POWERING PROSPERITY

Enticing our brilliant young people to stay

MAKING THE WORLD SAFER

What price disarmament?

FLAGGING A CHANGE

Branding our country
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Photographer, Boris White
On 1 January of this year, New Zealand took its seat on the United Nations Security Council, making us one of the five non-permanent seats on the ten-seat Council over the next two years. Our Security Council win, achieved on first ballot by a comfortable margin, was described as “a win for small states”.

The role of small states has been commented on by Secretary-General of the United Nations His Excellency Ban Ki-moon, recipient last year of an honorary doctorate from the University of Auckland. As Mr Ban has observed, “Despite their size, small states can meaningfully contribute to global peace and development. Being small does not mean an absence of big ideas.”

Other commentators, including distinguished alumnus Jim McLay (who is about to finish six years as New Zealand’s representative to the UN), point to a speed and agility that is unachievable in larger countries.

Perhaps as a consequence of our agility and big ideas – our pioneering economic and social policies – New Zealand has been described as “the laboratory of the world”. Yet if we are the laboratory of the world, some questions have to be asked about the success of our experiments.

For example, Gallup’s 2013 analysis of median income per capita places us 14th out of 30 developed countries, we have significant economic and social inequality, our proportion of exports not from the primary sector has actually declined in the last decade, and we remain dependent on a few large markets, notably Australia and China. Yet other small countries, notably in Europe and Asia, seem to have constructed diversified economies and strong social structures, often on the basis of fewer resources than New Zealand is blessed with.

As the largest provider of both higher education and research in New Zealand, our University has a unique opportunity to step up and lead the development of the kind of modern, diversified, resilient economy and society that we need. This will require us to do four things.

"Being small does not mean an absence of big ideas"

His Excellency Ban Ki-moon, 
Secretary-General of the UN

First, we will need to grow the pipeline of intellectual property that leads to the creation of new, hi-tech industries. We already generate patents at five to six times the average rate of the university and CRI sectors, but we could, under the right circumstances, significantly increase that output and the rapid transfer of those innovations to New Zealand industry.

Second, we will need to grow the supply of innovators for industry by developing the entrepreneurial skills of our doctoral and other research graduates. Having increased our number of doctoral graduates from 170 to 390 per annum in the past decade, we are well positioned to do that.

Third, we will need to make our graduates more valuable to industry through internships and enhanced international experiences. At present we are able to support just 2,000 of our 40,000 students to undertake internships each year, and just 1,000 to have an international study experience. That is far too few in a nation that relies on exporting for its economic wellbeing.

And finally, we will need to enhance the pool of skilled employees by reducing the current waste of talent among Māori, Pacific and low socio-economic communities. Although we already are the largest provider of Māori and Pacific graduates in the country, the number of such students attaining university entrance annually is about 3,000 lower than would be the case if they had parity with the population at large. That is a loss of potential talent that the country simply cannot afford.

This blueprint for growth will create a virtuous cycle of new industries, enhanced and diversified exports, more skilled jobs, a highly educated workforce and a more equitable society. I hope it is something in which we may count on your support.

Professor Stuart McCutcheon
University Vice-Chancellor
NEWMARKET CAMPUS OPENS

The University’s Newmarket Campus will be officially opened on 13 May.
The first phase of development, covering just over half of the 5.2-hectare former Lion Brewery site, has been completed, providing the University with state-of-the-art engineering research facilities.

Working with Jasmax Architects in a “commitment to re-use wherever possible” the University has renovated three former brewing and bottling warehouses (and constructed a fourth brand new building) to create leading edge laboratories and workspaces for both Engineering and Science Faculty research and industry collaboration.

The campus is home to a wide range of unique and specialist research groups including the NZ Product Accelerator, the Centre for Advanced Composite Materials and the Light Metals Research Centre.

The purpose-built structures hall includes 200 square metres of strong floor area and 9-metre-high strong walls to allow testing of full scale civil engineering projects. The new facility supports dedicated materials and fabrication testing and is one of the largest civil engineering research facilities in the Southern Hemisphere.

The re-vamped warehouses, covering approximately 20,000 square metres of strong floor area and 9-metre-high strong walls to allow testing of full scale civil engineering projects. The new facility supports dedicated materials and fabrication testing and is one of the largest civil engineering research facilities in the Southern Hemisphere.

“... The facilities at Newmarket are transformative for large-scale engineering research not only at the University but also the country as a whole,” enthuses Engineering Dean, Professor Nic Smith. “As a faculty we are excited about the opportunities to both expand existing work and develop new research.”

Below: Robotic equipment in action at the new campus.
DO WE HAVE THE RIGHT TO OFFEND?

Not sure?

Then head to the University of Auckland Writers Festival Debate on 13 May titled “Everyone has the absolute right to offend”. Media personality Linda Clark is chairing the session with two top members of the University’s Debating Society presenting the affirmative and negative positions. After that New Yorker media correspondent Ken Auletta, UK journalist Nick Davies, English comedian Natalie Haynes, and Indian/Canadian novelist and scientist Jaspreet Singh will discuss both sides.

The University is again a gold sponsor of the Writers Festival from 13-17 May, with many staff and alumni taking part, including Emeritus Professor of English, CK Stead, who is this year’s honoured writer. A special session on 17 May devoted to CK Stead’s career will be chaired by one of his former students Ruth Harley, whose PhD in Literature he supervised.

The University’s new Senior Lecturer in Creative Writing, alumna Paula Morris is also taking part. See Paula’s contribution in Taking Issue page 14 and read her short story “False River”, one of six finalists in the 2015 Sunday Times EFG Short Story Award, the world’s richest prize for a single short story.

