

# UNIVERSITY OF Otago

M A G A Z I N E  
ISSUE 14: JUNE 2006

## Health in Mind

OTAGO'S MENTAL HEALTH RESEARCH



JEREMY MOON'S ICEBREAKING PHENOMENON  
TAKING ON THE BIG BAD BUGS  
SAVING AFRICA: ALUMNA'S CAMPAIGN AGAINST AIDS



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## UNIVERSITY OF OTAGO m a g a z i n e

A MAGAZINE FOR ALUMNI AND FRIENDS OF THE UNIVERSITY OF OTAGO

University of Otago Magazine

Issue 14

June 2006

ISSN - 1175-8147

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**Printing** PMP Print

**Circulation** Alumni and Development Office

To update or change delivery address

Tel 0800 80 80 98

Email [magazine@otago.ac.nz](mailto:magazine@otago.ac.nz)

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Cover image: Jim Wehtje, Getty Images

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UNIVERSITY OF OTAGO

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## VICE-CHANCELLOR'S COMMENT

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Animation Research is a world-leading Dunedin company which provides computer animation of sports events such as yachting, cricket and golf, as well as other applications – for example, air traffic control simulation. The company first came to attention with its brilliant coverage of the 1992 America's Cup in San Diego. In a recent interview for the *Otago Daily Times* and the *New Zealand Herald*, the managing director Ian Taylor remarked: "One of the reasons we've been here for 15 years is we've never done business plans. We move by instinct and move very quickly."

That might sound like heresy, but recent analyses of strategic management in successful companies emphasise the value of strategic plans that are evolutionary rather than directive. As one author wrote, a simple compass is more useful than a road map if you get lost in a swamp. The environment surrounding universities is rapidly changing, so it is more like a swamp than a highway. What is needed are some broad objectives that can inform our decisions as we respond to the opportunities that arise.

Over the last year we have been consulting extensively, both within and outside the University, on a draft paper entitled *Strategic Direction to 2012*. This document proposed a strategy for the University and identified key challenges it is expected to face over the next seven years. I was greatly encouraged by the strong consensus that emerged, from all sections of the University and from other interested parties, about the direction we should follow. The revised document,

endorsed by the Senate and Council and now available on the University website, identifies six strategic imperatives for the University of Otago:

- Achieving research excellence
- Achieving excellence in research-informed teaching
- Ensuring outstanding campus environments and student experience
- Contributing to the national good and to international progress
- Strengthening external engagement
- Building and sustaining capability.

It is sometimes suggested that the strategic plans of research-led universities all tend to look the same. The Otago plan does have distinctive features. For example, we place particular emphasis on the need to nurture and enhance the quality of our campus environments and student experience, because these make a crucial contribution to the rounded education that this University offers. There is also a particular commitment towards contributing to the regional and national good, being active in national debate about the future direction of this country, and being fully engaged internationally – with attention to the needs of the developing world – in the Pacific and beyond.

Working groups are now being set up to develop actions plans for each of the strategic imperatives. The whole initiative should support our vision to be a research-led University with an international reputation for excellence.

Professor David Skegg  
Vice-Chancellor – University of Otago

# Health



# in mind

Diseases of the mind are among the leading causes of disability worldwide. Through innovative, evidence-based research, University of Otago staff are making a real difference in the problematic field of mental health.

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THE IMPORTANCE OF MENTAL HEALTH AND ITS relationship to the well-being of New Zealanders have often been underestimated by the public and politicians. It has often been referred to as the “poor relation” of the health sector, with attention and debate more often focused on hospital or primary care of physical illness.

For the last two decades the University of Otago has played a leading role in drawing attention to the needs of

mental health care, with innovative, evidence-based research now being translated to better clinical care. The Christchurch School of Medicine and Health Sciences, and in particular its Department of Psychological Medicine, has been at the forefront of this effort to improve our understanding of mental health problems within New Zealand. Its research has also gained an international reputation in such critical areas as bipolar disorder and depression, eating and anxiety



“The fact is that although there have been new pharmaceuticals developed in recent years, they’re no more effective overall than the older drugs which first came onto the market 50 years ago. What we’re doing is fine-tuning our treatment methods, but we can’t do this accurately without adequate research into outcomes, so we know how things work with different patients.”

disorders, addiction, suicide and the long-running and much cited Christchurch Health and Development Study headed by Professor David Fergusson.

Acting dean, Professor Peter Joyce, as former head of the Department of Psychological Medicine, spearheaded these developments through the establishment of the Mental Health Clinical Research Unit. A recent survey showed Professors Joyce, Fergusson and Roger Mulder are among the most internationally-cited mental health researchers in New Zealand and Australia. In 2004 Professor Joyce was also made a Fellow of the Royal Society for this research.

“It is obvious that robust, innovative and clinically-relevant mental health research is vital in terms of the need for better diagnosis, treatment and management of very common conditions such as depression,” asserts Joyce. “The WHO study into the Global Burden of Disease in the late 1990s is still the international benchmark on the major impacts of these disorders. It came as quite a surprise to many outside the field that depression was listed as the fourth most serious health condition in its effect on people’s lives. In addition five of the top 10 leading causes of disability are mental diseases.”

One of the consequences is a growing need for evidence-based research and the Mental Health Clinical Research Unit has been the recipient of significant Health Research Council programme funding for its ground-breaking investigations into bipolar disorder (manic depression), depression and eating disorders.

“Treatment of depression and bipolar disorder isn’t easy,” says Joyce. “While treatments are effective, finding the treatment

which works for each individual can be time-consuming and demanding. These disorders not only affect the individual, but also extended families on a long-term basis.”

Matching is also the key when it comes to patient treatment, and the focus of much of the research at the school. Joyce points out that only about 30 per cent of people with serious depression currently do well on medication, 40 per cent improve, whereas for 30 per cent there is not a great deal of change. Essentially, there is still significant trial and error in the use of medication, or non-drug treatment through psychotherapy.

How bipolar disorder affects families and the role that they can play in management of a sufferer has been given a significant boost this year through the University of Otago’s establishment of the Gama Research Fellowship, with \$560,000 worth of private funding. This money has then been matched by the Government through the Partnerships for Excellence framework.

The Mental Health Research Unit has already published more than 100 papers on its investigations over the last two decades, aimed at refining treatment for individual patients. Among some of its clinically-relevant findings are that the newer antidepressants such as fluoxetine or Prozac tend to work better with young females; that men over 40 often do better on older tricyclics such as nortriptyline; and that people whose depression gets worse later in the day also do better on the older tricyclics.

This objective of finding “the perfect match” between patient and treatment has also been one of the reasons why mental health research at the school is breaking new ground

## What’s that word...pharmacogenomics?

WHEN IT COMES TO MEDICATION AND PRESCRIBING the right drug at the right time to the right patient, pharmacogenomics is playing an increasingly important role in medicine and medical research.

That’s especially so in studies of bipolar disorder and depression at the Christchurch School of Medicine and Health Sciences. To get closer to the holy grail of “the perfect match” between patient and treatment, there is increasing interest internationally on how an individual’s genetic make-up affects the way they respond to antidepressants or other drugs.

The University of Otago has long had a particular strength in genetic research, investigating the links between gene variants, and particular diseases and drug response. That interest was given a further boost last year by the launch of the Carney Centre for Pharmacogenomics with a generous grant from the Carney Foundation, matched by government funding. Under the direction of Associate Professor Martin Kennedy at the Christchurch School of Medicine and Health Sciences, the centre draws together University-wide strengths in pharmacogenomic research.



Photo: Ross Coombes

*Professor Peter Joyce: "It is obvious that robust, innovative and clinically-relevant mental health research is vital in terms of the need for better diagnosis, treatment and management of very common conditions such as depression."*

in the area of pharmacogenomics (see story below). It has long been accepted in medical science that our genes may influence the way drugs are processed or metabolised by the body, and the possibility of side-effects. For the last eight years collaborative research has been continuing into the three-way inter-reaction of a person's genetic make-up, medication and personality; again trying to match medication and patient.

At the same time, there is also considerable research effort into the effectiveness of psychotherapy, which does not involve drugs: the so-called "talking therapies".

"We've been running trials comparing the effectiveness of two well-known psychotherapies when applied to bipolar disorder, depression and eating disorders."

Joyce is clear, though, that there are no instant answers in his ground-breaking work in mental health. He says there are no new drugs on the horizon for any of these common conditions that are likely to make a huge difference to outcomes.

"The fact is that although there have been new pharmaceuticals developed in recent years, they're no more effective overall than the older drugs which first came onto the market 50 years ago. What we're doing is fine-tuning our treatment methods, but we can't do this accurately without adequate research into outcomes, so we know how things work with different patients."

And despite all the controversy about the amount of antidepressant use, he is firmly of the belief that these drugs are not over-used, and that we are doing better than in the past.

"In my view, 20 years ago not enough people were given antidepressants by their doctor. The prescription rate was less than 10 per cent and people with depression were often ignored or simply given sleeping pills. Good research is one of the key things that has made the difference. It's encouraging that doctors and patients take these conditions much more seriously."

Members of the centre are working closely with the Department of Psychological Medicine on several aspects of pharmacogenomics as applied to treatment of mental disorders. For example, the group has examined patients with depression who metabolise drugs in unusual ways, partly because of genetic influences, and determined the effect that this genetic variation has had on the outcome of treatment.

"We also looked at how the drugs are working in the brain, as there are suggestions that people with a particular form of serotonin transporter gene do better with Prozac,"

explains Professor Peter Joyce. "However, we didn't see a consistent effect of this gene in our patients, and there're mixed findings in the research literature. More positive was the finding that a variant form of a gene (called G protein beta 3) appears to determine whether young patients respond well to Prozac or to one of the older drugs like nortriptyline."

Another of the Carney Centre's key research projects focuses on antidepressant drugs in laboratory-based work, complementing the clinical studies carried out by Joyce's team.

"We are looking at the effects of antidepressants on brain



Photo: Ross Coombes

*Associate Professor Martin Kennedy: "We hope this work will help us to better understand how the drugs work, why they work for some but not other patients, and whether we can use this information to better guide the choice of drug for patients suffering mood disorders."*

cells, using a range of laboratory techniques," Kennedy explains. "Although this work is at a fundamental level, we can rapidly test discoveries made in this way by analysing the patient data already collected by Peter's team.

"We hope this work will help us to better understand how the drugs work, why they work for some but not other patients, and whether we can use this information to better guide the choice of drug for patients suffering mood disorders."

Although pharmacogenomics is about trying to understand how drugs work and how better to tailor drugs to patients, it may also open doors to better understanding of mental disorders.

"It would be our greatest hope that something we discover in our laboratory research into pharmacogenomics will actually be of even greater value, by helping us to better understand the biological imbalances that lead to these distressing and serious disorders," says Kennedy.

The close links between these research groups mean that any such discoveries will be thoroughly tested and translated back into clinical practice, to benefit the patients who are the starting point for all of this research.

# Quality research

HUNDREDS OF THOUSANDS OF NEW ZEALANDERS BATTLE against addiction on a daily basis, principally nicotine, alcohol and gambling, involving about 30 per cent of the adult population. The considerable burden of personal, family and social costs from these three key addictions is balanced by the enormous tax-take they generate.

Illicit drug addiction is much smaller in terms of prevalence, but has a disproportionately high media profile. Intravenous opioid dependence, such as heroin and morphine, remains the most expensive drug addiction, most often financed through crime. Patients on methadone waiting lists require a cash flow of around \$1,000 every week to support their addiction while waiting for treatment.

Health authorities have long recognised these issues and the need to be pro-active in treatment. Since the mid 1990s the National Addiction Centre (NAC), at the Christchurch School of Medicine and Health Sciences, has been seriously investigating the most effective addiction treatment strategies for New Zealand conditions. Under the direction of Professor Doug Sellman, it is now providing valuable evidenced-based clinical research and teaching in this complex but highly relevant mental health arena.

"For a long time in New Zealand addiction treatment has been seen as a Cinderella area of mental health, and not scientifically based," says Sellman. "But the NAC is making a major contribution to changing that perception, through its emphasis on undertaking research and the dissemination of cutting-edge information."

Despite the significant progress so far, Sellman says there is still much to do to improve our knowledge and treatment of addiction within the New Zealand context.

He says a fundamental point is that consumer-based, modern liberal democracies may be "addictionogenic". People, including children and adolescents, are not only highly exposed to addictive substances and activities, but sophisticated marketing techniques prime the desire in people



# h key to addiction treatment

to stimulate themselves with various addictive activities, while normalising addictive behaviour. Primitive parts of the human brain, which have evolved over millions of years to ensure survival, are vulnerable to being hijacked by these influences, which results in compulsive addictive behaviour in many people.

In an effort to provide solutions to this growing mental health need, the NAC, at the Department of Psychological Medicine, has, over the last decade, established a national and international reputation for its addiction research. With around 20 clinical, research and general staff, it is regularly consulted by the media, the judiciary, government agencies and health professionals on addiction issues.

Sellman says that quality research is the key to improving addiction treatment, and then enhancing the knowledge and skills of those who work in this demanding area on the basis of that information. He says it is no good simply relying on research from overseas, as addiction is culturally influenced in its individual responses.

“This is why many of our research projects have a strong cultural thread. Several members of our staff are Māori, which is vital for using research results in a clinical setting.”



Photo: Ross Coombes

*Professor Doug Sellman: Despite significant progress so far, there is still much to do to improve our knowledge and treatment of addiction within the New Zealand context.*

At present the NAC has 12 research projects underway, supported by the Ministry of Health, the Alcohol Liquor Advisory Council and the Canterbury Medical Research Foundation. Typically, these projects are investigating an important aspect of treatment or follow-up in one or more of the main addiction areas – alcohol, nicotine, gambling, opioids and cannabis. Many are linked to PhD research projects.

Through the Ministry of Health, the NAC has developed a 10-year national strategic plan for workforce development, to improve recruitment and retention of addiction treatment workers and upgrade skills within

the treatment workforce. The NAC also runs a series of two-week addiction medicine courses for medical undergraduates, and two postgraduate programmes in health sciences are offered through the school.

... sophisticated marketing techniques prime the desire in people to stimulate themselves with various addictive activities, while normalising addictive behaviour.

# Suicide: the real story

FOR THE LAST 15 YEARS THE SENSITIVE AND OFTEN controversial issue of suicide has been an important area of investigation at the University of Otago. In many respects, this is the leading research in New Zealand, and has been vital in informing health and judicial policy on suicidal behaviour, while also the subject of intense public debate.

Associate Professor Annette Beautrais and Dr Sunny Collings, at the Christchurch and Wellington Schools of Medicine and Health Sciences respectively, are key investigators into this difficult subject. Beautrais has revealed how suicide affects the lives of thousands of New Zealanders – an area that for generations has been surrounded by shame, grief and guilt. In Wellington, Collings is bringing to light new information on the societal determinants, through the Health Inequalities Research Programme in the Department of Public Health.

“Suicide is such an emotional and sensitive issue,” explains Beautrais. “In 2003, 515 people took their own lives, but it’s not easy to uncover the evidence upon which to base sensible prevention strategies. Unfortunately, it’s much easier to theorise on instant solutions in the media, without any evidence to back them up.”

It is separating simple myths from the complex reality which is at the heart of both researchers’ work. As principal investigator of the Canterbury Suicide Project, Beautrais has earned a high media profile and international reputation through her studies on suicide and mental health.

“It is quite incorrect to maintain that we have disastrous suicide rates in this country and that there’s been no improvement,” says Beautrais. “We actually now rank in the middle range for OECD countries for males, and are slightly higher for females. We are not at the top of the league table as many people, and some media, still seem to believe.”

Beautrais has informed the development of the Youth Suicide Prevention Strategy which has seen a reduction of

deaths overall in the 15-24 age group by 40 per cent since the 1990s, although the female rate is not declining as fast as the male rate, mainly because young women are now using more lethal methods.

