

Otago Girls' High School Alumni Association

Principal's Report

Kia ora koutou katoa

I find reading the articles our ex-girls write for this newsletter incredibly inspiring. They are a constant reminder to me of our school vision: Inspire ~ Empower ~ Challenge ~ Dream, with these women living proof of the value of this vision. The sentiments and reflections provided by the authors always reinforce the qualities and dispositions I believe are important ingredients in happy and successful lives. It is never about money or position for these women; it is always about passion, opportunity and the willingness to help others. This is not just reflected in articles about our ex-girls, but also in events associated with the school. It is through the passion of others and their willingness to give back to our school community that we are looking forward to celebrating 150 years of girls' education next year and it is for similar reasons that you are able to read of the opening of our latest addition to the school - Te Taiwhaka o Kā Moana e Rua - our classroom by the sea. We are so fortunate to have such people associated with our school.

As I write this article we are in our first day of the nationwide lock-down in response to the Covid-19 pandemic. These are difficult times for the entire world and particularly worrying for the elderly and those with compromised immune systems. I am proud to report that the response of the school has enabled a smooth transition from face-to-face, classroom delivery of lessons, to online learning for all of our students. This has enabled our students' education to continue, despite the school being closed. Our ability to do this has been the result of years of investment by the Board of Trustees and the Ministry of Education into the digital infrastructure of the school and the professional learning and development of staff, along with the commitment of teachers to remain current in terms of digital technology and to develop resources and approaches that lend themselves to digital delivery. Classes are being delivered via a mix of Zoom meetings - that allow an entire class to be online with their teachers and classmates at the same time - and online resources and activities that students work on in their own time. In these ways



Linda Miller, Principal

we are able to stay connected with our students and support them in both their learning and their emotional wellbeing through this difficult time.

Already we are hearing reports of lovely things happening as a result of the challenge everyone is facing at present and it is important to share these. It is also an important time to think about those things we are grateful for as well as those things we realise we take for granted when life is 'normal'. I heard this morning of one student who told a staff member that she'd always thought that she hated school but now she isn't able to come to school, she realises she loves being in the classroom and loves her teachers. As for me, I'm grateful that I lead a school that is focussed on always doing its best for the students in its care and for how seamlessly our teachers have been able to move to the online mode of delivery. I am also grateful that I live where I do and that my 'government sanctioned walks for exercise' enable me to access the bush and the beautiful Otago Harbour directly from my doorstep and where I have been met by friendly smiles and waves from (almost) everyone I meet. Once this is all over I am looking forward to being able to drive somewhere for a walk and stop at a cafe for a cuppa when I'm done. I am also looking forward to seeing the girls and the staff back at school. Although it is really nice to be able to get things done with no interruptions while I am working out of my home based 'office', running a school when you see none of the people you are responsible for is quite a surreal experience. Another thing I am looking forward to when we get back to normality will be watching the sports and cultural events students participate in. I think the loss of these activities is among the most difficult experiences for many students at present and it will be great to see them reinstated.

I hope you enjoy reading this newsletter during the lock-down period. If you are at a loose end you may like to take up Editor Jane's challenge to write some memoirs, or maybe just share some things you are grateful for and/or are looking forward to.

Kia kaha everyone. Be kind to each other and remember to follow the guidelines and stay home!

Ngā mihi
Linda Miller

Influenza, Infantile Paralysis and Corona Virus - periods of closure at OGHS.

As staff and students have moved into a lock-down situation with the Corona virus it is timely to look at other occasions in the school's history when the school has been forced to close due to pandemics or epidemics.

On 13 November 1918, by order of the Health Officer,, Otago Girls' High School for forced to close as a result of the influenza epidemic sweeping the globe. At this stage one senior pupil had died from influenza. Six days later on the 19 November the Otago Education Board notified all schools under their jurisdiction that Public Schools were closed for the year for the summer holidays until further notice. This closing date was nearly a month earlier than the usual end of year finishing time. As a result of the closure the school prizegiving was cancelled and public examinations were delayed. The school prizes were not distributed until a gathering in the school hall on 3 February 1919.

Move forward to 1948 when further health issues impacted on the school. On the 8 December that year the school was forced to close due to the Infantile Paralysis or Polio epidemic, and the opening of the school

was postponed until 1 March 1948. For the three weeks prior to reopening the girls had had their lessons by correspondence. A Foundation Day Service had been held on 8 February 1948 but there were no girls present (*1948 School Magazine*).

