

Significant Mandurah Educators

Schooling in the Past

In 1829, when a colony was established by the British in Western Australia, the first children of the new settlement had little or no education, having to rely on what could be taught in the home, if their parents had the time or any formal learning themselves.

In 1847 the Western Australian state school system began with the creation of a Board of Education. This Board was designed to have community involvement. The Board's first report stated that as a rule, *"the establishment of a school in any particular district should in some degree depend upon the exertions and sacrifices which the inhabitants are willing to make."*ⁱ

In the 1860s funding became available to support education. An 1861 government record indicates a teacher's wage at a Pinjarrah school was £70 per year. The same document refers to 15 existing rural schools and the establishment of a contingency fund of £200 per year for future schools in rural districts.ⁱⁱ Prior to this, pupil teachers had been operating for some years.ⁱⁱⁱ

In 1871 the Education Act introduced education for children aged six to 14 years and this provided much needed impetus to the education of the colony's children.

Mary Ann and Eliza Tuckey

In 1865 members of the Tuckey family returned to Western Australia from the Victorian goldfields. Mary Ann Tuckey established a school in her home with the assistance of her daughter-in-law, Eliza Tuckey.^{iv} Eliza was subsequently formally employed by the State to teach the children of Mandurah.

Mary Ann was given charge of the mail in Mandurah with a salary of £6 per year. An increasing volume of business caused this remuneration to rise to £10 in 1870.^v This must have added extra work to her family life, but the extra money would have been welcomed.

Eliza Tuckey, often known as 'Mrs John', came to Mandurah when John Tuckey returned from Victoria where they were married in 1864. John and Eliza supported the church community and there is evidence of both financial contributions and use of their home for church and christenings. Eliza became involved in the Sunday School, teaching and playing the harmonium at church services.^{vi}

Eliza also conducted classes in her own home for several children. In October 1869 she was appointed by the Central Board of Education. She received an allowance of £25 for her work and the use of her premises. In 1872 Eliza was permitted a fortnight's break for the birth of her son Stephen, returning to the schoolroom with the baby in a basket. School hours were between 9am and 3pm with only five weeks holidays during the year. These included Christmas, Easter, mid-winter, and St Michaelmas Day on 29 September. St Michaelmas Day marked the start of harvest, an important celebration at the time.



Mary Ann Mewburn

Miss Mary Ann Mewburn was a teacher in Mandurah from 1872 to 1895. Mary Ann was the second child of Robert and Emma Mewburn (nee Eacott).

Her father Robert Mewburn taught in Mandurah for almost 20 years, being aided by Mary Ann. Following her father's death, Mary Ann continued to teach in her father's house until 1894. The facilities offered at the house were insufficient for the needs of the children and the school was moved to the old Police Barracks which were located on Pinjarra Road near the traffic bridge.^{vii} These premises were refurbished in 1894 and Mary Ann Mewburn taught and lived in the Police Barracks premises until 1895 when she resigned due to ill health.

Mary Ann remained in Mandurah for several years. She married George Saunders in 1897 and they had two children registered in Mandurah. Another child was born in Albany in 1901, and a further child in Katanning in 1904. Mary Ann passed away in 1953 at the age of eighty years.

When Mary Ann resigned in 1895, her position was temporarily and provisionally awarded to Amelia Molloy.^{viii} In 1897 Eliza Symon relieved Miss Molloy during a leave of absence.^{ix}

Ellen Mulrooney

In October 1897 Ellen Mulrooney was appointed temporary and provisional teacher at Mandurah School.^x

Miss Ellen Mulrooney taught at Mandurah School until 1898.

Many of the children attending school in Mandurah were Protestants. When parents found out that Ellen Mulrooney was Roman Catholic some objected quite strongly. However, Miss Mulrooney remained at the school, before leaving to teach in other towns in the South West. She taught in Coolup in 1900 and St John Brook in 1901.^{xi}

Ellen married Henry Edward Sutton, son of Henry Sutton and Jane Sutton (nee McLarty) in Busselton in 1901. The couple had three children. They returned to Mandurah to live by 1903 and two of their children were born in Mandurah.^{xii} Ellen died in Pinjarra in 1946.

