



LEFT: Blyth District Schools Interpretive signs organisers Jeff Pratt, Janet Zweek, Kerry Smith, Helen Perry and Ian Roberts.

BELOW: Kevin Jaeschke and Margaret Millard and the final Hart School site

Old school signs installed

A CONVOY of about 80 people travelled to seven previous school sites in the Blyth District, plus the site of Gleeson's Well, to unveil interpretive signs on Sunday.

The interpretive signs project was initiated by local Jeff Pratt and with the huge help from Clare Regional History Group Curator, Helen Perry, members of the Blyth Progress Association, students and descendants of school pupils who attended the schools.

The first interpretive sign was unveiled at the site of the Blyth Plains School (1869-1881) by CRHG Curator Helen Perry and Ken Shepherd, whose great grandfather donated the land for the school.

The next site was the Bowillia School (1888-1951) where a large crowd gathered to see Bowillia students, Max Carling, who continues to live down the road from the school site, and Ray Gleeson, unveil the sign.

Heading further west Everard East School (1910-1937), where a few remnants of the building still exist, sisters and students Roma Jaeschke and Margaret Walton reminisced about their time at the school and were glad to fossick through the remains.

The convoy headed back east to Gleeson's Well, where Jeff Pratt gave a brief history of the importance of this former water reserve that supplied water to the surrounding farmers.

Harmerville School (1892-1941) was one of half a dozen schools in the Blyth district and the land was given to the school by James Hamer. Sisters, Margaret and Roma (nee Hentschke) attended Harmerville after Everard East closed and were assisted by Wallace Drennan, also a former student, in unveiling the school sign.

The 80-strong crowd enjoyed a sausage sizzle and cold drink in Kevin and Mardi Pratt's farm shed before the tour continued north to Boucaut School (1897-1931).

Descendants of the Kirchner family, Brian Kirchner and Mary Adams

Janet Zweek reports:

and descendants of the Thomas family who donated the land for the school, Trev Thomas and Neil Field, all gave an incite from their father's and relatives' time at Boucaut School.

Heading east to Hart School (1923-1941) was the next stop and former students Kevin Jaeschke and Margaret Millard unveiled the sign in front of the school, which is now used as a residence.

The majority of students walked or rode a pony to school where there was a community water trough to water the horses.

The last stop was the first Hart School (1895-1922), which is situated next to a former Presbyterian Church.

Sid and Di Harris, who have been restoring the building as their home over the past 23 years, had pleasure in speaking of their time at Hart.

The visitors were welcome to walk through both the school and church before heading back to the Blyth Hall for afternoon tea.

During afternoon tea Blyth Progress Association chairperson, Kerry Smith, thanked all for attending and speaking at the sites of how life was in the early 1900s.

Thanks were extended to Helen Perry for her extraordinary amount of time spent on this project unearthing photos and information about the Blyth district; the financial contributions from the Wakefield Regional Council, Blyth Development Board, Blyth Progress Association, the community and families involved with the schools.

Thanks to Jeff Pratt for ensuring the project succeeded from a thought he had four years ago and to the Blyth Progress Association for backing the project financially and in its planning.

To the Blyth community for the voluntary hours in preparation to this project to ensure the many visitors from within the district and the state had the opportunity to enjoy the experience on the Blyth Plains.



LEFT: Margaret Walton, Roma and Wallace Drennan at Harmerville School site.



Roma Jaeschke and Margaret Walton, at Everard East School site.



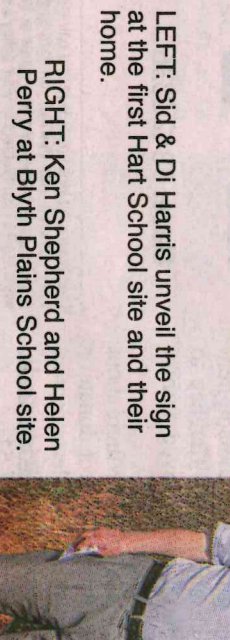
BELOW: Jeff Pratt speaking at the Gleeson's Well.



Students of Bowillia School Max Carling, Hedley Wandel, Pat Tiller, Wonne Gleeson and Ray Gleeson.



LEFT: Brian Kirchner, Neil Field, Trev Thomas and Mary Adams at Boucaut School site



LEFT: Sid & Di Harris unveil the sign at the first Hart School site and their home.



RIGHT: Ken Shepherd and Helen Perry at Blyth Plains School site.

