

# Otago

UNIVERSITY OF

## MAGAZINE

ISSUE 17: JUNE 2007

**ENERGY SUSTAINABILITY:  
A COLLABORATIVE JOURNEY**

CROSS-EXAMINING THE LEGAL SYSTEM  
100 YEARS OF DENTAL EDUCATION  
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2007

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2 AUGUST BETTER MEDICINES THROUGH BETTER FORMULATIONS

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16 AUGUST THE AUSTRALIAN ELECTION 2007: IMPLICATIONS FOR  
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ASSOC PROF KEITH GORDON - **CHEMISTRY**

30 AUGUST NANOTECHNOLOGY: FRIEND OR FOE?

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13 SEPTEMBER MIDDLE EASTERN SCENARIOS IN THE 21ST CENTURY

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27 SEPTEMBER SEXUAL BEHAVIOUR & HEALTH IN A LONG RUNNING BIRTH COHORT

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20 JUNE THE CHANGING SUN AND CLIMATE CHANGE

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4 JULY IS A PICTURE WORTH A THOUSAND WORDS? THE CLINICAL  
AND LEGAL VALUE OF CHILDREN'S ART

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UNEQUAL HEALTH OUTCOMES?

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## CONTENTS

# M A G A Z I N E

**5**

**Vice-Chancellor's comment**

**6**

**The energy revolution**

Otago researchers take a collaborative approach.

**11**

**100 years of dental education**

The University of Otago Dental School celebrates its centenary.

**16**

**The financial forecaster**

Commerce graduate Cameron Bagrie.

**19**

**Like father ... like daughter**

Fulbright winners Irene and Professor Rob Ballagh.

**22**

**Dancing with cars**

Alumna Emma Gilmour races ahead.

**25**

**Ice queen**

Dr Pat Langhorne is a leader in the world of sea-ice geophysics.

**29**

**The waiting game**

Otago's new Legal Issues Centre.



6



11



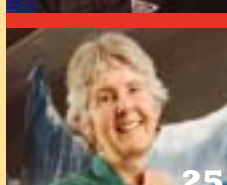
16



19



22



25

**32**

**InBrief**

Academic highlights.

**38**

**NZ wildlife inside out**

**39**

**Opinion**

Associate Professor David Perez.

**40**

**UniNews**

**43**

**UniClippings**

**44**

**Books**

**46**

**Hocken legacy**

**47**

**Alumni**

**51**

**Whatever happened to ...**

The Women's Room?

**17**  
ISSUE NUMBER

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In the last magazine I noted that the Ministry of Research, Science and Technology has concluded that Otago is New Zealand's most research-intensive university. In a separate exercise (known as the Performance-Based Research Fund), the Tertiary Education Commission has now given the University of Otago the highest ranking for research quality. Close behind Otago were Auckland and Canterbury, followed by Victoria, Waikato, Massey, Lincoln and AUT.

Otago had the highest ranked staff in more subject areas than any other university. The subjects are listed on page 40. Covering all four academic divisions, they included Clinical Medicine, Biomedical Sciences and Public Health. I mention Otago's top ranking in these fields because it vindicates a decision, more than 30 years ago, to expand our Faculty of Medicine to include campuses in Christchurch and Wellington.

There were two reasons for what seemed a radical decision. New Zealand was facing a serious shortage of doctors, while the clinical facilities in Dunedin were more suited to a smaller class – and could not accommodate further expansion. The first intake of fourth-year medical students entered the Christchurch Clinical School in 1973 and the Wellington Clinical School in 1977. Health workforce planning is notoriously unreliable and, no sooner had the new schools been set up, than people started worrying that New Zealand was producing too many doctors.

As a result, the Government reduced the intake of both the Otago and Auckland Medical Schools. This stymied the early development of Christchurch and Wellington, exacerbating tensions that were perhaps inevitable as schools developed in different cities in a country well known for its parochialism.

Despite such growing pains, the Christchurch and Wellington Schools of Medicine and Health Sciences have developed an outstanding international reputation. They play a major role in postgraduate education and research, and they underpin the quality of medical care in their regions. As a reviewer concluded in the 1980s, the Otago Medical School "consists of a three-legged stool, with each leg essential to the balance of the whole".

Recently there have been major building developments in Christchurch and a superb new building is being opened in Wellington this year. Our campuses in Wellington and Christchurch are also changing their names, to the University of Otago, Wellington and the University of Otago, Christchurch, respectively. The initiative to make this change came from the schools themselves and reflects the need to establish our University identity.

While the opening of campuses in different places seemed a radical move at the time, it is now commonplace for universities to have campuses in several cities (and even different countries). In New Zealand, for example, most people are familiar with Massey Palmerston North, Massey Albany and Massey Wellington. Another feature of modern university life, which some of us may regret, is an obsession with international rankings which affect staff and student recruitment. These commonly involve analyses of citation rates or of peer esteem as assessed by surveys of academics from other places. Many people (especially overseas) have not realised that the Christchurch and Wellington campuses are part of our University, so the reputation of the University suffers. Some of our most distinguished researchers and teachers are based at the Christchurch and Wellington campuses, so the recognition stemming from the new names will enhance the reputation of the whole University.

*David Skegg*

Professor David Skegg Vice-Chancellor – University of Otago



*Dr Janet Stephenson and Professor Gerry Carrington:  
"Energy comprises 10 per cent of the economy,  
but 90 per cent of the economy depends on it."*

# The energy revolution

**TECHNOLOGY WILL SOLVE ALL OUR ENERGY SUSTAINABILITY ISSUES, WON'T IT? FAR FROM IT, SAY ENERGY RESEARCHERS PROFESSOR GERRY CARRINGTON AND DR JANET STEPHENSON OF THE OTAGO ENERGY RESEARCH CENTRE.**

**PROFESSOR GERRY CARRINGTON** and Dr Janet Stephenson do not look like your typical revolutionaries. Not even closet ones. But together with a host of other top-line researchers, both at the University of Otago and nationwide, they are part of a group that is serious about shifting New Zealand to a sustainable energy path by using the combined forces of our researchers.

"We have huge issues facing us, both nationally and globally, in terms of energy constraints and, more particularly, how our use of fossil fuels contributes to global warming," says Stephenson.

"And we need to address those issues with a very broad front of knowledge because the solutions are not necessarily going to come from a single magic bullet."

Adds Carrington: "What we have to do over the next 40 years, if we are going to be successful, is to reconstitute entirely our systems for the supply and consumption of energy." It has to be appropriate for commercial and domestic consumers alike, and it has to be done in an affordable way, he says.

"To turn this around in 40 years is not trivial and there are major commercial forces reluctant to contemplate that kind of revolution."

Carrington is head of the Department of Physics at Otago, and leader of the Otago Energy Research Centre and the associated National Energy Research Institute.

Stephenson is a planning expert from the Department of Geography and convenor of the Otago centre. Both are passionate about the need for collaborative, multidisciplinary approaches to one of the modern world's most pressing quests – energy sustainability.

"The idea of changing the way we produce and consume energy in the space of the next three or four decades is horrendous in its implications," says Carrington. "And there are still some people who say, 'Look, come on, this is just a rush of blood to the head ...'"

"But the truth is we've seen this particular storm [carbon emissions and related climate change] brewing over the last 15 years. It has been on the radar for at least that long and at no stage has it gone backwards."

In March 2004 Carrington called together a group of interested University of Otago researchers for a day-long workshop on sustainable energy issues. For him it was the next logical step in an active interest that reaches back three decades. For others, it was something of a watershed.

Stephenson explains: "The upshot of that workshop has been the establishment of the Otago Energy Research Centre (OERC) which is a formalisation of the strong linkages starting to be established among energy researchers throughout the University."

"We are officially recognised as a Research Centre with a capital R and a capital C ..."



“It’s the beginning of a bit of a head of steam, not only in terms of our own work as individuals, but also in terms of a cluster of strengths we can offer to industry and others who want research done.

“It feels like the time is right for something like this,” she adds, “because everywhere we go to talk about it researchers are saying, ‘Yes, we can see the scale of the problem is huge’. And Helen Clark’s Statement to Parliament for 2007 was talking about sustainability and carbon neutrality – it’s a vision that is shared by researchers.”

“Energy comprises 10 per cent of the economy, but 90 per cent of the economy depends on it,” says Carrington. To underscore the point he cites last June’s Auckland power outage, caused when a shackle broke.

“For every dollar’s worth of electricity you don’t get, it costs the economy \$100 ... that’s a ratio of 100 to 1.”

The Otago Energy Research Centre was officially launched in March this year. It brings together about 40 researchers with an interest in energy issues. Its primary focus is the complex interaction among energy supply, energy users, human behaviour, social processes and economic forces, and the implications of all this for climate change and the environment.

The centre is unusual in its visionary “holistic” approach to sustainability. It challenges, but does not exclude, the

popular notion of the quick technological fix, by insisting on collaborative multidisciplinary pathways.

“Our energy system is so interlinked – a linked jigsaw puzzle. You can’t change the picture of the puzzle by focusing only on individual pieces,” observes Carrington.

The aim, he says, is to “defragment what is an intensely and deeply fragmented area of endeavour, both in terms of research and in terms of policy”. And it is about building the appropriate infrastructure – a challenge in itself.

He cites the example of his attendance at a recent Ministry of Research, Science and Technology meeting in Wellington on infrastructure funding for the research sector.

“They were talking about physical equipment – do you want a spectrometer, a laser? – until I made a point that cut across the meeting. I said that what we need in energy is the infrastructure that will hold the research groups together ...”

Those groups come from numerous academic disciplines, including accountancy, anthropology, biochemistry, chemistry, design, economics, engineering, geography, geology, information science, law, marketing, medicine, physics, psychology, surveying, tourism and zoology.

“I can’t think of a discipline that doesn’t have a role to play here.”

**“Our energy system is so interlinked – a linked jigsaw puzzle. You can’t**



Stephenson offers a topical example of the need for multidisciplinary problem-solving – wind turbines.

“Wind turbines need engineering expertise to work out the mechanical and electrical requirements. But we also need to consider other things, including the value of the landscape, the environmental impact of the turbines, alternative energy sources, or using present energy sources more efficiently.”

Networking and collaborating, both nationally and internationally, are also central to the centre’s aims and, to date, linkages have been formed with all the other major universities as well as interested entities such as CRL Energy Ltd, Landcare Research, Crop and Food Research, Centre for Advanced Engineering, Industrial Research Ltd and the Institute of Geological and Nuclear Sciences.

Creating such an extensive network of contacts and like-minded energy researchers has enabled other initiatives. One of these is the National Energy Research Institute (NERI), based at the University of Otago, which will receive Tertiary Education Commission funding of \$1.5 million from 1 July 2007.

“There were four broad areas – research, education, community outreach and industry relations – that, as a group of collaborating organisations, we felt had to be addressed,” says Stephenson.

Through NERI’s activities, this translates into better research co-ordination through improved networking among energy research organisations; improving the quality and depth of energy education in New Zealand; developing stronger relationships and understandings between researchers and the energy industry, energy consumers, iwi and government; improved education in energy-related professions and trades, and so on.

In a further development in a snowballing field, an application this year for Centre of Research Excellence (CoRE) funding, again based at Otago, provided the perfect opportunity to consolidate relationships already established through NERI, create new ones and pull together an impressive and wide-ranging body of existing and mooted research projects.

It is intended that many of the projects will proceed regardless of the CoRE decision.

This comprehensive research programme would focus on new and improved sources of renewable energy, reducing dependence on fossil fuels, and more efficient use of energy. Research would be grouped within five themes (see panel page 10).

Again, a central theme of the project would be the need for collaboration across disciplines. “It’s easy to assume that a new form of energy or a new type of motor will be

**change the picture of the puzzle by focusing only on individual pieces.”**



the answer to all our energy problems ... but it's far more complex than this," says Stephenson.

"Unless you involve people from different fields of knowledge, you may find that the emperor's got no clothes – it's not going to work because of a mismatch with another part of the energy system, or with people's preferences.

"Windpower's a good example. The technology's great, but it's meeting resistance from communities who don't want a wind farm on their hills. If you look at an issue from a number of different angles, you get a much better appreciation of its benefits and its drawbacks, and how best to move forward without stumbling."

Carrington knows this better than most. His team's development of energy-efficient heat-pump technologies for industrial drying has experienced resistance from businesses, even though it provided clear economic and processing benefits.

"We do need new technologies," he says. "But we need to find ways to get them embedded with the consumer

... and there are many things we can do to facilitate the uptake."

Understanding why energy consumers – industrial or domestic – make the choices they do is a large part of this and is where marketing, design, economics, anthropology and psychology, even law, may come in.

He offers an example – the logic-defying response of consumers to apparently commonsense energy solutions: "I know my house is cold and miserable, but don't talk to me about insulation and double-glazing."

They are responses that go to the heart of the multidisciplinary approach. Says Carrington: "We will make absolutely no progress in our energy sustainability until we have a broad-based understanding of the options for the energy system as a whole."

It is in this kernel of wisdom that the seeds of the energy revolution lie.

*Simon Cunliffe*

## RESEARCH THEMES FOR ENERGY SUSTAINABILITY

### Renewable Energy Systems

Developing and enhancing innovative techniques for harnessing wind, geothermal and solar energy; contributing to improved biofuels production.

### Sustainable Transport Systems

Developing blueprints for renewable-energy transport systems, promoting improvements in energy efficiencies of vehicle fleets and reducing the risk to the transport system from constrained or high-priced fuels.

### Energy Efficient Technologies

Developing leading-edge technologies with significant potential energy savings (for example, in dairy processing, refrigeration and industrial drying) and improving the uptake of energy-efficient technologies by industry and households.

### Macro Influences

Understanding how national policies, laws, trade and markets affect the supply and demand of energy (for example, modelling the trade implications of New Zealand's international commitments on energy use – the Kyoto Protocol); modelling future energy scenarios; suggesting improvements to energy regulation and the legal regime for renewable energy developments.

### Micro Influences

Understanding how the behaviour of individuals or groups affects energy use; removing barriers to energy-conscious decision-making; understanding why people choose particular energy goods and services, how different lifestyles affect energy uses and how families make everyday decisions about travel choices.

# 100 years of dental education



Photo: Hocken Collections

*University of Otago Dental Hospital 1908. It was officially opened on 1 July 1907.*

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**A CENTURY AGO PREVENTIVE DENTISTRY WAS ALMOST UNKNOWN IN NEW ZEALAND. NOW, 100 YEARS AFTER THE ESTABLISHMENT OF THE UNIVERSITY OF OTAGO DENTAL SCHOOL, THIS IS A PROFESSION TRANSFORMED.**

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**TURN BACK THE CLOCK** 100 years to the opening of the first Dental School and you would find a dental profession that was barely cutting its teeth.

In 1800s' New Zealand, dentistry was largely a sideline for backstreet quacks, the local chemist, the strong wrists of the town blacksmith or even visiting clergy.