Behind these figures is the expert evidence showing that the causes of suicide are linked to mental health issues which, in turn, are influenced by a range of societal factors. Research by Beautrais and others has demonstrated that mental problems such as depression, substance abuse and anxiety are key causes of suicidal behaviour, and that it is these which must be addressed.

She says that, despite “commonsense” opinion to the contrary, international research clearly shows sensationalising suicide in the media puts many vulnerable people with mental health problems at risk.

At the Wellington School of Medicine and Health Sciences, Collings is following up the complex societal influences on suicide. “One of our significant findings is that men may be more vulnerable to the impact of socio-economic factors on their lives. This fits with some of the international findings, and closely relates to the fact that during the 1980s and 1990s in New Zealand, suicide became more concentrated amongst lower socio-economic groups,” she says. Work in this broader but vital area continues, investigating the dynamics between socio-economic factors and mental illness.

Suicide research is now being translated into prevention. Beautrais says new strategies have resulted in a steady reduction in rates over the last decade, despite an unexpected spike upwards in 2003. The next intervention is the Government’s All Ages Suicide Prevention Strategy, to be released this year. This aims to address suicide in all age groups, in particular, the key 25-44 male age group, in which rates have remained stubbornly high.

Ainslie Talbot



Photo: Ross Coombes

Associate Professor Annette Beautrais: “Suicide is such an emotional and sensitive issue ... it’s not easy to uncover the evidence upon which to base sensible prevention strategies.”



Photo: Tim Lovell

Dr Sunny Collings: “One of our significant findings is that men may be more vulnerable to the impact of socio-economic factors on their lives. This ... closely relates to the fact that during the 1980s and 1990s in New Zealand, suicide became more concentrated amongst lower socio-economic groups.”



In little more than a decade Jeremy Moon has gone from C student at the University of Otago to one of New Zealand's most successful entrepreneurs. He explains how inspirational teaching, innovative branding and leading-edge design have taken his company, Icebreaker, to the top of the world's outdoor clothing market, and created a model for Kiwi businesses.

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IF JEREMY MOON HAS A PARTICULAR STRENGTH AS A CEO, it is, he says, his ability to take insights from other people.

"There are a number of key people every year who have huge impacts on me," he explains when asked how he stays ahead of the game.

That game is the outdoor clothing industry. Except, of course, it is not a game. For anyone who has been living under a sofa for the last 10 years, Moon's company Icebreaker is one of the great contemporary success stories in New Zealand business. In the space of a decade he has built a brand based around wool underwear into a \$US100 million merino phenomenon.

Moon's ability to listen and absorb critical insights began to come through in his third year of a Bachelor of Commerce degree at the University of Otago. "I started off as a C student and became an A student as I got more and more interested," he explains. And he is quite specific, and generous, about the influences that piqued that interest.

"I had a very inspiring teacher called Dr Wendy Bryce who taught a part of marketing called consumer behaviour, which moved beyond a traditional view into areas of cultural

anthropology – and how human beings behave in a consumer society."

Bryce also introduced her students, including Moon, to concepts such as "voluntary simplicity", a movement out of the United States relating to the way in which people deal with an overwhelming consumer world by having fewer things that do more.

"She taught strong values that were quite anti-consumerism. It was refreshing at a time when I was forming my own values."

Moon credits another lecturer, Dr Victor Gray, with crucial elements of marketing strategy that he would go on to use with Icebreaker.

"He taught tactical marketing, which was more about warfare theory. When you're up against the big guys you don't take them on straight-on, you flank them.

"So ours was to be a kind of flanking approach because here we were with natural New Zealand fibre up against billion-dollar chemical companies from the United States who were promoting polypropylene and polyester, and had very big marketing budgets.

“Our strategy was to create complete counterpoints to what they were.”

And the third major influence was that of Professor David Buisson, Moon’s marketing professor and recently-retired Dean of the University’s School of Business. “One of his key strengths was his enthusiasm and teaching me to believe in myself, which ignited something inside of me and helped build my confidence.”

It was a combination of influences and ideas that, following a master’s degree in marketing at Otago, led Moon into the irresistible embrace of the project that was, at the tender age of 25, to become his future.

“It possessed me,” he recalls. “It was like, oh my God, this is a marketer’s dream: taking a raw material that has been ignored and applying it to something as exciting as the outdoors industry.”

New Zealand was already famous for its sheep, its outdoor adventure market, and its clean and green image. “Pure New Zealand merino wool became my canvas and my forum for exploring some of these ideas.”

One of those ideas was retaining control in the chain from supply to delivery. Moon contracted Southern Alps merino growers to ensure supply of high-quality fibre. “We are now the largest buyer of merino in the world,” he says. “Our last contract was for \$29 million.”

The journey of natural merino fleece from the pristine Southern Alps to stylish, nurturing and multifunctional garments sold worldwide is central to the Icebreaker story. One of the first things Moon did when the merino opportunity arose was to contact brand strategist Brian Richards with whom he had gelled during his first job out of University – a marketing research position in Wellington. They met for a drink; a napkin and a pen were to hand. A strategy was born based on the concept of “icebreaking” – redefining new relationships.

“We set up the whole brand architecture over a cup of coffee in the Park Royal in Wellington in November 1994. Many of the key ideas that we had then are still there now and Brian is still a key advisor to me.”

Moon’s research had told him that the word “natural” was associated with hippies and the good old days, whereas “nature” intimated a more progressive view of what people craved as they increasingly lived in the cities.

So when, in 1995, the company evolved a brand enquiry, the word “nature” was central. The essence of the brand is “about our relationship to nature and to each other”, says Moon. “And Icebreaker has evolved into a metaphor about icebreaking...between mankind and nature, merino wool and skin, and people together in nature.”

A central question for Icebreaker, says Moon, became: how can we build something that lasts and is relevant to people, both physically – in terms of performance – and emotionally, in terms of emerging cultural values that value nature and the natural world? And then create something

that works incredibly well, lives up to the promise and lasts for years?

When Icebreaker began, he adds, all the outdoor brands were essentially about men climbing mountains. “So we made it about men and women, and about kinship with nature rather than competing against nature.” Moon’s was the first outdoor company to do an extensive women’s programme, which in part, again, relates back to marketing studies. His master’s thesis was entitled “Gender differences in attitudes to exercise behaviour”. Says Moon, laughing: “Basically for women it’s about spirituality and health, and for men it’s about muscles.”

Branding was so integral to the company that, unusually, Moon spent almost half of the \$250,000 seed money raised from investors on the blueprint. The move paid off: not only is the brand now internationally famous and sought-after, the young CEO and his company have become part of modern marketing lore. The Icebreaker story has even been included in Professor Joseph B. Lassiter III’s entrepreneurial marketing curriculum at Harvard Business School. Moon presented the first case at Harvard last November in what he describes as “the highlight of the year. There was an original Picasso outside my bedroom.”

Moon still spends up to 20 per cent of his time on brand and product strategy, and making sure it is communicated inside the company and out. “I strive to have an identity that is consistent internally and externally ... I can’t stand brand strategy for the sake of trying to manipulate populations into believing something that the people themselves don’t believe. A great brand is a symbol of a great company and committed people, not a false badge cynically displayed.”

Icebreaker has also become something of a case study for New Zealand businesses operating in a global environment. “We’re trying to pioneer what is a relevant business model for a little country like ours,” he says, explaining that much of the manufacturing takes place offshore. “We’re not the best manufacturers in the world, but we’re great at design and systems and relationships, and we’re great at growing the best merino fibre in the world, so our focus is on what we’re good at and on building partnerships with people who are good at other things.”

It is a recipe that has certainly worked for Icebreaker: the company has evolved from the “knife-edge” early years, when Moon travelled the country with samples in his grandfather’s old leather suitcase, to a decade on, manufacturing over a million garments into more than 1,500 stores across 22 countries. And as the sleeping giants of the US outdoor industry wake to the challenge posed by Icebreaker, Moon and his team will have their work cut out.

“We’ll have some really strong and clever competitors in two or three years, but our job is always to stay two or three years ahead and out-think them.”

And this is where another of Moon’s passions comes in: design. As chair of the BetterbyDesign project, set up under





Photo: Bill Nichol

*Jeremy Moon: "We're trying to pioneer what is a relevant business model for a little country like ours ... We're not the best manufacturers in the world, but we're great at design and systems and relationships, and we're great at growing the best merino fibre in the world, so our focus is on what we're good at and on building partnerships with people who are good at other things."*

the auspices of New Zealand Trade and Enterprise to embrace and integrate design for the country's commercial advantage, he is in an ideal position to lead and mentor others. For Icebreaker's own competitive advantage is largely partly built on being a design-led company.

"Design is deeply integrated into the whole strategy of the company," he says. "And our core specialty is that we know how to manage intellectual property, and leverage this commercially and globally.

"If you are on the design-led edge, it's about creating your own future and trying to think of things that haven't been invented, or meaningful combinations of ideas that haven't been made before." It is about, he adds, taking intuitive leaps

and creating things that you anticipate people will respond to positively. As much as Jeremy Moon is a future-thinking visionary, he hasn't forgotten his past. He remains connected to the University of Otago through sitting on the School of Business Advisory Board. The 12 CEOs involved come from diverse sectors.

"Our job is to challenge the status quo and to make the business school more relevant to students. There are some really great people on it. It's a way to try to give something back because of the huge commitment that people like David Buisson made to me personally."

Simon Cunliffe



*Professor Frank Griffin: "... understanding something like viral pathogenesis at the animal-human interface is really an essential area of science we need to support."*

IT'S THE STUFF OF HORROR MOVIES: A NEW PLAGUE sweeping the planet decimating populations, mass burials, people confined to their homes, the breakdown of law and order, of society itself. And yet this scenario is not culled from fiction. It comes from the reports of public health officials the world over.

The possibility, some insist probability, of a new and deadly bird flu pandemic is touted as one of the most dangerous threats to humankind. Here in New Zealand we have all been told to stock up the larder and prepare for the worst. But how real is this menace, how can we combat it, to what extent do we understand the mechanisms by which it operates and what public health policies can we implement to lessen the impact in its eventuality?

These are precisely the sorts of questions that will exercise the occupant of the new foundation Chair in Viral

Pathogenesis at the University of Otago. The \$2 million endowed chair is a project of the University's Leading Thinker's initiative, attracting matching funds from the government under the Partnerships for Excellence framework. It will be based in the Department of Microbiology and Immunology and head of department Professor Frank Griffin is passionate about the prospect.

"It's a very exciting and affirmative statement about your own institution to have an endowed chair. It's saying that generous people believe Otago has sufficient credibility and international relevance for them to link themselves closely to it."

On the announcement of the chair earlier this year, University of Otago Vice-Chancellor Professor David Skegg said: "The University of Otago has New Zealand's only dedicated Virus Research Unit, and this new professor will help clarify links between animal and human diseases by





# The virus hunters

The University of Otago's new Chair in Viral Pathogenesis will be a critical weapon in the battle against emerging infectious diseases.

Photo: Alan Dove

developing a research programme dedicated to understanding the nature of diseases which can be transmitted from animals to people."

The new chair could not have come at a more crucial juncture, elaborates Griffin.

"In recent times the significant new human diseases have all emerged from other species. So it is the interface between animals and humans that is the launching pad for new human diseases. And it is how we interact with these animals and what pathogens they carry that influences the leap across the species.

"We've had HIV which had monkey origins, ebola which is also presumed to have some kind of monkey origins, there's SARS from palm civets and the persistent recycling of influenza virus in fowl.

"We are now dealing with situations where emerging micro-organisms are getting the upper hand. And that means

our ability to understand the fundamental pathways of infection and disease is absolutely critical. So understanding something like viral pathogenesis at the animal-human interface is really an essential area of science we need to support. That's what makes it so exciting."

Already there are indications of interest in the chair from some high-profile researchers in the world of microbiology and immunology. Griffin hopes the University will have a candidate by August. The appointment, he suggests, will cement the department's position as the major academic centre for microbiology in New Zealand. It will also add considerable weight to the role of immunology and microbiology in public health.

"That's a role I see as very important for a viral pathogenesis expert," he says. "Informing policy, educating the public – we don't always have that. We have pandemic

“We have, for the last 20 years, completely underestimated the relevance of infectious diseases. We thought it was all over, that we had beaten them, but the bugs have kept on evolving. So we need new strategies.”

committees all over the country with limited input from microbiologists.

“At Otago we have a long history of research into viruses and viral diseases [with the Viral Research Unit] and I see the new chair as complementing the work of that group.”

The appointment will come at a time when the scientific and medical world is grappling with new realities in the battle against infectious diseases. Thirty years ago the medical world was crowing victory over bugs with, in hindsight, tragically misplaced optimism.

Says Griffin: “The reality is infectious diseases have a bigger presence today than they ever have before – even in developed societies.”

He cites a number of reasons as to why this should be so, including the ubiquitous misuse of anti-microbial therapies, the assault by conventional medicine on natural selection of populations, and the undermining of intrinsic resistance through stress and lifestyle factors.

“We’ve put antibiotics into the food chain and we’ve now got multiple drug resistant micro-organisms ... and 100 years ago, when infections went through populations they were constantly selecting for the most resistant individuals – the weak were eliminated.

“Letting natural pandemics select hosts is very costly in terms of humans or animals, but it is very effective in terms of maintaining the vigour of the gene pool.

“We’ve also created a frenetic world ... and have changed the intrinsic resistance of populations by putting more stress on them. The net effect is that we now have a huge population of vulnerable immune-compromised people.”

None of this augurs well for the next big pandemic, although Griffin counsels a personal note of caution on some of the hyperbole surrounding the H5N1 bird flu threat.

“We do have reason to be cautious, but it [H5N1] has been present in some populations for several years. Along the way we have seen that it can kill people as a primary pathogen, but the reality is that it has a very low infectivity for humans.

“Looked at from the position of risk, my personal view is that, yes, there is risk, and we should look at it very carefully,

but I don’t think we should become paranoid or silly about being wiped out by bird flu.”

Griffin explains that our ability to ring-fence and isolate certain infections is very significant now. At the first sign of human-to-human transmission of the virus “every key researcher from all over the world would be focused on that problem” to contain it.

He compares it to the last major scare, which was the SARS outbreak. It was a new virus and therefore garnered a great deal of media attention. “But while it was being touted as the next new plague, influenza was happily going on and killing lots of susceptible elderly people anyway.

“So in the real context it was insignificant, almost, but it was new and it was fascinating scientifically, and it was something you could talk up a big story about.”

The challenge in combating some of these new diseases, and older ones too, lies in the development of effective vaccines, which is where the basic science comes back in.

“The irony is that with something like influenza, say, we still don’t really understand what are the protective pathways against influenza infection, which means we don’t quite know how to design a vaccine to optimise its effect.”

Combine this with the reluctance of pharmaceutical companies to develop vaccines because of factors such as expense, fear of litigation and intrinsic redundancy (the vaccine is out of date by the time it has been thoroughly tested), and there is much work to be done.

Says Griffin: “We have, for the last 20 years, completely underestimated the relevance of infectious diseases. We thought it was all over, that we had beaten them, but the bugs have kept on evolving. So we need new strategies.

“It’s our ability to be smarter than the bugs that is all important. And that’s where our need to research these things is so essential.”

That’s also where the University of Otago’s new Chair in Viral Pathogenesis will come in. And, with threats like H5N1 bird flu hovering in the wings, not a moment too soon.

Simon Cunliffe



# State of the nation

Later this year the data collected in the latest Statistics New Zealand census will be released. But what makes a New Zealander tick? Who are we really? How do we see ourselves in the world?



