

# Essendon Football Club Past Players & Officials Association



## Newsletter - December 2022

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### President's message - David Collins



Welcome to the final EFCPP&OA Newsletter for 2022.

Thankfully, after a few years of severe disruption to our activities due to COVID, we have finally had a full year of events. Sincere thanks to all EFCPP&OA members who patiently stuck with us throughout this difficult time. Your loyalty and support is very much appreciated.

A big thank you once again to our wonderful Admin Assistant Jane Lee who coordinated and formatted this Newsletter and to all those that contributed to it, especially Jo-Anne Albert (EFC Life Member and past EFCPP&OA Committee member) for interviewing Hugh Mitchell (EFC's oldest player) and Carolynn Larsen (EFC History volunteer) who provided an interesting unknown EFC historical tale. Carolynn will also contribute an EFC historical story for each future EFCPPOA newsletter.

We had a number of functions this year, all of which have been very successful. Our recent functions are highlighted in this newsletter. Successful events do not just happen. They all require an enormous amount of planning, preparation and effort. We are extremely lucky to have people such as Kevin Dale, Barbara Cullen OAM, Jane Lee, John Dellar, Glenn Shepherd and Susie Norton involved. They are all true professionals in what they do and the way they do it. In addition to the above, we have Charlie Italia (EFCPPOA Secretary), and Ken Gilbertson (EFCPPOA Treasurer) who also make great contributions. And of course, we are enormously grateful to the EFC Past Champions who assist us wherever possible.

Planning has already commenced for our 2023 functions - DRC Golf Day at Sandhurst Golf Club on Tuesday 7 February, the DRC lunch at the RACV Club on Wednesday 24 May, the DRC Cocktail function on Wednesday 2 August at Windy Hill and our Annual Dinner on Wednesday 27 September 2023. We will keep you posted in 2023 about these events.

Our Annual Special Effort Raffle and our online Silent Auction were successfully conducted and resulted in good financial returns for our Association. I want to sincerely thank all those that donated the prizes which made these fundraisers possible.

We are all no doubt aware of the many changes that have occurred at the EFC since the end of the 2022 season. I want to make it very clear that the EFCPP&OA does not get involved in any way in any political issues at the EFC and we fully support the EFC. I can report we have had contact with new EFC President Dave Barham, who has indicated very strong support for the EFCPP&OA. The EFC Board have also appointed EFC Board member Melissa Green as the EFCPP&OA's main point of contact. Preliminary meetings with Melissa have been very productive and we are establishing a positive working relationship.

At the next EFC Board meeting, the EFC Board will make decisions on a number of outstanding EFC/EFCPP&OA issues, including a display cabinet for EFCPP&OA to use in the Glory and Fame Museum at The Hangar, changes to the EFC/EFCPP&OA Trust Deed arrangements, EFC Past Player profiles, the Barry Capuano room at Windy Hill, and benefits for EFC Life members and Hall of Famers. We are very confident that these issues will be resolved in the very near future.

My sincere thanks to our committee for all their work this year - Darryl Gerlach (Vice President) Charlie Italia (Secretary), Ken Gilbertson (Treasurer), Barry Besanko, Graham Leydin, Gary Grainger, Ryan O'Connor, Mark Fraser and Jason Johnson. Also, we appreciate the great work done by Jane Lee (Admin Assistant). Please do not hesitate to contact me via email [president@efcppo.com.au](mailto:president@efcppo.com.au), if you are interested in assisting the EFCPP&OA or joining our Committee.

Thank you again for your continuing support throughout the year. The functions we conducted have been strongly supported which puts EFCPP&OA in a strong position to provide support and benefits to our members.

Finally, I hope you all have a great Christmas and New Year. I look forward to seeing you at our functions in 2023.

Keep safe and well.

David Collins  
President

**TELL US YOUR NEWS ...** We welcome news, articles and photographs from all our members. If you have experiences, insights and/or photos that you think may be of interest to other EFCPPOA members, please feel free to send them to [admin@efcppo.com.au](mailto:admin@efcppo.com.au) so we can include them in future newsletters editions.

