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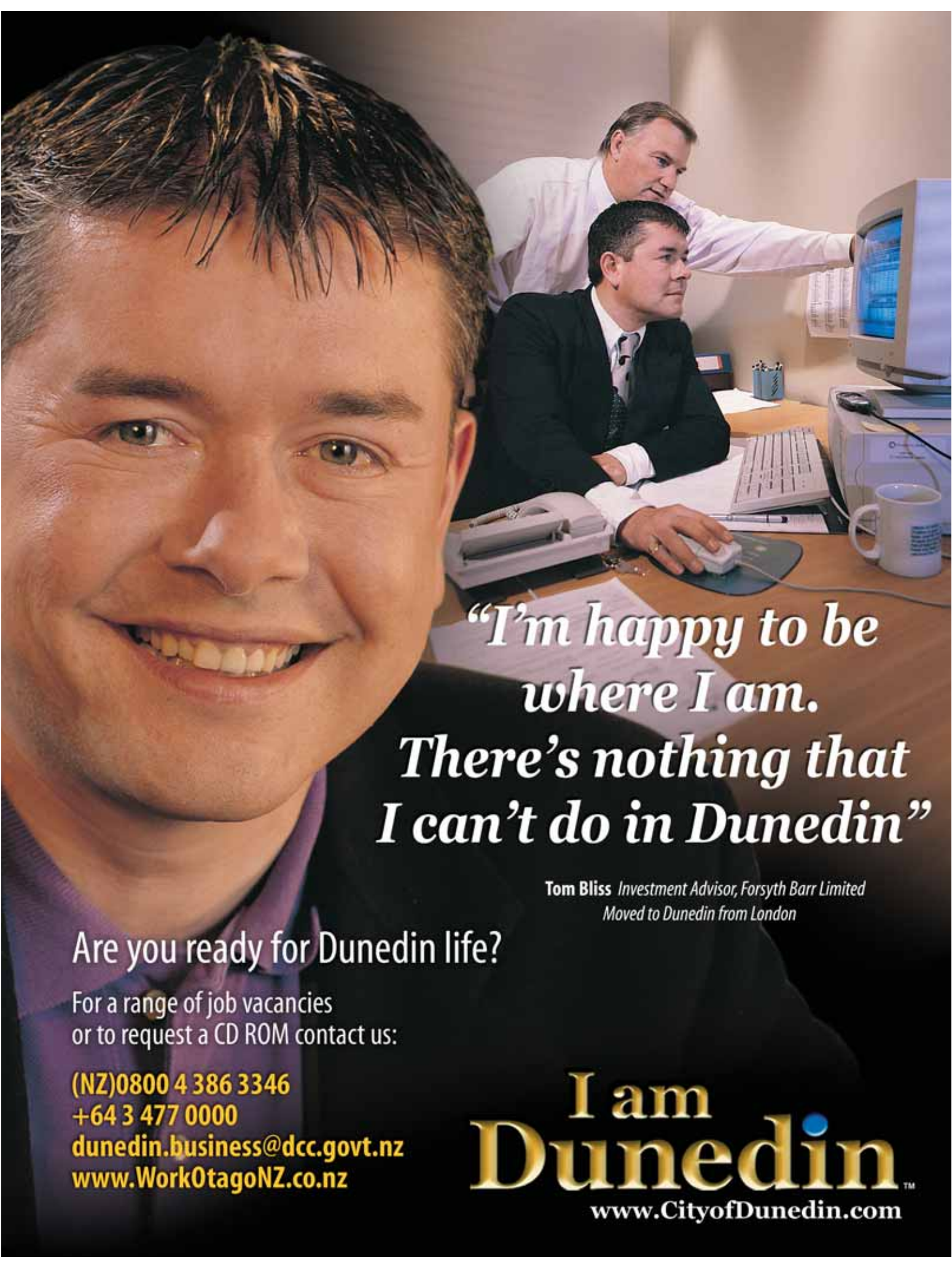
M A G A Z I N E

ISSUE 12: OCTOBER 2005

Sir Thomas Davis BORN LEADER

A DOCTOR'S MISSIONARY ZEAL
YOUNG SCIENTIST DECLARES WAR ON WASTE
NATIONAL POISONS CENTRE





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the Otago School of Mines?

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VC's COMMENT

The University of Otago has many assets, including a renowned campus and student life in Dunedin, important centres in Christchurch and Wellington, alumni who look back at their time at the University with gratitude, and research links nationally and internationally. As for any university, however, our greatest asset must be our staff. In order to sustain and enhance our teaching and research, we need to attract staff of the highest calibre.

During my first year as Vice-Chancellor, I have found myself spending much time in meeting and interviewing candidates for professorships and other senior appointments in the University. Some Vice-Chancellors delegate this task to other people, but I believe it is essential to be involved in decisions that will have more influence on the future of this University than any other activity. I am glad to report that we are attracting first-rate scholars and scientists to all parts of the University. As examples, I will mention three key appointments in the Division of Health Sciences.

With the retirement of Professor Peter Innes, we needed to appoint a new Dean for the Faculty of Dentistry. Professor Gregory Seymour, who is probably Australia's leading dental academic, has taken up this position. Professor Seymour has an international reputation for his research on periodontal disease and he was a highly successful Dean of Dentistry at the University of Queensland.

The new Dean of the School of Physiotherapy is Professor David Baxter, who comes from Northern Ireland. Professor Baxter has achieved international recognition for his research on physiotherapy and rehabilitation. As a professor at the University of Ulster, he headed the premier research group in physiotherapy in the last two UK Research Assessment Exercises.

There was also a need to appoint a new Pro-Vice-Chancellor to head the Division of Health Sciences, after Professor Linda Holloway retires next year. We have been fortunate to attract one of our own distinguished alumni, Professor Don Robertson, who is currently the McGregor Reid Professor of Paediatrics in the University of Adelaide and the President of the Paediatrics and Child Health Division of the Royal Australasian College of Physicians. Professor Robertson has an outstanding record as a clinician, researcher and teacher, and has proved to be a highly capable administrator.

Each of these people was selected from a strong field of national and international applicants. New Zealand universities face serious challenges, but with appointments like these – not only in Health Sciences, but also in the other Divisions – I feel confident about the future of the University of Otago.

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "David Skegg". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "David" and last name "Skegg" clearly distinguishable.

*Professor David Skegg
Vice-Chancellor – University of Otago*

Young scientist



A vertical photograph on the left side of the page shows a rocky, littered landscape. In the foreground, a black boot is visible. The background is a blurred view of a rocky area with some white litter. The text of the article is overlaid on a light blue background to the right of this image.

declares war on waste

A “reluctant academic” with a passion for art, languages and the environment, Otago’s Jessica North has won the prestigious MacDiarmid Young Scientist of the Year Award.

A TRAMPING TRIP IN THAILAND CHANGED JESSICA NORTH’S life – and now she’s working on changing the world.

North was in a remote village in northern Thailand when she was shown a growing mountain of rubbish left behind by visiting trekkers. It was a moment she’ll never forget.

“It dawned on me that this was a huge problem – and if it was so bad in this village of 20 or 30 people I thought what could be happening in the rest of the world? That’s when I decided to study the impact of humans on the environment.”

North’s subsequent studies have led to her being named the overall winner in the prestigious MacDiarmid Young Scientist of the Year, and equal first in the Environmental Sciences section of the awards.

Her work with the University of Otago’s Iso-trace, one of the Centre for Innovation’s newest companies, involves developing world-leading techniques to identify contamination caused by the toxic soup that accumulates at the base of landfills.

As part of her PhD in environmental chemistry, North is using isotope fingerprinting to trace harmful leachate seeping from landfills into surrounding areas.

The microbes that decompose the rubbish cause a unique change in the isotope values of the leachate, meaning that its presence in water can often be positively identified when samples are taken to the laboratory. The technology is also shedding light on how decomposition occurs inside landfills.

North’s work with Iso-trace could lead to greater protection of water supplies and may be incorporated into management conditions for landfills in the future. The spin-off could be big news for the environment, which helps to explain why North beat 127 other entrants in this year’s MacDiarmid Awards.

“I was totally astounded,” says North. “Waste research doesn’t get a high profile so it was quite amazing to me. I was totally humbled, especially when I saw some of the other entrants’ work. I didn’t think rubbish work had the same status as some of the other entries, even though it’s worthwhile. I would not be doing it if I did not find it important.

Jessica North: “It’s wonderful to see waste in the news. To me the biggest and most gratifying thing about the award is that people are getting interested in waste in this country.”

Photo: Alan Dove

"It's wonderful to see waste in the news. To me the biggest and most gratifying thing about the award is that people are getting interested in waste in this country."

North grew up waste-conscious. Her parents emigrated from the UK to Canada and raised their children with a waste-not want-not mentality.

"We composted scraps and separated out our recyclables once a month," North remembers. "Very few people were doing that at the time, but I grew up thinking it was absolutely normal."

North attended a French-speaking school in Canada, then boarding school in France. She learned German while in Europe and when she returned to Canada she had plans to be a fabric artist. But then she gained a Canadian scholarship to go to Thailand for her first year at university.

"I was a bit of a geek, but I was also good at sports and art and they were looking for well-rounded geeks with an affinity for languages. The year started with three months of intensive language training in Thai. I love languages so it was like a dream come true for me. If I could live in a new country every year and have that experience it would be wonderful."

While in Bangkok, North studied cultural, political and sociological subjects, as well as spending a semester studying fine arts. But then she went trekking in northern Thailand.

"We came into a village and everything changed for me. Talking to the villagers they asked if I could help them with a problem. Since the government had stopped their nomadic ways and they had established a village, a growing influx of trekking tourists was resulting in a growing pile of non-degradable rubbish. Where once they threw down a banana leaf plate behind the village, there was now a huge pile of rubbish brought in by tourists."

She decided on the spot that she wanted to make a difference – "at that time I was thinking of land impact rather than unglamorous waste" – and the artist morphed into the campaigner.

North's studies were cut short by a political coup, and she returned to Canada to do a BSc in geography and soil science. She gained management skills working with an educational programme promoting science and entrepreneurship to high school students, and then gained an internship with a company doing sustainable solid waste management in Thailand as part of a Canadian government initiative.

In Phuket, North managed a pilot scheme to improve landfill management, increase public awareness and improve

recycling systems such as composting in hotels. The scheme spread to major cities in Thailand and, although North's status was rising, she was wary of being called an expert and felt she needed to know more.

A Commonwealth scholarship to study the impact of landfills led to New Zealand and the University of Otago.

"I decided to come to New Zealand because of the country's clean, green reputation. When I arrived I discovered it was not. I found out it was just like anywhere else in the world. Some people are trying to make it better, but without political legislation it's not going to happen."

With an MSc in environmental science behind her, North went back into business with a waste minimisation company in Auckland.

"After working on landfills I felt I was at the end of the line and I wanted to try the other end.

"Waste is an indicator of an inefficient system. Customers pay for tons of resource processing for small items and then pay for disposing of them; 95 per cent of the products we buy will be in a landfill within six months.

"We have the ability to develop fine technology to send objects into space to hit comets. If we took only a tenth of that and applied it to reducing waste we would make big inroads into the problem. I see it as a huge challenge.

"Governments need to legislate for producer responsibility so that manufacturers have to look at the waste they are generating. It has long-term economic and sociological importance. It has to happen, not because of any idealistic principles, but because of economic reality. Companies may take a short-term profit slump by investing in new technology, but then they make bigger profits. Smart companies are already doing it. Zero waste is the way to go."

While North was pushing for zero waste, the landfill problem was still growing. Iso-trace director and senior lecturer in chemistry Dr Russell Frew tempted her back to Otago to do a PhD, developing new methods of landfill tracking using stable isotope technology.

"I'm a reluctant academic," says North. "I'm more into entrepreneurship and business, but it's good to have one foot in each camp. It's very exciting to see it developing."

The technology she has developed through Iso-trace has already been used in some commercial applications, and the Otago Regional Council is considering becoming one of the first regulatory authorities in the world to include isotopic

"I decided to come to New Zealand because of the country's clean, green reputation. When I arrived I discovered it was not. I found out it was just like anywhere else in the world. Some people are trying to make it better, but without political legislation it's not going to happen."

fingerprinting as part of the monitoring required when resource consents are issued for landfills.

North believes there is hope for the future. “Currently our best efforts are to use landfills as bio-reactors to produce methane gas. We’re only going to capture, at most, 75 per cent of that generated, and that’s being very generous, and we’ll still have leaching. But by separating out the organic waste at source and treating it in an enclosed container we could capture almost 100 per cent and the residue could be used as compost.”

After her doctorate she hopes to continue as an environmental consultant with Iso-trace to consolidate

commercialisation of the research. And after Otago? “Then it’s my absolute dream to get back to waste minimisation. We need to educate and show by example what can be done.”

Nigel Zega

Other Otago scientists were also recognised in the MacDiarmid Young Scientists of the Year Awards. Dr Mark Hampton, of the University’s Christchurch School of Medicine and Health Sciences, won the Health and Medical Award. Samantha Baldwin, who is completing her PhD in biochemistry with a project on genetically-modified crops, was runner-up in the biotechnology section.



Photo: Alan Dove

Dr Russell Frew (left) and Mike Darling: “The things that makes this company unique are our amazing team of people and that we are set up to handle forensic work.”

JESSICA NORTH WOULD NOT HAVE BEEN ABLE TO DO the research that won her the MacDiarmid award without Iso-trace, the fledgling University company that gave her the tools to do the job.

Iso-trace is owned by the University’s commercial arm and is based at the Centre for Innovation. It is the only laboratory in Australasia set up specifically to handle forensic isotope work, says forensic manager Mike Darling.

Darling, an experienced ex-police detective, sees a bright future ahead. “It’s a really exciting company. There are lots of amazing opportunities.”

The company grew from stable isotope work being done by scientific director Dr Russell Frew in the Department of Chemistry, where he still works part-time as a senior lecturer. “We have a close working relationship with the Department of Chemistry and many other departments here at Otago, and at other tertiary institutions throughout New Zealand,” says Frew.

In just over a year Iso-trace has built a solid reputation with clients including private industry, the Police, Customs, Crown Research Institutes, the Department of Conservation and international scientists.

“The things that make this company unique are our amazing team of people and that we are set up to handle forensic work,” says Darling.

Iso-trace is at the forefront of research, with its resources allowing three PhD students to do work they could not do otherwise – students such as Jessica North, who is also Iso-trace’s environmental consultant.

The small team comprises experts in various fields, allowing Iso-trace to offer a wide range of high-quality analysis for commercial, environmental, research and forensic purposes.

They conduct analyses using Isotope Ratio Mass Spectrometry (IRMS), working with samples that contain the elements hydrogen, carbon, nitrogen, oxygen and sulphur. Iso-

trace has invested heavily in specialised equipment to process a wide variety of sample types whether solid, liquid or gas.

Iso-trace has membership of two international networks of scientists, FIRMS (Forensic Isotope Ratio Mass Spectrometry) and NITECRIME (Natural Isotopes and Trace Elements in Criminalistics and Environmental Forensics). Both organisations were created for collaboration on developing forensic solutions to problems.

"Networking and fostering relationships are hugely important to us," says Darling. "We're swiftly winning people's confidence in our abilities."

Team members have already taken part in environmental and criminal forensic investigations, as well as oceanographic, paleoceanographic, geochemical, botanical and archaeological studies.

- Biosecurity New Zealand came to Iso-trace to find the origins of a Painted Apple Moth caught in Auckland. They needed to know if the moth had survived MAF's extensive eradication programme or if it was a recent arrival in the country. Iso-trace identified the moth as not having pupated in Auckland.
- Iso-trace scientists helped the New Zealand Ministry of Fisheries prove the origin of hake, a deep-sea fish, in a \$2 million prosecution of Korean trawlers fishing outside their quota area.
- On the personal health front, the company can measure chemicals in the breath to identify one of the causes of

potential stomach ulcers without having to resort to hospitalisation, and expensive and invasive biopsies.

- On the world health front, Iso-trace can trace the sources and fates of the greenhouse gas methane in various ecosystems from sediments and anoxic marshes to geothermal areas and landfills. Organic matter degradation in sediments is the main process that recycles organic matter from marine and land environments to methane and carbon dioxide. Isotopic investigations indicate relative rates of methane production from natural and human sources.
- Major oil spills hit the headlines when the culprits are obvious, but many spills are hard to trace. Isotope tracking can identify minute differences in crude and refined oils, even to the point of knowing if they have been used in different engines, giving monitoring authorities new weapons in policing pollution.
- How do you know if your morning fruit juice really is freshly squeezed or made from concentrate? Iso-trace can catch unscrupulous companies labelling cheap products to sell them as expensive ones, just as they can tell if undeclared sweeteners have been added to juices, or if honey has been adulterated with fructose.
- Isotope tracking of carbon and oxygen can also provide a window to the past, building a picture of ancient climates and temperature changes.

