



Papanui High School Alumni Association Newsletter



Jeff Smith
Principal

Dear Alumni members.

2020 is fast coming to an end, as I remember back to the start of the school year which began with our traditional pōwhiri. We had hoped for a settled year, however, March once again greeted us with an enormous challenge as we negotiated the Pandemic. Consequently, Term 1 ended earlier than expected, and we quickly found ourselves fully offsite, and experiencing teaching and learning beyond the school gate.

Our 'new normal' came with the use of some new terminology such as; Alert levels, self-isolation, contact tracing, social and physical distancing, bubbles, zoom, and google meet. We adjusted to Government announcements day by day. This was a very new and challenging situation for everyone and we represented this frequently with the *whakataukī* - *He waka eke noa*. We are all in this together.

We were all hugely relieved when we progressed back through the Alert Levels and were able to return to school and reconnect. Although this was a bit of an anxious time, school life quickly returned to normal. Our senior students were supported by the government amending NCEA requirements, and teaching and learning focused on moving forward as opposed to catching up.

It is also with great relief that the school's co-curricular programme swung back into action. Testament to our school's community getting back on its feet, and making the most of every opportunity, was that we were able to hold almost all of our celebratory events this term, including our senior prize giving at the Town Hall. They were all fantastic occasions with a large number of students, staff and community attending and being recognised for their outstanding success, effort and contribution. I would like to thank and acknowledge the large number of past students who contribute prizes/trophies for many of the events, it is greatly appreciated by the school, and our students.

Papanui High School Alumni Association

30 Langdons Rd, Papanui, 8053 Christchurch, New Zealand

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As with each year, we said a sad farewell to two very long serving staff members; Mrs Attwood retired after over 41 years of service, and Mrs Denise Hoskin from our main office after 28 years. I would like to acknowledge and thank them for their outstanding contribution to the school.

Very strong relationships continue to grow and develop with the local community through links with local businesses, shared community facilities, and Adult Education programmes. We are always interested in further developing these, and in ways in which our past students can contribute back to their school.

On another exciting note, the school has moved forward with its Master Planning, resulting in pre-design phase of two new buildings, and a refurbishment of the teaching spaces in the main administration block being completed. Hopefully by the end of next year we will have started the first project.

I would also like to thank those past students from the 1960's plus or minus a decade or two, who attended the Alumni Lunch in October. This culminated in a guided tour of the school. I am sure you enjoyed catching up, sharing stories and seeing the many changes the school has undergone over the years.

This has been in many ways an immensely challenging and complex year – but, it is also important to remember what has been achieved. We are the sum of all our parts. This is a great, supportive, and caring school. I would like to collectively acknowledge the respect and gratitude I have for our absolutely committed and dedicated staff, our students, our Board of Trustees, our PTA, and the support and contribution from parents, whānau, and our alumni.

I wish you all well, a safe and happy holiday period and a prosperous New Year.

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Alumni Coordinator – Jo Thomas-Hiddleston - December 2020

As challenging as 2020 has been, we had successful turnouts to the events we have been able to run. Starting the year with the 1980s Reunion, with three further events in the pipeline before Covid-19 saw those canceled. However, all was not lost, we set to and created a Labour Weekend Reunion for all year groups, which was a success, and thanks to Rob Nicol the 1960's Coordinator for his part in assisting pull this all together. Our Student Service group, headed up by Kaitlyn Gibson-Rayner, participated with full enthusiasm and commitment by hosting our Alumni visitors on a school tour. I must say the students were knowledgeable and proud of 'their school.' It was my privilege to work with Rob Nicol and the students involved in the Service Committee to make the reunion weekend happen.

I have the great privilege of introducing a book of poems and hi-lighting the life and success of one of our Alumni – Jess Fieberg – her success is note worthy and we are proud of her. Well done Jess.

