



## University of Otago records and historical sources

*While this Bulletin deals primarily with information and material on the University of Otago to be found in the Hocken Library, the opportunity is also taken here to present a brief guide to University material held elsewhere.*

THE University of Otago and the Hocken Collections have always been closely associated. Dr Hocken, who had been an early lecturer in the Medical School, was himself later a member of the University Council and, not long before his death in 1910, was elected Vice-Chancellor (Pro-Chancellor in today's terminology). While the Deed of Gift stipulated that his library was being presented to the 'people of New Zealand', the University of Otago took on the responsibility for housing, administering and curating the collection and has done so since the Library's foundation. Thus, while the Hocken Library is part of the University Library system, its Collections do not belong to the University, but are held in trust for the nation. The Library, in turn, holds a great deal of archival material relating to the University but does not own it: it is guardian, not owner, of the University's archives.

It is a truism that education is Dunedin's chief 'industry', and for anyone interested in the economic, social, political, literary, artistic, religious or sporting history of Dunedin, material concerning the University will necessarily be consulted.

### Historical Background

The University of Otago was formally established by a Provincial Ordinance of 1869 and opened in July 1871 with a staff of three professors (Classics and English; Mathematics and Physics; and Philosophy). The range of subjects was extended over the next seven years to include Law, Medicine and Mining. In 1878-79, when the present Geology and Registry buildings had been erected, the University moved from its original building in the centre of the town (later the Stock Exchange, now the site of John Wickliffe House) to its

present site by the Water of Leith.

Dentistry courses began in 1907, Home Science in 1911, Commerce in 1912, Theology in 1946, and Physical Education in 1947.

From 1874 to 1961 the University was an affiliated college of the University of New Zealand, but regained its independence in 1962, when its roll was about 3,000. Since then it has expanded considerably, catering now for some 15,000 students and offering courses also in Surveying, Pharmacy, and Physiotherapy, as well as specialist post-graduate courses in a variety of disciplines. Many of the details of these various changes and developments can be traced by means of the annual *University of Otago Calendars* (which include information not only on course requirements, but also give lists of staff and graduates, and also staff publications).

### Material in the Hocken

Three books are essential references for anyone whose research touches on the University. *A History of the University of Otago, 1869-1919* was written by Professor G.E. Thompson for the golden jubilee of the University and, published in 1920, gives considerable detail about its politics, personnel and development (including a chapter on the Museum and the Hocken Collection), but frustratingly lacks an index. Its sequel is Professor W.P. Morrell's *The University of Otago: A Centennial History*, published in 1969, which deals briefly with the ground covered by Thompson then gives a compact summary (indexed, fortunately) of the next half-century. These official histories are nicely balanced by Sam Elworthy's social history of student life at Otago, *Ritual Song of Defiance*, published in 1990.

Other useful publications devoted to aspects of the University include: *The Otago Medical School under the First Three Deans* (1964), by Sir Charles Hercus and Sir Gordon Bell; *Annals of the University Medical School, 1875-1939* (1945) by D.W. Carmalt Jones; *History of the Development of University Education in Home Science in N.Z., 1911-1936* (1937) by

A.G. Strong; *The Otago School of Mines 1879–1979* and *Otago Medical School 1875–1975*, both brief sketches by A.G. Parry; *A Brief History of the Otago School of Mines 1871–1981*, by G.S. Parsonson; *School of Home Science, History 1911–1961* (1962), by Elizabeth Gregory; *University of Otago. Faculty of Medicine, Compendium of Historical Data, 1873–1992* (1993), by J.D. Hunter; *Grace and Truth* (1975), a history of the Theological Hall, Knox College, by Ian Breward; *The Presbyterian Chairs at Otago University* (1949), by Sir Thomas Hunter; and *Dunedin School of Massage* (1988), by Leah Taylor. T.W.H. Brooking's *A History of Dentistry in N.Z.* (1980), Enid Anderson's *N.Z. Society of Physiotherapists, Golden Jubilee* (1973) and M.J. Cullen's *Lawfully Occupied* (1979), while dealing more generally with those professions, are also concerned with the professional courses at the University.

