

Northcote High School Alumni News 2016

December News

The Association is saddened by the passing on Saturday December 18th of **Itiel Bereson**, teacher of the 1950s and 1960s. He was a good friend of the School until the very end having served a long career in the Education Department as a secondary teacher and principal (Reservoir High School). Most recently he co-authored the section of the School History, *The Green, the Purple and the Gold*, which dealt with his period at the School. We publish this eulogy written by Dr. Barry York, distinguished Australian historian, for his old History teacher.

"I was a pupil of Itiel's at Northcote High in the 1960s. He was a wonderful, indeed exemplary, History teacher. It was a blessing to have him as a teacher, at that stage of life when one's mind is open to ideas and seeking to understand what makes the world tick. He was conservative in style but challenging in content.

My lasting memory of him back then is of a human whirlwind in a black flowing academic gown, entering the classroom with all the drama and excitement of a Shakespearean actor. He would hurry to the blackboard, and write words on it in chalk and then, using his wooden pointer, point to the words while spinning around to face the class. "YORK!", he exclaimed on one occasion. "What is the 'Ancien Regime'?!"

Like many others, it was almost impossible not to become an enthusiast for History after being taught by such a passionate and brilliant teacher. And when it came to the Ancien Regime, many of us learned the correct lesson: that it was the old order of things, an order that may seem 'solid' but which eventually 'melts into air' when it ceases to serve the people – despite the ruling class presenting themselves as the natural order of things.

Itiel aroused our curiosity about the past, which put some of us in very good stead to pursue the study of History and, in my case, to take it up as a career.

It was such a privilege, for a young kid from the low income Brunswick migrant working class to learn from him. He could have taught at the best elite private schools. And it was a privilege to keep in touch and visit him over the decades. He was a good friend as well as a great teacher. His enthusiasm and passion, and his interest in his former students, never seemed to diminish."

Keith Corcoran passed away on Friday December 16th after a short illness. He was a staunchly loyal Old Boy who attended NHS from 1951 to 1956. He completed his degrees at Melbourne University and taught French with distinction in various high schools. In 1976 he joined the Board of Secondary School Inspectors and later held various senior Departmental roles up until his retirement. At School he was the very efficient bell boy who was awarded many prizes and scholarships for good citizenship and academic excellence. I taught with Keith in my first year at Melbourne High where Keith acted as my mentor. His professionalism, sense of humour and support were so appreciated. *Gary Israel*

The School has lost two of its greatest friends who will be sadly missed.

Meliora Sequamur

November News



The Class of 1996 held a most successful reunion on Saturday 12th November at the Bar Cafe spot on High Street. A large number of the year attended (over 70) including Eliza Caldwell (McCormack) who flew down from Darwin for the occasion. A great job was done by Vicky Damilatis in setting the night up and a sincere vote of thanks must go to her. She was assisted by many but notably Stephanie Katsonis (Papdopoulos) and Kathy Goutsicas. It was great to see the former Level Coordinators Shirley Barbara and Terry Chapman in attendance. Terry travelled down from Castlemaine. Also helping were staff and former staff members –Danny Leondidas, Con Dinopoulos, Tass Tousimis, John Heyworth and Gary Israel. A great reunion!!

The Class of 1948 annual reunion lunch was held at the Old England Hotel on Wednesday 26th October and was well attended. Approximately 20 of “the boys” were able to make it including the Hon. John Cain, former Premier of Victoria. Memories and chats were enjoyed by

all including Principal Kate Morris and her PA, Kate Challis. Thanks to Bruce Campbell and John Hines for the organizing. Gary Israel.

October News 2016

Reunions

- * **The class of 1996** will hold a 20 year reunion on Saturday November 12th from 7.00pm at the new bar and courtyard at 520 High St Northcote . All welcome. Contact Vicky Damilatis email vicky@nobody.com.au
- * **Class of 1948** annual lunch will be held at Old England Hotel Heidelberg from 12 noon on October 26th 2016. Contact Bruce Campbell for further details.