Nigel Zega

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Glass half empty

Otago academics
canvass the possible
consequences of putting
the alcohol purchase
age back up to 20.

TWELVE LIVES AND 400 INJURIES EACH YEAR. THAT'S WHAT we could save by reversing the 1999 decision that lowered to 18 the age at which people can legally buy alcohol in New Zealand.

These are the findings of a new report on road traffic crash statistics by researchers at Otago's Injury Prevention Research Unit (IPRU), due to be published in the January issue of the *American Journal of Public Health*.

Now Progressive MP Matt Robson has put a Private Members' Bill to the House asking that the purchase age be put back up to 20 years, and Professor John Langley, director of IPRU, agrees with him.

"It's not by itself a comprehensive solution to the country's alcohol problems, by any means," he says. "But it is something we *can* do. It *can* be regulated. And there is plenty of evidence to recommend it."

Former IPRU researcher Dr Kyp Kypri, who has since taken up a position at Australia's University of Newcastle, believes the research evidence is compelling.

He maintains that attempts to address rates of drinking through education have proved ineffective. He adds that other effective measures, such as taxing alcohol more heavily, are "politically out of favour".

And he refers to a huge body of international research which comes to unequivocal conclusions. "We know that restricting access to purchasing alcohol reduces the harm related to it, and that the minimum purchase age is among the most effective means of reducing harm in a society in which drinking to

intoxication is normative behaviour among young people."

IPRU team members examined the rates of alcohol-related crashes causing death and injury prior to, and since, the 1999 law change in New Zealand. They also measured the number of hospitalisations due to traffic crashes before and after the law change. The team estimates that among 15- to 19-year-olds, crashes involving alcohol increased by 12 to 14 per cent for males and 24 to 51 per cent for females, relative to 20- to 24-year-olds. Furthermore, 12 deaths and 400 injuries every year would be prevented if the purchase age was increased to 20. If the new law was well enforced, the savings would be greater still.

Those who wound up on the wrong side of these statistics were not only those in the 18 to 20 age group but, to a similar extent, those aged 15 to 17.

Kypri chooses his words carefully to summarise the team's conclusions. "What we found was that the law change has retarded the benefits of the decreasing road toll among young people that the rest of society enjoys."

Sobering stuff. No law-maker wants that much blood on their hands. But it has not been enough to create consensus that New Zealand – which in 1999 became the first jurisdiction anywhere in the world since 1975 to reduce the age for purchasing alcohol – should admit we got it wrong. Because fermenting in the background are some persistent questions about alienation, discrimination, the function of law – and about how, and why, New Zealanders drink.



Photos: Alan Dove

Professor John Langley
"It [raising the purchase age back to 20] is something we can do. It can be regulated. And there is plenty of evidence to recommend it."



Dr Kyp Kypri
"We know that restricting access to purchasing alcohol reduces the harm related to it ..."



Selene Mize
She cites the philosophy of John Stuart Mill, who held that once people are adults, they should be free to make their own mistakes. "The question then becomes, when is a person an adult?"

IF WE WERE TO LOOK AT ALCOHOL LAWS PURELY FROM A harm-reduction perspective, the substance should probably be made illegal.

At a University of Otago Public Health Association panel discussion on the topic in August, an audience member noted that prohibition had led to a number of health benefits. Illness, violence and injuries related to alcohol occur right across the

age spectrum. Even in France, where the incidence of heavy episodic – aka binge – drinking is low, alcohol wreaks long-term havoc with people's livers. ("Relative to New Zealand, in France the acute effects of alcohol are less, but the chronic effects are greater," Kypri says.)

However, if society accepts and supports the presence of alcohol as part of the world we want to live in, but wishes to

... fermenting in the background are some persistent questions about alienation, discrimination, the function of law – and about how, and why, New Zealanders drink.

minimise the harm caused by it, then judgment calls inevitably need to be made. A reasonable question to ask is, should we restrict the rights of 18- and 19-year old adults in order to get the harm statistics down?

Professor of Law Mark Henaghan points out that, in line with the Bill of Rights Act, it is illegal to discriminate on the basis of age. The only grounds upon which laws that do so may be passed are where there is compelling justification for such discrimination.

Kypri and Langley believe such compelling reasons do exist to justify placing restrictions on the 18- to 19-year-old age group. “All the evidence tells us they are the peak consumers of alcohol, and they are the ones who suffer by far the most harm as a consequence of alcohol,” Kypri says.

That, in itself, would not automatically translate to a legal decision, says Henaghan’s Faculty of Law colleague and researcher on age-related rights, Selene Mize.

“If, for some reason, 30- to 35-year-olds were causing peak harm in a particular area, the law would be unlikely to ban their consumption of alcohol,” she points out. In this instance, however, the period of danger coincides with the onset of legal adulthood, and that’s the kind of grey area that makes a law academic’s job interesting.

The Bill of Rights theoretically protects everyone above the age of 16 from age-based discrimination, but that law is subject to limits. Countless laws exist that set a higher bar, and Mize is “very confident that the proposed legislation would survive any challenge mounted against it”.

Even where there are strong justifications for restricting purchasing rights, these should of course be weighed against the costs of doing so. Speaking at the panel discussion, OUSA welfare officer Renée Heal expressed a concern that by slapping an alcohol purchase ban on this group of adults, we risk alienating this already vulnerable group. “We have an ethical responsibility not to disenfranchise our youth,” she stated.

Mize agrees that the proposed law change sits pretty close to paternalism. She cites the philosophy of John Stuart Mill, who held that once people are adults, they should be free to make their own mistakes. “The question then becomes, when is a person an adult?”

With regard to the alcohol purchase age, Mize comments: “Mainly, but not exclusively, the issues relate to self-harm. Where other people may be affected, for example through drink-driving, we need laws that target those problems directly. Already the limit for alcohol for young drivers is lower than for other adults, acknowledging potential differences in judgment and capability.”

And Mize contends that restricting the rights of 18-year-olds in order to protect younger teenagers from flow-on effects is bad law. “If the problem is the younger people, then enforce the law. Enforce laws about passing alcohol to minors. To change the law for 18-year-olds for that reason is not fair.”

The point is often made that 18-year-olds are afforded many other rights of adulthood – voting, marriage and serving in war are just a few (see sidebar) – that it seems absurd not to permit them to buy beer. It’s worth noting they would still be able to drink the beer – unlike many jurisdictions, New Zealand has no minimum legal drinking age.

But might it be, in actual fact, that adults require a greater degree of maturity to handle alcohol than they do to get married? Kypri: “Well yes, maybe. Marriage is reversible. It’s not life-threatening. And there’s not much pressure to do it when you’re young. Alcohol is a psychoactive substance. It impairs judgment and there is evidence that it affects developing brains more detrimentally than mature brains.”

No one is celebrating the fact that the expectation to drink heavily during early adulthood appears to be etched into the national psyche. Considering the amount of alcohol consumption that is endorsed by society, the desire to restrict young people’s access to it may seem a bit rich.

Alcohol in New Zealand is at once glorified and demonised. By contrast, in southern European cultures such as Spain, Greece, France and Italy, where moderate use of alcohol is normalised in people’s daily lives, incidence of binge drinking occurs at about quarter of the rate of that in New Zealand.

So is a lower purchasing age a condition for improving the culture of consumption in New Zealand? Certainly, when then Prime Minister Jenny Shipley supported the law change in 1999, her vision was that it would usher in a new climate of European-style, Ponsonby-Road-café-culture drinking.

Instead, this is what happened: young people drank copiously before the purchase age was lowered. They continued to drink copiously – and in greater numbers according to several New Zealand studies – following the law change. The largest increases have occurred among young urban women.

Some changes in drinking practices did occur. Rather than drinking in people’s living rooms, younger people began drinking in pubs. Or drinking cheap alcohol in living rooms, prior to progressing on to pubs. And while licensed premises are supervised environments, with bar owners subject to laws including not being allowed to serve intoxicated people, this does not translate into being a safer place to drink.

“As soon as you go into town, transport becomes a factor,” Kypri points out. In addition, groups of drinkers in private

residences usually know one another at a friendship level. Not so in pubs. Research undertaken by Langley and colleagues David Chalmers and Janet Fanslow in 1996 on homicides and assaults revealed that, aside from domestic violence, "hotels and their environs are the venue for more violence than any other location".

Simply shifting the locations where young people drink may not have been the outcome our MPs in 1999 had in mind.

"Well it was ridiculous, really," says Sociology's Dr Lesley Procter, who has undertaken research into the role of alcohol in New Zealand culture, with a particular focus on alcohol advertising.

"Lowering the purchasing age was never going to achieve a culture change in itself. The law change was introduced in complete isolation from any other strategies."

In unpicking New Zealanders' relationship with alcohol, Procter is the first to point out there are many "drinking cultures" in New Zealand. "A significant number of families have wine with dinner. There are also those in which Mum and Dad get written-off every weekend. And there's an awful lot in the middle."

The problem-drinking culture is the one where people drink to excess on a regular basis (Langley and Kypri put the number at 40 per cent of those aged 18 to 24).

Procter believes this model of drinking is tied to long-held models of masculinity in New Zealand. These can be traced back to a celebration of the pub as a place where egalitarian values were upheld. Drinking in these pubs were men who

had been traumatised by two world wars and who – relate it to their early days as colonisers if you like – had been taught to be independent, resourceful and to internalise their stress.

Plus these men had likely inherited certain drinking patterns from their forebears: New Zealand's drinking cultures map closely to those in the United Kingdom and Australia.

That these patterns continue today tell us a couple of things, says Procter. One, that old habits die hard, and two, "We really haven't equipped our young people with better ways of sharing social experiences and handling the stresses life throws at them".

While these drinking histories mainly relate to men's experiences, Procter says emerging stories of why women drink also paint a picture of new and confusing social dynamics.

"We have anecdotal evidence that drinking is a way of young women coping with being promiscuous. They are able to distance themselves from the act by saying, 'But I'm not really like that when I'm sober'."

And there is evidence, for both men and women, that alcohol fulfils a role in how they construct their identities. Being a non-drinker is uncool. Being able to consume vast quantities is heroic. Being openly drunk is condoned. (Compare this with southern European attitudes to drinking, where a dim view is taken of displays of visible intoxication.)

The convergence of male-female drinking patterns may be a natural consequence of other increasing gender equalities,

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academically, professionally and socially. But Procter points out that it's a bit of a one-sided convergence when it comes to drinking – women are taking on the practices of men, not the other way around. And she believes the strong male bias in alcohol advertising – especially beer, by far the most heavily advertised alcoholic product – reinforces this.

“If you look at beer advertising, women are either trophies or you've got the barmaid. The men are the agents. It's very much focused through the male gaze.”

“What's the female equivalent of the Southern Man?” asks Procter. “There isn't one.”

The result, according to Procter, is a promotion of the idea that men drink on their terms. It's part of what being a bloke is all about. There are no consequences. And, in part through their drinking practices, women can gain “honorary bloke” status. Procter believes these stereotypes she has examined in the world of advertising can tell us something about existing social attitudes. “Advertising works when it's tied to accepted social models. It can offer a window onto our culture.”



Photo: Alan Dove

Dr Lesley Procter: She believes women are taking on the drinking practices of men and that the strong male bias in alcohol advertising reinforces this. ... “It's very much focused through the male gaze.”

But while Procter believes the decision to lower the purchase age was a poorly-thought-out, failed mechanism for social change, she doesn't see any particular value in raising it again either.

“I think sometimes there's temptation for governments to change legislation because it makes them feel like they're doing something about a problem. But nothing about the proposed legislation addresses the underlying relationship New Zealanders have with alcohol. New Zealand's history and culture

of drinking is complex; changing underlying, entrenched relationships with alcohol will require equally complex solutions.”

It depends, perhaps, on what we consider the proposed legislation might hope to achieve. If the law change is aimed at the harm related to drinking, then the IPRU team has shown that raising the purchase age would be a useful strategy. But if we are aspiring to sit down on an evening and imbibe like the French, then, as a society, we've still got a long way to go.

Nicola Mutch

By 18 years of age you can legally...

- Vote in a national parliamentary election
- Get married or enter into a civil union
- Run as a candidate for parliament or city council
- Place a bet at the TAB, buy an Instant Kiwi or play on a gambling machine
- Hold a driver's licence
- Leave an educational institution
- Purchase and smoke tobacco
- Be eligible for student allowances, and various employment and sickness benefits
- Join the armed forces
- Rent an apartment or house in your own name
- Operate a credit card, cheque account and borrow money
- Enter into binding contracts

- Be required to take an oath at court
- Consent to sex
- Leave home
- Donate organs
- Work in the sex industry
- Consent to or refuse an abortion
- Consent to surgical or dental procedures, or treatments for mental disorders
- Join a union
- Bring a personal grievance claim against an employer
- Be employed as a bar worker
- Donate embryos, sperm and eggs
- Serve on a jury
- Obtain a firearms' licence

But you can't...

- Enter or gamble at a casino
- Gain entitlement to the adult minimum wage
- Adopt

- Apply to join the police force
- Apply for a licence to drive a taxi, bus or ambulance
- Be legally considered an adult (age of majority is 20)

BORN LEADER



Sir Thomas Davis: "You depend on people and their creativity. To give them freedom is a powerful stimulation."

From science to politics,
Otago alumnus Sir Thomas Davis looks back
on a life of taking bold steps for Pacific people.

WHEN SIR THOMAS DAVIS WAS ABOUT 12, HIS MOTHER, A member of the Polynesian aristocracy, took him aside and said, "These people are your responsibility".

"I thought she meant this in a philosophical sort of way. But when I told my siblings about it later, they said she had never made such a comment to them."

Such was the way a sense of destiny was instilled in the young mataiapo (first-born son). "It weighed heavily enough upon me to be aware of it all my life. I knew one day I would have to lead my people."

And so it would be. Davis is known internationally as the former Prime Minister of the Cook Islands, responsible for sweeping economic reforms during the 1980s. But a conversation with the tall, charismatic Davis soon reveals that chapter of his life was one among many for a man with a thirst for knowledge, a gift for leadership and a deep-seated love of the sea.

His impeccable manners, considered speech and dry humour barely mask his hefty ability to defend any number of strongly-held opinions and convictions.

Davis attended King's College in Auckland before beginning his tertiary education at Otago in 1937, where he trained as a surgeon. "I wanted to be a scientist," he remembers. "Medicine was the next best thing."

But coming to New Zealand from the temperate climes of Rarotonga, Davis was miserable. He froze.

"I would watch my fellow classmates walking around in light jerseys while I would be huddled in a large coat, and I would wonder, how is it that they can cope with this and I can't? What is so different about our bodies?"

He decided their bodies had learned to adjust and he forced himself to go through the necessary process. "I took off my coat. For three weeks it was painful, I was so cold. But after that, I was just like everyone else."

Davis never ceased to be fascinated by that experience, and when it came time to undertake research at Otago he decided to explore the ways in which human beings adapted to the cold and other hostile environments. His research tools: Davis's friends, their surfboards, St Clair beach in winter and a set of rectal thermometers.

Every five minutes his friends would call out their temperature readings to Davis, who was waiting on shore with his notebook.

"Word got around I was carrying out this experiment," remembers Davis, "and crowds of people would gather on the Esplanade, giving a big cheer when anyone pulled out their thermometer."

Shops in St Clair that normally closed for winter were reopened to serve the masses – an early foreshadowing of Davis's creative methods for stimulating an economy.

In awarding Davis an Honorary Doctorate of Laws at the May 2005 graduation, University of Otago Vice-Chancellor David Skegg noted in his address that "anyone capable of persuading his colleagues to surf with a thermometer in their rectum has the ability to be a highly successful politician".

After graduating with his medical degree, Davis worked briefly in New Zealand hospitals, before responding to calls to return to Rarotonga.

Over the next decade, he took charge of the Islands' medical services. His main task was to reintroduce surgery, which had been abandoned due to high wound infection rates.

"No surgery had been done for years. It took three years just to get through the backlog of required operations."

During this period Davis also attended Sydney University to gain a Diploma in Tropical Medicine and Hygiene, and he remembers a great flurry of requests for treatment in the months leading up to his departure.

"People were coming to see me saying, 'I want an operation'. I'd say, 'But there's nothing wrong with you'. They would respond, 'I want one anyway, in case I get sick while you're away. I want my appendix out.'"

Davis also implemented public health measures such as improving sanitation and rubbish disposal systems in attempts to address rampant infectious diseases, including tuberculosis. His triumphs included eliminating yaws, leprosy and filariasis from the Cook Islands. His efforts saw him invited to study at Harvard University in Boston, becoming the first Pacific Islander to attend the prestigious university.

