



PERTH MODERNIAN SOCIETY NEWSLETTER



Issue 63, February 2025, Vol 4 No 5

WELCOME to your **Perth Modernian e-Newsletter, Issue 63, February 2025, Vol 4 No 5** 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
info@perthmoderniansociety.org.au
All messages received either by phone or email are promptly forwarded electronically for further action.

DIARY DATES

ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING and 30th Anniversary Celebration
5pm, Monday 19 May 2025
Staff Room, Andrews Building,
Perth Modern School

REUNIONS
Class of 1965
TBA - See **Upcoming Reunions** for details

CLASS/YEAR GROUPS
Are you planning a Class/Year Reunion for 2025?
We can help
for further information visit
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

NEXT ISSUES
Copy deadlines for
Issue 64, May 2025, Vol 4 No 6
20 May copy deadline for circulation
by **1 June 2025**

Issue 65, August 2025, Vol 4 No 7
20 August copy deadline for circulation
by **1 September 2025**

Issue 66, November 2025, Vol 4 No 8
20 November copy deadline for circulation
by **1 December 2025**

Modernians in the News

GINA WILLIAMS AM

Gina Williams, who attended Mod in the 1980s, has been appointed to the board of West Australian Opera. Her appointment is the result of the relationship she has built with the company which has produced two of her works, *Koolbardi Wer Wardong* and *Wundig Wer Wilura*.



A talented singer and composer Gina came to prominence in the early 2000s when she began to incorporate her indigenous heritage into her work. A Ballardong Noongar woman, Gina accepted the challenge of learning Noongar as a means of reconnecting with her heritage, concerned that as few as 400 Noongar speakers remained.

In 2001 Gina won her first West Australian Music Industry Award for Indigenous Song of the Year and subsequently won six more.

In 2011 Gina entered into collaboration with guitarist Guy Ghouse and they have since released a series of studio albums which feature original compositions in Noongar and translations into Noongar of classic children's songs from the Anglo-Saxon tradition.

She has a strong association with the establishment of Noongar Radio station 100.9FM (Kuditi) which she helped to establish and is a director of Noongar Media Enterprises.

Gina has been a member of the Management Committee of the WA Music Industry Association, a former Federal Secretary of the National Indigenous Media Association of Australia, the Australian representative to the Guam Festival of Pacific Arts (2016), a member of the Advisory Committee within the Office of Women's Interests and the lead artist for the *'Healing Songs'* project for the Community Arts Network of Western Australia (2009-2010).

In 2017 Gina won the Aboriginal Category within the Western Australian of the Year Awards. In 2018 she was inducted into the Western Australian Women's Hall of Fame. In 2021 Gina was made a Member of the Order of Australia, 'For significant service to the performing arts, to Indigenous music, and to media.'



IN THIS ISSUE

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OF THEIR COUNTRY

Acknowledgments

Thank you to all letter writers

and contributors:

Ruth Barrett
Janet Beed
John Burgess
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Irene Froyland
Jasmine Jansen
Robert Johnson
Roger Stubbs
Robyn White

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Robyn White
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MICHAELA TAYLOR-WILLIAMS

PMS Student 2010-2014



In 2024 Michaela was the lead author of an important paper, the subject of which is *Targeted multispectral filter array design for the optimization of endoscopic cancer detection in the gastrointestinal tract*.

The abstract explains that 'Color differences between healthy and diseased tissue in the gastrointestinal (GI) tract are detected visually by clinicians during white light endoscopy; however, the earliest signs of cancer are often just a slightly different shade of pink compared to healthy tissue making it hard to detect. Improving contrast in endoscopy is important for early detection of disease in the GI tract during routine screening and surveillance.'

Michaela's research group aims, to 'target alternative colors for imaging to improve contrast using custom multispectral filter arrays (MSFAs) that could be deployed in an endoscopic "chip-on-tip" configuration.'

An earlier paper by Michaela explored the use of multispectral imaging of nailfold capillaries using light emitting diode illumination. Imaging the smallest blood vessels at the top of fingernails provides an important diagnostic tool for several conditions.

Michaela undertakes her work in the famous Cavendish Laboratory at Cambridge University under the leadership of Professor Sarah Bohndiek.

The complexities of the paper are beyond this writer's ability to understand other than to create an awareness of how important bio-medical engineering has become.

Michaela was not one of those Modernians who featured in the list of Exhibition winners at the end of Year 12 but once enrolled at UWA in the Faculty of Engineering and Mathematical Sciences it was a different story. By 2018 she had completed a BSc (First Class Honours) Electrical and Electronic Engineering Science.

In 2018 Michaela was named the Global Winner in Engineering in the Undergraduate Awards. The Undergraduate Awards are the world's leading undergraduate awards program which recognises top undergraduate work and shares this with a global audience to connect students across cultures and disciplines. The initiative includes the top twenty universities in Michaela with her International Undergraduate Award medallion Britain, USA and Canada and accepts submissions from students in any Institution of Higher Education in the world.

Michaela's winning paper was titled "*Hollow core Photonic Crystal Fibre based Needle Probes for Raman Spectroscopy of Biological Tissue*" and was published in The Undergraduate Library.

