

In Black & White



CHRIST'S COLLEGE
CANTERBURY

Issue 86, 19 May 2015



From the Headmaster

We will be officially opening the new building tomorrow, when invited guests and the current year 13 will mark a significant day for the College. We had earlier explored the possibility of Prince Harry joining us, but had to be content with a swift pass in front of the gates. We received a request from the police to adjust our timings so that no boys would be running across the road in front of the motorcade. I resisted responding, and we didn't of course; in the event, coming at the beginning of lunch there was a very good presence outside to add to the atmosphere - and the police rang again later to thank us for doing so. We must not be too sensitive when approaches are made which reveal a lack of insight into the College and its ethos - we are not perfect, but not generally known for public irresponsibility on significant civic occasions.....



On Saturday Jane and I enjoyed a 'Farewell Lunch' so kindly arranged by the Wellington and Wairarapa branches of the CCOBA, in Martinborough. Attendees included parents and grandparents of a current student, recent past College families, and senior and not so senior alumni and their charming wives and partners. As is usual, I was able to say a few words about College today, and the future. It is always a delight to have an audience which so clearly understands the College's culture, and direction. Over the years at College we have been entertained at many such occasions, and they will be a lasting memory when we head off to a school so new it has very few alumni, let alone an association.

To bring things back squarely to 2015, some interesting data and research information has been revisited recently. I have previously reported The OECD Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA) results which show that data for the independent education sector in New Zealand, when extracted from the 2013 PISA results, rated 2nd in reading and science, and 3rd in mathematics in the table of non-government sectors, and 1st when compared to government sectors in reading and science. So our independent sector in New Zealand is internationally outstanding. But what of the debate of co-education against boys' schools?

Similarly, the Association of Boys' Schools in New Zealand (ABSNZ) commissioned independent research which has also been reported, and which can be validated with national statistics. The findings: Boys in boys' schools achieve above boys in co-educational schools at all levels of NCEA, including merit and excellence endorsements; boys in boys' schools have a higher rate of achieving scholarships than boys in co-educational schools; analysis of

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Top Scholar Awards ceremony

The Grand Hall of Parliament was the imposing setting for this year's Top Scholar Awards ceremony, held last...



Assembly Notes

Click on the photo for the Assembly Notes



Calendar Events

Click on the photo to view Calendar Events

schools by decile shows that boys' school students achieve at a higher rate than those in co-educational schools in all ten deciles. All known and understood. But why are the schools so successful? The research also identified the factors in boys' schools which make that difference. I invite our community to reflect on how we measure up. I think we tick the boxes. The factors are: Consistent focus on academic achievement as the key goal; strong consistent emphasis on effective staff professional development focused on the learning needs of boys; high engagement with, and involvement of, parents and the wider community in all aspects of school life; dedication to a strong co-curricular programme; provision of a robust pastoral support structure; clarity of, and belief in, the central vision; deliberate, focused crafting of the culture of the school; recognition of the significance of the spiritual, values base of educating the whole man. Some ticks are bigger than others - but it is so important that we recognise we can always do more, and must always be striving to improve.

I hope you are wondering if there is a 'but' coming. There is. Independent schools have always been seen as advantaged, and it is often held that the socio-economic background of the school is a key factor in success. We, of course, employ externally conducted 'value added' assessments to monitor our own performance, confirming we stay routinely above national averages for all schools in terms of improved outcomes for our boys, but is that enough? The current edition of *Independence* the journal of the Association of Heads of Australian Independent Schools (AHISA), leads with the work of distinguished researcher, Dr Gary Marks who pursued the following questions: How strong is the influence of socio-economic background on student achievement? What of the influence of student ability, and the effects of individual schools?

The briefest of summaries will not do justice here to the rigour of the study. However, in essence he was able to find little statistical evidence of any factors associated with background (socio-economic and cultural), school type etc. He used extensively Australian standardised testing data (NAPLAN - National Assessment Program - Literacy and Numeracy). In conclusion there were just two factors which showed

statistical significance in predicting future achievement, and neither were to do with individual school environments. Put simply, and not at all surprisingly, they were innate ability (intelligence) and past achievement - if a young person has a track record of achievement, it is likely to continue.

Around this statistical and generalised prediction, of course there is variation; some will under-perform, some will exceed their past achievement levels. Some will under-deploy their innate talent, others will work much harder than the average for a given ability to achieve highly. Schools therefore aim to do better than others with the spectrum of abilities and experiences which present at the gate. We certainly do, and can show the results.

