

EDUCATION

Part 2, Chapter 9

Schoolchildren living in our district in the 1860s and early 1870 faced a long walk, over rough roads which were often impassable in wet weather, to reach their nearest school. Te Aro, a Church of England school in Ghuznee Street, was one of the private schools which received a grant from the Wellington Provincial Council but each child paid an additional small fee.

The Wellington Education Board was established in 1871 to set up a system of public schools throughout the province. Te Aro School was taken over in March 1873 and an additional two schools were established in the southern area. Whilst additions were made to Te Aro a temporary school was opened in Adelaide Road, possibly in the Wesleyan Chapel, but closed in 1874 when the teacher, Mrs Palmer, left the colony. Hopper Street School, conducted by Mrs Wilkinson and her daughter in a lean-to at her home, flourished and, by the following April, had an average attendance of seventy pupils.

In November 1875 a boys' department opened in the new Buckle Street School and, on 10 March 1876 *The Evening Post* reported that 80 of the 270 boys on the roll came from Adelaide Road. Girls also attended the school and when a separate boys' school opened in Taranaki Street in 1878, the girls remained in the Buckle Street building.

Several private schools existed in our area during this period, the most notable being a boys' school, with a roll of 70 pupils, conducted by W. Weston in Tasman Street. He was highly regarded by the parents who had petitioned the Wellington Education Board without success to appoint him headmaster of the new Buckle Street School. Schools for "young ladies" were conducted by Mrs Lawson at The Knoll, Wallace Street in 1875 and by Mrs Colgan, a certificated teacher, at her home in Adelaide Road in 1879.

Families who could afford to, sometimes employed a governess as did Mrs Walter Haynes, wife of

the licensee of the Newtown Hotel. She advertised in September 1876 for "a well educated young lady ... music indispensable" to live in the hotel and teach her two children.

Central government assumed responsibility for education after the abolition of the provinces in 1876 and, with the passing of the Education Act, 1877, established a system of free, compulsory, secular education. While the majority of children attended state schools the church and private schools continued to play an important role as an alternative choice for parents.

Newtown School

A notice headed Newtown School appeared in the *New Zealand Times* 14 November 1877 advising that a day school would open, upon completion of the hall being built next to McIntyre's store in Riddiford Street. This may have been a private school, because in January 1879, two residents met with Wellington Education Board members and asked for a school to be established in Newtown. It opened on 27 May 1879 in a hall in Riddiford Street on the site now occupied by Radiator Services, opposite Wilson Street. Fifty-two children enrolled on the first day and the headmaster, T. Donnelly, was in sole charge until Emma Barnard, a pupil teacher, was appointed three weeks later. According to the school's log book the equipment was five desks, two blackboards and easels, one abacus, one clock, four maps and four geographical charts. With a school roll which had doubled by September, conditions in the one-roomed building must have been difficult. The removal of a gallery in December forced the headmaster to send the infants home, and tell them not to return until after the holidays.

Meanwhile an acre of swampy ground on the corner of Mein Street had been acquired from the government. A school containing classrooms for 350 pupils, designed by a Mr Schwartz and built by N.



Leighton, was erected facing Riddiford Street. When it opened on 26 January 1881, 95 pupils were admitted and E.R. Lillington, the new headmaster, was assisted by three staff members. More equipment had been added but the total of four teachers' desks and chairs, 24 desks and six blackboards and easels, seven maps and six geographical charts together with the abacus and clock must have been quite inadequate for the 247 pupils who were on the roll a month later. Two extra teachers joined the staff in March in time to cope with the peak attendance of 289 pupils the following week. The school's growth does indicate the rapid expansion of Newtown but a number of the pupils also came from the surrounding districts of Kilbirnie, Maranui (Lyall Bay) and Island Bay until their own local schools were established later in the decade.

Two new classrooms were added in 1881 and further extensions made in 1885 when the distinctive belfry was erected, despite the protests of one Education Board member who thought "the tower ornamentation" was a waste of public funds. A separate infant school was built in 1888 after a deputation from the school committee urged the Education Board to provide extra

accommodation to meet the school's growing roll. The playground which was rough and prone to flooding was another worry, and teachers at times had to carry the smallest children through knee high mud and slush. Branch classes of the School of Design, forerunner of Wellington High School, started in January 1887, when a tutor gave evening drawing lessons at ten shillings per quarter. After a successful start attendances declined and the evening classes ceased in 1891.

Work was scarce and wages were low during the eighties; there were many cases of hardship and children were often absent from school because of illness. Some families were too poor to buy boots for their children and it was common for pupils to wrap their legs with brown paper during wet weather for protection.

Further extensions to the buildings were made as the roll soared to 1,181 pupils in 1895, the largest school in Wellington, with a staff of 21 teachers. The opening of Rintoul Street School, later called South Wellington, in 1896 gave temporary relief, and the roll dropped to 896 pupils. Charles Hulke, the headmaster throughout this period, demonstrated his belief in the value of books by providing them, at his own expense, for the children of poor families. An enthusiastic analytical chemist, with his own well-equipped laboratory, he tested the area's milk supply with the result that a higher standard of milk was available in Newtown. His sudden death in 1899 came as a great shock to pupils, staff and parents.

