

Alumni Newsletter 2009

School of Physical Education Te Kura Akoraka Whakakori



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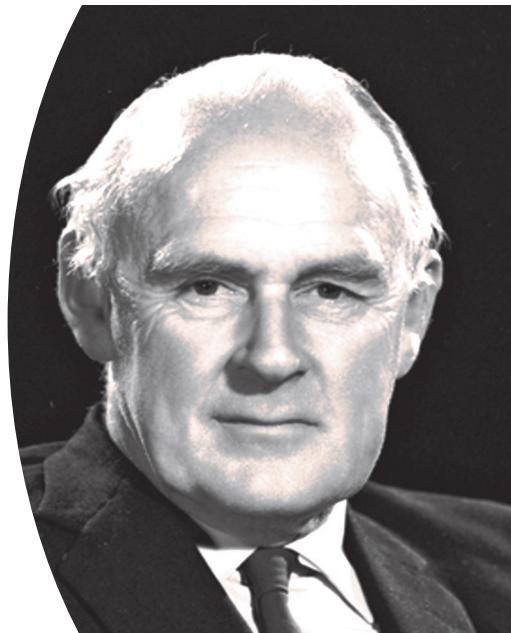
Remembering P.A.S.

James Smithells, son of Philip Ashton Smithells, shares memories of his father - who is also our School's Founding Father - and his legacy

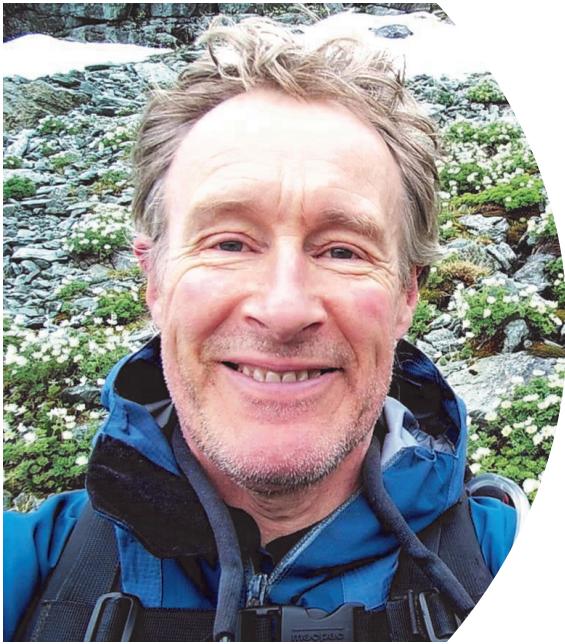
"It was with great pleasure that I attended the Dunedin celebration of the **60th reunion of the Otago University School of Physical Education** last year. The occasion was very well organised and the warm southern hospitality was particularly appreciated on a cold, snowy night. It was an honour to be present, along with **my brother Mark and his son Sam**, for both the induction of new members to the Wall of Fame and the presentation of the inaugural **Philip Ashton Smithells Memorial Scholarship**.

At the 50th reunion I gave a speech about PAS, with the theme of family, talking about both his personal families and the larger OUSPE family. I would like to expand upon this theme.

The Physed School, as we called it, was part of our lives from my earliest memories. **Indeed it goes back further than that, as my mother, Olive, informed me that I was conceived at a Trotters Gorge camp!** The staff and around 300 students were very much like an extended family for us, and I recall the warm, familiar feeling of sitting amongst long-lost early staff members at the 50th dinner, including **Colleen Hill, Malcolm Marshall, Peter and Margaret Cameron, Barry Buckton, Audrey Southgate, Annette Golding, Hilary Evison, Barry Davidson, Gouke Leek, and Warren Dukes.**



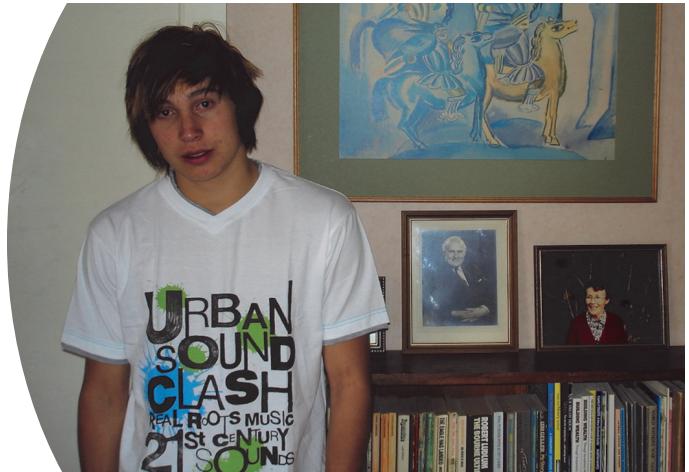
Philip Smithells, founder of The School of Physical Education



Writer of this article James Smithells, who is a keen outdoor sportsman and Queenstown resident

Another family aspect in the old days were the large maps of both New Zealand and the world, displayed in the main hallway of the old building. Every past and present student and lecturer was represented by a long pin with a name tag, placed exactly where they came from. I recall Dad telling us that one of the highlights of his year was his tour of the country interviewing each prospective student in their home town, often in a pre-arranged spot, to “test the personality and character” of the applicant. With the amazing growth of the PE School and so many course options becoming available over the following years, they would be very cluttered maps indeed these days, so large has the OUSPE family become. Naturally a certain intimacy has been lost along the way.

