

Primary entry #47: Branxton Public School

The Branxton Buzz



TRAFFIC FLOW: Work continues on the Greta-Branxton interchange.
Picture: Shelby Nikora

Roadworks to be completed later this year

By HAYLEY GILLAN

MANY people are excited about the new Hunter Expressway in the Branxton and Greta area. It aims to reduce traffic congestion and provide greater safety for drivers on the New England Highway between Maitland and Singleton.

There will be interchanges along the route to service nearby communities.

This more direct route to Newcastle will relieve congestion between Rutherford, Maitland and Thornton regions.

Less travel means lower costs for road users as petrol costs remain high. The federal government contributed \$1.451 billion to the project and the state government committed \$200 million.

The expressway has provided employment for workers including traffic controllers, dump truck operators, engineers, excavators, water truck drivers, line markers and land management consultants.

There have been some delays for road users, however the benefits when it is finished will make it worth the inconvenience.

Leonie Nash, of Branxton, said, "I can't wait until it's finished as it will make a huge difference to everyone's life throughout their working week."

It is due to be finished later this year, depending on the weather.

Marching into the past

By JOSIE WITHERDIN

THIS year Branxton Public School is celebrating its 150th year of offering public education.

After researching the history of the school, it was found that past students were the best source of information as to what school life was like at Branxton over the years.

One such ex-student is Mrs Shirley Green (nee Johnson), who attended the school from 1936 until 1942.

Mrs Green started school when she was six years old and went straight into year 1.

At the time there were three classrooms at the original Clift Street site. She has very vivid memories of Monday morning assemblies when all the children would stand in lines while the flag was raised. They would sing the national anthem - *God Save the King* - as King George VI was on the throne.

Mrs Green remembers having to hold up her hands and the head girl would walk along the lines and do an inspection of nails and shoes, which had to be polished if students wore them. She even remembers picking a thorn off the rose bush and cleaning her nails before school one Monday morning. She can't actually remember anyone ever being punished.

Following assembly they marched into their classrooms to



REMINISCING: Mrs Green shares her memories of school with Josie Witherdin.
Picture: Leah Muter

the tune of *Colonel Bogey* on the gramophone. Also on a Monday morning, the older and more sensible boys would go and mix up the ink so that the older grades could write with nibs dipped into ink that sat in inkpots on top of every desk.

When Mrs Green went to school they didn't wear uniforms. They just wore whatever they owned.

Many of the photos of the time showed that some children didn't even wear shoes, even in the middle of winter.

Students travelled to school however they could. Some would walk and ride bikes but those who lived out of town could grab a lift on the milk truck into school.

Mrs Green loved school. She

remembers going into the principal's residence and his wife taught them needlework while the boys went into the weather shed and learnt woodwork and bookbinding.

School has changed a great deal since Mrs Green's day. It is fortunate today's students have the education on offer at Branxton Public School.



SMARTY PANTS: Students Amy Szlicht, Mitch Robinson and Morgan Hawkins in action.
Picture: Holly Smith

Champion team beats their odds

By JADA HAMILTON

BRANXTON Public School's 2013 Mayoral Academic team of Mitch Robinson, Amy Szlicht and Morgan Hawkins proved to be a top combination, winning a total of \$3250 for the school.

Cessnock's Mayoral Academic Challenge started in 2006 and is aimed at assisting local primary and high schools financially as well as

promoting the academic abilities of the students.

Branxton Public School came third in 2009 and received \$1000 for the school. Since then they have reached the semi-finals but have not gone beyond.

This year, however, they beat Rosary Park Catholic School and Paxton Public School in the grand final, and won \$3000.

This was a great achieve-

ment but the team then had to compete against Cessnock High School to see who the overall winner.

They went up against the high school team, knowing that they had to work hard and incredibly, they won, gaining an extra \$250.

Branxton's principal, Mark Ouvrier, was delighted and commended the year 6 students. The money will go towards school equipment.

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