



Winter 2004

Issue 32

DHSESA Newsletter

TWO GEMS CELEBRATE THEIR 80TH BIRTHDAYS. WHAT A VINTAGE !

MARION TRIGG (DAWSON)

A merry Marion led a vast number of her family and friends aboard a Docklands cruise on a recent balmy evening. An exceedingly good time was had by all.



MAX OLDMEADOW

With wife Pam (Saunders), family and friends celebrated at the home of Carmen Powell (Cruickshank) and her husband Bob.



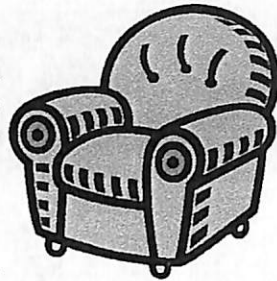
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From The Chair

We have reached another milestone this year. Dandenong High School is 85 years old. Since this not a full decade or a special part of a century, a huge anniversary is not being planned. However, both the School and the Association would like to mark the occasion in some way. An Expo of student work, and archival displays, have been suggested and may go ahead later in the year or early next year. Unlike most other anniversaries, it is felt that this time it would be good for past and present students and teachers to interact and celebrate together. To this end a History Week has been proposed where ex-students and teachers of various eras would join classes and talk to students about the School of their time. This can only be done if sufficient people volunteer.



I urge you to offer your support and be part of the program for all, or part of, a day. You could also recruit family and friends who attended the school to take part. Let Don or myself know if you are willing and able.

At the last meeting of the Edna Dawson Vukmirovic Music Scholarship Panel, members were given the good news that a goal, set at the first meeting in 1997, has been achieved. The sum of \$10,000 has been reached through donations and fund-raising efforts. This is to be used as the principal from which interest can be drawn to finance the scholarship. This will be sufficient to pay for one or two terms of music tuition. The next goal will be to be able to pay for a whole year's tuition. This has been done on occasion with the help of large individual donations and subsidies from Association monies.

The main fund-raiser is the Faber Quisque Fortunae Address. This year we have the exciting prospect of a concert at the Victorian College of the Arts in Melbourne. Robert Schubert has offered a musical program to be performed by his students at the College. Details will appear in a separate leaflet and booking form. Please come along and enjoy this wonderful opportunity.

For about ten years now the archives of the School have been collected, sorted and stored by members of the History Unit. This small band of dedicated volunteers has worked under the direction of our Historian, Dawn Harris (Burhop). Last year the School provided essential new storage space in one of the classrooms. Here, items of uniform, photo albums, school records, certificates, report books, correspondence, copies of "The Gate", student work, and articles about the School, its students and teachers, are kept.

Of great interest are copies of memoirs written by ex-students and teachers. These have been published in abbreviated form in the newsletter from time to time. Indeed, this edition contains an account of what Stewart Jones remembers of his time at DHS. You are all encouraged to put pen to paper (or head for your PC) and send us stories of your time at our school. If enough material is received it could become a special anniversary publication.

Greta Jungwirth (de Vries)
President.

SIKH CEREMONY FOR HENRI

(By our on the spot reporter, President Greta)

While interracial marriages are not uncommon, for one of our ex-students to marry in a Sikh Temple is somewhat unusual. Henri Licht (former student at DHS in 1959—61 and sometime contributor to our newsletter) married Abdesch Gill in the Blackburn Temple in February. They met through Abdesch's niece in Glenhuntly. While a number of cultural bridges had to be crossed, they knew instinctively they were right for one another.

Abdesch hails from Singapore, though her grandparents and father come from the Punjab in India. Sikhism grew out of Hinduism and through the intercession of nine revered gurus, adopted a single deity and rejected the caste system. The turban was introduced to keep long hair in place.



Henri dressed in the fashion of a Sikh bridegroom, and Abdesch followed the Sikh tradition of henna drawing on hands and feet. Sikhs take weddings very seriously and many family and friends came from overseas and interstate to attend. DHS was further represented by Terry Tovey and his wife, Greta Jungwirth (de Vries) and her husband, and our dear teacher, Greg O'Loughlin. The clothes, food and incantations were colourful and expressive. It was a joyous day.

Our best wishes to Henri and Abdesch for a long and happy union.

Mentioned in Despatches

GWEN JARVIS (McFEE) who attended DHS between 1935 and 1938. Gwen has been the Mayoress of the City of Dandenong, and is also honoured in the Pioneer Women's Hall of Fame at Alice Springs. Gwen's sister Sylvia also attended the school, and Gwen's 4 daughters.

