



ABBOTSLEIGH

Old Girls' Union Inc.

The Loom

ABBOTSLEIGH OLD GIRLS
NEWSLETTER
OCTOBER 2020



'Fields'

From the 1904 prospectus*

A glimpse into Abbotsleigh's lost past – croquet and tennis at 'fields', corner of Lucinda Avenue and Pacific Highway, 1904.

2020 EVENTS

The next Networking Breakfast will be held on Friday 6 November from 8-9 am via Zoom. Invitations will be sent out shortly. Please join us to hear Rebecca Ladd, one of the 2019 AOGU 110th Anniversary Grant winners, speak about her passion working with the deaf community, particularly focusing on her continuing efforts to enhance the education of deaf students in Bhutan.

While it has been disappointing that most of the 2020 AOGU events have been cancelled, we are in the process of re-thinking and putting together an events program for 2021 and are hopeful to be meeting and connecting in person again very soon. Please take this opportunity to feed in ideas of the types of events you would like to see the AOGU host and send them to the Old Girls Office.



President's message

Happy 135th birthday, Abbotsleigh!

What a milestone and a birthday year that will not be forgotten! Abbotsleigh has a long history of changing with the times and adapting to challenges and 2020 certainly has upped the ante with the changes required and challenges to overcome. Therefore, it is a privilege to share this special 'COVID' edition of *The Loom* in which some of our Old Girls share their experiences and challenges.

I'd like to take this opportunity to commend and thank Mrs Krimmer, the leadership team, School Council, all the teachers and staff for the incredible care and effort they have put into keeping our girls safe, adapting to ever-changing circumstances while still providing a stimulating learning environment and empowering our young women for the future. As an Abbotsleigh parent and the President of the AOGU, I am proud to be part of this wonderful community.

The AOGU Committee has also had to adapt to the changing circumstances; the most notable change being meetings held by Zoom. While the lack of in-person interaction has been felt, Zoom has enabled enhanced involvement from our Boarder Representative and has allowed one of our team stuck outside Australia to continue to actively participate. Therefore, if you have previously dismissed the idea of joining the AOGU Committee because you are not based in Sydney, I encourage you to reconsider joining our team as we need fresh ideas, wider representation and a range of skills to take the AOGU forward.

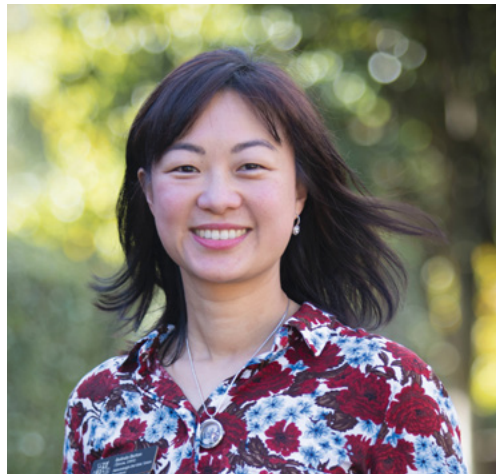
The AOGU is proud to continue to support Old Girls in meaningful endeavours to benefit the community and have a positive social impact. So, if you are involved in a project that pays it forward to either the local or worldwide community, don't forget to send in your application for 2020's AOGU 110th Anniversary Grant. Please see the AOGU

website for the application form and full terms and conditions. Applications close on **Monday 12 October 2020** and the winner will be announced at the AOGU AGM on Wednesday 18 November 2020.

Finally, please note that *The Loom* is going fully digital. Please ensure that the AOGU has your email address to continue receiving future editions of *The Loom* and other publications. For those of you who have a particular need for a printed copy of *The Loom*, please contact the Old Girls Office to discuss.

Keep well

Belinda Burton (Tjeuw, 1991)



Old Girls and COVID-19

No matter who you are, where you are or what you do, the effects of the COVID-19 pandemic have been felt by us all. Along with the impacts of devastating bushfires and drought here in Australia, 2020 has been defined globally by the immense challenges of this pandemic, the likes of which haven't been seen in a century.

In July, the AOGU called on you, our members, to share your COVID-19 stories, capturing your experiences and reflections of life and work during the pandemic. We have been thrilled to receive dozens of articles and photographs, from Old Girls of all ages, living all over Australia and the world, and engaged in so many different walks of life.

Some of the stories are sad and confronting, some are humorous, so many are uplifting, all are inspiring. Each article is a snapshot, as told by an Old Girl, of a moment in time and place. The articles were written in July, August or early September, and hence reflect the COVID-19 situation at the time of writing.

We are delighted to share these stories with you, in this very special edition of *The Loom*. The AOGU believes it's

important to have your COVID-19 experiences recorded and archived, for future generations to understand how we in 2020 are navigating this pandemic as individuals, and together.

Thank you to the 45 Old Girls who shared your stories: your contributions are invaluable. Thank you to the AOGU Committee members who joined me on the editorial team: Melissa Slattery (Walsh, 1977), Fiona Hobill Cole (Armstrong, 1981) and Karen Love (1987).

And most of all, to all of you who are on the frontline or are essential workers keeping us safe, thank you.

