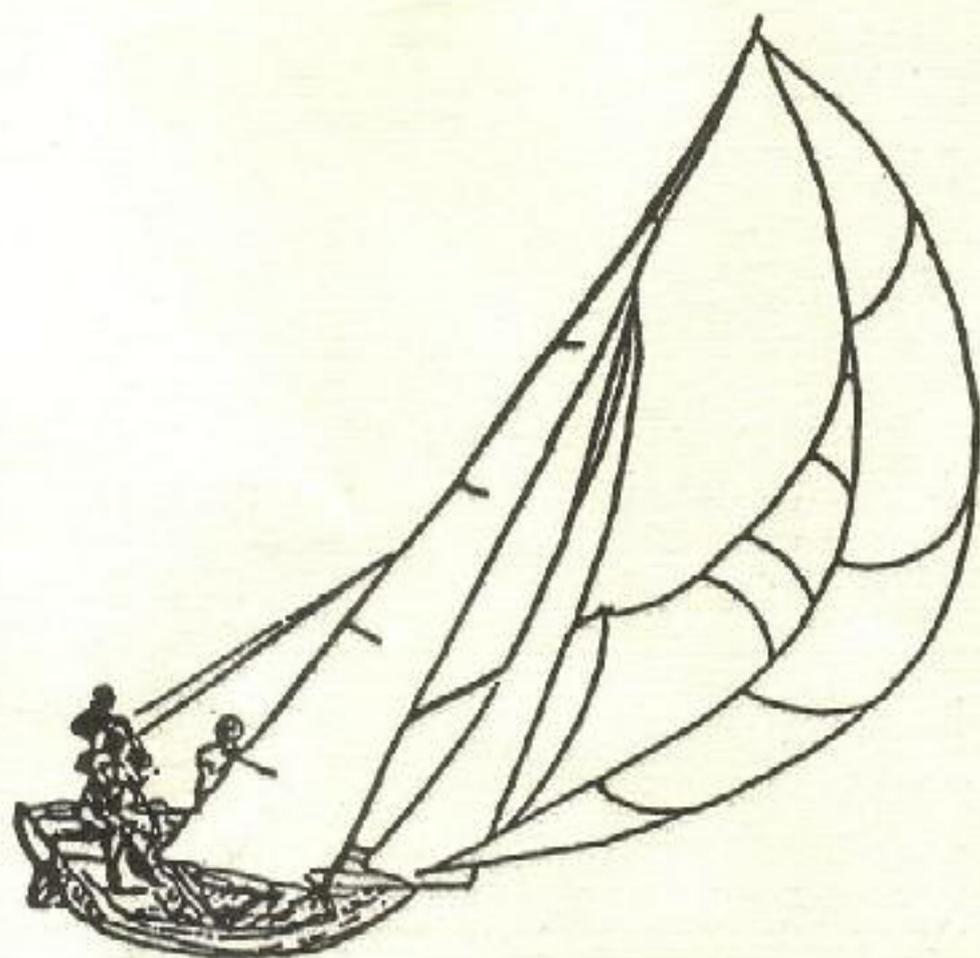


# LARGS BAY SCHOOL



**History**  
**1919~1983**

## Introduction

Before 1882, very few people lived in the sandhills and samphire flats that made up the suburb we now call Largs Bay. The building of the Largs jetty, the extension of the railway from Glanville, and the construction of the Largs Pier Hotel in 1882 marked the beginning of substantial settlement north from Semaphore.

Initially most of the new homes were built close to the coast or along the railway. To the east there was little development. During spring tides, the Port River flooded the eastern side of the LeFevre Peninsula as far as Fletcher Road, before embankments were raised to prevent it. For a number of years, these banks also prevented run off from the western side and large lakes often formed in the area near the present I.C.I. oval. The land north of what is now Jetty Road and east of Fletcher Road was still only sparsely settled until 1945.

Before the First World War, the residents of Largs often looked southwards for the provision of the services they needed. One of these was education.

Most children attended the LeFevre's Peninsula School or one of the numerous private schools that operated in the Semaphore—Largs region.

