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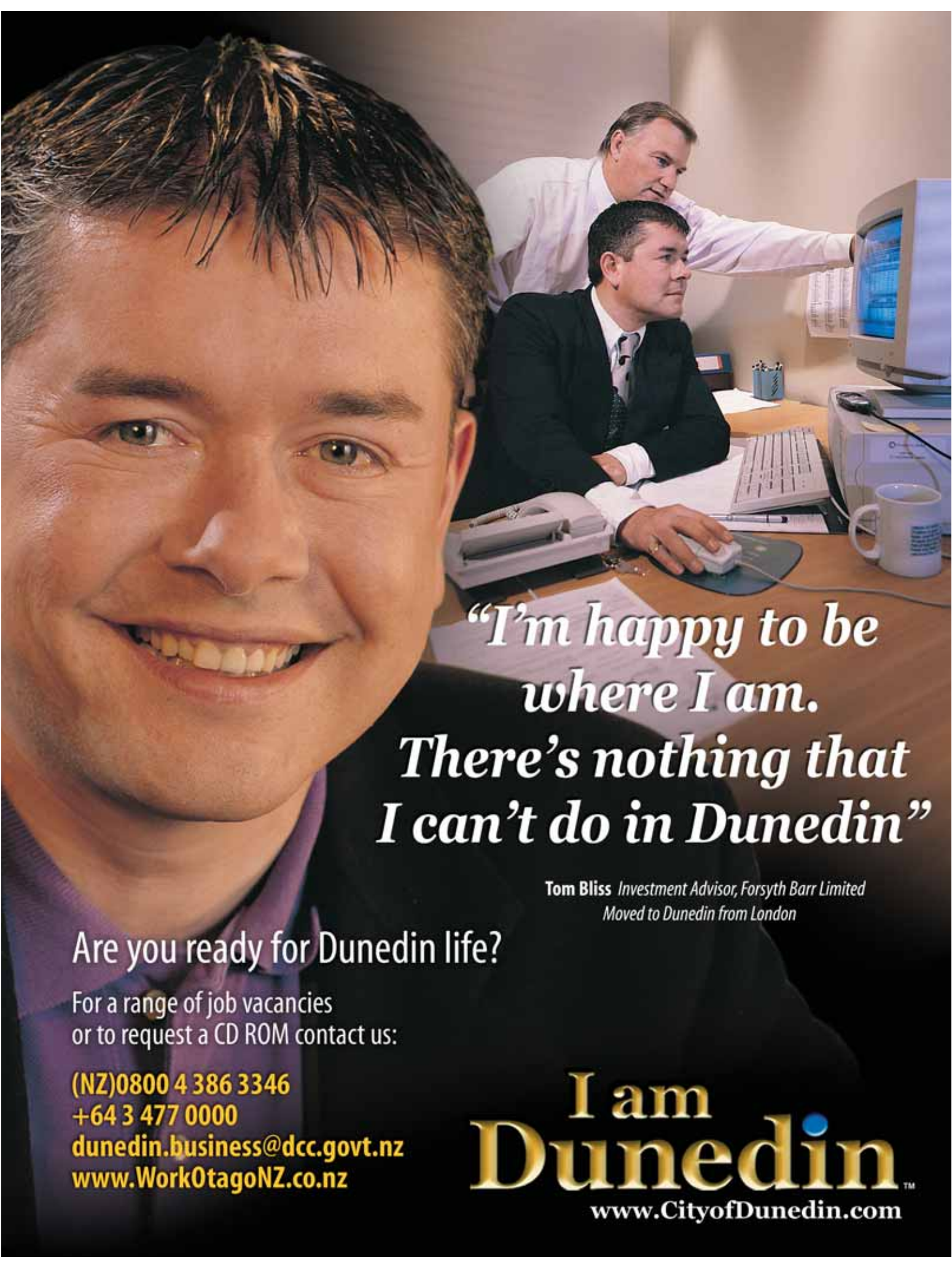
MAGAZINE

ISSUE 10: FEBRUARY 2005

Through the lethal haze

A TRIBUTE TO JANET FRAME
POLITICIANS, MEDIA AND THEIR IMPACT ON VOTERS
NZ'S CLEAN, GREEN IMAGE AND THE GM DEBATE
EMMY-WINNING PRODUCER JULIAN GRIMMOND





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VC's COMMENT

In late November we had a delightful function to celebrate the launch of the Eamon Cleary Chair in Irish Studies. Entertained by Irish music, senior academics and members of the community mingled with Mr Cleary and his friends – and looked forward to a major boost to the study of Irish culture at Otago.

The generosity of Eamon Cleary is noted elsewhere in this magazine (pages 38-39). His gift to the University will enable the appointment of a talented scholar who can build on existing strengths in research and teaching on Irish literature, history, spirituality and music. We hope to develop collaborative links and exchanges with partner universities in Ireland. The advent of this development has been greeted with enthusiasm not only from people at Otago, but also from other New Zealanders with an appreciation of the strong Irish heritage of this country.

The new Chair in Irish Studies can be included in the Leading Thinkers initiative, part of the University's Advancement Programme. For suitable projects, the Government has agreed to match private donations to the University of Otago on a dollar-for-dollar basis. This enables Otago to build on the generosity of donors and achieve far more than would otherwise be possible.

Philanthropy has been an important factor underlying the remarkable success of top American universities. In order to secure our goal of providing New Zealand with a world-class university, we cannot rely on Government funding alone. New Zealand has not enjoyed such a strong tradition of private philanthropy, but our University has attracted more endowments over 135 years than any other in this country. Many of the distinctive features of Otago (such as endowed chairs and residential colleges) reflect the generosity of individual and corporate donors.

During the celebrations surrounding the announcement of Eamon Cleary's gift, several people approached me with an interesting question. Given the heritage of this University – founded as it was in the early days of the "New Edinburgh" settlement – shouldn't we have a Chair in Scottish Studies as well? Perhaps one or more of our alumni or friends might be interested in endowing such a development. If so, we would love to hear from you!

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

Through the

COINCIDING WITH THE ENFORCEMENT OF THE
OTAGO RESEARCHERS CONTINUE TO PRODUCE
SECOND-HAND SMOKE AND ARE HELPING TO

THE BIG QUESTIONS ABOUT SMOKING HAVE BEEN answered and the answers are as ugly as they are unequivocal. Cigarettes make you sick and, given enough time, will kill you.

So far, so depressing.

However, there's plenty that, until now, has not been properly understood, particularly about the quantifiable risks of second-hand smoke and the most effective ways to lead smokers out of the lethal haze of nicotine addiction.

That this is starting to clear is in no small part due to the work of a motivated group of Otago health researchers spread across three campuses whose findings could have a big influence on tobacco control policies.

This is not science in a vacuum. On their office walls you will find anti-smoking messages. Their findings have helped shape the just-released Ministry of Health five-year tobacco-control plan. They have identified the enemy and are helping to stub it out.

Eight of the researchers profiled their work at last year's Smoke-free Conference in Wellington which, as usual, took as its gloomy starting point the fact smoking kills 4,700 New Zealanders a year, making it this country's second leading cause of preventable death after diet. We are not alone in this; both Britain

(120,000 deaths) and Australia (18,000) list smoking as their major preventable killer. Hidden behind these heavy-duty statistics are the mortality rates of passive, or second-hand, smoking, which have always been harder to quantify.

But an ingenious research insight by Dr Sarah Hill, of the Wellington School of Medicine and Health Sciences, has changed that, leading to the world's largest and most precise study on passive smoking and mortality.

Her breakthrough came when she realised New Zealand Census-Mortality Study (NZCMS) data could be used to place people in either smoke-free households or households in which at least one other adult was a current smoker.

After identifying the New Zealand adult "never-smokers"

aged 45-74 who responded to the 1981 and 1996 censuses, Hill's study then compared death rates of never-smokers in the smoke-free households versus other households.

The result? Proof of a 15 per cent higher mortality than never-smokers who lived in a smoke-free household.

Hill is in Africa and couldn't be contacted for this article, but her supervisor Associate Professor Tony Blakely (principal investigator of the NZCMS) has little doubt about the importance of her work.



Photo: David Miles

Dr Sarah Hill whose research has led to the world's largest and most precise study on passive smoking and mortality.

lethal haze

SMOKE-FREE ENVIRONMENTS AMENDMENT ACT, UNIVERSITY OF
DEFINITIVE EVIDENCE OF THE DANGERS OF
STUB OUT SMOKING AND NICOTINE ADDICTION





Photo: Bill Nichol

Dr George Thomson

"It's very much a matter of trying to change general understanding about second-hand smoke. It's not just annoying; it's as dangerous as if you were spraying chemical sprays in your home. There's an abstract realisation that it's dangerous, but the degree of harm is poorly understood."

"If you average across all the previous studies it looks like there may be about a 15 per cent excess risk [for non-smokers living with smokers]. Then you put out a study which is the largest in the world and it comes in very tightly on that 15 per cent. It really firms up the evidence base. We think it's a pretty important study."

Making the breakthrough even more satisfying was its timing, allowing it to be released simultaneously with the Health Sponsorship Council's "Take It Outside" advertising campaign targeting smoking in the home.

"It's a classic example of great research coming out of a study that we didn't quite click to at the beginning, but also great research managing to come out at the same time as advocacy work, which was very rewarding. That doesn't happen very often."

The work fits well with that being done by Drs Nick Wilson and George Thomson, also from the Wellington campus. By reviewing existing studies here and overseas they have underlined harm from second-hand smoke, but also some effective tobacco control measures.

This has been timely, considering the provisions of the Smoke-free Environments Amendment Act which came into force on December 10 banning smoking in workplaces, including bars.

"There've been studies that are showing even a small number of cigarettes actively smoked per day give an increased risk of heart disease and that sort of level is equating with some of the heavier exposure that some workers are getting in smoky bars. When you look at it all these different ways, the evidence builds up to a very convincing level," Wilson says.

The bad news keeps coming, with a link between second-hand smoke and meningococcal disease risk of particular concern considering the New Zealand epidemic.

"It seems that irritant-type exposure makes it easier for the bug that is sitting in the back of many people's throats to penetrate their system and cause the meningococcal infection."

But where to from here? Surely the home is the final frontier and nobody is seriously suggesting the smoking police will be knocking on people's doors? Well, maybe they won't need to.

Thomson, whose research is into the best investments in tobacco control, says that after reviewing overseas and New Zealand studies he is convinced well-directed, well-funded anti-smoking campaigns do work.

New Zealand's adult smoking rate sits at about 25 per cent, but he believes only about five per cent of those smokers are an intractable hard core – the rest are waiting to be persuaded away from the fags.

“Other countries, states and provinces have shown you can make really rapid decreases of smoking prevalence with really active programmes if you have combinations of smoke-free environments, taxation, cessation programmes, media campaigns and other things.”

Part of the aim is bridging the disconnection between what people know they should be doing and what they are doing. An unpublished New Zealand survey shows more than 80 per cent of smokers think that others have a right to a smoke-free home, yet more than 55 per cent of teenagers with smoking parents said smoking did happen in their homes.

“It’s very much a matter of trying to change general understanding about second-hand smoke. It’s not just annoying; it’s as dangerous as if you were spraying chemical sprays in your home. There’s an abstract realisation that it’s dangerous, but the degree of harm is poorly understood.”

Thomson believes New Zealand is moving in the right direction with initiatives such as Quitline – which reported in July 2004 it had helped 23,000 smokers quit – the smoke-free workplaces legislation and last year’s “Take It Outside” campaign.

However, he says the country needs to increase the money put into tobacco control programmes from \$30 million to \$75-

\$80 million, which would bring the funding into line with US Centre for Disease Control guidelines for a population our size.

“There’s a funding gap, and still a major legislative gap with things like retail display of tobacco. And taxation – we need a significant annual rise.”

Direct intervention in homes might be beyond the reach of lawmakers, but don’t rule out smoke-free cars, he says, especially when children are passengers.

His research is moving on to the impact of the smoke-free workplace legislation and will study the media coverage of its impact.

Blakely’s work is now focusing on the role of smoking in social differences, such as the very high ethnic inequalities in health in New Zealand.

“We found out smoking causes lung cancer 50-odd years ago. We’re not in that league, but we’re starting to get very firm evidence about where it is contributing to the differences in society.”

The big question – why does anybody do it at all? – he finds slightly easier to answer.

In fact, it’s the root of the whole dirty business.

“It’s addictive, mate.”

Sean Flaherty



Associate Professor Tony Blakely: "... we're starting to get very firm evidence about where it (smoking) is contributing to the differences in society."

Photo: Bill Nichol



Research about tobacco experimentation among school-age children has shown some alarming results, suggesting a need for earlier intervention with smoke-free programmes.

Smkn no gd 4 u.

This could be the smoke-free message of the near future as Otago researchers have identified that youngsters are slipping under the tobacco control radar.

It seems that efforts to target school-age smokers may not be starting early enough – and that health professionals could use the evolving electronic communications world as a vehicle for health promotion.

Reporting the 2002 New Zealand Youth Lifestyle Study, PhD student Helen Darling and Dr Tony Reeder, of the Social and Behavioural Research in Cancer Group at the Dunedin School of Medicine, found some alarming results. The 14- to 17-year-olds surveyed revealed tobacco experimentation at an age as young as seven, an age well before most school smoke-free programmes kick in. This suggests a need for earlier intervention, and further findings point to ways it could be done.

