

Old Geelong Football Club History

Extra Notes for 1956: including the OGGFC and the Olympic Games Connection

Since the 1956 notes were first posted on the Club website earlier in 2011, it was established that some information had been left out, and some more has come to hand since then, which enables us to publish some further notes. – Peter Lemon.

1) 1956, of course, was the year when the **Olympic Games** were staged in Melbourne, in November.

* Note apparently placed on the Club notice-board in early July:

“Will anyone interested in carrying the OLYMPIC TORCH one mile between Albury & Melbourne on 21 November please sign below. Only three will be chosen from the VAFA and the elections will be by ballot. The only qualification for nominees is that they will be able to run 1 mile in 6 mins or under.”

No-one from the Club got picked in the ballot, and on the subject of carrying torches of importance, closest we can get is the Club Secretary of 2004-2010, and Reserves Premiership player of 2005 and 2007, **Simon O’Brien** (furthest on the right) who carried the torch during the Commonwealth Games Torch Relay in 2006.

He has very kindly supplied us with a photo taken at the time, somewhere on the Bellarine Peninsula. (Actually he has been very good in supplying us with photos over the years – he also sent us one of him with the Cat’s Premiership Cup of 2007 back in 2007, but space precludes its publication.)



* From OGGFC Notes of *May 1956*: “**John Landy’s** name adds lustre to the training list, but in the national interest he won’t be picked this season.”

(**John Landy** did play a few games for the Club the following year. That’s him at a past player day at Como Park back in the early 1980s, along with past players **Marshall Baillieu**, **Jim Perry**, and 1966 Reserves Premiership player, **Peter Hudson**.)



* From the Football Club Notes of *August 1956*: “Congratulations are due to three of our members for their selection to represent Australia in the Olympic Rowing events. **Adrian Monger** and **Brian Dawes** are two of our best footballers, and, of course, are unable to play this season. **Garth Manton** is, without any discussion nor even a close rival, our best barracker. Our supporters are only 25 per cent effective without Garth, and we would like to assure him he is sorely missed.

(Fifty-five years later, Garth was in attendance at nearly all of our home games at Como this year, 2011. - Ed.)

* Whilst not playing for the Club in 1956, two other Olympians of that year, **Bob Joyce** (Shot Put), and **John Chittick** (Hurdles), went on to play for the Club in 1957 and 1958. (John, who now lives in Warnambool, probably next to the Officers, also represented Australia in Tokyo in the Olympic Games of 1960.)

* That’s a total of **six Olympians** (and four bronze medals) connected with the one football club.

Since then however the record for the OGFC has been much less impressive. Best we have done in the ensuing years, indeed decades, was to have **Andrew Mottram**, brother of much more recent Olympian and Commonwealth Games competitor **Craig Mottram**, play about five games for the OGFC Club-18 and two for the Reserves back in 2003. *(That’s Andrew in Nepal on Kalar Patar, 5545 to 5615 metres, depending on whose anemometer you use and the prevailing atmospheric pressure, in November 2003. I have always preferred the higher figure. – Ed.)*



* And we do note that past player **Simon O’Brien**, already mentioned and photographed previously in these notes, has fairly recently become engaged - to **Linley Hewitt**, who is the *sister* of Olympic sprinter **Lauren Hewitt**!!

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2) We think that’s about it when it comes to the OGFC and the Olympic or Commonwealth Games Connection, but we’ll continue with a few miscellaneous bits of new information, correspondence or notes from 1956 which have come to light.

* A letter from the President of the OGGFC to the Secretary of the VAFA in August:

“We would like to appeal against the 5/- (shilling) fine imposed on our Club due to the boundary line not being clearly marked on 7 July.

The writer was boundary umpire on this day and can testify that most areas of the boundary were actually under water. St. Kevin’s College, from whom we rent the oval, always attended to the ground marking and we assume that on this particular day they found that it was completely impractical.”

History does not record if the appeal was upheld.

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3) The Club applied to St. Kevin's for the use of the larger No.1 Oval if it became available in 1957 following the withdrawal of St. Pat's Ballarat who had been using that oval, and added in that letter of 5 September, 1956 after winning promotion to C Section for 1957:

“Whether our present members will be equal to carrying us to “B” Grade in 1958 is doubtful. Some of our stars are getting long in the tooth and it will depend a great deal on the talent we get from School next year. As they did well in the competition this year we may be lucky, but we have the same trouble as I imagine St Pats have, in so far as 50% or more live in the country, interstate or even overseas.”

