

VICTOR MAHORIN: STUDENT 1958 - 1963, SOCCER FAN



Victor Mahorin was of Russian-Ukrainian background and came to St Albans in the early 1950s. Victor was born in 1946 in Hannover, Lower Saxony, Germany, to Leonid Mahorin and Ariadna Sapozhnykiv.

Leonid Mahorin was of Polish-Ukrainian origin born in 1919 in Kalisz, Poland, and worked as a radio mechanic. His earlier family heritage is unknown. The Sapozhnykiv family heritage goes back to the 1870s in Petersburg, Saint Petersburg, Russia, but they must have moved to Poland, as Ariadna was born in Kalisz, Poland. Ariadna's mother was Vira Orbrutz who was from Konotop, Ukraine.

Ariadna was born in 1924 and her brother Michael was born in 1926. Sadly, their father died in 1948 not long before the rest of the family migrated to Australia.

Vira Sapozhnykiv nee Orbrutz may have remarried to Fedir Sapozhnykiv as they are listed as husband and wife on their Australian immigration papers. They arrived in January 1950 on the Langfit III and were housed at the Department of Immigration Holding Centre in Cowra, New South Wales.



Leonid Mahorin and Ariadna Sapozhnykiv had married in Bitterfeld, Germany, in 1945, and their son Victor was born in 1946. The family migrated to Australia in January 1950, arriving on the Langfitt III and being settled in the Migrant Workers Accommodation Division, Brighton Hostel, Tasmania. It is not known why they were sent there but there was a shortage of local labour at the time and some of the farmers needed fruit pickers: *All new Australians placed in employment will be engaged on essential works in which there is a shortage of local labour. They will observe the same conditions and will be paid the same wages as are prescribed for local workers. They will continue to live at*

the Brighton Hostel where they will pay for their own and their dependants' accommodation and will travel to their place of work at their own expense.

The National Archives show that the families had arrived together as displaced persons:

- MAHORIN Leonid born March 1919; Ariadna born January 1924; Viktor born April 1946;
- SAPOZHNYKIV Vira born September 1898; Mychajlo born January 1926; Fedir born June 1893. Mychajlo (Michael) is listed as being the supporter of his mother.

The families were separated on arrival, being sent to different states, but they reunited in St Albans. The Sapozhnykivs may have moved to St Albans about 1950 and built a house in Marsden Crescent. Michael became a forklift driver and later a storeman.

The Mahorins moved to St Albans about 1952 and were at first living in Elizabeth Street. They bought land in Marsden Crescent next to Ariadna's brother, Michael Sapozhnykiv, and Leonid built their home there. It's been said that Leonid was a carpenter, though his Displaced Persons List indicates he was a radio mechanic and his initial occupation in Australia was listed as labourer.

Leonid and Ariadna had two daughters who were born locally. Svetlana (Lana) was born about 1954 and was in 4A at St Albans High School in 1969. Cleopatra (Cleo) was born about 1955 and was in 3B in 1969, and was an editor of the school magazine in 1970.

Viktor Machorin (sic) started at St Albans State School in November 1952 and left at the end of 1957. It was a big enrollment when Victor started, as about 280 new students started that year at the small state school in West Esplanade that had previously had a maximum population of about 100 pupils. Nearly all of this new intake would have been young immigrants.

Victor probably started playing soccer during his time in primary school. In 1958 he was in the local Trident Ukrainian Soccer Team under the stewardship of Fedor Andriewski-Bevz and Ronald Craker; they played on the old Pinnacle Estate Reserve in Oberon Avenue. Other boys in the team included Peter Bevz and Leo Suszko. Peter Bevz recalls that the first game Trident played they lost 11-0 to Macabee - several years later

Trident played Macabee again and won 11-0. Trident later amalgamated with an Ardeer team to form the Sokil Club.



Trident Ukrainian Soccer team 1958, Victor in front second from left.

Victor started in class 1C at St Albans High School in 1958. His classmates from the primary school included Richard Wiatr and Eddy Lacinski, who became lifelong friends. In 1960 the high school had a soccer team that included Tony Venes (captain), Jerry Sawczuk, Jerzy Urbaniak, Norbert Richau, Richard Wiatr, Hartmut Koch, Marian Roszak, Steve Kozlowski, Victor Mahorin, Jeff Rodgers, Petro Kewniuk, and Anton Ecimovic. During the year they played against Sunshine Technical School on two occasions and beat them 3-2 and 3-1. In 1961 the volley ball seems to have expanded under the leadership of Paul Pavlov, but there is no mention of a soccer team, and it may be that this sport was being discouraged.



