

Neales Flat School Reunion

The Neales Flat School may have closed 69 years ago, but its past students have remained in contact with each other and regularly have reunions to catch up. Rodney & Fay Grosser have been the main organisers of the reunions in recent years and they organised it to coincide with History Month in SA this year, and only days after Eudunda had its Pioneer Market Day. This year a good number attended including several who travelled from interstate and one spritely lass who was a couple days off her one hundredth birthday.

Sunday 22nd May was a big day for Neales Flat, and Pastor Brian Keller. Earlier in the day he had conducted a church service in Eudunda and then came straight away to Neales Flat to help with their service. Pastor Keller had to leave early as he was also asked to attend the opening of the new development of the St John's School Hall. Allen Kleinig ably kept the well attended service going.

Past students, visitors and anyone interested then proceeded to the old original school building, to talk, and share in a very tasty supper, and lots of stories about the old days at school and how families are going now. The school building is in reasonable shape, and a tribute to the church and its members who have been able to maintain it in good condition.

Three years ago at the previous reunion there is some video footage showing where the interviewer asked the oldest student to attend that day – at 97 years old if she was up to the idea of coming back on her 100th birthday, and her answer was that she was looking forward to it. Praise be to God that – three years on; the oldest student to attend that reunion, Stella Schultz, has once again returned and will celebrate her 100th birthday on Wednesday 25th May.

“I would not have missed this reunion, it's always an exciting time for me, meeting up with everyone” a remarkably fit looking Stella Schultz said. Stella plans on attending a big birthday bash in Mannum, where she now resides on the next weekend.

Not everyone would be able to attend Stella's birthday so it was appropriate to present her with a cake a couple days earlier. The cake had a single “one” on it. One cheeky much younger boy said it was to be treated like an ‘odometer’, which had reached 99 and wrapped around to start again from one and count up. She did have a wiry smile at that one, and had no problems blowing out the candle. To finish off the day Stella was to be treated to a visit to her original Weis family farm (where brother Vic lived).

Peter Michael was one of many to speak during the afternoon. He talked about the difficulty of being one of only two families who were English speaking; growing up in an area where everyone else spoke German and the same was to be said of going to school. It was a thought provoking subject. Many of the students remarked on how Peter was the brains of the school and how they used to ask him for help. Peter then gave a book which was presented to him at the school so many years ago for achieving the highest mark (639) 2.C. 1939 (signed by Mr Leditschke) to the growing memorabilia collected by the past students.

Long distance travellers to attend were Vin & Kath Diener, and Peter Michael. Ian Michael came too and proudly chalked on the board that he attended from 1935 - 1942. A photo was taken of the oldest student (Stella Schultz) and youngest student (Dorothy Best) at the reunion. What was nice to see what those partners of past students who had passed away still came to meet friends and that younger people are attending, to bring their family to attend or just to find out about their family heritage at the school.

“I was the last student to enrol at the school and only attended for a few months before it closed down” said Dorothy Best.

There are plans afoot to have another reunion next year for the 70th year of the schools closing, with the Herriman family willing to help organise it.