

# UNIVERSITY OF Otago

M A G A Z I N E

ISSUE 4: FEBRUARY 2003

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at OTAGO

OUR PEOPLE IN EAST TIMOR

OTAGO TALENT RETURNS

MOUNTAINEER SETTING WORLD FIRSTS





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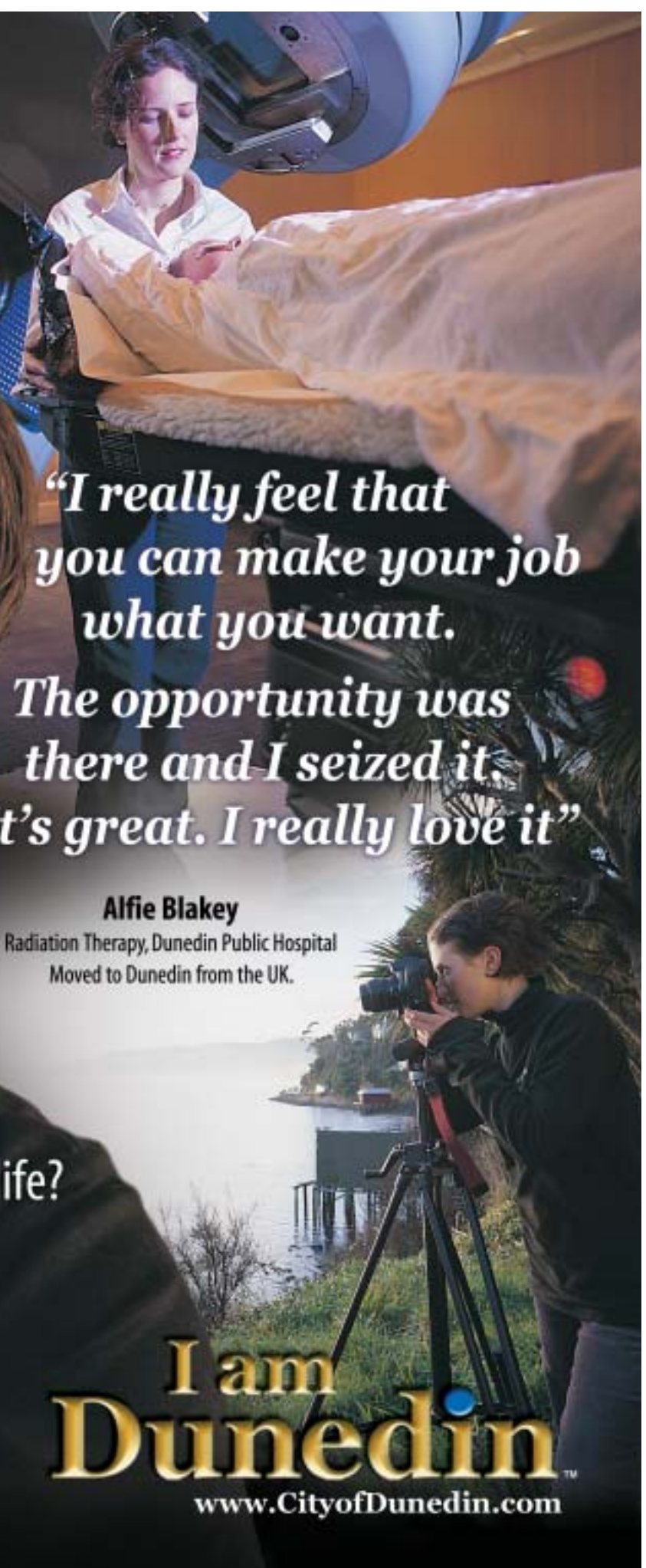
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UNIVERSITY OF OTAGO

## magazine

A magazine for alumni and friends of the University of Otago

University of Otago Magazine  
Issue 4  
February 2003  
ISSN - 1175-8147

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The Editor, *University of Otago Magazine*, at the above address or email [mag.editor@otago.ac.nz](mailto:mag.editor@otago.ac.nz).

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### Rhodes Scholarship Omission

The complete list of Otago Rhodes Scholars included in the October 2002 edition of the *University of Otago Magazine* omitted the 1950 entry for Peter Selwyn O'Connor. After completing his Rhodes' studies, O'Connor returned to New Zealand. He taught history at Otago and, later in his career, he was appointed an Associate Professor in History at the University of Auckland. O'Connor died in February 1994.



## VC'S COMMENT

In the October edition of the *University of Otago Magazine*, I made reference to the difficulties now being encountered in obtaining sufficient funds to maintain our position as a leading University.

Some three years ago, we realised that – if we did not take steps to help ourselves – simply relying on Government funding policies would mean an inevitable decline in the quality of the University of Otago's research and teaching. As your Vice-Chancellor, I decided this was something all university stakeholders, particularly its graduates, would not be prepared to tolerate: we had to take steps to raise additional funds ourselves to lessen our reliance on Government funding and student tuition fee income.

We have been successful in increasing, by a significant margin, the funds which we receive from contestable research bidding and for commercial research activities. However, this alone will not be enough. Hence our decision to undertake a

major campaign to secure additional support from graduates and friends of the University.

The article on page 34 of this edition of the *Magazine* outlines in more detail the programmes which we have put in place to achieve this.

Briefly they are:

- the Advancement Campaign to enhance our academic excellence in research and teaching and to provide more scholarship support for students;
- the Annual Fund for graduates and friends who wish to make donations to selective activities;
- the Bequest Programme for those who wish to consider support for the University in their estate planning.

To date, we have made significant progress, but much more needs to be achieved. I look forward to the University's receiving your support as we seek to secure Otago's reputation as a University of true international standing.

Dr Graeme Fogelberg  
Vice-Chancellor – University of Otago



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# IN BRIEF

## SURFACE BACTERIA HYPOTHESIS APPEARS TO STICK



Otago researchers (from left) Jim McQuillan, Associate Professor Iain Lamont and Dr Phil Bremer look at how bacteria stick to surfaces and the implications for industries, including health, food and shipping.

A joint effort among chemists, food scientists and biochemists has shed new light on how bacteria stick to surfaces. The work could increase the success of surgical implants, improve the hygiene of food processing surfaces, and increase the efficiency of surfaces such as water pipes and ships' hulls.

"It's an example of the whole being greater than the sum of its parts," says biochemist Associate Professor Iain Lamont.

Lamont is working with Associate Professor Jim McQuillan, whose infra-red spectroscopy allows him to look closely at how chemical bonds are formed between various substances, and Dr Phil Bremer, who is interested in bacterium *Pseudomonas aeruginosa* and its ability to grow on surfaces.

"We could see that the bacteria had a metal binding compound

which enabled them to cling to metal surfaces, but couldn't tell exactly which compound it was," says McQuillan. "Lamont's group was studying pyoverdine and how bacteria use this compound to get iron from our bodies. They gave us some purified pyoverdine to look at and its spectral pattern matched that of our surface adhering compound."

A recent Marsden grant of \$617,000 will enable Lamont and his colleagues to continue their investigations into other bacteria and other surfaces.

Bremer explains: "We're keen to look at bacteria that don't make pyoverdine and see if they also produce specific compounds that enable them to form chemical bonds with a variety of metal surfaces like chromium oxide – the substance which dominates the surface layer of stainless steel."

## GLOBAL WARMING AND THE RISK TO LIFE



Climate change could threaten both wildlife and human health if it continues at its current rate.

Pests and parasites represent a greater threat to life on earth if global warming continues at its present rate.

Dengue fever, which currently affects 30 per cent of the world's population, could threaten five to six billion people by the end of the century, and wildlife is vulnerable to the spread of parasites.

Zoology research fellow Dr Kim Mouritsen has spent the past year looking specifically at how parasites are affected by climate change. "All animals, including humans, harbour parasites and parasites are very sensitive to climate change. An increase in temperature of just a few degrees, for instance, could double or treble the population of some parasites and consequently increase the mortality rate of their hosts."

Mouritsen says rare species – like the kakapo and some species of frogs – could face extinction.

Health Research Council fellow Dr Simon Hales studies infectious human diseases spread by pests and the likely threat to our health resulting from a dramatic change in temperature.

"If more of the world's surface becomes suitable for mosquitoes, the spread of dengue fever is probable.

"Obviously, there are other factors which contribute. Climate change is just one of several global-scale trends which threaten human health in the long term."

"We're interested in being able to more accurately predict the effect of social trends on the transmission of disease."

Hales is a lead author of a chapter in the Millennium Ecosystem Assessment – an International Scientific Assessment due to report in two years' time.



## PUCK PICKED AS ONE OF TWO BURNS FELLOWS IN 2003



Poet Nick Ascroft: Robert Burns Fellow for the first half of this year.

There's a jaunty, language-licking, fun-poking bard at the helm of the 2003 Robert Burns Fellowship. Nick Ascroft is the Puck of New Zealand poetry – a cheerful verbal trickster with an impish delight in stretching tired old language into new unlikely corners. Indeed, there's something of the Jabberwocky in some of Ascroft's poems: "That's always been the type of poetry I've loved the most – well-crafted nonsense poetry. There's something beautiful and universally human about it."

At 29, Ascroft is already widely published: his poems have appeared regularly in New Zealand literary journals and magazines (including *Glottis* which he co-edits); his first solo collection *From the Author of* was released in 2000; his second volume, *Nonsense*, is due next month; and he is currently polishing off his first novel *Doubtful Landfall* – a science fiction tale set in Southland.

During his six-month Burns tenure - Sarah Quigley takes up the post from August - Ascroft will write poems both for publication and performance. Seven years of *Glottis* poetry readings (these days at Arc Café) and the close study of phonetics at the University of Otago have left him attuned to the delicious gallop of language on the tongue: "Poetry for me is a kind of musicality."

When Ascroft's father learned of his Burns Fellowship, he told him not to let it go to his head; others suggested it might bring with it 'a pompous self-indulgence'. Given the *Glottis* ethos he should be safe. Says Ascroft, "We don't want poetry to be too arty-farty, obsessed with itself, or hoity-toity."

## RELATIONSHIPS KEY TO WINE INDUSTRY'S CONTINUED SUCCESS



The future success of the wine industry depends on growers and wineries working collaboratively, says researcher Karen Henderson.

There's more to producing a good bottle of pinot noir than you might think.

Otago management researcher Karen Henderson's two-year study on the relationship between grape growers and wineries has turned up some surprising results.

"By far the most important reason for a grower choosing to supply a particular winery is the quality of the relationship between them. It's not about price or location," she says. "It's all about having a good flow of communication and positive interaction between the parties, for the long-term."

Henderson has gathered data from five South Island wineries – one from each of the four recognised wine regions plus one major winery – and surveyed 150 levied growers. Results indicate that personalised relationships where both parties are "proactively involved" are fundamental.

"More than half of the growers I surveyed cited 'knowing people at the winery' as critical in their winery choice," she says. "They viewed their relationship as being part of the winery team, as opposed to one of customer or supplier. Wineries also recognise that exemplary vineyard practice correlates with producing noteworthy 'vintages' and an ongoing supply of quality grapes."

While New Zealand produces just 0.2 per cent of the world's wine, export revenue for the 2002 vintage reached \$NZ246.4 million and this is expected to increase significantly in the next few years.

"The industry is struggling to satisfy the global demand for premium New Zealand wine. As long as we continue to produce high-quality vintages, the predicted 'wine glut' should have little impact. I believe that proactively developing these key relationships will be the secret to our continued success."

# IN BRIEF

## WHOSE BUSINESS IS SUSTAINABILITY?



Associate Professor Markus Milne is making it his business to look at how current business reporting practices measure up.

Looking at how New Zealand organisations report on their performance and whether their decision-making and reporting practices are adequate long-term has earned Otago Marsden funding of nearly half a million dollars.

Otago's Associate Professors Markus Milne and Richard Morgan, along with Dr Kate Kearins of Waikato, are interested in how businesses are responding to increasing demands to become more sustainable.

"The current practice of Triple Bottom Line reporting – where an organisation reports on its financial, environmental and social performance – may or may not be sufficient for the long-term," says Milne. "We want to see how organisations meet the current demand for public accountability and transparency; what structural changes are occurring and how organisations manage things like dialogue with

stakeholders. We also want to examine the attitudes and behaviours of the decision-makers."

The group, which includes three postgraduate research students, wants to look at how values are changing as a result of organisations changing to become more sustainable.

"There will be tensions and conflicts among the three aspects of performance, and we want to see how organisations manage these," Milne says.

The three-year programme is the first of its kind internationally to evaluate trends in corporate "sustainability" reporting and practice. Using a number of commercial enterprises, the study will show how New Zealand businesses, through their internal and external reporting, for instance, "perceive and portray sustainability practices," he says.

## RESEARCHERS CONSIDER COMPLEX HEALTH ISSUES RELATED TO POVERTY



Almost half of the world's six billion population lives on less than \$2 per day. Otago researchers are investigating the effect poverty has on health.

Researchers from Otago's Wellington School of Medicine and Health Sciences are in the international spotlight because of their work into the impact of poverty on health.

Dr Tony Blakely, Dr Simon Hales, Professor Alistair Woodward, Charlotte Kieft and Dr Nick Wilson contributed to a major World Health Organisation (WHO) report, after being approached by WHO to determine the world-wide impact of absolute poverty on health.

Blakely says the researchers worked alongside teams of other international researchers who were examining how much disease is caused by factors such as tobacco, cholesterol, and malnutrition.

Results from the Wellington-based researchers have been incorporated in the recently released *World Health Report 2002: Reducing Risks, Promoting Healthy Life*. The WHO report identifies

that 40 per cent of the deaths in the world are due to 10 risk factors: malnutrition, unsafe sex, blood pressure, tobacco, alcohol, unsafe water, sanitation and hygiene, iron deficiency, and obesity.

Blakely points out 1.2 billion people in the world live on less than \$US1 per day, and nearly half of the world's six billion people lives on less than \$2 per day.

Some of the results were shocking but not too surprising, the authors say. For example, Hales says childhood malnutrition, unsafe water and sanitation, and exposure to indoor smoke (for cooking) was greater among poorer people. However, the researchers were disturbed to find diseases of the rich, such as obesity, are becoming prevalent among the poor in developing regions such as Latin America.



## NATIVE BIRDS AND PLANTS RETURN TO STEWART ISLAND



*Dr Mike Hilton's work with the Department of Conservation to control marram grass on Stewart Island is proving to be a great success.*

The largest marram grass control operation undertaken in New Zealand, at Doughboy Bay on the west coast of Stewart Island, is already showing dividends, with the return of native dune plants and shore birds.

