



YERRINBOOL BAHA'I SCHOOL
1938 - 1988

An Account of the First Fifty Years

Graham Hassall

YERRINBOOL BAHA'I SCHOOL

1938 - 1988

An Account of the First Fifty Years

Graham Hassall

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I wish to record my thanks to several committees and individuals, whose goodwill and assistance have made this account a pleasure to compile. Firstly, I thank the Yerrinbool School Committee, for suggesting the project. I also take the opportunity to thank archivist Colin Brest, and the members of the National Archives Committee for their most effective conservation and ordering of Baha'i records. I thank the National Spiritual Assembly for its most efficient review of the manuscript, and the Baha'i Publications Committee is to be thanked for its efficiency and co-operation in overseeing printing of the booklet.

I thank for their significant contributions to the project Hand of the Cause Collis Featherstone, Madge Featherstone, Stanley P. Bolton, Jim Heggie, John Stevenson, Aubrey Lake, Elizabeth Barwick and John Burdett. Those familiar with the Yerrinbool School will know how many significant people, and important events, have had to be omitted from this account due to lack of space.

ILLUSTRATIONS

	Page
Mariette and Stanley W. Bolton	4
1st Yerrinbool Local Spiritual Assembly, 1948	4
Hand of the Cause Clara Dunn and Stanley W. Bolton opening Hyde Dunn Memorial Hall, January 1943	5
View of Hyde Dunn Memorial Hall and Tennis Court, 1944	5
Hand of the Cause Clara Dunn with Baha'is, including the Khan family, 1950's	12
Hands of the Cause Faizi and Furutan and Mariette Bolton, January 1954.	12
View of the Residence, 1943	12
First Yerrinbool Baha'i Summer School January 8th to 23rd, 1938	13-14
View of School, 1960's	15
First session of Yerrinbool Summer School 25/12/65-31/12/66	22
Youth Institute, 1978	22
Plan of Yerrinbool Baha'i School, 1970's	23

EARLY DAYS

Just over fifty years ago, on 2 May 1937, one hundred delegates and observers attending the national Baha'i convention in Sydney, travelled down the winding Mittagong Road to the small village of Yerrinbool. A ceremony was held, to coincide with convention, to officially open the property which had been bought by Stanley and Mariette Bolton, for the purpose of holding Baha'i "summer schools".¹

Since that opening ceremony, the Yerrinbool Baha'i School has been gradually expanded, its facilities upgraded, and its activities both diversified and multiplied. The participants in activities at the Yerrinbool School over the fifty years would number several thousands, and the memories of their time spent there are even greater in number. The changes in the Australian Baha'i community in half a century have been vast, and the story of the Yerrinbool School reflects some of these changes. Thus it would seem timely to look back to the beginnings of the Yerrinbool School, to recall some of the memorable events, and to celebrate the progress that has been made.

In 1934, the year the National Spiritual Assembly of the Baha'is of Australia and New Zealand was established, the Australian Baha'is numbered about one hundred, and only two Local Spiritual Assemblies existed in Australia - Sydney and Adelaide - while a third Assembly had been established in Auckland, New Zealand. The distances across the Australian continent (and the Tasman Sea) were so vast, that only the few Baha'is who were able to travel to the annual convention had the opportunity of meeting each other personally. The 'tyranny of distance', which historians consider to be a feature of Australia's past was no stranger to the early Australian Baha'is!

At the 1937 opening ceremony, chaired by Stanley Bolton Snr, prayers were read, addresses were given, trees were planted, and tea was served. The local Baha'i communities of Australia and New Zealand had been notified of the event, and invited to each send a representative. A brief report of the official opening appeared in Baha'i News for February 1938.² The Guardian, Shoghi Effendi, welcomed news of the formation of Australia's first summer school, and urged the Baha'is, in a letter addressed to Hyde Dunn, "to help by every means in their power to further the interests of that institution". If maintained and developed, Shoghi Effendi pointed out, it would be "of invaluable teaching help to the Cause...".³

In the first years, summer school programs were arranged by a committee appointed by the Sydney Local Spiritual Assembly. It was decided that summer schools be held in the December-January period, and that the first be scheduled for 8 - 23 January, 1938. The committee met in the Baha'i Centre, Margaret Street, Sydney, and at other times at Dr Bolton's chiropractic clinic, Martin Place. At the time the first schools were held, "Bolton Place" did not have the various buildings and facilities that exist today. Sessions were held in the Yerrinbool Community Hall, (on the corner of Everest Street and Sunrise Road) which had been built with voluntary labour, and completed so as to coincide with the summer school opening. Some participants were accommodated in the Bolton residence, while others billeted with various Yerrinbool residents.

Clara and Hyde Dunn, who had brought the Baha'i teachings to Australia in 1920, were both present at the first school, in January 1938. Their topics were "Baha'i Administration" and "Victory". In addition, the Tablets of Abdu'l-Baha were studied, and members of the National Spiritual Assembly - Sydney's Oswald Whitaker, Auckland's Emily Axford, and Adelaide's Robert Brown and Hilda Brooks - each spoke briefly. Several friends of the Baha'is were also invited to address the occasion: Mrs Laura Gapp, who had travelled to Vancouver, Canada, as a delegate to the Pan-Pacific Conference, spoke on "Unity"; and Mrs Annie Dains, from Bowral, addressed as her subject "The great hunger satisfied". The local newspaper, the Mittagong Star, carried advertisements for the first public meeting held at Bolton Place, addressed by Adelaide's Miss Dorothy Dugdale.

The sudden increase in activity in the region prompted several local residents to enquire about the Baha'i Faith, and evening sessions were hastily arranged for them (the fruit picking season kept them busy on their farms during the daylight hours). The first summer school was considered a resounding success, and full reports appeared in the Haifa Newsletter, Baha'i News, and the Australian Baha'i Quarterly.⁴ Many of Australia's first Baha'is had now met each other in person for the first time. Gretta Lamprill from Hobart had corresponded with Maysie Almond in Adelaide for twelve years before the two women met in person at this historic first school.

The progress of the Yerrinbool school was observed, guided and encouraged by Shoghi Effendi. He had cabled to the participants at the first summer school:

HEARTY CONGRATULATIONS LOVING FERVENT PRAYERS SUCCESS
DELIBERATIONS⁵

Horace Holley, secretary of the National Spiritual Assembly of the Baha'is of the United States and Canada wrote to the Sydney Assembly, congratulating its members for the "important step" which had been taken by the Australian community, and offering best wishes for the future development of the school.⁶

Summer schools continued to be held annually, despite the great difficulties to be faced during the years of the second world war. Each school sent a cable of greeting to Shoghi Effendi, and eagerly awaited his reply. He urged participants of the second summer school, in January 1939, to:

...INTENSELY STUDY TEACHINGS DEEPEN SPIRIT BAHAI
FELLOWSHIP EXTEND SCOPE ACTIVITIES⁷

Cables were also received from Baha'is in various distant places who were unable to attend: Auckland, Perth, Melbourne, Goldsborough, Adelaide, and Hobart.

THE YERRINBOOL COMMUNITY

Soon after the first summer schools were held, some local residents became interested in the Baha'i teachings. Regular study classes began in the home of Mr and Mrs Maginnis in September 1940. On alternate Wednesday nights, either Dr or Mrs Bolton (and sometimes both) travelled to Yerrinbool from Sydney. Whenever possible they brought other Baha'is with them, and in the first year the Yerrinbool group met Hilda Brooks (secretary of the National Spiritual Assembly), Dawn Ryan, Glad Pollard, Oswald Whitaker, Clara Dunn, Rose Hawthorne, and Gretta Lamprill. In August 1943, the Boltons moved from Sydney to become part of the Yerrinbool community.

