



Otago Girls' High School Alumni Association

Principal's report

Kia ora koutou

Warm Greetings for 2023

I am delighted to make contact with our Alumni again and to announce that we will get together on Friday 13th October for our first Alumni event in person for some time. This will be at 5pm with refreshments and entertainment from our current school students.

We are asking for a koha of \$10 towards catering and drinks. Save this date now and tell all of your school friends. Paige Milburn, Head Girl and Ella Hou, Deputy Head Girl and Harriet Miller and Ruby Stretch-Treweek, our Public Relations Prefects, look forward to welcoming you on a wonderful Spring evening.

The school is in good heart and we have returned to a normal Term One schedule of events with all of our welcome ceremonies and hui taking place. It has been important to us to have held our Year 8 interviews in person again last year and to have parents and community back in our school. Our school assemblies are full again (after split assemblies and Covid absences last year) and we have enjoyed a return to singing, music and whole school whanaungatanga and connection.

Our exam results in the very disrupted year of 2022 were excellent and we remain one of the top-performing academic schools in the country, with achievement being on average 20% above the national average in all three levels of NCEA, University Entrance and Scholarship. Our results for all levels put us in the top three highest performing schools in Otago and our Scholarship results for girls are also in the top three schools in Dunedin. We have a talented staff and a strong culture of learning here and are buoyed by the great number of Scholarship entries for 2023. Learning is at the heart of everything we do and, like you, we know the value of a strong education that we take with us for all of our life.

Sports and cultural highlights have included the selection of Head Girl, Paige Milburn, into the New Zealand Youth Choir, the selection of Ayla Biner McGrath into the New Zealand Secondary Schools Youth Orchestra, the 27th World Placing of Catherine Lund in the U20 Women's World Cross-country Championship, the awarding of



Bridget Davidson

Beth O'Connor as Gillette Venus Young Player of the Year in New Zealand Cricket and the recent naming of Praise Hola in the New Zealand Secondary School Netball Trials.

We have a very dedicated and talented new Board and are grateful for the service of our departing members, including ex-girl Lyn Hurring who served capably as Board Chair from July 2019 to October 2022. Lyn and the other departing Board members: Rowena Monson, Ann Bixley, Tony Gomez, Simon Pickard (Staff Representative) and Jomana Moharram (Student Representative) brought great knowledge and experience to the role. We welcome the new Board, with Chair Phil Marsh continuing on with us despite the graduation of his two daughters, Jen and Kaitlin. Continuing Board members are Deb Tasi-Cordtz and Shane de la Harpe and we welcome new Board members: Ricky Hohaia-Fyfe, Sharon Knowles, Shakila Rizwan, Kyla Mullens, Terry Curtis - Staff Representative and Paige Milburn - Student Representative.

Coming up is ANZAC Day where prefects and students will attend the Dunedin Dawn Service. This year is particularly poignant as we will be gifted the Memorial War Medal of Frances Anderson, who is our only known ex-girl to have lost her life in WWI. A memorial plaque to Frances is on display in the school. We were also thankful for the receipt of a Certificate of Attendance for Jean Morris who attended our school during WWI, which was gifted to us by Rata Newman's family.

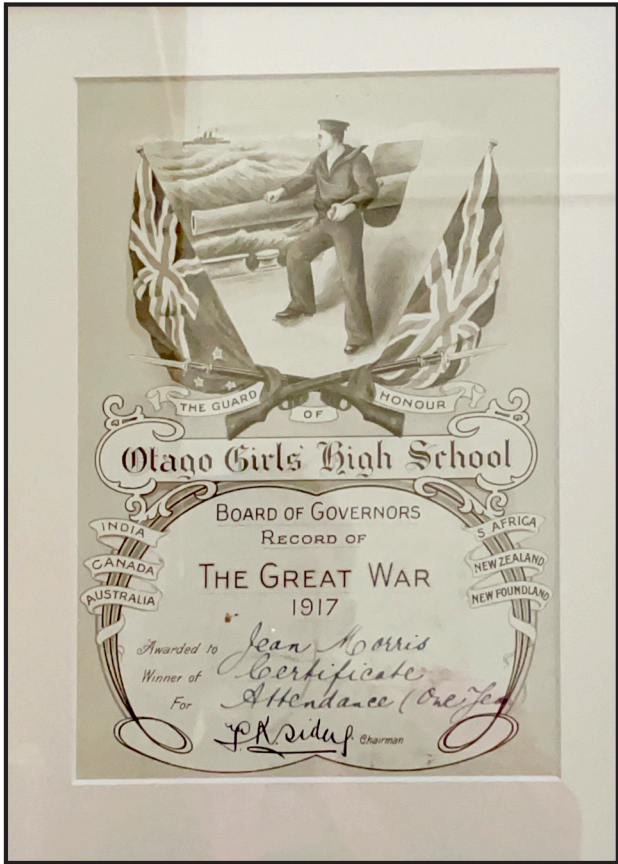
We look forward to Term Two when we don our kilts, the heating goes on and we launch into a raft of Winter activities and learning. Please continue to spread the Alumni far and wide by forwarding emails of interested past students, teachers, friends and families to us. We look forward to seeing you in person in the Spring at the school.