The roll had once again reached 1000 by 1901 and the school committee, concerned about the insanitary state of the buildings and grounds and angry at the Education Board's attitude, took their grievances to the Premier, the Rt. Hon. R. J. Seddon. As a result of his intervention the buildings were renovated and the grounds much improved during 1901-2.

A cookery room for classes from city schools was established in 1903, and, during the same period, a strip of ground along the Riddiford Street frontage was bought

Reference to be added

by the city council for street widening for the new electric trams. The school was created a District High in 1905, in response to the demand for free secondary places provided for by the Secondary Schools Act, 1903. In 1908 the cookery classes were transferred to South Wellington School, and the cooking room was converted to a science laboratory. The high school department was disestablished at the end of 1911 when more free places became available in the city's secondary schools and the name reverted to Newtown School once more.

An area of Town Belt at the top of Mein Street was acquired in 1914 because there was no space for school gardens in the crowded playground and, for a time, potatoes were grown for the 'War Distress Fund'. Evening classes returned in 1918 when tuition was given three nights a week to prepare students for the Wellington Education Board's Proficiency Certificate.

When the virulent influenza epidemic struck the city in November 1918 the school, which had closed because of the disease, became the local depot for the Block Committee which co-ordinated services and supplies to the stricken families in the district.

The replacement of the ageing buildings was an issue during the twenties and one proposal was for two schools, Newtown East on the Town Belt at the top of Mein Street, and Newtown West on a reserve at John Street. By the late twenties the school roll had fallen to about 1300 pupils and agreement to rebuild on the same site had been reached, but the project was shelved with the onset of the Depression.

A successful jubilee celebration was held 28-30 September 1934 when over 2,000 former pupils and staff enjoyed exchanging reminiscences. With the revival of the economy in the mid thirties the plans for a new school were implemented. The present two-storey building in Emmett Street was formally opened by the Hon. Peter Fraser, Minister of Education, on Saturday, 17 June 1939 and, amongst the large gathering, were the first pupil

teacher and one of the pupils who enrolled on the first day in 1879.

The infant school was not replaced then because it depended on the demolition of the old main school building which was currently being used to store educational exhibits for the New Zealand Centennial Exhibition. It became a temporary hostel in January 1940 and, for some months accommodated the several thousand children from all over New Zealand who were brought to Wellington to visit the Exhibition. Later it was taken over by the hospital, which was short of space because of wartime pressures, and used by patients and students until about 1942 when it was finally demolished.

Building restrictions prevented the erection of a new infant block and another 35 years were to pass before it was replaced. Newtown became a contributing school to the newly created South Wellington Intermediate in 1946 – a move which ended years of rivalry between the two schools. After completing the fourth standard pupils transferred to the intermediate school for their final two years of primary education.

The fifties and sixties saw several important events. An open air swimming pool, funded by parents and old students, was opened on 27 February 1954 and soon proved its worth. Five years later the school celebrated its eightieth anniversary during the weekend 23-25 October 1959 and the following year the long-awaited assembly hall was built. Playground extension and building redevelopment were features of the seventies and houses on the western side of Minerva Street were demolished and a grassed playing area established. The old wooden infant school, built nearly ninety years earlier, was the object of much adverse publicity before it was demolished in 1977. Pupils were transported to other schools while the new open plan junior block was being built, and they finally moved into the new premises in July 1978. Construction of the administration and library block was completed by

January 1979 and the reconstruction and refurbishment of the forty-year-old main school followed, during which some classes were transported to Kelburn School for a brief period. All renovations were completed in time for the school's centennial celebrations on 19- 21 October 1979 when between five and six hundred former staff and pupils renewed friendships.

Developments in the eighties started with the enclosure and renovation of the swimming pool, which is now well used in term and holiday times when it forms part of the Summer City and Newtown Community Centre holiday programmes. The school's introduction of a Maori/English bilingual class in 1984 reflected the higher proportion of Polynesian pupils on the roll, while the greater emphasis on multicultural activities which are now part of the programme highlight the cultural diversity of the children. A mural painted on the wall of the ANZ Bank in January 1987, and several added since around the playground, helped to brighten the drab school grounds, and further beautifying with tree planting and landscaping was completed at the end of 1989.

Newtown School's central site on the main road through the suburb has kept it well to the fore of public notice and over the years, it has played a significant role in the educational and social life of the community. Two classrooms in the old wooden school were divided by folding doors which, when pushed back, transformed the rooms into a large hall which from the mid 1880s, was the venue for many public meetings, social events, church and Sunday School services. Facilities for community use were again available when the present hall was built in 1960 and future refurbishment planned should attract greater use by groups.

