



## Eva Doris Daniel

1905-1995

Margaret Rumbold, a long-serving member of AFUW Victoria, wrote the following account of Doris Daniel. She first met Doris in the 1950s: 'It then transpired that she had been at school with my mother and thereafter our paths crossed at various points throughout the rest of her life. There were occasional visits; I attended her farewell and regretted that I was out of Melbourne at the time of her funeral'.

Eva Doris Daniel was born in 1905 in the Victorian gold-mining town of Maldon. The only child of Iorwerth Daniel and his wife, nee Eva Smallacombe, both of Welsh extraction, her early childhood centred around visits to her grandmother's home, *Bryn Hyfryd* in Lawrence Street, which in later life she was able to describe in vivid detail. Iorwerth (Welsh for Edward), had attended the Maldon State School as a pupil and later taught there, but by 1916 the family had moved to the city, where Doris completed her secondary education in 1922 with Leaving Honours at the Presbyterian Ladies' College in East Melbourne. From there she proceeded to the University of Melbourne, subsequently graduating with a BA in history. She also gained a Diploma in Education.

She began teaching in February 1928 at the East Camberwell Girls' School in Mangarra Road on the day that the school first opened. The fact that it poured with rain did not dampen her enthusiasm for a career which would span over forty years. In addition to her classroom duties, she was a form and housemistress and worked with the Junior Red Cross Club, which made "jumpers, bonnets, hug-me-tights" and patchwork quilts for the Berry Street Foundling Home, the Free Kindergarten Union and the Junior Red Cross.

Promotion in those days usually involved changing schools and after eight years at East Camberwell, Miss Daniel moved to a succession of positions. By the 1950s she was teaching senior history at the MacRobertson Girls' High School, where her students learned about "the redundant population" of eighteenth and nineteenth century Britain being one of the reasons for emigration to Australia. This was further encouraged by schemes such as those proposed by Edward Gibbon Wakefield to bring to South Australia "sober, God-fearing Presbyterians". Although not mentioned in a government school, this was an epithet which might equally well have been applied to her, notwithstanding that earlier generations of her family had been of the Welsh Independent faith and that at its formation in 1977, she would become a member of the Uniting Church.

Well-versed in her subject, she was also a kindly form mistress, taking an interest in her students. No doubt this was likewise a feature of her regime as Headmistress, first at the Flemington Girls' High School and ultimately at the Pascoe Vale Girls' High School. (Women were not appointed to head co-educational schools until some years later). Miss Daniel retired from Pascoe Vale at the end of 1969 and for a short time afterwards worked in the Staffing Office of the Education Department.

In 1950, on exchange to the Kirkaldy High School in Scotland, she had made the acquaintance of Jenny Wright, who soon came to live and teach in Australia and like Doris, became a staunch member of AFUW. Good friends, they were both in regular attendance at meetings and conferences and in retirement participated in the monthly gatherings of the Eastern Suburbs Group.

With more freedom to pursue her own interests, Miss Daniel embarked on the personal project of researching her forebears, as a result of which she published in 1983, a slim volume entitled *Grandfather was a Maldon Pioneer*, in which she outlined the life of Isaac Daniel, the grandfather whom she never knew, who settled in Australia in 1857 and died in 1888. Photographs, however, reveal that it was from his branch of the family that she inherited her own fine features.

Sadly, her final days were clouded by encroaching blindness and she spent some time in *Montcalm* in Canterbury, where, as a pastime, she was virtually limited to listening to the radio. She died at the end of 1995. Today she lives on, not only in the bequests she made to her former school, PLC, and to AFUW but also in the affections of those whom she

taught. The fact that she was an only child is telling for her bequest, though there were at least some cousins, the Sampsons, who lived in Canterbury.

Doris Daniel's will dated 15 May 1991, from the Eva Tilley Memorial Home in Balwyn. Doris Daniel was blind at the time the will was signed and it was read to her by the witness, presumably her solicitor. The will provides for some small bequests with larger ones to AFUW Victoria (now Graduate Women Victoria), the Social Services Department of the Uniting Church of Australia, Pascoe Vale Girls High School and Presbyterian Ladies College. The bequest to Pascoe Vale Girls' High School was to be applied for finishes or equipment for the E.D. Daniel Assembly Hall. The bequest to PLC was to be known as the E.D. Daniel Memorial and used for educational purposes or for the building fund.

*Since 1999, Graduate Women Victoria (formerly AFUW Vic) has followed Doris Daniel's wish that we use her bequest to award a scholarship in her name.*

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