



Summer 2010

Issue 49

DHSESA Newsletter

Festival founder Phyl Yates mourned.

(with thanks to the Greater Dandenong Weekly)

Phyllis 'Phyl' Yates, (Dawson) 1926-2010

PEOPLE throughout the region are mourning the death of Phyllis 'Phyl' Yates.

A member of the Dandenong Choral Society, she was unable to take part in the society's final concert on November 21 because of ill health and died at her home the next day. Ms Yates was born 1926 in Manangatang, North-West Victoria, and was one of five children. She moved to Dandenong in 1934.

After attending Dandenong West Primary School, Phyllis attended DHS along with her sisters Edna and Marion, and brother Noel. Together with her sister Edna (Vukmirovic) she was a founding Honorary Secretary, and remained so throughout the life of the Dandenong Festival of Music and Art for Youth. This period spanned 62 years.

Edna and Marion were also teachers at DHS, as was Phyllis' daughter, Chris Barattini.

For her tireless community work, Phyl was awarded a Medal of the Order of Australia and she was named as a 'Living Treasure' by the City of Greater Dandenong.

An outstanding family person, Phyllis had four children, 14 grandchildren and 11 great-grandchildren.

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From The Chair

Number 49



FROM THE CHAIR NO. 49

In 1997 the Association established the **Edna Dawson Vukmirovic Music Scholarship** in memory of a wonderful lady whose connection to the School as student, teacher, School Council Member and Ex-student Association Member amounted to a life-long commitment. She loved the School and became the longest serving staff member in its history.

The aim of the Scholarship is to encourage and support students in the general area of music and to foster their talents and broaden their musical experiences. To date more than twenty students have been the recipients of awards. The nature of the awards has varied according to the needs of the students and their areas of study. These have included vocal tuition, tuition in piano and flute, purchase of sheet music and music books, hire of instruments and master classes.

In September, the Committee received the welcome news that the Scholarship Fund would be boosted by \$15,000. The Fund became one of the financial beneficiaries of the winding up of the Dandenong Festival of Music and Art for Youth. The Festival retired last year after 62 years of magnificent service to the community. We thank the Festival Committee for the added support that can now be given to the music students of the School.

As a result of this windfall, it has also been possible to broaden the scope of the Scholarship. Two new awards will be presented to students at the Awards Night in December. One will be called the **Dandenong Festival Art Award** and the other will be called the **Dandenong Festival Drama Award**. We feel Edna would have been pleased to know that this legacy has been bequeathed to the service of the students and that the Dandenong Festival name will continue into the future.

News from the School has been mixed. On the positive side the four new house buildings are well on the way to being completed by the end of the year. However, the State budget did not deliver the expected funds for the next building stages. This was disappointing but the lobbying for continuing financial allocation has begun.

Then there are the departures of the Associate Principals. At the end of first term Jill Laughlin gained promotion as Principal of Camberwell High School and at the end of second term Barry Wiggs was also promoted to the position of Principal - of Cranbourne East Secondary Collage, a brand new school still under construction. The departure of two teachers of such calibre is an obvious loss to the School but it does reflect well on the growing esteem in which our beloved institution is held. Barry in particular will be missed by the Committee as he has valued and supported our efforts during his years at the School. We congratulate them and wish them well.

The Library has announced that it is making available to all students a valuable reference site called the **World Book Web**. This site can be accessed from school or home at no charge to families 365 days a year. This is the new education and a sign of the times.

Visitors to the School continue to come in large numbers. During one week in November fourteen Principals from the Netherlands and teams from two large country schools arrived to tour the new buildings and observe the style of education being delivered.

...From the Chair

Recruitment of new members has been an issue concerning the Committee for some time. We are well into an age when the nature of social interaction and belonging has changed. All volunteer organizations have seen a decline in membership and a reluctance for people to come forward and take positions of responsibility. We have recently been taking steps to meet this challenge by consulting and taking advice on a new, additional, form of membership. This could mean opening our own **Facebook** account to reach a far wider, younger readership and allow for a different form of ex-student interaction. The details of how this would work and mesh with our present system still have to be clarified.