Among these was the Largs Bay College, established early in the century. According to Miss Muriel Oldfield, Ward Street, Semaphore, the college was established by Mr. and Mrs. Hills who bought Thomas Caterer's Collegiate School in Ward Street and re-named it after shifting to 138-9 Esplanade. The original building still stands today. In 1907 it was advertised in L.S. Curtis's "Adelaide the Queer City of the South" as follows;

"COLLEGE LIFE ON THE SEA FRONT AT LARGS BAY COLLEGE.  
The climate is perfect, the surroundings are ideal, including a fine sandy, yet unusually firm beach in front, play grounds or paddock on either side and behind.

Preparation for professional or commercial life, or for Civil Service, by University Graduates of high standing and long experiences. Good results at recent public examinations of Adelaide University.

For further details as to qualifications, testimonials from parents and pupils successes, apply to the Principal, J.F. Hills, M.A. Largs Bay College, Esplanade South, Largs S.A."

Another private school was the Largs Girls College, later to become St. Alban's C.E.G.G. School. This was situated in Alexander Street and closed in 1968. Sacred Heart College, now on Brighton Road, had its beginnings in a home still standing on the southern corner of Hannay Street and Military Road.

Following the arrival of peace in 1919, the steady increase in population in the Semaphore - Largs area, LeFevre's Peninsula School became crowded, The Largs Bay Adjunct School was established under the general oversight of LeFevre's Head Master, Mr. Llewellyn to help relieve the pressure.



Miss Pepper 1919 - 1923

### **Largs Bay Adjunct 1919 - 1924**

This school was set up in the Naval Drill Shed on the corner of Military Road and Jetty Road. A part of the building was set aside for military use, but the rest became a school with Miss Pepper in charge. Other teachers there who later transferred to the new Largs Bay School were Miss Sharrad and Miss Mann.

The shed had an asphalt floor and classrooms were improvised by hanging cloth dividers from the roof. At least one ex pupil remembers slipping under these dividers to join another teacher's class when her own was engaged in less than exciting work. She also remembers the sandy yard with couch grass struggling to survive.

A Largs Bay Adjunct School Committee was formed and some of its first decisions were to supply water bags for the children and to frost the windows. Next they set about planning the first of a long line of Largs Bay School Bazaars. This one raised £80 to buy a piano. An interesting feature of this period was the amount of labour contributed by volunteers to make the Drill Shed comfortable the fitting of footrests to desks, the construction of outdoor seating, the trimming of the boxthorn hedge, were all speedily done.

One item purchased for £50 was a set of Montessori equipment for the Infant children. The School Committee also urged the Government to construct a new school. We know little about why the Fletcher Road site was chosen, but we can suppose that the Education Department planners anticipated housing development in the vicinity and the subsequent "Thousand Home." scheme nearby would bear this out.

In 1924 most of the children from the Adjunct School started at the new school in Fletcher Road. The building had cost over £11,000 and was only the eastern half of the large brick building that dominated the site until recently. Initially there were 257 primary children and 215 infants in the eight classrooms. Mr. George Polson was the Head Master and Miss Amy Hastwell the Infant Mistress.

A boundary was fixed between LeFevre's Peninsula School and Largs Bay School at Claughton Road and Wattle Street, and children were required to go to the appropriate school. This broke up the old Adjunct School population for some had to go to LeFevre. This boundary was later changed and finally discarded.

### **Buildings, grounds**

In 1924 the building was a prominent landmark completely surrounded by white sand. Indeed drift sand encroached onto the grounds for the next seven or eight years, a continual nuisance. During the 1920's and 30's most children walked to school across sandy paddocks from the Largs Railway Station area.

In the 1930's Miss Jenkins ran a tuck shop at the edge of a sand drift at the Lincoln Street & Centre Street corner. She sold homemade pea soup, cakes and boiled sweets, and is remembered affectionately by many ex-customers. Before 1933, the school playground was covered with coarse gravel. Any running about usually resulted in skinned elbows and knees. Quartz crystals in the gravel attracted the attention of many children who picked out the shiny pieces.

One small area was tarred and used for basketball practice and, of course, drill. Drill was also performed on the upstairs balcony.



Room 1, Largs Bay School 1924

As Mr. Polson watched the school's growing enrolments he suggested the purchase of 14 blocks to the south so that an oval could be built.

At the official opening of the extensions to the original building in 1927, the Minister of Education responded to this idea by saying, "We have no money, will make no promises, but keep the question before me".

