

The opening of the new Memorial School

On Sunday, 13 July 1941, the foundation stone of a new parish school at Norwood was blessed and laid. It poured with rain all day. Archbishop Beovich was astonished at the number of people who attended the ceremony despite the weather and eventually advised that the Blessed Sacrament be removed from St. Ignatius' Church and the ceremony concluded there.

The new school was to be a memorial to the Jesuit Fathers who came from Austria to South Australia in 1848. At the request of Bishop Shiel, who was Bishop of Adelaide at the time, they took charge of the Norwood Mission, covering much of today's eastern suburbs in 1869. Each classroom in the new school, except the kindergarten, would have a portrait of one of these founding Jesuits. The new school would also commemorate the 400th year of the Society of Jesus.

St Joseph's Memorial School would be a little different from the school buildings of its time. It would have separate classrooms, since it was designed to be used only as a school, not a hall. Within the school there would also be a kindergarten, to be named the Mary MacKillop Memorial Kindergarten. This was the classroom on the eastern side of the school, nearest Manresa.

The cost of the building was estimated at £5,000. The architect was Mr Cyril Kelly of Geelong (Victoria) who later designed the extensions to St Ignatius Church. The builders were Messrs. Emmet and Sons and the honorary clerk of work, Mr. John Quilty.

In his address on this occasion, Archbishop Beovich recalled the early days of Catholic education in South Australia. He spoke of Fr. Julian Tenison Woods and in particular, Mary MacKillop.

“It was a happy thought, said His Grace, that the Memorial School should be erected at Norwood. It was just a quarter (sic.) of a century since the Sisters of St Joseph had been established in Penola. Today the sisters were teaching 35,554 Australian children in 272 schools throughout Australia and in addition they had founded orphanages, homes for the needy and the fallen and other charitable institutions. All that work had come by the grace of God from the humble Foundation of Mother Mary at Penola. The opening of the new Memorial School at Norwood in January next would mark the centenary of the Birth of Mother Mary of the Cross.....”¹

Just six months later on 25th January 1942, Archbishop Beovich officially opened St Joseph's Memorial School. In again casting his mind back over the years, the Archbishop marvelled at the unfailing generosity of Australian Catholics

1. *The Southern Cross* Friday, 18th July, 1941

“What is to be thought asked His Grace, of the fact that the Catholic people, who were not over-burdened with material resources had raised £50, 000,000 in the succeeding years.. 2 (since 1857, when the Education Act cut off funding to private schools throughout South Australia) in the cause of Catholic education He would call that a modern miracle...although Fr. Ryan S.J, in his kindness of heart had suggested no collection be made, subscriptions seem to pour in while he was speaking! That generosity was characteristic of Catholic people where Catholic education was concerned.....”3

Mary MacKillop’s history in the area

It is not surprising that on both occasions, Archbishop Beovich should reflect upon the past. As early as 1872, Mary Mackillop set up a school in the Kensington-Norwood area, and of the several schools established by her during this early period, only three in the metropolitan area have remained in continuous operation: Hectorville, Mitcham, (now Kingswood) and Kensington-Norwood.

Mary MacKillop first came to live in the Norwood parish during the time of her excommunication, from September 1871 until March 1872. She rented, for ten shillings a week, a baker’s shop and three cottages on the corner of Queen Street and William Street, diagonally opposite St. Ignatius’ Church. A row of home units stands there now. Several of the Sisters who left the order with Mary MacKillop remained at the cottages, but she herself stayed there only occasionally, not wishing to cause trouble by drawing attention to the Jesuits: Fr.Hinteroecker,p.p., and Fr. Tappeiner, who supported her.

Shortly before his death, Bishop Shiel revoked the sentence of excommunication and many of the Sisters of St. Joseph of the Sacred Heart renewed their vows on St. Joseph’s Day 1872 at St Ignatius Church in Norwood.

Following the reinstatement of the order, the new Administrator of the Adelaide Diocese, Bishop Reynolds, purchased a cottage at Kensington for the Sisters of St Joseph, with the intention that it become their Mother House. The new convent was blessed and occupied on 8th September 1872. Soon afterwards, the Sisters began a school there, with an enrolment of two pupils.

The cottage was small and soon hopelessly inadequate for the rapidly increasing number of Sisters entering the Order and new pupils. Just over three months later, on Christmas Eve 1872, Fr. Tappeiner S.J., who had replaced Fr. Julian Tennison Woods as Spiritual Director of the Josephite Order, signed a five year lease on a building in Bridge Street. A few older children remained at the convent to complete their education, but most pupils transferred to the new school premises. In 1876, the Chapel, with an upper dormitory floor, which has since been removed, was built alongside the cottage. The present Convent was built in 1906, and the cottage was eventually demolished when the second wing was added in 1929.

2. *Since 1851, when the Education Act cut off funding to private schools throughout South Australia*
3. *The Southern Cross Friday, 30th January, 1942*

The Mechanics Institute – The first site of the Bridge Street School

The building at Bridge Street was leased from John Roberts, a carpenter, who owned several properties in the Kensington – Norwood area. He owned a building at 46 Bridge Street as early as 1840, but the building, which the Sisters of St Joseph rented was a small hall, built by John Roberts as a Mechanics Hall or Institute. It also served as a place of worship for John Roberts and his supporters after they seceded from the Congregational Church in Maesbury Street, Kensington, in 1854. This congregation moved to their new church on the Parade (now the Clayton Wesley Uniting Church) in 1856, and the hall appears to have remained empty until the Sisters took it over in 1872.

At the end of 1877, the lease on the building at Bridge Street came up for renewal. By this time, John Roberts was dead and buried in the graveyard next to the church he had helped to build. Fr. Tappeiner, S.J., was able to purchase the building on behalf of the Sisters of St Joseph, on condition that the wood and iron be painted with oil paint!

Although the building was rather shabby, it was put to good use by the parish:

“It was in this building that Sir (then Mr.) Edwin T Smith, in his young days and other lesser lights debated and won their first spurs a Parliamentary speakers... There the Hibernians came together in the kindly glare of an oil or kerosene lamp, years afterwards replaced by a few flickering gas jets. Incandescent lights were an unknown quantity in those days.

