



## DANDENONG HIGH SCHOOL EX STUDENTS ASSN NEWSLETTER NO.40

SPRING 2007



### FROM THE CHAIR

#### AGM

In this edition there is a report of Marion Trigg's address at this year's AGM. Marion is our sole life member and a living treasure of the organization, and indeed the whole school community. It was pleasing and gratifying to see more members come forward to join the Committee at this interesting time in the history of the School. We welcome back George Gill, who has previously held the position of Treasurer. We also welcome Sally-Ann Dowman, newly appointed Assistant Principal at DHS, and two former School Captains: Pia Farias-Hernandez and Ratika Palat.

#### ASSOCIATE MEMBER

The Committee has recently exercised its powers under the Constitution and for the first time has granted an associative membership; in this case to Philip Harris. For some years now Philip has been joining his wife, Dawn, and the small group in the History Unit, to work on the School's archives. He and Dawn have a long-standing interest in community history and belong to various Historical Societies. Philip's own school in England is hundreds of years old. Since he has volunteered his services and shown such an interest in DHS, it was fitting that his association was formalized. At the last meeting, Philip was also made a Committee Member, swelling our numbers even further. Congratulations Philip!

#### EXPAT CORRESPONDENCE

Our ex-student community is flung far and wide. We send out newsletters to country Victoria, all the States and various overseas countries. Now and then we receive interesting letters from former pupils and teachers, telling us what has happened in their lives since leaving DHS. One such letter came from Sergio Licit, who was at the School from 1957 to 1961, and has spent much of his working life in PNG. Since we received the letter Sergio has left Niugini Tablebirds and returned to Brisbane. The lure of that tropical country must be strong, however, because he has already begun negotiations for another position in PNG.

#### SCHOOL REDEVELOPMENT UPDATE

The latest information is that an Interim School Council is meeting on a monthly basis and is the guiding group for the development of the new school arrangements. This Council manages the finances of the three campuses of the School and takes a leading role in the development of curriculum and other future arrangements. One of its key committees is the Futures Committee. This met recently to discuss what would be the future uniform, motto, logo, house names etc. There will be a consultative process during the next six months as a course is set to provide an agreed position for the future. The Association hopes to have some input into this process.

The design work is expected to be complete by August 2007 and building works should commence early in 2008. The first stage is likely to be the completion of three of the seven **Schools Within Schools** buildings and the renovation of the Library. Great attention in design and building will be paid to the environment and to the comfort of students and staff. If any member of the school community would like to view the initial plans for the building, this can be arranged through the General office.

**Greta Jungwirth (de Vries)**  
**President**

**ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING SUMMARY  
HELD SATURDAY 21 APRIL 2007**

The result of the election is as follows:

<u>POSITION</u>	<u>NOMINEE</u>
PRESIDENT	Greta Jungwirth
SECRETARY	Gary Matthews
TREASURER	Ruby Constable
EDITOR	Don Metcalfe
MEMBERSHIP CO-ORDINATOR	Samantha Brown
HISTORIAN/ORDINARY MEMBER	Dawn Harris
SCHOOL LIAISON OFFICER	Sally Ann Dowman
ORDINARY MEMBER	Pia Farias-Hernandez
ORDINARY MEMBER	George Gill
ORDINARY MEMBER	Ratika Palat
ASSOCIATE MEMBER	Philip Harris
FUNCTIONS CO-ORDINATOR	Vacant
MARTKETING CO-ORDINATOR	Vacant
REGIONAL LIAISON OFFICER	Vacant

**Editor's Note:**

There are still some vacancies, so please come forward. Also note that Robyn Stevenson (Golding) has retired, and has been replaced by Sally Ann Dowman.



**MUSICAL ITEMS**

Newly appointed Music Teacher **Henry Sachwald** introduced three of his year 11 students (all three are taking VCE level music). The meeting was then entertained by these three student musicians, all of whom are beneficiaries of an Edna Dawson Vukmirovic Music Scholarship.

**Joshua Mamouny** played a short jazz piano piece by **Brian Bonsor**; **Jeanette Pamohaci** played a Latin American flute composition and guitarist **Rochana Karuppa-Arachchi** gave a rendition of "Play Misty for Me".