According to *A History of Dentistry in New Zealand*, written by Professor Tom Brooking from the University of Otago's Department of History, dentists were basically artisans trained as apprentices. Treatment mainly involved tooth extraction – preventive dentistry was virtually unknown.

By the 1880s technological advances such as purpose-built drills and chairs increased the range of work a dentist could perform.

Meanwhile, several strong personalities were leading a shift in political will. One of dentistry's earliest professionals Thomas Hunter – who was later knighted – championed the raising of standards of care and training through the establishment of a dental association and a properly-equipped, university-led Dental School.

Local politician Thomas K Sidey's significant contributions included a 1904 private member's bill bringing dental education under the umbrella of the then University of New Zealand.

By the time the New Zealand Dental Association (NZDA) was formed in 1905, there were 464 registered dentists, with varying qualifications. The push for a Dental School was gathering momentum with both the Senate of the University of New Zealand and the Council of the University of Otago playing active roles.

High standards were advocated from the start. Candidates first had to pass the medical intermediate examination, and the three-year degree balanced the biological and mechanical aspects of dentistry and required practical dental-hospital experience.

Not for the first time, funding issues loomed large with the Government prepared to commit only £1,500 of the required £2,500 for the new Dental School building on the corner of Union and Castle Streets – the building that now houses the University Staff Club.

It took the NZDA to guarantee a £1,000 contribution for construction to begin.

The Dental Hospital was opened on 1 July 1907 and was soon besieged by patients, but the Dental School itself didn't officially open until 1908 when Dr H Percival Pickerill – the first of several notable characters to serve as dean – admitted his first three students.

Right from the start, he placed a heavy emphasis on the biological aspects of dentistry, a legacy that remains today.



*The official opening of the University of Otago Dental School 1908.*





*The Faculty of Dentistry in 1926, with Dr H Percival Pickerill seated centre front row.*

He worked hard to maintain the faculty's status and lobbied persistently for funding.

Pickerill's own research programme covered a wide range of subjects, including the structure of enamel, the role of saliva in the prevention of dental caries and reconstructive surgery of the face and jaw.

After World War One both the Faculty of Dentistry and the profession were taking major steps forward. Bursaries attracted more students, staff numbers grew and Pickerill pushed for a new building in Great King Street. Its June 1926 opening symbolised victory over persistent efforts to have the school moved to Auckland.

By the time Pickerill left in 1927, to further his pioneering work in reconstructive plastic surgery, the faculty was in good heart. Student numbers continued to grow – from 104 in 1929 to 136 in 1936, under the then dean Professor R Bevan Dodds.



*By 1926, there were 60 chairs in commission.*

## THE WALSH ERA - 1947-72



*Sir John Walsh.*

John Walsh's arrival as dean in 1947 marked the beginning of a defining era for the Faculty of Dentistry.

A self-described "brash Australian", Walsh held both dental and medical degrees. He took control immediately, beginning an inquiry into the faculty's future requirements. Even though the roll stood at 172, Walsh felt more graduates were needed to meet future demands.

During his tenure undergraduate and graduate numbers increased while new specialties such as oral pathology, orthodontics and periodontics were introduced. Dentistry in general benefited from an era of prosperity and technological innovation.

One of Walsh's passions was the high-speed air-powered drill. He designed a handpiece that operated at 60,000rpm, avoiding unpleasant vibrations and providing faster cutting with less pressure.

While he was involved in developing a useable prototype, problems with seizing bearings all but halted the project. A similar high-speed drill was eventually manufactured in America and, despite arguments about who was first, it is clear that Walsh played an important part in pioneering the concept and design.

Photos: Hocken Collections



*The Dental School surgery 1949.*

Eventually knighted for his work, one of Sir John Walsh's lasting legacies was the Dental School building which now bears his name. Its 1961 opening was the culmination of a 10-year-plus push for a modern building featuring up-to-date facilities.

One of the Dental Faculty's longest serving current staff members, deputy dean and head of oral biology, Professor Tom Kardos first came to Otago as a student in the Walsh era before joining the staff in 1970. He says there had always been an emphasis on integrating clinical work and research.

"So when Walsh designed the building in the late 1950s it was to provide modern facilities for basic and clinical research in addition to clinical training."

When a new wing was added in the 1980s, under the leadership of then dean Professor Martin Kean, a floor devoted to research was again included.

The Dental Faculty's status as one of the University's research centres was also underscored in more recent years by the establishment of a research theme in Oral Microbiology and Dental Health.

During his career Kardos has seen the undergraduate student intake rise from 60 per year to 120 per year to access three programmes – dentistry, oral health and dental technology. Postgraduate student numbers have also risen significantly to more than 60.

He has also seen changes in undergraduate teaching. "I came through a system that was teacher-centred with little diversity in opportunities for learning. Now the three programmes offered in the faculty are more student-centred."

### THE NEXT 100 YEARS

Although he has been here a little over 18 months, the current dean of the Faculty of Dentistry, Professor Greg Seymour, has already overseen important changes.

Two new degrees and the establishment of the Sir John Walsh Research Institute represent important changes which will determine the direction for teaching and research in the future.

One of the new degrees, the Bachelor of Oral Health, combines the dental therapy and dental hygiene programmes into a single three-year degree.

"In this new programme it will be social sciences that will provide the knowledge and research base, rather than just the biological sciences," says Seymour. "The focus will be on the prevention of disease."

A Doctorate of Clinical Dentistry, the University's first professional doctorate, will replace the previous Master of Dental Surgery degree. "While we are not the first to provide such a clinical doctorate it does place us up there with the best worldwide," says Seymour.

The establishment of the Sir John Walsh Research Institute is a recent initiative which will provide a major focus for the faculty, he says.

"It will build on existing expertise in the faculty and also provide a future research base for the profession of dentistry in New Zealand with a national and international focus.

"By creating an institute that will bring together a number of research groups, we will be able to strengthen our research focus on oral health issues and be responsive to the needs of the community and dental professions."

As it has been several times over the past 100 years, the biggest issue currently facing the faculty is the state of the building and equipment, for both clinical services and research.

"While the standard of education and training is as high as anywhere in the world, the equipment and facilities are at the stage where they will start reducing the quality of graduates and research contribution in the future," says Seymour.



Photo: Todd Sisson

### Current dean Professor Greg Seymour.

A feasibility study, proposed by the University, will look at the options for redevelopment.

Like his predecessors, Seymour is positive about the faculty's future prospects and potential.

"The initiatives for a new research institute and new degree programmes have all set the scene for the Faculty of Dentistry to enhance its roles in improving oral health, advancing the dental professions and contributing to a research-led University.

"The expertise and ability of the staff, and the enthusiasm and quality of the students, will ensure that the faculty has an exciting future. A new, well-resourced building would be the perfect additional ingredient for this recipe for success."

Mark Wright



**ALUMNI PROFILE**



*ANZ National Bank chief economist Cameron Bagrie:  
"I'm paid to take a view ... Right now productivity  
growth is deteriorating."*



# The financial forecaster

---

**OTAGO COMMERCE GRADUATE CAMERON BAGRIE COMBINES  
“STREET SMARTS” WITH SOUND ANALYSIS TO PREDICT AND  
COMMENT ON ECONOMIC TRENDS AND DIRECTION.**

---

**GOING UP – INTEREST RATES**, mortgage costs, property prices, the dollar.

Going down – exports, tourism, migrants, first-time househunters’ hopes.

Maybe.

The world of finance is full of nightmare uncertainty. How do we make sense of it all? Well, we don’t have to. In order to answer some of our questions, someone came up with economists.

So we ask people like Otago graduate Cameron Bagrie, now chief economist for the ANZ National Bank.

It’s his job to forecast the future – testing the financial wind so we can all set a good course for monetary success.

It’s not a job for the faint-hearted.

“You’re never going to get everything 100 per cent right,” says Bagrie. “The biggest benchmark is that you still have a job – you won’t keep it for long if you are wrong too many times.”

Bagrie’s been in the top job for more than 12 months. Before that he was head of Market Economics and Strategy. After eight years at the bank and three years with Treasury, he must be doing something right.

His team prepares a range of economic research to service markets, internal business units and external clients. Part of his role is communicating their findings to an eager public. For many, that means looking into the crystal ball to predict fluctuations in interest rates and currency changes.

Is there an element of soothsaying or dart throwing? Bagrie laughs. “Yes, but it’s based on a combination of really good analytical groundwork and natural intuition. Some people are really quite good at throwing darts!

“We convey a risk profile and it is not just about being right or wrong. And you have to be prepared to change your position when things happen.

“The job is as much about being street smart as academic smart. Things do go in cycles. We’ve had a rough run on picking currency changes lately, but were on fire the preceding two years. Hindsight is a wonderful thing.”

It makes for an exciting life. Reporting on key macroeconomic trends means Bagrie is often quoted in the media, pleasing some and upsetting others.

“I have a good relationship with the media. It’s a bit rough getting up at 5.30am to do breakfast television, but it’s fun. You have to be a bit of a Jack-of-all-trades and I enjoy the debate.”

Late last year Bagrie found himself up against Council of Trade Unions president Ross Wilson after suggesting that the unemployment rate would rise in order for inflation to fall. Wilson suggested Bagrie should lead by example and find out first-hand what it felt like to be in the dole queue.

Bagrie stands by his comments. “I’m paid to take a view and I feel I’m better off, firstly, to have a view and, secondly, be honest about it. You have to have broad shoulders in this job. You’re regularly being attacked. The manner of the

**“It’s strange how the public demands excellence from all our sports teams, yet we don’t have the same aggressive attitude in business you find elsewhere.”**

attacks sometimes reflects the quality of some individuals, but it is not a level I’m going to stoop to.”

Generally Bagrie gets a warm reception on the public speaking circuit, all part of the job and all done in his own style.

“Most people arrive with 40 PowerPoint slides and you can see people nodding off after the first few. I don’t use them any more, but tend to fly by the seat of my pants. It would be a full-time job preparing presentations otherwise. I have a basic structure and some key messages I want to get across, but it’s important to present them in an interesting fashion.

“We’re here to help clients – to add value for them. We look at what is likely to occur over the next two years, broad trends over 10 to 15 years, and enter into debates on public policy.”

Bagrie’s key issue at present? Productivity growth. It underpins how much money we make, asset valuations and the living standards our children will enjoy.

“Right now productivity growth is deteriorating. We need to have some change. We’re in cruise mode and that’s not good enough. It’s strange how the public demands excellence from all our sports teams, yet we don’t have the same aggressive attitude in business you find elsewhere.

“I could work offshore, but I’ve made a conscious decision to stay here in New Zealand – it’s still a great place to be.”

Bagrie grew up in Alexandra and came to economics in a roundabout fashion while working towards a commerce degree at the University of Otago.

“I’d started thinking of being an architect, then an accountant. That was a safe career, but I studied it a bit and thought this is insane. I tried law – the money appealed, but the subject didn’t – and I did the usual student trick of too much partying and not enough lectures. I didn’t really know what I wanted to do, but then I discovered economics and started to knuckle down. In the third year I started mapping out a career plan and actually doing some work.”

After graduating with a BCom in economics at Otago in 1992, Bagrie moved north for a master’s on the way to Wellington.

“The two best employers for economists are the New Zealand Treasury and the Reserve Bank. If you do well you can make a name for yourself. I was lucky enough to get into Treasury and it was head down bum up for three years. Treasury still has a touch of academia about it. It was a gentle introduction to real-world finances.

“They invest a lot of resources in you. I learned a lot about advising the Government on macroeconomic issues, moving up, building relationships with some high-profile people.

“I worked with some smart people – the cream of the cream – but it is still bureaucracy gone mad. I’m a typical alpha male and wanted to get things done. So when the National Bank said ‘come for a chat’. I did, and walked away with a new job.”

After seven years providing analysis, forecasts and commentary on economic developments, Bagrie took over from his predecessor, John McDermott, who moved to a university position.

Now it is Bagrie making the calls to hire up-and-coming new economists from Treasury and touring the world trying to make sense of our financial future.

“I travel for maybe half the year. It’s hard on relationships, especially now with a nine-month-old, but it’s for a limited time. You’re never sure how long the body will hold out. I have no intention of dropping dead of a heart attack. I get out a little to unwind and try to keep the pounds off with gym work. You have to make a conscious effort to look after yourself.”

Bagrie admits that rugby and sport have fallen by the wayside, although he does walk his two energetic huntaway-Doberman dogs around the Wellington hills and goes mountain biking when he can.

At 36, financial forecaster Bagrie has his own future mapped out.

“I plan to come back to the South Island. I intend to return and get into business. I’m interested in helping to bring some more leadership to the region. Otago is where my heart is.”

*Nigel Zega*



Photo: Lindsay Somerville

*Father and daughter Fulbright winners, Irene and Professor Rob Ballagh.*

# Like father ... like daughter

**UNIVERSITY OF OTAGO** neuroscience honours graduate Irene Ballagh has just won one of the United States government's most prestigious and valuable scholarships, worth more than \$US250,000.

The International Fulbright Science and Technology Award is a new American initiative to attract the world's best students in science, technology or engineering to study in the United States.

First offered in 2006, it attracted 119 nominations from 70 countries. Irene was one of just 27 successful applicants and will spend the next five years doing postgraduate work in the States.

"It's pretty amazing to be one of the students chosen," she says. "It's a tremendous vote of confidence.

"It's great to have the security that I do have a university place and that I won't have to worry about the money." The award will go towards tuition, travel, living expenses, and includes book and research allowances.

"I'm very excited. America is going to be a big challenge. England is a different country from New Zealand, but you know the rules. America is effectively a foreign country. It will be a big learning experience."

Irene's academic achievements have already earned her the University of Otago's Dostoevsky Prize in Psychology and the Sir George Grey Prestige Scholarship in Science.

Now she is following in her father's Fulbright footsteps – although in a different discipline.

Professor Rob Ballagh won a Fulbright scholarship in 1973 and studied theoretical physics at the University of Colorado before returning to New Zealand and joining the Department of Physics at Otago.

Over the past decade he has led the Otago Ultra-Cold Atoms Group, which is making waves at the cutting edge of quantum science and was one of the first in the world to produce a Bose-Einstein condensate at temperatures approaching absolute zero.

"This is a fantastic opportunity for Irene and I feel very proud of her," he says. "I could always tell she had some talent as a kid, but you never quite know what that level is. We're very happy for her. It's a tremendous start to her career.

"We always advised our daughters that we'd support them studying anything that interested them. Education is about expanding your mind in all directions, not just training for a job. Irene has been fortunate to work with some great intellects at Otago. She has truly had a world-class education and that has enabled her to find the thing that really thrills her."

Irene took a while to find neuroscience. Early on at Otago she studied widely – biochemistry, anthropology, history and political science. She went on to psychology and has studied neuroscience since 2005.

"I always wanted to go on to postgraduate education, but didn't know whether it would be arts or sciences," she says.

