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As Abbotsleigh celebrates its 130th birthday, it is important to acknowledge the many blessings bestowed on this fine school and the many who have passed through this learning environment who have contributed greatly to society. Today we stand on the shoulders of those who have gone before and thank them for what we have inherited.

Marion Clarke’s vision for a school for girls where playing fields were as important as intellectual development and critical thinking, continues to be delivered. It was with great delight that we celebrated the official birthday with the opening of the Sports Hall and multipurpose field. In the building linking the two facilities is a wall of fame where Abbotsleigh girls who have competed for Australia are displayed. This history attracts much attention, and encourages and inspires our current girls.

One of the challenges of a Headmistress is to move the school forward while respecting and valuing the traditions and spirit of its past. We have moved forward not only in the area of physical sport but also in supporting our boarding community with improved facilities. Our oldest girls in Year 11 and 12 enjoy Wheeldon House where they have single bedrooms with an ensuite between two. Read House is back to being a boarding house, without the Headmistress in residence, and can cater for 25 girls, taking the place of Vindin House, which is now the Grace Cossington Smith Gallery. While facilities may change, the sisterhood amongst boarders is as warm and spirited as ever. The School’s commitment to boarding remains strong as we cater for our NSW country and regional girls as well as a small number of international students. I hope you enjoy our tribute to boarding – past and present – in this issue.

Our Old Girls contribute greatly to the School by being Council Members, Foundations Members and on the Foundation Board, mentors, and speakers on our Career Nights. I thank the Old Girls for their generosity in both time and financial support. Ensuring that we reserve places for those Indigenous, country and city girls who would not be able to attend Abbotsleigh without financial assistance is important to our mission and also to ensuring there is diversity in our student body. We value diversity and the learning community is enriched with this outreach focus.

I wonder what the next 50 years will bring. Today we educate our girls to be adaptable, resilient, critical thinkers and good communicators with compassionate hearts who understand their place as a global citizen. This world needs great female leadership and we aim to develop women of character who have the skills and intellect to change tomorrow.

Mrs Judith Poole
Headmistress
On behalf of the School Council I welcome you to this edition of Around Abbotsleigh.

The School Council is committed to keeping Abbotsleigh at the forefront of girls’ education in Australia and beyond. This commitment requires strategic thinking and planning – and Council uses our Strategic Plan as one of the tools to keep us on track.

If you haven’t looked through the Strategic Plan, I commend it to you (it is available on the School’s website). The plan has six ‘drivers’ focussing on the key parts of the School’s operations; namely:

1. Teaching and learning is our core business. Council is committed to providing the best learning environment to maintain the outstanding academic results of the past few years;

2. Christian purpose underpins all we do. We are all made as holistic beings, made in the image of God and made for relationship with him (possible only through the life, death and resurrection of Jesus Christ), and given opportunity and responsibility to understand his world (which we can do since all truth is God’s truth) and contribute to it;

3. Cocurricular activities are vitally important in helping each girl develop character, relationships, connections, responsibility and a ‘chance to shine’;

4. Boarding is an integral part of life and learning at Abbotsleigh, and we rejoice in the diversity and commitment that each of our boarders brings to the School;

5. Community partnerships provide rich opportunities to give back to, and receive from, a much wider world than exists just within the school boundaries; and,

6. Organisational sustainability is a focus to ensure that the School is efficient and effective in the use of resources to provide the best education for girls today and into the future.

That’s our blueprint – and each member of Council is delighted to be able to use our gifts, skills and time, however we best can, to keep Abbotsleigh the #1 choice for learners and educators.

Rev Ian Millican
Chair of Council

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1,859 likes
Many girls, parents and staff have shared with me their sadness at the prospect of Stuart’s departure. This is testament to the profound and invaluable impact he has had on so many aspects and individuals within our Abbotsleigh community since commencing his teaching and leadership here in 2010.

Stuart is an exemplary educator with a highly tuned teaching practice focused on the pastoral needs of each individual child and so well underpinned by his innate knowledge of student learning from the very youngest years through to primary. His many mnemonics for remembering information, creative and enthused presentations and warmth of interaction have ensured the girls thoroughly enjoyed their library lessons. All girls know not to be a ‘button popper’ and the importance of a ribbon and wearing one’s uniform with pride. With grace and humour he has set standards of compassion and consideration with the introduction of the ‘manners matter’ poster and actions. Yet, he encourages the girls to engage robustly, with humour and energy, as demonstrated on Year 5 camp when leading the way in climbing through the wombat hole and ascending Mt Kosciuszko with Year 6.

Stuart’s knowledge of curriculum and incredible attention to detail have ensured we passed the Board of Studies’ registration with 100% compliance on two consecutive occasions. Yet it is his capacity to promote and support innovative teaching practices, analyse data and continually strive for excellence that has enabled the teaching and learning in the Junior School to be so highly regarded within and beyond our school community. He is the master of organisation with assemblies, events and the daily running of the Junior School happening so efficiently and effectively under his direction.

With great good humour, a genuine interest in the wellbeing of all and a deep, deep pool of empathy, Stuart has been able to so well affirm, support and encourage us all. He is renowned for his kind gestures of meals, thoughtful gifts and generosity of time just when most needed. His capacity to listen, find a middle ground and be solution-focused are most impressive skills that have been so very much appreciated by all who have had the good fortune to work and collaborate with him.

Thus we must put aside our selfish desire to keep Stuart in our midst and recognise that he is very ready to lead his own Junior School with commitment, determination and vision. Kambala is indeed most fortunate and Mr Coppin goes with our warmest congratulations and every good wish.

Six outstanding years of leadership, service and exemplary practice

The entire Abbotsleigh community warmly congratulates Stuart Coppin on his appointment as Head of Junior School at Kambala where we know he will continue to lead with aspiration and compassion, writes Sally Ruston, Head of Junior School.
Tapestry of Sound

What began as an experimental music lesson in Year 10 blossomed into a fabulous concert at the Opera House, writes Royna McNamara, Head of Music.

My inspiration for the Tapestry of Sound concert stemmed from my belief that music can open our hearts and minds in extraordinary ways. I wanted to push the boundaries musically by encouraging the students to take risks and to think and perform in innovative ways. By selecting an eclectic mix of musical genres I wanted to create our own ‘tapestry of sound’.

To prepare for this concert, 120 musicians spent a weekend at the Collaroy Centre. Sitting quietly in the tranquil setting of the Chapel, looking out into the natural bush setting and listening to the sounds of Australian birds inspired the girls to create what was to become our Australian Tapestry. This student-led and inspired collaborative composition commenced as an experimental lesson in a Year 10 Music classroom. It grew organically as students experimented with improvised sounds, exploring new ways of using their voices and bodies to produce a narrative of sound. To hear this gentle wave of sound spread through the Opera House was truly mesmerising and very special indeed as the students took complete ownership of this performance.
By selecting an eclectic mix of musical genres I wanted to create our own ‘tapestry of sound’.

For the musicians, this concert required great commitment and dedication as the music selected was of a professional standard and required many hours of rehearsal. Working with professional musicians at the music camp lifted the performance level enormously and gave the students the incentive to reach their goal of performing in the premiere performance venue in Australia. The first notes performed in the Opera House at the rehearsal resounded with clarity and confidence and there was an air of excitement when the timpani sounded for the opening Gloria. It was clear that this was going to be an exciting moment in the life of the School.

Music is a powerful force and can reach into the innermost part of our being. My hope is that by making music together in the magnificent Opera House we will have ignited a love of music that will be remembered for years to come.
And the rain came down and the floods came up and the rain came down and the floods came up and the Chapel on the hill stood firm... The Chapel was dedicated on 24 April 1965 as a memorial chapel to those who served in the Great Wars. On 22 April 2015, amid the worst storms seen in Sydney for many years, we gathered to celebrate its 50th anniversary. Weeks before I had chosen the Bible Verse to open the service; I had no idea how apt it would be.

Old girls, present students and staff found ourselves protected from the Sydney storms in the refuge of the Chapel where our theme was rejoicing. Of course the Psalmist speaks not of a building nor of rain but of the refuge found in God himself. Yet the Chapel is a physical reminder that the foundational faith of our school is one which proclaims the God who sends his Son that we might find refuge in him and have joy into eternity.

The service brought together many generations for whom the Chapel has been a place to meet with God and each other. Previous headmistress Mrs Kathleen McCredie was interviewed by Mrs Judith Poole and shared memories of being a student and bringing coins to go toward the building of the Chapel. The theme of rejoicing from the school reading was spoken on by Mrs Robyn Claydon, former deputy headmistress, and her granddaughter Miss Georgia Barker, former student and Chapel prefect.

Georgia shared her many experiences of rejoicing at Abbotsleigh but at the centre of them all was the growth of her faith. She said, ‘I rejoice over the Christian education that the school provides. This is shown in many ways as it lies at the heart of the school. I am thankful for the devotions in assembly, weekly chapel services, Cru each Wednesday lunchtime, Christian Studies classes, the charity supported each year, among many other things. All of these aspects helped me to grow in my faith and shaped me into the person I am today. My prayer is that the Gospel will always remain at the heart of Abbotsleigh.’

Rejoicing in the rain

Nothing could dampen the spirits of those who celebrated the 50th anniversary of our Chapel, writes School Chaplain, Jenni Stoddart

‘Let all who take refuge in you be glad; let them ever sing for joy. Spread your protection over them, that those who love your name may rejoice in you.’ Psalm 5:11
Rev Ian Millican and Mrs Poole unveiled a plaque dedicating the stained glass windows in the Chapel. Fittingly a new window had been installed. It is in the Chancel and depicts the Lord Jesus through symbols including the lion and the lamb. The windows were dedicated with a prayer that summed up the mood of the service and echoed Georgia’s prayer for her school. Rev Millican prayed on our behalf: ‘With joyous and grateful hearts we dedicate these two new windows to Your honour and glory. May the symbols of the Lord Jesus in these windows speak to those who will hear Your Word in this place.’

Rejoicing in the rain was the perfect way to acknowledge 50 years of the Memorial Chapel and all it represents to our school.
Birthdays are always special occasions at Abbotsleigh and our 130th birthday celebration was a most remarkable day. Birthdays give us the opportunity to reflect on the past, celebrate the present and look forward to the future. We did all three things in grand style and in our brand new Sports Precinct on 20 July 2015.

The significance of our precious past was evident in many ways on the birthday. Visitors had the opportunity to walk past our new ‘Wall of Fame’, which recognises those girls and staff who have represented Australia in the sporting field over the past 130 years. A digital photo montage of sport over the decades at Abbotsleigh reminded us of the long-standing commitment to outstanding sportsmanship that has been a constant feature of the Abbotsleigh community. During the assembly we also met nine of our girls who represent a fourth or fifth-generation involvement in our community. To hear the stories of great-great-grandmothers who lived and learnt at Abbotsleigh reminded each of us of our rich heritage.

The day was also a wonderful celebration of the present and the gift of a brand new sports facility was the highlight. Entering the new hall for the first time it was an opportunity to take a very big breath. History was made as all girls from Kindergarten to Year 12 gathered together in the one school facility. To have more than 1,300 girls and more than 100 staff seated in the hall and still only cover two of the three courts was a sobering moment. The facility was officially opened by the Minister for Sport, the Hon Sussan Ley, blessed by the Bishop Chris Edwards and supported by our Council Chair Rev Ian Millican and our Headmistress Mrs Judith Poole. We are accustomed to having song, cake and gifts at our School birthdays but to hear the School Song ring out from within this the new Sports Precinct and to stand within one of the most beautiful birthday gifts ever celebrated by the School was a very special moment.