## A family legend that turned out to be true

*Written & researched by Carolynn Larsen -EFC History & Glory and Fame Museum Volunteer.*

We all have family stories that are usually apocryphal but here's one that turned out to be true and it relates to the oldest item held in the Club's Glory and Fame Museum - a silver cup won by Archie Graham in 1874.

Archie was one of Essendon's foundation players and played between 35 and 46 games from 1873 to 1881. Primarily a defender, he was one of Essendon's most important players, and his value was recognised in 1877 when he was appointed captain for the year.

The donor family believed the cup had been filled with sovereigns although this seemed unlikely. However, a search of the digitised newspapers on [Trove](#) revealed that it was indeed true. An 1874 article in the *Argus* reported that "the principal prize for competition was the Essendon Football Club Cup (with 10 sovereigns added), to be awarded to the highest scorer in three events [at the Club's sports day]." So Archie did, indeed, receive his sovereigns.

But his story has a tragic end. He was on a visit to Omeo and was returning from the local races when he was thrown from his horse and killed instantly. He had just turned 41 and left behind a wife and six children.



*Archie Graham's cup on display in the Glory and Fame Museum*



## Brad Teal, OAM

Our Association warmly congratulates former EFC Director and Life Member, Brad Teal who was recognised in the Queen's Birthday Honours List 2022 for his service to sport and to the community.

Brad was awarded the Medal of the Order of Australia.

A generous supporter of the Association over many years, we are delighted that Brad's role in sport and the community has been recognised.

## AFLW: A snapshot into a historic season

In just 10 weeks, the inaugural Essendon AFLW side completed many firsts for the club, creating a rich history that will be remembered for years to come.

On August 12, 2021, the Essendon Football Club became truly whole, with the AFL Commission granting an AFLW licence for the Bombers to join the competition for season seven. History had officially begun.



Natalie Wood was unveiled as the inaugural Essendon AFLW senior coach in March this year, followed by Georgia Nanscawen, who became the first ever AFLW Bomber. After that, the names came rolling in.

The Bombers signed 12 AFLW players from other clubs to their list, as well as bringing across eight players from their VFLW side, and seven coming through the draft.

The first official AFLW training session was held on June 13, with 21 players in attendance.



Bonnie Toogood and Steph Cain would become Essendon's inaugural co-captains for season seven. With Georgia Nanscawen and Jacqui Vogt joining the leadership team.

For the first time ever the Essendon AFLW side would run out on the ground as one team. They played a practice match against expansion side Port Adelaide at the NEC Hangar on August 11, coming away victorious by 20 points.

In round one, the Bombers came up against Hawthorn, another expansion club, for the side's first ever AFLW game. Tickets would soon sell out within a day of release, and to make history even more spectacular, the game was moved to Marvel Stadium.

Seven debutants would don the sash for the first time this season, with guernseys presented to the players on the ground in front of their families.

As the siren sounded on the eve of August 27, history was everywhere. Jess Wuetschner scored the Dons' first ever AFLW goal, with the help of Daria Bannister and Paige Scott. Toogood collected two goals for the game. Scott, Prespakis, Marshall and Alexander all scoring historic goals of their own. Essendon pushed ahead in the final quarter to secure a 26-point victory over Hawthorn, sealing the Dons' first ever AFLW victory.



After her breakout performance in round one, Paige Scott would earn Essendon's first ever NAB Rising Star nomination.

On September 11, the team would travel to Western Australia, to come up against West Coast at Mineral Resources Park. For the first time, the Bombers were playing outside of Victoria. The match would prove to be another historic moment for the Dons, defeating West Coast by 52-points.

At the time, round three's fixture recorded the highest halftime score in AFLW history, as well as the most multiple goal scorers (five) in season seven.

Round four was the Dons' first Dreamtime game, assistant coach Kirby Bentley hand painted every players' boots to represent a unified team, and Essendon released their first ever Indigenous guernsey designed by two students from Thornbury Primary School.