"I was interested in both equally, but I decided to go with science at the end of my first year. I felt that in science you can do something that will be productive and helpful for people directly."

After fielding offers from Columbia, Yale, MIT and Minnesota, Irene decided on Columbia in New York, in a department headed by Nobel Prize winner Professor Eric Kandel, an expert on memory formation.

"Neuroscience is the study of the brain, which is what makes people people. How do we find out how things work? How does the brain change?" she says.

"Columbia combines neurobiology and behaviour. You're not just exploring the brain, but seeing what affects behaviour. It's a nice cross between the two and has practical applications. One of the hopes is that soon we may be able to prevent Alzheimer's disease – not cure it yet, but stop it happening."

In interviews with the top American universities, Irene learned that New Zealand neuroscientists were well-respected internationally. But the Fulbright opens doors that might otherwise remain closed.

"There is some great work being done in neuroscience in New Zealand, but there are some things in the biological sciences that are just not possible to do here. In America there are different levels of technology and funding – you can do science-fiction things."

Rob Ballagh faced a similar situation 34 years ago. "The Fulbright helped enormously for me to get to the United

**"We have to build an attractive environment for our students to come back to and for other graduate students to come to New Zealand." – Professor Rob Ballagh.**



States to study theoretical physics. I could not have done that study at the time in New Zealand. It set me up for a career here in a way that would not have been possible without that experience,” he says.

In the past it was expected that students would go overseas for postgraduate work and, even when Ballagh came to Otago in 1979, he was likely to recommend that ambitious students should look overseas for their postgraduate studies.

But things were changing and he was part of that change.

“Lots of things bring you back to New Zealand. It’s a great country with a great lifestyle. But I had ambitions and hoped I could still make an impact in my field from Otago.

“Some of my older colleagues in physics were leading the way with an attitude that you could do world-leading work in New Zealand. That attitude rubbed off on me and that, combined with the fact that theoretical physics is not too expensive to fund, made us determined that New Zealand should compete with the best.

“My colleagues Dan Walls and Crispin Gardiner established New Zealand as a leading force in quantum optics. By the 1980s it became a good option for students to stay here. By the 1990s postgraduate study in a number of fields in New Zealand was competitive with anywhere else in the world. At Otago, there were great groups in a number of different disciplines. Now it is possible for postgraduate students to achieve at the highest levels.”

Ballagh’s work with the Ultra-Cold Atoms group is a case in point. “Since 1996, when we decided to work in the area of ultra-cold atoms, we have achieved a lot of prominence in terms of the science we have done, both internationally and within the University. We have gained a lot of respect overseas, and major international figures come to visit and work with us.

“An important factor is that there are more opportunities for science funding than there used to be. Funding for our work comes mainly from the Marsden Fund which is small, but focused on excellent ‘blue sky’ science.

“It’s a great fund, but is starved of money. The country needs a balance of applied and pure science, and we haven’t quite got it right yet.”

New Zealand also needs to hang on to its own talented graduates and attract those from overseas, he says.

“Students from all countries can go anywhere these days. We have to build an attractive environment for our students to come back to and for other graduate students to come to New Zealand.

“Many want to come here because they like the country. We have to offer them a rich academic environment as well.



Photo: Lindsay Somerville

**Irene Ballagh: “In America there are different levels of technology and funding – you can do science-fiction things.”**

We may not be able to do so in all areas, but we can do it in some.

“I’m very happy that I came back to New Zealand. The University of Otago is a great place to work and Dunedin is a great place to live and bring up a family. I may not have been able to have the same success in the United States or in Europe.”

Like any proud dad, Rob Ballagh hopes his daughter will return to New Zealand one day. Irene hopes so, too. “I’m not sure if I can see six years into the future, but I would definitely like to come home.”

Nigel Zega

## ALUMNI PROFILE



Photo: Todd Simpson

*Emma Gilmour: "It's just this amazing feeling ... it's like making the car dance."*

**PUT ACE RALLY-CAR DRIVER** Emma Gilmour in the co-driver's seat and she'll have to take carsickness tablets. Place her in front of one of those simulated Playstation rally games and her stomach will revolt. But let her get her hands on the steering wheel and she's a different woman altogether. "I'm a shocking passenger, but I'm fine when I'm driving."

This adrenalin-hungry 26 year-old is happiest when hurtling along a gravel road in her rally car, trying to nudge ahead of her competitors. "It's just this amazing feeling," says Gilmour. "You feel at one with the car, like it's an extension of yourself. When everything's working perfectly and you're getting from apex to apex, it's a huge rush. It's like making the car dance."

She hasn't always been a petrol head. From the age of eight until she was in her early 20s, horses were Gilmour's thing. She was hell-bent on equestrian life and dreamt of

representing New Zealand at the Olympics in the three-day event. She thinks there's more bravery involved in sitting atop a fast-moving maned creature than there is in sitting behind the wheel at a rally.

"I think horse riding is one of the most fearless sports around, especially the cross-country riding. I mean, you've got half a tonne of animal that might fall on you – it's a really gutsy sport."

But she lost her horse-riding nerve after an encounter with a cantankerous young horse.

"He was rearing up so I got off because I was really scared, and you know from pony club that you've *got to* get back on them and show them who's boss. And I thought, 'no, I don't want to get back on you'. I bawled my eyes out all the way home. And that was it. I gave it up – cold turkey. I also had a couple of friends who'd had bad accidents – one had her hip replaced and another had a head injury. I suppose you

# Dancing with cars

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**WITH A DEGREE IN DESIGN STUDIES BEHIND HER,  
EMMA GILMOUR IS DRIVING – FAST – TOWARDS  
AN ADRENALINE-CHARGED NEW CAREER.**

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don't mind injuring yourself if you're doing something you really love, but I just wasn't getting enough of a kick out of it anymore."

With horses off the menu, she tried her hand at downhill mountain-bike riding, trail bikes and rowing. She was also completing a design studies degree at the University of Otago during this time (with side helpings of history, philosophy and management). Design studies tickled her creativity, but it did nothing to close the yawning adrenaline gap in her life.

And so it was that she climbed into the rally-car driver's seat in 2002 (with a few years of co-driving under her belt) and stunned fellow racers and onlookers at her first tarmac event, the Targa Bambina Rally. Her father, an A-grade mechanic, offered to sit with her in the co-driver's seat to make sure she was OK. She was more than OK: she came first in the 4WD class and sixth overall from 98 entries.

"Dad was just totally blown away by how quickly I picked it up," says Gilmour. "I was just instantly fast."

Thus emboldened, she asked Australian World Rally Championship co-driver Glenn Macneall if he'd team up with her for her first gravel race. Much to her surprise he said "yes", popped across the Tasman for the event and pronounced her "seriously talented" (and, as it happens, also found her seriously fanciable – romance bloomed soon thereafter).

Macneall's thumbs-up convinced her to pursue this penny-sucking sport as more than just a hobby, and since then it's been onwards and upwards. Gilmour has consistently managed competitive times at both local and international rallies, and was profiled as the "next big thing" in the *Sunday Star Times* magazine in 2003. In 2006 she won the Rally Founders Trophy, awarded annually to the New Zealand rally driver who not only performs with

**“ I’m not someone who gets really het up about feminist issues ... I don’t want to be the first woman home – I’d rather be the first competitor home.”**

distinction, but also demonstrates a sportsman-like attitude and is a worthy ambassador of the sport. Another milestone was achieved in April when she was runner-up in the Otago Rally, the best result of her career so far.

Gilmour knows that the reason she was such an immediate media and sponsorship magnet was due, in part, to the simple fact of her sex. “There are very very few girls who are fast. There’ve been a lot of girls in motorsport who’ve come in and marketed the whole girl-in-a-male-sport thing and it works for a short time, but if you’re not getting results, it doesn’t last.”

Female drivers have long been ill-served by that weary old stereotype – one that has them riding the clutch, slowing the traffic and being far more interested in the colour of the car than its engine specifications. When asked if this old chestnut has dogged her progress through the ranks Gilmour says, “no”.

“But then I suppose I’m not someone who gets really het up about feminist issues. If I was someone who bit at every comment I heard they’d probably wind me up more, but because I just sort of roll with it they take me seriously. I’m not there to push the whole women’s issue. I don’t want to be the first woman home – I’d rather be the first competitor home. And the boys are really good – if I make a real effort to try and learn something about a car they make a real effort to teach me about it. And I think that would be the same with any woman and a car – if women show an interest in it, generally a guy will be happy to teach them about it.”

In between racing events, she works out team logistics, seeks much-needed sponsorship, has a hand in the Dunedin family business (Gilmour Motors) and, with partner Macneall, is in the throes of starting up a new motor accessories store. She also works on keeping herself in good physical nick because rally-car driving, while largely conducted from one’s butt, is actually a lot more physically demanding than you’d expect. Gilmour and other drivers once did a test in which they wore heart-rate

monitors for the length of an event and were amazed to see that their heart rates nudged the 180–190 beats-per-minute mark. “You wouldn’t think it,” she says, “because it’s not aerobic, but it’s pretty taxing on the body so you need to be fit. And you get quite hot because you’ve got your full overalls and balaclava and helmet on.”

Along with physical stamina and natural speed, a top rally-car driver needs to be blessed with a good dose of fearlessness. While motor-love runs in the Gilmour blood (her grandfather was also a mechanic) she also seems to have native unshakeable pluck.

“I suppose I’d say that I’m pretty gutsy. When I’m driving fast in a car, I don’t feel in danger and that’s probably due to being brought up around speed. You need to be strong mentally – I’m pretty unflappable. My confidence is probably my weakest link in that I don’t rate myself enough.”

But doesn’t fearlessness go hand in hand with confidence? “Yeah I suppose. But every male naturally rates himself as a driver – and I’m not just talking racing-car drivers. Whereas a lot of girls I know are really good drivers, but they don’t rate themselves.”

But all the fearlessness in the world doesn’t squash those pre-race nerves. “Before I start an event I have to get into an aggressive mode because it’s easy to become passive in the car. Quite often I’ll listen to music, visualise how I want to drive and get myself into the mindset.”

When pressed to reveal what sort of music revs her up (one assumes that Schubert or a Gregorian chant would not do the trick) she hesitates. “Oh, it’d be embarrassing to say! Probably some Guns & Roses or AC/DC. Definitely heavier music – it just changes your mood so much.”

And the moral of this tale? Enrol in design studies and you’ll develop a hankering for burning rubber and Guns & Roses?

*Claire Finlayson*





# Ice queen

*Dr Pat Langhorne: "I've always loved snow and ice. When I was at Aberdeen University I was in the tramping club and I used to look forward to winter."*

**DR PAT LANGHORNE'S  
PASSION FOR  
ANTARCTICA BROUGHT  
HER FROM SCOTLAND  
VIA CAMBRIDGE TO  
THE UNIVERSITY OF  
OTAGO WHERE SHE IS  
A LEADING FIGURE IN  
THE TOPICAL WORLD OF  
SEA-ICE GEOPHYSICS.**

## HOVERING IN A HELICOPTER

above the southern Pacific Ocean off the Otago coast, Dr Pat Langhorne was a mere few hundred metres up. Measured by her excitement, she was in heaven.

"It was awesome. Absolutely fantastic. Just gorgeous."

Langhorne had been commandeered by *John Campbell Live* as a polar research scientist. The objects of her knowledgeable enthusiasm so infectiously transmitted to the nation were a series of icebergs that, in late 2006, drifted up the South Island coast.

"It was absolutely thrilling to see the bergs," she recalls. "Because they were melting fast they had the most wonderful shapes. But I found the structure and layering that you could see within them even more fascinating and beautiful."

As a physicist with a lifelong passion for Antarctica and a career largely built around the geophysics of polar sea ice, Langhorne was in her element. A few months later, she has her feet firmly on the dry land of her Physics Building office, but she is again bubbling.



“You’ve heard about the (Ruapehu) lahar? Geophysics is such fun!”

Langhorne is a senior lecturer in the University of Otago Department of Physics. She is head of the multidisciplinary Polar Environments Research Theme which co-ordinates the overlapping polar research interests of a broad range of scientists – geologists, zoologists, geographers, marine biologists, physicists etc. – and continues to be actively involved in sea-ice research.

It is research that periodically takes her back to the frozen continent – the exotic, mysterious ice-covered landmass that first fired her imagination as a schoolgirl in Scotland.

“What I particularly wanted to do was to go to Antarctica,” she says. “It was the mystery and the remoteness. And I’ve always loved snow and ice. When I

was at Aberdeen University I was in the tramping club and I used to look forward to winter.”

Langhorne had studied natural philosophy – a quaint and now largely archaic term for physics – at Aberdeen. There she met a number of people who had been to Antarctica with the British Antarctic Survey and had been encouraged by colleagues to apply herself. There was only one problem. Back in the late 1970s they didn’t take women. But being no push-over, she applied anyway.

“Having a name like Pat, I got past the first hurdle,” she chuckles, “but it was always doomed to failure.” So she decided to take the long way round and headed off to the Scott Polar Research Institute, a department at Cambridge University, now part of the Department of Geography.

“I went to do a PhD and the topic I chose was on sea ice – which gave me a chance to work in the Arctic. That





was with the Canadians and the whole issue of gender was completely irrelevant.”

So Cambridge University gave her a PhD and, incidentally, introduced her to her husband-to-be, now Professor Vernon Squire and Otago’s Pro-Vice-Chancellor (Sciences). He was also working at the Scott Polar Research Institute and, opting to put at least a modicum of distance between her private and professional lives, Langhorne applied for a post-doctoral job in the Department of Engineering.

Turning up for the interview, she was told that the position had gone, but there was one going “next door” on a Rolls-Royce-funded project.

On the strength of her expertise as an experimental scientist, she was offered a post involving an apparatus designed to investigate a combustion instability in jet-

engine after-burners. From not knowing what an after-burner was, the slight but evidently focused scientist became something of a top gun on a phenomenon known as “reheat buzz” – a violent instability arising from the extremely loud sound waves that sometimes resulted when too much fuel was burnt.

“The rumour was that sometimes these [waves] would get so loud, they could shake an aircraft out of the sky ...

“Once we understood in detail what was causing this instability, the next step was to try to apply ‘anti-sound’ to get rid of it. It was a very dramatic and exciting project.”

For four or five years during the 1980s Langhorne put behind her the hopes of getting to the Antarctic as she wrestled with the reheat buzz conundrum. The passion was reignited when she and her husband received an unexpected invitation from Kiwi scientist Bill Robinson.

**“Sea ice covers about six to seven per cent of the world’s oceans ... it’s like a blanket insulating the ocean from the extremes of what’s happening above.”**

“In 1986, out of the blue, Bill sent an invitation for Vernon and me to join him on a New Zealand project in Antarctica, to take part in a month of fieldwork.”

