
Biochemistry News

The newsletter of the Department of Biochemistry at the University of Otago

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View from the Corner

Welcome to the first Biochemistry Newsletter for 2011. It is hard to believe that Semester 1 of 2011 is fully upon us and we are knee deep in practicals, projects and lectures! Although our schedules have just gotten very busy it's nice to have the students back. Most are familiar faces, and they arrive with fresh stories of summer adventures. Some students are brand new to us. All of our students bring a kind of excitement and new energy that is fun to feel around the department. The annual arrival of new students is to me one of the neatest aspects of our job. Our contact with the promise of the future! Of course, it also seems to me that we stay the same age while they just keep getting younger. Let's all take some time to welcome our students back both old and new and let them know how much we appreciate them.

As we welcome the new students back from vacation, it would be a good time to mention what a great group of summer students we had this year. They were one of our best groups to date and we wish them well in the upcoming year.

Speaking of new happenings in the department, there are lots of new developments going on here and there. On the 3rd floor, New Zealand Genomics Ltd is moving in and we hope to have "Next-Gen" sequencing up and going by the end of the month. Our lobby is getting a revamp under the expert guidance of Sophia MacKay, and we can't wait to see the finished product. The ex-Thompson and Brown labs are also due for a facelift at some point this year.

Please turn the page to read about new developments from within the department. There are weddings and



births to report and other exciting news to share within. This month the news was a bit slow in coming to Bronwyn and I want to encourage you to please take the time to write so that we can hear about what is happening with you. Long pieces or short pieces are just fine. Both formal and informal work for us as well, as long as you write it, especially if pictures are included.

As I close, I know that we all have been deeply moved by the horrific earthquake in Canterbury and have been watching closely daily developments in the region. I have been inspired at how their community has come together and by the international outpouring of assistance. The Canterbury Student Volunteer Army (SVA) is simply amazing. I know that many of you have been active in fundraising and packing lunches, and I would like to pay special tribute to everyone from our Department that have stepped up to help our our Christchurch colleagues.



Recent Publications

New since last newsletter as found by literature search, please let me know if I've missed any out.

R.L Roberts, J.E Hollis-Moffatt, M Gómez-García, K Fransen, C.Y Ponsioen, B.A Crusius, C Wijmenga, J Martín, R.K Weersma, T.R Merriman, M.L Barclay, R.B Garry, B.Z Alizadeh.

Association of the protein-tyrosine phosphatase nonreceptor type substrate 1 (PTPNS1) gene with inflammatory bowel disease.

Inflammatory Bowel Diseases (2011) vol. 17 (2) pp. E19-E21

A Phipps-Green, C Mckinney, M Rossol, M.E Merriman, R Topless, J.E Hollis-Moffatt, W.R.W Taib, N Dalbeth, P.J Gow, A.A Harrison, J Highton, P.B.B Jones, L.K Stamp, U Wanger, P Wordsworth, T.R Merriman.

Analysis of association of DNASE2 promoter variation with rheumatoid arthritis in European Caucasians.

Annals of the rheumatic diseases (2011)

C.J Pemberton, A.M Richards, M Siriwardena, V.A Cameron, T.G Yandle, M.G Nicholls, T Kleffmann, P Ruygrok.

Response to letter regarding article, B-type natriuretic peptide signal peptide circulates in human blood: Evaluation as a potential biomarker of cardiac ischemia.

Circulation (2011) vol. 123 (6)

N.V Morgan, S Goddard, T.S Cardno, D McDonald, F Rahman, D Barge, A Ciupek, A Straatman-Iwanowska, S Pasha, M Guckian, G Anderson, A Huissoon, A Cant, W.P Tate, S Hambleton, E.R Maher.

Mutation in the TCR α subunit constant gene (TRAC) leads to a human immunodeficiency disorder characterized by a lack of TCR $\alpha\beta$ + T cells.

Journal of Clinical Investigation (2011) vol. 121 (2) pp. 695-702

T.R Merriman, N Dalbeth.

The genetic basis of hyperuricaemia and gout.

Joint Bone Spine (2011) vol. 78 (1) pp. 35-40

M.D Liptak, R.D Fagerlund, E.C Ledgerwood, S.M Wilbanks, K.L Bren.