Many specialist dune plants, including pingao and shore spurge, which grow in conditions of mobile sand, have been largely displaced by marram grass. And the banded dotterel will only nest in open, unvegetated dunes.

Geographer Dr Mike Hilton and a team of four graduate students have been monitoring the Doughboy project for the Department of Conservation since 1998 – with the aim of understanding how marram grass invades dune systems and its effects on native flora, as well as how dune systems change after eradication of this alien grass.

“Most people have a poor understanding of the natural

character of dune systems,” he says.

“Sand movement is a natural process that provides habitat for native plants and animals, freeing them from competition with other plants and introduced weeds such as gorse.

“Marram grass converts semi-vegetated, active dune systems into stable grasslands – resulting in a catastrophic change to their ecology in the short term. In the long term, marram grass may prevent future episodes of sand movement.”

Marram grass has now been completely eradicated from a 15ha dune system in southern Doughboy Bay. Operations are continuing and expanding to include Mason Bay. “As well as the return of many native species, the operation has restored the natural instability of these dune systems.”

## KERR DEVELOPS REVOLUTIONARY DRUG-TESTING EQUIPMENT



*Dr Steve Kerr with his Tissue Recording System, which is proving extremely versatile in the laboratory.*

Being able to record the electrical activity of the heart and watch its response to various drugs is a new departure for pharmacologist Dr Steve Kerr.

Kerr revolutionised drug-testing technology with the launch of the Kerr Tissue Recording System (Kerr TRS). Six years in the making, this instrument is capable of recording the effects of drugs and toxins on living, electrically excitable tissues, maintained for hours in special buffer solutions.

Prototypes of the device have been used in the Kerr lab to analyse brain tissue from rats. However, recording techniques were recently adapted to include cardiac tissue and Kerr is now keen to assess other excitable tissues, such as skeletal muscle and retina.

The advantage of this instrument over previous models is that it is tailor-made for neuropharmacology teaching and laboratory situations.

“If we used older, pre-existing systems, which cost up to \$20,000, we’d have to purchase many separate items, plug them all together, and then try to squeeze 30 to 40 students around it,” Kerr says.

“This new system costs about a quarter of that price and, when assembled, is approximately the size of a soccer ball. It takes 60 seconds to put together and, apart from animal handling and dissection skills, doesn’t require a high level of training to use. It also means one can buy half a dozen units and have them all running simultaneously.”

The system is being marketed internationally by AD Instruments (ADI), which specialises in providing research and teaching equipment for physiology laboratories.

# IN BRIEF

## THE POSSUM, THE MOSQUITO, THE VIRUS AND THE TOURIST



Neil Price/Wellington City Council

Otago PhD student José Derraik warns that New Zealanders are more vulnerable than they realise to the Ross River virus entering the country.

A sinister circle comprising possums, mosquitoes and the Ross River virus... all it needs is a busload of Ross River virus-carrying tourists and we'd have the disease here.

Sounds like science fiction, but that's a topic being studied by University of Otago ecology PhD student José Derraik who is working in possum-populated bush in the Auckland region.

In Australia, says José, possums are potential carriers of the Ross River virus. He is exploring the relationship between the population densities of possums and mosquitoes in New Zealand, to gauge the likelihood of the disease cycle becoming established amongst the possum population. The female mosquito needs a good supply of blood in order to lay eggs, and what better supply than the widespread and abundant brushtail possum.

In comparison with other countries such as Japan and Britain, there are very few mosquito species in New Zealand. Before humans arrived in New Zealand there were only three species of native mammals - all bats. Now, we have not only several introduced mammals, but also four established exotic mosquito species. José's preliminary fieldwork indicates the mosquito population thrives at the Wellington Zoo, in comparison with native forest reserves. "One possible explanation is that the zoo provides a large supply of mammalian blood for mosquitoes," says José.

Global warming and the difficulty of border control mean the chances are New Zealand may play host to more nasty species of mosquitoes in the future, including the Asian tiger mosquito, which is a vector of yellow and dengue fevers.

## MANGAIA ISLAND – A THREE-DIMENSIONAL VIEW



The rich, historical, archaeological and indigenous knowledge of Mangaia Island makes it a researchers' paradise. An example of adzes from the island.

Weaving together three different strands of knowledge – the archaeological, the historical, and the indigenous – is providing a new and richly textured view of Mangaia, one of the largest of the southern group of Cook Islands.

Archaeologist Dr Richard Walter, Te Tumu historian Dr Michael Reilly and expert in the indigenous knowledge of the Mangaia Island Chief Mataora Harry have known each other for many years. It is only in the last two years, however, they decided to explore ways in which their different perspectives on the social, political and economic development of Mangaia could be combined.

"The place where our knowledge intersects," says Walter, "lies in the landscape. So we decided to begin by mapping the island."

As well as using archaeological methods to find out how the land was used at the time, Walter is

developing a multimedia software package which is now 80 per cent complete, including maps and photos with active links to historical information.

The collaboration extends beyond these three to the local people, who help Reilly flesh out the detail of the maps.

Reilly: "Mataora and I walk over the island with the maps and with their help, put in the place names, the location of marae, and identify where significant events took place. It's one of the most stimulating aspects of the work."

As well as providing a multi-layered view of the past, the project has implications for the present, says Reilly. It also feeds into Mataora's interest in developing the island in a way which sustains the life-style of its people.

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## DEVELOPING AN ALTERNATIVE CONTRACEPTIVE PILL



Associate Professor John Evans is working on non-steroidal forms of fertility modulation.

The development and wide use of the steroid-based contraceptive pill was part of the so-called sexual revolution of the 1960s.

Since those days of ‘flower power’, the issue of side effects of ‘the pill’, such as the risk of heart attack and stroke, has cast a shadow over the use of steroid-based contraceptives for many women. These concerns have stimulated interest in alternative and novel methods of pharmaceutical contraception which may not have the same impacts.

Otago’s Christchurch School of Medicine and Health Sciences’ Associate Professor John Evans is examining how the subtle but interrelated network of peptides, or small proteins, from the brain acts on the pituitary gland, which then sends a message through blood hormones to the ovaries, triggering ovulation.

“Already we have discovered that one peptide in particular, oxytocin, plays a significant part in this complex messaging process from

the pituitary gland at the base of the brain to the ovaries.

“Women who are given oxytocin before the middle of their menstrual cycle release hormones from the pituitary earlier, encouraging ovulation. Conversely, if they are administered an anti-oxytocin compound, their hormone levels are lower, discouraging ovulation. Therefore, this peptide might provide routes for either developing a contraceptive or for treating infertility.”

Evans plans to examine further the key roles that oxytocin and other peptides play in the carefully balanced array of hormones associated with ‘triggering’ ovulation.

Because of the complexity of these hormonal interactions which occur in the pituitary, just a minute change of an important component like oxytocin could disrupt the whole process, preventing ovulation, and acting as a non-steroidal form of contraception.

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## EARLY CANNABIS USE INCREASES RISK OF SCHIZOPHRENIA

A link between cannabis use early in life and the development of adult schizophrenia has been reported by researchers at the University of Otago’s Multidisciplinary Unit.

The study, published in the *British Medical Journal*, shows that early use of cannabis can significantly increase the risk of schizophrenic symptoms in adulthood.

The research used data collected from 759 young New Zealanders who were studied from their birth in 1972 until age

26 in 1998. The results showed that adolescents who began using cannabis by age 15, were three-to-four times more likely to be diagnosed with schizophreniform disorder in adulthood, than their counterparts. Among individuals who used cannabis before age 15, 10 per cent developed a schizophreniform disorder by the age of 26, compared to 3 per cent of the remaining cohort.

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## NEW ZEALAND CHILDREN AT RISK

Researchers from Otago’s Wellington School of Medicine and Health Sciences are calling for a more sophisticated government approach to tobacco control.

A University study has found that more than 10 per cent of New Zealand children are likely to be at risk from household spending on tobacco.

Researcher George Thomson says that, for some low-income households, 14 per cent of the non-housing budget is spent on tobacco: the estimated average tobacco spend is about \$35 per week in these households and this expenditure is equal to more than 60 per cent of reported food spending.



FEATURE

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# East Timor's struggle to – with a little help from

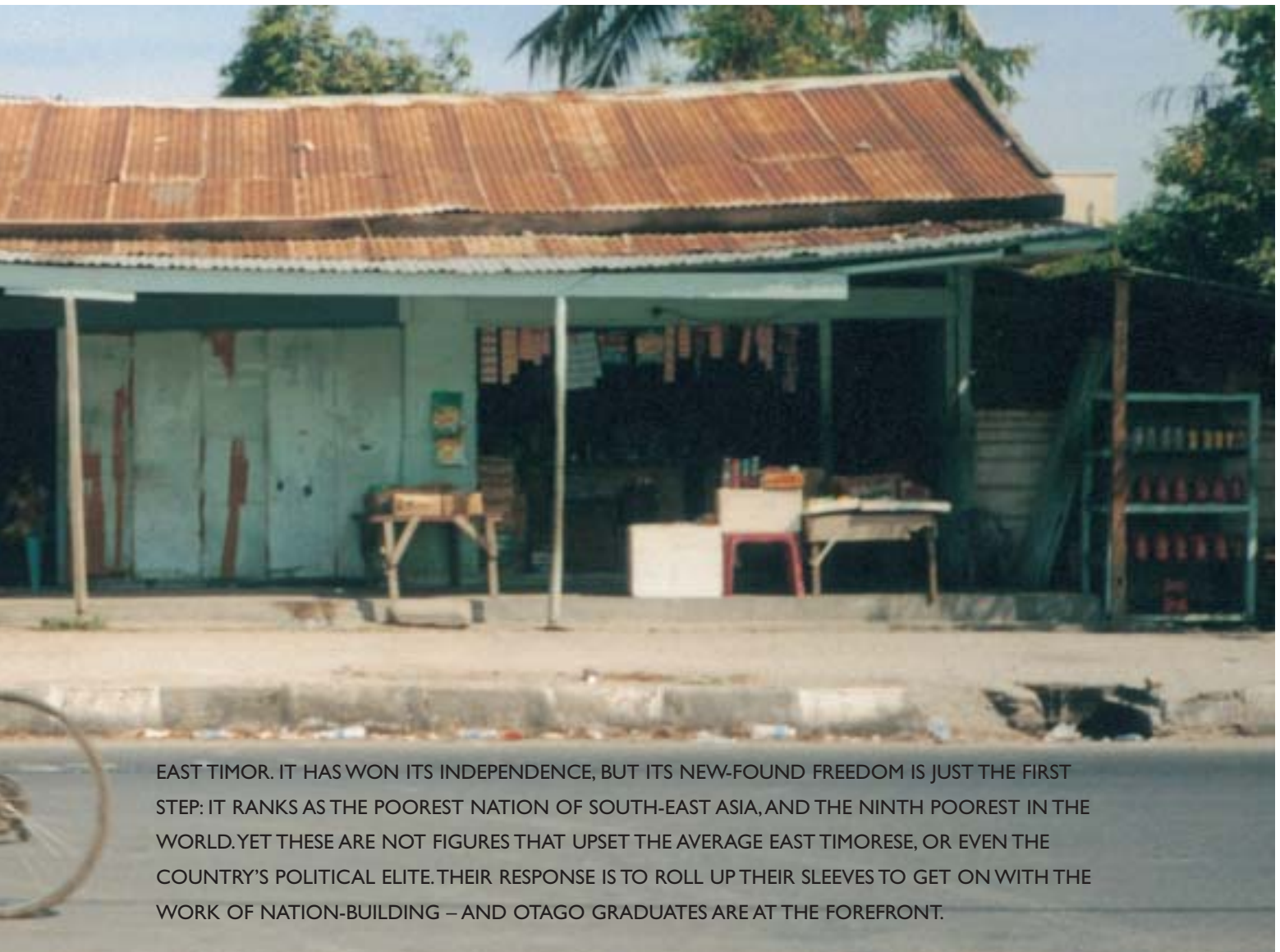
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# rebuild Otago grads

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EAST TIMOR. IT HAS WON ITS INDEPENDENCE, BUT ITS NEW-FOUND FREEDOM IS JUST THE FIRST STEP: IT RANKS AS THE POOREST NATION OF SOUTH-EAST ASIA, AND THE NINTH POOREST IN THE WORLD. YET THESE ARE NOT FIGURES THAT UPSET THE AVERAGE EAST TIMORESE, OR EVEN THE COUNTRY'S POLITICAL ELITE. THEIR RESPONSE IS TO ROLL UP THEIR SLEEVES TO GET ON WITH THE WORK OF NATION-BUILDING – AND OTAGO GRADUATES ARE AT THE FOREFRONT.

Photo: Jill Joliffe

THREE YEARS AGO, THIS TINY HALF-ISLAND WAS ALMOST reduced to ashes by the Indonesian army and its militia allies during their scorched earth withdrawal from the territory. It followed the United Nations' announcement that 78 per cent of the population had rejected Indonesian rule in a referendum on 30 August 1999. Through sheer courage, the East Timorese survived, as they did the 24 years of brutal military occupation before it. By comparison, the climb from poverty does not seem so daunting.

When UN peacekeepers entered Dili in September 1999, the city was still smouldering. Whole neighbourhoods had been destroyed and power grids sabotaged by the departing army.

As the troops fanned out into the countryside, they found evidence of systematic massacres of civilians – more than 100 slaughtered in Liquiçá, west of Dili, in April 1999, and an estimated 200 in south-coast Suai after the UN announced the election results on 4 September. In the northern border town of Maliana, about 50 independence supporters were hacked and shot to death by militiamen in front of assembled townsfolk, also in reprisal for the pro-independence vote.

Many people still bear the psychological scars associated with these acts, but with the help of the international community East Timor is slowly emerging from the ashes.

Since Independence Day on 20 May, the flag of the new Democratic Republic of East Timor has replaced the UN flag outside the white administration building stretching along the Dili waterfront.

Kamalesh Sharma, head of the United Nations Mission of Support in East Timor (UNMISSET), arrived on 21 May and takes second place to Timorese politicians until the UN's final departure in 2004. Former guerrilla commander José Alexandre 'Xanana' Gusmão stands proud as elected president, while Mari Alkatiri heads the Fretilin<sup>1</sup> nationalist government elected in August 2001.

Bill Clinton, Kofi Annan and other world leaders attended the glittering independence ceremony, but it is now a distant memory for most citizens who just want to get on with the job of self-government.

The pavements are busy with children selling bananas, limes and pineapples from bamboo poles slung across their skinny shoulders. The message that children should be in school has not yet filtered through. All age groups contributed to the anti-Indonesian resistance, and it seems natural for children to supplement the family income.