Move on to 2020 and we are now in our third period of prolonged closure due to a pandemic but the teaching and the learning continues and we look forward to all being back together at school in the near future.

Below are a some images showing what the world of on-line teaching/communicating looks like as Otago Girls' High School continues to deliver the curriculum and keeps in touch with students and staff.

Kia kaha



Science staff having a Zoom Departmental meeting during the lock-down.



Assistant Principal Chris Richards working from home during the lock-down, with Cruickshank House mascot Margaret at rear.



Year 13 student Laura Henderson having a lesson at home on Zoom.



Physics teacher Rose Gordon preparing physics videos to share with her students.



OTAGO GIRLS' HIGH SCHOOL
150TH JUBILEE
WAITANGI WEEKEND 2021

Register at otagogirls.school.nz

Donation of pewter box worked by Daphne Rita Bennett (OGHS 1932-1933)

Thank you to Trevor Hayes for recently donating the beautiful box depicted below to the school. He gave us this box at the request of his 101 year old mother Daphne Hayes (nee Bennett).



Daphne produced this box while at Otago Girls' in 1933 as part of an Art and Craft subject offered as an alternative to taking both French and Latin in the fourth form. Cooking, sewing and other handcrafts were also offered as part of this course. Daphne dropped Latin and this box was one of the results.

Daphne recently recalled to her son that they were supplied with a box and given pewter sheets to decorate. They punched holes to make the flowers on the top of the box, while the 'bubble' bits have plasticine underneath to give the raised texture. The design was created by Daphne.

Daphne went to Ravensbourne school and was the dux there in 1931. She left Otago Girls' in 1933 and went to the Catlins to be with her parents on their farm. Her parents both died there in the mid 1930's leaving Daphne and her sister to struggle with the farm. They trapped possums and shot rabbits to survive but were forced to walk away from the farm with nothing. Dorothy then worked in Dunedin, married after World War 2, and moved to Blenheim where she lives today.

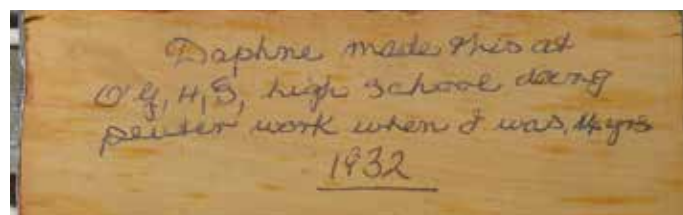
150th Jubilee update

As most of you will now know we opened our 150th Jubilee registrations in mid-March and thanks to those of you who have already supported our efforts by registering in uncertain times. We have posted out a number of paper registration forms where requested and these will be processed once the forms are returned to us.

Early planning for the Jubilee has meant that things are now well organised and our Registration team are working from home processing online registrations. This will continue to happen during the lock-down period.

We appreciate that many of you may be holding off registering to see how the current situation evolves but I encourage you all to remain positive, register for the event, spread the word and look forward to the Jubilee in more settled times. We will enjoy the opportunity to celebrate together.

You can register for the Jubilee by clicking the 150th box on the main page of our school website otagogirls.school.nz



The delights of an autograph book.

The images on this page were taken from the autograph book of Constance Lee who was a pupil at Otago Girls' High School in the mid 1920s. Her sister Ngaire also attended the school. It is now in the possession of OGHS relief teacher Vicki Wilson who is a great niece of the Lee sisters.

The entries depicted here were made by her OGHS classmates.



When the golden sun is sinking,
 And your mind from care is free,
 When of schoolmates you are thinking
 Will you sometimes think of me

Hazel White
 O.G.H.S.
 1926.

No may your joys be as deep as the ocean,
 And your sorrows as light as its foam.

Constance Morrison
 O.G.H.S. 1926

Emma Collins (OGHS 1995-1998)

Kia ora koutou, my name is Emma Collins. I am the Coordinator at The Breast Room® and a Breastfeeding Peer Supporter. I also volunteer as an administrator for Mothers Milk NZ and I am an active member of The Dunedin Breastfeeding Network. My roles are all part time allowing me to often work from home and providing flexibility for my family commitments. Mothers Milk NZ and The Breast Room® are registered charities. The Dunedin Breastfeeding Network is a not-for-profit group, made up of breastfeeding advocates from different organizations around Dunedin.



