

# PIN OAK



FOUNDATION  
DAY

ANZAC DAY

PORTRAIT  
PRIZE



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Issue 154 Crossword Answers

Across: 1 Rees, 2 Young, 6 Chambers, 7 Lee, 8 Kindred, 9 Simpson, 12 Sievert, 13 Gauchat, 16 Whiteley, 17 Case

Down: 1 Rogers, 3 Zink, 4 Bedingfield, 5 Bevan, 6 Clewett, 10 Pin Oak, 11 Verco, 12 Stanton, 14 Spies, 15 Taylor

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## Acknowledgement of Country

The writers, editors, and designers of Oxley's Pin Oak begin this edition by acknowledging the Gundungurra people - the Traditional Custodians of the land on which we learn and work - and pay our respects to their Elders past and present. We extend that respect to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples within the Oxley community.

## From the Music Department:

As the Oxley College Pipe Band continues to thrive, more junior members are needed to ensure its success. We believe learning to play an instrument and being part of a band is a fun and rewarding experience but also a valuable life skill that can benefit your child in many ways.

If your child is keen to take up the opportunity to learn the chanter or drumming and join the rewarding experience of participating in the pipe band, please following the link to the Oxley College webpage and complete the Music Tuition Form. [Music – Oxley College](#)

One of our experienced instructors will then be in touch to organise private lessons and support your child to develop their skills with the aim to become an integral part of the band. We look forward to welcoming new members to the Pipe Band!



## From the Service Learning & Round Square Team:

As Oxley College celebrates its 40th year, this seems an opportune time to identify our diverse cultural backgrounds so we can share and celebrate them across the school. Sunday 21 May was the World Day for Cultural Diversity and this week we are celebrating this ideal by capturing who we are culturally. Students plotted their cultural origins, trying to place their birth places of their parents and grandparents on a map. We are also asking parents to please fill out the survey linked here:

[Cultural Census](#)



# COLLEGE CAPTAINS' UPDATES

## VIRTUAL ASSEMBLIES AT OXLEY

To ensure students at Oxley get the most out of the Student Leader's theme of Regeneration in 2023, we are beginning to implement virtual assemblies.

You may be wondering what this means! virtual assemblies will be an engaging digital alternative to Student Leader assembly contributions. With HSC trials, assessments, inter house competitions, and co-curricular activities, the 2023 student leaders have found their schedules quite tight, but we want to make sure that everyone has an enjoyable year as we regenerate together. As the Oodgeroo House Captains demonstrated in our last assembly, each subcategory of the Regeneration theme will be presented by a particular house and accompanied by a fun activity.

Sometimes assemblies are too full of awards or performances or the Captains busy elsewhere, plus speaking in assembly is extremely scary! So, by implementing a virtual assembly when such obstacles occur, the whole school can still benefit from regenerating, and of course still participate in an exciting activity related to the theme.

This will not only allow students to actively participate in the present but also future students can 're-watch' the virtual assemblies as Regeneration continues to permeate through their senior school journey at Oxley.

By the end of the year, we hope to have 'regenerated' the college through implementing a sense of hope, gratitude, self-regulation, zest, perseverance, and an appreciation of beauty and excellence. Keep your eyes open for updates on Regeneration-related activities and if you have any questions, please don't hesitate to ask any of the student leaders or send us an email!

Leah Halstead, College Captain

## WELLBEING AND COMMUNITY

There are eight high schools which make up our Highlands school community. I can't remember a time

where our schools met together as an interschool learning community to discuss our hopes or to simply create better long-lasting connections with one another.

It seems strange that in a relatively small community I can't even say I know at least one person from all eight of the schools. Now, I cannot speak for everyone, but generally our connections with people outside of our tight-knit Oxley bubble aren't great. You may see students from other schools from time to time, like on the bus, to and from school, or at Saturday sport, but this is not how we want to continue.

Recently, Chevalier College held a "Wellbeing Summit" for any school that could attend. Moss Vale High, Bowral High, Southern Highlands Christian School, Frensham, and Oxley were all in attendance. We spent the first few minutes getting to know one another, and furthering our connections with other like-minded young adults from around the Highlands. The morning was broken into two workshops focused on 'Smart Borrowing from Others', 'Digital Intelligence', 'Habits and Goals', and 'Strength Spotting'. After this we split off into several groups consisting of students from all different schools to more generally discuss how our schools differed in wellbeing approaches and initiatives we could implement in our individual schools.

After the day concluded, we left feeling ready to implement action and continue our relations with the other schools. As a leadership group, we decided that we would host our own "Wellbeing Summit". We are still completing the plans for our Oxley summit which we hope to host in the coming weeks, but essentially it will allow us to meet and discuss plans and endeavours for the future of the Highlands community several times a year where we take the time to come up with initiatives suited to the season. We are very excited for our next meeting where we hope to further these connections and plan ways in which our school communities can continue to create positive relationships and connections for years to come.