*Professor Tom Brooking: There are some distinctive cultural characteristics that typify the "New Zealand personality", the main one being, "we're reasonably relaxed".*

Photo: Alan Dove

IT'S LIKE POSING FOR AN EPIC-SCALE FAMILY PHOTOGRAPH. Every five years, Statistics New Zealand lines us up, checks our teeth and hair (or, rather, our driving habits and house sizes) and takes its snapshot of the country.

The pictures, we know, are growing older and browner with each instalment. They include more people living alone and more people working until later in life. But they tell us little about the faces behind these statistical portraits. What do these changes mean from a cultural perspective? What kind of people are we becoming? And why – *why* – is the bathroom not counted as a room in the house?

So, while our national statisticians are busily at work, mining the data to give us information about what we're like as a population, the *University of Otago Magazine* decided to chat with historian Professor Tom Brooking on his views of what we're like as a people.

Brooking, who has been teaching papers on New Zealand history and identity since the 1980s, notes that culturally we're shifting. He lists the major influences upon New Zealand cultural identity over the past two decades as the increased visibility and strength of Māori and Pacific cultures, second-wave feminism, the "green movement", Asian immigration and Rogernomics. And Brooking does believe there are some distinctive cultural characteristics that typify the "New Zealand personality", the main one being, "we're reasonably relaxed".

"The fact that New Zealanders don't tend to get heated up if they've been offended takes some new immigrants, for example, a bit of getting used to," says Brooking. On the down side, it's an attitude that risks slipping into apathy. But on the other hand, says Brooking, there are worse problems than living in a society in which people are quite forgiving and tolerant of one another.

He lists the major influences upon New Zealand cultural identity over the past two decades as the increased visibility and strength of Māori and Pacific cultures, second-wave feminism, the “green movement”, Asian immigration and Rogernomics.

“It’s probably the quality that has prevented New Zealand from really ever facing large-scale, seriously-disruptive civic unrest.”

And one thing we’ve become increasingly chilled out about is defining our cultural identity at all.

“We are accused of being ‘bitsers’, of being like an old-fashioned quilt. But all national identities are fractured and segmented. And increasingly, we’ve become OK with that.

“The days of nationalistic projects – where middle-aged intelligentsia like Fairburn, Glover and Curnow sat down and produced culture for us – are gone.

“We’re among the world’s biggest travellers. As New Zealand has become increasingly global in its outlook, nationalistic projects have become more and more irrelevant.”

You can see it in the arts, Brooking notes. Rather than fretting about our multicultural, pluralistic society, or attempting to make statements about New Zealand as a whole, priorities are shifting. Instead, we’re seeing creative individuals who are comfortable with the fact that they represent only their own idiosyncratic segment of society, and proud to speak authentically from that position.

*Bro’town* epitomises this shift perfectly, says Brooking. “It’s intelligent, relaxed and basically one of the best things ever to come out of New Zealand television.”

And it’s among a new wave of creativity taking place in Aotearoa that’s being led by Māori and Pacific artists and delivering “fantastic productions that could only come out of New Zealand”. Think *No. 2*, *Sione’s Wedding*, *Whale Rider* and



Photos: NZ Herald



## QUESTION TIME

PROFESSOR TOM BROOKING SAYS THERE’S NOTHING HE’D like more than to get his hands on the census-writing pen and add in some questions that would really interest him as an historian. “Like, how do New Zealanders’ feel about the Treaty of Waitangi? What about energy and the environment? Gender relations?”

Not a chance, says retired former head of department and associate professor in geography, Dr Brian Heenan. As a population geographer, Heenan spent much of his career poring over census data, and helped develop and trial census documents during the 1970s and 1980s.

He explains something of the process by which census forms are crafted. “The questions are not a bunch of ideas bureaucrats come up with off the top of their heads.”

Communities are consulted; submissions of desired questions received; areas of national priority and gaps in necessary knowledge taken into account. The questionnaires are drafted, giving consideration to people’s reading ability and annoyance threshold in terms of the length of the form they will tolerate. Draft questionnaires are tested on pilot groups before being revised, if necessary, and rolled out to the general public.

Over the years, Heenan notes, the questions asked of New Zealanders have evolved. “There used to be very little targeted social information sought, whereas now we might ask questions about fertility, smoking habits, disability or car ownership.”

The grounds for defining ethnicity have also shifted. “Historically, people became Māori if they had a certain

musicians such as Bic Runga, Nesian Mystik and Fat Freddy's Drop.

"I loved *Lord of the Rings*, and it was great at putting New Zealand on the map, but it's an Oxford don's boys-own fantasy set in fairyland. It doesn't really say much about New Zealand," Brooking comments.

At the same time, he accepts a bit of tension here, noting that it's a true mark of our developing self-confidence that some of our finest talent does not feel the need to plaster their New Zealand-ness over everything they produce.

Elizabeth Knox's breakthrough novel, *The Vintner's Luck*, was set in France, he points out. Sarah Quigley and Philip Temple are, or have been, based in Berlin, Kirsty Gunn in Scotland and Emily Perkins in London.

Instead, it's these opposing pulling forces, between looking out to the wide world, and holding on to our local identity, that represent a developing issue New Zealanders – including our businesses and government – are grappling with.

"While we want New Zealand to be an international player, we also see our little group of islands at the bottom of the world as a safe haven, a place to escape to. This has always been important, and with issues like terrorist threats in people's minds, it's acutely important."

And ultimately, Brooking reckons, our great test of nationhood will come down to how well we look after one another in the years ahead. Despite his excitement at the directions being taken by Māori and Pacific Island artists, Brooking is gravely concerned about New Zealanders' lack of urgency in addressing the inequalities these cultural groups face in society.

"There is much talk of New Zealand culture being hybridised. That is true in the sense we are made up of many different groups. But in many ways there are quite defined barriers between these groups and, if anything, these are becoming stronger. We have areas turning into ghettos, Polynesian and Pākehā kids going to different schools. And the discrepancies in indicators like income and health are growing.

"The next 20 years are going to be messy; they're going to be hard. As a society, we are going to have some major environmental challenges to face," he continues. "To deal with them, we are going to have to be united."

New Zealanders have to wake up to the fact that it's better for everyone if we do not allow a social underclass to be created or perpetuated, much less one defined along racial lines, believes Brooking. This is our cultural challenge.



percentage of Māori blood. The question now asks for one's ethnicity to be culturally defined, in terms of the culture you identify with."

Censuses are also now available in several languages and can be accessed via the internet.

Theoretically, censuses are designed to achieve the holy grail of scientific research, by capturing an entire data set.

But in reality, despite the Herculean efforts behind measuring these minutiae of New Zealand life, the data will never be 100 per cent accurate, says Heenan. "The best data sets come from developed Western countries, including New Zealand, and even among these 95 to 98 per cent accuracy is about the most you can hope for."

Age data, says Heenan, is "rather less accurate than one would wish. You can run tests to measure these things, and

typically we find that women exaggerate their youth during their 30s and 40s, and exaggerate their maturity in their old age." And they go for round numbers – ages ending in zero and five appear more often than is their statistical due.

All the same, seeing the census results come in is right up there with election night or Telethon if you're a demographer.

"I was particularly interested in internal migration, especially later in my career," says Heenan. "For a long time, this was oversimplified as a trend from south to north, and from rural to urban centres. But recent censuses show signs the patterns are much more complex and changing as people move out of Auckland, for example, with a good many heading for Mainland destinations."

Nicola Mutch



# At the drawing bo







# ard...

Overseeing maintenance, refurbishment and construction on the University of Otago campus is a massive job. Property Services Director Barry MacKay talks about recent developments and the challenges ahead.

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LOOKING AFTER THE UNIVERSITY OF OTAGO CAMPUS IS LIKE RUNNING A town the size of Oamaru, says the person charged with that responsibility, Property Services Director Barry MacKay.

The Otago campus is unique, one of the few tertiary institutions in the heart of a major city. What singles it out from similar universities in Australasia is the number of students who live on campus or close to it. More than 10,000 people live within a kilometre of the Clocktower. At certain times of the day, Castle Street carries more foot traffic than the main street of Dunedin. As property values have soared in the last 10 to 15 years, other residents have moved out to make way for student flats and accommodation.

Student numbers have continued to climb steadily to over 20,000 and there are now more than 3,000 staff. At the last count, MacKay and his staff were responsible for close to \$900 million in assets, including 183 buildings covering about 23 hectares of land, with satellite facilities in Christchurch, Wellington and Auckland.

A decade of sustained growth and the University's continued success in acquiring research grants has placed intense pressure on available space.

"In the last 10 years, we've had a 29 per cent increase in students, about a 42 per cent increase in staff, but only a 25 per cent increase in space, so we're fitting more people into less space," MacKay says. "We've now got to a stage where every cupboard is full. We almost physically can't fit any more people in."

The University has now approved a critical-space plan to resolve space shortages in the next five or six years. The cost of that development will be somewhere around \$137 million, depending on priorities and how projects are structured.

MacKay expects the focus of development to shift from student accommodation to the provision of more academic and administrative space. Rebuilding of Unicol and Arana Hall is probably the end of the former phase of development for at least five years.

A Space Advisory Group and Capital Development Committee are expected to decide on new priorities, based on the University's 2012 strategic plan, in the next four or five months.

MacKay says some projects are definitely of greater urgency than others, but it is important that the process of setting priorities is transparent to all.

*Property Services Director Barry MacKay:  
"... the next six to 10 years will be quite intense ...  
bringing our current assets up to standard,  
addressing the space shortfall and providing some  
much-needed future-proofing with regard to the  
University's accommodation needs."*

At the last count, MacKay and his staff were responsible for close to \$900 million in assets, including 183 buildings covering about 23 hectares of land, with satellite facilities in Christchurch, Wellington and Auckland.

“In terms of a forward work programme, the next six to 10 years will be quite intense,” he says. “But it’s doing three things. It’s bringing our current assets up to standard, it’s addressing the space shortfall and it’s providing us with some much-needed future-proofing with regard to the University’s accommodation needs.

“Student surveys consistently give us good feedback on the feeling of the campus and that’s something we want to protect.”

So what will the Otago campus look like in 10 years’ time?

MacKay believes enhancement of the urban design of the campus, retaining the balance of green space and trees, is the key. The backbone of that design is a plan to improve public access to the Water of Leith, the stream that flows through the heart of the campus.

The University and the Otago Regional Council (ORC) have reached agreement on proposals to return the streambed to a more natural look. The design will open up the waterway by replacing concrete channel walls with steps, terraces and public spaces that are accessible.

Initially, the works will extend from Dundas Street to Clyde Street, but eventually the Leith/Lindsay project could be extended to Anzac Avenue to link the College of Education campus and the University with a walkway along the banks of the Leith. The concept design is complete and the ORC is shortly to apply for resource consents to start work.

“If the process goes smoothly, the first part of the project in the University Reach could start in November 2006, although in reality I’m not expecting it quite that early,” MacKay says.

In the next 10 years, he believes there will be fewer cars on campus as they will be moved out to parking buildings and car parks on the periphery, in conjunction with improved public transport systems.

The University has been working closely with the Dunedin City Council on a transportation strategy, which includes ride-share, park-and-ride, improvements in bus services and new car-parking buildings.

“Car parking is an ever-present part of my job. People are very passionate about car parks and it’s an issue we struggle with. The biggest things we can do are providing more parks and alternatives to cars, such as good public transport and safe routes for riding bikes. It’s those things we hope to focus on.”

MacKay expects the University to continue to redevelop existing buildings just to meet changing needs.

“Over the last five years there has been a huge amount of pressure to upgrade our laboratory facilities to meet hazardous substances legislation and we’re getting near the end of that now,” he says.

There will be a number of new buildings, the old buildings will be in really good condition and there will be more postgraduate and research-intensive buildings, with a greater reliance on new technology to deliver teaching.

A distinctive feature of the campus is the number of historic buildings. Seventeen University buildings are listed with the Historic Places Trust, eight of which have to be maintained in their original state.

MacKay sees those buildings as an asset and a big part of the University’s character, but they are expensive to own and operate.

Looking back on five years in the job, MacKay credits a concerted team effort of his 88 Property Services staff through a difficult period of growth. He says they are highly skilled and passionate about the University.

“It’s been a very satisfying time as director,” he says. “We’ve undertaken a number of fast-track projects, such as Unicol and Arana Hall, the Zoology building and, to a degree, Te Tumu (the School of Māori, Pacific and Indigenous Studies) under significant time constraints, and we’ve been able to build good quality buildings on time and within budget.”

MacKay has 30 years’ experience in the construction industry and 23 years’ in the public institutional field. For him the job is all about relationships.

“People from the construction industry do well in all sorts of fields because they are good negotiators. They are good communicators,” he says.

“You’re working with consultants and contractors, you’re always problem-solving, and you’ve always got budgetary and time constraints. So it’s all about relationships and a journey, and building is actually almost a by-product of the journey. Except at the end of the journey, there’s a tangible result and if the journey and the relationships have been positive, in general the building is a good building and it works for people.”

The people of Dunedin see the campus as part of their city, so there is a sense of ownership and intense interest in any development on site, MacKay says.

“So in a way it’s a space that is shared by the people of Dunedin and, to a degree, you’re a guardian of that.”

Rob Tipa



# Imparting knowledge

*Associate Professor Kim Fam: "If that knowledge is not effectively communicated beyond the four walls of a classroom, that knowledge becomes a museum piece."*

Photo: Bill Nichol

IN ACADEMIA, WE ARE CONSTANTLY STUDYING, researching, reviewing and producing reams of reports and academic papers, advancing knowledge in our respective fields, contributing to leading international discoveries and stacking up our evidence portfolio for PBRE. What needs to be addressed, however, is what is happening to the research we produce. What kind of knowledge does the community want and through which media can this knowledge be effectively communicated?

Knowledge is alive and is for sharing. Knowledge is useful information that is new to the user. It can be acquired through observation of own decisions and activities, observation and imitation of competitors, or by attending presentations, reading research literature and interacting with others. But studies have shown – and the business media has argued this point – that academic outputs (concepts and theories) are not reaching the intended readers. There are claims that the intended audience of most research is the academic community talking to themselves, rather than the dual community of scholars and practitioners. There is some truth in this. While professors discover concepts and theories, students learn. However, if that knowledge is not effectively communicated beyond the four walls of a classroom, that knowledge becomes a museum piece.

A number of barriers to knowledge transfer include the use of “academese” jargon and terminology, time-lag as practice usually precedes theory development, poor understanding of commercial realities and using the wrong media to deliver the knowledge.

Knowledge is alive and constantly updating. It exists in two forms: lifeless (stored in books) and alive (“in the consciousness of men”, Perley, 2005). It is this “alive” knowledge that is meant for sharing. But if practitioners continue to view academic research as arcane, irrelevant and

trivial, then new-found knowledge will forever remain on the museum shelves.

There is a general feeling that practitioners are unable to access knowledge discovered in academic research, and thus unable to assess its quality and applicability. For example, if research is to have a major impact on practitioners, it needs to be conveyed through magazines, newspapers, radio, television and the internet, not simply academic journals. Knowledge exchange can also be achieved through social activities like spending time together or learning together.

Integrating teaching, research and training to the benefit of the community should remain the focus of a university. Similarly, the community should “open” its doors and invite scholars to their premises to learn about their practices. Academics and industry need to work more closely together so that theory has more direct relevance to firms. Academics should reach out to industry to learn about real-world practices, synthesise what they have learnt into hypotheses and return this gift of knowledge to the business community.

Is knowledge created or waiting to be discovered? Your position will determine the extent of knowledge transfer. If knowledge is created, then the transfer may be a little problematic as practitioners think theorising is an academic’s pastime. Alternatively, if knowledge is there to be discovered, then there will be a dual urge to discover, learn and transfer “new” knowledge between academics and practitioners.

Associate Professor Kim Fam  
Department of Marketing, School of Business.

