



Autumn 2012

Issue 52

# DHSESA Newsletter

## Roll on reunions

Last year the 1960 matriculating class held their 50th anniversary, and we enthusiastically reported on the well-attended event.

It caused a follow-on, and recently the group pictured below, met again. They are:

Females L to R: Irene Jones (Gunn), Jennifer McKeown (Bright), Elaine Severino (Hone), Marie Harding (Thorkildsen), Daisy McAree (Arnold).

Males L to R: Roger Barlee, Russ Weber, (our Treasurer), Ross Weetman, Tim Rogers.

## INDEX

Reunion Repeat	1
From the Chair	2
Music Award	3
Anne Peereboom (Veldman)	4/5
Mentioned in Dispatches	6
Pam Oldmeadow (Saunders)	7
Margaret Holt (Davies)	8
Reunion Call	9



# From The Chair

## Number 52



### FROM THE CHAIR

The end of an era is approaching with the retirement of the Principal, Martin Culkin. He arrived at the School in 2000 after having led other metropolitan schools for ten years. Unsurprisingly, he has mixed feelings about his departure as there are parts of his work that he does not want to leave. As he has said: "I've had a charmed ride in my career with wonderful, experienced, highly supportive people. The highlight was the successful merger of three schools into one fabulous new school with high quality teachers and students."

He has overseen these changes with an eye to what is valuable and unique about the School. He has taken the traditions of the past and introduced them to the present so the students all feel part of the School and are encouraged to develop to their full potential. Martin's last day will be the 30th March and he is looking forward to having time to complete some projects, and to sailing his boat. Next term Associate Principal, Sue Ogden, will undertake the responsibilities of being the Acting Principal while the process of selecting a permanent head proceeds.

The Association extends its appreciation to Martin and our good wishes for a long and happy retirement. Members will have a final opportunity to hear Martin's reflections when he attends our Annual General Meeting at the end of April as guest speaker. Please make a special effort to be there.

\*\*\*\*\*

In 2008 the idea was mooted to mark both the 90th Anniversary of the School, and the merger of three schools, with the gift of a stained glass window placed above the front door of the original building, now named the Langford Building. This inspired suggestion was made by our Secretary, Gary Matthews. The commission was given to Ferguson Stained Glass, a family business that had historic connections to the School, with all three siblings attending DHS during the 1940s. A beautiful design was created by son and nephew, Andrew Ferguson, and a fund was established to augment the grant approved by the Department of Veterans' Affairs. There was a delay caused by the rebuilding program but we are delighted to learn the window has been completed and will be installed during the coming school holidays. Thank you to all the donors that made it possible.

Greta Jungwirth (de Vries)  
President

## EX STUDENTS' AWARD HITS THE RIGHT NOTE FOR KOKO

At its regular monthly meeting on 7 December, 2011, Committee members of the Ex Students' Association presented promising Year 9 music student, Koko Wu, with a new orchestra-standard flute. The flute has been given to Koko on a loan basis, for her exclusive use, while continuing to make good progress as a music student at DHS.

The award is part of a long running program, financed by the Ex-Students' Association, through the Edna Dawson Vukmirovic scholarship, which recognizes talented music students. The scope of the fund has been extended recently, as previously reported, to also include outstanding abilities in Drama and Art.



Pictured in the back row are: George Gill (DHS 1947-'51) Mrs Sally-Ann Dowman, Ass't Principal, Russ Weber (1955-'60) Phil Harris (Archives Officer)  
Front row: Greta Jungwirth (DHSESA President (nee deVries, 1957-'62) Koko Wu, Dawn Harris (nee Burhop, 1954-'57) Yvonne Neal, Flute Teacher

## MY MEMORIES OF DANDENONG HIGH SCHOOL

by Anna Pereboom (nee Veldman) (1960 – 1964)

Schooldays are reputed to be the happiest days of our lives but I have mixed feelings about mine. Of course, in retrospect they do look wonderful if only for the fact that we were young and just starting out on the road to adulthood.