See www.writersfestival.co.nz

Ya-Wen Ho

boys are not soldiers and guns are not toys for a reason_is reputedly our best defence against the hysterical fe-
Ma(i) never gets delivered on time on our Street_credibility is the only thing that saved your sorry little
ass_is just another word for
Donkey_rhymes with John Key, our prime__ribs are best marinated in honey and soya sauce_is a noun and saucy is an adjective describing a
corny woman or wench or tart_oranges make the best marmalade, but you must take care to
stir up in the hearts of our young a sense of
(H)ope_is an old-fashioned name for girl, akin to Chastity and Faith and Prudence and caution should be exercised when eating cheese fondue in an open polygamous relation-
ship_wrecked and marooned alone on an island, her hand creeps towards her mound of
Venus_is the brightest star_studded rodeo saddle waiting to be mounted_on the 20th March 2003
the American offence against Iraq is still ongoing to this date etiquette demands she let him hold her hand
out_and in and out and in and c’m on ladies rock those abs_eiling is an exhilarating experience when done correctly_is spelt with two ‘R’s’, look it up if you don’t believe in miracles, how can you believe in (A)ngels_makes the better pasta but Hells makes the better pizza according to the 2010 Auckland Eat-Out guide_him in through the back door, quietly, we don’t want to get (court)_is adjourned. We shall reconvene next (weak)_and blind and helpless, the kittens squirm to
find their mother’s (*) milk_

Ya-Wen Ho (pictured above) is interested in density, flotsam, and aural elasticity. She graduated with her BA/BFA(Hons) from the University of Auckland in 2012 and works as a writer, editor and independent publisher of chapbooks and zines. She has previously been published in The Deformed, Bravado, JAAM, Poetry New Zealand, Minarets and Caketrain. Her first book, last edited [insert time here], is available from TinFish Press <http://tinfishpress.com/?projects=last-edited-insert-time-here>

C.K. Stead
University of Auckland benefactor Ockham Foundation aims to build a capital base for its education initiatives while enhancing Auckland with beautiful apartment buildings.

Developer Ockham Residential has broken ground on the new Hypatia building, the latest project from the firm, which is committed to creating developments that are appreciated by the local community and enhance Auckland’s urban built environment. With its prime Auckland location, Hypatia is within easy reach of the University and medical precincts, the double grammar zone, Auckland Domain, the CBD and great transport links. The design for the building features elements from local Ngai Tai Ki Tamaki artist Reuben Kirkwood and the building will be constructed from durable, low maintenance materials that age gracefully, and minimise on-going costs.

Hypatia is being developed as a joint venture between Ockham Residential, the commercial entity, and the Ockham Foundation, a not for profit education focused charity. In 2009 in the midst of the GFC Ben Preston and Mark Todd jointly founded Ockham Residential and the Ockham Foundation, an education based registered charity, with the firm belief that a new reality was possible. Six years later, Ockham Residential has completed in excess of $100MM of market leading residential developments on the Auckland Isthmus and has a further $88MM of development in planning and under construction. Hypatia forms part of that new reality and, uniquely, is being jointly developed by Ockham Residential and The Ockham Foundation.

The Ockham Foundation’s mission statement is to support educational initiatives that encourage critical thought, independent thinking and the fostering of a sense of social justice amongst students of all ages. To date the Ockham Foundation has:

- Gifted US$200,000 to the University of Auckland to fund First Foundation Scholars studying in the Science Faculty.
- Gifted $100,000 to the Grey Lynn Primary School to fund an outdoor classroom and Nature trail.
- Funded two post graduate scholarships in Statistics to the value of $25,000 each at the University of Auckland.

One third of the apartments in Hypatia are available for purchase with an interest free vendor finance package. This unique offer allows owner occupiers to access an interest free loan for ten years, equal to 15% of the purchase price. The loan must be repaid on the sale of the unit, after ten years, or may be repaid sooner if the owner chooses. Repayment is the greater of (a) issued value or (b) 15% of the value of the apartment at the time of repayment.

Ockham Residential is excited to be bringing this quality project to market in conjunction with its charitable arm, as it builds towards its vision of a built environment for Auckland as beautiful as its physical surrounds.
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ENJOY OUR CITY. ENJOY YOUR LIFE.

Now Under Construction

Hypatia is being developed as a joint venture between Ockham Residential, the commercial entity, and the Ockham Foundation, a not for profit education focused charity. In 2009 in the midst of the GFC Ben Preston and Mark Todd jointly founded Ockham Residential and the Ockham Foundation, an education based registered charity, with the firm belief that a new reality was possible. Six years later, Ockham Residential has completed in excess of $100 MM of market leading residential developments on the Auckland Isthmus and has a further $88 MM of development in planning and under construction. Hypatia forms part of that new reality and, uniquely, is being jointly developed by Ockham Residential and The Ockham Foundation.

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POWERING PROSPERITY

Fady Mishriki, Young Alumnus of the Year for 2015, is turning wireless power research into a top international business.

Story Judy Wilford

What does it take to make an entrepreneur?

Says Fady Mishriki: “You don’t wake up one day and say, ‘I want to be an entrepreneur.’ You wake up and think about some revolutionary (or crazy) endeavour. It is the commercial pursuit of such an endeavour that makes you an entrepreneur. In my case, the world was wireless in everything except power and I wanted to change that. I hated plugging things in to charge. I decided I was going to eliminate the power plug.”