Future Principal?

Leadership potential has seen Dandenong High School assistant principal Barry Wiggs awarded a valuable scholarship by the Education Department. Mr Wiggs, 47, was one of a handful of teachers selected from across the state for assistance to complete a Master's degree in school leadership. Mr Wiggs will do the course over two years through Monash University. The Education Department will contribute \$6000 towards the \$11,500 program.

DEATH OF BARRY SIMON

"A politician of rare integrity..." Thus described in his recent obituary in 'The Age', which went on to observe "... the esteem in which he was held in politics was made clear at his memorial service when Labor opponents paid tribute to him". A Dandenong boy, as well as being a Federal politician, he was the first Mayor of the City of Berwick, with a great interest in the politics of green wedges. He was also a teacher. The paper concludes that "... he is mourned by his sons Paul, Michael and John and their mother Ruth, his former wife but his best friend".

The Editor turned back the clock (some 45 years) by casually attending football training recently at Taoradin which used to be part of the south west Gippsland Football League. In a yarn over the boundary fence, he engaged in conversation with GRAEME BELL who attended for 1 year in the 1950's and who was generous in his praise of Max Old-meadow, who helped Graeme adjust from his Dandenong Tech transfer. Incidentally, Max has just been honoured during Adult Learners Week for his 8 years with U3A.

A mini reunion was held very recently when a group of late 1950's students got together at the home of Ron Gordon. Others present were Graham Pettigrove and his wife Gay (Keam), Gail Saddler (Jenkins), John King, Jim Young and Don and Lorraine Metcalfe (Vincent). The Pettigroves are now located on the south coast of NSW.

Robert and Jennifer Waterhouse

Ex-student Rob. Waterhouse and his wife Jennifer have recently taken off to far north Queensland, owning and operating the Mt. Carbine Caravan Park.

Rob's sister Ruby is the Honorary Treasurer of our Association, and she visited them very recently.

Excerpts from some recent family emails -

"At Easter time standing at the top of the caravan park looking across the Mitchell River you can see a snake of flickering lights from all the campsites along the river.

Our neighbour three doors away had an unusual wake up call—just imagine a loud crash, something charging around smashing everything in the house then the bed being tossed around like a cork (and hanging on like grim death). It turned out to be a large wild pig.

Interesting to see the Tjapuka (pron. Jabbaki) just won the Australian top Tourist Award—it is down at Smithfield (Cairns). One of their jokes was: "We blackfellows smarter than you white fellows, we go out into the bush and catch our food fresh, bring it back and cook it in the microwave"

The guinea fowl (our park resident insect catchers) have taken over from the guy in the village's bird-feeding program and have been chasing all the parrots, cockatoos and galahs away. The guinea fowl are very territorial and vicious and were victors of the bird war. The wild birds are extremely tame and come into the park to play underneath the sprinklers.

Doing my nightly rounds of the park I came down the hill towards the phone box & the illumination from the box made me decide to switch my torch off. Then I sensed something and switched it back on just in time to avoid stepping on a snake coiled up ready to strike!

Plenty of 'silver haired nomads' call in on their way up to the tip of Cape York, some leave their vans here in storage while they make the trip.

Gold prospectors head up this way after the rains make new watercourses which open up new opportunities for fossicking.

One gold prospector from Port Kembla turned up and said he has been many times. He had some interesting stories to tell. He said when he first arrived up here he spent 3 months fossicking around and never saw any colour - then one day up the road he was talking to a character called Coke Can John. John said "What are you doing up here?" and he said "looking for the elusive commodity called gold" and John asked him if he had any luck and he replied he had "upped stumps and was heading south to better known gold areas" John said "and why would you leave here when you are in one of the best gold areas in Australia?". Some more prodding and John said "if you go back in there to any one of the four creeks coming off the mountain range you will find gold!"

So about two months later when he was coming out, John nailed him "and how did you go?". He replied "you were right there is a bit in there". "Well how did you go? Better still show me how you went"

So he pulled out his nuggets and there was one 7 ounce, one 5 ounce and several between 2 and 5 ounces, not to mention all the stuff measured in grams. "Phew, you have done well, what the heck are you leaving for?" and he replied "I've run out of provisions". When he arrived back fully stocked up from Cairns there was Coke Can and his relatives all working the area where he had been, and shortly after people started turning up from everywhere. Seems he had shot his mouth off and so learned a valuable lesson to be used if he ever gets lucky again.