And then to the future. One of the most wonderful aspects of the birthday was the energetic and skilful sports showcase put together by our sporting girls from Junior School and Senior School. More than one hundred girls participated in a montage of movement, competition and skill that illustrated

Over the years the subjects our girls could study grew in number, as well as the exciting ways in which they were implemented, with STEAM continuing to have a special role at Abbotsleigh. In 1960, Physics and Chemistry labs and new Art rooms were built. The subjects our girls could study grew in number, as well as the exciting ways in which they were implemented, with STEAM continuing to have a special role at Abbotsleigh. In 1960, Physics and Chemistry labs and new Art rooms were built. Over the years the subjects our girls could study grew in number, as well as the exciting ways in which they were implemented, with STEAM continuing to have a special role at Abbotsleigh. In 1960, Physics and Chemistry labs and new Art rooms were built. Over the years the subjects our girls could study grew in number, as well as the exciting ways in which they were implemented, with STEAM continuing to have a special role at Abbotsleigh. 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the diversity of sport at Abbotsleigh and gave a vivid demonstration of how the new facility will be enjoyed in the years to come. Some of the highlights included basketball, rhythmic gymnastics, badminton and dance, all framed by the skill of Junior School girls on scooters. It was fun, fast and impressive. This was only topped by the efficient exit of the entire school community to the new all-weather field, where all our girls danced in house colours to Let’s Move. As the overhead drone captured the moment, the enormous size of the new facility was clearly evident.

Our wonderful new Sports Precinct is a tangible reminder of the importance of our heritage, the excitement of our present and the possibilities for the future at Abbotsleigh. Happy 130th birthday!
Well, what an event! Sold out, full of fun, energy and generosity from our school community. The fourth annual Leather and Laces Sports Lunch was held at The Establishment, Sydney, on 21 August with more than 200 guests joining together to raise funds for the new Sports Precinct.

Well-known sports journalist Rebecca Wilson hosted the luncheon and the witty Stuart Gregor ran the live auction and the innovative Bat, Ball, Boots game. The panel line-up was exceptional with Raelene Boyle, Nick Farr-Jones, Kurt Fearnley and Phil Waugh providing lively discussion about their sporting careers.

Raising close to our goal of $100,000, the lunch was a huge success. Already there is a lot of anticipation for the 2016 event. Our sincere thanks to all supporters, donors and attendees – you made this the best Leather and Laces Sports Lunch yet.
To celebrate the opening of the new sports facilities, we invite you to commemorate your personal links with Abbotsleigh by making a gift with a difference.

An opportunity is available for you to make a 100% tax deductible gift to the Building Fund to support the building of the Sports Hall. We will honour your support of the construction of the Sports Hall with commemorative plaques.

Be part of the legacy

To discuss your gift, please contact Danielle Cotter Development Manager on:
(02) 9473 7738
or cotterd@abbotsleigh.nsw.edu.au

All donations of $1,500 and above to the Foundation’s Building Fund in support of the Sports Hall construction will be recognised on the Sports Hall’s Honour Board.
There is a great body of research highlighting the importance of silent, sustained reading across a variety of genres. Reading not only supports the development of literacy, it also promotes critical and creative thinking, cultural awareness and empathy (Krashen, 2004; McKearney & Mears, 2015; Miller, 2009).

The girls are challenged by the quantity, quality and variety of books. This year, 3,740 books were read between April and August across a wide range of genres, including awarded books, Christian books, classics, graphic novels, humorous books as well as non-fiction books and books about spies to name a few. This is the largest number of books read in the ARC since its inception.

This year, we introduced a new component to the ARC – the Lit-Tech Challenge, which inspired creative explorations of books using technology. Ipads were used across all grades, with Year 4 using the Puppet Pals program, Year 5 creating a book trailer and Year 6 using the Makers Empire app to create a 3D model of a character, which was subsequently printed on the 3D printer.

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I do believe something very magical can happen when you read a good book.

J.K. Rowling

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Most of the time I would find myself huddled next to one of the Challenge books wanting to know what is going to happen next.

- Year 5 student

Girls who completed all sections of the challenge celebrated with a ‘mystery author’ visit. All mystery authors have had a connection to Abbotsleigh, and in the past we have heard from Abbotsleigh Old Girls Wendy Blaxland (1967) and Belinda Murrell (1981), as well as Abbotsleigh staff members past and present, Jacqueline Harvey and Dr Irini Savvides.

In 2015, Abbotsleigh Old Girl Dr Kate Forsyth (Humphrey, 1984), internationally acclaimed author of books for children and adults, addressed the girls, inspiring them with her passion for reading. Kate shared how she became an avid reader at a young age while spending time in hospital, being transported to different worlds through the magic of reading. The girls were thrilled to receive a personally signed certificate to celebrate their reading success.

100 days of learning

On Monday 27 July the Kindergarten girls celebrated a very memorable day... their 100th day of Kindergarten at Abbotsleigh, writes Gillian Lynch, Kindergarten Teacher

Since the beginning of the year each class has been ticking off the school days on a calendar, all the way up to 100 days. Each morning, this led to maths activities using a number chart and incorporated games such as skip counting by 2s, 5s and 10s, as well as posing problem solving questions such as how many days left until the 100th day. After much counting, the special day finally arrived.

To start the festivities, girls shared different collections of 100 things that they had brought in, including 100 buttons, 100 paper clips, 100 5c pieces and 100 pieces of pasta. All Kindergarten girls then got together to participate in some fun aerobic exercises to groovy music. They were bending, stretching, giggling and clapping on different sides of their bodies all whilst counting to 100.

Then the classes split into groups for rotating activity stations. Literacy activities included speaking into the iPad to record their favourite things to do in Kindergarten and jointly making a ‘Thankful Tree’ by discussing 100 things they were thankful for, writing them on paper leaves and adding them to the tree. Maths activities included making a 101 Dalmatian with only 100 spots, putting together a jigsaw puzzle from the 100 square and a multiplication task of sticking 10 fruit loops on 10 flowers. The day couldn’t go by without creating a special ‘100’ crown to wear.

To conclude the celebrations, the girls had a surprise visit from Zero the Hero, who talked about the importance of zero and its place value in large numbers. It was a wonderful day and the girls are looking forward to hundreds more days at Abbotsleigh.
ELC Director Shelly Laycock reflects on the lessons learned at this year’s Abbotsleigh Early Learning Conference

Abbotsleigh Early Learning hosted a very successful two-day conference in June this year, which focused on the infinite potential of children’s thinking and learning. More than 70 delegates attended from as far afield as Wee Waa in the north of the state to the Illawarra region in the south.

Experts from a wide range of fields shared their research on best practice along with some of our own highly skilled Abbotsleigh educators. Keynote speaker Dr Cathie Harrison spoke about the divide between teachers in prior-to-school settings and those in school settings, particularly in relation to increased teacher accountability and where the emphasis on literacy and numeracy dominates the educational agenda. If children matter most, she asked, how do we do things differently? How do we get play and content together? Play is the natural activity of the child and an integral part of the Early Learning Centre’s philosophy. It is through play that children make sense of their world, where they learn to socialise, problem-solve, discover their creativity and independence.

The second speaker, Niki Buchan, complemented Dr Harrison’s keynote speech. Ms Buchan is passionate about naturalistic learning and the importance of outdoor play and the benefits of risk. We talk about children as being capable and confident and the Early Years Learning Framework supports this notion. In this, dare I say, highly sanitised era we are depriving many children of experiencing risky play. Interesting, given that the majority of participants said their favourite memories as children involved being outdoors and without adults nearby.

There are six categories of risky play identified by Dr Sandseter (a professor of psychology at Queen Maud University in Norway): exploring heights; experiencing high speed; handling dangerous tools; being near dangerous elements (like fire or water); rough-and-tumble play (like wrestling); and wandering alone, away from adult supervision. Research demonstrates that protective playgrounds have the opposite of their intended effect: instead of making children feel safer and therefore braver, they actually make them more anxious and fearful.

Children like to be challenged and they need to be challenged physically to enhance their emotional wellbeing.

Dr Kristy Goodwin was our opening speaker on the Tuesday. Her research supports the notion that technology is changing the way that children’s brains are developing. Parents are under increasing pressure to provide their children with the latest app, but the neuroscience is telling us that children need ancestral parenting more. Dr Goodwin likened parents and early childhood educators to ‘brain architects’, as 90% of neural pathways are made in the first five years. If, she questioned, children are being handed technology to pacify, are we depriving them of self-regulation? She also touched on technology and its interference in enabling children to get a good night’s sleep. ‘Devices need to have a bedtime too,’ she said, ‘and that is at least 90 minutes prior to users’ bedtimes.’ This is good advice for adults and children alike.

Our final external speaker, Margaret Sims focused on children’s rights as an approach to planning in the early childhood setting. Her research has also looked at the neurobiological evidence that supports children’s need to feel safe and secure in order to learn.

Over the two days our delegates participated in a wide range of workshops run by Abbotsleigh staff. Shireen Ramjahn and Sarah Scott co-presented and highlighted how educators could effectively integrate technology in a meaningful way within the early years’ settings. This hands-on workshop explored the use of the iPad for animation and film making. The two presenters discussed and demonstrated how good quality apps could boost young learners’ creativity.

Abbotsleigh’s Marian Doull and Caroline Surendra explored the use of art materials and techniques as a means of creating an environment that facilitates true, individual enquiry, while Hazel Grove workshoped an inquiry from inception through to completion. Delegates were encouraged to examine how to build on children’s interests in order to develop meaningful possibilities that would extend the child’s understanding of their world and the educator’s appreciation of the child’s thinking.

Helen Watkins and Claire Drury conducted a workshop that focused on the use of the Abbotsleigh Centre for Environmental Education for four-year-olds. Thought-provoking discussion took place as delegates considered ways in which to maximise outdoor learning. This workshop linked closely with Ms Buchan’s presentation on risk-taking and developing problem-solving skills.
Throughout the year, all Year 5 girls have been involved in a number of visits to a local nursing home. Prior to the commencement of this program, for some, these visits would appear to be nothing more than a few hours away from school; however, these perceptions were short lived. Those who were lucky enough to assist on these excursions saw that the few hours spent with the elderly were moments of pure magic.

Before their first visit, the girls were actively engaged in discussions about what this opportunity might afford them and what they could expect when they met their elderly buddy. They drew on their personal experiences to offer insight into how the residents might look, speak, walk and confronting enough for some, breathe.

From the very first visit, it was remarkable to witness the almost instant transformation of many personalities. Those girls who were naturally loud and bubbly became timid and quiet, so as not to upset or frighten their buddy. It was equally joyful to observe those girls that are usually shy, transform into the mothering type, propping their elderly buddy's pillow up, while offering to sing and recite poetry for their entertainment.

Through these visits the girls learnt how to acknowledge and deal with new and mixed emotions in a calm and mature manner. These visits have also helped the girls to develop caring and nurturing relationships, and of course learn not only responsibility, but the value of appreciation. It is with no doubt the girls have come away with experiences and memories that will last a lifetime.

In the words of Kalu Ndokuwe Kalu, *The things you do for yourself are gone when you are gone, but the things you do for others remains as your legacy.*

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A walk around the Junior School reveals collections of scooters and helmets outside classrooms awaiting their eager riders. Inside the classroom girls are encouraged to be brave and try new things as a regular part of learning. The opportunity to learn by doing is also something the girls on scooters are able to achieve as they explore the physical environment around the School.

Girls on scooters are engaging in problem solving, making judgements of space and enhancing their gross motor coordination as they navigate their way around the pathways. The social opportunities provided by scooters should not be underestimated. Groups of girls are often seen congregating around the Rainbow Walk. These groups are fluid in membership and provide a common sense of purpose. There are no restrictions as to who can join in and no assigned hierarchical roles that can make participation challenging.

Braveness of spirit was on show during the opening of the Sports Precinct as our Kindergarten girls sped around the Sports Hall to Born to be Wild. Being a brave learner involves taking calculated risks and then reflecting on what was learnt not only from the result achieved, but in the process. Scooters allow for brave exploration of the physical environment just as our teachers support brave learning within the classroom.

Although the year is over, girls on scooters continue to be a joyful and energetic part of the playground scene, writes Heather McWhannell, Infants Coordinator.