Since that time there has been no extension to the original property, but the use of Almond Tree Flat has alleviated the pressure on playground space.

The £10,000 extension in 1927 created a large majestic building of fourteen classrooms and a double assembly room.

In 1925 eighteen Norfolk Island pines were planted, some of which survive today. Many hundreds of trees and shrubs from annual Arbor Day plantings failed to survive the adverse conditions of sandy soil, long hot summer holidays and the playground packed with children. More successful was the planting of hundreds of trees over the years in

many local streets, close to the school and as far away as Lady Gowrie Drive (1936) and Victoria Road (1982).

This was always done in co-operation with the Port Adelaide Council that supplied the trees as well as the Official Guest at the Arbor Day ceremony.

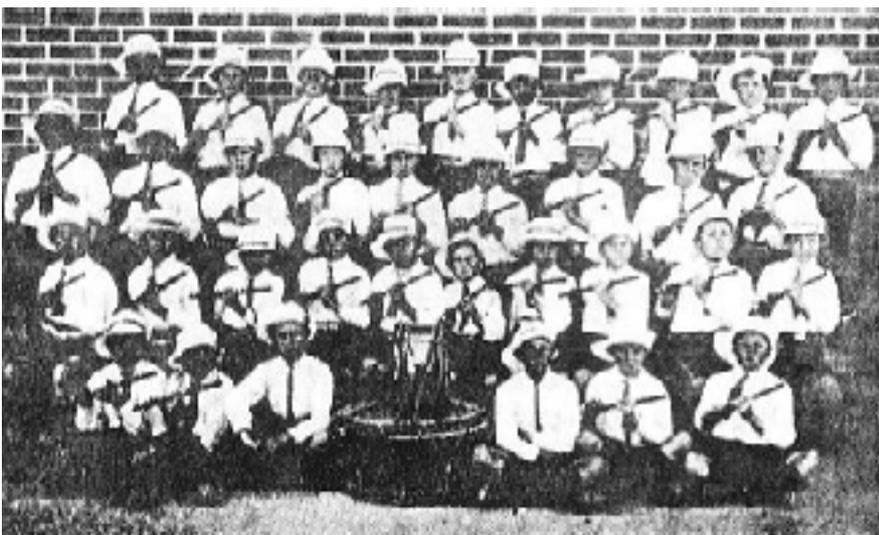
In 1924 Almond Tree Flat was a low-lying area surrounded by sand. There had been almond trees nearby at the turn of the century, but by this time only a couple remained.

The School used Almond Tree Flat as a site for athletic sports days and football practice. Later in the 1920's, the Largs Reserve on Woolnough Road was used for school sport on Friday afternoons. A number of approaches suggesting the purchase of Almond Tree Flat, were made to the Port Adelaide Council and the Education Department right up to the 1950's but these all came to nothing.

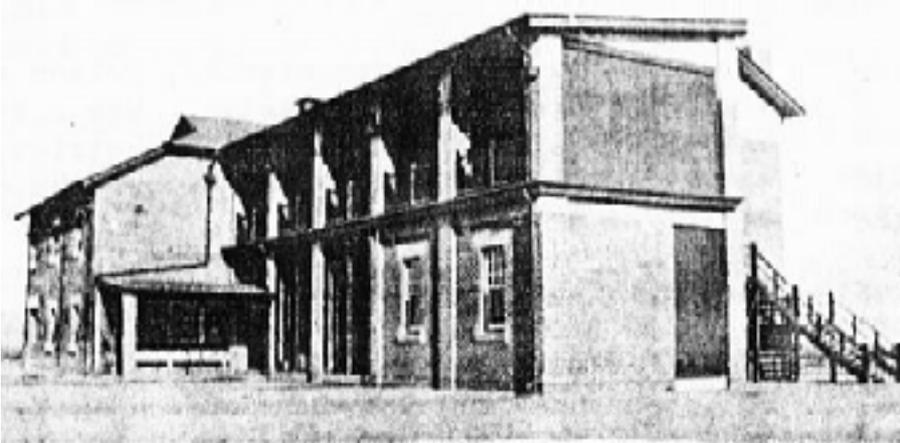
In 1926 the School Committee was concerned about the roadworks in Lincoln Street leaving the schoolyard lower than street level. Their fears were realized. For fifty-three years the northwestern section of the yard flooded after heavy rain and generations of schoolboys revelled in paddling their way to the marooned toilets at recess time.

