

# Otago Girls' High School Alumni Association

# Principal's Report

People often ask "how things are going" for me as Principal of Otago Girls' High School. My usual reply is that things are very busy but that the school is in good heart and we are making good progress. The tasks required of me as principal are extremely varied and I must admit that there are some that are far more pleasurable than others. Top of my list is the time spent with students and ex-girls of the school and the past term has lent itself to a veritable smorgasbord of opportunities. If I was to analyse why I enjoy these interactions so much it is very similar for both groups. Recently I have spent time with the choir at the Big Sing Finale in Auckland, our curling teams (Sweeping Beauties and Game of Stones) at the recent South Island Secondary Schools' championship and our hockey 1st XI in Ashburton during their SISS tournament. What I love about spending time with current students is their energy, their enthusiasm, their pride in the school and their potential. These young women are already achieving success in their chosen fields of endeavour, they are learning the soft skills that will set them up to be successful in organisations in the future and they have a sense of belonging to something bigger than themselves (OGHS) and an understanding of the rights and responsibilities that this entails.



Reading the profiles of ex-girls contained in this newsletter reveals the same skills, dispositions and affinity albeit viewed through the lenses of more time and experience. My visits to the Timaru Ex-girls Association and the Christchurch ex-girls 70th birthday were proof that the energy and enthusiasm among our ex-girls is no less than that of our current students. It was a great privilege to spend time with these women who have almost all spent more time at Otago Girls' than I have to date. At each event stories flowed and laughter followed and I was struck by the fact that the fondness these women hold for the school is irrespective of their personal view of the principal who served at the time. This was an important reminder to me that whilst I am custodian of the school for a time, it is the relationships that are formed within and between the staff and students, set within the context of the girl's adolescent self and the school's traditions and history, that produce the enduring memories. I share your pride in the school and will continue to do my best to ensure today's students will successfully follow your lead.

As Jane Smallfield, our editor and archivist has mentioned in this newsletter we warmly welcome ex-girls to visit the school. Please take this as a personal invitation.

Linda Miller  
Principal

## Spring Alumni Function

21 September

2pm in the School Library

The OGHS Alumni Committee are holding a Spring function in the school library at 2pm on Sunday 21 September. It will be a chance to chat informally with our recently enlarged Alumni committee and to meet our Principal Ms Miller, along with other Alumni members. You will be able to have a walk around the grounds which are looking lovely, as well as have a tour of the school if you would like one.

We will have a very brief (15 minute max) AGM at the beginning but please don't let that put you off - we have our office bearers all sorted so no one will be pressured to come on the Committee unless you want to.

Bubbles, non alcoholic options and afternoon tea will be provided.

Please RSVP by 15 September  
[alumni@otagogirls.school.nz](mailto:alumni@otagogirls.school.nz)

We are pleased to welcome the following ex-girls to our Alumni Committee.

Joanne Deaker (nee Da-Rin)

Jacqui Gee (nee Sinclair)

Kathryn Jenner (nee Harris)

Linda Kinniburgh (nee Donaldson)

Rebecca van der Hilst (nee Seque)

Loris Ives (nee Sparks)

Ying-Shi Tang

## Send us your stories

The Alumni Committee hope to find out what sort of fields our ex-girls have worked in and what sort of lives they have had since their OGHS schools days.

Please think about writing up to 300 words about yourself and email ([alumni@otagogirls.school.nz](mailto:alumni@otagogirls.school.nz)) or post it to us with a photograph if possible.

If you are happy to have your profile published in this newsletter please let us know when you send it in.

## New House couches



Over the last school holidays our wonderful Hard Materials teacher Mr Simon Pickard, designed and made beautiful couches in our School house colours for the students to enjoy. They look stunning in our school grounds.

Photograph reproduced with permission of the *Otago Daily Times*.

## Visit from Mary Meikle (nee Crosbie)



Mary Meikle (nee Crosbie) holding the Clark & Co Embroidery trophy during her visit to Otago Girls'. She was awarded the trophy in 1947.

