



MCC News



Food, glorious food
OUR CHEFS EARN TOP AWARD

Demon star shone both on and off the field

Ron Barassi was both succinct and spot on when commenting on Stuart Spencer's passing at 79 in September. He told the ABC the Demon champion was "a warm and loving person and one of the most liked and admired players" during his time at Melbourne. Thousands would nod approvingly of the observation.

At a time when football was largely a pastime rather than a profession, Spencer left the Demons as a 24-year-old after 122 games.

A business opportunity in Tasmania beckoned, but many believed he was walking away from greatness.

He first played for Melbourne in 1950, initially as a back pocket whose range of skills included a very fast and dead-accurate torpedo punt as well as an uncanny ability to win the ball.

Coach Norm Smith thought if he could get the ball so much he'd better put him where the action was. So, in a reversal of usual practice, the back pocket became a rover.

Spencer quickly became the best small man in the business and a key member of the team that surely was the most dominant of any era. The Demons won the flag in 1955-57, 1959-60 and 1964.

The young chap from Portland, "a humble little country boy" according to his skipper Noel McMahan, blossomed into a matchwinner and was best and fairest in the premiership years of 1955-56.

McMahan recalled that Spencer wanted to leave for Tasmania after the 1955 flag, but chairman of selectors Ivor Warne-Smith talked him into playing another year. "After that I used to tease him about staying, telling

him he'd miss out on being one of the game's all-time greats," said Noel. "He certainly would have played in another three premiership teams."

The 1956 Demons had abundant talent. The first ruck was Denis Cordner, Ron Barassi and Spencer. The second combination was "Big Bob" Johnson, Trevor Johnson and Tiger Ridley. And even with the loss of seven players after the 1956 season, they were still good enough to win the flag again in '57.

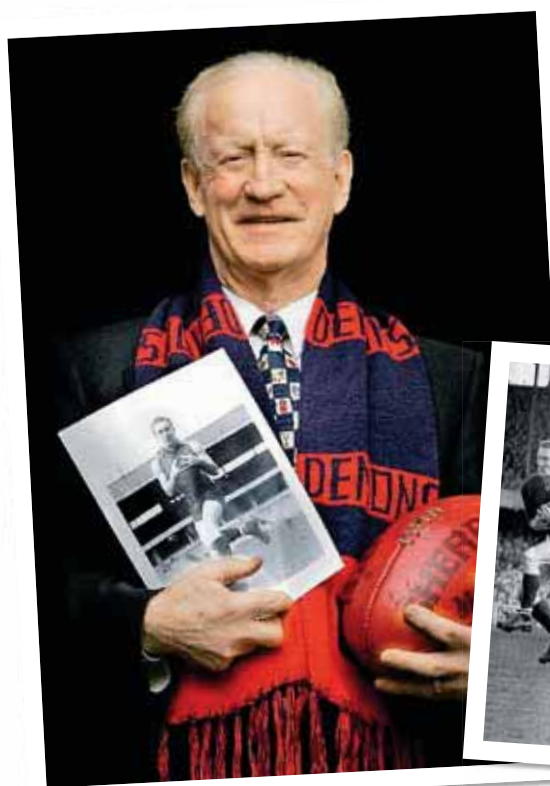
Melbourne's loss was Tasmania's gain. Stuart Spencer was appointed captain-coach of Clarence and played 236 games with the Kangaroos. His honours include All-Australian selection, inclusion in Melbourne's Team of the Century and membership of the Australian Football Hall of Fame.

One achievement almost certainly won't be emulated. In 1960 he captained Tasmania to their first and only win against the Big V.

After returning to Victoria, Spencer, who ironically became an MCC member in the year he left Melbourne, was once again recruited by the Demons and served as chairman of the footy club from 1986 to 1991. John Northey was coach at the time and Melbourne played finals football in five of those years with Spencer at the helm. Alas, the big prize eluded them.

Honorary Life member, long-time committeeman and MCC president (1997-2003) Bruce Church recalls that Stuart was very keen on forging closer ties with the club and always considered the footballers were part of the MCC family.

"Above all", said Bruce, "he was a passionate MCC member and always had the highest regard for an institution he represented for more than 50 years."



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Our Cover



• Food glorious food, and it's waiting for you at the MCG. See page 7.

Special silver

A letter received out of the blue two years ago has allowed us to celebrate the 150th anniversary of the first international cricket match at the MCG with the display of some superb silverware directly related to the occasion.

An Australian cricket buff now living in the US, David W. Anstice, bought this tea and coffee set at an auction in London in 1995. It was presented by catering firm Spiers & Pond, the promoters of that feted tour of 1861/62 by H.H. Stephenson's XI, to Richmond Cricket Club secretary George Shoosmith.

We're not sure why such an elaborate gift



From the President *Paul Sheahan*

It is a pleasure to report to the membership of our club. There are a number of matters about which I would like to comment.

Having held the presidency now for more than six months, I have become aware of at least two things about the MCC. First, it is a remarkably diverse and sophisticated club that should cater for pretty well all interests. Second, the staff under the expert and talented leadership of CEO Stephen Gough shows great skill in mounting events at the 'G for our entertainment. We have much for which to be thankful.

The photograph of me that accompanies this article shows me wearing a very distinctive club member tie, one that rivals our English MCC colleagues for its distinctiveness! To me it makes a great statement, and I think we male members should wear this tie on the four potentially capacity days of the year — the first day of the Boxing Day Test, the grand final, Anzac Day and the Melbourne–Collingwood match on Queen's Birthday weekend.

So, I encourage you to purchase the tie and wear it on December 26 this year when Australia plays India. I am reliably informed that the club's merchandise outlet carries sufficient supply.

Two major projects are occupying committee and management.

The water recycling facility in Yarra Park, immediately to the north of the Members Reserve, is moving happily according to a reconstructed timeline and will be complete by June next year. Once it is operational, we should see considerable improvement in the condition of the parkland, quite apart from the responsible contribution to Melbourne's inner-east water supply.

The refurbishment of the Great Southern Stand began more or less the day after this year's AFL Grand Final and will not be completed until just prior to the start of the

2013 AFL season. We expect some minor inconvenience for public patrons at various stages over the next 18 months, but our project team and builder Construction Engineering will ensure these are kept to a minimum.

Management has spent a good deal of time assessing the tenders for the very considerable catering contract for our ground. In the catering world, it is a handsome contract to have, both in terms of the volume of business and the kudos attached.

After much consideration, we have reappointed Epicure for the next five years, and we look forward to continuing the positive contribution they make to the amenity for members and patrons at the ground.

Somewhat unexpectedly, we lost treasurer Michael Andrew because of his appointment as global chairman of KPMG. This prestigious appointment demanded his relocation overseas. As a consequence he resigned from the committee.

Again somewhat unexpectedly, Michael Happell was appointed to fill the vacancy. I say "somewhat unexpectedly" in the knowledge that we had anticipated Michael Happell's accession to the treasurership when Michael Andrew's term concluded, but that was not envisaged as happening so soon!

I take this opportunity of saying to Michael Andrew how much we appreciated not just his financial skills but his intelligence and wisdom. They will be missed but we look forward very much to Michael Happell's term with his hands on the financial levers.

Finally, I offer my congratulations to the club's management and staff, along with our band of events staff, for the manner in which they have presented the club and its facilities this year, especially through a demanding final series of Australian football.

The arena looked spectacular — and still does as the cricket season gets underway — and the arrangements for handling large



crowds during the final series worked efficiently and effectively. All of Melbourne, not just the MCC, should have felt proud of the quality of the event that was presented on the worldwide stage. Congratulations to all concerned!

And congratulations to the folk at the MCC Library headed by David Studham and supported by a number of very capable volunteers. Their publication, *The Yorker*, was rated number one in the "best program, annual report or magazine" category by the international body that deals with such matters. You'll read more about that elsewhere in this newsletter.

We are entering an important era in the club's history. We will soon make some extremely important decisions regarding the extension of club facilities outside the MCG and the means with which we can deal equitably and acceptably with a burgeoning waiting list. We will keep members informed of developments in the months ahead.

I take the opportunity to wish all members a safe and happy festive season. I hope to see many of you at the Boxing Day Test and the remaining cricket matches over the summer.

ware delivered on a plate

went Shoosmith's way, although George was a selector for the Victorian XVIII opposing Stephenson's team and he obviously organised practice for the visitors on the Richmond Cricket Club oval (Punt Road) on Christmas Day, 1861.

The letter from Mr Anstice foreshadowed the upcoming 150th anniversary of Spiers & Pond's venture and described the treasures in his possession.

Would we like to borrow the silverware if the club was planning to mark the anniversary? We sure would! Thanks to Mr Anstice's generosity, you'll soon find

the tea set on show in the MCC Museum.

Meantime, the MCC Library is mounting a mini-exhibition of its Spiers & Pond/H.H. Stephenson material for display throughout the cricket season.

A thought on all this. If George Shoosmith of Richmond received such bounty from the caterers, why wasn't the MCC similarly favoured? Simply, the club took a purely commercial approach to the event, hiring out the ground to the promoters who took the risk and reaped huge benefits.

So no silverware for us!



Workers go south for the summer

Construction sites have become par for the course in recent months, both inside and outside the MCG (see Yarra Park story below right), with the upgrade to the Great Southern Stand now in full swing.

Building firm Construction Engineering (CE) took possession of a number of spaces on the southern side of the stadium immediately after the grand final in October, mainly around gates 5 and 6, in readiness for the first phase of work on the \$55m project.

As our pictures show, the CE team has wasted no time getting their hands dirty, demolishing or gutting several rooms and spaces before starting on the upgrading program.

By the end of March 2012, as the AFL season arrives, patrons will start to see the impact of this work. Major changes will include a new Haydn Bunton Sports Bar and Barassi Café on Level B1, refurbished entries to gates 5 and 6 and a substantial food and beverage outlet at the rear of seating bay M12.

Moving upstairs, AFL members will enjoy their own dining room with a view of the ground (formerly nine corporate suites and offices). The function rooms nearby, named in honour of Lindsay Hassett and Jack Ryder, will also boast superior facilities.

Disruption to our normal event day practices will be kept to a minimum over summer. While patrons attending the Boxing Day Test will see some hoarding around gates 5 and 6, they'll still be operational for the big game. The capacity of the MCG during this time will be unaffected.

