

# UNIVERSITY OF OTAGO MAGAZINE

FEBRUARY 2010

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The 15 July 2009 Dusky Sound earthquake arriving at the Otago Peninsula seismograph. Thanks to the New Zealand GeoNet project and its sponsors EQC, GNS Science and LINZ, for providing this image.

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Recently I visited two of America's eminent universities: Princeton and Dartmouth. Princeton "simultaneously strives to be one of the leading research universities and the most outstanding undergraduate college in the world". Dartmouth College is also renowned for liberal undergraduate education at its stunningly beautiful campus in rural New Hampshire, while having excellent graduate programmes and Schools of Business, Engineering, and Medicine.

The ethos of Dartmouth and Princeton is distinct from that of most research universities, in that they place so much emphasis on the undergraduate experience. While no Australasian university could match the resources of these Ivy League institutions, it occurred to me that Otago has a very similar ethos. We are proud to be New Zealand's most research-intensive university, but we also aim to provide outstanding campus-based undergraduate education.

The research culture at Otago underpins all four academic divisions, and this explains why our academics have won the largest share of the highly competitive Marsden Fund for five years in a row. Also crucially important are the health sciences campuses in Christchurch and Wellington, which are effectively like graduate schools. Many people would not realise that each of these campuses now has more academic and general staff than the Division of Commerce. Taken together, these two campuses attract a higher external research income than each of AUT, Canterbury, Lincoln, Victoria, and Waikato Universities.

The University is actively promoting graduate education and research, but we are also determined to maintain the quality of the undergraduate experience for which Otago is famous. Apart from Medical Radiation Therapy in Wellington and a small Education programme in Invercargill, virtually all of our undergraduates spend at least part of their course at the Dunedin campus.

A residential campus in a university town can provide a rounded education that could never be emulated by larger universities in big cities. I suspect that this is one of the reasons why employers welcome our graduates, and why most Otago alumni look back on their years in Dunedin with nostalgia and affection.

The quality of what we offer has not gone unnoticed overseas. As I write this, 29 Dartmouth students are in Dunedin enrolled for papers at the Otago Summer School. I hope and expect that they will enjoy their time here.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "David Skegg". The script is fluid and cursive, with the first letters of the first and last names being capitalized and prominent.

**Professor David Skegg**

Vice-Chancellor, University of Otago

# Breaking point

**As earthquakes tremble across the Pacific, Otago Geology researchers point out that we have our own big one building in the heart of the Southern Alps. It's a prospect that inspires both concern at our lack of preparation and intense scientific curiosity.**

In the 1960s, eminent Victoria University geophysicist Professor Frank Evison built a concrete wall across a trace of the Alpine Fault at Maruia, near Lewis Pass. He wanted to test the principle that, in a short space of time, the foundations would subside and cracks would appear due to the constant seismic twitching and adjusting inherent to major faults.

Today the wall still stands, utterly undamaged.

Despite the Pacific and Australian plate boundary pulsing out earthquakes with steadfast regularity (it was responsible for last year's earthquakes in the Pacific and generates almost all of the seismic activity in New Zealand), a 400-kilometre section of the Alpine Fault, between Milford and Hokitika,

remains disconcertingly rigid. Elsewhere, the constant pressure being exerted as the plates move 37 millimetres per year towards each other is released through subduction (one plate being dragged under the other). To the north of the Alpine Fault, the Pacific plate goes under the Australian plate while, to the south, the pattern is reversed: the Australian diving beneath the Pacific plate.

Along the South Island segment of the plate boundary, however, the plates meet in an oblique collision, rotating against each other. Indeed, it's the only place along the boundary where collision occurs – the plates pressing together to force mountains upward, locked in battle, the tension building incrementally, persistently.


How much longer can it accommodate this build-up of pressure?

Who can say? But one thing geologists tend to agree on is that when it goes, it's going to be a big one.

Otago geologists Professor Alan Cooper and Professor Richard Norris have been heading to the hills, trying to make sense of the action beneath their feet in the Southern Alps for the past 30 years. Along with Dr Virginia Toy, the Otago scientists have become authorities in the geometry, composition, history and behaviour of the globally significant fault. By combining times of tree damage with dates of offsets seen in trenches across the fault, they realised cataclysmic events involving major ground adjustments were occurring at relatively regular intervals. (These events were also recognised by Canterbury and Lincoln University scientists working on deforestation patterns.)

"From the forest data, we realised we were seeing earthquake dates," explains Norris. "There's evidence of a massive build-up of stress that appears to be relieved suddenly by enormous earthquakes of around magnitude eight every 250 to 300 years."



A photograph of three people standing outdoors. On the left is an older man with a white beard, wearing a blue button-down shirt and black trousers. In the center is a woman with blonde hair, wearing a red t-shirt with a floral pattern and blue jeans. On the right is a man with glasses, wearing a khaki button-down shirt and khaki trousers. They are standing on a paved path next to a low stone wall. Behind them are several large trees with light-colored bark and green foliage. In the background, a building with a white, pointed roof is visible.

**Otago 's Professor Alan Cooper, Dr Virginia Toy and Professor Richard Norris** who are joining an international team of geologists drilling deep into the Alpine Fault.

Photo: Alan Dove

The last one happened in 1717, 293 years ago.

According to Norris, the risk of the Alpine Fault failing in dramatic and vigorous fashion sits at around one per cent per year. Looked at another way, he adds, "That's a 50 per cent chance in the next 50 years".

Past evidence suggests we are talking about several thousand cubic kilometres of land finding a new home. It's the kind of activity that, over millennia, explains why rocks from Nelson can be found in South Westland.

What happens next depends on whether the earthquake "propagates to the north or the south", continues Norris. From a scale-of-havoc point of view, we had better hope it goes south.

"If the energy is dispersed north, the towns of Greymouth and Hokitika will bear its brunt, but serious destruction is likely right across Canterbury and out to Christchurch."

Either way, State Highway 6 cops it. "Average displacements during past major Alpine Fault earthquakes involved one to two metres of vertical uplift of the eastern side relative to the west, and approximately eight metres of sideways shift of the western side to the north-east," Cooper explains.

"State Highway 6, the West Coast road, is approximately eight metres wide – it would be totally offset!"

When Caroline Orchiston was carrying out research for her honours degree in Geology, she would spend hours examining rocks high up on the Mahitahi Range. Occasionally she would pause, take in the view and watch the

campervans beetling along the road below.

What would happen to them all, she wondered, if the earthquake hit now?

It was a concern which eventually surpassed her interest in the rocks themselves and inspired Orchiston's PhD study on "seismic risk and the tourism industry in the Alpine Fault zone".

"Tourism on the West Coast is extremely vulnerable. There are only a few access roads and they are already susceptible to closure through flood and avalanche – what would happen if these roads were closed for many months? How would the towns cope? What would they do with the tourists? How would the industry recover from the negative publicity that would inevitably be generated?"

Of course, it's the movement on the fault that creates the magnificent Southern Alps. It's these mountains that produce the immense glaciers, the high rainfall and lush verdancy, the sense of wild isolation. The danger is the very reason the tourism industry exists.

"Whole towns on the West Coast now have tourism as virtually their only industry," comments Orchiston. "Given this level of reliance, I wanted to understand how equipped the tourism sector was to deal with the threat it faces."

Orchiston discovered a sector of business people who knew everything – and nothing.

"Tourism operators were aware of the risk of earthquake, they could tell you about the fault and the tectonic plate boundary, but they did not fully appreciate the likelihood or consequences of a magnitude eight earthquake."

"Many do not have adequate insurance to cover the capital costs of their businesses, let alone lost earnings. And there was a lot of confusion around EQC [Earthquake Commission] insurance. Some believed it would cover their businesses, when this is not the case at all – it only provides cover to residential property owners."

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"There's evidence of a massive build-up of stress that appears to be relieved suddenly by enormous earthquakes of around magnitude 8 every 250 to 300 years." The last one happened in 1717, 293 years ago.



**PhD student Caroline Orchiston:**

"I wanted to understand how equipped the tourism sector was to deal with the threat it faces."

Photo: Graham Warman

But West Coasters are nothing if not self-reliant and what began as a study into tourism soon became an exploration of community. Here, Orchiston says, the best levels of preparedness came from small villages with natural leaders.

"One motelier had a background in emergency management and was very clear-eyed about the issues the township would face. He has plans to organise a shipping container, stack it with essentials, which they can lock and leave knowing that, if a natural disaster strikes, they have what they need to survive."

Larger towns with younger, more transient populations – Queenstown, that is – were less organised at the community level.

And, across the region, Orchiston uncovered a real thirst for information. "Even on the survey forms, I had

participants asking advice for what they should be doing."

Meanwhile, she says, she observed a brand of fatalism, a sense that "Yes, it's a risk. But what can you do about it? If it happens, it happens. We'll deal with it."

It's a sentiment that, perhaps surprisingly, resonates with the intrepid geologists who have been mapping and monitoring the fault's every move. Despite the thousands of hours Cooper, Norris and Toy have spent in the mountains, none has ever felt a tremor. And, while respecting the threat of an impending earthquake more than most, the scientists are drawn magnetically to the "fascinating natural laboratory" on their doorstep.

Their enthusiasm is shared by a worldwide community of geologists, eagerly anticipating the New Zealand-led

international deep-drilling project which includes the team of Otago researchers. Due to commence this year, the project aims to penetrate several kilometres beneath the surface.

Faults are mysterious places, says Toy. "Most earthquakes are generated in the top 10 to 15 kilometres of earth, but they probably initiate towards the base of that zone, not near the surface – obviously, these are extremely difficult environments to examine."

"The Alpine Fault is unique in that it gives us relatively easy access to the mid-crust, where a lot of important geological processes take place. By drilling down, we can record data about temperature, chemistry, fluid pressure and properties of rocks on a major fault. Plus, we can see what we can find out about stress conditions on a fault which is quite late



**"There is going to be an earthquake;  
it is going to be huge; it will probably  
occur in our lifetime and almost  
certainly in the lifetime of many of  
our buildings."**

Winter snow marks the western  
boundary of the Southern Alps  
which, in turn, are defined  
by the Alpine Fault, a few  
kilometres to the west.

Photo: NASA



in its seismic cycle – that is, due to cause an earthquake soon!"

Who knows what the researchers will uncover and what its significance will be in terms of understanding, and preparing for, seismic activity. What's thrilling, says Toy, is having the chance to be part of an international group of researchers with an unprecedented opportunity to explore the depths of the earth.

"It truly is an astounding geological environment we have in New Zealand," agrees Norris, "and we have a state highway that takes us right along it."

Toy's vision for raising tourists' awareness of earthquakes would tap into the exciting and dynamic environment they're visiting.

"The hot pools we enjoy are caused because the seismogenic zone is so

shallow – rocks are being pushed up to the surface faster than they can cool.

There are places on the main highway where you could have signs saying, 'You are now passing from the Australian to the Pacific plate'."

Cooper admits the threat of earthquake is one that's almost impossible to get into perspective.

"There is going to be an earthquake; it is going to be huge; it will probably occur in our lifetime and almost certainly in the lifetime of many of our buildings. Should we avoid enjoying the area in the meantime? Probably not, but we should have a plan in mind for what we'll do when it strikes."

**NICOLA MUTCH**

# Ageing well

## The long-running Dunedin Multidisciplinary Health and Development Study is about to enter a new phase, looking at the risk predictors for chronic disease.

Meeting someone at a school reunion who looks 10 years older than you doesn't make up for having just met another classmate who looks 10 years younger.

Why do we seem to age at different rates? Professor Richie Poulton, director of the Dunedin Multidisciplinary Health and Development Research Unit, is looking for answers in the next phase of Otago's lifelong study of about a thousand babies born almost 38 years ago.

"Biologically, some of our study members are older than their chronological ages, some are about what we might expect and some are younger," he says. "Some individuals appear to age faster than others and our hypothesis is that psychiatric disorder could promote this type of ageing, with subsequent risks for health."

The study, which has investigated participants at birth and at ages three,

five, seven, nine, 11, 13, 15, 18, 21, 26 and 32, will be looking at risk predictors for chronic disease when members are measured again at 38 years old.

"One of our investigations will see whether a persistent history of psychiatric disorder – like depression, anxiety, schizophrenia or substance abuse – might accelerate individuals' risk of progressing towards age-related cardiovascular disease.

"There are novel aspects in this project that can only be addressed with a long-term study like ours, which has measured mental health repeatedly across a long period of time and has a lot of information about our participants as children before they develop problems.

"The idea of mental health affecting physical health is intuitively appealing, but there isn't much good evidence in support of it. Most research that has been done is limited methodologically,

but we now have a great opportunity to do the job properly."

Currently about 17 per cent of the study members have been diagnosed with having recurring major depression – a finding that does not surprise Poulton.

"The World Health Organisation has calculated the burden of various disease types and predicts that by 2030 the global number-one disorder in terms of disability – that's early death and morbidity and loss of productivity – will be depression. It's like the common cold in terms of mental health problems."

Poulton believes the investigation is perfectly suited to the next phase of the Dunedin Multidisciplinary Health and Development Study.

"Thirty-eight is an ideal age – old enough to be past the peak age of the onset of the psychiatric disorders we wish to study and young enough for the information we collect to provide an important baseline for future research into the ageing process."

Age-related chronic disease is arguably the major public health challenge facing New Zealand in the 21st century, says Poulton, and already the health system is struggling to keep up with demand.



**Professor Richie Poulton:**

"Some individuals appear to age faster than others and our hypothesis is that psychiatric disorder could promote this type of ageing, with subsequent risks for health."

Photo: Bill Nichol

“With an ageing population that is going to increase substantially in the next decades, the challenges ahead are quite daunting and emphasise the timeliness of this type of research.

“It’s not particularly useful to study people when they are old and are already experiencing disability.

“It’s far better to study people before they get to old age – as our study is doing – to see if we can identify modifiable risk factors for premature physical ageing and do something about them.

“If you can get to people early enough you might be able to avert that negative trajectory into an old age of disability and, hopefully, make their latter years healthy, productive and enjoyable.”

