



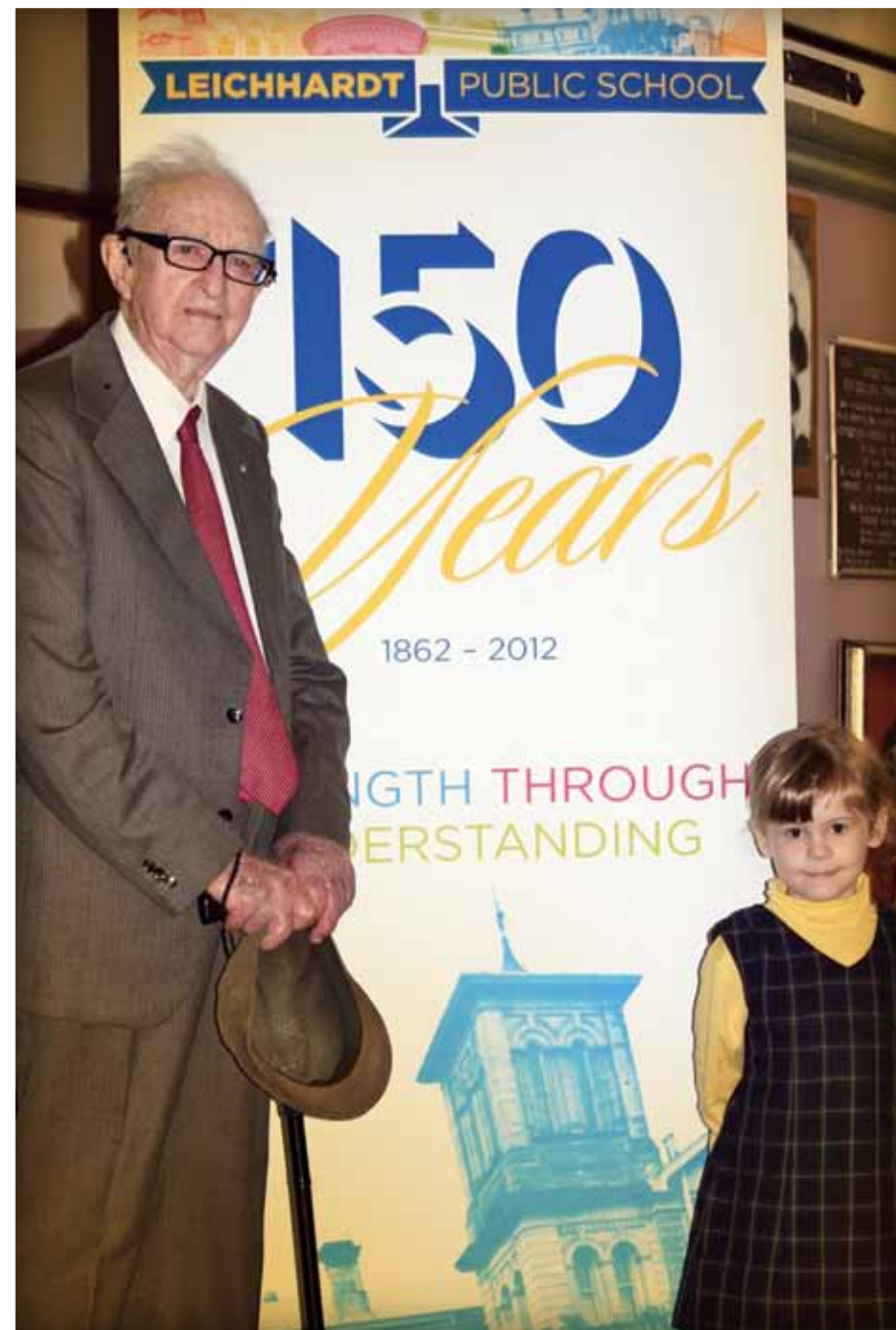
LEICHHARDT

PUBLIC SCHOOL

150 *Years*

1862 – 2012

A COLLECTION OF IMAGES, MEMORIES
AND IMPORTANT EVENTS OVER THE LAST 150 YEARS.



SYMBOLS AND MOTTOS

→
Hand drawn logo circa 1993 depicting the tower amongst the trees. Artist Gillian Phillips, Assistant Principal Leichhardt Public School 1993.



←
Badge logo circa 1966 depicting original LPS motto 'Towards Better Things'. In use between the years 1966 to 1993.

STRENGTH THROUGH UNDERSTANDING

↑
Current motto since 1993, created by Simon Emsley, a parent of the LPS community in 1993.

↑
One of our oldest students, Mr John Dougdale (92) photographed with Makayla Robinson (5) our youngest student at LPS.

ORIGINAL INHABITANTS

The municipality of Leichhardt as we know it was originally inhabited by the Wangal band of the Dharug (Eora) language group and we acknowledge them as the traditional owners of Leichhardt. The “Eora people” was the name given to coastal Aborigines around Sydney. Wangal country was known as Wanne and it originally extended from the suburbs of Balmain and Birchgrove in the east to Silverwater and Auburn in the west. It is not known how long the Wangal had lived around Leichhardt but it is known that the Dharug were living in the Sydney area for at least 10,000 years before 1788.

Acknowledgements

We have had a wonderful time researching and compiling this book and hope you enjoy reading it. Our constant refrain was ‘we need more time’, as our aim was to make this book the very best publication we could but of course we had to adhere to a deadline otherwise the sesquicentenary might have passed us by!

We would like to make special mention of those who have made this book possible.

Thank you to all those incredible ex-students and staff who have been so generous with their time and knowledge, you made all the history come alive. We hope we have captured your spirit.

We would like to acknowledge both the Department of Education and Communities and Leichhardt Municipal Library for allowing us to access their records and archives.

Thank you to Natalie Scaltrito and Lynne Gilchrist in the office for being enthusiastic participants in our project, without their patience and commitment this book may not have been written.

A very special thank you to our principal, James Reid who has shown us endless support and displayed an amazing amount of good humour when it looked like we might be ‘losing the plot’!

Finally we would like to acknowledge our long-suffering families for stoically (some of the time) putting up with our LPS history obsession. So a big thank you must go to the Savage family (Simon, Ruby, Harriet and Riley) and the Flaherty family (Michael, Brendan, Dominic, Adrian and Jessica).

Vicki Flaherty and Tania Savage

Sources

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School Community Profile Leichhardt Public School 1971

School Community Profile Leichhardt Public School 1983

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PRINCIPAL’S MESSAGE

2012 has been an eventful year at LPS as we have further enriched our school life with our Sesquicentenary celebrations.



This book, which has been cleverly compiled by Vicki Flaherty and Tania Savage, is one important way in which we have recognised our 150th birthday. The book complements three other artefacts, our Sesqui Quilt which now provides a colourful focal point in our entrance foyer, the delightful Life @LPS book of photography and the impressive tiled wall mural in the school playground. Reflective of the strong bonds the school has with its community, the success of these projects can be attributed to the vision, talent and dedication of our parents and teachers. The school community greatly appreciates the work of Clare Carter on the quilt, Brigitte Oberlander on the photographic book and Bernadette McDermott, Selina McGrath , Jim Mortimer and of course all our students on the tiled wall and mural. I am often amazed and always appreciative of the many and varied skills and talents that our parents and staff so willingly share, to support and enhance school life.

Along with our noteworthy Sesqui artefacts we celebrated at the Sesqui Ball in May, again thanks to the coordination by Finola Carey, Alison Clarke and Gavin George from our parent body. To provide a clear link to the school's long history Finola and Vicki Flaherty organised the refurbishment of two war memorials located in our school foyer. These successful projects and the contents of the book not only highlight the journey of our school but also reflects the commitment of both past and present teaching staff, the quality education they provided and the spirit and loyalty shown by our school community.

As detailed in the following pages, Leichhardt Public School has had a long and distinguished history dating back to 1862. This historical document will highlight the significant fluctuations in enrolments and changes in demographic over the past 150 years. In the 1920s the school experienced an enrolment peak of 2 250 students whilst for some parts of the 1990s the school was relatively small. The community diversified in the second half on the twentieth century and the school now benefits from the rich cultural heritage of our current and former students.

Leichhardt Public School places a strong emphasis on developing the whole student in academic as well as social, sporting and cultural pursuits. Our school values and nurtures the unique qualities and talents of each student. We have high expectations for all students and a commitment to engendering a genuine love of learning as a lifelong pursuit.

At Leichhardt Public School academic rigour is valued at all stages of learning and the classroom focus is on engagement and achievement. Our students are encouraged to take increasing responsibility for their own learning and expect learning experiences to be meaningful and challenging. They are measured risk takers who understand that successful learners extend themselves with new challenges and develop thinking skills that can be applied confidently in both school

and in everyday life. Individual differences are not only recognised but celebrated and students are encouraged to pursue interests and explore different ways of learning with the emphasis always on quality. These ideals reflect current philosophies of quality education. From this book you will be able to judge that these ideas may not have always been evident at the school, however it is clear that students have always been expected to strive for academic excellence and the school has always endeavoured to ensure that students enjoyed and valued their school experience.

Maintaining high standards of teaching has always been the school's core business and this has been achieved through the teaching staff willingly embracing the process of change and improvement. At Leichhardt Public School our staff are committed to professional excellence and continuous improvement of their pedagogy. From the book it may be evident that some staff took a more austere approach to teaching but we are sure that students have always been at the heart of their work.

Staff and parent partnerships are always based on mutual respect, clear lines of communication and a commitment to encouraging each student to achieve their full potential in all areas of learning. As demonstrated by the Sesquicentenary, the many ways in which the school community actively involved themselves in school life is an important asset to the school.

I am extremely proud of our school, the staff, the students and the families who make up the LPS school community and the great foundation the school lays down in the lives of our students. I hope that all students will look back with pride on their school days at Leichhardt Public School, in the knowledge that these days were among their happiest and most fulfilling and that our staff and parents will always view their time at LPS as both rewarding and enjoyable.

James Reid 2003 - to present

SCHOOL	LEICHHARDT	late PETERSHAM until 1874	FORM T.P.23
POST TOWN		DISTRICT	
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TEACHER	DATE OF APPOINTMENT	REMOVED TO	DATE OF TRANSFER
Thomas Pepper	5. 62		
David Tho Lewis	7. 63		31. 3. 65
Thos Mills	3. 4. 65		31. 5. 73
Wm Smith	7. 73		1. 1. 75
Jos Skensson	1. 2. 75		31. 12. 84
Archibald Smith	31. 12. 84		6. 94
Patk Connolly	6. 94	Insp	
Donald Fraser	1. 01	Insp	
Joseph Finney	1. 03	Insp	
Peo Flannery	10. 03	died	
John Douglass	5. 12	acting insp	13
H4 Clowrie	6. 13	(next card)	1. 14

↑
Principals of Leichhardt



↑
Former Kindergarten building (Block C) - 1971.



↑
Block C as it appears today - Year 5/6 classroom and LOOSH area.

A SUBURB IS BORN

In the 1840’s the colony of Sydney was beginning to throw off its convict yoke to emerge as a free society. Labourers both skilled and unskilled were free to move between jobs and choose where they wanted to live. However, the residential districts were determined by the available means of transport. Balmain, Glebe, Newtown, Paddington and Redfern were all situated within about 4 kilometres of the city and serviced by ferries, public omnibus and private carriages. The high cost of transport meant that most of the population had no other option but to walk to their daily place of employment. As these suburban communities continued to grow the demand for cheaper transport increased and by 1861 the fares had halved for the omnibus which brought it within the reach of a clerk or artisan but still well beyond the vast majority of the labour force.

Only the wealthy residents of Sydney were able to live in the ‘outer’ fringes of the city as they could afford to own a coach and employ a coachman. It would be difficult for any of us today to visualise Leichhardt as it must have appeared in 1862. Great estates belonging to families who had made their mark in the public life of the colony formed the area of present day Leichhardt. Men such as the magistrate Ryan Brennan, surveyor Samuel Perry and solicitor James Norton tried to replicate the lifestyle and home they had left behind in England in the huge estates they acquired. Along the “High Road to Parramatta” were a number of landmarks, Robert Johnston’s “Annandale” estate, Redmond’s land, Woolpack Inn and, at the corner of Balmain Road, the Bald Faced Stag Hotel which is still standing.

The land was dense bush with thick scrub and Balmain Road was known as a track ‘leading to nowhere in particular’. It skirted the eastern boundary of a 100 acre property called the “Elswick” estate which stretched from Parramatta Road to the present Hawthorne Canal. This estate was acquired by James Norton (1795-1862), one of the earliest members of Sydney’s legal profession in 1834. It consisted of a beautiful home, houses for servants, an orchard and a large formal garden which was renowned throughout Sydney as it featured an elaborate display of roses, bamboos and gardenias complete with peacocks strutting proudly and a man-made pond rich with fish and eels.

When James Norton died in 1862 his estate was cut up into small allotments and sold though a 50 acre lot including Norton’s palatial home was retained by the family. The subdivision of the Elswick estate ushered in an era of dynamic growth of the areas beyond the suburbs circling Sydney. Bit by bit more land was opened up - estates such as Redmond’s, Piper’s, Kegworth, Garry Owen, Orange Grove and Austeneham were sold to developers. Wealthy colonists fled what they saw as ‘cramped and insanitary living conditions’ to ‘rural’ areas such as Ramsey’s Bush (now known as Haberfield) to enjoy pure air.

In 1842 the Piperston estate had become the property of Walter Beames who renamed it Leichhardt after his friend Dr Ludwig Leichhardt, the famous explorer. In 1871 expeditions had been mounted into the interior of Australia to try and find the remains of Dr Leichhardt’s party after his last ill-fated expedition. A great mystery grew up around this search and almost certainly contributed to the naming of the new municipality which covered the area between Parramatta Road, Iron Cove, Balmain and Johnston’s Creek - Leichhardt was proclaimed on the 14th December 1871 and boasted 614 residents.

THE EARLY YEARS

It is often noted that the birth and development of public education in Leichhardt can be seen as a barometer for the changing fortunes of the area. The fledgling school was opened the same year as James Norton’s death which saw the gradual demise of the great estates to be replaced by smaller allotments for the working class of Sydney.

On the 10th April 1862 the residents expressed concern for the education of their children at a public meeting and called for a school to be provided for the area. The patrons of this meeting were all well-known local identities and included Henry Black, Ambrose Foss, SC Kirby, Captain Edward Hinder, Samuel Johnson, Phillip Andrews and Thomas Sullivan. They established a committee and agreed to be responsible for the general conduct of school affairs. Henry Black formally applied to the National Board of Education to establish a local public school stating that they had been granted the use of a building which was also used a Congregational Church.

This building consisted of a room 18 feet by 30 feet with plastered slab walls and had a “situation on an elevation commanding a large playground”. It was located somewhere “off the Balmain Road, within two hundred yards of Parramatta Road and quite near the Norton Estate”. The committee hoped to have sixteen boys and twenty three girls enrolled when the school opened and recommended the appointment of a Mr and Mrs Pepper to take charge of the school. The school was known as the non-vested National School of Petersham as it was the only one in the area designed to meet the requirements of the residents who lived in the municipality.

