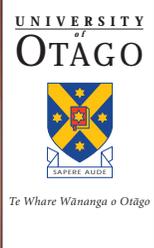


UNIVERSITY OF Otago

M A G A Z I N E

ISSUE 9: OCTOBER 2004

CIVIL UNIONS, RELATIONSHIPS AND THE MODERN NEW ZEALAND FAMILY
VICE-CHANCELLOR DAVID SKEGG
THE SCIENCE, AND ART, OF PALLIATIVE CARE



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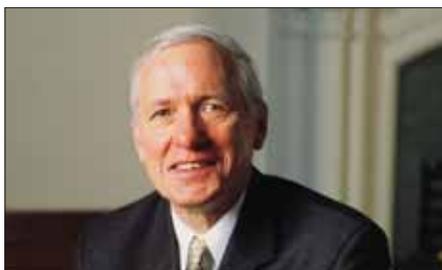
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VC's COMMENT

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

OTAGO GRADUATES AND STAFF WILL UNDERSTAND how privileged I feel to be leading the University as its Vice-Chancellor. Of the six previous Vice-Chancellors (in the modern sense of the word), only two were Otago graduates. I am certainly aware that all members of the Otago “family” expect its leaders to ensure that the essence of this great University is preserved and enhanced.

During the last few months, I have had many opportunities to wonder about what it is that makes Otago unique. The University Council encouraged me, before taking up my appointment, to visit key universities overseas. I spent time at many famous seats of learning – some ancient, and most richer than Otago. Nevertheless, I was reminded of our many assets: capable and loyal staff, beautiful surroundings, a wonderful relationship with the Dunedin community, and vibrant Schools of Medicine and Health Sciences in Christchurch and Wellington. I believe that there are few

universities in the world that can offer students an experience comparable to being a “scarfie” at Otago.

This was brought home to me forcibly when I attended an alumni function in Toronto. A young woman came up to me, and said that I had taught her epidemiology. It turned out that she had been to Otago as a Study Abroad student. Although she came from a prestigious Canadian university, she said that her time at Otago had been the best year of her education. I was struck by the fact that, despite not being an Otago graduate, this young Canadian felt such an attachment to Otago that she wanted to travel to an alumni function.

Despite all the pressures of growth in student numbers, financial stringency and competition for research funds, my colleagues and I are determined to preserve the unique character of Otago. We strive to excel in teaching and research, and also to maintain the “Otago experience”.

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UNDERSTANDING ALZHEIMER'S



Professor Cliff Abraham (left) and Professor Warren Tate aim to tease out the chemical changes that occur to the brain when Alzheimer's disease takes hold.

Science understands Alzheimer's disease as the progressive decline of particular regions of the brain. But the underlying mechanisms leading to this decline are still very much a mystery.

Head of Psychology, Professor Cliff Abraham, has recently been awarded a \$887,621 Health Research Council grant to continue trying to unravel the chemical changes when Alzheimer's sets in.

"The disease is characterised in part by the build-up of a toxic molecule – amyloid-beta – which impairs the brain's ability to make changes in the connections between neurons," he says, "something that is crucial for learning and memory to occur.

"This amyloid-beta is made from a larger protein which also makes a protective molecule; there is some of both the protective and the toxic molecules in all of us. With Alzheimer's sufferers, there is less

of the protective and more of the toxic molecule present.

"We want to know more about how the protective molecule works and whether the loss of this is as important for the disease effects as the increase in the toxic amyloid-beta," he says.

Abraham's research team, in collaboration with Professor Warren Tate in the Department of Biochemistry, will concentrate on the area of the brain affected by early Alzheimer's disease (the hippocampus) which is responsible for certain types of learning.

Looking at the hippocampus within rats, Abraham's team will investigate the mechanisms by which these proteins affect the function of the nerve cells.

HOW ANTARCTIC WORMS CAN BENEFIT ORGAN TRANSPLANTS



You don't survive in Antarctic ice without having a few tricks up your sleeve. Dr Craig Marshall (left) and Professor David Wharton are part of a team looking at worms' ice-active proteins, which may teach us how to make livers – and ice cream – last longer.

With Marsden Fund backing, Zoology's Associate Professor David Wharton, in collaboration with colleagues Dr Craig Marshall (Biochemistry) and postdoctoral researcher Dr Gordon Goodall (also in Zoology/Biochemistry) grew a culture of Antarctic worms or "nematodes" in the laboratory to find out exactly how they cope.

Wharton says, "Depending on how quickly freezing occurs, the nematode copes in one of two ways. If it's rapid freezing, the ice seeds into their bodies making the cells themselves freeze. If ice forms slowly, they dehydrate rather than freeze as they lose water to the surrounding ice."

There are other cold-tolerant organisms which produce ice-active proteins, but none quite like this one. "It's not like the 'anti-freeze' in fish – the ice still forms in the body of the nematode, but this particular protein stabilises the ice – it actually stops the crystals

growing, which is crucial to its survival," says Wharton.

While the prime motivation for this work is to understand fully the nature of this protein, "it's always important to keep an eye open for practical uses," says Wharton. Experiments are already underway with the Food Science Department, looking at how ice-active proteins might be used to help store ice cream for longer without its recrystallising.

Other exciting possibilities using the proteins include improving current preserving techniques for transplant organs or sperm, for instance, or providing frost protection to plants.

MEASURE BY MEASURE



Comparing the incomparable. Dr Kate Wynn-Williams' study of Pharmac suggests ways benchmarking procedures can work for public sector organisations.

It's hard to measure the performance of public sector organisations, according to Dr Kate Wynn-Williams of the Department of Accountancy and Business Law.

They are responsible to governments that fund them through taxpayers' money, and to the people and communities that receive their services. But in the absence of a profit motive to use as a yardstick, how do we judge their effectiveness?

Wynn-Williams proposes using benchmarking as one method of assessing how good a job they are doing.

In an article in a special health-related edition of *Benchmarking: An International Journal* (due for publication in 2005), Wynn-Williams uses Pharmac to illustrate her concepts.

"Benchmarking involves establishing external performance criteria and then measuring an

organisation against them," says Wynn-Williams. "The idea sounds great but there are difficulties with trying to use it in the public sector, where objectives can be stated in very general terms, resources are limited, programmes long-term, and competition non-existent."

Wynn-Williams suggests benchmarking by measuring how things are done rather than by results, reviewing present activities against the past rather than against competitors, and increasing public documentation so interested groups can find information.

The research will lead into assessments of performance, funding and decision-making in the public health sector in New Zealand, and Wynn-Williams hopes to extend it to Australia and parts of the UK, USA and Canada.

RED TAPE BLUES



All tied up: (from left) John Bell, Dr Robert Alexander and Dr Stephen Knowles have added up the time and money small businesses spend on complying with government requirements.

Red tape could be strangling entrepreneurs and economic growth, so University researchers are suggesting ways to cut the paperwork.

According to a Business New Zealand survey, small businesses are deterred from expanding because of the cost of time spent complying with such things as GST returns and health and safety regulations.

Now research by Dr Robert Alexander and Dr Stephen Knowles from Economics and John Bell of Marketing is throwing new light on the picture.

Business New Zealand suggested firms with one to five workers spent more than five hours a week complying with government regulations – a figure based on employers' estimates of time spent over a previous 12-month period.

Then University of Otago researchers asked small companies to record the actual time they spent

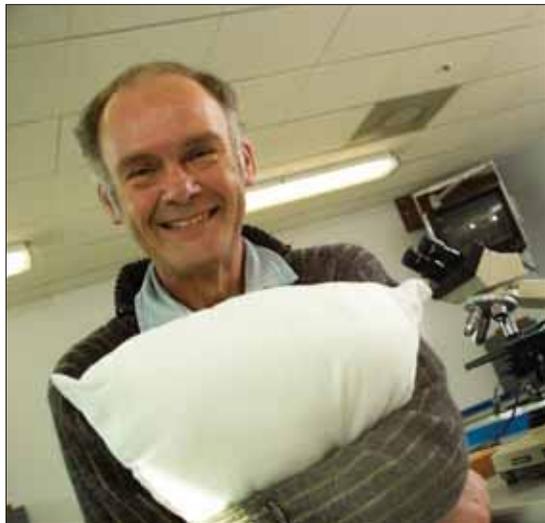
on dealing with government red tape over three months – and came up with just over an hour a week.

However, the University survey also found that firms spent an average of \$100 a week paying others, such as accountants, to handle their compliance for them.

Some firms weren't so unhappy with the time spent on compliance, but objected to the number of individual tasks they had to do, or the fact they had to cope with a major compliance item every now and then. Some said compliance costs had put them off expanding their business.

"From a policy perspective, these results are important," says Knowles. "Simply reducing the amount of time spent on individual compliance tasks won't help some firms. They need a reduction in the number of tasks."

PILLOW TALK



Asthmatics could be sleeping more easily, thanks to Rob Siebers and researchers at the University of Otago's Wellington School of Medicine and Health Sciences.

Relief could be just a matter of using feather pillows instead of synthetic, according to Senior Research Fellow Rob Siebers of the University's Wellington Asthma Research Group.

Allergy sufferers have long debated the relative merits of feather or synthetic pillows. Then research showed that man-made fibre pillows contained more house dust mite allergen – but no one knew why.

Now Siebers' group has found that pillowslips hold the answer. Covers for feather pillows need smaller pores to keep the feathers in – and they also keep the dust mites out.

Covers for synthetic pillows have pores averaging 57 micrometres, while the pores for covers of feather pillows average only 18 micrometres. The average width of larval house dust mites is 20 micrometres.

Researchers put 20 live adult house dust mites on each of the coverings of a feather, polyester and a newer polyester/cotton pillow. After 24 hours all of the mites had penetrated the polyester, but even after 48 hours none had penetrated the covers of the feather or polyester/cotton pillows.

“Until now, asthmatics sensitised to house dust mites were advised to cover all their bedding with occlusive covers,” says Siebers. “However, these are expensive, so the next best advice would be to replace all synthetic bedding with feather bedding or with a new type of synthetic pillow with a cover of similar pore size.”

The research was funded by the Asthma Research Group.

THERE'S GOLD IN THAT SCHIST ... SOMEWHERE!



Associate Professor Dave Craw's studies are helping take the guesswork out of finding gold in Otago's extensive schist resource.

People have been liberating gold from Otago's rocks and rivers for nearly 150 years...

Now a team from the University of Otago is giving technology a hand, by working out which rocks to target.

The research team is based in the Geology Department, under the leadership of Associate Professor Dave Craw. They work closely with Oceana Gold at Macraes in east Otago, and have received funding from the Foundation for Research, Science and Technology (FRST) to further their work on schist.

The current research project will focus on identifying the factors that might mark one kind of schist as more likely to be gold-bearing. Previously, gold mining has concentrated on gold-bearing quartz veins; but recently, Oceana Gold has been working with schist. They've found that the processing required is the same as they used for the gold-bearing quartz.

However, the schist indicators are much more subtle; unlike quartz mining, where historically miners “went about looking for great lumps of quartz sticking out of the ground”.

FRST requires a close alignment with an end-user, and Craw's work with Oceana Gold reflects that, but he stresses that the research could benefit other mining interests as well, especially if the Macraes mine is still operating.

So does Craw expect the research to be able to pinpoint exactly Otago's next big gold find? “I'm not expecting to come up with a big X on the map, but if I resign and disappear up Central, you'll know I found one!”

SUPER-FAST QUANTUM COMPUTERS ONE STEP CLOSER



Dr Murray Barrett has been thinking outside the binary code, to help develop the world's first super-fast, super-powerful quantum computer.

Another significant step has been taken towards building the world's first quantum computer – hugely faster and more powerful than ever before. And Otago Physics Department lecturer, Dr Murray Barrett, played a key supporting role.

At the time Barrett was working as a postdoctoral fellow at the National Institute of Standards and Technology in Boulder, Colorado. The group, led by Dr David Wineland, focuses on implementing the radical new ideas of “quantum information processing”, applying advanced concepts of quantum physics to the storage, manipulation and transmission of information, and eventually creating a completely new type of computer.

“In conventional computers information is stored using a binary system or bits that are either 0 or 1,” explains Barrett. “But in a quantum computer these bits are called qubits and can be both 0 and

1 at the same time. This allows a quantum computer to process all possible inputs at once, making for a potentially super-fast computer.”

A central feature of the processing is the use of what is called “quantum entanglement”. Basically, qubits become correlated with one another so that their behaviour is no longer independent even if they are widely separated; what Einstein once called “spooky interactions at a distance”.

“In a sense, entanglement allows the qubits to share their information,” Barrett says.

“The experiment we did is usually carried out with single particles. In this instance we used an ‘entanglement’ of three particles and showed that even our imperfect experiment resulted in a 50 per cent improvement over a perfect one-particle experiment,” he says.

If a quantum computer can be built it could have a major impact in areas such as electronic security.

ANCIENT TIME



Time is not what it used to be. Associate Professor Robert Hannah considers how ancient Greeks and Romans related to the passing of seconds, hours and lifetimes.

Time is money for Associate Professor Robert Hannah of the Classics Department.

Hannah has a Marsden Fund grant of \$70,000 per year for three years to write a history of how ancient Greek and Roman societies measured, used and conceived of time.

According to Hannah, our relationship with time has changed across space and time itself. From watching the sun, moon and stars to the elaborate measurement of atomic seconds, different societies have created their own systems of reckoning time.

While the Greeks created a water clock to measure time, philosophers such as Plato and Aristotle considered its nature.

“Time is both something we measure, and something we measure with,” says Hannah. “Our watches make us think time is a physical reality, but it’s more a metaphysical concept.”

He notes that our day-to-day method of measuring time is still derived from antiquity. “Human beings have always felt a need to structure life in terms of time. In modern Western culture we still like to mark stages in life such as turning 21, and ancient cultures shared this fascination with marking the stages of life,” he says.

“What we measure with time is a measure of what we value in life. For example, since the advent of the Industrial Revolution, time has been equated with money in Western culture. In other societies, time is seen as cyclical, less linear, less the drive towards an idea of progress.”

His proposed book, *Time in Antiquity*, will cover concepts of cosmic time, human time and the nature of time.

SUN PROOF

Photo courtesy Otago Daily Times



Caradee Wright (centre) buttons up Fairfield School pupils Tamra Smith and Joseph Van Der Hurk, in pre-testing efforts to measure how much ultraviolet radiation children are being exposed to.

Sun-smart schoolchildren could be doing more than just slip, slop, slap this summer.

Otago researchers will be asking Kiwi kids to wear new high-tech badges to measure how much ultraviolet radiation they are exposed to in a normal week.

