



# PERTH MODERNIAN SOCIETY NEWSLETTER



Issue 59, February 2024, Vol 4 No1

**WELCOME** to your **Perth Modernian e-Newsletter, Issue 59, February 2024, Vol 4 No1** 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  
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[info@perthmoderniansociety.org.au](mailto:info@perthmoderniansociety.org.au)  
All messages received either by phone or email are promptly forwarded electronically for further action.

## Congratulations

### PERTH MODERN SCHOOL

Perth Modern School has achieved the number one academic ranking for the WACE every year from 2016 to 2023. As of 2022, the School Curriculum and Standards Authority stopped publishing school academic rankings and median ATARs. However 'The West Australian' newspaper analyses the publicly released data and determines the top ranking school based on the number of subjects in which students receive awards. The newspaper's determination was that Perth Modern School was the top ranking school in WA in 2022 and 2023. Full details are available at [www.perthmodern.wa.edu.au](http://www.perthmodern.wa.edu.au)

### DIARY DATES

#### REUNIONS

**2024 ANNUAL REUNION**  
**TBA**

**CLASS OF 1954-58**  
Celebrating 70 year anniversary  
of first year at high school  
**Friday 19 April 2024**  
(see details in **REUNIONS**)

**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 60, May 2024, Vol 4 No 2**  
**20 May** copy deadline for circulation  
by **1 June 2024**

**Issue 61, August 2024, Vol 4 No 3**  
**20 August** copy deadline for circulation  
by **1 September 2024**

**Issue 62, November 2024, Vol 4 No 4**  
**20 November** copy deadline for circulation  
by **1 December 2024**

### PERTH MODERNIAN SOCIETY MUSEUM



Around 100 or so Modernians and guests enjoyed the 'Music at Mod' book launch on Friday, 1 December 2023. Everyone in attendance enjoyed wonderful performances from graduates of the 1968 inaugural class **Sue King (nee Dunne)** and **Lea Hayward**, Lumina members including **Monica Brierley-Hay** (Class of 2011) and **Sam Lander** (Class of 2007), **Amy Fortnum** (Class of 2011), and **Joshua Woon** (cello) currently Year 11.

On 18 December 2023, **Avril Grace** wrote on Facebook: "Wow, I just received my copy of the 'Music at Mod' book here in Canberra. It is just such a wonderful tribute to the music program and staff who made it so special. Sending a big, big thank you from me to the authors for this cherished souvenir 🎵💖"

### AUSTRALIA DAY HONOURS 2024

**Charles Wilson Tuckey OAM, PMS student 1951-52**

Previously Carnarvon Hotel Proprietor and President of the Country Shire Councils Association The Honourable Charles Wilson Tuckey was named Member of the Order of Australia for service to the people and parliament of Australia, 1980-2009 as Liberal MHR for O'Connor and 1998-2003 as Federal Minister of State.



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COUNTRY

### Acknowledgments

Thank you to all letter writers  
and contributors:

AFFM  
Barrie Baker  
Cambridge POST  
Thalia Cole  
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Robert Johnson  
Norma Keys  
Barbara Mallett  
Perth Modern School  
Keith Schilling  
Roger Stubbs  
Wendy Watts  
Robyn White  
Mary-Jane Whitehead  
Alison Woodman

### Coordinator/Editor

Sallie Davies

### Layout

Stuart Gould  
ShoreDigital

## CENTENARIANS

Norma Keys (nee Finney), PMS student 1937-41

Norma Keys (nee Finney) celebrated her 100th birthday in Victoria on 17 January 2024. She has always been grateful for the excellent education she received at Mod, the lifetime friendships she made and her many happy memories. She writes:



*"Perth Modern School has always been an important part of my life. The recent celebration of my 100th birthday in January prompted me to happily reflect on my five years at the school from 1937 to 1941.*

*"At that time there was a 'selective entry' process with 50 girls and 50 boys statewide receiving either a scholarship or an 'entrance' to attend the school. 'MOD' was the pinnacle of secondary education in Western Australia. In 1936, in my final year of primary school, I was fortunate to receive a scholarship. The school challenged us all to do our best academically with quality education and teachers. I studied ten subjects in Junior and seven subjects in Leaving.*

*"After leaving 'MOD', I trained as an Infant Teacher and started a part-time Arts degree at the University of Western Australia. Periods of teaching followed at Bayswater, Collie and Swanbourne, by which time I had graduated from University. In 1950, I accepted an 'exchange' with the Victorian Education Department and taught in Victorian Infant Schools for twelve months. After marrying a Victorian and settling in that State we had four children (two sets of twins). I spent several years bringing up our children. I then returned to teaching as an emergency teacher and later as a teacher librarian in primary schools.*

*"When I retired, we spent our time enjoying our nine-grandchildren and travelling. I now have 11 great grandchildren.*

*"No matter what I have done, a little bit of 'MOD' has always influenced me. I am grateful for the years I was privileged to spend there, the excellent education I received and the friends I made during that time."*



Gordon Ewers, PMS student 1929-33



WA's oldest living Modernian Gordon Ewers celebrated his 108th birthday. He has been married for more than 60 years and has two daughters, Marian Hall and Shirley Burton, both of whom also attended PMS. On Friday 2 February, PMS Principal Mitchell Mackay attended the celebration.



PERTH MODERNIAN SOCIETY

## COUNCIL NEWS

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



Peter Farr, Eric McCrum OAM and PMS Principal Mitchell Mackay

### 2023 PERTH MODERNIAN SOCIETY ANNUAL ORATION

The guest presenter for the 2023 Perth Modernian Society Oration on 27 November 2023 was Eric McCrum OAM. Eric attended Perth Modern School in 1950-51, and was a School Prefect in 1951.



PERTH MODERNIAN SOCIETY

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

### ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

Held on 29 May 2023

**TBA for 2024**

### 2023-24 COUNCIL

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

Ruth Barrett, *Honour Awards*  
Barrie Baker, *Membership*  
Deborah Beresford, *Hon Secretary*  
Eve Broadley, *Hon Treasurer*  
Robyn White, *Vice President, Museum Rep*  
Peter Farr, *Sphinx Foundation*  
Ian Hunt, *IT/Communication, Technology*  
Evan Kennea, *President*  
Salena Loasby, *Communication Marketing*  
Barbara Mallett, *Reunions*  
Daryl Williams, *Vice President*  
Mitchell Mackay, *Ex-Officio, PMS Principal*

### ANNUAL CONTRIBUTING MEMBERSHIP RENEWAL

\$40 per annum now due

### MEMBERSHIP UPDATES

*Annual Contributing Member renewals since 20 November 2023*

Peter Blaxell  
Robyn Bryant  
Joseph Coleman  
Avril Hughes  
Rebecca Guy

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





SPHINX FOUNDATION INC.

### 2023-24 BOARD

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

Nigel Hunt, *Chair*  
Barrie Baker, *Director (retired Dec 2023)*  
Peter Farr, *Director*  
Vivian Wang, *Hon Treasurer*  
Robert Gray, *Director*  
Danielle Jeyes, *Director*  
Fiona Tholet, *Associate Principal*

### DONORS

#### Sphinx Scholarship Fund

*from 20 November 2023*  
*list n/a*



### 2023-24 BOARD

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

Dr Robyn White, *Chair*  
Sharon Williams, *Treasurer*  
Jeffrey Lai, *Board Member*  
Ashleigh Blechynden, *Board Member*  
Monica Brierley-Hay, *Secretary*  
Mitchell Mackay, *Principal, ex-officio*  
**1 vacancy**

Ex-officio:

President Modernian Society

### MUSEUM VOLUNTEERS

#### [History Centre and Archives]

Gay Albillos  
Deborah Beresford, *Hon Archivist*  
Jim Davies  
Sallie Davies  
Peter Dillon  
Rebecca Guy  
Frank Hedges  
Ian Hunt  
Robert (Bob) Johnson  
Bill MacPherson  
Jill Lucas  
Wendy McCallum  
Deirdre Owen  
Roger Stubbs  
Loren White  
Robyn White  
Sharon Williams  
Alison Woodman

### 2023 DONORS

#### PMS Museum Fund

*Thank you for your*  
*generous support*

Bryant Byce  
Sallie Davies  
Helen Dilkes  
Bruce Herriman  
Wendy Home  
Jane Law  
Sylvia Power  
Karen Stanley  
Sue Strutt  
Rhonda Williams

### 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)

He delivered an interesting and engaging talk titled *'My fortunate life as a naturalist and teacher in Western Australia'* to Year 9 and 10 students and guests. See photos below and on the previous page.

Thanks go to Modernian Fellow, Peter Farr for his work once again in organising the annual Oration, a tradition which commenced in 2011 when the first oration was delivered by The Hon Michael Kirby AC CMG.

