



PAST & PRESENT PLAYERS' & OFFICIALS' ASSOCIATION

PAST & PRESENT PLAYERS' & OFFICIALS'

MEMBER NEWSLETTER

AUGUST-SEPTEMBER 2021 EDITION

FROM THE PRESIDENT



- ROD GRINTER

Welcome to our fifth newsletter for 2021. How exciting is it? - at the time of writing this

our team has won the McClelland Trophy as minor premier, for the first time in 57 years. It came down to the last home and away game of Season 2021, in one of the best comebacks I've seen, by beating Geelong in Geelong with a goal after the siren by our captain Max Gawn. How exciting was it, and how good? Even better was our Qualifying Final win over the Lions, which means we have a week's break before playing in a Preliminary Final, and have been able to enjoy seeing our team in amazing form. Congratulations must go to all involved at the MFC

for an outstanding year during the toughest of circumstances with this COVID-19 pandemic and associated restrictions. You should all be so proud of your team, as it's been a long time since we've had such success and supporting the MFC has been so good, even while it's been so bad in lockdown!

It's all about making history repeat itself. The last time we finished on top was 57 years ago (1964) which was the last time we won a premiership. I'm fully aware we still have some massive games in front of us, but I have been saying all year 'let's dare to dream', as we are not far from waking up and realising this isn't a dream - it's really happening. All the very best to our team and those directly involved in getting them in the best possible shape to take on achieving the Holy Grail. Go Dees!

We are not currently in a position to announce a MFCW player/past player as part of our Association's committee - this is a work in progress. Watch this space.

As always, we are financially responsible for keeping a healthy bank account to enable us to support MFC past men and women players of our great club. These continued lockdowns and restrictions have had a major impact in raising funds, so as the last newsletter mentioned, the next best thing is to simply ask whoever is in a position to do so, to donate to the MFC P&PP&OA. We have made this as easy as possible by creating our own QR Code thanks to Jackie Emmerton, so grab your mobile and donate whatever you can:



Thanks again to everyone for your assistance, and the ongoing support of your Association.

What a big month ahead we have. GO DEES.

Regards
Rod Grinter
President
MFC P&PP&OA



CONGRATULATIONS

There are so many Melbourne connected achievements as this remarkable season rumbles to an end, so please enjoy the following list, current to the end of August 2021:

THE MELBOURNE FOOTBALL CLUB - minor premiers for the first time since 1964. No matter how distant the games have been, loungerooms have been full of

Melbourne supporters virtually sharing the experience throughout this wonderful season.

ALL AUSTRALIAN - Max Gawn (captain), Jake Lever, Steven May, Clayton Oliver, Christian Petracca





PAST & PRESENT PLAYERS' & OFFICIALS' ASSOCIATION

PAST & PRESENT PLAYERS & OFFICIALS

MEMBER NEWSLETTER

AFL COACHES ASSOCIATION AFL CHAMPION PLAYER OF THE YEAR –
Clayton Oliver



NAB AFL RISING STAR –
Luke Jackson



Steven Smith (second from left)

AUSTRALIAN FOOTBALL HALL OF FAME INDUCTEE

– Debbie Lee. While she is now at the Western Bulldogs, Debbie – one of the pioneers of the women's competition, and a huge advocate for community involvement – played a major role in developing both areas during her nine years at the Melbourne Football Club.



MCC HONORARY LIFE MEMBER – Steven Smith. Former MCC President, Steven was recognised with this rare honour at the MCC's AGM on 29 July. Having played 203 games for the Melbourne Football Club between 1974 and 1985 – including winning the 1981 Best and Fairest – Steven became an MCC Committee member in 1998. He served as MCC President between 2015 and 2019, and said 'I've been very lucky to have both the Melbourne Football Club and the Melbourne Cricket Club play such an important role in my life.'

AFL SENIOR DEBUT – Jake Bowey, Round 20 vs Gold Coast



100 GAMES – Alex Neal-Bullen, Round 21 vs West Coast



REV'S ROAMINGS

During August, Paul 'The Rev' Burnham spent nearly seven hours on the phone, keeping in touch with around 50 members of the Association. One special role this month was to contact John Lord's teammates, 'who obviously miss

him dearly, as we do too.' From Bryan Kenneally, who delivered the eulogy at John's funeral, to all those who left heartfelt messages on the Instagram post notifying everyone of his passing, the memories of and stories surrounding John Lord have obviously been sad but unifying.