Below please enjoy just a few of the submissions we received. The full collection can be viewed by clicking [here](#). If you would like a hard copy of the COVID-19 supplement, please contact the **Old Girls Office** or call 02 9473 7740.

Rebecca Baillie (1989)
Vice President, AOGU
September 2020

SALLY MARDEN (Forndran, 1989)

Nurses feel strongly that one should never die alone. Every day for four months, I went to work at the Royal United Hospital, Bath, UK, not knowing what I would see, who I could help, and who I would watch die. I was struck by the number of COVID-19 patients for whom I was the only person staying back: to comfort them when they were dying, to help them make their final Facetime call to loved ones, to hold their hands and stroke their hair, as they literally drowned from the dreaded virus.

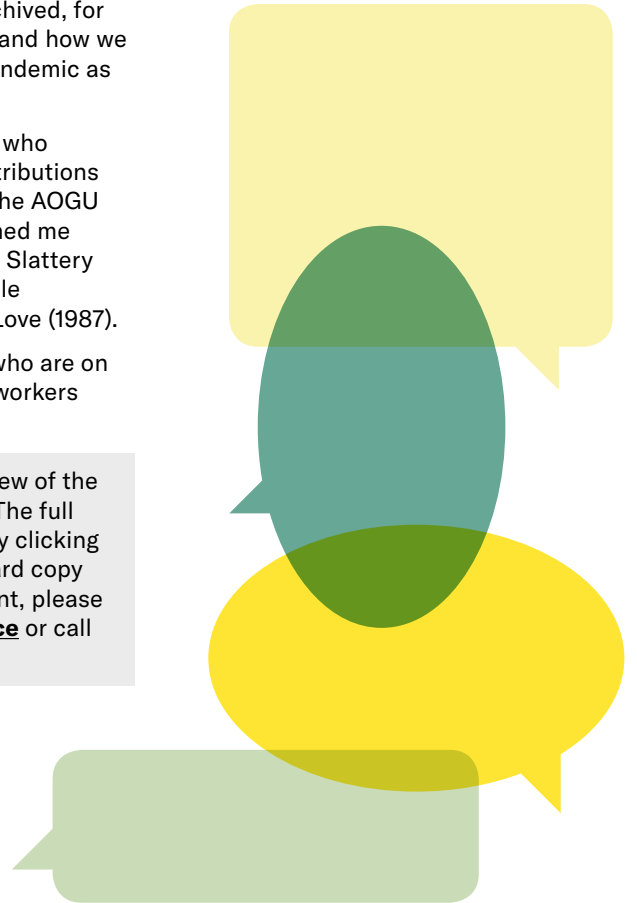
I have worked as a specialist nurse in the UK since 1998, and am currently the lead Sepsis and Kidney injury specialist nurse within Royal United Hospital's critical care outreach team. I seek out

and escalate appropriate patients to the intensive care unit, or palliate the patients who are the sickest of the sick. I cover A&E, paediatrics, maternity and all ward areas. It is an extremely busy job and the catchment area for the hospital covers 500,000 people.

COVID-19 has changed the hospital significantly. When we first heard of the sudden influx of patients arriving in London (two hours down the motorway), we had about two weeks to prepare for the onslaught. This was a very strange time, as we all needed fit-mask-testing, equipment supplies, distance measures and protocols to be put in place. The hospital was suddenly buzzing with builders putting doors on all patient areas and building new wards. COVID patients needed to be separated at every step throughout the hospital. The

hospital built an 18 bed Intensive Therapy Unit just for COVID patients, separate wards were transformed to treat COVID patients and all theatres and outpatient activity stopped suddenly. The number of patients through A&E dropped from approximately 300 a day, to about 30. Where did all the chest pain, stroke and trauma patients suddenly go once lockdown was enforced? The corridors were empty, in what is usually a very busy district hospital.

But then the COVID patients came. There was real concern about how infectious they were. It is an invisible virus, so every time a patient coughed, spoke, struggled to breathe, you constantly wondered if it was 'just that time' when you got infected. I sat for sometimes hours comforting them, in the hottest summer conditions – my gown, mask,





face shield, gloves all dripping with sweat, while I tried to hold back tears. I have cried many times, both alone and at the bedside, at the sadness of it all – so many people just so scared and not being comforted at all by loved ones. I felt so bad to be the last person they would see. I didn't know anything about them – what kind of life had they had? Who had they loved? Strangers who, day after day, I tried to comfort the best I could. But I never once felt satisfied by my actions and the care that I gave. When do you ever do enough for the dying?

I have had to leave my three children at home every day. They are 16, 15 and 12 years old. My husband also works at the hospital as a gastroenterologist and the kids asked early on who out of the two of us was the most exposed to the COVID patients? It was me. So, from then on the kids craved my attention when I got home, in subtle ways. My son kept asking to go for a walk, or kick a ball and he wanted to take pictures of me doing everything. 'Why?' I asked. He told me he was making memories, as he was sure out of the two of us, I would be the one to get sick and die. It broke my heart. My 16-year-old daughter was very quiet and scared, shutting off from me a little, as she thought I was 'dirty' and bringing the virus home. My middle boy has special needs and we had to make the tough decision to place him in boarding school. We both needed to be at the hospital every day, and so couldn't give him 1:1 care. It was really

challenging sending him away, he is very much part of the family and very loved. He didn't understand, and we all missed him terribly.