It was a delight to have a unexpected visit in July from Mary Meikle (nee Crosbie), who as a third form student in 1947, won the embroidery shield presented by Clark & Co manufacturers of Anchor Embroidery Threads which was profiled in a previous newsletter.

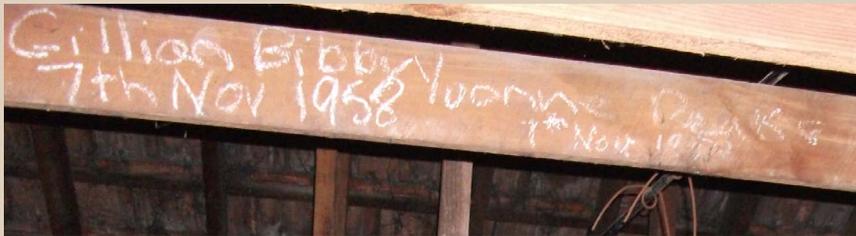
It was the first time Mary, now of Kaiapoi, had visited the school since she left in 1950. We gave Mary a tour of the school and were delighted to hear her memories - especially those of her embroidery classes.

Mary kindly gave us a piece of her needlework produced while she was a pupil at Otago Girls'. Of all the work we have kindly been donated over the past year this is definitely the most finely worked piece with perfect finishing. We are delighted to add it to our collection.



A small section of the work Mary gave to the school.

# Has your OGHS past come back to haunt you?



Being passionate about the history of Otago Girls' I leapt at an opportunity, given to me in 2011, when the then IT manager offered to give me a tour of the school ceiling! How delighted and surprised I was to find that I wasn't the first ex-girl to visit that space. Somehow I feel that the students who left their marks there back in the 1950s were not permitted to be there.

These chalk marks on the beams are as clear as the day they were written. A number of girls made their visit on 7 November 1958 including Nola Walker (3R), Gillian Bibby (3S), Yvonne Peak (3P) and Margaret Conroy (3S). Pamela Pritchard 4P left her mark in 1959 and D [Denise] McKellar and D [Daphne] Gosney both of 5B appeared to visit together in 1961.

I would love to hear from any of the above students about your ceiling escapades. Who else will admit to visiting the school ceiling?

Jane Smallfield, [sd@otagogirls.school.nz](mailto:sd@otagogirls.school.nz)

## Historic panels for OGHS

With the school now in its 144th year and preparations being considered for the 150th Celebrations at Waitangi Weekend 2021, the Alumni Association felt the time was opportune to look at how the history of our school can be presented in a way that is interesting and appealing to both students and guests to the school.

The Association has agreed to fund a project (as funds become available) consisting of six wall panels (1m x 1.5m) depicting various aspects of the history of our school. These will cover the foundation of the school, students and uniforms through the ages, ex-girls, and sport and cultural activities through the ages. Two of these boards have been generously funded already by the 1954 OGHS reunion group. If any ex-girls would like to contribute funds towards this project please contact us - all donations are tax deductible.

## Alumni profiles & news

### Eloise Garrity OGHS (1987-1991)

As the editor of a lifestyle magazine, I have had the opportunity to profile and interview a lot of successful women in many different fields. From film to fashion, from business to music. All women who have achieved success in their chosen pursuits. While the general consensus is that great



success requires a certain focus, I think that's also a slightly boring concept. Since leaving Otago Girls' High School in 1991, I have achieved a law degree and an architecture degree, and now I work in the publishing industry. Go figure. But each one of these experiences has opened up doors and created opportunities along the way and shaped the way that I think.

Moving from being a lawyer to working in the publishing industry meant a slight diagonal shift sideways to start out as a proofer and stylist before working my way up to studio manager and then managing editor. It's amazing but even in this role, I will still reference the lessons taught from both of my previous fields of study.