Social scientists from the University of Otago and physicists from the National Institute of Water and Atmospheric Research (NIWA) are investigating ways of reducing harmful exposure to help cut New Zealand's high rate of skin cancer.

NIWA's Dr Greg Bodeker and Dr Richard McKenzie are principal co-investigators with Dr Tony Reeder, Senior Research Fellow in the Department of Preventive and Social Medicine at Otago's Dunedin School of Medicine.

About 1000 schoolchildren around the country will be invited to wear the electronic badges, says

Reeder. "They'll also record what they're doing in a diary for a week, and they'll complete questionnaires about their sun-related knowledge, attitudes and behaviours."

Data from the badges and the diaries will be used to help develop health promotion programmes for New Zealand children, he says, "and will make a valuable contribution to understanding the links between UV exposure, the activities being undertaken, and other social and environmental factors."

South African student Caradee Wright won a prestigious National Research Foundation scholarship to come to New Zealand to carry out fieldwork for the study as part of her PhD at Otago.

The three-year project, the first of its kind in the country, is funded by the Cancer Society of New Zealand.

VIRUS POSSIBLE RISK FACTOR IN BREAST CANCER



Immunisation against breast cancer? Dr Ann Richardson is among a group of researchers which has uncovered a possible link between antibodies to a common virus, and breast cancer.

Epidemiologists at the Christchurch School of Medicine and Health Sciences and the Dunedin School of Medicine have uncovered an intriguing link between breast cancer in women under 40 and a common virus.

Collaborating with colleagues at the University of Melbourne, they tested blood samples from women with breast cancer and women without breast cancer. Testing of the blood samples was funded by a grant to the University of Otago researchers from the Cancer Society of New Zealand.

"Our study found that women with breast cancer had higher cytomegalovirus antibodies than women without the disease," says Dr Ann Richardson from the Christchurch School. "The higher antibody levels could be the result of more recent infection with cytomegalovirus.

"Countries where most people are exposed to CMV and other

viruses in childhood, rather than when they're adults, have lower rates of breast cancer," she says.

It is not unusual to find links between viruses and increased risk of cancer. Several cancers such as cervical cancer, some types of liver cancer and some forms of leukaemia are known to be caused by viruses.

At present it is still unclear exactly how CMV might cause or influence the development of breast cancer, and Richardson says further research is needed. The most exciting possibility is if late infection does increase the risk, it could be possible to decrease the risk by exposing people to the virus by immunisation in childhood.

Around 2000 New Zealanders develop breast cancer every year, making it the most common cancer affecting women in this country.

WHAT THE EYES CAN TELL US ABOUT THE BRAIN



A research volunteer glances about while her eye movements are tracked and recorded.

In Elizabethan poetry, the eyes were the window to the soul, but in modern medical science they are also the portal to unravelling the mysteries of neurological disorders such as Parkinson's disease or multiple sclerosis. The Eye Movement Research Group at the Christchurch School of Medicine and Health Sciences is doing just that; using high-speed digital recordings of eye movements which far surpass traditional bedside examination techniques.

This involves using sophisticated computerised equipment to measure individual eye movements or saccades, when the eyes skip from word to word while reading. Infrared or laser sensors measure light reflected from the eye, allowing their position and velocity to be measured accurately and in realtime, while people perform a variety of tasks. We make 100,000 saccades a day because only in the very central part of our visual field

do we have high resolution and that means the eyes have to jump every eight to nine letters.

The group has already shown that eye movements can reveal hidden damage resulting from head injuries, such as concussion. "Our experiments have shown that people who develop post-concussion syndrome also have abnormalities in control of their eye movements, even though this may not be detectable under normal examination or even a brain scan," says Research Fellow, Dr Michael MacAskill.

Parkinson's disease is another major area of research for the group as it's a common disorder which causes people to make slow and small movements. Research is now under way into using subliminal techniques to train people with Parkinson's disease to make larger and quicker movements which may then help them to improve control of their limbs.

TO THE RESCUE OF NEW ZEALAND'S OLDEST LITERATURE



Dr Lisa Marr, on a mission to resurrect New Zealand's earliest literature.

New Zealand is in danger of losing its literary heritage, according to Dr Lisa Marr of the English Department.

Marr is spearheading a Department drive to republish important century-old books that are fast disappearing.

Otago researcher Dr Julian Kuzma sparked the rescue operation when he could not buy the books he needed for his PhD on late colonial New Zealand literature.

"He was finding it almost impossible to get second-hand copies of texts," says Marr. "When he went to reading rooms some of the copies were so fragile they were literally falling apart in his hands.

"We felt that the English Department should play some part in trying to preserve these novels. We want to make them available to the public as well as students and academics. We wish to reprint a series of works of cultural interest,

edited and with explanatory notes."

The intention is to start with novels describing colonial life at the turn of the twentieth century, and then move on to plays, poetry and selections from periodicals.

"The series has no limits at the moment," says Marr. "We just want to keep producing them. But it does depend on funding, and we're looking for a publisher. We hope to print quality paperbacks, but keep the price down to make them accessible."

The first reprinting will be Arthur Rees's 1913 novel *The Merry Marauders*. Marr suggests the novel's insights into theatre and temperance in small-town New Zealand could interest students of English, History, Gender Studies and Theatre Studies.



TO LEAD

It's clear that David Skegg, eminent cancer researcher, internationally-respected health advocate and now, Vice-Chancellor of the University of Otago, is not entirely comfortable being in the spotlight.

AT LEAST, HE'S NOT AT EASE WITH PERSONAL QUESTIONS about himself. Ask him about his research or his passion for the University he has served for 24 years, and he has no trouble at all expressing his views. He's clear, forthright, confident in his convictions but without the hauteur one might expect from a person in his position. You get the sense that while he's unfailingly polite, underneath there is a steely will.

After all, this is the man who, as chair of the former Public Health Commission, wasn't afraid to take on governments for gross failures in protecting women's health. As one of his best friends, Professor Jim Mann, puts it: "David doesn't tolerate fools."

But ask David Skegg about the first time he beheld the young woman Keren who would one day become his wife, and he is at a loss for words. It's a wonderful moment which reveals both the deep love and genuine gratitude he feels for her, and his own innate modesty.

"She didn't notice me," he recalls with a smile. "I saw her in the medical school cafeteria, but I met her later on at a party...I found her very attractive."

He quickly acknowledges his debt to Keren, a medical doctor and Otago researcher in her own right, in the field of psychological medicine, but who has chosen to work part-time

in order to focus on raising their two girls, Caroline, now 21, and Julia, 16. His family, he admits, is the source of his greatest joy in life.

"She's done more than her share," he says of Keren. "I've been extremely fortunate. When you first meet someone you don't foresee how they will influence you. Really, there's a lot of luck in it."

Luck, the favour of the gods, good genes, call it what you will, but David Skegg knows he's been blessed – with a keen intelligence, with a happy upbringing based on compassionate Christian principles, with a loving marriage, with supportive colleagues, with a passion for science and for people. And now, as luck would have it, a challenging and exciting new job leading the University he so clearly loves.

Born in Auckland in 1947, the young David was raised along with two brothers (brother Peter is a Professor in Otago's distinguished Law Faculty) by his parents Donald and Margaret. Margaret has since passed away, but father Donald – now 91 – has moved to Dunedin where he enthusiastically partakes in University of the Third Age and University Club lectures.

With his father a teacher ("he'd use the old-fashioned term 'school-master'"), it's clear that a strong belief in the value of education played a formative role in the young life

of David Skegg. His academic aptitude revealed itself early on, with Skegg taking several prizes and a University Junior Scholarship while at King's College, and he was one of those fortunate kids who "always knew" what he wanted to be when he grew up: a doctor.

But along the way, he says his interests and attitudes were also shaped and broadened by the influence of two key figures: former Presbyterian Moderator, the Very Rev. O.T. Baragwanath, and King's Headmaster Geoff Greenbank. Baragwanath, "a very impressive human being", helped awaken Skegg's own social conscience, while Greenbank, "a complex character", encouraged him to seek the rounded life beyond academic achievement.

"He placed a strong emphasis on sport and cultural activities, so that I was in Shakespearean plays and also played rugby. It was very much part of the ethos of the school."

That well roundedness continued during his Otago years (and helped earn him a coveted Rhodes Scholarship to Oxford). While taking his BMedSc, MB and ChB with distinction at Otago, he was a dedicated Knox College man, got involved in the Debating Society and played rugby for the "Med Boozers". Skegg was President of the College and later, Assistant Master for two years.

It was while at Knox that Skegg became close to then-Master, Dr Jack Somerville and his wife Janet, who later died at a tragically young age from breast cancer. Both Jack and Janet became good friends and mentors to Skegg and Keren. And it was Jack Somerville – later, a Chancellor of the University – whom Skegg credits more than anyone with his decision last year to apply for the University's top job, even though Jack died in 1999.

"He was always spurring me on to consider a leadership position. He also loved Otago very deeply."

It's an emotional attachment that Skegg shares with his mentor. He's unabashedly in love with this University. But then, he has a bit of a "thing" for universities.

"My wife always laughs at this. While my wife can go into a garden and can remember the name of every single plant, I remember where a person went to university.

"I do think universities are incredibly important in society," he continues, "not only because of their role in research and teaching, but because of their independent voice.

"And I do love Otago. I would never have applied to another university (for a senior administrative post). But I

thought to myself at the time, you're 55, and – while I wasn't in a rut – I thought, you should be ready for a new challenge."

While the trend in recent years at Australasian universities has been to make external appointments to their most senior post, both internal and external appointments have their advantages, Skegg believes. Indeed, in Europe, "rectors" as they are often called, are sometimes elected by the staff from within the university.

"I believe there's no one model. Universities need different kinds of VCs at different times in their history." He pauses just a beat, and adds with a smile: "I would have to hope the selection committee got it right this time."

So what kind of Vice-Chancellor will Skegg prove to be?

Well, if you ask those who've known him the longest, he will lead by example. And that example will be characterised by a tremendous capacity for hard work, and a sympathetic understanding of people.

"I think he will be excellent.

He has a razor sharp intellect and an exceptionally good memory," says Associate Professor Charlotte Paul. She's known Skegg since their Medical School days, and then was his close colleague in the Department of Preventive and Social Medicine – the University's largest department which Skegg led for over two decades.

"He cares about all the best things a university stands for: truth, independence of thought, fearless speech. His clarity of thought, interest in listening to other people and articulateness will enable him to shift the culture of the University in ways which will encourage these values."

Jim Mann, who lived around the corner from Skegg when they were both graduate students at Oxford, and who credits Skegg with recruiting him to come to Otago, is similarly unequivocal in his praise for

the new Vice-Chancellor.

"He's profoundly intellectual, but you can talk to him at any kind of level. He's such an incredibly down-to-earth, ordinary person. If you see him interact with people, it's quite extraordinary how he takes the time to talk to you. Some people, you know, will speak to you, but their eyes will already be moving beyond you to the next person. Not David."

That down-to-earth style has already made itself known in small but significant ways.

He calls you to see if he can pop 'round to your office, rather than summoning you to his. He tries to take morning



Knox hijinks: Knox College mates chain Skegg to a Castle Street lamp post in "celebration" of his engagement to Keren.

tea with all the other staff on the top floor of the Registry building. And, if, as they say, you can judge a man by the car he drives, his is a singularly unpretentious Mitsubishi wagon.

When asked about his management style Skegg is quick to reject the very word “management”, and instead emphasises a broader concept of leadership – a rather radical break from the trend across many universities where the model has become increasingly corporate in both structure and function.

“When you look at those universities which have adopted a highly managerial, top-down approach, they have been less successful than those adopting an approach that involves staff as much as possible,” he says. “I’m very keen to lead the university in a way that makes staff feel committed and involved in what we’re doing.”

Certainly Skegg has made it his business to study various university models in the 11 months since his appointment was announced. He’s personally visited 21 universities in nine different countries, and participated in a top-flight university leadership course held in Cork, Ireland.

He noted that New Zealand universities tend “almost slavishly” to try to copy developments in Australia and in the UK. But not satisfied with only those models, Skegg went to Sweden, the Netherlands, Ireland, Canada and the United States, and in each country met with the Vice-Chancellor or equivalent. While some are styled President or Principal, Skegg was most struck by the title bestowed upon the head of a Dutch university: “Rector Magnificus – I’m considering a change of title!”

More seriously, Skegg wanted to find out just how these women and men balanced the day-to-day minutiae of running a complex university with the necessity of maintaining a clear strategic vision. Oh, and whether they also did any research.

It’s not as far-fetched as it sounds. Skegg is, after all, one of the world’s top cancer researchers, and as one media commentator put it recently, it would be a significant loss to cancer research if Skegg were to throw in the towel completely.

But how to juggle it all?

“I found in many research-led universities, people involved in administrative work do keep some time for research and scholarly work.”

One of those whom Skegg met was President Robert Birgeneau of the University of Toronto – one of the world’s leading quantum physicists who, while heading a university of some 68,000 students, also managed to win large research contracts and employ research assistants.

Another university leader he met kept a whole day a week just for research.

It’s a goal that Skegg has also set for himself – setting aside Friday afternoons and Saturday mornings to do what he’s always done.

But there is another more important reason for Skegg’s decision to keep his research hand in: he hopes that it will help encourage the University as a whole to make research a priority. And, in an era in which the government is increasingly concentrating funding in areas of proven research excellence, that research focus could help lift Otago’s overall performance.

“If we had all our senior administrators continuing to do their own research, it could change the whole culture of the institution. We are just going to have to organise our time better so that we can do that.”

Skegg has made no secret of his own disappointment at Otago’s recent placing in the Performance-Based Research Funding round. PBRF, as it is known, is a system by which tertiary institutions’ research quality and production is assessed by the Tertiary Education Commission, and funded accordingly.

Otago ended up with the greatest net increase in funding available and yet was not ranked first in terms of average research quality.

While the monetary gain is welcome, and will go back to the departments and researchers who earned it, Skegg isn’t about to let his University slip into complacency.

“In some ways, PBRF should be a wake-up call, and I



Young doctors in love: Keren (née Cargo) and David Skegg engaged to be married (1972).



A scholar and a gentleman: graduation day for the Rhodes Scholar, Balliol College, Oxford (1978).

