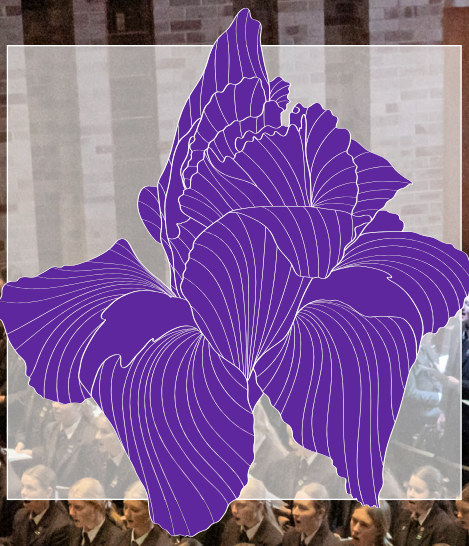
THE IRIS



A FRENSHAM SCHOOLS MAGAZINE

EDITION #04 JUNE 2024
TERM 2 NO 2

Recognising Achievement
Message from the Head

Birthday Messages
Michael Spencer
Robyn Parsons

Personalised Learning
Frensham Junior School

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"... A child should be encouraged to achieve self-reliance, to discover and fulfil her potential, and to develop a love of learning in a free, non-competitive, beautiful environment."

– Winifred West –

THE IRIS
A Frensham Schools Magazine
Edition #04 – Term 2
14 June 2024

Recognising Achievement at Frensham



One of the challenges we face at Frensham Schools is explaining to new parents our unique approach to recognising and celebrating student achievement.

We are one of the few independent schools in the country that doesn't have a speech night or an annual prize giving ceremony. For example, we don't have a Dux of School and prizes aren't given for first place in subjects. When new parents are told this their initial reaction is often to assume that we don't care.

This, of course, is not the case - we care deeply.

In 2022, Sally Fennell, Old Girl and staff member, delivered a message to the school at Morning Prayers. Her address was titled, Iris-Girdle, referring to the tradition of the school giving an Iris or a Girdle to celebrate the achievement and contribution of students.

With Sally's permission I have provided extracts from the address. I hope this goes some way to explaining our approach to competition, and in the least, I hope it will initiate a conversation in our community about how and why we celebrate achievement and contribution.



'Iris-Girdle' – Morning Prayers 2022

The Iris is our symbol, it is our flower, it is woven into all we are and all we do. The Iris is the embodiment of our unique culture. The purple Iris is Frensham.

The Iris is our emblem. Other schools have magnificent crests and wise latin words. We have the simple Iris, reflecting our founder's love of beauty and simplicity and her dislike for extravagance.

Often Miss West spoke of the value of beautiful surroundings, although this was just one facet of her concept of beauty. She believed that the highest form of the expression of beauty is a beautiful life. She said that "if we can have perfect buildings and perfect surroundings so much the better, but unless our lives and thoughts and actions correspond, the outward beauty will only be a mockery." She referred directly to the tone of the School and School spirit and believed that a beautiful life was one of friendship, contribution, challenge and service.

The Iris itself is a symbol of the character Miss West wanted her school to embody, chosen for its strength and great variety; for its hardiness and its ability to flourish both in poor soil as well as in good conditions; and for its perfect symmetry of form. All these qualities she saw as symbols of the human virtues of adaptability and versatility; of determination to overcome difficulties; and of the power of bringing joy and beauty into everyday living, all still reinforced today.

Miss West believed in the power of education. She said, "A child should be encouraged to achieve self-reliance, to discover and fulfil her potential, and to develop a love of learning in a free, non-competitive, beautiful environment. The child should be directed away from an aimless, self-centred, materialistic life into a life where service to others is fundamental, that is, service to the school and the community."

Frensham at its core is non-competitive. There are no prizes, no trophies, no medals, no cabinets in the North Room full of the symbols of competitive success, no presentation nights. We believe that this type of competition and prize giving are detrimental to a love of learning.

Frensham has no history of competitions between boarding houses or between year groups. Girls don't pit themselves against each other for prizes. As Miss West wrote, "In games, in scholarship and everything else, it does not matter in the least whether we are weaker or stronger than another school, or whether an individual is weaker or stronger than another, but it does matter, and matters intensely that we should do our best. We may have only one talent, but that must be used, not buried in the ground."

At Frensham, one talent is not better than another. Whether you are a singer or violinist, a maker of jewellery or ceramics, a scientist or an historian, a swimmer or netballer, a dramatist or member of our Ag team, your talent is valued, and you are encouraged to pursue this to the very best of your ability.

The unselfish pursuit of excellence is a core value, one that recognises the expectation of striving for excellence and the importance of your role within our community.

Receiving an Iris is not the same as receiving a prize. The presentation of an Iris from our gardens to a student is a powerful metaphor. In its simplicity and understatement, it sends a clear message of contribution and commitment. It is recognition of excellence, expressed through the essence of our school, 'in love serve one another'. We have no list of requirements, no tick-a-box system for the awarding of an Iris. It is too ephemeral for this.

Receiving an Iris is recognition by the whole body of staff, that a student should be recognised for their outstanding achievement in a field of endeavour, reflected in their service to others and in their character.

Miss West did not discuss the awarding of Irises in her annual Birthday addresses, and there is scant reference to the awarding of Irises or Girdles in the entire collection of Frensham literature, to this day. She simply gave girls an Iris from our gardens, a flower that would soon die, as a symbol of their excellence and contribution to our community and of the expectation that they would continue to strive and contribute, well beyond the moment of recognition.

Sally Fennell

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On a rare occasion, a student will ask why she did not receive a Girdle and to advocate for herself, listing all that she has done. This leads to a conversation about the purpose of recognition. No one should be doing anything with the prime objective of being recognised.

A Frensham award is not a prize to be won. Humility, not entitlement, is a core principle and, as with Irises, there is no tick a box system. There are no quotas for the number of girdles given every year, nor must they be given at certain occasions or in a particular order. Timing is when the moment for acknowledgement feels right.

Our message is to love learning, be passionate and committed, challenge yourself in the achievement of your goals and continue to give to others with integrity, humility and generosity. We want our students to feel joy in their achievements, knowing they have done their best, whether they are acknowledged with a Girdle, an Iris, or not.

Frensham awards are unique to our community. We encourage girls to share in the spirit of joy and always to remember that they have the power to make a difference to the lives of others. When girls are presented with an Iris brooch upon joining Fellowship at the end of Year 12, they carry with them for life the Iris symbol of outstanding achievement, endeavour and contribution.

Geoff Marsh
Head of Frensham
Head of Frensham Schools





Nicci Brigstocke
Kindergarten Teacher

Curiously, it was never my aspiration to become a teacher when I was at Frensham. It was only afterwards, having a little downtime, that I developed a sense that I'd enjoy teaching, partly driven by reflecting on how much I had enjoyed school. I decided to get some relevant skills and experience, and enrolled in a TAFE Childcare Course; and I was totally hooked.

So off to university I went and one Diploma of Teaching and one Bachelor of Education later, I started working at Queenwood Junior School. I taught K-2 there for nearly 10 years (and worked with Julie Gillick when she became Head of the Junior School). I married and soon took a break to have three beautiful children.

