



PAST & PRESENT PLAYERS'
& OFFICIALS' ASSOCIATION

PAST & PRESENT PLAYERS' & OFFICIALS'

MEMBER NEWSLETTER

DECEMBER 2021 EDITION

FROM THE PRESIDENT

- ROD GRINTER

Welcome all to our December 2021, Christmas Edition Newsletter. (MFC Premiership Year).

The celebrations of winning the 2021 AFL Premiership certainly continued during December, and for me personally it was just amazing. It started with my own Past Player Annual Catch Up – Number 19 – on the first Friday in December. This event was held at Bells Hotel in South Melbourne, attended by between 80 and 90 past players from Peter Cook (89 years young), who played between 1956 and 1958, to Nathan Jones (33 years old), playing between 2006 and 2021. It was outstanding having so many eras represented, and seeing everyone enjoying each other's company was a huge thrill for me. Some pics can be seen below.

Then, after a Saturday of R&R, we all rolled into the MCG for the MFC Premiership Celebrations; and wow wee, for those who were lucky enough to be there, it was very very special. The MFC hosted an outstanding day, including as many people as possible in front of over 30,000 red and blue fans, and it was amazing. For us – the MFC P&PP&OA having been appropriately allocated the Jim Stynes Grill as our room to host past players, family and friends – it



was also amazing.

There were 500 people in this room on the day, with the excitement and joy in the room something to be cherished.

The MFC included past players in all the post-game presentations on the day, with Neita presenting the Norm Smith Medal to Christian Petracca, and Neale Daniher presenting the Jock McHale Medal to Simon Goodwin. When Neale was introduced by our own Garry Lyon, if you didn't have a tear in your eye already, you should have then. The reception was both fitting and, like Neale Daniher, inspirational and unforgettable.

Then we had the ceremony of the Premiership Cup, starting with Noel McMahan – triple premiership player, two as captain in 1955 and 1956 – captured on video with the cup from his nursing home saying a few words, handing it over to yours truly. This was an honour the MFC had asked me to perform as your President. To start the procession in front of a Past Player guard of honour and in front of over 30,000 Demons fans was something I will never forget. I handed the cup over to Hassa Mann and Bryan Kenneally, stars from the 1950s and 1960s, before it was passed to Stan Alves and Barry Bourke, stars from the 1960s and 1970s, then on to Steven Smith and Gary Hardeman, stars from the 1970s and 1980s, followed by Greg Healy and Todd Viney, stars from the 1980s and 1990s, then to David Schwarz and Jeff Farmer, stars from the 1990s and 2000s. It was

then passed to James McDonald and Brad Green, stars from the 2000s and 2010s, finally making its way to Nathan Jones and Neville Jetta, stars of the 2010s to 2020s, who handed it over to Neale Daniher on the podium.

It was all just outstanding, then – after Goody and Gawny received the cup – all past players were still out on the ground. Paul Hopgood suggested we get onto the podium for a photo. Our CEO, Gary Pert, saw this unfold, and ran over to grab the cup off Gawny, to be placed in front of all the past players out on the MCG. It was a very special moment indeed.

A special mention and thoughts go to John Beckwith, Ron Barassi and Frank Davis – all legends of our club – who were to be included in the day's celebrations. However, due to COVID-19, they were unable to attend. Rest assured, they were there in spirit and much love for the Melbourne Football Club.

Congratulations and well done to all involved at the MFC for an unforgettable day.

On a very sad note, we all heard of the recent passing of Steve Laussen, MFC Fitness Coordinator from the 1980s and 1990s. Our thoughts and love go out to Sarah Jo, Ella, Will and Henry Laussen. RIP 'H'.

Merry Christmas and Happy New Year all, stay safe and healthy, and may 2022 be as exciting and fulfilling as 2021 was for all us Mad Demon supporters.