The Yerrinbool Baha'is looked forward to the annual influx of visitors, sometimes hosting sessions in their homes, and invariably providing accommodation for summer school attendants. Other Yerrinbool residents also enjoyed the event. In the 1940s members of the Yerrinbool Social Club helped organize picnics and sports days, as part of the summer school program. Mr Whitely, the Yerrinbool Station-master, was happy to help the planning, and Mr Edson, the secretary of the Social Club, "deemed it an honour" to be on the children's sports committee. ⁸

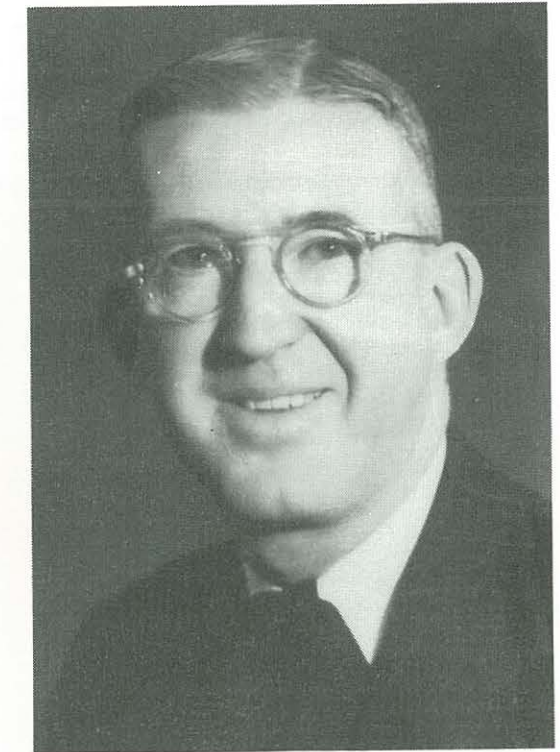
At the fifth school, January 1942, the Yerrinbool residents shared in a "motion picture night" (where Stanley Bolton showed film of the North American House of Worship under construction); a musical evening (where Mrs Thompson thrilled with her beautiful singing voice); and even a dance at the local hall. So many invitations had been issued, remarked Jean Hutchinson-Smith, that Mr Duncan's post office would be "doing big business". ⁹

In the years that followed, Yerrinbool residents continued contributing to the success of the schools. Several women gained temporary employment as cooks, and even Mr Scott, the local school-master, assisted with the loan of a blackboard!

The Baha'i community of Yerrinbool expanded in 1947 with the transfer in of the Johannson family from Adelaide, and Dr Jack Bean (brother of the war historian C.E.W. Bean), from Goulburn. A Local Spiritual Assembly was established in 1948, and Stanley and Mariette Bolton were elected as the community's delegates to annual convention. Several local papers carried news of the Yerrinbool Baha'is, and of activities held at the school. The Mittagong Star carried regular reports, and in 1943 published a lively exchange of letters to the editor between two local clergymen, and their Baha'i respondents. In 1946, after the Baha'is had tried for ten years, the Four Mails, a Bowral paper, carried a Baha'i news item, and at this time, too, the Picton Post printed Baha'i articles.

YERRINBOOL PROPERTY EXPANDS

Over a period of many years, the Yerrinbool school property has been expanded, and improved. Various necessary buildings have been constructed, and adjoining blocks of land have been acquired, to enlarge the size of the school. The Boltons



Mariette and Stanley W. Bolton



1st Yerrinbool Local Spiritual Assembly. 1948



View of Hyde Dunn Memorial Hall and Tennis Court, 1944



Hand of the Cause Clara Dunn and Stanley W. Bolton opening Hyde Dunn Memorial Hall, January 1943

had first bought three and a half acres in 1936. They had travelled to Yerrinbool to visit their friends, the Brocklehursts, and fallen in love with the adjacent land, which happened to be for sale at the time.

The first building constructed was the residence, for which Hyde Dunn laid the foundation stone on 11 October 1936. The Canadian Baha'i (later appointed one of the Hands of the Cause) Siegfried Schopflocher, suggested when visiting the property, that it be named "Bolton Place".

The Hyde Dunn Memorial Hall was opened at the 1943 summer school. The Boltons had wished to name it in memory of Hyde Dunn, as it was he who had introduced them to the Baha'i teachings. They met especially with Clara Dunn to consult on the wording of a plaque placed inside the hall.¹⁰ Clara Dunn pronounced the Hall open, and led the visitors inside for the first time. Mr Bolton read telegrams from inter-state Baha'is, including nine who were prevented from attending by war-time travel restrictions. Clara Dunn spoke of the "spiritual highlights" of her life in America, Palestine (she had been on pilgrimage in 1932) and Australia. Shortly after, the "Hilda Gilbert" cabin was constructed, and dedicated by Clara Dunn at the June 1943 winter school. The cabin, capable of accommodating four people, was named after the Sydney Baha'i, a member of the original summer school committee.

A NATIONAL INSTITUTION

Shoghi Effendi's advice to the National Spiritual Assembly (in December 1941) that, while the affairs of the summer school could be overseen by a committee of a Local Spiritual Assembly, they were "national in character and not purely local", led the National Assembly, in 1943, to shift responsibility for the summer school from a committee of the Sydney Local Assembly to a committee of the National Assembly.¹¹ The importance of the summer school as a national institution was gradually being recognized.

In 1946, at a time when the school could accommodate twenty-two residents, the Boltons acquired from Mr Mason, "Brockwood", the house where they had stayed during their first visit to Yerrinbool. It was subsequently known as "the annex", and, for the first time, the school had proper kitchen and dining facilities. Furniture for the annex was supplied by the Boltons, and the various kitchen utensils were provided by the Sydney and Carringbah (Sutherland) Baha'is. The annex was officially opened by Clara Dunn at the January 1947 summer school, but post-war rationing made it difficult to complete the provisioning: early in 1948 an application for 96 coupons to purchase tea towelling and sheeting was granted by the Rationing Commission, allowing the school committee to make 24 tea towels and 8 table cloths!¹²

By 1948, the school committee was expecting as many as fifty residents at the next summer school, and accommodation continued to be a challenge. Dr Bean donated to the school a caravan that he had earlier acquired from the Johannson family. In 1949 Albert Styles donated to the school a block of land,¹³ and shortly after, Miss Thelma Perks donated a block of about nine

acres. ¹⁴ These blocks, together with the land purchased by the Boltons, Bolton Place, and the land behind it, meant that the school now occupied five acres, with eleven acres on the opposite side of Sierra St remaining to be utilized at a later date.

HOW MANY SCHOOLS?

Even though summer school dates were well publicized among the Australian and New Zealand communities, often the distances to be covered, and the travel costs involved, prevented many Baha'is from attending. For at least the first ten years, summer schools received cables from distant communities whose members could not attend. The New Zealand Baha'is, of course, were most disadvantaged, and so began, as early as 1940, to hold their own schools. The New Zealand Baha'is bought their own school property in 1949.

During the years of the second world war, Adelaide Baha'is felt lucky if they could obtain the special permits required for inter-state train travel. Bertha and Joe Dobbins, together with Mrs Thompson and Mrs Beaumont, travelled from Adelaide to Yerrinbool to meet the eastern-state Baha'is for the first time, in January 1942. ¹⁵ The following year, nine Baha'is were prevented by travel restrictions from attending the opening ceremony of the Hyde Dunn Memorial Hall. ¹⁶ A lucky few - Eloise Greenlaw and Kit Crowder from Hobart, Bertha and Joe Dobbins and Grace Thompson from Adelaide - were able to attend once the school committee wrote to the "Land Transport Board" in Melbourne, certifying that they were all delegates from their states, to the summer school. ¹⁷

Shoghi Effendi had given praise to the Bolton's offer of the Yerrinbool property to the National Spiritual Assembly, but cautioned that the community, subject to the judgments of the National body, should be "left free to select any spot that will prove most convenient for the majority of their summer schools." In a subsequent communication Shoghi Effendi expressed the hope that the summer school would increasingly attract students of the Faith, "anxious to deepen their knowledge of its wonderful teachings". ¹⁸

Eventually, and partly because of the great difficulties that had been encountered in travelling to the Yerrinbool school, inter-state communities wished to hold their own summer schools, and even to purchase their own properties. The Adelaide Baha'is had conducted a successful winter school in 1941, attended by Stanley and Mariette Bolton, and not long after, Adelaide Local Spiritual Assembly took the initiative, and purchased a property at Belair, in the Adelaide Hills.

