



# PERTH MODERNIAN SOCIETY NEWSLETTER



Issue 61, August 2024, Vol 4 No 3

**WELCOME** to your **Perth Modernian e-Newsletter, Issue 61, August 2024, Vol 4 No 3** This newsletter offers two way communication with all registered members, volunteers, families and friends to bring you news, event details and articles from the Perth Modernian Society, its members and Perth Modern School. We hope you find its content both interesting and informative.



PERTH MODERNIAN SOCIETY

For further information

**Telephone:** (08) 6189 3690

[www.perthmoderniansociety.org.au](http://www.perthmoderniansociety.org.au)

[info@perthmoderniansociety.org.au](mailto:info@perthmoderniansociety.org.au)

All messages received either by phone or email are promptly forwarded electronically for further action.

## DIARY DATES

### REUNIONS

**Class of 1959**

**Monday 18 November**

**Class of 1964**

**November - Date TBA**

### CLASS/YEAR GROUPS

**Are you planning a Class/Year Reunion for 2024?**

**We can help**

for further information visit

[www.perthmoderniansociety.org.au](http://www.perthmoderniansociety.org.au)

### e-NEWSLETTER

Do you have something to say?

Memories to share?

**Where are YOU now?**

Send your news item, letters

and/or photographs to ...

[newsletter@perthmoderniansociety.org.au](mailto:newsletter@perthmoderniansociety.org.au)

### NEXT ISSUES

**Copy deadlines for**

**Issue 62, November 2024, Vol 4 No 4**

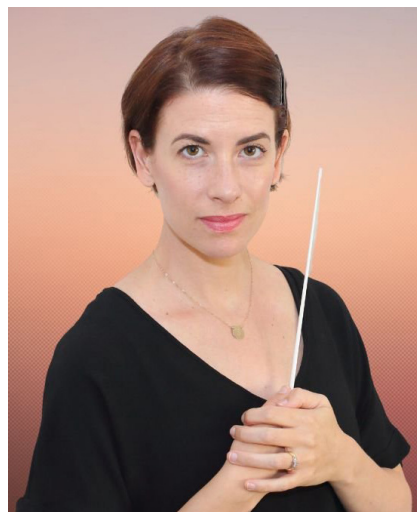
**20 November** copy deadline for circulation  
by **1 December 2024**

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## MODERNIANS IN THE NEWS

### Sara Duhig - Up and Coming Conductor



Courtesy Metropolitan Symphony Orchestra

It was a pleasure to hear Sara Duhig (nee Herriman) as the pre-concert speaker for the West Australian Symphony Orchestra's Eroica concerts, July 4-6. Sara was a music scholarship student 2000-2004, a violinist, and became leader of the school orchestra. Sara graduated from the University of Western Australia with a Bachelor of Music Performance on violin in 2008 and performed regularly with WASO. She was one of the founding musicians in the Perth Symphony Orchestra and has also performed in many chamber ensembles throughout Western Australia.

Sara is rapidly developing a career as a conductor. She began by directing school ensembles, then community orchestras, and

in 2024 will work with the Metropolitan Symphony Orchestra and South Side Symphony Orchestra, as well as the Philharmonic Orchestra, which is one of the West Australian Youth Orchestras. Sara has also been awarded a WASO Conducting Fellowship in 2024 and will participate in several workshops with the Orchestra throughout the year.

- Alison Woodman

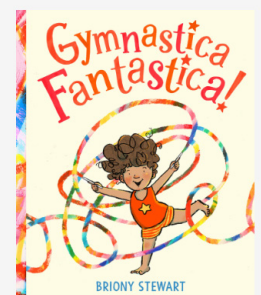
### Briony Stewart - Award Winning Author

Briony Stewart's book *Gymnastica Fantastica* has been awarded Book of the Year 2024, by the Children's Book Council of Australia in the Early Childhood category.

The CBCA judges say...

*"An enticing invitation opens this vibrant picture book, as a vivacious young child confidently demonstrates their gymnastic prowess, bouncing, cartwheeling and flipping their way across the pages. Their dog, a silent but invested observer throughout, provides a lovely contrast. This book conveys so much energy and life which children will connect with immediately."*

Winner - 2024 Early Childhood



Gymnastica Fantastica!

Briony Stewart

Lothian Children's Books, (an imprint of Hachette)

ISBN: 9780734421852

[Read More](#)



### Acknowledgments

Thank you to all letter writers and contributors:

John Bertram  
Thalia Cole  
Robert Johnson  
Max Kamien  
Beryl Morris  
Roger Stubbs  
Robyn White  
Sharon Williams  
Alison Woodman

### Coordinator/Editor

Roger Stubbs  
Robyn White

### Layout

Stuart Gould  
ShoreDigital

*The young child's voice permeates the tight, joyful rhyming text which includes a rich assortment of verbs, nouns, and adjectives. Pencil, ink, crayon, gouache, and digital illustrations are filled with zoom in action and movement matching the equally energetic text. The endpapers are perfect bookends, as twirling ribbons, held in the child's left at the start and right hand at the end, appear to capture the story."*

A member of the Special Music Program Briony attended Mod between 1997 and 2001. A prolific author and illustrator of children's books Briony has received many prestigious awards for her work including in 2022, the Prime Ministers Literary Award in the category of Children's Fiction.

Learn more about Briony and her work at  
<https://www.brionystewart.com/about-me>.



PERTH MODERNIANS SOCIETY

[www.perthmoderniansociety.org.au](http://www.perthmoderniansociety.org.au)

### ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

Held on Monday 27 May 2024

### 2024-25 COUNCIL

[info@perthmoderniansociety.org.au](mailto:info@perthmoderniansociety.org.au)

Ruth Barrett, Honour Awards  
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### ANNUAL CONTRIBUTING MEMBERSHIP RENEWAL

\$40 per annum now due

### MEMBERSHIP UPDATES

Have YOU completed or updated your  
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and/or CHANGE OF DETAILS ?**  
Forms are available on the website  
[www.perthmoderniansociety.org.au](http://www.perthmoderniansociety.org.au)  
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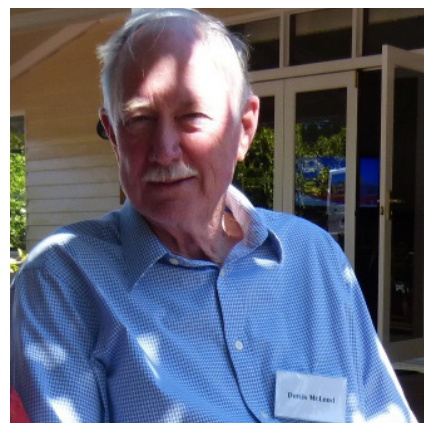
[sphinxfoundation@perthmoderniansociety.org.au](mailto:sphinxfoundation@perthmoderniansociety.org.au)

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### DONORS

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Malka Foundation  
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Nigel Hunt  
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Roger Atkinson



### Denis McLeod Honoured

Denis McLeod, who attended Mod between 1956 and 1960 has been made a Member of the Order of Australia, *For significant service to the law, to urban planning, and to the community of Western Australia.* His award was included in the Kings Birthday Honours list of the 10th of June, 2024.

