



December 2020

Welcome to our 2020 newsletter.

Our focus this year has been on planning the 150th reunion at Taieri College at Labour Weekend 2021. We have a committee of 10 ex-students who meet monthly, and we will be calling on further help closer to the time – please get in touch if you can assist. Also, in this issue we feature alumni Greg Foster, who headed Habitat for Humanity, Africa and Europe, along with seven retiring Taieri College staff members. We also share some reminiscences and photos from the past.

We now have a Taieri College Alumni Facebook page – please join this group and contribute your reminiscences <https://www.facebook.com/groups/taiericollegealumni/>

Taieri College alumni AGM

The pandemic lockdown meant our Taieri College alumni committee AGM at Taieri College was delayed until May 25. John Cuttance was re-elected as Chair, with committee members Sue Brinsdon, Claire Grant, Aroha Wylie, and Judy Southworth.

The 150th reunion

The reunion for ex-pupils of Mosgiel District High School, The Taieri High School, Mosgiel Intermediate School and Taieri College will be held on October 22-24, 2021. A get together at the School is planned for Friday evening. Saturday's festivities will include an Official Opening, an afternoon tea, photographs and a Saturday Night cocktail function. The Sunday will provide a further opportunity for attendees to catch up with old classmates and friends while enjoying music and food.

We will be holding the main events in a hired marquee at Taieri College. Limitations on the facilities available mean that each of the events will have a maximum capacity of 1500 attendees. Please pre-register early to ensure you are able to attend – you can register online, <https://www.taieri.school.nz/alumni-reunion/150th-anniversary-registration/> or email alumni@taieri.school.nz giving you name and class year (3rd form/year 9).

There is a pre-registration fee of \$30 (single) or \$50 (double), which will be credited to your full registration costs – each event will have separate attendance charges.

As part of the 150th jubilee celebrations, we are looking at putting together a short documentary reflecting the various cultural groups passing through the college. This would include Chinese, Maori, Polish, Dutch, Scots and Irish. The idea is to focus on each group for up to five minutes with a brief historical introduction, short interview and then show some aspects of that culture. The documentary would run continuously during the weekend celebrations. Input is welcome along with filming skills – contact Judy Southworth judyfs@hotmail.com or 027 684 7976

150th Reunion Logo



Our 150th reunion logo was created by Connor MacKenzie, a wonderfully talented art student who is currently attending Taieri College as a Year 13 student. He undertook the task as part of his L3 Art Design programme under the tutelage of the college's head of department, Mrs Sally Spittle. Connor comes from a truly proud Taieri family with one of his parents attending The Taieri High school in the late 80's. Both parents have helped the college in many ways from coaching sports teams, attending parents at sports tournaments and most recently Kerry MacKenzie has been appointed as a member of the Taieri College Board of Trustees. We thank Connor for his contribution towards our reunion celebrations.

TAIERI COLLEGE NEWS

The year 2020 has bought challenges like no other, and Taieri College principal David Hunter paid tribute at the school's senior prize-giving to the resilience Taieri's staff and students showed during the pandemic restrictions. The following is taken from David's address...



I was incredibly proud of the response from our staff, and our Taieri College community. Our teachers made sure every student was given ample opportunity to engage in a learning programme (albeit from home) and I admire those that dutifully accepted that challenge. Whilst we were upset at the plethora of lost opportunities, including rugby trips to Spain and Portugal, Antipodeans trips to Nepal, sporting and performing arts competitions, field trips and shut down borders, we must not lose sight of the ultimate tragedy of Covid19. The 25 New Zealanders that succumbed to the virus, or globally the 1.16 million people that lost their lives. They are the real tragedy.

We all agree that Covid created adversity, but through adversity we are given an opportunity to be resilient, empathetic and just grateful to be living in a great part of the world. As Disraeli once said There is no education like adversity.

To our Leavers, you have been part of a unique year. One that could not have been predicted, but one who's ramifications may stay with us for years to come. You will all enter 2021 more adaptable, more resilient and understanding the old adage, you should never

take anything for granted. Realise that the world isn't just about you! During your lifetime the world's population will reach 10 billion people. Currently it is a mere 7.6 billion. Our growing and bulging world needs young people who do not only care about their environment but care about each other. Be that person. By all means set lofty goals but don't be so pig headed about them that you trample on others to get there and don't be so focused and tunnel visioned that you don't notice a shining glimmer out of the corner of your eye. For it is those shining glimmers that somehow attract our attention that make life so much more interesting and exciting. Thank you for being yourselves and doing that so wonderfully well. I wish you all the very best in your life's next adventure.

