

Celebrating 150 years

1856-2006



Paddington Public School

Written and Illustrated by
Liz Bowring

Celebrating 150 years

1856-2006



Paddington Public School

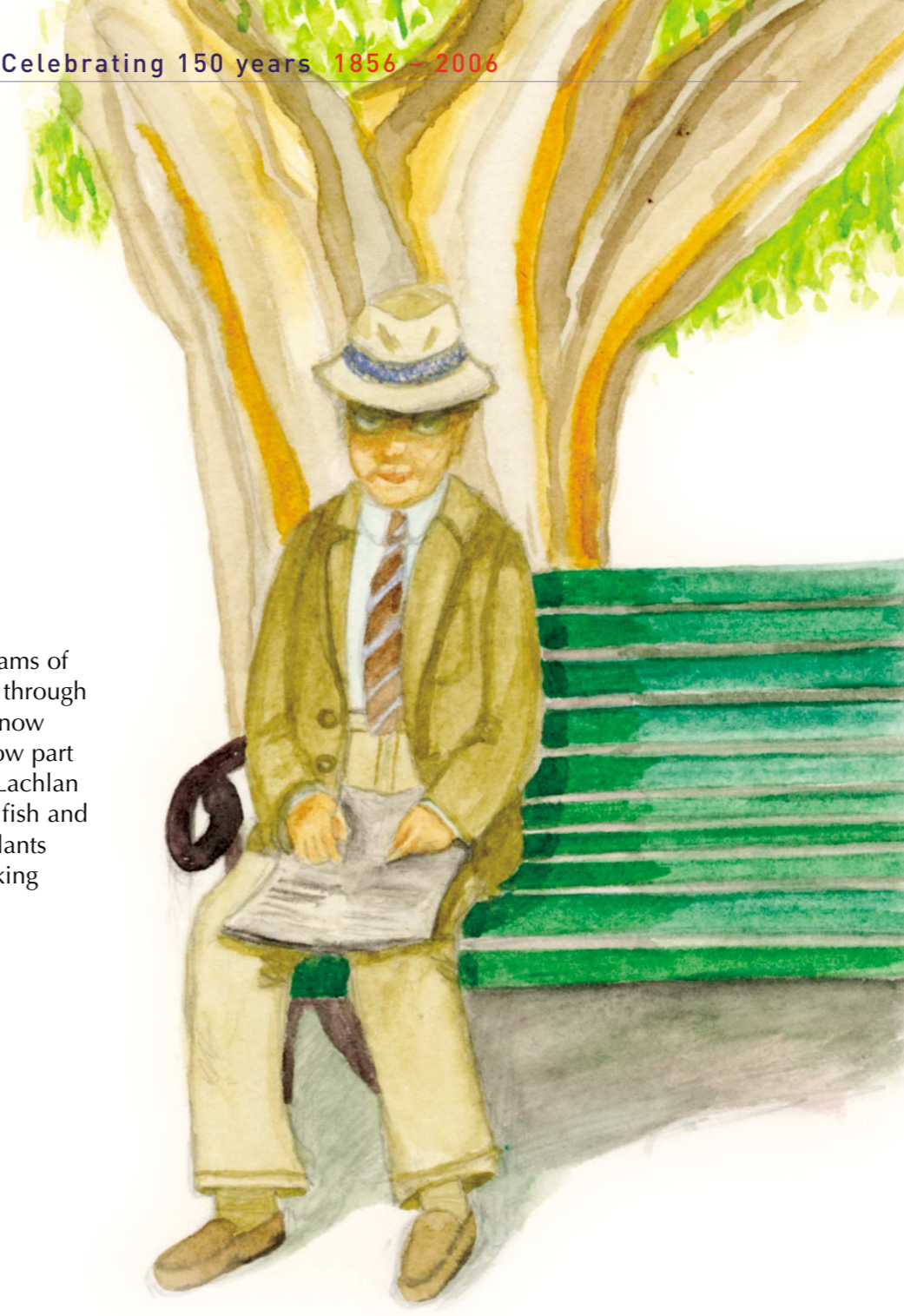
Written and Illustrated by
Liz Bowring



The land that Paddington School stands on is part of the land of the Cadigal (Cadi) people of the Eora Nation. Their land stretched from Sydney Harbour to Botany Bay.

Uncle George is 100 years old, and he remembers lots about Paddington. His grandfather was one of the first children to attend Paddington Public School when it opened in 1856.