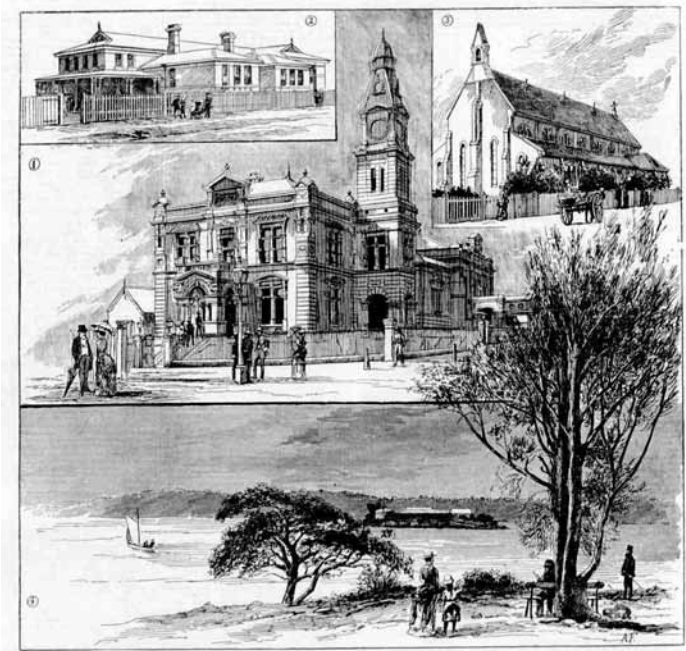
Mr Thomas Pepper was 25 and had only minimal training at the Fort Street Model School. His wife had no training but was employed to help her husband and teach needlework to the girls. The school was opened on the 1st May 1862 and enrolments exceeded expectations with 29 boys and 27 girls officially on the roll. Mr and Mrs Pepper did not appear to stay long at the school as it appears that a David Thomas Lewis took charge somewhere before September 1863 when he reports on a low attendance figure for a period in August.

During Mr Lewis’ tenure the enrolments increased at the school until there were a total of 69 students. Just imagine how difficult it must have been for him to try and teach all those students without any assistance. Even the School Inspector pointed out the necessity for another teacher to be employed but the committee appears to have ignored his suggestion - not surprisingly Mr Lewis resigned in March 1865.

Another teacher was appointed in April 1865. Thomas Mills was just 24 and once again was a student from the Fort St Model School. He married not long after his appointment and asked the committee for an increase of salary as his new wife would be assisting him in his work. Their combined salary was £7.

In 1866 the National Board of Education became the Council of Education and it became necessary for local patrons to register as the Local Board of Public Instruction. It was made up of the original committee members with the added addition of an S B Lewis and on the 21st March 1866 they were officially appointed.

Numbers at the school were steadily climbing and had reached 80 in total. Mr Mills requested assistance but as he did not hold a high enough classification as a teacher the school wasn’t eligible for extra staff. He requested leave of absence from the National Board of Education to attend a training school to improve his status but this request was refused. Inspector Gardiner stated rather archly that he had already as much training as most teachers adding “His wants are not precisely those that can be remedied by a training institution. They lie more in the actual management of the School and they have along with their remedies, been pointed out to him”. Mr Mills faced yet another difficulty as there wasn’t a teacher’s residence attached to the school. He requested an allowance be paid towards the cost of rent and it was reluctantly granted with an amount of £12 per month being offered.



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Illustration taken from Trove article
Australian Town and Country Journal - Saturday 18 November 1899.

THE NEW SCHOOL

In 1867 the Inspectors report on the school stated “The schoolroom is in bad condition. The furniture is neither good nor suitable and there is scarcely a sufficient supply of apparatus and books”. This report made it obvious to the patrons that they needed to raise funds to build a new school. Henry Black advised the Council of Education that a site had been donated for a new building to be built. They had also established a subscription list with a donation from Captain Hinder of £25 and hoped to raise £100. It appears that Henry Black must have possessed an enormous amount of charm and energy to obtain the site free of charge.

He first approached Mr Ramsay for the land and in a letter on the 21st June 1867 gave several reasons for the request. He stated:

“The number of children of the poorer classes is comparatively great.

The slab-built schoolroom at present in use is so old and dilapidated that it is dangerous to have the children under the roof in stormy weather.

The local patrons have had no help from the public in keeping the building in repair and furnishings.

The local board is now making an appeal it would be most encouraging if they had the land for a school site.”

Mr Ramsay generously agreed to donate the land which was part of the recently subdivided land of the Elswick estate. The one-acre block of land on the corner of Marion and Norton Streets with a wonderful street frontage was valued by the auctioneers Richardson and Wrench and the government architect at £100. The Local Board was particularly grateful to Mr Ramsay as his donation came at a time when subscriptions were slow in coming in. They had to report to the Council of Education that they had only collected £50 and asked what other steps could be taken towards the “completion of the object so long and anxiously desired and now so urgently desired.”

The government architect drew up plans and specifications for a public school to accommodate 100 pupils and a teacher’s residence. The Local Board sought tenders for the plans with the lowest coming in at £841. Public subscriptions had only reached £58 and as the Local Board was expected to provide a third of the initial cost of the building it was not surprising that further delays ensued. Henry Black implored the Council of Education to allow a tender be accepted with assurances that subscriptions would increase as the building work progressed but the Council would not go ahead. The government architect decided to call for fresh tenders and included details such as fencing, water supply and other supplementary works which were not included in the first round.

Despite money from the hard won subscriptions being used on repairs to the old school building it was becoming increasingly dangerous and a report in 1868 stated that “the schoolroom is wholly unfit for its purpose”. The government architect agreed and directed Mr Black to accept a tender from Mr Elphinstone who was not the cheapest tender but had committed to complete the building in three and a half months as opposed to four months from other builders. To try and keep the costs down the plans were modified and “the accommodation was reduced from 100 to 72 pupils, external features such as verandas, classrooms, lavatory, porches etc. were dispensed with” and “if the old desks were available there should be a saving of £20”. The Council of Education decided that further cuts could be achieved and reduced the size of the classroom by two feet, and directed the water tank be omitted and a further £45 was saved.

The new school and residence was found to be too small even as it opened in 1869 and though a definite improvement on its former ramshackle building the lack of accommodation was to cause difficulties over the next few years. Henry Black who had been the champion of the school from the outset took the Council of Education to task for its miserly cost cutting and in his usual flamboyant style pointed out that the teacher’s residence consisting of two rooms and a kitchen could scarcely house Mr Mill’s family of five. The builder offered to add a room for £36 but the Council refused and as the Local Board could not raise the funds so the plan to enlarge the residence was abandoned.



↑
Original school building 1869 located where LPS now stands.

RELIGIOUS BATTLES

In June 1869 the Rev H A Palmer, the local Anglican Minister, requested time for religious instruction and asked where this could be given as no special classroom had been constructed in the new school. Mr Black contacted the Council of Education and said he regretted to say that they had barely room for the students in their classroom let alone a special one for religious instruction and suggested that the Minister could use the room from 1pm to 2pm or 4pm to 5pm. Rev Palmer refused these times and claimed his right under the Act of 1866, to instruct the pupils in school time. He was informed the Board should make arrangements for the erection of a classroom. Mr Black then asked if the Council would help with the cost of this new room. The government architect estimated that a new room could be built for £100 and the Council requested the Board pay one third of this cost. Mr Black on behalf of the board refused this request and said they would support the expansion of the residence before building an extra room for religious instruction.

The Council of Education was caught between a rock and a hard place as the Minister insisted on his rights under the Act. Mr Black suggested Rev Palmer could visit the school between 3pm and 4pm to give religious instruction but refused to pay for an additional room until the teacher's residence had been expanded. Mr Mills, the teacher in question then joined the battle himself by contacting the Council to say he had raised £12 from loyal parents of the school to build an additional room on his residence.

He also raised concerns that some catholic students had stopped coming to school since Rev Palmer had started his instruction whilst others were kept away on Thursdays. He resented that the schoolroom which measured only 33 feet by 20 feet and normally held 75 students was given to the Minister to instruct 14 students whilst the remaining children were crammed into "any space they could find". Eventually the Council relented and agreed to fund both the new room for the teacher's residence and a new schoolroom. Unfortunately during this time white ants were found in the roof of the school and the teacher's residence and repairs were carried out but no sooner had these been replaced than white ants were discovered in the new room of the residence.

Despite the new schoolroom Rev Palmer had seen the Council's delaying tactics as depriving the spiritual guidance allowed under the regulations and deemed their decision as "too little, too late" - he subsequently decided to open his own school nearby. Numbers dropped at the public school and the teacher, Mr Mills laid the blame squarely at the feet of the Anglican Minister - "Mr Palmer has opened his school, and with his housekeeper, personally canvasses the district. I cannot charge him with directly soliciting the children to his school, yet the impression left is that they could be greatly benefitted in doing sothe copy books are also provided gratis, which is an inducement to parents."

Mr Mills surprisingly looked on his declining numbers as a way to coerce the Council into providing him with extra assistance and to ask for a promotion. The school Inspector recommended against both requests saying "the teaching is earnest and painstaking, but wanting in vigour and depth". Numbers continued to drop and by August 1872 the lure of Rev Palmer's free "copy books" proved so strong that the Petersham School was under threat. The Council recognised this threat and dismissed Mr Mills as they decided his personality was not strong enough to combat Rev Palmer's effect on the enrolment figures. The inspector noted that "a man of activity and vigilance is needed just now".

However, the Local Board had been strengthened by two powerful civic leaders in Frank Beames, the first Mayor of Leichhardt and Frederick Parsons, who became Mayor in 1876. They wasted no time in organising a public petition to have Mr Mills retained and the Council of Education bowed to public pressure and agreed to retain Mr Mills but warned that this was a "concession made in deference to the wishes of the Board who must be responsible for any decline in the school that may be occasioned by the inability of the teacher to maintain it in a satisfactory manner". Mr Mills apparently recognised his own shortcomings and in May 1873 handed in his resignation and applied for admission to the Fort St Training School to further his qualifications.

RENAMING OF THE SCHOOL

1873 was an important year for the school as Mr Black wrote to the Council of Education in January 1873 saying "There can be no doubt that the Board will cheerfully concur with the Council in the advisableness of changing the designation of the school to that of Leichhardt".

The change in name came about primarily because the Municipality of Leichhardt had been recently proclaimed in 1871. The development of the railway had also caused more settlement around train stations such as Petersham which in turn led to the opening of a public school for that expanding suburb and it was decided to change the name of the old Petersham School to Leichhardt.

Still not enough room

A new teacher was again appointed to the newly named school and William Smith followed the hard working Mills in May 1873. As with his predecessors he anxiously sought new accommodation and the government architect submitted his design for a new classroom as well as further repairs on the existing building. Curiously he also sought the hanging of a new bell which seemed an extravagance they could ill afford when there was barely enough room to house all the students.

Once again the bickering began over who should pay what and the indomitable Mr Black whilst agreeing that the Local Board would pay one third of the costs applied to the Council of Education for school fees to be raised. The Council objected to the proposed rise from sixpence per child to one shilling or from threepence for each additional child in the family to sixpence. They stated fees must be in line with those of the Petersham Anglican School, the Petersham Catholic School and Dobroyd Public School "otherwise there would be unfair competition".

Thankfully by the end of 1874 the new classroom had been built and a new pupil-teacher*, Miss Clarke appointed. In 1875 there was another change of teacher and James Stevenson took charge of Leichhardt School with 120 pupils. The inventory from that time makes interesting reading and included:

- 24 Scripture Lessons Old Testament
- 24 Scripture Lessons New Testament
- 30 Second and Third Book of Lessons
- 18 Fourth Book of Lessons
- 96 Framed Slates
- 5 Boxes slate pencils
- 2 Boxes school pens
- 3 Dozen penholders
- 5 Bottles ink
- 7 School Maps
- 1 Ball Frame
- 3 Blackboards
- 23 Inkwells
- 34 Diagrams which included 16 in mammalia of Australia, 18 in various object lessons,
- 7 School Registers
- 3 Fowles Drawing Books

Enrolments continued to increase and more additions were requested, perhaps the most interesting concerned the teacher's residence. James Stevenson drew some freehand sketches showing the additions he deemed necessary. This drew a very sharp response from the school inspector Mr McCredie who observed "I admit the convenience - not the necessity - of a small room for the servant, but it appears to me that a room 12 foot by 12 foot at the front of the residence cannot be necessary for a servant. A small bedroom for her should be attached to the kitchento this I offer no objection if the Council be pleased to add that to the three rooms and the kitchen already existing for a family of husband, wife and daughter, with servants". The status of a female teacher's accommodation is highlighted by Mr McCredie's report in which he says "It is true that a young lady, a teacher in the Council's service resides with the family - I suppose as a lodger - but I see no reason for taking her into account in the matter". Mr Stevenson's desire for a larger and better appointed residence was not realised until 1882 when a brand new cottage was built. The old residence was repaired and offered to the Infants Mistress.

Apparently the students of the school held Mr Stevenson in higher regard than the inspector as can be seen from the following piece in the Sydney Morning Herald from 10th June 1882.

"Mr. James Stevenson, the principal teacher of the Leichhardt Public School, was the recipient of an address and piece of plate on Tuesday last. The donors of the handsome gifts were the girls of the school, who wished to show their high appreciation of his kindness towards them while under his care."

*Pupil-teacher's were older students at the school who were in training to become a teacher.

LEICHHARDT CONTINUES TO EXPAND

In 1872 the enrolments at the school had been 99 and by 1877 had grown to 195 which led to a separate Infants Department being opened that year. In 1878 numbers jumped to 261 and a weather shed was converted into a classroom for the younger children. In two years enrolments had grown to 345 children and reflected the huge influx of residents to the Leichhardt area. The 1881 census showed attendance at the school was 635 which almost doubled to 1,111 in 1885.

In 1881 as heated arguments raged over the need for a new building a stop-gap measure was devised by James Stevenson and he asked for a school tent to be urgently erected. The tent classroom measured 30 feet by 16 feet and had a boarded floor but offered very little protection from the weather or noise and was prone to collapse in strong winds. The call for more school space was realised on 22nd August 1881 when the government reclaimed another acre of land on the corner of Marion Street and Balmain Road paying £1832. Finally in January 1883 a building was erected to accommodate 540 pupils at a cost of £3862.

Tuesday, 25th August 1881 SYDNEY MORNING HERALD

Arbor Day was commemorated at the Leichhardt Superior Public School with great enthusiasm and not a little ceremony. The parents responded to Mr. Smith's request for provisions for a feast, and Mrs. McEnroe and Miss Thornton, assisted by the other teachers, saw that the 1500 children present enjoyed the good things sent for them. In the afternoon a large gathering of the townsfolk, including Messrs. Darnley and Clark, Ms.L.A., the Mayor and aldermen, and the local board, with other prominent residents, evinced great interest in the singing of the girls under Miss Cromack, in the cadets' exhibition of physical drill and single-stick exercises, under Sergeant Hagney, and in a callisthenic display by the girls. Mr. J. S. Hawthorne, secretary of the local board, addressed appropriate words to the children and the teachers. Messrs. Clark and Darnley, followed with addresses. Some score of trees were planted by the children and by some of the visitors.

Initially boys and girls had shared the same classroom space but in keeping with the strict rules of the Victorian era they were segregated around this time. The school became three departmental, infants, primary and post primary. Students could start and finish their education at the school. In 1885 it became known as Leichhardt Superior Public School.

Despite two other public schools opening in the district - Leichhardt West (Orange Grove) in 1882 and Kegworth in 1886 plus a number of denominational schools - Leichhardt continued to flourish with ever increasing enrolments. By 1900 they had risen to a staggering 1,644 - how the school had grown from its early beginnings with a total of 56 students in 1862.

The 1891 Building

Leichhardt had a population of 17,067 in 1891 and the residents decided it was finally time for a first class building instead of all the make-shift structures they had endured over the years. The Council of Education had become the Department of Public Instruction in 1880 and a new government architect had replaced Mansfield. William Kemp was one of the few architects to have been born in New South Wales. He eagerly accepted the position offered to him whereby he would become the leading architect in Sydney.

Kemp's buildings were inspired by the Italianate classical style. He preferred to build in stone with very ornate features. Examples of his work can be seen at Bourke St Public School (1884) and though much simpler and built with brick, Pyrmont Public School. The 1891 Leichhardt School building is very similar to Pyrmont and reflects the large amount of money spent on it at the time - £6382. The old sandstone building on the corner of Norton and Marion Streets is still standing today and is registered as a historic building by the National Trust.