To finish with, a quote Shakespeare, and a comment on our bumpy ride through an unforgettable 2020: *Sweet are the uses of adversity which like the toad, ugly and venomous, wears yet a precious jewel in his head.*

ALUMNI PROFILE- Greg Foster (1975-78)

I only have positive memories of my time at Taieri High. Great friendships, some excellent teachers, and lots of great sporting memories. Didn't set the world on fire academically but I remain proud of passing year two Latin!

Since leaving Taieri I have had a colourful life journey.

Following four years of undergraduate and post grad work at Otago, I took a job as a youth worker in Christchurch, where we (my wife Fay and I) ran a 'foster' home for disadvantaged teenage boys. We fostered over 50 boys over a five-year period. The hardest job I have ever done.



We then moved to Philadelphia, with our two kids, where I studied for my Masters in Urban Development. From there our journeying around the world started.

First point of call was a three-year stint in Bangladesh on a development and aid project, working at creating jobs for rural women. Our two kids went to a small expat school in Dhaka where all three of their teachers were from New Zealand.

We then moved to Jordan where we headed up a development programme funded by the Canadian Govt working amongst the Bedouin in Jordan. This work included starting fish farms and agricultural projects in the desert.

In addition, we did a lot of work in Iraq from our base in Amman Jordan. Some really special memories including being bombed by American planes in Southern Iraq (I survived obviously), and just getting out of Baghdad minutes before it was heavily bombed on another occasion. During this time, I coordinated food and medical aid into Iraq during a time when the Iraqi people had no medicines and food was scarce.

After four years in the Middle East, we uprooted again and moved to Tanzania for seven years, where I managed the Canadian Government's micro-finance project, and then went on to

managing the Tanzania's Government malaria prevention project funded by the World Bank. That was quite the experience and I helped put in place a private public partnership that ended up getting malaria prevention (treated nets) out to rural areas throughout Tanzania.

From there we moved to Pretoria South Africa working for Habitat for Humanity, overseeing their work in East Africa and the Middle East. We spent seven years in South Africa – staying safe and wearing the All Black jersey with pride around the shopping malls and rugby stadiums.

Then we moved to Bratislava in Slovakia for five years. Also working with Habitat, I headed up their work in Europe and Africa. We loved living in Europe, and I was involved in building thousands of homes for people in need.

Our latest journey saw us return to Wellington, to be with grandchildren and family, and to work with the Salvation Army – heading up their social housing work. It is great being home – best place in the world!

Great life so far, and I have much to be thankful.

RETIRING STAFF

We bid a fond farewell to retiring staff members who have given a significant amount of expertise, passion, energy and time (Principal David Hunter noted at the senior school prize giving there was 150 years of service between five of them to Taieri children).

Alister McDonald (35 years)

Alister commenced at TTHS in 1986 teaching English & Social Studies. He joined the Commerce Dept in 1988 and taught Economics, Accounting and Business and Legal Studies. He became HOD Commerce in 2004.



A passion for learning led to Alister completing three university degrees during this teaching career. He was awarded a Master of Literature (with Distinction) in English from the University of Otago, a Bachelor of Business Studies with a double major in Accounting and Economics from Massey University, and a Bachelor of Arts in Philosophy with a minor in Sociology from Massey University. He also completed a Graduate Diploma in Business Studies (effectively a major in Business Law), a Graduate Certificate in Arts (in Philosophy) and a Graduate Diploma in Arts (in Sociology), all from Massey. Alister has also passed papers in Psychology, Anthropology and Linguistics. He was assisted in 2014 with a Teachers Study Award from TeachNZ.

Over the years Alister has made a significant contribution to the life of The Taieri High School and Taieri College. Students' will remember him as the MC for the Interform Singing Competition Finals. He has been Quizmaster for staff social events and student fundraisers. He was involved in The Miss Taieri High Competition in 1986 and 1987 and was compere for the Dunedin Year 7-10 O'Mathlon in 2017 and 2018. Alister has served on the Magazine Editorial Committee for many years and was also Teacher Mentor for the Young Enterprise Scheme from 1988-2005. Since 1990 Alister has been a Form 7/Year 13 form teacher.



