

6 EDUCATING



The formal and informal learning by children & adults

THEME 6.0 EDUCATION

The relevant National theme is *educating*. The relevant state theme is *education*. Local themes within this theme are activities associated with teaching and learning by children and adults, formally and informally. The following activities and places in the former Botany Bay LGA are relevant to this theme:

- The beginnings of formal education in the Botany District
- Schools:
 - Botany Public School
 - Mascot Public School
 - Banksmeadow Public School
 - Matraville Public School
 - Daceyville Public School
 - Eastlakes Infants School
 - J.J.Cahill Memorial High School
 - St Bernard's & St. Therese's Catholic Primary Schools
 - St Michaels School (also: religion, also: Daceyville/welfare)
- Nursery school (John Brotchie Memorial Nursery School)
- Libraries
- Mascot School of Arts
- Botany School of Arts
- The forming of public libraries
- The decline of the Institutes
- George Hanna Memorial Museum

Related themes:

Towns, suburbs and villages

6.0.1 THE BEGINNINGS OF FORMAL EDUCATION IN THE BOTANY DISTRICT

The establishment of a National School at Botany in 1848 was not only a historically significant initiative, it was also a socially indicative one that reveals the local community's aspirations of the time. Public education at this stage of the Colony's progress was not an orchestrated or administered entity - the establishment of a school being the responsibility of the local community. Education was commonly a subject that encountered an apathetic response, as was stated in a Report to the Board of National Education which described the problem thus..

"The first is the apathy of the parents, many of whom appear to care very little whether their children receive any instruction or not, while since some have actually stated their opinion, that children are better off without education." (Graham Norman, "Botany Public School: A History")

There was a widespread lack of finance to support an education system, so in 1826 Governor Darling

endeavoured to provide funds by reserving one seventh of all new land in the colony as the Clergy and School Lands, the proceeds of which were to assist in the payment of clergy and teachers in Church of England schools.

A large part of the area between the wetlands and the coast was reserved for this purpose and became known as the “Church and School Lands Estate”. Although the concept of setting aside land to raise revenue to pay teachers and clergy theoretically had the potential to do so, it was abandoned following legal advice from London and the Corporations established to administer the Estates were dissolved in 1833. The land was then designated general Crown Lands for use by the Government.

It was quickly realised by early governors Bourke and Gipps that an education designed to embrace all classes and sects was the ideal solution for New South Wales.

With this in mind, in 1844 Governor FitzRoy formed the Board of National Education which would supervise the schools provided by the Government under a new centralised Board. In order to promote the new system of education in the colony, the Government was prepared to provide up to two thirds of the cost of erecting and fitting out a school wherever an attendance of at least thirty pupils could be guaranteed.

Botany is notable as the location of only the third school, and the first in the Sydney metropolitan area, to be established under this scheme. (Largs and Dunmore Public Schools were opened before Botany Public School, however they were both in rural NSW.)

6.0.2 SCHOOLS

BOTANY PUBLIC SCHOOL

Botany Public School, also known as Botany Bay Public School, opened in 1849 with 30 pupils, a number that increased to 50 the following year. Although this attendance was impressive in the context of the small size and low density of the local population at the time, the school soon faced financial difficulties. Fees were very low (at 1 penny/week) and the Local Patrons requested that the four shillings/week for the premises be subsidised by the National Board.



The temporary premises were also not particularly suitable as a place of education. The location of this original school is not known. It is understood to have been established in an upstairs room of a temporary premises in the Botany area. This may have been on Lord's land (ie. close to the present day Botany town centre), since advertisements in the Sydney Morning Herald in 1850 asked those that had subscribed towards the erection of the Botany District National School to please make payment to the schoolmaster "at the school house, Botany" or to Frederic Castilla at Darvall, Castilla and Co.'s stores.

Darvall and Castilla were owners of large tanneries on either side of what is now the intersection of Bay Street and Botany Road in the Botany town centre, which suggests that it may have been close to its present position, even though the population in the area was still sparse and access to this part of Lord's land was difficult, since Botany Road did not extend through the site. It is also possible that the school was located in what was known at the time as the 'Botany Township' along the 'old' Botany Road now known as O'Riordan Street.

Fig. 6.0.1 Location of schools.