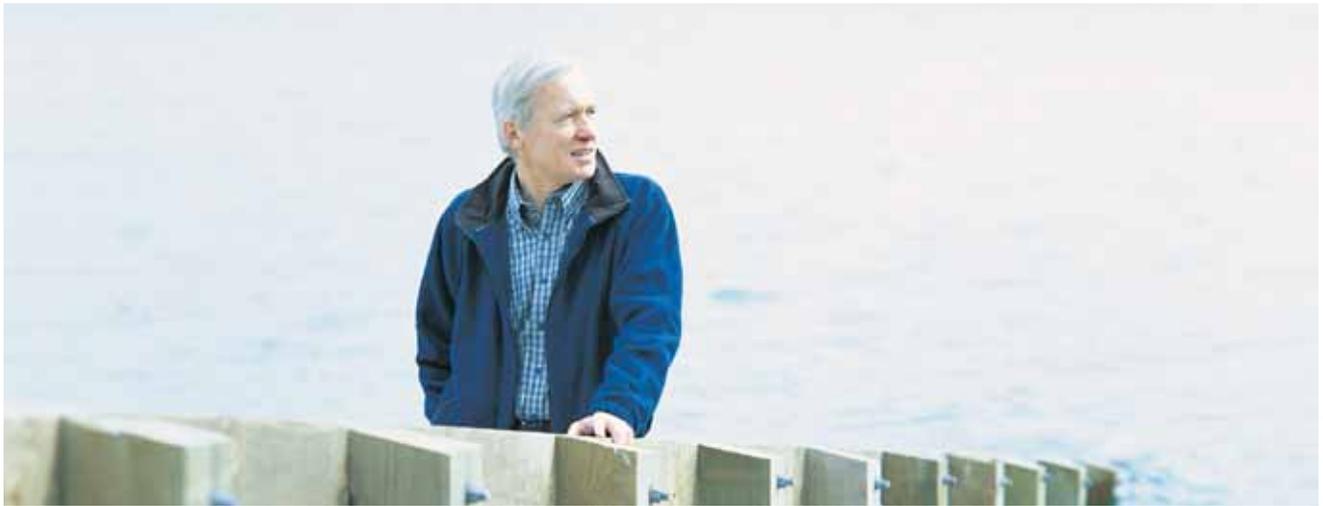


Photo: Alan Dove

fear we started to believe our own press, that being money-winners was enough. But it isn't. It showed that while we have tremendous research strengths, there are also some areas of the University that need to become more research intensive.

"This is not only because one of the functions of the University is to advance knowledge but also because Otago takes pride in providing an education underpinned by research.

"If I and others involved in leading the University are involved in research and committed to it, then others may follow suit."

But there is the particular challenge of balancing the time for research with the demands of teaching, and Skegg is aware that with Otago's almost open entry system it becomes increasingly difficult for teaching staff to maintain the highest academic standards.

It's a point of difference he noticed only too well during his visits to other universities. For example, at Edinburgh, there are about seven applicants for every one who is admitted to study. But if Skegg the scholar might lean towards higher entry standards, Skegg the social humanitarian isn't prepared to ... at least, not yet, and not without a wider debate within the University community.

"I do believe it's good for society that a much larger proportion of young people in New Zealand are able to participate in university education, because an educated society is likely to be more successful and more humane. It's a big debate about whether numbers should be capped or even reduced."

It's also an old debate. Skegg recalls during his final year at Otago when – with a student roll of 5,000 – a Senate committee considered what the most appropriate size would be.

"It seemed outlandish at the time that the University might grow to 10,000 or even 15,000. I argued then that growth should be restricted because I thought it would damage academic life. But I think I was wrong. I think the University has benefited from its growth – it's a much more stimulating and vital organisation than it was. The growth of the University has also been hugely beneficial for the City of Dunedin, and

it's become a much more attractive place to live in as well."

Skegg's predecessor, Dr Graeme Fogelberg, is on record as believing there were limits to just how big Otago could grow without outstripping its Dunedin campus facilities. With almost 20,000 students, pressures are intensifying on accommodation and library resources. But every additional student also brings in badly-needed funding (although in real terms government funding per student has actually decreased). As Skegg points out, if the total roll were to drop by even two per cent next year, the University's government-required surplus would be wiped out – leaving Otago financially vulnerable.

Added to that are the expectations of staff for higher salaries – the last bitter bargaining round saw demands for increases as high as 10 per cent in order to help close the gap between New Zealand academics and their Australian counterparts.

But Skegg, who has been a member of the Association of University Staff, is also a realist. He knows that this country's financial resources can't match those of our larger, more prosperous neighbour. In some ways, we'll have to do what kiwis have always done: do better with less.

"Like all New Zealand universities, our main challenge is trying to develop a world-class university despite very limited funding. But I have to say my visits to universities in other countries made me think that maybe we shouldn't be too gloomy and should rather be grateful for some of our advantages."

For Skegg, those advantages include "a tremendous esprit de corps that you can't put a dollar value on", a campus life unparalleled in New Zealand, and many highly capable staff.

But he concedes that retaining those staff in a competitive international market won't be easy, and like Vice-Chancellors before him, Skegg will have to make some tough choices.

"The expectations of David will be enormous," predicts Mann. "But when David has to make hard decisions that may hurt some people, you know that he will feel for those people. But he'll still make those decisions ... because he will have to."

Jill Rutherford

CIVIL UNREST

What does the debate about civil unions say about marriage, law and New Zealanders?

THIS IS WHAT the family studies lecturer who lives in a same-sex relationship said: “I don’t think gay marriage is appropriate. Marriage is a sacred term for many people and I don’t believe we should seek to interfere with that. A civil union is the right compromise.”

This is what the heterosexual Presbyterian minister said: “Civil unions are a step in the right direction, but do not go far enough. I look forward to the day I can officiate at a gay marriage”.

These positions may seem to confound stereotypes, but such are the nuances of

perspectives that are percolating below the surface of the responses to the proposed Civil Union Bill, as public debate degenerates into a branding exercise for Destiny Church.

And it’s worth listening carefully to these finer details, for this is a bill that hinges on its subtleties. By introducing a new term to define a publicly-declared, committed relationship between two adults, New Zealanders are being called upon to articulate just what they believe makes a marriage a marriage.

Legally, civil unions will bestow the same rights on couples as marriage. Indeed, marriage celebrants will be able to conduct ceremonies for both types of unions. But, according to Otago Law Professor Mark Henaghan, Otago Philosophy and Divinity graduate Reverend Chris Nichol and Otago Community and Family Studies senior lecturer Nicola Atwool, that doesn’t make them the same.



Photo: Bill Nichol

Reverend Chris Nichol, who looks forwards to the day he can officiate at a gay wedding.

“Marriage is a word with very rich connotations,” Nichol explains. “For some people, what it stands for is greatly treasured. For others, it is anathema. When people choose to be married, they are choosing to buy in to all the things that this means to them.”

From a legal perspective, the fact that marriages and civil unions will be deemed identical is intriguing. Henaghan says he can think of no other example where two pieces of legislation amount to exactly the same thing.

On the surface, this certainly looks like sneaking in gay marriage – seen as unpalatable by many – under another label.

But Chris Nichol, who has been celebrating and solemnising couples’ vows since the late 1970s, thinks not. Instead, what he believes we are seeing is the refusal for the concept of “marriage” – in the largest, broadest, collectively-owned sense of the word – to be bound by law.

“What the Civil Union Bill does,” says Nichol, “is throw into relief all the qualities that marriage has, and what sets it apart from an equivalent legislative contract.

“Society is a far more diverse place now than even 20 years ago. Men and women play different roles, we have the intermarriage of religions, exposure to many cultures, and formerly marginalised people, such as the gay community, have a far greater voice,” adds Nichol. “The days of being able to apply one monolithic label to describe all committed relationships are over. It fails to recognise the diversity of our communities today.”

His personal view of civil unions is that they would describe a relationship with a slightly different emphasis from a marriage. “For me, I see a civil union as making a statement about the reality of the relationship at a given point in time.” It might feel right for couples, gay or straight, who want to

STUDENT POLITICS

THEY RALLIED AGAINST THE SPRINGBOK TOUR OF ‘81, they raged against the prospect of nuclear ships – but on this particular social issue, today’s students have gone suddenly conservative. A motion to support the Civil Union Bill failed to pass at a recent Otago University Students’ Association meeting. OUSA members also voted against a move to “support the rights of queer students to be entitled to the same type of relationship status and privileges as other citizens in New Zealand”.

While both motions received more than 50 per cent of the vote, they failed to achieve the 66 per cent required to carry.

“The arguments were couched very much in terms of, ‘on an issue so polarising, how can OUSA claim to have a view that represents all students?’” says OUSA president Andrew Cushen. The result, he explains, means that OUSA continues to have

no policy position on gay rights or the Civil Union Bill.

Meanwhile, OUSA continues to support gay students by funding UniQ Otago, part of an inter-university support network for gay students.

According to Cushen, this is not inconsistent with the mandate given to them by the students. “UniQ is there to ensure that students who are queer have their learning needs met so they can reach their full potential. This is different from the Association explicitly supporting their political objectives.”

Cushen lists a host of groups funded by OUSA, including student branches of the Act, National, Labour and Green parties. “We support all sorts of groups,” he says, “but that doesn’t mean the Association has a position on all of the diverse political views they espouse.”

have the present state of their relationship recognised for the care of children, travel and any number of other reasons.

By contrast, he says, “A marriage is more of a statement of intention for the future of the relationship.”

“I think it would be quite consistent for a couple to have a civil union at one stage in their lives, and later choose to be married.”

On this point, Nichol supports the Civil Union Bill because it adds to the choices available for couples. And for gay couples, it introduces the opportunity to make a legally-endorsed public declaration about their relationship. “Getting up in front of your family and friends, and in the eyes of the law, and pledging your commitment to one another is an extraordinarily powerful act,” he says.

But Nichol believes the proposed legislation still discriminates, by not allowing gay couples the same choices as their heterosexual counterparts. “If a gay couple wants to have a union that carries all the connotations of marriage, they are still denied that opportunity. From a human rights perspective, that is not really acceptable.”

In some ways, the opportunity for gay couples to have their relationships publicly and legally recognised does not seem like a very big deal at all. Since the Human Rights Act was amended in 1993 to forbid discrimination on the grounds of sexuality, various other Acts have been working their way into line with this principle, including – significantly – the Property (Relationships) Act.

There are a host of outstanding issues, however. Gay people are at risk if their partner dies and the family hasn’t accepted the relationship. Parental leave is only available as of right to the biological parent in a same-sex couple. Same-sex couples have no immunity or privileges under the Crimes Act, meaning they may be compelled to give evidence against their

partner, or charged as an accessory. Gay couples are not entitled to a number of benefits, including government superannuation at their partner’s age of eligibility, or the widow’s benefit. And inconsistencies work both ways: presently, gay couples can avoid making conflict of interest disclosures under business law, a gay parent may describe themselves as “single” in order to receive the domestic purposes benefit, and both parties in a gay couple living together can claim the unemployment benefit. The Relationships (Statutory References) Bill would put an end to that.

“What the legislation would do,” Henaghan says, “is provide an overarching piece of legislation that tidies the whole thing up. Those who choose to enter a civil union will be treated the same as a married couple.”

“A lot of the social change has already occurred,” he points out. “This legislation is simply following up.”

So why the outcry? Nicola Atwool, senior lecturer in Otago’s Department of Community and Family Studies and the Children’s Issues Centre, admits she has been taken aback by the level of venom seen in the debate so far.

“Given all the other incremental changes that have taken place over the past 20 years, I would not have imagined there would be such intense opposition to allowing gay couples the chance to formalise their relationship. The heat and intensity of the debate has surprised me.”

But, on reflection, Atwool suspects this slow but steady pace of change, and society’s “PC posturing”, has brewed some pretty volatile conditions. “People have hidden what they really think and feel, and not really had an outlet for their positions in public debate. Now it’s coming to the surface, and it’s quite scary.”

Most concerning, she believes, is the attempt to turn the clock back 20, 30, 50 years. “The reality is, fewer than 50 per cent of children live with two biological parents. If we accept



Photo: Bill Nichol

Community, family and children’s issues researcher Nicola Atwool. “There is an enormous amount of diversity out there in terms of what constitutes a family.”

the generally-held statistic that one in 10 people are gay... then we have potentially 10 per cent of children with a gay parent. There is an enormous level of diversity out there in terms of what constitutes a family.

“The opponents of the legislation are rubbing people’s faces in a model of family which simply doesn’t exist for most people. It’s also very demeaning to sole parents, and reopens all those wounds about how they can perform as parents.”

Single people, those in couples, gay people, straight people, argues Atwool, can all be good parents. And all families perform best when they are supported in their roles. Atwool says, however, that the research is very clear on one thing: “Children need adults available to them who are warm, loving and responsive – and the more the better”. And she

believes that children’s role models – male or female – do not need to be resident.

“The progress that’s been made in supporting people in a range of family situations is being undermined,” she worries. “It could cause a lot of damage.”

If we imagine the Civil Union Bill is only about legitimising the gay-parented family, and put aside all those pesky human rights issues for a moment, let’s ask: What are the outcomes for children with gay parents? “There’s not a lot of research, but what there is suggests they’re slightly worse off than in traditional family structures, and slightly better off than with single parents,” says Atwool.

She adds that those results correlate strongly with the stress placed on those families. Single parent families are more

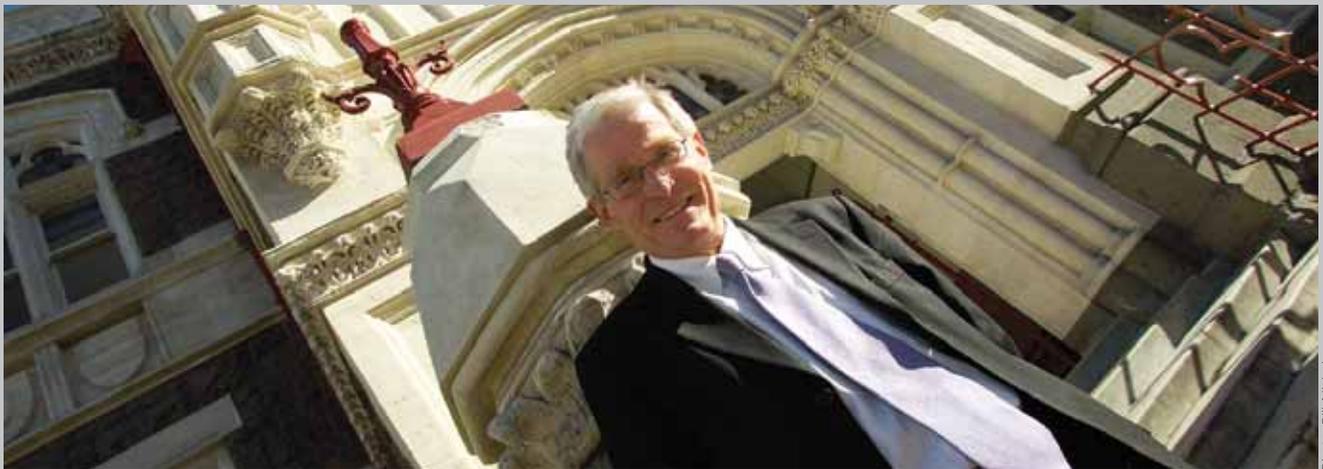


Photo: Bill Nichol

Professor Mark Henaghan... far more worried about the Relationships (Statutory References) Bill than civil unions.