Here the first Literary Society of the district was formed. Many a battle royal was fought in debate here against kindred Catholic and other Societies. Sometimes we were visited by outside friends, several of the them determining now the destinies of the Commonwealth from their parliamentary benches in Melbourne.....”⁴

Sometimes, Mary MacKillop would visit the school, armed with a tin of sweets and a spoon. Each child received a spoonful of sweets.

Over the next forty years, the building continued to deteriorate. When the new “School Church” at St Peters (Ellangowen) was opened, Fr. Connell, S.J., then parish priest at Norwood, took Archbishop Spence for a drive out to the school at Kensington. The Archbishop was horrified by what he saw:

“The old school was in such a dilapidated condition when he had last seen it that he feared that a strong gust of wind might sweep it away. It was simply fit for pulling down... The condition of the building and walls was dangerous to the Sisters and children. He told Father Connell without hesitation that the school must come down and a new one be built...”⁵

4. *The Southern Cross* Friday, 2nd December 1904
5. *The Southern Cross* Friday 20th October 1916

The Sisters and children moved temporarily to the Marist school hall (now updated and part of St. Ignatius Junior School) and the old school was demolished. It was in fact found to be in an even worse state than supposed.

The new building for the Bridge Street School

On 15th October 1916, Archbishop Spence laid the foundation stone of a new school at Kensington. The school was built to the memory of Fr. Daniel O'Brien S.J., who had died the year previously after serving as a parish priest at Norwood for fifteen years, as yet an unbroken record. Originally, Fr. O'Brien had come to Norwood as the first Jesuit of the Irish Province, replacing the Austrian Jesuits, who either returned to Europe or moved to other parts of Australia.

The new school building at Bridge Street was constructed within four months, and ready for use at the beginning of the new school year. It was blessed and opened by Archbishop Spence on 4th February 1917.

*“The new school is of a complete and up to date character. It is constructed of stone and brick with a roughcast exterior and is 70ft. in length by 30ft. in breadth, with a central height of 20ft. It is divided into three large classrooms by folding doors and can be used as a single hall when required. Cloakrooms are provided in front of the building and a shelter shed on the Eastern wall. The building is light and airy and is splendidly lighted by ample windows. Mr. W.J. Colligan of St Peters who built the first school church at Ellangowan is the designer and contractor and the building is on much the same general lines as the Ellangowan structure, though of course differing in details. The foundation stone bears the following inscription: -
“A.M.D.G. This school was built by the parishioners of Norwood to the Memory of Rev. Daniel O'Brien S.J., parish priest for 14 years. This stone was laid by Most Rev. Robert Spence, O.P., D.D., October 15th 1916”...”⁶*

Even in these early years, plans were made to provide a school next to St. Ignatius Church. Fr. Reshauer, S.J., parish priest at Norwood 1890 – 1897, drew up plans for the development of the parish which included schools for both boys and girls, the latter on the site now occupied by St Joseph's Memorial School and in July 1924, the Catholic Church Endowment Society purchased from the Young family a large block of land measuring 197'6" x 303' (approx. 61m x 93m) on the corner of Portrush Road and William Street, with the intention of building a school.

The Kensington School continued to operate for another twenty five years, until the end of 1941. During this time children in the parish aged between five and fifteen years were educated by the Josephite nuns. Generally, the boys transferred to the Marist Brother's School (now St. Ignatius Junior School) at the end of Grade 4, although some stayed on. Upon completion of Grade 7, a few girls would remain for Intermediate, a three year general course in secondary education. However, most would undertake a three year course in Commercial where they learnt Bookkeeping, Shorthand and Typing. The leaving age was fourteen years.

The school was divided into three classrooms by folding doors, as it is today. In what is now the Preschool were the youngest children, in Grades 1 and 2. Grades 3 and 4 and sometimes Grade 5 were in the middle classroom. Or Grade 5 joined Grades 6,7 and Intermediate students in the classroom which faces Bridge Street.

Leading off the Infant Room was the nun's kitchen now the staff room, where the nuns ate their midday meal. Their food was prepared at the Convent and brought to school each day to cook during lessons. At the other end of the school and separated from the nun's kitchen by a verandah was a small room, used at first as a cloakroom, then for many years as a music room. Here Sr. Ligouri and later S. Sebastian taught individual lessons in violin and piano. A corresponding room on the opposite side of the school was originally a cloakroom. In later years, these two rooms were used as a typing room, and a music room. Sometimes, a whole class would be squashed in for a singing lesson around the piano. Today, both rooms are for staff use.

Outside there was asphalt paving down both sides of the school and because there was none of the present additions on the southern side, plenty of space to play. At the back was dirt playground which became a basketball court lined with cement borders. Gum trees, which were host to large caterpillars each year, grew along the fence line. Underneath the trees were benches to sit on. About 1930, the shelter shed was built along the southern fence line, next to the boys' toilet, which have long since gone. The playground, which leads onto High Street, was acquired a few years later. In time, both areas were asphalted and marked out a basketball and tennis courts. One playing area was for the boys, the other for the girls.

The daily routine

During these years, the school at Kensington continued to operate much as it had in Mary MacKillop's time. Each school day began with assembly. The children lined up outside to do their exercises and then marched into class singing the hymn to St. Joseph. Lessons began with the Morning Offering and half an hour of Catechism. At noon, the bell at St. Ignatius, Church rang for the Angelus. Half an hour of Bible History followed, then, after saying Grace, the children were dismissed for lunch. Similarly, afternoon lessons began and ended with prayers. The children always knelt on the wooden floors and invariable had dirty knees!

Besides attending to their lessons, the children were expected to keep the school clean and tidy. They dusted and swept the classrooms before school, cleaned the yard outside and the toilets. Older children were also expected to help by writing hymns and songs on the blackboard and reading to the younger children while the Sister marked books.

Not all lesson time was spent at school. Each first Thursday of the month, the children walked to St Ignatius Church for Confession. The next day, they again went to church, where they joined the Marist boys for Benediction.

Extra curricular activities and interschool competitions

Each winter, the Josephite schools at Hindmarsh, Mitcham (now Kingswood), Cowandilla, Keswick, St.Mary's Beulah Road, Ellangowan and Kensington combined

for an inter-schools basketball competition. Apart from walking to St. Mary's Beulah Road and Ellangowan, the children travelled to their matches by tram, usually on Friday afternoons (Saturdays for Cowandilla).

Sports Day was one of a number of events which took place annually. It was held in the school playground off High Street. A display of Physical Culture began the programme, with figure marching, drill, club and arm exercises. The children were taught these by Mrs. Barbara O'Loughlin, who gave lessons in many of the Josephite schools. Later in the day there were races and ball games and relays to finish.

