

## **IVAN PATRICK MATHEWS: SENIOR MASTER, INSPIRATIONAL MENTOR AND LEADER, 1963-1967**



Ivan Patrick Mathews was born in 1918 in Lismore, Victoria. His parents were Arthur Mathews (1872-1932) and Ellen Winifred Doyle (1872-1965). The Mathews heritage goes back to 1770 in Co.Cavan Ireland, and the Doyle heritage goes back to 1790 in Kilkenny, Ireland.

Hugh Matthews (sic) and Margaret Mary nee Clarke emigrated to Victoria in the late 1850s and settled in Rokewood. They had 5 sons and 7 daughters (2 of whom did not survive). Arthur Mathews (sic) was their youngest son, born in 1872 in Rokewood. He married Ellen Winifred Doyle in 1902 and they raised at least seven children: Hugh Arthur (1903), Clarence (1905), Muriel Mary (1909), Gladys Agnes (1913), Aiden Joseph (1915), Ivan Patrick (1918), and Mary Alice (1921).

Ivan Patrick Mathews was born in 1918 at Lismore, Victoria, and grew up at “Helenslea” in Werneth. Werneth, Rokewood and Lismore are located south-west of Ballarat, over 150 kilometres west of Melbourne. The Aboriginal name for the area was Bongerimennin and the Lismore township as established by the British colonists was named in 1853.

Ivan’s father, Arthur Mathews, died in 1932 when Ivan was just 14, so life could not have been easy for a widow with a couple of children still at school. Ivan continued his education and passed the Intermediate and Leaving levels. He became a teacher at state secondary schools and obtained a BA from Melbourne University by 1943.

In 1940, Ivan Patrick Mathews enlisted in the Australian Military Forces at age 22 years and was based at the Mt Martha camp for some months. He was single and working as a secondary school teacher. His mother is listed as next of kin and residing at Werneth, but Ivan at this stage had been living at Barkers Road in Kew.

Mathews re-enlisted in the Australian Military Forces in 1943 at age 25 years. He was still single and living with his mother at “Greenways” Leslie Manor, west of Geelong. He was assigned to the Department of Defence Vocational Guidance Unit and later the Psychological Unit. He served with CMF 1942/43 and AIF 1943/46. He held the ranks of Sergeant, Acting Senior Seargent, Senior Seargent, Warrant Officer Class 2, and Warrant Officer Class 1. He was discharged in December 1946. He may have received a War Medal and an Australian Service Medal. He later became a member of the RSL.

In 1944 he became engaged to Anne Mary “Nancy” McCann who almost a ‘local’ as she was from Essendon. They married in October 1945 and established their home in Canterbury Road, Middle Park. They raised six children: Bryan, Helen, Vincent, Moya, Desmond and Aidan.



Teaching staff 1963. Mathews in front row fifth from left.

Mathews started at St Albans Albans High School in 1963 as the Senior Master, having taken over from Mr Sinclair. Mathews is mentioned in the student magazine that year as supporting the formation of the Students' Representative Council. His teaching forte was in English Literature and many students remember him for his inspirational guidance, as attested below.



1967 staff - Ivan Mathews is front row fourth from right.

Ivan Mathews did not stay long at St Albans. He left at the end of 1967 and was appointed Principal at Brunswick High School in 1968. He was aged about 50, which might have been fairly young to be promoted to a milestone position at a reasonably large suburban school. It is not known how Mathews' career progressed after this, but presumably he would not have retired from teaching until the early 1980s.

The 1980s was not a good decade, because Anne Mary Mathews nee McCann died in 1986 at age 68 and was buried at Warrandyte, Manningham City.

Ivan Patrick Mathews died in August 2006 at age 88 and was buried at Warrandyte, Manningham City.



**MATHEWS - Ivan Patrick (Chief)** Died peacefully at Carnsworth Nursing Home [in Kew] on Aug. 22, 2006. Loving husband of Nancy (dec.). Dearly loved father of Bryan, Helen, Vincent, Moya, Desmond and Aidan. Respected father-in-law of James, Jenny and Mandy. Greatly admired grandfather of Narelle, Fiona, Kate; Justin, Lucille; Steve, Mike; Jack, Tom and Sam; Patrick and Conor. Great grandfather of Ethan, Ben and Heidi. An inspirational father, teacher and friend. R.I.P.