Soccer and Volley Ball teams 1960.

Maybe this was the impetus for Victor to develop other interests. In 1962 he was one of the school's "Tennis Eight" with Eddie Lacinski, John Black, Vlad Bobko, Ivan Popov, Richard Wiatr, Alexius Kasser, and Reinhart Bruhns. Victor and Eddie must have liked their tennis because they both joined the St Albans Tennis Club and were remembered when Jimmy Knowles was writing the club's history.

Regarding the demise of soccer at the high school, Leo Dobes recalls ... *"I remember particularly a teacher called Robertson. Apparently an Aussie Rules player who was said to have played for North Melbourne, he railed against the un-Australian behaviour of those who preferred to play soccer at lunchtime. For some time, soccer balls were banned from the school."*

Even some teachers shared this view. David Worland was the assistant sports master in 1963/64 and stated ... *"I became involved in school sports, which was interesting as the school's policy at the time seemed to be that students were encouraged to adopt Australian sports and that meant playing Aussie Rules football, rather than soccer. I don't know whose policy it was – either the school or the Department, but in the early days I believe that soccer was discouraged, which is crazy when you think about it."*

There was a St Albans Soccer Club in the 1920s but the popularity of the sport increased in the 1950s and the St Albans Soccer Club was granted permission to use the recreation reserve on Pinnacle Estate. In the mid



1950s there were plans to form more junior teams because youngsters were keen on playing - the influx of British and European soccer enthusiasts was no doubt the biggest influence. The sportsmaster at the high school argued there were not enough boys to make up a soccer team because of the number required for the other sports. Mahorin was clearly one of these soccer followers and in 1963 wrote an anonymous letter to the student magazine Prisoners of Education challenging the school's lack of support:

"All over Melbourne, St Albans High School is known as one of the very few schools where soccer is not allowed to be played. A school with students of various nationalities should rightfully adopt a sport in which they, too, can participate. It is all very well to say that new-Australians should learn how to play Australian Rules football. However, after being used to a game which is so different from our football, that even the shape of the balls differ, one can be sure that a migrant would not cheerfully adopt a game that contradicts his national sport. I am sure that, if soccer were allowed in this school, it would receive a large number of followers. Sport is nothing but a game, a form of exercise, why then can't a person elect his own method of exercise. If freedom of choice is still valued throughout Australia would then St Albans High School not be un-Australian if it scorned this freedom?"

Victor finished at St Albans High in 1963 but continued to follow his school and soccer interests. In 1964 the school was raising funds to build an assembly hall that was estimated to cost £40,000 and the school had to raise at least £10,000. Everyone was devising clever ways of bringing in donations and Victor was involved in one of the most innovative ideas. It was arranged that the school would host four soccer teams with staged exhibition matches to draw in the paying public. The curtain raiser was between the Polonia Under 16 champions of NSW and the Wilhelmina Under 16 cup finalists of Victoria. The senior game was between Polonia and Wilhelmina State League teams who "put on a brilliant exhibition of teamwork". Victor even wrote an article about the event in the Parents and Friends Association journal, *Calling All Parents*.

Soccer Gala Day At High School

On Saturday, October 31, St. Albans high were hosts to four soccer teams which staged exhibition matches in aid of the Assembly Hall fund.

Great interest was aroused as the teams were among the best in the State. A curtain raiser was provided by the Under 16 champion side of NSW, Polonia and cup finalists from Victoria — Wilhemina under 16.

The game started at a scorching pace and in the first half both teams played the same type of game. However, evidently overcome by the long train journey,

the Sydney team tired badly towards the end, thus allowing Wilhemina to overrun them and win 4-0.

The senior game between Polonia and Wilhemina State League teams put on a brilliant exhibition of teamwork. Wilhemina playing with more incentive troubled Polonia who were playing several, relatively inexperienced, young players. Soon after the interval Wilhemina scored after good play between Bobby Simpson and Staffels, in a few minutes Staffels outplaying his opponent netted again. A penalty for Wilhemina was converted and af-

ter Staffels scored again Wilhemina looked set for an easy win.

Polonia stars, Jurecki and Korvarek were having trouble in keeping balance on the slippery grass. In an attempt to save face Polonia applied the pressure and Kowalek scored with a sensational shot from 20 yards. Inspired by this play Polonia kept pressing Wilhemina but Wilhemina's goalkeeper was in brilliant form and pulled off several brilliant saves.

