



Winter 2021

Welcome from Pook Austin, President of Fellowship

Dear Fellowship Member

I wish to welcome you all to our new online Fellowship Newsletter. It is very exciting to be forwarding news to you by email. By doing it this way we can keep you up to date much more regularly. However, we realise there are still a few people we do not have email addresses for: please encourage them to contact Jackie Dalton to update their details or to request a printed copy.

Many things have happened at Frensham in the past year. In December, Head of Frensham Schools, Ms Julie Gillick, retired after twenty years of incredible service, and in January 2021, was awarded an OAM in the Australia Day honours. A very well deserved award – congratulations Julie.

In January we welcomed the new Head of Frensham Schools, Ms Sarah McGarry. On behalf of Frensham Fellowship, I wish to welcome Ms McGarry. I hope that Fellowship members will have the chance to meet her in person at the next AGM on the 9 June, or a reunion soon thereafter.

Speaking of reunions... sadly due to COVID-19 they have not been held since March 2020, but we were delighted to welcome the 5 Year Reunion on 5-6 June 2021. Also for this year, we have a number of catch-up reunions and events that were postponed from last

year, and we hope to return soon to planned Cocktail parties, Garden Days and Lunches.

We are all in this together so Stay Positive, Stay Connected, and Stay Strong.

Should anyone have any queries please do not hesitate to contact me.

Best wishes

Pook Austin (Alison Cameron 1968)
President

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In love serve one another

FRENSHAM FELLOWSHIP
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www.frensham.nsw.edu.au/community/alumni



Ms Sarah McGarry, Head of Frensham Schools

I am thoroughly enjoying my first six months in the role as Head of Frensham Schools, getting to know the community and the rhythm of this special place.

The vision and inspiration of Winifred West, so central to Frensham Schools, underlies a mission, ethos and values that resonate entirely with my own educational philosophy, and with what research tells us is important to model for and instil in our students. Miss West’s vision, bold and courageous in the social, cultural and political landscape of the early 20th century, remains vitally relevant in 2021.

As we are busily preparing for this year’s Birthday Celebrations, the first we have celebrated in person since 2019, I have been reading and reflecting on some of her addresses over the School’s 108-year history. She wrote these poignant words, on the occasion of the School’s first birthday, June 1st, 1914:

However important the staff and the girls may be, the school is more comprehensive:

*It is more intangible
More lasting
More impersonal than a collection of individuals
It has its own soul
Its own life
And we hope will continue in years to come,
(when we individuals are no longer here)
An influence making itself felt in the world.*

Already I have a very strong sense of the intangible ‘soul’ and ‘life’ of Frensham, perhaps most strongly reflected in the Fellowship community. The ties that bind Frensham girls together during their years at school seem to last forever, and often continue through generations, with children and grandchildren following in their mothers’, aunts’ and grandmothers’ footsteps. These cross-generational connections, combined with an open and welcoming school community, make for a very warm, open and welcoming school community.

As a music educator, I was drawn to Frensham’s strong music tradition, and it is a joy to begin each day in song with the whole school at Morning Prayers. There is something extremely special about voices being raised together – in unison or with some of the beautiful descant lines enhancing the melody. The symbolism, of young women confidently raising their voices in gratitude and praise, is striking. Whilst we are not yet able to welcome Old Girls back to our Sunday Services, due to COVID restrictions, we are so looking forward to welcoming our first reunion group in over 12 months, the Five Years On Class of 2016.

Fellowship plays such an important part in both the history and the future of Frensham Schools – I look forward to joining with you at the AGM in June and to our strong association over the coming years.

Address to Julie Gillick by Cath Brennan

My speech to you today Julie, is the result of reading 20 years of Chronicle Reports written by you as Head of Frensham and Head of Frensham Schools. Through this, I also came to appreciate that I have been an active member of the Frensham community for 15 of your 20 years, firstly through my niece Matilda Raynolds (2003) and then through my daughters Lucy (2008) and Eliza (2015). Reading your reports, three key themes stood out for me:

- Firstly – *Challenges. Setting challenges and managing challenges.*
- Secondly – *Creating new traditions*
- Thirdly – *Cementing foundations for future growth*

Challenges

You always sought to raise the bar, never one to rest on your laurels. In 2000 you reported on embracing the technology challenge through the implementation

of K-12 Information Technology while balancing this with Social Competency, the need for connection and developing emotional intelligence.

