

Estelle Green nee Farrell

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Attended from 1946 to 1952.

No canteen, but as nobody had fresh bread on Mondays, students were allowed to walk up to Oatley shops to buy their lunch. The storeholders were usually parents from the school anyway; the De Silva's that ran the deli, the butcher (McPhersons?).

Estelle remembers Miss Milsop's store – there was no reason to enter the store bar to occasionally buy lollies but it was very dingy, Miss Milsop wasn't pleasant, and Estelle remembers Miss Milsop had an enormous ball of a cat.

There were no uniforms.

School carnivals were held in what is now Oatley Memorial Park. The kids would run barefoot and the grass was full of bindies. By the end of the day, the students' feet would burn but it was still a day that was eagerly anticipated. Estelle, being sporty, was a champion school runner and also did high jump. She would attend a District athletics carnival in Hurstville.

There were end of year plays; Estelle was always chosen to be in the plays because, she thinks, her mother was a seamstress and therefore the school knew she would have an outfit, and also because she remembered all the lines to the plays. She was always able to jump in to remind others of their lines if they forgot.

Estelle had a wonderful teacher called Mr Walker in Year 2 and Year 5 – he had a calm manner and was a talented educator and able to impart information. He in his 40s and his gentle manner made everyone warm to him.

Estelle remembers the cane - a boy called Geoffrey was asked to bring in actual sugar cane for the purpose, which he did, but 9 times out of 10, the cane would be used on him! He'd always say he'd never bring it in again, only to bring it in and have it used on him again.

Mr Sanderson: Estelle remembers that he was a WWI veteran, with a ruddy complexion. He was her Year 6 teacher and was often not in the classroom (as he was presumably busy with his Principal role). The boys especially would run riot. They would dare each other to go out the window, where they would drink water from a tap just outside the window, and then jump back in. One day, a boy that usually didn't dare jump out the window finally did it. He was still outside when Mr Sanderson returned. The children all thought Mr Sanderson hadn't noticed that the boy was still outside; but when it was time for lunch or recess, Mr Sanderson called his name out loudly and said "you can now re-enter the room – but from the front door please!"

Estelle remembers that one of the few advantages of being Catholic at the time was that there was no Catechist to run scripture classes. So the Catholic children were allowed to tend to the rose bushes between the office and Neville Street and she remembers having a wonderful time during Scripture hour.

Exams were held half-yearly.

The children loved playing Vigarò and Woman's Rules basketball (what netball may have been called at the time). Estelle remembers the sheds where the children would play and spend lunch time if it was raining.

Estelle remembers Wattle Day celebrated on 1 August (even though she thinks it used to be 1 July), and Empire Day was a big day on the calendar for the community but not necessarily the school (as it was a public holiday). Estelle lived at 17 Southern Street, right down the bottom end, and remembers feeling that the water and scrub surrounding was all an enormous play area for her.

ON Empire Day, there would be an enormous bonfire on Southern Street, with crackers and items gathered weeks in advance. Apart from the flag being raised at the school she doesn't remember any school-based events.

Estelle remembers walking along the water pipe all the way down to Como and if she and her siblings were ever spotted from their family home they would be in trouble that evening.

There were constantly scrub fires in those days, at the southern end of Oatley along the railway line, from the steam engines passing down the railway – Estelle remembers that they would go to help put them out!

Estelle remembers once being down at the railway line at the time of the Duke and Duchess of Edinburgh's visit to Australia in 1954. They had taken the train and were in the caboose of the train. Estelle and her companions waved and the Duke noticed and waved back.