He aha te mea nui o te ao
He tangata, he tangata, he tangata

*What is the most important thing in the world?
It is the people, it is the people, it is the people.*

Ngā mihi nui

Bridget Davidson
Tumuaki ~ Principal



Year 9 on their first day 2023

SPRING
CONNECT
FRIENDS AND ALUMNI EVENT

13 OCT	OTAGO GIRLS' HIGH SCHOOL	5 PM
	DRINKS & CANAPES * * \$10 KOHA * *	

RSVP: ADMIN@OTAGOGIRLS.SCHOOL.NZ

Alumni and Friends of Otago Girls' High School Spring Connect Event 5-7pm Save the Date! - 13 October 2023

Get ready to create unforgettable memories with us – we're hosting a special event with drinks and canapes.

The Principal Bridget Davidson and Head Girl Paige Milburn will be speaking. Student entertainment is on the schedule, and of course, we'll be talking about our plans for our 160th anniversary.

A \$10 koha on the evening would be appreciated. We look forward to seeing you all there.

RSVP: admin@otagogirls.school.nz



These are members of the Christchurch ExGirl's Branch of OGHS celebrating Founders' Day 2023. We packed our school lunches as we did many moons ago and met at the Lions Club in Avonhead. Our sandwiches were varied but marmite and walnut in white bread were favourites. Many of us are in our 80s and so our eating habits back in our school days were different! Lots of us were at school when Yvette did her gold medal jump and the Queen was crowned.

This group has been going a long time. The first meeting was in September, 1944 in the Hays lounge. By 1945 there were 56 members and gradually more space was needed. By the time many of us present day members joined, our meetings were held every month in the Big Room at CBHS. Sometimes there were up to 100 at special events like partners' nights and our Brides Revisited evening when some wore their wedding gowns. For our 60th Anniversary we went to the Shirley Golf Club rooms. It was a grand event! We have had excellent speakers, including Dame Alison Holst, before earthquakes and Covid cramped our style a little. But we still have 66 names on our list and a good turn out at our meetings every second month. We are ageing and so not engaging in activities of earlier times when our Christmas Choir delighted the members at the Christmas dinner and we turned on well - rehearsed pantos! But traditions are still retained and enjoyed, such as Jill Cooper's fabulous raffles and cakes, and the school song at the end of meetings. I recall the astonished faces of the staff at a venue a few years ago when we were singing the chorus "Build thee more stately mansions" with great enthusiasm. We've even sung it at funerals.

There is a bond in this group which we cherish. We have an Almoner (great title) who keeps tabs on what's happening and sends cards and flowers to us on special occasions. We've gone on annual bus trips together all around Canterbury.

All of this makes us the close group we are today with friendships from school days and others made in ExGirl's itself. It's truly unique and special. Thanks to our dear old school.

Recti cultus indeed!

Jan Hayward

Cleo Gilmour - OGHS 2009-2013

It was wonderful to see former head prefect, Cleo Gilmour, appear in the headlines across several news sources recently. Cleo was our head prefect in 2013 and has since gone on to become a co-founder of LILO Desserts. LILO is a future-forward plant-based dessert company. Future food entrepreneur Cleo has been appointed as a 'NextGen' member of the New Zealand China Council under its next-generation leadership development programme. According to a recent publication by the NZ China Council, "she previously interned and worked for a Chinese marketing consultancy in China and New Zealand and is an influencer on Chinese social media in her own right, introducing aspects of NZ life and culture to her followers. Cleo speaks Mandarin and holds Bachelor of Law and Bachelor of Philosophy degrees from Victoria University of Wellington." Cleo's bio details tell us, "(she) is passionate about combining sustainability with future-forward solutions to bring the best of New Zealand to the world. As GM of LILO Desserts Cleo is part of a team pioneering a New Zealand food tech desserts movement. LILO is making imperfect orchard fruit the star of nutritionally enhanced plant based desserts. Cleo comes from a background in Chinese digital marketing working with New Zealand brands such as Pic's, Education New Zealand, and Mother Earth."