Distinguished Modernian **Eric McCrum** grew up in Bassendean, where he spent much of his childhood exploring the wildlife around the Swan River. Eric was educated at Bassendean Primary School, Midland High School, Perth Modern School, and Claremont Teachers College.

Eric McCrum's passion for nature has led him to work as a teacher, headmaster, and nature educator, passing on his knowledge of nature to many students over the years. Indeed, for more than 70 years, Eric has devoted himself to understanding the natural world, and spreading his enthusiasm and knowledge to children and adults alike. For ten years Eric taught at the Perth Zoo Education Centre, and then for fourteen years at the Gould League Wildlife Centre at Herdsman Lake, inspiring over seven thousand visiting children a year.

Eric McCrum, naturalist, teacher and keen photographer, is known to many as *'The Birdman'* on ABC radio and is capable of imitating the call of almost any bird found in the Australian bush. He is also knowledgeable about the Noongar history of West Australian land, as well as Aboriginal language, such as relating to the place names of WA towns.

Eric received the Order of Australia Medal OAM and the also the Michael Chin Humanitarian Award for his services in environmental education, conservation, and natural history.

Since retirement, Eric continues to give talks and works to foster the care for, and protection of, the natural world through education. He does numerous talks to a variety of groups and presents regularly on radio. He has an incredible memory and knowledge of all things nature. He has also authored a book called *'The Nature of the Jarrah Forest'* with his daughter, Janine McCrum, launched in August 2023.



Head Prefect Chudy Isiendu with Eric



Eric's daughter Tanya Sankey and Ruth Barrett



Robert Johnson, Deb Beresford, Ross Ledger AM



Kate Lewis and Dr Robyn White



PERTH MODERNIAN SOCIETY

## Membership Renewals

### Notice to all Members

I am in the process of sending out (by email or letter) notices for existing Contributing Members (\$40 per annum) to renew for the new calendar year (2024).

On receipt, please arrange to pay (three alternative ways) and return the completed Details Form sent out with the notice. If you haven't heard from me by **16 March**, please contact me.

Your continuing membership contributions mean increasing support for all activities of the Perth Modernian Society.

Barrie Baker  
Membership Officer

Ph: 04 5039 1941  
[bakerz@westnet.com.au](mailto:bakerz@westnet.com.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

## Honorary Membership

Alison Woodman  
Tonya McCusker AM  
Nigel Hunt  
Brendon Dawson  
Sharon Williams

## CLASS OF 1963, 60 YEAR REUNION



Saturday 7 October 2023 saw 55 students from Year 8 1959 to Year 12 1963 gather in the 'new' building (now known as the Andrews Building) to celebrate the 60th anniversary of the end of schooling. There were a number of apologies, particularly from interstate and overseas, but the most spectacular was that of our School Captain, **Ross Garnaut**, who was grounded at home in Melbourne after a spill on his bike delivered him a broken leg! He did, however, send us a memorable written reflection on *'Sixty Years Past and Sixty Years Hence'*, which was ably read to us by **Tony Miller**. (See **YOUR SAY** in this issue). We were sad to note that around 40 former students are no longer with us.

We were welcomed by the Principal **Mitchell Mackay**, who led us on the school tour, along with Dr **Robyn White**, former Principal and Chair of the Perth Modernian Society Museum Association. Both Mitch and Robyn stayed with us for the entire afternoon, and we appreciated them giving up their time and chatting so freely with us all. Mitch even stayed to help clean up and lock up! Naureen Taylor organised us quickly, humorously and efficiently into a group to take the group photo that accompanies this article, and she also circulated afterwards taking informal pictures of smaller groups. She has produced a fine and memorable folder with the group photo above, and we would highly recommend her to any group organising a future reunion. You can contact Naureen via [www.reunionphotos.net](http://www.reunionphotos.net). Thanks are also due to a previous reunion organiser **Andrea Brittan** for her advice and help in setting us up with a painless on-line booking system!

We were the first wave of the post-World War II Baby Boom. The need to find places for us all in secondary school brought forward the change in Perth Mod from being an exclusively academically selective school to an area high school, resulting in a mix of scholarship and local area students. Some high schools, like Scarborough, at that time only went to the Junior Certificate (three years), so we gained extra students for the two years to the Leaving Certificate. This was not an easy transition for some, as Perth Mod still retained some rules and practices from its past. As an Area High School our group also included students from European migrant families who spoke languages other than English at home.

Because the *"New Building"* was not completed in time for us to have all our classes at Perth Mod, for the first two terms of 1959 we were housed in what was then the Claremont Primary School, with **Jerry Haire** acting as Principal. During these two terms, Domestic Science, and Manual Arts classes took place at Perth Mod, where the facilities were circa 1920s. Older Modernians will remember that for the girls, it meant a terrifying experience learning to iron with metal *"flat"* or *"smoothing"* irons. They were heated by open gas flames on long metal shelves, and had to be removed using an asbestos cloth to protect us from the heat of the metal handle, cleaned with borax and then rubbed in beeswax. They cooled rapidly, and had to be replaced with a fresh hot iron, usually when the job was only half done. On cooking days we girls started our day at Perth Mod, heading back after the lesson by steam train to Claremont School, clutching anything from Rock Cakes to billies full of soup. Spills were not unknown. Another memorable arrangement was that due to a delay in the completion of the girls' toilets in the new building, one of the boys' toilet blocks was used by the girls, with the urinals covered to avoid embarrassment!

Everyone present on 7 October had a great afternoon, and it is agreed that we will organise another get together in 2026, when we all turn 80! Make sure you keep your email contacts current, a date will be notified via our own database and this newsletter, in late 2025 and early 2026. - **Mary-Jane Whitehead**, for the organising committee.



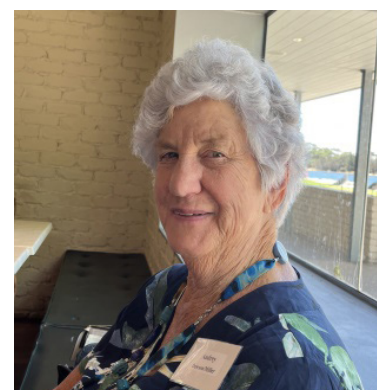
## CLASS OF 1972 REUNION 28 OCTOBER 2023

Photos in Beasley Hall and History Centre:



### CLASS OF 1956 GET TOGETHER

These photos below are from a happy gathering of about a dozen Mod bods from the 1952-56 cohort. We met at The Dome, Mount Pleasant, on 22 November 2023, and we're looking forward to our next get-together.



### REUNION COMING UP IN 2024

#### CLASS OF 1958 TO CELEBRATE 70 years since the start of high school days 19th April 2024

To celebrate 70 years since the start of our high school days, the PMS class of 1954-1958 will be holding a reunion in the form of a 3-course lunch, commencing 11:30am on **Friday 19th April** at the UWA **University Club** Private Dining Room (Hackett Drive, Crawley).

Please register your interest with a reunion committee member: convener/ treasurer, Peter Farr, [Farr.peter@farr.com.au](mailto:Farr.peter@farr.com.au), Tel./SMS 041 990 5864, or Wendy McCallum (Tel. 08-9446 5678), or Dr Peter McKerracher (Tel./SMS 0439 983 322).

### YOUR SAY

**From: Bryant Bice, PMS student 1968-72**

**Re: Thank you**

I would also like to thank our 'tour guides' for showing us around the school and museum on 28 October 2023. It was most enlightening to see the 'old' school and how it has been transformed over the decades. All the best, Bryant Bice (ACT)

**From: John Bunday, PMS student 1948-49**

**Re: Newsletter**

Your newsletters are always so very welcome. This last one (November 2023) was exceptional. Thank you. Congratulations to all those who contribute and keep us informed. John Bunday

**From: Robin Pope née Plank, PMS student 1954-58**

**Re: Newsletter**

I very much enjoy reading the Newsletters from the Perth Modernian Society, as it keeps me in touch with my old stamping ground and friends in Perth, WA. Keep up the good work! Yours with thanks, Robin Pope



**From: Judith McGuinness née Lovell, PMS student 1957-59**

**Re: Making Contact**

Hello, thank you for your November Newsletter which has been forwarded to me by [Jeanette McQueen](#). As a 1st year I was fortunate to have as my "Senior" Wendy Snow who was Head Girl in 1957, I was delighted to read Wendy's contribution to the current newsletter and am hoping that you can put me in touch with Wendy. Judith

**From: Dr Judy Cole, Consultant Dermatologist**

**Re: Death of Dr Andy Cole**

I'm writing to let you know that our father **Andy Cole** died very peacefully yesterday morning of old age, just a couple of months shy of his 100<sup>th</sup> birthday. He was grandfather to ten grandchildren and had just celebrated the birth of two great granddaughters. Perth Mod was very dear to him and until the last few years he always attended reunions and kept in touch with past students. His time at Perth Modern School was a very happy one and over the years he often talked about the school and his wonderful teachers with great fondness. We love receiving your newsletter and hope you will continue to send it so that we (his three children) can keep in touch with his old school. On behalf of my sister Cathy and brother Andrew, Best wishes, Judy

**From: Prof. Ross Garnaut, PMS student 1959-63**

**Re: In absentia, Perth Modern School Reunion of the Graduating Class of 1963, 7 October 2023**

***"Sixty Years Ago, and Sixty Years Hence"***

It was with delight that I accepted Mary-Jane's invitation to join my old school friends and to speak today, sixty years after we were preparing for our last exams. It was with dismay that I received the radiologist's report a month ago that the fall from my bike, riding to give a public lecture at the University's Melbourne Energy Institute, had fractured my tibia below the knee and would block my travel. I recall the hot summer night with [Bob Kagi](#), [Graham Smith](#) and [Greg Sterrett](#), riding down the middle of Stirling Highway on our way to Mandurah to camp for a week. No hands, no spills, no broken legs.