My two children at home were alone for five months' online schooling. I haven't sat by them once to help and guide them through this strange way of learning. This made me feel guilty for never being there for them. Thank goodness they are both extremely mature and resilient kids, and thrived academically despite this! Their school was amazing and provided outstanding pastoral care; I was concerned for the kids' mental health due to this prolonged time in isolation.

Another significant challenge was listening to my friends complaining that they weren't at work, or were at home every day with their kids – I craved both, and just felt so annoyed with them saying this to me! The number of friends missing their gym, favourite restaurants, the cinema and normal life was boggling to me – I didn't have this lockdown experience at all. I worked extremely hard, both physically and mentally and struggled with not being there for my kids. I had to send one kid away, just so we could both go to work. All the time I was desperately trying to suppress my anxiety at catching and dying of this dreaded virus to which I was SO exposed every day!

The fallout from this pandemic is now clear. The number of mental health patients is filling the hospital beds every

day. They range from 12-90 years old, and the stories break your heart. Job losses, anger, anxiety just a few causes. Abuse is astounding, violence is frightening, overdoses are commonplace, and suicide attempts just too many to count. And these are just the incidences who need hospitalisation, God knows what is going on out in the wider community?

Coming out of wave one has been a relief. I am completely spent and broken mentally. I struggle to do many tasks. I would love to exercise regularly, but I am finding it difficult, as after a day in all that gear I am exhausted, dehydrated and extremely reflective.

We are managing to get away next week for a well-deserved break – just as the second spike is hitting Europe and the numbers are on the rise again. After our first trip was cancelled, we are desperately hoping to get on the plane before another lockdown occurs. The winter months are looming. The flu season is tough every winter, and with COVID on top, things are going to be just awful. We are talking at work about how exhausted we all feel and are trying to take time away, before the numbers creep up again. There is a huge amount of uncertainty about the coming months, nothing of which is positive. Having been through it before, we feel ready mentally for what is coming.

The virus is nasty; it doesn't discriminate. My husband has lost two colleagues, and I have seen more than 400 nurses be infected. It is not the time to be complacent, rather to stay vigilant – inside and outside of work. I have never appreciated so much the safety of the family home, and the security of us all sitting around the table together. Laughing and just hanging out is so special during these strange and uncertain times.

The pandemic has taught me that people's life experiences generally affect how you react to situations beyond your control. I could never turn my back on my job, despite the risks I walked into every day. It was extremely hard to have this genuine drive to help, when I had kids at home who needed their mummy so much. I always respected the life I have: I have seen so many people die and I don't take anything for granted. Take care everyone.

July 25, 2020

If this article raises any issues for you:
Lifeline 13 11 14 or
Kids Helpline 1800 55 1800

CAITLIN OSCHADLEUS (2019)

Winds of Change

This year I am studying International and Global Studies at Sydney University. I also started working in the McCredie boarding house at Abbotsleigh and coaching a junior netball team.

It's often said that the only constant in life is change. We are constantly evolving, finding ourselves in situations that we never expected. At times, it will feel like we are standing on top of a mountain, the wind blowing through our hair, ready to take on any challenges that come our way. Other times, it feels as if we are being tossed in the depths of the sea, giving all our strength to just getting through the next day.

At the end of last year, December 10, I was sitting in my car outside Abbotsleigh Junior School, when a tree branch weighing around 250 kg fell onto my car, trapping me inside. The impact of the branch broke and dislocated two vertebrae in my neck, chipped another, as well as breaking a couple of ribs. After just over an hour, I was freed from my car and rushed to hospital, where I had surgery to fuse my vertebrae together. I spent about two weeks in hospital, and then two months in a (very flattering) neck brace. So, from the start, I had to get comfortable with knowing that this was not going to be what I expected my first year out of school to look like.

For a long time, I couldn't do much, except sit and think. So, as soon as I got out of my neck brace, I tried and expected to be able to go back to the same, extremely busy lifestyle I had been living before. Instead, I found myself getting exhausted and soon realised that I didn't give myself enough time to rest and to heal. I had to change my own expectations around what I was able to do.

COVID-19 isolation looked a little different for everyone, some took the extra time to learn a new skill, others ended up busier than before, trying to keep livelihoods afloat. For me, isolation was a chance to reflect, and a chance to heal.

I recently came across a quote I'd noted while listening to Oprah's *SuperSoul* conversation podcast with Joel Osteen: "If you embrace the winds of change that you thought were going to destroy you, they will end up pushing you into a divine future." It got me thinking about the winds of change that our world is currently facing, as well as those that we are personally facing.



Clem, Rosie and Stella visiting Caitlin in hospital

Isolation presented many different challenges, but also opened my eyes to the joy that can be found in the day to day, and how it has given so many of us a chance to stop, breathe and re-evaluate how we spend our time. While not being surrounded by people was hard, isolation gave me the opportunity to take the time to heal my body, to reflect and learn about myself, and to think about what I wanted my 'new normal' to be.