But of course there is so much more to success in later life than simple measured academic outcomes at school. The compelling interest of LinkedIn is in so many answers to 'where are they now?' It should be compulsory study for anyone in education who thinks school data, however rigorous and extensive, will ever, for a lot of boys, outperform a well polished crystal ball.....In the next *In Black and White* I will look at why some companies' graduate recruitment programmes are not what they appear.....

Calling all grandparents! Please put Wednesday 10 June in your diaries; we hope you will be able to join your grandson in College for our Grandparents' Day. Full details in the next *In Black and White*.

Simon Leese, Headmaster

Nepal Earthquake Fund

Thank you to all who contributed to the Nepal Earthquake Fund through our Mufti Day and Chapel collections. I am pleased to inform you that a pleasing sum of \$5108.00 has been paid to World Vision in support of their work in Nepal.

Neil Porter

Give a boy a tour and he'll find his way.

**Year 9 enrolment and scholarship applications close
Friday 22 May at 4pm.**

**Everyone's welcome at Christ's College.
Enrolment Tours Thursday 21 May, 10am-12noon**



**CHRIST'S COLLEGE
CANTERBURY**
Each boy at his best.

[Click here to register](#)

Latest News & Events

Click on the photos below to read the full story then click the go back arrow in your browser to return to In Black & White.



Livin' La Vida

After purchasing tickets online please pick them up from reception. "Livin' La Vida" a Cocktail Party in support of the Christ's College Football Tour to South America...



The Holderness Seat has returned

School House Old Boy, former Chairman of the Board and President of the CCOBA, Mr Julian Holderness, returned to the House on 6 May as the replacement Holderness Seat was...



Faustus Update

Bookings have begun for the senior College production Dr Faustus and this year, it's really easy to book. Boys can go to reception and buy their tickets on their account...



Mark Hadlow drops in to College

Actor Mark Hadlow made an impromptu visit to College yesterday, ending up discussing Peter Jackson, acting and his upcoming one-man show with Mr Chambers...



Billy T Award: Two Years in a row

College Old Boy comedian, Hamish Parkinson, has just won the coveted Billy T Award for 2015. He joins an illustrious group of New Zealand's best-known comedians...



Hunter Wilson

Hunter Wilson (Year 10) took part in the NZ Age Group Swimming Championships held last week in Wellington. In the morning's heats, he qualified for eight finals...

Careers



University 101

This is a public presentation designed for school leavers, parents and teachers and aims to promote and provide informative and engaging information about University and the differences between secondary school and university.

Victoria University - School-Leaver Scholarships

The following boys who attended College last year were awarded Victoria Excellence Scholarships: Andrew Ford, Oscar O'Brien, Edward Roche and Sam Till. The Vice-Chancellor's Excellence Scholarships were awarded to William Briscoe and Etienne Wain. Students who have NCEA Level 2, endorsed with Excellence are encouraged to apply.

University of Canterbury (UC) Entrance Scholarships

Entrance Scholarships between \$1000 and \$6000 are available. For NCEA, NCEA Level 2 endorsed with Excellence + NCEA Level 3 endorsed with Excellence = \$6000. Achieved at Level 2 and Merit at Level 3 = \$1000

UC Scholarships - tips

Mr Sellars has information from UC re Tips on filling in application forms, Eligibility criteria, Referees and Personal statements. The Bright Start Scholarship is for students who are likely to experience financial problems or personal hardship in tertiary study. The Scholarship brochure "Fund" is available.

Changes to University of Canterbury's Preferential Entry Scores

UC, along with a number of universities has a preferential entry system to help manage the number of students it enrolls each year. Students who enrol at UC will receive preferential entry (subject to gaining University Entrance) if they meet the following requirements: NCEA Level 3: 150 (from 120), International Baccalaureate: 28 (from 26), Cambridge International: 160 (from 140)

University of Otago - Transition to University

A handout sheet is available: Message 1, Being clear about your goals is important; Message 2, University is not like school; Message 3, You are not alone; Message 4, It is not about 'natural' ability.

University of Otago - Change in UE requirements for Year 13 students on exchange

Students need to refer to the current Discretionary Entrance requirements of a minimum of 80 NCEA Level 2 credits, including a minimum of 16 credits in each of their top four subjects, three of which must be from the approved list; and have met the literacy and numeracy requirements for University Entrance.

