



DHSESA Newsletter

Winter

2012

Issue 53

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MARTIN

CULKIN

RETIRES



ALSO

THE PRESIDENT IS HONOURED, and

'THE WINDOW' BECOMES A REALITY



From The Chair

Number 53

After all the waiting and eager anticipation, it can now be reported that the stained glass window has been installed. While on paper the design was admired and considered suitable for the old building, the reality is so much better. We think it is perfect. Andrew Ferguson has to be thanked for the extra-ordinary time and effort he gave to the project. Many months were spent drafting possible designs and making adjustments until all the requirements were met and a thing of beauty was created.

After the School's ANZAC Assemblies on 27 April, a small group of Committee Members and teachers was joined by the twenty student leaders to officially unveil the window. Since then it has been praised by all who pass through the entrance to the School. Thank you again to everyone who made it possible.

This year's Annual General Meeting was well attended with some added features making it a memorable occasion. Retiring Principal, Martin Culkin, related the highlights of his teaching career and concluded with his realization that DHS was a very special place and he felt fortunate to have been its custodian for more than a decade.

Unbeknown to me, the Committee had prepared a presentation of an Honorary Life Membership and Martin was invited to award the certificate to me at the conclusion of his address. I thank my fellow Committee Members for that pleasant surprise. Their broad smiles at the time contained an element of triumph at managing the whole thing without me having an inkling of what was in store.

An announcement was made this week that a new Principal has been appointed. Susan Ogden has taught at DHS for twenty-three years, has been Associate Principal for the last two years, has been Acting Principal this term and now is the first woman Principal in the history of the School. The importance of having an "insider" chosen at this stage of its transition, rather than a stranger to the ethos and traditions of the place, cannot be overstated. We congratulate Susan and wish her well with the challenges ahead.

Greta Jungwirth (de vries) President

PRESIDENT HONOURED

At the recent Annual Meeting, the just-retired Principal, Martin Culkin, was on hand to present an Honorary Life Membership to our President, Greta.

The Certificate, with citation, is set out the opposite page.



This is to certify that

GRETA JUNGWIRTH

is awarded an
Honorary Life Membership
to

**DANDENONG HIGH SCHOOL
EX-STUDENTS' ASSOCIATION**

on
April 28th 2012

In recognition of her leadership role in the re-establishment of the Association, which she continues to nurture, whilst actively promoting its enduring relevance within the School community.

Ex-Students



Association

J. Matthews

Secretary

*MARTIN CULKIN SPEAKS
UPON HIS RETIREMENT*

(Report by Association Secretary, Gary Matthews)

At our recent Annual Meeting, in introducing Martin Culkin, Greta observed that, just as Mr Percy Langford had laid the groundwork that had stood the School in such good stead for the decades to follow, she felt confident that the Martin Culkin era will have a similar enduring affect on the ethos of the school.

Mr Culkin, who is well known to many of us, as our very recently retired Principal, began his short address by outlining the history of schools he had been involved with before coming to Dandenong at the beginning of 2000. He recalls that the key reasons for applying for the DHS position was the high standards it sets itself, and what he saw as its strong potential to grow.

There were, of course the obvious things, such as photos in the hall, wearing of uniform, flags at the masthead, and the obvious punctuality by both students and staff. However, there was also the less obvious; the traditions, the ANZAC assembly, the badge assembly, the school song, the Ex-Students Association, the pride. Many of these were unknown at previous schools.

As time went by however, it became obvious that some key structures would need to be seriously addressed, particularly in the curriculum area, if, not only Dandenong, but other smaller neighbouring schools were to stay relevant to the needs of a changing world. Population growth predictions indicated that much needed to be done, if the expected increased number of young people was to grow up with a wider and richer educational experience; while still preserving that strong sense of tradition that so characterise DHS.

Fast forward six or seven years, still more needs to be done, but we now have the enrolment numbers, the staff and most importantly, the depth of curriculum, to equip our young people to meet the challenges, and earn their right to a fair go in society. Martin strongly believes his twelve 'marvellous' years at DHS were the richest experience of his career, and he is convinced that the School will go on to greater things.

In closing Martin expressed his admiration for the work of so many volunteers in the School, whom he regards as the salt of the earth. He added that he enjoyed his time at DHS immensely, and will always feel very privileged to have been here.

