Alumni Newsletter

School of Physical Education Te Kura Akoraka Whakakori

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issue 2

In this issue

Kay hard at work, getting England on the move for the Olympics and beyond

An Olympian Health Legacy

Kay Thomson BPhEd 2000

Can hosting the Olympic Games improve the health and fitness of a nation?

It's never happened before, but a stated aim for London 2012 is to "get England moving". Kay explains here how she is instrumental in making that happen.

I've been UK-based for several years now and enjoy the big city lifestyle, but **I'll never forget my fantastic student days in Dunedin**: being away from home for the first time, the socialising and camaraderie with other physed students, dance and gym, camp at Paradise and other 'pracs' were the highlights. I've retained many close friendships from those days and I love our Otago community, both here in London and at 'home' in New Zealand.

I graduated BPhEd in 2000, and shortly after also completed a BSc in Human Nutrition. It was during my final year that I got placed at Age Concern Otago as the Falls Prevention Coordinator, supported by teaching fellow **Carolyn Jenkins** and our lecturer **Phil Handcock** as part of our final year Exercise Prescription practicum. Working with groups of older adults, I was able to see both improvements in physical mobility and the wider social/psychological benefits offered by being more physically active for the first time.

Kay was the 'slip, slop, slap and wrap' girl in her first job after graduation

My first job after graduation was as the Health Promotion Coordinator at the Wellington Division of the Cancer Society. So as well as being the **'slip, slop, slap and wrap girl'** I was involved in understanding and promoting the cancer preventing benefits of good nutrition and regular physical activity. It was while I was working there that I became more interested in the public health benefits to be gained from increasing participation in physical activity. Whilst working in Wellington I completed a **Diploma in Public Health** which allowed me to better understand both the epidemiological basis for disease prevention, and also gave me the skills to plan and evaluate appropriate interventions.

After leaving the Cancer Society I did a stint in tobacco control at Hutt Valley District Health Board before moving to London in 2006. I was lucky enough to land a job at the Department of Health almost immediately, where I spent a year in tobacco control implementing the new Smokefree law and four years working in the physical activity policy team. **We were tasked with getting 2 million more adults participating in sport and physical activity by 2012**.

We implemented a range of cross-government (transport, sport, culture and health) national projects such as the community Free Swimming schemes, Walking for Health referrals, Fit for the Future - a pilot which incentivised deprived young people's gym participation - and Let's Get Moving - a primary care initiative very similar to New Zealand's Green Prescription - to help meet this ambitious target.

By far my favourite initiative of the last few years was project managing the development of new UK wide guidelines for physical activity and general health benefits. Building on the US and Canadian review processes we developed, consulted on and wrote new guidelines for each age group, endorsed by the Chief Medical officers for England, Scotland, Northern Ireland and Wales. The new guidelines (released in July 2011) outline **the many health benefits to be achieved by participating in at least 150 minutes (5 x 30 mins) of moderate intensity physical activity every week**, as well as the additional benefits of muscle strengthening and vigorous intensity activity. For the first time the guidelines covered the entire life course with bespoke guidelines for children under five and strategies for reducing sedentary behaviour. Joining me at the latter stages of this project and the person who took over my job when I left the Department of Health was another ex phedder, **Debs Moir** (BPhEd 2003). We had many interesting debates on the evidence behind the recommendations and often reflected on our early physiology lectures. The guidelines also gave us the opportunity to work alongside some of the top physical activity academics from around the world – CDC, WHO and UK universities and consultants.

Following on from the guideline publication I was lucky enough to transfer to **Sport England** where I am now working as their Strategic Lead for Health. We're responsible for delivering the community participation legacy as part of hosting the **London 2012 Olympic and Paralympic Games**. After securing the Olympic Games for the city, officials promised a health legacy (through increased participation in sport and wider physical activity) as a result of hosting the games. No previous Olympics has ever demonstrated an increase in activity prevalence as a result of hosting the games. Every year we see situations like the **'Wimbledon effect'** where tennis courts are booked out over the 2 weeks of Wimbledon and non-athletes are inspired to play tennis and emulate their sporting heroes. The legacy aims to build on this type of effect during the Olympics, and we commissioned research to tell us how best to build on this momentum.