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4) **Finances. And Festivities.** (Formal and otherwise)

From the Club Notes, August 1956:

“**Finances** are in good shape, thanks to the heartening support from Old Boys. Financial members for 1956 exceed 200, and we have received two magnificent gifts. Our first benefactor was **Mr. Desmond C Moore** who gave 200 pounds to be invested to provide perpetual trophies in the names of himself and **Mr. Don Bennett**, and the residue to be credited annually to club funds. Benefactor No.2 is **Mr. R.N. Lemon** who has undertaken to pay the ground rent, totalling 36 guineas per annum, for our home ground, St. Kevin's No 2 oval at Heyington for 1956, 1957, and 1958.”

“The club also organises **social functions** during the year which normally yield a profit.

“* The first of these was a barbeque on **Bill Morrison's** property on the banks of the Yarra at Eltham on April 14th – one week before the season started.

(The Eltham Barbeque became an annual event held over many years, early in the season, come rain or shine, over the next three decades, until galloping suburbia and we suspect the tightening of liquor licensing laws put an end to it, sometime in the 1980s. To follow at the end of these notes are a few more photos taken at the BBQ some years later.)

“* On Thursday May 31st the OGGFC surprised the critics by staging a formal festivity at The Dorchester. (*What the hell happened to Thursday night training? - Ed.*) The room was decorated in School colours, a five-piece orchestra was engaged, most footballers looked surprisingly human in dinner suits, and a wonderful night resulted.

“* On Saturday August 4th, the annual highly-informal barbeque was staged at the Hawthorn Tea Gardens. During the afternoon, in perfect weather, the team played a most important game against Hawthorn and won by more than 16 goals. The victor of the game was virtually assured of fourth place for the finals, and such a decisive victory set the stage for the evening at the Tea Gardens.

Although the evening was cold, a large coke brazier and two tremendous charcoal barbecue fires made conditions pleasant outside the hall, and inside the guests kept warm by dancing to the finest American canned music. One hundred and eighty guests paid their admission to the barbeque, and a profit of 50 pounds resulted.

“* Our coach, **Evan Macgregor**, entertained the active members of the club his home on Saturday evening, July 21st. Mrs Macgregor provided a most sumptuous supper, and when this scribe (**Bill**

Mollard) departed at midnight, the success of the party was very obvious. Our grateful thanks to Evan and **Betty Macgregor.**”

5) Reference was made in the previous body of these 1956 notes to the **Annual Dinner and Presentation of Trophies** which was held on Friday 14th September. The Headmaster of Geelong Grammar School, **Dr. James Darling** had declined an invitation to attend, writing on 26 August:

“Thank you very much for inviting me to the Football Club Dinner but please excuse me, for quite a number of reasons. There is a Committee meeting which I ought to attend but quite apart from that I am too old, too busy, too gloomy, and too tired to be much good at dinners.

I hope however that you have a very good time. You have done a great job with the football club and I am sure it has been worthwhile.”

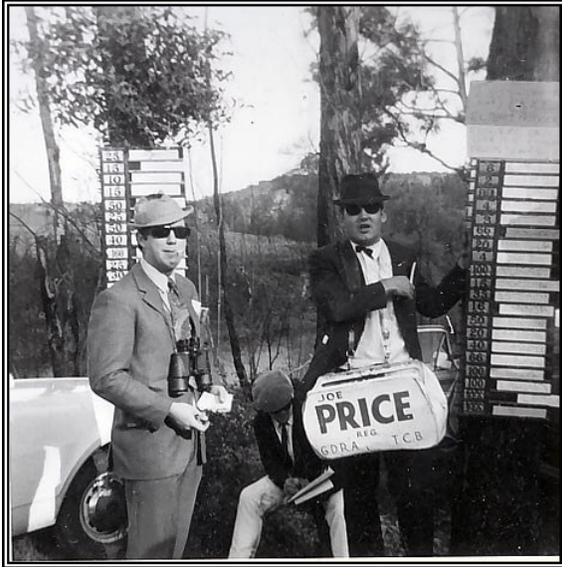
But masters from Corio who were able to attend were **Mr. Bill. Jaffray, Mr. Noel Newman, Mr. Vic Tunbridge** and **Mr. Barry Connell.**

6) As mentioned, 1956 saw the start of the Annual Eltham Barbeque, which was to last for about 30 years, and was usually held on the Sunday after the first Round. There are no photos from 1956, but a few from later years follow. Most of these are from about 15 years later (1971 for the mathematically challenged). There will be more in later Editions.



End of Supplementary notes for 1956. As always, any additional information would be appreciated.

Photos: Peter Lemon, and the Simon O'Brien Collection



Serious money changed hands on the result of the sack race and the sheaf-tossing competition.



Rod and Jan Brown still pay a Pivot Membership each year. Which is more than a lot of our readers do.