Regards

**Rod Grinter
President
MFC P&PP&OA**

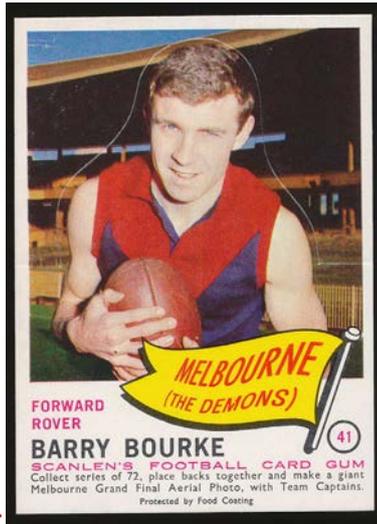




BARRY BOURKE

On 5 December 2021, Barry Bourke was one of those selected to assist with handing over Melbourne's newest premiership cup. Having played in a Melbourne premiership in 1964, he is a special part of the club's story.

Of course, every career starts somewhere other than the MCG, and Barry's was no different. Let's take a snapshot of some of his early history.



Barry was recruited from Neerim-Neerim South FC/Drouin High. Neerim-Neerim South was created in 1954, when Neerim and Neerim South merged. And there, in 1959 and 1960, the Best and Fairest for the Under 18s at the Neerim-Neerim South Cats is named as one Barry Bourke.

Now, Neerim-Neerim South is part of the Ellinbank & District Football League, and has won seven premierships – in 1962, 1964 (a good season!), 1966, 1978, 1982, 1998 and 1999. There are currently eleven clubs in the

EDFL: Buln Buln, Catani, Ellinbank, Lang Lang, Longwarry, Neerim-Neerim South, Nilma Darnum, Nyora, Poowong, Trafalgar, Yarragon; taking in a substantial stretch of West, East and South Gippsland.

With this heritage, reaching from the MCG to Gippsland, you can be sure that Barry knows what's needed to travel all over the countryside. Whatever your motoring needs, all Association members are welcome to contact Barry for assistance (and a chat about premierships!)



BARRY BOURKE
MOTORS

0418 999 101
barrybourke.com.au

REV'S ROAMINGS



The contact just never stops for Paul 'The Rev' Burnham, who has been in touch with over 70 people from mid-November to the middle of December. Once, that would have been settling into cricket, Christmas and school holidays, talking through the year and getting ready for what lies ahead. But now, with a premiership in our keeping and recent celebrations to welcome it home, The Rev has been finding that many Association members are happy to talk about just that – Melbourne's 2021 premiership. Kevin Dyson thought that the Grand Final was 'outstanding and unbelievable'. Alan Johnson

admits to having watched the Grand Final eight times (has he watched it any more than that by now, and is eight a record?), and Ray Carr, up there in Echuca, is – like so many of us – 'basking in the glory' of the Grand Final win. We say a heartfelt thank you to The Rev for bringing us these (and many other) stories, for helping out those who need a dose of Positive Pastoral Care, and for working untiringly to forge and maintain the special connections that keep us all going.



We look forward to sharing more stories, news and information with the MFC P&PP&OA membership in 2022. Our first newsletter for next year will be with you in late January/early February, updating what's ahead for another exciting season. Until then, wishing all a very Merry Christmas, and a Happy New Year.



ONE DAY IN DECEMBER

It could be called many things, but the words going around are mostly 'perfect', 'premiership' and 'celebration'. So, Sunday 5 December 2021 was all of those, and possibly more.

From the replay of the Grand Final on the big screens and in function rooms, to Russell Robertson entertaining the

multitudes at half time, to red and blue everywhere and over 30,000 embracing the occasion – this was a day that will be remembered for seasons to come.

With over 500 in the Jim Stynes Grill, it was a busy day for everyone associated with the MFC P&PP&OA. A visit from the premiership cup, accompanied by MFC President Kate Roffey, put the silver lining on the

occasion, before the ceremonies at ground level surpassed anything that had gone before.

Here are some of the highlights and personalities that made the day so special. Thanks to Ben Gibson/Matty Goodrope (MFC and AFL Media images) for assisting with providing many of the photos utilised here.



Harrison Petty, the inaugural winner of the Harris Mather Unsung Hero Award.

He's been one of the true fighters of the Melbourne Football Club and it was so special to have him here today.

- Jack Viney on Neale Daniher



It's been a long wait, but it's been worthwhile.

