

# Otago Girls' High School Alumni Association

# Principal's Report

Kia ora koutou!

Our year to date has obviously been very different and difficult year for everyone involved in the school. Covid-19 and the government's response has meant that many of the activities and achievements our students have normally been involved in by this point in the year, have simply not been able to happen.

These have included our joint musical production with Otago Boys' High School, our kapa haka group's participation in the National Kapa Haka competition and our summer sports teams tournaments which were all cancelled due to Covid 19, while the awarding of Year 9 Scholarships has been postponed until later in the year.

One of the most important achievements this year has been our success in maintaining programmes of teaching and learning throughout the lock-down period. Our Bring Your Own Device programme and the confidence and competence of our teachers in the use of e-learning meant that we were able to seamlessly and quickly transition from face to face to online learning, and back again, as the Alert Levels changed. While the technology enabled the transmission of learning material, it was the relationship between students and their teachers that ensured the vast majority of students remained engaged with their learning.

One of the big benefits of moving to Level 1 was the removal of the restrictions on the size of gatherings. This meant any worries we had about whether we would be able to hold our 150th Jubilee in February were lifted. Thank you to all of you who have registered but I also appreciate that some of you may have held off due to uncertain times while we were under lock-down. I encourage you all to register now so our organising committee have an more accurate idea of numbers planning to attend and can organise the event accordingly.

Ngā mihi mahana

**Linda Miller**  
Principal



*Principal Linda Miller in her office.*

## 150th Jubilee update

### **Donations towards 150th Jubilee Sculpture by ex-students and OGHS Ex-Girl Branches.**

Our 150th Jubilee project is the commissioning of a sculpture by New Zealand renowned sculptor and ex-girl Helen Pollock (nee Young).

When ex-students register for the Jubilee they have the opportunity to make a donation towards this event and we encourage them to do so.

We hope however that ex-students who are unable to attend the Jubilee may also wish to contribute to this project. This can be done by making donations to the OGHS 150th Jubilee bank account 02-0912-0351479-000, and putting your name and sculpture in the reference fields. Please also email Jane Smallfield at [sd@otagogirls.school.nz](mailto:sd@otagogirls.school.nz) to confirm you have made a donation and we can arrange for a receipt to be sent to you.

We would also gratefully receive any contributions towards this project from Ex-Girl branches. Such donations could be presented to the school at the Jubilee Opening but we would need to be notified of this well in advance.

## Hilary Bracefield (nee Briggs) (OGHS 1954-1955) - obituary



Hilary Bracefield

(The following obituary was written by Hilary's sister Lindsay Gunn).

Born in Dunedin in 1938, Hilary was the elder daughter of Charles Briggs, a teacher, and Phyllis (nee Anderson), an accomplished pianist and singer. Theirs was

a household where music, literature and the arts flourished.

Hilary commenced piano lessons with her mother at the age of three. She attended St Clair Primary School, but in 1946 the family moved to Balfour and then Greenfield where Hilary's schooling at the Clutha Valley District High School continued until the end of her 5th form year. Much of her after school time was spent in writing and music.

Hilary attended Otago Girls' High School for her last two years of schooling, and taught music and music theory at the Barth School of Music, obtaining her LTCL. Hilary then attended the University of Otago where she eventually took Masters Degrees in both English and Music. She became a foundation staff member at Bayfield High School. Many remember her as a teacher who engaged her pupils' interest. Her style was clear and concise with a hatred of jargon.

During this time she served on the committees of the Dunedin branch of the Registered Music Teachers' Association and the Federation of University Women, and was the federation representative on the Regional Committee of the National Commission for UNESCO. Added to committee, school and University work she was a music critic for the *Otago Daily Times* and a member of the University A Capella Choir. She was a keen follower of the Dunedin literary scene and formed friendships with many local writers and poets.

She received a Blair Trust Travelling Award to study at the University of Birmingham in 1970. While there she taught at a school and then at the Worcester College of Education. In 1976 she took up a post as lecturer in music at the Ulster Polytechnic which became Ulster University in 1984. She rose to become Head of Music from 1988 to 2003 and continued as a part-time lecturer in American Studies until 2009.

She took a great interest in contemporary and experimental music, having already lectured Electronic Music as early as 1958. During her time in Birmingham she became joint editor of the groundbreaking journal of contemporary music *Contact*, a role she continued throughout the 20 years of the journal's publication.