A high percentage of children said they use the internet for health information, so that is an obvious avenue, Darling says. The opportunity exists to help develop the critical acumen that children need to bring to their internet use

– Google returns 18 million hits for smoking, and tobacco companies have set up websites that can be attractive and hard to distinguish from legitimate health sites.

Direct intervention with young people will be happening in Christchurch next year as a result of work by Dr Greg Hamilton of the Christchurch School of Medicine and Health Sciences.

Partnership Health Canterbury (a PHO) has agreed to fund a smoking-cessation pilot study in three Christchurch schools based on a successful schools' programme in Perth which Hamilton investigated.

"The better-designed school studies consistently show a reduction in cigarette smoking among young people," he says. Teasing out which parts of the programmes are having an effect is the tricky part.

To that end the Christchurch programme will use a three-pronged approach, combining classroom interventions with support for pupils who want to quit, and the development of school policies where smoking is seen as a health issue.

"While schools may view smoking as a discipline problem, they also need to address it as a health issue," Hamilton says.



Photo: Alan Dove

Surviving the quitting

At the Christchurch School's National Addiction Centre, the smoking habits of a group of adolescent psychiatric outpatients is also being studied.

Although she is yet to "push the button" on the data, assistant research fellow Karen de Zwart hopes she and colleague Associate Professor Doug Sellman may be able to cast light on the known, higher-smoking rate among young people with psychiatric problems.

"As far as we know we're the first study that's interviewed young people face to face at an outpatients' unit regarding their nicotine use."

The results were surprising. "Once we got bums on seats these young people totally opened up to us. We got some amazing data on their drug-taking behaviour."

The positive response from the young people also pointed to a future in which similar groups could be educated about the dangers of smoking.

"Clinicians are missing a vital opportunity to administer smoke-cessation interventions."

Sean Flaherty

SO YOU'VE TRIED EVERYTHING BUT JUST CAN'T give up smoking? Join the club. You won't be wanting for company.

Nicotine is a highly addictive chemical so it's little wonder that the best advice outside marooning smokers on a desert island without their cigarettes involves letting them down gently with nicotine replacement therapy. Maroon them if you must, but be kind and float them ashore with a crate of nicotine gum or patches.

Nicotine substitution works as well as or better than anything else, say Otago tobacco researchers.

Research psychologist Karen de Zwart says she might throw a cell phone with a speed-dial to smoking help service Quitline into that survival crate.

"It's a really difficult thing to do. Less than five per cent of smokers will quit on their first attempt.

"What with free quit packs, support from trained quit advisors and subsidised nicotine replacement therapy, I cannot stress the effectiveness of the Quitline enough."

Quitline: 0800 778 778 www.quit.org.nz



Puffers instead of puffing

"... my belief is wherever cigarettes are sold there should be the alternative forms of nicotine available."

Professor Julian Crane with a prototype of his nicotine puffer.

Photo: Bill Nichol

IT'S THE NICOTINE, STUPID!

Professor Julian Crane is on a mission to focus people's attention on that simple point.

In a nutshell: forget the tobacco. It's just a profoundly harmful way of delivering a relatively safe but highly addictive substance – nicotine.

"Here we've got a crazy situation. In tobacco we've got one of the most lethal chemical cocktails in the world and people are using it because that's the only vehicle they can get their nicotine in," says the Professor of Clinical Epidemiology at the Wellington School of Medicine and Health Sciences.

Take the tobacco away and there are other ways to get the nicotine. Patches and gum are already available. They don't fire out the same "hit" of nicotine smokers are craving, but studies have shown they are highly effective at reducing the desire to light up.

An even better way of delivering nicotine could be through an inhaler similar to those used by asthmatics, an idea Crane took to drug companies in 1984 only to be told he was 20 years ahead of his time.

Well, do the maths. Why aren't these inhalers on the shelves?

One problem is the inhalers – if they can be proved to work – sit in a grey area between therapy and recreation, making them an awkward sell for drug companies.

"The pharmaceutical industry finds itself in a dilemma because should it really be promoting a drug of addiction in an aerosol?"

Balanced against that is the inhalers' potential for harm reduction. This is a debate Crane believes society is ready to engage in because of the hard core of smokers left behind by the reforms and education campaigns which have dropped smoking rates.

"We're left with a group of people who cannot stop. Some just don't want to, but there's a big chunk of people who've made multiple attempts to quit and it hasn't worked."

Convinced by the probable worth of the inhalers, Crane knocked a few up and tested them on himself 20 years ago.

"It made me cough and splutter so it was clearly doing something. But I couldn't do it properly because filling aerosols is not that easy. I couldn't be sure how much nicotine was in there so I could never give it to anybody else."

Now, he is having prototypes made by an Indian pharmaceutical company that mass-produces generic inhalers, and he hopes to attract funding to progress work to a trial involving a group of smokers.

"Of course, nicotine aerosols are only one way to go. There are simpler things that can be done immediately. For example, if you're a smoker and can't stop, you can walk into any dairy and buy a packet of cigarettes. It's much harder to get a patch or gum because you have to go to a pharmacy.

"But my belief is wherever cigarettes are sold there should be the alternative forms of nicotine available. Every cigarette packet should carry not only a health warning, but say there are alternative safe forms of nicotine available."

He is disappointed by the "conservative" use of nicotine substitutes with most quit programmes employing them for a short finite duration. "Most people use them for six weeks and stop, and then gradually drift back to cigarettes. That's insane. They would do much better to continue to use the nicotine patches or nicotine gum (forever if necessary) rather than return to smoking cigarettes."

Sean Flaherty

A bolder spirit



Janet Frame, who died one year ago, regarded University as a refuge – a place to explore bold ideas and revel in the expansion of her own mind.

Photo: Reg Graham

WHEN JANET FRAME POPPED IN TO THE HOCKEN Collections in 2001 to see the exhibition curated by Michael King (*An Inward Sun: the World of Janet Frame*) she was resplendent in a blue and gold striped Otago scarf. When a staff member commented on her sartorial splendour, she said she'd just bought the scarf at the supermarket the previous night because she thought she ought to have something new to wear to the exhibition opening. Very Janet Frame. And, perhaps, a little blue and gold salute to a city that both stymied and comforted her at various stages of her life.

In her second autobiographical work, *An Angel At My Table*, Frame referred to Dunedin as “one of my oldest acquaintances, perhaps my only acquaintance” for it formed the backdrop to significant phases of her emotional life and intellectual growth. Born in Dunedin, she spent only her first six weeks in the city before the family eventually relocated to Oamaru. She returned in 1943 to attend Teachers’ Training College and to study part-time at the University of Otago (in English, French and Psychology).

Though she enjoyed teaching young children, she was prey to an excruciating timidity, preferring to dodge morning and afternoon teas with other teachers and dreading the end-of-year visit from the school inspector. University, conversely, was her refuge – a place to explore bold new ideas and revel in the expansion of her own mind. She described this period as yielding an “intense feeling of wonder at the torrent of ideas released by books, music, art, other people; it was a time of finding shelter among the mightily capitalised abstractions of Love, Life, Time, Age, Youth, Imagination”.

When she returned to Oamaru to visit family she paraded her newly-decorated mind, partly because “the ignorance of my parents infuriated me”. She was especially fond of clobbering them with her new grasp on psychological theory: “I was dazzled by the new language and its powerful vocabulary. I could now say to members of my family, ‘That’s rationalisation, that’s sublimation, you’re really frustrated sexually, your super-ego tells you that but your id disagrees.’ Mother blushed when I said the word ‘sexually’. Dad frowned, and said nothing except, ‘So that’s what you learn at University and Training College.’ I explained to my sisters the significance of their dreams, how ‘everything was phallic.’”

“She was private, yes,
but the myth of the pathologically shy,
reclusive writer that followed Frame
throughout her life has, at times,
obscured the view of her
as a woman of delicious wit,
warmth and intelligence.”

This boldness of spirit rarely found flight outside the small safe circle of her family and close friends, but it was ever the cornerstone of her writing. She was private, yes, but the myth of the pathologically shy, reclusive writer that followed Frame throughout her life has, at times, obscured the view of her as a woman of delicious wit, warmth and intelligence.

There are many “Janecdotes” that testify to her irreverence and playful spirit. Her niece Pamela Gordon tells of a visit her aunt made to the Why Not Hair salon on Albany Street. Having made an appointment under the name Janet Clutha (her legal name by deed poll) she managed to confound the hairdresser who thought she looked vaguely familiar, but couldn’t quite work out who this friendly elderly lady reminded her of. Then midway through the haircut she triumphantly announced that she’d worked it out: her client looked awfully like that writer Janet Frame. And with customary impish delight, Frame replied, “So they tell me”.

There’s a lovely irony to the fact that the same woman who was to become one of New Zealand’s most distinguished writers once used to eye up the poetry pages of the University’s student magazine *Critic* with awe and hope.

Frame wrote: “I longed to be brave enough to submit a poem to *Critic*... I studied the stories and poems and dreamed of seeing my poems printed, myself *speaking out* boldly, brilliantly, in denial of my timidity, isolation, and fear of The World. I knew that inside the Student Union building there was a postbox inviting contributions: I was not brave enough to enter the Student Union building. Although I dreamed of writing poems that would startle and satisfy with their brilliance, I knew that I had not the talent, the assurance, the wonderful maturity that spoke so clearly in the poetry pages of *Critic*.”

She eventually got far more than a bit of space in the *Critic*. She had 12 novels, four story collections and one book of poetry published. She was awarded the University’s

Burns Fellowship in 1965 (without even having applied for it), received an honorary Doctor of Literature degree, was nominated for the prestigious Nobel Prize for Literature not long before her death in 2004, was named an “icon” by the Arts Foundation of New Zealand, awarded the Prime Minister’s Award for Literary Achievement, and now has an entire University English course devoted to her literary brilliance – ENGL 465: *Janet Frame: “a stream entire unto herself”?*

After publication of *The Carpathians* in 1988, Frame was able to live comfortably off earnings from her backlist and write for her own pleasure away from the public eye. She never stopped writing though. In fact, she left a whole stack of poems that were to be published only after her death. These are currently being sorted through by one of her literary executors – Denis Harold – for a forthcoming edition of poetry. Shy to the end, she cunningly planned *not* to be around to celebrate what will undoubtedly be a fine literary and publishing moment. It would surely have warranted the purchase of yet another bold woollen scarf from Pak ’n Save.

The Hocken Collections bought some of Frame’s papers in 2002 and were bequeathed the rest after her death in 2004. In amongst this second lot of papers was a white file box labelled “Penny’s Box” (a box that Frame’s cat Penny adopted as a favourite sleeping place) which Gordon purposely left in with all her aunt’s other Hocken-bound material to see whether the archivists would unquestioningly accession it. The box contains: 1 x cat comb (which still boasts some of Penny’s fur), 1 x packet of tuna-flavoured cat treats and 1 x can of Dine Petite Gold Salmon & Chicken Pâté. Frame would surely have approved of her niece’s Frame-ish act, relishing perhaps that Penny also now had a place in one of the country’s most lofty cultural repositories.

Claire Finlayson



Photo: Reg Graham

Janet Frame (left) with her sister, June Gordon, at St Clair Beach, 2000.

PHOTOCOPIER IN THE ENGLISH DEPARTMENT

*A sound of pumping pumping
the pressure put on
increased
to draw up preserve wine
out of the clay lip
the stone eye
pupilled with fire.*

*Pupil of fire
photocopier
reproducing fire
at love cost, blood pressure,
wet print the point
of word burst.*

Janet Frame

– From *The Pocket Mirror* and written during Frame's tenure as Burns Fellow at the University of Otago (1965).

WHOSE LINE IS IT, ANYWAY?

In this, a general election year, the tenuous relationship between politicians and the media will come into sharp focus. Otago alumni and staff discuss what this might mean for voters.

AS LOVE-HATE RELATIONSHIPS GO, THERE ARE FEW THAT appear so constantly and keenly poised between loathing and ingratiating as that between politicians and the media.

The media rely on politicians for an endless supply of stories, conveniently pre-packaged with at least two opposing sides and subject matter of national importance. Former Radio New Zealand special correspondent for social issues Shona Geary admits the press gallery serves journalists well. “You see plenty of conflicts and personalities, and lots of little dramas getting played out.”

And all politicians rely on the media. Nothing transports their identities and messages into the lives of their electorate so effectively. “To ask me what I think of the media is like asking me what I think of the weather,” comments National MP Bill English. “It’s simply the environment we work in.”

But to live in the media environment is to live in a world of storms – and possibly wild animals. Dunedin South Labour MP David Benson-Pope (stunningly displaying his skills with the sound-bite) comments that “the media watch-dog has turned into the media attack-dog”.

As election year begins, it’s worth asking what this dynamic of grumpy obsession means for voters? While we prepare ourselves for non-stop opinion polls, campaign trails and leaders’ debates (with or without “worms”), who is being best served? And if it’s us – the viewers – then which bit of us? We as voters, looking for an impartial, critical voice to help us make sense of the political issues of the day? Or we as audience members, looking to be gripped by unfolding political dramas?