Editors Note: Martin observed to those gathered at the Annual Meeting a quotation which ended the article from 'The Sunday Age', which is summarised on the following page. "Probably my most lasting memory is the parade of year 12 kids leaving the gymnasium (last year). A couple of kids said to me, 'Thanks for having me'. I thought, 'My god, I just could not top that comment'."

Continued on following page.

FROM THE ANNUAL MEETING

In opening the Annual Meeting, the President, Greta Jungwirth (de vries), extended a welcome to all, making special mention of ex-student, Jessica Farrands, nee Ferguson. Jessica, who was Head Prefect 1938, married the 1937 Head Prefect, John Farrands AO dec., and is the aunt of Andrew Ferguson, who designed the iconic stained glass window, commissioned by the Association. This was recently installed in the School's main entrance foyer, and a photograph lights up the front page of this newsletter.



Jessica shares a photograph with the Association Secretary, Gary Matthews.

The 'Gippsland-Gate', the journal of the Dandenong Historical Society, recently carried the memories of ex-student **Rod Tharle**. Rod reiterated that the gates at DHS were donated by Cr. Walter Bradley Tharle in 1930, who was Rod's father's uncle. He dinked his mate, **Eric Sangwell**, and shot rats in the tip opposite, which is now the John Hemmings Memorial Park.

The Editor, attending his Granddaughter's school last week, was met at the gate by the Principal, ex-student, **Stuart Daley**, whose mother was a teacher, **Alice Daley** in the 1950s and 1960's. Also on the staff of this school is ex-student **Susan Ware**, whose mother, ex-student **Christine**, was a City of Dandenong Councillor.

Judith Eckstein, former teacher, has recently passed away. Her wake, which she had requested, was attended by many ex-students. Tributes were paid to her wit (sharp and quick), her breadth of intellect, her quiet involvement in many community projects, such as the Ex-Students' Association and the Dandenong Festival of Music and Art for Youth. The Dunera Association, in a tribute in 'The Age', described Judith as "A special and active Dunera mother, sadly missed by the Association". Judith's husband, Eric, was a Dunera Boy. Judith was a strongly-principalled woman, never afraid to confront an issue. **Lorraine Metcalfe (Vincent)**, remembers that Judith could even make Ridout a bit of fun. Her sons, **David** and **Nicholas** also attended the school.

...MARTIN CULKIN RETIRES

'The Sunday Age', on April 1st 2012, published a mammoth article on the school, written by Amanda Dunn, and of Martin it said that he had undertaken a "...herculean effort to amalgamate 3 schools in Melbourne's south-east. Over the weeks that *The Sunday Age* spent at the school, sitting in on classes and speaking with students, and teachers, the consensus seems to be that it has been a great success".

Student Profile:

"About 80% of the students speak a language other than English at home. A third of the students are refugees, mostly from Afghanistan, Sri Lanka, Cambodia, and, increasingly, Africa. Many have had interrupted schooling or no schooling at all; some arrive not only unable to speak a word of English, or are completely illiterate.

Dandenong is culturally rich but one of the most disadvantaged areas in Melbourne. Almost 90% of families at the school receive the Education Maintenance Allowance, which means at least one parent is a health-care card holder. Some cannot afford the uniform or textbooks, and the school helps with all these things."

The Task:

"With \$45 million redevelopment to oversee, Culkin's job was to create a new school that would offset those complex layers of disadvantage, while merging 3 schools—one of which was initially reluctant to come on board—into one unified, high-functioning school. To say that it was a big project is an understatement".

"With more than 2000 students and 182 teachers, the story of the new Dandenong High is still being written. But the early signs are that at this huge school in Melbourne's outer south-east, which has built schools within schools and turned traditional ideas of classroom teaching on their heads is starting to fulfil Culkin's idea of a "transformative" change and, in doing so, give its students a brighter future than they otherwise might have had."

The Method:

After a study tour of the United States, Britain and New Zealand, "...it was decided that there should be seven "houses" that would each have about 300 students, 25 teachers and function as a quasi-independent school. Within these houses children are mostly taught in classes of 50 with 3 teachers, so that they come together as a large class, and then break off into smaller groups for particular exercises."

Outcomes:

"Perceptions within the community are different now, too — where he might have had a single application for a teaching position seven or eight years ago, he now receives about 60."



The then acting Principal, Sue Ogden, with acting Associate Principal, Mark Gow, represented the leadership team at the Anzac Day Ceremony.

