

Otago Girls' High School Alumni Association

Principal's Report

A highlight of the year so far was the opening ceremony for Te Toi Aweawe, The Cartwright Arts Centre, on the final afternoon of school for Term 1. Pages 4 and 5 of this newsletter showcase some of the guests and performances that made this such a special event.

The ceremony was the culmination of nearly four years of work, starting with the planning of a project which aimed to see our dated and tired music suite refurbished and extended. Our vision was to provide a state of the art music facility that would enable students to be inspired to learn, perform and record their music to professional quality, both on site and beyond school. The scope of the project was extended when it was clear that the provision of disabled access to the site was going to be of major significance to the design. Our architects, Baker Garden Architects Ltd, put forward a range of options to address this requirement and we eventually settled on the building of an access tower that would link the Performing Arts Centre with the upper level of the school and provide disabled access into Siedeberg Block.

What resulted was a building that provides a focal point for the Visual and Performing Arts department and that links the physical spaces that house each of the four elements of this curriculum area; dance, drama, music and the visual arts. The music suite itself was completely gutted and extended upon and now incorporates classrooms (including computer lab), practice rooms, office space and a recording studio.

The decision about what to name the new spaces came about after consultation with our Māori community and consideration of how other areas of the school had been named. Representatives from Te Rūnaka o Ōtākou Marae came up with the name Te Toi Aweawe. This name is derived from the whakatauki "Te toi whakairo, ka ihiihi, ka wehiwehi, ka aweawe te ao katoa" which means "Artistic excellence makes the world sit up in wonder". In keeping with the naming of major parts of the school after women associated with the school, the name The Cartwright Arts Centre recognises one of our



most illustrious alumnae, Dame Silvia Cartwright. Dame Silvia was New Zealand's first female High Court Judge, our 18th Governor General, a member of the International Committee on the elimination of discrimination against women, along with a myriad of other roles and responsibilities. We were delighted that Dame Silvia agreed to have her name associated with the Arts Centre and that she was in attendance at the ceremony. It is our hope that the name: Te Toi Aweawe, The Cartwright Arts Centre, and this facility will inspire the students who pass through these doors to pursue and excel in the visual and performing arts.

The official cutting of the ribbon and unveiling of the plaque was carried out by the world renowned opera singer, Dame Malvina Major. Dame Malvina's presence represented a link to the performing arts and in particular music, at the highest level. As I said during my speech on the day, "both Dame Silvia and Dame Malvina embody the dispositions we work so hard to foster in the young women of this school; pursuit of knowledge, persistence, resilience, confidence, and a commitment to public service. Both are truly global leaders in their fields and are reminders to us of the importance of building a strong educational foundation, the accomplishments that come from working hard and following your passion and the value of humility when touching the lives of others."

Performances by the combined Otago Boys'/Otago Girls' orchestra, Wairua Puhou, the Nautilus Singers, contemporary musicians Ella McCormack and Breanna Rowe-Clarkson, Maia Alderson and Mia Te Tana and classically trained singer Sarah Hubbard accompanied by Lucy Pollock provided evidence of the talent of our students. The ceremony also included the singing of the school song, which was especially appreciated by the ex-girls in attendance before a rousing waiata and haka rounded off the event. Guests were invited to tour the new facility before joining staff and prefects in the staff room for afternoon tea.

