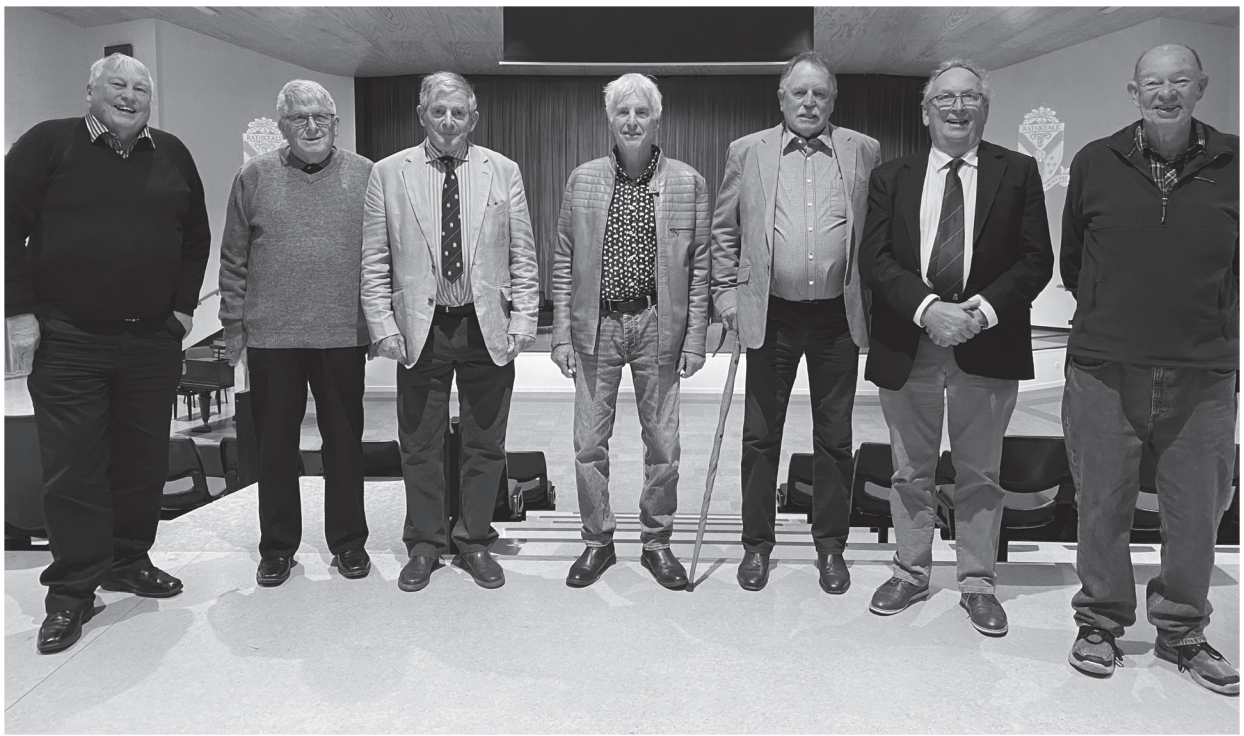


Rock Runner

The Magazine of the Rathkeale Old Boys' Association



Volume 29 | December 2024



Editorial

Jonathan Watt (2005-2009)

As a student at Rathkeale some of my best memories were from on stage in the auditorium. In my senior years, I was involved in the school's major productions and the Sheliah Winn Shakespeare Festival. The absolute highlight for me was performing in *Les Misérables* in 2009, and I owe a great debt of thanks to the staff who made that possible: Joanne Simpson, Graeme Anderson, Kiewiet van Deventer, Mark Robinson, and many others.

It has been fantastic to be able to revisit these memories as a teacher. This year, I was the Assistant Director of the school's major production – *Mamma Mia*. I also co-directed a 15-minute scene from *Romeo & Juliet* for the Sheliah Winn Shakespeare Festival. Being able to relive these memories of my youth but through a completely different lens (now a teacher, and backstage instead



of on it) was a fantastic experience. Full credit must also go to the directors of *Mamma Mia* – Kiewiet van Deventer and Lucy Hepburn, and co-director of the scene from *Romeo & Juliet* – Colette Nickelsen.

What has stuck with me the most from both *Mamma Mia* and the Shakespeare Festival is the enjoyment and excitement of the students who were performing – the same enjoyment and excitement that I had all those years ago. And of course, this is not exclusive to the performing arts: Sportsmen return to coach sports teams; musicians return to teach music lessons; farmers return to support the school farm; academic achievers return to tutor students; businessmen and entrepreneurs return to share their wisdom of the world – and so on.

One of the pillars of Rathkeale College is to “know that you stand on the shoulders of those who have gone before,” and the Old Boys’ Association is the very embodiment of this. Our Association is a network that has been built to help and support one another and, in particular, to strive to give Rathkeale’s current students the very best start in life as they leave the College.

I am eager to support students where I can in the performing arts arena, just as I was supported as a student myself, and I am sure that there will be other Old Boys who will continue this support into the future. This was made clear to me when I was not only surprised, but also humbled, by a chance encounter at the end of one of the performances of *Mamma Mia*. An Old Boy, Troy Etherington (2012-2016), introduced himself to me and told me that he remembered me from the 2009 production of *Les Misérables*, which had played a part in inspiring his own interest in the performing arts. I asked Troy what it was he was doing with himself to which he replied – he was training to become a teacher.

Do you have a story for the next issue of the *Rock Runner*?
We'd love to hear from you.
Please get in touch at: jww@rathkeale.school.nz

President's Report

Edward Cox (1983-1987)



I was having a winter dinner with family in a Martinborough restaurant when the idea for this report came to me, or rather it arrived shortly afterwards as I was driving away. I wasn't casting for an editorial line, but as soon as I thought about it, I knew what I wanted to say in this year's *Rock Runner*.

We were a typical family group in the restaurant, three generations negotiating which pizzas would make the cut. The young waiter could be forgiven for getting slightly frustrated, but he stuck with us. After his second call for orders, but before we embarrassed ourselves, he said to me, “Aren't you Ed Cox?” I asked how he knew, and he replied that he had seen me speaking at Rathkeale on behalf of the Old Boys. I stood up, we shook hands and had a chat. He was an impressive young guy working his weekend nights while in his senior years at Rathkeale. He must have sat through a couple of my speeches over the last few years and had the nous to introduce himself. I thanked him for

making the connection and on we went.

As I drove away, it struck me that that young Jack had done exactly what the Old Boys wants our members to do. He had made a connection with me because he knew I was an Old Boy. It doesn't matter that he isn't yet a member, because clearly, he will be soon. What is important was that he had the confidence to make that connection.

The Old Boys encourage the idea that we each have something in common. No matter how different our lifestyles, where we live and how we view the world, we all spent some of our most formative years at Rathkeale. Whether it was the stunning physical surroundings, the aspirations of a young school, the quality of the teaching, the sport, culture or spiritual dimension of our education, or just the company of friends who we went with through with, it is a very important part of our lives. We all have it.

One of the benefits of that common background is that it gives us the

confidence to make connections with other Old Boys. The ability to ask, “Weren't you at Rathkeale?” is a powerful way to kickstart a conversation. I am surprised how often I come across Old Boys in Wellington, be it through work or in the community, and that question almost inevitably creates a positive start to our dealings.

Being an Old Boy does not carry an obligation to be all things to all people merely on the basis they passed through the gates. However, I hope that if one of our members

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Report from BOT Chair - Mark Owen

has exhibited the confidence to invoke the connection, that they will at least be greeted with the courtesy of some time and/or assistance.

Several years ago, the Old Boys adopted as a strapline 'Pride in Belonging' to encapsulate that, as an organisation, we needed to step up and step forward to play our part in the Rathkeale community. I liken that structure to a three-legged stool holding up the school. First are the board and staff (i.e. the formal establishment), then there are the Friends of Rathkeale (the organisation that our parents have supported the school through), and the third leg of any good school should be its former pupils.

We are but the latest iteration of the Committee of the Old Boys that has evolved year after year, ever since our Association was formed in 1969. Each committee has tried to deliver for its members what they perceived was needed. Whether it was black tie balls or cricket pavilions, a small group has represented the interests of the larger body politic that is our membership. We hope that Old Boys will be proud to belong to our Association, to have in common with all members the experience of Rathkeale and their own connection with the place.

In the same way, we encourage members to have the confidence of connection with each other. Your time at the end of Willow Park Drive may be decades apart,

and your interests, experiences and memories may be wildly different. The fact, however, that you have that common experience means you should have confidence in making the connection with other Old Boys.

One of the pleasures of being the President of ROBA is meeting a wide range of Old Boys. I am routinely reminded of the range of lives we have gone on to lead, the places we live, the cards life has dealt us, and how we have played them. Almost invariably, the members I meet are grateful for my making the connection with them and willing to give me their time. It is the fact that we have something in common that allows that to happen.

