This year we celebrate the 40th Anniversary of the College and the 20th year of this 'Proteads Newsletter'. We are fortunate to hear from two students who were 'pioneer students' in 1975 and 1976. As you will read they still have strong memories of their time at school.

It’s always a pleasure to connect with past students, reminisce and hear about where they are now. Thanks also go to Sam and Odette for sharing their stories with us.

The MESC Proteads Facebook group has grown enormously since the ‘Fun Facts Friday’ posts began - these are a historical look back at the events which have shaped the College since 1975 - and have enabled many students to reconnect with each other and the College. We hope to see many of you at our 40th Anniversary Celebration on Sunday 15th November as well.

‘Act Two’ of the MESC Productions is also enclosed, together with details of a ‘Class of 1985’ Reunion.

If you have any news items and/or would like to share some memories in future newsletters then please contact us - proteads@mesc.vic.edu.au

Cheers,
Lynn
Editor

As Mount Eliza (High School) Secondary College is 40 years young this year we thought it only fitting that you be invited to join us in celebrating with an afternoon tea and chance to reminisce in your 'old halls of knowledge'!

So get your diaries and phones out, mark the date, ring your friends, and share the news - YES it's time to go back to school!!!!

Join our Mount Eliza Secondary College (Proteads) http://on.fb.me/ACZhUB Facebook Group to read about some “blasts from the past” with our ‘Fun Facts Friday’ posts, connect with fellow students and staff, and find out more about upcoming events including this one.

A Facebook ‘Event’ will be created shortly to remind you about this celebration and inform you about what we have planned.
There were about 120 of us – most were the very first ‘1st Formers’ and some were ‘2nd Formers’ gleaned from nearby high schools. There was nervousness and uncertainty, but with a sense of anticipation amongst us. We quickly learned that we were all in-it-together. It was a very small, tightly-knit group and no-one was anonymous.

The diminutive (but fearsome) Mrs Sheringham was the Principal and, although I think she cared about us, she ruled with an iron fist. The ‘Uniform Code’ was for “socks up”. Of course, we rolled them down. In line, before each class, there would be a frantic whisper, “Sheringham’s coming!” and socks were quickly whipped back up!

The only permanent building was ‘C Block’ and an adjacent locker room and toilet block. ‘C Block’ housed the General Office, Staff Room, Library and some classrooms. Language (with Mr Hoban) was the ‘Lingvo’ course – eight languages over two years – I’m sure many of us found Swahili useful? There was no Mandarin or Chinese. Many classes were held in a small city of portables – Science with Mr Patrick, cooking with Mrs Parker, together with sewing, art, maths, English. Ceramics with Miss Leonard (who married and became Mrs Ashley) was improvised in the boy’s locker room – FREEZING in the winter months! We walked too nearby Mt Eliza sporting fields to practice for interschool sports and athletics.

Who could forget Phys Ed. with Miss Fulcomer? Every class began with a warm up: American-style PT exercises – all to her military count-off (one-two, two-two, three-two) followed by a seemingly short session of basketball or softball.

On the topic of Phys Ed. whose parents were involved in the committee to choose our sports uniform? A stretchy mustard-coloured body suit (albeit with a bottle-green zip and overskirt) which did NOT suit all teenage girls. The concept of adolescent body-image issues had not yet been invented.

The following six years saw many “firsts” – in sports, academia, theatre, camps and exchanges. Our school grew, perhaps exponentially. We were excited to move into new buildings and facilities, albeit in a cool, quietly understated, adolescent kid of way. The population exploded and by Form 6 (by this stage called Year 12) we were ‘HSC 1980’. It is understandable that every Year 12 group feels special and that strong bonds are formed, but we felt just a little bit more special. We improvised and adapted together from the very beginning and, as such, some of the things we learned just can’t be taught.

We are the “Pioneer Students of MEHS”.

Note: ‘C Block’ went on to become ‘L Block’ and is now the ‘Year 7 Learning Centre’
It's my pleasure to share with you all a few little snippets of my days as a “Pioneer Student”. Well, I'm almost a pioneer student as I started a year later in 1976. What a little school it was! We only had three year levels back then with the very first Year 12 students moving through and graduating in 1979.