I then worked in both the private and public systems, teaching ages K-6 and even had a year as a School Librarian. Working in over 10 different schools, all with their own mix of challenging students and environments, I learnt to develop and enhance my teaching skills significantly. There is nothing like being asked to cover a class with absolutely no direction; no outline provided, no timetable on the wall, let alone any lesson plans or work left to do, so I'd bring out my bag of tricks. I vividly recall one time, when the teacher from the class next door warned me to 'keep the windows closed' because if given a chance, little Johnny would try to jump from the second storey! I knew then that it was going to be a long day and that I would need to dig deep. Something there was not working for these little people, so I tried to spark some interest in learning to make a difference for them.

When my family and I moved to the Southern Highlands, seven years ago, I taught briefly as a casual teacher again, experiencing several schools in the Southern Highlands before securing my position at Frensham Junior School. I believe being exposed to so many schools and different teaching scenarios gave me an insight and perspective on how truly special Frensham, and the Junior School really are.

My link with Frensham has been like a constant friend. I first started at Gib Gate as an overseas boarder and went on to Frensham with my sister. We travelled back and forth

Nicci Brigstocke – Kindergarten Teacher

three times a year to visit our parents who had been living overseas for 18 years. We lived the life of expats, a lucky and fascinating way to grow up, moving countries every few years. We were always travelling as we lived and attended schools in Christchurch, Washington DC, Hong Kong, Singapore, Honolulu, and San Francisco. I learnt to make friends quickly, get on with my classmates and make the most of every opportunity.

As a family we loved everything that Frensham stood for; my father served as a Governor for six years, was on the Foundation Board for fifteen years and was Chairman of the Board for two. The links multiplied as my two daughters attended Frensham from Years 7-12 as weekly boarders, my husband served as a Governor for more than six years (and is now a Company Member), we both joined the Frensham Foundation, and I joined Fellowship when I finished year 12 (also serving on the Committee for a short while).

So, what have I learnt? In my seven years as a Kindergarten teacher here, I've never been happier. To be part of a school that has a solid commitment to inspire a deep love of learning amongst all pupils, no matter where their interests lie, is wonderfully fulfilling. To work with such outstanding and dedicated teachers is inspiring. They balance their meticulous knowledge of education mixed in with genuine empathy, understanding and care for our young boys and girls in their most formative years.

I love motivating each one of my students to learn, through personalised academic programs, targeting their needs and interests. I want them to succeed and make a positive contribution to society now and in the future. Students learn the values of kindness, resilience, empathy and compassion, as these are our School's core values. Our students genuinely thrive in this environment. To be part of the development of so many hungry, growing minds and watching, encouraging, and guiding them to learn new things every single day, is uniquely rewarding and a great privilege.

Below: 'Tricky Words' wall in Kindergarten classroom



Falling in love with Frensham

Elise Brown (Year 11) – Boarder from NT



I come from a cattle station in the middle of the Northern Territory where the closest Woollies is 3 hours away (food only comes once every fortnight) and the closest airport is 7 hours away. It had always been me and my two younger brothers, so school was by correspondence with School of the Air and we were taught by a governess in a school room, very different to a regular classroom. There was never a dull moment while learning at home because I would sometimes miss the afternoon classes to move cattle or, on the weekends, we would have a campdraft on so we would practice in the afternoons after school.

People always ask me where I am from and when I tell them I live in the NT, they always have a look of shock and amazement on their faces. Often, their next question is, so why did you end up at Frensham? I always tell them how Mum was talking to one of the boys working in the yards asking them where all the nice girls are from, and he immediately said Frensham.

After visiting Frensham Mum fell in love with the School and loved the fact that it was in the country but not too far from the city, therefore making it convenient. As well as this, a lot of the girls come from farming backgrounds.

Even before stepping through Frensham's green gates, my excitement for boarding school couldn't be contained. Coming from School of the Air, where my closest friends lived 3 hours away, the idea of living with all my friends sounded perfect. I started my Frensham journey in 2020 as a little Year 7 – so excited for my high school journey to begin.

In boarding at Frensham, I have made strong friendships, which I will hold onto for a lifetime. I have grown to love certain aspects of boarding, such as mixed dorms and mixed year group houses. I have been able to build strong connections with girls I would not have otherwise grown close to which, in turn, creates a stronger school community and almost becomes like a family of 360 sisters.

Reflecting on my Frensham experience, it all becomes a bit of a whirlwind filled with emotional memories. From days of excitement to nights of homesickness, I have made memories and friendships I will cherish forever.



Campdrafting

Frensham's 111th Birthday Address
Michael Spencer – Head of Music

Michael Spencer delivered an insightful and entertaining speech during the Birthday Service on Sunday, 2 June. The speech was thoroughly enjoyed by all attendees and we thought we would share Michael's speech with those who weren't able to be with us on the day.



I don't mind admitting that I wasn't feeling at all sure I was entitled to be up here talking to you this morning. As far as I remember, guest speakers on the Birthday Weekend are usually Old Girls who are able to talk of their own years spent at Frensham, and who then go on to tell of the lessons they have learned in the wider world.

But I'm hoping you might make allowances for me when I say that, after all these years, I actually feel like a bit of an Old Girl myself. The way I see it, I arrived with Mrs Spencer in 2001, did my six years with the Class of 2006 and then, instead of leaving, I just decided to stay. Kind of like that ghost in Harry Potter who was a history professor until one morning tea, he quietly died in the staffroom – and then got up from his chair and continued teaching anyway.

But, as a bit of an Old Girl, I too have choked up many a time, trying to sing *I Vow to Thee* and *Jerusalem*. And, like the staunchest of Old Girls, I too can say that, on the playing fields, I've given everything I had... as a matter of fact, the grounds staff still talk about the magnificent outfield catch I took in a softball match with a splendid backward somersault to finish. And, I might add that, at the last game I played, there were in fact ambulances called! Although, admittedly, not for our opponents, it was just another father who did his knee. By the way, I do hope there were no ambulances required yesterday.

But I think my ultimate Old Girl credential is that, just like the 40-year reunion girls who come back to visit and tell tales of their first days at Frensham, I really do love this place, its culture and ethos. And that's what I'm going to talk about this morning. I'd like to tell you a tale of what it was that hooked me 24 years ago, and what has kept me here – working hard – all these years since.

But first, I have to begin with a bold statement that I believe we must face front on – from the outset – and here it is: Frensham is not a normal school. Frensham is 'unusual'. I imagine you all know and recognise that. But I didn't know that when, living in Sydney, I applied for the position of Music Teacher here. The first hint I got that Frensham was not a normal place was when, having sent off my CV, Ms Gillick called me and asked me to come down for an interview (normal enough), but then she added that I should probably do some research and reading on the 'particular culture' of Frensham.

Well, I'm afraid that was a hint I failed to pick up on. Mrs Spencer and I had young children and I barely had my head above the water. But surely there wasn't anything so particularly unusual about this place?

So I came down for the interview and that

went well. Ms Gillick was very gracious. But then came the unbelievable part... Could I please come back for an audition, in front of Mr Cooper, and the Madrigals?!! I had to run a rehearsal with the Madgies, so that Mr Cooper (and maybe even the girls) could be sure I was good enough to take over from him. That's when I really got the hint. This place wasn't normal. Expectations weren't normal!