Although the National Assembly had initially approved purchase of the property, Shoghi Effendi instructed otherwise. The Australian community, he stated emphatically, required at the time only one summer school. The Guardian's secretary wrote:

He does not consider it either wise or necessary at the present time to have more than one Baha'i summer school in Australia, and as Yerrinbool is equipped to accommodate the friends on Baha'i property, so to speak, he would suggest that Yerrinbool continue to be used as the Australian Baha'i Summer School...He has

also done the same thing in America - limited the number of Summer Schools - as the friends in their enthusiasm to inaugurate new institutions wanted to have very many Summer Schools which would have not only weakened, instead of strengthening, the older schools, but also would have dissipated the energy of the friends. ¹⁹

While some Adelaide Baha'is hoped for a summer school in South Australia, others were happy to make the long trip to Yerrinbool. In January 1947, Collis and Madge Featherstone attended their first school. Others attending were Bertha Dobbins, Selma Taylor (Galvin) and Florence Fitzner, who also returned a year later, in January 1948, to conduct one of the study classes.

A second issue resolved with the passage of time was the relationship between Dr and Mrs Bolton, as individual owners of the school property, and the summer school, as an institution of the National Assembly. There can be no doubt that without the ceaseless energies of both Mariette and Stanley Bolton, the Yerrinbool Baha'i School would have neither commenced, nor continued as successfully as it has done. Their contribution to the development of both the property, and to the institution of the summer school, was the significant factor in the continued existence of the school. In addition to donating the property to the National Assembly, and financing all of its initial development, the Boltons were active in the development of school programs, in fostering the Yerrinbool Baha'i community, and in establishing cordial relations with residents (including clergy and professional people) of the surrounding townships - Picton, Bargo, Mittagong, and Bowral.

Despite such whole-hearted efforts to establish and consolidate the Yerrinbool School (or perhaps because of them), differing views developed in the community as to how the summer school should be administered, and developed into the future. Such tensions were related to wider developments in the Australian Baha'i community, in the years 1944-47, and were attributed by Shoghi Effendi to the "immaturity...extreme zeal and sincerity" of the Baha'is of the time. His instruction to the National Assembly was to "not give up Yerrinbool because of any inharmony over it, but to administer and support it properly and remove the inharmony..." Furthermore, the National Assembly was advised to "...appoint a committee for the school, purchase any extra equipment needed for the comfort and accommodation of the attendants..." Summer schools in North America had already emerged following a similar pattern: "they were ...the property of individual believers who resided on them, but they are administered by committees appointed by the N.S.A. and which usually include, out of courtesy and consideration, the owners". ²⁰ The Boltons had intended that the property remain legally theirs until their deaths, but a change in property law in the state of New South Wales made it more expeditious to transfer the property sooner, than later. Thus legal transfer of the property, which had begun in 1949, was completed in March 1963. ²¹

ROOM FOR ALL?

Accommodation at the Yerrinbool school was one of the most pressing issues facing the school committee, and the National Assembly. The school committee required twenty-eight beds for the 1947 summer school, and was expecting increases to thirty at the coming winter school, and perhaps as many as fifty at the next summer school! ²² Twenty attendants at the 1947 winter school (including Clara Dunn) signed a petition urging the need for "further accommodation due to the greater number attending" schools, while a second letter informed the school committee that 56 pounds had been raised as a contribution toward the erection of a much needed dormitory. ²³

Evidently the National Assembly felt that it could not comply with the request to build a dormitory, and the collected funds were eventually used to purchase two large tents. Facing an accommodation shortage at the 1948 summer session, the school committee had sought the assistance of Mrs Vickers of the Yerrinbool Progress Association. At the 1949 school, seventeen participants met in the Hyde Dunn Hall to discuss the erection of permanent accommodation. Collis Featherstone reported to the National Assembly that 152 pounds had been donated by those present, toward a dormitory fund. ²⁴

The National Spiritual Assembly, meeting in Melbourne, acknowledged the accommodation shortage, and approved expenditure of 200 pounds on a dormitory. Other urgent needs, however, intervened. Following an appeal from the Guardian, the National Assembly had redirected the collected moneys toward completion of the Shrine of the Bab. Several years later, in 1956, the "Ethel Dawe" cabins were constructed, and the accommodation level finally increased from the ceiling of thirty-six occupants that had existed in 1949. ²⁵

PROGRAMS AND SCHOOL COMMITTEES

The task of attracting to the summer school competent speakers, and co-ordinating the best possible school program has been the challenge confronting school committees since the time of the first summer school. Initially, Baha'is in the various communities were invited to submit written papers. If it was not possible to present them personally, then another would read the paper on their behalf. In this manner, the New Zealand Baha'is Dulcie Burns (Dive) and Ethel Blundell forwarded papers they had written, as did the Perth Baha'is, although such was little comfort to Annie Miller, who wrote to the committee, "Alas! Our own funds do not permit our sending anyone this year. No-one of our little Assembly are financial enough to afford so long and expensive a train journey." ²⁶

The Hobart Baha'is chose as topics for the 1941 summer school "comparative religion", "Christian, Muhammadan and Baha'i marriage laws", and a study of "The Brilliant Proof". Florence Fitzner travelled from Adelaide in January 1948 to lead a study on Shoghi Effendi's "The Rising World Commonwealth". In the years prior to the passing of Shoghi Effendi, in 1957, summer schools often took the opportunity to study his long letters to

the Baha'i world, and his translations of Baha'i writings, soon after first receiving them. Thus, for example, Stanley Bolton conducted a study of "The Promised Day is Come" in January 1946, and Katherine Harkus led study of "God Passes By" in the winter of 1948.

From the early years, Baha'i youth contributed much to the success of summer and winter schools. In the 1940s, many events were organized by the "Werriwa youth group", established in 1944 when Frank Wyss and his sister Lilian (now Ala'i), two youth living at nearby Tahmoor, who became Baha'is at the 1944 winter school, combined with the Yerrinbool youth - Mariette, Antoinette and Stanley P. Bolton. Following their time spent studying chiropractic in North America, the school committee looked forward to these youth returning to Australia with first-hand knowledge of American summer schools.

Many topics studied in the 1940s remain relevant in the 1980s: "Abdu'l-Baha, Our Exemplar", "The importance of Baha'i Administration", "a new solution to the economic problem", "tests", "the abolition of racial prejudice", "prayer", and many more. In later years, other program formats were experimented with. One that has endured is the treatment of one topic or theme by an individual throughout the course of the summer school. Shoghi Effendi had suggested that the Australian summer school could be patterned on the schools which were being conducted in North America. He further suggested that the sessions be longer, and that, in addition, a 'winter session' could be held. ²⁷

One such winter session which proved to be very successful took place in August-September 1947. A series of public lectures on "The Nine Great Religions", included two non-Baha'i speakers, Harold Morton, a Sydney radio announcer, and Fazel (Frank) Khan, a Muslim businessman living near Yerrinbool. Harold Morton returned to Sydney to report on his 2GB radio program "Book Review":

At this very time a winter school is being held down at Yerrinbool by a group of people who are adherents of the Baha'i World Faith ...it was my good fortune to be invited to deliver the address during this session, on Buddha ... so a couple of nights ago I travelled down to Yerrinbool and was taken to Bolton Place where Baha'i members were assembled... ²⁸

Several months later, during the 1948 summer school, Harold Morton interviewed Mariette Bolton and Arthur Tunks on the same program.