St Anne's Marist School

The nearest school for children of early Catholic families living in Newtown was St Joseph's in Boulcott

Street which closed in 1876. The boys transferred to the new Marist Brothers' School, also in Boulcott Street, and the girls attended the convent school in Dixon Street. It was a tiring journey, particularly for young children and, as the number of families increased, so did the pressure from parents for the establishment of a local school. The Sisters of Mercy opened St Joseph's Day School on 30 June 1890 in a building still standing on the corner of Adelaide Road and Park Street, now Nikau Street. After attending mass at the Buckle Street church, the pupils and nuns walked in procession to Adelaide Road where the Very Rev. Father Kerrigan, Te Aro parish priest, blessed and opened the school. The two-storeyed building, rented at £40 a year, was designed for 100 pupils. A large room on the ground floor housed the infants and the standards were upstairs, while a large shed at the back provided extra room when needed. There were 64 children on opening day and, by mid September, the number had increased to over 100 children.

It was obvious that larger premises were needed and, by April 1892, sufficient funds had been raised to buy two acres of land between Daniell and Green Streets at a cost of £1,200. The area was mainly level but rose to a hillier section across a stream which ran diagonally through the property, from Daniell Street to the Newtown School grounds.

St Joseph's Catholic School, described as being only a wing of a larger building to be erected when funds were available, was blessed and opened by Archbishop Redwood on 30 April 1893. Designed in Gothic style, by D. Mahoney, it was built by Edwards and Palmer at a cost of £550 on the level area near Green Street. The school had accommodation for 240 children and a kitchen and dining room for the Sisters. A long shelter shed on the southern boundary protected the pupils during wet weather. It opened on 1 May with a roll of 150 pupils and, by the end of the week, an extra 25 children had enrolled.



Reference to be added

Two more classrooms were added in 1899 and plans were prepared for a new convent and high school, to be erected adjacent to the school. St Joseph's Convent, a two-storeyed wooden building designed by J. O'Dea and built by G. Hunt for £775, was blessed and opened by the Archbishop at the end of November 1900. Accommodation for seven nuns had been included in the

eighteen rooms in the building, a welcome move for the Sisters who, for ten years, had travelled daily by tram, from the convent in Hill Street. The convent garden was laid out later by members of the parish, with many plants being supplied from their own gardens. St Joseph's High School opened in February 1901 and provided courses for

fee-paying students to the level of Civil Service and Matriculation Examinations.

The new parish of St Anne's was established in September 1902 and the priorities for the priest. Father Ainsworth, were to acquire a church and a more spacious school. For some years the school had been used for church services after a small chapel, opened in 1897 proved to be too small for the congregation. In April 1903, it was decided to build a new school and enlarge and convert the existing building into a church. Father Ainsworth designed the school, a handsome two-storeyed wooden building, with accommodation for 380 children in five classrooms. It was built by Campbell and Burke, at a cost of £676, close to the northern boundary near Emmett Street, and was opened and blessed by Archbishop Redwood on 2 August 1903. Re-named St Anne's School, it was the largest in the Wellington Archdiocese, with 300 pupils and a staff of six Sisters of Mercy. The following April the grounds were levelled and drained when six thousand loads of filling were deposited by the tramway contractors laying the new tracks for the electric trams.

At the end of 1904, additions to St Joseph's Convent almost doubled its size. Included were a small chapel, two new classrooms, a music room and a special singing room for the high school students, while the remaining rooms were for residential purposes. The convent was well known for its excellent training in music, particularly singing, and a number of pupils gained honours in music examinations. The high school remained in existence for about forty years with the roll varying between thirty and sixty pupils.

Young boys attended St Anne's but transferred to the Marist Brothers' School, which opened in Tasman St in 1911, when they reached the standard classes. In 1915, however, the Catholic Education Board became concerned about inadequate staffing at the Marist School and asked the Sisters of Mercy to take over responsibility

for teaching the younger boys. St Anne's then became co-educational to the end of Standard Two and girls only from Standard Three upwards, a structure which remained until 1983.

For a brief period in November 1918 at the height of the influenza epidemic, the parish school was turned into a temporary convalescent hospital where the Sisters of Mercy nursed some of the patients.

Alterations and additions were made to St Anne's over the years to suit the school's changing needs. The increasing multiracial character of Newtown during the 1970s resulted in a greater diversity amongst the pupils, and new methods and programmes were devised to meet their particular requirements.

Catholic schools elected to become part of the state system of education after the passing of the Private Schools Conditional Integration Act 1975, which allowed them to conduct their schools according to their religious principles and this integration was completed by 1983.

The Marist Brothers' School and St Anne's amalgamated in 1983 and both schools became coeducational, with the junior classes at St Anne's and the senior classes, from standard Three upwards, at Tasman Street. It was not a satisfactory arrangement and this, together with the high cost of maintaining two old buildings, convinced the church authorities that it would be wiser to build a new combined school in Daniell Street. The site chosen was occupied by several houses. In addition, the church already owned the property at the end of Emmett Street where the Bonanza Bargain House operated in the former factory of Billiards Ltd. These buildings were demolished and the present school erected in Daniell Street, with a new entrance from Emmett Street. The Catholic community paid \$900,000 to build the school, aided by government loans, after which the Wellington Education Board became responsible for the supply of basic equipment and building maintenance.