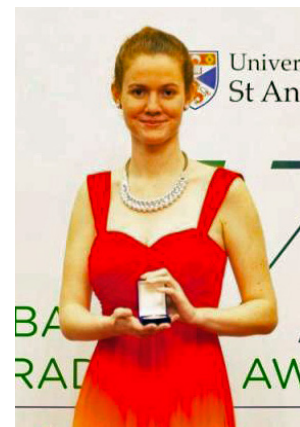
After receiving her award Michaela worked as a graduate engineer with BHP Iron Ore until she received a Woodside John Monash Scholarship which enabled her to undertake studies overseas towards a PhD.

In 2021 Michaela was award the scholarship offered by Washington based SPIE, the international society for optics and photonics which has assisted the continuation of her work in Cambridge.

Michaela's current career aim is to, '....develop a compact biomedical optical imaging system capable of producing 3D imagery of tissue vasculature for quantitative analysis of blood oxygenation, viscosity, and velocity.'

Watch this space.

- Roger Stubbs



Michaela with her International Undergraduate Award medallion



PERTH MODERNIAN SOCIETY

www.perthmoderniansociety.org.au

2025 COUNCIL

info@perthmoderniansociety.org.au
Ruth Barrett, *Honour Awards*
Barrie Baker, *Membership (up to 6 Feb.)*
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 (up to 24 Feb.)*
Barbara Mallett, *Reunions*
Daryl Williams AM KC, *Vice President*
Mitchell Mackay, *Ex-Officio, PMS Principal*

ANNUAL CONTRIBUTING MEMBERSHIP RENEWAL

\$40 per annum now due

MEMBERSHIP UPDATES

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 further information info@perthmoderniansociety.org.au



SPHINX FOUNDATION INC.

2024 BOARD

sphinxfoundation@perthmoderniansociety.org.au
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Peter Farr, *Director*
Vivian Wang, *Hon Treasurer*
Robert Gray, *Secretary*
Danielle Jeyes, *Director*
Annette Mercer, *Director*
Mitchell Mackay, *School Representative*



DONORS

Sphinx Scholarship Fund

The Sphinx Foundation Directors gratefully acknowledge substantial donations received in February 2025 from the Malka Foundation for the purposes of (i) Malka Equity scholarships, and (ii) Entrepreneurship and Leadership training for PMS students.



2024 BOARD

museum@perthmoderniansociety.org.au

Dr Robyn White, *Chair*
Sharon Williams, *Treasurer*
Monica Brierley-Hay, *Secretary*
Thalia Cole, *Board Member*
Jeffrey Lai, *Board Member*
Ashleigh Blechynden, *Board Member*

Ex-officio:

President, Perth Modernian Society
Perth Modern School Representative

MUSEUM VOLUNTEERS

[History Centre and Archives]

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

MUSEUM SOCIAL MEDIA PAGES

facebook.com/perthmodernschoolmuseum/
instagram.com/pmsmamuseum/

MODERNIAN HONOURS

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

* Deceased

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

* Deceased

Honorary Membership

Alison Woodman
Tonya McCusker AM
Nigel Hunt
Brendon Dawson
Sharon Williams

KELE READHEAD and CALEB ADAMS

In February, Peter Farr renewed his acquaintance with two Modernians at an 'Educated' seminar conducted by the Fogarty Foundation. Kele Readhead and Caleb Adams are both Fogarty Scholars and are studying engineering at UWA, a field they share with Peter.



Kele Readhead, Peter Farr and Caleb Adams

Kele graduated from Mod in 2024, was a school prefect, and Head Boarder at City Beach Residential College.

While at Mod he was a member of the Commonwealth Government's, National Student Voice Council.

As part of his commitment to community service, Caleb recently worked with the Youth Advisory Council which advised the U.S. Consulate in Perth.

In July Caleb will study in the USA as the recipient of a prestigious Fulbright Scholarship.

A number of Modernians have benefitted from the Fogarty Foundation to achieve its aim of, advancing social change through education.

NEW OLD MODERNIANS – CLASS OF 2013

The **Class of 2013** has yet to reach the age of thirty years but so many have already made significant progress in their careers, both to their advantage and to the advantage of the wider community. They have done so despite the impact of the COVID 19 epidemic with its attendant disruptions.

When the selective program was reintroduced, there was great concern about the fate of music. In their farewell comments so many of the Class of 2013 indicated that music had been the high point of their time at Mod.

These thumbnail sketches of a small representative sample of the class have been compiled from information posted on the internet via LinkedIn. In selecting the following about whom to write I am sharply aware of so many other with remarkable careers about whom I could have written – engineers, lawyers, medical practitioners, dental surgeons, an actor, consultants, statisticians and space scientists. Mod can be proud of the part it has played in the success these fine young people.



LIAM TAPSELL

Liam has a keen interest in sports science. He first completed a Bachelor of Science with first class honours with an emphasis on sport science, exercise and health at UWA, and then enrolled at the University of British Columbia where he completed a Master of Science with a thesis entitled 'How mental fatigue influences neurovascular coupling in post-concussion syndrome'.

Liam is now a research assistant at Edith Cowan

University where his research builds upon his Master's thesis and explores the use of technology to address neurological recovery.

A PhD candidate, Liam describes the scope of his work:

I'm a researcher with Edith Cowan University, with experience using Transcranial Doppler ultrasound, Transmagnetic Stimulation, and muscle stimulation. I am interested in action-based improvements to physical and mental output, in particular for those in neurological recovery. As well as my interest, I find great enjoyment in teaching and I find my communication skills serve me well in both.'



KYRON RESHI

As the world of business increases its awareness of how factors such as climate change may impact upon its activities, opportunities have been created for people like Kyron.