During isolation, I reflected a lot upon the idea of hope and what it actually means. This beautiful definition of hope by Morgan Harper Nichols came up on my Instagram feed: "Hope is not just wishful thinking. Hope is the audacity to believe: 'after all I've been through, there is more ahead of me.'" I love this definition, but I also think that it is *because* of what we've been through, not *despite* what we've been through, that there is more ahead of us. I am a big believer of there being a reason for everything we go through, both the good and the bad. Our experiences shape us, they develop our character, our story, our influence, and are continually evolving. Our stories have more power than we realise.

While embracing winds of change is definitely easier said than done, I want to end with the question, what are the winds of change that you have been facing? And in what ways have they made you stronger?



JUDITH GARDNER (Bearup, 1942)

I live in an independent living place in Fairfax County, near Washington, D.C. Just after the war, my father was transferred to London with the ABC and the family followed shortly after. I landed a job at Australia House and took advantage, visiting several European countries during holiday time. One summer, I was lucky enough to be sent to Geneva, to work in the Australian Delegation at the United Nations, where I could practise my schoolgirl French. It was so far from home and so interesting.

After nine years in London, I told my father I wanted to go home and he said, "that would be too bad without seeing America." My boss in External Affairs, whose previous post had been Washington D.C., set up a job for me in the Australian Embassy there. I met an American Foreign Service Officer and we married at his first overseas assignment, Madagascar. He had needed to get permission to marry a 'foreigner', and that was granted three days after he arrived in Tananarive. Other posts were Laos, Indonesia (after language training) twice, Turkey, Cambodia and Papua New Guinea.

The pandemic started here in early March. At first, two people could sit at the same table. Then, the dining room was closed and each resident was asked to fill in a form showing their choice for dinner. We then went downstairs to pick up our meal. This became a worry, as too many people were gathered together in close confinement. So, meals were then delivered to each apartment. We were asked to put a small piece of furniture at the door where the meal could be placed and the staff could be protected. The meals were served in styrofoam containers, which were destroyed after each meal and not re-used.

We couldn't leave the facility and nobody could come in. We could walk outside for exercise; there is a nice lake nearby, so that was pleasant. My husband is in assisted living next door, but I'm not allowed to visit him (have done Skype a couple of times, but that is all).

No resident has been infected with the virus, but seven staff members were and anyone who had been in any contact with them had to be quarantined for two weeks. All are now recovered. Anyone who has had to go to a place where there are crowds must then be quarantined. Two people who had had to spend time in hospital for other problems had to go through that too. Someone from the



Fairfax Health Department came and was impressed with what had been done here to cope with the problem, but suggested certain changes be made. The gym, theatre, business office and craft room were all closed and exercise classes suspended (they are now back to before). Our temperatures are taken every day. Only one person is allowed in the lift at a time, unless it's with a family member. Masks must be worn when in an area with other people. Our mailboxes in the lobby were made off-limits and mail was delivered to the front desk and then delivered to our doors. Apparently, this was at the request of the Post Office to protect their postman from any infection.

Shopping is a problem not being allowed out, so the two drivers who don't have many requests to drive people now have been put on shopping duty. They go out to purchase our necessities and bring them back to our door. Many items were scarce in the stores as people were stocking up when they could. I asked my daughter to get me some Vitamin C 500 mg. She went to the store as soon as it opened at 7 am, but said there was only one 1000 mg bottle left, so I'd have to cut the tablets in half! Most medical services closed for three months, e.g. I had my annual eye exam scheduled for June (appointment made six months earlier) but I got a call to say it would be rescheduled - for October!

A big problem was going to a hair salon, but when they finally opened, it was such a good feeling to get back to what you felt was your proper style.

Churches have been closed, as have schools. Students were given lessons at home by computer. All entertainers were barred from coming here, but now we see their performances on our computers. I am a tennis player, but no games now as the club closed.

My daughter is so disappointed that she has not been here since January, so she and her husband plan to drive cross-country from New Mexico, arriving here on 1 September to see me. The planes and airports worry them, though people still seem to be flying. As no one is allowed to stay at my place, they have rented a house, so we can have daily rendezvous—socially-distanced, unless they can get a test when they arrive here.

Some problems have yet to be resolved and even after all these months there are groups who won't wear masks, or stay out of crowds.

EMILY HARRIS (Hickson, 1988)

Despite the unquestionable seriousness of COVID-19 and the ensuing mess that 2020 has so far been, the past few months have provided an unexpected and precious hiatus for my family.

We live on a property in north-western NSW. We have two children at university and two still at boarding school. In fact, our third child Phoebe is part of the now-infamous 2020 Year 12 Abbotsleigh cohort.

We live just outside the border town of Mungindi, a community which is deep in our hearts and to which we are very proud to belong. While our life here has provided our children with a vast array of important life-skill-educational experiences, the opportunities for scholastic advancement have been more limited.