A legal practitioner, Denis established a practice with an enviable reputation for the advice it provides on matters relating to town planning issues and local government.

A very active supporter of the Law Society of Western Australia Denis was made an Honorary Life Member in 2020. He is also an Honorary Fellow of the Planning Institute of Australia, an Honorary Freeman of the City of Belmont and in 2012 was declared Lawyer of the Year by the Law Society.

His community service includes his appointment as Honorary Solicitor for the York Historical Society, the Royal Western Australian Historical Society and as a Trustee for the Katherine Susannah Pritchard Foundation.

His colleagues at McLeods Lawyers say that some of Denis's qualities which have inspired them include, 'good humour, generosity, humility, passion, tenacity and an encyclopaedic knowledge of planning law.'

### Lachlan Skipworth and Ben Vanderwal - 2024 Art Music Awards

A performance of *The Tides of Longing* composed by Lachlan Skipworth and Jay Emmanuel by The West Australian Symphony Orchestra, supported by the WASO Chorus, has been shortlisted for the national 2024 Art Music Awards. Lachlan was a music scholarship student at Mod and has built a significant reputation as a musician and composer. Modernians are well represented in both the orchestra and the chorus.

Another Modernian, outstanding percussionist Ben Vanderwal is a member of a group which supports Linda May Han Oh, whose work *Ephemeral Echoes* has been shortlisted in the Jazz category.

### Caitlin Bassett

Football tragics surely will have enjoyed features in The West Australian written by sports journalist Caitlin Bassett. A former high calibre professional sports star, Caitlin captained Australia's netball team The Diamonds, and played in the teams which won the World Cup twice, and a Commonwealth Games gold medal. She is well-placed to understand the issues faced by players under pressure and offers thoughtful insights in her articles.

Caitlin graduated from Mod in 2005. She was enrolled in the Special Music Program and played the clarinet, but it soon became obvious that her real talents lay elsewhere. Netball beckoned.



Patricia Quiggin  
Dorothea Bennie  
Alison & Graham Dowley  
Barrie Baker  
Ray Thurloe  
Ross Ledger (R E & F J Ledger  
Charitable Trust)  
Dr Richard Lugg  
Margaret Puzey  
Dr Barry Saker  
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Stuart and Douglas Gould  
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Noel Edward Kagi  
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PERTH MODERNIAN SOCIETY  
MUSEUM ASSOCIATION  
INCORPORATED

#### 2024 BOARD

[museum@perthmoderniansociety.org.au](mailto:museum@perthmoderniansociety.org.au)

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Jeffrey Lai, *Board Member*  
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President Modernian Society

#### MUSEUM VOLUNTEERS [History Centre and Archives]

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Deborah Beresford, *Hon Archivist*  
Sallie Davies  
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Ian Hunt  
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#### FY 2023-24 & 2024-25 DONORS PMS Museum Fund

*Thank you for your  
generous support*

Barrie Baker  
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Bryant Bice  
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Karen Stanley  
John Stone  
Sue Strutt  
W. L Turnbull  
Robyn White  
Rhonda Williams  
Daphne Williams

## Reginald Monson

Modernian Ron Monson (1918-1922) is best known for his extensive experiences as a war correspondent which included his evocative reports from the newly liberated Belsen Concentration Camp. In civilian life his exploits included a 15-month journey on foot from Cape Town to Cairo and a dive in the 'Iron Man' to the wreck of the Lusitania. Less well known is that he was one of only 17 Australian and British journalists allowed to witness a nuclear explosion in 1953 at the controversial Emu Field, as revealed in the recently published *The Secret of Emu Field* (Tynan). Perhaps limited in what he could say, he reported that the journalists were served curry and rice for breakfast. Presumably it was the staple of sophisticated 1950s parties, the recipe of which included sultanas, spoonful of plum jam and of course Keens.

## NEW OLD MODERNIANS

The second article in a series which celebrates a sample of members from the Class of 2011, with information gleaned from their postings on the internet. Next issue, the Class of 2012.

### Dr Lillian Seow

Lillian is a clinical psychologist who has a particular interest in youth mental health issues, trauma, addiction and psychological issues arising from medical treatment. She works within a private practice and at Sir Charles Gairdner Hospital with oncology patients.

Lillian qualified at the University of Western Australia where she completed a PhD the focus of which was on the factors that optimize the effectiveness of Dialectical Behaviour Therapy (DBT).

### Wilson Ng

Wilson is a Director of the Mergers and Acquisitions advisory team at Deloitte. The team specialises in the provision of advice for industries within the mining, technology, oil and gas, and infrastructure industrial sector. It is responsible for the organisation and execution of complex commercial arrangements.

Obviously as a Western Australian, Wilson is well placed to play a central role and his ability to communicate in Mandarin gives him a particular advantage. His academic qualifications prepared him well, and provided him with a knowledge of both engineering and commercial issues, highly relevant to his current role.

Wilson first completed a Bachelor of Commerce, Finance and Engineering at UWA followed by an honours degree in Commerce during which he studied corporate finance. His dissertation was entitled, *How do Large Shareholders Trade in the Lead up to a Takeover Bid?* As part of his studies he completed an internship with Godoi Consulting in Shanghai.

### Aileen Gong

Aileen is a specialist geotechnical engineer with Rio Tinto having previously worked for Arup.

To qualify Aileen first completed a Bachelor of Science at UWA with majors in Civil Engineering and Science. A course in Chinese Language and Literature at Singapore's Nanyang Technical University followed after which she completed a Masters of Professional Engineering at UWA.

### Darcy Nidd

Darcy is a Senior Policy Officer within the Department of Premier and Cabinet with a particular expertise in issues which affect young people.

Darcy first completed a bachelor degree at UWA with majors in International Relations and Political Science. She enhanced her initial qualification when she completed a masters degree in Public Policy and Management at Murdoch. Darcy also spent time at the University of Copenhagen where she was a guest student in Global Policy Development.





Sharon Williams  
Daryl Williams  
Edna Youngman

#### MUSEUM SOCIAL MEDIA PAGES

[facebook.com/perthmodernschoolmuseum/](https://facebook.com/perthmodernschoolmuseum/)  
[instagram.com/pmsmamuseum/](https://instagram.com/pmsmamuseum/)

#### MODERNIAN HONOURS

[awards@perthmoderniansociety.org.au](mailto:awards@perthmoderniansociety.org.au)

##### Modernian Fellow

Sallie Davies  
Malcolm McCusker AC CVO KC  
Donald Tyler  
Barrie Baker  
Ian Jarvis  
Peter Farr  
Dr Kenneth Michael AC Cit WA

##### Moderna Scola Award

Deborah Beresford  
Alan Porter  
Evelyn Broadley  
Rosemary Pratt  
Dr June Stephenson  
Robert Johnson  
Anne Celia Christmass  
Neil Anthony Coy  
Roger Stubbs AM  
Edward Lazarus  
Barbara Mallett

##### Honorary Membership

Alison Woodman  
Tonya McCusker AM  
Nigel Hunt  
Brendon Dawson  
Sharon Williams



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Exceptional schooling. Exceptional students.