Even within this position is a huge range of diversity and no day is the same. To add to this diversity, I have become a director of a road contracting company, a script editor, property manager and I run an organic pet supplies company on the side. My pathway in life might not be the most direct route but as they say, life is about the journey and not the destination. One thing that really stuck with me from OGHS were the words of our principal, Greta Firth, who said that everyone is different and people will find success in different ways. You just have to find that way for yourself. I think I owe a lot to those words.

#### **PTSA Art & Craft Auction**

**To be held in the school hall at 7pm on Friday 19 September. Tickets \$10 available from the school office.**

### Frances Denz OGHS (1957-1959)

I attended OGHS between 1957-59, leaving with School Certificate to go nursing. Unfortunately I did not complete my training because of a long term illness. After a number of years running my own businesses I became involved in teaching business skills first to long term unemployed, then to people with disabilities and now I teach Governance to people who want to be Company Directors. I have my own Private Training Establishment delivering governance training



In the last couple of years I have been privileged to receive a number of awards. I received the MNZM for services to business and later last year I was awarded the Tertiary Teaching Excellence Award. This year I was made Senior New Zealander of the Year, which was amazing.

I have published four books and have another one on the way.

I still meet up with my class from time to time and am a member of the OGHS Old Girls of Tauranga, who meet every three months or so. It just shows what a good start Otago Girls' gave me.

#### **Email Addresses:**

**Please remember to keep the OGHS Alumni Association informed of your latest contact details especially your email changes. Every time we send out a newsletter there are always a significant number of email addresses that are no longer current.**

# London alumni event

The first ever international OGHS Alumni function was held in London in July. Many thanks to Dame Judith Mayhew Jonas for hosting this event and opening up her home to our members. Dame Judith has sent us the following report of the event.

On Thursday 31st July 2014 ten former pupils of Otago Girls' High School gathered at Dame Judith Mayhew Jonas's London home for the first international gathering of the School's Alumni Association. The weather was sunny and warm and we were in a walled garden reflecting on the fact it would be winter in Dunedin. The years of attendance spanned from 1962 through to 2013. It was interesting that there were many shared memories about the school over these numerous decades. The quality of the teachers and teaching we all experienced was highlighted especially for those of us in classes described as hotbeds of academic competitiveness. The extra – curricular activities were mentioned by all present as being consistently good decade after decade. These may have changed their names but the activities were the same, choirs, the orchestra and music ensembles, debating and spoken language competitions, drama, art and not forgetting the sporting activity. Those of us who were older were amused to learn that more was being done with our brother school. The school uniform changes were also discussed.

Our age range did not matter because we all found huge interest in sharing our experiences and a letter from the current Headmistress gave us a feeling of being more closely connected to the school as it is now.

The other feature that emerged was the appreciation everyone felt for the school song. The evening ended with it being sung, and as it floated over Victoria Square in central London we agreed that the evening had been a great success and we would endeavour to gather more alumni to share experiences next time.

Those present were:

Florence Clutha	2011-2013
Katherine Gillett	1995-1999
Emma Williams	1991-1995
Rosa Hinsley (nee Kinniburgh)	1991-1995
Angela Paul	1991-1995
Lizzie Gillett	1991-1995
Michelle Hayes (nee Patterson)	1987-1991
Ann Witbrock	1974-1978
Margaret Lion	1964-1968
Judith Mayhew Jonas	1962-1967



## Keen to visit Otago Girls' High School?

Otago Girls' High School is delighted to welcome ex-girls who are visiting Dunedin to call into the school - you are always welcome and we will find the time to show you around and answer your questions.

We also welcome hearing from any groups that want to organise a reunion and use the school as a base for their celebrations. We are happy to help host these events over a weekend. If we can help you in any way contact Jane Smallfield on [sd@otagogirls.school.nz](mailto:sd@otagogirls.school.nz)

## Ex-Girl Branch reports welcome:

This newsletter will be published three times a year, along with a Mid Year School report.