Ah, Mr Cooper! These days, neither students nor even many staff members can be expected to remember Mr Cooper. He passed away over a decade ago. But, if there are old girl mothers here this morning, it's a fact that every one of them would have been taught by him. He gave 50 years of service to Frensham and I was applying to replace him.

Mr Cooper was a musician's musician. He was inspirational. He had perfect pitch. He was an excellent organist and jazz pianist, with a complete knowledge of the repertoire, and he was also completely charming. He was really funny and universally loved by generations of old girls, nearly all of whom he could recognise by the sound of their voice, when they came up to the organ after a service and spoke to him, decades later. Because, of course, the other thing about him was that he was blind! Frensham is not a normal school.

So anyway, returning to my audition with the Madrigals; I was teaching aural and keyboard harmony at the Conservatorium at the time, so I thought I might impress by teaching the Madrigals one of the short 3-part choral pieces I used for sight-singing with tertiary students. It was a beautiful canon by William Byrd, made more complex by the fact that the 2nd part was sung at the 5th! An amazing little piece. And the latin text was beautiful too – *Non nobis Domine, Sed nomini, Tuo da gloriam* ("Not unto us Lord, but to your name be the glory given"). I imagine the girls can see where I'm going with this...

I can still remember walking into Cooper Hall (School Hall as it was known then). I can picture Mr Cooper sitting at the piano, just giving me the occasional note and listening, and of course the Madrigals sitting in two rows, waiting to see what I might do. And it all went surprisingly well. Seemingly, I taught them so well, they were actually singing it perfectly by the end. Actually, a lot better than I had expected. Of course, if I had done the research Ms Gillick suggested, I might have discovered



Michael conducting the Madrigals performing 'Secret Migration' at the Frensham Schools' Birthday Service, Friday 31 May

Michael Spencer's Birthday Address

that, at special dinners, the Madrigals and even the entire school sing that very setting of *Non Nobis* as their Grace. But then again, maybe not. How was I to know Frensham girls even say grace, let alone sing it in beautiful 3-part Renaissance polyphony? No, Frensham is absolutely not a normal school.

Despite this debacle, or maybe because of it, I got the job and I embarked on the steep learning-curve required for me to fill Mr Cooper's shoes. But he didn't just leave me to it. He kept playing the organ for our school services and, more importantly, he coached me for at least a year in the Frensham hymn tradition, to make sure I could accompany the school properly and interpret all the hymns and carols correctly.

Actually, this morning, I've brought with me an ancient artefact from those days. It's one of the cassettes he made for me in that first year, where he would play the hymn and brief me on anything I needed to know. And here's a sample from it that I hope Old Girls might enjoy hearing. (Click audio icon)



So that was what hooked me 25 years ago. This inspirational musician made it very clear to me that the role I was assuming was an important one. And I had to get it right. I had to do it well. And perhaps even more powerful than the weight of Mr Cooper's expectation, was the fact that the girls themselves felt the same way. Those Madrigals at my audition, and the students during my early years, needed and expected me to do my job well too. They valued the tradition of singing at Frensham and they were protective of it.

So that was nerve-wracking for me, while I was still doing everything for the first time. In fact, I can remember at least one mortifying occasion when a Year 12 student came to me with some rather blunt feedback that she thought I needed to hear. But there was also an upside. Once I had eventually found my feet, I also gained the trust and loyalty of the School. And the goodwill and respect of the Frensham student body is no small thing.

And that is why I am still here, and why now, all these years later, I am the one who introduces new students to our musical traditions, and who works to prepare the school to sing for you at occasions like this. And somehow, that still feels important to me, and worthy of my time and energy.

Does that seem silly or delusional to feel so passionate about whether or not our small school is still able to sing hymns with the same commitment they might have had back in the 1970's, or even the 1930's? Might it all be just a huge anachronistic folly with neither meaning nor value?

Well, in terms of value, I certainly wouldn't suggest that the text or poetry of the hymns we sing are always edifying or, in some extreme cases, even decipherable! In fact, some of our hymns definitely need to be properly introduced to the 21st century. Nor is it that the music we sing is always worthy in and of itself. I mean, anyone who thinks *Forty Years On* is a pleasant piece of music needs their head examined. No, rather the value lies in the fact that, most mornings, for 3 or 4 minutes, Frensham girls stand up and take a risk together. Alongside their friends, they open their mouths and make good on a kind of social contract. "If you sing, then I'll sing". Even when they know that one or both of them might not sing very well. And, if it's a hymn they know and enjoy, they are surprised to find they can be strong together.

I believe Frensham is a place where girls find their voices, literally. Not demure, deferential, subservient voices. Often, they are deep, no-nonsense voices, capable of clear-eyed self-expression. Frensham is a place where girls experience their collective power by raising their voices together. And, in a society where (incredibly), women still find themselves



having to fight to be heard, I believe there is great value in that.

And finally, I would suggest that there is actually great value in the fact that Frensham girls continue to simply value things like our singing tradition - things that lie beyond the compass of their own self-interests. Things that they can only create together, through mutual endeavour. And that they care enough to do these things well.

Our musical traditions are merely one manifestation of this phenomenon. Just as they urge one another on to sing well, Frensham girls will also support each other on the playing fields with their crazy war-cries, and cooperate to create their mad Friday Night activities. And importantly, this, in turn, informs the way they collaborate in the classroom and exhort each other on to greater achievements.

In a world where more and more of what we do, we access online - in isolation - Frensham girls continue to care about and to value traditions and practices where everyone is needed and included. And, if by today's standards, this means that Frensham is not quite a normal place, well again, speaking for myself, that's exactly why I am here – and, dare I say it, perhaps a part of why we are all here. And how wonderful is it, to have had the privilege of navigating one more year together, as not-quite-normal as we all are?

Happy Birthday Frensham.



Frensham Birthday Lunch Robyn Parsons' Address

It is indeed an honour and a great privilege to stand in front of you to celebrate Frensham's 111th Birthday.

When Phoebe and Maggie asked me, my heart skipped a beat, partly out of sheer joy and partly out of sheer terror. This was way out of my comfort zone! I was given the option of saying 'no', but how could I refuse? We all need to be brave! The School's Birthday is the most important celebration of the school year.

Many years ago, twenty-three years to be precise, I sat in a version of this dining room to experience my first Birthday Lunch here at Frensham. It was in the old dining room which was nothing like it is now.

There was no heating or air-conditioning. On the side, was a brick fireplace which was the only source of heat. You can imagine how cold it was in winter and how stifling it was in summer. Everyone sat at the old tables and wooden benches, shivering, shoulder to shoulder.

In spite of the winter chill, it was a magnificent event, just like today. Tables were resplendent with colourful decorations, with streamers and balloons in abundance. Girls were dressed in beautiful clothes, like you are today – you all look amazing – and Ms Alison made the Birthday Speech.



After a resounding version of *Forty Years On*, staff departed as girls stood silently, eagerly awaiting the excitement of returning to the House to collect their cameras (not phones!) to create memories and to line up to use the landline phones in the corridor.

In her first Birthday Address, Miss West expressed the importance of loving service and the responsibilities of each Frensham girl. Today we reflect upon the development and achievements of our amazing School. I quote,

"The school does not get her power for good by magic. Every mistress and girl who comes has her gift for the school. Give yourself."

