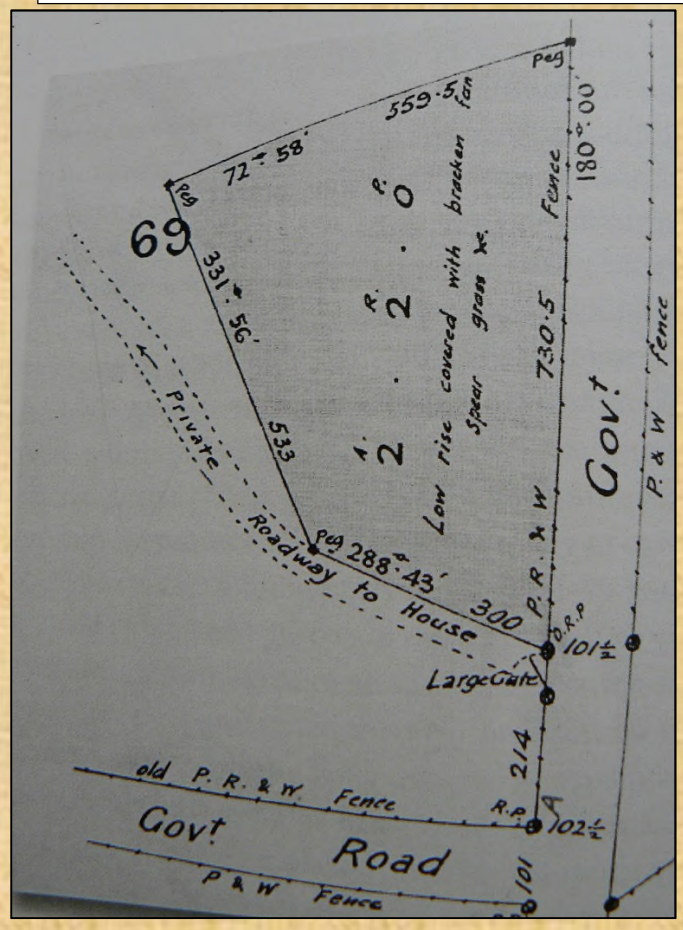
GARFIELD NORTH

OUTDOOR EDUCATION CENTRE

Garfield North State School No. 3849 opened on Monday 16th July 1914. The school building had previously been the Garfield State School SS2724 from its erection in 1886 before it was superseded by a new building that was built on that school's new site. (This information on the pre-camp days comes from Smith, Ron, 2014, *The school on the small plateau: The history of the Garfield North State School No. 3849*)

The school in 1915.

The building was a 'portable' of the 1880s, consisting of a gabled classroom and a skillioned teacher's residence. "The teacher's residence section would have consisted of two rooms with a fireplace in one of the rooms". (op cit, p.6) By the time of its removal to Garfield North, the wall between the residence and the school room had been removed and replaced by supporting posts. The teacher at Garfield North therefore had to find his or her own accommodation.



After discussing a few other sites, the Education Department decided on the site on what was later to be known as Garfield North Road, very near to Wright Road. The building was shifted to this new site in mid-July 1914. Daisy Body was the first teacher. The school opened to students on Monday 20th July. Daisy was only 17. She lived at Iona and travelled to the school in a horse and gig.

Daisy Body was not at the school for long as Harriet Rowley took over on 28th September 1914, straight after the September vacation. She stayed at the school until she resigned in mid-1918 to marry. After a two-month temporary appointment by Ethel Waller, Mabel Adamson took over until March 1921.

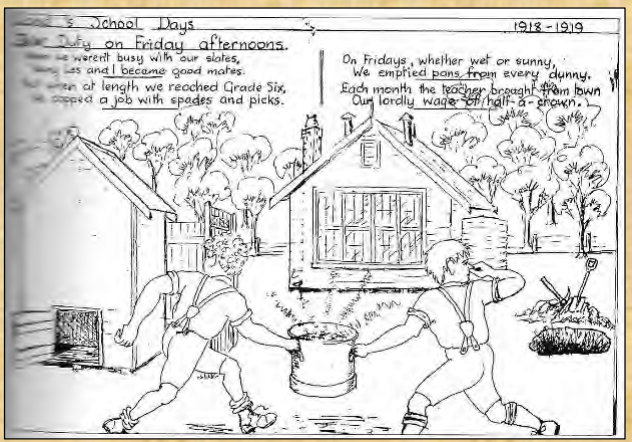
The 1915 students

The school became an important part of its local community. It was used for meetings and dances and a tennis court for the locals was added in 1923.

Opening of the tennis court 1923.