Just getting there proved an adventure in itself. He decided to sail, with his wife, two children and two crew members



on board. What's more, the most direct route was through the "roaring forties", the latitude notorious for upsetting participants on the Sydney-to-Hobart Yacht Race. It took Davis five months to travel the 24,000 kilometres to Boston. "I am a sailor at heart," he says.

At Harvard, Davis continued his Otago research into the human body's response to extremes of cold, heat and altitude. It was to attract some high-level interest.

"I was on stage, delivering a lecture in Atlantic City one day, when some men burst into the room and told me I was going to work on the space programme," Davis recounts. "They told me my bags were packed, my wife had been informed. They wouldn't even let me finish the lecture!" For the following two weeks, Davis worked in seclusion as one of the 20 scientists selected to plan the Apollo programme.

"I was told later that the reason it had to be top secret was not to keep it from the Russians, but to keep it from Eisenhower," recalls Davis. "The scientists were apparently worried he'd cut the funding if he knew exactly what they were up to!"

Before long, Davis was once again faced with repeated requests to return to Rarotonga to contribute to the Islands' moves towards independence. In 1965 the Cook Islands became self-governing, and in 1972 Davis helped form the Democratic Party and won a seat in parliament. He was Prime Minister from 1978-87.

Davis counts the economic reforms he introduced as among his greatest achievements. His economic philosophy was simply to tell his people: "Do whatever you like so long as it is not criminal and does not harm anyone."

He maintains that in island states, where resources are few, the greatest assets are the people. "You depend on people and their creativity. To give them freedom is a powerful stimulation."

Freedom, plus incentives. Davis slashed tax for local businesses from 48 to 25 per cent, and watched as his budget grew from \$11 million to \$70 million. Industries emerged – for several years the Cook Islands provided New Zealand and Australia with ballet shoes. Unemployment fell from 50 per cent to nil in two years.

"People were coming back to the Islands. We were actively looking for people to work there.

"I loathed politics," he admits, "but enjoyed the success of my terms as Prime Minister in applying the free market economic system. This was ill understood and how I survived nine years as Prime Minister making it work . . . it was a miracle."

Despite departing his post as Prime Minister at what would be a respectable age for retirement in New Zealand, Davis has scarcely stood still. He has written books on Polynesian canoes and voyages, completed his autobiography and recently held the post of Cook Islands High Commissioner in New Zealand. In February 2004, the 25-metre traditional Polynesian voyaging canoe he designed and supervised the building of was launched in Auckland Harbour.

Now, at 88, Davis credits his health and longevity to his wife and in-house naturopath, Lady Carla Davis, whom he married in 2000.

He whiles away his time investigating theories of global warming and alternatives to rocketry. He is also establishing the James Cook Medical School within the South Seas University.

"I am committed to higher education for Pacific Islanders. I am the graduate of three universities – that must say something!

"And now," he jokes, referring to his Otago Honorary Doctorate of Laws, "I'm thinking of beginning a new career as a lawyer."

Nicola Mutch

Turning labour relations to competitive advantage

THERE ARE LESSONS TO BE LEARNED FROM THE LABOUR dispute that plagued New Zealand universities this year. Unionised staff at the University of Auckland rejected a 4½ per cent pay rise and roundly condemned the Vice-Chancellor. At the University of Otago, Vice-Chancellor David Skegg offered five per cent and won overwhelming ratification and high praise.

The difference was more than that additional half per cent. Timing and style and personal reputation had something to do with it. But so did the employer's acknowledgement that the union legitimately held different views on bargaining issues. With that acknowledgement, the parties found a way to accommodate each of their *diverse* interests, thereby allowing them to accentuate their *common* interests.

New Zealand has had its labour relations' swings and roundabouts, but it is time now to move past die-in-the-ditch industrial battles and political paybacks. We are poised to turn labour relations to our competitive advantage if there is the political and industrial will to do so.

There are some promising signs of stability. The Employment Relations Act 2000 (ERA) promotes "positive employment relationships" as healthy for workers, workplace productivity, social well-being and a growing economy. Collective bargaining is encouraged, but not mandated.

Union membership has settled at about 20 per cent of the workforce and is likely to remain stable for some time. Employers dealing with unions today are likely to continue to do so.

While they won't have given up broader ambitions, unions in this country largely represent the "elite" of the workforce. These are core workers, and unionised workplaces and industries are at the centre of our economic and social lives.

Where collective bargaining is practised, single employer collective agreements are the norm. "Good faith" is the standard; it essentially translates as bargaining in a principled way that values relationships and emphasises a mutuality of interests while respecting the inevitability of some diversity and conflict of interests.

The ERA's good faith mandate has not been controversial, but nor has it been taken to full advantage by many. It provides an opportunity for employers and unions to add value to their relationship by exploring opportunities for mutual gain without sacrificing their separate interests.

Making the transition from a solely adversarial approach to collective bargaining to a more sophisticated, collaborative approach is not necessarily easy for bargaining parties, but the potential payoffs are enormous.

Making use of available resources is also important. The Partnership Resource Centre, for example, is a new unit in the Department of Labour providing on-site coaching to parties wanting to convert a traditional bargaining relationship into a



Dr Ian McAndrew: "It is time now to move past die-in-the-ditch industrial battles and political paybacks."

more collaborative and productive one.

The legislative foundation is in place. Bargaining relationships are in place for the long term, and in critical parts of the economy. Resources are available to assist the bargaining parties. It is time to take union-management relationships to the next level, contributing rather than detracting from New Zealand's economic and social well-being.

Dr Ian McAndrew

Senior Lecturer, Department of Management, School of Business.

(Dr McAndrew teaches the course, Art of Labour Negotiations, offered by the School of Business's Executive Education Unit.)



Minor domestic mishaps, suicide calls,
party pill poisonings, even possible terrorist threats –
this is run-of-the-mill work for the National Poisons Centre.

EVERY NEW ZEALANDER KNOWS SOMEONE WHO HAS phoned the National Poisons Centre hotline (0800 POISON 764 766).

And that person was probably not at their best. They may have been just embarrassed. More likely they were in a panic. Worst case scenario: it was someone wanting to take their own life.

All flavours of human emotion come streaming into this office 24 hours a day, 365 days a year, keeping the always-on-duty poisons information officers poised to deal with anything.

But, of course, when the centre opens its doors for a quick tour, the lines are quiet.

“Murphy’s Law,” shrugs office manager Lucy Shieffebien.

The hotline is merely the most visible part of a much larger operation, so even without callers there’s still plenty to do on the second floor of the University of Otago’s Adams Building.

The two duty poisons information officers sit, headphones on, a couple of computer screens apiece, reviewing recent cases.

Unlike most of the world's poisons centres, which rely on commercial databases, the National Poisons Centre has developed its own. It's called TOXINZ and is there on the officers' left-hand screens, enabling instant access to the details of 90,000 toxins.

This world-leading resource, used by New Zealand emergency departments and about to be marketed globally, needs constant updating as new products come on to the market and new treatment protocols are developed for any harmful substances they contain.

So nobody's complaining about a bit of quiet time. It beats the previous night when a drunken crank caller dialled the centre's 0800 number 48 times in three hours.

"They were on a prepaid cellphone just making up nonsense scenarios, laughing and hanging up.

"Still, they won't be doing it any more as Telecom has now disconnected the cellphone," Shieffebien says with some satisfaction.

Unfortunately crank calls now come with the territory as an unwanted measure of how well-known the centre has become. The freephone number launched in 2001 is everywhere – check out products in your kitchen or garage – and the number of calls keeps on rising.

In 2003 it was 26,000 and this year will reach 30,000. It's a poisonous world out there, they keep making more of the stuff, and people have tried most of it. Kids eat firecrackers and Pink Batts, and drink detergents, pesticides and paint. Adults get chemicals over their skin at work, or mix drugs and alcohol in misguided attempts to have a good time. Or take too many drugs on purpose and then have second thoughts.

Animals – 1,000 calls a year – eat strange plants and start acting weirdly. Swimmers get stung on the foot. Katipo spiders crawl out from under logs and may give someone a nip.

"You get people rolling around the sand hills at night who might get bitten on the nether region . . . those sort of calls," chuckles centre director Dr Wayne Temple.

Although most of the work is no laughing matter, the majority of cases are resolved over the phone. The caseload is split about 75 per cent – 25 per cent between the public and health professionals, and can involve heavy-duty dialogue with emergency specialists, but mainly it's talking to someone in a family home.

"The standard type of call is from a distraught parent or caregiver . . . 'My child has just got into dishwashing agent'

... something like that, and it's assessment of the case," says Temple.

"And obviously being able to assist the parent and reassure them calms everybody down, and they leave satisfied and they don't have the trauma of taking their child unnecessarily to a health care facility. We can triage some of these cases out at the home. Education and prevention are the keys to reducing the number of poisonings each year."

Direct intervention is not common – and becoming more problematic with the rise of cellphones meaning callers can be impossible to trace – but the centre has links with ambulance and police to ensure self-harm callers get treatment.

"For the staff it can be quite hard because if you get off

the phone and you've just been talking to somebody who's trying to end their life, how do you deal with that?" Shieffebien says. Fortunately these calls do not happen too often. Stress comes with the job, but the zero staff turnover for 2½ years points to both the job satisfaction and the growth of clinical toxicology as a viable career path.

All 10 poisons information officers among the centre's 15.5 staff are University of Otago BSc graduates. They are eased into the job with at least three months' training



The National Poisons Centre's telephones are manned 24 hours a day, 365 days of the year.

Photo: Alan Dove

before being "let loose on the phones".

Even so, "it's frightening, that first call", says Shieffebien.

Sitting in the background are two medical toxicologists who review the calls, help develop the protocols and are on hand for curlier inquiries.

This comprehensive staffing roster is a bit of a leap from the centre's origins as a one-man operation started by the then Pharmacology Department-based Professor Garth McQueen in 1964. The centre remains administratively part of the University's Department of Preventive and Social Medicine, but is funded entirely by the Ministry of Health and ACC.

The other jump has been in technology – from a card-index system used even 10 years ago to the massive database Temple says has become the centre's main work and pushed it to the forefront of its field.

It is compiled from clinical data, with centre specialists trawling all available literature to compile multi-dimensional descriptions of products' toxicity and patient management procedures.

... the majority of cases are resolved over the phone.

The caseload is split about 75 per cent – 25 per cent between the public and health professionals, and can involve heavy-duty dialogue with emergency specialists, but mainly it's talking to someone in a family home.

"The medical staff are critiquing that information and we have an editorial panel of clinical toxicologists in Australia and other countries who are inputting that information.

"We interact via the World Health Organisation through the International Programme in Chemical Safety. They have over 100 participating poisons centres from around the world.

"We share information on a website, and we've made our database available to some developing countries," Temple says.

He recently showcased the database to overseas specialists with promising results. "It's becoming a globalised database and we're looking at marketing opportunities because we don't get an enormous amount of money from ACC and the ministry. So we have the opportunity to market the database on a subscription basis to hospitals and the like, and bring a bit of cash back."

The centre is also involved in providing advice about potential chemical hazards, including terrorist threats, to government agencies.

"For example if you have a terrorist attack and they use an organophosphate agent like sarin, you can tell pretty much from the signs and symptoms displayed what the agent might be.

"Through WHO we've been putting together documents on handling those sorts of situations."

And the work goes on. As herbal-high-using partygoers start showing up in emergency departments, there is a need for more information on how to deal with the potential effects of the pills. The centre is in the final stages of getting ethical approval to research Benzylpiperazine, or BZP, the active ingredient in many of the herbal highs.

"What we're trying to do is get some cases together to see how bad it's likely to be. Some of the doses available are getting bigger and bigger and the usual toxicology theory is, the bigger the dose you're likely to get whammied a bit more. We need good clinical information about what we are dealing with," says Temple.

"That's how we learn. Sooner or later a new product comes onto the market that we know nothing about, then a few cases start appearing and you build up that clinical picture."

And then the phone rings . . .

Sean Flaherty

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Photo: Alan Dove

Modern science solves ancient mystery

Dr Leo Schep: "If we put aside the historical aspect, what they were asking was what we get 30,000 calls a year on – the only difference being that he was an historic figure."

THE VICTIM'S NAME WAS ALEXANDER. IT WAS THOUGHT he'd been poisoned.

How long ago? Oh, about 2,300 years . . .

It was no ordinary call and it nudged Leo Schep into a whole new world. Working an evening shift as a poisons information specialist at the National Poisons Centre, he picked up the phone and was surprised to hear an English accent.

Stranger still, it wasn't a straight poisoning case, but a television production company seeking a toxicologist to contribute to a documentary for the Discovery Channel titled *The Mysterious Death of Alexander the Great*.

Almost as big a mystery – unsolved to this day – is how Atlantic Productions came to call Dunedin in November 2002 when they were after someone in the United States. But Schep wasn't complaining. After overcoming his surprise, he gathered his tools of trade and plunged back in time.

"If we put aside the historical aspect, what they were asking was what we get 30,000 calls a year on – the only difference being that he was an historic figure."

Once he'd read up on the accounts of the conqueror's death in 323BC, Schep homed in on the plants and animal venoms that would have been available, and tried to match them to Alexander's deathbed symptoms.

"And to my utter surprise, I found something that almost fitted the bill."

The potential culprit was *Veratrum album* (white hellebore), used by the ancients to treat diseases but which would, in overdose, kill five to 15 days after ingestion. His theory became a cornerstone theory of the documentary

which aired in 2003 and established his small-screen credentials.

"The people working on it [Alexander's death] today are mainly in the classics fields, but to tackle a poisons issue properly you need to go to a toxicologist.

"And some of the theories I'd read were a little bit shaky; they just didn't match up at all. Perhaps that's why I found something that fitted the bill."

After this shock immersion into the ancient world, Schep had to learn how to live in the strange dimension called TV-land when he was flown to London for filming.

The cast of experts was brimming with professors from universities such as Oxford and Cornell, and he heard some hair-raising stories from a former head of the Anti-Terrorist Squad hired to investigate Alexander's death as a homicide.

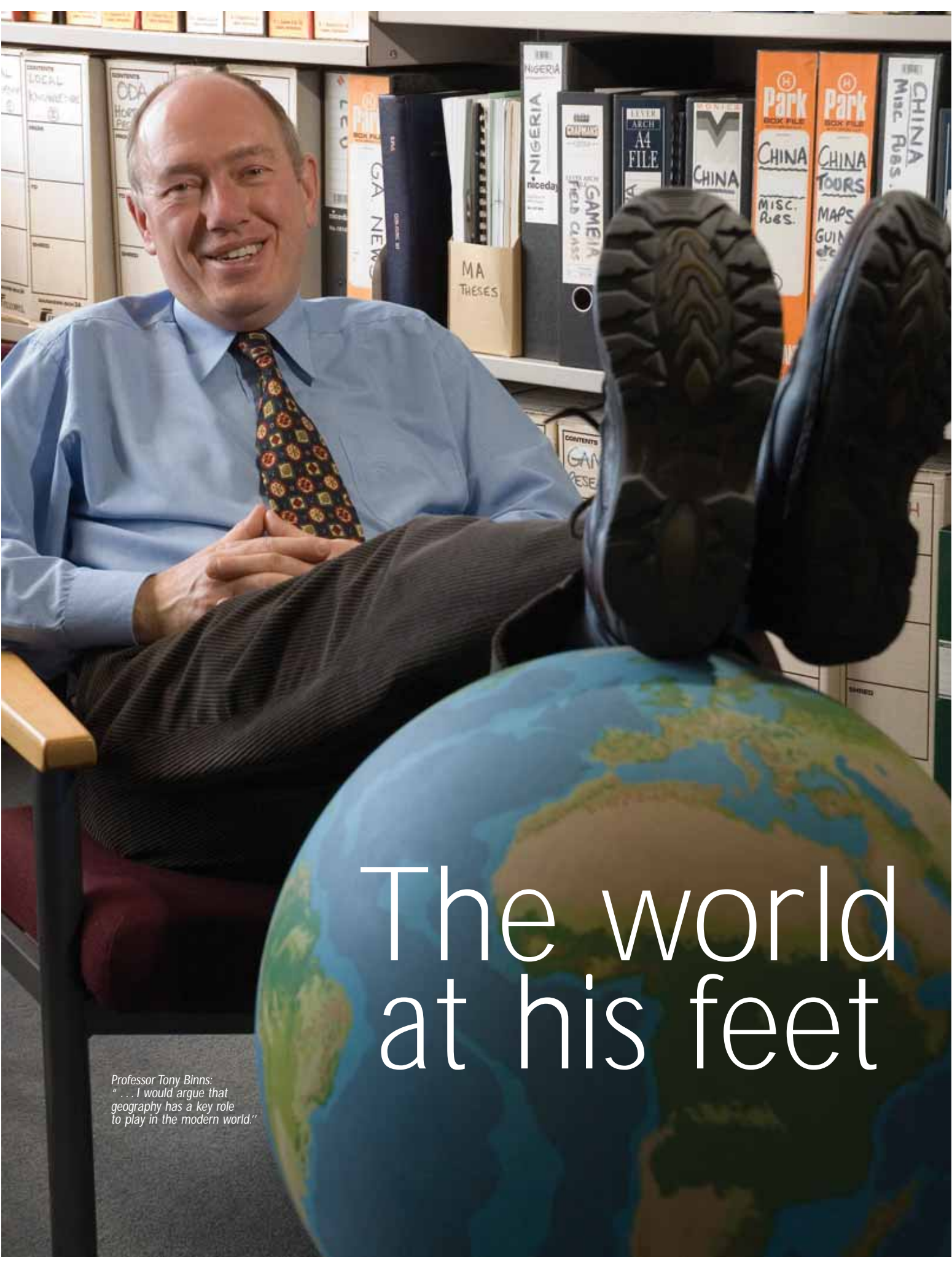
"I said to the associate producer, 'Why have you got someone from Otago when there are enough experts in the UK and Europe who could have provided expert advice in this documentary?' She said, 'Well, you came up with the goods.'"