All in all a very enjoyable afternoon. What a pleasant way to help the building of the Assembly Hall.

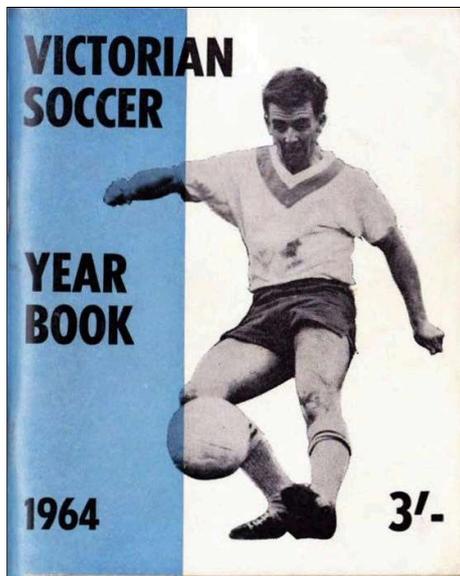
V.M.

Soccer report in *Calling All Parents* journal 1964.

In 1964 Mahorin was a publicity officer with the Victorian Soccer Federation Junior and a delegate to the Junior Management Committee. Interestingly, Peter Ermstrang of St Albans was Vice President and also a delegate. Ermstrang came to Victoria as a chef for the Dutch athletes in the 1956 Olympic Games and stayed. He started promoting soccer in Seymour and St Albans when he came here in 1961 and established the "Olympic 1956 Pastry Shop" also known as the "Olympic Cake Shop" in East Esplanade, opposite the railway station. He was President of the St Albans Soccer Club in the mid 1960s.

In 1967 the high school magazine Alba noted there was some interest in soccer as practice matches had been held, but there was no school competition. The school had been represented by George Jasinski in the Victorian Junior team, and Frank Attard and Peter Halela were members of the Combined High School Team. By 1970 there was a Junior Soccer team (no mention of a senior team) in competition against six other district teams and looking forward to a trip to South Australia to play some games there.

John Payne recalls:



"I knew Vic quite well through the High School then soccer at Green Gully Ajax. Victor loved his soccer, he was a very good player but unfortunately his weight and work pressures didn't allow him the time to give it 100%. He was always willing to give legal advice to any of the players free of charge. I loved seeing him drive around town in his jeep (army style). He was our solicitor and a very passionate person. Always helping the underdog."

John Cowl, the longest-serving teacher at the High School, mentioned that Victor continued supporting the school after he had left:

"Victor Mahorin was a local solicitor who was very helpful with kids who were having some difficulties. I had a lot to do with him in the early days. He opened his doors and we had kids with their parents there for advice when they needed it. He was a former student of the St Albans High School and he

was most helpful. ... I helped start the school camp during my first years at St Albans. Mr Carmody, the English teacher, was the main one responsible for this, and he was helped by two people: Victor Mahorin and me. We were the first to dig the holes and put in the stumps for the army platforms and tents."

According to Ancestry.com Victor Mahorin married Irene Ann-Marie Zabrzkeski in 1971. She was the daughter of Jan Zabrzkeski and Melania Moroch who were from Poland and came to Australia in 1949; Irene was born in Melbourne in 1950.

In 1972 Victor was working as a law clerk. In the early 1970s he was in partnership with George Legge as barristers and solicitors based in St Albans. One of their community services was providing legal advice regarding the establishment of the St Albans Community Centre. They dissolved the partnership in the mid 1970s and by 1975 Victor's new office was at 60 Alfrieda Street.

Steve Kozlowski remembers that:

"Victor became a solicitor and established his office in St Albans near the station. The police used to refer the minor criminal cases to him and he would charge some minor amount so that at least they were represented in court. I would go past his office occasionally and he would have his feet on up the desk that was completely covered in paperwork. Eddie Lacinski would help him with the paperwork because he was very good at that. Victor died early, I think because of complications related to diabetes. Lacinski then helped clean up all the paperwork so I guess that they were mates or business associates. He found that a number of people still owed Victor money for help that had been provided but Victor had not pursued the debts. He didn't care about that."

Not all of Mahorin's cases were in the 'minor' category. In 1987 he was representing two St Albans men who were charged with trafficking heroin with a street value of \$100,000. One of the men was a teenager who became a known underworld figure. It is not known if he escaped the drug charges but two decades later he was facing alleged murder charges.