In 2008, we made the tough decision to send our eldest, Sophie (Abbotsleigh, 2018) away to boarding school. She was just 10, and already our days of living 24/7 together as a family were ending. The payoff has been the wonderful friends our children have made, the excellent education they have received, the access to afterschool sporting opportunities and to extra-curricular activities such as speech and drama, musical instrument lessons and art classes (much of which would have been impossible where we live). The major disadvantage, however, has been that since 2008, we have not lived together permanently as a family. One by one, over the years, the children have come and gone from different

primary schools, different secondary schools, university colleges, and all within the two different states of NSW and Queensland.

So, it was with great delight that on 24 March 2020, my husband and I welcomed all four kids (now aged 21, 19, 17, and 15) back into the fold – and not just for a two-week period of a scheduled school holiday break, but for what seemed to be an indefinite period. And we loved it. Don't get me wrong, it wasn't all fuzzy feelings and warm hearts every moment of the day, but it was a quantity of time to spend together that we didn't ever expect to have again.

How lovely it was to have dinners together every night of the week. For them to get bored of my cooking. To listen to them squabble over whose turn it was to unpack the dishwasher.

To sit around a table and talk about how their school and university studies were progressing. To complete a jigsaw which, if you are an 'instagrammer', immediately classifies you as a happy family.

As boarding parents, when our kids come home on holidays, we try to make sure we don't have too much on, so that we can spend quality time with them. We tend to be a little less disciplinarian than we perhaps should be, as we are only with them for such a short period, and we want desperately for it to be a happy time. My husband, who travels a lot with his job, makes sure he schedules work around home so he can be here. We put off local social events which we might normally be involved in – because

we would rather do kid-based activities and things that we can enjoy as a family. But when the children were home during lockdown, we too had to resume our everyday busy working life – and I think it was good for them to see how much we have going on when they are not around.

Another great advantage of this lockdown was that because no one else in Australia was doing anything remotely interesting, there was nothing being posted on social media to make our teenagers feel like they were missing out. They weren't comparing themselves to anyone else – they were able to simply concentrate on their own life, their own day, their own needs. They realised how lucky they were to be able to come home to isolation in Mungindi (although, to be honest, isolation is a way of life on a property, so nothing much has changed there). To think that I had spent so many parenting years trying to explain this to them – little did I know all it would take was a pandemic to highlight how great our life is out here.

The other thing I have noticed is how loud and proud we can be about being farmers! We have been recognised nationally as essential workers. Australia is more than able to grow and provide enough food and fibre to feed and clothe not only our own population, but much of the developing world's population. And we Australian farmers do it well.

While I sympathise with countless other families who have tough tales to tell, (and we too have had to make some tough decisions in our business due to coronavirus), I am still grateful

for the precious time I have spent with my children. We have been able to re-connect with and reflect on just how good our life in rural Australia really is.



Emily Harris's kids at a black-tie dinner held at home in Mungindi during lockdown. They held 'Phoebe's fake formal' (complete with photo booth) just in case she doesn't get to have the real thing due to COVID-19 restrictions.

Snippets

Wendy Bowman OAM (1951)

Murrurundi artist David Darcy has won the People's Choice Award for the National Portrait Gallery's inaugural Darling Portrait Prize for his painting of farmer and internationally recognised environmentalist, Wendy Bowman OAM. Mrs Bowman established the lobby group Minewatch NSW in 1990 after open cut mines began to develop across the Hunter Valley. For the full story, visit <https://www.abc.net.au/news/2020-06-18/painter-david-darcy-wins-national-portrait-gallery-prize/12367590>



2019 leavers

Despite the challenges the world is facing, we are pleased to share that we have five 2019 leavers who will be studying overseas.

- Jessica Cejnar (pictured with her family, including mother Leela Cejnar [Underwood, 1982]) – Exeter College at Oxford to study Law
- Olivia Chen – Selwyn College at Cambridge to study Economics
- Natasha Huang – Fitzwilliam College at Cambridge to study Behavioural Sciences (Psychology)
- Vicky Wang – Emmanuel College at Cambridge to study English Literature
- Winona Lu – NYU Tisch College to study Film and Television



Michele Cotton AM (1965) and Jenetta Russell OAM (1973)

Two Old Girls were recognised in this year’s Queen’s Birthday Honours List. The late Dr Michele Cotton was the recipient of the Member of the Order (AM) for significant service to veterinary science, education and professional organisations (awarded posthumously). Jenetta Russell was awarded a Medal of the Order of Australia for service to the community and to business, in particular as a leading woman in the agricultural industry. You can read more about these remarkable Old Girls in the August 2020 edition of *Around Abbotsleigh*.