Otago Political Studies lecturer Dr Chris Rudd, who has examined the history of political coverage in the *Otago Daily Times*, is of the strong belief that the entertainment-hungry sides of our personalities are being pandered to at the expense of any left-brain requirement to engage critically with the enormous issues that may be at stake.

He is bothered by the need to reduce ideas into succinct “sound-bites” which he argues “dumbs down” not only political debate, but potentially also the politicians. “Some politicians,” he says, and names Winston Peters, “perform very well at that superficial level, but have arguments that fall to pieces when one digs a bit deeper.”



Rudd also rails against “the worm” (a gimmick he compares with the clap-ometer seen occasionally in game shows) for trivialising the complex process of assessing the quality of participants’ arguments.

It gets worse. Rudd has a particular problem with the prevalence of “personality politics” and “personality journalism” which he says is especially rife in television media. He cites the Mike Hoskings-led discussion on law and order during the 2002 election campaign as a particular low for national political debate.

“This was supposed to be an in-depth analysis of the issue, but Hoskings refused to allow the debate to achieve any depth at all. As soon as Nandor Tanczos tried to explain some of the rationale for his position, for example, he was cut off and accused of waffling.”

Rudd believes many of last election’s presenters revelled in their “schoolmaster’s” role, interrupting and directing the debate to a farcical degree. He believes one of the outcomes of such an approach “is the creation of the idea that politicians cannot be trusted; that they must be kept in line”.

An indirect consequence of this may be widespread disillusionment with politics in general.

Rudd’s research project, carried out with fellow Political Studies lecturer Dr Janine Hayward and which looked at political coverage in the *ODT* over the past 50 years, reveals that political debate has “without a doubt” gone through better times.

“In the ’60s political manifestos were printed in the newspapers verbatim. People were trusted with the raw information and to use that in their decision-making.”

Rudd acknowledges that a shift in reporting to just that – straight-out reporting – would place greater demands on the audience. However, he believes it is high time New Zealanders took greater responsibility for understanding and interpreting political issues. Along with that, he says, is the need for New Zealanders to take seriously their responsibility to elect a good government. And he believes that, given time, we would rise to the occasion.

“In the past, people used to refer to voting as a citizen’s duty. It barely makes sense to even say that any more. We talk about it as one’s right, but not one’s responsibility.”



Photo: Bill Nichol

Political scientist Dr Chris Rudd who believes New Zealanders should take greater responsibility for understanding and interpreting political issues, placing less reliance on commentators to do this for them.

Rudd sees further problems with the reliance he believes the public places on commentators to interpret and judge political issues – it's done ordinary people's brains out of a job. There is no longer a need, or role, for us in political debate. Indeed, Rudd wonders if this displacement of the voter's critical faculties may also be contributing to the steady decline of those participating in the electoral process.

"People are disengaged from community processes," he says. "They no longer go along to public meetings, ask questions or belong to local political groups. The media reinforce this disengagement."

Although one might assume that an all-pervasive media, bringing political debate to an ever-greater proportion of the populace, would increase involvement, Rudd believes the opposite has occurred. According to Ministry of Social Development figures, New Zealand proudly boasted an 89 per cent voter turnout in the 1984 election. By 2002 that had dropped to 72.5 per cent, the lowest in the country's modern history.

This places New Zealand just about bang on average for OECD countries and better than many more powerful democracies.

The United Kingdom's last election motivated only 58 per cent of those eligible to vote, the United States' 2004 election drew 59 per cent of eligible voters (up from 54 per cent in

2000 according to George Mason University figures) and Canada drew 55 per cent.

Rudd believes the climate of distrust engendered by the media, the banality of political coverage and the lack of any requirement for audiences to engage intellectually with the issues, are partly to blame.

His outlook is largely shared by Benson-Pope who, as a politician, must conduct his business in the public sphere.

"There is a major problem with the media becoming participants rather than reporters in the political process."

Worse still, Benson-Pope contends that a considerable amount of reportage is factually incorrect. He says he has seen too many instances – and cites Corngate as an example – in which the media have taken a strong position only for the information to later be discredited.

The standard of the press gallery has also slipped, he observes. "It used to be only the doyens of the profession. Now there are some people in there with little background and who don't have the time to examine issues in a meaningful level of detail."

It is a depressing summary of the profession which has the power to influence one's entire career in office. "I feel very cynical about there being a solution," says Rudd.

However, Geary says it could be, and indeed has been, worse. "There was a period in the late '90s when television

news stories lasted on average 90 seconds,” she says. “The entire television environment was driven by the need to make money.”

By comparison, television news stories may now last as long as three or four minutes per item. Geary, who has also worked as a political adviser to the Minister of Broadcasting and as a lecturer in journalism, believes levels of professionalism are increasing within the industry and that we are seeing more in-depth debate of a wider range of issues.

The public has demanded more intelligent analysis on television, and TVNZ’s Charter has allowed it to sidestep a strict ratings-driven commercial imperative. Enter *Agenda* and anything involving Kim Hill.

But as for verbatim manifestos appearing on public broadcasts, Geary can’t imagine anything worse. She recalls the period she spent in the Pacific Islands, “where news broadcasts could be half an hour of government speeches.

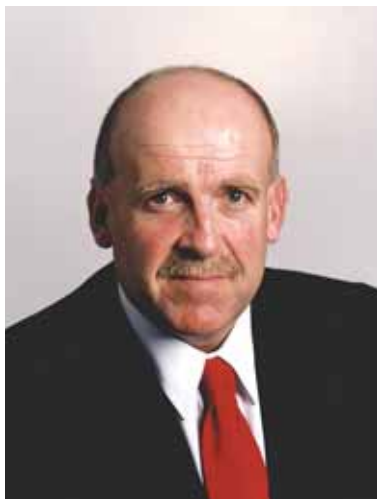
“It just gave total power to the government. It enabled them to have their voices, and nothing else, on television.

“If people want Hansard or political manifestos, they are all available on-line,” Geary continues. “But straight-out reporting of ‘he said, she said’ doesn’t give an issue a lot of shape. Top level political journalists in New Zealand generally have a large body of knowledge to draw upon. They have earned the right to place events in context and give particular interpretations, and suggest reasons for why people behave in certain ways.”

There is a difference between dumbing-down and expressing ideas in clear, accessible language, she believes. But by investing our journalists with authority, is there a chance their personalities will come to shape political debate and influence outcomes?

“To an extent,” says Geary. “There is a style of journalism, especially in the broadcast media, where one’s favourite journalists become something of a friend. If Kim Hill, for example, was to back any particular party, she may well influence others to do so as well.”

Not that she’d be likely to. “As soon as you give away your political colours, your credibility is gone,” says Geary.



David Benson-Pope: “There is a major problem with the media becoming participants rather than reporters in the political process.”

“Top level political journalists in New Zealand generally have a large body of knowledge to draw upon. They have earned the right to place events in context and give particular interpretations, and suggest reasons for why people behave in certain ways.”

– Shona Geary



Bill English: “To suggest that presenters of events, such as leaders’ debates, influence voters overstates their significance.”

She believes that, if journalists are good enough, you should never be able to guess their personal politics.

English, on the other hand, is of the view that “to suggest that presenters of events, such as leaders’ debates, influence voters overstates their significance”. He holds to a philosophy that public opinion will withstand most journalists’ attempts to put any particular angle on a story.

Even during the leaders’ debates of 2002, which English describes as “a disgrace – totally dominated by the host and rude, uncontrolled audience members”, he is sure most viewers would have identified when a politician was being treated fairly or otherwise, and incorporated that into their judgements.

He takes a pragmatic stance on sound-bites, acknowledging that journalists have limited space and a variety of agendas. “You certainly need to produce crisp, focused communication.”

English describes his experiences of dealing with the media as energising. “I enjoy the challenge of out-thinking them.”

So bring on the election campaign. Rudd thinks we’ll see a continued obsession with opinion polls, which he is okay about.

“There is evidence that they stimulate interest in politics generally. Despite the complaints of some politicians, polls do not appear to influence voters significantly.”

And if there’s one thing we know about the media, it’s that they won’t be satisfied with a boring race.

“If Labour continues to do well in the polls, the media will manufacture dramas surrounding potential coalition partners. Will it be the Greens, will it be the Māori Party? They will make a big deal about the ramifications of this. And we should see a lot of interest in the Māori seats as there will be more vigorous campaigning there.”

It makes you wonder: given the attacks and misrepresentation one is subject to, why would one want to be a politician at all?

“It’s the chance to change the world,” says English. “In the end, the media are just made up of observers. I’d much rather be a politician than one of them.”

Nicola Mutch

The GM debate: fact and fiction

NEW ZEALAND'S CLEAN, GREEN IMAGE
MAY NOT BE AS IMPORTANT AS WE THINK



Photo: Bill Nichol

Dr John Knight: His groundbreaking Trust and Country Image study found no evidence that the concept of a GM-free New Zealand has merit as a positioning statement.

DO EUROPEAN FOOD CONSUMERS REALLY CARE whether New Zealand grows genetically-modified crops? Are they concerned about the use of GM technology in farm animals destined for meat and milk production, or about buying meat from an animal that has grazed a genetically-modified pasture?

A groundbreaking Department of Marketing study has defined the way forward on these vexed issues, establishing boundaries for GM applications that might be “more” or “less” acceptable.

Published last year, *Trust and Country Image* is the first study to examine systematically marketplace acceptance of genetically-modified organisms and how New Zealand’s approach to GM

affects product image. Researchers talked with CEOs, executives, directors and chief food buyers (“gatekeepers”) from 17 influential European companies operating across diverse food sectors. Those interviewed discussed factors that determine their perceptions of food-producing countries, revealing that the presence of GM crops has little, if any, effect on these perceptions.

“There was a highly negative reaction to the prospect of using genetic modification in farm animals that produce meat or milk for food, and to the prospect of genetic modification of pasture plants grazed by animals raised for production of meat or milk – even when there were benefits in the potential reduction of reliance on drenches,” says Dr John Knight, who led the project.

Yet, there was an ambiguous response to whether the presence of GM crops in New Zealand would impact on perceptions of our non-GM food.

“When interviewees were questioned about countries such as America and Canada, where GM, organic and conventional crops are produced, there was no apparent negative impact on country image in relation to food quality and safety because of the presence of GM crops in those countries.”

While New Zealanders get hung up on the importance of our “clean, green image”, in general this label is not what gatekeepers’ perceptions of our food products hinge on, he says.

“It’s got more to do with maintaining high standards of hygiene, traceability, high MAF inspection standards, low chemical residues, superior packaging standards and excellent quality control standards than with images of scenery.”

A key problem, Knight says, is that the debate on the introduction of GMOs is poorly framed and polarised.

“Much of it has centred on the potential harm to New Zealand’s country image in foreign markets for food products – particularly European markets. A common misconception in New Zealand is that consumers in foreign markets are either ‘for’ or ‘against’ GMOs – usually ‘against’. A major study of public perceptions of agricultural biotechnologies in Europe has found this to be fallacious.”

Indeed, Knight’s study found no evidence that the concept of a GM-free New Zealand has merit as a positioning statement.

Knight cautions that New Zealand must remain highly vigilant in maintaining superior quality control and hygiene standards. He recommends deferring the commercial release of GMOs in farm animals used for meat or milk production, and probably in pasture and animal feed, until this technology becomes widely accepted in European markets, even though huge amounts of GM animal feed are used in Europe. He also urges caution in approving commercial GMO release in any crop situation where a conventional or organic version of that crop is currently exported to European markets, as some negative impact is possible.

New Zealand should, however, continue to develop GMO-based technology in non-food areas, such as mammalian pest control, bioremediation, methane emission, forestry and biopharmaceuticals, he says.

Knight adds that European Union expansion may limit New Zealand’s potential sales in Europe and we should be looking to our biggest food market, Asia.

“We need to look to the future and pay attention to the views of food buyers and consumers there.”

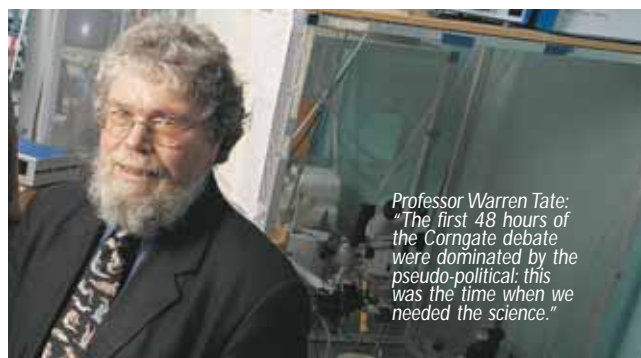


Photo: Alan Dove

Respected commentator on GM issues and Head of Otago’s Department of Biochemistry, Professor Warren Tate, says some Asian countries, including China and India, seem to be reasonably comfortable with introducing GM technology.

“In China this is a problem because they may not have the same regulatory standards for safety as we have. There is a discordance there we need to deal with but it also means that, if we introduce GM in our own products, then generally Asian markets shouldn’t be a problem.”

Tate says the dilemma for New Zealand is that it is surrounded by countries engaging in the development of GM crops and yet, as the report of the Royal Commission on GM revealed, New Zealanders have a deep-seated disquiet for this technology.

“As a scientist, I understand that scientists need to respect the concerns and anxieties of the public. I believe New Zealanders have the right to say ‘we are not ready for this technology’, no matter what we say.”