**GUEST SPEAKER**

The meeting was treated to a most absorbing and entertaining address by one of the Association's few Life Members, former DHS student and Teacher, **Marion Trigg (Dawson)**. In her talk, which she titled "What did DHS mean to me?" Marion drew on a rich body of knowledge and in particular, a history of the school she had written in 1989.

Marion began her school days in the Mallee town of Bannerton, when aged four, and after her family moved to the city, she amazingly enrolled at DHS, directly from grade 6, in 1934, aged only nine! Due to her young age she spent seven years at the school, being a proud member of the inaugural Matriculation class in 1940. (then called Leaving Honours)

Marion recalled that school fees of £2.0.0 per term were paid (which was close to the then average weekly wage). She was in Orchid House, becoming captain in her final year and the Scholarship Form ES, and later Form D. The founding Headmaster, Mr Percy Langford, was still in charge of the school when Marion started at DHS, but had to leave for Mildura shortly after, due to his seniority and falling enrolments, during what was then the Great Depression. Mr Langford was followed by visiting Scotsman, Doctor James, who combined his two-year stay with research into a geography text book he was writing. Marion remembers many interesting excursions organized by Dr James to places such as Lerderderg Gorge and the nearby Dandenongs.

Marion was greatly influenced by the Headmaster who joined the school in 1936, Mr J. L. Griffiths, who she credits with encouraging her to take on responsibilities and ultimately to enter teaching. She recalled how on one occasion she had to overcome her shyness when Mr Griffiths asked that she unfurl the flag at a school assembly. With school buildings comprising only the original red brick building, conditions began to get very cramped towards the end of the thirties, so much so, that classes were held on the upstairs open balconies, in storerooms, or anywhere space could be found. She recalls that academic standards suffered during this time. On the sporting field a highlight for Marion was being part of a hockey team, with coach Miss Braithwaite, which defeated both University High and MacRobertson Girls High.

After Matriculating in 1940, Marion, went straight into trainee teaching, initially in Primary Schools. Her first posting was Clayton North, where she rode each day on a bicycle. She returned to DHS, as one of a number of student teachers, for a short period in 1941/42, recalling that the duties were more administrative assistance than classroom; before a posting to Upper Plenty, as temporary Headmistress (where she had a 4 mile walk from Wallan station) all still at the tender age of 17! 1943 saw Marion entering Melbourne Teachers College, where, during the dark days of WW2, she remembers there were only 15 men enrolled, among a total college population of 300. After completing teacher training Marion completed an Arts Degree at Melbourne University, and it was on her first posting as a secondary teacher at Yallourn, that she met her husband-to-be, Graeme Trigg, who she married in 1949.

After periods at Ballarat and Auburn, Marion was beginning to feel the affects of the Education Department's then policy of discrimination against married women, in being passed over for promotion. Fortunately, through the aid of her former senior English teacher at DHS, Mr Henry, who was by then Assistant Director of Education, her experience was recognized with her appointment to MacRobertson Girls High. During the fifties, Marion took leave to have a family, during which time she accompanied her surgeon husband to Scotland, where she taught for three years. Returning to Australia in 1969, she learnt from her sister Edna (Dawson) that there was a vacancy for an English teacher at DHS, whereupon she applied and began a 20-year association back at DHS, retiring from the position of senior English Teacher in 1989.

Marion looks back on her teaching career, particularly her time at DHS with pride and affection, and sees it as a wonderful journey of personal development, not without its times of adversity and challenge, particularly during the war years, when resources and facilities were so stretched. She noted with satisfaction that there is still a member of the Dawson family at the school, an association unbroken since 1933.

**Editor's Note:**

The Editor thanks Hon. Secretary Gary Matthews for this summary.



Left to right  
Dorothy Easton (Gilbert), Flora Pobjoy (Moller), Marion Trigg (Dawson),  
Vera (Coventry) & Lorna Robertson (Corbel)

Marion's contemporary Vera Patterson, has written to us and provided the photo which appears above. They were celebrating the 70<sup>th</sup> anniversary of their first meeting at D.H.S. They meet annually, and the group was originally 7 in number.

**Editor's Note:**

Vera's sister, Muriel was in Form 2a in 1940, and her year photo appeared in the last newsletter.