The turn of the century was a sad time for the Mahorin family:

- Leonid Mahorin died in Melbourne in 1998 at age 80 and was buried at Altona.
- Michael Sapozhnykiv died at his home in St Albans in 1999 at age 73.
- Ariadna Mahorin died in St Albans in 2000 at age 75 and was buried at Fawkner.
- Victor Mahorin died in August 2001 at age 55 years.

Victor's passing was noted in the Herald Sun:

MAHORIN, Victor. Passed away in August 2001 after a hard and painful struggle with illness aged 55 years. Loving father of Natalie and Catherine. Father-in-law and best friend of Joe. Partner of Rita ... Big brother to Lana and Cleo. Grandpa to Anthony and Jarrod, brother-in-law to Paul and Jerry. Uncle to Eleanor, Miriam, Judy and Peter.

Impressions Of School Life

My debut into secondary education was made on a certain cold, over-cast morning in February, 1957. Although the exact date seems to have evaded me at the present moment, the impression shall haunt me forever.

With hearts throbbing like bass drums and with shaky knees, we made our way into the strange and sinister building, which was to be the centre of all educational achievements for the next, if we were lucky, six years. There was some kind of new sensation which dominated the atmosphere. Pupils from various suburban school assembled, all the uniforms of gray, at the General Assembly where we feared, more than welcomed the knowledge of the prospects awaiting us.

I found my way into 1C, and after the preliminary process of purchasing and books, we finally set to work. I can still remember how impatiently I awaited the first homework, but, oh, how I regret it now. Schools was thrilling for the next few weeks anyhow, but then it became just a monotonous pastime. Now that we had established ourselves in the school life some of the pupils decided to become better acquainted with the headmaster and many of them spent numerous minutes walking to and from the office. I was a very timid type and tried my best, with some measure of success, to delay my visits to the office. So ended a very uneventful year of schooling.

On our return from a most refreshing holiday, and with plenty of festival spirit still left in our veins, we decided to see if we could liven things up. Form IID were not the worst form in the school, but they were far from angels. Some of the previous fear was lost and from past experience we quickly came to see that art provided the best periods for enjoyment and we decided to take full advantage of them.

I can still clearly remember the day when we decided that all the boys should bring sweets to eat during Art. The poor young woman teacher ran out of humour when there was a continuous stream of boys moving to the rubbish bin to remove the sweets from their mouths. By the time the double-period had finished there was half a binful of sweets in the corner : what a profit the milk bars had made that day!

During that time we also used to pull out the trestles holding the paint and the slightest nudge would send all the paint spurting over the class. Whilst cleaning the mess we always managed to somehow to flood the entire area with water. However this fun was short-lived when the trestles were removed. Another important event of this year was the meeting of an old friend, Richard Wiatr and a strong friendship blossomed. Finally, I was fortunate enough to collide with the headmaster, and as I lay prostrate, but uninjured on the linoleum, he eyed me carefully from a great height, spoke to me sternly, then let me go. That was enough to cut short my activities for some time. There developed during this time a strong hatred for another Form, IIC, whom we considered "a pack of snobs."

There were two important events in the Third year: one was a daring escape from detention by some boys through an open window, but, alas, they were reported for walking on the garden: the second was that Richard, by this time, had become official bell-boy, and I would always give him a hand.

The year in which I obtained my Intermediate Certificate was marred by one thing, my dislike of Maths. Now that we had grown up, we were supposed to be maturing, but really we were young at heart so the fun did not cease. By this time, some of the teachers were most annoying. Things came to a climax, when, after my refusal to pick up papers from a dirty floor during a Practical Science period, I hurled my book at the teacher, and much to his dismay walked out. The following day I spent a long session with an understanding principal.

Next year, having been promoted to the office of a Prefect, I thought that my fun was over, but I was very much mistaken. The careless, care-free romping and mischief were replaced by such functions as History evenings and social outings. Many other events took place, but they are too recent for publication and it is better for all concerned that they are not disclosed. St Albans High School has given me much apart from scholastic achievements and headaches. Looking back over the years I only now realise what a good time it has been.

Victor Mahorin, Six Sense 1963.

Menu

People
Photos



(L-R) M Bowkun, V Mahorin, G Castagna, Mr Conroy, R Kiss, Mrs Gliddon, S Gunew, R Keegan, 1963.
