

# THE ANCHOR



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

**DECEMBER 2020**

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## ***President's Report***

Welcome to the December 2020 edition of the ANCHOR.

It's hard to believe we are already heading towards Christmas! It always takes me by surprise.

The COVID-19 lockdowns have curtailed the executive's activities over the last three months. We have been keeping the association ticking over but haven't held any face-to-face meetings for many months now.

We truly hope that you and your friends and relations have managed to weather the crisis as well and that 2021 is a vast improvement on 2020!

The school year has been a giant series of challenges that have spread throughout all four terms.

There were spates of special security measures to avoid transmission into the school and between students and staff. There were periods of working from home that were particularly challenging for some students and their parents.

There were periods when different year levels were in attendance at different times which was a trial I'm sure.

Through all of this the school managed to function and it's to the credit of the teachers, students and support staff that it has all managed to happen.

The year 12 students particularly didn't have many of the events that marked previous year 12 groups. We hope they can look back at their year 12 as an extra-ordinary adventure!

I hope you all have a happy Christmas and New Year period and that we can resume our exies activities in 2021.

Hold Fast  
Fred Cumming

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**ADDRESS ALL CORRESPONDENCE TO:**

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Articles or comments for the newsletter can be sent to the above address or email to [WHSESSA@gmail.com](mailto:WHSESSA@gmail.com)

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Williamstown High School web site :-  
<http://www.willhigh.vic.edu.au/>  
WHSESSA inc. web site :-  
<http://tinyurl.com/whsessa>

## Williamstown High School Excels

ADVERTORIAL

### An open letter of thanks to the WHS Community

As principal of Williamstown High School I have been filled with a great sense of pride during this challenging time. The Williamstown High School community has truly come together in this unprecedented period to honour our motto of Hold fast and ensure our students are supported and their learning journey continue in a positive and meaningful way.

As a school community we now celebrate the return of students to our classrooms and I would like to take this opportunity to thank the entire community for their collective and compassionate support.

To our staff, the extraordinary effort you have made to delivering high-quality teaching for our students moving into remote and flexible learning and now in the transition back to the classroom has been nothing short of remarkable. I know I speak on behalf of our parents and students when I thank you all for your wonderful work during this period.

To our parents, your ongoing support of our work and your children's learning has ensured the impact on your child has been one of growth in both resilience and learning. Your positive and affirming feedback has been well received and without doubt has been an ongoing source of inspiration and motivation for staff.

To our students, you embraced these challenges and changes with gusto and flexibility. Your resilience, optimistic attitude and support of each other has been exceptional. Seeing your smiling faces upon your return to school has been both warming and reassuring.

What lies ahead remains somewhat unknown but I am confident that the strength of the three way partnership at Williamstown High School, will ensure we move forward together, supporting each other to overcome the next obstacle. We will continue to provide an extraordinary and individual learning experience for every student at Williamstown High School.



To our Year 12 students, your final year of secondary school is one you must not forget. We cannot ignore the fact that your experience is distinctly different and although you 'may' miss what we know as the traditional festivities, your connection to each other, to your education and to your teachers during this time has been precious. We have been inspired by your responses and vision. No other Year 12 cohort can claim to be the class of 2020. No other cohort can say they triumphed during the year of the COVID pandemic. Your pledges from the Year 12 Camp will always remain, your journey this year has

built a new level of skills and resilience, and your parents and teachers will celebrate with you at the end of the year, be that in a traditional or non-traditional manner.

Thank you to each and every student, staff and family member for your effort and attitude during this time. I salute all of you!

**Hold fast.**

**Gino Catalano**  
Proud Principal of WHS

Note: The Williamstown High School colours and motto are steeped in over 100 years of history.

The original school colours of red, yellow and black were adopted from the flag of Belgium for the school to adopt the same spirit and resilience shown by the Belgium people.

At the same time the school motto was chosen to respond to the lack of commitment from students towards their education and was to be used to encourage students to 'Hold fast' to their studies. The Williamstown High School Community response to the current situation has been a wonderful example of living up to these ideals!

## Andrew Remembers and Remembering Andrew

From Mary Burbidge – Andrew's wife

Hello my dear family and friends,

I have been waiting for the time when I could tell you the details of a big memorial gathering to celebrate Andrew's life, but that possibility seems as far off as ever.

In the meantime the book of Andrew's remarkable life, his memoir and the memories others have of him, which I was planning to make available at the celebratory gathering, is now published and available to anyone who would like a copy – his gift to you all and something to keep us in your hearts.

So I am writing now in this lazy, lockdown, email way to thank you all warmly for the beautiful and comforting messages you sent me – in cards, letters, phone calls, emails, visits and with flowers and plants – in the weeks following Andrew's sad passing. Thanks also for the continuing supportive contact, with me and with Joey and her family, over the lonely months that followed.

The book, *Andrew Remembers and Remembering Andrew*, has turned out beautifully thanks to our friend, Helene Richards' skills as an editor and publisher, and many of you are mentioned in Andrew's story. So if you would like a copy, please let me know by email or phone (93915758). I will try to deliver most of them personally as restrictions lift, or you can come here and we can chat over the balcony, but I can also post copies.

Some people may feel happier if they pay something for the book. That is not necessary at all, but if you choose to make a donation, please transfer it to this new account ( Mary Burbidge, BSB 063179, Account 1062 1776) and I will send it all on to one of our favourite projects in due course.

Love to you all , Mary



**Teachers:** Two history teachers made a big impression on me. Brian Alcorn, in the earlier years, was an interesting teacher and introduced the concept of Australia being a Western country culturally and an Asian one geographically (Aboriginal history was almost completely ignored in the syllabus then). He used to run me home in his FJ Holden and I was sad when he left for another school. In Form 3, he said I could do either the sciences or humanities, but advised me I was stronger in the humanities.