I have also been given access to a fabulous article written by Frances Lawson nee Free, who attended the 2020 reunion weekend. Frances writes a blog and was able to highlight our reunion. After reading her article you might like to look her blog up, it is well worth following. The blog showcases interesting places and things as seen through Frances' eyes.

There is something special about being part of the Alumni Association, and it has been wonderful to see, this last few years the increase in younger Alumni joining the ALUMNI organization.

Keeping the connection with our old pupils is the essence of our community. This is achieved through events and social gatherings. A partnership of the two is necessary for our continued growth. It is a pleasure to have you all onboard and I look forward to more events in the 2021 year.

I am interested in printing in future Alumni newsletters

Alumni Milestones :Weddings / Births / Deaths

Promoting: 'Our People' Success Stories of our Alumni.

Advertising: Our Alumni Family who are now in business—email over your business card.

Please keep me up-to-date on any of the above.

Our Community News is well worth reading, here is the link—click on this or enter the information

<https://drive.google.com/drive/folders/1xOzgEyoxxdc1YNkb8bPsqSOudwmrVS1N>

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Celebrating our Alumni

Jess Fieberg



My time at Papanui was the foundation for the person I am today; it was during my high school years I was able to find space away from a chaotic home life and reflect about the kind of person I wanted to be. I still think of the wonderful teachers I had and the way they nurtured me and encouraged my creativity.

It's taken some time for me to face into the impact my formative years have had on shaping me. I grew up in a home where there was addiction and violence and during my mid-twenties, when an abusive relationship ended, I faced into some difficult home truths: why was accepting and excusing abuse so easy for me? Why did I need to be busy, all the time? Why did not being in a relationship feel so impossibly lonely?

While I've always been high functioning, finally, I realised I hadn't emerged from my upbringing unscathed. I had to learn how to be alone for the first time, how to cope with a mental breakdown with little family support. I felt the cold touch of grief for the life I had planned and the one I received, and was wading through my own mental health issues, self-harm and an eating disorder.

It was in this time, thick in the hot adrenaline of my anxiety, that I began to write. I barely slept as I grappled with crippling depression and words flowed out of me more easily than they ever had before. Suddenly, I had so much to say, about growing up with addiction, my friendships, heartbreak, madness, dislocation and sexual violence.

My Honest Poem details that journey of acceptance, from a childhood left to my own devices, to an adulthood marked by my own self destructive choices.

While this content sounds difficult, My Honest Poem is a coming of age story about rebuilding hope and self in the spaces left by trauma. These aren't easy experiences but they are also not uncommon; I believe my story will resonate with many. My Honest Poem is ultimately about recovery and how to find gentleness and strength in a life fractured by violence.

Christchurch poet Jess Fieberg's poetry has been published in journals such as Aotearotica, Best New Zealand Poems, Catalyst, Landfall, Takahē, Turbine, Poetry NZ Yearbook and New Zealand Poetry Society. She was runner up in 2019 Sarah Broom Poetry Prize. Her first collection of poetry, My Honest Poem, was published in August 2020 by Auckland University Press. She was a student at Papanui High School from 2004-2008 and was head girl in her final year. <https://aucklanduniversitypress.co.nz/my-honest-poem/>



Friday, 30 October 2020 as written and posted by Frances Lawson

Frances writes a blog called [To The Ends of the Earth](https://francesbigadventure.blogspot.com) – it is well worth reading francesbigadventure.blogspot.com

A piece about the Alumni Labour Weekend Reunion 2020

Last week I had the opportunity to have a luncheon with other alumni from Papanui High in Christchurch. The luncheon was followed by a tour of the current school, guided by senior students. These events are rare and it was quite by chance that I heard about it in advance.

I'd been chatting to an ex-Waitakere City Council colleague Darryl who mentioned the get-together and so we discovered we had both gone to the very same high school, but that our paths had never crossed. Darryl had been there a little ahead of me and left just before I arrived. Alas for me, that was the case for most of the attendees. There was no-one else at the luncheon I had known during my time at the high school.