We had an English lass studying wasps of the microscopic type, (in particular a minute variety which helps pollinate fig trees then they live in the fig fruit)".

Robert gets the Editor's award— a Cherry Ripe, for this contribution. Keep the stories coming.

Stewart Jones.... 1942—1946

For most lads of this period, the promotion from short pants to long pants was a major milestone, being a point of transition from boyhood to young manhood. This important event occurred for me some time during senior school at Oakleigh State School. I clearly remember the importance and prestige I felt through this change of clothing as well as the strange new feeling of clothing dinging to my legs.

I don't remember where the trousers came from, but I do remember that when it came to purchasing a suit, a young tailor in Station Street, Oakleigh, measured me up and made it. Clothing was not easy to obtain during the war, ration coupons being required, so what we did purchase needed to be right and long lasting. Later in the war my father located a respectable source of high quality used clothing, which did not require coupons, and I acquired several excellent suits this way.

Curiously, the promotion to long pants was part of my psychological preparation for the transition from Grade 8 at Oakleigh State to Form 3 at Dandenong High, which occurred for me at the beginning of 1942. I had just turned 14.

The change came as a shock. It was necessary to grow up very quickly indeed. At State School everything was done for us, even our learning was regimented, so that it was almost impossible to come out of class not having absorbed the lessons prescribed by the teacher for that day. By contrast, at High School, the students themselves had the choice of whether or not they learned the lessons. In my experience there was no warning that such a transition was imminent, and certainly no formal training to cope with it. In retrospect I regard myself as very fortunate indeed that my parents had encouraged within me a strong will to succeed, and had also trained me to recognise self discipline as a major tool in achieving that success.

At High School I began to understand a great deal about the reasons for success and failure in life when observing the negative attitude of some students when required to make an effort on their own behalf.

During this era in Victoria those who chose to pursue further education after State School had only two options. The children who wanted to prepare for a "professional career" went to High School, while those who preferred to "work with their hands" chose Technical School. Running parallel with this State run system was the private system of "Public" schools which included Church schools.

There was never any question that my choice was to go to High School, although I still had no idea what I wanted to "do for a living". My father had always told people I was going to be a "mechanical draughtsman", and that sounded good, but I had little idea what it meant. Only two alternatives in the State run system were available to those who lived in Oakleigh, Melbourne High School in South Yarra and Dandenong High School, the same distance in the other direction. My parents chose Dandenong, primarily because it was easier to get to, but also because they considered Dandenong to be a healthier environment, a hybrid of suburban and country life.

On enrolment at Dandenong we were required to elect our choice of subjects. For example, those aspiring to medical disciplines chose biology and chemistry and did only little maths and physics.

Those aspiring in the direction of "Science" did the most maths, physics and chemistry. If I remember correctly other courses were "Business" which included economics, and "Commercial" which included typing and shorthand, usually favoured by the girls. English Literature and English Expression were compulsory, together with a second language. The medicals chose Latin, the rest were required to do French. Although I had no idea where I was headed, my parents and I knew enough to choose the science package rather than the one suited to a career in medicine or business.

At this time it was usual to "do" a subject. It was not until much later in life that I began to hear people "taking" subjects.

Our headmaster at Dandenong was Mr Griffiths, who limped around painfully on a stick. His daughter attended the school at the same time as me. The teachers I remember best are Miss Carpenter, English, Mr Sanderson, Science, and Mrs Skinner, Maths. Mr Jones was the physical training and sport instructor.

One of the optional subjects was music. When the teacher learned that I played the piano she immediately enlisted me to play the National Anthem at the regular Monday morning assemblies. Until then she played for the occasion. She wrote out her arrangement for me, which was very rich and "chordy", and which had three lead in chords designed to indicate exactly when singing should start. I was extremely nervous, and practised the number over and over at home. Initially I made a few stumbles, which everyone seemed patient about, even my fellow students, but I soon got the hang of it. The piano was located in a classroom adjacent to the quadrangle, so it was necessary to thump out a good volume to be heard outside. I still treasure that teacher's handwritten manuscript of "God Save the King".