The proapoptotic G41S mutation to human cytochrome c alters the heme electronic structure and increases the electron self-exchange rate.

Journal of the American Chemical Society (2011) vol. 133 (5) pp. 1153-1155

M Legge, L.M Jones, B.J McLeod.

Energy substrate utilization in the common brushtailed possum (*Trichosurus vulpecula*) using intravenous tolerance tests.

Comparative Biochemistry and Physiology - B Biochemistry and Molecular Biology (2011) vol. 158 (2) pp. 132-135

A.P Kafka, T Kleffmann, T Rades, A McDowell.

The application of MALDI TOF MS in biopharmaceutical research.

International Journal of Pharmaceutics (2011)

Rowan P Herridge, Robert C Day, Samantha Baldwin, Richard C Macknight.

Rapid analysis of seed size in *Arabidopsis* for mutant and QTL discovery.

Plant methods (2011) vol. 7 (1) pp. 3

This study describes a sensitive, high-throughput approach for measuring seed size and seed size distribution. The method provides a low cost and robust solution that can be easily implemented into the workflow of studies relating to various aspects of seed development.

R.D Fagerlund, J.J Eaton-Rye.

The lipoproteins of cyanobacterial photosystem II.

Journal of Photochemistry and Photobiology B: Biology (2011)

Julian J Eaton-Rye.

Construction of gene interruptions and gene deletions in the cyanobacterium *Synechocystis* sp. strain PCC 6803.

Methods in molecular biology (Clifton, NJ) (2011) vol. 684 pp. 295-312

A series of protocols are presented for the storage, growth, transformation, and characterization of wild type and mutant strains of *Synechocystis* sp. strain PCC 6803. These protocols include the isolation of genomic DNA and the strategies required for the construction of specific gene interruptions or deletions in this organism. This cyanobacterium has been used widely as a model for photosynthesis research, and the sequence of its genome is available at CyanoBase (<http://genome.kazusa.or.jp/cyanobase/>). The details provided in this chapter do not assume any previous experience in working with cyanobacteria and are intended to enable new investigators to take advantage of a wide range of gene modification and mutation mapping techniques that have been adapted for use in this system.

10th Otago Genomics Facility Meeting.

This meeting was as popular as ever with 120 people registered and attending. We had an impressive lineup of speakers, with Dr Michael Mann from the Institute for Molecular and Cell Biology in Singapore as a keynote. He gave a fantastic talk on the use of transposon mediated gene knockouts to study genes involved in melanoma progression.

As usual we had a mix of technical methodology talks alongside those using genomics approaches to study interesting biological problems. Peter Stockwell gave a very informative methodology-based talk on various approaches to DNA sequence mapping from next generation sequencing of bisulphate modified samples. Ruth Topless gave an interesting talk on the advantages of using databases with flexible functionality for the study of complex diseases.

Genomic methodologies used in the study of a wide range of biological systems were also presented, with Phil Wilcox (Scion), Roger Hellens (Plant and Food), and Shannon Clarke (AgResearch) presenting fascinating talks on genomics approaches being taken in the more commercially orientated Crown Research Institutes.

Maui Hudson from ESR gave a thought provoking talk on genomics research from a Maori perspective, including mention of changing expectations around consultation and interaction. His talk also covered strategies and approaches for starting new projects and suggestions for ways of making interactions more informative and useful to Maori partners involved in research projects.

The standard of talks from the students presenting was outstanding. Student talks were given by Sarah Morgan from the University of Otago Department of Biochemistry, and by Gloria Evans from the University of Otago, Christchurch. Also attending from Christchurch was Rachel Purcell, who spoke on the use of genomic data in the study of rare cancers.

Chris Brown gave a fascinating talk on the use of next generation sequencing to study gene expression changes resulting from down regulation of microRNAs, and Russell Poulter presented a more classical genetics approach to studying cyclic peptides.

Finally, Tony Lough provided a very informative outline of the future shape of New Zealand Genomics Limited (NZGL), with probable time frames for implementation of proposals and how various partners will interact to provide a coordinated and integrated genomics platform for New Zealand.

A Chand, M Legge.

