



**December 17, 2021**

Welcome to our December newsletter.

2021 delivered a few challenges for New Zealand, thanks to Covid, and our hard-working 150th reunion committee was put in the difficult position of having to postpone the Labour weekend celebrations after many months of planning. However, we're still hoping to mark the anniversary, with the reunion already booked for Labour weekend, 2022 – including marquee, music, food and drink. We thank all those who have carried their registrations over to next year and encourage you all to tell your friends and to make plans to attend – if lockdowns have taught us something, it's that we need to make the most of opportunities to get together! And if you can help in any way with the organising, please let us know.

Some more words from Taieri College principal David Hunter....

This year we recognised, and were about to celebrate, 150 years of education on our current site. While we still recognise this significant milestone, it was with regret that COVID-19 put an end to the planned reunion celebrations. My thanks to the hard-working reunion committee for the hours of preparation that they put in to the now deferred Labour Weekend celebrations. Let's hope we can transfer that planning into a memorable event in October 2022 (our 151st anniversary!).

Originally named Lees School in 1871, Mosgiel School 1874, Mosgiel District High School 1901 and The Taieri High School 1956, we now proudly operate under today's title of Taieri College (which was formed in 2004 pending a merger with Mosgiel Intermediate). The name of the school may have changed over the past 150 years, but the quality of service the school has consistently provided hasn't. Taieri has always been a school of great character and has always produced great characters. Nothing has changed there!

We are a proud community school and have done our utmost to respond to and reflect the ever-changing needs of the modern world. We are grateful to those that continue to support us and trust us in educating their sons and daughters. It has been heartening to see the response of ex-students as they return, often with their own children, to explore our modern state of the art campus and endorse the positive direction the College continues to head in. We proudly reflect on our rich history and look forward to an exciting future.

### **Alumni news – A History of The Taieri High School Hislop Era publication**



A history of The Taieri High School of the Hislop Era 1956-1966 is nearing completion. Robert Findlay and his team have spent numerous hours bringing together many photos, reminisces and interesting anecdotes from the era. This book is a substantial publication with 278 pages and over 170 photos. If you would like to purchase a copy (\$70 plus \$10 postage), email [robert@topread.nz](mailto:robert@topread.nz) with your postal address and make payment to account number 02-1242-0717818-034. To save on postage, copies can be collected from Fairfield, Dunedin or can be dropped to you in central Auckland.

### **Taieri College news**

The Taieri College head girl and head boy for 2022 are Ollie MacKenzie and Leah Dixon, and Ollie Smythe and Pearl Harris-Blain are deputy head students.

Taieri's Senior Prize Giving was a wonderful celebration of the outstanding achievements by senior students in academic, performing arts and sports. Although the current Covid -19 restrictions stopped whānau and friends from attending in person, it was encouraging to have so many people join online for the celebrations. It was unique to have the whole senior school together again for a Senior Prize Giving. Special congratulations to Jacob Smith and Mary-Jane Brock-Smith who picked up the premier academic awards of Dux and Proxime Accessit, respectively. The Performing Arts Ambassadors were Seth Fleming and Jasmine Rixon, and Sports Team of the year was the Senior A netball team.



**Sportswoman of the Year:** Shinae Stanley - Shinae is a very skilled, but equally hard-working athlete. Shinae competed in the Secondary Schools' Girls' triathlon and gained bronze in the Otago's and then also the South Island Secondary Schools' U19 girl's grade. Shinae is also a leading team member of both the Senior A Girls' Basketball and Senior A Netball team. The A girls basketball team had a stunning year, finishing runners up in the Otago Secondary School Premier grade. Shinae is a top performing Senior A netball player, a former captain and has represented the team 78 times during her time at Taieri College.



**Sportsman of the Year:** Ben Baines - Ben has achieved great success in athletics on the national stage. At secondary school level he is the senior boy's para shotput, discus and javelin champion. In gaining these titles he set new national records in the shotput and the javelin. At the New Zealand track and field champs Ben won the Men's F37 Javelin class and set a new record of 33.44m which places him 6th in the world for 2021.