In the ten years since he graduated from the University of Auckland with a conjoint degree in Electrical Engineering and Commerce, Fady has built a successful international business headquartered in Auckland. He founded PowerbyProxi, which is using innovative technology created in this country, giving employment to local people and – most of all – inspiring young graduates to stay and fulfil their dreams here rather than seek success and adventure elsewhere.

Founded in Auckland in 2007, PowerbyProxi now has three offices in the US (San Francisco, Austin and Atlanta) and employs 75 staff. Over 300 patent certificates line the staircase of its bright, pleasant office building off Franklin Road in Auckland.

So what is the driving force that has taken Fady so far?

“What really excites me,” he says, “is doing things that have never been done before: things that make our lives better and enrich the experiences we have every day” – such as entirely changing the ways people relate to technology, and especially to the mobile devices they carry. For over 110 years, we have plugged things in to get power. Soon, surfaces not plugs will deliver power. We’re changing a century-old pattern of human behaviour.”

There are two parts to the business, Fady explains. One is concerned with industrial applications of wireless power transfer, which is where the company started and has its roots. An example is TE Connectivity’s Ariso product range (connections.te.com).

Ariso is a totally non-contacting connector system for industrial applications. Simply put, it’s a connector that doesn’t have to be connected to deliver power and data. There are no metallic contacts to wear and tear or to cause unreliable electrical connections. It’s completely waterproof. Maintenance problems and down-time from failed connectors that result in loss of efficiency and revenue are eliminated.

The second part of the business is a more recent market entry for the company, consumer electronics applications of wireless power. It’s about creating ubiquity of power and ease of charging for devices such as smartphones and tablets that people carry with them and use every day.

“We used to just have mobile phones that we’d use for calls and texts,” says Fady. “Now we have smartphones and we use them for so much more – our payment systems, our passwords, our files, our tickets to events, our navigation and so on” – which means they take much more energy and need frequent recharging.

“If you look at the increase in energy consumption over the last ten years it’s an exponential curve. If you look at the extension of battery power it’s a flat line underneath. By making power ubiquitously accessible, keeping your devices charged as you go about your day is one of the things we enable. There are big changes on the way.

“In the future people will be able to charge their devices anywhere.” (He gestures at my recorder). “You’ll just place it on the table when you do an interview and it will start to charge. You’ll never have to use a plug and power point again.”

Already IKEA has produced a range of furniture – coffee tables, desks and bedside tables – that have wireless power transmitters built in and will charge any device that is placed on them. Samsung has also built wireless power into its flagship phone the Galaxy S6 and Galaxy S6 Edge, launched in Barcelona in March this year.

Like TE Connectivity, Samsung has also become a major investor in PowerbyProxi.

And by 2020, according to Fady, 80 percent of vehicle manufacturers will have wireless power built into their cars as a standard feature. PowerbyProxi supports the widely-available Qi (pronounced “Chi”) standard for wireless power which IKEA, Samsung and the automotive industry have all adopted. The company is a member of the board (of 24 companies) overseeing Qi, which includes the biggest names in consumer electronics.

Fady dates his interest in electricity back to his childhood in Bahrain, where, when his age was “still in single digits”, he tried his first experiment with wireless power: a failed attempt to make electricity arc by cutting a power line with scissors. This was the first of three “electrocutions” he suffered (all “self-inflicted”) before the age of 12.

“Later,” he said, “when I told mum of my plan to go into business, I think she just saw it as more electrocution opportunities.”

Fady’s family is originally from Egypt and moved to New Zealand when he was 16 and by the time he started at the University of Auckland his fascination had extended to business as well as electricity.

He was pleased to find he didn’t have to choose between them: a conjoint degree allowed him to explore both.

In electrical engineering he was fortunate to
For over 110 years, we've been plugging things in to get power. Soon surfaces, not plugs, will deliver power. We're changing a century-old pattern of human behaviour — huge amounts of power without wires over short distances. These techniques, now in high demand for many applications in industry, are also at the forefront of advances in the remote recharging of electrically-powered cars.

In commerce as well, Fady was fortunate in acquiring a valued mentor: Geoff Whitcher, Commercial Director of the University’s Centre for Entrepreneurial Learning (whom he describes as an understated hero of entrepreneurship in New Zealand and as “a man who really changed my life”). It was Geoff who encouraged Fady to become one of the founding members of Spark, a student-led entrepreneurial competition designed to encourage entrepreneurship and foster business skills. This, says Fady, was the biggest catalyst for his business career. The following year he became CEO of Spark and ten years later was awarded the inaugural “Sparkie of the Decade” in recognition of his contributions to entrepreneurship in New Zealand.

When Fady came to do his fourth-year engineering project with fellow student, Kunal Bhargava, they “took a very commercial focus,” he said. “We even came up with a company name and branding, which most people don’t do for a final-year engineering project.”

The aim of the project was to develop technology to deliver wireless power for sensors for a company then called Acronic Technologies (now merged with Trimble). The company provided $2,000 to support the work.

“We thought we were made,” says Fady. “We thought we had enough money to test [the technology].” He smiles ruefully. “I was out by probably a factor of 2,000,” he adds.

That Spark business competition idea ultimately proved to be the forerunner to PowerbyProxi. The company spun out of the University with a licence from Auckland UniServices Ltd to its wireless power portfolio.

Kunal Bhargava is now Engineering Development Director for PowerbyProxi, while Patrick Hu, who supervised the project, is now Head of Research. PowerbyProxi retains strong links with the University and Fady is keen “to invest in training the next generation of wireless power engineers, many of whom will have the opportunity to work for us”.