From this period, ex—pupils remember Mr. Polson and Miss Paris in particular. Miss Hastwell was also held in high regard. These teachers were strict and often brusque, but humane, inspiring and worthy of respect at the same time.

Apart from Drill, which consisted of physical activities while standing on one spot, and 'Rhythm' which was similar but done to the accompaniment of a piano or gramophone, all lessons were conducted in large classes of about 60 children seated in narrow desks which filled the whole room. The children had exercise books, a reader, an arithmetic book and spelling book. The teacher had blackboards painted on the walls, some maps and a pointing stick. The school's Physical Education equipment consisted of one medicine ball in 1924. It was treasured and its use regarded as a privilege.



An Early Fife Band



Largs Bay Primary School 1924

A few library books were placed in each room and teachers decorated the building with friezes, flowers and their own pictures.

The committee voted £15 for library books in 1925 and £50 per year was a typical amount in the following years. They also voted £10 towards sports day championship medals. The emphasis was on competition.

In 1927, 28 and 29 picnic/sports days were held at Blackwood. Approximately 900 children and parents hired a train for £25 and enjoyed novelty races, championship races and the picnic lunch.

During the 1930's, the annual prize giving became an important ritual at the end of each year.

The dux boy and dux girl were chosen according to the marks gained in the Qualifying Certificate examination and were presented with a medal or watch and had their names inscribed on the Honour Roll. Prizes were awarded by the Shell Company for an essay competition and the Port Adelaide Institute awarded Reading and Drawing Scholarships.

'Good Attendance' cards were given to those who had not missed a day's school. This practice was discontinued later, when whooping cough, diphtheria, scarletina and infantile paralysis cases became frequent enough for concern. Sick children might be encouraged to attend and spread infection at school. Whenever a whooping cough or diphtheria case was reported, the classroom was immediately disinfected. One pupil remembers the wall maps and blackboard dripping with 'carbolic' after one case.

The infantile paralysis (polio) epidemics of 1938 and 1948 delayed the opening of school for a few weeks after the summer holidays.

During the 1930s, many families were desperately poor. In 1932, the school distributed 22 pairs of boots to needy children on behalf of the Port Adelaide Relief Poor Miss Dobson, however, Infant Mistress in 1939 felt that she should be able to attend Committee meetings too. The next meeting decided that she should be told that while her zeal and interest in the school were appreciated, it would be better if.....

Increasingly the Committee found itself allocating more and more money to teaching aids for use within the school. Perennial items were library books, pictures for the walls, gramophone records for "Rhythm", sports equipment and films and projectors. The first fixed wireless receiver was bought in 1939 for £42 and in that year the first central library was set up - a glass fronted bookcase containing a number of titles - total cost £30.

The Mother's Club, founded in 1924 raised funds exclusively for the Infant's School. Its meetings had more educational content to them than those of the Committee did. Frequently one of the classes would perform an item or a guest speaker would address them.

Some samples;

- 1933 Mrs McKay read from her diary written as a nurse overseas with A.I.F.
- 1934 Miss Pepper inspects a Rhythm item.
- 1935 First Aid talk by Red Cross lady.
- 1939 "Miss Olive Carter" addressed the club on her trip to Japan. Mrs. Lynch sang. (Miss Carter regularly gave special elocution lessons to the children).

In June 1924 the Committee and Mothers Club were at loggerheads over the sharing of the proceeds from the planned Bazaar. After a call by Mr. Polson at a public meeting, for unity in the work for the children it was decided that they would all "do their best." to make the Bazaar a success.

### **Fund raising**

In the following years, the proceeds of fundraisers were usually shared to Mothers Club and 4 to School Committee.

The predominance of women on the Bazaar committees suggests that the workload was not shared in quite the same proportions

Bazaars were usually held in the Drill Shed with various stalls elaborately decorated with paper flowers and trimmings. Often each stall was allocated a colour and a tall decorated arch constructed over the goods on display. Conveners were selected months in advance so that the goods could be made, collected or grown.