A MARRIAGE IN FACT

IN THE END, HENAGHAN WORRIES THAT THE CIVIL unions debate may be a red herring. The thrust of the Relationships (Statutory References) Bill, which will be introduced alongside the Civil Unions Bill, is that all relationships, be they marriages, civil unions or de facto, will be treated equally in law. (Or mostly equally – entering into a de facto relationship will not revoke a will as a marriage does at present.)

The law will apply uniformly to same-sex and heterosexual de facto couples.

“At least marriage and civil unions are something that one opts into,” Henaghan continues. “De facto couples will be treated as if they were married, whether they want to be or not. This is actually quite a dramatic erosion of choice. This goes much further than any similar relationship law overseas.”

And the implications could be enormous. The 2001 census put the number of New Zealand adults in de facto relationships at three in 10 (approximately 300,000). To compare the scale of the impact with the far more debated issue of gay unions, the number of people in same-sex

relationships is approximately 10,000. For people under 25 years of age, those living in a de facto relationship outnumbered those legally married.

Henaghan comments that, for many people, the whole point of a de facto relationship is precisely the chance to test their compatibility without taking on additional legal obligations that marriage would entail. “Most people consider getting married to be still a very significant step beyond that.

“I wouldn’t be surprised if many of these young couples have no idea they are already covered by the Properties (Relationships) Act, meaning they will divide their combined assets equally if they break up,” Henaghan says.

Currently, the only way of avoiding this is by signing a “contracting-out” agreement, an option which can cause problems in itself. One judge, cited in a recent report from the New Zealand Law Society’s Family Law Section, observed, “[these] property negotiations frequently have the same effect as an unseasonal summer frost, bringing the blossoming of a relationship to a premature end.”

likely to face financial pressures, delivering a double whammy of stressing the parents out and limiting the resources they have to provide for their children.

But it's people's attitudes that appear to contribute to the stress experienced by gay-parented families. "Left to their own devices, children are very accepting of differences between family structures," Atwool points out. "It only becomes confusing when other people make it confusing." For many, the consequences of this culminate in high school. She describes the heart-sinking day when she witnessed her teenage son, standing at a bus stop, copping a merciless barrage of taunts from his peers.

"Bullying is not OK, and bullying on the grounds of your parents' sexual orientation is not OK," Atwool says. She takes cold comfort from the knowledge that bullying can occur on fairly spurious grounds at the best of times – having zits, talking to the wrong person – and if it wasn't having gay parents, it probably would have been something else.

"Bullying needs to be dealt with per se, and only then can underlying issues of discrimination be dealt with," says Atwool.

"At the moment," she continues, "schools are not doing a good job of addressing homophobia." And public condemnation of the Civil Union Bill – a bill aimed at preventing discrimination – only serves to validate, and entrench, these attitudes.

It is not a reasonable argument to say that children of gay parents fare worse because of the discrimination they face, and therefore they should be discriminated against.

But can legislation change attitudes? Only if it's enforced, says Mark Henaghan.

While there are plenty of instances where enforced legislation has led to cultural shifts – wearing bike helmets, for example – "Law is not about changing people's attitudes," says Henaghan, "but enforcing people's rights."

But, he continues, what society may agree are people's rights can change over time. And through the democratic nature of law-making in New Zealand, by the time a law

change comes along, society is generally ready for it.

Individuals' rights are, of course, always weighed against the public good. The social decay predicted by some quarters that might result from the introduction of civil unions is not well supported by evidence. But there may indeed be solid practical benefits for society in allowing same-sex couples the opportunity to solemnise their relationship. The Maxim Institute presents a veritable swag of information pointing to the economic, societal and health benefits for those in legally committed – married – relationships. Civil unions would extend those benefits to gay couples as well.

Which raises the question put to jurisprudence students the world over, is the law designed to reflect the moral goals of society, or facilitate the greatest well-being across society?

Although some New Zealanders may struggle with the moral acceptability of homosexuality, it does not necessarily follow that gay people, their children – and society at large – should be denied the benefits that accrue from their living in a socially and legally recognised relationship.

Henaghan suggests we compare this to the recently passed Prostitution Act. Many of its supporters did not necessarily believe prostitution was a morally, socially or physically desirable occupation. However, they argued that the well-being of the women involved in it, including their access to health and protection agencies, was more important than upholding a moral ideal.

"In the end," says Henaghan, "there were greater moral values that society decided to uphold. These included believing that all people should be protected and treated fairly, and that [those working in the sex industry] shouldn't be put at greater risk or exploited or be subject to gross hypocrisies."

The Civil Union Bill is asking New Zealand to take one step further towards extending the social ideal of equity to all people, regardless of their sexual orientation. The question we're debating is, are we ready for it?

Nicola Mutch



Photo: Bill Nichol



THE VERY HUMAN FACE

NEW ZEALAND'S FIRST CHAIR IN PALLIATIVE CARE DISCUSSES MEDICINE, HUMANITY AND LIVING UNTIL YOU DIE.

ROD MACLEOD, THE SOUTH LINK HEALTH PROFESSOR IN Palliative Care at the Dunedin School of Medicine, has a knack of subtly turning things on their head.

It starts with his inaugural lecture, held with all the usual ceremony. Powerpoint images are thrown up on the huge screen, and interspersed with text slides are Claire Beynon's pastel drawings of abstract landscapes, where boundaries fade and unanswered questions lie. It's all part of MacLeod's moving beyond the usual medical role to acknowledge the uncertainties of life, and the place that dying has in the human condition – "an inevitable consequence of living," he says.

A week later he is sitting in his modest, almost cramped office, talking about the hospice – the place so central to his work: "The general perception of the hospice is that it's a place you go to die. We try to turn it on its head – it's not a place you go to die, it's a place you go to live."

"The hospice is not a building – it's a philosophy... Our main thrust is to support (the dying) wherever they are, so they can live as fully as possible instead of waiting to be dead."

A vital part of that support is to spend serious time with patients who are facing death. "If I'm seeing a person (at the hospice), I'll spend up to an hour with them, so that gives them an opportunity to explore all the different dimensions of who they are and what's happening to them." That much time? MacLeod is emphatic: "That's the minimum."

Now, with the South Link Health Chair, MacLeod has the platform he needs to bring about major changes in palliative care (care of the suffering and dying). He is quietly intent on seeing doctors reclaim their role of concern for their patients' complete well-being – and he wants to see care of the dying dealt with in a more integrated, human way.

"It's a lot easier to hide away behind a prescription pad and say, 'You have to take these pills, they'll make you feel better' – but the role of the palliative physician is not just to help people to feel better, but to help people to have a degree of understanding about what's happening, and to help the family adjust to different stages of the process."

Working this way requires a great deal of openness. "Part of the thing about caring for people at this stage of life is not to be frightened of it – not to be frightened of anything... to go into areas of their world that people have not gone into, so that whatever it is they want to talk about, they can talk about it." Difficult as this process may seem, MacLeod is adamant: "The doctor needs to know the whole person, otherwise he or she can't provide the appropriate treatment."

This involves changes in the way doctors are taught at medical school – and the changes may not come easily. "I think it's going to be a very difficult change to make. In a curriculum crowded with the acquisition of knowledge about all sorts of new treatments and new ways of doing things, it's actually quite hard to find space to encourage students to think about this way of working."

He doesn't blame the medical students for emerging as they do; they go through a long process that can cause them to detach emotionally from the patients they treat. He is working towards an increase in the teaching time on palliative care that medical students receive, and more exposure to people who are treating patients with a palliative aim rather than just a focus on cure – because medical students need to be shown how to care as well as cure.

The changes won't just happen at the medical school, either. MacLeod values the association with South Link Health,

an association of 450 general practitioners throughout the South Island, which has helped sponsor the Chair in Palliative Care. He has made a commitment to South Link Health to provide continuing education for GPs and practice nurses around the South Island, and is working with them to provide educational material for GPs.

MacLeod is keenly aware that euthanasia and care of the dying is high on the public agenda, with recent high profile cases, but his own view is clear: "I don't see that there is a place for euthanasia. We can provide effective care and relief for a majority of symptoms, and to start down that road of assisting people to die is going to destroy the relationship between doctors and patients."

However, he does see a genuine need for improvement in drug use. "I don't really understand why pain is so poorly managed in New Zealand." He feels he has an important educational role in explaining what morphine can and can't do, and the use of appropriate relief for both pain and suffering.

Meanwhile, MacLeod's work at the Otago Community Hospice takes up one and a half days a week, and he's keen to see the hospice expand its role. He points out that while there are usually ten patients in the building, a hundred will be treated out in the community. "Most New Zealanders want to die in their own homes, so we try to ensure they get better resources to enable them to stay at home."

He is also aware of a whole different group of patients who could be helped. "There is a huge potential for increase – most of our patients have cancer, but just as many die of non-malignant diseases (heart failure and respiratory diseases). They need our support as much as people with cancer."

Money is a huge problem, though. "We certainly couldn't manage the increased workload with the funding we've got now... we're currently working with the Ministry of Health and District Health Boards to get realistic funding for palliative care."

In the end however, many of these changes will only come about through the impetus of an individual – and MacLeod does have special qualities. He has a certain charisma, and he projects a quiet intensity. Does dealing with the borders of life and death every day transfer a certain mystique to him? Does he perhaps find people conferring a "guru" status on him? MacLeod laughs quietly at the idea, but gives it some thought: "People are slightly curious about how I do my work, why I do it, and the intimacy of the whole thing. I just see myself as a regular guy, who enjoys what he is doing."

In the end, MacLeod says he is the one who learns from his patients, despite his role as doctor and teacher. "They teach me about life, they teach me about living, relationships; they teach me that you can never make assumptions and that you can never make judgments."

John Birnie

The South Link Health Chair in Palliative Care is an initiative of the University of Otago's Leading Thinkers Advancement Programme.

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WE ARE BEING BOMBARDED ALMOST DAILY WITH UNPALATABLE disease statistics, to an extent that we have become insensitive. When we do stop to think, the facts that a third of the adult population of Botswana has been wiped out by HIV AIDS and that some 11 million African children under the age of 15 years have lost at least their mother or both parents as a consequence of the same disease are almost incomprehensible. Almost as difficult to conceptualise is that at least 200 million people worldwide have diabetes (about 200,000 with diabetes in New Zealand) and that some 10 per cent of children in New Zealand are obese. Given that obese children are likely to become obese adults and that obesity is a major cause of the epidemic of diabetes, the rates are expected to escalate. Renal services in some parts of the country are already unable to cope with the increased number of cases of kidney failure resulting from diabetes and renal failure is but one complication of diabetes.

Feelings of discomfort and an inability as individuals to influence the situation are undoubtedly reasons why most of us try not to dwell too long on such statistics. The latter assumption is unfortunate since it is incorrect. Some 20 years ago I used to commute regularly between Oxford and London on British Rail. It was almost impossible to get a non-smoking seat on the train – there were so few. A letter of complaint to British Rail was ridiculed. Sir David Hay recalls a similar experience when approaching Air New Zealand. Now, most transport systems and many public places worldwide are smoke-free, largely as a result of the groundswell of public opinion. As individuals we certainly cannot solve the global problem of HIV AIDS. However, most of us who do not already do so could sponsor through World Vision, or another aid agency, an orphaned child. Such a step (approximately equivalent in cost to 12 lattes per month at my usual coffee outlet) can influence the lives of an entire family.

Closer to home, McDonald's have introduced a new range of reduced-fat, reduced-calorie products; not, I suspect, because the company has finally been convinced that excessive intakes of energy-dense, high-fat, high-sugar products are contributing to the epidemics of obesity, diabetes and other chronic diseases, but because of public demand. Some other multinational giants (including the sugar industry in the United States) involved in the production of foods which are rich sources of fats, sugars and calories and relatively poor sources of useful nutrients, argue variously that physical activity rather than dietary restraint is the answer to the obesity epidemic, that food selection is a matter of individual choice, and even that excessive intakes of sugars have not contributed to the global obesity epidemic. While these arguments run counter to almost all expert opinion, the power and resources of the corporate voice have been sufficient to influence national (especially in the United States) and international nutrition-related policies. However, if a sufficient number of individuals were to create a demand for more appropriate food choices, commercial reality would soon ensure availability at reasonable prices. A groundswell of public opinion might even encourage legislative measures to facilitate healthier lifestyles and a greatly reduced risk of chronic diseases.

Jim Mann
Departments of Human Nutrition and Medicine

Unpalatable Statistics



Photo: Bill Nichol



Photo: Random House

A Champion of Women

IT'S EARLY EVENING IN WASHINGTON DC AND AS Amanda Ellis tackles gender inequities, world poverty and other such lofty issues over the phone with me in Dunedin, a little voice in the background says "Hello, hello, hello" and blows raspberries to the invisible person who is phone-hogging his mother. The raspberries belong to Mitchell, Ellis's 16-month-old son, whom she smilingly refers to as "a bit of a surprise – a nice surprise" that landed in her life when she was nudging 40. She's been up since 5.30am in order to join the daily commuting rush to her high-powered job leading a new initiative for the World Bank Group on Private Sector Development and Gender. A high-octane woman indeed.

Born and bred in Dunedin, Ellis attended both Columba College and Bayfield High School before studying French and Economics at Otago. She credits her time at Otago with developing her feminist sensibilities as well as her interest in things international. "My honours thesis dealt with a wonderful

literary work by a black feminist writer who chronicled the effects of slavery and its aftermath on three generations of women in the French Caribbean. I think that was where my feminist awareness began."

Ellis also cites her mother as a key influence, for she was very involved in women's service and community groups like Zonta International, and would often say to her daughter, "A woman can never be too well educated or too financially independent." Ellis's father – an accountant and small business owner – encouraged his daughter to study economics and seek a governmental post. So at the age of 12 she had it all worked out: she'd get a job with Foreign Affairs that combined economics, languages, travel and saving the world. Her childhood dream was to be New Zealand's Ambassador to France.

After graduating from Otago in 1984, she did the requisite Kiwi OE and backpacked around the world for a year. After working briefly as an economist at the Central Bank of Iceland,

she studied Japanese and completed a Master's degree in Communications and Political Science on a US Government scholarship at the East West Centre in Hawai'i. Then in 1988 she came back to New Zealand and joined Foreign Affairs, gratifying that 12-year old within.