→ 1891 Building (photo courtesy of Tania Savage).

Saturday, 23rd January
SYDNEY MORNING HERALD

OPENING OF NEW INFANTS SCHOOL

Yesterday afternoon the Minister for Education, Mr. Suttor, accompanied by the Under-Secretary, Mr. Johnson, paid a visit to Leichhardt for the purpose of officially opening the newly-erected Public School at the corner of Norton and Marion Streets, near the Leichhardt Town Hall. The new building is a very handsome structure, fitted with modern conveniences for teaching. It is to be used as an infants' school and will seat 396 students.

Upon the arrival of the Minister, the school cadets, who were drawn up in front of the new school, saluted. Mr. Suttor was received by Mr. J S Hawthorne, chairman of the local school board, members of the board and a large number of friends and relatives of the pupils. The Minister gave an address to the crowd and said it was very gratifying to himself and all the officers of the department to find that the infant section of the school was largely attended without bringing into force the compulsory clause of the Act; it was also gratifying that the department had seen the wisdom of providing good accommodation for the children. Songs and recitations were given by the children in a pleasing manner. The songs selected were "How happy is the farmer's life," "Ripe Strawberries," and "Evening Song".

Subsequently Mr. Suttor delivered an address from the steps of the new school. He said it was always a pleasure for him to take part in any demonstration which brought him more directly in communication with those over who exercised supervision. The present system of education was far in advance of that of the mother country. (Applause). The proportion of illiterates which 30 years ago had amounted to about 30 percent of the population had now been reduced to about 3 percent. The great body of teachers was admirably delivering education and was a class of people which should have they sympathy of every person in the land. One duty of these teachers was to see that the children under their care were taught to speak pure and good English. In America a distinct national accent had grown up and it was said that a similar development was proceeding in Australia. He fancied that this was true and it therefore specially behooved the teachers to see that the children were taught to speak English as it should be spoken, and so preserve the purity of the tongue of their forefathers. (Applause) He had great pleasure opening the school for the use of the children. A vote of thanks to Mr. Suttor was carried amidst cheers and the ceremony concluded with three cheers for the Queen. Refreshments were afterwards provided in the town hall.

In June 1894 Patrick Connelly was appointed as Principal and within a few days of his arrival he complained that the residence was old, damp and dilapidated. The inspector recommended the architect draw up plans to repair the house, but the architect having inspected the house, reported that "Nothing that can be done to the building will remedy its three great defects: smallness of rooms, low ceilings and dampness. These things tend to make the house unwholesome. The land occupied by this house would be a very useful addition to the boys' playground". His recommendation was approved and the residence and the old school were demolished allowing more playground area for the students. Mr Connelly was given a rent allowance of £85 per year and moved to 2 McDonald Street. He subsequently bought this home and continued to live in it after his promotion to the office of Inspector of Schools.



↑ Garden located on the corner of Norton and Marion Streets - known as the 'secret garden' (photo courtesy of Tania Savage)



↑ Facade of the 1891 building facing Marion Street (photo courtesy of Tania Savage).

LEICHHARDT CONTINUES TO EXPAND

The 1897 Building

With the destruction of the “old school” a new building was commissioned and is still in use today. It is constructed of brick with a round conical roofed tower and was considered a turning point for school architecture. The architect is not known but is widely attributed by historians to James Sven Wigram who took over from William Kemp as government architect in 1896. Wigram favoured building in brick and took advantage of highly skilled tradesmen who employed the latest technology of the day.

This building was to become the Girls' Department which could house 400 students. Mindful of the need to conserve much needed playground space the architect designed this new structure to be two storeys. The total cost for this build came in at £3191 and was completed around 1898.

Saturday, 6th August 1898 - SYDNEY MORNING HERALD NEW PUBLIC SCHOOL AT LEICHHARDT An Official Opening Ceremony

Yesterday afternoon Leichhardt was en fete on the occasion of the official opening ceremony in connection with the new handsome and commodious structure that has just been erected for the new girls' school in Marion Street, Leichhardt, which was gay with bunting, stretching across thoroughfare from the adjacent fire station. The function attracted a numerous attendance of residents and visitors from other suburbs. The gathering included a large percentage of dignitaries such as Mr J. S. Hawthorne M.L.A., the Mayor and Mayoress of Leichhardt, the principal of the school Mr Patrick Connelly and headmistress Miss Lucy Cromack. The building which is constructed in the Romanesque style of architecture forms one of the most prominent additions to the public buildings of the district. It is constructed of brick and stone, and contains three stories, inclusive of a tower and every attention has been paid to lighting, ventilation and sanitation. The foundation stone of the edifice was laid on October 9, 1897, by Mrs J. S. Hawthorne, the wife of the member for the district, and herself a keen worker for the advancement of public schools.

The Minister was invited to officially open the gates of the school for the first time on behalf of the people of Leichhardt. Mr Garrard fulfilled this task amidst cheers from the crowd. He congratulated the people of Leichhardt on the opening of such a fine edifice and gave an address to the waiting crowd. He said on occasions such as these he took the opportunity to praise the education system in the colony which was second to none. He mentioned that 80 percent of the children of the colony attended public schools, 16 percent attended private schools and 4 percent of school children were not attending school at all. These figures spoke volumes for the popularity of the public system. (Applause)

Mr F. Bridges (Chief Inspector of Schools) reinforced Mr Garrard's sentiments and repeated a prominent early advocate of the public system who said “Education was the right of every child, and not a political concession”. (Applause) Subsequently at the invitation of the principals and members of the school board visitors were suitably entertained in the main building.

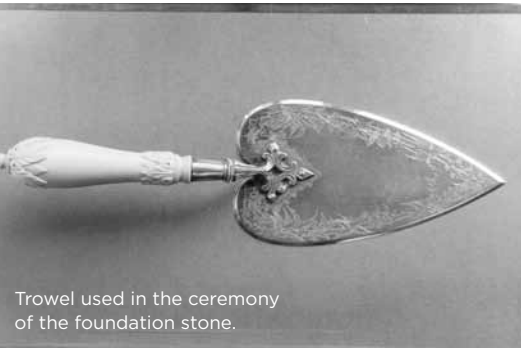
The residents of the Municipality of Leichhardt were justly proud of the improvements that had been made to their suburb. A piece in the Sydney Morning Herald on the 18th November 1899 extolled the many virtues that Leichhardt possessed including a glowing report on Leichhardt Public School.

On the opposite side of Marion-street, and having frontages to both that thoroughfare and Norton Street, is the Leichhardt Superior Public School, which in itself supplies ample evidence of the progress of the borough. Within the past few years two additional schools have had to be erected, and the building now occupied by the boys' department alone was, not many years ago, ample for all requirements. The Headmaster is Mr. P. Connelly a gentleman well known in many country districts, including Wagga, Wyralla, Ballina, and Grafton! Mr. Connelly has been in charge of the Leichhardt Superior for the past five years, and in that time has secured results equal, if not superior, to any school in the suburbs.



↑
The tower (2012) - very little has changed since its construction in 1897 - only the trees have grown higher (photo courtesy of Tania Savage).

Group assembled for the laying of the foundation stone.
↓



Trowel used in the ceremony of the foundation stone.



↑
Intricate detailing on the 1897 building (photo courtesy of Tania Savage).



↑
Laying of the foundation stone.



↑
Arched windows on the 1897 building (photo courtesy of Tania Savage).



CORPORAL FREDERIC ISAAC KILPATRICK

Frederic Kilpatrick was a pupil and teacher at Leichhardt Public School who joined the NSW Lancers and took part in the Boer War at the turn of the 20th century. He was one of the first NSW Lancers to be killed in action on the 16th January 1900 in Ransburg South Africa. As soon as news of his death reached Australia the chairman of the Leichhardt School Board called a meeting to establish a fund to raise money for the erection of memorial in his honour. It was reported that 10,000 people attended a service for the unveiling of the plaque at Leichhardt Public School on the 14th April 1900 - the memorial is still on display to this day. On the 31st May this year we held a special service on Boer War Memorial day to remember Corporal Kilpatrick and to re-dedicate our Honor Boards*.

*Added to the Register of War Memorials in New South Wales during 2012 (sesquicentenary year).

→
Memorial plaque installed on the beautiful 1897 building facade
(photo courtesy of Tania Savage).

Friday, 23rd February 1900
SYDNEY MORNING HERALD

THE LATE CORPORAL KILPATRICK.

It is proposed to erect a tablet in memory of the late Corporal Kilpatrick, of the Lancers, who was killed in the war. As soon as the cables announced his death, Mr. Hawthorne, M.L.A., as chairman of the Leichhardt School Board, with Mr. P. J. Connelly, head master of the Leichhardt Superior Public school, Miss Cromack, head mistress of the girls' school, Miss Thornton, head mistress of the infants, and other teachers, held a meeting and decided to inaugurate a movement for the collection of funds wherewith to erect a memorial tablet on the tower of one of the schools opposite the Leichhardt Town Hall. The Minister for Education, Mr. Perry, has sanctioned the erection of the tablet, and Mrs. Perry has been asked to unveil it. The ceremony will take place on March 17. The late Corporal Kilpatrick was a scholar, a pupil teacher, and an assistant teacher in the boys' department of the school.

Monday, 9th April 1900
SYDNEY MORNING HERALD

THE LATE CORPORAL KILPATRICK - UNVEILING A MEMORIAL TABLET AT LEICHHARDT

A memorial tablet, erected on the tower of the Leichhardt Superior Public School, facing Marion street, to the memory of the late Corporal Kilpatrick, who died from wounds received at Ransburg, South Africa, was unveiled on Saturday afternoon, in the presence of a large concourse of people, by Mrs. Perry, wife of the Minister for Public Instruction. A detachment of the Sydney Squadron of Lancers, under Major Vernon, was present, as well as four men from each squadron of the Imperial Bushmen. Amongst those occupying seats on the platform were Mr. J. S. Hawthorne (member for the district), who presided, Mr. J. J. Cohen, M.L.A. and Colonel Taunton (representing Major-General French).

The chairman addressed the meeting, and read a telegram from the Premier expressing his regret at being unable to be present. The Police Band was present, and played several selections of music. About 300 school children sang patriotic part songs. A recitation, written by a local resident, entitled "In Memoriam", was read and during the last verse of which the flags covering the tablet were lowered by Mrs. Perry, amidst considerable enthusiasm and loud cheering, the school children singing "The Requiem". The singing of the national anthem concluded the proceedings.



EARLY 1900's

Leichhardt Superior Public School continued to thrive through the early 1900's as the suburb grew. Despite housing many low socioeconomic families with widespread poverty, the community were civic minded and took part in many local events as they were keen to support the less well-off in their midst. The community were particularly eager to give their children the very best education. They were instrumental in raising funds for the first school library (1904) by organising two school concerts at the town hall. The new library consisted of “over three hundred volumes which are held in two large handsome cases”.

The principal of the Infants School Ms Alice Reilly organised concerts to raise funds to purchase art supplies and a report in the Sydney Morning Herald in 1904 sang her praises. Sadly, the newspaper had to report her death by suicide some eleven years later in 1915. She was remembered as a hard-working, kind, and innovative principal who cared deeply about her students and the school.

The early 1900's saw Leichhardt School plant its first garden. They grew every vegetable imaginable and even kept a couple of sheep. The school entered the sheep in the Royal Easter Show and won first prize - this success must have meant a great deal to the pupils as my grandmother was still talking about this quite excitedly 80 years later!

Displays and exhibitions were highly valued at Leichhardt School - a report in the Sydney Morning Herald dated 26th May 1908 describes an exhibition at the school of between 1,200 and 1,300 students - they sang patriotic songs, performed marching exhibitions but apparently the highlight of the day was when a volley of shots were fired by the cadets over the heads of the students as they sang “God save the King”!



↑ Prize winning LPS Ram - 1906.



SYDNEY MORNING HERALD

The end of year demonstration given by the infants' department at Leichhardt was a sight which would gladden the eyes of every true Australian and bring joy to the heart of the worst pessimist. Looking at the little boys and girls playing at their organised games or working busily at their drawing, writing or modelling one felt with a thrill that there was nothing very wrong with young Australia. The bright faces and sturdy limbs told a more eloquent tale than any statistics or reports, and the happy air of the children and their lack of self-consciousness spoke loudly of the wisdom of their teachers. There was a freshness and spontaneity about every action of the little pupils that proved how excellently the true spirit of work was being fulfilled, and that the children were unconsciously and happily learning what once would have been resisted as 'lessons'.

There was another thing too that was noticeable in the games, and that was the natural grace of the children, or rather of the little girls. The boys were somewhat clumsy and lifted their feet with a more visible effort; but the tiny shoes of the girls skipped and danced as lightly as if they were fairy slippers. The games do much to reduce the awkwardness in both boys and girls, and it is safe to say that the boys and girls who have had such a real training will not be such hobbledchoys at any age as those who have not. They are less awkward in every way and it has been proved beyond question that the child who learn to fold paper shapes accurately, and makes little birds and sheep from clay, is much more skilful with his tools when he comes to the technical schools than the child who never learns to use his hands until he is ten years old. The politeness and courtesy which are a marked feature of all the games must have a beneficial effect on the children, and incidentally on the 'grown-ups'.

Music and sport were held in high esteem at Leichhardt. The boys' choir was particularly famous, they won a number of eisteddfods and participated in numerous concerts to not only entertain the public but raise funds for the school. Cricket was a popular sport at that time and the school fielded very competitive teams to play in inter-school matches. It is obvious that these were very male domains which reflect the culture of the time.

Leichhardt School had another famous scholar grace the world stage during the 1900's. Archibald Lang McClean attended Leichhardt High School for his secondary education to Intermediate Certificate. He showed signs of being a gifted student and was encouraged to move on to Fort Street Boys High School where he matriculated. He became the Chief Medical Officer under Douglas Mawson for the first Australian expedition to Antarctica in 1910. His scientific findings formed the basis of research for those who came after him. McClean remained behind in Antarctica to search for three members of his party that were lost on a sledge expedition. They were due to return to Australia but McClean and five others chose to stay and search for the lost men even though it meant they would have to stay

another year in Antarctica. Tragically only Mawson survived and was nursed back to health by Archibald McClean. When World War One broke out McClean joined the Royal Medical Corps until his discharge in 1916 with a poisoned finger. He returned to Australia and joined the Australian Army Medical Corps and saw service in Egypt and France where he was gassed twice. Throughout his service he had a reputation for gallantry and devotion to duty and was awarded the military cross. Unfortunately McClean died from tuberculosis in 1922 at the age of 37.

Evening school classes were an integral part of Leichhardt School's development during the early 1900's. The very first attempt to introduce classes occurred in 1881 for young men who had left school but wanted to further their education. There were only eleven prospective students so the move failed however proponents of the cause didn't give up and in 1901 seventeen young men applied to enrol at evening school and were taught by Mr H B Squire until 1908 when numbers dropped again and the school was closed. In July 1909 the evening school reopened in an unofficial manner due to small numbers but their persistence paid off and in 1912 the Evening Continuation School opened which included science and manual training.

Despite two new beautiful buildings being constructed and extensive expansion of the old buildings overcrowding was still an issue. In 1912 the whole of the school buildings were remodelled and additions provided in connection with all three departments. New buildings were also constructed to house science, domestic economics and manual training. Only the manual training building still stands at the back of the school in McDonald Street and was recently converted into town houses. The total cost of the refurbishment was estimated to cost over £15000.



7 year olds circa 1912.
↓



↑ Maypole dancing circa 1903.