If you encounter someone whom you suspect is an Old Boy, make the connection with them. At a minimum it should be a pleasant social interaction. However, it may also prove to be a valuable connection for you both. As Old Boys, we should encourage that happening.

As we head into the Christmas season for 2024, I thank our Editor, Jonathan Watt (2005-2009), for this edition of the Rock Runner and wish you all well for the festive season. If you bump into someone whom you sense knows that summer smell of the Ruamahanga, the noise of a ball in the gym, or the long march to the dining hall – make the connection with them. The chances are, they will be grateful for it.



While not having attended Rathkeale College as a student, I can still associate with the 'rock runner' reference headlining this magazine. As a schoolboy coming from Gisborne, I spent many summers staying with my grandparents in the Wairarapa on my uncle's dairy farm. My cousin and I enjoyed farm life over the summer holidays, and amongst all the fun of hunting rabbits, spotlighting for eels, getting the cows in for milking, or loading the hay into the barn, one of our tasks was to help collect the nice round boulders from the river. We would load them onto the tractor trailer for my uncle to use to line the water races running through the gardens – all part of the exciting outdoor adventures for a townie from the East Coast.

Roll the clock forward 40 years or so and here I am living in the Wairarapa to be close to my parents. My wife, Sarah, works at Hadlow Preparatory School, and my son, Dan, is in Year 10 at Rathkeale. Following several years on the Board of Trustees, I feel honoured to now support Rathkeale College and utilise my governance experience in my role as Presiding Member (Chair) of our fantastic school.

My role is relatively easy, given we have a strong team at this school, led by our principal, Mr. Martin O'Grady. The results speak for themselves – outstanding academic achievements, excellent sporting results, first class drama and music, together with a wide range of school activities. On the national stage, Rathkeale continues to punch well above its weight.

From a governance perspective, we have Board members who are passionate about supporting Rathkeale now and into the future as we assess the landscape of teaching and learning in a fast-changing educational environment. To ensure we plan now for where Rathkeale College needs to be to remain relevant for our future students, we have commenced development on a 10 Year Plan to help prioritise the changing requirements of Rathkeale. We are also needing to update our current Strategic Plan and in 2025, we will be seeking wider community feedback on our aspirations – this is where we will need your insights, wisdom, support and input. To ensure we preserve our history, our track record and uniqueness, and continue to attract a good contingent of students, we will need to continue to invest in teaching staff, along with our teaching spaces and property needs.

As a Board, our duty is to apply the Rathkeale Pillars, one being to 'stand on the shoulders of those who have gone before' to ensure we build on history while still adapting to our changing world and educating our students for future career opportunities. We must also continue to provide a rewarding environment to attract highly professional teachers and support staff. Through all this, we must retain the uniqueness that is Rathkeale College – our park-like grounds, amazing recreational spaces, the recently acquired Bush Block, our Senior College and its academic successes, advanced tracking of individual student development, our highly proficient teaching staff, and our dedicated



support staff (especially those who go above and beyond to support our Boarders and International students). Rathkeale offers the complete educational experience, and the Board is keen to preserve and build on these attributes, honed over many years. We also acknowledge the value of having our student and teacher voices represented around our Board table to ensure we get the full range of views and opinions.

As we enter the next phase of growth, we will be drawing on the support of students, teachers, the Rathkeale Old Boys' Association, the Trinity Schools' Trust Board, the Friends of Rathkeale, and the wider community, to help shape and support the delivery of our future aspirations for Rathkeale students of the future. As Board members, we welcome your feedback on any aspect of school governance and ideas on how we can support our college to deliver the best experience for both our students and staff.

Principal's Report

Report from the Principal of Rathkeale College - Martin O'Grady



It is a pleasure to contribute once again to The Rock Runner, now in my seventh year as Principal. The past year has been marked by both cherished traditions and exciting new milestones at Rathkeale College, and I am pleased to share these highlights with the Old Boys community.

Our students have continued to impress with their academic, sporting, and cultural achievements. The school has seen a remarkable level of success across all fields, reflecting the dedication of both students and staff. This year we also had the privilege of hosting another memorable Grandparent/Significant Others Day, which was a wonderful opportunity for students to share their school life with their loved ones.

A major highlight of this past year was celebrating the 60th anniversary of Rathkeale's founding. On Founders' Day, we welcomed a strong contingent of Old Boys, including several 'Originals' (Rathkeale's very first students). A special moment during the celebration saw Derek Daniell, Chris Gane, Tim Falloon, and Hugh Akers take the stage to reminisce about their days as students. Their stories brought to life the early spirit of Rathkeale, and it was a reminder of how deep the connection remains among our community.

Earlier in the year, we also hosted a reunion weekend for the Originals, who first walked through Rathkeale's gates back in 1964. It was an honour to be referred to as the 'Young Fella' among these remarkable men, who shared a weekend of camaraderie and nostalgia, capped off with singing around the piano. It was clear that their bond, formed in those first days at the College, remains as strong as ever.

Sadly, we also marked the passing of some key figures in Rathkeale's history. Faye Norman, the wife of Rathkeale's first Headmaster, who incidentally, was the last original staff member of Rathkeale College, passed away at the age of 97. Soon after, we lost the College's second Headmaster, John Taylor. The College had the honour of hosting a memorial service for John, which was attended by his family, friends, and many Old Boys from his tenure. It was a fitting and heartfelt tribute to a man who left such an indelible mark on the school.

On a brighter note, we celebrated an extraordinary milestone for Mathematics teacher, Greg Baillie, who has now completed 40 years of service to Rathkeale.

His contributions over the years have been immense, and it was only right to take the time to honour his commitment and loyalty to the school. Block One now has a new name, The GJ Baillie Block, which is a fitting tribute to Greg's efforts for the past 40 years.

In a similar spirit, we heard from 2019 Head Boy Archie Woodhouse at this year's Leavers' Dinner. Archie shared his recent accomplishments, which include being a finalist in the New Zealand Young Farmer of the Year Competition for 2024. It is wonderful to see Old Boys like Archie continuing to excel and make meaningful contributions to their fields.

I would like to extend my thanks once again to ROBA President Ed Cox, whose steady leadership and unwavering support continue to be invaluable. Ed's passion for the College and dedication to its future has played a significant role in the ongoing success of the Old Boys' Association.

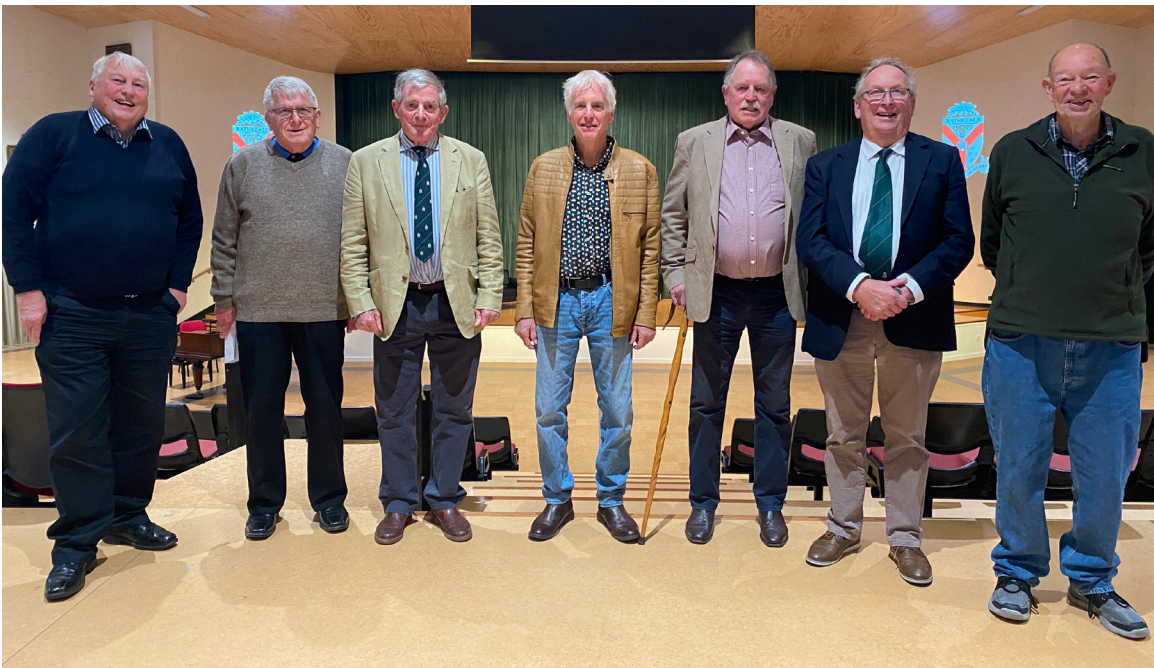
As I reflect on this year, I am reminded of the enduring value of the Rathkeale Old Boys' Association. The connections forged through this community continue

to offer tremendous support not only to the College but also to each other. Whether it is through mentorship, networking, or simply staying connected with former classmates, the benefits of the Association are many. I encourage all Old Boys to remain involved, as the strength of these relationships enhances the College experience for generations to come.

