



Doctrina Vitae

Bacchus Marsh
Grammar

GRAMMARIAN



ISSUE 3 – 2020

Life Members of Bacchus Marsh Grammar

William Wilson

Jill Wilson

Graeme Blyth

Peter O'Day

Marcia Gage

Raelene Hawkins

Baxter Holly

Bruce Marshall

Sheryl Tunnecliff

Silvija Lucas

John Cooke

Stuart Davidson

Andrew Conolly

Andrew Dickson



Invitation to the BMG Alumni

In preparing this edition of the Grammarian, focussing on the school's history, it presents a wonderful opportunity to invite past staff, students or families to write and submit their own 'BMG Reflection'. We welcome these Reflections and any historic information or photos to be either emailed to school@bmg.vic.edu.au or posted to Bacchus Marsh Grammar, PO Box 214, Bacchus Marsh 3340.

It is hoped that this will form the beginning of a collation process in recognising the school's full history.

If you are a past student, please register for the school's Alumni via the school website.

www.bmg.vic.edu.au

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FROM THE PRINCIPAL

I first set eyes on Bacchus Marsh Grammar early in 1998 when I was thinking of applying for the position of Principal. I visited the site one weekend with Phillipa and my then young daughters Stephanie and Antonia. My memory of the visit is that it was extremely hot, and Phillipa and I decided that I should put in an application.

Two months later, I was offered that job. I was in two minds whether to accept it, but after some advice from my father and the Head of the School that I then worked at, I accepted the position. Our then plan was to come to BMG for three to five years before moving off either interstate or overseas. Twenty-two years later and I am still here. Apart from finding the area a very pleasant place to live, the growth and changes to the school have basically allowed me to face three or four different experiences as a Principal, whilst staying at the same school.

The early years at the school were very tough. Enrolments were low and the relationship between the Board and all Principals had not been a very harmonious one. My first

two years in particular were very difficult and caused me to contemplate leaving on numerous occasions.

On my first day in the role, Michelle Graham and I 'found' the enrolment book. We both monitored these using a small exercise book. We both, I think, recognised there and then how dire the situation of the school actually was, with enrolments in 1999 heading for a further decline from their already perilous level. On that day, the strategic imperative for the school was set. Baxter Holly had secured a better deal in relation to funding; the next step was to grow the enrolments of the school quickly to avoid a spiral into closure.

Early initiatives were taken in relation to changing the curriculum offerings of the school and many of the attitudes and practices in relation to basic processes of learning. There were early decisions to improve facilities, in particular, the conversion of the core of the under-utilised Science Technology Building and the development of a very rudimentary oval, which subsequently died off in the great drought at the turn of the century.

When I first arrived, one of my major concerns was that we were a school that was very inward looking. In a remark that was unpopular at the time, I said that, “We need to get rid of the view that the world ends at Anthony’s Cutting”.

The turning point for the school was when this throw away line started to become reality. A major influence in that was the decision to introduce school bus routes, separate from those offered by the Government. Our first students from Wyndham arrived just over twenty years ago. The expansion physically, but also in the school’s imagination of what is possible, has been a hallmark of the school over the past twenty years.

I have been very fortunate to be surrounded by wonderful staff and, from the early part of this century, a supportive and encouraging School Board. Central to the journey has been Michelle Graham, Elizabeth O’Day, Greg Gough and Kevin Richardson. Along the way, many others have joined and made enormous contributions to make a truly great school but to borrow the words of a famous 19th Century School song – “one whose best years still lie ahead”.

– Mr Andrew A. Neal, Principal





Official opening of the school

THE HISTORY OF BACCHUS MARSH GRAMMAR

Since our humble beginnings in 1988, Bacchus Marsh Grammar has become a leading Independent school boasting an excellent reputation for the way we foster individual difference and diversity, and facilitate personal development, academic growth and pastoral care.

With a founding motto of “Doctrina Vitae” (Education for Life), we have grown from a single campus with too few students to one with three campuses and more than 2,600 students. Our community is drawn from a large and diverse catchment area in the outer west of Melbourne and towards Ballarat and Geelong.

Follow up from our 30th anniversary, we are compiling an extensive collection of material to stimulate a greater sense of pride in our school history and all that has been achieved in such a short space of time. We have much to be proud of since those early years and the ambitious and challenging road that has been negotiated to become the successful school we are today.

EARLY YEARS

Bacchus Marsh Grammar commenced operation in 1988 under the leadership of Foundation Principal, Mr Graeme Blyth.

Supported by a small and determined group of families, Mr Blyth had identified the pressing need for an Independent school in the growing township of Bacchus Marsh and surrounding areas. Their shared vision was for a school that was non-denominational and not tied to any particular faith or the teaching of any particular creed or doctrine.

The school first operated from a site in Halletts Way, central Bacchus Marsh. The early years were particularly tough due to a lack of government funding and difficulties in attracting and maintaining enrolments. Totally committed, the School Council, under the leadership of Peter O’Day, provided unwavering support, and so too did many of the school’s hard working original families. Mr O’Day was subsequently honoured with Life Membership of the school for his contributions. His involvement has been a lifelong family affair – his wife Elizabeth is a long-term member of the teaching staff and Senior Deputy Principal and Head of Junior School, and their grandchildren now attend our School.