An opportunity to serve the community while being pushed beyond their comfort zones has seen Year 5 girls grow in social awareness and compassion, writes Rebecca Burgmann, Year 5 Teacher.
A calculated perspective on art

There’s more to many artworks than meets the eye, writes Senior School Maths teacher Kim Allan, especially when a Year 7 Maths class starts applying mathematical and geometrical concepts to what’s on display.

Year 7 was keen to visit the Grace Cossington Smith Gallery, especially because it was showing an exhibition that included artworks from their year and Year 8. It was the perfect opportunity for 7M7 to go to the gallery, view their own creations, and put their Maths to work.

This term the girls have been studying various number and geometry concepts. They were given the challenge of using the artworks to find as many applications as they could for fractions, decimals, rates, quadrilaterals, as well as designing their own questions incorporating their learning. Some wanted to know the rate at which the panda could eat bamboo, how fast a cat could run, what types of quadrilaterals were in various artworks and the ratio of negative to positive space in several portraits. They estimated the area taken up by the frog tiles and then calculated the percentage error based on their actual measurements of the dimensions of the display. They also thought about two ways by which they could estimate how many dots on one of the portraits.

The students were asked to identify their favourite artwork and explain what it was they liked about it; find mathematical ideas contained within specific artworks; and solve some puzzling problems related to various works in the exhibition. In addition, they had to do some calculations to assist Mrs Faith, the curator of the gallery, in planning the layout of the exhibition.

Feedback from the students was very positive: “We loved coming to the gallery and combining Maths and Art in a practical way”; “We really enjoyed making up our own questions”; “It was great looking at our own artwork and finding out how we can apply our learning in Maths classes.”

We are looking forward to another opportunity to combine Maths and Art in the gallery.
Judith Wright was a prophetic poet, environmentalist and campaigner for Aboriginal land rights. Born in Armidale in 1915, Judith was brought up on her family’s sheep station until at the age of 14 when she was enrolled in New England Girls School. Here her love for poetry grew, as she realised the immense comfort and solace it offered her. At 19 years old, Judith gained admission to Sydney University where she studied philosophy, psychology and English.

However at the outbreak of the Second World War, Judith was brought back home, where she developed a huge attachment to the land and its people. Judith used the poetic medium to warn against environmental destruction and advocate for recognition of the injustices towards Aboriginal people. Two Dreamtimes, At Cooloolah and The Dark Ones are just three examples of her poems, part of a prolific oeuvre of poetry and short stories.

For more than half a century, the poetry of Judith Wright provided Australians with words to explore the spiritual dimension of their land, its people and history. She had a deep connection with the iconic Australian landform Tamborine Mountain, located in southeast Queensland.

She and her partner, the philosopher Jack McKinney, moved to the mountain in the 1940s where their daughter Meredith was born. The natural world, so abundant on Tamborine, was always central in Judith’s poetry. She wrote poems about that world and those forests, and the powerful, symbolic effect it had upon her, describing them as ‘timeless with an intimate depth of meaning’.

She was extremely moved by the Australian poet and political activist Oodgeroo Noonuccal. They spent time together on Tambourine Mountain, writing poetry to one another. It was this poetic exchange that in turn sparked the conversation of Aboriginal land rights throughout their communities.

Jack died in 1966, and Judith eventually moved south to NSW in 1975. Together with Nugget Coombs, she helped form the Aboriginal Treaty Committee, an organisation dedicated to helping spread the word about the need for land rights and a treaty among white Australians. In the later years of her life, Judith spent time with her daughter Meredith, in between part-time lecturing at various Australian universities. She passed away in Canberra, on 25 June 2000, at 85 years of age, yet her legacy lives on, running deep in the spirit of our Australian literature and landscape.

In many ways Judith Wright was a role model of a great independent woman. She wasn’t the typical loud leader, but rather a naturally shy and introverted person who, although having a quiet demeanour, was incredibly strong willed and determined in her beliefs. One of the readings that resounded during the House Captain’s speech earlier this year, was this one: ‘Feelings or emotions are the universal language and are to be honoured. They are the authentic expression of who you are at your deepest place.’

Judith Wright was an individualistic, strong, modest woman, all traits which would have been taken into account when Abbotsleigh chose to give her name to one of our Houses.
A proud history of boarding

The popularity of boarding at Abbotsleigh since its earliest days has seen the need for continual growth and change, writes Julie Daly, School Archivist.

Abbotsleigh has a long, proud history of boarders – or House girls, as they were initially called. Our first location at North Sydney had boarders, and our records show that a small nucleus of House girls made the transfer from our second site at Parramatta to Wahroonga, when we opened on this site in 1898 with 13 boarders and ten day girls.

The girls at Wahroonga made their home in School House. This house was purpose-built as per Miss Clarke’s instructions: downstairs held the dining room, kitchen and classrooms; upstairs the private spaces. As the need for more rooms arose, School House grew in size, but eventually the boarders grew too numerous, and a second house was required: Wollumbin, located just across the highway (then known as Lane Cove Road), near the steps of today’s overpass.

Wollumbin was leased in 1914 by Abbotsleigh’s second Headmistress, Margaret Murray. This new property allowed for more rooms to be allocated for teaching, and also offered a new tennis court and a flat lawn, where physical culture classes could be held. For the first time in Abbotsleigh’s history there was inter-house rivalry – School House Reds and Wollumbin Blues.

Even with all the new spaces offered by Wollumbin, we had need to use Wollumbin’s neighbouring property Terranora for even more House girls. Terranora was the home of a local GP, Dr Gother Robert Carlisle Clarke – interestingly, the brother of one of Abbotsleigh’s first male pupils, Mordaunt Lindsay Clarke, and both foundation students at Shore. An overflow of House girls lived in Terranora with Dr Clarke’s housekeeper until 1917/18, after Dr Clarke’s death in Belgium during the First World War, and the house and medical practice were taken over by another doctor.

In 1925, the lease on Wollumbin was terminated after the 1924 purchase of a property belonging to an old Abbotsleigh family, the Mander-Joneses. This house, known as both Sherbrooke and Boonara, was subsequently called Murray House in honour of our second Headmistress. The relocation of the girls from Wollumbin to Murray House was welcomed as it removed the division of the School over two properties and across an increasingly busy main road, which the girls had to cross several times a day for classes and meals.
Murray House was demolished in 1963 to make way for Abbotsleigh’s Chapel – although a remnant of the Mander-Jones family home has remained in the form of Highway House, the small, long house on the side of the Chapel, which housed the staff when the house was owned by the Mander-Jones family.

Whilst other boarding houses have either been purchased, purpose-built or indeed repurposed and still remain part of the landscape – Vindin, Read, (new) Murray, Lynton, Poole, McCredie and Wheeldon – others have been lost to the past.

Marian Clarke Wing was opened in 1929 and was built to complement School House. The upstairs rooms in this wing were designed as dormitories, as opposed to the small rooms in School House. These rooms are now used as offices and contain the Learning Support Department.

Dodgson House, located directly behind the Junior School, opened in 1973 as a boarding house, initially as a residence for 10 Sixth Years. By the following year the youngest boarders were living there, but it was demolished in 1985 to make way for the new Sydney to Newcastle freeway. The house took its name from the previous owners who had a familial connection to Charles Dodgson, more popularly known as Alice in Wonderland’s Lewis Carroll.

Hirst Cottage was opened and named in honour of our fifth Headmistress, Ruth Hirst, who returned to the School in 1985 to open the house. The boarders moved from this cottage in 2010 when Wheeldon House was opened.
The extended family that is the Year 9 boarders’ cohort works hard, plays hard and enjoys each other’s company, writes Year 9 Boarding Coordinator, Sarah Ward.

Year 9 have a hectic daily schedule in McCredie House, but they do it all with a smile. Many are up at 6 am to get off to sports training and orchestra practice. They each clean up the house kitchen and laundry for a whole week once a term, and keep it tidy daily by cleaning up after themselves. In their free time in the afternoons they take advantage of the extensive AbbSchool programs and participate in activities such as boarder fitness; stretch, flex relax classes; Drama Club; contemporary or urban dance classes; and tennis lessons. At 6 pm they trot up to dinner in the Dining Hall with Year 10 and 12. They even clean up their own plates and wipe down the dining tables.

"Year 9 boarding is great, it’s like a giant sleepover all the time!"

Olivia Taylor, 9P

At 6.30 pm they begin two hours of prep or head off to the library for tutoring. The girls work hard and play hard, keeping themselves constantly busy.

When they do have downtime they relish it. Hanging out in each other’s rooms, playing music and watching movies. They bake biscuits, cakes and brownies to share with each other and always save a slice for the staff. They love toasted cheese sandwiches, cups of tea and yoghurt by the gallon. At bedtime they hand in phones and laptops to ensure they get a good night’s sleep, before starting all over again in the morning.

On weekends they enjoy a peaceful breakfast in the house and several times a term go on group outings. Recently the girls went skating at the Macquarie Centre ice rink and had a great time shopping as well.

"There is so much emotional and academic support around the house, and sharing clothes and fashion advice is great too!"

Athena Kam, 9R

The boarders especially love it when parents and families visit the house, and enjoy showing the day girl visitors around. The girls delight in celebrating their birthdays together, often buying each other small gifts at Wahroonga shops and making cards. The Year 9 boarders share all of the ups and downs of growing up and experience so much together every day. It is a pleasure to be their Boarding Coordinator.
Year 10 is a major transitional stage in the life of the girls in McCredie House, and Rebecca Jones, Year 10 Boarding Coordinator, has enjoyed every step of watching her girls mature into wonderful young women.

As they embarked upon their work experience week, exploring possible future careers, they returned to the boarding house visibly enlightened by the independent future within their grasp. With glorious stories of working in hospitals, veterinary clinics, law firms, rugby union headquarters and some even choosing to experience the working life on their properties, the girls found a new level of determination towards their own personal goals.

It was only a short moment after the girls returned from work experience when the call for leadership candidates was announced for the upcoming Abbotsleigh Boarder Council elections. It was no surprise to me to see 27 girls apply for the leadership role and it was definitely no easy task choosing the six girls that would take on the responsibility. It was with great pride that I received such wonderful feedback from the Head of Boarding about the impressive leadership skills that the girls exhibited leading up to the elections, but the decision needed to be made and the six girls, based on peer votes and staff reviews, were selected.

It was only a few short weeks until the Service Committee demonstrated their commitment to raising funds for the Royal Flying Doctor Service through setting up a stall on Sunday morning and selling a variety of cakes and slices hand made by the boarding community. With more $300 raised for the RFDS, it was most definitely a success for the newly appointed Service Committee leader.

Although these organised events are important, I feel as though I should also mention the wonderful initiative and leadership shown by other girls that seek to make life in the boarding house more enjoyable for the others. On a recent Wednesday evening the girls had requested that they be able to have a special breakfast in the house. ‘Something yummy’ were their words. With this in mind they made a list of ingredients that they would like and on a (surprisingly) warm winter Sunday morning, six of the Year 10 boarders woke up early to meet me in the kitchen to begin cooking the feast. It was not too long before the girls had requested that I depart the kitchen and that they be allowed to take control. Within an hour there were pancakes with strawberries and cream; bacon, eggs, mushrooms and grilled tomato; and also fruit salad with Greek yoghurt. With Mother Nature delivering some much appreciated sunshine, it was indeed the perfect Sunday morning for all of the girls in the boarding house.

This is the girls’ final year in McCredie House and although I will be saddened to see them depart for the grandeur of Wheeldon House, I know that these girls will continue to shine bright with their courage, initiative and outstanding leadership skills.
Bridget Goldsmith's diary

Join Bridget Goldsmith (Year 10) as she lives a typical day as an Abbotsleigh boarder.

Tuesday 25 August

7 am  Wake up to the familiar voice of our Housemistress, Ms Jones. Get dressed, brush my hair and make my bed (perfectly, of course). Empty the bin, turn the light off and open the curtains.