Looking ahead, there is much to be optimistic about. Rathkeale continues to grow and thrive, and the future looks bright. I look forward to seeing more Old Boys return, share their stories, and continue to be a part of the ongoing story of Rathkeale College.

Thank you all for your continued support and involvement. We are privileged to be part of such a dynamic and dedicated community, and I am proud to be able to share these moments with you.

Ma te atua e manaaki. May God bless you all.



Left to right: James Spiers, Chris Gane, Hugh Akers, Derek Daniell, Douglas Barton, Tim Falloon, Peter McLennan

Tim Bowman

Tim Bowman (1972-1976) returns to Rathkeale after 48 years



Tim (far right) playing saxophone in the Rathkeale Concert Band at the Christmas Fête

Tim Bowman (also known as Tim Trappitt) is currently working part-time as a Teacher Aide at Rathkeale. This is not Tim's first experience of the school, however, as he is also an Old Boy and was a dayboy at Rathkeale from 1972 to 1976.

As a student, Tim particularly enjoyed Music at Rathkeale with his teacher Faye Norman. He played bass and guitar in the orchestra for many school productions including Jesus Christ Superstar, Joseph and the Technicolour Dreamcoat, and Paint Your Wagon. Tim's main instrument, however, was the bagpipes. He was a Pipe Major in the Rathkeale Pipe Band and enjoyed playing for special occasions both at school and in the Wairarapa community. He was also a member of the school choir. Tim has good memories of being part of art teacher Jim Walsh's work gang with which he was enlisted to build paths throughout the school and the Greek Theatre. They even built canoes to paddle in the river. He also has memories of rock running itself and having to swim in the pool every single day – even in Winter when it hadn't been cleaned.

Now working at Rathkeale, Tim can attest to the fact that the dining hall food has certainly improved. Tim explains that although the school itself hasn't changed too much, the children it serves, and the education

system itself, have changed a lot. He enjoys working with the students as a Teacher Aide, particularly when he is able to help an individual student overcome a particular problem or challenge. He also has to work very hard around exam time, when many students find his support invaluable. Tim has also involved himself in music at school once again and is now playing saxophone in the Rathkeale Concert Band.

Between leaving Rathkeale as a student in 1976, and returning again as a Teacher Aide in 2024, Tim has had a very interesting life. He studied Medicine at Auckland University and has worked in both Auckland and Australia in Emergency Medicine and Student Health. Tim has also been heavily involved in his main passion of music, playing in both the Skar/Reggae band 'Blue Asthmatics' and the guitar ensemble 'Gitbox Rebellion'. He studied Composition at the Auckland Music School in 1994 then moved to the United Kingdom in 1998 to complete a PhD in Music at Goldsmiths College. It was his return to New Zealand in 2020 that brought him back to the Wairarapa and ultimately Rathkeale. Initially, the return to Rathkeale felt quite bizarre for Tim, but he has managed to settle in quite easily. When Tim is not working at Rathkeale you can find him playing and writing music, gardening, or making cheese.

David Strang

David Strang reflects on his time as a Tutor in Rugby House

January, 1977. With six inches of snow on the ground at Glasgow Airport, I boarded a flight to Auckland, stopping down in San Francisco and Nadi. I had just completed my final term at Loretto School in Scotland and was heading to Rathkeale College to work as a Boarding House Tutor for two terms, before returning to the United Kingdom to study at the University of Durham.

Arriving in the glorious heat of mid-January Auckland couldn't have been a greater way to start my adventure in New Zealand. After a week in Auckland, I travelled to Wellington, then Masterton, and completed the first of many journeys down Willow Park Drive to Rathkeale College.

My post was as a House Tutor in Rugby House. There was only one problem – the House had not yet been built. So, for my first term, I stayed in School House, as a guest of the Headmaster and his wife, John and Faye Norman. I could not have received a warmer welcome or been made to feel more at home. During that first term, Rugby House was completed and at last the first boys moved into the new premises during the Easter holiday. I was a resident House Tutor, alongside David Ross, a Physical Education teacher. The first Housemaster was Marcus Wright, who worked hard to establish the ethos of the new boarding house. We spent that first term ironing out snags and making sure everything ran smoothly.

There were two other tutors from British schools at Rathkeale – Nick Herbert-Jones from Rugby and Tim Johns from Whitgift. I enjoyed a wide range of duties and responsibilities including: taking a junior Social

Studies class, providing one-to-one support for individual pupils in subjects such as English, Maths and Latin, and supervising sporting activities. I was even asked if I would be prepared to referee some of the soccer matches. I readily agreed and, never having refereed a football match before, spent a weekend studying the Laws of Association Football and learning how to referee.

During my time at Rathkeale I acquired not only a knowledge of soccer refereeing, but also a small motorbike, a 100cc Suzuki, which transported me faithfully around the country. Memorable highlights were a long weekend trip to Rotorua and a spectacular tour of the South Island over the Easter holidays, travelling anti-clockwise and getting as far as Invercargill. Being a Scot ensured I was given a warm welcome wherever I visited; I have never forgotten the kindness and generosity of the people I met on my travels.

I appreciated regular visits to Masterton for entertainment, meals out, and the annual sheep shearing championship – The Golden Shears. I was also made to feel very welcome each week at St Luke's Presbyterian Church in town.

After leaving Rathkeale and completing my studies in Durham, I enjoyed a 33-year career in the Police Service. First in the Metropolitan Police in London, then returning to Scotland where I was Chief Constable in Dumfries and Galloway Constabulary, then in Lothian and Borders Police, based in Edinburgh. I then spent five years as HM Chief Inspector of Prisons for Scotland, chaired an independent inquiry into Mental Health Services in Tayside and, last year, chaired the Scottish

Drug Deaths Taskforce.

After 46 years, I fulfilled an ambition to return to New Zealand, this time with my wife Alison, in February 2023. Our holiday included a visit to Rathkeale, where we received the warmest of welcomes. The weather was familiarly Scottish, with heavy rain all day! It was very interesting to see how the school had developed over the years, most significantly with the introduction of co-education. The trees were much taller and Rugby House had matured, but the Greek Theatre remained unaltered and the friendly atmosphere of the school still very evident.

We were delighted to be welcomed by Grant Harper, who was able to provide the link for us back to the 1970s. I was pleased, too, to meet two current tutors from the United Kingdom, continuing the tradition of which I had been a part nearly half a century ago.

I am grateful to Rathkeale for the important influence on my teenage years and I send the school my best wishes for its future.



David Strang (left) with Tim Johns & David Ross

Hamish Paris

Hamish Paris (2005-2009) continues to pursue his love of the outdoors

Hamish Paris was a student at Rathkeale College from 2005-2009. Hamish has fond memories of Rathkeale where he was a prefect and Head of Hillary House in 2009. He led the house to victory in many sporting events as well as winning House Music overall.

Hamish grew up in the Wairarapa and attended Opaki School before coming to Rathkeale. Having friends whose parents were Boarding Housemasters meant that Hamish had already spent a lot of time exploring the Rathkeale grounds before starting as a student. He loved the nature Rathkeale had to offer and the weekends he spent swimming in the river, trying his hand at the low ropes course, building forts in the bush, and playing lots of backyard cricket.

As a student Hamish made the most of his time at school and was involved in anything and everything. He was keen to try any sport he could – including football, squash, cricket, multisport, adventure racing, cycling, cross country and basketball. He was also heavily involved in cultural activities such as Viva Camerata, the school choir, and the school production of *Les Misérables*. He spent as much time as he could outdoors – out in the bush on day trips and overnight, spending hours looking at topographical maps and heading into the bush with no adults at fifteen years old.

After finishing school, Hamish headed down to Dunedin where he studied at the University of Otago and attained a Bachelor of Physical Education. In the South Island, Hamish's love of

the outdoors continued. At the end of 2014 he started working as a guide for Ultimate Hikes on both the Routeburn and Milford tracks. Hamish completed 70 trips on the Routeburn and 20 trips on the Milford and certainly has a few stories to tell. During his time guiding he had to deal with torrential rain, flooding, injuries, helicopter evacuations and lost clients but also loved the experience of living his life in nature and learning about the flora, fauna and history of the area. Along the way Hamish met clients who he has kept ties with and met up with overseas, and some who even knew him when he was a baby. All in all, nothing beats spending every day outdoors and having the best office in the world. He has also been a guide in the Coromandel, at Lake Waikaremoana, and on Mount Tongariro and Great Barrier Island.

Hamish later swapped the bush for the snow and New Zealand for Canada when, after travelling through South East Asia and road-tripping through the United States, he spent time working on ski fields in Canada. Again – Hamish loved the opportunity to be able to work outdoors every day, getting paid to do what he loved.

