

Karoonda 1915 - 1940

When the first farmers settled at Karoonda in 1911 they soon became concerned about the lack of schooling facilities for their children. In June 1912 Mr PT Lowe wrote urging the survey of a site on which a hall could be erected. There were about 15 school going age children within walking distance of Karoonda siding. A Progress Association was formed and was responsible for the building of the Institute. Settlers knew the Education Department favoured renting buildings in new areas. On January 18th 1915 Karoonda school opened in the Institute with an enrolment of 13 pupils. Mr Joseph O'Loughlin was the Head Teacher. By the end of January there were 22 children on the roll. Parents whose children had not had any opportunity to attend school were relieved to have the school available.



Opening of Second Stone Room and Domestic Arts and Woodwork Rooms at Karoonda Primary School

On January 12th 1917 the contract for the erection of a school and residence was signed. Two acres was set aside as a school reserve. A residence for the Head Teacher was built and a single classroom (with iron shelter shed attached) a few hundred feet west from the residence. Total cost was £1,557-3-10. In contrast to the practice of the 1880's of erecting composite buildings in which the classroom was attached to the teacher's house, Karoonda's school and house were erected as separate structures. The new school room, although already in use, was officially opened on December 18th 1917.

The building was extended in 1928. Another classroom of the same size and design was built on the eastern end. Also added was a timber and iron structure north of the new classroom and slightly larger. It was divided up to provide a woodwork room, a room for "domestic economy" (later called "domestic arts") and a room for use as a staffroom and office. (This building is currently used as the Child Parent Centre of Karoonda Area School.) A second teacher was appointed to Karoonda during the 1920's.

This two roomed school sufficed for town and nearby farm children until 1940. Enrolment in 1940 was 78.

The Welfare Club was formed in 1929. An active Old Scholars' Association was formed in 1933. A banquet was held on July 7th 1933 by the Old Scholars' Association. Catering was 1/6 per head. Admission was 2/6 for gents, 2/- for ladies. The banquet was held in the Masonic Hall. This Old Scholars' Association was understood to be the first known such association of a public school in South Australia.

Area days were held in 1929, 1936, 1937. Fourteen schools participated in the area days.

Teachers who taught at Karoonda were:	Joseph P O'Loughlin	1915 - 1916
	Michael V Daly	January - March 1917
	Elsie E Giles	1917 March - September
	Harold T Darwin	October 1917 - December 1921
	Owen S Burgan	1922 - 1933
	Albert E Norman	1934 - September 1936
	Walter R Ashton	1936 - 1940

Most small townships and schools are touched by tragedy at some time in their history and the early years of Karoonda School were no exception. A tragic train and car accident in the 1930's shocked the community and the Memorial Shelter Shed was erected in memory of the two students who lost their lives. Other plaques were placed in various areas of the school yard in memory of pupils who died during their school years.

When school days are discussed, most of the students of those early days remember the saluting the flag, singing *God Save The King*, the inspection of hands at the morning assemblies and marching - in step - into the classroom.

Punishment used to be severe and several of the early students of Karoonda school remember how the cane was administered freely and firmly on pupils, some as young as seven years.

Another form of punishment for those who misbehaved or produced poor work was to stand in the fireplace with one's head up the chimney. Needless to say messages of dislike for the teacher were scratched inside the chimney.

Errors in spelling were corrected 100 times.

Garnet Clarke's sister Ruth, can remember the discomfort of chilblains and how they used to relieve the itching by rubbing the juice of pigface on the offending chilblains.

The early Headmasters, Mr Ashton and Mr Burgan, were keen teachers of music. The Clarke sisters fondly remember the thrill and beauty of "*Who is Sylvia?*" sung in two parts. They also remember Rhythm lessons. One - the portrayal of the blossoming of a Rose - each girl being a petal, was performed to the music of the Barcarolle played on a wind up gramophone.

The usual pranks were played by mischievous pupils - dipping the ends of the girls' pigtails in the inkwells, and tying the ties of the girls' dresses to the back of the desk making standing up to read somewhat difficult.

A school band was formed comprising flutes, drums and triangles and provided music for marching as well as concerts.

Garnet Clarke has two memories which remain fresh in his mind - how one girl could beat everyone else at the art of walking barefoot across a patch of three-cornered jacks; the other when he was playing paperchase - he ran a small stake into his foot. Four boys helped him to Frank Vivian's saddlery, made him lie face down on the bench, held him firmly, whilst the stake was pulled out Sand helped stem the bleeding.

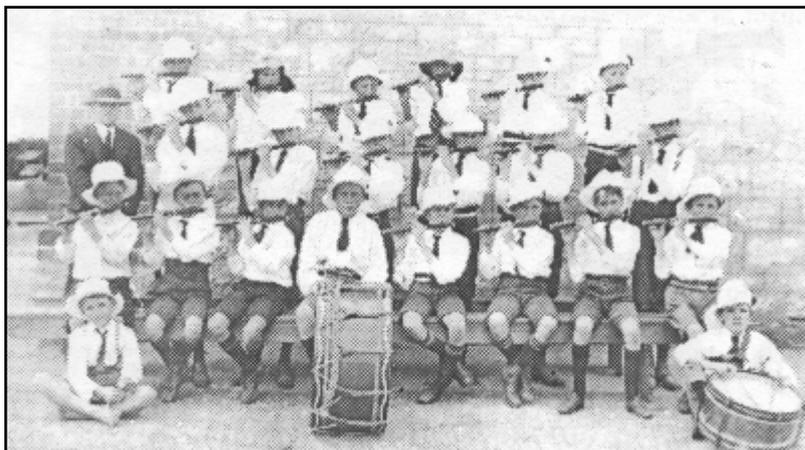
One thing all the early students relate, is how the friendships formed in those early harsh, hard days, have remained firm and loyal over the years.



Karoonda Primary School Students 1920



Karoonda Primary School Students



**Karoonda School Band
15th December 1922**