The coming study will follow interconnected themes of mental and cardiovascular health, understanding the ageing process and the development of age-related disease, respiratory health, oral health, sexual and reproductive health, and Māori health.

Funders include the Health Research Council of New Zealand, the US National Institute of Ageing, the UK Medical Research Council, and the Dental and Craniofacial Research branch of the National Institutes of Health in America.

For Poulton, recent years have seen high points – such as pushing the boundaries of the nature-nurture debate – and the inevitable lows that come with a long-term study.

“Every time we hear of a study member dying we all take it very hard. We really feel for the families because we have a special relationship with them all.”

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## Fertile connections

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As people in the more developed world are deciding to have children later in life, many are finding pregnancy hard to achieve.

It is now normal for women to delay starting a family until well into their 30s, by which time fertility is on the decline and infertility can be more of a problem.

Associate Professor Nigel Dickson, of the Department of Preventive and Social Medicine, is investigating the sexual and reproductive health of the Dunedin study members as they reach age 38.

“Considering this age will allow us to put more emphasis on exploring what happens as people near the end of their prime reproductive span, particularly women,” he says.

“As people postpone child-bearing, more are having trouble getting pregnant and we’ll be looking for possible explanations.

“We have access to a complete history since birth, so can investigate a wide variety of issues that might influence when people choose to start a family such as education, occupation and socio-economic factors, and how these impact on their fertility.”

The study provides information to the World Health Organisation to support its goals of helping people to achieve their desired number of children safely and healthily; understanding sexual development and maturation; avoiding illness and disability related to sexuality and reproduction; and remaining



**Associate Professor Nigel Dickson:**

“As people postpone child-bearing, more are having trouble getting pregnant and we’ll be looking for possible explanations.”

free from violence and other harmful practices.

“We’ve improved understanding of sexual health in adolescents and young adults, and now we’re following up as their reproductive life enters a new phase.

“There have been a number of cross-sectional studies, but ours is arguably the longest and most comprehensive longitudinal study of sexual and reproductive health and behaviour in the world.”

Sexually transmitted infections (STIs), especially genital herpes and chlamydia, are also on the list for investigation.

Although, overall, the incidence of STIs is expected to fall as more study members establish long-term relationships, Dickson says that the risk may still be high among those who have not.

Changing times lead to changing sexual practices. The spread of STIs might even be related to internet use as more people turn to the web to look for both long- and short-term partners.

“The internet is a new method for people seeking sexual relationships,” says Dickson. “We’ll be exploring how and why people use it, and we’ll try to see if there is any connection between the extent of internet use and the spread of STIs.”

Other topics include sexual behaviour and alcohol use, relations between erectile problems and cardiovascular



health, and relations between infertility and mental health problems.

Study participants answer a computer questionnaire, a method of data-gathering that has proved useful for sensitive information, particularly with younger people.

Now the study group is more mature, but some issues such as same-sex attraction and STIs are still sensitive. Confidentiality is paramount.

“Our study group has been providing information on their sexual behaviour since they were 18 and they can feel confident with how we deal with this very personal information they share with us as there has never been a breach of confidentiality,” says Dickson.

“The other important thing is that members are questioned infrequently enough that the study does not change what they do in their lives. Yet they feel a responsibility to continue to be part of it. They feel they are joint owners and they feel safe. They are very special people.”

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## Oral clues

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The risks of smoking tobacco are commonly accepted, but what about cannabis?

Typical cannabis use in New Zealand does not involve mixing it with tobacco, giving Dunedin study researchers an advantage when looking at possible links between cannabis and gum disease.

According to Professor W Murray Thomson, head of Dental Public Health in the Department of Oral Sciences, the findings so far are stunning. “Once we control for tobacco, we find smoking

cannabis has a strong adverse effect on gum disease,” he says. “In fact, the strongest effect was shown among those who had not smoked tobacco.”

The findings, published in the *Journal of the American Medical Association* last year, are a world first, and an example of the cross-disciplinary research that is a hallmark of the Dunedin longitudinal study.

“We know about the mechanism by which smoking does damage in that it affects the inflammation response and the body’s capacity to heal itself,” says Thomson.

“Gum disease is an easily measurable marker of the damage smoke does to the body. The gums show the body’s balance between destruction and repair – and smoking tips the balance towards destruction.”

There is hope for ex-smokers, in that the diseased gums of people who smoked at 26 showed signs of improvement if they had given up by the time they were next measured at 32.

Researchers are following up with measurements at 38, as well as looking at a range of gum-disease-related issues, including links with cardiovascular problems.



**Professor Murray Thomson:** “The gums show the body’s balance between destruction and repair.”

“Until now, our cohort has been too young to show much heart disease, but in the next phase we might expect to see early signs,” says Thomson.

“There’s circumstantial evidence for people with gum disease having a higher risk of a number of problems, including heart disease and strokes, but there have been no long-term studies.

“We’re in a unique position to answer some of these questions because of our detailed records and the length of our study.”

National health surveys report that poor oral health is the most common chronic problem in New Zealand. The knock-on effect on general physical and mental health is only just being realised. And the problem is only going to get worse, says Thomson.

“As the baby-boomer generation ages, it’s a public-health time bomb.”

**NIGEL ZEGA**

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“There’s circumstantial evidence for people with gum disease having a higher risk of a number of problems including heart disease and strokes ... We’re in a unique position to answer some of these questions ... ”

# Being different

**Astrophysicist Professor Datuk Mazlan Othman, believes in making a difference. Hers has been a stellar career.**

If you want to make a difference, you need to do things differently, says Professor Datuk Mazlan Othman.

Othman has practised what she preaches for most of her life and she has certainly made a difference.

She still has plans to improve the world and now, as a high-ranking official in the United Nations, she's extremely well placed to do so.

Highlights of a full CV include being Otago's first female Physics PhD graduate, developing Malaysia's national planetarium and space programme, being director of the United Nations Office for Outer Space Affairs and now adding the role of deputy director-general of the Vienna office of the United Nations.

Othman started her pioneering life as she was to continue. At 16, in Malaysia, she turned her back on the medical career she was expected to follow because she had fallen in love with physics.

A Colombo Plan scholarship brought her to Otago for a physics degree, which she completed in 1975.

Dunedin was a revelation. "I loved the old buildings and the Leith and the ambience – it was so cool," she says. "I was very impressed by the way of life in New Zealand. It was an egalitarian society with a very strong sense of justice. I loved that.

"It was one of the best things I learned at Otago and now I hope I think, feel and act in an egalitarian manner and have a sense of justice and equality. Ethics and integrity are important."

Othman stayed on at Otago for a PhD in astrophysics. "I wasn't the first female candidate, but I was the first to succeed. I never thought of myself as female in a male world – I guess I was gender-blind – I just saw a goal and was going for it.

"At that time life might have been easier if I'd been male – I might have advanced faster – but being female was

never in my face, although I was the only girl in the Physics Department then."

Othman's first child was born in New Zealand and she remembers how he slept beside a pile of textbooks and attended all her lectures. She says it's no surprise that he's now working in a space engineering design company in the US. "What chance did he have? At least he went into engineering and not astrophysics – one in the family is enough."

As Malaysia's first astrophysicist, Othman returned to her national university to set up a curriculum in astrophysics. Her work helping educate the public about astronomy and space issues led to her being asked to set up Malaysia's national planetarium and then becoming director-general of the government's new Space Science Studies Division.

"Malaysia would not be the space nation that it is today if I had not left the university to join the Prime Minister's department to start a microsatellite programme.

"I broke the psychological barrier that people thought it was not important to go into space – all part of a strategic

**"There's no reason why developing countries shouldn't come up with good science projects that could be run by astronauts from Europe or Japan. You don't have to spend millions to buy technology when you can rent it."**



**Professor Datuk Mazlan Othman:**

"In order to make a difference you have to be different - different thinking, different approach ..."

move that Malaysia had to complete to fulfil the Prime Minister's vision to be a fully-developed country by 2020."

By now a full professor, in 1997 Othman was honoured with the Malaysian title Datuk [Dame]. The same year she received an Honorary Doctor of Science degree from Otago – "it never crossed my mind that I'd get such an honour".

Then a late-night phone call changed Othman's life again. The caller wanted to know if she was interested in a vacancy at the United Nations. Othman had had dealings with the UN as a representative of Malaysia, but she didn't want to uproot her family, so she said she was not interested. The caller faxed through the vacancy anyway, and called again to ask for a CV and then more information.

Othman went along with the questioning, but continued to turn down the idea until she was asked to go for an interview. Arriving in Vienna she discovered she was one of only two candidates and, when she was eventually offered the job, she and her family decided it was worth the disruption.

Then she had to convince the Prime Minister to let her go when he wanted

her to continue with Malaysia's space programme.

As director of the United Nations Office for Outer Space Affairs (UNOOSA), Othman handled issues including international co-operation, prevention of collisions and space debris, use of space-based remote sensing platforms for sustainable development, co-ordination of space law between countries and the risks posed by near-earth asteroids.

After two years, the Malaysian government asked her to return to be the founding director-general of ANGKASA, the Malaysian space agency, where her work led to the launch of the country's first astronaut in 2007. Othman had wanted to go into space, so she had mixed feelings about having to select a suitable candidate and, thus, disqualify herself.

After five years, the United Nations again offered her the job to run UNOOSA and, in 2009, added the position of deputy director-general of the United Nations Office at Vienna.

"The first time I went to the UN I was not sure what I could achieve," she says. "The second time I had clear goals."

One of Othman's aims is to consolidate the UN's work in Africa, arranging for various agencies to work together more efficiently. She also wants to help developing countries acquire skills and capabilities in basic space technology.

"After setting up an education programme to follow Malaysia's small satellite, I realised that any country could run a space technology initiative," she says.

A third goal involves convincing scientists in developing countries that they should have confidence in proposing projects for science programmes in microgravity and the International Space Station.

"The Malaysian astronaut programme was conceived as something that would unite the people of Malaysia, inspire the young and achieve significant scientific breakthroughs.

"In the beginning it seemed like an impossible dream, but we managed to get over the political and financial problems to realise it, and now we have an astronaut who is a role model for young people and science programmes that will continue for years.

"There's no reason why developing countries shouldn't come up with good science projects that could be run by astronauts from Europe or Japan. You don't have to spend millions to buy technology when you can rent it."

Othman loves Vienna, and although her head may be in space, her feet are firmly on the ground. For relaxation, she takes brisk walks and reads.

"I prefer detective stories. I'm too critical of the bad science in most science fiction – I haven't got the patience for it, with the possible exceptions of Arthur C Clarke and Isaac Asimov."

And does she think there is other life in space? "Scientifically, it is unthinkable that there are no other life forms in space because there are billions of galaxies out there. And if you are religious and say God created life on earth, then surely God could create other forms of life apart from that on earth?

"However you approach the question – through science, religion or philosophy – the answer is the same."

Back on earth, Othman's advice to students is simple. "Determine what you want to do and do what you really want to do, not what your teachers or parents want you to do.

"Look at where you want to be in five or 10 years and make a start in that direction as soon as you can.

"In order to make a difference you have to be different – different thinking, different approach – and don't be afraid to try to do something no one else has done."

**NIGEL ZEGA**



# Becoming FAMEous

**Combining executive education-style learning with on-the-ground experience, the FAME programme is generating international opportunities and networks for New Zealand agribusiness.**

The University's School of Business is a major player in an innovative programme targeting agribusiness companies looking for new opportunities in overseas markets and learning how best to realise them.

FAME (Food and Agribusiness Market Experience) is a collaborative effort between the University of Otago and Massey and Lincoln Universities.

"The overall aim of the programme is to immerse senior executives in foreign markets that provide potential for their products," explains Associate Professor Ken Deans, a member of FAME's programme development group and Head of Otago's Department of Marketing.

He says the idea of FAME emerged from discussions between the partner universities about how universities are very good at teaching principles and applications while businesses are

good at the practical side. So FAME was conceived as a way of linking the two – connecting businesses with offshore marketing and commercial opportunities.

Companies involved in FAME come from a wide range in the agribusiness sector, such as sheep and dairy, fish, horticulture, viticulture and rural banking.

The programme consists of formal, executive education-style seminars and trips to overseas markets accompanied by Deans and colleagues from the other partner universities. Last June a trip was made to China, Denmark and the Netherlands and, at the time of writing, Deans was about to leave on another FAME expedition, on that occasion to the US, Italy and Japan.

Preparation for each trip is intensive and a key to the FAME project's effectiveness. The June trip was preceded

by a three-day training module in Christchurch, with sessions on relevant topics such as the global food market, innovation, market strategy, supply chains and the cultural aspects of the countries to be visited.

Experts – including both Deans and Department of Management's Dr Malcolm Cone, a respected expert on China – were brought in to these sessions to ensure participants were well briefed before their 18-day journey.

While it could be argued that a "bunch of business people" could simply go on a trade mission to these countries, Deans explains that the FAME programme development group wants to take participants' learning to a level where there is a strong educational and self-development focus.

His role, along with his Massey and Lincoln colleagues, is to accompany participants on these visits and to "formalise the learning in a way that's practical, relevant and happening". This is achieved through question and answer and plenary sessions and individual projects.

Deans ensures participants have a project that is specific to them or their

sponsors. It's not a case of "conquering the world", he observes. Rather, it's about "focusing down, saying 'that's the market opportunity for me now or in the very near future'." Equally, the participant might have already identified a real opportunity and so networks and local conditions become the focus.

He says visits are highly structured with presentations from key people hand-picked because they either have a unique business model or are particularly knowledgeable about a specific market.

"When we go to something like a flower auction [in the Netherlands] or a fish market in Denmark, the owner or a senior executive will give a lecture, an overview of the company, the markets, corporate structure and players. We also link with business schools, so there is an academic contributing to sessions."

The visits are full-on which is "a good thing because you want to deliver value without running people into the ground".

"It [FAME] is a kind of upskilling in knowledge by listening and observing: everywhere you go in FAME you carry your notebook and every gem is written down, so there's a mentality there that it's all to be taken in."

