



UNIVERSITY OF

Otago

M A G A Z I N E

ISSUE 21: OCTOBER 2008

THE HUMAN GENOME DEBATE

RISK-TAKING: WHY YOUNG ADULTS STILL BEHAVE
LIKE TEENAGERS

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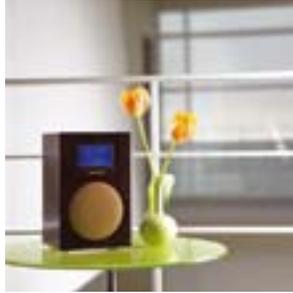
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EDITOR

Karen Hogg

DESIGNER

Peter Scott

CONTRIBUTING WRITERS

Simon Ancell
Rose Harrison
Linda Hobbs
Karen Hogg
Nicola Mutch
John Parker
Ainslie Talbot
Rebecca Tansley
Rob Tipa
Mark Wright
Nigel Zega

PHOTOGRAPHY

Ross Coombes
Alan Dove
Ken George
Bill Nichol

COVER

Getty Images

ADVERTISING

Ryan Helliwell

PRINTING

APN Print

CIRCULATION

Alumni and Development Office

To update or change delivery address

Telephone

0800 80 80 98

Email

magazine@otago.ac.nz

Web

www.otago.ac.nz/alumni/changedetails

Editorial contact details

University of Otago Magazine
Marketing and Communications
PO Box 56
Dunedin
New Zealand

Telephone

64 3 479 8679

Fax

64 3 479 5417

Email

mag.editor@otago.ac.nz

Web

www.otago.ac.nz/otagomagazine

Submissions

Contributed articles and letters should be addressed to:

The Editor, University of Otago Magazine, at the above address
or email mag.editor@otago.ac.nz

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Sir Lindo Ferguson, the second Dean of the Medical School, said that a satisfied Dean was a contradiction in terms. This observation, quoted in Dorothy Page's new History of Medicine at Otago, applies equally to Vice-Chancellors. No university ever has enough money. While recognising the danger of sounding predictable, I want to explain the particular predicament of New Zealand universities.

This country spends a respectable proportion of its GDP on tertiary education, but there is an imbalance in that investment. New Zealand now devotes 42 per cent of government funding for tertiary education to financial aid to students (including interest-free loans), against an OECD average of 18 per cent. This sounds generous, but a consequence is that the universities themselves are seriously under-funded. Between 1991 and 2006, as student numbers grew, government funding actually declined by about \$1,800 per full-time student (when adjusted for inflation and measured in 2006 dollars).

The nature of the problem is well illustrated by the situation we are facing next year. The Government will increase its funding levels per enrolment by 2.6 per cent, while inflation is running at around four per cent. Student fee increases are strictly limited by regulation, so that source cannot be used to bridge the gap. As this process continues year by year, the funding of our universities falls further and further behind that of comparable institutions in Australia and other advanced nations. This problem is

only compounded by New Zealand's paltry investment in research.

Given the limitations in funding, New Zealand universities do a remarkable job. Scepticism about rankings of world universities is fully justified, but those recently published (from Shanghai Jiao Tong University) are widely regarded as the most objective. These bracket two New Zealand universities – Otago and Auckland – in the 201–302 band, while three others are placed between 303 and 503. There are literally thousands of universities in the OECD alone. On a population basis, having five universities in the top 500 puts us in second place in the world after Sweden. But Sweden has no fewer than four universities in the top 100, while Switzerland, Austria, and Australia all have three each. In contrast, New Zealand has no universities among the top 200 places, in this ranking system based mainly on scientific research.

The world rankings take no account of the quality of teaching at a university such as Otago, let alone the unique campus experience we provide. These are of paramount importance to students, but are threatened by inadequate funding. Moreover, as New Zealand's most research-intensive university, we want to realise our full potential in supporting the social and economic development of the country. We value the support of our alumni and friends in advocating for more enlightened funding of university education and research.

David Skegg

Professor David Skegg Vice-Chancellor – University of Otago

Who, why, when?

AS THE HUMAN GENOME RESEARCH PROJECT NEARS ITS END, PROFESSOR MARK HENAGHAN REVIEWS ITS FINDINGS.

UNTIL RECENTLY, parents who carried the genes for a range of heritable conditions such as Huntington's disease, haemophilia and cystic fibrosis had no way of knowing if they might be passing those conditions on to their children.

Many agonised over whether to have children or, in the case of haemophilia, using IVF so they could discard all male embryos, even though not all would have the condition.

The exponential increase in knowledge about the human genome and the ability to genetically screen for many severe inherited diseases has changed that.

But it has also raised many ethical, medical, cultural and legal issues around whether, how and to what extent human genome-based technologies should be regulated, prompting the New Zealand Law Foundation to step up with sponsorship for the University of Otago-led Human Genome Research Project (HGRP).*

The result has been a three-year, multidisciplinary investigation into the issues surrounding emerging human genetic technologies, drawing on New Zealand and overseas expertise to produce a series of reports totalling some 1,300 pages, thus far.

Those reports have covered topics ranging from the pre-implantation genetic diagnosis (PGD) of implant embryos, newborn screening and the genetic testing of children, to the issues surrounding community genetics and the need for a Māori ethical framework for research relating to Māori health.

Project leader and Dean of Otago's Law Faculty Professor Mark Henaghan says the key concerns revolve around how humankind could misuse genetic knowledge.

"Some feared that we would be able to predetermine and design babies, predetermine what illnesses people were going

to get, and predetermine whether people were pre-inclined to certain crimes and those sorts of things," he says.

"Many people felt that this information could be misused. It could be misused by employers, it could be misused by governments and misused by people who wouldn't want to have anything to do with you because of your genetic make-up.

"At the same time – and this is the reason I got involved – one could also see the tremendous good that could come from it," says Henaghan. "If there is one lesson I have learnt from this project, it is just how much potential for good the flow-on from this discovery has in terms of being able to find things like genes for cancers, for example. If they find genes that predispose people to certain diseases then they can do something about it early on."

Henaghan says the HGRP's reports have progressed through the lifespan, starting with PGD and the screening of implant embryos for genetic disorders such as haemophilia, Huntington's disease and cystic fibrosis.

"PGD means people with genetic disorders in their family are able to have a child without the burden or the fear," he says. "For example, there is a one in two chance someone with Huntington's disease will have a child with the condition.

"I think anyone in that situation will say it's wonderful that they are now able to have a choice – that they are able to have a child that is free from the disease. Those sorts of things have helped me understand that these discoveries have the potential to do more good than harm."

Fears of genetic knowledge being used to create the perfect baby won't come to fruition, he says. "People wouldn't want



*Professor Mark Henaghan:
“... these discoveries have the potential
to do more good than harm.”*

to do that – it’s not the way people work. Besides, I think that the complex interaction between genes and the environment means that you would never get it right anyway.”

But, as one of the HGRP’s more recent reports found, parents using PGD may also end up with some unwanted information about themselves.

“Say, for example, one of your grandparents had Huntington’s disease, you’ve probably got a one in two chance of having it – but you probably don’t want to know that,” says Henaghan. “On the other hand they want to eliminate the risk of a future child having it, so they use what is called exclusion testing which tells them whether a particular embryo is free of the disease without them knowing what their own make-up is,” he says.

“Knowing at the age of 25 that in 15 or 20 years’ time they could develop this awful, debilitating disease would be too much for some people to bear and would lower the quality of their lives.”

The HGRP has therefore recommended the use of exclusion testing for such situations.

Newborn testing raised a different range of issues. Henaghan says there are conditions where it can make a difference to quality of life.

“But should parents be able to test for conditions which they can’t do much about, for example, Huntington’s, and be stuck with the knowledge even though they can’t do much about it? We came down with the view that parents shouldn’t be encouraged to test their children in this sort of situation,” he says. “Their children might want to make the choice themselves when they get to 18 or 19, knowing that there is Huntington’s disease in the family history.”

On the other hand they found, for example, testing for susceptibility to diabetes could be very helpful for parents because they can do something about it, such as adjusting diet and lifestyle.

“In the end, if more people take responsibility for their health then it takes the burden off everyone.”

Looking at it from a legal perspective, Henaghan believes New Zealand law is generally coping well with the changing technology. Our privacy laws are reasonably modern and the Human Assisted Reproductive Technology (HART) Act provides good processes.

“I think the danger in this area is to over-regulate. You can try to eliminate all risks, but, if you do that, you stifle the ability of people to make choices.

“There is the potential to do that with PGD. If we over-regulate and have doctors and ethics committees making the decisions then you have to ask ‘What more do they know than the parents?’ They’re not the ones who will be bringing up the child.”

Henaghan says that also extends to so-called “saviour siblings” – where a child with a severe life-threatening condition can be saved if a sibling is born with compatible genetic tissue, after being selected by PGD.

“It seems to me that should be a parental choice. All they are doing is choosing a child with a particular blood group and genetic make-up. Some people see that as using a child as an instrument, but we need to trust parents to do things which both children will benefit from,” he says.

“Do you put the burden on the individual choosing to show there’s no harm – which I think is impossible because everything has the potential for harm – or do you put the burden on society and say ‘Unless you can show clear harm you shouldn’t take choice away from people?’ I think that’s where we’ve gone – down the second track.”

Henaghan says trying to eliminate all harm before you proceed will stifle the ability of society to grow.

“You can’t eliminate all harm. New Zealanders have always been risk-takers and that’s always been one of our strengths. We can only forge ahead in a knowledge society if we are prepared to take those risks from time to time.

“Generally, I think you can show the benefits outweigh the harms, because they are only potential harms, the actual benefits are very clear – the child will be well. The harms

***The New Zealand Law Foundation**

THE NEW ZEALAND Law Foundation established the Human Genome Research Project after identifying the relative absence of legal and policy analysis in New Zealand around the rapidly emerging issues from human genetic technologies. Otago’s Faculty of Law was selected in 2002 to lead a multidisciplinary research team involving international collaborators.

The New Zealand Law Foundation is an independent charitable trust that provides grants for legal research and public education on legal matters. As such, it is the only funder of “pure” legal research in New Zealand – other legal research funding is tied to public policy development.

In addition to its grants’ programme, the foundation also awards annually the International Research Fellowship, New Zealand’s premier legal research award.

New Zealand law is generally coping well with the changing technology. Our privacy laws are reasonably modern and the Human Assisted Reproductive Technology (HART) Act provides good processes. – Professor Mark Henaghan

(the saviour sibling might be used) are just predictions and possibilities – they are not actualities.”

Henaghan has come to realise that, for many conditions, it is not just the genetic make-up; it’s the environment and the social conditions – genes don’t predetermine everything.

“So it hasn’t dehumanised us. There was a fear that we would just be the sum of our genetic make-up as opposed to the sum of our environment, our social interactions – all those other things,” he says.

“This project has been an opportunity to show the wider community that this technology has the potential to bring very real benefits and is not just science fiction.”

From next year research in this area will come under the new New Zealand Law Foundation Chair in Emerging Technologies which has been funded by a \$1.5 million sponsorship from the foundation, as well as support from the University of Otago’s Leading Thinkers initiative. In a first for New Zealand, the new chair will lead the Centre for Law and Policy in Emerging Technologies and guide projects tackling legal issues, regulations and policies that face upheaval because of fast-paced developments in technology.

Mark Wright

New reports pending

TWO FURTHER REPORTS, on patents and pharmacogenetics, are due out later this year as the Human Genome Research Project moves towards its final report release early next year.

Pharmacogenetics involves the tailoring of drugs to meet an individual’s genetic make-up and Henaghan says, that while it sounds very effective, this so-called personalised medicine is still a long way off.

“There are some downsides to it, in the sense that drugs may be tailored to meet certain genes because they are easy, so people in that gene pool will have drugs made for them. But, for those on the periphery, it is simply too expensive to produce drugs specifically for that group.

“People may think that the drugs will simply work and will forget about environmental and other factors,” he says.

“While I think progress will happen in that area, again I don’t think it’s going to be something that drug companies are going to be rushing into. It is hard enough to produce a drug for a large population – it costs millions. So I think those things are a slight inhibition to being able to go ahead.”

A report will also be released on patents on experimental techniques and tests used in genetic research.

Henaghan says there is the danger of people wanting to take a patent over that test, making it too costly to have it available as a diagnostic tool.

“Generally our research of health-care providers and researchers showed that people weren’t constrained from using these things because of the cost,” he says. “Overseas patent holders are not currently insisting on high premiums and some are not enforcing patents in New Zealand.

“It isn’t inhibiting people’s ability to access things, so they can keep up with what’s going on in this area without the prohibitive costs of licensing.

“At the moment, though, it is good news for a small country like New Zealand that our scientists can adapt tools from overseas and access them here without prohibitive costs.”

Henaghan says one option would be to have a research exemption in the Patents Act so researchers can use the knowledge from overseas research to develop tools here.

“There is no immediate need for that, but it would be a good safety net.”

Risky business

BRAIN SCIENCE NOW TELLS US WE'RE TEENAGERS UNTIL WE'RE 22. ACCORDING TO DEVELOPMENTAL PSYCHOLOGIST PROFESSOR HARLENE HAYNE, THAT EXPLAINS A LOT.

IF THERE'S one thing universities are full of, it's 18- to 22-year-olds.

So psychology Professor Harlene Hayne had a lot of personal experience to draw upon as she began reading new data about adolescent brain development. Now she believes the findings – and the research it has inspired – will force us to rethink how we regard the transition into adulthood.

For a long time, scientists believed that the human brain was fully mature by about the age of 18, but more recent brain-scanning technology has provided researchers with some surprising new insights about how the brain works, including evidence that the brain takes much longer to reach maturity than we previously thought. In fact, it now appears that the brain is probably not fully mature until the age of 20 or 22, and possibly even as late as 25.

“As a university teacher, the finding that the brain continues to mature during the period when many students attend university was a major epiphany,” says Hayne. “Sometimes I would look at students in frustration and think, ‘why don’t you act like an adult?’ The reality is they are not adults. The brain of a university student is very different to that of an adult, which is the source of both their charm and the chaos that they sometimes generate around the place.”

In particular, between ages 18 and 22 years, a large amount of brain development occurs in the prefrontal cortex. This is the part of the brain that helps to control attention span, perseverance, planning – is this ringing any bells for parents yet? – judgement, impulsivity and self-monitoring.

The finding that brain development continues into the 20s casts new light on university students’ behaviour. In fact, because of the way their brains work, they are actually predisposed to take more risks than adults – they climb on things, jump off things, experiment with alcohol and other drugs, drive their cars too fast – in large part because the part of their brain that would otherwise limit these activities is not yet fully mature.

“In fact, we know that risk of death or injury increases between 200 to 300 per cent between childhood and adolescence – a period of time during which most people are their most physically healthy. One of the major reasons for this increase in morbidity and mortality is that adolescents take more risks.”

Hayne argues that 18- to 22-year-olds may be especially vulnerable to the negative effects of risk-taking because this is a period in their lives in which biology and society conspire against them. Because people in this age group are

traditionally regarded as adults, they are afforded enormous freedoms and are given significant responsibilities. They are free to drink, drive, have sex and otherwise entertain themselves virtually unhindered, while living – often for the first time – away from parents, with others their same age.

What’s more, continues Hayne, “At this age, brains are still maturing, so individuals need at least nine hours of sleep each night, and changes in their circadian rhythm mean that young people are more likely to go to sleep later and later. Meanwhile, their academic or work responsibilities demand that they are awake and functioning by 8am. In the end, most people in this age group are sleep-deprived.”

For Hayne, the findings of prolonged brain maturation were a fascinating extension, as it were, to her research on child brain development.

“We don’t even have a name for people in this age group. These findings are very new and the research opportunities are immense. My students and I are particularly interested in the relation between brain development and risk-taking, both in people whom we would traditionally consider to be adolescents, as well as in university students.”

Already, Hayne and her students have embarked on several studies that are beginning to yield exciting results. A recent master’s thesis, conducted by her student Clark Sim, clearly supports the idea that there is a strong relation between risk-taking and the developmental status of the brain. In fact, says Hayne, “How participants scored on cognitive tests that are designed to measure functions of the prefrontal cortex was by far the best indicator of their risk-taking behaviour, better than age or gender.”

These data add to other research that has dispelled myths about why adolescents take risks. “We often assume that adolescents behave the way they do because of raging hormones or because they don’t know any better. In fact, research has shown that there is little or no relation between hormone levels and risk-taking.

“Furthermore, when asked to evaluate the risks associated with a large number of activities including drinking, taking drugs and having unprotected sex, most 13-year-olds perform at levels equivalent to that of adults.”