She was generously given three months leave of absence by Newnham College to do the research work and to have a look around New Zealand. “It was a huge and exciting opportunity for me to get to Antarctica,” she recalls. And the frozen continent did nothing to disappoint a lifetime of yearning to get there.

“My overriding memory is of stepping out of the Hercules onto the sea ice and thinking, ‘Wow!’ I was blown away by the vastness, the huge scenery – it was awe-inspiring.”

Better than that, the project – investigating the waves generated in sea ice by moving loads at increasing speeds across the ice – was a great success and put the team on the front of the prestigious periodical *Nature*. It also began a “love affair with New Zealand”, consummated a year or two later when the couple emigrated and settled in Dunedin.

For the first few years, Langhorne taught in the Department of Physics while adjusting to motherhood, a new city and a new country. Her husband had joined the Mathematics and Statistics Department. And it was not until 1992 that she got back to Antarctica – “leaving a two-year-old behind with Vernon”.

She has been going back and forth intermittently ever since, collaborating with Dr Tim Haskell, of Industrial Research Ltd, and others. Their most recent research involves understanding the interaction and relationship between ice shelves (land ice) and sea ice, the latter being ice that’s frozen from the ocean – which puts her in a good position to comment on the presence of those icebergs last year.

Were they indicative of an accelerating rate of global warming as many people surmised? “Not necessarily,” she explains. In Antarctica, falling snow accumulates and compacts, constantly adding to the mass. If there is to be a steady state, then the continent will lose at the edges what it gathers in the centre and on the surface.

The loss of significant chunks of the Ronne and Ross ice shelves are “both believed to be natural events that have to happen from time to time”.

And the provenance of the Otago icebergs? “At the time, my colleagues, Mike Williams of NIWA and Russell Frew of Chemistry, had identified the bergs as originating from the Ronne Ice Shelf. However, the Antarctic Climate and Ecosystems Co-operative Research Centre, Australia, now argues that they originated from B15 which was a vast iceberg that broke off the Ross Ice Shelf in 2000. We await further scientific evidence to sort this out.”

Less questionable is the potentially disastrous effect of the loss of sea ice, particularly in the Arctic.

“Sea ice covers about six to seven per cent of the world’s oceans,” Langhorne explains. “It forms a lid that prevents heat exchange between the air and the ocean ... so it moderates the temperature of the ocean; it’s like a blanket insulating the ocean from the extremes of what’s happening above.”

“A lot of energy that would otherwise go into raising or dropping the ocean temperature just freezes and melts it. There is another effect, too, and that is, because the ice is white, it reflects most of the energy, but as soon as you remove it that energy is absorbed by the darker ocean. So the melting accelerates.”

Research to date shows that since 1979 the area of the Arctic covered by sea ice has declined by 20 per cent. In the context of climate change, this is an extremely serious event, says Langhorne.

To date, analogous data show little change in Antarctic sea ice, but there is no room for complacency. In a public lecture earlier this year Langhorne reminded attendants that global temperatures climbed 10 times faster in the 20th century than at any other time in the last 1,000 years and that global oceans would rise 57 metres if the Antarctic ice sheet were to melt rapidly, drowning cities like London and New York.

Thankfully, there are scientists whose passion for the frozen continent, and dedication to understanding the geophysical processes affecting it, may help us predict and, ultimately, prevent such potentially catastrophic eventualities.

Dr Pat Langhorne is conspicuous among them.

*Simon Cunliffe*



# The waiting game




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## OTAGO'S NEW LEGAL ISSUES CENTRE AIMS TO CROSS-EXAMINE THE LEGAL SYSTEM, AND ASK WHETHER JUSTICE IN NEW ZEALAND CAN BE FAST AND FAIR.

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**IF JUSTICE DELAYED** is justice denied, then spending half a decade battling for money that is rightfully yours is no justice at all.

But where many of those mired in such processes might emerge from the experience obsessing over the details, Christchurch couple Grant and Marilyn Nelson set about to change the system – beginning with a \$1 million donation to establish a Legal Issues Centre at the University of Otago.

In 2001, commercial tenants vacated a building rented from the Nelsons' charitable trust to reveal extensive damage. The aftermath dragged the couple through the courts for some five years.

Others – including the Nelsons' lawyers – encouraged them to accept early settlement offers. Comments Grant Nelson: "The lawyers themselves had no faith that justice would be done through the legal system."

But for the Nelsons a principle was at stake. The company had damaged their property and were not offering to pay the full value of the harm they had caused. "We didn't feel they should be allowed to get away with that."

The couple persevered, eventually being awarded 85 per cent of their claim for damages – an exceptionally good outcome by the standards of the system. Accepting the early settlement, as it turned out, would have cost

them about \$1 million. They acknowledge they were among the lucky ones who had the financial capacity – not to mention the time and energy – to stay in the fight.

“Examples of the consequences for some people embroiled in legal processes are legion,” says Nelson. “You hear of people who reach the end of the case with their finances gone, their marriages over, their mental health suffering. There must be a better way of resolving disputes.”

The legal system, they felt, needed to be examined as a whole. How well does the adversarial system serve justice in cases of civil law? How do the economics of running a law firm contribute to the efficiency of the legal system? What are the emotional experiences of those engaged in long-running cases?

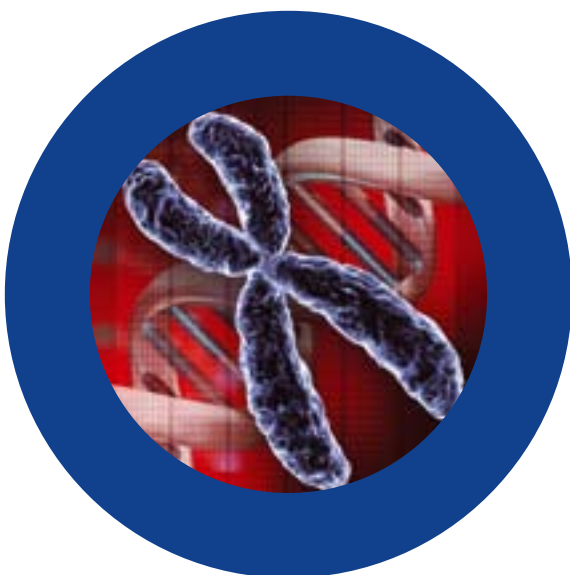
These are scholarly questions. And with no New Zealand legal faculty currently oriented to such a participant-centred view of how law works in practice, the Nelsons’ quest for answers involved a tremendous step – the \$1 million donation to the University to establish a Legal Issues Centre, which, as part of the University’s Leading Thinkers initiative, is matched by \$1 million under the government’s Partnerships in Excellence framework.

One could say the donation was funded from the profits from seeing their legal battle to the end, rather than settling early (although the Nelsons’ frustration was such they had resolved to make the offer in any event).

The concept instantly struck a chord with Otago’s Dean of the Faculty of Law Professor Mark Henaghan. “It’s the chance to take a bird’s-eye view of the entire legal system. There’s nothing like it in New Zealand and there’s nothing really like it in the world,” he enthuses.

The donation came with three pages of potential topics suggested by the Nelsons, conveying a vision for the centre that lends itself to interdisciplinary study. They span issues of psychology, economics, ethics and more. Examples include how the rules of evidence can be changed to encourage greater honesty and integrity on the part of lawyers, their clients and expert witnesses; how some lawyers are able to create work, cause delays and abuse the legal system and what measures can be taken to prevent this happening. They ask whether depositions hearings should be eliminated altogether.

Henaghan says the concept of the centre – which will be overseen by a professor or associate professor yet to be



## Stopping cancer where it starts

Professor Anthony Reeve is trying to second-guess an unpredictable killer.

Reeve, head of the Cancer Genetics Laboratory at the University of Otago, is battling cancer at a genetic level, trying to understand more about how it starts.

Over three decades he has been part of many world-leading breakthroughs.

Early discoveries led to revelations in Wilms tumour and colon cancer, and have helped explain why some families and some races are more or less susceptible to the disease.

In 1998, the research team led by Reeve’s colleague Dr Parry Guilford identified a gene mutation in an extended Māori family with high rates of diffuse gastric cancer. While Reeve and his team have won a raft of international accolades and awards for their ground-breaking work, he says being able to tell this stricken family why generations of them had suffered similar fates was a “real buzz”.

Now the aim is to try to predict what cancers will do, so doctors can offer patients the most suitable treatments.

The latest research will put New Zealand at the forefront of emerging technologies and could revolutionise medical practice in the 21st century.



[www.otago.ac.nz](http://www.otago.ac.nz)

The University of Otago, **first** in research.\*

\*MORST, Ministry of Research Science and Technology report 2006



*Professor Mark Henaghan: “Everything about the system hinders accessibility. Even the cost of lodging an application stops many people from pursuing a claim, even where the evidence is overwhelmingly in their favour.”*

appointed – has captured the imaginations of his colleagues within the Faculty of Law and across the University. “When the idea was put to us, there was a great sense of ‘Yes. This is what we need to be looking at.’ There is a real need for these questions to be answered, especially in the realm of civil law,” says Henaghan.

“Everything about the system hinders accessibility. Even the cost of lodging an application stops many people from pursuing a claim, even where the evidence is overwhelmingly in their favour.

“There are tactics employed known as things like ‘burning your opponent off’. This is basically the principle of dragging the case out until the other party has run out of money or willpower. It’s not a good principle for justice.

“Plus, lawyers find themselves under pressure to return a certain level of income to their firm, which can affect the advice they give. Really, if the client does not have much of a case, their legal advisors should say so. But the incentives can be there to take on vexatious challenges and foster hope in their client, when all it really does is prolong everyone’s agony.”

But what really takes up the time is the process of interlocutories, says Henaghan. This is the system by which formal requests and exchanges of information between opposing parties’ lawyers occurs.

Responsibility for addressing the interminable delays lies not just with lawyers, but across the legal system.

Codes of ethics such as those stipulated by the Law Society are not consistently monitored or enforced, says Henaghan. Furthermore, some larger law firms are opting out of signing up to them at all.

And for judges, he continues, “there is an issue of accountability that needs to be looked at”.

“Judges are very highly paid, highly responsible people. Every time they accept a request for adjournment, they need to ask very seriously whether this is promoting or hindering justice.”

Is there another way? Alternative models of resolving legal disputes have emerged, which the Nelsons and Henaghan agree are worthy of academic enquiry. The process of “collaborative law”, for example, is gaining popularity across the United States and the United Kingdom as a way of settling divorce proceedings in a less oppositional and arduous manner than that offered by the courts. Under this approach, each party and their legal advocate sit down for a series of meetings and work their way to an agreement.

But, of course, the point, and to some extent the beauty, of law is its abiding commitment to process. All the principles of law and justice – the correct identification of the points of law at issue and examination of whether the evidence points to a breach of the legislation; the onus and burden of proof being upon the prosecuting party – are built around robust systems and due process.

Is there a danger that, in the drive for a speedier outcome, this rigour may be undermined?

“That is the nub of the issue,” agrees Henaghan. “What is the legality and justice of cases resolved via alternate models?”

But if clients are more satisfied, and experience the process and outcome as reasonable, does this count as a measure of justice? And Henaghan returns to his initial argument. “If justice is delayed, and comes at such a high financial and personal cost, then justice is undermined anyway.

“The worst consequence is that people lose confidence in the legal system. This has happened already. Many people do not even seek justice because the system is so hard to deal with. This is not conducive to a society that expects its members to respect the law and to be protected by a system of justice.”

Nicola Mutch

Photo: Todd Sisson



*Dr Gerry Closs: Trace element analysis “gives a very precise picture of the way fish are moving around within a catchment ...”*

## Tracking trout

**UNDERSTANDING THE HABITS** and behaviour of the wily brown trout is one of the great sports-fishing challenges of the South Island, attracting anglers from all over the world.

Some of this game fish’s movements have been largely a mystery to science in the past, but recent advances in laser technology have given Department of Zoology fisheries scientists fresh insights into the life cycle and migration patterns of brown trout.

The key is a new technique of analysing trace element “fingerprints” from a crystal of calcium carbonate (otolith) in the heads of fish that records the subtle changes in chemical composition of their environment throughout their lives. It is the first time the technique has been used for brown trout recruitment studies.

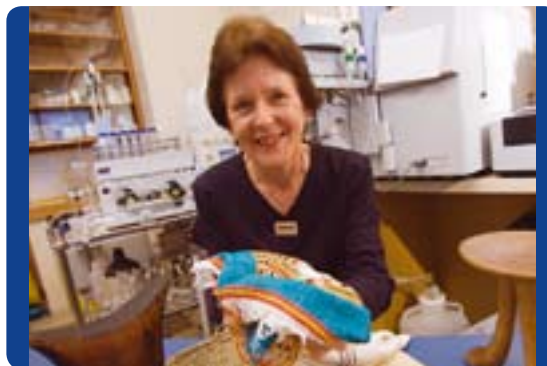
Fisheries scientist Dr Gerry Closs and his research students say understanding the movements of brown trout populations is crucial for making informed decisions about the fishery and habitats.

“It allows you to identify which are the important spawning streams within the fishery, migratory patterns, issues of fish passage, which streams are suitable for agriculture or hydro-electric power schemes and which streams you need to protect,” he says.

“It gives a very precise picture of the way fish are moving around within a catchment, whereas before it would have been only guesswork. Now we actually have hard data.”

With the support of Fish and Game and the Clutha Fisheries Trust, researchers have completed major studies on the Taieri and Motueka Rivers and have recently begun another study on the upper Clutha River catchment.

Photo: Bill Nichol



*Professor Rosalind Gibson: Interventions are now planned to improve health and childbirth outcomes for Ethiopia’s zinc-deficient women.*

## Raising the zinc status

**FORTY YEARS** after beginning her research career in Ethiopia, Human Nutrition Professor Rosalind Gibson has returned to the south of that country to work among some of the many people in sub-Saharan Africa who have a nutritional status particularly low in zinc.

Zinc is vital for growth, immune competence and neuro-behavioural functions. It is important for pregnant women who, without sufficient zinc, run increased risk of early labour, low-birth-weight babies and poor neonatal health resulting in increased child morbidity.

Gibson says the average requirement for zinc for pregnant women in this setting is 12mg, but the intake averages 5mg due to a unique diet, heavily dependent on the native false banana, enset (low in zinc), and maize (high in phytate, preventing the absorption of zinc). Very little, if any, animal-source food is consumed and most is sold for cash. However, there are some upsides to this diet – bacteria produce folate and vitamin B12 during enset fermentation, and iron from soil contaminates the food and is probably absorbed.

A founding member of the International Zinc Nutrition Consultative Group, Gibson says zinc is now attracting the attention of the World Health Organisation.

A number of interventions are planned to improve maternal health and birth outcomes among these people – zinc supplementation for women before, during and after pregnancy, programmes encouraging dietary diversification (particularly the consumption of animal protein) and the biofortification of crops with zinc.