The Bombers would run out in their inaugural Pride guernsey in round eight, designed by VFLW Premiership players Mia-Rae Clifford and Kendra Heil.

This year was jam-packed full of historic firsts, with many more still to come. Who will be named Essendon's inaugural AFLW Best and Fairest? And will first year young guns Paige Scott or Steph Wales be named NAB Rising Star?

The 34 names which embodied Essendon's first AFLW season will remain in the history books for years to come.

And the side is indebted to the families, members and fans for the history they have been a part of and the support they have given this season.

- **2022 Highlights**
- Steph Cain was ruthless having a total of 56 tackles.
- Daria Bannister was our highest goal scorer with 8 goals for the season.
- Maddy Prespakis topped the season with 237 disposals.
- Steph Wales was a killer in the ruck with a total of 133 hit outs.
- 12 players played every game of the season.



## **2022 DRC Cocktail Function**



This year's Dick Reynolds Club Cocktail function was held on Wednesday 3rd August in the recently renovated Premiers Room at the Windy Hill Venue. Over 100 people attended the event, which featured debut jumper presentations to a number of past EFC players. Kevin Dale was again outstanding as MC and kept the crowd entertained.

Cale Hooker (# 12) received his debut jumper from former # 12 Barry Capuano. Barry outlined many of the highlights and achievements of Cale's long and distinguished career. It was clearly evident from Cale's response on how much he loved his time with the Bombers.

John Barnes (former # 20) was at his entertaining best in presenting Jake Carlisle (#20) with his debut jumper. In his accepting his jumper, Jake stressed how proud he was to receive his jumper and to have been able to with play the EFC.





The function also included several very informative interviews with past EFC champion players and focused on their memories of the premiership wins they were part of, namely Barry Capuano (1962) and Jason Johnson, Steven Alessio and John Barnes (all 2000).

All in all, it was a most enjoyable and entertaining evening.



## Missing EFC Team Photos

Barry Capuano and EFC History volunteer Carolynn Larsen are involved in a project to update EFC Past Player profiles and other EFC historical records and memorabilia.

Their research has revealed that following team photos are missing.

### VFA period 1872 to 1896

1873	1884
1874	1885
1875	1886
1876	1888
1877	1889
1879	1895
1880	1896
1881	

### VFL/AFL 1897 to 1990

1906	1931
1914	1935
1915	1937
1918	1952
1920	1967
1930	1974

If anyone has copies of any of the above team photos or suggestions as to where copies may be located, please contact us via email - [admin@efcppo.com.au](mailto:admin@efcppo.com.au)

## **Essendon's oldest living premiership player**

**-# 31 - Hugh Mitchell (born 22 November 1934)**



*Special thanks to Jo-Anne Albert (EFC Life member and past EFCPP&OA Committee member) for interviewing Hugh to commemorate his 88<sup>th</sup> birthday and for sharing it with EFCPP&OA members.*

**Happy 88th birthday Hugh!**

*"Thanks (chuckles), as long as I keep having birthdays, it's all good!"*

**How does it feel to take over the mantle as the Bomber's oldest living premiership player?**

*"I never imagined I would have the opportunity to play for the club I loved as a kid. Footy has been a wonderful part of my life. I've been fortunate. Great people, friendships, and memories. I love the club and want them to have success. I've seen 9 premierships; I'd like to witness one more in my lifetime. In 2023, it will be 70 years since I started playing with the Bombers.*

**Tell us about your school days at Moonee Ponds Central - next to the racecourse**

*"In 1945 my father took me to my first game. In 1946, I received my first EFC junior membership ticket – 5 shillings it cost. It would be truly memorable, as it was a premiership year for the Bombers.*

*Each winter the club would give the school a football. Branded: Compliments of Essendon Football Club. As kids, we loved to get a kick of that particular footy – to us it was a piece of gold.*