Often scientific discussion starts too late after a concern comes before the public, as happened in the case of Corngate, Tate says.

“The first 48 hours of the Corngate debate were dominated by the pseudo-political: this was the time when we needed the science.”

“Contaminations like this will continue to occur because many countries around us – North America, Asia, Australia and South Africa, for example – are practising GM.”

Like Knight, Tate believes the debate about genetic modification needs to shift to a position of more reasoned analysis.

“It is healthy that the intensity of debate on GM also includes existing practices.”

Vivien Pullar

BEHIND THE SCENES

A University of Otago honours degree in History well prepared Julian Grimmond for a career in film. "History teaches you to focus on the minutiae while keeping the biggest picture in mind."

QUITE WITHOUT PROMPTING, OTAGO GRADUATE Julian Grimmond informs me that not a day goes by when he doesn't use the skills he gained through his History honours degree.

Could this be the alumni profile sent from heaven? I have not asked him to wax so lyrical. But, the way the double-Emmy winning co-producer of *The Amazing Race* explains it, it makes perfect sense.

The hit show, which has now scooped two consecutive Primetime Emmys in the reality television category, challenges teams to race from destination to destination across the globe. It spans geography and cultures, is presented via the mediating device of television, and is concerned – indeed, obsessed – with the passing of time. All things Grimmond learned in History.

"History teaches you to focus on the minutiae while keeping the biggest picture in mind." That, he says, pretty much sums up *The Amazing Race*.

"The logistics and the detail are just mind-boggling," Grimmond explains. Months of preparation are carried out to prepare for shoots in each country that will last somewhere between three and 24 hours.

And where reality television may have earned a reputation for being low-budget and despairingly banal, *The Amazing Race* stands out for its epic vision. According to Grimmond, the show's principles belong to the tradition of filmmaking known as "cinema verité" (doesn't reality TV sound better in French?), and thus returns reality programming to its roots in documentary.

"Reality is a wonderful medium," says Grimmond. "But unfortunately it's been hijacked. Many reality shows are completely cast and choreographed to exploit people's emotions and anxieties."

By contrast, *The Amazing Race* takes a wide range of people, places them in varied and challenging – but nonetheless real – environments, and "creates entertainment through intellectual, cultural, gross and hilarious circumstances", says Grimmond.

"Competitors on *The Amazing Race* are immersed into foreign cultures and react with acceptance or rejection largely based upon the American culture they are familiar with."

It's a long way from the young man who – in a rather savvy move – handed in an honours dissertation on Dunedin's Natural History Unit in 1991.

Otago had become Grimmond's university less by design than by destiny. "It never entered my mind that there was another university on the planet," he says.

His brother and sister both studied there, his father was a lecturer in Medicine and his mother, Nicola, was a popular lecturer in Zoology, who served on the University's Council and was involved in numerous facets of University life.

The fact that Grimmond had been well known to many senior members of the University's staff since he was a child did hamper somewhat his attempts to indulge in "scurrilous student activities", he admits. "My friends could get away with things, but everyone would always know who I was!"

But it was through his mother, who passed away last year, that Grimmond says he developed his abilities for looking at many sides of a situation. He credits her for instilling in him the values of fairness and equality, and hard work. He remains grateful to her for aiding and abetting his crazy ideas of becoming a film-maker.

A ginkgo tree has been planted outside the University's staff club in Nicola's memory.

As to his fateful History dissertation, Grimmond does not believe it is the finest piece of research the History Department would ever have seen. Indeed, he admits its flaws were mercilessly explored by his examiners – for which Grimmond says he still owes them thanks.

"I learned a lot from the experience, more than I would ever have done had [the examiners] gone easy on me. I firmly believe you should always remain critical of your work. You should never rest on your success."

But beyond its value as a lesson in humility, Grimmond's research provided him with valuable inroads into New Zealand's premier documentary unit. Over the next eight years he worked as a freelance researcher and director for Natural History New Zealand and TVNZ before establishing his Queenstown-based company, Mountain Film Unit.

And so it was that, rather than Grimmond becoming involved in a top-rating CBS production as a result of pursuing a Hollywood career, *The Amazing Race* came to him. Filming had just finished for the first series of *The Amazing Race* and producers were scouting for the next season's destinations, when the events of 9/11 dramatically unfolded. (Grimmond himself was standing in Heathrow Airport



Double-E Emmy winning producer and Otago History graduate Julian Grimmond:
"I firmly believe you should always remain critical of your work. You should never rest on your success."

Photo: Bill Nichol

on September 11, 2001; not a good day to be getting on an aeroplane, he concedes.) There became a new-found concern with using "safe" countries, and Phil Keogan – the show's Dunedin-spawned host – suggested they come to New Zealand. Here, Grimmond's talents were called upon to produce two episodes.

"The shows went really, really well," recalls Grimmond. Soon he was one of the core team of producers and now, five seasons later, has overseen episodes in countries including Vietnam, India, Korea and Morocco.

"I tend to produce the slightly more challenging countries," Grimmond acknowledges. In some instances, he recognises that it can be an advantage coming from a country that is perceived neutrally or, as he has frequently experienced, favourably.

"It is amazing how warmly New Zealanders are viewed around the world," Grimmond comments. "It is something to be very proud of." He says he has been humbled by some of the welcomes he has received from communities around the globe and counts among his career's highlights the experience of teaching Moroccan children some words in Māori.

Respect is, of course, a two-way street. Grimmond points out that it is fundamental to the show's philosophy that they are conscious that "we are a guest of the country, and a guest of the culture".

But while *The Amazing Race* may be Grimmond's best known project, it is by no means the full extent of his activities.

You might remember the Mountain Film Unit-produced series on "a deconstruction of extremists", titled *Extreme Tribes* which aired on the Discovery Channel last year.

It featured six people in wing-suits (imagine a wetsuit with built-in sails from your ankles to wrists – a bit like

an Australian flying fox) jumping out of a helicopter near Glenorchy, an assortment of base jumpers, and a skier who sailed off a 300-metre cliff.

"You hear about these sorts of activities, and it's easy to dismiss them as a quick spectacle, but the actual feat, the level of skill acquisition involved, is actually incredible."

And watch out soon for *FreeDive*, a science documentary on free diving filmed in Cyprus for the Discovery Channel, produced by Mountain Film Unit, and shot and directed by Mike Single.

Yes, it's a good time to be working in the New Zealand screen industry, believes Grimmond. He considers the Kiwi can-do attitude to be real and alive and well. He has been struck time and again by the realisation that "what people think is average here, is considered extraordinary by international standards".

And he says – once again without the tiniest hint of arm-twisting from me – that as a businessman in a creative industry, he feels "reassured that there is a university nearby producing smart, talented people".

But Grimmond tempers the hype and excitement around the film activities in New Zealand with a word of caution. "If this success is to continue in the long term, we can't just be based on economics, but excellence."

In this time of significant growth, he says, the onus is on those involved in the industry to remain critical of themselves, their work – and never, ever, to let their standards slip.

History taught him that.

Nicola Mutch

Computer man

Passionate about teaching and dedicated to nurturing a New Zealand computer game industry, Simon McCallum is far from the archetypal computer geek

THE CLASSIC, SOCIALLY AWKWARD GEEK – THE ONE more comfortable basking in the glow of a computer screen and deploying virtual gun-toting warriors than engaging with real humans – is a persistent stereotype that has dogged computer science departments worldwide. Lecturer Simon McCallum sets all that on its ear: a more affable, enthusiastic and chatty man you'd be hard-pressed to find.

McCallum came to the University of Otago in 1993 as a student, completing an honours degree in Computer Science in 1996. As an undergraduate he tutored in the department before enrolling for his PhD, and after three years of doctoral toil, took time out to become a teaching fellow. He fell irretrievably in love with the lecturing lot.

"Lecturing is fantastic. I don't have quite the adrenalin rush of fear that I used to have. In my first lecture the top of my mouth started getting dry – you could hear the click as my tongue came off the top of my mouth. But I no longer have any panic – now it's just joy. I go in to have a good time and I really enjoy what I do. It's a lot of fun."

In 2003 McCallum developed a new stage-three course on computer game design – the first of its kind at any tertiary institution in New Zealand – and organised this country's first Game Developers' Conference for which he personally provided the financial backing until external funding was eventually secured from the Tertiary Education Commission, New Zealand Trade and Enterprise and Sidhe Interactive.

His aim was to help nurture a local game development industry. "One of the issues in New Zealand is that we consume much more than we produce," he says. "We're producing about \$4 or \$5 million worth of game content per year – actually that jumped up to about \$10 million in 2003 with Sidhe producing *Stacey Jones Rugby League*. We probably consume around \$100-120 million worth of product (overtaking cinema-ticket and music sales which are at around

Computer Science lecturer Simon McCallum: "Being a lecturer and being involved with students ... for me, it's a vocation. It's not a profession, it's not what I do nine-to-five, it's what I do from the minute I wake up until the minute I go to sleep."

Photo: Alan Dove

\$100 million) so our consumption is much greater than our production.

"This is a problem because it means we're importing culture. American culture – the violence, the guns, and their attitude towards society – is different to that of New Zealanders. It will only change when we have people from our culture developing products: we need people from our society and from our culture developing content that our young people can play."

McCallum thinks the climate created by Peter Jackson has helped enormously in displaying New Zealand's proficiency in that ripe intersection between creative and technical fields. He says that when he was visiting the United States and talking to people about developing game development, the Jackson-inspired reverence for things New Zealandish was rampant.

"The reputation of New Zealand is somewhere where you do creative and technically interesting things. I was asked whether I worked at Weta because they think everyone who's technical in New Zealand must work at Weta!"

When Sidhe Interactive (the largest game company in New Zealand with a modest 35 staff) released *Stacey Jones Rugby League* it sold 120,000 units which, at \$100 dollars a pop, is a whopping \$12 million.

"New Zealand gets terribly excited when one of our musicians sells 20,000 copies, so 120,000 is a lot," says McCallum. "And it's showing that you *can* do it in New Zealand. We're trying to grow as many companies as we can. I also want to get more women in the industry – that's a big issue."

So why is it such a bloke-heavy industry?

"There are lots of reasons for it," he says. "It's not just gaming, it's the whole ICT (Information and Communications Technology) area and it's global. The default method of teaching for these areas has always been aimed at arrogant young men, and there's still a little of that in computing departments because the majority of our students are arrogant young men. That male dominance in teaching means that it's easier for men to learn and there's a long lag time once you get one gender dominating a profession. It's very hard to get the other gender to come back through. The games industry is the worst because 97 per cent of the developers are men so most of the games are designed for men."

He hopes this will change now that computers are more mainstream. The teenagers of today have grown up with the computer culture, so it's no longer just a "boy's toy". McCallum makes a concerted effort to keep his lectures gender-balanced so as not to "ghettoise" his female students. After all, he knows what it's like to be the odd gender out: one of his earliest jobs had him hosting beauty product parties for women.

"I sold cosmetics for an after-school job – I went door to door with Nutrimetics. I was a Nutrimetics man! There were very few of us around and I got called Simone quite a bit!

"My stepmother thought I should have an after-school job and there was an ad in the paper for Nutrimetics so I thought, I could do that. I did training. I learnt all my colour matching – my autumns, my springs, my winters and summers, and how to get the right colour matches. I still do my wife's make-up when she goes out and I can talk about the whole cleansing and toning routines, and moisturisers and foundation, and proper skin care."

It's these little unexpected gems in McCallum's conversation that often pop up in class – much to the delight of his students. He delivers his lectures off the cuff so that he can read his audience as he goes, and weave lighter moments into his teaching when his students look in need of an anecdotal jolt.

"I'm very social, I like to talk. I say to my third and fourth years that they can ask me *any* question – and I mean any question – and I will answer it. I'm quite happy to talk about anything. And I sometimes lecture in a kilt!"

He sets assignments with enjoyment in mind too, often arming his students with Lego to build robots and rewarding the fastest and most efficient teams with blocks of chocolate. Learning + chocolate = nice.

His method of lecturing, then, is a bit like playing a computer game.

"If you look at modern learning theory on how you should teach people things, it's almost identical to how you make a good compelling game. Games are learning systems. If we wanted to teach well we'd just make all our education like games. If you go back in our evolution, kids have learned by playing games. Learning in mammals is related to play – it's safe, they can experiment, and they're not overly punished for getting it wrong."

Though McCallum earns less than most of his graduates will be receiving two years out from graduating, financial gain is no lure for this man.

"I like teaching too much – it's part of who I am. And my father made me a dyed-in-the-wool socialist so I feel I have a social responsibility. My lifestyle – being a lecturer and being involved with students – is more important. For me, it's a vocation. It's not a profession, it's not what I do nine-to-five, it's what I do from the minute I wake up until the minute I go to sleep."

It's not often you find a Computer Science lecturer who can tell you what colour eyeshadow would best suit your outfit or skin colour. It's not often you find one who dons a kilt every now and then or furnishes diligent students with chocolate. If anyone can lure fewer arrogant young men and more computer-savvy women to the gaming industry, it'll be the enthusiastic, cup-always-more-than-half-full McCallum.

Claire Finlayson

Stuck in the middle . . .

When lobby groups and government policymakers clash, sometimes it's the academic researcher who gets the squeeze



Photo: Bill Nichol

Dr Deborah McLeod: "Intellectual freedom is one of the cornerstones of academia and, as such, the academic viewpoint is seen to provide good quality and unbiased information."