I started at Dandenong High School on a very hot day in February 1960, just a month short of my 12<sup>th</sup> birthday. It all seemed a little overwhelming at first, such a large school with so many classrooms and pupils and being 'reduced' from a primary school 6<sup>th</sup> grader who made the rules in the playgrounds, to one of the babies of this establishment, did not boost my confidence much either, but I soon managed to settle in.

I was put in form 1F and our form teacher was Mrs. Windsor. It was an all girls form, much to the delight of our music teacher Miss Dawson who tried, with some measure of success, to turn us into a girls choir. We were even invited to perform at several functions in Dandenong, singing such classics as "The Ash Grove" and "Believe Me If All Those Endearing Young Charms". Songs that would make today's youth shudder in horror!

My best friend during that first year was Janice Fleming who was also my friend in primary school.

Discipline was strict and Monday mornings would commence with a general assembly in the quadrangle, where we would be addressed by headmaster Mr. Cooke and headmistress Miss Houston, who would remind us of the rules.

Our uniforms consisted of a navy blue pleated tunic, white shirt and school tie, navy jumper or blazer, grey stockings or socks, black shoes and navy beret in winter and a navy, red and white check dress and grey straw hat in summer. We were expected to wear hat or beret whenever we left the school grounds, but these would be immediately removed and stuffed in our schoolbags the minute we were convinced there wasn't a prefect in sight who could reprimand us or report us to a teacher.

Make-up, nail polish and jewellery, with the exception of a wrist watch, were not permitted. Hair must be cut short or tied back in a pony tail or pig tails if it touched or hung over the collar of the school blazer. These rules were enforced by Miss Houston who could often be found prowling the grounds, armed with a bottle of nail-polish remover and rubber hair bands. Our sports uniforms, which consisted of a red tunic, white blouse and red bloomers, were compulsory for all sporting activities and physical education. The skirt length of the tunic was of great importance and we would be required by Miss Houston to kneel on the floor as she would measure the distance from hem to floor. Woe betide any girl whose skirt was too short!

I was an average pupil who liked to stay out of sight and attention of the teachers as much as possible. As a result of these tactics the teachers remarks in my report books usually started with "Anna is a hardworking and conscientious pupil but would do better if she took a more active part in class discussions". I sailed through form 1 achieving good marks with the minimum of effort and, to my own amazement, even managed to come top of all the first forms in English with 89% in the first of the half yearly exams.

Continued on following page.



Anna in summer uniform in 1962

The following year I was in form 2C with form teacher Mrs. Howie. My friends were Margaret Bongers and a girl who had just come out from Holland called Nel Spruitenburgh. Nel was 2 years older than us but as her knowledge of the English language was not sufficient, she was put back two grades. I liked my teachers and enjoyed most subjects with the exception of Physical Education and Cookery.

I was never much good at gymnastics and at the tender age of 13, I was not in the least inclined towards domestic science.

Every Monday morning we would don our white aprons and starched caps, which we had sewed and diligently embroidered with our names and initials in Form 1, and head for the cookery classroom dominated by Miss Pedersen. Nothing I made turned out as it should. My stews were watery and my blanc mange would never set and remained obstinately in its liquid form. And to make matters worse we were expected to eat our own concoctions.

1962 found me in form 3C headed by Mr. Jolly. Nel was still my best friend and together with Kathy Wilkinson and Pauline Lennox we would sit somewhere at the back of the classroom, trying to be as unobtrusive as possible, and eat the sweets we had bought in the tuck-shop.

By now we were no longer regarded as juniors and a marked change began to take place in teacher/pupil relationships. The pupils became more outspoken and some downright disrespectful and some of the teachers began to lose control. Our poor music teacher, Mr. Menadue, would turn red with frustration as he tried in vain to coax teenage boys, who either could not or would not, sing, with their croaky voices.