Driven by vision and ambition, a “land swap” was negotiated in 1992 to enable the school to move to our current location in South Maddingley Road, just south of the Bacchus Marsh township. The site was previously the administrative hub for Maddingley Brown Coal. Local landowners, Bill and Jill Wilson, were instrumental in achieving the land swap and were later awarded Life Memberships for their efforts.

In 1994, Mr Blyth resigned as Principal due to the tensions inherent in operating an Independent school without appropriate government funding. Mr Kevin Nicholson was interim Head of the School until Mr Baxter Holly was appointed as the school’s second Principal (1995 – 1998). Mr Holly had been Head of the Knox School and before that, a senior member of staff at Scotch College.

Mr Holly's main task was to secure funding. After significant lobbying by Mr Holly and the School Council, this was achieved in 1998 when the school joined the Victorian Ecumenical System of Schools. In the July of that year, Mr Holly left Bacchus Marsh Grammar to become Head of Kingswood College in Box Hill.

During these formative years, the parents of the school community made an enormous contribution. Raelene Hawkins and Marcia Gage, in particular, were the driving force behind raising money for the day-to-day operations of the school.

CONSOLIDATION

In 1998, Mr Andrew Neal, who had been Director of Curriculum at Trinity Grammar, Kew, was appointed our third Principal. One of his priorities was to establish a sound curriculum and secure a strong enrolment base. This involved major changes to ensure the school could offer a curriculum and resources that would attract students from across western Melbourne.

Such change is not easy but Mr Neal was able to progress with support particularly from School Council members and Life members Peter O'Day, Sheryl Tunnecliffe, John Cooke, Andrew Dickson, Andrew Conolly and Bruce Marshall. An almost entirely new School Council resulted.

In 2001, work commenced in earnest to develop an achievable Strategic Plan to help move the school forward. Mr Neal's endeavours were supported by a new management team comprising Deputy Principals Elizabeth O'Day and Kevin Richardson, Business Manager Greg Gough and the School Council. The process was further assisted by the enormous contribution made by the Principal's Assistant, Michelle Graham.

The results were soon seen with significant improvements to curriculum policy, a more expansionary outlook, together with the consistency and a confidence that come with stable management and a united School Council.

Ongoing curriculum consolidation, development, and innovation have been made across the Senior, Middle and Junior schools. This has been supported by substantial growth in the school's infrastructure and resources, the size of the Maddingley campus and a flourishing co-curricular program. The process of growth has continued with the establishment of a campus on 200 acres at Staughton Vale and a Prep - Year 8 campus at Aintree/Rockbank.

Academically, the school is proud of its reputation. There has been a dramatic increase in the number of students achieving at the highest levels, and we boast one of the most extensive Year 12 programs in the State.

In many respects, Bacchus Marsh Grammar has come of age. This has been thanks to the enormous effort and hard work of many people including long-serving staff and parents committed to the moral and philosophical foundations of our school.

The best still lies ahead. It is with great confidence the School is embarking on the next exciting phase of development to underpin its long-term future.

– Ms Lou Callow, Artist in Residence



THE TIMELINE

1988

Establishment of Bacchus Marsh College

AT HALLETTS WAY IN BACCHUS MARSH



ELIZABETH O'DAY

REFLECTION



A strong desire for quality education in Bacchus Marsh fueled the involvement of our family in the development of Bacchus Marsh Grammar.

The first 10 years of the school was such a roller-coaster in all facets just to keep the doors of the school open. So much work

behind the scenes by a small group of parents kept the wheels turning.

I vividly remember being met with open arms by Silvia Lucas and Jan Loftus when I arrived with a ute load of readers that were being discarded from the school I was then teaching at. Physical resources were so scarce, however the strength of the school was the dedication of the staff providing quality education and pastoral support for the students. This is still evident in the success of the school today.

I was fortunate to join the Bacchus Marsh Grammar staff in 1993 on the current site in South Maddingley Road. I have also been fortunate to work with the three Principals, Mr Graeme Blyth, Mr Baxter Holly and Mr Andrew Neal.

The school under the direction of Mr Andrew Neal has made quantum leaps in its educational status, state of the art facilities and strong enrolment demand. I feel privileged to have grown and developed my career under his direction and with his support.

Reflecting on the past 30 years, it is immensely satisfying that the early sacrifices made by such a small few sees a successful, high demand, quality school that we have today. My five children were all students at the school and were lucky to receive a good education from a small band of quality teachers. The real reward for my family is the opportunities that are offered today in such a prestigious school that will see our grandchildren reap the benefits.

– Mrs Elizabeth O'Day, Senior Deputy Principal / Woodlea Operations Project - Primary Specialist

1990

Name change to Bacchus Marsh Grammar

AND RELOCATION TO ITS CURRENT SITE IN MADDINGLEY, BACCHUS MARSH



1991

Mining huts

CONVERTED TO CLASSROOMS



The Gardening groups

WITH GENEROUS BUDGETS OF \$100 ANNUALLY

JAN LOFTUS

REFLECTION

MY MEMORIES FROM 30 YEARS AT BMG



I started teaching at this school straight out of University some 30 years ago. In those days, the school was on its original site in Hallett's Way and was literally some portables in the middle of a paddock.