The streets bustle with hand-carts, UN military vehicles and taxis with teenage drivers (licences are not yet universal). Like the fruit-sellers, the taxi-drivers are chasing the Yankee dollar which the UN nominated as currency soon after its arrival. The economy was artificially bloated by fast-spending internationals on salaries of up to \$US300,000, frequenters of the fashionable City Café. Most have gone now, leaving it to a few long-termers and the ubiquitous child beggars. In general, prices are dropping a little, but scraping a living is not easy. In the cities, there is a 48 per cent unemployment rate<sup>2</sup> and the UN maintains its cap of \$US400 per month on wages for Timorese employees.

Beyond the capital, life is returning to the villages laid waste in 1999. When peacekeepers arrived then, the landscape on the three-hour drive from Dili to the border was eerily devoid of human figures. People were either dead, hiding in the mountains or had been forced over the border. Around quarter of a million people had been deported to West Timor by the Indonesian military after the first waves of militia terror. All but 30,000 people have now returned, with assistance from the United Nations High Commission for Refugees (UNHCR)<sup>3</sup>.

Today, there are signs of recovery everywhere, backed either by the UN or non-governmental organisations. There are micro-credit schemes for farmers, trauma counsellors for

## DOCTORS IN THE TROPICS

THE THREE MONTHS DUNEDIN-BASED MILITARY surgeon Mike Hunter spent 'on tour' in East Timor in late 1999 is not a time he looks back on fondly.

It was hellishly hot, uncomfortable, the landscape steep and barren. The people of Suai, the remote South Timorese village where Hunter was stationed, lived in terror, and with nothing: the Indonesian forces who had torn through the area in a frenzy of post-election rioting had stripped the villages of "everything," Hunter remembers, "right down to the iron from the roofs.

"What they couldn't take, they'd smashed."

Amid this scene, a sophisticated MASH-like unit was established and Hunter, who is employed jointly by the New Zealand Army and the University of Otago, was called to serve there. Replete with 28 staff and surgical facilities, the unit's

role was to provide 'state of the art' emergency medical care to the New Zealand peacekeeping mission and 1200 United Nations' troops.

Their services were rarely required, but duty prevented Hunter from venturing far from the compound. He took to jogging around the 960m barbed-wire perimeter fence "to relieve the boredom". Meanwhile, the team were able to provide some medical services to the 40,000-strong local population of Timorese: they supplied antibiotics, delivered babies.

"It was ludicrous really," says Hunter. "The Timorese didn't need a team of hi-tech trauma specialists – they needed paediatricians, immunisations, a Tb programme, malaria nets, a safe water supply. And while we did what we could, I was



the grief-stricken and builders busily repairing houses and public buildings. A little over a year ago, most of the 13 district administrators were UN-appointed Europeans, but today they are all East Timorese.

Schools are functioning, but struggling with many issues. Since the government decided on its controversial policy of making Portuguese one of the two official languages – the other being Tetum, which is not spoken abroad – Portuguese-speakers have absolute preference in teacher recruitment. Textbooks are being designed and printed in Portugal but, meanwhile, classes continue in Indonesian, because the exotic European language is understood by only around 5 per cent of the population<sup>4</sup>. Few people spoke Indonesian either, before the 1975 invasion.

**AMONG THOSE WHO HAVE ROLLED UP THEIR SLEEVES** is 38-year-old Otago graduate Rui Araújo. As Health Minister of the newly-independent government, this moment in Dili seems light years away from the spring of 1998 when he landed in Dunedin.

He had graduated in medicine from Bali's Udayana State University in 1994 and was working as resident surgeon at Dili

hospital. In September 1998, the New Zealand embassy in Jakarta told him he had qualified for one of two Official Development Aid scholarships available to East Timorese.

It was for a diploma in public health, but Rui Araújo had always dreamt of specialising in obstetrics and gynaecology. "I wasn't that interested", he recalls.

A dramatic turn in his life caused him to reconsider. "Just days before the embassy got back to me, I had threats at home, constant phone calls to say my house or car would be burnt. I had recently participated in a pro-independence meeting. I thought 'Ok, I don't really want a career in public health, but I can't stay in East Timor.'" With his wife, Nina's, encouragement he decided to go.

Dunedin was a place so different from his tropical homeland that he feared cultural isolation would overcome him, if not the gnawing anxiety over his family: Rui (7) and Claudio (3), after the threats to his life from pro-Indonesian militia gangs.

He finished his diploma in October '99, then returned to East Timor for field work for his master's thesis, *A Suitable Medium-to-Long Term National Health System for East Timor: an East Timorese Perspective*.

Araújo was appointed as an independent in Alkatiri's first transitional government after the Fretilin Party's 2001 victory,



Otago graduate Rui Araújo (fifth from left, bottom row), pictured September 2001 in a line-up of cabinet members of East Timor's Second Transitional Government led by Prime Minister Mari Alkatiri (seventh from left, bottom row). Araújo's deputy Health Minister and Otago graduate João Martins is in the top row directly behind Alkatiri.

well aware that once we left, there was nothing in place to fill the gap."

But it was a gap that, following Hunter's return, continued to trouble Lt Col Andrew Dunn. An Otago graduate and now the Director of Army Health Services, Dunn commanded the Suai hospital for seven months from April 2000, and made it his business to develop and support a local health committee, comprising UN workers, non-governmental organisation volunteers, nuns and local people.

"I had the ability to travel from our remote location to Dili, the capital. Hence, I could see what should have been made available to 'our' locals. In this way, I managed to get a tuberculosis clinic up and running and get medical supplies to the general practice hospital in the Cova Lima district where

the New Zealand army was based."

Progress, believes Dunn, is inching along. A health infrastructure now exists, as does a working database – a major problem surrounding an early polio vaccine programme was figuring out what the actual population and demographics of the region were.

And while tuberculosis, dengue fever, malaria and obstetric health care remain massive challenges, Dunn discusses the health needs of East Timor with a tone of cautious optimism. He plans to go back, hoping his recently gained London Diploma of Tropical Medicine and Hygiene might be put to helpful use. "The future is, I think, good," Dunn says, carefully. "But I hope that the people's expectations are not too high."

Nicola Mutch

and continued in the second, which was sworn in the day after independence.

In this role, he has been able to put his thesis to work at a policy level: “Most of what I wrote in my thesis is now being implemented here,” he says with a grin.

Araújo’s task is formidable. A study by the World Bank published in October 2001 showed that residents in 38 per cent of *sucos* (clusters of villages of the same clan) had a 90-minute walk to their nearest health care provider, with no other form of transport available. In 25 per cent of *sucos*, the average walk was two-and-a-half hours.<sup>5</sup> Many women give birth at home, unassisted. East Timor consequently has one of the highest maternal mortality rates in the world, at 420 deaths per 100,000 births. Of every 1000 children born, 144 are dead before they reach five years of age. The average life expectancy is 57 years.<sup>6</sup> (By comparison, New Zealand’s maternal mortality rate is seven per 100,000 births; seven children per 1000 born die before they turn five; and life expectancy is 76 and 81 for New Zealand men and women, respectively).

The great Timorese health scourges are tuberculosis – endemic in Portuguese colonial times and never eradicated since – malaria, dengue fever and infant diarrhoea. First testing for HIV/AIDS has just begun, so the extent of the problem is not yet known.

Araújo’s sole East Timorese companion in his first days at Otago was João Martins who had also graduated in medicine in Indonesia. Martins had preceded him and was himself alone for almost a year.

“My adoptive family was great, but it was my first exposure to western food,” Martins recalled, “and I couldn’t eat it at first.”

Like Araújo, the cold climate and worry over his family made adjustment difficult. Both men agree that the warm reception they received in Dunedin helped overcome their concerns. They remember candle-lit vigils for East Timor’s freedom, neighbours who passed round the hat to pay their phone bills and strong support from the city’s Catholic congregation.

Martins joined Araújo in government after the 2001 parliamentary elections. He served as his deputy minister, and their common Otago experience made them a formidable team.

Araújo was a political independent, but Martins belonged to the Democratic Party, which fell out with Fretilin around the time of independence. As a result, he was dropped by Prime Minister Alkatiri when the new cabinet was formed. He has since dedicated himself to setting up a faculty of public health at the newly-established University of Dili and is sounding out former Otago teachers about potential help.

For both these Timorese alumni raised under the Suharto dictatorship, Otago represented their first contact with liberal values and independent thinking.

“In Indonesia, the lecturers write a ‘small introductory course’ extracted from various text-books, which the student is expected to learn,” Martins explained. “You can’t deviate from it or you will be considered ‘wrong’. At Otago, we were pointed to the library and referred to answers we could find for ourselves. There was no ‘wrong’, only ideas you presented and backed up with sources. I really liked this freedom.”

## THE ARMED FORCES EFFORT

IT ALL HAPPENED OVERNIGHT FOR ROYAL NEW ZEALAND Navy Commanding Officer and Otago science graduate Ross Smith, aboard *HMNZS Te Kaha*. One moment he and his ship were approaching the end of a five-power defence arrangement exercise in the “relatively benign” area of the South China Sea, the next he was being summoned to the waters between Timor and Australia.

*Te Kaha* arrived on 11 September 1999. Dili was burning, the surviving Timorese had fled to the hills, the Indonesian forces were acting aggressively and unpredictably.

“You spend almost your whole career in the armed forces training for events you hope will never happen. Suddenly it was happening, and happening very quickly,” Smith remembers.

And all that training, he says, immediately fell into place. Over the following weeks, *Te Kaha* was kept busy, escorting troop ships going to and from Darwin as part of the INTERFET (International Forces East Timor) operation.

The frigate also provided guardship duties in Dili harbour, carried out routine patrols, kept sea lines of communication open and acted as a hub for a range of air

and surface surveillance tasks. Smith’s crew kept a close eye on the movements of an Indonesian submarine for a while, and monitored air activity.

They never came ashore, never saw their enemy, nor the people they were defending.

“Naval warfare is very much more clinical than land-based,” Smith says. “Although the ship monitors air, surface and subsurface activities, you tend to work in two-dimensions. Your enemy is a blip on a radar screen – hopefully at long range. You don’t see the eyes of the enemy.”

THE DEATH OF PRIVATE LEONARD MANNING IN EAST Timor in 2000 provided the wake-up call.

While New Zealand’s armed forces undergo psychological preparation and debriefing before and after their deployment, until then there had been no one whose job it was to look after the emotional well-being of the soldiers ‘in theatre’.

But after the shooting, an army psychologist was called to New Zealand’s military base in Suai, and her role became a permanent fixture. Six months later, in early 2001, Otago-educated Kerryn Parke took up the post for two months.

**PAULA BARRY, 28, GRADUATED FROM OTAGO IN 1994** with a Bachelor of Consumer and Applied Science majoring in human nutrition. She is now applying her skills to an issue that also concerns Rui Araújo – the serious health problems of women and children in East Timor. She began work as a nutritionist in the district of Suai in September.

“It’s all very new. I’m working at building relations with the community, and I’m sending out monitoring messages, such as: ‘if kids have chest infections, diarrhoea – make sure they’re seen before they die.’”

She prepared herself with a four-week crash course in Tetum, the lingua franca of East Timor, and is coming to grips with the frustrations of working here. Suai is one of the hottest

areas of the country, with temperatures that sometimes surpass 40 degrees, and she is shocked by rural living standards. “I expected it to be hard, but I can’t believe people are doing it this hard. I can’t really compare it to anything else.”

She is concerned with the high rates of anaemia prevalent among Timorese women, which peak around child-bearing age. “Food is such an important part of people’s lives,” she reflects. “Because of the conditions, I have to try to find different solutions, which you wouldn’t have thought of at home.”

But she is not complaining. “I feel privileged. I try to keep my sights on the women and children. When I’m frustrated, I walk around the market and remember that they’re the people I’m here for.”



Otago graduate Paula Barry

Photo: Jill Jolliffe

During her tour, Parke held a discussion on responses to grief following the drowning of a soldier in Hera, talked to a Fijian battalion that had been involved in an enemy contact, and helped a soldier who was feeling suicidal.

But in the end, Parke says, coping with fighting and bloodshed wasn’t the greatest emotional challenge the troops faced. Far more pressing were issues of homesickness, performance pressures and relationship difficulties back home.

As for the Timorese, Parke says she can scarcely imagine the psychological scars they must bear. She met a few locals and was humbled by their resilience and generosity. But, in terms of helping them through their post-traumatic stress: “There was nothing we could do. These are lifelong issues – you can’t put a band-aid on them during your deployment. Even to have tried would have been completely inappropriate – culturally, socially and emotionally.”

**IN SEPTEMBER 2001, TWO YEARS AFTER THE INDEPENDENCE** elections and ensuing violence brought UN troops rushing to the region, Otago student Rob Elstone took up the call to serve in East Timor.

For Elstone, a helicopter electrical engineer in the Royal New Zealand Air Force, it would be his first ‘tour’, his first time out of the country. It was, he says, an eye opener.

“It was a place of massive contrasts. On one level, things were quite settled and felt strangely normal,” he says, remembering the bustling commerce of Dili. But life became more basic in Suai, with its concrete block shops and bamboo huts, and wilder still out west. There was still occasional confrontation along the border with the West Timor militia and Indonesian soliders, the outcome not always peaceful.

Not that Elstone had any hostile encounters with the Indonesian forces. He ran into some, once, out at the border, and everything was jovial enough. “They saw it as a photo opportunity.”

The Timorese villagers, too, took great interest in their Kiwi military neighbours, the children often crowding around the troops as they passed through the area. “They idolised us!”

The rule was firm though: don’t interfere with the villagers’ ways of living. “We didn’t want to do anything to cause them to become dependent on us,” says Elstone.

Nicola Mutch



ONE OTAGO GRADUATE WHO VISITED EAST TIMOR recently was tying up some important loose ends. David Wilkie, 79, graduated in medicine in 1948, later completing a postgraduate course in anaesthesia at Melbourne University.

He served in East Timor during a period when few foreigners were in the country. In early 1975, he was working as an anaesthetist in neighbouring Darwin, in the aftermath of Cyclone Tracy. By October, Indonesian troops were crossing the East Timor border in force, although a full-scale landing in Dili was only to occur in December. He answered a call for doctors by the International Committee of the Red Cross, and worked continuously in Dili hospital from October until the organisation evacuated him on the eve of the Dili paratroop landing.

