

THE Bridge

Brigidine College St Ives



Honouring tradition
Transforming tomorrow



70
YEARS
1954-2024

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The Bridge, the Brigidine College St Ives biannual magazine

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WHAT WE LIKED

What an amazing sporting and cultural experience for our Rugby 7s and Football students who spent their Term 1 school holidays on a Canada and Fiji Sporting Tour.



CARE TO SHARE?

We are always grateful to receive photos and stories that we can share on our social media pages. Please send content to communications@brigidine.nsw.edu.au

From the Principal

This first edition of *The Bridge* in 2024 highlights our Platinum Jubilee year celebrating 70 years of dedicated Brigidine and Catholic education of strong and gentle women in St Ives.

In 1954 the College began with nine students and we now proudly have over 830 students enrolled. This year marks 70 years of strong and gentle women on this site and gives us the opportunity to honour the tradition of our history and look to transform our future.

As we turn 70, we honour everyone who has helped create and shape our College community. We particularly remember our founding principal Mother Romnald Walz, her fellow Brigidines and those very first students.

While we have grown in numbers it has been our evolution and adaptation over the past seven decades that has allowed the College to develop into the thriving school community it is today. The vision and mission of the Brigidine Sisters still holds firm: the education of young women modelled on the strength and gentleness of St Brigid.

In 2024 we are marking our 70th anniversary with key celebrations held throughout the year that allow us to acknowledge this milestone in the College's history. The first, held on 9 February, was the unveiling of statues that symbolise our students – past, present and future – who are at the centre of all we do. These statues are placed in our main driveway in front of the building that was the original convent. We also planted an oak tree to remember Daniel Delaney who started the Brigidine order. Like the oak tree, Brigidine College St Ives confirms the adage that 'from a small seed great things grow'.

We were delighted to welcome back five of the original students from 1954 – Mrs Barbara Brannan, Mrs Ann Lomas, Mrs Patricia Martyn, Mrs Ruth Bridger and Mrs Maureen McCallum – as well as Brigidine Sisters including past principal Sr Anita Murray, Sr Maureen Keady, Sr Faye Kenny, Sr Jan O'Neill and Sr Patricia Buckley. Past principals Mr John Bowie and Mrs Jane Curran also joined the celebrations.

This year also marks the 10th anniversary of Kildare Ministries. We were excited and honoured to host their anniversary conference in March. With the theme 'Crossing New Seas: Encounter, Dream, Do' the conference provided the opportunity to connect with staff from other Kildare Ministry schools and Community Works and reaffirm our shared values along with our purpose and hopes for the future.

As 2024 unfolds, we look forward to transforming the future of Brigidine. Construction has commenced for our new Sports Precinct which will house two full-sized basketball courts, new teaching and learning facilities and underground parking. This new building will be known as the Cill Dara Centre, meaning *Church of the Oak*, in honour of our Irish heritage through the Brigidine Sisters. We anticipate the centre will open towards the end of 2025.

A busy year of learning, cocurricular activities, student leadership, social justice outreach and connection with our parent and alumni communities is already in full swing. I have no doubt it will be a joyful year of celebration and a proud moment in our journey.

LAETITIA RICHMOND
PRINCIPAL





FEATURE

Celebrating 70 years Educating Girls

On 1 February 1807 Bishop Daniel Delaney had a vision to provide education to all. He gathered six faith-filled women in Tullow, Ireland to form the foundation of the Congregation of St Brigid and planted an oak sapling from Kildare in the Tullow convent grounds.



Precisely 147 years later, on 9 February 1954, the oak tree had spread its roots far and wide and Brigidine College St Ives opened its doors to students for the first time. There were just nine students on the roll, Mother Romuald Walz was the Principal and lessons took place in the building now known as Synan. Fast forward to 2024, the oak tree still stands in the Tullow convent grounds and, as we celebrate seven decades of strong and gentle women, our College is a thriving community with over 830 students.

It was therefore a fitting day on 9 February 2024 to celebrate the start of our story mark the first of our various anniversary celebrations taking place this year.

Past principal and Patron of our Alumni, Sr Anita Murray along with our current College Captains, Natasha Townley and Indie Smith unveiled a beautiful bronze statue depicting a Senior and Junior student. In her welcome address to our guests College Principal, Laetitia Richmond said, "As Principal, staff and students we truly stand on the shoulders of those who have come before us and are grateful for the work of the Brigidine Sisters in establishing our College in 1954."

Past Principals John Bowie and Jane Curran together with our current Principal Laetitia Richmond planted an oak tree on the Principals Lawn. The tree provides a link back to our roots in Ireland and the acorn, the fruit of the oak tree, forms part of our Alumni logo. It recognises a group of women who are part of our College community, who are a reflection of its past, a representation of its present and a link to its future.

We were privileged to be joined by some of our first students to share in the celebration along with some Brigidine Sisters. Laetitia Richmond acknowledged our founding principal Mother Romuald Walz and invited Sr Maureen Keady to speak on behalf of the Sisters who lived and worked in St Ives at the time. Sr Maureen shared memories of happy times saying, "This is a wonderful occasion celebrating the beginnings of a school that has grown over 70 years to become a thriving, successful and happy community that we are all proud to be part of." You can read Sr Maureen's speech in full overleaf.

PIP INMAN
ALUMNI & COMMUNITY RELATIONS



This is a wonderful occasion celebrating the beginnings of a school that has grown over 70 years to become a thriving, successful and happy community we are all proud to be part of.

When that front door opened in the original building that runs alongside Woodbury Road on 9 February 1954, those first Sisters and students must have been excited to be part of a new venture – an adventure really; together building a brand new school!

The community consisted of Sisters Romuald, Adrian, Josephine and Duchesne, the last two beginning the new Primary Corpus Christi School.

In 1955, Sr Josephine moved elsewhere and Sr Andre came, and in 1956 I arrived to teach in the Primary section of Corpus Christi School in the Chemistry Room of the College.

Those early students formed strong and enduring friendships, their parents became our greatest friends and supporters, and altogether, the school was a tight-knit and very happy community. There were extra-curricular duties too, notably making a playground out of the paddock of knee-high paspalum! I couldn't forget that Victa mower – winding the strap around and pulling it, hoping the motor would start.

During winter we Sisters often played tennis after school, only to find at times, our black shoe laces tied together and the perpetrators safely at home.

Over the last 70 years we have been fortunate to have had wonderful principals, all contributing their own particular gifts to develop the school, stage by stage. We are delighted to see some of them here with us today, and we thank them for their contribution.

We congratulate the present Principal, Ms Richmond and the staff, who are faithfully keeping the Brigidine Spirit, and maintaining the truly Catholic qualities inherent in the foundation of the College: the creation of a learning environment that caters for students' spiritual, intellectual and social needs. We thank them too for this lovely celebration today.

We thank God for this entire school community: staff, students, parents, past students and teachers and we pray that God will bless us all.

**SPEECH GIVEN BY SR MAUREEN KEADY
BRIGIDINE COLLEGE ST IVES 70TH ANNIVERSARY EVENT
9 FEBRUARY 2024**



Sr Maureen with College Captain Natasha Townley, 9 February 2024



In my role as Alumni Coordinator, our Alumni often share memories of their school days with me. Of course, talk of the 70th anniversary has reignited those memories for many and I have the privilege to share just a few of them with you.

**PIP INMAN
ALUMNI &
COMMUNITY RELATIONS**



“There were nuns on duty in the yard and we would ask them if they’d like something for their morning tea, but they were never allowed to eat in front of us, and I thought that was just the strangest thing. They must go home and raid the fridge; they must be starving!”

“As pioneers we had a unique experience. I remember there was never a day when I didn’t want to come to school.”

“I have no memory of my first day, however, I do recall the grounds, the trees and the open space... I loved that.”

“The nuns were gentle, pleasant and kind.”

“We went forward with confidence...that was a gift from the school.”

“I have great admiration for the nuns in those early days and am most appreciative of the education I received.”

“Remembering my first day at Brigidine was seeing some faces of girls I knew who went to Corpus Christi, so I felt I was not alone.”

“The friendships were great and they still last to this day.”

“I am still very connected with my Brigidine friends. We have travelled alongside each other and continue to do so through life’s ups and downs. I am truly lucky to have their friendships.”

“The spirit has stayed the same. There is a real openness and welcoming within the school body, the students and the teachers.”

“I vividly remember the uniform. The winter uniform, I loved it, absolutely loved it! I felt really special.”

“The values I learnt during my time was to have faith in yourself, have faith in other people, be honest and don’t be afraid.”

“Brigidine taught me the courage to stand up for what is right. It taught me to have support and empathy for all those people who can’t support themselves and of course the greatest motto that I still live my life by: girls can do anything, Brigo girls can do everything.”

“The differences these days are mainly the choice of subjects and activities offered. The uniforms... no more stockings summer and winter and sticky paspalum seeds clinging on!”