IN 2000 I RESPONDED TO A REQUEST FOR RESEARCH by the Office of Veterans' Affairs. The resulting contract outlined specific tasks including a systematic review of the national and international literature on the health of Vietnam veterans' children, but not, as some of our later critics believed, to provide original research of our own.

Our report concluded that high quality studies of male US and Australian veterans did not provide evidence of an overall increased risk of birth defects and no consistent strong association had been identified with any specific birth defect. We also emphasised the strengths and limitations of epidemiological studies in answering questions about the effect of exposure to chemicals on the health of veterans' children.

In New Zealand, academic researchers from universities are frequently called upon to provide information to various government agencies. Intellectual freedom is one of the cornerstones of academia and, as such, the academic viewpoint is seen to provide good quality and unbiased information. But what are the implications for researchers? When the findings of studies are not welcome, tensions can arise between researchers and either policymakers, lobby groups or the general public. This is especially the case when the perspectives and objectives of lobby groups and the government clash, with academic researchers frequently caught in the middle. And when research findings are controversial, you can expect the media to come calling.

Explaining studies to the public can be difficult. In the case of Vietnam veterans, attention has been focused on the more "newsworthy" emotional stories of children with birth defects.

In the media coverage of our report, the very specific and focused nature of our task – a review of existing literature – was lost amongst suggestions of a government cover-up of the extent to which New Zealand veterans were exposed to Agent Orange.

Who, ultimately, is responsible for communication with media and lobby groups: researchers or the policymakers commissioning the research? We completed work on our report nearly three years ago yet the call on our time and others' continues well after funding for the project has ended. We have been harassed, our personal integrity and professionalism publicly attacked.

While information from research is an essential part of the policy development process, it is not the only part. The role of policymakers, in this case government, is to consider the evidence from research reports, such as ours, along with information from other sources and to develop policy. It is their responsibility to decide the information needed for evidence-based policy, and the relative weight they will place on evidence, anecdote and the political fall-out from resulting policy.

Unless there is increased understanding of the interface between research and policy and some protection for researchers, researchers themselves and the institutions they work within will become increasingly wary about working on controversial topics. Does this mean that the only research to be published on controversial topics will be that carried out by researchers employed by lobby groups?

Such an outcome would hardly be in the public interest.

Dr Deborah McLeod

Research Director, Department of General Practice, Wellington School of Medicine and Health Sciences



Photo: Hocken Collections

ARTIST UNKNOWN. *Teacher Chau Yip-fung and Alexander Don, Shameen, September 1880*. Oil on canvas: 292 x 408 mm. Lent by Mrs Jean McNeur Moore, c1966.

Glorious confusion

THESE TWO MEN – CHAU YIP-FUNG AND ALEXANDER Don – are unlikely poster boys for inter-racial marriage in New Zealand. But, due to a spot of confusion, they became man and wife in the pages of Sandra Coney's book *Standing in the Sunshine: A Story of New Zealand Women Since They Won The Vote*. This painting was reproduced in a section called "Affairs of the Heart: Friendship and Courtship: Love and Affection". Coney's caption reads: "The New Zealand missionary McNeur and his Chinese wife. Relationships between Pākehā men and Chinese women were rare as few Chinese women were allowed to come to New Zealand before the 1930s."

This terrific muddle arose because the painting's reverse lists both the names of those that donated the painting to the Hocken (the McNeurs – George McNeur was also a missionary) and the portrait's sitters. However, the only love shared by Chau Yip-fung and Alexander Don was for the Cantonese language. Soon after Don arrived in Dunedin in

1879 to seek a missionary post, he was sent to Canton to learn Cantonese in preparation for his work among Chinese goldminers in Otago. Chau was his teacher and it is this Chinese-English linguistic exchange that lies at the centre of this strangely compelling image.

Though meticulous in its approach to detail, this work has a slight naïve edge to it. The men's facial features have been rendered with great care and realism, but Don's hands are impossibly tiny and Chau's right shoulder seems to have slipped. These anatomical quirks – to this viewer at least – give the painting an even more endearing quality.

Having endured perspectival oddities at the hands of the painter, and an imaginative, amorous re-casting of their relationship by Sandra Coney, these two men now hang safely on the "A" rack of the Hocken's alphabeticised storeroom, with the inglorious tag of Artist Unknown.

Claire Finlayson

HOCKEN COLLECTIONS GALLERY EXHIBITIONS

Runs until 1 April 2005

Cantata: a play of the trace II, a multimedia installation by Lyn Plummer

"Fareweel Bonny Scotland . . ."

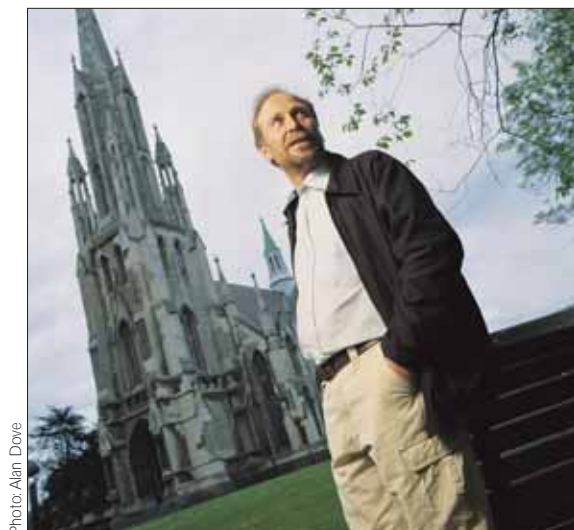


Photo: Alan Dove

Professor Tom Brooking is co-leading a major study of Scottish migration to New Zealand.

It's probably not a good idea to tell the red-blooded footie fans on the terraces of Carisbrook that their Super 12 team should really be called the Lowlanders.

It just doesn't quite have the same ring as the Highlanders. But it would be a more accurate moniker, says Professor Tom Brooking, who is co-leading a major study of Scottish migration to New Zealand.

"The fact is the majority of Scots who settled in New Zealand were lowlanders, from around Edinburgh and Glasgow," he says.

That doesn't make them any less Scottish. Indeed, New Zealand is as Scottish as it comes – hence the need for a detailed history of a migration which has not been closely studied.

"We want to investigate all their stories – we know about some of the success stories, but others failed or even became criminals. We also need to assess how Scots fared in

New Zealand relative to English and Irish migrants."

It will be a "path-breaking project" involving historians from the country of origin – leading Scottish academics Professor Tom Devine, and migration specialists Drs Marjory Harper and Angela McCarthy – and the receptor society. On this side of the globe Brooking and Brad Patterson will head a team from the Stout Centre at Victoria University in Wellington. It will also involve former Otago graduates Drs Rosalind McClean, from Waikato, and Jim McAloon, from Lincoln.

It's tricky from this end as Scots tended to readily inter-marry with migrants from other places. "The tartan blurred quite quickly," says Brooking, who hopes to bring it back into focus and show that New Zealand's Pakeha heritage is richer and more diverse than most modern citizens realise.

Otago database internationally recognised

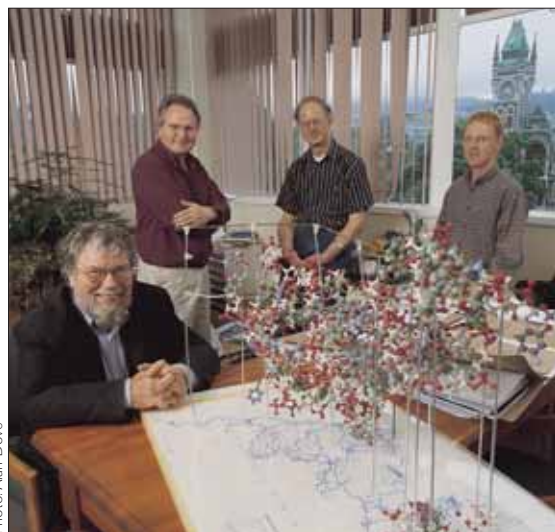


Photo: Alan Dove

The TransTerm team (from left): Professor Warren Tate (seated), Dr Chris Brown, Dr Peter Stockwell and Dr Grant Jacobs.

A unique University of Otago database containing vital information on the genetic code of 40,000 species has been recommended to researchers worldwide by the prestigious *Science* journal.

This database, TransTerm, was developed in 1990 by Dr Chris Brown, Dr Peter Stockwell and Professor Warren Tate of Biochemistry to test part of the genetic code for RNA signals specifying "stop protein synthesis". RNA is copied from DNA and regulates activities within the cell.

TransTerm soon proved this initial genetic code was more complex than originally thought and was further developed as a resource to discover new signals in RNA.

"The amount of genetic information known is roughly doubling each year so it is a never-ending task updating TransTerm,"

Brown says.

It is available to anyone around the world via the internet and is useful for a researcher who perhaps wants to compare the whole genetic make-up of different species while searching for similarities.

"Otago Biochemistry researchers are now using the database to understand the HIV and Hepatitis B and C viruses," Tate says. "TransTerm searches for similar patterns in the code of the viruses so the function of each pattern can be determined. It is hoped that these patterns can then be targeted by specific drugs to prevent further spread of the viruses."

"Similarly, it may be possible to develop drugs which destroy a particular pattern of genetic code to inhibit the virus in some way."

The TransTerm team has now expanded to include Dr Grant Jacobs of Bioinfotools.

An honest boss?



Photo: Alan Dove

Professor Steven Grover: "What we've found so far is that if you like the qualities your boss has, then you are more likely to forgive their transgressions."

How do we tell if our boss is being honest?

Management Professor Steven Grover is exploring the sticky issue of perceptions of honesty to find out how important leader honesty is in the business environment.

Grover is examining the situations in which leaders lie or tell the truth and is investigating leadership integrity – the honesty and consistency leaders exhibit. Drawing on perception and psychology studies, he is analysing leaders' behaviours, including those of front-line supervisors and CEOs of multinational companies.

The big question is whether it matters if leaders are honest.

"Theory shows us that people are more likely to engage with a leader who is honest – we would expect that. However, leaders can't always be completely honest, so an important part of the research

is to look at the outcomes of this behaviour."

Yet, it's not easy to define what makes an honest leader. Key attributes regularly defined in the literature include consistency in "doing what you say you're going to do", integrity and morality.

The study – part of a five-year research plan – is still in its initial stages and current research is looking at how honesty is attributed to leaders.

"What we've found so far is that if you like the qualities your boss has, then you are more likely to forgive their transgressions. We all filter other people's behaviour through a 'value lens'; if their value set more closely matches ours, then we are more likely to see our boss as having integrity and, therefore, as being honest."

Skeleton secrets



Photo: Alan Dove

Dr Hallie Buckley is leading a team of international experts in analysing the ancient skeletons from Vanuatu.

Thirteen skeletons discovered by chance in an ancient cemetery on the island of Efate, Vanuatu, should provide important information about the way prehistoric people lived in the Pacific 3,000 years ago.

The skeletons are of Lapita people, ancestors of today's Polynesians, and the first humans to live in Vanuatu. Significantly, they were found among pottery dating back to 1200 BC, 200 years earlier than it was thought that Lapita arrived there.

The cemetery is the oldest ever found in the South Pacific and has attracted wide attention, particularly as the skeletons had no skulls. Dr Hallie Buckley, of the Department of Anatomy and Structural Biology, excavated the remains and says the heads appear to have been removed after burial in what was probably a cultural practice. Loose teeth were found in the graves and shell bracelets had been positioned above the necks.

Buckley will lead a team of international experts in analysing the skeletons, now being sorted and cleaned at the University of Otago. Samples will be sent to Britain for DNA tests, and it is hoped further studies will reveal where these people came from, what they ate and how they adapted to their pristine island environment.

"We're also interested to discover what the Lapita people looked like, whether they were more Melanesian or more South-east Asian looking.

"When I excavated the bodies, I noticed some were very robust with large muscle attachments, indicating they were strong and lived active lifestyles. We will investigate this further to begin to build a profile of the lifestyles of prehistoric Pacific Islanders."

Social factors and suicide rates



Photo: Tim Lovell

Dr Sunny Collings: "... social factors do count, but for any factor or group of risk factors at a societal level, the effect is influenced by many other factors."

Possible social epidemiological explanations for suicide rates in New Zealand are the subject of a Ministry of Health project led by Dr Sunny Collings and her team from the Wellington and Christchurch Schools of Medicine and Health Sciences.

The project is nearing completion and the suite of research papers, including a final report that is being peer-reviewed, will be published by the Ministry of Health as a key policy resource for mental health and suicide prevention professionals.

Preliminary conclusions suggest that, from observations of New Zealand and other countries, reductions in the cohesiveness and fast pace of change in society may contribute to an increase in the prevalence of mental disorder, Collings says.

"This, of course, would put more

people at risk of suicide.

"So social factors do count, but for any factor or group of risk factors at a societal level, the effect is influenced by many other factors. For what is actually a rare event in statistical terms, it is difficult to draw direct causal links between features of society and suicide rates, except in general terms.

"We have provisionally recommended that social and economic policy should take into account possible effects on the mental health of vulnerable people and that targeting known at-risk groups should continue in that context."

