KENTIAN SOCIETY
SUPPORTING KENT STREET SENIOR HIGH SCHOOL
Newsletter

November 2023

Society Re-Connects With Kentian Who Started In 1940

Kentian Chair John Ayling recently started reviewing member email addresses that didn't appear to be working. After noticing that some of the apparently invalid addresses may have been mistyped, or even in some cases had an extra space in them, he tried sending test emails with adjustments to the addresses enclosing a copy of the Society's latest newsletter together with a Membership Update form to each "lost" member.

A pleasing number of responses came back with people expressing surprise and delight that they had been contacted. One in particular caught John's attention. It read as follows:

> *Thank you for the Newsletter. Yes, I must say that I have missed them. I shall send the [Update] form via email. I began at Kent Street School on the first school day of the year 1940, and finished on the last school day of 1942…*
>
> *I can't travel any more, so there will be no more trips to Australia unfortunately, but I shall look forward to the Newsletters in the future. Good Luck to the Committee of the Kentian Society.*
>
> *Mollie Holst (nee Andersen)*
> *Drammen, Norway*

John was already aware that Mollie Holst was an Original Life Member who had submitted articles in the past to our Archives (for instance, she wrote an article about Peter Perica's design of the School Crest, for the school's 50th Anniversary booklet). [**Editor:** *A brief history of the school crest was posted most recently on the Kentian Archives Facebook page on 11 August this year.*]

However, when he had previously sought more information about her, he had been told by some long-standing members that it was unlikely that she was still alive.

It soon became apparent, in ongoing email correspondence between Mollie and John, that this lovely 96-year-old lady was very much alive (a recent photo of her can be found on the next page). She was more than happy to tell more of her story, over several pages!

WELCOME to your **Kentian Society e-Newsletter,** offering two-way communication with all interested members, families and friends.

We hope you find it both interesting and informative.

IN THIS ISSUE:

Mollie Holst (Andersen)	1
From the Archives	4
Society Luncheon	5
Do You Remember?	6
Your Say	7
New Strategic Plan	9
Society Membership	10
Alumni Scouts	11



Mollie Holst (Andersen), student 1940-42, at an Anzac Day reception in Oslo, Norway 2 years ago. She is wearing her OAM medal, plus her father's medals from WWI & WWII **Photo: Mollie Holst**

Mollie Holst was awarded a Medal (OAM) in the General Division of the Order of Australia in the Queen's Birthday Honours in 2010, for service to veterans and their families as a voluntary carer of war graves of World War II Australian airmen in Norway, and through the organisation of Anzac Day services.

Limited space in this newsletter prevents us from publishing all of Mollie's story, which will be stored permanently in our Archives, but a few extracts are reproduced here to give our readers a taste of her writing. We hope to include more extracts in future newsletters.

From Perth To Drammen, Norway

I spent a happy childhood in South Perth with lovely family and friends. I attended Forrest Street State School [now South Perth Primary], which was situated quite near our home. We went home for the lunch hour, and took with us friends as well. At weekends, we had permission to use the school tennis courts. Otherwise, living near the river, we swam a lot at Como Beach.

Then came the War in 1939, when we were in our last year of primary school. All the children who went to State schools south of the river had to attend this new high school, South Suburban Central School in Kent Street, Victoria Park. This was in case of bomb alerts or worse, and to save us travelling to a school over the river to the city side. It was a safety measure for us.

It was supposed to be the first co-educational high school in the State. But the boys' and girls' playgrounds were separate, as were the classes (until our 3rd year).

After three years at Kent Street (where I passed my Junior Certificate with 7 out of 8 subjects - failed in Domestic Science which I hated, and still do!), I worked at a Life Assurance Company until I was old enough to start Nurse training. At weekends, a few girlfriends and I joined the Emergency Service Corps, a Branch of the Red Cross. We would be called upon to help out at all sorts of places, all over Perth, where there was a shortage of staff.

I did my General Nursing training at the Royal Adelaide Hospital (because the Perth and Fremantle Hospitals had long waiting lists for training). Then I did my Midwifery training at Royal North Shore Hospital in Sydney.