Year 7, this is your very first Birthday Lunch. Year 12, your sixth and very last. For me, it is my 23rd, with more to come.

I am relying on my memory to reflect on all the School's Birthday celebrations and all the other joyous occasions I have experienced.

Memory is defined as the ability to remember information, experiences and people. It is said we have very little memory before the age of 3, which is sad, and that our ability to remember new information peaks in our 20's. For me, that was a little while ago.

You see, I am a child of the 60s, a Baby Boomer, one of the most tumultuous decades in world history. A time marked by the Civil Rights Movement, the Vietnam War and the assassination of John F Kennedy.

What will you remember of your days at Frensham? What will you remember of the School's Birthday celebrations?

Winnie the Pooh said, "We didn't realise we were making memories; we just knew we were having fun!"

As one girl asked me some time ago: "Mrs. Parsons, what do you do for entertainment?" My reply was simple, "I work here".

Memory is a way of holding onto things you love, the things you never want to lose. You only have to look at the walls of your cubies and the doors of your cupboards to see the memories you love of the people you love. So many photos decorate every surface.

My memories of my time here are vivid and wonderful. So as not to forget, I made a folder for every year I have been here. This is just one of the 23 folders I have. In each folder is a collection of treasures from the girls I have been blessed with caring for. There are letters, notes and cards of thanks and appreciation, and in some cases, words of apology.

Because, you see, as a housemistress I have the opportunity of interacting with our students on a very personal level as well. After all, the House is also their home for however long they are in school. At times I am what could be called a listening post for them to be able to share their highs and lows, sometimes to vent, which we all need to do occasionally, to laugh

Robyn Parsons' Birthday Lunch Address

hilariously or to shed a few tears. Or to just talk about their ordinary, everyday experiences.

So once again, the memories collected and remembered around such experiences are cherished and valued. And just to share, a little while ago I was made aware of the profound impact my advice had on some occasions. You see, I ran into an old girl who had finished school a short time before, and whilst chatting she related that there was something I had told her at school which she had never forgotten. I have to admit, inwardly, I did a bit of a peacock dance with feathers fanned, wondering what was the advice I had given her that she found so remarkable. "Yes", she said, "you always told me that I should never stand in front of a microwave and I've never forgotten it!"

At the 97th Birthday Service in 2010, Mr Marsh said, "Birthdays are not about getting presents, they are not about getting cake. They are about people coming together in love to acknowledge the important part that each and every one of us plays in making our families, our communities and our school, what they are."

Traditions are very important to us. One very special tradition is how girls celebrate each other's birthdays, reflecting the School's motto, "In Love Serve One Another". It is a time of rituals marking the uniqueness of every girl.

Where did these birthday rituals originate? They were brought in by the girls themselves. By you! In years gone by, girls, on their birthday, were adorned with beautiful flowers collected from the garden by groups of other girls working together. To prevent these flowers from falling, wreaths of ivy were thoughtfully constructed with a myriad of colourful blooms.

Now, at the crack of dawn, even on a crisp, white, frosty morning, armed with torches and scissors, donned in pyjamas and hoodies, groups of girls leave the House to gather ivy and snip the most beautiful blooms they can find. Whose breath has not been taken away by the beauty of these floral wreaths?

As girls grow older, a stunning collection of ribbons are woven into the birthday girl's hair. What a joy to behold, seeing friends tying and braiding these colourful ribbons. To the outsider, a girl wearing a wreath of flowers entwined with leaves, branches and vines, or a cornucopia of brightly coloured ribbons in her hair, is a vision of great wonder, curiosity and bewilderment.

The creativity and thought put into creating a magnificent, if at times astonishing and dramatic ensemble for a girl's 18th birthday, is yet again friends working together. For weeks before her birthday, the birthday girl ponders and dreams of what spectacular creation awaits her!

Mrs. Kennedy's speech on the School's 25th Birthday compared Frensham to a symphony, an unfinished symphony built upon varying themes.

Who can ever forget the music...the hymns at Morning Prayers; Frensham's traditional Grace, *Non Nobis*; the magic of the Madrigals; the genius of Mr Spencer; the resounding, if not confusing, words to *Forty Years On*.

May a day not pass when we do not look around us and wonder at the beauty of nature that embraces us - the hills and gullies; the Holt; the towering trees; the bush and the flowers.

I would now like to finish with some of the lyrics of a song written by Bob Dylan in the 60's for his children. These words are for you. The song is *Forever Young*.

> *"May God bless and keep you always, may your wishes all come true,*
> *May you always do for others and let others do for you.*
> *May you build a ladder to the stars and climb on every rung,*
> *May you stay... Forever Young".*

Happy Birthday, Frensham!

Frensham Birthday Lunch

Emily Crawford & Ashley Brewer, Year 12

We are honoured to have been chosen to give this year's Birthday address in celebration of 111 years of Frensham. Except, when we started brainstorming, we struggled to come up with ideas. How could we put the spirit of Frensham into words and capture what makes this community special? So, out of options and ideas, we thought we would go back to the beginning and see what Miss West had to say.

Our founder, Winifred West, saw life as a mosaic, and I quote, "made up of significant pieces of coloured marble or stone not strikingly beautiful in themselves, but so arranged that a wonderful pattern may result. The complete beauty of the whole depends on the perfection of each part and its relation to the other parts. Each piece needs the surrounding pieces to show off its full beauty."

We know you've all heard that one before, and we definitely thought we'd never be saying it ourselves, but after hearing it 10 times, it actually kind of got through to us. And that's when we realised we'd never be able to do it justice with words – Frensham is more than just a place, or even a school, it's a patchwork of experiences we share with each other, every day. Singing together in the morning, swapping baby photos in our hymn books, belting out those last three notes of *Jerusalem* - that's Frensham. Blaming a sleepy last period in North West wing on the green walls, sneaky toasties on a closed weekend, totally fair war cry competitions - that too, is Frensham.

Every one of these moments is what brings girls together, making them bright and beautiful pieces in our mosaic, each strikingly different. And the Schools' Birthday is the time when we reflect on these things, to come together and appreciate every single part of our community, recognise how we lift each other up and make each other shine. Looking back on our own journeys, we thought we



could give some examples of moments that definitely strengthened connections within our year group:

Year 7 dorm wars between the 'man cave' and another Hartfield dorm, which led to some intense pranks being played. After weeks of hard, gruelling work, the 'man cave' came out on top.

Even though it never worked, we admire Sylvie's spirit and the unitedness of all girls in constructing and planning what we can only describe as a devastating revolt, raising all their hands at the same time in year 7 prep. Blissfully unaware that all emails sent to the year group also get sent to the year coordinator (an important lesson that each year group comes to learn), Ms Vaughan barged in moments before the beautiful plan came to fruition, crushing what could have been a revolutionary moment in Frensham history.

Most of our years collective experience in fake tanning for the first time for Christmas lunch.

There we were, all excited and thinking that it would give us a nice bronzed glow, but instead left us all looking just a tad orange. We wanted to give a particular shout-out to Tilly Graham, who achieved an unbelievable shade – we didn't even think it was possible for fake tan to turn out that orange. We're not even sure she's got it all off yet.

Of course, we couldn't discuss our Frensham schooling without mentioning the elephant in the room, COVID. More specifically, the Zoom Prayers that became staples of our weeks, and Mr Spencer orchestrating 300 girls singing from their bedrooms, either muted or camera off. Most of us were pretty humbled by the singing item that definitely included the voices of everyone in our year and not just Madeleine Charters.