In my first year I taught a composite Year 4/5/6 class and Mrs Lucas taught Prep/1/2 and 3! Yes, there were only 2 classes in Junior School. At that stage we were Bacchus Marsh College, however, we changed our name to Bacchus Marsh Grammar as we kept receiving the Secondary College's mail and they received ours.

We were very scarce on supplies and received little funding from the Government. I clearly recall holding a Prep to Year 6 Assembly to show the students the new and only trundle wheel we had been able to purchase. We were all so excited!

I recall the excitement when we were notified the school had obtained the Maddingley site, and staff spent many weekends with the school families painting and preparing the buildings to move to the new site. Wilson Hall still remains one of the original buildings.

The changes I have seen in my 30 years at this school make me feel as if I have taught at 6 different schools. I am now teaching children of past students which makes me feel very old, but also very warm and happy inside.

I have been so fortunate in my life to have obtained a teaching position here when I was so young and inexperienced. I have always been given so much support from the school community to enable me to become the teacher and person I am. I only hope I am managing to give back some of that in my varying roles which I hold currently. I love this school!

– Mrs Jan Loftus, Assistant Principal

I REMEMBER WHEN...



Back when I attended BMG, there were 20 students, three teachers (one of whom was also doubling as the Principal), six classrooms, one downball court drawn with chalk, one gravel tennis court and one basketball ring attached to the end of the outside wall of the building. There were three classes – Prep to Year 3, Year 4 to 6, Year 7 and 8.

Our entire school population was smaller than a current Tutor Group.

By the end of that year, we were up to 40 students, from Prep to Year 8. We also even had a small fort and playground and owned a total of 9 desktop computers by then. To look around the school as it is today – the school we all know, it is almost impossible to believe its humble beginnings.

It was not unusual for us to spend our weekends at the school with our families in those early days. We didn't have the wonderful maintenance team that we have now – our parents were the maintenance team. They did the gardening, painting, building, repair work and anything else that needed doing.

In the past, as I have watched our Year 9s head off on several buses to their year level camp, I was reminded of my own Year 9 camp, with my entire class driven to our campsite by our tutor teacher in the back of a Toyota Landcruiser.

As the school grew, we started a canteen. And by canteen, I mean we each had to take a turn on a roster system, dragging a table out of a classroom and selling chips and lollies from it. We generally made around \$20 on a good day. Our end of year Christmas concerts were held outside... we performed on the verandah and our parents sat on our classroom chairs on the scoria in front of the school.

I remember quite clearly one day being split up into four groups and being told we were forming a House system. In those groups, we discussed and voted on names for those Houses. We chose names that were significant in the local area; Bacchus, Pentland, Braeside and Hilton. I was in Bacchus and, initially, was one of only two girls in my age group. No need for tryouts or trials, the only requirement for qualifying for events in House Carnivals or sports teams was that you had arms and legs. This meant I (along with pretty much every other student in the school) represented our Bacchus Marsh Grammar in swimming, athletics, cross country, football, netball, korfbal and many other sports.

Mr Richardson asked me the other day if I ever felt that I had been disadvantaged in any way by being part of the school in its very early days due to its small size. Certainly, we didn't have even a minute fraction of the facilities or opportunities that exist for BMG students now. So, in that respect, we lacked advantage. However, when all of you have graduated from here and you look back on your time at BMG, it won't be the facilities you remember, or even, necessarily, the vast opportunities you had, it will be the people you met, the friends you made or the teachers that had an impact on you. And from that perspective, despite its amazing growth in size and prosperity, the BMG I knew as a student is the same BMG you know as students today and the same BMG you will remember in another 30 years' time. At its core, then and now, is the same set of values. Teachers and staff working tirelessly for their students and each other, and hard-working parents who send their children here because they want the best for their children (and as a parent myself here now, I would like to thank the brilliant maintenance team for the fact we no longer have to do the gardening). So no, I don't feel disadvantaged. I actually feel lucky and very proud to have played just a small part in the history of this great school.

– Mrs Kelly Dilges, Graduating class of 1996, current parent and Assistant Principal



Principal, Mr Blyth, also class teacher for Years 4, 5 & 6

1994

The Staff Room

The Staff Room and adjoining building were used for many purposes including an assembly place, a performance centre, and finally the Administration Offices.



The Arts Centre

Classroom downstairs (including a small kiln room) and an office on a mezzanine floor. Years later it was converted into a senior classroom, then a VCE study room up until 2019.



1995

The Main Entry to the school

The General Office, including the Principal's office, was situated in what are now music rooms. Wilson Hall has also undergone many internal changes. It was our Assembly Hall where the whole school would gather.



1996

Science Building



1997

The Bristols

To cater for the growth of the school, The Bristols (then L block) were acquired second hand from the local secondary school.