**MENTIONED IN DESPATCHES**

One of our favourite newsletter subjects in recent times, **CATHRYN FITZPATRICK**, Australian female cricketing icon, has retired. During a 17-year career, that included 13 tests and 109 one-dayers, Cathryn took 240 wickets, bowling at up to 125 kilometres per hour. She has been appointed to coach the Victorian Spirit Women's Team..

**ROBYN STEVENSON (GOLDING)**, a student, teacher and an Assistant Principal of the school, has retired. Our Association presented Robyn with an appropriate gift at a special farewell function. Robyn was unanimously appointed an honorary life-time member at our most recent meeting.



Avid supporter of our Association, **JENNIFER BANTOW (CUMMINGS)** has been awarded Life Membership of the National Trust. Her sister, **JUDITH STONEY** is currently in the outback on a painting expedition. Upon her return, Judith and her daughter, Elizabeth, will be holding an exhibition in Federation Square. P.S. Judith's and Jennifer's mother, **Phyllis Snedden**, attended D.H.S with her sister **Amy**, whose two boys, **Lyall** and **Bernard** also attended. Another dynasty?

### Ex-students gather for Val Slade (Finck) birthday

Proud DHSESA supporter, Val Slade, of Cranbourne, recently celebrated her 70<sup>th</sup> birthday with friends at the Settlement Hotel, Cranbourne (part owner, ex-student, John Finning). Val attended DHS from 1949-1954. Following her attendance at a reunion in 1994 Val "...decided to collect some old history regarding those years to add to the photographs taken during that evening". The result is an admirable compendium of the lives of her DHS contemporaries, which Val has donated to our archives.



GROUP PHOTO FROM OCTOBER 1994

BACK ROW: John Evans, Bev Morgan (Carey), Gail Burke, Barbara Hume (Pinney), Joy Stephenson (Anderson), Ron Hickmott, Ken Begley, Evan Slater,  
FRONT ROW: Margaret Turner, Robert Brettel, Barry Burke, Dorothy McGee (Turner).

### Val's words about the 2007 get-together

With a number of ex-pupils of DHS 1949-54 turning 70 years during 2006-7, some local exies decided to meet in Feb this year for my 70<sup>th</sup>. With requests from others to attend, a group of 28 met at Settlement Hotel in Cranbourne on Feb 26<sup>th</sup> 2007. Several others traced were unable to attend, owing to other commitments, but showed interest for future gatherings.

Exie's attended from Rosebud, Leongatha, Altona, Pakenham, Garfield, Cranbourne and Melbourne areas. Ex-teacher, Mrs **Eloise Nicholson** of Bayles (DHS 1948-52) was contacted but unable to attend owing to her golf competition at Garfield on the day. Eloise travelled on our school bus from Bayles, leaving around 7.30am for Dandenong, returning 5-5.30pm daily. Many exies recalled the long days and the cold mornings waiting for the bus. Eloise recalls her days teaching at DHS as some of the best during her career.

All exies received a tape of the school songs by the Ex-students choir as a gift from Val, and all, including some partners present, enjoyed the day. Even though many present had not met for decades, the friendly atmosphere still shone through, developed from D.H.S. in the 1950's.

### "Cyclone Jack" – Bush Poet

News reached us recently about David Jacobs, who matriculated in 1963, and whose sister Simone matriculated in 1969. At the launch of his poetry book, "Rhymes for Hard Times", David's friend (and mentor), Geoff Galbraith, another 'bush poet', penned the following words:

" 'Cyclone Jack' Jacobs, is a poet in the same way that a cricket is an insect. It is not so much what he does, as what he is. The poems in this book are uncut gemstones direct from the miner's hand. They record forty years of wrestling schizophrenia and the poverty and loveliness, the highs and the lows that come with it. But they also reveal a person rich in love and compassion; one who dares to speak of death, God and his own deepest needs.

Here is John the Baptist crying in the wilderness, not only uncovering his inner self, but ours as well."

Soft Shadows of Night  
Soft shadows of night  
and a cool breeze blowing:  
I had lost my way,  
or so I thought,  
But in the distant darkness  
a light was shining  
And I found my way  
'though I had thought  
All was lost.