Outside of his teaching commitments Alister was Dramaturg at the Fortune Theatre (until its demise) and Secretary to the Fortune Theatre's Trust Board. He played five professional mainstage roles and directed five professional stage productions while teaching, along with occasional voiceover, commercials, simulated patient, training video and film extra work (on *Scarflies* and *Sylvia*). Since 2015 Alister has been the Secretary/Treasurer of the Writers' Cottage Trust. He has served on the Executive of Playmarket, the New Zealand Playwrights' Agency and Script Development Service, and been a funding assessor for the Queen Elizabeth II Arts Council and its successor Creative New Zealand.

It will not only be the staff who will miss Alister. Over the years, at the Year 13 Leavers Function, many students have commented on their enjoyment of being in Mr Mac's class. Some of the school's most distinguished scholars, despite career intentions in other fields, have opted for one or other of his subjects in their final year simply to have a further year of being taught by him.

Sandra Suttie (31 years)

Sandra and her husband Jimmy moved to New Zealand after he was appointed to a position at Invermay. She commenced working at The Taieri High School in 1989 as a relief teacher. At the end of March 1991 Sandra was appointed to a position in the Science Department, teaching Biology and Science.



Sandra has been a junior and senior form teacher, was Year 12 Dean in 2000, 2001 and 2002, and Year 13 Dean in 2003 and 2004. Since 2015 she has been a Year 13 form teacher.

In 2006 Sandra was appointed in her role as Specialist Classroom teacher, which was a new position created by the Ministry to support beginning teachers, new staff to the College, and other staff when required. She has found this role very satisfying – she has enjoyed working with the beginning teachers and seeing them develop, some of them into roles of responsibility within the college. She worked with Paulette Hutchison in her role and the pair of them made a great team.

Since 1991 Sandra has been involved in the magazine and was responsible for its distribution to the college students, community groups and local schools. For many years she has also had the responsibility for organising student Blood Donors. She was heavily involved in field trips, in particular Mt Cook and Portobello. She has been involved in the costumes for school musicals, including 1997 for *Wolfstock* and 1999 for *The Three Musketeers*.

Sandra was regarded as the 'mom' to most of the staff in the Science Department. She is the voice of calm when needed, a great listener, someone who thinks rationally, and she sees things from a whole lot of other people's perspectives which is why she is considered a great person to seek advice from. She is respected amongst her colleagues for being intensely

loyal and truly professional. Sandra's modest and unassuming manner means that she quietly gets on with the job and "things just happen".

Sandra's children attended TTHS - Martin 1996 and Moria 1998.

Noel Campbell (38 years)

After completing a BA in Economics and a Diploma in Physical Education at Otago University, Noel completed his teacher training in Christchurch before commencing teaching Economics and Physical Education at The Taieri High School in 1982.



Noel has been a junior and senior form teacher and a Dean, and Lead Year 7-10 Dean in 2005. In 1990 Noel took on the position of Outdoor Education Co-ordinator, a position he held for six years. And was involved in the Form 6/Year 12 PE tramp for several years. Noel coached both senior and junior boys' and girls' volleyball teams, and football. Latterly, Noel has been involved with Multisports administration including for the "Paddles Up" (kayaking), the Enduro, and the Cromwell Triathlon.

In 1997 Noel was selected by the Dunedin-Otaru Exchange Scheme as a teacher of English. Otaru, in Northern Japan, is Dunedin's sister city. He was granted a year's leave and the whole family headed off to live and work in Japan. Noel found this to be a great experience as he had always been keen on languages. In 2002 Noel returned to Japan for six months to teach English and further his proficiency in the Japanese language. In 2003 Noel commenced teaching Japanese, as well as teaching Economics, and in 2006 he was appointed Head of the Languages Department.

Noel has taken photographs for the magazine, took a recreation programme for the Transition Department students, and organised the placement of students on the Outward Bound and Spirit of Adventure/Spirit of New Zealand programmes.

Noel is a very modest and unassuming person who will be remembered for his thoughtful and empathetic manner. He has been keeping the staff entertained over the years with his witty comments and his puns, which definitely contributed to the enjoyment of staff meetings! These quick "off-the-cuff" responses will be missed by staff and some of his astute students.