We welcome reports from all Ex-Girls branches to be included in these publications. Please send these, along with any photographs to [sd@otagogirls.school.nz](mailto:sd@otagogirls.school.nz)

## OGHS Ex-Girl Branches

The following reports have been received from our OGHS ex-girls branches.

### Hawkes Bay

The Hawkes Bay Branch all had a very pleasant time catching up with each other at their mid winter lunch held in Hastings in August.



Left to Right:

Elaine Brown (Duncan)  
Liana Cockerill (Macfarlane)  
Shirley Young (Johnston)  
Marjorie McQuillan (Willis)  
Beth Scott (Cromarty)  
Carole Smoothy (Williamson)  
Betty Collett (Sutherland)  
Rosalie Sutherland  
June Thomas (McStay)  
Alice Crocker (Pierce)  
Joye Biles (Hellyer)  
Jenny Young (Clingin)

### Christchurch Ex-Girls 70th Birthday

The Christchurch Branch of Ex Girls celebrated their 70th anniversary on Tuesday, 2 September, 2014 with a buffet dinner at the Riccarton Park Function Centre. Forty six members were in attendance plus the principal of Otago Girls' High School, Ms Linda Miller.

The evening began with the New Zealand National Anthem. Olwyn Crammond (nee Jones) accompanied on the keyboard, followed by a toast to Her Majesty the Queen.

A moments silence was observed to reflect and remember the recent death of Koa McKewin, (nee Galland), a long term member, and as well, other former members no longer with us.

The sound of pipes then filled the air as members of the City of Christchurch Highland Pipe Band marched in and around us carrying haggis, whiskey and sword. The Burns address to the haggis was delivered with gusto, the haggis sliced and the whiskey drunk by band members while the Ex Girls raised their glasses of wine or juice.

The President, Margaret Jones, (nee Shaw), then formally welcomed everyone, making mention of Principal,

Linda Miller, Patron Shirley Scambary (nee Kroon) and Vice Patron Margaret McIntosh. Two members had driven from Oamaru and Twizel to be with us. Both ladies having moved due to the Canterbury earthquakes. Letters from members overseas or not able to attend were read out.

Past President, Jennifer McKinnon presented flowers to Bev Booth (nee Billcliff), to mark her resignation from the committee. Bev, now living in Twizel had been our "official" photographer for many years.

Jan Hayward (nee Deaker) then proposed a toast to the school. Grace was said by Patron Shirley Scambary.

The meal was buffet style, with the mains, haggis and crackers enjoyed before we sat back to listen to Principal Linda who was introduced by Margaret Jones.

Linda spoke enthusiastically about the school as it is today. She illustrated her talk with still photos and a video clip. Her talk was very well received with one or two remarking afterwards that they wanted to go back to school as so many interesting subjects and activities were now offered to present day students compared with days gone by!

Ellen Harris, (nee Roy), thanked Linda and presented her with a framed embroidery of the main block of the school. The embroidery had been done by Valda McLachlan, (nee Crozier) former Patron, who had died earlier this year. Her family were delighted to know what was being done with the previously unframed piece of embroidery.

Following dessert, Anne Malcolm, (nee Salmond) and Margaret Jones jointly recalled events from the past 70 years with assistance from early minute books. Shirley Scambary and Margaret McIntosh cut the Anniversary cake, which was made by Jillian Cooper (nee Haggitt). Margaret Jones told members that Jill had joined ex girls in 1969, had made and decorated a cake that year and at least one every subsequent year. Quite a generous contribution from a member.

Before enjoying cake, coffee or tea, Olwyn played the School Song on the keyboard with members providing the vocals. Linda Miller was about the last to manage to get a hot drink as everyone wanted the chance to talk to her! A very popular guest at our celebration.

Margaret Jones



Margaret McIntosh (left) Vice Patron of Christchurch Ex-Girls (OGHS 1946-1950) and Shirley Scambary (nee Kroon) Patron (OGHS 1939-1943) cut the cake at the Christchurch OGHS Ex-Girls' 70th Celebrations.