Unexpectedly, Zara being the first ever in our year to be sent to the duty room, something she still flexes proudly to this day. She's really changed since then. Well, maybe not completely, but a weird achievement nonetheless.

But, on a more serious note, Year 12. You're a pretty special bunch. So special, in fact, that Mrs Spencer wanted to be our Year Coordinator four times. All jokes aside, the experiences we have shared, from playing get-to-know-me games in the houses on our first day of school at Frensham, to rehearsing our song for our final year group service, are ones we will never forget. In our years here at Frensham with you, we've had more than a few ups, downs and unforgettable moments. In a Frensham girl's life, she will attend roughly 220 Friday night activities, 694 sport trainings and games, a whopping 970 Morning Prayers and yet only 6 Birthday lunches. For Year 12, it is our last and while we're sad to be almost at the end of our journey here, for others, it has just begun.

Year 7. You are the next pieces in our mosaic. You still have hundreds of bad dress-ups, mudslides and venite-singings, and they will hone you into a strong, kind and connected cohort, a group who bring out the best in each other. You have five more Birthdays yet, each one of them a special opportunity to look back and recognise the ways in which you help one another's unique strengths shine. Because, before you know it, it will be you standing in Clubbe Hall, arms around each other, belting out the lyrics of *Forty Years On* for the very last time. Before you know it the weekly sports trainings, hymn practices and Friday night activities you once thought tedious will be times you look back on fondly when you leave these green gates. Treasure every moment spent here. Throw yourself into different activities, make time to chat with people in your year you often don't, and most importantly cherish the memories you have made. Because, before you know it, you will only have 13 weeks left.

Your time here will fly, and by your last Birthday lunch, when you again reflect on what Frensham means to you, you may come to the same conclusion that Emily and I have, that you cannot put your finger on when, or how, but you know that Frensham has changed you for the better, and every minute you've spent here with the girls around you will be precious, an invisible, unbreakable fabric between you, memories that connect us all in a beautiful, 111 year strong mosaic.

Happy 111th Birthday, Frensham!



Personalised Learning, Key for Student Growth

Recently I enjoyed several opportunities to join with and share collegially with fellow Heads of Junior Schools throughout Australia. In a session discussing our highlights and joys, I shared how fortunate I feel to work with such an outstanding team of teacher practitioners.

When I'm asked, "What is it that makes Frensham Junior School teachers so special?", there are many reasons I could share; but I often start by describing the commitment that every teacher makes to ensuring each child's learning journey is personalised for individual growth.

So, what is personalised learning? Definitions can vary across the educational field, but at the core of most definitions are two components:

1. tailoring learning to each student's strengths, needs, and interests
2. providing students with choice, voice, and flexibility in reaching learning outcomes*

I feel so blessed to regularly see these two components of personalised learning in daily classroom practice at Frensham Junior School. With the benefit of small class sizes, teachers form a deep understanding of each child's strengths, interests and needs. Through observation and discussion, our teachers understand what motivates each child and how they are best situated to learn.

One child's day often looks different to another child's, as they work on achieving different goals, guided by the teacher's knowledge of their academic needs. By celebrating each others' differences and recognising that everyone works in different ways and at different levels, we avoid a culture of comparison and judgement. Teachers focus on building intrinsic motivation and providing individualised, continuous feedback to students on their personal achievements and areas for improvement. A positive, nurturing classroom dynamic is the result!



Our teachers effectively personalise student learning by providing students with flexibility, voice and choice in their learning. Within every classroom students engage with tasks in varying ways, choose different learning spaces, complete tasks at varying paces, select various mediums to showcase their learning, investigate concepts of personal interest, choose the direction of their learning through project-based tasks and share collaborative projects with each member of their class.

What a privilege it is to work with a team who all understand how important personalised education is to student growth and who are passionate about helping students be the very best they can be. Thank you to all our Frensham Junior School teachers!

Lucy Gregory
Head of Frensham Junior School

Gunawardena, M; Bishop, P; Aviruppola K, (2024) 'Personalized learning: The simple, the complicated, the complex and the chaotic', Teaching and Teacher Education, Volume 139, doi: https://doi.org/10.1016/j.tate.2023.104429

Gib Gate Former Student & Sport Coach

Many of our Frensham Junior School families will have seen Dominic O'Shannessy passionately coaching students at morning and afternoon Sport training sessions or Saturday Sport games. But did you know Dominic is actually an ex-Gib Gate student himself and an exceptionally talented sports person in his own right? Dominic attended Gib Gate from the age of 3-12 years old. He excelled academically, musically, dramatically and on the sports field. He was, and still is, popular with students and respected by staff. We are delighted that Dominic is now a member of Frensham Junior School's sporting staff as a coach and mentor for a range of sports. He is an outstanding role-model for our students.

Here are some words from former Gib Gate Sports Coordinator, Michael Standen, and a reflection from Dominic of his sporting start at Gib Gate and some of his achievements.



Michael with Dominic receiving his CIS Primary Boys Sportsman of the Year Award, 2014.

Michael: "Dominic is what any school sports master would call a godsend. Beginning at Gib Gate in preschool, he soon became engrossed in most sporting activities on offer and even a few that weren't. He excelled at them all – soccer, athletics, basketball, but especially cricket where he dominated the game locally making every rep team and taking every honour.

While in Year 4 he trialled for the NSW CIS Cricket team, just missing selection that year, but he was one of the first chosen in the following two years. He captained the CIS team in 2013 and was selected as captain for the NSW Primary Boys Team the same year. He starred at this tournament in Darwin and was ranked the most outstanding player of the tournament. He later went on to represent NSW and Australia at under 19 level as a 16 year old. In 2014 Dominic was awarded the Combined Independent Schools (CIS) most outstanding Primary Boys Sportsman.

Since leaving School, Dominic has fallen in love with golf and like every sport he takes on, is excelling at it. More significantly, Dominic has not forgotten where his sporting journey began and he can be seen most weeks at Frensham Junior School helping the future generation develop a passion for their own sporting pursuits."

Dominic: "As a student at Gib Gate, I quickly became enveloped with sport under the tutelage of Michael Standen. An already strong passion ignited into a fierce love and drive on the sporting field. Soccer and rugby in the winter with cricket in the summer. Not to mention the early morning athletics and cross-country training. I had many sporting highlights at Gib Gate, one of which was receiving the D.A. Wiburd award for most outstanding NSW primary school athlete in Year 6.

However, what was equally impressionable on me was the regular swimming lessons the school organised. My freestyle I would consider to be abstract at best. For those who watched the 2000 Olympics, I was more akin to 'Eric the Eel' than I was Ian Thorpe. I absolutely dreaded the 'Summer' swimming lessons at Bowral pool. Despite my regular protest I was always given my marching orders to participate. There laid naturally the foundation of a more empathetic and resilient young boy. It was through these experiences and high-quality coaching that I was able to excel into high school where I participated in basketball, soccer, cricket and athletics at a representative level. At the time cricket was my true passion where I was fortunate enough to represent my state and country at an U17 & U19 level. As of today, I am currently pursuing a career in professional golf.

