

School Ties

Wellington Girls' College Alumnae Newsletter



December 2012

Issue 16

Mission Statement

Wellington Girls' College prepares young women to go out into the world as independent thinkers with respect for themselves and others, the confidence to accept and respond to challenges and an enduring passion for learning.

Dear WGC Alumnae

Wellington Girls' is in great heart. The last eighteen months have seen some significant developments – the opening of the new Pipitea Block in June 2011 was the highlight with the whole school and a number of old girls taking part in the celebrations. We have inducted six new laureates into our Halls of Fame; we have a wireless network throughout the school so girls are using their own iPads, phones and laptops all around the place; we had a record school roll of 1320 this year; work has begun removing the old prefabs down the Murphy St drive; work starts on an artificial turf on the bottom courts next week; initial discussions about the refurbishment of the Music and Drama areas has started; our top students continue to amaze us with their academic, cultural and sporting achievements; our staff continue to push traditional approaches so that they make the most out of new technologies, teach in different ways and make life challenging for the girls and themselves; our third alumnae plaque will be installed over the summer on the forecourt and our parents have become significantly more involved with the school with innovations like the Dad and Daughter breakfasts, the Principal's forums and the Leavers' cocktail party bringing more families into the school throughout the year.



As a few of you have noticed, School Ties has been 'on leave' since 2011. Last year, the WGC Charitable Foundation which produced it, decided to fold and transfer its land assets to the WGC Board of Trustees – it had already given the school most of its cash to help build the Pipitea block. That meant that the person previously employed to produce School Ties has also gone and the responsibility has now come to the school to produce it. We are happy to do this but this will be our last hard-copy version. Each edition has cost around \$15,000 to print and post and, to put it simply, the school can't afford that cost. From now on all copies will be sent to email addresses and put on our website – unless you contact us and send us enough to cover print and postage of a hard copy each year - \$5 should cover it. We are sorry to have to do this as some alumnae don't access information digitally, but we know many of you would prefer an e-version and that is the way all of our communication at school now.

I look forward to seeing many of you in the year ahead and hearing more tales about your time at WGC. If you are having meetings or reunions please get in touch – I'm always keen to join you if you'd like that.

Julia Davidson
Principal



60 years on ...

About 50 old girls from the class of 1953 are meeting for a reunion on the weekend of 22-24 February 2013 to celebrate their 60th anniversary. This event will include; attending a school assembly, a tour of the school, bus tour and cocktail evening. Many will travel from outside New Zealand to attend.

Natalia Arait and Annie MacDonald Head Girl and Deputy Head Girl 2012



It is such an odd feeling to find ourselves at the end of our secondary schooling years. For us, five years is a long time and you never really think that college is going to end, but here we are with no more normal classes and only a few occasions left for us to come into the school. Our lives now are full of possibility which is of course exciting but is also very terrifying. We no longer have our normal morning routine, scheduled food breaks or timetables that fill our days. Our choices are bigger than wondering what sports to try or whether to have our muesli bar at interval or lunch - they are choices about our future. Although this change is frightening, it is change that we are ready for because of our time at WGC.

In our prize giving speech, we used the analogy of the Teal Brick Road as our experience of WGC because the past years at this school have built onto our present and helped us to be ready for our future. This is the best way that we can explain how this school has prepared us and enabled us to grow as people. We leave here as empowered women who have a broadened perspective on the world around us and are ready for the unknown of life outside college.

There are so many aspects of Wellington Girls' that we love, but what we will miss the most is the girls that fill the corridors, the classrooms and the packing into the hall at assembly times. Although we will keep in touch with these girls, there will never be the same feeling of so many talented and promising young women in one space at one time. We have done the most part of our growing up, blossoming and changing with our own year group and we have become a strong and motivated force that has achieved some great things and added to the long history of WGC.

On a personal level for us, we are both extremely grateful for the opportunity we were given this year and have learnt invaluable skills. We have learnt such things as the importance of having a diary (and that you have to use it), time management and organisation. We were able to figure out our own style of leadership (of course with guidance and support) which was challenging but extremely rewarding. Basically, we could not have asked for a better way to finish our amazing time at Wellington Girls'.

We will always look back on our schooling years with affection and great fondness and will no doubt recount many of the hilarious memories we have from WGC to anyone who will listen. Yes, we are scared for this new change and sad to leave our beloved school years in the past, but as we have said we are ready for the next step and WGC will always have a place in our hearts.



