

THE Bridge

Brigidine College St Ives



Honouring tradition
Transforming tomorrow



INSIDE THIS ISSUE

From the Principal 3

MESSAGE FROM THE BOARD CHAIR

Farewell and Thank You to our College Principal 4

FEATURE

Celebrating our Past, Present and Future 6

LATEST NEWS

Seeing the World through New Eyes 12

Accelerated Studies of Religion for all Year 10 students 14

Exciting Progress on Our New Sports Precinct! 15

An Inspirational Future 16

Introducing our New Senior Leaders 18

Celebrating Student Excellence 19

Little girls alone in the woods 20

Cocurricular Highlights 22

COMMUNITY

School Snapshots 24

Community Spirit at the Heart of our College 26

ALUMNI

Latest News 27

Reunion Day 28

Pioneers and Golden Girls Day 29

Births, Christenings and Weddings 29

Staying Connected 30

Vale: Margaret Cook 31

Alumni Profile: Emma Nedov (Class of 2013) 32

Vale: Jill Rolleston 33

ARCHIVES

The Firsts that Built a Foundation for the Future 34



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WHAT WE LIKED

With Social Justice integrated into student life at Brigidine, we acknowledged Homelessness Week in August. Along with a visit from Matt Cross MP, Member for Davidson and Sherin Fishwick from Dignity, the College community cooked and prepared hundreds of meals for Dignity, supporting those at risk of homelessness.



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

After five thoroughly enjoyable years as Principal of Brigidine College St Ives it is with a mixture of joy and sadness that I welcome you to this edition of *The Bridge*, the second for our 70th year in 2024.

My sense of joy is alive in the collection of events, accomplishments and memories of this year and it is with sadness and fondness that I bid Brigidine farewell as I prepare to take up the principalship of St Scholastica's College, Glebe in 2025. It has truly been a privilege and honour to work with the Brigidine Sisters, Kildare Ministries, our College Board, our Alumni, the staff, students, parents and the wider community of Brigidine College St Ives since 2020.

This year, remembering our beginnings has given us pause to consider and celebrate our evolution and adaptation throughout the last 70 years that has allowed the College to develop into the wonderful school community it is today. The vision and mission of the Brigidine Sisters still holds firm today – the education of young women modelled on the strength and gentleness of St Brigid.

2024 has been an extremely successful year for the College. In academic, cultural and sporting endeavours students have excelled. In a society where attitudes often reflect a 'near enough is good enough' approach Brigidine students have proven that adage wrong. The active pursuit of excellence and the celebration of each student achieving their best is of the highest priority of all the staff.

A focus for the Brigidine community during the final term of 2024 and the start of 2025 will be developing a new strategic plan. As Brigidine College enters 2025 and the years beyond, our next strategic plan will lead us into the future, ensuring that we remain faithful to our mission.

Our strategic planning will capture and build upon the ideals we hold closely at Brigidine: a holistic education that celebrates and meets the needs of all learners, where collaboration and risk taking as learners is vital to

the development and growth of our students, and diversity of curriculum and learning experiences build on real world experiences for our students. This course will be carried forward by our next College principal, their leadership team and staff into the future. The search for our next College leader has begun in earnest and we look forward to the announcement of the successful candidate who will be our community leader from 2025 onwards.

As 2024 concludes, we continue to look to the future of Brigidine and all that lies ahead. The construction of our new Sports Precinct which will house two full-size basketball courts, teaching and learning facilities and underground parking is well underway. This new building will be known as the Cill Dara Centre honouring our Irish heritage through the Brigidine Sisters. We anticipate this facility will open towards the end of 2025.

This year also marked the 10th Anniversary of Kildare Ministries, and we were excited to be the Sydney hub for the anniversary conference held in March. This conference with the theme of 'Crossing New Seas: Encounter, Dream, Do' gave the opportunity to connect with staff from other Kildare Ministry schools and Community Works, and reaffirm our shared values, purpose and hopes for the future. The connections, themes and opportunities from the Kildare Conference will continue to help shape Brigidine College in character and purpose.

As I prepare to leave this vibrant community to embark on a new challenge, I am sure that 2025 at Brigidine will be an amazing year full of learning, cocurricular activity, student leadership, social justice outreach and connection with our parent and wider community. I have no doubt it will be a joyful year of celebration and another proud moment in our journey.



On a personal level I thank the students, staff and parents of Brigidine for the opportunity to work with you during my time at the College and share the joys and challenges in your lives and all that school life can bring. As Principal I have been fortunate to enjoy the support and collegiality of Michelle Dixon, our Chair of the Board, and previous Chair Kitty Guerin. I thank them both and our Board of College Directors for the generosity of their time and wisdom. I also thank Kildare Ministries Trustees, Co-Chairs Rosemary Copeland and Kathy McEvoy, Liz Maguire, Michael Kearney, Executive Directors Erica Pegorer and Nicole Mangelsdorf, and fellow Kildare Principals for their support.

Being Principal at Brigidine also brings the honour of connecting you to those who have built this special community in their time here. My thanks go especially to the Brigidine Sisters, in particular past principal Sr Anita Murray, and Sr Maree Marsh, as well as John Bowie and Jane Curran, previous principals who have all shared their support and love of this place.

I am extremely proud to have been part of Brigidine's story and look forward to my continuing connection, especially hearing of the achievements of our students who are at the centre of all that is Brigidine.

With Strength and Gentleness,

LAETITIA RICHMOND
PRINCIPAL



MESSAGE FROM THE BOARD CHAIR

Farewell and thank you to our College Principal

It is with gratitude and best wishes that our Brigidine College St Ives community prepares to farewell our Principal, Laetitia Richmond at the end of the 2024 school year.

Ms Richmond joined Brigidine at the commencement of 2020 having only a short month or so with her feet under the desk before the global pandemic hit, impacting our school community in a way that could never have been foreseen. I remember those early days of the pandemic and the way Ms Richmond, although so new to her role, rolled up her sleeves and worked hand in glove with her Leadership Team, all our staff, Kildare Ministries and the Board to ensure with agility that our students' education continued albeit in a different and unprecedented form. Ms Richmond's focus combined with calmness, navigating the challenges of 2020 and 2021, including complex laws, protocols and learning arrangements will forever be valued and remembered.

Working with the Board and College Leadership Team, Ms Richmond progressed the College Masterplan to commence construction of our much anticipated, wonderful new state of the art sports facility, which will be completed in the latter half of 2025. Ms Richmond worked with our Board, school community, architects and builders to evolve the project to ensure the build will meet our students' sporting needs and curricular endeavours.

The Board will shortly be commencing work on our next Strategic Plan, but it is with much appreciation that the Board recognises Ms Richmond's leadership in developing and implementing our current Strategic Plan - *Courage, Confidence and Compassion in a Changing World 2021-2025*. The Plan recognised the need for continuous College improvement and growth, underpinned by our commitment to excellence and opportunities for

all students. Ms Richmond and her Leadership Team have led the College in the implementation of the Plan ensuring an authentic Catholic education and advancing opportunities for students through creating a learning environment where our students continue to achieve academically and spiritually, as well as in a range of sporting and creative activities, encouraging them to reach their potential.

Ms Richmond led our community through our 70th Anniversary this year with the many student and alumni events marking the occasion so significantly, including the establishment of our beautiful Alumni Garden and commemorative statues, which will mark our landscape and focus on our young peoples' education for many years to come.

Brigidine is well known for its strong focus on wellbeing and Ms Richmond has, over the past five years, promoted a connected College community in which everyone is known, valued and cared for. The cornerstone of the Brigidine Sisters who established the College was a belief that education has a fundamental role to play in spiritual, personal, social and intellectual development. As Chair, I am privileged to have worked with a generous, insightful and experienced Principal who has demonstrably lived St Brigid's values and our College motto of *Strength and Gentleness* reflecting the demands of school leadership - strength in decision making, strength in courage and justice, strength of character; gentleness in caring, gentleness with those you lead and gentleness of spirit.

Brigidine is in a strong position, spiritually and academically and on behalf of the Board and College community I extend our appreciation to Ms Richmond for her leadership as Principal of the College and we wish Ms Richmond all the very best for her future endeavours. I look forward to farewelling Ms Richmond formally as the year end approaches.

MICHELLE DIXON
BOARD CHAIR



“Brigidine is well known for its strong focus on wellbeing and Ms Richmond has, over the past five years, promoted a connected College community in which everyone is known, valued and cared for.”



Celebrating our Past, Present and Future

ALUMNI GARDEN OFFICIAL OPENING

What a wonderful trip down memory lane we had on Saturday 15 June celebrating the seven decades of our school with our Alumni community. We took time to acknowledge those who were at the start of our story and the work they did to establish strong foundations; we remembered those who are no longer with us but who have their place in our history and we celebrated what it means to be a Brigidine student.

