

Take Heart

Old Girls' Newsletter

November 2022

Welcome

It is hard to believe that we are nearing the end of 2022!

It has been another hugely successful year for St John's D.S.G. - from pupil numbers at an all-time high to numerous additions and improvements to our infrastructure. However, it is the smiles on the faces of the girls, combined with the warmth, sincerity and devotion of members of our community, which still remain our greatest quality.

It is my pleasure to welcome you to the latest edition of our Old Girls' newsletter, *Take Heart*. Enjoy the read!

The St John's D.S.G. Community wishes all our special Old Girls and their families a very happy Christmas and a prosperous New Year.

Jane Cole-Edwardes (Old Girls' Liaison)

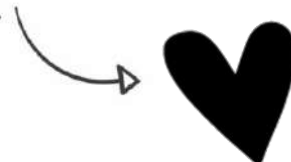


Heart-to-Heart

For our monthly "Heart-to-Heart" feature, we catch up with an Old Girl to find out where she is in life and what she has been up to since leaving school.

These features are published on the St John's D.S.G. website: www.stjohnsdsg.com under the "Old Girls" tab and links to these articles are shared on our social media pages. Below are two snippets of recent articles. To read more of our "Heart-to-Heart" features, please click on the heart below.

If you would like to feature in our new "Heart-to-Heart" series for 2023, please email Jane Cole-Edwardes on oldgirls@stjohnsdsg.com.



Heart-to-Heart with Yvone Mabuza

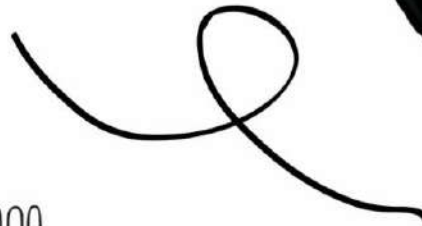
St John's D.S.G. Old Girl, Yvone Mabuza, Class of 1992, is a determined and energetic lady. After a few stints in the HR Industry as well as Sales and Marketing, Yvone eventually fell in love with IT after returning home from two years abroad.

After being diagnosed with Lymes disease in 2018 and being told by doctors that there was minimal chance of survival, Yvone developed a passion towards alternative healing through the SCIO (Scientific Consciousness Interface Operations System) as nothing makes her happier than to see others healthy.

However, even with all her personal and business success, her greatest achievement of all is her children!

What did you love most about St John's D.S.G.?

St John's D.S.G. allowed me to showcase my talents in public speaking. I felt accepted and part of a family. The weekly Chapel Services and SCA, which seemed mundane at the time, have kept me striving for greatness to this day. I've come to realise that what you despised when you are young, you end up loving – especially when you're in trouble!



Heart-to-Heart with Elizabeth Bassage

Having specialised in Debt Counselling, St John's D.S.G. Old Girl, Elizabeth Bassage, Class of 2000, runs her own Law Firm, EMB Attorneys. She has dedicated the last eight years to focusing on her business and is now proud to have a growing para-legal team.

When not working, Lilla spends time with her family, friends and Terri, her very spoilt basset hound.

What did you love most about St John's D.S.G.?

I loved the sisterhood element of St John's D.S.G. and the small class size which fostered special friendships that have lasted well over 27 years.

I truly treasure my St John's D.S.G. friends the most, as old friends really do make the best of friends!



Area Ambassadors

SOUTH AFRICA

Hilton/PMB: Mary Millward (née Quicke - 1985) info@dusi.co.za
Nombulelo Zulu (2014) bulelombanjwa@gmail.com

Midlands/Kamberg/Notties:

Kelly Sivright (née Gaylard - 1999) kelly@glengarry.co.za

Winterton/Bergville:

Lindsay Du Plessis (née Carte - 2002) lindsaycarte@gmail.com

Durban:

Puvithra Naidoo (1991) puvithra@me.com

KZN North Coast:

Kirsty Heath (née Bowles - 2002) bowlzies@hotmail.com

KZN South Coast:

Geneé Kilgour (née Liedenbergh - 1987) kilgour@mweb.co.za

Gauteng/JHB:

Grace Buthlezi (2014) fanelegrace@gmail.com
Nombulelo Zulu (2014) bulelombanjwa@gmail.com
Candice Seggie (née Leo-Smith - 2000) candiceseggie@gmail.com

INTERNATIONAL

U.K. (London):

Christina Haralambous (2000) christine.haralambous@gmail.com

USA & Canada:

Paula Owen (née Munro - 1996) info@paulaowen.ca

Australia (Sydney):

Lauren Tischendorf (1998) lm Tischendorf@gmail.com

Australia (Perth):

Jo Pletts (née Bird - 2004) jopletts@gmail.com

Middle East

Meagan Bremner (2010) meagenmbremner@gmail.com

UNIVERSITY REPS

Wits:

Nana Mwenechanya (2017) nanamwene@gmail.com
Nombulelo Zulu (2014) bulelombanjwa@gmail.com

Tuks:

Michelle Niebuhr (2017) michelleniebuhr@gmail.com

We are still on the lookout for more Area Ambassadors, local and International, so if you are interested in assisting us with organising Old Girl gatherings in your area, please contact Jane Cole-Edwardes on oldgirls@stjohnsdsg.com



What our Old Girls have been up to...

An Author's Visit

Old Girl, Gill Clark (née Schouten, Class of 1964) recently visited the St John's D.S.G. Grade 3 girls to read them her debut children's book, "The Adventures of Houdini the Hedgehog." Gill attended St John's D.S.G. from Grade 1 to Matric and was even Head Day Girl in 1964!

Gill (AKA Gilly Flower - her pen name) spoke to the girls about her journey as an author and was blown away by the insightfulness of the girls' questions. She also chatted to the Grade 3s about her time at St John's D.S.G. and the value of friendship and sisterhood. She even brought her best friend (and fellow Old Girl), Judy Scholtz (née Markham), with her, who she met in Grade 1!

Gill compiled two books together with her sister-in-law after the tragic death of her brother, which they both found extremely therapeutic. The books were never intended for publication, however their children had other ideas! Gill adds, "We are busy with the next two books and still enjoying the challenge!"



Keeping a Promise

At the end of Term 3, St John's D.S.G. announced the Prefect body for 2023. In the midst of all the excitement, St John's D.S.G. welcomed back two familiar faces - Old Girls, Mia Geyser and Tsungai Mbuyazi, from the class of 2019.

It turns out that both Mia and Tsungai promised the class of 2023 (who were their Grade 8s in their Matric year) that they would return to school for the 2023 Prefect announcement - and they kept that promise! Mia is currently at TUKS studying Psychology and Tsungai is studying Law in Johannesburg.

No Timeframe on Success

Carey Breetzke (née Watson, Class of 1998) is currently flying high in the corporate world and has recently relocated, along with her family, to the USA for her to take up a job as Global Head of Cross Border Marketing in the Visa (Credit Card) Head Office, San Francisco.

Carey, by her own admission, was not an "A" student or a prefect during her time at St John's D.S.G. and before embarking on her exciting journey to America, popped in to the school to share her story with the Grade 11 girls. She wanted to impart her motivational message with the girls that even though you may not "achieve" at school level, there are no limitations later on in life - you can still succeed in anything you set your mind to.

We wish Carey and her family all the best as they settle into their new life over the ocean!



Wedding Bells

Congratulations to Rebecca Bergs (née Groom, Class of 2014) who recently married Brendan at the beautiful Teza Game Farm, Mfolozi. Two of Rebecca's special bridesmaids were fellow St John's D.S.G. Old Girls, her sister (Tamsin Sheard, née Groom, Class of 2008) and her best friend (Jess Stegen, class of 2014).

Many of the guests in attendance were friends from school days too! Rebecca says, "I am forever grateful for my time at St John's D.S.G. It blessed me with lifelong friends, a foundation rooted in Christ and the courage to walk through this beautiful, sometimes crazy, life with resilience, a sense of peace and a lot of joy!"

Jessica Stegen (Class of 2014), Tamsin Sheard (née Groom, class of 2008). Rebecca's nephew was the ring bearer, Lee van Niekerk (née Symons, class of 2006 - who made their wedding cake and her little girl, Anah (certainly a future St John's D.S.G. girl!) was the flower girl.