FAME participants are actively engaged in the visits. It's not, as Deans notes, just a question of "that was an interesting talk". They are given responsibility to run question and answer and de-briefing sessions focusing on subjects such as market structure insights, commercial opportunities, business models that can be applied or adapted, and on identifying five key points from each visit or lecture as they apply to New Zealand, in general, and their company, in particular.

Deans believes many executives either don't realise the potential for their products in these markets or don't know how to fully leverage opportunities, which is where FAME comes in. It does this by providing on-the-ground experience and expertise, and through the sharing of best practice, the latter being another key to the FAME programme.

In China, for example, experts were brought in to speak at "New Zealand Central" in Shanghai, which is run by New Zealand Trade and Enterprise. There, participants gleaned invaluable information on legal implications of trading in China, logistics, market opportunities and how to operate in the world's most populous nation.

"The objective was to let people know of the complexities, but that there were also avenues for gaining access and resources to help them establish a presence in these markets."

Deans says you can give executives textbooks, brochures, DVDs and lectures, but there's nothing like being "immersed in the reality".

He gives the example of the logistics of distribution in Shanghai.

"At Yangshan Island port you could see the enormous scale – 50 or 60 derricks in a row – all accessed by a bridge that went for 25 kilometres over open water, forming a six-lane highway to get to this.

"Then you're in Shanghai and you see someone cycling in the back streets with 10 units on the back of their cycle, so the distribution can break right down to that level very quickly."

Deans sees FAME as an innovative way for the University to link with business because "we are used to getting involved in business projects and

executive education, but [in FAME] we're actually experiencing and understanding the dynamics of foreign business practices and opportunities".

To his knowledge, this idea of setting up something with commercial potential while giving executives the tools they need to leverage these opportunities is unique.


"I think for a small country like New Zealand it's [the FAME programme] such a smart thing to do. They're not going to come to us; we have to go to them. The reality check of visiting cities with larger economies than New Zealand is powerful!

"What we're doing is facilitating their business networks. It's one thing to give them knowledge; it's another to expose them to culture, the logistics and the intricacies."

Deans also views FAME as being a "really good" positioning statement for the University of Otago in terms of fostering engagement with New Zealand businesses and overseas experts, to generate new business success stories.

He says FAME is already showing real value. Feedback from participants has been extremely positive and there have already been tangible results for some of the companies involved.

**GRANT McIVOR**

A portrait of Associate Professor Ken Deans, a middle-aged man with short, light-colored hair, smiling at the camera. He is wearing a dark suit jacket, a light-colored shirt, and a yellow patterned tie. The background is a blurred architectural structure with wooden beams and windows.

**Associate Professor Ken Deans:** "What we're doing is facilitating business networks. It's one thing to give them knowledge; it's another to expose them to culture, the logistics and the intricacies."

Photo: Alan Dove

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"I think for a small country like New Zealand it's [the FAME programme] such a smart thing to do. They're not going to come to us; we have to go to them."

# Is it cool to korero?

When the first settlers arrived in New Zealand they quickly engaged with iwi and learnt te reo as a conduit for communication and relationship building. In talking with friends, colleagues and students who were schooled in New Zealand (post-1970), they remember learning te reo in a small way: accounts of how they were taught A E I O U are recalled in extremely vivid detail and often constitute part of their “fond” school memories.

Although part of our history and school curriculum, the pronunciation and use of te reo within New Zealand, however, is still fraught with conflicting social messages. It is always interesting to watch various television weather presenters attempt the pronunciation of many New Zealand towns/cities including Taupo (pronounced “Toe-paw”).

A TV news clip reported that when a group in the Waikato (pronounced “Why-cut-tore”) tried to encourage locals to use the correct pronunciation they said they couldn’t correctly pronounce the word because then “no one would know where they were talking about”.

So how did we get from being a nation where te reo was an accepted medium of intercultural communication, to a place where its mispronunciation has become “normal”? And why does this matter in 2010?

Often when I use the word “colonisation” for the first time in my classes I notice that some students appear to cringe as if pre-empting the arrival of an aversive experience. Usually this is because, within our schooling and social experiences, colonisation brings with it uncomfortable concepts of colonial guilt.

However, what isn’t talked about is what colonisation is and how it works – the logistics of it.

One form of colonisation undertaken by the Crown was to de-humanise Māori (the portrayal of Māori as aggressive cannibalistic warriors, pagan worshippers, or promiscuous and ungodly were most common) so that the second wave of “new settlers” coming to New Zealand would not feel conflicted by their new land occupation rights. Part of this process involved the deliberate mispronunciation of te reo as a social statement, so that settlers were not seen as “Māori friendly”, but rather as

patriotic to the Crown. With the passage of time the mispronunciation of te reo has become accepted and normalised as correct.

So why raise this point? Over the last eight years the Māori/Indigenous Health Institute (MIHI) at the University of Otago, Christchurch, has undertaken a number of research projects and has realised there is a growing body of evidence that te reo is directly related to health outcomes. In a study about Māori patients’ perceptions of GP care, we asked participants “How do you know you are getting good health care?”. Without much hesitation four separate focus groups consistently answered “Oh, that’s when the medical receptionist pronounces my name correctly”.

I was not content with this answer: surely they meant to say “The open access to the latest statins”? So the question would be asked again. First there was always silence, then a smile “Oh, when the medical receptionist, nurse and doctor pronounce my name correctly”. Further analysis showed that the issue was not just simply name pronunciation, but also the use and validation of te reo throughout the



**"It became clear by the end of the research project that the use of, and respect for, te reo for many Māori patients was, in fact, seen as an indicator of quality health-service provision."**



**Suzanne Pitama:**  
"The challenge for us now is to see engagement in te reo and its correct pronunciation as a relationship-building tool, just as the first settlers and iwi did."  
Photo: Ross Coombes

consultation. It became clear by the end of the research project that the use of, and respect for, te reo for many Māori patients was, in fact, seen as an indicator of quality health-service provision.

In another recent research project, a participant who had been screened for his heart health was asked what he had enjoyed about being part of this particular research project. With much emotion in his voice, he went on to relate a story about how he had felt like a "person" within the research because he could use te reo and the project manager of the research project "got him". "She heard me, she got me ... I wasn't just a number, she understood what I was trying to say."

Within a wider New Zealand context, the boundaries between New Zealand and Aotearoa are drawing closer with the inclusion of Māori language week

and the wider use of some te reo within everyday conversations (e.g. kai, puku, haka, kia ora, mana, whānau) which no longer requires translation.

However, the challenge for us now is to see engagement in te reo and its correct pronunciation as a relationship-building tool, just as the first settlers and iwi did.

Why? Because for a long time the role of te reo within Māori communities has been undervalued and has also contributed to New Zealand society being exclusive of Māori. It is easier to feel you belong when your language is accepted and used. Often, we look towards wider systemic interventions to make a difference, but forget that, as individuals, we can each contribute to change.

Not all interventions require rocket science, some just require humanity.

Do I believe our engagement in te reo will influence changes to our current health status? Yes I do, because to engage in te reo we demonstrate a shift in the way we have chosen to think and interact with each other.

My challenge to the University, and one of my dreams, is that anyone who rings the University of Otago is greeted in te reo with "kia ora": not because it is politically correct, not because it is part of a performance appraisal, but because each individual answering the phone wants to be an agent of change and reverse the impact of colonisation on future generations.

**SUZANNE PITAMA**  
Māori/Indigenous Health Institute (MIHI)  
University of Otago, Christchurch

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# A man of vision

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## Otago alumnus and ophthalmologist the late Barrie Jones changed forever the way in which ophthalmology is taught and practised.

Many Otago graduates are high fliers with international careers, but few attain the degree of professional success achieved by ophthalmologist Barrie Jones.

Jones not only revolutionised the way ophthalmology is taught, but also brought the gift of sight to thousands in developing countries.

On his retirement in 1987, the *British Journal of Ophthalmology* dedicated an entire issue to honour his work, with tributes flowing from “colleagues and friends who are proud to have sat at his feet”. On his death last year, obituaries appeared across the world in praise of a man who had made a difference.

Jones read physics and chemistry before studying medicine at Otago. He spent time clinical training in his home town of Wellington before returning to Dunedin in 1950 as a registrar in ophthalmology under Professor Rowland Wilson, who had undertaken important research on trachoma in Egypt.

Wilson inspired in Jones a lifelong love of research-based medicine and of the study of ocular infections, in particular trachoma, a leading cause of the world’s infectious blindness.

Encouraged by Wilson, Jones moved to the UK in 1951 to advance his training in clinical ophthalmology, with an idea of returning to Dunedin to work with his mentor. But after gaining a training post at Moorfields Eye Hospital and enrolling at the Institute of Ophthalmology, Jones believed he would be able to pursue his scientific investigations into eye disease more readily if London-based.

Within six years he was a senior lecturer at the institute and an honorary consultant at Moorfields. In 1963 the University of London became the first in the country to establish a chair in clinical ophthalmology and Jones was appointed its professor. Under his leadership the department soon became renowned as a centre for research and teaching,

and attracted many young academic ophthalmologists and scientists from Britain and overseas.

Innovation came naturally to Jones, partly because of his Kiwi roots, says his daughter Jenny Robin Jones.

“His early experience in the New Zealand bush helped him with his lifelong career,” she says. “He adored tramping and botany, and it made a deep impression on him that every living organism was linked with all the others.

“He took that understanding into medicine. He had a holistic approach long before it was popular and the broad training he received in Dunedin helped support that.”

Jones changed the method and direction of ophthalmic practice at Moorfields and transformed the relationship between clinicians and researchers. He insisted on all trainees using the operating microscope, thus spawning a new generation of micro-surgeons, and encouraged subspecialisation in every branch of ophthalmology. His changes revolutionised cataract and other ophthalmic surgery, introduced antibiotics, anti-virals and anti-

inflammatory medications, and improved treatment for corneal and external disease.

He was passionate about teaching and was noted for coining memorable phrases. The indiscriminate mixing of ocular secretions between members of a family which spread trachoma he described as “ocular promiscuity”, while an “ocular condom” was a hat with a mesh around it to prevent flies reaching the eyes.

His daughter remembers how he briefly gained the nickname “the pox doctor” when the contraceptive pill was introduced in the swinging ’60s and he advised condom use to help prevent the spread of a chlamydia organism involved in transmitting eye infections.

“He often came up against the establishment for clear thinking and speaking his mind – but quite enjoyed being outspoken and always had a twinkle in his eye.”

Jones’ long-term campaign against trachoma saw him undertake a programme of research in the Middle East, where the disease was particularly rife. He and his wife, Pauline, spent several weeks each year in Iran, and Jenny Robin Jones recalls her mother learning Farsi so she could communicate with the local women – something a man could not do.

“They were very much a dynamic duo, a hands-on team that was much more than just a sum of its parts,” she says. “After one trip my mother asked my father when he was going to do something for the people who had provided data for his research for so long.

“This triggered what he called ‘an identity crisis’. The result was a total switch in emphasis, because he had identified that the reason for the

‘ocular promiscuity’ of trachoma was overcrowding and poor sanitation.

“From then on his focus was the far less glamorous work of preventive ophthalmology.” He resigned from the chair of clinical ophthalmology in 1981 to establish and lead a new International Centre for Eye Health, which enrolled students from many fields, some unrelated to ophthalmology.

Instead of offering training in Western medicine, which was city-based, he trained people who wanted to learn about the diseases of their own countries and were interested in returning home to work with their people in rural areas. His efforts led to a world-wide movement for eye health, with training centres in Africa, India and America.

His daughter recalls: “When he set up the new department it was a radical development for ophthalmology. People thought he was barmy, but he was undeterred. He was dedicated to his work to the point of being obsessional. It was difficult being in his shadow, but he was inspiring to be around.”

She remembers when she was little how her mother took her and her younger brothers to the hospital so they could see their father where he was working long hours.

“It was quite a special thing to have a parent like that and to see how much could be done, and how you could be so excited by things and put so much energy and dedication into life.”

After Jones retired in 1986, he followed up requests from his students to help with research programmes in their countries, particularly with the control of onchocerciasis (river blindness) in Africa. By then a seasoned fundraiser and winner of monetary awards, he was



**Barrie Jones:**

He was passionate about teaching, and transformed the relationship between clinicians and researchers.

able to fund and pursue this work into his late seventies. He remained as Emeritus Professor at the University of London until 2002 when he and Pauline returned to New Zealand, where three of their four children were living.

Although Jones had spent his entire career overseas, his reputation and Otago connections have had a positive effect on the University, says Department of Ophthalmology Associate Professor Gordon Sanderson.

“In ophthalmic circles Otago punches far above its weight,” he says. “This is the place people turn to when they want postgraduate training or they want to get representation on a committee.

“Otago has inordinate influence and that is partly a result of Barrie Jones.”

Jones received many honours, including a CBE in 1985, the 1986 King Faisal International Prize in Medicine, the 1990 Gonin Medal (the highest award of the International Council of Ophthalmology) and the International Agency for the Prevention of Blindness 2004 Global Achievement Award.

“He had great respect for those who had gone before,” says his daughter. “He often talked in lectures about honouring those heroes who had led the way. Now he is playing that role for others.”

**NIGEL ZEGA**

# Musical chair

**Professor Terence Dennis is one of New Zealand's most respected musicians, sought after as an accompanist by the world's distinguished performers.**

"The music world, it calls you, not the other way round."

Professor Terence Dennis, sitting in the surprisingly light and airy basement space he shares with a Steinway grand piano with faint traces of music wafting down from practice rooms or from the auditorium above, is quoting Dame Kiri Te Kanawa. He offers this trade secret with a knowing smile by way of general observation about musical careers, but it seems a most fitting description of himself: a man who has become New Zealand's most in-demand accompanist and one of our most widely respected musicians.

Music is most certainly Dennis' world and – judging from his relentless performance schedule and substantial teaching responsibilities – he appears to move through it at an *allegro* pace. He is often considered New Zealand's leading pianist to partner distinguished

international artists in concert and recording, including being one of just a handful in the world to play concert recitals with Dame Kiri Te Kanawa.