The College was officially opened by Cardinal Gilroy on 13 June 1954 and 70 years on, on 15 June 2024 we came together again. This time over 200 past students, staff and principals joined us for the opening of our new Alumni Garden. The garden is a celebration of the strong and gentle women who have walked through the College gates since 1954 and of the staff who have guided them.

It sits embraced by the original Convent building and is at the heart of today's campus. A large tree provides shade and several benches have been positioned to allow quiet contemplation or a place to catch up with friends. On visiting the garden, you will also find a wonderful timeline curated by our Archivist, Jackie Rossington, which provides a snapshot of the seven decades of Brigidine College St Ives.

Michelle Dixon, College Board Chair, performed the cutting of the ribbon as she spoke about the history of the College Board and a beautiful bronze statue was unveiled by Sr Maree Marsh and Natasha Townley, College Captain and Indie Smith, College Vice Captain, marking the significant contribution of our Alumni in the history and heritage of the College.

Sr Maree spoke on behalf of the Brigidines who founded the College 70 years ago. She said "Today we remember the women and men who have shaped Brigidine College over these 70 years – Brigidines may have been the first teachers here but the stories of assistance from those early families

cannot go without recognition nor can the stories of each successive generation of boards, principals, staff and students. All have contributed to making Brigidine College St Ives the special place it is today." You can read Sr Maree's reflection in full on page 8.

Pip Inman, Alumni and Community Relations Coordinator spoke about just how much the College has changed in its 70 years but one thing that remains the same is its spirit of strength and gentleness and community. She said "We love the fact our Alumni are proud Brigidine girls. The creation of a permanent feature like this within the grounds of the College further develops the idea of identity and belonging they have, and although the garden is new, with time its plants will flourish and like the roots of the oak tree planted by Daniel Delaney in Ireland when he founded the Brigidines, the plant roots will go deep and will continue to provide connection to the College and the community that is Brigidine for many years to come."





Today we remember the women and men who have shaped Brigidine College over these 70 years – Brigidines may have been the first teachers here but the stories of assistance from those early families cannot go without recognition nor can the stories of each successive generation of boards, principals, staff and students. All have contributed to making Brigidine College the special place it is today.

The Irish poet, John O'Donohue, reminds us that “We enter the world as strangers who all at once become heirs to a harvest of memory, spirit and dream that has long preceded us and will now enfold, nourish and sustain us.” (*Benedictus: A Book of Blessings*, p. 14)

We celebrate the rich harvest of memory, spirit and dream of Brigidine College. Just as those first Brigidines were surrounded by women and men who embodied the generosity of God, we thank the students, the staff, the boards and Kildare Ministries for adding their dream, their spirit and their memory that will now enfold, nourish and sustain successive generations to govern, to lead, to teach and to create beautiful spaces for our young women to learn and to become women of strength and women of gentleness.

The community is made up of people who have been doing small things with great care, and these kindnesses and micro-moments all add up to making the school a place where people want to be. It is the daily actions – undertaken with care, intentionality and the desire to serve and do good – that make the community that is Brigidine St Ives. We trust that the weaving of stories will continue in creative and unexpected ways as Kildare Ministries, the Board, the staff and students walk towards new horizons as they begin the next 70 years.

And so we pray:

*May the blessing of Brigid of Kildare and Bishop Daniel Delany who responded to the needs of their time be with us.
May the Spirit of God inspire us to act justly, to love deeply and to walk humbly with our God.*

**SPEECH GIVEN BY SR MAREE MARSH
BRIGIDINE COLLEGE ST IVES 70TH ANNIVERSARY EVENT
ALUMNI GARDEN OPENING, 15 JUNE 2024**



*May it be a quiet place for those who need rest.
May it be a joyful place, delighting the senses.
May it be a peaceful place, for all to pause and remember.
May these flowers remind us to keep blooming.
May these benches remind us to stop and rest.
May this tree remind us to root ourselves in Christ and shelter one another in grace and love.*

ALUMNI GARDEN OFFICIAL OPENING PRAYER





AN AFTERNOON OF MEMORIES

Our panel *An Afternoon of Memories* was hosted by DiAnne McDonald, Head of Drama in the Murray Theatre following the Official Opening of the Alumni Garden. She chatted to (pictured above, left to right) Dr Kerry-Ann O'Sullivan (Class of 1976), Ann Lomas (Class of 1959), Annalisse Cornell (Class of 2005) and Megan McGrath (Class of 1993). They shared recollections of their school days with us, each one with a unique memory or anecdote of their time as a student.

Di lead our Alumni panel through a series of questions encouraging them to tell us about one thing that stood out from their first day at Brigidine. She asked them to think about how their time at the College was shaped by different people and experiences – such as teachers, friendships, excursions, camps and retreats – and to share their fondest memories with us.

The panel also spoke about the different cocurricular opportunities available in the modern day Brigidine experience and how they had changed over time.

“There’s a real sense of family, belonging and warmth. There’s an essence here that I think we all feel...It’s a special place to belong.”

MEGAN MCGRATH
(CLASS OF 1993)

Di’s final question considered how wonderful it is to think we are all part of a community of almost 8000 alumni and asked the panel “as we celebrate 70 years of educating girls at Brigidine and looking back at your time at the College, tell us why it is important to you to remain connected to our community?”

The overarching theme of their replies and in fact of all our 70th Anniversary events this year was one of community and belonging. They told a story of an inclusive, caring community where family and friendship nurtures us and gives us a sense of belonging which in turn enables us to all live by the motto *Fortiter et Suaviter* – Strength and Gentleness.

PIP INMAN
ALUMNI & COMMUNITY RELATIONS

“Being a Brigie girl is part of my DNA, it’s who I am.”

ANNALISSE CORNELL
(CLASS OF 2005)

“Being invited to reunions brings all of us back...and I hope, like me, you all know the beauty and the depth of that connection, which is forever.”

ANN LOMAS
(CLASS OF 1959)

“That’s what continues, that sense of belonging. That’s the tradition that was started all those years ago by those incredibly forward-thinking women who made such a commitment, such a sacrifice to start a school, who were great educators.”

DR KERRY-ANN O’SULLIVAN
(CLASS OF 1976)



To watch *An Afternoon of Memories* in full, scan or click on the QR Code



SPIRIT WEEK

In a year when we've taken time to celebrate important milestones, we allowed 'Spirit Week' in late June to be a real celebration of the past, present and future at the College.

Our annual Founders Day Mass was celebrated on Wednesday 26 June, a departure from the normal Friday morning mass usually held that week. It enabled us to celebrate the College's 70th Anniversary as a community with the students in full school uniform and take time to acknowledge the contributions of past students and staff in the Mass. We were blessed to have Sr Jan O'Neill and Sr Margaret Daniels with us representing the Brigidine Sisters who laid the foundations for the College for so many years and continue to inspire us today. There were also College alumni present, Ann Lomas (Class of 1959) and Anne Mayoh (Class of 1963) who participated in the Mass and represented the many alumni of the College over 70 years.

At the end of the Mass we celebrated with a special cake, and on Friday at recess cake was also shared between the students to mark this important occasion. Our school photographer assisted us in creating a special '70' symbol on the College green comprised of the entire student community in 2024. Using a drone camera, the photo was an opportunity to celebrate this significant milestone and allow the students present that day to be part of College history.

A 70th Anniversary badge was designed for this year's celebrations and these were distributed to all staff and students that week as well. This commemorative pin carries the image of the acorn, an integral symbol to the Brigidine Sisters. The original Oak tree, planted by Daniel Delany founder of the Brigidine Order, still stands in Kildare, Ireland. The acorn reminds us of the growth and development of Brigidine College, as with the acorn becoming an Oak tree, Brigidine is also a place of shelter and growth, with a Brigidine education enabling our young women to reach out, stand tall and shelter others with strength and gentleness.

Our annual Founders Day concluded Spirit Week, and it was celebrated in style with Year 12 leading the way in support of their charity for 2024, 'Hope in a Suitcase' supporting young people and children in foster care situations. The College held the 'Brigo's Got Talent' quest followed by a fun fair of food and special treats mixed with games, a Haunted House, Rave Cave and many stalls and fundraising activities.

The week was a wonderful and memorable way to commemorate 70 years of Fortiter et Suaviter when we could all honour our past, celebrate the present and look toward the future of Brigidine College St Ives.

**BRIAN LOUGHLAND
DEPUTY PRINCIPAL
FAITH AND MISSION**



RED DIRT IMMERSION

Seeing the World through New Eyes

The Term 2 holidays saw 18 students in Years 9-11 along with five members of staff embark on the College's Red Dirt Immersion. The tour provided participants with a unique opportunity to explore the realities of life for outback communities, particularly Indigenous communities.

