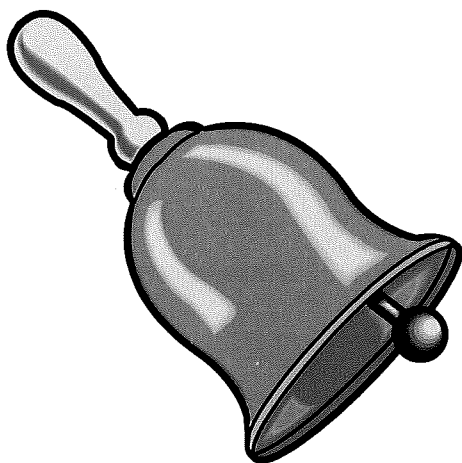




HISTORY OF  
VOGELTOWN SCHOOL  
1915 - 1965

COMPILED BY G.H. DAVEY  
ESQ.



## HISTORY OF VOGELTOWN SCHOOL 1915 - 1965

Compiled by G. H. Davey, Esq.

The establishment of a school at Vogeltown followed the general pattern of suburban schools in New Zealand at the beginning of the century. As the population of the town grew, surrounding farmlands were subdivided with the result that new houses were built in closer proximity to each other, the occupants generally being of young families. Citizens too with families moved to the outskirts of the town to take advantage of the cheaper living and greater freedom.

By 1910, the Vogeltown area, which had been served by the Central, Frankley Road and Carrington Schools, was ready for a school of its own.

The first move towards this end came in 1912 when, after discussions among the residents of the area, Mr G. W. Browne was chosen to approach the Taranaki Education Board. The community was mostly a farming one, but about this time larger holdings were being subdivided into sections ranging from a half acre to 10 and 20 acres. The next step was to choose a site for the school and the first proposed was at the junction of Carrington and Brooklands Roads. This was considered by the Board to be rather far out and although ideal level sites appear to us at the present time to have been available, the Smith Road site was preferred.

Smith Road - later Smith Street and now Huatoki Street - then ran from Carrington Street to the edge of the Huatoki Valley but was formed only as far as the present school gates and the area adjacent to it was marked on the maps as Saxton Township.

After two years of indefinite haggling, the residents with an estimated 60 pupils, now pushed the authorities into a decision. In July 1915 a school was temporarily established at the Methodist Sunday School in Hori Street as a "Side School" under the control of the Headmaster of the Central School.

Miss M. Wilson and Mrs Wilkes opened the school with 33 pupils up to Standard 4. Senior pupils still attended Central School.

Meanwhile land was purchased from Mr Tippens on the south side of Smith Road beyond the present school gates with only one acre of semi-flat land and the rest sloping steeply to the Huatoki Stream.

The First World War intervened and all building was postponed until 1918 when the Education Department finally gave the 'go ahead' to the building of the first school of two rooms. Because of the poor conditions at the Hori Street School, the roll had dropped to 40 pupils, parents preferring to send their children to Central or Frankley Schools.

On May 29th 1919, The Hon. R. Masters, as Minister of Education, opened the new school with Orlando Allen as Headmaster. Of interest today is the cost of the two rooms and outbuildings which amounted to the princely sum of 2,039 pounds.

By 1921 the school was already overcrowded with Mr Allen and an assistant struggling with 75 pupils in a classroom of 580 sq. feet. So back to Hori Street went a class until two new rooms were built in 1924 and 1925.

Meanwhile an area of 2 acres originally owned by General Meldrum on the opposite side of the unformed portion of Smith Road was offered by the late W. H. Broome and purchased in 1923 to make a much needed addition to the grounds.