Which is why Hayne believes that we can’t rely on education alone to protect young people from the consequences of their risk-taking.

Professor Harlene Hayne: “The brain of a university student is very different to that of an adult, which is the source of both their charm and the chaos that they sometimes generate around the place.”



Photo: Alan Dove

“Of course, adolescents are aware that kayaking down the Leith during a storm is potentially dangerous. That’s the whole point of doing it.”

“Young people know that drugs are dangerous. That knowledge alone does not and will not and, to some extent, cannot stop young people from using them. Indeed, with some thrill-seeking behaviour, the fact that an activity is risky is the entire point of undertaking that activity. Of course, adolescents are aware that kayaking down the Leith during a storm is potentially dangerous. That’s the whole point of doing it.”

Hayne cites research conducted in the US in which alcohol consumption by university students has been monitored over a 12-year period. During this same period, millions of dollars were pumped into alcohol education programmes on the campuses that were studied. Despite the fact that students reported that they had participated in an average of three alcohol education programmes, binge drinking rates did not change at all.

“Some education about risks is obviously necessary, but it is not the whole picture. Sometimes behaviour needs to be managed.”

Education would be far more useful, Hayne maintains, if it focused on risk-management techniques, giving young people specific skills designed to help them negotiate the wide range of risky situations they will undoubtedly encounter. This includes practising safe sex, looking out for one another in groups, and knowing when and how to seek help.

“The concept of the sober driver, for example, is an excellent tool to help young people manage a very serious risk of drinking and driving,” she says.

And society could do much more to provide a safer and more appropriate environment for young people, she believes. “We should be building more climbing walls, so people can climb things that are designed to be climbed. If there were more skateboard parks, there would be less temptation to launch oneself from the top of View Street. We need to harness the positive aspects of adolescent risk-taking and provide new opportunities for adolescents to take positive risks.”

As for public policy, Hayne is adamant. “No other country lets young people get their driver’s licence as young as we do and, while the graduated licensing scheme is good in theory, it’s poorly enforced. And lowering the drinking age was absolutely a step in the

wrong direction. What sort of message does this send about how much we value the lives and safety of our young people?”

On the other hand, it’s not irrelevant that, for many people, this period of rapid brain development coincides with the best time of their lives. “If we ask adults to recall the most important events in their lives, most will name a large number of events that took place in their late teens and early twenties. We refer to this as the ‘reminiscence bump’. When people look back on their lives, this is the period they tend to focus on, and they recall it in rich and glowing terms.”

Furthermore, a lack of fear of the consequences is what gives people the confidence to pack up and move to London with just a few thousand dollars in the bank, study the subjects they care most passionately about, or to push themselves to achieve world-record downhill skiing results.

“The adolescent brain is highly responsive to new information. It’s part of what makes university students receptive to new ideas and capable of approaching issues in bold and creative ways. And,” says Hayne, “it’s what makes them so wonderful to teach.”

These positive aspects of risk-taking are now forming a strand of Hayne’s research interests, looking at activities including adventure sports.

Indeed, Hayne acknowledges, there’s evidence to suggest that a little bit of risk-taking is good for all of us. “Quite a lot of research shows that young people who have experimented with alcohol and other drugs, and who have done a few crazy things have better life outcomes than young people who take excessive risks and young people who take very few risks at all.”

“In the end, young people do grow up,” she continues. “By the age of 30, most university students will be law-abiding, tax-paying citizens. As a university community, our goal should be to foster a bit of risk-taking, but at the same time, we sometimes need to protect students from themselves – providing them with new ways to manage their ever-changing brains.”

Nicola Mutch

No ordinary man

OTAGO-TRAINED PHYSIOTHERAPIST STANLEY PARIS SHARES HIS VIEWS ON SUCCESS, FAILURE AND PARTICIPATION.

IT'S AUTUMN in Dunedin and Stanley Paris sleeps on top of his blankets with the windows open. He happily spends hours standing in the sea, reading a book. And, if he's not sweating in the cool air-conditioned comfort of a cinema, he's disappointed.

In case you hadn't noticed, Stanley Paris is no ordinary man. At the usually tender age of 70, the Dunedin-born, American-based physiotherapist (or physical therapist, as the profession is called in the United States) is preparing to swim the English Channel, which will make him – if he succeeds – the oldest person to make the crossing.

Paris is not particularly interested in the glory that comes with success, although it would be nice, he concedes, if some of its lustre rubbed off on his profession, which he credits with providing him with the skills and knowledge he has utilised in his training. Over a couple of hours' conversation with him three months before his attempt, one gets the impression he is more focused on failure and what it can teach us.

"I think failure is wonderful," he says on the blustery day following his keynote address at the New Zealand Society of Physiotherapists national conference. "The only way you fail is by doing something you haven't done before. So it's fine to fail. It's what you do with failure

that counts. I failed anatomy and I'm pleased, because I had to repeat it and I got a passion for it then."

A graduate of the University of Otago's New Zealand School of Physiotherapy, Paris went on after his undergraduate qualification to research spinal manipulation in London. He returned to a teaching post in Dunedin, but in 1966 immigrated to the United States to undertake a PhD – in anatomy.

His subsequent CV is about as far from failure as you can get. Twice appointed physiotherapist to the New Zealand Olympic team and once to its Commonwealth Games team, Paris is himself an accomplished athlete who has swum the English Channel twice, completed the Atlanta Boston Marathon and the Hawaii World Championship Ironman Triathlon. He has sailed around the world, won line honours in the trans-Atlantic race from Spain to St Lucia, and set a point-to-point speed record across the Indian subcontinent in a Volkswagen Beetle named Dreadnought (named after a ship in Admiral Nelson's navy).

That's in his spare time. In his professional life he took an entrepreneurial leap, in 1979, from faculty positions at Boston and Emory Universities to establish his own university, the University of St Augustine, in Florida. The institution now boasts three campuses, is



Photo: Alan Dove

Stanley Paris: "I think failure is wonderful ... It's what you do with failure that counts."

the United States' largest provider of physical therapy programmes and its third largest provider of occupational therapy courses.

Paris' motivation for this landmark achievement lies with his other passion: autonomy, the drive for which fuels his personal achievements, as well as his professional.

"When I trained here in Dunedin, physicians sent patients to us and told us what to do. They prescribed treatment and we were technicians. But today our professional knowledge is so extensive that no physician could reasonably tell a physiotherapist what to do. I often say that the average physician is in the business of differential diagnosis and treatment of disease, whereas a physiotherapist is in the business of differential diagnosis and treatment of dysfunction. Medicine and surgery may save lives, but no profession will speak to the quality of that life better than physical therapy."

Increasingly frustrated by physiotherapy's subordination to the medical profession, and the resulting resistance to professional and postgraduate specialisation, Paris established the North American Academy of Manipulation Therapy in the 1970s to provide a forum for clinical specialisation outside the national association. In 1979 Paris gained a licence to confer Master of Health degrees. Six years later he bought an old hospital in Florida with money he'd made in private education, and the University of St Augustine, a for-profit, private university – part of the biggest growth area in the American tertiary education sector – was born.

Although he recently relinquished the position of president at St Augustine, Paris remains closely involved and he is looking forward to undertaking further research in spinal neuro-anatomy. Paris also plans to open St Augustine's fourth campus, in New Zealand or Australia, in 2011 to provide postgraduate physiotherapy qualifications and exchange opportunities for students from both sides of the Pacific.

"I sometimes worry about why I'm never happy with the way things are," says Paris. "But I think I believe in continuous quality improvement, that things can always be better. When you look at history, nothing's the same, so do you wait for it to happen or are you one of the people that make

it happen? I prefer to be one of the people that make it happen.”

Paris followed his father, who was a private practitioner in Dunedin, into physiotherapy, making the pair the first father and son to graduate from the New Zealand school. As a young man, his interest in back pain was sparked when he accidentally manipulated a patient’s spine and effected an instant recovery – at the time a misdemeanour for which he was disciplined.

Today Paris believes physiotherapy’s most important function is the maintenance of physical performance.

“We’re living longer so we’ve got to maintain our health. When I was born my life expectancy was 65, but kids being born now have a life expectancy in their 80s. We’ve got to look at the quality of those lives. You may opt to have artificial knees or hips, but that’s not the way we as a profession want it to be. We believe we can improve the quality of life, save on health-care dollars and prevent surgery through timely physiotherapy interventions with follow-up ‘booster’ sessions. We just have to prove that.”

Paris points to research currently being undertaken [both at the University of Otago and] at St Augustine into the long-term cost-effectiveness of physiotherapy as an alternative to surgery, but also believes that people need to start taking more responsibility for their health care.

“When a patient wants me to fix their back, I say ‘I’ll do my best to help you, but it’s your back, it’s your responsibility’. There are people who don’t want to hear that, of course. They want to be fixed. They’d rather have surgery than take responsibility for their lifestyle. These days people want short-term pleasure [rather than] long-term investment, but anything worth achieving is going to take time.”

This is clearly the kind of attitude that helps Paris through the months of endurance training and uncomfortable body conditioning required to even attempt to swim the English Channel.

Paris has been committed to swimming the channel since he was 13, when he heard the then Governor-General, Lord Bernard Freyberg, address Otago Boys’ High School. Freyberg had been awarded a DSO for his courage at

Gallipoli, where he swam several miles ashore to create a diversion intended to draw enemy fire while troops landed elsewhere. He was also awarded the Victoria Cross. Yet Paris recalls being impressed most by Freyberg’s humility.

“After [the wars] he tried twice to swim the English Channel,” recalls Paris. “Here’s the Governor-General, decorated in the First World War, who fought alongside Montgomery in Africa in the Second World War, and what does he speak to our school about? About his ‘failures in life’, among which were his two attempts to swim the English Channel. I turned to my friend and I said to him, ‘I’ll do that one day’.”

Paris did “do it” – twice – but his July 2008 attempt, three months after we spoke, to become the oldest person to swim the English Channel was unsuccessful. Unfavourable weather conditions prevented a second attempt. Paris says he will likely participate in relays across the channel, but will not return for a solo crossing.

“Far less than half the [solo] attempts succeed,” says Paris, “and I have been fortunate to have done so twice. True, I am bitterly disappointed ... but I accept the outcome.”

Paris has been amazed at the messages from people indicating his inability to complete the swim is not seen as a failure, however, and that he has provided inspiration to them just like Freyberg did for him.

His campaign also raised \$50,000 for rehabilitation research and “the media have picked up on the story of this 70-year-old who refuses to take life easy just because of his age”.

What’s more important, Paris believes, is that he gave it his best shot. Particularly in a society which is unhealthily obsessed with winning.

“We’ve got coaches saying, ‘Show me a good loser and I’ll show you a loser’. That’s an appalling statement. I would say, ‘Show me a good loser and I’ll show you a sportsman’ because being a good loser is important. You can’t always win and you don’t need to. Just be the best you can be. You’ll shine. Participation is important, participation in the game of life.”

Rebecca Tansley

“When you look at history, nothing’s the same, so do you wait for it to happen or are you one of the people that make it happen? I prefer to be one of the people that make it happen.”

The end of oil?

Some optimistic musings ...



Photo: Bill Nichol

Dr John Parker: "Price rises will be held back by increases in the supply of oil and the arrival of substitutes."

IS OIL GOING to continue to skyrocket in price and then run out as the more fervent exponents of Peak Oil would have us believe? Or is it business as usual with Peak Oil turning out to be another Millennium Bug, which arrived with a bang and went out with a whimper? From this economist's perspective, the answer lies between these extremes. In my opinion, the Peak Oil arguments lack substance because they tend to ignore the rationing function of markets and their power to induce innovation.

Markets in action

To clarify this, I need to explain how markets work and, in particular, I need to show how the price mechanism can,

and does, foster innovation. So what does a market do?

At a simple level, a market matches the amount of a given good or service being offered for sale to the amount that consumers want to buy. The device that achieves this concurrence is the price for the good that is paid by buyers and received by sellers. This adjusts in a mechanistic and impersonal way until the market clears so that demand equals supply.

In effect, a market is a rationing device that uses the price to arbitrate between sellers and buyers. The mechanism has the wonderful advantage that it is self-organising and, when it works well, no single participant can manipulate the price for his or her own ends.

Markets and innovation

At a more sophisticated level, a fuller description of the market mechanism must include innovation. The price paid for a good not only influences its supply, but also exerts pressure to develop alternatives. Thus, a significant rise in the price of oil will dramatically improve revenues for existing producers and also the economic prospects for substitutes. Innovation is stimulated both inside and outside the oil industry.

We know from experience that dramatic improvements in offshore oil drilling techniques have been stimulated by premium prices. We also know that the arrival of alternative fuels or substitutes is not necessarily slow. There are always part-developed or dormant technologies that have been biding their time, waiting for oil prices to rise. These can be activated relatively quickly.

This price-induced technological change is one of the most powerful forces in economics. Hence, if there is a belief that high oil prices will persist, then it is inevitable that supply will increase and substitutes will appear. Together, they will influence the price of oil and the price of substitutes. Their impact may even be felt before they actually reach the market. Buyers will anticipate their arrival and lower the price they are prepared to pay for oil accordingly.

Dormant technologies

Examples of dormant or part-developed technologies within New Zealand include the Motonui gas-to-gasoline complex, and coal liquifaction based on Otago's and Southland's lignite fields. One tonne of this low-grade coal is capable of producing up to a barrel of diesel. Of course, there is a carbon management problem, but once reliable sequestration techniques are developed, then the output could be many billions of barrels.

New technologies

Three other local examples add weight to the argument that the search for substitutes for oil is active. LanzaTech, an Auckland-based biofuels company, is producing ethanol by bacterial fermentation from carbon monoxide in industrial flue-gas waste, from which it hopes to develop a low-carbon petrol.

A Nelson-based firm, the Aquaflo Bionomic Corporation, claims to be nearing commercial production using sewage as the feed stock for hydrocarbons. The

conversion process goes from algae, to diesel, petroleum and aviation fuel.

The final example here concerns a postdoctoral fellowship at the University of Otago, funded by the Foundation for Research, Science and Technology. The properties of different types of bacteria are being studied, in a search for the fastest growing and most productive in terms of the amount of hydrogen or ethanol released.

Fuels of the future?

The transition to a reduced dependence on oil is likely to involve a myriad of technologies until, by a process of iteration, a new paradigm is established. What is this likely to look like? The long list of prospective candidates includes improved battery technology, hydrogen-activated fuel cells, and hydrocarbons grown from algae or bacteria. And how quickly is this transition likely to happen?

A major determinant will be the strength of the incentives to change. If oil prices remain high, then there will be a strong motivation to harness dormant and new technologies, so that change will be relatively fast. This is why the oil companies have a love/hate relationship with high prices. High prices mean high profits but, inevitably, substitutes will gatecrash the party.

The end of the world is not nigh

So, to return to the opening question: Is oil going to continue to skyrocket in price and then run out? The answer is no. Price rises will be held back by increases in the supply of oil and the arrival of substitutes. Induced technological change will rescue us. To argue otherwise is to suggest that oil is unique relative to all other resources in the world and cannot be replaced, and also that human ingenuity will fail us. Like the more dire predictions of Peak Oil, this is not realistic.

Dr John Parker

Former associate professor in the Department of Economics and now a part-time lecturer with an interest in the economics of industrial innovation.

For more detail about the ideas raised here, see the articles in issues 20 and 21 of *EcoNZ@Otago*, available from www.business.otago.ac.nz/econ/econz/index.html or on request from the author.

Sound ideas

**A FOUNDER OF THE DUNEDIN BAND THE VERLAINES
AND HEAD OF OTAGO'S CONTEMPORARY ROCK
MUSIC PROGRAMME, DR GRAEME DOWNES IS
COMMITTED TO KEEPING MUSIC RELEVANT.**

DR GRAEME DOWNES is being not very polite, very politely.

Not to me personally, of course; it's hard to imagine the softly-spoken musician being anything but the epitome of courtesy. But telling people how things are – and never mind the bollocks – is pretty much what rock and rollers have been doing for the last 40 years. So Downes, founder and frontman of the longstanding Dunedin-born band The Verlaines, should have the art of social commentary pretty finely tuned, right?

Listen to his most recent single, *Yangtze Cod and Chips*, a black-humoured, burlesque and blues-influenced swipe at New Zealand's Free Trade Agreement with China, and you'd have to say yes. In fact, people have commended him on "saying something that everybody's thinking while there's otherwise a deafening silence around the place".

"It doesn't effect change," Downes concedes, "but at least it mocks and I think mockery is a very healthy thing."

This is probably why Downes, now a senior lecturer in the Department of Music, seems chuffed that the role of critic and conscience has ended up a formal part of his job description.