Joe Quilty, College Vice Captain

## Webinar for Parents: ySafe Cyber Safety



Protecting children in their digital worlds is an ever-evolving task for Australian families. Now more than ever, parents are looking for guidance in how to manage screen time and navigate the world of games and social media. We are therefore pleased to help our parent community by offering a crucial and engaging education session with ySafe, Australia's leading provider of cyber safety education. This practical, strategy-rich session will cover the most important points that all families need to know about online safety, covering key information about social media and gaming, screen time recommendations and step-by-step instructions on how to set up a cyber safe home for children of all ages. If you've ever struggled with getting your children off their games and into bed, worried about the content of the games that they are playing or felt concerned that your child was spending too much time in the digital world, this workshop is for you! If you are interested, please follow this link: [ySafe Oxley College](#)

# HEAD OF COLLEGE UPDATE



I would like to start with a huge congratulations to all of the students and staff involved in Foundation Day and Night celebrations – it is a truly wonderful opportunity to celebrate the foundation of Oxley and all that we have become as a school and community over the last 40 years.

Below is an excerpt from the speech I shared on Foundation Night, I feel it is important for those who weren't able to attend to hear what's on the horizon for Oxley.

I have been here at the College for a Term and a half, and while I had heard what a special place Oxley was, I am really pleased to share with you that I have experienced this first-hand. Our community is one where we genuinely care about each other.

Not only does our vision state it, but we really are a vibrant, respectful and inclusive learning community. I have seen how we strive towards the development of character and care for the whole child and we do indeed, inspire individuals to thrive. I would also like to thank everyone for the very warm welcome that has been extended to my family and I – we are so very grateful.

Oxley College was founded 40 years ago by a small group of visionary families, who were also very generous. They put their heart, soul and money into establishing an independent, co-educational, non-denominational school, here in the Southern Highlands. Enabling their children to stay in the region for their education. In February 1983, Oxley College opened its doors for the first time with a dedicated teaching staff of four and 24 students. Fast forward four decades later and we are a community of approximately 840 students and over 120 staff. As we celebrate this 40 year milestone, I also wanted to take this moment to share with you what is coming next.

Last week I was proud to officially launch the Oxley College Foundation. The Foundation will support the building programs in the College, but also offer bursaries for students whose families may not be able to afford an Oxley education. This school community has a long history of giving. The College was started by families who leveraged their own homes to provide their children with an Oxley education. It was truly a leap of faith for this school and we are all beneficiaries of the giving of these previous families. I am sure future families will be thankful for what we do now. Should you wish to make a contribution to the Building Fund or Scholarship Fund, you can do so via the QR codes.

Oxley College has always looked towards the future, from the establishment of the College, to the introduction of the Junior School in 2012, and now we remain future focussed as we share that from 2024 we will be establishing our first Pre-K class, becoming... Oxley College Pre-K to Year 12. This is an exciting part of the next chapter in Oxley's story.

You may recall at the end of last year our Chairman of the Board of Governors, Dr Barnett, shared with you some of the directions our College will be heading in regard to facilities - there are now more elements of the plan I can formally share, and a number of these projects will be beginning this year.

Shortly, we will start work continuing to develop our Wellbeing space in the school. The Clinic, home to Nurse Bec, will get an upgrade with a bathroom and shower facility for students who become unwell during the school day. We will also begin work re-instating the school gym with the purchase of new cardio and weights equipment and the development of a dedicated facility for students, particularly in the Senior School.

We also will be investing in the Arts, with the development of three new music pods in the music precinct in the school. These pods are fantastic facilities that will allow the continued expansion of the music offerings at the College and space for our children to develop their wonderful talents. These spaces can be used for individuals for one-on-one lessons or for small groups.

Hoskins Hall is about to be renovated. This will be a considerably large project with the introduction of tiered seating, new sound and lighting, plus a complete refresh of the internal space, capable of comfortably seating more than 200 people, with the ability to put on a variety of shows, but also be used as a lecture theatre and for parent information sessions. The aim is to have this completed by the beginning of Term 2 2024 and our first major production there will be early Term 3 – a Junior School musical. And as I announced at Foundation Night, I am pleased to share that this will be 'Matilda'.

With new facilities come new opportunities for our students as we strive to ensure we maintain our academic rigour. Currently, we are "Curriculum Dreaming", investigating the introduction of some new electives into Year 8, 9 and 11. Giving students agency in their learning as they grow. We are also well on the way to the implementation of Round Square in the School from 2024. This will bring an international focus into our curriculum, also providing our students with opportunities across the globe.

Round Square is a global network of schools that at their core care about the character development of students through experiential learning, leadership development, and community service. These ideals closely to our own.