In the meantime, existing members could do the Association a great service by recruiting one or two members each from their circles of families and friends. Passing on newsletters and information, as some members do, is not very helpful when this results in a reduction of numbers. Please everyone, make a serious effort to help in this matter.

Over the years former students of all ages have wanted to tell the stories of the cherished memories of their school-days. The common themes have been the joys of youth, the great times they had in the classrooms and the playing fields, the telling influence of certain teachers and the lasting friendships formed. The latter has been the most prominent theme.

An article about friendship recently published seemed to me to encapsulate the essence of much that had been expressed. To paraphrase and selectively quote: **If you are lucky enough to meet someone when you are young who seems like the perfect mate, cherish that friendship. If you work at it, a friendship that starts at school can become one of the most sustaining and constant forces in your life. When your parents die, for instance, your oldest friends not only console you but, in a very real sense, become your new family, the guardians of your memories; they hold the narrative threads of your life together.** Indeed.

Greta Jungwirth (de Vries)

President

DHS CAREERS TEAM REQUEST

It is proposed that a list of past students be developed who would be prepared to offer an hour of their time to come back to the School and talk to current students about their careers and the pathways they have taken to reach their current positions. The talks could take the traditional form of an exposition followed by a Q and A session, or a program called "speed careering". In the latter the guests are given 30 seconds to tell a small group of students about their chosen careers and after a discussion of 7 or 8 minutes a bell will ring and the groups of students will move to the next table in the room.

An ideal response would be for many people of different ages, experiences and occupations to volunteer to be on the list. If you are willing and able to offer your time in this way please contact our Secretary, Gary Matthews, by phone or email.

THE NEW TREASURER LEADS BY EXAMPLE

Russell Weber, the Association's new Treasurer, has set a great example, by hosting a reunion.

On the 1st November 2010, the Form of 1960 held a 50th anniversary get-together at the home of Russ & Deb Weber. Attendees included twenty-three classmates and four spouses. They came from Ormeau in Queensland (just north of Surfers Paradise), Adelaide, Launceston, Traralgon, Tooradin, Kaarimba (near Numurkah), Cowes, Horsham and various other places near Melbourne.

The day kicked off at 10am in bad weather, fined-up for a 1pm bbq lunch on the back deck and a most pleasant afternoon until stumps at about 6pm.



Jude A'Vard & Russ Weber
Liz Cox & Trish Gaston



Joan Alexander & Gael Thomsen
Leigh Ward & Graham Morden



Jenny Bright, Tim Rogers & Judy Meade



Russell Smith & Margaret Kirkham



STAINED GLASS WINDOW APPEAL:

REGISTER OF CONTRIBUTORS TO BE INCLUDED IN OUR HISTORY ARCHIVE:

Since the Appeal for our "Window into the Past and Future" was launched in the last edition of the Newsletter, we've had a most encouraging response. So far, we've received just over \$2000, so well done to those who have made that possible.

As the window will not be able to be installed until scheduled major internal refurbishment of the Langford building is complete, it's difficult to assess its final cost. But clearly, we've made a good start, and our best estimate is that we're nearly half-way. So, while we're well on the way, more support is needed for the appeal to reach its goal.

In recognition of the importance of this project and those who will have made it possible, a Register of Contributors is to be established, for inclusion in the School's history archive. If you would like your name included in the Register, there's obviously still time, and, in so doing, leave a tangible reminder that you were part of this wonderful addition to the front entrance of our old school.

FINAL GROUPS FROM THE 1960 REUNION



Jill Huxtable and Elaine Hone

Margaret Rogers & Anton Iseli

Peter Holloway



HOBART REUNION

THE EDITOR AND LORRAINE (VINCENT) RECENTLY VISITED TWO NOTABLE EX-STAFF MEMBERS, IN THE TASSY CAPITAL.

