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Another year of remarkable VCE results

With a median ATAR of 95.35, one of our highest on record, and close to two thirds of the class achieving an ATAR of 90+, the results of the Class of 2012 maintain our proud history of achieving consistently high VCE scores. Our median VCE Study Score of 37 also places us at the top of all independent schools in Borroodara as well as second in Victoria for independent girls’ schools.

2012 VCE highlights at a glance

• 62% of students achieved an ATAR of 90+ placing them in the top 10% of the State
• 52% of students achieved an ATAR of 95+ placing them in the top 5% of the State
• 14% of students achieved an ATAR of 99+ placing them in the top 1% of the State

The 2012 NAPLAN results, released on the MySchool website, place Fintona amongst the highest achieving independent girls’ schools in Victoria, affirming our position as a consistently high performing school. Our Year 9 results, especially, place us at the top in Writing and Spelling and top two and three in Grammar, Punctuation and Reading respectively.

In recognition of these wonderful results, our Principal, Mrs Suzy Chandler was interviewed in the Herald Sun on 15 March, 2013.

“I would like to think our kids aren’t highly trained, but what they are is highly educated,” she said.

To read the full article in the Herald Sun, visit our website at www.fintona.vic.edu.au

Another year of remarkable VCE and NAPLAN results

From the Principal

The new ELC playground delights our younger students

Year 2 girls enjoy exploring Merricks Beach

Year 4 girls on the cutting edge

Join the club at Moss House

Year 6 students visit iconic sights in Canberra

Life is a Cabaret

Our 2013 Consuls in the Spotlight

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Meet our FPA President

The fabulous Fintona Food & Wine Festival

New staff in 2013

Meet our Teachers; Katrina Brennan and Trish Leigh

World Challenge - Fintona students visit Ecuador

New Mac lab inspires students to create their own CD

Where are they now?

OFA

Reunion Dates

Important Dates for 2013
We have become used to an expectation that schools need to find ways to measure their success, the more obvious innovation in that regard being NAPLAN. Governments in many countries have or are implementing such methods with varying success and much criticism about the effect of the testing and bureaucracy needed to underpin it and the reliability of the outcomes.

Perhaps another way to ascertain a school’s capacity, without the angst attached to student testing, is through parent and student surveys which Fintona has conducted in the past. Last year, we decided to utilise the ISV Parent Satisfaction Survey from ELC to Year 12, so that we could benchmark our results against the 701 independent schools that ISV represents.

The survey was carried out across ten domains, including Quality of Teaching, Curriculum, Pastoral Care and Resources and an area for other, general responses. The results were very pleasing putting us above the mean in every domain at ELC, Primary and Secondary levels (refer to the chart top right).

Our education, as well as being first class in the here and now, should also be focused on providing our students with the skills, both academic and personal that will fit them for the future. I started thinking about this some time back when I saw that employment was changing quite rapidly. In the past we began by outsourcing manufacturing to China and that took off in an unprecedented way. Then Third World countries began moving beyond factories where cheap labour churned out mass produced t-shirts, toys and footwear and began to educate their populations to deal with IT, clerical work, design and other low level professional work.

Now we have a situation where big law, architecture, engineering and other firms are sending such work offshore where it can be completed more cheaply if not as well. Internationally we also have a rapid escalation of inter country employment where firms try to hire the best candidates irrespective of their country of origin. This all suggests radical changes that will confront our students and that we need to be mindful of as we educate the next generation of employees.

There is always a drag effect in education where we teach over a 12 to 17 year period so that when the students we have taught leave university, the original landscape upon which they made various career choices may have changed quite radically. What we have to do is try to prepare them more broadly so that no matter what they do ‘they know what to do when they don’t know what to do’ as one educationalist put it.

As well as providing our students with a plethora of challenging and interesting activities both within and outside the classroom, which you will read about in this edition of the Fintona File, we have invited a number of guest speakers for staff days this year to stimulate discussion about the future for our students. We are also reviewing aspects of the curriculum with the same focus in mind and encouraging our students to continue to look out at the broader world, engage in the changes they see all around them and think about their place in the world.

Suzy Chandler
Principal
The new ELC playground delights our younger students

After 12 months of planning, preparation and very hard work, we were pleased to open the new ELC playground to the children at the start of Term 1. The old playground was removed over the summer holiday break to allow for the new space to be constructed. It was designed and developed by our Gardener, Helen Kinross and the Fintona Maintenance team who excelled in transforming the old playground into a remarkable new space.

The playground provides the children with many different experiences and areas for exploration and discovery. Its design ensured the inclusion of many natural materials and innovative elements, including a large water feature with pump and a cubby house nestled into the sandpit.

The playground was officially opened by Principal, Suzy Chandler and Maintenance Manager, Joe Diedun on Wednesday 20 March and judging by the very positive reaction we have received from our young learners so far, we are certain that this magnificent space will be thoroughly enjoyed for many years to come.

Cara Mearns
Head of ELC
Year 2 girls enjoy exploring Merricks Beach

As part of Fintona’s Outdoor Education program, our Year 2 class embarked on a three day camp to Merricks Beach. The camp provides girls with opportunities to learn skills of independence and make responsible choices in relation to healthy eating and lifestyle, which links to their classroom Unit of Inquiry. Team building activities, such as sand sculpture and pine needle presentations, allowed opportunities for collaborating and negotiating.

The girls were able to explore the nearby beach at high and low tides – and in all kinds of weather! A highlight of the camp was seeing a gorgeous koala in a nearby tree. The camp was an action-packed fun-filled experience with many memorable moments!