Kyron completed a Bachelor of Commerce with distinction at UWA and then a Masters degree (with distinction) in Supply Chain Management and Logistics at the University of Sydney.

Subsequently he became a consultant advising clients on how to navigate, 'the current and emerging risk landscape, enabling them to make informed decisions aimed at mitigating adverse events.'

Kyron now works in New Zealand where he is the Practice Leader-Strategic Risk Consulting for Marsh McLennan NZ and Fiji. His mission is to, '...enhance client resilience and growth throughout the Pacific Region.'

JOHNSON YE

Former Head Boy Johnson has qualified as a Doctor of Dental Medicine and is exploring opportunities through further study and broader experiences. He describes himself as an:

Australian dentist with a multidisciplinary background in healthcare and commerce. Interested in the intersection between healthcare, technology and enterprise.

Johnson first studied at the University of Western Australia where by 2020 he had completed a Doctor of Dental Medicine. Following graduation, he practiced in regional Western Australia principally with the Department of Health.

While at UWA he undertook a clinical observership at the Peking University School of Stomatology. He was able to put his bi-lingual skills to good use and as a translator assisted in the preparation of strategic marketing materials.

To pursue his interest in the application of technology in dentistry, Johnson studied at Oxford University where by 2023, he had completed a Master of Science in Applied Digital Health.



RUISI CHEN

Ruisi is an Adviser with the Behavioural Economics Team and is based within the Department of Prime Minister and Cabinet. Ruisi explains that,

BETA's mission is to improve the lives of Australians by generating and applying evidence from the behavioural and social sciences to find solutions to complex policy problems.

Previously Ruisi worked as a Project Officer within Western Australia's Department of Health where her work embraced issues associated with early youth psychosis, family violence and homelessness.

To qualify Ruisi first completed at UWA, a Bachelor of Science and then a Master of Public Health (with Distinction). Her dissertation explored the *Underutilization of Labour in Australian Nursing Graduates*.

ROSE ILES FEELEY

Rose is a Policy Officer within the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade having previously served as Second Secretary at the Australian Embassy in Phnom Penh.

Rose studied at the Australian National University where she achieved a Bachelor of Arts with First Class Honours. Her areas of study were Political Science, Spanish and French. She then spent two months as an Intern with the U.S. Senate Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation. (Chairman John Thune).

She became a Research Assistant for ANU's Professor Benjamin Goldsmith and was based in Rio de Janeiro. While in Brazil Rose undertook intensive language studies in Portuguese at the Pontificia Universidade Católica.



ZOE CASTLEDEN

Zoe works as a researcher for a media company which produces high end documentaries that focus upon key social and environmental issues. 'We're interested in outsider perspectives and dissenting voices.'

When Zoe enrolled at UWA to complete a Bachelor of Science in Chemistry there were signs that she had a future in the media. She was Science Editor for the student magazine Pelican.

Upon graduation she had a range of experiences which involved community engagement and publication within a scientific context.

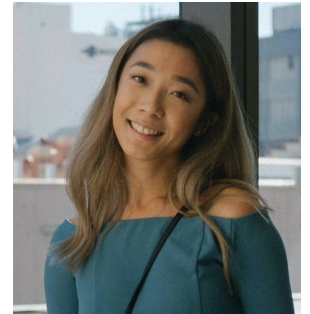
By 2021 Zoe had graduated from Imperial College London with a Master of Science – Media Production. For a time, she worked as a magazine designer for ISCIENCE before relocating to Faction Media Ltd.

JESSICA CHENG

Jessica is a Senior Program Officer within the WA Department of Health. Jessica's speciality lies within the field of genetics.

She first completed a Bachelor of Science (Honours) in Genetics. Study for a PhD in Molecular Genetics followed. Jessica explains,

My thesis explored a gene cluster implicated in complex inflammatory autoimmune diseases (the Regulators of Complement Activation), combining molecular laboratory techniques with genomic datasets to better understand their transcriptional regulation and chromatin architecture.



Employment as a researcher at the Telethon Kids Institute followed before she joined the Department of Health as an intern. From there, her career progressed.



JOE DOWSON

Established in 2018, the Australian Space Agency, 'which works across government, industry and academia to advance Australia's position in the global space economy....'

Joe is a senior policy officer within the Australian Space Agency and at the time of writing is an Assistant Director (acting) in which role he is the project lead for the development of an Australian space sustainability policy, including:

- Facilitating public consultation and whole of Government consultation on the policy.
- Generating reports and engaging with executives to enable decision making.
- Developing educational materials to promote the benefits of space sustainability to the public.

He began his path towards his present position by first completing a BSc (Physics) with First Class Honours at the University of Melbourne. He then enrolled at the Ecole Polytechnique Fédérale de Lausanne (Switzerland) where he completed a MSc in Engineering Physics and Applied Physics. In the months before he went to Switzerland Joe worked with the astronomers and engineers on the Square Kilometre Array project. An online course with Havard Business School (credential of Readiness) followed which he passed with high honours.

Joe spent six months as an intern with Airbus Defence and Space in Germany after which he was employed by Visagio (Perth) and the Boston Consulting Group (Melbourne), in consultancy roles. As a member of BCG's Climate and Sustainability practice in Australia and New Zealand he worked with clients in the energy sector, public sector, and industrial goods sector on strategy and program delivery projects.

In 2024 he joined the Australian Space Agency.