Since completing my Breastfeeding Peer Support training in June 2017 I volunteered regularly at The Breast Room®, providing one on one consultations during our free, weekly drop in clinics to respectfully support parents, share information about breastfeeding and suggest solutions to overcome barriers a parent may be facing in regard to breastfeeding. At the start of 2019 I was employed as the coordinator. The role includes helping with the management and liaising with other peer supporters, ongoing follow up support after the clinic and networking with organizations or support groups to introduce our service and share information, so parents know where to seek help or support if needed and fundraising etc. I thoroughly enjoy the position and being part of such an incredible team, and highly value working alongside a knowledgeable mentor. The Breast Room® is a service like no other, and I wish there were many more around New Zealand.

I joined Mothers Milk NZ last year, where my role quickly developed from an ambassador to administrator. Part of my position is to arrange breast milk to be matched and shipped, unless locally matched, around New Zealand to whanau who are unable to breastfeed. There are many reasons for this; illness, medications or complications with the recipient's baby's health are just some. I input blood test results and gather as much relevant information as possible from the donor to give to the recipient as they need to be offered every opportunity for informed choices. I am consistently communicating with the donors and recipients and have such compassion for the different, often sensitive circumstances which bring people to use the service. I work with an amazing tribe of volunteers from many different professions all with a common goal around breastfeeding and for breast milk to be available for those parents wanting to feed their babies the next best thing to their own milk. We follow international milk bank guidelines including regular blood screen tests for blood borne virus' in our donors.

Since becoming part of the Dunedin Breastfeeding network, I have helped to organize and run events for world breastfeeding week, such as The Big Latch on, and a Fourth Trimester seminar.

I attended Otago Girls' High School from 1994 to 1998. I enjoyed my time there, and my favourite subjects were those related to the arts. I do wish I had paid more attention to science and biology, of course hindsight is 20/20! I am also a mum to three amazing school aged daughters. I'm from Dunedin and although I'm currently living in town, my roots are 'down the bay' where I've spent most of my life. After I left high school, I went on to do my first year of study at the

School of Art which really enriched my love for the world of creativity and expression through art. My zest for art has never fizzled out. I really enjoy designing and creating art in a range of mediums. I have even been able to sell several items, much to my surprise and delight.

In 2000 when I was 19, my lifestyle as a student completely changed. Just before the The America's Cup Race in Auckland, I secured a job as a stewardess on a multimillion dollar super yacht. It was a surreal experience, being on the sea for six weeks, travelling up to the Bay of Islands and accommodating clients from 'exotic' backgrounds, compared to my humble life in Dunedin. From there I went on to work in hospitality in Auckland where I lived before returning home to Dunedin at age 21.

Fast forward to 2006, after working in retail for several years, I was blessed with a daughter. Unfortunately her birth didn't go as well as I expected and I was unable to breastfeed. This created some really sad feelings for me and I struggled with postnatal depression. After working on my mental wellbeing (which I still work on today, with mindfulness), I returned to the workforce and gained experience in hospitality and freelancing as a makeup artist. In 2012 I met my partner, and he and I have two daughters born 2013 and 2015 whom I successfully breastfed, including tandem, for several years. That is when my passion for breastfeeding support grew, although (or perhaps because), it was rooted from my past experience of being unable to breastfeed my first child, I was motivated to ensure every mother is heard and that her wishes and cultural values are respected, so parents can achieve their personal breastfeeding goals.

The mahi I do has great meaning to me, and I genuinely care for families I am able to support. I continue to participate in professional development when the opportunity arises, attending short courses and doing online training, as well as learning from more experienced peers and colleagues. A volunteering ethos fills my soul. When you mix interest, skills and passion the result is pretty impressive. Volunteers need to problem solve and persist until they find a way forward, because often the organisations requiring volunteers are running off sheer willpower, very tight budgets and committed leaders. Resourcefulness and creativity are needed to find solutions.

In spite of my lack of tertiary qualifications, I attended the Breastfeeding Peer Supporter training course, where we are taught information about breastfeeding and how to actively listen to clients and offer suggestions to help with common breastfeeding problems. Since then, I have been learning from many hours of experience working with parents and babies, along with my own life experiences, which prepared me to communicate, relate to and help people from all walks of life. I strive to empower parents so they can make informed choices and meet their breastfeeding goals. I have learnt to put their needs and wishes before my own emotions. The experience has improved my knowledge ten-fold.

I've learnt to use my initiative and that it's ok to take risks, to try new things. I have learnt to research how to do something and achieve goals. It has taught me to believe in myself and trust my own abilities. I have learnt the importance of collaboration, rather than competition and to focus on creating a meaningful impact to the quality of life for other people.