1. Mascot Public School
2. St Therese Catholic Primary School
3. J.J.Cahill High School
4. East Mascot Public School
5. Daceyville Public School
6. St Michael's Catholic Primary School
7. Botany Public School
8. St Bernard's Catholic Primary School
9. Pagewood Public School
10. Banksmeadow Public School
11. Matraville Public School

Prior to the passage of the Public Schools Act of 1866 it was common for private individuals, who perhaps had a bent for teaching or a desire to earn fees for services in a community that lacked schools, to set up private tuition classes. More often than not, these schools were but transitory. Several such schools existed in the early years of Botany, including two in lower Botany for children of wealthy parents living in the vicinity of the Sir Joseph Banks Hotel.

Fig. 6.0.2 The original 1868 schoolhouse of the Botany Public School was a typical example of architect George Allen Mansfield's distinctive Gothic design for a two-roomed school in a semi-rural area. It included an attached wing to provide accommodation for the teacher. The wing has been demolished. The grounds were planted with Norfolk Island Pines and Moreton Bay Figs.

It was described at its dedication ceremony in 1868 as being unable to be surpassed in architectural beauty by any of the nearby ecclesiastical buildings.

(NSW State Records, 1 October 1868, Sydney Morning Herald, p.5)

The teacher at the Botany District National School, Mr Samuel Smyth, resigned from his post in 1850 to open his own private school. It appears that at around this time the building being used by the school was required by its owner, and no replacement teacher was appointed or premises secured, so the school closed for eleven years.

In 1862 an 'Application for the Establishment of a Non-Vested National School at Botany Bay' was lodged with the Commissioners. The application was approved and another temporary premises, the Wesleyan Chapel, was used to house the new school which again grew quickly, with 96 enrolments registered in 1864. The Wesleyan Chapel soon became overcrowded, a situation increasingly common throughout early schools in Sydney at the time.

The Government was at this time committed to wide-ranging reforms



in educational policy and practice culminating in the Public Schools Act of 1866. This Act abolished the National and Denominational Boards that had been coordinating education up until this time and instead placed schools under one controlling body, the Council of Education.

It was to this newly constituted Council that local Botany residents directed their request for a new purpose-built school in 1867 on the basis that the Chapel was far too small as the school's population had by this time exploded to 140 pupils. To expedite the process George Lord donated one acre of land valued at £100 for the new school. The school was situated on the western side of Botany Road and was "*of gentle elevation of land, sandy and naturally drained*". There would also have been a rather pungent odour in the air for the school abutted two tanneries.

Local residents raised £300 for the construction of the school. It was designed by Government Architect, George Allen Mansfield, in his characteristic Gothic style and included a classroom suitable for division into smaller teaching spaces and an attached residence for the teacher - a standard inclusion in schools considered remote from the main residential areas of Sydney at the time. The building was formally dedicated on 30 September, 1868, and classes commenced in January 1869 under Mr Charles Stratford. (Interestingly, the school appears to also have been known locally as Bay Street School, presumably due to its former name as the "Botany Bay School", or possibly its secondary frontage to Bay Street.) It was the practice to supplement the teacher's salary by fees. In Botany these ranged from threepence weekly for one child to a shilling for four or more. Enrolments consisted of a mix of fee paying and free students; a scheme that allowed free education for families that met certain social and economic criteria, based on income, land and number of children. Many of the local families were poor and a considerable proportion of children at the school did not pay fees, leading to a strain on resources and the teacher's income.

The management of the school was considered poor, and the quality of its teaching was considered "*discursive, superficial and mechanical*". A succession of teachers was dismissed due to either the unclean state of the school or their sub-standard teaching and behaviour management. It is not surprising that private schools nearby attracted



Fig. 6.0.3 A photograph of the school taken in 1938. The expansion of residential subdivision in the Botany area in the late 19th and early 20th centuries and introduction of the tram service along Botany Road had led to a rapid growth in student numbers. A second classroom block was added in 1903 to house the primary classes and a third in 1909. (BCHA)

Fig. 6.0.4 The original lancet windows to the 1869 classroom that had been removed by 1938 have now been reinstated. (Photo Elizabeth Conroy)

the better pupils, causing the enrolment to be reduced by almost half. Enrolments had dwindled to 70 by the 1870s, many parents having moved their children to a flourishing private school that had been established on the adjoining site by Samuel Butler, a disgruntled ex-teacher of the Public School. An elderly veteran teacher, Jabez Clarke, took charge of Botany Public School in 1878. He seems to have been appreciated by both parent and student, and enrolments increased rapidly from 79 in 1877 to 236 in 1880. (*Graham Norman, "Botany Public School: A History"*)