Since 1991, Dennis has been official pianist for the finals and winners' tour of the Lexus Song Quest (formerly Mobil Song Quest), working with some of the greatest operatic singers in the world in their role as judge.

He has been official pianist for seven international string competitions, and was invited to coach alongside Dame Kiri and some of the world's most elite musicians at the prestigious Solti Te Kanawa Accademia di Bel Canto in Italy in 2009 and 2010.

In 2008, Dennis released a recording of Wagner and Liszt piano works, which led to an invitation to present a lecture recital at the World Conference of the European Piano Teachers' Association in Serbia early in 2009. Later that year, he

accompanied Bryn Terfel on a national tour, delighting in the special speech of thanks the internationally renowned bass-baritone gave him at the Auckland Town Hall and the signed concert poster Terfel dedicated to him, a tennis lover, as "the Federer and Nadal of the music world".

All in all, it's a life that might be considered quite an achievement for a boy from Christchurch who did not grow up in a musical family, although one very supportive of his training.

The music world first called Dennis when he was seven years old. Holidaying on the South Auckland farm where his father grew up, he discovered an old piano – and a talent for playing it and "inventing things" on it.

"I obviously didn't thump the thing, so it was suggested to my parents that I get piano lessons," he remembers. "It was like a duck to water. It was like breathing – as easy as that."

Following an undergraduate degree at Otago, Dennis went to the Staatliche Hochschule für Musik in Cologne, Germany, at that time the largest conservatorium in Western Europe, where he graduated Konzertexamen with



Distinction, the highest German music conservatory qualification.

In 1981, after returning for a concert tour in New Zealand, Dennis was offered a temporary lecturer position at Otago. Here, 25 years later, he would become the first performance staff member at a New Zealand university to be appointed to a personal chair.

Now, as William Evans Executant Professor in Performance, he is co-ordinator of the Classical Performance Programme, teaches piano at all levels, coaches voice students in Italian and German and is co-supervisor of masters' students both in piano and in voice. He is invited to present papers at international conferences on musical pedagogy and is on the committee of the Australasian Piano Pedagogy Conference. In 2004 he was appointed to the New Zealand Order of Merit and in 2009 was made a Fellow of the New Zealand Academy of the Humanities.

"The University of Otago has given me a base, a springboard and the flexibility to be able to do a lot of things," he says. "Yes, it's a long way from places, but it certainly hasn't stopped me being asked to do those sorts of things."

Dennis is asked to do "those sorts of things" because he is, in the words of Dame Kiri, "world-class".

"I acknowledge and admire his advice," she offers, "and his musical integrity is second to none. We work together with great satisfaction."

The boy for whom playing the piano was like breathing, it turns out, was equipped with a rare amalgam of skills and abilities that make him not just a

very good pianist, but an outstanding accompanist.

"What a singer like Dame Kiri or Bryn Terfel wants in their pianist will be the support, the range of colour and the freedom to do whatever they want," explains Dennis. "That demands a sixth sense. In essence, you've got to be a second skin of the person you're working with. You've got to be your own personality to an extent, but everybody has a different way of performing and, as an accompanist, you have to assist that and make them feel totally comfortable.

"That means the way you play a piece with one person will be different to the way you do it the next day with someone else. You have a concept of how the work is, but all the little details will be individual.

"Your antennae have to be up all the time. You've got to sense when people are needing more breath so you can push them through, help them through corners, move around. You really have to know the music beyond the part, as if you're conducting it, plus have the digital prowess to play anything they want.

"And you have to have a range of tone in your hands that can complement the soloist, so that if the violin is grand or if it's sweet, or if the voice is big or it's a high soprano and light, everything changes. That requires split second adjustments."

William Evans Senior Lecturer in Voice at Otago and Dennis' long-time colleague Judy Bellingham speaks of his ability to "make the piano speak in such a way that enhances the inherent emotion in the text".

"Terence is intuitive in the way he works with a singer," she says, "but the intuition is based on having a superior mind and musical intellect."


Dennis' own piano students also benefit from these gifts, of course, and from an approach that is centred on an awareness of the physicality of piano playing.

"To produce a beautiful sound you have to have total freedom to alter the touch in a thousand ways, because that's from the heart, from what the music is telling you. That's a Zen sort of concept, but you're playing an instrument where

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"I acknowledge and admire his advice, and his musical integrity is second to none. We work together with great satisfaction."  
- Dame Kiri Te Kanawa.





**Professor Terence Dennis:** “... the way you play a piece with one person will be different to the way you do it the next day with someone else.”

Photo: Alan Dove

the touch for each note is on average 30 grams – imagine the differentials across a whole piece. So my tenet is that the musical and the technical gestures should be totally matched.

“I approach it from the relaxing of the body. I make my students feel the freedom of the arm right up to the shoulder, because what you’re playing with is the tiny tips of your fingers, but it stems from the strength of the shoulder and back.”

Latterly Dennis has been invited onto music scholarship boards and he is a trustee of the Kiri Te Kanawa Foundation, an organisation established to help New Zealand’s most talented young singers and musicians succeed internationally.

“Terence has already made a significant contribution and his advice on a number of special projects has proved invaluable,” says Dame Kiri. “You don’t often meet the combination he offers: practical experience in performance, plus detailed knowledge

of the academic aspects behind the music repertoire.”

Dennis only ever listens to music actively, never as a “background”. One imagines he would find the type of sanitised, bland music you hear in the supermarket or an elevator an anathema.

“When music is your life you have to treat it in a way that it doesn’t become just a commodity,” he explains. “You’re trying to do something special with it all the time. Just to have endless, wall-to-wall music is the last thing I would want.”

Sometimes, in a world filled with sound, he just likes silence, as when he walks through the Dunedin Botanic Garden on his way to and from campus. Presumably it’s all the better to appreciate the world of beautiful sounds he occupies on the international stage.

**REBECCA TANSLEY**

## A word in your inner ear

**Could stimulating the vestibular system or balance organs in the inner ear aid learning and memory?**

A group of researchers in the Department of Pharmacology and Toxicology think the answer could be “yes” and are putting it to the test.

Co-investigators Professor Paul Smith, Dr Yiwen Zheng and Associate Professor Cynthia Darlington have been awarded a Marsden grant for the research that, they say, is based on simple logic.

“One of the most striking findings recently is that not only does damage to the inner ear lead to memory impairment, but it also causes the hippocampus to shrink,” says Smith. “So the idea came to us that stimulating the vestibular system

could actually enhance memory. Vestibular stimulation seems to create changes to the pattern of activity in many different areas of the cortex.”

Neurologists have found that stimulating the inner ear with a very low amplitude galvanic vestibular stimulation (GVS) can help stroke and Parkinson’s disease patients. The low amplitude avoids any vestibular reflex activity, such as nausea. The process involves two small electrodes on the skin and, Darlington says, it is totally innocuous.

“If it proves effective, those who will be treated with it will find it non-invasive.”

Zheng says they will apply GVS to rats and then use learning tests to see if it enhances their memory.

“We will also record electrical activity in the hippocampus which is an area involved in memory.”

They will also investigate whether GVS

produces neurogenesis or the formation of new neurons in the brain.



**Associate Professor Cynthia Darlington, Dr Yiwen Zheng and Professor Paul Smith:** They are looking at whether stimulating the vestibular system could enhance memory.

## Looking good on the web

**Internet social networking sites have taken off in recent years and, for some, they offer a chance to present a whole new persona.**

University of Otago Department of Media, Film and Communication lecturer Dr Erika Pearson is examining how people represent themselves, both as individuals and as members of a social group, on sites such as Facebook, MySpace and LiveJournal.

“My particular area of focus is how they use pictures to create identity and community and belonging.”

Pearson says she chose LiveJournal for her current research because it is very image-heavy and is also anonymous.

“By that I mean it is not based on off-line social connections. Facebook, for example, is all about connecting with friends. There is a certain constraint



**Dr Erika Pearson:** “My particular area of focus is how [people] use pictures to create identity and community and belonging.”

because people know what you look like and how you dress.

“With LiveJournal they have no idea, so the only mental picture they can construct is the one they build through your words and the one you give them through your pictures.”

Pearson used an online survey which drew 650 responses from LiveJournal users and then followed that up with an extended interview of a dozen people, asking about how they constructed images to present themselves and what they looked for in other people’s sites.

“People try to create a picture and even their layout is carefully designed to create a certain impression. They often try to construct or portray certain personality characteristics or pursue interests they wouldn’t in their normal environment.”



## Hydration hype questioned

Much is made of the need for correct hydration in sport and daily life, but Otago School of Physical Education researchers are adding to a growing body of research that questions the blanket guidelines.

Dr Jim Cotter says much of the research into hypohydration (a state of lowered body fluid levels caused by the process of dehydration) is taken out of context, with findings based on exercise effects using unrealistic hypohydration levels created in artificially heat-stressful lab environments.

Honours student Troy Merry found that athletes tolerate hypohydration better than untrained people when using realistic and controlled environmental and



**Dr Jim Cotter:** He says much of the research about hypohydration is taken out of context.

hypohydration conditions equivalent to about two per cent of body mass.

"The athletes showed none of the cardiovascular and thermoregulatory burden shown by untrained participants and promulgated in literature."

The performance effects were unclear, but Cotter thinks the tendency for athletes to show slightly impaired performance may involve expectation or perceptions.

"There was no apparent physiological reason for it. They may have regulated their performance according to perception - and thirst is a strong perception."

Cotter says common guidelines suggest that for every kilogram lost you should drink 150 per cent of that to get it back. "In reality, much of the weight lost in prolonged competition or training is glycogen [stored sugars] and the water bound to it. There's no point getting the weight back until you've resynthesised the glycogen - that can take a day."

He says aggressive rehydration is potentially more harmful than drinking according to thirst. "Surprisingly, it's still unknown whether drinking to thirst will limit exercise performance."

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## Kilimanjaro's glacial clues

**Mighty Mount Kilimanjaro's ancient glaciers are providing important clues about climate change for a University of Otago climatologist.**

Dr Nicolas Cullen (Department of Geography) began studying the 5,893 metre giant during postdoctoral work at the University of Innsbruck in Austria, working with Professor Georg Kaser.

"Kilimanjaro is interesting because it is the highest free-standing mountain in Africa. It penetrates well into the mid-troposphere and you can detect variability in the climate, not only near the surface, but well up into the atmosphere."

Cullen says the scientists work with energy and mass-balance models using field measurements from weather stations

on Kilimanjaro's glaciers.

"Glaciers can tell us something about climate change - they are useful indicators. If you can unravel those processes in the present, you're in a position to say something about both past and future - and that's the most exciting part."

He says there is contentious debate about Kilimanjaro because there are those who see it as being driven by global warming and a general rise in temperatures, but he believes it is something more complex than just global warming.

"If you look at the actual processes responsible for the Kilimanjaro glacial retreat, we think it is moisture variability that controls that retreat as much, or more, than any change in air temperature."

While Kilimanjaro's height and tropical location provide unique data, students are being encouraged to study glaciers here.

"I think New Zealand glaciers can also be used to help unravel this issue of climate change - we can still do a better job."



**Dr Nicolas Cullen:** "Glaciers can tell us something about climate change - they are useful indicators."



## Cultures for success



**Professor Brendan Gray:** Successful organisations are committed to staff engagement, customer satisfaction, teamwork, quality and innovation.

### What makes for successful organisation or corporate cultures?

In a 10-year longitudinal study of 40 firms across the professional and business services sectors, Professor Brendan Gray has uncovered a number of common themes. Gray, who holds the Dunedin City Chair in Entrepreneurship, found that most successful organisations had clearly defined their missions, visions and goals, and encouraged a high level of staff buy-in to overarching strategies and practices to enable effective implementation.

This was achieved in a number of ways, such as involving staff at various levels in developing strategies, rather than imposing them, and educating staff and managers to appreciate the importance of being market-oriented, creative and focused on finding new ways of solving existing customer or business management problems.

Gray says the successful firms

also tried to “stretch” their employees, giving them challenges to improve their practices, and their relations with customers, suppliers, distributors and wider communities. There was a strong emphasis on teamwork, often through assembling cross-functional teams from different parts of the organisation to solve problems.

Other key characteristics were an emphasis on quality and customer satisfaction, and a focus on their communities – being good corporate citizens. The study suggests that a culture emphasising innovation is crucial to long-term success, mainly because technologies – along with marketing campaigns and pricing strategies – are not only changing rapidly, but can be copied quickly.

“The top performers had a greater commitment to their internal and external strategies and practices, and used more sophisticated techniques to ensure their organisations delivered superior value.”

## Colon cancer disparities

**New Zealand has one of the highest rates of bowel cancer in the world and new research from the Department of Public Health (Wellington) shows that Māori have less chance of surviving this serious disease than non-Māori.**

Researchers Drs Diana Sarfati and Sarah Hill compared 301 Māori and 328 non-Māori patients from the New Zealand Cancer Registry to determine survival from colon cancer.

“It’s quite clear that Māori are less likely to survive a diagnosis of colon cancer than non-Māori,” says Sarfati. “They have a 30 per cent higher risk of dying within five years of diagnosis of colon cancer.”

She says the differences in survival for

Māori are internationally significant and need to be addressed. The study, recently published in the *Journal of Epidemiology and Community Health*, pinpoints several key factors behind this disparity.

A major predisposing factor is high Māori rates of pre-existing medical conditions such as diabetes, heart and respiratory disease. These factors affect the treatment that people receive for their cancer and also directly affect survival.

Secondly, reflecting other international studies of ethnic disparities in health, lower survival in Māori patients reflects more limited health service access and quality.

“We found no biological reason for the survival difference between Māori and non-Māori patients,” says Sarfati.

These inequalities in colon cancer treatment are also the subject of a second and related study just published in *Cancer*.

It concludes that the New Zealand health system itself is also a factor in Māori bowel cancer patients experiencing inferior treatment.



**Dr Diana Sarfati:** “It’s quite clear that Māori are less likely to survive a diagnosis of colon cancer than non-Māori.”

## Biophotonic potential

Coherence is a fundamental property of laser radiation that has attracted attention from organisations such as NASA, but there is also enormous potential for lasers in medicine and the life sciences.