When asked what advice he would give to aspiring young entrepreneurs, Fady says: “The only way to learn it is to do it. So what I would say is go out and give it a shot. Surround yourself with people who have done it before. You’re just starting out so your strength is that you think anything is possible — but it can also be your weakness. You need someone to guide you and help you avoid common pitfalls.”

He adds a word of caution: “It’s not for everyone. It can be a real roller-coaster. There’s not much distinction between work and play. I was up till 5.30 this morning doing conference calls. Germany is terrible time-zone-wise.”

Fady feels he had one great advantage as a graduate in this country: he came as a 16-year-old and didn’t have any driving need to go out and see the world as soon as he was qualified.

“When I was at University so many people around me had this ambition when they finished University to work for a few years, save some money and go on an OE. To me that didn’t seem so interesting. And what I dreamed of doing was just what I have done.”

“Right out of University is probably the best time of your life to do something entrepreneurial. The good thing is that you have no responsibilities. And you don’t know what you can’t do, so everything seems possible.

“But if you work and save for two years, then go on an OE for another five, you’re probably married or about to be by the time you come back, and you’re probably wanting to buy a house.

“In the first years I was selling stuff on TradeMe, doing contracting jobs to try and pay the bills. It wasn’t very stable. I sometimes wondered if I was doing the right thing by staying here. But growing a technology company from New Zealand is a phenomenally exciting thing to do and now I do a ridiculous amount of travel as part of the job anyway.”

Fady is now the father of two children aged one and three.

“My hope for the kids as they grow up,” he says, “is that they can either create for themselves or find great opportunities here. We have lots of exciting things happening in technology, and I’d love to see the knowledge economy advance to the point where my kids will have all the opportunities they need here in New Zealand. There has never been a more exciting time to live here.”
MAKING THE WORLD SAFER

International lawyer, Associate Professor Treasa Dunworth recently put the case at the United Nations, on behalf of New Zealand, for starting to build a legal framework for nuclear disarmament, despite political roadblocks. Not only are laws necessary for civil society, she says, they can shift people’s attitudes, opening possibilities.

Story Nicola Shepheard

Treasa Dunworth has two clippings on her office door. One contains a letter to the Guardian from her friend, David Williams, sparked by a conversation they had. It points up the hypocrisy of defending French satirical journal Charlie Hebdo’s “freedom of speech” in its anti-Islamic cartoons while supporting censorship of anything considered “anti-semitic.”

The other is a cartoon of a generic interview with a sports player. In the final panel, the interviewer says: “Now, back to the studio for ten hours of sports analysis”, to which the player replies: “My income is higher than most countries.”

The letter’s fair-minded rigour, and the cartoon’s wry exasperation, give you a good steer on Treasa, 51, who remarks: “I often feel like if we put as much energy into discussing how we want our society and community to be as we did discussing some boys throwing balls around, we would live in a much better world! That doesn’t make me popular, though; and I do know that sport is good for us.”

Treasa (pronounced “Trissa”), an associate professor in the Law School, is affable, unpretentious, and, I’m picking, a good sport. She lives in Titirangi with her husband, Marty Wilkinson, a special needs teacher, and her 16-year-old son. For years she helped organise the Titirangi Festival of Music (“to get involved in the community”), and is now learning the piano. In September, her daughter and son-in-law will make her a nana. During our interview, her words come in an emphatic flurry, then stop dead as she chooses her next ones – not, you sense, because she’s cagey, but because she wants to get it right.

Her 20-year career in international law, arms control and disarmament puts her at the cutting edge of efforts to make the world safer. Last year, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade asked her to write a paper considering legal ways in which states could start negotiating for nuclear disarmament. She presented her case at New Zealand’s permanent mission to the United Nations in New York. Her main message: states are already legally obliged to negotiate in good faith. And, while real progress will require political will, we need to begin properly discussing a legal framework for nuclear disarmament now.

“Law does not simply reflect our societies and its values,” she wrote, “it shapes and re-shapes them.” As she tells me later, “Sometimes talking about what’s legally possible can create a political possibility.”

Treasa knows she’s playing a long game. But over her career she’s witnessed real progress in the control and disarmament of other types of weapons. Her first job in this field was with the precursor to the Organisation for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons (OPCW), formed to enact an international chemical weapons ban, the Chemical Weapon Convention.

“It would be difficult to exaggerate how important this was: the first time the world had ever seen a disarmament treaty with an international verification system attached to it.” (Inspectors check countries’ self-reports of weapon stockpiles and track their destruction.) She advised states preparing to sign up on the domestic law changes they would need to make. The convention entered into force in 1997.

She’s against sending NZ troops to Iraq. “Not because it’s unlawful, because it’s unwise … there isn’t a military solution to the tragedies in Iraq and Syria.”
Today, signatories represent about 98 percent of the global population and landmass, and 98 percent of the worldwide chemical industry. Eighty-five percent of the world’s declared stockpile of chemical agent, and 77 percent of chemical munitions and containers have been verifiably destroyed. In 2013, the OPCW received a Nobel Prize for its work.

There has been progress elsewhere: a 2008 international ban on cluster bombs (“baby bomblets” dropped in clusters, of which unexploded ones continue to maim and kill people for years, including children who play with them), a 2014 ban on arms trade in conventional weapons, which still kill more people than any other weapon category.

International law and disarmament treaties work, she says. “Does that mean we’re moving to a peaceful world where we’ll never see war? No it doesn’t. But in the ordinary legal system we have rules against rape, drunk driving, murder and domestic violence, and we still have those things in our society, but nobody suggests that we shouldn’t have a crime of murder; or have a criminal justice system. We just keep on working to make it better, more effective, and try to address root causes.”