Noel's three children are all TTHS alumni - Samantha 1999, Christopher 2000 and Lauren 2003.

Raewyn Loughrey (25 years)

Having joined the International Department in 2003, after time as a support staff at Taieri, Raewyn has seen students from all around the world come and go, and sometimes stay. She is still in touch with many.



Raewyn's job goes beyond her work with homestays. Her expertise in ESOL as a teacher and teacher aide has been hugely valued, particularly when we welcomed our former refugee community to Mosgiel.

Raewyn's calm presence and efficient will be missed, as will her fun sense of humour and detective work. The students will miss the hugs, caring nature and practical advice. One student comment summed it up – "You made me feel like your grandchild. Your embrace, your smile and your daily good morning really made me have a good day."

Raewyn's three children are TTHS alumni - Jenny 1990, Steven 1993 and Tessa 1995.

Brenda Brook (15 years)

Brenda began her teaching career (both in food and fabric education) in 1977 at Kaikorai Valley High School and then moved to Taieri College in 2005. Over her 43-year career she has taught all levels of the Textiles Technology curriculum from Years 7-13 and Food Technology/Home Economics from Years 7-12. She also taught Health and trained as an ESOL teacher. Over her career, she has been driven by her incredible passion for teaching, students, and her subject.



She joined the Friends of Taieri College (PTA) in 2005 and participated in a variety of fund-raising activities, the highlight being the introduction of Taieri College's biennial Wearable Art competitions. Between 2006 and 2016, she organised, with the support of several teachers, six school-based Wearable Art competitions.

She held positions of responsibility within The Otago Home Economics Technology Teachers' Association (HETTANZ), including president, secretary, and treasurer. The inclusion of Technology as a university approved subject at Year 13 became a hard-won victory for teacher members. She has also been involved with The Technology Teachers' Association (TENZ)

Brenda loved making the most of the textile design, drama, and musical talents of the school. She was an incredibly creative teacher and knew how to bring this out in her students, encouraging them to experiment and pushing them beyond their comfort zone. A tattered garment or piece of furniture becomes an opportunity for sustainable design and repurposing, and she has a flair for breathing life into vintage clothing. Many of Brenda's students have been inspired to create prototypes that embrace sustainable practice which became a classroom goal. Brenda also promoted to her junior students the need to protect the environment by eliminating plastic packaging and synthetic fibres when they planned their materials for each design brief scenario.

Brenda has donated the Brenda Brook trophy and a koha that will be awarded each year to the highest achieving Year 13 Technology student who will continue their studies at a tertiary institution.

Brenda's children are TTHS alumni - Julia 1999 and Emily 2003.

Yvonne Hayes (13 years)

Yvonne started in 2007 joining the English Department teaching a combination of junior and senior English classes, as well as in Social Studies, History, French and the International Department.



Yvonne has been involved in many aspects of Taieri College's life over the years. She has been a form teacher, Library Manager, and part of the editing team for the School magazine. From helping with the wardrobe for productions, Co-Teacher in charge of Hockey, International Camps and afternoon swimming for our Arabic girls, Yvonne has done a bit of everything, always with her Irish smile.

Yvonne is one of the most genuine and caring individuals, which made her perfect for the role of Dean to the International Students. The range of students that come to Taieri College from many countries around the world never fail to mention in their speeches about the never-ending support, care and all-round general amazingness that Mrs Hayes has been for them.

Debbie Seddon (23 years) and TTHS Alumni (1973–1976)

Debbie retired in March after a long association with Taieri College and The Taieri High School. She attended TTHS as a student from 1973 to 1976 (Debra Wylie). In 1997 she began working at TTHS in the Photocopying Room; the Support Staff role also including daily attendance records and helping deans and form teachers with student's attendance. She then moved to the Main Office, continuing attendance duties along with student support and administration for the Sports Institute when it was based at TTHS. In 2012 she moved to the Finance Office to manage student accounts and assist with school accounts.



She was an active member of the Friends of Taieri High School committee from 1997-2004 and involved many fundraising ventures to support sports teams and school events. She was also a netball team manager, scored for many cricket games and did time keeping for the school swimming championships. Debbie's many skills, dedication to her job and unflinching loyalty to Taieri College will be missed.

Debbie's children Joel, Logan and Kelsey all attended TTHS/Taieri College.