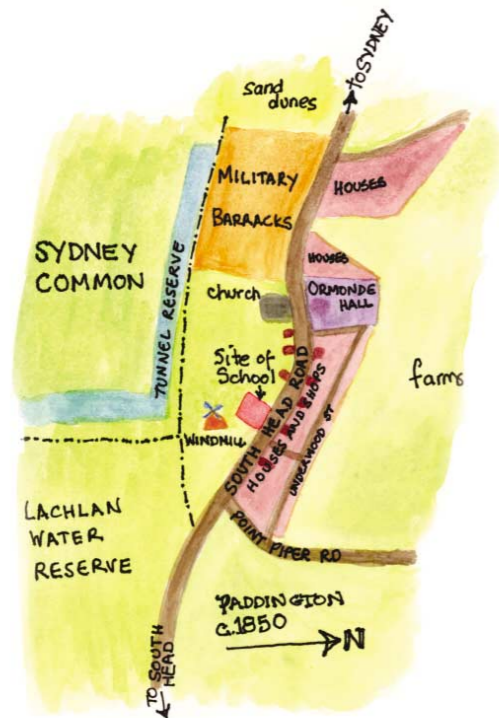
If you listen to what Uncle George says, you will get to know many things about the history of this school.



Uncle George says that streams of fresh drinking water flowed through the land where Paddington now stands. The lakes that are now part of Centennial Park and the Lachlan Swamps provided plenty of fish and eels. The abundant native plants were used for food and making tools and baskets.



JW Hardwick 1853 'Panorama of Paddington' Original held in the Mitchell Library, State Library of NSW with permission.



It is hard to believe that in the early 1800's Paddington was a long way from Sydney Town. A road now called Oxford Street had been built along the ridge to connect the town to the Pilot Station at South Head, so it was called South Head Road. Much of the land to the south of the road was large sand dunes, and further south was marshy. In 1811 Governor Macquarie had granted this land as the 'Sydney Common'. Bushland with fresh water lakes further east was set-aside in 1820 by Governor Macquarie as the 'Lachlan Water Reserve'.

Uncle George says the first settler near the school in Paddington was Charles Gordon. He built a windmill to crush grain in 1829. It was a wooden post-mill on a circular stone base. The school was built just next to the windmill.

A big change came when it was decided to build the Military Barracks. The site was high and strategically positioned between Sydney Harbour and Botany Bay. It had good drinking water supplied from Busby's Bore. Many people moved to Paddington to help build the Barracks or to provide for the needs of the builders and eventually the soldiers. Most people settled across the road from the Barracks, and some built houses and shops along South Head Road. There were dairy farms, a distillery and vegetable gardens to the north of South Head Road.

By 1851 Paddington had a population of 1389.

John William Hardwick drew this picture of Paddington as it was when he visited in 1853.



Uncle George says that in those days if parents wanted a school they had to get together with other parents and promise that at least 30 children would attend and pay their fees. The fees were used to pay the teacher's salary. The parents had to provide one-third of the building costs as well.

An Iron School House for Paddington School was ordered from Liverpool, England in 1853. It cost 199 Pounds.

On the 2nd May 1856 the 'Sydney Morning Herald' published this advertisement:

National Education, Paddington.

Notice is given that the school, at Paddington, under the superintendence of the Board of National Education will be opened on Monday next, the 5th May, for the reception of pupils. Mr Thomas Harris will be pleased to afford all particulars as to the admission of children, at the school house, from 8.30 am to 5 pm that day.

By order of the National Board of Education
W.C. Willis, Secretary



In the end 227 pupils were enrolled and there were 4 teachers. Mr Thomas Harris was the first headmaster, but he only stayed for three months. Mr Edwin Johnson must have been happier. He took over as Headmaster, and then he married Miss Rebecca Little, who was the first Assistant Teacher that year.

Paddington was set up as a model school. 'The establishment of a high standard of elementary instruction, and the exhibition of correct methods of teaching' were its goals. Students were encouraged to become pupil teachers. The Headmaster was to train them and in time they became qualified teachers.¹

Water supply has always been a problem in Sydney. When the school was established there was no water supply to Paddington School. Instead water had to be brought to the school by horse and cart, courtesy of Mr William Nestor.