The full text of this keynote speech on “Integrating theory with practice” was presented at the 2005 Asia Pacific Marketing Conference, organised by UNIMAS, Malaysia, and can be accessed via the School of Business’s digital research repository <http://eprints.otago.ac.nz>

# Saving Africa

Otago alumna Dr Carole McArthur spearheads a campaign which combines scientific research and humanitarian aid in the fight against Africa's devastating AIDS pandemic.

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THE AIDS PANDEMIC HAS THE POTENTIAL TO DESTROY not only lives and families, but also economies and, ultimately, countries.

African nations are particularly at risk, especially those in disadvantaged areas and where AIDS is relentless in taking its devastating toll.

There are no easy answers, but a University of Otago alumna working in the United States is spearheading a two-handed fight against the problem.

Dr Carole McArthur, professor of oral biology at the University of Missouri-Kansas City (UMKC), is the organiser and director of the US-Cameroon Health Program, which is tackling AIDS with a combination of scientific research and humanitarian aid.

"The problem of HIV is daunting with many faces," says McArthur. "The overall concept I have invoked to impact the

AIDS pandemic, and which appears to have had some success, is a combination of scientific and humanitarian effort to rebuild the fragmented infrastructure.

"A fundamental theme has been not to provide a hand-out, but to stimulate a genuine collaboration and ownership by Cameroonians who provide valuable scientific resources for our programme, and in return receive much-needed medical support for patients who participate in our studies.

"Our progress from a hole in the wall in a back street to a thriving clinic strongly suggests we have found a recipe that works."

Despite the successes, McArthur is under no illusions about the AIDS tragedy.

"We cannot forget that every HIV patient has a personal story to tell. All stories are painful. Many stories are brutal, particularly those of women. The women of Africa bear the





Dr Carole McArthur and school teacher Julius Tangem, who works for McArthur's programme during the summer, helping with HIV education.

Photo supplied

brunt of this epidemic. Some tragedies could have been avoided, but many have their roots in waves of colonisation complicated by a peculiar and sometimes enigmatic mission culture. Cameroon has one of the most complicated histories in Africa, and is ethnographically and linguistically among the richest."

McArthur attended Kaitangata Primary School and South Otago High School in Balclutha before studying at the University of Otago, where she gained a first class honours degree in zoology and a PhD in the field of immunology.

During her time in Dunedin she was an avid middle-distance runner and one of the first women to compete for the Leith Harrier Club.

Moving to the United States she worked in the industrial sector in genetic engineering, gained an MD degree from UMKC, and qualified as a clinical and anatomic pathologist at the Truman Medical Center.

After 30 years of research in the biological sciences she now teaches immunology and immunopathology at UMKC, and directs a molecular biology laboratory in the School of Dentistry. Her focus is to elucidate the mechanism of AIDS transmission in Africa and she has developed a salivary gland model of

mucosal immunity, which she studies in the United States.

McArthur's interest in AIDS took her to Cameroon in sub-Saharan Africa, which is considered a hot spot for HIV mutations, and where an estimated 600 people become infected with HIV every day. Between 15-20 per cent of Cameroonians are HIV positive.

She began the US-Cameroon Health Program in 1998 by going from hospital to hospital in Africa searching for collaborators for her multi-faceted project. The goal was to set up collaborations between the United States and African researchers to foster interdisciplinary studies in basic, social and clinical science, and to improve the infrastructure.

A secondary goal was to provide a conduit for humanitarian efforts directed at HIV transmission, and funded by United States corporations and such organisations as Rotary and Lions Clubs. McArthur's ultimate goal is to establish an Institute of Emerging Diseases, which would be of international value.

The programme currently involves a network of 12 hospitals and clinics in Cameroon and two in Congo, all directed at HIV research funded from the United States.

"Africa is the womb of civilisation. This is where we all began.

Africa has a spiritual power or magic that has attracted explorers and adventurers for a thousand years.

If we can help her to become healthy, isn't that good for everyone?"



Dr Carole McArthur and her motorcycle driver Emmanuel at Kooshe, in Bamdzeng, where she and her team carry out HIV screening. This village has no running water or electricity. Locals help carry her supplies.

McArthur photographed with Falani chief Ardo Galla (above).

Now, several years into the project, McArthur has consolidated her resources at a centrally-located clinic in the city of Bamenda in the north-west province of Cameroon. The Mezam Polyclinic provides laboratory space and equipment, and houses employees funded by her programme.

In Cameroon McArthur is grateful for the help of two more Otago graduates, her cousin Dr Trevor Parr and his wife Helen, who direct the programme while McArthur is in the United States.

African research opportunities for science, dental and medical students, and residents are extensive, says McArthur. They span tropical medicine (malaria, onchocerciasis, AIDS), oral health (salivary gland disease, traditional medicine), ophthalmology, clinical studies (diagnostic test development and evaluation, vaccine and drug trials) and aspects of traditional medicine such as the role of scarification in HIV transmission.

There are also graduate research opportunities in social sciences (education, psychology, sociology, anthropology, political science), pharmacology, traditional medicine and nursing (nutrition, education).

McArthur welcomes New Zealand students and faculty, and invites them to spend time at the laboratory in Cameroon to obtain a unique experience in tropical medicine or science.

In general, the non-African members of the project provide expertise, training and equipment, while Cameroon

provides enthusiastic personnel, facilities and many needy patients willing to participate in the studies.

The laboratory offers free diagnosis and testing for HIV and other opportunistic infections such as TB, which infect more than 50 per cent of HIV patients.

McArthur thus obtains valuable HIV-positive plasma samples for human and viral genetics research.

Already she has identified a new variant strain of HIV virus, which could pose new health hazards. The strain could be the result of genetic mutations within the virus and may prove to be more resistant to anti-HIV drugs, or more virulent than other viral strains. Tests on the new variants are currently under way.

Incorporating this kind of genetic information into the blood-bank screening system has significant value as it protects patients in the rest of the world from inadvertent infection by transfusion of contaminated blood products.

Each year about 25,000 patients are screened for AIDS, with most of the HIV-positive blood samples sent to the United States for analysis.

One researcher aided by the project's work is Dr Sunil Ahuja, professor of medicine and director of the Veterans' Affairs Center at the University of Texas Health Science Center in San Antonio.

Ahuja, who has recently published his findings in *Science*, is investigating how genes affect people's risk of getting HIV

Already she has identified a new variant strain of HIV virus, which could pose new health hazards. The strain could be the result of genetic mutations within the virus and may prove to be more resistant to anti-HIV drugs, or more virulent than other viral strains. Tests on the new variants are currently under way.





e) and with a Falani tribesman at Galla (right).

and how they affect progression to AIDS. Why does one person get HIV, but others do not? Why does HIV cross the placenta in some mothers, but not in others?

McArthur and her Cameroonian colleagues have been able to provide Ahuja with blood samples from large well-defined cohorts of patients meeting his criteria for research subjects, and his work now involves more than 700 families.

Information from the samples may also have broader health benefits.

“Oral infections are the hallmark of HIV and the first sign of immunodeficiency,” says McArthur. “This is caused by infection of the salivary glands, which changes the volume and destroys the protective arsenals found in saliva. When we can understand the mechanism of pathogenesis we will be able to develop strategies to prevent this destruction, perhaps by immunomodulation. Insight into the mechanism of salivary gland disease is likely to throw light on other causes of salivary gland disease such as that occurring in lupus, rheumatoid arthritis and Sjögren’s syndrome.”

The programme also strives to build a local health infrastructure. It has a strong physical presence with the establishment of the Mezam Polyclinic, which has now been designated the north-west province of Cameroon’s official HIV/AIDS treatment and research centre, and is directed by McArthur’s long-time colleague, Dr Paul Ngang Achu.

“We have established a research facility, which includes a histology laboratory and a TB culture facility supported by the US Navy, none of which was available in the north-west province of Cameroon previously,” says McArthur.

“We can now do CD4 lymphocyte counts essential to administer HIV therapy, and this year, supported by Roche Molecular Systems, we hope to begin quantifying viral loads. In return Roche receive valuable viral genetic information, which is critical for standardising and obtaining FDA approval

of their diagnostic products. The Roche project aims at establishing a viral repository, which will be a major step towards the creation of the Institute of Emerging Disease.”

Using federal grants and funding from private organisations, McArthur travels to her clinic in Cameroon several times each year, taking medical supplies and students, and supervising research. She also travels to remote villages, often on horseback (harking back to her days in South Otago), to monitor health issues at grassroots level.

It appears to be a rare win-win project. Cameroon has recently honoured McArthur with its Traditional Medicine Award in recognition of her work to merge the treatments of native healers with modern medicine to fight HIV, and for identifying a new strain of HIV in the country. She was also recognised for these contributions to the advancement of science by induction as a Fellow of the International Academy of Science.

But the challenges remain huge. Distances are great and travel is difficult. Funding is always a problem, together with a shortage of equipment, facilities and trained health-care providers. Most Africans still rely on traditional healers and some still doubt that AIDS even exists.

The programme needs hard cash to pay its staff, replace decades-old equipment and reopen an eye clinic that was forced to close after the ophthalmologist could not be paid.

Currently McArthur is struggling to raise \$US1-2 million to ensure the future of the project.

Her rationale is simple and to the point.

“Africa is the womb of civilisation. This is where we all began. Africa has a spiritual power or magic that has attracted explorers and adventurers for a thousand years. If we can help her to become healthy, isn’t that good for everyone?”

Nigel Zega

# Bizet's *Carmen*



Building on the success of the 2003 production of *Madama Butterfly*, the University of Otago this year presents another professional opera, Bizet's *Carmen*. First staged in March 1875, *Carmen* was denounced by critics of the time as "immoral" and "superficial". Today, however, this story of contrasts – between sin and virtue, duty and desire, sun and shadow – has become a world favourite. Otago's production opens at Dunedin's Regent Theatre on August 24 and has attracted a highly talented cast, many of them Otago graduates and some travelling from the other side of the world to take part.

Mark Hotton caught up with the UK-based team.



“I’m aware a lot of artists leave New Zealand and don’t come back,  
but I don’t think the arts can afford that ...  
I think it’s important you don’t just disappear.”

IF JUST A FRACTION OF THE ENERGY AND ENTHUSIASM shown by the UK-based members of the University of Otago’s upcoming production of *Carmen* can be harnessed, then audiences are in for a truly magical experience.

Their aim is to produce a top quality opera – and Irish-born director Annilese Miskimmon will ensure that. But for the three UK-based Otago graduates returning to Dunedin for this opera – Tecwyn Evans, Alistair Watson and Rebecca Ryan – there is even more: the significant benefit to the University’s Music Department of having professional former students return to inspire the next generation of Otago singers.

A leading conductor, Evans is excited about going home and making good music with people he knows. “I’d go anywhere to do that, but to go home and do it is even better.”

He considers it a “real coup” for a university to stage professional opera. “Any opportunity that can give people the chance to see what those who have gone overseas are doing has got to be beneficial.”

Evans completed his master’s in composition in 1995 at Otago and spent a year at the University of Kansas before heading to the UK. A chance meeting led to his appointment as chorusmaster at leading English opera house Glyndebourne, the only New Zealander to have held the role. In fact, Evans believes at present he is the only Kiwi conducting top-level opera in the world.

“It’s certainly not something you usually associate Kiwis with. Opera is not exactly at the forefront of entertainment in New Zealand and, because we’re not exposed to it a young age, we don’t get interested in it early enough.”

Buoyed by his recent success in making the final of the prestigious Leeds’ conducting competition in July 2005, Evans has found demand for his skills is on the rise. He’s achieved several of his personal goals, including one to conduct a major orchestra (BBC Philharmonic last year), and in January will conduct his first major opera in a major theatre (*L’elisir d’amore*) for Opera North in Leeds’ Grand Theatre.

He conducted the University’s production of *Madama Butterfly* in 2003 and is excited at having the chance to return for *Carmen*. He is also acutely aware of the importance of nurturing future talent – his own interest in conducting was sparked by leading conductor Nicholas Braithwaite’s visit to the Dunedin Sinfonia.

“I’m aware a lot of artists leave New Zealand and don’t come back, but I don’t think the arts can afford that. I wouldn’t have done what I’ve done if someone hadn’t turned up and exposed me to that experience. Whether I’m filling a gap I don’t know but I think it’s important you don’t just disappear.”

These sentiments are echoed by both Watson and Ryan. As repetiteur, Watson is the production’s rehearsal pianist, playing from a score that reduces the entire orchestra down to one part. It’s a key part of the creative process and is vital to helping the cast understand the music, as well as what Evans and Miskimmon want to achieve.

After completing his master’s in music at Otago, Watson attended the Royal College of Music in London. He then completed a year-long repetiteur course at the Guildhall School of Music and Drama. By undertaking repetiteur work and supplementing it with other work, such as accompanying soloists and teaching, Watson is able to have a full-time career as a musician in London.

“It is possible to make a living and have a fulfilling and rewarding musical life without necessarily being a big name.” And that’s a message he is keen to spread in his old haunt.

“The idea is to inspire the next generation of students and show them it is possible to have a career overseas in music, and be successful, and for it to be rewarding.”

Ryan will make her New Zealand professional singing debut in *Carmen*, having been in the UK for nine years. Originally from Bluff and a graduate of the Royal Academy of Music, she’s sung in most of London’s major venues and is excited about returning to the place that led her into performing as a soloist – she also completed a degree in information science at Otago.

“I think it’s great that the University is getting former Otago students to return for this. It’s important to bring different kinds of music to different audiences and Kiwis don’t have as much exposure to classical music or opera compared with the UK.”

Irish-born Miskimmon, who will be directing *Carmen*, is also passionate about taking opera to places that aren’t normally exposed to it. She, too, is aware of the importance of nurturing young talent. When she was young, a visitor to her local drama club encouraged her to go to Cambridge to study drama. While there, lecturers gave her the chance to direct some operas they had found and re-edited, which ignited the directing spark in her. She eventually got offered a role at Glyndebourne where she learnt her craft.

It was here she also met Evans and last year they worked together on *La Bohème* in Ireland for Miskimmon’s opera company. Both are looking forward to working together again.

“I think we work well together because we both have the same attitude to opera. Also, there aren’t many opera conductors who are dramatically minded, but Tecwyn is very much ‘if it doesn’t work dramatically then why bother?’ which helps me.

"It's important to work with the University because the chorus will be made up of those studying there. To do something with a group of young people at the start of their careers is hugely attractive, too. There's an energy and rawness about [younger singers] which is something they should try and carry on through their professional lives, but as they get older they tend to get a bit blasé."