Sitting in the garden of the historic Hotel Turismo, he recalled his first visit to Dili, around 1970, after he had become a hippy and abandoned medicine briefly. "In those days the 'hippy trail' began in Darwin and passed through Portuguese Timor to Indonesia, and that's how I first came here. I've been involved ever since," he said.

During his evacuation, he took a rare photo of the Indonesian attack on the capital, using a strong lens from the offshore island of Ataúro. A sinister mushroom cloud hung over the burning city, as the Australian Broadcasting Corporation quoted statements from Jakarta that peace and stability had been restored in Dili.

Wilkie's pilgrimage was incomplete without a visit to the surgeon's residence near Dili hospital where he lived in 1975. It is now occupied by Brigadier-General Taur Matan Ruak, commander of East Timor's new western-style army. In early 1999, Ruak was still commanding the resistance army – a bearded, long-haired guerrilla hunted by the Indonesians.

Today, he is clean-shaven and spruce. Hearing about Wilkie, he instantly invited him for a cup of tea and a nostalgic inspection of the house, during which they chatted at length.

But, like most Otago graduates who have made their impact here, Wilkie didn't come to East Timor out of curiosity or for merely sentimental reasons. He wanted to contribute actively. While visiting Ataúro, scene of his 1975 departure, he discovered an eco-tourism scheme that could really help the country along. Its energy problem will soon be remedied by solar panels, which he will deliver on return to New Zealand.


Jill Joliffe

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PROFILE

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# BALLET SHOES TO CRAMPONS

– a graduate's expedition through life

AS SOMEONE WHOSE VERTICAL EXPEDITIONS  
DON'T STRAY MUCH PAST BALDWIN STREET,  
THE NOTION OF CLIMBING 8000 METRES  
JUST WON'T FIT QUIETLY INSIDE MY BRAIN.  
I'M ALSO QUITE PARTIAL TO OXYGEN,  
SO THE THOUGHT OF HAVING ONLY ONE THIRD  
OF THIS LOVELY STUFF INSIDE YOUR LUNGS  
IN THE AREA KNOWN TO THE HIGH ALTITUDE  
FRATERNITY AS THE DEATH ZONE,  
IS SIMILARLY DIFFICULT TO ACCOMMODATE.  
NOT SO FOR MOUNTAINEERING ACE  
JULIE-ANN CLYMA – AN UPWARDLY INTREPID WOMAN  
DEEPLY SMITTEN WITH THE CULTURE OF CLIMBING.



*Pumari Chisch 7350m, May-June 2000: Julie-Ann Clyma making the first attempt on the south face of this unclimbed peak in the Biafo-Hispar area of the Karakoram in Pakistan.*

WITH BRITISH HUSBAND ROGER PAYNE, SHE'S MADE A number of first British/New Zealand ascents including Nanda Devi East (7431m) in India, and peaks Khan Tengri (7010m) and Pobeda (7435m) in Kazakhstan. Add to this her attempts at three 8000m peaks - including the notoriously difficult K2, yearly expeditions to the Himalayas, and 10 years as a mountain guide, and you know you're dealing with a woman of formidable pluck.

There was no real vertical challenge to be had on the flat Invercargill expanse of Clyma's childhood. Nor was her family an especially outdoorsy one: "I wouldn't say I was an adventurous child at all! Very bookish – always reading... I should add that my taking up mountaineering seemed quite odd to my family, as I had spent many years (from age 5 to 17) studying ballet!" Hefty climbing boots and crampons are indeed some way from pink ballet shoes, but all that pirouetting and poise was no doubt excellent training for the careful, deliberate footwork needed on alpine ascents.

Seems that Clyma's mountain fever hatched rather accidentally. While working towards a BSc (Hons) in human physiology at the University of Otago (1980-84) her friends dragged her along to join the University's Tramping Club. After a few treks (sans the enthusiastic friends who'd signed her up) she was invited by one of the leaders of the Club to climb Mt Sefton in the Mt Cook National Park. It was there that she got her first heady whiff of mountain air: "I was totally hooked." On finishing her studies, she left New Zealand to travel, making Peru her first stop. There, at one of the base camps, she further sealed the vertical nature of her future travels: she met British climber Roger Payne whom she married and accompanied to England.

Those of us whose mountaineering knowledge is gained from the fully oxygenated safety of the couch via grim tales of fraught expeditions, are always fascinated by what drives these people to toy with gravity's curfew. Anyone who has cowered under the bedclothes reading Jon Krakauer's *Into Thin Air: a personal account of the Everest Disaster* will know that even the most experienced climbers are not immune to the cerebral danger wrought by high altitudes. Clyma describes the iron will power needed to push past the 7000-8000m mark: "Everything happens terribly slowly and when you are gasping for oxygen your thought processes get muddled and slowed. It is hard to react quickly to anything. It is very easy as you get more and more tired to just not care about hazards around you. The only thing you can sometimes think about is staying upright and keeping moving. Even simple things like putting up a tent and brewing a drink are hard, because all you want to do is lie down and sleep."

Of the 14 so-called 8000m peaks the most formidable is K2 (8611m) - known to some as 'Savage Mountain'. Though

second to Mt Everest in height, K2 is trickier to summit and its weather conditions are more capricious. Clyma once spent 11 weeks trying to win K2 (she also helped install two micro-hydro electricity schemes in local villages) but was eventually defeated by unrelenting storms. She recalls the human toll on that bleakest of expeditions: "The experience was awful because five people died on the mountain that summer. It is terribly sobering when you are in a camp listening on your radio while other people are out there fighting to survive. On our early attempt on the mountain we rescued a climber who had been to the summit and whose partner died on the descent. We picked him up at around 7700m, kept him in our snow-hole overnight, and then lowered him down the mountain the next day. He was lucky to survive, and there is no pleasure in a mountain when you are surrounded by tragedy."

A far more emphatic reminder of the perils of mountaineering is the gap where one of Clyma's big toes should be. It belongs to Mt Cook now – claimed by frostbite during a winter ascent in 1983. At one point, Clyma and her mountaineering partner had to stop and wait for sufficient light, and it was during this pause that her feet became very cold. She recalls: "It was only when we got back to the hut and I got my boots off that I found that both feet were frozen solid – from the toes back to the instep." She was evacuated by helicopter the following day and treated at Burwood Hospital in Christchurch, where she stayed for two months while the tissue healed. She cheerfully concludes: "Very fortunately there was no infection, and in the end I only needed surgery to remove one of my big toes."

So why do they do it? Why throttle every last nerve and withered ounce of flesh in such tremendously uncomfortable and dangerous conditions? When George Mallory was asked why he wanted to climb Mt Everest in 1924, he replied: "Because it is there." Clyma, thankfully, is a lot less laconic. She cites the satisfaction of meeting physical and intellectual challenges – of pushing her body as far as it will go and using her accumulated experience and judgement to do so safely. She describes the exultation in the pub at the end of an expedition: "...you see all these climbers excited and gesticulating, describing what they've done, and they are all equal – they all have the same intense feelings of discovery."

And then there are those 'spiritual Berocca' moments when you are as far away as possible from the dulling rut of small daily concerns and snaking arms of materialism. Clyma enjoys this mountain-top soul balm – "the feeling of your spirit being refreshed from the spells of solitude, and that opportunity to see yourself as such a tiny object in a vast landscape.... It makes you appreciate your insignificance and climbing is a great way of getting perspective. Many people I know say that going away climbing gives them a greater appreciation of life and the things they have."



When not exploring the limits of her own physical capacity, Clyma is busy investigating the physiological quirks of others. She spent five years at the Centre for Cancer Epidemiology in Manchester where she completed a Master's degree in Public Health on the treatment of women with cancer. Currently living in Switzerland, Clyma is writing her PhD on male infertility. As absorbing as this research is, she doesn't stay tethered to her desk for long. Much of the spring is spent doing ski touring work and the summer months see her guiding groups in the Alps. Clyma plans to finish her PhD soon, but adds "that all depends on the climbing conditions!"

Krakauer described his own compulsive mountain fever as "an essential expression of some odd, immutable aspect of my personality that I could no sooner alter than change the colour of my eyes."<sup>1</sup> I ask Clyma if she, too, falls prey to mountain hunger when she's been anchored at sea level for a

while: "Once you are a mountaineer, it seems impossible to resist going back. It's not just a feeling of wanting to climb peaks, but also of wanting to keep that connection with the environment. So I always have climbing plans, but even if I can't climb, then just getting out to walk and be outside is important. It definitely feels like you get withdrawal symptoms otherwise."

Though we can only offer her a modest 3764m Aoraki/Mt Cook to dig her crampons into, Clyma believes the New Zealand wilderness experience is second to none. The tug of home is very much upon her – she plans on yielding to it soon.

<sup>1</sup> John Krakauer, *Into Thin Air*, Pan Books, London: 1998, p.83

Claire Finlayson

*Julie-Ann Clyma on K2, 8611m, July-August 1993.*



FEATURE

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# YOUNG, GIFTED AND

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NEW ZEALAND IS ATTRACTING SOME OF THE WORLD'S LEADING RESEARCHERS BACK HOME.

What is it about Aotearoa, and especially Otago, that's making some of our most gifted graduates leave the thrum of the northern hemisphere and head back south?

Two of the University's most recent appointments in the field of medicine – Professors Allan Herbison and Stephen Robertson – have done just that. A world expert in infertility, Herbison continues to break new ground. And Robertson is making waves in the area of human disease – the only one in the world working on a group of rare congenital disorders. As they each try to nail the “x-factor” in their decision to come back, there is a distinct echo - they were born here, they like the lifestyle, and last but not least, the job is the right one.





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# BACK AT OTAGO

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INVERCARGILL-BORN HERBISON (41) – HEAD OF THE new Wellcome Trust-funded research unit in the Department of Physiology – jumped at the opportunity to establish New Zealand as an important international site for the study of neuro-endocrinology.

“This University not only has the biggest physiology department in the country, but there are also a number of people outside the department doing work in a similar style to

me. I’m looking forward to forging strong collaborations within the University and eventually beyond it.”

Herbison’s interest in neuron activity and reproduction began when he took a year out from his medical studies to work with Professor John Hubbard. Hubbard introduced him to the part of the brain involved in reproduction and he worked in his laboratory recording the electrical activity of neurons in this particular area.



*Professors Stephen Robertson (left) and Allan Herbison: two young, talented researchers returning to Dunedin to take up key academic positions*



“If we understand how the brain controls fertility, there’s a chance we can do something about the growing problem of infertility,” he says. “About 10 per cent of couples worldwide are infertile and this problem is growing in the developed world largely due to the fact that women are delaying pregnancy.”

Graduating with a BMedSc in 1983 and a MBChB in 1986, Herbison then spent his internship year at Otago. In 1987, he worked in Auckland for a year and, in 1988, won a Commonwealth Scholarship to Jesus College in Cambridge. His PhD, awarded in 1990, was so successful he ended up with a choice of college fellowships, eventually taking one at Pembroke College, Cambridge. After a six-month stint in France, he returned to Cambridge with the prestigious Jenner Fellowship from the Lister Institute of Preventive Medicine and, a year later, was offered a permanent position at the Babraham Institute, a UK government-funded research institute in Cambridge.

His most recent breakthrough was developing techniques to examine the neurons in the brain that control the ovaries and the testes.

“Until recently, we didn’t have much idea at all about how this worked,” he says. “Now we can look at all the genes being expressed by these neurons and make recordings of their electrical activity. It means we can characterise these neurons – find something unique about them.”

Being able to investigate the GnRH (gonadotrophin-releasing hormone) neurons which control the ovaries was a major step forward.

“These neurons release GnRH and ovulation occurs in response. The oestrogen and progesterone released from the ovaries then feed back to the brain telling it what’s happening. This circular process is critical to the normal regulation of fertility.

“If we find a way to manipulate this activity, we can use this knowledge to manipulate fertility.” And reaching this “molecular level” of knowledge means a more precise method of treatment is possible, he says.

“The way the pill works, for instance, is to disrupt this circle of messaging by overloading the body with oestrogen and progesterone. We’re talking about finding a process that is much more refined.”

Herbison’s efforts to progress this work are being backed with some serious cash: The Wellcome Trust have contributed \$2.5 million and Marsden have put forward \$750,000.

**FINDING SMART WAYS TO TREAT DISEASE IS ALSO AN** important spin-off in Robertson’s work. Robertson (36), a paediatrician appointed to the newly-established Chair of Child Health Research at Otago.

“I came back because I wanted to find somewhere where genetics was already strong and the vision was to make it stronger. The more we know about what causes things like asthma or diabetes for instance, the more precise we can be about how to treat them.”

And Robertson’s particular area of genetic research is very precise. His prime interests are the underlying causes of congenital malformations. He currently heads a research effort aimed at refining our knowledge of the genetics of these conditions. The principal focus of this effort is a group of four related but rare conditions - the *frontoootopalatodigital osteodysplasias* group - all of which affect the skull, face and limbs, as well as other organs, and which are purely genetic in origin.

“They manifest in a number of ways – combinations of deafness, cleft palate, fingers fused or missing, bones and tendons not completely formed, for instance,” says Robertson.

“One or two children in 50 are born with something that is structurally not quite right - a hole in the heart, hydrocephalus, deafness, spina bifida, for example. While the origin of some of these can be attributed to things like drugs or infections, the vast majority are a puzzle. These disorders certainly have genetic components, but they don’t run in families in a predictable fashion.

“The particular group I’m looking at are all purely genetic in origin. What I’m interested in is finding the particular gene – or genes in these cases – which have mutated or changed in some way. If we understand the basis of rare conditions like these, there’s a good chance we will be able to understand those sporadic birth defects, like holes in the heart etc. that individually occur more commonly.”

Robertson’s interest in this area of human genetics began at Otago in 1987 when he did a BMedSc with Professor Warren Tate in the Department of Biochemistry. He then shifted to Auckland in 1991, where he trained as a paediatrician at the Starship Children’s Hospital. From there, he went to Melbourne and the Royal Children’s Hospital working in the Victoria Clinical Genetics Service as a clinical geneticist. Three years ago, he went to Oxford on a Nuffield Medical Fellowship and started working full-time in the laboratory. It was during his time at Oxford that he identified the chromosomal “address” of the evasive gene that is mutated in the group of disorders that he is studying.

“We’re now combing that chromosome in detail,” he says. “It’s a bit like searching for a genetic needle in a haystack.” But he’s confident he is only “a few months away” from finding that rogue gene.

“While our own defined area of interest seems small in the world scene, each time we learn something new, it’s adding another piece to the jigsaw.”

Once the gene has been identified, the next step will be to study the protein it produces to find out more about how the gene works and what it interacts with.

“In this way we can then perhaps pin-point other genes which might contribute to these conditions.”