Inviting a Muslim to speak at the Yerrinbool school in the 1940s was a bold deed. A few years before, newspaper publicity given to the opening of the Hyde Dunn Memorial Hall had provoked a local clergyman to describe the Baha'i Faith as an "outcrop of Islamic Faith in a nineteenth century Mahdi" and as an "anti-Christian aberration", to which Stanley W. Bolton and Hilda Brooks had written articles in reply. ²⁹ The National Spiritual Assembly had felt that it was premature to include study of the Quran in school programs. Despite these reservations, however, Mr Khan had heard of the Baha'i Faith from Mariette Bolton, and was prepared to speak on the school program about his own Islamic Faith:

At the close of Frank's talk one of the friends asked him could he read Persian. Frank read Arabic and understood Persian but not well. He was handed some poems of Tahirih's. He stood reading and kept repeating, "These are so beautiful! These are so beautiful!". Tears streamed down his cheeks. No-one ever got the translations. He was so moved. Mr Featherstone stayed at the Khans' home that March and was told by Frank that when he and Bibi arrived home from that school they fasted for a week, they were so shaken. ³⁰

Following a year and a half of close investigation, Frank Khan and his family became Baha'is at the 1949 summer school. The committee cabled to Shoghi Effendi:

LOVING GREETINGS 13TH SUMMER SCHOOL COMMENCED WITH
MUSLIM FAMILY ACCEPTING FAITH STOP SUPPLICATING PRAYERS
FRUITFUL ACHIEVEMENTS

to which the Guardian replied:

DELIGHTED ASSURE ATTENDANTS NEWLY ENROLLED FAMILY
LOVING FERVENT PRAYERS MAY SCHOOL SESSIONS PROVE
LANDMARK PROGRESS FAITH LEND TREMENDOUS IMPETUS
UNFOLDMENT PLAN DEEPEST LOVE SHOGHI RABBANI ³¹

The Khans' acceptance of the Baha'i Faith was a momentous and significant event in the evolution of the Australian Baha'i community. The Khans were the first Baha'is of Islamic, and of Indian background, to enter the community. Frank and Bibi, and their children Peter and Joy (Vohradsky), living nearby to the Yerrinbool school, were quite soon involved in the planning of school activities.

In 1947, the Australian community had commenced its first systematic teaching plan. It was to be six years duration, and so provide a framework for activities until 1953. The summer school became an occasion to learn of the progress that the community was making, and of the requirements of the plan at the time. In 1950, midway through the six year plan, the school committee described the summer school just passed as a "consolidating influence in the life of the Australian Baha'i community", and "an institution playing an important role in the six year teaching plan". Stanley P. Bolton had conducted a study of Baha'i Administration, and Meg Degotardi and Elsie Griffith (possibly the first Perth Baha'i to attend a summer school) together had run a course on "The New Civilization". ³²

Not all Baha'is felt able to prepare talks, or lectures, and made their contributions in other ways. Effie Baker, when asked to prepare a talk for the 1939 summer school exclaimed:



Hand of the Cause Clara Dunn
with Baha'is, including
Khan family, 1950's



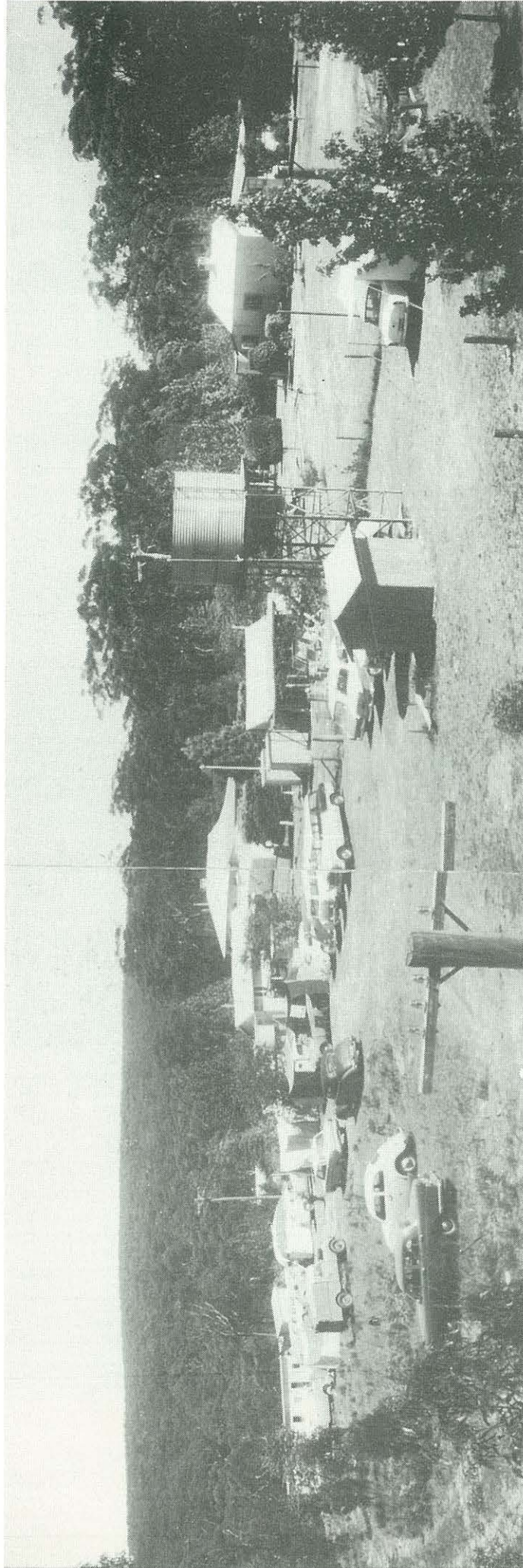
Hands of the Cause Faizi
and Furutan and Mariette
Bolton, January 1954



View of Residence, 1943



*First Yerrinbool Bahá'í Summer School,
Jan. 8th to 23rd 1938.*



View of School, 1960's

...my dear I've never attempted such a thing in my life. Afraid like the countryside in which I am at present residing my brain is very droughty and to compose a few thoughts into passable English on paper would amount to almost a miracle for me - but then again droughts are liable to break any moment so lets keep cheerful and hopeful in the circumstances... ¹

Marie Dunning, a school teacher from Quirindi who shared Effie Baker's retiring personality, hoped to attend the 1949 summer school as "ex-officio washer-up and President of the Tea-Pot", adding:

We can't all be lecturers and I like to feel I am contributing something to the success of the school. ²

Summer schools, from the very first held, had been occasions for teaching the Baha'i Faith, as much as deepening those who were already Baha'is. People had become Baha'is at each of the first eight schools, the committee recorded proudly in 1945: a further three declared at the 1948 summer school, and a total of nine declared at the 1949 summer and winter schools. ³ Although expenditure on "teas and suppers" at the 1948 summer school had resulted in a seven pound loss, explained the school committee to the National Assembly, this was justified, because: "the cost of the loss is commensurate with the value of teaching work done amongst non-Baha'is resident in Yerrinbool, Mittagong, Bowral and Tahmoor"! ⁴

Participants at many schools in the 1940s and 1950s were privileged to be in the company of Clara Dunn, known affectionately to all as "mother" Dunn. Appointed as one of the Hands of the Cause in 1952, Clara Dunn often attended schools as the guest of the school committee, accommodated in her specially reserved room, adjacent to the Hyde Dunn Hall. She attended her last summer school in 1959, a year before her passing, in 1960.