The completed suite of papers will be used to inform the All Ages Suicide Prevention Strategy and associated action plan that are currently being drafted by the Ministry of Health and other government agencies.

Off to the rugby – or not?



Photo: Alan Dove

Professor Dorian Owen (left) and Clayton Weatherston are using economic modelling to discover what determines attendance at rugby games.

What motivates you to don your team's colours and turn out for a rugby game?

Professor Dorian Owen and Clayton Weatherston of the Department of Economics have been figuring out just that — using economic modelling to discover what determines attendance at New Zealand rugby matches.

A key aim of the research has been to test the effects of the degree of uncertainty about the result on people's decisions to go to a game or not. Owen and Weatherston's two studies focused on first division NPC matches in 2000-2003 and Super 12 matches between 1999-2001.

The factors that most affect attendance at Super 12 matches reflect habit and tradition, says Owen.

"For example, people are more likely to attend a game if they've been to a previous Super 12 game

at the same venue, if the game involves a traditional rivalry, if the home team is likely to score tries, if the opposition team has had a successful season, and if the game is held towards the end of the season."

But if the opposition is not a Kiwi team or there's rain on the day, then some of us choose to stay at home.

While many of the factors that influence people's attendance at Super 12 matches also apply to NPC games, Owen says there are some key findings that differ.

"The presence of All Blacks boosts attendance at NPC games, which is of relevance in light of the NZRU Competition Review's proposal to exclude All Blacks from the NPC."

Chance find from time of the dinosaurs



Photo: Alan Dove

Associate Professor Ewan Fordyce (left) and graduate student Daniel Thomas discovered this rare mosasaur fossil while on a mapping exercise.

A chance discovery in a remote North Canterbury creek has led to the Department of Geology collecting an extremely rare fossil of a reptile that co-existed with the dinosaurs.

Associate Professor Ewan Fordyce found the remains of the marine lizard – a mosasaur – while working with graduate student Daniel Thomas on a mapping exercise.

Mosasaurus looked like large, more sinuous crocodiles with paddle-like legs, and died out with the dinosaurs around 65 million years ago.

They are uncommon worldwide and Fordyce believes that locally this latest specimen could be the fossil reptile find of the decade.

It took two field trips to extract the fossil from the siltstone boulder that had protected it since it died, and to transport it to the University. Now researchers face

the long task of removing it from the rock, which could take a year once funding becomes available.

Parts of the skull, jaw and teeth are now visible, and it is hoped that once the rock is removed the metre-long skull will be sufficiently well-preserved to shed more light on the past.

Mosasaurus and other reptiles have been recovered from the same area since about 1860, although many fossils were sent overseas for study and then lost, along with an important part of New Zealand's ancient heritage.

Fordyce hopes the latest find will help us to understand the nature of predators in the late Cretaceous seas of New Zealand, and how they have evolved.

It is expected that either the original fossil or a replica will eventually be put on public display.

Clothing cues



Photo: Alan Dove

Aisha Boulanour who is studying how Moroccan Muslim women communicate through their choice of clothing.

The nexus of ideas reflected in the clothing Moroccan Muslim women wear, how they see themselves and how they communicate through their clothing is the focus of a study by Aisha Boulanour of the Department of Marketing.

"It's generally accepted that perceptions of people are formed from visual cues, and that clothing makes up a reasonable proportion of the cues available when we meet or see someone," says Boulanour.

In the first half of her study, she is asking university students in Morocco to complete a values questionnaire to canvas their cultural values. She'll then conduct in-depth interviews with Moroccan mothers and their daughters about clothing choices.

Boulanour chose Morocco for her study because "in Morocco Islamic clothing is not political". For example, there are no dress laws in Morocco relating to colour or style. Moroccan women – of all

religions – often wear the national dress, the jellaba – a hooded robe with long sleeves and matching shoes. Because Morocco was formerly a French colony, French style and trends feature among the clothing influences.

Morocco is a developing country with large income gaps and irregular regulation, and Moroccans can buy a satellite dish at almost any market. This creates an environment with an interesting interplay between ideas – external and internal, cultural and religious, she says.

Born in Roxburgh, Boulanour is a fifth-generation New Zealander who chose to become a Muslim and she believes this gives her a unique opportunity.

"It gives me a different perspective from many people from the English-speaking West or from those raised in Muslim or Arab cultures."

Kiwi cookbook culture



Photo: Alan Dove

Professor Helen Leach: "... recipes are just as suitable for analysis as potsherds, and just as important to preserve."

The trans-Tasman pavlova debate has drawn attention to her work, but that's really just a side dish in Professor Helen Leach's investigations into the New Zealand diet.

The University of Otago anthropologist found herself on Australian television last September after her research into Kiwi cookbooks identified a 1933 recipe for pavlova – preceding by two years the earliest-known Australian recipe.

All good fun, but hardly a serious academic pursuit: "People don't actually want that debate resolved – they want to keep arguing about it."

Her real passion, which has helped her win a Marsden grant for a three-year study, is Kiwi cookbooks, especially those produced by community groups.

Reflecting the dishes made at particular places and times, they become valuable social documents as they age.

"Dishes are like artefacts which change across time and space. Their recipes are just as suitable for analysis as potsherds, and just as important to preserve," she says.

The project team includes independent cooking historian and sociologist Michael Symons, and Otago food scientist Janet Mitchell.

Their study will culminate in a book on the development of New Zealand's culinary traditions.

A pilot study with PhD student Raelene Inglis which looked at Christmas cake recipes not only established a methodology but uncovered cooks' responses to conditions such as rationing in which they had to do without eggs.

And in all this research has she found any tasty delights herself?

"Tango buns! I found them in so many recipe collections from the 1920s that I had to try them out. Now I make them regularly."

Addiction treatment does work



Photo: Bob Ashford

Dr Simon Adamson's study has shown that many alcohol and drug-addiction patients reported significant changes in their lives and well-being following treatment.

Alcohol and drug addiction is a significant health problem affecting thousands of New Zealanders and the first representative study of treatment outcomes in this country highlights the challenges for health professionals in this area.

With research funding from the Alcohol Advisory Council (ALAC), Dr Simon Adamson, from the Christchurch School of Medicine and Health Sciences, investigated the effectiveness of community and residential treatment for addiction.

"The National Addiction Centre research over nine months showed there are many improvements for patients from treatment, even though 80 per cent are still using," says Dr Adamson.

"This is particularly important in the context of international recognition that addiction is a chronic and relapsing condition."

Of the 107 randomly-selected patients from clinics in Christchurch and Hamilton, drug or alcohol use

dropped from two out of three days, to one out of three days. Dependence reduced from three-quarters to half the sample, and negative consequences of substance use reduced from three-quarters to one-third. The largest improvements were for stimulant use, such as metamphetamine and Ritalin.

The study shows patients also reported improvements in employment, arrest rates, social functioning and mental health.

Cumulatively, many participants experienced significant changes in their lives and well-being following treatment. This was particularly noteworthy when 70 per cent had convictions, 25 per cent had been arrested in the previous six months, 75 per cent have psychiatric illness and two-thirds do not live with their children.

"In fact, 67 per cent of those surveyed rate their addiction as much improved after treatment," he says.

Endurance racing not so tough?



Photo: Alan Dove

Dr Jim Cotter (left): "Despite all the difficulties of different stresses during the race, we were not suffering as much as we thought we were."

School of Physical Education research undertaken during the 2003 Southern Traverse adventure race is producing ground-breaking results, indicating that prolonged endurance racing might not be as punishing as it seems. Analysis shows that while many of the athletes might have felt they were close to overdoing things, their bodies were coping well.

Exercise scientist Dr Jim Cotter co-planned the research and was also one of 12 racers followed throughout the five-day event. Another 60 athletes were tested before and after the race.

During the 100 hours of competition, they were exposed to extremes of temperature, lack of sleep, fatigue and the pressures of tactical decision-making – a package that had not previously been studied effectively over such a long period. Tests investigated these extreme stresses, looking at

the effects on metabolism, immune and endocrine systems, mental abilities, mood, physical performance and body composition.

"Despite all the difficulties of different stresses during the race, we were not suffering as much as we thought we were," Cotter says. "At different times we thought we might be hyperthermic or hypothermic, but we were not."

Heart rates and body temperatures all stabilised within safe ranges, with athletes working at a sustainable third to a half of their aerobic capacity after the first day. There was no evidence of fewer white blood cells or that their function was reduced, and blood glucose remained stable, countering a theory that low glucose may be responsible for poor decision-making.

This research is ongoing, with tests during the 2004 race and more planned for the future.

A decade's work ...



Photo: Alan Dove

Dr Daphne Lee has spent 10 years collecting information and illustrations for the *Treatise on Invertebrate Paleontology*.

When Dr Daphne Lee accepted an offer to contribute to the world's leading published authority on invertebrate paleontology, she didn't realise it would involve more than a decade of work.

The offer came after the world's second International Brachiopod Congress, which the Geology Department's Lee instigated in Dunedin in 1990.

Since then she has been leading a small international team of authors describing and providing illustrations for more than 700 fossil and living brachiopod genera.

"If I'd realised how long it was going to take I might have said no," says Lee, who is currently proofing the pages of her contribution – about half of volume 5 of part H of the *Treatise on Invertebrate Paleontology*.

"Much of the literature is in other languages, and it has been a major international project collecting and translating it.

It's been my responsibility to turn all the translations into 'real' English, and to collect and organise illustrations. Just putting it together is difficult, with about 1,000 references in around 15 languages."

Lee has made a life-long study of brachiopods, which are marine organisms often called lampshells. The ones most commonly washed up on New Zealand beaches are sometimes called fingernail shells, red and black shells about 20mm across.

"In the Paleozoic era brachiopods were among the most common animals in the world's oceans, and they are now probably the most common fossil people can find worldwide," says Lee.

Now she's looking forward to the publication of the new volume next year – and finally seeing 10 years' work in her hands.



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UNIVERSITY EXPANDS ACCOMMODATION

The University is continuing to expand its student accommodation options through a new supervised flatting scheme and the construction of two extra wings for Arana Hall.

The major extension at Arana will provide 144 new beds for 2006, as well as upgraded kitchen, dining and common room facilities.

Cumberland Hall has this year undertaken the management and supervision of a precinct of University-owned flats that house about 100 students.

Cumberland Court allows students to experience independent living combined with the supervision and support enjoyed by Hall residents. A residential supervisor and residential assistants are on site. Some meals are provided at the Hall, and all residents can take part in Cumberland's tutorial programmes and social activities.

MĀORI ACHIEVEMENT CELEBRATED

The University capped off its year of celebrations of the centenary of its first Māori graduate, Te Rangi Hiroa, Sir Peter Buck, in December. At that month's special pre-graduation ceremony at Otakou Marae, a record 16 Māori medicine graduates were among those whose achievements were celebrated by whanau and friends.

This followed Otago Māori scholars making up nearly one-third of the 31 PhD graduates honoured at the Te Amorangi National Māori Academic Excellence Awards held in November.

The 10 Otago PhD graduates from across the University's four academic divisions were: Dr Anna Carr (Ngā Puhi, Ngāti Ruanui), Tourism; Dr Rawinia Higgins (Tūhoe), Te Tumu/Māori Studies; Dr Jim Williams (Ngāi Tahu), Geography and Te Tumu/Māori Studies; Dr Terry Broad (Kai Tahu), Zoology; Dr James Green (Kai Tahu), Psychology; Dr Glen Carbines (Ngāti Mahuta, Ngāti Pukeko), Marine Science; Dr Sheryl Miller (Kai Tahu, Kāti Mamoe, Waitaha), Botany; Dr Jane Kitson (Kai Tahu, Kāti Mamoe, Waitaha), Zoology; Dr Gail Tipa (Ngāi Tahu), Geography; and Dr Olivia Tan, Anatomy & Structural Biology.

BUSINESS SCHOOL JOINS ELITE GROUP

The University's School of Business has joined an elite group of international business schools in being awarded the prestigious EQUIS accreditation by the European Foundation for Management Development (EFMD).

EQUIS, the quality assurance body of EFMD, has awarded full accreditation to the School of Business based on rigorous assessment criteria including research and development, students, programme quality, corporate connections, alumni and internationalisation.

The EQUIS accreditation offers the School of Business a formal international benchmark and ranks it among the best business schools worldwide. There are currently fewer than 80 business schools globally that have EQUIS accreditation.

The School is also seeking accreditation from the US-based Association to Advance Collegiate Schools of Business.

BUSINESS SCHOOL TEAM WINS INTERNATIONAL CASE COMPETITION

A team of four Otago School of Business students recently made history by winning the prestigious Program in International Management (PIM) International Case Competition in Atlanta, Georgia.

Case competitions require teams to come up with solutions for a scenario or problem that a real business may be facing, or has faced. Representing the "rest of the world" category in the competition, Otago team members Brian Casey, Paul Chong, Iain Grant and Hayden Starkey beat out four business school teams from the United States, Denmark and Italy to claim the top prize.

It is the first time a New Zealand team had competed in the competition, which involves 53 business schools in the world-leading PIM network.

The competition featured mainly MBA students, making the Otago team's win even more impressive as each team member is studying at undergraduate level.

OTAGO'S 2005 ARTS FELLOWS

An internationally acclaimed novelist, an Auckland painter, a Christchurch composer and a German dancer and community arts leader are the recipients of the University of Otago's 2005 Arts Fellowships.