INDEPENDENT PUBLIC SCHOOL

[www.perthmodern.wa.edu.au](http://www.perthmodern.wa.edu.au)  
for School Board information

Before she was appointed to the Department of Premier and Cabinet as a Graduate Policy Officer, Darcy undertook a number of roles associated with reconciliation, economic policy development and youth issues, and was Chairperson of Propel Youth Arts in Western Australia.

#### Kristy Chu

Kristy describes herself as a Senior Functional Consultant who works with the Microsoft Power Platform to provide business analysis and PMO advice (project, or program management office).

She works with Veldrada an international company which provides data and digital support especially for mining and resource companies, and has a particular interest in the emerging field of artificial intelligence.

Kristy completed a masters degree in Professional Engineering at UWA with an emphasis upon chemical engineering. She had previously undertaken studies in Chinese language.

Kristy's initial employment was with Deloitte Australia where she was a consultant in technology, strategy and transformation, particularly in relation to the mining and oil and gas industries.

As a Senior Consultant with experience in, change management, project management, business analysis and system configuration she then moved to Veldrada.



#### Kyle Rosa

Kyle is a Machine Learning Software Engineer with dug, a company which specialises in high performance computing. dug has an interesting story. It has its origins in Western Australia and has grown into an ASX listed international company which has developed high level management software for a range of large companies and designs high performance computers.

Kyle completed a Bachelor of Science with first class honours at UWA.

His areas of study were Pure Mathematics, Applied Mathematics and Statistics. He then completed a Master of Philosophy in Pure Mathematics.

After graduation Kyle worked as a Machine Learning Specialist at Elemint before returning to UWA as a Research Fellow in Computer Vision.

#### Adam Tan

Not every New Old Modernian is an engineer, IT specialist, lawyer or medical practitioner. Adam Tan is a professional musician with an international reputation for excellence. Adam is a percussionist and has particular expertise with the marimba. He is a soloist, composer and content creator.

Adam has recognised the importance of a profile on the internet and his posts have over 50,000 followers and he has achieved over 10,000,000 'hits'. He has performed in the United Kingdom, the Americas and throughout Asia. His compositions are played widely and feature in the compulsory repertoire lists around the world.

Adam has sponsorship from several companies which market percussion products some of which he has developed.

Adam has lectured at the University of Western Australia and conducts lessons in his private studio.

He has a Master of Music Performance from the UWA Conservatorium of Music and a Bachelor of Music with First Class Honours. He was the recipient of several major prizes.



## Tarquin Stone

Tarquin is a physiotherapist within the public health system as part of the State Rehabilitation Service.

He qualified as a physiotherapist at Curtin University and then gained further experience when he travelled to the UK. In England he worked for several NHS Trusts which included the Royal Free London NHS Trust, Barts Health NHS Trust and the Royal Cornwall Hospitals NHS Trust.

Upon return to Perth, Tarquin first worked for SportsMed Subiaco.



## TERRI CHARLESWORTH OAM CIT WA AND THE GRADUATE COLLEGE OF DANCE



In 1998, visitors to Perth Modern School noticed intense activity amongst the school buildings close to Hamilton Road. The old gym building which housed photography classes, and the original manual arts building, were both under renovation. Their larger than usual classrooms had Tarkett floors suitable for dance classes installed. At the same time, a new building was under construction where once were gardens (or even the rifle range in earlier days). The way was now prepared for the Graduate College of Dance to operate at Perth Modern School after the closure of Swanbourne Senior High School, where it had previously been located.

The Graduate College of Dance was the vision of its Director, Terri Charlesworth. A former principal dancer, international classical ballet teacher, choreographer and then educator, Terri was well prepared for her role. In 1952 she joined the WA Ballet, then led by Kira Bousloff. In 1957 Terri was invited to perform at the International Arts Festival in Moscow – where she won the prestigious Ulanova award for her performance of the Brolga.

She also performed in China, Italy and London, before returning to Western Australia to work with the company as its principal ballerina. In 1960 Terri established her own ballet school and later visited and studied with the Bolshoi Ballet in Moscow on a cultural exchange program. In 1979, she founded WA's first professional contemporary dance company, Kinetikos Dance Theatre. Terri joined the Australian Ballet School as a senior classical teacher, and taught and choreographed in Japan, Hong Kong, Monaco, Greece and Italy, in 1981 and onwards.

As she progressed her rigorous international and national dance and education commitments, Terri envisioned an advanced, full-time vocational dance education program. In 1973 with Margita Chudziak, Terri established a comprehensive dance course for talented students with the Creative Dance Centre (WA). In 1975 this entity was renamed The Graduate College of Dance. In 1982 Diana de Vos joined Terri as Principal. By 1989 the College offered an elite dance training program that allowed students to complete secondary school academic subjects alongside an extensive dance training course. A partnership was established with Swanbourne Senior High School where the College was able to locate. Terri wrote the curriculum for Ballet Studies for years 11 and 12 which were accredited subjects which Ballet students could use to graduate from secondary school.

When enrolments at Swanbourne Senior High School declined, the Education Department chose to close the school and send its students to the newly established Shenton College where there was no room for the Graduate College of Dance. Perth Modern School was chosen as the new location for the College. Terri became a member of the school's staff as the Director of the College and instruction began in the newly refurbished rooms in 1999. The purpose-built ballet studio became available in 2000.

Terri continued at Mod until 2002 when Dawn Weller became the Director of the College. Terri returned to the Charlesworth Ballet School which she operated in conjunction with her daughter Sonya Shepherd and continued to promote excellence. She became deeply involved with Youth Ballet WA.



Throughout her career Terri has been recognised for her skills, and her contribution to the dance community and the wider community. The list of her awards is extensive.. They include:

1957 – The Ulanova Laureate – Moscow – Youth Arts Festival  
1970 – Advanced Teachers Certificate of the R.A.D.  
1987 – Fellow of the Classical Dance Teachers Australia Inc.  
1994 – Medal of the Order of Australia O.A.M. Arts & Culture  
2006 – Western Australian Citizen of the Year for Arts, Culture & Entertainment  
2015 – Lifetime Teacher Award– Australian Independent Teachers Association  
2016 – Lifetime Achievement – Australian Dance Awards – Ausdance  
2023 – State Treasure Award

The students at the College were Modernians and continued to undertake their academic studies at the school until 2011. The ballet students were easily identifiable within the school. As highly tuned athletes they moved about the school with an easy grace and poise. The College always demanded a high level of personal presentation and the female students all sported a 'dance bun'

Many of the students who graduated, gained principal, soloist and corps de ballet positions in International, National and State Ballet and dance companies. Briana Shepherd who is now a newsreader and journalist with the ABC was one of those, and became the first Australian hired by the New York City Ballet. She is Terri's granddaughter.

When the government decided in 2005, that Perth Modern School would again become an academic selective school, Mod was no longer a school easily able to share its curriculum. The Board and Director reviewed the program and the alternatives available, and in 2011 became an out-of-school vocational dance program, still located at Perth Modern School. By 2021, after the enrolments at the school had increased because of the admission of Year 7s, there was less space available at the school. The College then relocated to West Leederville where it continues to offer an elite vocational dance program, including WACE accredited courses.