Gail Shand - Staff Member for 30 years

It is with great sadness we announce Gail passed away after a short battle with cancer on 1 March 2023 surrounded by her loving family.

Gail worked at Otago Girls' for thirty years, starting as a cleaner and then becoming the House Manager - which put her in charge of the cleaning staff. She worked incredibly hard and took enormous pride in her work. It is no surprise that visitors to the school would frequently comment on the cleanliness and state of maintenance of the grounds and buildings - something Gail played an enormous part in achieving.

Linda Miller's tribute read at the funeral (Principal 2001-2021):

Gail was a force of nature. I first met her when I came into school the holidays before my first

term as Principal at Otago Girls'. I think she took a liking to me because I had a big clean out of my new office, getting rid of loads of out of date documentation and booklets from the cupboards. I think she thought I was a neat freak - so sorry to have disillusioned you Gail.

I don't think it was long before she realised my initial burst of cleaning enthusiasm was not going to be long-lived, but by then we had bonded over past associations with Tapanui and shared understandings of life with a disabled child.

Gail cleaned my office every day. She could always be relied on to be discreet, never to throw anything away without asking and never to move something I might later look for. I used to love coming back for each new term to the smell of polish and everything looking extra clean and shiny. She cared for the

whole school that way, taking personal pride in its appearance and made sure the other cleaners did the same. She had very strict rules - no pins above the dados in the classrooms, you had to use the right cloths for the right purpose, or boy did you get a dressing down. It is fair to say there were a few run-ins along the way. Gail's tendency to call a spade a spade was a bit harsh for some of the more sensitive souls and there was sometimes some diplomacy required from my end. From time to time she would get mad with me. I was never quite sure what I'd done, but I'd get the cold shoulder for a week or two and then we'd be back on good terms again.

Because I was generally there at the beginning and the end of each day she would frequently come charging into my office to berate me about some indiscretion by my staff. She would point that finger and launch into whatever had upset her that day. It might be coffee cups not returned to the staff room, the 'English department leaving the heater on again in their workroom', or the mess in the science workroom; I would hear about it. She didn't suffer fools gladly, but she also had a heart of gold and was the first to help out or show sympathy when others needed it.

Gail took special care of the plants in the school, spending hours every summer holiday, making sure the plants would survive our absence. I think it was the thought of the plants being neglected that prevented her from retiring earlier.

Some days I would be really busy and Gail would march into my office and launch into whatever was going on that day. I would initially groan inwardly,

but would then realise that actually, listening to Gail was the right thing to be doing right then because, actually, Gail was more important to the running of the school than the Ministry or the Board Chair and she deserved to be heard.

Gail was one of a kind. I loved her dedication, her work ethic, her loyalty, and her love for her family. I always heard about the grand kids, she would often bring Hayden in to see me, and she would tell me all about her adventures and her latest battles with the health system. Nothing ever seemed to come easy for Gail, she seemed to have to battle her entire life. Thank you for letting OGs have such a big part of Gail, David. She was an inspiration.



Staff ID photo 2015



Gail Shand, Joan Hobson and current House Manager Sera Katuke, August 2021

Lucy Davidson - OGHS 2015-2019

Kia ora! My name is Lucy and I attended OGHS from 2015-2019. I loved my time at school, enjoying Geography and Sciences. I was also heavily involved in the environment group. Through the support of the school, I got the opportunity to attend BLAKE Inspire in 2018 and travel to Abu Dhabi for the prizegiving of the Zayed Sustainability Prize and the World Future Energy Summit at the beginning of 2020. These experiences led me to study Geology and Geography at the University of Otago and this year I started my Honours in Geology. My passion for the environment, combined with a love for tramping and cycling, led to me spending this past summer in Antarctica as this year's BLAKE Antarctic Ambassador with GNS Science and Antarctica New Zealand. This was an amazing opportunity that took me to one of the least visited parts of the globe.