Stereological Assessment of Developing Mouse Ovarian Follicles in an *in vitro* Culture System.

Anatomical Record (2011) vol. 294 (3) pp. 379-383

R W Bentley, D Keown, T R Merriman, M Raj Krishnan, R B Gearry, M L Barclay, R L Roberts, A S Day.

Vitamin D receptor gene polymorphism associated with inflammatory bowel disease in New Zealand males.

Alimentary pharmacology & therapeutics (2011) vol. 33 (7) pp. 855-856

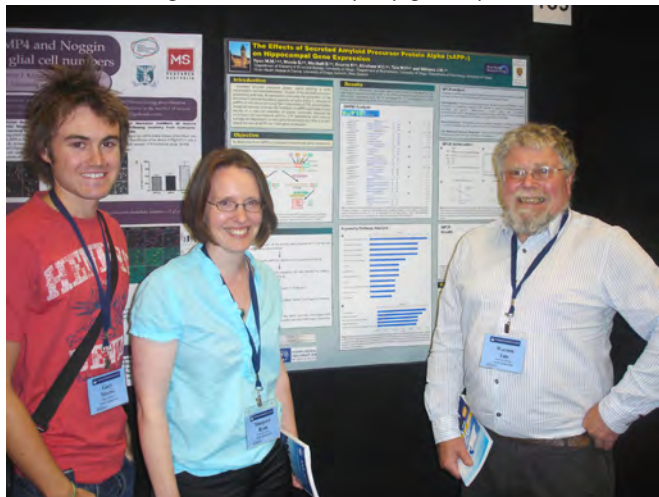


Lab News

Tate Lab

2011 is now well underway and the Tate Lab has not been caught napping! Our summer students Caillin Crowe-McAuliffe & Clare Ogilvy successfully completed their projects and although we had to sadly say goodbye to Clare, who has gone to study medicine, we are delighted to have Caillin back into the lab this year to study for a Master's degree. He is clearly quite a catch as he was jointly awarded the Edson Prize in Biochemistry for his achievements in 400 level studies last year! Congratulations Caillin! The lab is also excited about the imminent arrival of new students; as yet we are unsure who will be joining us – more info in the next issue!

In late January some members of the Memory Group attended the Australian Neuroscience Conference in Auckland. Gary Morris, Margaret Ryan and Ana Claasen each took posters presenting some of their work. The conference was an excellent opportunity to see some of the top neuroscience research being conducted in the southern hemisphere; it has motivated us to work even harder this year.



In the last newsletter we said goodbye to David Young. Just weeks after David's departure we learnt that Suneeth Mathew was accepted into medical school in Auckland. Suneeth began her tenure in the Tate Lab as an honors student in 2002. She subsequently went on to complete her PhD and was an integral part of our Lab. Suneeth's knowledge, her ready ear and ability to solve all sorts of technical problems will be sorely missed by everyone. We wish Dr. (Dr.) Mathew all the very best in her future studies, hopefully first year biochemistry won't be too difficult!

On a brighter note our ARF, Katie Bourne is now back in the lab after taking six months maternity leave, she is now a 50% FTE mum. As the Krause lab is ever expanding we offered them lab 109 so Katie has moved into the main lab where she has humans to talk to! We consequently look forward to our social calendar being much better organised this year (there were far too many plums at our xmas party!)

To those eagerly awaiting the "pun of the month", we are very sorry to say that we have all been too busy to catch any of Warren's famous quotes. Lets keep our ears peeled team!

Until next time,

The Tate Lab.

Cancer Genetics

CGL are being treated to Soroush's laughter again as the finishing touches are put to his PhD thesis – good luck! Having not managed to scare her away over her summer studentship, Bryony will now turn her attentions towards potential synthetic lethal E-cadherin interactions for her honors project. She is joined by fellow Genetics honors student, Justine, who will be investigating E-cadherin transcription regulation in ovarian cancer. We also welcome, Jo, a biochemistry masters student, looking into histone deacetylation inhibitors as a preventative cancer therapy.

McCormick Lab

Numerous departures from the McCormick lab since the last newsletter have left the lab missing the giggles and screeches of our summer students; Greg, Hannah and the comparatively quieter Sijing.