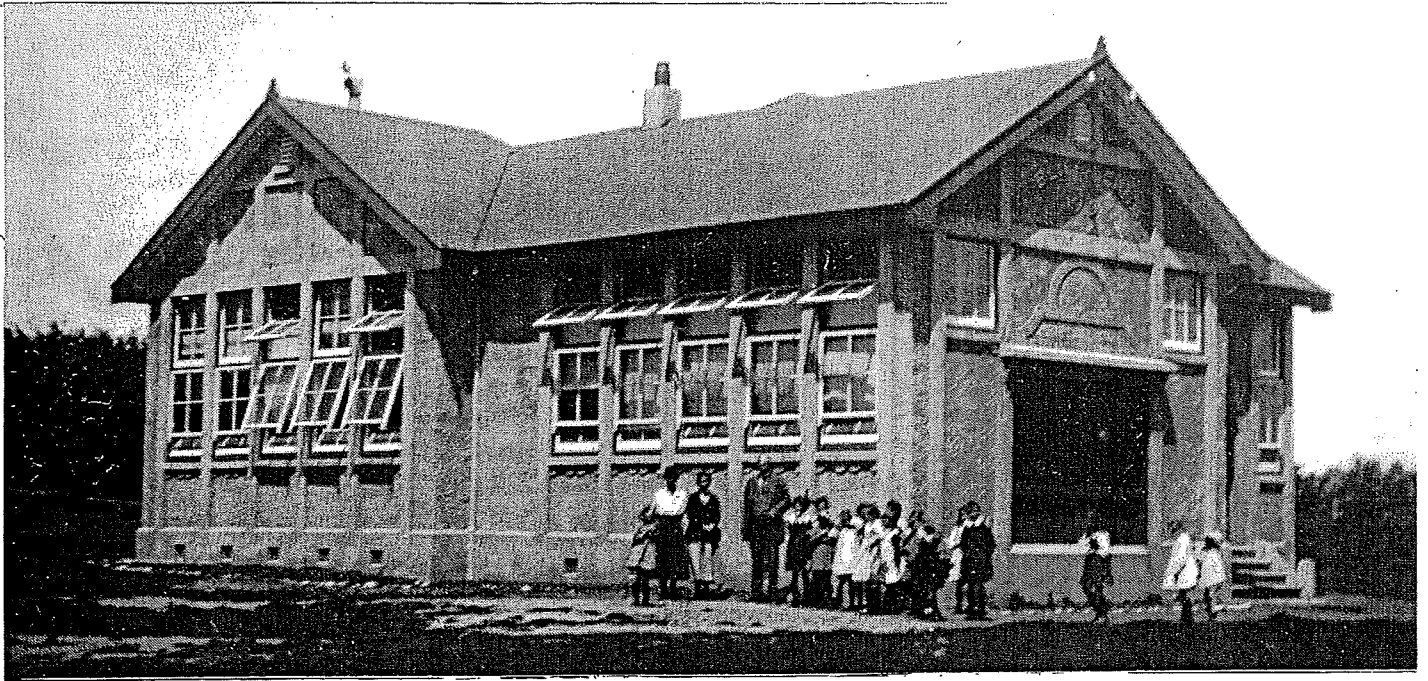
The roll rose to 170 in the next few years, but then any natural increase was offset with the withdrawal of all five year olds during the depression.

Work was found for many unemployed locally on the levelling of the school grounds.

THE TWO ROOM & PORCH VOGELTOWN SCHOOL, NEW PLYMOUTH at the end of Smith Street (now Huatoki Street) then a grass unformed street with a gravel footpath on the south side, leading in from Carrington Street.

This building is the original school and is still part of the present school.

Photograph by Caleb Wyatt



In 1933 the school residence was purchased from Mrs Martin of Stratford for 708 pounds.

It was not until the middle 30's that the next upward trend began. At the end of 1935 the whole staff moved to other positions so that in 1936 a new staff of 5 teachers arrived on the job together, a most unusual situation. A rising roll the next year saw the arrival of the first movable classroom, a weird contraption of four walls with a roof bolted together by long steel rods. In a southerly wind the walls were inclined to concertina dangerously, so that Miss Todd, the teacher at the time, made several hurried exits to safer, if less comfortable spots in the playground.

Meanwhile improvements were being added to grounds and classrooms through the efforts of good committees and co-operation of the parents. The Huatoki pool had catered for the district swimmers for the past 25 years. But despite many efforts to improve it, as a teaching pool it was a poor affair, although hundreds of children did learn to swim there.

As the roll had now passed the 200 mark, a decision was then made to build a swimming pool in the grounds. With the willing help of numerous working bees, a Government subsidy, and the full co-operation of the Education Board, the pool was completed after a few months ready for the 1940-41 swimming season and opened by Mr Frost, M.P. The first swimmer was Gladys Franklin, who had been recommended for a Humane Society Medal for the rescue of Bobby Russell at the Huatoki Pool.

As the playing area covered only 2 1/4 acres at this stage, another 3 3/4 acres was purchased from the Saxton Estate on the southern boundary. The hilly nature of the land prevented its use until several years later, when less than half was made available by bulldozing.