Pupils moved into the new St Anne's Marist School at the end of the second term in August 1984, and the building was blessed and formally opened by Cardinal Williams on 23 September. The old wooden school was demolished during the August holidays, after serving the parish for 81 years, and the space became part of the enlarged playground. St Joseph's Convent was transferred to the city council early in 1989 for development as a community park.

South Wellington Intermediate School

It was clear by the early 1890s that another public school was needed in the district to relieve the overcrowded conditions at Newtown School. The site chosen was a former Chinese market garden, on four acres of Maori lease land, between Russell Terrace and Rintoul Street. Designed by Thomas Turnbull and built by A.J. Ward, Rintoul Street School was a wooden structure, built around three sides of a quadrangle, which stood on a knoll facing west. There were six classrooms, a headmaster's office and a library. The grounds, which were unpaved became a sea of mud in wet weather. The first headmaster, George Flux, was assisted by seven teachers, and the opening roll on 20 July 1896 was 280 pupils. The roll had risen to 420 pupils the following February and, to ease the accommodation problem, the quadrangle was converted, later in the year, to a hall for infant classes. The school continued to grow and, in 1901, the headmaster turned away some children when attendances of up to 600 pupils overtaxed the school's capacity.

There is some confusion about the school's name at the turn of the century when "Berhampore" seems to have replaced "Rintoul Street" although both continued to be used until 1906.

On the night of Sunday, 26 March 1905 a fire started in one of the northern rooms and quickly engulfed the whole building. The fire brigade from the John Street

Station was at a fire in the city and, although the hose reel from the Donald McLean Street station was rushed to the scene, the water pressure was not strong enough to have any effect. When the brigade eventually arrived the fire was out of control. The cause of the disaster was not established but a spate of rumours circulated, ranging from the activities of a "two-up" school in the basement to a candle being used by a tramp sleeping in the building.

School work resumed a few days later in six different buildings, including the Berhampore Baptist Hall, St Thomas's schoolroom and the Church of Christ schoolroom. The foundation stone for the new building was laid on 28 November 1905 by the Premier, the Rt. Hon. R. J. Seddon, before a large audience. Teaching in temporary premises continued for another nine months before South Wellington School was officially opened on 29 August 1906 by the Minister of Education, the Hon. G. Fowlds. The new school built of plaster faced brick, had been erected on the same site by J. and A. Wilson. Ten classrooms and a library opened off a large central hall in the main building, and three additional classrooms were in a separate infant school. A manual training block was built near the Rintoul Street entrance in 1908, and cookery classes were transferred from Newtown School and woodwork classes from temporary premises in Constable Street. Pupils from schools in the surrounding district attended classes weekly.

Over the next years further improvements were made to the buildings. Pupils and teachers excavated and levelled the grounds in readiness for asphaltting and, a nursery for native trees was established in 1916 as part of a plan to beautify the school grounds. Three thousand young trees were flourishing two years later when the school planned to enlarge the nursery and supply trees to other schools.

The outbreak of influenza in November 1918 closed all schools and, for a short period, South Wellington School became a convalescent hospital for 25

patients. Meals were prepared in the cookery rooms and carried across to the main school.

A major improvement to the grounds was the opening, in 1927, of a flight of steps leading from the Russell Terrace entrance which replaced the former slippery clay paths. A successful jubilee celebration held on 30 September 1931 commemorated the thirty-fifth anniversary of the school's establishment and the twenty-fifth anniversary of the replacement building. About 600 people enjoyed the day's formal functions and entertainment provided by the pupils. During the thirties parents, teachers and pupils worked hard to landscape the Russell Terrace frontage by building stone walls and planting flowering trees and shrubs. The resulting garden and its centrepiece, a memorial sundial dedicated to Mrs E. V. Player, a former pupil and teacher, provided an attractive contrast to the asphalted playgrounds.

The building was badly damaged by the 1942 earthquake, but wartime restrictions allowed only sufficient strengthening to make it safe and the school continued to be used. Wellington Education Board's plans to convert the school to an intermediate raised a furore amongst parents and school committee but their opposition went unheeded, and South Wellington Intermediate School, the first in the city, opened on 4 February 1946.

During a routine check two years later the building was found to be unsafe and the school was evacuated in November 1948. Classes were continued in a variety of premises ranging from the school's gymnasium to rooms under the Athletic Park grandstand and classrooms at Brooklyn and Mount Cook Schools. Rebuilding was delayed because of uncertainty about the school's future – at one stage the Education Board considered disestablishing South Wellington and making Mount Cook an intermediate school. But it was decided to build a new intermediate school on the same site, the old brick building was demolished and the rubble tipped

on the former gardens on the Russell Terrace side. The present school was built in two stages, and the first block, which contained classrooms and the library was occupied by Form One classes in the third term, 1953. Stage two, containing manual training, art and science rooms was completed much later. Eleven years after the intermediate school was established it was officially opened on 20 March 1957 by the Hon. R. M. Algie, Minister of Education.