Word from Greg is that he's enjoying Sydney – having the festivities of Mardi Gras as a welcoming event surely helped things along. Hannah has managed to tear herself away from the lab just in time to get stuck into the 300-level course and Sijing has returned to the other end of campus for another year of med lectures.

In other news, our most recent newlywed PhD deportee has tired of her housewife duties in Adelaide and has secured herself a post-doc position working in the Breast Cancer Genetics Group with Prof. David Callen at the University of Adelaide.

Those left behind have kept themselves entertained – Anne's youngest has started Kindy, getting off to a flying start. Brie's cells are keeping her amused while she is busy dreaming of warmer climates. Ange spent a month back home in Taiwan and is now back with a bundle of enthusiasm to finish off her Masters. Congratulations to Nina who was the recent recipient of a Gottlieb-Erica Trust scholarship to complete an alpine club instruction course. Co-incidence has it that Gottlieb Braun-Elwert's daughter Carla did her Honours degree in our department! Sally has quashed rumours that her coffee addiction was subsiding by ramping up the caffeine intake in response to impending teaching and to aid recovery from vineyard concerts.

This week we warmly welcome our new recruits, Honours student (and recipient of the Mervyn Smith Prize in Biochemistry!) Emma Nolan and here to start a two year Masters, as well as to fill the position of 'token McCormick lab male', ex-pat Cantabrian Tom Morley.



A little something from the Marshall Lab,

Just as we are inviting the new summer students into the lab it's now time for them to stretch their science wings and fly from the coop. The time has come again to invite a new brood of potential professors into the wonderful world of research.

As for our current Marshall Lab occupants we are getting on with the usual. Melanie occupies most of her lab time dissecting oysters and pondering over the usual science conundrums. Abhishek has successfully solved a crystal structure and is delving into data obtained at the Australian synchrotron. Stephen is doing a magnificent job at putting off writing up for another while but has obtained some good results from his spots in the mean time. James has come across some "sub-optimal" science results which has taken him back a few months, but is

back on track and has nearly got back to where he wants to be.

All in all, the usual pitfalls in this wonderful world of new discoveries.

As for Craig, he is gearing up for another year of teaching and is looking forward to getting some sea monkeys growing and continuing work from his PhD all those many years ago.

All for now and we wish everyone the best for the coming times and hope the newbies settle in nicely and make something of themselves.

Love!

James and the Marshall Lab

Macknight Lab News

2011 has started with a flurry of excitement with Mau having her baby, Shakinah, at the start of January. Mau has been seen in the lab since, and is as upbeat as ever, putting the finishing touches on her thesis.



Over the summer we have had Jared Fudge working on a variety of projects from Rowan, Rob and Mau. Jared enjoyed it so much that he has decided to do a masters project in our lab, so we can expect to be hearing plenty of awful puns for at least the next two years. Jared's masters project will be on flowering time in *Medicago*, looking at homologues of the *Arabidopsis* *SOC1* gene. Rachel also did a summer studentship, following on from her honours-year successes looking at non-canonical start codons. Rachel is about to embark on a tour of the United States, so we wish her well for her holiday (even though we are all very jealous!). In fact, Rowan was so jealous that he too is heading to the United States, albeit for a conference, in June (or is it to escape Dunedin winter?).

While we may be losing Rachel, an old face has returned to the lab, Chris Farr has come back to put the final touches on his PhD. Chris has spent the last year building a house with his Dad, which has put him in great spirits, and seems to be carrying over to his thesis-writing.

Rob has had a busy start to the year as well, most notably helping to organise the Otago Genomics Meeting. Everything went off without a hitch during the meeting, and I'm sure everyone who attended can attest to the meeting being a great success. Rob has also been frantically writing a paper, which involves a lot of high-throughput data, as well as putting together grant applications. Of course this means that Jane has been kept busy with Rob's lab work.

Robyn has continued her work on onion flowering time, with some nice results on the expression of the FT genes. As it turns out, they aren't regulated in the same way as *Arabidopsis*, so there are plenty more exciting discoveries to come in this department.