"I'm writing a lot of songs that aren't very polite to people at the moment. I think that's my job. This is not, historically speaking, my usual *modus operandi*, but I'm constantly surrounded by young men and women who are relatively new to the world and therefore aren't complacent about it. They question it and, increasingly, they force me to do the same. So, just because rock music has come into the establishment, it doesn't mean it's going to be tidy and well-mannered."

Downes took up his position in 2000 to build the University's contemporary rock music programme. New Zealand's only university-based programme of its type, it currently offers Bachelor and Master of Music degrees, aiming to develop students' skills and understanding in the field of contemporary popular music. He points to the body of rock music now available for teaching and the weight of its history.

The programme also focuses on the development of the wide range of skills required by the modern rock musician. Downes reckons that if it can condense into a three-year course some of the experience that, up until recently, could only be gleaned from a long, hard apprenticeship in the rock music industry, then he is fulfilling another important part of his job.

"All Lennon and McCartney did was write songs – all the knob-twiddling was done by George Martin. These days, record companies expect you to turn up with your finished album that you've made yourself on a computer with software that you've bought because it's inexpensive. To be the composer, arranger, performer and sound recordist, arrange the horn or the string section, and also be your own publicist and manager, that's a big skill set."

Downes refers to his own career to illustrate his point. As a Dunedin boy, "mad on classical music" and with an emerging interest in poetry, he pursued a traditional music degree. The immersion in western classical music traditions undoubtedly contributed to the harmonic complexities for which The Verlaines' music would later become well-known but, he thinks, left his grasp of the rhythmic elements of rock music wanting.



Dr Graeme Downes: "Just because rock music has come into the establishment, it doesn't mean it's going to be tidy and well-mannered."

Photo: Alan Dove

“Bach’s language is still alive and kicking, and we use it on a daily basis; it’s just being used by different people in slightly different ways.”

It was Downes’ first encounters with live bands – usually in places like the Maori Hill Coronation Hall – that proved the turning point and led him down the rocky road of contemporary musicianship.

“They were writing their own music with lyrics and – as opposed to playing cover versions of some dead guy – that was kind of attractive. That’s classical music’s continuing problem: the modern stuff is kind of hard for most people to listen to and the old stuff gets older every year.

“It’s about relevance. Much as you might like the music, it isn’t really very ‘now’. It’s a common story for a lot of rock musicians: they threw down their violin or whatever, picked up a bass guitar and that was the end of it.”

Which isn’t to say that Downes abandoned his interest in classical music. The singer/songwriter completed his PhD on the music of Gustav Mahler in 1994, and regularly teaches and speaks on topics such as Mahler’s and Russian composer Shostakovich’s compositional techniques. Downes’ background also informed, and continues to inform, his own composition.

Just as Downes’ songwriting is influenced by his understanding of classical harmony, his teaching draws on this background to develop a similar appreciation in his students. He says the 101 paper Materials of Music, which was initially taught separately to classical and rock students, is now combined because the concepts are equally relevant to both.

“We might look at a musical concept such as the German 6th, for example, where I might show them it in Beethoven, in Scott Joplin in exactly the same cadence and then in a Jeff Buckley song. Bach’s language is still alive and kicking, and we use it on a daily basis; it’s just being used by different people in slightly different ways. You might just use it to write a pop song good enough to be played at somebody’s funeral” [an oblique reference to Elton John’s *Candle in the Wind*].

In spite of his faith in the ability to teach rock and roll, Downes believes that, ultimately, true musicians are born, not made – he just gets to help them along their way. Similarly, he believes that the 1980s phenomenon that was the Dunedin Sound did exist, rather than being just

a useful invention of the media, as some commentators have argued. Downes is currently writing a book that argues this, drawing on his skill in musical analysis to define exactly what made the Dunedin Sound distinctive.

“In [the early ’80s] there were very noticeable similarities in the patterning of the notes, the techniques, the bent-out-of-shapeness of it all and the complexity,” he says. But, equally, the best songs of that era were in some ways unique.

“Pop music, in particular, is generally standardised and pre-packaged, so form is not something that tends to be responsive to content; you just pour new ideas into the same old mould. Yet, in almost all the iconic Dunedin-Sound songs, the form of the songs depends on the content. It was invented for that song and replicated in no other. There’s an artiness and an intellectualism to that, that composers were trying to do quite complex things and not just follow what was preordained about what a pop song should be.”

The Dunedin Sound is a very small part of the curriculum at honours level and Downes stresses that he doesn’t “ram it down anyone’s throats”. Rather, students are asked to examine why, in an era and an industry typified by transience, the Dunedin music of the 1980s still speaks to people today; why it has the R-word – relevance.

Each generation brings its own perspective to the lasting questions that face it. The way Downes sees things, popular music is a battleground on which foot soldiers re-take the same ground on a generational basis, each time in their own inimitable way. For him, after two decades in the industry, this is both invigorating and sobering.

“To teach writing pop music you have to be prepared for your students to make you feel old-fashioned and redundant, or at least I feel like I’m tacitly daring them to try. You’re kind of training your replacements. That’s certainly the job.”

Rebecca Tansley

A new Verlaines’ album, *Beautiful Cruelty*, is due out this month and follows the 2007 release of *Potboiler*.

The business of science

INTEGRATING THE ACADEMIC PRINCIPLES OF SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY WITH THE PRACTICAL APPLICATION OF BUSINESS, OTAGO'S APPLIED SCIENCE PROGRAMME IS ATTRACTING THE ATTENTION OF EMPLOYERS LOOKING FOR MULTI-TALENTED GRADUATES.

GRADUATES OF OTAGO'S Bachelor of Applied Science programme share a few key qualities that set them apart as outstanding individuals.

They are “bright, multi-talented innovators, committed and passionate, and future leaders in their fields who would stand out anywhere in the world,” says programme director Associate Professor Greg Anson, a research neuroscientist in the School of Physical Education, and Brain Health and Repair Research Centre.

The four-year BAppSc programme has been running at Otago since 2001 and, already, two graduates have gone on to Stanford and Oxford Universities on scholarships, another has gone to the United States as a Fulbright Scholar and several are continuing their academic studies at Otago for their masters' and doctorates.

Some corporate employers are recruiting graduates directly from the programme, while other graduates have walked straight into jobs through business contacts made during work experience for their degrees.

Nationally and internationally there is a growing demand for science to make a visible contribution to

a learning society and to a nation's well-being, Anson says. Applied science fits that role extremely well because it integrates the academic principles of science and technology with the practical application of business.

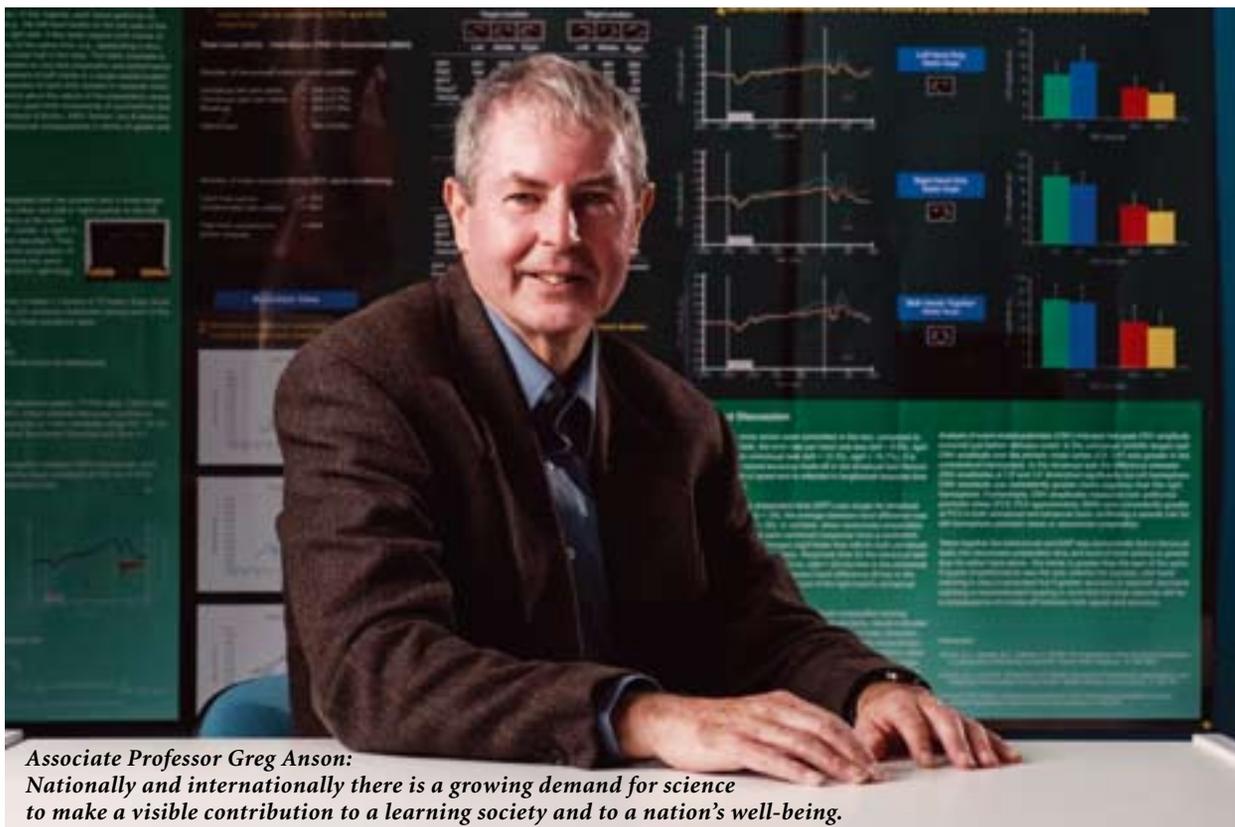
Otago's Applied Science programme is unique in two ways: the way in which business papers are integrated into the degree and by the fact that all students have to complete a period of work experience, usually at the end of their third year.

“Many degree programmes will provide opportunities for students to take business courses,” Anson says. “We require a minimum of four business papers of every student in every major.

“The point of that is to give them an opportunity to understand entrepreneurship, knowledge of business practices and the opportunity to gather knowledge on how science operates in the business sector.

“The onus is on students to create their own work experiences. We will help them in whatever way we can, but we also encourage them to make their own contacts.”

Currently, the programme has placement opportunities in nine or 10 countries. Students can work



Associate Professor Greg Anson:
Nationally and internationally there is a growing demand for science to make a visible contribution to a learning society and to a nation's well-being.

Photo: Alan Dove

anywhere in the world, but their choice has to be approved by their course co-ordinator in each of the 13 majors currently available.

Undoubtedly, part of the attraction for applied science students is that the programme offers up to nine Transpower Scholarships, worth \$7,000 each, every year. Candidates are judged on academic ability, leadership qualities and community involvement. Students can retain the scholarship for up to three years, but have to maintain an A minus average.

The standard of applicants for these scholarships to date is stunning and competition is intense, Anson says. "It's more often the case that we have more good applicants than we have scholarships that we can award. We usually have three new scholarships and about 20 applicants each year."

Another attraction – and a key difference between an applied science and a basic science degree – is that many of the majors offered are put together from core papers from more than one discipline. For students to study these papers any other way would mean at least an extra year after completing a basic science degree.

All 13 majors offered build on a broad range of the University's strengths. For example, Molecular Biotechnology is a very popular course that builds on the broad strength of health sciences and chemistry, genetics and microbiology in particular.

Sport and Exercise Nutrition builds on the School of Physical Education's number one ranking in the country and the very strong reputation of the Department of Human Nutrition.

Some majors have been identified and developed to meet public demand. A combination of papers in marine science, zoology, surveying, chemistry, business and ecology was put together for a major in Aquaculture and Fisheries as a direct response to a specific industry need.

Other majors offered are in Applied Geology, Software Engineering, Computational Modelling, Energy Management, Electronics, Design for Technology, Environmental Management, Food Innovation, Geographic Information Systems and Telecommunications.

One of the exciting new majors currently being developed is in Forensic Science. A Summer School course

attracted such strong interest in this field, the University has been encouraged to develop a degree course.

The Applied Science Students' Association (ASSA) plays an important role as an umbrella organisation organising social events and competitions to strengthen bonds between applied science students.

"When you have a loose coalition of majors spread across four divisions and umpteen departments, it is difficult sometimes for students to know where their home is," Anson says.

The programme maintains its links with business through an Applied Science Advisory Board, which includes an outstanding group of leaders and innovators in science, technology and business.

Board chairman Dr Peter Fennessy is a research scientist and biotechnology business leader who has specialised in the fascinating interface of converting clever technology into successful businesses. Science and business are essentially complementary, Fennessy says, and there are huge opportunities for applied science graduates in technology-based businesses.

Feedback from industry confirms that applied science graduates from Otago are highly sought after for their skills and are now being actively recruited directly from University. "Our vision is to get 1,000 students into this programme. That is our target," he says.

Rob Tipa

A logical choice...

STUDYING AT OTAGO was a logical choice for a 2008 BAppSc graduate, PhD candidate and sports all-rounder Estelle Baker.

Where else could she keep a horse a few kilometres from the campus, play ice hockey on the best rink in New Zealand and be three hours' drive from the ski fields of Central Otago?

Originally, Estelle came to Otago from Pleasant Point in South Canterbury to study health sciences, with a leaning towards physiotherapy. After her first year she received a letter saying she fitted the criteria for the new Applied Science programme.

"I thought that was a pretty cool degree, because I hadn't really heard about it before that," she says.

She enjoyed the biology, genetics and microbiology papers she did in her first year so decided to do a major in Molecular Biotechnology, basically a mix of papers in genetics, microbiology and biochemistry.

Estelle had always looked at doing some commerce papers as well to broaden her education. Because they were already a requirement of the Applied Science programme, they counted towards her degree, which was a good incentive to do it.

After her first year, she applied for the Transpower

Scholarship, worth \$7,000 a year, was one of four successful applicants that year and retained it for her second, third and fourth years.

"It's very good," she says. "It's kind of nice knowing you don't have a student loan and your fees are

covered. But it keeps the pressure on a bit to keep the grades up to maintain an A minus average. So that's another good incentive."

The work experience requirement of her degree opened doors for her as well. She found a job close to home in Timaru, working for South Pacific Sera Ltd, a company that makes sheep vaccines.

"It was good to see the commercial side of science rather than the research and I got paid for it," Estelle says. "It was a good summer job and I went back to the same people for the

next two years."

Estelle is committed to research for her doctorate for the next three years, then who knows? Travel beckons, possibly to Europe first.

In her spare time she snowboards, plays field and ice hockey for fun; she grew up riding horses, has competed in pony club events and show-jumping and has chased the hounds on horseback in cross-country hunts.



Estelle Baker:
"... a pretty cool degree".

Hard work counts

**ACCOUNTING EXCITING? IT IS FOR OTAGO ALUMNA
LISA WHITING WHO RECENTLY PLAYED A KEY ROLE
IN THE BIGGEST SHARE FLOAT IN US HISTORY.**

MANY SUCCESSFUL professionals can point to defining moments in their careers such as inspirational colleagues, lessons learned or business successes.

Otago accounting graduate Lisa Whiting will find it hard to top her role in this year's initial public offering (IPO) of Visa Inc. shares.

Whiting, a partner in the San Francisco office of KPMG, was number two in the team handling what turned out to be the biggest IPO in US history. The offering raised approximately \$US19 billion, nearly doubling the previous record of \$US10.6 billion raised by AT&T Wireless in 2000.

For Whiting, it was the culmination of years of work.

"Taking Visa, an entity previously owned by and operated for its members, the world's banks, to a public company and a for-profit model was just incredible. The choreography required to get the IPO completed on the timeline that Visa wanted meant nothing could slip. It was a staggering amount of work for a lot of people – investment bankers, attorneys, the company and all of its advisers.

"I'd been on the account since 2000 and had built up a significant amount of institutional knowledge. It was an amazing thing, being part of the entire cultural change the company had to go through and all the changes associated with it, including the myriad of accounting issues due to its previous structure. It took about two years from planning to execution."

The IPO tops Whiting's previous coup of helping to bring in the Kaiser Permanente health-care account (the largest not-for-profit health-care system in the US with more than \$US30 billion in revenues) from a rival firm that had held it for 60 years.

"I've had a couple of big ones," says Whiting. "I've been very lucky." Luck may have played a part, but Whiting has done the hard yards to get where she is as a partner in one of the US's top accounting offices.