Over its sixty years of operation as Garfield North State School, 399 pupils had been registered for attendance until its closure on 6th March 1973. The numbers attending at any one time varied greatly over those years.

The school had many teachers, with only nine of them at the school for at least two years, with the longest tenure being Iris Towt's eight years from 1942-49. Iris had been a former pupil. Ron Smith who was virtually the last teacher at the school, being transferred only a couple of months before the closure, has written an excellent, comprehensive history of the school and the district called *The school on the small plateau: the history of the Garfield North State School No. 3849*.



A notable picture in the book is a drawing by Derrick Chapple who was the Garfield North teacher in 1934-36. It depicts two Grade 6 boys doing toilet duty on a Friday afternoon. While the school depicted is another of Derrick's schools, it could well be Garfield North.

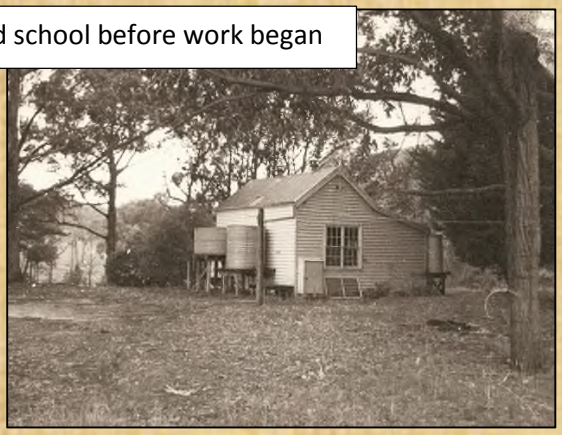
The Education Department began in the late 1960s to offer closed rural schools to other schools for use as school camps. Following the lead of the special schools for students with mild intellectual disabilities in establishing a camp at Blackwood in 1970, the five Education Department schools for students with physical disabilities took over the Garfield North State School building and site in 1976. These schools were then known as Yooralla Carlton (now Glenroy), Yooralla Balwyn (Belmore), Marathon (Glenallen), Nepean and Shannon Park, Geelong (merged to form Barwon Valley School in 1993). Because of the distances involved Shannon Park soon dropped its membership, but the other four schools remained.

The decision on Garfield North came after a meeting at the school in 1969 between two Departmental officials (one was Brian Jeanes who was in the Physical Education Branch and later became principal of Oakleigh/Monash SDS), school principals Gwenda Wilkinson (Glenroy), Tony McNamara (Belmore), Stan Spencer (Nepean) and Rowena Wakefield (Marathon), with some locals including Graeme and Helen Peggie and Ian Vagg. The locals were happy with the camp being established but wanted the use of the building for neighbourhood meetings. This was readily agreed to.

However, before any camps could start, much work was needed, and the Christian Work Camps Group provided the solution. This voluntary group provided the plans, materials and labour in a very concerted effort. They built a new wing which established the dormitories for students and staff as well as the showers and toilets in a very short space of time.

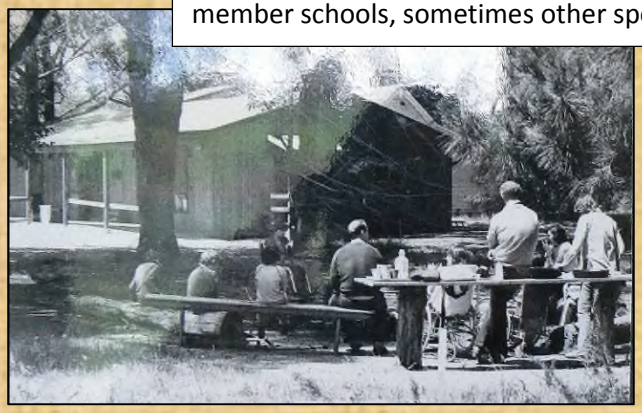
CHRISTIAN
WORK
CAMPS

The old school before work began



Christian Work Camps
Group January 1978

Now, the camps could begin. Though the camp was primarily for the member schools, sometimes other special schools hired the camp.



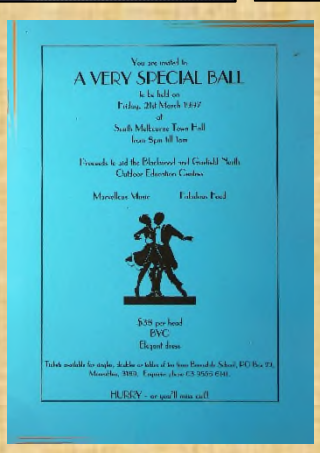
Despite the enthusiasm of many in the member schools over the time, the organisation of four schools found it increasingly harder to maintain and sustain the camp. So, in 1995, they approached the Blackwood committee to see if it could assist.