Students taking care of their vegie garden 1903.
↓

WORLD WAR ONE

As was the case with the rest of Australia, the First World War was a difficult time for Leichhardt School. Many young men from the area had enlisted and were off for ‘their great adventure’. As the full horror of the war became clear and casualties climbed a sombre mood hung over Leichhardt. Nationalism fervour ran high and the boys’ choir performed in a “Patriotic Concert” at Leichhardt Town Hall on the 25th May 1914. The tragic events of Gallipoli and the Western Front were still to come. Female students keen to help in the war effort knitted over 1,000 pair of socks to send to the troops.

When the war came to an end in 1918 families were devastated as the full realisation of those that they had lost became apparent. It seemed to many that a whole generation of young men had been wiped out and there was a great need in the community to honour those that had died. The first mention of the Parents and Citizens’ Association came in 1918 when at the end of the war they were instrumental in erecting an Honor Board, in memory of the scholars and teachers who had served in the First World War. Early in 1920 the Parents and Citizens’ Association decided to plant a row of shade trees and lawn at the school in memory of those from the school community who had lost their lives in the war. The Department had the trees planted in June, and the Association met the expenses. Subsequently a marble tablet was placed on the wall of the school building “setting forth the object for which the trees were planted”. The row of trees planted all those years ago are still growing in front of the school and are a moving tribute to those who lost their life in World War One.

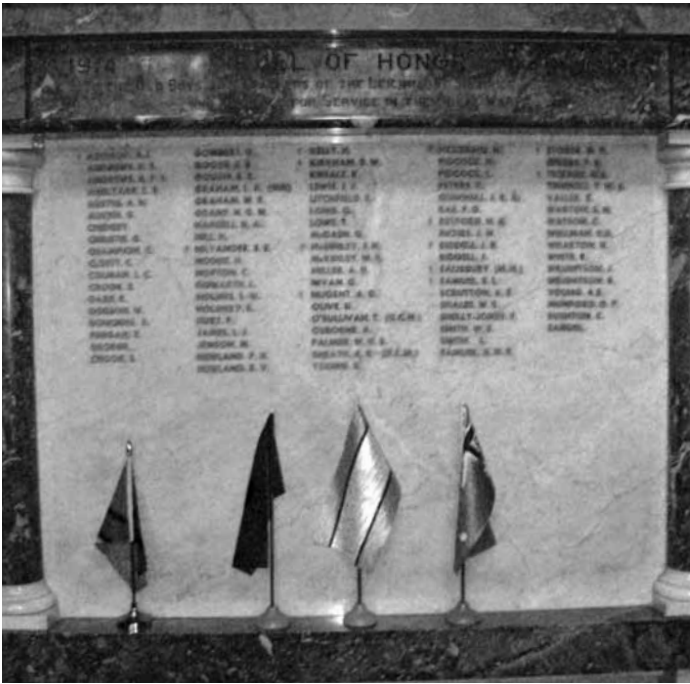


↑
The row of shade trees as they are today in memory of those from the school community who lost their lives during the Great War (photo courtesy of Tania Savage).

We were delighted when **Mr Harold Wilson** contacted the school – he was born in 1910 and is now 102 years old. He started school in 1915 and completed the whole of his education at LPS before leaving in 1924. He remembers that all students received a peace medal when the war was over and can recall watching as the trees were planted at the front of the school as a mark of commemoration. He also vividly remembers the war memorial, which now stands in Pioneer Park, being placed on the intersection of Norton and Marion Streets – it was later moved when the old cemetery began a memorial park.



→
Plaque for the memorial trees (photo courtesy of Tania Savage).



←↑
World War One Honor Boards restored in 2012.

→
6A - 1917
(Photo from Eva Harris born 1906).



BETWEEN THE WARS

The 1920’s were an exciting time for Leichhardt School. The Municipality of Leichhardt celebrated its Diamond Jubilee in style with concerts, parades and lots of speeches from the politicians! The school was now known as Leichhardt Central to easily differentiate it from the myriad of schools that were springing up in the surrounding areas.

It was reported in a Jubilee Souvenir Paper that Leichhardt Central was ranked as one of the largest schools in the Commonwealth and the Infants Department was considered to be the largest in the state. Total enrolments stood at 2,202 students with 57 teachers across the three departments. Boys could either sit for the leaving certificate and go on to further academic education or pursue a trade certificate at school. The majority of boys followed the trade path and in 1921 there were 121 enrolments. Many girls left school at the end of primary to help at home or get a job to support the family but those who did stay on enrolled in domestic science and were instructed in cookery, needlework, laundry work and household cleaning.

The great depression hit Leichhardt hard. Unemployment in the area reached a record 29% with many people being evicted from their homes. Many struggled on part-time work or depended on charity or the dole. Students regularly left school as soon as they turned twelve to try and help support the family - this led to a generation of under educated children. Poverty was rampant and many students came to school hungry as their family were only able to afford one meal a day.



↑
Rose and Tom Hillard's great grandfather- family photo circa 1923.

Mr Ray Swankie, aged 96, a former student who went from kindergarten to high school at LPS, remembers being at school during the depression.

“The depression back then wasn't like what we have had in the past few years. People had no money at all, nothing – even doctors were digging ditches to try and make some money! Many of the kids who came to school had no shoes, including me, but I never went hungry. My mother was able to make a meal from anything – she made her own damper and made jam out of any fruit that was available – I can't look at jam now!

There were three dairy's in Leichhardt back then where we could get milk from, Langdale's on the corner of Allan Street and Derbyshire Rd (now townhouses), Kincaid's in Moore Street (now Memorial Park) and Lambert's in Marion Street (now Lambert Park).

I was born in Short St and moved to Norton St opposite the cemetery (Pioneer Park) – we had a great time playing in the cemetery! We had to make our own fun by playing cricket in the street with stumps made out of old kerosene cans but sometimes we had to move when a horse and cart came along. Back then everything was delivered by horse and cart.”

We are very fortunate to have made contact with a scholar from the early 1920's. **Mr John Dougdale** (who is now 94) attended Leichhardt Public School from Kindergarten until Year 5 when his family moved to Ettalong on the Central Coast. Mr Dougdale has led a varied and interesting life - he became a teacher, then principal and finally a District Inspector of Schools before retiring in 1978. He has kindly allowed us to use some extracts from his autobiography. Mr Dougdale visited our school in August this year and was interviewed by students from a number of primary classes and was guest of honour at the Infants' assembly.



↑
1920 Whole School.

EXTRACTS FROM

Mr John Dougdale's Autobiography

Being a July baby I would have already been six months into my fifth year when I was enrolled into the kindergarten class at Leichhardt Public School in February 1924. This was rather late to enter kindergarten, but at 4 at the beginning of 1923 I would have been too young and, at any rate, that was about the time we moved into 39 Junior Street. I have always had a belief that somewhere in those early school years I skipped a class and this accounted for the fact that I was in second class for the whole of 1925. After only six months in that initial kindergarten grade I apparently by-passed first class. The outcome of this was that I was always about half a year younger than most of the children in my grade level, right up into fifth year at high school in 1934. As I was never of robust size this “immaturity” may account for personality problems I came to manifest – shyness, introversion and, to a degree, being a “loner”. I believe, however, that my immaturity only accentuated those defects to which I was genetically pre-disposed.

Memories of my school days at Leichhardt are not plentiful. I feel that I cried when my mother left me on my first day of school, but that would not have been unusual. She may have wept a little herself, as many mothers are wont to do when handing their pride and joy into the hands of others. The kindergarten was located in a red-brick, self-contained building, which still stands in the schoolyard aloof from the handsome main building of sandstone with its high tower at the corner of Norton and Marion Streets.

My only, but vivid recollection of the kindergarten classroom at Leichhardt has to do with a celebration of “Empire Day” one May 24th. I see a stage that the teachers had constructed by linking together the kindergarten classroom tables. Moving on that platform is a string of little figures all dressed in sailor costumes that our mothers had made for us. I was the leader of the “crocodile” and we marched around, one after the other, singing as our mothers watched and applauded:

*Sons of the sea,/ All British born,
Sailing every ocean,/ Laughing foes to scorn.
They may build their ships, my lads,
And think they know the game,
But they can't beat the boys of the bulldog breed
That made Old England's name.*

Whether it was during my kindergarten months or my second class year there was the exciting time when the school photographer came to visit us with his Shetland pony. Having been forewarned of this thrilling event those of us who wanted to have an equestrian portrait of ourselves came to school dressed in our best clothes each to be seated astride the placid beast to have his picture taken. I don't know if the little girls of the class were equally favoured and maybe if they were they were seated side-saddle to be similarly recorded for posterity. Mine was an excellent photograph, which I still have, showing a neatly dressed, rather stocky little boy astride the pony who

was standing quietly near the stone trough where the drinking bubblers were situated.

Other memories reside with me concerning my days in second class. One is tangibly reinforced by a gift I made my mother for Mother's Day 1925. This was kept by my mother and I have it with me today. Each child in the class must have made a similar tribute to motherhood. It consists of a small-sized brown-paper drawing book such as continued for many years to be a stock issue for infant's children in public schools. Over perhaps three weeks we cut illustrations from papers and magazines, no doubt provided by the teacher, coloured them in using pastels or wax crayons and pasted them into our small presentations. To these, in our own cursive handwriting in pencil we added such words as, “I coloured this and cut it out”. Best of all, however, was our cursive transcription onto the gift's front cover; this was verse copied from our second-class reader, which read:

*Hundreds of butterflies on the lawn,
Hundreds of bees in the purple clover,
Hundreds of dewdrops to greet the dawn,
But only one mother the wide world over.*

On looking at this relic today I marvel at the good quality of the cursive handwriting in the book I composed for my mother's day gift. She obviously treasured it, herself being sentimentally inclined towards the institution of motherhood, for she kept this token of recognition and affection until I took it over as the only existing artefact of my early school and childhood days. “Mother knows best.” was her stock response from her own Victorian upbringing when we often queried why we should or should not do something she commanded or suggested.

In due course I passed into third class in the primary boys' department at Leichhardt Public School where I think we had a man as teacher, but I have no memory of him. There is an ambience of largeness and gloom about the classroom which was just off one of the entries into the main brick building. Any recollection of what went on in that room has long since vanished, but I have a faded photograph of the sixty eight-year-olds that that one teacher had to deal with in my class. I can barely make out the features of the little boys who had posed for the school photographer during their year in third grade and I can attach no names to my class-mates of 1926. This is a great pity for it is the only picture I have of my subsequent school years. My parents never did own a camera, nor did they place much store in accumulating family photographs. In any case, cameras and film were expensively outside the range of most working class families of the 1920s and 1930s and it was comparatively rare for people to possess even the humble fixed-focused, single-lensed Kodak Box Brownie to make snapshots.

My year in fourth class is a void in my mind, but there are a few memories of my being in fifth class in 1928 including some recollections of my teacher then. His name, I am sure, was Bennett and he lived not far from the school in a small cottage whose small veranda fronted almost immediately onto the footpath on Marion Street. I would even venture to assert that he lived there with his sisters, but that may

be wrong. We thought he was quite old but he was probably a returned soldier from World War I and he was possibly only in his thirties. When I visualise him he dimly materialises as a man of spare build in a grey suit and without beard or moustache. I believe he was as kind to us as a teacher of those days could be and we rather liked him. He must have been garrulous for he was easily led into telling us some yarn or other that had nothing whatever to do with the lesson in hand. This was of much greater estimable interest than performing some lesson in reading, writing or arithmetic.

Two lessons that Mr Bennett gave, however, which made a great impression on me. One had something to do with volcanoes and for a long time thereafter I suffered from nightmares about being engulfed in boiling lava and even waking fears that there might be an eruption one day in the vicinity of Leichhardt. The other lesson was about the Hawkesbury River railway bridge. Mr Bennett told us that when it was being built (in the 1890s) the engineers couldn't find a rock foundation for some of its deeper pylons and had been obliged to float them on bales of wool. No doubt I have the details wrong, but the effect of these allegedly shaky foundations was that the bridge was somewhat unsafe in 1928. In reality, woollen bales or not, this last was apparently quite true and for many years before the new bridge was built trains slowed down to a crawl when they were passing over it. We often went to Woy Woy for our holidays in those days and I vividly recall closing my eyes in dread as the train passed over the Hawkesbury River Bridge and feeling a sense of liberation when it made it to the other side.

The playground of our school was an enjoyable place to be. It was large in the dimensions of childhood, but actually small and crowded and covered with bitumen that was mostly broken and sometimes stony. Of trees in those days there were few although the old infants building had a decorative shrubbery on part of its street border where of course play was forbidden. It was a very Spartan playground delimited by buildings, one of which was the double-story building that contained classrooms for the technical education of the super-primary boys. The rest of their school was in a nearby block in Balmain Road where there was also a domestic science school for the big girls. I cannot recall seeing any of these adolescents and we never seemed to be troubled by them, either in or on our way to and from school.

BETWEEN THE WARS (continued)

The perennial problem of overcrowding at Leichhardt School reached its peak in the 20’s. In 1921 some primary classes were so full that the Anglican Church hall over the road was rented to relieve the situation and in May 1924 a room at the Presbyterian Church was rented for needlework classes. Later that year the overcrowding was so bad that two girls’ classes were held in the Anglican Church hall, two in the Presbyterian Church hall and a further two at Petersham School.

History seemed to have a way of repeating itself and the building work needed to ease the problem was not completed until May 1929 with a price tag of £26,650. A second storey of three classrooms was added to the boys department (the three kindergarten rooms upstairs in Block E), a new wing of six classrooms to the girls department (the green room, and three classrooms upstairs in Block A), and a two storey domestic block was built (this has been demolished). Despite the massive expansion overcrowding still remained a problem especially for the domestic science section and in 1934 two of its classes had to be sent to Rozelle School.

Extract from Enrolment Register - 1938.

↓ Leichhardt

PROGRESS, AND WITHDRAWAL

Ann 2

GIRLS

Register No.	Date of Admission	First Name	Second Name	Third Name	Fourth Name	Fifth Name	Sixth Name	Seventh Name	Eighth Name	Ninth Name	Tenth Name	Date of Admission to each Class	Date of Leaving School	Occupation (if any)	
101	1938	Clark	Ann	11	1938	Clark	Ann	11	1938	Clark	Ann	11	1938	1938	1938
102	1938	Clark	Ann	11	1938	Clark	Ann	11	1938	Clark	Ann	11	1938	1938	1938
103	1938	Clark	Ann	11	1938	Clark	Ann	11	1938	Clark	Ann	11	1938	1938	1938
104	1938	Clark	Ann	11	1938	Clark	Ann	11	1938	Clark	Ann	11	1938	1938	1938
105	1938	Clark	Ann	11	1938	Clark	Ann	11	1938	Clark	Ann	11	1938	1938	1938
106	1938	Clark	Ann	11	1938	Clark	Ann	11	1938	Clark	Ann	11	1938	1938	1938
107	1938	Clark	Ann	11	1938	Clark	Ann	11	1938	Clark	Ann	11	1938	1938	1938
108	1938	Clark	Ann	11	1938	Clark	Ann	11	1938	Clark	Ann	11	1938	1938	1938
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Regular and punctual attendance, a rare thing in the 20s.



EXTRACTS FROM

‘MY DAYS AT LEICHHARDT PUBLIC SCHOOL 1935 - 1941’

written by Ruth Eslake

(formerly Ruth Parsons who lived at the Rectory of All Souls Anglican Church over the road from LPS)

My recollection of the early period is understandably sketchy. It was also the latter part of school life lived through the Great Depression though as a child I wasn’t aware of the effect it must have had on families and the restrictions placed on the Education Department. Money was tight and parents were expected to fit their children out with uniforms, school cases, some exercise books, coloured pencils and food. The issuing of necessary school utensils was strictly accounted for.