A JOURNEY THROUGH TIME: BRIGIDINE COLLEGE ST IVES 1954-2024



1954

Brigidine College St Ives opened with nine students, two classrooms, a music room and chapel, two tennis courts and living space for the nuns



Foundation Principal 1954-1959: Sister Romuald Walz CSB



The uniform was fawn tunic dresses and stockings with cherry red accessories



Officially opened on 19 April 1959, the Convent and Noviate buildings provided a separate living area for nuns, space for novitiates to study and additional classrooms



The Opening of the McCammon Wing was held on 2 March 1986 with 1000 people in attendance



Increased student population necessitated the extension of the College Hall in 1983. It was rededicated as Romuald Hall



1980

Acting Principal 1980: Sister Helen Connolly CSB



The College celebrated 25 years at St Ives with a Silver Jubilee Mass, officiated by The Papal Nuncio Archbishop Luigi Barbarito on 29 April 1979

Gentle yet strong, that's
Why we sing our song.

Chorus: Strong and Gentle
The words by which we live.
To love is to care, to be
Gentle yet strong
Fortiter et Suaviter.
To love is to care, to be
Gentle yet strong
Fortiter et Suaviter.



Principal 1989-1993:
Sister Joan Smith CSB



1990

Junior and Senior uniforms are introduced in the updated College colours, maroon and light blue



June 1991 saw the opening of two new buildings, the Murray Wing and the Gymnasium, with the McMahon Wing and Sr Adrian Wing opened in 1993



The Anita Murray Centre for Performing Arts and Sciences provides state of the art facilities in music, drama and science. It was opened in July 2014 by Governor, Her Excellency Professor Marie Bashir



The Kildare Ministries was launched in 2014 as the canonical and civil authority incorporating the NSW and Victorian Provinces of the Brigidine Congregation and the Presentation Congregation of Victoria



2010

Principal 2010-2019:
Jane Curran BA
DipEd, MA



An aerial view of the College taken in 2017 shows both the continued growth of facilities and retained vegetation across the campus



2020

A worldwide Covid-19 pandemic forced Australian schools into extended closures with students required to learn from home



Two College Houses, Fortiter and Suaviter, were introduced in late 1959



1960

Principal 1960-1965: Mother Lawrence Kinkead CSB



Today known as the Romuald Visual Arts Centre, the first College Hall was opened on 15 November 1964 by Bishop Freeman



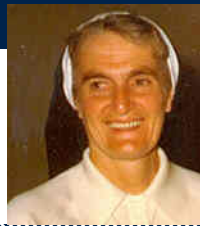
Principal 1966-1967: Sister Theresita Bonser CSB



Our inaugural musical, *The Mikado*, was performed in 1977 and has developed into a vibrant annual tradition



Principal 1975-1989: Sister Anita Murray CSB



Principal 1975: Sister Val McKenna CSB



Principal 1971-1974: Sister Valentine McMahon

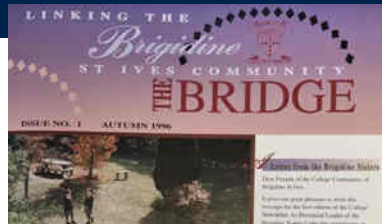


1970

Principal 1968-1970: Mother Thomas Keating CSB



Principal 1994-1995: Sister Angela Ryan CSB



Now the College's biannual magazine, the first issue of *The Bridge* was a four page newsletter published in Autumn 1996



2000

Principal 1996-2005: John Bowie AM, BA DipEd, MEd



St Brigid's Chapel and Religious Education Centre opened in November 2001, providing flexible learning and sacred spaces for the College



Acting Principal 2009: Jonathan Byrne BA DipEd



Principal 2006-2009: Joanne Atkins BA DipEd, GradCertArts (Theology), MEd



Bowie Hall was opened in September 2005. The building sits overlooking the College Green and provides a multipurpose space for school productions and gatherings



Our Golden Jubilee celebrated the 50th anniversary of the College. Opening Mass was held at St Mary's Cathedral with over 1000 people in attendance



Principal 2020-present: Laetitia Richmond BEd, MRE, MArtsEd, MArtsAdmin



2024

The College celebrates 70 years educating girls.

Congratulations Class of 2023

Congratulations to the Class of 2023 on their outstanding HSC achievements. These results reflect the motivation, resilience and engagement of each student in their approach to learning and involvement in College life throughout the year. Early entry offers to university and an outstanding number of nominations for HSC Showcases of excellence in Dance, Drama, Music, Textiles and Visual Arts underscored the success of this cohort of students. As a community we wish them all the best for future study, personal endeavours and life beyond Brigidine. We are so proud that these girls graduated personifying our motto of strength and gentleness, ready to make their mark on the world. We look forward with anticipation to their future achievements and welcoming them back to Brigidine as much treasured Alumni.

Some of the highlights from the results for the Class of 2023 are:

DUX

Hailey Cerneaz achieved an ATAR of 99.75

PROXIME

Jessica Tillotson achieved an ATAR of 98.65

ALL-ROUNDERS

Hailey Cerneaz, Sarah Hudson, Ashleigh Karcher, Zoe Miller, Abigail Mills, Jessica Tillotson

TOP ACHIEVERS IN THE STATE

1st Geography: Hailey Cerneaz
1st Mathematics Standard: Hailey Cerneaz
3rd Textiles and Design: Hailey Cerneaz
3rd German Beginners: Ashleigh Karcher
4th German Beginners: Julia Ober
5th Portuguese: Ines Teixeira-Pinto (Year 11)

DISTINGUISHED ACHIEVERS

90 students were mentioned on the Distinguished Achievers list (those who scored 90 marks or above in a subject), with 163 mentions across a broad range of subjects

BRIGIDINE COLLEGE RANKED

- 3rd cohort in the state for Geography
- 6th cohort in the state for Drama
- 75th of all NSW Schools
- 10th of all Independent NSW Catholic Girls Schools
- 11th of all NSW Catholic Girls Schools.

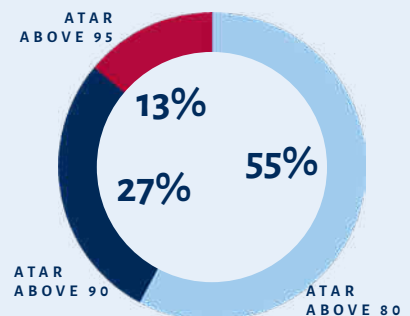
LAETITIA RICHMOND
PRINCIPAL

“Thank you, Brigidine, for giving me the gift of an education. Thank you for the endless opportunities, unending support and for making my dreams come true.”

SARAH HUDSON
COLLEGE CAPTAIN 2023

OUT OF 150 YEAR 12 STUDENTS:

- 13% received an ATAR above 95
- 27% received an ATAR above 90
- 55% received an ATAR above 80



HAILEY CERNEAZ
COLLEGE DUX



I am looking forward to studying a Bachelor of Arts/Bachelor of Advanced Studies at The University of Sydney. I will be majoring in Geography and French & Francophone Studies and doing a minor in Spanish. I chose these areas of study as my time at Brigidine has fostered in me a great curiosity to learn more about the physical and human geographies of our world, as well as a keen interest in understanding different cultures through their native languages. I look forward to expanding upon my passion for these subjects as I am interested in pursuing a career in the field of geography or foreign affairs.

JESSICA TILLOTSON
PROXIME



I am excited to begin a Bachelor of Veterinary Biology/Doctor of Veterinary Medicine at the University of Sydney. I have always had the aspiration of becoming a veterinarian and I am beyond grateful to Brigidine for nurturing my passions and equipping me with the knowledge and support to pursue this childhood dream. I am thrilled for this opportunity to make a positive impact in the world through helping animals in need.

2023 HSC RESULTS

90

STUDENTS MENTIONED ON THE DISTINGUISHED ACHIEVERS LIST
THOSE WHO SCORED 90 MARKS OR HIGHER (BAND 6)

99.75

BRIGIDINE'S HIGHEST ATAR ACHIEVED



163

MENTIONS ON THE DISTINGUISHED ACHIEVERS LIST ACROSS A BROAD RANGE OF SUBJECTS



6

TOP ACHIEVERS IN THE STATE



6

ALL ROUNDERS

2

SELECTIONS FOR HSC SHOWCASES
38 NOMINATIONS



RANKED 10TH IN NSW OUT OF INDEPENDENT CATHOLIC GIRLS SCHOOLS AND 11TH IN NSW OUT OF CATHOLIC GIRLS SCHOOLS

BRIGIDINE RANKED 75TH SCHOOL IN NSW

13%

ATAR OVER 95

27%

ATAR OVER 90

55%

ATAR OVER 80



LAUREN WATTS WAS SELECTED FOR CALLBACK (CORE COMPOSITION)

SPRING GARDEN (APPAREL) BY HAILEY CERNEAZ WAS SELECTED FOR TEXTSTYLE

Breaking Ground – a new chapter begins

It was an exciting day for the College on 7 February with the official turning of the sod and commencement of the new Sports Precinct project. Gathered onsite were the architects, builders, project managers, members of the Leadership Team, representatives from the College Board, College Captain Natasha Townley and Vice Captain Indie Smith as we marked this special occasion.