We'll provide an update in our next edition, including plans for works during the 2012 AFL season.



Looking forward to the green, green grass of old

There's been no shortage of activity in Yarra Park in recent months, as several aspects of our master plan gather momentum.

Construction of an underground water recycling facility is dominating the vista outside the members' entrance at the MCG. The provision of non-potable water — around 180 million litres annually — underpins our plans for a healthy parkland and this crucial project is now taking shape.

Excavation to a depth of eight metres is completed and the underground structure is steadily progressing, with the internal and external concrete walls being poured. Critically, the pipeline connecting the recycling facility to the MCG storage tank, Punt Road Oval and the city fringe has been installed.

Away from the construction zone, the first stage of landscape upgrading has also started. Situated in the north-east corner and covering about 25 per cent of the park, the works — including a new irrigation system, re-turfing, planting of Kikuyu grass, soil decompaction and additional mulching

of trees — are preparing the site for tapping into the new water supply.

An all-important maintenance program has been established and new furniture and infrastructure has been installed for park users.

These stage one works will be completed before Christmas. Other sectors of the park will progressively receive the same treatment. As water will not be produced from the recycling facility until the middle of next year, City West Water has approved alternative arrangements for the provision of water to support the landscape upgrade.

Early in the New Year, work will start on a third element of the master plan. The Southern Plaza, located adjacent to the AFL members' entrance, will be modified to allow taxis, buses and patrons with a disability to access the southern side of the MCG via Brunton Avenue. This will reduce the traffic impact on the roads and residential properties along Vale Street and Jolimont Terrace.

It's all part of the long-term commitment by the club to restore Yarra Park to its former glory and secure its future. But there is still much to do.



Warne a Big Bash Star attraction

The new-look Twenty20 Big Bash League (BBL) received the shot in the arm it was craving when spin king and MCG hero Shane Warne announced on November 8 he would play all of the Melbourne Stars matches this summer.

The champion leg spinner took the last of his 708 Test wickets almost five years ago, but he clearly still holds massive appeal among cricket fans. His presence alone should generate large crowds when the MCG-based Stars kick off their campaign at home against a Sydney Thunder team featuring Chris Gayle and David Warner on December 17. Warne joins a Stars outfit coached by

Greg Shipperd and captained by Cameron White (see right for a message from the Stars skipper to MCC members). The team also boasts David Hussey, George Bailey, Peter Siddle, Adam Voges and Matthew Wade among a talented line-up.

Members can pre-purchase visitor tickets to all four MCG matches (see table below) via Ticketek or in person at the club. Further details are contained in the 2011/12 Cricket Guide or on the MCC website.

The Stars have also tailored a membership package — the Star Gazer — for MCC members wanting to support the MCG's home team. Further details are available at www.melbournestars.com.au.

Our Town, Our Turf, Our Stars!

I hope all MCC members will join us and be a part of our team at the MCG this summer. We'll be striving to deliver brilliant entertainment and a fantastic experience for families, kids and anyone who loves the theatre of a big game under lights at the MCG.

As the home team at the mighty MCG, our members, supporters and partners will enjoy only the best — the finest facilities, largest crowds, explosive entertainment, the thrill of Twenty20 cricket and a dynamic team with the most electrifying talent in the country.

As captain of the Melbourne Stars, I'm extremely proud to be part of this team and we hope to be a team you will be proud to follow.

Join me as the Melbourne Stars are born and we look forward to Saturday December 17 when the Stars will explode onto your ground and a new page will be written in the great sporting heritage of our city.

The Melbourne Stars start now. Go Stars! FEEL THE POWER!

Cameron White
Melbourne Stars captain

BBL MATCHES AT THE MCG

(all start at 7.00pm)

Saturday December 17	Melbourne Stars v Sydney Thunder
Wednesday January 4	Melbourne Stars v Perth Scorchers
Saturday January 7	Melbourne Stars v Melbourne Renegades
Thursday January 19	Melbourne Stars v Adelaide Strikers

The MCG may also host a semi final (January 21 or 22) and the final (January 28) if the Stars qualify.

DINING ROOM DRESS CODE EASED

In line with the relaxed atmosphere associated with Twenty20 cricket, the club has again decided to ease the dress standards required of members and guests in the Members Dining Room at all BBL matches.

While the usual Long Room dress standards apply, those accessing the dining room need only conform to the code required to obtain entry into the Reserve.

Further information about this and all other aspects of the 2011/12 cricket season at the MCG is available in the eight-page guide either accompanying this newsletter or located on the MCC website.



Keeping Victorians moving

Few understand congestion and other transport issues affecting our state better than MCC member Brian Negus, general manager public policy at the Royal Automobile Club of Victoria (RACV).

For the past four years he has headed an expert team of engineers, transport planners, environmental scientists and psychologists specialising in transport issues.

Their role is to combine research of its two million members and technical knowledge to formulate policies on road operation, road and vehicle safety, public transport, road user behaviour, driver education and environmental issues.

Negus has spent a lifetime across all aspects of the transport sector. He was formerly the deputy director of public transport with the Victorian Department of Transport (where he has served two stints) and was also VicRoads metropolitan regional director for eight years. Add in a role with the Port of Melbourne Corporation and clearly there is no one better qualified to discuss ways to get Victorians moving.

The Bulleen-based Negus is no stranger to life at the MCC, having been a member since 1993. He is a regular Boxing Day Test onlooker, has attended the last five Members' Dinners and several of his close friends are XXIX Club members.

MCC News caught up with Negus in early-November, fresh from attending the World Congress on Intelligent Transport Systems in Orlando, Florida, where the future is about smart cars, smart roads and smart systems. He says there were three common themes evident that Melbourne shares with other major cities — congestion, sustainable motoring and the choice of how we travel.

"Mobility is important to people, whether it be private travel, business travel, going away on weekends and holidays or freight," Negus says. "Mobility is key. It drives the economy and our lifestyle."



Club member Brian Negus says mobility and choice are key elements of our transport dilemmas.

So, with exponential population growth across Melbourne, our trains and trams bursting at the seams and a "peak hour" that Negus admits now stretches to more than three hours at both ends of the day, what can be done?

"Our view is it's about improving mobility and travel choice," he says. "As population density increases, our liveability will be affected if we don't find solutions. It's about getting more sustainable motoring, but secondly providing more choices.

"But in Melbourne we don't yet have a good enough public transport system for people to have that choice, so cars dominate."

The RACV believe that roads and public transport infrastructure require upgrading to keep up, or catch up, to our city's needs. But Negus says there are changes that can be made to our vehicle registration fees structure and motoring taxes that could also provide incentives for people to use public transport.

"One option could be a user-pays system for vehicles," says Negus. "At the moment, all registrations, taxes and duties the driver pays are fixed costs (except petrol). If you change

to a variable system, like our electricity and gas charges, you'll give people information they can then use to decide which mode of transport to use."

Negus presides over the RACV's integrated transport plan, which calls for several key projects to be implemented. Many are large-scale and expensive, relying on a combination of federal and state funding, together with public-private partnerships, to become reality.

There's the East/West Link from the Eastern Freeway to the Western Ring Road (with tunnels to CityLink and under the Maribyrnong River), the "missing" North-East link from the Metropolitan Ring Road at Greensborough to the Eastern Freeway, the Metro Rail Tunnel from Footscray Station to Caulfield Station and "an ongoing program to remove all major railway level crossings in Melbourne."

Also on the list is improving the image and usage of buses and creating a high-speed rail link to Melbourne Airport, the absence of which has baffled locals and overseas visitors for decades.

Plan to punt traffic from Hoddle St

One key road project on the RACV radar sure to interest thousands of motorists and MCG visitors is a major upgrade of Hoddle Street/Punt Road.

Plans to improve traffic flow on this major arterial connecting the Eastern Freeway and Nepean Highway links alongside the MCG seem to revolve around either a tunnel from the Eastern Freeway end to south of Swan Street or a series of grade separations (underpasses).

While he acknowledges that individual grade separations would cause "massive disruption" during construction and a tunnel would have a large cost, Brian Negus says that action is well overdue.

"We've got a southern bypass to the city, as well as a western bypass," he says. "There's nothing in the north — hence our push for the tunnel in our transport plan — and in the east there's nothing. So Punt Road is the key route.

"We need grade separations at the Johnston Street, Victoria Street, Bridge Road

and arguably Swan Street intersections or a tunnel under the lot. If you can get the major through traffic down by dropping Hoddle St/Punt Rd, not only does the through traffic benefit, but the cross-traffic, including buses and trams, benefits as well.

"In the context of the MCG, it would mean the above-ground route could more readily cope with access/egress from places like the 'G and surrounding areas, because the through traffic is underneath. There also needs to be pedestrian overpasses on the south side of the MCG to get people directly to Richmond station."

Time will tell.

“We are strongly committed to it, but it’s not going to be cheap,” says Negus of an airport rail link. “You could upgrade the bus system in the interim, and possibly widen the CityLink part of the Tullamarine Freeway out of the city and create a transit lane for buses and taxis. But they need to get going on plans for a fast rail link to the airport now.”

“Yes, it’s a big challenge and it can be frustrating,” Negus says of the continual battle for government funding and placing transport higher on the priority list of ministers. “We need to make sure that governments understand the importance of transport. Health is important, education is important, but so is transport.”

Big road and rail projects are a major part of Negus’ role, but he feels technology advances have the potential to have a very significant impact on those key pillars of choice and mobility. Improving the travel information available to motorists and public transport users — along with improved smarts in cars — is high on the list and is rapidly emerging in Europe.

“While there is a lot of public transport information available, nowhere is that put together so you can get the train, tram and bus real-time information together with road travel times in one location,” says Negus. “What we want is a multi-modal, real-time travel information system, so that if I want to go from A to B, before I leave home I can get real-time information about which mode of transport will be most efficient.”

RACV studies show that improving the quality of country roads, by removing trees and installing wire barriers, can save up to one third of car crashes. In the last three years, 40 per cent of fatalities in regional Victoria are single-vehicle, run-off-road incidents, generally involving trees.

Negus says vehicle-to-vehicle communication technology, whereby cars can talk to each other while on the road, could significantly reduce the number of crashes.

It’s one of many advances in our vehicles and systems that Brian Negus feels will ultimately help ensure Victorians are safer and travel more efficiently around our transport network. Now that’s a worthy aspiration, one that affects us all.