Throughout my time from Kindergarten to Sixth Class I can only remember a few occasions when I was unhappy. Strong discipline and routine were the norm and the regimental style seemed to suit me. We just had to obey and follow orders. Each morning began with school bell rung at 9am, then assembly in the courtyard where we lined up in pairs in class order.

Kindergarten was held in one large room with two small rooms attached for pupils to progress to once they knew the alphabet and could hold a pencil correctly. I only remember the story-telling, dancing to music and playing with toys. The building was separate from the rest of the Infants. In the Infants building there were individual classrooms but no common group areas. Each room was set up with rows of double desks and a teacher’s desk up front and a blackboard. We did however have more playtime and games outside and were dismissed each afternoon a half hour before the Primary department which ended at 3.30pm. It was co-ed up to this stage.

Primary was girls only. After the morning assembly and rollcall we settled into our fixed wooden double desks which had an inkwell and open drawer underneath for books. Pencils were still used until 4th class when nib pens were issued and monitors make ink from powder to fill the inkwells. Lessons usually started with mental arithmetic (which I hated), then spelling (which I liked). We were issued with readers suitable for each age group and could borrow from a cupboard that contained supplementary readers. At the end of the day we packed up and the teacher inspected under our desks to see that that they were tidy. If the weather was bad the classes were crammed into two classrooms which had concertina walls that could be opened to make more room. On Friday afternoons we had physical culture in the playground eg: with ball games or exercises. The school had a small choir of which I was a member. We practiced under an excellent teacher and entered into competitions. These were sometimes held in the Sydney Town Hall and it was so exciting to travel there on a tram - “The Ashgrove” is one song I remember.

In 1932 the residents of Sydney watched in awe as the two sides of the Sydney Harbour Bridge finally joined together. It was an amazing engineering feat which helped raise the spirits of a nation struggling with the hardships of the great depression. One of our ex-pupils, Mrs Peggy Carr was at the opening of the bridge and saw Francis De Groot ride up on horseback and cut the ribbon with his sword just before the NSW Premier Jack Lang was able to perform this task.

Some excitement was also caused on 18th October 1934, when a policeman arrested a thief in McDonald Street, outside the school. In the course of making the arrest he fired a shot from his pistol which ricocheted through the window of the cookery school damaging the opposite wall.

By the eve of the Second World War unemployment began to decline but families were now filled with a new fear. The storm clouds of war were once again gathering above Europe and most families still had very clear memories of the last Great War - they could only watch and wait nervously.



↑
3B Class 1940
(Courtesy of Marion Davies nee Smith).

WORLD WAR TWO

This time the war came to Australia. Many ex-students remember how the windows were taped up to prevent flying glass and an air-raid shelter was built in the playground with emergency drills being commonplace. **Mrs Marlene Hackland** (nee Gazzard) remembers “During the war years, we had air raid shelters, and regularly we would have to go into them to know what to do in case of an air raid. We each had a first aid kit. We also sent parcels to people overseas”.

Inspectors’ reports from the war period constantly praise the staff for trying to provide stability for their students, many who were bewildered and frightened. He notes that at least two rooms were on secondment to the National Emergency Service which once again exacerbated the overcrowding. **Margaret Perine** (nee Sargeant) notes that she did not start school until she was 6 years old because of the overcrowding – there were simply no classes available.

Despite the somewhat dire position they found themselves in the Inspector wrote in 1943 “The most important work achieved in this school this year has been the establishment of a fine tone and happy busy working spirit. In view of the exceptional difficulties which have been faced this is a matter for sincere commendation and congratulations”.

One of our ‘old’ students **Mrs Marion Smith** (nee Davies) remembers that you had to be a certain height to get material for a three pleated tunic because of restrictions during the war years. Another memory of the war years from a former pupil **Mrs Tania Grasbon** (nee Stepanoff) recalls money being short and buying food with coupons. **Ruth Eslake** (nee Parsons) writes of an interesting guest speaker at school “who extolled the virtues of eating apples and proceeded to eat one - core and all. We all received one, which was a novelty as fruit was not commonly eaten during the war years”.



Eric Perine who attended LPS from 1935 until 1946 remembers a mosquito bomber cleared the roof of the school and exploded over Petersham Station. Newspaper reports state that a mosquito bomber on a test flight disintegrated over Leichhardt and Petersham on the 2nd May 1915. It was suspected that a violent pull from a power dive may have led to the structural failure of the plane. The two crew members tried to eject from the plane but were too close to the ground for their parachutes to open and were killed. The Daily Telegraph dated 3rd May 1945 stated that two civilians were injured and a total of 18 properties damaged with five houses set on fire by the falling debris. **Mrs Lyn Ellston** (nee King) remembers that “they brought round a small part of a plane that fell in the school grounds”.

All of our questionnaire respondents who attended Leichhardt during the war years have fond memories of school reinforcing the Inspector’s findings. Many had already lived through the Great Depression yet they seem not to dwell on the difficulties they faced as children during the war years preferring to reflect fondly on the friendships they made and retained and remember with great affection some of the teachers who made a great impression on their lives. Perhaps **Miss Jessie Ritchie** sums it up quite succinctly with her final words in our questionnaire when asked to share any memories from her school days “Best days of your life and a very good school” - who could ask for more.

METHODS OF ADRIAL ATTACK. page 1.

1. High Explosive Bombs.
2. Incendiary Bombs.
3. Gas Bombs and Sprays.

HIGH EXPLOSIVE BOMBS.

A. FRAGMENTATION BOMBS.
Used largely to create panic amongst the people. They burst on impact and fly into numbers of:fragments. Splinters from it travel at the rate of 50 to 80 miles per minute. The second danger is from the BLAST EFFECT. When the bomb explodes air is driven out and there is a vacuum for a fraction of a second, then there is a rush of air back to the seat of explosion. The suction is so great that it will suck the walls out of build-ings and sweep everything before it, human beings included. Walls of buildings will always fall outward.

B. DEMOLITION BOMBS.
These are of a larger and heavier type, and will be used to destroy important build-ings, military objects, to disorganise essential services, means of transport etc. They are fitted with a time fuse to delay action. This allows the bomb to penetrate the build-ing before exploding.

Both these types of High Explosive Bombs cause casualties, e.g. fractures, wounds, shock, asphyxia.

INCENDIARY BOMBS.

KILO BOMBS.
These weigh 2½ lbs each and are the most likely to be used. They are about 14 inches long, the case being made of magnesium metal filled with a mixture called thermite which burns with terrific heat. A bomber plane can carry 1,000 of these. One of these bombs can penetrate an ordinary roof and probably come to rest on the ceiling where it would burst into flames. Fragments may fly 50 ft from the bomb and start other fires. The bomb will burn itself out in 15 to 20 minutes. It does not burn with a flame after the first few minutes, but with a glow like molten metal.

HOW TO CONTROL. (a) with sand; (b) with water.
These bombs cannot be extinguished, they can only be controlled so that they will not

WHAT TO DO WHEN THE WARNING SOUNDS. Pa ge 2.

(a) IF IN THE OPEN.
1. Immediately take cover.
2. DO NOT look out for aircraft--danger from splinters from our own anti-aircraft as well as from bombs. Bombs released several miles away can injure you.
3. Enter a shelter if near one.
4. If no shelter is handy enter a modern building and obey the warden.
5. If no cover is available then throw yourself into the gutter, supported on one elbow, keep the chest, stomach and lower portion of the body off the ground. Open the mouth a nd cover the head with a coat if possible.
6. Do not shelter against a wall or any upright object.

(b) IF AT HOME.
1. Turn off the gas at the meter.
2. See that water receptacles are filled.
3. Make sure that your fire fighting appliances are handy.
4. Remain in the special room prepared until the "All Clear" sounds.
5. A heavy table will provide extra protection.
6. Don't stay between a window and door, on account of the blast effect, the corner of a room is safer.

CASUALTIES.
Standing in Street 14
Lying " " 7
Street Doorways 4½
In Houses 1½
S urface Shelters ½

THE CHOICE OF A ROOM IN A BUILDING.
1. A cellar or basement offers slightly better protection than an above-ground room, but there must be two outlets, also there is danger of flooding from broken mains, damaged pipes and drains.
2. If possible choose a room facing a garden or soft earth, rather than pavement as the blast effect is lessened.
3. If there are three rooms in a row, choose the centre one as the walls of the others give added protection.
4. Avoid a room with too many windows or ornamental plaster ceiling.

↑
Taken from a 1942 school instruction document outlining what to do when the air siren is heard.

←
1949 Trans class.

1946 TO 1969

The end of World War Two marked a period of mass migration to Australia as many refugees left war-torn Europe. The demographic of the area changed markedly as families from many different nations decided to call Leichhardt home.

This change caused some friction in the community but mostly brought some wonderful influences to the municipality. Of course the school reflected the changing community and the enrolment register from this time started to display a wide array of surnames. Leichhardt was still predominantly working class with many refugees finding work in low paid jobs as they were not able to speak English fluently. Evening classes at Leichhardt

School provided many migrants with the opportunity to learn to speak and write English. Natalie Scaltrito who has worked for many years in the office recalls that her father Placido Costa studied at Leichhardt Evening College when he first arrived as a migrant from Italy in the late 1950's - as did many Italians from that period, Mr Costa lived initially in Leichhardt as there was a strong Italian community there which is still present to this day.

4B 1951 - Sandra Milne.
↓



→
Anne Yates half yearly
report 1953.

Leichhardt Central Girls' Primary School		
TERM Half-Yearly 1953		
REPORT ON: Anne Yates		
CLASS 5A		
SUBJECT	TOTAL	MARKS GAINED
ENGLISH—		
Reading	100	78
Composition	100	70
Comprehension & Grammar	100	79
Dictation	100	98
Writing	100	65
Natural Arithmetic	100	91
Written Arithmetic	100	100
Geometry		
Social Studies	100	86
Handwork		
ATTENDANCE excellent CONDUCT V. Good		
COMMENTS: A very good worker. Pleasant. Writing can be better.		

Kindy B 1951
(Photo courtesy of Helen Yates).
↓



Ann Yates - first day of school 1950



←
School Concert 1950 -
Leichhardt Town Hall Helen Yates
and Jennifer Stevens.

The 1950's are often seen as a 'dull' period in Australian history. We have some wonderful memoirs written from this period that dispels that myth.

EXCERPT FROM
‘MEMORIES OF
LEICHHARDT
PUBLIC SCHOOL 1950-1954’
written by Sandra Milne

(nee Morgan) - grandmother of Amelia and Demeter Milne
(current students of LPS)

I came to Leichhardt Public School from the infants' school in Crystal Street Petersham in 1950. The infants school only taught till second class - then everyone had to move on to a Primary School. Luckily my little sister was allowed to join me because Leichhardt Public School did have infants' classes.

It was exciting because it meant we could catch the tram which came up Norton Street and stopped right beside the school as the buses do now. It was a very busy intersection just like now - with trams going in both directions.

The main buildings in the old section of the school have not changed very much from the outside. I remember the staircase in the main building - my class was upstairs along a wide corridor. A staff room and the headmistress' office were also along this corridor.

A break in the morning was called playtime around 11 o'clock - all children were given a small bottle of milk with a silver top. This was free and helped to keep us healthy and strong. We make all sorts of things from the silver tops!

Two events I remember fondly were:

- 1. Queen Elizabeth was coming to Australia for a visit in 1954 - the first since becoming Queen. Many schools arranged a show with folk dancing. Leichhardt Public School was involved and I remember us practicing for a long time getting our steps perfect. The big day came and we did our show at the showground and the Queen drove past in a big black open car waving to all the children. For that time it was a very special event.
- 2. The other event was the school concert at the Sydney Town Hall. There was no Opera House then so special concerts were held in the Town Hall. Again Leichhardt Public School had a choir which joined several schools. It was a splendid concert and my parents were very proud that their daughter had sung in the Sydney Town Hall!

These two events must have been memorable as a number of students have remembered them as 'special memories'.

It is interesting to see this period from the perspective of a teacher and once again we can draw on memoirs from **Mrs Ruth Eslake** (nee Parsons) who was formerly a student at LPS before returning to teach at the school in 1954.

I returned to teach at Leichhardt Primary School as a teacher in 1954. It was still segregated into girls and boys and I taught girls 5B/6B. I think I had about 30 pupils. My classroom was fitted out with moveable desks and the inkwells were replaced with ink bottles. Blackboards were still the main teaching aid. My desk was situated near an open coal fire which was the only form of heating in my room and often had insufficient fuel to last the day. I used a fountain pen but ballpoint pens were grudgingly allowed to be used.

The most popular lesson was sewing which was taught by a special teacher and girls were allowed to talk as they learnt embroidery.

Teachers' playground rosters were strictly enforced, with two teachers on duty at a time. We were also in charge of organised games. I remember teaching Maypole dancing for special events. We were also expected to supervise the distribution of morning free milk and try to stop any child who disliked drinking it from passing it on to one who did. There was a school secretary but teachers' aides, photocopying, television and computers were still to come in the future.

When the school was known as Leichhardt Superior School many students completed all of their education at Leichhardt - from Kindergarten through to High School. Boys who attended the Junior Technical section of Leichhardt all appear to remember the discipline at school as being 'very strict'. Sport also seems to rate highly as they remember fondly the sport they participated in at school - especially PE, soccer and rugby league followed very closely with their delight in buying goodies from the tuckshop as it was known then. The Olympic Games in Melbourne is recalled as a 'highlight' - but somewhat surprisingly the coronation of Queen Elizabeth seems to run a very poor second!



↑
Botanic Garden Excursion 1957 with teachers Miss Grady, Miss Rupray
(Photo courtesy of Helen Yates).

Excursion to Vaucluse House 1956 - Teacher Miss Grady.
↓



6A 1958 (Photo courtesy of Helen Yates)
↓



Marion Street.
↓



↑
Home Science Class 1953



→
Miss Edwards Teacher Excursion
to Vaucluse House 1956.



←
Class 5C, 1961.

The 1960s were a time of great social change in Australian Society. There were new ideas as to how modern families should live coupled with an influx of culture from other countries. The perceived role of women in society was being slowly challenged as well as changes in social and political ideology. The major cultural changes were seen in fashion, music and technology. Fashion changed from being simple and conservative to carefree and relaxed. Artists such as Bob Dylan were pushing for social change through their music. On the technology front improvements to jet engines made plane travel faster and more affordable - the world was on the move.

A much smaller move was planned in Leichhardt when the older boys moved to the newly established Ibrox Park Boys High down near Pioneer Park in 1960. The Technical College formerly attached to Leichhardt became part of Petersham Technical School. The girls section of Leichhardt expanded and became known as Leichhardt Girls Junior High and went from Years 1 - 4 (we now know it as Years 7 -10). We have had contact from many girls from this period who recall their time at the school with a great deal of nostalgia.

Cathy Eslake had spent her school life at a private all girls' school in England before enrolling at Leichhardt from October 1963 to April 1964 - she remembers her first day vividly:

“The first day I arrived at LPS, the principal Mr McKervey, asked Toula Markos to ‘take Catherine and show her the ropes’. Toula did a great job showing me the classrooms, toilets, playground and every part of the school but when we finished our tour I thought to myself: well she’s a very friendly girl and she has shown me everything but where were the ropes? Almost 50 years later it is still a story we like to tell our family and friends”.

Cathy also reminds us of ‘Beatlemania’ during the 1960’s:

“I had just turned 11 and it was my first experience of music that I wanted to listen to, rather than boring music I was told to listen to. I remember sitting next to mum on a bus going up Norton Street and asking her if she thought there would ever be a time when the Beatles weren’t famous!”

Whole school assembly 1962.
↓



Library 1962.
↓

↑
P&C Members 1962.



1970 - 1989

The outlook for Leichhardt in the 1970's was considered to be somewhat bleak from all accounts.