Developments since then included an open air swimming pool, probably funded by parents, which was built on the Russell Terrace side in the late fifties or early sixties but was later demolished. An assembly hall which had been promised as part of the new building did not eventuate and the former gymnasium was converted and, after several extensions, is still in use. As with the other schools in the area, the pupils at South Wellington are a mixture of many ethnic groups and the specialised activities developed by the school reflect this multicultural aspect.

A reunion of former pupils and teachers was held on 21-22 March 1987 and close on a thousand people commemorated over ninety years of the school's existence and the thirtieth anniversary of the opening of the present building. One outcome of the celebration was the establishment of a fund to refurbish the wrought iron gates at the Russell Terrace entrance, all that remains of the former primary school.

Disaster once again struck the school in the early hours of 11 March 1989 when fire destroyed the administration area and badly damaged part of the classroom block. Classes were transferred to other schools for a short period while the classrooms were repaired but the rebuilding of the administration block has been plagued by arguments about the replacement cost. A recent announcement stated that work would start in the latter part of 1990.

Marist Brothers' School

The Marist Brothers' School in Boulcott Street, once the heart of a residential area had, by the early part of this century, become increasingly isolated as the population moved away from the expanding city centre. The problem was resolved in 1908 when the church authorities decided to replace it with schools in the two densely populated suburbs of Thorndon and Newtown.

About an acre of land in Tasman Street, bought three years earlier, housed an infant school run by the Sisters of Mercy, but it was very overcrowded. It was decided to transfer the children to the Dixon Street Convent and use the Tasman Street site for the Marist Brothers' school. An additional section behind the old horse tram barns was bought to give access from Adelaide Road. The architect, J.S. Swan, prepared plans for a single storey building, with six classrooms, to accommodate 300 pupils. John Moffat's tender of £3,376 was accepted for the cement faced brick building, with a small belfry on the roof and a large open basement shelter. The building was opened and blessed by Archbishop Redwood on 29 January 1911.

The school opened the following day, under the direction of Brother Justin who was assisted by three staff. One hundred and seventy boys were enrolled but within a few weeks the numbers had increased to 220 pupils. As no residence was provided for the Brothers they travelled daily from Boulcott Street until, two years later, a two-storeyed wooden house was erected adjacent to the school. The Brothers occupied this home until the mid 1950s, when the present residence was built, and the old house became the clubrooms of the Old Boys' Association.

The grounds around the school were undeveloped until energetic Brother Louis (known as "The Concrete King"), assisted by the boys, undertook the backbreaking task of forming the playing area and school approaches.

Originally the school enrolled boys from Standard One upwards but, in 1915, the number of pupils had increased to such an extent that six teachers were required to maintain classes of a reasonable size. As no extra staff was available to help the four Brothers, the Catholic Education Board asked the Sisters of Mercy to take over the teaching of the lower standards. Until the end of 1982 the Marist Brothers taught boys from Standard Three to Standard Six only.

Concerts were a feature in the early life of the school with singing, music, drama and elocution being performed in either the Town Hall or the Grand Opera House before audiences of several thousand people.

From the beginning, the Brothers fostered an interest in sport and the boys proved their ability in many codes. Because the school was barred from interschool rugby competition for some years during its first decade, soccer was the main game and the school set a national record in 1920, by winning seven cups and 18 medals in their local Saturday competitions.

A new chapel and social room were added in the early 1940s and, in 1943, the first school baths in the area were built. The fundraising for the swimming pool was a project of the Old Boys' Association and the work was done by the Brothers and boys, with some assistance from the Public Works Department.

The golden jubilee of both the Thorndon and Newtown Marist schools was celebrated during the weekend 27 -29 October 1961 when over 600 former pupils and their partners shared a programme of events.

Further additions were made to the building during the 1960s when a secretary's office, extra toilets and a staff room were built.

In 1983 Marist Brothers' School amalgamated with St Anne's Convent School and it became co-educational, with senior classes remaining at Tasman Street. However, it was an unsatisfactory arrangement; and it was decided to close the school and transfer the

pupils to St Anne's. At a function at the end of 1983 the Marist Brothers' School was formally closed after 73 years' service.

As the building was classified as a 'B' grade earthquake risk, meaning that it did not need strengthening, the church authorities decided to sell the property to help defray the cost of the new combined school in Daniell Street. Nearby residents hoped the site would become a park and that the swimming pool and tennis courts would be available to the community. After various suggestions for its use the area was eventually sold to the Crown in April 1986 as a site for polytechnic expansion. Demolition followed two months later, despite plans by the Polytechnic to use the buildings for the music and drama departments.

Since then the site has remained vacant, but there are now plans to make part of it a students' car park and the remainder to be used by horticultural students.

Coromandel Street School

The school's beginnings date back to the 1940s when some parents of intellectually handicapped children approached the Education Department about establishing an occupational school, to be run by the Wellington Education Board. The Education Department finally agreed to provide premises and, after a few setbacks, the Intellectually Handicapped Children's Parents' Association found a suitable site at 132 Coromandel Street.