7.30 am  Make my way up to the Dining Hall. Drop my bag off in the foyer with all the other Year 10 boarder bags.

7.35 am  Have the usual breakfast of Special K, Greek yoghurt, banana and honey, and a cup of English breakfast tea.

8.05 am  Leave the Dining Hall, collect bag, head up to the lockers to put my bag away. Grab my toothbrush and head into the Year 10 bathrooms (overcrowded as usual).

8.17 am  Head off to class.

11 am  Back to the Dining Hall for recess. Once again, the line is almost around the corner. Assorted muffins today (the only problem is that we are only allowed three each). Sit outside the foyer and have recess. As per usual, it is very clear when a boarder has left rubbish lying around. The paper wrappers could only belong to us.

11.25 am  Period 3.

12.45 pm  Tutor time.

1.15 pm  Lunch time (finally). Today it is chicken schnitzel, a clear favourite among we boarders! The line is staggeringly long. Ruth (our lovely kitchen lady) is constantly bringing out new trays of chicken and bread rolls, trying desperately to keep up with us. We all sit down in the Dining Hall to eat lunch. The radio is on and most of the boarding school stays in there during the entire lunch break.
2.05 pm  We eventually dawdle off to period 4.

3.30 pm  Back to our lockers to grab our bags and then to the boarding house. Once there, many girls head off to sport.

3.45 pm  Relax in the house. Make a birthday cake and watch a few episodes of Dance Moms.

5.50 pm  Dinner time in the Dining Hall. We have dinner with Years 9, 10 and 12 because there are two different dinner sittings. It is chicken curry with rice and baked sweet potatoes, which is quite good. Ice blocks for dessert.

6.25 pm  Walk back down to the house

6.30 pm  Start prep. Everyone is in their own rooms at their own desks.

7.25-7.35 pm  Break time. You can use your phone, go to the kitchen and make some food or a cup of tea.

8.30 pm  Prep finishes. Free time from now. I call my parents, have a shower and then relax and go to other people’s rooms.

9.20 pm  Phone and laptop hand-in time! I get marked off, then go to the bathroom to clean my teeth and then to my room to get ready for bed.

9.30 pm  Everyone is in their own rooms. If not, Ms Jones always finds a job for you to do.

9.30-10 pm  Quiet time in own rooms. I pack my bags for sport in the morning and get into bed.

10 pm  Lights out.
Boarding memories

The way we were...

After getting a glimpse into boarding life at Abbotsleigh today, read on to share a few memories of how it used to be.

'I remember sharing an upstairs dorm with my friends in Vindin House and talking after lights out as quietly as possible. Now we meet up regularly while we are on maternity leave nearly 25 years later, and the talking is nowhere near as quiet!'
Carly Hopgood (Price, 1996)

'Mashed potato and devon sausage on Sunday night before going to church!!!'
Anonymous

'Boarders' uniform dresses were a green serge tunic and fawn blouse (winter), a green dress with fawn collars (summer), a white dress for church on Sundays, a velveteen dress for special occasions (non-uniform), a green-and-white check dress as a going out uniform, yellow tunic and white shirt with black corded sash for sport. When these uniforms were sent to the laundry for washing, ironing and starching, they arrived back with so much starch that not only were they T-shaped, we had to actually push our hands through the sleeves to separate them.'
Gaye Doyle (Bullough, 1963)

'My first Sunday at Abbotsleigh in 1953 was memorable. We had attended St. Paul's church on Pearce's Corner in our white, church dresses. Afterwards we were told to take our rugs to the Top Oval and spend the day quietly reading. Well, three nine-year-old girls brought up on properties in north-western NSW became a little bored, and looking around, discovered The Glen, where we had a lot of fun playing 'bobbies and bushies', building cubbies and making lots of noise.

Of course, the mistress on duty found us, giving instructions that Miss Everett would like to see us immediately after Assembly on Monday morning. We waited in trepidation. Older boarders said we would be given detentions (we had to ask what that was!). Miss Everett towered above us and in her very English accent advised that on Sundays we were expected to observe the Sabbath quietly reading (preferably the Bible). She then said, “You dear little country girls, don’t do this again. Off you go.”
Anne Mulready (Croxon, 1959)

Early in senior school I at weekends sitting around our tartan rugs listening to our precious transistor radios and eating fruit out of our individual paper bags.
Judith Matheson (Baldry, 1964)
’I was a junior boarder for one year in 1968. Home was Killarney Station, a wheat/sheep property, ten hours’ drive northwest (no freeways back then). I can’t say I was happy boarding. I missed my family terribly and the boarding regime was very strict. So here is a more light hearted memory. Each girl was allowed to bring a blanket from home. On a nice day we would take our blankets outside on the lawn beneath the palm trees. Someone showed us how to thread the palm nuts onto string and make bracelets and necklaces. I even sent one as a gift to my aunt in the country!’

Jane Suranyi (Buchanan, 1977)

’I was a boarder at the young age of seven. On Sundays we had to wear a special green velvet dress with a lace collar for Chapel. A regular Sunday meal was tripe in white sauce. I really struggled to get it down but was made eat it. Consequently, on the way back to my room I vomited all down my velvet dress and down a big flight of concrete stairs. I was never made to eat tripe again, and I never have.’

Kris Sawatske (Phypers, 1965)

Having left wartime Britain in July 1940, after disasters and adventures we arrived as boarders at Murray House in 1941. It took time to acclimatise to the rules and rituals of our new environment. The final challenge came on our last day when we dared to climb the water tower. We waited till after lights out and all went quiet, descended by the newly installed fire escape from the verandah dormitory, ran to the tower by the laundry, hearts racing, and climbed to the staging, walked round it and tried to locate the harbour. Then silently back to bed, undetected!

Esther Senbenn (Almond, 1946) and Diana Abram (Almond, 1948)

’In the 1980s, we staged the great tuna sandwich strike. No one collected their lunch one tuna sandwich day to get our message across. We didn’t like them!’

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Esther Senbenn (Almond, 1946) and Diana Abram (Almond, 1948)

’I came to Abbotsleigh as a boarder at the age of 12 in 1941. I was assigned to School House, where the Matron ruled with military discipline. She was tall and skinny and wore a nursing sister’s veil. Her nickname was ‘Hag’; a stern, no nonsense person who immediately struck fear into the hearts of all newcomers. After a couple of years I had a dose of flu and discovered to my amazement that there was another person inside that Hag. She nursed us with all a tenderness and practical care that could not have been surpassed by our own mothers!

Marguerite Francis (Gilford, 1945)

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Jane Suranyi (Buchanan, 1977)
Meet Sofi, Abbotsleigh’s youngest boarder

Sofi, the Boarding School’s ninth Guide Dog puppy has recently taken up residence in Wheeldon House. Sofi is a nine-week-old yellow Labrador with a keen sense of fun and a drive to work hard. She has adapted easily to the boarding environment and is confident and very friendly. She loves nothing better than being at a boarder’s feet and no amount of noise will deter her from communal activity.

These early signs of assurance and ease in crowds are excellent indicators of potential success for when she starts her official training as a Guide Dog at the age of 14 months. Until that time, Sofi will be trained in basic obedience, socialisation and lead work by the boarding community. Over the past weeks, Sofi has been busy learning how to ‘sit’, ‘stay’, ‘drop’, ‘come’ and ‘wait’.

The senior boarders, under the direction of Allysia Heness-Pugh, Deputy Head of Boarding, are moving onto more advanced obedience training with Sofi, involving ‘upstand’ and ‘heel’. When Sofi gets older, she will go for longer walks in the local community, learning how to interact with people and other dogs in public.

Sofi has single and group training with a Guide Dogs Officer each month to ensure she is progressing well.

Our new Guide Dog puppy is settling in well, writes Allysia Heness-Pugh, Head of Boarding.

The little yellow Labrador is learning new skills and winning lots of hearts.

Sofi is a nine-week-old yellow Labrador with a keen sense of fun and a drive to work hard.

The boarders’ service learning project is in its eighth year and Abbotsleigh has produced a number of successful Guide Dogs. Guide Dogs NSW/ACT breeding program has been running for the past three years and Sofi is the second purpose-bred dog the school has puppy-raised. Boarding students and staff have noticed the difference in the engagement and temperament of the purpose-bred pups in the boarding house. Sofi has an obvious drive for command work and enjoys the stimulation of learning new steps.
The Marian Clarke Society sells the Abbotsleigh camellia to generate funds for the Camellia Award, which assists the Headmistress in providing financial support to students to further pursue an area in which they already excel. The Camellia Fund is administered by the Abbotsleigh Foundation.

Miss Ruth Hirst, fifth Headmistress of Abbotsleigh, encouraged the girls to have ‘faith in little things’. With this saying in mind, the Marian Clarke Society was inspired to repropagate 1,000 cuttings of the prize winning Abbotsleigh camellia in 2010.

Cultivated from the Camellia Japonica, the Abbotsleigh camellia has an exceptionally large, white flower with a double layer of petals and grew from a chance seedling in the garden of Cecil Blumentals in St Ives. It is a medium to large, evergreen shrub with attractive, glossy, dark green, thick foliage, a medium, pure white, informal double flower, and a small group of yellow tipped white stamens tucked away in the centre. The camellia flowers in mid-winter.

Order your camellia today to take advantage of this opportunity to grow a piece of Abbotsleigh’s history in your own garden or give it as a very special gift – camellias are $15 per plant and can be collected from the School via Mrs Jean Ardley, Development Manager.

Plants ordered must be picked up at Abbotsleigh. If ordering from outside Sydney note that postage is only possible for five plants at a time at an additional cost of $30 per plant.

Abbotsleigh camellia order form – $15 per camellia

I would like ___________ plants. Total amount payable $ ________________

Your name __________________________________________ Email address _______________________________________

Phone __________________________ Mobile phone _______________________

Method of payment

□ Cash □ Cheque - payable to Abbotsleigh Foundation □ MasterCard □ Visa □ Amex

Card holder’s name ___________________________________________ Expiry date __ / __

Card number __ __ __ __ | __ __ __ __ | __ __ __ __ | __ __ __ __ Card holder’s signature _______________________

Note: You can pay online for the camellia. Go to www.abbotsleigh.nsw.edu.au > online services > online payments, click on Development Office and select the item from the drop down list. Plants must be collected from Abbotsleigh. You will be contacted via email with instructions for pick up.

Enquiries: Jean Ardley, Development Officer Phone 9473 7791 Email ardleyj@abbotsleigh.nsw.edu.au
Around Abbotsleigh

Thank you to all the Abbotsleigh families who support the school community in so many ways. It has been another wonderful year with so many fantastic group functions and school events.

Year 12 Mother Daughter Breakfast

Year 12 Father Daughter Breakfast

Pink Mothers’ Day Breakfast

Transition, Year 2 and Year 6 mothers and daughters had a beautiful breakfast on Bundarra Lawn in the Junior School. Funds were raised for the McGrath Foundation.

APA Dinner Dance

Parents enjoyed dinner and dancing the night away to parent band Gluteus Maximus at Pymble Golf Club. A special cake made by one of our Year 9 students marked the School’s birthday.
Year 7/8
Mother Daughter Breakfast

The girls enjoyed breakfast with their mums while hearing from Mrs Donna Moffatt, Director of Learning Innovation speak about her special journey as a mother.

Boarding lunch in Boorowa

Past, current and future Abbotsleigh families were welcomed at a special lunch held in June at the property of the Merriman family in Boorowa.

Spring Ridge dinner

Past, current and future Abbotsleigh families were welcomed at a dinner held in July at the property of the Brownhill family in Spring Ridge.