David Jacobs



GROUP PHOTO FROM FEBRUARY 2007 'BIRTHDAY/REUNION' AT CRANBOURNE

BACK ROW: Barbara McGee, Ron Pearson, Margaret Orr (Marshall), Ron Hickmott, Ron Townley (hidden), Terence Kinsella, Barry Burke, Ken Methven (wearing his school beret), Ken Begley  
MIDDLE ROW: Judy Arnold (Halliday), Lois Clarke (Hewson), Shirley Methven (Walker, Form 1 1950) Barbara Hume (Pinney), Irene Rhodes (Rhys-Jones), Beryl Henderson (Walsh).  
FRONT ROW: Leonie Mitchell (Henderson), Isabelle Stephenson (Benham) Barbara Watts (Turner), Val Slade (Finck).

### Memories of Dandenong High School - Val Slade (Finck)

To most of us, DHS was a school we enjoyed attending. Excellent teachers, good discipline and a place where friendships were gained and have been kept to today. I recall a very hot day in February 1949 when, along with others from country areas, we travelled by bus to DHS to commence secondary education. My brother and I had left the single-teacher Yallock State School which had approximately 25 pupils and two to three pupils per grade. At DHS we were to join forms of over 50 pupils and dozens of teachers.

We travelled from the farm on the tandem bicycle to Bayles to catch the bus at 7.30am, returning after 5pm, daily. The days were long as many times we had to assist in the milking of the cows first, rising at 6am, to enable older sister and brothers to gain seasonal employment thus assisting to the financial side of our education – something that hadn't been available to them in the family of nine children.

DHS gave everyone the opportunity to develop their skills, whether they be academic, musical, dramatic, handcraft or sporting. I think my mind was more on sporting fields having been part of the basketball (netball), rounders, softball and athletic teams. Later I was to make use of the experience gained during those years, by competing in top grade netball, coaching, umpiring and forming a club and association in that sport. The Intermediate Certificate which was gained assisted in obtaining a clerical position at the State Electricity Commission, Dandenong. There I met many ex DHS students who also had gained from the school, and looked on their years there with pride and a good grounding for their futures.

Memories of the five years at DHS were the school assemblies, school socials, sporting competitions, house sports, and competing against other schools, form picnics, and excursions. The pleasure of knowing such dedicated teachers, especially the Headmaster, Mr. Griffiths, who had time for everyone.

The egg appeals taught us the importance of helping others. The "fun" of crossing the highway to those huts – what a headache it must have been for the teacher! I recall the efforts of the bus driver in getting us through Dandenong safely following cloudbursts in the area.

The reunion of October 22<sup>nd</sup> 1994 gave many an opportunity to catch up with some 'lost' friends. Good luck to the ex-students Association for the future.

### A BRIEF IN THE LIFE OF SERGIO LICIT

After leaving DHS, I started working 1962 at the CBC Bank in Dandenong. One condition of this employment was the continuation of studies in Accounting, Economics and English. This I did for approx. 1 year after which I realised I was neither a banker nor an accountant, so I left and found employment at International Harvester Co. in Costing Dept and Payroll.

In 1966 I left Australia to fulfill a dream of returning to Italy to visit family and reacquaint myself with Italian life. I stayed in Italy for approx. 10 months during which I visited most tourist centers in Italy, France, Switzerland and Belgium.

On return to Australia, penniless, I secured various jobs mainly in the accounts or clerical fields until a friend introduced me to K & L Thomas Hatchery. There I began my training into the Technical aspects of Poultry & Hatchery Production, followed by Sales and Technical Services to farmers and processing companies.

I remained with this company for approx. 10 years until its sale; the subsequent takeover forced me to leave for alternate employment within the Poultry Industry. Over the next 10 years I worked as Technical Services Manager, Planning and Sales Administrator, Vic Sales Manager until the break up of my first marriage encouraged me to look for overseas opportunities. In 1985 I was offered my first contract to work in Papua New Guinea at Ilimo Poultry Products 14 miles from Port Moresby. This was the start of a long and rewarding association with PNG and its people.

I remained at Ilimo for four and half years until the owners, Investment Corporation of PNG awarded the management contract to an International consortium run by Booker Tate and Lyle of the UK. I became dissatisfied with the direction and decision making of the Booker Management Group and eventually decided to return to Australia: this time to live in Brisbane – a much warmer & more conducive place to live than Melbourne. Within months I was again offered a position to live and work in PNG, a small but beautiful centre called Goroka in the Eastern Highlands of PNG working with abattoir, piggery and cattle production. After 2 years, personal problems of security forced me to return to Australia (Cairns) where my new wife Chrissie was working in the Hospitality Industry in Cairns. After 6 months beach-bumming, I secured a position of Operations Manager at Nuigini Tablebirds in Lae back in PNG. This position was one where the range of responsibilities allowed me to become multi-skilled in a range of management positions.