Jenetta Russell



Michele Cotton

Corrigan family (Bell, 1974) and (2005)

Two Old Girls, Lucinda Corrigan (Bell, 1974) and her daughter Ruth Corrigan (2005), featured on the cover of the August/September issue of Outback magazine! From a small parcel of land drawn in a ballot in the 1870s, the article describes the family’s southern NSW enterprise “Rennylea” as one of the most highly regarded Angus studs in Australia today. Go to <https://www.outbackmag.com.au/strong-foundations/> to read a story excerpt, the full version is available for purchase online or in newsagents. #RennyleaAngus



Robyn Claydon

Last month, Honorary Life Member of the AOGU, former Deputy Head and later Chaplain of Abbotsleigh, Mrs Robyn Claydon, was awarded her OAM for services to Education and the Anglican church at Government House, postponed from March because of COVID-19. Robyn said it was a beautiful ceremony despite the rain. She was accompanied by her husband David and granddaughter Georgia Barker (2011), which made the day extra special. Mrs Claydon visited Abbotsleigh earlier this year as part of the School’s 135th birthday celebrations. Our congratulations go to Robyn.



Georgia Dawson (1993)

Congratulations to Georgia Dawson who has been named senior partner of international law firm Freshfields Bruckhaus Deringer. It’s a remarkable achievement: first female senior partner, first Australian senior partner and first Abbotsleigh Old Girl to run one of the world’s elite law firms. Founded in 1743, Freshfields is known as one of the ‘Magic Circle’ firms, meaning Georgia has broken the gender barrier by becoming the first woman to lead one of the most critically respected firms across the globe. Georgia was a boarder at Abbotsleigh and Head Prefect in 1993.



Abbotsleigh's 135th birthday assembly

Old Girls played an important role in Abbotsleigh's 135th birthday celebrations last month.

The annual school's birthday assembly, which was twice postponed and radically different to the norm thanks to COVID-19 considerations, was shared with students, staff and special guests via Zoom.

As is tradition, AOGU President Belinda Burton read the School Lesson, however this year it was delivered via video. "On behalf of the Abbotsleigh Old Girls' Union, I'd like to wish Abbotsleigh a very happy 135th birthday," Mrs Burton said. "It certainly is a birthday year that won't be forgotten."

A highlight of the assembly was a special video featuring Old Girls sharing some of their favourite Abbotsleigh memories. **[Click here to enjoy the video.](#)**

In her address, Headmistress Mrs Megan Krimmer reminded the girls it was an occasion to celebrate and to think not about the things we can't do, but instead think about the things we can do.

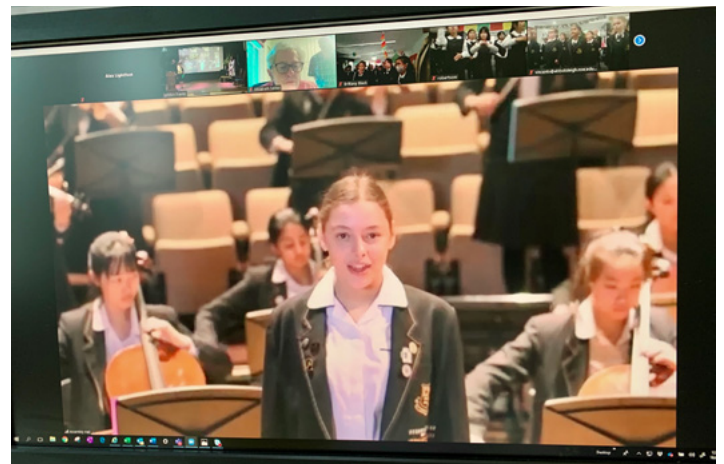
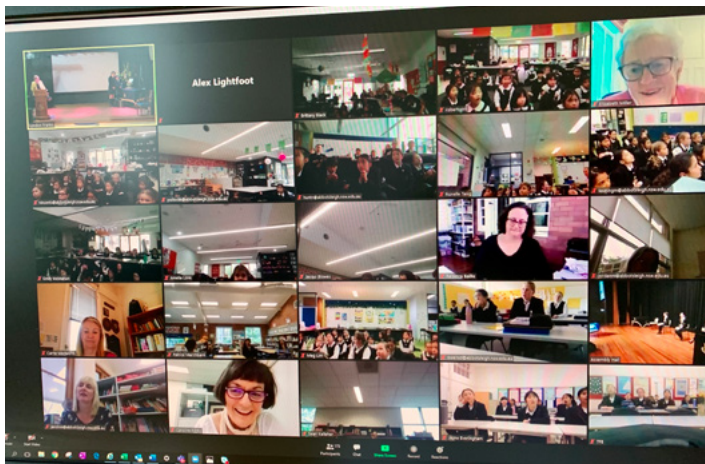
"We are all safe, we are healthy, we are so fortunate in so many ways," Mrs Krimmer said.

"You are just like the Abbotsleigh girls of old; Abbotsleigh girls who lived through WWI and the Spanish flu; then a few years later, Abbotsleigh girls who lived through the Depression and WWII," she said. "They were times when girls had to adapt and do things differently, times when they heard about, and were part of, very sad news."

She said these were times when Abbotsleigh girls had demonstrated what current girls had demonstrated this year – courage, compassion, looking after one another, strength, resilience and a growth mindset.

Mrs Krimmer also encouraged the girls to continue to do what every Abbotsleigh girl has done before and to live out the school values – "think about, and do, things that make the world that you touch a much better place".

"Happy 135th birthday Abbotsleigh. Happy birthday to the School that has been blessed by God and the School that has most definitely stood the test of time."