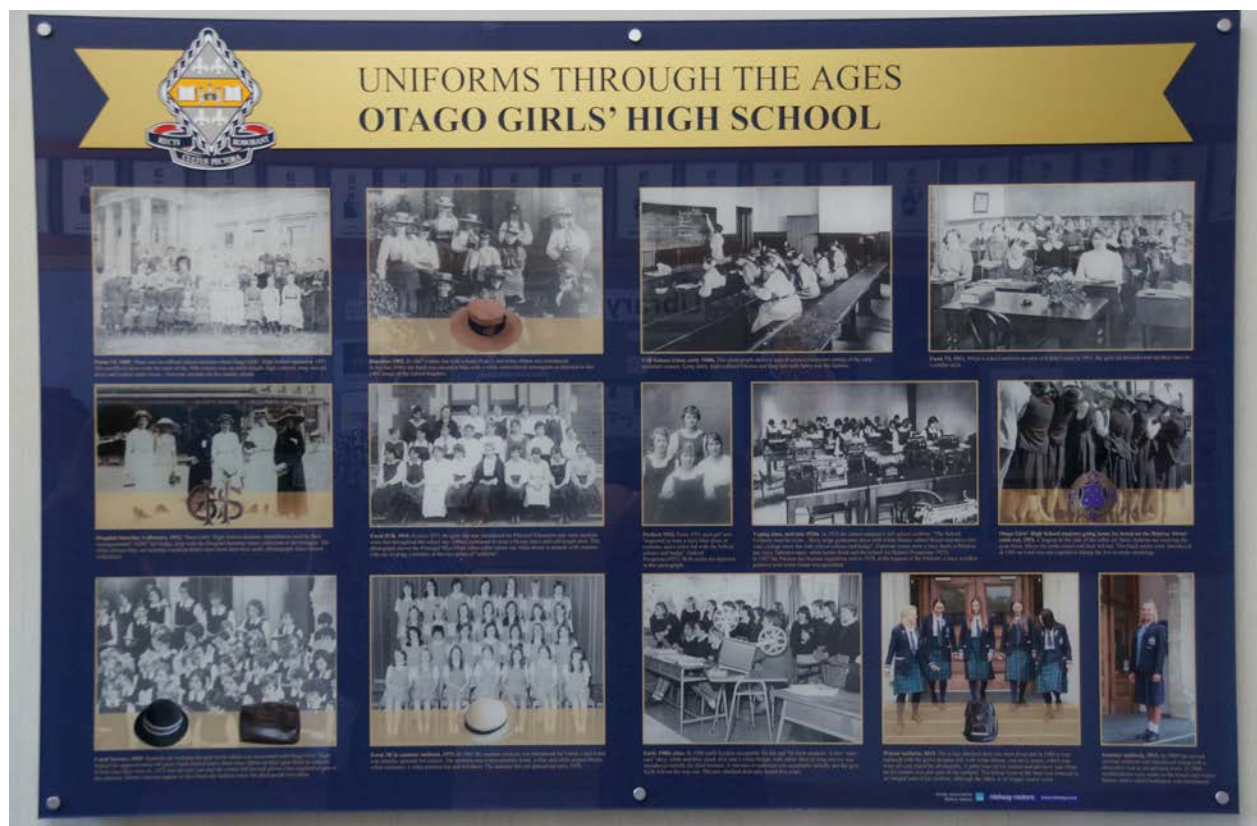
The event was a wonderful opportunity for the entire school community to come together to celebrate the completion of the building, acknowledge the importance of the visual and performing arts in the life of the school and to enjoy the sense of belonging and comradeship that comes from being part of this wonderful school and its history.

Linda Miller, Principal

Photograph reproduced with permission of *Otago Daily Times*.



Second historical panel, on school uniforms completed



The school has recently installed the second panel in the school history series. The new panel depicts the changes in the Otago Girls' High School uniforms from the school's founding in 1871 up until the present day. This board was generously sponsored by Midway Motors of Dunedin and is now on display outside the school library.

We are now working on the production of two boards featuring prominent ex-girls. The first of these is kindly and generously sponsored by the Christchurch Branch of the Otago Girls' High School Ex-Girls' Association and will depict prominent ex-girls who started at Otago Girls' High School prior to 1945. The following women have been selected to be profiled on this first ex-girls' board:

Flora Allan: Dux of Otago Girls' in 1879 and Principal of the school from 1911-1921.

Frances Anderson: Only known ex-girl to die on active service during World War 2.

Jean Begg, MBE, OBE, CBE: Social worker, New Zealand's most notable YWCA worker and director of British war services for women in the Middle East and Africa during World War 2.

Ethel Benjamin (later de Costa): First New Zealand woman law graduate.

Christina Cruickshank: Principal of Southland Girls' High School and Wanganui Girls' College. Co-Dux of OGHS with her sister Margaret in 1891.