In these tough times, with half the country in lockdown, contact from 'The Rev' has been an important and ongoing factor in keeping everyone together, and keeping in touch through isolation. From Des Bell, now at home after hip surgery and doing well with his exercises, through to Len Mann playing bowls 'when he can' despite a crook back, Brent Heaver in Canberra, and Bob Skilton 'down Drouin way and doing fine', the MFC

P&PP&OA population can be found far and wide across Australia.

Through his conversations with the many in August, 'The Rev' has also collected many enthusiastic comments from excited people, thrilled with the 2021 season. Some examples include:

John Tilbrook – 'loves the Dees!'

Maurie Bartlett – 'Go Dees!'

Cameron Schwab – 'Go Dees!'

Bob Skilton – 'Go Dees!'

Stephen Powell – 'Go Dees!'

We agree wholeheartedly, and thank Paul 'The Rev' Burnham for being an important part of everyone's lives throughout this time.

BEHIND THE SCENES – SPIKE HARRIS

Anyone who has communicated with the Association to update details, book in for events, purchase merchandise or just generally be in touch will most likely have contacted Spike Harris.

For those who do not know Spike – although most do – here is some of his red and blue story:

Starting with the club in pre-season 1989, Spike was the club's team manager for 25 years after starting out with the Under 19s, which were wonderful years. Even further, a young David Schwarz lived with the Harris clan for a year. 'He was growing up with our kids; the three boys were in the one room.' Later, Darren Kowal also lived with the Harris family for a year, as did Hayden Lamaro. Spike and Lyn Harris are two familiar and treasured figures around the Melbourne Football Club, and such experiences help to show why.

Family support and involvement is a vital part of any club, and that has been at the heart of Spike's involvement over three decades. Part of his role involved sorting out host families for players, and in quite a few cases, that meant young players being part of the Harris family. Spike



and his family also took on a number of player sponsorships, from Alastair Clarkson to Colin Sylvia, 'a beautiful person', much loved and missed by all. 'We used to have them over for dinner three or four times a year, and we've made some really close links with the families.'

Appropriately recognised with a life membership in 2006, Spike is a quiet achiever in the club's story, but no less valued for that. As team manager, one of his primary assignments was to check grounds before games. 'I was trying to do the best I could. I'd get to the ground four hours before a game!'

Another important part of Spike's role was being in charge of Specified Assets. This involved 'setting up country and interstate kids with furniture', with specific funding provided by the AFL. 'While most of them bought a TV, the most important item was a bed.' Fortunately, Spike wasn't there when a current player went the other way, deciding that a TV was the vital item, not the bed, spending more than half of his allocated funding on a big screen special.

Having made his way through the challenges of the last decade, Spike

has never been one for publicity, trying to avoid the limelight; sometimes difficult when he has been on the boundary, including the 2000 Grand Final, 'standing on the line, listening to the National Anthem.' Now, with his main involvement away from the patterns of training and match day, Spike has filled a variety of roles – Treasurer, Secretary and Assistant Secretary – since joining the committee of the P&PP&OA in 2006. Fifteen years on, he is proud to be part of an organisation that club CEO Gary Pert acknowledges as a 'very important part of the Melbourne Football Club.'

The Association is equally proud of Spike's involvement, recognising his 30 years of involvement in the Melbourne Football Club in 2019 with a match day function and presentation dedicated to him. In typical understated fashion, Spike says now 'The fact that the past players gave me that was fantastic. My family was all there, and everyone enjoyed it.' He freely admits that he has enjoyed most of his time in red and blue.

In return, we can all say to Spike that we appreciate and recognise his contribution – 100 per cent of the time!

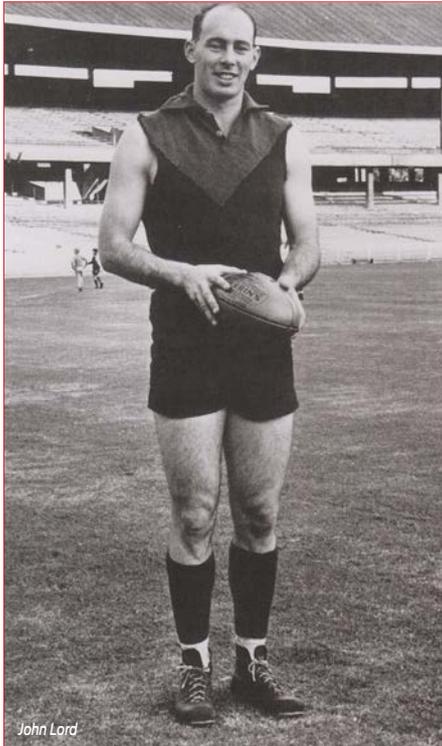


PAST & PRESENT PLAYERS'
& OFFICIALS' ASSOCIATION

PAST & PRESENT PLAYERS & OFFICIALS

MEMBER NEWSLETTER

VALE JOHN LORD



John Lord

If any past player can truly be said to be at the heart of the Melbourne Football Club, John Lord would have to come close. From his playing days to his role as an MCC Tour Guide, and many seasons spent working behind the scenes with the club's Past and Present Players' and Officials' Association, he gave more than half a century to the game at the highest level. His passing has taken one of the game's great characters from us.