Through a range of experiential learning activities, students were exposed to different natural environments, people, cultures and local schools, helping to widen and enrich their world view. Journeying to Coonabarabran, Baradine, Coonamble, Walgett, Brewarrina, Bourke and Dubbo, the girls gained privileged access and insights into life in outback NSW and experienced the strength and depth of community work with Indigenous people.

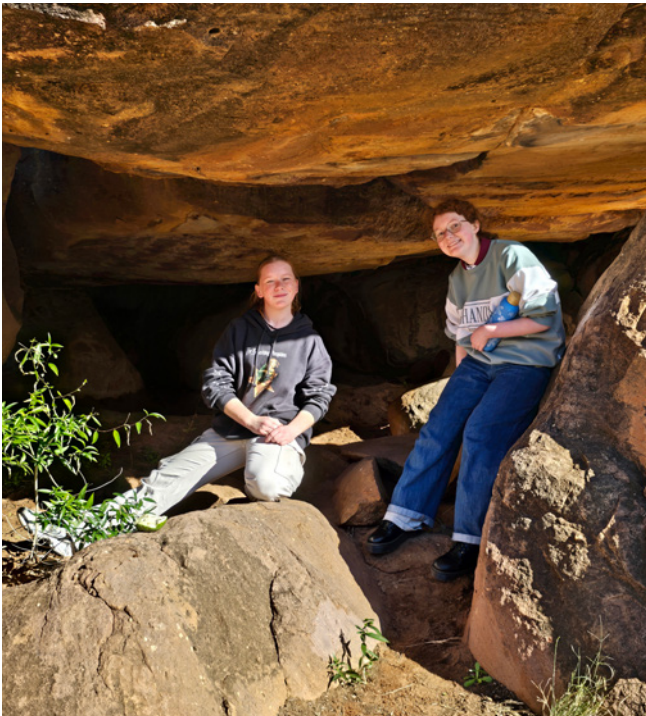
Highlights included visiting St Brigid's Coonamble, the first Brigidine school in Australia, running a sports event with St John's Primary School in Baradine, speaking with Michael Ross at the Baradine Local Aboriginal Land Council, experiencing the beautiful Sculptures in the Scrub at the stunning Dandry Gorge, hiking the iconic Breadknife and Grand High Tops walk in Warrumbungle National Park, a ZooSnooz experience at Taronga Western Plains Zoo, as well as campfires under the stars and creating connections across year groups.

After six nights immersed in the Australian outback the group made their way home reflecting on all they had learned and experienced, with newfound friendships, lifelong memories and a deeper understanding of the world we live in.



“One of my highlights of the trip was meeting students from Baradine High school and learning about their experience living out in the country and balancing both school and farm life. Attending the Red Dirt Immersion was such a valuable experience that allowed me to develop my leadership skills and form new friendships, all whilst making lifelong memories.”

EMILEA WALLIS
YEAR 11



Accelerated Studies of Religion for all Year 10 students

At Brigidine we are always striving to provide students with opportunities to deepen their learning, challenge themselves and better prepare for the academic demands of senior study. In line with this commitment, we are excited to announce that all students in Year 10 2025 will be accelerated in Studies of Religion (SOR). This initiative is designed to offer every student the chance to engage with more rigorous academic content earlier in their school journey, equipping them with essential skills for the future.

Acceleration will allow students to complete the SOR course ahead of time in Year 11, providing them with a unique academic advantage as they transition into their senior years. Traditionally, SOR has been offered in Years 11 and 12. By extending this opportunity to Year 10 students, we are encouraging them to develop critical thinking skills, deepen their understanding of global faiths and reflect on complex ethical questions at an earlier stage.

The NSW SOR syllabus covers a wide range of topics designed to give students a comprehensive understanding of world religions, their practices and their significance in the modern world. By studying SOR in Year 10, students will be exposed to these key themes earlier, enabling them to engage in meaningful dialogue about religion and its role in society. This exposure is valuable, especially in an increasingly interconnected and multicultural world. Understanding diverse religious perspectives can foster empathy and respect for others within the College community and in wider social contexts.

This course is particularly valuable in developing students' analytical and critical thinking skills. The study of religion is not just about learning facts and figures – it involves evaluating complex ideas, understanding different worldviews and considering the ethical implications of religious teachings. Through this course, students will be challenged to think deeply, ask probing questions and form reasoned opinions on topics that are often debated in modern society, such as human rights, social justice and the environment. These are skills that will serve them well, not just in their

senior studies, but in their future careers and as informed, responsible citizens. Students will also be encouraged to reflect on how religious traditions address contemporary moral and social issues, providing them with a framework for ethical decision-making in their own lives.

One of the key advantages of accelerating is the head start it provides for senior studies. By completing a HSC course in Year 11, students will have one less subject to manage in Year 12, allowing them to focus more fully on their other subjects. The transition to senior studies can be challenging for many students due to the increased workload and higher academic expectations. However, with one subject already completed, students will have more flexibility in managing their time and may experience reduced stress levels during their final year.

This reduction in workload is particularly beneficial for students wishing to pick up extension subjects in Year 12, such as Extension 2 English or Mathematics, or Music, Language, History or Science Extension. It also provides an opportunity for students to pursue cocurricular activities or leadership roles without feeling overwhelmed by their academic commitments. This balance between academic success and personal development is something we strongly advocate for, and the introduction of accelerated SOR is one way we will be supporting students to achieve it.

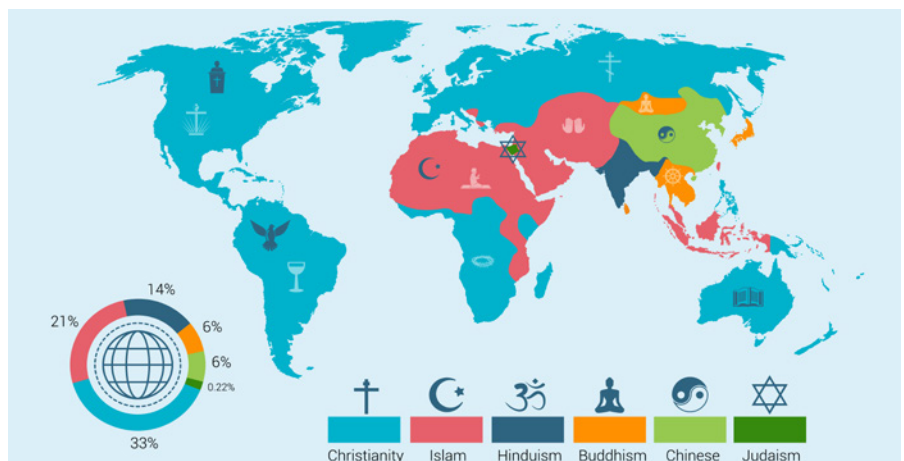
It is important to note that while we are introducing the accelerated 1 Unit SOR class

for all Year 10 students, we will also continue to offer our traditional accelerated 2 Unit SOR class for selected students. This has been a successful part of our academic program for many years, and it will remain a key option for those who wish to further challenge themselves.

The 2 Unit SOR course offers a more in-depth study of religious traditions. It is beneficial for students who have a particular interest in religious studies or who wish to pursue careers in law, education, international relations, or medical and health fields, where an understanding of religion and ethics is highly valued. By offering both accelerated 1 Unit and 2 Unit SOR options, we are providing a pathway for every student, regardless of their specific academic goals or future aspirations.

As part of NESA's requirement for students to complete 12 Preliminary units, we are exploring the introduction of new 1 unit subject offerings to supplement SOR in Year 11 in 2026. These additional subjects will give students more choice and flexibility in their academic pathways. Options under consideration include Philosophy, Entrepreneurship, Sport, Leisure and Recreation, Fitness Coaching, and Active Volunteering. We will be aiming to provide students with a broad range of subjects that cater to different learning styles, interests and career goals.

**LEONE SMYTH
DEPUTY PRINCIPAL
TEACHING AND LEARNING**



Exciting Progress on Our New Sports Precinct!

Eight months into the development of our new sports precinct on the south-east corner of Woodbury Road, we are excited to share the latest updates on this fantastic project which promises to greatly enhance our College's sports facilities.

Here's a look at what's been achieved so far:

- Inground Services: Completed
- Blockwork Walls: Perimeter of the carpark is finished
- Carpark Base Preparation: Completed
- Stormwater Pipe Installation: Completed

We recently reached a significant milestone with the completion of the structure for the basement carpark and the OSD (REF works). With this phase now behind us, we were excited to begin the enclosed sports courts (CDC works) in mid-September.

In celebration of our progress, Stephen Edwards Constructions had the pleasure of showing a group of Year 7 students around the site. These enthusiastic girls are already looking forward to the opening of the sports

centre next year and are eager to utilise the new facilities for both their curricular lessons and cocurricular activities. We can't wait to see their excitement turn into action as they begin using the new sports precinct in the latter half of 2025.

We look forward to sharing more updates as we continue to build and develop this exciting new addition to our campus.