Sally Clayton
Head of Junior School

Year 4 girls on the cutting edge

Our Year 4 girls gain considerable knowledge from their Unit of Inquiry, ‘Who we are’, in which they explore the central idea – ‘Bodies contain a number of systems and organs that are interdependent.’ As part of their inquiry, the girls donned gloves and with cautious enthusiasm probed and dissected a number of animal organs. Through experimentation, testing of theories, collecting data and reporting findings, the girls move to a much deeper level of understanding. I am sure we have some budding medical practitioners.

Sally Clayton
Head of Junior School

Photos:
TOP LEFT
Imogen Burg (in front) and Lauren Pitts present their pine needle creation while on camp at Merricks Beach

TOP RIGHT (L TO R)
Sandra Lee, Gabrielle Walker, Alana Dimopoulos and Alannah McKernan probing and dissecting organs

BOTTOM LEFT
Year 2 students had great fun at their camp at Merricks Beach
There is something special happening at Moss House at lunchtime. Every second Friday brings Creative Writing Club to the Rose Room, where girls spanning all year levels from 5-12 are free to come, share what they have written and learn some tips about writing. In addition, two Year 12 girls eat lunch in Moss House and chat to the Middle School girls every lunchtime. The interaction with the older girls ensures the development of friendships across other year levels which the Middle School girls appreciate immensely.

Once a week, the kitchens become a hive of activity thanks to the Middle School Cooking Club. So far the club has made rice paper rolls, fruit kebabs, and fried rice, with many students displaying impressive cooking skills! The kitchens have also been used by the Year 5 students to make pancakes, and the Year 6 students to make dips and learn about healthy eating.

As part of a Unit of Inquiry exploring the Theme, ‘How we organise ourselves’, Year 6 students attended a camp in Canberra from March 13-15. Many places of interest were visited, enabling the students to gain a deeper understanding of how the Australian Federal Government operates. The girls participated in education programs at Parliament House, the High Court, the Royal Australian Mint, the War Memorial, Questacon, the Electoral Office and Old Parliament House. A special thanks to Mrs Patricia Moore and Ms Yvette Soedarsono for their support.

Michelle Gurry and Lisa Broben
Year 6 Teachers

“Parliament House was a great learning experience as we were able to see the House of Representatives and the Senate. I thought that the most exciting part was seeing Julia Gillard and Tony Abbott during Question Time.”

Aahana Dudani

There are exciting plans to establish a Middle School Debating and Public Speaking Club which will meet in Moss House once a week. Both Public Speaking and Debating are an integral part of studying at Fintona and we hope that this club will inspire more students to increase their confidence of speaking in front of others.

In addition to the many scheduled activities, Moss House is used throughout the day by the Middle School girls. It is a wonderful meeting place to get together informally at recess and lunch time. During free time, Middle School girls can come and eat, play games and socialize on the chairs and bean bags. We are very lucky in the Middle School to have Moss House.

Joanna Bleakley (Year 8) and Lauren Bleakley (Year 12)

Join the club at Moss House

Year 6 students visit iconic sights in Canberra
Life is a CABARET for Fintona students

On Friday 26 April, our fabulous Fintona girls dazzled, amazed and thoroughly entertained the audience with their diverse talents on a night that was full of music, dance, song and good humour. This year the theme was Life is a Cabaret drawing inspiration from the 1920s and 1930s era of jazz and cabaret. The evening, which was run by Friends of Music, was a sell-out and lots of family members dressed up for the occasion. There were Italian gangsters, Great Gatsby lookalikes and elegant ladies with plenty of feathers and beads on their outfits and in their hair.

With Al Capone (a.k.a Mr John Thomson, Drama Co-ordinator) as the MC for the night, lots of candles, fairy lights and even a smoke machine, the MCH was transformed into the type of venue that was popular during the jazz age.

Fintona’s Music Staff also performed and had everyone spellbound with their impressive rendition of the Golden Wedding. Not to be upstaged, the School Orchestra performed in the finale, George Gershwin’s Rhapsody in Blue which showcased to perfection our girls’ extraordinary musical ability.

The wonderful catering by Miss Peppercorn, silent auctions, a Trivia Quiz and drinks served by our hard working Friends of Music team, all contributed to an exceptional evening of entertainment and fun.

We would like to thank our girls for their creative performances, our talented Music Staff for their dedication and direction, our two Music Captains, Huhana De Marinis and Aimy Tran and of course Friends of Music whose enthusiasm and tireless fundraising efforts are always much appreciated.

Sam Seabrook
Music Co-ordinator

1. Akira Chounlamountry on Saxophone
2. Huhana De Marinis (Music Captain), Marise Rush, Heather Charlton and Georgia Abzatz
3. Olivia Lin and Samantha Cunningham
4. Husband and wife, Barry Cockcroft and Sam Seabrook, performing together
5. L TO R: Julia Lee, Hannah Schaub, Mia Geljic, Anna Reid and Nicola Dobson performing the Charleston
6. Georgina Pynta and Briannah McKean
Our 2013 Consuls in the Spotlight

Saskia Rowson and Pamodi Kodikara are Fintona’s School Consuls for 2013. We interview these impressive young women and discover why they are two very worthy recipients.

What do you think a Fintona education has given you?

Saskia: I believe Fintona has offered me the opportunity to be part of a cohesive and mutually supportive school environment. Such a small student community really facilitates individual expression. Everyone interacts with and comes to know everyone else, irrespective of personal tastes or, largely, year level. I think being part of such a secure environment has given me an appreciation of my own, and others’, individual personality.