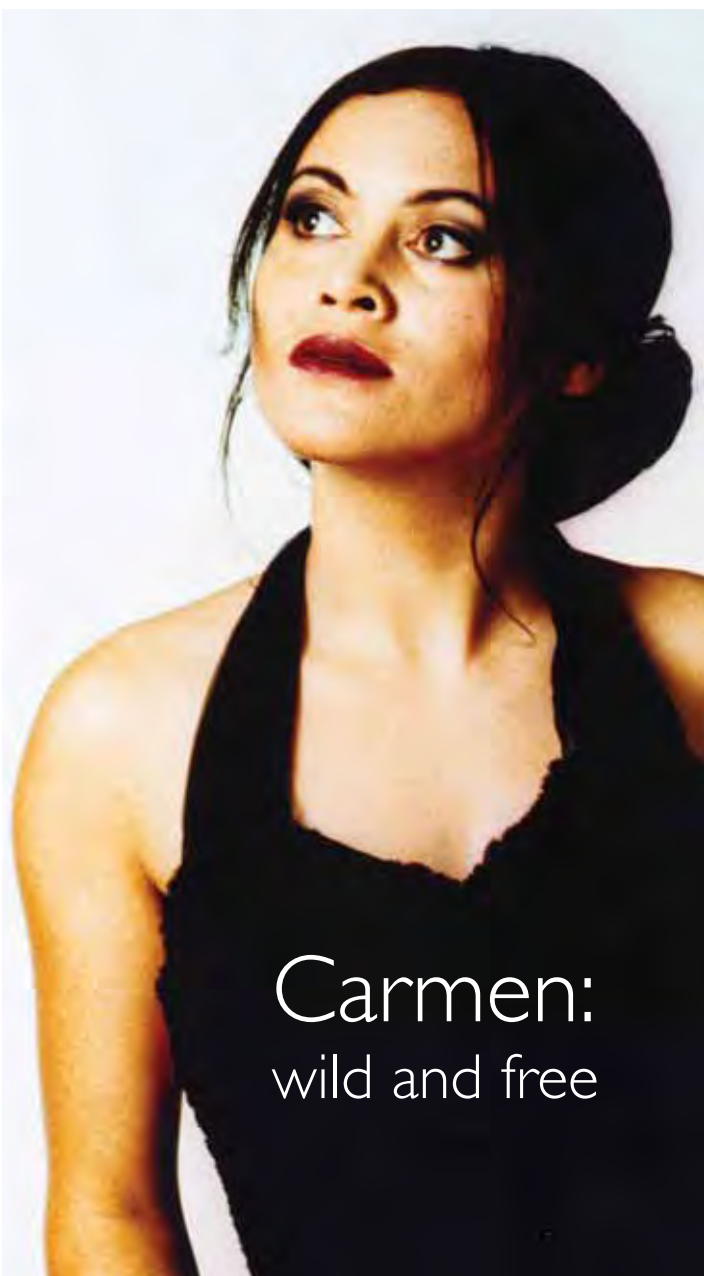
While the logistics of developing a production from the other side of the world are challenging, she says it's also exciting because art needs a "slightly chaotic element" for good things to be produced.

It's the 32-year-old's first *Carmen*, and she feels it's an exciting opera to direct.

"At the heart of it is a dirty, sordid tale about obsessive love and stalking that ends with the murder of a woman. I've got mixed feelings about it because generally in opera if a woman is sexual then she's punished and this is kind of the most devastating example of it."

Before heading to Dunedin, Miskimmon will direct *Così fan tutte* in London and after returning she'll head to Dublin to direct *Fidelio* in the infamous Kilmainham jail.

*Carmen* opens at the Regent Theatre on Thursday 24 August. Its season continues – 26, 28 and 30 August. Tickets go on sale through Ticketek on Thursday 15 June.



## Carmen: wild and free

FEW PROFESSIONAL OPERA SINGERS CAN CLAIM SO DIVERSE A repertoire of talents as Deborah Wai Kapohe. And it is this range of talents that promises to make her portrayal of Carmen so special.

"From the moment I sing the first aria I intend to be Carmen, rather than portray Carmen," says Kapohe who believes that the essence of the woman is contained in that song.

"People like Carmen are special because they know how to love: how to play with it, how to create it, how to care for it, how to use it to make others feel really special and, even more importantly, how to let it die without a second's regret."

This is powerful stuff and, although this will be the first time Kapohe has played Carmen, she is more than equal to the challenge.

"There is so much in this opera that I hold dear – so many of the values – that I don't have to look far for inspiration. I think that many of us don't really understand love or accept love's 'character'. Too many lovers, husbands and wives strangle it, make it a duty, stuff it full of rules, starve it, force it, demand it, or fail to realise when it's long gone – they are Don José!

"Carmen lives from moment to moment. She is wild and free."

Kapohe is recognised as one of New Zealand's most promising sopranos and, while currently living in Australia, she is completing her master's degree in voice at Otago. Roles she has played include Pamina (*Magic Flute*), Mimi (*La Bohème*) Rosalinde (*Die Fledermaus*) Nannetta (*Falstaff*) and Marguerite (*Faust*). However, opera is not her only love: she has performed across the musical spectrum – from classical to contemporary – and has released four CDs as a singer-songwriter in the alternative folk genre on her own label, Ring Trout CDs.

"It is important to me to write my own music and I hope that one day I might have the opportunity to develop this further ... maybe into short stories."

She is looking forward to returning to Dunedin for *Carmen* and is eager that as many people as possible have the opportunity to see it.

"This opera is to be enjoyed by everyone, of all ages. My four- and five-year-old children already know the music really well and sing along with it. Buy the CD, learn the tunes and you'll enjoy it even more!"

Photo: supplied

Deborah Wai Kapohe:  
"From the moment I sing the first aria I intend to be Carmen ..."



RAYMOND MCINTYRE (1879-1933)  
*Portrait of a dark-haired woman c.1914*  
 Oil on wood panel: 292 x 202mm  
 Given by Dr Charles Brasch, 1959

PSYCHOLOGICAL PENETRATION WAS ANATHEMA TO Raymond McIntyre's brand of portraiture. Why spoil a good painting with an excess of personality? McIntyre's was an art purged of emotion. "Sentimentalism," he said, "is so very inimical to good art." Design qualities ruled the McIntyre brush, and portraits were merely handy vehicles for decorative flourishes.

After studying at the Canterbury College School of Art, McIntyre decided Christchurch was too flaccid an art scene for him, so in 1908, at the age of 30, he left for London and never returned. Like fellow expatriate Frances Hodgkins, he relished the excitement and vigour offered by European modernism and, being a modish urbane gent, revelled in London's sophisticated art circles.

*Portrait of a dark-haired woman* shows McIntyre's love of pattern and spontaneity. There's an unstudied freshness and swiftness about those brushstrokes – something he'd admired

in the work of French artists such as Matisse. Of course, we learn nothing of the sitter – she looks remarkably like his other female portraits: just another elegant, refined face for him to hang his modernist ideas on. In the *Architectural Review* in 1924 McIntyre wrote: "... in my view dignity and quiet are the first essentials of a good portrait ... there is a sense of reserve force in stillness, and this is true in the case of portraits as well as in individuals. A person who is always fidgeting about, and ogling ... is no more desirable to encounter in a portrait than in life."

German expressionism would surely have horrified McIntyre – far too much emoting and angst for his calm artistic heart. His idea of a good painting was one that pleased the eye and steered well clear of darker emotions: "to be depressed or made dreary by the contemplation of a painting is of no practical value whatever".

Claire Finlayson

## HOCKEN COLLECTIONS GALLERY EXHIBITIONS

Until 15 July 2006

Ralph Miller: designs from the Hocken Pictorial Collections (curated by Frances Speer)  
 Liz Abbott: Fanny and me

22 July – 23 September 2006

Douglas McDiarmid: gift to the Hocken



## Possum clues to prostate disease



Photo: Lighthaus

Professor Helen Nicholson: "... results will be used to develop future studies into the possibility of new treatments for existing BPH and, ultimately, ways of preventing it."

NEW ZEALAND'S BRUSHTAIL POSSUM (*TRICHOSURUS VULPECULA*) may provide the key to new treatments for benign prostatic hyperplasia (BPH).

For reasons which are unclear, in most men over the age of 40 the prostate begins to grow. While this condition is rarely fatal, it produces significant morbidity and affects more than 50 per cent of men over the age of 60. Current treatments include surgery, laser therapy or drugs. More men are opting for medical treatments, but these are less effective than surgery and both options can have side effects.

Professor Helen Nicholson (Anatomy and Structural Biology) says research into the causes of BPH has been hampered by the difficulties of obtaining human prostate samples and the absence of a suitable animal model.

However, the possum prostate has now been identified as structurally similar to that of man. It is also androgen dependent (like the human prostate) and, most significantly, it undergoes seasonal growth and regression, providing a model to investigate factors that both stimulate and inhibit growth.

In collaboration with Dr Bernie McLeod (AgResearch, Invermay), Nicholson's initial investigations have looked at the impact of the hormone mesotocin, but results so far are inconclusive.

"BPH does not result from an abnormality of a single hormone or growth factor, but is due to a series of complex interactions," she says. "This project will provide a holistic view of the changes that occur and results will be used to develop future studies into the possibility of new treatments for existing BPH and, ultimately, ways of preventing it."

## Backing the dogs



Photo: Bill Nichol

Dr Gurmeet Bhabra: His research shows that the "dog" stocks in the New Zealand market carry a lot of downward momentum.

BACKING THE DOGS MAY SOUND MORE LIKE A GAMBLING strategy than an investment strategy, and research out of the University of Otago School of Business suggests that is where it should stay – in New Zealand anyway.

Dr Gurmeet Bhabra (Finance and Quantitative Analysis) says the "Dogs of the Dow" (DoD) is a popular contrarian investment strategy which basically states that a good time to get into the sharemarket is when it is down, because it will rebound.

"The original 'Dogs of Dow' strategy was applied to a group of 30 Wall Street stocks that comprise the Dow Jones Index. This strategy entails investing in the 10 worst performing stocks price-wise – hence the term 'dogs' – in the belief that if a stock does poorly one year it will be a star the next," he says.

Bhabra and master's student Lauren Bruce became interested in how this might apply to the New Zealand market. They analysed an 11-year period from 1992 to 2002, looking at poor performing shares through periods when the market rose and fell, as well as during times of high volatility.

According to Bhabra, it seems that the "dog" stocks in the New Zealand market carry a lot of downward momentum and tend not to rebound the next year.

"If you are looking at small markets, the strategy may not hold as much value as it supposedly does in larger markets and certainly not in New Zealand," he says.

## Focus on regional story



Photo: Lighthaus

*Dr Tony Ballantyne: "We're interested in exploring the complexity of the meeting between Māori and Pākehā worlds in this particular place (Murihiku)."*

A TEAM OF OTAGO HISTORIANS HAS BEGUN WORK ON A THREE-year research project to explore the cross-cultural exchange of knowledge between Māori and Pākehā during the colonisation of Murihiku (Otago and Southland) between 1770 and 1914.

The collaborative project, which has the support of Ngāi Tahu iwi and a Marsden Fund grant, is expected to generate new understanding and fresh insights into the role of colonialism in reinforcing Pākehā dominance and, ultimately, disempowerment of Māori.

The group is looking at three key issues, says principal investigator Dr Tony Ballantyne. The first deals with the obvious question of how Ngāi Tahu knowledge and traditions were transformed by contact with Europeans. The second looks at the reciprocal impact of Māori knowledge on Pākehā. The third covers the broader issue of how events here related to the wider struggle for knowledge and identity elsewhere in the British Empire.

The research team includes Emeritus Professor Erik Olssen, Dr John Stenhouse, Dr Khyla Russell, PhD student Michael Stevens and two research assistants. The group expects to publish a series of journal essays on their findings and a book focused on the intellectual life of the Otago colony between 1848 and 1900.

"We're interested in really capturing the richness and the texture of the region's history," Ballantyne says. "In the past the focus has been on telling the national stories. For us that is not so important. We're interested in exploring the complexity of the meeting between Māori and Pākehā worlds in this particular place."

## New liver leads



Photo: Alan Dove

*Dr Ayako Mabuchi: Evidence now points to hepatic stellate cells (HSCs) having a key role in liver regeneration.*

THE LIVER'S REMARKABLE ABILITY TO REGENERATE HAS LONG fascinated researchers and physicians alike, but only now are they beginning to understand the mechanisms involved.

Until recently, hepatic stellate cells (HSCs) were mainly associated with conditions such as fibrosis, but Dr Ayako Mabuchi (Department of Physiology, School of Medical Sciences) says the evidence now points to their having a key role in liver regeneration.

"You can remove 70 per cent of the liver and in two weeks it can be back to its original volume and function," she says.

"It is a very special organ in the body – other organs don't do it. It has a special regeneration system."

Mabuchi has been involved in research on liver immunology for 20 years, and in 1999 she grasped the opportunity to come to Dunedin and work with Professor Tony Wheatley, who suggested she study HSCs.

Little is known about how HSCs become active following the liver's partial removal. Liver stem cells, or hepatocytes, seem to be easily stimulated, and the research by Mabuchi and her colleagues points to some sort of interaction with HSCs.

The underlying cellular mechanisms remain a mystery, but Mabuchi is excited about the opportunity she now has to pursue this line of research through a three-year Marsden grant which starts this year.

"It is very encouraging for me. The grant gives me more freedom to pursue this research and to extend my work with my collaborators in Japan."

## Moko renaissance

Photo: Alan Dove / Photo location: Otago Museum



Dr Rawinia Higgins: "A lot of people just see the aesthetic value of it (moko) as opposed to the cultural responsibilities and the politics that are associated with it."

OVER A CENTURY IN THE FASHION WILDERNESS, THE ANCIENT Māori art of *moko* (tattooing) is back in vogue, according to Te Tumu lecturer Dr Rawinia Higgins. Her PhD from Otago's School of Māori, Pacific and Indigenous Studies focused on the identity and politics of *moko wahine* (female tattooing) in New Zealand.

The full facial Māori *moko* almost disappeared in the 1860s, mainly because of a buoyant trade in preserved heads, which made males sporting a tattoo a targeted trophy for unscrupulous head hunters.

Fortunately, knowledge of traditional *moko* practices, implements, technology and dyes survived thanks to a handful of *kuia moko*, elderly women who had *moko kauae* (chin tattoos) done when they were young girls in the 1920s and 1930s. Many were still alive until the late 1970s, Higgins says.

The art form was then revived by the gang movement, which gave the tattoo some negative connotations, and later picked up by influential Māori activists such as Tame Iti and the late Eva Rickard. Today the *moko* is undergoing a major cultural renaissance for Māori proud to wear it as an identity marker. The tattoo has almost regained mainstream acceptance in society today through celebrities such as Robbie Williams and Ben Harper.

"It is fascinating and there are so many dimensions to the whole art form," Higgins says. "A lot of people just see the aesthetic value of it as opposed to the cultural responsibilities and the politics that are associated with it."

## Fighting with phytoplankton

Photo: Bill Nichol



Dr Robert Strzepek: "In the Southern Ocean basic nutrients like silicate are very plentiful, so this area has a much greater potential to take up atmospheric carbon."

PHYTOPLANKTON CAN TRAP ATMOSPHERIC CARBON AT THE bottom of the sea for tens of thousands of years, reducing levels of greenhouse gases linked to global warming.

Dr Robert Strzepek (Chemistry) and colleagues are researching two kinds of phytoplankton from the Southern Ocean: diatoms (large cells with silica-based exo-skeletons), and *Phaeocystis* (tiny cells which occasionally form large spherical colonies). Initial studies looked at how these oceanic phytoplankton manage to thrive in the iron-poor Southern Ocean.

"We looked at how oceanic diatoms photosynthesise: their biochemical make-up in comparison with their coastal cousins that inhabit iron-rich coastal environments (same genus, but different habitat).

"Photosynthesis requires three types of complexes and iron is a major component of two of them. We found that the oceanic diatoms had much lower ratios of the most iron-rich complexes and this didn't change when we put them in an iron-rich environment. They don't acclimate to immediate changes in iron availability, but seem to have evolved so they require less iron all the time."

Researchers have been looking at the environmental benefits of phytoplankton's carbon-trapping, and Strzepek says the Southern Ocean has more potential for this because the waters are so nutrient rich.

"In an experiment in the North Pacific, waters were seeded with extra iron to stimulate an algal bloom (rapid growth of phytoplankton), but this led to a lack of silicate and ultimately inhibited phytoplankton growth.

"In the Southern Ocean basic nutrients like silicate are very plentiful, so this area has a much greater potential to take up atmospheric carbon."



## IT forensics



Photo: Lighthaus

Spike Quinn: "Knowing how to preserve evidence in a way that makes it admissible in court is crucial."

MANY INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY PROFESSIONALS ARE WOEFULLY unprepared for dealing with evidence of computer-related crime, according to the results of a survey by K J Spike Quinn.