In the 1940s, Clara Dunn was a regular participant on school programs. Inevitably, those present would gather around to hear her speak of her life in America, her meeting with Abdu'l-Baha, and with Shoghi Effendi; and of the early years in Australia, when she and her husband Hyde Dunn travelled through each state to spread the Baha'i teachings. Such was the case at the 1945 winter school, on the last night, huddled in the annex around a log fire! ⁵

In these early years, the atmosphere created by the coming together of Baha'is from distant regions was an important part of each school held. When a group remained together for a week or longer, free of other disruptions, close bonds of friendship and communication were created. Furthermore, a sense of shared commitment to deepening their understanding of the Baha'i teachings came about. Not all schools produced a similar feeling, of course, and the physical conditions encountered at Yerrinbool produced their own effects: participants of the 2nd Summer School abandoned sessions in order to save the School property from the flames of the "big fire" of 1939; the brave participants at the 1941 winter school remembered sessions limited to 2-5 pm by the extreme cold; while those at the 1942 summer school according to a report in the Mittagong Star, experienced the "terrific heat" (reportedly 107 degrees,) while

sitting in a tent listening to Bertha Dobbins speak on "The Day of God and the Age of Science".³⁸ In contrast, the 1950 winter school had to be cancelled at the last minute, as incessant rains had made the roads impassable.

Physical conditions aside, school participants were sometimes acutely aware of the purpose for which they gathered. Such, no doubt, was the case at the 1952 summer school, which took as its theme the significance of the Great Jubilee Year (October 1952 October 1953), and the momentous decade to follow.

THE TEN YEAR CRUSADE 1953 - 1963

In the significant decade 1953 - 1963, the challenges given to the Australian Baha'is by Shoghi Effendi brought also some changes to the Yerrinbool school. Numerous Baha'is who had attended the summer schools, as participants and speakers, in the 1940s, left Australia to pioneer in the Pacific Islands. These included six members of the 1953 National Spiritual Assembly (Lilian Wyss, Stanley P. Bolton, Gretta Lamprill, Dulcie Dive, and Alvin and Gertrude Blum), in addition to several others, including Glad Parke, Frank Wyss, Bertha Dobbins, Vi Hoehnke, Irene Jackson (Williams), Harold and Florence Fitzner, all of whom left Australia before 1955.

Perhaps the bold new ventures facing the Australian Baha'is overshadowed the Yerrinbool school for a time. Winter school was cancelled in 1953, in deference to a "Pacific School" conducted at the National Hazira, 2 Lang Road, in Sydney; and toward the end of the Crusade, the 1962 summer school was cancelled (for the first time) so that the community's resources could be directed to the completion of the House of Worship in Sydney.

Other changes occurred also. When Stanley and Mariette Bolton moved from their residence, Bolton Place, to live in Orange, New South Wales, their keen oversight of the property needed to be replaced. From now on, good caretakers for the property were cherished, and their departure lamented.³⁹ The days of direct contact between school sessions, and the Guardian, ended with his passing in November 1957.⁴⁰ Likewise, the passing of Clara Dunn in 1960 marked the end of a special period in Australian Baha'i history.

With the diversification and expansion of the community's activities, summer school (and, to a lesser extent, winter school) changed from being at the centre of the Baha'i calendar, to playing a supporting role - and, as one example - the 1954 summer school stands out as one of the most significant Baha'i gatherings to be held in Australia. Shoghi Effendi had sent to Australia Hand of the Cause Ali Akbar Furutan, accompanied by Abdul Qasim Faizi (who was also, three years later, appointed one of the Hands of the Cause), to encourage and deepen the Australian Baha'is. In addition to visiting numerous Baha'i centres, Mr Furutan and Mr Faizi attended summer school in January 1954.

Because these two distinguished Baha'is were the first Persians that most Australians had met, about seventy Baha'is were attracted to the summer school, from nearly all states in Australia, and New Zealand. Hand of the Cause Furutan, who was

not at that time fluent in English, had his talks translated by Mr Faizi. On the first evening he spoke on the importance of summer schools, and pointed out that Australia was in a fortunate position, having the Yerrinbool school to develop into the future. The participants cabled to Shoghi Effendi:

YERRINBOOL SCHOOL SEND DEVOTED GREETINGS BELOVED
GUARDIAN JOYFUL THANKS HAND CAUSE FURUTAN RECORD YOUTH
ATTENDANCE

To which the Guardian replied:

LOVING APPRECIATION SUPPLICATING ATTENDANCE SCHOOL
ABUNDANCE BLESSINGS GREAT VICTORY 41

Because of Mr Faizi's Persian background, reported the school committee, his talks on the Dawnbreakers "were absorbed with rapt attention - a new horizon opened, flooding hearts with devotion and awe, as the series progressed through the history of Christianity, Islam, and the early Baha'i Faith. The students were eager to further their studies of Nabil's Narrative, the Dawnbreakers". On four successive nights, Mr Furutan spoke on the Will and Testament of Abdu'l-Baha, and the youth requested special sessions with him.

In addition to the presence of two special visitors, five Baha'is described their recent pilgrimages, and meetings with the Guardian. The Australian Baha'is were becoming increasingly connected to a wider international Baha'i community, and the purely national character of earlier schools was being replaced with a concern for, and awareness of, the role to be played by Baha'is in an emerging global community.

Baha'is moving to and from Pacific goal areas, who were able to visit Yerrinbool, added an international dimension to the sessions of the 1950s and 1960s. In January 1954 Alvin and Gertrude Blum attended summer school prior to their departure for the Solomon Islands, and in January 1955, Stanley P. Bolton and Margaret Rowling described their respective experiences in Tonga, and New Caledonia. Harold and Florence Fitzner, pioneers to Portuguese Timor, were present at the 1965 summer school.

Collis and Madge Featherstone were among the regular attenders of summer schools in the 1950s, driving from Adelaide with a caravan, and children, in tow. Numbers at the summer schools continued to rise, and pressure on the facilities available continued to increase. In 1955, the National Assembly decided to appoint a school property committee (Hazel Reynolds, Stanley W. Bolton and Margaret Rowling) to oversee maintenance of the physical aspects of the school. Buildings erected in the 1930s and 1940s were in need of repair, and larger school sessions required improvement of other necessary facilities: water tanks, showers, and toilets. The era of the Yerrinbool "working bee" was at hand...

So, also, was the 1950s the era of a new generation of Baha'i speakers. Peter Khan, whose twenty first birthday was re-celebrated at the January 1958 summer school (he had another, just before it) delivered a series of lectures on Baha'i administration. According to the school report, he "related the path of social evolution to the evolution of religious systems,

noting at each stage the limitations of each form. Then followed, logically, an examination of the Baha'i form of administration, showing the ways in which it meets the faults and frailties of former systems and applies so aptly to the stage of social evolution which is now emerging".⁴² As well as including other young speakers, this school was fortunate to have two Hands of the Cause present, Clara Dunn, and Collis Featherstone, as well as their Auxiliary Board Members, Thelma Perks and Eric Bowes.

Although school programs were as popular as they had ever been, doubts were once more raised about the location of the summer school. Would it not be better, asked the school committee of the National Spiritual Assembly, if land be purchased somewhere more accessible to public transport, and to the general public?⁴³ If a property was acquired near the House of Worship, the committee, ventured, long distance visitors could be accommodated all year round.⁴⁴ The National Assembly replied that no change of location was to be contemplated. It felt that the Yerrinbool School had been securely established and that what was required was commitment to improving the facilities already existing. Recommendations to National Convention in 1958, urging that a comprehensive plan be devised for future developments at Yerrinbool, and again in 1967, urging that the National Assembly adopt a 'forward plan', indicated a commitment in the community to the Yerrinbool location.

School programs continued to evolve, reflecting change and growth in the Baha'i community. The 1960 summer school included for the first time a number of educational sessions for children, arranged by Miss Joanne Rodwell. A trained kindergarden teacher supervised plastecine modelling, finger painting and games, while the presence of a television set, used to occupy the children at other times "contributed to the serenity of the lecture sessions".⁴⁵

In 1963 and 1964, the first two children's camps were held, organized by John and Joy Stevenson, Madge Painter, John Milne. The children were divided into four troops named for the first days of the Baha'i week. Each troop was rostered for duties, such as table setting, washing up, and cleaning; while other activities included talks, bush walking, and craftwork.