The opening of the tram line down Botany Road facilitated further increases in enrolment and attendance at the school. Water and gas were added and the teacher's accommodation was increased. Enrolment increased rapidly following the incorporation of the municipality in 1888 and by 1900 had grown to 369. The original buildings form the nucleus of the present Botany Public School, with the addition of a two-storey primary classroom block in 1903, and then third classroom block by the early 20th century and a new hall in the late 20th century. The grounds of the school had been increased gradually by purchase of adjoining parcels of land, and the rear part of the site, extending to Bay Street, was used as a playing oval, with the original timber shelter shed, which had survived almost 100 years, being relocated to this area in December 1975.

MASCOT PUBLIC SCHOOL

Between 1914 and 1918 land from the Estates of H.C. Castle and G.H. Hicks was purchased by the Board of National Education for a school. The erection of a new school was desperately needed for the North Botany area. Gardeners Road Public School was the main catchment school for the area and by 1894 had over 400 enrolled students, with 300 attending weekly. In March 1892 a deputation from the Public School Board and North Botany Council approached the Minister for Education to request a new school with proper brick buildings be built in King Street to help ease the population burden. Nothing appears to have been carried out as a result of this and by 1921 Gardeners Road Public School's population had exploded to 1,700 pupils – a number that far outweighed the capacity of the school.

Originally the new school at Mascot was to be an Infants School, however in July 1920 the scope of the project was widened to be a complete primary school due to this rapid rise in school-age population in the catchment area of Mascot at this time. Plans were prepared and in November 1920 the Department accepted Mr. F. Denham's tender for construction of a primary school.

The school, built of brick with an iron roof in the Arts and Crafts style,

Fig. 6.0.5 Class 4B and their dolls at Mascot Public School. n.d.(BCHA)



was officially opened in 1922 (at the King Street location originally proposed in 1892). Over 600 students left Gardeners Road Public School to attend Mascot Public - a move welcomed by the former for it reduced their population to a more manageable 1,150 and allowed them to receive kindergarten students for the first time. (*Gardeners Road Public School: 1883-2008 125th Anniversary History*)

Mascot Public School could accommodate 700 students in 14 classrooms. Six additional classrooms were added in 1924. A separate Infants School was built on an adjacent site and opened in 1926. The Infants School was a two-storey brick building on concrete foundations and with a roof of terra cotta French pattern tiles. Special attention was made to the heating and ventilation of classrooms. In the 1970s a new wing was built to contain a canteen and an undercover area. A 1979 fire destroyed two classrooms and an outdoor theatre. In 1993 an administration block and staff amenities were added.

Fig.6.0.6 The 1938 classroom block at Banksmeadow Public School was a substantial one even though the local residential population was mainly industrial and market gardens. The rapid growth of residents following the release of the Sandgate, Hancock Gardens, Sir Joseph Banks and Dudley subdivisions led to a significant expansion in pupil numbers. (BCHA)

BANKSMEADOW PUBLIC SCHOOL

Banksmeadow Public School began in 1875 as an informal gathering of pupils in a temporary weatherboard building in Banksmeadow. The school had an opening enrolment of 24 pupils and the head teacher was Mr. W. Densley. Application to the Council of Education for a provisional school was refused on the grounds of the location of the school being less than two miles from Botany School (the rules



stipulated no two public schools could be closer than six miles apart).

The school was finally approved in 1881 and opened on the 1st of September of that year on land provided rent-free by Joshua Wiggins, an early mail coach driver in North Botany. The premises was a room, 6 by 5 metres in size, owned by Wiggins. By the end of the year there were 94 pupils enrolled with an average attendance of 54 a week. In 1882 Wiggins requested £1 per week as rent. Rather than pay for the site that it had been receiving for free, the school board instead moved to purchase land from William Stephen, a resident of Brighton Street in Banksmeadow whose son operated a market garden on the same street. The school relocated to this land and established a tent upon the property. The tent was said to have been windswept, badly affected by storms, and had no drinking water or toilet facilities. By the following year, 1883, a permanent brick school building had been constructed, at a total cost of £4,297. A teacher's residence, also known as the Headmaster's Residence, was also built just to the north of the school site.