*My schoolmate and EFC teammate, Ken Peucker, and I would have a kick across the road in the centre of the Moonee Valley Racecourse, the school's footy ground. Our footy jumper was navy, green, and gold and I chose #3 (Dick Reynolds). At Windy Hill games, Ian and I would sit in the same spot, the second last row of the Reynolds stand. We carved our names on the back of our seats, adding 2 letters at every game until it read: 'H Mitchell 1947'."*

*"John Coleman had been Dux at the school, I saw him play his first game in 1949, he kicked 12 goals."*

**In 1953 you made your EFC debut**

*"I started in the 3rds but only played 5 games when the club secretary told me I had been promoted to the Supplementary List. I trained with the reserves and seniors. I played 2 senior games in my first year. During the 1953/54 seasons I played 8 games alongside John Coleman."*



### **1955 Round 8 Saturday 4 June - Essendon vs South Melbourne at Windy Hill – What a day!**

*“My teammate the late Ian Monks (#29), said he’d drive us to Windy Hill. There were no special carparks for players in those days. We had to be at the ground by 1.30 pm. None of the surrounding streets had vacant spots, so we drove to Strathmore station, parked running back to the ground with our heavy leather Gladstone bags. Essendon’s Chairman of Selectors Howard Okey gave us a spray as we rushed into the rooms, threatening us with fines if we were not changed and on the ground in 5 minutes. At 1.55 pm, I noticed Hutchy (Bill Hutchison) walking in after us, but nothing was said. Hutchy got dressed and went straight out onto the ground – it was accepted as his pre-game habit.”*

**Your opponent that day was Swan’s fullback Fred Goldsmith. You kicked 9 goals, 6 points.**

**The Bombers won by 38 points – 13.14 (92) to 7.12 (54). Were you B.O.G., Hugh?**

*“The important thing to me on that day is that the team won. I contributed in some ways to winning the game for the Bombers.”*

***Fair Dinkum Unbelievable:* When votes for that game were read out at the 1955 Brownlow Medal count, umpire John Frood awarded the 3 votes to Goldsmith. At the end of the count:**

21 – Fred Goldsmith (South Melbourne) - **Winner**

20 – Bill Hutchison (Essendon)– **Runner up** (Hutchy won Brownlow’s in 1952 and 1953)

**To quote the late Jack Dyer: *Oh, if you don’t mind umpire, please!***

**Before the count, the SP bookies had Goldsmith 50 to 1 to win..**

*“It was disappointing for Billy Hutchison. Part of footy, it surprises you, and was unexpected.”*

**Reynolds, Coleman and Hutchison – EFC’s culture**

*“Being coached by Dick Reynolds and later John Coleman and have played alongside Bill Hutchison (Captain) and John Coleman (Vice Captain) was very special. Great people, I was privileged to be involved with those guys. In 1953 the club’s culture was built by Dick Reynolds. He set the standard; it just grew stronger as the years went on.”*

**This year the club celebrated the 60<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the 1962 premiership.**

*“At each year’s premiership players reunion, the kicks get longer, marks get higher (laughs)”*

**Radio – Calling footy on 3AW and ABC**

*“I loved working with Jack Dyer and Tim Lane. It kept me connected to the game.”*

**What message would you like to send to the current team?**

*“Be the best team.*

*This is a special chance in life – footy gave me something in my life that was a gift to me. On the days I played, I always had a go. You have good days and bad days, but always play to win.*

*I wish Brad Scott and the team all the best. Bring aggression, toughness, and strength into our game... Our kids have the ability, we should have success.”*

**Hugh’s Stats:** 224 games, 306 goals, Premiership player 1962/65, #31, B&F 1959 and 3<sup>rd</sup> in the Brownlow, Represented Victoria 4 times, Life Member, Member EFC Hall of Fame.

**Hugh, You loved the open spaces, could read the play, and knew where the second and third kicks were coming from. You were surrounded by great teammates and were a great teammate. Thanks, Hugh.**



## **Vale Ray Horsburgh AM**

Ray was a longstanding, dedicated and passionate contributor of the Essendon Football Club & the EFCPP&OA for many years.