Pamodi: One of Fintona’s greatest advantages is the accessibility students have to academic and extra curricular activities. If you really want to participate you don’t have to be a state hockey player or a national debating champion. This has been an important aspect of my education. I was never judged on my ability and Fintona has allowed me, someone who was never particularly special or who possessed ‘genius’ qualities, to achieve success and realise my potential.

Which leader inspires you the most?

Saskia: There is no particular leadership figure that I admire. Rather, I am inspired by specific characteristics of a wide range of people. I might be inspired by the pragmatism of a girl in class who volunteers to give her speech first in a public speaking competition, or the originality or social conscience of a fictional character. I think it is easy to become complacent about one’s involvement in the community, and it’s immensely inspiring to recognise exemplary qualities given very ordinary circumstances.

Pamodi: Most of what I aim to embody, as a leader, stems from the characteristics I admire in those close to me. My teachers, parents, friends and other members of the community have guided me and have been a constant source of inspiration. They have integrity, maturity, social awareness and other honourable qualities that motivate them. My Co-Consul, Saskia, also offers new insight into the leadership role.

What would you consider to be the highlight of your time at Fintona and why?

Saskia: There are many fond memories I have from my time at Fintona, so it’s difficult to choose one particular highlight. However, I think being in the school play a few years ago, as a member of the cast for the production of ‘The 39 Steps’, was a really rewarding experience. It was such a fun thing to do, and it illustrated to me just how inclusive the Fintona community is, regardless of year level divisions.

Pamodi: It is difficult to single out one specific highlight, as my time at Fintona has been full of rewarding experiences. The opportunity to participate in community service through the Year 9 Connections Program was enriching. Through this experience I have created a strong relationship with EDAR (Eastern Disability Access Resource) where I now volunteer every year. This long term interaction with the wider community has been invaluable to me.

What are your aspirations for the future?

Saskia: In my immediate future, I hope to study medicine at university. I’ve always wanted to do something where I could interact with a variety of different people, something that I thought would be worthwhile and which offers sufficient diversity that I would never be limited or bored. Hopefully I get the opportunity to travel extensively; I would love to keep up my French or Japanese!

Pamodi: I would like to visit Europe, especially France. I have never travelled there, but have dreamt of it since I learnt my first French word! Career wise, I hope to pursue medicine or veterinary science. The application of science to treat illness as well as the potential to be involved in research and technological development in this field is what I find most appealing.
Jessica named Victorian winner of The Simpson Prize and wins a trip to Gallipoli

Year 10 student and history enthusiast, Jessica Greenan, was selected as the 2012 Victorian winner of The Simpson Prize which gained her a trip to Gallipoli in April. The Simpson Prize is a national competition for Years 9 and 10 students who were asked the question …….

“What does an investigation of primary sources reveal about the Gallipoli experience and to what extent does this explain the origins of the ANZAC Legend?”

As part of their studies of World War 1, Fintona students were given the option of submitting an entry to the The Simpson Prize. Jessica’s response was an exceptional audio-visual presentation which examined photographs, letters, paintings and other material that explored the emergence of the ANZAC legend.

On April 17, Jessica travelled to Turkey and for two weeks, along with other state winners, visited iconic battlefields and attended the dawn service at Gallipoli on ANZAC Day.

As the Victorian winner, Jessica also attended a presentation of the awards and a briefing program in Canberra with her parents.

Jessica is a worthy recipient of the prize and we congratulate her on this outstanding achievement.

Emma wins Balwyn Rotary Public Speaking

On Tuesday 19 March, Year 11 student, Emma Schwerkolt, participated in the finals of the Balwyn Rotary ‘Four Way Test’ Public Speaking Competition. Emma was successful at beating a high calibre of students from schools in the region and another eight finalists.

Taking first place is an excellent achievement, and Emma deserves much praise as she worked very hard on her speech. Her speech discusses the inequities and injustices in our society and offers a creative solution.

Balwyn Rotary Club gave a generous first prize of $3,000 for Fintona and $300 in book vouchers for Emma. Congratulations to Emma on an excellent achievement.

Georgia is our running star

Georgia Griffith, from Year 11, was chosen for the Australian Junior Athletics Championships in March held in Perth. Georgia competed in the U18 Women’s 800 metres. She came third in her heat with a brilliant personal best time of 2min 10.32 secs. The finals contained the best of the best, including a New Zealand competitor, as it was a qualifying race for The World Youth Championships. Georgia performed again under great pressure and achieved a time of 2min 11.72 secs to come fifth overall.

Georgia was the fastest Victorian in her division! Congratulations Georgia.
Meet our FPA President

My name is Anne-Maree McKernan. I am married and we have 3 children, all girls and all at Fintona Girls’ School. I am a chartered accountant by trade and have been running my own business from home since 1998. I took on the role of President in 2012 after serving on the committee as Vice President in 2011 and as a general committee member in 2010. In 2013, the FPA will be introducing two new social events to the Fintona calendar: the Fintona Dads’ Beef & Burgundy night; and the Fintona High Tea. Please note the dates in your diary now so you won’t be disappointed in missing out.