We are lucky to be here. Some of our friends haven't made it. I was sad to hear from Bob of [Richard Nowotny's](#) heart attack on the golf course. Most of us were born in Australia in 1946 when life expectancy at birth was 66 for boys and 70 for girls. That's one of the things that has changed a lot. Our grandchildren or great grandchildren born this year can expect a span of 81 and 85 years.

That's another thing that's changed - born in Australia. When we were conceived in the last months of war or the first year of peace, less than an eighth of Australians were born overseas and only about 3.5 percent in countries that didn't have English as their main language. Today nearly a third have been born overseas, and a large majority of those in countries that speak languages other than English. Our classes reflected the beginnings of postwar European immigration. Entirely European, having navigated White Australia. The thirteen of us having won scholarships from Mt Lawley Primary School saw the beginnings of that initial diversity. I can recall five with Jewish backgrounds. [Con Berbatis](#) would invite us to stop on the way home for a milk shake at his Greek parents' Lilac Milk Bar near the corner of Barrack and Wellington Street.

I have given a couple of lectures to later year students in the old assembly hall at the school over the past few years - now tiered to give the speaker a good look into the faces all around. An impression of similar proportions of backgrounds in Europe, East Asia, and South and West Asia. The diversity of talent and energy of today's multicultural Australia. I had the chance to look around our old classrooms, and saw that Australia's future is in good hands and minds. It was in that assembly hall that [Tony Miller](#), [Alan Rosen](#) and I lost the grand final of the schools debating championship to the girls of Presbyterian Ladies College. When Tony, Alan and I catch up in Sydney, we talk about that loss. Alan refuses to apply his expertise as Professor of Psychiatry to explain our three very different recollections. Alan remembers that we were robbed. What I remember is the humiliation of defeat and my contribution to it. Tony claims to have no memory of the event at all. Incidentally, after an adult lifetime as Professors at Sydney, the Australian National and Melbourne Universities, the members of the old Mod debating team identify as Western Australians, barracking for the Eagles through the triumphs and the despair.

Coming second was too common in the teams in which I represented the school. Year after year I would lead over the last hurdle in the interschool athletics, and Cliff Matson from John Curtin High would run me down in the last twenty metres dash to the tape. Worst of all, the footy team of which I was captain, winning every game in the home and away season and losing the grand final. What perfidy led to that game being played at their Kent St home ground? The girls did better. When our ranks were strengthened by arrivals from Scarborough in early 1962, [Judy Pockrass](#) made our netball team a winner, and brought home first prize in the athletics sprints.

We were well taught. [Mr Staples](#) in his fourth decade of teaching the nineteenth century revolutions had me calling in at the State Library on my bike ride home to read and reread Edmund Burke's Reflections on the Revolution in France. Physics and chemistry gave me a good start on climate change and its mitigation. [Mrs Wrightson](#) doing her best to drill unfamiliar French sounds into our monolingual vocal cords. [Eric Strauss](#) coaching our teams alongside the Sheffield Shield cricket squad. Jerry Haire, famously coach of John "Jack" Winter's high jump Gold Medal in the 1948 Olympics in London (Western Australia's first Olympic gold medallist), and Chilla Porter's heroic silver medal in the Melbourne 1956 Olympics, teaching me to keep one's centre of gravity as close as possible to the bar or hurdle. [Beans Gardner](#), [Mr Draber](#), [Mr Love](#). Our headmasters [Mr Sampson](#) and [Mr Loudon](#), nurturing the great traditions at a time of change.

I remember Mr Louden and Mrs Wrightson calling Girl School [Captain Patricia Wauchope](#) and me to the office late in 1963, and informing us that by tradition our mothers would organise the end of year lunch for teachers and prefects. "Mine can't", I said. Mr Louden asked why. "Because she's dead". That was my painful deep secret through my high school years. The prism through which a boy and young man viewed his relationships with others. I survived by holding things tight. Patricia's path crossed Jayne and mine many friendly times over the next two decades, in Port Moresby and Canberra. I have seen too little of many of my friends who stayed in WA. At 77, we have left a life expectancy of 10 years for the boys and nearly 11.6 for the girls to make amends.

We went to school in a small and isolated city. About 450,000 people at the end - less than Canberra today. WA before the industrialisation of Japan and then Korea and China created our modern mining industry. When I went to Sydney University's Summer School of physics at the beginning of 1963, it was novel for any of us to travel outside the state. Now a rapidly expanding Perth is about the size of the largest city then. Many Western Australians board a plane for the eastern states or overseas as many years as not. At the beginning of our school years, it was a long journey from the eastern suburbs to the beach. It was an expedition when I accompanied [Tony Tate](#) and his family for a weekend at their beach house at North Beach.

We left school into a world of full employment and economic security, in which a young person or couple would take out a mortgage and buy a house not long after they entered the labour force. It was an Australia in which a fair go was thought to be our birthright, guaranteed by our national character. A fair go for some of us. A fair go within a White Australia, in which most aboriginal Australians were unable to participate in our democracy. A heavily gendered Australia, in which the boys did manual training and the girls domestic science. In which girls could expect to be employed professionally only until marriage - and to be paid much less than men until that time. A world in which the white Empires were crumbling, but in which Australians retained confidence in the order built around the superiority of our great and powerful friends. A world in which Australian trade was underwritten by our relationship with Britain, before its entry into Europe. Riding my bike past a newspaper shop on my way to school for one of the final exams, a billboard announced the assassination of President Kennedy. Straight after the exams I listened to Prime Minister Bob Menzies off the back of a truck in front of the GPO in a crowded Forrest Place, explaining that our purchase of F111 fighters would save us against the Indonesian threat.

At the end of the last Victorian school year, I took a long trip with our two eldest grandkids. Kai and Harvey, to hang out at the end of their school, to try out a new electric car and to get their hours up for drivers' licences. They are moving into a different world. Desperately more difficult in many ways. Unfair for many. But much fairer in other ways than the world into which we walked in 1963. In the new world, the United Kingdom is struggling after withdrawal from Europe. American democracy is under threat at home. Our trade and prosperity are shaped by opportunities in our Asian neighbourhood.

It is hard to imagine the world in which our grandchildren will hang out with their own, after school in sixty years from now. Maybe their own grandchildren will join a humanity that has conquered the threat of climate change, in which Australia's rich endowments for a zero-carbon world economy has been underwriting full employment with rising incomes for a growing population for a couple of generations. Or they may join a humanity frayed by incapacity to manage the social, political and economic disruption of weakly mitigated climate change. The international context will be very different. The majority of the world's children will be African for the first time in 70,000 years.

I hope they get along well with young Australians. We can hope that our grandchildren's grandchildren enter a world in which prosperous and powerful Asian communities comfortably share influence over a global system with the most successful successors to the North Atlantic states. That can be the future if our own grandchildren have preserved human civilisation from war in an era of nuclear and cyber technology. If humanity is flourishing, there will be a larger role for global governance. Regional and national differences will remain. Some communities will live richer lives than others. Will Australia be distinguished as a democracy that has taken arms against a sea of early twenty first century social and economic troubles and defeated them? Or be divided by the growing inequality and weakening internal sympathy and communication that emerged in these difficult years?

It is hard for us to imagine an Australia and a world that changes as much in the next sixty years as it has in the sixty years since we left school. But it will change even more. We sort of managed, some lucky ones helped by a good start at Mod. I've got a feeling that our grandchildren will do better.



PERTH MODERNIAN SOCIETY  
MUSEUM ASSOCIATION  
INCORPORATED

## OUR VOLUNTEERS AT WORK

2024 has begun as our Museum volunteers reunited on Monday 29th January – ready for the new year. Having successfully acknowledged the one hundredth anniversary of the unveiling of the Cenotaph and the World War I Honour Board on Saturday 22 October 2022 and then finally launched the book, *Music at Mod* on 1 December 2023, our volunteers have loads of continuing and new projects to accomplish in 2024.