University of Otago - introduction of new Humanities papers for 2015

SOCI 103 Crime, Deviance and Social Transformation - Criminology is one of the fastest growing and popular areas of study in the social sciences internationally. LAWS 102 Introduction to Law and New Technologies - It covers, Climate change and GM food; DNA testing for criminal trials and paternity tests; Genetic tests, testing embryos; Cyber regulation, file sharing, and copyright; Cyber bullying

Computing at Otago

Computers are embedded in every aspect of our working lives. It may be useful to include some computing papers in a degree. For example, the two Web Development papers are a useful adjunct to a Marketing major. There are several ways of developing computing. Computer Science (BA, BSc), Information Science (BA, BCom, BSc), Software Engineering (BAppSc), Computational Modelling, Geographic Information Systems (GIS), Telecommunications.

Health Sciences at Otago - Medical Laboratory Science, Pharmacy, Physiotherapy

The Single Programme Preference (SPP) was used for the first time as part of the selection into the 2015 second-year classes in these degrees, and will be used again in 2016. Students who indicated by the application closing date of 15 September that they were applying for only one of these programmes were considered before applicants applying for more than one programme. SSP is not used for entry into Dentistry or Medicine. Dentistry: first year marks, UMAT test and an interview. Medicine: first year marks and UMAT test.

Your First Guide to Insurance

Soon our leavers will be making important financial decisions. To help them the Insurance Council of New Zealand has written a small book, 'Your first guide to insurance'. It is written especially for students leaving school. Copies are available by downloading from the home page of their website, www.icnz.org.nz and the Are You Covered website www.covered.org.nz

Chris Sellars, Careers Advisor

Events since the last issue:

Careers Expo
UC College House, accommodation
University of Canterbury, Bachelor Sports Coaching presentation
University of Auckland Parent seminar
Otago Polytechnic liaison visit
UC Information Evening
Victoria University liaison visit

For upcoming careers dates continue to page 6.

Curriculum News



The world of education is awash with myths and has been for decades. In my early years practice was so disconnected from data and evidence that to claim teaching as a profession might have seemed to be stretching the truth to those 'in the know' (although oddly I suspect that it was viewed as more of a profession by the general public at that time

than it is now). I recall pondering (only very briefly) how I would have felt being attended by a doctor or dentist who paid similar regard to research evidence (thankfully I never have been). Things have changed, and teachers generally not only incorporate the use of achievement data into their practice, but also the growing body of good robust research evidence that has accumulated worldwide on what helps cause learning.

One of the seminal moments in this regard must be the publication of John Hattie's book 'Visible Learning: A Synthesis of Over 800 Meta-Analyses Relating to Achievement' (2008). In the book Hattie and his international research team brought together a vast amount of research data, all carefully sifted to ensure that only quality data was incorporated. The book makes heavy going as a piece of reading as the density of quality material is so high. However it has made for a much better informed profession. Sadly despite work of this sort, some serious myths persist.

One of the classic myths is the 'learning styles' debate. In his later book 'Visible learning for teachers (2012) Hattie says "...it is not intended to delve into learning styles (visual, kinaesthetic etc), for the effectiveness of which there is zero supporting evidence, ". Professor Steve Wheeler of Plymouth University takes up the cudgel in this debate as well in a blog post titled 'A Convenient Untruth' (<http://steve-wheeler.blogspot.co.nz/2011/11/convenient-untruth.html>) in which he says:

"In an excellent expose on learning styles, Riener and Willingham (2010) argue this:

"...learning-styles theory has succeeded in becoming "common knowledge." Its widespread acceptance serves as an unfortunately compelling reason to believe it. This is accompanied by a well-known cognitive phenomenon called the confirmation bias. When evaluating our own beliefs, we tend to seek out information that confirms our beliefs and ignore contrary information, even when we encounter it repeatedly. When we see someone who professes to be a visual learner excel at geography and an auditory learner excel at music, we do not seek out the information which would disprove our interpretation of these events (can the auditory learner learn geography through hearing it? Can the visual learner become better at music by seeing it?)"

Another more recent controversy arises over the current concept of Modern Learning Environments or MLEs. This is the notion that we physically and intellectually deconstruct the classroom. We place two or three classes of learners into one space with several teachers, and allow student choice of what they learn and when. Apparently there is a massive intuitive appeal to the concept, one pushed by the Ministry of Education across the state school sector, I understand. While I have serious concerns over the concept, even more concerning is the fact that this major change to education is being pushed in what appears to me to be an absence of data. If there is robust replicable data out there, I can't find it. I have looked. A lot. The debate resorts to a lot of rhetoric, with the suggestion that the value of MLEs is so common sense that you'd be a fool to challenge it. Apparently this is where the modern business world is going, and we'd ignore that trend at our peril.