In 2013, the committee members for 2013/2014 are:

**PRESIDENT:**
Anne-Maree McKernan  
E: bfsam@bigpond.com

**VICE PRESIDENT:**
Jodie Gordhandas  
E: jodie1969@gmail.com

**SECRETARY:**
Julie Brett-Morris  
E: jbrrett@bigpond.com

**TREASURER:**
Sue Davey  
E: suedavey112@gmail.com

**GENERAL COMMITTEE MEMBER:**
Caroline Ward  
E: r-war0239@bigpond.net.au

**GENERAL COMMITTEE MEMBER:**
Scott Brown  
E: messengerme@live.com.au

The main FPA responsibilities are:

- managing the second hand book sale (next scheduled for Saturday 7th December 2013);
- managing the second hand uniform shop (open every Monday during school terms from 3pm – 4pm);
- managing the Fintona Food and Wine Festival (a biennial event) in partnership with the school, next scheduled for November 2014;
- organising social functions to build school community spirit.

Anne-Maree McKernan  
FPA President

(Allanah Year 4, Tayla Year 6, Briannah Year 9)

The fabulous Fintona Food & Wine Festival

With the sun shining (eventually) and over 30 food and wine stalls, a dozen children’s amusements on offer helped by the assistance of many, many volunteers, the Food & Wine Festival, Fintona’s fifth, was another resounding success.

Held on 18 November 2012, Festival goers were able to sample and purchase wines from Rebello and Coliban Valley Wines, mouth watering cheeses from Delicatess and fill their shopping bags with as many homemade jams, sauces, delectable cakes, boutique honeys, meats, breads, dips and olives as they could carry. Some even managed to grab a bargain or two from the White Elephant stall.

For those who were simply there to enjoy the atmosphere, the magnificent school grounds and the Fintona Beer Garden did not fail to delight. With an expertly hand picked selection of boutique beers and wines, Friends of Music ensured all palettes were catered for. Dip and cheese platters, sausage sizzles, hamburgers, mini Dutch pancakes, satays, falafels and sushi provided enough food choices to satisfy even the pickiest of eaters. All this whilst being entertained by gypsy band Vardos and electric violinist Orania Theoharidis (‘08), as well as a selection of student performances on the main lawn.

Children left the festival with exquisitely painted faces and bellies full of fairy floss and other tasty treats, well and truly exhausted after a day of jumping, sliding, pony riding, petting and feeding baby animals and for some, riding on a Segway.

Thank you to all of our supporters, from stall holders to the parents, Fintona’s ground, administration and teaching staff all ably supported by a dedicated committee, our parent representatives and last, but not least, those that came and enjoyed.

We look forward to even more delicious treats and beverages at the next Food & Wine Festival in 2014.

Anne-Maree McKernan  
FPA President

Gypsy Band Vardos delighted the crowds
1. Middle School girls enjoying the atmosphere
2. Fintona staff Shannon Kosub and Margaret Rossborough judging the Fashion Parade
3. The Jumping Castle is always a favourite
4. MC for the day, our Drama Co-ordinator, Mr John Thomson
5. The Decorate your own Cupcake Stall was a hit with this young girl
6. Pony Rides were popular with the little ones
7. Junior School mums at the Delicatess Cheese Stall
8. Susannah Schoeffel selling her delicious cupcakes
9. Ebony Simon gets her face painted
10. Fintona mums helping out at the very successful Cake Stall
Fintona’s New Staff in 2013

We welcome most warmly the following new staff to Fintona. Our staff are one of our greatest strengths and we are confident the new staff will be excellent additions. We wish them a long and happy association with our School.

Teaching Staff
Mr Brit Biviano, Art Teacher (commenced in Term 4 2012)
Mrs Catherine Devlyn, Maths Co-ordinator
Ms Michelle Gurry, Year 6 Teacher
Mrs Sandra Messina, JS Library Technician
Dr Denton Thomas, Brass and Classroom Music Teacher
Ms Leah Tremewan, Sport Co-ordinator
Mrs Kim Ubert, Laboratory Technician
Ms Liz Wheeldon, PE/Publications
Ms Fiona Williams, School Counsellor

Non-teaching staff
Mr Hirian Hinson, Business Manager (.commenced Sep 2012)
Ms Kate McPhee, Alumni Co-ordinator (commenced Oct 2012)

Staff moving to new positions
Ms Marion Ellis, (has become full time Learning Support in 2013)
Ms Susannah Schoffel, (PE/Camps/Duke of Edinburgh)
Mr Barry Cockcroft, (Head of Woodwind and Classroom Music Teacher)

Katrina Brennan

As a teacher, where have you worked prior to coming to Fintona?
During my study, I taught at a range of schools including a small girls’ private school, a co-educational state school in the Eastern suburbs and a more diverse and challenging state school in the Western suburbs. I spent my first six years at a private, co-educational school in the outer western suburbs of Melbourne as a senior English teacher. I was an inaugural Head of House there with 200 students in my House from Years 7-12 who I looked after in a pastoral, discipline and academic sense.

I went from there to Shelford Girls’ Grammar as the Head of the Middle School (Year 7-9) and English teacher (Year 7-12). The school is a similar size to Fintona. The role at Shelford was similar to my current position and I learned a lot about building relationships and working with people.

My husband and I then took a sea change, living on the Victorian West Coast where I taught at a country, Catholic co-educational school for a few years. This was a very rewarding experience, as the culture was so different to my previous schools, given that most of the students lived on nearby dairy farms. We then welcomed a son, Callum, into our family and I most recently have been at home with him prior to returning to work part time initially and full time in 2013.

As the new Head of Senior School what have you found so far to be the most rewarding aspect of your job and what is the most challenging?
The most rewarding aspect is dealing with the amazing students at this school. Fintona students are so friendly and welcoming. They are also highly motivated, kind and inclusive. They enjoy the small size of the school and appreciate getting to know their teachers. It is wonderful to be a part of a school where the students are genuinely thrilled to be here, the families are encouraging and the teachers are passionate about their subjects, interested in every student as a learner, dedicated to their teaching and supportive of each other as colleagues.