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

MANDY LOOMES
DIRECTOR COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT



STUDY GRANT RECIPIENTS

An Inspirational Future

Thanks to the generous contributions from our College donors, Brigidine is delighted to continue our tradition of supporting academic excellence with our annual study grants program.

This year, we awarded five \$500 grants to exceptional students in Years 11 and 12 across various subjects:

- Business Studies, Economics, Legal Studies
- Science
- History Extension
- Mathematics
- Performing Arts.

Students who met the grant criteria were invited to submit applications, showcasing their strong personal interest in their chosen fields. The quality of submissions was outstanding, making the selection process a challenging yet inspiring experience for the panel. It was truly heartening to witness the passion and dedication each student demonstrated in their applications.

We are proud to announce the successful recipients of this year's study grants together with brief excerpts from their compelling submissions.

If you or your company would like to participate in this rewarding program, please contact Director Community Engagement, Mandy Loomes at mloomes@brigidine.nsw.edu.au



PERFORMING ARTS SOPHIE MCGRATH

Outside of school I have performed in multiple community theatre productions as well as being an ambassador for both Griffin Theatre Company and Belvoir Theatre Company. I have also achieved my Grade 8 AMEB Music Theatre Repertoire Exam (Vocal) and RAD Ballet Advanced Foundation qualifications.

In the future, I intend to pursue a career in the Performing Arts specialising in Musical Theatre and have already been offered a place at ED5 International for their Advanced Diploma in Performing Arts.

In terms of my own personal training, I am aware that my vocal ability is not as strong as my other talents and so, if I were to be successful in receiving this Grant, I would use the money towards the cost of supplementary professional vocal tuition, which I would take alongside my degree, in order to strengthen my prospects in the industry.



MATHEMATICS ZANNAH DIXON

As an elite athlete who trains 21 hours a week with 16 hours of travel time, I need to be efficient and organised with my time. I have missed 38 days of school this year due to swimming commitments and have been able to manage my studies with a lot of self-directed learning. This has included the Australian Swimming trials for Paris Olympic Selection and representing the school at a National Level at School Sports Australia for Swimming. I have had 61 days or 8.7 full weeks dedicated to competing or training camps year to date on top of training.

If I was to be successful in gaining the Mathematics Extension grant, I would invest the \$500 towards an international flight to investigate overseas college opportunities to compare to Australian opportunities.

I participated in a voluntary capacity in the peer tutoring program at Brigidine College in Year 9. It is my intention to become a Mathematics Tutor as a part-time job while at university. I see mathematics in my future and if successful I would be truly grateful to the College Grant program for helping me towards achieving my goals including to study a double degree in Actuarial Studies and Bachelor of Science (Advanced Mathematics) majoring in Pure Mathematics, Applied Mathematics or Advanced Statistics.



SCIENCE
MILDA MAGYLE

I believe my passion and genuine interest in this sphere of science can be seen reflected in my academic achievements in the Physics course. I have consistently ranked first within our cohort in both the Preliminary Physics course and the HSC course, and I attained the top mark for Physics in our recent HSC trial examinations. It is a result of my curiosity and appreciation for STEM that I have achieved such results, and additionally been able to aid my friends in study sessions when preparing for Trials.

My interest in astronomy has led me to read extensively beyond the syllabus, including works such as *A Brief History of Time* by Stephen Hawking, and *The Mind of God* by Paul Davies. Such reading has shaped my decision regarding further study at a tertiary level, where ideally I am seeking to do a combined degree at the University of Sydney of a Bachelor of Arts and Bachelor of Science, majoring in English and going through the Astrophysics program for Science. I believe that such a combination would allow me to attain a well-rounded scope of understanding regarding not only interoceptive explorations of the human condition but also a macro knowledge of the vast, almost incomprehensible irregularities which occur within space. Thus, if I were to receive this Grant I would put the money towards additional materials which would supplement my personal study of astrophysics such as further reading material and tutoring.



HISTORY
MAYA FLATTERY

I plan on studying Law at Sydney University or the Australian National University as the justice system has always been an area of interest for me. Whilst that may not directly correlate to history, History Extension has provided me with a higher order of critical thinking vital to subjects like law and the ability to understand the nuances of essays and in-depth analysis, as Ms Rae has professed, the History Extension major work can be compared to a university level essay. On a micro level, History Extension has allowed me to garner insights into key aspects of analysis and essay writing vital for study at a tertiary level along with an understanding of the smaller but essential parts of researching, such as correct footnoting. On a higher level however, especially concerning the major work, History Extension has really pushed me and made me understand the necessity of keeping up with work and not falling behind, continuously working on big projects which is crucial in strenuous subjects such as law.

History Extension specifically has been a subject I have loved ever since picking it up, enhancing my analytical skills and critical thinking as I have undertaken my major work and the general coursework. I really hope you understand what a profound impact this subject has had on my life.

SOCIAL SCIENCE
(BUSINESS STUDIES, ECONOMICS,
LEGAL STUDIES)
MAYA FLATTERY

Notions of law and the justice system as a whole have pervaded probably every aspect of my life since I was merely a child. I have grown up within a family in which watching the news is imperative and discussions of political elections is pertinent at almost every dinner conversation. I remember every car drive to school listening to my father's podcasts on American Politics whilst having heated discussions with my mother over key policy decisions and Australian legislation as she works within policy making and governmental affairs. Understanding the legal and political foundations of not only the Australian governmental system but the systems of American and other nations has really persisted as imperative within my home life, I don't think there has been a news story I have missed with my subscription to *The Sydney Morning Herald* remaining constant. I am genuinely very grateful to have grown up within this environment as it has only cultivated my love for understanding the intricacies of the justice system and all aspects of legal frameworks.

The funds provided by the Grant I would be extremely grateful for, placing them aside to be used within my tertiary study specifically for university resources (which I have heard there are a lot of). Within university there are not only many books and equipment to buy but also a laptop is imperative, especially in such a fast paced and high-stress course like Law, to which the funds would go towards. Similarly, the funds would be used to support the general textbooks and course work essential, especially if I end up pursuing multiple degrees such as Law and Political Science, relieving my parents of the stress of funding those aspects of my education which they have done for 13 years. Ultimately, I would be greatly appreciative for the funds to promote my tertiary education and allow me to start this chapter of my life with my best foot forward.

STUDENT LEADERSHIP

Introducing our New Senior Leaders

Congratulations to our newly elected Senior Leaders who will shape the next year with their ideas and hopes for our community.

Our motto of Strength and Gentleness reflects the demands of student leadership:

- That confidence, strength and optimism are constant themes in daily school life for students, modelled by school leadership.
- That leadership and opportunity is continually coupled with accountability and humility back to our school community.
- That students are prepared to operate in a rapidly changing world with courage, integrity and wisdom.

I congratulate all our students who have given themselves the goal to be a school leader and for their willingness to accept this challenge to be the change needed in our society.

LAETITIA RICHMOND
PRINCIPAL



College Captain Emilea Wallis and Senior Vice Captain Caroline Cuda with Principal Laetitia Richmond

2025 STUDENT LEADERS

College Captain Emilea Wallis

Senior Vice Captain Caroline Cuda

Senior Captains Olivia Carson, Briella Chung, Josephine Crocker, Sienna De-Fina, Roxanne Hathorn, Lucinda Hudson, Olivia Lisle, Summer Woods

Year Ambassadors Emilia Atkinson-Dicandilo, Olivia Belger, Anna Ferguson, Amelie Hill, Kelina Vasquez Buzzolini

House Captains

Fatima Indira Mellers, Matilda Saunders
Kildare Star Howell, Megan Jeremy
Lourdes Charli Marks, Elleni Turkovic
Prague Daisy-Sky Raaff, Caitlin Wilson

Mission Captains

Ministry Talia Ellis, Christine Kim
Social Justice Isabella Ringrose, Sigrid Veidners

Cocurricular Captains

AFL Ava Thomas
Art Scarlett Miles, Lily Wearne
Athletics/Cross Country Claire Cornes
Basketball Alicia Danielian
Dance Charli Senanayake, Sarah Lanyi
Debating Deana Little, Georgia Potts
Drama Summer Rowland-Smith, Ruby Hills
Duke of Edinburgh Jaime Hamilton, Grace Osborne
Football Imogen Webber
Girls In Black Keilana Stoten
Music Georgie Calleia, Georgina Thomas
Musical Olivia McGrath
Netball Audrey Draper
Rugby 7s Georgia Luca
Softball Georgia Benson
Sports Aerobics Jimena Blanco, Jessica Surjan
Swimming Marta Donald
Taekwondo Arianne Wong
Tennis/Tildesley Freya Lugg
Touch Football Mia Links
Volleyball Hannah Charlton
Water Polo Chloe Cogan

Celebrating Student Excellence

We proudly held the opening night of the Year 12 HSC Showcase in August. The event was a fantastic display of student major works for Visual Arts, Textiles and Design, English Extension 2, History Extension, Science Extension and Society and Culture. The creativity and dedication demonstrated by the students was nothing short of inspiring.