In 2008, the focus was on nurturing three significant leadership qualities – tenacity, integrity and resilience. The excellent academic results from the 2008 Year 12 (Lucy's year) placed Frensham 21st in the top 200 schools based on percentage of Band 6 results and was ranked 18th of all the schools based on results in English (the only mandatory subject). These results continue to be matched.

I recall your concerns of the mandated publication of NAPLAN results in 2010 to assist parents in their educational choices. How could other schools be compared to be 'like' Gib Gate and Frensham? *Frensham is a small school (300 students) and very large in terms of boarding (70:30). What other schools are like this?*

The Evaluating Excellence in Independent Schools (EEIS) project reviewed Frensham, Gib Gate and Sturt and led to clear agreed goals impacting the professional learning of students and staff. As parents we heard often about *meeting the individual learning needs of students*. Other goals were to maintain a growth mindset in a whole of school approach to care and wellbeing, to develop leadership capacity across the school and to build a learning community that is world class and embraces innovation.

2013 – new curriculum and resources to support the STEM programme with Sturt Design Studios developed. 3D design and CAD machines – the girls produced some outstanding work.

In 2017 it was all about innovation and adaption. You wrote, *committed to developing in staff and students a spirit of enquiry and a love of learning with a future focus and the capacity to discern*.

You managed many challenges outside of your control – floods, fire, drought and in 2009, significant financial crisis. You wrote in recognition of the commitment the parents and members of the extended family made to the education of their daughters as an ongoing priority during this difficult period. In 2016 you supported the whole school, family and friends after the tragic death of Year 12 student Olivia Inglis. And then in your final year as leader of the Schools, a global pandemic!

New Traditions

In your second year, you referred to creating new traditions to complement existing traditions. Introducing Jasper and Bronco (two white Shetland ponies) dressed in purple rugs with green trim emblazoned with the words *Winifred West Schools' Mascots*.

In 2003, introduction of Frensham Studies to the core curriculum for Year 7 students, the Year Eliza commenced.

Acknowledgement that to understand the present it is important to appreciate the past in preparation for the future. We saw the return of the Fleishmann's Deer Sculpture to the Harbison Fountain in 2003. The Blessing of the Pets Service photo in the 2009 Chronicle collage included a cow, hamster, dog, very large goat and guinea pig. What a fitting new tradition to introduce to the school.

Global Studies was introduced to Year 9 students in 2014 to immerse girls in consideration of real-world issues and to inspire them to 'think globally' whilst learning to 'act locally'. I felt this built on the School motto of *In Love Serve One Another*. New sports uniform for the Firsts and Seconds teams in Hockey, Netball and Tennis in 2011. So flash, so modern!

Cementing foundations for growth

Major renovations and development of boarding and learning facilities, along with grounds and gardens continued throughout your tenure at Frensham Schools. The list of new and upgraded facilities is too long to mention. Frensham got a pool – who would have thought that would ever happen!

2013 Centenary Year! *Frensham 100 Years On: A Reflection 1913-2013* editor Susan Flaxman wrote, despite the enormous changes that have occurred in the last 100 years – across the world, in Australia and indeed at Frensham – what has not changed is the ethos of the School, its moral and spiritual core.

So much happened during this year. The Back to Frensham Weekend and the 100th Birthday Weekend were enormous undertakings. Centenary Trail, Centenary Bridge, Centenary Pool project commenced, and Centenary Sculpture installed. What a momentous year.

Values and traditions have been maintained and built on. You have benchmarked Frensham nationally and internationally to meet the current and future needs in the 21st Century.

In closing, I would like to read back to you what you wrote in your first report in 2000: It is important to remind you, as others have noted to me, that one really never leaves Winifred West Schools.

Once touched by the Winifred West Schools' spirit, it seems that one is imbued with a special challenge for life.