Pictured here are: (1st pic) Megan Walsh, Sarah Currie, Jenna Bam & Jessica Stegen – all class of 2014.



1980 Reunion

St John's D.S.G. recently welcomed back 13 special ladies from the class of 1980, some of them having flown in from overseas for the event. The ladies enjoyed a walk down memory lane with a tour of the school, where they chatted to some of the current students, after which they spent a lovely morning reminiscing over a delicious tea. Thank you to Bronwen Lambert (née Reid) for organising the mini reunion.



World of Work Day

Every year, the Grade 11 St John's D.S.G. girls attend a World of Work Day, where they are treated to guest speakers from different professions. This allows the girls to hear different perspectives and ask questions with regards to future career choices. This year, the school had the pleasure of welcoming back a few St John's D.S.G. Old Girls:

Jackie Cameron (class of 2001), renowned chef, restaurateur and author; Kelly-Ann Fjellvik (class of 2017) a Sports Science graduate; Michelle Niebuhr (class of 2017), a qualified Physiotherapist and Kim McConnachie (nee McCallum, class of 2002), an HR specialist with 15 years' experience within human resource management, talent management and human resource operations.

Thank you, ladies, for taking time out of your busy schedules to come and chat to the girls.



Kelly-Ann Fjellvik



Michelle Niebuhr



Kim McConnachie



Jackie Cameron

The Nervous Novice

Kate Martens (née Gordon, Class of 2002) may have been a novice in this year's Comrades Marathon, but boy was this lady super dedicated. They say "third time lucky," and this was certainly true having entered the "ultimate human race" in both 2020 and 2021 – which of course didn't happen due to Covid-19! Being her first Comrades, she said that she had NO CLUE what to expect but was just looking forward to crossing the finishing line in Durban.

Kate finished her first Comrades in excellent time with a Bronze medal after a tough but enjoyable run.



Best of SASMT Music Eisteddfod

During August, St John's D.S.G. participated in the annual SASMT Music Eisteddfod. Four of our Senior School girls achieved top results in their instrument grade and were invited to perform in September at the "Best of Eisteddfod" concert, hosted by The Wykeham Collegiate.

History was made when Mrs Elizabeth Burczak (née Raab, class of 1982), was selected as the best Grade 5 violinist and her daughter, Victoria (Grade 8) as the best Grade 4 violinist!



Keeping in Touch

We love hearing from our special Old Girls who regularly meet up and keep in touch.

Pictured here is Lennie Turpin (née Impey), Jill Alderton (née Picket) and Susan Manning (née du Plessis).

All three ladies are currently living in a Golf Estate in Harare.



'Golden Oldies' Tea at Yard 41

On the 1st of December, we enjoyed a lovely morning of tea and cake with some of our 'Golden Oldies', ranging from the class of 1950 to 1986. Thank you to all these special ladies who joined us for the morning. Thank you to Mrs Sharon Kingham who has served on the Old Girls' Committee for 22 years. Now that her daughter, Mikayla, has matriculated from St John's D.S.G., Sharon will be stepping down as the Treasurer. We are grateful for all the time she has dedicated to the Old Girls Association.

If you would like to join us for our next Midlands tea and cake morning, please contact Mrs Jane Cole-Edwardes on oldgirls@stjohnsdsg.com.



Welcome to the Old Girls' Association

The Matrics of 2022 recently attended their Valedictory Service – their final Chapel Service of their school career.

It was a beautiful morning where Rev Di (Chaplain) shared a heartfelt message and Lucy Kewley (Chairlady of the Old Girls' Association) formally welcomed the Matrics as 'Old Girls'. They each received a beautiful silver heart pendant engraved with 'SJS 2022' as a gift from the Old Girls' Association.

We wish these young ladies all the best as they leave St John's D.S.G. and embark on new and exciting adventures ahead. We look forward to seeing them at future Old Girls' functions.



