



Henry Gregory Huggins (1931–2022)

For nearly twenty years Henry Huggins was a volunteer at the Australian Institute of Archaeology serving in several expert roles. He undertook the photography of the museum collection and oversaw all aspects of security. He also carried out much needed administrative tasks, although this was not his preferred activity. He was a friend to all and promoted a respectful and positive atmosphere. Lunch breaks were often entertaining and informative, if not downright gory, as Henry would recount tales of his exploits as a Victorian Police Crime Scene Investigator. Henry had personal recollections of many of Australia's major crime figures and was able to comment reliably on their characterisations in television series such as *Blue Murder*.

Henry was born in Cardiff on 5 March 1931, the fourth child of the Reverend Arthur and Doris Huggins. He was educated at the historic Christ's Hospital during World War II. The school was established in 1552 by King Edward VI and students have continued to wear a uniform dating from that time. Henry played the clarinet in the school band. He retained his interest in music, playing the French Horn in the Whithorse Orchestra until the last couple of years of his life.

Henry emigrated to Australia in 1947 to work on a farm owned by his uncles and aunts at Hedley in Gippsland. There, he met a Swiss nurse, Dora Rauber, who was

holidaying in Australia and staying at Toora. They married in April 1956. Henry joined the Police Force in 1959 and moved with his young family to Clayton. After serving as a traffic policeman he joined the Victoria Police Forensic Services Division, where he worked until his retirement in 1991. He attained the rank of Senior Sergeant and Officer-in-Charge of the Crime Scene Section. In the 1989 Queen's Birthday Honours he was awarded the Australian Police Medal for distinguished Police Service.

John Silvester wrote of Henry in *The Age* (9 April 2022):

We lost Henry, aged 90, in February and with him the last link to a time when you learned largely on the road. He joined in 1959 and soon found himself in the Scientific Section, driving a former army Studebaker canteen van refitted as a mobile lab to some of Victoria's biggest crime scenes.

His son, Daniel, remembers family dinners when the phone rang and dad was gone, meal left untouched on the table.

Victoria Police historian and former inspector Ralph Stavely says Huggins was "extremely intelligent, patient and hugely thorough". Before computers simplified the most difficult forensic problems, Huggins used his trained eye and skilled hands to crack the case of the cracked skull. A



In Christ's Hospital Band in war-torn London, 1945.

man was found with fatal head wounds. A shattered vase was nearby. Piece by broken piece Huggins reconstructed the vase and found fingerprints on the neck that showed the offender used it as a weapon to bludgeon his victim. As well as the prints, Huggins found a button from the offender's shirt at the crime scene.

So respected was Huggins that he was called in to lead the 1986 crime scene examination when baby Azaria Chamberlain went missing near Uluru.

In Victoria, Henry pioneered the analysis of shoe-prints, tyre-prints and tool-marks. In the Fine Cotton scandal, he took casts of hooves on the racetrack to establish that a 'ring-in', a substitute horse, had raced instead of Fine Cotton. He used a comparison microscope to identify ballistic evidence, and when the microscope was replaced by a digital instrument, he arranged for it to be donated to the Institute.

Henry remembered the digging up the bodies of Douglas and Isabel Wilson, victims of hitman James Bazley, at Rye back beach. When seeing the X-Rays of the Institute's child mummy, he commented that it looked as if it had been buried briefly in a shallow grave. One incident that Henry was proud of was described by Silvester:

It looked for all the world a murder. The man was found with a fatal gunshot wound to the head, with the gun several metres away. Henry Huggins decided to test bite marks on the rifle stock, matching them to the dead man's dog, "Macca" – leading to the conclusion that the loyal German

Shepherd dragged the gun away to try and protect his owner. The Coroner concluded it was suicide.

Henry had many interests and activities. He was a practising Anglican. At All Saints Clayton he was the choirmaster, and he spent his last forty years at St John's Diamond Creek. He was a leader at youth camps on Raymond Island and he sailed dinghies and catamarans. He traced his relatives, spending time tracking them down in counties such as Dorset. He always had a good workshop for wood working. Astronomy was another interest, but after retiring, it was archaeology that was his main passion.

He attended The University of Sydney's training excavation at Pella, Jordan, and gained the reputation as one of the best trowellers that the dig had seen. He also excavated in Melbourne at Spring Street and Viewbank, in Romania, Cyprus, Uzbekistan, China, Albania and at Winton, Qld.



With Sir Tony Robinson and the comparison microscope at Glenrowan, Victoria, 2015.

At Glenrowan in northern Victoria, Henry analysed the ballistics for an excavation directed by Adam Ford. The dig was filmed with Sir Tony Robinson of *Time Team* renown. After years of courtroom cross-examination, Henry had become very cautious with results, so we were treated to a scene where Tony put his arm around Henry encouraging him to concede that, since no-one's life depended upon it, there may be a possibility that ... Tony failed.

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