At our first Committee meeting on 12th February, volunteers clarified their proposed activities for this year.

- [Ian Hunt](#), our IT/Communications volunteer outlined proposed further upgrades to the network server and the electronic data base. Ian has coordinated with both [Ed Lazarus](#) (retired Council member) and Jeff Lai (Museum Association Board member)
- [Bob Johnson](#) reported that he will continue adding to cells of the digital Nominal and Honour Boards (found on the school website) as well as reviewing the current physical honour boards and display of photographs. Bob is currently working on the biographies of [Ron Grey](#) (1943-47) and [Bernard Barton \(Barney\) Cresswell](#) (1926-28).
- Bob is also supporting the process to digitise many of our records. He has commenced digitising the book, *Perth Modern School: The History and Heritage* (2005). Thanks to help from the Battye Library and the Perth Modernian Society Museum Association Board's purchase of Adobe Acrobat Pro, Bob is now editing errors that were discovered by readers after publication.
- [Sharon Williams](#) oversees the changing displays in the Museum. She is very keen to know of reunions that might be organised for 2024 so that we can provide as many school photos as possible. Sharon also manages, shares and writes many of our social media posts on Facebook and to a lesser extent Instagram, where our posts are less frequent.
- Our science display has drastically changed over the past year. The final re-organisation will happen later this term, followed by installing some interactive displays and finally QR codes alongside static displays so that visitors might better understand the use of each apparatus. [Loren White](#) is undertaking these tasks.
- [Deb Beresford](#), [Deidre Owen](#), [Alison Woodman](#) and [Gay Albillos](#) will continue to work assiduously accessioning new donations, photographs and books into the Mosaic database. Gay has also shown us several older Sphinx magazines in very poor condition. Gay and her daughter have offered to restore these.
- [Wendy McCallum](#) and [Jill Lucas](#) will continue to enter new enrolment data onto the electronic data-base. Already they have identified some student information that would be better entered with some new fields added to the data-base set up. They will document these for Ian and Ross's consideration.
- [Frank Hedges](#) and [Jim Davies](#) continue the important work of including newspaper articles and other written material into the **[George Burvill Biographical Index](#)**.
- Over many years the school's Heritage Trail, originally devised by Sallie Davies, has been used by student guides as they conduct tours around the school. It's proposed that this might be formalised with identifying QR codes alongside heritage locations so that individuals might also create their own school tour.
- The museum volunteers would also like to extend our collection of oral histories. Throughout this year volunteers will endeavour to add to the current collection. Contributions of oral histories from readers will be most welcome.

Our volunteers have set a very busy schedule for the year ahead – to achieve these challenges as well as maintain our day-by-day administrative roles. We expect to achieve all of our goals – but will be very happy for new volunteers to join us!

## CAN YOU HELP?

**From: Keith Schilling, Bunbury**

**Re: Can you please identify names in this 1925 photograph**

The photograph of a hockey team (below) was found among my late mother's belongings. The girl in the front clearly appears to be wearing a Mod Sphinx badge and the tunics they have on have coloured bands around the skirt. An early Bunbury High School Magazine (Kingia) mentions Perth Modern School involvement in the Interschool Sports Carnival held in Bunbury in 1925.

*"In 1925, the interschool sports carnival was now called Country Week (but still involved Perth Modern School)". Is this a photograph of the team which played for PMS in that 1925 Country Week carnival?*



*Can you help identify the names of the team members in this photograph?*





The following names were identified in this 1925 PMS School hockey team photo:  
 Sheila McClemons, PMS student 1922-26;  
 Marjorie Hodge, PMS student 1921-25;  
 Dot Byers, PMS student 1921-25, State Hockey team 1933-36, Australian hockey umpire;  
 Edith Hurst, PMS student 1921-25;  
 Dot Thomas, PMS student 1922-26;  
 Sylvia Kemble, PMS student 1921-25,  
 Rosalie Trotter, PMS student 1922-25;  
 Enid Lightfoot, PMS student 1925-26;  
 Nancy (Margaret Annie) Lee, PMS student 1924-25;  
 Esme Purcell, PMS student 1921-25;  
 Iris Rhodes, PMS student 1921-25.  
 (ref. The Sphinx, August 1925, pp. 14,15)

## MUSIC AT MOD



### LAUNCHED!

As our Modernian readers know, the Museum volunteers have supported [Roger Stubbs](#) (author and principal researcher) and Alison Woodman (editor and collator of photographs) in their over three year quest to appropriately document and celebrate the Specialist Music Program at Perth Modern School 1968-2010 and the musicians before and after. 'Music at Mod' is the fourth history book about Perth Modern School – surely a proud record itself!

The challenges in documenting this important time for Perth Modern School were many – especially since most of this research was undertaken during the COVID-19 years. With limited space to collect and retain documents in schools generally, past programs, student lists, music concert information and other artefacts were difficult to locate. The current music staff were generous in their support to locate and recall information. Fortunately, via Roger's online social media expertise (and time), plus the advice from various past students and teachers, Roger connected with many people who were able to share information and documents. With persistence and focus, visits to Battye Library and alumni, Roger has created a very readable and accurate (to the best of our knowledge) account of these important years and achievements. With the addition of specialist photographs taken by our volunteer [Peter Dillon](#) and the creative expertise of Valda Langley and her team at Stylus Design, a very beautiful and readable book emerged.

Late last year, the Board of the Perth Modernian Society Museum Association Inc, determined that the book should be purchased at a price accessible to most alumni. In order to do this, the Association committed to subsidising the cost of the initial design and print by approximately 30%. Our volunteers are volunteers – their incredible time and energy were given freely so is not included in the cost. On Wednesday 29<sup>th</sup> November, perfectly on time, Data Documents (our printer) delivered the books to the school – ready for the launch on Friday 1<sup>st</sup> December 2023.

The launch was a very special event for us all with around 100 guests in attendance. The performances of six of our alumni music students assured the evening as a unique event. [Sue King](#) and [Lea Hayward](#) (foundation students who arrived into year 11 in 1968) performed a clarinet and piano duet, followed by Lea's solo piano performance. Both of these alumni continue to enrich generations of WA children via their continued activities as music performers and teachers. Then followed a wonderfully mellow choral set performed by [Amy Fortnum](#) (2007-2011) a graduate of WAAPA (Classical Voice and Musical Theatre) who is now a creator, musical theatre artist, actress and educator.

[Joshua Woon](#), a current Perth Modern School music student and cellist, followed with a superb solo rendition of Tarentella. Joshua's performance cemented our understanding that excellence in music education and performance has been maintained throughout the academic select years of the school. The final performance for the evening was by members of Lumina, an ensemble specialising in sacred choral music. Of the four performers, Emily Bruining, Greg Le Coultre, [Monica Brierley-Hay](#) and [Sam Lander](#), two are graduates of Mod. Monica (2007-2011) studied and performed at WAPPA, followed by a UWA law degree. Monica now works as a lawyer and is also a Board member of the Perth Modernian Society Museum Association Inc. Sam (2007), graduated with a law degree from UWA and worked as a lawyer for many years. Sam now is the owner and operator of SKELD – making unique, high-quality furniture. The quartet provided a beautiful conclusion to the performances and reminded everyone attending of the way in which the school's music education graduates continue to enrich WA, Australia and the world.

At the conclusion of the performances, our MC for the evening, [Kate Lewis](#) (1973-1977), who continues with her commitment to music performance through her work with Freeze Frame Opera, introduced Roger Stubbs, the author and principal investigator for the *Music at Mod* publication. Roger's brief talk is published in this newsletter – a heartfelt account of his reasons for his three year commitment to accomplish as comprehensive as possible account of the music program and its effectiveness.

And finally, [Evan Kennea](#) (1984-1988) the President of the Perth Modernian Society and Executive Manager, Artistic Planning at the Western Australian Symphony Orchestra, was introduced to officially launch the book and present Roger Stubbs with the "first" copy of this beautiful book.

With the formalities of the evening concluded, everyone adjourned to the Andrews Building for refreshments and book purchases. Once more, school alumni featured as the grazing table was provided though "*Sunny Graze – Grazing Boards*" operated by alumni [Savanna](#) (2022) and [Alisa](#) (2022). The Treasurer of the Perth Modernian Society Museum Association Inc, Sharon Williams, ensured that she returned from Bendigo just in time for the launch formalities and the sale of the book, admirably supported by [Karen Wedemeyer](#) from the school administration, and [Jeff Lai](#), Board member. Meanwhile, [Taylar Amonini](#), also from the school administration, was essential in acting as bar manager! Special thanks also to [Thalia Cole](#), from Mod, for her assistance with regards to the launch. The evening continued for some hours as past students and teachers re-connected. A terrific evening of music, book sales, refreshments and friendship!