Dorothy Dalrymple

Dorothy Eleanor Dalrymple (nee Johnstone) was born in 1869 in Sale, Victoria. She married Robert Dalrymple in 1889 in Victoria. When the couple arrived in Western Australia, Robert Dalrymple was employed by the Education Department and taught in Albany, Coolgardie and Belmont.

West Australian records show that Dorothy was appointed as sewing teacher at Belmont in 1897. In her early records less than complimentary statements regarding her sewing work can be found, along with a threat of dismissal at her next assessment if she does not improve. Over the next several years there were obvious improvements and by 1903 she was receiving very complimentary remarks for both her own and her student's work.^{xiii}

Dorothy transferred with her husband to Mandurah in 1899. Her wages were £12 per annum. She taught at Mandurah School, which is now a building within Mandurah Museum. She retired along with her husband in 1926.^{xiv}



The War Years

By the time World War One commenced, Dorothy was well settled within the Mandurah community and became a formidable figure in the events of Mandurah during the war years.

The charities which she sponsored and worked for were many and varied. Some mentioned in newspaper articles include the Belgian Relief Fund and the Comfort and Trench Comfort Funds for soldiers. This included items which the children had made for soldiers under Dorothy's supervision. Another area of assistance was the State School's Patriotic Fund.^{xv}

With many of their old pupils now enlisting in the war, plus news of the deaths of many taking part in battle, the couple must have been concerned. As it was such a small school, they would have had contact with the children of Mandurah from their start at school until some six years later. Many events in Mandurah took place to farewell soldiers, with a personal item being provided as a gift to the departing men.^{xvi}

The French Red Cross Society appears to have been a particular favourite of the town and Dorothy was in the thick of these activities, serving as the Honourable Secretary.^{xvii}

Robert and Dorothy Dalrymple were closely involved in fund raising to provide a plaque with the names of those soldiers who enlisted in the war. It must have been with some trepidation that in February 1918 they gave permission for their eldest son Eric to enlist. What is clear from multiple newspaper articles is that Dorothy undertook every duty she could to assist with both fund raising and providing some comfort for those affected by the war.^{xviii}

In 1917 she received a commendation for her work, which *"deserves special mention for the children and herself with Mr Dalrymple's aid have raised some £500 in money and goods for the soldiers during the period of the war"*.^{xix}

Community Involvement

Dorothy was busy with teaching and raising her two sons, but she did a lot more as well. People often asked her to play the piano at events. She also helped raise money and supported her community. Every year, she and her husband would organize a Christmas or end-of-year party at the school, raising money to buy gifts and things for the children.^{xx}

Robert died in 1928 while they were both living in Mandurah.^{xxi} She continued to donate her time to the community, being acknowledged in 1933 for her contribution to the Murray Districts Hospital Fund.

In 1933, Dorothy moved to live with her youngest son James Dalrymple who was teaching at Bradley's Siding. Unfortunately, during a visit to Mandurah in 1935, she fell and broke her thigh, this time needing help from Murray Districts Hospital, a place she had supported. Having survived the fall, Dorothy died in Geraldton on June 11, 1937. Her body was brought to Mandurah for burial, a funeral that was well attended. Her grave is in the Christ's Church Cemetery.^{xxii}



Margaret Kirkpatrick

Margaret Kirkpatrick (nee Leahy) was born in 1910 and records show she commenced teaching in 1933. She taught in Trayning and Pithara prior to returning to Teacher's Training to undertake the Infant Certificate. Her records show "*She is a brisk, thoughtful, painstaking teacher who secures good response from her class and has fair control. Best suited to lower primary work.*"^{xxiii}

Margaret went back to the countryside and taught in Koolanooka and Gingin. While working in Gingin, she reconnected with Ross Kirkpatrick, who would become her husband. They had previously met at Teacher's Training College. After teaching for two years in Gingin, Margaret resigned in 1938 to marry Ross. Back then, women were not allowed to continue teaching after they got married.^{xxiv}

Her unemployment was not to continue due to the war years when she was called on to do relief teaching at Group Settlement 89/90 in Pemberton. She taught at Trayning in 1942. Later while her husband was teaching at Fairbridge Village, Pinjarra she took over his classes while he attended to the children of Dutch evacuees from Indonesia.^{xxv}

During their time at Fairbridge Village, their daughter Thea was born, and they decided to buy a block of land in Mandurah.