Once a year, the Sisters took the children on a picnic to Hazelwood Park, or they all caught the tram to Brown Hill Creek or Long Gully. As a special treat, the children were given raspberry cordial in tin cups. There were races, games and prizes.

On St. Patrick's Day, the Catholic schools in Adelaide combined for an elaborate procession from King William Street to the Wayville Showgrounds. Each religious order entered a float and there was some friendly rivalry between the Dominicans, the Mercy Sisters and the Josephites. Hard work and imagination went into the construction of the floats. One year, a teacher from Kensington, Sr. Loreto, borrowed Nimble (the white horse in the Christmas Pageant) from John Martin's and created a float of a knight riding to fetch his maiden, who sat waiting in her garden, surrounded by flowers and children. Once the whole procession had reached the showgrounds, children from all the schools massed for a display of maypole dancing. There was also Irish dancing and races.

In 1935 Archbishop Killan was enthroned and five years later, Archbishop Beovich. On both occasions, all Catholic schools gathered at the Wayville Showgrounds to be presented to the new Archbishop. Each order prepared an item. The Josephite schools combined whenever possible for rehearsals, so the Kensington children walked to St Mary's Beulah Road, where there was a hall large enough to accommodate both schools

Each year there was also a combined Catholic schools concert for massed choir at the Centennial Hall, in the Wayville Showgrounds. The children from Kensington joined for rehearsals with the Marist boys, who walked up from Norwood. During breaks, the Marist boys were confined to the boy's playground!

One of the Jesuits, Fr. Delaney, gave drama lessons at the Kensington School. Sometimes, more boys were needed and the Marist boys were called upon. Performances were given mid-year at various locations: The Kensington Convent, The Theatre Royale in Hindley Street and the York Theatre in what was then Rundle Street. Fr. Delaney also sang well and gave singing lessons at both the Kensington and Norwood (Marist) schools.

The children were taught elocution by Mrs. Flo. Brown, who gave lessons at several of the Josephite schools. Together with Sr. Ita, she prepared the children for the play, which they performed at the annual Christmas concert.

For many years, the Christmas concert was held in the Norwood Town Hall. The Josephite schools from Hectorville, Ellangowan, St. Mary's Beulah Road and Kensington, together with the Marist boys from Norwood all took part. At the

Kensington School, the doors were folded back and the Sisters rehearsed to perfection, since they themselves did not attend the concert. Considerable effort was also lavished on the costumes. Even during the Depression, the children were well costumed, on one occasion, in black velvet jackets and red caps. Usually, the concert opened with a massed choir, after which each school presented two items. There was a mini-opera, or play and the concert concluded with a nativity play, usually presented by St. Mary's Beulah Road.

The final days of the Bridge Street site

So the school at Kensington continued for nearly seventy years in all, from its beginning at the convent cottage to the rickety hall at Bridge Street and finally to the building which stands there today. On the last day of school in 1941, the children walked one more time from Bridge Street to St Ignatius Church for Benediction and afterwards stayed to look at their new school, almost complete.

The building of the new Memorial School at William Street

Work had begun on the Memorial School on the Australia Day holiday of 1941:

“Monday, January 27, was a public holiday. Instead of taking a day off from work, numbers of our men and youths came to the site of the new school, armed with picks, shovels and other gardening tools and in remarkably short time, had taken down the fence and hedge adjoining the site. Two or three had also to come down. One bright individual recalled that, at Eden Park, Mrs. T.F. Scarfe had one of those uncanny gadgets for pulling down trees. This lady was at Grange. We asked her by phone for the loan of it. This was graciously given: indeed she sent her man all the way from Grange to bring it to us: many thanks! Under the skilled direction of E.K., those trees were soon felled. A crosscut saw also came from Eden Park and by nightfall the site of the new school was ready for the builders on the Tuesday (January 28). It is surely significant that the very day the schools reopened and the day, on which the Mass of the Holy Ghost was offered up for our schools and scholars, the first sod should be turned. We felt that we had swung back to the Middle Ages, the ages of Faith, on observing the men of the parish at work on that Monday”⁸

Progress was slow, because of the war. However, the parish was committed to building and paying for a school, which would not only commemorate the 400th year since the Society of Jesus was finally approved by Pope Paul 111, but which would also be a fitting tribute to the early Norwood Jesuits, who seventy years before had built St. Ignatius Church and it was a fitting tribute!

8. *St Ignatius Calendar, February 1941*

“And the SCHOOL! Sooner or later we must spend more than f4, 000 on it; but it will be a gem, with a KINDERGARTEN and INFANTS’ DEPARTMENT as a special feature. And the rooms will have pastel colourings each a different shade. There is to be “ridge-roof” ventilation and of course hopper windows. The lighting will accord with the very latest medical research. And no tin roof will do us, but the best tiles toned to suit the general colouring, because we believe in the aesthetic effect as a part of education. Besides, a tiled roof is cooler in summer and warmer in winter. The extent of the site allows us to have the front some twenty-odd feet back from the street and we intend to have, in time, either lawns or a garden in front. The rest of the plot will be made into a spacious playground for the children, with a full-size basketball court in one corner of it. The infants will have the shady trees on the Western side as their very own special playing area, with swings, roundabouts and other pleasant things beloved of little ones, including a sand pit. And these little ones are to have their own cloakroom opening off the kindergarten room. There are many other features, but we have said enough for a beginning. Mr. Kelly, the architect and Mr. Emmett, the builder and Mr Quilty, our own parishioner and clerk of works, are co-operating splendidly in making our memorial worthy of the pioneers.”⁹

Moreover, the name of the school would stand as a lasting reminder of the generous commitment made by two religious orders to the education of Catholic children in the Norwood parish.

By September 1941, the walls of the new building were plastered. The following month the windows, with their glass were installed

OUR MEMORIAL SCHOOL

“The windows are now going in glass and all. The classrooms, now that they are floored, plastered and ornate ceilings have been fixed and one of them as a specimen tinted with a delightful pastel blue, make us realise that we are getting from Mr. Kelly, the architect, a school quite out of the ordinary. The treatment of the outer walls is also something rare in schools”¹⁰

Several statues for the niches in the rooms were donated, as well as the marble statue of St Joseph, which still stands over the entrance.