Growing up in “the boondocks” of Ballingarry, County Limerick, Ireland, Treasa never dreamt she’d become a lawyer. She was the second-youngest of eight. Her father was a builder, her mother had been a school teacher before having kids.

After finishing school, she worked and travelled for 10 years, doing standard backpacker jobs: factory worker, barmaid, secretary. In France she met her future husband, New Zealander Marty Wilkinson, a teacher. In London she became a legal secretary at a South Auckland law firm.

“I really loved working there,” says Treasa. “I could see that law had the potential to trash people: we’d have lots of impoverished families coming in, they’d signed loan agreements and were paying exorbitant interest, and the law allowed that to happen. But equally, you could see how the law could be changed to provide better protections. For me, in those early years, law wasn’t an intellectual exercise, it was a tool to help and sometimes empower people. So that’s what turned me on.”

Lisa Tremewan, now a district court judge in Waitakere, was a junior lawyer at the firm.

Treasa: “It was Lisa who said why don’t you go to law school? It was beyond my apprehension that I’d go there.” Her friend helped her apply to the University, and they made plans to practise together in South Auckland once Treasa had qualified.

Treasa was one of two students that year accepted into Law School under the quota system (since replaced by targeted admissions). She was 27. “That was a defining thing, that I got a second chance. New Zealand, and this university, offers great opportunities for people, for which I was very grateful. I worked incredibly hard and did really well.”

Deciding she needed one last travel fix before settling into that South Auckland job, she applied to do a masters in International Law at various colleges, including Harvard (because former Irish president Mary Robinson went there), where she was accepted. Her mother-in-law and sisters paid for her to go. It was 1994. The cold war had just ended, sparking an explosion in international law. “It was the best possible time I could hope for. I absolutely loved it. But even at that point it hadn’t dawned on me you could get a job in this.”

Then she saw an ad for the OPCW-precursor job. She applied, got it, and Treasa and Marty moved to The Hague, where they lived from 1995 to 1998. For “the little girl who’d always wanted to travel and meet other people”, it was an amazing experience. She travelled widely and worked with an eclectic international bunch – colleagues included scientists who’d previously developed chemical weapons (“what better people to send out as inspectors?”).

Eventually, though, she and Marty felt the pull homeward. It just so happened that the Dean of the University of Auckland’s Faculty of Law had a vacancy for an international law lecturer and asked Lisa Tremewan for Treasa’s contact address: “That was timing beyond perfection. So I started here as a lecturer in 1999, and have been here since.”

As you’d expect, she’s a popular teacher. “My motivation is offering the opportunity of education.” She knows the difference it can make. “It’s given me all sorts of options and experience. I’m paid to teach interesting and engaged students and research things I find interesting. Find me a more privileged job!”

Treasa has continued her work in arms control and disarmament, critiquing the ways in which states translate their international arms control obligations into domestic law, and the accountability (or otherwise) of international bodies charged with advancing these twin goals. She also studies the reception of all international law into New Zealand domestic law.

She’s currently working on a PhD thesis that will dig beneath the rhetoric of “humanitarian disarmament”, an in-vogue approach concerned with the idea of human security rather than of state or national security. “It says: instead of saying this weapon makes us secure, we should look at what impact this has on civilians. The photo of Princess Di standing with landmine victims epitomises the argument,” she explains. Her thesis points out that this idea isn’t new, dating back at least to 1899, and that it’s used politically to imply that some kinds of violent death are worse than others.

“Princess Diana was right: it’s not very nice to have those little kids get their legs blown off and be in terrible pain. But are landmines really worse than aerial bombing? Is it really more terrible to be killed by a landmine than chopped up by a machete? To describe some weapons as truly awful implicitly condones the use of some other weapons.

“We have a complete hissy fit when we have an allegation of 700 people killed from chemical weapons in Syria – why do we privilege those deaths over the 220,000 people killed and millions displaced and all the lost childhoods? Why do we start to declare war on Syria – Obama’s bright red line” (this last is spat). “Yes, I worked on the OPCW, I know chemical weapons are bad things, but [singing them out] can come back to bite you in the butt. And don’t get me started on the whole language of weapons of mass destruction – do we mean malaria, which kills hundreds of thousands of kids every year and yet it’s absolutely curable?”

She’s against sending New Zealand troops to Iraq (she used to teach a paper on the country). “Not because it’s unlawful, because it’s unwise...there isn’t a military solution to the tragedies in Iraq and Syria. Even overwhelming force – you know what? This is still the 2003 Iraq war.”

She later emails a link to a newspaper comment piece by Richard Jackson, saying she agrees with everything he says. Islamic State atrocities, he writes, are actually “fairly banal in the history of warfare … Objectively, it is perverse to insist that burning a man to death with petrol is a greater moral evil than using munitions like phosphorous bombs in military operations, which we know will burn a great many innocent people to death, including children.”

He also says “the monster [that is Islamic State] grew out of the illegal invasion of Iraq, the support for a brutal and corrupt Iraqi government, and the long-running policy of killing insurgent leaders.”

Is Treasa a pacifist, then? “No, it’s funny, I’m not. The moment when I realised that was the protest in Tiananmen Square. How many times are we going to see wholesale slaughter of civilians? At some point we need some weapons to deal with it. Usually the causes of conflict are incredibly complex and we’re never honest enough about that and dealing with prevention and de-escalation.”

Sometimes she despairs. Ultimately, though, she’s hopeful that right-thinking people will prevail.
LETTER FROM OXFORD

Our invited Letter from Abroad this issue is from alumnus Max Harris (BA/LLB Hons, 2011), who went as a Rhodes Scholar to Oxford University where he has completed a Bachelor of Civil Law with Distinction and a Master of Public Policy degree.

