



The Early Years. 1910 – 1919



The decade 1910 to 1920 was one of huge social change in Australia. The advent of World War One had a significant impact on Australian society and even the lives of children in a Melbourne beachside suburb called Carrum.

Children were enthusiastically involved in the war effort, raising money by collecting bottles, bones, wood and scrap metal to sell. Many Victorian schools at the time had classes of 40-60 kept in line by teachers wielding the cane. At Carrum State School, the decade began with a severe shortage of teachers. Junior teachers in particular were difficult to keep and the Education Department received a steady stream of correspondence from the Head Teacher complaining of the shortage.

In July 1911, the school had been 15 weeks without an assistant or junior teacher. Enrolment at the time was almost 90 students.

One teacher traveled to Carrum on the train from East Melbourne, leaving her home each morning at 7.15 am and arriving back at 8.15 pm.



The verandah built in 1916.

In 1911, lot 41 was purchased and in January, 1913, the school purchased and fenced lot 42, running from Church Road through to Valetta Street.

Horticultural studies were considered worthy components of the curriculum at the time and in 1914 the department sought an explanation from the Carrum Head Teacher as to why he did not teach it. His terse response summed up some of the difficulties faced by the school.

"The school will teach agriculture when practicable. At present, there is only a small area. Soil is sandy. At present there is hardly sufficient room for a playground."

Cramped as it was, the school nonetheless had some proud academic moments in these years. Edward Ronayne, taught by Mr. Winnicott, headed the list of teaching scholarships in 1915, in addition to winning scholarships to Wesley College and Caulfield Grammar.

In April 1916, the department agreed to erect a verandah on the main building facing east to Church Road. Parents had raised the necessary money.

Consideration was given at this time to a new site for the school. The school committee enquired as to the purchase of lots 1, 2 and 3, which fronted McLeod Road and was "practically the only site available". However the land was deemed too expensive and the school remained at its original location.

At the time:

- * Australian Prime Ministers: Andrew Fisher (-13), Joseph Cooke (13-14), Andrew Fisher (14-15) and Billy Hughes (1915-)
- * The Australian population - 4, 425, 000 (1910)
- * The first Myer store opened in Melbourne (1911)
- * Walter Burleigh Griffin won the competition to design Canberra (1912)
- * 96 % of the Australian population had been born in Britain or had British parents/ grandparents