Reflecting the increased participation of children and youth at school sessions, evenings were given over more to plays, musical evenings, even fancy dress parties, and the attendance continued to increase: the 24th summer school, January 1962, registered a record one hundred and twelve attendance. It was at schools such as this, that the practical brilliance of such people as Aubrey Lake was most appreciated - crisis management meant working in very hot, very crowded, conditions, digging up drains which simply had to be unblocked!

Aub's physical contributions particularly with maintenance and just keeping the property going, with buildings, modifications, alterations, patching the plumbing, has to my certain knowledge, been what kept the property going. Aub was always planning improvements and had the vision before him of what the School will be - he is always a seeker after perfection...Most of his efforts were not recorded and

only noted by those of us who from time to time worked with him. His work undoubtedly saved the funds. His skills cover a very wide range.⁴⁶

No summer school was held in 1962, then one hundred and eight people gathered in January 1963 for the final summer school of the Ten Year Crusade. Emphasis was placed on the fundamentals of Baha'i Administration, for many of those present came from one or other of the thirteen new Local Spiritual Assemblies which had been established at Ridvan, 1962.

The history of the Yerrinbool school nearly finished at this time, as a government plan proposed to reserve about one third of the Mittagong Shire as a water catchment area. The whole village of Yerrinbool would have been unaffected, and only the highway and railway station left untouched. Aub Lake, Frank Khan and John Stevenson, together with other shire residents, attended a tribunal hearing in Mittagong, at which Yerrinbool won a reprieve from the commissioner, allowing use of the property to continue.

THE NINE YEAR PLAN 1964 - 1973

During the years of the Nine Year Plan (1964-1973) further developments occurred in the administration of the school property. With annual attendances of approximately one hundred (seventy accommodated, plus thirty in tents and caravans),⁴⁷ the 1966 summer school was for the first time divided into two sessions, the first 25-31 December, 1965, and the second 1-6 January, 1966. The National Assembly had decided to reduce the numbers attending schools to a maximum of sixty to seventy, so that the standard of accommodation, and facilities, could be improved so as to meet the requirements of the Local Government Council.

Following adoption of a suggestion at annual convention, separate committees were established in 1967 to cope with programming, administration, and maintenance of the school.

Pam Ringwood, a member of the program committee, reported that the 1967 summer school: "reached a deeper level of discussion and dedication to study in a faster time than previous schools ...partly due to building on the development of earlier years and partly to a natural maturing of our understanding of the school..." Schools were, she felt, "growing in their happiness and depth of study and spiritual activity."⁴⁸

At other times of the year, vital maintenance work had to be completed. A weekend in June 1967 spent fixing the ablutions block to meet the Mittagong Shire Council requirements meant that: "...digging, cementing, plumbing and carpentering opened up new channels of interest and earnestness to learn from 'the other fellow'".⁴⁹ This working bee occurred during the Seven Day war between Israel and Egypt. At one time an absorption trench was being dug by two men of Jewish background, two from Muslim backgrounds (one Egyptian, one Turkish), one Dutch, one German, and a lone Australian!⁵⁰

Although many Baha'is contributed their skills in carpentry, electrical work, plumbing, and other fields, to maintenance of the property, the cost, in the early 1970s, was more than the combined cost of maintaining the House of Worship and the National Hazira, 2 Lang Road. Although the National Assembly did have to resolve, for a time, to limit spending on the school property, it also encouraged greater use of the facilities. The Yerrinbool School had to, more than in the past, help pay its way.

In 1971, spring and autumn schools were incorporated into the calendar. Each school was nine days long, and accommodated fifty people. A trial "Ridvan school" was held in 1965 which, although a success in itself, did not continue in subsequent years. A more enduring event, focused on Baha'i youth, emerged from the "Baha'i Youth Convention", first held over Easter 1969. More than seventy Baha'is, mostly youth, consulted with Hand of the Cause Collis Featherstone, and visiting Auxiliary Board Member Marc Towers, on matters affecting young Baha'is. The convention received a special letter from the Universal House of Justice, and presented to the National Assembly a series of recommendations, including the establishment of a National Youth Committee, (not the first - one had been appointed in the 1940s) and a set of youth goals toward completion of the Nine Year Plan.

Following a second youth conference at Yerrinbool in 1970, and a decision not to hold one in 1971, this youth movement flowered in a series of National Youth Conferences in Canberra (1972), Adelaide (1973), Perth (1974), Canberra (1975), Brisbane (1976), Sydney (1977), Hobart (1978), and Melbourne (1979).

The Yerrinbool Baha'i community, which at times fell below Assembly status, continued to support the school's events. When at times the property was without caretakers, members of the Yerrinbool community stoically assumed this responsibility.

THE FIVE YEAR PLAN 1973 - 1978

Following the move to use Yerrinbool as a "deepening, regenerating and teacher training centre" which had inspired the Ridvan schools, there followed a series of intensive deepening held during the easter period. A nine day institute in May 1973 attracted 17 participants to an intensive study of Baha'u'llah's works The Hidden Words and The Seven Valleys. Such deepening, which required a smaller number of participants in contrast to the several hundreds attending the youth conferences, evolved into a series of "Youth Institutes", held annually between 1975 and 1979.

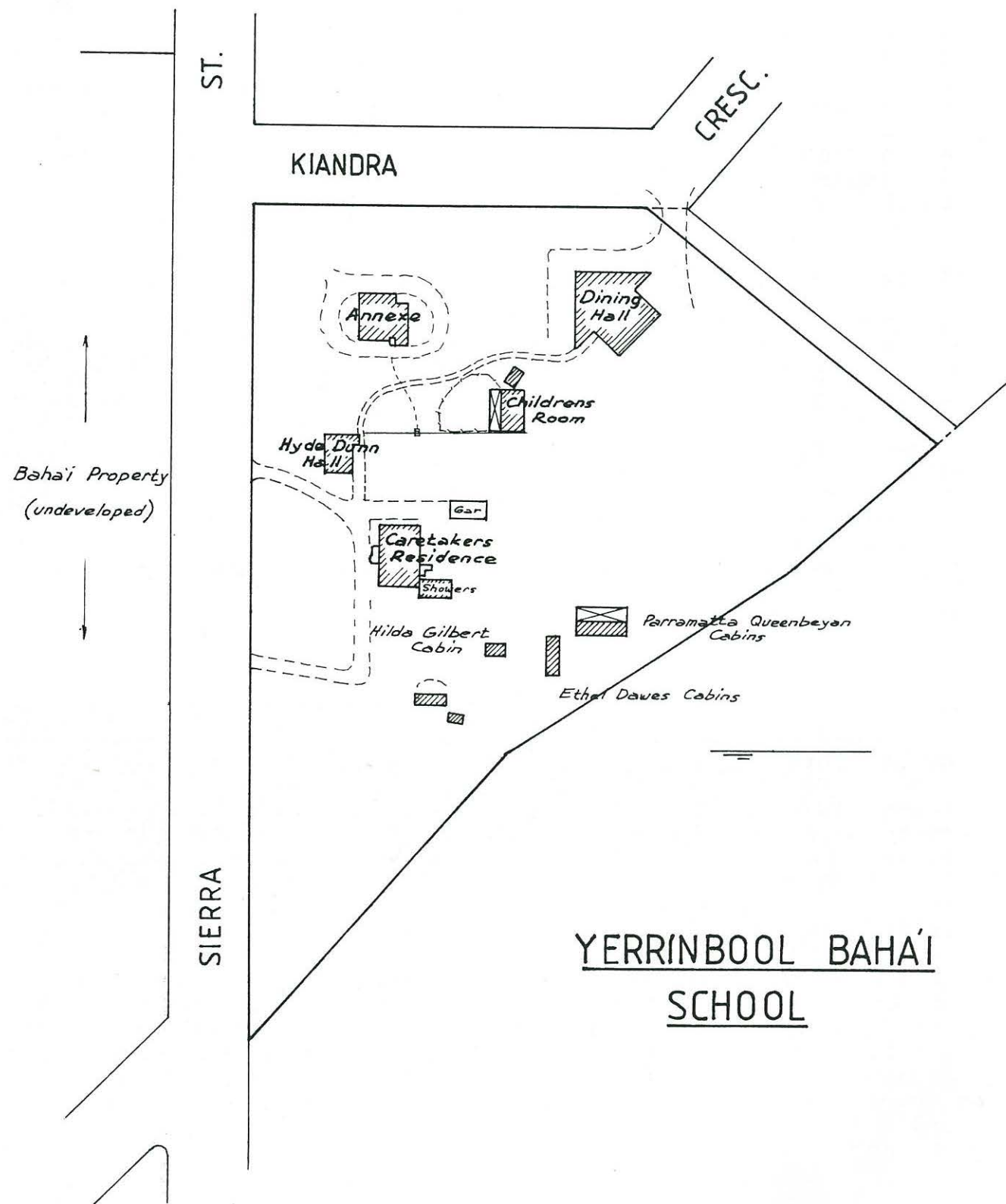
Present at the 1975 Youth Institute were Hand of the Cause Collis Featherstone, and Mrs Featherstone, who spoke of their pilgrimage, and meeting with the Guardian; Dr John Davidson, who led research into the Dawnbreakers; National Assembly members Beverly Stafford and Pieter de Vogel, and National Teaching Committee member Terry Spratt. The enthusiasm generated at this first institute ensured that those of later years, encouraged particularly by Drs Janet and Peter Khan (as members of the National Spiritual Assembly and Continental Board of Counsellors respectively), and Auxiliary Board Member Dr John Davidson, were also very successful. The youth present caught an enthusiasm for deepening, and a new confidence in their teaching efforts.