In Memoriam

Grace Joy **STENBERG** (nee Lamason)
02/2011
Student 1931-1933

Alison **HOWIE** (nee Nicoll) 02/07/2011
Student 1930-1932

Waimaria **ERUETI** 27/07/2011

Zoe Margaret Norton **PURVES** 27/07/2011

Doreen Sutherland **DOWDALL** 29/07/2011
Student 1943-1945

Beryl Nora **IGGLEDEN** 08/2011
Student 1941-1943

Lesley Christine **O'CAIN** 18/08/2011
Student 1965-1966

Marjorie Hilda **MCFARLANE** (nee Harradine) 21/08/2011
Student 1939-1940

Barbara **SCHOFIELD** 28/08/2011
1939-1942

Beryl Mary **REYNOLDS** 11/09/2011
Student 1929-1933

Gillian Esther **BAIRD** 21/09/2011

Annie Dawn Aroha **RESCH** (nee Diamond) 08/10/2011

Nona Dorothy **BRITTEN** (nee Hemsley) 09/10/2011
Student 1939-1941

Charmaine **KETTING** 15/10/2011

Marjorie Avyce **PEMBERTON** 05/11/2011

Mary Donalda **MATTHEWS** 14/11/2011
Student 1925-1929

Amanda Beatrice **O'CONNOR** 20/11/2011
Student 1989-1990

Lucy Kay **FRASER** 28/11/2011
Student 1969-1972

In Memoriam continued

Ellen Jean **JULIAN** (nee Heazlewood) 22/07/2012

Marilyn Tanya **BOWMAN** 22/07/2012
Student 1949-1951

Dolores Luan (Lucy) **BUNNY** (nee Sarcich) 31/07/2012

Destyn Elizabeth **STOEBENER** 06/09/2012
Student 1944-145

Jean **MCGREEVY** (nee Price) 15/09/2012

Shirley Rose **CODY** 17/09/2012
Student 1946-1947

Mary Elizabeth **TOOK** (nee Sheppard, Reid) 20/09/2012
Student 1957-1959

Joan Seymour **FISCHER** (nee Clothier) 22/09/2012
Student 1938-1942

From the Development Committee, or from school socials to a social school

Teaching and learning have been evolving; rather than seeing the school as a place where teaching is enforced, schools have grasped the potential benefits of teaching and learning as a joint partnership, the foundations of which are built on good communication. The school has an active role at the core of the girls' network of associations both virtual and physical. The college made a timely commitment to embrace the virtual world and now girls email assignments and arrange events through social media, all this is normal business for your average Year 9 to 13 girl. This growth in digital communication has been spurred by the decision to install a wireless network that is accessible to all students and staff anywhere on campus. It will inevitably lead to a change in the physical environment of the school as schools move on from "cells and bells" teaching spaces to multifunctional learning spaces, as found in the new Pipitea block.

To this end the development committee has held a series of workshops to act as a catalyst for prioritising and briefing future developments around the campus. In short we have agreed what is not so great about the school's campus and are now in the process of sorting out a path to improve the physical environment as supportive social learning spaces.

WGC has the benefit of a great location, and the challenge of many physical constraints. Some things haven't changed over the years - the field is still sunny and popular, people still congregate around the quad, and parts of the school can still feel like a rabbit's warren of tight spaces. Performances still occur in the hall, music in the basement classrooms nearby, and the sports ground spaces are sought after. Space is limited and a growing curriculum offers ever increasing possibilities and puts ongoing pressures on limited resources.

The school now provides a broad range of subject choices: dance is now taught alongside drama and girls bring their own laptops and tablets to school and access the network from any part of the school not just the library or classrooms. All of this has informed the master plan.

The new atrium has provided such a great place for girls to congregate that it is probably a victim of its own success, with admin staff having to remind girls about climbing noise levels. This has provided a further catalyst to initiate the "Commons" - an inviting multi-functional social space for large groups to gather indoors with the potential to provide spaces that can engage in the broader community both in and outside of school hours.

The workshops have also been addressing how to get the best out of our next Ministry of Education 5YA funding grant to improve our music and drama spaces to create a modern, flexible and exciting performing arts space.

They also helped to reassure us that the installation of a new artificial turf playing surface on the existing tennis courts was not going to be located in an area that would restrict future development and allowed the Board of Trustees to give its installation the go ahead. This has been scheduled over the Christmas holiday break and we all look forward to seeing the Turf in place when the girls start back in 2013.