'Wimbledon Effect': the UK public come out to play during the 2 championship weeks

Over the last 3 years or so various organisations - government departments, Sport England and the London organising committee for the Olympic games - have been working together to increase opportunities for sporting/activity provision for communities and those least active. Whilst organisations such as UK Sport are responsible for supporting elite athletes and meeting medal table targets, **we are the government agency responsible for building the foundations of sporting success**, by creating a world-leading community sport environment of clubs, coaches, facilities and volunteers.

Although our focus is around three outcomes – growing and sustaining the numbers of people taking part in sport, as well as improving talent pathways to help more people excel, my own role as Strategic Lead for Health is slightly different in that **I'm responsible for aligning sport and health and looking for opportunities to get more inactive people active**.

Our detailed market segmentation data now tells us much more about the individuals we are trying to reach, what they're interested in and how they are motivated. I'm interested in understanding the barriers to participation for these individuals, and the broader environment which influences their decisions.

Our 'grow' team examines how we can adapt traditional forms of sport to suit different audiences. We've definitely evolved in terms of our understanding of what motivates people to be involved in being physically active, and programmes such as PING (table tennis) and No Strings Badminton are examples of how more informal sport can reach out and engage people.

Sebastian Coe MP with kids getting active for the Olympics

I'm often asked what the challenges are in getting inactive individuals to make permanent changes to improve their health and fitness. The challenges are immense: here in England there are **14 million people currently classified as completely inactive** (that's not even meeting the lower threshold of 30 minutes once a week) - and we're not alone with these figures. The WHO estimates that physical inactivity is responsible for 6% of all deaths globally (overweight and obesity is 5%).

With much of the public health focus on the high proportions of overweight and obese (two thirds of English adults – 31.7 million people!), we try and promote the wider benefits of becoming physically active. I'm regularly heard espousing the many physical and psychological benefits of a physically active lifestyle.

It's also important to recognise that everyone has their own activity biography. Seasonal variation, fluctuating levels of activity, and different activities are the norm. **Participation in sport and wider physical activity is not a static phenomenon**; people are constantly 'dropping in' and 'dropping out', which is normal rather than exceptional behaviour.

We need to focus on the factors that motivate people to participate - attitudes, beliefs, social networks and physical competencies that build up sporting resilience to life events - as well as becoming more sophisticated in how we design public policy interventions to tune into a person's life stage, motivational profile and individual circumstances.

Research has shown that **changes to the built environment have a real impact**: giving priority to road users other than those in motor vehicles; ensuring that public open spaces are accessible by foot or bicycle; changing the internal design of buildings to make being active easy, and modifying the school environment to be conducive to physical activity.

Following changes in administration, the National Health Service is currently undergoing a massive reform process with responsibility for public health set to transfer from local NHS services to local authorities, complete with ring fenced public health budgets, from April 2013. This move towards a more holistic model for health and wellbeing services presents an opportunity to combine leisure provision with needs assessment and identification through primary care of those most at risk of inactivity.

With less than a year to go until the Olympics, and with the English national health system likely to be undergoing substantial change, **it looks like we've got a busy year ahead**.

Kay definitely practices the 'get active' message she preaches: she is a keen member of Twickenham Cycling Club.

In 2010 she completed the Étape du Tour, a Tour de France route which includes the infamous Col du Tourmalet, and in June this year she biked from London to Paris with her clubmates.

Fields of gold: Kay out on her bike

Go Warriors!

A donated Warriors jersey, signed by the players from the 2005 season, will be auctioned on-line; proceeds will go to the Wall of Fame.

The jersey was donated by former students **Karl Temata** (**BPhEd 1999**) who played for the Warriors 2002 – 2005 and **Keir Hansen** (**BPhEd 1996**) who was team trainer for 6 years.