Bacchus Marsh Grammar

ANTHEM

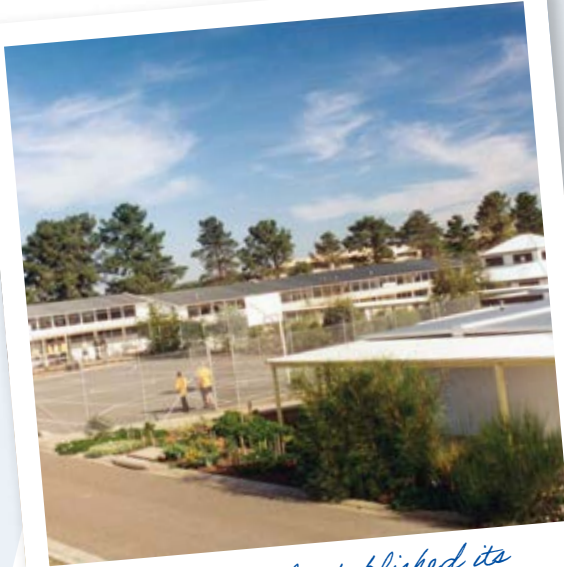
WRITTEN BY TRACEY NICHOLSON

Come join with us our voices raised
In one community,
As of our school we sing the praise,
Its life and history.
From small beginnings, prosper, grow,
With strength we face all strife,
And work each day toward our goal.
Education for Life, Education for Life.

Our colours blue and black and gold
We wear with loyal pride.
Blue represents our friendships
True companions by our side.
Black stands for efforts hard and long
to reach the final goal,
Where gold acclaims achievements
And a future to behold, a future to behold.

We learn amid a leafy clime
To challenge each new day
And make the best use of our time,
To seek and not to stray,
We strive with spirit in our hearts
And purpose in our minds.
A link is forged each day we work,
A loyal tie that binds, a loyal tie that binds.

That link will join us through the years
And guide us as we grow
To make our way down life's long path
And pace ourselves just so.
The hardest times we face with zeal
Remembering lessons schooled,
We'll draw our strength from times we spent
At Bacchus Marsh Grammar School,
Bacchus Marsh Grammar School.



*The school established its
first computer lab*





I commenced at Bacchus Marsh Grammar in July 1998 and was appointed to the role of Principal's Assistant by Andrew Neal and past Business Manager Alan Dennis.

I started two weeks before Andrew's official first day at the school, to assist in setting up the Principal's Office before his commencement.

One of the first things that struck me about the school was the 'feeling'. The students, parents and staff were so welcoming and friendly, and being a small school of 300 students we were a close-knit community. Even though the school has now grown to 3 campuses and a student population of over 2,600, the 'feeling' still exists. We may not know each and every student's name but there is still a hello and smile from the students and parents.

The first few years were hard work; Andrew had 2 small daughters and I had a toddler. One of the successes of the growth of the school was to take the school 'on the road'. We held many information nights in the Werribee, Melton, Gisborne and Diggers Rest areas which resulted in some instances of over 12-hour workdays. It was hard work, but on reflection, so worthwhile to see the wonderful success of the school's growth over the years.

My role has evolved enormously over the years. In the first couple of years my day consisted of being: Principal's Assistant, School Registrar, School Nurse, Canteen Assistant, Car Park Attendant, Uniform Shop helper, Receptionist, Tour Guide operator – to name a few! If there was a job to do, we all pitched in and did it. Something that still exists amongst the staff today.

In the year 2000, I went on Maternity Leave and the School Registrar was appointed to manage the growing enrolments the school was experiencing. The Registrar's role has also evolved from keeping track of enrolments in an exercise book (true! – Andrew and I, once we found the exercise book, were troubled to say the least). The enrolments are now managed via our database, and enrolment forms have gone from a paper-based system to online, saving many hours of data entry.

I returned from Maternity Leave in 2001 and then left for Maternity Leave again in 2002! With three small children I worked part-time, and job-shared the role for a couple of years. As the school kept growing and my children grew older, I recommenced in the role full-time.

The facilities of the school have also changed enormously over the years. One example of that is Wilson Hall, which was the indoor Physical Education Hall and located next to the Principal's Office and my office. Some days we were listening to the Chicken Dance song, the Nutbush and other tunes as students learnt movement to music! The Principal's Office has also had three locations over the last 20 years; we moved into the current location in 2013.

There have been many hilarious events, tragic events, births, deaths and marriages, and I'm proud to have been able to be a part of the history of the school. I can't believe I have been on the staff for over twenty years, and in my last year of being a parent of the school as my youngest daughter completes Year 12; the time has absolutely flown by. Each and every day is still different in the Principal's Office and, although I may not be 'on the ground' as much, the work is still stimulating due to the ever-evolving nature of the school.