A special school bus was contracted by Grenda's for the run between Oakleigh station and the school and return, with frequent stops along the highway. There was also the train, but the bus was more convenient for me. Several on the bus became good friends of mine, including Frank O'Shea of the O'Shea and Bennett timber milling family, whose large English style house was high on the hill in the open paddocks at the corner of Wellington and Dandenong Roads, now Monash University; Keith Douglas, whose father was the resident Nurseryman at the Hughesdale State Schools Nursery, and John Heath, destined to become a Melbourne dentist, whose father was a dentist and who lived in a converted church, an architectural curiosity for Oakleigh, located on Warrigal Road near the corner of Dandenong Road.

Frank O'Shea joined the family business and occasionally sought my professional assistance after I became an engineer with CSIRO. Keith Douglas visited me and my wife years later after we had shifted to Brisbane. However, I never had the need to engage the dental services of John Heath and unfortunately he disappeared from view after we left school. Especially during the earlier period of my time at Dandenong I enjoyed riding my bike to school on occasion, about 15km each day.

Stewart Jones... continued.

I was usually joined by Ross Wilkinson who lived in the shop next to the Paramount Theatre but who normally went to Dandenong by train, and by John Heath. Dandenong Road was a simple two lane bitumen road with gravel edges, but road traffic during these war years was very thin so we were in little danger from cars. As I recall, the days usually chosen for these rides were sports days when the afternoon schedule at school was not as rigid as other days.

Strangely, for one who later became a Civil Engineer, throughout High School the subjects I did best at were English Literature and English Expression, for the simple reason that these subjects, by contrast to others I had to grapple with like Maths and Science, never required the material to be first understood. I really enjoyed Shakespeare's plays and passed the exams by realising early that the more one could quote from these plays to illustrate answers to exam questions, the better. (So I would go into exams loaded with a huge repertoire of memorised quotations, which I made sure appeared somewhere or other in my paper). I also enjoyed the books prescribed for the courses, such as Anthony Trollope's "Barchester Towers".

Learning French was more laborious, but I still enjoyed it. When in Paris some years later I was surprised at how much of the language I was effortlessly recalling, and found that the longer I stayed the easier it became.

I also enjoyed Physics, Chemistry and Maths, which were divided into Pure Maths and Applied Maths, but found these to be hard work compared to the "humanities" because there was so much which had to be understood before it could be learned. I found that once each concept was thoroughly understood it was possible to work through problems from first principles and the subjects became simple and enjoyable. I didn't know it at that time, but this was the type of brain required of an engineer. The brain of a doctor on the other hand is characterised by being able to memorise huge volumes of abstract information.

The intense interest I had in Chemistry and Physics was because these subjects were teaching me about the things around me, the elements and materials our surroundings are made of and the laws by which they exist and function. For example, in Chemistry I was delighted to learn what soap was and how it was made, and about the new chemicals recently invented, "detergents". With my parent's assistance I bought a few basic Bunsen burners, stands, glassware and chemicals so that I could repeat the chemical experiments of the classroom at home. However, surprisingly I never did well in Chemistry.

Our teachers at Dandenong made very little comments about the war but it was clear that some of them had personal contact with its effects. Most poignant was the unobtrusive, typed honour roll posted on the school notice board of old boys and girls who had joined up. Occasionally a mark would be placed by a name to indicate they would not be returning, and the teachers would be seen in little groups discussing this latest sad news.

One of the important features of High School which I found very helpful was the amount of attention given to imparting some of the finer graces of life to students. This took place informally by teacher-student contact when the really good teachers were able to drive home the message about

such decencies as discipline, obedience, courtesy, cleanliness, deportment, manners, respect, and so on. It also came more formally by the teaching of good language, by participation in school plays and concerts, and by the provision of well supervised school dances.

As the conclusion to sixth form approached and I was soon to matriculate (qualify for entry to University), the inevitable question emerged, what was I going to do with my life?

I thought I would enjoy teaching, so applied for entry as a Student Teacher with the Victorian Education Department. I did a trial class at Dandenong State and was accepted to enrol as a student teacher. At the same time I wondered about a career in the Navy, wanting to emulate my mother's brother Ralph who had made a very successful career in that force and who I was very fond of. I filled in some papers, but when it came to the point I didn't feel comfortable with the idea and went no further.

The breakthrough came when I did some vocational guidance tests at a Government Vocational Centre at the Flinders Street end of Elizabeth Street. Everyone of these tests showed without any doubt or exception that my best vocation would be that of a professional engineer. They did not specify the type of engineer, mechanical, civil, electrical, the only three available at that time, but it was clear that to attain to this vocation a University Degree would be desirable.