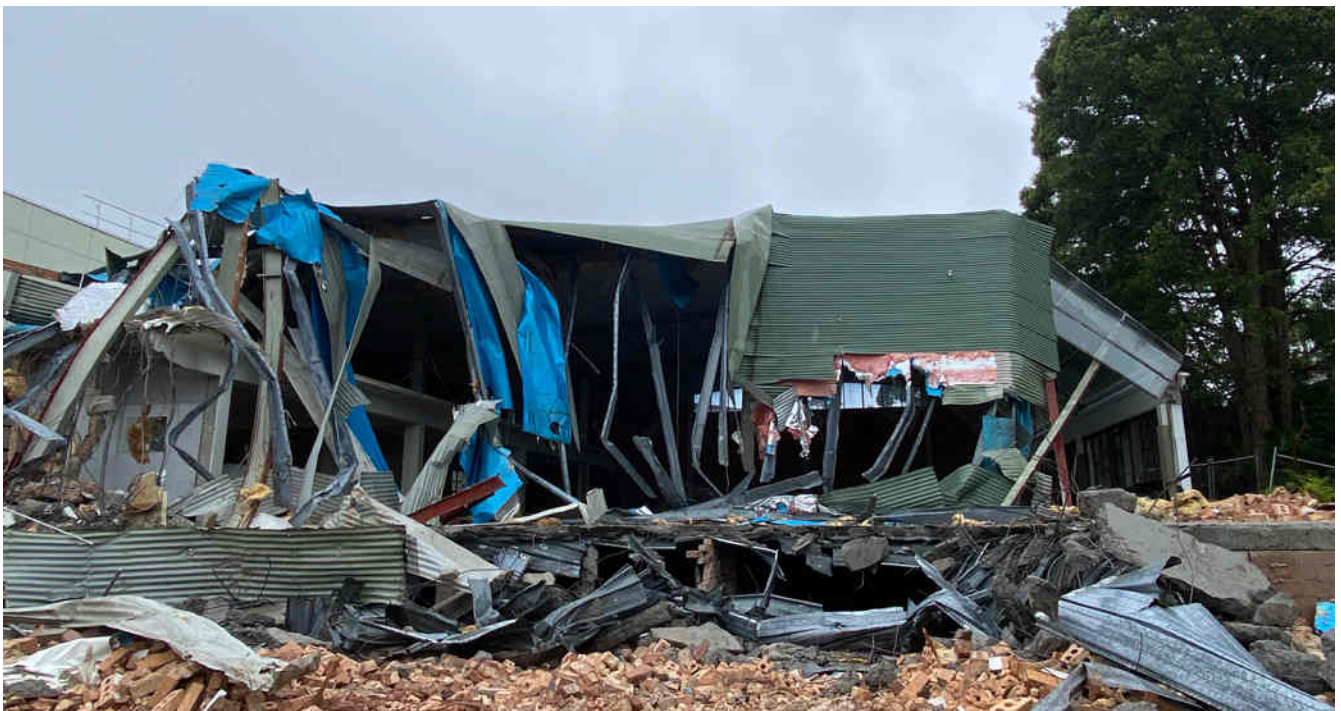
This milestone event signified the culmination of meticulous planning and anticipation as the College embarked on the journey towards the completion of this new building in 2025, which will provide the school and community with an amazing new sports facility.

The initial phase of the project has been completed with the demolition of the Sr Adrian building and the original gymnasium, clearing the way forward. As the dust settles from the demolition phase, we move into the next stage of the project, which is the deep excavation to prepare for the footings. This crucial step lays the foundation, figuratively and literally, for the construction of the Sports Precinct project.

As construction progresses, the Sports Precinct will take shape and in late 2025 will provide the College with a state of the art facility for all Brigidine students to use.

For regular updates on the Master Plan please visit the College website brigidine.nsw.edu.au/news/#masterplan

MANDY LOOMES
DIRECTOR COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT



Crossing New Seas

Brigidine College was one of five hubs across Australia that hosted the Kildare Ministries Conference in March, celebrating 10 years of Kildare Ministries since its inception in 2014. This momentous occasion was the first time the 1,300 staff from the 10 schools and three Community Works united as one under the umbrella of Kildare Ministries.

Brigidine College St Ives hosted staff from Melbourne, Geelong, Adelaide and Brisbane and sent some of our own staff to these hubs in an exchange to foster connection and deeper understanding between all of the schools and ministries.

The Kildare Ministries group was established by the Brigidine Sisters of NSW and Victoria along with the Presentation Sisters of Victoria. Sharing a common heritage and story through St Brigid, Daniel Delany and Nano Nagle in Ireland and coming to Australia to establish schools and Community Works, the congregations established Kildare Ministries as a Catholic community of schools and services to continue strength and gentleness throughout Australia. Kildare Ministries has been guided by a profound commitment and dedication to inclusivity, hope, compassion and courage. Our core values are hope, courage, wonder, hospitality, compassion and justice. These values are also the grounding our students receive based on the teachings of Jesus in the Gospels.

The conference theme was 'Crossing New Seas: Encounter, Dream, Do'. We *encountered* one another as 10 schools and three Community Works joined as one. We *dreamed* of a future plan and focus for our communities based on our heritage and our need to meet the challenges of being Christian in the context of Australia.

We were called upon to *do* what we can to build more inclusive communities that work collectively to engender and affirm a better world for all.

Through workshops and guest speaker presentations, staff in attendance across the nation explored a range of social and educational issues in modern Australia including our First Nations people, refugees, people on the margins of society, the place of the church today and environmental issues.

This Conference will inspire the Kildare Ministries Trustees to chart the course for the future of a shared Kildare Ministries mission as a significant group within the Catholic Church in Australia. The conference enabled staff to embark on a journey of professional and personal reflection, inspiration and innovation. Together, staff discussed and shared thoughts on the possibilities for the future and the best path forward for the education of our students.

The College's continued support of social justice remains a central platform for the formation of our students in making a difference in the world.

**BRIAN LOUGHLAND, MANDY LOOMES
BRIGIDINE COLLEGE CONFERENCE
ORGANISING COMMITTEE**



Farewell and thank you

At the end of 2023 we farewelled some long standing members of staff whose dedication to the College spanned decades. We thank Ros Boyd, Dave Chant and Vicki Scott for their many years of service to Brigidine College St Ives.



Ros Boyd and Lorna Hall at the TAS Exhibition Opening, 2005



DiAnne McDonald and Ros Boyd at the 'Flamingle' Welcome Cocktail Party, 2023

ROS BOYD HEAD OF MUSIC

Brigidine turns 70 this year and Ros taught here for 34 years – almost exactly half of that time, which is an extraordinary statement of loyalty and commitment to the College. I have been truly blessed to have been her colleague and friend for 33 of her 34 years at Brigidine.

I will never forget when she came and asked me in 1991 if I would like to be involved in the musical. Picturing a little minor costuming or makeup role, I eagerly said yes, only to find myself directing the show. A baptism of fire! This launched an incredible journey of almost 20 musical productions with our dream team of four including Maree Lindsay (Fletcher) and Lorna Hall. It was a time of raucous laughter and fabulous memories!

Ros continued this incredible tradition, powering towards 30 musicals with the new dream team including Emma Johns, Chris Rutherford, Leah Crockett, Jude Allan, Charlie Lovelock, Kath Ramsay, Gareth Edey, Carmel McCudden, Libby Goode, Lis Vickery, Michelle Casiglia and Jenny Ridgeway.

Ros' contribution to the cocurricular life of the College has been unsurpassed. I've lost track of the number of vocal groups, vocal ensembles, choirs, string groups, bands, orchestras, rock bands, eisteddfod groups, interstate and international tours she has led. She has inspired thousands of young women who have either gone on to follow in her footsteps or have taken the incredibly valuable lessons she's given them and put them to good use in their own lives. Some of Ros' students have been nominated and selected for Encore, and some we've had the pleasure of seeing perform professionally in venues such as the Sydney Opera House.

Ros truly epitomises strength and gentleness. She is Brigidine, and we will be so much the poorer for her leaving. We all wish her the most magnificent retirement!

DIANNE MCDONALD HEAD OF DRAMA



"It has been a privilege to work with so many outstanding teachers, caring year coordinators, dedicated teaching assistants and helpful support staff who go above and beyond. Thank you to the thousands of students I have been fortunate to teach over the years. You have made each day a joy."

ROS BOYD
HEAD OF MUSIC



Ros Boyd, Year 12 Farewell, 1989



**DAVID CHANT
PDHPE, LANGUAGES, RELIGION**

Dave was an integral part of Brigidine for 23 years. His passion and dedication to teaching left an indelible mark on the entire College.

I first had the privilege of working alongside Dave 28 years ago at St Leo's College. As a young teacher, I was fortunate to be guided by Dave's exemplary work ethic and his incredible ability to connect with students.

Our paths continued to intertwine when Dave was employed at Brigidine as a PDHPE teacher and Sports Coordinator. We served for 10 years together on the Broken Bay Sports Associations executive committee where I experienced Dave's wisdom as a leader and attention to detail as a sport organiser for both Brigidine and the Diocese. Thirteen years ago, fate brought us back to the same office, and in my time at Brigidine he has become an important part of our daily lives.

As a department, we reflected on Dave's complete commitment to every task he undertook. His love for sports, particularly swimming, cross country and athletics, went far beyond his duty, ensuring that Brigidine girls had every opportunity to reach their full potential. Dave was consistently the first to arrive each day and the last to leave, working diligently on lesson preparations for the various subject areas he taught over his time at Brigidine.