The first two rooms of the new classroom and office block in 1943 made the extension of the playing area still more important. The end of the war saw the beginning of a boom period when the roll rose from under 300 to 450 within seven years. Housing projects in all surroundings areas kept the classrooms bursting at the seams. The Hori Street Sunday School was again requisitioned and even the Domain buildings were used as classrooms. More classrooms still had to be built, although zoning syphoned off some children to Welbourn.

Growing schools need money and Vogelstown has always been fortunate in its parents. All kinds of money raising projects continually brought in large sums of money. The Home and School Association and the School Committees were (and are) most active bodies working in close co-operation for the good of the school.

The building of the school hall was a splendid example with a Queen Carnival in 1944 raising 1,558 pounds. It was eventually opened in April 1949 with a social and dance.

In 1948 an area of 4 3/4 acres behind the street frontage in Huatoki Street was purchased from W. W. Thomson Estate for a new Infant Block, so that by 1950 the pressure on the main school was relieved by the withdrawal of infant classes. Then again in 1955 the Highlands Intermediate School drained off approximately 110 pupils in Forms 1 and 2. This provided a breathing space with accommodation to spare, but six or seven years of housing expansion, especially in the Frankleigh Park area, once again built up the school roll to crowding proportions. As a result the Woodleigh School was established in Brois Street. This meant that Vogelstown is now surrounded by well established schools, and will be free from the fluctuations of the past for a long period.

Maybe for the next 50 years .....

FIRST DAY PUPILS

1.	BROWNE	Eileen
2.	HOOKER	Dorothy
3.	PEPPERELL	Veta
4.	WELLS	Freda
5.	EVA	Ruth
6.	ALLDRIDGE	Marjorie
7.	GORDGE	Winnie
8.	BRIDGEMAN	Rita
9.	NOBLE	Myrtle
10.	HEALY	Jean
11.	HANWRIGHT	Myrtle
12.	NOBLE	Olive
13.	LAWRENCE	Gwendolyn
14.	LAWRENCE	Raymond
15.	HOOKHAM	Lilly
16.	HOOKHAM	Thomas
17.	HODGES	Claude
18.	LAWRENCE	Ina
19.	HODGES	Dorothea
20.	HANWRIGHT	Ivy
21.	HODGES	Nina
22.	BRENMUHL	Ruby
23.	COLEMAN	Dorothy
24.	SIMCOCK	Mavis
25.	HOOKER	Bertie
26.	SIMCOCK	Lindsell
27.	NOBLE	Wanganui
28.	BROWNE	Rex
29.	BERRYMAN	Arthur
30.	HEALY	Jack
31.	HANWRIGHT	Leslie
32.	SUTTON	Roy
33.	SYMONS	Herbert

VOGELTOWN SCHOOL, HUATOKI STREET, NEW PLYMOUTH

Reminiscences of the first years of the school by Caleb Wyatt - a pupil during 1919 and 1920.

The first move towards establishing a school came in 1912.

The First World War intervened to postpone any building work. In October 1919 a grant of 1,695 pounds was approved by the Education Board allowing the building of a school at Vogeltown to commence. It was completed on May 19, 1919. The two room school with its porch and outbuildings cost 2,039 pounds.

It was built on a small flat area overlooking the Huatoki Stream, at the end of Smith Street (now Huatoki Street) - then a grass covered unformed street with a gravel footpath on the south side, leading in from Carrington Street only as far as the present school gates.

The Junior pupils from the temporary school in the Methodist Sunday School in Hori Street moved in. Also children from Frankleigh Park who came through the gully and across the stream and the Senior pupils who had been attending Central School.

The official opening by the Hon. Robert Masters, Minister of Education, took place on May 29, 1919.

Miss T. Sage was the Headmistress and taught standards 3, 4 and 5 was in one room and Mrs Amy Wilks (daughter of Mr Chew Chong, a well known businessman and a pioneer of the dairy industry in Taranaki) - she was later Mrs Laing - was in charge of the lower classes in the other room.

Mrs Sage left at the end of 1919 and at the beginning of 1920 Mr Orlando Lincoln Allan started as Headmaster and remained until retiring from teaching at the end of 1926.

My parents moved from Bell Block to Carrington Road and I commenced attending Vogeltown School in July 1919 as a pupil in Standard 5.

During 1920 Mr Allan taught the four upper classes with just twelve pupils in each class. Mrs Wilks and Mrs Gibson taught the primers and standards 1 and 2.