8 Old Girls were mums of Matric, 2022 girls.

Fun Facts

- ♥ St John's D.S.G. currently has 10 staff members who are Old Girls.
- ♥ There are 28 St John's D.S.G. Staff members who have daughters currently at the school.
- ♥ 41 girls (between Grades RR – 12) have moms who are St John's D.S.G. Old Girls.
- ♥ There are 29 sets of sisters in the Junior School, and 13 sets in the Senior School.
- ♥ The first wedding took place in the St John's D.S.G. Chapel in 1923.

Women's Day Luncheon

On 9 August, our Old Girls' Association hosted a Women's Day Lunch. It was fantastic to see so many of our current girls and Old Girls, along with the special ladies in their lives, at this much-anticipated event. Mags Hounsom, a passionate occupational therapist and proud wife and mother, was the guest speaker, who bravely shared her life story - one of love and loss.



The Old Girls' Gables

We have seen numerous additions and improvements to St John's D.S.G.'s infrastructure over the last 12 months, and included in this is the new Day Girl waiting area. This beautiful building, called 'The Old Girls' Gables,' is positioned at the Harwin Road entrance and will make a huge difference to those waiting to be collected.

The Old Girls' Association very generously donated towards the building cost of this project and the Parents' Association have donated the benches.



125th Celebrations

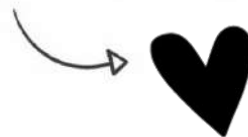
125th Birthday Video Series

Over the last 15 months, in the run up to the 125th birthday, St John's D.S.G. launched monthly videos, taking its viewers back in time to where it all began.

These short videos summarised our special school's history and revealed how St John's D.S.G. became what it is today – a small school with BIG heart.

We would like to introduce the incredible people who have worked so hard behind the scenes to make these videos a reality...

Click here to view the videos



Dale Hancock – The Director

Dale is a St John's D.S.G. dad and an international, award winning wildlife film maker and has recently received three Emmy Awards for his work in the hit Netflix documentary *Penguin Town*. Dale has used his expertise to compile and edit each video in line with our vision.

Abby Michie – The Scriptwriter

Abby is a Brand Manager at Hello Marketing based in Hilton and has a phenomenal flair for words. She has so accurately and succinctly scripted these videos to be informative and engaging.

Sbongile Mshengu – The Voice

Sbongile is our remarkable Senior School Secretary. Her gentle and soothing voice brings the script to life and captivates those watching from the very beginning.

Linda Ireland – The Historian

St John's D.S.G. Archivist, Linda, has a passion for history and is very well known in the Archivist field throughout South Africa. She has played a valuable role in sourcing photos and content.

Jane Cole-Edwardes – The Producer

Jane is our St John's D.S.G. 125th birthday co-ordinator (and Old Girls' Liaison) and together with the Marketing Department, has lovingly conceptualised this project from start to finish.



Birthday Cake

On Thursday, 18 August, St John's D.S.G. celebrated their official 125th birthday with a big old fashioned birthday party, and what jamboree is complete without a beautiful cake! This incredible three tiered birthday cake was made by the very talented Mrs Carol Parsons (Assistant Catering Manager) and we thought it would be fun to share just how much went into creating a master piece such as this...

- ♥ The cake included 57 eggs, 2kg of butter, 8.2kg of icing sugar, 4.36kg of sugar and 3.9kg of flour.
- ♥ Over 6kg of fondant totalling 1.35m² was used.
- ♥ The base layer of the cake had the school branding specially printed onto 7 x A4 sheets of icing which were carefully cut to size to fit around the sides of the cake.
- ♥ The top tier was decorated with exactly 125 gold and white hearts.
- ♥ 9.3m of ribbon was used.
- ♥ The centre dowel (which was custom made by Mrs Parsons' husband) stood 60cm high and an additional 8 dowels were used through the cake to support it.
- ♥ When complete, the cake weighed an astonishing 30.9kg!



Gala Dinner

On Saturday, 13 August, St John's D.S.G. held their 125th Gala Dinner, and what an incredible night it was! It was a magnificent evening with staff, parents, Old Girls and friends of the St John's D.S.G. community coming together to celebrate this momentous occasion in our special school's history.