At first the residential population in Banksmeadow was mainly industrial and market gardens. The rapid growth of residents following the release of the Sandgate, Hancock Gardens, Sir Joseph Banks and Dudley subdivisions led to a significant expansion in pupil numbers. In 1895 the school accommodation had reached capacity, being originally designed to hold 236 pupils and with a current population of 261. The Minister for Public Instruction stated in the media that the pupil numbers would continue to grow and that the school's accommodation would need to be increased. Tenders were called for additions to the school building in 1895.

In 1919 fifty trees were planted in the grounds to commemorate the fifty ex-pupils of the school who had enlisted to serve in World War I. Ten of the trees were given "pride of place" to honour those who had lost their lives. (*4 August 1919, The Sydney Morning Herald, p. 8*)

In 1921 the school site underwent major redevelopment. The original 1883 brick building appears to have remained, however major additions were made to the site including the construction of a new two-storey brick building. By the Jubilee year of 1938 enrolment at Banksmeadow Public School had surged to 475 before decreasing slowly over the years to 223 in 1969. Enrolment at Banksmeadow

Public School remained stable at approximately 250 pupils for the next fifty years.

MATRAVILLE PUBLIC SCHOOL

Matraville Public School was the third public school erected in Botany Bay. It originally opened in 1904 as the Cross Roads School. Cross Roads was the local name for the area at the time due to the intersection of Bunnerong and Beachamp Roads. The first application for the establishment of the school was made in 1899. On 24th June Mr Laycock, Secretary of the Botany School Board, wrote to the Minister of Public Instruction urging the erection of a public school in the neighbourhood of the Cross Roads. He informed the Minister that there would be 70 children of school age in the locality, however the Inspector thought the need was insufficient and so the application for another school was refused. Laycock renewed his application in October 1900, however this too was declined on the grounds of insufficient population. Applications continued to be lodged, including proposals that named different locations for the school, but on each occasion they were deferred.

Mr McCredie, the Deputy Chief Inspector, visited the district in November 1902 to decide upon a central and suitable site for the erection of a school. He reported that the erection of a large paper mill within half a mile of the Cross Roads would lead to more settlement of families and in this case, a school could be approved. The original site identified at the Cross Roads was selected and on 3 March 1903, just over 2 acres of land was dedicated for the new public school. Plans were drawn for a building that could accommodate 100 pupils. Tenders were subsequently invited and in November one submitted by Mr J. A. Oag was accepted. Oag had made errors in his tender and so he did not take up the contract, with it instead going to Mr J.





Wilson of Newtown for £1,080. The school buildings were completed by June 1904.

The opening enrolment at the Cross Roads School was 95 pupils. Shortly after it began operating, the Department asked head teacher, Owen Jones, if he could suggest another name for Cross Roads School as another school was operating under the same name. On 17 August Jones informed the Chief Inspector that the residents preferred the name of “Matraville”, and on 24 August 1904 the new designation of the school was approved. The suburb was also renamed Matraville, however not until c. 1911.

The name comes from James Maria Matra (1745-1806), a sailor and diplomat in England, who accompanied Captain James Cook aboard HMS Endeavour in 1770. Matra became a leading proponent of the idea of establishing a colony at Botany Bay, and it is because of this connection that the school community chose him as their namesake. In May 1911 the school held a large Empire Day celebration, where “patriotic songs were sung by the children and the flag was saluted.” At the celebrations the headmaster also read aloud a letter from the President of the Urban Council in Frome, England (the location of James Maria Matra’s country estate), who said that...

“the flag recently sent by the school to commemorate James Maria Matra would shortly be unfurled in the Victoria Park, Frome, by the Premier of New South Wales, Mr. McGowen.” (25 May 1911, The Sydney Morning Herald, p.5)

Fig. 6.0.7 Matraville Public School opened in 1903 in a weatherboard classroom block typical of schools in outlying areas at the time, with wide, sheltering verandahs. (BCHA)

Fig. 6.0.8 Empire Day celebrations at Matraville Public School in 1911. (BCHA)

DACEYVILLE PUBLIC SCHOOL

Daceyville Public School formed an integral part of the original Daceyville Garden Suburb ideal. Provision of public education through Daceyville Public School was not just about meeting enrolment needs like it was at every other public school in the area. Rather, the Daceyville Public School was, from its very beginning, an idealised provision of public education, of government welfare and of the garden suburb values. It is therefore highly recommended that this section be read within the context of the Daceyville chapter, see Section 4.5.2.