- Noel McMahan, meeting the premiership cup with daughter Annie and granddaughter Katie



It's about belonging. - Simon Goodwin



A day never to be forgotten.
- Stephen Newport



PAST & PRESENT PLAYERS' & OFFICIALS' ASSOCIATION

PAST & PRESENT PLAYERS & OFFICIALS

MEMBER NEWSLETTER

ACU

The 2021 Annual Catch Up – the nineteenth – was undoubtedly the biggest and best yet. With over 60 in attendance at Bells Hotel in South Melbourne, the Grand Final playing in the background, and hearing from the likes of 89 year-old Peter Cook, it was a special and memorable evening for everyone involved. Later on in the night, there was even another very welcome visitor; silver in colour, with two handles, greeted with much affection by all.



AFLPA ALUMNI

If you're a past player, one of the best gifts you can give yourself this Christmas is AFLPA Alumni membership. Here's how it works:

BECOME A MEMBER

Past players who played at least one senior AFL/AFLW game receive access to all our services, plus a range of lifetime benefits.

MEMBERSHIP FEES

Joining the AFL Players' Association as an alumni member involves a one-off payment that gives past players lifetime membership. For recently retired or delisted players, membership cost is the same as for a listed AFL player. This amount is deducted from your retirement fund.

For further information, please contact Tim Harrington (tharrington@aflplayers.com.au) Head of Alumni.

Membership focuses on support in the following areas:

HEALTH AND WELLBEING

FINANCIAL PROSPERITY

CONTINUED EDUCATION

SOCIAL CONNECTION



To read more about it, visit [Alumni | AFL Players' Association](#)

AFLW

In important developments for the MFC P&PP&OA, we are delighted to make the following announcements:

We will be welcoming our first AFLW representative to the Association's committee in 2021, with Maddi Gay joining us. Maddi, whose sporting background includes elite level netball, spent one season at Carlton in 2018, winning the Blues' Best First Year Player award, before making her way to Melbourne. She has been a dedicated Demon ever since, and is a renowned midfielder.

Welcome, Maddi!

In the Grand Final edition of the newsletter, we featured the first father-daughter selection for the Melbourne Football Club. Georgia, daughter of Adrian Campbell (1993-94), will be wearing the red and blue for Melbourne in 2021.

While she will naturally have the support of everyone involved, the MFC P&PP&OA is proud to announce that we will be adding a bit extra to that, sponsoring Georgia in 2021.

We look forward to seeing Georgia in action, and wish her all the very best for her debut season.



BENEVOLENT FUND

– JACKIE EMMERTON

The committee would like to thank all those who donated to our Benevolent Fund in 2021 – we truly appreciate your ongoing and loyal support. Through the last two years of a global pandemic, our donors have allowed us to grow as an organisation, support our members in need and become one of the strongest and most connected alumni in the AFL.

As we approach 2022 and the return of crowds at the footy, we are excited to once again be able to deliver fun, affordable, engaging events and supporting our members in need. We will continue our fundraising activities into the future to ensure a strong and viable Association. Thank you again, we are truly grateful.

To round off 2021, we welcome and thank our latest donors:

Michael Barber
(in memory of Les Meade)
Garry Lyon
Nick McCallum
Peter McKenna
Simeon Sparks

Our full list of donors throughout 2020 and 2021 is:

2020

Melbourne Football Club, The Demon Army, Western Demons, Ron Barassi AM, Don Baron, Clint Bizzell, Barry Bourke, Graeme Brassington, Paul Burnham, Lynda Carroll, Dave Cawsey, Andrew Chrapot, John Collett, Liz Coningsby, Chris Connolly, Penny Connolly, Ray 'Smokey' Dawson, Eric Dick, Colleen Dooley, Simon Eishold, Jackie Emmerton, John Gallus, Ian George, Simon Godfrey, Bernadette Grinter,

Rod Grinter, Spike Harris, Karen Hayes AM, Chris Heffernan, Ben Holland, Paul Hoggood, Mark Jenkins, Graeme Jones, Darren Kowal, Clyde Laidlaw, Ralph Laurie, Harold Lubansky, Phil Madick, Gary Marchant, David Martin, Peter McKenna, Mike McShane, Diane Mountney, Jeremy Nichols, Stephen Powell, Brendan Rice, Guy Rigoni, Russell Robertson, Cameron Schwab, Troy Simmonds, Steven Smith, Brian Stynes, Janette Sutherland, Tricia Thorne, Daniel Ward, Ken Whitfort, Anonymous x 3