Coaching seemed a natural option as it involves some of my strengths and further encompasses other interests of mine such as psychology, physics, and character development. I first started coaching in high school when I was a boarder at Newington College where I was lucky to learn from some of the best. Just after school, I was offered work at Frensham Junior School on a casual basis in 2020 and 2021. Late last year I returned and shortly after was offered a more substantial and permanent role in the coaching staff across both campuses. Over this period, I've been enrolled in and completed multiple coaching courses in a variety of sports.

The sense of community and identity at Frensham Schools is something I distinctly remember as a student. It's no different here now as a coach. It truly is a privilege to work alongside such professionals. The opportunity to pass down my knowledge and provide insight on my experiences not only as an athlete but as a student is something I hope proves valuable. I look forward to seeing smiles on new and familiar faces throughout the Frensham Schools community."

Extracurricular Activities

Frensham Junior School students LOVE participating in extracurricular activities, before school, at lunchtime, or after school. We believe that extracurricular activities are an essential part of a well-rounded education and at Frensham Junior School, we create an environment designed to provide students with many and varied opportunities. These activities enable students to learn and apply a range of skills in a real-world context. They help students explore their interests and personalities, and demonstrate their ability to contribute, and manage their time and priorities. Extracurricular involvement can be helpful in boosting students' educational experiences and social, emotional, and communication skills. Being active in extracurricular classes allows students to gain new experiences and apply what they have learned. They can develop leadership, co-operation, and social skills, as well as learning how to be self-sufficient, creative, and hardworking – enhancing their overall wellbeing.

At Frensham Junior School we offer a wide range of extracurricular activites over the year:

- Music – Orchestra, Junior and Senior Choirs and music tuition in most instruments
- Technology – Junior STEM, Robotics, Robocup
- Sport – Tennis Squad, Junior Tennis and private lessons, Gymnastics, Athletics, Swimming Squad, Swim Race Essentials, Basketball, Cricket, Hockey, Netball, Soccer teams
- Creative Arts - Junior and Senior Drama, Dancing, Art Club, Lucy's Craft Workshops, Ceramics
- Tournament of Minds
- Debating and Public Speaking
- Picture Book Making
- da Vinci Decathlon
- Chess Club
- Cooking
- Nature Club



Combined Schools Orchestra

Members of the Frensham Concert Band, Kennedy Strings and Junior School Orchestra recently joined together for a workshop morning to play for each other and with each other. Much has been published in literature about the cognitive and wellbeing benefits of playing a musical instrument, however, aside from this, the students really enjoy the opportunity to play together.

Students from Frensham Junior School then attended a mini recital in Clubbe Hall. After further work in separate rehearsals with Mr Spencer, Mrs Graham and Ms Boulton, the Combined Orchestra performed the processional music, *Minuet* from Handel's *Music for the Royal Fireworks*, for the Frensham Schools Birthday Service with over sixty students on stage, under the baton of Ms Lia Boulton. This is likely to be a regular fixture for the Service as it was such a wonderful, collaborative way to commence the weekend's Birthday celebrations!

Mrs Anne Graham
Deputy Head
Frensham Junior School







The Livestock Enterprise

Empowering rural girls: Frensham's livestock legacy

The Livestock Enterprise is a cornerstone of Foundation's fundraising efforts, reflecting our community's values of resilience, integrity, and compassion. Since its inception in 2014, the initiative has generated funds for the Foundation's Bursary Fund, supporting the enrolment of rural girls who might otherwise lack access to a Frensham education.

Frensham families become part of the Livestock Enterprise by hosting livestock on behalf of Frensham. Andrew and Kimba Thomas, a long-term Host family, exemplify the program's success. Their journey began in March 2020, amidst the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic, when they answered the call to become Hosts for cattle.

'We wanted to do everything we could to see this go very well,' Andrew affirmed. Their commitment paid off handsomely, with a significant profit margin realised over 18 months.

Andrew and Kimba then took on another 10 more head of cattle in late 2022 and despite market challenges in 2023, they remain optimistic about future returns. Andrew has also joined the Livestock Enterprise Committee, which he has found to be extremely fulfilling.

'We're very willing to host cattle, we know it is having such an impact,' Andrew expressed, highlighting the rewarding nature of their involvement.

Kimba echoed this sentiment, emphasising the ease of hosting. 'Being a Host is very easy. Once the cattle are bought, they are transported to the farm, usually with the purchase of other cattle. From there, we have an on-farm induction process and install the Frensham ear tags, after which the Frensham cattle are turned out in the paddock with all the other cattle,' Kimba said.

Coming from a farming family, their daughters Tia in Year 11 and Amber in Year 9, actively participate in Frensham's Agricultural Team, further solidifying the family's connection to Frensham through this program.

Looking ahead, Andrew and Kimba urge more farming families to join as Hosts, recognising the transformative impact of reinvesting proceeds into Foundation and assisting rural girls to attend Frensham.

For those interested in learning more about Hosting opportunities, please contact Hamish Firth, our Chair of the Livestock Enterprise Committee. Hamish can be contacted at Ray White Rural Scone - 0499 881 585 or hamish.firth@raywhite.com

Jackie Dalton
Director of Philanthropy

News of Old Girl
Alice Scamps Goodman (2012)

After leaving Frensham in 2012, I studied a Bachelor of International Relations and a Bachelor of Laws at the Australian National University. My favourite subjects in my law degree were those involving public international law, such as the law of war, international dispute resolution and comparative counter-terrorism studies.

After graduating in 2018, I travelled to Jerusalem to undertake a two-month legal internship with the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestinian Refugees in the Near East. In 2019, I took a graduate position at MinterEllison and worked in the technology law team for the next five years.

In 2023 I was fortunate enough to be accepted into the Masters of Law at Georgetown University, in Washington, D.C. specialising in International Legal Studies. In August 2023, I travelled to Washington, D.C. to commence my first semester.

During my time at Georgetown, I was able to study a range of interesting topics, including the law of war, international human rights law, the law of the sea, the law governing the use of weapons of mass destruction, the International Court of Justice, cyber operations and artificial intelligence and national security. The best experience I had at Georgetown was being selected to represent the University in a prestigious international law competition organised by the International Committee for the Red Cross (the Jean-Pictet competition), hosted this year in Belgium. Our team competed against teams from universities across the world and we were selected to compete in the semi-finals for only the second time in Georgetown's history of participating in the competition. In my second semester,



I was lucky enough to live with my partner in New York City and commute to Washington, D.C. to attend my classes.

I graduated from Georgetown in May this year and to cap off this incredible experience, I got engaged on my final night in New York City at *Per Se*, a three Michelin star restaurant overlooking Central Park.

I am grateful for the learning experience I had at Frensham which provided a great education foundation and allowed me to pursue these opportunities. I encourage any Frensham students to consider studying overseas as it is a very special experience.

Fellowship Careers Networking Evening

Fellowship is bonded by the shared experience of a Frensham Education.

Service to Others is one of Frensham's core values and each student is encouraged to live the challenge of our founder, 'In Love Serve One Another'. In fostering a spirit of service, our students are compassionate and willingly offer their support to others, even as they move beyond the School gates and into the world.

As such, the Fellowship Committee wished to consider the ways in which it may enable alumnae to support one another in their professional development, as they fulfill this unique sense of duty.