When laser radiation goes through biological tissues it becomes less intense, less coherent, less polarised and more highly scattered. By quantifying these changes in respect to physiological processes and/or structural changes within the tissues, a new non-invasive diagnostic technique could be developed. This research area is known as biophotonics.

Dr Igor Meglinski (Physics), in collaboration with Professor Michael



**Dr Igor Meglinski:** He is investigating the application of biophotonics in medicine and the life sciences.

Eccles (Pathology), is working on this developing technology to aid early cancer detection and to thus enable more effective treatment. He is also working with Associate Professor Liz Franz

(Psychology) on the use of biophotonics in the investigation of brain activity. EEG and fMRI brain scanning technologies are well established, but costly. Working with Franz, Meglinski is developing, what he describes as a complementary technology for EEG and fMRI, using optical fibre.

"The device will be relatively low-cost, portable, non-invasive and compatible with fMRI and EEG, so we would be able to deliver additional information with no additional cost at the same time as the fMRI or EEG scan is being done, speeding up the diagnosis process and making it more accurate."

Meglinski says the future of biophotonics is huge and diverse, with potential applications including "food sciences, pharmaceuticals and cosmetics industries, nanotechnology and biomedical engineering".

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## For richer, for poorer ...

New Zealand or, more specifically, the University of Otago Faculty of Law, is providing valuable input into an international study examining how different countries treat matrimonial property.

The Law Commission of England and Wales is currently considering whether changes are needed to laws covering marital agreements. It is working with the Centre for European Legal Studies, based at the Faculty of Law, University of Cambridge, which is conducting a comparative research project, headed by Dr Jens Scherpe, looking at different approaches in European and non-European countries.

Otago Law researcher Margaret Briggs, who is co-ordinating the Otago involvement, says England and New Zealand have very different systems of dealing with property distribution when a relationship ends.

New Zealand legislation imposes a default property-sharing regime on married couples, civil union couples and de facto partners. But it also offers them the option of contracting out of the regime.

"There is less legislative intervention in England. It is a discretionary matter and the courts have a much wider say in property distribution."

Briggs says New Zealand is of interest to the UK because, although our system was based on the old English common law system, it is now far removed. The way our system covers so many different relationships is also of interest to them.

"But our system is not perfect either,



**Margaret Briggs:** She is contributing to an international study of matrimonial property.

so looking at other countries will also be very helpful for New Zealand."

The study, involving 13 countries, is due to be published this year with New Zealand providing a chapter.

## Cyanobacteria conundrums

There are unknown numbers of cyanobacteria – simple organisms that capture sunlight for their energy supply via photosynthesis: the perfect “lab rat” of the plant biochemistry lab.

Cyanobacteria also produce hydrogen and small amounts of ethanol so, in these energy-conscious times, these ubiquitous energy factories are of particular interest.

Dr Tina Summerfield (Botany) has been working on cyanobacteria and their photosynthesis processes for some time, investigating which strains are the highest producers of hydrogen.

“There’s a balancing act between oxygen production through photosynthesis and the production of hydrogen. Oxygen inhibits the enzyme that generates

hydrogen, but both are products of photosynthesis. So there’s a tipping point where more oxygen is produced, cutting off the production of hydrogen. This varies from one strain to another.”



**Dr Tina Summerfield:** She has been exploring which strains of cyanobacteria are the highest producers of hydrogen.

While working on this, Summerfield found something extraordinary: one strain had a different response, producing alternative forms of key proteins in photosynthesis.

“These alternative proteins are increased under low oxygen conditions. We will investigate how they alter photosynthetic performance and whether this alters the ability of the cyanobacterium to produce hydrogen. These changes may enable the hydrogen production to continue for longer.”

The other puzzle is the enzyme itself – hydrogenase – which produces hydrogen, but also consumes it. Summerfield is exploring what triggers this switch as well.

“There are so many different kinds of cyanobacteria – some produce hydrogen, some fix nitrogen. There’s so much metabolic potential in the different varieties – the ones that live in hot springs would be very interesting to explore ...”

## Gene link to Crohn’s disease

Dr Robert Bentley and the Autoimmune Disease Research Group (Christchurch) have shown for the first time that having a higher number of copies of the DEFB4 gene is a risk factor for Crohn’s disease, one of two forms of inflammatory bowel disease (IBD).

This incurable and debilitating condition affects thousands of people in New Zealand. Its causes are unknown, but these findings reflect increasing research interest in genetic risk factors and, particularly, the influence of gene copy numbers in the development of Crohn’s and other autoimmune diseases like IBD.

“It appears that there’s a relationship between elevated DEFB4 gene copy

number and expression of the anti-microbial peptide beta-defensin 2 in the gut,” says Bentley. “This may be associated with an increased risk of gut inflammation in Crohn’s disease.

“We looked at 466 patients with Crohn’s and 329 controls, based on the Canterbury IBD study, and we validated the assay by alternative methods, so the findings are pretty robust.”

Bentley says the results, published in the *American Journal of Gastroenterology*, may be controversial as they contradict the only previous study which found the opposite result, that lower levels of DEFB4 were associated with a risk of Crohn’s disease.

Bentley, paediatric gastroenterologist Associate Professor Andrew Day and colleagues in the Department of Biochemistry (Dunedin) are continuing this research. They have been funded by the Canterbury Medical Research Foundation



**Dr Robert Bentley:** His research shows that a higher number of the DEFB4 gene is a risk factor for Crohn’s disease.

to investigate factors that influence the expression of beta defensins in the gut and whether this response can be modified with therapeutics for Crohn’s disease.

## Looking at lakes

There are more than 3,500 freshwater lakes in New Zealand and Dr Marc Schallenberg (Department of Zoology) has studied about 70 of them in the course of his work ... so far.

"I look at many aspects of lakes including climate change impacts, eutrophication or farming impacts, invasive species, pathogens in drinking water, as well as environmental histories and lake restoration."

Core samples from lake beds give insights into historical changes to lakes and their catchments. Indicators will typically be microfossils (exoskeletons of diatoms among which particular species can be identified), skeletons of foraminiferans and plant pollens.

Sampling on lakes often arouses the interest of locals. "At Lake Waiholā

[30 km south of Dunedin] curious individuals would spot us working and have a yarn with us about what we were doing."

Community links happen in various ways, often initially through such chance encounters. Participation in community meetings, seminars, workshops and field days has led to more formal links with the Department of Conservation, New Zealand Fish and Game, regional councils and local iwi.

Schallenberg's team also puts together easy-read reports for the public, works with local schools and provides scientific advising. He believes working with communities in this way is invaluable.

"Having to explain their research clearly to non-scientists is great training for students. Communities often know things about their lakes that we might otherwise never find out or take ages trying. And, because we're working

on something that's important to the communities, they're really appreciative of what we are doing!"



**Dr Marc Schallenberg:** "I look at many aspects of lakes including climate change and farming impacts, invasive species, pathogens ..."

## Encouraging energy savings



**Professor Rob Lawson:** "New Zealand lags behind most developed countries in adopting energy-efficient behaviours and technologies ..."

**New Zealanders' reluctance to embrace energy-efficient technologies is being put under the spotlight by the three-year Energy Cultures project, funded by the Foundation for Research Science and Technology (FRST).**

Professor Rob Lawson (Department of Marketing and convenor of the University's Energy Research Centre) says the \$1 million grant is the first time FRST has supported such research. It will build on work undertaken over the last two years in local communities, supported by a University of Otago research grant.

"New Zealand lags behind most developed countries in adopting energy-efficient behaviours and technologies and we have been slow to set vigorous standards for energy efficiency in comparison to the rest of the world."

Even energy industry giants like Shell now admit that large-scale behaviour

change is necessary to cope with the combined threats of climate change and peak oil, he says. "A lot of behaviour is seen as habitual and difficult to change, even in the face of significant economic pressure. There is a strong inertia to change and preaching austerity certainly does not work. Saving the planet is not a relevant message for many people either."

The Energy Cultures project aims to understand how people use energy to achieve the lifestyles to which they aspire and, in so doing, identify barriers to adopting energy-efficient technologies and opportunities to encourage and facilitate change. The team involves staff from the Centre for the Study of Agriculture, Food and Environment, Economics, Law (at Waikato University), Marketing and Physics.

"It is exciting having a variety of different disciplines feeding into it. Changing behaviour is a complex thing."



# This other Scotland

**As a Scotsman joining Otago's new Centre for Irish and Scottish Studies, Professor Liam McIlvanney is continuing to learn about Scottish heritage.**

Professor Liam McIlvanney is in his element at the University of Otago. The Scotsman took up the new Stuart Chair in Scottish Studies\* last February and is clearly relishing the post.

One of the attractions of the job was the chance to profess Scottish Studies outside Scotland, particularly as so few positions of this kind are available.

He also points out that part of the intellectual development of Scottish Studies in the past 15 years has focused on the internationalising of the discipline, particularly regarding issues such as the Scottish diaspora – the mass emigration of Scots in the 19th century.

"I'm interested in the next stage of the process which is the institutional internationalisation of the discipline, so it's very exciting to be part of that [at Otago]," McIlvanney says.

He adds that Dunedin and Otago's Scottish heritage makes it an obvious place for a chair in Scottish Studies and

part of his motivation in coming here is to learn more about this "other Scotland" 19,000 kilometres from home.

"I've been very struck – as anyone would be – by the Scottish ambience in Dunedin and the extent to which various institutions, from the high schools and the University to churches and even the pubs, have a distinct Scottish character.

"There's also the extent to which people in Scotland can be fairly uninformed about the diaspora, about places like Dunedin. To discover that Robert Burns' nephew [the Reverend Thomas Burns] played such a significant role in the founding of the city was a revelation.

"It's been fascinating to discover there are aspects of Scottish heritage unknown to me, at least. But I also think it gives the chair a context in terms of the potential for community engagement, which is present here in a way that might not be possible if the chair had been established in some other city."

Before coming to Otago, McIlvanney's research tended to focus on two areas: 20th century Scottish fiction and 18th century Scottish literature, concentrating particularly on the work of Robert Burns.

"My first book [*Burns the Radical: Poetry and Politics in late Eighteenth-Century Scotland*] is essentially a study of Burns' politics and of the role of Presbyterianism in the development of his radical politics.

"More recently, my research has taken greater cognisance of the diaspora and, in coming years, I plan to research what might be called the 'diasporic imagination'."

While studies of the Scottish diaspora have tended to focus on statistics – the numbers and the economic "push-pull" factors in Scotland's mass outflow of population – McIlvanney is now interested in exploring the cultural and imaginative dimension to that experience. In other words, through novels, stories, poems and plays, to look at the ways in which Scottish immigrants imagined Scotland and their new environment overseas.

"I think that has been a relatively neglected dimension to the whole



**" ... it seems the next stage in the development of Irish and Scottish Studies is the internationalising of the discipline, to look at how Ireland and Scotland ... impacted on places like Australia and New Zealand."**

**Professor Liam McIlvanney:** "I've been very struck by the Scottish ambience in Dunedin and the extent to which various institutions ... have a distinct Scottish character."

Photo: Graham Warman



diaspora experience. Clearly, some of the early New Zealand poets and writers were of Scottish extraction like John Barr, who wrote poems about Otago, but more recently Janet Frame and James K Baxter."

McIlvanney, who is part of the University's new Centre for Irish and Scottish Studies, notes that in other parts of the world where centres for Scottish Studies have been established, comparative Irish/Scottish Studies have proven a very fruitful field for research.

He says this is hardly surprising given the two nations' shared historical experience and historical parallels, including their sometimes fraught relationship with their larger neighbour, England, and their experiences of nationalism, political sectarianism and the Gaelic language.

"There's a whole host of parallels that make that comparative study a compelling field in which to work.

"Again, it seems the next stage in the development of Irish and Scottish

Studies is the internationalising of the discipline, to look at how Ireland and Scotland – those two nations who contributed so hugely to the outflow of people from Europe in the 19th century – impacted on places like Australia and New Zealand."

He says it could be argued that Scotland was one of the first countries to experience "globalised modernity", through industrialisation and participation in "supranational" entities like the British Empire. It was also

among the first countries to theorise and interpret modernity, through the work of Scottish enlightenment philosophers such as Adam Smith and John Millar, who sought to understand how societies move from one stage of social development to another, and through the historical novels of Walter Scott and John Galt. Scotland then exported these ideas through the enormous influence of Scottish educators, who founded a number of schools and tertiary institutions overseas, among them the University of Otago.

“So, in terms of our understanding of how Scotland and Ireland go through that process of modernisation, there’s a sense in which these countries are emblematic and exemplary, and that studying them opens up insights into how other countries experience that process.”

So what are McIlvanney’s plans for the chair and what will it bring to the University of Otago?

“The aim is to make the Centre for Irish and Scottish Studies a focus for high quality, interdisciplinary comparative research into the impact of these countries in this part of the world.

“Beyond that, one of the things I’m keen to foster is a sense of community engagement. Recently, we had a visit from the presiding officer of the Scottish Parliament, and a delegation of MSPs [Members of the Scottish Parliament]. I was struck by the enthusiasm that visit generated. Upwards of 70 people attended a function held at short notice

and there was a good half-hour of questions after it. And that just gave me a sense of the hunger for things Scottish here.”

In this context, McIlvanney is working to set up a writers’ exchange between New Zealand and Scotland. At the time of writing, the Scottish Arts Council had agreed to fund an airfare, accommodation and stipend for a New Zealand writer going to Scotland and McIlvanney was working to set up the New Zealand end. The visiting Scottish writer will be based, for at least part of their stay, at the University of Otago.

“I think it will be a significant exchange. It’s often through imaginative literature that connections between nations really come into focus.”

He also plans a symposium, scheduled for November 2010, on James K Baxter’s connections to Scotland.

Much of McIlvanney’s current research focuses on Baxter and his engagement with his Scottish inheritance, and has shown that he was strongly focused on this during his time as Burns Fellow at Otago in the mid-1960s. Baxter was also very conscious of what he called the “predicament of being a Burns Fellow” and, indeed, Burns was a poet whose influence was evident throughout Baxter’s career. Remarkably, Baxter knew Burns’ poem *Tam o’Shanter* by heart at the age of six and, while at Otago, gave a lecture, *The Man on the Horse*, which McIlvanney describes as a “brilliant 40-page exposition” on the symbolism of the famous poem.