2021

Anonymous x 2, Deluxe Print, Demon Army, Melbourne Football Club, MFC Coterie, VFL Club Foundation, Peter Ashton, Michael Barber, Don Baron, Wayne Bynon, Lynda Carroll, David Cawsey, Elizabeth Coningsby, Chris Connolly, Chris Cooper, Eric Dick, Jackie Emmerton, Darrell Fenton, Phil Goldberg, Rod Grinter, Lachlan Haig, Kaye Hargreaves, Spike Harris, Mandy Horsburgh, Alan Jackson, Kevin Jones, Torsten Kasper, Peter Lawrence, Garry Lyon, Nick McCallum, Peter McKenna, John McMahan, Darren McMenaman, Mike McShane, David Martin, Alistair Nicholson, David Peel, Guy Rigoni, Simeon Sparks, Matt Taylor, Paul Thompson, John Trotter

We welcome your donations, and thank you for your support. In order to donate:

Our Association's banking details are:

Account name: MFC Past & Present Players & Officials Association

BSB: 063 204

A/C: 1008 8589

Please use your name as the reference.



PAST & PRESENT PLAYERS'
& OFFICIALS' ASSOCIATION

PAST & PRESENT PLAYERS & OFFICIALS

MEMBER NEWSLETTER

VALE STEVE LAUSSEN

Your planning, preparation and execution is what has got us here. The expression 'it is ours to lose' is the proverbial double-edged sword; on the one hand it creates enormous pressure, but most importantly it confirms that we are the real deal and that with planning, preparation and execution, we will win. Enjoy every minute of it. Go Dees!

Steve Laussen wrote those words on the eve of a momentous occasion – the 2021 Grand Final – as part of his message to the Melbourne players about to break a 57-year premiership drought.

His sudden death, at the age of just 60, has shocked many, and saddened all who knew him, with the most profound sympathies being sent to his wife, Sarah Jo, and his children – Ella, Will and Henry.

The words of all who knew him as more than a fitness coordinator – a friend, a supporter, and a source of encouragement besides – say much in tribute:

Henry was Swooper's right hand man on the conditioning front. Henry was super organised and committed and you always felt he had your best interests at heart. On the social front he was always there but one back, shaking his head at the shenanigans. Henry was back at the MFC in 2008 to support Jimmy as a Foundation Hero, tipping in \$5K. Henry has always been a passionate Demon, and it is great that he saw the 2021 premiership win.

Chris Connolly

Me and Balls and Lovie were getting ready to run from Wonthaggi to Inverloch one Christmas. We were set to go at 6 in the morning, and at 5.50 Henry pulled up after driving from Melbourne, jumped out of his car, and said 'right, let's go'. He did the run with us, pushing us all the way, finished, jumped in his car and drove back to Melbourne. He cared so much.

Garry Lyon

Would do anything to help you get better. Held our hands through countless tough pre-seasons, and did everything with us. Guttled and will remember him fondly as a friend.

Graeme Yeats

Only a guy as genuine as Henry could bring the 100 hundreds to the club and still be as popular as he was. One of the best guys you will ever meet in your footy journey. RIP Henry.

Earl Spalding

Such sad news. Flappers was a great man. As many of you have said he guided a lot of us through countless pre-seasons. Humble to the core. Great man H. Terribly sad.

Andy Lovell

Loved H...A great man who genuinely put others before himself, which is why so many liked him. Drove very high standards while still maintaining great relationships with the players. Condolences to his family and to all who knew him. RIP H.

