UNANDERRA PUBLIC SCHOOL CENTENARY:

Mr. F. R. Parker, Principal of Unanderra Public School, has forwarded the following note on the forthcoming centenary of the school:

Unanderra, from an aboriginal word meaning the junction of two creeks, was originally the village of Charcoal, named after Will, a stockman in the employ of Mr. George Cribb, one of the earliest settlers in the district.

In the first part of last century the educational needs of the children were met by two church schools in charge of Mr. McPhail and Mr. J. Stapleton and later by a Mr. Peter Tresnan who carried on a school for 32 years.

In 1876 an application was made to the Council of Education for a Public School at Charcoal Creek. The school and residence were built in 1877 by Mr. G. Osborne on land given by Messrs. Jenkins and Jones. The school opened in October 1878 with Mr. John Richardson transferring from Fairy Meadow as the first Headmaster. The original building is still in use, but the residence was demolished some years ago.

The school continued as a typical village school with three teachers until the early 1950s when large scale housing development began. To meet the needs of the rapidly expanding population additional accommodation was progressively built until today there are twenty classrooms to cater for an enrolment of 480 pupils.

The Infants’ section became a separate Department at the beginning of 1954 with 260 children and a staff of six, the Mistress being Miss G. Pritchard. The Department was housed in two weatherboard units at the rear of the Primary section. In 1955, when land was made available in Tannery Street, on the site of the old Unanderra Tannery, the first of the present Infants’ buildings was erected. As additional rooms were required to cope with the growing numbers they were added to the Infants’ section and the Primary Department progressively occupied those vacated in the earlier buildings. In September 1962 the Infants’ Department became self-contained on the Tannery Street site.

In October, 1978, we celebrate our school centenary, and to mark the 99th year of the school we will be holding an afternoon tea commencing at 1.30 p.m. in the school library on Monday, 7th November. On this occasion the Patron of our Centenary Committee, Mr. J. R. Maynes, J.P., the Lord Mayor of Wollongong, Alderman F. Arkell, plus the youngest pupil attending the school in conjunction with the oldest ex-pupil in attendance on this day will be planting trees at the front of the school.

Any members of the Historical Society who would be interested in attending either our 99th anniversary tree-planting, our future meetings, or our centenary celebrations to be held during 1978 are most welcome.