Blackwood jumped at this chance to save and revitalise Garfield North, so they offered to take it over in a merger. After a joint year and with several new member schools for students with intellectual disabilities, the camp was re-established as Garfield North Outdoor Education Centre the next year with the new committee led by four former Blackwood committee members.

Blackwood committee meeting at Garfield North 1995

Internal changes needed to be done to the building as many of the new students were more physically capable than the previous target group. Internal dormitory walls were built and lined, doors put on the showers and toilets, and the old hospital style beds were gradually replaced, a number of them with double bunks. This work was all done by committee members.

It was thought that the shelter shed could be renovated, but it had to be demolished because of termite damage.



To help with fund raising for all the work needed, the Garfield North and Blackwood committees decided to organise a ball at the South Melbourne Town Hall. These were successful and were held from 1997 to 2000.

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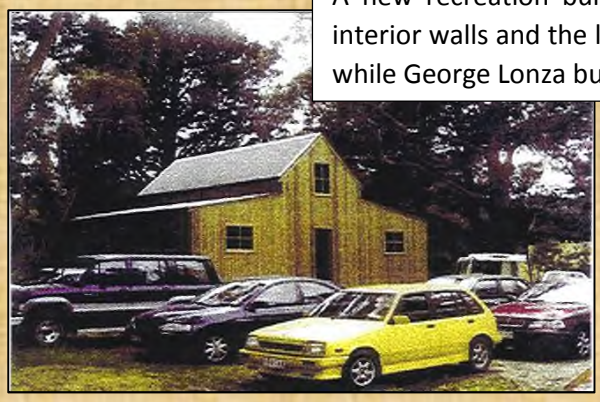
1998 playground refurbishment

A new recreation building, the Barn, was obtained in 1999. The interior walls and the lining were done by the committee members, while George Lonza built the verandahs, ramp and steps.



Committee members lining the Barn in 2000.

While we had the scaffolding to line the Barn, it was used it to paint the high ceiling of the School building.

The completed Barn 2001

In-services have been an important part of the times at GNOEC. In 1996 and for a couple of the years after, they were offered in conjunction with Blackwood. The usual format is activities and talks in late afternoon and the night of the first day, a complete program on the second day and evening, and then more sessions until departure after lunch on the third day.

In-service 2003

Building the boardwalk on the wheelchair track.

In 2006, the pine trees on the western boundary were removed.

The buildings in 2009.

The Barn has been used over the years by some schools for special purpose camps such as music, art and Bike Ed.

In 2013, there was a major refurbishment of the camp. The main works were the overhaul of the shower and toilet areas and the building of a laundry area.

The Department, in 2017, as part of a state-wide project, paid for the fire protection of the Barn by recladding it and installing fireproof window shutters.

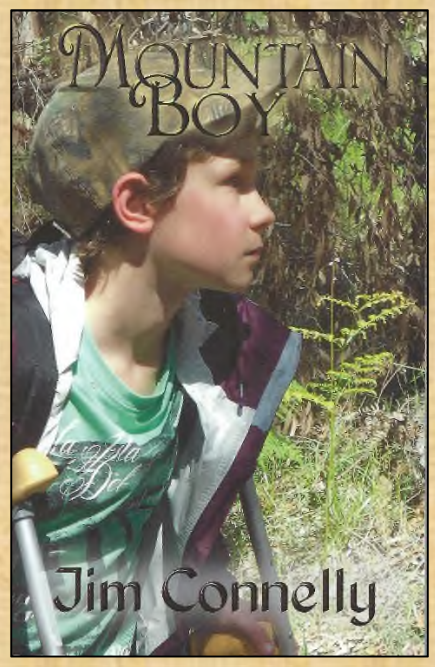
In March 2019, with the Bunyip State Park fire, we had massive concerns about the camp as the fire moved closer and closer to it. There was no one at our facility fortunately. Then we heard that it been saved. The CFA had sent a truck and crew from Mount Martha to the site and they protected the buildings. There was extensive damage to the fences and the trees and undergrowth.

With the great assistance of the Education Department, the site has now been cleared up and the fences and other items replaced.

Over the years, especially in the first twelve years of operation under the new GNOEC format, there has been a great need for donations for maintenance and improvements to the facilities. Without these generous donations, the camp would not have survived and prospered as it has.

We thank these donors very, VERY much!