Written on behalf of the Museum by Robyn White

## GWENYTH LOVE

### PMS student 1926-1930, staff member 1967-1976

Gwenyth Love was born in 1913. Her family lived in Hensman Road Subiaco so Gwen attended Subiaco State School. Gwen gained a Secondary School Scholarship in 1926, the year before her father died.

Her mother Nina, was left with three small children to raise. A resourceful woman, she started the Kings Park Tearooms in the 1920s, opening for afternoon tea on Sundays.

At Mod Gwen was a member of the tennis, hockey and lifesaving teams, a school prefect in 1930, library prefect, red faction captain and editor of the The Sphinx

Gwen sat for her Leaving Certificate in 1930: she gained distinctions for Biology, History, Maths A and Maths B. She was awarded a General Exhibition and her lifelong friend Sheila Mansel was awarded History and English Exhibitions at UWA to commence in 1931. The Exhibition gave some degree of economic security, very important in those times of the depression worldwide.

In 1933 she was employed as a monitor at a one teacher school near Busselton where she walked to and from the school from the farm where she boarded. She completed her degree by correspondence and was awarded her Bachelor of Arts in April 1934. She was then employed as a "real" teacher at Princess May Girls School in Fremantle. Teaching gave her immeasurable pleasure.

During the Christmas school holidays of 1937 Sheila, Gwen and Gwen's Mother undertook a boat-drive holiday to the eastern states. They left on the MV Duntroon and then toured in a car which they called "Felix". They took the boat to South Australia and then drove to Victoria and NSW. It was an adventurous trip and once, their car rolled over. Luckily, they were able to right it.

During the early 1940s Gwen joined the National Fitness Council and became a team leader in 1941. At one stage she was a vice-president of National Fitness. At the same time, she continued to teach.

Gwen married Arthur MacLennan in November 1946 and had to resign from her teaching job. It caused much angst but family was important to her and she never regretted that decision.





In 1966 Gwen was delighted to hear that married women were now employed to overcome teacher shortages and returned to Mod. She loved this period of her life, gained great satisfaction from the opportunity to nurture and encourage her special students.

Gwen volunteered with SPELD (children with specific learning disabilities), Meals on Wheels, and other organisations. She returned to university and studied anthropology. She learned to play bridge, joined a Scottish dancing group, and played tennis at Shenton Park.

In 1987 her husband Mac died unexpectedly and her life took a different turn. She took the opportunity to see the world and early 1988 saw Gwen head for Europe with a backpack and Youth Hostel Handbook!

Gwen passed away at Sir Charles Gairdner Hospital on 4 September 1997. A life well lived. Her brother David Love (1928-1931) attended Mod as did his daughter Marilyn Macaulay (nee Love 1959-61). Gwen had two children Keith MacLennan and her daughter Beryl Morris.

Written on behalf of the Museum by Beryl Morris in association with Sharon Williams.



The 1930 Girl's Tennis Team l-r Sheila Mansel, Betty Jackson, Gwen Love and Leah Cohen.

Sheila, Betty, and Gwen became schoolteachers. Leah Cohen practised law and was part of Australia's delegation to the United Nations. Her very generous philanthropy supported many educational endeavours.

## REUNIONS

### Annual Reunion 2024

A small but enthusiastic group enjoyed a delectable High Tea in the Staff Room on Saturday the 30th of August. High Tea is something of a misnomer as probably more wine was enjoyed than tea. A particularly welcome guest was Sallie Davies who recruited her daughter Megan Paul to ensure she could take part. This was followed by the concert in the Cyril Tyler Auditorium which fittingly honoured the Year 12s' final musical performance at Mod. The concert was uplifting, and a great credit to the conductors and students.



Enid Rose (née Riley), Jim Rose and Colin Ross



Wendy Watts (née Snow)



Ruth Barrett (née McWhinney) and Sallie Davies (née Hicks)



Jenny Bardsley (née McKenzie) and Jenni Ross



Ruth Barrett (née McWhinney) and Sallie Davies (née Hicks)



Jenny Bardsley (née McKenzie) and Jenni Ross



## UPCOMING REUNIONS

### Class of 1959

The Perth Modern School class of 1959 will hold a reunion on **Monday 18 November 2024**

Contact: **Merv Lynch** - [m.lynch@curtin.edu.au](mailto:m.lynch@curtin.edu.au) and 0478 882 304 for details

### Class of 1964

A 60-year reunion in November is planned for ex-students from 1964. Attendees at the 2014 event will shortly be contacted from the existing database.

Enquiries to **Janet Beed (Wright)** [jandenbrae@hotmail.com](mailto:jandenbrae@hotmail.com) if you have not been contacted.



PERTH MODERNIAN SOCIETY

## ANNUAL REPORT

Our 2023 Annual Report was presented at our 29th Annual General Meeting on Monday 27th May 2024, and is also available on our website:

[www.perthmoderniansociety.org.au/wp-content/uploads/Modernian-Society-Annual-Report-2023-WEB.pdf](http://www.perthmoderniansociety.org.au/wp-content/uploads/Modernian-Society-Annual-Report-2023-WEB.pdf)

## YOUR SAY

### Music at Mod – Congratulations

Former Music student John Bertram sent the following message after he received his copy of Music at Mod. John became a professor within the Department of Anatomy and Developmental Biology at Monash University:

*I'm writing to pass on my sincere congratulations on your wonderful book Music at Mod. It really is a very significant effort, with so much detail, so many facts and figures, brilliant photographs.*

*It is a very classy production and you and your team should be extremely proud of producing such a quality product. I don't know what I expected, but I did not expect such a polished outcome.*

*It has been fun to reminisce about a lot of the things that happened during my time at Mod. I had a few interesting thoughts:*

*While I knew a lot of the things mentioned in the book about my time at the school (1968-1972), there were so many things I didn't know. I must have been wandering around in somewhat of an adolescent haze - not uncommon I know.*

*I wasn't really very aware of the concerns of the administration about the "them and us" problem - i.e. music students and the non-music students. I knew we were different from the bulk of the school because the musoes did not come from the school catchment area. So, in a way we didn't actually belong. But apart from that I felt totally at home. I certainly didn't feel superior in anyway compared to the non-musoes, but perhaps some perceived that trait in us.*

*I didn't perhaps appreciate just how much time was taken up with our music rehearsals, camps and public performances - let alone weekly lessons and hours of private practice per week. I remember much of this, but when I read about how much we did I wonder how we ever had time to do our other subjects. I do remember undergoing a major panic about 6 weeks out from the matriculation exams when I suddenly realised just how much work I needed to do. Again, wandering around in that adolescent haze. I think we had some practice exams a few months before the final exams, and that was a super reality check.*





*So, thank you very much again for producing this fine and important book. It must have taken an enormous amount of work. It tells a story that could have so easily been lost, and that would have been a real shame.*

John

**Readers, do you too have something to say? Please address your comments to Roger Stubbs ([rstubbsbunbury@gmail.com](mailto:rstubbsbunbury@gmail.com)) or Robyn White ([robynwhite5@hotmail.com](mailto:robynwhite5@hotmail.com)).**