A rest is as good as a change in the Wilbanks Lab

The summer brought less change to our lab than usual. Samuel stayed for the summer and will continue his DnaK single molecule work in a one-year MSc project. He finished his fourth year with a flourish, sharing the Edson Prize with Caillan. Aimée was our only new face for the summer, and will stay for a two-year MSc. She has already grown crystals of DnaK and used remote, midnight data-collection at the Australian Synchrotron to collect our best data yet for that protein. The rest of the lab denizens are remaining with us, at least for the next few months. We expect to have welcomed Yohan into the chaperone fold for his fourth year by the time this report lands on your desk.

Jess and Malcolm have teamed up to solve the Hsc70 cloning issues. While not in the lab, Jess has occupied herself with learning new acrobatic tricks and looking after old patients. Peter has tamed the Psb27 cloning problems, so has a route to mutants and an assay for Psb27 function, a winning combination. Egor, who clones faster than the eye can follow, has moved the cysteine dioxygenase project into the bacterial realm, and with Richard plumbed the intricacies of Mössbauer spectroscopy. Meanwhile, Eleni has shown that removing a single cysteine from the surface of the rat enzyme tames her previously wierd and wild kinetic data.

With members of the Marshall, Ledgerwood, Carne and Day labs, the two SMWs, JR and PM escaped the turbulent Dunedin summer for the promise of more temperate beaches at the Lorne Conference on Protein Structure and Function in the first week of February. Held outside of Melbourne at the Erskine Mantra Resort in Lorne, the 36th annual meeting featured Membrane Dynamics, Molecular Chaperones, Ubiquitin Systems, Viruses, and Protein Ion Channels. Just about every session included a healthy dose of structural biology. Talks with northern hemisphere chaperonologists Rick Morimoto and Bernd Bukau made the conference particularly exciting for the Hsp70 aficionados in the lab.

Although cool and overcast days made it easier to attend sessions than sometimes at Lorne, every lab member got into the water at some hour of the day or night. And got back out, for eventual reunion with clothes and wallet. Après conference, we visited Melbourne galleries and shops, caught up with friends, Sigurd toured CSIRO's high-throughput crystallization and imaging facility, and we capped the trip with a lab outing to Shakespeare in the Botanic Gardens; the first three acts of the Comedy of Errors were engaging and the following thunderstorm was truly moving: Liz and Sigurd moved to the trolley stop while the students soaked up the local atmosphere. Amazingly, we were all present and dry for our next morning 6 am check in and return to Dunedin and the bench.

Dearden Lab News; First Quarter 2011

Like the rest of the world – wondering where this first quarter has gone off to so fast, the rat bastard.

In late November we held the annual Genetics Otago Symposium at St Margaret's College, which as usual was a resounding success. Guest speakers included Professor Paul Goodyer from the McGill University Health Centre in Montreal, and Professor David Fergusson, Director of the Christchurch Health and Development Study.

We farewelled our summer student, Erica Mather, earlier last month after a stunning summer of research, just in time to welcome our new Genetics Honours student, Lisa Zondag. Lisa will be working with Dr Megan Wilson.

One of our senior PhD students, the lovely Rosannah McCartney wed Scott Cameron from the Chemistry Dept on the 29th January in a beautiful ceremony in the Pohangina Valley, Manawatu. The lab had a lovely time in the heat of the North Island, wishing her well with champagne, wedding cake and cheese. Lots of cheese.

Our Lab Manager Otto Hyink and his wife had their third child last month, a beautiful baby girl by the name of Elsie (for Elsevier, the journal publishing overlord). The family is doing well and we can't wait to have the kids over for a lab meeting.

Liz Duncan and Rosannah McCartney took out both the staff and student poster prizes at the CRG Colloquium last month in an epic prize sweep for the lab, and Sarah Morgan gave a presentation at the Otago Genomics Meeting.

Tamsin Jones, one of our ARFs was accepted to Harvard (as well as Michigan State) last month and is making plans to be flown over for an interview with the hopes of commencing her PhD mid 2011.

Matt Benton, honours class of 2008, visited the lab in January, on his winter break from Cambridge where he is now half way through his PhD. Nathan Kenny, honours class of 2009, is visiting this month on his first break from Oxford, where he started his PhD in October 2010.

We also have a new ARF starting this month, Tahlia Whiting, who will be working with Liz on her UORG investigating the role of small RNAs (piRNAs) in honeybee oogenesis. We look forward to having her as a part of the team.

