



Pictures: Stacey Merfin

HISTORY MAKERS: Will, Harrison and Sam, from The Lake Primary School's preps, look like they came straight from the early 1900s to be in the parade.

Birthday bash was history in the making

By Jono Pech

TEN days of celebrating Merbein's history came to an end yesterday with the final events of the town's centenary.

Kenny Park hosted an inter-denominational church service yesterday morning, followed by a memorial tree planting and farewell lunch.

An Illawarra flame tree was planted to represent a centenary of irrigation settlement, with a centenary plaque unveiled next to the plaque commemorating EJ Kenny as the father of Merbein.

Rebecca Wells, Merbein Centenary committee member, said the whole 10 days had run well as a great community effort.

"They've done a great job getting everything together and making it happen," Ms Wells said.

"It's great to think the events held have regularly had 500 people attend, so it's positive to have people come to them all and give the feedback that they've enjoyed it and had a good time.

"We even had some people passing through at the parade stopping and asking what's going on, then they've stayed in Merbein for a



ENGINE DRIVER: Joseph, a grade 1 student at The Lake, leads his school's centenary float.

few days." She said Friday's Centenary Parade was the main highlight of the many events.

"Merbein hasn't seen anything like that.

"The fact we had so many people - maybe

1200 in the parade from all different areas in town and the district - that was an amazing effort to get on the day.

"There was 7000 to 8000 people there,

which added to the atmosphere as well. "The winner of the best float category went to the Merbein and District Historical Society.

"We had fireworks afterwards and that went really well, it was a great display.

"We had the bush dance last night and everyone had a really fun time dancing.

"We've just been so excited with how well everything has gone and how well-attended it's all been.

"Lots of those who attended have given such positive feedback, which makes all the hard work worthwhile."

Ms Wells said many people had travelled a great distance to be part of the celebrations.

"It's also good hearing people catching up who haven't seen each other for a long time, asking how many kids, what they do now, just to touch base.

"It's good to see part of the process of what this has been about, creating memories for the future and celebrating the past.

"Next time they have an event like this there'll be so many people to talk to who have memories of this, so that'll be exciting.

She said now the celebrations had ended the community could finally catch up on some well needed sleep.