Despite originally being on Geelong's radar, Melbourne heard about the younger Lord, whose father had also played for Melbourne – and invited him to play with the Under

19s, thereby forging the red and blue bond.

Lord's first season at Melbourne – 1956 – was interrupted by National Service. However, he played in a premiership side with the Seconds, placing him in good stead for further achievement in 1957.

This, of course, was the start of great things. Playing at centre half-back in the triumphant Grand Final side, Lord was one of the best players on the day, hailed in the club's Annual Report with the comment that 'John Lord, another grand young player, showed by his marking and his strong straight-ahead play that he is to be reckoned with.'

Absent for the 1958 Grand Final loss to Collingwood, Lord went on to play in the 1959 premiership, but really came of age in 1960, when he played every game, won an Outstanding Service Trophy and again attracted praise in the club's annual report, with the comment being made that:

'John had his best year in the ruck, and in the grand final was best afield at centre-halfback. John seems certain to hold this position down for many years, and should be a serious contender for the State team in 1961.'

While Melbourne's embarrassment of riches during this era meant that Lord missed State selection – only two were selected from each side at this time – he continued to be integral to the team's success during the early 1960s, despite battling a severe shoulder

injury suffered in the 1963 Preliminary Final loss to Hawthorn.

In 1964, Lord played in his fourth premiership side with Melbourne, and was again praised for his contribution to the club, with comments noting that:

'Led by a magnificent captain in Ron Barassi, who has been ably supported by Frank Adams, Brian Dixon and John Lord, players with years of experience behind them, the team deserves the highest praise that can be given.'

Made a Life Member of the Melbourne Football Club at the end of 1965, Lord hung up his boots with 132 games and 80 goals to his credit. Always a distinctive figure with his bald head and wearing No. 4 for his entire career, he also had a diverse role to play throughout. Mostly to be found in defence, Lord also favoured playing at centre half-forward, and was known for his marking skills and goal kicking ability.

John Lord was part of a memorable era in the game, and played a huge role in maintaining connections, both during his career and in retirement. To honour this giant of the Melbourne Football Club, the team wore black armbands for the Round 20 game against Gold Coast. We offer our sincere condolences to John's family, to his many friends, and to the wider sporting community, of which he was such an integral part.

AFLPA

In these often challenging times, we continue to remind all past players to stay in touch, and to avail themselves of the facilities they

can access through the AFL Players' Association. Ensure your connection by taking out an AFLPA Alumni membership. Find out more by visiting <https://www.aflplayers.com.au/players-home/alumni> or calling 8651 4300.



BENEVOLENT FUND

As part of our ongoing campaign in 2021, we continue to encourage contributions to our Benevolent Fund, as we steadily make our way towards raising \$5000 for the year. Every donation helps us to support those in need, and to establish a solid base for the future.

Our 2020 Benevolent Fund attracted just over \$3000 in donations, for which we are extremely grateful. A big thank you to all those who donated. If you can spare a few dollars, please support us – any amount is appreciated.

We would like to thank and recognise our generous donors of 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 Hopgood, 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, Guy Rigoni, Russell Robertson, Cameron Schwab, Troy Simmonds, Steven Smith, Brian Stynes, Janette Sutherland, Tricia Thorne, Daniel Ward, Ken Whitfort, Anonymous x 3

Our 2021 Donors to date are:

Lynda Carroll, Chris Connolly, Chris Cooper, Frank Davis, Jackie Emmerton, Darrel Fenton, Paul

Galway, Phillip Goldberg, Rod Grinter, Lachlan Haig, Kaye Hargreaves, Mandy Horsburgh, Peter Lawrence, Mike McShane, Alistair Nicholson, Paul Thompson, Deluxe Print

Click here to add your name to the 2021 Donor list!