I would highly recommend to anyone to find something you

really care about and volunteer to provide or improve that cause whatever field that may be. It will open doors for you, that are created by a passion for what you care about. That passion and drive stops one from looking at work as drudgery and instead as important duties that keep the organisation running smoothly, and as providing a service to those that need it. For me it is breastfeeding! You will never be worse off for giving someone else the gift of your time and the kindness they need. That is one of my goals, to try and leave the world a little better off once I'm gone, than it was, before I came.

Emma Collins

Generous gift to Otago Girls'

In March Otago Girls' took possession of a wonderful gift to the school. Mrs Margaret Da-Rin has given the school one of her prized possessions, a beautiful Yamaha 5' 6" grand piano. It was removed from her home by crane and delivered to the school. Margaret has four daughters that all went to Otago Girls' - Joanne Da-Rin (1972-1976), Claire Da-Rin (1975-1979), Suzanne Da-Rin (1977-1982), and Cheryl Da-Rin (1978-1982).



Margaret Da-Rin.

Thank you Margaret for your generous gift to the school which will be enjoyed by generations of students to come.



The piano being removed from Margaret's home by crane.

Ex-girls who are authors

As part of the 150th Jubilee the McNab Room at the Dunedin Public Library will be doing a display of published books written by ex-girls. If you have had a book published we would love to add you to our list. Alternatively let us know your favourite book written by an ex-girl - there are many to choose from. Email details to alumni@otagogirls.school.nz

Anna Duncan (nee Thomas) OGHS 1995-1999

Since leaving OGHS in 1999 I decided to focus on my springboard diving training which meant moving to Auckland to train with the national coach and team. In 2002 I qualified and competed at the Commonwealth Games in Manchester. It was an amazing experience being part of a larger New Zealand team. I was the first in the New Zealand team to compete at the games! I achieved a 6th and 8th place. In 2003 I competed at the World Championships in Barcelona, training and competing in the pool that was used for the 1992 Olympic Games.



After my diving career finished in 2004 I moved back to Dunedin to complete my Bachelors degree in Business Studies at Otago University. In 2006 I moved to Edinburgh for my OE and ended up staying for seven years with my now husband. During my time in Edinburgh I worked at Sport Scotland and Scottish Golf in Sport Development, and then as the Race Director for the Edinburgh Marathon. I also took up touch rugby socially and ended up trialing for the Scotland team in 2010 and got in! It was good fun to be part of a team sport and also to be training again. In 2011 we competed at the World Championships. My touch career ended half way through these championships with a broken ankle!

In 2012 we decided it was time to come home as I was pregnant with our first child and we were keen to be with our families for support. We welcomed Myla into the world in November and in January we got married! We have two other children now. Zara who was born in 2015 and Indie born in 2018. I have continued to work in events since returning to NZ; working for the FIFA U20 World Cup in 2015, Rugby League World Cup in 2017 and I am currently working for the ICC Women's Cricket World Cup which will be held in February 2021.

Anna Duncan

A challenge to you during lock-down

Take advantage of this lock down period to reflect on your time at Otago Girls' and write down and share your memories.

If I get enough memories (short or long) emailed to me, I will compile a memories newsletter and distribute it to all Alumni members over the next month.

Email memories to alumni@otagogirls.school.nz

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.

Opening of Te Taiwhaka o Kā Moana e Rua "Classroom by the Sea"



The following is the speech delivered by Principal Ms Linda Miller at the opening of the Te Taiwhaka o Kā Moana e Rua, the "Classroom by the Sea" on 12 March 2020.

Tēnā koutou katoa!

E mihi ana ki te whare e tū nei, ki te marae e hora nei, ki te iwi e tau nei,

Tēna koutou katoa.

Ka nui te mihi ki a koutou nga kaitautoko mo te tuwheratanga o Te Taiwhaka o Kā Moana e Rua.

E mihi ana ki a koutou mō tā koutou manaaki mai i tenei ra, tēnā koutou katoa!

Good afternoon and welcome to the opening of Otago Girls' High School's Classroom by the Sea. Greetings to the house, the land on which we stand and the people here in attendance today and thank you all for your support of this project - Te Taiwhaka - this classroom - o Kā Moana e Rua - that sits in this region of the harbour known by Kai Tahu, the mana whenua of this land, as Kā Moana e Rua.

To our esteemed guests, Mrs Christine Garey, Deputy Mayor of Dunedin City, Simon Gilmour and Jenny Child owners of the former High Tide Restaurant, Mat Caird designer and project manager extraordinaire, Barry Sleeman from the Ministry of Education, past and present OGHHS Board of Trustees Members, members of our PTSA, our rowing coaches, Craig and John, fellow principals, DCC staff, Staff, students and parents of Otago Girls' High School, welcome one and all.