I was part of a small Kiwi and Italian research team, investigating how greenhouse gases are stored in the permafrost of Antarctica's Dry Valleys. This involved taking measurements at over 300 sites and collecting permafrost, gas, and water samples. The McMurdo Dry Valleys are the largest ice-free area of the continent and are an extremely unique, vulnerable, and beautiful part of the planet. It is important to understand the potential of the valleys to store and release greenhouse gases as this could impact current projections of warming. Previous work from the study has found that with warmer temperatures, more carbon dioxide and methane is being released into the atmosphere.

We travelled to Scott Base on the 28th of December before flying the ~100 km to the valleys




at the beginning of January. Being immersed in such a harsh yet beautiful place for an extended period of time was highly rewarding and at times challenging. We spent 30 days camping in sub-zero temperatures and walking up to 20 km a day over uneven terrain every day amongst stunning mountains and huge glaciers. The isolation of fieldwork meant that other than daily radio calls to Scott Base, we had extremely limited connection to the outside world. The dry cold conditions mean that barely anything lives in the valleys and instead they are littered with mummified seals and penguins that are unable to decompose in the dryness. The importance of protecting such a fragile environment meant that we had to be conscious of the impact of our presence. This meant limiting our greywater, not showering, and flying out our blackwater. Living in such a beautiful yet vulnerable landscape highlighted the importance of being connected to the environment and looking after the places we **love**. I had an incredible summer and cannot recommend the experience enough. In the upcoming months I will be going into OGHS to talk to the girls about my time in Antarctica and the pathway I took to get there.








Otago Girls' High School



Celebrating 152 years of Excellence

www.otagogirls.school.nz
 fb.com/otagogirlshighschool
 @otagogirlshigh

2023/2024

Margaret Burn (nee Huie) **First Principal of Otago Girls' High School**

My name is Bruce Thompson and I am a retired Barrister from Melbourne Australia. My Great Grandfather was James Huie born in Edinburgh, Scotland in 1828. He was a Civil Engineer, Surveyor and Shire Engineer near Geelong Victoria and died in 1885. He had a very accomplished and industrious older sister.

On 1 February 2023 my wife Sharon and I had a one day stop in Dunedin NZ off a P & O Cruise Ship that had sailed from Melbourne. As we came ashore to see this beautiful city we had never visited before, I knew there was a family connection.

My Great Aunt, Margaret Gordon Burn, nee Huie, (the sister of Great Grandfather James) had been Principal of a girls school from its establishment in 1871 until 1884. Much to our surprise the school was still there at the top of a steep incline with imposing views above Dunedin. It was called Otago Girls' High School, and it was open for business on what appeared to be a busy school day 152 years after its founding.

We scouted around the school peering through windows until finally, completely unannounced, we reported to reception. We stated the reason for our interest in the school and the welcome and response by staff and Principal Bridget Davidson was wonderful. We were allocated a senior student guide (Cara) who showed us around the school pointing out the prominent photos and references to Margaret Burn displayed throughout, along with the wonderful facilities and thriving educational environment.

We were delighted and impressed when we were then presented with publications setting out the history of the Otago Girls' High School, the role of Great Aunt Margaret in its early years, and the stories of many accomplished alumni including the first woman to be appointed a Barrister and Solicitor in NZ. (Ethel Benjamin)

We were touched by this kind gesture and extend our heartfelt thanks to Principal Davidson, Cara and the lovely staff involved.

I cannot help but think how proud, if not amazed, my Great Aunt Margaret would be, if she knew that the school she led from 1871, became a thriving centre for education excellence in NZ and exists as such to this day.

Bruce Thompson BA LLB LLM



James Huie (brother of Margaret Burn) in the uniform of a Captain in the Victorian Light Horse approx 1870's



Mrs Margaret Burn the first Principal of Otago Girls' High School



Cara Spurway (Year 13), Mrs Bridget Davidson Principal, Bruce and Sandra Thompson taken on their brief visit to the school in February.

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 Olig 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.

Written by Jane Smallfield (recently retired OGHSA Archivist)



Rhoda Lillian Bridger (nee Sharp) - OGHS 1951-1954



We were honored to have Rhoda, one of our ex-girls, visit us this week with something special. She presented us with the school blazer badge that she has proudly kept with her all these years - a reminder of the cherished memories she made during her time here at OGHS. she remebered being very proud to be in the special choir as a junior. An honour usually only achieved in a students senior years. Pictured here with Year 13 student Anna Yuen (Peer Support Prefect)

Jillian Patterson (nee Russell) OGHS 1968-1972 and

Celia Visser (nee Russell) OGHS 1971-1975

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 any questions you may have.

