

DECEMBER 2015

Welcome to the last newsletter of 2015 for the Taieri College Alumni and welcome to the new Alumni members who joined up after our successful open day at Taieri College on November 21. There was a great turnout of the community to look at the new administration building, library, and classroom block that replaced the old A block. The new buildings are amazing, and such a contrast to the old wooden A Block - the staff and pupils did well to work around such a major rebuild during the year.

A group of pupils from the class of '81 (1977 alumni) took the opportunity to get together during the open day weekend - thanks to Sandra Clark for initiating. Many memories were shared!

Unfortunately, also in November Hislop Hall was damaged by a fire, caused by an electrical fault. It's sad to see, particularly the damage to sporting trophies for the junior school. We will update you on the hall's future next year as decisions are made.

Now to brag - Taieri College is thrilled that it can now add Silver Ferns coach to its impressive list of coaches the school has produced. Janine Southby, who attended The Taieri High School between 1982 and 1986, was named Silver Ferns coach in November. Her father Graeme Brown has also been a teacher at the school.

The two current All Blacks coaches, recently back from their Rugby World Cup success in England, also hailed from Mosgiel. All Blacks coach Steve Hanson lived in Outram and attended Taieri High School in 1973/74, and assistant coach Ian Foster started at Taieri in 1978 before moving to the Waikato with his family. We're hoping we can bring you some of their memories of their time at Taieri in profiles in upcoming newsletters.

Other former Taieri pupils to have had recent sporting successes include Otago javelin thrower Holly Robinson, who produced a personal best throw of 38.18m to win a bronze medal at the International Paralympic Committee world championships in Doha in October. She is now preparing for the Rio Olympics in 2016. Also 23-year-old Dunedin cyclist Brad Evans won the Tour of Southland cycle race in November, days after completing the Tour of Hainan in China.

Congratulations too, to former pupil Craig Page, who has been appointed deputy editor of the Otago Daily Times. Don't forget to encourage your friends and family to join up with our Alumni - Membership is free - we're aiming for a membership of 1000 next year and we need your help. Ask them to register at www.taieri.school.nz and select the Alumni tab or they can email alumni@taieri.school.nz Get in touch if you have any reflections of your school days or photos you'd like to share - we'd love to hear from you.

IRENE SCURR

TTHS Alumni 1959-1962



As a female farmer in a male-dominated industry, former Taieri High School pupil Irene Scurr has helped pave the way for New Zealand women choosing non-traditional careers.

Irene, who attended The Taieri High School from 1959 to 1962, was the first New Zealand woman on the national Agricultural Training Council, and on the Telford Farm Training Institute board.

She was also the first woman in the country to get a bank loan without requiring a male guarantor. All banks at the time required that a single woman be at least 35-years-old and have a male guarantor or they would not get a loan. It was the culture of the time, something she challenged and won.

One of only three girls in her year studying agriculture at Taieri High, she was regularly top of her class. One memory of the agriculture teacher though wasn't actually about farming; Jack O'Connor was a passionate rugby coach who was forever writing game plans on the blackboard, unintentionally giving her a great foundation in rugby strategy. She was also part of the school's Country Girls Club, and loved the annual camps.

Irene had wanted to train as a teacher, but girls, particularly in her family, weren't encouraged into tertiary education at that time; she instead managed the family's three farms around Dunedin after leaving school, until her brothers finished at university.

At the same time, she became a wool classer to bring in the extra money needed to work towards buying her own property; her first farm a 600 acres block on the Chain Hills was bought in 1968. She continued to manage all till 1972 when she started farming on her own account.

That success gave her confidence to be a leader in the industry, and to break down traditional boundaries, at a time when "girls don't do that" was changing to "girls can do anything."

She represented NZ Youth and Rural women at the United Nations conference for women in Mexico in 1975, alongside well-known New Zealand Member of Parliament and trade unionist Sonya Davies. Sonya's advice to tackle discrimination was to lead by being the very best that you could be in your own field.

Inspired, Irene became a public speaker and motivated many women to take an active place in society, and encouraged young women into careers in agriculture and science.

A Kellogg Rural leadership scholar in 1986 and an independent Chairman at the Rural Bank during mortgage restructuring in the late 1980s, saw the start of her work of 20 years as a rural support coordinator working with rural families in

times of crisis and change. Irene was awarded a 1990 Commemoration Medal for her work as a "rural woman" and for enhancing and improving the position of woman in society.

When her two children were young, she served on the North Taieri School BOT and The Taieri High Board of Governors. She was the inaugural Chair of the Otago Peninsula Community Board when it formed in 2002 and for the next nine years, and a life member of the Otago Peninsula Trust. Lately she initiated the Otago Peninsula Biodiversity Group with its aim of a "Pest free Peninsula". Nowadays she farms a 25ha lifestyle block on the Otago Peninsula.