Once again after 3 years I was forced to return to Australia as a result of an attack on my person by local indigenous people resulting in hospitalisation in Brisbane. Over the next 5 years I worked for the University of Qld – Gatton Campus (in Poultry Dept), and as Farming Manager at Sunnybrand Chickens at Byron Bay.

In 2001 I received a call from an old friend from PNG days, asking me if I was interested in a job in Saudi Arabia. He had just secured himself a job there and was trying to recruit other poultry specialists to Al Watania Poultry, based at Buraydah, central Saudi Arabia. Curiosity got the better of me and so I accepted a 7-day trip with all expenses paid to look at this operation, followed by an interview for the position of Broiler Department Manager. I returned to Australia thinking I would be crazy to leave a secure job in God's own country of Northern Rivers – but curiosity and money finally convinced me to accept this position.

Since this place was very much an unknown quantity, it was decided that I would go it alone and my wife would remain in Brisbane to assist our daughter Cathy with children and keeping home fires burning. My contract was for 1 year renegotiable with 3 paid return trips back to Australia – and as Chrissie said " You can't get into too much trouble in the deserts of Saudi" so began a most interesting facet of my working life.

My job called for running the grow out of 175 million Broiler Chicks per annum (equivalent to the total annual NSW grow out ). I also became a member of several committees and technical groups charged with resolving all the company's technical, poultry, and other associated problems, and making recommendations to Sheik Ibrahim Al Rajhi and his brother Sheil Khalid.

During these 3 years I was sent to visit with companies in UK, Denmark, Holland, France and Italy as part of fact- finding missions for management and technical improvements to Al Watania Poultry.

I was promoted to Exec. Director for Sales and Production Planning, and charged with the responsibility of opening up opportunities for Halal killed chicken to be marketed in Europe.

In this position I formed an alliance with one of the best poultry operations in Italy, Amadori & Sons and made many trips to their operations in Cesena Italy. Another part of my job specification was to develop and open up markets in the GCC(Gulf States) and Middle East for value-added poultry and deli. style products.

This area was about to open up when a wave of terrorist attacks hit Riyadh targeting westerners. Bombings of western compounds was frequent; drive-by shootings of westerners was becoming common place, and even the taking of hostages and finally beheading them was unsettling the expat population to the point where one had to decide to stay and face the risks or leave. I decided to leave at the end of my third contract.

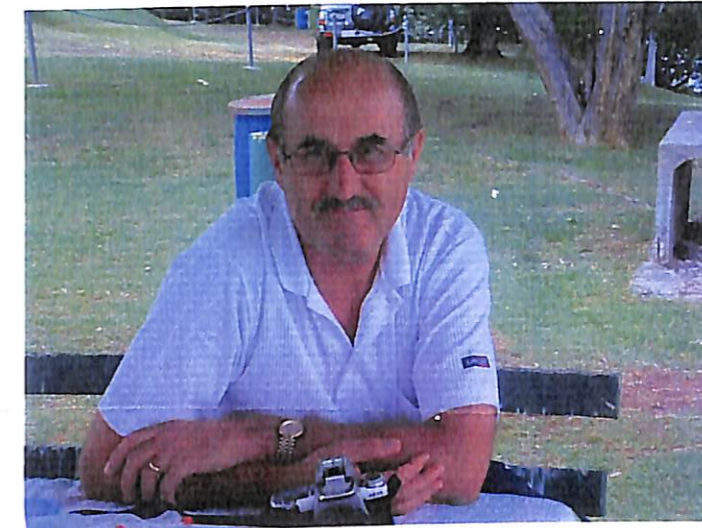
I returned to Australia where, to my dismay, my work background and expertise was not recognised and my age was an insurmountable barrier to employment. It was the age of youth, where most men over the age of 50 were either unemployed or retired. After almost 1 year of frustration, I had resolved to return to University to do a degree and was in the process of planning my next move when I received a call from Papua New Guinea. Tablebirds were looking for an experienced Operations Manager to resolve their processing problems and I was approached to once again return to PNG.