CONWAY LI

Sometimes people wonder what is the point of studying Mathematics at an abstract level. A quick look at the career of Conway Li may provide some of the answers. His success was foreshadowed when in 2010 he received an *Award of Excellence for an Outstanding Individual Performance* in the Mathematics Olympiad.

At UWA, Conway first completed a Bachelor of Philosophy with Honours in Mathematics and Physics. He then completed a PhD in Applied Mathematics. His publication was entitled *Boundary Tracing for Laplace's Equation with Conformal Mapping*.

Conway now works as a Technical Consultant with RGB Assurance which is an engineering consulting firm 'specialising in the provision of consultancy services, software development and training, in the area of high-integrity, safety-critical systems.' In particular, it specialises in complex, multi-technology systems comprising software and electronic hardware. On his LinkedIn page Conway identifies a number of projects with which he has been involved. These include,

- Programmatic fault tree analysis for a risk assessment of proposed train protection systems along a rail corridor
- Analysis of platform screen door gap size sensitivity (passenger entrapment risk assessment)
- Curve fitting to reverse-engineer a flawed implementation of a risk model
- Kinematic modelling of train dynamics
- Estimation of train brake rate (deceleration) from footage
- Fault tree analysis to derive tolerable hazard rates and safety requirements
- Statistical analysis and block diagrams for reliability assessment of infrastructure
- Python scripting to interface between Google Sheets and Microsoft Office
- Browser extension development to automate filling of web forms
- Android development of an open-source Chinese keyboard (XML + Java)
- Development of an open-source fault tree analyser (Python)

DERIEK PIJLS

Deriek works as a Senior Analyst at S&P Global Ratings as a member of its Sovereign and International Public Finance Team.

Previously he had held a number of positions within the Victorian Department of Treasury and Finance. As a Senior Economist he was a member of the Revenue Forecasting Team.

Deriek studied at the University of Melbourne where he first completed a Bachelor of Commerce (with Honours) in Economics and Finance. He later completed a Master of Commerce with High Distinction.



AMELIA TOYNE

Amelia works within the banking industry with ANZ as a Senior Manager Research and Analysis – Resources, Energy and Infrastructure. She has been with the organization for seven years and has progressed through a series of positions.

In her current role Amelia recognizes the growth opportunities that exist as business makes a transition to a low-carbon economy.

To prepare for her role Amelia completed a Bachelor of Commerce at UWA in Business Law and Finance. Later she completed a Graduate Certificate in Strategic Communications.



SARA FROCHTER

Sara is a social worker who now works as a clinician with Headspace. On her LinkedIn page, Sara describes herself as follows.

Mental health professional graduating with a Master of Social Work (MSW). Demonstrated history of working with clients from diverse social and cultural backgrounds, with skills in Individual Counselling, Cognitive Behavioural Therapy, Groups and Workshop Facilitation, Quantitative Research. Special interest in working with LGBTQIA+ populations. Mental health professional graduating with a Master of Social Work (MSW).



Demonstrated history of working with clients from diverse social and cultural backgrounds, with skills in Individual Counselling, Cognitive Behavioural Therapy, Groups and Workshop Facilitation, Quantitative Research. Special interest in working with LGBTQIA+ populations.

Towards becoming a social worker, at UWA Sara first completed a BSc (with Honours) in Psychology. Since then, she has completed a Master of Social Work at UWA and a Master of Applied Psychology (Professional) at Murdoch University.

REUNIONS

Class of 2014

Jasmine Jansen (Head Girl 2014) reports that on the 21st of December 2024, the 10 Year Reunion for the Class of 2014 was held at the Hylin Cafe Back Bar in West Leederville, just a stone's throw away from Mod.

"We had a fantastic spread of food and drinks on a lovely summer evening. There was an amazing turnout with over 85 people attending, including our beloved head of year Nikki Reilly who we were all so thrilled to see. It was such a special time to catch up with each other, reminisce and share stories about the past, reconnect with old friends, make plans for the future, and celebrate how far we've all come since graduation."



Class of 1956

Ruth Barrett reports that some members of the class of 1956 caught up with each other in the closing months of 2024. There are no details of the stories that were told but *The Perth Modernian* was sent some lovely photographs. Most were once teachers except for **Kevin Moore** who was an accountant.



Joan Saleeba (née Eimer)



Laurie Best (née Terrill), Ruth Barrett (née McWhinney) and Rayma Pervan (née Richter)



Kevin Moore and Kent Logie



Sian Bailey (née Thomas)

Class of 1964

A lively reunion of the Class of 1964 was held at the Herdsman Lake Tavern in Wembley on the 21st of November. **Janet Beed** was thrilled with the high level of attendance from a group of former students who are now in their 77th year. Forty-three former students attended with 12 others sending their apologies because of other commitments. Former staff members **Eric Alcock** and **John Graham** were also able to attend.

To make the job of recording those who attended easier, the group gathered in their former form groups for photographs. Eric Alcock and John Graham feature in the front row of each photograph.



Good food and even better conversation



Form V1



Forms V2 and V3 combined



Forms V4 and V5 combined

UPCOMING REUNION - Class of 1965

A special 60-year reunion is planned for 2025. If you are interested, or can assist with providing connections to students from 1965, please contact Peter at peterstephenson48@gmail.com or phone **0412 715 546**.

YOUR SAY

John Burgess, who visited the Museum and History Centre to explore the records of his father Eric Burgess (1922-1923), forwarded the following compliment for the dedicated team of volunteers.