Our maths teacher, after issuing several warnings of what would happen to those who would not be quiet and listen, would threaten "I will throw this inkwell at that boy if he does not stop talking" or "I will throw you out of the window". One young English teacher was subject to the humiliation of having her measurements taken by a boy who suddenly appeared at the front of the classroom brandishing a tape measure.

Once a teacher's back was turned all hell would break loose, with dusters and paper aeroplanes flying around the classroom, and a group of boys had brought a bottle to school filled with what looked like booze but was probably cold tea and this would be passed around among them. One of the French teachers just gave up and would walk out of the classroom, leaving us to our own devices.

In form 4, with form teacher Mrs. O'Loughlin, we were deeply shocked by the untimely and sudden death of our classmate Helen Belousow. Strong rumor had it that she had been driving the car of one of the teachers, who had a relationship with her older sister, and that she had been involved in a fatal crash. She was a lovely girl of Russian origin and we all missed her, but none as much as her best friend Anna Haverkamp who, like the rest of us, heard the news when she arrived at school on that particular morning.

That same year my best friend Nel left school but I decided to go on to form 5, not because I liked school and studying all that much but the thought of starting work had even less appeal than another year at school for me.

So in 1964 I started my last year at DHS in form 5D with Mrs. Vukmirovic as our form teacher. Most of us were now 16 or 17 years of age and more focused on achieving good results than we had been in previous years. I don't recall any remarkable incidents from that year. I passed all my exams and in December I left Dandenong High School. To celebrate the occasion I burned my ridiculous straw hat in the furnace of the hot water boiler at the back of our house.

Anna and her family had migrated from Holland in 1952, settling in Bruce St Dandenong. On leaving DHS, Anna had jobs in Banks, and Finance companies, both in Melbourne and Dandenong, before the family returned to Holland in 1971. Anna is married with one adult daughter, lives in Emmen, in the north east corner of Holland, and takes annual holidays in Crete. Ed.



## Mentioned in Despatches...

Secretary, Gary Matthews, met Harold (Horrie) Heathcote (1936 - 1938) in Berwick recently. Horrie will be remembered by many as a long time senior staff member at the State Savings Bank in Dandenong, and as an accomplished cricketer in the local competition, having learnt the craft in the company of others such as Dave Morris and Jim Reid at DHS. Horrie used to make the journey from Yannathan by train each day, travelling in the one-passenger carriage attached to the rear of the coal train.

[www.dhs-exstudents.synthasite.com](http://www.dhs-exstudents.synthasite.com)

It is probably true to say that many of us, although possibly retired, still have a fulsome day, with necessities & things to do that occupy most of our waking hours.

I must say that I fall into that category & never seem to get to do those items of intent.

It certainly happened with my intent to visit & fully explore the DHS-ESA website, to which I'd only paid an occasional & cursory visit; until the other day, I logged in to the site (detailed above) & was absolutely enthralled with the information & manner in which it is carefully & meticulously prepared & presented & monitored by our hard working Sec. Gary Matthews, who is to be commended for its excellence & presentation.

I recommend that you pay it a visit. You will not be disappointed.

George Gill. DHS-ESA  
Committee Member

*Caught up with Joan Stephenson (Gowland) recently, who with husband Arthur, attended DHS in the 1940's. Joan donated her badge and a pin to the archives. Arthur remembers travelling to school with Ken Grenda from Springvale. Ken has recently made headlines for his overwhelmingly generous treatment of his staff upon selling Grenda Transit, which was started by his father in 1945. He bestowed \$15 million in bonuses on his faithful workforce.*

If you would like to receive the Newsletter by email, please notify the Secretary, as we are considering this option. Also for those over 80 years, there are no annual fees. Please advise.

Chatting with Darryl Rayner recently, to learn that as well as he and his siblings, Carol, Denise and Andrea attending DHS, their mother May (Mary) Stein, also attended, with great academic success, as a contemporary of Ken Griffiths

Our last newsletter's featured person, Jennifer Bantow (Cummings) OAM is returning to Dandenong on June 16th as Guest Speaker at the Annual Meeting of the Dandenong Historical Society. Honoured for her National Trust work, Jennifer is a most appropriate choice.