Accompanied by a large collection of patients’ samples, Robertson will continue this work in New Zealand.

“There are important dividends for those several dozen families I’ve been working with,” he says. “While there is no cure for these disorders, knowing which gene is responsible

means we can make a more accurate diagnosis and, in some cases, reassure people the gene is not present.”

And after three years largely confined to the laboratory, Robertson is looking forward to having more clinical contact with people.

“I’m first and foremost a clinician. Many scientists don’t get the opportunity to interact clinically with the people affected by the conditions they are studying - it’s a great privilege.”

As well as the demands of continuing this research alongside his clinical practice, Robertson also faces the challenges of a newly-established role – Chair of Child Health – a joint venture between the Child Health Research Foundation and the University. Robertson is relishing the prospect: “I think what they’re saying is that genetics is important and they want to foster it. For me to be part of that is exciting. The challenge will be to translate our understanding into dividends for families.”

FOR BOTH HERBISON AND ROBERTSON, RETURNING to their birthplace has always been on the horizon.

“I only ever went away to come back,” says Herbison. “New Zealand is home and there’s no getting away from that.” Even after 15 years in the UK, the pull is strong. “Our families are here – we want to give our children their grandparents and

cousins.” Herbison and his wife Mary have three children – Amy (18), Ryan (9), and Kelly (7). Though Mary was born in Takapuna and treasures her beach-bound childhood, she is happy to come to Dunedin. “We both like the proximity to Queenstown, the lakes and mountains,” he says. “Cambridge is a lovely place to live, but there’s a ruggedness about the South Island that appeals as well as the fact that it’s not so densely populated.”

And for Robertson, too, his New Zealandness and love of the outdoors is also key to his migration back. Robertson and wife Robyn Blake, a GP and once a keen long-distance swimmer, both studied at Otago and still love Dunedin. “It’s the lifestyle here and Dunedin’s status as a University city,” he says. And with three young children – Nicholas (6), Mark (3) and Isabelle (2) – they, too, want to be closer to their families.

Robertson and Herbison are here for the long haul. While Herbison stresses the importance of being able to attend international meetings – “it’s what’s said off-stage, over a beer, that’s important” – he plans to stay put for at least 10 years. And, full of praise for the commitment of the University and the Foundation in setting up the Chair, Robertson wants to bring permanence to this important new position.

Dianne Pettis



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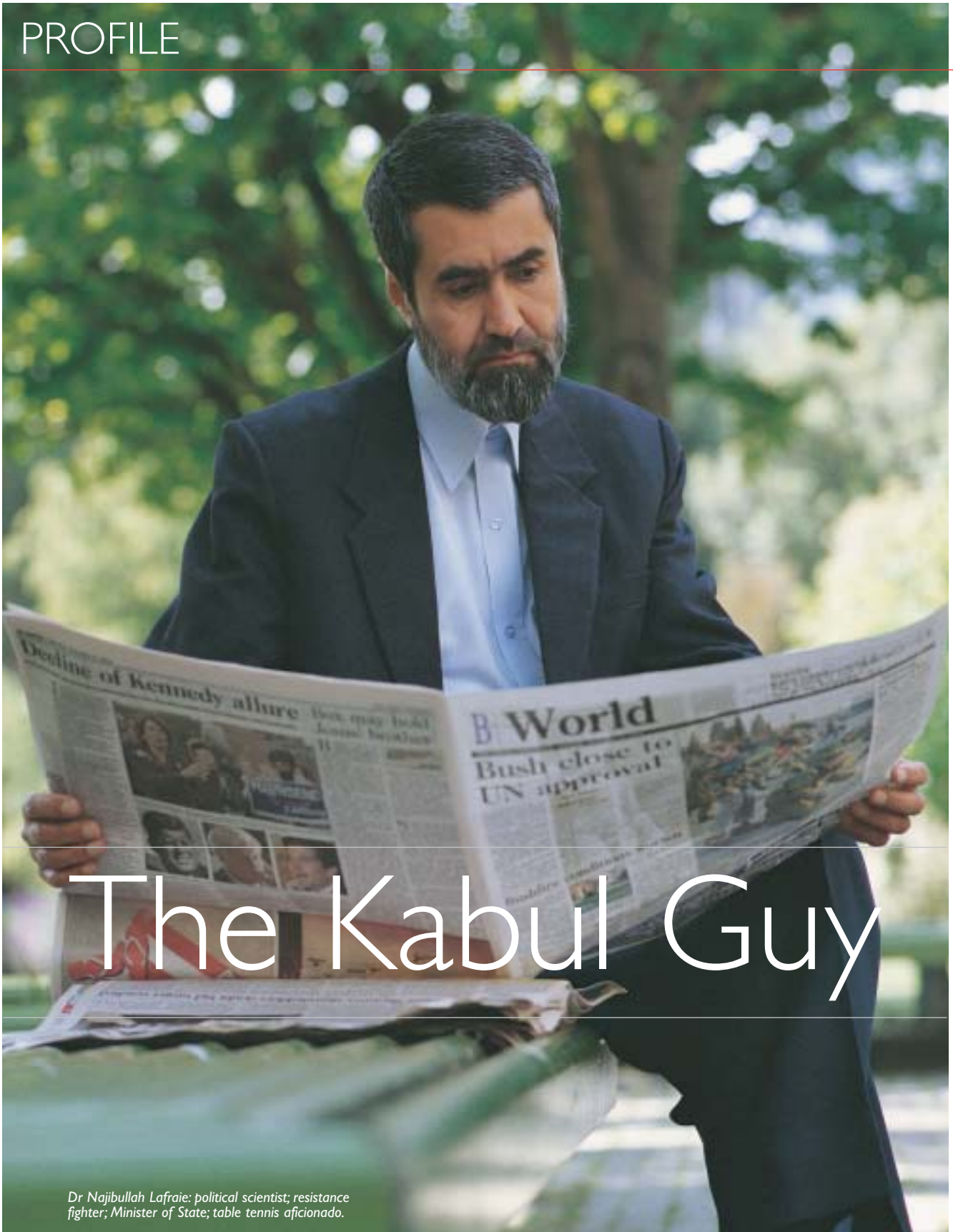
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PROFILE



# The Kabul Guy

*Dr Najibullah Lafraie: political scientist; resistance fighter; Minister of State; table tennis aficionado.*

Photo: Stephen Goodenough



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FOR A FORMER MUJAHIDEEN FREEDOM FIGHTER, DR NAJIBULLAH LAFRAIE PROJECTS A SURPRISINGLY GENTLE DEMEANOUR. HE'S SLIGHTLY BUILT AND SOFTLY SPOKEN. HE PLAYS AND ENJOYS COMPETITIVE TABLE TENNIS.

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BUT THERE'S NO DOUBT, THE OTAGO POLITICAL studies teaching fellow's professional life has been an eventful one. Of his stint as Afghani Minister of State for Foreign Affairs in Kabul in the 1990's, Lafraie comments: "The office was under rocket attack quite often, and we did suffer casualties. But that wasn't the worst aspect of the job. My main problems came from the [corrupt] practices of some of my government colleagues."

Such recollections are typical of Lafraie. The understated treatment of awful circumstance (as if missile attack is comparable to faulty air conditioning), the seriousness of his commitment to his country, and, above all, his extraordinary resilience in the face of adversity.

Lafraie remembers his time growing up in Afghanistan as relatively peaceful.

"Afghanistan was not a very advanced country, but it was not very poor either. For me, it was a good time. I was in a middle-class family in Kabul City, and it was a comfortable life."

He went to Kabul University, completing a BA in Law and Political Science before travelling to Hawaii for postgraduate work. But his studies were disrupted by the Communist coup in 1978 and, when the Soviets invaded the following year, Lafraie abandoned his books and returned to join the resistance movement. His life, and Afghanistan, changed forever.

"Living conditions were extremely difficult," says Lafraie, on his time in the Mujahideen. "But psychologically, you could deal with it easily, because you knew you were doing something that was good and you were fulfilling your obligations."

"Although the people in the world at that point did not believe that poor Afghans could defeat a superpower, we believed that just as our ancestors had forced the British out of Afghanistan, we could force the Soviets out."

And force them out they did, only for the country to collapse soon into internal strife. The story's familiar to us now: factionalism broke out and the Taliban rose to power. But Lafraie sees most of Afghanistan's problems as stemming from foreign interference. It's a trend continuing today, with the US presence in Afghanistan.

"When the Taliban rule began to end, I was optimistic about the future of Afghanistan, and the opportunity for Afghan self-governance," he says. "But as time has gone on, I have become much more pessimistic. Many officials in Afghanistan have complained about the American arrogance,

how they act without consultation. If this is how those in positions of privilege are feeling, imagine the resentment among the poorer Afghans, many of whom faced American bombs during the 'war on terrorism'."

Lafraie observes that many Muslims are suspicious of US motives in the Middle East and Central Asia. This, he believes, along with issues of Muslim self-determination, were key factors in the September 11 attacks.

"The attacks on New York were a terrible crime against innocent people, and cannot be justified in any way. However, they were not mindless acts; they expressed a bitter resentment towards US foreign policy and interference in the Middle East. Even Bin Laden was not anti-American until the Saudi regime refused his offer to help in ousting Saddam Hussein from Kuwait, and instead invited US troops into a land that he considers sacred."

While Dr Lafraie feels that the US needs to address its foreign policy, particularly in relation to Palestine, he also sees education as having an important role in diffusing hostility between Western and Muslim countries. He argues that many Muslims, and especially Muslim youth, are drawn to extremist ideologies like those of Bin Laden, because they lack a proper understanding of Islam.

"Islam is a religion of the middle way. It rejects all extremes, whether of a worldly or spiritual nature. Most Muslims are moderate. But the extremists find fertile ground among the youth who don't know much about their religion. In Afghanistan, for example, very few people are literate and, even for those who are, the Koran is usually recited in Arabic, rather than read for understanding in Afghan languages. So the people are observant, but lack a proper and deep understanding of their religion."

Politics in Afghanistan, of course, have been blighted by such extremism, and its target has included the Afghan people themselves. Dr Lafraie experienced this first hand in 1996, when the Taliban captured Kabul. While most of the government of which he was a part fled, Lafraie and his family went into hiding at a relative's house.

"It seemed like a good way to get out of politics," he says. "I thought I would only have to hide for two weeks or so, and then I could maybe go back to teaching at the university. I didn't think I had done anything wrong, so I thought I had nothing to fear."

As it was, Lafraie and his family were in hiding for 11 months. How does one survive such an ordeal?

“You keep yourself busy. I saw it as an opportunity to read some books and learn more about Afghan history. I also spent time teaching my children. The English I taught them was very useful later on when we came to New Zealand.”

During this time, Lafraie’s brother was arrested and thrown in prison, where he spent 18 months in shackles. And, when the Taliban came looking for his host, Lafraie was forced to escape to Pakistan.

Two years later, with the Taliban extending their power base to the north, the Lafraie family applied for refugee status from the United Nations High Commission for Refugees. They were advised that they had been accepted as refugees by New Zealand in August 2000, and they arrived in September of the same year. Since then, Lafraie has watched events unfold in his own country from afar.

Lafraie’s reminded of a verse in the Holy Koran from which he took solace during his time with the Mujahideen. It told the story of Christian youths, who, persecuted by a cruel pagan ruler, hid in a cave, and were put into a divine sleep for 300 years. When they awoke, the ruler’s reign had passed, and there was peace in the land. At the time, Lafraie imagined such a sleep would see an end to the Soviets. Now, he only hopes he will not have to wait so long for peace to be restored to Afghanistan.

Christan Stoddart

Associate Professor Robert Patman, former Acting Head of Political Studies at the University of Otago, gave more than 50 media interviews in the wake of September 11. At one such session, he was struck by the insightful and balanced comments of the guest appearing before him on the same programme – Dr Najibullah Lafraie.

“I thought at the time how lucky we were in New Zealand to have an Islamic scholar who, through a combination of high-level diplomatic experience and academic training, could offer such a unique perspective on recent events.”

Two months later, Patman received an approach from the New Zealand immigration service, alerting him to the academic availability of Lafraie. Remembering the speaker that had made such an impression on him, and somewhat surprised that no other institution had snapped him up, Patman rushed to secure the services of Lafraie.

Calls were made, meetings convened, funding eventually found and, in the second semester of 2002, Lafraie became a teaching fellow in the Department of Political Studies at Otago. His 200-level paper, *Islam, Politics and the Challenge of Terrorism*, attracted an amazing 142 students at short notice. And forget student ratings: at the end of the semester, Lafraie received a standing ovation from his class.

The paper will be repeated in first semester, 2003.

LAFRAIE'S LIFE	AFGHANI POLITICAL EVENTS
Najibullah Lafraie born in Kabul, Afghanistan	1948
Lafraie attends Kabul University	1966
Lafraie graduates with a BA in Law and Political Science	1970
Lafraie begins studying for his master's in Political Science at the University of Hawaii	1973
Lafraie is visiting Kabul to conduct research for his PhD dissertation. Following the coup he returns to Hawaii	1978
Following the Soviet invasion, Lafraie joins the Mujahideen in Pakistan	1979
Lafraie returns to his studies in Hawaii	1982
Lafraie completes his PhD in Political Science	1986
Lafraie returns to Pakistan	1987
Lafraie named Minister of Information in the Afghan Interim Government in exile	1989
Lafraie becomes Minister of State for Foreign Affairs in Rabbani government	1992
	1994
Lafraie and his family go into hiding	1996
Lafraie and family escape to Pakistan	1997
Lafraie and family arrive in New Zealand as refugees	2000
Jenny Shipley uses parliamentary privilege to accuse Lafraie of past terrorist activity, the suggestion is rubbished	2001
Lafraie takes up teaching fellow post at the University of Otago	2002
	King Zahir Shah overthrown in military coup by Daoud Khan and the Afghan Communist Party
	Violent coup, Daoud is killed and Taraki becomes president; Taraki signs treaty of friendship with the USSR; Mujahideen resistance movement born
	Taraki and his successor Hafizullah Amin are killed; USSR invade in December, Babrak Karmal becomes president
	Babrak Karmal replaced by Dr Najibullah
	Mujahideen reject ceasefire proposed by Dr Najibullah
	Soviet Union defeated; Mujahideen continue fighting regime of Dr Najibullah
	Mujahideen take Kabul and liberate Afghanistan; Burhannudin Rabbani becomes president; Opposition from Pakistani-backed warlord, Galbuddin Heymatyar
	Taliban movement born
	Taliban take Kabul
	Attacks on World Trade Centre and Pentagon; US launches attacks on Afghanistan; Hamid Karzai named interim leader of Afghanistan

# ENTREPRENEURSHIP AT OTAGO

ACCORDING TO THE 2001 GLOBAL ENTREPRENEURSHIP Monitor Report, New Zealand was the second most entrepreneurial country in the world. Last year's showing was not quite as impressive, but again it still found that New Zealand was an international leader.