<https://gofund.me/d69a8084>

You can also scan the QR code to connect to our GoFundMe donation page:



OR – go to gofundme.com and search **MFC P&PP&OA** 
<https://gofund.me/d69a8084>

OR – Direct payment to:
BSB 063 204
A/C 1008 8589
MFC Past & Present Players & Officials Association

DEMONS IN THE DESERT

During July, committee member Mark Jenkins was travelling through outback Australia – read on for his story of the inevitable red and blue encounter in the middle of nowhere, watching Melbourne's Round 18 draw against the Hawks, far away at the MCG:

I'm on the way back from travelling across the Simpson Desert, and wanted to share this story with you all.

We arrived at the Mungerannie Hotel on the Birdsville Track after exiting the desert, and stayed the night.



In preparation for the game, I put on my 1980s footy jumper and wandered into the bar for a couple of quiet ones to warm up, when I heard an elderly lady mention her grandson played for Melbourne.

She turned out to be Valerie Sparrow, who, with her husband John, is travelling up north.



Mark Jenkins meets John and Valerie Sparrow

We spent the night supporting the Dees and, in the pub's tradition, I hung my Big Freeze beanie on the roof.

Valerie and John are lovely people who are very proud of Tom - sadly he didn't get onto the field, even though he was the medical sub!



A GREAT TIME OF THE YEAR:

There's no time of the season that's better for generating facts, stats and general trivia than finals time. So, here are some hits and memories for Melbourne:

- Six of Melbourne's twelve premierships to date have been won against Collingwood, giving a solid backbone to the infamous rivalry between the two clubs.
- Melbourne has won eleven of its twelve premierships playing at the MCG. In 1900, the Grand Final was played at the East Melbourne Cricket Ground (EMCG).



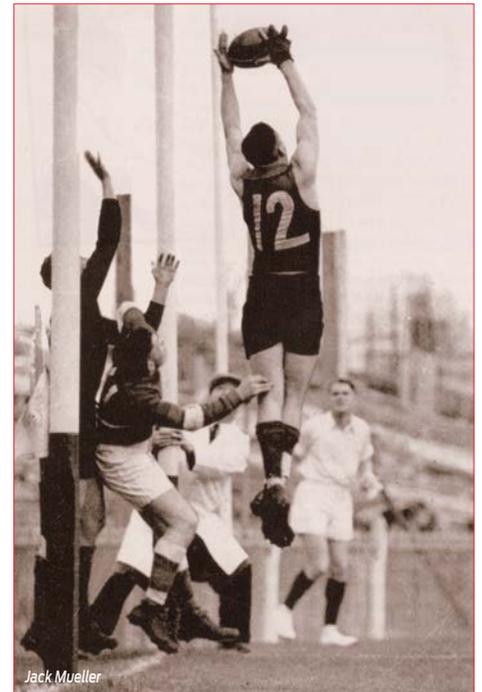
- In 1998, twelve Melbourne players made their finals debut in the First Qualifying Final win against Adelaide; a week later, Travis Johnstone became the thirteenth to make his finals debut when Melbourne defeated St Kilda in the First Semi-Final. (In the 2021 First Qualifying Final win against the Lions, nine Demons made their finals debut).
- In 1941, extra premierships medals were provided by the VFL to



- recognise Ron Barassi Snr, Harold Ball and Keith 'Bluey' Truscott. All were considered to have been certain starters in the Grand Final, if not for the tragedy of war.
- The 1956 Grand Final between Melbourne and Collingwood holds the honour of being the sixth most attended game in the competition's history, with 115,902 there on the day.



- In the 1948 Grand Final, the great Jack Mueller kicked six goals – twice. This was due to Melbourne drawing with Essendon, then winning on replay. In both the original encounter and the replay, Mueller kicked six goals.



- Melbourne's First Qualifying Final win against the Lions in 2021 has created another first – it's the first time the Demons have played a final at Adelaide Oval, making that the tenth finals venue for the club since 1897.
- The only Melbourne player to have ever reached double figures in goal kicking for a single finals game is Garry Lyon, who kicked 10.4 in the First Semi-Final win over Footscray in 1994.
- Melbourne holds many pioneering honours, not the least of which is being the winner of the first ever premiership cup, won – fittingly - against Collingwood in 1959.
- Melbourne has never previously played either the Brisbane Lions or Brisbane Bears in a final. Going back to Fitzroy days, the most recent occasion on which the two teams met in a final before 2021 was a 62 point win for the Demons in the 1960 Second Semi-Final.



FINALS TIME

As the team made the finals, committee member Paul Hopgood suggested that we should invite Association members to pass on their best wishes to the players. Here are some of the comments received and sent on leading into the Qualifying Final against Brisbane:

Len Mann

Heartiest congratulations boys on your Team achievement this year & thanks for all the heart stopping moments we've had in a very difficult year for all & sundry.

