A Record of Achievement:
The 50th Birthday of the Otago University Press

19 December 2008 to 27 March 2009

Special Collections  de Beer Gallery
1st Floor  Central Library  University of Otago
Hours: 8.30am – 5.00pm  Monday to Friday
Happy 50th Birthday Otago University Press!

In 1993, when the University of Otago Press moved the distribution of its books to HarperCollins, one of their sales representatives was heard to say: ‘Real books – not mass trash!’ By then, the Press has been publishing books for scholars and occasionally the wider community for thirty-five years, with the Press established in 1958 and the imprint first used in 1959. Initially a part-time unpaid task performed by the University Librarian, with limited technologies and producing modest monographs, the Press appointed a full-time Managing Editor in 1993, and now has staff, spacious quarters, website, international distribution and an expanding and diverse list of publications.

Many of these developments followed ongoing technical changes in the book and print trades. Photo-setting and galley-proofs were eventually replaced by direct-imaging, and production time-frames were compressed. Communication methods between the publisher, editors, authors, designers, production-editors, printers, distributors and retailers have also changed dramatically.

The role of the Press has also changed. Slim publications, often used as presentation copies or sold at a nominal cost, have given way to substantial works, many illustrated in colour, that are sold beyond the academic environment. Books are printed in Hong Kong as well as New Zealand, and there is a greater emphasis on marketing books through distributors, local and overseas conferences and book-fests, and direct sales initiatives. In 1999, a distinctive new Press logo was created by Anneloes Douglas and in 2006 there was a subtle name change; to Otago University Press.

Crucial in the Press’s development have been the University Librarians – such as Peter Havard-Williams and W. J. McEldowney – and later editors – Dr Bill Sewell, Dr Iain Lonie, Dr Helen Watson White, and Wendy Harrex. There have also been acting editors at various times: Professors Jocelyn Harris and Alan Horsman. The Dunedin firm of John McIndoe Ltd, under the leadership of John McIndoe, was another vital component in the Press’s development. Until 1993, they printed and marketed the books to the trade.

Barring the issues of journals such as Landfall (acquired in 1994), and Childrenz Issues (established 1997), the Press has published some 310 books. These range from T. B. L. Webster’s Greek Art and Literature 700-530 BC (1959), G. J. Fraenkel’s The Example of Joseph Lister (1959), Erik Olsén’s John A. Lee (1977) and the first English translations of Dr Louis Thiercelin’s Travels in Oceania. Memoirs of a Whaling Ship’s Doctor, 1866 (1995), to Neville Peat’s and Brian Patrick’s Wild Dunedin (2002), David Young’s Our Islands, Our Selves: A History of Conservation in New Zealand (2004), a reprint of Geoffrey Cox’s classic Defence of Madrid (2006), and Professor Helen Leach’s The Pavlova Story (2008).

This exhibition, ‘A Record of Achievement: The 50th Birthday of the Otago University Press’, celebrates the Press’s 50th birthday. It offers an overview of the wide variety of publications produced, those involved in the making of the books, including the authors, the editors, and the book designers, and those events that have shaped its development. Unless stated, all the books on display are published by the Otago University Press. Although selective, it represents a proud achievement. Long may the Press flourish.

Special thanks to W. J. McEldowney, John McIndoe, Helen Watson White, Wendy Harrex and her staff, and all the authors and designers who responded kindly to my queries.

Dr Donald Kerr, Special Collections Librarian, December 2008

Items on Display

CABINET ONE - INTRODUCTION
Sandra Chesterman, FigureWork: The Nude and Life Modelling in New Zealand Art (2002).
Ka Taoka Hakena Treasures from the Hocken Collections. Edited by Stuart Strachan and Linda Tyler (2007).
Nurse to the Imagination. 50 Years of the Robert Burns Fellowship. Edited by Lawrence Jones (2008).
Mark Adams and Nicholas Thomas, Cook’s Sites: Revisiting History (Dunedin: University of Otago Press with Centre for Cross-Cultural Research, Australian National University, 1999).

CABINET TWO - THE EARLY YEARS
Harold Mattingly, Christianity in the Roman Empire ([Dunedin]: University of Otago, 1955).
P. Platt, Music History as a Living Study (1959).
Peter Munz, The Origin of the Carolingian Empire (1960).
CABINET THREE - THE EARLY YEARS CONTINUED


CABINET FOUR - BIGGER & BETTER

H. N. Parton, Science is Human (1972).

CABINET FIVE - EARLY HISTORY

Dom Felice Vaggioli, History of New Zealand and Its Inhabitants (2000).

CABINET SIX - W. J. MCELDOwNEY & THE END OF AN ERA


CABINET SEVEN - SEWELL-LONIE-WHite


CABINET EIGHT - OTAGO HISTORY SERIES

Communities of Women: Historical Perspectives. Edited by Barbara Brooke and Dorothy Page (2002).

CABINET NINE - JOURNALS

Otago Bioethics Report, Vol. 6, no. 1 (February 1997).
Computers in New Zealand Schools, Vol. 9, no. 1 (March 1997).

CABINET TEN - CREATIVE WRITING

Bronwyn Tate, Russian Dolls (1999).
Lynn Davidson, Ghost Net (2003).
CABINET ELEVEN - REPRINTS & NEW BOOKS

____, Defence of Madrid (2nd ed., 2006).
Ian Dougherty, Books and Boots. The Story of New Zealand Publisher, Writer and Long Distance Walker Alfred Hamish Reed (2005).

CABINET TWELVE (DRAWER) - LANDFALL


CABINET THIRTEEN (DRAWER) - PROMOTION

Roger Hall, Otago University (1994).

CABINET FOURTEEN - AUTHORS

Cilla McQueen, Fire-Penny (2005).
Ruth Dallas, The Black Horse and Other Stories (2000).

CABINET FIFTEEN - FROM MANUSCRIPT TO BOOK

____, ‘Chapter 2’ – Typesetting proof of ‘Keeping New Zealand Green.’
____, ‘Keeping New Zealand Green. Recent Environmental Reforms’, first proof copy.

CABINET SIXTEEN - DESIGNERS

Agathe Thornton, Māori Oral Literature as Seen by a Classicist (Ngaire Gardner, 1987).
Mark Stocker, Francis Shurrock. Shaping New Zealand Sculpture (Mark Winstanley, 2000).
Kay McKenzie Cooke, Made for Weather (Fiona Moffat, 2007).
Donald Jackson Kerr, Amassing Treasures for All Times. Sir George Grey, Colonial Bookman and Collector (Delaware; Dunedin: Oak Knoll Press; Otago University Press, 2006; Ralph Lawrence).

CABINET SEVENTEEN - UNIVERSITY AUTHORS


CABINET EIGHTEEN (LARGE) - NATURAL HISTORY/LOCAL GUIDES

The Natural History of Southern New Zealand. Edited by John Darby, [and four others], (2003).
Keith Probert, [and others], Southern Seas. Discovering Marine Life at 46º South (2005).
David Young, Our Islands, Our Selves: A History of Conservation in New Zealand (2004)
Neville Peat and Brian Patrick, Wild Dunedin (2002).
Warwick Don, Ants of New Zealand (Dunedin: Otago University Press in association with Otago Museum, 2007).

REFERENCES:

Otago University Press Archives