She jokes that San Francisco is just like where she grew up. "It's a hilly harbour city where you get all four seasons in a day, and it's three hours to the lakes and mountains – just like Dunedin, only with different accents and a few more people."

Whiting was born and bred in Dunedin. She decided – "this sounds so geeky" – to go into accounting when she was in the fifth form at Otago Girls' High School.

"I actually liked working with numbers. I was the treasurer of our tennis club. My mother was treasurer of our squash club and I helped her with that. Accounting was offered at school and I found it really easy. I did it for three years at school and the first year at Otago was basically reinforcing what I previously learned.

"When I started the honours programme in the second year that really extended me. It was a really good programme that made you think outside of New Zealand and understand the international side of accounting and the immense impact that overseas events have on the country. It became a lot more interesting."

Whiting was far from a geek. She played squash for Southern Districts and tennis for Otago. She had a life. "I enjoyed the study, but I enjoyed the social side of University too. I had my share of Bs and Cs as well as As. After three years I wasn't ready to go out and work."

Honours study took care of the fourth year, which ended with an unwelcome surprise. Whiting had been sponsored by an accounting firm, but a downturn meant they were cutting back on recruitment. Whiting and other jobless graduates did the rounds. She found KPMG and never looked back.

After just over a year in Auckland she returned to work in Dunedin, where one of her auditing lecturers became her boss and inspired her to travel with the firm. "Ross Smith was very encouraging of international rotations because he

believed they helped in extending you both personally and professionally.”

After four months with KPMG in Guernsey in the Channel Islands and six months back in Dunedin, Whiting landed an 18-month placement in San Francisco.

“I really enjoyed it because San Francisco is such an awesome place. There’s a great international community here. Of the 10 international people whom I started with, nine of us stayed for quite a few years.

“I realised the amazing opportunities for both travel and business. After four years I was working on world-class accounts and seeing a lot of different things – things I couldn’t get back in New Zealand because it is much smaller.

“The KPMG culture is so similar around the world that it makes it a lot easier to adjust. And the Otago degree set me up so well that wherever I went I never had a problem competing with my peers.”

Whiting set her sights high, but it wasn’t all plain sailing.

“I wanted to make partner – that was my goal from starting with KPMG. It’s even tougher to make it in the US because I was an international. I had to requalify and had to overcome the fact that I was a foreigner. You can never be sure that your Green Card will be renewed, so you exist at the whim of the government.

“KPMG was very supportive. Business is global, so it helps the firm to have global people and global thinkers. It was especially useful for international accounts and working in different countries and different cultures.”

Whiting could potentially have gained her partnership earlier by moving to a different office, but she wanted to stay on the West Coast where her speciality banking knowledge was valued.

“You have to be dedicated. You have to put up with a lot and prove that you have the skills to do the variety of work required, from the largest to the smallest companies.”

People skills learned socialising at University came in useful after all.

“At times I’m sitting in boardrooms with some of the world’s top executives and I think to myself, ‘I’m from little old Dunedin, New Zealand, and I’m sitting here with these executives. This is pretty amazing.’”

Whiting supports the latest research that suggests

there’s no glass ceiling for women in accounting if they are prepared to put the time in.

“I did not see the glass ceiling syndrome at all anywhere I have worked at KPMG. The firm appreciates the diversity and has set up a number of programmes to accommodate female employees who want to sustain the work-life balance. They’re flexible with things such as childcare and working from home.”



Lisa Whiting: *“I love having New Zealanders and Australians on my accounts. They see that there’s a job to do, and they just roll up their sleeves and get it done.”*

Whiting is one of 10 female partners in her office – four of them with children. She has only recently become engaged – “to a wonderful guy who has nothing to do with accounting”, a tomato breeder, with a master’s in plant breeding and genetics. They met online, which is increasingly common in the hectic business world.

“There’s only one way busy professionals can get to meet. With all the work I’ve done over the past four years there was no way I could go out and socialise every weekend to try to find the love of my life.”

Finding the right people is one of Whiting’s roles as a recruiter at KPMG.

“We take on rotationals from Australia and New Zealand, and it’s always fantastic when we do because they walk in the door and they’re always ready to work and it’s so refreshing to see. I love having New

Zealanders and Australians on my accounts. They see that there’s a job to do, and they just roll up their sleeves and get it done.

“I think our upbringing in New Zealand makes a difference. Coming from Dunedin you learn that if you miss the bus then you just have to walk home in the cold. You do what you have to.

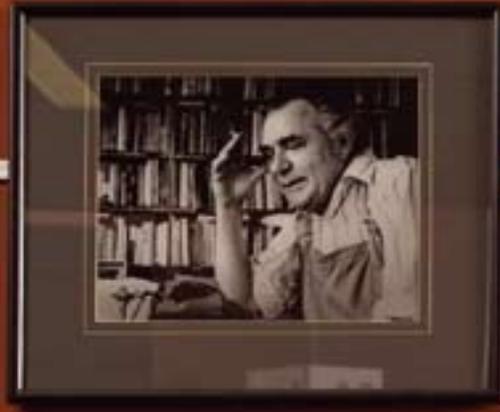
“The University of Otago definitely sets you up. If you wanted to get a good job you had to get a good grade and you had to put the time in. No matter how much you might like to party, you had to get the job done. But those who find a balance between working to get the right grades and still finding time for a social life end up being the most valuable employees.

“There are only a few schools that I recruit from over here [in the US] that have a similar nature. At Otago you can work hard and play hard, and the ability to have that mix sets people apart.”

Nigel Zega



Ted Middleton
Fellow, 1964-1965



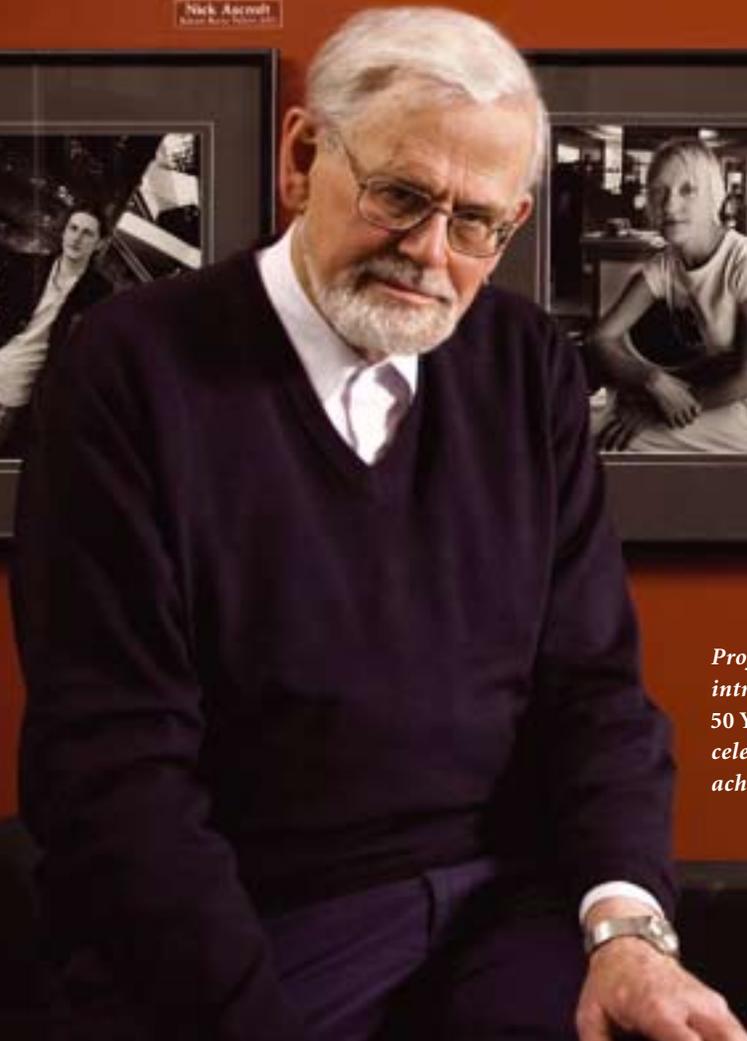
Noel Hilland
Fellow, 1964-1965



Nick Ancroft
Fellow, 1964-1965



Sarah Oatley
Fellow, 1964-1965



Professor Lawrence Jones has written the introduction to Nurse to the Imagination: 50 Years of the Robert Burns Fellowship, celebrating some of the fellowship's great achievements.



Ian Wedde
Awarded Burns Fellowship 1992



Graham Billing
Awarded Burns Fellowship 2001



Piri Simons
Awarded 2004



Kate Dignam
Awarded Burns Fellowship 2009



Catherine Chalpy
Awarded Burns Fellowship 2012



Honouring Burns

NEW ZEALAND'S FIRST LITERARY FELLOWSHIP TURNS 50.

IAN CROSS, JANET FRAME, Noel H Hilliard, Hone Tuwhare, Cilla McQueen, Owen Marshall, David Eggleton, Michael King, Laurence Fearnley ...

It could be a reading list for a paper in New Zealand literature.

... Ruth Dallas, Witi Ihimaera, Lynley Hood ...

If it were a university course, it would be one of those wide-ranging yet quirky ones. It would take in everything from drama to short fiction, poetry, non-fiction, television scripts and novels. It would include anecdotes like James K Baxter worrying he was becoming corrupted because his life was getting too easy.

... O E Middleton, Keri Hulme, Catherine Chidgey.

They could call the course something sweeping like: From God to Gale Force Winds: New Zealand landscape and colonial consciousness. Or corny like Cold Burns: a year as a writer in Dunedin. Maurice Duggan would like that.

This year, the Burns Fellowship turns 50. Its legacy is testament to its vision. Established in 1958 by “a group of citizens who wished to remain anonymous”, it was an open secret that Charles Brasch and various friends and relations bankrolled the concept on the back of his Hallensteins’ inheritance to provide a proper piece of infrastructure for writing upon these distant shores to flourish.

It was a gain for the University, and a revelation for the New Zealand literary community. For 20 years, the Burns Fellowship was the only paid residency available to writers in New Zealand. The sense of opportunity it engendered was immediate and obvious. Emeritus Professor Lawrence Jones, who joined the University of Otago Department of English in 1964, the year Maurice Gee held the fellowship, has seen for himself the very real atmosphere of possibility that comes with being awarded the fellowship.

“Maurice Shadbolt claimed his only regret was not applying for a second year. Maurice Duggan said long after that he remembered the year vividly. Many fellows are very conscious that their name is being added to a highly esteemed list.”

This year Jones has written the introduction to *Nurse to the Imagination: 50 Years of the Robert Burns Fellowship*, celebrating some of the fellowship’s achievements (see page 42).

The title comes from Charles Brasch’s *Landfall* editorial on the fellowship, in which he expounded that “Part of a university’s proper business is to act as nurse to the arts, or, more exactly, to the imagination as it expresses itself in the

arts and sciences. Imagination may flourish anywhere. But it should flourish as a matter of course in the university, for it is only through imaginative thinking that society grows, materially and intellectually.”

Critically, says Jones, the fellowship has been about providing writers space. In 1958, as now, chances to treat writing with professionalism and commitment were rare. Roger Hall described the year in a book chapter titled *From Glide-Time to Full-Time*.

“In the early days, there was a real preoccupation with ‘the Great New Zealand Novel’. Who was going to produce the defining work of New Zealand literature? The Burns Fellowship was the best opportunity writers had to pursue something so ambitious.”

The trouble is, Jones points out, the idea of the great New Zealand novel grew to the size of a heffalump in the literary consciousness.

“Maurice Duggan arrived with the intention of creating such a tome and produced a draft, but abandoned it. He wrote to a friend complaining that he had read over the draft ‘in disgust and despair’, and said that ‘God knows where the draught is coming from, but it blows through the holes and gaps in the poor thin story like a blast from the arse-end of a vacuum cleaner’, and that the hero, Miss Bratby, had limped along to the end, ‘barely breathing.’”

Instead, says Jones, the Burns legacy for Duggan was that it was when he discovered Nabokov’s *Lolita* and Beckett, gave up on writing novels, and produced his best work – “a wonderful novella and two very fine stories”.

Other abortive attempts included Maurice Shadbolt putting “everything about New Zealand between two covers”, which he then shelved to write a satire based on Ian Cross’s *The God Boy*.

“Eventually, the great novel became a kind of a joke,” says Jones. “And now, of course, we’re far too ironic to speak of such things.”

Instead, the Burns Fellowship became a symbol of liberation, the chance to pursue ideas and take risks. Equally, for the New Zealand literary community, it has provided an opportunity to back a variety of writers of divergent pedigree and style.

Poetry has always been a strength of the fellowship, beginning with the formal verse of R A K Mason, through to Sam Hunt as the keen-eyed bard and the expansive

The Burns Fellowship became a symbol of liberation, the chance to pursue ideas and take risks.

postmodernism of Nick Ascroft. James K Baxter spent some of his most prolific years here, publishing some 100 poems, a book of religious essays and numerous plays – all the while grizzling he was becoming soft. “My asbestos suit is wearing thin,” he would lament.

Theatre too has been well served, and well supported by Allen Hall and the Globe which featured works by Jo Randerson, Stuart Hoar, Paula Boock and Renee during their tenure.

Jones’ introduction describes the ways in which the fellowship has crossed genre, gender and generations. He discusses the rise of women writers, the Māori renaissance and the emergence of biography as a recognised literary form.

The range of writers is thanks in no small part to the breadth of scope the selection committee has to work with. In appointing the fellows, the instructions of the fellowship as decreed by the “anonymous” benefactors are still observed – more or less.

Applications are invited from “writers of imaginative literature, including poetry, drama, fiction, autobiography, biography, essays or literary criticism”. They need no formal qualifications, but must have established they are a serious writer, likely to go further. All being equal, preference is given to writers under 40 years of age. (Other, less significant goals of the fellowship have been left to wane. The writers are rarely called upon to give lectures within the department – though some do – and the role of commemorating Robert Burns’s family is served only by the fellowship’s name.)

In the process, the fellowship ensured Dunedin was established as a hub of literary activity, drawing writer upon writer to the city. Many – Janet Frame, Hone Tuwhare, Ian Wedde – stayed a while. Some never left.

Not insignificantly, the fellowship also meant the Department of English has enjoyed the company of a succession of

eminent writers for the past half century. The characters ranged from the gregarious – “Brian Turner was always up for a good debate,” remembers Jones – to the solitary.

Janet Frame was known as a fast, two-finger typist, whose work ethic was obvious to all by the tapping emanating from her office. “Her office was across from mine,” Jones recalls, “and I would notice that, for an afternoon each week, the tapping would stop. It turned out she was listening in on Professor Margaret Dalziel’s tutorials on *Paradise Lost* through her office wall, too shy to actually attend the classes.”

The dramatic increase in support for the arts in New Zealand means that the fellowship is no longer as hotly contested as it was 50 years ago – the days when Baxter and Frame both applied in the same year are a thing of the past (Otago resolved this by inviting Frame to stay for a second year as a guest of the University). While it continues to attract writers from around the country, increasingly the fellowship has provided a means for retaining and supporting Otago writers.

The combination of prioritising younger writers and innovative works, and providing a room – and income – of one’s own, continues to create the conditions for interesting art. Its unpredictability is part of its beauty, says Jones. The writing work that has derived from the fellowship has been magnificently successful, he says. Careers have certainly been advanced. Important things have been written, but they weren’t always what the Burns selection committee, or the fellows, expected.

Says Jones simply: “It has made things possible.”

Nicola Mutch

An exhibition entitled *Nourishing the Roots: an exhibition celebrating the 50th Anniversary of the Robert Burns Fellowship* at the University of Otago will run until 12 December at the Special Collections, University of Otago Central Library.

LORD’S HOME

The legacy of the Burns Fellowship has included works of fiction, poetry and theatre – and a small house in North Dunedin.

In 1987, one of New Zealand’s most prolific, astute and adventurous playwrights, Robert Lord, returned from New York to take up the Burns Fellowship. He purchased a 1909 brick cottage on Titan Street – the original home of Dunedin’s first sanitary engineer – where he enjoyed several happy and productive years as a writer.

When Lord died aged 46 in 1992, his will instructed that his home become writers’ accommodation upon his mother’s death. His mother, however, fast-tracked the

gift, establishing the Robert Lord Writer’s Cottage Trust Residency in 2002, in commemoration of 10 years since her son’s passing.

Since then, the cottage has become a rent-free, short-term home to writers. Some have held the Writer in Residence at the University of Otago’s College of Education. Others have used the time to carry out research, particularly using the resources of the Hocken Collections.