Your archivists were most helpful and provided me with a lot of information, most importantly interpreting the handwriting associated with my father's record. I could not have managed it by myself. It all comes together to tell an interesting story.

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

MUSEUM NOTES



PERTH MODERNIAN SOCIETY
MUSEUM ASSOCIATION
INCORPORATED

The 2025 school year has begun so our museum volunteers are back in action.

We're all very happy to return, catching up with each other's summer activities as well as focussing on collecting, cataloguing and conserving the artefacts in the museum.

One of the first challenges for the new year is for the volunteers to refresh Museum displays. On the afternoon of 9th March, Perth Modern School will feature in Maureen Gathercole's program of Walks Around Subiaco. (*See Subiaco on Sunday*). She will lead a community walk around the school and access to some of the heritage buildings. The museum volunteers will work with participants, ensure that the museum is open and answer questions which relate to Perth Modern School.

The Museum has been fortunate to receive new donations over the summer. Modernians and their children used their holidays to have a declutter prior to downsizing.



Over summer a number of active Modernians have passed. Their contributions are acknowledged elsewhere in the newsletter. These sad occasions have reinforced to us all, that the memories and memorabilia held by the museum document the social and cultural history of Perth Modern School and also of our state. Our collection and conservation of these records, artefacts and stories seems even more important. Please consider donating objects, articles or texts, memories and stories relating to Perth Modern School so that our collection truly reflects the breadth of experiences of past students and staff. It also reminds us of the importance of succession planning. Its time to identify the next generation of those who will care for our treasures.

In our first meeting of the new year, the Museum Committee members indicated their plans for 2025. Ever enthusiastic, the work of cataloguing and conserving Sphinx magazines, student records as well as newly donated articles, will continue to dominate our time. A functioning IT operating system is critical for these activities and Ian Hunt has been focused on ensuring consistent access.

For 2025 the school has also allocated the Museum some space in the display area outside the library. This area is frequented by students and staff over break times and even when lining up for classes in the library – so offers a great opportunity to display artefacts while including information about the Perth Modernian Society, the Museum Association and Sphinx Foundation. We hope to fill these spaces in the next week or so – hopefully alerting more students to their active alumni organisations.

- Robyn White

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
Merle Bignell née Fleming	1944-1945	Student	21 October 2024
Lyle Bowden	1949-1953	Student	10 January 2025
Ronald Naylor	1950-1954	Student	22 December 2024
Dorothea Margaret Bennie née James	1949-1953	Student	17 December 2024
Alan Fletcher	1955-1959	Student	7 December 2024
Marion Blair	1953-1957	Student	19 November 2024
Sydney Denis Wakefield	1945-1946	Student	1 December 2024
Barrie Baker	1954-1958	Student	6 February 2025
Barbara Tobin née Limb	1957-1961	Student	5 January 2025
Maureen (Mandy) Dunk previously Oehlers, née Leach	1957-1961	Student	23 September 2024

TRIBUTES

Barrie Baker BA (Hons), Dip Ed, Dip Comp, Dip Theol, Dip Ed Admin
PMS Student 1954-1958



Barrie with wife Zoe

Barrie was a cherished member of the Perth Modern School community. The manner of his passing illustrates his zest and enthusiasm for life. Aged 84 he set out on his bike to attend his weekly Pilates class. Sadly, the searing heat contributed to his collapse upon arrival, and he could not be resuscitated.

Barrie attended Mod between 1954 and 1958. He achieved six distinctions spread across the most demanding science and maths courses, and the humanities. He taught mathematics, first at Mt Lawley Senior High School and then he became a lecturer within the technical education system.

But it is his later life contribution to the school for which Barrie will be best remembered.



The Sphinx Foundation is renowned for its fundraising activities and its distribution of generous scholarships. Barrie was a director from 2000 to 2023 and coordinated committees which assessed applications for scholarships. He also served as the Foundation's Chair. In recognition of his outstanding service the Sphinx Foundation at its 2024 AGM, resolved to award Barrie its first Life Membership.

When the Perth Modernian Society was established in 1995, Barrie was an inaugural and continuous member of its Council. He served as its president for seven years and also as vice-president. He served as the Functions Coordinator since 1996 and was Convenor of the Finance and Fundraising Committee since 2011, and was the Membership Officer in recent years. He was part of the team which produced the first history of Perth Modern School, *The History and the Heritage*. For his many contributions the Perth Modernian Society conferred upon Barrie its highest award, that of *Modernian Fellow* in 2016. Thereby, his name is permanently recorded in gold letters on a board in the McCusker Room at Mod.

Barrie did not limit his volunteer activities to Perth Modern School. A long-time resident of Mt Lawley he was Patron of the Mt Lawley Society. As a reflection of his interest in Urban Heritage, in 2011 he received an award from the Heritage Council for the individual making the greatest contribution to heritage in Western Australia. In keeping with his committed Christian faith, he was a Lay Pastoral Minister in the Anglican Church.

The time Barrie could allocate to his extensive volunteer activities was compromised in recent years when his wife Zoe, also a Modernian (Zoe Matthews), became seriously ill and needed his devoted care, but still he retained his commitment to Mod. His calm and cheerful manner will be missed amongst those with whom he worked tirelessly. Barrie is survived by Zoe, daughters Miriam and Ruth, and three grandchildren.