First session of Yerrinbool Summer School 25/12/65-31/12/65.
Hand of the Cause of God, Mr H. Collis Featherstone is at left.



Youth Institute 1978



Plan of Yerrinbool Baha'i School. 1970's

In addition to the new events being held at Yerrinbool, summer schools continued in the December-January period. Programs increasingly facilitated the attendance of whole families, with childrens classes being organized in addition to the adult program. A classroom, designed by Robert Chaffers, was constructed during 1975-76. Several schools to instruct parents and teachers were organized by the Childrens Department. Other specialist programs were conducted, such as an Aboriginal Teaching Institute, in February 1967. Hand of the Cause A.Q. Faizi returned to summer school in January 1977 for the first time since his 1954 visit.

THE SEVEN YEAR PLAN 1979 - 1986

Among the goals of the Seven Year Plan was a call for greater use of the Yerrinbool School. David and Rosemary Merideth, who followed Nigel and Ursula Hall as caretakers in 1981, worked successfully with the school committee to diversify and increase the number of events held at Yerrinbool. By 1983, the annual calendar included summer, spring and autumn schools, three deepening institutes, and an annual studies conference, in addition to numerous other weekend events. The Sydney youth, in July 1983, held a "Third World Awareness" weekend, and in August, a "public speaking workshop" was conducted. A Buddhist group, yoga, and meditation groups held several sessions at the school. Also, institutes were being held annually for the training of assistants to the Auxiliary Board Members. Agricultural initiatives resulted in fruit and vegetables for school menus being grown at the school. A new kitchen-dining complex, designed by Mr Haddad, was completed in time for the 1985 summer school.

Programs for the major schools were organized by the National Community Development Committee, and the studies conferences, between 1982 and 1984, by the University of Tasmania Baha'i Society. Following the establishment of an Association for Baha'i Studies in Australia, the annual conference was once again held at Yerrinbool, in 1985, before moving to Macquarie University in 1986 (as part of the Peace Exposition), and to Griffith University, Brisbane, in 1987.

Although events which began at Yerrinbool, such as the studies conferences, and before them, the youth conferences, moved on to other locations, the school property was instrumental in their nurturing. In the 1980s summer schools and institutes were held increasingly, and regularly, in all Australian states. The era of one summer school for the whole continent has, apparently, ended. The evolution of the Yerrinbool School, however, has only just begun.

YERRINBOOL BAHAI SCHOOL: THE FUTURE?

Could those Baha'is who gathered at the dedication of Bolton Place, in May 1937, have imagined the role that it was to play in the growth of the Australian Baha'i community? Could they have imagined how many people would later become Baha'is having first experienced the fellowship of a summer school? The first half-century of the Yerrinbool school included soul-stirring events which will never be repeated. In 1985 the community paid tribute to Stanley W. Bolton (1892 - 1966) and Mariette Bolton (1900-1968), as founders of the school, by laying a memorial stone in the grounds in their honour. 51

But it is not only the well known Baha'i speakers, or the most joyous and productive sessions, which will be remembered. Many will recall, as young, or new, Baha'is, their first "proper talk", given in the Hyde Dunn Hall. There are the many youth, as well as adults, who made their closest friends at a summer school (and made it the place of their annual reunion); who washed and wiped more dishes than at any other time in their life; who acted in their first play, or chaired their first session; who learnt the joy of studying the Baha'i writings in depth; who met people of cultures and backgrounds they didn't even know existed; who learnt the requirements of the teaching plan of the time; who became more knowledgeable in the texts of the Faith; who resolved to return again to Yerrinbool...

By looking at the past fifty years of activities at the Yerrinbool Baha'i School, and at the role it has played in the evolution of the Australian Baha'i community, it is possible to gain an appreciation of the institution called the "summer school". The issues of the schools' location, function, maintenance, and method of organization, have been raised, and, for the most part, resolved. The Australian Baha'i community must anticipate, now that it is considerably larger than when the school was first established, the taking of further steps to develop the Yerrinbool Baha'i School according to the vision outlined by Shoghi Effendi:

...as a center for the preparation and training of prospective teachers and pioneers, and for the commingling and fellowship of various elements in the Baha'i community ...(and) its development into that ideal Baha'i University of the future, which should be the aim of every existing Baha'i Summer School to establish in the fullness of time. 52

ENDNOTES

1. The first meeting of the school committee took place on 15 March, 1937. Dr and Mrs Bolton met with Mrs Whitaker and Mrs McLachlan at the Baha'i Centre, Margaret St, and it was decided to hold a picnic at Yerrinbool, on 2 May. The following week, 22 March, Mrs Moffitt also met with the committee, and a program was devised for the 2 May picnic. Yerrinbool Baha'i School Committee. Minutes 1937-45. 0577/0186.
2. Baha'i News 114, February 1938, p8.
3. Shoghi Effendi to Hyde Dunn, quoted in Baha'i Quarterly 5, October 1937, p4.
4. Baha'i News 118, August 1938, p5-6.
5. Baha'i Quarterly 7, January 1938, p5-6.
6. National Spiritual Assembly of the United States and Canada (Horace Holley) to Sydney Local Spiritual Assembly (Hilda Gilbert), 7 April 1938. NSA of Australia and New Zealand. Yerrinbool Baha'i School Committee. Correspondence 1937-39. 0302/0110.
7. Baha'i Quarterly 11, 1939, p3. A full report of the 1939 summer school appeared in Baha'i News 128, August 1939, p8.
8. G. Edson to Yerrinbool School Committee, 19 April 1940. Yerrinbool Baha'i School Committee. Correspondence 1937-39. 0302/0110.
9. Mrs Jean Hutchinson-Smith to Mrs Mariette Bolton, 8 December 1942. Yerrinbool Baha'i School Committee. Correspondence 1937-39. 0302/0110.
10. Stanley and Mariette Bolton to the National Spiritual Assembly, 26 July 1942. Yerrinbool Baha'i School Committee. Correspondence. 1937-39. 0302/0110; Yerrinbool School Committee to the National Spiritual Assembly, 12 October 1942. Yerrinbool Baha'i School Committee. Correspondence. 0240/0060.
11. Letters from the Guardian to Australia and New Zealand 1923 - 1957, p42. The national, rather than local, character of summer schools was reiterated in the Guardian's letter of 18 April 1942, p45.
12. Annual Report of the Yerrinbool Baha'i School Committee for the Year ending 30 March 1948. Correspondence. 0240/0060.
13. This is acknowledged by Shoghi Effendi in his letter to the National Spiritual Assembly, 22 August, 1949. Letters to Australia and New Zealand, p78.
14. Baha'i News Bulletin 13, 1949, p4. cf: letter from Shoghi Effendi 28 June 1950. Letters to Australia and New Zealand, p83.