In the light of these findings, wouldn't a new academic programme at Otago focusing on fostering entrepreneurship be like trying to teach your grandmother to suck eggs?

Not so, according to Dr Jenny Darroch, Director of Entrepreneurship at the University of Otago.

Although New Zealand may have a comparatively high level of entrepreneurial activity of the kind measured in the report, most of it is generated by "lifestyle" entrepreneurs,

rather than by the ventures that will play a crucial role in developing the knowledge economy, she says.

"Choosing to start a business to become your own boss or to replace an income stream may make you an entrepreneur in one sense of the word, but we're more interested in a definition that goes quite a way beyond that."

Entrepreneurship at Otago focuses instead on the types of businesses that come up with ground-breaking ideas with identified markets, especially in areas where New Zealand can get an edge over international competitors.

Innovation alone isn't the key to these export and job-generating businesses. Risk-taking and growth opportunism are just as important, and, taken together, they are the "three

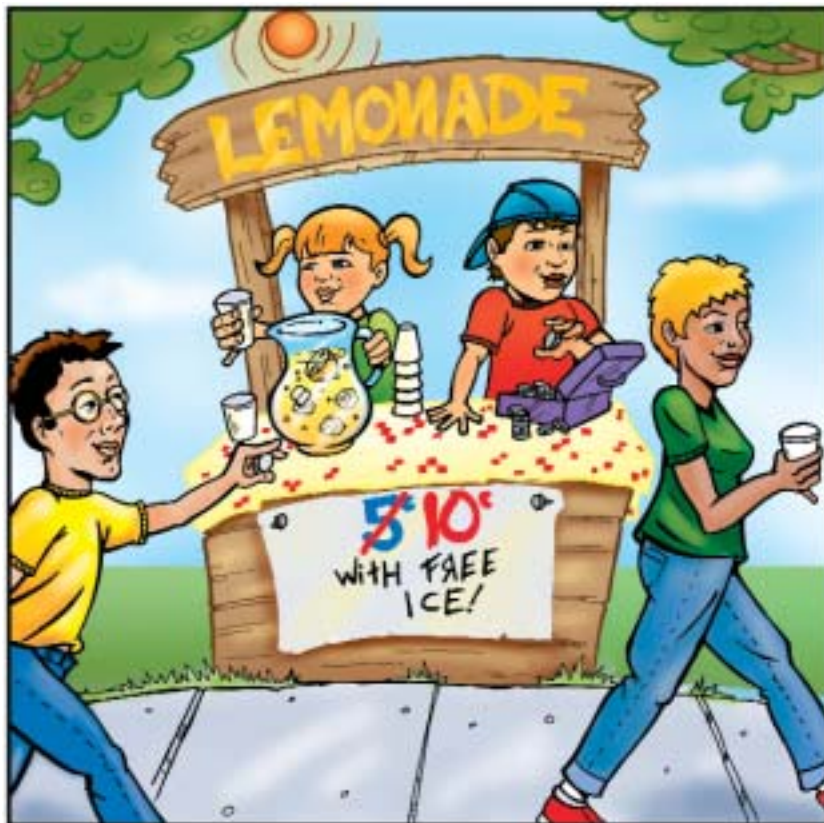


Photo: Dean Proudfoot, Watermark Ltd





*Dr Jenny Darroch – encouraging innovation, growth, opportunism and risk-taking beyond the lifestyle business.*

pillars” which underpin entrepreneurship, Darroch says.

In some quarters, there is a degree of scepticism – and perhaps rightly so – about whether academic study can create entrepreneurs.

Darroch acknowledges that some people will never have any inclination towards entrepreneurialism, and that there are others who will be highly successful entrepreneurs without ever studying it at university.

But in between these two extremes is a mass of people who can be successfully taught the skills and knowledge required in entrepreneurship.

“We can’t change people’s personalities, but we can help them identify their own strengths and weaknesses. In areas that they may have difficulty with, we can help them to develop skills. We can also identify the gaps where they might want to team up with someone who can complement them.”

Since her appointment in 2001, Darroch has been busy assisting in the preparation of new papers designed to equip students with this entrepreneurial know-how, and is developing a full-time taught master’s degree for introduction in 2004.

The new papers, which are being introduced this year, are specifically targeted at the University’s recently-established Bachelor of Applied Science – an innovative programme with the aim of enthusing students into creating science-based businesses.

The third-year paper in Entrepreneurship is based on case studies of entrepreneurial ventures, illustrating the development of an idea from opportunity recognition, through start-up, to the stage when outside money is needed and – although nobody likes to talk about it – exit strategies.

Darroch also intends to invite outside speakers in to share their real world experiences with the students.

“I’d like to bring in people who have actually failed, maybe failed and never come back to it, and maybe failed and come back and done quite well. Rising from the ashes is an important part of the story of being an entrepreneur.”

Christchurch mobile communications mogul Sir Angus Tait is one such phoenix.

At the University of Otago sponsored Innovate Conference last year, he described how his first company went under after 15 years of hard graft, due to his mistaken belief that if he got the technology right, everything else would fall into place.

In 1969, at the age of 50, he took out a second mortgage on his house and started Tait Electronics, this time making sure the money side was attended to. As of last year, the company employed 850 people, exported 90 per cent of product into well over 80 countries, and was striving to break the \$200 million per annum sales barrier.

Through the entrepreneurship programme, the lessons that Sir Angus learnt the hard way can now be imparted before budding entrepreneurs get started, Darroch says.

“We can teach them some business acumen, for instance to know how to calculate the risks, and to know when to get outside help, such as tax or legal advice.”

The new master’s programme also has great potential for building on degrees such as Applied Science and Health Sciences, allowing graduates creating innovative export-oriented businesses, based around cutting-edge University research, to be retained in the Otago region, she says.

Darroch is also highly enthusiastic about building close links with the University’s business incubator, the Centre for Innovation.

“We’ve already identified an amazing number of synergies where we can see how we can come together. Just one example is feeding in start-up companies put together by teams of Applied Science and Commerce graduates.”

Starting up businesses that can grow to a substantial size has been identified as a key requirement for New Zealand’s economic development goals, and institutions like Otago will be increasingly important in helping to realise these goals, Darroch says.

“Whether it’s through encouraging an entrepreneurial mindset through our educational programmes or collaborating with business to commercialise discoveries, universities will play a vital role in fostering the development of the new industries that we need to compete successfully in the global arena.”

Simon Ancell

# HOCKEN LEGACY



Toss Woollaston (1910-98)  
*Landscape, Tahunanui* 1934  
Oil on canvas on board:  
483 x 610mm  
Hocken Library  
(Given by Mr R.E. Kennedy 1976)

TO THOSE FAMILIAR WITH THE MUDDIER EXTREMES of Woollaston's tonal range, *Landscape Tahunanui* will be a surprising smack in the eyes. Quintessential Woollaston is a far murkier, more earthy affair than this vibrant landscape would have you believe. But then this was a young artist in transit – still giddy on the scent of modern art, and inches away from what was to become his own idiosyncratic perch.

In 1931, while wilting under the restrictive tutelage of the Canterbury School of Art, Woollaston chanced upon the chromatic vigour of a recent British import - R.N. Field. So captivated was he by Field's uncorseted approach to colour, that he cycled from Nelson to Dunedin (with an easel strapped to his back) to seek the man out.

*Landscape Tahunanui* wears these heady Field-inspired colours while also saluting the work of one of European modernism's most influential sons: Paul Cézanne. Woollaston devoured all he could of Cézanne from Flora Scales – a New Zealander who had nudged up against avant-garde notions while studying art in Europe. It was here that Woollaston

gained permission to ignore art's cherished notions of perspective: "...I learned that vanishing perspective was out. My relief and excitement at this knew no bounds."<sup>1</sup>

Having grown up amid the unrelenting green of the Taranaki landscape, Woollaston delighted in the parched, sun-stained land of the Nelson region. It became source of both art and economic livelihood; fruit-picking jobs yielded enough to leaven his straitened circumstances, his mother's admonishment that 'artists always starve' no doubt hovering ominously in his mind.

Woollaston's expressive response to the landscape elicited scorn from some quarters. One visitor to his 1936 exhibition in Dunedin disparaged his efforts as: "...the mind of a monkey expressing itself through a human."<sup>2</sup> Not that this swayed the artist from pursuing his loose, unfussy mode of painting: "Tidying up is *the devil*."<sup>3</sup>

Claire Finlayson

<sup>1</sup> Toss Woollaston, *Sage Tea: An Autobiography*, Collins, Auckland, 1980, p 245

<sup>2</sup> Toss Woollaston, *op.cit.*, pp 255-256

<sup>3</sup> Gregory O'Brien, *Lands & Deeds*, Godwit, Auckland, 1996, p199

## HOCKEN LIBRARY EXHIBITIONS

21 December 2002 – 8 March 2003

- Signs: Scott Eady (Frances Hodgkins Fellow 2002)
- Hardy by Nature: Michele Beevors (School of Art, Otago Polytechnic)

15 March – 17 May 2003

- Mediatata: paintings by Thelma Beer and verse by Dr Peter Frost
- Moving Still: paintings by Gary McMillan
- Under the Skirts of Erebus: Frocks about Science. New design from Fieke Neuman (Antarctic Arts Fellow 2002/3)

## ALUMNI INSIGHT

# Why you can take the boy out of



Photo: Becky Nunes

*New Zealand comedian Jeremy Elwood.*

WHEN IT COMES TO KEEPING IN TOUCH with the past, I have to confess that I am a serial arsonist. Over the years, I've burned so many bridges that the notion of "no man is an island" is beginning to look decidedly waterlogged. My own history of transience, combined with the nature of my professional life, long ago led me to the conclusion that people will cross paths when and where it's supposed to happen. Don't panic, I'm not espousing some post-new age, destiny vs fate argument for it being a small world, but in my experience people come and go. Simple.

So why does it seem that on the other side of every bridge there's an ex- Dunedinite waiting with a cold beer? By my reckoning, in the four years since I moved from the South, I have met, through no planning or predictable pattern of my own, ex-Dunedin people in no less than nine different countries, and god knows how many individual cities. Let me state right here that by "no predictable planning" I mean that I have never undertaken the classic Kiwi OE – officially defined as "blowing the last of your student loan on a trip to London where you live with the same people and do the same things you were doing back home". I've never taken a Contiki tour, never been to The Church, never owned a combi wagon, and never, EVER performed the haka in the middle of Piccadilly Circus after 25 pints. Yet, despite this apparent buffer zone against New Zealand lemminghood, I've lost track of the number of times I've heard a familiar accent behind me; asking if I know the way to Darling Harbour, wondering aloud why you can't get a decent pie in North America, or trying to figure out the Spanish for "a jug of Speight's please".

Are we all just lost? Or is there some Dunedin gene that leads us off the beaten track (read Wellington, Melbourne, IT job in London, retire to Bannockburn) into less predictable places? Can we blame the water? Personally, I'd argue for all of the above.



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# Dunedin, but...

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I will acknowledge that my chosen field has a lot to do with it. So many of the people I trained and performed with in Dunedin have gone on to forge at least a subsistence living in the arts. Forget Hawkes Bay wine and Zespri, our growth industry over the past four years has been export quality talent. Writers, artists, fashion designers, singers, musicians, actors and (okay, I have to say it) stand-up comedians have been pouring out of Dunedin like a swarm of oddly-dressed bats. As I write this, safely ensconced in my Auckland home, New Zealand Fashion week is about to start, the Melbourne Fringe Festival is winding down, an opera singer has just won a major UK classical music award, and my TV is advertising this week's 60 Minutes documentary. Names associated with all of these events can be found in the Otago alumni register or, at least, on the unpaid tabs list at the Robbie Burns. So we can conclude that, through accident or design, Dunedin breeds good art. And it moves away. This, I can vouch for. In all my dealings with artists who began their careers in Dunedin, there is a quality which sets them apart from their contemporaries around the world. It's a survival instinct. If you want to make things happen in Dunedin, you just have to get out there and do it. You don't expect any help, and most of the time you won't get it, but, if you really care about what you do, you can make it happen. In terms of my background in theatre, the most valuable experience I gained in Dunedin was the freedom to fail. Hire a venue, write a script, photocopy a few grainy black and white posters, then sit back and watch the whole thing fall to pieces. Then try again next week. Dunedin folk know it's a training ground, they're proud of that fact, so if you blow your chances, they'll help you get over it. If you're a huge success, well, they'll help you get over that, too. So when artists decide to move on, as inevitably the majority will, they're ready. They have the skills, the mental preparation and the sheer bloody-mindedness to take on whatever and whomever they have to. They have something to prove.

So that much, at least, makes sense to me. It's no big surprise when I show up at a theatre or festival only to find that the programme reads like an Allen Hall cast list. But that only accounts for perhaps half of the people I run into internationally. What are the nice people like you doing in places like this?

Let me explain. When I travel, I avoid the obvious. As in the OE list above, I have no desire and see no point in going halfway around the world to spend time with people in places I would have avoided at home. So I seek out the mundane. If

I'm in Scotland, I want to meet Scots, and you won't do that on the "Braveheart Country" bus tour. On my last visit to Belfast, I made what has become my irregular pilgrimage to the Crown Liquor Saloon, a pub stuck in the middle of Northern Ireland's local government district that, during the Troubles, gained the dubious distinction of being the most regularly bombed bar in Europe. It's a safe bet that you won't see many matching tracksuits or STA Travel brochures amongst the clientele. So imagine how it feels when the barmaid hears my accent and asks if I've ever heard of her home town – Palmerston.

For a more poignant image, take Edinburgh: The Dunedin of the North. I performed at the Edinburgh Fringe in 2001, and took great pride in being able to find my way around the New Town using only a flathunter's map of Dunedin. Howe St, Dundas, St Andrews, Albany, George, Princes, Moray Place. They're all there, in the right order. It's like walking around a customised monopoly board. I knew all this from previous visits, but crossing over the bridges to my fringe venue was another story. My venue manager, the bar manager, press office staff, box office personnel, even the guy driving the tuk-tuk between rooms knew where the Octagon was. Hell, even my audiences came from Dunedin, most disturbingly on the night of a Bledisloe cup match in full-face paint and Highlanders' jerseys. The question has to be asked – am I being stalked? I've met so many Dunedin people overseas, I started to wonder if there could be any left in Dunedin. Did you evacuate the town without telling me? Did the harbour finally reclaim what was rightfully hers?