Art with Heart

As part of the 125th birthday celebrations, St John's D.S.G. Old Girl, Kelly Higgs (Class of 1995), an amazingly talented and successful Botanical artist, gifted the school with an original painting.

On Monday, 10 October, Kelly joined the Matric Final Assembly to hand over this extremely special piece of art. She explained to the girls and staff how each element in her painting represented something special from her time at St John's D.S.G., from the nasturtium to the intricate trophy vase.

St John's D.S.G. is blessed to have received such a beautiful and personal gift representing our special school.



Save the Dates

Old Girls' Day - Saturday, 3 June 2023

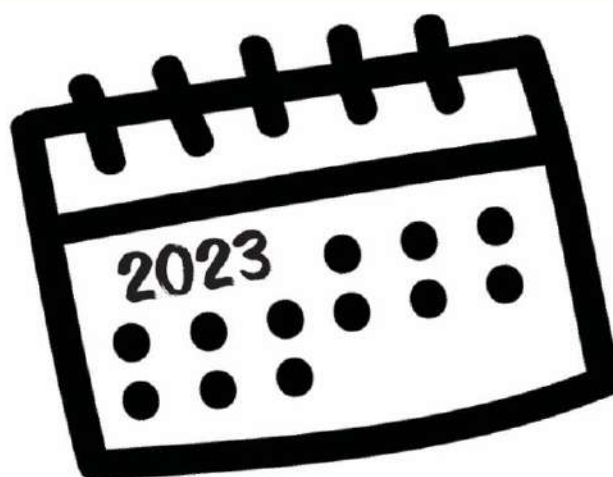
Old Girls' Gatherings

Ballito – Wednesday, 8 February 2023

Nottingham Road – Tuesday, 14 February 2023

Hillcrest - Thursday, 23 February 2023

Winterton – Wednesday, 8 March 2023



Should you wish to join any of these evenings, please contact Jane Cole-Edwardes on oldgirls@stjohnsdsg.com

Running Club

Did you know that St John's D.S.G. has started their very own running club? If you are interested in joining, or finding out more information, please contact Jane Cole-Edwardes on oldgirls@stjohnsdsg.com



Pastoral Postscript by Dr Bernice Borain

Re-joining St John's D.S.G. this year has been a homecoming in several ways. Despite only attending St John's D.S.G. for a short time in the 80s, I am reassured that this counts, thus, I find myself a proud Old Girl of the Junior Primary campus. I remember wearing a sea captain's hat, a magician's cloak, and still being terrified and impressed in assemblies by the discipline and order. There were nine of us in my class, and I remember this meant I was afforded far more attention by my teacher than I wanted.



Fast forward to this year, when I returned for a second time, in a pastoral role, working under Mr Moore's mentorship, to enhance relationship-building, leadership, discipline and inclusivity. In the latter portfolio, I have worked with our girls to forge ahead with work Sekwanele (Enough is Enough) started during the BLM movement.

You will remember the survey data compiled by conversation strategist, Nozipho Tshabalala, and her husband, Rorisang Tshabalala, and since then, our 2022 head girls have been instrumental in helping us form and name the new inclusivity advisory body, Sisonke. The Representative Council of Learners attend with a balance of learners and staff. The staff come from every part of our school – boarding, sport and academics, support and administration.

The purpose of this column is to tell you more about what Sisonke has been working on and to engage with you as much as we can. Our initial work centred on belonging and kindness. We have also considered more practical matters, collaborating on our inclusivity statement with girls and staff, and discussing whether we should consult the Heritage Committee to name buildings and other spaces to honour important people in our history.

Another practical issue has been navigating social justice issues in schools today. Our Christian Anglican ethos informs everything we do, and so too for this journey. Rev Di (St John's D.S.G. Chaplain) has been looking at biblical social justice, informing us of modern day slavery and foregrounding the predicament of the vulnerable quartet – the poor, the widow, the orphan and the refugee. More recently, she has spoken on biblical truth, and that informs our pastoral vision.