Other planned initiatives include the possibility of student exchanges and collaborations with his colleagues Professor Angela McCarthy, who has been appointed to a chair in the Department of History, and Peter Kuch, the Eamon Cleary Professor of Irish Studies. The trio are developing a taught master’s programme in Irish and Scottish Studies which McIlvanney sees as a way of combining their research interests and of attracting students into the PhD programme. They’re also applying for approval of another undergraduate minor.

“I think the teaching aspect of the job is crucial ... I’ve really relished the challenge of teaching Scottish literature in a context where you can’t take for granted the kind of background knowledge you can in Scotland.”

As well as being an academic, McIlvanney writes creatively. His first novel, *All Colours of the Town*, was published by Faber last August. It’s a political thriller, set in Glasgow and Belfast, which explores the contemporary ramifications of the Irish “troubles”.

He is working on a second novel with the same protagonist. The novel is due for release in 2011.

#### GRANT McIVOR

\*The Stuart Chair in Scottish Studies was endowed by the Stuart Residence Halls Council through the University’s Leading Thinkers Initiative. The council’s gift of \$1.5 million was matched by the Government under its Partnerships for Excellence programme.

## Māori health workforce pilot programme launched

**The University has developed a pilot programme to support up to 20 Māori students to become health professionals.**

Students in the programme, called Tū Kahika, are enrolling in the University's Foundation Year programme this year to prepare for entry to Health Sciences First Year or other health studies in 2011.

Pro-Vice-Chancellor (Health Sciences) Professor Don Robertson says New Zealand has a serious shortage of Māori health professionals and the programme is responding to this acute need.

"With a stronger foundation in the health sciences and sound study skills, we hope that these students can achieve the academic standards required to apply for entry to a range of programmes leading to medical, dental, pharmacy, physiotherapy and medical laboratory qualifications," Professor Robertson says.

The University has government support for the pilot, which was developed in consultation with the Ministry of Health and Te Tapuae o Rehua Ltd, a joint venture between Ngāi Tahu and five South Island tertiary institutions, including the University.

## School of Business re-accredited

**The University's School of Business has been re-accredited with a highly respected European quality standard accreditation, known as EQUIS.**

Only 118 business schools in 34 countries hold an EQUIS accreditation, which identifies business schools as having world-class faculty, resources and facilities, and ensures that current and prospective students are receiving world-class education. The school is one of only about 50 business schools worldwide

to gain both the EQUIS and the North American AACSB accreditations.

## University Stadium building plans approved

**The University Council has approved plans for the first of its buildings to be constructed adjacent to the Forsyth Barr Stadium at University Plaza.**

The flagship building (below) has been designed by architectural firm Warren and Mahoney and will provide the west wall of the stadium, opening on to the University Plaza. It will accommodate the University's Foundation Studies programme and the Unipol Gymnasium. It will also house a physiotherapy clinic and café. Construction is planned to begin in May, with completion by August 2011.

Vice-Chancellor Professor David Skegg says the new building and the adjoining University Plaza will be wonderful assets for both the University and the community.

"The University of Otago will be very fortunate to have a major learning and recreational facility next to a world-class covered stadium," he says. "This will be one of the most exciting developments

on our campus for decades. The world's leading universities have always pursued the ideal of a healthy mind in a healthy body and this complex will be unparalleled in the Southern Hemisphere. It will undoubtedly help to ensure that Dunedin attracts the best possible students from around New Zealand and internationally."

Eventually, a second building will be constructed at a right angle to the first building, providing an L-shaped development.

## Marsden funding success

**University of Otago researchers gained significant funding from last year's Marsden Fund round to pursue projects pushing the frontiers of knowledge.**

The Otago researchers received more than \$18 million for 25 projects in the highly competitive funding round. The projects are led by staff from across the University's Divisions of Health Sciences, Humanities and Sciences.

Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Research and Enterprise) Professor Harlene Hayne says she was extremely proud that, for the fifth year in a row, Otago researchers





Professor Keith Hunter



Professor Donald Evans



Professor Allan Herbison

had captured more Marsden funding than any other institution in New Zealand.

"Our recipients, who range from early-career researchers to eminent professorial staff, have demonstrated that their research is at the cutting-edge. Otago's continued success in this extremely competitive funding environment is a good indicator of the high calibre of our research programmes."

## 2010 Arts Fellows

The University's Arts Fellows for the year are Auckland novelist **Michele Powles** (Robert Burns Fellow), Wellington-based artist **Joanna Langford** (Frances Hodgkins Fellow), Auckland composer and music teacher **Christopher Adams** (Mozart Fellow) and Auckland performer and choreographer **Suzanne Cowan** (Caroline Plummer Fellow in Community Dance).

## Appointments

Professor **Keith Hunter** as Pro-Vice-Chancellor of the University's Division of Sciences. A leading marine and freshwater chemist, Professor Hunter previously headed the University's Department of Chemistry. He succeeds Professor **Vernon Squire**, who has taken up the position of Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Academic and International).

Professor **Andrew Mercer** (Microbiology and Immunology) as the University's inaugural Professor of Viral Pathogenesis. Professor Mercer is widely recognised as New Zealand's most eminent virologist working on understanding viruses at the molecular level to help develop vaccines. The Chair in Viral Pathogenesis was endowed by anonymous donors under the University's Leading Thinkers Initiative.

Dr **Jennie Connor** as Professor of Preventive and Social Medicine at the Dunedin School of Medicine. Professor Connor will also head the Department of Preventive and Social Medicine. Her research interests include reduction of traffic injury, the role of sleepiness in injury, the health effects of transport, and alcohol-related harm.

Dr **Colin Gavaghan** as Director of the University's newly-established Centre for Law and Policy in Emerging Technologies. Dr Gavaghan, who comes to Otago from the University of Glasgow, is a leading scholar in medical law and ethics.

Dr **Faafetai Sopoaga** (Preventive and Social Medicine) as the first Associate Dean (Pacific) in the University's Division of Health Sciences. Her new role involves co-ordinating efforts to support current and prospective Pacific students seeking to enter the health workforce.

Professor **Donald Evans** (Bioethics) as President of the International Bioethics Committee of the United Nations Educational Scientific and Cultural Organisation. He is the first person from the Southern Hemisphere to hold the post.

## Obituaries

Emeritus Professor Sir **Donald Beaven** (85). A national authority on diabetes and its treatment, Professor Beaven was known for his energy and enthusiasm for tackling the disease and other public health ills. In 1971, he was appointed Professor of Medicine and academic department head at the University's Christchurch School of Medicine.

Emeritus Professor **John Parr** (87). A pioneering ophthalmologist at the Dunedin School of Medicine, Professor Parr was largely responsible for developing the school's undergraduate

ophthalmology programme into one of the strongest in the world. His medical text *Introduction to Ophthalmology* remains a classic in its field.

Dr **Pat Farry** (General Practice and Rural Health) (65). Founding Director of the University's Te Waipounamu Rural Health Unit, Dr Farry was renowned for his devotion to advancing rural medicine. His significant contributions to rural medical education included recently developing a ground-breaking rural immersion programme for fifth-year medical students.

**James (Jim) Archibald Valentine** (87). A distinguished Dunedin businessman who served on the University Council from 1969 - 92 and as Chancellor from 1982 - 92. He also served on the St Margaret's College Council from 1957 - 2000 and was awarded an Honorary Doctor of Laws degree by the University in 1990.

## New professors

Twelve staff were promoted to professor in December. The new professors are **Annette Beautrais** (Psychological Medicine, Christchurch), **Murray Barclay** (Department of Medicine, Christchurch), **Judith Bennett** (History), **Philip Bremer** (Food Science), **Michael Colombo** (Psychology), **Peter Herbison** (Preventive and Social Medicine), **Martin Kennedy** (Pathology, Christchurch), **Iain Lamont** (Biochemistry), **Robert McGee** (Preventive and Social Medicine), **James McQuillan** (Chemistry), **Henrik Moller** (Zoology) and **Graham Wallis** (Zoology).

## Achievements

Professor **Sally Brooker** (Chemistry) was awarded the New Zealand Institute of Chemistry Maurice Wilkins Centre Prize for excellence in chemical research.



**Associate Professor  
Parry Guilford**



Rhodes Scholars elect **Alice Irving** and **Thomas Hills**

The award recognises her significant contributions to the design and synthesis of polymetallic complexes.

Professor **Allan Herbison** (Physiology) won the Health Research Council's Liley medal in recognition of his ground-breaking research into how the brain controls fertility. It recognised his outstanding contribution to the health and medical sciences in the field of neuroscience and neuroendocrinology.

Professor **Barry Taylor** (Women's and Children's Health) was awarded the Montgomery Spencer Oration for 2009. The annual award is given by the Royal Australasian College of Physicians and recognises lifetime achievement in the contribution to child health by a New Zealand paediatrician.

Professor **Murray Thomson** (Oral Sciences) received Australasia's premier award for dental science, the Alan Docking Award for distinguished work in dental research.

Senior Teaching Fellow **Tony Zaharic** (Biochemistry) was named OUSA Teacher of the Year, Dr **Alan Davison** (Music) won the title of OUSA Best Supervisor of the Year and Dr **Kelly Hare** (Zoology) was named Best New Supervisor of the Year.

Emeritus Professor **Helen Leach** (Anthropology) won the Non-Recipe Book of the Year section, 2009 Culinary Quill Awards, for her book *The Pavlova Story*.

## Fellowships/scholarships

Associate Professor **Parry Guilford** (Cancer Genetics Laboratory) has been awarded a two-year James Cook Research Fellowship to pursue a programme aimed at developing epigenetic approaches to cancer prevention and therapy.

In 2009 Emeritus Professor **John Barsby** (Classics), Professor **Terence**

**Dennis** (Music) and Professor **Charles Higham** (Anthropology) were made Fellows of the New Zealand Academy of the Humanities.

Three Otago scientists were elected Fellows of the Royal Society of New Zealand in recognition of their distinguished work. They are Dr **Philip Boyd** (NIWA/Chemistry), Professor **Andrew Mercer** (Microbiology and Immunology) and Professor **Hamish Spencer** (Zoology).

**Karen Trebilcock**, who writes under the pen name Ella West, is the University of Otago College of Education Writer in Residence for 2010.

Two of the three New Zealand Rhodes Scholars elect for 2010 are Otago's **Thomas Hills** (MB ChB, 2009) and **Alice Irving**. The scholarships will support their postgraduate study at Oxford University.

2010 Rutherford Foundation Scholarships winners, Bachelor of Applied Science graduand **Julian Peat** and **Naomi White** (BSc (Hons) 2009) will undertake PhDs at the University of Cambridge.

**Nathalie Saurat** (BSc (Hons) 2009) is one of three New Zealanders to receive a Woolf Fisher Scholarship.

Physics honours graduand **Jonathan Squire** has gained an International Fulbright Science and Technology Award.

PhD students **Danny Baillie** (Physics) and **Chelsea Goulton** (Pharmacology and Toxicology) received national Top Achiever Doctoral Scholarships.

## Honorary Doctorates

In December, the University conferred three honorary doctorates. New Zealand hymn writer **Shirley Erena Murray** (MA (Hons) 1953) received the honorary degree of Doctor of Literature in recognition of her outstanding

contribution to the art of hymn writing. Former Otago academic and Deputy Prime Minister Hon Dr **Michael Cullen** and Otago businessman and community benefactor Mr **Trevor Scott** (BCom 1964) received honorary Doctor of Laws degrees.

## New Year Honours

Knight of the New Zealand Order of Merit (KNZM): Professor **Mason Durie**, for services to Māori health; the Hon. Justice **J Bruce Robertson**, for services as a Judge of the High Court of New Zealand and the Court of Appeal of New Zealand.

Companion of the New Zealand Order of Merit (CNZM): Dr **Richard Fisher**, for services to medicine; Dr **Hugh Spencer**, for services to medicine; **Ian Templeton**, for services to journalism.

Companion of the Queen's Service Order (QSO): **Lorraine Isaacs**, for services to television, education and women; **Lane Mohi**, for services to education.

Officer of the New Zealand Order of Merit (ONZM): Dr **Robert Boas**, for services to medicine; the Rev. Dr **Allan Davidson**, for services to history; Professor **Geoffrey Horne**, for services to medicine; Dr **G Murray Kirk**, for services to medicine.

Member of the New Zealand Order of Merit (MNZM): Dr **Jacqueline Allan**, for services to Māori health; Dr **Michael Boyes**, for services to outdoor recreation and mountain safety; Professor **Sitaleki Finau**, for services to Pacific Islands community health; Dr **John Musgrove**, for services to community health; Dr **David Sabiston**, for services to ophthalmology and the community.

The Queen's Service Medal: **E Bryan Dick**, for services to the community.





## Promised New Zealand

*Fleeing Nazi Persecution*

**Freya Klier, translated by Jenny Rawlings**

**For 24 European Jews, it is New Zealand, the country furthest from Germany, that will be their refuge.**

First published as *Gelobtes Neuseeland*, this book brings together their stories. From doctors and entrepreneurs to children and world-famous minds - Karl Popper, Peter Munz and Peter Dane being three scholars the country gained - their stories could scarcely be more varied. Yet they have one common link - the desire to maintain

as much distance from Germany as possible throughout their lives.

*Promised New Zealand* is a significant piece of world history, interweaving historical background on the politics of the period with vital stories that need to be told before they are lost to subsequent generations. It is the first translation of this important work and the first time it has been published outside Germany.



## In the Paddock and On the Run

*The Language of Rural New Zealand*

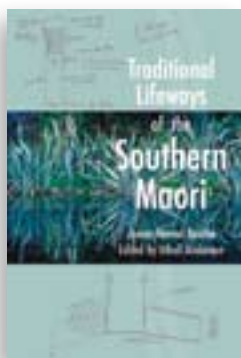
**Dianne Bardsley**

**This is the first book to explore the rich heritage of language the rural sector has generated.**

Very entertaining and more than 400 pages in extent, it includes historical citations for all words listed.