She worked there for the next decade in various capacities, including a secondment to the OECD (Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development) as an international trade economist, and a post as Consul to the French Territories (New Caledonia and French Polynesia). While French resumption of nuclear testing in the Pacific was the hot issue in this latter role, it also added a more visceral understanding of gender inequities to her previously intellectual standpoint: "When I was working with indigenous women's groups – particularly in Melanesian society – the women used to say to me, 'Amanda, culture is used by the men as a reason to keep us from being able to play a more active role in traditional society'. It was the beginnings of my understanding – in a practical sense – of issues for women in developing countries."

While still at Foreign Affairs she became manager of New Zealand's international aid programmes in Vietnam, Laos and Cambodia. Of this period she says, "It was really a revelation to me that women without the same kind of access to productive resources as men could really create an enormous difference to their community through entrepreneurship. And I guess that's where my real interest in the whole women's business field was piqued."

She was soon poached by the private sector and wooed to Australia by Westpac to work first as Head of Communication, then as National Manager for Women in Business, and later as Head of Women's Markets. While there she was approached by Random House to write a book called *Women's Business, Women's Wealth* (2002) combining interviews with successful Australian women and offering practical advice on how to become the "CEO" of their own "Me Inc" (this was followed in 2003 by a New Zealand version co-written with June McCabe called *Woman 2 Woman: New Zealand women share their experiences of career and business*).

The keystone of her career, then, has been the economic empowerment of women – whether at the micro or macro level – in developed or developing countries. She says, "I really feel that my life purpose is about empowering other women to achieve financial independence whether that is through banking (as I was able to do at Westpac) or through helping women entrepreneurs in a practical way (as I'm doing now at the World Bank) and also providing advice to governments which will hopefully change the legislative and regulatory environment in which women are operating. So while it may sound corny, I feel that that's my contribution. I know that my 'career anchor' is service and I guess that's why I also enjoyed

Foreign Affairs and my memberships in women's groups like the Australian National Breast Cancer Network so much. There's a real sense of making a meaningful contribution, however small."

When asked where she thinks we stand now globally on gender equity, Ellis has a raft of sobering stories and statistics. At one end of the scale sit the women of Saudi Arabia who are not allowed to drive or even set foot outside their homes unless accompanied by a male relative, even if that relative is – and this is astounding – a two-year-old boy. In many African countries women still cannot own property under custom law – in fact, despite the fact that woman-headed households are now around a third of those in developing countries, women own less than five per cent of property in their own right. In the developed world, despite often hard-won legal equality, women earn on average around 76 per cent of the male wage. We poll a more heartening 85 per cent in New Zealand and can boast a female Prime Minister, Governor-General, Attorney-General and Chief Justice, as well as CEO of our largest public company, Telecom. However, New Zealand women still represent only three per cent of the top job-holders. In the developed world it is estimated that women will only achieve pay parity with men in the corporate world 170 years from now. Meanwhile, in the US – that land of the free – there are 1.6 million women currently suing Wal-mart for entrenched gender discrimination and lack of promotion. Yikes. I wonder if Michael Moore knows...

And, lest you thought that true gender equity was the birthright of the younger generation, Ellis quotes this alarming statistic: "A recent survey of young Australian women under 20 revealed that seven out of 10 are still expecting to be whisked off by a 21st century knight in a (preferably expensive) fast car to a life of financial ease and security. Remember, the odds of that happening are less than one in 10."

That's how deeply entrenched those gender stereotypes are in our cultural fabric. Says Ellis, "It's very easy for the gains to be lost without a continual focus on them. I think it's really important to make sure that equality is enshrined in legislation. And it's important for men too, because gender stereotypes are often as damaging to men as they are to women."

At the close of our wonderfully long, meandering interview Ellis steals away to kiss the raspberry blower goodnight and get a few winks of sleep before the 5.30am alarm beckons once again. On having his wife returned to him after a near two-hour conversation with some stranger in Dunedin, Ellis's husband pays homage to one of the more appealing gender stereotypes, commending us for our impressive "discursive abilities". We don't mind that one.

Claire Finlayson

WALKING TALL

Poles apart... Accessible as an afternoon stroll but with the upper body workout of cross-country skiing, Nordic pole walking meets all the requirements of personal trainer Joe Waide's community fitness philosophy.

SUPER-FIT AND SUPER-FOCUSED, JOE WAIDE HAS SPENT the last six years striding towards the summit of the Australian fitness business. Now he's there – becoming the first Kiwi to win the Australian Personal Trainer of the Year for 2004 no less – and he doesn't seem that surprised.

Why? Well, it might be that the title, while an honour and priceless career boost, was all part of the plan for the boy from Dunedin who early in the piece separated Joe Waide the brand from Joe Waide the sweaty guy in the singlet. "You can have all the knowledge in the world, but if you don't know how to market yourself and set yourself up as a brand, if you like, then you're not going to go far," he says by phone from Brisbane.

The 30-year old fully digs the Queensland sunshine – "You'll hate it when I tell you mate, 25 degrees, blue sky..." – but it was at the University of Otago that he learned the cold facts of marketing, with himself as the product. Blessed with athletic talent, the schoolboy sprinting champion and first fifteen winger for King's High School studied for a Diploma in Fitness Industry Training at Christchurch Polytechnic before returning to his hometown to gain skills commensurate with his sky-high ambition.

He doubled up in more ways than one, taking a double major (BCom in Marketing and Management) while at the same time establishing a personal training business at the Les Mills gym.

After attaching himself to Les Mills' expansion into Australia and moving to Brisbane in 1998, he's found himself exactly where he wants to be. He has two businesses, Inspire Personal Training and Community Fitness Australia, with two different clientele and goals. That means mornings are spent in one-to-one sessions with Inspire clients while afternoons he's a company director looking after both enterprises.

Somewhere in-between he works towards his goal of getting each and every person in Australia fitter and happier by undertaking community fitness sessions and charity work. You could warm your hands on the positive vibes humming down the phone line. Here's a clear-eyed optimist who managed to grasp early what he wanted out of life, establish a means of achieving it, and is now getting it done by maximising his natural gifts.

"A trait I'm very blessed with is I'm very lucky that with people straight away I can tell if they're conservative or introverted. Then there are the ones who are more bubbly and just go go go and hungry for information...and some that just want to be thrashed..."

There's no escaping the business angle loaded on much of what he says – it takes about two minutes for him to mention the Nordic Pole Walking he's heavily involved in promoting – but on the other hand no commercial imperatives were involved in his most satisfying project to date, which involved helping a 118kg man slim to 84kg. And he didn't win the Australian national title from a field of 1000 personal trainers just by being able to peel off a million press-ups or whip celebrities into shape. The judges were looking for the sort of well-rounded portfolio that doesn't come easy. Whether it's part of the big profile-raising synergy or not, he still had to pedal that exercycle in a mall for 12 hours to raise money for premature babies. He still has to front for the community sessions helping Vietnam veterans.

And that's where his slice of satisfaction pie is all the richer. He might be making dollars in what he terms the "land of opportunity" but he's also achieving his wider goals of getting people moving and using his seemingly limitless energy to raise money to help others.

"It's something I got from my mum and dad because they're beautiful people...I just want to help other people.

"You can see the change; you can hear it in their voices, their confidence, their self-esteem."

He's got a couple of newsreader clients but overall the personal training game isn't as glamorous as you might imagine.

"I tell you what, though...it's easier than back in Dunnoos.

"Going down to Les Mills to start personal training, taking a class when I was doing my degree as well, getting up at 5.30am was a damn sight tougher when I had to drive down the hill with my head out the window of the car because it was all frosted up..."

Identifying strongly with his Māori roots – "I'm Ngā Puhi, with mother from Kaitaia" – because of the "strength, passion and history", Joe finds the longer he spends away the more he loves New Zealand.

However, with strong connections to Otago's sporting A-list, he only has to wait for the next Highlanders visit to turn his corner of the city into Dunedin for a day.

"Every two years when the Highlanders come over I organise a big get-together. Last time we had 100 people in a big marquee out the back of my place.

"It was just amazing who you meet up with from Otago. You haven't seen this person in a couple of years and you just start a conversation and you're away again."

STANDING

If Dr Liz Slooten had her way, we'd think of Hector's and Maui's dolphins just as readily as Kiwis when pressed for symbols of our nation. Though once given the unglamorous nickname of "puffing pigs" by the Marlborough Sounds' Perano whalers, Slooten says, "They are really key animals. When you look at what the symbol of New Zealand should be, to me it seems so logical that the Hector's and Maui's dolphins should be right up there in terms of our image of ourselves as a nation, as our icons."



Photo: Steve Dawson

Hector's dolphin, surfacing at Banks Peninsula.

BY THE SEA

WITH A POPULATION OF AROUND 7,300, THE SOUTH Island's Hector's dolphin is listed as an endangered species. The North Island's Maui's dolphin (a sub-species of the Hector's) fares even worse with a population teetering at a very anaemic 111. This earns it the dubious distinction of being the world's rarest marine mammal. Sobering stuff.

"Maui's dolphins are the marine versions of the kakapo," says Slooten, and yet we seem to be far more aware of the predicament of our endangered birds. Had they the same reproductive oomph as rabbits they would not be in this grave predicament, but they are unfortunately at the elephant end of the breeding spectrum, beginning their sexual life at around seven or nine years of age (they only live for about 20 years) and having one calf every two to three years. While we can't change their sluggish breeding patterns, we can control the extent to which they lose their lives to gill nets.

In the 1980s Slooten (Senior Lecturer in Zoology) and her partner Dr Steve Dawson (Senior Lecturer in Marine Sciences) surveyed the plight of the Hector's dolphin from a base in Akaroa harbour. Their research data made for appalling reading, indicating that an estimated 230 dolphins died due to entanglement in gill nets between 1984 and 1988 – statistics that prompted the establishment of the Banks Peninsula Marine Mammal Sanctuary in 1988.



Liz Slooten dip-netting for sperm whale skin in Tonga.

Photo: Sue Hendriks



Photo: Steve Dawson

Humpback whale breaching off Tonga.

Slooten's current research suggests that if we lose more than one Maui's dolphin every five years due to by-catch, the population won't be able to sustain itself. Surely that is a bald enough statistic to galvanise the Ministry of Fisheries? "Very slowly we are doing something about the problem," says Slooten, "but the only question is, will we do it fast enough? Is it too little, too late?"

She and a small group of fellow marine scientists are advocating an extension of the four-nautical-mile protection zone that forbids gill netting along the coast from Dargaville to north of New Plymouth: home of the Maui's dolphin. Says Slooten, "That offshore boundary is in the right place – but only just. It could do with being a little further offshore. It's a little bit like saying that if you drive 100km per hour your car will blow up and yet allowing people to drive 99km per hour."

Slooten doesn't live by dolphins alone. She's recently returned from a four-month research trip to Tonga with Dawson where they studied humpback and sperm whales. Using a cunning device called a hydrophone array, they were able to pinpoint the exact location of the whales from their catamaran. This enabled them to approach the creatures with enough stealth to take tail photographs for identification purposes, make sound recordings and gather skin samples that would yield vital genetic information. The "skin fishing" was conducted with a net made from a lacy curtain that Slooten found in a Tongan shop (their original one perished in the

sun). Very DIY. The 42 hours of whale song are currently being analysed by Dawson (acoustic specialist-cum-whale whisperer).

As to where her deep marine fascination was born, Slooten says she always wanted to do something animal-related, but it was really her first post-school holiday job at a dolphinarium in Holland that catapulted her towards marine zoology. While many of us were stacking supermarket shelves or such like, Slooten was climbing into a dolphin tank with baskets of fish.

She emigrated from Holland in 1977, following a trend set by her two brothers (both marine engineers) and in the course of her zoology studies met the equally marine-dazzled Dawson – which is just as well really, for there would be few partners willing to sell their home to buy a research boat. Slooten explains, "We had a boat lined up but when we took a look at it, it wasn't really suitable. We drove back home feeling a wee bit depressed. I remember saying to Steve, 'Well we could sell the house and buy one.'" His response: "Yippee!"

When asked if it is hugely gratifying knowing that her academic research affects marine conservation beyond her University office door, Slooten says, "It's intensely enjoyable and rewarding but at times intensely frustrating because it involves an enormous amount of work. Wouldn't do anything else though – I love it."

Claire Finlayson

2005

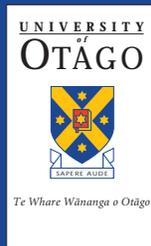
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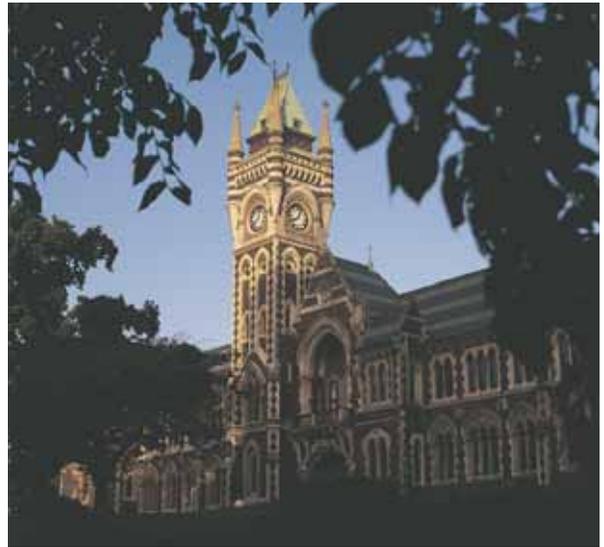
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THE HISTORY AND THE FUTURE

FOR DR TONY BINNS, THERE IS NO ESCAPING THE Geography Department's proud history or the quality of the staff who have come before him: it's written in his title.

Early this month, he became Otago's inaugural Ron Lister Chair in Geography.

It's a position that was established with the assistance of a benefactor through the University of Otago's Leading Thinkers Advancement Programme, to pay tribute to the former Head of Department's vision and enthusiasm for Geography at the University of Otago. The donor has also contributed a further gift making it possible for two additional appointments in Development Studies: a lecturer in Geography, with a regional specialisation in India or China; and an annual visiting Fellow to teach a Special Topic paper.

These three positions have the potential to make the University a national centre of excellence in Development Studies bringing together a significant research cluster with interdisciplinary programmes involving Geography, Economics and Anthropology.

