

# Class of 74 Reunions

## Welcome to the 35<sup>th</sup> reunion of the Class of '74.

As a prelude to finalising some of the detail for this reunion, I looked into my archives and found a few notes that I thought I would share, together with some of my memories.

In the following pages I have given you a quick visit to the organisation, planning and night of each of our reunions. Interestingly, one of the most contentious subjects through 35 years has been partners: do we bring them or do we catch cabs home?

Yes, there is a bit more to the reunion than the night, and Gerard Dempsey will tell you he only comes to the reunion because he enjoys the ride through the organisation. I make no claim that these memories are the truth: I am just spitting out what has gone in, rattled around and stuck to the edges.

Doing this also allows me to remind you that there are people who have worked hard over the last 35 years to keep this group together. Some stats for you:

- Our class list includes 222 names, although some of those may have only been with us for a short while, like Frank Jones who I think spent a term with us. Were his weeks with us the inspiration for him taking holy orders?
- Over 100 people have attended at least once.
- At least 20 people have attended every reunion.
- About 1200 letters have been sent out
- Five reunions to date, no profit made, and luckily none has recorded a loss.

Now I admit freely I do a bit of glossing about the edges, but the real work for the last 35 years has been undertaken by his immenseness, Gil Reilly. Admittedly, the reason he keeps an eye on you all MAY be so he can sell you something (it was advertising, it is now a house), but there is almost nobody in our form that Gilly cannot identify, provide a brief history of and provide at least one amusing anecdote about their days at Dara. He will have a go at finding anybody, and everybody remembers him.

But like the blue whale, Gill's days as the largest creature in the reunion tank are counting down. As we get older, the Reilly route of ringing the bloke that was married to a your sister's first cousin are harder and harder to navigate. Luckily, Gil has found a new-age helper to guide him and his clapped-out salesman's Cadillac from that gravel road to the superhighway.

Terry Quinane joined us three reunions back and has bought some science and technology to the show. Terry has you Googled, has cross checked you on electoral rolls and has cruised through your facebook page. Between them, they are tracking down all but those who don't want to be found. As well as our man of technology, Terry is also banker and providore.

I hope you all enjoy the night. Let us know if you want to join the planning group for 2014 - Gilly will have some cold calls for you to do!

Leo



*Left: The B and C group from 1972. Was Conor a special guest?*

*Below: Cricket against St Eddies in 1974.*



# The history



Five reunions you reckon? Yep, see how many you remember.

1. The Caine photo from 2004 2. Tim, Pas and Geoff, 1999  
3. Keith, '99 3. Max & Pete '99 4. Me, Terry and Dom '99

## 1976: the cricket match

Many years have passed and I had all but forgotten this day. Gill remembered. I am not sure on so many of the details, but I can tell you our first attempt at reuniting with school chums was a game of cricket played at the Hawdon Street oval against the staff of Daramalan, followed by a BBQ in Haig Park. Gil was there, Bayliss and I were there. No idea who organised it. There were others and women, including my future wife. Mark Henry was there and bowled at a million miles per hour off three steps. Paul Caine was there and so was his then beau, Louise (I know because I was wearing her old man's creams!).

The result was a win to the teachers thanks to some allmighty slogs from Peter Dawson. I think his wife Ilsa also played, as did Mrs Morris, sending poor old Greg Bayliss into another year of lust-fuelled dreams.

Somewhere up at the school is a really crappy cricket kit full of battered pads and broken bats, but with a proper ridgy-didge scorebook that records all those that played that day.

## 1979: Gil's garage. The randy years

In 1979 most of us were 23 years old. Making our way in life, choosing careers, choosing partners and choosing partners again and again where we were able. In terms of percentages this probably had the highest number of women in attendance: we were obviously all glad to show off that we had one!