*In the Paddock and On the Run* is arranged in chapters relating to different aspects of rural life and farming. The author is director of the New

Zealand Dictionary Centre at Victoria University (Wellington) and also works as a lecturer and lexicographer within the School of Linguistics and Applied Languages. Her publications include *The Land Girls: In a Man's World, 1939-1946* (2000), several New Zealand dictionaries, and she is a contributor to the Watch Your Language column in the *Dominion Post* newspaper.



## Traditional Lifeways of the Southern Māori

*James Herries Beattie*

**Edited by Atholl Anderson**

**Journalist and researcher Herries Beattie worked with southern Māori for almost 50 years and produced many books.**

With a strong sense that traditional knowledge needed to be recorded, in 1920 he interviewed people from Foveaux Strait to North Canterbury, and from Nelson and Westland, with Otago Museum support. He then transcribed notebooks lent to him by his informants and visited the museum with them, recording southern names for fauna and artefacts, and also travelled to traditional sites and consulted the work of earlier researchers. Finally these findings were worked

up into the systematic notes that eventually became MS 181 in the Hocken Collections, a highly valued, but increasingly fragile, treasury of knowledge first published by Otago University Press under the above title in 1994.

Editor Atholl Anderson, Professor of Prehistory in the Department of Archaeology and Natural History, Australian National University, has written a biographical introduction to the book, describing Beattie's work and providing background information about his informants. It is a wonderful source of knowledge, unique in New Zealand literature.



## The Watchdog

*New Zealand's Audit Office 1840 to 2008*

**David Green and John Singleton**

**In a global economic climate troubled by the consequences of a dearth of fiscal accountability and transparency, the importance of independent auditing bodies, whether in the public or private sector, is not to be underestimated.**

Today, New Zealand is perceived as one of the world's least corrupt nations, indicating a job well done by its national Audit Office in inspiring public confidence. The authors trace the office's rise and decline towards "impotent irrelevance" before it was saved by computers, which facilitated more

targeted and searching methods of examination. The public sector reforms of the 1980s saw questioning of the very need for an Audit Office - questions that the office was, by then, well equipped to answer.

David Green is an historian and editor in the History Group, Ministry for Culture and Heritage, Wellington, and John Singleton is reader in Economic History at the School of Economics and Finance, Victoria University (Wellington) and principal author of a history of the Reserve Bank.

For further information:

Otago University Press

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)

## Recent Otago University Press titles

**Secular Sermons: Essays on Science and Philosophy**, by Alan Musgrave, September 2009.

**The Summer King: Poems**, by Joanna Preston, July 2009.

**Landfall 218 - Islands**, edited by David Eggleton, November 2009.

**Rauru: Tene Waitere, Māori Carving, Colonial History**, edited by Nicholas Thomas, photographs by Mark Adams, June 2009.

## Books by Otago alumni

**A Sliced-Bread Moment**, poems by Janet Carrington, JCarrington, 2009.

**The Art of Videogames**, by Grant Tavinor, Wiley-Blackwell, October 2009.

**My Bum Looks Brilliant In This: The One True Secret of Lasting Weight Loss**, by Karen Nimmo, Random House, New Zealand, July 2009.

**Blood Viscosity Factors: The Missing Dimension in Modern Medicine**, by Les Simpson, Mumford Institute (New Jersey), December 2008.

**Hell-Bent for Life**, by John Valentine, John Valentine Publishing, October 2009.

**The Anointed Son: a Trinitarian Spirit Christology**, by Myk Habets, Pickwick Publications, 2010.

**Film Location Tourists**, by Stefan Roesch, Channel View Publications, 2010.

## Alumni:

if you have published a book lately email the editor at [mag.editor@otago.ac.nz](mailto:mag.editor@otago.ac.nz)



Robin White, *New Angel* (1998), commercial and traditional dyes on 18 woven pandanus mats. Bought with the assistance of Hocken Library Endowment funds, 2000.

## Art and life interwoven

It's one thing to live in a foreign land, but quite another to assert oneself as an artist there.

In 1990, eight years after moving to the Kiribati island of Tarawa, New Zealand painter and printmaker Robin White was still coy about her position as an artist in the community. Despite producing numerous woodcuts on the remote coral atoll – exhibited to great acclaim in New Zealand – she commented in an *Art New Zealand* interview: “I haven’t revealed my art here ... My activities as an artist are a fairly private affair. [The I-Kiribati] know that I work and they respect that.”

Over the following years, however, a change happened. In 1996, fate dealt a blow to White’s reclusive art practices as a fire destroyed most of her printmaking equipment. And, in the two years prior to returning to New Zealand in 1999, she created a series of works that are both embedded within her island life and affectionately observant of it.

The *New Angel* series is a collaboration with women from the Itoiningaina Catholic Women’s Training Centre who wove table mats from leaves of the pandanus tree, following designs from White’s watercolour workings.

Each series begins with a shadowy outline of an everyday item, which emerges with increasing vigour across the images. In *Red Label* tea becomes brand-specific while, in *Safety Matches*, the bright Pacific flower is revealed as a commercial logo. Issues of Westernisation and commodification spring to mind, but White’s works are not that cynical. They celebrate reality and the essentials of

living on a remote island – matches, a cup of tea, a sense of humour.

In producing the works, White embraced a new medium of textile art.

She once described coming to terms with her new living environment as an exercise in “naming things as in a picture book”. But, in some ways, this process of sense-making has always been part of White’s work: she earned her reputation through her keen-eyed selection and labelling of objects and figures, allowing each subject to proudly claim centre stage.

But where White’s work was previously known for its crisp, confident lines, the natural fibres and dyes and weaving technique of *New Angel* bring softness and warmth. And it is perhaps significant that the symbols of the West are woven into, rather than asserted upon, tradition in these works.

What this says of White’s sense as a white New Zealander within an island community can only be imagined. But the works – much like the decorative motifs and woven skirts on Kiribati – suggest that, towards the end of her time on the far-flung shores, White found art and life gently infusing.

### NICOLA MUTCH

Reference: Eyley, C P, *Robin White in Kiribati*, *Art New Zealand*, Vol 54, 1990, pp55-59.

### Hocken Gallery exhibitions

Until February 20

On Vacation: a history of holidaying in southern New Zealand.

28 February – 24 April

Frances Hodgkins Fellow, Eddie Clemens.



**Alison Finigan:**  
Head of Alumni Relations

## A word from the Head

At the beginning of each year I survey the list of alumni events to come, anticipating the pleasure of seeing familiar faces and meeting new friends at functions in New Zealand and abroad. One event I look forward to with particular pleasure involves a group of alumni-to-be, the Alumni Annual Appeal Scholars, who early in the year attend a “welcome to Otago” morning tea at Alumni House.

To meet these young people fresh out of secondary school as they stand at the threshold of their future is to be inspired and invigorated by the bright expectations they bring, their hopes and dreams for what life holds for them, and their determination to take advantage of all that the University can offer to make those dreams a reality.

We in the Alumni Relations team keep a motherly eye on them throughout their first year, and take great pleasure in seeing them grow and develop as they settle into their new lives as Otago students – and outstanding students at that, to judge by the consistently high grades they achieve in their first-year examinations. Their successes are a tangible outcome of the benefits that they receive as Alumni Annual Appeal Scholars and those of you who support the scholarships in the Annual Appeal will enjoy reading snippets from the reports of the 2009 scholars, reproduced in the following pages.

2009 was the year that the Alumni Relations at Otago entered the wonderful world of Web 2.0, with the advent of the new alumni website offering a degree

of interactivity not available on the previous site (see page 44). Your Otago Link introduces a raft of new features that we hope will be of benefit to alumni and will help us to tailor communications to suit the needs of different sections of the alumni community.

Over the next 10 months the University will hold a number of alumni events in cities in New Zealand and overseas. Please check the list on page 45 and, if we’re coming to a place near you, we’d love to see you there.

## Upcoming University celebrations

2010 Hocken Library centenary

Māori Centre 21st anniversary

2011 St Margaret’s College centenary

School of Home Science and Consumer and Applied Sciences centenary

Department of Preventive and Social Medicine 125 years

Aquinas College jubilee

50 years since the University of Otago became autonomous from the University of New Zealand.

### St Margaret’s centenary, 2011

In January 2011 St Margaret’s will be celebrating its centenary with celebrations scheduled for Friday 28 to Sunday 30 January. Please register your interest at [www.alumni.otago.ac.nz/reunions/stmargarets](http://www.alumni.otago.ac.nz/reunions/stmargarets) or by post to the Alumni Director, St Margaret’s College, PO Box 56, Dunedin 9054.

### Department of Preventive and Social Medicine 125 years, 2011

In March 2011 the University’s largest department will celebrate the 125th anniversary of public health education in New Zealand. The department’s research, teaching and innovation in all aspects of public health have been enormously influential, within and beyond New Zealand. If you have recollections, photographs or other memorabilia you would like to share, please contact [DeptPSM100@otago.ac.nz](mailto:DeptPSM100@otago.ac.nz) or [functions@alumni.ac.nz](mailto:functions@alumni.ac.nz)

### Aquinas College jubilee, 2011

Following the successful reunion in 2008, a group of Aquinas alumni are planning another celebration to mark six decades of the history of this college, to be held in Dunedin 23 – 25 September 2011, the weekend of the England vs playoff winner World Cup rugby match. Please register your interest by emailing [lizzy.lukeman@otago.ac.nz](mailto:lizzy.lukeman@otago.ac.nz) or telephone 03 479 8487.

### University of Otago, Christchurch 40th anniversary, 2012

In February 2012 the University of Otago, Christchurch will celebrate 40 years of research and teaching on the Christchurch campus with a series of social functions, a jubilee publication and the creation of a research trust to be called the University of Otago, Christchurch Fellowships and Scholarships Fund. For further information contact Virginia Irvine, phone 03 364 0038 or email [virginia.irvine@otago.ac.nz](mailto:virginia.irvine@otago.ac.nz)

## Your Otago link

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

If you've been browsing on the University of Otago alumni website recently, you will have noticed some subtle changes. That's because the site has been updated to incorporate new features that will help alumni to communicate with the University and each other. The site is accessed by username and password, and can only be entered by alumni and University staff. It's a website to help you stay connected to Otago and to each other. It's Your Otago Link!

### Features and benefits

- The secure site operates on an "opt-in" basis to address the need for different levels of engagement – you can choose how and when you participate.
- The site provides opportunities for linking with other Otago graduates for assistance and introductions. The Alumni Directory feature on the site allows you to find your old classmates and friends and, if they have opted into the site, you can get in touch with them.
- When you sign up and register as a member, you can activate your own [@otagoalumni.ac.nz](mailto:@otagoalumni.ac.nz) address that forwards mail onto an email address you specify. It's a smart, official-looking address that will look good on your CV, academic papers or anywhere you want a permanent address which promotes your connection with Otago.
- The application allows you to receive news, event information and general updates from your former department, residential college or local alumni

group. The website has dedicated sites for these "networks" so you can keep up to date with what's happening in the areas at Otago most important to you, as well as keeping you connected to other Otago alumni in your area.

- You can view the information that is held about you on the Alumni and Friends database. You can update your contact information, review your education details and manage which e-communications you would like to receive from us.
- You can directly post your own news, ideas or thoughts onto the discussion board.
- Looking for a change of career or wanting to employ an Otago graduate? The Careers section, available to logged-in members, will help you reach Otago alumni throughout the world.
- The site offers a Benefits and Services page that highlights the advantages of being an Otago alumna/alumnus.
- More key features: access to University podcasts; RSS feeds on items of interest that appear elsewhere on the site (such as the Event Calendar and Alumni News); links to Careers Office and other University services.

New features are being added to the site on a regular basis, which will make it even more dynamic and interactive. The more alumni who register as members on the site, the better the networking will be for everyone.

## Reunions

### Upcoming reunions

#### MB ChB Class of 1954

19 – 21 March 2010, Auckland  
Contact Warren Fraser at [wnc.fraser@xtra.co.nz](mailto:wnc.fraser@xtra.co.nz)

#### MB ChB Class of 1970

5 – 7 March 2010, Wellington  
Contact David Waite at [waited@xtra.co.nz](mailto:waited@xtra.co.nz)

#### MB ChB Class of 1957

2010, Wellington  
Fellow Otago graduates from the 1956 or 1958 MB ChB classes who are interested in joining us are welcome to contact Warren Austad at [austads@xtra.co.nz](mailto:austads@xtra.co.nz) for further information.

#### BDS Class of 1960

18 – 21 August 2010, Christchurch  
Contact Kerry Sullivan at [kerrysullivan@xtra.co.nz](mailto:kerrysullivan@xtra.co.nz)

#### MB ChB Class of 1964

6 – 9 May 2010, Christchurch  
Contact Peter Law at [peter.law@xtra.co.nz](mailto:peter.law@xtra.co.nz)

#### MB ChB Class of 1968

26 February – 1 March 2010, Paihia  
Contact Brian Spackman at [fredspoos@xtra.co.nz](mailto:fredspoos@xtra.co.nz)

#### MBA 14 1990

22 – 24 October (Labour Weekend) 2010, Dunedin  
Contact Tony Johnston at [tony@millerstudios.co.nz](mailto:tony@millerstudios.co.nz)

#### MB ChB Class of 1997

October 2012, Dunedin  
Contact Rochelle Phipps at [rochelle.phipps@gmail.com](mailto:rochelle.phipps@gmail.com)

For help organising reunions contact Lizzy Lukeman at 64 3 479 8487 or email [lizzy.lukeman@otago.ac.nz](mailto:lizzy.lukeman@otago.ac.nz)



## Reunion reports

### MB ChB Class of 1950

#### “Sixty Glorious Years”

Last August, 30 class members and spouses met at the University’s Executive Residence for the group’s first Dunedin gathering since the end of 1949. Thus, the theme “Sixty Glorious Years” – which happens to be the title of a notable 1938 movie, screened during the reunion – was cheerfully adopted.

