

Year: 1955

Runners-up, E Section

President: **Bill Mollard**

Secretary: **John Happell**

Treasurer: **Don Bennett**

Vice-Presidents: **J.D.C.C. (Fred) Moore, Alf Osborne**

Committee: **Jim Perry, E.H. Kinnear, Brian Dawes, R.A. Smallwood, Garth Manton, Peter Gebhardt, W. Morrison, J. Jack Jolley, Adrian Monger**

Captain/Coach Firsts: **Bill Irvine**

Delegates to VAFA: **C. Brian Dawes, Bruce Rowe**

The Annual General Meeting for 1955 was held on March 8. 38 people attended.

* Training to commence Tuesday 22 March.

* General subscriptions were raised - doubled from 1954 - to 10 shillings.

* In addition, players would be paying 3/- a game. (Extrapolating on a comparative basis with the current full playing membership fee in 2011 of \$200 - students/U19s are less - that would come to \$60 a week! However on another calculation just allowing for inflation it would come to about \$4.37 a week on 2010. Perhaps not so bad.)

* The following being past Presidents of the Old Geelong Grammarians Association who had generously contributed Five Pounds each towards the founding of the Old Geelong Grammarians Football Club the previous year were elected Life Members at the AGM (Interestingly, do any of these appear on the list of Life Members on the honour boards at Como? We don't think so, with the possible exception of Don Bennett and Hubert Black. However, it will be some months before anyone can check.)

Allan Spowers,
Hubert. S. Black,
Frank Austin,
Don. Bennett,
W. Balcombe Griffiths,
E.D. McKinnon,
J.H. Lindon,
Dr. Hume Turnbull
W. Stuart Ross
Dr. R.N.S. Good
Des. C. Moore
C.O. Fairbairn

C. Osbourne Fairbairn replied, from Skipton, with thanks, to the letter advising him of the award, adding “I am very much in favor (sic) of healthful recreation among our young people and am pleased to be of some help making this possible”.

(We’re not sure where, if anywhere, current player-young person **Charles Fairbairn**, seen here having some healthful recreation in 2011, fits on the family tree.)

The following notes include extracts from various club communications, many of them written by **Bill Mollard**, which have survived.

Pre-Season. “The smallest number at training has been 16, the largest 19.”

By 30 May membership numbers are up to 120.

The Club had been able to secure the use of the smaller of two football ovals St. Kevin’s school, Toorak.

“In early 1955 **Don Bennett**, who lived nearby, suggested that I should approach St. Kevins College to see if we could lease their smaller oval. I was able to tell Brother Cummins that I had played for three years pre war for the Old Xavier. Whether this helped I never found out, but we got the lease of the ground.”

Here there was a pavilion, and it did have showers. And amenities for players and supporters were much better than at the previous ground, especially the ability to park close to and overlooking the ground. The rental for the year was 37 pounds 16 shillings.

From a circular to members:

“For those able to attend some or all of our matches, to lend some vocal support and to meet some old acquaintances, we attach a list of fixtures for 1955 together with descriptions of locations of grounds. All matches can be watched from the comfort of your car and, if a married man, your wife and children can enjoy the afternoon with you.”

The St. Kevin’s No.2 Oval was a very small ground, and from time to time the ball when kicked wide to the wing disappeared into Gardner’s creek.

“All those non-playing members who follow the club either regularly or occasionally have a thoroughly enjoyable afternoon and the standard of football is excellent. A number of old boys bring the entire family and the children have fine time playing around the boundary or assisting the goal umpire.” *(There is no record as to the goal umpire’s view of such assistance.)*

“**Bill Irvine** has been re-appointed Captain-Coach and is doing a remarkably fine job, as early results will show. **Jack Jolley**, a University Football blue and an ex member of the Victorian Amateur representative Football team, has been elected vice Captain.”

“In the second half of the season, the team was greatly strengthened by **David Lee** who unselfishly stepped down from “A” grade to play with us.”



“If we can hand on the club to the younger players in a year or two with the OGGs at least in C Grade, it should ensure that all players will automatically join the Club instead of having a number of first class players running about in A and B Grade teams as we have at the moment.” (*Nothing automatic about it at all, even during the times over the years when the Club has been in C Section. – Ed.*)

“We have a first class crop of youngsters who left school at the end of last year. And also a large band of supporters of all ages who attend our matches.”

