

Otago Girls' High School Alumni Association



Calling all OGHS ex-girls

The Otago Girls' High School Alumni Association invites you to reconnect with your school at an event for ex-girls to be held in the school hall.

- Friday 1 March 2019, 5.00pm-7.30pm
- Nibbles and drinks provided
- Entertainment by student groups
- Opportunity to have a tour of the school
- Hear about the upcoming 150th Celebrations
- \$15 donation at the door for catering costs appreciated
- RSVP by 22 February to alumni@otagogirls.school.nz



Principal's Report

The following is a transcript of the speech Principal Linda Miller gave at our Prizegiving held on 4 December 2018.

Tēnei te mihi ki a koutou mā

Tēnā koutou

Good evening and welcome to the 2018 Otago Girls' High School Prize giving ceremony. I would firstly like to extend the apologies of our Board Chair, Mr Pete Hogan who is unable to be with us tonight due to a cycle accident yesterday. He is very disappointed not to be here and extends his thanks and best wishes to all who have contributed to the work of the school this year.

Guest speaker Dame Silvia Cartwright, members of the Board of Trustees, staff, parents, students and friends of Otago Girls' High School.

A number of milestones have been achieved this year, for Otago Girls' High School and Aotearoa, New Zealand. As a school we embarked on a series of consultation meetings and surveys to develop a new Vision Statement that will help guide us into the future. By bringing together all the ideas collected we came up with a simple, aspirational and hopefully memorable statement: *Inspire, empower, challenge, dream*. This is what we want for the students in our care and it is our commitment to provide the opportunity for every learner in our organisation to experience these ideals.

It is entirely appropriate then, that on the national front, we have acknowledged those who 125 years ago saw their dream come to fruition. They dared to dream of greater equality between the sexes and challenged the status quo to win the vote for New Zealand women. Prominent among the suffragists were people from, or associated with this very school. They were then, and continue to be now, an inspiration to us all, with the lessons learned through their stories of frustration, persistence and eventual victory a source of empowerment to all who fight for equal rights.

Equally inspirational have been other alumnae of the school who visited this year; Mai and Mindy Chen, Kelly Brazier and Madison Kelly, all of whom shared their stories, their passion for learning and their achievements at the very top levels of law, academia, sport and the arts and environmentalism. One of the key messages that came through from these speakers was that while academic results are important, what sets you apart from others is your strength of character, and that character is developed by facing challenges. They left us in no doubt that students from this school have the capabilities to become world leaders. Tonight we are honoured to have another alumnae address us, Dame Silvia Cartwright.

Our students have created waves here in Dunedin in more ways than one, starting with the Year 13 girls' volleyball team winning the 2018 boys volleyball competition for Otago. A milestone in and of itself.

And then there are the 'pants'! Hannah King in Year 13 had a dream: a dream that trousers should be part of our school uniform. With the help, support and encouragement of others she put together a proposal to the Board of Trustees to have pants included as an optional item of school uniform. The



proposal was extremely well put together and left the board in no doubt that introducing the pants was the right thing to do at this point in our school's evolution. With the Board's endorsement a straight-forward one, Hannah and I were completely unprepared for the interest this decision attracted from media outlets throughout the country. I am proud to say that we are a school that values and celebrates our history and traditions without compromising the need to be inclusive and responsive to the needs of our students.

This year saw the school purchase of 29 Kitchener Street, the old High Tide Restaurant. This purchase was made possible through the generosity of Simon Gilmour and Jenny Child, the former owners and parents of ex-girl and former head prefect Cleo Gilmour. Their vision to see this property repurposed for Otago Girls' watersports, along with their planning, hard work, and willingness to accept payment significantly below market value, has provided us with a 'classroom by the sea'. While there is much work to be done to see this vision come fully to fruition, it is my hope, and the hope of the board, that it will provide a centre for watersports and a hub for education outside the classroom that will enable our entire school community to enjoy and contribute to the natural and cultural significance of Otago Harbour.

Most importantly, this year has seen outstanding achievements from our students across the board. Academic, sporting, cultural and leadership awards will be presented to some outstanding young women tonight and I congratulate each and every one of them.

Thank you to everyone who has contributed to ensuring another year of outstanding successes for the students and staff of Otago Girls' High School.

Nāu te rourou, nāku te rourou ka ora te manuwhiri. With your food basket and my food basket the guests will have enough. (May each contribute).