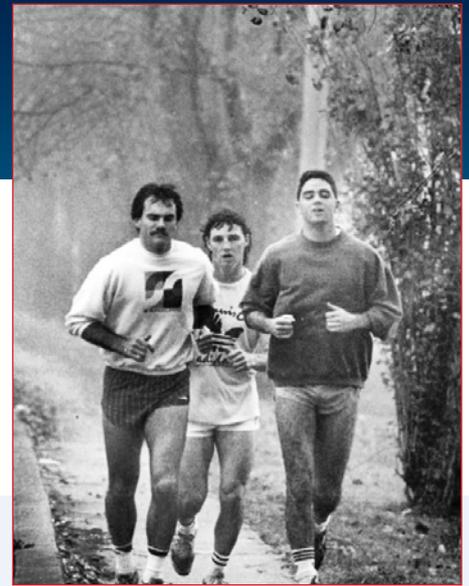
Steven Stretch

Henry went above and beyond in his role to get the best out of all the boys. Very selfless and a great role model for us as young men. VIP through the gates upstairs for H.

Brett Lovett

So sad to hear this news. He was a genuine 'salt of the earth' person. Always there to support and encourage you to do your best – never judgemental. I remember that feeling of being in no-man's land when we had done 70 one hundreds and he convinced us with a straight face that we would feel much better when we completed another 30!!! Steve was involved for the right reason, which was to help each person be the best they could be. Will be sadly missed. Condolences to his family.

Adrian Battiston



I'm still in shock. To me, Henry provided me with words and actions of unconditional support. Every Saturday morning that I was out suspended (way too many) H would meet me before each game and run with me around the Tan, up Anderson Street too many times to remember, countless times around the Lake, like this pic of H, G & Lovie. H didn't just advise me what was best, he would do it with me and absolutely got me match fit for when I was available. An absolutely outstanding human. Condolences to the family, close friends and the MFC family that knew Henry. RIP Steve (H/Flappers/Henry) Laussen.

Rod Grinter

Such sad news – one of the real great people to have shaped and influenced me in my time at the club, a genuinely great person that club culture is built around. Hard working, Loyal, Humble & Respectful. RIP Henry

Todd Viney

Very sad news – a great man and extremely dedicated in helping all he came in contact with become better at understanding all our individual thresholds and what we needed to do to improve as athletes and footballers. He loved the Dees.

Steven Icke

Flappers was an absolute legend. One of the all time great human beings. Loved him and his support so much. RIP great man.

Glenn Lovett

JOINING FORCES

As many readers will be aware, we're always on the lookout for disappeared Demons. In 2022, we'll be pooling resources, with MFC Membership Manager, Declan Adams, saying:

The Club has some exciting initiatives planned for the upcoming season, and we are calling out for any past



players who may have lost contact with the club. If you know of any past players who currently don't hear from the club, please email membership@melbournefc.com.au with player

names and contact details so the club can add them to their past player database.

So, if you know if someone who should be in contact

but isn't, or if your own details have changed, get in touch and help us to communicate with as many past players (and officials) as possible.

50 YEARS

It's been a year of milestones and achievements, particularly highlighted by Melbourne casting aside its 57-season drought to win that thirteenth premiership.



Two people who are also celebrating a personal milestone in the 50s are Greg

and Mavis Wells, who were married on 17 December 1971.

Greg played 224 games and kicked 251 goals for Melbourne between 1969 and 1980. He won the Best and Fairest in 1971 and 1976, was runner up in the Brownlow in 1972, and captained the Demons in 1977. He then went on to play 43 games with Carlton,

including the 1981 premiership, and on retirement returned to Melbourne,

where he served in a range of roles, including as assistant coach and chairman of selectors.

As MFC P&PP&OA President Rod Grinter points out, 'Greg became a great father figure and mentor to me... Greg and Mavis, I look up to both of you – congratulations on your golden wedding anniversary.' With four children – Melanie, Kylie, Sharni and Clay – and eight grandchildren, we are sure that there will be much celebrating, and everyone offers their best wishes and congratulations at such a special time.

RAY GROOM – THE NETHERBY MIRACLE

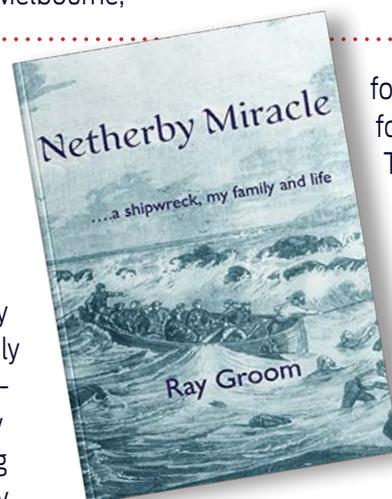
In 1858, the game of Australian football was taking shape and name as the Melbourne Football Club stepped into existence. At the same time, in Sunderland, way up in the north-east of England, a fully rigged ship of the Black Ball Line – the *Netherby* – was being built.