On his return to New Zealand, however, unfortunately the Covid-19 pandemic had put an end to most tourism jobs. But this didn't stop Hamish from finding more work outdoors, and he started work in pest plant control in Rotorua. He has fond memories of his time in Rotorua where he was able to spend much of his downtime enjoying the lakes, tramps and mountain biking tracks in the area.



Hamish Paris (left) guiding for Ultimate Hikes

Hamish has now moved back to the Wairarapa to be closer to family. He is currently working for the Wellington Regional Council as part of their pest plant management team – this allows him to continue to do what he loves and work outdoors almost every day. He is glad to be using his skills for good; to help the environment and protect our native plants.

Hamish made great friends at Rathkeale and still keeps in touch with many of them today. He is grateful that Rathkeale allowed him to pursue his passion of outdoor pursuits when he was a student there, and hopes that today's students will not hesitate to take the same opportunities that he did.

James Price

James Price (2005-2009) is working in his dream job as a helicopter paramedic

James Price attended Rathkeale College from 2005-2009. James grew up in Eastbourne and the Hutt Valley on the southern side of the Remutaka Ranges, and in 2004 his family relocated to Masterton, in part because of the schooling opportunities there. He was the first of three children to enter the Trinity Schools system, with his sisters Katy and Beth attending Hadlow and St Matthew's in the years to come.

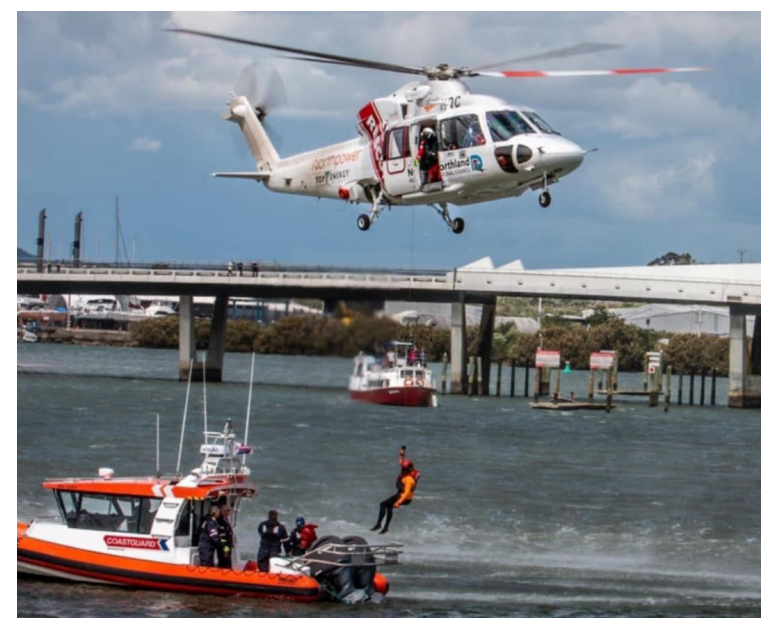
James had made fast friends with some of the lads at Hadlow and stayed friends with them throughout his Rathkeale years and beyond. As a student, James was initially more involved with some of the cultural extracurricular activities such as Viva Camerata (and before that, the Rathkeale Singers), before finding his own as a runner and adventure racer in the later years. From Year 12 onwards, he was overnighing in the Tararua Ranges and completed the Northern Crossing with some of the St Matthew's girls for their Duke of Edinburgh.

After finishing school, James initially took leave of New Zealand and spent 6 months in Shrewsbury, England, teaching outdoor education activities at a PGL adventure camp. He returned to New Zealand to pursue what he thought was to be his dream career – a pilot with the

RNZAF. Unfortunately, he discovered his vision was not adequate, and so instead attended Auckland University of Technology, where he studied paramedicine.

This would lead James into a now 13-year career in ambulance operations, which has had some extremely memorable moments. After his first few years in the job, James took opportunities to work at Ruapehu ski field for a season and then returned to Auckland to become part of a team which used technical means such as rope rescue to access hard-to-reach patients. A highlight of this time was in the early days of the Covid-19 pandemic, when he was flown to Darwin to assist in the repatriation of six New Zealanders from a cruise ship.

Several years ago, James and his partner decided to move north to Whangarei, where he now flies on the Northland Rescue Helicopter as a critical care paramedic, winch operator and rescue swimmer. As it turns out, this was the dream job all along, and James is extremely appreciative of the educational foundation that he received at Rathkeale, without which he would not be working in this incredible role. In June 2024, he and his partner Alisha were joined by their son, Flynn, who is growing up very fast, and may one day attend Rathkeale as well.



Charles Kendall

Charles Kendall (1993-1997) reflects on his love of teaching and the Trinity Schools



Charles Kendall was a day student at Rathkeale College from 1993-1997, which was a year after his father Richard 'Dick' Kendall became involved heavily in Rathkeale Sport. Charles's first introduction to Rathkeale, however, was actually a year before he started. In 1992 he was at the college working as an errand boy for the New Zealand U14 Cricket tournament with his father and former Rathkeale teacher Craig McBride. At that time, he was a prefect and Captain of Sport at Hadlow Preparatory School.

While at Rathkeale Charles was heavily involved in sport and also in music. He began playing for the First XI Football Team in Year 10, which he would later be the captain of, as well as being in the First XI Cricket Team from 1995, which he would also become captain of. In 1996 he was part of the team that toured Australia for football and the following year led the 1st XI Cricket Team to a top four finish in the Gillette Cup NZ Secondary Schools Cricket

Competition. These were Charles' obvious sporting highlights but there were plenty of others, especially the outstanding result for cricket versus Lindisfarne, which can be seen in the original Cricket Pavilion.

Music also became a big part of school life for Charles, from musicals to bands to starting up a senior singing group in Year 13. During his final years at Rathkeale, his band and the Rockquest competition became a major focus. Charles' band was very successful, making it to the Wellington finals of Rockquest at Victoria University in 1997 and also performing at school dances and performing at the leavers' ball.

Another memorable musical highlight was House Music. Houses would perform the hymn, the song, and the band but there was also the 'optional item' of old usually reserved for the Year 13s to joke about the other houses. In his first year at Rathkeale not only was Charles asked to be part of the band competition, but due to a unique ability to pull off the drive through scene from the movie *Wayne's World* he was also asked to partake in the optional item.

At the end of his time at Rathkeale Charles secured a one-year tutorship to Colfe's School in Southeast London. On returning to New Zealand Charles took up study at The University of Otago to become a teacher. Sport and music continued here, with cricket more of a serious focus playing in the Dunedin senior competition. Rugby was now the social sport of choice with football becoming a little more part-time. It was also then that Charles spent three years as a resident DJ at The Outback Inn.

As graduation approached and job

hunting was underway Charles welcomed his first child – Hunter Kendall (Rathkeale College – 2016-2020). It was at this stage that things started to move full circle as he took up a teaching position at Hadlow Preparatory School.

Today, Charles is still teaching at Hadlow, and during this time he welcomed his second child Kyan Kendall (Rathkeale College – 2019-2024). Whilst at Hadlow Charles continues with the passions and interests that were developed and nurtured at Rathkeale College – being very involved in both sport and music at the school. Both Hunter and Kyan were U13 Hatch Cup representatives for hockey which meant that hockey coaching was now a part of the resume along with football, cricket, netball and softball. Charles also assists with choirs and orchestras, running bands, and is



Charles and his partner - Deb



Charles' sons - Kyan and Hunter Kendall

now leading Kapa Haka in the school as well as leading Te Ao Māori. Information Technology is also another area that Charles has developed and is leading in the school.

Since returning to the Wairarapa personal sport has also continued. Football is now at the forefront and Charles spent time playing for Wairarapa United in the Capital Football competition, Carterton AFC and now Masterton AFC, which he has also been the president of for six years. As time (and age) goes on football has become more social and has been a way to catch up with a few other Old Boys. There has also been some social cricket with the Bottom Paddock Cricket team, which also has some links to Old Boys and Rathkeale College.

Music has always been an area that Charles has continued to be involved in in his own time, being a member and assistant for the Wairarapa Youth Concert Band as well as being in

the orchestra/band for local musicals at MATS. There has also been the odd stint in the local rock scene with Masterton band – *The Dead Zephyrs*.

As a former Rathkeale student teaching at Hadlow there are some unique opportunities that this has created. For example, having the Kapa Haka group perform at the Greek Theatre and taking Hadlow students to the old stomping ground at the oval provides an opportunity to pass on some knowledge and history as well as reminisce. Having this link also makes it easier for Charles to visit his father's memorial seat at the pavilion and take time to reflect on how Rathkeale and its staff have helped shape him into the man he now is. As his own children leave the Trinity system, he still has that special link through the Hadlow-Rathkeale connection to continue to appreciate what an incredibly special place Rathkeale is.