Thus, the idea for a Careers Networking Evening was born. This event provided a platform for Fellowship Members, and a group of Year 12 students, to meet, share their journeys, and exchange insights as each of them navigate diverse career paths.

Held on the evening of Wednesday 8 May, in the Sydney offices of Evans and Partners, which were generously provided by Lucy Meagher (Rayner, 2007), the evening proved to be a dynamic and inspiring evening of networking and learning.

A highlight of the evening was an interactive panel discussion, featuring four members of Fellowship who each brought a unique perspective on their career progression from Frensham to today.









The panelists included Katherine Evans (2009) – Special Counsel at Sparke Helmore Lawyer, Annabel Hay (2015) – Inventor, Founder, Owner and CEO of CLUTCH Glue, Samantha Hutchinson (2003) – National Reporter for The Australian Financial Review and Lucy Meagher (Rayner, 2007) – Senior Investment Adviser at Evans and Partners.

We look forward to providing you with more details of our panelists in future editions of The Iris.

Penelope Ellice-Flint
Fellowship Liaison













BIRTHDAY CELEBRATIONS




























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WD





French Exchange – Penelope Hampson, Year 11

I have been in France for over four months. I can still clearly remember walking off the plane after twenty three hours, with virtually no sleep, pumping with adrenaline and meeting my host family for the first time in person after Zoom calls in a mixture of French and English. During my stay, I will be living with four different families in order to experience the various ways of living and parenting. Having a family as generous and loving as mine has been amazing, and my adventures so far have been ever so eye-opening.



Starting off in France, my host family and I went on a weekend trip to Italy, to meet a client for my host dad's defibrillator business. For three incredible days, we walked our way through the capital, stopping to look at the detailed stonework of the Fontana de Trevi and the Pantheon. While waiting to see the Pope (Papa) speak, I introduced myself to some Italian Boy Scouts, who were in the city for a scavenger hunt. We ended up being interviewed on Vatican TV about why we loved the Pope!

My first host father is an avid sportsman, he participates in marathons and is training to tour le Mont Blanc with his friends. Benoît also dabbles in recreational skiing, so in the holidays we drove eight hours down to the South-East of France to ski. It was truly magical, like nothing I have ever experienced. White powder coating the fur trees, horses pulling sleds, and of course, raclette. I was living my dream of snowboarding in the French Alps.



Schooling in France is dramatically different to Australia. Three days out of five I start school at 8am and finish at 5.40pm. This means waking up at 6.30 for the 7am train. Some days I have 9 lessons in the day, others are just one. Everyone takes the same classes which include; Physics and Chemistry, Biology, Maths, History and Geography, English, Spanish, French, Sport, Moral Physics, Sociology and Economics and Numeric Technology. Wednesdays are half days, so in the afternoon you can play sport or take music lessons. On my Wednesday afternoons, I take a tennis lesson with 4 other girls. My tennis coach is a tennis and rugby enthusiast, so every lesson we have, I get to test him on the pronunciation of Australian cities like 'Wollongong' and 'Adelaide'. We have bonded over helping each other with English and French, a friendship like no other.

This exchange year has granted me with so many opportunities I wouldn't have deemed possible otherwise. For example, during the vacation that just passed, I spent 15 days whistle stopping around the east and west of Europe in bus. We started as 40, coming from Taiwan, Japan, Australia, New Zealand, Mexico, Argentina, Brazil, Finland, USA, Paraguay, Philippines, Peru, Thailand and Colombia. In the bus for up to 9 hours together, as a group, we quickly became family. Starting in Paris we went to Belgium, The Netherlands, Germany, Czech Republic, Slovakia, Austria, Hungary, Italy and Switzerland. Highlights of the trip that I'll remember forever are: dancing through the streets of Amsterdam with ABBA blasting through our pocket speaker; learning, playing, and then winning card games like Poker, Chudadi (Taiwanese) and Daifugō (Japanese); being taught phrases and salutations in Spanish, Mandarin and Japanese; walking through the largest cave in Europe located in Slovenia; indulging in local delicacies like the Käsekrainer (an Austrian sausage with cheese inside), Trdelník or chimney cake from Prague, the frites & mayonnaise of Belgium; and finally visiting and commemorating ANZAC day at the German concentration camp Sachsenhausen. Saying goodbye to all the people that I met on this trip was just a glimpse of how hard it will be to say goodbye in January. I now have memories as souvenirs that will last a lifetime.

Living in France has been a dream come true, with its fair share of ups and downs, I'm still ever so grateful for the teachers, students and community at Frensham for supporting me through such a thing. It's changed my life.



ARTEXPRESS 2024

After the conclusion of Visual Arts practical marking for the HSC in early November 2023, the School was delighted to receive the news that from five nominated Bodies of Works by Frensham students, two had been selected for exhibition in ARTEXPRESS 2024. In the first half of this year, we are delighted to note the inclusion of Janna Martin-Cooley and Sophie Hassall in two separate ARTEXPRESS exhibition venues.

From 8660 students studying Visual Arts for the HSC in 2023, approximately 470 Bodies of Work from NSW secondary schools were nominated for inclusion in ARTEXPRESS. Approximately 210 works were then selected for exhibition, highlighting what a significant achievement it is to be both nominated then included in ARTEXPRESS exhibitions.



Janna Martin-Cooley (2023), with her father Peter at the opening of ARTEXPRESS at Hazelhurst Art Gallery

From 10 February to 7 April, Janna Martin-Cooley's Body of Work titled ***Rebellion and Reclamation*** was exhibited at Hazelhurst Art Gallery in Gymea, which is one of several venues selected for ARTEXPRESS. Janna's culturally powerful and personally significant work, featuring aspects of painting and printmaking, was one of 52 Bodies of Work exhibited at Hazelhurst. As Janna stated

'within my expansive Body of Work, there is an exploration of the repercussions of Colonialism on Indigenous communities—a subject of profound personal significance. My Indigenous identity fuels me to unearth Australia's obscured historical stories. This piece intertwines historical and contemporary themes, unravelling links between past and present colonialist attitudes.'

ARTEXPRESS is currently on show at Ngununggula (Southern Highlands Regional Gallery) until 30 June. This is the first year that Ngununggula has hosted ARTEXPRESS, and the exhibition, featuring 59 Bodies of Work, looks fantastic. Notable within the exhibition is Sophie Hassall's exquisite and refined suite of 6 charcoal drawings on canvas *(pictured right)*. She notes that her Body of Work *'is centred around the concept of accepting mental illnesses as a mundane and normal part of life, conveyed through depictions of skeletons placed in everyday scenarios to communicate 'deathly' inner experiences within ordinary life. The title of this work plays upon the traditional artistic trope of Memento Mori, represented symbolically in Dutch 17th Century still-life paintings through the depiction of morbid skulls and wilting flowers. I have adapted this to translate to 'remember, you do not have to die' (memento non mori), communicating that despite one suffering from a mental illness, they are still able to have, and are worthy of, a full and meaningful life'.*



Phil Alldis
Head of Visual Arts

Hosting Bees

Last year, we received two beehives and bees from the Bowral Bee Company, which we are now using as a teaching tool for our Agriculture classes. Students are learning about the life cycle and hierarchy of bees, honey production, hive maintenance and how to market the honey produced. We are hosting the hives for the Bowral Bee Company, who have visited the classes at Frensham to share their practical knowledge with the students, instructing them on testing honey, how to care for the bees and educating them on bee diseases such as the Varroa mite.