Footnote: At the Perth Modernian Society Council meeting on the evening of 24 February, Dr Robyn White and 1954 1A classmate Peter Farr spoke in praise of Barrie, with Peter also stating that the Perth Modern School of today, along with the Perth Modernian Society, the Sphinx Scholarship Fund and the Museum, would not be what they are without his magnificent all-round contribution. A Condolence motion was carried unanimously to be conveyed to Zoe, Miriam and Ruth.



Barrie right, with Peter Farr and Don Tyler



Wen Zhu (PMS Head Boy, 2021) and Barrie Baker sharing a light moment.

David William Black AM PMS Student 1949-1953

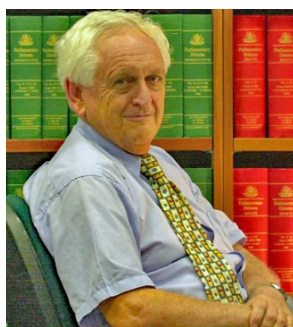


Photo: Megan Lewis

David, who bestrode the political landscape in Western Australia, died on the 23rd of November 2024. As his deep knowledge of politics in Western Australia grew, he became a much sought after commentator, especially at election time. He became a very familiar face when television presenters tried to make sense of emerging trends as results came in. David could be relied upon to provide background information about individual candidates, their electorates and the patterns of voting. His predictions were inevitably correct.

He was well equipped for the task. A student of Australian and Western Australian political history he became Professor of History and Politics in the School of Social Sciences and Languages at Curtin University. The Western Australian Parliament recognised his knowledge and skill when he was appointed Chairperson of the Parliamentary History Advisory Committee and later a Parliamentary Fellow (History).

In 2010 he was made a Member of the Order of Australia for, "service to education and to the social sciences, particularly through the promotion and preservation of the political and parliamentary history of Western Australia"

David was a student at Mod between 1949 and 1953. His connections with the school ran deep for his father Edward Black, his mother Bessie Bockelberg and his uncle Herman were all former students as were two of his brothers.



Edward, Bessie and Herman were highly talented musicians, which perhaps explains why David achieved a Distinction for Music (as well as for History and English) in the Leaving Examinations, and why tributes to him acknowledged how he and his wife loved singing together.

The Sphinx Foundation was formed in 1996 for the inaugural purpose of preparing a publication to celebrate the school's history. David became Chair of the Foundation in 2000 and continued in that position until 2009.

A comprehensive history of a school like Mod was an ambitious project and gained momentum when historian David stepped forward to assist stalwarts such as Sallie Davies to ensure its completion. *The History and the Heritage* was the result.

David wrote five pivotal chapters one which of course, focused upon the significant number of Modernians who became parliamentarians. His particular contribution to the success of *The History and the Heritage* was to negotiate a grant which enabled the compilation of the oral histories which feature on the companion CD.

A treasured resource of the school museum is a file containing the 10,000 or so record cards of every student who attended Mod between 1911 and the 1960s. David recognised its worth and arranged funding for each card to be individually digitized and then compiled upon a compact disk. Each card provides the full name of each student, their address and former school, date of birth, religion, their parent's name and occupation and the students desired vocation. The cards also show if a student achieved entry either through a Scholarship, A Soldiers or Shell Scholarship, or an offer of entry based on test results. When it was in fashion, cards also recorded IQ. But more than that the cards provide an insight into the attitudes and values of the times, through the sometimes-acerbic comments recorded by teachers and the records of absences. The last entry is usually the student's Leaving Examination results with any distinctions or exhibitions noted. The cards have proven invaluable for families, genealogists, researchers and historians. A fitting monument for one who had a love of the school and a commitment to the history of Western Australia.

Merle Bignell (née Fleming) OAM PMS Student 1944-1945



Merle receiving her OAM from
Governor Lieutenant General
John Sanderson

Merle was a member of that female legion of Modernians who went to regional Western Australia as teachers and after marriage remained, to enrich the communities of which they became an integral part.

Merle began her teaching career in 1950 when she was appointed to Kojonup Junior High School. She was a graduate in history from the University of Western Australia. Her decision to teach dancing in the community led to her marriage to farmer Keith Bignell in 1952.

Farming activities and family responsibilities occupied much of her time but as her children matured she found time to indulge in her passion for history and she accepted commissions to write local histories.

In 1971 she wrote the first of the twelve publications listed in the State Library catalogue, the well-received history of the Kojonup Shire *First the Spring*. Subsequent publications included histories of Gnowangerup and Katanning, and *Little Grey Sparrows*, an account of the Anglican nuns who ministered to Group Settlement farmers in the south-west.

Merle was also a renowned gardener, a very active community volunteer and an enthusiastic participant in local politics.

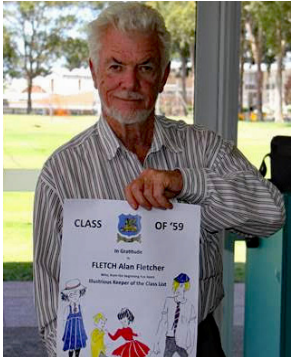
In 2000 Merle was awarded a Medal in the Order of Australia for 'For service to the preservation of local history, particularly through the Kojonup Historical Society, and as an author, researcher and editor.'



Three of Merle's publications.
Photo: Donnybooks



Alan Fletcher PMS Student 1955-1959



The Keeper of the Rolls

Alan Fletcher was a very special person to those who went to North Perth Primary School (1948 - 1954) or to Perth Modern School (1955 – 1959) for one reason particularly. He kept a list of fellow classmates, their postal addresses, their phone numbers and ultimately their email addresses.