When Celia (now based in Auckland) and Jillian (now based in Christchurch) stopped by for a surprise visit, it was like taking a trip down memory lane! Harriet Miller (Public Relations Prefect) had the pleasure of showing them around our school and enjoyed listening to their stories as they recounted their school days here at OGHS.



Pictured from left: Celia Visser, Harriet Miller and Jillian Patterson

Ruby Yeats - OGHs 2005-2009

Hi, I'm Ruby Yeats and I attended Otago Girls' High School from 2005-2009.

I'm now a mother of one child and three fur children, living on Australia's beautiful Gold Coast. I work as a Talent Acquisition Lead for Woolworths, managing the Technology & Digital recruitment team and advising on talent strategy, workforce planning, and all things recruitment across all online/digital businesses and business units.

Rewind more than 13 years, to my final year at High School, and you probably couldn't have guessed that trajectory. A keen Drama, Media Studies and History student, I was drifting towards a career in Journalism and started studying film and communications at Otago University in 2010. As is often the case, different subjects piqued my interest and I quickly pivoted towards the (infinitely more entertaining..!) world of law during my first year - and never looked back. After a stint as a summer clerk at Bell Gully in Auckland, I graduated with my LLB in 2013 and embarked on the next big adventure.

In grand kiwi tradition of the Great OE, I opted to defer the commencement of my 'real life' as a lawyer and searched for greener - or at least warmer - pastures offshore. I landed in Cambodia in 2014, and joined an organisation called Legal Aid of Cambodia where I had the opportunity to participate in the work supporting the prosecution of war criminals in the Khmer Rouge Tribunal. I was also given access to a motorbike and a translator to practice some real "bush" law, travelling around the poverty-stricken countryside to visit clients in prison, and meet with families struggling to navigate the highly corrupt legal system.

In search of levity, I headed next to Thailand to teach English in North-East Mukdahan, and spent the last few months of my big adventure sampling the food (and beer!) of Vietnam, Laos and Myanmar.

I flew back to Auckland and commenced my life as a law clerk with Duncan Cotterill, gaining admission to the bar and a couple of High Court appearances along the way. The beginning of my professional life coincided with the ignition of another real passion: fitness! Which saw me join a CrossFit gym



and compete in several local comps, as well as run my first half marathon (spoiler alert: running has become a huge part of my life now.)

I left my legal career in late 2016, moving across the ditch to be closer to family and to enjoy the sights and sounds of bigger city living in Sydney. I started working in a recruitment agency, for no better reason than I thought it sounded interesting, and quickly found I loved working in a role which was so collaborative, social, and fun.

When the pandemic struck in 2020, I found myself thinking about the next sea change, and moved up to the Gold Coast on a whim. I joined a business that allowed me to work 100% remotely, and fell quickly in love with the outdoor lifestyle and beaches of the Sunshine State.

I met my partner, Sam, in 2020 and added three new additions to the family: our Russian Blue Ragdoll, Louis, and our Aussie Shepherd and Dachshund, Mac and Cheese. In September 2021, my son Jack was born, and I've been deeply in love with being his Mum ever since.

I ran the Queenstown Marathon in 2019, and the GC30km in 2020 and 2022. I start every day with exercise, and have found an incredible sense of achievement, satisfaction and mental clarity through endurance sports. I hope that sport in all its forms will be a huge part of my life, and my family's life, for many years to come.

I now own two properties on the Gold Coast, and have very deep family and professional roots here, but it doesn't stop me from pining for home. I have been back to New Zealand many times since officially jumping the ditch, and it never gets any easier saying goodbye to family and friends. My Mum has recently relocated to Dunedin after more than a decade living in Aus, and I had the joy of taking my son back to his unofficial hometown earlier this year - it was so beautiful watching him explore the little city I grew up in.

I'll be forever grateful to Otago Girls' for igniting my passion for sport, for leadership, for camaraderie, and for learning. I stay in touch with many of my High School friends, and I feel so proud to be forever connected to such a beautiful part of the world.



Elena Piere - OGHS 2004-2008

Tēnā koutou, Ko Elena toku ingoa. Kei Waitati taku kainga. Ko Daniel taku tane. Ko Luca rāua ko Freya aku tamariki. Nō reira, tēnā koutou katoa.