The provision of a place for public education was an essential component of the vision for the design and development of Daceyville. Dedication was originally made for a public school in the area in the original 1913 plan, but it was to be an Infants School initially.

The site selected was at the extreme north-western edge of the plan between Astrolabe and Isaac Smith Street. The temporary school was approved to accommodate primary aged students in 1917.

As the suburb grew, the school outgrew its premises at Astrolabe Road and a new site of five acres (the present site) was obtained from the Housing Board. A new building was designed with a commodious two storey building with wide verandah and balcony for ventilation and health, with accommodation for eight classrooms and four cloak rooms. A Kindergarten building was also constructed on the site in a similar form but smaller scale to the school. The cottage, now used as a child care centre, still stands at the north-west corner of the school grounds.

The main school building was predicted to cost £14,000. The architect is not known, but was likely to have been the Government architect, attempting to add an Arts and Crafts flavour to a standard school block. Daceyville Public School was officially opened at the start of the 1922 school year and had such a rapid enrolment that by 1925 it had again outgrown its premises. This time however extensions were made to the existing school building, as opposed to relocating the school.

The first pre-fabricated classroom building to be erected in NSW was erected in the grounds in 1950. It was imported from Britain and



Fig 6.0.9 The original temporary Daceyville School was located in Astrolabe Road. Photo taken c. 1914-1917s. (State Records NSW)

Fig 6.0.10 The newly completed Daceyville Public School, c.1914. (State Records NSW)

Fig 6.0.11 The student population at Daceyville Public School, c.late 1930s-early 1940s (State Records NSW)

heralded as the first of 185 to be erected in the state, but were not successful and was subsequently demolished. (2 June 1950, *The Sydney Morning Herald*, p.1)

EASTLAKES INFANTS SCHOOL / EASTLAKES PRIMARY SCHOOL

Eastlakes Public School was first established in 1938 as an Infants School. It was originally housed in a church hall in O'Connor Street. The school moved to its current site in 1943 and originally consisted of one building, which currently houses the school library. For many years at the end of Year 2 students moved to one of the nearby primary schools, either Daceyville, Gardeners Road or Mascot Public. Following the redevelopment of the old Rosebery Racecourse in the 1960s into a housing and shopping complex, the number of enrolments grew at Eastlakes Infants School. The need to expand the school to include students from Kindergarten to Year 6 became evident so in 1979, Eastlakes Infants School became Eastlakes Primary School.

J.J.CAHILL MEMORIAL HIGH SCHOOL

The natural outcome of the Public Schools Act of 1866 and 1880 was the introduction of the high school component to a youth's education. Formerly secondary education was mainly provided by private schools, but in October 1883 public high schools were opened at Sydney, Bathurst and Goulburn.

Entrance to high schools was obtained by passing the Qualifying Certificate, the unsuccessful pupils remaining in the primary school until reaching leaving age. In 1823 some primary schools were extended to seventh, eight and ninth classes to cater for successful pupils not wishing to proceed to a full high school course of five years but were too old for the younger grades. During the post-war period further new developments in secondary education occurred, namely the extension of the high school course to six years.

Until 1961 Botany had no public high school. Botany's post-primary pupils had to travel to neighbouring areas such as Randwick and Sydney (city) to attend high school. Junior technical and home science courses were provided at Gardeners Road (located on the northern side of the LGA boundary).

Eventually the Department of Education began searching for new sites for high schools due to the pressure of post-War population growth arising from both the 'baby boom' and immigration.

A site of ten acres was resumed in Sutherland Street, Mascot, in March 1951 for a new high school for the Botany area. Construction began in July 1959 by A.F. Little Pty Ltd. By November 1960 the building was ready for the first group of pupils from Gardeners Road Junior Technical and Home Science Schools. On 31 January 1961 the school commenced as a full co-educational high school with 899 pupils and a staff of 44 teachers. In keeping with a policy of using schools to perpetuate the memory of men who were thought to have contributed to the development of Australia, the State Cabinet named the new building the 'J.J.Cahill Memorial High School' in honour of the late Honourable John Joseph Cahill, Premier of New South Wales. The school was officially opened by Mrs J.J. Cahill on 24 March 1961.