Reports on the socioeconomic make-up of the community make depressing reading:

- low average income per member of the workforce
- 9th highest rate of receipt of emergency cash assistance in the state
- 3rd highest member of separated and divorced adults in the state
- the area had less than 1.2 hectares of open space per thousand residents.

Crime rates were amongst the worst in the state:

- sixth highest rate of drug convictions in the metropolitan area
- third highest number of long term prisoners in the state
- second highest rate of juvenile crime in the state.

Heath status of Leichhardt residents was among the worst in NSW:

- second highest rate of suicide and self- inflicted injuries in the state
- sixth highest rate of male mortality rate in the state
- ninth highest rate of perinatal mortality in the state.

The problems the community were facing were also reflected at school. A number of issues were identified including the school's location. This was seen a threefold problem as it was directly under a flight path, had a shortage of playground space and used a considerable amount of demountable classrooms.

The other issue facing the school was its large proportion of pupils (70%) from a non-English speaking background which was made up of thirty five nationalities. To help address some of these problems the school was included in the Disadvantaged Schools Program which enabled it to introduce targeted programmes.

MEMORIES FROM Vicki Flaherty *(nee O'Loughlin)* - attended LPS from 1967-1973

My days at LPS were happy ones - according to statistics we were, like many others in Leichhardt, living just below the poverty line in a suburb with soaring crime rates as well as high rates of suicide and mental health disease. However, I always felt secure and loved at home and was constantly nurtured at school by teachers who were unshakable in their belief that education was not a privilege but certainly a right of all children - I certainly wouldn't have wanted to grow up anywhere else than Leichhardt!

Despite the myriad of problems facing the school it continued to be a wonderful centre of learning. Students from a non-English speaking background were given access to specialist teachers. In 1976 a Special Education Unit was established at LPS and is still an integral part of the school to this day. Leichhardt students excelled on the sporting fields and were active participants in the inter-school sport programme. Musicals were popular at this time and a very professional stage production of 'Oliver' was performed on a number of nights to great acclaim.

The physical state of the school was certainly in need of updating. The fact that it was located directly under the flight path also caused difficulties but of course it wasn't feasible to simply move the school so plans were drawn up to refurbish it. This was to be a long and arduous process reminiscent of the battles previously fought by staunch LPS advocates' way back in its early days.

In 1976 the Girls High School was moved to Ibrox Park Boys High to form a coeducational High School for Years 7 to 12 and was to be called Leichhardt High. This allowed the infants and primary school to expand into the space previously occupied by the High School - eventually these two departments would combine under one principal. Architects were commissioned to refurbish the site in a sympathetic manner which took into account the historical significance of the buildings as well as trying to create space that was in line with more modern architecture.

At the end of the 1970's enrolments were beginning to decline as many families moved to the western suburbs of Sydney where great tracts of land were being opened up for housing (much in the same way Leichhardt had been developed in the 1860's) and of course were much more affordable. The gentrification of the inner suburbs had already started in areas such as Balmain and Paddington and Leichhardt was the next in line as those who were priced out of the 'trendy' suburbs looked towards cheaper alternatives which were still within an easy commute to the centre of Sydney.



→
LPS Jnr Girls Basketball 1970

During the early 1980's Leichhardt was in a transition stage from a largely working class, residential and industrial area to an environmentally reformed and physically upgraded residential suburb, with a number of middle and upper income residents. These new residents were often households which consisted of single people or childless couples. It was also characterised by an extremely high turnover of resident population which was reflected in the frequency in which children changed schools. Leichhardt also became significantly underrepresented in the young age group. In 1981 the 0-14 age group were 16% of the area population compared with 24.4% for the state of NSW. This trend was significantly reflected in the falling enrolments at Leichhardt Public School.

In the early 1980's a large number of students still came from a non-English speaking background. Statistics show 49.3% were listed as Australian, 18.3% as Italian, 8.7% as Greek, 8.0% as Yugoslav, 4.1% as Turkish, 2.2% as New Zealander, the remaining 9.4% of students were from various backgrounds including Maltese, Portuguese, Tongan, Filipino, Cambodian and Indian.

In 1982 a massive building program commenced. It was a difficult time for both students and teachers whilst construction was taking place as it seemed that every part of the school was a building site.

A new hall and canteen was constructed at the back of the school. In Block A the old hall was remodelled into a spacious staffroom as well as offices for the principal and executive staff. Two other classrooms were remodelled into the front office, sick bay and print room. A new library was established with the added bonus of a mezzanine level. A covered walkway was built from the steps of Block A to the new hall.

The old canteen was pulled down and some remodelling of Block E occurred. An Audio Visual room was established and a covered walkway built to join Block E and Block F. The whole of the school was repainted and new carpet laid. The pebble stone amphitheatres were built and extensive landscaping took place.

Unfortunately due to decreasing enrolments the school was denied access to Block C and the old sandstone building and little work was carried out on these buildings. The P&C and staff protested loudly and pointed out that enrolments were often cyclical and these buildings would be needed in the future - history has proven them to be right. 1982 also saw the end of Leichhardt Public School being part of the Disadvantaged Schools Program.

Leichhardt had long been known as "Little Italy' due to the large number of migrants that had settled in the suburb in the post-war period. In 1982 the Italian language programme was introduced to the school and was one of the first such programmes in the state. Italian is still taught at the school and is highly valued by members of the school community.



↑
Leichhardt Girls Junior High - Staff Photo 1974.



↑
Leichhardt Girls High 1D 1972 (Photo courtesy of Marion Davies nee Smith).



↑
1972 Junior Red Cross.

In 1983 the building work finally finished. The school community were excited about the refurbishment of their school and looked forward to enjoying the upgraded amenities.

School Programmes from 1983 were listed as:

LOTE Program (Language other than English)

Italian is taught to children in Years K-6

ESL Program (English as a Second Language)

Two Primary and **two Infants** teachers

Resource Teacher

Works with children who are not achieving their full potential

Dancing Programme

A part-time dancing teacher is funded by parent contribution and teaches Infants children different types of dancing.

Craft Teacher

Craft teacher attends four days a week

Camping Programme

Camping is seen as a very important part of experiential learning. Five grade camps are held each year, as well as camp to Myuna Bay

Fitness Programme

All Infants children take part in a daily Infants Aerobic exercise programme. Two Primary classes also have a daily exercise programme in addition to the usual sport and PE programme.

Music

Activities include choir, recorder and guitar groups.

School and Community Multicultural Liaison Programme

A coordinator, who is a Social Worker, is funded for 12 hours per week by the Multicultural Education Co-ordinating Committee and works towards opening the school to the community.

The mid to late 80's saw the continued change of Leichhardt from a working class area to a well-educated, distinctly middle class area. There were still residents in Leichhardt with relatively low incomes but the level of affluence was on the rise.

1984 Beach Harbour Walk excursion.
↓



School hall and old LOOSH building.
↓



↑
1984 - 1G Classroom - they had not long moved into E block building.

←
Marion Street frontage where native garden is now taken in 1983.

1976 was the year special education came to leichhardt.



Where the playground is now.



1996 children at front of school.



1997 Bob Carr visiting classroom.



1999 Food ready to go for Multicultural Munch.



Children at front of school 1996.

1990's

In Leichhardt the 1990's saw a strong movement of employment towards professional and technical positions moving away from trades and process work. A relatively high proportion of women were in the workforce at numbers way above the average for Sydney. With the Leichhardt area becoming more middle class, there was also a growth in the number of people with educational qualifications of a diploma status or higher.

Leichhardt Public School in the 90's also reflected the change in the broader community. Better educated parents demanded much more from their local school but were also willing to give of their time and expertise. Families were much smaller and consequently enrolments remained at a relatively low level. Classes now had the luxury of utilising double rooms but there was also a constant worry that if the school numbers became too low there would naturally be a loss of teachers and programs.

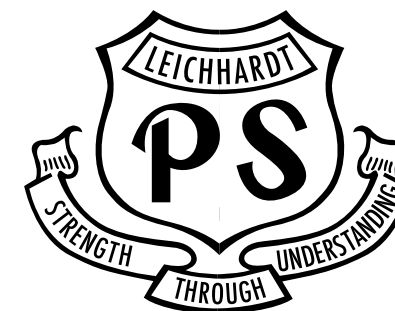
In 1995 a groundswell of protest erupted over increased noise pollution which emanated from Sydney's Kingsford Smith Airport. The federal government's response was to offer soundproofing measures to those directly under the flight path. LPS fell into this category and major work was carried out in 1996 - windows were double glazed and sound-locks added to the hall and exterior of Block E. Air-conditioning was installed in all buildings which helped mitigate the noise pollution but on-going costs and problems have arisen with high electricity costs and constant maintenance issues with the air-conditioning units.

This decade saw a dynamic group of parents in conjunction with the principal Maryann Campbell introduce programs which are now an integral part of school life - we simply cannot imagine LPS without them. In 1992 the band program took its first tentative steps under the guidance of a hardy group of parents with incredible drive - many students have been given tremendous opportunities through this program. The art program was also established in 1998 with our resident art teacher Patsy Chingwile working one day a week - from this small beginning the art programme has grown to be the success it is today.

A wonderful committee was created in the mid 90's called 'Patcom' - Parents and Teachers Committee. It was, as the name suggested, a coming together of parents and teachers who were passionate proponents of the school. They were keen to raise the profile of LPS in the broader community - as they saw it 'we were the best kept secret' and wanted to let parents of the inner west know that our school was a dynamic centre of learning. The members of Patcom also encouraged families to participate more fully in school life. It was from this forum that the Multicultural Munch was introduced as a way of celebrating the diverse nationalities at our school. The washing up at the end was never as much fun as sharing all the amazing food which families prepared!

For many years "Towards Better Things" had been the school motto but it was time to change as the school had evolved and we needed words which more fully reflected our philosophy. A competition was launched in 1993 and Simon Emsley, a parent at the school, was successful with his entry "Strength through Understanding". These three simple words continues to represent the ethos of Leichhardt Public School. It was also at this time that the Assistant Principal, Gillian Phillips drew the distinctive logo which depicted the tower surrounded by trees.

Social functions and fundraisers were a highlight of school life in the 1990's. Who could ever forget fireworks night - this yearly fundraiser caused the principal and organisers more than a few grey hairs (especially when the rain clouds gathered) but it was a definite must for all LPS families. The array of fireworks on display was an amazing sight as everyone jostled for the best vantage point behind the barriers. Much excitement ensued when a plane flew over - the passengers probably had a better view than most of the crowd! Lots of food and hot chocolate was consumed, many out-of-tune songs sung around the bonfire and if the wind was blowing in the right direction, only a little bit of smoke breathed in - all together the perfect night!



↑
The new motto launched in 1993.

2000 - 2011

The year 2000 saw the Olympic Games held in Sydney and of course LPS embraced it wholeheartedly! A number of events, both large and small, were planned and there was quite an air of expectation around the school.

We were very lucky to have a visit from the Tanzanian Olympic Team - the athletes made quite an impression with the students. You can only imagine the excitement when the school and some students featured in a television ad for the games - you would have thought we were all movie stars! Of course there were a large number of 'mini' Olympic events held in the playground (sometimes it seemed as if they never ceased). When we heard the school was on the torch relay route plans really went into overdrive as the school band was organised to perform on the Town Hall corner. We all saw John Newcombe carry the torch as he ran up Marion St before turning into Norton St. A number of students were members of the Olympic School Choir which performed at Homebush. Just so we wouldn't forget the 2000 Olympics, a time capsule was also placed in a wall near the foyer of the front office as a commemoration. It is to be opened when Australia is next chosen for the Olympic Games or in 2034 - whichever comes first. Once the games were finished everyone took a deep breath and turned their attention to the Paralympic Games. Our students were fortunate to be spectators at many of the Paralympic events.

Diminishing enrolments were still a concern in the early part of the 2000's. A considerable amount of time and effort was put into reaching the local community to promote the school and its wonderful programs. Little by little this strategy paid off and enrolments began to steadily rise.

During this time, as a means of promoting the school, our principal, James Reid introduced the 'Baby Proms' for the local pre-schools. They were modelled on the popular 'proms' performed by the Sydney Symphony Orchestra for little ones and saw our band give a mini concert to tiny tots in a similar vein. It was lots of fun for both our band and the pre-schoolers and our students were always keen to do more.

The playground was also given a facelift in 2007 when the basketball court was refurbished with a soft pour surface. Not only was it a little more forgiving to knees when you fell but had the added benefit of being used as a multi-sport area. It is used extensively, not only at play times but by teachers supervising sport lessons or at after school training sessions.

To combat the effects of the global financial crisis which took hold of the world in 2008 the Federal Government provided funding under the BER scheme (Building the Education Revolution) to help stimulate the Australian economy. Schools could choose what sort of project they would like for their school and after consultation with the school community our principal opted for a new library to be built with three additional classrooms on the second storey.

In 2009 work on the new block commenced with two very old weatherboard demountable classrooms being demolished. We watched as the new building was constructed and in 2010 the library moved from its old home in Block A to a custom built brand new library space.

This year much excitement amongst the students ensued when the playground equipment near Balmain Road was upgraded at a cost of approximately \$45000. They had watched eagerly as construction took place and were

extremely keen to test it out as soon as they could. It is probably easy to assume that in their eyes this was without doubt the most important part of building work that has taken place in the last 150 years!

The school community were also very pleased to see the erection of a new flag-pole in 2012 near the amphitheatre of E block. The old flag-pole had to be moved when the new library was being constructed but everyone agrees that it is now in the 'perfect' position and a number of whole school events have taken place in front of it.

After being dubbed as the 'best kept secret' in previous years LPS found itself a much sought after school and for the first time in many years a waiting list for out of area enrolments was established. By 2008 we had stabilised our intake to two kindy classes per year, in 2009 it climbed to 3 classes, in 2010 we had three and a half kindy classes and in 2011 it jumped to five classes. We again have five classes in 2012 and as in the previous year we were unable to offer everyone a place who wanted to enrol.

As our enrolments have increased the need for more space has arisen. In 2012 Block C was handed back to the school for use as classrooms and it is more than possible that as the school grows the beautiful old sandstone building on the corner will once again become part of Leichhardt Public School.



LPS IN 2012

What would the staff, students and families from the early days say if they could visit us now? We hope that they would recognise the dedication and values that they so ably demonstrated over the past 150 years which has helped us evolve into the school we know and love today.

Our programs look a little different to those outlined in 1983 and are certainly a world away from the curriculum Mr Pepper was expected to follow when he first began to teach his new charges on the 1st May 1862.

We thought it would be interesting to include a brief history and outline of the groups and programs which reflect Leichhardt Public School in 2012.

Parents and Citizens Association

The Parents and Citizens Association (P&C) was first mentioned during 1918 when they assisted with the erection of the Honor Board to commemorate those who had served in the First World War. Until the late 1970's the Primary and Infants departments were two distinct entities - the quaintly called 'Mothers' Club' served the interests of the Infants section and the P&C were the grown-up equivalent for the Primary and High School departments. After Leichhardt High School was established in 1976 it led to the eventual amalgamation of the infants and primary departments so it was only natural that the parent representative body merged as well - the P&C as we know it today was formed.

From the outset, both the Mothers Club and P&C were instrumental in funding many school programs. They were constantly acknowledged in Inspector's reports as being an integral part of school life responsible for providing much needed resources. The basis of the P&C has evolved over the years and it now also promotes the parents' views on school policies to the principal.

The P&C has initiated and maintained many services for the school community. For many years it ran the school uniform shop with its tiny group of volunteers until it became no longer viable for the P&C to have such a large percentage of its funds tied up in uniform stock and a private firm took over. Perhaps the most utilised and well known facility is the school canteen - it has been under the auspices of the P&C for the past 35 years and continues to provide a wonderful service for families at LPS.