Round Square is based on the educational philosophy of Kurt Hahn (who also founded the Duke of Edinburgh's International Award), which emphasises holistic education that goes beyond academic achievement and includes personal development, outdoor education, and international understanding.

Later this year, as a part of our exploration of our membership, Stacey Taylor and I will accompany some Senior School Students to the Round Square international conference at the Brookhouse Schools in Kenya, where we will have the opportunity to share with 150



# HEAD OF COLLEGE UPDATE

Round Square schools across the globe.

Last Saturday night, over 330 Old Oxleyans, current and past parents plus past and present staff and members of the Board, gathered at Centennial Vineyards Restaurant for the 40th Birthday Cocktail Party and launch of the Oxley College Foundation. It was a wonderful night and we raised over \$30,000 toward the Foundation, which was a very generous result and for all who gave, we are so deeply grateful. Events like these don't come together without many hours of work and there are some people I would like to thank:

- Our incredibly generous Oxley community who donated the live and silent auction items.
- Robin and Mandy Murray (and their wonderful team) who generously hosted us at Centennial Vineyards Restaurant.
- Paul Milner our Auctioneer
- Chris Ahearn MC on the night
- Fiona Pearce for the beautiful cake and cupcakes
- Past parents Amanda Mackevicius for her amazing work on the upcoming Oxley College coffee table book, to think, to dare, to dream (further details to

- to follow) and Fiona Nixon who arranged the flowers for the Cocktail party and Foundation Night.
- Our 40th Birthday Committee: Megan Moore, Amberley Guilly, Alex Stone, Hannah Raffe, Joanne Richards, Em Cassin, Emma Calver

As we look towards the end of term, I encourage students to give themselves time to prepare so that they can achieve their own personal best in the upcoming half-yearly examinations.

Scott Bedingfield, Head of College



## From the P & F:

Over 330 people attended a wonderful birthday celebration for Oxley College on Saturday night at Centennial Vineyard Restaurant. Music provided by the John Field Band (featuring Oxley's own Dom Lindsay) was fabulous and ensured the dance floor was full all night long! To support the launch of the Oxley College Foundation, both a live and silent auction was held with a fantastic range of prizes on offer. There are many generous people within our community, and I would like to take this opportunity to thank them.

Our MC for the evening was Oxley parent Chris Ahern who did a fabulous job keeping us on time and maintaining order in a room full of noisy and excited attendees! Paul Milner conducted a live auction, raising nearly \$19,000 from prizes on offer. Thank you to both these gentlemen for giving up their time and contributing to the success of the evening. A beautifully decorated birthday cake was provided by Junior School parent Fiona Pearce, with an additional 100 mini cupcakes also decorated with the same navy and gold Oxley theme.

The Southern Highlands is a very giving community, and we know our local businesses are called upon often to support causes and make donations. Thank you so much to those businesses and individuals who donated generously. Your contribution to our evening was very greatly appreciated.

Our next birthday event will be a whole school trivia night to be held on Saturday 26 August 2023. I look forward to seeing our Oxley community enjoying another College event.

Megan Moore, Oxley College P & F

## Our thanks to:

- |                               |                       |
|-------------------------------|-----------------------|
| • Angus Stephen               | • Joshua Blom Lawyers |
| • Anni Ballieu                | • Matt Anstee         |
| • Berrima Vault House         | • Tall Poppy Gourmet  |
| • Bespoke Letterpress         | • Tessuti a Tutu      |
| • Burnt Co                    | • The Albert family   |
| • Catherine Barnett           | • The Office Bowral   |
| • Dirty Jane's                | • The Sparke Family   |
| • Endota Spa                  | • Tina Tziallis       |
| • Hannah Raffe & Brian Kirsch | • Victoria Levey      |



# SPOTLIGHT: SPOKEN WORD

## SOUTHERN HIGHLANDS MODEL UNITED NATIONS ASSEMBLY

On Saturday 13 May, three eloquent delegates from Pakistan, and another three from Iran, boarded a flight to Geneva, set for the United Nations international headquarters. Okay, so maybe that's a stretch, but despite Wingecarribee Council's conference chamber not exactly being The Hague, the level of worldliness demonstrated by our teams would rival any diplomat.

Truly inconceivable amounts of effort were plunged into this prestigious competition. Our representatives for Pakistan - **Anouk Hakewill (Year 10)**, **Patrick Muldoon (Year 12)** and **Isabelle Hessey (Year 11)** - and our representatives for Iran - **William Barnett (Year 11)**, **Mikey O'Connor (Year 11)**, and **Violet FitzSimons (Year 10)**, as well as our advisors, **Sophie Dunn (Year 12)** and **Evie Crowley (Year 11)**, all worked extraordinarily hard to prepare for this competition, and despite not being invited to compete further, we are so grateful to have had this experience, and to compete amongst so many bright young minds within the Southern Highlands. We wish all the best to the delegates from Canada (the winner of the MUNA Regional Peace Prize) and France (Regional Champions) as they continue with the competition, and the Oxley Spoken Word team eagerly anticipates our next foray into MUNA's ranks.