At the end of 1946 I again matriculated, but still didn't know enough about the engineering courses available at the University, or which of them would suit my needs best, so we decided we shouldn't be hasty with my future and that I should go to work for the time being and give myself space to carefully consider all options.

So we searched the jobs advertised in the classified section of the Melbourne 'Age' and found a vacancy for a Laboratory Assistant advertised by the Divisions of Forest Products of the Council for Scientific and Industrial Research. (Now Commonwealth Scientific and Industrial Research Organisation, CSIRO)

This was located near Spencer Street Bridge in Yarra Bank Road, South Melbourne, where the Crown Casino now stands. I was excited about the job description, so I applied for it, was interviewed and accepted. This was the only job I applied for, and have ever formally applied for.

With the encouragement of my employers at the Division of Forest Products, I later enrolled with the University of Melbourne and completed a full time degree in Civil Engineering. After many years of fruitful and exciting research in CSIRO I established my own Civil Engineering Consultancy in Brisbane, specialising in Timber Engineering and Timber Technology, from which I am well and truly retired.

As I write these notes during the year 2003 I look back on my years at Dandenong High School with a great deal of nostalgic satisfaction. Supporting the wonderful home life and training given me by my parents, the teachers at DHS established the solid academic and disciplinary foundations, together with the broader personality development necessary for the happy, successful and fulfilled life which followed.

Annual Meeting Highlights....

Reverend Doctor Coralie Ling

Our annual meeting was graced by the presence of Coralie Ling as guest speaker. In opening, Coralie produced her school report to assert her bona fides, telling us that she attended DHS from Noble Park, matriculating in 1956. Her brother Don also attended. Coralie became a teacher, working at Kerang and Koo Wee Rup High Schools.

After becoming a Deaconess in the Methodist Church in 1969, Coralie became the first woman in Victoria to be ordained in the Methodist Church, and the second in Australia. Her pastoral duties have taken her to Ballarat, Horsham, Essendon, Wangaratta, and Malvern, prior to her current position at Fitzroy, from which she is retiring this year.

Invited by the President to lay before us her achievements and aspirations, Coralie informed us of her representation in the 'Signature Quilt Project' in the 'National Pioneer Women's Hall of Fame' in Alice Springs. The quilt carries a square dedicated to each nominee, and Coralie carries her own credo "....sew with the rich colours of diversity and solidarity."

Coralie is also represented in the Museum of Victoria Exhibition celebrating Federation "Ordinary Women Extraordinary Lives", within the "Burning For Justice" section. In addition, a Coralie profile also appears in the anthology 'Dissident Daughters' edited by Theresa Berger.

Recalling her DHS experiences, Coralie enjoyed recollecting making a 'stink' by pouring hydrochloric acid into ink wells, creating 'rotten-egg gas', creating smoke in the pre-fabs and sniffing rinsos to create coughing symptoms. We presume she became a 'knowing' teacher.

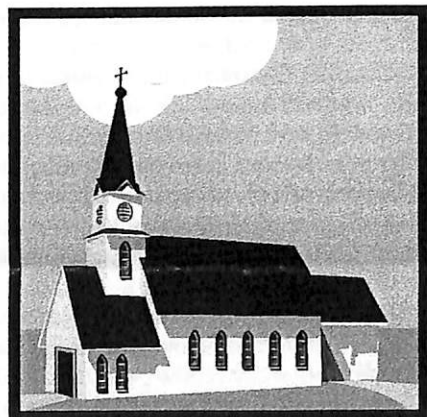
Recalling politics of the day, she recalled great class interest in the Labour 'split', West Papua (as it then was) and other critical issues—the inequity of the Australian society during her formative years led to her lifetime commitment to feminist issues.

Adding to her DHS adopted languages of Latin and French, Coralie went on to Greek and Hebrew during her divinity studies, and later to Indonesian, because there was a pastoral need.

A mature-age doctorate was also attained.

Finally, Coralie mused on the narrowness and diversity divide. The DHS era provided a narrow, principally protestant background with the post-war ethnic diversity growing, until by the 1980's the school had roughly 50% of students from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds.

Those present expressed great admiration and appreciation to Coralie as an admirable ex-student of Dandenong High School.



Maurie Jarvis remembered

A Tribute to Maurie Jarvis - 1917 - 2003

It is a privilege to write this tribute to Maurie Jarvis, my friend of many many years. For about 30 years Maurie and I were tennis partners.