Computer forensics do not even feature on the radar of most IT managers, says Quinn, but professionals will need to lift their game as New Zealand companies expand their international connections.

Quinn, a researcher with the Security Research Group in the Department of Information Science, assessed 162 managers on their knowledge of protecting a trail of electronic evidence in the event of criminal activity.

"Most organisations did not have a forensic policy or realise the importance of it," he says.

"New Zealand is far behind the USA in this respect, partly because of the US legal system being so litigious. As New Zealand companies deal more with international markets, they'll need to put safety measures in place.

"If they don't, the legal and, therefore, commercial implications are huge."

Computer forensics hit the headlines as part of the trial of David Bain, whose computer use came under scrutiny when building a picture of his whereabouts at a certain time. More recently, investigators have been tracking email and web porn on police computers.

"Even non-technical first respondents should understand the relevant computer processes, and know their responsibilities regarding the preservation and protection of potential evidence," says Quinn.

"Knowing how to preserve evidence in a way that makes it admissible in court is crucial. The industry definitely needs far more professional training in the area of preserving and protecting digital evidence."

## Routing gout



Photo: Ross Coombes

Dr Lisa Stamp: "We're interested in finding out how we can improve medication regimes for gout ..."

IT MAY BE THOUGHT THAT GOUT IS AN AFFLICTION OF THE PAST. Not so, according to rheumatologist Dr Lisa Stamp (Christchurch School of Medicine and Health Sciences). Gout still strikes thousands of New Zealanders of all ages, but particularly Māori and Pacific Islanders who have rates as high as 14 per cent.

Stamp and her colleagues at Christchurch Hospital are researching how to improve treatment for this form of arthritis which causes a painful burning sensation in swollen joints.

"Gout is underestimated. It causes a lot of pain and immobility, and once you've had it you are likely to get a recurrence," explains Stamp. "We're interested in finding out how we can improve medication regimes for gout, as we are not quite sure what is the best dose of drug to get the most improvement."

Gout is caused by an excess of uric acid in the blood, which can result from large amounts of red meat, fish and alcohol in the diet. Stamp says the commonly used drug Allopurinol has been around for years, but there is no good scientific evidence as to the optimum dose, and whether increasing levels will further reduce uric acid.

"We believe we can determine that optimum dose by measuring the Allopurinol level in the patient's blood, and then looking at the uric acid level to see what the response is."

From these tests carried out over the next two years, Stamp and her colleagues hope to establish firmer recommendations for the treatment of gout in the future.

## Slow down and smell the roses!



Dr Wendy Parkins and Dr Geoffrey Craig: "The more we multi-task or try to do, the less efficient or productive we are."

TIRED OF THE FRANTIC PACE IN THE FAST LANE, NO ESCAPE FROM work and not enough time to enjoy the simple pleasures of life? Take comfort, you are not alone.

International studies suggest growing dissatisfaction worldwide with the intense pressures of longer working hours, heavier workloads and a diminished quality of life. Research in Australia, the UK and the USA shows surprisingly high rates of people "downshifting", a term coined to describe those who have decided to slow down, earn less, consume less and work fewer hours.

Slow living is not about dropping out of society or returning to the good old days, says Dr Wendy Parkins, co-author of a newly-released book exploring the concept. It is a conscious move to take firmer control of your life and enjoy everything it has to offer – striking a better balance between work and pleasure, and making more time for family and friends, good food and leisure.

Parkins and co-author Dr Geoffrey Craig, both senior lecturers at the University of Otago, spent a sabbatical in Italy researching and writing the first academic study of slow living, a term which grew out of the slow food movement, which originated in Italy and has caught on internationally.

"If you slow down you might think you'll achieve less or get less done, but in fact the opposite is true. The more we multi-task or try to do, the less efficient or productive we are," Parkins says.

## Tracking health care



Wellington School of Medicine and Health Sciences researchers (from left): Lindsay Macdonald, Professor Tony Dowell, Dr Elizabeth Plumridge (standing), Dr Kevin Dew and Maria Stubbe.

ANECDOTAL AND STATISTICAL EVIDENCE SUGGEST THAT different people are treated differently as they pass through the health system. Some seem to receive more attention than others, but it's difficult to improve the system until there is adequate research into what is wrong with it.

Dr Kevin Dew and Maria Stubbe of Otago's Wellington School of Medicine and Health Sciences have a three-year Marsden grant to track interactions and related communications involving individual patients and health professionals.

The multidisciplinary research team, which includes Lindsay Macdonald, Dr Elizabeth Plumridge and Professor Tony Dowell, plans to identify information flows and barriers in the system, aiming for better care for all.

"We have an unusual mixture of general practitioners, research nurses, sociolinguists, sociologists and public health experts, all coming from slightly different viewpoints, and all with their own approaches to collation and analysis of data," says Dew.

"Nobody that we know of has tried to track people through a system like this, based on the documents and data around them."

The team will follow patients from when they enter the health system, through primary and secondary care, up to when they exit the system.

Earlier research projects funded by the Ministry of Health and the Health Research Council were designed to improve health care. This latest study continues the investigation into how health professionals make decisions about patient care.

"This approach is really novel," says Dew. "We hope it will help us to find out why some people get access to care and some don't."

## Healthy natives



Photo: Lighthaus

Associate Professor Kevin Gould: "Our goal now is to ... identify the chemical components of the antioxidants in these plants and to explore the possibilities of developing nutraceuticals."

SEVERAL TRADITIONAL MĀORI PLANT FOODS HAVE BEEN FOUND to be rich in antioxidants, molecules that can protect the body against free radicals implicated in the development of cancer, heart disease and neurodegenerative conditions.

Now Otago researchers are looking at ways this finding might be used to develop health-promoting nutraceuticals.

Associate Professor Kevin Gould (Botany) says that of the 17 plant foods tested, eight had considerably higher levels of antioxidants than blueberries – the standard by which other foods are measured.

For example, puha, a plant still commonly eaten by Māori, has more than three times the antioxidant level of blueberries. Even more exciting, the fruit of *Syzygium maire* (swamp maire) has more than 18 times the level of antioxidants, the berries of *Alectron excelsus* (titoki) have 12 times the level, and *Knightia excelsa* (rewa rewa) stamens are almost 10 times higher in antioxidants than blueberries.

While none of these plants, apart from puha, were key foods for Māori, Gould says this still gives a possible insight into why pre-European Māori appeared to have low levels of non-infectious diseases.

"Even now, they have lower incidence and mortality rates from certain colon and rectal cancers than New Zealanders of European descent.

"Our goal now is to establish a collaborative, multidisciplinary study to identify the chemical components of the antioxidants in these plants, and to explore the possibilities of developing nutraceuticals.

"If we can identify these compounds we can then see if they would be potentially effective in promoting human health."

## The tastes of age



Photo: Bill Nichol

Dr Conor Delahunty: "We were looking at the extent to which ageing means loss of sensory function, and then how loss of sensory function impacts upon food acceptability and choice."

### POPULATIONS ARE AGEING, BUT ARE THEY AGEING HEALTHILY?

A growing incidence of malnutrition among the elderly indicates many are not eating well, and how much this is due to loss of sensory perception has been the subject of research by Dr Conor Delahunty, the new director of the Sensory Science Laboratory at Otago's Department of Food Science.

His study included participants from 10 different European countries, aged from 20 to over 70.

"We were looking at the extent to which ageing means loss of sensory function, and then how loss of sensory function impacts upon food acceptability and choice," Delahunty explains.

"We looked at abilities to perceive odour, taste and mouth-feel. We also looked at chewing efficiency, and the ability to pick up astringency and oral burn."

While the study indicated some loss of sensory ability, particularly with regard to smell, there was no uniform pattern to the losses, nor to the way various sensory-ability losses were paired up – for example, no apparent correlation between odour-detection ability and taste sensitivity.

"What we did find was that the emphasis each individual placed on different sensory characteristics in foods can vary depending on the nature of the particular sensory impairment of that person."

Other research in the study looked at the role of habit or variety in liking or not liking particular foods, and also the strong influence of context on food consumption behaviour. Delahunty is now looking forward to pursuing further these research questions within the New Zealand context.





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**NEW UNDERGRADUATE SCHOLARSHIPS POPULAR**  
Otago's two newly-established undergraduate scholarships have met with a positive response.

The University's Māori and Pacific Islands Entrance Scholarship and the Dux Scholarship, both offered for the first time in 2006, have been taken up by 30 and 90 school leavers respectively.

The Dux Scholarship is aimed at achieving Otago's goal of ensuring that high-achieving students from across the country have an equal opportunity to attend New Zealand's first University.

Students from a range of schools and backgrounds, from Kaitiaki to Invercargill, and even the dux from Niue, took up the scholarship this year.

Māori and Pacific Islands Entrance Scholarships are offered to promising Māori and Pacific Islands students to encourage them to take up study at Otago.

Recipients went through a rigorous selection process involving academic references, information on their involvement within their communities, and an essay outlining the importance of tertiary education to them personally and their communities.

#### ADVANCEMENT CAMPAIGN GAINS MOMENTUM

The University's Leading Thinkers Advancement Campaign is building momentum with the recent announcement of two new foundation professorships and a new fellowship.

The professorships are the New Zealand Institute for Cancer Research Trust Chair in Cancer Pathology and the Chair in Viral Pathogenesis (see page 14).

The fellowship is the Gama Research Fellowship in Bipolar Disorder and is based at the Christchurch School of Medicine and Health Sciences.

The chairs and the fellowship were made possible through gifts to the University totalling \$2.8 million, a sum which attracts matching dollar-for-dollar funding from the Government.

Leading Thinkers was launched in 2002 to build on Otago's current research strengths through supporting people who are distinguished researchers in their fields.

#### TE TUMU CENTRE OPENED

A major extension of the University's Te Tumu, School of Māori, Pacific and Indigenous Studies, was officially opened at a ceremony attended by distinguished visitors from the University of Alberta and the University of Hawaii.

The waka-shaped \$4.4 million centre for teaching the Māori traditional arts is designed to provide teachers with a multi-purpose facility, and enables staff to deliver programmes using culturally-appropriate learning and teaching styles.

Its new laboratories and studios have been designed specifically to teach the performing arts, carving and weaving papers for the new Bachelor of Māori Traditional Arts (BMTradArts) introduced this year.

Visitors from the School of Native Studies at the University of Alberta, in Canada, and the Center for Hawaiian Studies at the University of Hawaii attended both to celebrate and honour the occasion.

Professor Tania Ka'ai, Dean of Te Tumu, said the visitation of both delegations showed the high regard in which Te Tumu is held internationally and boded well for the possibility of collaborative research projects in the future.



*Dancers from Te Tumu perform at the celebrations marking the opening of the school's new centre.*

Photo: Kelly Lindsay

#### MERGER DECISION IMMINENT

A ministerial decision on the proposed merger of the University and the Dunedin College of Education is now expected next month.

The merger would create a new professional teaching and education studies school within the University's Division of Humanities, which would be called the University of Otago College of Education. If the proposal is approved, the merger will take effect in January 2007.

#### PACIFIC REFERENCE GROUP

Prominent members of New Zealand's Pacific Islands community are now playing a central role in helping the University become more responsive to Pacific needs with the formation of a new reference group.

The University's Pacific Peoples Reference Group was established in March. Auckland, Wellington, Christchurch and Dunedin are all represented by members who include prominent Otago graduates.

The group has been given a broad mandate to advise the University on areas including achieving its goals and objectives for Pacific Peoples in alignment with Pacific community aspirations.

The numbers of students at Otago of Pacific Islands descent have increased by around 40 per cent since 2000.

#### WELLINGTON CAMPUS EXPANDS

The University is investing over \$20 million to expand teaching and research space in its Wellington School of Medicine and Health Sciences building.

The work, which began in March, includes creating an enlarged and improved library and administration suite, as well as new undergraduate teaching and study spaces.

Construction is expected to be completed by early 2007, in time for the arrival of an increased number of medical students.

#### SCHOOL OF BUSINESS DISTINGUISHED BUSINESS SPEAKER

Named as one of the most powerful women in business by *Forbes* magazine and a driving force of rural sourcing in the USA, Professor Kathy B White will speak in the St David lecture theatre on Tuesday 8 August, at 6.15pm.

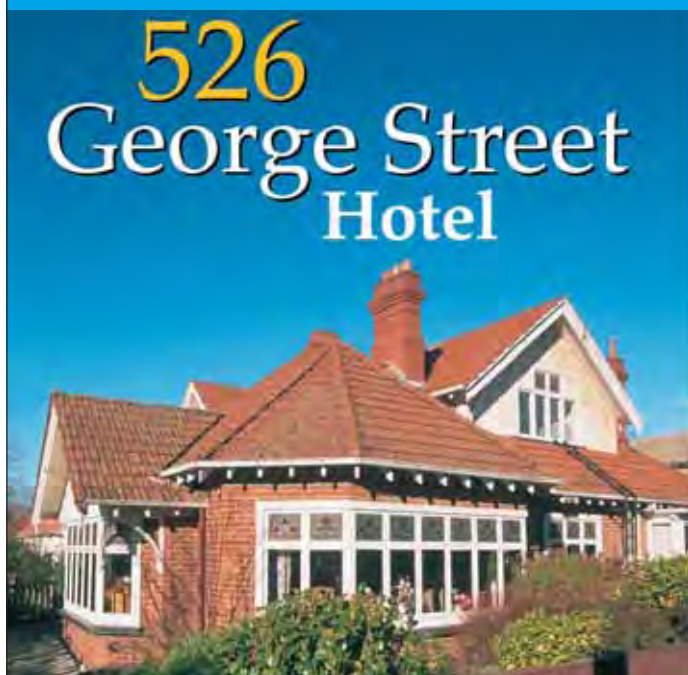
Her subject will be how New Zealand can revitalise its economy through establishing technology hubs in our rural centres.

White is president and chairman of the board of Arkansas Rural Sourcing Inc, a non-profit organisation serving the technology needs of the Arkansas Delta, a director of Mattel, founder of the Horizon Institute of Technology. For more information please visit [www.otago.ac.nz/business](http://www.otago.ac.nz/business)

#### AUCKLAND PUBLIC LECTURES

A series of public lectures in Auckland by leading Otago academics exploring topical issues is under way until mid September.

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Held at the University's Auckland Centre each Thursday evening, upcoming lectures in the series cover topics as diverse as "the end of oil", the politics of murder in Lebanon and Syria, and ethics and the business world. (See page 43.)

Further details about the inaugural Winter Lecture Series can be obtained at [www.otago.ac.nz/aucklandcentre/](http://www.otago.ac.nz/aucklandcentre/)

#### APPOINTMENTS

Recently retired Pro-Vice-Chancellor, Health Sciences, Professor **Linda Holloway** as the next Chair of New Zealand's National Health Committee.

Dr **Peter Anstey** to the University's recently established Chair in Early Modern Philosophy, which was funded through the University's Leading Thinkers Advancement Campaign. Professor Anstey comes to Otago from the University of Sydney.

Dr **Stephen Duffull** to a Chair in Clinical Pharmacy at the University's School of Pharmacy. Duffull comes to Otago from the University of Queensland.