Megan Leask has been busy organizing this year's schedule of LENS Seminar's, a secondary school/research scientist learning extension program which is live streamed from Auckland once a month. Our lab hosts the Dunedin Hub for this event, with students from high schools across Dunedin attending to get a taste of the real science backing up their government prescribed learning objectives.

Peter, Liz and Megan L visited Kaikorai Primary School last month to talk about honeybees and the science we do with them, with kids (both young and old) thoroughly enjoying the experience.

In amongst their numerous other duties Liz and Peter have been coordinating the first NRCGD Epigenetics Workshop which was held at the beginning of March at St Margaret's college and was by all accounts a great success. Special thanks to Mel Kennedy for helping Liz get the handouts printed (at the very last minute)!

This month we all aim to settle back into the normal rhythm of University life, with lecturing, demonstrating and somehow, somewhere, fitting all of our outstanding research in to the program.

Peace Out.

Neural Development and Disease Lab

The NDD lab has had a boost in brain power this week as we welcome three new women into the lab. Julia Prier, who is employed as an ARF by the anatomy department, is based with us for the next six months making viral constructs for a collaborative project with Louise Parr-Brownlie. We also have two new students; Nicole Neverman has joined the lab to do her honours project in biochemistry after completing a summer project with us, and Taryn Tait is undertaking her honours project in genetics.

Hollie is continuing to write up her Master's thesis and finish off some final experiments, and Shar is back from her break to continue with her PhD. Katie and Steph are hoping to get up to Lincoln in a week or two to undertake some further *in vivo* work which was delayed due to the earthquake.

Stephanie was an invited speaker at the Centre for Reproduction and Genomics 3rd Annual Research Colloquium at the end of February. Her presentation entitled "Developing gene therapies in a sheep brain" included some of Katie's recent work focussing on developing gene therapies for Batten disease. Stephanie is also soon to be interviewed by Career Services to give her views on what the life of biochemist is really like - we can expect a huge influx of new biochemistry majors if you sell it right Steph!

For those of you interested in hearing about some of the latest advances in brain health research, Brain Day Dunedin will be held on Saturday 19th March this year in the St. David lecture theatre, with presentations by invited speakers from 11- 4pm.

Lamont Lab News

Iain has taken over as director of the genetics teaching programme and is looking forward to the challenges it will present. Andrea is back in the lab for while on short hours until she has her final operation. She is eager to get back to full time lab work after she has recuperated from the operation. Anna has completed her PhD and graduated and is now busy writing journal articles after a wonderful holiday in Cambodia. Leo and Becky are working hard at their projects.

There have been a few comings and goings in the lab. Richard has departed for Canberra and we are sad to see him go and wish him the best for the future. He will be back for his oral examination. Katy is staying on after her summer project to undertake a Masters-level project. Welcome to Georgi our new research assistant, taking over from Xin who is now living in Washington, DC. Georgi has joined us after completing her honour's year in the department.

Eaton-Rye Lab

Everyone in the JER lab is back from their Christmas and New Year break, starting the year refreshed and enthusiastic about their projects ... (I think).

Our summer students have survived the lab, and in fact one is staying on (Jake Lamb) to work on his MSc with Martin Hohmann-Marriott, so clearly we haven't put him off. We have welcomed Johnny Spoor who is here for 6 months from The Netherlands as part of his training. Our new 4th year students, Joshua O'Sullivan and Asher Dale, have started today.

Masters student, Simon Cabout, is enjoying (or maybe not) his 15 seconds of fame as part of the new Sky TV advertisement ... look out for him, although he is disguised as Winnie-the-Pooh!

I would say for many people February 22nd will be a day they won't forget, and least of all Julian. He flew to Christchurch for the day, for a meeting, and got caught up in the devastating earthquake. Thankfully he was able to evacuate the building at Canterbury University and was put up for the night until his flight home the following evening. A lucky escape; he was shaken but not stirred.