I left Otago Girls' in 2008 mid way through my final year, to take advantage of an opportunity to attend an American university fee free. Looking back, this was something of a pivotal decision in the direction my life would



take. In the USA I developed a passion for working in the outdoor adventure industry. Through a university elective, I gained a raft guide qualification that allowed me to spend my summer guiding on a river in Montana. I loved being paid to spend my days outside, facilitating others to have incredible experiences, and I knew this is what I wanted to do moving forward. I came back to Dunedin, and completed the second year of the Diploma of Outdoor Leadership and Management offered through the Otago Polytechnic (my own experience recreating in the outdoors giving me the practical experience needed to jump straight into the second year of the program). This qualification, and the additional industry instructor qualifications I gained provided me with a way to travel the world. I started on the beautiful Fox Glacier on the West Coast, before travelling and working in Hong Kong, Canada, Australia, USA. I focused primarily on outdoor education, teaching children skills around self confidence, being one's best self, resilience and creativity through the medium of outdoor recreation.

In 2011 I met my husband. We worked together for an outdoor adventure camp in Northern California. Approximately a year later, I convinced him that we should get married. Also that he should give up his life in the States (along with most of his possessions), and move to Aotearoa, New Zealand with me. If you are currently at Otago Girls', you may know him as Mr Bleckinger.

Upon our return to Dunedin I worked at the University of Otago, facilitating recreation programs for students. In 2015 I welcomed my son into the world. He was followed by my daughter in 2017. Motherhood was another pivotal moment for me. I realised that the draw of spending weeks in the outdoors was not

there any more, now that I had my own little people to care for. After a slew of failed attempts to find work, I recognised I needed to retrain. Focusing on the transferable skills I had from a career in outdoor education, in 2019 I decided to pursue a Bachelor of Commerce in Management. Over the course of the degree, I developed a passion for sustainability, community development and understanding businesses' role in mitigating the climate crisis we are in today. Along the way I have had the opportunity to work with some amazing professors through research scholarships, and to apply theoretical knowledge to real world problems through an internship with the Otago Regional Council. As of February this year, I am undertaking a Masters of Sustainable Business at Otago University. (Thanks to two different University of Otago scholarships this will almost be free! - so work hard, it pays off). I am excited to see where it will take me next.

Parting advice? Listen to your heart and follow your passion. Take time to understand what you want to do, even if it means taking time away from formal education. And finally, don't be afraid to pivot and take on new adventures.

Kā mihi nui.



Mary Ronnie - OGHs 1939-1942

It is with sadness that we record the recent passing of Mary Ronnie. Mary was a pupil at Otago Girls' High School from 1939 to 1942.

Mary Ronnie made history becoming Aotearoa's national librarian in 1976. The first woman in the world to be a national librarian.

Some of our students had the pleasure of meeting Mary Ronnie while delivering Easter treats to residents at Redroofs Lifecare Home in April 2021. She recalled with great pride many stories of her time here at Otago Girls'

We at Dunedin Public Libraries are deeply saddened by the passing of the wonderful Mary Ronnie QSO (1926-2023).

Mary Ronnie has made an immense contribution to Dunedin Public Libraries over a time frame spanning decades. Mary first worked here in an after-school position starting in 1942, when Archie Dunningham was City Librarian. Mary became a full-time staff member, and subsequently Head of Circulation for many years, and ultimately City Librarian between 1968 and 1976.

In 1976 she left Dunedin to become the first female National Librarian in the world, a position she held until 1981.

Mary then became Auckland City Librarian before moving to Melbourne to take up a position at Monash University in 1987. She retired in 1992 and returned to New Zealand.

Mary authored the definitive centennial history of the Library, *Freedom to Read*, published in 2008,

which included the challenging task of writing much more than a chapter on her own substantial contribution.

Mary donated numerous works to the Heritage Collections, including books and theatrical and musical ephemera items, some of which touched on her interest in Scottish country dancing. Her donations included artworks by Dame Robin White which adorn the walls at the City Library.

Mary was a true champion of lifelong reading and the essential civic role libraries play in society. For her tireless work she was made a Companion of the Queen's Service Order for public services and was awarded an honorary Doctorate of Literature by the University of Otago in 2007. She proudly received a Dunedin Public Libraries Citation in 2007. We thank you Mary for your continuous support and dedication to the library, you will be greatly missed.