We will be reporting back on the outcomes from these workshops in the New Year and look forward to building upon the great work that has gone before. Having created the Atrium and wonderful spaces at the entrance of the school, the funds for development will need to be built up. Any support from the Old Girls' community will be welcomed. Our aim is simple - to enhance the facilities and grounds at WGC so that our girls get a physical environment that matches the wonderful spirit of the school. Have a happy Christmas and New Year.

Halls of Fame 2011

2011 saw the introduction of an entirely new Hall of Fame. It was formed to represent the amazing alumnae that Wellington Girls' College has, but who do not currently fall under any of the previously formed Halls. The committee wanted to '*choose women who entered into a profession different to the women who had been inducted previously, and women who were amazing role models*'.

In addition, we started the Sports Hall of Fame in 2011 which recognises former students who have represented New Zealand at the very highest level, and the Arts and Cultural Hall of Fame which is for alumnae whose work (either paid or unpaid) has been significant to arts and culture. In 2011 and 2012 Alumnae have been inducted into these Halls of Fame as part of the Sports and Cultural Awards dinner.

If you know of any old girl who could be considered for inclusion in any of our Halls of Fame please contact Jo Kahl by writing c/- the school or send an email to wgc@wgc.school.nz



From left to right: Dame Margaret Shields, Honourable Luamanuvao Winnie Laban, Shona McCullagh and Trish McKelvey

Dame Margaret Shields - nee Kerslake (Student 1955-1959)

Entering the new Hall of Fame is Dame Margaret Shields, a leading female figure in the male dominated world of politics. A former Labour Cabinet Minister and Chair of the Greater Wellington Regional Council. She has been a strong advocate for the rights of women, holding offices in the United Nations Development Fund for Women, the International Research and Training Institute for the Advancement of Women, the National Council of Women and the Federation of Graduate Women.

Honourable Luamanuvao Winnie Laban (Student 1969-1971)

The Honourable Luamanuvao Winnie Laban, is the first woman with Pacific Island heritage to have been both a Member of Parliament and Cabinet Minister. She is currently the Assistant Vice-Chancellor (Pasifika) at Victoria University.

Shona McCullagh (Student 1975-1979)

Inducted to the Cultural hall of Fame is Shona McCullagh. She has been an inspirational dancer, choreographer, director and leader for people involved in the art of dance. Both national and internationally, Shona has shown dedication and strong passion through her work; which includes choreography for many prestigious dance companies as well as work for theatre, television and film. Through her love of dance she has given a lot back to the community, imprinting something in the lives of others through sharing her passion while helping aspiring artists through her dedication and skill.

Trish McKelvey (Student 1955-1959)

Sporting Hall of Fame inductee is Trish McKelvey. She was captain of the WGC Senior A netball and First XI cricket teams, and went on to represent New Zealand in cricket. She captained New Zealand and led us to win two test matches, the only two New Zealand Women's Cricket team have ever won. Trish was an amazing cricketer and all-round sportswomen who has contributed to New Zealand in many ways. She rightly deserves to be the first inductee into the Wellington Girls' College Sports Hall of Fame.



Jo Randerson Student 1986 -1991

Jo Randerson is a unique writer and theatre-maker interested in meaningful, honest and imaginative self-expressions. As a Year 13 student, she was Head Girl.

After completing Year 13, Jo then went on to Victoria University of Wellington to major in English, Theatre and Film. She became involved as a writer, director and performer in theatre productions for the University's Student Drama Club. At the same time she also wrote for and performed at BATS Theatre, Wellington and made television appearances as a stand-up comedian. After graduating, she spent a year in Australia before co-founding 'Trouble' a theatre group, on her return in 1995. *The Lead Wait*, a show written by Jo and the group was praised for its 'unsettling hyper-naturalism and dark wit'.

In 2001, Jo then founded her own theatre company, Barbarian Productions, whose award winning shows have played in cities all around the world, including New Zealand. Jo writes short stories and prose poems, her writing includes *The Not* and *Through the Door* and *The Spit Children* and *The Keys to Hell*. Her writing has twice been short listed for the International Institute of Modern Letters Prize and has earned her the following writing fellowships: Robert Burns Fellow (Dunedin), Winston Churchill Fellow (Russia) and the Creative New Zealand/Department of Conservation Wild Creations Residency at Cape Kidnappers. She was also a Billy T James Comedy Award Nominee in 2005. In 2008, Jo was the curator of *My House Surrounded By a Thousand Suns*. This exhibition was shown at The Dowse and featured the works of artists with experiences of mental illness and/or intellectual disability.