Read the full length story on the MCC website in our blog section and leave your comments about Melbourne’s transport issues.



Epicure chefs are cooking up a storm

The already high quality of the MCG dining scene received another ringing endorsement when two Epicure chefs took out Clubs Australia’s 2011 National Chef’s Table Award in October.

Blair Humphrey and Adriano Biondi had earlier wowed the judging panel at the Victorian competition in August, the chief judge noting that he had given the Epicure pair “perfect marks for the balance of those three courses — 20 out of 20 — a Chef’s Table first... perfect menu structure and composition”. They repeated the dose at the nationals.

The chefs are well-known to club diners. Blair is chef de cuisine at the MCG and was the Long Room Wine and Food Society’s Chef of the Year in 2009. Adriano is sous chef in the MCC Committee Room and the Members Dining Room.

Their success highlights the wealth of talent servicing the various dining rooms in the Reserve and throughout the ground. The weekday offerings in the Committee Room, for example, are outstanding, perhaps the equal of anything the fine dining set would encounter around town.

Wine prices are reasonable, too. There are several choices in the \$30 range and aficionados would be pleased to savour some special drops such as a 2006 Saltram No.1 Shiraz, available recently for a relative bargain \$85.

Members and guests can park under the grandstand, entering off Brunton Avenue’s Gate A. Take the lift to Level 2 and head for the Committee Room. Bookings are advised

Entrée
Ballotine of Victorian farmed salmon
mi-cuit with beetroot textures, avocado, Yarra Valley salmon caviar, frisée and herb salad

Main
Assiette of high country pork
Pan-seared tenderloin and creamed potato
Slow-braised cheek, spiced lentils, cinnamon and clove jus
Belly sous-vide and roasted crisp, baby spinach, apple and parsnip puree

Dessert
Marc de Champagne mousse
Orange and thyme sorbet
Soft-centred white chocolate and honey truffle
Orange caramel

on (03) 9284 2300. Meanwhile, see above something to get the lips smacking — the award-winning menu of Messrs Humphrey and Biondi...

Postscript: Epicure also won the award for “best food and wine matching and best table service”, for which MCG food and beverage manager Laura Turner was responsible. Well served, Laura.





Memories to cherish: Jonathan Dyer, Jacquie Murphy and three-month-old Henry were among hundreds of waiting list candidates who experienced the Members Reserve for the first time during the recent AFL season.

to the Richmond-Sydney game on August 14, booking lunch in the Committee Room.

“From the moment we long-suffering Tigers supporters arrived at the ground the day just got better and better,” they wrote in an email to the club after the match. “The staff were extremely helpful in letting us know where everything was, including the Parents’ Room.

“We were greeted by Alan at the Committee Room door and shown to our table. We enjoyed some lovely refreshments and a beautiful lunch. We made our way to our reserved seats, which were in a terrific position offering a great view of the ground.

“At half-time we returned to the Committee Room for afternoon tea — and what an afternoon tea it was! It was our son’s first footy game, and to see the mighty Tigers roar to a great victory and have him in my arms hearing the club song, well, needless to say, the whole event was a very emotional experience.”

Jason Weaven also told us of the great time he had with his three children, Harrison (10), Fletcher (six) and Isabella (four), at the Collingwood-Brisbane game on August 20.

“It was exciting to watch our team play, but to sit in the Members Reserve was a fantastic experience that we will never forget,” recalled Jason. “We have been to the MCG before to watch AFL and cricket games and the Commonwealth Games, sitting in many different areas of the MCG, but never before in the MCC members. It was something very special and unique.

“Your staff were very accommodating and helpful — exactly what you need when you haven’t been there before and don’t know where you can go. We had an awesome time.”

Waiting list offer extended to cricket

The club received a wonderful response from those on the waiting list who availed themselves of an offer to experience the Members Reserve during the AFL season.

The offer was part of our desire to increase engagement with the waiting list, now numbering more than 218,000 people, while they wait for membership. Those aged six years and older who lodged an email address with the club were able to purchase visitor tickets for up to eight home and away matches.

Buoyed by the response during the football season, the club has made a similar offer to

waiting list candidates for each of the Twenty20 Big Bash League matches at the MCG this summer.

Waiting list candidates may purchase a visitor ticket for themselves and up to two guests through Ticketek. But they’ll need to have provided us with an email address (68,000 have already obliged) so that we can send purchase details and keep in touch in ensuing years.

The football take-up was very strong and, pleasingly, the feedback we received was very complimentary. Jonathan Dyer and Jacquie Murphy took their three-month-old son Henry

FOOTY SCHEDULE SET FOR 'G

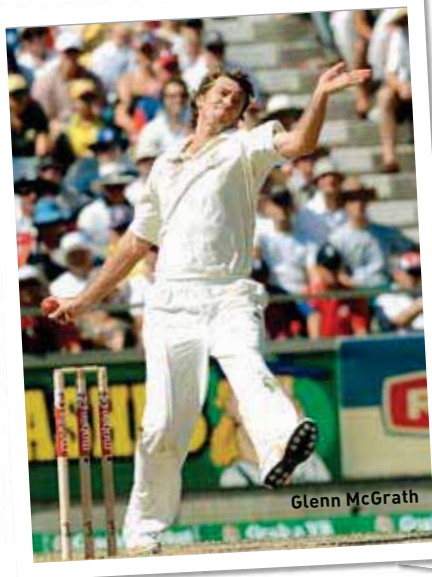
Those waiting anxiously on the AFL fixture before scheduling weddings, birthdays and holidays were relieved in late-October when the 2012 home and away fixture was released.

The MCG will again host 47 matches, starting with a Richmond-Carlton encounter on Thursday March 29. It’s the first of three matches at the ‘G in the opening round, concluding with Mark Neeld’s coaching debut as the Demons take on Brisbane Lions on Saturday March 31.

With Greater Western Sydney Giants entering the competition, the season will be played over 23 rounds, with shortened six-game rounds in weeks 11, 12 and 13 allowing each club to have a mid-season bye. The grand final will return to the last Saturday in September.

Further information about members’ arrangements for the football season will be communicated early next year.





Glenn McGrath



Brian Lara

Modern cricket greats honoured

Selectors were given a flying start when it came to electing the club's intake of Honorary Cricket members last month, with three of the greatest players of the modern era topping the list of candidates for consideration.

Australian pair Glenn McGrath and Shane Warne and West Indian superstar Brian Lara were automatic inclusions once they became eligible. The trio, whose records speak for themselves, are among 16 cricketers — including two females — recognised for their performances at international level.

Warne and McGrath were among 11 Australians in this year's intake, including former teammates Justin Langer, Jason Gillespie, Damien Martyn, Darren Lehmann and Andy Bichel. Also joining the club are gritty opening batsman Bruce Laird, left-arm off spinner Ray Bright and female top-liners Belinda Clark and Cathryn Fitzpatrick.

Leg-spinner Warne (708 wickets at 25.41) and frugal paceman McGrath (563 wickets at 21.64) respectively are the second and fourth-highest wicket takers in Test history. The pair was a driving force behind Australia's dominance throughout the 1990s and 2000s, as well as being key members of World Cup triumphs.

Left-handed Lara must surely rank alongside Viv Richards and Sir Garfield Sobers as one of the best West Indian batsmen to have played the game. A stylish entertainer capable of batting for long periods, the Trinidadian scored 11,953 Test runs (fifth highest in history) and holds the game's highest-ever Test score of 400 not out against England in 2004.

Lara is joined by England batsman Graham Thorpe (6744 Test runs at 44.66), Sri Lankan dynamo Aravinda De Silva (6361 runs at 42.97), New Zealand's Chris Cairns (3320 runs and 218 wickets) and Zimbabwe's Heath Streak (216 wickets at 28.14) as internationals included in this year's intake.

NEW HONORARY CRICKET MEMBERS

AUSTRALIANS

Male

Ray Bright
Andy Bichel
Jason Gillespie
Bruce Laird
Justin Langer
Darren Lehmann
Damien Martyn
Glenn McGrath
Shane Warne

Female

Belinda Clark
Cathryn Fitzpatrick

INTERNATIONALS

Chris Cairns (NZ)
Aravinda De Silva (SL)
Brian Lara (WI)
Heath Streak (Zim)
Graham Thorpe (Eng)

While statistics are not comparable with males due to the contrast in volume of matches played, batsman Clark and fast bowler Fitzpatrick are widely regarded as two of the finest female players to have represented Australia.

An opening batsman and long-time captain, Clark averaged 45.95 in Tests and 47.49 in ODI matches. In September, she became only the second female to be inducted into the ICC Hall of Fame. Australia lost only 17 of 101 games under her leadership.

Fitzpatrick was universally regarded as the world's fastest female bowler for her entire 16-year career. Figures of 60 Test wickets at 19.11 and 180 ODI wickets at 16.79 add weight to that argument.

A full list of the club's Honorary Cricket members is available on the MCC website.

Bat Taylor-made for museum

The treasure trove that is the National Sports Museum's collection received a significant boost recently with the addition of the bat used by Australian captain Mark Taylor in 1998 to make his highest Test score.

As is often the case, the story behind the object is the stuff of legend. The left-handed skipper, who was inducted into the Australian Cricket Hall of Fame earlier this year, had survived a major form slump in the two years before he emerged unbeaten on 334 at the end of the second day against Pakistan at Arbab Niaz Stadium in Peshawar.

At the time, his tally equalled the highest score by an Australian, made by Don Bradman at Leeds in 1930 (Matthew Hayden eclipsed it with 380 against Zimbabwe in 2003). Left to ponder whether to declare level with Bradman or overtake him, Taylor closed the innings before play the next morning and was widely acclaimed for his generous gesture.

Although played in batsmen-friendly conditions, Taylor's innings was one of remarkable stamina. His 334 not out came off 564 deliveries in 12 hours, with 32 fours and one six. Along the way he overtook the career runs tally of both Bradman and Greg Chappell.

Having occupied the crease for all of the first two days, he returned briefly late on the fourth day for the start of the second innings, going on to make 92 on the final day before being dismissed. He was, at the time, just the second player to score 400 runs in a Test match.

The bat now takes pride of place in the hall of fame display in the NSM, along with Taylor's 1989 Test blazer. Fellow inductee Doug Walters has also loaned two items of significance — a World Series Cricket shirt and a blazer presented to him by Queensland's Peanut Marketing Board as their 1965/66 Australian Cricketer of the Year.