The place of the University in a wider context can be better understood by consulting *The University of New Zealand* (1937), by J.C. Beaglehole; *The University of New Zealand* (1979), by Hugh Parton; and *Colonial Cap and Gown* (1979), a study of the universities founded in New Zealand and Australia last century, written by W.J. Gardner. A useful summary of more recent events is *Letters from a Vice-Chancellor: Otago University 1979–1985* (1986), by the former Vice-Chancellor, Sir Robin Irvine. *By Degrees*, the history of the Otago branch of the Federation of University Women, edited by Janet Angus and published in 1984, also provides an important additional perspective.

Much earlier, incidentally, R.O.H. Irvine had written the pamphlet *The Future of the Medical School* (1969), one of a number of smaller publications about the workings of the University. A quarter of a century later, Peter L. Schwartz, at much greater length, tackled the same theme in *The Art of the Possible: ideas from a traditional medical school engaged in curricular revision*. Both H.P. Pickerill in 1924 and J.P. Walsh in 1946 similarly produced reports on the prospects of the Dental School.

Hocken also holds a wide range of 'housekeeping' publications connected with the University: printed professorial applications, the constitutions of societies and organisations, promotional material, pamphlets issued to mark the opening of new buildings or new faculties, programmes, prospectuses, inaugural and other special lectures and the like. *The Otago University Jubilee, 1869–1919; Ceremonies and Celebrations*, largely reprinted from the *Evening Star*, is a substantial record of that event. Everyday reference books take on scarcity value with age, and it won't be long before

past issues of the University's *P.A.B.X. Telephone Directory* become reference source material. Despite some incompleteness, the massive *Roll of the Graduates of the University of Otago (to May 1988)*, ed. by A.D. Macalister and D.W. Taylor, already is.

Nor should the literature relating to the University library system be overlooked, especially as many of the listings there are of considerable use to researchers: W.H. Trimble, *Catalogue of the Hocken Library* (1912) and *Dr Hocken and His Historical Collection* (1926); D.W. Taylor, *The Monro Collection in the Medical Library, Otago University*; Linda Rodda, *Calendar of Dr T.M. Hocken's Personal Letters and Documents preserved in the Hocken Library*; and various other publications on library holdings in art as well as books and papers. As for art, John Borrie's *Art and Observables in the Otago Medical School* (1975) is an interesting booklet on one of the by-ways of University activity.

## Memoirs

As an institution, the University figures prominently in many biographies and reminiscences: *Jack in the Pulpit* (1987), by J.S. Somerville, former Master of Knox College and later Chancellor; W.P. Morrell's *Memoirs* (1983), and also *W.P. Morrell, A Tribute* (1973), ed. by Wood and O'Connor; *To Catch the Spirit* (1995), P.C. Fenton's account of the mathematician A.C. Aitken; Sir Gordon Bell's *Surgeon's Saga* (1968); the biography *Ann Gilchrist Strong* (1963), by Helen and Sylvia Thomson; Carmalt Jones' *Diversions of a Professor* (1945); *Full of the Warm South* (1983), by Dennis McEldowney, and the same author's *Donald Anderson: A Memoir* (1966); Lucy Adams' memoir of her husband, *Thomas Dagger Adams, Professor of Classics* (1954); and Dunn & Richardson's 1961 biography of *Sir Robert Stout*.