**– Mrs Michelle Graham
Executive Assistant to the Principal**



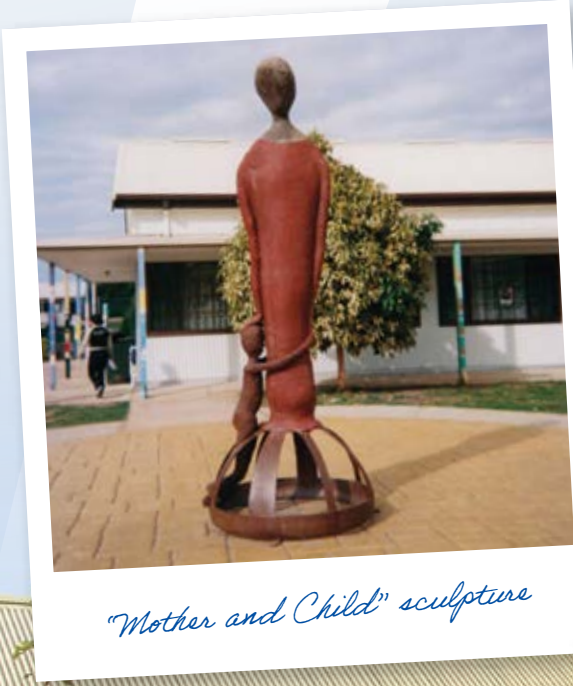
Grace, Michelle, Madeleine and Bailey

1998–1999

‘Artist in Residence’ Project

In 1999, Senior Art Teacher Linda Gallus successfully applied for a grant to engage an ‘Artist in Residence’ to work with art students. Sculptor Fiona Orr was appointed and attended the school for an extended period throughout 2000. Fiona ran a series of sculpture workshops for students and staff. In particular, Fiona worked with Year 12 students, who were given a design brief to create a clay marquette for a sculpture feature for the school grounds. Chelsea Corcoran’s ‘Mother and Child’ marquette was selected, and the class was guided through the construction process to create the piece.

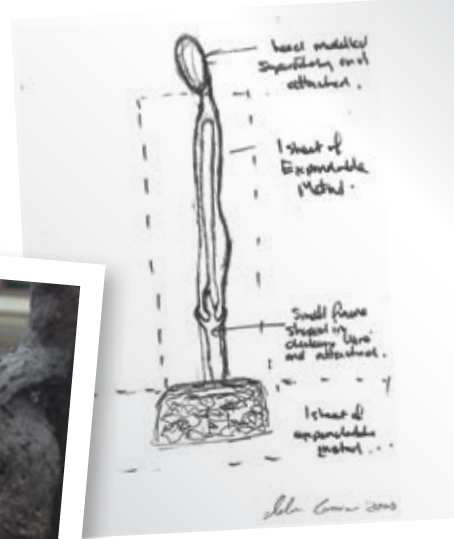
Over the years, the sculpture has provided a gathering place for celebrations, acknowledgements, grief and loss, and remembering.



‘Mother and Child’ sculpture



Chelsea Corcoran



LOU CALLOW

REFLECTION



I was employed along with three other new teachers in 1996 by Mr Baxter Holly, second Principal of BMG. My job was to set up an Art Department. I love a challenge and it certainly unfolded as one.

The school was eight years old and going through challenging times; struggling with student numbers and financial difficulties.

I think there were 300 students when I started; it was a small close knit school community. As new staff were employed, we bonded together and worked as a team. We had to for survival; we supported each other and made the most of every situation. Staff came and went, a few of us from those early days still remain today. I will never forget the support and generosity given to teachers by parents. They helped raise funds for class materials, ran sport days and other events. It reminded me of my childhood when there was a profound sense of community and connectedness.

In 1998, Andrew Neal was employed as Principal, along with his Secretary, Michelle Graham. Their first two years were extremely challenging, and it would have been no surprise if they walked away. But they didn't. Instead they worked as a formidable team (and still do to this day) and hit the road in the evenings after long days at the office, in a bid to get more students. They, along with Elizabeth O'Day, delivered information evenings to the local community, and travelled to numerous communities, including Sunbury, Melton, Werribee and Hoppers Crossing. Their courage in doing this gave staff and parents hope. Students started being bussed in from Werribee and then other places; numbers started to grow. Andrew managed to gain better funding for the school, the tide was turning. He had a vision for the future, and there was much to work and hope for.

In 2000, I remember Andrew making a statement at a staff meeting, that the school had joined a group of independent schools, and through this we had gained an on-going funding source. The school grounds became a building site for a number of years, with continual projects rolling out. These past years have seen the school grow from strength to strength in infrastructure, morale, professionalism, reputation and in student and staff numbers. We are achieving amazing things.

I feel blessed when I reflect on the richness of experiences and stories BMG has provided, as I move through the twilight years of my teaching career.

– Ms Lou Callow, Artist in Residence



2002

Baxter Holly Wing (P Block)

AND THE CREATION OF THE BOULEVARD OF DREAMS



SARAH HUNTER

REFLECTIONS



“Enjoy the little things, for one day you may look back and realise they were the big things.”

– Robert Brault

I arrived at Bacchus Marsh Grammar in 2001. There are so many wonderful memories from the early days of the school. Year level camps were always a great adventure: climbing the Pinnacle at Halls Gap, soaring on the Giant Swing in Portsea, hiking in Wilsons Promontory. I also fondly recall the early days of school productions and performances- the Year 7 Creative Arts and Performance Evening (better known as CAPE) was definitely a highlight. I have been known to enjoy a dress up day and we definitely had our fair share of fun dress ups, such as our World Cup event in 2006 and the staff Fashions on the Field competitions. BMG also enjoyed the family feel-good Harvest Festival, where we raised money for important causes within the community. There are so many events and moments that have contributed to our journey at BMG. These events and moments have shaped us, but I believe the greatest influence on our school's culture

and current practices are the people. Our wonderful staff members have forged strong professional relationships, and very close friendships. The bond between staff and students is also enduring. Many former students return to BMG employed in various roles, and many more go on to study teaching at university. This is the greatest reflection of the wonderful environment that our school has created and continues to provide for those lucky enough to be a part of it. I have loved all the little and big things that have been a part of my work at BMG for the last twenty years. It is a hugely significant part of my life and it will always feel like home.