Bring home the Flag!!

Regards Len Mann

1960 GF Team member

1964 Emergency



Brian Stynes

To the Melbourne team and Coaches, You have given all the Stynes Family a huge lift and great joy in difficult times this year.

I wish you all the best for the upcoming Finals campaign. I love the brand that you have created and I know your best is more than good enough to get the big prize. I am sure the big Fellow is looking down on you with great pride!!!

Go Dees,
Brian.



Barrie Vagg

Well done on getting this far Best foot forward from here on & success will come to all

Good luck
Barrie Vagg

Darren Kowal

GIVE 'EM HELL; Don't die wondering! Other than that, it's business as usual

All the best,
Mooy.

Stan Alves

Best wishes to all involved in quest for 2021 PREMIERSHIP. Play like there is no tomorrow and no regrets. It is yours for the taking.

Proud of you.
Stan Alves 1965-1976

John Northey

Reaching the Finals in 1987 for the first time in 23 years was one of the best, most emotional experiences in my time as Coach. Self-belief grew and grew, taking us through to the Preliminary Final. You have carried this self-belief throughout the year. The gutsy comeback last week against Geelong showed how deeply this self-belief is embedded. This year can be one of the greatest in the history of the MFC. The Team and Coach have won enormous support and admiration throughout Australia and beyond.

I feel I can speak on behalf of all team-members from years ago when I say, "GO THE MIGHTY Ds".

John Northey

Let's all make the most of every opportunity to continue sending wishes to the team in Season 2021. If you have any messages to pass on, please feel free to send an email to Spike Harris – spike.w.harris@gmail.com

We also hope to publish more of your wonderful messages in future issues of the newsletter.



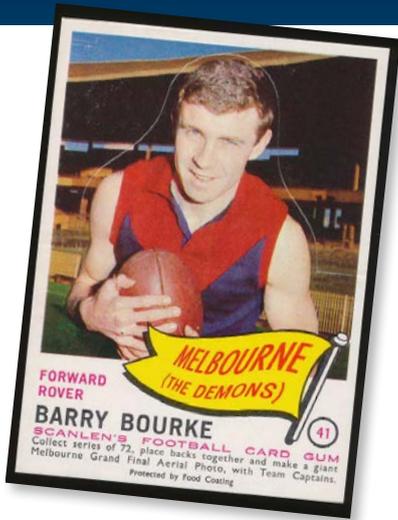


PAST & PRESENT PLAYERS' & OFFICIALS' ASSOCIATION

PAST & PRESENT PLAYERS & OFFICIALS

MEMBER NEWSLETTER

AUGUST-SEPTEMBER 2021



BARRY BOURKE

Barry Bourke had the honour of making it to a Scanlen's Football Gum collector card in just his second season – 1964 – with the Demons. The back of the card provided a glowing writeup for the youngster, stating that:

After coming from the Thirds to full-forward with the Seniors in a year, won Melbourne's award for Best First Year Player. His five goals for Melbourne in their 1963 Preliminary Final against Hawthorn was the bright spot for the Demons on their losing day... Barry's effort had many supporters recalling the goalkicking of top full-forwards of the past, including Ron Todd's 11 goals for Collingwood in each of 2 Preliminary Finals in 1938 and 1939.

Association members, don't forget to contact Barry for assistance with all your motoring needs.

BARRY BOURKE
MOTORS
 0418 999 101
barrybourke.com.au

THE STRETCH STORY

Great footy stories appear in many places, and one of the busiest platforms is the Footy Almanac website. Editor John Harms encourages all past players to have a read of this two-part special by veteran writer, Matt Watson:

<https://www.footyalmanac.com.au/the-demons-steven-and-billy-stretch-part-1/>

<https://www.footyalmanac.com.au/the-demons-steven-and-billy-stretch-part-two/>



VALE JIM WILSON

All involved with the Melbourne Football Club were saddened to hear of the recent passing of Jim Wilson. Jim, who played 17 games in 1952 and 1953, wearing No. 11 throughout, came from Golden Square. He was known to be the smallest player in the competition at the time he was playing, and was named Best First Year Player for 1952. We pass on our deepest condolences to Jim's family and friends.



WE'LL MEET AGAIN

As in 2020, we will be joining forces via Zoom for our annual reunion. While we'd all much rather be at the

MCG, we hope that everyone takes the opportunity to be part of it on the Thursday evening before Grand Final Day. Stay tuned for further details, and let's see if Guy Rigoni turns up in black tie again this year!

