



# Foster Primary School History

At Foster, first known as Stockyard Creek because a yard had been constructed for travelling stock, gold was discovered in 1870. A small rush developed, and a township grew. William H Foster, Police Magistrate at Sale and Gold Commissioner for Gippsland, visited Stockyard Creek to administer justice. He objected to the name so a public meeting in 1871 decided to rename the place "Foster". The first application for a common school at Foster was made on 13th November 1871, supported by a District Inspector who estimated that 30-50 pupils would attend. He added that the attendance would be smaller in the winter 'as no roads have yet been formed'. The first committee consisted of Thomas Bodger, hotel keeper; Joseph Davies, miner; Alexander Hall, chemist; James McCarthy, storekeeper; James Shepherd, miner and John William Wyatt, storekeeper (Correspondent).



The first head teacher, James Ingram, 1st of April 1872, was assisted by his wife Helen. Ingram, a good teacher, was not qualified, but his wife was. Hence, a strange change occurred in the teacher situation at Foster in 1879 when Mrs Helen Ingram became head teacher and James Ingram, her assistant.

The list of long-service head teachers at the school includes Mrs Helen Ingram (1879-88), J.W. Anderson (1888-98), William Rice (1899-1916), W.J. Tynan (1916-20), N.C. Heathcote (1921-22), James Caldwell (1922-26), T.B. Stapleton (1926-34), T.W. Somerville (1952-59), R.S. Southwell (1960-66). Norm Heathcote (1921-22) and James Caldwell (1922-26) later became District Inspectors. School was first conducted in a house purchased for temporary use, situated on the other side of Stockyard Creek, opposite the present South Gippsland Shire offices. In February 1873, Ingram reported that the building, being undermined by mining operations, was unsafe. Therefore the Department leased the Mechanics Institute, from April 1873 to December 1874. On 15th of August 1873, an area of 2.5 acres on Cement Hill (now Church Hill) was gazetted as the site for a new school, but because of protests this was cancelled and a new site of little more than .5 of an acre, near the present South Gippsland Shire, was selected. The wooden building, 50ft X 20ft erected there, was first occupied on 1st February 1875. In 1882, an extra piece of land was added to the site, which was enlarged still further during 1889-90, when Pioneer Street was being formed, and a triangular portion on the NE side annexed to the school.

In 1902, three adjoining allotments were added to the school as a playground. Finally, in 1960, the site known as Munro's Paddock was acquired. A new school was built, and occupied early in 1965. The school became a HES in 1919. When Foster high began in 1952, the school reverted to primary classes. It became Foster Consolidated School, with buses bringing pupils from several small schools in the district, allowing the closure of these small schools. The initial enrolment of 50 pupils in 1872 has grown gradually, until, with consolidation it reached 330, served by a staff of nine class teachers, a librarian, and an arts and craft teacher.



The present school was opened in 1965 at a cost of \$200,000 and the first president of the Advisory Council was Mr A.E. Linton whom our pavilion is named after.

## Principals

1960 - 1966	Mr R.S. Southwell
1967	Mr H.G. Guest
	Mr Anderson
1978 - 1995	Mr M.J. Hastings
1995	Mr M.J. Dale (Acting)
1995 - 2005	Mrs H Stone
2006 – 2013	Mrs Fiona Bull
2013- current	Mrs Lorraine Gurnett

## School Pine Plantation

The first plantation was established in 1928. Mr A.E. Linton was the major force behind the plantation in the 60s and 70s. Funds from the plantation helped towards the building of our school pavilion. In 2017 the plantation was harvested again, funds went towards renovation works and new furniture.

## Buildings

Many changes have taken place to our buildings

1988	The pavilion was built
1989	The Mod 5 (library building) was moved in
1992	A portable classroom was installed and consequently moved
1994	The LTC double classroom was installed
1994/95	\$200,000 spent on an administration upgrade
1999	Recarpeting and repainting
2000	New gas heating system with bulk tank and individual heaters to each room. Air-conditioning to Principal and Vice Principal's office, general office and staff room. An electronic security system was installed.
2003	Air-conditioning to all classrooms
2010	With the assistance of the Government Building the Education Revolution Funding—a new building/wing was added to the site housing the Library and three Grades.
2015	Replacement of air conditioners begins. Much general maintenance to buildings and grounds to keep the school in a presentable and safe state.
2017	Major building works, replacing two external walls of the Admin building. Recarpeting and painting of the Junior Building. Redecorating of the front entrance of the school and reception area with help from Lian Casson & Cat Wheeler for their design and artwork. Playground structures have been updated.
2018	Ongoing painting works to external buildings. Replacement of block C & D with new modular building as part of the asbestos removal plan.
2019	We took over the new modular building with junior grades.
2020	Asbestos removal to block A continues. External painting to windows, fascias and guttering scheduled. Very different school practices due to COVID-19 Pandemic.

Some information collated from: *"Wednesday Closest to the Full Moon"* - Barry Colett, Melbourne University Press, 1994

*"Vision and Realisation"*

*'From Palings to Pavements - History of Foster'* - Dr.H.C. Wilson, MrE.R. Cunningham, MrG.K. Esler, South Gippsland Publishing Company, 1995