RAAF Bombers Over Germany 1941-1942 is a recently published book written by Anthony Cooper which pays high tribute to Old Boy, Wing Commander Keith Kaufman, DFC and Bar. Keith was Commanding Officer of 460 Squadron under the Commander of Bomber Command's, Air Chief Marshall Sir Arthur Harris. Keith took over the Squadron in the middle of 1942 at the age of 27 and immediately improved morale with what the author describes as his engaging personality. When he visited the sergeants' mess on his first day he took off his tunic and said "I believe you blokes are pretty good drinkers; let's get stuck into it and see how good you are" (Page 200). He had the common touch and spoke easily to men of all ranks. He was always positive and encouraging. That night all Wellington bomber crews returned safely. Kaufman flew himself the following night in an attack on Bremen. He survived the War being twice decorated for bravery in the air. Meliora Sequamur served him well!



August 2016 News

Congratulations to Alan Monger on OAM. Alan attended NHS from 1955 to 1958 and became a licensed surveyor. He was awarded an OAM in the 2016 Queen's Birthday Honours for services to the community and surveying. He worked for CRB in Melbourne and at surveying for high rise buildings in Melbourne and London. From 1976 he worked in private practice as a surveyor in Wangaratta and Benalla areas. He has served the Benalla community with distinction in Rotary (President for a period) and Probus. He won the Rotary Paul Harris Fellowship in 2009. He has been involved on School Councils, local history association and the Benalla Arts Council. He has served as an honorary associate of Museum Victoria, being an authority on the shells/molluscs of SE Australia and writing on this subject. At School he was on the SRC in 1958 and featured in athletics and basketball teams. He was School pianist of 1958. Well done Alan and hearty congratulations on the OAM!

His Honour Mervyn Kimm has contacted the School. He attended NHS from 1944 to 1948 and went on to obtain an LL. B (Hons) from Melbourne University. He served as a barrister at law at the Victorian Bar, as Deputy Chairman of the Liquor Control Commission 1982-88 and as a County Court Judge from 1968 to 2002. The Association wishes Mervyn well in retirement and notes that he has certainly followed the motto, *Meliora Sequamur*!

Passing of Rex Chadwick. Rex passed away very recently having retired as Principal of Apollo Parkways Primary School and after long service in the Victorian Education Department. As a Principal, his very successful school was one of the Navigator Schools working with NHS in the mid 1990s, leading change for Victorian schools. He attended NHS from 1954 to 1958 and was a keen footballer and swimmer. The Association extends deepest sympathy to his family. Vale Rex!

July News 2016

Great to hear from **Graeme Fellows (Class of 1961)**. He remembers his teachers so clearly – Heads Alec Sutherland and Jack McGregor, Tex McAvoy, Messrs Stevens, Shipley, Shineberg, Weston, Carter, and Whiteley. Fondly remembers the metalwork teacher's instructions "Don,t bash it, Tap it". He recalls class mates like Waler Bourke, later star of the Australian Ballet and Wayne Duncan, key vocalist and bass with the famous pop group *Daddy Cool*. Graeme worked for the Northcote Leader rising to Print Manager and later became an hotelier. He played cricket outside School and umpired 62 senior VFL matches. He recently caught up with Ron Bailey and Neil McLean also ex-student VFL umpires. Graeme supplied interesting insights, memories and old photographs. Well done Graeme!

Back to Afternoon, June 21st was a great success with a large crowd of ex-students and staff, etc attending to hear the Hon. John Cain, former Victorian Premier, talk about his days at NHS and of changes he has seen in education over the years. Those present greatly enjoyed his address. The School band and ensemble entertained with some very impressive playing and the School Captains and present Principal, Ms. Kate Morris, updated the audience on the nature of

the present school. Tours and a splendid afternoon tea followed. The Association heartily thanks all those responsible for the hard work to organize the day. Food, displays, tours etc don't occur smoothly without hard work and detailed planning. Thanks go especially to Kate Morris, Kate Challis, Jocelyn Hill and all those directly involved.