Sixty buckets were needed for the weekly school supply. It was the duty of selected senior boys to count the buckets as they were emptied into a large cask. When all was correct the Headmaster paid two shillings and six pence to the carrier.

Uncle George remembers that when he was a child there was terrible trouble if any water was wasted. Punishments were severe. Hitting children was common for any misdemeanor, especially for boys. 'Spare the rod and spoil the child' was what the adults said.



Toilets were also a problem for the school and the community. There was no sewage system in the suburb, and there were not enough toilets for the number of students. In the 1870's there was one toilet for every fifty girls, and for every 40 boys. The recommended number was one for every 20 pupils.

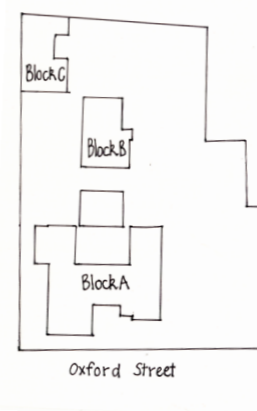


Uncle George says that Paddington School kept growing out of its buildings.

By 1868 the iron schoolhouse had rusted, twisted out of shape, leaked in the rain and swayed in the wind. It also had to accommodate more than 300 pupils. A new brick building was planned and it was completed in 1870. The school was divided into Boy's and Girl's Departments.

If you look carefully you can still see the old building. It is the ground floor of the main school building.

Within ten years the weather sheds were enclosed to make more classroom space but this was still not enough. After the Public Instruction Act 1880 the school population rose to 1400. That's when the second storey was built on the main building.



The building that now houses the computers was built in 1876. It was a classroom for 120 young children, with 12 children squeezed along each bench.

Block B was built in 1889. It was built for the Infants School and was to accommodate 400 children.

Two storeys of Block C were built in 1908 to provide specialist rooms for Domestic Science for the Girls and Manual Training for the boys. The third storey was added to this building in 1923.

Uncle George says that one of the most important people in the late 1800s was Sir Henry Parkes, the Premier of NSW. He lived from 1815 to 1896, and he believed in the benefits of education. Although he hadn't had much formal education himself he wanted to make sure that all children received an education. In the 1860s less than half of the children in the Colony of NSW were educated.

In 1880 Parkes' government passed the Public Instruction Act. This Act meant that education would be:

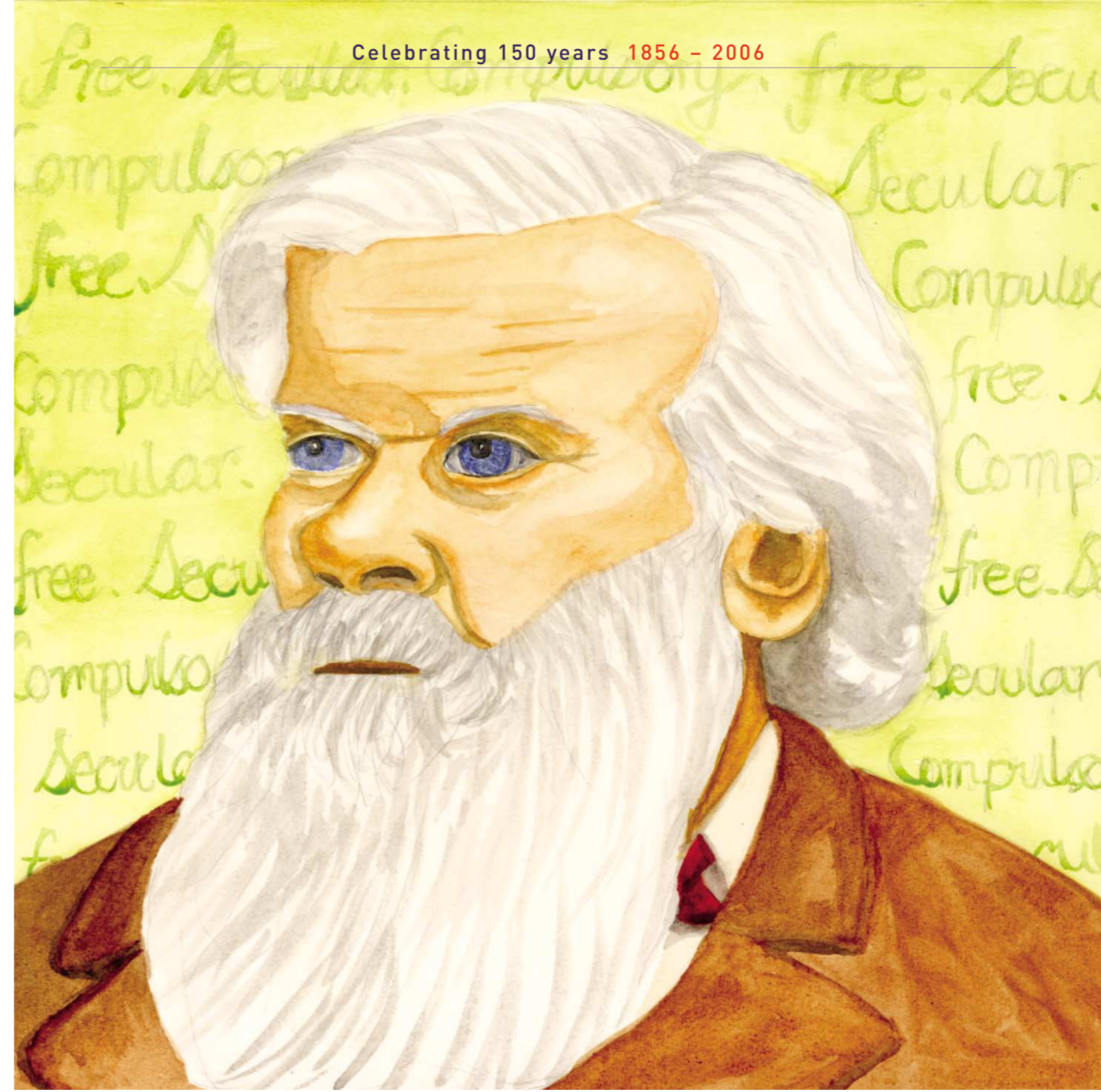
- Free to all, so everyone could afford it.
- Compulsory, so that all children must be given the opportunity, and children could not be sent to work instead of going to school.
- Secular, not tied to any religion, so that anyone could be educated at his or her local school.