ABOVE: Mark Taylor's bat from his marathon innings in India in 1998 is now on display in the NSM.

International body bowled over by *The Yorker*

The MCC Library's flagship publication *The Yorker* received important international recognition in October when it was judged the "best program, annual report or magazine" at the International Sports Heritage Association's 2011 communications awards in Woodville, Canada.

Librarian David Studham was delighted that *The Yorker*, which has been published since 1993 and is now available by subscription, had been given such a tick by ISHA. In another sub-section, *The Crooked Staffe*, the library's special year-long celebration of four hundred years of cricket in print, was commended with an honourable mention certificate in the mixed media and design category.

"It is such an honour to have our hard work on both *The Yorker* and *The Crooked Staffe* recognised by our peers in the sports heritage industry's leading body," said David.

The Yorker is compiled principally by MCC Library volunteers and staff who research and write on endless topics related to sport. It is not MCC-centric, however. Recent features range from left-handers in Test cricket and early football in Geelong to the origins of player numbers for footballers. And of course there are regular reviews of books with sporting themes.

On the menu for December's edition is a history of Spiers and Pond, the Bourke Street caterers who sponsored the first international cricket tour of Australia with the visit of H.H. Stephenson's XI in 1862. The Spiers and Pond story in Melbourne is told by Alf Batchelder, while Jim Blair chronicles the partners' subsequent success in England.

Ahead of perhaps the little master's last Test appearance in Australia, Ken Williams reviews the great Sachin Tendulkar's performances here.

You'll also find a fascinating account of a search by Ray Webster for the identity of a Sydney and Brisbane cricketer of the 1890s, A.A. Atkins, for inclusion in a dictionary of first-class cricketers.

The problem with Atkins was that he was only known by his initials and his nickname, "Rocco". No Christian name could easily be found for this peripatetic batsman who played first-class cricket for Queensland.

His life was a mystery but Ray's detective work, which included researching births, deaths and marriage offices, electoral rolls, post office directories, old newspapers and national and state libraries, turned up trumps, the Atkins identity finally confirmed by a prison photograph!



MCC librarians David Studham (left) and Trevor Ruddell play a vital role in production of the library's award-winning publication, *The Yorker*.

One of the many beauties of *The Yorker* is the opportunity it affords to showcase a broad selection of the countless images held across the heritage collections. Most would not otherwise see the light of day, no matter how worthy.

Members (and others) are encouraged to subscribe to *The Yorker* by completing the order form located at <http://tinyurl.com/mccyorker>. The cost for three editions annually is \$30 (members) and \$40 (non-members).

TELL US THOSE TALES OF YOUR TIME AT THE 'G

The National Sports Museum's current temporary exhibition in the ISS Gallery, Hidden History of the MCG, showcases the odd and the oddball from a fertile field of material unearthed by our curators and archival researchers. You can't help but be fascinated by the display.

This dynamic exhibition was launched in August by president Paul Sheahan and Minister for Sport Hugh Delahuntly (below,

ringing the Lysander Bell) with a promise that, as further quirky or interesting snippets came to hand, they would be added to the show.

Included in the exhibition is a newspaper article reporting the death at the MCG of Billy Murdoch, a champion batsman and Australian skipper of the 1880s who famously led his country when the Ashes legend was born after Australia defeated England at The Oval in 1882. At the time he was rated second only to

the great W.G. Grace in cricket's pantheon. He was also a fine captain and a monty to eventually be included in the Australian Cricket Hall of Fame, according to MCC Library volunteer Ray Webster.

Murdoch collapsed while dining in the MCC Committee Room. The tragedy occurred in February 1911 during a Test match against South Africa. Despite the presence in the room of four doctors, Murdoch died that afternoon. He was 55.

The Hidden History exhibition is interactive in more ways than one. Visitors can switch on the lights in a model MCG light tower, trigger the sound of the siren and listen to personal stories via headphones. Visitors are also encouraged to use a keyboard in the gallery to type in their memories of special experiences at the ground for possible inclusion in the display.

Members are encouraged to set aside some time for the Hidden History exhibition when next they're at the ground. It runs until May 27, with new material added regularly.

Record your stories by phoning (03) 9657 5594 or email them to mcgstories@mcg.org.au





Spotlight on MCG hall of famers

When the latest batch of inductees to the MCG Media Hall of Fame was announced at a Long Room dinner in August, it brought to 105 the number of press, radio and TV journalists honoured since the club established its “Rogues Gallery” of media personalities in 1979.

Rebadged the MCG Media Hall of Fame in 1999, there has been a recurring theme to the reaction of inductees, no matter how high up the media totem pole they might sit. Without exception they have been humbled by, and deeply appreciative of, their inclusion.

It’s all about their connection with our great ground, the centre of the universe to many and the undisputed home of sport. *The Age’s* Rohan Connolly, clearly overcome, said it all: “I can’t say how much this means to me. I feel like I’ve grown up in this place.”

Senior photographer Michael Dodge tried hard to top Connolly. “It’s the most important moment of my life to be here tonight receiving this award,” he said, citing his joy at covering events such as Shane Warne’s 700th Test wicket at the MCG and noting that “freezing moments in time like that are the things that are most important to us”.

Another highly regarded photographer, Wayne Ludbey, who started as a cadet with Standard Newspapers in 1981, spoke glowingly about his favourite patch while admitting almost sotto voce that occasionally he had some inside running, being the brother-in-law of Jim Stynes!

Herald Sun journalist and 3AW commentator Jon Anderson started his career in the same year as Ludbey. He spoke of his affection for the stadium, as did Sebastian Costanzo who has been a photographer with *The Age* since 1975.

Peter Le Grand, a radio commentator with 3UZ, 3DB and 3GL/K Rock for 33

years credited earlier inductee Don Hyde (who attended the function) with his getting a start on UZ and recalled the great E.J. Whitten’s generosity with adidas products, among many admirable traits.

Most footy fans will recall Clarke Hansen as part of the ABC commentary team but how many would appreciate that he was bringing you all the action for 30 years? Stephen Rielly is another familiar name, writing football for the *Geelong Advertiser*, *The Age* and *The Australian* since 1989.

The late Doug Heywood was also recognised for his contribution to the sporting media, mainly through his silky-smooth football commentary on 3AW and ABC radio and television. A very effective MCC committeeman (1988-96), Doug was represented at the function by daughter Virginia.

But nobody has had a closer association with the MCG than Kevin Bartlett, who played the majority of his 403 games on the ground and later forged an outstanding media career that began on *World of Sport* in 1984. He since has worked on most radio stations in town, written for the *Sporting Globe*, *Herald Sun* and *Sports Weekly* and hosted Fox Footy programs. KB spoke on behalf of all inductees in

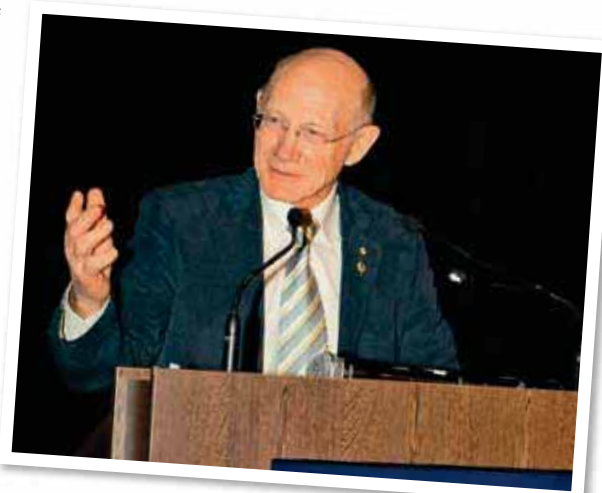
thanking the club for managing the hall of fame and told the story of how he met his wife Denise at the MCG. It was 1967 at a non-Richmond game when Kevin and Billy Barrott, the latter accompanied by Denise, were checking the opposition for the coach.

Debonair Billy went about his work conscientiously but KB had other things on his mind, principally “chatting up the lass” and winning the day. Another Bartlett goal at the MCG!

MCG Media Hall of Fame Inductees

Jon Anderson	Kevin Bartlett
Rohan Connolly	Sebastian Costanzo
Michael Dodge	Clarke Hansen
Doug Heywood	Peter Le Grand
Wayne Ludbey	Stephen Rielly

ABOVE: The inductees of 2011, from left — Wayne Ludbey, Sebastian Costanzo, Jon Anderson, Peter Le Grand, Rohan Connolly, Stephen Rielly, Kevin Bartlett (also at right), Clarke Hansen, Virginia Heywood (representing Doug) and Michael Dodge.



CATS DELIVER... THREE

The classy Cats snared their third flag in five years on the first Saturday in October.

After six months jockeying for favouritism, the two standout teams of the 2011 AFL season, Geelong Cats and Collingwood, met at a wintry MCG on the first Saturday in October to settle the score.

With 99,537 looking on, it was the Cats who triumphed by 38 points, kicking away with five goals to nil in the final term after three quarters of entertaining, high-pressure football befitting the occasion.

Jimmy Bartel was sublime in the conditions, taking out the Norm Smith Medal to sit alongside his third premierships medal as the Cats recent dominance rivals the Brisbane Lions' hat-trick (2001-03) and the great Hawthorn teams of the eighties.

Despite Melbourne's big wet over the preceding 48 hours, the MCG playing surface was in immaculate condition. Cameron Hodgkins (pictured here with assistant Tony Gordon) and his team are to be commended for the quality of the arena presented for play.

Earlier in the day, thousands of MCC Full members took their place in the queue outside Gate 2 for walk-up seating (see breakout far right). While around 6500 members had lined up by the time gates opened at 8.00am, several hundred endured a long night in cold, wet conditions to ensure they secured their favoured vantage point. Many used novel approaches to stay warm, including one in a panda outfit!

Once inside, an orderly allocation of seat tickets followed before many members settled in for some of the hearty breakfast offerings around the Reserve or sought comfort in the MCC Library or Long Room. Understandably, some of the overnight campers returned home for a quick nap before the big game.

In the Frank Grey Smith Bar, members were treated to the talents of musicians Laura K Clarke and Tim Wild, a continuation of an initiative throughout the finals series to inject further atmosphere around the Reserve. They returned post-game to perform as members kicked on well into the evening, singing plenty of old favourites.