Finally I would like to thank our Board for their support this year, but most importantly I would like to thank our teaching staff. These people push themselves to the limit to provide the very best of support and opportunity for your daughters. They sacrifice time with their own families to spend time with yours. I thank them from the bottom of my heart and hope that they, and you and yours have a restful and enjoyable Christmas.

Nō reira

Tēnā koutou, tēnā koutou, tēnā koutou katoa.

Linda Miller

Principal



Hannah King (at left) who prepared the trouser proposal and Sabrina Swerdloff wearing a pair of the trousers.

Dr Margaret Barnett Cruickshank MB ChB

Commemorations to honour her life held in Waimate 28 November 2018
- 100 years to the day after her passing in 1918



Below: The grave of Dr Margaret Cruickshank and her sister Christina in the Waimate Cemetery.

Principal Linda Miller and Alumni Secretary and school Archivist Jane Smallfield were pleased to be able to attend the recent commemorations in Waimate marking 100 years since the death of Otago Girls' ex-girl Dr Margaret Cruickshank.

In 1888 Margaret and her twin Christina started at Otago Girls' High School and they were joint duxes in 1891. Margaret studied medicine and graduated in 1897. She became the first New Zealand woman to register as a medical practitioner and immediately took up a position as an assistant, and later partner, to Dr Barclay at Waimate. She remained in Waimate all her life, apart from taking a postgraduate course at Edinburgh and Dublin in 1913.

When the terrible influenza epidemic of 1918 struck Waimate, Margaret responded beyond the call of duty to the needs of the district. She not only gave medical care to her patients but attended to any urgent domestic tasks, which at times included feeding babies and milking cows. Tragically Margaret caught influenza herself and died on 28 November 1918. A marble statue was erected in her honour in Waimate in 1923. This statue is thought to be the first erected to a woman in New Zealand (other than Queen Victoria) and the inscription reads "The Beloved Physician, Faithful unto Death".



Below L-R: Jane Smallfield, with Timaru Ex-Girls Rosemary May (née Blair), Annette Batchelor (née Dewar), Patricia Shears (née Fairweather) and Principal Linda Miller, in front of the Waimate statue of Dr Margaret Cruickshank. Below right: Margaret's image on a silo in Waimate.



OGHS 150th Celebrations- Waitangi Weekend 5-7 Feb 2021

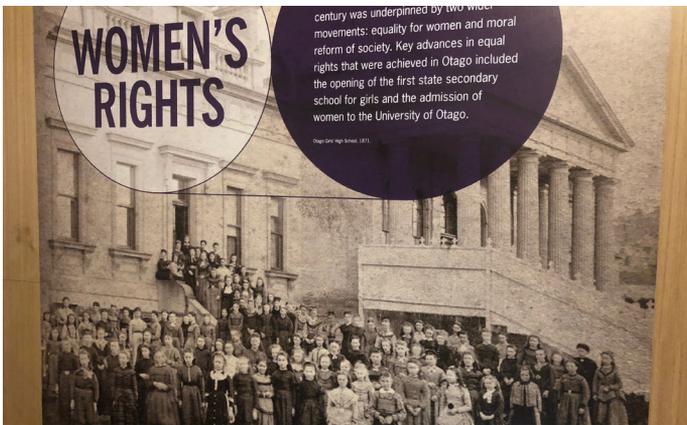
Planning is already underway for our 150th Celebrations in 2021. You can help us out by making sure any ex-students or staff you know have registered their interest in this event. If you aren't already on our database you can go to the school website and enter your details on our Alumni page. Alternatively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

Suffrage 125 Exhibition - OGHs well represented

I encourage any of you who live in Dunedin or are visiting here to take in the Suffrage 125 exhibition currently being held at Toitū Settlers Museum. Otago Girls' features in many aspects of the exhibition, some of which are depicted here. The exhibition was also opened by ex-girl Dame Silvia Cartwright and runs until 29 July 2019.



Above are two of the panels, originally made for the 100th anniversary of Women's Suffrage, which are currently on display at Toitū. The one on the left depicts Learmonth Whyte Dalrymple and the other one depicts Emily Siedeberg.



Above: First day pupils of the Provincial School for Girls' (later Otago Girls' High School).



Above: Otago Girls' High School has loaned some of Dame Silvia's medals to Toitū for the exhibition.



Right: The Otago Girls' High School gym frock also features in the Suffrage 125 exhibition.