Binns is currently Reader in Geography at the University of Sussex in Brighton, UK, where he has worked since 1975. He graduated from the University of Sheffield in 1970. Binns developed a strong interest in third world development issues, and proceeded to postgraduate study at the Centre of West African Studies in the University of Birmingham, where he was awarded an MA in 1973 and a PhD in 1981. His doctoral

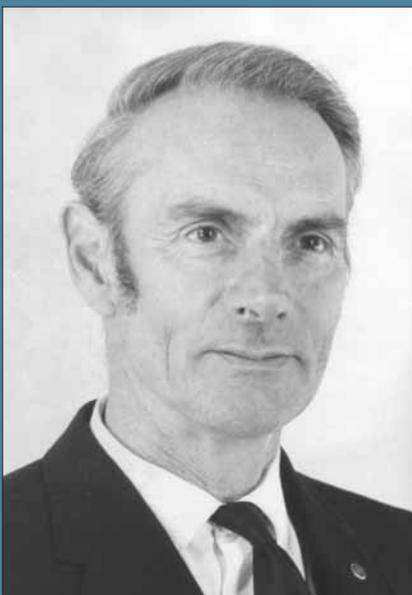
thesis was based on a year's field research in Sierra Leone.

Binns has maintained his strong research and teaching interests in third world development and in geography at all levels in the education system. He has travelled widely throughout Africa and Asia, and has taught at universities in Bangladesh, Canada, Hong Kong, India, Ireland, Kenya, Nigeria, Seychelles, Sierra Leone and South Africa. Binns' field research has focused mainly on people/environment relationships in a development context, and on aspects of community-based development.

In 1998, the University of Sussex Alumni Society gave Binns an award for excellence in teaching.

The traditional base of environment, society and economic development has broadened over more recent years to include gender, political, legal and educational perspectives, and to focus on a broader range of settings and scales, including urban environments and sustainability.

The development of a substantial body of research in the field of Development Studies, under the aegis of the proposed Research Cluster would be paralleled by significant advances in teaching and postgraduate research. The enormous success of globally recognised institutions such as the Institute of Development Studies at Sussex and its counterpart at the University of East Anglia, among many others, demonstrates that there is substantial demand for tuition at all levels, including strong international student interest.



FOR NEARLY 30 YEARS, FORMER PROFESSOR RON LISTER SERVED AS the Head of the Geography Department, inspiring many students with his passion for the integrative discipline which aims to establish knowledge of relationships between and among human and natural systems.

Lister graduated in 1939 with first class honours from University College in London and accepted the position of Lecturer in Charge at Otago in 1952 after working for four years at Auckland University College.

Initially teaching all the courses himself, Lister threw himself at the task of developing the department. His specialist subject was the Regional Geography of Asia, resulting from his war service from 1940-46 where he served in South East Asia.

In 1965, Lister was honoured for his work in the department by being named the Foundation Chair. He retired in 1981 and passed away in 1985.

Former Professor Ron Lister, whose vision and enthusiasm has now inspired the Ron Lister Chair in Geography.

OTAGO SIGNS MOU WITH NGĀTI POROU HAUORA

The University and Ngāti Porou Hauora, a Māori health body, recently signed an agreement that will help to ensure the ongoing provision of a highly skilled Māori health workforce.

The Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) marks both parties' commitment to providing training and cultural support to the University's Māori health sciences students.

At the signing ceremony Vice-Chancellor Professor David Skegg said the University was "thrilled" to be formalising its long-standing special relationship with people of Gisborne and the East Coast.

Under the agreement the University will offer distance and web-based delivery of specialist postgraduate qualifications, and will work collaboratively with Ngāti Porou Hauora on joint research projects where appropriate.

Otago will also establish a postgraduate scholarship for Māori health professionals wanting to undertake health-related certificates or diplomas.

The agreement will see Ngāti Porou Hauora providing placement opportunities and cultural experiences for students, and utilising the University's courses.

OTAGO AMONG NZ'S BIGGEST IT USERS

The University of Otago is one of New Zealand's big four information technology users according to *Managing Information Strategies* (MIS) magazine's annual 100 rankings.

Otago places third-equal with Air New Zealand, beating out dairy giant Fonterra in the number of "screens" (9500) directly managed by the organisation's IT department – a total made up of 8400 PCs (including Macs) and 1100 laptops.

Otago was one of only two education and research organisations to make the top 10.

University Director of Information Services Martin Anderson said Otago's strong showing reflected the University's commitment to pursue state-of-the-art Information and Communication Technology (ICT) in supporting teaching, research and the day-to-day running of the institution.

UNIVERSITY'S ECONOMIC IMPACT TOPS \$900 MILLION

The University of Otago pumped more than \$908 million into New Zealand's economy in 2003, an increase of \$61 million on 2002's result, according to its latest Economic Impact Report.

Based on the University's expenditure, estimated student spending and flow-on effects of both, the report found that activities of the Dunedin, Christchurch and Wellington campuses and its Auckland Centre generated an impact of \$810.4 million, \$49.6 million, \$46.5 million, and \$1.8 million respectively.

According to the report, strong enrolment growth underpinned the 6.7 per cent increase in economic impact, with the University's Equivalent Full-time Student (EFTS) numbers rising from 15,623 in 2002 to 16,632 in 2003, leading to student spending rising to \$218.1 million. The average expenditure of each student was

estimated as \$13,114 (\$8,450 on accommodation, food and other daily living expenses, and \$4,664 on other consumer items).

Taken together with the University's expenditure of \$316.2 million, a total of \$534.3 million was injected into the national economy. University expenditure included areas such as the day-to-day costs of running the institution, salaries, capital expenditure and spending on scholarships, the last of which rose to \$11.4 million in 2003.

Nationally, \$374 million worth of flow-on economic effects arose from the direct spending, an estimate arrived at after applying a conservative 1.7 multiplier to total University-associated expenditure.

ONLINE ENROLMENT LAUNCHED AT OTAGO

Students planning to enrol at Otago are now just a mouse click away from registering via an easy-to-use and intelligent web-based system that allows them to check for potentially mismatched courses and timetable clashes.

The easily-navigated and intelligent system includes a number of advanced features such as course checking, a progress indicator and the option to revisit registration details after submission.

The course-checking feature gives students the option to look for any potential problems with their intended course of study, such as timetable clashes, paper restrictions and workload. Whether they use it or not, the system automatically flags anything that might be a problem on the forms used during the later course advice and approval process.

Instant access to information on all the University's papers, programmes and fees is also available through the system.

Online registration is open to most categories of domestic and returning international students. People registering by mail or telephone will also be able to view and revisit their registration details through the system.

OTAGO OFFERS SUMMER SCHOOL PAPERS IN AUCKLAND

Otago Summer School papers will be available in Auckland for the first time in 2005.

Two papers, TOUR306 Ecotourism Operations and MAOR110 Introduction to Conversational Māori, will run during January and February at the University's Auckland Centre on Queen Street.

In 2005 the School is offering a total of 49 papers, its highest number yet. For more information visit: http://www.otago.ac.nz/courses/summer_school/index.html

RESEARCH FUNDING ROLL FOR OTAGO

Otago researchers are continuing to gain a significant share of the major annual research funding pots. As well as scooping nearly two-thirds of the Health Research Council's \$51 million funding pool this year, University researchers also received 10 grants for innovative fundamental research projects from the prestigious Marsden Fund.

OTAGO HOSTS ELITE MOTOR SPORT ACADEMY

In what is believed to be the first dedicated programme of its kind in the world, Otago researchers recently put 10 of New Zealand's top young rally and race-car drivers through a series of high-performance tests to hone their skills.

Part of the five-day programme took place at the University's Human Performance Centre (HPC) and drew on the combined expertise of researchers from disciplines including Physical Education, Psychology, Clothing and Textiles Science, Medicine, Human Nutrition and Physiotherapy.

Two custom-designed simulators were set up in the HPC's heat chamber, where the drivers raced each other in temperatures of around 40 degrees while their reaction times, decision-making abilities and physiological responses were tracked.

Drivers also benefited from the input of University experts on a range of topics to help them boost their knowledge and practical skills. Topics covered included regulating thermal stress in regulation clothing, developing the right mind set for competition, advice on drug testing, and ensuring healthy eating and hydration.

The Academy was jointly hosted by the NZ Academy of Sport: South Island (ASI) and Motor Sport New Zealand. The 10 drivers will receive a further two years' monitoring and mentoring programme. Ten further drivers will be accepted for next year's Academy.

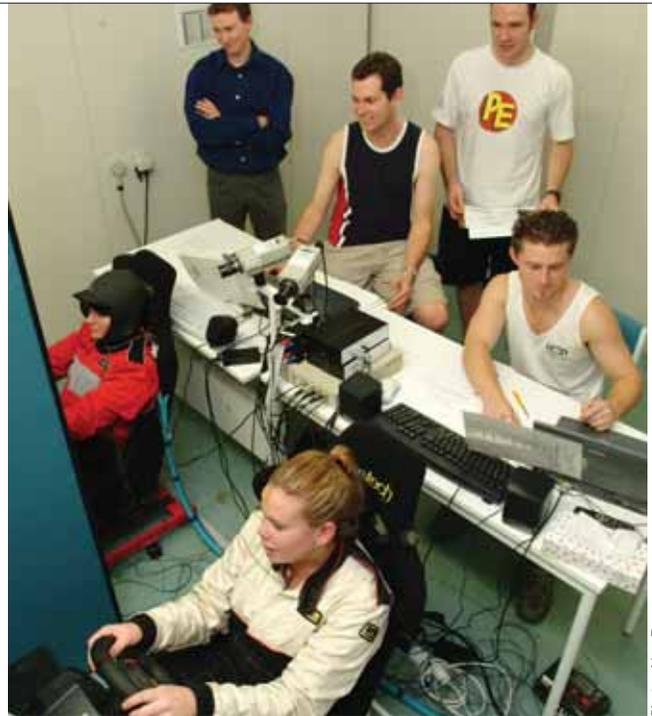


Photo: Alan Dove

Young elite drivers are put through their paces by researchers in the Human Performance Centre's heat chamber.

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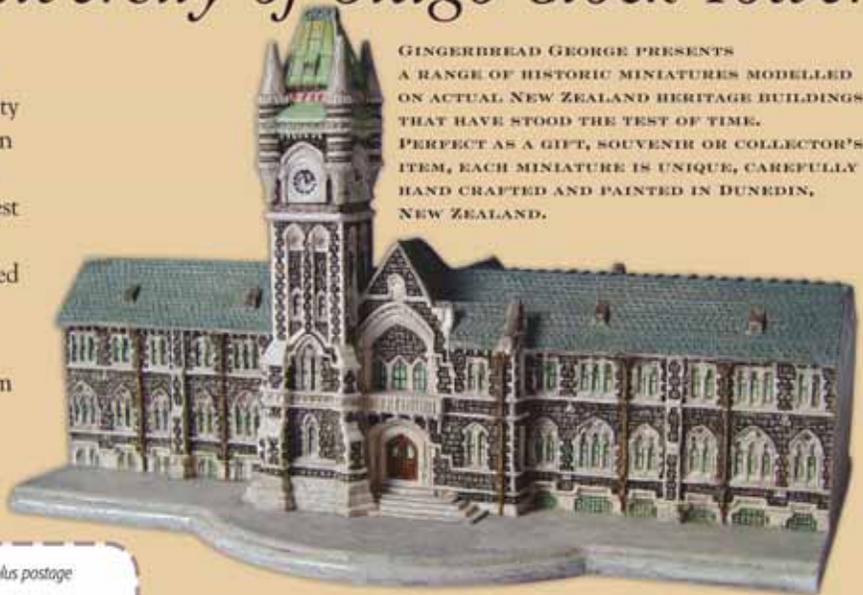
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UNICLIPPINGS

APPOINTMENTS

Vice-Chancellor Professor **David Skegg** as Secretary of the New Zealand Rhodes Scholarship Selection Committee.

Professor **Gareth Jones** (Anatomy & Structural Biology) as interim Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Academic & International), 2005-2006.

Associate Professor **Jean Fleming** (Anatomy & Structural Biology) to the University Council.

Dr **Kim Ma'ia'i** (MB ChB 1990) as Director of the University's Student Health and Counselling Service.

OBITUARIES

Dr **Godfrey Pohatu** (48). Former Head of Māori Studies (1990-1997). Appointed in 1986, Dr Pohatu was instrumental in the creation of Te Tumu, The School of Māori, Pacific and Indigenous Studies, as well as other initiatives including the establishment of the University's Māori Centre, Māori Liaison Officer position and the Māori Students' Association.

Dr **John Dawson** (75) (MA 1952). Member of the German Department from 1963 until his retirement as senior lecturer in 1989. Noted for passing on his love of the poetry of Heinrich Heine and Goethe, and of Goethe's *Faust*, to generations of German students.

John Passmore (89). An eminent Australian philosopher, he was appointed to the Chair of Philosophy at the University in 1950, a position he held for five years.

SCHOLARSHIPS/FELLOWSHIPS

Dr **Rebecca Roberts** and Dr **Dejan Arsic** (Christchurch School of Medicine and Health Sciences) have been awarded NZ Science and Technology postdoctoral fellowships to investigate the pharmacogenetics of inflammatory bowel disease and to improve understanding of liver cancer in children, respectively.

Dr **Philippa Carter** (Women's and Children's Health) received the 2004 Masonic Paediatric Fellowship to conduct research into childhood obesity.

Geology MSc student **Andrew Clifford** won Antarctica New Zealand's Sir Robin Irvine Antarctic Scholarship to further his research into the Southern McMurdo Ice Shelf.

ACHIEVEMENTS

Professor **John Langley** (Director, Injury Prevention Research Unit) was honoured with a prestigious International Distinguished Career Award at the Seventh World Conference on Injury Prevention and Safety Promotion in Vienna.

Associate Professor **Murray Skeaff** (Human Nutrition) received an award for Sustained Excellence in the National Tertiary Teaching Excellence Awards. Along with Dr **Ann Richardson** (Christchurch School of Medicine and Health

Sciences), he also received the University's Inaugural Excellence in Teaching Award.

Professor **Christine Winterbourn**, (Christchurch School of Medicine and Health Sciences) won the University's Distinguished Research Medal for her work on free-radicals and antioxidants.

Professor **Peter Joyce** (Christchurch School of Medicine and Health Sciences) received the Royal Australian and New Zealand College of Psychiatrists' Organon Senior Research Award for the second time in 10 years.

Marine Science PhD student **Peter Batson's** book *Deep New Zealand: Blue Water, Black Abyss* won this year's Montana New Zealand Book Awards environment category.

Professor **Jim Mann** (Human Nutrition) was made an Honorary Life Member of the New Zealand Dietetic Association in recognition of his outstanding contribution to the fields of dietetics and human nutrition.

Alexandra Smithyman (LLB (Hons) BA 2002) has won a 2004 Fulbright award to carry out an LLM specialising in international law at New York University.