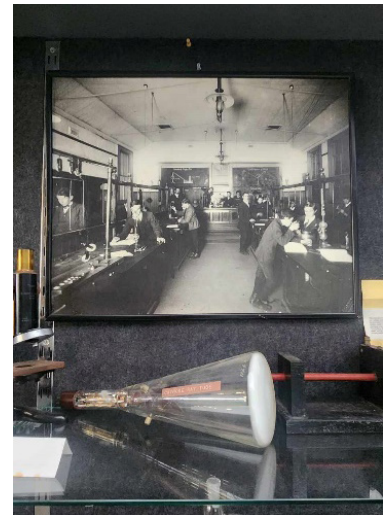
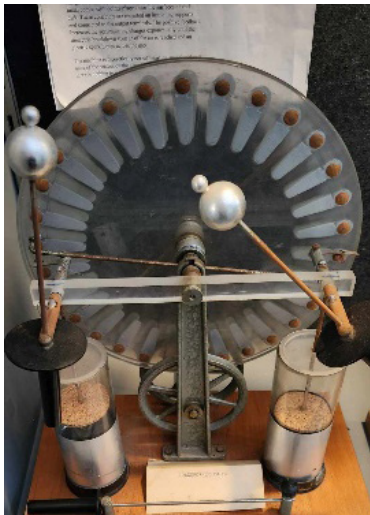
PERTH MODERNIAN SOCIETY  
MUSEUM ASSOCIATION  
INCORPORATED

## MUSEUM MATTERS

Monday morning is a lively time in the Museum as our valued volunteers go about the business of preserving our records. Tasks such as filing and cataloguing may seem mundane, but it is amazing how often we discover gems of information that generate great interest and vigorous discussion. Hardly a week goes by without a descendant of a deceased Modernian dropping by with a box of absolute treasures: letters, diaries, superb photographs and other memorabilia. And then there are the genealogists who are desperate to learn of a relative they once heard was a Modernian. And visits too from other schools who are fascinated by what they find and leave inspired to do something similar. Feel welcome to join us. Give me a call on (08) 6189 3690.

### Science Week

The theme for Science Week 2024 was ***Species Survival - More than just sustainability***. To celebrate, two major displays were set up outside the Parsons Library, one prepared by students, the other by the Museum. The students prepared beautiful illustrations of threatened species to inform their display. Museum volunteer Loren White prepared a fascinating display of science equipment with which most of us educated in the 1950s are familiar but which represents bewilderment to most current students. 'What is that?' Luckily the display explained. Thanks to library staffer Tonya Dunne who assisted.



### Reunions

We always prepare year specific displays for reunions held at the school but 2024 has been unusual in that no reunions have been held. After a visit from Peter Stephenson and Russell McKenny (class of 1965) that may soon change. Reunions are a terrific way to catch up with the diverse exploits of past friends and acquaintances. If you are considering a class reunion, please contact **Barbara Mallett** or the Museum to support you in creating a memorable event and by finding fellow class-mates.



## Donations

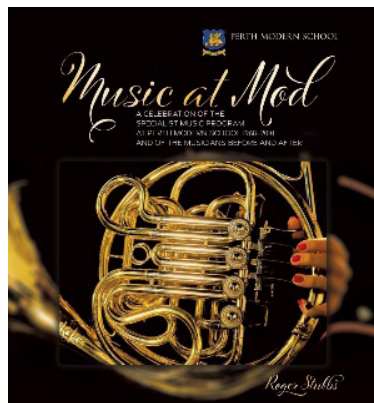
We would like to sincerely thank all who donated to our annual appeal. As a charitable organisation, our only income is via grant money or our own funding-raising.

The following are the most recent donors to the Museum. Their generosity is very much appreciated.

Mrs Wendy McCallum  
Mr Barrie Baker  
Mr John Stone AO

Mr W. L Turnbull  
Sheila Robinson  
Dr Robyn White  
Hon Daryl Williams AM KC

Mr Ross Ledger AM  
Mr Michael R Cullen  
Mrs Margaret Pinchback



Our Museum volunteers and Board are incredibly proud of the beautiful book that records the history of the specialist music program at Perth Modern School and the musicians before and after. Sales of the books are continuing steadily – but books do remain to be sold. The Museum Association is subsidising the cost of each book by ~30% – ensuring these are affordable as well as beautiful. Books are available to purchase at the Museum, at the School's main reception or via [www.perthmoderniansociety.org.au/music-at-mod](http://www.perthmoderniansociety.org.au/music-at-mod). Orders can be posted.

## Visitors

Many Modernians and visitors came into the Museum during terms 2 and 3. They enjoyed our displays, donated items and shared stories. Representatives from two schools visited us including three staff members from Bunbury Senior High School. Bunbury SHS was commenced in 1918. After 108 years the school has a large store of memorabilia. They were interested in what our museum displays, conserves, the spaces we occupy and how we are funded. We have of course, offered support in any way we can.

### Kate Chaney MP – Federal Member for Curtin

On Monday 5 August Kate Chaney visited the Museum to share the wonderful news that we were successful in our Federal Government application for the 2023-2024 Volunteer Grant of \$2,000. Kate spent over an hour in the Museum looking at various displays and engaging with our volunteers and Principal Mitchell Mackay.

Kate messaged us. *'Congratulations! We are so excited to see this money used to assist you and your volunteers to continue your wonderful work in the community.'* Thank you, Kate we are also very excited, and appreciate your support and assistance.



Kate Chaney MHR, Mitchell Mackay (principal), Robyn White

### **Gwenyth MacLennan (nee Love 1926-1930) – Student and Mod Teacher**

We thank Gwen's daughter Beryl Morris, for the treasure trove of precious items she brought to the Museum. Included were some beautiful black and white photos, school certificates, two shields and 25 Sphinx magazines. An extract from Gwen's story appears elsewhere.

### **Julie Doncon (nee Green 1968-1972)**

It was fabulous to see Julie back in the Museum with another wonderful donation – a long-playing record (vinyl) of the Perth Modern School Choristers at the Concert Hall. The Musical Director for the recording was Mr John Christmass, with Faith Smith as the Accompanist. Julie also helped identify a number of student musicians from a 1971 photo on display.

Previously Julie had donated her fabulous scrap book from her music scholarship years which also provided invaluable documents, information, and photos for Roger Stubbs as part of his research for Music at Mod. There is a beautiful photo of Julie in Music at Mod and of the 1968 Clarinets.

Julie was a prefect in 1972 and became a teacher after completing her diploma in teaching at Graylands Teacher's College.



### **Perth Modernian Society Museum Incorporated - Board News**

At the August 7<sup>th</sup> meeting of the Perth Modernian Society Museum Association Board, we welcomed in person Jeff Lai, Sharon Williams, Thalia Cole, Matt Healey and Robyn White. Ashleigh Blechynden and Monica Brierley-Hay attended online. We were delighted to learn that in September, Monica will take up a place at the London School of Economics to study for her Masters in International Law. She will continue to work on our Board – online – during her year away. We were also able to properly welcome our new board member, Thalia Cole. Thalia brings to the Board a variety of communication and marketing skills that will be of great value to the Museum and Board.

### **Museum Visiting Hours and Social Media**

Our Museum is open from 9.30am until midday on Mondays during school terms, or by appointment. Other times may be arranged by phoning (08) 6189 3690 or by emailing [museum@perthmoderniansociety.org.au](mailto:museum@perthmoderniansociety.org.au).