So it was not long before the phone rang again and he was delving into Cleopatra's death. Was it the asp, or could it have been hemlock?

That documentary aired earlier this year (don't hold your breath on the hemlock angle) and Schep continues to be in contact with the production company in London.

"There's nothing solid at the moment, but they've made it clear that if anything does come up, they'll be banging at my door."

Sean Flaherty



The world at his feet

Professor Tony Binns:
"... I would argue that
geography has a key role
to play in the modern world."

Otago's new Head of Geography and first occupant of the Ron Lister Chair, is a world-leading academic and passionate enthusiast for his subject.

THE GEOGRAPHER, OF ALL PEOPLE, COULD HAVE LITTLE cause for chagrin should he make his way to the edge of the world and find himself peering into a professional abyss. Happily, the geographer also knows that it is only convention that locates the centre of things, and that this is frail defence against the spirit of adventure, and weapons of modern academia: new technology, the internet, and frequent and fast travel.

So the University of Otago's new Head of Geography and first occupant of the Ron Lister Chair, Professor J A (Tony) Binns, who is nothing if not adventurous, had few misgivings about uprooting himself from a long career based at England's Sussex University and translocating his career to the opposite end of the earth.

"After 29 years at Sussex, 28 years of which I was based in the School of African and Asian Studies, I got to the stage where people around me were retiring. But I didn't want to retire. I didn't know what I'd do if I retired.

"I was invited to apply for the post here and it's given me a new lease on life, and an exciting challenge."

And while the isolation of Dunedin did give Binns momentary pause, he was soon assured by the University that he would be expected to maintain his African field research, and continue to cultivate the professional associations and activities that have made the 57-year-old professor a world-leading figure in his discipline.

Tony Binns was born in Manchester, England, in 1948. He attended Sheffield University where he took a degree in geography and gained a teaching diploma with distinction. He began teaching in a Doncaster secondary school but, as much as he loved the classroom, he soon enrolled for a master's degree at the prestigious Centre of West African Studies at Birmingham University. "I got totally immersed in things like the economic history of West Africa."

Achieving his MA in 1973 brought Binns to another crossroads: did he return to teaching, opt for something like Voluntary Service Overseas (VSO), or begin research towards a PhD?

The latter won out and on January 21, 1974, a date still etched into his memory, he stepped onto the sweltering tarmac in Sierra Leone. He was dressed in his English winter clothes.

"I remember thinking, oh my God, it's warm here. I remember that first impression very clearly: the warmth, the smells ... and the expatriate oil man, like a slightly seedy character from a Graham Greene novel, on the ferry that crossed the wide river estuary from the airport to the capital.

"The oil man said, 'Do you realise, son, you have come to the fundament of Africa ... and Freetown is nine miles up it.'"

If he thought he might put off the enthusiastic young geographer, he was wrong. "I had one of the very best years of my life," says Binns. It was the beginning of a love affair with Africa and a strong interest in Third World development issues that continues to this day.

Binns was awarded his PhD in 1981. He has travelled widely throughout Africa and Asia on consultancies and research, and has taught at universities in Bangladesh, Canada, Hong Kong, India, Ireland, Kenya, Nigeria, Seychelles, Sierra Leone and South Africa.

He is a Fellow of the Royal Geographical Society, and has been an active member of the Geographical Association for more than 30 years and elected president 1994-95. Formerly a reader in geography at Sussex University, in 1998 he was awarded that university's Alumni Society Award for Excellence in Teaching.

In his long and productive career to date he has acted as consultant for a number of television series on Africa, Southern Africa and China, has authored 15 books and monographs, edited seven books and collections, contributed 22 chapters in books and has published more than 60 articles in refereed journals.

So he is well-suited to promote a better understanding of what constitutes modern academic geography, and its relevance.

"Geography," he says, "is fundamentally the understanding of people's relationships with the environment." In contrast to the days where it was much more fact-based, geography now is more interested in issues that arise out of the people-environment interface. In physical geography there are issues such as climate change, and the recent Asian tsunami where, typically, geographers would want to study both the physical causes and social impacts.



On a recent trip to Sierra Leone, Professor Tony Binns is escorted by the Paramount Chief of Lower Bambara Chieftdom during an inspection of civil war damage in Panguma.

“There is a strong lobby that says students should know their facts. But, having said that, it’s really all about global understanding. Global awareness is at the heart of geography: mutual understanding, getting rid of wars, helping organisations like the United Nations to work properly. I would argue that geography has a key role to play in the modern world.”

Binns is also a strong advocate for geography as an employer-friendly discipline. “Research has shown, and there are a number of papers on this, that geographers are eminently employable when you compare them with some of the sciences and arts and cultural studies areas.

“The jobs you can do with geography are incredible. When I was at university in the 60s it was often said that all you could do with it was teach. But that’s not true now. Geographers go into planning, environmental research, travel and tourism, marketing, banking, teaching and, of course, development work.”

The last mentioned is dear to Binns’s heart. “Development studies is very much in my blood. I’ve grown up with it.”

The establishment of a Development Studies Research Cluster coincident with his arrival here has added impetus to his research programme at Otago. The cluster brings together a multidisciplinary team of academics.

“Within three or four years, and certainly five, Otago will be the key place in New Zealand in terms of development studies. Already I can see tremendous potential here,” says Binns.

The present emphasis on post-conflict development fits neatly with Binns’ renewed research work in Sierra Leone, brought with him from Sussex. His original research in the 1970s was on the interface between rural development and diamond mining in the eastern regions of the former British colony. Wracked by bloody civil war for a decade or so from the early 1990s, in part fuelled by diamonds, the country’s infrastructure and institutions were largely destroyed.

Says Binns: “We decided to move back to the places I worked in the 70s, because we have data from that period and

a lot of recollections. We are looking at where those places are now in terms of community rebuilding and development.”

Binns was in the UK at the time of the G8 leaders’ meeting in July and the Bob Geldof-inspired concerts to focus attention on the problems and poverty in Africa.

“There was tremendous euphoria and the concerts put Africa centre stage,” he says. “But the general feeling is that the G8 still has a long way to go in alleviating the problems of Africa. It’s not just a debt issue; there are issues of trade and aid.”

That said, he warns against the tendency always to typecast Africa as the problematic continent. “I’ve worked in 20 African countries and I’ve seen lots of positive and exciting things going on.”

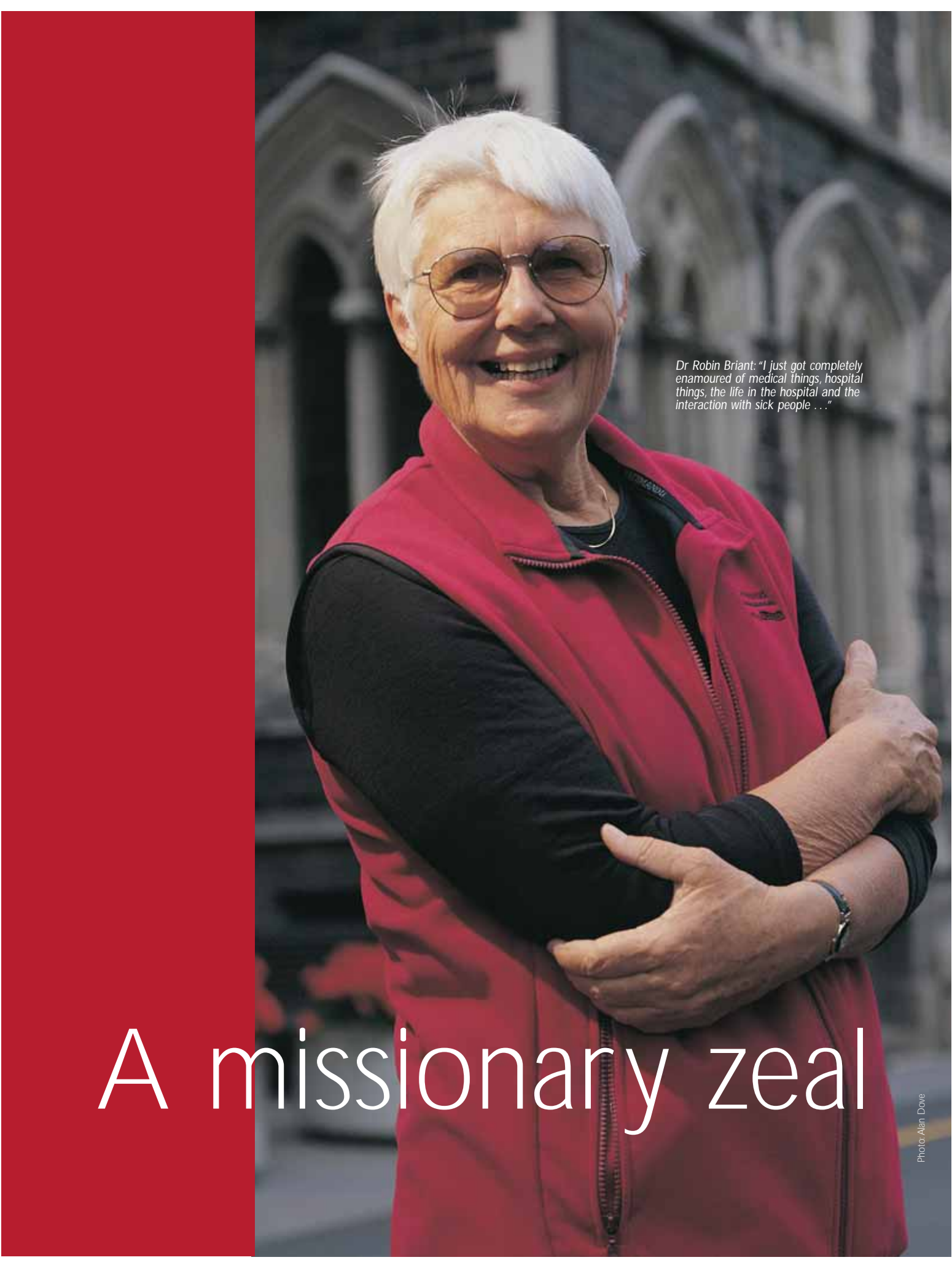
That he will continue to pursue his work from Otago is in part a legacy of the late Ron Lister. Professor Lister served as head of the Department of Geography for nearly 30 years. He was appointed as lecturer in charge of geography in 1952 and Foundation Chair in 1965. He retired in 1981 and passed away in 1985.

The chair named in his honour is part of the University’s Leading Thinkers Advancement Campaign, whereby world-ranking academics and research teams are appointed to bolster proven areas of research strength, with dollar-for-dollar assistance from the New Zealand Government as part of the Partnerships for Excellence programme.

Binns is flattered and delighted to be here. As newly-appointed Head of Department, occupant of a prestigious chair, with the facility to travel to conferences, to continue his research, and with the task of establishing and leading a research cluster in post-conflict development, why wouldn’t he be? “Everyone has been very nice and there is a great collegial feeling in the department,” he says.

For someone who confesses to having gone “a bit stale” and being in need of an “exciting new challenge”, Tony Binns could be forgiven for feeling he has the world at his feet.

Simon Cunliffe



Dr Robin Briant: "I just got completely enamoured of medical things, hospital things, the life in the hospital and the interaction with sick people ..."

A missionary zeal

Ever keen to steer clear of career complacency, Otago alumna Dr Robin Briant has often sought positions that have taken her to distant, conflict-ridden corners of the world, far beyond her comfort zone.

“RACY” IS A WORD SELDOM USED TO DESCRIBE OUR FAIR Dunedin city, but that’s the adjective that fell from Dr Robin Briant’s lips when talking about her old University of Otago days. When she arrived to take her place at Medical School in the 1960s, she thought her new adopted city was quite the bee’s knees.

“Having grown up in Poverty Bay where my parents were farmers and having lived in a small village, I thought Dunedin was by far the most fantastic place and racy place the world could have ever seen, and I just loved it.”

However, her passage through Medical School was marred by the prevailing male-centric attitudes.

“There were only 10 women in a class of 120 and that was pretty much how it had been forever. The thing that stands out for me is how badly we were treated as women in Med School and yet it seemed like that was how the world was meant to be. It felt like we were there on sufferance. Some of the male staff – particularly in anatomy – were sexist to the extreme. And yet it was a man’s place – you just put up with it. I’m still kind of stunned when I look back and see what we put up with. It was really just attitudinal stuff – and it wasn’t particularly subtle either.”

Having said that, she stresses that these views have been formed retrospectively.

“I was too dumb (socio-politically at least) at the time to recognise that the attitudes to women were abnormal. We got on and participated in everything and returned most of what we got; I had a wonderful time in Med School, both from the academic and the social point of view.”

In an age where women were not expected to aspire to anything beyond teaching or nursing, the young Briant fell towards medicine via her talent for science. A post-school job at a local laboratory in Gisborne gave direction to her “sciencey” inclinations.

“I just got completely enamoured of medical things, hospital things, the life in the hospital and the interaction with sick people. So I decided I’d give it a crack. I probably had a bit of missionary zeal in me at that stage as well.”

As one of five children, she felt the family resources wouldn’t stretch to pay for her university education. Having

heard her parents talking about the lack of funds and the importance of the boys having the education, she kept her career aspirations quiet until she’d arranged her own path.

“We weren’t poor – we had plenty – but they were thrifty and they were relatively tough times. So I actually sorted everything out myself and made a plan to come to Dunedin before I told them. Of course they were absolutely tickled pink.”

After graduating from the University with a MB ChB and, later, a MD, Briant went on to work as both a consultant physician at Auckland Hospital and in private practice, and as a clinical lecturer in clinical pharmacology at Auckland University’s Medical School. She’s also been very active as a health watchdog, joining IPPNW (International Physicians for the Prevention of Nuclear War) in 1981 to educate people about the health threats associated with the nuclear industry, chairing the Medical Council for five years, and sitting on both the Advisory Committee to Pharmac and the Ethics Committee of the Health Research Council.

Ever keen to steer clear of career complacency, Briant has often sought positions beyond her comfort zone. In 1979 she worked for World Vision as a Medical Officer in Thailand – a profoundly affecting experience.

“It was an eye-opener. We couldn’t do any investigations at all – no blood tests or X-rays. It was utterly basic. It’s not accurate medicine. You had to go with what your best guess was, but I think our New Zealand training is very clinically based at the level of the patient, and you learn to draw in what other resources you’ve got for investigation and treatment. Whereas the Americans brought over their electronic heart monitors etc (and there was no electricity) and they felt completely paralysed.”

When asked where her strong social activism and humanitarian instincts came from, Briant says that missionary zeal was certainly always there and has never left her.

“My parents were kindly, but not particularly charitably directed. So I don’t know what the kernel of it was. Sometimes it might be a need for a bit of adventure as well – life gets pretty humdrum doesn’t it?”

Having decided that she needed to get out of the hospital before reaching 60 (“in case I died doing a ward round or

something”) Briant resigned from her position there and sought another overseas mission. In 2003 she elected to work as a volunteer doctor with the humanitarian medical aid agency MSF (Medecins sans Frontieres) and was sent to the Occupied Palestinian Territories – first to Jenin then to the Gaza Strip.

It was an atypical mission for MSF because it wasn’t a zone of great deprivation.