Colleagues have described Dave as a "beautiful man", "old school" and "a real gentleman". His special connection with so many members of staff is testament to his warm and genuine nature. Dave will be sorely missed, and his legacy will endure in the hearts and minds of those he worked with. May his retirement be as fulfilling and joyous as the countless lives he has enriched through his teaching.

**JOSHUA HOLMES
HEAD OF PDHPE**



Dave Chant with Sport Captains, 2003



Dave Chant with Sr Anita Murray, 2011



Vicki Scott with Sr Anne Boyd csb at the Kildare Ministries launch, 2014



John Bowie and Vicki Scott, 2004



**VICKI SCOTT
PRINCIPAL'S PA**

Vicki Scott has had a stellar career as PA to the last five principals of Brigidine College St Ives.

Prior to her time at Brigidine, Vicki spent many years working in the corporate sector and brought professionalism, confidentiality and a wide range of skills to her role at the College.

As Personal Assistant to the Principal, Vicki dealt with parents, students and staff, offering them support. She is the true professional in dealing with the range of issues that hit her desk.

The principals who preceded me – John Bowie, Joanne Atkins, Jonathan Byrne and Jane Curran – all appreciated the support Vicki gave them and have sung her praises.

It is not easy to be the Principal's PA; the days are unpredictable and often long. Vicki met each of those days and challenges with a great sense of what needs to be done and a wonderful sense of humour.

Vicki also worked closely with the College Board, Board Chairs and Directors and her work in this realm has meant that our team of Directors has been well taken care of. She has been at the table for Master planning, governance issues, committee meetings and in our partnership with Kildare Ministries.

On a personal note, I have loved working with Vicki. Her sense of humour, professionalism, friendship and support were all much appreciated.

We wish Vicki all the best as she embarks on the next chapter, easing her way into retirement. She will be missed!

**LAETITIA RICHMOND
PRINCIPAL**

AI and the Future of Education

Artificial intelligence (AI) is increasingly becoming a transformative force in education, as well as the wider world, influencing how educational content is delivered, personalised and assessed. As we look towards the future, AI's role in education is poised to expand, potentially reshaping the learning experience in profound ways.

At its core, AI in education aims to enhance learning outcomes by providing tailored educational experiences. AI systems can analyse a student's performance in real-time and adjust the difficulty of tasks, the style of content and the pace of learning accordingly. This personalised learning approach helps to ensure that all students, regardless of their learning pace and style, can achieve their full potential.

AI also has the capability to automate administrative tasks, allowing teachers more time to focus on teaching rather than on paperwork. It can automate the grading of tests, manage classroom schedules, and even communicate with students to resolve simple queries.

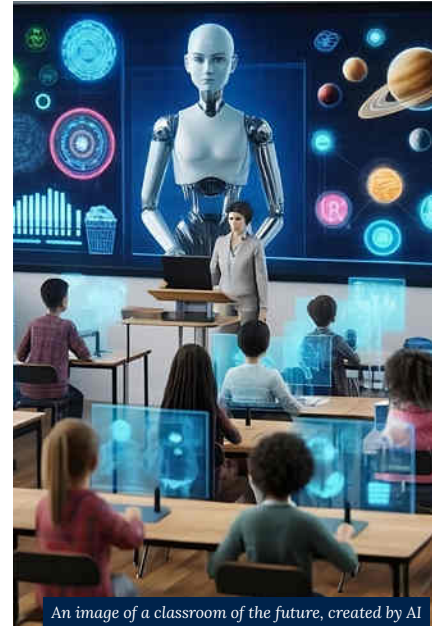
Artificial intelligence is paving the way for new forms of educational content, such as virtual tutors and intelligent content systems. AI-driven tutors can provide one-on-one tutoring tailored to the needs of individual students, offering explanations, guidance and feedback that can seem just like human interaction.

AI's potential in opening up access to education cannot be overstated. Through technologies like machine translation and speech recognition, AI tools are making educational content accessible to non-native speakers and students with disabilities. This inclusivity not only

broadens the reach of education but also ensures that it is more equitable.

However, the integration of AI in education is not without challenges. There are concerns about data privacy, as the use of AI involves the collection and analysis of large amounts of personal data from students. There is also a risk that AI could widen the digital divide if access to the latest technologies is not evenly distributed. This could lead to a scenario where students in wealthier regions or institutions benefit more from AI advancements than those in underprivileged areas. Additionally, AI systems may inadvertently reinforce existing biases. If an AI system is trained on data that is not diverse, its assessments may favour certain groups of students over others, leading to unfair educational outcomes. This concern highlights the need for meticulously curated training data and algorithms that are regularly audited for bias and fairness.

Another significant challenge associated with AI in education is the potential for its misuse. As AI tools become more sophisticated, so too do the methods students might use them for dishonest purposes. For instance, essay-writing AIs can enable students to submit work that is technically correct but not their own, undermining the educational process's integrity and the authentic assessment of student learning. Also of concern, the easy availability of AI-generated solutions can lead students to rely on technology for quick answers rather than engaging deeply with the material. This reliance can limit their intellectual growth, as the convenience of AI assistance might discourage the development of critical thinking and problem-solving skills. If students shortcut their learning experiences by leaning too heavily on AI, they miss out on the process of struggling with and overcoming challenges, which is essential for deep learning and personal development.



An image of a classroom of the future, created by AI

To address these issues, educational institutions need to adapt their academic integrity guidelines to include AI-specific considerations, ensuring that policies keep pace with technological advancements. This includes creating robust systems to detect AI-assisted cheating and developing clearer guidelines on what constitutes legitimate use of AI in homework and assignments.

A key role of teachers will be to emphasise the importance of the learning process itself, not just the outcomes. Integrating AI literacy into the curriculum can help students understand how to use these tools as a supplement to their learning rather than a substitute. By fostering an environment that values honest inquiry and the hard work of learning, educators can help students harness AI as a tool for enhancement rather than evasion.

Looking ahead, the future of AI in education appears to be a blend of opportunity and caution. On the one hand, AI could lead to a more personalised, efficient and inclusive educational system. On the other, it necessitates careful consideration of ethical issues, such as privacy, equity and academic integrity. At Brigidine, we recognise that as AI becomes an integral part of our daily lives, it is imperative that we all learn how to use and interact with this technology responsibly and effectively, ensuring we harness its benefits while mitigating its risks. For our students, their future will see humans and AI working together – so we need to teach them how to do this successfully.

LEONE SMYTH
DEPUTY PRINCIPAL
TEACHING AND LEARNING

WELLBEING

Camps and Retreats

The education of the whole person at Brigidine is an essential component of our approach to learning, wellbeing and spirituality. The Camps and Retreats program is strategically coordinated to gently move students out of their comfort zones into new challenges and experiences to encourage and inspire them as part of their Brigidine College journey.

Time away from home on Camp or Retreat is precious time. The week is a chance to utilise 'Strength and Gentleness', learn to face life's challenges with greater confidence, be more independent, yet also more aware of the needs of others. In the future, each student will look back on these times with happiness and with a certainty that their time away was invaluable in enabling them to emerge from their teenage cocoons and move confidently into a challenging world.

BRIAN LOUGHLAND
DEPUTY PRINCIPAL FAITH AND MISSION



MUSICAL

Legally Blonde

It's time to get serious...

The school went pink for this year's musical production, *Legally Blonde*, which played to full audiences in April.

Adapted from the popular 2000s movie, *Legally Blonde* is a comic, uplifting celebration of finding your people, your purpose and your power. It is a particularly inspiring story for young women. In an age where we receive many messages about what we can and cannot do, Elle boldly forges her own path. She trusts her instincts, acts with integrity by not compromising her principles, and succeeds on her own terms. Her journey is a testament to what is possible with self-belief, kindness and a supportive network of people who are in your corner.

The students involved in *Legally Blonde*, on the stage, in the orchestra and as part of Girls In Black (or Girls In Pink!), possess many of the same qualities we admire in Elle. Her tenacity and drive shone through

in what our students accomplished in this production.

The College Musical is a team effort and the contributions of many other talented women cannot be understated. I acknowledge the hard work of Mrs Jude Allan for many years as rehearsal pianist whose gentle and generous support of the Musical Director has been invaluable. Our Alumni, Miss Chloe Jackett (Class of 2020) once again created excellent choreography for the show, along with Ms Katrina Rennie who crafted 'Whipped Into Shape'. Mrs Emma Johns, who has directed three Brigidine Musicals herself, was a source of light and laughter for us all, whilst her colleagues Ms Libby Goode and Ms Troha have lent their keen eyes to this year's costuming. Mrs Carmel McCudden offered consistent student support, Mrs Michelle Casiglia managed our ticketing process, and the Visual Arts Department painted the sets.

As much as it was a show about young women, I also thank the gentlemen whose creative work on *Legally Blonde* was invaluable. Mr Gareth Edey's technical prowess was evident in the sound, lighting and stage setup. Our set pieces were built by Mr Glenn Cameron and Mr David Yu under the direction of Mr Andrew Hodgson. Finally, Mr Charlie Lovelock stepped into the role of Musical Director with aplomb, bringing his infectious energy to the process in the same way Elle enlivened Harvard University.