### **Some other awards that might be of interest to alumni were:**

Cadzow Scholarship: Benjamin Aitcheson

Cumberbeach Scholarship: Emily Wilden

Frances Cosgrove prize: Meaghan Christensen and Jenny Petegem Thach  
Gateway Scholarship – Mosgiel Kitchens: Tayla Smith  
Prime Minister’s Vocational Excellence Award: Liam Anderson  
Salisbury Scholarship: Katelyn Aitken and Melissa Hussey  
Taieri Times Award: Timothy Chevtchenko



*Taieri College has started laying the much-awaited sports turf, after months of groundwork preparation. The turf will be used by netball, tennis, hockey and PE classes. It will be ready for use at the start of 2022.*

## **Our Alumni – Colin James**

Colin James was a pupil at The Taieri High School from 1957 to 1961. He shares a few of his salient memories .....

At the very start of my first year, the trip into military HQ in Dunedin in an ancient troop truck to get sandpaper suits for military cadets; old men shouting and pointless marching instilled a contempt for the army but there was fun on the firing range where, to my astonishment, I hit the targets. In my last year I was made sergeant of the armoury to get me out of the way, having refused to go to Burnham camp to earn real stripes.



The whole-of-school evening socials, for which I had to learn such arcane dances as the Canadian 3-step, taught at lunchtime dance classes; at one social, a young woman phys-ed teacher and her boyfriend did rock-and-roll, then new to the backwoods of Mosgiel.

Distilling whisky in a science class as a laboratory experiment under the auspices of science teacher Fergus McLean (I think that was his name) who told us the Japanese made very good motorbikes and would make very good cars. Two canes from him outgunned six by anyone else.

Setting up a whole-of-school elected student council in my final year, modelled on such councils in the United States which American Field Scholar Hank from Oshkosh told us about; then underlining the council's independence from teachers by taking a team scrub-cutting one Saturday to build up funds for the council – Hank told me "money is power" – and taking the whole school downtown to the Mosgiel town hall for a pow-wow (with no teachers present).

The production of Merchant of Venice in that final year, also in the Mosgiel town hall.

Also in that final year, coming third in the senior cross country, beating all but one of the First Fifteen (a team I was too small, too slow and too uncoordinated to qualify for). That was bigger than being dux.

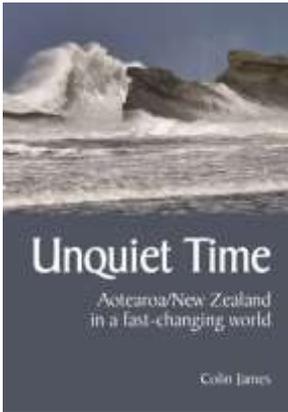
And, not least, the privilege of being at school with talented contemporaries, many of whom have done very well in life and some of whom have risen to exalted roles here and offshore.

On the whole the teachers treated us well. There were some damn good ones - I would single out Roy Miller, Steve Amies and my French teacher whose name has skipped out of my memory.

I went from The Taieri High School to Otago University, later fleshing out my language's degree at Otago with political science, te reo Māori and law study at Victoria University through to 1983. From the end of my second year at Otago I worked in the summer holidays on the Otago Daily Times as a cadet subeditor. After finishing my Otago degree in 1965 I couldn't think what else to do, so did journalism fulltime, migrating north to Wellington (and initially the Dominion, in 1968). I was a political journalist from 1969 to 2019 (except for four years in London from 1973 to 1977 with the International Wool Secretariat). In addition to and alongside my political journalism, I edited National Business Review from 1983 to 1987 and New Zealand Books for four years in the 1990s.

I did a range of other things, all built on my journalism. One was to run multiple series of roundtables on state services and climate change and a conference on the constitution for Victoria University's Institute of Policy Studies from the mid-1990s to 2018 (by which time it had been renamed the Institute for Governance and Policy Studies). Victoria University gave me an honorary doctorate in 2008.