*Fellowship Committee Farewells & Presentations
Sturt, Tuesday 17 November 2020*



1 Susie Arnott (Margaret Taylor, 1959)

Member since 2014

Susie has been involved with Fellowship for the past six years and was the Year Rep for 60 Years On Reunion in 2019. She has a strong connection with Frensham with family member alumni including: sisters Gennie Kirton (1957) (dec) and Gai Taylor (1970); granddaughters Ellie Arnott (2017), Sophie Arnott (2019) and Tempe Arnott (currently in Year 8). Susie also supported Foundation and the school by making around 450 pairs of pyjama pants for the last Iris Country Fair!

She is a steadfast and staunch supporter of Fellowship, and happily donates her time assisting with so many jobs. On a personal note, Susie loves to ski, and spends as much of her time as possible on the slopes.

2 Pook Austin (Alison Cameron, 1968)

Member since 2018; Fellowship President 2020

Pook attended both Gib Gate and Frensham. A keen sportswoman, Pook became Games Captain as a senior Frensham student. She followed in the footsteps of her Old Girl mother, Jeanette Cameron/Lee (Avern, 1936) (dec) and sister Jenny Weston (Cameron, 1961). Pook only had sons, so no more Frensham Old Girls to continue the tradition.

Pook has kept in close contact with Frensham and her cohort over the years as a Foundation member, and as a Fellowship Year Rep for 50 Years On Reunion in 2018. As Pook says, *I was so impressed with the School, staff, gorgeous girls and Old Girls, that I wanted to give a little in return to something that has given me so many friendships and support in my life.*

Living between Trangie and Warren in central NSW, she enjoys sport, gardening, country life and most of all, her family and friends... hence Fellowship.

3 Kate Boyle (Ellice-Flint, 2003)

Member since 2020

After leaving Frensham in 2003, Kate completed a

Bachelor of Medical Radiation Science at Charles Sturt University in Wagga. Upon graduation, she obtained a position as a Radiographer at Royal Prince Alfred Hospital while she continued studies for a Masters in Medical Imaging of Computed Tomography (CT) at Sydney University. Kate describes twelve years at RPA in one of Sydney's biggest trauma and oncology centres as, *thoroughly rewarding and equally challenging.*

In 2014 she married her husband Michael Boyle and in 2015 they welcomed their first daughter Bonnie. 2017 saw the arrival of their second daughter Grace and in September 2020, they were blessed with their third daughter Beatrix (three future Frensham Alumni!).

Kate and her family recently relocated to the Southern Highlands from Bondi. Kate's middle girl is at Gib Gate Preschool where she absolutely adores her days playing outdoors and bush walking. Kate says, *it is incredibly surreal for me at school drop off, I have so many fond and cherished memories of my time at Gib Gate and Frensham.*

4 Cath Brennan (Cathryn Raynolds, 1979)

Member since 2006; Vice President 2009

Since graduating from Mitchell College of Advanced Education (now Sturt University) with a BA Social Science, Cath has worked for well over 30 years in the community service sector with a focus on child and family work. Cath is currently employed in Local Government coordinating the Community Wellbeing team.

Cath married Adrian in 1988 and they have three children – Lucy (2008), Nick and Eliza (2015). The family has enjoyed the lifestyle of the Southern Highlands since 1999.

Fellowship membership has provided a great opportunity to stay connected to a broad range of the Old Girl community and related to the current school community.

5 Liz Hunter (Elizabeth Aylmer, 1980)

Member since 2014; Vice President since 2016

Liz attended Frensham following: mother Sarah Aylmer (Sally Reading, 1949); sisters Jane Hall (1974) and Kate Baldry (1978); great-aunt Lesley Heath (Sue Reading, 1922).

After completing Year 12 at Frensham, Liz studied Catering and Hotel Management before moving into the world of finance. After studying a number of courses with the Australian Stock Exchange and the Sydney Futures Exchange, she obtained her Registered Representatives qualification. She worked in several financial roles including futures and financial information before a company takeover transferred her to Hong Kong with Bridge Information Systems as their Asia Content Acquisition Manager. Liz arrived just after the 1997 handover with only one suitcase. She spent five very happy and exciting years in Hong Kong travelling around Asia, USA and UK, ending her time there as VP, Global Content Acquisition Manager.