This year's Robert Burns Fellow, Catherine Chidgey, plans to complete her fourth novel, which is set in Berlin between the wars and in the present-day United States.

Auckland painter Rohan Wealleans has taken up the Frances Hodgkins Fellowship. Wealleans is known for working with multiple levels of paint and, while in Dunedin, he is concentrating on creating more ambitious, larger-scale work.

Christchurch composer, lecturer and teacher Rachel Clement is the 2005 Mozart Fellow. She is focusing on chamber music, work with a local orchestra or choir, and developing one or more existing ideas into a substantial work.

The University's first Caroline Plummer Dance Fellow, Petra Koppers, takes up her position in July. She intends to create a site-specific project series culminating in two performances, a digital video and a CD ROM. The Fellowship was inspired by the vision and achievements of young Otago dance student, Caroline Plummer, who died of cancer in April 2003.

APPOINTMENTS

Pro-Vice-Chancellor, Health Sciences, Professor **Linda Holloway** as Dean of the Faculty of Medicine.

John Patrick as the University's Chief Operating Officer, a new wider position incorporating his previous role as University Chief Financial Officer.

Professor **Gregory Seymour** as the next Dean of the School of Dentistry. Until recently he was University of Queensland School of Dentistry Dean.

Director of the University's Bioethics Centre Professor **Donald Evans** has been appointed to a new UNESCO Ethics Commission responsible for the development of medical ethics teaching in Asia.

Associate Professor **David Gerrard** (Sports Medicine) as New Zealand's only representative on the Board of the World Anti-Doping Agency (WADA). He has also been appointed to WADA's health, medical and research committee.

Dr **Neil Pickering** (Bioethics Centre) to the Ethics Committee of the Health Research Council.

Associate Professor **Philip Bagshaw** (Christchurch School of Medicine and Health Sciences) was elected Chair of the New Zealand Council of Medical Colleges.

Richard Madden (MusB (Hons)1977) as Choral Director at Knox College.

OBITUARIES

Maurice Shadbolt (72). An internationally acclaimed New Zealand novelist and writer, Mr Shadbolt was the University's Robert Burns Fellow in 1963.

Jean Margaret Riley (90). Former long-serving Academic Registrar of the University.

Emeritus Professor **William McGregor Cunningham** (96). A major early figure in the research and teaching of periodontology at the School of Dentistry (1948-1972).

SCHOLARSHIPS/FELLOWSHIPS

In recognition of his service to dentistry, recently retired Dean of the School of Dentistry Professor **Peter Innes** was made a Fellow of the New Zealand Dental Association and an Honorary Fellow of the Royal College of Surgeons, Edinburgh.

Physiology graduate **Elizabeth Cottrell** (BSc (Hons) 2004) was awarded a prestigious Woolf Fisher Scholarship for doctoral study at Cambridge University's Department of Clinical Biochemistry.

Professors **Gerry Carrington** (Physics), **Grant Gillett** (Bioethics, Neurosurgery), **Peter Joyce** (Psychological Medicine, CSM&HS) and **Helen Leach** (Anthropology) have been elected Fellows of the Royal Society of New Zealand.

Lester Flockton (Educational Assessment Research Unit) was made an Honorary Fellow of the New Zealand Educational Institute in recognition of his work as co-director of the national education monitoring project.

PROFESSORIAL PROMOTIONS

The following Otago staff have been promoted to full Professor: **Tom Brooking** (History), **Ivor Davidson** (Theology), **Michael Eccles** (Pathology, Dunedin School of Medicine), **Richard Mahoney** (Law), **Richard Morgan** (Geography), **Paul Roth** (Law), **D. Robin Taylor** (Medical and Surgical Sciences, Dunedin School of Medicine), **Bastow Wilson** (Botany), **Han-Seung Yoon** (Pathology, Dunedin School of Medicine).

ACHIEVEMENTS

Associate Professor **Lloyd Spencer Davis** (Zoology) won a \$35,000 Copyright Licensing Ltd Writers Award to assist him in writing a book aimed at unravelling Darwin and Darwinism.

Surveying senior teaching fellow **Stewart Petrie** was overall winner of the 2004 Otago University Students' Association Teaching Awards, while outgoing Deputy Vice-Chancellor, Academic, Dr **Phil Meade** also received an honorary teaching award in recognition of his strong influence on teaching quality at Otago.

Professor **Harlene Hayne** (Psychology) was named 2004 OUSA Research Supervisor of the Year.

Dr **Gerard Wilkins** (Medicine) received the Dean's Senior Staff Award for Quality in Teaching in the Inaugural Dunedin School of Medicine Teaching Awards.

Associate Professor **Steve Dawson** (Marine Science) and Dr **Liz Slooten** (Zoology) were jointly awarded the Charles Fleming Award for Environmental Achievement, in recognition of 20 years of research into endangered Hector's and Maui Dolphins.

Associate Professor **Iain Lamont** (Biochemistry) won the New Zealand Society for Biochemistry and Molecular Biology's Applied Biosystems Award in recognition of his work investigating the pathogenicity of the deadly bacterium *Pseudomonas aeruginosa*.

Associate Professor **Richie Poulton** (Director, Dunedin Multidisciplinary Health and Development Research Unit) has been awarded the NZ Association of Scientists Research Medal for an extraordinary body of high-quality scientific work that is

having a large impact on psychiatric and public health practice. The Health Research Council also awarded him the Liley Medal in recognition of his contributions.

Associate Professor **David Perez** (Medical and Surgical Sciences) received the Cancer Society of New Zealand's Meritorious Service Award for his outstanding contribution to the Society.

The Sir Charles Hercus Medal was awarded to Professor **Jim Mann** (Human Nutrition, Medicine) for his extended series of related studies of nutrition in relation to diabetes and cardiovascular disease.

The following researchers recently won the University's Inaugural Early Career Awards for Distinction in Research: Dr **Tony Ballantyne** (History), Dr **Greg Cook** (Microbiology), Dr **Heather Dyke** (Philosophy), Dr **Craig Rodger** (Physics), Mr **Andrew Geddis**, (Law). Mr Geddis is also the 2004 recipient of the Rowheath Trust and Carl Smith Medal, awarded for outstanding research by a relatively new staff member.

Dr **John Reynolds** (Anatomy & Structural Biology) was one of only three scientists in the world to receive the 2004 Brain Research Young Investigator Award.

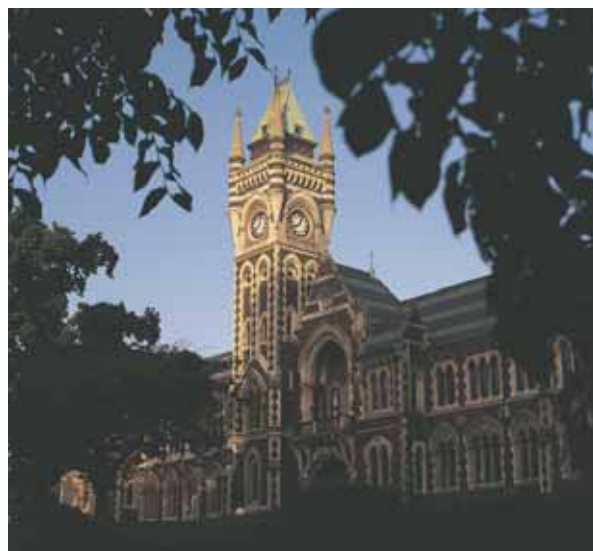
New Year Honours appointments to the New Zealand Order of Merit – DCNZM: Emeritus Professor **Donald Beaven** CBE (MB ChB 1950). CNZM: Dr **Wyn Beasley** OBE (MB ChB 1950); Mrs **Margaret Bendall** (BA (Hons) 1970); Mr **James Guthrie** (LLB 1972, BA 1970); Dr **Foss Leach** (BA 1966, MA 1968, PhD 1976). ONZM: Professor **Kathryn Crosier** MB ChB 1978); Dr **Arthur Hackett** (MBChB 1954) Dr **Patricia Harris** (BHSc 1973, MHSc 1974); Associate Professor **Jack Havill** (MB ChB 1966) Professor **Diana Lennon** (MB ChB 1972). MNZM: Dr **Allan Bean** (MB ChB 1957); Mr **David Brook** (BSc 1963, MSc 1964) Dr **Richard Meech** (MB ChB 1969). Appointments as Companion of the Queen's Service Order: Mr **Alistair Betts** (BCom 1966); Mr **Gerald McGhie** (BA 1963, MA 1964). Queen's Service Medal: Mr **Grant Kerr** (LLB 1972); Reverend **Alan Leadley** (BD 1968).

PHYSIOLOGY CENTENARY

The Department of Physiology will be celebrating its 100th anniversary on the weekend of April 30 - May 1. The programme will include both formal and informal functions, as well as talks from some of the Department's distinguished past and present members.

All past and present students and staff, as well as members of the wider physiological community, are invited to attend. For further information see www.otago.ac.nz/physiology

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ADVANCEMENT

EAMON CLEARY: AN INTERNATIONAL IRISHMAN

EAMON CLEARY, WHO HAS RECENTLY ENDOWED A Chair in Irish Studies at Otago, always wanted to visit New Zealand. As a young man of 16 he would have emigrated here, but was persuaded by his parents to wait. He came for a visit in 1994 and was immediately taken with the country, its people and the business potential. Before he went home, he invested in a sizeable farm south of Auckland.

Born the eldest of a large family and raised on a small holding near the town of Ballybay, Ireland, Cleary left school at age 11 to work on his father's farm. He was apprenticed to a block layer at 15 and at 17 set up his own building business. At 20, he started a pre-cast concrete and reinforcing-steel company while continuing to run his successful building operation. He married at 24 and went on to develop one of the largest agricultural supply businesses in Ireland, which he sold in 1991.

By 1996, at the age of 34, he had moved to New Zealand and established a business career with substantial investments in agricultural land and commercial property in both the North and South Islands. He has eight children ranging in ages from 10 to 20 years, and is also the proud owner of Rand, a



Eamon Cleary

thoroughbred that represented New Zealand in the Nakayama Grand Jump (Japan's Grand National). With extensive business and property interests in Australia, Eastern Europe, Ireland and New Zealand, Cleary has now begun developing agricultural and telecommunications businesses in Argentina and Chile. While in New Zealand, his base is Lake Hayes.

None of this foreign expansion has diminished his love of Ireland, Irish music, culture and history which were, in part, the prompt for his decision to endow a Chair in Irish Studies at the University of Otago.

Cleary's gift will be matched dollar for dollar by the Government through the Partnerships for Excellence programme.

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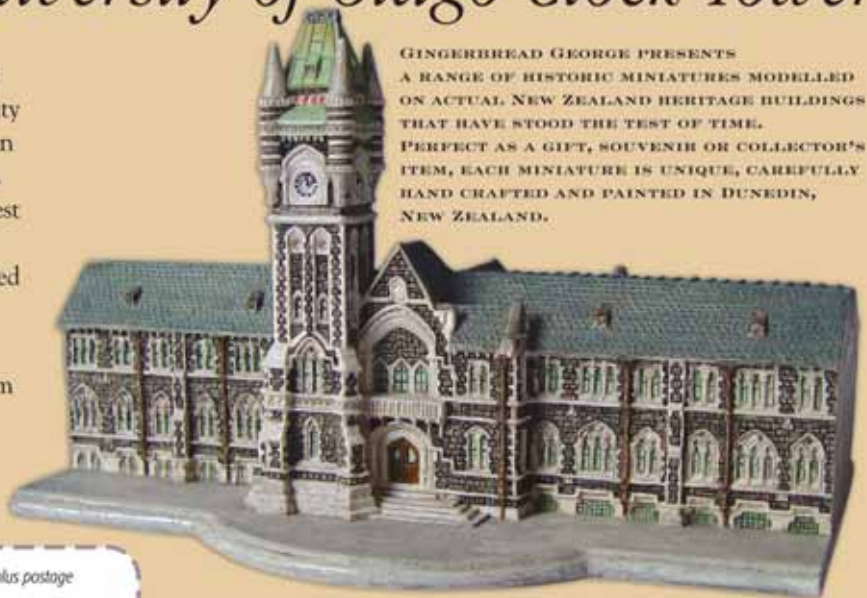
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NEW CHAIR IN IRISH STUDIES OF "NATIONAL SIGNIFICANCE"

ESTABLISHED THROUGH THE UNIVERSITY'S LEADING Thinkers Advancement Programme, the Eamon Cleary Chair will enable the University of Otago to provide national leadership in the area of Irish Studies.

This Chair will create an integrated multidisciplinary programme drawing upon existing expertise in Irish literature, Celtic spirituality, economic history, Irish music, and recognised strengths in studies of community, cultural diversity, anthropology and issues of national identity.

It has been welcomed as "nationally significant" by the University's Assistant Vice-Chancellor (Humanities), Alistair Fox.

"It will enable a high-quality academic programme to be developed that will give future generations of New Zealand students an insight into the Irish heritage of this country and Ireland's place in the contemporary world.

"We will be seeking to appoint a distinguished academic to the Chair who can also develop research collaboration and staff exchange with one or more partner universities in Ireland."

The last two decades have seen a major resurgence of interest in Irish culture throughout the Western world, including New Zealand. This interest has been spurred by elements of political and economic devolution in Ireland, together with a renaissance of Irish culture.