The 1924 bazaar had the following stalls

<b>Stall</b>	<b>Convener</b>	<b>Decorations</b>
Sweets	Mrs. Weir	Peach Blossoms
Work Stall	Mrs. Stewart	
Cake	Mrs. Clark	Heliotrope
Produce	Mrs. Phillips	Mauve & Yellow
Flowers	Mrs. Dobson	
Jumble	Mr. Craigie	
Afternoon Tea, Cool Drinks & Ice Cream	Mrs. Maddern	Wheat & Poppies
Queen Competition	Mr. Renton	Lavendar & Lemon
Strawberries & Cream	Mrs. Justice	
Tulip Garden & Children's Corner	Mrs. Nalty	Black & White
Cooking Competition	Mrs. Beck	Daffodils
	Mrs. Craigie	

Money was often collected beforehand to buy material for the work stall and the women spent many hours making plain garments or doing fancywork. This stall was a welcome source of relatively cheap clothing for some families.

The children's favourite stall was the "Strawberries and Cream" — a luxury. Bazaars were usually advertised with buttons (badges) and the distribution of hundreds of printed handbills.

A feature of many bazaars was the 'Ugly Man' competition. This consisted of voting for various competitors by pressing pins through cardboard grids and paying a penny or so for the privilege. Later this became the Popular Boy or Popular Girl competition.

Penny concerts were frequently held at school in lunch hours during the thirties. The emphasis certainly was on creativity in a period when money and luxuries were lacking.

Another regular fundraiser was the 'Children's Frolic' where children (and sometimes adults) paraded in fancy costume to the music of a piano or a tiny band such as the "Talbot Orchestra". This took place in Port Adelaide Town Hall or the Semaphore Palais.

Picture nights were also put on after which the proceeds were shared with the management of the Ozone Theatre at Semaphore. This arrangement continued from 1925 through to the 1950's when the school committee put on its own picture shows in the long, narrow upstairs balcony at school.

Groom's Hall, in Hargrave Street was the venue for many school functions - picture nights, concerts and socials.

### **1939 - 1945**

The war years brought many changes to the way the school related to the Largs community.

At the end of 1941 a telephone was installed 'for military purposes', hundreds of sandbags arrived, and soldiers occupied the building for the summer vacation. Four weeks into the 1942 school year they were still in residence. In response to a direction from the Education Department, the Head Master, Mr. Johncock called a conference with the Committee and Mothers Club on the safety of the children in the event of enemy action. The Committee took on responsibility to provide trenches near the school for the pupils and make shelters available in the homes of nearby residents. The Mothers Club supplied identification discs with name, address and blood group written on them and satchels containing a first aid pack, sweets etc.

Assisted by the City Engineer, Mr. Simons, the school appealed for help to dig the trenches. The response was overwhelming. More than 70 were assembled. The committee being temporarily at a disadvantage for materials, Arthur Workman, Alex Cormack and Arthur Weir went to the tennis courts at Largs Bay Reserve and commandeered the wire netting and backstops for the trench requirements. Another party collected wire netting from the Drill sheds. Others provided wire, stakes and sacks.

Later the Government ordered all householders to provide air raid shelters on their properties. The school organized where the scholars were to go in case of warnings and at

the same time advised the parents where their children would be sent in case of air attack. The dispersal was rehearsed and proved quite upsetting for many small children.

In 1944 Air Raid Precautions regulations were relaxed and the Mothers Club handed over A.R.P. funds to the School Fund.

In 1940, Miss Sharrad, one of the original 1924 staff retired amidst glowing tributes.

Mass immunization against diphtheria became possible at this time and in 1941 every student was treated.

When peace finally came in 1945, a special thanks giving was held and school dismissed at 9.30 a.m. on 15/5/45.



Fife Band 1946

## **1945 - 1980**

### **Buildings, grounds**

In 1946 the Port Adelaide Council marked out the precise position of Almond Tree Flat with a view to Government purchase for a school playground. The purchase never occurred, but the school obtained permission to use it and to this day a lease arrangement with the Corporation gives the school exclusive use during school hours and for Saturday morning sport.

In 1956 the upstairs balcony area of the building was enclosed, and in 1974, carpeted and used as an open teaching area. The School's enrolments had grown quickly in the post-war years reaching a peak of 1500 in 1969. At this stage 18 'temporary' wooden rooms occupied the small yard. They were not enough, and for a few years extra classes were crammed on to the balcony as they had been in 1926. The opening of Taperoo Primary in 1953 and Largs North Primary in 1967 did not prevent enrolments from growing. It was the opening of North Haven Primary in 1979 that assisted most markedly in reducing the number of children at this school.