CHRIS RUTHERFORD
DIRECTOR





SPORTS CARNIVALS

Pool, Track and Field

We had an action-packed start to the year with all three Interhouse Carnivals being held in Term 1.

House colours were brightly on display as students competed in swimming, athletics and cross country. Congratulations to all our Age Champions, Records Breakers and to the Houses that scored the highest points!

	Swimming	Athletics	Cross Country
Multiclass	Katie Booth	Jessie Walsh	
12 years	Billie White	Emily Valentine	Grace Trout
13 years	Teddy Smith	Ava Ellis	Ava Ellis
14 years	Tabi Mimmo	Sophie Irvine	Gemma Elliot
15 years	Nikita Muriti	Sofia Ehnбом	Caetlin Ashby
16 years	Poppy Smith	Amber Hiscox	Tasha Lillycrop
17 years	Sophia Cooper	Claire Cornes	Albee McInnes
18 years	Zannah Dixon	Leila McDougall	Erin Shanahan
Invitation 50m Freestyle Champion	Zannah Dixon		
Invitation 100m Champion		Sofia Ehnбом	
Overall Champion	Zannah Dixon	Sofia Ehnбом	Gemma Elliot
Winning House	Kildare	Fatima	Fatima

NEW RECORDS

18 Years 50m Freestyle: Zannah Dixon (28.62s) Old record 28.76s

18 Years 50m Butterfly: Zannah Dixon (30.29s) Old record 30.99s

15 Years Long Jump: Sofia Ehnбом (5m) Old record 5.5m



COCURRICULAR

Highlights



ETHICS OLYMPIAD

Our 'Ethletes' team earned Honourable Mentions at the International Ethics Olympiad. The competition was fierce and our girls showcased exceptional contributions that left the judges impressed.



Photo by Winkipop Media

GYMNASTICS

Lauren Turner, Year 10 competed at the National Gymnastics Championships and achieved a personal best overall score making her Senior State Champion. Lauren finished 1st Vault, 3rd Floor, 4th Bars and 3rd Beam. She will be representing NSW at Nationals in May.

KAYAKING

Tess Lever and Hayley Dunbar, Year 10 (pictured, right) and Zoe Shirdon and Albee McInnes, Year 12, competed at the National Kayaking Championships, held at the Sydney International Regatta Centre, Penrith. All four girls came home with medals, with Tess and Hayley winning gold in both the K2 1000m and 500m finals.

Tess and Hayley have been selected in the U16 Australian Kayaking team and will compete at the Asia Pacific Cup in May.

MUSIC TOUR

Brigidine Music toured to Queensland in April to join forces with Brigidine Indooroopilly where they shared their musical talents and performed with one another.



PUBLIC SPEAKING

Congratulations to our students who competed in the CSDA Public Speaking grand final. They each had great success in their respective divisions with Amelia Hague, Year 10 (pictured) finishing in first place, Summer Woods, Year 11, placing second and Hannah Ryu, Year 8 and Adele Scully, Year 7 very worthy grand finalists.



SOFTBALL

Natasha Townley, Year 12, Georgia Benson, Year 11 and Josie Howlett, Year 11 represented NSWCIS at the NSW All Schools Softball Championships.



SPORTS TOUR

Over 30 of our AFL and Rugby 7s players had a wonderful time touring to Fiji and Canada in April as part of the Brigidine Sports Tour.



School Snapshots



Year 12 launching their theme for the year "Together through it all - 2024" in support of the charity Hope in a Suitcase



Stan Grant speaks with Years 9 and 11



Anzac Memorial, Hyde Park



Class of 2023 High Achievers Assembly



Shrove Tuesday



Year 7 Wide Reading challenge



Ash Wednesday



Dignity Dishes



Bronze Duke of Edinburgh



Caritas Rice Day



Year 12 Breakfast



Brigidine Music performing at the Sydney Royal Easter Show



Women in Science evening

Creating a Legacy

As our students continue to strive for excellence, we are excited to launch the 2024 Annual Giving campaign which will support our new state of the art Sports Precinct.

Our vision extends beyond merely constructing a facility; we aim to create a vibrant hub where all students can train, compete, flourish and grow. Our new and modern Sports Precinct will not only serve as a beacon for sporting excellence but it will be a gathering place for our community to come together, fostering a sense of belonging.

Our students' vision for the Sports Precinct is to install solar panels on the roof when construction is completed. They are passionate about sustainability and making a difference.

Why do we need your support? This project is bigger than any one of us – it's about investing in the future of our community and ensuring that our students continue to have the resources they need to succeed. By contributing to the 2024 Annual Giving campaign, you are not just building a facility; you are investing in the dreams and aspirations of our current and future students who will all benefit from this Sports Precinct for years to come.

Together, we can build more than just a Sports Precinct—we can build a legacy that will enrich the lives of our students.

Thank you for considering this important investment in our community's future. We have seen in the past what can be achieved when our vibrant Brigidine community bands together in support of a cause. Indeed, this is a unique opportunity to make a difference for the school and students.

Due to recent system changes to the Voluntary Building fund any donations to support the Sports Precinct can be made through the 2024 Annual Giving program on the College website brigidine.nsw.edu.au/giving

Your contributions are tax deductible.

If you would like more information please contact Mandy Loomes, Director Community Engagement on mloomes@brigidine.nsw.edu.au or 02 9988 6200.

MANDY LOOMES
DIRECTOR
COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT



“The students at Brigidine College are extremely passionate about the implementation of solar panels. Climate change is one of the leading issues our generation is facing. At Brigidine we are taught to be leaders, act responsibly and to care for others and our environment. In order to drive change we have to initiate it. The student leaders recognise the need to act responsibly regarding ecological sustainability and set an example for other schools and future students. We are extremely proud of our school and we want to leave it a better, more sustainable place for all future students.”

CAITLIN WALLEY
YEAR 12



Empowering Women

International Women's Day is a global day that celebrates and recognises the social, economic, cultural and political achievements of women. In 2024 the College celebrates 70 years of educating strong and gentle women. Our Brigidine women are leaving their mark on the world in their own special and unique way.

We invited our Alumni to come on the journey with us as we recognised the day at the College. It is one of the most important days of the year when we can celebrate women's achievements and call for positive change advancing women. By inspiring inclusion we forge a better world, and when women and girls are inspired to be included, it creates a sense of belonging, relevance and empowerment.

Holly De Jong (Class of 2003) and Leah Jackson (Hopcroft, Class of 2001) shared their stories with Years 8 and 10 students. Both have had different journeys, experiences and careers, yet

their messages to the girls were the same. They emphasised the importance of self-belief, authenticity and pursuing their own dreams.

At the start of the day, our Senior students represented the College at the Catholic Schools NSW annual International Women's Day breakfast. The guest speaker was Tanya Plibersek who gave a very moving address on the invaluable contribution of the religious Sisters to the social fabric of Australian society. She acknowledged their role in establishing schools, hospitals and other social services leaving a legacy for a more equitable society.

International Women's Day provided a platform to recognise the achievements of women past and present. It was a day filled with appreciation, reflection and inspiration for students and staff.

In commemorating 70 years at Brigidine, the College continues to foster a community where everyone can thrive and contribute, paving a more just and prosperous future for us all.

MANDY LOOMES
DIRECTOR
COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT



Community Spirit

The roots of the Brigidine College St Ives community spirit began 70 years ago and today in 2024 it continues to thrive. Being part of a community unites us; it makes us feel part of something greater than ourselves. It provides us with opportunities to connect with others, give and receive support, learn and feel a sense of belonging. Our community is made up of more than 780 families, over 830 students, 150 staff and 8000 Alumni all working together.

In February the College hosted almost 400 guests from our parent community at the Welcome Cocktail Party. The theme for the night was 'Bright and Beautiful'. Our P&F transformed Bowie Hall into the perfect venue creating a haven of all things bright and beautiful. Guests were greeted by the sounds of live music and enjoyed delicious canapés created by Barbettes Feast and served by our Hospitality students. It was a wonderful opportunity for parents to catch up with old friends and for new families to get to know one another.

We have two initiatives at Brigidine aimed at welcoming our Year 7 parents to the College community. In March we

continued the tradition of our Mums Lunch and Supper Groups when 50 of our Year 7 mums came together at events held at the College. In April, we welcomed Year 7 fathers to Brigo Dads. Navigating the move from primary school to high school can be overwhelming so meeting other parents is a wonderful way to share in the experience. We look forward to watching friendships in these groups flourish.

Our P&F are an important part of the community, a group of parents who support the College by not only fundraising but more importantly 'friend raising'. They meet once at the beginning of each term and offer assistance to the College in many

ways. If you would like to be part of this sociable group and volunteer a pair of helping hands from time to time, please contact them at pandf@brigidine.nsw.edu.au They would love to hear from you.

Look out for details of other community events happening later this year including the Trivia Night and Christmas on the Green. We would love for you to join in and to be part of the community that is Brigidine.