### Thanks to Ex-Branched for donations since our last newsletter was distributed:

Bay of Plenty	\$100 for Library
Hawkes Bay	\$175 for Library
Dunedin Ex-Girls	\$250 for Library
Timaru Ex-Girls	\$100 for Timaru Ex-Girls Prize

# Visit to Timaru Ex-Girls

It was an excited bunch of Timaru Ex Girls who gathered at the home of Nola McKinlay (nee Binnie) to welcome the Principal Linda Miller and Librarian/Archivist Jane Smallfield to our lunch meeting in July.

A dozen members enjoyed chatting and sharing memories with Linda and Jane before lunch. After lunch Linda brought us up to date with what is happening at Otago Girls, telling us about the Positive Behaviour for Learning Programme, the House System which has recently been established, the new Music Suite which is being built and some of the ins and outs of NCEA.

It was obvious from her enthusiasm for the school's history and her praise for the input from both present day staff and pupils, that Otago Girls' is maintaining its high reputation for girls' education. Linda's love of Otago Girls' High School shone through. Jane gave us an insight into her work as librarian and archivist at Otago Girls, the thinking behind the Alumni Association and plans for the 150th Reunion.

The group was interested to hear about the ideas Linda and Jane had for assigning areas for displays within the school buildings to make pupils more aware of the history of Otago Girls' High School, the first secondary school to provide education for girls in the Southern Hemisphere. Certainly a history to be proud of.

Jane and Linda were thrilled to accept from Raewyn Clarke (nee McDougall) an apron sampler, sewn by her Mother (Ellen Jean Fea) and a hat badge. All these articles are over 80 years old and will be added to the school's historical collection. Vice President Nola thanked Linda and Jane for travelling so far to visit us, and Treasurer Jan Sinclair (nee Pierson) presented Linda with a cheque from the Timaru Branch towards a book prize for the school. Our time together came to an end with an invitation from Linda for our group to visit the school and as she outlined some of the activities we could expect, left us buzzing about a group trip to Dunedin and our old High School.

Annette Batchelor (nee Dewar)  
Secretary  
Timaru Ex-Girls

## Ex-Girls in the news

If you see or hear of an ex-girl being recognised for an achievement - please let us know by emailing [alumni@otagogirls.school.nz](mailto:alumni@otagogirls.school.nz)



Heather Chirnside, Margaret Bradley, Audrey Le Roy, and Linda Miller (Principal of OGHS)



Rae Clarke and Annette Batchelor



Audrey Le Roy and Aileen Stewart



Heather Chirnside and Maragaret Bradley

# Margaret Burn (nee Huie)

## First Principal of Otago Girls' High School

When the position of Principal of the Otago Provincial School for Girls' was first advertised in 1870 it was deemed that the "responsible head of the School be a lady, un-married, or a widow, of attested talents and acquirements, and that a previous experience in a similar institution be indispensable to her nomination". What was the background of Mrs Margaret Gordon Burn (nee Huie) who was appointed to this position and remained in the job until 1884? A few hours research revealed an interesting story.

Margaret Gordon Huie was born on the 22 March 1825 in Edinburgh, the eldest child of seven born to Alexander Huie, an Agent/Accountant and his wife Eliza Gordon Edgar. On the 1841 Census Margaret is a 15 year old living at 11 Clarence Street, Edinburgh, Scotland with her parents, four younger siblings, and two female servants. Most of her early education was acquired at the Circus Place School in Edinburgh and later she studied languages under private tutors. By the time of the 1851 Census, Margaret was a single 26 year old, living in the Manor House, Claughton, Wirral, Cheshire, with the family of Sir William Jackson, as his children's governess.