For information about the Robert Lord Cottage residencies, please see www.playmarket.org.nz/opportunities/robert_lord_residency

A conversation with Neville Bain

**INTERNATIONAL BUSINESSMAN AND OTAGO ALUMNUS
NEVILLE BAIN TALKS ABOUT REPUTATION, EXPERIENCE
AND PUTTING MONEY WHERE MEMORIES LIE.**

WHILE MANY OTAGO graduates think fondly of the University that gave them a head start in their careers, that may be as far as most go. But some put their money where their memories are – with endowments that seek to give something back to their *alma mater*.

“The most important thing as you get to the end of your working life is that you ask yourself what can you give back – what can you leave behind you. How can you support your family, your university, your community?” says Dunedin-born Dr Neville Bain. “You have to pick things you really want to do.”

Bain now lives in the UK, where, following an international business career, he maintains a number of directorships and runs a small consultancy firm.

His most recent gift was to provide permanent fellowships for MBA scholars to travel to study at Otago. He also funds the Neville C Bain Prize, presented for outstanding achievement in the MBA programme.

Both awards reflect aspects of Bain’s business philosophy, gleaned over a lifetime of executive roles, mainly in the food and drink industry.

“The University’s MBA programme is already world-acclaimed,” says Bain. “Fellowships like this should help to give our University a competitive advantage. It’s very important for people to broaden their experience and travelling fellowships like this should help to attract more top students. Anything we can do to enhance the quality of people coming into the MBA programme has to be good for them and the school.”

Bain is the current treasurer of Otago’s UK and Europe Alumni Chapter and the Otago University Trust (UK), which he co-founded for expatriate alumni to make tax-efficient endowments to the University. He was awarded the honorary degree of Doctor of Laws by the University

in 1994 and, this year, was awarded an Otago Medal for Outstanding Alumni Service.

It’s a far cry from working-class origins in Dunedin, where he grew up as one of four brothers, attended King’s High School, gained University Entrance at 16, but never enrolled full-time at Otago.

“I wanted to go to University, but I wasn’t convinced that I would be successful on a full-time course. However, I could study accounting part-time. Those were the great days when people paid you to study. If you did well you got a bursary. I didn’t fail anything. I had a bursary for all the time I was attending University, other than my first year. It wasn’t a lot of money, but it paid for your texts, which was good.”

Bain went straight from school to work at the Tax Department, studying part-time. As he gained accountancy qualifications he moved into practice, and eventually joined Cadbury Schweppes in Dunedin. After completing a BCom at 21 he wanted to broaden his horizons and began a master’s degree in economics.

“It was quite stressful, especially since I also got married at 21, and soon had two children. But the Commerce Faculty was very accommodating and helpful in scheduling lectures for people who had to work as well as study.

“I’ll always be grateful that you could do well part-time, but the combination of all that meant that I had to be quite focused in what was important. University is where I learned that you need focus and dedication to make sure you do what is needed to achieve an objective.

“There had to be some trade-offs. I was really keen on rugby. I played for King’s and for the Commerce Faculty, but you had to make compromises. Rugby went, and any social aspects of the University, and I probably didn’t spend quite as much time as I should have done with the family.”

Studying economics opened up a new world for Bain.

“As a chartered accountant it would have been so easy to have stayed in a narrow, but deep, financial accounting stream, but I felt there was a huge benefit in breadth of learning and breadth of experiences. That’s why I wanted to do economics, which struck me as being much broader, and it has helped me enormously. It helps your critical thinking and it means you are more than a specialist.”

Rising in Cadbury Schweppes launched Bain onto the international scene.

“I learned that New Zealanders could make a real contribution in different geographies. Going to South Africa to take on the role of group managing director in a listed company was a major step and a major development time for me. Of course, I was nervous initially about moving from a small country to a large one, but you find that the skills that you bring with you are extremely valuable.

“When I moved to London as strategy director for Cadbury Schweppes, within six months I was the first non-Brit appointed to the main board. I was astonished as I felt there were many people in the company who had a greater depth of knowledge, but what I hadn’t been aware of was the breadth of my knowledge and the competitiveness that New Zealanders excel at. The ‘must win, can win’ attitude comes across strongly to other people – and that was something they valued.”

During his 27 years at Cadbury Schweppes, Bain rose to hold the positions of deputy group chief executive and finance director, having previously been managing director of the world confectionery business. He was then head-hunted as CEO of fashion and textile group Coats Viyella, and moved on to become chairman of the Post Office Group and a series of non-executive positions.

Changing industries at the upper levels of management is not a problem, he says. “If you have the right intellect and have had a good grounding then you can move from one industry to another with relative ease. You have to understand the basics of the science, but not necessarily the detail of it, and you have to understand what levers to pull to make the business model work.

“You bring along some speciality knowledge like good governance, making sure the board is structured correctly and talking about the right things, and when it comes to strategy you can provide a wide view. Quality people can move across different industries and make a good contribution.”

Bain has also found time since the 1990s to do the occasional lecture at Otago. As the 2007 School of Business Distinguished Business Speaker, he discussed reputation – of individuals, organisations and countries.

“The most precious thing that any individual has got is their reputation and that has to be built up over a long period of time. It has to be nurtured and you have to make sure that it is protected. It can go quickly, but it takes a huge time to build it.

“I think Otago has an excellent reputation. Medicine, dentistry and business are just some of many areas of excellence. I think in recent years the focus on Otago’s academic achievement, rather than just being a great place, is absolutely right because you then get better recognition from potential employers and more real reward for the students.”



Neville Bain: “University is where I learned that you need focus and dedication to make sure you do what is needed to achieve an objective.”

Continuing professional education is a must for any manager, according to Bain. In support of that goal, he has written many papers and four books on successful management, getting the best out of people, good governance and being an effective director.

Born, bred and educated in Dunedin, Bain has worked around the world and now lives with his second wife Anni in Surrey. His own reputation among fellow professionals suggests his business style is tough, decisive, supportive and well prepared.

His advice for young Otago business undergraduates is simple. “Keep building your reputation, keep learning, and get as varied an experience as you possibly can.”

Nigel Zega

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Tel 64 3 479 8834 Email leadingthinkers@otago.ac.nz



Photo: Bill Nichol

Associate Professors Steve Dawson and Elisabeth Slooten: “These [protection] measures are a major step forward, but not enough yet.”

Protecting Hector’s dolphins

NEW PROTECTION measures will only slow the decline in Hector’s dolphins and more action will be needed to enable population recovery.

These are the findings of research undertaken by Associate Professor Elisabeth Slooten (Zoology) and Associate Professor Steve Dawson (Marine Science), analysing the impact of recently-announced measures to protect this rare and endangered dolphin species.

The measures include regional bans on set netting, trawling and drift netting in some coastal waters, as well as increased monitoring of commercial fishing vessels and the establishment of four new marine mammal sanctuaries.

“These measures are a major step forward, but not enough yet,” says Slooten, who has received the Royal Forest and Bird Protection Society’s “old blue” award for her contribution to marine conservation.

“Our research shows they will slow the Hector’s dolphins’ slide towards extinction, but more will be needed to be done to achieve population recovery.”

Hector’s dolphins are found only in New Zealand waters, but current population levels of just over 7,500 are only about a quarter of what they were. Without the new protections, the population was projected to decline to just over 5,000 by the year 2050. With the protections, this population decline is expected to slow to 7,000.

However, Slooten says full protection from by-catch in gill nets and trawl fishing would help the population almost double by 2050, recovering to more than 15,000.

She says fishing methods other than gillnetting could be just as economic and, in the long-term, more selective, sustainable methods would also benefit fish stocks and therefore the fishing industry.



Photo: Alan Dove

Dr Haxby Abbott: “Even if only one in 30 patients treated with physiotherapy was able to delay or prevent joint replacement it would be worthwhile ...”

Replacing joint replacement

AN AGEING population means osteoarthritis is becoming increasingly common, so School of Physiotherapy researchers want to see if physiotherapy can not only decrease pain and disability, but also reduce the need for hip or knee-joint replacement surgery.

Dr Haxby Abbott, a senior research fellow in clinical research, and his team have been awarded two Health Research Council grants worth around \$800,000 to see how effective physiotherapy can be in decreasing pain and increasing mobility for people with osteoarthritis.

“We want to see what proportion of patients benefits and to what degree,” he says.

They will compare several different approaches: manual therapy (in which the joints are manipulated and stretched), exercise therapy (using an exercise programme) and a mixture of the two approaches.

Abbott says a similar US study found that, after one year, one in seven patients had either delayed or put off their surgery. A course of physiotherapy costs about \$540 compared with \$16,000 for joint replacement.

“Calculating from the numbers in that US study, taking this approach here could save over \$16 million per year.

“Even if only one in 30 patients treated with physiotherapy was able to delay or prevent joint replacement it would be worthwhile for the health system. At the same time, a much larger proportion would enjoy less pain and disability.” There is also the potential to produce savings in the cost of specialists, medications, adverse events and hospital time.

The Dunedin study will also analyse the potential economic benefits in the New Zealand situation.

Photo: Ken George



Dr Richard Jaine and Associate Professor Michael Baker: "... we found that Māori and Pacific peoples had admission rates 10 and 20 times higher than European and 'other' rates."

Rheumatic fever rising

ACUTE rheumatic fever (ARF) hospitalisations, particularly of Māori and Pacific peoples, have failed to decrease in New Zealand over the last decade and are among the highest seen in a developed country, according to public health researchers at the Wellington campus.

Dr Richard Jaine and Associate Professor Michael Baker found significant and worsening ethnic disparities in this serious disease, particularly prevalent in the five to 14-year age group.

"When we looked at 1,249 new hospital admissions between 1996 and 2005, we found that Māori and Pacific peoples had admission rates 10 and 20 times higher than European and 'other' rates," says Jaine.

The concern is that ARF, which follows streptococcal throat infections, may lead to serious complications later in life with chronic rheumatic heart disease. This causes an average of 150 deaths a year, making it probably New Zealand's most important infectious disease in terms of years of life lost through premature mortality.

"Of particular concern is the widening disparity in rates in Māori and Pacific peoples. During this 10-year period, rates in the European population fell significantly, whereas rates in Māori and Pacific children actually rose," says Baker.

The researchers say these high rates of a serious disease suggest that primary prevention is inadequate. They argue that it is a public health priority to improve service delivery to these populations, through earlier diagnosis and treatment of strep throats in children, and adequate follow-up to prevent recurrence of ARF.

"One small Northland community has entirely eradicated ARF with this approach," says Jaine.

Photo: Alan Dove



Dr Chris Brickell: *Changes in men's relationships were linked to social and economic change.*

Mates and lovers

RESEARCHING homosexuality in New Zealand has taken Dr Chris Brickell (Gender Studies) on a three-year journey, all the more fascinating because this "love that dared not speak its name" was largely hidden. Court records, photographs and personal memories became the main sources for his book *Mates & Lovers: A History of Gay New Zealand*.

Beginning in the 1830s, Brickell found no overt concept of sexual identity. "There was a sense of physical intimacy between all men. Romantic friendship was socially acceptable and men openly expressed affection for each other. Some relationships were platonic, some were carnal, some were in-between."

Attitudes changed in the 20th century. Same-sex love became regarded as a disease – as well as a sin and a crime. "Queer" friendship networks grew and, by the 1950s, homosexuality and heterosexuality were clearly delineated. The Gay Liberation Movement took hold in the 1970s and, in 1986, homosexuality was decriminalised.

"These men lived in different worlds and I wanted to find how they saw themselves." He found both continuity and change.

Brickell says changes in men's relationships were linked to social and economic change. "As the distinction between male- and female-only spaces broke down, as men became more involved in family life, as fewer men were employed in physical labour, they had to identify themselves in new contexts. They had to redefine what was masculine and what was not." Some of the subtleties of male relationships were lost.

And, whether sexual identity becomes more fragmented or entrenched, Brickell predicts it will, again, be propelled by broader social change.



Photo: Bill Nichol

Drs Russell Frew and Doug Mackie: Are the unique isotopic signatures of fertilisers used in New Zealand reflected in our meat?

Countering counterfeit meat

ISOTOPIC fingerprinting may provide a unique way of combating fraud in international meat markets, where the New Zealand brand carries a premium.

Drs Doug Mackie and Russell Frew (Department of Chemistry) are exploring whether the unique isotopic signatures of fertilisers used in New Zealand are reflected in our meat.

Frew says current traceability systems are open to counterfeiting. “So we are looking at ways of utilising the inherent chemical properties of the product itself by looking at the natural trace elements and geochemistry that it derives from its environment.”

There is a chance that other areas of the world may have a similar geochemistry, so Frew and Mackie want to utilise New Zealand’s unique farming practices to see if they provide a unique signal.

“New Zealand soils are deficient in some areas and there has been huge investment in redressing that trace-element imbalance,” he says. “We want to see if farming practices have disturbed the natural geochemistry enough to provide that signal.”

They are particularly focusing on isotopes as a way of distinguishing between substances that are chemically identical. For example, selenium will be different depending on whether it is derived from the soil, fertilisers or animal remedies.

Frew says they hope to detect, in the meat, the unique isotope ratio of the selenium that has been added through fertilisers or animal remedies.

“Once you have established that signature, it should be relatively simple to check whether a piece of meat is genuinely from New Zealand, or not.”



Photo: Ross Coombes

Professor Ann Richardson: “The more dangerous thick melanomas didn’t show any decrease from 1994–2004.”

Melanoma problem ongoing

NEW ZEALAND has a high rate of melanoma by international standards, the most dangerous being thick melanomas (more than 3mm) which are often nodular in shape.

Public health researcher Professor Ann Richardson and colleagues Lynn Fletcher, Dr Mary Jane Sneyd, Associate Professor Brian Cox and Dr Tony Reeder have completed a study investigating whether there has been any decrease in the incidence of thick melanomas in New Zealand since 1994.

“Regrettably the answer is no,” says Richardson. “The more dangerous thick melanomas didn’t show any decrease from 1994–2004.

“There was a possibility that early detection strategies and greater public awareness may have had an impact by detecting melanomas before they became thick, but so far that’s not the case.”

Richardson suggests two possible reasons for the lack of progress in fighting this difficult disease which resulted in 249 deaths in 2004. She says it may be too early to see an impact on thick melanomas from the detection strategies, or the strategies may not identify some melanomas early enough.

“I think we have to continue to monitor the situation, but I would also support a re-examination of our early detection strategies to see if they could improve recognition of thick melanomas.”

It is not always easy to identify a thick melanoma, especially nodular melanomas, as they are often not dark or irregular in shape. Similar issues are being experienced internationally with a number of countries also finding that thick melanomas have not declined as hoped even though early detection strategies are being used.

Photo: Alan Dove



Dr David Lont: “Better governance and reporting in New Zealand might also lead to audit-fee offsets here.”

Better governance, lower fees

FOLLOWING high-profile corporate collapses, the rules regarding company governance have changed internationally. The Sarbanes-Oxley (SOX) legislation affected major changes in the US, and in New Zealand companies have to meet tighter regulations imposed by the NZX and NZ IFRS (International Financial Reporting Standards).

How these changes interact with auditing fees raises significant issues for the accounting profession, says Dr David Lont (Accountancy and Business Law).

In post-SOX research undertaken with Yuan Sun and Professor Paul Griffin (University of California, Davis), he argues that, while SOX imposed substantial cost on companies, increased spending on governance can also result in savings.

He says theirs is the first research to reconcile a positive and negative effect – a fee-increasing relation because auditing services help attain better governance, partially offset by a fee-decreasing relation because auditors reduce the price of risk to reflect the benefits of better governance.

After controlling for the increased costs imposed by SOX, Lont finds better governance reduces the cost of auditing, because even though better governance is costly, it enhances the quality of financial statements and internal controls, enabling auditors to decrease audit and control risk, and therefore results in reduced fees.

“This moderates the price of audit risk for the average US company by about six per cent, which we calculate implies a dollar offset to the average company’s audit fees of approximately \$180,000, and more than \$500,000 for the larger companies in our sample. This suggests better governance and reporting in New Zealand might also lead to audit-fee offsets here.”

Photo: Bill Nichol



Dr Lisa Houghton: “Now is a great opportunity to gather baseline data on the folate status of a group of reproductive-age women ...”

Evaluating folate fortification

BY OCTOBER 2009, all New Zealand bread (except organic breads) will be fortified with folic acid in an effort to reduce the number of pregnancies affected by neural tube defects (which can cause conditions such as spina bifida).

The neural tube develops early in pregnancy, often before the pregnancy is detected. The Ministry of Health recommends supplemental folic acid for women planning a pregnancy, but at least 40 per cent of pregnancies are unplanned. Many countries fortify the food supply as a preventive measure.