'Our Gary' Matthews, again snared a group of ex-students, this time in a local doctor's surgery waiting room. Chatting with Beryl Riddell (Dawson) - 1936, 1937, the adjacent patient chimed in to say that she was Marlene Coates (Lawless) 1949-1952, which then prompted Joanna Nicolaas (1962-1964) to add her DHS credentials. Gary regrets that the great old chat only broke up when the doctor 'rudely' interrupted.

P.S. Gary has just undergone serious surgery, but is home and recovering well. We all wish him well.

### FROM THE SCHOOL

The big news is that the Principal, Martin Kulkin has announced his retirement. We will provide a comprehensive cover story in the next edition.

Former Principal, Russell Williams passed away recently. He retired from DHS in 1986, and lived locally at Upper Beaconsfield. He had previously been the Principal at Pakenham High School for 8 years.

## PAM OLDMEADOW ( SAUNDERS)

*Pam, who died in 2011, lived in Dandenong all her life.*

As a child, her family had a mixed-use farmlet in South Dandenong. Pam attended Dandenong East Primary No. 1403, then attended DHS in the late 1930's and 1940's.

After leaving DHS, Pam worked locally, until she married another local, Max Oldmeadow in 1948. Max was also an ex-student, who later became a respected teacher. Their three boys, Ian, Graeme and Russell, all attended.

Later, Pam supported Max through political terms in Local Government and as a member of the Whitlam Federal Government.

After the boys became independent, Pam worked at Oldmeadow (Court) Booksellers, but along her life journey, Pam had many community commitments, particularly within her beloved church.



The Editor is indebted to the Gipps-Land Gate for the data for this obituary and the photograph.

In addition, I am pleased to report that Max has just seen his book on the Oldmeadow-Saunders families come to fruition.

## THE STORY OF MARGARET HOLT (nee DAVIES)

**50 years! Where to start?** After 4 years at Monash, and three and a half years with the Victorian Education Department at Geelong and Dandenong, I took off for the Far East (Near North?) and Hong Kong, where I was teaching about three years before marrying (a Brit.) and leaving for London (a few days later).

After about a year in the UK, I moved to Cyprus as a teacher with the British Council, working mainly in Turkish Girls' Lycee in Nicosia. During these two years I made frequent trips to Oman, where my husband was working, as well as to Sharjah, Dubai, Abu Dhabi, Lebanon, Turkey etc. Our end-of-contracts treat to ourselves—a few weeks luxury in Iran—ended up with us being stranded, with almost no money for two months, after the last lot of Greek/Turkey troubles broke out in Cyprus in 1974/75. My apartment in Nicosia, overlooking the 'Green Line' between the two communities was taken over by the Greek National Guard and used as a firing point, and my car (which I collected nearly a year later) had bullet entry holes, but no exit holes! The overland journey from Shiraz in summer clothes back to London in winter was pretty memorable, and I can still remember the fights between the refugee Greeks and Turks from Cyprus in the corridors of the Orient Express. (Don't believe the films, it was actually little more than cattle wagons, with no food car, toilets inoperable within half an hour of leaving Istanbul, etc, etc. (Zagreb station facilities will forever have a glow of 'paradise' around them for me). Next stop: Dusseldorf. Another two years passed, during which time I taught at a British Military secondary school and produced a son (now based in Cairns). We moved back to London briefly, and then on to Sussex.

After about 10 years bringing up a son, plus a divorce, I returned to History and English teaching in London. I then did the specialist Diploma for teaching English as a Second Language, following which I had the most enjoyable 12 years or so in my entire teaching career, working in a variety of London schools with high populations of refugees.