I left Australia in July on 2005 and took up this position, when I was informed that I would be appointed as Acting GM during the incumbents' vacation. Within weeks of this appointment I was informed that the incumbent GM would be removed and I was offered the position of GM at Tablebirds, a position which I still hold. The company had, back in 2003 gone through a hostile takeover bid, which resulted in it being placed into receivership, and all the previous administration removed and sent home. I took over the company at a difficult time, with many financial problems as well as staffing and administration difficulties.

As background, Tablebirds is a medium sized poultry growing and processing company which forms part of the Mainland holdings group of seven diverse divisions. Tablebirds is the largest of these with a turnover of approx \$150 Million per annum. It processes approx. 170,000 chickens per week solely for the PNG market.

It is quite a challenge managing Niugini Tablebirds and one that I relish. With the changes taking place here I envisage my stay will be for some years to come. My wife has decided to remain in Brisbane and commute and chalk up frequent flyer points with her overseas trips.

Until the next instalment.



Sergio Licit



**Dandenong High School Musical Productions**



Under the above heading, in this and future Newsletters, the History Section will, based on the archives held at the High School, present a series of articles covering Dandenong High School Musical Productions. Our records suggest that the following was the first major musical production by the School, whilst public performances by students had occurred; these were more in the nature of choral or instrumental and often were in competitions.

**Hansel and Gretel (Humperdinck)**  
Dandenong Town Hall  
Thursday 28<sup>th</sup> and Friday 29<sup>th</sup> June 1951

Under the inspired leadership of Miss L. Rofe (producer and musical directress), pupils and teachers, singers, actors, orchestra, choirs, electricians, scene-shifters, carpenters, and scene-painters co-operated enthusiastically to make the two performances a success.

In order not to disappoint the courageous young singers and actors who had volunteered to take part, Miss Rofe decided that there should be two complete casts of principals.

They were:	<i>Thursday</i>	<i>Friday</i>
Hansel	Janet Hartrup	Laurence Davis
Gretel	Rosemary McHenry	Mary Whiteside
Mother	Valerie Banks	Joan Loveland
Father	William Noblet	Michael Kinsella
Witch	Helen Tatterson	Anne Buckland
Dewman	Bruce Willmott	David McLean
Sandman	Graeme Jackson	Graeme Jackson

A compromise was made to overcome the technical singing difficulties by introducing spoken scenes; high praise was given to the talented young performers for the courage and skill with which they sustained their difficult singing and acting roles.

The organisers who strove to co-ordinate all the diverse parts which had to be assembled into a coherent whole, were: The organisers who strove to co-ordinate all the diverse parts which had to be assembled into a coherent whole, were: Mrs Nicholson who trained the dancers, Mr Alexander who coached the actors for the speaking parts, Miss Dawson and Mr Luke who trained the choirs and Mr McCubbin who trained and conducted the orchestra, Mrs Nicholson and Mrs Kelly who designed the costumes, Mr Randles the skilful stage carpenter, the senior art students who painted the scenery and Mr Carroll the electrician, stage manager and launcher of thunderbolts.

Elaine Fenn the pianist, supervising, directing and inspiring all, smiling and unruffled during the most nerve-racking periods of rehearsal, when all was confusion and it seemed that only by a miracle could a successful production be achieved.

Miss L. Rofe (producer and musical directress) in addition played the piano and the violin at both performances. Mr Barnes, the financial wizard, reported afterwards that this fine entertainment showed a net profit of £114(a new tractor cost £640!) for the school funds.

The bulk of the material for this article is taken from The Gate of 1951 which also included a 'grainy' photograph of the cast and production team.

### **DHSESA Office Bearers**

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- **Honorary Member**  
Philip Harris

#### **Membership of the Association**

Membership of the Association is taken to be for a calendar year, regardless of which month the payment is made. Some people choose the option to pay for 2 or 3 calendar years. If a new member joins in the last 3 or 4 months of the year, their membership is usually carried into the next year. These practices have been adopted to be in line with the rules of the Association and to create the least work for the committee.

**O.K. - LETS REMIND EVERYBODY THAT NEW MEMBERSHIPS ARE ENCOURAGED. NEWS IS ALWAYS WELCOME AND MEMORABILIA WILL BE PRESERVED IN OUR GROWING ARCHIVES**