For those on social media you can also follow Museum news and events on Facebook:

<https://www.facebook.com/perthmodernschoolmuseum>.



### **THALIA COLE - NEW BOARD MEMBER**

I am very excited to join the Perth Modernian Society Museum Association Board. I have admired the work of the Society and Museum Association since I started working at Perth Modern School in 2012. It is fabulous to be part of an enthusiastic and hard-working group of volunteers whose love of Perth Modern lingers on well after they have left the school.

When I first came on board at Mod, I was working in three roles: Teacher, Executive Assistant to the Principal, and Marketing and Communications Officer. I had worked as a secondary school teacher since 2002, in Social Studies and English. In 2010 and 2011, I took a career break and studied Journalism at Curtin University. I now manage school marketing, communications, and public relations at Mod, a job that keeps me very busy and fulfilled.

Over the past 12 years, I have learned much about the school's amazing history and heritage as well as the incredible Modernians who have walked these hallways, going on to achieve great things in their chosen fields of endeavour. One exciting task I have had was being the project manager of the book, ***A Celebration of Contribution: Tales of the courage, commitment and creativity of Modernians 1911-1963*** that was published in 2017. I feel very privileged to be a 'Modernian' and I look forward to contributing in any way I can to the Museum, especially in helping promote it to the school community.





*Thank you to the volunteers, families and friends who have forwarded/alerted us to the following information and memories of former PMS students and staff for publication and/or inclusion in Museum records*

Name	Year at PMS	Position	Deseased
Richard Pilpel	1946-1947	Student	5/08/2024
Thomas Lang	1949-1953	Student	12/07/2024
Geoff Hall	1954-1955	Student	14/05/2024
Michael Dilworth	1949-1953	Student	30/06/2024
John Feutrill	1950-1954	Student	6/06/2024
Robert Tonkinson	1954-1955	Student	6/06/2024
Robert Cross	1971-1977	Staff	3/03/2024
Gary Gillard	1956-1960	Student	14/07/2024

## TRIBUTES

### **ROBERT (BOB) CROSS** **PMS Deputy Principal 1971-1997**

Bob was Deputy Principal of Mod from 1971 to 1977. Like most bonded teachers at the time he began his career in regional Western Australia. His first appointment was in Albany before transferring to Bunbury Senior High School in 1958. He was to spend five years in Bunbury until he transferred to Tuart Hill Senior High School in 1963.

He became Senior Master of Physical Education at Tuart Hill, a position he held for six years. Promotion to Deputy Principal took him to Esperance for one year before took up his position at Perth Modern School, then known as Perth Modern Senior High School, in 1971.

The Special Music Program was in its infancy in 1971 and many of its students who travelled from across metropolitan Perth were a little daunted. Comments posted on the Museum's Facebook page when his death was announced expressed appreciation for his cheerful and sympathetic demeanour which students found of great assistance.

Jonathan Laird remembered his broad smile and his swift stride. 'He was a nice fella'.

Jan Saunders considered him a great man and a great Deputy Principal.

Wendy Oliver remembers him as an 'approachable nice man'.

Charlotte Stockwell remembered a man who, 'tried to help when I was miserable'.

Bob was promoted from Mod to the position of Principal. His last appointment was at South Fremantle Senior High School.



A cheerful Bob Cross with Clare Casey (principal mistress)  
and Joe Stokes (principal)

## **RICHARD ISAAC PILPEL OAM** **PMS student 1946-1947**

Richard enrolled at Mod in 1946 as a New Four, but unlike many who came from Perth Boys he was not consigned to the Thomas St Annexe but placed in Science IV, a mixed class in which there were some very impressive students.

Better known as Dick, his family owned Pilpel Print, a significant enterprise near the city centre, so it was inevitable that he would join the business and ultimately become its head. He was a leader in the industry and in 2006 was presented with the Printing Industry Award for Outstanding Service to the Printing Industry.

A number of organisations benefitted from Dick's preparedness to print their publications for a modest price, including Perth Modern School and the Guild Undergraduates. For many years he printed The Pelican.

Like so many Modernians, Dick was an active community member. Some of his contributions include the presidency of his Rotary Club, the presidency of the Maurice Zeffert Nursing Home and the role of Master at the Lodge of Wisdom.

In 2008 Dick received a Medal in the Order of Australia, 'For service to the printing industry in Western Australia, and to the Jewish community'.

## **PILPEL PRINT - Printer of "The Sphinx" for some years** **Memories of Science 1V Mixed 1946**

Coming from Perth Boy's at end of 9th Grade, I knew I would be sent to the Thomas St annexe. Having friends at Mod, Noel Sampson allowed me to sit for a Chemistry Exam during the Xmas holidays. Not having done chem in year 9, I had to learn the subject before entry in 1946. Luckily I was accepted in the first 4th year mixed - 16 girls and 10 boys. The girls in that class were brilliant and matched the boys in all subjects. Five of the girls went on to become pharmacists. Hazel Allen, Fay Flint, Mary Turner, Maureen Maxwell and Betty Wilson. Girls in those days never took Dentistry or Medicine. In June 2004 Mary, Fay, Margaret Redman, Graham Glick and yours truly had morning tea at Mary's and recounted old times

### **From *Sprinter News*:**

Richard Isaac Pilpel has worked at Pilpel Print since 1948. His prestigious award is for service to the printing industry in Western Australia, and to the Jewish community.

He is known as one of the pioneers of the Perth Printing industry and his extensive knowledge has been a key factor in the business's success.

In 2006 Dick Pilpel was presented with the Printing Industry Award for Outstanding Service to the Printing Industry.

Pilpel Print reached its 80<sup>th</sup> Anniversary in 2007. The company was established by Joshua Pilpel and two generations still manage the business.

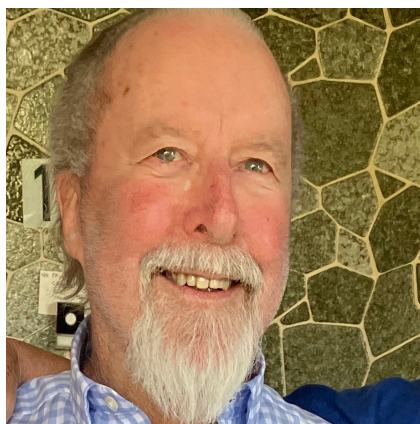
## **Thomas Andrew Lang** **PMS student 1949-1953**

Tom was an all-rounder. He was a prefect, captain of Blue sports faction and represented the school in athletics, rugby and tennis. In 1953 he was a member of the PMS tennis team that regained the Slazenger Cup – the interschool tennis competition - from Aquinas College.

Tom became a chartered accountant and quickly rose up the ranks to become a senior partner in the international accounting firm Deloitte's. He was competent, ethical and highly respected and was sought as a Chair of over 40 companies. He knew, and was known by, the movers and shakers of Western Australian society. But he was never heard to big note himself, badmouth or gossip about anyone.

He continued to play good tennis at the Royal King's Park Tennis Club until his 88th birthday.