**Lex de Jong** (LLB 1980) as a Judge of the New Zealand Family Court.

#### OBITUARIES

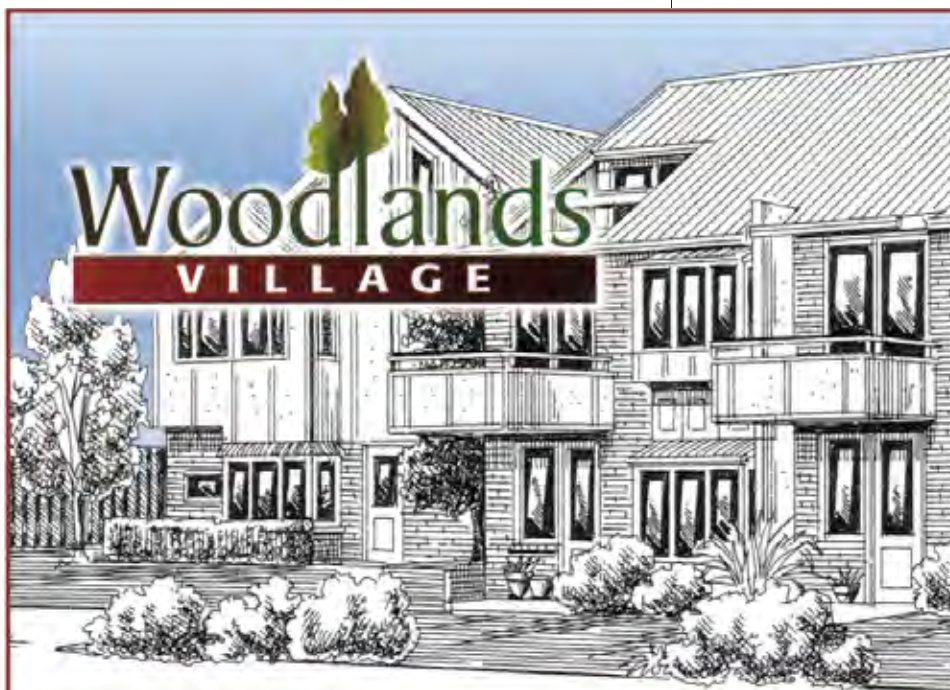
Sir **Brian Barratt-Boyes** (MB ChB 1947, ChM 1962) (82). One of the world's finest cardiac surgeons, Sir Brian Barratt-Boyes was a pioneer of many techniques including ways of saving babies born with congenital heart defects.

Dr **Evan Pollard** (85). A former professor of New Testament at the Theological Hall, Knox College, Pollard was a theologian of international repute who served at Otago from 1963 until his retirement in 1981.

Dr **Mary Miles** (BA 1993, MHealSc 1997, PhD 2006) (62). Director of the Centre for Postgraduate Nursing Studies at the University's Christchurch School of Medicine and Health Sciences (2000-2005). A driving force behind the growth of the centre, Miles contributed significantly to course development and oversaw a doubling in numbers enrolled.

#### ACHIEVEMENTS

Dr **Rhonda Rosengren** (Pharmacology and Toxicology) will receive \$133,000 from the Breast Cancer Research Trust of New Zealand over the next two years to advance research into the use of hormones to control growth of breast cancer cells. The research seeks to identify anti-cancer and anti-growth properties.



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## UNICLIPPINGS

Professor **Robert Webster** (BSc 1955, MSc 1957) of St Jude's Children's Research Hospital, Tennessee, won NZBio's Distinguished Biotechnologist of the Year Award for his work in virology and avian influenza.

Professor **Terry Crooks** (Education) received a Secondary Principals' Association of New Zealand Leadership in Education Award for his work in developing standards-based assessment in New Zealand.

School of Dentistry staff Professor **Jules Kieser**, **Norman Firth** and **Ross Meldrum** received the New Zealand Special Service Medal (Asian tsunami) for their forensic work in Thailand.

## EMERITUS PROFESSORS

The following staff members were granted the status of Emeritus Professor earlier this year: Professor **Chris Heath**, Professor **Linda Holloway**, Professor **Jim Hood**, Professor **Elizabeth Isichei**, Professor **Alastair Rothwell** and Professor **Richard Sainsbury**.

## SCHOLARSHIPS/FELLOWSHIPS

University of Otago doctoral candidates **Holly Mathieson** (music) and **Julia Young** (biochemistry) won Elman Poole prestigious travelling scholarships which provide up to \$25,000 each for overseas study.

Three Otago PhD students have received Top Achiever Doctoral Scholarships, which provide an annual stipend of \$25,000 and pay fees for up to three years. They are **Jonathan Kitchen** and **Victoria Argyle** (both chemistry) and **Catherine Grueber** (zoology).

Tourism masters' students **Barbara Valentine** and **Eliza Raymond** each received \$15,000 Ministry of Tourism Research Scholarships provided to high calibre master's-level students for research highly relevant to the industry.

Five Otago health science students were awarded prestigious Ministry of Health Pacific Health Workforce Awards worth \$10,000. The recipients were **Shiva Nair**, **Vaaiga Autagavaia**, **Xaviour Walker**, **Jared Williams** and **Sina Barrott**.

## HONORARY DOCTORATE AND HIGHER DEGREE

In May, the University conferred an honorary Doctor of Science (HonDSc) on Dr **Beryl Howie** (MB ChB 1951) in recognition of her medical and humanitarian work in India, and an earned Doctor of Medicine on Dr **Graham Mills** (MB ChB 1985) for his research into *Chlamydia Pneumoniae* and the respiratory tract.



# Wall of Fame unveiled

OTAGO'S ABILITY TO PRODUCE TOP-FLIGHT GRADUATES was underscored by the unveiling of the School of Physical Education's Wall of Fame on 6 May.

Set up as a means of recognising outstanding University of Otago physical education graduates, the inaugural inductees included All Blacks' coach Graham Henry, renowned marathoner Lorraine Moller, former Silver Ferns' netball coach Leigh Gibbs, Black Ferns' captain Dr Farah Palmer, and two distinguished sports scientists, Dr Lindsay Carter and the late Dr James Hay.

Carter was a student and a staff member at the School of Physical Education before a Fulbright Scholarship took him to the US. After time back at Otago he moved to San Diego State University where he was a professor from 1962-92.

Hay completed his DipPhEd in 1956, using it as a launching pad for a distinguished career, largely at the University of Iowa in the United States where he gained a full professorship in 1978.

Henry completed his DipPhEd at Otago in 1969 before becoming a physical education teacher. He eventually became Principal of Kelston Boys' High School from 1987 to 1996, before moving into rugby coaching full-time.

Moller stands out as one of New Zealand's finest women athletes, winning 15 of the 28 international marathons she contested, including three wins in the Avon World Marathon Championship, the 1984 Boston Marathon and an Olympic bronze medal.

An outstanding netballer turned coach, Gibbs gained a diploma in physical education in 1976. Career highlights included captaining the New Zealand side to a world title in 1987 and later coaching the Silver Ferns between 1993-97.

Two-time World Cup-winning captain of the New



Photo: Lighthaus

Two of the School of Physical Education's inaugural Wall of Fame inductees, Dr Lindsay Carter and Lorraine Moller.

Zealand women's rugby team, Palmer first took up the sport at Otago. She completed her BPhEd(Hons) in 1994 and a PhD in sociology of sport in 2000. She now lectures in sport management and coaching, and is part of Te Au Rangahau (Māori Business Research Centre) at Massey University.

The Wall of Fame concept surfaced in 2003 when Associate Professor Rex Thompson left after more than 20 years with the University of Otago School of Physical Education and, as a departing gift, pledged a generous donation.

Dr Phil Handcock took up the challenge, convening a working group to bring it to fruition.

Two or three graduates will be added to the wall each year, with physical education graduates being asked to nominate suitable candidates.

2006

UNIVERSITY OF OTAGO  
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Lecture  
Series

Professor Jules Kieser ORAL SCIENCES *Blood, Sweat & Teeth — Adventures in Forensics*  
Thursday June 15 @ 7.30pm

Professor Brendan Gray MARKETING *Competitive Branding Practices of Professional and Business Services*  
Thursday June 29 @ 7.30pm

Associate Professor William Harris POLITICAL STUDIES *Lebanon and Syria — The Politics of Murder*  
Thursday July 6 @ 7.30pm

Professor Donald Evans BIOETHICS *Does Business Need Ethics?*  
Thursday July 13 @ 7.30pm

Professor Thomas Rades PHARMACY *From Chemicals to Medicines*  
Thursday August 3 @ 7.30pm

Associate Professor Bob Lloyd PHYSICS *The End of Oil*  
Thursday August 10 @ 7.30pm

Professor Phil Harris MARKETING *The Good, The Bad and The Ugly — The Rise and Fall of Negative Advertising in Modern Political Marketing*  
Thursday August 24 @ 7.30pm

Professor Glenn Summerhayes ANTHROPOLOGY  
*Lapita and the colonisation of the Pacific*  
— *New evidence from Papua New Guinea*  
Thursday September 14 @ 7.30pm



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In 1973, policeman Ron Chambers left the sectarian violence of Northern Ireland behind for a new life in New Zealand, where, for 21 years, he served as proctor of Otago University.

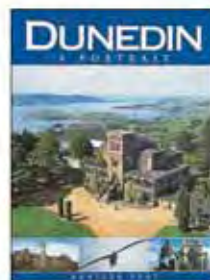
His recollections form an alternative history of the university in the 80s & 90s. Capping stunts, orientation hijinks, student protests, skyrocket wars and inter-college skirmishes are all described from a proctor's-eye view. Here the reader will meet - or perhaps remember - the Vomit Comet, the Messiah, Nick the Dick, the Flying Proctors, and Ox, among a host of colourful personalities.



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### AMASSING TREASURES FOR ALL TIMES: SIR GEORGE GREY AND HIS LIBRARIES

Donald Jackson Kerr

Sir George Grey was an outstanding British colonial statesman in the nineteenth century. Brilliant and inscrutable, Grey maintained contact with key Victorians, from Darwin to Whately, throughout his life. As Governor of New Zealand, South Australia and the Cape Colony, he played a central role in overseeing the development of these colonies into politically autonomous entities. He was also an obsessive collector of rare books and artefacts, including early indigenous-language publications, which he selflessly bequeathed to the people he governed.

Donald Jackson Kerr is currently the Special Collections librarian at the University of Otago, and the former librarian of the Auckland Grey Collection. His study sheds desperately-needed light on the genius and magnanimity of an increasingly-controversial figure, demonstrating the complex humanity underlying his apparent remoteness. It is the first study on Grey of its kind.

### LIVING TOGETHER: TOWARDS INCLUSIVE COMMUNITIES

Edited by Claire Freeman & Michelle Thompson-Fawcett

How do we develop inclusive, engaged communities? In this book experts in community planning review some of the challenges, strategies and solutions, using New Zealand case studies. The needs of specific groups – whether migrant, the young, elderly or indigenous – and community ties with local and central government are explored, as are the Treaty of Waitangi, the influence of feminism and the development of online communities. Importantly, the book provides tools for achieving healthy communities, with strategies to empower community members and ensure they are heard.

The editors are from the Department of Geography, University of Otago. Claire Freeman is director of the planning programme and has held lecturing posts at universities in Britain, South Africa and New Zealand. She was a planner for the Urban Wildlife Trust in Birmingham, UK. Michelle Thompson-Fawcett is senior lecturer in planning and environmental management and worked in planning practice for 10 years. With Claire Freeman, she co-edited *Living Space: Towards sustainable settlements in NZ* (Otago, 2003).

### OTAGO UNIVERSITY PRESS RECENT RELEASES

*Gathering for God: George Brown in Oceania*, by Helen Bethea Gardner (April 2006).

*Disputed Histories: Imagining New Zealand's Pasts*, edited by Tony Ballantyne and Brian Moloughney (April 2006).

*A Wind Harp*, poems by Cilla McQueen (CD, April 2006).

*Landfall 211: Borderlines*, edited by Tze Ming Mok (May 2006).

*The Joy of a Ming Vase*, poems by Ruth Dallas (June 2006).

*The Word Went Round*, poems by David Howard (July 2006).

### RECENTLY PUBLISHED BOOKS OF OTAGO ALUMNI

*Surgeon Scientist*, by Graham Hill, Random House NZ (May 2006).

*Justice and Jellybeans*, by Ron Chambers, edited by Paul Sorrell, Missing Stocks Press (May 2006).

*The Goose Bath*, by Janet Frame, edited by Pamela Gordon, Denis Harold, Bill Manhire, Random House NZ (March 2006).

*... from under the bench*, by David Best, Steel Roberts (2006).

*The War Between the Two Beasts and the Two Witnesses: A Chiastic Reading of Revelation 11: 1-14:5*, by Tony Siew, London & New York: T & T Clark (2005).

*Island Ministers: Indigenous Leadership in 19th Century Pacific Islands Christianity*, by Raeburn Lange, Pandanus Press, Canberra (2005).

*The Out of Bounds Church*, by Steve Taylor, Zondervan (2005).

*Hourglass*, by Sue Wootton, Steel Roberts (October 2005).

*The Birth of the Universe: Te Whanautanga o te Ao Tukupu. Māori Oral Cosmogony from the Wairarapa*, by Agathe H F Thornton, Reed Publishing NZ (2004).

*Robinson's Thoughts for Old SINners*, by Robin Mitchell, Cadsonbury Publications.

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

# Events and Reunions

## Latest Events

**NEW YEAR, NEW IDEAS:** THE FIRST OF OTAGO'S 2006 alumni events was also the first of its kind – a celebration of our Pacific Islands connections in Auckland on 9 March. The event was a joint alumni-staff enterprise, with speeches from Pro-Vice-Chancellor for Humanities, Professor Alistair Fox, and His Honour A'e'au Semi Epati, (LLB 1974), New Zealand's first District Court Judge from the Pacific Islands, and music from Papali'i Pita Taouma (BDS 1971).

**INVERCARGILL'S CIVIC THEATRE** ON 24 MARCH WAS THE venue for a congenial reception and a slideshow of the newly-refurbished Arana Hall, providing an insight into modern residential hall life. Arana's Head of Hall, Jamie Gilbertson, was delighted to meet with foundation-year resident, Dr David Pottinger.

**AN ENTHUSIASTIC RESPONSE TO THE ALUMNI NIGHT** AT the Fortune filled the downstairs theatre on Friday 21 April, for the opening night of Neil LaBute's *The Shape of Things*. There were strong Otago links in this tale of student life and love, with theatre studies graduate Serena Cotton (BA 1999) playing the lead, and theatre studies lecturer Jerry Jaffe directing.

**ON 28 APRIL, THE MELBOURNE CHAPTER'S ANNUAL** dinner was well attended, with close to 100 local alumni welcoming the Chancellor Lindsay Brown, and Dean of Law Mark Henaghan. The guest speaker was eminent forensic psychiatrist Professor Paul Mullen.

**PROFESSOR GARY NICHOLLS** WAS THE GUEST SPEAKER AT the Christchurch alumni evening on 17 May. Professor Nicholls has returned from overseas to spend a year co-directing the Cardioendocrine Research Unit at Otago's Christchurch campus, the Christchurch School of Medicine and Health Sciences.

## Upcoming Events

**THE NEW ZEALAND INTERNATIONAL SCIENCE FESTIVAL** returns to Dunedin this year, with Otago once more closely involved. The main event on campus is Science – Do It, Live It, Love It – a two-day expo at the St David lecture theatres on 7-8 July. More than 22 departments are contributing a range of activities to demonstrate that science is an exciting part of everyday life. It's free and family-friendly, and organisers expect to exceed the 3000-visitor count of the 2004 festival.

**THERE WILL ALSO BE A CAFÉ SCIENTIFIC DOWNSTAIRS** at the Staff Club on Thursday, 6 July. This is a lively and informal evening during which the audience can discuss a topic of interest with an expert panel – in this case, the relationship between science and business.

**PLANS ARE UNDER WAY FOR THE NEW ZEALAND Alumni Convention 2006:** connecting Asia with Aotearoa New Zealand, to be held at Wellington's Te Papa from 5-8 November. Registrations are open and the preliminary programme is available on the convention website: [www.wellington.govt.nz/about/international/alumni.html](http://www.wellington.govt.nz/about/international/alumni.html)

Aimed at alumni, particularly those in Asia, of New Zealand tertiary education institutions, the conference programme will be built around the themes of re-connecting, doing business in New Zealand and Asia, celebrating innovation and emerging technologies within New Zealand and Asia, understanding the world at large and our place in it, and New Zealand today.