The school grounds were in a rough state and Mr Allan formed a gardening class, of about twenty of the bigger boys, to improve the grounds and plant young trees around the boundaries and on the steep hillside down to the stream. Also to form a path down and to build with river stones, a wall across the stream to form the first school swimming pool. Some of the boys stood in the stream and collected the stones and threw them 'chain gang' style to the ones standing on and building the wall.

The school acquired a set of new gardening tools, not of a very good quality, so Mr Allan brought his own very good, sharp spade.

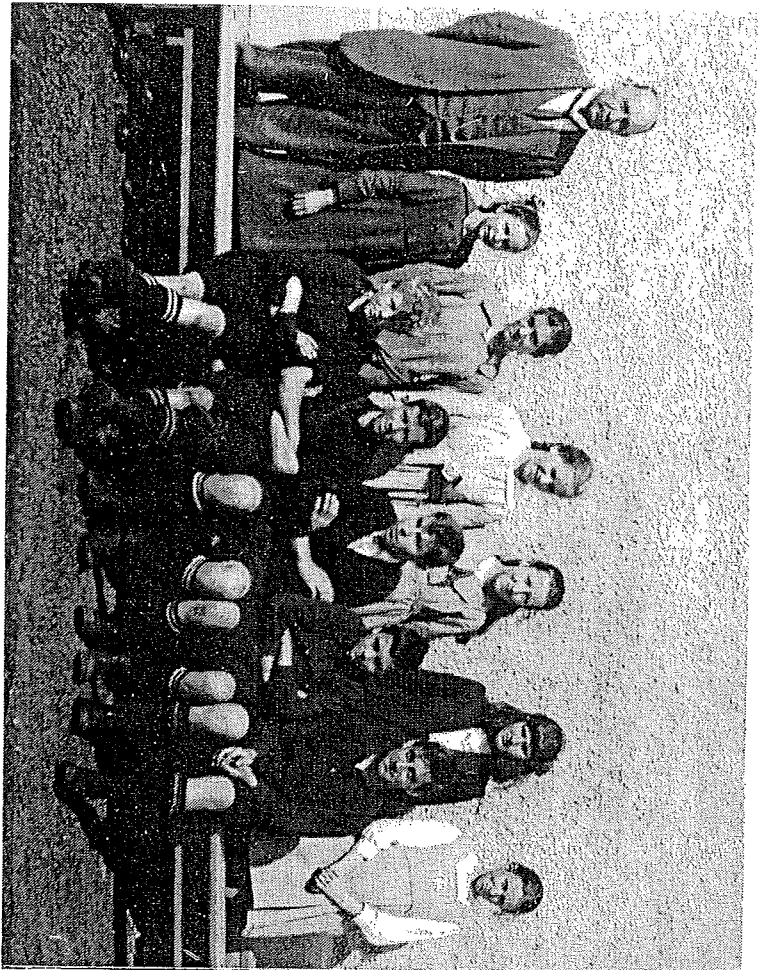
I do not know whether or not it was because I only had one eye or because I was the biggest boy at school but he entrusted his spade to me and gave me the task of marking out and cutting the outline of the zigzag path down to the stream. The class followed on doing the excavating.

All this took place during the year 1920.

On the days this was taking place Mrs Wilks conducted sewing classes with the girls.

(At a later date the dam wall of the swimming pool was washed away in a river flood.)

Mr Allan would never tell anyone his Christian name. He was a very good teacher and very seldom punished anyone with the strap but for some reason when he did he went very red in the face (not from temper) so one of the boys christened him 'Firey' and that name stayed.



STANDARD SIX VOGELTOWN SCHOOL NEW PLYMOUTH

By Caleb Wyatt, November 19th, 1920.

Standing from left: Mr Orlando Lincoln Allan (Headmaster from 1920-1926). Lena Margaret Miller (Mrs Goodsell), Violet Hunt (deceased), Olive Corney, Edna Constance Therkluson (Mrs W. J. Revell, died 3/9/89 aged 78), Violet Reed (Mrs Les Hine), Ina Lawrence (deceased). Seated from left: William Robert (Pat) Allen (died in New Plymouth Hospital from misadventure following a minor operation 20/7/41 aged 34), Harold William Rowse (died 15/8/89 at Christchurch), Caleb Wyatt, Kenneth Oliver Butcher (deceased), Ernest Hooper (wing Commander, Royal Air Force for five years; back in NZ killed while piloting a topdressing plane at Hunterville).

