



Otago Girls' High School Alumni Association

Happy 150th Birthday Otago Girls' High School

Principal

Kia ora koutou

This is my final report as Principal of Otago Girls' High School. It is just over a decade since my appointment to this position and it is hard to believe the time has gone so quickly. I had expected to be celebrating the 150th Jubilee of the school this year and had been working with the 150th Jubilee Committee towards this event for the past few years. Sadly, Covid-19 put paid to our plans and we were left with mainly in-school events and activities to celebrate this amazing milestone.

When I was appointed to the role of Principal I had never worked in a girls' school. Having spent the past 10 years here I am absolutely convinced of the benefits a single sex education provides most young women. The scope of opportunities, the focus on girls and their learning, and the unashamed celebration of the achievements of women provide students with an environment that supports and nourishes them.

There have been many highlights for me during my time here and all have been the result of the collaborative efforts of many people, including the Board, staff, students, and alumni of the school. The introduction of Positive Behaviour for Learning and Restorative Practice frameworks, the introduction of the House system, the establishment of the Alumni Association, the building of Te Toi Aweawe - Cartwright Arts Centre, the purchase and renovation of Te Taiwhaka o Kā Moana e Rua our classroom by the sea, the increasing visibility of Māori culture in and around the school, and the development of our new school vision are things I hope will continue to develop and grow after I have left.

This final year for me as Principal has been an unusual one in that I have spent a lot of time outside the school. I am extremely grateful to the School Board for allowing me the opportunity to take a principals' sabbatical in Term One, and to be seconded to the Teaching Council for Terms Two and Three. This was possible due to the capable hands of Acting Principal, Bridget Davidson, the senior leadership team and other staff who stepped up to fill roles in my absence. Throughout 2021 the school has continued to offer an amazing array of opportunities to students and students have continued to excel, regardless of the impact of Covid-19.

It has been a real honour to serve as principal of this school and the knowledge, experience, and skills I have gained through this role have seen me grow enormously as an individual. I have thoroughly enjoyed watching the students of this school grow and develop into amazing young adults as they have progressed through the school and beyond. Their talent, commitment, and humanity frequently leave me in awe of their potential.

It has also been an immense pleasure to meet with so many ex-girls of the school, whether it be through visits to ex-girl branch events, formal events at the school or when ex-girls have called in to visit their alma mater. You have all been an inspiration and are a valued part of the Otago Girls' High School Community.

Throughout my time here I have been fortunate to have been supported by wonderfully dedicated and supportive senior leadership teams, Board members, staff, students and whānau. Thank you all for making my time here so meaningful and worthwhile. I would particularly like to make mention of Jane Smallfield, our librarian, photographer, magazine editor,



Linda Miller, Principal

school historian, archivist, and best friend, who has made my work so much better over the years.

Mrs Smallfield also leaves the school at the end of the year. As indicated above her input into the school has been immense. This year we also farewell Head of Science Dr Ian Phillips, fondly known as "Dr Phil", Mrs Rose Gordon, teacher of physics, Mrs Rebecca Fleury, teacher of mathematics, Mr Simon Edmunds, teacher of Mandarin, and Mr Luke Fussell, teacher of English. Earlier in the year we farewell Ms Amy Lee Budd, HOD of Technology. We wish them all well for their future endeavours.

Ngā mihi nui

Linda Miller
Principal

Message from the Editor

I thought I would finish off the year with a final newsletter before I retire at the end of next week. It will enable you all to have a look at images of the 150th Jubilee sculpture which has been successfully installed. The embroidery blocks have also been pieced together by our Textiles teacher Rosemary Flanagan and this work will be mounted and displayed in school in the near future.

All those who ordered memorabilia when they registered for the Jubilee should have received their items. There is a very limited stock left but any future inquiries about purchases in 2022 should be sent to admin@otagogirls.school.nz

Best wishes to you all for the holiday season and 2022 and may the Otago Girls' High School Alumni Association continue to thrive.

Jane Smallfield

Blessing of mauri stone Te Ika a Ngahue

On Friday 15 October a beautiful mauri (life force) stone was blessed at Otago Girls' High School. Located in the main foyer the pounamu stone is positioned to enable all who pass by the stone to touch it and in so doing add to the mauri of the stone and in turn the mauri of the school.

The blessing was done by Matua Kane Holmes who also gifted the name Te Ika a Ngahue to the mauri.

The mauri stone was one of the main initiatives of Kāhui Kōrero Māori Students' Council who have worked to improve on things Māori in the school. At the start of this year they began engaging with different carvers and iwi about securing a mauri stone for our school. The pounamu stone was selected and collected from Hokitika by staff member Mac Te Ngahue.

It was found by Master carver Colin Davison in the Arahura river and Mac Te Ngahue was drawn to this special piece when he first saw it.

The plinth on which the mauri rests was built by our talented Hard Materials Teacher Simon Pickard using recycled native wood which he hoped would emulate the natural bush that once stood on our site. Matua Kane Holmes commented on the structure that Mr Pickard erected noting the twelve rungs of native timbers could correlate with the story that Māori have twelve steps to heaven and the fact that to hold such a stone you need a strong wood like rimu to keep it in place.

Te Ika a Ngahue belongs to us, the whanau of Otago Girls' High School. What a beautiful and meaningful addition to our school in its 150th year.



Commemoration of Parihaka and Pakakohi Prisoners

The 5th of November is a very special and sad day in our nation's history. We remember the prisoners of Parihaka and Pakakohi who were held in Dunedin between 1869 and 1881 and worked the area particularly in Smith Street close to our school, and also levelled the ground for a cricket pitch when Otago Boys' High School occupied our school site.