ST BERNARD'S & ST. THERESE'S CATHOLIC PRIMARY SCHOOLS

On 31 January 1885, five Sisters of Our Lady of the Sacred Heart (OLSH) arrived in Sydney and took up residence in a cottage on Botany Road. Although today St. Bernard's Church is in the suburb of Botany, the 1889 Sands Directory reveals that the Sisters were actually living at the southern end of North Botany, between Hollingshed Street and the Botany dams. There was soon a group of buildings built upon the site; the St. Bernards schoolroom, the St. Bernards Church and the Sacred Heart Convent.

When the school opened between 1885 and 1889 it held an enrolment of about 20 pupils. The original school was a wooden structure and served its purpose for many years, during which time hundreds of children came through the school.

Immediately following his appointment as parish priest, Reverend P. Walsh called for plans to construct a new two-storey building which was to serve as a church on the ground floor with a school above it. The building was erected in memory of Father Dowling in recognition of his work in the religious development of the Botany Parish.

In 1936 Fr. Edward Teehan, of Kilmanagh, Co. Kilkenny, Ireland, was appointed as Parish Priest (the parish at this time being St Bernard

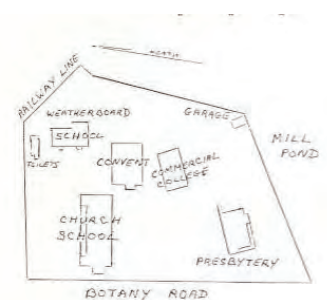


Fig. 6.0.13 (below) Un-dated and unsigned sketch of the buildings in the original St Bernard Church group prior to its resumption by the Civil Aviation Authority and relocation of the Church, school and Convent to Ramsgate Street, Botany. (BCHA)



Fig. 6.0.12 Pre 1895 photograph showing the original buildings of St Bernard's, including the (L to R) schoolroom, convent(at rear), bell tower and the 1860 church. (BCHA)

Fig. 6.0.14 By the early 20th century substantial additions had been made to both church and school buildings and presbytery had been added to the south. (BCHA)

Mascot). In the following year he directed the purchase of the land at the corner of Sutherland, Coward and Harris Streets for an 'out-church' to service the Rosebery-Eastlakes side of the parish. (*St Therese Mascot Parish History*, <http://sttheresemascot.org.au/parish-history/>)

Despite St Bernard's at this time still being the centre of the parish, the reason for the 'out-church' further north was that it was deemed to "meet a growing need, for population had not crowded round the St. Bernard's Church-school, whereas further on towards Sydney, Mascot has been expanding considerably". (1 February 1940, *Catholic Freeman's Journal*, p. 6)

St Therese's Church was built in 1940 at the corner of Coward Street and Sutherland Street, Rosebery. St Therese's Infants School was the

first building to be constructed on the site, built for The Catholic Church had purchased the site by 1940 and established upon it an Infants School. It was built at a cost of £2,375 and opened in February 1940. The construction and opening of the church building followed several months later. Originally sisters from St Bernard's church and school travelled to St Therese's Infants School to teach.

In 1951 the St Bernard's site was purchased by the Department of Civil Aviation in 1954 and the buildings demolished to make way for the clearance needed for the new East-West runway at Sydney Kingsford Smith Airport. St Bernard's church moved to a smaller site in Ramsgate Street and in 1955 the new school and presbytery, as well as two remodelled adjacent brick cottages, were blessed and opened.

Until the resumptions by the Department of Civil Aviation, the Mascot Parish of St. Bernard's had served both Mascot and Botany Municipalities. When St Bernard's moved to Ramsgate Street, St. Therese's Church at Rosebery became the centre of the parish.

A presbytery was built at the St Therese's site in 1954, followed by the primary school and Sisters' residence the following year. A new infants school was constructed in January 1963.

ST MICHAEL'S SCHOOL

(See also Section 8.3 (Religion) and 4.5.2 (Daceyville))

St Michael's Catholic Primary School sits on a large parcel of land within the second (1915) section of the Daceyville subdivision designed by Foggitt.

The origins of the school actually begin in Kensington, where in 1914 it was announced that sisters from the Our Lady of the Sacred Heart convent at Kensington would begin a small school in a hall (although in reality it was more akin to a shed) situated at the corner of Anzac Parade and Wallace Street. There were 42 pupils at first, but this number quickly grew. In 1919 the Daceyville subdivision began and the Daceyville Parish was formed soon after. There was a large block of land purchased by the Catholic church for use by the Parish at Daceyville. Construction of a new Church-School building upon the site began in 1920.