Reinhard Schwanecke

Reinhard Schwanecke (2011-2016) discusses his love of filmmaking and science

Reinhard Schwanecke studied at Rathkeale from 2011 to 2016. Though generally a quiet, reserved student, Reinhard broke out of his shell to perform on stage for major school productions, Sheilah Winn Shakespeare festivals and Theatre Sports. In class, he developed a flair for writing and continued his lifelong interest in the Sciences, especially Biology. A keen member of the school's tramping club, Reinhard still counts trudging up and bum-sledding down a snow-covered Mt. Holdsworth as one of his favourite day treks.

After Rathkeale, Reinhard studied Biological Anthropology at the University of Auckland, before pivoting to biological science more generally. Up north, he wrote skits and performed improv with the university's Stray Theatre Company. Excursions with the Auckland University Tramping Club satisfied his drive to be outdoors. On the side, he tutored students in NCEA and Scholarship English and Biology, while during semester breaks, he worked odd jobs as a farmhand, as well as short stints recycling x-rays and pruning pine trees. As well as all of this, while being haunted by ideas of a future transformed by genetic engineering, Reinhard combined his passions for science and writing into a screenplay for a sci-fi epic feature film during his third year of undergrad study.

Reinhard completed his Bachelor of Science in 2020, then promptly pulled a handbrake-turn on his scientific career by enrolling in a Master of Arts program at Victoria University of Wellington to study scriptwriting for TV, film, and theatre. This was a difficult decision made easier by the advice he had received from

both a former teacher, as well as an Old Boy who had been through the course. That year, Reinhard developed a portfolio of scripts as Covid-19 plunged the country in and out of lockdowns that unfortunately precluded the practical work experience component of the course.

Armed with a firmer grasp of storytelling, Reinhard invested in a camera and wrangled friends and family to act as cast and crew for a series of short films. Learning practical skills in filmmaking along the way, Reinhard worked part-time as a lifeguard to fund production costs after employment as a professional writer proved elusive. Reinhard would be the first to point out that he bit off more than he could chew with his film projects. Stunts such as dangling from a moving tractor were relatively straightforward compared to finding the perfect camera settings for lighting. A rehearsal gone wrong led to Reinhard receiving a minor stab wound to the hand from his co-star and little brother, Jurgen, while weeks of editing left him visualising waveforms for every sound.

However, the trilogy of slapstick shorts Reinhard made would, despite their questionable production values, horrendous colour grading and lack of views on YouTube, prove instrumental in helping him break in as a professional writer and researcher for a digital education agency.

Working remotely, Reinhard spent the end of 2022 and most of 2023 exploring the South Island in a trusty Toyota van. This led to a variety of adventures: catching an eel on Stewart Island, bagging his first red stag in the Remarkables with a Boer War era rifle, and making a barefoot

ascent to the summit of Mount Earnslaw, including crossing the Birley Glacier.

At the end of 2023, after months of video calls and emails, Reinhard was hired to complete two drafts of a screenplay for a sci-fi feature film, based on an original story from award-winning Japanese film director, Hiroki Kamada. He finished this contract in June of this year, his first stint as a professional screenwriter.

Reinhard's current personal project, 'The Man Who Killed Otzi the Iceman,' a slice of life short film set in the early Copper Age, combines his interests in the arts, sciences and outdoors that were cultivated at Rathkeale. The production of this short has involved new and obscure skills, such as tilling a longbow, as well as brain tanning and sewing animal hides into a reasonably stylish jacket. Shooting entirely outdoors has been a challenge as usual, from being beholden to the weather to finding a wild deer to follow the script, and dealing with possums stealing bread from catering. With filming still underway, he hopes for a release sometime next year.

All in all, Reinhard is deeply grateful to his teachers for their guidance and encouragement in and beyond school. He hopes that current and future students at Rathkeale will seize every opportunity that comes their way, and enjoy the sense of community that only a small school with traditions can afford. While five years of Anglican teachings never swayed Reinhard's stubborn agnostic leanings, he still misses belting out hymns on Friday mornings.



*Left: Reinhard at the top of Mount Earnslaw
Right: Two stills from Reinhard's latest short film – 'The Man Who Killed Otzi the Iceman'*

Country Calendar

Rathkeale is featured on New Zealand's longest running television series

This year Rathkeale College was lucky enough to be featured on New Zealand's longest running television series – *Country Calendar*. The series was interested in looking at students' engagement with Agriculture and Primary Industries at the school (including Agribusiness) and both the Land Lab (school farm) and Eco-trail featured heavily in the episode.

Liz Evans, HOF of Science at Rathkeale, organised the visit with her husband John Bissell. John has been working in conservation in New Zealand for many years and was approached by Dan Henry, the producer of *Country Calendar*, to talk about what he does around the country with farming and conservation groups (including Save the Kiwi) to help protect New Zealand's native wildlife from introduced predators. Once Dan learnt that Liz had set up a Predator Free unit as part of Science classes here at Rathkeale, he suggested that he did some filming at the school as well.

The *Country Calendar* team were very impressed with Rathkeale's amazing campus and surrounding native bush and enjoyed touring both the Land Lab and Eco-trail to see how students utilised these in their studies both in Agriculture and Science. Students demonstrated how they worked with both sheep and cattle in the yards and also showed the filmmakers what they had been growing in the garden area of the farm. On the Eco-trail, students explained what they had

learnt about how to trap and monitor pests like rats, mice and possums in the bush. Agribusiness teacher Dallas Pahiri and her students were also filmed exploring alternative protein sources. They used flour made from crickets to make chocolate brownies.

The experience of being on camera was a little daunting for both students and staff alike – but everyone did a fantastic job and the filming itself was completed on schedule and without any problems (as can often be common on a film set!) Being told to 'just make normal conversation' felt a bit odd at times but everyone soon got the hang of it and once the awkwardness was out of the way they were able to forget about the camera and just enjoy themselves. The students in particular were very excited to see all the film equipment used to make the show (including a drone which flew above them and tracked them through the bush) and the exposure to this level of professional filmmaking was an excellent learning experience for them. They also felt proud to be involved in something as iconic as *Country Calendar*.

The Land Lab is a huge asset to the school. It was once a golf course, but roughly 12 years ago, the school started to really use it as a model farm. Coadette Low, the previous TiC of Agriculture prior to Jesse Bird, began a huge push to re-pasture, improve stock and build sheep yards as well as to introduce Agribusiness as a new Senior College subject. Since then,

the school has continued to grow the Land Lab with the purchase of a new block and improvement of the fences and cattle yards. It is a continual work in progress to improve the farm but with Jesse at the helm, there are always many hands-on opportunities for students to learn and practice including fencing, crutching, shearing and yard work with both cattle and sheep. Agricultural Science is an academic subject with high standards of literacy. But it also has the advantage of being able to get students outside and hands on, so really, it's got the best of both worlds because not every student likes to sit down and learn.

The school is incredibly grateful for the support of our farming community to help us run the Land Lab. From donations of stock when the farm was starting, to help with supplementary feed, offers of help in teaching, field trips and lots of advice. The Land Lab is also very well supported by the school's grounds staff through building upkeep and maintenance tasks.

The *Country Calendar* episode screened on November 17th on TV1 and was a huge success. Not only was this a great learning opportunity for students and excellent publicity for the school, but now Rathkeale College has a place in history on one of New Zealand's greatest television programs of all time.



Top: Year 12 and 13 Agribusiness students discussing alternative proteins
Middle: Year 11 students showcasing the Predator Control science unit
Bottom: Year 12 Agriculture students weighing lambs in the yards

Scott Morris

Scott Morris (2016-2018) is at the top of his game in professional football



Scott Morris attended Rathkeale College from 2016 to 2018. Born and bred in Nelson, the bright lights of the Wairarapa and Rathkeale College caught his eye with the opportunity to enhance his football skills on his hopeful, and what had then seemed, extremely unlikely path to professional football.

The opportunity to attend Rathkeale College came through a partnership the Paul Ifill Football Academy had created with Rathkeale College. With the support of his parents, Scott began his Rathkeale tenure in Repton House under Housemaster Deon van Deventer. Nerves were high at the start of the academic year, but it didn't take long for Deon and Scott's new Rathkeale brothers to make him feel settled and at home.

Looking back on it now, moving to Rathkeale College was one of the best things that could've happened to Scott. The academic opportunities to do well at Rathkeale were numerous, ensuring that he passed with excellent grades, an achievement that he is not sure he would have replicated had he remained in Nelson. Scott attributes much of his success in football to his time spent at Rathkeale College, with the three years spent playing and training with Rathkeale and the Paul Ifill Football Academy ultimately proving pivotal in the development of the player he is today. There are many former and

current coaches and staff members that Scott can thank for their part to play in his journey so far. His football highlights at Rathkeale College include winning the Rex Dawkins Tournament in 2016 and finishing top 10 in the country at the New Zealand First XI Football Tournament in 2017.