## PLAIN ENGLISH SPEAKING COMPETITION

On May 9, two members of our Oxley Spoken Word team, **Sophia Hamblin (Year 11)** and **Violet FitzSimons (Year 10)**, competed in the NSW Plain English Speaking Award. Oxley was delighted to host a regional heat of the competition, receiving a multitude of fantastic speakers eager to share their views. Speeches ranged from the Tennessee anti-drag laws to the sanitisation of cancel culture, and from Oxley College particularly we saw an incredible level of spoken word prowess. Sophia gave an incredibly powerful speech on Indigenous issues in Australia. Violet's winning speech on the Australian flag sees her through to the Regional Finals in Sydney on May 26. We are so excited to see her through to the next round; good luck, Violet!

## HICES DEBATING ROUND 3

Wednesday 17 May: our Oxley debaters were locked in the fight for their lives, for they were brazenly challenged by Shellharbour Anglican School. In all seriousness, the third round of this year's HICES season was a tricky one, with a variety of challenging topics, all centred around "Government". We had a win at each level of the competition, and our teams are so excited to be going through to the next rounds! More details to come as we progress, but all the luck to our amazing teams.

Anouk Hakewill, Year 10





# Junior School Weekly Awards

## Week 2

Sophia Houghton  
Harry Noonan  
Elliot Stempel  
Orlando Lansdown  
Ruby Rogerson  
Maddie Cochran  
Elsie Herrmann  
Christo Galwey  
Harry Adams  
Esther Saviana  
Edison Feller  
Cora Bedingfield  
Chloe Watson  
Felix Chamley  
George Abreu  
Frankie Russell  
Raj Sidhu  
Angus Love  
Bianca Bode  
Sophia Bagnall  
Jack Friesenecker  
Will Kean  
Bailey Fox  
Gabi Von Sperl  
Luca Poropat

## Week 3

Willow Devlin  
Clementine Goff  
Alexander Saviana  
Matteo Sicari  
Isaac Choo  
Charlie Seehusen  
Evan Callan  
George Kindred  
Veryan Black  
April Sneddon  
Archie Taggart  
Georgie Webb  
Cleo Bathur  
Zac Chalak  
Phoebe Burton  
Matilda McCarthy  
Chase Holmes  
Harvey Talbot  
Thomas Berry  
Andy Clothier  
Arthur Pemberton  
Adelina Rahme

## Public Speaking Finalists

Juliet Nissen  
Scarlett Druery  
Georgia Hurst  
Chloe Watson  
Cora Bedingfield  
Harry Meyerson  
Ayden Hosseinzadeh  
Sienna Patruno

