

DHS - Newsletter

Number 21

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DANDENONG HIGH SCHOOL EX-STUDENT'S ASSOCIATION NEWSLETTER

FOUR FABULOUS REUNION EVENTS

UNANIMOUS PRAISE FOR VARIED PROGRAM

Fourteen months of planning culminated in the successful staging of the recent 80th Anniversary at the School.

In a festive atmosphere, the events embraced original students, plus current students and staff, and great numbers in-between.

Leading our array of guest columnists is Pam Oldmeadow (Saunders).



PRINCIPAL, BRUCE VAN DEN BERG.
REGRETTABLY, HE IS
NOW RETIRING

"On Saturday March 27th, the DHS luncheon for students attending school in the 20's, 30's and 40's - 'the oldies' - was held in the View Room at the Dandenong Club.

Marion Trigg (Dawson) and Committee had done a fine job in organising this event. Rev. Phillip Newell, the Anglican Bishop of Tasmania and an ex-pupil was the guest speaker. He reminisced, reminding us of many of our teachers and happenings - there were just enough truths in his anecdotes for them to sound authentic - there was much laughter.

Jack Grogan and Miss Gill were there - they were foundation pupils in 1919. Many had travelled long distances, some from interstate - Molly Buckley and Lloyd Pearson were among these.

This was a great reunion. We all, along with Phillip Newell, sang that Dandenong High School was 'The Best School of All', and we really meant it".

'WE WERE WRONG'

Pam Oldmeadow has just assured me that Noel Courtney of Kooweerup fame is very much alive!! (Refer last edition);

Sincere apology.
Ed.

EARLY DECADES LUNCHEON
SATURDAY - MARCH 27TH 1999

Marion (Dawson) Trigg – 1934-1940 Student, 1942 Student Teacher, 1969-1989 Staff Member

When the task of being a secretary for this function was handed to me, I didn't imagine what a satisfying and enjoyable experience it would be.

Many were the long 'phone conversations with those who would come and those who could not (and why). The past came flooding back, and it was those who could assist, to reassure those not as fit as they used to be, that all would be cosy and comfortable.

And so it proved to be...due in no small part to the friendly co-operation of the staff at the Dandenong Club, Michelle for the prior arrangements, and Jan on the day. The provision of a cordless microphone was a tremendous asset as the huge crowd could then hear the speakers, (and there were many).

My co-compere Ken Griffiths, was rudely awakened by me at 8:30 am on the day, and asked to be on deck at 11:00 am. I won't repeat the rude word he uttered, but worse was yet to come. When I asked him to "Blue-tac some photos", his reply was "What's blue-tac?". Oh well! We got there. Ken and I had worked together as school captains, Orchid house captains, editors of The Gate, and shared the corridors (classrooms) as part of the first Form Six at D.H.S. in 1940. It was wonderful to meet another from that form, Joan Taylor (Cranbourne). Making up the number, five only, were Freda Goepel and Heather Smith (dec.). Our form teacher was Adeline Hill who attends most reunions.

The closing date for bookings for the Decade reunions was the 20th of Feb., 1999, but that bore no resemblance to what actually occurred. By then there were 58 starters. At the end there were nearly 200. Who knew? I said "No" to nobody, even had applications on the last morning, and like the loaves and the fishes, there was plenty to eat (and drink) for everybody.

Phillip Newell, Guest Speaker, and wife Merle, flew in from Tasmania that morning and returned that evening. His speech struck just the right chord, bringing to our minds the good, the bad and the eccentric of staff members so well known to all of us. Only mention Griff. or Brum. or Fordie or "Biddy" Broughton and the stories began to flow. Remember "Biddy" and her quote from the 1940 Gate "No school has ever before won the premiership of the Royal Life Saving Society for bronze bars, medallions, intermediate and resuscitation certificates.". Guest speaker Phillip was thanked by ex-pupil and ex-teacher Max Oldmeadow, who was present with wife Pam (Saunders).

Frank O'Shea (I believe there was an O'Shea at D.H.S. from 1923 until the 1950's) formed a table of 10 which included Dorothy Griffiths (daughter of Griff) and husband Len Lloyd. Geoff Dawson (not my brother) formed a table of 10, all from the later 1940's. What a pleasing thought that these will take over from us as the decades roll by.