So, on a quiet night in 1979 it occurred to his immenseness that it was five years since we left school. He was having a party anyway, so with a week's notice we hunted up about 50 people and crammed into the garage of Bert's brothers house in Spence. While most of us were still regularly playing with it, Michael Bride came along with news of what it was really for: five years out from school and he had three kids!

## 1984: Daramalan Rugby Club: The rowdy years

The roaring rowdy years. As 28 year olds, most of us were in our prime, with wives, kids, responsibility and a reunion was a chance to forget all that for a night. This was a woman free reunion, but we did have a couple of the clergy from Dara wander up on the promise of a free drink, including one brother that nobody could remember being at the school.

With a bit more time we managed a broader celebration, with about 80 blokes in the basement of the Dara rugby club. My enduring memory of the event was Paul Mackenzie and Honza drinking "depth charges" – a schooner of beer with a shot glass of whiskey dropped in! Honza?

I also remember balancing the books by spending our last hundred dollars with a round of port, and being forever suspicious of clubs when \$100 of port ended up being one \$7.99 Morris cask poured into 50 glasses.

When the Club threw us out, about 20 blokes were loaded into somebody's van (Bill Finch's?). Sitting on the floor, we were driven to the "Bin". The van was heaven, because 20 minutes later I remember being jammed into the Bin, unable to move from the stairs leading to the toilets, discussing life with Mick Donnellan and Doug Read, and copping a testicle massage every time somebody went to the toilets, be they attractive women or blind drunk hairy bikie.

Being young and sporty, about 14 of us had attended a game of cricket on the oval on the Saturday afternoon and some of us with strong constitutions even made it to a family BBQ on the Sunday... somewhere. Was it Weston Park?





## 1989: Married with Children

Now Gil and I are sure we had a reunion every five years, but nobody has a memory of another venue. We are sure we missed one: was it 1984 or 1989? All we can think of is that the sleep deprivation caused by babies, the stress from trying to pay that mortgage and the emotional trauma of realising that we were over thirty made us miss this one.

## 1994: Daramalan School: The organising years

This was the big year for organisation. We had a Mass and remembered the alarming and growing number of departed classmates. The nicest part of being involved in the reunions for me was a handshake from Michael Callahan's dad at that mass. Michael was probably the first of our class to die, and the only one while we were at school.

We had:

- nibbles, including sausage rolls in buttered buns
- a roving roast
- grog, including Dara labelled wines (served by the Daramalan Hockey Club as a fund raiser, although any funds raised ended up in the staff's bladder);
- a raffle (did Damien Gilroy ever get his prize?);
- a drunken doorman
- a really drunken doorman flailing about in the gardens trying to find a gorilla to mate with, and
- a peanut throw!

Gil worked overtime with the whiskey when he should have been at Mass to provide the last three!

Gil was also in charge of nametags. If you got there at 7pm you had something that probably looked similar to the name your mother called you. If you go there after 7.30 you ended up with the name that Bert called you at school. If you got there after 8pm you got a name that he just made up. Garan Day

took matters into his own hands and spent the night wandering around tagged as John Carse. John has tried to make sure he attended every reunion since!

Just don't ask about the snag on the meat tray. No seriously, don't ask.

We even threw on a bus to provide a shuttle service to the city. That ended up being two trips to the city and one to outer Belconnen to deliver the previously identified Gorilla/peanut target/doorman home.

The next day's clean-up provided the hard task of finding Charlie Zappia's roaches in the courtyard garden: we couldn't corrupt the next generation.

## 1999: Bluebeat Café: Our Golden Anniversary

Bloody hell: we are all fat, forty and fucked! Well it felt like that sometimes.

We really went overboard on planning this one, starting in 1998. The feature that stands out of 1999 when I look at my files is **Conor McNamara found Management**. It is a bit like finding God, but requires more zeal and evangelism, and a new mobile phone every four months.

I suppose Conor was a reflection of what was happening to lots of us: we found ourselves in management, trying to focus our attention on careers and trying to find time for all those diverse interests that filled a life, like family, sport and beer.

