

## JOHN DION MADDOX: SCIENCE TEACHER, 1966



John Maddox was a western suburbs boy who became an inspirational physics teacher at St Albans High School in 1966. Maddox has some "Aussie Royalty" in his family of origin. John Maddox's father was Douglas Vincent Maddox who was born in 1895 in Portland Tasmania. His father's heritage goes back to 1776 in Dunstable, Bedfordshire, England: Charles Maddocks was transported to Tasmania in 1844 for stealing a book and a prayer book from Dunstable Church. In 1849 Charles married Susan Plunkett who was from Northern Island and had arrived in Tasmanian in 1847 on the female convict ship "Arabian".



Douglas Vincent Maddox served during WWI with the AIF 21st Battallion at Gallipoli and was wounded in action; he was awarded the 1914-1915 Star. He married Elsa Fauna Valentine Jaensch in Melbourne West in 1928. The Jaensch heritage goes back to the 1790s in Klemzig, Kries Züllichau, Posen, Prussia, which is now part of Sulechów, Lubusz Voivodeship, Zielona Góra County, Poland. Charles Ferdinand Robert Carl Jaensch emigrated to Victoria and married Elizabeth Ann Wyatt in 1852; her heritage goes back to 1795 in High Littleton, Somerset, England.

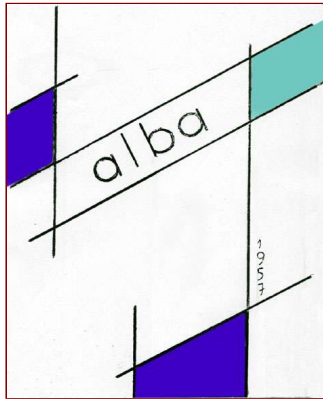


Douglas Maddox married Elsa Jaensch they raised two children - John Dion Maddox and Nancy Maddox. In 1930s the family were living in Yarraville, so John Dion Maddox was a western suburbs boy from wayback. It's likely that he qualified as a teacher in the early 1950s, and that's probably when he met his future wife Jocelyn Mary Wortley. In 1954 Jocelyn was a teacher at Wonthaggi and was staying at the Wonthaggi Guest House, so she was a city girl from Burwood serving her mandatory educational requirements out in the country. In 1955 she became engaged to John Maddox:

"WORTLEY - MADDOX. - Mr. and Mrs. E. F. Wortley, of Burwood, have much pleasure in announcing the engagement of their only daughter, Jocelyn Mary, to John Dion, only son of Mr. and Mrs. D. V. Maddox, of West Melbourne." (Argus 4 June 1955 p9)

Jocelyn's parents were Edward Francis Wortley who married Mary Lilian Callister in 1932. The Wortley heritage goes back to 1715 in Rutland County, England. Valentine Wortley emigrated to Victoria and married Caroline Maria Walwyn in 1852. Edward Francis Wortley was born in 1902 and died in 1976.

Is it possible that Jocelyn Maddox (B.Sc., Dip.Ed.) started at St Albans High School in 1957, a decade before her husband John? In 1957 St Albans High School had relocated to Main Road East in St Albans and Mrs Jocelyn Maddox was a science teacher. Students must have liked her as they wrote a limerick:



*"There once was a teacher named Maddox,  
Who was chased by a bull through the paddox.  
So she made a form vow,  
From then until now,  
To eat nothing but tame, salted haddox."*

Mr Bruce Alcorn later wrote of "Mrs Maddox climbing on the science table yelling 'Snake' as a science specimen slithered across the floor." She stayed for just one year and Mr Doug Hill succeeded her as science coordinator at the beginning of 1958. (Where the Wind Blows; St Albans High School Silver Jubilee 1956-1981.)

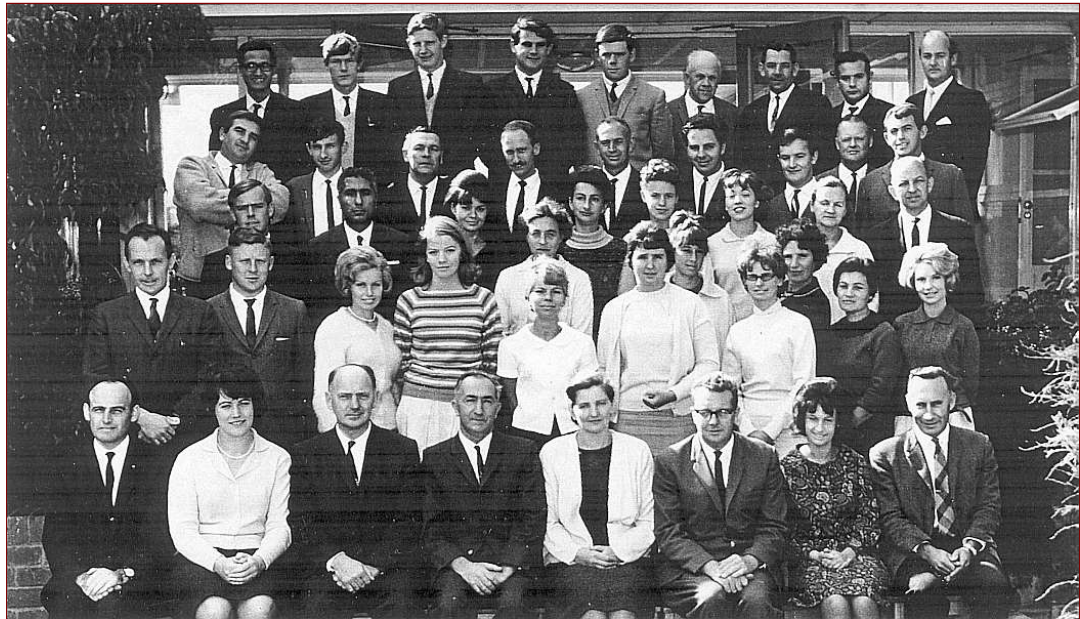
In 1958 John Maddox was teaching at Sunshine High School. He must have been keen because as well as teaching science he was also mentoring the boys' inter-school swimming team, the inter-school athletics team, the girls' swimming team, and the girls' athletics team.