Kindergarten and Year 3
Father Daughter Breakfast

We celebrated Fathers’ Day with egg and bacon rolls and hot chocolate.
Show support for academic excellence

Prizes currently available for endowment:

**Senior School prizes**
- AbbSearch Student Independent Research Investigation Prize
- Ancient History in Year 12
- Cynthia Bidencope Prize for Art in the Senior College
- Debating in Senior College
- Extension History in Year 12
- General Mathematics in Year 12
- Improvement in English in Year 12
- Information Processes and Technology in Year 12
- Mathematics (2 Unit) in Year 12 (or Advanced Mathematics)
- Music Composition Prize
- Rosemary Goulding Prize for Languages in Year 12
- Winifred Gunther Prize for Physics in Year 12

**Junior School prizes**
- Captain of Junior School
- Citizenship and Effort in Year 3
- Citizenship and Effort in Year 5
- Citizenship in Year 1
- Margaret Read Prize for Citizenship and Effort in Year 4
- Science in Year 6
- Sports and Sportsmanship in Year 6

If you would like more information on prize endowment please contact Yvette Vignando, Director of Development on 9473 7737.

Speech Day is one of the most memorable events of the year as we together celebrate our girls’ efforts and achievements. Each year many generous members of our school community encourage excellence by endowing a Speech Day prize.

Donors endow prizes for many reasons: celebrating achievement and inspiring others to reach great heights; acknowledging personal experience of their daughters’ or granddaughters’ experiences at Abbotsleigh; being particularly passionate about an area of study or simply taking the opportunity to give back to Abbotsleigh.

We are extremely grateful to our current and past prize endowers who have shown their commitment to encouraging each girl to reach her potential and strive for personal and academic excellence.

A gift of $1,000 to the Foundation endows a prize for five years. A gift of $5,000 to the Foundation will endow a prize in perpetuity with the option to name the prize. All prize endowers are offered VIP seating at Speech Day and each endowment is acknowledged in the prize citation in the Speech Day program.
Salute to drama queens

A family passion for Drama led Malcolm and Penelope Thompson to endow the Year 12 Drama prize

When we were choosing a school for our daughters we were under the illusion that no school would suit all three girls. Abbotsleigh, our first choice, quickly dispelled that perception. There is; however, one personality trait our daughters all share: their passion and commitment to Drama. We cheered on the sporting sidelines, listened at recitals and happily attended lunches and dinners, but it was undoubtedly within the Drama Studio and various performance spaces in and out of the School that engaged our emotions most. We wanted to acknowledge not just our girls’ common interest and individual successes, but highlight the benefits that studying Drama often cultivates: memory recall, public speaking practice, confidence, team work and managing disappointment; all great tools for life. It is only those involved in HSC Drama – students (and their families) and staff – who truly appreciate the time, effort and personal sacrifice required to achieve success.

It is for this reason we feel honoured to endow the Year 12 Drama prize. We understand the numerous hours the recipient of this prize has spent working with her performance group, her teacher and the countless hours spent on practising, drafting, writing and rehearsing.

We think that is worth acknowledging and endowing.

Investing in future generations

Leaving a gift in your will is a very personal decision, but is one that will make a positive impact on the next generation.

The Abbotsleigh Foundation invests testimonial gifts prudently and ensures the utmost level of care, sensitivity and respect for your wishes.

What kinds of bequests can be made?

You may choose to make:

A specific bequest: a specific sum of money, real estate, or property such as shares, jewellery, art or antiques;

A percentage bequest: a certain percentage of your estate;

A whole estate bequest;

A residual bequest: this is what is left in your estate after all other gifts and costs have been deducted.

If you would like to discuss making a bequest to Abbotsleigh, please contact Yvette Vignando, Director of Development on 02 9473 7737.
Year 12 Indigenous scholarship student and boarder Tileah McGrady’s Visual Arts major work Royal Descent captured the hearts and minds of all who attended this year’s Showcase. Her self-portraits are simply breathtaking. They speak in depth of Australia’s history, yet present a delicate personal journey, by telling the story of how colonisation truly impacted Australia’s indigenous people.

‘Australian history is important to me as I am an Indigenous women from the Kamilaroi tribe. I always wanted my major work to be about Indigenous Australians and I had many ideas to begin with. After quite some time, I narrowed it down to this idea of white settlement and colonisation.’

Tileah’s tagline, ‘white Australia has a black history’ explores her personal and cultural experience of the first settlement in Australia. She used photography to capture the changing face between Indigenous Australians and white Australians as a consequence of the doctrine of Terra Nullius.

‘Our culture is now only 2% of Australia’s total population. It is believed that there are only 60 languages that remain ‘alive’ today. People from around this area know little or nothing about the language from our tribe. In fact, since white settlement there is now no-one from our tribe who speaks our language. This issue is important to me as it I am part of the oldest living culture in Australia, and I believe people should learn about, and understand more fully, our history and culture.’

Tileah’s artwork was inspired by two artists: photographer and film maker Cindy Sherman, and Indigenous Australian artist Christian Thompson. She was also greatly inspired by the styling of the iconic Queen of France, Marie Antoinette, for costuming, hair and positioning for her self-portraits.

‘I am a Yalari student at Abbotsleigh and I am so thankful for this life changing opportunity for education. I have been involved in a range of activities over the last six years of my secondary education, including sport and the arts.’

Tileah McGrady, Year 12, Indigenous scholar

The Abbotsleigh Foundation encourages the community to support the Scholarship Fund for the support of the wonderful and enriching Indigenous scholarship program at Abbotsleigh. Our Indigenous students contribute so much to our community while benefiting from the excellence in education. Our relationship with Yalari and our Indigenous students and families epitomises the Latin proverb ‘In teaching you will learn’. Please consider supporting an Indigenous scholarship student with a tax deductible gift at www.abbotsleigh.nsw.edu.au/donate or make an enquiry via the Director of Development, Yvette Vignando on 9473 7737, vignandoY@abbotsleigh.nsw.edu.au
Life after a Kathleen McCredie Scholarship

Abbotsleigh Old Girl Cassandra Durnan (2013) has enjoyed a rich experience post-secondary education, including a gap year as a Clinical Support Officer in the Theatres Department in her hometown at the Wagga Wagga Base Hospital and is now studying a Bachelor of Psychological Science at the University of New South Wales, residing at Philip Baxter College on campus.

How have you enjoyed your time post-Abbotsleigh?
I thoroughly enjoyed my gap year. It was great to get a taste of the workforce and what it was like working full time before commencing tertiary studies. My time at home after living away from home since I was 15 when I commenced boarding at Abbotsleigh, was incredibly refreshing. I had some really good quality family time and loved the experience living in a regional community again. I currently keep busy with all the extra-curricular activities and sporting events that happen at college and within the university.

What is one memory that you have from Abbotsleigh that you would like to share?
My fondest memory is definitely the experience of boarding. Especially at Abbotsleigh, where there is such a large boarding community. It is the perfect environment to make great friends; most of whom I am still great friends with today. I constantly think back and remember amazing memories and moments spent in the boarding house and how grateful I am to have had the opportunity and experience.

How has your education at Abbotsleigh impacted your life?
Without the Kathleen McCredie scholarship I would not have had the opportunity to experience schooling outside the Riverina; it has provided me with endless benefits. Attending Abbotsleigh and experiencing boarding has opened many doors for me in every aspect of life.
Cassandra Durnan, 2013, Kathleen McCredie scholar

The Kathleen McCredie Scholarship was initiated through a generous gift from the Abbotsleigh Old Girl’s Union and continues to be generously supported with gifts by the AOGU, alumni and parents. The scholarship honours the dynamic and positive influence of Miss McCredie during her time as Headmistress of Abbotsleigh (1970-1987). Awarded to a girl entering Year 10, who, but for the award, would not be able to attend Abbotsleigh, the student also must demonstrate all round involvement in the areas of spirituality, service, culture, sport and academia. It is next available for award in 2016 for a 2017 start. Tax deductible gifts to support this scholarship can be made at www.abbotsleigh.nsw.edu.au/donate and enquiries about gifts can be made via the Director of Development, Yvette Vignando on 9473 7737, vignandoy@abbotsleigh.nsw.edu.au
Elva Julien, Former Deputy Headmistress, and Patricia Anderson (Salenger, 1932) celebrated major milestones with family and friends

Elva Julien, former Head of English and Deputy Headmistress of Abbotsleigh, celebrated her 100th birthday in May this year with extended family and friends. Her daughter Elise wrote this account of her mother’s special day:

A group of mum’s colleagues and friends came to the lunch including Kath McCredie, who appointed her as Senior Mistress (Deputy Headmistress) (after she had served as Senior English Teacher; Nikki Seymour who was then Head of Music; and Jill Tuffley, who was then Head of Economics and Geography. Elva was an inspiring teacher and spokesperson for the Abbotsleigh staff. Elva also taught at Tara Anglican Girl’s School and Ruth Shatford, former Headmistress of Tara, spoke at the event. Ruth appointed Elva to the Tara School Council after her retirement from Abbotsleigh.

There were five generations at the lunch, with family from all over Australia and from Los Angeles. At the conclusion of the formalities and in her usual style, Elva stood up and spoke off the cuff, keeping her audience of all ages entertained and ending with a pertinent poem by Walt Whitman.

Elva is an extraordinary person in so many ways: as a mother, wife, grandmother, friend, professional woman and a contributor to the local community. Incredibly, she still attends The View Club when she is able, the Scrabble Club and the U3A Creative Writing class, and has only recently resigned from the Country Women’s Association. Her newer friends, met through these clubs since she moved to Mullumbimby seven years ago, also gave her 100th birthday parties. Elva remains living in her home, ably cared for by her eldest son, David.

Elise Julien (1968)

Patricia Anderson (Salenger, 1932)

On 15 August 2015 we all celebrated Patricia Anderson’s 101st birthday. (Marjorie) Patricia Salenger was born, a twin, on 15 August 1914. She started at Abbotsleigh in 1925 and left in 1932. She represented in hockey and netball and was a Prefect in her final year. Her younger sisters Barbara (Munro) and Margaret (Gill) also attended Abbotsleigh, but Mum outlived them. Her daughters Elaine (McLachlan, 1957) and Elizabeth (Havas, 1960) both started in the Junior School. All her children, and some of her grandchildren and great grandchildren celebrated with her.

Elizabeth Havas

Sadly, Patricia died a month after her birthday on Sunday 20 September.
Cora Jane Anderson’s legacy lives on

In 1969 a tragic accident cut short the life of one of Abbotsleigh’s girls, but she is still remembered fondly and the bursary in her name continues.

It was Easter 1970 when a tragic accident at Mullaley, near Gunnedah, resulted in the death of Cora Jane Anderson who started as a boarder at Abbotsleigh in sixth class, 1969. This year would have been her 40th reunion year. Christine McNeill (1975 alumna) reflects, ‘I had a wonderful and unforgettable day with Jane Anderson when we sat next to one another on the floor of the Junior School Hall watching Neil Armstrong and Buzz Aldrin land on the Moon in 1969. We talked for the entire day without drawing breath and I remember thinking how lovely she was. Every time I see any reference to this significant historic event, I think of her fondly.’

So it was a heart-warming coincidence that in this 40th reunion year, the Abbotsleigh Boarder Parents’ Association decided to rekindle the Cora Jane Anderson Bursary with a generous gift from the profits of the Daisy Club, allowing the Headmistress to confidentially offer assistance to some of our boarder families.

Outgoing President of the ABPA Nicola Dillon warmly expresses the care of Abbotsleigh families. ‘With the unpredictable climate that many boarder families live in, and having experienced three years of drought in some of the west and northwest of the state, we all feel that this bursary is so important. We know that boarder families, particularly ones that live long distances away and nowhere near schools, make huge sacrifices to send their daughters to Abbotsleigh. When hard times hit, we all want a way of showing our support and this is a wonderful way to do it.’

To make a gift of support for boarder families in need via the Cora Jane Anderson Bursary, please contact the Director of Development, Yvette Vignando on 9473 7737.

When hard times hit, we all want a way of showing our support and this is a wonderful way to do it.