Ten years ago I was given the unexpected opportunity of early retirement (in UK) which I took and promptly moved to Prague with a Czech-speaking German friend, where I lived for the next 5 years, teaching in a small, private, Russian secondary school. My German is definitely better than my Czech, but I can still manage 'Dobry den Ursula. Jak se mate?' My shopping and menu-Czech is OK though. Since returning to London 4 or 5 years ago, I have done a lot of travelling—back to Melbourne for a month or so every year plus NZ, HK, Thailand, Singapore, all more than once. I am spending a lot of time in Prague and Berlin too, and the Channel Tunnel makes it easy to flit across to Paris.

To supplement my meagre pension income, I provide mini-English courses to Foreign Language students, providing a package of lessons, food, accommodation and accompanied tours into the centre of London. My students are mostly Russian, German or Austrian, and no, I don't speak more than a dozen words or so of Russian. I also have occasional B&B customers, who are happy to put their feet up in a real home and have the advantage of a knowledgeable tourist guide: me!

All in all I've been pretty lucky.

PS The Editor is currently reading a novel about the Cyprus troubles, called 'A Watermelon, a Fish and a Bible' by Christy Lefteri. It transitions between characters in London and on Cyprus.

## PROPOSED REUNION CALL FROM GEORGE GILL

1947/52 DHS Students.

Do you realise it's the 60<sup>th</sup> anniversary this year since our group left the old school. Although it's early days at this stage, we believe it's essential & would be absolutely great to have another celebratory reunion, as we have done previously, to enjoy & celebrate each 10 year occasion in the company of old friends, as we may not be in a fit condition to do the 70th. ?? So let's do it now, whilst we're reasonably able. At this point we're tentatively looking at a light luncheon at the school, probably on Fri. 16th. Nov. or possibly Fri. 23rd. Nov. 2012, but these dates may change to fit in with the school program. We'll advise further when a firm date & time is established. The Ex-students Assoc. now has a specific room allocated on the 1<sup>st</sup> floor of the old school, which houses all the old memorabilia etc. for viewing, where we'll likely have the lunch. Arrangements will also be put in place for us to have a conducted tour of the new school buildings & this will really make you gasp in wonderment, in comparison to what we endured; particularly in relation to the old dilapidated Army 'Nissan' huts adjacent to the rat infested tip. We encourage you to get in touch with all your old DHS friends of this era to tell them about the proposed event to attend & would appreciate contact from you to indicate your intention to attend & advise us of names & addresses of those with whom we've lost contact. For contact details; your self-appointed committee for the event is as follows;- Don & Margaret (Bedwell) Turner Ph. 9791.6550 email:- [donandmargt@gmail.com](mailto:donandmargt@gmail.com) Marj. (Harvey) Lampard Ph. 9560.3050. George & Elaine (Waters) Gill Ph. 9802.7876.  
Email - [george.gill@bigpond.com](mailto:george.gill@bigpond.com)

## EVEN MORE REUNION NEWS

It will be observed that we are very enthusiastic about reunions, and our next Newsletter will carry a comprehensive report of the reunion of the matriculating class of 1986, which was attended by our Assistant Editor.



### 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.

### DHSESA Office Bearers

- President  
Greta Jungwirth
- Secretary — I. T.  
Gary Matthews
- Treasurer  
Russell Weber
- Historian/Ordinary Member  
Dawn Harris
- School Liaison Officer  
Sally Ann Dowman
- Membership Co-ordinator  
Gail Saddler
- Newsletter Editor  
Don Metcalfe - 0418 343 995/03 9704 7938  
valuerdm@bigpond.net.au
- Assistant Editor  
Wendy Metcalfe
- Committee:  
George Gill.  
Gail Saddler  
Ruby Constable
- Honorary Member  
Philip Harris
- Regional Liaison Officer  
Gary Matthews—5941 2507

### Mailing Address

P.O Box 383  
Dandenong 3175

### WEBSITE

The web address is [www.dhs-exstudents.synthasite.com](http://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.

For further information, contact Gary Matthews by email at [gazz-cazz@hotmail.com](mailto:gazz-cazz@hotmail.com) or phone him on 5941 2507