Hilary was a true polymath writing on a wide range of subjects from Stravinsky to the poetry of Fleur Adcock, from a comparison of the celebration of Dominion Day in New Zealand in 1907 and 2007 to the works of L M Montgomery.

She had a particular interest in Northern Ireland composers, notably exploring issues of gender and identity and the way composers were shaped by the politics and unrest of the Troubles. She contributed over 20 articles to *The Encyclopaedia of Music* in Ireland. She also published on music therapy, music and disability and American Music.

An excellent speaker, because of her clear no-nonsense style, Hilary was also a well known media figure giving a number of broadcasts for BBC Radio Ulster. She was a presenter and contributor for some years to the 'Music Around' series and 'Auditorium' as well as giving interval talks, reviews, previews and interviews and panel discussions.

Hilary was the antithesis of an ivory-tower academic, serving on innumerable boards and committees, notably the Royal Musical Association where she served as vice-president from 2004 to 2011 and she founded an Irish Chapter which later became the Society for Musicology in Ireland. That body made her a life member in 2012. She also served on the Council of the Incorporated Society of Musicians in Northern Ireland, the Arts Council, the Belfast Music Society, the Newtownabbey Borough Council Arts Advisory Committee, the Council for the Curriculum, Examinations and Assessments, and was on the Board of Governors of the Rosstulla School in her local area. She was pivotal in the development of the Sonorities contemporary music festival, and contributed greatly to the work of the Open University in Northern Ireland. This, and her wider contribution to music and the arts in Northern Ireland, was recognised with the award of an honorary degree in 1999.

Hilary is remembered as a distinguished musicologist, a generous colleague, and a brilliant supervisor and teacher of generations of students. She was much loved by her family and friends.

**Lindsay Gunn**

## Ex-students return to help us out.

We currently have four ex-girls coming into the school to assist us as sports coaches and one as a teacher aide. These ex-students are passionate about their alma mater and it is lovely to have them back. Sisters Becky and Holly Paterson who left OGHHS in 2017 and 2016 respectively are back coaching the Junior A and B Netball squad. Becky is in her final year of nursing training and Holly is in her final year of pharmacy training.

2017 Head Prefect Madison Campbell has come back to OGHHS to work as a teacher aide between stints at American Universities on a Volleyball Scholarship. Madison moved to America in July 2018, after receiving a full athletic scholarship to study and play volleyball at a Junior College called Eastern Florida State College. After two years playing volleyball in Florida she accepted another Scholarship to an NCAA Division I Eastern Kentucky University. She will head there soon to complete her bachelors in Kinesiology and Exercise Science and play volleyball.



Becky Paterson (far left) and her sister Holly Paterson (far right).



2017 Head Prefect Madison Campbell at work as a teacher aide.

## Mr Pickard's lock-down project

There are many talented staff at Otago Girls' High School and then there are the super talented ones. Hard Materials teacher Simon Pickard is one of the latter. In June he delivered this model of the original Otago Girls' building to the school library - creating it was his lock-down project. This building, located at right angles to the current school, was originally built for Otago Boys' High School which opened in 1863. In 1871 the boys' school moved their boarding house to upper Stuart St and the girls occupied the left hand side of the building they had vacated. Note the seven foot fence which kept the two schools separate. In 1885 the boys' school moved to their current location and the girls occupied the whole building until the current school opened in 1910 next door to the original school.



Mr Simon Pickard with his model of the original school.



Model of the original school.

# Memories

(in response to a request in the previous Alumni newsletter).

## **Nancy (Anne) Morgan (née Williamson) OGHS 1948-1951**

I am a part of the history of OGHS!

The 1948 closure because of the Polio epidemic happened as I was about to commence High School. This date was recorded in the last Alumni Newsletter.

I remember Musselburgh School being closed in December 1947 and we kids thinking, "Oh freedom!"

I lived in Queen's Drive, Musselburgh, five minutes from St Kilda beach. On summer days many hours were spent there and we thought that would be what happened again. But, no! The beach was not an option as Polio or Infantile Paralysis, as it was more commonly known in those days, was considered to be airborne! There had been small closures of schools prior to this long one. Indeed, I went through primary school with a girl who sat in a large wheel chair because she had caught Polio as a small girl!

So the commencing of High School late, was met with a mixed reception. We were, as with this Covid 19 virus, told to keep within family groupings. School was closed but if I remember correctly only schools! Shops, businesses etc. continued to operate. We were not allowed to go in them though! As an only child I would have been very isolated and lonely. Remember, no TV, cell phones, computers in 1948!