PIP INMAN
ALUMNI & COMMUNITY RELATIONS





FROM THE ALUMNI AND COMMUNITY RELATIONS COORDINATOR

This year is particularly special for our community, marking 70 years of Brigidine College St Ives. Our story is young compared to some but nonetheless it is a full one; one of dedication, courage, resourcefulness, growth, friendship and of course strength and gentleness. I am sure if the Brigidine Sisters of 1954 had been told their work in St Ives would lead to the education of some 8000 young women they perhaps would not have believed it, but 70 years on, the foundations they laid still stand strong and their spirit and journey continues. You can read more about what it was like back then in our article on page 34, '1954 – The Beginning of a St Ives Community'.

In planning for our 70th anniversary I asked our community to share one word that springs to mind when they think of Brigidine College St Ives. The response was overwhelming, but the words shared were no surprise; there was a common theme which paints a picture of a happy place where friendships are made, young minds are inspired and strong social justice values are encouraged.

In this issue we read about our very first College Captain, Barbara Brannan (McCarthy, Class of 1957), memories of her school days and how it shaped her life; we see how Alumni are 'giving back' by sharing their wisdom and talents with current

students at events like International Women's Day, Women in Science and our Festival of Music; and we share the successes of Ella Davies (Class of 2000), Brianna Parker (Class of 2019) and Juliet Liddy (Class of 2017).

On 9 February this year, 70 years to the day the College opened its doors to students, the first of our anniversary celebrations was held. You can read about the unveiling of our new statue, the significance of a tree planting, as well as Alumni school memories as part of the feature story on page 4 of this issue of *The Bridge*.

PIP INMAN
ALUMNI & COMMUNITY RELATIONS

A MESSAGE ON BEHALF OF SR ANITA, ALUMNI PATRON

Sr Anita, Alumni Patron, celebrated her 92nd birthday in February this year. She is always a popular figure at our Alumni events and we know many of you have fond memories of your time at the College when she was Principal. Sr Maree Marsh asked us to share this message with you all.

Sr Anita deeply appreciates all the messages she has received since moving

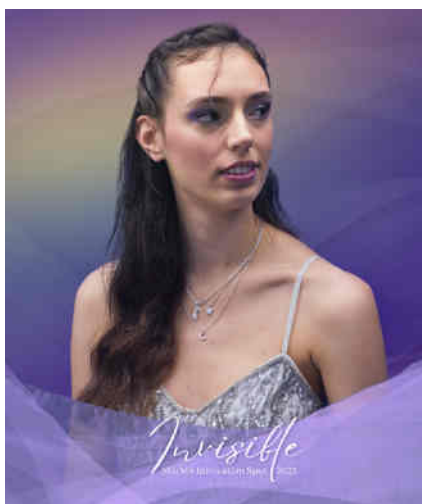
into Brigidine House, Catholic Healthcare, at Randwick and for her birthday.

She is not able to respond to each one individually, but she wanted everyone to know that your messages mean a great deal to her.

With grateful thanks,
Sr Maree Marsh
mareemarsh@brigidine.org.au



Sr Anita with College Captain, Natasha Townley (right) and Vice Captain, Indie Smith (left) at the recent 70th anniversary celebration



INVISIBLE – AN ORIGINAL MUSICAL

Congratulations to Ella Davies (Class of 2020), who showcased her musical *Invisible* with the Macquarie Musical Society in September 2023. It was featured as part of the society's Innovation Spot, an annual event reserved for promoting and workshopping student written material. Ella wrote both the music and lyrics and said "The heart of *Invisible* is to (hopefully) allow those who feel unseen to feel seen. I hope that anyone who feels invisible or out of place knows that that's ok, it's normal, and that somewhere, someday, you will find a space to be seen."

SYNOPSIS

Invisible is an original musical theatre song cycle that explores different facets of invisibility through song. Focused through the eyes of a young woman named Iris, a range of stories are told by an ensemble cast, with each story exploring a different perspective and experience of invisibility. Together, they highlight the ironic universality of invisibility and what happens if the choice to be seen is made. *Invisible* was workshopped through Macquarie Musical Society's Innovation Spot 2023, with a cast of 11 and a 6-piece band.

THE FOOL AND THE DEVIL

Brianna Parker (Class of 2019) released her first published book in February through publisher Shawline Publishing Group. Titled *The Fool and the Devil*, the book is a collection of poetry and prose predominantly written when Brianna was 15 to 18 years old, during her time at Brigidine. Brianna describes herself as “an introverted student” and says she spent a great deal of her time reading in the school library. She explained that Brigidine was very important to her and made a great impact on her life. Here is what she wrote about her journey to publishing the book:

My passion for writing, consisting of poetry, short stories and lyrics started when I was 13 and has continued every day since. My writings focus on themes of mental health, love, looking back on memories of sadness and gaining independence through the means of change and personal growth.

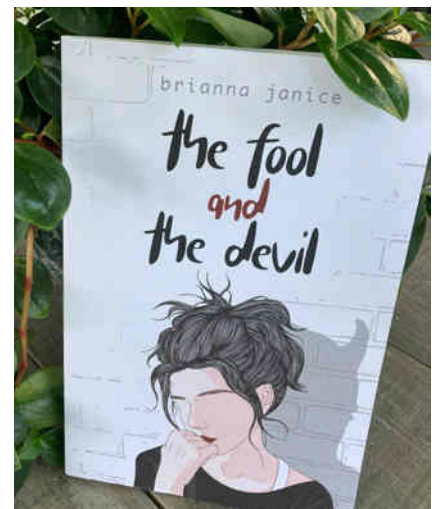
Since graduating from Brigidine, I've been studying, working and travelling. I have recently returned from London where I spent 14 months living and exploring many corners of Europe, feeding my writing passion even more.

While overseas, I started the process of publishing my first poetry book and it has finally come to fruition. I've learnt a lot during this process and it has been both wonderful and exhausting.

My time in high school was a great inspiration for my “teenage” writing. Almost every teenager experiences a life that is pretty tumultuous at times, whether from the stress of studies or angst from personal relationships. A lot happens when you're young and wishing for adulthood.

Congratulations Brianna, we hope your book *The Fool and the Devil* is the first in a successful writing career.

The Fool and the Devil is available under author name Brianna Janice on all platforms, including [amazon.com.au](https://www.amazon.com.au) and the publisher's site, [shawlinepublishing.com.au](https://www.shawlinepublishing.com.au)



FROM SPECIAL OLYMPICS TO HOSPITALITY AND INDEPENDENCE

Juliet Liddy (Class of 2017) has been keeping extremely busy since graduating from the College. She has represented NSW at the Special Olympics National Games twice, competing in the Mixed Basketball Team that won the gold medal at the 2022 Launceston event. Her love of basketball continued and in 2023 she helped the Women's Basketball Team win bronze as part of Team Australia for the Special Olympics World Games held in Berlin.

During this exciting time Juliet was selected to represent the NSW delegation in a private meeting with Their Excellencies, The Governor General and Mrs Linda Hurley, when receiving their Team Australia uniforms at Admiralty House. She also represented Team Australia by collecting water from Sydney Harbour before departing Australia to take to the Opening Ceremony in Berlin. Juliet was thrilled to lead Team Australia into the Olympiastadion for the ceremony.

On her return from Berlin, with her feet firmly on the ground, Juliet turned

her thoughts to her love of hospitality and memories of her Food Tech lessons at Brigidine. She continued with her Hospitality and Independence Program at Niccolo's Restaurant & Bar, Hotel Etico graduating in July.

From a model originating from Italy, Hotel Etico in Mount Victoria is Australia's first social enterprise hotel. The Hotel trains and employs young people with a disability in a fully integrated open employment environment, where they can learn hospitality and independent living skills over a 12-month period while being paid full award wages. The Independence Program provides supported independent living for trainees while they stay overnight in the Hotel for their rostered workdays. (hoteletico.com.au/hotel-etico-training-program)

Since graduating from the Hospitality and Independence Program, Juliet now works at Song Hotel Sydney as a Food and Beverage Attendant on the Breakfast shift in Song Kitchen. The Song Hotel, Australia's only

profit for purpose hotel, is owned and managed by YWCA Australia, a national not-for-profit organisation supporting women and young people. Profits made by the Hotel are reinvested back into YWCA's programs and services. A current priority of YWCA is young women's leadership and women's housing, with a goal to advance gender equality.

Congratulations Juliet, the world is your oyster and we can't wait to hear the next chapter in your story.



Giving Back



There are so many ways alumni can connect with their alma mater to help make a difference. At Brigidine College St Ives we are very fortunate our Alumni community loves to get involved and regularly gives back to College life by sharing their time, knowledge and experience. We are incredibly grateful to all Alumni who take the time to join us throughout the academic year and give back to the College in such a positive way.

WOMEN IN SCIENCE

Our Science Department hosted a 'Women in Science' evening in conjunction with the United Nations celebration of the 9th International Women and Girls in Science Day in February. Two of our Alumni, Margaret Rozali (Class of 1998) and Gillian Devaney (Class of 1983) were guest speakers. They talked about their rich and exciting career paths and how taking a combination of science subjects for their final years of high school helped to place them on trajectories they could not have imagined.

Margaret trained as an engineer. Her work involving radiotelemetry led her to Africa where she was a safari group leader and

gained her drone flying licence to help in the fight against elephant poachers. Margaret eventually returned to the engineering field to work on projects such as connecting Australia to the world with fibre optics cables.

