

Interview with Dennis O'Hearn 6.6.91 who has been a teacher at Rathmines P.S. since 1982. Dennis started and still runs the School Band.

Dennis started the School Band in 1982 with six instruments (Bass, Euphonium, Trombone, Tenor Horn, 2 trumpets). These were given to the school by the Department of Education through Tom Naiseby, Music Consultant for the Hunter Region. In 1983 \$2000 from the Trade Fair Committee and \$600 from the P & C was donated and a Bass, Euphonium, Tenor Horn and Cornet were added. The students pay a hire fee each year for the instruments and this money is used to buy more instruments. Six Clarinets, 2 Flutes and 2 Trombones have been added this way. There are now 25 instruments in the band. The clarinets and flutes are taught by students from the Newcastle Conservatorium of Music.

Dennis has been playing since he was 12 or 13. He started in the Community Band at Urunga, where he lived. When he went out teaching, he became conductor of the District Band at Dubbo, where he was appointed before coming to Rathmines.

Dennis sees the band as a way of giving kids the opportunity to learn to play an instrument and perform. None of the students is forced, as he sees it as playing for pleasure only.

Quite a few of his ex-band members are still playing. Geoffrey Grace plays in a jazz band called the "Society Swags". Geoffrey was one of the first band members and went on to play in the Toronto H.S. band. Chris McBurnie, who is in Air Force officer training, plays in the Air Force Band. Darren Com plays in the Westlakes Band; Gavin Mackenzie in a jazz band; and Jarrod Bayl is in the Morisset H.S. Band.

Interviewed by Anne Britt,
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