I remember Year 7 vividly. Check out the photo of our long socks! Our Principal, Mrs Sheringham, insisted the girls wear knee high socks. The following year, all the girls in the school rebelled and rolled them down to our ankles instead much to her disgust. We were told off, yes, but how could she give us all detention? Too many of us to deal with so she gave in, much to our delight!

1976 was the year the school officially opened and I played the cello in the school band as part of the celebrations. We played “God Save the Queen”. Such a laborious task it was for me though. I lived in Koornalla Cres and lugged this large heavy instrument all the way to school and back on foot once a week. I took it to the General Office in the mornings to have it looked after until band practice then picked it up after school to carry the thing back home again together with a full school bag of text books slung over my other shoulder.

Speaking of music; I vividly remember in Music class (1977) an announcement came over the loud speaker saying Elvis Presley had died. Many of us cried. Class was dismissed early.

First year there I completely embarrassed myself. It was a ‘Free Dress Day’ and I decided to dress up. Eyelids painted thickly with green eye shadow, I wore a long green dress with a bow at the back. Even worse, I wore black high heels and had to lift my dress as I walked up the steps to get to class. I was the ONLY one in the entire school, even teachers, not in jeans! It was a long day indeed.

Sport was fun. We played softball, cricket, hockey; all the usual track and field stuff and had an athletic sports and swimming sports day every year. We had four houses. Red house was called Manyung, Blue House was Warringa, Green house was Kimmuli, and I was in Yellow House, Kirrang. If we forgot our sports uniform for PE, we'd have to spend the whole lesson time writing lines. "I must not forget my uniform, I must not forget my uniform" and so on for the whole 50 minutes. For the girls, in our earlier years, our PE teacher at the time had us fold our arms in front of us, elbows sticking out then push them backwards and forwards while repeating "We must, we must, improve our bust." lol.

Our locker rooms were still how they are today; facing the quadrangle, boys to the left and girls to the right. Last I saw they still have the original signs. I only got the privilege of a top locker when I was in Year 10 and onwards. Locker inspection! Do you still get those? Do people still tip your lockers so when you open them everything falls out including your cigarette packet and goodness knows what else and you thanked God the teachers didn’t see?

My teachers? I must say the teachers were outstanding. To name a few I remember Mr Baker (who loved his cigars) for Geography, Mr Craig for History, Mr Wittick for German, Mr Scott-Kembell for Language, Mr Raynes for Science, Mrs Dowling for Science, Mrs Lane for Maths, Mrs Kemp for Home Economics, Mrs Fulcomer for Youth Group. (She had an American accent). Too many other teachers to mention over the six years.

I remember a few times people walking past the front of the school asking if it’s a University. "No," we said. "This is Mount Eliza High School. It’s new." They looked very impressed. We felt so proud to be a part of the new school as foundation students. I still feel proud to this day. Forty years but it seems like yesterday; it really does. I'm 51 now with four grown children. Where have the years gone?

Upon leaving school I went into nursing then some years later I married and joined the Air Force which took my husband and I away interstate for a few years. After the Air Force days I raised my four children then pursued an extremely rewarding career in medical administration.

Be proud of your school like we all were way back in the mid 1970's. All the very best to you all.

Note: See page 4 for photos from Nancy
Thank you to Nancy for sharing these photos from her own collection.

Original school sign 1981

HSC students 1981

Quadrangle 1981

Quadrangle (taken from music room)

Year 12 (HSC) 1981

Form 1 Class 1976

Nancy is front row, 2nd on left
Mrs Daphne Sheringham  
Principal 1975

Ripple Magazine  
1975

First student  
1975

Students waiting to start their first day at MEHS  
February 1975

Staff photo 1975

Ron Glass and Jade Meyers with The Honourable Mr Lindsay Thompson (MP) at the official opening of the school on 3rd June 1977 - held in the Quadrangle with all students, staff and guests in attendance.
King Island Memories

I was only at MESC until the end of Year 10...so long ago...I was student when we used asbestos mats under the Bunsen burners in science – scary thought!