Scott remembers fondly, but with some empathy for his former self, certain experiences that were unpleasant at the time, but can be classed as invaluable memories now. When rock running was reintroduced to Repton House in 2016, Scott experienced his fair share. To those who have been lucky enough never to experience it, it is the art of running rocks from the Ruamahanga River to Repton House via the long, and appropriately named, Burma Road, every Friday morning at around 5:30am in complete darkness. The purpose of this became evident every second week, with the running of the same rocks from Repton House back to the Ruamahanga river. A delightful experience as you can imagine! Deon, or Vundy as we liked to call him, was a fantastic Housemaster. However, it was hard to say anything fantastic about him when he kindly woke the boarding house up with a cold squirt of water from his water gun at 6:45am at random throughout the year. The delight on his face was all too evident, although to be fair to Vundy, it was all in good fun.

After his time as a student at Rathkeale, Scott began working at the school in a boarding tutor role in Repton in 2019. Scott remained in the Wairarapa for the next couple of years, playing football for Wairarapa United and working in various jobs. In 2022, the opportunity to move to Christchurch to sign with Christchurch United, and begin his university life was too good to turn down. Scott began a double degree at Canterbury University, studying a Bachelor of Law and a Bachelor of Criminal Justice. In his first year playing for Christchurch United, they won the Southern League for the first time in 24 years and qualified for the National League for the first time in thirty years. Although Scott's schedule was quite hectic with sporting and academic responsibilities, he still maintained his love for the outdoors and continued four-wheel driving, surfing, and adventure running as much as he could. The adventures that could be had in the South Island were endless and Scott took full advantage of having that on his doorstep, with numerous trips to the West Coast and deep into the Canterbury plains whenever he could fit it into his schedule.

2023 was a massive year for Scott. In March, he received his first national call-up, with the opportunity to represent his country at under-23 level in a two-game series in New Zealand against China. Scott was again called up to represent his country at the Paris Olympics 2024 Oceania Football Qualifiers held here in New

Zealand. With club football, he has also had an equal amount of success. He won the 100th Anniversary Chatham Cup with Christchurch United, along with winning the New Zealand Football Southern League and the Mainland English Cup. This meant that Scott and Christchurch United had completed a domestic treble, which has only occurred several times before in New Zealand football history. Scott was not the only Rathkeale Old Boy to complete the treble in 2023, with Old Boys Riley Grover and Luca Molnar, previous Rathkeale Director of Sport Cam Lindsay, and current Director of Football Paul Ifill, winning alongside him.

On the back of this success for both club and country, Scott signed his first professional contract with Stoke City Football Club in the English Championship, the second tier of English football. The step-up to full-time professional football has been an intense and exhausting experience, but one that Scott is relishing and attacking with full energy and effort. This achievement has been huge for Scott and his family. It is an achievement that a fresh-faced Year 11 Scott Morris would have a hard time believing if he was told this was his future self. Scott is looking forward to what the future holds for him, and with the world of professional football being so full of change, he has learnt to expect the unexpected and is ready for the journey ahead.

Kristopher Nielsen

Kristopher Nielsen (2006-2010) follows his passions of music and psychology

Kristopher Nielsen attended Rathkeale from 2006-2010. He enjoyed being in the classroom and was actively involved in various aspects of wider school life including school productions, 1st XI Hockey, and the Rathkeale Pipe Band. He got on very well with his fellow students and valued much of what Rathkeale had to offer, but sometimes struggled to feel at home in the school's very traditional and masculine environment. In 2010, Kris was proud to be named Head Boy of the school. While there were several stressors associated with this role, this was a formative experience that taught him a lot. One of Kris' favourite memories of his time at Rathkeale was having the opportunity to conduct for Repton/Hillary at House Music in Year 13.

After leaving Rathkeale, Kris knew he wanted to go into further study but wasn't sure what he wanted to focus on yet (and also wanted to save some money). Taking a gap year turned out to be a fortuitous decision – midway through this year he experienced a brain injury and without the pressure of having to return to study he had the flexibility required to recover relatively quickly. This experience, and managing the challenges that followed, furthered an interest in studying Psychology. Pairing this with a major in Philosophy, Kris graduated with a Bachelor of Arts at Te Herenga Waka - Victoria University of Wellington in 2013.

While a job in retail had left him with a questionable fashion sense and less spare time than he would like during his studies, Kris found the university experience extremely rewarding. Staying on at Victoria he completed a Master's Degree in Cognitive and Behavioral Neuroscience and trained as a clinical psychologist. Along the way he became interested in the underlying assumptions behind mental health discourse and practice. From 2017-2020 he engaged with PhD research, exploring a central question of 'how should we best conceptualize mental disorder?'. This research resulted in the development of a new way of thinking about mental health problems. A link to a summary of the key ideas from his work is located at the bottom of this article.

During his studies, Kris met his partner, Alice. In a complete coincidence, while flatting together, Kris found out that Alice's best friend and their then current flat mate was in fact Rathkeale Principal Martin O'Grady's daughter! Kris and Alice are now married and are based in Wellington with their cat Franklin.

After school, Kris continued to explore music as a hobby. No longer feeling comfortable playing the bagpipes after his brain injury, Kris hopped around between instruments for a few years. After stumbling upon the strong Irish traditional music scene in Wellington, Kris eventually settled on playing the Uilleann Pipes – a quieter and sweeter variety of the

bagpipes. A high point in recent years was getting to be a part of the band Criu; playing with and learning from some of the top Irish trad musicians in the country. He currently plays at traditional music sessions at The Welsh Dragon and The Hanging Ditch in central Wellington.

In recent years Kris has been working as a clinical psychologist in Wellington. In this role he has had the privilege to help people facing a range of challenges, but has worked particularly in the areas of neuropsychology, concussion recovery, sexual trauma, and general mental health. During this time he also wrote a book based on his PhD work, which was published last year. Late last year he was also an invited speaker at a conference based at the Okinawan Institute of Science and Technology, presenting some key ideas from his book.

Starting this year, Kris has taken on a role as a lecturer in Clinical Psychology at Victoria University which he is very much enjoying. Just recently, while presenting for a large first year psychology class, he reflected on how his experiences in the performing arts during his time at Rathkeale had directly prepared him to communicate with and engage such an audience. He is loving the experience of teaching and the opportunity to expand his research. He looks forward to the possibility of a Rathkeale or St. Matthew's student turning up in his classes one day soon.



Top: Kris and his wife - Alice

Bottom: Kris at the Ceol Aneas Irish Music Festival

<https://aeon.co/ideas/think-of-mental-disorders-as-the-minds-sticky-tendencies>

Greg Baillie - 40 Years of Service

Mathematics teacher Greg Baillie celebrates his 40th year of teaching at Rathkeale

In a world where change seems to be one of the few certainties it is good to ponder the man that is Greg Baillie; a man who has for over 40 years been an integral and constant part of Rathkeale College.

In the 1980s both Rathkeale and the world were rather different places. Rathkeale was 21 years old and an independent college with over 400 boys, 300 of whom were full boarders. Greg Baillie had grown up in Masterton and had enjoyed his secondary education at Wairarapa College where he was regarded as a good all-round student and a highly rated sportsman. After college he completed a Bachelor of Arts degree in Social Sciences majoring in Mathematics at Massey University followed by a Diploma of Teaching at Christchurch Teachers' College. Greg admits that surprisingly this was not really by design but rather because students were paid to do it! As part of his teacher training, he was successful in negotiating a teaching section at Rathkeale in 1983 – very much against the wishes of the Teachers' College who were not enamoured of independent schools.

Greg's mother, Alison Baillie, was the Headmaster's Secretary at the time and in 1984 he was appointed as a teacher in the Maths Department and a tutor in Repton House. 40 years later, we look back now and see that Headmaster John Taylor had made both a wise and significant appointment.

From the outset, Greg established an enduring reputation for the highest standards, both inside the classroom and beyond. Perhaps surprisingly for some, he produced the Repton House play early on and donned a tutu to perform in the staff ballet version of Swan Lake in 1985. Not so surprisingly, he quickly joined the sporting life of the College, and the Record magazine of the time, The Record, reveals that he coached Colts B Rugby and 4A Cricket in 1984 before moving up to Minors A Rugby and 1st XI Cricket in 1985. That was just the beginning: He coached Junior Rugby for 18 years with several of these as TiC of the sport. He also coached and was TiC of Cricket for a number of years and coached various football teams for 16 years. As if that doesn't sound enough, he played bowls for ten years and became a Wairarapa representative player. He has completed four marathons and cycled extensively in New Zealand, Australia, China, and the length of Britain from Land's End to John o' Groats during the year he spent on exchange at Loretto School in Scotland. These days, he can often be seen out and about in Masterton either cycling or running.