Moving House?

Update your contact details [here](#)

Gifts that last a lifetime

Visit the [Abbotsleigh website](#) or contact the [Development Office](#) for more information.



Stay Connected Contact the Old Girls

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2020 AOGU Centenary Scholarship Announcement

Congratulations to Olivia Santow who was awarded the 2020 AOGU Centenary Scholarship at the 135th school's birthday assembly last month.

AOGU President, Belinda Burton, wished Olivia continued success for her future. She is confident that Olivia will continue to make a very positive impact on Abbotsleigh and the wider community.

The Centenary Scholarship was inaugurated by the AOGU in 1985 to commemorate Abbotsleigh's Centenary Year. It is awarded annually to a Year 11 girl (whose mother is an Old Girl), who by her effort and enthusiasm, participates in a broad spectrum of the School's curriculum and community activities.

In accepting the scholarship, Olivia said she was honoured to have been chosen from such a worthy group of girls and was grateful to the AOGU for the generosity shown in presenting it every year; "I am very fortunate to have grown up as a daughter of an Old Girl, my mum (Rebecca Baillie, 1989) and her school friends always talked so fondly of their times at Abbotsleigh and the many opportunities that the School brought them. The School has given me so much already and I know that I will cherish these opportunities as I prepare to enter Year 12 and eventually leave high school."



Year 12 2020 final assembly and chapel

The Abbotsleigh Class of 2020 has recently celebrated a joyous milestone, finishing 13 years of school. Many Old Girls will remember the extreme emotions this day brings! The final assembly, attended by Year 12 students in the Assembly Hall (seated on the familiar-to-some green benches!) and shared via Zoom with their parents as well as girls and staff across the School, featured a special video of Old Girls from a variety of leaving years sending their best wishes for the HSC and beyond.

In addition, Year 7 boarder and daughter of Old Girl Jessica McKay (Shannon, 1997), Willa, related her experiences of being new to Abbotsleigh and expressed her gratitude to the leadership shown by Year 12 2020. At the conclusion of the assembly, every Year 12 girl received a yellow rose, made her way along a guard of honour formed by staff and was presented with a Yearbook accompanied by a handwritten note of support from our youngest Old Girls, the 2019 leavers. Year 12 2020 includes 18 daughters of Old Girls as well as another five who are descendants of Old Girls. Best of luck for the future girls and we look forward to welcoming our newest recruits into the Abbotsleigh Old Girls community!



2020 AOGU 110th Anniversary Grant call for applications

As part of its 110th Anniversary celebrations, the AOGU launched its 110th Anniversary Grant program in 2018. The aim of this program is to support Old Girls in meaningful endeavours to benefit the community or have a positive social impact. The Grant recognises the value that Old Girls add by being contributory members to their local and/or worldwide communities through financial assistance and raising awareness of their activities. Such activities may include, but are not limited to, contributions to national or international service work, significant creative and performing arts projects and extraordinary sports or research project.

The AOGU is now calling for applications from eligible Old Girls for a limited number of grants between \$1,000 and \$5,000.

Full terms and conditions and application form are available on the AOGU website.

<https://www.abbotsleigh.nsw.edu.au/old-girls/old-girl-news/aogu-110th-anniversary-grant>. If you have any further questions, please contact the Grants Subcommittee aoguanniversarygrants@abbotsleigh.nsw.edu.au.

Applications close on **Monday 12 October 2020** and the winner(s) will be announced at the AOGU AGM on Wednesday 18 November 2020.



Notice of the Abbotsleigh Old Girls' Union Annual General Meeting 2020 on Wednesday 18 November 2020

The Annual General Meeting of the Abbotsleigh Old Girls' Union Incorporated will be held via Zoom on **Wednesday 18 November 2020 commencing at 7.30 pm**. All AOGU members are welcome. Please RSVP to the Old Girls Office and a Zoom invitation will be sent to you.

Order of business

1. Confirmation of the minutes of the previous AGM;
2. Receive and consider the Annual Report of the Honorary President;
3. Receive and consider the Annual Report of the Honorary Treasurer including the audited financial statements and the Auditor's report for the year ending 30 June 2020;
4. Appoint the auditor for the year 2020/2021;
5. Receive and consider the Annual Report of the Honorary Secretary;
6. Elect the Committee and Officers for 2020/2021 including confirmation of AOGU nominated Abbotsleigh Council Representatives; and
7. To conduct any other business of which 14 days prior written notice has been given.

All Committee and Officer positions will be declared vacant at the AGM and nominations for these positions are now open.

Nominations of candidates for positions on the Abbotsleigh Old Girl's Union Committee must be signed by the proposer and seconder and be accompanied by the written consent of the nominee. Nomination forms can be obtained by contacting the Old Girls' Office at aogu@abbotsleigh.nsw.edu.au or on 9473 7740. Nominations must be received **by 5pm Monday 9 November 2020** by: The Honorary Secretary, AOGU, Locked Bag 1666, Wahroonga NSW 2076 or via aogu@abbotsleigh.nsw.edu.au.