*This research is a collaboration between the University of Otago, Hawassa University (Ethiopia), University of Colorado Health Sciences Centre and Oklahoma State University, and has attracted funding from the US National Institutes of Health.*



Photo: Bill Nichol



Professor Rob Walker: "We can then measure how much added dietary salt increases blood pressure ..."

## Salt study may spice debate

**DESPITE GOOD EVIDENCE** that lowering dietary salt intake is beneficial to health, its effect on blood pressure regulation is still contentious.

Otago's Kidney in Health and Disease Research Group is now tackling this issue in a large-scale study that looks at that impact of increased dietary salt intake on blood pressure control and arterial blood vessel tone.

The study, by Alwyn Todd, Dr Rob MacGinley and Professor Rob Walker from the Dunedin School of Medicine, is sponsored by the National Heart Foundation of New Zealand. It is simple in concept, but has never been done before.

Participants are initially placed on a low salt diet, using National Heart Foundation recommendations. They then randomly receive three different salt intakes – no added salt, a typical New Zealand medium salt intake, or a high salt supplementation simulating a typical American intake.

"We can then measure how much added dietary salt increases blood pressure and how it changes their blood vessel tone," says Walker.

A rise in blood pressure following the higher salt diets will provide much stronger evidence for diet and lifestyle intervention in the control of high blood pressure.

The Kidney in Health and Disease Research Group comprises researchers from the Christchurch and Dunedin Schools of Medicine and departments in the wider University.

They are involved in a number of trials, both nationally and internationally, including two large clinical studies: one looking for markers in urine that indicate early warning of acute kidney failure and another studying the effect of lithium on kidney function.

Photo: Todd Sisson



Professor Alistair Fox: "Both Māori and Pakeha men have legacies they wrestle with."

## Masculine myths exposed

**MANY NEW ZEALAND** men are suffering harmful effects from the legacy of their cultural pasts, according to a new book by University of Otago Pro-Vice-Chancellor (Humanities) Professor Alistair Fox.

*The Ship of Dreams: Masculinity in Contemporary Pakeha and Māori Fiction of Aotearoa/New Zealand* (to be released later this year by Otago University Press) shows how four prominent novelists – Maurice Gee, Stevan Eldred-Grigg, Witi Ihimaera and Alan Duff – delve under the surface in exploring the influences that have shaped post-war masculine identity.

"Both Māori and Pakeha men have legacies they wrestle with. For Pakeha it is the legacy of 'puritanism' with its strong work ethic, self-repression and a mistrust of emotions," says Fox.

"They often find it difficult to make connections with other people, and Gee, for example, often explores the terrible effects on children of remote fathers or puritanical mothers."

Māori men, meanwhile, struggle with the warrior stereotype and the clash of cultures and sense of powerlessness they face living in a world dominated by Pakeha culture.

"Duff and Ihimaera both explore the dysfunctional aspects of this and the way they deflect their violence onto their families," says Fox.

"All four authors have mapped the terrain and their literature gives us a psychological diagnosis of what it has meant to be a New Zealand man in the last 50 years. What emerges is a picture that is very different from that presented in the standard myths of the Kiwi bloke and the hypermasculine Māori sportsman."

Photo: Alan Dove



*Professor Evelyn Tribble: Early English actors were used to committing complex passages of text to memory quickly.*

## Extended minds

**IMAGINE LEARNING** a major role in a Shakespearean play and committing it to memory in four weeks flat. That would be a challenge for any professional actor on the stage today.

Now imagine performing up to six different plays every week and simultaneously learning a new production every fortnight. An accomplished actor in early English theatre in the late 16th and early 17th centuries may have had to learn 70 full parts within a two-to-three-year period.

How could they master so many complex roles so quickly? That is the question that fascinates Professor Evelyn Tribble, the Donald Collie Chair in Otago's Department of English.

Using Shakespearean theatre as a model, she is researching distributed cognition as a major part of her focus in the first stage of a three-year collaborative study into The Extended Mind in Early Modern England. The project has won a Marsden Fund grant.

Tribble says there has been a major cultural shift in the way we use our memories. Today we rely on books and computers to recover complex texts, whereas actors in early English theatre companies were used to committing complex passages of text to memory quickly.

One technique actors used to learn their parts was to memorise "sides", hand-written scripts of only their own lines and cues, stripped of any other distractions. In this way, the cognitive load of learning a new production was spread over the whole company.

Photo: Alan Dove



*Associate Professor Ted Ruffman: Experiments showed young people are significantly better at reading emotions than older adults.*

## Emotion breakdown

**HOW GOOD ARE YOU** at reading faces, that precious social skill of recognising the emotions of others by subtle changes in facial expressions?

Recent studies by Otago's Department of Psychology researchers suggest this skill declines with age. Adults over the age of 60 have particular difficulty in recognising anger, sadness and often fear, on the faces of others, but not the other basic human emotions of disgust, surprise and happiness. They are also worse at detecting dangerous faces than younger people.

Experiments showed younger people are significantly better at reading emotions, possibly because they tend to focus more on the eyes, the most informative region of the face for transmitting emotion. Older adults split their attention equally between the mouth and eyes.

Associate Professor Ted Ruffman and colleagues Drs Janice Murray, Jamin Halberstadt and Mele Taumoepeau believe the reason for this decline is that the brain changes with age.

Different emotions are processed by different parts of the brain. A reduction in neuro-transmitters or shrinkage of cells in certain regions of the brain are thought to be the two most plausible reasons for this decline, Ruffman says.

"The frontal area of the brain is known to be the last part to develop and the first to deteriorate."

If older adults have difficulty recognising emotions, they may be seen as less sensitive in some social situations and could be ostracised, he says. However, while cognitive decline may be inevitable as we age, its effects can be reduced by diet and exercise.

Photo: Alan Dove



Matt Wilson-Wheeler: "Which girls and which boys are not doing well at school and why?"

## Achievement agenda

**IN RECENT YEARS**, the relative academic performance of girls against boys has often been presented as an intellectual wrestling match between the genders.

Nationally and internationally, there are growing professional and community concerns in the media and educational literature about this apparent imbalance.

A popular perception is that girls work harder and are surging ahead academically, while boys are innately intelligent, but their behaviour compromises their ability to perform well.

College of Education lecturer and researcher Matt Wilson-Wheeler believes this preoccupation with gender alone is simplistic and glosses over the complexity of the issue, ignoring other factors such as social class and ethnicity.

"The boys' under-achievement debate focuses on boys as a homogenous mass, but clearly not all boys are under-achieving academically and, conversely, not all girls are doing well either," he says. "So that begs the question – which girls and which boys are not doing well at school and why?"

The aim of his PhD research is to take a closer look at how students perceive their own academic performance and why. His research focuses on an intermediate class, with in-depth interviews of a group of high, low and average achievers, their teacher and parents.

One common factor from his work to date is that some students see academic achievement as outside their control.

The aim of his project is to identify poor performers early, to find some means of intervening to lift their academic performance, and to inform teaching practice and policy development.

Photo: Ken George



Dr Louise Signal: "... the Pick the Tick programme is failing to meet the needs of those who need it most."

## Tick misses the mark

**PICK THE TICK** is a well-established National Heart Foundation health promotion providing a guide to healthy food choices.

However, research led by Dr Louise Signal (Public Health, Wellington) shows that Pick the Tick is failing Māori, Pacific and low-income New Zealanders who rarely use the programme to guide their food purchases.

The study indicates this is due to the relative absence of the Tick on low-cost food, lack of information about the programme, lack of time to read labels and shopping habits.

Māori, Pacific and low-income earners are most likely to suffer from overweight or obesity, and have significantly increased morbidity and mortality from related diseases.

"As a result, the Pick the Tick programme is failing to meet the needs of those who need it most," says Signal. "This is likely to contribute to widening health inequalities through obesity, cancer and cardiovascular disease.

"It may also be contributing to a sense of failure amongst some people in these communities who recognise the Tick as indicating healthy food, but cannot afford to choose these products.

"Despite the successes of the programme, such as significantly reducing salt in endorsed food products, it's of concern that large groups of people don't use it."

The study made a number of recommendations to improve the marketing of healthy food. These include increasing the number of low-cost foods with the Tick, advocating for a reduction in the price of healthy food, and simple mandatory indicators such as the traffic-light system, currently used in the United Kingdom, on all packaged food.

Photo: Bill Nichol



Bruce McLennan, Dr Paul Thorsnes and Dr Robert Alexander: "... an additional hour of sun is worth about 6.5 per cent of house price."

## Sunshine costs

**CAN YOU PUT A PRICE** on winter sunshine? Two University of Otago economists have estimated its market value in Dunedin at about \$15,000 per additional mid-winter hour.

"We knew anecdotally from living here that people value sun," explains Dr Robert Alexander. "But we wanted to put a dollar value on it."

He and colleague Dr Paul Thorsnes gathered information on 1,000 house sales in 1995 and 2005. Bruce McLennan (Information Science) then used computerised maps to estimate the hours of sun each of those houses is exposed to in mid-winter.

"It varies from about four hours to 8½ hours, depending on topography," says Thorsnes.

"We found that, on average, in the main suburbs, an additional hour of sun is worth about 6.5 per cent of house price. In today's market, that's equivalent to about \$15,000."

Thorsnes points out that the majority of Dunedin houses are not insulated because they were built before the 1978 introduction of stricter building codes. Differences in sun exposure appear not to affect the prices of houses built since then.

"So people who bought older houses in sunny locations do indeed value solar heating."

The premium is much less evident in some state-housing areas, such as Brockville, which offer great sun and views. These areas may have developed quite differently if the government had not built low-income housing in sunny areas.

Additional data will allow them to explore further the market effects of both state housing areas and the requirement to insulate new houses.

Photo: Alan Dove



Jean Simpson: Only 36 per cent of drivers had children properly seated in correctly-fitted restraints.

## Make it safe ... and easy

**MOST RESPONSIBLE PARENTS** would be horrified if they realised how incorrectly-fitted child restraints could expose their children to the risk of serious injury, or even death, in a motor-vehicle crash.

Since the use of child restraints became compulsory in 1994, surveys show most parents use them. However, a recently published study by the Injury Prevention Research Unit at the University of Otago shows a majority of parents make errors in the installation of a child restraint or the way their child is placed in it.

The study, funded by the Health Research Council of New Zealand, interviewed 1,113 drivers and made 1,484 inspections of vehicles with child restraints in supermarket car parks in the Wellington region.

While 86 per cent of drivers interviewed thought child restraints were easy to use, a quarter of them made a major error that could have had moderate to serious consequences if a crash occurred. Only 36 per cent of drivers had children properly seated in correctly-fitted restraints.

Critical faults observed included some car seats not attached by safety belts at all, failure to use tether straps, some rear-facing restraints turned to face forward, improperly-fitted attachment systems and children loosely strapped into their seats.

The design of both vehicle interiors and child restraints requires urgent work to ensure safer systems that are more compatible and user friendly than those currently available, says researcher Jean Simpson.

The challenge for manufacturers and designers is "to make the safe choice the easy choice," she says.





Photo: supplied

Francisco Conejo (left) and Tim Breitbarth: "... visiting large sports events can change people's perceptions about a host nation."

## Lessons from a football fan

**A TRIP BY** New Zealand football fans to the 2006 World Cup in Germany has an important message for the New Zealand tourism industry, a Department of Marketing study has shown.

The research, undertaken by Tim Breitbarth, Francisco Conejo and Dr Magdalena Florek, looked at the Kiwi fans' travel motivations and behaviour, and their perceptions of Germany before, during and after the World Cup.

Before leaving, the fans thought Germans would be disciplined and efficient, "uptight and conservative". However, these perceptions quickly changed and remained positive after the fans came home.

The researchers attributed this largely to the national promotion campaign run by the German Government prior to the tournament.

"The people of Germany were encouraged to be good hosts and they felt proud of the event. There was a real sense of vibrancy in the country," Conejo explains. "A range of supporting events organised around the World Cup also helped spread goodwill."

Overall, the fans showed a marked change in their perception of Germany as a country because of their experience. Most said they would like to visit again.

This signals an important message for New Zealand and organisers of big sports events, says Breitbarth.

"Our research shows how visiting large sports events can change people's perceptions about a host nation – an opportunity not to be missed when New Zealand hosts the Rugby World Cup in 2011.

"It is important that sports administrators and government work together to promote a positive image. A disastrous event will hurt a country's image for many years."



Photo: Ross Coombes

Dr Margret Vissers: "Our results show that vitamin C is part of a vital command and control mechanism in all cells in the body."

## Vital vitamin C

**VITAMIN C** has long been known to help prevent scurvy and is often used as a remedy for colds, but groundbreaking Otago research has shown that this vitamin plays an even more important role in maintaining good health.

Dr Margret Vissers from the Free Radical Research Group (Christchurch), in collaboration with the Angiogenesis Research Group, has published two papers detailing the vital role vitamin C plays in cell survival.

"Our results show that vitamin C is part of a vital command and control mechanism in all cells in the body," she says. "We've found that it's absolutely fundamental in controlling cell stress responses, cell death and cancer growth."

Vissers has shown that key enzymes in the cell are activated by vitamin C. These enzymes (hydroxylases) control a transcription factor (HIF-1) which turns on specific genes. Many processes fundamental to cell survival, such as energy metabolism, stress responses, cell death and growth, are all controlled by the HIF-1 transcription factor.

"When vitamin C is low or absent, the transcription factor HIF-1 is turned on and cancer cells make more blood vessels, grow well and survive chemotherapy. This means that a lack of vitamin C enhances tumour growth and prevents effective treatment. It follows, then, that restoring vitamin C to normal levels could mean less tumour growth and more successful chemotherapy."

Vissers' next step is to establish if tumour tissue is low in vitamin C, with the possibility that boosting levels of this vitamin will make a difference to cancer treatment.

# NZ wildlife inside out



**UNIVERSITY OF OTAGO**, Christchurch Professors Justin Roake and Tim Buckenham, and Dr David Lewis are normally busy clinicians in vascular surgery and radiology. But recently they have branched out into a somewhat experimental and novel field of artistic endeavour, at the same time drawing on their clinical expertise and scientific knowledge.

They selected examples of New Zealand's unique wildlife and CAT scanned the live animal or plant to create fascinating three-dimensional photographic images, illustrating anatomical interiors. Roake, who has an interest in photography, believes this is the first time, at least in this country, that CAT scans have been used in this way to create art images.

The results so impressed the Christchurch Art Gallery that it held a special exhibition over Waitangi Day, which received excellent reviews.

The scans were made possible through the generosity of the Christchurch Radiology Group and the skills of radiographer Hayley Stewart who worked with Roake to develop the raw images. "There's a lot of work refining the raw image for display," he says. "It's a three-dimensional reconstruction which can be rotated on the screen and there are some images like the kiwi which need a lot of work, selecting and highlighting the right detail to make them accessible for the viewer."