Gillian became a phlebotomist at Mona Vale Hospital. After an exciting change to become a police officer, her career path took another turn and she is now a wildlife assistant at Taronga Zoo's crucial facility where research into conservation of Australia's unique fauna is undertaken alongside rehabilitation of sick and injured wildlife.



INTERNATIONAL WOMEN'S DAY

The College recognised International Women's Day on Friday 8 March. Two Alumni, Leah Jackson (Hopcroft, Class of 2001) and Holly De Jong (Class of 2003) shared insights, advice and inspiration with students in Years 8 and 10. They spoke about their time at Brigidine and how inspiring inclusion can forge a better world, where women and girls have a sense of belonging, relevance and are empowered to achieve their goals.

After spending several years working in creative advertising agencies Leah switched to client-side marketing and is now head of Digital Marketing at Goodman Fielder. Holly has been working in the architectural industry since 2007. She is an experienced Associate and a registered architect in NSW. Her area of expertise lies in education projects and campus master planning.



ALUMNI



Reunion Day

FESTIVAL OF MUSIC

We have a fabulous Cocurricular Music program at Brigidine which was showcased over three nights last year. Each night featured a different area of the program and included performances from our talented Alumni musicians.

The Brigidine Alumni String Orchestra performed for the first time as part of the Strings Showcase including Rebecca Johnson and Lucy Stafford (both Class of 2014), Mia Gougousidis (Class of 2019) and Clarisse Tsang (Class of 2022). The featured Alumni soloist was Lindsay Gilroy (Class of 2000) who played an amazing piano solo.

Taking part in the Band Showcase was the Alumni Concert Band featuring Jess Kittos (Class of 2017), Annabelle Ambrogio, Emily Ambrogio and Eloise Carroll (all Class of 2018), Bianca Henderson-Brookes and Andie Hilton (both Class of 2021) and Jessica Wearne (Class of 2020). Natasha Williams (Class of 2019) was the featured Alumni soloist. She played an unaccompanied trumpet solo. At the time of the performance Natasha was in her final year of trumpet at the Conservatorium of Music. The piece she performed was a Brigidine commission composed by Zoe Gougousidis (Class of 2019) who was in her final year of composition at Sydney Conservatorium of Music.

The Festival concluded with a Vocal Showcase night. The featured Alumni soloist was Molly Sutton (Class of 2016). Also performing was the Alumni Vocal Ensemble featuring Camilla Corbett (Class of 2012), Rebecca Johnson (Class of 2014), Tiegan Denina (Class of 2016), Devina Maurice (Class of 2017), Gemma Curry and Eva Ossowski (both Class of 2022).

We thank our Alumni musicians for sharing their musical gifts with us and giving back to the College community in what was a showcase of superb talent.

Over 200 Alumni from the Classes of 1978, 1983, 1988, 1993, 1998, 2003, 2008, 2013 and 2018 came together on Saturday 11 November 2023 for our annual Alumni Day.

The sun shone as guests were welcomed by Laetitia Richmond, College Principal. They enjoyed tours of the College campus, caught up with past staff, reminisced with old friends, viewed memorabilia from our archives and heard from current students. It was wonderful to see so many happy memories of their time at the College being shared amongst them.

Our 2024 Alumni Day for the Classes of 1979, 1984, 1989, 1994, 1999, 2004, 2009, 2014 and 2019 will take place on Saturday 7 September. Further details will be emailed to these groups later in the year. If you are part of one of these year groups, please make sure we have your current email address so you don't miss out on your invitation. We look forward to seeing you there.



BARBARA BRANNAN (MCCARTHY, CLASS OF 1957)

In 1953, Barbara McCarthy was living in Pymble and attended school at Monte Sant' Angelo, North Sydney. As a happy 12 year old, she travelled from Pymble Station to Monte by train and two trams. She was in a Year 7 class of around 50 girls taught by two nuns and had many lovely friends, some of whom she remains friends with today. Barbara really enjoyed the fact that, due to it being a big class, she could sit at the very back of the room, quietly talking with her friends and not doing much work, including homework which she explained wasn't checked very often.

In 1954, Barbara's mother told her about a new school being opened in St Ives by the Brigidine Sisters and explained that Barbara would be one of the new students there. Barbara was of course very shocked, then nervous to start at a new school and sad to be leaving her wonderful friends at Monte. She began attending Brigidine College St Ives in May 1954 and was the 11th student on the roll. There was no school uniform at the time, so the girls wore their "good clothes" instead.

Year 8 students sat in one row at the front of the classroom that is now known as Synan Room 2 (SY2), a daunting moment for Barbara who was used to sitting at the back. Year 7 students sat in the classroom now known as Synan Room 3 (SY3) and the teachers were Principal, Mother Romuald Walz and Sr Adrian Small. These two women taught all subjects on offer to the students with dedication and care.

Barbara travelled to Brigidine on a bus that picked her up from her house on the Pacific Highway. The bus would even wait for her if she was a little late leaving her house and being such a small school, the day only started once the school bus arrived.

She remembers how she enjoyed buying special treats from the roadside shop which was sometimes open at the front of the school on the side of the two-lane Mona

Vale Road and recalls Woodbury Road was a dirt road; the school felt like it was very much in the bush.

During recess and lunch, the girls were allowed to explore the grounds around the only building on the site, now known as Synan. Back in the 1950s the area of land where Bowie Hall now stands was an orchard. The girls liked to explore this area, being careful to look out for snakes in the warmer months. There were also horses on the property which the girls loved to visit and pat during their breaks.

Recess and lunch breaks came to an end when one of the nuns, wearing her white gloves, would put her hands outside the window of SY2, over what is today the quadrangle, and clap loudly. She recalls that each afternoon it was the students' responsibility to clean the classrooms before leaving on the buses for home. This included sweeping the wooden floors and carefully refilling the ink well on each desk. One day Barbara decided to put on some white gloves and clap the girls back from their break, before the nuns had done their marking and had their cup of tea. Barbara had some extra classroom chores to do that week!

This wasn't the only type of practical joke she remembers being played on the nuns. Barbara told the story of how the nuns would often play tennis after school. In those days the tennis court was located where today's Chapel stands. They sometimes took their shoes off to play and on return, they would find their laces had been cheekily tied together by the girls.

In those early days the girls' parents were heavily involved in organising and attending school fetes, official openings of the school, school masses and significant fundraising for the new buildings and resources at the College.



Barbara in College sports uniform, 1957

A regular social and fundraising event for the students was a highly anticipated movie night. These were held at the house of Barbara Driscoll (Class of 1958) which was across the road from the College on Mona Vale Road and had a projector in the garage.

As enrolment numbers grew, students were invited to vote for a School Captain to represent the College. Barbara was voted in as the first College Captain. She must have been a good leader and popular amongst her fellow students because she was voted in again for a further three years.

Barbara loved being a student at Brigidine College St Ives. She believes it was the passionate, dedicated work of the nuns that afforded her an amazing educational opportunity that led her to to achieve academic success in her Leaving Certificate and go on to Teachers College receiving a Diploma of Teaching, a Graduate Diploma of Religious Education and a Graduate Certificate in Arts.

It was not only the academic opportunities she loved about Brigidine. Barbara forged lifelong friendships with some beautiful women, enjoyed music lessons with Mother Duchesne Donlan, and, coached by Mr Henry Lindo, played in tennis games against other schools (although, she remembers how stockings were part of the tennis uniform, even on warm days, which was not something she loved!).

Completion of her leaving certificate in 1957 was the start of the next fulfilling chapter for Barbara. She began her teaching career, met Martin Brannan, a photographer for *The Sydney Morning Herald*, married Martin, built a house in Killarney Heights, had eight children (Judy, Martin, Brigid, Sean, Bernadette, Adrian, Chris and Kate), who gave her 14 grandchildren and one

great-grandchild – so far. Barbara lives a life dedicated to her family and community.

Continuing her connections to St Ives, Barbara enrolled her daughters Brigid (Class of 1984), Bernadette (Class of 1987) and Kate (Class of 1998), as students at the College. Barbara's granddaughter Amelia attended Brigidine College Indooroopilly (Class of 2019).

Brigid now a teacher, Bernadette a nurse and Kate, also a teacher and on staff at the College, loved their time as students at Brigidine too. Each of them graduated with lifelong friends, going on to university, enjoying family life and continuing their strong connections with the Brigidine community, guided by the motto of *Strength and Gentleness*.

Barbara's connection to the College continued long after her graduation and in 2007, as part of the 200th Anniversary of the Brigidine Sisters, Barbara enjoyed participating in a pilgrimage to Ireland. She joined many of the St Ives community as well as interstate and international community members to celebrate this significant occasion.

Barbara often recalls fondly her time at Brigidine. She is grateful for the dedication and determination of the Brigidine Sisters who worked tirelessly for the benefit of the students and the community. In all areas of her life Barbara has lived by the values of strength and gentleness instilled in her by Mother Romuald and Sr Adrian. From 1954 to today, Barbara is so proud to be part of the Brigidine St Ives story.