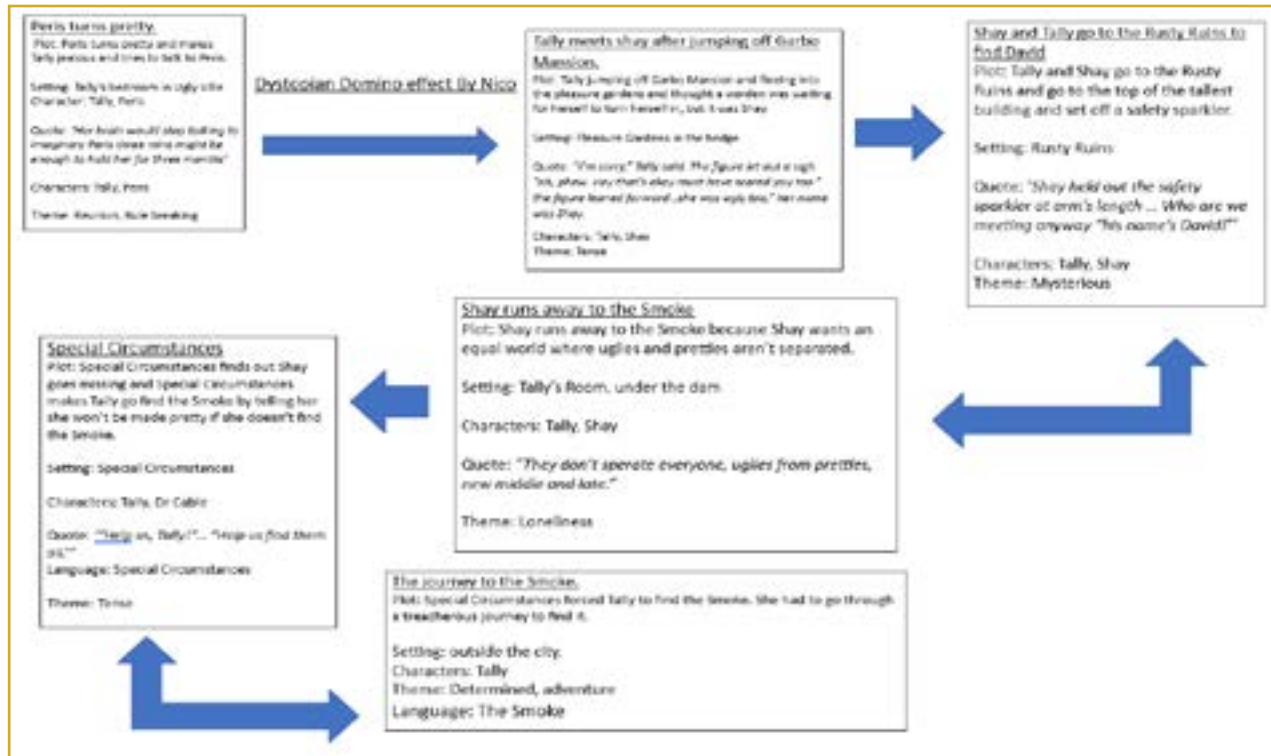
**Winner: Clara Hardwick Jones**



# AROUND THE COLLEGE

## Brave new worlds

Year 6 have been reading and analysing the dystopian novels 'Uglies' by Scott Westerfield, 'City of Ember' by Jeanne DuPrau and 'The Last Wild' by Piers Torday.

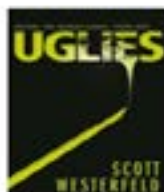


### Uglies: A Cautionary Tale

By Maeve Ryan

#### What is Uglies?

The novel *Uglies* is set in a dystopian future. It follows the adventure of Tally Youngblood and her friend Shay. The book constantly mentions the previous race of humans, whom they refer to as the 'Rusties', and how their technology backfired on them.

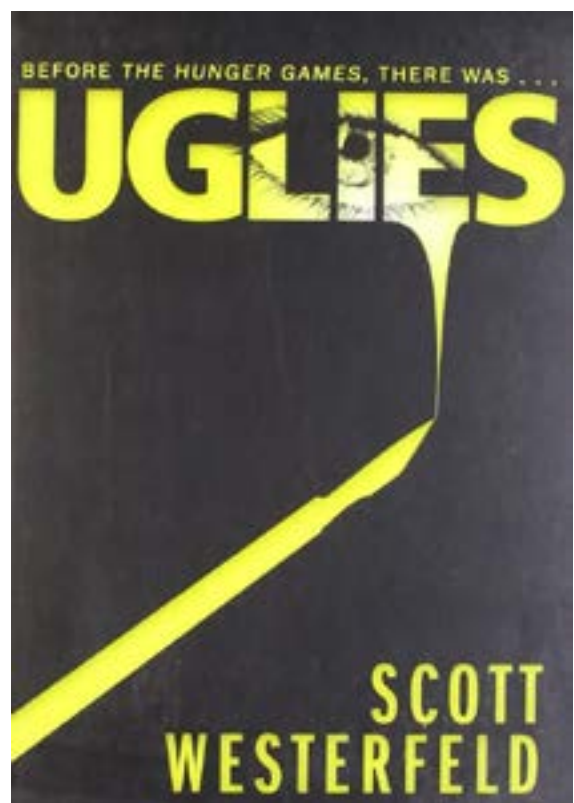


#### Who are the Rusties?

We can assume the Rusties' fate is the author, Scott Westerfield's, assumption of what will happen to us. This is obvious when the book states 'On school trips, the teachers always made the Rusties out to be so stupid. You almost couldn't believe people lived like this, burning trees to clear land, burning oil for heat and power, setting the atmosphere on fire with their weapons.'

#### The Rusties' unfair judgment

Another example of Westerfield's foreshadowing of our future is on page 44 where Shay says "Everyone judged everyone else based on their appearance. People who were taller got better jobs, and people even voted for some politicians because they weren't quite as ugly as everybody else." I don't believe such unrealistic judgement is happening now, but I won't be surprised if such things began happening in a few years' time.





# AROUND THE COLLEGE



<b>The Last Wild</b> By Adelina Rahme	
<b>Character:</b> Identify the different attributes (appearance, gender, age, ideas, habits, personality, attitude, values, identity, actions) of the two or three main characters in the novel. Put this information in a table.	
<b>Kester</b> <b>Appearance</b> Page 8 "I put on my <u>sneakers</u> , shove my feet into my trainers and strap on my watch."	<b>Kester</b> <b>Personality</b> Page 114-115 "My head and stomach feel carved out, hollow, and every word is an effort."
<b>Dolly</b> <b>Appearance</b> Page 125 "I turn around to see a girl with dark hair curled up on her head and fierce eyes staring at me over a small angry mouth."	<b>Dolly</b> <b>Personality</b> She is very protective. Page 124 "If you're come to kidnap Sidney, I'm not going to let you."
<b>Kester's Dad</b> <b>Appearance</b> Most likely he is wearing his lab coat.	<b>Kester's Dad</b> <b>Personality</b> He's a very smart man. Page 71 "But my father's a famous scientist – a human magician, who works with animals."