As a result of his efforts, those NPPS students still reunite 70 years later – and those PMS students share a sandwich and a tippie annually as they support each other through these exciting and challenging years. As 'Keeper of the Rolls', Alan was the glue that held us together.

Fletch won a place as a Technical Assistant in the Division of Minerology at CSIRO, the first such appointee in the new WA division.

CSIRO staff were respected both for their contribution to professional knowledge in this resource rich state and for their reputation as trusted community leaders in their fields. CSIRO in WA started small, and everyone worked for the common good. Staff were expected to make their own equipment. Fletch was skilled in working with glass and was able to undertake all of the glass work necessary for his division. CSIRO reports indicate that from technical assistant he progressed to participating researcher, and shared joint acclaim for reports and papers.

In time the division grew and focused upon Geological Exploration and Mineral Chemistry. Fletch's professional and driving skills made him a preferred companion on field trips and he enjoyed his fully funded outback adventures.

At CSIRO, Fletch had a reputation as a fun colleague and a skilful trickster. His pranks, not appropriate to discuss here, are still legendary amongst remaining workmates.

Alan and Margaret (née Toy) were sweethearts from their high school years. They enjoyed a happy marriage from 1965 until Alan's death in 2024. Their two sons and four grandchildren were Fletch's pride and joy. They were active participants in his life until the very end.

Being a skilled 'do-it' person, Fletch happily worked to make their century-old West Leederville home both beautiful and comfortable. He and his sons fitted out a steel yacht hull which they purchased, and they sailed up the coast as far as the Dampier Peninsula and the Monte Bello Islands.

Fletch and Margaret's values did not end with personal fun. They were founding members of the Margaret River Conservation Farming Club which acquired and protected 128 hectares of mostly native bush. Fletch was a leading member of the Prostate Men's Support Group (the 'Prosties') and active in a Men's Help Group.

Alan's school companions were universal in their praise. "He was nice that way" and "Alan was not an extrovert, and he was not loud. He was in fact a quiet achiever who got things done."

We thought that Alan would always be there, so when he was a last-minute withdrawal from the most recent reunion, we assumed it was a temporary issue. Unfortunately, it was not. Alan might not attend any more school reunions but for as long as we meet, he will somehow "be there".

- Irene Froyland, class of 1959

Ronald Naylor PMS Student 1950-1954



Dr Ron Naylor at Yallingup

Ronald Naylor qualified as a medical practitioner. Before he went into private practice, he worked at Royal Perth Hospital where he designed major improvements to emergency triaging.

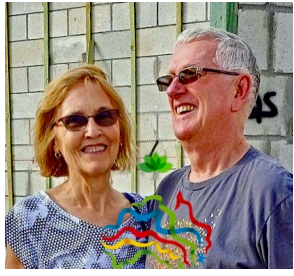
Beyond his doctor's surgery in Scarborough, he had a passion for surfing. Known as 'Doc' within the surfing community he was a key figure in the Western Australian Surf Riders Association. He served as its President for the ten years following its association in 1964 and helped establish Yallingup as a key centre for competition.

Many tributes were posted on Surfing Down South's Facebook page including one which observed, 'Doc you managed to extract a symphony out of a bunch of incorrigible miscreants.' His lifetime service to surfing was recognised in 2005 when he received the Len Dibben Award for service to surfing.

Ron was also a great supporter of Surf Lifesaving WA and was a first-aid examiner for its competitions.



Barbara Tobin (née Limb)
PMS Student 1957-1961



Barbara enrolled at Mod in 1957 where she made lifelong friends, Margaret Toy (m. Fletcher), Kim Berryman and Dianne Graham. As well as performing well academically, she was able to express her enthusiasm for a wide range of sports.

Barbara graduated as a schoolteacher from Graylands in 1963 from where she embarked upon a diverse and fulfilling teaching career. She taught at Bridgetown High School before she set off on her travels. She first went to teach in Alberta Canada before returning to Australia where she taught in a range of locations including Neutral Junction Station in Central Australia.

Before joining future husband Ken Tobin (a Modernian) in London in 1970, Barbara taught on Bougainville Island (PNG).

Barbara and Ken married in London and began a family before returning to Perth. In 1978 they travelled to the University of Georgia to undertake further studies before again returning to Perth for teaching and academic appointments.

In 1985 Barbara returned to the University of Georgia to continue doctoral studies in language education. She returned to Perth to continue her dissertation research on children's responses to literature. The lure of academic life in North America was great, and the family moved to Florida in 1987 where Barbara spent a decade as a faculty member at Florida State University.

In 1998 Barbara and Ken moved to Philadelphia where Barbara spent seven years teaching undergraduate and graduate children's literature courses at the University of Pennsylvania's Graduate School of Education. She also supervised student teachers. In 2003, Barbara received the Graduate School of Education's Excellence in Teaching Award—a fitting recognition of her four decades of dedication to teaching.

2003 saw Barbara and Ken relocate to New York City where for a time they lived in Times Square and then South Amboy in New Jersey. Barbara decided to retire and instead undertook a range of community activities, which ranged from yoga, Zumba, and a wine club, to tennis coaching and holiday parties for the children of the Lighthouse Bay community. Barbara served on the board of the South Amboy Library and the South Amboy branch of the YMCA. She led a beautification project that organized flowering plants throughout the city. In this role she developed youth programs, including a monarch butterfly station. This initiative led her to collaborate with an activist from Red Bank, New Jersey, on a campaign that successfully established the swallowtail butterfly as the official butterfly of New Jersey.