An original member of the Collins Street Dons and proud supporter of the Dick Reynold Club, Ray joined the EFC Board in 2003 and served as President from late 2005-2009. Ray was also a passionate contributor to the EFCPP&OA, especially in his role as a member of the EFC/EFCPP&OA Trust.

Ray's involvement with the Club & EFCPP&OA was extensive, and he was a great friend and confidant to many.



Ray also had a long history of involvement with football at community level. He was an avid supporter of the Williamstown Seagulls Football Integration Development Association (FIDA) team. FIDA is an Australian football competition for players with intellectual disabilities. In 2006, he received the Order of Australia for his work with disadvantage youth.

Ray also had a very successful business career over 40 years – he was CEO of Australian Consolidated Industries Group and then Smorgon Steel Pty Ltd.

*An incredible person who contributed so much.  
Rest in Peace Ray*

## **Thank You, Lisa Raciti**

For most of 2021 and 2022, Lisa Raciti (Personal Assistant to EFC CEO Xavier Campbell for many years), was the EFCPPOA's primary point of contact with the EFC. Lisa provided excellent assistance and support to our Association in this role. Lisa resigned from the EFC to return to the music industry in late 2022.



Thank you very much Lisa for all your great work and being so amazing to deal with. We really appreciate your support.

We are also thrilled that Lisa is now a member of the EFCPPOA.

## 2022 Annual Dinner

Around 160 Full members and guests attended this year's Annual Dinner at the Windy Hill Venue on Wednesday 21 September. Sean Wellman was MC and was in outstanding form in his debut performance in this role.

This was the first Annual Dinner we have been able to hold for three years and was attended by several special guests, including EFC Board members -David Barham (President), Andrew Muir and Kate O'Sullivan, as well as EFC staff - Nick Ryan (Acting CEO) and Josh Mahoney (EFC Football Manager). Several representatives from other AFL Past Player Associations also attended, along with representatives from Sovereign Financial (EFCPP&OA's major sponsor) and other EFCPP&OA sponsors and EFC Coterie Groups.

President David Collins welcomed all present and thanked everyone for their great support of the Association over the past few years during very difficult circumstances. He particularly thanked those players from the 1962 era and those from the 2000 era for attending the event to help celebrate and remember the 60<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the 1962 win and 22<sup>nd</sup> anniversary of the 2000 premiership win.



David also passed on his sincere thanks to Barb Cullen OAM, Kevin Dale, Susie Norton and John Dellar for their great work for our Association, and for their work on organising the Dick Reynolds Club functions namely the DRC Golf Day, the DRC Bombers in the Media lunch at the RACV Club and the DRC Cocktail function. He thanked EFCPP&OA committee members who had retired in recent years as well as all current committee members for their contributions.

On a sad note, David also advised that the following great EFC and EFCPPOA members had passed away since our last Annual Dinner in 2019:

- 2020 Jack Jones and Bruce Reid
- 2021 Harold Lambert and Bluey Shelton
- 2022 Noel Allanson, Merna Slattery and Ray Horsburgh

One of the highlights of the evening was the presentation of Brent Stanton's debut jumper to him by another great EFC No. 5 in Terry Daniher. Terry was in his normal great form and made the presentation both sincere and amusing. Terry also noted that Brent had played 255 games for the EFC and there are only 12 players in our history that have played more games than him. Brent spoke extremely well in accepting the jumper and expressed his great love for and appreciation of the EFC. His two boys also attended the event and were very excited for their Dad.



A panel representing the 1962 Premiership team (Ken Fraser, Barry Capuano, John Birt and Hugh Mitchell), revealed some of the untold stories from the 1962 premiership win and from that era in our Club's history, much to the amusement of all present. It was noted that Hugh is EFC's oldest living premiership player. It's also worth reporting that Hughie's responding comment was that he accepts this honour with great pride and that he intends to remain that way for many years to come.

