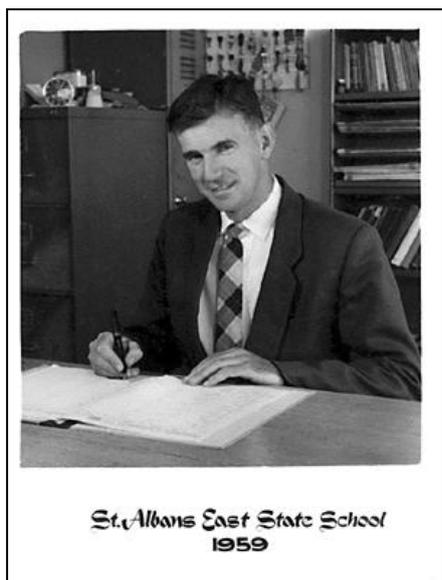


## Donald John Hodder



Donald John Hodder was born in 1930 in Korumburra, Victoria. His parents were Robert Reginald Hodder and Gladys Eileen Cotter. The Hodder ancestry goes back to 1780 in Isleworth, Surrey, England. Gladys Eileen Mary Cotter was born in 1899 in Bendigo Victoria to John Thomas Cotter and Mary Ann Murphy. The Cotter ancestry goes back to 1834 in Kilkishen, County Clare, Ireland. The Murphy ancestry goes back to 1930 in Enniscorthy, Wexford, Ireland.

Growing up, Hodder enjoyed sports, including athletics, cricket, and football. He was a junior footballer with Bairnsdale Football Club in 1946<sup>1</sup> and was playing with Nowa Nowa football club by the end of the decade.<sup>2</sup> In 1952 he was as a playing member of the Myrtleford Football Club.<sup>3</sup>

He also had scholastic talents. He was only 16 in 1946 when he received a teaching scholarship.<sup>4</sup> Hodder was a prefect at Bairnsdale High School in 1947,<sup>5</sup> and received several mentions for his exam results.<sup>6</sup>

By 1951 at age 21 Hodder was on the teaching staff of the Education Department and assigned to the Bete Bolong school, near the Snowy River near Orbost:

*"Mr. Don Hodder, son of Mr. and Mrs. R. Hodder, Nowa Nowa, who received his first teaching appointment to the Bete Bolong school five months ago has been transferred. He was entertained by the Mothers' Club and the children of the school on Wednesday night and presented with a gift as a token of their good wishes and esteem. The presentation was made by Cr. E. W. Johnston."*<sup>7</sup>

In 1954 Hodder was a teacher in Casterton staying at the Railway Hotel. It was the year he proposed to Eileen Macklin, who was from Leigh Creek in Ballarat. They had met in Myrtleford where Donald had joined the local football team:

*"The engagement is announced of Eileen, youngest daughter of Mr and Mrs Roy Macklin, Leigh Creek, Ballarat, to Donald John, only son of Mr and Mrs Robert R. Hodder, Nowa Nowa, East Gippsland."*<sup>8</sup>

Donald John Hodder married Aileen Joyce McKlin [sic] in 1955. Her parents were farmers but she had been working as a hairdresser in Ballarat and was listed on the Government Register of Hairdressers for 1951.

Eileen's parents were Roy Macklin and Mary Irene Greenbank who had married in 1924 and raised three daughters: Reta Mavis, Marie Gertrude, and Eileen Joyce. The Macklin ancestry goes back to 1735 in Aymestrey, Herefordshire, Herefordshire and Worcester, England, United Kingdom. The Greenbank ancestry goes back to 1834 in Dent, Yorkshire.

Donald and Eileen Hodder came to St Albans within a couple of years of their marriage. They built their weatherboard home in MacArthur Avenue, St Albans, in the mid-1950s. Their house was opposite the St Albans East State School, so it was a very short walk to work, but they were one of the few local families who enjoyed the luxury of car. Hodder was teaching at St Albans East in 1957

<sup>1</sup> Bairnsdale Advertiser 16 April 1946 p3

<sup>2</sup> Bairnsdale Advertiser 27 May 1949 p8

<sup>3</sup> Myrtleford Times 12 November 1952 p2

<sup>4</sup> Sun News-Pictorial 16 January 1946 p18

<sup>5</sup> Bairnsdale Advertiser 19 December 1947 p4

<sup>6</sup> Bairnsdale Advertiser 30 December 1947 p6

<sup>7</sup> Bairnsdale Advertiser 24 May 1951 p3

<sup>8</sup> Snowy River Mail 7 July 1954 p4

and was in charge of Grade VI. Hodder was a young (mid-20s) man who was popular with his students. He even played with the St Albans Football Club which would have impressed his students.



Aileen and Don Hodder's house in MacArthur Avenue, St Albans, 1950s.



Don Hodder with Grade 4, St Albans East Primary, 1957.

Donald and Eileen did not stay very long in St Albans. They moved to Upper Beaconsfield and then in 1963 they settled in Stoney Creek Road in the small village of Berwick. They raised three sons, Michael, John and Tim, and a daughter Mary. Don must have been a good role model as three of his children became teachers.

His teaching career advanced. He returned to university to complete a degree. He was promoted to Principal and later to Inspector of Schools. He studied the German language and modern European history, and augmented his studies by travels to England, Europe, and Austria.

In 2006, the St Albans East Primary School celebrated its fiftieth anniversary, and Mr Hodder was invited as a special guest. His former students were delighted to see him – they shared lots of stories and took lots of photographs.



In 2020, Nick and Jutta Szwed hosted a more informal reunion for Hodder and his former students at their home in Bulleen. Another wonderful occasion.



Don Hodder with Grade 5A, St Albans East Primary, 1959.



Don Hodder with class re-enactment, 2010.

In later life Donald Hodder became ill with cancer. He died at Berwick in 2015 at age 84 and was buried at the Berwick Cemetery:

*"Hodder, Donald John. Passed away peacefully in Berwick on Wednesday 24th June. Loved husband of Aileen, father of Michael, Mary, John and Tim, father-in-law of Jon, Pauline, Bernadette and Anita, and grandfather of eleven grandchildren. The Funeral will be held at St Michael's Church Berwick on Thursday 2nd July from 10:30 am."*

John Hodder gave a moving eulogy at his father's funeral, including these excerpts:

*"His support and encouragement to us in all we set out to achieve when growing up was faultless. He could not do enough for us, ever!! He saw the importance and secure employment in teaching and encouraged this and as a result three out of four became teachers. ...*

*"Dad enjoyed his sport, in fact most things outdoors playing his football as a young man with Bairnsdale and boxing. Dad took great enjoyment throwing the gloves on Tim and I in the top yard and then letting us "go for it". Thumping each other, bloody noses, mum screaming to stop, dad laughing and Mick encouraging it to go on!! Good times!! We would watch as dad would instruct us how to throw a straight left or quickly switch to southpaw to throw off your combatant using Mick as his assistant. It wasn't long before student started to outfox the instructor ...*

*"Summer meant cricket!! And our top block was perfect for that. I hate to think how many games of cricket we had. Long hot evenings, Dad displaying his prowess with the ball or bat. Or kicking the footy, or swinging a racquet of some type. It was this involvement and encouragement from dad I believe that led to all of us leading healthy and active lives, which we are extremely grateful for as are his grandchildren."*<sup>9</sup>

Written by Joseph Ribarow 2026  
Images from Nick Szwed archives

<sup>9</sup> <https://historyofstalbens.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/12/HODDER-DONALD-JOHN.pdf>