Uncle George says there were lots more kids at Paddington School after that.

Sir Henry Parkes also organised the 'gift to the Nation' of Centennial Park. The park was given to the people in 1888, and Uncle George says it is a gift to all Paddington School children who use it for sport, picnics and play.



The Paddington gates of Centennial Park were the entry point for the parade on 1 January 1901 to celebrate the federation of the Australian colonies as the Commonwealth of Australia. Over 250,000 people gathered in Federation Valley to welcome the birth of a new nation. Sadly, Henry Parkes was not there. He had been the president of a convention to plan for our independence as a separate nation, but he died in 1896. Uncle George says he is remembered as the 'Father of Federation'.





Uncle George says that when he went to school girls and boys were educated separately, even though they went to the same school. The playground was divided into girls' and boys' sections by a high wooden fence.

Girls and boys were taught different things. Although they would all study English, Mathematics, and some Natural Science, Geography and History, other subjects were exclusively for boys, or for girls.



At Paddington girls were taught domestic subjects, such as cookery, needlework, home management and household hygiene. Commercial studies were also offered. These included bookkeeping, typing and shorthand. These subjects were thought to prepare the girls for life. Girls were expected to work as a secretary or in an office or shop, and then leave work to get married and run a home.

At Paddington the boys were taught technical subjects such as woodwork, metalwork and technical drawing. These subjects were thought to prepare a boy for going into a trade such as building or to work in a manufacturing industry.

By 1913 the high school students attended what was called either Paddington Domestic Science School or Paddington Central Junior Technical School.



Uncle George says that the terrace houses of Paddington are a tourist attraction nowadays but that this hasn't always been the case.

The houses that were built in Paddington were just like the houses in 'Mother England'. They were built close together, in terraces, because people had to walk to work. The terraces replaced the large Colonial sandstone houses that you can see in the painting of Paddington before the school was built. One of those houses remains. It is called Juniper Hall and is on Oxford Street.

The first form of transport along South Head Road (Oxford Street) used horses. There were horse and carts, horse drawn buses as well as the riding of horses themselves. Then there were horse drawn trams, which were replaced by steam trams in 1880.

Another result of steam trams was that some parents moved their children to schools other than Paddington School. Some parents thought it would be too dangerous for their children to cross Oxford Street once the steam trams began to run.

The trams were electrified in 1902. Cars began to appear around the turn of the century.