– Mrs Sarah Hunter, Assistant Principal,
Deputy Head of Woodlea Campus

DEBRA OGSTON



The year is 2002. There are approximately 650 students from Prep to Year 12 and only one campus. The local radio station is housed on-site, and we have classrooms that were once used as housing for the Commonwealth Games. There is no gymnasium. There is an oval that requires a lot of work. Our buses drive through

the middle of the school which continues to be a growing concern for safety, particularly with the increase in student numbers and the need for more buses.

The whole school fits into Wilson Hall for assembly every Monday morning. It is also an indoor space for P.E. classes on wet weather days, creating a challenge for more than one class at a time. Drama and Music also share this space, making it even more difficult to run classes. In that year, Year 12 had a total of 73 students (3 Tutor Groups).

Fast forward nearly 20 years and the physical presence of the school has grown in proportion to the increase in staff and students. With greater student enrolment came more classrooms. A new single court gymnasium was built which increased again in size in 2010 to a two court, multi-purpose venue to include Dance, Drama and a Strength and Conditioning Room. There was an increase in electives for Senior students to cater for a wide range of interests, and a variety of extra-curricular programs was on offer outside of the mainstream curriculum.

So much has changed over the past 18 years, yet the true essence of who we are as a school has remained the same. Doctrina Vitae - Education for Life.

– Mrs Debra Ogston, Deputy Principal,
Head of Senior School

2010

The 'John Leaver' Gymnasium

GYM EXTENSION OPENED INCLUDING CLASSROOMS AND DANCE STUDIO



Gym extension opening





This has been a wonderful opportunity to reflect on my time at Bacchus Marsh Grammar; so many memories, so many friendships and so many experiences.

My journey with Bacchus Marsh Grammar began as a parent when my eldest daughter, Millie commenced Prep in 1998. Andrew Neal had just commenced his position as Principal and his transformation of the school had begun. The whole school at that time had an enrolment of approximately 700 students. That is a far cry to our current enrolments.

In 2000, the school introduced Prep Reception, and this was when I commenced my employment with the school, working with Chris Kerambrun in Prep Reception's inaugural year. This position also introduced me to the Prep, Years One and Two team in which I also assisted teachers and students. My youngest daughter, Zoe also commenced Prep that year.

Elizabeth O'Day was Head of Junior School and continued to be during the time I was there. Under her leadership, the Junior School continued to grow, supporting staff and students in all their endeavours.

Together with Nerida Thompson, Student Services began its life in a very small room opposite the sand pit. The Junior School virtually surrounded the large round sandpit which was the playground hub during recess and lunch times. At this time, it was the responsibility of the teachers on recess/lunch duty to ring the bell to alert all (including teachers and students) that play time was over.

During my time working in the Junior School, I worked with many teachers and students, accompanying them on excursions, incursions, and sporting events.

With Nam-Ha Quach and Rohan Bryan, I also assisted with the permaculture garden where we involved Junior School students.

Veggie gardens, seed raising, composting, aquaponics and general gardening began on the Terraces at the front of the school. This has now all transferred to Staughton Vale as part of its curriculum, where Rachel McMahon and other staff continue its journey.

As the years continued so did the growth of the school. Every time we returned to commence a new year, a new building, a new playground, a new car park would appear, as well as new

staff. I have worked with many staff members over the years and many are still wonderful friends. We have outgrown the staff room several times and have had several remodels. I remember the old lounge suites we would sit on huddling around the gas heater each morning before classes began.

Wilson Hall was originally the hub of the school, housing whole school assemblies, the school office at one time, as well as the canteen, music department, concerts and fundraising events.

Bus numbers also grew at an amazing rate. At one stage we would assist placing only 7 children (from Prep to Year 2) onto buses each afternoon. This eventually grew to a much larger number today. It was a great relief to all when the new bus turnaround was built and the buses finally no longer entered the school grounds.

During my time at Student Services with Alex Ball and Wendy Green as Managers, I worked with students, and assisted in classrooms. When Alex retired, I was given the opportunity to manage the administration side of Student Services under the guidance of Wendy Green. Our team grew very quickly and outgrew the building on the hill and now Student Services is housed in a spacious facility.

Five years ago, Andrew asked if I would set up and manage the Early Learning Centre at the new Woodlea campus. With the support of Elizabeth O'Day, we set up the Centre which opened in January 2017 accommodating 33 families and 8 staff. This has now grown to 15 staff and 90 families. We are now looking forward to moving to our new bigger and brighter building on the Woodlea site in 2022.

I have watched the school of 700 students grow to an enrolment of 2,600 students, across 3 campuses - an amazing effort to which many people have contributed. A school this size and reputation does not operate on its own but under the direction and leadership of Andrew Neal, while staff and the school community have continued to support the growth of this amazing educational facility.

And what became of my two daughters? Well, they have also continued their journey with Bacchus Marsh Grammar; Millie is our speech pathologist and Zoe is a Year 1 teacher at our Woodlea campus.