Dr Lisa Houghton (Human Nutrition) is researching the health of pregnant women, infants and young children, with a focus on folate, vitamin D and dietary intake patterns.

“Now is a great opportunity to gather baseline data on the folate status of a group of reproductive-age women before the initiation of the bread fortification programme. We can then compare the folate status to similar women in North America, where the food supply has been fortified for almost 10 years. This also gives us an opportunity to evaluate the New Zealand programme once it’s established.”

Houghton’s research focuses on the response of blood to supplemental folic acid as concerns have arisen about possible cancer risks with high intakes. The fortification of bread in New Zealand will provide a low dose of folic acid.

“We need to monitor the mandated folic acid fortification programme carefully, looking at dietary intakes and potential adverse effects. Research indicates that the nature of the folates in blood may change due to high levels in a person’s system.”



Photo: Alan Dove

Nicky Real, Dr Joel Tyndall, Professor Andy Mercer and Dr Lyn Wise: *In vitro* studies have been completed.

Anti-fungal and anti-cancer?

SUBA™ itraconazole – a super generic anti-fungal drug – is now being examined as a potential anti-cancer drug.

Dr Joel Tyndall, a senior lecturer in medicinal chemistry at the School of Pharmacy, says a US study recently screened a range of drugs for anti-cancer properties and itraconazole, the active pharmaceutical in Subazole™, was one of those to stand out.

“Itraconazole has the ability to inhibit angiogenesis, which is the development of the blood vessels that feed the tumour.”

Tyndall says the project came from an unexpected discussion he had with Dr Roger Aston, the head of Halcygen Pharmaceuticals who produce SUBA™ itraconazole.

“He was interested in testing the American research and knew I was already involved in other cancer projects dealing with brain tumours, cervical and breast cancers.”

Tyndall is working with Professor Andy Mercer, Dr Lyn Wise and Nicky Real from the Virus Research Unit (Department of Microbiology and Immunology) to understand how the drug appears to inhibit the development of the endothelial cells that line new blood vessels.

They have already carried out in-vitro studies and are looking at animal models as the next stage. Itraconazole can be formed into several isomers, or structures, to create different forms of the same molecule and they want to test several of those isomers.

Tyndall says finding new ways to use existing drugs can speed the research process. “If the drug is already on the market you don’t have to go through as many hoops to get approval for its use.”

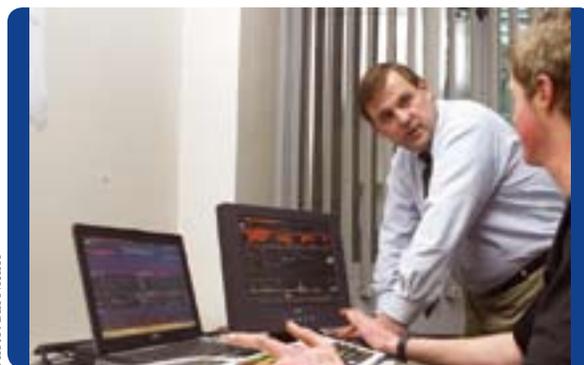


Photo: Bill Nichol

Professor Robin Grieves: The new Bloomberg terminal “is an extremely valuable research resource for the faculty and it is a powerful teaching tool”.

Business gets market hotline

THE DEPARTMENT of Finance and Quantitative Analysis (School of Business) is now wired into the financial heart of world markets with its own Bloomberg terminal.

Professor Robin Grieves says the terminals are usually the domain of capital markets, portfolio managers and brokers, delivering real-time pricing, news and analysis from markets around the globe. Otago is the first university in New Zealand to make such an investment.

“When I worked on Wall Street, everything I knew about the world I knew from Bloomberg,” he says.

“It is an extremely valuable research resource for the faculty and it is a powerful teaching tool, especially for advanced students. It allows them to get their hands dirty with data.”

Grieves says every major US business school has up to five terminals.

At first glance it looks like any other internet computer, but it has several exclusive features, for example, a specialised keyboard with keys dedicated to particular markets, such as equities, currency and fixed interest.

Grieves says it allows them to explore markets and companies in far greater depth than they were able to in the past.

“We can find out who owns a company, who the managers are, its trading history and its financials. It is a unique source of information.

“In addition to top quality education, we are teaching vocational skills. Those students who can say they have even rudimentary skills on a Bloomberg go to the front of the employment queue,” he says.

“It is the dominant tool in the world and we are exposing our leading students to it.”

Photo: Alan Dove



Dr Karen Nairn: “Not everyone in our study was planning to go to university, but they more or less always considered it when weighing up their options.”

Higher education expectations

WHEN ROGER DOUGLAS set about unshackling the New Zealand economy in the 1980s, it seems he also helped unshackle young people’s expectations.

A Marsden Fund-supported study led by Dr Karen Nairn, from the College of Education, suggests university has almost taken on a compulsory status amongst the children of Rogernomics.

“Before the education reforms of the 1990s it was mainly children from elite or middle class backgrounds who went to university,” she says.

But while there was a time when completing five years at secondary school was considered an achievement, Nairn says going on to tertiary studies is now expected.

The study involved in-depth interviews with more than 90 participants from different parts of the country.

“Not everyone in our study was planning to go to university, but they more or less always considered it when weighing up their options.”

To date, the study has generated six papers on a variety of areas dealing with how economic reforms have shaped young people’s thinking. A book is also on the way.

For example, the research has examined the way some Auckland schools mentor high-achieving Māori and Pacific Island girls to go on to university.

“This mentoring is a sign of the times in terms of fostering abilities – but it is also raising the bar in terms of expectations,” says Nairn.

She says the tertiary reforms of the 1990s revolved around encouraging people to get a loan, go to university, get a job and pay it back.

“It was designed to encourage greater participation in the knowledge economy – and it’s worked for many, but not all.”

Photo: Bill Nichol



Dr Jim Headley and Andreas Reitzig: more than half of respondents indicated that there is not enough debate on foreign policy issues in New Zealand.

Foreign policy interest

THE NEW ZEALAND public wants more debate on foreign policy issues, according to a national survey by Department of Politics researchers.

Initial findings from the survey of more than 850 New Zealanders were released at this year’s Otago Foreign Policy School, which was titled *Power to the People? Public Participation in Foreign Policy*.

The survey looked at four main areas: foreign affairs, defence, international trade and the level of public involvement in New Zealand foreign policy formation.

As well as respondents randomly selected from around the country, 84 “positional elites” took part, including politicians and representatives from business, trade unions, NGOs and the media.

Dr Jim Headley said that, contrary to the widespread perception, many New Zealanders discuss foreign policy issues with their colleagues, friends or family on a more or less regular basis.

However, despite this active interest in foreign policy, more than half of respondents indicated that there is not enough debate on foreign policy issues in New Zealand. Many also felt that there is not enough government effort to involve the public in foreign policy decision-making.

“This is surprising given that New Zealand has, in the past, often taken the public views into account in its foreign policy making.

“Clearly, New Zealanders feel that is often not the case today.”

Young scientist wins with hagfish research



Dr Rebecca McLeod who is the 2008 MacDiarmid Young Scientist of the Year.

OTAGO MARINE ECOLOGIST Dr Rebecca McLeod recently gained New Zealand's most coveted award for early-career scientists, thanks to her study of the slimy denizens of the deep known as hagfish.

In August, the 30-year-old postgraduate researcher was named 2008 MacDiarmid Young Scientist of the Year. Her award-winning research involved investigating hagfish diet and energy transfer between the forest and marine ecosystems in Fiordland.

She won the Understanding Planet Earth category of the MacDiarmid awards, with her entry also judged top overall of the 146 put forward from around the country.

Nelson-born McLeod says her interest in marine environmental issues was sparked by the progressive diminishing of fish stocks she witnessed during her childhood holidays in the Marlborough Sounds.

"When I was really young we could guarantee a catch of blue cod for dinner, but, by the time I left home, it was common to return empty-handed from a fishing expedition."

In her research, McLeod used state-of-the-art biogeochemical techniques to study the diet of the primitive, scavenging eel-like hagfish, which live up to 420 metres below sea level in New Zealand fiords.

She is part of a wider research programme at Otago, led by Dr Stephen Wing of Marine Science, which has been studying the biodiversity and management of the Fiordland region.

Fiordland is one of the few places left on Earth where there is intact rainforest bordering a pristine marine ecosystem, she says.

"That environment gives us an insight into how our coastal ecosystem functioned before humans started cutting down trees. The forest goes right down to the edge of the water, and landslides and rivers transport logs and leaves into the sea where they rot on the seafloor like a huge compost bin."

McLeod discovered that hagfish are obtaining up to half their nutritional energy from this "compost", showing that the coastal marine ecosystem is heavily reliant on the forest.

Her research concluded that the forest matter produces hydrogen sulphide which is taken up by bacteria and, through a series of chemical reactions, is turned into carbohydrate energy.

These bacteria live inside some species of clams and worms, giving their hosts all the food they need. It is thought that hagfish then feed on these creatures, gaining energy that originated in the forest.

McLeod used a mixture of stable isotope analyses and measuring biomarkers in fat extracted from hagfish tissue to confirm the source of its food. This month she is travelling to Antarctica to use similar techniques to study the role bacteria play in recycling algal energy under the ice.

Otago Zoology PhD student Ursula Ellenberg won this year's Adding Value to Nature category in the MacDiarmid awards for her studies into the threat unregulated tourism is posing to the survival of a yellow-eyed penguin colony on Otago Peninsula.

Her findings show that the birds do not breed as well as those in more remote sites because of stress caused by frequent disturbance from the thousands of people visiting each year.

Otago leads national genomics initiative

THE UNIVERSITY of Otago is the lead institution in a new genomics research infrastructure involving several of New Zealand's universities and Crown Research Institutes.

The venture aims to accelerate the progress of genetic research and technology in New Zealand, and is being

funded through the Ministry of Research, Science and Technology (MoRST).

Modern genomic technologies, which allow scientists to examine the structure and function of thousands of genes at a time, are considered vital to advancing research in health, agriculture, horticulture, biosecurity and biodiversity.

The research infrastructure will receive \$40 million in Government funding over the next nine years, alongside parallel



Professor Anthony Reeve:
The infrastructure will help New Zealand stay at the forefront of genomic research.

investment from collaborating institutions. These include Otago, Massey University, the University of Auckland and AgResearch. It also has support from another four universities and six CRIs.

Director of Otago's Cancer Genetics Laboratory Professor Anthony Reeve says such a collaborative national infrastructure will help New Zealand stay at the forefront of genomic research.

Reeve says the infrastructure will allow research projects to be carried out on a larger scale and help avoid wasteful duplication of effort and resources.

Each of the key institutions brings different areas of expertise to the infrastructure.

As the lead institution, the University of Otago has expertise in all areas, including genome sequencing, bioinformatics and gene arrays, technology used to examine genetic variations.

These strengths are complemented by the strong expertise Massey University has in sequencing, genomics and bioinformatics, and the University of Auckland and AgResearch's expertise in genomics and bioinformatics.

International student support award

OTAGO RECENTLY won a national award for its "culture of care" towards international students.

The Excellence in Student Support award was presented by Education New Zealand at its annual international education conference.

The judging panel was particularly impressed by the pre-arrival information sent to new international students and Otago's student mentoring programme, as well as the umbrella approach to international student pastoral care promoted by the University's International Office.

Pro-Vice-Chancellor (International) Professor Sarah Todd says the award reflects the University's high level of student services and unified approach to pastoral care.

2009 Arts Fellows

OTAGO'S ARTS FELLOWS for 2009 are Michael Harlow, Eddie Clemens, Christopher Watson and Sean Curham.

Michael Harlow is a Central Otago poet, editor and psychotherapist. He will use his tenure as Robert Burns Fellow to write a new book of poems and short prose. A former associate and poetry editor of *Landfall* (1976–1984), Harlow studied toward a master's degree in education and taught New Zealand literature at the University in 1993.

Christchurch artist Eddie Clemens is the new Frances Hodgkins Fellow. He completed a Bachelor of Fine Arts degree (Painting) at the Canterbury School of Arts before being awarded a master's (hons) degree in sculpture at the Elam School of Fine Arts. During his tenure he plans to create a series of works based on ordinary aspects of New Zealand suburban and rural life.

Christopher Watson will be Mozart Fellow for another year. With several compositions, including a collaboration with the Burns and Caroline Plummer Fellows, now completed, he is currently working on some new orchestral music and a work for solo cello. Commissions for works for two pianos and for a gamelan ensemble are also on the horizon.

The Caroline Plummer Fellow is Auckland community dancer Sean Curham. Curham intends to complete a dance project, entitled *Four Legs Better Than Two*, during his tenure. The dance will be based on the concept that the physical experience of walking with a dog is an exciting way to participate in the community.

Researchers gain major funding

UNIVERSITY RESEARCHERS University researchers have won significant funding in national funding rounds this year.

In June, Otago researchers gained more than \$21.5 million in the annual Health Research Council (HRC) round. This will support research 18 projects, including two major new programmes.

One of the programmes involves studying genetic factors and clinical outcomes in five common health conditions (abdominal aortic aneurysm, rheumatoid arthritis, schizophrenia, gout and inflammatory bowel disease), while the other focuses on new ways to predict the onset and progression of heart disease in order to improve diagnosis, monitoring and treatment.

In July Otago gained \$18.6 million from the Foundation for Research, Science and Technology (FRST) to support five major research projects that will develop innovative links between university research and the national economy.

And in September University researchers were awarded more than \$13.8 million by the Marsden Fund. This will support more than 20 projects across the Divisions of Health Sciences, Sciences and Humanities, and represents more than one quarter of the total pool, the most of any institution.

Otago joins iTunes U

IN JUNE, Otago became the first university in New Zealand to offer free audio and video educational content through Apple's iTunes U.

iTunes U is a dedicated area of the iTunes Store featuring free lectures, lab demonstrations, campus tours and more. Users can search, download and play content with the same ease-of-use with which they download music, exploring world-class materials from top universities around the globe.

At the time of the launch of Otago iTunes, only 63 universities in the world featured publicly on the site.

The University currently has more than 133 audio and video files available through the site and there has been strong interest in Otago's offerings. More video files are being added each week.

Among the most popular clips to be downloaded are the *Wild Flicks* series of highly-acclaimed wildlife documentaries produced by the science communication masters' students in natural history filmmaking.

The University's inaugural professorial lectures are currently also proving very popular, as are the "Our People" series of interviews with Otago researchers. Music clips

from the University's classical and contemporary rock programmes are also available.

www.otago.ac.nz/itunesu



University Information Technology Services staff member Emerson Pratt checks out Otago on iTunes U.

University signs MoU with Ngāti Toa

THE UNIVERSITY of Otago and Ngāti Toa recently formalised their relationship, with the signing of a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU).

The University and Ngāti Toa already had a long-standing relationship through the Wellington campus, and the Eru Pōmare Centre in particular, which has a strong research focus on Māori health.

Otago now has MoUs with several iwi and key Māori providers throughout New Zealand.

Appointments

Professor **Harlene Hayne** as the University's next Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Research and Enterprise).

Dr **Paul Tapsell** as Professor of Māori Studies and Dean of Te Tumu, the School of Māori, Pacific and Indigenous Studies.

Professor **Gordon Harold** to the recently-established Alexander McMillan Chair in Childhood Studies.

Professor **Janet Hoek** to a Chair in Marketing.

Professor **Roger Willett** to a Chair in Accountancy.

Associate Professor **David Gerrard** as Director of Development and Alumni Relations.

Professor **Kevin Clements** to the University's new Chair in Peace and Conflict Studies.

Obituaries

Emeritus Professor **Patricia Coleman** CBE (Lady Sayers) (84). Dean of the Faculty of Home Science from 1962–1986, she had a life-long passion for ensuring continuing educational and career opportunities for women home-science graduates.

Associate Professor **Anne Bray** (63). A leading intellectual-disabilities researcher, she was a long-time

Director of the Donald Beasley Institute and an Associate Dean of Health Sciences (2005–2008).

Emeritus Professor **Peter Bannister** (68). A noted plant physiologist and inspirational teacher and supervisor, he served as Head of the Department of Botany from 1979–2002 and retired in 2006.

Achievements

World-leading cardiac researcher Professor **Mark Richards** (Medicine, University of Otago, Christchurch) is the 2008 recipient of the University's Distinguished Research Medal, as well as the Royal Society of New Zealand's Sir Charles Hercus Medal for Biomedical Sciences and Technologies.

The University's 2008 Early Career Awards for Distinction in Research went to Dr **Mik Black** (Biochemistry), Dr **Fiona Edgar** (Management), Dr **Alex McLellan** (Microbiology and Immunology), Dr **Pat Wheatley** (Classics) and Dr **Lisa Whitehead** (Centre for Postgraduate Nursing Studies).