Members of the AOGU who wish to receive a ballot paper for the election of the Committee, including the Council Representative, must write to the Secretary requesting a ballot paper **by Monday 9 November 2020**. Ballot papers must be returned **by Monday 16 November 2020** to: The Honorary Secretary, AOGU, Locked Bag 1666, Wahroonga NSW 2076 or via aogu@abbotsleigh.nsw.edu.au

For more information, please contact Sarah Franks, Honorary Secretary of the AOGU via email at aogu@abbotsleigh.nsw.edu.au

2020 and 2021 reunions

Reunions might still be up in the air, but we know that should the current COVID-19 situation change, there are Old Girls ready to reunite – even if it is a year later than originally planned. Please rest assured that we are looking forward to helping you celebrate as soon as possible! Many Old Girls have already volunteered to be Reunion Coordinators for 2020 but we are now also seeking 2021 event organisers. If you are interested in helping coordinate your future reunion, please contact the Old Girls Office. Now is a great time to reconnect with classmates and gather contact details so invitations can be ready to go!

2010, 10 Year Reunion

Camila Hart	hart.millie@gmail.com
Eunice Fung	Eunice.fung@hotmail.com
Alexandra Dennis	alexandra.a.dennis@gmail.com
Elyce McClelland	elyce.mcclelland@gmail.com

2005, 15 Year Reunion

Shreya Aggarwala	Shreya8788@hotmail.com
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2000, 20 Year Reunion

Leonie Marsh (Mansfield)	abbclassof2000@gmail.com
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1995, 25 Year Reunion

Lisa Bloom (Thiedeman)	lisa.bloom@im3vet.com
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1990, 30 Year Reunion

Looking for coordinators

1985, 35 Year Reunion

Lucy Rigby	lucyrigby@bigpond.com
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1980, 40 Year Reunion

Linda Lorimer (Pratten)	abbotsleigh1980@gmail.com
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1980, 40 Year Reunion Boarders' Evening

Anne Knoblanche (Webb)	knoblanche@gmail.com
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1975, 45 Year Reunion

Wendy Wilson (Fowler Smith)	wendyfw65@gmail.com
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1970, 50 Year Reunion

Libby Gardiner (Amos)	libgardiner@bigpond.com
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1971, 50 Year Reunion – October 2021 tbc

Catherine Morrison (FitzSimons)	cathmorrfitz@yahoo.com
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1965, 55 Year Reunion

Dimity Riley (Wood)	dimity.riley@bigpond.com
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1960, 60 Year Reunion

Anne Le Couteur (Bullen)	alecouteur@mac.com
Morag Hollway	umhollway@ozemail.com.au
Jane Meggitt (Rutherford)	jmeggitt@meggies.com.au

1950 and 1951, 70 Year Reunion

Organised by the Old Girls Office

Are you interested in joining a group of vibrant, dedicated and generous women?

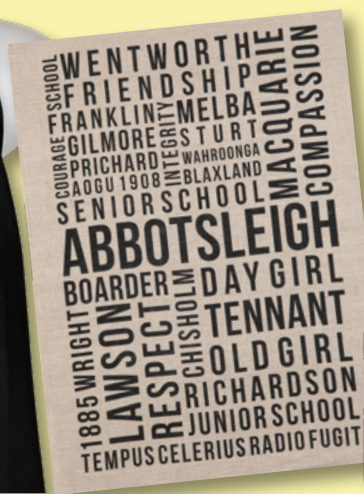
I warmly invite you to consider joining the Abbotsleigh Old Girls' Union (AOGU) Committee for 2021. The AOGU has a long tradition of exceptional Old Girls volunteering their time to serve on the Committee. These women share a love of the School and its traditions, a passion for girls' education and value the importance of maintaining a connection with Abbotsleigh and connecting the generations of amazing girls who have passed through these doors.

The Committee comprises women from a variety of backgrounds. Diversity is essential and all skills and contributions are welcome. It is a wonderful opportunity to support the Old Girls community and to build our network of women supporting each other. If you can spare some of your time, I strongly encourage you to get involved.

We meet twice a term during the school term on a Wednesday evening at 7.30 pm at Abbotsleigh (currently via Zoom).

If you are interested, you are welcome to join us at one of our meetings this year to see what is involved prior to making a commitment. The AOGU Committee is appointed annually in November at the AGM. Feel free to **contact me** if you have any further questions.

Belinda Burton
President, AOGU



Aprons \$25 each or two for \$40
Tea towels \$15 each or three for \$35
Portable chargers \$25 each

All profits from merchandise sales go towards the Kathleen McCredie Award.

Order here
Or call 02 9473 7740



***Cover image**

In 1901, our first Headmistress, Miss Marian Clarke, purchased nearly three acres of land on the corner of Lucinda Avenue and Lane Cove Road (Pacific Highway), five minutes' walk from School House. Called 'fields', it was fully laid out with two tennis courts, seats, a basketball court and cricket pitch. Due to 'fields', Abbotsleigh is recognised as the first school in Australia to provide sporting facilities for girls, the first to offer cricket to girls and one of the earliest schools to play basketball.