The most challenging aspect is getting to know everybody and handling the diverse and wonderful range of things that are part of my role. It is also what I love about the job as I can spend time in a day with any number of students, their families and staff and I can also be organising a function, thinking about curriculum or finding out about a program that could potentially be put into place here. It is very busy but very exciting.

How would you best characterise a Fintona girl in the Senior School?
The girls in the Senior School are energetic and focused. I find them to be open minded and curious about the world, relishing opportunities to travel and learn about other experiences. They are also characterised by their kindness and support of each other. The girls are motivated to do well but not at the expense of others. They wish to help each other to do their best and are very proud of each other’s achievements.

Can you tell us what your interests are outside of school?
I have a great love of books, theatre, art and design and film. I love my family and spending time with my husband and son is always wonderful. I particularly love reading with my son and enjoying days at the beach immersed in nature. I love travelling and experiencing different cultures and food. I enjoy socialising with friends, cooking, walking and listening to good music, especially when I get a chance to see something live.

Even though Katrina was destined to be a teacher from a very young age after playing school with her dolls and setting up a library with her books, she commenced her career as a lawyer. However, the law did not satiate her desire to be involved with people in a more holistic sense so she began her training in education. Whilst on a teaching round after only a few weeks of study, Katrina knew then that she was undoubtedly in the right place and has never regretted the decision. In her short time as Head of Senior School, she has gained the respect of her colleagues and students and loves to ‘pass on’ her love of books and reading in the classroom.

I most recently have been at home with him, prior to returning to work part time initially and full time in 2013.

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Mr Barry Cockcroft, (Head of Woodwind and Classroom Music Teacher)
When did you come to Fintona and in what capacity?

I came to Fintona in 2009, as a Year 6 classroom teacher. It was very exciting for me to join a community of welcoming, dedicated professionals who shared my values and beliefs of the importance of a well-rounded education for girls. I was able to share my expertise whilst learning further from my colleagues who inspire me with their passion for education.

As the new Head of Middle School what have you found so far as the most rewarding aspect of your job?

Definitely the most rewarding aspect of being Head of Middle School is having the opportunity of meeting and working with such a wide range of interesting young ladies. It is a privilege to be part of their education and to listen to their excited chatter at lunchtimes. I particularly enjoy working with the different age groups and developing ways of providing opportunities for them to investigate their different skills and talents. The other rewarding aspect of the position is the opportunity to build a warm, positive environment in which Year 5 to 8 students are able to interact with girls in different year levels to pursue a variety of interests.

What exciting plans do you have install for Middle School House?

We are so very lucky to have a dedicated area for Middle School girls in Moss House. Not only is it a delightful working space for our girls to pursue their endeavours, but it also provides a warm atmosphere where the feeling of community can be fostered. This year has seen the introduction of a number of new lunchtime activities in Moss House, such as Cooking Club and there are plans for developing other clubs related to the girls’ interests such as debating and public speaking clubs, gardening club and games clubs. There are also plans to utilise one of the upstairs spaces as an SRC and Tutor Representatives room where the students can meet to organise activities and to discuss suggestions they have for Middle School.

How would you best characterise a Fintona girl in the Middle School?

A Middle School Fintona girl is warm, caring and accepting of her peers. She is excited about the many opportunities she has for learning and developing her skills and talents and she is comfortable in knowing that she is supported in all her endeavours. Our girls are confident in approaching their teachers to discuss whatever is of importance to them and they know they will be treated with respect and interest. A love of learning is evident in Fintona Middle School girls and this is reflected in their willingness to try new things, even if at first it may appear difficult.

Can you tell us what your interests are outside of school?

In my leisure time, I enjoy walking, particularly on crisp mornings. I also love reading and savour every opportunity I have to curl up with a good book. My family plays a very important part in my out-of-school life and I cherish the many opportunities I have to spend time with my children and grandchildren. I also love to travel, both within Australia and overseas.
Flying to Ecuador is probably the only thing that will inspire me to get up at 2am. After 36 hours of travelling, we finally arrived in Quito, the capital. Sleepy, very excited and just a tiny bit lighter, due to our proximity to the Equator, we began the trip of a lifetime, where we were in charge of everything, from budgeting, booking hotels and transport to cooking and camping in extreme conditions.

After our acclimatisation phase, we started our main trek, around the freezing but beautiful mountain range of El Alatar, which we explored for four days. We conquered the volcano Ruminahui, climbing to a summit of 4,600m. Our next destination was the Amazon Jungle. Following our local guide, we learnt to make chocolate, and a tent out of a single leaf.

In a jungle town called Tena, we spent a week helping out in a school for children with special needs. We paid for construction, painted, and helped out in classes.

With just our rudimentary Spanish, we learnt to communicate without words. This was definitely a most rewarding experience.

For the last few days we were treated to a tour of the Galapagos Islands, where we snorkelled with giant turtles, sharks and eagle rays, and relaxed on the beach with sea lions. World Challenge was undoubtedly the best month of my life so far. Two years ago I couldn’t find Ecuador on a map. Now I’ve explored its cities, climbed its mountains, and run through its jungles.

Izzy Francis
Year 11
New Mac lab inspires students to create their own CD

The Year 9 students have been making good use of the new Mac lab in the music department. The music elective this semester is all about music performance. Students have used the lab to research performers of their instruments, study websites of their favourite performers, listen and watch live concert videos. They have also been taught to use a piece of software called ‘Garageband’. Using ‘Garageband’, students have created short compositions using the wide range of sounds and special effects to become familiar with the principles of multitrack recording. Term 2 sees the extension of this work with the production of their first music video. Performing either solo or in small groups, they will create a CD by recording, filming a performance and then editing all the material into a cohesively produced final product.