Dr Margaret Cruickshank: First New Zealand woman doctor to practise medicine.

Dr Elizabeth Gunn, MBE: Founder of New Zealand Health Camps and was on active service as a doctor during World War I.

Ngairi Lane (later Galloway): New Zealand swimming representative at the 1948 London Olympics.

Shona McFarlane CBE: Prominent artist, writer and TV personality.

Dr Kathleen Pih (later Chang): First Chinese graduate from Otago Medical School.

Dr Emily Siedeberg (later McKinnon): First New Zealand woman to graduate in medicine.

Anna P Logan (later Lady Anna Stout): First day pupil, activist for women's rights.

Dr Marion Whyte (later Cameron): Dux of Otago Girls' in 1912 and first lecturer in anaesthetics in a New Zealand university.

Yvette Williams, MBE, CNZM (later Corlett): First New Zealand woman to win an Olympic gold medal.



Images from the opening of Te Toi Aweawe, The Cartwright Arts Centre



Principal Linda Miller (centre) with Dame Malvina Major (at left) and Dame Silvia Cartwright.



These images were taken at the opening of Te Toi Aweawe, The Cartwright Arts Centre, as reported in Linda Miller's article at the beginning of this newsletter.

We were delighted to see a number of ex-girls come along to join us for the occasion. If you weren't able to be there please feel free to call into school during term time and have a guided tour.





Physical Education film 1947

In 1947 a film crew visited Otago Girls' High School to record various gymnastics sequences on the grounds in front of the main building. Various still shots such as that shown below have been published in previous newsletters. Recently however the original film reel has come to light and we now have a digital version of it available on our website: <http://www.otagogirls.school.nz/alumni/film-of-1947-students-doing-pe>

If you participated in this event we would love to hear from you.



Thanks for donations

Sincere thanks to the Upper Clutha Branch of Ex-Girls for their generous \$100 donation to the school library. Your donation is much appreciated and will enable books to be presented on your behalf on our annual Library Day.

Thanks also to ex-girl Lynda Kinniburgh for her generous \$100 donation to the school library.

Bequest

We are grateful to the late William Scrymgeour Tatlow, of New South Wales, who recently left a bequest to the school. Mr Tatlow was the son of Jessie McGregor Scimgeour [sic] who attended Otago Girls' from 1898 to 1900.

In memory of his mother he left the school \$5000, along with an 1884 water colour painting entitled "Dunedin from the Bay Road".

Oldershaw High School - follow up

In our December newsletter there was an article on the help Otago Girls' High School gave to Oldershaw High School in Wallasey, England from 1946 until the early 1950s. This article was in response to an email I received from Joan Wilson who had been one of the recipients of our school's gifts.

Since then I have had contact with Pat Cove who now lives in Norway, and who had read our last Alumni newsletter on the Otago Girls' High School website. She was surprised and pleased to read of the account as she is a member of the Oldershaw Old Girls' Association and she could remember their Headmistress Miss Hitchman reading out correspondence from Otago Girls' High School.

Inspired by this correspondence I searched our archives for material relating to this contact with Oldershaw and found a collection of delightful hand painted cards sent from the Oldershaw High School to Otago Girls' High School. Also included in the archive was a photograph of Oldershaw High School and an official letter from the Minister of Food on behalf of the people of Great Britain, thanking Otago Girls' for their gifts.