Max is now a Prize (or Examination) Fellow at All Souls College, founded in 1438.

Up to two of these fellowships are awarded each year, with the very best students from across the disciplines and around the world competing for places.

Examination Fellows receive seven years of funding to pursue an approved course of study of their own choice. They are full members of the College’s governing body, receive free accommodation in College, and can have free lunches and dinner there. They are expected to take an active role in College life, and the youngest Fellow (youngest in terms of years at Oxford, who, at the moment, is Max) also has certain unique obligations, which include having to give a speech in Latin in his first year, and having to observe “certain conventions” at dinner, such as being the last person to leave the dessert table.

Max hopes to spend the first two years of his fellowship writing a book on progressive politics in New Zealand, carrying out research in law and political theory, and writing pieces on politics and economics for a general audience.

A KIND OF HOME

I spent a fulfilling five years at the University of Auckland from 2006 until 2010, finishing the honours component of my Law/Arts conjoint degree in 2011 while working in Wellington. It was in Auckland where I feel like I really did my growing up, having travelled north for university from Wellington, where I had gone to school.

Memories of my first year at O’Rorke Hall stay with me today. I remember not being able to go out to clubs on the waterfront until halfway through my first year, because I was only 17 and wasn’t rebellious enough to have a fake ID. I remember learning to play (badly) the guitar that lay around our common room, and discussing religion and politics late into the night. I remember almost getting arrested in Rotorua with an O’Rorke crew after a nude run went wrong – something that would have scuppered the law studies I was just then beginning.

Years 2–5 were a good deal more focused and sedate. There were long conversations over coffee at Slurp, Pod, Relax, and the Black Crow – any cafes we could find. I’ll never forget Kathy Smits’ engaging lectures on political theory, Julia Tolme introducing me to a feminist perspective on criminal law, James Belch’s epic journeys through settler society history, and Matheson Russell opening my eyes to the philosophy of the Frankfurt School.

I’ll treasure the memories, too, of the makeshift handball/“four square” court that was set up outside the Davis Law Library – where law students could get aggressive with a tennis ball and plenty of (pseudo-)smack-talk.

I now find myself, a few years on, at All Souls College in Oxford – a small college with about 75 Fellows and a reputation for scholarly rigour. Every year the College selects one or two fellows “by examination” following a somewhat gruelling two-day written test and 30-minute interview, and last November I was lucky enough to be one of two selected in 2014 as Examination Fellows (or “Prize Fellows”).

I can honestly say that my studies and experiences in Auckland played a significant part in helping me through the exam. Four of the 12 questions I answered as part of the written test were on topics that I was first exposed to at Auckland. On one question, “Postmodernism is sooo last century. Discuss”, I drew on conversations I had with my friend Mark Taylor at the Black Crow Cafe in my first year of studies at Auckland; Mark taught me what little I know about Derrida, Foucault, and Lyotard. Two other questions in the law paper – on legislative intent and remoteness of damage in contract – explored issues I’d discussed at length with lecturers at Auckland. A fourth question raised a subject, prisoners’ rights, that I first took an interest in as a member of Auckland’s Debating Society, and which I’ve been passionate about ever since. And the conjoint degree structure at Auckland – which allowed me to study law, politics, philosophy, history, Māori, economics, and English - gave me some fluency across disciplines, which helped me enormously at the All Souls “viva”, where I was interviewed with 55 Fellows in the room on what I had written in my exam.

There have been ups and downs in my life between Auckland and All Souls. I was fortunate to spend an incredible 20 months as clerk to Chief Justice [and Distinguished Alumna] Sian Elias at the New Zealand Supreme Court in 2011–2012, and last year I spent a memorable two months in Helen Clark’s office at the United Nations Development Programme in New York. But at the end of my time in New York I was also suddenly told I had a serious heart problem – a dilated aorta. The problem required surgery, which I had in Oxford last November, days after hearing I’d been elected an All Souls Examination Fellow.

But my “growing up” at the University of Auckland – personally and intellectually – has helped me get through these ups and downs. And I’ll always look at the University of Auckland as a warm place where I could do that growing up: a kind of home, I guess. I suppose, then, that this is my letter home.

Yours sincerely, and with gratitude,

Max Harris
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flagging a change

Why is a new flag important for New Zealand? What should it be like?
Helen Borne asked for views from an historian, a brand expert and a writer.

**Bold Move Needed**

Fifty years after Canada changed its flag – to the maple leaf design known around the world – we need to make a similar bold but inevitable move towards our own clear identity.

Our flag isn’t unique – the Union Jack and a version of the Southern Cross appear in other national flags – and it’s not distinctive. The Ministry for Culture and Heritage describes the flag’s blue background as representing the sea and sky around us, but that feels like a limp after-the-fact justification. The sea and sky surround Japan, say, and Malta – another Commonwealth country – but the flags of Japan and Malta are striking red-and-white designs.

The colours of red, white and blue seem explicitly drawn from the Union Jack in our flag’s canton. Like the presence of the Union Jack, they speak of a colonial past. Many of the other flags with a Union Jack canton are still British overseas territories, like Bermuda and the Falkland Islands. It’s no surprise if this is how we too are perceived.

The Union Jack itself feels tenuous even in Britain: if Scotland had voted for independence last year, taking the Saltire of St Andrew with them, the Union and its flag would no longer exist. The Union Jack also incorporates the Saltire of St Patrick, added to the flag in 1801, when all of Ireland was part of Britain. This hasn’t been the case since 1922, and to some communities in Northern Ireland the Union Jack is controversial and inflammatory.