After her mother passed away, Liz returned to Sydney in 2002 to be nearer her father. This time she was accompanied by a husband, a baby and a container of furniture. They settled into life on the Northern Beaches and their second daughter arrived in 2004.

Liz feels very fortunate to be able to continue her family's Frensham tradition with her Hong Kong baby, Hayley (2019) and her Sydney baby, Sarah (currently Year 11). Liz notes that her *lovely Scottish husband Paul, whom I lured back to Australia with me from Hong Kong, is currently a serving member on the Frensham Board of Governors.*

6 Sam Kennedy (Samantha Greig, 1991)

Member since 2017

Sam was a Frensham Prefect and Head of Frensham Choir.

She currently lives on a farm near Gunnedah NSW with her husband Mick and their two children Hugh and Sophie. Since leaving university Sam has taught in both primary and secondary schools on the Central Coast NSW, in Sri Lanka, Sydney and is currently teaching in Gunnedah. Sam's daughter Sophie is in Year 8 and she has three nieces at Frensham – Georgia, Year 9, Mia Year 11 and Jessica, Year 12.

Sam enjoys being part of Fellowship, particularly working towards ways to foster the community's Frensham connections.

7 Julia Laverty (Forbes, 1990)

Member since 2016

Julia was Vice Head at Frensham, and was the Year Rep for their last Reunion.

Julia finished at Frensham in 1980, studying Optometry at UNSW and then a BA in Visual Communication. Julia worked in London for several years as a copywriter/art director in advertising. Shortly after returning to Sydney she was in a car accident in which she broke her neck and has been using a wheelchair ever since. Julia has been teaching Ethics at her local public school for the last five years.

Julia subsequently married Jono and they have two daughters, Chloe and Olivia. Olivia is currently in Year 11 at Frensham and is the third generation of her family, following her grandmother Louise Forbes (Rutherford, 1956), her mother, and aunt Catriona Cater (1979). Julia says, *it's great to be a part of the school again and watch the bond between Olivia and her Frensham friends evolve.*

8 Lou McMichael (Cowlshaw, 1969)

Member since 2020

Lou enjoyed a wonderful few years at Frensham. Having moved from the Northern Territory where she and her younger sister (Susie Cowlshaw) had a governess and studied via 'School of the Air', her parents felt they needed to be somewhere in the country – hence Mittagong.

Lou loved all sport at School and enjoyed being Captain of Softball. Susie had six years at Frensham and was one of the original students to do the Sturt Course.

Lou is married to Neville and has lived on the Central Tablelands for nearly 50 years. They have two sons, Hamish and Richard. Richard is married to Olivia Lowndes (1987) and they, in turn, have three boys. Their daughter, Georgie Rainger (1998) has two boys and their only granddaughter.

Lou has owned a small gift shop/nursery, worked in the Iconic Mayfield Garden in Oberon followed by seven years in a nursery. She played tennis for some years but is now enjoying golf.

Lou loves her community and has spent 20 years doing Meals on Wheels, and four years mentoring families with special needs. She is looking forward to being a positive member of Fellowship.

9 Annette O'Connell (Moxon, 1983)

Member since 2012; President 2015-2020

Following her years at Gib Gate and Frensham, and following her sister Jane McPhee (1977), Annette studied for a Diploma of Community Services at Randwick Technical College and then worked in Special Education at Tangara School, Mittagong.

She met her now husband Marcus O'Connell in the Highlands, and they had three children – Angus who is currently working in finance with Arnotts,

Tori (Victoria, 2011) who is working in ICU at Royal Prince Alfred hospital with COVID-19 patients, and Phoebe (2019) who was on the start of her GAP year in the UK and managed to return to Australia on one of the last flights prior to lockdown.

Annette and Marcus run their Electrical and Technology business locally, and Annette is still involved with their horses (Phoebe rides at National level).

Annette donates time each week to volunteering for the Community Transport, is a Director of Foundation, and very happily still involved with Fellowship.

10 Ingrid Ridge (Merrett, 1984)

Member since 2015 until 2021

Ingrid is a Foundation member was a Prefect at Frensham. Her family has attended Frensham for three generations: mother Pru Merrett (Prunella Prevost, 1956) (dec); aunts Elisabeth Kinross (Prevost, 1953) (dec) and Gina Macarthur-Onslow (Prevost, 1958); sister Fleur Vander Straaten (1989); nieces Zoe Vander Straaten (2019) and Skye Vander Straaten (Year 12); cousins Alex Kinross (1980), Sarah Street (Kinross, 1975) and Airlie Hawley (Macarthur-Onslow, 1987).