As the day progressed, focus turned to the public turnstiles where the MCG welcomed its three-millionth patron for the 2011 AFL season around midday. Cats supporter Jane MacCallum from Templestowe was the lucky fan, scanning through Gate 1 in the Ponsford Stand to be greeted by MCC events general manager Trevor Dohnt with the good news.



Jane won a \$400 MCG Superstore voucher and dinner for two in the Members Dining Room — a great prize just for coming to the footy! It was a strong year for crowds at the 'G, the season total of 3,069,471 drawing an average of 56,842 per match, up from 56,036 in 2010.

The club hosted a number of distinguished guests in the Committee Room. Among them were Federal MP Bill Shorten (pictured above

with wife Chloe and president Paul Sheahan, a happy Cats fan), Archbishop Dr Philip Freier, BHP Billiton chief financial officer Alex Vanselow, Mirvac chairman James MacKenzie and British Consul-General Stuart Gill.

On the sporting front, then Melbourne FC caretaker coach Todd Viney, 1962 Brownlow medallist Alistair Lord and his twin brother Stewart (both Geelong premierships players)

OUT OF FIVE AIN'T BAD



RESTRICTED MEMBERS VIEW THE BIG ONE

With wet weather forecast, the club announced early in grand final week that it would review the early walk-up numbers before determining whether Restricted members would be afforded access.

So it was that after the initial queue cleared, the walk-up rate of Full members was such that it was felt the Members Reserve may not reach capacity.

At 11.15am, members were informed via our website, social media channels and some media outlets that entry tickets would be sold to Restricted members at 11.45am. The tickets would cost \$245, or \$158 for Restricted Junior members, and provided an opportunity to obtain one of the limited number of Level 4 seats or available standing room.

As this was the first time Restricted members had been permitted to attend an all-Victorian grand final, reaction among the membership was understandably mixed. Many queried the ticket price or felt the late decision disadvantaged country members, while others were simply delighted to have the rare opportunity to witness a grand final.

In the end, more than 400 Restricted members purchased an entry ticket and the Members Reserve was fewer than 300 short of capacity. A fine result, given the weather, but as is done annually, we will review all aspects of our operation of the Reserve to ensure we maximise capacity and comfort for our members on the biggest day of the football calendar.

represented football, while Test cricketers Ashley Mallett, Tony Dodemaide, John MacLean and Colin McDonald were also among the gathering.

The much-hyped pre-match entertainment arrived in the form of old rocker Meat Loaf, performing a 12-minute medley of classics in the countdown to the first bounce. Then it was time to find out who would be AFL premier.

Cats midfielder Travis Varcoe took just 10 seconds to boot the first goal, signalling his team's intentions. While the match was in the balance until the last 15 minutes, there was no doubting the deserving winner.

Cats skipper Cameron Ling, who later announced his retirement, kicked the final goal of the game before the final siren sparked celebrations around the stadium... and Pies fans were left to ponder what might have been.

Netballers prepare for finals action



Nugent bows out in style

Long-standing Lacrosse Section chairman Barry Nugent bid farewell to the role at the section's annual presentation dinner at the MCG in October after eight years at the helm.

Barry leaves with a remarkable record of voluntary service. He has taken on several positions in the section at various stages, including roles as diverse as treasurer and coach.

Barry has also clocked up more than 350 games as a player and been a long-time promoter of junior players. He will continue in his role as State League coach and remain on the committee, but there are big shoes to be filled.

A highlight of the presentation was the awarding of life membership to Richard Ellingworth, who became just the 16th life member of the Lacrosse Section, which was founded in 1896. Richard (pictured below receiving life membership from Barry) has been a big part of the lacrosse scene for many years, having played more than 350 games as well as coaching the seniors and juniors.

Marty Hyde took out his second Fairest and Best Trophy, having won it previously in 2005. Marty represented Australia at the 2010 World Championships.

The Lacrosse Section is developing a promising crop of junior players. For more information about the section, please contact secretary Rob Pettit on 0411 496 149.



The club's netball teams were in the final stages of their debut season as our deadline approached, with early results quite encouraging.

There are three MCC teams playing at the State Netball and Hockey Centre on Monday nights in the Parkville Netball Association.

With two matches remaining before finals, the number one team (pictured above) is undefeated and sits atop the Division A1 ladder. They've already booked a spot in the semi final on December 5 and a win would

set them up for a shot at grand final glory on December 12.

The MCC2 outfit is fifth on the ladder and needing to win both of its matches to sneak into fourth place and compete in the finals. The third team hasn't had as much success and sits in seventh spot, out of finals contention.

Interest among members has been very strong in this inaugural season, so much so that the club is likely to expand in 2012, entering additional teams in the association's various divisions.

Demon pitchers just Ace

The MCC Baseball Section has commenced the 2011/12 season in fine style with the first nine in third place and well in contention after nine rounds. The team had a 7-2 win-loss record as we went to press.

It has been a busy couple of months around the section, with two big signings pre-season. One of Victoria's leading pitchers, Matt Blackmore, was brought in to bolster the bullpen and former Claxton Shield coach and US professional David White is on board as pitching coach.

Pleasingly, pitcher Andy Mann made his Melbourne Aces debut in the Australian Baseball League, while Blackmore is also on the Aces roster. The selection of Mann at the higher level has prompted the MCC to take on a pitching import, Adam Rowe, for the remainder of the season.

A left-armer from Ohio, Rowe was drafted by Kansas City Royals in 2004 and remained with the Major League



Baseball team until 2007, when he signed with Fargo-Moorhead Redhawks in the independent Northern League. After spending three seasons with the Redhawks, Rowe spent time with Rockford River in the same league before suiting up for El Paso Diablos in the American Association.

Members can keep an eye on the progress of our baseballers at www.melbournedemons.baseball.com.au.

Recognition for two champs of the sporting sections

Demon champion Hassa Mann and MCC hockey's John Tait were most worthy recipients of the club's prestigious Hans Ebeling Award for services to the club's sporting sections at the sections' annual dinner on November 16. Both men boast an extraordinary connection to their club and their sport.

Hassa, the boy from Merbein who became a triple premiership player for Melbourne (1959-60 and 1964) and later served as a director of the club (1989-92) and CEO (1992-97), is "widely regarded

as one of the most treasured figures to have donned the red and blue colours in the modern era".

The citation also notes that Hassa has remained involved with the club for many years in a voluntary capacity as a director of The Bentleigh Club and in assisting with various club activities such as organising reunions and the production of publications. He is, and has been for a long time, part of the furniture at Melbourne.

Hassa played 178 games for the Demons, was All-Australian, best and fairest three

times and a member of the Team of the Century, among many accolades collected both here and interstate.

John Tait has been an outstanding contributor to the MCC Hockey Section since he started with the club as a 14-year-old. He has played nearly 700 games and still takes the field after 38 years wielding the stick.

Most importantly, life member John has filled nearly every administrative position since 1978, including club secretary (1989-92), men's chairman (1993-95) and club chairman (1996-2000). He also was a Victorian Hockey Association committeeman from 1983 to 1986.

There were two major initiatives during John's time in office. First came the introduction in 1989 of two merged teams of ladies to form the MCC Women's Hockey Section, which has been stunningly successful.

Next was the joint venture with Melbourne High for the building of a synthetic pitch and clubrooms, completed to widespread acclaim in 1995. Little wonder that a proponent of John's Ebeling Award offered that "when others falter, he is always the grand statesman, the collaborator, the historian and peacemaker".

We can't beat that commendation, which certainly puts paid to John's award in 2000 of the David Pettit Trophy for the Unsung Hero!



John Tait and Hassa Mann (front row, third and fourth from left) amid a sea of Hans Ebeling Award winners at the Sporting Sections Annual Dinner in November.

Hockey girls take home the flag

The MCC Hockey Section capped off a fine season by snaring three premierships in September, including a win by its top women's team in State League 2.

The girls went through the season undefeated, narrowly eclipsing Footscray 3-2 in the grand final at the State Netball and Hockey Centre to return to the top division in 2012.

The grand final weekend also saw victory to the Women's Metro 1 team over Camberwell 2-1, while the Men's Metro 3 East team won 4-3 with an overtime golden goal.

The first goal in the State League 2 clash came from a one-on-one with the Footscray goal keeper, when Sarah Calthorpe skilfully evaded the defender. This was followed by a goal by Caitlin Jones on the left post after a great ball from Alison Upton.

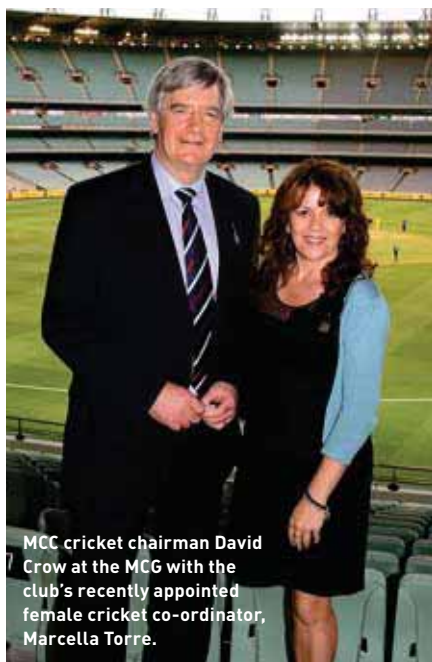
The girls went into the half-time break leading 2-0 but knew that Footscray would come out fighting in the second half.



Co-captain Carla Bond seemingly sealed victory with a goal from field play in the second half, her 33rd goal for the season at the staggering average of 1.7 goals per game. However, the Footscray girls were not

going to finish their season without one last go and quickly scored two goals. The last five minutes seemed to go for hours, but the defence held firm to ensure a well-deserved victory for the MCC girls.

Women's cricket team in good hands



MCC cricket chairman David Crow at the MCG with the club's recently appointed female cricket co-ordinator, Marcella Torre.

When the MCC set about creating the first-ever female cricket team in the club's 173-year history, the to-do list was lengthy.

First cab off the rank, though, was to identify a capable co-ordinator with experience and a working knowledge of the women's game to lead the way. Enter Marcella Torre.