Dame Silvia Cartwright and Principal Linda Miller at the official opening of the Suffrage 125 exhibition at Toitū.



Left: Competitors in the bicycle race at the 1902 school sports.



Principal Linda Miller with ex-girl Michelle Bong.

Michelle Bong Junior Engineer: Fulton Hogan

Three years ago Michelle Bong left Otago Girls' to study civil engineering. Now she's already a year into her first job as a junior engineer with Fulton Hogan and loving every minute of it.

"It was a bit daunting, starting my first job, especially being quite young and being one of the only females in a male dominated industry," she says. But since then Michelle has never looked back.

"Everyone here has been really great. I've found everyone is willing to help and teach, you just have to ask and show up ready to learn."

Michelle's role sees her pricing and writing tenders for contracts among other things, and she says she would love to see lots of other young women take up civil engineering as a career.

"There's just so much opportunity. I love all the choice civil engineering offers. You can have a career in lots of different sectors, like water, roading or construction. Plus it's something that's always going to be needed in the future and you can do it anywhere in the world," Michelle says.

Michelle was just one of three women students in her civil engineering course, and often the only one in her classroom with 30 to 40 males.

"That's definitely something I would like to see change.

"When I was studying everyone was so supportive of it, from my friends to my lecturers. Because I was a girl doing civil engineering which is quite rare, and I was quite young, I felt like everybody really wanted me to do well.

Now, after several months at Fulton Hogan, where she is the only young female engineer in the construction and drainage division, Michelle says she has learned a lot.

"My boss has been great. He is really willing to give me the chance to try new things and to test myself. He will always let me have a go at doing something and I know I can always ask him if I don't know something."

Outside of work Michelle flexes some different muscles by playing canoe polo and spending plenty of time with family and friends. While she's happy learning as much as she possibly can in her current role, she also has her eye on further study down the line. "But I really want to get as much practical experience as I can. Because I am in contracting, it's good to know how everything works first. I think that will really help me out when I come to do more study.

The information in this article, provided by Michelle, came from the following website <http://www.connexis.org.nz/wp-content/uploads/2018/09/Michelle-Bong-profile.pdf>

Alumni AGM



Principal Linda Miller with Secretary of the Christchurch Branch of OGHS Ex-Girls' at the Alumni AGM held in the OGHS Library.

Suzie Bates helps out



Year 9 students Abby Harris (left) and Isy Parry (right) in the school gym, getting some cricket coaching from ex-girl and world cricket star Suzie Bates.

Email addresses

Please remember to keep us updated with your current email address. Every time we send this newsletter out we find we have a large number of email addresses that are no longer active.

The following article is by a recent ex-girl Hayley Dick who moved to Auckland at the beginning of this year after she finished Year 13. It focuses on how moving to Auckland gave her a greater appreciation of her Alma Mater.

Hayley Dick (OGHS 2013 - 2017)

Moving away from Dunedin and to Auckland was definitely one of the best decisions I have ever made – but not for the reasons one might think and definitely not for the reasons I initially thought. Uphauling my life like this has allowed me to gain a greater appreciation for the small town that has shaped me into the person I am today. Everything that I used to be not so fond of or took for granted in Dunedin, I am now immensely proud of. Perhaps it is the homesickness or maybe it is the comparison to the high-stress living in Auckland; my relationship with Dunedin has evolved in ways I couldn't imagine.

There were many things that I did not expect to happen when I moved to Auckland, and the University of Auckland in particular. I was the only student from Otago Girls' to enrol into the University of Auckland and one of three to decide to study in Auckland altogether. I was going in with the mindset that I wouldn't know many people, no one would care that I wasn't from Auckland and that I would really be starting fresh in another city. However, this was immediately not the case. While I was the only person in my hall of residence, O'Rorke, from Dunedin, I could not escape the question that was on everyone's minds: "what school did you go to?" I remember talking to my sister about this and wondering why everyone was so concerned with what school you went to. Ultimately it is a mix of curiosity and a bit of elitism. We did not really have private schools in Dunedin but suddenly, even after high school, I felt myself being compared to girls from Diocesan Girls', ACG Colleges and other elite high schools for girls. This was the first thing that really helped me gain a greater appreciation for Dunedin and it was definitely not the last time that Otago Girls' came up throughout my year.