Sue has been at the school for 23 years, and Mark for approx. 24 years!

ANZAC DAY ASSEMBLY 2012

Committee Members, including Don Metcalfe, (The Editor) and Secretary Gary Matthews, Dawn Harris (Burhop), her husband Philip, together with Lorraine Metcalfe (Vincent) and Gary's wife Carole, were able to attend the Junior School assembly to commemorate Anzac Day, at which our President was a speaker.



Philip Harris, President Greta Jungwirth (de vries) and Guest Speaker John Wells OAM.

JOHN WELLS OAM

John is known to, and his work is admired by the Editor, as a former local primary school Principal, and I am indebted to Elise Miller of 'The Greater Dandenong Weekly' for the following background:

John was raised in Longwarry, and enjoyed a teaching career in excess of 30 years, retiring as a Principal around 2000.

A war veteran and a member of the 108 Field Battery Vietnam Association for over 40 years, John served as Secretary of the Dandenong branch of the RSL from 2000—2005, during which time he found the iconic helicopter which adorns the Dandenong RSL headquarters, and brought it from America.

John is also a prolific author, with 14 books to his credit by 2010, two of which are in the library of Lorraine Metcalfe (Vincent), and relate to the history of Gippsland. They are 'Gippsland — people, a place and their past', and 'More Colourful Tales of Old Gippsland'.

However, the most exciting thing John shared with us at the Anzac Day commemoration service, was that his mother, Muriel Harris, attended DHS.

A parent's love...

Last year, the 'Yarra Ranges Weekly' carried a story titled "New Zest for Life", about the joy arising from organ transplants.

Among the stories was that of ex-student from 1954-1959, John Leah. In the eyes of John's contemporary, ex-student, Lorraine Metcalfe (Vincent), who penned this story, John became a proud and noble man. He gave one of his kidneys to his daughter, Martine. Martine had been on peritoneal dialysis for a number of years. A successful kidney transplant would mean the end of a demanding, but life-saving, regime.

And it was successful. John and Martine both recovered well from their surgery. Martine is now leading an active life, attending gym, working, and being fully involved in the activities of her son. We know (from visiting), that John really didn't stop working - he had his lap-top in hospital with him, in spite of doctor's orders! What a difference an organ donation can make.

Visit - www.donatelife.gov.au, or the Organ Donor Register
1800 777 203)

NEW PRINCIPAL ANNOUNCED



**THE NEW PRINCIPAL, SUSAN OGDEN, WITH HER PREDECESSOR,
MARTIN CULKIN.
(COMPLETE STORY NEXT ISSUE!)**

UPDATED REUNION CALL FROM GEORGE GILL

1947/52 DHS Students.
60th. Anniversary. 27th. Oct. 2012.

As advised in a previous edition of this Newsletter, we will be having our 60th. Anniversary Reunion this year.

A firm date of Sat. 27th. Oct. 2012 has now been established for it to be held at the school, commencing at 11am with a light luncheon around 12 noon & a tour of the new school buildings to follow, which will no doubt amaze you, if you haven't already seen them.

In order that we can cater appropriately for those attending, please advise other former students & staff and friends of this era to contact any one of the 3 following 'Oldies Group' to indicate theirs &/or your intention to attend.

George & Elaine (Waters) Gill. (03) 9802.7876 or email george.gill@bigpond.com

Don & Margaret (Bedwell) Turner (03) 9791.6550 or email donandmargt@gmail.com

Marj. (Harvey) & Keith Lampard (03)9791.6550 or email kemarl@bigpond.com .

"Don't put it off to another day & forget it, make the contact now & mark your diary accordingly"

Oath Of Allegiance

I love God and My Country
I honour the Flag
I will Serve the Queen
And cheerfully obey
My Parents, Teachers and the Law

Our Archive Section has been searching the Archives to try and establish:
When did Dandenong High School cease to recite the Oath at Assembly?
Which year?

If you know please contact our Historian Dawn Harris
9787 5136
Thank You



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**
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Wendy Metcalfe
- **Committee:**
George Gill.

Ruby Constable
- **Honorary Member**
Philip Harris
- **Regional Liaison Officer**
Gary Matthews—5941 2507

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WEBSITE/INTERNET

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.

For further information, contact Gary Matthews by email at gazzcazz@hotmail.com or phone him on 5941 2507

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.