The other challenge was to actually get a good CAT



Images: (c) Iconix Art Ltd www.iconixart.co.nz

scan image of a kiwi. How was this achieved with a live bird?

"Well, we just asked them to stand still," says Roake. "But no, we eventually used a kiwi and a tuatara from Willowbank Reserve in Christchurch. The tuatara was quiet and still in a darkened box. The kiwi was a bit more of a challenge, but we eventually managed it by choosing the right time of day and mature kiwis who were more used to being handled."

Roake's favourite image is the kiwi because of its uniqueness, sculptural content and its delicate feathers. He says the contrast between feathers and air in a scan was very difficult to detail, but eventually they managed to achieve this and show the delicate and dense nature of the kiwi's plumage.

The group is now looking to hold an exhibition in a private gallery. "We would like to sell some of the limited edition images so we can support clinical research in vascular surgery and radiology."

"This is about art and conservation coming together for the benefit of these unique species, some of which, like the kiwi, are in serious decline, and it may help to focus people's attention on their preservation by putting them in a different light – inside out as it were! We certainly hope so."

*Ainslie Talbot*

# Herceptin – at what cost?

**HERCEPTIN IS THE** trade name for the monoclonal antibody drug *trastuzumab* which has promising benefits for some breast cancers, and which has been in the news recently because its high cost presents a major challenge to our public health system.

Monoclonal antibodies fight infection and, in some cases, destroy cancer cells by targeting tumour antigens on the surface of the cell, leading to the cancer cell's death. These drugs have little effect on normal tissues so there are relatively few side effects, a clear advantage over traditional chemotherapy.

Approximately 25 per cent of all breast cancers, around 400 per year in New Zealand, carry the cell-surface antigen HER-2 and are susceptible to *trastuzumab*. As the HER-2 antigen is associated with an aggressive form of breast cancer, any additional therapy for these women is welcome.

However, *trastuzumab* is expensive – approximately \$70,000 for a year's treatment. It has been publicly funded for several years for women with relapsed or metastatic HER-2 positive breast cancer. (Remissions of six to 18 months can be achieved, but ultimately the condition is incurable.) But recently *trastuzumab* has also shown new promise as an adjuvant therapy when administered with chemotherapy soon after initial breast surgery. Used in this way, it may delay or prevent relapse (a likely problem with HER-2 positive breast cancer) and may well also increase the cure rate – and the demand for *trastuzumab*.

Pharmac, New Zealand's drug evaluation and purchasing agency, has come under great pressure to fund the drug for adjuvant use. Most of the supporting research has come from several large, randomised studies of 1,500–3,000 women who each received *trastuzumab* for 12 months. Follow-up in these studies is still relatively

short at two to three years, but, even so, the data show a 40-60 per cent reduction in relapse rates and extension of life expectancy. (Longer follow-up beyond five years is usually required to be confident of results.)

Pharmac rejected funding for 12 months' adjuvant *trastuzumab* on the grounds of the data being preliminary and the excessive cost – adjuvant *trastuzumab* would almost double the total cancer drug budget! But now

Pharmac is causing much surprise and concern with its plan to fund adjuvant *trastuzumab* for nine weeks only. A small study (less than 250 women) has suggested that nine weeks' *trastuzumab* may be equivalent in effect to 12 months. So far this study has not shown any extension of life expectancy and the cost would still be considerable at around \$6 million per year.

This plan cuts across many of Pharmac's usual benchmarks for funding expensive therapies, such as the requirement for large, mature studies which preferably have been

replicated. Many oncologists suspect this plan is the result of public pressure and the intrusion of funding considerations into the scientific assessment of drug efficacy.

*Trastuzumab* is only one of many similar new-generation cancer drugs waiting for funding approval in the public health system. Patents on these drugs can last up to 15 years so the affordability dilemma is here for the foreseeable future. There is no easy solution, but the temptation to fund the cheapest option in the hope that it may prove beneficial is definitely not the pathway to the future.

Associate Professor David Perez  
Medical oncologist, Dunedin School of Medicine



**“The temptation to fund the cheapest option in the hope that it may prove beneficial is definitely not the pathway to the future.”**

## Otago New Zealand's Top University

**THE UNIVERSITY OF OTAGO** was ranked first in the recent Performance-Based Research Fund (PBRF) assessment.

The assessment is undertaken by the Tertiary Education Commission and examines the quality of research performance by all eligible academic and research staff in New Zealand universities and other tertiary organisations.

Close behind Otago were Auckland and Canterbury, followed by Victoria, Waikato, Massey, Lincoln and AUT.

Vice-Chancellor Professor David Skegg says he is absolutely delighted with the results.

"The distinctive characteristics of universities are their research and research-informed teaching. Last year a Government report concluded that Otago is New Zealand's most research-intensive university. It is very gratifying that a rigorous assessment has now shown that our research is also of the highest quality.

"This PBRF result will lead to extra funding for the University of Otago, but the reputational effects are far more important. Otago is already famous for its outstanding campus environments and student experience. It has also now been shown to be New Zealand's leading academic institution."

In the first PBRF assessment, which was carried out in 2003, Otago was placed fourth. "We always regarded that as an aberrant result," Skegg says. "I think that the University went into the first exercise with insufficient preparation. The main thing that has changed, however, has been the focus on research excellence and research-informed teaching in all parts of the University. For example, the number of research papers and other outputs produced during 2006 was 50 per cent higher than in 2003.

"We have also made outstanding academic appointments, and our Leading Thinkers initiative has been a catalyst for attracting world-class scientists and scholars to this country. This University is 'on a roll' and the only thing holding us back is the desperate shortage of research funding in New Zealand."

Skegg says that, with such an outstanding result overall, it could be invidious to single out individual departments or schools. "Nevertheless, I must mention that the results for our Department of Psychology are stellar. Some would say that the criteria used in the PBRF for identifying world-class researchers are too rigorous. But the Department of Psychology was found to have no fewer than 12 such academics, a number which is unlikely to be matched by any other department in any discipline in New Zealand. Indeed the number is higher than those in two entire universities!

"The Department of Philosophy also had a brilliant result. Its quality score for the whole department (7.5) was the highest for any discipline in New Zealand."

Otago was ranked first in more subject areas than any other institution. These included, Biomedical, Clinical Medicine, Earth Sciences, Economics, Education, English Language and Literature, History and Classics, Law, Philosophy, Public Health, Religious Studies and Theology, and Sport and Exercise Science. The University of Otago also had more first or second-ranked subject areas than any other institution.

Skegg thanked everyone in the University who has contributed to the welcome outcome, especially the Deputy Vice-Chancellor for Research, Professor Geoff White.

### About the PBRF

The Performance-Based Research Fund (PBRF) was introduced in 2003 as a mechanism for the Government to fund New Zealand tertiary institutions on the basis of their research performance.

During the past four years, the PBRF has progressively replaced the previous EFTS (equivalent full-time student) "top-up" model for funding research. From this year, EFTS income for all students at all levels, from undergraduate to PhD is the same.

The PBRF has three elements to it: the quality of researchers (60 per cent); master's and PhD research degree completions (25 per cent); and external research income (15 per cent).

The major element – the Quality Evaluation – is determined six yearly. However, the first was held in 2003 with the current evaluation being a partial round. The next round will be a full six-year cycle and is scheduled for 2012. The assessment is based on the performance of individual staff who contribute to teaching and/or research.

The 2007 allocation is \$231.7 million including GST. The sum is projected to increase marginally each year to be worth \$264 million in 2011.

### University Rankings

	Quality score
University of Otago	4.22
University of Auckland	4.19
University of Canterbury	4.10
Victoria University of Wellington	3.83
University of Waikato	3.73
Massey University	3.05
Lincoln University	2.96
Auckland University of Technology	1.86



## New home for Pacific Islands Centre

**THE UNIVERSITY** officially opened new improved premises for its Pacific Islands Centre during a special ceremony earlier this year.

Centre manager Nina Kirifi-Alai says the facilities in the bigger building on the corner of Clyde Street and Leithbank amount to a “huge, huge upgrade” for the centre, which provides support for Pacific Islands students.

The new centre has two student study rooms, improved computer facilities, a bigger kitchen and more office space.

One room is named in honour of former Cook Islands Prime Minister Sir Tom Davis, with another dedicated to the memory of former Fiji President Ratu Sir Kamisese Mara. Both are illustrious Otago alumni.

Otago currently has more than 500 Pacific Islands students, reflecting a steady growth in numbers since the centre was established in 2001.

## Genomic data-sharing enhanced

**OTAGO RESEARCHERS** have been granted \$468,000 for a project to use advanced networking to share disease-related genomic data with scientists around the world.

The project involves developing ways to use the new Kiwi Advanced Research and Education Network (KAREN), a high-speed network, to share and analyse information from databases here and abroad.

Department of Biochemistry researchers will focus on data related to human genomic variation in cancer and genetic disease.

After combining versions of the human genomic sequence and related gene expression data from databases in the United States and Europe, they will integrate the information with New Zealand-generated data and analyse it using techniques developed at Otago.

It will then be provided to the international medical and biotechnological research and education community, allowing improved understandings of the complex role human genes play in health and disease.

## Gene sequencers boost research capacity

**OTAGO HAS ACQUIRED** state-of-the-art gene sequencing equipment in conjunction with Massey University, as part of a bid to enhance significantly New Zealand's research capabilities.

The two Mega DNA sequencers use revolutionary new technology to produce DNA sequences 1,000 times faster than existing technologies.

The sequencers will be used co-operatively and linked to a shared genetics database, which other researchers in the country can access through the KAREN high-speed network.

Wide applications in the horticultural, agricultural and biomedical industries are expected. The equipment will also enhance ecological and evolutionary research, and the identification of new organisms in land and sea samples.

Otago's Department of Anatomy and Structural Biology houses one sequencer, while the other is based at Massey's Allan Wilson Centre for Molecular Ecology and Evolution.

Anatomy and Structural Biology head Professor David Green said the initiative will underpin the newly-funded AgResearch University of Otago Centre for Reproduction and Genomics.

## Diva shares wisdom with Otago's budding singers

**STUDENTS AT THE** University's Department of Music gained valuable insights during an audience with Dame Kiri Te Kanawa earlier this year. Dame Kiri spent two hours with the Department's 23 voice students. The students, ranging from first-year to master's, heard her talk about the trials, tribulations and triumphs in becoming one of the greatest singers in the world. Three students also sang for Dame Kiri and enjoyed the special privilege of receiving some coaching from her.



*Dame Kiri Te Kanawa with University of Otago voice students.*

## Leading Thinkers leads the way

**THE UNIVERSITY** has celebrated a bevy of developments in its Leading Thinkers initiative over the past few months as the initiative powers towards its \$50m target.

As well as four new professorial chairs and a senior fellowship being announced, the University's new research vessel has been refitted and a trace element research centre officially opened.

Professorial chairs in urology, international health, theology and public issues, and the Legal Issues Centre (see page 29) have been launched along with a senior research fellowship in childhood obesity. All the projects are eligible for matching funds under the Government's Partnerships for Excellence scheme.

- Dunedin businessman Trevor Scott is donating \$1 million to establish the T D Scott Chair in Urology. The appointee will lead and stimulate further urological research at the University, and enhance the teaching of both undergraduate medical students and postgraduate trainees.
- Sisters of Mercy New Zealand, through Mercy Hospital Dunedin Ltd, have gifted \$1.5 million to establish the McAuley Chair in International Health. The professor will be the founding director of a research centre that will have a major role in public health research training for developing countries.
- The Howard Paterson Chair in Theology and Public Issues was endowed in May. The appointee will lead a new research centre charged with undertaking an informed theological and ethical analysis of the challenges facing contemporary New Zealand society. The initiative has been made possible through support of the trust managing part of Mr Paterson's estate, the Presbyterian Synod of Otago and Southland, and Ian and Annette Tulloch.
- The Karitane Senior Research Fellowship in Early Childhood Obesity was also established through the support of KPS Society Ltd. Dr Rachael Taylor has been appointed to the position, which is based at the University's Edgar National Centre for Diabetes Research. Led by Professor Jim Mann, the centre was also established through Leading Thinkers.

Other recent developments include the April re-launch of the University's new ocean-science research vessel, *RV Polaris II*, which massively extends the University's ocean-related research and teaching capabilities.

The vessel has now been repainted and extensively refitted and re-equipped. The overhaul included installing



*The newly-refitted RV Polaris II, one of the University's many Leading Thinkers projects.*

a desalination plant, an "underway laboratory", and adding several workrooms and extra sleeping spaces to the hold. Its purchase was made possible through donations from Chris and Dayle Mace, Eion and Jan Edgar, The Community Trust of Otago, and the J and L Callis Charitable Trust.

The \$2.5 million Community Trust of Otago Centre for Trace Element Analysis was officially launched in March, marking a new era for research of this kind. Previously, New Zealand did not have its own trace element isotope laboratory and had to send its research material to California for analysis.

## Caselberg house for arts fellows

**A CORNERSTONE SPONSORSHIP** agreement has been signed with the Caselberg Trust under which the University's arts fellows and, on occasion, non-arts University visitors can live and work at the Caselberg house in Broad Bay on a short-term basis.

Poet John Caselberg held Otago's Burns Fellowship in 1961 and the words from his poems feature in a number of works by Colin McCahon. Anna Caselberg was the daughter of renowned New Zealand artist Toss Woollaston and a significant painter in her own right. Their house in Gwyn Street has a long association with the New Zealand arts. The cottage next door was originally owned by writer Charles Brasch and was an "open home" to many artists of that time. Brasch bequeathed it to the Caselbergs when he died and they subsequently used it as their studio.

Following the Caselbergs' deaths, the trust was established to develop the house as a nationally recognised residence in which artists can live and work, continuing the Brasch and the Caselbergs' legacy.

In the future, the trust hopes to construct a purpose-designed studio on the section in memory of Charles Brasch.

## Obituaries

Professor **Jean-Pierre Dufour** (54). A highly-respected flavour scientist and popular teacher, Professor Dufour took up the Chair of Food Science at Otago in 1995. He later became head of the Food Science section and was appointed head of the Department of Food/Clothing and Textile Sciences in 2001.

Emeritus Professor **Alan Clarke** (74). Dean of the Christchurch School of Medicine (1986–93), and Ralph Barnett Professor of Surgery in Dunedin (1970–85). Professor Clarke was a leading surgeon and tireless advocate for the disabled.

**John (Jack) Salmon** (82). University of Otago Extension (1981–1992). Mr Salmon was hailed as one of New Zealand's "digital heroes" for his innovative development of the University's distance teaching networks.

**Cheree Mellow** (47). A tutor dietitian at the University's Dietetic Training Programme in Auckland, Cheree made a major contribution to the programme over the past 13 years. Her legacy includes shaping the professional lives of more than 100 young dietitians.

## Achievements

Emeritus Professor **Jim Flynn** (Political Studies) was recently appointed a Distinguished Associate of The Psychometrics Centre of Cambridge University and named by the International Society for Intelligence Research (ISIR) as its Distinguished Scientist of the Year.