Due to lack of space, classes such as reading, were often held in the porch among the school bags and wet coats. Toothbrush drill was instituted at the time, we each had to keep a mug and toothbrush at school. Each morning pupils lined up in the playground with mugs and each was given tooth cleaning liquid; dip the brush in it then brush so many times, back teeth left side, then right side, front teeth sideways up and down, etc. then spit out. It did not do anything for me; I lost all my teeth early in life.

Dr Elizabeth Gunn, the Education Board's Medical Health Doctor, used to visit schools. Her gruff reputation travelled ahead of her. Most children were absolutely scared stiff of her coming visit. When she walked into the school in her white uniform and in a booming voice said "Good morning children", almost to a voice they said "Good morning Sir". Quite a few burst into tears. She checked heart, lungs, eyesight, tonsils, teeth.

When checking the boy next to me (who shall remain nameless) with her wooden spatula, he played up and made quite a scene and said "My mother told me to tell you that you must not touch any of my teeth". She gave each tooth a prod and said that one must come out and that one and that one, then she said "now spit out" and out popped 4 or 5 of his "baby" teeth.

On December 6th, 1920, standard 6 pupils from all the surrounding schools went to Central School to sit the Certificate of Proficiency examination supervised by Mr M. Dempsey, Chief Inspector of Schools.

Mr Allan told me later, after the schools had broken up for the holidays that I had gained highest marks in this exam for Vogelton School.

I left Vogelton School at the end of December 1920.

## VOGELTOWN SCHOOL HISTORY SINCE 1965

Vogeltown School has progressed a further quarter century since the last history was written.

Needless to say, physical aspects of the school have been altered from time to time. Much needed extensions to staff and office quarters, and classrooms, were carried out, with the final additions being added in 1981.

The famous bell, which had deafened both Principals and Teachers in the rooms adjacent to the office for too many years, was finally moved to a new site across the quadrangle.

The hall, one of the greatest assets of the school was refloored, the kitchen upgraded, and is in constant use by the school and outside groups.

Probably few people other than teachers, realise just how valuable an asset a good library is. Without it, no school can begin to function even adequately because of the demands of present schemes of work. It has come to be recognised that good reading habits - not just the mechanical skills of 'barking at print' but the knowledge of how to find out, how to interpret and how to judge the quality of literature - are the absolute basic necessities of education today.

Vogeltown can pride itself on having an outstanding library, where all children are taught to work the Dewey system, common to all public libraries throughout the country and the western world. The library is the hub of a modern school. Funds for the provision of the present space were provided by profits from the last jubilee. No money could have been more wisely spent.

Schools are, however, not just buildings and subjects, they are what people make them. Families add character, personality and enjoyment in countless ways, and Vogeltown has been particularly fortunate in this respect.

Since 1966, the Principals of the School have each made distinctive contributions to Vogeltown.

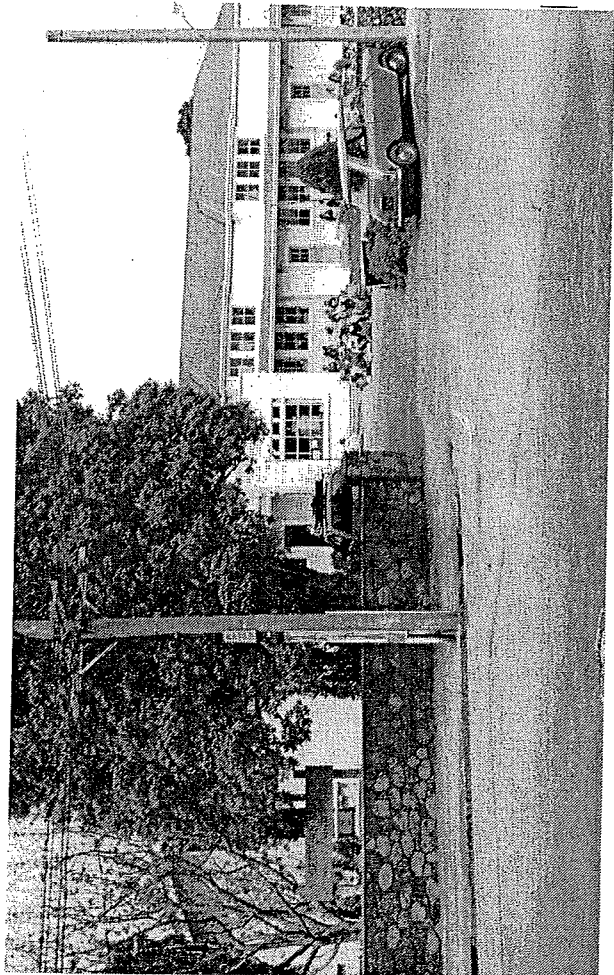
Mr Glen Olsen (1962-1966) who later became a Taranaki Staff Inspector, planned and inaugurated the library. His staff remember him for wanting the best for every child, irrespective of ability.