Further details:
http://physed.otago.ac.nz/alumni/vfw-jersey.html

Bids/donations will be updated regularly and the winning bid will be announced at the **Wall of Fame induction ceremony on 4th May 2012**.

Manfully modelling the jersey is Dr Phil Handcock BPhEd 1980 PhD 2003

Dr Mark Falcous

Empowering Women To Get On Track

Dr Mark Falcous

BA (Hons), PGCE (De Montfort)
MA (Queen's), PhD (Loughborough)

One of the School's most popular people wins a prestigious BikeNZ award

Congratulations to Dr Mark Falcous, lecturer in sociology of sport at the School, for receiving the prestigious Shona Smith Trophy awarded by BikeNZ in Auckland recently. This award is for raising the involvement and profile of women in cycling.

Mark founded and runs a Women on Wheels programme in Otago that gives women the chance to try track cycling in a supportive environment - a group that has previously enjoyed limited involvement. He has introduced more than 35 female riders to cycling by running track coaching clinics and bunch rides.

He **"wanted to push the women riders past their comfort zone and empower them with new achievements and skills. They rose to the occasion"**.

Mark has been an enthusiastic and dedicated staff member at the School since 2002, and is very highly thought of by colleagues and students. His research, teaching and supervision are broadly within the area of the sociology of sport, namely sport and the media; globalisation, and sport and national identity.

Road and track cycling are Mark's leisure activities of choice, and he also enjoys spending time with his two children, Rosie (5) and Lily (3).

2012 Wall of Fame

A reminder that nominations for the 2012 Wall of Fame close on 31 October 2011. All nominations are most welcome.

Forms can be downloaded from http://physed.otago.ac.nz/alumni/wof/nominate.html

PhD Project Launch

The School of Physical Education will be honouring over 50 PhD graduates when a launch of their photos takes place at 4.30pm on Tuesday 15 November this year. The launch will be part of the School's Postgraduate Symposium.

Anyone wishing to attend should contact helen.carman@otago.ac.nz

Our School's PhDs are now living and working around the globe; we caught up with two of them recently - both are Canadians, one now back at home, the other working in Slovenia...

Roger LeBlanc with daughter Stéphanie

"I love what I do and those I do it for"

Roger LeBlanc PhD 2004

Bonjour, Kia ora, and Hello

Doing my PhD at Otago in 2004 was really the best time of my life - I made many good friends and have memories that I'll always treasure. I'm back now in my home town of New Brunswick, Canada at the Université de Moncton, where I offer sociology of sport as well as pedagogy classes. Just got tenure this year, and love what I do and those I do it for. Yes, my stay in NZ was all worth it and has permitted me to go on even further. As student body adviser, I have organized 4 humanitarian trips to Haiti with my students. We've brought more than 5 tons of sporting equipment to more than 100 soccer teams! When I'm not at work, I enjoy playing ice hockey and spending time with my beautiful 26 year-old daughter Stéphanie.

“Such a positive learning experience”

Shawnda Morrison PhD 2008

Shawnda Morrison

Kia ora

I often think back to my time spent at Otago fondly, and I’m so grateful to have had such a positive learning experience there. After finishing my studies in NZ, I moved back to Canada to complete a Post-doctoral Fellowship at the University of Waterloo with Dr Richard Hughson. We were involved in an international bed-rest study sponsored by the European and Canadian Space Agencies, and I spent four months collecting data in Toulouse, France. Currently, I am working as a Research Associate for the Jozef Stefan Institute in Ljubljana, Slovenia. We are investigating the effects of hypoxia, bedrest and exercise in the Alps. Right now I have been very busy setting up a new place to live, meeting new people, and learning a little Slovene. These pictures are of the University of Waterloo in Canada, working in Toulouse, and the Olympic training centre here in Slovenia, where our research is based.