Professor **Rosalind Gibson** (Human Nutrition) was made a Fellow of the American Institute of Nutrition in recognition of her international contributions to micronutrient nutrition research and recommendations.

University of Otago Pacific Islands Centre manager **Nina Kirifi-Alai** has been honoured with the High Chief title of "Tofilau" from her village of Iva Savaii in Samoa.

Dr **Margot Skinner** (Associate Dean of Research, Physiotherapy) was elected to the World Confederation for Physical Therapy Executive in March.

Senior Research Fellow **Robert Siebers** (Wellington, Asthma Research Group) was made a Fellow of the Institute of Biology, London (FIBiol) in recognition of his contributions to asthma research.

## Scholarships

Six PhD students from Otago have received Top Achiever Doctoral Scholarships in the latest national round. They are **Kristin Brown** (Van der Veer Institute), **Andrew Cox**, **Xiaoyan Deng**, **Eva van Stockum** (all

Pathology, Christchurch), **Rosemary Geddes** (Centre for Neuroendocrinology) and **John Dennison** (Theology). The scholarships provide an annual stipend of \$25,000 and pay fees for up to three years.

Doctoral students **Deborah Jordan** (Chemistry) and **Joshua Ramsay** (Microbiology and Immunology) have received prestigious Elman Poole Travelling Fellowships to visit overseas laboratories to learn new techniques.

**Mark Robinson** (Microbiology and Immunology) has been awarded the NZVCC Pukehou Pouto Scholarship and an Agmardt Doctoral Scholarship to support his studies into John's disease.

**Hayden Selvadurai** (Pathology, Dunedin) has been awarded a Wellcome Trust PhD Scholarship to study at the University of Edinburgh in Scotland.

Wildlife Management MSc student **Rasmus Gabrielsson** received the 2007 Fish and Game research scholarship to support his work in monitoring brown trout migration by analysing the chemical composition of their ear bones.

## Emeritus Professors

In March, the University paid tribute to the following recently retired staff who have been granted the status of Professor Emeritus: **Martin Ferguson**, **David Jones**, **Alan MacGregor**, **Brian Robinson** and **Anne Smith**.

## Honorary doctorate

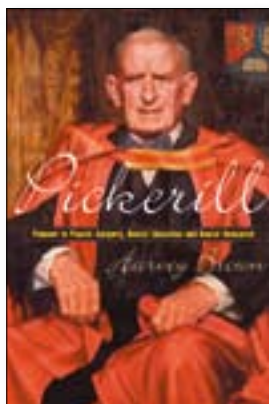
In May, the University conferred an Honorary Doctor of Literature degree (HonDLitt) on **Mary Ronnie** (BA 1951, MA 1965) in recognition of her life's work as a champion of high quality library services for New Zealanders.

## Book celebrates Hocken collection

In September 1907, Dr Thomas Morland Hocken donated his private collection of art, manuscripts, books and other collectibles relating to the history of New Zealand and the Pacific to the people of New Zealand, under the stewardship of the University of Otago.

One hundred years on the University of Otago intends to celebrate this gift with a commemorative publication, *Treasures of the Hocken*, to be published by Otago University Press.

To pre-order or to make further enquiries, please contact: University of Otago Press  
PO Box 56, Dunedin 9054, New Zealand  
Tel 64 3 479 8807, Fax 64 3 479 8385  
Email [university.press@otago.ac.nz](mailto:university.press@otago.ac.nz)



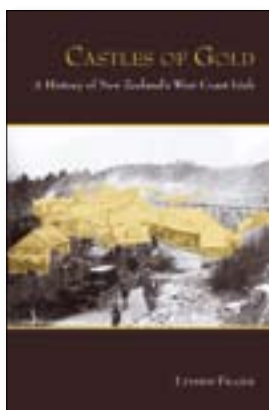
## Pickerill: Pioneer in Plastic Surgery, Dental Education and Dental Research

Harvey Brown

**FOUNDING DEAN** of a new dental school at the age of 28, only 18 months after completing his medical and dental studies at the University of Birmingham, was just one of Henry Percy Pickerill's achievements in a highly productive life. His research and writing on dental caries were internationally significant and laid the foundations for the School Dental Service in New Zealand. His work on facial and jaw reconstructions at Sidcup Hospital in England during World War One established him as one of the pioneers of plastic surgery.

Pickerill was the author of three significant dental textbooks and, as founding dean, led the University of Otago Dental School from 1907 to 1927. He then embarked on independent practice as Australasia's first plastic surgeon, and was known especially for his innovative work in hare-lip and cleft-palate surgery. What is most surprising is that this is the first biography of Henry Percy Pickerill.

Harvey Brown is a former associate professor and head of the Department of Community Dental Health, and deputy dean of the Faculty of Dentistry at the University of Otago.



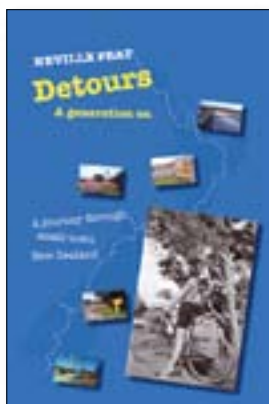
## Castles of Gold: A History of New Zealand's West Coast Irish

Lyndon Fraser

**FROM THE 1860S** the West Coast of New Zealand's South Island was the scene of two major goldfields, attracting hopefuls from all over the world. Suddenly, where there had been native bush and wide rivers, towns with 400 pubs and accommodation houses had appeared. Amongst the hopefuls were Irish miners, many of whom stayed on after the goldrushes as part of a community with its own distinctive character.

This is the first academic study on the history of those Irish – where they came from, who they were, how many women came and what they did, how people sustained their family connections, what they believed – in the context of the history of the larger Irish diaspora. The author draws on private letters and oral histories as well as more conventional sources, and includes many individual migration and settlement stories.

Lyndon Fraser is a senior lecturer in the School of Sociology and Anthropology at the University of Canterbury.



## Detours – A Generation On

*A journey through small-town New Zealand*

Neville Peat

**SUMMER, 1981.** A young Neville Peat set out from Cape Reinga on his new 10-speed bike, aiming to cycle through small-town New Zealand from north to south, all the way to Stewart Island. The week before Easter he reached his destination. He wrote a book about it, *Detours: A journey through small-town New Zealand*, which sold many copies and was broadcast on radio.

Many times in the intervening years, usually on anniversaries of the journey, he wished to try a repeat journey, but life held other challenges. Now, as a leading author and in the age of the personal computer and cellphone – a very different world – he has revisited many of the towns and regions, not on a bicycle, but by car. In *Detours – A Generation On* he reflects once again on how small-town New Zealand is doing.

Neville Peat is a leading natural history writer, whose prize-winning works include four regional natural history books (co-authored with Brian Patrick) and, most recently, *Kiwi The People's Bird*.





## Landfall 213 The “Russia” issue

Edited by Jacob Edmond, Gregory O'Brien, Evgeny Pavlov, Ian Wedde

**LANDFALL 213** picks up from an anthology of New Zealand poets published in Russia in 2005. It features contemporary Russian poets in translation and also includes a wide range of New Zealand writing on contemporary Russian culture – Natasha Templeton, Stephanie de Montalk and Stuart Young on diverse Russian traffics between New Zealand and Russia; Russia-oriented poems by Tusiata Avia, Wystan Curnow, Anna Jackson, Jan Lauwereyns and Richard von Sturmer; as well as substantial reviews of recent New Zealand books. There is an art portfolio of work by the Blue Noses Collective and back page by Daniel Malone.

Jacob Edmond teaches modern and contemporary poetry in the Department of English at the University of Otago.

Gregory O'Brien lives in Wellington. He recently curated exhibitions which are being toured nationally by City Gallery Wellington.

Evgeny Pavlov teaches Russian and German at the University of Canterbury.

Ian Wedde is a writer based in Wellington.

### Recent Otago University Press titles

*How to Do Local History: Research \* Write \* Publish: A Guide for Historians and Clients*, by Gavin McLean, February 2007.

*Employment Relations: New Zealand and Abroad*, by A J Geare & F J Edgar, March 2007.

*Unearthly Landscapes: New Zealand's Old Cemeteries*, by Stephen Deed, March 2007.

*The Gorse Blooms Pale: Dan Davin's Southland Stories*, edited by Janet Wilson, April 2007.

For further information  
email [university.press@otago.ac.nz](mailto:university.press@otago.ac.nz)  
or visit [www.otago.ac.nz/press](http://www.otago.ac.nz/press)

### Recently published books of Otago Alumni

*Books and Pamphlets on Southern New Zealand: A Simplified Locality Guide 1772 to the 21st Century*, by George Griffiths, Otago Heritage Books, Dunedin, December 2006.

*Le Voyage de Saint Brendan: Edition bilingue*, publication, présentation, traduction et notes par Ian Short et Brian Merrilees, Paris: Champion, 2006.

*Leadership in the Salvation Army: A Case Study in Clericalisation*, by Harold Hill, Authentic Media.

*Above the Belt: A History of the Suburb of Maori Hill*, by Jane Smallfield and Brian Heenan, the Maori Hill History Charitable Trust, 2006.

*Overkill*, by Vanda Symon, Penguin New Zealand, March 2007.

*Pates & Terrines*, by Fiona Smith, Ryland, Peters & Small, Great Britain, 2007.

*The Psychiatry of Palliative Medicine: The Dying Mind*, by Dr A D (Sandy) Macleod, Oxford, Radcliffe, 2007.

*Parliament in the 21st Century*, by John Halligan, Melbourne University Press, 2006.

**ALUMNI:** If you have written a book lately email the editor at [mag.editor@otago.ac.nz](mailto:mag.editor@otago.ac.nz)



a library to scale (no.13)  
F B Butler Collection, Puke Ariki, New Plymouth, 2006  
Ann Shelton  
C type print: 1365 x 965mm

**FRED B BUTLER** (1904-1982) was a man of eccentric and voracious archiving appetites. He would cover old novels with pieces of wallpaper (or simply cross out their titles) and then paste over their original fiction-rich pages with clippings from the local New Plymouth newspaper and the odd handwritten list or drawing. This lifelong scrapbook mania resulted in 3,500 volumes, all carefully divided into thematic categories.

There are the usual subjects – education, crime, births, deaths and marriages – as well as a whole raft of Taranaki history. And then there are those volumes that reflect Butler’s own interests. There’s a scrapbook on needlework, for instance (Butler was a keen quilter and rug maker), and also one devoted to “nudists”. It seems he was quite partial to nudism. In 1977 he was employed to dress up in colonial garb and enhance the historical atmosphere at the Tauranga Museum Village. He was also allowed to lodge on-site. One day, while off-duty, he was sunning

his naked bodily wares on his verandah when several museum visitors accidentally strayed into staff quarters. Suffice it to say they were greeted by more than just “historical atmosphere”. Complaints were made.

When photographer Ann Shelton stumbled upon Butler’s idiosyncratic archive at New Plymouth’s Puke Ariki Museum, she thought it deserved some kind of splendid memorial so she captured it in a series of 26 life-size photographs. Dr Francis Pound described Shelton’s endeavour as an attempt to “order and to still for a moment the perpetual rush of everything into oblivion”.

Shelton’s series is an ode to one man’s obsessive and tireless efforts with newspapers, scissors and glue; to the rigours of collating and ordering information pre-Google; and to the sheer, comforting beauty of book spines (and their promising innards) lined up on a shelf.

*Claire Finlayson*

## Hocken Collections Gallery Exhibitions

Until 23 June 2007

*Working Drawings:* Sarah Munro

An exhibition showcasing the wall-mounted sculptures of the 2006 University of Otago’s Frances Hodgkins Fellow.

29 June – 25 August 2007

*Innocents Abroad: Touring the Pacific Through a Colonial Lens*

Mounted by Te Papa Tongarewa, this exhibition features 67 photographs taken by Alfred Burton of Dunedin’s Burton Brothers Studio during his 1884 winter cruise to the South Pacific.

31 August – 2 November 2007

*Treasures from the Hocken Collections*

Mounted to coincide with the release of the Treasures publication, this exhibition showcases the diversity of material held in the Hocken Collections. The book and the exhibition are the first of a range of activities planned to celebrate the library’s centenary.



## New head for ADO

**ALISON FINIGAN** is the new head of Alumni and Development. Alison holds a master's degree with first class honours in French language and literature and has worked at the University

of Otago since 1989 in a wide variety of roles, including as an adviser in human resources, as senior administrator of the School of Language, Literature and Performing Arts, as divisional marketing co-ordinator in the Division of Humanities and, most recently, as head of student international services in the International Office.

Alison has been involved with a number of significant projects relating to the development of Otago's international connections. This work began in 1996 when she embarked on a project to set up links with universities in Latin America. In the course of this initiative, she accompanied senior Otago officials on several trips to the region, which resulted in strong

ongoing partnerships being established with universities in Argentina, Chile, Brazil and Mexico. Alison has worked with universities in Canada to develop relationships for Otago in the area of indigenous studies, and, during her time in the International Office, was responsible for managing relationships with partner universities in the United States who send study abroad students to Otago. In this capacity, she regularly attended the annual NAFSA conference in North America, and in 2004 represented Otago at a Commonwealth Universities' conference on risk and responsibility in student mobility at Queens University in Canada.

Alison brings a wealth of Otago experience to her new position as head of the Alumni and Development Office and sees strong similarities between this role and others she has held during her career, particularly in the area of relationship management. She is very much looking forward to working with the team at Alumni House, and is keen to continue the work that has already been done to help alumni keep in touch with the University and each other, so that the "Otago experience" continues to enrich the lives of those who have studied here.

## 2006 Annual Appeal

**THE ALUMNI** and Development Office thanks all the alumni and friends of the University of Otago who supported the 2006 Annual Appeal. This was the appeal's fourth year and it was wonderful to receive such an enthusiastic response.

The appeal supports three targeted areas within the University – scholarships, library and research. This year it has been possible to award 11 Alumni Annual Appeal Scholarships to first-year students, fund two worthy research projects and support two library projects, as well as purchase library resources with donor-directed gifts.

More than 100 applications were received for this year's scholarships with the 11 winners coming from Whangarei, Auckland, Hamilton, Wellington, Christchurch and Dunedin. The scholarships cover tuition and sundry fees for students' first year of study.

The two research projects supported by the appeal were Processes of Marine Ice Transfer in Antarctic Ice Shelves, part of an International Polar Year project, (principal investigator Dr Sean Fitzsimons) and Renal Dialysis for the Elderly: a pilot study (principal investigator Dr Sarah Derrett).