We went to King Island when I was in Year 9 and I was part of the hockey team. I was billeted out to the Gobel family who lived on a dairy farm outside of Currie. This was the main town on King Island at the time. It was the best part, the family were really wonderful. Although it was a dairy, they also had sheep. We rode around on quad bikes and collected new born lambs that had been abandoned by their mothers. We also had milk straight from the cows with our breakfast and I got hives from it because of how rich it was! I remember we did a tour of the kelp farm near a beach called ‘British Admiral’ and they explained all the uses for kelp and we went up to the lighthouse for a tour, it was so windy! I also remember the flight over on a little propeller plane from Moorabbin Airport.

I’m the kind of person that looks back and believes that all experiences have shaped me into the person I am. For the past 18 years I’ve worked with apprenticeship centres and am now an Authorised Officer with the State Training Board. In fact I’ve been back to MESC on a number of occasions to speak to students and had lots of memories flood back. Mind you the school was a lot smaller then too.

All schools have traditions, and sometimes it takes a new school time to build up tradition. But one already four years old at six year old Mt. Eliza High School is the annual exchange with King Island High School students.

Last year over forty of our Year 9 and 10 students visited King Island. The school, which is housed with the Primary School, reaches only Year 10, and students who want to go onto higher levels travel to the Tasmanian mainland from the island which, as well as farming, has a scheel mine and an extensive fishing industry (especially crayfish).

This year 43 Year 9 and 10 students from King Island were hosted by students from Mt. Eliza High School. Over a five day period, many sporting matches were played and there was a disco on Friday night. All students and their hosts travelled to Waverley for the Preliminary Final, and most took the opportunity to visit the Royal Show on the Sunday. After the Year 10’s departed on the Monday, a game of softball was played with the Year 9’s, who weren’t leaving until the Tuesday. The result is a mystery.

However, the following are other scores we do know!!

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sport</th>
<th>King Island</th>
<th>Mt. Eliza</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Carpet Bowls</td>
<td>King Island 2</td>
<td>Mt. Eliza 0</td>
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<td>Squash</td>
<td>King Island 4</td>
<td>Mt. Eliza 1</td>
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<td>Hockey</td>
<td>King Island 6</td>
<td>Mt. Eliza 3</td>
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<td>Netball</td>
<td>King Island 10</td>
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<td>Football</td>
<td>King Island 2G-5B</td>
<td>Mt. Eliza 21G-16B</td>
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Golden Opportunities

A story you may not be expecting.

My memories of Mt. Eliza high are sacred because this is the school that saved me. I was literally rescued from a home devastated by alcohol and abuse. I made escaping that home possible because I had caught glimpses of people and relationships outside of my house that were brimming with love and kindness and I made a decision at a very young age, 13 in fact, that I was deserving of something better. I didn’t blame my parents. They did the best they could with their lot but the sheets of addiction are so easy to slip into when one wants to cope and that is where my parents slept.

Once I spotted a glimmer of love and hope, I ran from the home in which I lived. I told the police about my situation and after that, I never went home to my parents again. I took a punt on life and believed that wherever I landed, it had to be better than where I was. I had planned my escape but to what fate I did not know. Luckily I had an elder sister who lived in Mount Eliza and took on the responsibility of becoming my legal guardian. I knew that I had narrowly escaped foster care and was eternally grateful. After dragging all of our ugly truth through court, my sister became my permanent legal guardian and I was enrolled at the end of year 8 at Mount Eliza High.

Don’t believe all that you hear about kids who come from bad homes. I knew that I had tenuously landed on safe turf but I couldn’t place a foot wrong. Being immersed in all that crap for so long and feeling so sad about life makes you realise and appreciate any golden opportunities that are placed before you and I grabbed every single one. School productions! Get up on stage and be a different person. God the skin of someone else feels so good! To release yourself into another dimension for a while and be something other than what you think you are is illuminating. Mount Eliza High gave me that. Song, dance and ensemble. All in the name of making people happy and all the while feeling good about yourself too. Literature, English and Language was what I loved and immersed myself in. Teachers like Mr Bryson and Mr. O’Brien were my heroes. Public speaking and debating teams gave me the chance to speak up about things I believed in and I soon discovered that I believed in sticking up for the underdog. Literally I spoke my way into the finals of The Rostrum Voice of Youth competition (1990) pleading a case for Animal Liberation. I used to go on late night runs to put graphic posters up around the school. They would get torn down in the morning and I would get called into the Vice Principals office, Mr Tranter, the next day for a stern talking to, but secretly I think they were proud of me, even if I broke the rules just a little.