Otago's Teaching Excellence Awards were presented to Associate Professor **Mike Colombo** (Psychology), Dr **Ian McAndrew** (Management) and Dr **John Reynolds** (Anatomy and Structural Biology). Drs McAndrew and Reynolds were also recognised in this year's national awards for Tertiary Teaching Excellence.

Professor **Jean-Claude Theis** (Medical and Surgical Sciences) has been elected Chair of the New Zealand National Board of the Royal Australasian College of Surgeons.

Professor **Charles Higham** (Anthropology, Gender and Sociology) has been elected as an honorary fellow of St Catharine's College, Cambridge.

Fellowships/Scholarships

Dr **Ashton Bradley** (Physics), Dr **Christina McGraw** (Chemistry) and Dr **Tina Summerfield** (Biochemistry) were awarded three-year Foundation for Research, Science and Technology Postdoctoral Fellowships.

The University's 2008 Elman Poole Travelling Scholarships were awarded to PhD students **Rachel Paterson** (Zoology), **Daniel Thomas** (Geology) and **Oliver Wilson** (Music).

PhD students **Anne-Marie Jackson**, **Stephanie Rotarangi** and MSc student **Darnell Kennedy** gained three-year Foundation for Research, Science and Technology Te Tūpuna Pūtaiao Fellowships.

Tertiary Education Commission Top Achievers Doctoral Scholarships went to **Gemma Dickson** (Biochemistry/

Dentistry), **Ana Claasen** (Anatomy and Structural Biology/Biochemistry) and **Caroline Kuiper** (Pathology, University of Otago, Christchurch).

David Dempsey won the 2008 New Zealand Post Antarctic Scholarship while **Kathryn Lister** gained the Kelly Tarlton Scholarship to pursue their masters' studies in Antarctica.

Psychology PhD student **Damian Scarf** gained a Fulbright-Ministry of Research, Science and Technology Graduate Award to further his studies at Columbia University. **Adam Forbes** (BAppSc (Hons) 2006) gained the same award and will complete a Master of Science degree in technology at Stanford University, while **Jono Paulin** (BPhEd 2007) gained a Fulbright General Graduate Award to complete a Master of Science degree at Northeastern University in the US.

Emeritus Professors

Gerry Carrington (Physics), **Charlotte Paul** (Preventive and Social Medicine) and **Gary Nicholls** (Medicine, University of Otago, Christchurch) have been granted the status of Emeritus Professor.

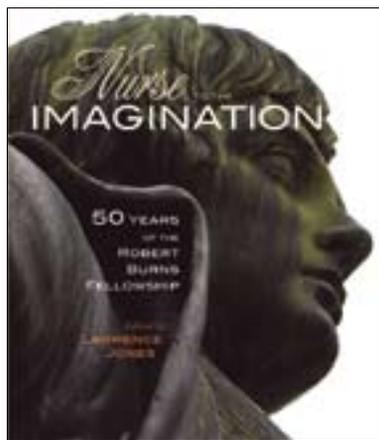
Honorary Doctorate

Distinguished Māori academic and mental health leader Professor **Mason Durie** (MB ChB 1963) was awarded the honorary degree of Doctor of Laws at the August graduation ceremony.

Queen's Birthday Honours

Current and former staff to receive honours: **Gillian Whitehead** (former Mozart Fellow) was made a Distinguished Companion of the New Zealand Order of Merit for services to music; Professor **Richard Beasley** (Wellington) was made a Companion of the New Zealand Order of Merit for services to medical research; Professor **Alison Mercer** (Zoology) was made an Officer of the New Zealand Order of Merit for services to science; Professor **Ann Richardson** (Christchurch) was awarded the Queen's Service Order for services to public health.

Alumni honoured include: DCNZM – Hon Justice **John Hansen**; CNZM – Dr **Carol Shand**; ONZM – Dr **John Edwards**, **Lynette Gillanders**, Dr **Diana Martin**, Dr **Olive Webb**; MNZM – Dr **Diane Baguley**, **Tony Gilbert**, **Anne Gover**, **Jeremy Moon**, Dr **Sally Pairman**; QSO – **Joy Quigley**; QSM – **Shirley Alabaster**, Dr **Patricia Hill**, **Barry Lawrence**, Dr **Alan Mangan**.



Nurse to the Imagination: 50 Years of the Robert Burns Fellowship

Edited by Lawrence Jones, October 2008

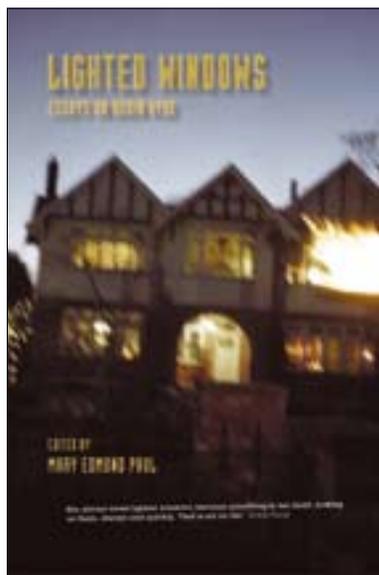
THE BURNS FELLOWSHIP is New Zealand's oldest and most famous literary fellowship. The "Nurse" of the title is its host, the University of Otago.

This book is a sampler of the first 50 years of the fellowship, with short biographies and work, playful and serious, by all of the writers who have held it. It forms part of the writers' festival of the same name, held in Dunedin earlier this month to celebrate the fellowship with the current and many former fellows in attendance.

Beginning with novelist Ian Cross in 1959 and ending with the 2008 Burns Fellow, poet Sue Wootton, *Nurse to the Imagination* provides an introduction to such leading New Zealand literary figures as Janet Frame, James K Baxter, Witi Ihimaera and Michael King, as well as newer voices.

There are lots of interesting trends here, of which the shift from male-dominated literature up to 1980 to the rich representation of women writers since is just one.

Lawrence Jones is a leading historian of New Zealand fiction, and Emeritus Professor in the University of Otago's Department of English. His publications include *Barbed Wire and Mirrors: Essays on New Zealand Prose* (1990), *Picking up the Traces: The Making of a New Zealand Literary Culture 1932–1945* (2003) and the recent edition of O E Middleton's short stories, *Beyond the Breakwater*.



Lighted Windows: Essays on Robin Hyde

Edited by Mary Edmond Paul, September 2008

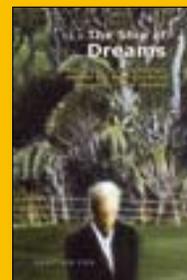
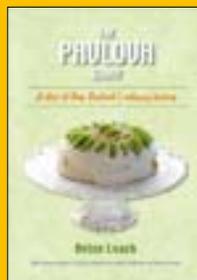
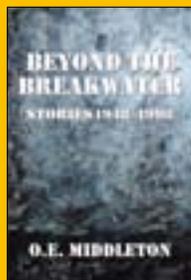
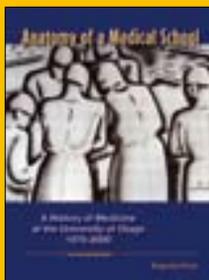
AS A JOURNALIST, poet, novelist and war correspondent (from China, in 1938), Robin Hyde wrote about the movements and debates of a volatile period.

She dared to broach such subjects as the plight of soldiers returned from World War One and the dangers of new-found freedoms for women. This first critical study of her diverse writings includes new information on her life and work, and enlarges our understanding of the vitality, richness and wit of her writing. The essays this book contains are lively and accessible to any reader with a general interest in Hyde's work.

Contributors to the book include Susan Ash, Nadine Attewell, Diana Bridge, Alex Calder, Renata Casertano, Megan Clayton, Michelle Elleray, Jolisa Gracewood, Nikki Hessel, Alison Hunt, Alison Jeffreys, Brigid Magner.

Mary Edmond Paul is programme co-ordinator, English, at Massey University's School of Social and Cultural Studies in Auckland. Her previous book, *Her Side of the Story* (1999), explored the reading of three women writers, one of whom was Robin Hyde.

With Michele Leggott, she has held a Marsden Research Fund grant to work on Hyde, which has produced a biography, *The Book of Iris* by Derek Challis and Gloria Rawlinson (2002), a new edition of the poems, *Young Knowledge* edited by Michele Leggott (2003) and a forthcoming collection of Hyde's autobiographical writings. She has also edited three anthologies of work by contemporary New Zealand writers.



Recent Otago University Press titles

Anatomy of a Medical School: A History of Medicine at the University of Otago, 1875–2000, by Dorothy Page.

Tarara: Croats and Māori in New Zealand, by Senka Bozic-Vrbancic.

Beyond the Breakwater: Stories 1948–1998, by O E Middleton.

Facing the Music: Charles Baeyertz and the Triad, by Joanna Woods.

The Pavlova Story: A Slice of New Zealand's Culinary History, by Helen Leach.

Pasifika Styles: Artists Inside the Museum, by R Raymond and A Salmond.

Understanding Health Inequalities in Aotearoa New Zealand, edited by Kevin Dew and Anna Matheson.

A Southern Architecture: The Work of Ted McCoy, by Ted McCoy.

The Ship of Dreams: Masculinity in Contemporary Māori and Pākehā Fiction of Aotearoa/New Zealand, by Alistair Fox.

For further information:

email university.press@otago.ac.nz

or visit www.otago.ac.nz/press

Recently published books of Otago alumni

Mates & Lovers: A History of Gay New Zealand, by Chris Brickell, Random House NZ, July 2008.

The Ringmaster, by Vanda Symon, Penguin, August 2008.

Tall Tales (Some True): Memoirs of an Unlikely Writer, by Greg McGee, Penguin 2008.

Ngāi Tāhu: A Migration History, The Carrington Text, edited by Te Maire Tau and Atholl Anderson, Bridget Williams Books, 2008.

Touch the Earth Lightly, by Shirley Erena Murray Hope, Carol Stream, USA, July 2008.

Real Weight Loss, by Doug Sellman, Craig Potton, August 2008.

Principles of Australian Public Law, 2nd edition, by David Clark, Sydney: LexisNexis, 2007.

Survive! Remarkable Tales from the New Zealand Outdoors, by Carl Walrond, David Bateman, August 2008.

The International Handbook of Stepfamilies. Policy and Practice in Legal, Research and Clinical Environments, by Jan Pryor, Wiley Publishing, 2008.

Alumni: If you have written a book lately email the editor at mag.editor@otago.ac.nz

A word from the Head

THIS YEAR has been one of special celebrations in the Otago alumni community as we recognise the outstanding contributions of three of our members. Sir Paul Beresford and Dr Neville Bain, from the UK and Europe Chapter, and Alister Robinson, from Sydney, were all honoured with the presentation of the University of Otago Medal for Outstanding Alumni Service at alumni functions in London and Sydney respectively, acknowledging their long-term commitment to the University through their work with alumni in their regions. The medal is an honour rarely conferred and is a measure of the University's appreciation of the work of these dedicated individuals.

2008 has also seen a growth of interest in alumni events organised by local chapters outside of the official University function programme. Informal alumni groups are popping up all around the world, often starting from a single impromptu get-together organised by an Otago graduate keen to meet up with fellow "scarfies". These groups can provide a ready-made social network for newcomers and provide opportunities to form lasting bonds amongst



Alison Finigan

expatriates who share an Otago history. If you would like to know if such a group exists near you, or if you'd like to set one up yourself, the Alumni and Development team can help you with contacts, invitations and follow-up.

The pleasure that alumni find in their Otago connections comes from the shared experience of living and learning with others who are all going through the fun and tough times of approaching adulthood. Generations of students have found creative ways to balance heavy work schedules with activities that help them to let off a bit of steam. In this edition of the *Otago Magazine* you can read about one such escapade from the 1930s in the very entertaining memoir provided by Professor John Mackie, now a very young-at-heart 97-year-old. This is just one of a host of amusing anecdotes from John's memories of his time in the School of Mines and we are grateful to him for allowing us to print it here.

If you have a story you would like to share, we'd be delighted to hear from you. The Alumni and Development Office is working with the History of the University Unit (www.ouhistory.otago.ac.nz) to store alumni memories safely – please contact us for further information.

News

Otago's alumni enjoy success at Beijing

A number of University of Otago alumni featured as both athletes and officials during the Olympic Games held recently in Beijing.

These include Associate Professor **David Gerrard** who was in Beijing as a member of the Medical Commission overseeing the drug testing of all aquatic events. Many of the team doctors, physiotherapists and coaches, including high performance coach **Mark Elliot** and sports scientist to the cycling team **Craig Palmer** also studied at Otago.

Of particular note are the outstanding performances by the following athletes who have studied at Otago: **Nathan Twaddle** who won a bronze medal in the men's coxless pair rowing final; **Hamish Bond**, a member of the coxless four and was named New Zealand's 1,000th Olympian; Dunedin-based graduate **Alison Shanks** who finished fourth in the women's 3,000m cycling individual pursuit; **Nathan Cohen** who was placed fourth in the men's double sculls final; **Greg Henderson** who represented New Zealand in the men's track cycling points and madison events, and Wanaka-based **Nina Rillstone** who turned in a commendable performance to finish 16th in the women's marathon.

Otago Medal for Outstanding Alumni Service

The University has awarded an Otago Medal for Outstanding Alumni Service to three of its distinguished alumni volunteers – London alumni Sir Paul Beresford and Dr Neville Bain, and Sydney-based alumnus Alister Robinson.

Sir Paul Beresford is the current chairman of the Otago University Trust (UK) and the UK and Europe Alumni Chapter. He has acted as the key volunteer in the organisation of many successful alumni functions held in London.



Neville Bain and Sir Paul Beresford.

Neville Bain (see pages 30–31) has served as a member of the University Graduates' Association and is the current treasurer of both the Otago University Trust (UK) and the UK and Europe Alumni Chapter.

Both men work tirelessly to foster links between the diverse groups of Otago alumni living in London and Europe. They provide outstanding management of the Otago University Trust (UK), resulting in an excellent level of support from alumni in the region over several years of Annual Appeals.



Alister Robinson

Alister Robinson has maintained long-standing links with the Otago Graduates' Association and currently serves as an enthusiastic volunteer for the Sydney Alumni Chapter. He has always been forthcoming with support and advice and has assisted with the organisation of a number of events for alumni, including the pre-Bledisloe Cup gatherings. He, too, works tirelessly to support and encourage links among Otago alumni living in Sydney.

International, Study Abroad and Exchange students

The Alumni and Development Office has recently incorporated records of former International, Study Abroad and Exchange students who from now on will receive the *University of Otago Magazine* and other Otago communications. We welcome all former students to Otago's alumni community. If you know of any student who came to Otago, but has not received communications from us, please encourage them to update their details at www.otago.ac.nz/alumni/changedetails

Did you go on an AFS Exchange from NZ to the USA between 1947 and 1976?

Joany Grima, the project manager at AFS Intercultural Programmes NZ Inc., would like to hear from you. You can contact her on 64 210 234 0419 or email joany.grima@afs.org

History of the Department of Classics

Emeritus Professor John Barsby is working on a history of the Otago Department of Classics and is interested in receiving reminiscences of the department, especially from prior to 1971. If you have a story to share contact Emeritus Professor John Barsby, Department of Classics, email john.barsby@stonebow.otago.ac.nz, phone 03 479 0169.

Upcoming University Celebrations

- 2008** School of Physical Education 60th Anniversary
Aquinas College/Dalmore House Anniversary
- 2009** Knox College Centenary
Department of Computer Science 25th Anniversary
Cumberland College 20th Anniversary
City College 10th Anniversary
- 2010** Hocken Library Centenary
- 2011** St Margaret's College Centenary
Department of Home Science and Consumer and Applied Sciences Centenary
Studholme College Centenary
Department of Preventive and Social Medicine Centenary
Department of Pharmacy Centenary
50 years since the University of Otago became autonomous from the University of New Zealand

School of Physical Education 60th Anniversary

The school is celebrating 60 years of excellence in 2008 with a series of reunion functions held around New Zealand, including Wellington, Dunedin and Auckland. A further function will be held in Christchurch on 7 November. For information and registration details visit www.physed.otago.ac.nz

Aquinas College Reunion, 14–16 November

This year marks the 20th anniversary of the University's ownership of Aquinas College. A reunion for all past residents, including those from the late 1950s when Aquinas College first opened as well as those from the Dalmore House period (1988–1996), is being organised for the weekend of November 14–16. For further information and registration details please visit www.otago.ac.nz/alumni/reunions/aquinas or contact lizzy.lukeman@otago.ac.nz

Knox College Centenary, 7–9 August, 2009

Knox College, the second oldest residential college affiliated to the University, celebrates its centennial year in 2009. Plans are well advanced for a weekend of celebrations, including a ball and a dinner. It is also planned to launch a history of the college, tentatively titled *A Living Tradition*, written by historian Dr Alison Clarke.