Looking back I am not if sure Conor found the perfect work/life balance, but he did find Peta from his work and got her to balance his life. He made the poor girl retype the class list (a big effort for a two thumbed typist), had her prepare and distribute minutes from the meetings and even circulated "to do" lists. How the hell she ever found anything sensible to report in minutes is beyond me: I was there and all I can remember is Warren Townrow, Gil, Gerard Dempsey, Conor, Dave Kelsey, John McKee,



C and D in 1972, A in '74 and JKLM in '74, Honza and John in 1999.

Dom Mamoliti and Bill Hourigan sitting around drinking too much and telling tales. A lot of bottles of red wine died to make that reunion happen.

Boy, were we organised? A whole 14 months out we sought your views on what the reunion should be and received about three replies. Dick Smeltink told us four times on one sheet of paper that he didn't think we should include partners, and Pas Carnavale suggested the doorman stay sober at least until everybody was in the door.

He also thought that we should have awards. We did try to incorporate people's views, but ignored Dick and invited wives. While a dozen turned up the effect of these young women folk couldn't stop the talk of the night starting with Mrs Morris. She was the only teacher who responded to our invitation (Conor's agenda item 3.2: invite old teachers. Dom Mamoliti to do). She relit the flame that time had almost extinguished for quite a few of her ex-students . . . like Greg Bayliss.

We did a few awards. Of course, Honza in his school uniform won the least changed and Greg Turnbull with his five children won the fecundity award. Gil wanted to give something to Geoff White's wife, but she had to be content with a lifetime response from Gil that would make Dr Pavlov proud. Say "Whitey" tonight and he will start to drool.

We did have a special award for Mick Ward who was our first grandfather, but Mick was unable to attend. He did at least send us an obscene email to hang in his place, which provided a nice counterpoint to a letter from Father Paul Passant.

## 2004: The Turner Bowling Club: The enterprise years

Rapidly approaching 50 years of age, you would think we were almost ready for a quite night in the bowling club. Wives were again invited, and a few attended. As a group, your organisers were maturing: no excessive drinking – or designated drivers if there was, and a calm relaxed approach. Probably too relaxed. This was the closest we have ever gone to putting our hands in our pockets. Of the sixty-five people who said they were coming, about 15 didn't show. We ended up being saved because a number had paid before hand so we had their money to meet the caterer's bill. Our caterers did a great job on the night and there were buckets of food left over . . . and

not a Tupperware container in sight.

Highlights of the night included slipping 12 bottles of red past the club officials (thanks to Tony Goodwin for sharing Mudgee's finest) and the proof that Dara boys – and the odd wife – are never too old to blow a bit of dope out on the rinks!

Paul Caine proved he might be able to sell houses, but we should never let him take photographs. Mind you, his three out of focus grainy shots from 300 yards away are the only evidence of the night.

## 2009: School. Our contented years

With most of us approaching the public service magic age of 54, you would think we might have grown up a bit by now. Lets see. Tell me at about midnight.

In terms of organisation we have shown either:

- the benefit of our years of management experience, or
- the bitter twisted "not give a toss" attitude of cranky old blokes approaching retirement.

This has been a very relaxed lead up. Was it wrong to start the first meeting with a Leonard Cohen song? We have had very few meetings, chat a lot by email and have worked on the idea of "build it and they will come". I think the highlight of Gil's work is finding Tim Allen, who has been on the missing list since 1972. He is alive and working as a glass artist in Cairns, and is the only person to say "who" to Gil when he got that call.

When you get up tomorrow morning, write down a memory of the night. I want to see them and show them to your mates in five years!

## And what is to come?

### 2014: The retirement years

As we approach our 60<sup>th</sup> birthday celebrations, I hope there won't be too many of us working, although between second and third wives, lawyers working for first wives and the world's financial brokers, who can tell. Make sure you are there!

*Tony in 1999, Tim Rudi, Gerard and Bill in '99*