The two have a wonderful connection that is explored by Ray Groom – Melbourne player, former Premier of Tasmania and much more besides – in his book, *Netherby Miracle: a shipwreck, my family and life...*

Writing through the strangest of

times as we lived and locked down through the pandemic years of 2020 and 2021, Ray tells the story of the Netherby wreck of July 1866 that brought his great-grandparents Ben and Lucy Groom from London to King Island, then Victoria, as they abandoned their original plans of settling in Queensland.

From these beginnings, Ray goes on to expand on the family's rich history, while traversing his own time in legal circles, politics and – of course –



football. Having played for both Cooe in Tasmania, as well as Melbourne, and with the debate over Tasmania's place in the AFL strong and ongoing, this is a timely contribution.

More, this is a detailed and fascinating insight into an Australian family, set against the landscape of both world and local events. If you would like to share Ray's story, head to [amazon.com.au](https://www.amazon.com.au) and search for '[Netherby Miracle](#)'.



BEST AND FAIREST

It's rare that a club Best and Fairest lands in December; except, of course, if your team has won the premiership that season.

Crown Palladium was full of red and blue brilliance as the awards were announced, with names that starred during 2021 featuring throughout.



Best and Fairest (Keith 'Bluey' Truscott Memorial Trophy) was Clayton Oliver, who has now been triumphant in three of his six senior seasons. His triple treat puts Oliver in elite company, alongside the likes of Laurie Fowler, Nathan Jones, Hassa Mann and Jack Mueller, only Allan La Fontaine and Jim Styne ahead of them with four Best and Fairest awards each.

Second Best and Fairest (Sid Anderson Memorial Trophy) was Norm Smith Medallist, Christian Petracca. Having won the Best and Fairest in 2020, he fell just 26 votes short of victory to Oliver this season, while still achieving a special honour in his own right, being recognised for a perfect game in the Grand Final.



Third Best and Fairest (Ron Barassi Snr Memorial Trophy) was won by Max Gawn, adding to his list of honours in 2021. From being named All Australian (alongside Lever, May, Oliver and Petracca) for the fifth time, to captaining Melbourne's first premiership team in 57 years, everyone's favourite ruckman has carried all before him in a memorable season.

Fourth Best and Fairest (Ivor Warner-Smith Memorial Trophy) was won by Christian Salem, in his best finish yet in the award. One of the keys to moving the ball from defence into attack, his determination and hard hitting play were instrumental to the team's success in 2021.



Fifth Best and Fairest (Dick Taylor Memorial Trophy) went to Jake Lever, aptly recognised as 'the general of the backline'. With Melbourne's defenders admired throughout the competition, Lever – who took the most intercept marks of any player – has become an integral part of the Melbourne lineup in



his four seasons since coming from the Adelaide Crows.

Other awards presented on the night were:

Norm Smith Memorial Trophy (Coaches Award) – Alex Neal-Bullen

Ron Barassi Jnr Trophy (Leadership Award) – Max Gawn

James McDonald Trophy (Club Values Player) – Steven May

Harold Ball Memorial Trophy (Best Young Player) – Kysaiah Pickett

Ian Ridley Memorial Trophy (Club Ambassador Award) – Ben Brown and Neville Jetta

Troy Broadbridge Memorial Trophy (Best VFL Player) – Toby Bedford

In an extra special highlight for the evening, former coach Neale Daniher was inducted into the MFC Hall of Fame; the 50th inductee, and the first since 2017. Club President, Kate Roffey, captured the sentiment of all when she said 'Our club is a better place because of Neale Daniher'.

No truer words could have captured what Neale Daniher means to Melbourne. On a wonderful night, it can also be said that all those recognised have helped to make the Melbourne Football Club a better place, Neale Daniher foremost among them.