- Project Manager, Dr Robyn White, Chair Perth Modernian Society Museum Association Inc

## SHARING MY JOURNEY

### Author Roger Stubbs AM

PMS staff member 2005-11



Distinguished guests, lovers of music all

I had always taught at schools where the guitar was the only instrument a boy would ever admit playing, but only if it were electric, and his repertoire was AC/DC Covers. My friend [Don Cook](#) persuaded me to become a relief teacher at Mod. My first class was a group of 14 year old music scholarship students. Imagine the disdain they showed, when I had to admit that, I could not sing, I could not play an instrument, nor could I read music.

To my rescue came a young music teacher who swept into the room, hair flying. She announced that she would take the class. Warm-ups, scales, some mysterious hand waving, solos, part and group singing. Forty minutes of non-stop energy, enthusiasm, and engagement.

I had never seen anything like it. **My journey towards Music at Mod had begun.**

Let me share just a few of my special memories. Met [Leila Fox](#). For me she was always a little stropky but when I had the privilege of hearing her beautiful contralto voice all was forgiven. And who could ever forget the pitch perfect [Reigan Derry](#) sing with an incredible jazz band. It was easy to be impressed by [Brody Linke](#), [Alex Tempone](#), and [Maeve Lander](#) for they were trumpeters. [Sarah Herriman](#) and [Hannah Cowie](#) shone as leaders of the Senior Orchestra. And [Aidan Boase's](#) performance of the Grieg Piano Concerto.

Rehearsals by the Chorale for the 2005 tour were very special. When I heard the Old One Hundredth, **All people that on earth do dwell, sing to the Lord with cheerful voice**, later performed in Westminster Abbey, for a moment I believed God had come to Roberts Road. And then Rutter's Clare Benediction completed the emotional roller coaster.

I remember the day when [Neil Coy](#) halted a very vigorous performance by the Senior Orchestra, and pointed to a member of the second violins. He **apparently** was a little late on the fourth bar. Two things amazed, how could Neil hear that small error, and the good grace with which the public criticism was received. [Elysia Murphy](#) impressed when she gave an impromptu performance of scat singing that enthralled her students. / Move over Ella. And despite the many times I watched, I could never detect the secret signal [Celia](#) gave that caused the chorale in full voice, to swiftly switch to a clapping song.



I met so many remarkable students. But despite all that, the students remained typical teenagers, although with a greater confidence and sense of purpose.

In 2020 when asked by the then principal to write *Music at Mod*, I did not hesitate. The story deserved to be told. After all, Mod was the school which swept up the prizes at the 1999 Vienna International Festival. In 2005 it was the first Australian School ever to sing and play for the ANZAC Ceremonies at the Australian War Memorials in London and France and before Her Majesty the Queen in Westminster Abbey. Graduates made music across the world.

Previous efforts by [Steph Rogalski](#) and [Sue King](#) provided a good starting point, but both had been thwarted by a lack of reliable records. I had a similar problem. Information was dredged from a variety of incomplete sources. Old concert programs were found but not a complete set. Copies of Sphinx and yearbooks were invaluable, but publication was suspended for much of the 1980s. [Vicki Duball](#) produced a wonderful scrapbook of the 1984 tour to China, and Julie Doncon had a scrapbook that provided valuable detail. Covid made it difficult to meet with people but [Margaret Grose](#), [Kitty Spackman](#), [Karen Morrissey](#) and the [Mohen family](#) were of great assistance. I would have loved a complete set of the newsletters the music department issued to parents, but sadly only three survive in the archive. [Robyn White](#) had kept the booklets from her three European tours which provided valuable insights.

Former students were asked for anecdotes but most were about hi-jinks on camps rather than music. **Apparently**, the saxophone offers the best opportunity for smuggling Fruity Lexia into camp.

Videos were found from as long ago as 1987. But of course they were VHS. I was able to transcribe some and had the privilege of viewing a dynamic performance by [Ben Vanderwal](#) with the Jazz Band.

We found and were given so many wonderful photographs, but few had any names attached. We tried to identify students from the musical instruments they held. We were confused until someone told us that often students would swap instruments, even for official photographs.

Enthusiastic former students came to the rescue. I would especially like to acknowledge the efforts of [Jessica Bracken](#), [Josephine Christmass](#) and [Hannah Brockway](#). And thanks too, to Alison Woodman, the photographic editor, who so carefully curated the 150 splendid photographs which illustrate the book. And thanks to the creative talents of Valda and Graham Langley and Harry Davies from Stylus Design, who have brought our text and photographs to life with a stunning design.

Our message for anyone doing anything moderately important keep good records and write names and dates on the backs of photos.

**Despite the challenges**, a fascinating story of outstanding achievement has emerged.

The story begins with the efforts of Edgar Nottage to establish the program and the impact of the 1971 concert which has become legend. How remarkable that he was able to engage the services of WASO musicians, such as [Ashley Arbuckle](#), [Brian Pope](#), [Brian Mendemann](#), [Owen Fisenden](#) and [Graham Wood](#) as instrumental tutors. The achievements of its students under long term Senior Masters [John Christmass](#), [Clive Kendrick](#) and [Roger Hey](#) are documented, with references also to [Donn Browne](#) and [Greg Kelly](#).

As I researched, I was reminded how Education has changed. For example, in 1976 John Christmass took 14 choir members to Tasmania without a female chaperone. Despite their age he allowed them to visit the newly opened Wrest Point Casino. At one destination the only accommodation for the students was a single dormitory. **In 2023 what would the tabloids and social media have made of that? The program has contributed greatly to the personal development of its students.**

Speaking in this hall, [Elizabeth Gaines](#) attributed much of her success to the music program a view echoed by [Lana Winfield](#) in the book. A highly demanding schedule of rehearsals, performances and tuition taught her effective time management. As a member of an orchestra she learned the importance of cooperation and teamwork. Excellence was demanded and excellence given. But above all the experience created self-belief, resilience, resourcefulness and confidence. **As I listened to her**, I thought of [Brent Grapes](#) who would leave home each morning shortly after 6am so that he could be at school in time for rehearsals or music lessons. Those qualities are reflected in the achievements of so many students.

In the book is a **representative sample** of about 100 who have careers in music and about 100 others who have careers in other fields. It is an impressive list. There could have been so many more. Most know of [Emma Matthews](#), [Simone de Haan](#) and [Victor Sangiorgio](#), but what about long time supporter of the music program [Graeme Hoskins/Lee Bradshaw](#) who operates a major studio in Melbourne, [Rohan Stevenson](#), [Graeme Blevins](#), and [Richard John](#) who have successful creative careers in London, and [Jessica Armstrong](#), [Stephanie Davis](#) and [Lisa Outred](#) who perform with orchestras in Germany. And [Georgia Browne](#), [Anne Horton](#) and [Patrick Murphy](#). Of course, Modernians have always been well represented in WASO.



Those who enjoy careers other than music include my favourite, 1975 Dux and Rhodes Scholar [Adam Ashforth](#), who spent many months living in Soweto to complete his PhD, and is now Professor of Afro-American studies in Chicago. As a student he played with the Mucky Duck Bush Band. Foundation student [John Bertram](#) is a world authority on the kidney. [Melville da Cruz](#) is a professor of otolaryngology but still plays his violin. [James Bednall](#) is a linguist who studies the languages on the Groote Eylandt Archipelago.



[Claire](#) and [Nicole Jones](#) both became highly qualified engineers engaged in cutting edge research. [Amanda Lewis](#) is a molecular research scientist. [Anna Nowak](#) a medical researcher who is pro-vice chancellor at UWA. So many other doctors, teachers, lawyers, engineers, IT specialists, humanitarians - all with a love of music.

**The significant contribution the program and its advocacy of the Kodály method** has made to music education is also acknowledged. I remember when this hall was filled with music teachers for an in-service course. Celia was standing next to me. For the sake of conversation I asked her if she knew any of them. She turned, smiled and said, '*Roger, I taught most of them*'. **And what must be acknowledged too** is the way Musos from Mod now support and lead so many community orchestras, ensembles and festivals.

And what well rounded individuals so many of the musos were. [Lachlan Skipworth](#) played lacrosse at state level, surely a high risk sport for a clarinettist. [Isaac Seidl](#) now a medical practitioner was a state champion swimmer. [Lorraine Darvill](#) represented Australia in Water Polo and was capped 89 times. [Emma Lefroy](#) was a champion kayaker. And despite the demands upon their time, Musos were always great supporters of the student council, eager participants in the drama program and always in the forefront on Mufti Day.

**Music was not well catered** for from 1911 to 1968 despite the early establishment of a small orchestra which always struggled. Our research, aided by [Ian Lindsay](#), will help you learn about the achievements of Modernians [Essie Pickering](#), [Barbara Tyler](#), [Bat Zion Spigl](#), [Zipah Feldman](#), [Josephine Curtis](#), [Donald Thornton](#), [David Westlake](#) and many others, often at an international level. But tuition was usually provided by [A.J Leckie](#) and the [Sisters of Mercy](#).