OBITUARIES

MISS MARGARET ALEXANDER

Teacher 1956-1987



Prior to coming to The Taieri High School, Miss Alexander taught at Timaru Girls High School and she taught for several years in Fiji. In 1956 Miss Alexander joined the teaching staff at the new school of The Taieri High School. She lived with her mother who required very significant assistance in her latter years.

Miss Alexander was an assistant teacher in English, but later became Head of English and Careers Advisor. The Careers Advisor's job was at times taxing. Miss Alexander was excellent at dealing with those girls who were not happy at school, and worked hard to find them work in the community.

When Miss Benbow resigned, Miss Alexander was appointed to the position of Senior Mistress in 1972. She held this position until her retirement in 1987. It is a huge testimony to the hard work, excellent teaching and genuine concern that Miss Alexander displayed that no-one ever complained about her. Although she was responsible for girls' discipline and she had to deal with a large number of incidents, her quiet and caring manner meant that she was hugely respected.

In retirement, Miss Alexander enjoyed the company of others in organised activities and travelled to many places, often with the same tour group. She played bowls, was a member of the Taieri Women's Club and was a member of a walking group.

Just prior to her death she had been on a cruise. She took ill on this cruise. Miss Margaret Alexander died at Dunedin Hospital on Wednesday 11 November very much as she had lived for all her 85 years, quietly and without drama.

Her immediate family was small and Miss Margaret Cotton, Mr Alex Mooney and Mrs Sheila Fenton organised Miss Alexander's funeral which was well attended by

her ex-pupils of The Taieri High School, ex-colleagues and friends from Chatsford and a niece from Australia.

Miss Alexander saw thousands of young people pass through her classes and her office and she would have had great rewards from hearing of students' successes. She once supplied information for the ODT and gained mention in Prester John's column where her help was acknowledged and she was described as his favourite English teacher.

We are grateful to Miss Alexander for dedicating so much of her life to the students and staff at The Taieri High School. She has made a difference and been a superb role model to a lot of people.

NEIL HOWARD

Teacher 1962-1989



We were sorry to hear of the passing of The Taieri High School teacher Neil Howard in September, at the age of 84. Alister McDonald remembers his contributions to the School over many years.

Neil Howard began teaching English and History at The Taieri High School in 1962 and was promoted to HOD Library in 1967. When Pat Thyne became Deputy Principal in 1974, Neil succeeded him as HOD Social Studies and he remained in this position until his retirement. For a number of years from the mid-1970s he also served as Form 7 (now Year 13) Dean and was in charge of beginning teachers.

For many years he supervised the operations of the sound system in Hislop Hall. His other extra-curricular involvements included at times the Students' Council, tennis teams and the school's Sea Cadets unit. He enjoyed the school musicals, formals and interform singing competition while disliking marking rolls, handing back exam papers, the swimming sports and 'studied insolence' on the part of some students.

He retired after 28 years' service to the school, at the end of 1989. When he retired he calculated he had made 11,231 trips over Three Mile Hill from his home in Maori Hill to the school, where he had taught 2,667 students and walked 7,534 kms while on playground duty.

He was known to many as 'The Admiral' in recognition of his long-time involvement with the Royal New Zealand Naval Volunteer Reserve. He rose through the ranks from Ordinary Seaman in 1949 to become Commander of HMNZS Toroa in 1964, a title he held till his retirement from the post in 1975. For his service he received the Volunteer Reserve Decoration and Clasp.

Born in Dunedin in 1930, Neil was educated by the Christian Brothers and his Roman Catholic faith remained a key element throughout his life. He then

attended Otago University (where his father, previously a secondary teacher with a doctorate in History, was by that time the first Secondary Schools Liaison Officer). In 1953 he completed an M.A. in History with a thesis on New Zealand's Naval Defence Policy between 1885 and 1921.

He began his teaching career at King's High School (where his father had been one of the first teachers), working there between 1954 and 1959 before a two year stint at the District High School in Milton where he completed his 'country service' (a requirement for teachers in those days if they wanted to progress up the pay scale).

He served a term as President of the Otago Navy League, was curator of the RNZVNR Association Museum and an Advocate for the Montecillo War Veterans Home. He continued to research and write about New Zealand naval history, with one of his essays being commissioned and published in the Cyclopedia of Otago and Southland. From his naval involvement he knew the need for and value of teamwork, and in a school setting he believed all those involved played an important part in its success.

At the time of his retirement he reflected his belief in the inherent value of all when he wrote in the school magazine: "I took up teaching because I like people and therefore I have been able to follow a 'hobby' for a lifetime. I have stayed teaching, when many have left, for the continuing challenge of meeting so many different kinds of personalities, hopeful, enthusiastic, determined, highly intelligent or bravely average, confident. Just as important were the pupils who did not have those qualities because they are the ones who carry the world."

TTHS STAFF 1973



Front row showing Miss Alexander and Mr Howard

I REMEMBER WHEN....

by Rod Mason - MDHS Alumni 1952



Mosgiel District High School
Class F3R 1952

Back Row: Marie Davis, John Atherton, Bill Harris, Annette Hughes.

