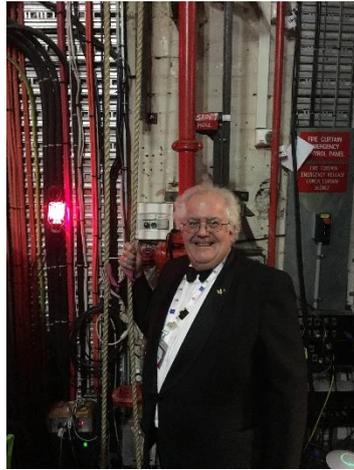


Graham Paulin



My Calisthenics journey started about 40 years ago when our eldest daughter was about 5 years old. My three daughters were encouraged to come and try a recreational calisthenics class at Upwey Calisthenics College. This was a non-competitive class and was designed as a feeder class for the Boronia Calisthenics College. It only took about two years to decide that we wanted to be involved in the competitive nature of calisthenics. Boronia Calisthenics College under the Principal Coach, Marilyn Coady, was classified as "A-Special" and was a non- Ballarat RSSS Club.

I was very quickly convinced to venture backstage to assist with props and hand properties. There were very few men involved and particularly with the lower division clubs. So, I became very involved with a number of different Clubs and Colleges.

One of the earliest projects with which I became involved with Calisthenics was the incorporation of Calisthenics Clubs and Colleges as "Not-for-Profit Incorporated Associations". The first of these Colleges was Dandenong Calisthenics College. I assisted the College fine tune their Incorporation documents. I subsequently went on to assist a number of other Clubs and Colleges become incorporated. "Clubs" are Committee run associations and "Colleges" are Principal run Associations and therefore needed different sets of Rules and procedures. At about this same time, Miss Betty Corrigan, who was the President of the recently Incorporated Calisthenics Victoria Inc. invited me as her personal appointee, to attend the general meetings of CVI and become involved in the affairs of CVI. At this time there were quite a few men involved in the administration of Calisthenics, including but not limited to Leo Leyden, Allan Hewitt, Norm Plant, Norm Pearce, Bill Woodward, Stan Waites, Peter Cohen, and several others whose names I can't remember. One of the first tasks given to me was to re-write the Rules of the Calisthenics Victoria Inc. to accommodate the different classes of membership of the Association. These included the Clubs; Colleges; Coaches, Adjudicators. I ended up completely re-writing all the Rules and The By-Laws.

I also became even more involved in the administration of CVI as the organisation transitioned from meeting in a church hall in Kew to renting our own premises in Oakleigh. I then accepted the position within CVI as The Director of Planning, a very full-on position which I held for just over five years. The tasks included a complete and comprehensive amendment of the Rules and By-Laws and steering them through a special General Meeting of CVI. I was also involved in working with the VCTA in writing their Rules of Association so that the VCTA also became an Incorporated Association. The VCTA at this time changed their name from the Victorian Calisthenics Teachers Association to the Victorian Calisthenics Coaches Association as this more accurately reflected the role of "Coaches" in our sport. I was also requested to head up a committee to prepare the very first "Strategic Plan" for Calisthenics in Victoria.

I was also very involved in the first of the National Championships, the first several of these were held at the National Theatre in St Kilda and then at the Besen Centre and the highlight was the Nationals held at the Victorian State Theatre under the incredible leadership of Wayne Jones, our President. It was my involvement in working in so many prestigious theatres that it became apparent that we needed to have our talented backstage crew accredited to work in these theatres. I collaborated with Neil Wetherill, Keira Cowell's Stepfather, whom I knew both through Calisthenics and the Scouts Gang Shows we managed to prepare a comprehensive "Back-stage Crewing" course through the Theatre Studies Department of Box Hill TAFE. This course has been accredited as an approved short TAFE Course and involved over twenty hours of theory and practical hands-on training at the Whitehorse Centre in Nunawading. The ultimate accolade was the Nationals at the State Theatre when the theatre techs confirmed that we were the best trained backstage crew they had ever worked with and they gave us so much freedom to assist with setting up the lighting, re-hanging the curtains and legs for Calisthenics, operating the sound and lighting in connection with the Theatre Techs.

I began my journey with RSSS about 30 years ago, first as a backstage props and general roustabout. About twenty years ago I became officially recognised as a RSSS Volunteer and I am now listed as an "Associate", eligible to attend General Meetings of RSSS and to vote on resolutions. During this time, I managed to convince the Technical Staff of Her Majesty's Theatre that with some appropriate training and on top of the Backstage Crewing Course completed in Melbourne, we could be approved to "fly" the back two black curtains and Silver curtain and the house curtain. The approval was conditional on becoming re-accredited at an up-skilling training session at Her Majesty's Theatre every year to take account of any changes in technology and equipment and the general situation backstage. I was one of the very first people duly accredited to fly the curtains, and, for quite a number of years, I was the only Non-Ballarat volunteer, permitted to fly the curtains. I have now been accepted to act as Chairman, Music Player, and Stage Manager.

One of my fondest memories was when we were competing at the Civic Hall and I was connected with the Dandenong Calisthenics College Inc., we had to carry a full-size covered wagon with fully operating wagon wheels all the way down through the auditorium and up

onto the stage from the front as it was too big to fit through any of the backstage doors. However, it was very successful.

I have to say that I have made so many really great friends. I have learnt so many new and interesting skills and I really enjoy spending as much time as possible with this beautiful and wonderful sport and doing what I love the most, holding the microphone and acting as Chairman/M.C.

Thank you so much to all my friends and colleagues at Royal South Street Society. I cannot thank you enough for the faith and opportunities you have provided to me. I love you all and I look forward to being able to contribute as a Volunteer for many years to come.