Books by or about New Zealand doctors almost invariably include a section on their student days in Dunedin when Otago had the country's only Medical School. Dr Francis Bennett's *A Canterbury Tale* (1980) and Bradford Haami's more recent *Dr Golan Maaka, Maori Doctor* (1995) are examples, and even *A King of Con Men* (1975), autobiography of the notorious Murray Beresford Roberts, recalls his student days. Other such memoirs include: *Within Sound of the Bell* (1953), by J. Rhoda Barr, principal of Timaru Girls' High from 1924 to 1938; *An Angel at My Table* (1984), by Janet Frame; *Underneath the Lamplight* (1989), by G.E. Maloney; *The Green Years* (1969) and *The Leaves Turn* (1973), by Eileen Soper; *'Titch' of the Div. Cav. A Memoir of L/Sergt P.L. Titchener*, (1944); *Breaking the Habit* (1992), by

Judith Graham; *Fred Hollows: An Autobiography* (1993); *Lady Doctor — Vintage Model* (1974), by Frances Preston; *My Life, My Story* (1993), by L.J. McKay; and *The Doctor Must Get Through* (1971), by R. Burns Watson.

Other writers have incorporated personal memories of the University into their novels and short stories: Dan Davin, *Cliffs of Fall* (1945), *The Gorse Blooms Pale* (1947) and *Not Here, Not Now* (1970); C.R. Allen, *A Poor Scholar* (1936); Arthur H. Adams, *Tussock Land* (1904); J.K. Baxter, *Horse* (1985); Merton Hodge, *The Wind and the Rain* (1934); Diana Noonan, *A Sonnet for the City* (1992); while an early satirical tale on Otago University, 'The Experiences of Uncle Paul Pry', appears in *The Duel on the Creek and other tales of Victorian New Zealand* (Hargreaves & Holland, 1995).

A number of periodicals provide researchers with both factual information and the flavour of University life. The *Otago University Review*, began in 1888 as the equivalent of a 'school magazine', mixing news and comment with original writing; but the special number issued in 1893 to mark the first 21 years of University life is particularly useful and interesting. In latter years (after a brief interlude renamed *Twelvemonth*) it has become almost entirely devoted to creative writing, and two retrospective anthologies have been issued. The student newspaper *Critic* first appeared in 1925 and since then has been published fortnightly (and latterly weekly) in term-time. The Hocken has a full range of the well-known Capping magazines published since 1903.

Magazines of the various halls of residence are also useful. Not all halls have managed an annual publication, but *The Knox Collegian* and *The Selwyn Record* have appeared regularly since 1910 and 1931 respectively. Knox and Selwyn have also produced registers

and *The Selwyn College List* (1956). Selwyn updated its list and published a history of the college in *Selwyn College's First Century* (1993), ed. by R.P. Hargreaves. A biography of *Archdeacon L.G. Whitehead*, the long-serving warden of Selwyn, was written by K.F.S. Cox in 1977. Studholme, St Margaret's, Arana and Carrington have all produced magazines, and the latter two also have a brief history, *A Triumph of Improvisation* (1991), by G.A. Macaulay. Arana's first warden was Harold Turner, and his *Halls of Residence* (1953) remains a relevant study of the role of residential halls in university life.

Sporting, social and cultural clubs ebb and flow, but rugby and cricket have maintained a prominent place in the life of Otago students. A.R. Andrew's *Jubilee History* of the rugby club appeared in 1936, updated by D. Hay's *Otago University Rugby Football Club, 1886–1969*, in which A.P. Gaskell's famous short story about university rugby, 'The Big Game', was reprinted. *Otago University at Cricket*, by George Griffiths, was published in 1978.

No attempt can be made here to document the huge number of books, pamphlets and articles produced by University staff in their respective disciplines over the years and, in most cases, held by the Hocken Library. Normal use of the on-line and card-index catalogues, of bibliographies in specialist publications, and of the many learned periodicals, will assist research in those fields. One important category is the Hocken's collection of students' dissertations and theses, particularly, in this case, those dealing with university topics. Examples include S.H. McDonald's 1984 essay, 'This Educational Monstrosity', on Home Science at Otago; H. Denford's 1937 MA thesis, 'Sir Thomas Sidey'; S. Dooley's 'Ivory Tower Idyll: Students at the University of Otago in the Depression, 1929–36'; and

*'The best qualities  
of all the babies  
combined in one.'  
Detail from an  
advertisement for  
the Austin 7 car  
drawn by Russell  
Clark and published  
in the 1936  
Capping Book.*

of their past residents, incorporating considerable historical detail, in *The Knox College Register* (1973)

R. Sinclair's 1941 honours thesis, 'The Change in Student Mind — as revealed by their publications in

Otago, 1889–1941’. List of the theses can be consulted.