I am very grateful for all the opportunities, memories, and friendships I have experienced throughout my 21 years.

Thank you Andrew for your offer to me, all those years ago, to "help out in Prep Reception".

– Mrs Kerry Osborn,
Director of Early Learning Services



*Kerry Osborn
and Nam-Ha Quach*

2011

Terraces Building (W Block)

& THE LOU CALLOW GALLERY



2013

Bus Turnaround



Back when the buses used to go through the school

2013

BMG Cookbook

CELEBRATING 25 YEARS



Principal Andrew Neal, Moira Berry (School Board Chairperson),
Life Members Elizabeth and Peter O'Day.



2015

Food Technology and Hospitality upgrade



FROM 300 TO MORE THAN 2,600 STUDENTS



Say it as you want, but this is how it goes... 20 plus magnificent years of witnessing Bacchus Marsh Grammar develop into the best independent school, west of Melbourne.

In 1999 I enrolled my first born into Year 9 with just over 300 students from Prep to Year 12. It was a close knit family back then. Teachers, parents, students and staff were all known to each other.

I joined the PFA, (Parents and Friends Association) in early 1999. I spent a few vigorous years fundraising, then I was encouraged to join the School Council as a Committee Member in 2002, to now, current Chairperson of the Board.

The PFA raised much needed funds to help towards keeping the school afloat. Back then there was little or no government funding. Parents volunteered to run the uniform shop. Families attended picnics to meet each other whilst fundraising on the school grounds. There were loads of community efforts to ensure this school grew and remained a viable one.

Working bees were organised to assist with maintenance around the school. This is how the school grew and survived in its infancy.

Wilson Hall was the main assembly building. This Hall also catered for functions including the Annual General Meetings, and class lessons were taught there over many years.

Classrooms were quite basic, but teaching staff managed. All those classrooms are now a memory having been gradually upgraded over the years.

There was an open playground with neatly manicured grass located where the current oval is now. Students would travel down to Maddingley Park oval to participate in Physical Education activities.

In 1998, the appointment of Mr Andrew Neal as Principal saw the sound establishment of a positive direction in both curriculum and administration. An excellent relationship with the School Council journeyed together to make for the absolutely brilliant school it is today.

Gone are the days of a simple business bank account at the local branch and a wish list that included ovens to make a basic cooking classroom, and the Principal teaching one child a Year 12 subject!

BMG in 2020 is a well managed school, with prudent Strategic Planning enabling three thriving campuses (Maddingley, Staughton Vale and Woodlea) and more than 2,600 students from Prep Reception to Year 12.

I am fortunate to have had the opportunity to be part of this amazing journey. Achieving many great results even through this turmoil of COVID-19, with online teaching at its best. Well done Bacchus Marsh Grammar, "Education for Life". I look forward to watching the next chapter.

– Ms Moira Berry, School Board Chairperson



THE CHANGING SPORTING LANDSCAPE AT BMG



The Sports Program has changed significantly over the 27 years I have been at Bacchus Marsh Grammar. Originally the school helped establish the Galway Sporting organisation which, in the initial years, saw BMG fielding teams of 50 students. This has progressed to being involved in the ICCES Interscholastic Sporting Organisation, with BMG fielding teams of up to 150 students in major carnivals. We now host major sporting and cultural competitions like the ICCES Football, Badminton, Summer Tour and Debating, with our students not only competing, but also umpiring, managing and officiating at these events. We also compete internationally in Singapore at the Asia Netball Challenge. One of the highlights of the current sporting landscape at BMG was the introduction

of the Elite Sports Program in 2010. This was established after visiting Sports Schools in Denmark and Finland with ideas and concepts “worked” to best suit BMG. Since the establishment of the program, we have had athletes within the program win World Championship, National and State medals in a variety of sports, had athletes achieve scholarships to NCAA sports in the USA and had athletes make National and State teams on a regular basis. BMG has also partnered the WestVic Academy of Sport providing our athletes with additional resources, coaching and athletic education. For the past 7 years, the Elite Sports Program has also established a training camp in Singapore; educating our athletes on overseas travel and competition in one of the finest Sports Schools in Asia. The program has certainly come a long way from the paddock for an oval, and Wilson Hall for a sports facility in 1992.

– Mr Andrew Perks, Director of Sport



2019 Netball Team



2019 BMG Elite Sports Program Athletes



Graeme Frislie, Former BMG student and 2019 Silver Medallist for the Australian Cycling Team

2014

Year 5 & 6 Building



2015

Prep and Year 1 Building



2017

Early Learning Centre Woodlea



2017

Year 3 & 4 Block



2017

Staughton Vale Campus



2017

The Eagle

Back in the 1990s, long before the bus turnaround existed and before N, O and P blocks were built, there was the back paddock. On a regular basis, the wedge-tailed eagles would come and land not far from L block. We would stop what we were doing and watch these magnificent birds from the classroom windows. They were amazing to witness; their grace, strength and power when landing and taking off was awesome.

The Wedge-tailed Eagle is Australia's largest living bird of prey and one of the largest eagles in the world.

They breed across plains and forests; locally the eagles have breeding areas on the outcrops in nearby Rowsley Valley.