Sport may be a passion, but Greg understands that core business resides in the classroom. He is able to tell you that he has operated in eleven teaching spaces before securing long term tenure of Room 3. What this room reveals is order and professionalism. The desks are in immaculate rows, and it is

definitely not a room for frivolity. In the face of any silliness Greg is inclined to say that he is in charge of any fun that is going to occur in his classroom. One Old Girl is reported as having said that getting Mr. Baillie to laugh was the biggest challenge she faced at Senior College.

This brings us to perceptions. One current senior student told me recently that Mr. Baillie was 'cool'. Digging deeper, I learnt he is cool because he is a great teacher: well organised, very competent, faultlessly passionate about his subject, totally committed, and respected for going the extra mile. One Old Boy recently reported that studies his with Mr. Baillie set him up well for his Engineering course at university. I am sure many students would have similar feelings – enough to have voted him as the first recipient of the apple for the Best Teacher Award.

If anyone is looking for Greg at break time he can always be found in the same corner of the staffroom. There he has been central to the daily newspaper quiz for as long as I can remember and where he demonstrates a fine general knowledge that takes him far beyond the realms of mathematics and sport.

Mr. Greg Baillie is a fundamental part of Rathkeale College, and we must thank him for the 40 years he has given to the school. We only hope that we will be able to keep him here for a little longer.

Grant Harper



Top: Greg with James Church (Head Boy, 2024)
Bottom: Greg with Bruce Levick (Headmaster, 1991-1996)

Phil Masters

New staff member Phil Masters reflects on his journey to Rathkeale

Phil Masters is a new staff member at Rathkeale College this year. Phil teaches Classics, History and Social Studies. This is Phil's nineteenth year of teaching. He has worked in both New Zealand and the United Kingdom and came to Rathkeale from Central Hawke's Bay College where he was Head of the Humanities Department.

Phil is from Dorset in the UK and before teaching he worked first a Contract Manager and then as a Landscaper. Phil started off his teaching career at Petroc College in the UK, then moved with his family to New Zealand in 2016 where he has been teaching ever since. Phil enjoys working with young people and has a particular passion for Classics. He has always been a fan of Indiana Jones and loves the 'adventurous' aspect that the subject can offer. Phil is also passionate about football and has been a football coach for many years. He is currently coaching the Junior A football team at Rathkeale.

As well as teaching, Phil is also the Cranleigh Assistant Housemaster, and will take over the role of Cranleigh Housemaster in 2025. He and his family enjoy living on-site and Phil is beginning to feel more and more at home at Rathkeale. He also appreciates the better relationships with students that he is able to build in the boarding environment. Phil's wife, Ruth, is currently working at Masterton Intermediate School as SENCO and his children, Ramona and Éomer, attend St. Matthew's and Rathkeale respectively. The whole family have been granted New Zealand citizenship and they are looking forward to their citizenship ceremony soon.

Phil is enjoying his new life in the Wairarapa – particularly the access to nature that it affords him and his family. He enjoys both cycling and hiking in the weekends. He, and the rest of his family, are also surfers – and they will often travel to Castlepoint or Riversdale for this. Phil's other passion is music. He has played in bands his whole life and recorded an album in 2013. He has also had the chance to play and record at Abbey Road Studios in London. Phil plays bass and other instruments and is currently working on a follow-up album and a book of poetry. He feels it is important to stay creative and instils this belief in his students as well.

Phil believes Classics, History and Social Studies are subjects that are essential for students to understand the world they live in today. These subjects play a key role in helping young people understand the foundations of Western culture as well as understanding differences between Western and Eastern cultures. Subjects such as Classics take you widescreen – teaching not only history but also sociology, psychology, and politics along the way. To understand the present – you must first understand the past.

Phil and his family are grateful for the welcome they have received to Rathkeale and the Wairarapa, and look forward to continuing to build a life here.



Phil outside Cranleigh House

Decade Reunions

Together again at Rathkeale in 2024



Decade Reunions

Together again at Rathkeale in 2024



Rathkeale College
Decade Reunions - Class of 1974



Rathkeale College
Decade Reunions - Class of 1984



Rathkeale College
Decade Reunions - Class of 1994



Rathkeale College
Decade Reunions - Class of 2004



John Taylor - *in Memoriam*

John Taylor was the Headmaster of Rathkeale College from 1979 to 1987. He passed away on 28th March 2024. For Old Boys who were here during his tenure, John Taylor left a clear and lasting impression on us.

He was an ever-present feature of our school lives. JST, as he was fondly known, was the classic headmaster of those times, in every sense of the phrase. No one was in any doubt about who was running the show. He swept into assembly in his academic gown, and he held court in the quad afterwards to hear pleas for permissions and indulgences. He was very strong on discipline and Old Boys from our era can still hold long and impassioned debates about who was the better caner, Bruce Hamilton or John Taylor.

Most Old Boys remember JST for his strength of character as Headmaster. John Taylor set the standard in all aspects of school life, and that standard was high. Nothing was done casually, and he expected the same of all those around him. He created an atmosphere where, at least within his sight and hearing; our presentation, behaviour, learning, sporting endeavour and cultural performances were all expected to be done to the highest level - and he intervened directly if they were not. Rathkeale enjoyed a wonderful period of success in the 1980s. We had the sense that we were at a great school. Presiding over all of that was JST.

John was an articulate and powerful public speaker. He commanded those in front of him. His delivery was always polished. I remember him starting his prizegiving address in the Greek Theatre on a brilliant December morning, the stage packed with staff and prizes, the theatre full of seated parents and boys crammed on the back rows and around the edges. Beaming at his audience, John Taylor told them his address would last 19 minutes, invited them to set their watches and then finished exactly on time.

And yet, for all his formality and unwavering public persona, JST could be approached by any boy. The former housemaster in him ensured he knew every boy's name, listened to them, and usually delivered a swift answer or piece of advice. Going to his office was never a casual or relaxing affair, but provided you had a sensible plea, a fair hearing was usually received.



JST had a special connection with the Old Boys and has served as our patron for many years. John was a great supporter of Old Boys' events and initiatives. He revelled in meeting Old Boys. Nothing had changed, still the firm handshake, chin up, amazing name recall, interest in what we are doing, and possibly his most enduring trait, always encouragement. And all of that usually delivered in the same slightly frenetic social whirr as he worked the room.

I will finish by saying this: Old Boys from the 80s know the importance of a good handshake, to look someone in the eye, to sing the refrains of a hymn strongly, that a job worth doing is worth doing well and that their most formative years were presided over by the very strong character and example of JST. For that, and for his life, we are grateful.

Edward Cox

Faye Norman - *in Memoriam*

Faye Norman passed away peacefully aged 97, on Sunday, May 19th, 2024. She was the wife of John Norman, Rathkeale's first Headmaster, and taught music at the College from 1964 to 1978.

At Rathkeale there is a lovely photograph of the Norman family photographed at Christ's College in September 1963 prior to their move north to the Wairarapa – a happy young family with many life-changing challenges ahead. John, the recently appointed first Headmaster of Rathkeale College, stands strongly and looks confident. Faye is smiling graciously and showing no sign of any of the doubts she must have felt about uprooting the family in such a risky venture.

Upon arrival in Masterton they were greeted by a grand old Heathcote Helmore homestead surrounded by an Alfred Buxton garden, sweeping paddocks and stands of native bush which gave little indication that this might one day become a school – one that they would become intimately involved with.

It took John no time to become preoccupied with the immense task he had accepted. In the meantime, Faye immediately began to transform the former servants' quarters of the Maunsell's Rathkeale homestead into a family home and settling the children into local schools and music lessons.

The first students, the Originals, arrived at the start of the 1964 academic year and the College history written by Bruce Hamilton records that, "Mrs Norman began as she was to go on, an essential part of everything at Rathkeale." Beyond the family's living room door were the third form boarders – noisy, boisterous and at times needy. For fifteen years the student's lives were intertwined with those of the Norman's and their family life, peace and privacy were all impacted.

My association with Rathkeale began as a student in 1967 and it took little time to become totally immersed in school life and to appreciate that the Norman's were omnipresent. They were pioneering times with a college to build and a campus to tame. But manners, standards, Christian beliefs, service, academics, sport, culture and music all had to be to the fore too.

Fully supportive of her husband's daunting task, Faye had her own vital roles to perform as wife, confidant, mother, and the school's first lady. Beyond that there were matronly duties, staff and student transportation, meal supervision, school music and singing, teaching and the chapel to support. In elusive spare time there was second-hand furniture to recover for common rooms, flowers to arrange, rooms to paint and curtains to create. On top of all of that there were boys to mother. Together, they were a great team.

In return, Faye enjoyed unwavering respect and affection for some sixty years. This was patently obvious at the College Jubilee 10 years ago when at 87 years young she was centre stage at the grand piano surrounded by Old Boys heartily singing songs so fondly remembered from long ago: Riding Down from Bangor, There is a Tavern In The Town, The Campdown Races and Transeamus! So very, very special!