The next step is to consult with you. Our Sisonke committee would like to rename the houses to more accurately reflect who we are and remove the colonial names of men who have little to do with our school, especially the disreputable Cecil John Rhodes. We believe we can do better and show our community and visitors more respect by finding names that align with our identity and values. We flew different African eagle names past the girls, but this idea did not take off. Unfortunately, more bad eagle puns are to follow as you will have noted that we were not successful in hatching this plan. So we need your help. One idea might be to simply strip the names down to their colours and allow the girls to choose a theme every year. The other idea is to use the founding sisters' surnames – for reasons that will be quickly apparent, their first names have been vetoed – Fanny Bayly, Anna Hermann and Margaret Lucas. Bayly is associated with berries (red), Lucas with light (yellow) and Hermann with warrior (blue). A few of us believe this is appropriate and more relevant than the current names. No other discussions have taken place with students yet, but they will soon, and we would like to engage with you on this too. Click here or scan the QR code to share your thoughts and ideas:

Yours
*Dr Berni

Head of Senior School Student Affairs

Click here to
share your
thoughts.



** Dr Bernice Borain is a mother and an English teacher who has returned to St John's D.S.G. as the Head of Student Affairs. Most of her work entails pastoral matters, which include relationships, leadership and discipline, with a focus on restorative measures. Berni's thesis delves into Afro-Gothic and Afrofuturist texts from the Nigerian diaspora, and she teaches senior English to indulge her passion for literature. From time to time, the Pastoral Postscript from the school newsletter, "The Yellow Pages" will appear here to update and engage you on current matters that pertain to you as Old Girls.*

New Partnership



After many conversations, planning and strong relationship building, St John's D.S.G. and the St John's D.S.G Old Girls' Association is excited about their partnership with the Amathuba Foundation.

The Amathuba Foundation facilitates customised additional funding and provides personalised mentorship to girls coming to St John's D.S.G. from financially needy backgrounds.

Ali Kingsley of the Amathuba Foundation says, "We all know that access to a quality education sets one up for life. Whilst being offered a bursary-type opportunity is an incredible gift, there is a much greater need to closely walk alongside these scholars, and their families, as they navigate an unfamiliar environment and desire to belong and to thrive."

As a registered NPC, Amathuba raises funding, through relationship building, for both bursaries, the extra incidental costs as well as mentorship. "We see ourselves as ensuring a good return on investment for our donors," says Ali, who has walked with Amathuba's 25 scholars for many years through her involvement with the Frank Jackson Foundation. Together with her team of 15 part-time mentors, they experience the magic of opportunity and the effect it has on the trajectory of generations.

Contact Ali on info@amathubafoundation.org for details about how to contribute towards these outstanding youngsters becoming tomorrow's leaders.

To read more, please follow the link: 

Click here to view the clip featuring St John's D.S.G. and Simon Moore, Principal. 

Digital Archives

We are thrilled to let you know that our Digital Archives has been launched and is available on the St John's D.S.G. website. If you would like to access any of the past St John's D.S.G. School Magazines, please follow the link below.

Galleries



Click here to
view the Archives 

* Magazines 2011 - 2021 will be released soon.

Update Contact Details

We would love to get in touch with all our special Old Girls. Please take a minute to click on the heart below to update your contact details.

Not Online?

Click here to
update your details



We know that not everyone has access to online resources, so if you know of an Old Girl who is not online and who would benefit from having information posted to her, please email Jane Cole-Edwardes on **oldgirls@stjohnsdsg.com** with their name and postal address.

Link to Current News

If you aren't already following our St John's D.S.G. Old Girls' social media pages, please do so by clicking the link below. This is where we keep you up to date with what our Old Girls are up to as well as any important information regarding reunions date changes and future events.

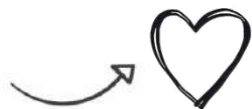
Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/stjohnsdsg>

Instagram: @stjohnsdsgoldgirls

If you would like to keep up to date with current school activities and news, please follow the link below to our monthly 'Yellow Pages'.

Yellow Pages:

Click Here



If social media isn't your thing, The Old Girls' section on the St John's D.S.G. website allows for easy access to any past Heart-to-Heart posts, newsletters and upcoming events.

<https://www.stjohnsdsg.com/old-girls-association/>

