

THE ANCHOR



**Williamstown High School
Ex-Students & Staff Association
Inc A0041347A**

SEPTEMBER 2021

President's Report

Welcome to the September 2021 edition of the ANCHOR.

We had scheduled our AGM **Saturday 31st July 2021**. Sadly that had to be cancelled as a result of the Victorian COVID-19 lockdowns.

At this point we haven't set a reschedule date. Given the way things are going I don't see that being a possibility this side of Christmas.

WHS doesn't allow visitors at this point and that's unlikely to change before the end of the school year.

Our usual 'end of year' reunion was scheduled for **Wednesday 1st December 2021**. It is therefore highly unlikely that we will be able to hold this event.

The committee has been unable to meet over the last few months. We are really acting in "caretaker mode". We continue to keep the association ticking over as best we can. We all look forward to being able to do more than that.

I hope you are all coping with the restrictions and getting along as best you can.

I have received my two COVID vaccinations. Hopefully all of you are working towards vaccination too. It's the one thing that we can all do to help ourselves, our friends and family and the community in general.

Hold Fast
Fred Cumming

ADDRESS ALL CORRESPONDENCE TO:

**The Committee of Management
WHSESSA
PO Box 81
WILLIAMSTOWN VIC 3016**

Articles or comments for the newsletter can be sent to the above address or email to WHSESSA@gmail.com

Enquiries

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Williamstown High School web site :-

<http://www.willhigh.vic.edu.au/>

WHSESSA inc. web site :-

<http://tinyurl.com/whsessa>

DENNIS (D.J.) NILSON

By, Geoff van Wyngaarden (aka *Van Dyke*)

Part 1

Williamstown High School has had many outstanding and dedicated teachers in its long and colourful history going back to 1915 but Mr. Dennis Nilson, more commonly known as D.J., is one of the very best. A highly popular Physical Education teacher and Sports Master he instilled discipline and common sense into a very large number of students during his many years at the school.



He instigated a relationship with the various Naval ships in Williamstown over many years which resulted in sports meetings and various other activities. His Form class quickly became known as H.M.A.S. 2A and was the envy of other classes at the school. “Dennis can recall Leigh Dunstan (Dunstan’s Dairy) and Linda Ferguson were my inaugural Form Captains. Steven “Steamy” Stewart (Stewarts’s Pastries in Ferguson Street) was already a member of TS

Voyager in Nelson Place and had his own Bosun’s pipe. From then on, I got piped on-board every morning into our stand alone pre-fab classroom which we had decorated as a ship.

One year “Captain Catriona Murray made a beautiful HMAS 2A Banner which I still have.”

It must have worked because the other Form 2’s notably Tom Purves (Uncle Tom) set up a 2E RAAF group. In this particular year 1969 there was also a class called Apollo 2D.

The great D.J. first arrived at Williamstown High in 1965 on a 4 week student teaching block. His teaching subjects at this stage included Physical Education, Social Studies, History and Geography. His first year as a qualified teacher was in 1966 and he stayed there until 1975 before moving to the Geelong area.

The magical influence this great man and teacher had on his students continues to this day. When DJ first moved to Williamstown he loved the atmosphere and camaraderie of the Steampacket Hotel. This venue was a traditional favourite with Willy High teachers for decades. “Before my time The Steam Packet Hotel was colloquially known as “Room 27” as the WHS timetable had 26 rooms. So, if you wished to check who was going down to the “Packet” that afternoon you simply asked the supposed “coded” question, will you be attending the meeting in Room 27 this afternoon.”

When Dennis first moved to Williamstown after starting teaching, he was lucky enough to get to know the famous Parker Family. Laurie Parker the popular local dentist in Douglas Parade owned the vacant house next door to his surgery at 15 Douglas Parade. This 2 storey building quickly became the living quarters with DJ upstairs and other WHS teacher the late Colin “The Baron” Nicholls living downstairs. DJ stayed at this residence until 1972 when he married local Williamstown girl Jenny Gilbertson.

When DJ moved to Williamstown he loved the atmosphere of the popular local hotel the Steam Packet. This venue quickly became very popular with Willy High teachers. "The Steam Packet was run by the Crewes Family and I quickly met a lot of Willy locals who made me feel very welcome in this like small country town of Williamstown and I also enjoyed the Chan family Chinese Restaurant café in Nelson Place which included the parents plus children Steven, Edward, Colin and Rosemary."