Wedge-tailed Eagles feature in many dreaming stories for Aboriginal Australians: the eagle Bunjil is an important creator being for the Kulin people of central Victoria.

In these dreamtime stories, Bunjil (an ancestral spirit) created the environment and all the plants and animals that live in it, including humans. He also taught the people how to survive in their country, how to make the weapons and tools they used, and he gave them their laws.

In Moorabool Shire, the township of Gordon has the eagle as the town symbol and there are Aboriginal sites of significance across the region. It is also of note that our local Aboriginal Elders live in Gordon.

In Term 4 of 2017, students in 2D Art chose to depict the Eagle in wall murals. Two art works were created; a stylised eagle and a larger realistic eagle. Each group undertook research, planned and designed their murals, with the results being permanently installed in the school grounds.



The stylised eagle on the music wall was created by past students Elizabeth Grosshans, Eden Noonan and Vincent Nguyen.

The realistic eagle mural was created by a number of students who worked as a team, sharing their strengths in each aspect of the mural production.



2018

Celebrating 30 Years



2019

Woodlea Campus



2020

At the beginning of 2020, classes commenced in the new Senior School Centre. This impressive three storey facility is a wonderful asset to the school.

These state of the art facilities are mostly dedicated to VCE students providing spaces necessary for them to thrive.



Senior School Centre



TWENTY YEARS OF BMG



As I approach my twentieth year at Bacchus Marsh Grammar, it gives me a chance to reflect on my time here, and how much things have changed, but also how much some things stay the same.

When I started here, the school finished at the N block and behind this were just paddocks. We actually used

to do our Geography excursion in the paddocks behind the N block by just climbing over the fence and going for walk around to look at the landscape and the features of Bacchus Marsh. Now the same walk would see us in more classrooms or on the bus turn around. I also remember the time Mr Richardson and I had to move cows off the oval one morning so a PE class could commence. The cows had taken their own excursion to the school from the farm across the road; not something that could happen now with all the new development.

When I think about all the staff offices I have had in my time here I feel as if I have done a tour of BMG and its ever changing and developing spaces. I started at the top of the Junior Library – it was actually the Drama Room when I had an office there – a very loud office when Year 7 Drama was held. Then the N block, to P Block, then to the building affectionately known as the ‘Pizza Hut’ (named for its roof line) adjacent to the

Year 12 Common Room. I am sure there may be more offices in my future as the school continues to grow and spaces get redeveloped and change for our needs, but what remains the same, is the amazing staff who share these spaces with me and our wonderful students who make these spaces more than just an office, but a place of purpose and hope.

And when I think of what has stayed the same over my time here, it is the spirit of the school and the students who attend here. Twenty years ago when I came to BMG for an interview, I became a little lost on my way to the Administration Building. A student saw me in the yard, asked if I was ok and where I needed to go. This student then walked me to the Administration Office and wished me well. It was then that I decided this is the school I wanted to work at and this was the community I wanted to be a part of. And clearly nothing has changed since that decision. I continue to be proud of our students and the way they conduct themselves, and this has again been highlighted with their amazing transition to online learning. Also the endeavour of the staff has not changed in my time here; the staff continue to strive for the best for their students and try to help each and every one of our students achieve their very best.

I look forward to seeing what the next twenty years bring.

– Mrs Erin Thornton, Assistant Principal,
Deputy Head of Senior School

ALEX BALL



When I commenced at Bacchus Marsh Grammar as Head of Student Services in 2004, I had no inkling that I was embarking upon the happiest and most fulfilling nine years of my teaching career. From the very first day I was impressed, and continued to be impressed, by the friendliness and dedication of the members of staff and

administration, and the attitude and behaviour of the students.

Throughout my time at BMG, I witnessed many examples of acceptance and kindness on the part of students, at all levels of the school, towards students who had special needs and found school work challenging. I was also very fortunate indeed to work with a wonderful team consisting of Kerry Osborn, Nerida Thompson, Lindy Harwood and Lauren Majewski who, with professionalism, expertise and understanding, supported students with learning difficulties across the school.

In 2004, our amenities were somewhat basic to say the least. We worked out of one small room that also served as a sports cupboard but we were afforded an excellent view of all the buses driving through the school ground before and after school each day. We later moved into a larger building which had been part of the Melbourne Commonwealth Games Athletes’ Village and, although we were impressed by the extra space, separate rooms and toilets at the time, it was nothing like the current building now housing Student Services.

I found it a very difficult decision to retire, and my final week was an extremely sad one; however, as it turned out, my involvement with the school did not end there. I, along with Ron Noonan, have had the pleasure and privilege of an ongoing relationship with the school as markers of practice exam essays and proofreaders of school publications and student reports.

It is always a pleasure to return to BMG, an institution that means a great deal to me and has provided so much to many others.

– Alex Ball

Celebration of Bacchus Marsh Grammar

Nicole Heywood (Head of Art, Years Prep to 8) made this artwork in celebration of the 30th Year Celebration of Bacchus Marsh Grammar. Each panel holds a significant image from each year between 1988 and 2017. Different eucalyptus leaves are used on each panel, linking each of these and as a symbol linking our campuses. The artwork is encaustic wax over encyclopedia pages (representing lifelong learning), with image transfers onto the wax.





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