Mr Clive Hughes was a much older man and appeared to re-use the notes he had prepared many years ago. Nonetheless, he was an interesting teacher given to occasional flair, such as "Drake toasted the toes of the Spaniards he conquered." He was known affectionately as Rare Bear; I don't know why. For many years he helped the High Tide students' committee to produce a high-quality magazine.

The Maths teacher, Mr Howard, a RAAF-looking man, taught us quadratic equations and was famous for two sayings. One, to boys gathered for the cross country, was, "Well, boys, you know the drill. A quick cross-country run home for you and it's off to the Steam Packet for me." The other, at the end of a long hot day studying quadratic equations, said to a bright Greek student (Nal Manolakakis, later principal of Werribee High), "Oh, Mana, Mana, Mana, No, no, no, you've still got it completely wrong." "Mana, Mana, Mana" was thereafter a catch cry among the students whenever something was wrong.

Mr Halloran, a French teacher, used to run Paul and me home in his Riley Saloon in later years. The car, which had no seatbelts, was unlocked and we would get in and wait for him. I had the occasional run-in with him in class when my behaviour, such as typing when he called for silence, annoyed him.

Mr Mephan was a bit of a character and we tended to give him a hard time. He wore a blue suit and came by train from Reservoir. He had a mole on his head and thinning hair that earned him the nickname 'Fluff' Mephan. He was a Science teacher but was also a strong Rechabite (an anti-alcohol temperance union). He incorporated some of his anti-alcohol passion into classwork (reaction times with and without alcohol and the compound interest on the savings of not spending a shilling a day on alcohol over the years, for example).

Some of the teachers were scarcely older than we were. John Becroft was only in his first year of teaching when he took us for Economics in Matriculation and helped me get an Exhibition in Economics.

*Sue Sofarnos (nee Mellis) attended Williamstown High School during the 1970s. She was a keen lacrosse player as a youngster and continued as a player and coach throughout her life. The following was published by the Australian Lacrosse Association following her sudden death in September 2020.*

## **VALE - Sue Sofarnos (nee Mellis) ‘Melli’**

**Monday September 21, 2020 by Australian Lacrosse Association**



11 January 1961 – 19 September 2020 (59)

The Australian Lacrosse Association and the entire Australian lacrosse community, is mourning the passing of Sue Sofarnos, suddenly on Saturday 19 September 2020.

Sue contributed to all levels of lacrosse, firstly from a young age of 10 as a player for many years and then as a coach of Newport Ladies Lacrosse Club, with Lacrosse Victoria as a state player multiple times and then as a coach over several years; and with ALA as Australian Team player at 5 World Cup's and as a coach at 3 World Cups. During the height of her playing career, Sue was one of the best female players in the world, as demonstrated with her All World Team selection at the 1982 World Cup and in Australian's World Cup victory in 1986.

Sue's contribution to the Australian Women's Teams over many years, was instilling internal trust and self-belief and of each other. Her leadership and support of everyone was part of what she was and her care factor to those around her was unsurpassed. Sue's passion, dedication and commitment to her team mates was unapparelled. Her work ethics and pursuit of 'an edge' was always on show. Sue was always leading by example, proving support and encouragement to be the best you could be, every single day.

Sue's service to lacrosse has included several distinguished awards; the Nell Rawlins Award 1980 and 2019 (Lacrosse Victoria award, awarded to an individual who has made a significant contribution to women's lacrosse in any one year). Sue also received the Women's Lacrosse Australia Merit Award in 2008 and her services to lacrosse and the community were acknowledged earlier this year when she received the Medal of the Order of Australia (OAM).

Sue was much loved in the Australian lacrosse community and will be sadly missed.

Sue is survived by husband John and daughters Hayley and Jessica. And son-in-law, Chris.

To read the entire article try this url. [http://lacrosse.com.au/news/2020/09/vale-sue-sofarnos-\(nee-mellis\)-%E2%80%99melli%E2%80%99](http://lacrosse.com.au/news/2020/09/vale-sue-sofarnos-(nee-mellis)-%E2%80%99melli%E2%80%99)



## From the High Tide archives...1980

This article describes the chain of events that led to the creation of the current library at Pasco St.



### CHRONICLE OF DEVELOPMENT OF THE LIBRARY, CLASSROOMS AND AMENITIES COMPLEX

In July 1971 the then Advisory Council obtained confirmation of their view that library facilities at Williamstown High School were exceptionally poor. During the period mid-July 1971 to mid-1973 conversion plans for the northern most rooms of the courtyard complex were developed, coated and approved.

In September 1973, the Advisory Council was advised that a Commonwealth Library for Williamstown High School was listed as a high priority, and consequently the conversion plans were shelved. Between then and November 1974 several and various attempts were made by the Advisory Council to ascertain the actual priority of the school and also to seek agreement from the Education Department regarding siting of the proposed library.

In February 1975 the Minister of Education wrote assuring the Council that both the Education Department and the Public Works Department were anxious to solve the problem. Eventually, on April 8th 1975, agreement was reached at a meeting of senior officers of both departments and the Advisory Council, who met at the school.

From then until late 1977 close consultation with the school was maintained whilst plans were drawn up for total master planned redevelopment of the school. The library, classrooms and amenities block was completed in 1979, together with the modern stenographics and typing department on the first floor of the old Pasco Street building.

Extensive renovations and upgrading of the school are now well underway and are due to be completed by October 1980.

Many members of the school community have been intimately involved in the actual planning at all stages of the scheme. This opportunity has been unique and the final outcome is expected to be so much more beneficial, due to the quality of that participation.

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