Sometimes we talk of flags as though they’re ancient and unchangeable. In New Zealand, our current flag was introduced only in 1902 – after our soldiers had fought in the Boer War, and our rugby players toured Britain for the first time.

The silver fern is a potent symbol in sport, but our flag represents more than our sporting gods and more than our old imperial allegiances. My vote is for the national Māori flag that flew on the Harbour Bridge on Waitangi Day 2010. Its clean, distinctive red-, white- and black koru design is a clear expression of New Zealand’s unique place – cultural and physical – in the world.

Dr Paula Morris (Ngāti Wai)
Senior Lecturer in Creative Writing
Faculty of Arts

**Telling People Who We Are**

For me, the question is not whether a new flag is important but how important is the flag?

A flag is a symbol, an emblem. It stands for something else – the “realm”, the “nation”, the “people”, the “government”. As with all such symbols, flags are invented. In 1834 Māori chiefs voted on the United Tribes flag; from 1840 the Union Jack flew over the colony; and in 1902 King Dick Seddon decreed the current flag. We fly more than one flag. There is the national flag, the Queen has a New Zealand flag, the Governor-General has a flag, the Māori sovereignty flag was launched in 1990, official flags exist for ships and aircraft.

The flag can signal who we are and how we feel. People fly, wave and wear the flag during international sporting events; it is lowered to half-mast as a sign of mourning. It lets the ships of other nations know we are friendly and have a right to be in the water, indicates who is in the car, and identifies our team in the Olympic stadium. And we recognise our flag, even if few other people do.

Unlike some peoples, we do not show a great deal of respect for our national flag. We have gone in for chopping down flagstaffs, not only at Kororareka in the nineteenth century but also in the 1980s when a misguided Minister of Education wanted to make it compulsory for all state schools to fly the flag daily. Burning and other forms of dishonouring the flag are against the law and therefore a popular form of protest.

Because we want people to know who we are, and a flag is a way of doing this, we have to have one. The
Does the current New Zealand flag play an important role in the country branding of New Zealand? NO.

Traditional thinking about country branding focuses on having distinctive identity and image that is recognised in its export markets. Clearly the current New Zealand flag does not do at all well here. Its identity is easily confused with the Australian flag and even the Union Jack. In terms of image the associations with the UK have little or no meaning in most of our export markets.

Contemporary thinking about country branding takes a broader perspective. Here the New Zealand flag could become part of a process to create distinctive collective meaning within export industries, export markets and New Zealanders at home and abroad. Recently the New Zealand trade development organisation (NZTE) has launched a major country branding strategy based on the “New Zealand story”. The initiative is about broadening the perception of New Zealand internationally beyond the scenic beauty of the country to include attributes like innovation and resourcefulness, the unique Māori culture, and the integrity and the welcoming friendly approach (www.story.newzealand.com). Once again the current New Zealand flag does not do at all well here.

Could a new New Zealand flag play an important role in the country branding of New Zealand? YES

An appropriately designed flag could not only help build a strong identity and image but more importantly it could play a key role in a process that builds a distinctive collective meaning within export industries, export markets and among New Zealanders at home and abroad. However, this is conditional on a design that reflects and facilitates the “New Zealand story”.

Professor Rod Brodie
Department of Marketing
University of Auckland Business School

Brand New Zealand

New Zealand has a history of debate about whether the national flag should be changed. Alternative designs have been proposed but there is no consensus as to which design should replace the flag. Arguments for the change are that it is too similar to the flag of Australia and it does not represent New Zealand’s current status as an independent multi-cultural nation. Opponents to change argue that the national flag has “stood the test of time and represents a proud history with the UK”.

flag should say something about place and history. Our current flag does this by recognising the British past (the Union Jack is relegated to a corner) and by the stars of the Southern Cross. Missing is any reference to Māori history. Is this enough to require a new flag? Yes. And as the country changes over the next 100 years, the flag will change again. It is the shadow and not the substance.

Raewyn Dalziel
Emeritus Professor of History, and former Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Academic)
**BUILDING HISTORY**

**Story Margo White**

Associate Professor Deidre Brown had a somewhat precocious interest in the built environment. According to her parents, the first word she uttered, after "Mum" and "Dad", was "house".

"Although I think it might have actually been 'Neil,'" Deidre says, laughing. "Because of Neil Homes, which were everywhere. My parents said it was 'house,' but I wonder if it was 'Neil.'"

Deidre Brown (Ngāpuhi and Ngāti Kahau) teaches design and history at the University’s School of Architecture. Evidently there was something about houses that always fascinated her; she was only a primary-schooler when she began constructing paper models of other people’s houses, according to the specifications of the real estate ads in the *Herald*.

“I stopped making them around the age of 12, as I thought I should focus on my studies and getting into architecture school, but I wished I’d kept it up. I’m making my own children keep up the tactility of that. We spend a lot of time with students getting them to relearn that sort of making.”

Deidre’s teaching and research focus is on Māori and Pacific architectural history and indigenous design. She is currently working on the Toi Te Mana project, in which she and Dr Ngarino Ellis (and drawing on the research of the late Professor Jonathan Mane-Wheoki) will trace the development of Māori art from its Polynesian origins to the present day. She says this will be the first comprehensive indigenous art history created by and with indigenous peoples.

She has contributed to and written several books, including *A New Zealand Book of Beasts; Art in Oceania, Te Puna, Māori art from Te Tai Tokerau Northland*. She also wrote *Māori Architecture*, the first book to be published on the subject. While there have been many books about the meeting-house, this was the first to put that building type together with other Māori buildings and collectively call them architecture.