I did further specialised training in New Zealand and in WA. At the same time, I was in the Reserve of Officers (Australian Army), which meant that I would be called up to do a Camp somewhere or other, in charge of the Camp Sick Bay. Many interesting experiences at some of those. In one camp, I was the only female in a camp of 500 men!

Some years later, I happened to be working in a hospital where I became friends with a member of staff who had been "pen friends" with a man in Norway since they had been very young. She assured me that he sounded very nice, and seeing that I and another girl friend had plans to travel to England and Europe soon, she said that she would write to him, and ask him to meet us if we ever got as far as Scandinavia and Norway etc.

Off we went in late 1959, and reached England after a 5-week boat journey. Dumped our belongings and then over to the continent. Spent some months travelling there, using the Youth Hostel system for overnighting. Well, we eventually reached Norway, my friend's "pen friend" met us and showed us all around the countryside. He seemed a nice, kind person, and eager to show off his beautiful country.

We stayed there for about three weeks, and then off to England, Scotland, Ireland etc, and finally down to London to work and earn some money! After a bit, this nice Norwegian man began to write to me, and I replied, and it became a very frequent thing. Until the letters were being exchanged nearly daily.

Without ever meeting him again, the next time I met him was in London, in Church, on our wedding day!

One might have thought it was a risk, but I was over 30, and he was an old bachelor of 40, living with his widowed mother. So we were not "young and dumb", and knew what we were doing. He, now deceased, was the kindest, most thoughtful person one could wish for, and we had a very happy marriage. We had a son, who is now 62.

So, there I was - a "foreigner" - in the town of Drammen about 50 kms southwest of Oslo, the capital city. There were not many "foreigners" in Norway at that time, but things have changed and my town (which has a population of about 67 000) now has a ratio of one in three "foreigners".

The country is beautiful with its fjords, waterfalls, mountains etc, but the Winters - UGH! I've experienced minus 33 degrees once, but the winters are slowly becoming milder. Masses of snow and minus degrees still.

The biggest problem for me was the language. I was at home, not working or mixing with many Norwegians, only in the shops (over the counter in those days). My husband spoke perfect English, so we just continued that way in the home. Our son is bilingual, of course. Now, [with my husband gone] I have to speak Norwegian all the time outside the home, but it's no problem now. I write, read and speak Norwegian with ease.

As far as I know, there are no other Aussies here in this town, but there are many in the Oslo area. We have regular meetings, and the Big Day of the year - Anzac Day. I am very involved with this and that, so the days speed by.

By Mollie Holst (Andersen), student 1940-42

[**Editor**: There'll be more about Mollie's school experiences in the next newsletter.]

News From The Archives

From Archivist Vicki Duball (Pearce), student 1956-60:

Recently, the Archives Sub-Committee embarked on the largest task undertaken since the relocation of the Archives in 2011. It involves scanning all (approximately 20–25 000) of our heritage record cards and completing a detailed database listing those students and the artefacts linked to their name.

At the commencement in 1940 of Kent Street SHS (initially called South Suburban Central School), each student was allocated a simple card upon which their names, date-of-birth, address, religion, parents' names and occupations were handwritten in ink. Student results were later recorded on these cards, in some cases two cards were pinned together (with photos as well) and finally, when requested, a school reference was also attached.

The Archive volunteers view these cards as a valuable historic record of our early students which must be honoured and preserved and it is a matter of great importance that they are digitally recorded as a safeguard.

One of our new volunteers, Carsten Bauer, has offered to scan all the cards and save them in electronic form. However, all the records must first be prepared for scanning by removing anything attached to the card that prevents them passing through the scanner. Meanwhile, a verification task needs commencing.

A database has been set up for this purpose. Each scanned record, reference and photo must be matched and recorded against the database. To do this efficiently, we need a team of at least three people (including one typist).

Some of this preparation and scanning is already underway and may take up to two years to complete. As the daily archiving tasks must also continue, we are calling on new people to assist with this enormous task. Please become a volunteer and join us.

If you can assist, please contact us on the Archive email at: archives@kentians.org.au.