Today's ceremony marks the culmination of literally years of work to develop this facility for the current and future students of Otago Girls' High School. This has only been possible through the generosity of members of our school community and with the support of Kai Tahu, the DCC and the Ministry of Education.

Back in 2017 we were approached by Simon Gilmour who, along with his wife Jenny, had a vision for the building they had previously run as High Tide Restaurant. They could see its potential as a base for watersports and a hub of learning for school students. With their daughter Cleo having rowed for Otago Girls' and serving as Head Prefect in 2012, we were very fortunate that they offered us the chance to realise this potential. Simon and Jenny were extremely generous in offering us the purchase of the building at a significantly lower price than its value and we will be forever grateful to them for this. The Board of Trustees, recognising this potential set about securing the lease to this land from the DCC and by November 2018, and with the approval of the Ministry of Education, Otago Girls' High School Board of Trustees was the proud owner of this

building. Thank you Simon and Jenny, for making this possible.

The next step was to renovate the building to incorporate changing facilities and a 'classroom' space, in addition to the storage of our rowing boats and gear. It was at this point that Mat Caird, father of one of our current students, stepped in and offered to design the renovations and oversee the project at no charge to the school. Again, we owe you an enormous debt of gratitude Mat, for the time and energy you have put into this project, for overseeing the build, for ensuring all the consents were granted and even, along with your wife Martha, ensuring that the drainage was working during significant rainfall events. We couldn't have done it without you.

We have also had outstanding support from the parents of our rowers, and the staff, students and parents who helped out at numerous working bees as well as the generous contribution of the PTSA who enabled us to purchase all the whiteware. It truly has been a collective effort.

Earlier today, Kaumatua Hata Temo blessed this building and the boats most recently purchased by our rowers, and we are grateful for the protection and support of Kai Tahu and Te Ao Māori in our endeavours here in this place, both on and off the water. We thank Kai Tahu representatives also for the name Te Taiwhaka o Kā Moana e Rua and look forward to having this installed on the building.

For our rowers, this place is already a second home and I believe it is no accident that since moving our rowing base to this location, and thanks to the efforts of the coaching team, the achievements of these students on the water has been going from strength to strength. After this ceremony these girls are heading off to the South Island regatta and we wish them well for the remainder of the season as they build up to Maadi Cup.



The boats blessed this morning are named for the four ex-girls after whom our Houses are named: Flora Allan, the first ex-girl to become principal of Otago Girls', Ethel Benjamin the first woman in New Zealand to become a lawyer, Margaret Cruickshank, the first woman in New Zealand to practise Medicine, and Yvette Williams, the first New Zealand woman to win an Olympic Gold Medal. May all who row in them enjoy protection and success.

Te Taiwhaka is about much more than just rowing however. This is a base that we will use to extend how we deliver the curriculum in ways that are powerful, innovative and authentic. Outdoor Education, drama, writing, citizen science projects, kapa haka and social sciences are just some of the groups planning to use this space to enhance their programmes of learning. It is my hope that the ideas and applications for this space will grow and develop over time as we begin to realise the potential of this facility for us as a school but also for the wider Dunedin community.

It is fitting that we are here at this opening in the year before we celebrate the 150th jubilee of Otago Girls' High School. We are still, as we were then, an institution at the cutting edge of the education of the young women of Dunedin as well as being an institution that enjoys enormous support from our community

Thank you to all involved in making today's ceremony possible. Our students' future is brighter because of your contribution.

No reira,

Tēnā koutou, tēnā koutout, tēnā koutou katoa.

Linda Miller (Principal)



**Gift from estate of Margaret Elaine Wright
(nee Berryman)
(OGHS 1946-1948)**

It is always nice to receive unexpected donations to add to our school archive collection. This week I received this plate to add to the pieces of china we already hold from this set. Donated by Mike Wright of Christchurch this plate belonged to his mother Margaret Elaine Wright (nee Berryman) who passed away last year. This china set was manufactured by Grafton China & Sons in England for Arthur Barnett Ltd probably in the 1930s or 1940s.

Margaret attended Otago Girls' High School from 5 February 1946 and left on 29 November 1948. She was a talented piano player at school and went on to record for National radio in the 1950s. Margaret is in the 1947 fourth form photograph below (fifth from right in the second row).



Form IVO, 1947



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