The school was originally called Papanui Technical college and opened in 1936. It was renamed Papanui High School in 1944. My maternal uncle, Eric McNabb attended while it was still a technical college. There he is in a cadet's uniform at the college.

I attended Papanui High School from 1968-72, leaving at the end of the seventh form year. I'd been a member of various choirs, the orchestra, the drama club and photography club and a chamber music group. I had continued to play the violin and was active in school productions.

My last year there saw me in the lead role in the 'Calamity Jane' production. Some of you might think I was well cast and am still a 'calamity'. I was a big success in the production and it was one of the few times in life I felt appreciated or talented. [photos show me signing autographs while Principal, Ted Fancy and his wife speak to my mother, me stripping during a rehearsal in the hall and then threatening with a rifle a bar patron in the same musical Calamity Jane.





My school gave me an opportunity to discover aspects of myself that I still use today. That's the mark of a good school and although I was never a great scholastic talent I did cram a fair amount of experiences in and seem to have gone further than many alumni, in certain areas.



I enjoyed listening to other alumni's stories and being shown around the current school. We all reminisced constantly, sharing our recollections with our student guides because society and the times have radically changed.

From time to time I would step back and listen in as the transfer of school history between alumni and current students picked up pace. I was watching something very important happening and I thoroughly enjoyed interacting with the senior students who seemed confident, well-behaved, open-minded and balanced.





When we had been students at the school we were streamed, depending on our IQ and academic tendencies. I was put in the professional stream, others were more commercial or technical. There was even a unique class with the prefix NM for non-math's. I never progressed math's beyond the fourth form and for my final three years I was spared the suffering of not understanding math's lessons. There were only a handful of us who were excused but we were all reasonably intelligent, just no good at math's. I wasn't much good at French either but, look where it eventually led me - life in France. My English teacher Mr. Bunn married my French teacher Miss Cowie after I left. In those days boys and girls were kept separate as much as possible, even in a co-educational environment. We found ways around that, of course. The only time I got a detention was for being in the music rooms after reasonable hours.

A group of us were playing 'spin the bottle' and 'truth, dare or promise'. We were having a whale of a time and were not doing anything dreadful but as the group started to break up we were caught out by a member of staff.





See empty cloakroom and seating photo below for that very room. It's hard to believe our orchestra instruments were stored there; my violin in its case on the seating, the double basses and cellos ranged along the walls. A smaller, separate room was used for the brass band instruments. I clearly remember my drama teacher Mr Bunn trying to encourage a younger boy and me to practice kissing there for the production of Romeo and Juliet. We were both mortified to be singled out and having to do THAT. I was a shy student mercilessly tormented by the band boys because of my surname FREE.

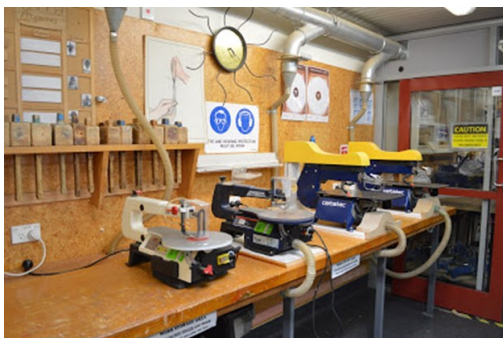
Boys can be so cruel.



Our alumni group were very saddened to see the integrity of the layout of the school almost unrecognizable. The cricket grounds out the front which had framed the main block had been replaced by ugly asphalt and cars. One key block had been amputated and flogged off in return for the use of a new gym and access to swimming. The old swimming pool was gone, instead there was a dance studio and Maori/Polynesian structure. The environs are far less aesthetic than they were, both inside and out and the principal explained it is difficult for the school, being sandwiched between a mall, big-box developments, a railway and lack of access and parking.