“**Evan Macgregor** (*who started with the Club just before the June 30 cut-off*) who once won the Old Melburnians Best and Fairest award and later played with Ormond in A grade is still a class footballer and has given tremendous strength across the half back line **Adrian Monger** joined the team as soon as his rowing was finished and has lifted the ruck work significantly. (*Adrian Monger went on to represent Australia in the Men’s Rowing Eight and win a Bronze Medal at the Olympic Games in Melbourne the following year.*)

“Needless to say we are all very grateful to you and St. Kevin’s for allowing us to play on your oval. This has probably been the biggest single factor in our success so far this year.” – From a letter to the Sports Master, St. Kevin’s.

“At the end of the eighteen home and home matches the team had been defeated only twice, and by small margins, and had a lead of four clear points and 67% over the second team. By reason of this excellent performance we won the Minor Premiership, and the right of challenge if defeated in the finals.” (*The VFA had not yet adopted the Page-McIntyre finals system.*)

This included was a nine-straight win record in the second half of the home and away season, and a semi final win, although a spate of injuries late in the piece was to prove very costly:

“This achievement was aided by a very good run in respect of injuries but, unfortunately, in the last two home and home matches and the first semi final the lucky wheel turned full circle, with the result that five of our best players saw the finals from the wrong side of the fence and two of our stars gallantly played with injuries which greatly reduced their effectiveness.”

“The greatest loss is **Perc Palfreyman** because last week he broke a scaphoid bone in the wrist... we all agree that Perc is irreplaceable with his strong ruck work, sure hands and wonderful football you have played this year.....the second casualty is **Ev Macgregor** who tore a hamstring..... the third is **Jack Jolley** who “did” his left ankle....

The club played a total of 36 players during the season.

“We had a great band of supporters and from their ranks came boundary umpires, goal umpires, trainers, timekeepers, scoreboard operators, and a whole host of other incidental jobs that need attention in a football club.” (*Hamish McInnes, Steve Lansdell, Jim Legoe – read that and weep.*)

“Others... who have been of inestimable help in the team are **Eddie Bryans** and **Michael Moore** as boundary umpires, **Robin Delves** as goal umpire, and **Jamie Learmonth** as trainer. Many others have assisted, but they are too numerous to mention.

“Sad to relate we were finally beaten for the “E” Grade Premiership by de la Salle OC. With five of our best players unable to play through injuries and with two stars playing under difficulties, we had

every chance to win the grand final on 17 September. At three-quarter time we had kicked the melancholy score of 7 goals 16 behinds and were leading by three points. DeLa finished well winning 15-12 to 9-18.”



Photo believed taken at St. Kevin’s Oval larger oval, late in season 1955 (perhaps Grand Final). Those in the photo are thought to be:

Back: Bill Morrison (inj), Perc Palfreyman (inj), George Eadie, Ian “Octer” Wilson (who went on to become President of the Richmond Football Club in the 1970s/80s), Brian Dawes, Adrian Monger, Jock Morris, Jim Perry, Askin Morrison, Allan Shugg (?), Bruce Rowe.

Centre Row: Dick Law-Smith, Mike Pointer, Evan Macgregor, Jack Jolley, Bill Mollard, Bill Irvine, John Happell

Front Row: Ian Peake, John Bennett, Richard Smallwood, Robin Fenner, “Mouse” Hesketh, Peter King, Bob Dean.



(Note only three players in long sleeves in 1955. These days, 2011, very much a different story.)

Two very successful **Barbeque/Dances** were held during the season on the banks of the Yarra in the Hawthorn Tea Gardens in Riversdale Road, Hawthorn. Approximately 250 people attended the first.

“The Club would like to thank **Perc Palfreyman** who obtained the meat for the Barbeque. Faced with the slaughtermen’s strike it would have entailed a lot of work and a lot of luck to get so much

meat. Not only did Perc obtain the whole quantity but he stayed back after knock-off time to saw up all the chops personally.”

A hand-drawn map and other handwritten instructions **on how to get there** were placed by the President on the notice board in the rooms. Accompanying instructions and advice included:

“Directions Map created 16 July. Scale: 4” = 1 mile

The two best methods of reaching the Hawthorn Tea Gardens.....

If proceeding straight from the St. Kevin’s Football Ovals, the route via Glenferrie Road is shorter and quicker.

If proceeding westwards to pick up one or more young ladies, the route via Grange Road Bridge should be better.

If in doubt (or if unable to read a map due to having been trained by the RAAF or for any other reason), see the map maker.”

Subsequent report:

“The Barbecue held on Saturday 16 July at the Hawthorn Tea Gardens proved to be a great success financially and a great time was apparently had by all. The club funds will benefit by approximately 50 pounds and the sum would have been greater if we had not inadvertently drunk a firkin (*a nine gallon keg of beer*) belonging to the *Royal & Ancient Order of Buffaloes*, which they carelessly left lying around and which we had to replace.