We were allowed to go for walks with family members only. My two best friends lived next door and I remember two palings being removed from the adjoining fence so that we could come and go through the fence, which, I might add, was right next to the public footpath!! I guess our parents must have discussed this. Each afternoon we were taken for a boring walk; no beach, no playgrounds, no school!

I remember my high school uniform hanging in the wardrobe, with hat, gloves, tie and school bag close by. Yes, note the hat and gloves mentioned! We were given detentions if seen on the street without those two fashion items! I digress.

I vaguely remember lessons being posted to us. (What a huge task that must have been for the staff). There were new subjects such as Science, French, and Maths. I don't remember doing much learning and when we did eventually return to school I am sure we all went back, nearly to the beginning. Anyway high school for me was a happy place. During my four years there, I learned much. The teachers were excellent and knowledgeable and hockey and tennis were to the forefront. It was there, with Chase Clark as music teacher, that I first conducted our Form Three T, in the inter-form choir contest; probably badly, but it led to me conducting choirs for many years after! It opened my eyes to the fact that I would like to become a teacher and that the opportunities to do so were available.

During my early years as a teacher Polio injections were given to each school pupil. I well remember trying to decide whether to put the bravest pupils first in line, thinking that maybe the rest would follow their brave example! Or, should the most afraid go first so that they didn't have to wait so long? What I did I can't remember. Soon after the injections came the Salk liquid and that has proved to be wonderful with it being available to every child. Polio was a very nasty debilitating disease, as is Covid 19. We hope and pray that a vaccine will soon be available to all.

I continued with my teaching career for about thirty four years and have absolutely no regrets about my choice. I was privileged to teach in New Zealand mostly, but also in the USA and Scotland, learning much in each place.

So, as OGHS approaches its 150th Anniversary, and, as I will now be one of oldest ex pupils I say, "Thank you Girls' High", you gave me a great start in life as I am sure you continue to do for the girls of today.

Arohanui

**Nancy Morgan**

## **Katrina Hawker (née McLean) OGHS 1964-1967**

I was a fourth former, no longer a third former wet behind the ears, and not yet preoccupied with School Cert. There was plenty of time for mischief and, one lunch hour, an opportunity arose. The caretaker had left a ladder in the corridor, completely underestimating how tempting that would be to teenage girls stuck inside on a wet day. The ladder reached a manhole cover and, well, it just had to be investigated. After some discussion, up we went, gingerly, rung by rung. I was at the back of a group of four or five, aware of the danger of too many people on ladders. The most adventurous were in the lead and quickly found the manhole gave access to the upper storey roof space. The trouble was, though large and inviting, the route across to the other wing, our intended destination, crossed the top of the staff room. Whether the footfalls were heard or plaster dislodged I don't know but, suffice to say, it wasn't long before several very flapped and flustered staff were on the scene. That's when the real trouble began. The perpetrators were rounded up and sent to stand outside Miss Upchurch's office. We honestly thought the sky would fall, such was the fear we held for this particular Principal in those years. By a stroke of good luck (its not what you know....), I dodged my interview with said lady, having been rescued by one of the staff who was a good friend of my mother. I don't know what she said to the others but, probably, the dressing down would have included many reminders about acceptable behaviour for young ladies. It's still makes me smile wryly to recall that day and how, in some ways, we were just being normal kids.

**Katrina Hawker**

### **Mannequins required**

We are looking for some mannequins to display past school uniforms on. If you have one you no longer need or wish to sell, please contact Jane Smallfield on [sd@otagogirls.school.nz](mailto:sd@otagogirls.school.nz)

## Marina Kamel (OGHS 2006-2007)

*(The following article is reproduced with the permission of the Royal Society of New Zealand and Marina Kamel. It was originally published on the Royal Society website. Marina first became involved with the Society when she attended Realise the Dream in 2007, which sparked her passion for scientific research. Now after a rigorous academic journey, she is working as a specialist periodontist in Brisbane).*

I first became acquainted with the Royal Society Te Apārangi in 2007 as a Year 13 student at Otago Girls' High School, Dunedin. After attaining first place in the 2007 Otago Science and Technology Fair, I was given the opportunity to compete at Realise the Dream (the National Science and Technology Fair) in December 2007. This event was organised by Royal Society Te Apārangi and involved attending and participating in a one week camp in Wellington. It was the most amazing week - providing a mixture of scientific seminars, visits to university laboratories, research facilities, aquariums and observatories as well as loads of social activities to draw like-minded young adults together.