Meanwhile, the Wellington Education Board provided funds for a temporary school in the basement of the Basin Reserve pavilion. Miss E. Dickson, the first teacher, assisted by two Training College students, enrolled 16 children on 22 May 1950 in an area which was damp, cluttered with furniture and, for a while, without heating. The Education Board arranged transport for the children, usually by taxi.

The school continued to meet in these unsuitable quarters while negotiations were completed for the purchase of the Coromandel Street site. The owner, C. H. Jepson, had landscaped the area in readiness for building a house when he decided to sell it, and the parents finished the laying out of the grounds. The Coromandel Street School opened in September 1952 under the direction of Miss Loy, principal, and her two assistants. In the following years the school developed as an occupational training centre until 1965, when it was designated a Special School for Intellectually Handicapped Children.

Advances in the special education field were taking place and, in the late 1970s, the Wellington Education Board approved the establishment of the Special Care Unit to help multi-handicapped children. The unit's individual teaching programmes were designed to develop each child's full potential in basic and social skills and, at one stage, it led the country in the training of severely handicapped children.

Satellite classes were established at Newtown and Miramar Central Schools in the early 1980s and later at South Wellington and Evans' Bay Intermediates. These classes were taught by teachers from Coromandel Street School but, wherever possible, the pupils were mainstreamed with other appropriate classes or the whole school, for varying periods. The Minister of Education, the Hon. M. Wellington, announced in 1984, that the state would take over the education of the 400 school aged, multi-handicapped children who were then attending preschool centres run by the Society for the Intellectually Handicapped. These children were to be admitted gradually and Coromandel Street was one of five schools chosen for the scheme from throughout the country.

By 1984 the building proved too small for the growing roll and, at Easter, the school moved to the old Fever Hospital in Alexandra Road. Upgrading and

extensions – which included a new administration block, an enlarged classroom, craft room and a flat for senior pupils – took a year to complete, and the refurbished school was officially opened on 8 June 1985. An adjoining property had been bought for an extended play area, the rest of the grounds were landscaped, and an adventure play-ground was erected with money from Telethon and local fundraising. There were 61 pupils on the roll, ranging in age from five years to upper teens, with nine staff members. Not all the children attended Coromandel Street School however, some were in the satellite classes attached to regular schools.

The mainstreaming of pupils continued through the late eighties and plans were made for an additional satellite class to be established at Johnsonville School in 1990. Coromandel Street School finally closed on 15 December, 1989. Staff and parents supported the move but, it was stressed, success would depend on the level of funding available to provide the necessary backup resources.

To date the Ministry of Education has not announced any plans for the vacant building.

KINDERGARTENS

The Wellington Free Kindergarten Association, which now has two centres in Newtown, dates back to 1905 when Mary Richmond, the President of the Wellington Froebel Society, was distressed by the number of preschool children she saw playing in the streets. Determined to establish a kindergarten for these children, she addressed groups of women at over afternoon tea parties held in private homes. Twenty centres were formed in the city and the head of each promised to raise £15 per annum, for three years, to support an experimental kindergarten. A foundation member was Mrs J. P. Luke, later Lady Luke, of Newtown.

The Richmond Free Kindergarten Association opened its first free kindergarten in Taranaki Street in

1906 and it proved successful immediately. The Association continued to use the Richmond name until 1917, when it was changed to Wellington Free Kindergarten Association as an aid to fundraising.

Wellington South Kindergarten

The success of the first kindergarten led to the establishment of a second school in 1909 in the Congregational Church hall, on the corner of Constable and Daniell Streets, where the Pacific Islanders' Church now stands. Attendances were good and, the following year, quarterly social meetings were held to provide a link between parents and teachers and to raise funds for the kindergarten. A successful address on child care, given by a doctor at one of these meetings, showed the mothers eagerness to listen to advice from qualified people, and a series of health talks was planned.

The Kindergarten Association organised a display at the Masonic Hall, Boulcott Street, in August 1918, to publicise its work. The Wellington South Kindergarten, whose Director, Rebecca Hind, was a lifelong resident of Lawrence Street and one of the first teachers trained in Wellington, chose the subject "Soldiers in Camp" for its demonstration. Talks were given and the pupils displayed their skills by bandaging, threading beads in the colours the soldiers wore, building hutments and making ambulance wagons and covers.

By 1919 the Kindergarten had moved from Constable Street to St Thomas's hall, Riddiford Street. Because the list of children waiting to be admitted had grown so large, a second kindergarten, Newtown, opened in 1921.

Wellington South started a building fund in 1922 and, eight years later, the present site in Owen Street was bought, with the help of a government subsidy. Fundraising for the school continued, helped by gifts of £10 each from 10 notable citizens and generous

contributions from the Wellington Gas Company and the Dominion Confectionery Company.

The foundation stone was laid on 11 December 1935 by Lady Jacobina Luke, a member of the first council who, with her husband, Sir John, had worked hard for the Kindergarten movement. Amongst the large gathering were some of the people Lady Luke had gathered together, thirty years earlier, to support the first kindergarten.