The school offers a broad range of subjects and even hosts an ESOL unit and one for Special Needs kids up to the age of 20. Our group got excited to see the solid materials department with so much technical equipment which includes 3D printing. "You are so lucky," we said to the students showing us around because we'd had to manage with almost nothing.

There were plenty of ooos and ahhs as we explored the campus, trying to orient ourselves with various buildings, but much has changed. Politics and a changing society have radically modified subject content, delivery and focus. At least girls and boys are free to follow subject they wish.





In my day I had no right to do technical drawing or sewing or other home economics. Girls, especially, knew they had to follow the career path dictated by their mothers. I did liberal studies in my last years at Pap and chose to render hairdressing services to ladies in a retirement home. The school paid for a portable kit for me and Langers hairdressing trained me. I did so well they offered me an apprenticeship but my mother scotched that idea. Too working class for her snobby ideas but maybe I would have had a chain of hairdressing salons and a stable career rather than the constant instability that became my reality.

I was particularly curious to see the theatre and music departments. Oh! how I would love to be a student in today's times. They have their own little theatre and lighting gear. As I toured the new music rooms I saw plenty of acoustic guitars, an electric guitar, bass and drum kit but little in the way of classical instruments other than piano. There was a long table covered in electronic musical keyboards. How cool!



The former gymnasium is now a study room. There's an ICT room full of computers, photoshop and graphic design software. It really is a different world but our group agreed our level of English is vastly superior to that of modern students.

I was stunned to be back in the old school assembly hall which was much as I remembered it. While no-one was looking, I pushed through those double doors that lead to the old music rooms and backstage and let the memories flood back. It's all old and sad looking but still recognizable. A lot of maintenance and improvements have not been allowed to happen due to rebuilding plans following the earthquakes. I climbed the steps backstage to access the stage. It was almost 50 years since I had stood on it. It felt great and entirely natural. Sooo much water has flowed under my bridge since 1972. I'm a lot more confident.



We remembered the uncomfortable wooden benches we used to sit on for assembly, boys one side and girls the other, school orchestra just in front of the stage, staff parading in while we sang the school song in latin. Crumbs! but we had respect for our elders (well, most of us did).

Large photo shows our group of alumni in the old assembly hall, me in mustard, Darryl on the left end of seating. We all enjoyed our trip back in time and into the future, interacting with students. I'd like to do more of that in future if given the opportunity.





The college in 1940. Note the space in front of the main wing which gave a wonderful perspective. Quite a bit of the space still existed when I studied there and the trees along the front on Langdon's Rd were a good size by then. credit photo http://ketechristchurch.peoplesnetworknz.info/en/site/images/show/2586-papanui-technical-college-in-the-1940s?view_size=medium

Below is the school orchestra in 1970, me in the top row second from right.





For those who are alumni, maybe you remember interacting with some of these teachers.



STAFF 1970

Back row: Mr Moore, Mr Miller, Mr Brown, Mr Fekkes, Mr Hickford, Mr Amodeo, Mr Barrett.
Third row: Mr Sydow, Mr Pierre, Mr Bunn, Mr Liddell, Mr Dann, Mr Dodgson, Mr Simpson, Mr Mander, Mr Nock, Mr Ball, Mr Johnston, Mr Davies.
Second row: Mrs Anderson, Mrs Kidd, Miss Munro, Mrs Wyde, Mrs Dollan, Miss McLay, Miss Craigie, Miss Armstrong, Miss Blomquist, Miss Young, Miss Kennedy, Mrs Marcon, Mrs Crawshaw, Miss Bradley.
Front row: Miss Waters, Mr Vincent, Mr Rowe, Miss Nicol, Mr McFedries, Miss Banks, Mr Hinton, Mr French (Deputy-Principal), Mr Fancy (Headmaster), Miss Roper (Senior Assistant Mistress), Mr Swan, Miss Cowie, Mr Russell, Mr Papps, Miss Alexander, Mr Stott. Absent: Mr Hay.