Philip had two personal families, with only one grandchild resulting from his marriage to Olive. Sam P.A.S. Smithells is the only direct descendant to carry his name. It was therefore most fitting that he was invited to present the inaugural Smithells Scholarship. Although Philip and Sam never met, Olive had 17 special years as his grandmother, until her passing in June 2007. **If PAS were alive today he would be 99**, and would have been a very proud grandfather to have seen his grandson presenting the scholarship in his name.



Sam Smithells, with treasured photographs of his grandfather Philip and grandmother Olive

This special event has created further links, both within Philip's family and between the Smithells and the larger OUSPE family. With Sam's participation and with the emphasis of the scholarship being on the practical development of physical education in New Zealand, there will undoubtedly be growth for both families.”

The Legacy

Abbie Law, the inaugural Philip Ashton Smithells Memorial Scholar, tells us how much it means to her

"In January 2008 I was extremely proud to be awarded this prestigious Scholarship, in recognition of my academic merit, communication skills, leadership and potential for making a contribution to Physical Education in New Zealand.



Abbie receiving the Scholarship from Sam Smithells

For the remainder of the academic year the scholarship gave me the confidence to continue to achieve extremely pleasing academic results in all my papers. The scholarship relieved any financial demands I may have been faced with while studying and allowed me to be completely focused on my studies. I purchased textbooks required for the Physical Education papers I was taking, and used the remaining funds for other course costs.

I have now achieved my academic goals by attaining two degrees: a Bachelor of Physical Education, majoring in Professional Studies with a specific interest in dance education, and a Bachelor of Teaching.

I am currently working at Otago Girls' High School, using my Physical Education degree to teach junior dance. I also used my leadership skills to direct 100 students to gain 3rd place in this year's Otago Region Stage Challenge competition. Furthermore, I am using my passion for dance to run a Latin Dance club at school which currently has 40 participants.

I have been extremely grateful for receiving this scholarship. It has allowed me to achieve my goals and continue my passion for Physical Education. My future goal is to inspire more students to get involved in Physical Education."

It was an honour to receive a scholarship that was created in memory of the founding director of the School of Physical Education. It was particularly special to be part of a ceremony that inducted several sporting greats to the Wall of Fame, and to be presented with a plaque from Philip Smithell's grandson at this ceremony.

Cutting Edge

Sam Lucas BPhEd 2001

This article by Sam, who has recently completed a PhD at Otago, was published in the prestigious international magazine **Physiology News**.



Sam Lucas



The Ageing Musculoskeletal System

In early April 2009 the western world's attention was focused on London where the leaders of the 20 largest economies had gathered to discuss the global recession. While these leaders were looking at ways to lessen the impact of an acute credit crisis, across town **The Physiological Society's Human and Exercise Physiology meeting** had gathered at King's College, London, to discuss an issue that will have an impact on all facets of society for a far greater period. The theme of the meeting was the ageing musculoskeletal system, and I had travelled from New Zealand to present data about age-related changes in brain blood flow.

The presentations were of a very high quality and ranged from understanding what the ageing process is at the cellular level to the rather grim reality of mortality rate for hip fractured elderly patients (15% in the first year of recovery). A figure that remains etched in my mind is that of life expectancy for people living in the western world plotted against the years spent living without illness, with the latter not increasing at the same rate. Although we may live longer and be able to see our grandchildren grow up, and if we are lucky our great grandchildren, if we want to do more than just watch them from a bed, then the news is not so great. For me this meeting was a step along the way to addressing this widening gap. While we cannot, and perhaps should not, stop the ageing process, a common theme that emerged from the meeting was the important role that exercise has in slowing the age-related decline in our physiology. This was the silver lining in an otherwise gloomy forecast. Slowing this decline may be an answer to increasing our healthy life expectancy and thus improving the quality of life for the elderly.

Data presented during the meeting indicated that resistance and strength training appears more beneficial for some aspects of ageing health (eg mobility), while in other aspects aerobic exercise appears more beneficial (eg immune function and weight loss). So just like having a healthy balanced diet through life, it would seem that we need to balance our exercise programmes too. Maintaining muscle strength and quality into old age appears very important in delaying dependence and frailty, and aerobic training may help immune function in the aged and help control weight gain. These data are important for all society and although we may not have all the answers to this ageing challenge, there appear to be some positive interventions that we can use to improve our ageing health.



A Mutual Passion

For each other & the Great Outdoors

Chris Charteris-Wright BPhEd 1989

Kim Charteris-Wright BCom 1991



Kim and Chris Charteris-Wright



PHSE 231/232 Surfing, 2008



PHSE 231/232 Skills For Teambuilding

Chris Wright & Kim Charteris got together as Otago undergraduates, and what started as a romantic partnership has now expanded to a business partnership also – they not only joined their surnames to become Mr and Mrs Charteris-Wright, but they combined their professional skills to form Free Spirit Training & Development, based at their family home on the Otago Peninsula – and they still maintain close personal and professional links with the School of Physical Education.

Chris has a passion for Outdoor Education, and is a former Coordinator for the “pracs” papers, where he also taught the Surfing course. He currently teaches the Surfing and Skills for Teambuilding courses as a contractor to the School, and maintains his love affair for Camp, having instructed on that programme for over a decade now.

Kim brings her Human Resources expertise to the partnership, which is a provider of team-building, leadership and personal development programmes for corporate clients and individuals. There has been a steady increase of business in recent years, and the company now has a staff of six.

Chris and Kim see Free Spirit’s programmes as a way of empowering people. **“We aim to provide each individual with the awareness and tools they need to unleash their potential and realise their dreams in their lives and in their work environment”.**

For more information <http://www.freespiritnz.com/>



The Free Spirit Team



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Training & Development
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