YEAR 11 PLAY

Little girls alone in the woods

The Year 11 Play is a longstanding and important cultural event for Brigidine College offering all students in Year 11, regardless of whether they study Drama, an opportunity to work together to perform on stage in a dynamic and exciting cocurricular activity.

This year Brigidine College presented *little girls alone in the woods* by Melbourne playwright Morgan Rose. This brilliantly contemporary play explores the conundrum in which teenage girls find themselves, in an anonymous adult world that is constantly shifting. The play opens with a busker being stopped by security for not having the proper authority to sing, and merges into what appears to be a normal playground scene with students concerned about assessments, coffee and Pablo Picasso. Alarmingly, the students start to mention their peers disappearing 'in the woods', and for the rest of the play we view the world of this shadowy town through the eyes of the students, both in and out of the woods.

I first read this breathtaking and evocative play in 2023 — a time when the *Barbie* movie had just been released, when talk of *The Matildas* dominated the mainstream media and Taylor Swift's Eras Tour had just launched its epic journey. It felt as though the world celebrated and honoured everything female.

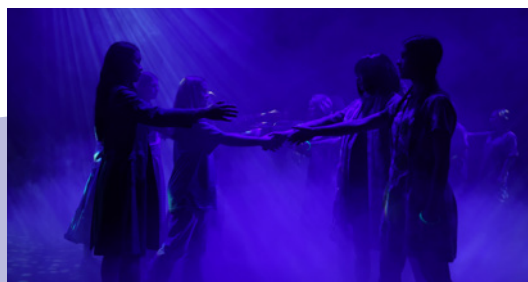
The colour design choice of purple and green is a deliberate symbolic link to the colours of the Suffragette movement in the early part of the 20th century. Purple was worn to reflect dignity and green to reflect hope. Hope was a key message of our performances, conveyed through a visual presentation towards the end of the show, where I have acknowledged Brigidine College alumni who I have had the pleasure of teaching over the years. Their post-Brigidine stories reflect the hope that our current students can aspire to. For this reason, I also created an all-female soundtrack for the production showcasing two current professional recording artists and College alumni, CXLOE (Chloe Papandrea, Class of 2012) and Soph Bee (Sophie Clisby, Class of 2013).

We had over 60 incredibly enthusiastic and talented Year 11 students on stage in this

production and two dedicated and talented Year 11 choreographers working behind the scenes. It gave many students the opportunity to perform on a stage for the very first time and I sincerely hope it leaves them with a lifetime love of the stage! It was also the first time every single Year 11 student appeared in the Year 11 Play, thanks to technology.

Our Year 11 students demonstrated that not only can they be 'alone', but they can handle 'the woods' head on as they "charge forward with hope swirling beneath our skin."

DIANNE MCDONALD
DIRECTOR





Highlights



2GB TAKEOVER

Tilly Cooper (Year 7) wowed 2GB Sydney radio host Ben Fordham when she appeared on his Breakfast show in May. Her confidence and sense of humour shone through, leaving the breakfast host having no doubt of her bright future.

BATTLE OF THE CHEFS

Ashley Gerrie, Ashleigh Weir and Cleopatra Westley (all Year 11) won the Broken Bay 'Battle of the Chefs' competition in June. The girls plated up some magnificent food to take the win in what was a keen battle in the kitchen of St Peter's Catholic College.



Y NSW YOUTH PARLIAMENT PROGRAM

As the Youth Member for Davidson, Josie Crocker (Year 11) spent an incredible week at NSW Parliament with the Y NSW Youth Parliament program. Josie's highlights included writing and debating a Youth Bill on human rights legislation, delivering a Community Recognition Statement, mock Question Time and meeting Her Excellency the Governor of NSW. This six-month program focuses on leadership and advocacy, enabling Years 10-12 students to build confidence, develop leadership skills, engage with civic leadership, policy development and democratic parliamentary debate.



ACADEMIC ENRICHMENT

In August our students involved in the Academic Enrichment program were invited to participate in two Gifted and Talented Conferences organised by the Academy of Learning from Oxford, England held at Ascham School.

Our Year 8 Honours students and our Years 9, 10 and 11 Philosophy students were confronted with thought-provoking sessions about key philosophers such as Descartes, Plato and Aristotle. They were invited to think laterally in the style of Oxbridge Interviews. They contributed to Community of Inquiry activities on the topics of fairness and justice, and reflected on materials about life after death, the implication of Artificial Intelligence in the modern world and the role of God in fine tuning the universe. Every session was aimed at stretching and challenging their thoughts and generating new ideas about the world around them.

AFL

We sent two teams to the CSBB AFL Gala day for the first time and finished 3rd in both the Junior and Intermediate competitions.

DEBATING

Our Year 10 Schools Debating Network (SDN) Debating team participated in the Grand Final of this competition placing runners up against Riverview, a fantastic achievement.

HOCKEY

Our Senior 2nds were in the IGSA Hockey Grand Finals against Frensham who narrowly defeated them scoring 1-0 on the half time buzzer.

DANCE

Our Dance Eisteddfod teams finished the season with a bang in September at the Level Up Eisteddfod, receiving the following results:

- 1st - Company Jazz
- 3rd - Company Hip Hop
- WOW FACTOR AWARD - Company Jazz
- 1st - Company Contemporary
- 2nd - Contemporary Ensemble
- WOW FACTOR AWARD - Company Contemporary.



FOOTBALL

Our Junior 1st Football team was joint Premiers with Pymble in the Junior Division 1 Grand Final this year. The match was played in challenging conditions and after being locked up at 1-1 after regular time and 10 minutes of extra time, the teams could not be separated.



NETBALL

We had 13 teams compete in the IGSA Netball Grand Finals in September achieving some amazing results with 10 winning teams!

KAYAKING

Hayley Dunbar and Tess Lever (both Year 10) spent the week at the Australian Institute of Sport (AIS), representing Australia at the Asia Pacific Sprint Cup in May. Hayley won Silver in the Women's K4 500m and Gold in the Women's 200m relay, while Tess won Bronze in the Women's K4 500m and Silver in the mixed K4 200m. It was an amazing experience for both of them representing their country.

MOUNTAIN BIKE RIDING

Elleni Turkovic (Year 11) made the Australian Team for Mountain Bike riding for two international events this year.



OLYMPIC TRIALS

Zannah Dixon and Hannah Smith (both Year 12) attended the Olympic Trials for swimming and diving respectively. We will be watching eagerly as Zannah and Hannah continue their pursuits as they look towards the LA Olympics in 2028.



SPORTS AEROBICS

Our Sports Aerobics teams competed at the National Schools Sports Aerobics Championships in Adelaide in August and achieved outstanding results, bringing home four Gold medals and three Silver medals.



SWIMMING

Zannah Dixon (Year 12) represented NSW at the School Sport Australia Swimming Championships on the Gold Coast where she won two Bronze medals and two 4th places.

TENNIS

Freya Lugg, Sofia Encina, Emilea Wallis (all Year 11) and Abigail Julian (Year 9) attended the NSW Combined Catholic Colleges Tennis tournament in Bathurst. In very cold conditions the team placed 3rd.

WATER POLO

Sophia Cooper (Year 12), Chloe Cogan (Year 11), Lilah Ogg (Year 10), Isabella Parkes and Nikita Muriti (both Year 9) represented NSW Combined Catholic Colleges in the Australian Schools Water Polo Exchange. Their team had a successful competition finishing 3rd. Sophia was named in the Tournament 7, an amazing achievement.



School Snapshots



Pink Day



Festival of Music



R U OK? Week



Winter Sleep Out



Father's Day Liturgy



Year 7 Grandparents Day



Founders Day



Duke of Edinburgh



2025 Leaders Commissioning Ceremony



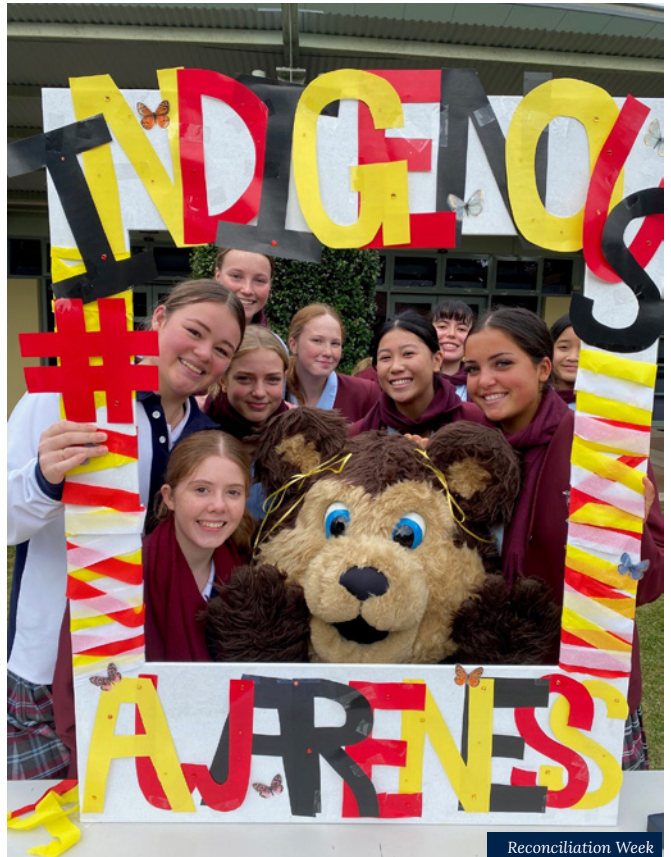
Year 12 Graduation Mass



St Vincent de Paul Winter Appeal



Social Justice Forum



Reconciliation Week

COMMUNITY

Community Spirit at the Heart of our College

Community is at the heart of our College and never is that more evident than when we all come together and work towards a goal.