Hvala lepa, se vidimo kasneje,

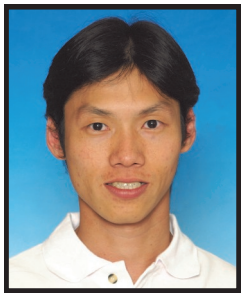
Shawnda Morrison

Our Global Family

The School of Physical Education has awarded 50 PhDs to date, there are 5 currently under examination, and we have 25 currently studying. As a ‘taster’ for the launch in November, here’s a small sample:

Amir-Ali Mohagheghi

Carolyne Smith



Chow Jia Yi

Farah Palmer

Jerry Shearman

“We have the Technology …”

Tania Cassidy **DipPE 1985, DipGrad 1993, MPhEd 1995 (Otago) PhD (Deakin)**

Dr Tania Cassidy

Tania is a senior lecturer in Pedagogy at the School of Physical Education, and was the organising genius, along with Associate Professor Chris Button, behind our 2011 symposium, *Technologies in Sport: Performance, Bodies and Ethics*, held at the Otago Museum and our campus on 20 - 22 September. She reports here on what this successful event was all about.

The purpose of the symposium was to critically examine sporting technologies and to stimulate discussion, debate and understanding of the multidimensional issues associated with technologies in the field of sports science and sports coaching. To this end leading international researchers from the academic disciplines of philosophy, medical ethics, sociology, law, skill acquisition, and pedagogy shared their research and opinions on technologies in sport.

Several leading researchers delivered keynote speeches and provided their perspectives on various aspects of technologies in sport.

The format of the symposium was designed to provide maximum opportunities for delegates to engage with each other as well as with the presenters. This resulted in stimulating, enjoyable and thought-provoking discussions and debates.

The symposium was organised along three themes, which highlight the place of macro- as well as micro-technologies in sport and coaching:

- Emerging technologies for performance enhancement
- Disciplinary technologies
- Technologies of the body

Technologies of the Body

Professor Grant Gillett

Professor Grant Gillett

Grant is a Professor of biomedical ethics at the University of Otago. He is also a neurosurgeon and worked in clinical practice until 2006. He studied medicine at the Auckland Medical School and also completed a Masters degree in Psychology. He became an overseas fellow in Neurosurgery at The Radcliffe Infirmary and then completed a D.Phil at Oxford University and was appointed fellow of Magdalen College in 1985.

"Cyborgs and Sports Cheats"

Cyborgs are human-machine complexes with prosthetic abilities. Where the enhancements remediate a defect we are prepared to acknowledge their value but where they seem to create an unfair advantage over others we feel disturbed. How good can a person be before a compensation for their disability makes them a differently-abled being in quite another sense? We accept and even welcome enhancement of natural abilities in officials but direct advantaging of competitors is quite another thing. Why? When does good preparation and careful optimisation of ability cross a boundary and why do we care? Is there a plausible and defensible line to take on this issue?

Dr Gregor Wolbring

Dr Gregor Wolbring

Gregor was a research scientist at the University of Calgary, Faculty of Medicine, for 16 years before, in 2008, becoming an Assistant Professor at the University of Calgary's Program in Community Rehabilitation and Disability Studies. Currently, he is also a part-time Professor in the Faculty of Law at the University of Ottawa in Canada. In addition, Gregor is a Distinguished Scholar in the Center for Nanotechnology in Society at Arizona State University, USA, and Adjunct Faculty in the Critical Disability Studies at York University, Canada; the President of the Canadian Disability Studies Association and Chair of the Bioethics Taskforce of Disabled People's Inter-

"Therapeutic Enhancement, Therapeutic Doping? The Changing World of Bodily Assistive Devices or the (Para-) Olympian Body as Artefact."

'Therapeutic' body devices are developed historically to mimic species-typical body structures and expected body functioning. However, they increasingly allow the wearer to out-perform the species-typical body in various functions. The 'cheetah' prosthetic legs worn by Paralympic athletes such as Oscar Pistorius and Aimee Mullins are one example of such a 'therapeutic' device. 'Therapeutic enhancements' give Paralympic athletes a different option as to how they define themselves and their goals, how they relate to Olympic athletes and how they view the Paralympics and Olympics and their relationship. This in turn might affect how Olympic athletes perceive themselves and their goals. Indeed many of these developing 'therapeutic' enhancement enabling devices could be used by so called non-disabled athletes.