In December, we enjoyed another flying visit (literally) to Hobart—always enjoyable. Our quarries were John and Geraldine Menadue. John was music teacher, and Geraldine taught “domestic arts”, in the late 1950’s. They were easy to track down, just by attending the morning service on Sunday at the historic Scots Church in central Hobart, where John is organist and Choirmaster, and Geraldine is a choir leader. John maintains his music passion, by both performing and composing. His latest fugue is approaching fruition, and he entertained his two DHS visitors by sneaking in ‘Finlandia’ (Sibelius/David Clift—1957) during the offertory! Geraldine is also leaving a major cultural imprint in her native Tasmania, having presented dissertations upon some 23 of Shakespeare’s works to the Tasmanian Chapter of U3A over recent years.



With Geraldine as navigator, and John as chauffeur, we ‘motored’, (as one can still do in Tasmania) up to Geraldine’s birth village, historic Richmond. Her family’s cattle grazed on the pasture adjacent to the renowned heritage bridge.

NOTE: We are very pleased to report that they are both well, with well-established local families.

Regrettably, the Pastor of Scot’s Church, **Rosalind Terry**, an ex-student from the early 1960’s, was absent on leave. Rosalind made a significant contribution to the success of our recent 90th Anniversary celebration.

LAURIS ELMS AWARD

‘THE SENIOR’ journal, through its well-known columnist, Bob Horsfall, recently carried a story on ex-student **Lauris Elms**.

“Born in Springvale, Victoria, her first chance came with the National Theatre Opera Company in 1952, and by 1957-59 she was principal contralto at Covent Garden in London. Lauris toured Israel in 1958 for the 10th anniversary of the State of Israel. The same year, she married Graeme de Graaf, and they have one daughter.

Between 1960 and 1970, she did Lieder recitals with Musica Viva, and the ABC throughout Australia.

In 1965 Lauris sang with the Sutherland-Williamson Opera Company, and then the Australian Elizabethan Theatre Trust, and Australian Opera from 1966 to 1987.

Her list of achievements goes on and on, but our lovely lady of song retired in 1994, later releasing her story in book form, *The Singing Elms*.

Lauris was appointed an Officer of the Order of the British Empire (OBE) in 1974, awarded the Queen’s Jubilee Medal in 1977, and appointed a member of the Order of Australia (AM).

In 1988 the University of Sydney awarded her an honorary Doctorate of Music, and in 1995 she received the Rotary International Award for Vocal Excellence.

Lauris has made many records, so her vocal qualities will be heard for many years to come.

At last month’s (2010) Opera Green Room Awards, Lauris Elms won this year’s Lifetime Achievement Award.”



Lauris and Graeme at Government House when she received her Order of Australia.

EDITOR’S NOTE.

From (our autographed copy of) her autobiography referred to above, I take the following excerpt

“ At the end of 1944, in the Dandenong High School Speech Day Concert in the Dandenong Town Hall, I was chosen to sing the solo in *Land of Hope and Glory*. As I stood waiting on the curving stairs rising up to the stage from the dressing rooms below, one of the boys filing past smiled at me, and I recognised the son of one of my father’s Rotarian friends. He was **Graeme de Graaf**, who was to become the major influence and the love of my life”.

Their daughter, Deborah, is a clarinettist.



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.

SCHOOL BADGES

Available from our memorabilia collection, and can be purchased through the Association. Price is \$10, which includes postage within Australia.

- A. **Replica school badge;**
- B. **Stick pin;**
- C. **Special 90th Anniv. Badge.**

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WEBSITE

The web address is www.dhs-exstudents.synthasite.com A further option for finding us is to do a "google search", and simply type **dhs ex students** , ***without*** clicking Australian sites, and you will see our site at the top of the list.

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