The steady decline in numbers since 1969 had some real advantages. Classrooms were converted for use as a library, a staff-room and a canteen. One was removed altogether.

The establishment of more homes close to the school in the 1950s effectively removed the option of acquiring more playground space adjacent to the main site.

So in these crowded years, staff encouraged children to use Almond Tree Flat during lunch breaks. This did not prevent a number of nasty accidents on the home site, but reduced the danger to a large extent.

### **Education**

Inside the classrooms instruction remained largely traditional until the 1970s. During this period many student teachers received part of their training at the school.

In 1946 the primary school first set up a separate room as a library. The Infant School converted the front porch for the same purpose.

By 1952 upper primary boys were attending woodwork and sheetmetal classes at Port Adelaide.

In 1954, the new Religious Instruction system was adopted — children being taught in denominational groups. These were often very uneven in size and occasional lack of instructors played havoc with the timetable.

A ‘talkie’ projector was bought in 1957 and the late 1960’s were using television programs regularly.

In 1971 Mrs. Helen Woolman and Mrs. Wilma Bottomley successfully tried “Co—operative Teaching” in the adjoining rooms 1 and 2 and similar team teaching units followed in the primary section in 1978.

Children attending during this period continued many of the school’s traditions. For example, alleys for boys and knucklebones for girls gradually rounded the edges of the numerous redbrick gutters that crossed the yard.

### **Sport**

In line with another tradition, sporting teams continued to prosper, ‘soccer, hockey, swimming, cricket and athletic teams regularly won inter—school competitions as well as the football and netball teams. Sports Days continued at Almond Tree Flat. In recent years the ‘tabloid’ organization has been used, but in 1982, a ‘Blackwood’ picnic/sports day, reminiscent of 1925—29 was tried again.

### **Music**

The music tradition also continued. The School Band received new uniforms in 1946 made from Air Force uniform material. The band switched to recorders in the 1960s. After a period without a band at all, children are once again learning recorders — 155 of them this year.

The school choirs regularly appeared in the Festival of Music until 1980. The teaching of stringed, brass and woodwind instruments has been introduced in recent times for a limited number of children.

### **Parent bodies**

The Primary Welfare Club joined the School Committee and Infant Mothers Club in 1962. This group worked in a similar fashion to the Mothers Club until the two groups merged to become the Parents and Friends Association in 1980. Buying audio-visual materials, maintaining the first aid equipment providing curtains and blinds, covering library books and making sports uniforms are some of the activities in which they were involved. A wide range of guest speakers, often connected with education, was invited. The annual birthday party became another tradition.

While adding no dignity to the school at all, they have provided regular amusement over a number of years.

### **Fund raising**

Fundraising since 1945 changed from reliance on one or two major events per year, to smaller and more varied functions, Lunch days, stalls at Sports days, cake days, picture evenings, bottle-drives, bike-a-thons, spell-a-thons, 'Bugs' afternoons and the fetes of 1977 and 1976 all contributed. The voluntary contribution cards, later to become the amenities booklist fee provided a major source of income since 1953.

The School Committee became the School Council in the early 1970's with teacher and other parent body representation. One of their achievements was the establishment of a canteen in 1973, set up to avoid the problems associated with large numbers of children having to leave the school grounds. This saw the end of the traditional 'tuck shop' close to the school — the tradition starting with Mr. Cameron who sold pies and pasties from his wagon in 1924 and carried on in various neighbouring stores by Miss Jenkins, the Underdowns, Hunters, Murrins and Edwards families.



School Yard 1980



Largs Bay School 1980

### **1980 - 1983**

There was a welcome announcement in 1980 that the brick building would be extended northwards at a cost of \$1.6 million to allow the removal of the wooden classrooms and the provision of more usable play space. The School Council asked once again for the closure of Centre Street so that its area could be added to the yard during the redevelopment. This was not successful.

The rebuilding was a difficult time. The Special Class moved to LeFevre School and for eighteen months four primary classes traveled to Largs North School by bus. The construction necessarily took place close to classes of children and the noise, dust and very restricted play and storage space were problems. Most children were forced to Almond Tree Flat each lunchtime and for most Physical Education lessons.