1976 Debbie 4th from the left



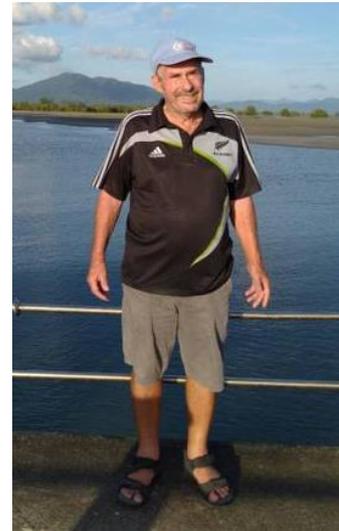
Debbie's 1973 form class

REMINISCES: The Hislop years, from Don Bishop

I attended The Taieri High School from 1960 to 1964 during the Hislop years. I clearly remember the three “C’s” – Caning, Caps and Cadets.

Corporal punishment was thriving, and I think some teachers took delight in belting the Bishop bum. In the 4th form I believe I had the caning record of 32 strokes. Rather than providing any measure of discipline, six of the best was like a badge of courage and immediately after a good whacking it was off to the dunny to display the bloody welts.

Caps had to be worn at all times outside of the classroom. Many of my canings were due to my total disregard for cap wearing. I am proud to report that as a member of the inaugural School Student Council I played a part in having cap wearing abolished.



Don Bishop

Cadets really saved me from myself as here was an activity where discipline did matter and made sense. I learnt to shoot and read a compass. I really liked the Army and was fortunate to go to several NGO training camps at Burnham Army Camp. I reached the rank of Warrant Officer 2nd class, RSM of the school battalion and got to wear a Sam Browne. The highlight of my cadets was the Royal Garden Party in Dunedin in 1963 with Taieri High cadets chosen to be part of the guard of honour.

The Senior Dance in 1964 was a truly memorable affair. We had an “under the sea’ theme complete with fish nets, buoys, shells and subdued blue lighting. The Assembly Hall along Green St was transformed. Funny that in 1984 Hollywood stole our theme for the first of the “Back to the Future” films. Too late for some royalties, I guess. I spent all afternoon cleaning Dad’s Morris 8, polishing my shoes and pressing my trousers under the mattress. I arrived to pick up my partner complete with orchid bouquet and what a surprise. At school I had thought Astrid was reasonably pretty, but here was this beautiful apparition in flowing ball gown and cascading hairdo – just amazing. I had no problem filling my dance card and a great night was had by all.

I wonder what happened to Astrid.

Donald Bishop, 14 May 2020. Chiang Mai, Thailand

BLAST FROM THE PAST - Judy Southworth

As a keen hockey player at Taieri High during the late 1950s and early 1960s, winter trips to Alexandra to compete in winter sports were two yearly events.

On the two trips I took, I was lucky enough to be billeted with a family of champion skaters. They insisted on taking me down to the Manorburn Dam for skating sessions.

They kitted me up with firm fitting boots, and sitting by the frozen dam, gave me basic instructions. My main fear initially was of getting on to the skating area without sinking as the boards around the edge covered ice that was very thin. Scary. However, out on the main skating area, the family propped me up and got me moving after showing me how to stop - stop? How about starting? - and to accept regular falls.

Finally, I was away. Well, I was moving!

The delight of being able to balance on a couple of thin blades and move forward was rather wonderful, though I was wobbling about like a newborn calf!

By the second session, I was moving a little further each time before tumbling.

Above us, on the cliff, a speaker belted out 'The Skaters' Waltz'.

It helped create an atmosphere of fun and encouragement.

The feeling of exhilaration and freedom that the skating and music gave me has stayed with me all these years. The fading late afternoon light gave an almost impressionistic atmosphere to the scene. I see myself as gliding quite confidently and elegantly to the rhythm of the waltz, though in reality, I would have been bumbling jerkily along in my bulky royal blue track suit, while all around me, confident, well dressed skaters, twirled and raced.



Judy next to coach Mrs Puddy back row.

FROM THE ARCHIVES



Art with Mrs Fraser



1978 3rd form Basketball team



Stu Letts, Mark Johnson, John Davers, Ginny Kitchingman 1990's



If you have any stories of interest to share or are planning any reunions please let us know at alumni@taieri.school.nz