In 2019, Ken retired from his position in New York and he and Barbara relocated back to Florida. They lived in the city of Mount Dora in central Florida. Barbara and Ken built a lovely new home with a lake just a stone's throw from their back lane. Here they enjoyed growing potted plants, as well as loving the bird sanctuary opposite.

Typically of so many Modernians, Barbara led a vigorous, enthusiastic and active life which contributed greatly to the communities in which she lived.

MODERNIANS WHO DIED IN THE SERVICE OF THEIR COUNTRY

*Number 26 in a special series of articles researched and prepared for publication by
Robert Johnson, PMS student 1961-65 and Museum Volunteer*

Clarence Arnold Manuel
Perth Modern School Student 1912-1914

At 4:20am on 8th August 1918, **Clarence Manuel** and the men of the 43rd Battalion stood up and walked in heavy fog behind their own artillery towards the German front line east of the town of Le Hamel in Northern France. They were a small part of the largest Allied offensive of World War 1. It was so successful that Erich Ludendorff, the German Chief of Staff, called 8 August the "Black day of the German Army". The battles that followed, collectively known as the "Hundred Days Offensive", brought the war with Germany to an end on 11th November 1918.

Clarence was born in Kerang, Victoria, on 8 October 1897 to parents Clarence and Annie. Clarence Sr died in November 1906 aged 37 and Annie in August 1909 aged 39, making Clarence Jr an orphan at the age of 11.

Clarence attended Donnybrook Primary School where John Jones, his maternal uncle and now his guardian, was a teacher. Clarence commenced at Perth Modern School on 7 February 1912 in the agricultural stream. His uncle John was posted to Jolimont Primary School, three kilometres from Modern School.



After three years at Modern School, Clarence left in December 1914 and worked on a farm in South Australia before enlisting in the Australian Army on 25th April 1916, the first anniversary of Anzac Day. He was staying with another maternal uncle, Fred Jones, in Belair, 10kms south of Adelaide. Clarence's brother, Roby, enlisted with Clarence and both were posted to the 43rd Battalion, a unit raised in South Australia early in 1916.

On 9th June 1916, the Battalion left Adelaide on HMAT Afric, arriving in Southampton on 24th July. After several months of intense training on the Salisbury Plain in southern England, the Battalion arrived on the Western Front in December 1916 and spent much of 1917 bogged in bloody trench warfare.

On 17th February 1917, while the Battalion was in the Armentières area, Clarence was shot in his right wrist. It was a relatively quiet day, and he was the Battalion's only casualty. The wound required medical attention, and he was sent to the 3rd London General Hospital in England.

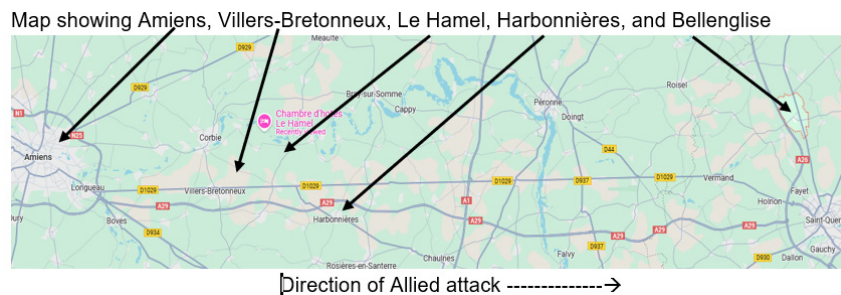
After two months in hospital, several weeks in a convalescent unit and a period of further training, Clarence rejoined the Battalion on 4th August, 1917. During his absence, Roby had been transferred at his own request to the Australian Flying Corps. Roby went on to win two Distinguished Flying Crosses for shooting down 12 German aircraft and finished the war with the rank of Captain.

Clarence's absence also caused him to miss the Battle of Messines in June 1917; however, he took part as a newly promoted Lance Corporal in the successful but costly attack on Broodseinde in early October 1917.

Clarence was sent on an NCO's course two days after Christmas 1917. He returned to the Battalion in January 1918 and was promoted to Corporal. He was given three weeks' leave in England in February and returned to France in March. A month later, on the third anniversary of Anzac Day, the Battalion helped stop the massive German Spring Offensive at Villers-Bretonneux. On 4th July the Battalion was part of General Monash's spectacular victory at Le Hamel, six kilometres north-east of Villers-Bretonneux, which resulted in a knighthood for General Monash.

Clarence was promoted to Sergeant on 26th of July 1918, 13 days before the opening of the Hundred Days Offensive. Tragedy struck on the first day - Clarence was one of three soldiers killed in the Battalion on a day on which 120 prisoners, 25 machine guns and an artillery piece were captured.

Two other students who were at Modern School in 1912 died in the Hundred Days Offensive. **Louis Bromham** was killed in action near Harbonnières the next day, 9th August. Clarence and Louis were born within three months of each other and were in the same year at school in 1912 and 1913. **Arthur Bacon** was killed near Bellenglise on 18th September 1918, the last day that his battalion was in action. Arthur had previously been wounded three times: in the face at Gallipoli and again in France, and in his left foot at Ypres in Belgium.



Clarence was 20 years and 10 months old when he died, Louis had just turned 21 and Arthur was six days short of his 22nd birthday.

LEST WE FORGET

A more detailed and fully referenced version of this article is on the Honour Board at honour.perthmodern.wa.edu.au