Archives Donors Honoured At Luncheon

Three major donors to the Society's Archives were invited as special guests to this year's annual Kentian Society and Scholarship Foundation joint luncheon.

The preparation and serving of the outstanding lunch was undertaken by a volunteer group of Year 11 Hospitality Certificate students under the very capable supervision of teacher Ingrid Hills.

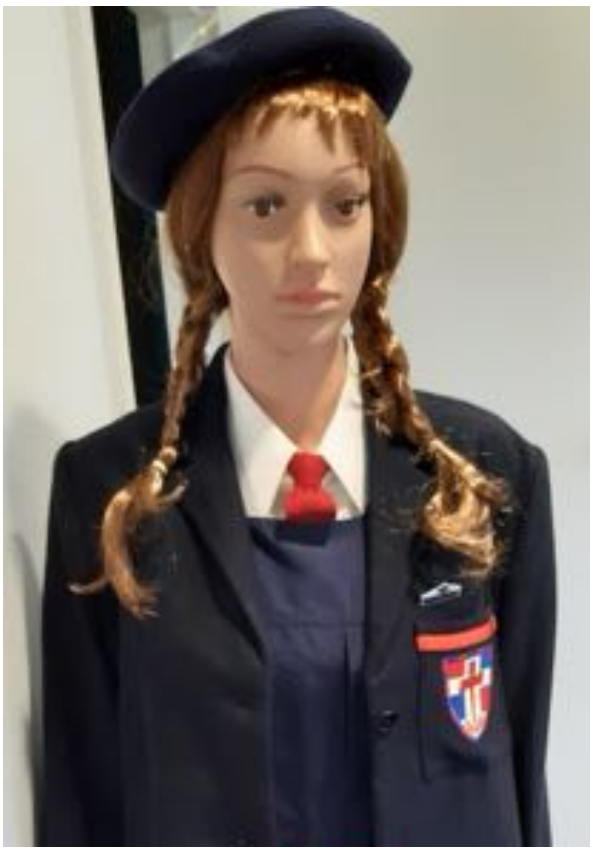
Although our special guests were a little too modest to allow a big fuss of themselves to be made on the day, their generous contributions to the Archives are being acknowledged and thanked more widely here in this newsletter.



Some of the Year 11 Hospitality Certificate students who prepared and served the luncheon. **Photo: Merilyn Harvey**



For Dessert: Long meringues, topped with Strawberry gum ricotta cream and seasonal fruits, placed down the centre of the table for guests to serve themselves. **Photo: Merilyn Harvey**



"Wendy" wearing uniform donated by Wendy Lugg (Easton)
Photo: Kentian Archives

Wendy Lugg (Easton), student 1965-67 donated most of her school uniforms and sports clothes, together with souvenirs from school such as the programmes from the musical "The King and I". The Archives has used her uniform to dress its display mannequin (which is named Wendy in her honour).

Lorraine Hansen (Morley), student 1956-60 donated many of her work books from school that she had saved since finishing Year 12 in 1960. Her work was immaculate and of a very high quality. Her art folder was particularly outstanding and the current Art teacher was very pleased to view her work.

Carsten Bauer, student 1992-96 has come forward as a new volunteer on Thursday mornings to help with the electronic scanning of many historical items in the Archives that need to be digitally recorded as an important safeguard. He is a FIFO worker and is only able to assist when he is on his leave time. Unfortunately, Carsten was unable to attend the lunch due to his work commitments.

Do You Remember?

Recently, the following question was posted on several public and private Facebook group pages that are regularly viewed by some of our Kentian alumni members:

> *Who remembers participating in the mid-1960s in fundraising walkathons for the Police & Citizens Youth Club near Berwick Street? They were organised by Constable Lavers (known affectionately as "Dagwood" because of his great height).*

The Facebook pages lit up with replies. Here's a few examples:

Kenneth: *Sure do. We lived on Berwick Street at the time.*

Jill: *I remember going on at least one of them, I mostly remember because it was stinking hot and a lot of us thought we were going to pass out. It would have been '67 or '68 I guess.*

Gill: *Constable Lavers came to our place a couple of times to get Dad to witness documents. There's nothing like opening the front door to see a smiling giant in uniform. He was lovely.*

Genette: *I recall a couple, not sure if it was Scouts, P&C or Interact Club but we were fundraising for Nulsen Haven. So glad things have improved for the severely disabled. We were taken on a tour… multiple kids tied to chairs with sheets.*
On one occasion, while walking 10 or 20 km round the bridges, I lost my purse and didn't have the 5c to get home on the bus. The driver let me off and the purse was returned a couple of days later… Those were the days.