Marcella, a former left-arm orthodox bowler good enough to play nine games for Victoria in the late-nineties, has spent the last five years as Cricket Victoria's cricket operations manager. Her experience in charge of the female high performance program, including team manager of the VicSpirit outfit, leaves her ideally placed to advise on how to advance the MCC's plans.

"We are building a team from the ground up and creating our own history," she says passionately. "The MCC is not interested in simply poaching players from other clubs to make a team, as that will not help grow the game."

She has wasted no time in her pursuit of everything needed to have the red, white and blue on the field next summer. But where to begin?

First step is securing a coach, with several names already on a short list for discussion in the months ahead. Then comes the unenviable task of attracting enough players of a suitable standard to make for a competitive team, initially in the VWCA second division and ultimately the top grade.

"We believe there are some quality players out there who are not already aligned to a club, particularly in the 15-18 age group," she says, adding that those playing indoor cricket are another potential source. "Hopefully the MCC's history and reputation in cricket will be an attractive proposition for budding players."

MCC members who either wish to play or know others who are potential players at club level are encouraged to contact Phoebe McWilliams on (03) 9657 8985. We'll have more news on plans in the coming months.

"We are determined to make a significant contribution to developing women's cricket and having a team in elite competition is a core element," says MCC Premier Cricket chairman Michael Sholly. "Marcella's knowledge of the women's cricket system will prove invaluable during this process."



A NEW BEGINNING...

Melbourne Football Club head coach Mark Neeld (front) has wasted no time building his off-field team ahead of the 2012 AFL season. With Mark at the MCG are (from left) Aaron Greaves, Brian Royal, Andrew Nichol, Paul Satterly, Jade Rawlings, Leigh Brown, David Misson, Todd Viney, Robert Jackson and Adam Paulo. MCC members who support the Dees can show their true colours by purchasing a dual MFC/MCC membership. Both clubs' websites have all the details.

Really keen on their tennis

Participants from the MCC Real Tennis Section and the Royal Melbourne Tennis Club pose for the camera during their interclub match at Romsey in October. The MCC emerged victorious, and has won all its interclub matches this year.

Sometimes described as a mix of tennis and squash requiring the strategies of chess, real tennis is played on an indoor court with a net. Players use old-style wooden rackets and solid, hand-made balls. It's a game for both men and women and a unique handicapping system allows players of varying ability to be competitive.

MCC Real Tennis secretary Iain Buchanan will be pleased to field inquiries from members on 0417 565 215.



Goalie waves flag on record career

Nowhere among the cavalcade of retirees feted at the MCG on grand final day did you see David Flegg, although his contribution to AFL matches should not go unrecognised.

David, an MCC member for more than 25 years, retired as a goal umpire at the end of the season after a VFL/AFL record 337 matches. After breaking the previous mark of 335 games, he manned the MCG goal square one last time in the Round 23 Hawthorn-Western Bulldogs encounter before calling it a day.

"I've seen too many people go on one year too long, both players and umpires," the 47-year-old said of his decision to retire, after coming back from an injury-riddled 2010. "I could see my performance slipping slightly, so I felt the time was right."

David's resume is formidable. He umpired three grand finals (1991, 1993 and 2006), 19 finals and two international matches. He was declared Goal Umpire of the Year by the AFL Umpires' Association (AFLUA) on no fewer than seven occasions.

Off the field, his passion for umpiring knows no bounds. A life member of the AFLUA, he has served as the association's historian/statistician for nearly 20 years,

meticulously compiling the records of every VFL/AFL umpire in the history of the game, among other worthy projects.

"David is considered one of the greatest contributors to umpiring within Australian football," said Victorian Football Umpires' Association president Peter Kelly. "His extraordinary achievements at the highest level are matched by a contribution to the broader football umpiring community."

Reflecting on his career highlights, David says it's hard to go past those three grand finals. The first in '91 at Waverley was particularly special because he umpired with close friend and fellow MCC member Leigh Keen. However, earning selection for the 2006 decider meant just as much because of the 13-year wait to return to the last Saturday in September. And he awarded the final goal (to Ben Cousins) in what was ultimately a one-point result.

Of 1993, he says "no" before the question is finished. He wasn't the umpire who adjudicated the famous Michael Long running goal in the decider that Stephen Silvagni so animatedly claimed to have touched. He was at the other end!

David was approached by the AFL within a week of retirement to be a trainee timekeeper



in 2012. It was an offer he accepted gladly, even if it means he'll have fewer opportunities to use his MCC membership.

"I use my membership to watch the cricket more than anything else, because I haven't needed it to access footy matches," he says. "After retiring, I went to every AFL final this year in the Members Reserve. To be a member and to be able to use those wonderful facilities any time I like, it's fantastic."

One suspects it may be some time before this dedicated member of the umpiring fraternity has a free weekend in winter. But the game of football is better for that.

Member Jim lends a helping hand

As the third anniversary of the Black Saturday bushfires draws near, it is timely to acknowledge MCC 50-year member Jim Usher's contribution to a book that has raised \$100,000 for CFA brigades involved in the firefight.

The book, *Footsteps in the Ash*, is a record of the devastation of the St Andrews and Strathewen communities where 37 people died and 117 homes were lost in the intense February 2009 fires.

Jim and co-author Mac Gudgeon interviewed 80 survivors and 65 firefighters to compile the 276 pages of compelling stories and photographs.

Both are long-term residents of St Andrews and were close to becoming victims of the

fires themselves. Flames were less than a kilometre from their homes when a wind change swept the fires in a new direction, at the same time killing many of their friends including actor Reg Evans and his artist partner Angela Brunton.

They worked on the interviews and photographs for 10 months, in the process becoming a listening post for the trauma of locals, many of whom are still working through the tragic events of that day.

"To this day, I can't believe how most of those we interviewed survived," Jim said. "Their stories are harrowing and a tribute to the capacity of the human survival spirit, but there were also many miracles that day. "People survived fighting the fires in their

homes, or sheltering in dams and swimming pools, in pipes under the road, in culverts and even wombat holes. Two families, one with a young baby, buried themselves in the mud of Diamond Creek.

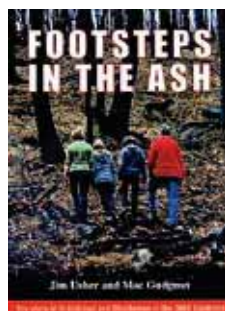
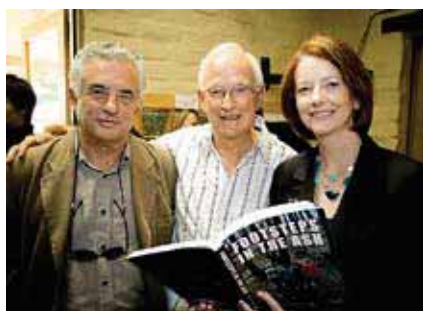
"They were saved when a sudden gush of water seemingly came from nowhere, dousing the flames from burning embers that had crashed around them. When they emerged from under the shelter of a blanket, two lyrebirds were peering curiously at them," Jim said.

He also told of another story where a mother of two young girls stood on a kitchen table and screamed at the fire as it burst through the ceiling: "You are not going to take my children."

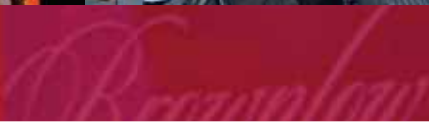
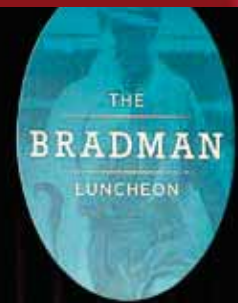
Production of the book was a full-scale community effort. Everyone who worked on it did so gratis, enabling the entire proceeds from the 5000 copies sold to be distributed to the St Andrews and Arthurs Creek/Strathewen CFAs, with contributions to other brigades that helped fight the fires in the two communities.

Jim joined the MCC in 1957 and received his 50-year membership four years ago. His sister, Jill Grace, is an MCG guide.

There are fewer than 100 copies of the book remaining for sale. They are available via phone (03 9808 6622) or at www.bpabooks.com.



Authors Mac Gudgeon (left) and Jim Usher with then Deputy Prime Minister Julia Gillard at the launch of *Footsteps in the Ash*.



Support for functions grows and grows

Members in their droves are taking advantage of the number and variety of club functions on offer and those who haven't yet "joined the party" are invited to do so. Traditional get-togethers such as the grand final eve luncheon are always well attended (695 dined in the Reserve this year) and new functions are being well received.

For instance, the Comedy @ the 'G format has been a hit, 120 packing the Hans Ebeling Room for a pre-game laugh before the Collingwood-Brisbane night match on August 20. Top-line comics Dave Thornton, Zara Swindells-Grose and Jeff Green had their audience in fits.

The young members' Scotch Whiskey Evening on October 21 was another popular event, as was the special offer to members wishing to attend the MCC hospitality marquee for The Presidents Cup in November.

Grand final week always starts with a bang at the MCG. On the Monday we enjoyed the Sporting Sections Luncheon (with its 20th year in prospect) where Ian Cover and Tony Leonard entertained brilliantly around guest speaker Guy McKenna.

That evening, the Members Dining Room hosted the hilarious Coodabeens Brownlow Dinner, a sell-out show since the first edition in 2006. In what is always a light-hearted look at football's gala evening, members and guests adopted the personas of people involved in news-making events during 2011, reliving those moments with much hilarity.

On the Wednesday of grand final week the XXIX Club held its 55th annual dinner and it was a great success. Long-time member and former XXIX Club secretary Marcus Philips rated it the funniest dinner in memory, courtesy of guest speaker Kerry O'Keefe.

The former Australian leggie told of his admiration for Richard Hadlee, a great bowler who could move it in the air from half way down the pitch — not from the arm — and who was unerringly accurate, always finding the edge of O'Keefe's bat. Hadlee took 400-odd wickets in his career but "if he'd been playing against his own he'd have taken 800!"

Perhaps the gem of the night was O'Keefe's observation that there was one word that best summed up the reason for his mate Shane Warne's well-chronicled troubles over the years — "nightfall".

The Bradman Luncheon on August 26 is a highlight of the MCC calendar and this year's function maintained the lofty standards set since inception in 2001. Gerard Whateley compered, Greta Bradman sang beautifully two of her Pa's favourites — *Music of the Night* and *Ave Maria* — and Cricket Australia chairman Jack Clarke was guest speaker.