Now I speak for a living and I’ve always spoken up for what I believe to be right. I got in to one of the best drama schools in the country, VCA which taught me skills that carried me all through life and not just a life on stage. From there I created my own business and for a long time now I have been a full time voice over artist. I still do some acting now and then, but my focus now is putting the spotlight on issues instead of myself, like climate change. I have a 5 year old daughter and I realize that she is going to need, not just a world in which she can live, but one in which she can flourish, so I want to save it from ruin.

There is little ruin worse than one of your creation and so to that I would say, mind your tongue in this world. I learnt very quickly that my “big mouth” could get me into buckets of trouble if I wasn’t careful about the way I spoke, particularly of other people.

Mount Eliza High was a sanctuary for me and one for which I will always be grateful.

Make the most of any opportunity it offers.

Odette Joannidis

1985-1990

“….appreciate any golden opportunities that are placed before you...”
School productions have been a popular component of the co-curriculum program at Mount Eliza since the very first production, ‘Wizard of Oz’ in 1976 to the junior performances of ‘Wizard of Oz’ in 2015. What a fitting choice given this is our 40th Anniversary year!

However, productions were not staged each year with time also being devoted to Rock Eisteddfods, Display Nights, Performing Arts Festivals, Shakespeare Festivals, Joining the Chorus and State Schools Spectacular.

‘Bye Bye Birdie’ was the first production to be held in the College Drama Centre in 1984, whilst others have been staged at the Mount Eliza Community Centre, George Jenkins Theatre and Frankston Arts Centre. This year saw a return to productions being held at the College once again.

Many students also performed in amateur theatre (such as PLOS) and some received much acclaim and awards for their performances - Michael Dyer, Jessamy Mason, Tim McGregor, Romany Smith (to name a few).

Over the years there have been many staff whose names will always be synonymous with these productions - Ieva Kains (who directed the first production), Sandy Van Nooten and Angela Banfield (who also co-wrote ‘Salman Chanted Evening’) and Ros Williams who is still directing productions at the College today.

No doubt many of you will remember other names and have your own memories to share with friends as you look through these photos.

### 1975 - 2014

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<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Production</th>
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<td>1976</td>
<td>Wizard of Oz</td>
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<td>1977</td>
<td>Toad of Toad Hall</td>
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<td>1984</td>
<td>Bye Bye Birdie</td>
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<td>1985</td>
<td>Pardon Me, Is This Planet Taken?</td>
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<td>1986</td>
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<td>1987</td>
<td>Bats</td>
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<td>1988</td>
<td>Tied to the Tracks</td>
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<td>1989</td>
<td>Salmon Chanted Evening</td>
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<td>1991</td>
<td>Birds of a Feather</td>
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<td>1993</td>
<td>Asteroids</td>
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<td>1994</td>
<td>Son of Phantom</td>
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<td>2002</td>
<td>Macbeth: A Rock Opera</td>
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<td>2003</td>
<td>Back to the 80s</td>
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<td>2004</td>
<td>Disco Inferno</td>
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<td>2005</td>
<td>Footloose</td>
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<td>2006</td>
<td>Zombie Prom</td>
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<td>2008</td>
<td>Sweet Charity</td>
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<td>2010</td>
<td>Seussical the Musical</td>
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<td>2011</td>
<td>Peter Pan</td>
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<td>2012</td>
<td>Grease</td>
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<td>2014</td>
<td>High School Musical</td>
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<td>2015</td>
<td>Wizard of Oz</td>
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Note: There were far too many photos to share in one newsletter so you will see pictures from 1976-1996 in the previous issue of this newsletter June 2014.
Class of 1985 Student Reunion

After an amazing 20 Year reunion in 2005 this group of past students are ready to party again with a 30 Year reunion planned for 20th February 2016

and/or contact
Louise at designsmart@bigpond.com.au
to be added to the class address book for more details