Each year through events like Trivia Night, the P&F set their sights on raising money for an item or items all our students will benefit from. In the past this has included items such as a minibus, and outdoor seating and tables. This year they set their sights on raising funds for Library resources and so the theme of 'Big Kids Book Week' was born.

Thank you to our wonderful community for supporting the event. Whether it was by sending in donations for the auction, buying event tickets or 'Buy a Book', or bidding on the auction, we are incredibly pleased and blessed to report community spirit is alive and well here at Brigidine St Ives! And as we closed the book on another great Trivia Night story we were thrilled to announce, including sponsorship, we reached a combined fundraising total of \$29,000. What a great ending to the story!

P&F

Our P&F are an important part of the community, a group of parents who support the College, not only through 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, from time to time, volunteer a pair of helping hands, please contact them at pandf@brigidine.nsw.edu.au They would love to hear from you!

Look out for details of our next community event, Christmas on the Green, taking place on Friday 29 November. 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

As humans we constantly look forward but very rarely look back. We strive to move towards new goals, life experiences and relationships but how often do we stop and look at where and what we came from?

As we head towards the end of 2024, this year of 70th Anniversary celebrations has allowed us to do exactly that; to remember the Brigidines who laid down strong foundations for the school we see today, to honour the first nine students who set the wheels in motion for seven decades of strong and gentle women, and to remember our connections and relationships formed with classmates, teachers and work colleagues.

With each event held, the importance of those connections amongst us all became clear. In this issue you can read how they have led some of you to 'give back' by sharing your time and experience with our current students at events like our HSC Showcase, Year 9 Commerce Incursion and our Senior Leaders Leadership Camp.

COMMEMORATE YOUR SCHOOL DAYS

This year the College celebrated its 70th Anniversary. As part of our celebrations, we opened an Alumni Garden.

Embraced by the original Convent building and at the heart of today's campus, the garden pays tribute to almost 8000 strong and gentle women who have walked through the College gates since 1954 and to the staff who have guided them.

We invite you to mark your time at Brigidine with a Commemorative Paver. It will be placed in the Alumni Garden, etched with your name and graduating year, or your family name.

The garden is a place of celebration so, as we acknowledge the 70th Anniversary of Brigidine College St Ives join us in celebrating the part you played in our story.

For more details scan the QR code or contact Pip Inman at alumni@brigidine.nsw.edu.au

You can also read about how the support Emma Nedov (Class of 2013) received from Brigidine in her formative years as an elite athlete helped her to fulfil her dream of becoming an Olympian and on page 9 you can read about the trip we took down memory lane as we continued with our anniversary celebrations.

Our tag line this year has been 'Honouring tradition, transforming tomorrow'. On pages 34-35 you can read about some of the 'firsts' which became traditions in our story, as our Archivist, Jackie Rossington delves into the diaries of two of our early students. As we look towards 'transforming tomorrow', new firsts will become part of what makes us who we are.

Our roots are strong, our future is exciting, our story continues...

PIP INMAN
ALUMNI & COMMUNITY RELATIONS



HONOURING TRADITION, TRANSFORMING TOMORROW

Celebrate seven decades of Brigidine College St Ives with our special limited edition 70th Anniversary Tea Towel. Each word on this unique keepsake represents the collective spirit of our community and reflects the values, memories and aspirations shared by generations of students, teachers and supporters who have shaped our school's story.

PRICE:

\$20 each (collection from College Reception). You will be notified when your purchase is ready for collection from College Reception.

\$25 including postage.



Scan the QR code to order yours today and be part of our story.

Reunion Day



On a sunny day in September, shrieks of joy and laughter rang out across the campus as Alumni from the Classes of 1978, 1984, 1989, 1994, 1999, 2004, 2009, 2014 and 2019 caught up with one another at our annual Alumni Reunion Day.

Greeted with the sounds of our Stage Band, welcome drinks and canapés were served to guests in the grounds of St Brigid's Chapel before they headed inside to hear from Laetitia Richmond, College Principal. She welcomed everyone and spoke of how, during her time at the College, she has seen that "Brigidine girls, both past and present, are distinguished by their warm welcoming nature, a practical, down to earth take on the world and a spirit that lends itself to giving anything and everything a 'go' with a great sense of humour along the way!"

She said "To meet a Brigidine girl from any era in our history is a meeting infused with a wonderful sense of school spirit and pride. We truly stand on the shoulders of those who have gone before us, and we hope to inspire the future generations that will be part of this College."

Emilea Wallis, College Captain 2025 and Caroline Cuda, College Vice Captain 2025, spoke of their Brigidine journeys so far, sharing the ups and downs and experiences they have had. They explained that they hoped, by sharing their stories, they could take Alumni back to thoughts of their own school days and the memories they have from that time.

Pip Inman, Alumni and Community Relations Coordinator spoke of the 70th Anniversary celebrations the College has held this year including the opening of our Alumni Garden in June which was officially opened almost 70 years to the day from the official opening of the school. She explained "The creation of this garden is a celebration of you, the strong and gentle women who have walked through the College gates since 1954 and of the staff who have guided you. It also remembers those who are no longer with us but who have their place in our history."

If you would like to see how the College has evolved and how the garden was created, please scan or click on the QR code below to watch a short video.

Thank you to our Stage Band for their performance and to our Hospitality students who served canapés.

We hope the day was full of great memories of school and a chance to reconnect for all who attended.

If you are a member of the Class of 2014 celebrating 10 years since your College graduation and would like to arrange to collect your Year 12 time capsule please contact Pip Inman, Alumni and Community Relations Coordinator at alumni@brigidine.nsw.edu.au



PIONEERS AND GOLDEN GIRLS DAY

Each year we hold a special day to celebrate our Pioneers and Golden Girls. This year was no different and on Saturday 15 June they joined us for brunch in the College Common Room.

We were delighted to acknowledge the Class of 1964 who this year reached the milestone of 60 years since graduation and welcomed the Class of 1974 to the group fondly known as the 'Golden Girls' as they reached 50 years since graduation.

Later in the afternoon the Pioneers and Golden Girls joined us for our 70th Anniversary celebrations – the official opening of the Alumni Garden and our Alumni panel, *An Afternoon of Memories*. (Read about this event in full from page 6).



ALUMNI

Births, Christenings and Weddings

WEDDED BLISS

We are thrilled to share the wedding news of **Alicia Partington (Ward, Class of 2019)** and **Gus Partington**.

We got married at Growwild Wildflower Farm in the Southern Highlands on 3 May 2024, accompanied by our friends and family, some of who are Brigidine Alumni including one of my bridesmaids, Grace Mirabello (Class of 2019).

Gus and I met when we were four years old and went to primary school together not long after. It wasn't until March 2017, Year 10, that we officially started dating. We got engaged in March 2023 and married 14 months later.

We had a wonderful honeymoon in Thailand, soaking up the sun and meeting some amazing people.

We are honoured to share our story as many people would've met Gus at Brigidine school formals and social events.

Being childhood sweethearts has allowed us to watch each other grow into the people we are today.



WELCOME AIRLIE SUMMER MAJOR

Alana Major (Conlay, Class of 2004) and her husband **Erik** welcomed baby **Airlie Summer Major** on 21 January 2024. She joins big brother, **Henry**, aged 3.



ST BRIGID'S CHAPEL – A PLACE OF CELEBRATION

On Sunday 28 July St Brigid's Chapel was the perfect venue to celebrate the Christening of **Amira Wilkins**. Daughter of **Breana Wilkins (Garratt, Class of 2009)** and husband **Nick**, Amira was born on 6 April 2024. Breana said of the day "It was so lovely to have the chance to hold my daughter Amira's Christening at my school surrounded by our closest friends and family. It brought back so many lovely memories of my time at Brigidine especially those with my best friends that were there on the day as well."