## Remembering Ivan Mathews



**Barry Rayner:** There were some really good, inspirational teachers: people like Allison Gliddon, Ivan Mathews, John Conroy, Eric Ford, and Doug Hill. There were also several migrant teachers who did a wonderful job, in particular Mrs Kriksciunas, Mrs Burden, Nick Bolvari, and Paul Pavlov. Many staff, including people like Ivan Mathews and Alison Gliddon, would get together at weekends at somebody's place.

**Joan Butler:** When I arrived at St Albans it was such a great experience because it was the first time that I met people from various cultures. Those particular first students were very aspirational, very friendly. There was that incredible mix of nationalities and the sheer joy of being there. Many of the staff were young and I had excellent mentors in Ivan Mathews and Alison Gliddon - he was the senior master and she was the senior mistress.



and was already in the school.

**Leo Dobes:** Ivan Mathews taught English Literature and introduced me to Shakespeare, just like he introduced Shakespeare to a whole lot of other people. Mathews later went to Brunswick or East Brunswick as the headmaster, I believe. I once tried to get somebody enrolled at his school. The kid was a Czech migrant who came out after 1968 and he wanted to go to school, but he couldn't get in anywhere. I phoned up Ivan Mathews, because I knew him, and asked if I could get this kid into his school. Much to my dismay he said no, because the person concerned did not live in the school's intake area. And much to my chagrin the next day the kid phoned me up and said he'd gone round there on his own, went to the front office, enrolled himself,

**Peter Karol:** Once I was legally able to drive a car I was allowed to borrow either mum's or dad's car. I was the first person in the form to get their license, and certainly the first to get ready access to a car. So it was great fun taking a bunch of colleagues out for a drive. Sometimes we'd do this during lunchtime, but you had to be careful to get back on time. One day we got back late and Mr Mathews, the senior master, had us all lined up wanting an explanation. He knew I was the driver. "Whose car do you have?" he demanded. "Which one?" was all I could think of saying, because I would alternate between the two. He was a bit taken aback by my response, but calmed down when he realised I was fully licensed and had my parents' permission to use their cars. Mathews was an okay fellow, but he did tell us not to skip any classes in future.

**Alex Pliaskin:** I teach at Victoria University because I really love doing what I'm doing and feel

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that I can get across to the students. I feel as if I am doing something worthwhile. I can still hear the words of Ivan Mathews from 40 years ago when he said that ... “teaching is a no bull profession”. That inspires me.

**Christa Albrecht:** Mr Mathews is responsible for my becoming an English teacher. He gave me a lot of encouragement and read one of my essays to different classes. St Albans High was a tough time for me and he helped me to cope. Barry Rayner and John Morrison did too. ... It may interest people to know that one of the former students (me) has been living in Europe for 30 years and been teaching English as a Second language for 25 years.

**Henry Goralski:** Mr Mathews in the short term had a great effect on me. Up until then I took language and the classics for granted but he gave me a bit a love for that. I developed a bit of a thirst for reading and finding out more about the cultural side of life. My attitude changed because people like Mathews, who was an English master, stimulated your imagination. I remember doing Julius Caesar with him. When we started reading the book it made no sense to anyone, because that style of language was unknown to anyone who wasn't familiar with Shakespeare. After a month or so Mathews took over the English class and he made that book come alive for us all. He would stop at the end of each page and explain what the language meant and we speculated what was going through the minds of the characters. In this way we discovered how cleverly it was written. By the time we finished the book I developed a bit of a love for Shakespeare. Mathews excited my imagination by acting as a translator for old English and made it understandable and enjoyable.

**Marin Gunew:** I have fought against various ridiculous authorities, culminating probably in my largest challenge, which was when I was called up for National Service and Vietnam. I declined the invitation. They spent the next three years trying to lock me up. They didn't succeed. Being anti-military and anti-organised-religion, even I was surprised that I had an early member of the RSL (my English teacher and senior master of St Albans High, Mr Mathews) giving evidence on my behalf.

**Stefan Czyz:** Mathews was a very caring person and kept an eye out for me after that. When I mentioned that my bike wasn't working he brought half a bike from home so that I had spare parts to fix mine. He became our language teacher in Form 6 and was very good on stories. One school afternoon he took Lindsay Chatterton and myself out to play tennis at the Sydenham courts. We had a few sets and then came back to school. That's the sort of Vice Principal he was.

**Lindsay Chatterton:** Another occasion I remember going over to Joe Attard's at lunch time with a group of others and getting into a flagon of port. Then on the way back to school or maybe at the school we got picked up or were taken out to Mr Mathew's car, an old Vanguard. He read us the riot act. I am sure he could have done much more than that. He was a good person, big hearted, and would always talk to you first.

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Article written by Joseph Ribarow.

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