Fig. 6.0.15 St Michael's Church built in 1924 was also used as the schoolhouse until the purpose-built school was completed, requiring the re-organisation of the interior twice each week to accommodate the two uses. The original church building remains and is now used as a hall. (Elizabeth Conroy)



Fig 6.0.16 Sisters of Our Lady of the Sacred Heart at their convent, beside St Michaels Catholic Primary School on Haig Avenue c.1920s (BCHA)

The learning environment was very trying in St Michael's early years. By 1924 the Church-School building had been completed (it remains today on the site, close to the boundary of Haig Avenue), however its use had to be shared for many years, meaning that after each school day the front part of the building had to be reorganised in preparation for the next morning's Mass, and each Friday, the entire school was reconverted into a Church for the Sunday congregations.

Not only this, but the teaching sisters walked on foot to and from their accommodation in Kensington to St Michael's in Daceyville each day until a convent was finally built for them on a site adjoining the school in 1926. (By 1926 the Sisters leased the baby health clinic, opposite the school at the corner of Haig Avenue and Wills Crescent, to ease the burden of travel while they waited for the convent to be

completed. Nine sisters lived in residence there from 1926 to 1929, at which time they moved to the new Convent).

In March 1938 Friar Foley sought permission to finally erect a proper school building. The application was granted, thus freeing the original building to operate in its intended purpose as a Church for the Daceyville Parish. The new primary school buildings opened in 1939 and by 1950 they held 450 students (both boys and girls).

In 1954 the Marist Brothers established an adjoining school in Banks Avenue for upper primary and lower secondary school boys. A residence for the Marist Brothers was also built on the site (facing Banks Avenue).

In 1992 St Michael's Primary School became a systemic school under the Catholic Education Office and the OLSH Sisters withdrew from the administration of the school. In the following year the neighbouring Marist Brothers school closed and the Brothers took over the administration and management of St Michael's Primary. Closure of the Marist boys college gave St Michael's students the opportunity to use their library and a classroom on that site, however the majority of the old Marist Brothers college became occupied by Catholic Education Offices.

NURSERY SCHOOL (JOHN BROTCHE MEMORIAL NURSERY SCHOOL)

The proposal to establish a nursery school in Botany was made in 1946 by Mayor J.S. Greenfield and the Town Clerk, John. E. Brotchie. Public subscriptions were immediately opened and temporary accommodation was secured at the Presbyterian Hall, where £2,000 was subsequently spent on improvements and renovations to the building. In February 1949 the Botany Nursery School opened with an enrolment of 36 children.

Following Brotchie's untimely death in October 1949, it was unanimously agreed that the school's title be changed to the John Brotchie Memorial Nursery School to perpetuate his name.

The nursery school remained at the Presbyterian Hall for ten years. In 1959 the Council leased the old Botany Literary Institute/School of Arts building to the nursery committee. Extensive renovations



Fig 6.0.17 The Literary Institute building, also known as the School of Arts building, at 1361 Botany Road, Botany c.1930s.

The Institute was established for the education and betterment of the local working population, and provided a reading room with small library.

The School of Arts was also the location of the first meetings of the newly-formed Botany Council until the Council relocated to Pemberton's cottage opposite the Police Station on Botany Road following an argument with the management over a table left in the hallway (see Section 7.2).

In more recent years the property was adapted for re-use as the John Brothie Nursery School in 1959. (BCHA)

and building reconstruction (at the cost of £3,000) were undertaken. During these alterations the façade of the heritage item remained intact. The Mayor of Botany is the Patron of the nursery, thus preserving the historic link between this nursery and (former) Botany Bay Council.

6.0.3 LIBRARIES

Mechanics Institutes and Schools of Art were the precursors of community libraries. They are a legacy of the days when there was no provision for adult education. Interested groups of people formed themselves into associations to provide opportunities for meeting one another and improving their knowledge.

MASCOT SCHOOL OF ARTS

A School of Arts was established in North Botany on the current Council administration site on Coward Street. The exact date of its construction is unknown. The School's peak in popularity appears to have been in the period from 1915 to 1925, when numerous social institutions and sporting clubs met there.

It was very common for these institutions to also host a small library, and North Botany School of Arts appears to have had one. A Return published in the Statistical Register for 1915-16 excludes Botany but lists Mascot as having a library of 1,084 volumes valued at £95. This almost certainly belonged to the School of Arts and not to any other library institute for the collection was marked as the only institution of its kind in the area.