While the new school was under construction, the parish continued its efforts towards raising the money to pay for it. Because it was wartime, prices were high and so were wages. Yet money was available and there was always the concern that with the new Registration of Schools Act, the parish would in any case be compelled eventually to provide good school buildings and facilities. In other words because the building was needed it would somehow be paid for. Many could and did respond to such an appeal.

⁹. *St Ignatius Calendar, February 1941*

¹⁰. *St Ignatius Calendar, October 1941*

“We simply must record this incident: Three of our Loyola boys are with the Fighting Forces – Jim Hogan, Johnnie Gillespie and Pat Russell. These grand lads (God Bless them and protect them!) actually sent by airmail £3 for the school, saying that, though far away, their hearts are still in Norwood and they felt they should do their bit (they do not get much in the way of pay either!) Other extracts that will pass the censor are : “Besides, there may come a day when we shall be sending our own children to the School”. (That’s the real Catholic spirit!) “We wish your new school every success and we hope that the people of Norwood will come to light with the necessary cash for it” These three “ very gallant gentlemen wish to be remembered to the Loyola boys and ask, “Are they putting on concerts for you still, or are they loafing on the Job?” Never do the Loyola lads loaf, Jim, my boy.”¹¹

The opening of the New Memorial School

By the time the school opened on January 26th 1942 (a year almost to the day since work started) about £3000 still owed. Not until six years later in May 1947, was the Parish clear of this debt.

Within a month of opening, the school justified itself. The children no longer had to contend with shabby surroundings and more importantly they were only a short distance from St Ignatius Church. The Children visited there more frequently, as had been hoped. As well the proximity of the Marist Boy’s school was seen as an advantage, since several families had children at both schools.

The parish then began the lengthy task of providing a playground “in a state more worthy of the building”¹² Apart from the fences, nothing had been done, not even the paths. Volunteers were, at first, determined to lay concrete, not just for the paths but also for a basketball court ready for winter. However, they were prevented by exceptionally heavy rains and instead roofed the slit trenches, which were used as air raid shelters. The creek, which during the summer months sheltered the children from both schools during air raid practices, was running fast and quite unusable.

During the winter months of 1942, a shelter shed was erected and painted dark red, to blend with the school. For a time it had no floor. The wood was there, but as so often happened in the war years there were no carpenters to spare. Once the weather cleared, men from the parish spent their Saturday afternoons rolling and levelling the playground, which during the winter had been a sea of puddles. Tonnes of fill were dumped, most of which came from Halls Drinks factory, a fact which some have good reason to remember.

¹¹. St Ignatius Calendar February 1942

¹². St Ignatius Calendar November 1942

Men from the Loyola Club dug up the land at the front of the school in readiness for two lawns and flowerbeds. A parishioner, Mr. Dan Clifford, who like so many had given generously to the parish school intended to look after this garden. However, his death left the work unfinished until the children in each class were given a plot to tend.

Programme for the Annual School concert, 1942. Taken from "St Ignatius Calendar", January 1943...13

During these years, the Mother's club worked tirelessly to provide amenities for the children. They raised money for a wireless and a gramophone, a loudspeaker system and an electric stove for the sisters. They organised playground equipment: swings, slippery dips and the 'ocean wave', which was very popular. Nor did their work go unrecognised in the parish.

The Mothers' Club of the Memorial School is a model of what such a club should be – they provide all the good things at the Children's Christmas tree (and what grand things they hung on it!) and there was a distribution of ice cream as well. Then they were responsible for the school picnic at Hazelwood Park. That meant the hardest of hard work for these good women and the outlay of much money. Yes – that Mothers' Club is second to none...14

At the end of 1942, the Memorial School joined with the Marist boys for the annual school concert. Children from both schools sold £40 worth of tickets. The concert which His Grace, the Archbishop attended "though somewhat on the long was the most diversified for some time"¹⁵

The first Sports Day at the Memorial School was held on Saturday, 3rd July 1943 and reported the following month in the parish magazine:

"The first sports meeting of our new school was held on Saturday afternoon, July 3rd. The weather was threatening but the rain actually held off till all the events were decided. A splendid crowd gathered to see children, grandchildren, and little friends enjoying themselves. There were stalls for sweets, jumble sales and afternoon tea provided by the energetic Mother's club. The drill, physical exercises, even by the kindergartners, marches and dances, all excellently done to the accompaniment of music by Miss Vera Dowd, L.A.B. The three handed Irish reel was particularly pleasing; we look forward to more of this in our hall or at our break-up at the end of the year. There were house competitions in the sports among St. Joseph's, St Rita's and St Terese. To Mr. Kenny, who presented a fine cup for house competition, the Sisters and children are very grateful. St. Terese won it, so the Little Flower is interested in sports also..."¹⁶

13. Programme for the Annual School Concert 1942, from St Ignatius Calendar, January 1943

14. St Ignatius Calendar January 1947

15. St Ignatius Calendar January 1943

16. St Ignatius Calendar August 1943

In many respects, the life of the school centred on the parish. Boys from the school served at Mass each day at 6.30am and the many Benedictions in the church, even during winter. At the annual Lourdes Day Mass, which was held in the grounds of the grotto at St. Ignatius Church, the procession of swinging red lanterns, the banners and the red cloaks of the canopy bearers were made all the more colourful by the flower petals strewn by girls from the parish school.

At the end of 1943 came the sudden announcement that, after forty years teaching at Norwood, the Marist Brothers were leaving. The effect on the parish school was immediate and profound. At the time of its closing, the Marist school had enrolment of 34 boys, who had to be educated elsewhere. The Memorial school suddenly acquired about 14 older boys in what had largely been (in Grades 4-7) a girl's school and the curriculum was altered accordingly:

The resignation by the Marist Brothers of the care of our boys left us with the problem of teaching boys up to the 7th grade. The Sisters of St Joseph, true to their will earned reputation of always being ready to help the parishes kindly undertook to take boys up to 7th grade in the Memorial School – something we had not asked them to do for us in forty years. But we, ourselves look upon this as a temporary expedient, hoping still to make other provision for boys over 4th grade. Most of the boys of the old Ignatius School went to one of the secondary schools, but about 14 looked to the Nuns to teach them in our Memorial School. An appreciable number of these come from outside our parish. We may be compelled to accept only those from the parish. We are heavily in debt to the good sisters for helping us in our difficulty: They actually organise the games for these boys, buying football and cricket equipment and teach them designing and painting on wood and making of mats and even aprons and the like, besides giving them a splendid education up to 7th standard inclusive. True, in the Department schools of the state, all this is the ordinary procedure but we don't like it and (please God) we shall remedy it when we can. The school has 178 pupils, 82 being boys, mainly in the lower classes”¹⁷