A full report can be read at [www.alumni.otago.ac.nz/1950reunion](http://www.alumni.otago.ac.nz/1950reunion)

### MB ChB Class of 1979



Professor **Rob Walker** and **Nicola Baxter**, with reunion attendees in the Barnett Lecture Theatre.

The Medical Class of 1979 celebrated its 30-year reunion in Dunedin over Labour Weekend, and awarded the inaugural Class of ’79 scholarship to Nicola Baxter (third-year Medicine). This scholarship was established at the class’ 25th reunion with the aim of helping

second- and third- medical students who are facing financial difficulties attending medical school. The scholarship will be awarded annually.

### Computer Science celebrations



In September, the Department of Computer Science celebrated 25 years of successful teaching and research. To mark the anniversary, graduates, staff and friends of the department gathered for a reunion weekend. Pictured are the successive heads of department (from left): Brendan McCane (third and current HOD), Brian Cox (first and founding HOD) and Ian McDonald (second HOD).

## Regional alumni networks

There are a number of alumni groups around the world who get together for a wide variety of activities and social pursuits. Each of these groups is co-ordinated by a local volunteer or committee who works with the Development and Alumni Relations Office in Dunedin.

For information about regional alumni networks in your area visit the Alumni and Friends website [www.alumni.otago.ac.nz/regionalgroups](http://www.alumni.otago.ac.nz/regionalgroups)

## Alumni events 2010

Events have been confirmed for the following cities:

Queenstown	Thursday 18 March
Melbourne	Thursday 15 April
Shanghai	Wednesday 26 May
Kuala Lumpur	Friday 28 May
Kuching	Thursday 3 June
Christchurch	Friday 18 June
Wellington	Friday 23 July
Sydney	Thursday 26 August
Auckland	Friday 10 September
Washington	Saturday 23 October
Cologne	Saturday 30 October
London	early November ( <i>tbc</i> )
Dunedin	mid-November ( <i>tbc</i> )
Māori (Dunedin)	Saturday 27 November

For further information about these or events yet to be confirmed, please email [functions.alumni@otago.ac.nz](mailto:functions.alumni@otago.ac.nz) or visit the Alumni and Friends web page [www.alumni.otago.ac.nz/events](http://www.alumni.otago.ac.nz/events)

## Magazine delivery

The *University of Otago Magazine* can be sent to you – by post or by email – wherever you are in the world.

If you would prefer to read the magazine and other alumni communications online rather than in hard copy, or if more than one magazine is being sent to your address and you need only one “household” copy, please email [database.alumni@otago.ac.nz](mailto:database.alumni@otago.ac.nz) so the mailing list can be amended.

## Alumni events 2009

Pacificana



Gisborne



Napier



## Researching your public health research

### A history within a history

If you were once a medical student at Otago your work is probably part of the collection of nearly 3,400 dissertations submitted by senior medical students between 1923 and 1979.

In preparation for the celebration in 2011 of 125 years of public health teaching and research, the Department of Preventive and Social Medicine is looking at the collection afresh. Dr Julian Kuzma, who is appraising the collection, is interested to know about your recollections of the project, in particular:

- why did you choose your topic?
- what guidelines did you have about doing the research?
- what happened when you submitted your dissertation?
- what did you think about the exercise then and now?
- how did the project help your understanding of public health?
- what other comments would you like to make?

Please contact Julian at  
[julian.kuzmo@otago.ac.nz](mailto:julian.kuzmo@otago.ac.nz)

The public health dissertation was the brainchild of Professor (later Sir) Charles Hercus. He believed that every medical student should have the opportunity to undertake a research project and present a report on some aspect of public health that interested the student, and hoped that the project would inspire a continuing interest in health research. The idea was implemented soon after Hercus was appointed Professor of

Public Health and Bacteriology in 1922 and continued for more than 50 years.

The collection is catalogued and kept under secure conditions in the Medical Library. Dissertations can be accessed under certain conditions. As time goes by they are becoming an increasingly valuable resource for teaching and research.

## Annual Appeal

The Alumni Annual Appeal scholars for 2009 (below) have completed their first year at Otago and submitted reports on their experiences throughout this momentous time. The following extracts are just a sample of the sentiments expressed by the students on what it

has meant to them to be recipients of the scholarship, made possible by the generosity of Otago alumni.

*There are so many new stresses that accompany leaving home for the first time ... receiving this scholarship has helped to significantly relieve this pressure and the benefits will be felt especially in the years to come.*

*The Alumni Scholarship allowed me to not be so stressed about the money side of University and to focus on study...*

*[The scholarship] ... has boosted my confidence which is particularly important since this year has included many challenges ... I feel proud to have received an Alumni Scholarship.*





## University of Otago in America Inc

Two new members have been elected to the Board of Directors of the University of Otago in America Inc.

**Lisa Salgado** graduated from the University of Otago with a BCom(Hons) in 1992. She took a job as an accountant with KPMG in Auckland and, in 1996, was transferred to KPMG LLP in San Francisco where she is currently a partner, specialising in banking and finance. Lisa is a New Zealand Chartered Accountant and holds a CPA licence in the US.

**Adrian van Schie** graduated BCom LLB (Hons) from the University of Otago in 1987. From 1988 to 1992 Adrian was employed as a lawyer at Buddle Findlay, Wellington. He also worked with the New Zealand Securities Commission for part of that time, engaged on various projects with NZLSA Company and Securities Law Reform committees. He graduated with an LLM from the University of Chicago in 1994 and was admitted to the New York Bar in 1995. He joined Kirkland and Ellis (New York City) in 1994 and has been a partner since 1999.

## Benefits remembered In appreciation of Dr Alan Derek Fair OBE (MB ChB 1945)

In March 2009 the Alumni Relations Office received an enquiry from a correspondent in New York seeking to make contact with Otago alumnus Dr Alan Derek Fair.

The story recounted in the email was an inspiring one and serves as a wonderful example of enduring gratitude for kindnesses received more than 50 years ago.

Dr Fair served as a doctor with the New Zealand army in the Korean War, during which time he made the acquaintance of a young medical student struggling to complete his studies against a background of war and upheaval in his home country. Dr Fair took an interest in the student and encouraged him with his studies, even going so far as to provide funding for fees and expenses.

After the war, Dr Fair moved to Japan, where he worked as a paediatrician for many years, and the two lost contact.

Meanwhile, the young Korean doctor worked hard and eventually moved to the

US where he specialised in psychiatry. As his career flourished, he thought about the New Zealander who had encouraged him when times were tough, and how best to recognise the kindness and practical help that had made all the difference to him when a struggling student.

In the end, he decided to give to others what he had received from Dr Fair by funding a scholarship at Dr Fair's alma mater in New Zealand.

With the sketchiest of details to hand, he began his search to find out more about his benefactor's origins, which eventually led to the message received in the Otago Alumni Relations Office in March 2009.

By a very sad coincidence, Dr Fair passed away in January 2009, just two months before the query arrived from New York.

This makes the story particularly poignant, but the gift, as envisaged by the donor to recognise his benefactor, will now stand as a memorial to the benevolence of a young Kiwi doctor all those years ago. It is the donor's wish that his gift remain anonymous.

## Keep in touch

### Address for correspondence

Development and Alumni Relations Office  
University of Otago  
PO Box 56  
Dunedin 9054

### Physical address

Alumni House  
103 St David Street  
Dunedin

Tel 64 3 479 8487  
Fax 64 3 479 6522  
Email [alumni@otago.ac.nz](mailto:alumni@otago.ac.nz)  
Web [www.alumni.otago.ac.nz](http://www.alumni.otago.ac.nz)

The Alumni and Friends website contains information on what's happening for alumni around the globe. Via the website you can:

- update your contact details so you continue to receive Otago publications
- register for alumni events
- receive updates about what's on for alumni
- view information on how to contact other Otago alumni
- find out how you can support the University.

## Alumni story

### Shedding light on NZ musical history

As an international student from Hong Kong, writing an MA thesis on Australasian composer Alfred Hill (1869 – 1960) was truly a challenging experience. Surprisingly, the biggest hurdle for me was not the fact that I come from a very different culture, but the relative obscurity of a composer about whom very little has been written.

My interest in Hill's music started in Hong Kong in late 2002 when I came across his work during my final year BA studies, as I was preparing for a university exchange period in New Zealand. The fact that Hill was New Zealand's first professional composer and had incorporated Māori elements – poetry, legend and music – into his compositions drew me to his work and confirmed my desire to do research on this topic.

When I arrived at Canterbury University at the start of my exchange I was disappointed to find that almost no one – not even music students – had heard of Alfred Hill. There were also very few materials about him available in local libraries.

Thoroughly discouraged, I was considering dropping the topic when a lecturer suggested I contact Professor Donald Maurice, who had been researching Hill at Massey University. Professor Maurice revived my interest and helped me to see the value of persevering with my original project.

After a period back at my home university where I completed my BA, I



Hong Kong alumna  
**Yuen Ching Lam.**

headed to Otago in 2005 to further explore this remarkable, yet neglected, composer.

My MA thesis focused on Hill's Second String Quartet (1907 – 1911), which is based on a Māori legend. Hill's bold approach in using Māori elements risked alienating his mainly Pākehā audience. There was much to explore in the topic which I found exciting and challenging.

I am deeply grateful to my supervisors, Dr Anthony Ritchie and Mr Peter Adams, and my co-supervisor Professor Maurice, whose insightful guidance allowed me to explore the possibilities of this subject.

I am often asked how my study of this topic has contributed to my career. I am currently working as a researcher, so the immediate answer that it taught me essential research skills is an obvious one. But perhaps more importantly, my study of Hill has enhanced my understanding of others and broadened my perspective of life, allowing me to see the world from a refreshing angle. This is the lasting legacy of my days at Otago that will continue to enhance my view of the world for the rest of my life.

**Yuen Ching Lam, MA 2007**



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# Banned books?

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“Oh, Harry, don’t you see?” *Hermione breathed*. “If she could have done one thing to make absolutely sure every single person in this school will read your interview, it was banning it.”

J K Rowling’s heroine, quoted from *Harry Potter and the Order of the Phoenix*, could not have spoken truer words, for the history of censored and even banned books is one of – above all – enduring popularity. Indeed, the most pronounced effect of embargoing a literary work appears to be an exponential increase in the desire of the public to read it. We need only witness the perpetual print runs of D H Lawrence’s *Lady Chatterley’s Lover* or the international infamy of Nabokov’s *Lolita* to realise this.

As long as there has been literature, powers such as the Church and the State, and even individuals, have endeavoured to control the publication of its more extreme or challenging examples. And, while most people support the censorship of offensive materials in a modern society, rarely do we stop to consider the history of literary censorship or the significance of censored works to our collective cultural sensibility.

A recent exhibition of banned books at the de Beer Gallery in the University’s Central Library raised these very issues. “Heresy, Sedition, Obscenity: The Book Challenged” presented more than 60

examples of books that have been banned or restricted from the 15th century onwards.

These works – some modern, some ancient – resurrected the spectre of draconian State and Church controls over what people were once able to read. They proved an intriguing testament to the shifting focus of censorship over time, from religious and political dissent to obscenity. And, despite being banned or challenged in some way, each title had gone on to claim a position of enduring cultural importance – perhaps, in itself, an indication of their boundary-pushing nature.

How much poorer would our literary heritage be without Boccaccio’s *Decameron*, for example, which was banned by the Catholic Church in 1559? Or how blighted the development of modern philosophy had Voltaire’s works not survived their blanket condemnation by the same institution?

How would Church history have played out if Martin Luther’s writings had not survived the Church’s attempts to ban all references to them? And how might science have developed without access to Galileo Galilei’s *Opere* [Works], which were banned as heretical until 1835?

Most of the works in the exhibition, many of them early editions, were sourced from the library’s own Special Collections and, in particular, from the

Shoult’s Collection, a treasure trove of 4,000 volumes of principally theological and classical bent donated to Selwyn College by the widow of Canon William Arderne Shoult’s in 1888 and placed on permanent loan to the University of Otago Library in 1965.

It is thanks to the Shoult’s Collection that the exhibition was able to feature an 1855 copy of the *Index Librorum Prohibitorum*, the list of prohibited books first produced by the Catholic Church in 1559 and updated throughout the centuries right up until it was abolished in 1966.

The exhibition also displayed a remarkable 1586 edition of the *Index Expurgatorius Librorum*, the Church’s catalogue of titles that, it deemed, were safe to read, providing the sections indicated within its pages were excised beforehand.

Among obvious other inclusions – Adolf Hitler’s *Mein Kampf*, Salman Rushdie’s *The Satanic Verses* or Harold Robbins’ tawdry tale *The Carpetbaggers* – were the lesser known, such as John Milton’s *Areopagitica*, a seminal work in support of personal liberties. Its passage “Who kills a man kills a reasonable creature, God’s image; but he who destroys a good book, kills reason itself, kills the image of God, as it were in the eye” has become an iconic comment about the abuse of censorship.

Special Collections Librarian Dr Donald Kerr, who curates four exhibitions in the de Beer Gallery annually, believes the history of literary censorship reflects the evolution of societal fears. He refers to recent bannings of publications relating to euthanasia and explosives by New Zealand's Office of Film and Literature Classification to illustrate his point.

"What does the changing nature of censorship say about society?" he asks. "And what is the role of censorship today?"

If Hermione Grainger's comment is anything to go by, it certainly has a role in promoting sales. Ironically, J K Rowling's bestselling series of children's books about magic and wizardry remain the most commonly challenged titles in American school districts and public libraries for their alleged subversion of Christian beliefs. But as anyone who snuck a look at *Lady Chatterley's Lover* will know, being told you can't read something just makes you want to read it even more, doesn't it?

*Heresy, Sedition, Obscenity: The Book Challenged* is available online. Please visit [www.library.otago.ac.nz/SpecialCollections/exhibitions](http://www.library.otago.ac.nz/SpecialCollections/exhibitions)

**REBECCA TANSLEY**



Despite being banned or challenged in some way, each title had gone on to claim a position of enduring cultural importance ...

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