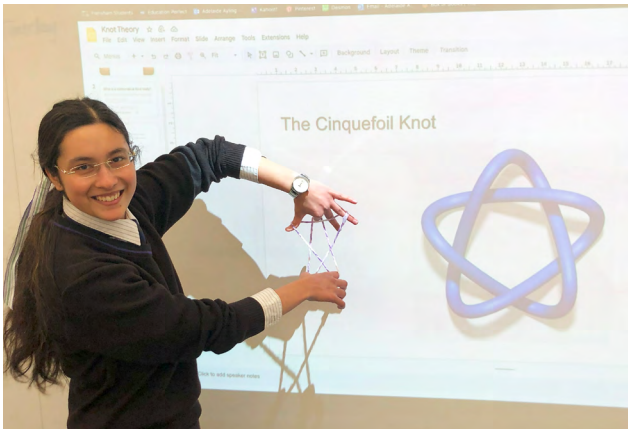


When the bees arrived at Frensham, they were only in a newly established hive and it will take them some time to begin honey production. Currently, all the honey produced is consumed by the bees themselves, but we hope to harvest our first batch later this year. This honey will be extracted, bottled, marketed, and sold by the students at a pop-up marché on campus later this year.

The hives are located in the orchard at the Ag plot, where both the Bowral Bee Company and our students regularly check them to ensure the bees' health and adequate food supply, especially during the winter when blossoms are scarce. If the bees need feeding, the class prepares a sugar and water mix for the hives. We also plan to plant more blossoming natives, such as bottlebrush, in the Ag plot to provide the bees with access to pollen throughout the winter months.

We have purchased protective bee suits for the students, allowing them to safely care for the bees. The girls have enjoyed their visits to the hives and have enjoyed being so close to the bees and the ability to look inside the hives to see the intricate honey-making operation. The girls said that they were able to sample both native and European bee honey and were surprised to note that the European variety was much sweeter.

Leonie Mutch
Coordinator of Agriculture



Maths Club

In this Term's Maths Club, students wove their way around Mathematical Knots. After a brief introduction to the theory of mathematical knots it was discovered that these knots aren't the typical climbing knots or shoelace bows that are often encountered. Instead, a knot was defined in terms of a closed loop and its number of intersections. Students learnt to name and generate their own knots, starting with the basic ***unknot*** and progressing through the ***trefoil***, ***figure 8*** and ***cinquefoil*** knots. In order to solve a riddle students searched the corridors for hidden knots and used a series of *Reidemeister* moves to correctly arrange the knots upon returning to the Maths rooms. After this challenging and interactive task students consolidated their learning through *Kahoot* on the history and theory of mathematical knots. By building on their knowledge of this advanced university-level mathematical theory through teamwork, interaction and competition, students were not only able to understand something new and gain confidence in their ability to learn, but also appreciate the vast world of mathematics and humour that exists outside of high school; when the ancient trefoil was asked if she could tell a funny joke she replied "*I'm a frayed knot*".

da Vinci Decathlon – Regional Competitions

In Term One, four teams across Years 7 to 10 participated in the da Vinci Decathlon competitions hosted at The Illawarra Grammar School and Knox. For one excitement-filled day, teams of eight competed across ten disciplines: engineering, mathematics, code breaking, art and poetry, science, English, ideation, creative producers, cartography and legacy. To help us understand how great the day was, the Year 9 team relive the experience: *"You walk into the Knox school and into the large hall where it is hosted. Many different people, in a variety of different coloured uniforms, scurry together to find their seats at one of the many tables in the hall. The session is hosted by an MC who displayed great dance moves on stage and went through the timetable for the day. As the timer starts for session one, everyone, from all the schools, put their heads down and get to work. The sessions where the tests are done can be stressful as the tests are challenging, however, it is nice to be able to collaborate with your peers around you. At break times and lunch, schools sit in groups around the Knox campus, some schools interacting with each other and utilising this break to strike up conversations. Overall, da Vinci is a memorable event, one I feel honoured to be a part of and will never forget."*

The girls love everything about this competition, from the laughter, collaboration and hard work, to visiting a new school and extending themselves in new ways. For one student, picking up an ideation paper lying untouched on the table led to winning a second place certificate for the team: *"About halfway through my introduction I realised what it really meant to think outside the box, and that my idea was going to have to stand out, so I came up with a design for a new piece of technology that both met the criteria and provided an unheard perspective on what the stimulus required. With about 20 seconds left on the clock, I finished the booklet."*



Years 9 and 10 teams at Knox Grammar

The papers themselves, and coming together applying your academic knowledge to a fresh set of problems, are the crucial element that ties together the competition.

It's not just the excitement of the day that brings students back to da Vinci each year, but also the training leading up to the big event where *"we attempt to fill our minds with knowledge on some extremely niche topics that just may or may not help you on the actually day... that's the fun of it!"* And of course, competition day wouldn't be the same without the traditional bag of lollies on the table to sustain busy minds.

We were all thrilled when Year 9 won the regional competition and were invited to compete at the state level. It was the first time the girls have progressed so far, 'It's my third year doing da Vinci and it felt so great to have what felt like all the effort of the past three years amount to something as tangible and exciting as state.' And, as another student said, *"a lot of schools don't offer opportunities like these, and it makes me very grateful to be provided with this experience"*









From top: Year 7 team and Year 8 team at the Illawarra Grammar School; Year 9 team presented with the overall Regional winner trophy and Year 10 team at Knox Grammar.

Mock Trial

On 22 May, the Year 11 Mock Trial team travelled to Wollongong, where they were hosted by Edmund Rice College for the second round of the Mock Trial competition. The team consisted of two barristers, Sophia Windsor and Skye McLelland, a solicitor, Alice Fergusson, two witnesses, Raphaela O'Neill'Siambis and Asha Badhni-Chipperfield and a court officer, Diana Paicu. They were accompanied by Mr Bognar, Ms Bollard and their dedicated coach, Luke Bentley.

The case was a criminal matter in which the defendant, Jamie Seville, had been charged with assault occasioning actual bodily harm. Frensham was the defence and had the difficult task of proving the defendant's innocence. After tough cross examinations from the prosecution and impressive performances from Frensham's barristers, the Magistrate declared that Frensham won both the case and the trial, a second win for the team!

If they win their next case, they will advance to the next round of the competition. The team would like to thank Ms Hely, Mr Bognar, Ms Bollard and Luke for their support leading up to and on the day of the trial. A special mention to Raphaela, who was described by the coach as having "one of the best witness performances" he had ever seen, and Sophia, who got a special mention by the Magistrate for her impressive closing statement. Best of luck for the next trial.





Where boarding is a way of life

Frensham

MEET & GREET 2024

The Head of Frensham Schools, Geoff Marsh, will be attending three functions over the coming months. Members of the Frensham Community (past, present and future) are invited to attend as are families who are interested in a Frensham education for their daughters.

• **Wagga Wagga**	**Thursday 20 June**	REGISTER HERE
• **Tamworth**	**Friday 26 July**	
• **Sydney** (Cocktail Party)	**Wednesday 21 August**	

For more information: frensham.communications@frensham.nsw.edu.au