I was made a life member of the Journalists Union which, because of various union amalgamations, has morphed into life membership of the E Tu Union. I am a life member of the Parliamentary Press Gallery and a fellow of the Institute of Public Administration.



I have published eight books and have one last book under way, including:  
The Making of a New Zealand Prime Minister (with Jim Eagles), 1973.  
The Quiet Revolution (1986)  
Three pre-election books (1987, 1990 and 1993).  
Unquiet Time 2017  
National at 80. A history of the National party 2017.

All that was learning. There can be no more satisfying life than to learn continuously, for which The Taieri High School geared me, and which journalism allowed me to do.

## Retiring teacher Nikki Mortimer (1999-2021)



Nikki Mortimer possibly does not even have an application form on her personnel file at Taieri College. She was tutoring some students in Mathematics when living in Mosgiel bringing up her two sons and made such a great impression that she received a phone call when a teacher vacancy came up. She had previously taught at Riccarton High School in Christchurch with Philip Craigie, the Deputy Principal of The Taieri High School at the time. He said she was one of the best teachers he had ever worked with and so The Taieri High School, and then Taieri College, gained the services of a very professional and caring teacher of Mathematics in 1999.

Often, Mrs Mortimer started her class with “Ladies and gentlemen...” and that is how she considered and treated her classes. She expected (and mostly received) adult behaviour from students and was a stickler for good notes and well-presented work. When pressure was on, especially before NCEA examinations, Mrs Mortimer gave time willingly to help her students. Mrs Mortimer gained a position of responsibility in the Mathematics Department in 2004 when the school became Taieri College, and she has been a great help to students and staff over the years.

Mrs Mortimer’s personal interest in tramping and outdoor fitness has taken her on many school tramping and skiing trips. There are many stories to be told of river crossings, sleeping on concrete in a three-walled shelter, rats in the dormitory and a lot of good fun and camaraderie with staff and students. For several years, Ms Mortimer organised the annual mid-winter ski trip to Mt Hutt.

Athletics Day always saw Mrs Mortimer enthusiastically helping to run the discus throwing, and more recently, the girls’ football team have benefited from Mrs Mortimer’s interest and co-management.

From 2000, Mrs Mortimer has guided students in her role of dean. While starting with the Year 9 students, Mrs Mortimer has also been dean of other year levels, finishing with her role of Year 13 dean which she has done for the last five years. She is generally a quiet person who listens carefully and understands the problems of adolescents, reasoning with students and letting them consider best alternatives.

Mrs Mortimer is always reflective in her dealings with staff and students and always willing to acknowledge when things have been done well. Her contribution to school life has been considerable and she is unstintingly loyal to Taieri College. She cheerfully supported students and staff in their many activities and was willing to assist with putting together the school photobook and pitching in and helping wherever needed. Her role in helping students select book prizes at the prize-giving has always been carried out with great care, consideration of students' requests and professionalism, which is her trademark.

Her great sense of humour has helped many colleagues to cope with the trials and tribulations of teaching. Mrs Mortimer's jokes were legendary, often with a mathematical leaning.

### **Reminiscing...**

Ex Taieri High School pupils lunching at the Village Green, Sunnyvale, Dunedin on 7 March 2021.



*From the left: Lorraine McDonald, Christine Gulliver, Rosemary Ross, Jeanette Ralston, Heather Bathgate Joy Walker (top of table), Runa Chesney, Dale Wilson, Shirley Ross (Eddy) NZ Women's Hockey player, Zelda Matheson, Valerie Ross*