“In one sense life was normal, but in another sense it was so abnormal as to be extraordinary. Jenin was so unsafe that MSF ruled that we didn’t go anywhere but in relation to work – at the end of work we went home and stayed indoors. We didn’t walk anywhere and we didn’t go to people’s homes. It was basically house arrest because you didn’t know when something would explode. The Israeli military had a huge base and brought tanks into town and past our house every night. The locals had curfews that would last several days at a time – big families in little houses – terribly damaging (we were allowed out to visit our patients because we were foreign). The most awful thing is when you’re sitting in your car and the tank brings its gun around and points it at you and you wonder, ‘What have I done, where am I going, what’s going to happen next?’”

The emotional impact of such a mission was profound. When Briant returned to New Zealand she was told that it

might be pretty hard coming back into normal civilisation and was given some brochures for counselling.

“I thought I was tickety-boo so I said, ‘No, no, I’ll be fine’. Well, I was a complete cot case. Took me about two months to turn into a normal person again.”

Though Auckland is her base, she sneaks off to Gisborne whenever she can.

“As you get older you seem to want to get back to your roots a bit more. I’ve actually bought myself a little house on the beach in Gisborne where I swim enthusiastically in the sea. One of its many charms is that nobody goes there. The climate is pretty good, the coastline is spectacularly lovely, the rush hour lasts for about 30 seconds and there’s one traffic light.”

At the time of this interview Briant was between jobs and quietly hoping for another MSF mission. “I’d like to do at least another one before I get too decrepit!”

She got her wish: a day later she was offered a nine-month position on a tuberculosis programme in the Republic of Abkhazia (bordering Russia). So at 65 – an age when many retreat from risk and adventure – Briant is still actively chasing that missionary zeal to far-flung, conflict-ridden places. A bit different from Gisborne’s 30-second rush hour – let’s hope it’s all tickety-boo.

Claire Finlayson

DUNEDIN NEW ZEALAND

526 George Street Boutique Hotel



Luxury hotel accommodation next to shops, restaurants and cafés in the city’s main street. 526 George Street is 200 metres from the University. It is on the flat across the road from the Otago Museum, 400 metres to Dunedin Hospital and within easy walking distance of Cadbury World, theatres and other attractions. Eating and dining out in nearby restaurants and cafés is an event in itself.

Suites range from doubles and twins to large family accommodation. The disabled access and facilities enable easy wheelchair movement around the spacious ground floor and lovely grounds.

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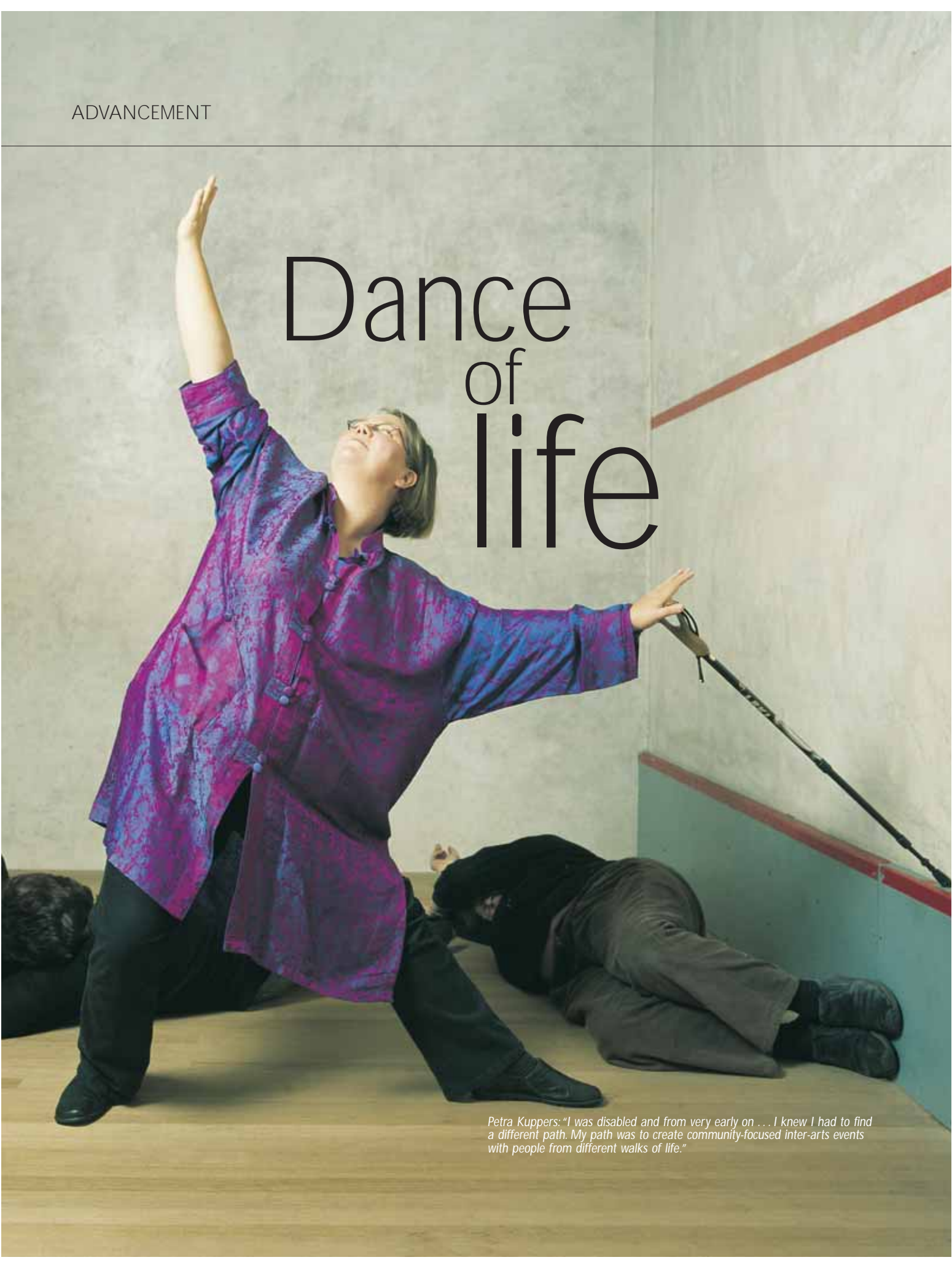
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ADVANCEMENT

Dance of life

A photograph of Petra Kuppers, a German choreographer and dancer, in a dynamic pose. She is wearing a vibrant purple and blue patterned long-sleeved shirt and black pants. Her right arm is raised high, and her left arm is extended outwards, holding a black cane. She is looking upwards with an expressive face. In the background, two other people are lying on the floor, one in a dark hoodie and the other in a dark jacket, suggesting a performance or rehearsal space. The setting is a room with light-colored walls and a wooden floor.

Petra Kuppers: "I was disabled and from very early on ... I knew I had to find a different path. My path was to create community-focused inter-arts events with people from different walks of life."

Disability cultural activist and Caroline Plummer Dance Fellow Petra Kuppers is dedicated to expanding the parameters of dance.

WHEN CAROLINE PLUMMER'S FATHER SUGGESTED money from her life insurance might be put towards a memorial trust to further the dreams she herself couldn't live out, she apparently beamed and said "Awesome, Dad". Plummer completed a BA in anthropology and a Diploma for Graduates in dance at the University of Otago, but sadly died of cancer shortly after graduating in 2003. She was only 24.

Plummer was a wonderfully spirited and community-minded woman who was particularly smitten with dance. In one of her journals, she wrote: "For me, the ultimate career would be one in which I could marry dance with healing, music with rehabilitation, movement with improved quality of life. I believe that dance is unique in the way that it challenges both mind and body." This vision lives on in the Caroline Plummer Dance Fellowship, established under the University's Leading Thinkers Advancement campaign and made possible by a memorial trust initiated by Plummer's parents.

Petra Kuppers, Associate Professor of Performance Studies at Rhode Island's Bryant University, is the first recipient of the fellowship. She is thrilled to be here.

"It's the first recognition, as far as we know, of the field of community dance in an academic environment and I am deeply honoured to be here."

Of Plummer she says: "It's amazing what she managed to create in her life. It's a great tribute to her spirit that I am sitting here and that many others will be sitting here as years go by. When I found out about the fellowship I read the material on her website [www.carolineplummer.org.nz] and was astonished at her insights."

Kuppers' focus is on the social effects of community dance – less the end product of a performance than in the rewarding creative collaborative process that precedes it. Describing herself as a disability culture activist, she is particularly keen to expand the parameters of dance and open up the field for those who think that dance is not for them.

"I'm interested in a culture that's different from non-disabled people's culture and, as a disability culture activist, I'm interested in what it is about disability culture that we can take pride in. Rather than buying into stereotypes of tragedy, negativity and loss – which is traditionally how people conceive of disability – I'm interested in showing something about the richness of this other way of living. My art-practice hopes to seduce non-disabled people into seeing this other beauty."

During her six months at Otago, Kuppers will be working on a book, *An Introduction to Community Performance*, and running several community dance projects, one of which will take place at the same hospice that Plummer spent time in. Kuppers wants to show "some of the beauty and dignity of the people there, and try to undo some of the stereotypes people have about hospices. It's about a deepening of experience, a deepening and opening up of sensory experience. Movement is a wonderful way of doing that – even if you just become aware of your breath. Your breath is your first movement; it's the first dance of life."

Kuppers is well versed in debunking stereotypes. She gained her dance qualification from a wheelchair and was the first person with a disability to take up a position in a dance department in the United Kingdom (she taught a community dance course at Manchester Metropolitan University for three years).

"I was disabled and from very early on I knew that without four sound limbs you could not get into choreography school, so I knew I had to find a different path. My path was to create community-focused inter-arts events with people from different walks of life."

She feels her disability has made her hyper-alert to her environment.

"I actually think that I have a different relationship to movement to someone who does not have pain in her life. I pay a lot of attention to my steps, and the two hundred metres I can walk into a forest or up a hill. I have a different, sensuous relationship with what I see and what I feel and what I touch and move with than someone to whom this is normal, who doesn't even have to think about it. If I hadn't been that way, I think my artistic life would've been quite different. So I think who I am, both as a researcher and an artist, is very much shaped by this different attention to the world. I think that's a good thing."

Caroline Plummer would no doubt have approved of the community-minded projects that this first dance fellow is undertaking. She cited Petra Kuppers' work in her own student writings on dance. Kuppers was thrilled to learn of this.

"It was just amazing to hear this because as an academic you write sitting in a little office and who knows who reads it, right? So it was very, very moving to hear that a dialogue had been established before Caroline's death and that this dialogue continues on now."

Claire Finlayson

Revolutionary look at evolutionary change



Photo: Alan Dove

Dr Jon Waters: Native galaxiids in New Zealand rivers may help provide a more accurate rate of evolutionary change than the current world standard.

Why is the scientific world getting excited about a small New Zealand fish? Ask Zoology's Dr Jon Waters and Geology's Associate Professor Dave Craw.

Researchers worldwide have been posing questions about rates of evolutionary change, and now native galaxiids could help provide answers.

Waters and Craw are collaborating to identify populations of fish that have been separated by a geological event, so that evolutionary differences can be measured against a known timescale.

The geologists provide the places and the times, the zoologists investigate the fish and work out the percentage changes, and simple maths indicates a rate of evolutionary change, one of the big unknowns in zoology and genetics. The Otago researchers are concentrating on geological changes that separated fish populations by reversing the course of rivers – occurrences that are more common than most people might think.

Rivers that once flowed in different directions include the Nevis, the Cardrona, the Von and the Pelorus, hopefully giving Waters sufficient data to provide worthwhile evidence of a rate of evolutionary change.

Waters has already identified rates of change for galaxiids in the Nevis. Working with a three-year Marsden Grant and a University of Otago Research Grant, he plans to follow up with other South Island rivers.

"The project will undertake this kind of analysis for several different species in at least four locations across New Zealand, giving us a much more reliable and accurate rate of evolutionary change than the present world standard," he says.

"It's good to combine genetics and geology to the benefit of both. Working across the disciplines gives us all an increase in energy, and we're hoping to provide answers to some important questions."

Changing career choices

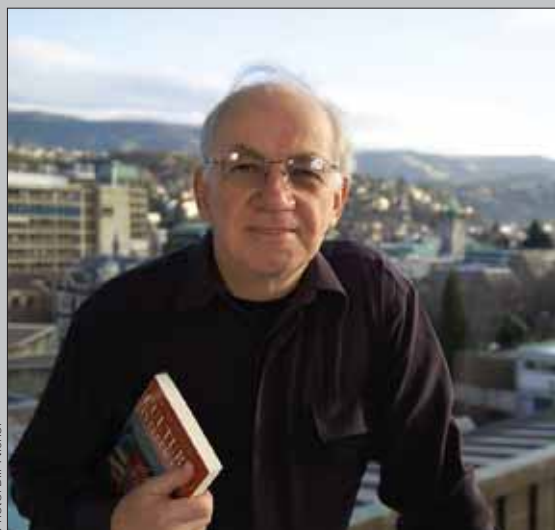


Photo: Bill Nichol

Professor Kerr Inkson: "Today, people focus on remaining employable rather than having employment ..."

While busting myths about normal straight-line career paths, Professor Kerr Inkson, of the Department of Management, has uncovered a picture of how the common expectation of a linear, continuous career path is now less frequently found.

"Today, people focus on remaining employable rather than having employment, and take more responsibility for their own employability instead of looking to someone else."

The strategies to manage a less linear career are readily adopted by today's young people, he says.

A particular degree major is sometimes only a career starting point and graduates often diverge eventually from their original qualification into new areas of interest. His research with an Auckland University of Technology colleague also found that young New Zealanders who do the proverbial OE and return home, bring with them beneficial skills and experiences that improve their employability.

When examining sources of instability in careers, Inkson has found that people in the secondary labour market are often there because it fits their lifestyle.

"Office temps, for example, are sometimes thought of as a secondary labour market, yet temping is often a lifestyle choice that fits around family, hobbies, business activities or a vacation, rather than being a necessity."

Inkson has published widely on the subject of careers including *The New Careers* published in 1999. He has recently completed the first draft of *Understanding Careers*, a book which develops the use of metaphor to expand thinking about careers, an idea that career practitioners increasingly use with clients.

A “Cinderella” issue



Photo: Lighthaus

Dr Jean Hay-Smith: Incontinence can impact greatly on lives, often restricting social participation and limiting activity.

Incontinence is rarely discussed openly, yet it affects the daily lives of many people. Women are more often affected than men, and more people of both sexes are affected as they age. By age 50, about one in three women experiences incontinence, although about 10 per cent of women in their early twenties are also incontinent to some degree.

Incontinence researcher Dr Jean Hay-Smith says this “Cinderella” issue can impact greatly on lives, often restricting social participation and limiting activity. “People worry about leakage, smell, or that there won’t be a toilet nearby.”

Her work has included projects with Professor Don Wilson and Associate Professor Peter Herbison (Dunedin School of Medicine), and most recently Dr Sarah Dean at the Rehabilitation Teaching and Research Unit at the Wellington School of Medicine and Health Sciences.

In a University of Otago funded project, a number of women experiencing uncomplicated incontinence and their therapists are being interviewed separately to determine how they each view incontinence and its conservative (non-surgical, non-drug) treatment.

“Women are often keen to avoid drugs and surgery, but conservative management can be more difficult than people anticipate because it requires behaviour change and this is not easy for women to implement or sustain. It seems difficulties can arise if the therapist and women don’t share similar views about the problem, or what they are trying to achieve. We know conservative treatments can work, but for some women the improvements are not maintained. Is this because conservative treatment ‘failed’, or it worked but could not be sustained?”

Preserving the knowledge



Photo: Alan Dove

Poia Rewi: “It’s through the Māori language that the true richness of the Māori world is appreciated.”

A doctoral thesis on Māori oratory is the first to be accepted by the University in the Māori language alone, thanks to the support of Te Tumu, Otago’s School of Māori, Pacific and Indigenous Studies.

The author, Poia Rewi (Ngāi Tūhoe, Ngāti Manawa, Te Arawa), gives particular credit to Te Tumu’s senior academics, Professors Tania Ka’ai and John Moorfield, and Dr Michael Reilly, for insisting a thesis solely in Māori was appropriate.

Rewi agrees. “In the end, it’s through the Māori language that the true richness of the Māori world is appreciated.”

Brought up in the tiny North Island town of Murupara and head boy at Te Aute College, Rewi was involved in Tūhoe wānanga (cultural “workshops”) from his youth, and when he later began recording interviews with skilled speakers, he found ready acceptance.

Rewi’s thesis explores the history of whaikōrero and looks in depth at current issues, and also endeavours to provide a benchmark for current and future speakers of te reo Māori.