Emerging Technologies for Performance Enhancement

Professor Cathy Craig

Professor Cathy Craig

Cathy is a Professor at the School of Psychology, Queen's University Belfast. Having obtained her PhD from the University of Edinburgh, she went on to take up a post-doc at the Sports Science Faculty, Marseille, France. It was here that she first encountered virtual reality. In a project funded by Adidas she was the first person to use this technology to simulate and understand the perception of curved free-kicks in soccer. Since joining QUB in 2005, she has built an immersive interactive Virtual Reality lab where she is continuing to use this technology to study decision making in sport.

"Virtual Reality Technology: How can it help us understand decision making in sport?"

Virtual reality (VR) provides the perfect adjunct to study perception/action and decision making in sport. It is in essence a sophisticated interactive and immersive human-computer interface where a sensory environment (visual, haptic and/or acoustic) is simulated by a computer and is controlled by the interactive behaviour of the user. It is a versatile methodological tool that gives the experimenter complete control over complex environmental conditions and allows for an in-depth analysis of the user's behaviour.

The versatility of the VR platform means the technology can be easily applied to a multitude of sports. The research presented explores *how* visual information is picked up from the visual environment influences the actions and decisions being made by the players in different sports by examining what is it about the dynamics of the environment (e.g. movement of other players and/or the ball) that players tune into and do experts and novices pick up the same information?

Disciplinary Technologies

Associate Professor Jim Denison

Associate Professor Jim Denison

Jim is an Associate Professor in the Faculty of Physical Education and Recreation, University of Alberta, Canada and Director of the Canadian Athletics Coaching Centre. A sport sociologist and coach educator, his research examines coach effectiveness and the social construction and historical formation of coaches' practices through a Foucauldian lens. Jim has written on athletic identity, athlete development, coaching ethics and the coach-athlete relationship, edited and co-edited two books and is co-editor of the forthcoming *Handbook of Coaching Research*. He is a past Associate Editor of the *Sociology of Sport Journal* and serves on the editorial board of the *International Journal of Sports Science & Coaching*. He is the author of *The Greatest,* the official biography of the Ethiopian running legend, Haile Gebrselassie, as well as *Bannister and Beyond: The Mystique of the Four-Minute Mile*, a collection of in-depth interviews with a wide-array of sub four-minute milers.

"What Coaches Do: Problematizing Planning and Practice"

"Being a coach" largely revolves around the practice of planning what athletes need to do in training to improve and develop their potential. Three components of training that coaches control, and that greatly influence athletes' capabilities, are the training spaces used, the monitoring of time, and the organization of exercises. The consideration of these elements, and their impact on athletes' progression and capacity for performance, derive from Michel Foucault's analysis of technologies of discipline. I examine Foucault's conceptualization of discipline and its effect on athletes' bodies, as well as how coaches can enhance their understanding of planning and athlete development by problematizing what they have their athletes do.

Thanks for the article Tania … but you failed to mention that it wasn't all serious, academic slog … judging from photographic evidence from the School's vaults, there appears to have been a prolonged period of "ceilidh madness" to round off the proceedings!

Dancing Queen: Tania cuts a rug with (L to R) Chris Button, Michael Gard and assorted delegates

The keynote presentations will soon be available as podcasts on the School of Physical Education website for your interest.

The symposium received considerable national and local media coverage. For more details of the symposium and stories reported in the Otago Daily Times please see the following:

http://physed.otago.ac.nz/hosted/techsport2011/

http://www.odt.co.nz/news/dunedin/178727/technologies-sport-discussed

http://www.odt.co.nz/rugby-world-cup-2011/rwc-latest-news/179059/virtual-way-assist-real-play

That's it for issue 2; our final issue will follow next week.