L-R: **Jannaya Ashelford, Alexandra Phillips, Breana Wilkins, Alyssa McNamara** (all Class of 2009)

The beautiful venue **St Brigid's Chapel** is available to members of our community to hold their weddings or christenings. If you would like more information on how to book a date for your celebration please contact **Gail Dugan, Events Coordinator** at gdugan@brigidine.nsw.edu.au or 9988 6276.

Staying Connected



L-R: Lauren Stanaway (Class of 2019), Brianna Parker (Class of 2019), Auria Nunes (Class of 2019) and Sarah-Jane Wilson (Class of 2018).



Leah Jackson (Hopcroft, Class of 2001)



Sarah Alden (Class of 1991)

ALUMNI GIVING BACK

In a world where we use social media to make connections, there is still no substitute for in-person contact and relationship building. We encourage our Alumni to stay connected with one another and the College and we love it when they come back to the College, especially when they impart their knowledge and experience to our current students. In the second half of the year our Alumni have continued to 'give back' to our students in inspiring ways.

The HSC Showcase is the exhibition of Year 12 HSC major works for students studying Visual Arts, Textiles and Design, English Extension 2, History Extension, Science

Extension and Society and Culture. This year we introduced a new award called 'Alumni Choice' and we were thrilled to welcome back Sarah-Jane Wilson (Class of 2018), Brianna Parker (Class of 2019), Auria Nunes (Class of 2019) and Lauren Stanaway (Class of 2019) as judges.

In August our Year 9 Commerce students showcased their innovative business projects to a dynamic 'Shark Tank' panel of successful businesswomen including Sarah Alden (Class of 1991) and Leah Jackson (Hopcroft, Class of 2001). Sarah and Leah listened with great interest to the presentations, and by sharing their own experiences and expertise with the

students, inspired the next generation of business leaders.

Each year our newly elected Senior Leaders come together to prepare for their roles in the year ahead. At this year's camp Lucy Cuda, Tina Evanian, Alani Barros, Anna Harris and Monique Vassallo (all Class of 2022) shared with our 2025 leaders how they navigated their own Year 12 journey.

If you would like to share your knowledge, expertise and time with our students please contact Pip Inman, Alumni and Community Relations Coordinator at alumni@brigidine.nsw.edu.au

ALUMNI CATCH UPS

We love the fact that many of you formed lifelong friendships during your time at Brigidine. That can certainly be said for the Class of 1991 who recently got together at The Oaks, Neutral Bay and who endeavour to catch up yearly. It's great to see so many of you, ladies!

If you and your classmates catch up, we would love to hear about it. Don't forget to share a photo of the group and any news with us at alumni@brigidine.nsw.edu.au



Margaret Julie Cook ('Cookie')

STAFF MEMBER 1970–1997



*Two roads diverged in a wood, and I—
I took the one less travelled by,
And that has made all the difference*

Marg had asked me to read Robert Frost's poem *The Road Not Taken* at her funeral, the celebration of her life. A deep honour and a sad privilege for the little 12 year old girl Cookie had first met many years ago. The road she had chosen brought her from her hometown of Perth to St Ives. In 1970, she was welcomed by the Brigidine Sisters into a school community where she found a place of belonging that she loved for the rest of her life. That journey did make a profound difference.

As a well-respected English and Drama teacher Marg was energetic, innovative, and even, at times, challenging. She always wanted the best for all her students and did everything she could to inspire their learning and to support them through her dedicated work. Many former English students will recall her care and individual attention. Her classes frequently enjoyed performances or 'dressing up' activities and they knew Mrs Cook always had new ideas for them. One of my strongest images is of her as Director – playscript and pencil in hand – up on the stage or down in Romuald Hall, guiding and blocking action with authority and excitement. We credit Marg with the introduction of the Year 11 Play, an iconic tradition now, when she brought Thornton Wilder's *Our Town* to Brigidine in 1977. I asked her very recently if she

had a favourite play over all her years as Director/Producer, and not surprisingly, it was this 'first' one.

Our relationship shifted over the years from teacher and student to colleagues and good friends, who worked together closely during my 13 year leadership of the wonderful English and Drama staff. We shared a great love for poetry, both delighting in the music of words, those ripples of thought and the spark of imagination that a poem excites. Marg understood how the power of the ordinary could become extraordinary and she never stopped pursuing this through her reading, writing and musical ability. She played the piano well and often at Brigidine, and in her retirement years, took up lessons on the cello, a beautiful, difficult instrument.

Marg was a free spirit, independent and sometimes provocative, always deeply compassionate and fiercely loyal. She was ardent about social justice and committed herself to causes that helped build educational opportunities for those who did not have the same resources. She used her expert language skills to teach English to new migrants who, in turn, welcomed her to share meals and gatherings, often wanting to stay in her class rather than progress.

Brigidine St Ives remained permanently etched in her heart. Marg enjoyed many happy post-work times with Marie Duffy sorting through the archives, sharing their great knowledge of people and events, and feeling perfectly at home in her special place that she had joined years before when she was 33.

Above all, Marg loved her family and friends. She was a prolific sender of cards. We knew how much she cared for, and thought about us, and how generously she supported our endeavours. It is these simple acts of kindness and love that we remember of those special people who touch our lives and hearts. She will be missed.

Cookie experienced endless joy in the natural world, so I close now with another of Frost's well-known poems:

*So Eden sank to grief,
So dawn goes down today.
Nothing gold can stay.*

**DR KERRY-ANN O'SULLIVAN
HER FRIEND**

Photos: Margaret Cook with colleagues

(L-R) Sr Anita, Marie Duffy and Kerry-Ann O'Sullivan



EMMA NEDOV
(CLASS OF 2013)

Emma Nedov is an Olympian and World Cup Gold Medallist in Artistic Gymnastics but her journey to reach these huge achievements has been far from plain sailing. She has faced numerous setbacks and even retired, twice! But with a pull to complete unfinished business she came out of retirement for a third time to fulfil her dream of becoming an Olympian as part of the Australian Gymnastics Team in Paris 2024.

On the Australian Olympic Committee website Emma is quoted as saying “I actually made an Instagram post in 2021, and I wrote in it, ‘I’m not going to say I’m retired because I’m notorious for comebacks’. There was a big part of me that felt like I had unfinished business when I finished up.”

As a result of her determination and self-belief she achieved her goal and couldn’t be prouder. Read on to hear how she juggled school life with her passion and how her strength of character helped her to navigate setbacks and disappointment.

I first took up gymnastics at the age of five, and by the time I reached Year 6, my passion had turned into something real. I had won several state titles for NSW and had been recognised for my potential by the Australian National Coach. My training regimen was intense – 32 hours a week – which required me to balance my school commitments with gymnastics. I attended two half school days a week to accommodate the training load.

Choosing a high school was a critical decision, and the ability to juggle both academics and training was paramount. Brigidine College proved to be the perfect fit. The school’s support was instrumental in allowing me to continue chasing my dream. While at Brigidine, I won national titles and represented Australia at various international competitions. One of the highlights was winning a Gold medal at the 2011 Youth Commonwealth Games.

Balancing both school and elite sports wasn’t easy. I missed a lot of school due to my demanding training and competition schedule, but with Brigidine’s incredible

support, I managed to complete my HSC over two years. This flexibility allowed me to focus on both my gymnastics career and my education without compromising either.

After completing my HSC, I continued to represent Australia on the international stage. I relocated to Melbourne to prepare for the 2016 Olympic Games in Rio, but unfortunately, the Australian team did not qualify. Despite this setback, I set my sights on the 2018 Commonwealth Games. However, nine months out from the competition, I ruptured my Achilles tendon during training, an injury that took me out of contention for the Games.

It was a challenging period and I seriously contemplated retirement. However, after taking some time off, I decided to continue. In 2019, I had one of my most successful years as a gymnast. I won medals at World Cups and represented Australia at the World Championships. My proudest moment came when I won a Gold medal on the Balance Beam – my specialty apparatus – at the World Cup.





The media even dubbed me the “Australian Gymnastics Beam Queen,” and I had the opportunity to appear in advertisements for companies like Canon Japan, Fuji, Toyota, Woolworths and Running Bare.

Despite these achievements, life threw another challenge my way. I was qualifying for the 2020 Tokyo Olympic games when COVID hit and the way I was trying to qualify didn’t work out due to lockdowns.

As a result, I missed out on making it to the Olympics again and I made the decision to retire. During that time, I built a life after sport entering into the world of nutrition and business. I created my own business, Artium Sport which is a sports bag retail business, I’m on a not-for-profit Board and I’m a sports nutritionist with a focus on restoring metabolic health.

In October 2023, the opportunity to do gymnastics again presented itself and after a few conversations, I decided to make an unexpected return after three and a half years away.