From 1987, Ingrid lived and worked in London for two years and travelled extensively around Europe with fellow Frensham Old Girls. Upon returning to Sydney, Ingrid worked at Standard Chartered Bank in the treasury dealing room, and then at AAP Reuters as a Client Manager, Financial Services.

Married in 1992, Ingrid has three children: Nicholas, Lucy (2017) and Georgie (2019). Both girls attended Frensham. Ingrid is currently studying to get her Certificate III and Diploma in Early Childhood Education.

11 Kate Waldren (Herbert, 1990)

Member since 2017; Secretary 2020

Kate a strong family connection with Frensham: daughter Maggie (currently Year 11); sisters Mandy Horton (1983) and Georgina Hood (1985); nieces Alice Hood (2014), Georgia Phillips (2015) and Anna Horton (2016).

Kate studied a Bachelor of Landscape Architecture and practiced for 20 years in Canberra, the South Coast, Sydney and the UK. Kate's interest in natural environments and processes led her to complete a Diploma in Environment Planning and Management. In 2001, Kate married Anthony Waldren and moved to Canberra where she worked on commercial landscape projects. Kate established a practice in Canberra where she specialised in environmental

conservation, and recreation planning and design in natural environments. With the love of country life still in their hearts, in 2005 Ant and Kate purchased and relocated to Kate's family property 'Nandawar' at Nimmitabel in southern NSW.

Since 2008, and following the birth of their third child, Kate has worked full time on 'Nandawar', running Angus cattle. She loves all facets of farming and the business. Maggie, their first child, is in Year 11 at Frensham and really enjoys the agricultural program, including showing steers (bred at home).

12 Annabel White (1983)

Member since 2020

Annabel started at Frensham in Year 9 as a full time boarder, travelling every holidays with her three brothers to where their parents worked in Africa. She was a prefect at Frensham and is a member of Foundation. She followed the family tradition of attending Frensham: mother Sally White (Fairfax, 1957); daughters Lily (2016) and Charlotte (2020); aunts Gilly Johns (Gillian White, 1964), Penelope Peel (White, 1965) and Ruth Armytage (Fairfax, 1967); cousins Emilia Kefford (Armytage, 1995) and Alice Peel (2000); nieces Sophie Booth (2017) and Lucy Booth (Year 11).

After leaving school, Annabel took a gap year to spend six months in Nairobi, Kenya with her parents and six months travelling and working in Europe. She lived in Paris for three months, studying at The Sorbonne.

After completing her Bachelor of Arts at Sydney University, Annabel had a brief stint travelling to Nepal, India, Turkey and Europe before returning to Sydney to start a career in media and publishing. Since then, she has completed a Graduate Diploma of Editing and Publishing, Macquarie University; a Master of Business (Social Investment and Philanthropy), Swinburne University; a Diploma of Health Studies, UNE; and the Australian Company Institute of Director's course. Annabel's current non-executive board roles include Mundango Abroad, the Vincent Fairfax Family Foundation (VFFF) and Foundation for Rural and Regional Renewal (FRRR).

During her time in Glen Innes Annabel helped raise three children (now all adults) and worked in a variety of jobs including local Council, Landcare, and Arts North West, alongside other community volunteer positions. Annabel has returned to the Southern Highlands with her two daughters and is delighted to be involved in Fellowship. She loves the 'six degrees of separation', humility, friendship, values and community that Frensham has given her.



The Official Launch of The Winifred West Legacy

On Thursday 20 May, The Winifred West Schools Foundation, and Frensham Schools, hosted the official launch of Foundation’s newly-formed bequest group, The Winifred West Legacy.

The event was held at Bendooley Estate’s Stables, Berrima, and 160 guests attended—including our ‘Custodians’ of The Winifred West Legacy, along with current and past Heads of School, current and past Governors, current and past Directors of Foundation, current and past Company Members, past Head Girls, past Presidents of Fellowship and long-term supporters of the School.