Many of the famous hockey team of 1940 were present, famous because they were undefeated in B grade so challenged the winners in the A grade section, University High School. Dandenong won (2-1) and still holds the shield, probably because there was never another challenge. Thank you Miss Braithwaite, our coach. Present on the day were Marion Dawson, Edna Gasciogne, Ira Stooke, Lois De Graaff, Phyllis Dawson, Alisa McDowell, Betty Rodd and Kath Keighery. Also present were Monty Rodd and Ken Griffiths from the "Pacemakers" boys team, created especially to increase our speed on the field. Still on sport, great to see Norma Campbell, sadly without our fine athlete and cricketer, her husband Dave Morris. Another cricket captain, Bill Giles brightened our gathering as usual, still upholding the traditions of the Gippsland Train Travellers!!



Back row – Raymond Jungwirth, Greta Jungwirth (President), Pam Oldmeadow, Max Oldmeadow, Marion Trigg, Dorothy Lloyd, Phyllis Yates. Seated – Lois Williams, Ken Griffiths, Rev. Phillip Newell, Merle Newell.

The early decades luncheon gave a great opportunity to look back to the past, dwell on the present and plan for the future. As with the original ANZACs, our "first roll" pupils are becoming less and less. This year they were represented by two, Jack Grogan and Nellie Gill. At our function, the over 80's identified themselves and spoke briefly into the microphone so that everyone could see and hear them.

Another group of seven girls was mentioned because it was formed in 1938 and some of the group have met once a year for 61 years.

Much has been written in this article about the ex-students from 1919 to 1940, but the next reunion will feature the 1941 to 1949 era, judging by the large turn-up in this age group, now young, in their 60's and not "feeble of foot and rheumatic of shoulder" or so it appeared to me.

It would seem to me that the "decade" functions were a marvellous idea, giving opportunity to suit the activity to the company. The afternoon luncheon was an excellent idea, no set places, no set program. Those present had time to chat, look at memorabilia, to move freely and be "home before dark".

Speaking of memorabilia, mention must be made of the vital interest displayed by our present Principal, Bruce Van den Burg and Assistant Principal and ex-student Robyn Stevenson (Golding). They came, they sold and they gave their time unselfishly from their hectic schedules, and we did appreciate their interest in the "oldies". Actually 40 members of the present staff assisted during the weekend.

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1980's Decade Celebrations for the DHS 80th Anniversary

Like they say, things always turn out differently from the way you expect them to, and so the story goes with the 80's decade celebrations for the DHS 80th Anniversary weekend.

What began as a token committee of two, grew into a committed group of four and a half. We wanted to organize something casual to minimize booking and cash collecting problems. We also wanted it to be something fun that would encompass both the eighties era we had grown up in, and the 90's we were still growing into; where old friends could meet new family members, and old memories could spark off a bunch a new ones. It all had a kind of "That Was Then, This Is Now" feeling.

The committee meetings began all rather innocently really with a few people sitting soberly together discussing the facilities at Hemmings Park, getting council approval, trips across the overpass to check out the old school grounds and everyone bringing their own packed lunches to feed their hungry hoards. However, after numerous weeks, mere discussions, disagreements over the 'picnic theme', rather technical mumbo-jumbo regarding health regulations for food preparations, and the occasional bottle of red wine, our picnic managed to remain a picnic. It was suddenly moved to the school oval, a sausage sizzle was introduced (for the swinging singles), a wonderful, and scary collection of 80's memorabilia was compiled (thanks Wendy), and the 80's disco hits were ready to roll. By the time the final touches were being added to the bespeckled signage to hide the accidental paint drops, one of us had been overseas for three months, one had partly dropped out (hence the 'half'), and quite a few bottles of good Australian Red had been emptied.

The night before the Big Day, we gathered together for the last minute preparations and going over the checklist: who would take the Barbecue, the stereo, the butter, the wine? We began by looking over the fashion collection and opening the first bottle. We painted last minute signs for the front gate and followed it with another glass or two. By the time we got to blowing up the balloons with the vacuum cleaner we decided it was not a good idea and blew them up our selves. When they started to burst, we weren't sure if they were blown too big, they were getting too close to the oven, or they just couldn't hold their liquor as well as we could. After a barrage of self portrait photo sessions and few more glasses of wine, we called it a night so we could be ready and rearing for the long and exciting day to come, when all our hard work would pay off.