The father of Cora Jane and Abbotsleigh boarder families later honoured the memory of this young Abbotsleigh girl with the establishment of the Cora Jane Anderson Bursary, making funds available to assist boarder families in need. Over the years, the balance of this bursary decreased and it has not been for awarded for some time.

Below: 1969 Abbotsleigh sixth class, Cora Jane Anderson is in the back row, sixth from the right.
Generations of Abbotsleigh girls

At the School’s birthday this year, we celebrated the families who were proud to represent four, or even five generations of Abbotsleigh students.

Alice Candrick, Year 6
Mother Zoe Barker 1981-1988
Grandmother Angela Blackwood 1950-1959
Great grandmother Rina Clifton 1929-1933
Great great grandmother Dorothea Edwards c.1902
Alice has links on her grandfather’s and her grandmother’s side that go back four generations. Alice’s grandfather accompanied her grandmother to the leaving dance in the Everett Hall when it was brand new and can claim that he was brave enough to ask Betty Archdale to dance. Alice’s grandmother Angela taught English at Abbotsleigh from 1968-70 and 1979-2001.

Rosie Fordham, Year 7 (boarder)
Mother Georgie Haysom 1982-1987
Grandmother Lesley Lillyman 1955-1967
Great grandmother Dorothy Smith 1932-1933
Rosie is very proud of her long line of Abbotsleigh history. Her grandmother tells stories of how she climbed the water tower, had supper with Betty Archdale and used to sneak down to the village for milkshakes.

Sophia Manchee, Year 7 (boarder)
Mother Elizabeth Nicholas Kirkby 1988-1993
Grandmother Sylvia Nicholas Scholfield 1954-1958
Great grandmother Doris Grace Cameron 1924-1928
Sophia is a fourth generation boarder at Abbotsleigh. Her mum tells a story of how when she was in Year 7, the older girls made her and her friends go down to the village to get them food as they were the only ones who was small enough to sneak through the security bars.

Charlotte Pearson, Year 7
Mother Louise Rachel Smith 1980-1985
Grandmother Susan Gorick 1956-1960
Great grandmother Alice Green 1931-1934
Charlotte’s family lived music, art, drama and sport through the years and excelled as leaders in the boarding house. Her grandma tells the story of the tradition that boarders were expected to climb the water tower. Charlotte’s grandma easily snuck past the teachers, was not caught and did not have to write lines.

Abbotsleigh won the Tidesley Shield for tennis. Lesley Lillyman Rosie’s grandmother sitting to the left in the second row
Annabelle Stuart, Year 7
Mother  Brooke Boland 1979-1988
Grandmother  Lee Hunter 1960-1966
Great grandmother  Merle Kirkby 1940-1941
Annabelle’s family contributed to Abbotsleigh on the sporting field, excelling in diving and athletics. She said that it was ‘quite amazing’ to be a fourth generation Abbotsleigh girl, never having realised it. Stuart family legend has it that the name of Annabelle’s grandmother, Lee, has been carved on top of the water tower.

Anneliese Buddee, Year 9
Mother  Pepita Carpenter 1979-1988
Grandmother  Pepita Owens 1957-1961
Great grandmother  Margaret Brown 1928-1935
Anneliese is fourth generation; however, 15 members of her close family have attended Abbotsleigh. With so many Old Girls, the family often has conversations about how has Abbotsleigh evolved over the years and share their experiences. Having such a rich Abbotsleigh history holds a special significance in their family.

April Gregson, Year 11
Mother  Jennifer Harris 1983-1988
Grandmother  Elsie Jean Watson 1948-1952
Great grandmother  Jean McLeod 1925-1927
Great great grandmother  Elsie May Arthur (unconfirmed)
April’s family have reason to believe that they are a fifth generation family. Unfortunately, the School cannot confirm Elsie May Arthur’s attendance here. April and her family recently visited Abbotsleigh and reflected on the many changes. Being a sporting family, they were really appreciative of the new oval and Sport Precinct in general.

Rebecca Bell, Year 9
Mother  Anne Butchart 1978-1983
Grandmother  Audrey Newman 1944-1952
Great Grandmother  Struan Dobbie 1916-1922
Rebecca’s connection started with Struan Newman (Dobbie, 1922). Struan has been followed by her two daughters, five granddaughters and four great granddaughters... so far.

Lillian Higgins, Year 11
Mother  Annabel Schmidt 1969-1976
Grandmother  Lorna Scammell 1942-1947
Great grandmother  Lorna Jones 1920-1921
Lillian commented that it is very special to know that you are fourth generation Abbotsleigh girl, having a fourth generational link on both sides of your family. Lillian’s godmother also attended Abbotsleigh. The stories of how Lillian’s mum and her Auntie Peg ended up staying with the Headmistress because they got in trouble are often shared. (Auntie Peg was caught jumping on the bunk beds in Vindin!) Lillian’s grandmother Patsy tells of how they found a rat in the boarding house and chased it out with their hockey sticks. Lillian’s mum remembers how the boarders had ‘lanky’ dresses in winter and how they always look a little bit untidy.
Taking the Barrier Reef to Paris

Artist and Old Girl Janet Laurence’s (1963) latest work highlights her concern with the effects of climate change, and she is taking the message to France

Janet Laurence is not an artist easily categorised; her work skirts the boundaries of art, science, architecture, nature, the imagined world, history and memory. Today, Janet she is best known for her site-specific installations and she has been referred to as the ‘architects’ artist’. She has always been interested in how art works in a given space and in ‘how art could contribute to the definition of a space and make the viewer participate holistically within that space’. A case in point is her 1991 commission for the Tomb of the Unknown Soldier in Canberra. The piece consists of four pillars in different natural and manmade materials: glass, marble, wood and metal, soaring toward the golden dome of the Hall of Memory. Its purpose is to invoke memories, both private and public; something that Janet aspires to do through most of her works.

Closer to home is her Edge of the Trees installation outside the Museum of Sydney, an award-winning collaboration with Indigenous artist Fiona Foley, which evokes the cultural and physical history of the site, before and after 1788.

Nature is the theme of her most recent work. Janet is the Australian representative for the Artists 4 Paris Climate 2015, which takes place during the Paris Climate Change Conference this November. She is creating a site-specific installation called Reef Resuscitation, which, she says, ‘addresses the threat to our natural environment and its fragility due to climate change and human impact on the Great Barrier Reef. This artwork will be formed through a residency with the Australian Museum Marine Science Department and their Lizard Island research station in the Barrier Reef.’

Reef Resuscitation will be exhibited in the Great Gallery of Evolution, within the Muséum National d’Histoire Naturelle, in the Jardin des Plantes, Paris; the Australian Museum will exhibit the here in 2016.
Old Girl news

Proving once again, that Abbotsleigh girls can do anything, please enjoy the latest news from and about a few of our Old Girls

Noël Grant (Stevenson, 1937)

Noël Grant (Stevenson) attended Abbotsleigh from 1931-1938. She went travelling with her parents after school and was unable to leave England when the Second World War broke out. She recalls that there were no ships to return to Australia at the time and she decided to join the Royal Air Force. She entered France with the American forces after the fall of Normandy and was needed in the front line because of her role as a decoder. All orders were still received coded at that point of the war.

On the occasion of the 70th anniversary of the Second World War, the French Republic honoured veterans who fought for the liberation of France by awarding them to the rank of Chevalier (knight) in the Legion of Honour. Noël Grant is the first woman in Australia to receive this honour.

The French Legion of Honour is an order of distinction first established by Napoleon Bonaparte in May 1802. It is the highest decoration bestowed in France, which recognises distinguished service. The awardees are decided by the President of the French Republic, subject to very strict examination. The delivery of the decoration takes place in a solemn ceremony in which a French authority representative thanks the recipient for their services to the country. The award was given to Mrs Grant and 25 ex-servicemen at the Melbourne Shrine of Remembrance on 14 July, 2015.

Noël remembers her days at Abbotsleigh fondly. She point out that the seven years she spent here was a long part of her life. She recalls that the School did not have air conditioning at that time and the classrooms were freezing. In these conditions Mrs Carter, one of her teachers, would walk into the room and open all the windows saying, “You are going to be cold in any case so you might as well have fresh air.”

Louise Taylor (1958)

After leaving Abbotsleigh in 1958, taking with me 12 years of very happy memories and many lasting friendships, I qualified as a Medical Record Librarian. I completed a Bachelor of Health Administration at University of NSW.

After I retired, the Bachelor of Arts degree I had commenced at Macquarie University in 1990 was put on hold when my second husband and I moved south to a small farm just north of Canberra. Here I completed the Certificate in Farm Management and Animal Husbandry at the Canberra Institute of Technology and it enabled us to run a very small but very successful cattle growing business.

In 1996 I resumed my BA degree, this time at the Australian National University (ANU) and in 2002 completed it with Honours in History.

In 2009 I commenced work on a PhD thesis at the ANU which was awarded to me earlier this year – a wonderful occasion! My thesis was on a small group of convicts among those who had worked at the Australian Agricultural Company in Port Stephens between 1822 and 1837. Biographical information obtained from a homogeneous group such as this enabled me to seek the commonalities, differences and idiosyncrasies of the experiences of these convicts, as well as their aggregate. The biographies also revealed criminality and punishment, alcohol usage and economic outcomes. In addition, tracing the lives of these families provided insights into the convict legacy on the later history of Australia.

Now, 57 years after leaving Abbotsleigh, with my children happily established with their own families, I have come back to the North Shore, living with my husband at Lindfield. Although many of my school friends have moved away, I am finding that there are still some who have stayed or have returned, like me. It is a nice feeling to be back.
Sue Thompson (1965)

Last September, I published my fifth book of poetry, *They*. It tells the story of my transgender child, now in her 30s, and her very close relationship with my father, a World War II veteran and former POW in Germany, who died a few years ago at the age of 91. Because the poems explore the challenges that gender identity poses to three generations of an American family, it has received quite a bit of attention in the press – more so than any of my previous books.

My husband retired last year and we are now living on the eastern shore of the Chesapeake Bay in Maryland. I teach poetry workshops in the DC area and have spent most of the past year doing readings and promotional events for the new book. I’ve been back to Sydney three times in the past 15 years and visited Abbotsleigh once (late ’90s, I think), spending a day there and speaking to the girls about my experience as an exchange student in 1965.

Louise Hart (1977)

Louise Hart (1977) has just published a book, *Procuring Successful Mega-Projects* (Gower Publishing, 2015), drawing on thirty years of experience in the public and private sectors in Sydney and London. She was the Project Director for the $3.6 billion procurement of the Waratah double deck trains that many Abbotsleigh girls now catch every day to school. Louise lives in North Sydney with her husband Anthony Alexander and works as an independent consultant and speaker on major projects and procurement.

Rebekah Pang (1996)

Rebekah Pang (1996) has been nominated as one of top 50 leading women in hedge funds for 2015.

Rebekah is a director at Newedge Honk Kong, where she is Head of Capital Introductions for Asia in Prime Clearing Services. Newedge has been established in the region for more than 10 years, with Rebekah joining the team around five years ago. She started her career at JP Morgan in Sydney and then worked in asset management in Singapore. Her proud father wrote, ‘I strongly believe part of her success was her attendance at Abbotsleigh and the strong conviction that women can do anything’.

Esther Brazil (2004)

Esther Brazil made her BBC Proms Debut in August, appearing as La Ninfa in a semi-staged production of Monteverdi’s *L’Orfeo* at the Royal Albert Hall with Sir John Eliot Gardiner and the English Baroque Soloists. During a US tour of the production in April, she performed the role at Carnegie Hall.

Esther was a choral scholar at The Queen’s College, Oxford, where she read Philosophy and Theology, following which she gained her MA in voice from the Royal Academy of Music in London. She is a mezzo-soprano, and specialises in baroque repertoire ranging from Buxtehude to Bach.