The more recent economic rejuvenation of Ireland adds a dimension that is of particular relevance to New Zealand and has attracted the attention of the New Zealand Government. Ireland's recent success as a small resource-based island in a globalised era has particular resonance in this context.

Issues which are fundamental to Irish Studies have a significance beyond the academic world since they raise problems of social exclusion and poverty, community relations, integration and social citizenship, political independence and devolution, race and interculturalism, national identity and the significance to home and host nations of waves of emigration/immigration.

The introduction of Irish Studies will thus be able to focus academic attention on a range of issues that will have implications for and relevance to the future development of New Zealand's society and its economy.

Otago has existing networks with Ireland, including ongoing collaborative projects, and further formal linkages with Irish universities will be stimulated by the Chair. It is planned that provision for students to study Irish Gaelic will be made in the form of in-country study through an exchange agreement with University College, Dublin.

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ALUMNI

OTAGO ACROSS THE GLOBE

OTAGO GRADUATES THROUGHOUT THE WORLD ARE an integral part of the University's alumni activities and, since the Alumni and Development Office was established in 2000, volunteers and networks have been a great help with organising events and coordinating international groups.

One of the oldest, the University of Otago Alumni Association of Malaysia (UOAM), celebrated its tenth anniversary last year with the election of a new committee eager to consolidate on the first decade. Incoming president Serene Chong Siew Yoon, a founding vice-president, says the committee wants to refresh its profile, particularly among younger alumni, and has made a commitment to community service.

The UOAM maintains regular contact with members via newsletters and various events, including the May golf tournament at the Clearwater Estate, annual dinner and dance, educational tours and outings. It also offers professional networking to new graduates seeking employment and counselling for graduates' children seeking further education at the University of Otago, as well as maintaining a close relationship with Otago and New Zealand as a whole.

Otago's strong relationship with its Malaysian alumni is reflected by a high turnout at the regular University events, which are organised with great support from the New Zealand High Commission in Kuala Lumpur. Recently returned

graduates attending for the first time find themselves mingling with fellow alumni who have become household names in Malaysia, including many of the stalwarts of the UOAM. Its patrons are three of Otago's most distinguished Malaysian graduates, Datuk Amar Dr Sulaiman bin Hj Daud, Datuk Amar Dr Leo Moggie and Tan Sri Dato' Dr Ahmad Azizuddin bin Hj Zainal Abidin. All three have been honoured by the state and also by Otago's conferment of honorary degrees for their outstanding records in public service and business.

UK alumni have also been active for more than a decade. Now called the University of Otago Alumni – UK & Europe Chapter, this group of committed Otago graduates helps raise funds for the University in the UK and organises functions. These have become "hot ticket" events for Otago expatriates, always selling out and with alumni from throughout the UK and Europe making special trips to London for the occasions. Prestigious venues arranged by the enthusiastic committee help. The New Zealand House penthouse views of London never fail to impress, and chapter chairman Sir Paul Beresford's MP access to the Houses of Parliament has allowed Otago guests to enjoy some particularly special events.

In addition, a number of newer chapters have become active in organising alumni gatherings, and Otago's overseas events are increasingly the starting point for locals to set

LONDON



LONDON



up groups. Melbourne's 2002 University of Otago cocktail reception was followed by the chapter's launch dinner which has become the central annual event. Melbourne's lively committee, representing a broad range of Otago's disciplines, is eager to expand its scope. At the 2004 dinner, the committee canvassed alumni opinion on possible activities and is already acting on the most popular suggestions.

Alumni in Toronto responded positively to a survey after last year's University reception, which once again attracted a good proportion of the relatively small number of Otago expats in the region. Such was the interest in more regular informal gatherings that the first was held before Christmas at a downtown bar, thanks to local volunteer Professor Brian Merrilees.

The University and the Alumni and Development Office very much appreciate the work of these established groups and other volunteers. Volunteers in other regions are also developing networks, as are various faculties, schools and groups. Details will be advertised on the web as appropriate throughout the year. If you would like to be involved, please contact either alumni@otago.ac.nz or the Alumni and Development Office, University of Otago, PO Box 56, Dunedin, New Zealand.

For information on the groups mentioned above visit www.otago.ac.nz/alumni

MILLENNIUM GRADUATES RATE OTAGO

Five years after graduating, former University of Otago students are now being asked about their educational experiences here and what, with hindsight, they consider to have been most worthwhile.

The Millennium Graduate survey is being conducted by the Higher Education Development Centre (HEDC) and is comprehensive in nature, asking graduates for in-depth information about a range of issues.

While more definitive results will be available early next year, assistant research fellow Dr Nell Buissink-Smith says early indications are very encouraging. "While there are some negative comments about student loans and personal subject choices, most graduates have given us very positive feedback."

Graduates have highlighted a range of skills gleaned during their time at Otago that have been of invaluable help in their lives and, in particular, in the workplace. These include independence, the ability to think both critically and analytically, to work well within group situations, and to interact well socially and with tolerance.

The survey has been sent to most former Science and Humanities students who graduated in late 1999 or early 2000. Graduates who still want to participate in the survey can do so online at hedc.otago.ac.nz/research

AROUND THE WORLD IN 2004...

There was serious – the presentation of an Alumni Service Medal to Wong Cham Mew in Kuala Lumpur in April. There was swish – around 300 alumni at the British Houses of Parliament in June. There was simple – a dozen Otago expats congregating at short notice in a downtown Perth bar. All up, there were another 20 or so alumni events of varying shapes and sizes around the world in 2004. The Otago spirit travels with our former students.

FUNCTIONS SCHEDULE 2005...

April	Los Angeles
	Dublin
May	Christchurch
June	New York
	Edinburgh
	London
	Kuala Lumpur
July	Wellington
August	Sydney
September	Auckland

Confirmed dates are posted on the Otago alumni web pages at www.otago.ac.nz/alumni. Closer to the time invitations will be sent to those known to be within travelling distance of each event. Please keep us up to date as you move or, if you think you might be in these areas at the time, let us know at alumni@otago.ac.nz

For information on any of these alumni functions, please email functions.alumni@otago.ac.nz

BOOKS

SOUTHERN SEAS

MARINE LIFE AT 46° SOUTH

by Keith Probert, John Jillett and Sally Carson

In 1904 New Zealand's first marine research institution was established on the Otago Peninsula, an area famous for its marine wildlife and coastal scenery. *Southern Seas* celebrates the institution, now the New Zealand Marine Studies Centre, and the marine environment it promotes. The book's authors have an intimate knowledge of both: Sally Carson is the centre's programme director and John Jillett is a retired associate professor from the Marine Science Department where Keith Probert is senior lecturer.

Originally a fish hatchery and marine investigation site and transformed into a biological research station by Betty Batham, the laboratory was taken over by the University of Otago in 1951. Its staff, students and visiting researchers have made important contributions to understanding the southern marine environment, its habitats, plants and animals. The centre is a leader in public marine education in New Zealand and holds the country's first aquarium.

Southern Seas is the second book in University of Otago Press's Conservation Guides, a new series exploring New Zealand's inspiring conservation stories. The first title, *Restoring Kapiti: Nature's Second Chance*, was published in late 2004 and examines pest control and species recovery on Kapiti Island, one of New Zealand's longest and most exciting conservation successes. The book's contributors are people who have worked on the island, including editor Kerry Brown who received a Master of Science and Postgraduate Diploma in Wildlife Management from the University of Otago.

RECENTLY PUBLISHED BOOKS OF UNIVERSITY ALUMNI

The Dark Mirror, by Juliet Marillier, published by Pan Macmillan, 2004

Who Wants to be a Millionaire? by Sandy MacKay, published by Longacre Press, 2004

Christ in a Grain of Sand - an Ecological Journey with the Spiritual Exercises, by Neil Vaney SM, published by Ave Maria Press, 2004

Alumni: Have you written a book, produced a CD or held an exhibition lately?

Email the editor at mag.editor@otago.ac.nz

e-LEARNING COMMUNITIES

TEACHING AND LEARNING WITH THE WEB

Edited by Kwok-Wing Lai

The last few years have seen an extraordinary growth in the use of information and communication technology (ICT) and the internet in schools and classrooms. The web is becoming a vital tool for both teachers and students: 82 per cent of New Zealand primary and 78 per cent of secondary schools have internet connections.

e-Learning Communities explores the many dynamics of ICT and the issues surrounding its implementation in schools and classrooms. These issues include teacher use and professional development, online professional and educational learning communities, searching the World Wide Web, online plagiarism, cybersafety, virtual field trips, the role of the ICT coordinator, and assumptions about the potential of e-learning in schools.

Editor Kwok-Wing Lai is the Head of Department and Professor in the University of Otago's School of Education. He is the former editor of *Computers in New Zealand Schools*, New Zealand's only magazine for teachers, from pre-school to tertiary level, who use computers in the classroom. His books include *e-Learning*, *Words Have Wings* and *Net-Working*, also published by University of Otago Press.

UNIVERSITY OF OTAGO PRESS RECENT TITLES

Our Islands, Our Selves: A History of Conservation in New Zealand, by David Young

Restoring Kapiti: Nature's Second Chance, edited by Kerry Brown

"Rats and Revolutionaries": The Labour Movement in Australia and New Zealand 1890-1940, by James Bennett

Built for Us: The Work of Government and Colonial Architects, 1860s-1960s, by Lewis E. Martin

Southern Seas: Marine Life at 46° South, by Keith Probert, John Jillett and Sally Carson

Captain Cook's Navigator and Coleridge's Poem: William Wales, Samuel Taylor Coleridge and "The Rime of the Ancient Mariner", by Bill Whelen

Landfall 208, edited by Justin Paton

e-Learning Communities: Teaching and Learning with the Web, edited by Kwok-Wing Lai

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

WHATEVER HAPPENED TO . . .

IT ALL STARTED WITH VIRGIL MORE THAN 25 YEARS AGO.

Associate Professor John Hale, a Latin expert and world-ranked Milton scholar, went to the Classics Department's lunch-hour reading of Virgil's *Aeneid* and an idea was born – an all-day reading of the epic poem *Paradise Lost*.

By October last year, on the eve of his retirement, Hale had just celebrated the tenth marathon reading of the poem he calls “the English language’s answer to Homer and Virgil”.

Hearing the poem spoken aloud is an integral part of the experience.

“It’s a poem more for the ears than the eyes. Milton was blind by the time he completed it, and he is on record as saying he heard the words from his muse at night.”

Readings started with three or four people in his office, but 60 people attended the start of last year’s event held at the Hocken Collections.

“... my adventurous Song,
That with no middle flight intends to soar”

Book I, lines 13 - 14



The Milton Marathons

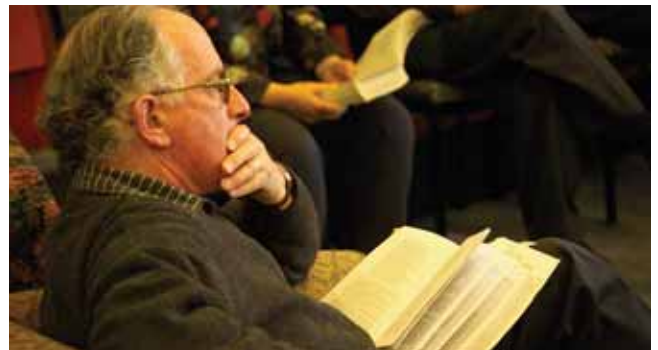
Competition was introduced to the format in 1999, and since then teams like Hell’s Belles, Eve Ho! and Club Paradiso have vied for trophies. Costumes and theatrical elements have been welcome, but not required. Last year the team reading Book II arrived wearing slashed punk outfits, and another group’s Eve was a man in black with an impish smile and an impossibly blond wig.

It’s all fun, but it’s not the main thing. Hale is adamant: “It’s about listening to a long, long story with nothing but your ears and your imagination.”

Past participants remember the readings with pleasure. Former Chancellor Judith Medlicott recalls: “It was the momentum of the reading that was most impressive – the surge of the story.” And you don’t always need to be there to take part. Bill English (an Otago alumnus) sent a tape of himself reading the start of Book X while he was Deputy Prime Minister.

The event is a genuine marathon, and it engenders the same sense of pride in the participants who stay the distance. Hale remembers the finale one particular year: “We drew into a tight circle and when we came to those two melancholy last lines, we all spontaneously said them together. We felt as if we’d been through this ordeal and shared the experience together.”

John Birnie

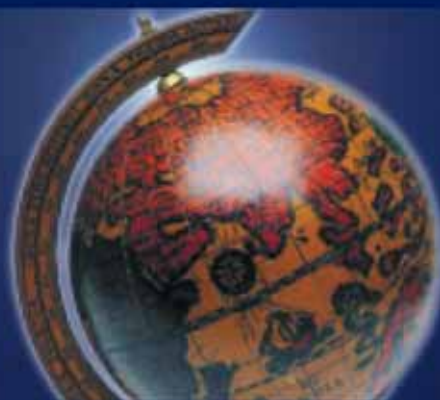


Retiring Associate Professor
John Hale at the tenth
Milton Marathon.

“They [Adam and Eve] with wandering steps and slow
Through *Eden* took thir solitarie way.”

Book X, lines 1539 - 1540

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