<https://www.stuff.co.nz/national/300833690/worlds-first-female-national-librarian-mary-ronnie-dies-aged-96?cid=app-iPhone>



Our students had the pleasure of meeting Mary Ronnie while delivering Easter treats to residents at Redroofs Lifecare Home in April 2021.



Mary Ronnie Form VS 1941

6 Otago Girls' High School Magazine

SCHOOL ROLL, 1941.

VI-A—J. Barclay (S), A. Begg, J. Gibson, M. Hill (C), R. Holmes, D. Martin, B. Matheson, B. Mills, M. Mervin (C), J. Nelson, B. Selinger (C).

VI-B—A. Anderson, G. Baker (C), A. Barclay, A. Blackledge, D. Bradfield, N. Carter, E. Carter, C. Clarke, J. Crawford, P. Dwyer, D. Forrester, F. Gibson, L. Gibson, M. Griffin, M. Harrison, M. Keller, G. King, D. Knox, M. Malcolm, B. Mason, J. Miller, P. Morgan, J. Murray, L. Macpherson, J. McCall, B. McDonald, J. McCannoch, E. Mann, B. Palmer, J. Peters, O. Rawnsley, J. Robinson, M. Russell, B. Shuter, A. Summers, P. Summers, J. Smith, M. Stewart (S), E. Turnbull, E. Walker, M. Watt (C), B. Wilson, M. Wilson.

VI-A1—D. Archison, S. Allen, M. Collett, M. Craigie, J. Davidson, L. Deziel, L. Fairchild (S), D. Fink, M. Fergus, J. Ford, J. Fraser (C), G. Harper-Tripp, E. Hays, P. Hedges, E. Hensley, L. Ingh (C), B. King (C), M. MacArthur, N. McCannell (C), E. McKee, L. McKeever (C), J. Nasson, M. Richardson, N. Ross, A. Sorenson, B. Somerville (M), D. Sutherland (C).

VI-A2—M. Agnew (C), M. Allan, M. Bryant (C), V. Gunning, M. Hancock, M. Johnson, S. Johnson, S. Levenshul, N. Manley (M), M. May, J. Murray, L. Parker, L. Reisinger, P. Rieck, J. Pringle, M. Raines, M. Riggin (C), B. Robinson, M. Shanks, M. Skene, S. Stocklin, V. Shepherd, D. Walker (C), S. Watson, P. Wilder (S).

VI-B1—A. Allison, M. Anderson, A. Barclay, L. Beach, N. Bunker, N. Cameron, E. Dalrymple, A. Fife, H. Hill, P. Hunter, C. Hodge, P. Howe, H. Kay, S. Knox (M), M. MacMurray, N. Matheson, M. Miller (S), V. Muir, M. Rennie, P. Sheriff, N. Sankin, L. Sikes, J. Wanklyn.

VI-B2—P. Bealy, L. Burgess, H. Burwell, B. Chapman (M), J. Colquhoun, J. Cooper, M. Cunningham, J. Cunningham, J. Duff, E. Duff, A. Fink, J. Fink, P. Gibson, G. Gilliland (S), D. Litch, G. Hay, C. Herbert, A. Ingram, J. King, M. Lamberton, S. Mackay, M. McCall, L. McCall, C. McCall, S. Mackay, M. McCall, M. Morrison, L. Rose (C), V. Russell, J. Smith, J. Stewart, J. Tate, M. Walker (on leave), M. Richardson (transferred to VI-B2), C. Wilson, J. Williams.

VI-C—K. Anderson, L. Barrett (C), J. Beecher (C), E. Bennett, J. Cameron, J. Camp (C), J. Gordon (C), P. Chapman, G. Goddard, V. Gower, P. Fisher, L. Fergus, J. Frier, M. Gibson (S), M. Hawke, M. Jenkins (C), L. Keller (C), M. Lamberton, D. Leathley, M. Leslie, N. McGee (M), M. McCannoch, J. McCall, L. McCall, C. P. McCall, K. Miles (C), H. Milton (C), A. Parer, B. Reid, J. Roberts, J. Roberts, D. Ross, J. Summers (C), G. Shepherd, S. Smith (C), P. Stronach, J. Summers (C), D. Toulson, N. Venn (C), J. Watson, P. Woodson.