I was intrigued to see a piece in the business publication 'The Main Report' titled 'HR - Does a cool office really matter?' (The Main Report, 11 May 2015) in which the opening statement is:

Recruiting experts Hays says the technology sector's famously alternative work spaces are being replicated by many businesses, but it asks - do they have the desired impact on employee productivity, performance and retention? The answer is - it depends on the organisation's culture."

As I see it, someone has decided that alternative open plan workspaces and collaboration are the way of the future. However in the school context it seems to me that this fails to recognise two factors:

Employees in the workplace are not adolescents who are right in the middle of that process of testing boundaries and learning about themselves and the world around them.

Even in these alternative work environments people need space to sit down at a desk in a quiet environment and think, create or problem solve. They need to be able to close the door to the rest of the world and get on with things.

Am I a fan of Modern Learning Environments? Possibly not as they are currently portrayed. However I AM a fan of what you might call Modern Learning Pedagogy. There are new ways to learn, and there is a growing body of research evidence that these new approaches work. We observe in our classes many of those things that the research evidence seems to support. However we monitor what the research says, and modify our practice in the light of research and experience.

For example in the midst of the laptop programme we are considering the issue of reading. It is perhaps no surprise to many that reading electronically is different to reading on paper. It seems that there is often less comprehension, less

depth to reading done online, or on electronic devices. The nice thing is that this thing called neuroplasticity of the brain seems to mean that we can retrain the brain to read carefully, closely, with an eye to detail. For four years now we have had a focus on critical literacy at College. This embraces a spectrum of issues from the basic skills of reading and writing to the more complex skills of critical thinking and analysis. As she scanned research literature and articles on the subject (part of a regular routine for most of us) a colleague found a fascinating article in 'The New Yorker' titled 'Being a better online reader'.

It can be accessed here:

<http://www.newyorker.com/science/maria-konnikova/being-a-better-online-reader>

At College we maintain what we call a blended learning environment. That is, one in which we use the right tool for the job, and there will be times when laptops are not the right tool for the job. So while a lot of reading takes place online, we also have boys reading from and working on paper. We have boys interacting in person as well as online. We have boys putting their laptops away and taking up a hammer or a paintbrush, throwing a ball or sprinting down the length of Upper.

As a consequence of this sort of data, and our own daily data gathering in classes, teachers modify their practice. Reading is important, and reading a traditional paper book is a valuable exercise. Staff acknowledge this and encourage reading at every opportunity. I have mentioned in previous columns that we need to continue to encourage reading. This will at times mean reading online, but it should also mean reading on paper. Perhaps it's only true for those of us of a certain age but there is something about the feel, the smell, the look of a paper book that makes it appealing. It would seem that that is what the research confirms. I find it a little ironic that in an educational era in which we emphasise critical thinking so much, so many people continue to buy into educational myths revealing perhaps a lack of critical thinking.

Incidentally, if valid robust data comes to light to show the MLEs do indeed cause more significant learning than the existing alternatives, I will of course recant. Put another way I will of course 'think critically' about the evidence and my position.

And as a footnote, last year I was transporting some junior boys to sport and their conversation went something like this:

A: You got a kindle?

B: Yeah

A: Got many books on it?

B: No, I prefer paper books.

A: Yeah, me too.

Robin Sutton, Senior Master Academic

Upcoming careers dates:

- 20 May** - A career in Chiropractic,
- 20 May** - Waikato University Open Day, 9.00am-2.30pm
- 22 May** - CPIT Liaison visit, Year 12
- 22 May** - University of Waikato Open Day
- 23 May** - D&A, Design & Arts College of New Zealand Open Day, 11.00am - 2.00pm
- 25 May** - Law Seminar - University of Otago
- 26 May** - University 101, Questions about University, Burnside High School, 7.30pm
- 27 May** - IT TechHub Careers Expo, Aurora Centre, cnr Greers Rd, Memorial Avenue, 6.30pm
- 5 Jun** - CPIT - Have a Go day
- 15 Jun** - International College of Hotel Management (ICHM), Adelaide, visit
- 18 Jun** - CPIT Open Day
- 18 Jun** - New York University Abu Dhabi, liaison visit
- 25 Jun** - Victoria University, Christchurch Information evening
- 9 Jul** - Yoobee, ACG School of Design Open Day
- 1 Aug** - Students can apply online for accommodation at Universities
- 15 Aug** - UC - Emerging Leaders, Foundation Sports and Bright Start Scholarships - applications close
- 15 Aug** - University of Otago, Scholarships applications close
- 28 Aug** - Study @ Victoria University Day
- 29 Aug** - University of Auckland Open Day
- 30 Sep** - Apply for accommodation at university Colleges before this date