Queen's Birthday Honours recipients: Distinguished Companion of the New Zealand Order of Merit (DCNZM) - Reverend Dr **Penelope Jamieson** (BD 1982). Companions of the New Zealand Order of Merit (CNZM) - Dr **Graeme Fogelberg** (Hon LLD), Professor **Gareth Jones** (Anatomy & Structural Biology), The Rt Reverend Dr **Richard Randerson** (BA 1960, MA 1961, BD 1964). Officers of the New Zealand Order of Merit (ONZM) - Professor **Brett Delahunt** (Wellington School of Medicine & Health Sciences) (MB ChB 1978, MD 1995), Professor **Keith Grimwood** (Wellington School of Medicine & Health Sciences) (MB ChB 1977), Dr **Maurice Orpin** (MB ChB 1959), Emeritus Professor **David Sharpe** (MB ChB 1968, MD 1982), Professor **Ian Watson**, J.P. (BSc 1959, MSc 1960, PHDS 1966). Members of the New Zealand Order of Merit (MNZM) - Associate Professor **Terence Dennis** (MusB Hons 1977), Dr **John Hedley** (MB ChB 1973), Dr **Barry Partridge** (MB ChB 1961). Dr **Peter McGeorge** (MB ChB 1970) was made a Companion of the Queen's Service Order, while Queen's Service Medals were awarded to **Catherine Goodyear** (BA 1981), **Garry Jeffery** (BA 1951, MA 1952, DipEd 1956), Dr **Geoffrey Knight** QSM (PGDipGP 2002) and **Jan Riddell** (BSc Hons 1976).

HONORARY DOCTORATES

Dr **Paratene Ngata** (MB ChB 1970, DipComH 1982) had an Honorary Doctor of Laws conferred in recognition of his major contribution to Māori and community health care, as did outgoing Vice-Chancellor Dr **Graeme Fogelberg** in recognition of more than a decade of outstanding service to the University.

BOOKS

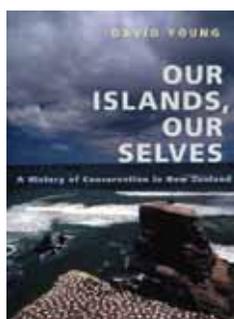
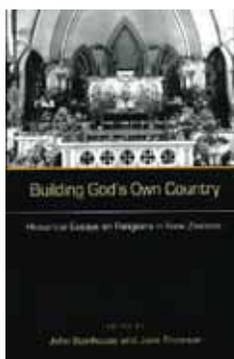
BUILDING GOD'S OWN COUNTRY: HISTORICAL ESSAYS ON RELIGIONS IN NEW ZEALAND

Edited by John Stenhouse and Jane Thomson

The essays in this book argue that features of society and culture – family life, gender roles and relations, racial and ethnic identities and interactions, and weekly rhythms of work and leisure – cannot be understood without looking at New Zealanders' religious beliefs and values.

Building God's Own Country: Historical Essays on Religions in New Zealand offers insights into New Zealand's religious past, an area often overlooked by historians. Much of the collection has an Otago/Southland framework that offers a window on religious experiences that are regional, but of national relevance. While some essays focus on mainstream churches, such as the Anglicans and Presbyterians, authors also look at Jews, "heathen" Chinese, Mormons, Irish Catholics, the Salvation Army, missionaries and a high-profile Dunedin atheist.

This is the third volume of essays from post-graduate students of the University of Otago History Department, published by University of Otago Press. These collections aim to bring the best student research on an important historical theme to a broad audience of scholars and the interested public. Previous volumes have been on Māori history and the history of mental health care. *Building God's Own Country* is edited by John Stenhouse, senior lecturer in the History Department, and the late Jane Thomson.



OUR ISLANDS, OUR SELVES: A HISTORY OF CONSERVATION IN NEW ZEALAND by David Young

University of Otago Press have just published the first-ever history of conservation in New Zealand, in association with the Department of Conservation and the Ministry for Culture and Heritage.

Our Islands, Our Selves: A History of Conservation in New Zealand explores the evolution of a conservation ethic in this country. It looks at the phases of Māori settlement and how the need to preserve slowly became an element of the use of some resources. It identifies the issues, personalities and organisations of the past 200 years, as the country evolved from a "quarry economy" to a modern society grappling with erosion and flooding issues, predator proliferation, and habitat and species loss.

Many of the individuals who have engaged in conservation politics have University of Otago connections. Lance Richdale, a world authority on birds, who fostered the royal albatross colony at Taiaroa Head on the Otago Peninsula, taught in an honorary role at the University from 1940-1952. Ian Prior, whose environmental work has included the Save Manapouri campaign, is honorary fellow at the Department of Public Health, Wellington School of Medicine. And, of course, Professor Alan Mark of the Botany Department played a leading role in the Manapouri campaign, and was instrumental in securing Comalco's involvement with the Kakapo Recovery Project.

UNIVERSITY OF OTAGO PRESS NEW AND FORTHCOMING TITLES

Past Judgement: Social Policy in New Zealand History, edited by Bronwyn Dalley & Margaret Tennant (August)

Building God's Own Country: Historical Essays on Religions in New Zealand, edited by John Stenhouse & Jane Thomson (September)

Queenstown: New Zealand's Adventure Capital, by Neville Peat (September)

Wellington: History, Heritage and Culture, by Gavin McLean (September)

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

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

'Rats and Revolutionaries': The Labour Movement in Australia and New Zealand 1890–1940, by James Bennett (October)

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

Southern Seas: Marine Life at 46° South, by Sally Carson, John Jillett & Keith Probert (November)

William Wales, Samuel Taylor Coleridge and 'The Rime of the Ancient Mariner': Captain Cook's navigator and Coleridge's poem, by Bill Whelen (November)

Landfall 208, edited by Justin Paton (November)

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

IN PRACTICE

by Rosie Fenwicke

In Practice is Otago graduate Rosie Fenwicke's compilation of 13 New Zealand women's stories of practising medicine. Most contributors attended medical school in the 1960s or '70s, a period when women's widespread participation transformed the profession. Contributors include New Zealand's first female orthopaedic surgeon, Karen Smith; past president of the Royal New Zealand College of General Practice, Helen Rodenburg; and Papaarangi Reid, a public health researcher campaigning for the elimination of health disparities.

The book's strength is its honest depiction of the difficulties of a career in medicine. The conflicting demands of work and family; maintaining one's ideology when it conflicts

with medical orthodoxy; and staying human while managing an inhumane workload are insights useful to anyone, male or female, considering a medical career.

Fenwicke invokes the feminist axiom "the personal is political" as the basis for her exploration of the lives of the 13 doctors featured. For some, this meant the freedom to participate in all areas of the profession. For other contributors, being a woman in medicine was being an outsider, perhaps aligning oneself more closely with patients and the developing patients' rights movement. As the beneficiaries of feminism, some sought to advance this and other social justice ideals through their work.

Overall, blatant sexism appears rare and is seldom dwelt on. The difficulty of combining a career in medicine with raising children, however, is a common theme of the stories. The contributors differ as to whether the medical workforce should be reformed to allow both men and women time with family, or whether some element of family sacrifice is essential for competent practice.

The conclusion is that subtler barriers to women's participation, including student debt, have replaced overt discrimination. Many fear debt's differential effect on women graduates may erode the gains in women's participation in the profession. This concern motivated Fenwicke to create a fund for financial assistance for women medical students at the University of Otago, to which all royalties from the sale of this book will go.

Ayesha Verrall

RECENTLY PUBLISHED BOOKS OF OTAGO ALUMNI

Book Book, by Fiona Farrell, Random House, 2004

Church of the Holy Name – Dunedin North, by Margaret MacCormick, Taieri Print, 2004

"History of the World Federation of Societies of Anaesthesiologists", by Cedric Hoskins in *World Federation of Societies of Anaesthesiologists – 50 Years*, Springer-Verlag Italia, 2004

Mastery, Tyranny and Desire: Thomas Thistlewood and his slaves in the Anglo-Jamaican world, by Trevor Burnard, North Carolina Press, 2004

Type 2 Diabetes, and How to Live With It, Louise Farmer, Sue Pearson & Amber Strong, Life Care Books, Massey University Institute of Food, Nutrition & Human Health, 2004

Letters from Jean, (Janet Frame), compiled by Sheila Natusch, Nestegg, 2004



Photo: Random House

Rosie Fenwicke



JACQUELINE FAHEY (1929-). *Sisters Communing*, 1974. Oil on board: 1102 x 921 mm.

SO MUCH COLOUR, SO MUCH LIVELY DETAIL, AND YET the prevailing note in *Sisters Communing* is one of suburban stupor. Jacqueline Fahey has not only arrested a moment in the lives of her sisters, Cecil and Barbara; she's also offered up a little time capsule of middle-class womanhood in New Zealand c1974.

In a room thick with torpor and dulled spirits, the only hint of jollity is to be found on the inanimate face of the doll. Fahey explains the decided lack of laughter and animated conversation between the sisters: "They are at that stage in life, in time, in history, where they're beginning to see that it's not a simple issue, that it's not just a matter of getting married and having children, that it's going to be much more fraught than that."

This quiet suburban reckoning was taking place in many such New Zealand lounges in the 1970s as the feminist ferment gained ground. While many artists tackled landscape or abstract ideas, Fahey remained staunchly devoted to picturing the less lofty domain of domesticity and all the socio-political strains therein.

Fahey's interiors are always reassuringly dishevelled – the toys stay on the floor, the *Cosy Coal* bag isn't hidden away. There's no visual editing here; nothing is too prosaic to be included. She says this was a very deliberate thumbed nose to the tyranny of respectability and gentility that smothered women's creativity: "So many women still act as if the Inspector of Housework and Interior Decoration might call at any moment."

Claire Finlayson

HOCKEN COLLECTIONS GALLERY EXHIBITIONS

Runs until December 2004

Talking Back: Six Dunedin artists respond to history in the Hocken Collections

REGARDING HISTORY:

SUMMER ART EXHIBITION AT THE AUCKLAND CENTRE

AUCKLAND WILL SOON HAVE ANOTHER OPPORTUNITY to get a glimpse of the Hocken Collection treasures, with an exhibition of historical portraits showing at the Auckland Centre. Opening in December, the exhibition showcases a collection of nineteenth century feature portraits, offering a human face – or series of faces – to our vision of Otago’s early history.

The artists range from the prolific to the obscure. Similarly, the subjects range from the familiar and famous, to the unidentified *Girl’s Head*. Many of the paintings show the influence of the European art teachers and the development of an increasingly self-aware local style.

Auckland Centre Manager Adrienne Molloy believes there is much to look forward to with the forthcoming exhibition. “The history of Otago and New Zealand is so interesting, and the opportunity to uncover and disclose some of the makers of our local history through the Hocken’s extraordinary collection is a privilege. Holding these exhibitions provides a lovely opportunity for the Auckland public to take a look at what the Hocken Collection holds, and to see the early days of life in New Zealand through the eyes of the people who were actually there.”



JM NAIRN (1859-1904). *Smiling Woman: Portrait of the artist's wife.*
Oil on canvas: 576 x 487 mm.

The exhibition opens Sunday 12 December, and will run through the summer until the end of January. Alumni and friends who would like to attend the opening are invited to contact Adrienne on 09 373 9702 or at adrienne.molloy@otago.ac.nz



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ALUMNI

A FULL ALUMNI SCHEDULE FOR 2004 HAS CONTINUED apace in the last few months. University business and pleasure combined in May, with the Council meeting in Invercargill on 11 May being followed by another alumni event; towards the end of the month, a group of senior University staff travelled to Samoa and Fiji for significant meetings with universities there, and enthusiastic alumni gatherings.

The northern hemisphere was covered in June, with alumni in Toronto helping to organise a perfectly-formed small event, followed by the year's largest function, in London. Over 350 tickets – a sellout and then some – were snapped up for the reception at the British Houses of Parliament, as always superbly organised by Otago's UK Alumni Chapter.

There was a new venue in Sydney, for a revamp of the traditional pre-Bledisloe Cup alumni reception. The landmark Queen Victoria Building is well-known; The Tearoom on its

top floor is not and many of the 150 guests were delighted to discover this elegantly restored space. Liberal adornment of paua, pounamu and Otago colours gave Otago's biggest Sydney crowd to date a marked Kiwi atmosphere. There was also a nicely personal touch with a presentation by local grad Alister Robinson on behalf of Sydney's alumni to the very recently retired Graeme Fogelberg, in appreciation of his commitment to alumni throughout his time as Vice-Chancellor.

Events in New Zealand were also well attended, with several hundred alumni spreading themselves across four evenings in Auckland and Wellington. Pre-1990 graduates in Auckland on 26 August were keen to talk not just about the past, but also their present and future relationships with the University – the next generation is giving their parents a good reason to visit Dunedin. The next day, those from 1990 onwards set about getting the weekend off to a lively start

SYDNEY



John Deaker, Miles Clark, Tiso Faletose, Elspeth Deaker, Chris Bayley



Rosa Williams, Cairon Coyle, Kristin Hodgson



Sally Huang, Kazuki Takamine, Brian Flaherty

AUCKLAND



Newton Wickham (CBE), Anni Low (OBE), Dr W Sealy Wood, (K of SU, OBE)



Prof Sir John Scott, Margaret Scott, Bill Brabazon, Ian Ronayne



Judy Skyrme, Murray & Bea Haslett, Rosalie Mitchell

AUCKLAND



Tania Balle, Freddy Davison, Anna Dungan, Geoff Willetts, Sonya Steidle, Bradley Clarke



Hannah Wells, Sara Moore, Kathryn Docherty



Cath Grant, Paula Matawalu, Lisa Samusamurodi, Jane Lober, Simon Lemalu Kolose, Sarah Eyre (front)

– even ever-popular Dean of Law, Mark Henaghan, found it a challenge to be heard above the noise of the ebullient crowd.

At Wellington's functions a week later, the pre-1990 event again drew many familiar faces and several of our more senior alumni, including the Chancellor's high school maths teacher. The as-usual high-spirited 1990-onwards night was equally well attended by many junior alumni, only one or two years from Dunedin, and also a pleasing sprinkling of those second-generation alumni whose parents we've met at other events.

At the Melbourne Chapter's annual alumni dinner on 16 September, Graeme Fogelberg concluded his long-time commitment to Otago's former students with some recollections of his 10 years in the Clocktower. Chancellor Lindsay Brown provided some University news, and Trevor Moyle and the Chapter's enthusiastic committee started working on their next event.

As ever, a sincere thank you to those who attended alumni events this year. The warmth of the alumni feeling towards Otago consistently confirms that this is a special place for its students. We look forward to seeing you again.

A STEP BACK IN TIME WITH THE UNIVERSITY OF OTAGO MEDICAL ALUMNUS ASSOCIATION

For the last 29 years the Medical Alumnus Association has reunited Otago medical graduates from all over the world with former classmates and has kept them up to date with news from within the Faculty. The Association distributes an annual Bulletin to its 900 members, hosts class reunions, provides former class lists and photographs and raises money for Faculty projects and scholarships.