With the closure of the Marist Brothers' School came also the realisation of Archbishop Beovich's dream of a secondary education for girls in the Adelaide Archdiocese. Once the Departure of the Marist Brothers became a certainty, he requested from the Norwood parish the use of their vacant school buildings. Thus, during the Christmas holidays, the school was hastily refurbished, to open in February 1944 as the St. Joseph's Higher Primary, with an enrolment of 83 girls. The parish school, in addition to acquiring a number of older boys, was suddenly bereft not only of its Intermediate class, but also of its Principal, Sr. M. David, who assumed the position of Principal at the new school. Much the same effect was felt at the other Josephite schools at Keswick, Hectorville, St. Mary's Beulah Road, Ellangowan, Tranmere, Russell Street (City) and Plympton.

17. *St Ignatius Calendar, Nov 1944*

Towards the end of 1944, the brown paper, which had been posted over the classroom windows of the Marist Brothers School for the duration of the war, was at last removed and the classrooms were much lighter. However, nothing could disguise the fact that they were overcrowded. The school, with only four classrooms, had over 200 pupils, 40 of whom attended the kindergarten. With the best facilities the parish could offer, the Memorial School had inevitably increased rapidly in numbers.

Initially, the Mother's club proposed a shelter shed which could double as an Assembly area, the lack of which had been felt from the beginning. However by October 1946 came the realisation that extensions were essential and the original architect, Mr. Cyril Kelly was consulted.

Mr. Kelly drew up a sketch plan for extensions, which more than satisfied the parish, but because of Government restrictions, nothing could be done. Instead the old presbytery was renovated during 1947, to provide some temporary accommodation, which the school shared with various parish organisations.

In March 1949, there began major works in the parish, which had far reaching effects. To begin with, the school building at Bridge Street, which had stood empty since the end of 1941, was repaired and painted on the outside.

The Jesuits start a school in the Norwood Parish

The following month, work began on Second Creek. Up until this time, the creek had provided a convenient, though not actual boundary between the two schools. The works were intended to provide a level playing area by removing numerous gum trees, straightening the creek bed and laying underground pipes, which would then be covered over.

This work was well underway when, in October 1949, an important announcement appeared in the monthly parish magazine:

Article about St Ignatius Jesuit College, Norwood 18

It now became a matter of urgency that the Bridge Street building be completely restored and renovated. Archbishop Beovich asked that the alterations be done in accordance with the wishes of the Sisters and work commenced immediately:

“During the holidays, things began to happen. Mr. A.W. Baulderstone, to whom we owe much gratitude for his expeditious handling of the creek job and the new oval last year, kindly undertook to have the restored school ready at the resumption of classes last February. He was as good as his word and we would like to thank him and the good men with him who did their work so quickly and well

The ceiling was remodelled in cream boarding. The walls were painted a very pale green. The floors were sanded white and polished to perfection.

A kitchenette and morning room were built for the use of the sisters at at one end of the verandah.

On the opposite side of the building two glazed-in classrooms were constructed one for typing, the other for dressmaking classes. The former Library Room became the Music Room.

Electricians rewired the whole building and installed lighting units that are all one could desire.

During the year, our good friend, Mr. G.V. Culshaw had arranged for the purchase of the three disused tennis courts which the parish had leased formerly. This land has now been added to the basketball court at the rear of the school as playing space for the girls.”¹⁹

At Queen Street, Norwood work on the new oval was finished by August 1950. In that same year, the Jesuits purchased from the Memorial School the land, which had been part of this development. At the same time the construction of new classrooms and the renovation of the existing building previously occupied by St Joseph's Higher Primary, continued. Finally, on the 4th February 1951 Archbishop Beovich blessed and opened St Ignatius Boys School, a Jesuit day school for boys in Grades 3 – 7. It had an enrolment of 55 boys on the first day.

Thus at the beginning of 1951 the Norwood parish had four Catholic schools within its boundaries. The Memorial School, with approximately 200 pupils, was by far the largest.

Post War Immigration and the growth of the School

The ever-increasing enrolments at the parish school were due, to a large extent to the influx of post-war immigrants. The presence of these families in the parish, many of who were barely surviving, was a matter of considerable concern:

“I WAS A STRANGER”

Wanted Urgently

- 1. Two rooms for a Polish family – father, mother and two small children of kindergarten age. This family is now housed in a single*
- 2. Three rooms for a Lithuanian family – father, mother and three children of higher primary school age. This family is now housed in a single room, which is a passage room.*
- 3. Two rooms for a Lithuanian family – father, mother and two children attending our parish primary school. This family is now housed in a garage*
- 4. Three rooms for a Latvian family – father, mother and four children ranging in age from one to six years of age. This family now lives in two rooms and must quit their present abode in December, being bound in honour to vacate their rooms in favour of a relative of the owner of the house.*

Information about these families may be obtained at Manresa or from any member of our Vincent de Paul Conference. The families would prefer rooms in a Catholic home. They would however be grateful for information about any home where they might find accommodation. For months they have vainly sought lodgings. There is no room for them because they have children. If you, O reader can do nothing to help, will you please say a prayer that someone may be inspired to open a door?²⁰

Year after year, in spite of the difficulties caused by overcrowding and the number of migrant children who had difficulties with English, the school inspectors consistently praised the Memorial School, both for its excellent facilities and the high standard of education given by the Josephite Sister.

In June 1953, the Father General of the Jesuit order gave his consent for major extensions to St Ignatius Church and work commenced immediately. The architect was Mr Cyril Kelly, who had designed the Memorial School. (He later donated the tabernacle for the new sanctuary). Boulderstone Ltd successfully tendered for the contract at £31,000. Besides the extensions, the existing church had to be completely reroofed and the new interior fitted with a new marble high altar, altar rails, side altars, confessionals and furnishings.

In order to meet the cost of building and furnishing, it was decided to revive the Church Union Fund. However, whereas in the past the proceeds of this fund had been used for maintenance, repairs and general expenditure in connection with the whole of the church and parish school property, the Church Union Fund would now be used exclusively to finance the church building programme.