Jeanette: *I don't remember the walkathons, but I remember the blue light discos and Constable Lavers in the '70s.*

Beris: *I used to love going to those…Constable Lavers…wow…good memories…*

Loretta: *Oh my Gawd!! I remember doing walkathons for a few years! I had blocked them out! It was in the early '70s though for me I think. Unless we did it while at Victoria Park Primary School in the '60s? Anyways, it's all a blur except the blisters and the overwhelming urge to thumb a ride from around mile 16! Lol.*

Keith*: I did mine at Vic Park Primary. 3 years in a row. John Lavers would stand on the verandah handing out certificates and shaking all our hands. His arm almost straight down. My arm almost straight up.*

[**Editor**: Keith even provided a link to a YouTube video, called "Four generations serving the community through the WA Police Force and PCYC", that tells the amazing story of the Lavers family and showcasing four generations of Police employees supporting PCYC!]

The wonderful reaction to this simple question about the walkathons, and the many memories it helped people to recall, has led to us to introduce another feature in our newsletter (if readers like it, of course). After all, not all people use Facebook.

So, if you have memories of Constable Lavers and the walkathons, or the blue light discos, why not share them with our readers? Even better, if you have another question like the one that prompted all the replies illustrated above, let us know and we'll share it in the **Your Say** section (see below) of future newsletters.

Your Say

Readers appreciate the news brought to us by members, and often are important for inclusion in Archives records and displays, allowing us to honour the history and share the heritage of Kent Street Senior High School. Your contributions should be sent directly to society@kentians.org.au

From: Loretta Reese (Gauci), student 1972-74
Subject: Looking for Paula Retell

I've been trying to find Paula Retell, my best friend from high school (and in the years following when we were flatmates). We kept in touch for years, but I travelled so much that we lost touch (no Facebook or mobile phones then).

I've thought about her for so many years. We were thick as thieves and had so much fun together sneaking under-aged into "Gobbles" and "Beethovens"!! We looked like little squirts, how did we get away with it?

I didn't know where to begin to find her - then our Kentian Society asked us recently if we had anyone we were trying to find? So, I asked about Paula (and her sister, Vicki). They went to absolute extraordinary lengths to find her - and they did… I'm so sad to say they are both dead…Paula died in London in 2002 (Vicki in 2020) but for me, Paula died today.

While I'm really quite heartbroken, I'm also very grateful to know the truth and want to thank… the Kentian Society for all [their] help, and for the opportunity now to contact her relatives to find out more about her life.

Editor: *This is a recent post from "Kent Street SHS - the 70s" (a private Facebook group) and is reproduced with the permission of Loretta Reese. No information was passed to her without first double-checking it and getting confirmation from a family member.*

[A Tribute to Paula is expected in our next newsletter]



Paula Delahay (Retell), student 1972-74, as a teenager **Photo: Lynette Aitken**

From: Brett Todhunter, student 1966-68
Subject: Alumni Database

I am writing to add my name to your Alumni Membership database. I attended Kent Street Senior High School for three years, with my first day being 14 February 1966 (Decimal Currency Introduction Day). At the time of attending Kent Street, I lived with my parents in Leonard Street, Victoria Park. My first year, I was annexed to rooms at Victoria Park Primary School due to a class room shortage at Kent Street. My time at the school finished after Year 10 exams in late 1968.

Some teachers names I remember are: Mr Love - Science, Mr Rutherford - Maths, Mr Tippet - Woodwork, Mrs Strickland - English (I think).