The school, designed by W. Gray Young, assisted by Nancy James of the Kindergarten Association, was officially opened by the Minister of Education, the Hon. Peter Fraser, on Friday, 29 May 1936. A small workshop was named in honour of Miss N. Ramsey, a previous director who had died two years earlier.

The following years saw steady progress in the kindergarten's work and continuation of the ever present task of fundraising for equipment and supplies. The school's twenty-first year of operation was celebrated in December 1956 by an end-of-year party when past directors, committee members and supporters were entertained by staff and parents.

Attendances during the 1970s averaged about thirty children for each of the morning and afternoon sessions while the numbers on the waiting list reached a peak of over 100 in 1977. The increasing number of children for whom English was a second language caused some communication problems and the question of appointing a third teacher was raised but without success. An adventure playground was built at the back of the play area in 1975 and has proved very popular.

Improvements in the 1980s included upgrading the grounds and enclosing part of the verandah in 1981 to provide a much needed reading room. Parents helped to keep the cost down by doing the painting and plastering to finish the room.

Exchange visits with other local schools had been started in the late 1970s and by 1983 regular weekly visits

were made by a group of pupils from Coromandel Street School. A later development of these visits was the trial integration of one of the pupils, once a week, which proved so successful that it was adopted permanently.

After eighty years the kindergarten continues to be an essential part of the community and, although the present site is rather cramped by today's standards, it is conveniently situated for the families it serves.

Newtown Kindergarten

The second kindergarten was opened in 1921 in the Trinity Methodist Church Hall in Riddiford Street, to relieve the pressure on Wellington South Kindergarten. It was stated at the time that, if more teachers had been available, they could have taken twice as many children.

In the late twenties the kindergarten participated in a public demonstration of work in the Town Hall Concert Chamber. This was a feature of the period, and its theme was Mail Delivery. Table work involved making boats and a railway station from odd materials, and writing and posting letters.

At the height of the Depression the committee made special efforts during the winter, to provide extra milk for the children, as well as giving assistance to many families suffering hardship.

The kindergarten remained in the Methodist hall until the end of 1936 when it moved to St Thomas's Church hall which had been vacated by Wellington South Kindergarten earlier in the year. Hopes for permanent premises appeared to be realised in 1940 when a section and building became available. The New Zealand Free Kindergarten Union, which co-ordinated the work of the local associations, had displayed a model kindergarten at the New Zealand Centennial Exhibition held at Rongotai in 1939-40. The building had been donated to the Union by two dozen local firms which had supplied materials and labour, with the mention that it should be re-erected later on a permanent site in Wellington. The question of

where was resolved in November 1940 when the Governor General, Lord Galway, offered the Association a part of Government House grounds, bordering Hospital Road, as a site for the kindergarten and a children's play area. The land had previously been a horse paddock then a vegetable garden for the unemployed during the Depression. This quick solution for the kindergarten's accommodation problems was dashed when the defence authorities, who had taken over the exhibition buildings, refused to release the kindergarten which was then being used as a lounge by the Women's Auxiliary Air Force. To avoid further delays the Association accepted an offer of £1,500 from the Royal New Zealand Air Force in 1941 for the building. With additional money and materials from the original donors and a government subsidy, a new building, designed by Ronald Muston along similar lines to the model kindergarten, was started in May 1941. More delays occurred when labour was diverted to urgent war work but the building was nearing completion when the 1942 earthquake struck Wellington. Workmen brought in from other parts of the country to repair that damage were encamped near the kindergarten and the Association offered them the building as a mess room. It was handed back in November 1943 and, after extensive renovation, the building was officially opened on the 18 November 1944 by the Prime Minister, the Rt. Hon. Peter Fraser. At a later stage the area surrounding the kindergarten was laid out as a children's play area by the Wellington City Council.

While all these delays were taking place the kindergarten, which had closed temporarily in June 1941 when the then director left Wellington, appears to have remained shut because of difficulty in finding suitable premises.

At the end of 1950 the kindergarten was made the demonstration centre for student teachers, and the administration was taken over by the Kindergarten Training Centre. An observation booth was built which

allowed students to watch the children at play without being seen.

Some years later, the nursery school, which had operated at the Taranaki Street Kindergarten since World War II, was transferred to Hospital Road where it ran in conjunction with the kindergarten. The building was open from 8 a.m. to 5 p.m. and the staff and domestic helpers worked shifts, caring for the 30 children who attended for the full day and the kindergarten children who were present in the mornings or a couple of afternoons during the week. Applicants for the nursery school were carefully screened and preference given to children from families where the mother was unable to give all day care. The nursery school was discontinued in 1968 and the kindergarten expanded and continued to serve the area. A week's celebration, 12-17 November 1984 marked the fortieth anniversary of the building's opening.

More recently new hospital development and street changes have had an impact on the kindergarten. The new Blood Transfusion Centre in Hospital Road and the extension of Hugh Street through the former public children's play area which surrounded the kindergarten, has hemmed it in and increased the traffic flow around the building. A high wooden fence to protect the children was erected late in 1989 with money raised by the parents and a grant from the Wellington South Licensing Trust. Now well protected, although somewhat isolated, the kindergarten continues to serve the community.

