

Calves Go To School

In these days of computers and iPads in classrooms, it is easy to forget about the equipment used and activities undertaken by school children of sixty years ago. Young children wrote on slates and progressed to fountain pens with small bottles of ink. Books, lunch and other items were carried to and from school in small backpacks.

In Seventeen Mile Rocks where some children walked up to several kilometres to school, the weather sometimes determined the time that school finished. The teacher would keep a lookout for approaching storms and send home earliest those children who had the greatest distance to walk.



Eleven Calves and Their Minders, Judging Day at Seventeen Mile Rocks State School, 25 Nov. 1949.

About 1949, for two years, the Seventeen Mile Rocks school curriculum included a Calf Club. Each child was expected to look after his/ her own calf at home for several months, feeding, grooming and training it to walk on lead similar to 'showing' cattle at the RNA. In the process, the children learnt about feeding, care, hygiene, bacteria and diseases.

On the day of judging, children took their calves to school and paraded before the judge, an official from the Department of Agriculture & Stock, and a silver cup was presented to the winner. The Calf Club was part of the Education Department's agricultural education program for children in rural areas.

Many years later, the school building had a different role in supporting the interests of rural children. After Sir Hercules Sinnamon acquired the then disused school building, he made it available to the Indooroopilly branch of Rural Youth for its monthly meetings in the 1970s. The Rural Youth movement, originally created to support farming interests, had extended to include city children and to promote a common bond between city and country children. In the late 1980s, Sir Hercules, after relocating the school building and play shed to Seventeen Mile Rocks Road, made it available for visiting school children as an interactive museum. The aim was to demonstrate school curriculum and equipment of earlier times.

Meg Gordon

This article was first written for and published in *Centenary News*.

All pages on this website remain the property of the Centenary Suburbs Historical Society. Please contact us (centenaryhistory2@hotmail.com) if you would like to use our images or articles.



Centenary Suburbs Historical Society Photo Gallery and Articles by [Centenary Suburbs Historical Society](#) are licensed under a [Creative Commons Attribution-NonCommercial-NoDerivs 3.0 Australia License](#).

Based on a work at www.cshsoc.org.au.