Guests were welcomed by Ms Elizabeth Stuart, Chair of the Board of Governors, before being delighted by a Madrigals performance. The item prepared was an arrangement of an Aretha Franklin song *Since You’ve Been Gone*, featuring the Head of Madrigals, Grace Amos, as soloist.

The Madrigals then invited guests to stand as they sang Frensham’s traditional Grace – William Byrd’s *Non Nobis*.



Guests heard from Ms Sarah McGarry, who reflected on her first six months as Head of Frensham Schools and her vision for the future of the Schools. All agreed that it is an exciting time, as we embark on a new era for Frensham Schools.

Mr Alan Watson, the immediate past Chair of Foundation, then spoke about The Winifred West Legacy, thanked our current Custodians and invited our guests to find out more about what is involved.



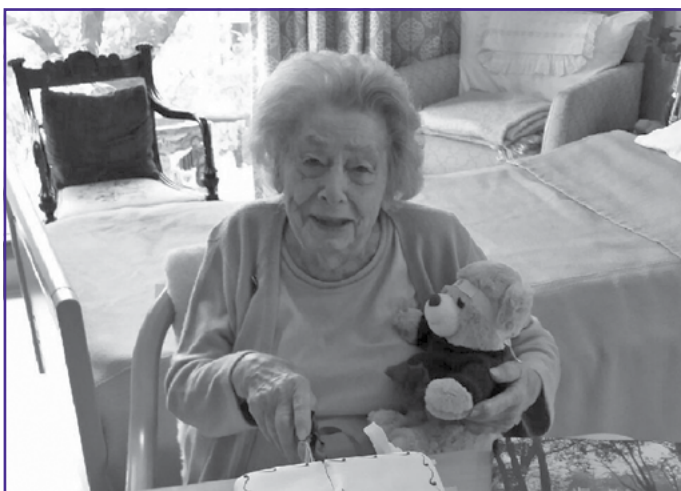
Every year from now on, we will hold a luncheon for our Custodians of The Winifred West Legacy – primarily to say a sincere ‘thank you’ from the School, and for our guests to hear from Ms McGarry about what is happening at Frensham Schools today.

If you are interested in finding out more about becoming a Custodian of The Winifred West Legacy, please contact our Director of Philanthropy, Ms Jackie Dalton on 02 4860 2000 or jdalton@frensham.nsw.edu.au



Heidi Montgomery Dalara Scholarship

Heidi Montgomery (2020) was recently awarded a \$300,000 Dalara Scholarship to study Veterinary Science at the University of Sydney. Heidi comes from Trangie, NSW, where her family own a sheep property. She grew up surrounded by a menagerie of animals and a passion to become a rural vet. Of the Scholarship, Heidi said, *My family are recovering from a detrimental drought out West, which transformed our properties into dust bowls. The [Dalara] Scholarship gives me the security to achieve my life-long goal, regardless of future hardship on the land...It is difficult to find the perfect words to explain how my family and I feel about achieving the Dalara Scholarship, but deliriously ecstatic might come close.*



Fellowship was notified this week of the passing of our oldest Old Girl, Joan Baldick (1938) at the age of 101 years. Joan was a passionate Frensham Old Girl, and featured prominently in the School's birthday festivities in 2019, when we celebrated Fellowship's centenary.

Save the Dates – Reunions

Saturday 7 & Sunday 8 August:

- 20 Years On (2001)
- 40 Years On (1980) – Sunday only
- 40 Years On (1981)
- 60 Years On (1961)

Saturday 28 & Sunday 29 August:

- 5 Years On (2015)
- 10 Years On (2011)
- 20 Years On (2000)
- 30 Years On (1990 & 1991)
- 50 Years On (1971)
- 70 Years On (1951)

We will contact all Year groups closer to the date, once we are absolutely certain that the reunions can go ahead on site here at Frensham.



Annual Fellowship GOLF DAY

The Annual Fellowship Golf Day is to be held on **Monday 15 November** at Elanora Country Club. Many thanks to Alisa Fantham (Uther) for organising. Details to follow. We'd love to see you there!

For more information on any aspect of Fellowship's work, please contact:

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Visit Alumni website section here >