

# ANME News

Newsletter of

**ANME** AUSTRALIAN NATIONAL  
MUSEUM OF EDUCATION

[www.anme.org.au](http://www.anme.org.au)

No. 33

Autumn 2020

Editor – Dr Geoffrey Burkhardt

## Exhibition: Steiner Education in Australia



L to R: Marie Nicholls, Dr Malcolm Beazley, Virginia Moller, Linda St Clair, Dr Velma McKeachie, Glennis Mowday and Dr Thomas Stehlik

In conjunction with Steiner Education Australia (SEA), the Australian National Museum of Education mounted an Exhibition titled, *Head, Heart and Hands: Reflections on Steiner Education in Australia*, celebrating Steiner Education in Australia 1957-2020.

Guests at the Opening event were welcomed to the University of Canberra and the

Faculty of Education by the ANME Director, Dr Malcolm Beazley AM. The Exhibition, on display in the *Mura Gadi Gallery*, University of Canberra Library, was officially opened on Friday 6<sup>th</sup> March by Ms Virginia Moller, CEO of Steiner Education Australia. The Program included an address by Ms Glennis Mowbray, of the Glenaeon Rudolf Steiner School, on the background to the Exhibition. This was followed by the launch of *Waldorf Schools and the History of Steiner Education, an International View of 100 Years*, written by Dr Thomas Stehlik, from the University of South Australia. The Opening function ended with concluding remarks and expressions of thanks by the Curator of the Exhibition, Dr Velma McKeachie, Steiner Education teacher. Much appreciation is extended to Dr McKeachie, Christian West, Manager of Library Services (Acting) and Alex Stalker Booth, ANME Curator.

The Exhibition contains a large variety of artistic and creative items produced by past and present students of Steiner Schools. Of particular significance were the outstanding artworks, the creative craftwork and needlework items and the display of historical documents and school records of the first Steiner Education School to be

established in Australia in 1957. The Official Opening was well attended by teachers from local Steiner Schools in Canberra, and especially teachers, students and ex-students from Steiner Schools who had travelled from Sydney especially for this formal occasion. Quite a number of Friends of the ANME also attended this significant event, which highlighted important aspects of the history of Australian education, not only in Canberra, but also at the wider National level.

## **Visitors**

In February, Dr Beazley and Dr Burkhardt were pleased to welcome two visitors from the National Museum of Australia, Dr Vicki Northey, PSM, Manager, Exhibition Projects and Interpretation at the National Museum and Dr Martha Sear, Head of Curatorial Centres. Following a tour of ANME's current exhibitions, mutual interests relating to the conservation of precious items and the preservation and display of valuable fabric items were discussed.

## **Highlights from ANME's Research Collection of School Textbooks**

Two nature studies school textbooks written by William Gillies and published by Whitcombe and Tombs, Melbourne, during the second decade of the twentieth century, are titled, *First Studies in Plant Life in Australasia, with numerous questions, directions for outdoor work and drawing and composition exercises*, and *First Studies in Insect Life in Australasia*. They became most popular references used in the primary school and junior high school classes. Although not the first school textbooks on Botany and Nature Study to be published in Australia (see Guilfoyle *Australian Botany for the Use of Schools*, 1884, and Dendy and Lucas, *An Introduction to the Study of Botany*, 1892) Gillies textbooks are less technical and perhaps more suitable for use with primary school classes. As Gillies states in the Preface of his *First Studies in Insect Life in Australasia*, "This book has been written for the use of young children who are making their first attempts to understand the world of Insect Life". Both of these volumes are well illustrated, each chapter concluding with questions and exercises. They are well bound in cloth, and sold at a quite affordable price for their time of publication at a little over a shilling each. Like many of Whitcombe and Tombs publications, they carry no date of publication, however the National Library Catalogue estimates the publication at 1910.

## **The Glebe Ragged School**

The Glebe Ragged School was founded to cater for those children who were from very poor families, some of them orphans, who were dressed in poor shoddy clothing and who were not eligible to be enrolled in public schools in Sydney. Established in 1862 in Glebe, on the corner of Bay Street and Glebe Street, the Glebe Ragged School was

one of a number of Ragged Schools in the Sydney district operating between 1860 and 1912.

The Glebe Ragged School was part of the Ragged School Movement, which began in Britain in the 1840s. They offered an elementary education in addition to a basic training in some industrial subjects to children of poor parents living in city slums with poor housing conditions. The motivation for the establishment of these types of schools derived from those displaying “Christian Zeal” in the relief of poverty conditions experienced by these neglected and destitute children. Margaret Penson, author of *The Glebe Ragged School*, (2001) states that the enrolment of the Glebe Ragged School in 1864 was 115 students, who were taught a curriculum which comprised reading, writing, singing, with the girls being taught sewing and plaiting. Benefactors of the School donated money for the operation of the School, together with some form of “state aid” after 1866 from the colonial government. It should be appreciated that prior to the NSW Education Act of 1880, public schools in the Colony of NSW were not free, nor was schooling compulsory.

By 1922 the enrolment in the Glebe Ragged School had declined to 22 students and it closed in 1927. In addition to Margaret Penson’s history of the school, Professor John Ramsland OAM has also published a number of journal articles on the Ragged School Movement in Australia. Professor Ramsland is also one of ANME’s Patrons. A detailed description of the early history of the Ragged School Movement in Britain and the Colonies may be found in *Sixty Years in Waifdom: Or The Ragged School Movement in English History*, written by C.J. Montague as early as 1904 and reprinted in 1969.

### **ANME Annual Field Trip**

On Saturday, 14 March an excited group of Friends of ANME participated in a tour of educational institutions in Goulburn, NSW. These included the Goulburn Public School (1868), hosted by Principal, Mr Mark Sullivan, the former Goulburn Community Education Centre (1975), hosted by Mr William Sommerville, founder and long-time educator, the Mulwaree High School Museum of Remembrance (1992), hosted by founder Mr William Needham and Ms Narelle Morgan and finally the former St Joseph’s Orphanage (1905), made possible by its owners Darryl and Maggie Patterson. The day was well paced and very informative. Participants were treated to a delicious sandwich luncheon at Goulburn’s famous Paragon Café and to a fireside dinner at the historic Bushranger Hotel, Collector. We are very grateful to Ms Rita Daniels, Principal of Daramalan College and Business Manager, Mr Hugh Bolter, for making the bus available for our use, to Bus Captain Roger Amos, for making the trip possible and to ANME Board Member, Ms Victoria L. Redfern for her organization and leadership on the day .

*Photos by courtesy of Roger Amos, Peter Fock and Victoria Redfern.*



*Top Row: Goulburn Public School*

*Second Row: Former Community Education Centre*

*Third Row: Mulwaree High School Museum of Remembrance*

*Fourth Row: St Joseph's Orphanage*