Want to devour more YA dystopian fiction?

Try these titles:

## "The Giver" by Lois Lowry

This classic novel tells the story of Jonas, a young boy living in a seemingly perfect society where everything is controlled. As Jonas begins to unravel the dark truths behind his community, he questions the price of conformity and the value of individuality.

## "The Maze Runner" by James Dashner

In this thrilling novel, Thomas wakes up in a maze with no memory of who he is or how he got there. He must navigate the treacherous maze and uncover the secrets of their dystopian world.

## "The Maze of Bones" by Rick Riordan

While not a traditional dystopian novel, this series combines elements of adventure and mystery within a dystopian world. Siblings Amy and Dan Cahill embark on a global treasure hunt that pits them against other powerful families. As they uncover hidden secrets, they realise the high stakes and dangers involved.

# AROUND THE COLLEGE

Ms Aitken's Year 10 Visual Arts class developed a most unconventional but no less sophisticated series of ceramic sculptures in honour of an inspirational artist. Students created a complete meal, based on their in-depth research and investigations of their selected artist.

From Andy Warhol to Takashi Murakami, entrees, mains and desserts were constructed almost completely out of clay! The results are very accomplished, and we are very proud of what they have achieved, in creating a postmodern take on a traditional art media.

One viewer stated, "these morsels are making my stomach rumble..."

## *The Last Supper*





# ***AROUND THE COLLEGE***



## *Carpe diem*

Year 12 students have recently completed a portfolio of creative compositions as part of their 'Craft of Writing' HSC module. They were required to compose imaginative, discursive and persuasive pieces in response to a range of stimuli surrounding notions of connections, immersion in the natural world, the passage of time, changing perspectives and living in the moment!

### **Savour the mandarins, their season is short!**

"You can't connect the dots looking forward; you can only connect them looking backwards."

This is a famous line from APPLE guru and IT nerd, Steve Jobs, delivered back in 2009 when he had been diagnosed with cancer and was asked to give a speech to graduating students at Stanford Uni in the USA. This translates to 'as much as we try to plan our lives ahead in advance, there's always something that's completely unpredictable about life'. As human beings, we love predictability. To know what is around the corner. We plan. We imagine the future. Steve Jobs encouraged us to follow our hearts' desire. Throw caution to the wind and just be true to ourselves. Have no regrets. Listening to his speech took me back. Back to me when I was five or six years old. I received news that was impossible for a little boy to imagine.

I was sitting outside on the verandah of our farm playing with my dogs in the warm December summer sun while eating a fresh mandarin. It had been a couple of weeks since I was up in Sydney down at Manly Beach playing in the ocean, boogieboarding on the small waves and kicking a footy in the sand with my dad. Mum had driven me up to stay with him and my older brother, Christian, for a week during the school holidays. Dad would tell me stories about him and Christian sailing in the harbour and reminisce about taking my mum on the boat with famous people and channel 10 television crew as they led the Sydney to Hobart race out through the headlands.

My dad loved to eat mandarins. Whenever I would go up to his place, there was always a bowl of sweet juicy mandarins on the kitchen counter. I heard the door open behind me. A loud sobbing emanated from inside. I turned around. It was Mum. Her phone was against her ear and she was crying. Big gulps of sobs. I got up to see what had happened. She bent down to my height and embraced me. "Daddy Denis has passed away, my love." Tears were rolling down her cheeks. I didn't know how to react. I couldn't really comprehend the reality of her words. But I instinctively hugged my mum so tight I thought I was going to break her ribs.

Weeks passed and the funeral day arrived. A day of sorrow and sobbing. It was an utterly miserable day. I watched raindrops race down the car window. I tried to focus on which raindrop would win. My chest ached. My tummy had never felt so empty. We arrived at the church where I was greeted by my big brother, Christian. He gave me a big hug...a rib snapping hug. My big sister had flown down from Byron Bay. But I wasn't sure what to say to her.

I am now 18 years old and about to finish school. My dream is to become a marine biologist. The love I have

of the ocean instilled by my father at a young age when playing at Manly Beach, still lives in me. The ocean is in my veins. I still love a juicy mandarin too. They are in season now. Just for a short time. You might not expect a teenager to know that but I work at Harris Farm after school....so I know these things now. I know that we need to "Stay Hungry". Just as Steve Jobs advised us.