The school survived this period well and the newly completed building with its spacious library, assembly hall, numerous withdrawal spaces, carpeted work areas, craft areas and storage rooms was all the more welcome.

The occupation of the new northern section including the complete first floor took place in February 1982. During the first term of that year the older section downstairs was renovated and came into use in June. The assembly hall was constructed late in 1982 and was handed over to the school in February this year.

We hope you share with us our pride in the Largs Bay School of 1983.



School 1983

**HEADMASTERS 1924 - 1983**

1924 - 1926	George Polson	1957 - 1960	Murray Farrow
1927 - 1929	Robert Healy	1961 - 1963	Edwin Brauer
1930 - 1931	Harry Nadebaum	1964 - 1966	Arnold Parish
1932 - 1936	William J. Fisher	1967	Mort Pearce
1937 - 1938	Sydney Nancarrow	1968 - 1970	Reg Lawry
1939 - 1941	Alan Rendell	1970	M. Hambour
1942 - 1952	John A. Johncock	1971 - 1974	Wally Dawes
1952 - 1954	Francis Beech	1975 - 1977	Bill Barnes
1955 - 1956	George Mazure	1978 - 1983	Harold Lawrence

**INFANT HEADMISTRESSES 1924 - 1983**

1924 - 1925	Amy Hastwell	1949 - 1952	Marie Heyward
1926 - 1929	Mary Fitzgerald	1953 - 1954	Melva Sando
1930 - 1931	Gladys Crutchett	1955	Vera Haworth
1932 - 1934	Margaret Smith	1956 - 1961	Renate Duldig
1935 - 1937	Marjorie Kentish	1962 - 1965	Joyce Traeger
1938	Eileen Elford	1966 - 1969	Z. Cornelius
1939 - 1942	Kathleen Dobson	1970 - 1973	E. McLagan
1943 - 1946	Anne Milne	1973	Anne Soc
1947	Myra Bennett	1974 - 1979	Joan Ralph
1948	Rosina Norton	1980 - 1983	Marilyn Sleath

**1924 SCHOOL STAFF**

Primary	Infant
George T. Polson	Amy Hastwell
Mabel Harris	Sarah Soar
Beatrice E. Paris	Vera Morris
Anne Sharrad	Jean Sinclair
Caroline Mann	Edith Perry

**SCHOOL COMMITTEE 1924**

Chairman G. Goudie

Secretary/Treasurer Mr. Sincock

Committee Mesdames Weir, Justice and Heywood

Messrs. McIvor, Craigie

**SCHOOL ENROLMENTS**

1924	Primary	257
	Infant	215
1960	Primary	890
	Infant	406
	(Peak year for enrolments)	
1974	Primary	548
	Infant	160
1983	Primary	307
	Junior Primary	135

**SCHOOL COMMITTEE CHAIRMEN**

1919 - 1920	Mr. W.C. Beaumont
1921 - 1923	Mr. A.R. McKay
1924 - 1925	Mr. G. Goudie
1926 - 1932	Mr. G.M. MacKay
1933 - 1935	Mr. A.R. Clare
1936 - 1937	Mr. N. Guthrie
1938 - 1959	Mr. B.C. Samuel.
1940 - 1942	Mr. A.B. Clouston
1943 - 1945	Mr. A.A. Weir
1946 - 1948	Mr. A.W. Workman
1949 - 1952	Mr. G.S. Hutton
1953 - 1964	Mr. F.D. Scharnberg
1965 - 1973	Capt. J.A. Gillespie
1974	Mr. M.G. Inglis
1975 - 1979	Mr. R.W. Crow.
1980 - 1981	Mrs. J. Evers
1982	Mr. B. Patterson

**PRIMARY WELFARE CLUB PRESIDENTS**

1962 - 1965	Mrs. A.Y. Tinga
1966 - 1967	Mrs. P.M. Driscoll
1968 - 1972	Mrs. P. Murray
1973	Mrs. B. Vaidron
1974 - 1976	Mrs. V. Royle
1977 - 1979	Mrs. J. Evers

**PARENTS & FRIENDS ASSOCIATION - PRESIDENTS**

1980	Mrs. C. Thompson
1981	Mrs. R. Burford
1982	Mrs. E. Whitehorn
1983	Mrs. C. Benson