Wellington Polytechnic

The roots of the polytechnic lie in the old Wellington Technical College, a secondary school which placed a strong emphasis on courses providing vocational and technical training. Over the years it had developed a wide range of advanced courses for apprentices and adult students until, in 1960, there were five tertiary students to every secondary pupil in a total roll of about six thousand. The complex administration problems

connected with such a large, diverse establishment hastened its separation into two autonomous institutions – Wellington Polytechnic and Wellington Technical College, renamed Wellington High School in 1964.

At the end of 1961 B. W. Potter, was appointed the first principal of the new Wellington Polytechnic and it opened, in February 1962, with a staff of 27 teachers who had transferred from Wellington Technical College, and six tutors recruited from industry.

As no legislation had been passed to authorise the establishment of polytechnics, it was controlled by the Technical College's Board of Managers for its first few years. The Education Amendment Act, 1963, gave it statutory recognition and the Polytechnic Council, its own governing body, was formed at the end of 1964.

Meanwhile the polytechnic continued to share the secondary school's premises on Mount Cook and relocatable classrooms were added, to cope with the increasing courses and expanding roll, while the plans for permanent buildings were prepared. Part of the chosen site was the former Dunn property in Wallace Street. James Dunn, a director of Bethune & Hunter, the oldest firm of merchants in Wellington, had occupied the property in the late 1880s and his descendants had lived in the fine old house, surrounded by a spacious garden, until the 1930s; the large trees on the Wallace Street frontage are all that remain of the former garden. This property, which had been bought in 1941 for the further expansion of the Wellington Technical College, together with some adjoining houses acquired in the 1960s, formed the original site of the polytechnic. By the time classes moved into the main block in 1971, plans had already been announced to acquire further houses in the area bounded by Wallace Street, Finlay Terrace and Tasman Street, and to incorporate Coombe Street and Hayward Terrace into the campus.

To illustrate the potential of satellite communication, a link with the University of Hawaii was

inaugurated on 14 December 1971 using a satellite stationed above Christmas Island near the equator. Known as Peacesat it proved to be a valuable means of communication for government departments, educational institutions and voluntary groups to link with other organisations in Pacific countries. It survived a series of funding crises during its 14 years' existence and finally shut down in 1985 when the satellite reached the end of its working life. Efforts have been made since then to establish another satellite link and it is hoped this will be achieved late in 1990.

An open day was held on 27 June 1973 to celebrate the first decade. Most of the subject schools were at last housed together in spacious quarters and, the programme included a fashion parade, a catering demonstration and static displays illustrating the variety of courses available.

A report presented to the Polytechnic Council in June 1973 outlined the growth of the institution since it began. In 1972, staff totalled 173 tutors and the roll was 7,129 students, the great majority of whom were part time. Some of the schools were still housed in temporary classrooms in Buckle Street and the numbers and diversity of courses to be timetabled caused administrative problems. Student and staff facilities were inadequate and many problems remained.

A new Nursing School, established in 1973, created considerable controversy because it made a break from traditional hospital-based training. Music courses had been available for some time but in 1974 the School of Music was introduced to train young musicians for a career as performers and/or teachers of music. Part-time courses, seminars and day courses added in response to community needs made further demands on accommodation which was stretched to the limit.

To provide more space the former Marist Brothers' School in Tasman Street was bought in 1986 but plans to convert the building for use by the Music School

were foiled when it was suddenly demolished. Two years later the school moved to the old Fever Hospital, in Alexandra Road, where the refurbished building proved to be a satisfactory temporary home for what is now called the Conservatorium of Music. The silver jubilee of the polytechnic was marked by a number of informal gatherings and social events during the weekend 10- 12 September 1987 when the events of its 25 years' existence were celebrated.

A multimillion dollar building programme was started in 1987 when houses in Finlay Terrace and Coombe Street were demolished for the new School of Nursing, which was opened by the Governor-General, Sir Paul Reeves, on 2 June 1989. Extensions to the library were completed by the end of 1989 and the staff moved into their enlarged premises. The need for these extensive building projects is shown by the way student and staff numbers have grown. In July 1989 there were 1,353 full time students attending 26 weeks or more and 11,889 enrolments for part-time courses. At present there are 410 full-time tutors on the staff.

Student facilities were improved in the early part of 1990 by converting the former Wellington Indian Association hall, in Tasman Street, to a recreation centre and by adding prefabs to enlarge the area for student activities. The School of Maori Studies, located in Buckle Street for many years, moved to the main campus in February 1990 and the relocated marae was dedicated by the Governor-General, Sir Paul Reeves, on 21 February 1990.

For years the residents of Mount Cook have been concerned about the impact of such a large, concentrated establishment on what is, essentially, a residential area. Housing losses, reduced sunlight and harbour views, together with constant parking problems and high traffic flows, have all caused resentment. More recently there has been greater consultation between the polytechnic administration and local residents with a consequent

easing of friction, while less obtrusive building design has improved the visual impact. With further building plans waiting to be put into effect it is hoped that the consultations will continue.