15. Bertha Dobbins to Yerrinbool School Committee 15 December 1941. Correspondence. 1937-39. 0302/0110.
16. Adelaide Local Spiritual Assembly (Harold Fitzner) to Yerrinbool School Committee 16 December 1942. Correspondence 1937-39. 0302/0110.
17. 15 January 1943. Yerrinbool School Committee Minute Book, 1937-45. 0577/0186.
18. Letters to Australia and New Zealand, 18 April 1942, p44; and 19 March 1943, p48.
19. 12 December 1944, Letters to Australia and New Zealand, p52.
20. Shoghi Effendi 13 May 1945, Letters to Australia and New Zealand, p56.
21. In 1949, when Mariette Bolton was secretary of the National Spiritual Assembly, Ruhyyih Rabbani had written on behalf of Shoghi Effendi: "He wishes to thank you and dear Mr Bolton for the loving gift of Bolton Place to the Baha'i community of Australia. This is an excellent example, and befitting gesture, for it has many associations with the spread and development of the Faith in Australia, and has further enriched the record of your historic services to the Faith", 4 September 1949. Letters to Australia and New Zealand, p82; cf Baha'i Bulletin 111, October 1963.
22. Yerrinbool School Committee to National Spiritual Assembly, 7 February 1947. Correspondence. 0240/0060.
23. Letter from 20 signatories to Yerrinbool Summer School Committee 6 September 1947; D. Dive, M. Bolton and H. Reynolds to Yerrinbool Summer School Committee, 22 September 1947. Correspondence. 0240/0060.
24. D. Dive, H. Reynolds and M. Bolton to Yerrinbool Summer School Committee 13 January 1948. Correspondence. 0240/0060; Yerrinbool School Committee to Mrs Vickers, 29 September 1947. Correspondence. 0239/0060; Collis Featherstone to National Spiritual Assembly, 25 January 1949. Correspondence 1948-49. 0249/0061.
25. National Spiritual Assembly to Yerrinbool Summer School Committee 3 March 1949. Correspondence. 0240/0060; Baha'i Bulletin 38, August 1957, p12;
26. Annie Miller to Yerrinbool School Committee, 19 April 1937. Correspondence 1937-39. 0302/0110.
27. Letters to Australia and New Zealand, 25 March 1946, p60.
28. Harold Morton's Book Review on Radio 2GB Friday 5 September 1947. Correspondence. 0240/0060.
29. Of the event, the National Assembly reported in July 1943: "An extraordinary amount of unexpected free publicity has been afforded by newspaper correspondence resulting from a report of the opening of the Hyde Dunn Memorial Hall during the Yerrinbool Summer School sessions in January. The "Mittagong Star" gave a lengthy report of the proceedings on the front page of the paper. A Roman Catholic priest sent

- along letter denouncing the Faith and contending that a newspaper serving a Christian community should not make itself an instrument to propagate "this outcrop of Islamic Faith in a nineteenth century Mahdi", this "anti-Christian Islamic aberration". But the newspaper ignored the priest's reprimand and published further letters of considerable length over a period of six weeks..." Baha'i Quarterly 28, July 1943, p3.
30. Madge Featherstone, personal communication.
 31. Yerrinbool School Committee to Auckland Summer School, 13 January 1949. Correspondence 1948-49. 0249/0061.
 32. Report of Baha'i Summer School 31/12/49-12/1/50. Correspondence. 0240/0060.
 33. Effie Baker to Yerrinbool School Committee 5 December 1938. Correspondence 1937-39. 0302/0110. In fact, Effie Baker was an accomplished letter writer, and had written an account of her travels through Persia, 1930-31, taking the photos required by Shoghi Effendi for inclusion in Dawnbreakers.
 34. Marie Dunning to Yerrinbool School Committee, 18 October 1948. Correspondence 1948-49. 0249/0061. Miss Dunning contributed to the school properties in other ways, such as anonymously paying for the cost of connecting electricity to the annex, 1947. Marie Dunning to Yerrinbool School Committee (Dulcie Dive) 20 February 1947. Minutes 1946-48. 0579/0186.
 35. Report of the Yerrinbool Baha'i School Committee for the Baha'i Year 105 (1948-49). Correspondence. 0240/0060.
 36. Yerrinbool School Committee to National Spiritual Assembly 25 February 1948. Correspondence. 0240/0060.
 37. Report of the Fifth Annual Yerrinbool Baha'i Winter School (April 1945). Correspondence. 0240/0060.
 38. Mittagong Star, 9 January 1942.
 39. An incomplete listing of caretakers:
 - (a) In the 1940's:

Matt and Dorothy Appleton
Mr & Mrs Johannson
 - (b) From the mid 1950s, when the Boltons moved from Yerrinbool, until care-takers were appointed, the property was maintained by Aub and Greta Lake. For many years, Aub maintained the National Headquarters, 2 Lang Road Paddington, and the House of Worship property, in addition to the Yerrinbool school property.
 - (c) "Urgently needed at the school is a suitable caretaker."- Baha'i Bulletin 111, October 1963. "Caretakers still to be finalized" Baha'i Bulletin 134, October 1965, p2.

Barry and Wendy Hall March 1967 -
Sue and Chris Borleis 1970 - September 1972

Neville and Helene Foskey
 Harry and Margaret Headland
 Rae and Jim Rhodes
 Ursula and Nigel Hall February 1980 - July 1981
 David and Rosemary Meredith July 1981 - July 1984
 Vedad Badiyan
 Sima and Quadrat Motallebi April 1985 - December 1986
 Kathy and Edwin Humphries February 1987 - present

40. Shoghi Effendi's last cable to a Yerrinbool summer school, January 1957, read:

ASSURE ATTENDANTS LOVING FERVENT PRAYERS URGE
 CONCENTRATION OBJECTIVES PLAN DEEPEST APPRECIATION
 SHOGHI

National Spiritual Assembly. Annual Report, Baha'i Year 113 (1956-57), p25.

41. Report of the 18th Baha'i Summer School, 31 December 1953 - 10 January 1954. Correspondence. 0241/0060.
42. Report of activities, Yerrinbool Baha'i School 27/12/57-6/1/58. Correspondence. 0241/0060.
43. School Committee to National Spiritual Assembly, 2 April 1959. Correspondence 0241/0060.
44. School Committee to National Spiritual Assembly 9 September 1959. Correspondence. 0241/0060.
45. Baha'i Bulletin 67, February 1960, p12.
46. John Stevenson, personal communication.
47. Baha'i Bulletin 125, January 1965, p8.
48. Baha'i Bulletin 154, June 1967, p32.
49. Baha'i Bulletin 155, July 1967, p32.
50. "And of course, in perfect harmony." John Stevenson, personal communication.
51. For a brief account of their lives, see Stanley W. Bolton, "In Memoriam", Baha'i World, vol. XIV (1963-1968), p323-5; Mariette G. Bolton, "In Memoriam", Baha'i World, vol. XV (1968-1973), p435-7.
52. From a letter written on behalf of the Guardian to the National Spiritual Assembly of the United States and Canada, 29 July, 1939. Lights of Guidance, p432.