The next day it rained. Then it hailed. Of the few of us that crawled out of bed that morning, some could only laugh, while others just wanted to cry. In the end though, as the twenty-something twenty-somethings drifted through our humble shelter, we cooked sausages, took photos, played retro 80's music, talked over old times, tried to put names to faces, drank some more wine and even smiled when the sun finally came out. Things turned out a little differently from what we had expected, but then, that's not always a bad thing. The memories of that autumn day may slowly fade into oblivion, but oh! those summer nights.....

Many Thanks to Wendy, Louise, Carlos and Michael for all your help!!!
Samantha Brown.

Wendy Metcalfe also observes;

The sausage sizzle went down a treat, and people mingled amongst the 80's clothing, including some Faberge jeans, Roman sandals, Ciaks, thick belts and who could forget those net shirts??!! We listened to 80's hits, good and bad (from Boy George to INXS, with Cyndi Lauper and Rick Springfield in between..., not to mention Spandau Ballet and Cold Chisel!!)

News of other 'exies' was exchanged and the afternoon continued for some committed 'reunionists' at the Keg.

If there are interested 80's students out there - we know you are there, but where are you hiding - get in touch with the Association.

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FABER QUISQUE FORTUNAE – SONGS OF DANDENONG HIGH SCHOOL – CD LAUNCH

Members of the DHS ex-students choir who made the recording of the school songs were present to perform and witness the launch of the CD. Members of the choir came from many different school years; some members were the composers of the music and the words of the songs. We were proud to meet again.

A 'mini-reunion' occurred with these members before the assembly, and a sing along rehearsal happened in between catch-ups. We were joined by current student members of the DHS Vocal Group, conducted by Anne Earle (choir member and former music teacher at DHS) and by Katrina Vrisk (current music teacher), and accompanied by Jean Mitchell (nee Brown, a student in the 40's). Our performance became a whole school thing as we sang the first verses and then the whole school assembly was invited to join in for the remainder of the songs – *The Best School of All*, *Faber Quisque Fortunae*, (*We Shall Be Strong*), and the *School Song* (*We Are the School*).

In launching the CD recording, Greta Jungwirth spoke of the work of the choir in preparing the songs, the accompaniment of Mollie Cowan, the excitement of the recording day when John Menadue came across from Tasmania, and tribute to Edna Vukmirovic for her conducting and encouragement of the choir. Greta spoke of the time since the recording and the launch, and felt it appropriate the CD be launched as a dedication to Edna in the Edna Vukmirovic Performing Arts Centre.

On behalf of the choir, Stana Sargood then thanked Greta for her work in producing the CD – establishing the choir, keeping track of members for notifications, organising copies of music and words, researching the songs and preparing the history for the CD booklet. The aims of producing a CD to assist at school functions and to make a recording for prosperity, are well met.

Copies of the CD or cassette are available from the Association.

LOOKING TO THE FUTURE

When Bronwyn (Mutton) Maddock (1975 – 1980) was expecting someone to steam clean her carpets after a laundry flooding, she didn't expect Richard D'Argent (1975 – 1980) to knock on her door! Four hours later the carpets were not done, and they had chattered and reminisced over Bronwyn's photo albums, and the idea of 'what about a reunion?' came up as a result.

Next these two contacted about 30 people for a night at the Keg to talk about the possibility of a reunion in 2000. A great night resulted, with much enthusiasm leading to sub-committees for memorabilia, tracing people, organising the venue etc.. The Ex-students Association has had a valued role in assisting the committee plan the event.

The Class of 1975 - 1980 Twenty Year Reunion will be at The Dandenong Club, Heatherton Road, Dandenong, on Friday, March 17th, 2000. While details are being finalised, the tracing committee is attempting to find students and teachers from these years.

If you know of any names and addresses, please contact Stana Sargood (03 9808 2659), or Peter Watson (03 5995 2662).

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SCHOOL 'STUFF'

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THE GATE

URGENT CALL

The archival copies of "THE GATE" are incomplete.

Pre 1947 copies are needed as well as 1948, 1949, 1950, 1951, 1960, 1966, 1971 and 1980 editions.

Please let us know if **YOU** can lend or donate these magazines to the School archives.

MEMBERSHIP MEMBERSHIP MEMBERSHIP

To make the organisation great, we appeal to you to make certain your renewal comes in, and to nominate addresses of friends so that they can share in the life of the Association.

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