There will be an Otago alumni reception in Wellington on Tuesday, 7 November, which all Otago convention delegates will be most welcome to attend. And of course, those who come to New Zealand for the event are reminded that if you've made it this far, you're over halfway to Otago: take advantage of the opportunity to see what's changed in Dunedin and on campus since you were last there.

PACIFIC ISLANDS





# Alumni Update

## Event Schedule 2006

Dunedin – Café Scientific	Thursday 6 July 2006
Sydney	Friday 4 August 2006
Whangarei	Friday 25 August 2006
Hamilton	Thursday 7 September 2006
Tauranga	Friday 8 September 2006
Napier	Friday 22 September 2006
Nelson	Friday 13 October 2006
Suva	Thursday 26 October 2006
London	Saturday 4 November 2006
Wellington	Tuesday 7 November 2006

## Reunion

Salmond Hall 35th Anniversary – 26-27 August 2006.

Much has changed in the 35 years since Salmond Hall first opened its doors to Dunedin tertiary students, and in August, Salmond will be celebrating and sharing these experiences with former residents.

Saturday 26 August: meet up with old friends over drinks and dinner at the Hall.

Sunday 27 August: service at the Salmond Hall Chapel. Please express interest by email: [asstmaster@salmondhall.ac.nz](mailto:asstmaster@salmondhall.ac.nz) or telephone 03 473 0750. Updates will be posted on the Salmond Hall webpage.

## Alumni Update

DR RAY KING (BA 1962, MA 1965) RECEIVED THE ORDER of Australia (OAM) in January for his work in mental health, suicide prevention and with older men's groups. King's award comes after a long and varied career in education and psychology which he began as a lecturer at Otago. After moving to the University of Sydney in 1971, he later became the first director of their Aboriginal Education Centre, and also founder and first director of the university's Community Research Centre. After retiring in 1989, he registered as a psychologist, and continued to work as a visiting professor and in an honorary capacity, and in 1993 was made a Fellow of the Australian College of Education.

ST MARGARET'S COLLEGE'S ALUMNI GROUP HAD A double reason to celebrate in May, with the conferment of two doctorates with special significance for the college. Dr Beryl Howie's honorary doctorate in science recognised the medical and humanitarian work in India which led St Margaret's to make her a Fellow of the College last year, while Susannah Grant's completed PhD in history now gives her more time to devote to her current commission – the official St Margaret's College centenary publication. Friends and students of the college marked the occasion with Howie and Grant on 21 May.

STUDENTS FROM THE EARLY 1970S WHO'VE BEEN TO SEE the film *Sione's Wedding* might think that the wedding singer looks familiar – that's because it's Papali'i Pita Taouma (BDS 1971) and his band providing the music during the reception for the event which gives the movie its name.

FOR SEVERAL GENERATIONS OF OTAGO ALUMNI, JOE TUI'S name is legendary, synonymous with late nights and fast food. The latest incarnation of Tui's café has recently closed, but the name lives on in New Plymouth, where the Spotswood College Joe Tui Club continues to induct Otago graduates into its inner circle as they join the college staff.

WHEN MARNA MACDONALD (MUSB 1936) OF DUNEDIN turned 100 in April, she became our oldest confirmed graduate still living (although not our earliest – we're still in contact with a number of students from the 1920s). If anyone knows of other alumni who've either reached or are approaching centenarian status, please let us know so we can ensure their records are up to date.

SOPRANO ANNA LEESE (MUSB (HONS) 2002), WHO LEFT Otago for the Royal College of Music with an already impressive list of musical honours to her credit, will make her Covent Garden debut later this year as Tamiri in Mozart's *Il Re Pastore*.

OUTGOING GOVERNOR-GENERAL DAME SILVIA Cartwright (LLB 1967, HonLLD 1993) been appointed as one of two international judges in the Trial Chamber of the Cambodia War Crimes Tribunal. The tribunal will look into crimes against humanity which occurred during Pol Pot's 1975-1979 Khmer Rouge regime, under which an estimated 1.7 million Cambodians died. Dame Silvia's term as Governor-General ends in August.

# Otago Appeal

## Alumni generosity reaps rewards

Gifts to the 2005 Care to be Wise Otago Appeal are making a real difference at the University this year.

They have funded 11 new undergraduate scholarships, two worthy research projects and the purchase of a valuable digital resource for the University library – *Early English Books Online*.

Through the generosity of donors to the Appeal, 10 new New Zealand students (from Auckland to Invercargill) and one from Australia are beginning their studies at Otago across a range of disciplines. These are outstanding young people who have a strong desire to study and achieve, bringing with them talents and energy certain to enrich the Otago campus. The scholarships cover the cost of tuition fees for the scholars' first year of study.

Continuing the commitment to supporting research which has the potential to benefit the entire community, 2005 Appeal funds have been allocated to projects relevant to the

well-being of older people and children – *Age-related changes in long-term retention: implications for memory development* and *General practitioners' assessment of asthma in the children of the New Zealand cohort study*.

The purchase of *Early English Books Online* is a wonderful addition to the University's library as it contains virtually every work printed in England, Ireland, Scotland, Wales and British North America, as well as works printed elsewhere in English, from 1473 to 1700.

The ongoing commitment of alumni to the Care to be Wise Otago Appeal plays a critical role in helping the University of Otago maintain its tradition of world-class education and research. It also enables a generation of new students to grow and learn, and enjoy the Otago experience as those who have gone before them.

Thank you for your generosity.



The 11 students who received scholarships funded by the 2005 Care to be Wise Otago Appeal.

### CARE TO BE WISE OTAGO APPEAL 2006

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# Court of Convocation

## Court of Convocation elections

Later this year the University of Otago's Court of Convocation will be invited to vote for court representatives to the University's Council.

The Otago Court of Convocation comprises all those who hold a degree from the University of Otago, as well as those who hold three-year diplomas (the Diploma in Home Science, the Diploma in Physical Education and the Diploma in Land Surveying). However, the Court as such never meets; its sole purpose is to elect three of its members to the University Council. These elections are held every four years and are run under statutory requirements set down in the Election of

Members of the Council Statute 1991. The requirements are published in the University Calendar and on the University website ([www.otago.ac.nz](http://www.otago.ac.nz)).

Court representatives are eligible for re-election, subject – like all Council members – to serving no more than four consecutive terms of four years. The next election for three Court of Convocation members on the University of Otago Council will be held in November this year. Nominations will be sought by public advertisement in September and voting papers will be sent out in early October with the next issue of the *University of Otago Magazine*.

## Graduates encouraged to vote

University Chancellor Lindsay Brown is one of the three Court of Convocation members on Council, elected in 2002 after having been an appointee of the Minister of Education. He encourages Otago graduates and diplomates to vote in the forthcoming elections and thereby have a say in the future of the University.

The Council has overall responsibility for the well-being of the University. It is a democratic body and comprises representatives from a number of stakeholders, including graduates elected by the Court of Convocation.

"Each Court of Convocation representative is one of up to 20 members on Council and has as much say as anyone else," Brown says. "We all work together in the overall interest of the University."

The University is a very substantial organisation. It has assets of \$1 billion, is the second largest employer in the South Island and plays an enormously important role in Dunedin. It is also a significant New Zealand institution as a national university, with its campus in Dunedin, health sciences facilities in Christchurch and Wellington, as well as a presence in Auckland.

Brown believes the next four years will be both exciting and challenging for the University.

"Significant building programmes have been announced to meet space shortages and there have been favourable messages from the Minister for Tertiary Education about promising changes to funding for universities.

"Challenges include the flattening of domestic student numbers and declining international student numbers – a situation confronting all New Zealand universities.

"There is also the ongoing issue of how best to ensure that high-spirited student behaviour does not unreasonably impinge on the residents of North Dunedin who have generally been so welcoming to students. We wish to retain Otago's unique campus environment and student experience.

"The Strategic Direction to 2012 signals more exciting developments, including an increasing emphasis on research excellence

and research-informed teaching, and the importance of contributing to the national good and international progress.

"I encourage anyone who has a continuing interest in the University to exercise their right to vote."



University Chancellor Lindsay Brown

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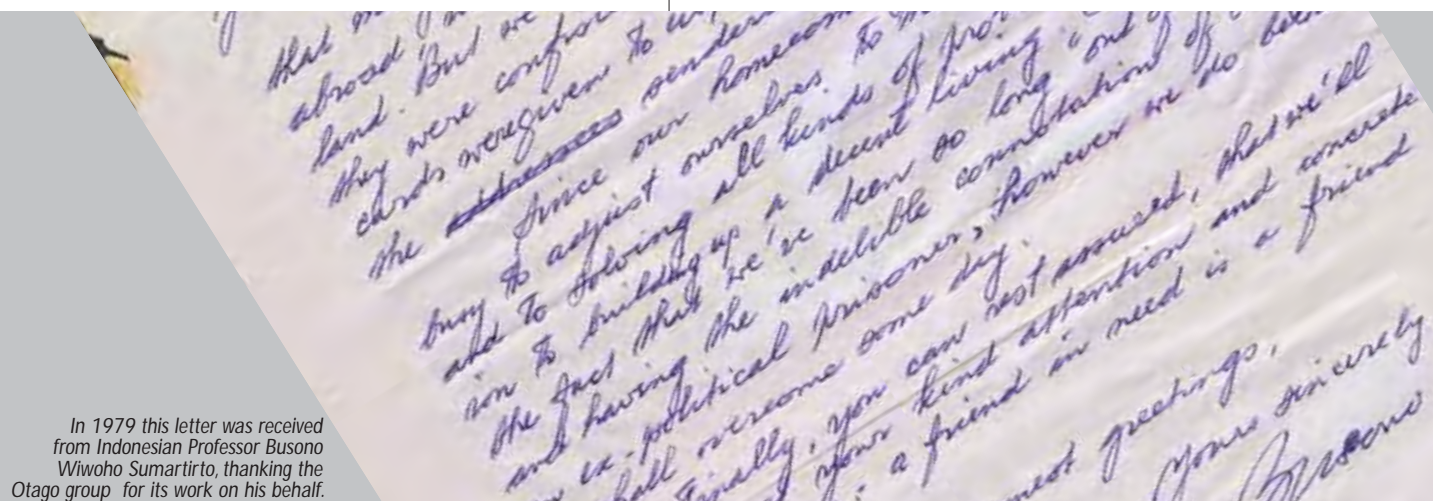
# That hot-bed of human rights activism:

BOB ENTWISTLE CREDITS A COMMUNAL TEAROOM IN the 1960s for promoting moral outrage at human rights injustices. It was there that the former physics lecturer met with colleagues from humanities and maths departments, and debated issues of the day.

When the tearoom closed down, the coffers were sent to Amnesty International's New Zealand office in Wellington, which encouraged the Otago academics to form their own group – and with this Entwistle began his association with the human rights organisation in which he is now believed to be Dunedin's longest-standing member.

The contributions Otago Amnesty members made included drawing upon their specialist knowledge for particular causes. Emeritus professor in medicine, Olaf Simpson, for example, participated in an international group concerned about reports of condemned prisoners in China being harvested for their organs. "They were anaesthetised, had their organs removed and in the process, of course, they died."

Simpson's concern about human rights abuses in China saw him present a full-page open letter in the *Otago Daily Times* to the Chinese Ambassador, calling for an investigation into unfair trials and reports of torture and ill-treatment in



In 1979 this letter was received from Indonesian Professor Busono Wiwoho Sumartirto, thanking the Otago group for its work on his behalf.

The first meeting was held in 1969 at Otago's Dental School, drawing people from across the campus, including Jim Harvie from Russian, Eric Herd from German, microbiologist Dick Wilkins and fellow physicist Fred Ansbacher, among others.

The group adopted the case of fellow academic, Indonesian Professor Busono Wiwoho Sumartirto, imprisoned along with his wife for 14 years without ever having been tried for a crime, probably on the grounds of his suspected opposition to the government. A highlight, says Entwistle, was receiving a letter from Busono upon his release in late 1979 thanking the group for its work, which included contributing to the medical expenses for his wife.

Soon the group split into three, located in the suburbs where the members lived, with University staff continuing to take on public roles. These included law lecturer Margaret Bedggood, who went on to become Human Rights Commissioner, chair of the New Zealand section and a member of Amnesty's International executive committee.

Drapchi Prison, Lhasa. His actions elicited an invitation from the Chinese Embassy in the columns of the *ODT*, including an invitation to visit the prison.

"Unfortunately, such visits can readily be manipulated by the authorities and can lead to repercussions for prisoners who speak out or pass information to the visitors, so it was decided not to accept," Simpson says, a little regretfully.

Now in his 80s, Simpson met with the Chinese Ambassador in Wellington recently, to discuss his concerns about the treatment of prisoners.

Today, the undisputed mother of Amnesty in Dunedin is psychology research technician Betty Mason-Parker. She remembers being invited to her first Amnesty meeting by her boss, Professor Cliff Abraham, in 1983. By 1985 she was serving on the movement's executive committee and 1986 became chair. "The first week in the job, the Cohens (drug-addicted mother and son) were arrested," she recalls. "The next month, the Fijian military staged a coup."

# Amnesty International at Otago?

Mason-Parker, however, was not easily fazed. And she's not easily depressed. In fact, despite the terrible circumstances of the people she aims to help, she says it's the optimism of the movement that continues to motivate and inspire her.

"People always ask, 'How do you know you're making a difference?' I don't. But I do know that doing nothing makes no difference.

"Amnesty is a movement full of people who, when faced with evidence of terrible violations, are not prepared to do nothing. We have such freedom in New Zealand – we need to use that freedom wisely."

rights activist Amena Shams, who spoke to a full Union Hall on the plight of women in her country; they also supported Falun Gong members, who used a controversial art exhibition at the University to highlight the brutal suppression of their movement by the Chinese government).

Despite its profile, 2005 Otago University student group co-ordinator Daniel Williams, now employed at Amnesty International's campaign office in Wellington, remarks it was "pretty disappointing" that out of the 20,000 students to attend Otago University last year, "only eight were interested enough in human rights to turn up to meetings and run stalls".



Photo: supplied

Each year Dr Charles Pigden swims Otago Harbour to raise money for Amnesty International.

Such a person not doing nothing is philosophy lecturer Dr Charles Pigden. "Human rights are fundamental, more fundamental even than democracy, in that democracy can only develop where human rights are respected."

To express his belief, every year he swims ever-increasing distances in the Otago Harbour, recently setting a personal record of 18 kilometres (Aramoana to St Leonards) in 4½ hours.

And like Mason-Parker, Pigden agrees the University is a good place to be a human rights activist. He raises nearly \$1,000 per swim for the movement – now totalling nearly \$9,000 – gleaned almost entirely from colleagues at the University.

But while numerous Otago staff members are members of Amnesty International – including, says Mason-Parker, any number of "closet Amnestoids" – there is no campus-based group. Similarly, the student group has ebbed and flowed. None currently exists, despite its presence being strong last year (the group's activities included hosting Afghani human

He notes the case being worked on by one of Dunedin's Amnesty International groups, relating to student activists in Myanmar (Burma) who wrote a history of the student movement in their country. The editor, Ko Aung Htun, was sentenced to 17 years' imprisonment and has been tortured.

"You'd expect that at a university, where freedom of thought and expression is so fundamental, there would be a bit more of an appreciation of the value of these rights being respected," Williams comments.

Nicola Mutch

Nicola Mutch is the newly-elected chairperson of Amnesty International Aotearoa New Zealand. She graduated in Art History from Otago in 1998 and is now commencing doctoral studies in the Department of Marketing. She is a regular contributor to the *University of Otago Magazine*.





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