I came back to Dunedin recently, ostensibly to perform, but my real aim was this: to assure myself that you were all still here. And you were, all the same people, albeit with a few thousand new faces. I walked through the University, and the lecture halls were still full. I went to the Albert Arms, and the glasses still weren't. I even met someone I knew, a Dunedin person in Dunedin! I could have cried... until he told me his plans for next year. He's moving. Overseas. His parting words, innocuous enough in any other context, still wake me up at night: "See you again, soon."

Jeremy Elwood

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Jeremy Elwood was at Otago from 1994-1998. He completed a Bachelor of Arts in Theatre Studies and now enjoys a career as a stand-up comedian, actor, musician and director.

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Alumni Insight is an invitation piece written by Otago alumni prepared to share tales, memories and opinions.

## NEW PROGRAMMES ADVANCE OTAGO

The University is embarking on a concerted drive to advance Otago as a world-class institution.

Otago is seeking support, throughout New Zealand and the world, from its community of alumni, friends and business partners. Three programmes have been put in place through which external support can be gathered and put to best use for investment in human capital – Otago’s key resource.

The programmes are tailored to enable individuals and organisations to give according to their means and preferences through: partnerships via the Advancement Campaign; donations to the Annual Fund; gifts under the *Legacy for Excellence* Bequest programme.

The **Advancement Campaign** aims to enhance significantly Otago’s areas of research excellence and learning. This aim is being pursued through initiatives such as the appointment and fostering of world-class knowledge leaders and teams, and scholarships to increase University participation in under-represented groups.

Substantial investments have already been made from partners within the community, business and local government, and more are being sought. The aim is to raise \$50 million over five years for strategic investment in human capital in areas identified as essential to the advancement of Otago’s status as a world-class university. Half of the sum is being sought under the Government’s Partnerships for Excellence framework in matching funds.

The first fruits of this approach are for the establishment of a National Diabetes Centre, a National Centre for Trace Element Analysis, Professorial Chairs in Entrepreneurship, Geography, Parkinson’s Disease, Palliative Care, and a repatriation scheme for young surgeons and physicians. Support has also been given for a planned Centre for Sustainability.

Further partnerships have allowed targeted scholarships to be set up to encourage young New Zealanders who have no immediate family history of university participation to feel its life-changing effects.

In addition, new prestigious scholarships are supporting top students to bridge traditional gaps between business and science through the University’s Applied Science programme.

The **Annual Fund** invites alumni and friends of the University, both nationally and internationally, to maintain and boost the University’s work through regular contributions to scholarship programmes, library resources or priority research areas.

Collectively, these individual annual contributions – no matter how modest they may be – will make a real difference to Otago’s ability to advance its international reputation.

The **Bequest Programme** encourages alumni and friends who wish to remember Otago in their wills to support the University in perpetuity, often at a level not possible during their lifetime.

Last year, a bequest brochure entitled *A Legacy for Excellence* was published and widely distributed. It sets out several options for donating through wills, a tradition that has played an important role in making the University what it is today. General bequests may be given that enable the building up of resources for supporting long-term developments, or bequests can be gifted for specific objectives. The brochure includes a codicil form, which provides a simple way of allowing existing wills to include a legacy for the University.

The University has established the University of Otago Foundation Trust to receive and administer bequests, sponsorships and donations. The terms of the Trust ensure the University gains the full benefit of all gifts made and that the wishes of all donors and sponsors are fully observed.

It is expected that support from the three programmes will ensure that Otago has the resources necessary to advance its status as a world-class University.

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### EARLY INITIATIVES MADE POSSIBLE THROUGH THE ADVANCEMENT CAMPAIGN:

#### Dunedin City Council Chair in Entrepreneurship

The appointment of this Chair will further the development of the University’s School of Business programme in entrepreneurship, introducing students of all levels to the skills needed to succeed in developing new or innovative businesses while leading and expanding academic developments in this field.

#### Edgar National Centre for Diabetes Research and Education

Otago is the country’s acknowledged leader in the field of diabetes research and education. The new National Centre will be headed by a Director who will help coordinate existing research at Otago, develop his or her own research programme, and foster collaborative research.

#### Community Trust of Otago National Centre for Trace Element Analysis

This world-class Centre will analyse trace elements in environmental, geological and biological materials, building on current research strengths and leadership. A new state-of-the-art high-resolution mass spectrometer with an inductively-coupled plasma source (HRICP-MS) will be at the heart of the Centre.

#### The South Link Health Chair in Palliative Care

With the support of both South Link Health and The Otago Hospice, the University is establishing New Zealand's first Chair in Palliative Care. The Chair will extend research into hospice care to the broader population. It will also be involved in postgraduate education throughout the South Island.

#### McKenzie Medical & Surgical Repatriation Fellowship

The Fellowship offers the best and brightest young surgeons and physicians the chance to return to New Zealand to a well-supported academic research and teaching position, after training in top international clinical and research units.

#### Ron Lister Chair in Geography

Named in memory of a greatly-admired former head of department, this Chair will provide new focus for existing departmental strengths in the physical and human aspects of geography and the interactions between them. Research in this area will become increasingly important in understanding how the future challenges of environmental change can be responded to.

#### Cas Van der Veer Chair in Parkinson's Disease

This Chair is being established with a legacy from Cas Van der Veer and support from the Canterbury Medical Research Foundation. Based at Otago's Christchurch School of Medicine and Health Sciences, the Chair will focus on research and the clinical treatment of those with Parkinson's Disease.

#### Carl Smith Medal for Emerging Researchers

This prize, supported by the Rowheath Trust, is awarded for outstanding research by a relatively new staff member of the University.

#### Centre for Sustainability

This Centre will inform New Zealand businesses and individuals on how to take responsibility for the amount of resources and energy they consume, the wastes they produce and the impacts that they have on ecosystems and members of society.

#### Applied Earth Sciences

Otago is the leader of applied geological research in New Zealand. Support for a project to further Otago's work in applied earth sciences and commemorate the Otago School of Mines has been received from Tan Sri Dato' Dr Hj Ahmad Azizuddin bin Hj Zainal Abidin, a Malaysian mining graduate.

#### TARGETED SCHOLARSHIPS:

Otago University Development Society Trailblazer Scholarships; J & L Callis Charitable Trust First-in-Family Scholarships; Alexander McMillan First-in-Family Scholarships

These new three-year undergraduate scholarships will introduce the "life-changing" effects of University education to young people who have no immediate family history of university study. The scholarships will increase university participation from under-represented groups. As well as generous financial support for three years of study, each scholarship will be structured to ensure that the recipient benefits from the pastoral care and academic support for which Otago is known, and which is crucial for achievement.

#### Transpower University of Otago Bachelor of Applied Science Scholarships

These generous four-year scholarships will support outstanding young scholars studying in the University's innovative Applied Science programme. This degree equips graduates with the intellectual skills to bridge the traditional disciplinary gaps between business and the sciences and helps prepare them for careers in high growth areas such as information and communication technology, biotechnology, and environmental/energy management.

#### South Canterbury Finance PhD Scholarships

These scholarships offer support to PhD students who are undertaking research into cancer. Cancer research is one of Otago's areas of excellence.

## MARINE CENTRE CELEBRATES 100 YEARS

The University of Otago's Portobello Marine Science Laboratory celebrates its 100th birthday in January next year, with the release of a special centenary book about marine biology of Otago.

Otago was the first university in New Zealand to acquire a marine station when it took over the old Portobello fish hatchery from the Marine Department in 1951. There had been a marine laboratory at Portobello since 1904, but it had

become run down during the depression.

Professor John Eccles, then Head of Physiology, who later became Sir John Eccles (a Nobel Prize winner), saw the potential of the station for experimental work using marine organisms.

Several events are planned to celebrate the laboratory's centenary next year including a public open day at the Portobello laboratory and a one-day symposium on southern marine science, to be held in August 2004.



# UNICLIPPINGS

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## APPOINTMENTS

New Zealand Medical Association Chairman Dr **John Adams** (MBChB 1976) has been appointed Dean of the University of Otago's Dunedin School of Medicine.

University of Otago Chancellor **Eion Edgar** has been appointed to the Accident Compensation Board.

**Carole Gibb** (DipHSc 1972, PGDipSci 1998) has become executive officer of the New Zealand Dietetic Association.

**Peter Springford** (MBA 1995) has been appointed as CEO and Managing Director of Carter Holt Harvey.

University of Otago Zoology Professor **Carolyn Burns** has been reappointed to the Royal Society of New Zealand's governing council.

Molecular biologist Dr **Paul Reynolds** (BSc Hons 1977, PhD 1981) is the newly appointed Director-General, Policy for the Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry.

Broadcaster **Lorraine Isaacs** (BA MA 1967), solicitor and Knox College Master **Bruce Aitken** (LLB 1976) and Pine Gould Guinness company director **Lindsay Brown** (BCom 1964) are the successful candidates in the recent Court of Convocation election to the University Council.

Dr **Donald Kerr** has been appointed Special Collections Librarian at the University of Otago Library.

**Nina Kirifi-Alai** has been appointed as Pacific Islands Centre Manager.

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## OBITUARIES

Sir **Garfield Todd** (94), Prime Minister of Southern Rhodesia (1953-1958). Leaving New Zealand in 1934 for mission work in Africa, Sir Garfield became an advocate for African advancement in Southern Rhodesia. After losing political power, his criticism of the Government led to periods of detention, but he held senatorial office when majority rule was introduced in 1980. Sir Garfield received an honorary doctorate of laws from Otago in 1979, and was knighted in 1985.

**Mark Parker**, 27, BCom died in the October 2002 bombing of the Sari Club in Bali.

The Very Rev Dr **George A F Knight** (93), former Professor of Old Testament Studies at Knox College was also founding principal of the Pacific Theological College, Suva. Dr Knight received an honorary degree of Doctor of Divinity from Otago in 2000.

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## ACHIEVEMENTS

New Year Honours recipients of the New Zealand Order of Merit were – CNZM: **Peter Chin** of Dunedin (LLB 1965), local body and community service. ONZM: **Philip Gayton**

(DipPhEd 1974), volleyball; Emeritus Professor **Keith Jeffery** (MBChB 1958, ChM 1975), orthopaedics; **Neale Pitches** (BA 1972), education; Dr **Ken Thomson** (BMedSc 1966, MBChB 1967), pathology; Dr **Richard Wigley** (MBChB 1949), medicine, in particular rheumatology. MNZM: **George Berry** (LLB 1964), education; **Owen Hoskin** (Dip Ed 1979), education and the community; Dr **Rachel Maule** (MBChB 1960), psychiatric medicine and the community; Dr **Richard Rothwell** (MBChB 1953), medicine; Dr **Ivanica Vodanovich** (Dip HSc 1954), development studies; **Jeff Wilson**, rugby. **Betty Cuthbert** (BHSc 1945) received a QSM for community service. In the UK, Professor **Malcolm Grant** (LLB 1970, LLM 1973, LLD 1986), the former Chairman of England's Local Government Commission, received a CBE for services to planning law and local government. He is currently Pro Vice-Chancellor of Cambridge University.

Dr **Richard Cannon**, senior lecturer at the Dental School, was awarded the Oral Biology Award from the New Zealand and Australia division of the International Association for Dental Research.

Inaugural Māori Academic Excellence Awards for post-graduate research went to Otago University Māori Studies lecturer Dr **Brendon Hokowhitu** (BPhEd 1992, BA 1993, PhD 2002), Otago University Law lecturer **Jacinta Ruru** (LLB 1998, LLM 2002) and Auckland based scholar Dr **Mark Laws** (MSc 1998, DipGrad 1996, PhD 2002). Ruru was also awarded the inaugural National Māori Academic Excellence Award for Law 2002.

University of Otago Council member **Graeme Marsh** (BCom 1964) was made one of 30 life fellows of the New Zealand Institute of Management.

University of Otago became the first recipient of the Arts Foundation's Governors' Award for its long-standing contribution to the arts in New Zealand, in particular the three annual fellowships available to composers, artists and writers. Writer and performer, **Jacob Rajan** (BSc 1988) received one of the Foundation's Laureate awards.

The University's Frances Hodgkins and Mozart Fellowships were awarded to **Sara Hughes** of Auckland and **Noel Sanders** of Sydney, respectively. The 2002 Robert Burns fellowship will be shared between novelist and biographer **Sarah Quigley**, currently based in Berlin, and local poet **Nick Ascroft** (BA 1994, Dip Arts 1996).

Mobil Song Quest winner **Anna Leese**, who has just completed her Honours degree in music, has won the Aria Lockwood title, earning a \$10,000 prize package which includes the chance to compete in next year's McDonalds Aria in Sydney.

The University of Otago School of Business has been accepted in the Programme in International Management (PIM), an elite consortium of the world's top 44 business schools.

The Otago MBA is the only New Zealand programme to be internationally ranked in the London-based Economic

Intelligence Unit's top 100. Otago rated third in the world for the internationalism of alumni, eighth for the potential for students to network, and 87th overall.

Otago University Management lecturers **Diane Ruwhiu** (BCom Hons 1997, MCom 2002) and **Jodyanne Kirkwood** (BCom Hons 1995, MCom 1997) received the Ruth Greene Memorial Award for the best business case study outside North America at the annual North American Case Research Conference.

Otago alumni **Malcolm Farry** of Dunedin (BDS 1962), **Dexter Bambery** of Wellington (BDS 1968, DipC(DISC) 1991), and **Robert Max** (BDS 1964) and **Barrie Pratt** (BDS 1965) of Auckland were made Fellows of the New Zealand Dental Association late last year.

**Hamish Conway** (BA, BCom, DipGrad 1996) was awarded the Ernst and Young 2002 Young Entrepreneur of the Year title.

University of Toronto Professor **Brian Merrilees** (BA 1959, MA 1960), and University of Ottawa Professor **Donald McRae** (LLB 1966, LLM 1967) have been elected Fellows of the Royal Society of Canada.

Professor **Murray Brennan**, (BSc 1961, MBChB 1964, ChM MD 1983, Hon DSc 1997) Chairman of New York's Memorial Sloan-Kettering's Department of Surgery, has been elected President of the American Surgical Association.

The Royal Society of New Zealand awarded postgraduate student **Robert McCormick** the 2002 Hatherton Award for the best scientific paper by a PhD student in physical sciences, earth sciences and mathematical and information sciences.