BOTANY SCHOOL OF ARTS

George Lord, son of early Botany pioneer and major landowner Simeon Lord (1770-1841) donated land for a Mechanics Institute in the 1860s on the condition that it should never be sold or mortgaged. The building was constructed in 1867. There was a library at the Institute as well as reading, card and billiard rooms and a lecture hall. The building is known interchangeably as the Mechanics Institute, the Literary Institute and the School of Arts in historical records.

The Botany School of Arts was the location of the meetings of the Botany Progress Association. Presbyterian services were also held at the Botany School of Arts from 1873 to 1879 until the congregation secured a designated church site in southern Botany (1561 Botany Road).

In 1888 the newly formed Botany Council (which formed out of the Progress Association) met in the 'ante-room' of the School of Arts for their fortnightly meetings. Eventually the secretary of the School complained that the Council used and left a table out without first asking, and the Council, rather disgruntled, moved their meetings to a cottage held by one of the Aldermen, William Pemberton Snr. (now 1158 Botany Road).

The School of Arts building continued to be used for rallies, election speeches, voting, general assemblies and meetings. It performed this civic community role right up until the completion of the Botany Town Hall in 1899.

6.0.4 THE ESTABLISHMENT OF PUBLIC LIBRARIES

The Municipalities Act of 1867 had empowered councils to establish public libraries, assisted by a subsidy of £100 if there were at least 300 readers and £200 if over a thousand. Botany Council first considered the establishment of a free public library in 1889, but it was not until six years later that effective steps were taken towards this proposal. Botany's reading population was considered sufficient to obtain a government subsidy of £200 and in July 1896 the library was opened in a room in the School of Arts building for the public to use.

Most of the early libraries functioned under considerable difficulties. There was a general absence of enthusiasm that stemmed largely from the Government's restrictions on lending which impaired the usefulness of the early municipal libraries. Eventually they succumbed to the keen competition of the Schools of Arts and similar institutions, to which the books were generally transferred. This was the fate of the Botany Municipal library collection, which was transferred to the Botany Literary Institute/School of Arts in 1908.

Mascot Council did not appear to establish a municipal library separate to its School of Arts' collection.

6.0.5 DECLINE OF THE INSTITUTES

Institutes for the working classes began to decline in popularity in the 1920s. Government aid was withdrawn and increasingly local Councils were the ones to either continue funding them or let them diminish over time. Eventually both Botany Literary Institute and Mascot School of Arts ceased to function; The Mascot School of Arts was eventually demolished to make way for the Municipality of Botany's new administrative offices in Coward Street in 1929. In 1959 the Botany Literary Institute was leased by Council for the John Brothie Memorial School, and it remains a child care facility to this day.

The Libraries Act was passed in 1939 empowered local councils to take over existing libraries, or to establish new ones. The Municipal Council of Botany (post-amalgamation in 1948) adopted the Act and built two libraries in the former Botany Bay LGA – Eastgardens library at Eastgardens Westfield Shopping Centre and the Mascot Library and George Hanna Memorial Museum at 2 Hatfield Street, Mascot.

The Joint Library Service between the two Councils was established in January 1976. This saw the establishment of library branches at Coward Street, Mascot and at Botany Town Hall, with the continuation of library services at Maroubra and the opening of new branches at Matraville (1978) and Randwick (1990). The partnership was relatively short lived as local politics saw parochial interests lobby for the dissolution of the Joint Library Service, a decision that was eventually made, amongst much acrimony, in 1983, by then Mayor of Botany, Ron Hoenig. By 1984, Botany Library Service was

again a separate entity. The Botany Library in the Botany Town Hall was only closed in c.1990 after the opening of Eastgardens Library in 1989. (<http://www.randwick.nsw.gov.au/library/about-the-library/history>)

6.0.6 GEORGE HANNA MEMORIAL MUSEUM

The only local museum in the area is the George Hanna Memorial Museum, named after George Hanna, Alderman of the Municipality of Botany from 1959 to 1968 and Mayor in 1966. It forms part of the Mascot branch of the former Botany Bay LGA library network. (see also Section 9.2 for more information on George Hanna)



Fig 6.0.18 The George Hanna Memorial Museum. (BCHA)

(facing page) "An inspection and march past for 1st Australian Returned Stores Depot" 18 September 1945. 116120. Held by Australian War Memorial Research Centre.