- Max Kamien



## **GARRY MICHAEL GILLARD** **PMS student 1956-1960**

Garry attended Mod between 1956 and 1960. He had a particular passion for drama and was an enthusiastic participant in school productions such as The Sorcerer and Patience alongside Lois Achimovich, Michael Phillips, Geoffrey Michaels and Bruce Williams.

As a bonded teacher Garry was sent to Narrogin where he became a reluctant teacher of French. Travels to Europe followed and on return other teaching appointments.



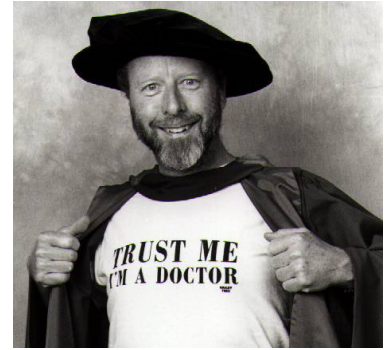
By the 1970s following his completion of a BA with honours at UWA, Garry had developed serious academic ambitions and enrolled at the newly established Murdoch University to complete a Master of Philosophy. In 1977 he was the first student to graduate at Murdoch.

Appointments to Deakin University and the University of the South Pacific followed. At the University of the South Pacific, he was the coordinator of Course Development for those parts of the South Pacific which included Samoa, Tonga, Vanuatu, The Cook Islands and Fiji.

In 1985, after his return to Perth, Garry was appointed to the staff of Murdoch University. When he retired in 2008, he was a Senior Lecturer in the School of Media Communication and Culture.

In 1994 Garry completed a doctorate, the subject of which was, *Supertext and the Mind-Culture System: Freud, Levi-Strauss, Bateson*.

Garry had a particular love of both Fremantle and Australasian Cinema, and spent considerable time documenting both on-line in a way which illustrates his vast knowledge. The Australasian Cinema site documents over 800 Australasian films.



They are Garry's legacy. The importance of the sites has been recognised by the National Library of Australia which has chosen to include both in its digital archive.

More may be learned about Garry and especially his years at Mod at [www.garrygillard.net](http://www.garrygillard.net).

### **GEOFFREY HALL** **PMS student 1954-55**

Geoff was brought up in Highgate where he befriended many Greek and Jewish fellow students and their families. He attended Perth Boys High School and after obtaining the Junior Certificate he transferred to Perth Modern School. There he excelled in English, long-distance swimming and tennis. He was captain of the 1955 tennis team that won the Slazenger Cup. Geoff had a very short back and sides haircut popular in Germany. His nickname became 'Fritz'. This morphed into an alter ego that he berated when the tennis ball did not go where he had directed it.

After matriculating, Geoff joined the West Australian newspaper as a cadet reporter. He later became the editor of the Western Mail, a weekly paper set up by Robert Holmes à Court in opposition to the West Australian. This led to Geoff's interest in the Stock Market. He was headhunted to the position of press secretary to the then Premier, Sir Charles Court.

Geoff was a wordsmith with high level editorial skills that he readily donated to his rich and academic friends. He never charged for his services. He said that: "You do not charge your friends" This misplaced sense of pride and his need for independence extended into his old age where he rejected all the aged care help for which he was eligible.

Geoff was good company. He was a good listener and always well informed about world affairs courtesy of SBS television. He was a kind person and a loyal friend especially to his PMS classmates, Mike Pethick and Bill Burdett.

- Max Kamien

### **Michael John Dilworth** **PMS student 1950-1954**

Many will have seen the wonderful obituary for Michael written by Patrick Cornish that appeared in *The West Australian*. For those who missed it, here is a brief summary of his remarkable career.

Michael was enrolled at Mod between 1950 and 1954. Apart from his outstanding academic success at school, Michael was a prefect and company Sergeant Major in the cadet unit. Michael received seven distinctions and a General Exhibition in the Leaving Examinations. He chose to study agricultural science at the University of Western Australia. He graduated with first class honours. The subject of his dissertation was soil microbiology. Soil microbiology and the biochemistry of nitrogen fixation and the biochemistry and physiology of legume modules were to remain central to his ongoing research.

After he completed his PhD Michael first travelled to Oxford where he undertook post-doctoral studies. In 1965 he became a research fellow at the University of Wisconsin, renowned for its agricultural programs. Upon his return to Western Australia, he continued his research at UWA and became the associate professor of agricultural biochemistry in 1974.





In 1975 Michael was appointed the foundation professor of biology at Murdoch University as position he held until 2003 when he retired. His teaching and especially his research continued. As a result, he served on the Australian Research Council for six years and was pro-vice-chancellor research.

In retirement Michael devoted greater time to the vineyard he developed with wife Mary in the 1990s. Known as Abbey Creek it has a dramatic setting in the shadow of the Porongurups.

### **ROBERT TONKINSON** **PMS student 1954-1955**

Bob aka 'Tonky', came to PMS from the now extinct Claremont High School. He enjoyed the academic challenge and the diversity of backgrounds of his fellow students. He represented PMS at hockey and tennis.

Bob had set his sights on becoming a teacher. He enrolled in a BA at UWA at the same time as attending the Claremont Teachers' Training College.

His first posting was to the Harvey Junior High School.

His BA studies introduced him to Anthropology which was to become his life's work.

He did field work in Narrogin for his honours degree. In 1963, Bob left teaching to pursue postgraduate studies and undertook field work at Jigalong. He received a MA for his thesis "Social structure and acculturation of Aborigines in the Western Desert".

Bob then participated in a large study of relocated communities in the Pacific under the direction of Professor Homer Barnett, of the University of Oregon; his study for the project was conducted in the new Hebrides, now Vanuatu. After producing the required monograph, he was offered a one-year teaching position at the University of Oregon.

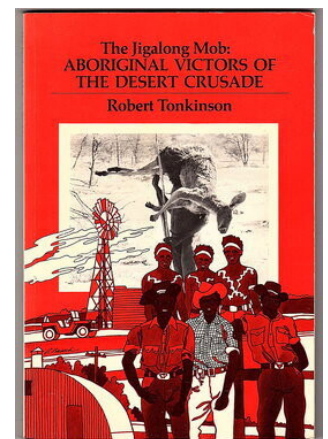
In 1969, Bob returned to Australia to conduct further field work at Jigalong for which he was awarded a PhD from the University of British Columbia, Vancouver, Canada, for his thesis "Western Desert Aboriginal rainmaking ritual."

Bob held academic positions at the Universities of Oregon (where he met his wife, Myrna also a social anthropologist) and the ANU. He was appointed to the Chair of Anthropology at UWA in 1984. He also had visiting appointments at the universities of British Columbia, Auckland and Heidelberg.

Bob was an entertaining speaker and a superb teacher for people of all ages.

He served on the Council of the Australian Institute of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Studies for over two decades and for many decades was a strong supporter of the UWA Camp for Kids.

- Max Kamien



## **MODERNIANS WHO DIED IN THE SERVICE OF THEIR COUNTRY**

*Number 24 in a special series of articles researched and prepared for publication by  
Robert Johnson, PMS student 1961-65 and Museum Volunteer*

### **ARTHUR NICOLAY (PMS 1937-38) and IAN CASS (1935-36)**

This is the story of two Perth Modern School boys whose time at the school in the 1930's did not coincide. However, their service in two RAAF squadrons did overlap, and, by one of those strange coincidences of life, they spent their last few hours flying on the same day, on the same operation, and in the same aircraft.