The original purpose of his research was simple: “It was a passion to preserve the knowledge.” An awareness that many of his interview subjects were aging lent urgency to the project and gave a bitter-sweet edge to finally finishing. “I’ll be sorry to leave it behind – it’s like cutting off from those people.”

Despite this, Rewi is heartened that the revival of te reo Māori has seen people reclaiming the old skills of whaikōrero. “People are coming up through kohanga reo, kura kaupapa and wharekura with a real breadth of knowledge.”

Classical heroes



Photo: Lightraus

Dr Pat Wheatley: His fascination with Demetrius the Besieger, one of Alexander the Great's successors, has led to him writing the first book in English on the subject.

Dr Pat Wheatley describes Alexander the Great as a bright comet that flashed across the historical horizon.

Springing to the throne at 20 and conquering the Persian Empire from Greece to Northern India ensured he still captures the imagination of scholars 2,400 years after his death, aged only 32.

"In 12 years all up he achieves what many people take several lifetimes to accomplish," Wheatley says.

However, it is the time immediately following Alexander's death that most fascinates Wheatley; in particular, Demetrius the Besieger.

Demetrius was the son of one of Alexander's generals, Antigonus the One-Eyed, and had a reputation as a great besieger of cities.

"He built enormous siege machines and catapults and spent more than a year trying to break down the walls of Rhodes. When finally recalled to Athens he was declared a god by the Athenians."

Demetrius then lived a "quite remarkable and colourful life" in the Parthenon – he had a particular penchant for prostitutes and older women, marrying three widows in succession. However, his popularity waned and he drank himself to death in captivity at the age of 54.

Wheatley completed his PhD thesis on Demetrius' life, supervised by Brian Bosworth – the "most famous living Alexander scholar". Now a lecturer in Otago's Department of Classics, he is completing a book on the subject. It will be the first book about Demetrius written in English and the first in any language for almost 40 years. And there are many interesting stories to tell – Wheatley estimates it will be more than 300,000 words.

Frightening fat findings



Photo: Manson Wright

Dr Philippa Carter: "Obese children face significant physical problems ..."

A study of Dunedin three-year-olds has found that 27 per cent are overweight or obese.

Even more alarming, researchers were not surprised by this finding.

"It's only slightly higher than we expected based on previous studies of older children," 2005 New Zealand Paediatric Fellow and study co-ordinator Dr Philippa Carter says.

"It is frightening for a number of reasons. Apart from the adverse psycho-social problems, obese children face significant physical problems, the most serious being the risk of developing Type 2 diabetes, with all the health risks that entails."

The Dunedin School of Medicine longitudinal study follows the growth, activity and eating environments of 241 Dunedin children from their third to fifth birthday.

As well as weighing and measuring the children, and keeping tabs on how active they are, the study also looks at family eating habits, such as whether they eat together and if the TV is on or off.

The aim is to discover which environmental factors are most important in becoming overweight or obese, how that risk can be averted and what intervention treatment would have best results.

Current intervention treatment has poor long-term results and needs to be more complex than simply telling people to eat less and do more, Carter says.

At the age of three, there appears to be little correlation between children's body mass index and the amount of activity they do.

As other studies show older overweight children are less active, this study is an opportunity to find out what comes first – the extra kilos or the inactivity.

Sport as cultural tourism



Photo: Alan Dove

Associate Professor James Higham: "We began to see this packaging of the sport into a product that was of interest to far more people than just rugby fans."

Like many good stories, it started in the Captain Cook Tavern.

Associate Professor James Higham (Department of Tourism) wanted to show a visiting Canadian professor an authentic Dunedin experience: a Super 12 game at Carisbrook, preceded by a pint at the Cook and a bus ride to the ground with fellow supporters.

However, Tom Hinch (University of Alberta) fitted into the rugby crowd better than his local host.

"We met up with all these other people from overseas," Higham says. "It was obvious the Super 12 was drawing people into Dunedin for the excitement of the weekend."

This opened a new line of research for the pair into sport as an authentic type of cultural tourism attraction.

"We began to see this packaging of the sport into a product that was of interest to far more people than just rugby fans."

That was in 1998 and this year they are publishing a paper in Europe called *Sport, Tourism and Authenticity* and Higham is presenting a keynote address at a conference in Perth with reference to the new Western Force Super 14 franchise. The work addresses a familiar concern – the fear of killing the attraction by compromising its integrity.

They do believe this new form of tourism is fairly robust. Beyond the slick packaging, professional sport retains its authenticity because evenness of competition and uncertainty of outcome remain defining qualities.

And growth in sport-related tourism could be what New Zealand needs as the industry looks to move "beyond nature" into more sustainable visitor attractions, Higham says.

Plant genomics at cutting edge



Photo: Bill Nichol

PhD student Robert Day: "We hope to establish collaborations with groups around the world ..."

Biochemistry PhD student Robert Day recently achieved a rare distinction for a budding academic. He was lead author of an article in the prestigious international journal *Trends in Plant Science*. The article reviews an emerging field in which Otago could become a leading centre – laser-assisted microdissection (LAM) of plant cells.

Day and PhD supervisor Dr Richard Macknight are among only a handful of researchers world-wide adapting LAM technology – originally developed for cancer biology – to investigating the genetics of plant development at the molecular level.

LAM involves using lasers to dissect out finely-targeted regions of microscopic samples, so that cells of an individual type can be isolated from surrounding tissues.

Just as LAM enables the isolation and genetic analysis of specific cancer cells in complex tumours, the Otago researchers are now able to efficiently zero in on individual plant cell types at different developmental stages and analyse which genes are being expressed.

What gives their laboratory a particular edge is local access to both the laser microdissection apparatus and the state-of-the-art gene-profiling equipment at the \$1.8 million Genomic Facility established by the University in 2000, says Day.

"Everything is coming together for us now. We hope to establish collaborations with groups around the world as the ability to easily perform this kind of 'global gene analysis' from specific cell types is something nearly all plant researchers are after." Several international labs are already interested in visiting Otago to learn the technique, he says.

Climate clues



Photo: Grahame Sydney

Dr Gary Wilson: He and his colleagues aim to uncover clues to climate change hidden under the ice of Antarctica.

A drill core sample taken from South Canterbury farmland marks an important step in the multi-national, multi-million-dollar ANDRILL research project.

Dr Gary Wilson (Department of Geology) has played a pivotal role in developing the long-term project, which draws on the expertise of some 150 scientists from around the world. Its aim is to gain a better understanding of global climate change – past and future – by analysing geological samples from Antarctica.

Antarctica has had an enormous impact on climate change, but the exact nature of the global events that drove those changes is locked away below hundreds of metres of ice and sea. For the past five years Wilson and colleagues have been working on geophysical surveys to identify sites likely to yield long sediment core samples from beneath Antarctica's ice cover to give scientists the information they need. Two have now been selected and more need to be found to complete the picture.

The ANDRILL drill rig has been developed and was tested in September/October in South Canterbury providing information that will give supporting data for the Antarctic project.

"Although it's 3,000km away from the Antarctic, the Canterbury Basin evolved under the Antarctic Circumpolar and Southwest Pacific Deep Western Boundary currents, so it's been strongly influenced by changes in Antarctic conditions. We already know that the strata in South Canterbury reflect significant Antarctic-driven events such as major falls in sea level and major episodes of sedimentation linked to the increase and decrease in Antarctic-driven currents."

The first Antarctic drilling is scheduled for October 2006.

Gender costs



Photo: Lightraus

Dr Murat Genç: The gap between male and female full-time earners may be due to the slowness with which women progress to more highly paid work.

Research by economists Dr Murat Genç, Dr Robert Alexander and Dr Mohammad Jaforullah confirms that women in New Zealand on average earn around 13 per cent less than men – even when factors like qualifications are controlled for.

Genç and Alexander used Statistics New Zealand's Income Survey and Quarterly Household Labour Force Survey to examine gender differences in our labour market.

Most past research attributes gender differentials in earning power to differences in skill levels, which lead to differences in productivity and, hence, wages.

Genç, Alexander and Jaforullah's two cross-sectional snapshots from 1999 and 2003 find that – even when controlling for variables such as educational attainment – the wages of New Zealand women in full-time work remain at around 86-87 per cent of those of New Zealand men in full-time work.

The gap between male and female full-time earners may be due to the slowness with which women progress to more highly paid work, Genç says.

While the wage gap among full-time workers remained fairly steady between 1999 and 2003 and has not narrowed greatly, Genç says an interesting wage differential pattern emerged among part-time workers.

"In the case of part-time workers, we found no significant gender differentials. This may be because part-time work predominantly takes place in the secondary labour market where many jobs are paid at or near the minimum wage."

The study also looked at ethnicity, finding that Pacific Islands people have the greatest wage disadvantages, with the gap in Pacific-European wages being similar to the study's overall female ratio.

A vexed question



Photo: Ross Coombes

Dr Dee Richards: Her research looked at antibiotic resistance in the Christchurch community.

Although a great deal is known about the development of antibiotic resistance in hospitals, far less is understood about what is happening in the community. Dr Dee Richards and colleagues at the Christchurch School of Medicine and Health Sciences are changing that.

Richards, Professor Les Toop and Professor Steve Chambers have completed two studies, one of which has been published in the *British Medical Journal*, which give cause for concern.

“Our first study is aimed at throwing some light on the vexed question for GPs of when to prescribe antibiotics for such things as common urinary tract infections (UTI) in women. It has come up with results which show that a urine test in the surgery doesn't necessarily give clear guidance as to whether or not antibiotics should be prescribed.”

It showed that many women who had symptoms of UTI, but had negative urine tests, got better faster when prescribed a common first-choice antibiotic than patients given a placebo.

“So we need to develop a more satisfactory way of predicting who will benefit from antibiotics, or not, with this common infection.”

Richards' research also looked at the levels of resistance in the Christchurch community after collecting samples from 76 GPs and submitting them to laboratory analysis.

The results show an increase in antibiotic resistance compared to previous research. Overall resistance in women with a positive UTI test rose to 7.4 per cent, from 2.7 per cent in 2000. Richards says this points to the need for continued monitoring of antibiotic resistance in the community.

Policies and inequalities



Photo: Lighthaus

Dr Brian Roper: His book finds that neo-liberal government policies have benefited a wealthy minority of New Zealanders.

Eighteen years of researching and teaching New Zealand politics and public policy has been channelled into a recently-published book by Political Studies senior lecturer Dr Brian Roper.

Roper started investigating political change while writing his PhD and drew on 15 years' teaching experience to write *Prosperity for All? Economic, Social and Political Change in New Zealand Since 1935* (Thomson).

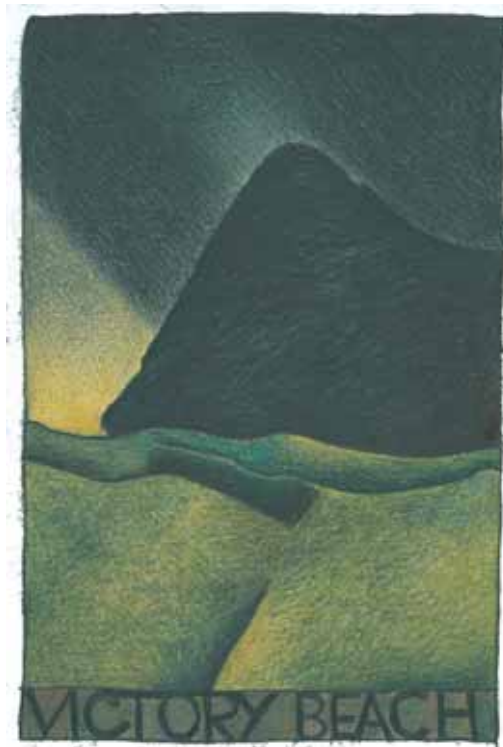
It investigates the broad shift from the Keynesian policies of the post-war era to the neo-liberal policies implemented by governments from 1984 to 1999. It also describes the moderation of these neo-liberal policies by the Labour Government from 1999 to 2005.

Based on an extensive survey of the statistical evidence on social inequality, Roper argues that neo-liberal policies have benefited a wealthy minority of New Zealanders, while disadvantaging the majority.

From 1984 – 99 tax cuts for high-income earners and business were accompanied by tax increases for those on low and middle incomes (due to the regressive effect of GST), reduced benefit rates and tightened eligibility criteria for beneficiaries. The Employment Contracts Act, introduced in 1991, resulted in a major decline of union membership.

The overall effect has been increased inequality in the distribution of wealth, market income and after-tax disposable income. Real incomes have either declined or remained stable for low- and middle-income earners, while the top 10 per cent have experienced a substantial rise.

Roper says that although the Labour-Alliance Government promised to close the growing gap between rich and poor, the changes introduced in the areas of taxation, social and industrial relations policy have stalled rather than reversed the trend.



ROBIN WHITE (1946 –)
Victory Beach. Victory Ave, 1981
 Hand-coloured monoprint (1 of 5): 460 x 305mm
 Given to the Hocken Collections by Robin White

THE SAND AT VICTORY BEACH HAS A BIT OF ROBIN WHITE in its midst, having hosted the artist's first responses to that bleak, dramatic corner of the Otago Peninsula. Of course these works only had an audience of one (White herself) before they were claimed by the incoming tide. There wasn't so much as a solitary sheep peering down from a distant hill to observe her efforts.

White recalls her first visit: "I didn't take paper and charcoal. I went just to make my acquaintance with the place. The first drawings I did were with a stick on the sand. It was then that I realised that I had something to say in response to that landscape. I can still see those drawings. Obviously they wouldn't have lasted more than a few hours or so."

It was the big basalt pyramids of Victory Beach that intrigued her, and the positive and negative shapes that they created in the surrounding landscape. To White, the area resembled an amphitheatre with its flat area of marshy land rimmed with distinctive basalt forms and hills. Having heard stories about

some of the conflicts that had taken place there in pre-European times between Ngāi Tahu and Ngāti Mamoe, she felt that the land still retained the eerie residue of human loss.

"This area", says White, "had a sense of being like a stage in which a drama had been enacted and in which the sensation of those events was still vibrant."

White was feeling a keen sense of loss at her mother's death at this time, so the beach's pyramid shapes (with their connotations of Egyptian tombs) carried an extra layer of resonance for her. She and her husband had also just made the decision to leave Dunedin and live in Kiribati, so her thinking was tinged with a sense of departure and closure. This hand-coloured monoprint, then, is a blend of personal and physical geography; the rumblings of White's own interior landscape caught somewhere in those dark sombre forms of Victory Beach.

Claire Finlayson

HOCKEN COLLECTIONS GALLERY EXHIBITIONS

Until 27 August 2005	Glenn Busch, photographer: Our Place, images of Christchurch people.
2 September – 5 November 2005	The Medical Body: An installation.
2 September – 5 November 2005	Terminus: Artists respond to Port Otago and land reclamation of the Upper Harbour.
12 November – 14 January 2006	Design history exhibition, curated by Design Studies students.
20 January – 17 March 2006	Rohan Wealleans: An installation by the 2005 Frances Hodgkins Fellow.

COLLEGE, UNIVERSITY MERGER MOVES

Discussions on a proposed merger between the University and the Dunedin College of Education are gathering pace.

A number of joint taskforces have been meeting regularly to hammer out the details needed for a merger business case.

The intensive work follows the endorsement of high-level statements of intent by the respective Councils of the College and the University in May. The taskforces are consulting with both internal and external groups in developing recommendations that will shape the future of the new College.

The general proposal is that of a professional school within the University's Division of Humanities, which would be based at the present College site. Recommendations are being developed on specific areas such as the academic shape of the new College, staffing, governance and management, and the provision of services.

Other important steps achieved include joint meetings with key government agencies, staff and student representatives, and other stakeholders.

Professor Gareth Jones, University co-convenor of the joint merger group, said in August that while an immense amount of work still lay ahead, merger developments to date had been "highly encouraging".

The business case is scheduled to be considered by both the University and College Councils in November.

If both councils endorse the case, it will be forwarded to the Minister of Education to consider who would make a final decision after public consultation in the New Year.

LINKS FORGED WITH SPANISH UNIVERSITIES

Five Spanish universities are to join with the University of Otago in a range of exchange opportunities.

Agreements are currently being finalised, ranging from student exchange agreements to fostering collaboration between Otago and Spanish researchers and academic staff, including staff exchanges.

The universities with which memoranda of understanding will be signed are Universidad de Alcalá, Universidad Autónoma de Madrid, Universidad de Córdoba, Universidad de Granada and Universidad Complutense de Madrid.

They will be the first formal agreements to be signed by these universities with any New Zealand university, and are expected to greatly benefit students and staff in both countries.

Professor Alistair Fox, Pro-Vice-Chancellor of Humanities, says the initiatives are a response to the rapid growth and strength of the Spanish programme at Otago.