For further information about the Knox College celebrations visit www.knoxcollege.ac.nz, phone 03 473 0107, or email alumni@knoxcollege.ac.nz

St Margaret's College Centenary, 28–30 January, 2011

St Margaret's College, opened in 1911 as a college for women, will celebrate its centenary in 2011. Register on the

website www.smc.ac.nz to receive information on upcoming functions and the reunion.

Department of Home Science and Consumer and Applied Sciences Centenary, February, 2011

In February 2011 Home Science/Consumer and Applied Sciences will commemorate 100 years at Otago. Please visit www.otago.ac.nz/caps to register your interest, or write to us at Consumer and Applied Sciences Centenary, PO Box 56, Dunedin 9054.

Reunions

MB ChB Class of 1958

24–27 October 2008, Dunedin.

Contact: martin.pollock@otago.ac.nz

MB ChB Class of 1973

24–27 October 2008, Queenstown.

For further information visit www.conference.co.nz/index.cfm/Classof73/index.cfm/classof73

MB ChB Class of 1977

24–27 October 2008, Queenstown.

Contact: gail.williams@otago.ac.nz

MB ChB Class of 1988

24–26 October 2008, Dunedin.

For further information visit www.dcms.co.nz/classof88.html or contact: mebrooker@yahoo.com

MB ChB CSM Class of 1998

25–26 October 2008, Christchurch.

Contact: geraldine.mackle@paradise.net.nz

MB ChB Class of 1963

Planning under way for March 2009, Auckland.

Contact: LyndaLeng@xtra.co.nz

MB ChB Class of 1950

4–6 August 2009, Dunedin.

Contact: Wyn Beasley alwynbeasley@hotmail.com or 04 384 5414

For help organising reunions contact Lizzy Lukeman on 64 3 479 5246 or email lizzy.lukeman@otago.ac.nz

Regional alumni groups

There are a number of alumni groups around the world who get together for a wide variety of activities and social pursuits. Each of these groups is co-ordinated by a local volunteer or committee who work with the Alumni and Development Office in Dunedin.

For information about regional alumni groups in your area visit www.otago.ac.nz/alumni/regionalgroups or contact

the co-ordinators below if you would like more details. To register your interest in becoming a regional contact or co-ordinator contact Alix Cassidy on 64 3 479 5649, email alix.cassidy@otago.ac.nz

University of Otago Alumni – Melbourne Chapter

Trevor Moyle, chairman/secretary

melbourne.alumni@otago.ac.nz

University of Otago Alumni – Sydney Chapter

Alister Robinson

sydney.alumni@otago.ac.nz

University of Otago Alumni – Canberra Chapter

Marie Carroll, convener

canberra.alumni@otago.ac.nz

University of Otago Alumni – Perth Chapter

Helen Skellet, convener

perth.alumni@otago.ac.nz

University of Otago Alumni Association of Malaysia

Ms Siew Yoon Serene Chong

chongsy@myjaring.net

University of Otago Alumni UK and Europe Chapter

Sir Paul Beresford, chairman

beresfordp@parliament.co.uk

Washington DC

Joe Manickavasagam

j.mv@verizon.net

University of Otago groups in China

alix.cassidy@otago.ac.nz



The first get-together of Otago Alumni in Beijing was organised by two enthusiastic Otago alumni. The group met at Schindlers, a German restaurant and bar near the British Embassy. Some of the group met again at a lunch with the New Zealand Governor-General organised by the New Zealand Embassy in Beijing on 11 August. They plan to have regular events throughout the year.

Alumni events 2008

Los Angeles, Consul-General's Residence, June



London, New Zealand House, June



Hong Kong, Royal Aberdeen Yacht Club, June



Auckland, Auckland War Memorial Museum, July



Sydney, The Dinosaur Exhibit, Australian Museum, August



Upcoming alumni events 2008

Kuala Lumpur	Tuesday 21 October
Kuching	Thursday 23 October
Wellington	Thursday 6 November
Christchurch	Friday 21 November
London	Thursday 27 November

Dates for all alumni functions are also posted on the Otago alumni web pages www.otago.ac.nz/alumni/functions. The web pages also feature reviews and photos from Otago alumni events held since 2003. For information on any of these events for alumni, please email functions.alumni@otago.ac.nz or contact Alix Cassidy at the Alumni and Development Office on 64 3 479 5649.

Giving to the University of Otago

The University of Otago enjoys a high level of support from its alumni, including financial benefits made possible by generous donations from individual alumni and friends. The University has established The University of Otago Foundation Trust, a New Zealand registered charitable trust, the Otago University Trust in the UK, the University of Otago Foundation for Malaysia and the University of Otago in America, Inc. in the USA. The terms of these trusts allow in-country tax benefits for Otago's donors living abroad and ensure that the expressed wishes of donors are fulfilled.

The trustees/directors are:

The University of Otago Foundation Trust (NZ):

the Chancellor, Vice-Chancellor, Chief Operating Officer, one member of Council and two outside representatives.

The Otago University Trust (UK): Sir Paul Beresford (chair), John Zinzan (deputy chair), Dr Neville Bain (treasurer) and Dame Judith Mayhew-Jonas.

The University of Otago Foundation for Malaysia:

Tan Sri Datuk Amar Leo Moggie, Tan Sri Datuk Amar Dr Sulaiman Bin Hj Daud, Tan Sri Dato' (Dr) Haji Ahmad Azizuddin Bin Haji Zainal Abidin, the Vice-Chancellor of the University of Otago, the Chancellor of the University of Otago and the Head of the Alumni and Development Office.

The University of Otago in America, Inc.: Jenny Schreiber (California), Murray Brennan (New York), Bill Lindqvist (California), Neil Matheson (Pennsylvania), Allan Portis (Ontario), Andrew King (Louisiana), Andrew Howells (Connecticut) and Geoffrey Nichol (New Jersey).

Annual Appeal

The 2008 University of Otago Annual Appeal was launched in September. Now in its sixth year, the appeal continues to be an important aspect of the work of the Alumni and Development Office. We have been delighted with the response so far and would like to thank all our supporters for their generous contributions.

This year you can direct your donation towards undergraduate scholarships, or one of four designated research centres.

Earlier this year we offered **undergraduate scholarships** to 12 students beginning their first year of study at Otago.

The four research centres supported through this year's appeal have been selected by the Vice-Chancellor's Advisory Group and represent important areas of research at Otago.

- **The Centre for Entrepreneurship** introduces students to the skills needed to succeed in developing new or innovative businesses.
- **The Centre for International Health** aims to make a real difference to the health and well-being of people in developing countries.
- **The Centre for Science Communication** extends our considerable strengths in natural history filmmaking into a new Master of Science Communication degree.
- **The Centre for the Study of Agriculture, Food and Environment's** research identifies practical pathways to enhancing social, environmental and economic well-being through discovery of sustainable food production and harvesting strategies, and efficient environmental management.

If you wish to make a contribution to the Annual Appeal you can do so by visiting the Alumni and Friends web page www.otago.ac.nz/alumni or contact us on annualappeal@otago.ac.nz

KEA New Zealand

KEA New Zealand is an independent, non-government, non-profit incorporated society dedicated to encouraging New Zealanders living overseas to maintain their connections with home. The Alumni and Development Office is assisting KEA with its Every Vote Counts campaign encouraging New Zealanders living overseas to vote in the 2008 General Election. The campaign is strictly non-partisan, and does not advocate voting for any particular political party or candidate, or hold or act on any particular political opinion.

Visit www.keanewzealand.com and www.everyvotecounts.co.nz

An alumni story

Emeritus Professor John Mackie (BSc 1931, MSc 1932, BE 1934, AOSM 1934, HonDSc 2000), former student and Otago staff member, was unable to attend the reinstatement of the Otago School of Mines plaque earlier this year. However, this occasion prompted him to share some stories from his days at Otago in the 1930s. The following is an excerpt from his memoirs. (An extended interview with John Mackie will be featured in the next issue of the *University of Otago Magazine*.)

“Capping time was always popular with the miners, mainly because Speight’s Brewery was then open for free beer. The trouble was you had to go drink the ale there and couldn’t take any away.

“For this reason, one year we decided to make our own brew. The necessary hops, yeast, etc. were bought out of a joint fund of 30 shillings (\$3), and an empty whiskey cask obtained through the good offices of the Bowling Green Hotel. We also gathered together a few clean four-gallon petrol cans converted to buckets.

“The brew was mixed with water in the buckets and brought to the correct temperature in the assay furnaces in the upper basement of the Mining School whence it was carried up the stairs to the attic and poured into the cleaned whiskey cask. Nobody ever went up there because all it contained was dust and an assortment of junk. The cask remained there, cool and quiet, for 10 days or so while its contents worked away at making 40 gallons of beer.

“Inevitably, the faint but heady fumes percolated down through the school, prompting Professor Park, the Dean, to comment, when he came in one morning, on the brewery-like atmosphere. In due course the brew, looking good, was

cleared with isinglass and bottled in the school over a long night.

“The time was drawn out because we were short of crown-stopper bottles and had to make up with champagne bottles from some wealthy Dunedinite’s pile of empties. It took quite some time to master the technique of getting the corks in and wiring them into place. Each bottle was fortified with a small teaspoonful of sugar and a raisin, and all of them, about 160, were stored among the building rubble in the lower basement to mature.

“Every now and then one would explode during lectures and Herb Black, our lecturer who was slightly deaf and suspected the school foundations in the Water of Leith were unsound, would appear a bit shaken.

“With so much beer lying about it’s a wonder the stock wasn’t quickly depleted. But no, with great willpower we miners retained the cache intact for another fortnight. However, the great day of first tasting eventually arrived at a miners’ meeting in the assay room. The president of our association produced a bottle and one of Herb’s clean glass beakers into which he poured the first of the beer.

“It looked good, smelled good and had a good ‘head’. Toasting the brew, he took a good swig. A curious look came over his face; he put down the beaker and went into the locker room next door. On his return he had one of the malt bottles we’d bought. ‘I ruddy well thought so,’ he exclaimed, looking at the label, ‘malt and cod-liver oil!’

“Consternation all round for a bit. But no, all was not lost. Although the brew tasted slightly fishy on the first mouthful, the taint was hardly noticeable afterwards. In fact, some wag commented that it was probably medicinally very healthy. It certainly was an excellent brew otherwise, and we made a profit by selling half of it to the dentals for ninepence (8c) a bottle!”

KEEP IN TOUCH

Address for correspondence:

Alumni and Development Office
University of Otago
PO Box 56
Dunedin 9054, New Zealand

Street address: Alumni House
103 St David Street
Dunedin

Tel 64 3 479 5246

Web www.otago.ac.nz/alumni

Email alumni@otago.ac.nz

The Alumni and Development Office website carries information on what’s happening in the office and around the globe. Via the website you can:

- receive updates about what’s on for alumni
- RSVP to alumni functions
- update your contact details so you continue to receive publications from Otago
- post a message on the alumni noticeboard
- view information on how to contact other Otago alumni
- find out how you can support the University.



David Edward Hutton, No 44. *Sea dragon*, gen. *Phyllopteryx*, family *Syngnathidae*, from *life*, 1915, watercolour, pen and ink on paper, Hocken Pictorial Collections.



David Edward Hutton, No 45. *Bell-pull in silver*, copper and enamel, 1912, pencil on paper, Hocken Pictorial Collections.

Art to architecture

When the Auckland City Art Gallery held an exhibition of *Frances Hodgkins and her Circle* as part of the 1954 Auckland Festival of the Arts, it featured some oils and watercolours by David Edward Hutton (1866–1946), describing him as having been “something of a youthful prodigy”.

That would explain his appointment, at the age of 15, as a pupil-teacher at the Dunedin School of Art. The school (now the Otago Polytechnic School of Art) had been established in 1870 by his father, David Con Hutton, just a year after the family emigrated from Scotland.

The younger Hutton’s expert drawing technique and meticulous attention to detail both played well to contemporary tastes and reflected the professional skills required in those days. The prolific artist became the first New Zealand male to gain a full Art Master’s Diploma from South Kensington, and stacked up awards and medals from London and New Zealand alike. In the 16 years (1882–1899) he taught at the School of Art, Hutton’s responsibilities extended to teaching art at Otago primary and secondary schools, the Otago Teachers’ Training College and the University’s School of Mines.

Besides the contribution Hutton made to art education, his superior draughtsmanship left a legacy of local history. His works included sketches of the former Stock Exchange building and an oil painting of the old Stuart Street Wharf, now the site of the Dunedin Railway Station.

After Dunedin, Hutton’s next stop was Wanganui, where he revived a languishing art school, before embarking on a European tour. And while Frances Hodgkins proceeded to break new ground with her explorations of colour, shape and dimension, her contemporary’s interests were becoming ever more concrete. In London, Hutton undertook specialist training in art’s application for industry.

He returned to New Zealand in 1910 and set up as an architect, with designs including the Christchurch Training College and several of the city’s schools. His eye for beauty and gift for realism remained, as can be seen by his imagining a seahorse as a doorbell, above.

The forward of the 1954 exhibition catalogue noted: “The aim of this exhibition has been primarily to place Frances Hodgkins in her context, but in doing so we have realised the great individual qualities of some of her associates and contemporaries. These artists can be represented here only by small groups of selected works, but it is hoped that they will be done fuller justice in the future by the presentation of exhibitions devoted to them alone.”

That Hutton’s works are rarely shown and little remembered suggests more of artistic tastes and values today than the contribution he made to New Zealand art more than a century ago.

Nicola Mutch

Hocken Collections Gallery Exhibitions

Until 24 October (Hocken foyer)

Anatomy of a Medical School: Otago’s Early Years
Curated by Dorothy Page, showcasing material relating to the early years of the University of Otago Medical School.

Until 22 November 2008

Fine Folk: The Design work of Colin McCahon
Showcasing the design work of Colin McCahon, demonstrating his involvement with New Zealand’s decorative arts 1940–1970.

Your academic record?

HAVE YOU EVER WONDERED what happened to your academic record? Can you remember what subjects you studied and your grades? Do you need it for a job application or are you simply curious?

Now it's easy to get a copy. Certified transcripts of records showing enrolment information and results are available through a new online service at www.otago.ac.nz/study – go to University Transcripts and Statements or directly to <https://secure-www.otago.ac.nz/study/transcripts/>

Dunedin College of Education transcripts are also available.

There is a small fee payable for this service, but an official letter – or statement – from the University confirming details of your enrolment and qualifications is available free of charge. This statement is generally a standard format, but customised statements can be issued in some circumstances.

The University keeps all academic records and its files date back to 1882, with the earliest record belonging to a Robert Gillkison who began an Arts degree in that year. These files comprise collections of both small loose cards and bound volumes; some are handwritten and some typed, some are a mixture of both, depending on their age.

This historic collection is now permanently archived at the Hocken, however, as a back-up and to make retrieval easier, a massive task began in early 2001 to digitise the records and store them on Alchemy, the University's electronic storage system.

"They had to be done in stages as they were moved down to us for scanning in large filing cabinets – we didn't want to remove them and handle them unnecessarily," says Tracey Sim, head of Corporate Records Services. "To save the bindings from damage, we scanned them individually on a flatbed scanner and, often, this had to be done many times over as some of the records were in very poor condition and the resulting scanned images left a lot to be desired!"

In total, more than 51,000 documents were scanned, a job that took three staff members, working part-time, from March 2001 to November 2002 to complete.

In the past, graduates have been able to obtain copies of their records by written request, but earlier this year the new online request service was introduced, streamlining the process. Proof of identity is required.

Copies of academic records of deceased graduates can also be supplied for family history or research purposes.

Anyone who has been enrolled at Otago since 1992 – the year the University introduced papers and points as opposed to the old units system – can still find summary details of their academic record on PIMS. This includes papers taken, passes, years of study, degree(s) and year(s) conferred. (Please note: this is not a certified transcript.) Your username and password are needed to access this information. If you have forgotten these, email the helpdesk at helpdesk@otago.ac.nz

Karen Hogg



Photos: Bill Nichol



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CONTACT

Gretchen Kivell
Head of Abbey College
University of Otago, PO Box 56, Dunedin 9054
Tel 64 3 479 4892, Fax 64 3 479 4891
Email abbey.college@otago.ac.nz