Margaret's father died in January 1852 and this may well have been the impetus for Margaret and her family to immigrate to Australia, for by October that year, Margaret Huie, her mother and siblings had arrived in Geelong, Australia. On the 6th October they advertised in *The Argus* [of Melbourne]: *Mrs and the Misses Huie beg to announce their intention of opening on Monday next, the 11th instant, an establishment for the education of young ladies, on the plan of the Circus Place School, Edinburgh, and trust from the experience they have had in the tuition and care of children, to merit the approbation of those who may entrust children to their care...*

At the end of 1855 a Scottish teacher by the name of Andrew Burn left his role as head assistant teacher at Scotch College in Melbourne to undertake the duties of his appointment as headmaster of the Free Church School in Geelong. Two years later on 24 December 1857 he married Margaret Huie at Singapore Terrace, Geelong and they had a family of three children: Ann McLeod Burn, Edgar Huie Burn, and David William Murray Burn.

On 13 October 1863 Margaret Burn advertised in the Geelong Gazette. Under the heading "Ladies Select Boarding School", Mrs Burn informed the public that she had taken Orlig House, Fenwick Street, Geelong. The advertisement indicated that she had "lengthened and successful experience in educating young ladies" and the following year Mrs Burn advertised that the school had a course of instruction (in addition to a complete English education) which included French, German, Music, Singing, Dancing, Calisthenics, Needlework, Leatherwork, Wax and Paper Flowers.

In October 1864 at the annual meeting of the High Church held at Gheringhap Street School concern was expressed at the "serious and lasting illness of Andrew Burn", formerly head teacher of the Gheringhap Street School. The exact nature of his illness is not known. Margaret Burn's obituary says "the state of Mr Burn's health necessitated a voyage to the Old Country" while Eileen Wallis in *A Most Rare Vision*, indicates he suffered from severe heat stroke and returned to Edinburgh for treatment which proved unsuccessful. The implication is that Mr Burn went back to the old country and died soon after - this was not the case.

In July 1869 Margaret's mother Eliza Gordon Huie died at her residence in Virginia Street, Geelong and perhaps without that Geelong tie Margaret was free to follow other educational pursuits. In August 1870 Mrs Burn's Ladies' College was operating from the Old Treasury Buildings, Gheringhap Street, Geelong when she accepted the job of Lady Principal of the Otago Provincial School for Girls (as Otago Girls' High School was then known). She was one of 28 applicants and it was described as "an important educational post in Dunedin, in connexion with the college there - an institution fostered by the Government". The appointing body had opted for a genteel and Christian woman from "home".

Margaret, her children and two sisters arrived at Port Chalmers on the Gothenburg on 27 December 1870, and the school opened on 6 February 1871. Margaret's daughter Annie was also a first day pupil of the school and she went on to become dux in 1875. Two of Margaret's spinster sisters were also early teachers at the Otago Provincial school for girls during their sister's term as Principal. The Principal's position was one Mrs Burn held until 1884 before taking a short retirement and then moving on to be Principal of the new Waitaki Girls' High School.

There is no evidence that Margaret ever returned to Edinburgh but it would be nice to think that she did keep in contact with her husband Andrew, for he lived for another 28 years in Scotland. He spent those years as an inmate of the Royal Asylum, Morningside, Edinburgh and was a patient there when the 1871, 1881 and 1891 censuses were taken. On each occasion he is described as lunatic, while his occupation is given as a teacher of English and his status is married. On 13 May 1892 Andrew Burn "married to Margaret Huie" died at the Royal Asylum of brain disease which he had had for 28 years - his usual residence was given as Geelong, Australia. The news of his death reached Geelong and the Geelong Advertiser reported *In our obituary column appears the notice of the death of Mr Andrew Burn at Edinburgh on the 13th May last. Mr Burn was principal of the High School in Gheringhap Street under the denominational Board in the early days, and identified himself with many movements for the advancement of scientific knowledge and the general interests of the town. He and Mrs Burn, who survives her loss, were held in universal esteem during their residence in Geelong.*

Margaret spent her later years living with her family and died in Dunedin in 1918. As the first Principal of Otago Girls' High School, the oldest girls school in the Southern Hemisphere, her memory and achievements live on.