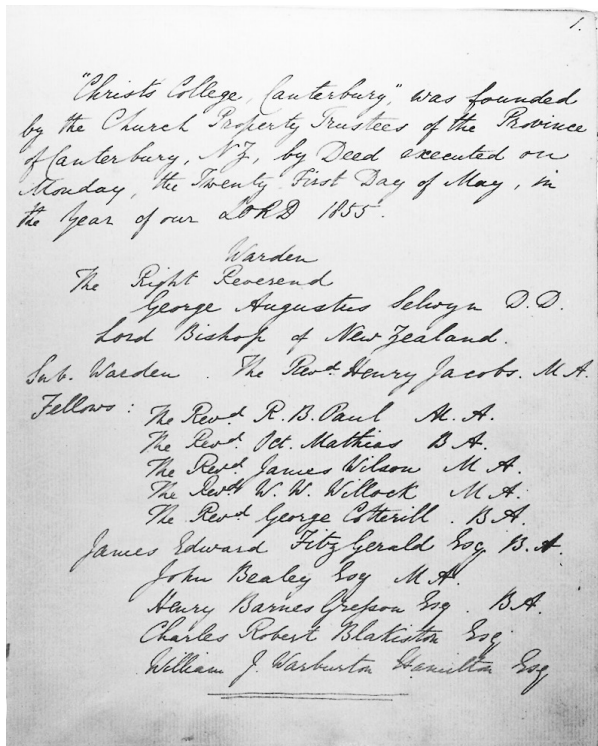
CCOBA Scholarships

The Committee of the Old Boys' Association (CCOBA) has funding available to provide financial assistance to boys whose parents are facing financial hardship. These awards tend to be made for one year at a time only and are designed to keep a boy at College when financial circumstances might otherwise require his withdrawal. For more information, phone 03 379 6738 or go to [Old Boys' Scholarship Information and Application Form](#)

21 May 1855

The first page of the Minutes of the Christ's College Board of Governor's contains the following record in Henry Jacobs' handwriting;

"Christ's College, Canterbury", was founded by the Church Property Trustees of the Province of Canterbury, NZ by Deed executed on Monday, the Twenty First Day of May, in the Year of our LORD 1855."



The First page of the Minutes of the Christ's College Board of Governors.

We are officially 160 years old although the planning for College's existence began well before 1855. It actually turned out to be a complicated business involving Henry Sewell, Church Property Trustees, and the transfer of land both as an endowment for College and as a site for buildings.

Henry Sewell, who had been sent out to New Zealand to sort out the affairs of the Canterbury Association, negotiated with the Church Property Trustees of the Diocese of Christchurch to initially administer the College lands and then to set them aside formally for College.

Sewell also had a hand in selecting the current site. Initially there was talk of a 3-4 acre site near the Heathcote Ferry, but after inspecting the Government Domain Henry Jacobs, Robert Bateman Paul and Thomas Cass decided that a site on Rolleston Avenue (then known as Antigua Street) would be the most suitable. However they still had to secure it.

It was not until October 1855 however that the newly appointed Fellows petitioned the Superintendent of Canterbury for a portion of the Domain. James Edward Fitzgerald, (who was

also a Fellow) granted the College nine acres and three roods provided they occupied it within three years.



The School in the Country: Christ's College in 1859.

It was a tight finish, but occupy it they did. In July 1855 Bishop Harper, second Warden of the College laid the foundation stone of the first building, on the site of the present Jacobs House. On 26 November 1857 the new school room was opened and in July 1858 Henry Jacobs and his boarders moved into the Headmaster's House.

Jane Teal, Archivist



Grandparents' Day

Save the date for Grandparents' Day, Wednesday 10 June. More information and online registration for Grandparents' Day will be live on our website very soon.

Timetable

- 10.00–10.15am** Grandparents arrive and are met by their grandson(s)
- 10.20am** Attend Chapel
- 11.00–12noon** Tour College with grandson(s)
- 12noon–12.30pm** Refreshments in the Chapman Room, Miles Warren Building
- 12.30pm** Depart