In 2011, along with Kate McIntosh, Jo created *Hullapolloi*, a theatre and dance performance in collaboration with Footnote Dance and won 'Best of Fringe' in Dunedin. Currently, Jo is directing *White Elephant*, the second part in a trilogy of new works by barbarian Productions and herself. It fuses dance and theatre with bastardised clown and mask techniques to explore themes of social values, identity and inequality.

Rebecca Perrott Student 1974-1978

In 1990 Rebecca Perrott was inducted into the New Zealand Sports Hall of Fame and this year was inducted into the Wellington Girls' College Sports Hall of Fame. Rebecca was an outstanding athlete during her time at Wellington Girls' College and still is today. While she was attending college she was also competing in international swimming events for New Zealand. The fact that Rebecca was able to achieve so much at such a young age is truly inspirational.

As a 12 year old Rebecca competed for the Fijian national team at the 1974 Commonwealth Games in Christchurch. She then went on to become New Zealand's youngest ever Olympian at age 14 and this record still stands. At the 1976 Olympics in Montreal she was the fastest qualifier for the 400 metres freestyle heats and came fourth in the final, missing a medal by just 0.16 seconds. Two years later she showed the same excellent form when she won four medals at the Edmonton Commonwealth Games including gold in the 200 metre freestyle.



Rebecca's passion for swimming has continued throughout her life. She still swims four times a week and has been swimming at masters level for 20 years. At this level she has continued to achieve greatness becoming a world champion in both the 100m and 800m freestyle at the Perth World Masters Championship in 2008 as well as three second places. Rebecca is also a member of the New Zealand selection committee for the national swimming team.

Old Girl Profiles



Edna Whittaker

Edna Whittaker recently celebrated her 100th birthday with family and friends. Her perfect recipe for long life is 'good food' meat and three vegetables every day. She believes fresh vegetables are important and has always grown her own.

Edna was born in Wellington on 30 October 1912. She and her husband Stephen raised a family of four before they retired to Otaki.

On leaving Wellington Girls' College Edna wanted to be a Karitane nurse, but she wasn't old enough and instead learned shorthand typing.

Her husband was a member of the Whittaker family which has run the home-grown chocolate making business since it was established in 1986. Two of Mr Whittaker's nephews - Brian and Andrew run the company today.

Mr and Mrs Whittaker became active member of the Otaki Golf Club in retirement. At 92 Edna, who has been a widow for 24 years, was still playing golf but when her eyesight started deteriorating and she was no longer able to drive, she had to give it up. Edna started playing bridge when she was 50 at learner classes at the YWCA. After moving from Otaki to Sommerset in Levin when she was 90, Edna travelled back to Otaki every week to play Bridge as well as playing in Levin.

Edna recently moved to Pahiatua to be near her daughter Janice Bird and now resides at the Waireka Rest Home. Janice also attended Wellington Girls' College from 1954-1958.

Edna is a much loved member of the Wellington Girls' College Old Girls' Association and still attends all the local functions. As the oldest 'old girl' she was given the honour of cutting the birthday cake for the 125th Jubilee in 2008.

Agnes Moncrieff

While at Carterton High School Agnes Moncrieff, fondly known as Nessie, won a scholarship to Wellington Girls' College which she took up in 1913 when she was 14. She boarded at the College Hostel which was at 8 Hill Street. In her first year she won the Senior Education Board scholarship and later a Junior National scholarship. Was first in the Junior Division of the Cercle Française and in 1915 won a place on the University Scholarship credit list. In 1916, her final year, Nessie was Proxime Accessit to Dux.

The reporter school magazine has frequent references to Nessie Moncrieff. They show she took a full part in school life right from when she began. She played tennis with success, was a keen member of the Christian Union, editor of one edition of the magazine and a contributor and a keen member of the Literacy and Debating Club.

Nessie's leadership skills were well recognised and she was Head Prefect in both 1915 and 1916.

Nessie attended Victoria University from 1917-1920 completing her BA in English, Education, French and Latin and taking French and Latin on to her MA. During her student years at Victoria, Nessie was the Student Association's Woman Treasurer and later Women's Vice President.

After some years teaching Nessie trained as a YWCA secretary and in 1930 went to China to be a YWCA foreign secretary. She worked for and was responsible to the YWCA of China. Her time coincided with the beginning of and then total occupation of China by Japan. After returning to New Zealand the conditions Nessie coped with in China caught up with her and she became very ill and it wasn't until 1951 she was able to resume her life teaching at the Correspondence School. Nessie died in 1988.

Over 200 letters Nessie wrote during her time in China are now archived in the Turnbull Library.