ALUMNI

Christenings and Marriages

On Sunday 4 February **Tara Hodges (Perkins, Class of 2016)** and her husband were joined by their family in St Brigid's Chapel for the christening of their daughter Charlotte. Charlotte, who was born in May last year, wore a beautiful dress made by her great-grandmother using material from her Nanny's wedding dress. Tara said, "it was very special to be able to hold the christening in the chapel I grew up in."



Lauren Thompson (Class of 2009) and her husband Hermant's son Kai was born in October 2022. In October 2023 they celebrated his first birthday and christening on the same day choosing St Brigid's Chapel as the perfect venue. Lauren said, "it was a lovely celebration with all of Kai's favourite people present."

Mimi Collins (Dennis, Class of 2015) shared her wedding news with us:

I married Jack on the 11 November 2023 at Elanora Country Club. It was truly the happiest and most special day of our lives!

Jack and I met through mutual friends seven years ago (however we are sure we must have crossed paths at some point before this as we grew up living just five minutes away from each other). Jack lived in Elanora Heights, which is where I went to preschool and worked at the local pharmacy, while I lived five minutes up the hill in Ingleside. This is why Elanora Country Club felt like such a fitting venue for our wedding.

One of my bridesmaids was my friend, Madi Lai who attended Brigidine and graduated with me in 2015 (pictured Photo 1, far right) and another was my niece, Matilda (Tilly) Lloyd who is currently in Year 9 at Brigidine (pictured Photo 1, third from left).



Photo 1

There were also several Brigidine girls who attended the wedding as guests who I have remained friends with since school: (pictured, Photo 2) Jane Vanzino (Class of 2015), Kelly Wilcox (Class of 2015), Clare Vanzino (Class of 2015), Isabella Ryan (Class of 2015), Maddi Brown (Class of 2015), Sophie Wright (Class of 2017) and (not pictured) Taylor Gleeson (Class of 2015).



Photo 2

1954 – The Beginning of a St Ives Community

In 1946 the Brigidine Provincial Chapter decided a new novitiate was needed and with a growing community on the North Shore and limited space at the Holy Family School in Lindfield, ten acres in St Ives was purchased between 1949–1951 (Garaty 2003, p. 95). It was thought that building a school before a novitiate would provide a source of income and a place for novitiates to complete their practical teacher training.

Whilst still a rural location (Mona Vale Road had just two lanes of traffic and Woodbury Road was a rocky dirt lane with a creek in the middle) building of the school commenced in August 1953 with intentions to open for the next school year (Brannan 2003). As the time drew near it became obvious that the building would not be finished for foundation Sisters (Romuald Walz and Adrian Small along with Corpus Christi staff; Sisters Josephine Coady and Duchesne Donlan) to move in. From 5 February they started preparing the schoolrooms but spent the night with the Lindfield community or had their meals cooked by Mrs Brooks who lived across the road (Bowie & Egan 2004, p. 30).

This original building is the midsection of the block we now call Synan. The main entry was on Woodbury Road although it was rarely used by the girls who entered via a smaller door on the Mona Vale Road end. Downstairs was the Chemistry and Domestic Science rooms along with nuns' amenities whilst upstairs had four classrooms used for 1st Year, 2nd Year, chapel and sacristy, a nuns area divided into four sleeping cubicles and a sitting room (Brannan 2003).

After a blessing from Monsignor Crowley, parish priest of Sacred Heart Pymble, the College opened on Tuesday 9 February with nine girls (five girls in 1st Year; Barbara Brooks, Ruth Gardner, Theresa Lynch, Angela O'Connor, Maureen Dalton and four in 2nd Year; Barbara Reynolds, Leonie Fleck, Rhonda and Sonya Lyon). As uniforms were not ready Mother Romuald requested students wear 'good' clothes with their College hat, but none of the girls did until the full uniform arrived (Bowie & Egan 2004, p. 31). Despite school commencing, the building works continued, scaffolding remained and workers, Jim the carpenter and Albert the operetta singing painter kept working with classes being accommodated outside (Bowie & Egan 2004, p. 30).

Building works were finally finished in May with an official opening held on Sunday 13 June 1954. Students from Brigidine schools at Randwick, Maroubra and Lindfield travelled by bus to celebrate with local families and Brigidine Sisters from other communities. *The Catholic Weekly* reported approximately 2500 attendees at the opening, which is recalled as being overwhelming for the now 11 enrolled St Ives girls (*The Catholic Weekly* 1954; Brannan 2003). Parents and friends of the community turned out in their finest dress, with women wearing hats and gloves and visiting students in their best school uniforms all forming a guard of honour for the official party (Brigidine Sisters 1954). Guests included His Eminence Cardinal Gilroy who wore his red biretta and vestments, Monsignor Crowley wearing his purple sash of honour, Father Sebastian of the Passionist Congregation and the Lord Mayor of Sydney. Many nuns from other Brigidine Convents came to celebrate and watched the ceremony from the windows of the College building (Bowie & Egan 2004 p. 32).

The overwhelming theme of the day was of joy and optimism for the planned growth to continue at St Ives and the need for fundraising to build the novitiate. Cardinal Gilroy spoke of the ideal environment in St Ives with trees preserved and location 'removed from the world and its distractions' (Garaty 2003, pp. 238–239), and 70 years later we are still growing our Brigidine community in ideal surroundings.

JACKIE ROSSINGTON
ARCHIVIST

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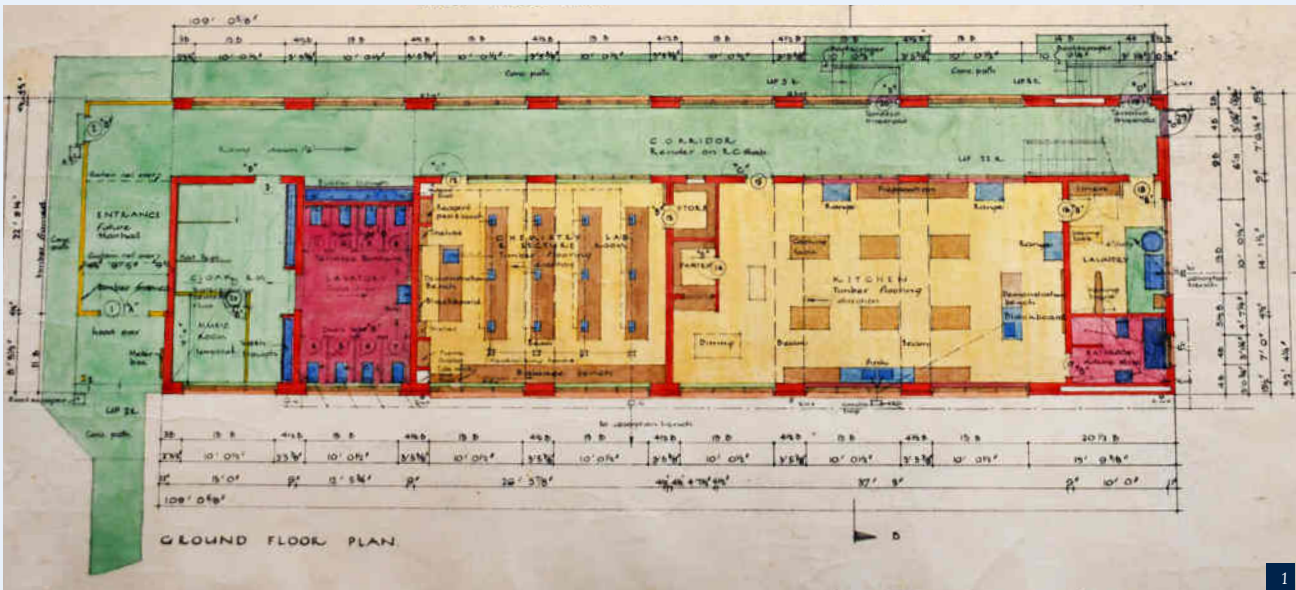
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PROGRESS, AND WITH

Register No.	Date of Admission	PUPIL'S NAME
1	9/2/54	Dalton, Maureen
2	9/2/54	Dleck, Leonie
3	9/2/54	Lynch, Teresa
4	9/2/54	O'Keenan, Angela
5	9/2/54	Gardner, Ruth
6	9/2/54	Brooks, Barbara
7	9/2/54	Lyon, Rhonda
8	9/2/54	Lyon, Sonya
9	9/2/54	Reynolds, Barbara
10	28/3/54	McNamee, Marie

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Photo 1: Architect's working drawings, 1954
 Photo 2: Cardinal Gilroy opening the College, 1954
 Photo 3: Sisters watching the opening ceremony, 1954
 Photo 4: Admission register, 1954
 Photo 5: Sr Adrian reading, 1956
 Photo 6: 2nd year, 1954
 Photo 7: College just completed, 1954



Artist's impression of drive entry to the new Sports Precinct

Creating a Legacy

Brigidine College's new state of the art Sports Precinct will create a vibrant hub where all students can train, compete, flourish and grow. It will not only serve as a beacon for sporting excellence, it will be a gathering place for our community to come together.

Our students are passionate about sustainability and making a difference. Their vision for the Sports Precinct is to install solar panels on the roof once construction is completed.

Please help make this happen by investing in the future of our community.

Together, we can build a legacy that will enrich the lives of our students and our environment.

You can make your contribution by scanning the QR code or through our website:

brigidine.nsw.edu.au/giving

