

BURNS, Grahame – 10 March 1936 – 4 May 2021. Year of '53

Some words from fellow student John McKenzie.

You will remember that, at NBHS, Grahame was gregarious, popular, congenial and hard working. In our final year he was a Prefect and (as hooker alongside *Kev Miller* and *Bruce Nickisson*) he was in the celebrated front row of our Premiership winning 1st XIII.

With *said Bruce Nickisson* and with *Allan Charlton* and *Jim Barr*, he was also a member of the really good, Senior, 4 by 50m freestyle relay team that came second to Sydney High at the 1953 *Combined High School Swimming Carnival*. In doing so, they had to beat *Jon Henrick's* Fort Street Team into third place - no mean feat.

Through life, Grahame's great sporting strengths were in swimming, body-surfing and surfboarding. For ages, he was a strong and loyal member of *Cook's Hill SLSC*. He and Bruce Nickisson both joined Cook's Hill while still at school and continued thereafter.

I think that, after the American/Malibu Board demonstrations and revelations in the surf of Bell's Beach, Victoria in 1956 (during the course of the Melbourne Olympics) Grahame *burned* (no pun) to get one of the revolutionary new surf-boards.

He became the first of my friends to own one but this did not lure him from ordinary surf-club duties at *Bar Beach* or from competing for the Club at Carnivals. I remember him telling me that, with our friend *Clem Varley* (Junction School, Tech High and Newcastle Engineer) and the legendary Beach Inspector, *Reg Gazzard*, he was a member of the Cook's Hills R & R Team.

In later years, he and his youngest brother, Bruce, took up ocean-swimming.

He also played and enjoyed golf (whatever that is - Denis Gordon and Pete Myors can explain). Perhaps that was in retirement. I'll be surprised if he wasn't good at it.

At High School I thought that Grahame took class-work and study pretty seriously but there was a balance. Not everyone had that balance. I think that he was probably well organized for he didn't seem to strain and he didn't seem to stint his interests. Whatever the explanation, at schoolwork, socialising and sport, he was a fine all-rounder.

He seems to have stayed that way.

He certainly was (and remained) wonderful at camaraderie.

After I left Newcastle, I lost touch with him for quite a long time. This was so with and among many of us. The Internet and the formation of the current Old Boys' Association helped to re-connect a lot of us - certainly it was so with Grahame; and for *that* re-connection with him, I will be forever grateful.