Throughout the week, we competed for opportunities to represent New Zealand at an international level. I still recall the day I was selected to represent Aotearoa in the Taiwan International Science Fair (TISF). It was a rewarding, honourable, and highly motivational experience; one you remember for a long time.

Travelling to Taiwan and learning about another culture, representing my country, and coming back with a second place in the chemistry stream was a once-in-a-lifetime experience. Aside from being academically interesting, this exposure confirmed my passion for scientific research, and positively contributed to my social skills, maturity and confidence. It was a very empowering experience.

Thereafter, I pursued my tertiary education at the University of Otago, hoping to qualify as a dentist. Health sciences first year was a competitive endeavour, I had to compete with 2200 students for 40 to 50 spots in the dentistry course. There were many days during this year where I questioned whether I would make it, or whether the competition was too great. Having had a positive experience at the Realise the Dream week, I was determined to go through it, try hard, be resilient and give it my all. At the end of health sciences, hard work paid off and I gained admission into dental school eventually attaining a "Bachelor of Dental Surgery" at the University of Otago in 2012. It was an enjoyable, yet highly challenging, five year course. Throughout my time at dental school, I maintained my interest in scientific research and participated in multiple dental research projects.

After graduation, it was time to join the work force. However, my passion for learning and challenging myself burnt on. I wanted to obtain a fellowship with the Royal Australasian College of Dental Surgeons in general dentistry. At this point in time, attaining a fellowship was an essential step for those who wished to enter specialist-training fields. I realised that this would mean an additional two years of studying and examinations while working full-time. Again, the challenges rolled on. I had to exercise resilience, stamina and hard work. There is nothing easier than giving up and nothing harder than holding on even when all the odds are against you. Instead of completing the fellowship in two years, I ended up having to spend an additional

year to complete the qualification. However, I was so proud to finally attain this fellowship while working full time.

Equipped with the necessary qualifications, I applied for specialist training in the field of Periodontics. It was an ambitious application given the highly selective nature of specialist training and the small number of dentists accepted into the programme. However, I was extremely delighted to be offered the only position at the University of Sydney. A tough three year training journey followed; perhaps the toughest three years of my life, balancing family life, weekend work and full-time study. However, my past academic experiences and the fellowship journey taught me to hold on and keep going. I successfully completed my specialist training in November 2019 and was also awarded an honorary membership with the Royal Australasian College in Specialist Stream. It was a humbling feeling of accomplishment, analogous to the day I was chosen to represent New Zealand in Taiwan's science and technology fair.

Nowadays, I am working as a specialist periodontist in Brisbane, Australia. I also have vowed to give back to the dental community; I have taught dental students at both the Universities of Otago and Sydney, and participated in a dental outreach programme which provided dental services to the orphaned children in Kenya. Further, I currently am a mentor for general dentists through both the Australian Dental Association and the Royal College.

Outside of work, I enjoy travel, running and spending time with my family in the great outdoors.

### Marina Kamel



Marina representing Aotearoa at the Taiwan International Science Fair while she was a pupil at OGHS.



Marina providing dental treatment to orphaned children in Kenya.



OTAGO GIRLS' HIGH SCHOOL  
**150<sup>TH</sup> JUBILEE**  
**WAITANGI WEEKEND 2021**

Register at [otagogirls.school.nz](http://otagogirls.school.nz)



## Mindy Chen-Wishart

A huge congratulations to ex-girl Professor Mindy Chen-Wishart who, from October 2020, will be the Dean of the Faculty of Law at Oxford University. This is a three year term. Mindy attended Otago Girls' from 1974 until 1978 and was co-dux in her final year. Here she is pointing out her name on the Dux board when she visited the school in 2018.



## Millie Lovelock

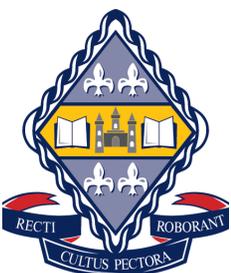
Dunedin songwriter and former *Otago Daily Times* columnist Millie Lovelock won the best independent debut award for her 2019 album *Relief*, at the Taite Music Awards. The award, a \$2000 cash prize and a live performance opportunity, went to *Repulsive Woman*, a solo project of Millie's. The prize is for outstanding New Zealand albums released in the past calendar year. Millie attended Otago Girls' from 2007 to 2011.



*Millie Lovelock (photo reproduced with permission of Otago Daily Times).*

### 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.



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