At first cars were great novelties. In the first decade of the 20th century whenever a car drove along Oxford Street the children in the school playground would flock to the fence and cheer.

Trams and cars meant people didn't have to walk to work. Many people moved to suburbs where the houses were built to suit the climate and had large gardens. These people usually kept their Paddington houses, and rented them out.

Most of the houses were rented in Paddington from 1900. During the Great Depression of the 1930s many people lost their jobs. They could not afford to pay rent on their homes. Owners could not always afford to repair or maintain their houses. Many Paddington houses fell into disrepair, and the area became known as a 'slum'.

Because of unemployment some families did not have enough food. Children often went home from school for lunch, but some children had to go to the Sydney City Mission in William Street to have a meal as there was nothing to eat at home.

The Government made plans to demolish all the Victorian and Georgian houses and replace them with modern houses and roads in both 1947 and later in 1952. Uncle George says the suburb was saved from destruction in two ways. Firstly by 'new Australians' who migrated from Europe, and secondly by the 'Paddington Society'.

The migrants came from Greece, Italy, Yugoslavia, Spain, Portugal, Poland, Germany, France, Russia, Holland, Hungary and Malta. They began to buy the terrace houses, repair and renovate them. Because of the work they did on the houses the values of the houses increased. As a consequence the government could not afford to buy up all the houses.

In the 1960's new people began to buy into Paddington. Often they had travelled overseas and Paddington reminded them of their experiences. The exotic shops selling foods from different countries attracted people. These people wanted to see historical Paddington preserved. Some people formed the 'Paddington Society' and they fought against plans to change this historic area. Gradually, as more people were able to restore their homes, the value of their properties increased and Paddington became a desirable place to live once more.





Uncle George says that many people who went to Paddington School went to fight for the 'Mother Country' in World War I and to protect Australia in World War II. These soldiers are remembered on the Honour Boards at the school and at ANZAC Day commemorations. Each year the Captains and the Principal attend the ANZAC service at the Victoria Barracks, and the RSL Club donates a pile of books to the school Library.

Uncle George says that during the war years there was an air raid shelter in the playground. The children had to practice what to do if there was an air raid. The girls also learnt how to make an 'Oslo lunch', a salad sandwich on wholemeal bread, a bottle of milk and a piece of fruit. This was considered very modern and healthy.

Uncle George says we must not forget one of the great community links the school has had over the last thirty-three years – the Paddington Markets. Starting in what is now the Paddington Uniting Church a small group of creative stallholders has grown to become one of Sydney's best and most famous markets. This market uses the school grounds every Saturday. It is special because this market is a 'makers' market' that encourages new ideas, particularly from artists, crafts people and designers. The income from markets helps the Uniting Church in their programs to help needy local people. It has also helped the school. Uncle George says that the markets provide good experiences all round.

Uncle George says that sport has always been popular at Paddington School, and that quite a few cricket, boxing and football heroes have had their schooling here. In 1954 Paddington Central Junior Technical High School was the first NSW school to send a representative side overseas. The team travelled to New Zealand to play Rugby League for five weeks.



For the girls there were drills and dumbbells in the early 1900's. By the 1920's the girls would perform Eurhythmics in their lacy dresses. The girls also participated in athletics, swimming netball and tennis.

Playground games with balls and skipping have always been popular. Now, of course, all students participate in sport each week.

Good education has always been the main focus at Paddington School. Although there have been lots of name changes, and different age groups involved, the school has always offered the best education.

It began as a model school, which trained teachers.

In 1882 an Evening College was established. For many years it provided further education for workers.

Discipline followed the trends, and when 'spare the rod and spoil the child' was the belief the cane was commonplace. Uncle George says that one time when they did a renovation the builders found a heap of canes under the floor. The children definitely did not enjoy being hit, and some had found a good hiding place for the canes. Unfortunately they were always replaced.

For many years students filled the inkwells set into the top of the desks, into which hundreds of children dipped their nibs. The children had to make sure they did not spill the ink on their paper because it could not be rubbed out. It wouldn't wash out of your clothes either. Ballpoint pens were used after the late 1960's, but only after you had your pen licence.

Uncle George says you only have to ask an old 'Paddo' student to hear lots of stories, and most of them are good.

In 1963 Paddington returned to being a Primary School. Rooms that had accommodated over 1000 students were used for less than half that number.