By November 1955 the Memorial School Roll had risen to 336. In spite of the withdrawal of financial support from the Church Union Fund (ironically the Mothers' Club was one of its most generous contributors) every effort was made to ease the difficulties caused by overcrowding. A child's cloakroom and bicycle shed were provided. An incinerator was built and a toilet block at the back of the chalet. The stainless steel for the boys' urinal was too big to fit through the doorway and had to be cut in half before it could be installed.

Extensions to the Memorial School

Finally, the long awaited extensions to the classrooms were commenced between 1957 and 1958 each of the four classrooms facing William Street was doubled in size, giving the Memorial School the large classrooms it has today. A fifth classroom where the offices and storeroom are now, remained as it was and the front entrance continues to be used as the Principal's office.

Once the extensions were completed, yet another concerted effort was made to raise sufficient funds to liquidate all debts incurred by the school through its building programme. A Father's Club was formed and together with the Mother's Club managed in every way possible to raise money. One initiative was "Operation Door Knock", which began on Sunday, 10th May 1959. Parishioner went from door to door soliciting donations for the school.

²⁰. *St Ignatius Calendar, November 1951*

Of the amenities needed for the school, the most urgent was the new shelter shed. It was designed by Mr. Brian Polomka and used pipes that came originally from the old steam trains no longer in use. Building the shelter shed proved more difficult than expected. Because of the Hall's Stonie Ginger bottles that had originally been used for fill, it was impossible to dig with post holers. The only alternative for the Father's Club was for each man to lie down flat and to scoop out the holes by hand.

Perhaps the most abiding memories of these years are that of the classrooms, cluttered from the front platform to the back windows with desks. Each row had four desks in it: two singles flanking a double desk in the corner. A favourite game was "Advance a Desk" where with each correct answer given, a student moved a row forward to the desk in front.

The children were roistered to clean the bike shed and the toilets but they much preferred to wax and polish the beautiful jarrah floorboards each week and to slide over them afterwards, ramming the front platform in order to stop. In 1963 considerable damage was done to the floorboards in the Grade 2 classroom when the school was broken into and set on fire. As well several desks were burnt and school books ruined. While repairs were carried out the Grade twos were transferred to the smaller Grade 3 classroom and the Grade Threes were taught at the convent.

All of the classrooms led onto the long, green painted verandah and this stepped down to the basketball court. For many years, this was the setting for the annual school concert. The verandah became the stage and the basketball court was the auditorium. However, in 1968 the school concert was held at the old Bridge Street School, which, by that time had been converted into a hall, with a stage where the Pre-school room is now. The following year the school concert was held for the first time in many years at the Norwood Town Hall. On that occasion the children presented "The Sound of Music".

The boundary between the Memorial School and St Ignatius Junior School was marked by the shelter shed and a wooden paling fence which continued down to Portrush road. In this corner was a drain that led to the creek bed and which was used to store crates of school milk. Each day every child had to drink a bottle of milk (1/3 pint) regardless of how long it had been standing in the sun. The School Milk Scheme, which had commenced in September 1951, was eventually abolished in December 1973.

In this corner of the playground were the double swings and two seesaws. Further along was a hurdy-gurdy (also called a Witch's Hat). At the intersection of Portrush Road and William Street were the monkey bars. Towering over these were two gum trees all that remained of the magnificent stand of gum trees that had once lined Second Creek. The last remaining gum tree was eventually cut down at the cost of £100.

Vatican Council reform

By the late sixties, the reforms instituted by the Second Vatican Council were beginning to impact upon the lives of Australian Catholics. At the same time a series of administrative changes took place in Catholic parish schools which not only reflected these reforms but which were eventually to reshape Catholic Education throughout Australia.

The first of these changes came towards the end of 1968 when the bishops of South Australia instructed parish priests and the principals of parish schools to establish School Boards “to conduct the financial administration of the school on behalf of the parish” (Catholic Schools Handbook Part One: Guide for School Board Members) The bishops, in keeping with the spirit of the Second Vatican Council, saw the establishment of School Boards as an opportunity for the laity to become more involved and to exercise greater responsibility in the life of the Church, of which the Catholic parish school was a important part. Of equal concern to the bishops was the need for a statutory body within each Catholic school to administer the proposed Commonwealth subsidy, due to commence in 1970.

The first St Joseph’s Memorial School Board meeting was held at Manresa on 21st October 1968 and an estimated budget for 1969 was presented:

Expenditure:

3 Sisters’ salaries	\$ 3,462
4 Laic teachers	\$ 5,564
Special teachers	\$ 500
School Requisites	\$ 500
Rates, Insurance & sundries	\$ 1,465
Total:	\$12,000

Income:

State Govt Grant	\$ 2,500
School Fees	
250 children @ \$30 (Actual payment)	\$ 5,000
Mothers’ Club	\$ 500
Total:	\$ 8,000

The shortfall of \$4,000 would be met by the parish.²²

Based on the enrolment of 220 pupils, a Commonwealth Grant to St Joseph's Memorial School would, in 1970 yield \$8,365. which in effect doubled the school's income from all sources in the previous year. The grant was to be used solely for the education of children and the payment of teachers' salaries but not capital expenditure nor as a subsidy on fees.

At the beginning of 1971, the State Government subsidy was widened to include school requisites "much cheaper than from ordinary Stationery Houses"²³. In a school that had managed to survive for so long on the bare essentials, such plenitude was at times difficult to grasp.

At the same time the School Board was notified of the conditions attached to the receipt of the Commonwealth Grant, it was advised to regulate the terms of employment of its lay teachers. With this directive, there began to emerge in Catholic School over the next decade, a fully trained and qualified teaching profession, both lay and religious. In 1972, a lay teacher was provided by the Immigration Department to assist the migrant children. In the following year, the first two qualified lay teachers were employed at the Memorial School.

Gradually, in school they now employed a dedicated and professional lay staff, the Josephite Sisters began to withdraw. The last Josephite Sister at the Memorial School, Sr Patricia O'Day taught there until 1986 and the school is now entirely staffed by lay teachers.