There was a switch to vaudeville early in the piece when Lindsay Kline and Ian Meckiff replayed the last over of the Tied Test, facing the frighteningly fast Wes Hall.

We suspect they'd been rehearsing but "Spinner" Kline revealed that, on watching a tape of the run-out ball some years later, he noticed that "Duke", at the bowler's end, had hesitated. "Why did you hesitate?"

"I was so shocked to see you hit the ball," was the Meckiff retort.

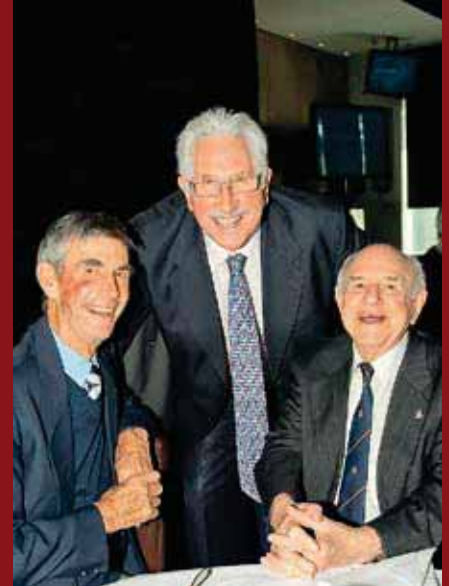
Jack Clarke's address was outstanding. He mentioned that club guest John Bradman, Don's son, "wasn't a bad sportsman himself, holding the 120 yards hurdles title in South Australia at one time despite having polio as a kid." He talked of The Don's contribution not just to cricket but to the country. "He inspired a nation."

Clarke, also a South Australian, recalled a fascinating conversation with The Don when South African Barry Richards was coaching SA. One training night Bradman saw the players laboriously running up a hill outside the Adelaide Oval.

"Why are they doing that," he asked of Richards. "To get them fit, of course," replied the coach. "I never got out because I was tired," said the little bloke, "and I never ran a lap of the oval in my life." This might set the PE industry back decades!

On financial matters, Clarke noted that the expected income from India's visit this summer will be 65 per cent higher than the 2010 Ashes series. That's remarkable.

The last word came from John Bradman, who appreciated the opportunity to attend the luncheon each year. "This is exactly the sort of function Dad would have loved. It has everything he liked about such affairs."



Tee off at prestigious Kingston Heath



As we head towards the New Year, members should mark their calendars for the first of two annual MCC golf days, scheduled for Tuesday February 7, 2012 at Kingston Heath Golf Club. Online bookings for this event will be taken from Monday December 12 until Friday January 13.

Participating in this event provides members with a rare opportunity to experience one of Australia's premier golfing facilities.

Two tee-off times will be available, 8am and 1pm. Should applications exceed capacity, a ballot will be conducted.

The all-inclusive package includes green fees, light lunch and presentation dinner with drinks that evening. Entrants must hold a club, VGA or WGV official handicap.

In the meantime, golfing enthusiasts among the membership are set to walk in the footsteps of the sport's elite at the forthcoming Members' Golf Day on November 28 at Royal Melbourne Golf Club, just a week after The Presidents Cup battle has been waged at the famous sand belt course.

Competitors will enjoy pristine conditions as they compete for the coveted President's Plate on the West course. Good luck to all.

MEMBERS' GOLF DAY

WHEN: Tuesday February 7
WHERE: Kingston Heath Golf Club
TIME: 8am or 1pm tee off
BOOKINGS: Open from December 12 to January 13
COST: To be confirmed

Celebrate Christmas at the MCG

Looking to take the hassle out of preparing Christmas lunch for your family? Why not leave it all to the experienced and talented chefs from Epicure and dine in style in the fine surrounds of the Members Dining Room.

Seafood, turkey, pork, vegetables and plum pudding will feature on a sumptuous three-course menu, including a plated seafood entrée, choice of two plated main course dishes and a spectacular buffet dessert. The fine fare will be accompanied by beer, wine, sparkling and soft drink.

There is no limit to the size of your booking so bring along the entire family. Santa Claus himself may even drop by for a special appearance.



CHRISTMAS DAY LUNCH

WHEN: Sunday December 25
TIME: 12.00pm for 12.30pm
WHERE: Members Dining Room
COST: \$165 (adults)
 \$130 (children 12-17)
 \$38 (children 4-11)
 *Infants free of charge

Bookings were still available at the time of going to print, so please visit the website or ring the club on (03) 9657 8888 to book or obtain further details.

Bookings close on Friday December 9 unless sold out beforehand.

Your functions calendar

DAY	DATE	FUNCTION	VENUE
Thursday	November 24	Annual 50-Year Members' Luncheon	Members Dining Room
Friday	November 25	Annual 50-Year Members' Luncheon	Members Dining Room
Monday	November 28	Members' Golf Day	Royal Melbourne Golf Club
Thursday	December 8	New 50-Year Members' Luncheon	Long Room
Friday	December 9	Members' Dinner	Members Dining Room
Sunday	December 25	Christmas Day Lunch	Members Dining Room
Monday	December 26	Boxing Day Breakfast	Members Dining Room
Tuesday	December 27	Women In Cricket Test Breakfast	Members Dining Room
Thursday	January 19	MCC/VRC Twenty20 Cricket Function	Jim Stynes Room
Thursday	January 26	Australia Day Luncheon	Long Room
Tuesday	February 7	Members' Golf Day	Kingston Heath Golf Club
Wednesday	March 28	MCG Footy Season Launch Luncheon	Members Dining Room

National icon sails in on Australia Day

America's Cup hero and Sport Australia Hall of Fame chairman John Bertrand AM will be our special guest at the MCC's Australia Day Luncheon in the Long Room.

Bertrand famously skippered the winged keel Australia II to victory over Dennis Connor's Liberty to win the 1983 America's Cup, breaking 132 years of American domination as well as breaking the longest-running record in any sport.

A world champion and Olympic bronze medallist, Bertrand represented Australia in five America's Cups and two Olympic Games over a 25-year period. The Confederation of Australian Sport voted the Australia II victory as the "greatest team performance in 200 years of Australian sport".

He is chairman of the Alannah and Madeline Foundation, which is a world leader in anti-bullying and wellbeing programs within Australian schools and now cyberspace. John is also chairman of the Sport Australia Hall of Fame, which is housed in

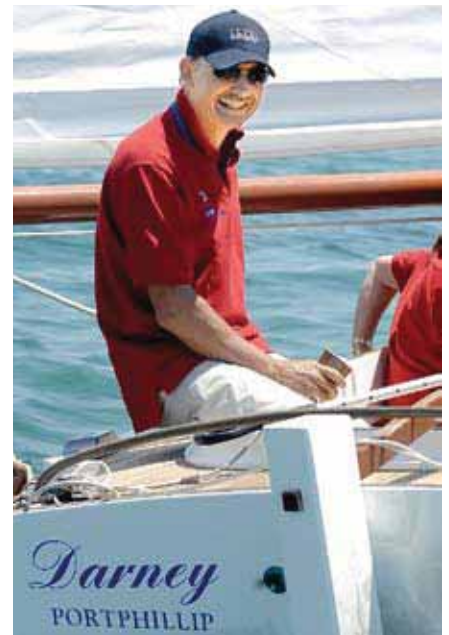
our magnificent National Sports Museum at the MCG.

MCC members and guests are invited to celebrate our national day in fine style at the luncheon, which includes a three-course meal with beer, wine and soft drinks. Bookings are now being taken via the club website or in person at the club.

AUSTRALIA DAY LUNCHEON

WHEN: Thursday January 26
TIME: 12.00pm for 12.30pm
WHERE: Long Room
COST: \$80 (members)
 \$90 (guests)

Please note:
 - Bookings will be taken on a first-in, first-served basis.
 - Members wishing to sit together should submit their forms together.
 - Successful applicants will be sent a letter of confirmation.



Early bird catches the breakfast

While the ever-popular Boxing Day Breakfast is already a sellout, members can still avail themselves of tickets to the Women in Cricket Test Breakfast in the Members Dining Room on Day 2 of the Australia-India Test match.

The breakfast will be hosted by media personality Angela Pippos, who has been our master of ceremonies at this function since inception. Details about our guest speaker and other entertainment were being finalised as we went to press.

Members are encouraged to bring up to four guests and make this a great start to the second day of play. However, you must ensure they have pre-purchased visitor tickets as it cannot be guaranteed that they will be available on the day.



Above: Former Australian cricketer Melanie Jones (left) with MC Angela Pippos at the 2010 Women in Cricket Test Breakfast at the MCG.

The package includes a sit-down breakfast, full beverage service and a reserved seat on Level 2 in front of the dining room to view the day's play. Bookings can be made via the MCG website or by obtaining a booking form from the club.

WOMEN IN CRICKET TEST BREAKFAST

WHEN: Tuesday December 27
TIME: 7.30am
WHERE: Members Dining Room
COST: \$75 (members)
 \$85 (guests)

STOP PRESS: MCC-VRC CRICKET FUNCTION

As we headed to print, plans were under way for an event in January that will be available for both MCC and Victoria Racing Club (VRC) members.

The joint initiative builds on the already existing reciprocal relationship between the two clubs (see over page for details about how MCC members can access the races at Flemington).

The event is to be held on Thursday January 19 in the Jim Stynes Room at the MCG, with the Big Bash League match between Melbourne Stars and Adelaide Strikers providing the perfect backdrop.

We recommend visiting the club website in the coming days for further details.

Saddle up at Flemington

If you enjoy horse racing as much as attending events at the 'G, then the MCC's reciprocal arrangements with the Victoria Racing Club (VRC) are just for you.

MCC members, along with up to four guests, may access the Members' Enclosure at Flemington for selected VRC-hosted race meetings during the 2011-12 season (please refer to table at right). Access to the enclosure is not applicable for any other VRC racedays.

MCC members and their guests must pay the admission fee to the racecourse of \$12 (\$15 for New Year's Day and \$20 for Lightning Stakes Day) and then proceed to the Raceday and Ticketing Office to obtain Members' Enclosure ticketing.

Upon presentation of your photo ID membership card, MCC members can obtain a complimentary Members' Enclosure pass and purchase passes (\$30 for Lightning Stakes Day and \$25 for all other days) for up to four guests.