Date	Amount	Trust	Purpose
Nov-06	$ 1,000	Sydney Myer Trust	General Use
Jan-97	$ 5,000	Grosvenor Foundation	Kitchen Upgrade, floor polishing
Jul-97	$ 1,000	Ian Potter Foundation	General Maintenance
Dec-98	$ 1,000	Ian Potter Foundation	General Maintenance
Dec-98	$26,200	Jack Brockhoff Foundation	Recreation facility
Jan-99	$ 5,500	Helen McPherson Trust	Playground (fort & slide)
Feb-99	$12,000	RE Ross Trust	Wheelchair track
Sep-99	$ 7,500	Andrews Foundation	Recreation facility
Aug-00	$10,000	Andrews Foundation	Recreation facility
Sep-00	$ 4,800	Helen McPherson Trust	Ramps and steps
Sep-00	$12,000	Jack Brockhoff Foundation	Recreation facility
Jan-01	$ 9,400	RE Ross Trust	Secure area / fence
Jan-05	$19,250	Jack Brockhoff Foundation	Staff toilet, laundry
Oct-06	$10,100	Schools	Tree Removal
Oct-07	$ 7,300	Schools	Sewerage
Jan-08	$ 4,000	Helen McPherson Trust	Sewerage
Jun-08	$ 3,760	Jack Brockhoff Foundation	Mower & Shed
Jun-09	$ 1,600	Schools	Barbecue
2013-8	$1,150	Beryl Millman	Playground shelter & other items



Jim Connelly has written an excellent short novel about a boy camper's GNOEC adventure tackling Mt Cannibal, the iconic little peak near the camp. The book is called *Mountain Boy* and it was published in 2016. For information, go to ajcon@dcsi.net.au

Some of the Garfield North committee members over the years.

NAME	SURNAME	SCHOOL/S	ROLE & YEARS
Joan	Anson	Belmore	Comm member 2001-14; Volunteer 2015-
Lisa	Chapman	Springvale Park	Comm member 2012-
Julian	Collas-Smith	Frankston/Nepean	V/P 2000-01; Comm member 2002-05; Volunteer 2006-
Stuart	Cordy	Emerson	V/P 1995-99; Comm member 2000-08; Volunteer 2009-
Carly	Davern	Noble Park	Comm member 2008-10
Mary	Davern	Noble Park/Frankston	Sec 2000-01; V/P 2003-06. 2008; Pres 2009-
Victoria	Ferguson	Dandenong Valley	Comm member 2016-
Karen	Garrard	Yooralla Glenroy	Comm member 1995-97
Neisha	Gange	Vermont South	Comm member 2019
Laurie	Haslem	Yooralla Glenroy	Sec 1983-87
Fiona	Handel		Comm member 1996
Heather	Jackson	Vermont South	Treas 1995-2009; Comm member 2010-
David	Kemp	Emerson	Comm member 2012-18
Terry	Leach	Naranga	Sec 1995-97
Cathy	McDonald	Vermont South	Comm member 2010-15; V/P 2016-
Julian	Moloney	Monash	Comm member 2005-08; V/P 2009-15; Volunteer 2016-
Kaye	Molyneux	Bulleen Heights	Comm member 1996, 2009-13; Sec 1997-99, 2014- 18; Pres 2000-08
Glen	Morrison	Belmore	Comm member 1995-98
Di	Pert/Irving	Dandenong Valley	Comm member 1996-98
Bryan	Scott	Vermont South	Volunteer 1997-2006
Jayne	Smith	Dandenong Valley	Comm member 2015-16
Glenys	Stevenson	Dandenong Valley	Comm member 2000-08; Sec 2009-13; Volunteer 2014-
Tess	Sweeney	Dandenong Valley	Comm member 2014-15
Gabrielle	Szypowski	Ashwood	Comm member 2009-10
Mike	Tegg	Glenallen	Comm member 1998-2000
Tony	Thomas	Montague/Berendale	Pres 1995-99; Sec 2002-08; Comm member 2000-01; Volunteer 2009-
Sam	Troman/Elliott	Noble Park	Comm member 2005-6; V/P 2007
Peter	Vevers		Comm member 2000
Chris	Winter	Emerson	Comm member 2018-

LIFE MEMBERS

Joan Anson	Christian Work Camps Group
Julian Collas-Smith	Stuart Cordy
Heather Jackson	Beryl Millman
Julian Moloney	Kaye Molyneux
Helen & Graeme Peggie	Bryan Scott
Glenys Stevenson	Tony Thomas

Over the years since 1976, thanks are due to the many people who established and maintained this outdoor education centre for the use and delight of hundreds of Victorian students with disabilities who have visited and stayed at the facility.