#### FELLOWSHIPS/SCHOLARSHIPS

University of Otago medical students **Nicholas Fancourt**, **Sarah Parker**, **Melanie Lauti**, (Dunedin School of Medicine) and **Wayne Hsueh**, (Christchurch School of Medicine) won the New Zealand Medical Council's \$5000 summer studentships.

**Thomas Douglas** (23), a trainee intern at the University of Otago's Christchurch School of Medicine, has been named as one of three Rhodes Scholars. Douglas, who also gained a Bachelor of Medical Science degree in biomedical ethics with distinction at Otago, will undertake studies in economics and philosophy at Oxford University from October 2003.

Research fellow Dr **Mark Hampton** of Otago's Christchurch School of Medicine and Health Sciences is one of three recipients of the Sir Charles Hercus Health Research Fellowship, worth \$500,000 to each recipient.

# FINC 101 - Protecting your assets

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# BOOKS

## FIGUREWORK: THE NUDE AND LIFE MODELLING IN NEW ZEALAND ART

The importance of the nude in New Zealand art is explored in this new book by Sandra Chesterman. The first to take this fresh approach to New Zealand art, *FigureWork* provides absorbing insights into the wide range of artists who have worked with the nude, the models who posed for them, and the controversies they may have encountered along the way.

Views on nakedness and the nude have changed dramatically during the past 200 years. Chesterman traces the tradition of life drawing from its classical roots through to the 21st century resurgence in life drawing classes. The model, who has usually been an anonymous partner, is also given a voice.

*FigureWork* is illustrated with 100 contemporary and historical artworks. The principal focus is on painting and drawing, but photography and sculpture are also discussed. (University of Otago Press, 2002).



## WILD DUNEDIN: ENJOYING THE NATURAL HISTORY OF NEW ZEALAND'S WILDLIFE CAPITAL

The winner of the Natural History section of the 1996 Montana Book Awards, *Wild Dunedin*, has been reprinted with a new, paperback cover. Dunedin and its environs are home to an exciting range of habitats and landscapes, of plants, animals, birds, insects, and geological features. *Wild Dunedin* (by Neville Peat and Brian Patrick) introduces this stunning environment: from the ocean, with its albatrosses and penguins, to the high alpine zone of inland ranges. The book is illustrated with over 200 colour photographs.

*Wild Dunedin* was the first in a ground-breaking series of regional natural histories published by the University of Otago Press. Other titles in the series are: *Wild Fiordland: Discovering the Natural History of a World Heritage Area*; *Wild Central: Discovering the Natural History of Central Otago*; and *Wild Rivers: Discovering the Natural History of the Central South Island*. All are by Neville Peat and Brian Patrick. (University of Otago Press, 2002).

## RECENTLY PUBLISHED BOOKS OF UNIVERSITY ALUMNI

*An Edition of Luke Shepherd's Satires*, Janice Devereux. Arizona State University, 2001.

*Boat People*, Tim Jones. HeadworX, 2002.

*Building Stronger Bones Naturally*, Xandria Williams. Hamlyn, 2002.

*Christianity Without God*, Lloyd Geering. Polebridge Press, 2002.

*Extreme Weather Events*, Tim Jones. HeadworX, 2001.

*Garden Party*, Jane Trotter (composer). The Willis Music Company, 2002.

*Learning Through Storytelling: Using Reflection and Experience in Higher Education Contexts*, Janice McDrury and Maxine Alterio. Dunmore Press, 2002.

*Opening the Manifest on Otago's Infant Years*, Ian N. Church. Otago Heritage Books, 2002.

*Primer of Travel Medicine* (third edition), P.A. Leggat, J.M. Goldsmid (editors). ACTM Publications, Brisbane, 2002.

*The Hopeful Traveller*, Fiona Farrell. Vintage, Auckland, 2002.

*The Song Atlas*, John Gallas. Carcanet Press Ltd, Manchester, 2002.

*The Spurious Māori Placenames of Southern New Zealand*, George Griffiths. Otago Heritage Books, 2002.

*Wolfskin*, Juliet Marillier. Pan Macmillan, Australia, 2002.

## UNIVERSITY OF OTAGO PRESS

*Feeding the Dogs*, Kay McKenzie Cooke, 2002.

*Figure Work: The Nude and Life Modelling in New Zealand Art*, Sandra Chesterman, 2002.

*Landfall 204: The Wild*, Justin Paton (editor), 2002.

*On the Left: Essays on Socialism in New Zealand*, Pat Moloney and Kerry Taylor (editors), 2002.

*Soundings*, Cilla McQueen, 2002.

*Wild Dunedin: Enjoying the Natural History of New Zealand's Wildlife Capital*, Neville Peat and Brian Patrick, 2002.

## WRITTEN A BOOK, PRODUCED A CD OR HELD AN ART EXHIBITION RECENTLY?

We've decided to expand this section to include more than books. Alumni of the University are still invited to tell us about recently-published books, but we'd also like to know about new music CDs or exhibitions (recent and upcoming). Email the editor at [mag.editor@otago.ac.nz](mailto:mag.editor@otago.ac.nz)



# ALUMNI

## MEDICAL SCHOOL ALUMNUS ASSOCIATION

THE MEDICAL ALUMNUS ASSOCIATION, FOR GRADUATES and staff of the Otago Medical School, was formed on the occasion of the School's centenary in 1975. Since then, the Association has been involved with several projects relating to the School and alumni, and communicated with members through an annual publication. Initially, it was a newsletter reporting on events and personalities, but it is developing into a bulletin format, recognising its expanded, quality content.

A prime function of the association is involvement with medical class reunions. Most classes still enjoy getting together at least every 10 years, and the association and school are happy to assist with these events. The association can provide a Class Reunion Guide with general advice, information on how to obtain class lists, and contacts for arranging access to school facilities for groups holding reunions in Dunedin.

A special feature of Dunedin reunions is guided tours of the school conducted by senior and retired staff members, during which alumni can view the historical artefacts and memorabilia collected by the association and displayed in various locations around the school and hospital, including the John Borrie History Hall. The Association continues to welcome contributions for the collections. One recent gift is a

German World War II medical kit, which had belonged to the late Stanley Wilson (MBChB 1929, Hon DSc 1975).

The association also helps to preserve the school's archival material. Due to the initiative and drive of the honorary faculty archivist, Emeritus Professor John Hunter (MBChB 1949, MD 1962), much material of historical interest has been assembled for a definitive history of the Otago Medical School and its component schools, from its foundation in 1875. The association established a Historical Fund to finance this project, and commissioned Otago historian Dr Dorothy Page to write the book. Due for publication in 2003, it will include a wealth of interesting stories about the school, staff and graduates, and will make fascinating reading for former students.

If you would like further information about the Medical School Alumnus Association, please contact Mrs Ellen Hendry, Dunedin School of Medicine, PO Box 913 or email [ellen.hendry@stonebow.otago.ac.nz](mailto:ellen.hendry@stonebow.otago.ac.nz)

### Contact Information

For updated details of alumni services, news and events see [www.otago.ac.nz/alumni](http://www.otago.ac.nz/alumni), or call the Alumni and Development Office, +64 3 479 5649



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## ALUMNI

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# Alumni events draw the

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MORE THAN 3000 OF THE MANY Otago alumni living in Auckland, Wellington, Christchurch and Dunedin turned out to six cocktail receptions in their cities late in 2002. Auckland and Wellington numbers were so high that invitations were spread over two nights.

The run of these major functions began on 29 August at **Auckland's** Winter Garden. About 400 guests from the pre-1990 group mingled vigorously and listened with interest to reports on recent developments at Otago from Chancellor Eion Edgar and Vice-Chancellor Graeme Fogelberg. The next evening, at least 500 younger alumni turned out to kick off the weekend in typically enthusiastic Otago style.

Another week, another city: it was **Wellington's** turn on 5 and 6 September. Among the 400 guests at the James Cook Hotel Grand Chancellor on the Thursday were three alumni distinguished by the University with honorary doctorates: theologian Lloyd Geering and economist Frank Holmes, and a former Vice-Chancellor, Robin Williams. On the Friday evening, almost 600 younger alumni caught up with each other.

After a pause for breath, the University team headed to **Christchurch** on 18 September. The alumni who turned out at the Centra ranged from recent graduates to one of the first women to complete a medical degree at Otago, Dr Margaret Smith, and the Chancellor's former science teacher, Bob White.

The University will return to all three centres in 2003.

*Otago graduates across the decades gather to celebrate the launch of the Advancement Campaign*

## ALUMNI

# crowds

After **Sydney** alumni held another successful Pre-Bledisloe Cup Party in August, it was decided that the University would return for a function with a different focus. That turned out to be a dinner at Tattersalls Club on 1 November, at which Anna Leese – Otago student and the 2002 Mobil Song Quest winner – sang, with Otago staff member Terence Dennis accompanying. Anna's performance, which concluded with Pokarekareana, was much appreciated by the 90 guests of all ages, some of whom had travelled from Canberra to join the evening. Once more, Tim Bartley (MSc 1991) and Antonia Watson (BCom Hons 1992) deserve special mention for their efforts in coordinating the function at the Australian end.

Splendid with blue and gold banners, flowers, and balloons, the Link at the Information Services Building buzzed on 12 November for a very special alumni function in **Dunedin** celebrating the official launch of the University of Otago Advancement Campaign. Some 800 guests – making it one of the largest parties ever in the city – responded enthusiastically to the Chancellor and Vice-Chancellor's outline of the Campaign's aims and the considerable progress already made. A string quartet from the University's Department of Music and performances by the Capping Sextet added to a festive ambience which was much appreciated by alumni delighted to mark the occasion with the University while catching up with old friends.



*Dr Newton Wickham, BDS, CBE, wearing his 1938 University Blues for hockey at the Auckland Alumni Function on 29 August 2002*

## SCHEDULE 2003

### UPCOMING FUNCTIONS FOR 2003

With 2002 being such an outstanding year for alumni functions worldwide, the University is delighted to announce another comprehensive schedule for 2003. The University will return to most cities in which there were functions last year. There will also be functions in several provincial centres in New Zealand, and in Brisbane.

We welcome all alumni at any alumni function throughout the world, but for practical reasons, invitations are sent only to those known to be within travelling distance of the closest planned function. Please keep us up to date as you move around. There's an easy online change of address form on the alumni web page [www.otago.ac.nz/alumni](http://www.otago.ac.nz/alumni).

For information on any of these alumni functions, please email [functions.alumni@otago.ac.nz](mailto:functions.alumni@otago.ac.nz).

### ALUMNI FUNCTIONS 2003

<b>Timaru</b>	Tuesday	4 February 2003
<b>Brisbane</b>	Friday	14 February 2003
<b>Hamilton</b>	Wednesday	5 March 2003
<b>Tauranga</b>	Thursday	6 March 2003
<b>Nelson</b>	Wednesday	12 March 2003
<b>Napier</b>	Thursday	13 March 2003
<b>Kuala Lumpur</b>	Tuesday	1 April 2003
<b>Kuching</b>	Wednesday	2 April 2003
<b>Singapore</b>	Thursday	3 April 2003
<b>Wellington</b>	Thursday	8 May 2003
<b>Wellington</b>	Friday	9 May 2003
<b>Christchurch</b>	Thursday	22 May 2003
<b>San Francisco</b>	Thursday	12 June 2003
<b>Vancouver</b>	Friday	13 June 2003
<b>Toronto</b>	Tuesday	17 June 2003
<b>New York</b>	Thursday	19 June 2003
<b>London</b>	Tuesday	24 June 2003
<b>Melbourne</b>	Thursday	24 July 2003
<b>Whangarei</b>	Monday	18 August 2003
<b>Auckland</b>	Tuesday	19 August 2003
<b>Auckland</b>	Wednesday	20 August 2003
<b>Sydney</b>	Friday	19 September 2003



# ALUMNI

## ALUMNI GATHER IN LONDON

THE 2002 ALUMNI SCHEDULE CONCLUDED IN STYLE with two sell-out events in **London**. More than 100 alumni of all ages turned out for a cocktail party in New Zealand House's Penthouse on 29 November. As on previous occasions in the past decade, John Zinzan (BDS 1969) contributed greatly to a special evening with an Otago flavour.

The following night, another group of alumni donned their finery for a glittering event hosted by Sir Paul Beresford MP (BDS 1970) in the Members' Dining Room at the House of Commons. Sir Paul and his family had neglected no detail in organising a celebration much enjoyed by the 180 guests.

Early arrivals were able to accompany Sir Paul and Dame Judith Mayhew (LLM 1975, Hon LLD 1998) on visits to the Lords and Commons chambers. Speeches by Sir Paul and the Vice-Chancellor punctuated dinner, while a game of Reverse Bingo concluded the evening's programme. Air New Zealand's Regional General Manager, Gerard Gilmore, had the pleasure of presenting two return tickets to Dunedin to the winner, Teena Lazaridis and her equally delighted husband George (BDS 1978).



Chancellor Eion Edgar and Elizabeth Mason (née McIndoe) BSc 1933, of Edinburgh at the House of Commons dinner in London, 30 November 2002.

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## WHATEVER HAPPENED TO



Photo: Alan Dove

The University Sextet performing at the recent Otago Alumni function in Dunedin.

## SEXTET SURVIVES A CENTURY

HEARD OF THE SONG, “I DID IT MY WAY?” WELL, THEY did it sideways.

Of course “they” are the University of Otago Sextet – six singing clowns nowhere near extinction even after 100 years on stage.

Sextet convenor Karl Read says he and current members Nick Douglas, Nick Madden, Matt Landreth, Ben Campbell and James Aitken get a kick out of performing in the tradition of their Sextet predecessors.

The group seems to spawn talented musicians who make it big in the music world. Previous members include budding opera star Jonathan Lemalu (1995-1996); Mobil Song Quest winner Martin Snell (1982 - 1989) and professional conductor Tecwyn Evans (1992 -1996).

If some surnames in the current crop sound familiar, it is because they are sons of one-time Sextetees. James Aitken’s

dad, Master of Knox College Bruce Aitken, was one, as was Nick Madden’s father, Dunedin composer Richard Madden.

Originating in 1903, when a group known as the “Coons” sang at the capping show, their main purpose was to send up university life and professors. The always-male group called themselves the Sextet from 1912 and originally sang in unison.

Read says his group sings in six-part harmony, writing more of their own witty songs.

“We do it for the love of it.”

Their main event is the capping show, but these days they also perform for non-university entities. Last year they sang live on television before a Bledisloe rugby match.

And the future remains bright. This year, they held open auditions, with no shortage of university talent wanting to replenish the ranks and don those clown suits.

Jo Galer



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