Other images of what is left of the old historic parts of the school. My heartfelt thanks to the staff and senior students for such a gift of revisiting such a key part of our pasts.





CALAMITY JANE

It seems that what Papanui audiences like most in live entertainment is a musical—comical—western! Our show ran for three nights, each one was booked out, and there were clamourings from those who were too lazy or too sceptical to buy tickets earlier. Hence, in audience appreciation alone, the show could be classed as a success.

During the crowd scenes there were eighty pupils on the stage. Most, at one time or another, doubted whether such a large number of inexperienced pupils could master the movements and singing required to give the show a good standard. Suddenly, at dress rehearsal everything came together, even the senior boys concentrated, and a show was created.

Much of the credit for this can be claimed by Calam—Frances Free, that is. Having had some experience in theatre she knew what was expected of her. She learnt her lines quickly. She worked out her own dance routines, she practised her songs, she concentrated on getting into the part of Calamity and, except for a certain modesty when revealing her (Calam's, that is!) underwear, showed confidence at all times. Frances has a great deal of talent, and should do well in theatre in the future.

One of the problems of any dramatic production at a secondary school is that of finding senior boys to fill important roles. It was with great pleasure that Mr Rowe and Mr Bunn saw David Ward (Wild Bill) and Shane Docherty (Danny Gilmartin), two fifth form boys, working hard at their singing and in the development of their characters. Altogether the fifth form and the junior school must be congratulated on the spirit of their representatives who took part and did a magnificent job while enjoying themselves fully.

Perhaps the main feature, however, of this production was the involvement of so many people: pupils, ex-pupils, music teachers, wives and husbands of some of the staff and twenty-five teachers all co-operated to create the final illusion.

The audience at a show sees very little; they know nothing about the sentimental tears shed at the end of the performances by some otherwise sophisticated young ladies, nor about the producer's being bitten by the caretaker's dog. Perhaps they would have got a laugh out of Wild Bill having to hold Calamity's hair on after she had taken her dress off!

Whatever the audience knows, 1972 will be remembered by many pupils as the year of (the) CALAMITY!

Some clips from the press:

"Polished show by children . . . (The) cast came up to the expectations of a packed house which gave these young people well deserved encouragement . . . Across (the) scenery danced, pranced, sang and talked an incredible number of people, who variously entertained with can-can dances, sang, clapped and generally looked colourful . . . This was a performance much above the average . . . We could, however, have done without the hills themselves."

—"Christchurch Star"

"The production of this popular show, while somewhat ponderous in places, boasts masses of enthusiasm and several impressive individual performances . . . Miss Free . . ."



Back row (left to right) is Holly Duston, Alisha Hitchens, Leah McCullam, Maia Jeffs, Emily Haldane, Leni Smith, Megan Townshend, Ruby Paynte and Kaitlin Gibson-Rayner.

Middle row (left to right) is Lucas Smith, Jack Haldane and Jolie Sarginson

Front row (left to right) is Caitlin Andrews and Charlotte Carrell

ow (left to right) is Holly Duston, Alisha Hitchens, Leah McCullam, Maia Jeffs, Emily Haldane

The Team from the Service Council who supported our 2020 Labor Weekend Reunion

The Service Council at Papanui High School is in its second year. This year we had a tight and professional team of 22 students, who were always keen and ready to help out. Service Council runs events such as, Lollipop Love, Rubbish Clean-ups, Can Collection, also helping out with different collections for different charities throughout the year. Additionally, we have a sub-council that helps to fundraise the support for Ronald McDonald House Teenage room. So why do we do it? Everyone has their own reasons on why they do service, however the primary reason I believe for everyone in the team is to give back to the community, to meet new people, learn new skills and of course because we all really enjoy it!!

Kaitlyn Gibson-Rayner Team Leader – November 2020