Uncle George remembers hearing of the miracle of watching the first landing on the moon on the 21 July, 1969, and how all the children gathered to watch on the black and white television. At that time teachers could show films or slides if the room was dark enough. By the 1980's teachers could play colour video programs on the television, and in the 1990's there were CDs and DVDs.

The school has always kept up with the latest technology, starting with a Commodore 64 computer. There is now a room of Macs and children can search the Internet. That doesn't include other computers in the Library and in classrooms. Uncle George says he has been shown the school web site, but don't bother sending him an email as computers are beyond him.

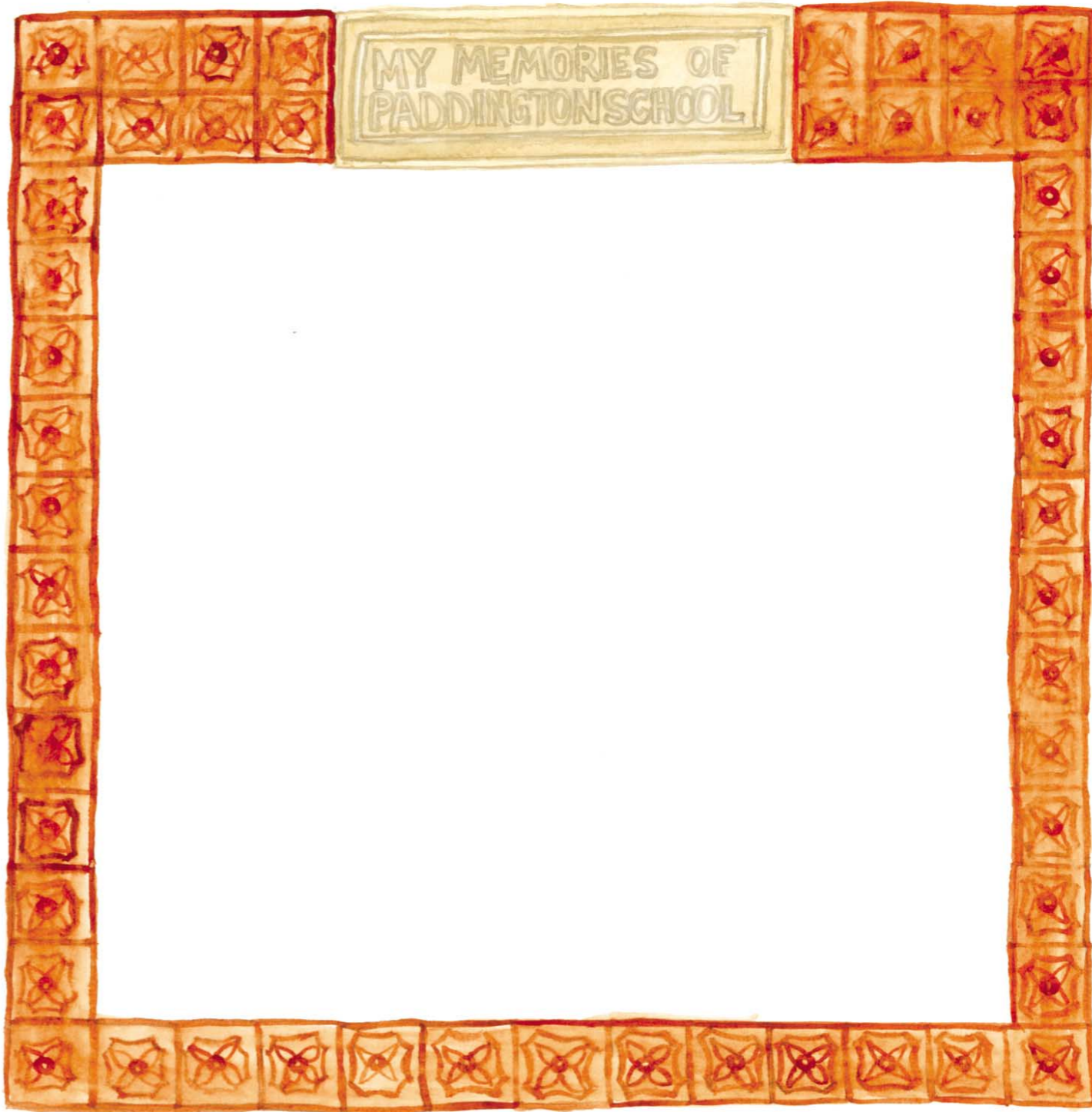
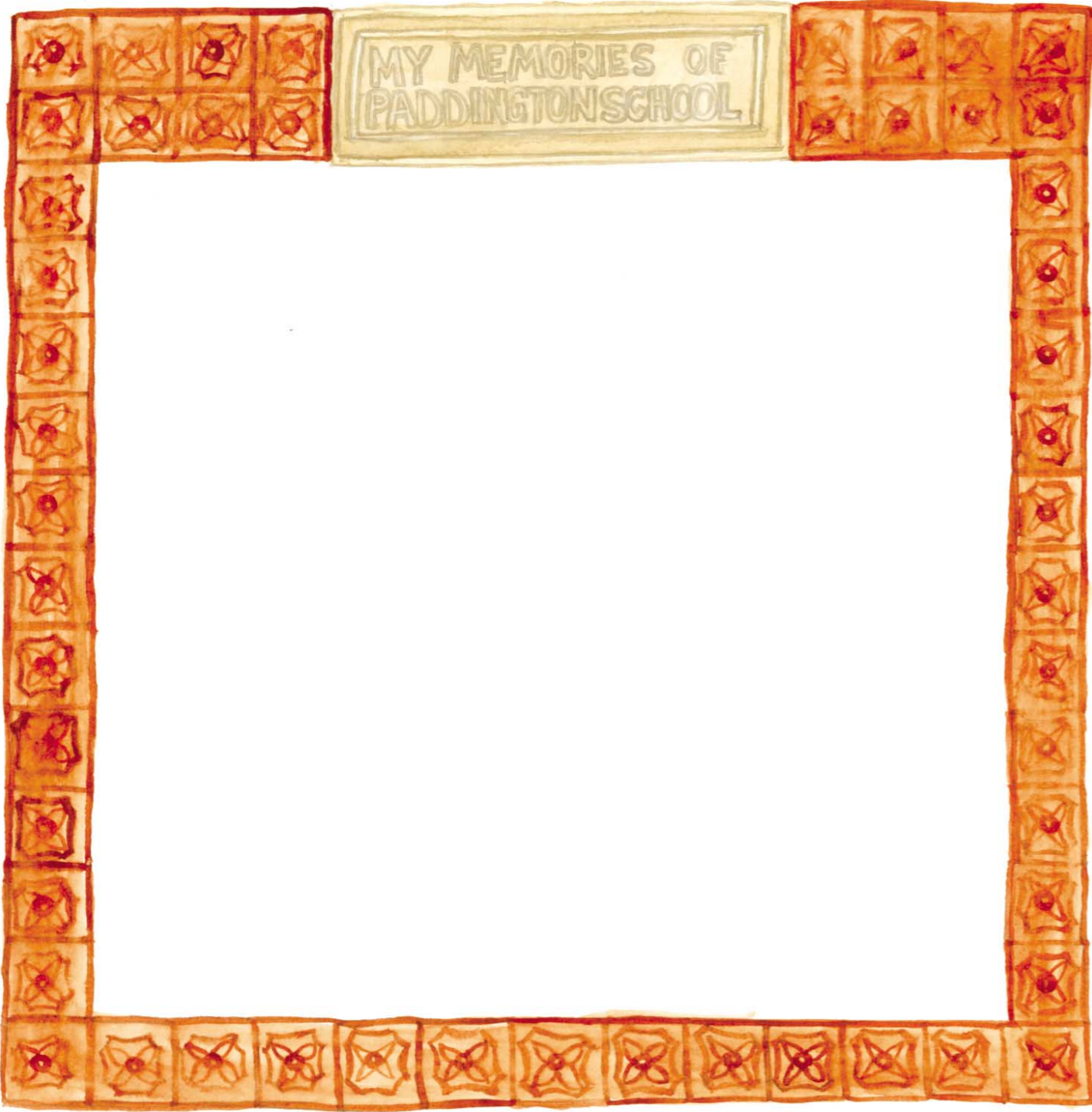
Today I told Uncle George how we all had our photo taken together – the whole school, even the teachers. The children come from 29 different cultural backgrounds. We made the numbers 150 to celebrate the 150th year of the school. Our school is one of the oldest in Australia!

Thank you Uncle George for your memories of Paddington School.