NEW ANATOMY SUITE OPENS

A new dissection suite in the Lindo Ferguson Building was recently officially opened by Dr Lindo Ferguson, the grandson of the Medical School Dean after whom the building is named.

The Department of Anatomy and Structural Biology's old dissection room has now been transformed by the addition of a new floor at the mezzanine level.

The new clinical anatomy suite includes a new dissection room, clinical research area, staff and postgraduate offices, and a storage room, doubling the amount of space available.

Property Services staff worked closely with the Historic Places Trust during the alterations to preserve the character of the building.

ENTRANCE FINALIST IN AWARDS

The University's new formal St David Street entranceway was recently selected as a finalist in a national urban design competition.

The entranceway, which runs off Cumberland Street, is a contender in the 2005 Year of the Built Environment Awards, administered by the New Zealand Institute of Architects.

The judges noted that the entranceway provides a well functioning space for students and integrates what were previously disjointed parts of the University. Using bluestone and Oamaru stone, the formal entrance to the University is now signalled by a six-metre high monolith bearing the University name and crest.

The overall winner will be announced in December.

MARSDEN SUCCESS FOR OTAGO RESEARCHERS

University of Otago researchers have won 18 prestigious Marsden Fund contracts worth nearly \$11 million to undertake innovative fundamental research across a wide range of areas.

Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Research) Professor Geoff White is delighted at the outstanding outcome, which sees researchers from across the University's Health Sciences, Sciences and Humanities Divisions win 15 "standard" contracts and three "Fast-Start" grants for early-career researchers.

White congratulates the researchers on their success, which he says is especially pleasing given the University's continuing efforts to foster and support a strong research culture among staff.

The result will help reinforce Otago's mission as a research-led university with an international reputation for the quality of its research and teaching, he says.

Otago projects funded through the extremely competitive Government research fund include work on how the brain kick-starts puberty, further study into an exotic new state of matter, and research into patterns of early contact between Māori and Europeans in the South Island.

In this year's Marsden round, Otago gained more contracts and funding than any other institution in New Zealand.

APPOINTMENTS

Professor **Don Robertson** (MB ChB 1971) as the University's next Pro-Vice-Chancellor, Health Sciences. Professor Robertson, a leading paediatric academic in Australia, takes up the position in February.

Suzanne Pharo as University Librarian. Ms Pharo comes to Otago from a similar position at Waikato.

Graham Ford as Director of the University's Marketing and Communications Division.

Graham Lang (LLB(Hons) 1980) as a Judge of the High Court of New Zealand.

OBITUARIES

Emeritus Professor **Peter Wilson** (72). Professor of Anthropology and long-time head of the department. He served the University from 1971 – 1998.

Emeritus Professor **William Stehbens** (78). Founding professor and chairman of the Wellington School of Medicine's Pathology Department. He held the position from 1974 until his retirement in 1992.

Dr **Alfred Poole** CBE (83) (MB ChB 1946). A highly dedicated Southland cardiac physician who served as honorary lecturer at the University's Dunedin School of Medicine.

Professor **Gerald Ashby** (69) (BA 1964, MA 1970). A leading educational innovator and an advocate for children, who oversaw the introduction of universal free pre-school education in Queensland.

Emeritus Professor **Jack Dodd** (83) (BSc 1942, MSc 1945). Retired long-serving member of the Physics Department (1952 – 1987). A physicist of international repute and a visionary departmental head, he established Otago's reputation in world-class physics research.

Professor **Peter Cameron** (83). A pioneer in several educational fields including special needs teaching. He retired in 1985 after 34 years of dedicated service to the University.

Vera Keefe-Ormsby (53). A highly regarded research fellow at the Wellington School of Medicine and Health Sciences' Eru Pomare Māori Health Research Centre. She was passionate about improving Māori health outcomes, especially oral health.

ACHIEVEMENTS

Professor **Anthony Reeve**, Director of the University's Cancer Genetics Laboratory, received the University's 2005 Distinguished Research Medal for his enormous contribution to the world-wide study of cancer genetics.

Dr **Boris Baeumer**, (Mathematics and Statistics), Dr **Mark Hampton** (Pathology, CSM& HS), Dr **Nie Jing-Bao** (Bioethics Centre), Dr **Karen Nairn** (Education), Dr **John Reynolds** (Anatomy and Structural Biology) received the University's Early Career Awards for Distinction in Research.

Stuart Petrie (Surveying) and Professor **Thomas Rades** (Pharmacy) both received Sustained Excellence Awards in this year's National Tertiary Teaching Excellence Awards.

Environmental chemistry PhD candidate **Jessica North** was named the 2005 MacDiarmid Young Scientist of the Year for her work tracing contamination from leaky landfills. Dr **Mark Hampton** (Pathology, CSM&HS) won the Health and Medical category, while Biochemistry PhD candidate **Samantha Baldwin** was equal runner-up in the biotechnology section.

Associate Professor **Nicola Peart**, **Margaret Briggs**, Professor **Mark Henaghan**, **Jacinta Ruru** and **Shelley Griffiths** (Faculty of Law) won the JF Northey Memorial Book Award for the best law book of 2004, *Relationship Property on Death*.

SCHOLARSHIPS/FELLOWSHIPS

Matt Gillett (BA/LLB (Hons) 2003), won a Fulbright award to pursue postgraduate law study at the University of Michigan.

Physics PhD candidate **Robert McCormick** (BSc (Hons) 2001), won a prestigious Young Scientist Award from the International Union of Radio Scientists (URSI).

Veronica Chalmers (BA/LLB (Hons) 1999) received a prestigious Rotary Peace Scholarship to study for a master's degree in International Affairs at Sciences Po in Paris.

Zoology PhD candidate **Sabrina Taylor** received an International Federation of University Women scholarship to complete her studies into bird populations moved to off-shore islands.

Katie Ayers (BSc (Hons) 2004) was one of only 10 people worldwide to win an EU scholarship to take part in a PhD programme in developmental and cellular biology at the University of Nice.

Rhonda Powell (LLB (Hons)/BA 2002) was awarded the New Zealand Law Foundation Ethel Benjamin Prize to support her doctoral study at Oxford University.

QUEEN'S BIRTHDAY HONOURS

Retiring Pro-Vice-Chancellor of Health Sciences, Professor **Linda Holloway** was made a Distinguished Companion of the New Zealand Order of Merit (DCNZM). Former Dean of Dentistry Professor **Peter Innes** CNZM (BDS 1963, MDS 1967, DDS 1979) was made a Companion of the New Zealand Order of Merit (CNZM), as was **Bill Manhire** (BA 1967, MA 1968, MLITT 1970). Alumni among new Officers of the New Zealand Order of Merit were: Dr **Tony Baird** (MB ChB 1966); Professor **Richard Faull** ONZM (MB ChB 1970, BMedSc 1967); Mr **David Le Page** (MB ChB 1979, PGDip GP 2000) – Brigadiers' List, New Zealand Army. Members of the New Zealand Order of Merit: **Lynette Burns** (Cert Heal Pr 1996); **Barbara Else** (BA 1967, MA 1968); Dr **Danny Knudson** (BA 1965, DipEd 1966, MA 1973, PhD 2004); Dr **Chris Lane** (MB ChB 1983); **Anthony O'Neill** (BCom 1999); Dr **David Shaw** (MSc 1977, MB ChB 1981); Dr **Donald Stewart** (MB ChB 1963)). **Allan Hubbard** (Hon LLD 2002) was made a Companion of the Queen's Service Order (QSO) for Community Service, while **John Perry** (BCom 1954) received the Queen's Service Medal for Public Service.

Celebrating our past: the History of the University Unit

Photo: Hocken Collections



This photo of two Selwyn College students dressed up for capping celebrations was found glued into a 1922 Capping Carnival magazine.

"THE IDEA OF CREATING A UNIVERSITY ... WAS BORN IN SCOTLAND, and came to the colony with the first settlers", wrote George Thompson in his 1919 history of the University of Otago. This idea became reality a mere two decades after the first shipload of settlers anchored in Otago Harbour.

The history of our University, from the time the four founding professors began their classes in 1871 in a now-demolished building in the Exchange, to the present day, when it is a huge and complex institution operating over many sites in several centres, is both significant and exciting. The new History of the University Unit aims to capture some of this academic and human story.

Recently launched by the Vice-Chancellor, Professor David Skegg, in the historic Council Chamber, the unit is based on a proposal from Professor Barbara Brookes and is overseen by a widely representative advisory board, chaired by Dr Dorothy Page. It operates out of the History Department, under the aegis of Marketing and Communications. With the sesquicentenary of the University in (distant) view in 2019, the unit is working to locate relevant historical material, encourage research and facilitate publication on any aspects of University history, as well as provide an electronic archive for alumni accounts of student life and study at Otago.

Work is already under way. In the first semester this year a joint English/history honours class published *Tower Turmoil*, a lively set of essays on the University of Otago characters and controversies. Researchers have also been working on a comprehensive bibliography, and on the cataloguing and scanning of photographic images relating to the University. A data manager has been developing a website and a facility to record reminiscences. All reminiscences are very welcome – please send in yours.

Email: ouhistory@otago.ac.nz

Website: <http://ouhistory.otago.ac.nz>

Portraits of Artists: an exhibition by contemporary artists at the Auckland Centre

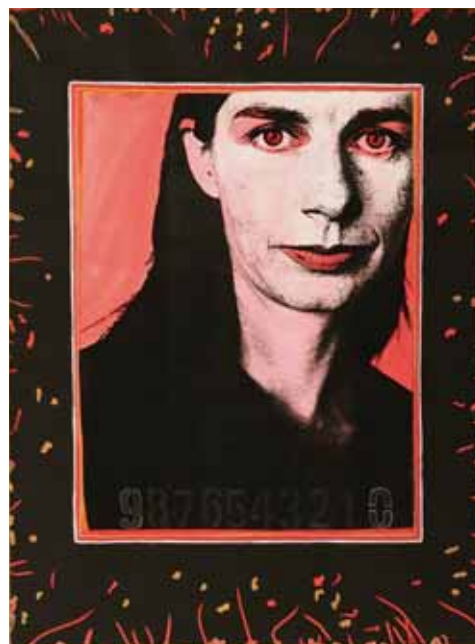
On 11 December the University's Auckland Centre will open an exhibition of portraits from the Hocken Collections.

The Hocken Pictorial Collections reveals a treasure trove of contemporary portraits. In New Zealand's artistic community of the 1940s and onwards, the artists' use of each other as subjects would have been a reciprocal sharing of resources. At the same time, a kind of honour is paid to each other, for posterity.

Some of the portraits are whimsical, as is Seraphine Pick's self-portrait *Don Quixote's Lover* which refers to Tony Fomison's clownish *Self Portrait*. Fomison's ironic portrait of Philip Clairmont as *Don Quixote* completes the circle and shows how closely the portrait artists of New Zealand were, and remain, connected.

Nigel Brown's hand-coloured woodcut of James K Baxter *Head of a Poet* (1987), from Baxter's days at Jerusalem, will be shown with the exquisite pencil drawing of him by Els Noordhof, drawn in 1967, perhaps during Baxter's time as a Burns Fellow at the University of Otago. Rita Angus's beautiful self-portrait of herself in her later years (1964) sits beside Douglas MacDiarmid's portrait of her as a young woman in 1945.

The exhibition opens on Sunday, 11 December, and will remain open until Friday, 3 February, 2006. We hope to see you there. Hours at the Centre will be Monday – Friday, 10am – 4pm, or by appointment.



Marilynn Webb, self portrait 1985, Hocken Collections

For more information contact Adrienne Molloy at adrienne.molloy@otago.ac.nz or telephone 09 373 9702.

Alumni Update

British honour

In recognition of his distinguished career in the British public service, Len Cook (BA (Hons) 1970) has been made a Commander of the British Empire (CBE). Cook has completed a five-year term as Britain's national statistician and registrar-general of England and Wales. As national statistician he led 4,700 staff, presided over a census and, as a member of the United Nations Statistics Commission, helped measure the causes and distribution of world poverty. Also, as registrar-general it was Cook who decided that the civil marriage of Prince Charles and Camilla Parker-Bowles could proceed. Cook was the New Zealand Government statistician from 1992 to 2000.

Oxford selection

Sasha Holden (BA/LLB 1995) is one of only 20 students chosen from applicants around the world to undertake the Oxford University Master of Studies degree in International Human Rights. This degree aims to train and support future leaders in the field of human rights, with an emphasis on implementation and international perspectives. Holden is the only representative from New Zealand and Australia, and will be joined by eminent human rights' practitioners and scholars from the USA, Canada, Jordan, the Netherlands, Croatia and Malaysia among others.

Southern service

David Coburn (BDS 1998) left New Zealand in 2000 with the intention of pursuing a career in oral and maxillofacial surgery. However, his plans changed a year later when he gained a commission in the Royal Air Force (RAF). His latest detachment has taken him to the remote Falkland Islands where, as well as taking the opportunity to explore the unique landscapes, he is providing dental care to the British forces stationed there. This is reputedly the most southerly dental team in the world! After his four months on the island, Squadron Leader Coburn returns to the UK to take up the post of station dental officer at RAF St Athan, South Wales.

Top job

Former Rhodes Scholar and All Blacks captain David Kirk (MB ChB 1984) has been appointed CEO of publishing firm John Fairfax Holdings Ltd. Kirk led the All Blacks to victory in the inaugural World Cup in 1987. The former management consultant and political advisor has held senior positions within a number of large companies.

New chancellor

Tan Sri Datuk Amar Dr Sulaiman Haji Daud (BDS 1962, HonLLD 1993) was installed as Chancellor of the International Medical University at the Malaysian university's August convocation ceremony.

Where are you?

At Otago, the OUSA has been recognising a couple of dozen outstanding sportsmen and women every year for around a century. It's perhaps not surprising that some of these busy people missed the presentation of their awards, and the Alumni and Development Office has recently been sending some unclaimed certificates to recipients from the last 40 years. Most have now been returned to their rightful owners, but if anyone can help us contact rower Anthony Brook or athlete Alan Lloyd, please contact the Alumni and Development Office.

Sporting recognition

Otago graduate Matthew Slade (DipSpSt 2004) won the 2005 New Zealand University Sportsman of the Year award in July, recognising his gold medal in the T37 200m at last year's Athens Paralympics. Slade, who has cerebral palsy, completed a full set of medals with the gold: he won silver and bronze in Sydney four years earlier.

Film awards

Brad McGann (BCom 1988) won best director and best screenplay at the 2005 NZ Film and Television Awards. His feature, *In My Father's Den*, adapted from a Maurice Gee novel, has also won festival prizes in Canada and Spain.

We welcome news from alumni. If you would like to share your achievements please email: alumni@otago.ac.nz

KEEP IN TOUCH
www.otago.ac.nz/alumni

Updates about what's on for alumni

Your link to an online change of address form

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

Links to virtual postcards and desktop wallpaper

Events and Reunions

Between June and September several hundred alumni accepted the opportunities to meet the Vice-Chancellor and other Otago staff, and to catch up with each other around the world. New York, Edinburgh, London and Kuala Lumpur drew strong crowds in June, while around 400 alumni attended Wellington events in July. The Perpetual Trust-sponsored Dunedin

performance of *The Graduate* in early August was booked out within weeks of tickets becoming available; Sydney alumni were once more out in force to celebrate their New Zealand connections at the annual pre-Bledisloe Cup event. And, as this magazine went to print, Auckland alumni were accepting their invitations to events to be held there in late September.

WELLINGTON



SYDNEY



Functions 2006

Another comprehensive schedule of alumni events is currently under construction for 2006. Details will be posted on the web pages at www.otago.ac.nz/alumni when confirmed, and published in the February issue of the *University of Otago Magazine*.

Virtual tour

Feeling homesick for the Dunedin campus? From the old Archway entrance to the new one at St David Street, from the old homesteads on Clyde Street to the new home-away-from-home in the ISB, you can revisit Otago at www.otago.ac.nz/about/virtual_tour/index.html

Reunions

1965 Medical Class Reunion - Nov 2005
1975 Medical Class Reunion - Nov 2005
1992 Medical Class Reunion - Feb 2006
1971 Medical Class Reunion - Feb 2006
1954 Medical Class Reunion - TBA 2006
1962 Medical Class Reunion - Mar 2007

Further information is available online at www.otago.ac.nz/alumni or from the Alumni and Development Office.

Visa card

Carry Otago with you with a University of Otago Westpac Visa card. The card features the Clocktower, is a continually-reviewed credit facility, and makes an automatic payment to the University every year at no extra cost to you. The minimum \$10 per card per year Westpac contributes to Otago is added to our Otago appeal scholarship fund and gives you a very distinctive purchasing power.