After three years of discussion, planning, and work, Kāhui Kōrero (our Māori Student Council) were very proud to unveil a memorial to commemorate the Parihaka and Pakakohi Prisoners. The prisoners were Māori men, brought down from Taranaki to work in and around Dunedin. From the research sourced from Ian Church in 'Salutary Punishment - Taranaki Māori Prisoners in Dunedin, 1869-72 and 1879-81' we know they built several roads and structures in the vicinity of the school. When Kāhui Kōrero found out about these Māori prisoners, we felt there should be a way that we acknowledge them. This rock and its plaque is to remember and respect these men and the history of this whenua.

This type of rock is from Te Tai ō Tinirau or Blackhead. Tinirau was a famous chief from Tahiti who invented haka as revenge for Kae killing his pet whale. In Tahiti, there is the same rare rock formation as those found at Blackhead, this being the reason why it is named Te Tai ō Tinirau. When the Year 13s of Wairua Pūhou leave school, they are gifted with a taonga made from this rock acknowledging the birth of haka.

The toka was gifted to our school by Blackhead Quarries. I would like to thank Blackhead Quarries, Mac Te Ngahue, Simon Pickard, and the school, for making this happen.

*Whatungarongaro te tangata, toitū te whenua
As man disappears from sight, the land remains.*

Gabby Liddell
Māori Prefect



Production of "The Chambered Nautilus" sculpture



Sculpture Helen Pollock ONZM (OGHS 1959-1962)
Produced by Richard Wells Artworks Foundry, Auckland



Unveiling of "The Chambered Nautilus" sculpture & time capsule



On Tuesday 22 November our 150th Jubilee sculpture "The Chambered Nautilus" was unveiled. It was designed by ex-girl Helen Pollock (née Young) who attended OGHs from 1959 to 1962.

On the same day a time capsule was filled and buried in a secret location in the school grounds. Its contents reflect life at the school in 2021.



Mhairi-Bronte Duncan

Congratulations to ex-girl Mhairi-Bronte Duncan who recently left for Europe to play at the curling mixed pairs Olympic qualifying tournament in the Netherlands. Mhairi-Bronte is competing for the final two spots in the Winter Olympics held in Beijing next year.

New Principal Appointed



On 8 November the School Board announced that Bridget Davidson will be the new Principal of Otago Girls' High School. Bridget started teaching at Otago Girls' in 1995 and became Deputy Principal in 2020. This year she spent two terms in the role of Acting Principal. Bridget has a real love for the school and we wish her well in her new role.

"The hunt for the Chambered Nautilus"

Well, we may have missed our 150th Jubilee weekend, but hopefully, the Junior Production team of 2021 helped to lift our school spirit in their own sweet and talented way. "The Hunt for the Chambered Nautilus" went on stage recently after Covid interruptions last term and the fear that we may never get it up and running. It was written by Ms Dick with huge support from Mrs. Smallfield, our living treasure, and archivist. With the help of Papers Past, Ms Dick was able to capture the words of our famous ex-girls verbatim. Miss Dalrymple endured Oompah bands and interruptions from a woman who wasn't allowed at the meeting but needed to tell all assembled that Mr Clayton was outside having broken both his legs! Her first meeting to set up a school for girls was a disaster to say the least. Christina and Margaret Cruickshank had to go to school on alternate days as their mother had died and they had to look after their siblings. Emily Siedeberg and Ethel Benjamin did amazing things for women's health in the late 1800s while Yvette Williams and Jean Stewart carried a kit with cork air plugs around with them in case of a bombing in WW2.

Entwined through the script was the hunt for the origin of the school song, The Chambered Nautilus. There have been a couple of school hymns over the years but nothing surpasses The Chambered Nautilus, written in 1936 to the lyrics of the poem by Oliver Wendell Holmes. Miss King endured her own roasting from the Otago Daily Times in the past when reporters accused her staff of failing to attend the assembly, and what was worse, they were allegedly NOT standing up to sing God Save the King. Mary King took on these accusations and squashed them with a firm retort. Her "Ballad of Light and Beauty" included a cast of 300 girls. I cannot imagine how we would manage that today! Thank you to all the staff who supported me in production week but most importantly to all our wonderful actors, singers, dancers, technicians and backstage crew (all student-led) who produced such a fabulous show. I know that our Alumni would have been proud of you if they had had an opportunity to see it and I am certain that somehow, somewhere, the spirit of our historical wahine toa would be celebrating with, and for you.

Ms Kathryn Dick (writer, director))

Junior Production

"The hunt for the Chambered Nautilus"

By Kathryn Dick



Southern Heritage Trust tour of the Dalrymple Block

On the 28 November I was delighted to host a tour of the Dalrymple block of Otago Girls' High School as part of the Ōtepoti Dunedin Heritage Festival hosted by the Southern Heritage Trust.

The Dalrymple block was opened in 1910 and designed by well known architect Edmund Anscombe. The hall was a 1914 addition and the Rattray Street wing was not added to 1921. The exterior of the school has changed little over the years but the interior is now a bright and vibrant facility.



Dalrymple Block 1911.



Dalrymple Block 1925 with Rattray Street wing addition opened in 1921.

Aileen Lister (nee Kinaston)



One of those guests who attended the tour was Aileen Lister (née Kinaston). Aileen had registered for our 150th Jubilee but with that cancelled her family took the opportunity to bring her on the tour. Aileen started at Otago Girls' in 1948 in form 3T and left on 12 December 1952. Aileen was a delight to have on the tour and the visit brought back many happy memories for her.

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.