

The MELROSE Re-Union – February 2014

by René (Chait) Sidley

[Ed – this reunion, so named because it was convened in place of a 50th reunion, took place at Grand Central, Melrose Arch, Johannesburg on Thursday February 13, 2014. Photos by Dr. Ian Kennedy and Shiela (Posen) Gien]

It was one of those perfect Johannesburg evenings weather-wise, and I was really looking forward to this reunion. I had driven past Northview the day before, and was really upset to see the sports fields, with long grass. The beginning of the year, with school just started, and the fields hadn't been mowed, and the school looked shabby.

I had looked up the Matric results and it was one of the most improved schools – wonderful. In 2010, there had not been a single matric pass, and in 2013 there was a 67% pass. How times have changed. I wondered who the headmaster was, and what sort of teachers, and pupils were now at 'our' school!



Onto our evening. Stan and I arrived at the same time, and some man walked up to him and shook his hand. I had never seen this man before, and I think it was mutual. Stan recognized him – Ian Kennedy. No. 1 had arrived!!!

I had phoned the restaurant to book the upstairs, and had been there to speak to the manager, and also made contact with the PRO, so we should have been on track. However, when I got upstairs, nothing was organized, so I got hold of a manager, and within minutes a table was set up for us, but not on the side I wanted, as there was already a party of about 10 people at a table, where I had wanted our table to be.

Then our class-mates started arriving.

I had labels, and wrote names immediately. I can't say we were a bunch of middle-aged people, because in reality, our children are middle-aged, so what can I call us – "*Pensioners*" – NO! – that won't do! We are all still young at heart.

Yvonne Kolby was one of the first to arrive - I recognized her immediately. The only one of the girls who I had no idea who she was, was Marjorie Holmes, but as the evening progressed, she looked just like the Marjorie Holmes I recall from school. I had no idea who Michael Meyers was, and it took a few seconds for me to recognize Kalman Datt. We all hung around chatting, with the staff of the restaurant complaining that we were in the way of the kitchen, and I politely told them that that was their fault and we weren't budging.



Being typically South African, most of the guys sat at one end of the table, and the girls at the other end, with Leonard Morein and Ian Kennedy flanking Estelle Brodie at the top.

I made a little speech, telling them about our little reunion in London (Brian, Elaine, Joel and myself), which prompted this one, and as a tribute, read out the names of those who were deceased. A little later Stan also made a little speech, admitting that he has trouble saying **no**, and because he tried to accommodate everyone, date-wise, nothing happened for the 50th.



We all reminisced, caught up with each other's lives, managed a short Skype-link with Brian in London, missed making the connection with Martin in California, and, overall, had a marvelous evening.

Yvonne sang* the school anthem – I had forgotten that had one, and then remembered that the words were written by someone in our year that had curly red hair. Anyone remember her? [Ed – the words are contained in the 'booklet' with the music, by van Opstal!] See the separate link to the file



showing Yvonne singing!

One of the boys totted up the bill, divided by 17 (we refused to allow Estelle Brodie to pay) and (not sure who the *accountant* was!!!) there was about R250 left over, after the tip; I donated this to charity.

I have to say that it was a marvelous evening, and one that has to be repeated. Unfortunately, time was too short to connect in any depth with everyone, and being in a restaurant, one can't really move around, but if I were to do it again, I would make everyone change seats every half hour.

I am so pleased I set up this event and that so many attended. I heard that some were reluctant to come but were so very pleased that they did, so I guess it was a great success and we had three *out-of-towners* Brenda from Durban, Kalman from Australia and Sheila from Florida, USA.

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More photos:



Brenda (Russell) Robinson,
Sheila (Posen) Gien, Beryl
(Slavin)



Estelle Brodie (aka Miss Kagan) and
Leonard Morein



Melvin Jaye, Mike Myers,
Kalman ('Cookie') Datt



Merle (Gordon) Waksman,
Yvonne (Kolbe) Droste

Merle (Gordon) Waksman, Yvonne (Kolbe)
Droste, Cheryl (Michels) Waner





Estelle (Kagan) with
Rene (Chait) Sidley

Stan Klaff with Yvonne
(Segal) Jacobson



Dennis Goldman



Giovanni (John) Coci



Peter Levor



Ian Kennedy
Dennis Goldman
Patricia DeZeeuw