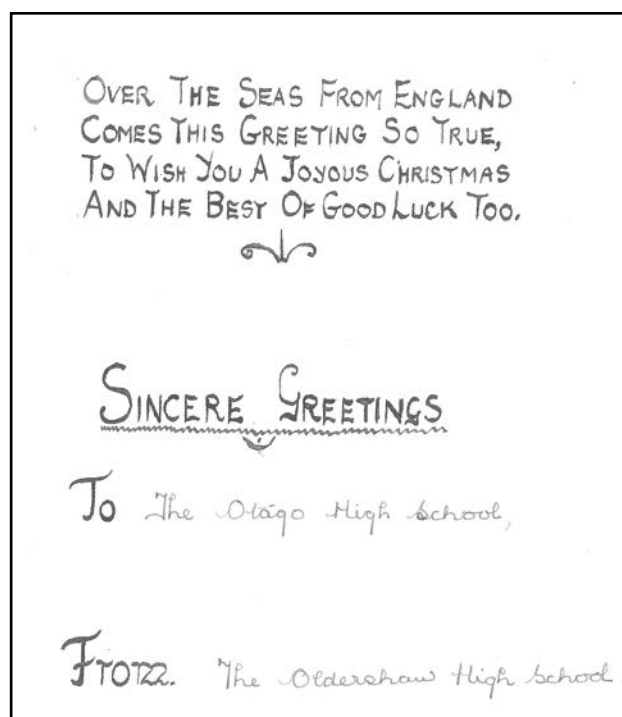
Hand painted Christmas card sent to Otago Girls' High School in 1948 by Oldershaw High School students. The interior of the card is at right.



Card from the UK Minister of Food thanking Otago Girls' for the donation of gifts sent to the people of Great Britain.



Oldershaw High School, England c1948.



Ex-Girl Achievements

**Molly Brown (nee McPhail)
(OGHS 1929-1930)**



Molly Brown at Otago Girls' in 1930 (left) and Molly (above) trying on one of the old school hats on display in the library during her visit.



Principal Linda Miller, Mrs Molly Brown, Head Girl Kelly Stitely and Human Relations Prefect Eliza Booth.

How fortunate we were to make contact with Molly Brown (nee McPhail) in March. We had heard via a student at Otago Girls' that Molly Brown was about to turn 100 and that she was an ex-girl of Otago Girls'. We sent her a congratulatory card and after her birthday we decided to invite her back to her old school to tell us about her time here.

Molly attended Otago Girls' in 1929 and 1930 and was heart broken when she had to leave school to help support her widowed mother and her siblings during the Depression. Because she had only spent two years at Otago Girls' Molly had always felt she

wasn't a true Otago Girls' student but Principal Linda Miller helped Molly rid herself of the inferiority complex she had carried for all the intervening years.

Molly absolutely loved her time at Otago Girls' and it was lovely to show her around the Dalrymple block which she remembered.

Molly met with Principal Linda Miller, archivist Jane Smallfield, Head Girl Kelly Stitely and Public Relations Prefect Eliza Booth. It was such a pleasure to meet Molly and we enjoyed hearing her stories and seeing photographs of her time at Otago Girls'.

**Calla Knudson-Hollebon
(OGHS 2010-2014)**

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Soprano off to learn from Dame Malvina

By SHAWN McAVINUE

A DUNEDIN soprano is heading to Hamilton to start a scholarship and learn from opera star Dame Malvina Major.

Calla Knudson-Hollebon (19) has been selected for a voice scholarship for at least three years of study at the University of Waikato.

Dame Malvina would be her main teacher in the undergraduate course.

The former Otago Girls' High School pupil said she had been singing since infancy but was in her early teens when she realised she could make it a career.

To gain entry to the course, she was interviewed by a panel of three judges in Hamilton in September, singing three songs — *Se Tu M'Ami*, by Alessandro Parisotti, *Tell Me, Lovely Shepherd*, by Richard Bonsall, and *Coming Thro' the Rye*, by Robert Burns.

The news in November she was accepted and won the scholarship created a "shaky excitement".

"It was pretty amazing."

In November, she performed as soprano soloist in *Remember O Thou Man* at Knox Church, a piece written by her mother, Karen Knudson.

She had learnt how to control her performance by transforming nervousness to excitement, Miss Knudson-Hollebon said.

"I try to change the way I view that adrenaline because it does give you that extra boost when you perform."

She has been a soloist in concerts for City Choir Dunedin, Taieri Musical Society's production of *Les Miserables*, St Kilda Brass, played violin in the Dunedin Youth Orchestra and was a member of Knox Church Choir.

Last year, she started music classes for pre-schoolers at Knox Church, a pastime she plans to continue in Hamilton.

Her long-term goal was postgraduate study overseas and a career in opera and she knows the toil needed to make it a reality.