Jane Smallfield (OGHS Archivist)



## 1935 OGHS student ski trip to Mt Cook



**1935 ski trip to Mount Cook. Winners of Girls' Secondary Inter-school Championship. L-R: Hilary Runnerstrum, Doreen Standage, Joan Whiteside, Olive Richan, and Miss Johnston.**

From the OGHS school magazine 1935:

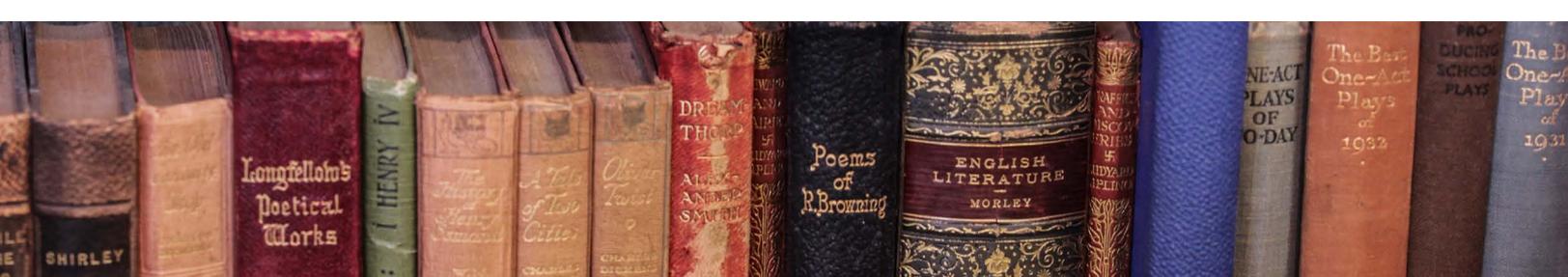
"Under the excellent chaperonage of Miss Johnston our party had a week of marvellous fun at Mount Cook this year. This is the third time we have been up, but never before has there been such a heavy fall of snow.

Usually everyone stays at Ball Hut, but this year the snow was so thick that it was impossible to get through until the latter part of the week. This meant staying at the Hermitage, which was a nice change for those who had not been there before, and also meant "HOT BATHS"...

In the sports we were very successful, Doreen Standage winning the individual cup and our team the Inter-school Ski-ing Championship Cup. Besides this, all our girls obtained the first star ski badge".



**2014 Year 13 Physical Education trip to the Snow Farm, Pisa Range.**



## 1961 Staff



I thought some of you might enjoy this Staff photograph from May 1961. Names are as recorded on the photo.

- Back row: Mr Dean, Miss Martyn, Mrs Brasier, Miss McFarlane, Miss Henderson, Mrs Ramsay, Miss Scott, Miss Searle, Miss Garden, Miss Ritchie, Mrs Hughes, Miss Selbie, Mrs Brown.
- Second Row: Miss Prisk, Mrs Gillies, Mrs Grey, Mrs Lascelles, Mrs Thomson, Mrs Entwisle, Mrs Cranefield, Miss Wilson, Mrs Taylor, Mrs Mitchell, Mrs Mayhew
- Front Row: Miss Stuckey, Miss Lyon, Miss Morrell, Miss Fitzgerald, Miss Johnston, Miss Hendry, Mrs Simon

It is with regret that we acknowledge the recent passing of Mrs Judith Cranefield who is picture above. She died in Dunedin on 6 August 2014.

## OGHS 150th Celebrations- Waitangi Weekend 5-7 February 2021

Planning is already underway for our 150th Celebrations in 2021. You can help us out by making sure any ex-students or staff have registered their interest in this event. If you aren't already on our database you can go to the school website and enter your details on our Alumni page. Alternatively you can email us at [alumni@otagogirls.school.nz](mailto:alumni@otagogirls.school.nz)



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