Transferring to Mandurah in 1948, the couple went about setting up a permanent home and joining the community. Shortly after their arrival in Mandurah their son Ross was born. Although Margaret appears to have ceased teaching at that time, record sheets obtained from the State Records Office show her in almost constant use as a relief teacher when required for short periods. As well as being qualified as an Infant Teacher, she was also adept at other homemaking subjects such as sewing, knitting and crocheting. The last year of relief teaching shown in records was 1968.^{xxvi}

In later life, Margaret became a skilled artist. At one stage she undertook some projects in an art studio in Perth, they also tried to persuade her to undertake an exhibition. Margaret's son Ross has several of her artworks.

Elizabeth Bernice Tonkin

Elizabeth Bernice Tonkin (nee Lannin) was born in Coburg, Victoria in 1908. She married Arthur George Tonkin in 1927 in Northam, Western Australia. Their two sons were born in Northam. They moved to Bayswater during the 1930s and moved in the early 1940s to Mandurah.

Elizabeth began her teaching career as an Assistant Relief Teacher in 1942 at Mandurah. She remained in that position until 1949. In 1950 she was transferred to Mandurah High School again as an Assistant Relief Teacher. In 1953 she returned to teaching at Mandurah Primary School as a Mistress. During her years at Mandurah Primary School, she taught the younger children.

Elizabeth had a break and returned, as a Temporary Relief Mistress, to Mandurah Primary School in 1965 where she continued until 1968.^{xxvii}

Former student Violet Gowan recalls in her oral history: "*While quite strict she was very fair and quite lovely.*" Later in the same oral history, Violet recalls how Mrs Tonkin played the piano for them and encouraged them to sing. "*She had a lovely voice.*"^{xxviii} She also gave piano lessons.

Elizabeth's career teaching in Mandurah spanned significant times and changes in teaching practices. Elizabeth would have gone from using slates and later pencils, to nib pen and ink and then to ball point pens. She would have seen the implementation of the Free Milk Scheme to W.A. and have supervised the distribution of this within her classes. School milk was implemented by the Menzies Government in 1951 and ceased by the Whitlam Government in 1974.^{xxix}



Maisie Vivette Luff

Maisie Vivette Luff (nee Gatley) was born in Kalgoorlie in 1928. Her family were living in Menzies where her father, John Gatley was a railway worker. Her Mother, Mary (nee Scott) had been a teacher in Menzies and was later transferred to Bodallin as Headmistress. The family left Menzies when Maisie was 11 years old. Her father had been injured in a workplace accident and died shortly after. Her mother moved the family to Midland to give her children a better education.^{xxx}

Maisie finished her education at Perth Modern School. She had been inspired to become a teacher by Henry Lake who had been her teacher at Menzies. She began her teaching career at Midland Junction Infants in 1946, aged 18 years, as a Monitor. This experience led her to gain a place at Claremont Teachers College. She completed her training and was sent to her first posting at Manjimup Junior High School in 1950. She remained teaching in Manjimup until 1953. She gave up teaching for several years when she married Ronald John Luff and had her family of five children.^{xxxii}

In 1962 the family moved from Bunbury to Mandurah. With the growth of the population in Mandurah, there were plans to extend the Hackett Street School (now Mandurah Primary School). More teachers were required, and Maisie's previous experience made her a sought-after candidate. Persuaded by Headmaster Jim Frawley, Maisie returned to the classroom in 1968 as a temporary teacher at Mandurah Primary School. She remained at Mandurah Primary School in various teaching roles for 12 years until her retirement in 1980.^{xxxiii}