Maurie and the Jarvis family grew up in the Dandenong Methodist Church. Throughout his life he worshipped at this church and it was his spiritual home. It was here that he met Gwen McPhee and was married in 1944. His 58 years as a Sunday School teacher must surely be a record! The Dandenong Methodist Tennis Club was a great love and the en-tout-cas courts built after the war were due to his drive and enthusiasm – he played A Grade tennis for 30 + years. He was an Elder, sang in the choir and was a member of the Men's Society. Maurie had a strong Christian faith and this led him to work in the community where he made a remarkable contribution.

He was the longest serving Councillor of the Shire and then the City of Dandenong. In his 37 years on Council he was three times Mayor. Rightly, one of his proudest achievements was the preservation of the Police Paddocks. Together with the late Alan Lind M.L.A., Maurie was a major driving force in the establishment of the Wallara Centre for the intellectually disadvantaged. He provided leadership and support to countless community organisations like the Dandenong Agricultural Show, Dandenong High School Advisory Council and the Dandenong and District Historical Society.

For many of us, what we will remember most was his deep concern for his fellowman. This was evident in the numerous visitations he made to the sick and his help to people going through 'a rough patch'. Maurie's fantastic contribution to Dandenong's community life was recognised in many awards: in 1977 he was made a Member of the British Empire (MBE), Dandenong Citizen of the Year in 1982, Freeman of the City of Dandenong in 1993, a Living Treasure of the City of Greater Dandenong in 2000, and this year he was the recipient of the Centenary of Federation Medal.

Maurie was passionate in his love of his family. Other passions included his bantams, his garden, fishing, tennis and his beloved Collingwood Football Club – the latter a passion I couldn't share!!

Those of us who worship at Trinity will miss Maurie greeting us as we sat in the pews each Sunday before the service. He will be remembered as a person of integrity with a strong sense of compassion and social justice which gave expression to his unwavering faith in God.

Our condolences to his wife Gwen, daughters Elizabeth, Bronwyn, Sue and Marion and their families.

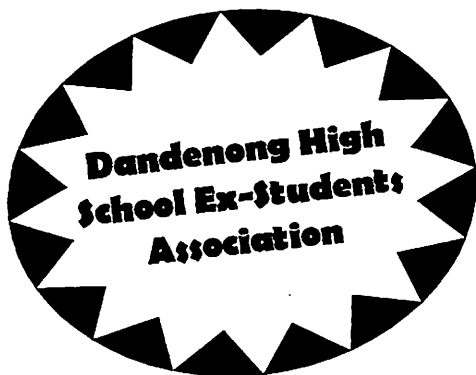
Max Oldmeadow.

ANOTHER EX-STUDENT ELECTED MAYOR OF THE CITY OF CASEY.

Cr. Rob. Wilson, a student in the late 1950's was recently elected Mayor of Victoria's fastest growing municipality.

Previously, Cr. Wayne Smith, a student in the 1970's had occupied this illustrious position.

Ex-student Barry Simon, who was the first Mayor of the City, passed away very recently, and an obituary appears elsewhere in this newsletter.



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.

DHSESA Office Bearers

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Requests from the Archives...

We do not have any copies of "The Gate" for 1950 and 1971. Would some kind person please donate then to the DHS archives?

Any copies of "The Gate" from the 1920's, 1930's and 1940's would also be most welcome.

The search is still on for an original tunic worn by former a DHS pupil. Please dive into those attics, sheds and cupboards and ask your friends – someone must still have one! Also on the wish-list are the straw hats worn by the girls as part of summer uniform in various decades.

What we would also love to obtain are copies of private photos taken by ex-students at school, at parties or during excursions, helpfully labelled with names and dates and places. We have a few and they are an interesting addition to the official photos.

A Puzzle...

In the 1948 copy of "The Gate" there is a photo of THE QUAD showing ONE wooden staircase; the one that was the boy's staircase during the 1950's and 1960's, when there were TWO such staircases. Yet some former pupils of the very early days of the School remember TWO wooden staircases. Does anyone have an explanation?

Volunteers Needed...

If you have a few spare hours on a Wednesday afternoon once a month, come and join in the work on the Archives at Dandenong High School. It is an interesting task with congenial company and a chance to visit your old school.

Contact our Historian, Dawn Harris, on 9787 56136 or President, Greta Jungwirth on 9754 2440.