Under the auspices of the P&C a number of sub-committees operate including band string, canteen, drama and garden. The garden group under the guidance of Sally Boswell have achieved some remarkable outcomes over the last couple of years. The beautiful sensory garden at the back of the school was finished last year with some help from a local philanthropic organisation. The P&C were also able to help contribute to the school's project of revamping the garden near the covered walkway.

Of course, one of its most important roles is still raising funds to support school programs. Sometimes the means and reasons for fundraising have changed but as the saying goes 'the more things change the more they stay the same'. Reading through old newspaper reports you could be forgiven for thinking that it was written only yesterday - an article relating to the school was titled

'Concert to raise money for art materials' was dated Wednesday, 26th October 1904 (Sydney Morning Herald). The P&C currently raise funds to contribute to the funding of a specialist art teacher.

When the school celebrated its centenary in 1962 the P&C played an important part in organising the festivities with the school. Fifty years on it has again embraced the marking of this important milestone and, in conjunction with the school, helped LPS celebrate its birthday in style. Many wonderful events and lasting homages have been organised by the Sesquicentenary Committee and school. These would not have been possible without the wonderful contributions from our very talented school community.

These include:

Restoration of the Honor Boards
funded by grants from State and Federal Governments

Sesquicentenary T-Shirts

Sesquicentenary Ball

LPS Photo Book

Sesquicentenary Quilt

Sesquicentenary Tile Wall
partially funded by grant from Leichhardt Municipal Council

Sesquicentenary Mural

LPS History Book

Refurbishment of Canteen
funded by grant from Leichhardt Municipal Council

Colonial In Day

'Back to Leichhardt' Day

'Peter and the Wolf' Musical Production

Music Program

The music program at Leichhardt Public School is well known and widely respected throughout the community. We were quite surprised whilst researching information for the sesquicentenary the discovery of a picture of an LPS String Group from 1922 - we thought we had introduced the program but the love of instrumental music obviously runs deep through the school's veins!

The music program boasts a large number of ensembles including Junior Band, Mozart String Group, Concert Band, Vivaldi String Group, Senior Band, Beethoven String Group and our very own LPS Orchestra. Our music ensembles participate in numerous festivals and are extremely successful in the many competitions they have entered. There are 170 students currently participating in the music program - approximately a third of the school with a number of students playing in multiple ensembles.

As well as being chosen to play in regional band and orchestra programs many students have pursued careers in music through specialist schools such as Newtown School of Performing Arts. It is wonderful to see so many of our former students returning as tutors to assist our budding young musicians.

The creation of the orchestra in early 2011 was an exciting time as it saw the crossover of the string and band programs which added yet another dimension to the school's music program. The year culminated with the orchestra being invited to perform an individual item at the Instrumental Festival at the Sydney Opera House. Their outstanding performance attracted enthusiastic praise from music directors, bandmasters and parents who were in attendance on the night. It was an amazing effort by a primary school orchestra established only a few months earlier.

The orchestra has once again been invited to perform an individual item the Sydney Opera House in the 2012 Sydney Region Music Festival. This is quite an honour as it is rare for a school to be asked to perform at such a prestigious event two years in succession.

A brief history of the band and string groups follows. It is amazing to see how the music program has grown from its very small beginnings in 1992 with the first tentative steps of the band - from little things big things have certainly grown. Special mention must be made of all the parents over the years who have been members of both the band and string group committees - without their dedication these programs would not be the success they are today. It is also important to acknowledge the wonderful support the school has always provided the music program

Band Program

In 1992 a small group of dedicated parents and the principal, Maryann Campbell, applied to the NSW Department of Education and Training to join the School Band Program. They were loaned a small number of instruments and were supplied with a bandmaster for a short period. The initial numbers in the band were small but Ms Campbell and the committee were not discouraged and worked extremely hard to establish the program. In order to purchase the instruments, music and stands necessary to make the program viable the parents embarked on a fundraising drive and managed to buy the necessary equipment. They were also fortunate to obtain the services of Jock Heath,

a respected conductor who guided the program until the end of 2005. Under his tutelage the band numbers expanded and its reputation began to grow in the music community. When they won a finals place in the City of Sydney Eisteddford it was a wonderful moment as it was the first time a public primary school band from 'south of the Harbour Bridge' had attained such a position.

In 2006 the band welcomed Simon Bartlett, another well respected conductor and musician, as its new bandmaster. The parent band committee put forward the idea of a weekend band camp to Simon who enthusiastically embraced the idea. Our first senior band camp took place over two days in June at the Baden Powell Scout Centre in West Pennant Hills and was a huge success, both musically and from a fun aspect! It is now a tradition which takes place every year and is an eagerly anticipated event on our band calendar.

In 2006 our current principal, James Reid initiated another exciting musical experience when he organised and led the very first band tour to the Hunter Valley. The senior band performed at six schools over three days and was a wonderful experience for all the children. Over the past 6 years the band has visited schools in the Hunter Valley, Port Stephens area and the Bathurst region. This too has now become a tradition and Mr Reid expends a great deal of energy planning these wonderful musical odysseys.

Simon Bartlett left the program at the end of 2008 to become a member of the Royal Australian Navy Band and was replaced by Jon Clipsham who was only able to stay as bandmaster for a year. Though his stay was short Jon was able to stamp his own unique style on the band - they had an enormous repertoire which was wide and varied. This proved very handy when the band opened Ray Martin's book signing event at Leichhardt Town Hall - they had to play an extremely long set and were the consummate performers as they entertained the crowd.

In 2010 we were extremely fortunate to be joined by Dan Murphy - a very talented musician and conductor who has taken the band program to wonderful highs. He helped form the first LPS Orchestra in 2011 and was responsible for the orchestra's audition and subsequent inclusion in their individual ensemble performances at the Sydney Opera House.

String Program

In 2005 Leichhardt Public School added another dimension to its music program with the introduction of the string group. It was formed by three extremely talented parents Penny Rees, Kirsty McCahon and Kees Boersma with the encouragement and support of the principal, James Reid. The first year saw a group of 14 eager young violin and cello players, mainly from kindergarten and year 1, learning to hold their instruments and by Christmas squeak out a passable Jingle Bells.

Enthusiasm for the string group took hold and the following year more students were keen to join. Penny, Kirsty and Kees generously gave their time and provided tuition for all the members of the group. More instruments were needed and the string group committee set about fundraising to help with the purchase.

Eventually, as the numbers swelled, members of the string group were separated into three ensembles aptly named Mozarts (beginners), Vivaldis (intermediate) and Beethovens (advanced).

In 2008, the String Group produced a wonderful version of ‘Carnival of the Animals’. It was narrated by John Waters and was performed to a very appreciative audience. It was a tribute to Penny, Kirsty and Kees who had shown such vision just a few years earlier when they had established the string group.

As the numbers in string group grew and Kirsty and Kees were committed to engagements with their respective orchestras (Brandenburg and Sydney Symphony) the need for additional professional tutors became apparent. Penny continued to coordinate the group as well as provide lessons for the cellists - it was certainly a busy time! The string group was in great demand - it was such a pleasure to have them perform at the Kindergarten Parent Information evenings and numerous school events.

More success was to follow in 2009 when members of the string group performed in the group performance of the Instrumental Festival of Music at the Sydney Opera House. Once again Penny and her tutors did a phenomenal job in preparing the young musicians for this special occasion where they played three pieces. They were invited to join this event for the next two years - quite an amazing feat for a group which had only been formed a few short years earlier. In 2010, Kirsty and Kees farewelled LPS as their boys moved on to other schools. They were warmly recognised at the end of year presentation day for their contribution to the school and in particular the string group.

2011 was an exciting time for the whole of the music program with the formation of the LPS Orchestra. Once again Penny was instrumental in helping the string group meet the challenge and it was only fitting that she was on stage with them playing cello, at the Sydney Opera House when they performed their individual piece.

Art Program

The art program is a much loved institution at Leichhardt Public School. From its small beginning it has blossomed into an entity that is widely respected in the community. Patsy Chingwile has overseen the program since its inception and is passionate in her belief that every child is an artist. Below is an extract from Patsy describing her philosophy for teaching children art.

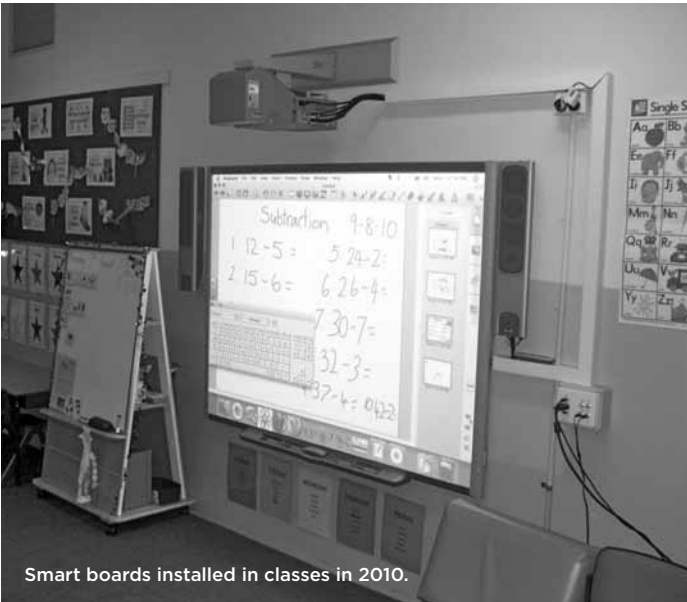
“I studied at Alexander Mackie Art School in painting, drawing and printmaking, over a period of 8 years – my study being interrupted by having children. When I started by BA in Fine Arts I had no interest in being a teacher – I was going to America to paint, before I had children, and become a famous artist. And after the children, I decided I would just have to make it happen here in Australia. And then I had my third child and financial reality brought me around to doing my Dip Ed at Sydney Uni, where I trained to be a high school teacher.

I worked part-time as a high school art teacher to support my practise as an artist, but also gave art lessons at Leichhardt Public School where my children attended, as a volunteer for many years. About 14 years ago the principal asked me if I would like to work as the school's art teacher one day a week, which I gladly agreed to, and then the P&C suggested that they pay for me to work a second day a week so I could teach each class more often. And then as the school grew in size, so did my attendance – until now I am working 9 days a fortnight. I still manage to find time to do my own art work – at the moment I am mostly painting in oils.

I think it is because the art program grew so organically and incrementally that it was able to evolve into such a unique format. I myself have practised Iyengar Yoga from India for 20 years, I train in Chinese Tiandi Qugong as well as practise a

Buddhist Burmese meditation. When the children are in year 2, I introduce to them a 20 minuted meditation session, which they practise whilst art making. Half way through year 2 they have developed real meditation muscles, and are able to concentrate effectively for the whole 20 minute session.

Each child at the school regards themselves as an artist and it is this that I am so excited about as well as the quality of their work. They realise that they each have their own individual style, and that it is lovely (when we carry out any activity with respect, confidence and integrity it has its own beauty) and they understand that everyone else also has their own style, which they themselves might or might not appreciate – they come to see that each of us have our own taste as well as our own style – they are learning to appreciate difference.”



Technology

It would be quite feasible to expect that a student from the turn of the 20th century would recognise a classroom in the 1960's – teacher, desks, books and blackboard. From the 1970's technology entered the classroom and things would never be the same again.

With the introduction of television, schools began to embrace it as a means of teaching. Programs and documentaries were created for students and special rooms ear-marked for this purpose. It was not however a very interactive form of teaching. The students' role was to learn the information presented by this form of technology much in the same way it was the students' role to learn the information from their teacher without the benefit of being able to digress and discuss the content as they would with a teacher.

One of the most exciting pieces of equipment to enter the classroom in 1971 was the overhead projector. It typically consists of a large box containing a very bright lamp and fan to cool it. On type of the box is a large lens that disperses the light. Above the box, usually on a long arm, is a mirror and lens that focuses and redirects the light forward instead of up. Transparencies are placed on top of the lens for display. The light from the lamp travels through the transparency and into the mirror where it is shone forward onto a screen for display. The mirror allowed the teacher and class to see the image at the same time, the teacher looking down at the transparency as if writing whilst the class was looking at the screen – magic!

An early form of photocopying was used by office staff at school with a spirit duplicator sometimes known as a 'roneo'. The duplicator used 'spirit masters' – the first sheet could be typed or drawn on whilst the second sheet was coated with a layer of wax impregnated with a colour (usually purple). The pressure of writing or typing on the first sheet transferred the coloured wax onto the second sheet which in turn transferred it to the back of the first sheet as a mirror image. The two papers were separated and the first sheet was fastened on to the drum of the machine, back side out – this acted like a printing plate. There is no separate ink used in spirit duplication as the wax transferred to the back side of the sheet contained the ink. As well as being quite a laborious task, the copies tend to fade over time as we have found to our chagrin whilst researching our history.

Teachers in the 80's used a means of duplicating sheets for their classrooms with a jelly pad. It was described by a teacher in the following way:

“A jelly pad was made up of gelatine basically – a LOT of gelatine on a baking tray – and with texta pens (a new innovation at the time), you would write out some maths (or whatever), place the texta pen written master stencil on the gelatine, face down, and after smoothing it firmly and lifting it off, place a blank sheet of paper on the gelatine to get an image on the paper. It would be good enough for six or seven images to be made before you had to write out your master stencil again.”

Later in the 1980's photocopiers were introduced to school but were expensive to run and were certainly not to be used by the teachers without special permission! Now photocopiers are an everyday part of school life and are not only used for straight copiers. Images can be scanned and emailed or saved on to laptops to be used with interactive whiteboards.

Since the introduction of information and communication technologies (ICT) in schools in the early 1980's, there have been continual and dynamic changes in the technologies available. More than 30 years ago few teachers could have imagined the technological advances in the capacity and applications of personal computers, the internet, and technologies such as interactive whiteboard (IWBs).

LPS has always been at the cutting edge of technology and boast 3 computers labs with additional computers available in all classrooms. Blackboards have been replaced in all classrooms and interactive whiteboards installed. This is probably the one area of school that students from earlier ages would find the hardest to recognise.

The Support Unit

The Support Unit has been a part of Leichhardt Public School since 1976. It began as one class and has since grown to cater for a wide range of children with diverse abilities. There are three classes, I.O (moderate intellectual disabilities), I.M (mild intellectual disabilities), and AUT (Autism class). A dedicated team of teachers and support staff strive to provide the best possible learning experiences for all children in the unit. This is achieved by the collegial approach and attitude of the whole school staff.

The Support Unit is an asset to the school and to the wider community. It allows all children to foster a greater understanding of differences and acceptance, which helps to prepare them for an inclusive society in their own adult lives. It enhances qualities such as tolerance, respect and empathy. Every child is a valued and respected member of the school community which truly reflects our motto of 'Strength through Understanding'.

Ethics Program

In 2010 Leichhardt Public school participated in a pilot for Special Ethics Education. Below is a reflection from Emma Milne, a parent at LPS and the Coordinator for the Ethics Program.

In 2010, an opportunity arose for Leichhardt Public School to become one of only 10 NSW schools to participate in the pilot for Special Ethics Education. This initiative was developed by the St James Ethics Centre in Sydney with an aim to engage children that opt-out of Special Religious Education in meaningful activity. With keen and vocal support from the parent body, P&C and Principal, the school was selected. Four Leichhardt parents were trained to teach the pilot curriculum and forty eager Year 5/6 students were elected to participate.

Due to the success of the pilot, and constant campaigning by parents and the St James Ethics Centre, on December 1, 2010, the NSW Education Act 1990 was amended to include the legal right for children who opt-out of Special Religious Education the choice to attend philosophical ethics. Since 2010, Special Ethics Education at Leichhardt Public School remains very popular and has grown to six classes in 2012. So far, there are eight trained volunteer teachers, six of whom are parents of children at LPS, and two are community members. The option of ethics continues to be overwhelmingly supported by the parents, students, teachers and wider community of Leichhardt Public School.