Editor: *Brett is one of dozens of Alumni Members who have recently updated their details with us, and who will now be receiving our quarterly eNewsletter.*

From: Penny King (Ayres), student 1968-72
Subject: June Ayres (Mainstone), student 1942-43

My mum June Ayres is 94 years old and went to Kent Street Senior High School from 1942-44. She was June Mainstone then, and her brothers Ben and Bob went to Kent Street as well. Mum went to business college after leaving school and then worked at 6IX until she married. She's very with it and has many great memories of Kent Street.

Her best friend from Como Primary School lives in the same retirement village as Mum and also went to Kent Street with her. Her name is **Estelle King (Wansborough)**.

I also went to Kent Street (1968-72) with my sisters Vicki (1964-68) and Susan (1966-70).

Editor: *Penny and June have both completed Update forms for our Alumni Members database, and we hope to have more information about June's story in future newsletters.*

New Strategic Plan Sets Direction For Society

The Management Committee recently approved a new Strategic Plan which will guide the work of the Society for the next two years by focusing on connections for our alumni through four key pillars: networking, experiences, giving back, and communications and sharing stories.

The comprehensive document opens with a seemingly paradoxical quote from award-winning English author Neil Gaiman that encourages people to make mistakes. He says if you do so, "then you are making new things, trying new things, learning, living, pushing yourself, changing yourself, changing your world."

That ethos reflects the Kentian Society's shared values with the school of:

- respect for learning,
- resilience to achieve, and
- responsibility to our school and community.

The new Plan explicitly recognises the incredible learning opportunities that come from networking and coming together across all generations of alumni.

The opportunities the Society offers to volunteer, or to donate, or to offer expertise all provide our alumni with another way of connecting through "giving back".

The Plan promotes the ethos of "making a difference" and notes that stories are powerful - they move people. That's why we want the stories of our alumni, out in the world and having an impact, to inspire our current students and each other.

For more information, go to our website www.kentians.org.au where you can find the complete Strategic Plan 2023-25 and its associated Operational Plan.

Society Membership

*New Society Members and renewals since 1 **February** 2023*

Bob Adams
Helen Barns (McGuiness)
Carsten Bauer
Jacob Bayross
Deanne Charman (Worth)
Mark Charman
Doug Corker
Peter Gerrard
Jane Good
Margaret Munro (Locke)
Tatiana Ramadhani
Tim Rattenbury
Mary Scroop

Have YOU completed your **MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION / UPDATE?**

Forms are available on our website www.kentians.org.au

Your membership contributions help us to keep you connected, build new connections, promote reunions, and preserve your memories in our archives.

Don't risk YOUR membership falling into arrears. A review of our membership register is currently underway, so if you want to remain a financial Society Member please make sure to update your details (including your email address) on our new Update Form and pay your membership contribution into the bank account specified on the form.

Don't delay - do it today.

Alumni Scouts To Help Find “Lost” Members



As noted in our last newsletter, we’re planning to celebrate Kent Street Senior High School’s 85th Birthday in 2025, and we want to find as many “lost” alumni as possible before then.

To do that, we need people who (like the Native American scouts in the wild west movies we watched as kids) can help find some of our people who’ve gone missing.

Some of them have moved since they were at school (many more than once). They’ve relocated to new cities (or even countries), and it’s not uncommon for them to forget to update their contact details and lose touch with their former classmates as they have explored different paths after leaving school.

But that doesn’t mean they’re lost forever. If you know the whereabouts of fellow alumni who may not be receiving information from us, or who have recently moved address, please let us know or encourage them to update their details (especially their email address).

Better still, become one of our **Alumni Scouts** (financial members of the Kentian Society with full access to information from our historical Archives). These are people who are looking after say the finishing year for a group of students (like 1975 or 1995, for instance).

We can help with the names of all the students in that group, plus whatever other public information is available, and then each Scout puts their thinking cap on and starts searching. It’s like a treasure hunt.

Some Scouts ask their friends if they’re still in touch with anyone else from their years at school. Perhaps they’ve stayed in touch on Facebook or other social media platforms? As each “missing” person is located, they often know of the whereabouts of other people, and so the network grows.

Please contact us by email at society@kentians.org.au if you want to know more about becoming one of our Alumni Scouts.