Likewise if two or three guests had not removed the front cover from the piano and anointed the works with beer, we would have been better off financially. The piano wreckers were not members of the Club, but if anyone can identify them, we would be grateful as it would be better for them, rather than Club funds to pay for the damage.” (Apparently the offenders were never caught: the Club accounts at the end of the year show a payment of 20 pounds for “Repairs to Piano”.)

The second event was a little smaller, “about 140 attended, but all the better for that, we thought..... Apart from one guest anointing a well-known Ormond player, who should be playing with us, with a glass of beer, no really ugly scenes occurred, no pianos were broken and no Buffaloes’ beer was consumed.”

Income for the season was 344 pounds and 5 shillings.

This included a donation from the Old Geelong Grammarians General Committee of 10 Guineas (10 pounds, 10 shillings.)

Outgoings were 289 pounds, 3 shillings and 11 pence. (Including the repairs to the piano. Six percent of the Club’s income. Guess they were lucky it wasn’t a Steinway.)

Bill Mollard also wrote “Speaking as one of the older members of the Club, having left school in 1933, it has given the writer a great deal of pride and satisfaction to be associated with this club.... This younger generation is at least as tough as we liked to think we were. Their enthusiasm, will to

win and courage on the football field leaves nothing to be desired and their conduct and bearing off the field is irreproachable.”

The Annual Dinner was held at the London Hotel on Friday 7 October, and was attended by 60 members.

One of whom, committeeman and player, **Richard Smallwood**, perhaps then exhibited traits that would be echoed by many others down the years in sending the following letter to the President in the fortnight before the dinner:

*“Dear Bill,
Just a note to apologise most humbly
(a) for not arriving at the Committee Meeting and
(b) for failing to inform Adrian Monger and Peter Gebhardt.*

I must be getting quite a reputation for myself, what with forgetting to bring along football boots, sweaters etc. I remembered about it on Sunday, and then it didn’t enter my head again until I received your circular. I sincerely hope that I didn’t upset any arrangements or cause too much inconvenience. I look forward to seeing you on the 7th.”

From Vic Health Website “2011 Board of Governors

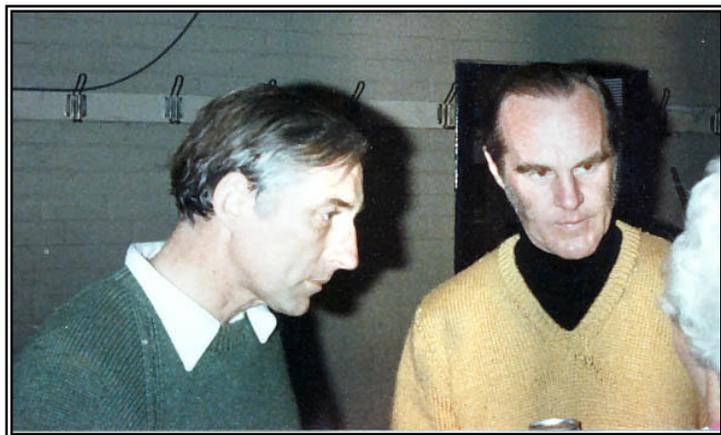
Professor Richard Smallwood, AO has a wealth of experience in senior medical and public health positions, recently as Commonwealth Chief Medical Officer. He is chair of the Victorian Ministerial Taskforce for Cancer, former chair of the National Health and Medical Research Council and past president of the Royal Australasian College of Physicians. Prof. Smallwood is an international speaker in research, clinical and health service related topics, and author/co-author of some 250 publications. He is also chair of the National Blood Authority and a member of the Australian Medical Council Executive.”



Trophies awarded at the Dinner on the 7th were:

- Best and Fairest - **John Jolley** (who was also Runner-Up in the VAFA section vote count as well.)*
- Best First Year Player - **Ian Peake***
- Most Consistent - **W. I. Morrison***

(No trophy, but it is noted that **John Happell** was the leading goal-kicker for all of VAFA E Section, with 55 goals. He is the first entry in the section in the Club’s website headed **Outstanding Achievements**. See <The Club> <Club History> <Outstanding Achievements>)



*VAFA E Section Leading goal kicker, 1955, **John Happell**, left, and player **Askin Morrison** at a Past Player Day, 1979*

If any of our readers has anything to add or correct, or anything in the way of any photos from that time – did nobody carry a Kodak Box Brownie camera? - we should be really pleased to hear from you.