Sam Seabrook
Music Co-ordinator

Year 9 students enjoying the new Mac lab

Where are they now?

In February this year, The Weekly Review magazine featured the career of four of our past students: Katlin Harper, Andrea Coote, MP, Jodie-Ann Senior, and Victoria Woolley. Read their stories on the right.

SUCCESS STORIES // FINTONA GIRLS’ SCHOOL OLD GIRLS

KATLIN HARPER (NEE HEXTOR)
Attended // Class of 1989
CV // Founder of the Rhubarb brand
Swimming captain and house vice-captain at school. Harper trained at Myer and worked as a customer service manager at Myer Doncaster and as a homewares manager before becoming national merchandise buyer. After her first child, Olivia, she started Rhubarb in 2003. The brand supplied shops in Australia, New Zealand, US, Britain, Canada and Asia. In 2005 Harper had baby Jonathan and in 2007 the brand expanded into children’s wear. Rhubarb has six shops and is sold by some of the world’s best retailers. “It’s over 20 years since I left Fintona and the lessons I learnt then are still among my most important,” she says.

ANDREA COOTE, MP
Attended // Class of 1989
CV // State Member for Southern Metropolitan Region
Coote was a Fintona senator (prefect) before becoming the first Old Fintonian to enter Parliament when elected to the Victorian Legislative Council in 1999. Since 2006 she has represented the Southern Metropolitan Region. Coote has held many parliamentary positions and is parliamentary secretary for Families and Community Services and Women’s Correctional Services Advisory Group chairman. “Fintona’s culture of supporting the community and for being the voice for those less able and privileged have become hallmarks of my parliamentary career,” she says.

JODIE-ANN SENIOR (NEE WEBB)
Attended // Class of 1986
CV // Senior cardiologist
A debating team captain, Senior was also a member of the orchestra, choir and madrigals at school. She studied medicine at Monash University from 1987-1992. After obtaining her medical degree she acquired a fellowship as a cardiologist in 2000. Senior worked in heart failure and heart transplantation for more than 10 years at the Alfred Hospital. She is now director of cardiology at The Valley Private Hospital and a consultant at Cabrini Hospital. Senior, who has three young children, also created the Blood Oath campaign to raise the blood-donor rate in Australia.

VICTORIA WOOLLEY
Attended/Class of 2001
CV//Australian Ballet assistant stage manager
At Fintona, Woolley served as captain of boats, music vice-captain and hockey captain. Inspired by drama teacher Ms Kiellerup, she did VCE theatre studies and theatre production at the Victorian College of the Arts. While there she worked with Melbourne Theatre Company, The Lion King and the 2006 Commonwealth Games opening and closing ceremonies. Woolley freelanced at festivals and with Sydney Theatre Company before becoming the Australian Ballet’s assistant stage manager five years ago.

great things come from a small package 15
A message from the OFA President

Dear Old Fintonians,

It is a great honour for me to have been appointed the President of the Old Fintonians’ Alumni. As many of you are aware, I have been on the staff at Fintona for thirty five years this year so I know many Old Fintonians personally, as well as their families. This position enables me to continue my long, happy association with the School and past students.

In addition, my role as Archivist, has enabled me to establish further contacts with the Fintona community and continue with the preservation of the history of the School. I enjoy these aspects of my position enormously.

I am looking forward to working with the new Alumni Coordinator, Kate McPhee, to deliver a full schedule of reunions throughout 2013. Kate has a background in PR and has worked for ten years in Public Affairs at the Royal Children’s Hospital. Kate has settled into her position very well, displaying much initiative in organising events and reunions to grow and strengthen our links within the Fintona community.

All Old Fintonians are encouraged to keep in touch with the OFA and to contact Kate if they have moved, their details need updating or they have news of Old Girls for The Fintona File.

It is lovely to hear news of Old Fintonians and some of you may be aware of the feature articles published recently in The Weekly Review where four Old Girls: Katlin Harper (Hextor ‘89), Jodie-Ann Senior (Webb ‘86), Andrea Coote (‘69), and Victoria Woolley (‘01) were featured.

Age Quod Agis

Ann Hawker
OFA President

2012 ART SHOW AFTERNOON TEA

The Art Show afternoon tea is held annually for a number of Old Fintonians in the graduating classes of 1962 and below. On Friday 19 October 2012, guests enjoyed a tour of the Art Show, introduced by Miss Melanie Cass, another Old Fintonian and former teacher at Fintona, and then shared many happy memories of Fintona over afternoon tea.

Thank you to the four Year 6 girls, Matisse Montegue, Nikkita Chandnani, Molly Horan and Serena Wang, who kindly accompanied our guests for the afternoon with enthusiasm, and Miss Melanie Cass for giving up her time to speak to the group about the 2012 Art Show.

It was unanimous amongst the Old Fintonians that the 2012 Art Show was the most interesting and diverse yet.

CLASS OF 1962 50 YEAR REUNION

Fifty years since leaving Fintona was marked with three functions throughout 2012; a brunch in March, dinner in July and then the major celebration in November, hosted generously by Di Gibson at her beautiful property ‘Greystones’. A great turnout saw 38 of us gather for a magnificent lunch, enhanced by the added enjoyment of a string trio playing special music!