Within the space of five years from 1969 to 1974 the projected budget for the parish school soared from \$12,000 to just over \$46,000. State and Commonwealth Grants, reflecting a similar increase, rose to a combined estimate of around \$31,000. In the same period, school fees crept up from \$10 to \$14 a child each term and family concessions were introduced. As usual the parish agreed to make up the shortfall, which varied from around \$100 to \$1,000. In 1972 direct financial support from the parish was curtailed because the parish hall (which would be available to the school) was under construction. The School Board therefore found it necessary to collect outstanding fees. It was an awkward situation but by the end of that year over \$2,000 had been collected.

Where was the money spent, if not on educating the children and paying the teachers' salaries? With an enrolment climbing to 250 pupils it is hardly surprising that within seven months of receiving the Commonwealth Grant, the Memorial School had a new classroom. Initially the School Board thought to purchase a prefabricated classroom from Sigal Industries for \$5,672, which included blackboards, pin boards, wall cupboards, light fittings and floor tiles. However, when Mr. Brian Polomka submitted his proposal for a brick addition incorporated into the verandah and fully furnished for the same amount, it was an obvious choice. On 2nd August 1970 Archbishop Beovich celebrated the feast of St. Ignatius at Norwood and afterwards blessed and opened the new addition to the parish school. It would be used as another Grade 1 classroom.

23. School Board Minutes, 6 February 1971

More modifications to William Street

Following completion of the new classroom, the School Board determined future building requirements of the Memorial School, both immediate and long term as follows: an urgent need for a new staff room and storeroom, a library and at least two more classrooms within the next five years.

During the Christmas holidays 1970 – 1971 a new storeroom was erected and paid for by the parish. Next staff facilities were updated. The door leading to the girls' cloakroom was bricked up and the room converted into the school office. A wall between the adjoining storeroom and staff room was demolished to make a much larger staff room and a new entrance to the office completed the work.

The unused site at Bridge Street is again renovated

Finally, at its meeting in April 1971 the School Board discussed the feasibility of renovating the old school building at Bridge Street. It was not entirely an attractive proposition. The building had not been used as a school since St Joseph's Higher Primary left there to become Mary MacKillop College in 1963 eight years before. The roof leaked and guttering down one side of the building had to be replaced. Everything needed a coat of paint. Worst of all were the toilets. In fact, over half of the total cost (\$7,200) of renovations, furnishings and amenities was spent on rebuilding the toilets.

Although it was a considerable amount of work for the Fathers' Club the building was ready within a matter of weeks. Classes began operating there from 28th June 1971 and Fr. Mulvihill, Director of Catholic Education, officially blessed and opened the Bridge Street School a few months later, on the 19th September 1971. On that day \$148. in donations was collected. To begin with, children who enrolled at the Memorial School remained at Bridge Street until completion of Grade 2, when they transferred to William Street. However, this changed at the beginning of 1974 when children in Grade 3 remained at Bridge Street. With some rearrangement of classes at William Street, it then became possible to set up a new library in an empty classroom.

Up until this time, books had been stored in the Principal's Office (now the entrance foyer). For the new library, all the required books were collected together, covered (no small task for those who volunteered) and shelved in the new library. The library has since shifted several times, but originally it was housed in the classroom which is incorporated into the verandah.

Most of the children in the school were of Italian descent and from 1971 onwards a 'migrant' or 'multicultural' teacher was supplied by the Immigration Department to assist those children who had difficulties learning English. Mostly, these were the younger children in the Junior Primary section. Older children tended to need only remedial help.

With such a huge percentage of parents in the school community fluent only in Italian, it was necessary, on occasions to provide a translation of official school reports. On other occasions, such as the A.G.M. of the School Board, Fr. Andrew Zerafa S.J. was usually called upon to act as an interpreter.

Facilities at the Parish School improved steadily throughout the 1970s, largely because of the work done by parents. With the help of a specially trained group of parents the Library expanded to Bridge Street. At both sections of the school, classrooms were carpeted. Playground equipment was updated. At William Street, the yard was asphalted and a grassed area, complete with cricket pitch established. The last of the gum trees, riddled with white ants were removed. All the playground area was refenced.

It was also time to replace the Chalet. This building, which had been used for many years as a tuck shop and wet area, as well as for assemblies, was in a sorry state. The walls tended to lean inwards and the ceiling sagged. Because it was constructed of corrugated iron it was stifling hot in summer and cold in winter. It was demolished and replaced with the brick building that stands there today.

The changing face of Norwood brings a decline in enrolments

Oddly enough, these improvements were matched by a steady decline in enrolments. The main reasons (all interrelated) appear to have been the changing circumstances of families attending the parish school, changes in Norwood itself and the wage/price spiral, which was a marked feature of the Australian economy in the 1970s. As the immigrant families became more affluent and their children grew up, many moved out to the newer housing areas of Campbelltown, Newton and Athelstone. In their wake came the younger professionals with few or no children, intent on restoring the old houses in Norwood to their former amplitude (and with a family room across the back). Furthermore, wages continued to increase and with them housing prices. The result was that Norwood, from being in 1970 a rather run down inner city suburb became, within ten to fifteen years, a highly desirable area in which to live.

The last Josephite Principal leaves and is replaced with a Lay Principal

At the end of 1980, Sr Margaret Cresp, RSJ, left St Joseph's Memorial School and Mr John Clarence filled her position of principal, the first lay principal of the school. Until that time the junior and primary sections of the Memorial School had in fact operated independently, with a Josephite sister in charge of each section. The School Board and Parents and Friends Association were however, constituted for the whole school. Mr Clarence's appointment was that of principal of the overall school, with Sr Loreto O'Conner RSJ, continuing to co-ordinate the Junior Primary section at Kensington.

Initially, Mr Clarence established weekly planning sessions with Sr Loreto and gradually the school moved towards combined staff meetings and days of inservice for all of the staff together. All finance was conducted through a single bank account. Another innovation was the school newsletter. In an effort to curtail the constant deluge of information to parents with children at both sections of the school and to provide a tangible link, a newsletter for both sections was sent out weekly. It was given the appropriate title "Connection". Above all, the school benefited from the combined school liturgies which Mr Clarence and Sr Loreto prepared with Fr Zerafa S.J., who was school Chaplin at the time.

As part of the Grounds Development Plan an "action station" was proposed for William Street. This entailed the design and construction of playground equipment

specifically for the William Street playground. This equipment would not only promote physical fitness, but would stimulate the children's imaginations. It would also make the best possible use of the school environment.