**Arthur Renfred Nicolay** was a Bayswater boy, born on 22 August 1920 to Arthur and Violet. He completed his Junior Certificate in nine subjects at Perth Boys School in 1936 and commenced fourth year at Modern School in February 1937. His teachers said that he had ability but not the interest. He left the school in June 1938 to begin employment at Boans (now Myer) as an Advertising assistant. While there he engaged in a correspondence course in marketing and advertising so he may have found something academic that interested him. He certainly found it in the Air Force.



Arthur joined the RAAF on 27 April 1940. Of average height and weight with fair hair and grey eyes, he worked his way through various Air Force training courses in 1940 at Maylands, Essendon and Pt Cooke. He was reclassified on 12 January 1941 as an Airman Pilot qualified to fly Avro Ansons and promoted to Sergeant, all at the age of 20. He undertook a navigation course at Laverton in Victoria and was then posted on 12 January 1941 to No. 14 Squadron at Pearce, 50 kilometres north of Perth, where he learned to fly Lockheed Hudson light bombers. While at Pearce he was promoted to Pilot Officer on 1 June 1941 and to Flying Officer on 1 December 1941.

**William Ian Cass** was born in Busselton on 5 February 1922 to parents Fred and Winifred. He enrolled at Perth Modern School on 5 February 1935, his 13th birthday. The family was then living in the area of West Subiaco now known as Shenton Park. Ian's mother died four months later on 4 June at the age of 33. This tragedy may have adversely affected Ian's schoolwork as his teachers reported in August that he had "gone back considerably – seems to have lost interest." He failed his final first-year exams in 1935 and his second-year exams in 1936. He left the school in December 1936 at age 14, moved to Kalgoorlie, attended Eastern Goldfields High School in 1937 and passed his Junior exams in six subjects in November. He worked as a junior clerk for 18 months before joining the Air Force.

A tall, well-built lad, Ian enlisted in the RAAF in Perth on 9 December 1940 when he was 18. He trained as a Wireless Operator/Air Gunner in Ballarat, Victoria, during the first six months of 1941. After graduation he was posted in August to No. 14 Squadron at Pearce.

### No. 14 Squadron

The paths of Arthur and Ian crossed at Pearce when Ian arrived there on 10 August 1941, seven months after Arthur, and they served together for the rest of their young lives. Ian was a Sergeant and Arthur was an officer so they would have been in different messes and living quarters. However, it is likely that they flew as part of the same four-man crew from time to time as part of their training in the RAAF's newly acquired Lockheed Hudson bombers (see photo below). One wonders whether their conversations ever caused them to realise they both attended Modern School in the 1930's.

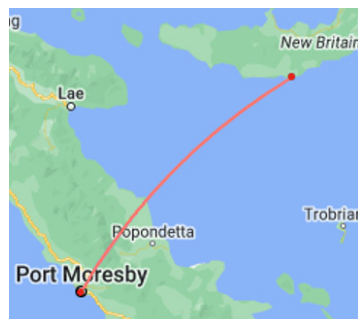
Arthur's commanding officer at Pearce provided a glimpse into the man that Arthur had become. In his Officer's Confidential Report dated 16 February 1942, just prior to Arthur's departure for New Guinea, he wrote:

*"Is fond of music and a good pianist. A keen and reliable Hudson captain with plenty of stamina and determination for intensive flying operations. Tends slightly towards the larrikin type."*

### No. 32 Squadron

No. 32 Squadron was created on 21 February 1942 in Pt Moresby and Ian and Arthur were posted there as part of the squadron's initial establishment. The squadron was based at the notorious 7-Mile Drome where conditions were primitive, the weather was hot and humid, the food was bad, the rain was torrential and mud was everywhere – where they lived, ate and slept. To make matters worse, the airfield was regularly bombed and strafed by the crack Japanese air wing based in Lae on the north-west coast.

Less than a fortnight after arriving in Pt Moresby, five of the squadron's Hudson bombers were tasked with the bombing of the Japanese air base at Gasmata on New Britain, a distance of 490 kilometres. Arthur was the pilot of Hudson A16-101 and Ian was the Wireless Operator/Air Gunner.



Map showing Pt Moresby and Gasmata  
Source: Google Maps



Lockheed Hudson Light Bomber  
Source: Temora Aviation Museum

The five aircraft took off just after 10pm on 3 March 1942. One turned back when it flew into a tropical storm and the other four bombed the target soon after midnight. Losses were high with two of the aircraft being shot down by Japanese anti-aircraft fire. One of those was A16-101.

After the war, an RAAF Searcher Team led by the legendary Squadron Leader Keith Rundle travelled twice to the area and found the wrecks of both aircraft, largely due to the substantial assistance of the local inhabitants. A16-101 was lying off the coast on a reef in a metre of water. There was no evidence of human remains.



The crews are remembered on the Rabaul War Memorial and at the Australian War Memorial in Canberra. Arthur was 21 when he died and Ian had just turned 20.

### RALPH BILSBY

Ralph Bisby is not a Modernian but his story has been included because of his very strong family connection to the school.

The May 2023 edition of the newsletter included an article on Perth Modern School brother-and-sister students Margaret (Peg) and William (Bill) Johnson, and a visit to the museum on 11 April 2023 by Ralph Bilsby. Ralph is the son of Margaret and her husband, Harry Bilsby, and the nephew of Bill.

During Ralph's visit he mentioned that he was named after his uncle Ralph, Harry's brother, a pilot with the RAAF who lost his life over Italy in 1943 when he was 21. Had he survived, he would have become Margaret's brother-in-law when she and Harry married in 1945.

I passed through Rome on the way to Canada in March and took the opportunity to visit the town of Cassino and the historic 1,500-year-old Abbey at the top of Monte Cassino, the first monastery of the Benedictine order.

Flight Sergeant Ralph Bilsby was serving with No. 142 Squadron, RAF, when his Wellington bomber was shot down over Amigliano Del Arco seven miles north east of Naples at 3am on 22 July 1943. He and his four crew members are buried in the same row of the Cassino War Cemetery, which can be seen from the Abbey.

Bill Johnson served in the RAN during World War 2 as a Petty Officer Radio Mechanic and Harry Bilsby served in the Army as a Gunner with the 2/3rd Field Regiment. Margaret's and Harry's son Ralph was conscripted in 1966 and served in Vietnam as a Signaller with 104 Signal Squadron for a year from July 1967 to July 1968. Ralph wrote a book about his life entitled Down the Line from Collie.

The photos below show Bill in his RAN uniform, Ralph with his pilot's wings, and Ralph's headstone with four of the Commonwealth War Graves Commission staff who attend the graves of the 3,982 servicemen who lie in the Cassino War Cemetery.



Ordinary Seaman Bill Johnson



Flight Sergeant Ralph Bilsby



CWGC Staff at Ralph's Headstone

## LEST WE FORGET

A more detailed and fully referenced version of this article is on the Honour Board at [honour.perthmodern.wa.edu.au](https://honour.perthmodern.wa.edu.au)