It was wonderful to catch up with everyone, and renew old friendships. Some travelled from interstate, including Micky Harris (Lucovich), Cherie Powell (Overyell), Anne Schubert (Hobbs) and Heather Campos (Davidson). Rosie Hill (Stamp) even made the trip from her home in Ireland. Di’s planning and organisation was exemplary and we loved her touches of Fintona which included yellow and blue flowers everywhere.

The Class of ’62 has a wonderful record when it comes to reunions and certainly excelled themselves in 2012.

Meredith Buzaglo (‘62)
This was a beautiful lunch on Saturday 23 March. Many girls had made a huge effort to get there; I think there were more from country Victoria and interstate than there were from Melbourne. There were some we hadn’t seen since leaving school and so, yes, we did need the nametags but we agreed that we all looked fabulous! The most prevalent memory of our schooldays was of the friendships made and the most amusing thing to me was the re-emergence of all the schoolyard nicknames.

We had a very happy couple of hours catching up on the varied experiences, illustrated with wonderful photos. It was a great day full of fun and laughter and good to catch up once again and share life after Fintona.

We were saddened by news of both Peggy Greville’s (Helen Lawrence ‘42) and Jean Gunn’s passings but felt privileged that Jean had attended the previous reunion.

We were looking forward to our next lunch scheduled for Saturday 20 October, 2012. A fourteen strong plus group attended the lunch and if the incredible noise levels were anything to go by, everyone had a marvellous time. It was great to have Suzy Chandler join us again and we really appreciate the effort she makes to travel all this way to see us.

Anne Street (Penfold ‘47) had planned to join us but was unfortunately not well. On a brighter note, two ‘new’ Old Fintonians joined us this year. Mandy Nixon (Dick ’75) and Diana Deane (’73). We were also thrilled to welcome back several ladies whose absence had been missed for the past few years.

We were saddened by news of both Peggy Greville’s (Helen Lawrence ‘42) and Jean Gunn’s passings but felt privileged that Jean had attended the previous reunion.

We are looking forward to our next lunch scheduled for Saturday 26 October 2013.

Michelle Harris (’62)
Births

Congratulations to the following past student on the birth of her baby:

Kim Macneil (’95) and Ben Marr welcomed a son, Rowan Macneil Marr on 13 December 2012, weighing 4.3kg.

Marriages

Congratulations to:

Brooke Wilson (Dujela ’96) married Matthew Wilson on 10 August 2012.

Deaths

The Fintona community is saddened to learn of the deaths of:

Joyce Palmer (Worthington ’26) 17/8/12
Peggy Greville (Helen Lawrence ’42) 18/9/12
Dr Marjory Elaine Davey (’37) 31/10/12
Jean Grant Gaze (Doig ’41) 23/11/12
Barbara Speirs (Grosser ’44) 22/12/12
Ann Randall (Montgomery ’51) 11/4/13

Obituaries

Jean Grant Gaze (Doig ’41) 23/8/24 - 23/11/12

Jean spent her childhood in Colac where her father was a doctor. She entered Fintona as a boarder in 1939, prior to the start of World War II. She enjoyed her years at the School where she excelled in study and in sport. She was a member of the hockey team and played a good game of tennis. In her third year (Year 12 in current terms) she was elected as a Prefect.

After Fintona, she was a resident at the University Women’s College where she took a Science Degree at the University of Melbourne. In the final year of this course she gained first place in Biochemistry. Due to the War, some practice classes were scheduled at night, and Jean had some scary walks back to College in the blackout. After obtaining a Bachelor of Science, Jean did post graduate work in Biochemistry for a Master of Science and she worked at the University as a demonstrator in her chosen subject. She retired in 1951 when she married George Gaze and this happy marriage lasted 61 years.

Jean and George had three children, Keith, Beth and Douglas. Beth (’70) also went to Fintona and she now holds a position as Associate Professor of Law at the University of Melbourne. Jean’s niece Meredith Doig (’68) also attended Fintona.

Jean was a member of the Old Fintonians’ Alumni.

Barbara Speirs (Grosser ’44) 18/01/28 - 22/12/12

Barbara attended Fintona’s Junior School, then housed in Mont Albert Road, and the Senior School, becoming a Prefect in her final year.

Graduating in Psychology from the University of Melbourne, she married George Speirs and they moved to a farm on the Victorian/New South Wales border where their three children were born.

The family’s next move was to Perth where Barbara worked for 18 and a half years as a psychologist in deaf education. The following is a wonderful tribute from work colleague, Brian Fisher, as to her abilities and care for others:

“Barbara was an outstanding colleague of mine for 18 ½ years until her retirement. She made an inestimably valuable contribution to the quality of the state-wide service and to its development, and guided the expansion of the Visiting Teacher Service for most of these years. Her skills in the difficult assessment of deaf and language impaired children were of the highest order. Her personal support especially in challenging periods of the development of the service for hearing impaired children was of incalculable value. She will be remembered with gratitude and affection by many teachers of the deaf, parents and their children themselves.”