To end on a happier note, we have just celebrated a milestone as a group under Julian's leadership, as it has been 15 years since shifting up to the "new" 3rd floor lab, where it all began (well, apart from the previous year spent on the 2nd floor). Time flies when you're having fun! During that time Julian has had:

34 Dip Sci/Honours students

11 Masters students

14 PhD students (+2 with Chulalongkorn University in Bangkok)

3 Postdocs

Not to mention summer students, visiting students, Prep room staff, etc, who have come through the doors to work with us.

Catch you next time.

News from Frances

On the work front, busy trying to get early year allocations and fee repayments done. Budget Review will be early this year, it is all entered directly on Finance One now so makes my life easier. Then in April I am away at a family reunion, will be close to 200 Templetons descending on Riverton for 3 days, and I have been involved in editing the family history, fun (not!)

Three weeks ago we got a new member to the family my baby Chihuahua, Jesse who is an absolute delight. Already toilet and sleep trained, but now learning not to bite everything in sight.



News from Bronwyn

Seeing as I've been nagging at you all about providing copy for the newsletter, I thought I'd better lead by example and write something myself.



Café l'Arté near Taupo

I've been having a reasonable busy time over the last couple of months. I spent a couple of weeks in Auckland, Tarawera and Taupo over Christmas with my brother and his family. We swam and boated and suffered in the extreme heat that seems to have passed Dunedin by. In Taupo I went to the drag races for the first (and probably only) time, and saw the dragbike one of my oldest friends has spent the last five years designing and building have its first outing on the track. Drag racing is uncommonly boring. A lot of waiting around (again in unbearable heat) for 12 seconds of action! Repeat three times over the day and that's it. It was good to see the bike go (or more accurately to hear it, it sounds truly awesome), but I don't think I'll be repeating the experience.

Then at the end of January I had a few days in Sydney and a week in Adelaide. In Sydney I caught up with some old friends I hadn't seen in many years, and went to the Big Day Out with one of them. I got to finally see Iggy and the Stooges and Grinderman. Brilliant.



Ancient rock star

In Adelaide I had a lovely time being Grandma. My older granddaughter started school while I was there, which was very exciting for all concerned. She informed me that I must be very old because I have loose skin, but then she told her mother I can't be really old because my hair isn't grey. So confusing for the poor girl. I should either get a facelift or stop dyeing my hair.



Small girl, big uniform

I bought an iPod touch in duty free on my way to Australia (worth it, you don't pay the GST) but when I got to Adelaide I hardly got to use it at all. Both granddaughters (aged 5 and 2) are keen iPhone/iPod game players. Mum and Dad don't let them use their iPhones any more because they have an iPod to share. Grandma's iPod is of course superior, and as my friend Matthew (the iPad owning father of a five-year-old) said, I had to learn to do some

fairly major sharing myself. Nothing better for preventing back seat of the car squabbles though.

I should have been in Christchurch the weekend before last at some proper motorbike races, but the earthquake put paid to that. I shall have to wait until the end of this month to see a friend's brand new Norton race. This will have been the first new Norton to arrive in New Zealand for a great many years; the brand had been defunct for a long time until just recently, and there have not yet been very many made by the new owners. I'm looking forward to seeing it.

Krause Group

Folks in the Krause group have had a busy summer. For starters, we had two awesome summer students this year, Joshua O'Sullivan and Gabby Watson. Josh worked with Sylvia Luckner and learned about the mechanism of cycloserine action in mycobacteria while Gabby worked with Miriam Sharpe on newly identified neuraminidase inhibitors. As summer ended, Gabby went off to go skiing in the Rockies in America and then Miriam went off to have a baby!



Neve Cutfield (see photo) arrived on 27 February weighing 3.5 kg and could not be cuter. Mom and baby are well and enjoying a welcome respite.

Karen Yates also had a big summer with parties, family visits and extreme sports all culminating in a beautiful wedding at Glenfalloch. At the reception she and her German groom Michael Knapp did a double reverse with him sharing wedding greetings in English and Karen sharing greetings in perfect German.

Michele and Kurt Krause toured the South Island with their children Alex and Nick and took time out to swim with dolphins in Kaikoura and later walk on a glacier at Franz Joseph. The funniest moment on the glacier hike occurred when a tourist, all outfitted with a coat, boots and crampons, while atop the pristine glacier walk asked if the glacier had toilet facilities!