Something that really made my year enjoyable was a class called "Art Scholars" which was a group of about 50 students who all share a passion for the arts. Before this class started, I knew of only one person in the class, and I was not expecting an ex-girl of Otago Girls' to pop up on that first day. I remember sitting down in class and being completely caught off guard as I saw Edie Benny walk in. After the class, we caught up a wee bit – me asking why she was in a first-year class despite being a year older, and her explaining that she had just returned from a gap year which she spent in China. We bonded over our shared memories of Otago Girls' and how we were both the only ones from our cohorts to make the move up. It was a welcome surprise that I am so grateful for as it made an unfamiliar class just that little bit more familiar.

With Art Scholars, all the students in this classes are assigned a mentor from the teaching staff of their respective faculty. I have the absolute privilege of having Professor Jennifer Curtin as my mentor. She is such a successful academic who specialises in women in politics. In September, I attended her Inaugural Lecture, which coincided with the 125th anniversary of Women's Suffrage and it was titled "Sex, Gender and Power in New Zealand – 125 years of Women's Politics." It was a hugely fascinating lecture as she described not only her research but her journey throughout. I felt so proud when she mentioned Learmonth Dalrymple as a champion for Women's Rights in her era, and when I got the chance to talk to Jennifer about it, it was

really cool to be able to share my own experiences at such a historically important school. Additionally, when I was writing an essay on women's representation for my New Zealand Politics class, I came across an entire chapter on Otago Girls' in a book that I was referencing from!

Moving up to Auckland has exposed me to so many new experiences and relationships that I would have never have thought to happen and so many of these have surprisingly been based on Otago Girls'. During my time at Otago Girls', I was aware of the historical significance and how the relationships that I made would be ones that I would have forever, but I didn't realise how important that it would actually be in my life and how soon this importance would realise itself. I am not sure if I would have felt the same way had I stayed in Dunedin as I might have expected it, rather than it be a welcome surprise in my life. As I write this at the airport, waiting for my flight home – if only for a few days – I feel so proud and privileged that Otago Girls' unexpectedly made one of the hardest times in my life a bit easier and turned it into one of the best experiences of my life.

Hayley Dick



Hayley Dick (centre in black) at the Auckland Model Asia Pacific Forum. Hayley has continued to be involved in UN Youth - something she was involved in while at Otago Girls'.

Dr Emily Duncan (nee Stevens) (OGHS 1993-1994)



We were delighted to hear that ex-girl and playwright Emily Duncan (nee Stevens) was named a Robert Burns Fellow, joining a group that includes Janet Frame, Maurice Gee and James K Baxter. (Photo reproduced with permission of the Otago Daily Times).

“Celebration” alive and well at OGHS



The long standing tradition of the Otago Girls' High School Carol and then Thanksgiving Service is still alive and well at OGHS. In 1994 the name of the event was changed to The Celebration of Family and the Community, but since 1995 it has simply been called Celebration.



Visit by ex-girl and Black Fern Seven's player Kelly Brazier

On 1 August we were delighted to have three Black Ferns visit Otago Girls' to meet with our school rugby players. Hot on the tail of their World Cup 7's win in Los Angeles, Tenika Willison, Alena Saili and ex-girl Kelly Brazier answered questions from students and staff about their lives on the 7's circuit. Kelly Brazier also returned to be our guest speaker at our Sports Awards.

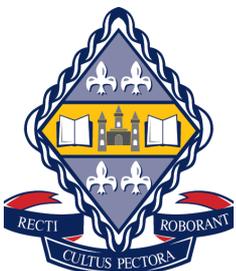


New Cartwright awards at Prizegiving

Last week our annual prizegiving was held at the Regent Theatre. This year there was a new award instigated by our Postive Behaviour for Learning (PB4L) Prefects, Olivia Dorne-Cumming and Lily Forbes. This prestigious award was to recognise one girl in each House who consistently adhered to the school values. The PB4L Prefects wrote to Dame Silvia to ask her if she would agree to it being called the Cartwright Award as they knew that Dame Silvia embodied all the characteristics they wanted to recognise. As well as agreeing to this Dame Silvia also attended our prizegiving to present the first Cartwright awards and address the audience. The first recipients of the award are pictured below with Dame Silvia, who insisted on standing in the back row!



L-R: Meredith Walker (Allan House), Hannah Moore (Benjamin House), Emily Harrex (Cruickshank House), and Laura Tran (Williams House).



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This newsletter was compiled by Jane Smallfield on behalf of the OGHS Alumni Association.