Mr Bruce Eversfield (1966-1975) continued the school's development, and was zealous in finding ways of ensuring that the children observed and appreciated their surroundings. His assemblies were memorable. Tree planting continued to be an important feature of the year's programme, and outdoor carol services at Christmas were carried out for many years.

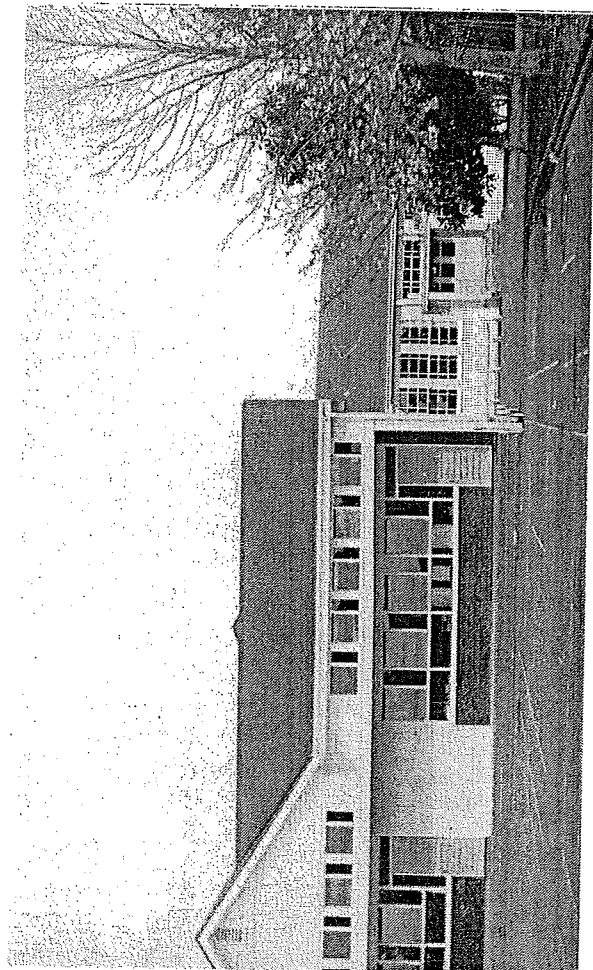
Mr Stan Lonsdale (1975-1985) made immediate efforts towards the tighter integration of the Junior and Senior schools, difficult in the circumstances with the buildings separated by a busy thoroughfare. Parents were encouraged to participate in many areas of the school, building the tremendously popular adventure playground, assisting with reading and classroom activities, and helping with sports days, sausage sizzles, and end of year functions. Classes from 'the little school' were brought over frequently for a variety of occasions including a weekly library lesson, and senior children went across to assist junior leaders on 'state' occasions and to share pet days and so on.

Under Mr Bruce Hammond (1986) the school has ....

by Marie Wall and Ellen Cash



The main entrance to the Senior School  
Huatoki Street, New Plymouth.  
September 1990



The remodelled first built two classroom block  
with the school hall to the right.  
September 1990

HEAD      TEACHERS

1915 - 1919	MISS M WILSON
1919 - 1920	MISS SAGE
1920 - 1926	MR O L ALLAN
1926 - 1927	MR W A BROWN
1927 - 1934	MR T A NICOLL
1934 - 1937	MR A M MCLEAN
1937 - 1942	MR G H DAVEY
1942 - 1944	MR S G CHRISTENSEN
1945 - 1953	MR R V BURTON
1953 - 1956	MR R TIZARD
1957 - 1962	MR J A DUGGAN
1962 - 1966 May	MR G OLSEN
1966 - 1975	MR B EVERSFIELD
1975 - 1985	MR S LONSDALE
1986 - 1992	MR B HAMMOND
1993 - 2005	MR B HINMAN
2006 - 2014	MR M LUFF
2015 -	MR J OALE