# FROM THE ARCHIVES

Form class 7JR 1998, Mrs Jerram, Room A9



Mrs L  
JERRAM



Rodney  
BOWEN



Helen  
BUCHANAN



Amy  
De'BLECOURT



Andrea  
GRANT



Angela  
HIBBS



Joanna  
LE MASURIER



Mark  
LONGMAN



Kirsten  
MAY



Anna  
MCNEILL



Kristy  
MEADS



Marcie  
MICKANLUK



Margaret  
PAIA



Rebecca  
PALMER



Emma  
PETERSON



Theresa  
RENAULT



Tristin  
RYALLS



Angela  
STEEL



Megan  
TIKEY



Lawrie  
WHEELER

Form class 7PP 1998, Mrs Phillips, Room C8



Mrs H  
PHILLIPS



Mark  
BARRINGER



Pam  
COOMBS



Jessica  
DYSON



Christine  
EATON



Cherie  
HARVEY



Jamie  
HILLIS



Michael  
HODGES



Zoe  
ISCHIA



Jodin  
JOHNSTON



James  
KERR



Hayden  
KIRK



Carol  
MCFADGEN



Philippa  
MILBURN



Asahi  
NOVOA-VALLS



Daniel  
ROSIE



Kim  
SMEATON



Bryce  
SMITH



Paul  
THOMSON



Kevin  
TOPPING

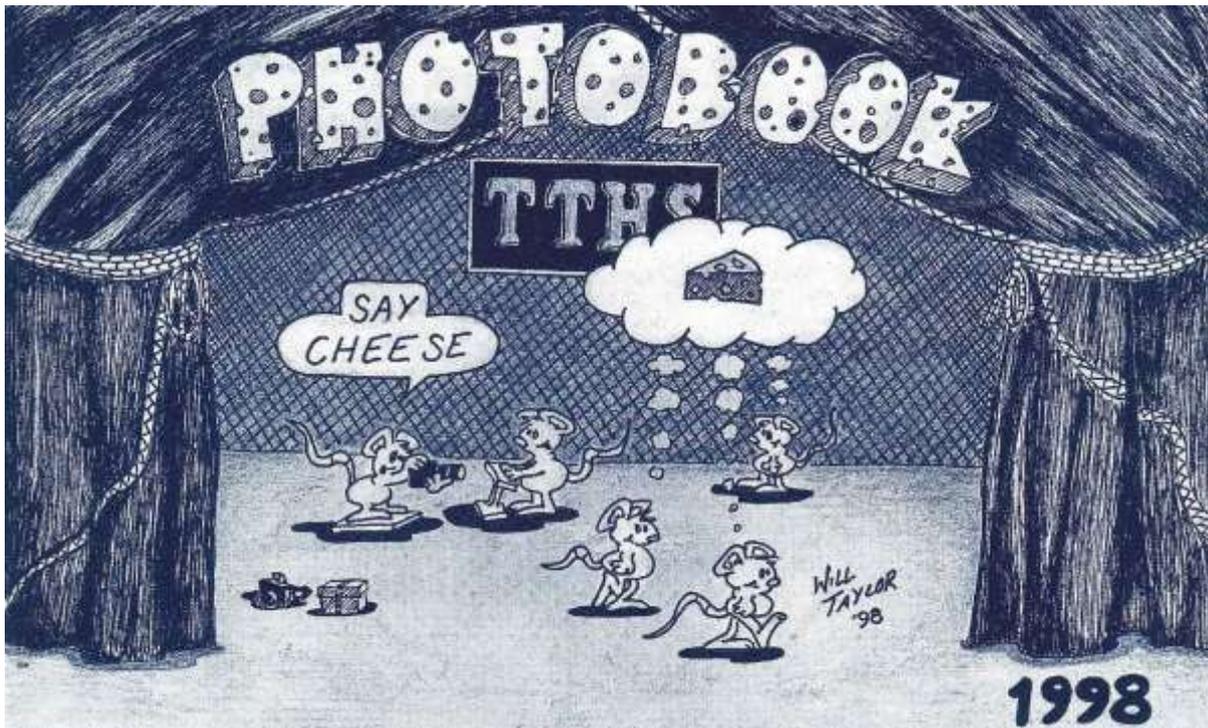


David  
URQUHART



Karena  
WATT

Photobook cover 1998



If you have any stories or photos of interest to share or are planning any reunions, please let us know at [alumni@taieri.school.nz](mailto:alumni@taieri.school.nz)