I could talk too about the high points of the European tours, the contribution of [John Embleton](#), the number of [Paul Duhig's](#) horn players who are members of international orchestras. How Modern School dominated at ABODA and Choral Festivals. How access to [Neil Boon's](#) unpublished memoir provided fascinating insights into measures he and [Ted Styles](#) took to ensure the program's survival. About the marvellous support given by many parents in the tradition established by [Dr Harry Cohen](#). Who still has a giant roll of Alfoil in their pantry?

**But I won't, because, it's all in the book.**

As I wrote, I was mindful that Clive James called his seminal work **Unreliable Memoirs** and acknowledge that there may be some small errors of fact or emphasis. And there are gaps and silences in the book, which leaves the field wide open for any former students who have hoarded memories and mementos. After we published, we discovered that [Dr Emily Gunson](#) still has the diaries she kept while at Mod. What tales do they hold? Thank you to all who have given so much generous assistance. I trust that **you too** will share the journey that Robyn, Alison and I have enjoyed so much.



Sylvia Power

The book is such an in depth review of the Mod music programme over the years - congratulations! It is so interesting and of course brings back great memories - how lucky we were to be part of it!

10 h Love Reply Send message Hide



## VALE

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       | Deceased   |
|--|-------------|----------------|------------|
| Robert John Stack                          | 1946-47     | Student        | 24/06/2023 |
| Graham Lionel Glick                        | 1943-46     | School Prefect | 08/07/2023 |
| John William Somerville                    | 1946-52     | Student        | 23/10/2023 |
| Paul Richard Sealey                        | 1976-80     | Student        | 14/11/2023 |
| Veronica Ruth Ninham, nee Williams         | 1956-57     | Student        | 12/11/2023 |
| Valerie Joy Gulland, nee West              | 1947-51     | Student        | 04/12/2023 |
| Dr David (Ned) Robert Biggins              | 1957-61     | School Prefect | 11/12/2023 |
| Caroline Mary Serventy OAM, nee Darbyshire | 1946-47     | Student        | 12/12/2023 |
| Dr Eric John Middleton                     | 1950-54     | Student        | 20/12/2023 |



| Name   | Year at PMS | Position       | Deceased   |
|--|-------------|----------------|------------|
| Lilian Annette Garnett, nee Hoad               | 1951-55     | Student        | 20/12/2023 |
| Norman George Ashton (Adelaide, SA)            | 1950-54     | School Prefect | ??/01/2024 |
| Walter James (Wally) Howse                     | 1954-56     | Staff          | 22/01/2024 |
| Emeritus Professor Andrew Reginald Howard Cole | 1937-41     | School Prefect | 06/02/2024 |
| Geoffrey Michaels (New Jersey, USA)            | 1957-60     | Student        | 17/02/2024 |
| Dr. Peter Gregory Goss                         | 1954-58     | School Prefect | 22/2/2024  |
| Harry Kuhaupt                                  | 1951-53     | Student        | 24/02/2024 |

## TRIBUTES

### **GRAHAM LIONEL GLICK** **PMS student 1943-47**

*"Engineering is an art more than a science. This is the view of Graham Glick a former prominent Consulting Engineer and a director of Halpern Glick Pty Ltd, at that time the longest established Western Australian consulting office having been founded by Leon Halpern in 1947."*

- Taken from a profile published in "Building WA" in June 1986 (full text is held on file)

### **GRAHAM GLICK'S SOJOURN TO MODERN SCHOOL AND BEYOND** (in his own words)

Graham Glick, civil engineer, was a student at Perth Modern School from 1943 to 1947 and was a prefect in his final year.

I qualified to attend Perth Modern School by gaining a Government High School Scholarship in 1942, having attended North Perth State School. So I chose to attend Mod for the next five years..... and what great memories I have of the time that I spent there.

Boys and girls were completely separated when in class and on school grounds. Students were allocated to classes in alphabetical order with approximately 30 in each class, and I was in 1A. Sports day in October was a great event when the school had an open day for families and friends to visit and inspect the facilities, and better still, boys and girls could mingle.

Because I was there during the Second World War years, students did not have to wear a school uniform and most boys came in casual clothes. Girls, however, came more traditionally dressed. Boys had to do Army Cadet training and in final year, five of us were chosen to become cadet officers, each in charge of a platoon. There was a small rifle range established at the bottom of the school grounds where we could practise shooting with 22-calibre rifles. Armistice was declared in 1945 and the whole school was given a day off to celebrate the occasion and mingle with the crowds filling Perth City streets.

Our fourth year was the first time that a mixed class of girls and boys was formed, because previously girls were never taught science subjects such as chemistry and physics, only arts subjects. This was necessary for those who wished to study medicine, which at that time could only be done at the Universities of Adelaide and Melbourne. I remained in a boys' class as I wished to study technical drawing as it was a prerequisite to enrol in the Faculty of Engineering at the University of WA. I had always wanted to become a civil engineer and after five years of intensive study I qualified with First Class Honours, having gained a distinction in every subject throughout the course.

For the next two years I worked on the construction site of the BP Oil Refinery at Kwinana, following which I was awarded a Federation of British Industries Scholarship to work in London for the next two years. This I did with the large engineering firm, Wimpies.

After 12 months in London, in December 1955, I returned to marry Ruth Weil, who had also attended Perth Modern School in 1951-52 for fourth and fifth year, and we both travelled by ship back to England to stay for the next 12 months. I had bought a small car and we travelled throughout England, Wales and Northern Ireland.

I was appointed as a senior lecturer in Civil Engineering at UWA in 1957, which I carried out for the next four years. Lecturing was not my cup of tea as I found it monotonous to repeat the same topics each year. So, in 1960 I formed a partnership with a practising consulting engineer, Leon Halpern. At that time WA was rapidly developing in the north-west. This development was initiated by the export of iron ore to Japan after the wartime embargo on this was lifted.

I designed towns, starting with Dampier, associated with water supply, sewerage works, roads, harbours and railway lines. This variety of work I carried out throughout the state for the next 28 years. We had even opened a consulting office in Darwin and Singapore. I found this work most rewarding and at our peak we employed 90 personnel of engineers, draftsmen, tracers and office administration staff.



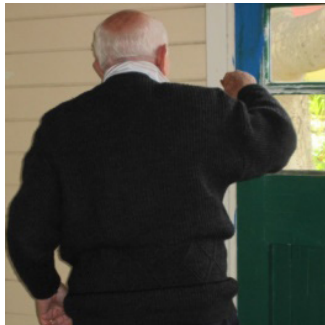
I live with Ruth in a very comfortable and well run retirement village and enjoy helping as a volunteer for several organisations. Ruth and I enjoyed relaxing and holidaying as much as possible. Western Australia, especially Perth, is a great place to live and enjoy one's memories.

### **On his involvement with Modern School during adult lifetime** (from interview 2004)

*"Oh well that's a different area altogether. I've always liked ... I was never good at history at school, I found it difficult to learn history, dates, kings and queens of England as we all had to do but I liked ... always liked preserving things and over a number of years I have been involved with Modern School's history, I've been on the ... well it's called the Historical Subcommittee of the Old Modernians for a number of years. Fact they have a bit of a joke, the first job I got was polishing the brass plaques as you come up the front steps into the front door and I said to my colleagues well I didn't know I had to get first class honours through school and at engineering and all the rest of it and then finally end up being eligible to polish the brass plaques at the school. It's a bit like Gilbert's and Sullivan's Pirates of Penzance I think where he polished up the brass knobs on the door and I always laugh at that, that the whole circle's changed around.*

*"I reckon I did a good job polishing the plaques but I've done other things around the school. I like doing manual things as I've explained before and a lot of the people on the committee don't really want to do it or can't do it so whenever there's jobs to be done I ... and so I like that. Recently last year I had the old clock that was ... we used to wind the clock up by clock monitor. [For a] number of years they never did that and it never worked so I've had that electrified and it now goes continually ... It is being maintained in its antique condition but it now shows the correct time. Things around the war memorial and other ... what would I say? Shields been mounted in the hall. You know I enjoy doing all that sort of thing."*

### **.... setting up the Museum and showing it off to friends and Modernians**



### **NORMAN GEORGE ASHTON** **PMS student 1950-54**

From Cambridge POST 19 January 2024  
Extract from article by John Townshend

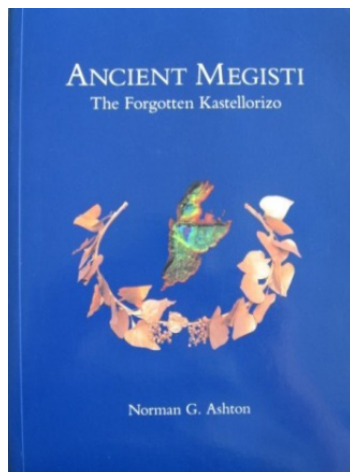
Norm Ashton was a prolific historian and academic, red wine lover, cricket giant, football fan and fecund provider of talent to the University Cricket Club. He died in Adelaide last week, aged 86, after a long, varied and fulfilling life. Head of Classics and Ancient History at UWA, where he studied the history of significant Greek island Kastellorizo and the coins of Sifnos, and convinced sceptical teenagers of the value of examining the past to better know the future.