DJ, who has Finnish-Scandinavian heritage, was always interested in ships and got the idea to take students to see working ships in dock. "These sort of visits wouldn't be allowed nowadays. I took my Form HMAS 2A down to South wharf to see the brand new Shaw-Savill ship, the MV Megantic unloading its cargo from overseas. Each year when the ship came in, the captain would ring me up and I would take a group of students down to visit the ship. At the same time due to contacts at the Steam Packet I was lucky enough to take regular trips on the tug boats at Reid Street Pier in Williamstown especially the MT Elton Griffin (Master was Jack Stevens) and also the Harbour Trust mud hopper called the J.T.Webb. I was right into the swing of Williamstown Maritime Life plus the school had a sailing program.

I later noticed that ships of the R.A.N. Fleet were refitting at the Naval Dockyard and the young sailors seemed to have not much to do. I got the great idea to integrate them into the schools sports program and lunch time activities. Football and cricket matches were organised as well as lunch time Volleyball and Badminton matches in the Drill Hall."

"On some occasions the WHS students went down to the ship and had lunch with the sailors and I went to the Ward Room with the officers. It was all in good spirit and in keeping with Williamstown's Naval and Maritime origins.

This relationship with visiting Naval ships lasted for over 10 years.

A couple of school assemblies were held in the WHS Hall where the Naval personnel were on the stage. In 1975, for the School Diamond Jubilee celebrations, I arranged for the restoration of the 68' Drill Hall flagstaff to be fully restored and rigged (courtesy joint project Willy Council and Dockyard) and even had a guest high ranking Naval officer in attendance and the Naval Band performing.

The original school hall, which was also known as HMAS Lonsdale II, came from the Dockyards and was repositioned at the Pasco Street site. All pieces of wood were carefully labelled and put back in the same position. The Oregon beams were reputedly the longest ever imported into Australia.”

“In 1966 when I coached the 1st. XVIII Football Team, I did a write up like Lou Richards did and gave each of our players a nick name, many already had nick names.

My biggest highlight and best idea came about in a rowdy Wombat House meeting in 1968 before an inter-house sports day and I noticed a little kid sitting in the front row and his face was on fire with enthusiasm. Listen son, what’s your name ? and he said ‘*Geoff van Wyngaarden*’ which I replied from now on son you’re the sports writer for Wombat house. This was the start of one of my great highlights at Williamstown High School. That name is too big a name, from now on, your name will be ‘*Van Dyke*’. We expect a sports write up tomorrow morning. To my pleasure, next morning in the main quadrangle, outside the staffroom on butchers paper and with headlines in large letters cut out from newsagents posters and combined with memorable raucous jokes and pro Wombat bias, began the “Van Dyke” Thursday morning sports reports era. Practically the whole school and all staff eagerly awaited each weekly report. It inspired a lot of renewed house spirit.”

... stay tuned for part 2 in the December Anchor ... (Ed)

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Annual Subscriptions 2021-22 - WHSESSA inc. A0041347A

Subscriptions are due on the **1st July 2021**. Subscription rate for 2021-22 is **\$15**

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Please include your AGM acceptance. Payments can be made at the AGM, by cheque to WHSESSA Inc. PO Box 81 Williamstown, Victoria, 3016, or by direct deposit to **BSB 633 000** Account No. **119563336** (include your name!)

NB: 1 If you wish to pay for more than one year, you can pay pro rata at the current subscription rate of - \$15 per year

Ray Price, Secretary & Public Officer, WHSESSA inc A0041347A

*** You can send back this whole page if you like. Just fill in the bits that are relevant. Ed ***

Annual General Meeting 2021

As mentioned previously we have had to cancel the 2021 Annual General Meeting as we haven't been able to meet the COVID-19 restrictions that have been placed on the school system. We were also not prepared to put the health of our members at risk.

To keep our members abreast of the affairs of the association I would like to provide the following financial statement showing the current state of the organisation.

As you can see from the table below we have continued to manage the financial side of our business on a slightly better than break-in basis. Our 2020-21 revenues were \$478 more than our costs.

Fred Cumming
President WHSESSA inc.

WILLIAMSTOWN HIGH SCHOOL EX-STUDENTS & STAFF ASSOCIATION INC.

2021-2022 FINANCIAL STATEMENT

RECEIPTS:

Membership subscriptions:	\$1,500.00	
Book sale:	\$30.00	
Donations:	\$1,125.00	
Sub total:		\$2,655.00

EXPENSES:

Printing & stationery:	\$540.90	
Donation to Williamstown High School (scholarships):	\$1,500.00	
Post Box Fee:	\$136.00	
Sub total:		\$2,176.90

2020-21 Annual SUMMARY

Receipts:	\$2,655.00	
Less Expenses:	\$2,176.90	
Balance:		\$478.10

Financial Position as at 30 June 2021

Bank Statement balance @ 30 June 2020:		\$6,218.24
Less: Unpresented cheque #410	-\$106.59	
Plus: Surplus of receipts over expenses @ 30 June 2021:	\$478.10	
Balance of funds @ 30 June 2021:		\$6,589.75

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