During her time at Mandurah Primary, Maisie was part of the growth of the school that included a larger canteen and library. Student numbers increased as Mandurah grew. Class sizes were increasing, making the need for more classrooms essential. It was estimated that the school student population was around 1,000 students. Dudley Park Primary school opened in 1976 to manage the increase in students, and other schools around Mandurah followed.^{xxxiii}

In her final year teaching, Maisie had the unique experience of teaching her own Granddaughter. After retiring from teaching in 1980, Maisie became involved in volunteer community work with Christ's Church Anglican Church. She was active in keeping the Op-Shop open and served on the Committee for 20 years. These days Maisie is surrounded by her 15 grandchildren and 5 great-grandchildren. They were all educated in Mandurah and work locally.

ⁱ "A History of WACSSO" [website], <https://www.wacssso.wa.edu.au/about/a-history-of-wacssso/>, (accessed 6 February 2024).

ⁱⁱ Ibid

ⁱⁱⁱ Haynes, B.T., Barrett, G.E.B., Brennan, A.E., & Brennan, L. (Eds). (1976). "Documents on Western Australian education 1830 – 1973". Claremont, Australia: Claremont Teachers College, page 31

^{iv} J H M Honnibal, "The Tuckeys of Mandurah", *Early Days WAHSJP*, Vol. V, Part VIII, 1961, p. 15.

^v G. E. Owen, *The Post, Telegraph and Telephone Offices of Western Australia: An Alphabetical List*, (Typescript, 1958), (Battye Library PR 2151)

^{vi} *Western Australian Church of England Magazine*, August 1869

^{vii} Minutes and Outward Correspondence of the Murray District Board of Education

^{viii} *Government Gazette, The West Australian*, 24/02/1896

^{ix} News and Notes, *The West Australian*, 01/02/1897

^x Executive Council Appointments and Decisions, *The West Australian*, 08/10/1897

^{xi} The Education Circular Western Australia, WA Education Department, Vol 3, 1900

The Education Circular Western Australia, WA Education Department, Vol 4, 1901

^{xii} The Education Circular Western Australia, WA Education Department, Vol 25, 1923

^{xiii} Inspector's Reports, WA Education Department, AU WA S3672, page 44

^{xiv} Ibid, page 3

^{xv} Mandurah Notes, *South Western Advertiser*, 01/07/1917

^{xvi} Mandurah Notes, *South Western Advertiser*, 27/07/1917

^{xvii} French Red Cross Entertainment at Mandurah, *South Western Advertiser*, 20/04/1917



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- xviii NAA: B2455, 3483971.
- xix Inspector's Reports, WA Education Department, AU WA S3672, page 3
- xx School Concerts Mandurah School, *South Western Advertiser*, 22/12/1922
- xxi The Late Mr. W. R. Dalrymple, *South Western Advertiser*, 01/06/1928
- xxii Family Notices, *The West Australian*, 16/06/1937
- xxiii Inspector's Reports, WA Education Department, AU WA S3672, page 1
- xxiv Kirkpatrick, R. Interview by John Price, 1990s, City of Mandurah, Mandurah Museum
- xxv Ibid
- xxvi Record of Service Cards – Teaching Staff, WA Education Department, AU WA S132, page 16
- xxvii The Education Circular Western Australia, WA Education Department, various
- xxviii Gowan, V. Interview by Eleanor Kay, 2009, City of Mandurah, Mandurah Museum
- xxix Virginia Thorley. "Australian School Milk Schemes to 1974: For the Benefit of Whom?" *Health and History*, vol. 16, no. 2, 2014, pp. 63–86. JSTOR, <https://doi.org/10.5401/healthhist.16.2.0063>. Accessed 9 Feb. 2024
- xxx Luff, M. Interview by Eleanor Kay 2010, City of Mandurah, Mandurah Museum
- xxxi Ibid
- xxxii The Education Circular Western Australia, WA Education Department, Vol 82, 1980
- xxxiii "Dudley Park Primary School (5587)" [Website], <https://www.det.wa.edu.au/schoolsonline/overview.do?schoolID=5587>, (Accessed 09/02/2024)