Norm was my first-year tutor. He won over our small Ancient History 100 class early by uncorking a fruity red to aid discussion, and later made it clear to me, without ever saying it directly, that my degree prospects would not be harmed by doing well on the field for UCC where he was president. That was the year he helped set up Lord's Taverners in WA, the long-running cricket charity, and took a leading role in the national youth cricket council.

The council was the body that helped frame junior development across the country and, in those days, ran the national under-19 championships used to identify future Test talent. Norm and his great mate Laurie Sawle, premiership team-mates at UCC, proved a powerful combination on the national stage. "Colonel" Sawle was national selection chairman with a mantra to "identify talent and find a way to pick it" while Norm worked on the programs needed to produce that talent. He had plenty of his own in cricket, football and hockey. He was not able to break into the East Fremantle team that won the 1957 WAFL premiership, but he soon had a remarkable season at UCC, taking 90 wickets at an average of 8.3 with his lively seamers, and completing the first leg of the unprecedented feat of winning a flag in every grade at the club.

Sport was his passion, but history was his career. He combined the two with his epic *Fremantle Football*, which examined the origins of the sport in the port, and later, after moving east to become pro-chancellor at Adelaide University, the definitive and somewhat controversial book on Port Adelaide's entry into the AFL. He sired several groups of sons for Uni, called on his knowledge of the dead languages Latin and Ancient Greek to set up Namedroppers, a business most useful in providing exotic but accurate racehorse names, and was an outstanding raconteur and dinner guest. Norm was a doer, mostly unruffled but strong-willed when roused, and great company.





**Head of Dept of Classics and Ancient History UWA, Chair of Academic (Professorial) Board of the Academic Council, UWA, Pro Vice Chancellor at the University of Adelaide (two books on Ancient Greek History), National CEO Smith Family.**

Norman will be remembered as an incredible academic and scholar especially of Ancient Greek History. He undertook exceptional archaeological work on the Greek Islands of Kastellorizo and Siphnos, leaving a legacy of appreciation of their ancient history for future visitors to treasure. His work on Kastellorizo was especially remarkable, opening a new understanding of its ancient history and publishing his discoveries in the Book "*Ancient megisti: the Forgotten Kastellorizo*". Future generations will be indebted to his Scholarship.

### **Emeritus Professor ANDREW REGINALD HOWARD COLE**

**PMS student 1937-1941**

From *The History and the Heritage*

Promoting excellence in Australian science

**Professor Andrew Cole**

**Chemist**

Andrew Reginald Howard (Andy) Cole was born in Perth, Western Australia in 1924. He qualified for a place at Perth's only selective school, Perth Modern School, in 1937. After finishing secondary school in 1941, Cole was awarded a government university exhibition to study at the University of Western Australia (1942-46), graduated with a BSc (Hons) in chemistry in 1946, and received a Hackett studentship which enabled him to study in England. After spending a year doing further research in Western Australia, Cole took up this studentship at St John's College, Oxford (1947-49). In 1950, moved again, to take up a position as postdoctoral research fellow at the National Research Council of Canada in Ottawa, was awarded a Nuffield research fellowship and returned to the University of Western Australia in 1952. He was subsequently appointed senior lecturer in chemistry (1955-57), reader in chemistry (1958-68), personal professorship in physical chemistry (1969) and head of department (1971-89).

### **CAROLINE SERVENTY OAM**

**née DARBYSHIRE, PMS student 1946-47**

From the website of AFFM Australian Federation of Friends of Museums

In memory

Conservationist and influential supporter of museums in Australia and internationally, Caroline (Carol) Serventy OAM passed away in December 2023.

*Caroline Mary Serventy (née Darbyshire)* was born in Hay Street, Perth in 1930 and lived to the age of 93. Despite a rocky start in life (her father left when she was ten years old) Carol and her brother Tony loved their life and always made the best of it. Carol attended the well-regarded Perth Modern School (former Prime Minister [Bob Hawke](#) was also an alumnus). She graduated with a Bachelor of Arts from the University of Western Australia in 1953, and then taught Speech and Drama with the Western Australia Adult Education Unit.

Carol was an actress with the Perth Repertory Club from 1948-1958. In 1955 she married [Vincent Serventy \(PMS student 1929-33, later teacher\)](#) who was 14 years her senior. Vin and Carol had many adventures together as they travelled Australia to produce '*Rolf's Walkabout*' and some of Australia's earliest nature documentaries. They also published the *Walkabout* magazine in the 1960s, and Carol edited all of Vin's many books. They were both committed conservationists and encouraged Australians to protect and cherish their country's natural environment. The couple raised three children: Tash, Cathy and Mathew, and Carol was a loving aunt and friend. Her friends included scientists such as Barbara Main (spiders) and Valerie Taylor (sharks); and artists, writers and gardeners. Although the family lived in Sydney in the 1970s, they were crucial to saving the Dryandra Woodlands in Western Australia, and were involved in many other conservation fights across Australia.

Carol Serventy made notable contributions to the world of museums, beginning in 1972 when, with the approval of the Australian Museum Director, Frank Talbot, she chaired the committee that founded the Australian Museum Society (TAMS), with the goal of supporting the Australian Museum in interesting a broad spectrum of the public in the environment and its conservation. In 1975 Carol was a prime mover in establishing the Australian Federation of Friends of Museums (AFFM), and became the first Australian President of the World Federation of Friends of Museums (WFFM) from 1997 to 1999, hosting a world congress of WFFM, 'New Century, New Museums, New Friends' in Sydney in 1999. Along with Judy Holding and Jack Thompson, Carol was instrumental in the formation of the Friends of the National Museum of Australia in March 1989. Their passionate advocacy for the Museum, along with other influential Australians such as Winnifred Rosser, Vin Serventy, Valerie Taylor, Robyn Williams, John Williamson and Margaret Whitlam, contributed to the decision by government to establish the National Museum of Australia, which opened in March 2001 on Acton Peninsula, Canberra.



Carol spent many years living in Pearl Beach (NSW) and in the last few years, with her daughter Cathy and son-in-law Pete, in Lismore. She leaves four grandchildren: Charo, Lachlan, Lucy and Ari.

**LILIAN GARNETT, née HOAD**  
**PMS student 1951-55**

Lilian was born in Vasse, WA, In 1938, the eldest of four children. She arrived at Perth Modern School in 1951 having earned a scholarship from primary school in Perenjori where she had attended primary school in classes taught by her father. Following in her father's footsteps she became a teacher. Her immaculate attention to detail was enhanced in her training to become a Home Science Teacher and her greatly admired handwork skills provided lifelong joy. Her first teaching appointment was to Bridgetown where she met and married Geoff Garnett. They had three remarkable daughters. Quiet, friendly, and considerate in nature she held an intense love of family, devotion to God and church and was a very proud Modernian. She lived her life for everyone and everything.



**DR DAVID (NED) BIGGINS**  
**PMS student 1957-61**

David (Ned) Biggins attended Modern School, then enrolled in Agriculture gaining an Agricultural Council Scholarship. He topped his year in Agriculture during his time as an undergraduate, then obtained First Class Honours in Agricultural Biochemistry. He then went to the UK, and undertook a PhD at the University of Sussex.

In 1976-91, he studied Science and Technology at Griffith University in Brisbane to Doctoral level and founded a faculty for the first programme in Australia on social dimensions of Science and Technology.

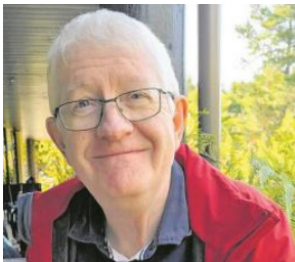
His wife is a doctor, and they did not have any children. They lived in West Leederville. David's mother was Laurel Asquith, PMS Head Girl 1921, father Robert Ernest Biggins was a teacher at PMS 1947-51, brother John 1954-58 became a doctor in rural SA.

David Robert Biggins died on Monday evening 11 December 2023 and a service to celebrate his life of was held on Thursday, 21 December 2023.

**DR JOHN MIDDLETON**  
**PMS student 1950-54**

John studied organic chemistry at UWA and earned his PhD there. In 1965 he was appointed to a research post in CSIRO in Melbourne, where he worked until retirement. He took up rugby at Mod and played First Grade for UWA before taking up refereeing, which he continued in Melbourne. He married in 1961 and was father to two sons and a daughter. His first wife died in 1995 and he married a second time in 2002. John died in Melbourne in December 2023 from Alzheimer's.