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Robyn Christmas (Duly, 1975)

Earlier this year I entered an annual, Australia-wide competition to find the top reciter of *The Man From Snowy River*. People from all over Australia send in their recordings to the festival held each year in Corryong Victoria (where they claim Jack Riley was the ‘man from Snowy River’). The recordings are then sent to three independent judges and the aggregate scores are announced for the top 10 reciters. The top three are then invited to go to the festival to recite live for the festival-goers on the Friday evening and are judged again. I won last year – and am only the second woman ever to do so in 25 years of competition. The ABC radio ran a discussion about whether a woman should have won such a competition (my blood boiled!) and interviewed me. So, to prove it wasn’t a fluke, I entered again this year...and became the only woman to have won it twice (no man has won it more than twice). So I am the current national champion reciter of A B Paterson’s *The Man From Snowy River*. 
New arrivals

Twelve years ago Tara Hannon (1976) gave birth to triplets. ‘My triplets, Tracey, Angelina and Grace now 12 and off to high school. I’m hoping to return to work after a three year break.’

My husband Chris Roe and I had our third baby, Bronte Skye Macdonald Roe, on 20 April at the San. She was born in the thick of that horrific storm so her name, which means thunder, turned out to be unexpectedly appropriate! She is a little sister to Caillie (8) and Molly (3). Katrina Roe (Hutchins,1992).

Sarah McKensey (1994) and her husband Mike Sabey welcomed little Hugh McKensey Sabey into the world on 9 January 2015 at Aiku Hospital Tokyo, Japan. Sarah is currently on an expatriate assignment in Tokyo in her role as HR Director for Johnson & Johnson Japan.

Nicola Gains (Flint, 1996) and husband Nick welcomed into the world a baby daughter, Eleanor Rose Gains on 24 April 2015 at St Thomas’s Hospital in London, England.

Susie Thompson (Pumphrey 1997) welcomes Hugo Bobby Thompson her third boy, Oliver (4 years) and Louis (2 years).

Carly, James and Matthew welcomed Joshua to the Hopgood family in April 2015. Carly Hopgood (Price, 1996)

Sangita Khetia (Phadke, 1998) gave birth to a boy called Ishan Mohan Khetia on 30 June 2014. She also has a three-year-old son.

Johanna Wong (Au, 2000) and Andrew had a second baby, Hannah Ming Yeo Wong, born on 2 January 2015 in Sapporo Japan. She is the younger sister of Emily (3).

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On 18 April 2005, Courtney Davis married Andrew Aho in a beautiful beachside wedding in Bermagui on the NSW south coast. Sister Alexandra Davis (2009), friend Jess L’Green (Westover, 2005) and cousin Camilla Davis (2003) were in the bridal party.

Sascha Lindsay (2004) married Mark O’Reilly (St Aloysius, 2004) on Saturday 5 September at St Peter Chanel Church in Hunters Hill.

Dr Louise Killen (2005), married Mr Peter Gaffney on 8 August 2015 at St Mark’s Anglican Church, Darling Point, followed by The Royal Sydney Golf Club. The bridal party included Charlotte Killen (2008); Louise’s cousin, Georgia Smith; Peter’s brother, Thomas Gaffney; and friend Alex Chilvers.

Melissa Derum (Pearson 2003) and her husband Oliver welcomed Alfie (Alfred Leigh Glynn Derum) into the world on 23 April this year.


Dmitry and Rebecca Morov (Gibson, 2004) welcomed a sister for Damien, Evelyn Grace, 23 December, 2014. ‘She is gorgeous and much loved by her big brother.’

Jill (Coenen, 2003) and Will Ford are thrilled to share that their baby girl Elizabeth Michelle Ford arrived on 1 December 2014.

On the 15 May 2015, Elena Falls (Pini, 2009) and husband Rob had a beautiful baby boy, Zachariah (Zac).

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Melissa Derum (Pearson 2003) and her husband Oliver welcomed Alfie (Alfred Leigh Glynn Derum) into the world on 23 April this year.


Dmitry and Rebecca Morov (Gibson, 2004) welcomed a sister for Damien, Evelyn Grace, 23 December, 2014. ‘She is gorgeous and much loved by her big brother.’

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Joan Holcombe Furze (Green, 1932)
1914-2015

She was born in Hornsby on 4 January 1914 at the height of the summer bushfires, the eldest of four children.

She spent her early years at a small school, Norwood, in Hornsby, where she used to go home for a hot lunch each day!

In January 1930 the Green family moved to ‘Tacoma’ in Stanhope Road, Killara. Joan and her sister Margaret (Marnie) were both educated at Abbotsleigh where she played tennis, basketball cricket and hockey. She remembered discipline was quite strict and the Headmistress, Miss Poole, being very fair. Writing lines or a composition or not being able to attend a sporting match were punishment. Order marks were also given out and a total of six meant you had to spent time at school on a Saturday morning.

Uniform regulations were very strict at Abbotsleigh, particularly regarding the wearing of a belt. You were not allowed to wear your belt tightly around your waist to give you an hourglass figure. It had to be loose around the hips!

Celebrating Anzac Day at school was a very special occasion as was Shakespeare’s birthday. There were no formal lessons on this day as every class in the School had to perform an act from a Shakespeare play. This took up the whole day and was a highlight, especially if you were keen about acting, which Joan was. She was School Prefect in her final year.

After Joan left school, she went to Darlinghurst College to learn cooking and dressmaking

In 1935 at the age of 21, she set off on the cruise of a lifetime with her parents and Marnie to spend the Jubilee year in England and Europe. She told us that during time spent in Germany they were wakened one morning in their German hotel by the marching of young men in brown uniforms outside. She sensed a feeling of foreboding even then.

In 1936 she went to Metropolitan Business College to study shorthand, typing and bookkeeping. She also regularly nursed for her father in his dental practice.

During the period of 1937-1939 she studied acting under the great Doris Fitton at the Independent Theatre in North Sydney, but the Second World War got in the way and she gave it all up to train as a nurse in 1940 at Royal Prince Alfred Hospital. She was on duty in May 1942 the night the three midget Japanese submarines entered Sydney Harbour and often spoke of the ‘brown outs’ when they covered the hospital’s windows with brown paper to be less obvious from the air at night.

She vividly remembered all the nurses removing their veils and running or catching trams to Town Hall to join in the ticker tape celebrations the day that peace was declared.

In June 1946 she went to Singapore by ship and it was there that she met her future husband Alan Furze. They were married in 1947 at St Martin’s Church, Killara. St Martin’s became a pivotal part of her life where she regularly attended Sunday 8 am communion, sitting in the same pew for more than 80 years. She was a very active member of the church and a great stalwart of the community with her many voluntary roles including Red Cross, Meals on Wheels and the Mothers’ Union.

She had many interests including her love of gardening, her Bonsai collection, attending live theatre, ballet, symphony concerts, the opera, Killara Music Club and Scottish Highland Dancing. She was a keen and active skier at Perisher in the 50s and 60s and belonged to Avondale Golf Club and Warrambool Bowling Club for many years. She loved her regular bridge games with a group of Abbotsleigh friends, which lasted many years.

A fiercely independent woman who spoke her mind, she lived and drove independently until she was 98.

At her 90th birthday she told us all to ‘live life to the full’. She made a small speech at her 100th birthday where she announced that the secret to her amazing healthy life and longevity was to ‘keep moving’ and that she did. Up until August 2015 she was the School’s oldest Old Girl.

She was a wonderful grandmother to Belinda (1990) and Wendy (1993) and finally had her wish to be a grandmother was fulfilled with the birth of Benjamin in 2014.

Jo Millyard (Furze, 1965)
Old Girls – We remember

Barbara Munro (Salenger, 1934)
1918-2015

Barbara was born and brought up in Sydney, in Artarmon and Killara. She attended school at Abbotsleigh, at the beginning of what was to be a lifelong association with the School. Because of her high marks in the Leaving Certificate, she was awarded a scholarship to Sydney University and Women’s College. She completed an Arts degree in March 1939 with double Honours in Latin and Botany. At the start of the Second World War, she was employed as a cipher assistant at Garden Island, where she met and married Max Munro, then a naval officer. Their first daughter was born in 1941. At the end of the war, Max returned to his civilian banking career and two more daughters were born over the next few years.

Barbara believed that a good education was essential and made her daughters’ schooling a high priority. When the family moved to a new city, she went to great lengths to get the girls into the best school. All three daughters attended Abbotsleigh: Margaret (1949-53), Catherine (1961-64) and Jenny (1961-64). It was also a given for her that they would attend Sydney University and live in at Women’s College, and all three girls did so. Her interest in education, particularly of girls and young women, was lifelong. She served as the honorary secretary of the Women’s College Association in 1967. She was a member of the Council of Abbotsleigh from 1967-1978, a founding Governor of the Abbotsleigh Foundation and President of the Abbotsleigh Old Girls’ Union in 1970. Barbara held very progressive views and was delighted when a conservative member of Abbotsleigh Council referred to her as a ‘radical’, when in the early ‘70s she suggested that the girls should be allowed to wear trousers to school.

Barbara’s interests were wide-ranging. During the 1960s she worked with the Girl Guides Association and became a District Commissioner. She loved travel, and was thrilled with the art, theatre and culture of London and Europe while living in London with Max and the family for three years. In the early 1970s she served as a volunteer guide at the Art Gallery of NSW. In 1974 she qualified as a horticulturist from the Ryde School of Horticulture and subsequently enjoyed giving garden talks and judging garden competitions. She was an enthusiastic gardener, an excellent cook and a keen reader, particularly of biographies and books on the history of science. She also liked to be well-informed about the world and had the paper delivered every day until she could no longer read it at the age of 95.

Throughout her life, Barbara took a great interest in her family, extended family and friends. She loved to hear their news and always remembered birthdays and special occasions with homemade cakes or scones, cards, gifts and flowers from the garden. She will be much remembered for her strong intellect, the breadth of her talents and especially for her commitment and loyalty to her family and her many friends.

Margaret Ahrens (1953), Catherine Munro (1964) and Jenny Munro (1964) (Barbara’s daughters)

Enid Tankard (Martin, 1943)
1926-2014

My mother, Enid Martin, was born on 26 July 1926 and died last year on 14 September 2014. She arrived at Abbotsleigh wearing the school uniform from her previous school, Marsden, in New Zealand where her father’s position with the AMP had taken the family for a time. The Abbotsleigh school uniform had been navy I think; however, they very much liked mum’s green Marsden uniform and adopted it. (Editor’s note: this anecdote is not endorsed by the School Archives.) I think it might have been the winter uniform with those hard to maintain box pleats! Mum loved Abbotsleigh, friendships, languages and hockey.

She married my father, James Tankard, in 1951 and had three children: Christine, Glenn and Sarah.

Christine Dillon (Tankard, 1971)
‘Thanna’, Moree
Virginia Wilkie (1956)
1939-2015

Virginia Wilkie (Anderson) was the archetypal 1950s Abbotsleigh girl — bright, inquisitive, gregarious and glamorous. She never tired of learning and, after graduation, she pursued her interests in the visual arts, fashion, travel, Italian language and culture. Virginia grew up in Killara, with her parents, Clare and Bill, her sister Cherry, grandmother, Leah, and dog, Laddie. Their Art Deco home was filled with antiques that her mother had brought from England and with art that her father had gathered in his travels through China. Virginia was surrounded by colours, textures and patterns, and developed her love of art and fashion there.

Growing up, she was a high-achieving student, enjoyed charity work and loved to party. After graduation, she spent ‘a season on the Continent’. In London, she was taught to curtsey by the High Commissioner’s wife, took afternoon tea at Buckingham Palace and was presented to the Queen.

Back in Sydney, Virginia worked in travel and fell in love with the world. At a tennis club one afternoon in 1959, she also fell for a dashing young meteorologist named Alan Wilkie. They married in November 1960 and nurtured a family of three children (Michele, Katrina and Andrew), a cat, many dogs (including Sophie, the standard black poodle) and miscellaneous birds and goldfish.