Front Row (l. to r.): Mr. D. Fraser, Mrs. N. Melbourne, Mr. C. Trounson, Miss H. Richards, Mr. F. E. Lloyd (Head Master), Mr. R. Hosie, Mrs. D. Sutton, Mr. R. Ritter, Mrs. N. Shaw.  
Middle Row (l. to r.): Mr. C. Brumby, Mrs. A. Martin, Mrs. J. Lanham, Miss M. McIntyre, Miss P. O'Neill, Mrs. M. Pinches, Mrs. J. Harper, Mrs. J. Chandler, Mr. D. Clymo.  
Back Row (l. to r.): Mr. R. Wilson, Mr. L. Schreiner, Mr. L. Jones, Mr. J. Maddox, Mr. L. Snow, Mr. D. Turner, Mr. L. England, Mr. J. Kennedy, Mr. T. Burns, Mr. A. Oliver.

Staff of Sunshine High School 1958, John Maddox in back row.

In 1963 John and Jocelyn Maddox were living at Newman Street, Sunshine, both working as teachers. Mr John Maddox came to St Albans High School in 1966 after Mr Barry Rayner left. Maddox appears to have stayed for one year - he is listed amongst the teachers in 1966 but not in 1967.



Staff of St Albans High 1966, Maddox in front row third from right.

In 1966 the new St Albans High science block - all two rooms plus a corridor - became part of the form six science boys' personal space. By now the interest in robust physical activity had given way to more academic pursuits. The new centre gave us a secluded spot for private study. However, there was still a large element of good natured larrikinism. We enjoyed each other's company and that of most of our teachers, but that didn't stop us from playing our own games to challenge authority.

Joseph Ribarow - "Our new science centre had a notice board under lock and key - it was there for school notices, not for student use. In fact we were too well behaved to deface the new paintwork by plastering notices on the wall, but we had our own solutions. One morning when Mr Maddox walked past there was a portrait of the pin up girl from The Sun neatly displayed behind the locked glass. We were delighted to see the mystified look on his face and hoped he'd be wondering how we'd gotten hold of a key. We hadn't. We'd knocked the pins from the hinges and removed the whole door, then put it all back together again. As always, Mr Maddox was good humoured about it all. He grinned and carried on with normal routine. After a couple of weeks he said, 'Do you think it's been there long enough?' So we took it down."



Henry Goralski, Joseph Ribarow, David Dusting, Wally Kosiak, Marin Gunew, Michael Hatjiandreou.

Henry Goralski - "Mr Maddox was a great mentor. He was a quietly spoken but very thoughtful person. I'd have conversations with him and the more you got to know him the more you appreciated he was a really genuine guy."

David Dusting - "Teachers such as Mr Rayner, Mr Pavlov, Mr Maddox, Mrs Gliddon, and Father Radford, helped me gain a glimpse that life often holds more than what you immediately see before you. ... Maddox took over from Rayner in 1966 teaching Form 6 Physics and Calculus (and Applied). He was an excellent teacher. When I did a teaching round at Sunbury High in 1973 he was the headmaster there. A friend said he was headmaster there when he arrived in 1981 until his retirement in 1983/84."



Staff of St Albans High 1966, Maddox in front row third from right.

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In 1967 John and Jocelyn Maddox were living at their permanent home in Ogilvie Street, Essendon, both working as teachers. In 1980 they were still there and still working as teachers. They had raised three children: Gregory Douglas, Jillian Faye, and Russell John, who were students in the 1980s.

In June 1988 John Dion Maddox of Essendon, Victoria, was awarded the OAM in the Queen's birthday honours list for service to secondary education. Unfortunately, the detail of his work for this nomination has not been traced.

Jocelyn Mary Maddox nee Wortley passed away in 2025:

"Daughter of Edward and Mary Wortley (dec). Dearly loved and loving wife of John, mother of Jill, Russell and Greg, mother-in-law to Ian, Rosemary and Iko, and Granjoc to Emma, Tanya, Lisa and Jess. Passed away peacefully in hospital following a sudden stroke. Died at age 92."

A memorial service to celebrate her life was held at Ascot Vale in January 2025.

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Article written by Joseph Ribarow.  
School photos from Nick Szwed archives.  
Family photos courtesy of Ancestry.com