MY MEMORIES OF
PADDINGTON SCHOOL

MY MEMORIES OF
PADDINGTON SCHOOL





Timeline of Paddington Public School

1838	It was decided to establish the Military Barracks at Paddington.	1880	The Public Instruction Act made education 'free, secular and compulsory'. Miss M Doyle became Headmistress.	1905	Miss K Phillips became Headmistress.	1939	Miss I Grant became Headmistress.
1848	The Barracks was occupied.	1881	The school was renamed Paddington Superior Public School on March 8. This meant there were at least 2 post-primary classes with an enrolment of at least 20 pupils.	1907	Miss E Robson became Headmistress.	1940	Miss J Rogers became Headmistress.
1851	The population of Paddington was 1,389.	1882	Overcrowding was reported in the girl's school. The daily attendance was 250 but there were only 150 seats. An evening college was established.	1908	Mr E J Watt became Headmaster. Building of a new 2 storey building with Science and Manual Training rooms on the ground floor and Cookery, Sewing and a Female staffroom and dining room/pantry on the upper floor was completed.	1942	Miss L O'Mara became Headmistress.
1856	Monday May 5 the first Headmaster, Mr Thomas Harris, received the first pupils of Paddington Public School. 227 pupils were enrolled and there were 4 teachers. Mr Harris lasted 3 months, but returned later, in August 1862 for a few months. He was replaced by Mr E Johnson.	1883	The weather sheds were enclosed to accommodate pupils.	1913	Paddington School acquires the names 'Domestic Science School' for the High School girls and 'Junior Technical School' for the High School Boys. (Perhaps the Central was also added then)	1943	Mr W S Henderson became Headmaster and Miss E M Stark became Headmistress.
1856	The First Parliament for Self Government was elected on May 22.	1889	A new 2 storey building was constructed to provide for 400 pupils in the Infants Department.	1914	Mr R Irwin became Headmaster.	1950	Mr W H Miller became Headmaster.
1861	Mr J Allpass became Headmaster.	1890	Mr Bateson became Headmaster. Kindergarten classes were offered for the first time.	1916	Mr G Steinbeck became Headmaster.	1951	Miss Scutt became Headmistress.
1863	Mr J Fisher became Headmaster. He was replaced by Mr W Johnson.	1891	Mr G Cotterill became Headmaster.	1919	Miss E A Long became Headmistress.	1953	Miss H Bloomfield became Headmistress.
1870	The new brick building was completed and the school was separated into boys and girls departments. Miss E Druery was the first Headmistress of the Girl's Department. A tank was constructed to collect water from the roof to supply the school.	1893	A second storey was added to the main building. There were 1400 pupils.	1921	After years of negotiation land was resumed from the Methodist Trustee next door to provide extra playground space.	1954	Mr A G Spicer became Headmaster.
1871	Miss Jenkins became the new Headmistress.	1894	The beginnings of the School Library collection started on shelves in the Headmaster's office.	1923	A third floor was added to block C.	1963	High School students go elsewhere and the school becomes Paddington Public School again. Mr Desmond McGrath became Principal.
1879	The Principal Mr Drurie reported that the school had 837 pupils.	1902	Electric trams replace Steam trams.	1927	Mr J Jacobs became Headmaster.	1964	The 'Paddington Society' was formed.
				1928	Mr N Boxall became Headmaster.	1968	Miss Joan Waghorn became Principal.
				1935	Miss F Colebrook became Headmistress.	1973	Mr Bruce R Sinclair became Principal.
				1937	Mr A Hetherington became Headmaster.	1975	Paddington Markets started.
						1994	Susan K Mootz became Principal.
						2006	School celebrates 150 years.



Bibliography and Acknowledgements

As far as possible this book is historically correct, except for Uncle George who was created to help tell the story.

[1] From material held at Paddington School

- Government Schools of New South Wales 1848-1976
Directorate of Planning Services,
Department of Education [1979]
- Kelly, Max Paddock full of Houses:
Paddington 1840-1890 Doak Press, 1978
- Paddington Central School Centenary 1856-1956
Paddington Central Junior Technical School, 1956
- Starr, Andrew and Morice, Janet Paddington Stories
Andrew Starr And Associates, Paddington 2000
- The Tricolour Farewell issue, 1962 Magazine of
Paddington Central Junior Technical School.
- Memories of many ex-Paddo students in letters
and e-mails.
- Maria Hoareau for editing and assistance with research
- Sue Mootz for leadership, friendship and encouragement,
and editing.