VRC members' dress regulations apply and these can be viewed at www.vrc.net.au.



MCC MEMBER ACCESS AT FLEMINGTON

2011	Saturday December 10	Western Health Community Race Day
	Saturday December 17	Christmas Race Day
2012	Monday January 2	New Year's Race Day
	Saturday January 14	Chester Manifold Stakes Day
	Saturday January 21	Summer Heroes Race Day
	Saturday February 18	Coolmore Lightning Stakes Day
	Saturday April 14	Community Race Day
	Wednesday April 25	Anzac Day – VRC St Leger
	Saturday May 5	Flemington Green Fields Day
	Saturday May 19	Andrew Ramsden Stakes Day
	Saturday June 9	Queen's Birthday Race Day
	Saturday June 23	David Bourke Provincial Plate Day
	Saturday July 7	Flemington Finals Day
	Saturday July 21	Flemington Winter Race Day

GOLF COURSE OFFERS HARD TO TOP

With The Presidents Cup recently held in Melbourne, it's timely to remind MCC members of the opportunity they have to play at three of Victoria's finest golf courses at special rates.

Thirteenth Beach

Comprising two 18-hole championship courses, Thirteenth Beach is located just over an hour from Melbourne along the scenic coastline near Barwon Heads. Ben Jarvis, golf operations manager, says both courses are in fine shape.

"In my 10 years at Thirteenth Beach, our courses have never looked better coming out of the winter months," says Ben proudly. "MCC members thinking of booking a round of golf over the summer months are encouraged to do so as soon as possible. Our timesheets are available for bookings, but will fill quickly."

Green fees are set at the special price of \$49 midweek (normally \$59) and \$59 on weekends and public holidays (normally \$79). Non-MCC members will be required to pay full fees. Tee times must be pre-booked and

MCC membership cards presented upon check-in. Please visit www.13thbeach.net or phone (03) 5254 2922.

St Andrews Beach

Green fees for members at St Andrews Beach, one of Australia's premier courses, are just \$69 on weekends, public holidays and in the December 26-January 17 period — a 15 per cent saving.

Midweek rates (excluding the aforementioned peak periods) are just \$55 per member. Non-MCC members will be required to pay full fees. Discounted cards are also available for MCC members.

Your membership card needs to be presented on the day and bookings are available by phone, (03) 5988 6000, or email bookings@standrewsbeachgolf.com.au.

Ranfurlie

Part of the Amstel Golf Club in Cranbourne, this private course is available on Sunday (mornings may be restricted) and weekdays at just \$55 per MCC member, along with golf cart discount. Members may bring up to three guests at the discounted price.

Bookings are available six days in advance and dress regulations apply. Simply mention this exclusive offer when booking, phone (03) 9788 8288, or email Ranfurlie@amstel.org.au and present your MCC membership card on the day of play.



LEFT: Golfer Geoff Ogilvy practises at St Andrews Beach Golf Club at Gunnamatta.

THEY'RE WAITING ON A GOOD TIME

The annual dinner in July for those on the waiting list for Long Room Wine and Food Society membership is becoming a most popular and appreciated part of this highly successful special interest group's social calendar.

This year's attendees were doubly blessed. Not only were they sampling wines from one of the country's premier producers — Wynns of Coonawarra, presented by *Gourmet Traveller's* 2010 Winemaker of the Year Sue Hodder — they were treated to a feast prepared by the society's 2007 Chef of the Year, Epicure's Jeremy Woods.

The function attracted 200 MCC members and guests who enjoyed a spectacular seafood station and canapés on arrival in the Long Room before adjourning to the Members Dining Room for the main event.

If a sample of guests at tables 14 and 17 is any guide, the winemaker and chef were performing before a discerning audience. A man who really knows his meat, 50-year member John Knox, has spent a working lifetime in the livestock industry and he revelled in the main course duo of roast sirloin and slow-cooked osso buco.

Terry Christie and wife Jan were others who knew a thing or two about the business.

Jan started a winemaking course at Roseworthy College in Adelaide but changed direction before completing her degree. Husband Terry, 52, shared paper rounds and schooldays with noted chef and restaurateur Andrew Blake.

He also took up a share in the business when Blake's at Southgate was hitting its straps as one of the city's finest eateries. "I didn't know anything about the hospitality industry but I soon followed my investment and joined the restaurant team and eventually took up the reins," Terry recalled.

"It was a fascinating experience and I loved my time there. It's not every day you meet the president of Veuve Clicquot in Melbourne and get an invitation to dine with the upper echelon as a guest at their Champagne headquarters in France!"

Terry, 52, later moved into the accommodation industry as a natural extension to his hospitality experience and has now returned to the car rental industry, whence he came originally, as regional manager for Thrifty Car Rental.

He waits patiently for his wine and food society membership along with 400 others, a thirsty and hungry queue of MCC-like dimension, relatively speaking.



SEND TEXT, WE'LL DO THE REST

As we head into a major event period at the ground, the club's Discipline Sub-committee has yet again been forced to mete out punishment to those who refuse to comply with rules and regulations.

At its meetings in August and November more than 25 cases were heard, which is very disappointing. While the litany of offences varied widely, including abusing staff, fighting and intoxication, many were accused of failing to control the behaviour of guests or knowingly lending their membership card to another person.

Rather than dealing with problems themselves, members and other patrons are encouraged to use the anti-social behaviour text message service in operation at the MCG. The system allows patrons to send a text message via mobile phone to a number advertised inside the MCG, which is monitored by the police and security control centre. They then assess and respond where appropriate.

For the record, an MCC membership card is not transferable under any circumstances. It is also important to remind members that they are responsible for the behaviour of their guests at all times. If you purchase a visitor ticket to bring a guest into the Reserve, please ensure you accompany them where possible.

Recent penalties ranged from membership suspension for three months to three years, while three members were expelled. The club is serious about maintaining standards of behaviour among members and guests. Please help us in this regard.



LEFT: Celebrated Wynns winemaker Sue Hodder, pictured here with Long Room Wine and Food Society president Stuart Stockdale and Wynns marketing executive Luke Skeer, addressed the waiting list dinner in July. The wait listers may one day join (below) Robert Green, Wal Nicolson and John Moss at the members-only Old Bottle Day, held in January each year.



A focus on our members

For more than 20 years, the MCC has been periodically using member research to assist with decisions big and small about the operation of our club.

In addition to regular surveys about policy matters, the last two or three years have seen a regular capture of data pertaining to the satisfaction of members using the Reserve on match days. The results of those surveys for the recently completed AFL season are featured in the graph below.

The club has now taken that approach further with the recent introduction of focus groups to the suite of information held about the views of members. Seven focus groups comprising different subsets of members were conducted independently by Sweeney Research at their South Melbourne offices in late-September, on either side of preliminary final weekend.

"After reviewing the trends emerging from the club's annual survey of members in recent years, it was felt necessary to develop a broader understanding of the current membership offer," said Stephen Philp, MCC customer service manager.

"Specifically, we want to delve deeper into members' views on the current appeal of membership and whether they feel there are opportunities to expand the delivery of benefits to members."

As can perhaps be expected, views on some issues were at either ends of the spectrum. This in itself is one of the club's biggest challenges: Finding the right balance that satisfies as many members as possible while maintaining an equity and fairness that underpins the club's values.

Some of the more prevalent views arising from the focus groups were:

- ▶ There was an underlying perception that the MCC was not a club but rather a membership delivering benefits.



- ▶ Furthermore, there was a tendency to want to share the membership with friends rather than spend time with other members.
- ▶ Membership is seen to be AFL-centric. This was particularly the view among younger and newer members.
- ▶ When asked for their first thoughts of MCC membership, words such as "prestige", "privileged", "civilised", "history" and "comfortable" were the most common.
- ▶ There is a feeling that members now need to be more organised and plan further in advance when attending events at the MCG. "A decision to attend is not as spontaneous as it once was," said one focus group participant.
- ▶ While there was a desire among many to "get your money's worth" and attend AFL and cricket matches as often as possible, there are several factors that may affect attendance in the Reserve. Highest on this list are difficulty obtaining visitor tickets at high-demand games (leading to inability to share experience with friends), live television coverage, scheduling days and times of events and family/work commitments.

- ▶ There was some support for flexible payment options for membership subscriptions, in particular from those in a family containing several members.

This is plenty of food for thought as we take the club forward. We will report back in future editions with a deeper look at some of the above issues.

FOOTY TIPPING CLIFFHANGER

Congratulations Mark McCluskey, winner of the 2011 MCC website AFL tipping competition who hung on by the barest of cumulative margins from a fast-finishing Allan Campbell.

Mark, a Full member who has witnessed more than 40 consecutive grand finals in the Reserve, was in a four-way tie for the lead going into the last round. Proving he could handle the pressure, he tipped six winners to finish on 151 tips. He wins a Sharp television and the title of the MCC's premier footy tipster.

Campbell tipped eight in the final round to vault from nowhere into second position, just eight cumulative margin points away from top spot. He wins a NAB savings account valued at \$1000. Daniel Farrell, who led for much of the season, finished in third place, also on 151 tips. He wins a 52-week subscription to the *Herald Sun* newspaper.

FOOTY TIPPING FINAL LEADER BOARD

Mark McCluskey	151 (571)*
Allan Campbell	151 (579)
Daniel Farrell	151 (628)
Thomas Johnstone	150 (483)
James Parr	150 (487)

*Denotes cumulative margin

THE SURVEY SAYS...

The club has also been conducting monthly surveys of a random sample of members who had attended a sporting event at the MCG in the previous month. The aim is to assess the level of satisfaction members have with the various elements of their matchday experience.

Pleasingly, the results for September were in line with the averages across the entire AFL season, indicating that the ball was not dropped as the pace quickened during finals time.

The key results in each category can be seen in the table below:

We note in particular the lower number of satisfied members with respect to food outlets and, to some extent, bars. Each was rated against six criteria: Staff service, quality of product, value for money, menu options, queue times and speed of service. We will take on board these results and seek improvements to the member experience where possible.

	Overall satisfaction	Transport	Ticket purchasing	Comm-unication	Food outlets	Bars	Dining facilities	Merchandise
September	86	80	76	91	39	64	77	76
Season average	86	75	81	90	40	67	77	76

(Number equals percentage who responded with "satisfied" or "very satisfied")