Interestingly, the Hocken holds a treasure-trove of information about the various coats of arms found at the University. Dr Morris Watt, a lecturer in medical microbiology, was almost single-handedly responsible for ensuring that the University and most of its halls of residence obtained officially granted arms from the heralds in London and Edinburgh, and his correspondence and papers are held in the library, together with Dr Watt’s own collection of works on heraldry, one of the best in the country.

### **Photographs and Pictures**

The Hocken’s collections of photographs and pictures include innumerable images of buildings, staff and students of the University. Sports teams, Capping processions, eminent professors, halls of residence, club committees, royal visits and panoramic views are all filed and recorded.

The Pictures Collection, it should be noted, holds representative works by the various painters such as Ralph Hotere, Jeffrey Harris, Graham Sydney and Marilyn Webb, who have been Frances Hodgkins Fellows over the years. It also holds the architectural drawings for the original University buildings

### **Archives**

Primary sources are the true inspiration for scholars, of course, and the Hocken holds many of the University’s oldest and most precious records in its Archives, right back to the letters of application for the founding professorships. They include a further set of *Calendars*, minutes of meetings of the University Council from 1869 onwards, of the Professorial Board (renamed the Senate in 1962) from 1875 onwards, and of various University committees. Correspondence from the Registry and financial records are also held. Many of these are listed in detail in Stuart Strachan’s article, ‘The Archives of the University of Otago’ in *Archifacts* no.4 (December 1974), and the quantity of material is huge.

But perhaps the most valuable source in the Archives is, surprisingly, a series of scrapbooks. Since 1903, the University has kept press-cutting books, chiefly of clippings from the *Otago Daily Times* and the *Evening Star*, which chronicle the life of the University in reports not only of formal meetings, but of graduation ceremonies, capping stunts, obituaries, student demonstrations and riots, and sports events. The press reports of meetings are especially useful as they often include comments and summaries of discussion

not recorded in the formal minutes.

The Archives are also the repository for other minutes and papers of University organisations, most notably the Otago University Students’ Association, and of the papers of people closely associated with the University, including those of Philip Smithells, first Director of the School of Physical Education, and Dr H.D.Skinner, for many years director of the Otago Museum and in charge of the Hocken Library.

It is important to note that none of the University’s records may be consulted without permission from the Registrar, and all requests for access to records should be made in writing. Considerations of privacy, legal issues and commercial sensitivity may mean that access to some classes of records could be declined in a small number of cases.

### **The Registry and elsewhere**

The preceding summary of University-related material held in the Hocken needs to be complemented with a summary of what is *not* in the Hocken. As the University is a living institution, many of its records — even ‘old’ records — are in daily use or need to be readily available to its administrators.

Of particular interest to family historians are enrolment and graduation details of past students at the University. Information about living persons cannot normally be released to inquirers, but questions about deceased persons can be answered by the staff of the Student Records Office. Any requests about past students should be made in writing, addressed to the Academic Registrar.

Although the Hocken has photographs of, and information about, most of the University’s buildings, as well as drawings of the original buildings, it holds relatively few detailed architectural plans relating to the campus as a whole. Inquiries about these should instead be made in writing to the Works Registrar.

Many University departments — the Faculty of Medicine is a particular example — have gathered historical information about their staff and students, and have developed collections of photographs or equipment. Although many of these written and printed records have been lodged in the Hocken in recent years, some remain with the departments, and many interesting historical medical items are also held by the Alumnus Association of the Medical School. Again, a written inquiry is the best first line of approach.

*Compiled for the Friends of the Hocken Collections by Gregor Macaulay and Hocken Library staff. Edited by George Griffiths. Designed by Gary Blackman.*