2nd Back Row: Brian Kearney, Warren Coleman, Lawrence Lloyd, Ron Bisset, Ted Bezett, Barry Elvine, Brian Paterson.

3rd Back Row: Brian Cashmere, Murray Hughes, Earl Stewart, Noel Thurlow, Lex Emsley, Murray Gallacher, Gordon Stephens, Kelvin Bird, Steven Ranger.

2nd Front Row: Denis Bolwell, Russell Reid, Don Morrison, Jim Dick, Ray Anderson, Trevor Donaldson, Arthur Youngman, Noel Welsh, Allan Scherp.

Front Row: Neil Robinson, Graham Coombes, Ken Nelson, Russell, Murdock, Rod Mason, Ewan Osborne, Colin Scott.

I started at Mosgiel District High School in 1952. The Agricultural classes -- Form 3 and Form 4 -- were held in a two roomed block situated on the North East side of the main block, offices etc. Mr. Dodds taught the 3rd Form and Mr. Davis took the 4th (and I think,) the 5th form in the 2nd room. The rooms were heated when required by old potbelly stoves fired with coke and situated in the corner of the room nearest the teacher's desk!!! Mr. Saul was the School Headmaster, but unfortunately I am having a little difficulty remembering the Principal's name.

Army Training was still practiced in the early fifties. To get the correct sized Army uniform, we were all lined up from the tallest boy to shortest and the appropriate uniform handed out. That was when I discovered I was the second smallest boy at the school!! (Thank goodness I grew a bit in my teens).

I joined the Air Training Corp (ATC) when in the 4th form and subsequently had my first flight in an airplane. They drove all ATC pupils in the back of an old army transport truck from the school to the Airfield on the corner of Wingatui and Stedman Roads -- the Dunedin Airport at that time. They gave us all a 10-minute flight in one of two old Tiger Moth training aircraft, one boy in each plane and the pilot controlling from the back seat. Very exciting for 14-year-old boys.

When in the 4th and 5th Forms we had our practical farm training, one week and two boys at a time. The farms involved were one at Wingatui (vegetables, tomatoes and hens, and large glass houses) and Wallis Nursery. In the 5th form we also had one week's experience at Invermay Research Station.

On the personal side, I received only one (probably well deserved) caning while at Mosgiel District High. This was administered by the Head Master and the ridges, (three of them,) could still be felt the next day!!!

It was a thoroughly enjoyable time at Mosgiel District High School and really set me on the right course for a successful farming career.

NEW A BLOCK OPENING 30 OCTOBER 2015



A BLOCK COMMUNITY OPEN DAY 21 NOVEMBER

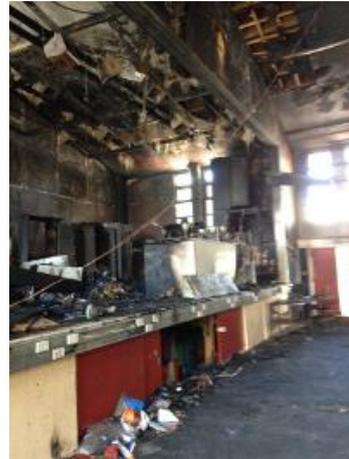


1977 Alumni (Year 9/3rd form)

The open afternoon was attended by approximately 100 people which included current students and parents, staff, ex-students, 1977 alumni and 3 teachers from past years; Henry Stoddart, Margaret Cotton & Pat Scott.

If you are planning a get together for your alumni year please let us know so we can email the details to alumni enrolled with us.

HISLOP HALL FIRE



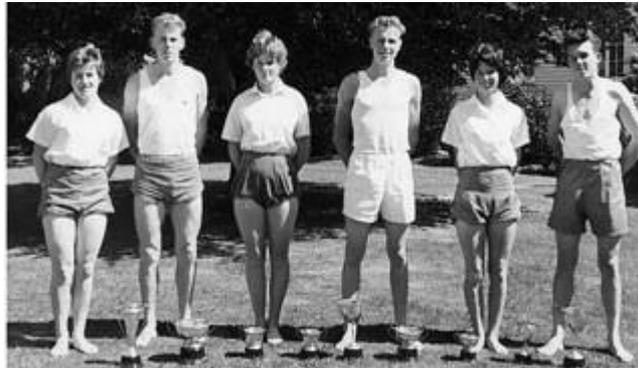
BLAST FROM THE PAST.....

PREFECTS 1961



*Max Robertson, Ross Jackson, George Davis, Euan Miller, Don McRae, Colin James
Pam Tracey, Heather Grigg Lynette Hughes, Tom Hislop, Irene White, Judy Gamble*

ATHLETICS CHAMPIONS 1961



Joy Rivett, Ross Jackson, Morven Inglis, Denis Brown, Zona Metzger, Ken Whitson

Wishing you a merry Christmas and a safe and happy new year from the Taieri College Alumni team. Kirsty Fiddes, Sue Brinsdon, Claire Grant, Kerri Kennedy and John Cuttance.