The Association collates historical medical memorabilia and artefacts for its History Museum and has raised funds for a publication to record 125 years of the History of the Faculty of Medicine, which is due out shortly.

To find out more about how you can help and what the Association can offer, visit the website at www.otago.ac.nz/medicalalumni



The evening's longest standing graduate, Rowan Nicks (MB ChB 1937) with its most recent: Kristin Hodgson (BCom 2003), Graeme Fogelberg (Hon LLD 2004)



John Eastwood, Jane Miller, Sue Chudleigh



Nicky Burnett, Marion Parkins, Chris Waalkens, Marsden Bell



Beverley Shannon, Alf Vincent, Ngairé Vincent, Leslie Shannon



Henry Wedd, Derek Kerr, Hayden Gordine



Vaughan and Brenda Poutawera

FEEDBACK

As we continue developing our alumni programme, we're very interested in what alumni think, and have developed an event evaluation form which can be electronically submitted via the alumni web pages. If you've attended an alumni reception this year, we would be delighted if you could take a few moments to answer half a dozen questions at www.otago.ac.nz/alumni/functions/feedback

ANNUAL APPEAL THANK YOU

I WOULD LIKE TO THANK ALL WHO HAVE CONTRIBUTED TO the funding for the Alumni First in Family Scholarship; it has given me the opportunity to achieve my goals for the future. No words can really express how much this has provided such an amazing experience for me.

This year I am studying Law and a Bachelor of Arts majoring in Geography. My understanding of the natural and cultural environment of the world we live in, and my passion for law, inspires me to work to my full potential.

This scholarship has significantly been a life-changing event, not only for myself, but for my family as well, giving them the opportunity to see me achieve and grow each day. It has allowed me to study full time without the pressure of financial needs. I would like to thank all the donors for making my dream come true.

Have you ever felt you are living a dream? Otago really is “a home away from home”, and I am taking every opportunity to make the most of it – with passion and determination in life, anything is possible.

Sarah Day (Graduating class of 2008)

TO BECOME A FIRST IN FAMILY SCHOLAR IS NOT AN EASY THING to achieve and being the first person in my family of five brothers and sisters to get into university was hard. I didn't know what to expect.

Life has many challenges for everyone but because of the help and support from the community life can become better. I would like to say thank you so much to those who participated in the funding for the Otago University Alumni First in Family Scholarship. Without this scholarship I wouldn't be where I am today.

The scholarship has enabled me to put all effort into my studies without worrying too much about financial problems. This scholarship has given me the potential to achieve my goals. Not just that but it also gives me different experiences in life, makes me understand how people in the community support one another. I had never thought of becoming a community volunteer before but I am now keen to explore opportunities available.

This year I am studying Health Science papers and some Commerce papers. I want to get into research. I hope I have a chance to find the cure for some genetic diseases and cancer. I still remember my High School principal's theory, he said if you believe in the 4As (Attitude, Academic, Attendance and Appearance) anything is possible. I am planning to do double honours in Pharmacology and Chemistry. I am also doing Commerce, majoring in Finance. It will take about five years to finish my degrees.

Once again thank you so much.

Sok Phou (Graduating class of 2008)



PHOTOS: ALAN DOVE

Sarah Day (top) and Sok Phou are first year students who were awarded Alumni First in Family Scholarships. These scholarships were made possible by donations from Otago alumni to the Annual Fund 2003.

FROM OTAGO TO FIJI

When rearranging banking recently, Trudy Shearer elected for the Westpac University of Otago Affinity Card “because I liked the idea that they would donate to Otago for every card taken”. The Dunedin Hospital radiographer's philanthropic thought has won her a trip for two to Fiji in the bank's recent promotion. She looks forward to taking up her prize early next year - and of course, she has the card, so can carry Otago with her to Fiji.

Find out more about how alumni gifts make a difference at www.annualappeal.otago.ac.nz

GRADUATE OPINION SURVEY PRIZE WINNER



Graduate Opinion Survey winner, Priscilla Donald, happily accepts her prize of \$5000 worth of international air travel from Air New Zealand representative, Ms Angela Daniels.

PRISCILLA DONALD (BCOM, 2002) TOOK JUST 10 MINUTES to complete this year's Otago Graduate Opinion Survey, but it won her \$5000 worth of Star Alliance air travel anywhere in the world and \$2000 spending money. The prize, kindly donated by Air New Zealand and the University of Otago's former Vice-Chancellor, Dr Graeme Fogelberg, was one of three given away in a prize draw to thank former students who completed this year's survey.

The annual survey (and the Student Opinion Survey) is an integral component of the University's commitment to quality improvement, providing valuable information on how students and recent graduates perceive the quality of the University's academic programmes and support services. Each year all students and graduates within a selection of programmes and majors are surveyed on a revolving four-year schedule.

The question format used asks graduates about their views of the course and the skills they feel it developed, particularly in light of their subsequent experience in the workforce, which is also covered in the questionnaire. This provides valuable information to departments about the needs of their graduates.

Confidential statistical reports are distributed to the divisions, departments and schools surveyed, and overall Summary Reports containing less in-depth information are also produced on the entire survey. Departments use the survey information extensively to help identify areas of strength and weakness, and to stimulate improvement. Central administration uses the overall survey results to set and measure performance targets for the institution as a whole.

If you'd like any further information about the survey process or a copy of the Summary Reports (available at no cost), please contact the Quality Advancement Unit at PO Box 56, Dunedin or quality.advancement@stonebow.otago.ac.nz

RHODES CENTENARY ON VIEW

THE NATIONAL LIBRARY'S EXHIBITION TO CELEBRATE the centenary of Rhodes Scholarships, *A Civilising Mission: New Zealanders and the Rhodes Scholarship 1904 – 2004*, opened at the University of Otago Library on 20 September. Several guests had Rhodes connections as Scholar, Fellow, or family member – among them, the Hon Hugh Templeton, Rhodes Scholar in 1952, who opened the exhibition. The original Wellington exhibition has been revised for the Otago audience with extra panels of local interest, and display case material sourced from University collections.

The exhibition in the Brasch Court and the de Beer Gallery, 1st Floor, University Library will run until 10 December. Those interested who can't make it to campus should note that, as with all Otago's Special Collections exhibitions, there's an online version at www.library.otago.ac.nz/resources/exhibitions.html

TE RAUKURA EXHIBITION

AS NĀ TŌ HOA AROHA, THIS YEAR'S CELEBRATION OF 100 years of Māori graduates at Otago, marks the graduation of one Peter Henry Buck, MB ChB, a young man for whom Otago was just one step in a truly inspirational career, it's fitting that one of the year's highlights focuses on his achievement.

Te Raukura, an exhibition honouring his remarkable life as doctor, politician, soldier and anthropologist, was opened at the Otago Museum on 19 August by the Governor-General, Dame Silvia Cartwright, in the presence of representatives from the University community and his Ngāti Mutunga people.

The exhibition includes New Zealand memorabilia tracing Sir Peter Buck's path from Te Aute College to Otago to medical practice, Parliament and Gallipoli: the University has provided the old desk inscribed Te Rangi Hiroa – Sir Peter Buck's Māori name. The University's Te Tumu School of Māori and Pacific Studies deserves credit for arranging the loan of some of his personal treasures from Hawai'i's Bishop Museum, where he became Director and one of the foremost authorities on Pacific anthropology of his day. Among these taonga, Te Rangi Hiroa's stunning kiwi feather cloak and superb mere underline his mana. Such artefacts sit alongside fascinating documentary insights into early 20th century Māoridom.

The story they tell pays tribute to a great New Zealander whom Otago is very proud to count among its graduates.

THE KNOX FARCE

(not, by any means, to be confused with the Selwyn Ballet).

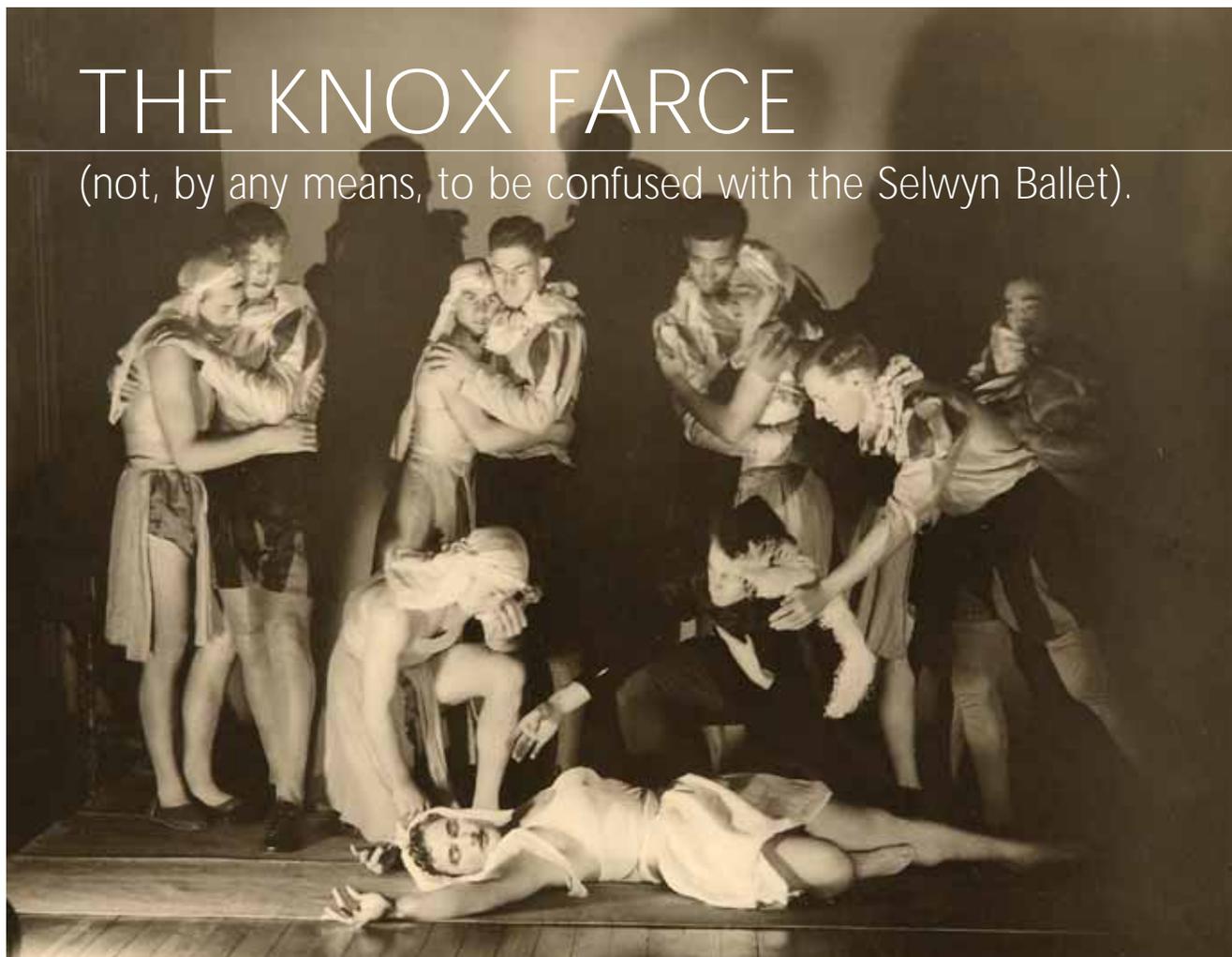


Photo: Morris Kershaw/1946

Knox Farce production Cameo and Mabelette, 1946.

Back from left to right (as far as is known): Bob Haigh and Ian Inkster, Tony Steward and John Tanner, Ratu Mara and Campbell Maclaurin or Warren Schrader, Jack Hoe. Front from left to right: Bob Hardy, Eric Parr and Fergus Fergusson (standing). Prostrate at front, Irwin Isdale.

IF REVENGE IS A DISH BEST SERVED COLD, THEN THIS IS ICY.

A flurry of letters from octogenarians in response to the photograph on page 43 of our June issue highlights that the memories of college rivalry still smoulder years after the enemy is defeated by the trickery of stunts and skirmishes.

Correspondence from Knox lads reveals that this elegant photograph is of the 1946 Knox Farce production *Cameo and Mabelette*, not as was reported, the Selwyn Ballet.

David Cole, concert director from 1945-47 and a former Dean of the Auckland Medical School, laments that “this misrepresentation, heinous as it is, will be profoundly upsetting to the failed thespians who are currently enjoying their 80th year (+ or -) and would have preferred not to have their senescence shattered by this clanger.

“Your tragic mistake is to mix up the Selwyn Ballet, which

even we from Knox admit is a fine tradition, sometimes amateur in its performance, with the highly esteemed Knox Farce.”

Spoils from a trophy raid, or perhaps a Knox plant? How the photograph landed in Selwyn’s archives is a mystery.

“We don’t know how: it’s certainly been around for a number of years, and even featured in the history of Selwyn College, *Selwyn College’s First Century 1893-1993*,” says warden Lois Warburton.

The photograph features a number of Knox notables, including former 1950-52 All Black John Tanner, former Fijian Prime Minister Ratu Sir Kamisese Mara and prominent New Zealand medics.

Staged almost continuously between 1940 and the early 1980s, the Knox Farce initially appeared in-house and then regularly as part of the University capping show. The level



The Sunbeams of 1928 – the first Selwyn “ballet”.

of alcohol consumption in the 1980s caused the jokes to fall embarrassingly flat and it was only in 1995 when the intake was tempered that the farce was revived.

Always a parody of popular issues of the day, the 1946 version, produced by Norman Gilkison (later to become Moderator of the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church), guffawed at Dunedin’s mayor from 1944-47, Donald Cameron, and Mabel Howard, the country’s first female cabinet minister.

Back in those days, according to one correspondent, Randy De Castro, “Knox was rather prominent in capping activities – in the band, the parade, even the book, as well as the concert...” Selwyn specialised to keep up, he says.

Tony Steward relates: “We danced to the music of *Les Patineurs* and *Orpheus in Hades*...your photograph has cut off the main principle lying on the floor who has just expired. All that is visible are the two large lampshades attached to his chest! We are all showing our sadness.”

Explaining the serious disposition of its dancers, Bob Haigh writes: “We had a real ballet mistress who said, ‘Don’t try and be funny...just play it straight...it will be funny enough.’”

So, come on Selwyn College alumni, don’t be gazumped by the old rival. We’d love to know how the photograph came to adorn your College walls.

Vivien Pullar



The Selwyn Ballet performing *Swan Lake* at Carisbrook, 2004.