"It really depends on the people you meet, the connections you make and how hard you work."

The scholarship covers the tuition fees and requires grades of a B average or better.

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6 I try to change the way I view that adrenaline because it does give you that extra boost when you perform

— Calla Knudson-Hollebon

**Sajida Lafraie
(OGHS 2003-2005)**



From L-R: Global Leadership Programme participant Meredith Walker, Sajida Lafraie and Global Leadership Prefect Mira Neuman.

As part of the Otago Girls' High School global leadership programme a Speaker Series has been operating during Term I. One of our recent speakers was ex-girl Sajida Lafraie who attended Otago Girls' from 2003 to 2005. She was the youngest of the three Lafraie girls who all arrived at Otago Girls' together, after spending two years at Burnside High School.

The Lafraie girls were brought up in Afghanistan and Pakistan and came to New Zealand with their younger brother and parents as refugees in 2001. Sajida spoke to the Global Leadership girls about her life in these countries where she lived under the rule of the Taliban. She talked to the girls about how her family of six spent six months living and sleeping in one room in a relative's house while they were in hiding. Her father, an academic in Afghanistan, was being pursued by the Taliban, but while in hiding he made the most of the difficult time by educating his children. He also taught them that they should be proud of who they were and that they could achieve anything. This teaching was certainly contrary to the official Taliban line where girls were not permitted to go to school. Our Global Leadership girls were amazed by all of Sajida's account and particularly her recollection of her family's escape into Pakistan followed by them applying to the UN for refugee status.

Today Sajida is a pharmacist and a true kiwi but she will never forget the countries where she spent her childhood years.

Ex-Girl Profile Patricia Larsen OGHS 2004-2008



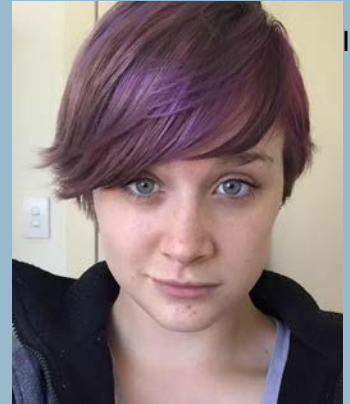
After finishing high school I went to the University of Auckland to study for a degree in medicinal chemistry. Being an odd sort of person who didn't want to imagine a life without maths, I then quickly changed to physics. I did a Bsc(Hons) degree while also doing summer research projects on quantum optics and accelerator physics, and then successfully applied for a Rutherford Foundation Trust Scholarship to study astronomy at Cambridge.

Now I find myself halfway across the world studying for my doctorate in cosmology. This means that I look at what the universe is made of, and how it has changed over time. It's a testament to the strength of modern science that we can actually study this quite well, and there are always new discoveries to be made. My work also gives me the opportunity to teach. Recently I've spent a great deal of time teaching young children about the sky and taking them star-gazing. It is incredibly rewarding to see the looks of wonder on their faces as it reminds me just how fascinating our universe really is.

My time at Otago Girls' contributed a great deal to my success. The teachers there taught me to challenge myself, to enjoy my studies, and they encouraged me to make the most of the many opportunities that were available to me. I will soon finish my PhD and, while it will be very odd to no longer be a student after so many years, I am looking forward to starting the next chapter of my life.

Ex-Girl Profile Zoe Armstrong-McCauley OGHS 2009-2013

Since I left Otago Girls' High School in 2013 I have been studying a BA in Theatre studies and English. Within my first year at the University of Otago I was offered a role on a USTV show, 'I Survived,' reenacting the horrific scenes of a victim of home invasion. After delving into the likes of acting,



(as inspired by OGHS own Belinda Leckie), lighting, sound and backstage work I finally settled on SPFX (Special Effects) makeup art as the one thing I truly enjoy more than anything. I have worked on several productions for the Mayfair, Fortune Theatre and small time gigs doing my SPFX work and my Instagram Zoe Armstrong SFX has recently been featured in *The Daily Mail*, *New Zealand Herald* and *Stuff.co.nz* much to my own surprise and excitement.