Virginia played bridge and tennis with a gaggle of great girls, as one did in 1970s Killara. Between matches, they nibbled quiche, salad and vol au vents and sipped Ben Ean Moselle. She also loved to entertain and turned on magnificent dinner parties.

Her children remember sitting on the end of her bed, watching her get ready to go out — earrings, eyelashes, cocktail frock: ‘We truly thought that she was the most beautiful woman in the world.’ And perhaps also the most stylish. Virginia won a Women’s Weekly Award for fashion design and designed ranges of clothing under the label Fasano for her two Sydney boutiques.

In the ’90s, she and Alan moved to Paddington, where they enjoyed a new inner city life. They travelled often and skied in America and Australia, where Virginia won trophies.

Virginia’s love of Italian culture eventually led her to study the language at university and to a role as an Italian tour guide with the National Trust, which became her ultimate passion. However, on one tour to Italy, Virginia suffered a stroke on the plane, and that changed the course of her life. She spent her last years with her much loved partner, John Farrell, in Queensland.

Virginia died on 5 May this year. Her children and nine grandchildren remember her as someone who was true to herself, who lived her dreams, who took risks, who was loving, outspoken, unpredictable, and always a woman of the world.

John Farrell and Virginia’s children

Lesley Howell (1970)
1953-2013

Lesley Howell died in January of 2013. It was a very brief and intense hospitalisation, where she fought and succumbed to diabetes. Her diabetes became a battle she couldn’t win. Lesley often spoke about Abbotsleigh and was still studying when she died – a passion she never lost and attributed to her days at school. The words that we chose for Lesley at her funeral were: ‘To laugh often and much, to win the respect of intelligent people, and the respect of children.’ - Ralph Waldo Emerson. We believe these words were perfect for Lesley, She gained a Post Grad Marketing, Masters of Marketing and MBA, and was studying for a Doctorate, and whilst she never married, she had two nieces and two nephews whom she loved to spoil.

Juliet Howell
Sister-in-law

Erratum

We would like to apologise for having erroneously reported in the last edition of Around Abbotsleigh that Georgina Bitcon (1972) had died. Georgina is alive and well and living in Sydney. She only reported the death of her aunt Joan (Jimmie) White (Bourke, 1939) in February last year.
Lesley Ann Sykes
1945–2015
Abbotleigh staff, 1965–2005

Lesley will be remembered with great affection and admiration by the hundreds of girls who enjoyed her classes, and by the many staff members who were her colleagues and friends over the 40-year period during which she taught at Abbotleigh. Lesley approached everything she did with enthusiasm, humour, energy, determination and creativity. She made her classes and staff room conversations interesting and fun. Lesley was generous with her talents and her time, and was the epitome of a good teacher who really cared about her students.

Lesley Dow spent her childhood on her parents’ farming property in northern NSW and was educated in Armidale. In 1965, fresh out of university, she was recruited to Abbotleigh by Betty Archdale, and for three years she was both teacher and boarding mistress. Girls of that era still remember her vitality, her tall elegance and her beautiful long hair! She was the first staff member to have her wedding in the new Chapel when she married Hugh Sykes in 1967. When she returned to Abbotleigh in 1977, she had short hair and was the mother of two children, Peter and Tanya. She joined the Geography Department where, for the next 20 years, she taught several Social Science subjects, helping her HSC students to achieve excellent results. When Design and Technology was introduced to the School in the 1990s, Lesley did some retraining and happily transferred to the area. In the following years she made beautiful rocking horses and dolls houses, Japanese puppets for the Language department and a set of 40 small dolls perfectly dressed in every school uniform worn at Abbotleigh from 1885 to the present day. This generous legacy to the School is a treasured part of the Archives collection.

Lesley was an enthusiastic participant and organiser of extra-curricular activities and staff social events. After she retired in 2005, she and Hugh moved to a retirement village in Erina, close to her daughter and her family. She played an active role in the village social life and established a highly successful annual craft fair. She often returned to Sydney for FAbBS (Former Abbotleigh Staff) activities, and was a valued member of the FAbBS Committee and Book Club. Over the past 10 years Lesley and Hugh took great pleasure in being grandparents and enjoyed travel in Japan and Europe. However her retirement was cut short when she lost a long battle with breast cancer and died in July 2015, two months before her 70th birthday.

Jill Tuffley
Abbotleigh staff, 1972–1999

We remember

Heather (Margaret) Mitchell (Griffith, 1945) Heather Mitchell died in May 2015. Her daughter, Jane Mitchell, wrote, ‘I know mum really enjoyed her two years as a boarder at Abbotleigh in the mid 1940s and this was mentioned at her funeral.’

Karen Reynolds (Jacobs, 1963) died in June 22, 2014 in Ridgewood, New Jersey. Her husband Hal Reynolds wrote that she spoke often of her experiences at Abbotleigh with great fondness and that she and Hal visited the School in the 1990s before a tour of Australia.

Alma Erwin Roxanas (Lothringer, 1963) died on January 15, 2015. Helen Muir (Hawthorne, 1963) wrote that Alma joined the 1963 year group in the Junior School and came all the way through. Her daughter Mary (1994) also attended Abbotleigh.

Susan Asta (Henderson, 1956) died 5 February 2015

Barbara Cathers (Stafford, 1942) died November 2014

Anne Craford (Gilder, 1948) died 7 May 2015

Ailsa Daniel (Moodie, 1936) died 23 July 2014

Margaret Freeth (Riley, 1949) died 6 June 2014

Libby Fuller (Loxton, 1965) died 19 March 2013

Valerie Gerull (Shaw, 1944) died peacefully 22 June 2015

Jenny Greatrex (Mitchell, 1942) died 17 September 2014

Mary Godwin (Mackenzie, 1938) died November 2014

Diana Harris (King, 1957) died 26 February 2015

Sybil Hooke (1950) died 19 August 2014

Nerida Hooton (Moore, 1947) died 5 March 2015

Jean Isles (Perry, 1937) died May 2015

Prue Lander (Dean, 1961) died 19 September 2014

Barbara Lowe (Cowper, 1954) died 4 February 2015

Mary Kemp (Officer, 1938) died 9 March 2015

Mary Preston (Hedley, 2014) died 31 December 2014

Libby Seale (Miles, 1942) died 9 February 2015

Wendy Walker (1944) died 22 April 2014

Lesley Dow on the staircase in School House on her wedding day, May 1967. Photograph courtesy of her husband, Hugh Sykes.
Mother and Daughter Dinner

The annual Mother Daughter Dinner (MDD) was brought forward to June this year to coincide with the School’s 130th birthday and it was once again a fun evening with entertainment, sharing stories, rekindling friendships and making new ones. It was lovely to welcome a large contingent of Junior School mothers and daughters, enjoying their first MDD. Julie Daley, the Abbotsleigh Archivist, had provided some ‘historic’ PE uniforms, photos, tennis racquets and other memorabilia, which were a real talking point. This tied in with our guest speaker for the evening, Kate Howitt (1996) who is an Old Girl, Head of Sport and most recently became a mum to Abigail. Kate shared her daughter with us, as well as her stories.

Of course, the MDD would not be the same without Rory O’Donoghue and the guitar ensemble. In particular it was lovely to hear Phoebe Chadwick sing and play her guitar in a duet with Rory with a beautiful rendition of Travelling Soldier, which she had just performed for her HSC music exam.

We look forward to seeing many generations of mothers, daughters, grandmothers, aunties and cousins at next year’s event.

Business Networking Evening

The second AOGU Business Networking Evening was held in the city on Thursday 19 March. A dynamic group of 56 Old Girls attended and were challenged to consider how to use our position of privilege and influence to make a difference in our communities. The guest speaker, Jane Stratton (1992), who after 10 years of a successful law career decided to be brave and really make a difference by following her dream, shared her passions and the choices she made. As she said, “Passions are too precious to keep as hobbies! For women like us, they are the stuff of life!” Jane actively works in the Parramatta area and focuses her energy on creating an environment that can contribute to wellbeing by giving every person a voice through her organisation THINK+DO TANK.
Golden Old Girls Lunch

The Golden Old Girls lunch hosted by the Marian Clarke Bequest Committee is an integral part of the School’s annual birthday celebrations. More than 90 Old Girls who have already celebrated their 50 year reunion attended the lunch. Elizabeth Tomlinson, who steered the committee for the past four years, stepped down as President. Elizabeth has been instrumental in creating a number of philanthropic initiatives. She worked closely with Melissa Slattery (Walsh, 1977) and Kath McCredie on creating the Kathleen McCredie Award, and during her time as the President of the Marian Clarke Bequest Committee, started the Camellia Fund. A fund the Headmistress can use at her discretion to help a student in need.

Rosemary Hoskins (1963) has now stepped into the role of President. A proud Archdale girl, Rosemary comes to the role with extensive corporate and philanthropic experience. Her passion for Indigenous education and support of the Indigenous Scholarship at the School shone through in her introductory speech.

Interconnections, the exhibition that was showing at the Grace Cossington Smith Gallery at the time of the School’s birthday, celebrated the legacy of art education at Abbotsleigh left by the founder of the School, Marian Clarke. Miss Clarke invited the best teachers and encouraged girls like Grace Cossington Smith. Mary Faith, director of the gallery and curator of this exhibition explored these connections in her address to the guests. Entertainment was provided by Phoebe Chadwick (2015) and Rory O’Donoghue.

Card Day 2015

The Grace Cossington Smith Gallery once again provided a wonderful backdrop for the 2015 Card day in May. 24 players attended and the delicious lunch provided by the AOGU committee annual was praised by all. It was decided that in future, this day will from now on be held on one of the first Fridays in May.
Queensland reunion

Queensland Abbotsleigh Old Girl reunions have been rare. This year all that changed. Jann Anderssen (Joseph, 1958), Helen Nicholson (Amos, 1960) and Libby Gardiner (Amos, 1970) took the initiative and all Old Girls who had celebrated their 40th reunion were invited to spend a Saturday lunch at Jann’s home in Toowong. Saturday 5 September was a beautiful day with 25 Old Girls attending. Drinks were served on the verandah and then a sit down lunch was served, prepared by Jann, Libby and Helen. One of the ‘girls’ commented that there is always camaraderie and fun when Abbotsleigh girls come together, because they are a family. Ruth Richardson (Warden, 1940) was the oldest Old Girl present and displayed the Abbotsleigh spirit of independence by driving herself to the reunion. Others came from as far as Armidale and Mackay. We hope that this will be the start of many Queensland reunions. The reunion was sponsored by the organisers and all proceeds from the reunion were donated to the Abbotsleigh Indigenous Scholarship Fund.

Bowls Day

The 33rd Bowls Day was a fabulous success. With six mothers of Old Girls adding to the numbers, the group was a healthy 20 players on the day and with two extra Old Girls coming for lunch. It was lovely to have Margaret Kahn (Horne, 1952) as a guest all the way from the United States. Thank you to Sue Cross (Jacobs, 1949), Robin Kench (Hobart, 1951) and Virginia Armstrong (Buckley, 1957) who helped with the organisation. Bowls is definitely a team sport.

1945 70 year reunion

Nearly 20 1945 leavers and carers gathered at Abbotsleigh on Friday 22 May for a delightful reunion. Memories were shared and old friends met up for the first time in years. Judith Cameron (Stubbs, 1945) reminded everyone of the days when the wonderful and eccentric Miss Everett was the Headmistress.

1970 45 year reunion

The 1970 leavers were brave and decided to have their 45 year reunion at school. They were also curious as they pointed out there has been quite a few changes since their 40 year reunion. Read House had become a full boarding house again, Vindin had been changed into an art centre, housing the Grace Cossington Smith Gallery and senior art classrooms and work on the Sport Precinct had begun. A number of girls attending the reunion had never ventured back to school before and a great time was had by all. Everyone was in agreement that it was well worth the time and effort to get together and that the organising of the 50 year reunion in 2020 will be a momentous team effort.