Money raised is also being used to further support two library projects – access for ECCO: Eighteenth Century Collections Online, which was purchased last year with



*The 2007 Annual Appeal scholars. Standing, from left: Sarah Jacobs, Heather Norton, Samantha Wilson, Ema Latu. Seated, from left: Joe Blundell, Georgette Philp, Olivia Faull, Georgina Hampton, Assil Russell, Samuel O'Sullivan. Absent: Kiri Mason.*

Annual Appeal funds, and ARTstor Digital Library. ECCO delivers every significant English-language and foreign-language title printed in Great Britain during the eighteenth century, along with important works from the Americas. ARTstor is a digital library of 500,000 art images and descriptive information, plus software tools for viewing and analysing them.

For more information about the appeal, visit [www.otago.ac.nz/alumni/annualappeal.html](http://www.otago.ac.nz/alumni/annualappeal.html)

## 2007 Alumni Event Schedule

### Sydney

Friday 3 August, at the Australian Museum

### Apia

Thursday 30 August, at Aggie Greys

### Christchurch

Friday 21 September

### Queenstown

Friday 28 September

### London

Friday 28 September

### Auckland

Thursday 1 November, at the Auckland Museum

### Wellington

Friday 16 November, at Te Papa

Saturday 17 November, at Te Papa

## Reunions

**1948 MB ChB:** Planning is underway for a 1948 MB ChB class reunion to be held in Auckland, February 2008. Contact Dr Rae West [west.raelilian@splurge.net.nz](mailto:west.raelilian@splurge.net.nz) or phone 09 521 5609.

**1957 MB ChB:** To be held in Dunedin, November 2007.

Contact Dr David Holdaway [davidshirley@xtra.co.nz](mailto:davidshirley@xtra.co.nz)

**1959 – 1960 MB ChB:** To be held in the Wairakei Resort, Taupo, February 2008. Contact Dr Graeme Woodfield [GraemeWoodfield@xtra.co.nz](mailto:GraemeWoodfield@xtra.co.nz)

**1968 MB ChB:** To be held in Dunedin, October 2007.

Contact Dr Brian Williams [brianshiela@clear.net.nz](mailto:brianshiela@clear.net.nz)

**1968 BDS:** Planning is underway for this reunion to be held in 2008. Contact Roger Stuart-Andrews [hanoger@netspace.net.au](mailto:hanoger@netspace.net.au)

### Oamaru, March 2007



### Timaru, March 2007



### Melbourne, April 2007



**1982 MB ChB:** To be held in Dunedin, August 2007.

Contact Pat Johnston [pat@dcms.co.nz](mailto:pat@dcms.co.nz)

**1983 MB ChB:** To be held in Dunedin 15-17 February 2008. Contact Alan Wright [alanwr@healthotago.ac.nz](mailto:alanwr@healthotago.ac.nz)

**1987 MB ChB:** Planning is underway for this reunion to be held in Dunedin, November 2007. Contact Dr Andrew Bowers [Andrew.Bowers@otagodhb.govt.nz](mailto:Andrew.Bowers@otagodhb.govt.nz)

**1988 MB ChB:** To be held in Dunedin, October 2008.

Contact Dr Mary Brooker [mebrooker@yahoo.com](mailto:mebrooker@yahoo.com)

Otago Alumni are a mobile constituency living in more than 120 countries, and in Australia, Malaysia, North America and the United Kingdom. Volunteers support University alumni activities and co-ordinate independent local events. *For further information, go to [www.otago.ac.nz/alumni/regionalgroups.html](http://www.otago.ac.nz/alumni/regionalgroups.html)*



## Alumni News

**Dr Peter Foley** (BSc 1976, MB ChB 1981) is the new chairman of the New Zealand Medical Association.

**Professor Peter Leggat**, who has completed a number of postgraduate qualifications at Otago, has been recognised internationally with the Most Outstanding Alumnus Award from the Tropical Medicine Association of Mahidol University in Thailand. Leggat is president of the Australasian College of Tropical Medicine and is acting director of James Cook University's Anton Breinl Centre specialising in public health problems in tropical Australia.

**John Halligan** (MA (Hons) 1972) has recently moved from the position of Professor of Public Administration (since 1996) and senior management positions at the University of Canberra to Research Professor in Government and Public Administration.

**Shirley Jones**, née Hannah (BSc 1950), now living in Sydney, was awarded the Medal of the Order of Australia in 2006 for her role in establishing a national women's library for Australia – the Jessie Street National Women's Library – in 1989.

**Andrew Fowler** (BSc 2003) spent his final year studying abroad at UBC in Vancouver, Canada. He now lives in Oakland, California, and works as a geologist in the environmental department of URS Corporation which does site investigations and remediation work primarily for industrial sites in the San Francisco Bay Area. He has also worked on international projects in West Africa.

**Simon O'Neill** has just been contracted by the Metropolitan Opera in New York for Wagner's *Die Walkure* next January. O'Neill completed a Bachelor of Music at the University of Otago between 1990 and 1994.

**Scott Marris** (BTchg (Prim) 2003) is currently working for Japan's largest employer of native English speakers on the Japanese government's Ashikaga Kids' Program as an assistant language teacher. He has recently been reselected for one of only three positions available through his company for another year-long contract.

**Tom Coulter** (BDS 1957) retired after 42 years in practice, both in New Zealand and in the United Kingdom. His Luton, England, surgery was for some years an approved postgraduate training practice for recent dental graduates.

If you would like to share your achievements since leaving University, please send an email to [alumni@otago.ac.nz](mailto:alumni@otago.ac.nz) with "magazine" in the subject line.



*More than 180 former Foundation Year students who were due to graduate from Otago in 2006 were invited by teaching and administrative staff and the board of Foundation Studies Ltd to an event at the University of Otago Staff Club (above). The event recognised the achievements of students as they prepared to leave Otago and take up employment or travel opportunities in New Zealand or overseas, and provided an opportunity for old friends to reunite and for staff to keep in contact with former students.*

## Wall of Fame nominations 2008

**THE SCHOOL** of Physical Education is seeking nominations for its 2008 Wall of Fame recipient. Recipients must be graduates of the school and have achieved national or international standing and acclaim in their field of endeavour or success on the world stage.

Go to <http://physed.otago.ac.nz/wof> for criteria and nomination forms or, for more information, you can email [wof@pooka.otago.ac.nz](mailto:wof@pooka.otago.ac.nz)

Nominations close 31 October 2007.

## Postcode changes

**INSTITUTIONS** such as the University of Otago have been given a two-year transition period to implement the new postcodes system. The old postcodes are still valid during this time, so you are not required to advise us of your new postcode.

## Retired Staff Group marks 25 years

**THE UNIVERSITY** of Otago Retired Staff Group celebrated its 25th anniversary at a function in the Council Chamber on May 3.

The group, established in 1982, was the idea of Professor Patricia Coleman. She and her husband, Sir Edward Sayers, returned from leave in the United States full of enthusiasm for the way American universities looked after retired personnel. However, the then Vice-Chancellor Robin Irvine and Registrar Douglas Girvan were at first reluctant to recognise a group they believed would falter and fail once the novelty wore off.

In spite of this, a working party was set up, there was a warm response from people invited to comment and the first function was held in the Staff Club in March 1982. It was decided there would be no constitution and that there would be four functions each year – two bus trips, a mid-winter lunch and a Christmas dinner. Patricia Coleman's determination was passed on to others and the Retired Staff Group has flourished.

Its members include former professors, librarians, administrators, technicians and typists. They have roamed far and wide on day trips, enjoyed picnics and banquets and – most importantly – a sense of camaraderie. An organisation expected to fail has maintained a steady membership of between 80 and 100 people and includes several who joined 25 years ago.

*For further information about the Retired Staff Group, please contact Nancy Carr, 03 454 5021.*

### KEEP IN TOUCH

[www.otago.ac.nz/alumni](http://www.otago.ac.nz/alumni)

Updates about what's on for alumni

Your link to an online change-of-address form

Information on how to contact other alumni and reconnect with old friends

Links to virtual postcards and desktop wallpaper

## Capping remembered ...

**THE STORY** about the capping procession in the last issue of the *University of Otago Magazine* (February 2007, pages 50–51) stirred the memory of John Gibbs, now of Queensland, Australia.



He writes: "The 1955 capping procession was while Dunedin was changing from trams to trolley buses. The picture of this float [above] was taken in George Street between Frederick and Hanover Streets. You can see the old tram rails. By the time we got to the end of the procession (past the old post office), the float was very much the worse for wear. Nevertheless, we did get the prize for the best float!"



He also sent this photo of the Selwyn Ballet and 1955 Capping Show cast: "There are some quite distinguished folk there including one All Black!"

# The Women's Room?

**THE DAY I VISIT**, the women chatting and eating lunch in a small enclave upstairs in the Student Union don't strike me as conspicuously unattractive at all.

This might have disappointed the writer to a 1983 issue of the *Critic*, under the pseudonym "I Know All Feminists Are Dogs", who hoped the newly-established Women's Room would be "a sanctuary for the uglies" so that "they don't spoil my and my bigoted white Caucasian male friends viewing fun" [sic].

Another offered similar "support", generously commenting that "If a lot of hard-nosed butch feminists want to get together over their knitting and discuss their forthcoming rapes, that's OK by me".

Such was the venom attracted by the decision to turn a modestly-proportioned storage room into a Women's Room at the height of a bitter period of gender politics among the student body.

Setting up the Women's Room was one of Phyllis Comerford's first projects as the first-ever woman president of OUSA.

Having campaigned on a feminist platform – in the face of staunch opposition by rival candidate Mike Greenslade and his supporters – she envisaged a space where women could find resources addressing their concerns, hold formal and informal meetings, and relax whilst being "assured that they can be free from sexist comments and harassment".

Despite the heated opposition to the room, it has survived successive student executives and now, nearly a quarter century on, its original function and ethos is still largely upheld. An overflowing noticeboard highlights woman-centred and other events. A bookshelf contains advice on topics from parenting to cystitis.

OUSA women's representative Claire Barton comments that space has evolved over the decades. "It's become an important space for Muslim women," she acknowledges, as nearby a young Muslim woman carries out her prayers.

And, while it may not be the political axis it once was, its steady level of use easily justifies its existence.

There's no doubt the Women's Room does have a very different vibe than elsewhere in the Union – the space is relaxed and unfussy, the mood quiet and friendly. I'm not certain it's a result of only women being here, but then again it might be.

The crowd comprises mainly mature students and the reasons they give for coming here are more pragmatic than ideological. "It's just a nice chilled-out place to be," says one woman. "You can heat your food here and use the phone."

"I'd come even if it wasn't a woman-only space, but I'm pleased that it is," says another. "I flat with five men," she laughs, receiving no-further-explanation-necessary smiles and nods from those around her.

But the absence of expressions of overt feminism does not mean the gender wars that underpinned the room's establishment are over.

"Maybe twice a year we will get some sort of comment in the *Critic* or elsewhere that questions why the room should exist," Barton says. "It shows the debate hasn't completely gone away, and that we still have a role in defending women's rights and promoting women's issues."

"The room does provide a different kind of environment that certainly enhances some women's experience of University. My response to those who ask 'Why isn't there a men's room?' is to say 'Go ahead and establish one then'. So long as it's a place where all men, including gay men, could feel welcome and comfortable, I say go for it."

Nicola Mutch

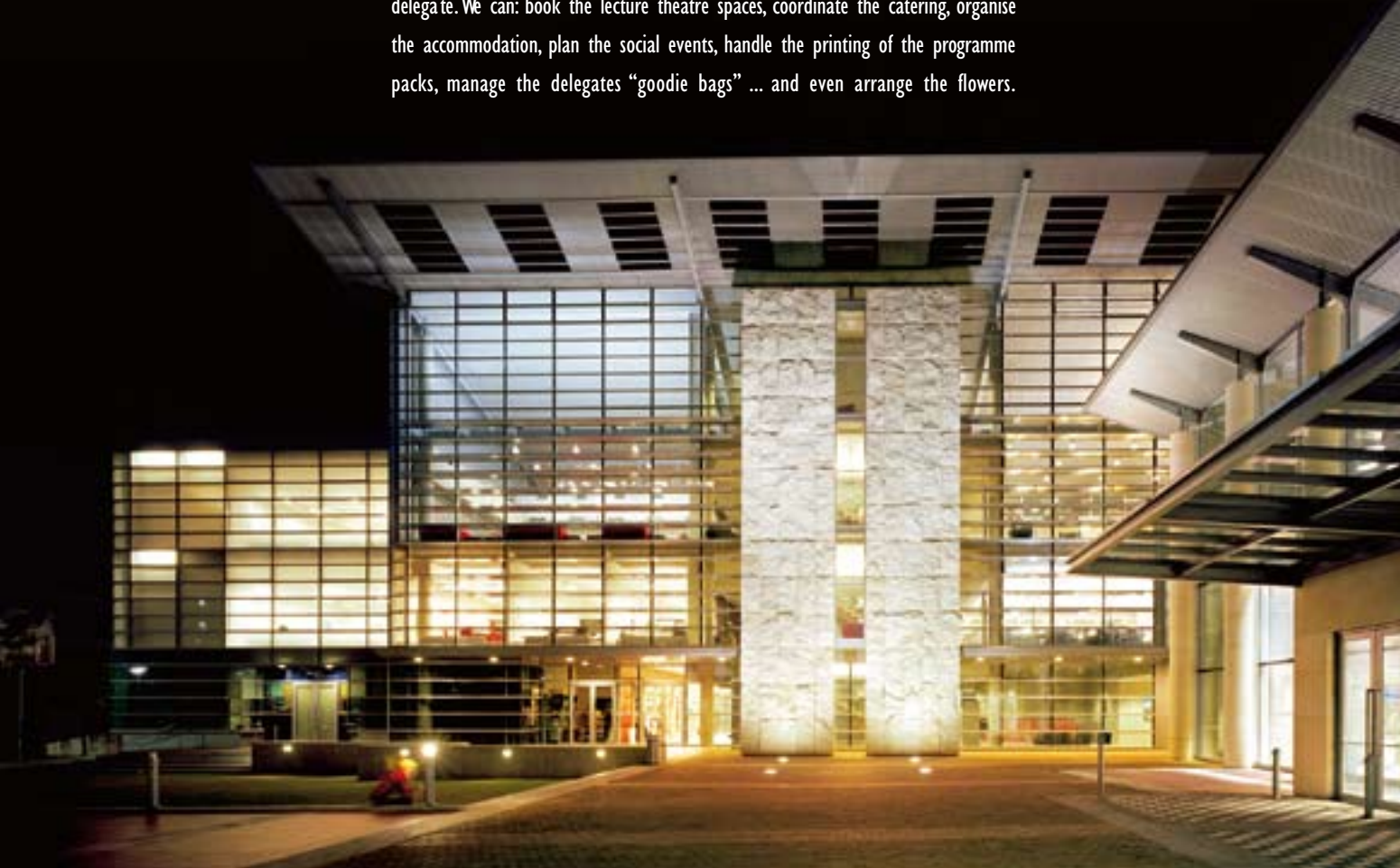
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