I first started developing a passion for SPFX work when I was in art classes at school with teachers such as Mr Otley. I also spent large amounts of time fascinated by the vast expanse of horror stories at the school library where I spent most mornings delving into a different world full of inspiration before I went to my classes. During these times I would often use old paints, watercolour pencils and wet newspaper to make zombie hands on myself and my friends – including doing makeup for a small pet project zombie film we made after school while waiting to be picked up. I hope to go on to create SPFX Makeup work for films and TV shows overseas in the future.



An example of Zoe's special effects makeup.

Ex-Girl Profile

Sasha Srivastava

OGHS 2003–2006

I left OGHS at the end of 2006 and almost immediately Principal Mrs Anderson asked me back for tea at school to celebrate my successes in scholarship. NZQA came to the party with a Top Scholar Award.



Thereafter I was at Otago Uni not Otago Girls' – a totally different world; one I was not really prepared for. It took me a year to realize that finance interested me and I had to drop French, something I am passionate about.

Three years towards a B.Com was far from fun – I thought it pretty full on but in the end I had my basic degree. The sweet part was that I had a bag full of scholarships and that helped my mood considerably.

I moved on towards a Masters in Finance. The Otago Postgraduate Master's Award came through and I left Uni with an M.Bus with Distinction. The most rigorous part of the Master's programme is the research and writing of the thesis – they sent it off to the University of Melbourne for evaluation. It came back with an 'accepted without alteration or amendment' and a recommendation that it be developed as a paper. Interesting!

In Finance, the CFA Charter offered by an American institution is what I intended to pursue. This is way beyond our NZ curriculum and I had to study independently towards it leading to three of the most difficult examinations I have come across. I successfully cleared all three at the first attempt.

The job search was difficult with several interviews and rejections. It surprised me that I had two good offers from Australia, but my insistence to remain in NZ landed me with repeated rejections.

Two interviews – one in Wellington and then in Auckland got me a position as a Risk Analyst at NZX, our national stock exchange.

I moved on to the Ministry of Education as a Forecasting and Modeling Analyst – a challenging but

gratifying stint that came to an abrupt end after 10 months because I moved to ACC. I am currently the Quantitative Analyst in the Investment Division of ACC, at the Corporate Office in Wellington.

Recently I have had the paper that was the subject of my Master's thesis published in the *International Review of Economics and Finance*. This is an A Grade Journal based in the US and in a strange way it feels like I have started my OE without leaving NZ.

Trying constantly to improve on what I have done or achieved yesterday is my mantra.

I left OGHS in 2006 but a part of me remains and always will. I need to come back to see what it looks like to be on the DUX board.

Keen to visit Otago Girls' High School?

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 your questions.

We also welcome hearing from any groups that want to organise a reunion and use the school as a base for their celebrations. We are happy to help host these events over a weekend. If we can help you in any way contact Jane Smallfield at sd@otagogirls.school.nz

Add your memories to the school website

Under the Alumni section of the school website there is now a place to add your memories of your time of school. We would love to start gathering these to use for the 150th reunion. Please visit our the website and send us some of your memories from your time at Otago Girls' High School.

www.otagogirls.school.nz

Suzie Bates

Ex OGHS Head Girl Suzie Bates, who captains the White Ferns, was judged International Women's Player of the Year at the recent New Zealand Cricket awards. She has also become just one of four players to top 2000 runs in women's T20 internationals.

Her cricketing pedigree has also been recognised at the highest level as Wisden's Leading Women's Cricketer of the World!

The Wisden publication stated: "Bates spent 2015 consolidating her status as one of the power hitters of the women's game, not least when scoring 258 during the 5-0 one-day whitewash of Sri Lanka. But the highlight was her sixth one-day century, made in the victory over England in February."



OGHS students "Shave for a Cure"



Last week five of our Year 13 students chose to shave their heads in order to raise money for Shave for a Cure, a fundraising campaign to raise funds for the Leukaemia and Blood Cancer New Zealand.

We are proud of their efforts which resulted in them raising over \$3000 for the cause.

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 sd@otagogirls.school.nz

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

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



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