Barbara’s husband George, pre-deceased her. She is survived by her three children and beloved grandchildren who all live in Perth. The Western Australian Branch of the Old Fintonians’ Alumni will miss her laughter and gentle strength.
Dr Marjorie Davey grew up in a working class family in Melbourne. In the latter years of primary school, a teacher recognised Marjorie’s academic potential and encouraged her to apply for a scholarship to Fintona. Gaining the scholarship, Marjorie excelled in her studies and spoke warmly of her school years and the teachers who had helped and encouraged her. She particularly adored and respected Miss Cunningham who seemed to understand Marjorie with the wisdom and prowess of a great teacher. As her daughter, I can say that for most of her life, Marjorie gave me a Fintona education as well, speaking long and often about literature, poetry, science and society. Matriculating with honours, Marjorie gained entry with another scholarship to a Bachelor of Science Course at the University of Melbourne, graduating in 1941. The Science Degree proved yet another stepping stone to a further scholarship, whereupon Marjorie entered a Bachelor of Medicine and Bachelor of Surgery at the University of Melbourne, graduating this time in 1948. She spoke often about the benefit of having a scientific background in the practice of Medicine. Marjorie then moved onto becoming a Resident Medical Officer at the Alfred Hospital in 1949, often relating many of the moving and sometimes light-hearted tales of working in those early years as a junior doctor in a hospital, under the supervision of wonderful mentors, two of whom she spoke most highly of – Dr Robert Officer and Dr Morrie Davis. It must be remembered that for a woman, becoming a doctor in those days was indeed a noteworthy achievement.

After her internship, but still continuing with the Alfred Hospital, Marjorie started a General Practice with husband and fellow doctor, Dr Malcolm Turner in the then remote suburb of Syndal in Melbourne. Surrounded by orchards, Marjorie would often talk about being paid for doctor’s visits with eggs or sausages, and entering homes where the furniture was packing cases, with the householders and friends admiring the new fridge in the kitchen.

In 1965 after a year’s travel overseas, she moved to Sydney to become a Medical Officer at the then Randwick Chest Hospital. This time Marjorie worked with TB patients, trialling and researching a new drug, Ethambutol, in the treatment of TB. In 1966, Marjorie won a scholarship to research Ethambutol in a TB hospital in Rome for 6 months, moving back to Sydney where she stayed at Randwick Chest Hospital until 1968. This time the move was to Newcastle, when Marjorie applied for and was appointed Medical Superintendent at the Mater Hospital. By 1971, Marjorie yearned for Melbourne again and gained the post of Medical Superintendent in geriatric medicine at the After Care Hospital in Collingwood.

This was her last official post, where she stayed until 1981, when she declared to the family that she would retire and move to the country. So in 1981, Marjorie and the family moved to Armidale and after 6 months Marjorie had started a small General Practice from home opposite the University. It was in this occupation that Marjorie further practised her skills, becoming a much beloved doctor not only to the general public, but also to many in the Koori community, to whom she became known as ‘Dr Marg’.

Marjorie continued in her sole General Practice up until 1997, when illness overcame her and she began the long and difficult journey she was on for the last 15 years.

Marjorie was a rare breed of doctor who spent time with patients and listened to them. She would often say that if you let a patient talk long enough, they will tell you the answer. She had an uncanny knack for swift diagnosis, showing remarkable talent for looking at a patient holistically and thinking of possibilities that were not immediately apparent. As a true humanitarian, ever concerned about people, the world and social issues, Marjorie will be sorely missed.

Eve Shaw
Marjorie’s daughter

News of Old Fintonians

OFA for Charities 2012 Christmas Committee Meeting

Committee members celebrating their birthdays: Suzanne Davidson (left) and Di Parker (right) at the OFA for Charities 2012 Christmas Committee Meeting.

Old Fintonians will be delighted to hear that Ruth Wizniak, who was the School Counsellor at Fintona from 1968 to 1984, was awarded an Order of Australia Medal (OAM) in the Queen’s Birthday Honours List (Australia) in 2012. Ruth was given the award for her service to community health, particularly in the field of psychology to youth and the community. Many will remember Ruth with great fondness and will be delighted that she has been recognised publicly in such a well deserved manner.

Queen’s Birthday Honour

Ruth Wizniak’s award for her service to community health, particularly in the field of psychology to youth and the community.

Mere things come from a small package.
## Important Dates for 2013

### JUNE
- **Monday 10 June**  Queen’s Birthday Holiday
- **Wednesday 19 June**  Tour Morning 9.15am to 11am
- **Friday 28 June**  End of Term 2

### JULY
- **Tuesday 16 July**  First day of Term 3 for students
- **Friday 26 July**  Tour Morning 9.15am to 11am

### AUGUST
- **Friday 2 August**  Rowing Trivia Night in the Margaret Cunningham Hall 7.00pm
- **Thursday 22 August to Saturday 24 August**  Fintona Art Show starts at 6pm on 22 August
- **Friday 23 August**  Tour Morning 9.15am to 11am
- **Wednesday 28 August**  Annual Music Concert 7.30pm in the Margaret Ross Centre

### SEPTEMBER
- **Friday 6 September**  Dads’ Beef & Burgundy Night 6.30pm in the Margaret Cunningham Hall
- **Friday 13 September**  End of Term 3

### OCTOBER
- **Tuesday 8 October**  First day of Term 4 for students
- **Tuesday 15 October**  Valedictory at 7.30pm in the Robert Blackwood Hall at Monash University
- **Wednesday 23 October**  Tour Morning 9.15am to 11.00am
- **Saturday 26 October**  High Tea hosted by the Fintona Parents’ Association 2.30pm in the Margaret Cunningham Hall

### NOVEMBER
- **Monday 4 November and Mid-term holiday/Melbourne Cup holiday**
- **Tuesday 5 November**

### DECEMBER
- **Wednesday 11 December**  End of Term 4 for students

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For more information on our Tour Mornings, contact our Registrar, Kathy Byrne on 9830 1388.

[www.fintona.vic.edu.au](http://www.fintona.vic.edu.au)

A CONSISTENTLY HIGH ACHIEVING INDEPENDENT GIRLS’ SCHOOL