Leichhardt Out of School Hours

Leichhardt Out of School Hours (affectionately known as LOOSH) has been an integral part of LPS since 1988. This one program probably reflects most clearly the changing nature of society, not just in Leichhardt but across Australia as a whole in the last thirty years. Before 1980 only a small proportion of the school population had both parents working full-time and care for their children was usually provided by extended family. From the 1980’s on more and more parents began to work full time and not only was there a call for increased of long day care centres but there arose a real need for out of school hours care as well. Emily Hamilton, the Coordinator of LOOSH has provided us a with an overview of the centre.

“Leichhardt Out of School Hours (LOOSH) is a parent-run not for profit organisation, established in 1988 in the grounds of Leichhardt Public School. LOOSH is staffed by dedicated team who strive to provide quality Out of School Hours Care to the children who attend. The number of families using the service has grown along with LPS and now approximately 350 families rely on LOOSH to provide Before School, After School & Vacation Care. With a focus on meeting the needs and interests of the children, a variety of structured activities (cooking, craft, construction, sport) are balanced with a lot of free play to support their development. It is a testament to the service that some of our current staff attended LOOSH as children.”

Familial connections

Over the past year we have discovered that a number of our students have strong familial connections with LPS. It is wonderful to imagine those hands from the past reaching across time to touch the present generation.

Duke Richardson has quite an amazing connection. His great, great, great grandparents were **John Stuart Hawthorne** and **Mary Hawthorne** who opened the 1897 school building. One can only wonder if they ever imagined that their great, great, great grandson would be attending this school over a hundred years later!

Rose and Tom Hillard’s great grandfather was called **Sydney (Sid) Henry Connell**. He was born on Norton Street before moving to Charles Street Leichhardt . Sid and his siblings, Eddie, Arthur, Joyce and Florence all attended Leichhardt Public School during the 1920’s. Sid left school at 14 and spent almost his entire working life at Cyclops Toy Factory on William Street, Leichhardt. He started at Cyclops as a telegraph boy and remained there until he retired as Export Manager.

Don McEvoy grew up on Norton Street Leichhardt and attended Leichhardt Public School during the 1930’s – he is the grandfather of Jarrah and Alex McEvoy. William Rue’s great, great uncle, **Charles Thomas Cunningham** attended Leichhardt during the early 1920’s – we were very pleased when he gave us a copy of his class photo from 1924. Jasmine and Ziggy Marsden’s great uncle, **Robert Laws** attended LPS during the late 1950’s and early 60’s.

James and Daniel Hayes called their great, great aunt ‘Auntie Sissy’ but her real name was **Florence Olsen** and she attended LPS in 1916 with her cousins Winifred and Charles Olsen. ‘Auntie Sissy’ passed away only a couple of years ago aged 103 and both her great, great nephews were able to ask her what school was like at LPS when she came all those years ago.

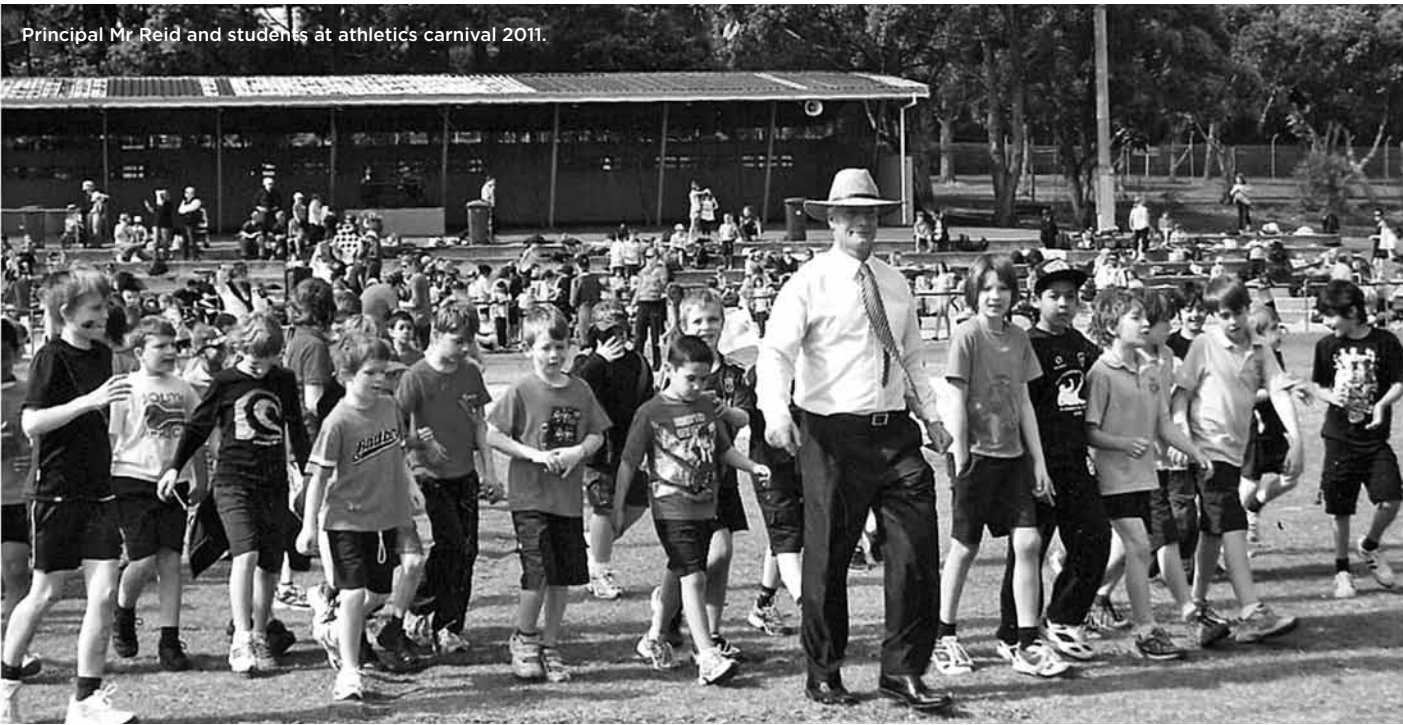
My own family have been part of LPS for the last 125 years. In total there have been 41 family members over four generations attend Leichhardt Public School. In 1894 my great, great uncle **Patrick Connelly** became Principal of the school. My grandparents commenced at LPS in 1902 where they met and fell in love ringing the school bell, or so the story goes! My mother and aunt attended LPS during the 1920’s when overcrowding was at its worst. My sister, brother and I were students at Leichhardt covering the period from 1958 to 1973. My four children, Brendan, Dominic, Adrian and Jessica were the final generation to attend LPS from 1994 to 2008.

The student and staff are the heart of LPS

The heart and soul of LPS has always been the staff and students. We have heard wonderful stories from so many students, old and young, where they reflect with great fondness on their days at Leichhardt. They remember their friends and in particular they express gratitude to many support staff and teachers who impacted on their life, both in small and large ways.

In 2012 we farewelled a number of staff who spent a great deal of their career at LPS and were much loved members of the school community. **Chris Carter** spent 26 years at Leichhardt and found it very hard to leave even though she was heading off on retirement with some very exciting travel plans! Chris always found her students a great source of pleasure and never lost her passion for teaching. **Bridget Pople** and **Roma Cox** arrived on the same day in 1993 so it seemed to be fate when they both chose to retire at the end of term one this year. Bridget was Assistant Principal of the Special Education Unit and was held in the highest esteem by all those she came in contact with. Bridget was one of the most understanding and empathetic persons anyone was ever likely to meet with a wonderful sense of humour. Roma was the School Administrative Manager and oversaw many changes in the school office in her time - her favourite saying was ‘always expect the unexpected when you work in a school’, an adage which turned out to be right on so many occasions! Roma was a constant support to all those she worked with and was seen by the students as the ‘mum’ you turned to at school when you needed a bit of ‘TLC’.

It seems only fitting that **Peter Holmes** is retiring during our sesquicentenary year. Peter first came to LPS as a young teacher in 1978 before leaving in 1985 to further his career. He returned to Leichhardt in 1996 as Assistant Principal and this time we wouldn’t let him go! Peter has a character which is ‘larger than life’ and for the past 16 years he has been a remarkable teacher, wonderful colleague and an amazing friend to so many at LPS. There is not one student or staff member, past or present, who could not give you a Mr Holmes ‘saying’. It is hard to contemplate life at LPS without Peter but we wish him and Litza all the very best that life has to offer as they embark on the next stage of their lives.



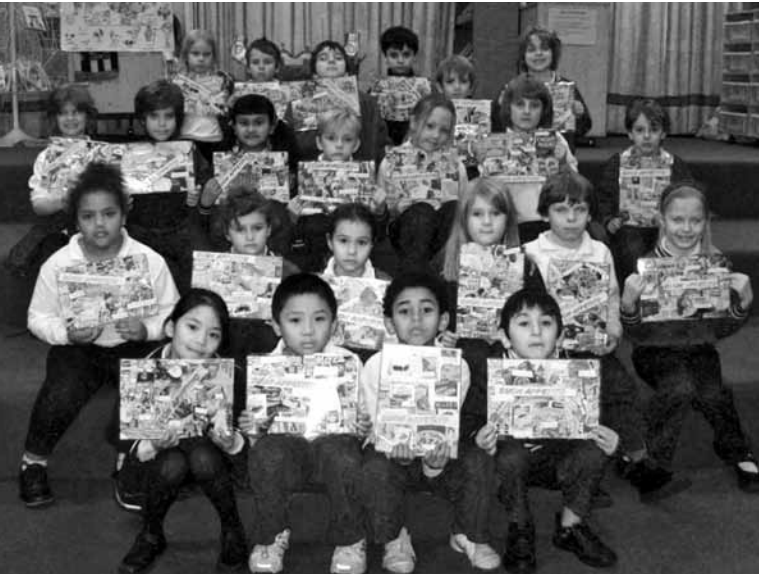
Principal Mr Reid and students at athletics carnival 2011.



The new library and classrooms finished in 2010.



2012 play equipment.



↑
2Mc group 2010.



2012 play equipment.



←
Girls of Leichhardt 2009.

TO THE FUTURE

Leichhardt Public School has seen many changes over the last 150 years. It is a much loved mainstay of the community and judging by the wonderful response we have had from past students we can confidently say that LPS played a large part in the lives of those who came through its doors. We are sure that future generations will look back on their days at Leichhardt with the same degree of affection.

What does the future hold for LPS – who better to ask than some of our students from years 5 and 6. We wanted them to imagine what life might be like at school in the year 2062 when the school would be celebrating in bicentenary.

In the year 2062 there will be more technology and all the students will get their own Ipad to keep forever, so will the teachers. There will be floating desks so the kids won't get bored at school and there will be less homework but more work at school. The smart boards will be replaced with glass screens that are touch activated and they will be upgraded every year. The glass screens will also be voice activated so everything the teacher says will come up on the board. There might also be a robotic teacher or if the teacher wasn't replaced you could just use Skype to talk to your teacher. **Mayen**

I walk into the aero-tube, press the button and shoot upwards, sweat streaming from my body. Today is examination day. Passing means moving on to the next floor. The next examination. Failing means being fed to the principal. I love school. Once in the classroom – after what seems like an age – I feel slightly less stressed when I see Mr Rhodok wiring up the ITables. **Harry**

It's 2062 and I have to go to school. When I get there, I see thousands of trees around the school. The super sound of the bell rang. It was time for school. Our robotic teacher, Miss Pete waited for us in the classroom. She looks excited even for a robot. "Class, have you finished your report on 200yr of Leichhardt?" she asked. I panicked. I totally forgot that this year was 200yrs of Leichhardt. I tried to look to my screen on my desk but I couldn't stop staring at her. One by one the students handed in their report. She came up to me. She stared at me with her grey eyes. "Um, um I forgot my report at home....." I said. Everything went quiet. **Lucy**

I think Leichhardt would have new technology such as I-pads and the buildings would all be newly renovated. Some teachers will be nice or strict depending on how they like to run the class. Smart boards would be upgraded with the newest technology instead of the slow computers. **Amelia**

In LPS 2062 I believe that there will be 1 huge hall that all students will be in. There will be 1000 single adjustable tables. Each desk will have a 1 X 1 metre apple smart screen. A smart screen is a glass panel that is like a computer (like the one on avatar). The front wall will have a smart wall (large smart screen). The smart screen will display year categories with the years and the days set tasks. This screen will be wired to the Australian Teaching Syllabus Server. **Tim**

Schools in 2062 will have iPad's instead of computers and the canteen will sell things at lower prices. The biggest amount of money you would have to spend is \$1, so you can practically buy anything. Instead of human teachers there are robot teachers that are super kind. The trees will stay the same. The school uniform will stay the same but not on Friday. On Friday you wear what you want for 50 cents. The recess is 1 hour and the lunch is 2 hours so we have 2-3

hours of learning time. What I would love is that we would do equal amounts of work on every subject. At the front gate there will be this arch thing that you walk through and it detects anything dangerous or metal. **Carmen**

In 2062 I think there will be a larger number of kids at L.P.S with computers on each desk in the classrooms. I think there will be a lot bigger classrooms and the school will give every kid an ipad instead of a homework book. **Kosta**

I think in 50 years there will be more technology and the kids might have their own laptops. There might not be teachers because the kids have laptops and they can Skype their teachers so the teachers can stay at home. The canteen food might be more expensive or cheaper than these days ie: the canteen's frozen yogurt is \$2 and for a whole packet it is \$2.50 so it should go down not up. It will be funny if this actually happens. **Hazel**

Leichhardt public school will have new technology and the school will be a little bigger. Technology might be slower and looks 3D. I think that every student will have I pad. The desk will be different with no shelves under the desks. The table will be shorter and the teacher will probably be a little more impatient. The school might have been renovated or it might move but it will keep its history. There are probably not going to be and smart boards. The school will have more teachers and students .The school will be more involved in things such as gala days. There might be more homework and the school hours might change. There might be more excursions and camps. There probably will be more school sport which will help with sportsmanship. **Emma**

I believe that LPS in fifty years time will be completely different to what it is now. I think our school will have lots of new technology - for example, every student gets the newest apple laptop and every year they will be upgraded. I also think that students will have the keyboards disconnected from the screen and the screen will be in the desk. I also believe the school will also have the best security around at the time - for example, every entry gate weighs 25 kg and the gates are 15 metres high, plus every door is voice activated and for a back-up system it will be finger touch activated. **Bailey**

L.P.S will have better security where once everyone is inside every exit in the school will shut and no one can get out. The school would most likely be hovering above the ground, and everyone would have their own artificial intelligence. Everyone would have hover boots so that they could do messages faster and could get to school on time. The schools technology would change and everything would be touch screen so that it would make the schoolwork easier. **Zahne**

In 2062 at L.P.S., I think that the school's technology will be much more advanced, and all the students will have I-pads. Most of the buildings will be new and will have a modern look to them. There will be a lot more students, and teachers will have a better pay. **Charlotte**



Whole school 2012.



Orchestra 2012.



2011 'Week of Taste'.

2012 district carnival
(photo courtesy of Di Owens).
↓



Staff 2012.

STRENGTH THROUGH UNDERSTANDING

“Interests I have today stem from the time I spent at Leichhardt Public School.

It is a delight to think that now in 2012 I have two grand daughters enjoying their time at the same school. I hope they can look back in 60 years time with the same happy memories I have!

My congratulations on the 150 years that the school celebrates this year and may the school continue to live by its motto ‘Strength through Understanding’.”

SANDRA MILNE (NEE MORGAN)