While the action station was being constructed by the Parents and Friends Association under the direction of the consultant, the School Board was intent on acquiring a \$30,000 grant, which would enable considerable improvements to the school buildings at William Street. Their application being successful, they immediately began work.

Entrance to the school had been for many years from the rear verandah. It was impossible on approaching the school from this direction, to feel other than a sense of dismay. The brickwork was covered with grime as far as hands could reach. The verandah, because it was open to the weather, was always dirty and the leaves blew onto it. It was dirty, dark and noisy.

As so often happens, a simple solution was the best. The verandah was enclosed by a glass wall, with double doors each side of the classroom, which had been added eleven years earlier. All brickwork was replastered and painted. Skylights were installed and light flooded in to the once dark corridor.

A few years later, the front entrance was finally restored to its proper use. Parents and visitors, on entering the school are now drawn into a large, well-lit open space which remains a most attractive feature of the school.

The continuing shortage of staff amenities was finally addressed. The small classroom on the eastern side of the school was converted to offices for the Principal and school secretary and the remaining area fitted up as a storeroom. On the western side, the school office now redundant was covered to a new staff kitchen and a second toilet was added.

Changes in curriculum, as always have been dependent on available funding. Thus, from employing a Migrant teacher who helped the Italian children learn to speak and read English, the school changed of necessity, to employing a multi cultural teacher. By now there were at least two dozen different cultures represented in the school. A popular feature was the annual "International Day" at Bridge Street. The children dressed in their family's national costumes and after presenting their items, shared a huge range of national dishes with their families. In later years, the multi cultural programme became the Italian programme and at William Street, children were taught to speak and to write Italian. When funding ceased in 1984, the second language programme disappeared. Now, in 1992, with funding available once more, Japanese has been introduced as a second language.

The Josephite sisters had always given singing lessons and other individual instrumental tuition as well. In 1987 recorder lessons were given to all pupils and a few years later, a class music education programme was introduced.

Computers were brought into the school in recent years and have become a useful adjunct to the classroom routine. As well, much of the administration of the school is now computerised.

Out of necessity, parents have always been involved in activities that raise money for the school. St Joseph's Memorial School, like most parish schools, would barely have survived without their efforts. More recently, however, parents have been involved in shaping the curriculum to reflect accurately the school as a family of faith and life. In the mid 1980s a series of electives was offered to the students, with parents contributing a wide range of skills and talents one afternoon a week. Parents have also been involved in formulating school policies, in compiling a school philosophy statement as a basis for curriculum design and management and taking an active role in the sacramental programme.

The first discussions of amalgamation and the SACCS review

In 1987, informal discussions were held with the CEO in regard to amalgamating both sections of the school. The following year, after discussion of the proposal with both the staff and the School Board, an application was lodged with the Department of Employment, Education and Training, with an expected completion time of February, 1991. The school would operate five classes at William Street for approximately 140 students. The Pre-school would remain at Bridge Street. Amalgamating both sections of the school would require structural changes at William Street, but the cost of these alterations would be offset by a simplified administration and provide the school with a clearer identity. The CEO budgeted \$20,000 as a special grant in the 1990 budget to assist with a renovation programme if the amalgamation proposal was adopted.

However, in the same year 1988, the Jesuits conducted a review of their role in education in the Norwood Parish. As a result St Joseph's Memorial School found it necessary to consider not only alternatives to its amalgamation proposal, but to defend its position as the parish school. From the ensuing review set up by the SACCS (working Party for the Rational Development of Schools) there eventually emerged a set of recommendations that SACCS approved in November 1991. These recommendations, contrary to the original intention of the Jesuits (which was the closure of St Joseph's Memorial School as the parish school) guaranteed the continued existence of the school for another five years. The parish school was, therefore able to plan for the future with some degree of confidence.

What then of the future? At the heart of the Memorial School lies the Josephite tradition:

“to bring people to God, regardless of their social or economic status”²⁴

It may be time to look at this tradition in a new light. Ultimately, the socio-economic changes in the Parish of Norwood and in the Memorial School itself become irrelevant in carrying out the task to “bring people to God”. For the same reason, it makes no sense to define the parish school solely in geographic or socio-economic term. The school may have at one time or another provided a Catholic education for the poorer families residing in the parish but as with any Catholic school, this was never its primary purpose.

²⁴. P xi *The Josephite Story*, Marie Therese Foale R.S.J.

On the other hand, it may be to its own advantage that St Joseph's Memorial School is the parish school:

“Catholic Schools...are indeed of fundamental value and importance in assisting and complementing parents in the exercise of their educational rights and responsibilities. But in this education in the faith, the school remains only a partner, joining with the home and the parish in that process of growth and development of all, which is religious education. Moreover, it is the parish which remains the Pre-eminent place for catechesis”²⁵

The Memorial School, as the parish school is ideally placed to fulfil its primary purpose of fostering the development of faith through a religious education programme firmly centred on the parish.

Whatever the implications for St Joseph's Memorial School as a parish school, one thing remains clear: that for this school, its future will to some extent be determined by its past. With such a past, rich in history and tradition there is indeed much to hope for.

Hilary Raimondo 1992

BIBLIOGRAPHY

- 1) *The Josephite Story* Marie Therese Foale RSJ
pub. St Joseph's Generalate, Sydney, 1989, 1990
ISBN 0 9592316 2 5

- 2) *Fifty Years' History of Kensington and Norwood* (Facsimile Edition)
pub. Austa Print, 11 Elm St, Hampstead Gdns
SA 5086 1978
ISBN 0 85872 272 0

- 3) *One Hundred Years' History of Kensington and Norwood*

- 4) *St Ignatius Norwood, South Australia: 1869 –1969*
pub McCallum Print

- 5) *St Ignatius Calendar:* various articles from the Parish Magazines
1916, 1939-1961

- 6) *The Southern Cross* various articles from 1901- 1904, 1916, 1917, 1941,
1942

- 7) *Jesuit Archive at Sevenhill, S.A. and Hawthorn, Vic.*
Provided various articles on the Austrian Jesuits

- 8) *Minutes of St Joseph's Memorial School Board 1968-1974*

- 9) *Guide for School Board Members*
Pt 1 Catholic Schools Handbook SACCS

- 10) *St Joseph's Memorial School Amalgamation Proposal*
Dec 1090

- 11) *Summary of recommendations of SACCS (Working Party for the Rational
Development of Schools) in regard to St Joseph's Memorial School Norwood.*
Nov 1991