Grant Harper



Obituaries

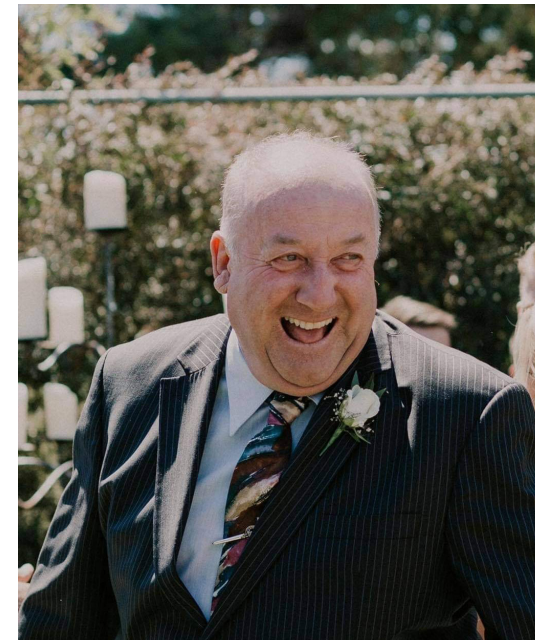
It is with sadness that we acknowledge the passing of a number of Old Boys and former members of staff. Regrettably, we sometimes know little about their lives beyond the College gates and are always grateful when families inform the Association or provide the Rock Runner with information which can be shared with readers.

Peter Nicol (1968-1971)

Peter James Nicol – known to most as Pete – attended Rathkeale College from 1968 to 1971. He was a stoic, pragmatic man of both land and sea, who lived life to the fullest alongside his beloved family and friends. Pete possessed a strength of character and a deep love for his family, farming, and the simple joys of life. He was not only a husband, father, and grandfather but also a man whose legacy lives on in the land he worked and the values he instilled in those he loved.

1968 saw Pete start his days out at Rathkeale. He joyfully retold many mischievous tales, like the time he and a few friends 'borrowed' a white van from the mechanics workshop, tearing down Burma Road and crashing near the river. During the building of the Greek Theatre he somehow managed to also crash the tractor with a load of rocks into a tree. Rathkeale was a place that would hold special meaning throughout his life, eventually becoming part of his family's legacy.

Trinity Schools became a cherished family tradition, especially as Pete's wife, Barbara (née Bannister), attended St. Matthew's. Their son Stu also went to



Rathkeale, while daughters Lisa, Karli, and Rachel followed their mother's path to St. Matthew's. Three of his children's spouses were also alumni, and in 2025, Pete's grandson Tom will be a Year 11 student, with Oscar following as a Year 9. In 2023, the Nicol family was one of two families to have three generations attend Rathkeale. This was recognised with a special tree planted on Grandparent's Day and an article in last year's Rock Runner.

Beyond the school, Pete's legacy was firmly rooted in the family farm at Drumcairn, which he ran with dedication and purpose. After working in the Wairarapa and Mangaheia Station in Tolaga Bay, Pete returned to manage the family land, a responsibility he took on with a pragmatic mindset and a focus on ensuring a sustainable future for his family.

Pete's passion for machinery, farming, and the simple joys of life created countless memories for all who knew him. He had a natural ability to fix and handle anything with an engine and was always eager to lend a hand, whether it was helping others on the farm or organising family trips out on the water. His zest for life was infectious, and his larger-than-life personality filled any space he entered. Yet Pete also appreciated the quiet moments, often ending his day with a drink in hand, savouring the calm and reflecting on the day's work.

Pete's values extended into his friendships. He could talk to anyone, never turned a blind eye to wrongdoing, and was always open to a good discussion or debate. Known for his honesty and practicality, he had a way of saying what he thought, offering advice, and listening without judgment. His reputation in the farming community reflected this steadfast nature. He embodied the qualities of a true Rathkeale gentleman. His integrity was evident in all he did, from his dedication to hard work and family to his unwavering sense of loyalty. Pete's spirited presence, quick humour, and open-hearted nature drew people to him and made any room feel brighter. His legacy of strength, wisdom, and generosity will continue to inspire us, urging us to live with the same purpose, warmth, and enthusiasm for life.

Rachel Nicol (née Brooking) – attended St. Matthew's 1996-2000

Alison Osborne (Staff)

Alison Osborne worked in the Learning Support team at Rathkeale and also assisted in the library. She then went on to work at Wairarapa College. I'd known Alison for well over a quarter of a century at both schools, and we often met up for a cuppa and a natter. She was a quiet person who just got on with the job she was tasked with. She loved her church, her garden, her friends and of course her family. She and her husband Graeme had an overseas river cruise planned, but her health got in the way. At the very young age of 66, she passed away. She will be sorely missed by all her friends, and especially her family – husband Graeme, son Simon, daughter Sarah, Sarah's husband Adam and their two children. We'll all miss an amazing person.

Linda Wells



Duncan Powell (1989-1992)

Duncan Powell attended Rathkeale from 1989 to 1992. An active member of the Ashhurst Pohangina Rugby Club, he passed away on Sunday 17th December 2023.

Lindsay Pyne (1964-1967)

Lindsay Pyne attended Rathkeale from 1964 to 1967 and went on to have a distinguished career in banking both in New Zealand and overseas. He passed away in 2024.

Richard Cowper (1969-1972)

Richard attended Rathkeale from 1969 to 1972 as a boarder in Repton House where he made his mark as a talented athlete. Previously, Richard had performed with distinction in the Hadlow vs. Hereworth athletics competition – leading Hadlow to a sweet victory.

After College he went to Mahia in northern Hawke's Bay and worked as a farmhand for the Bowen family, before returning to Pirinoa. Richard really loved flying and operated as an aerial top dressing pilot. Sadly, a flying accident brought this occupation to a close.

He briefly practiced as a Real Estate agent before ongoing poor health necessitated a move to the Crownthorpe area of Hawke's Bay. Here, he was closer to family when he passed away on 31st July 2024. Richard is survived by two adult children, William and Grace.

Richard Field-Dodgson (Staff)

Richard Field-Dodgson taught Science and Mathematics at Rathkeale from 1979 to 1981 and served as housemaster of School House from 1980 to 1981. He also coached rugby and cricket, and was a strong supporter of the choir.

Richard's arrival at Rathkeale, with a young family in tow, followed five years teaching at Harrow School. Accommodation at Rathkeale initially comprised of a farm cottage with little indoor plumbing and a coal range as the only means of cooking and water heating. However, this also came with a spectacular view of the Tararua Ranges and a pleasant walk through native bush to school. Other memories relayed by Richard of his time at Rathkeale included busting the prefects' drinking places along the river, and the tension during the 1981 Springbok tour (which he marched against in Wellington).

Richard's time at Rathkeale was followed by long spells of teaching at Whanganui Collegiate School and Scots College. He died in June 2024, aged 74 years, and is remembered with love by his family, including three children and nine grandchildren.

Mark Field-Dodgson



Tony Masters (1966-1968)

Tony Masters was born in 1951 to Fred and Molly Masters in Hastings, being the fifth of six siblings. He attended Hastings Boys High School for one year and Rathkeale College from 1966 to 1968.

After leaving school, Tony did a horticultural course at Massey University and contracting and harvesting work. He purchased his parent's orchard on Havelock Road and set up an extensive fruit-packing business at its peak employing over 100 people and leased orchard properties. For about 10 years Tony had a reach mowing contract in the Kaingaroa Forest before returning to Appledore and looking after the property.

Tony was an affable person who enjoyed a variety of water sports and loved his horses, doing competitive horse endurance riding for many years. Tony passed away peacefully in his home at Appledore where he began life, on 30 April 2024, surrounded by his family. He is sadly missed by his wife, Heather and their children, Tim, Mandy, Suzy, Rod and nine grandchildren.

Heather Masters

Colin O'Connell (Staff)

As this magazine was being sent for publication, we were made aware of the passing of former Rathkeale College staff member Colin O'Connell. From 1979, and for over forty years, Colin was a member of the College's ground staff. A full obituary will be included in the 2025 magazine.

Sons of Old Boys

2024



BACK ROW: C Fleming, J Ellingham, G Jaspers, A Donworth, L O’Gorman, L Bassett, C Cameron, H Farman.
MIDDLE ROW: G Farman, M Plimmer, C Bassett, H Bunny, T Nicol, J Martin, T Southey, E Martin.
FRONT ROW: Z Hogg, M Andrew, L Oldfield, J James, N Shaw, G Donworth, L Martin, J McGruddy.

ATTENTION ALL OLD BOYS

who were part of the cohorts who left school in
1975, 1985, 1995, 2005 and 2015.

2025 is your year to attend the
King's Birthday Weekend Decade Reunions,
Friday 30th May - Saturday 31st May.

Contact your Year Group facilitators or
the Old Boys' Association for more details:
oldboys@rathkealeoldboys.org.nz



Do you have a story for the next issue of
the *Rock Runner*? We'd love to hear from you.
Please get in touch.