EB



### **Under the Pin Oak we dance**

The russet and ochre toned leaves dance in the breeze as they fall gently to the ground. The late afternoon autumnal light glows through the boughs of the pin oak, creating patterns on the grass for me to dance around. The crunching under foot feels like I am dancing on bubble wrap and the earthiness of the moist ground invades my senses. I wheel freely under the arms of the tree, my own arms outstretched like a bird. The rolling paddocks beyond the park are illuminated by the golden orbs of the setting sun and I feel a surge of energy as the cool May air brushes against my cheeks. I climb up the welcoming arms of the oak tree trying not to lose my step and fall into the crushed-up leaves below me. I reach the middle branch. This is the furthest I have gone, but I know one day I will be able to make it to the top. I hold my breath for a moment as I prepare myself to swing off the branch for as long as I can until the rough branch encourages me to drop to the ground. One, two, three, jump. I swing on the branch watching the world bob up and down. I feel a rush of the energy and then to drop the ground. I cartwheel joyously across the grass and the world is momentarily displaced, my perspective altered. I lock eyes with an old lady whose warm upside down smile greets mine...

As I watch the girl dance through the golden autumn leaves, a surge of jealousy momentarily tugs at my



# AROUND THE COLLEGE

chest. It seems like only yesterday that I could move so freely without any fear of pain. She has no worries or stresses...not yet. Certainly no fear of that inexorable clock ticking ominously towards the final toll. I wonder what worries will eventually come into her life and what joys will elevate her towards the top of that tree. Glancing over at the fine lines etched in the bark of the oak, I remember how I too was able to nimbly climb the opening arms of the oak and swing off the boughs dangling over the gold leaves. The feeling is still with me, the cool air, the birds singing, the late afternoon autumn sun blinding my eyes, and my youthful naivety, oblivious to the movement of time, lost in the moment that seemed to have no end. The sands in the hourglass run so quickly through. This I know now, but I did not know then.

The jealousy ebbs away. As I watch her climb and fall and cartwheel, a sense of ease and mutual delight fills my being. I have enjoyed those same special moments. I feel okay with it not being able to last forever. I glance down at my wristwatch as the sun's rays start to disappear. Time marches on. I struggle to get off this bench these days. But I can feel the joy of the young girl across from me as I watch her frolic through the leaves. This oak has grown with me and continues to grow. Ahh, if only it could talk! Nostalgia resides deep in her veins and she holds many secrets inside. No doubt this tree will listen to all the joys and woes of this girl too. I gather myself up from the old wooden bench and start the journey home, a light spring in my step. A warm tingle brushes my shoulder. As I glance back, the branches of the oak are waving.

LH



## Moving mountains

The view from the highway drew our eyes hungrily across the white stretch of sand towards the water. As we saw those dark blue moving mountains, my heart skipped a beat. I could hear Tij laugh and say, "You're shitting it, aren't ya?" Easy for him to say. He'd surfed waves bigger than this. But for me, this was my 'big wave' debut. We pulled up in the car park overlooking the entire

beach. I watched as the local legends attempted to tame these blue beasts. Most failed being brought over the falls and held under the water for up to 15 seconds. My heart was beating even faster now. To the far left side of the beach there was a reef break called Pump Rocks. It seemed like the only reasonable option if we wanted to leave this surf trip unscathed.

"Are you sure you wanna go out?" Tij asked me. "I won't call you a bitch if you don't want to." The blood in my veins was turning to ice. My fingertips were tingling. Was it adrenalin or deep trepidation? I thought to myself for a second, was it really worth it? Putting my life on the line for a 10 second ride of glory. Am I stupid? Of course I am!

"I'm no bitch. Let's do this!" I replied. As we got leaped out of the car, I immediately felt the cool sea breeze kiss my face, sending shivers down my spine. I took a deep breath and felt the salty air dry up my mouth. As we leapt down the stairs towards the sand, Tij reminded me, "Remember what I told you... if you go down, curl up into a ball and start counting to 10". This scared me even more.

The feeling of the soft sand on the soles of my feet began to calm me, sending rhythmic pulses up through my calf muscles. My heart rate levelled out with my deepening breaths. Tij ran me through a few different stretches to get me warmed up.

Looking out to sea, Tij remarked, "It's bloody beautiful isn't it?"

"What?" I ask.

"The power of the ocean... its ability to humble us." I thought to myself, you're crazy man. "Grab your board, let's get this over with", I shouted as we hit the water.

I felt the icy coldness press against my wet suit, engaging all of my senses. As we started the long paddle out, my right arm started to cramp. I used every stroke as an opportunity to stretch out, but the point seemed to get further each time. When we finally reached the reef, the waves looked even bigger than before, like towers crashing down.

Tij shouted, "Get shyked! Benny, this is the best surf I've seen in ages." What does this term mean?