Care to be Wise Otago Appeal 2005

A huge thank you to everybody who has kindly supported our ongoing University of Otago Appeal. Your wonderful letters, anecdotes and enthusiasm for the University have been a joy to receive. This is the Appeal's third year, and it is encouraging to see alumni interest in the areas of library, research and scholarships is as spirited as ever.

For further information please telephone +64 3 479 5246 or email annualappeal@otago.ac.nz

Support for Wall of Fame

For nearly 60 years School of Physical Education graduates have been excelling in the worlds of sport, education, recreation, outdoor education, research, dance and business.

Now the School's new Wall of Fame project, launched in May, sets out to celebrate these many successes and all phys-ed graduates are invited to take part, both by nominating graduates for induction and by donating to the project.

An advisory group of past and present students and staff has drafted criteria for induction, and several nominations have already been received. The close-off date is November 1, 2005, and then the selection committee will face the daunting task of selecting the most worthy candidates. Between three and five outstanding phys-ed alumni will be chosen for the first Wall of Fame induction, in May next year – and competition for these places is expected to be tough!

The wall is the brainchild of Associate Professor Rex Thomson who gave generously towards the project when he left the school in 2003 after 30 years on staff. He well knew how many phys-ed alumni have scaled the heights of their chosen careers and strongly believed that their achievements should have lasting acknowledgement. The Wall of Fame enables all "phys-edders", past and present, to share in this.



Launching the Wall of Fame in May, physical education alumni gather to discuss their times at the School of Physical Education and the Wall of Fame. From left, Josh Kronfeld, Anton Oliver, the late Donald McIntyre, Rex Thomson, Phil Handcock, Matthew Slade and Kereyn Smith.

More than half of the Wall of Fame appeal target of \$10,000 has already been raised and any donations received in excess of this will be added to the Philip Ashton Smithells Memorial Scholarship Fund.

For more information please visit <http://physed.otago.ac.nz/wof/>

St Margaret's Alumni Association

In September 2003, former residents from 1952 – 1955 returned to St Margaret's College for a memorable weekend. The momentum generated by this happy occasion helped with the establishment of a St Margaret's College Alumni Association. St Margaret's, New Zealand's first women's college of residence, is already looking forward to celebrating its centenary in 2011, with Otago PhD student and former resident Susannah Grant writing the an official history.

Contacting St Margaret's alumni is not straightforward, not just because of incomplete historical lists, but mostly because its earliest residents were all women and they tended to change their names on marriage. The University's Alumni and Development Office has been able to help to some extent, but building up the alumni list will take time and personal contacts – friends talking to friends.

Good progress has been made, beginning last year with Friday evening social functions in Dunedin, Christchurch, Wellington and Auckland, even London. This year the formats have been varied. Following the University's Christchurch alumni function, St Margaret's people were invited to stay for cake, coffee and conversation. A morning event was held in Auckland during which Dr Beryl Howie was made a fellow of the College in recognition of her medical and humanitarian work in India.

Plans for next year include another London meeting, and perhaps one in Sydney, as well as the four New Zealand centres, and Invercargill. For further information, visit the website at www.smc.ac.nz or contact the association by email at stmargarets.college@smc.ac.nz

Let us know what you think

Our relationship with alumni is important to us. Your feedback on the magazine, our events and your ongoing relationship with Otago is always welcome.

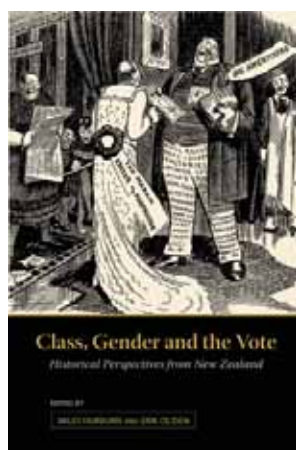
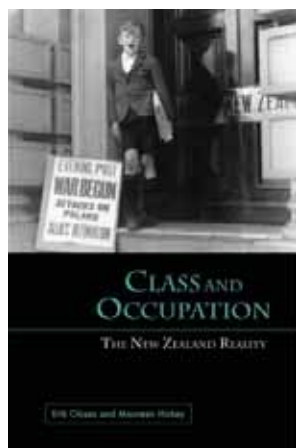
Contact us

Email: alumni@otago.ac.nz

Alumni and Development Office, PO Box 56, Dunedin

Telephone: +64 3 479 5246 Fax +64 3 479 6522

Otago History Series



With titles ranging from Irish migration to the Waterfront crisis, public heritage to mental health treatment, the *Otago History Series* is making an important contribution to a growing understanding of New Zealand's rich history. Published by University of Otago Press, the series is expanding to eventually include research from the wider Asia-Pacific region.

There are now 21 books in print, with authors, editors and contributors from various centres. A close relationship has been fostered between University of Otago Press and Otago's History Department. Three books in the series are collections from the department's post-graduate students. These have explored Māori history, mental health care and the place of religion in New Zealand history. *Landscape/Community*, edited by Tony Ballantyne and Judith A Bennett, emanated from a 2003 conference. The most recent books in the series are drawn from the Caversham History Project, under the direction of Erik Olssen.

CLASS AND OCCUPATION: THE NEW ZEALAND REALITY

Erik Olssen and Maureen Hickey

Miner, servant, farmer, doctor – the occupation made the man. The New Zealand census introduced an occupational census, ignoring many features of the colonial workforce and following its British counterpart. This book is the first systematic attempt to identify New Zealand's actual occupational structure from 1893 to 1938, using the information gathered by the census. The six essays consider how best to construct an occupational structure for both the whole country and for regions within it. Changes in occupational structures cast light on social change in New Zealand and women's participation in the paid non-agricultural workforce.

CLASS, GENDER AND THE VOTE: PERSPECTIVES FROM NEW ZEALAND HISTORY

Edited by Miles Fairburn and Erik Olssen

With the rise of the study of social history in the second half of the twentieth century, the focus of many historians shifted from politics, high culture and foreign policy to new areas, including demographics, crime and immigration. But how can historians deal with the detail of so many different pasts? Fairburn and Olssen set out to show that a quantitative approach to history can help to rectify this problem. The essays they have chosen address some potent themes – class, mobility, gender and how people vote.

RECENT TITLES FROM UNIVERSITY OF OTAGO PRESS

Landfall 209: 1984, edited by Justin Paton, June 2005
Landscape/Community: Perspectives from New Zealand History, edited by Tony Ballantyne and Judith A Bennett, June 2005
Fire-Penny, poems by Cilla McQueen, July 2005
The Politics of Indigeneity: Challenging the State in Canada and Aotearoa New Zealand, by Roger Maaka and Augie Fleras, August 2005
More than Law and Order: Policing a Changing Society, 1945–1992 by Susan Butterworth, September 2005
Edward Eyre, Race and Colonial Governance, by Julie Evans, September 2005
Hiapo: Past and Present in Niuean Barkcloth, by John Pule and Nicholas Thomas, October 2005

For further information contact university.press@otago.ac.nz

RECENTLY PUBLISHED BOOKS OF OTAGO ALUMNI

Colonial Sunset: A worm's eye view, by Ralph Stevenson, Pen Press, 2004
Cracks in a Glass Ceiling: New Zealand women 1975 – 2004, by Joyce Herd, New Zealand Federation of Graduate Women, 2005
Theologie als Instanz der Moderne, Dr Michael Kessler, Tuebingen-Basel (Francke), 2005
Giving Poetry a Bad Name: Selected early poems, by Mark Pirie, Earl of Seacliff Art Workshop, 2005
Tower Turmoil: Characters and controversies at the University of Otago, the Time Keepers, Department of History, University of Otago, 2005

Alumni, have you written a book lately? Email the editor at mag.editor@otago.ac.nz

The Otago School of Mines?

THIS IS A STORY WITH A TRACE (ELEMENT) OF A happy ending.

It began in 1869, when the ever-practical Otago provincial superintendent Macandrew urged the University Council's first meeting to consider a School of Mines. Two years later inaugural studies in natural science included mineralogy and by 1879 the University of Otago had convinced government to finance the necessary training.

Before Wellington could change its mind, Otago appointed the highly-qualified George Ulrich to establish the new department. The resulting Otago School of Mines (OSM) quickly established a reputation as an exporter of young men into positions of responsibility throughout the British Empire, even the world. New Zealand's first Rhodes Scholar, James Allan Thomson, was an OSM associate. Other graduates went on to become managers and professors of distinction. The AOSM and BE (Mining) degrees were tickets to a life of adventure.

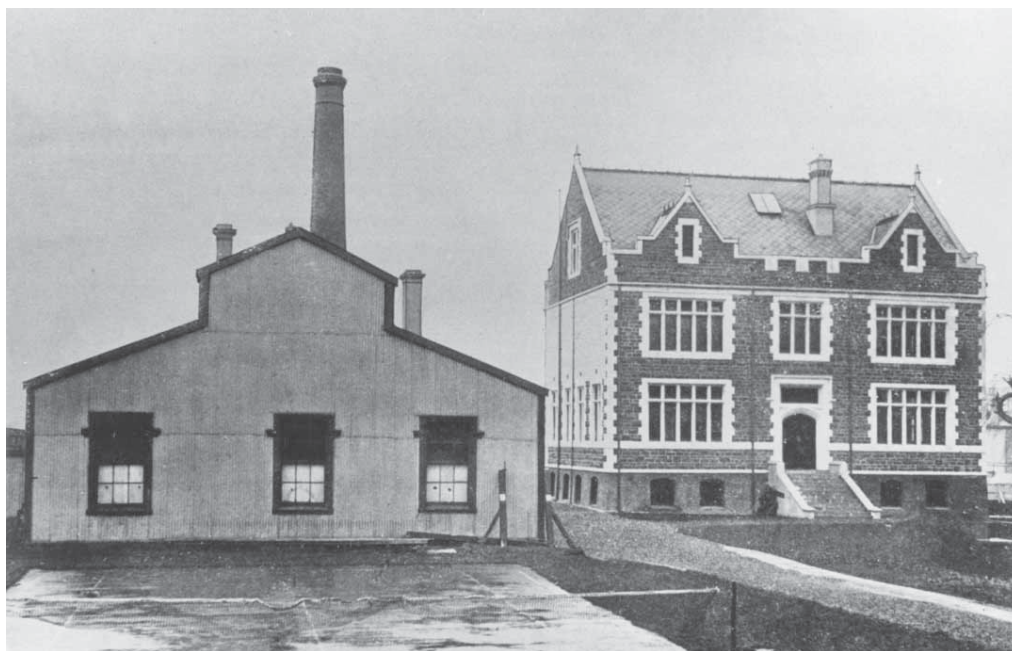
The miners forged strong bonds with each other and the University. They spent their holidays with the hard men of

New Zealand's mining communities, but they were always in the heart of campus, first in an infamous tin shed, then in the new bluestone building now known as Archway West. They were a courtyard away from the home science girls they would chase and marry. They were also across the Leith from the dentists who were their chief competition at rugby, drinking and chasing home science students.

They were characters, resourceful and resilient, early ambassadors for Otago in the tin mines of Malaya, brave when caught by World War Two.

For all that, the Otago School of Mines always had a precarious foothold at Otago, with government funding threatened from its first decades. In 1905 northern universities nearly succeeded in staking their claim, but Premier Richard Seddon's support for Auckland foundered in the face of concerted student and public support from the south. Student numbers were always an issue, fluctuating with war, economic conditions and political changes in the dying days of the Empire.

Photos: Hocken Collections



The School of Mines in 1909 with the old tin shed (left).



School of Mines students and professors, 1913.

Mining itself changed, becoming more technological, and it became harder to justify this increasingly expensive boutique training for a small number of men (there were only two women students in over a century) who were almost certainly going to leave the country. In 1966 the OSM became the Department of Mineral Technology, but the push continued for some kind of integration with engineering training.

In 1984 New Zealand's central tertiary funding agency, the University Grants Committee, decided that mining could not realistically be taught outside a full engineering faculty, and the department would move to Auckland. Conspiracy theorists could choose between government muscle-flexing and northern plots. The students blamed the university; it became messy and sad.

For a year the OUSA and the University tried to reverse the decision, but the review they won was a token victory and at the end of 1986 mineral technology upped sticks and moved to Auckland. Otago feared the move would weaken its earth sciences programmes, but it continues to produce surveyors

and geologists as sought-after as the miners were. On the other hand, the move to Auckland failed to stabilise the student numbers required for specialised mining training in New Zealand, and a decade later the course was gone completely.

But Otago's mining alumni remain loyal to each other and the OSM. So devoted, in fact, that Otago's last mineral technology students unofficially took with them to Auckland the chrome plate which marked the School. There, along with other memorabilia, it helped make a home away from home in the new "Department of Mining Engineering incorporating the Otago School of Mines".

Over the last decade, Auckland has relinquished these historic assets. The photos are now in the Hocken, and the plate has been returned to the University of Otago where it belongs. It will once again hang in the foyer of Archway West, honouring an Otago legend.

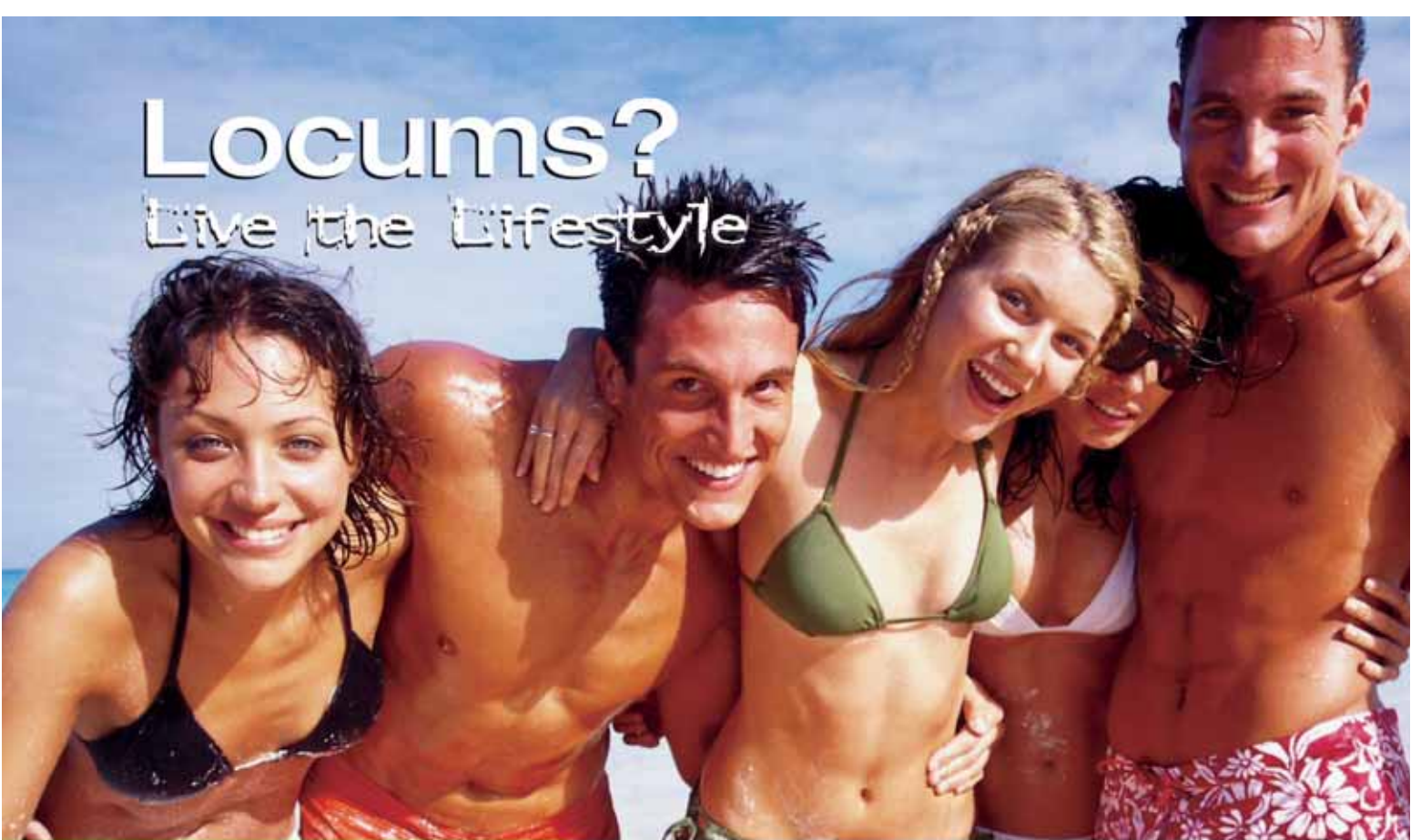
Karin Warnaar



The School's furnaces, 1949.

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