VI-C1—A. Allison, N. Anderson, D. Campbell, L. Colquhoun, M. L. Gowan, J. Green, M. Gunn, P. Harker, E. Hart, O. Kinnear, J. Laker, J. Lamm, E. Macdonald, J. McKee, R. McNeilson, M. McPherson (M), W. Newby, D. Randal, J. Robinson, E. Robinson, M. Samal, F. Sinclair, E. Samsing, F. Tack, L. Wainwright (C), S. Woodhead (S), S. Workman.

VI-C2—D. Agnew (C), H. Bailey (C), E. Barnes, M. Beale, L. Bennett (C), N. Cook, B. Cunningham, A. Curtis, K. Davis (C), P. Ferguson, G. Gibson, C. Gilbert, A. Halliday, H. Johnson, M. Jones, B. Lambert, H. Jones (M), M. McCulloch, M. McCannoch, J. McCall, N. McNeil, J. Matheson, J. Muir, J. Marshall, B. Martin, C. Pagan (S), E. Parer, J. Richardson, A. Robinson, P. Roberts, C. Smith, S. Tait, D. Williams.

VI-C3—V. Adams, A. Ashby (C), P. Bray, M. Gibson, D. Harvey (C), B. Hoare, L. Howard, D. Ingh, L. Lamberton, M. Lamberton, P. Lamberton, J. Laine, N. Martin, J. Matheson, M. McCall, L. McCall, M. Morrison, E. O'Hara (S), P. Pail (C), M. Richardson, M. Richardson, J. Richardson, L. Robinson, M. Scott, J. Spain (M), J. Sutherland (S), J. E. Stewart, J. Spinks, W. Thayer, M. Wilson.

VI-C4—E. Abernethy, D. Auld, J. Bagley, Z. Bain, M. Barnes, L. Birchall, L. Bishop, N. Black, J. Blain, R. Brown, C. J. Brown, E. Buchanan, D. Duncan, L. Duncan, M. Gowan, P. Gilbert, D. Horne, V. Jones, S. Jones, E. Martin (C), P. Marshall, E. Marsh, E. MacArthur, E. Rennie, E. Robertson, Y. Reid (M), G. Scales (C), M. Sheriff, J. Summerfield, B. Thurlston, S. Vickar.

VI-C5—K. Anderson, N. Baskin, R. Burns, M. Burnett, N. Bond (C), J. Cameron, N. Campbell, E. Caldwell, D. Caldwell (S), E. Cameron, J. Gair (C), L. Evans, A. Gillin, N. Gowan, W. Hammond, A. Harris (C), R. Jeffrey, S. Jones (C), J. Kerr (M), L. Kerr, E. McKinnon, M. Perry (C), J. Robinson, N. Stocklin, H. Sun.

VI-C6—J. Adams, J. Anderson, W. Bennett (M), E. Campbell, D. Campbell, G. Chapman, V. Clark, F. Cunningham (S), T. Gowan, L. Henderson, J. Hicks, E. Henderson, A. King, J. King, J. Maquet, A. Meyer (C), K. Miller, D. Paterson, L. Peden, C. St. George, N. Thompson, N. Whitecombe, M. Whitehead, J. Wilson, M. Wilson, D. Woodson.

VI-C7—F. Agnew, M. Anderson, D. Beatty, M. Bruce, F. Clark, P. Davidson, J. Fraser, H. Gibson, A. Hartman, C. Harris, M. Henderson (S), L. Jackson, N. Laine, J. Lambert, N. McCall, A. McCall, D. McCall, M. McPherson (C), J. McNeil, J. Merritt, A. Miller, E. Robinson, T. Scott, B. Stewart (M), J. Stewart, N. Sutherland, K. Sutherland, V. Waite.

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 alumni@otagogirls.school.nz

Send us your stories

We would love to hear what sort of fields our ex-girls have worked in and what sort of lives they have had since their OGHs school days.

Please consider writing up to 300 words about yourself and email alumni@otagogirls.school.nz including a photograph if possible.

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

Keep us informed

If you know of ex-girls doing exciting things please let us know. Email any contributions to alumni@otagogirls.school.nz. 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.



Otago Girls' High School Alumni Association
 41 Tennyson Street, Dunedin 9016
 03 474 0496
www.otagogirls.school.nz
alumni@otagogirls.school.nz

This newsletter was compiled by Kathryn Dick and Cheree Henderson on behalf of the OGHs Alumni Association.