But all I could think about was falling and being into that dark abyss. We sat on the boards... floating, waiting for the dream ride then we saw a set in the horizon so we paddled out and got into position. As the waves got closer and closer they grew bigger and bigger until they were right on us. Tij said the first ones yours so I turned around and started to paddle as fast as I could. Looking down that 20 ft face of the wave, it scared the shit out of me, but I knew I had to commit so with one last paddle I took to my feet. As soon as my back foot hit the board I knew something was wrong. I was looking down and I was off balance. I snagged a bump in the wave and got rocked off my board. Everything went into slow motion as I skimmed down the face of the wave at what felt like a hundred miles an hour. Then the lip hit me and under I went. I remember what Tij told me, curl up into a ball and start counting one .. two .. three.....

BR



# FOUNDATION DAY





# FOUNDATION NIGHT





# 40TH BIRTHDAY COCKTAIL PARTY AND THE LAUNCH OF THE OXLEY COLLEGE FOUNDATION





# JUNIOR SCHOOL MOTHER'S DAY BREAKFAST





# PORTRAIT PRIZE





# ANZAC DAY & HONOUR THE FALLEN





## YEAR 7 & 9 HISTORY - A NIGHT AT THE MUSEUM



## YEAR 10 DRAMA PERFORMANCE NIGHT





## DUKE OF EDINBURGH'S INTERNATIONAL AWARD



## ISA CROSS COUNTRY





# GRANDPARENTS' DAY





## OXLEY OUT AND ABOUT





# GOOD & OTHER NEWS

## Achievements

### Written Word

A huge congratulations to **Violet FitzSimons (Year 10)** who has won the Somerset StoryFest National Poetry Prize. The Somerset StoryFest is Australia's premier children's literature festival, where thirty-one of Australia's best children's and YA authors present and conduct workshops. As the winner of the poetry competition, Violet received an all-expenses paid trip to the 3 day festival, VIP access to all author sessions and the honour of reading her winning poem at the gala dinner.

### Swimming

Oxley College has enjoyed some excellent results in swimming.

**Annabel Arnot (Year 10)** has qualified for CIS in 50m Butterfly, 50m Breaststroke, 100m Freestyle, and 100m Butterfly, and **Oliver Linde (Year 10)** has qualified for CIS in 50m Freestyle, 100m Backstroke, 100m Freestyle, and 50m Backstroke.

### Basketball

Congratulations to the U14s Girls on their Grand Final win!



Oxley students **Sabella Watson (Year 7)**, **Madeline Kirsch (Year 8)** and **Bronte Morgan (Year 8)** are to be commended on their win in the Southern Junior League Basketball Grand Final on the weekend at Wagga. Sabella was also named the Most Valuable Player for the tournament (U14 Div. 1). The Moss Vale Magic U14 Representative side won Division 1 and are now heading to compete in the Waratah Junior State Cup in August.

### Athletics

Over the holidays, **Amelia May (Year 11)** and **Harry Keats (Year 7)** competed in the Australian Schools Athletics Championships in Brisbane. Representing NSW, Amelia came 2nd in the U18 Girls 1500m and 5th in the 800m, and Harry came in 2nd in the U13 800m. Harry went on to compete at the Little Athletics National Championships in Melbourne in April. He was selected to be on the NSW State team and he won gold in both the 400m and 800m. In the 800m event he also ran a new National meet record time of 2:03. Tremendous achievements!

### Geography

**Olivia Sewell (Year 8)** has achieved 3rd place in the Junior Category of the 2022 Young Geographer Awards. For Olivia's project, she surveyed 100 people, conducted an interview with the then MP for Wollondilly, Nathaniel Smith and made use of ABS data to better understand the issues of housing affordability in our community. Well done, Olivia - your \$100 prize money will go a very small way to getting you on the property ladder!

## International Sport

Last month, **Sam Harwood (Year 9)** and **Will Torr (Year 10)** had the incredible opportunity to participate in the U17s International Academy League - a semi-pro cricket tournament - in Delhi, India. They noted that the weather was extremely hot, and the pollution in Delhi made it hard to breathe during their first game. In firsts for the boys, the local children wanted their autographs and made them feel very welcome.

The boys also attended an IPL Cricket match between the Delhi Capitals & Mumbai Indians at the Arun Jaitley Stadium and saw world-class players including David Warner, Cameron Green, Anrich Nortje, Tim David, and Axar Patel.

Each recognises the amazing experience they have been afforded - to visit such a busy, hot & totally different country to ours whilst playing in an extremely competitive international cricket tournament, and meeting players from India, Sri Lanka, South Africa, United Arab Emirates & Australia.

Sam has also just been chosen to play Green Shield for North Sydney in the 2023-2024 squad and selected in the NSW Youth Academy Squad.









# Southern Highlands HSC Intensive Study Camp

Stay in the Highlands this  
Winter to access expert  
academic support over  
the June/July Break

8.30am to 6.00pm  
Monday 3 - Friday 7 July 2023

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