**PAUL SEALEY**  
**PMS student 1976-80**



*"Much loved colleague, teacher, conductor, musical director and mentor from Churchlands SHS. We miss your counsel, dry wit, passion for the Essendon Football Club, dedication to our music department, but most of all we miss your friendship. Sincere condolences to Karen, Isaac and Xavier." Published in The West Australia Tuesday, 21 November 2023*

**GEOFFREY MICHAELS**  
**PMS student 1957-60**

From the website of Garry Gillard, PMS student 1956-60



Geoff didn't enter Mod at the beginning of 1956, mysteriously turning up I think at the beginning of second year (1957). Although a year ahead of his age in a selective school, he had no trouble fitting in, both scholastically and socially.

I recall a lunchtime concert at school when with piano accompaniment he played something like a movement from one of the heroic violin concerti, perhaps the one by Mendelssohn. What I do remember is my scepticism when little Geoff appeared on the stage with his fiddle, and then proceeded to play magnificently, impressively, virtuosically.

Geoff first married Patricia Wrightson, who was in our year at school, in the 1960s. They were presumably divorced in the 1970s.





February 2024: Geoffrey is in the final stages of Parkinson's Disease, at home with his (second) wife (whom he married in the late 1970s) in New Jersey.

See also: <https://garrygillard.net/pms/michaels.html> and <https://garrygillard.net/pms/musicals.html>

The Australian violinist Geoffrey Michaels has passed away at the age of 79. Geoffrey Michaels was born June 19, 1944. He attended Perth Modern School in Australia, led its orchestra in musical productions, and served as secretary of the school's music society in 1960. Michaels began studying the violin at the age of five and was soon recognized as a prodigious player. By the time he was fourteen, he had won the Australian Broadcasting Corporation's concerto competition, becoming the youngest musician ever to do so. Michaels soon received opportunities to appear solo with major Australian orchestras and to tour as a recitalist. At sixteen, he went to America to study violin with Efrem Zimbalist and viola with Oscar Shumsky at the Curtis Institute of Music. While he was still a student, Michaels accepted an invitation to become a member of the Curtis String Quartet and remained in this position until 1969. Michaels was a prizewinner at the Tchaikovsky Competition, the Queen Elisabeth Competition, and the Concours Jacques Thibaud. As a pedagogue, he taught for many years at Princeton University and Swarthmore College. He also held professorships at Florida State University and the University of British Columbia. Michaels was also a founding member of the Liebesfreude Quartet, and appeared in the Janus Piano Trio, Performers' Committee for Twentieth Century Music, Richardson Chamber Players, and Vancouver New Music Society.

He married childhood friend Patricia Walmsley, and they divorced later. He met Beverly McCoy at a music camp, and they married in 1978, and had daughters Julia, Annika, and Carolyn. Beyond the stage, Mr. Michaels served as a professor at the University of British Columbia and Florida State University while maintaining teaching affiliations with Princeton University, the New School of Music, and Swarthmore College. In 1986, he discussed the importance of participating in community outreach programs in the New York Times: *"I feel that I am no use as a teacher unless I am consistently engaged in the business of actually playing. Almost everything I have to say is based on my own experience with the instrument."* His wife said: "Music was like a religion to him. Teaching was like passing on a craft." His daughter Annika said Mr. Michaels had a gift for "seeing the deep elegance and complexity in things we otherwise might take for granted." Honouring him, she said, was to recognize *"the passion in the way the people we care about live their lives and how that enriches our own lives."* He followed politics and current events, and likely read every spy novel by John le Carre. Friends said he could be a perfectionist but rarely a self-promoter. He was a hands-on parent by all accounts. Our heartfelt sympathies and condolences go out to Mr. Michaels's family, friends, colleagues, and former students. Sources: [Violinist and Pedagogue Geoffrey Michaels has Died, Aged 79 \(theviolinchannel.com\)](#), and [Curtis Mourns the Passing of Geoffrey Michaels \(Violin '60\) - Curtis Institute of Music](#), and [Geoffrey Michaels, celebrated violin prodigy and longtime music teacher, has died at 79 \(inquirer.com\)](#)

## MODERNIANS WHO DIED IN THE SERVICE OF THEIR COUNTRY

Number 22 in a special series of articles researched and prepared for publication by Robert Johnson, PMS student 1961-65 and Museum Volunteer

### **Bernard Barton (Barney) Cresswell** **Perth Modern School Student 1926-28**

Squadron Leader Barney Cresswell climbed into his Kittyhawk fighter at Pt Moresby in New Guinea just after dawn on 17 April 1942 and took off on a reconnaissance flight over Lae on the north-east coast. A unit of the Imperial Japanese Navy's crack Tainan Air Group was there to meet him.

#### **Early Years**

**Barney Cresswell** was born on 30 November 1912 to George and Eleanor Cresswell. Barney had an older half-sister Georgina and older brother Chris who both attended Modern School. Chris, a policeman, married Beryl Hedges in 1936 and had three sons; George was born in 1937, Bernard, named after his uncle Barney and also nicknamed Barney, was born in 1944 and John was born in 1950. George and Bernard went to Modern School as well, Bernard becoming School Captain in 1961.

Barney commenced at Mod in 1926 and received glowing comments by his form teacher throughout the year. These had dissipated somewhat by the middle of Third Year, perhaps due to the distraction of being an enthusiastic member of the Young Australia League band.

Barney passed his Junior Certificate examinations in seven subjects at the end of 1928 and left Modern School for a job in the Crown Law Department.

#### **Military Service**

Barney served in the 10<sup>th</sup> Light Horse Regiment, a Reserve unit, for four years before he was selected for an eleven-month course at Pt Cook in July 1934 when he was 21. The primary training aircraft was the Westland *Wapiti* and the course focused on signals, photography, air observation and aircraft maintenance.



Barney graduated on 18 June 1935 with a Short Service Commission of four years and the rank of Pilot Officer. He was posted to No. 3 Squadron in Richmond, NSW, and celebrated New Year's Day in 1936 by being promoted to Flying Officer.

Over the next few years Barney was posted to a number of squadrons to gain experience in a range of RAAF functions. He also served in Southern Area Headquarters in Melbourne to obtain experience in staff duties. He was promoted to Squadron Leader on 1 June 1940. He was active in sports and had become an outstanding runner and surf lifesaver.

In September 1941 Barney married Faith White in Sydney. The Japanese bombed Pearl Harbor three months later, and on 1 April 1942 he was appointed commanding officer of No. 76 Squadron, a Kittyhawk squadron based near Brisbane. By this stage Barney had considerable flying experience but no combat experience so he was sent on attachment to 75 Squadron in Pt Moresby to familiarise himself with battle conditions.



Squadron Leader  
Barney Cresswell, 1942



A 75 Squadron Kittyhawk in New Guinea, 1942

No. 75 Squadron was engaged in a desperate and costly struggle against the veteran Japanese Tainan Air Group based in Lae, 300kms to the north. Michael Veitch, in his book *44 Days, 75 Squadron and the Fight for Australia*, describes Barney's first and last combat mission:

*"On 17 April, accompanied by Flying Officer "Pop" Woods, Cresswell took off just after dawn for a reconnaissance flight over Lae. Approaching at low level three Zeros suddenly descended on them from high above. Woods and Cresswell had crossed with a flight of seven Betty bombers and their six-strong fighter escort heading out on an early attack to Moresby.*

*Woods saw them pounce at the last second, but with their radios not working, he could only waggle his wings desperately to warn Cresswell, who was following 150 yards astern. With the Zeros almost on top of them, Woods banked away into cloud. A Zero latched onto the unsuspecting Cresswell who took hits at close range.*

*A nearby New Guinea Volunteer Reserve detachment reported seeing a Kittyhawk emit a long trail of smoke as it lost height, apparently seeking a safe place to crash land. Without warning, it keeled over and plummeted straight into a hillside near the junction of the Watut and Bulolo rivers."*

Barney was shot down over Zenag about 30 km south of Lae. His remains were buried at the Bulwa military cemetery, then moved to the Wau War Cemetery, and finally moved to the Lae War Cemetery when Lae was captured from the Japanese in September, 1943. On his headstone is written

### HE DIED AS HE LIVED, FOR AUSTRALIA



Map showing Zenag, Wau and Lae



Barney's headstone in Lae Cemetery in 1967  
(Photo David Beal).



### Where Are They Now?

Faith gave birth to a daughter, Lindy, soon after Barney was posted to Queensland. It is believed that Barney never saw his daughter. Faith remarried in 1944 to RAAF Sergeant John Linacre of Melbourne. Lindy lives near Euroa north of Melbourne and still maintains contact with her cousins (Barney's nephews) George in Hobart, Bernard (Barney) in Perth and John in Busselton.

Barney Cresswell was 29 when he died.

## LEST WE FORGET

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