Later in the night, a panel representing the 2000 Premiership team, made up of Steve Alessio, Jason Johnson, John Barnes and James Hird relived their premiership win. It was great to see James Hird in attendance, who showed he had not lost any of his wisdom in the way he answered the questions put to him. James also revealed some interesting insights about the grand final.



Once the formal part of the evening finished, guests mingled and caught up with each other. There was a multitude of laughter and smiles by all present.

Special thanks again to MC Sean Wellman who did a great job and to the EFCPP&OA Committee, especially our "Super Star" Admin Assistant Jane Lee, for all their work in organising the event.

Many thanks also to the EFC for contributing to event costs.

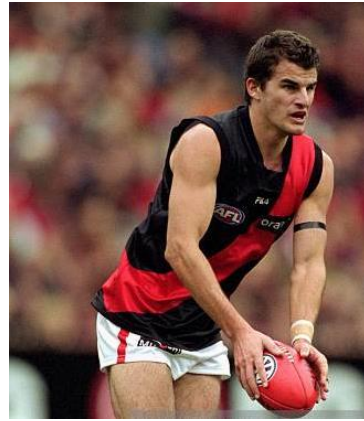
## Where Are They Now?

### *Damien Peverill*

**Years played:** 2001-2008

**Games:** 144    **Goals:** 32

**Number/s worn:** 45 (2001) & 11 (2002-2008)



#### **What did you do, football wise, following your playing days with Essendon?**

Spent one year at Collingwood as a player/assistant coach with their VFL team in 2009. After that, I joined a few ex-teammates at Aberfeldie in the EDFL (two years as a player, four years as an assistant coach). More recently, I have coached Therry Penola in the VAFA and I am currently coaching my sons under 12 team at Moonee Valley

#### **What job/jobs did you pursue following your playing days, including what you are doing currently?**

Moved into Mortgage Broking post-football before ending up at NAB for six years.

In the last two years have moved back into Mortgage Broking and I am working with the great Sean Wellman at Wellman Finance.

#### **Have you suffered with any post football injuries and have any required surgery?**

Nothing yet

#### **Do you have any ongoing medical problems? (if you would not like this included in Newsletter please indicate)**

I was very lucky not to have any joint or soft tissue issues when I played, so I have come out of football in pretty good shape.

The only real (ongoing) issue is a dodgy wrist, which I broke a couple of times in my playing days.

#### **Do you have any special anecdotes from your playing time to pass onto other past players?**

I could provide a couple of stories from footy trips or Mad Mondays, but I don't want to implicate any of my team mates (especially Aaron Henneman!!).

**What are your thoughts on the modern game, and how would you change any of the areas that you don't like!**

Like most old-timers, the constant tinkering of the rules on a yearly (and sometimes weekly) basis frustrates me. However, I reckon the game is in a pretty good place at the moment.

For quite a few years it appeared that teams and coaches seemed to place too high an emphasis on defence, which created lots of boring and dour games.

In the last couple of years, it has been great to see that the most (good) teams have gone back to placing an emphasis on playing attacking/offensive football, which has led to a better spectacle.

It will be interesting to see what happens when/if a Tassie team comes into the competition, and whether this dilutes the talent pool and has a detrimental impact on the quality of games.

**Who were your mates in your playing days with Essendon, do you keep in touch?**

We've got a good crew of 9-10 of us who catch up on a semi-regular basis for a meal/beers and to talk rubbish.

Charlie Italia (trainer) is the ring-leader of the group, and Steve Alessio leads the way in talking rubbish.

**Who were the players you most admired in your playing days at Essendon?**

**For Essendon:**

Adam Ramanauskas.

What this guy went through (multiple times) to come back and play AFL football was extraordinary.

**Other teams:**

He was a little bit before my time, but always loved watching Paul Kelly play at Sydney.

**Do you have any comments that you would like to pass on about your time at Essendon?**

Nothing overly inciteful or intelligent, my time at Essendon had (and continues to have) a massive impact on my life and my family, which I'll always be grateful for.

Hopefully the club can get it together and win a final in the next couple of years.