90th Anniversary Launch 2016

The celebrations for the School's 90th year will formally commence on Monday March 21st with a School Assembly being addressed by the Minister for Education and Deputy Premier, the Hon. James Merlino. Representatives of the decades have been invited as space is limited by students and staff filling the hall. Ex-students will be invited to a special open day in April and the grand "Back to" cocktail party in September.

News of Ashley Richiardi

Ashley was a student of the Class of 1993 and later graduated with a Bachelor in Construction Management (Hons) from Deakin and with Diplomas in Applied Science (Building) from Gordon Institute. He worked for several construction companies from 2001 to 2011. He is now teaching English as a Second Language in Poland and has indulged his passion for travel, visiting a staggering 80 countries around the world. At School he was a keen chess player, Student council member and competed in teams in swimming and track. Well done Ashley and best wishes from the Ex-student Association.

An interesting contact

The School has been contacted by the nephew of Victor Nathaniel Barclay from Switzerland. Victor left NHS in 1935 to become a clerk with the Victorian Lands' Department. He joined the

Royal Australian Navy in 1940 and served on HMAS Sydney which was sunk by enemy action the following year with the loss of all hands. Victor and three other NHS “boys” perished in this wartime tragedy. Victor’s nephew was seeking details from the School records regarding his uncle and we were able to help. Victor came to NHS from Wales Street Primary School, was a good scholar and a keen sportsman. Victor’s name is recorded on the School’s brass memorial plaque in the entrance area.

Passing of Gillian Campbell (Fergusson)

Former staff member Gillian Campbell, known to the School as Gillian Fergusson, passed away on November 15th of 2015, after a short illness. She graduated Bachelor of Science with Honours from London University in Geology and Geography. She worked as a geologist in Namibia, lectured in teaching training and taught at schools in South Africa, Zimbabwe and Melbourne before joining the NHS staff in 1981 as a Geography teacher. She inspired generations of students in her subject and strongly encouraged new staff members. Her wonderful teaching, organisational skills and abilities saw her hold many senior positions in her 23 years at NHS. Her deep concern for the progress and welfare of her students and her wisdom and experience made her a much loved Year level Coordinator and staff member. She will be very much missed by generations of her students and the staffing colleagues privileged to work with her.

The School community and Ex-students’ Association offer deepest sympathy to Gillian’s husband Dave and her family in Bishop Auckland, England. Gillian had returned to the UK not long after retirement in 2004.

November 2015 News

The Class of 1948 held its annual reunion lunch on Wednesday 28th October at the Old England Hotel, Lower Heidelberg Road. It was good to see 16 class mates enjoying themselves and basically looking so well. This was one of the first groups to sit for Matriculation from the School after the War. Head Prefect Bruce Campbell and John Hines acted as hosts and welcomed all to the lunch, including former Premier of Victoria, the Hon. John Cain. Gary Israel represented the School and reminded those attending of the forth coming 90th anniversary of the School in 2016. It is pleasing that this group, like many others, informs the School of its activities.

First Student of Greek Background at NHS.

The School History, *The Green the Purple and the Gold* noted that the first student of Greek background in 1929 was Dimitrios Varvarigos . An obituary appeared in the *Age* newspaper of October 28th 2015 for Dr Andrew Varigos (originally Varvarigos), brother of Dimitrios. Dr Andrew, an old boy of Melbourne High, passed away aged 100. We are now trying to find out what happened to Dimitrios who passed away in 2010. The obituary for Andrew noted that this family had a special place in Greek Australian History and, of course, over the years, the School had a proud history of Greek enrolments. Northcote was one of the first Government Schools to teach Modern Greek, still in the curriculum from Years 7 to 12.