In a remarkable journey, just nine months later, I qualified for the 2024 Olympic Games – a comeback story I could never have imagined.

I found myself so emotional competing at the Olympic Games. I almost cried before I walked out and there were lots of tears when I saw my family afterwards. Being in the village and part of the Australian team filled me with such pride, we truly have an incredible country that we live in. It was nerve-racking competing; there’s a lot of pressure to perform well at an event as big as the Olympics, particularly because it doesn’t happen often. However, I didn’t focus on that, and I rather enjoyed just being out on the floor. My competition outcome wasn’t what I would’ve liked and

“The ongoing support I received from Brigidine during my formative years as an elite athlete allowed me to not only maintain my training but also set a strong foundation for my education.”

there were a few disruptions to my routines the day before competition that threw me off a little bit. I can proudly say however, that our team placed 10th in the World and the future of Australian Gymnastics is exciting. I’m honoured to have had the opportunity to represent Australia on the floor at the Olympics and it’s probably one of the proudest moments of my life.

The ongoing support I received from Brigidine during my formative years as an elite athlete allowed me to not only maintain my training but also set a strong foundation for my education.

My hope is to use my experiences as an elite athlete to inspire others and help them achieve their own goals – whether in sports, business or personal health.

VALE

Jill Rolleston

STAFF MEMBER 1993–2017

Jill’s passion for teaching was equalled only by her love for her family. Over three decades, she dedicated her energy and enthusiasm to Brigidine College, Chatswood Girls High School and Marist Sisters College in Woolwich.

Jill’s expertise spanned Religion, French and English and in later years, as a frequently called on Casual Teacher, she embraced new subjects with a touch of humour. Living just five minutes from Brigidine, she would eagerly leap out of bed at the prospect of a casual teaching day.

She thrived on engaging with her students, fostering lively classroom discussions that

encouraged participation. She wanted her students to see education as a gateway to a world full of opportunities, making learning both enjoyable and rewarding.

She was a big part of the Brigidine community, as a teacher, parent and later volunteering in the archives.

Whether known as Miss Blanchfield or Mrs “Rollingstone” Rolleston, Jill was beloved by students and colleagues alike for her professionalism and endearing cheekiness.

She is deeply missed by all who had the pleasure of knowing her.



The Firsts that Built a Foundation for the Future

Einstein said that “The future is an unknown, but a somewhat predictable unknown. To look to the future we must first look back upon the past. That is where the seeds of the future were planted.”

At Brigidine we often speak of our first nine students and the Brigidine Sisters who commenced at St Ives in 1954. These people created our first traditions and built the foundations of the community we share today, but not all traditions start from the beginning of a school’s history.

As the College Archivist there are many ways to find out when events or traditions started such as publications like yearbooks, magazines and newsletters, photographs and interviews with past students and staff. Our archive holds many items significant in their ability to confirm stories and provide social commentary over the last 70 years, and on this occasion, it is the second of two diaries written by students in their final year at the College – Maureen McCullum (Dalton, Class of 1958) and Denise Brady (Class of 1960) – that documents the many ‘firsts’ which occurred during the College’s seventh year.

As College vice captain, prefect and house captain of Fortiter, Denise’s insight into the final year for the Class of 1960 is unique. She filled almost every page of her diary with her thoughts and observations about teachers and classmates, family life and society more broadly, along with her hopes and dreams for the future and it is here she has captured many firsts in the history of the College.

The first week of school 1960:

There are 35 in 1st year and 70 total in the school. The school doesn’t seem the same like this time four years ago when there were 23 in the school. It seems too crowded and I don’t know any of the new kids’ names... It doesn’t seem the same without Mother Romuald (first Principal).

For the first time in our school’s experience we had to line up in lines of eights before marching up into school. Mother Lawrence, our new principal said because the school was getting larger it should have some organisation.

On student leadership:

Tuesday 16 February

I was elected vice captain of the school and 4th and 5th year prefect today. Only 4th and 5th years voted and I got six votes (out of 12 students)... Margaret (Dermond) is captain of the school and I’m the first vice captain it’s ever had. It’s terrible to tell the kids not to talk in the cloakroom, not to walk up the middle of the stairs and to put on their gloves.

Since 1954 badges featuring the College crest have been worn by all students. In her diary Denise speaks of the introduction of additional badges recognising those in leadership positions:

Thursday 18 February

I got my prefect’s badge today. We are having a captain’s and a vice captain’s badge but they will not be ready for six weeks... By the time I leave school I will have three school badges, my ordinary one, my prefect’s one and my vice captain’s.

On the introduction of a weekly sports day and expansion of sports played at the College:

Friday 11 March

We had sports for the first time today. Suaviter won four games and Fortiter three.

Friday 1 July

Today at school we had our first game of softball that has ever been played there. Margaret and I made history! She had the first pitch and I had the first bat. I didn’t last long! I got out on the first base!

Welcome changes to the canteen menu:

Monday 4 July

Mum and Mrs Walsh were on tuckshop today. Instead of having sandwiches Mother (Lawrence) decided to have pies in winter to warm us up so we had pies today for the first time.

Updates to the College grounds:

Thursday 14 July

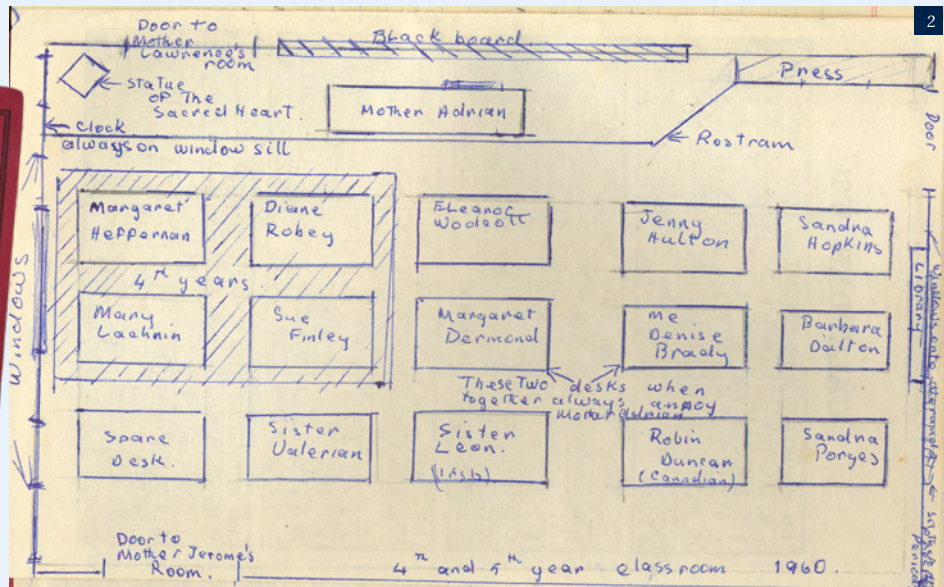
We got a new sign today on the Mona Vale Road to attract new pupils. It says “Brigidine College (St Ives, I think) Secondary School for girls.”

The memories of people, places, events and traditions become those that connect us forever, now and into the future. Like Einstein we see that ‘the future exists simultaneously with the past’. Honouring our traditions is not an attempt to remain in the past, it is the celebration of a legacy of continuing firsts that nurtures our culture of a strong and gentle community as we look forward to transforming tomorrow.

**JACKIE ROSSINGTON
ARCHIVIST**



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Photo 1: Denise Brady's diary with house ribbon bookmark, 1960

Photo 2: Classroom seating plan, Denise Brady's diary, 1960

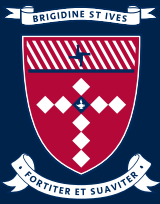
Photo 3: House Captains with sports shield (Sandra Porges, Denise Brady, Margaret Dermond, Barbara Dalton), 1960

Photo 4: Denise Brady in winter uniform, 1960

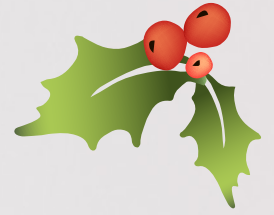
Photo 5: Mother Lawrence Kinhead, Principal 1960-1965

Photo 6: School building (Synan) with tennis courts and a new path to the Convent, 1960

Photo 7: Students in sports uniform under the College sign, 1960



Brigidine College
St Ives



Brigidine Christmas — MARKETS & CAROLS —

FRIDAY 29 NOVEMBER

3.30PM - 9PM

Join us for an evening of Christmas Markets and Carols!

4pm - 7pm

Performances from Brigidine College St Ives,
Corpus Christi Catholic Primary School, Warrawee Public School,
Sacred Heart Pymble Primary School,
St Ives North Public School

7.30pm - 9pm

Carols at Twilight

A wonderful festive atmosphere enjoyed by young and old!

If you would like to be a stallholder at our markets please contact Pip Inman,
Alumni & Community Relations at pinman@brigidine.nsw.edu.au



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