“The profession has quite an expanded view of what architecture is, which is ‘buildings built to inhabit’. So outside this institution some might have issues around the notion of architecture having been applied to Māori buildings as a term, but I think because some people see architecture as a high art — you have houses, and then you have architecture. If you’re in the profession, it’s all one.”

*Māori Architecture* was partly the result of research she first began when she was an undergraduate, when her mother Rosine suggested she look into...
It was also one of several gifts that were looted from a formal relationship between Māori and Europeans.

King had gifted to Te Pahi, a small pre-fabricated brick house, such as where it is, or what it looked like. Deidre, however, is getting close to finding out. The location has been narrowed down to one of two islands that sit within Wairoa Bay, either Motuapo or Roimata: her research is pointing to the former.

And with the help of her research assistant, Stacy Vallis (who is in her final year of her Master of Architecture degree), she’s building a good picture of what it looked like too.

“It has been fascinating. The architectural histories of prefabs in Australia don’t go back this far, so we were stumped about what to do. We thought, maybe we should go through the trades. And that has exposed this whole construction industry in Sydney, as well as all these people who are writing about it, often independent academics who are very passionate and have supplied us with heaps of information about the manufacture of convict bricks, and the different marks on them. Everything was written down, every little detail. Being a penal colony it was just one massive bureaucracy.”

The remains of the house might be buried, and may remain buried forever, but the search for its whereabouts is already shedding light on New Zealand history.

“It’s a foundational building in New Zealand architectural history. In terms of Pakeha architecture, it’s the first permanent building to have been built in New Zealand. But also it came out of this relationship between Māori and the Governor, or Māori and the Crown. It was manufactured on behalf of the Crown for an indigenous leader, using captive European labour, the bricks were made by convicts, the frame was made by convicts.”

“So to find out what it was like, you have to walk into early nineteenth-century Sydney, explore these timber yards and brick yards and understand what is happening there and why the governor was making [the convicts] work like this. “And to do that you also have to understand the significance of the house as a gift, and its purpose. It was a little bit like a trade embassy, so that Europeans would come to the Bay of Islands, learn about Māori culture and establish a trading enterprise and a flax trade.”

Deidre’s research has also resulted in many serendipitous connections and discoveries. That a colleague in Australia whom Deidre has known for many years is a direct descendant of King, who gifted the house. That Te Pahi’s granddaughter, who had been left at an orphanage in Sydney in 1810, has descendants alive and well and living in Australia. And she was at a conference in Tasmania, when she found out that there was a “sister” prefabricated building only a 30-minute drive from where the conference was being held, presumably very similar to the building gifted to the Northland chief.

This is a research topic that she expects she’ll be pursuing for a long time yet: “Even though it’s not my major research topic, it occupies my thoughts all the time. This is probably a career-long project, research that will be there for the rest of my life.”
OPINION

DYNAMICS OF RISK

With the seemingly endless summer having drawn to a close, it is perhaps appropriate that we reflect a little on the joys and sadness that this season brings to our aquatically-oriented lifestyle.

From my vantage point both at the top (as a researcher and educator) and at the bottom of the cliff (as a lifeguard), I see how uplifting and valuable aquatic activities can be, especially when done with friends and whānau, but I also see the heartache and sense of loss as a consequence of failure to cope with the attendant risk of drowning that is omnipresent around water. Sadly, the loss of life through drowning over the summer is not new but it is enduring, and a good hot summer increases the risk of exposure to drowning. Summer drowning persists in spite of an elevated sense of water safety among the public that is often the consequence of a heightened media presence.

So what can we learn from this summer’s tragedies that will help prevent future loss? In spite of the varied situations in which people lost their lives, some consistent factors play a part in many fatal and non-fatal drowning incidents. It is no coincidence that most of the victims were male and most incidents occurred in open water environments. More significantly, almost all of the incidents were the consequence of underestimation of risk and overestimation of ability to counter that risk. Critically, many victims thought they possessed the physical competencies needed to cope with the conditions (e.g. cold water, rip currents, outgoing tides); some did not possess the water safety knowledge required of the situation (rip identification, supervisory roles).

In the research we have done recently, many people, when asked to express their current competency in the water, relate back to when they last were regularly engaged in swimming activity and were at their fittest. Others recall their pool-based accomplishments even though they rarely, if ever, perform the same tasks in open water. Some consider themselves good swimmers if they can do one length (25 metres) of a pool, some consider their children good swimmers if they have had swimming lessons. So asking the question “how good is good enough?” has special significance in an open water environment. Furthermore, many consider that swimming for distance is all that is required. Our research shows us that even proficient swimmers, capable of swimming on their front, often cannot swim on the back and cannot float: both are critical competencies in a survival situation.

The other side of the coin, risk estimation, is an especially slippery slope for males. As in many aspects of daily life, males are risk takers, females are risk averse. The problem in an aquatic environment is that errors of judgement are sometimes lethal. Our research evidence shows clearly that, irrespective of age, ethnicity, aquatic experience or water competency, males get it fatally wrong four times more often than females. This pattern is consistent in all high income countries such as New Zealand.

So what can we do about it? First, drowning-prevention advocates need to shift our gaze from a simplistic “swim = safe” mentality, to recognise that drowning is situational and dependent upon the interaction of three constraints: the environment (e.g. surf beach), the task (e.g. rock-based fishing), the people (e.g. male youth). Second, we researchers need to unpack the dynamics of these constraints – what people do in aquatic environments that places them at risk of drowning – and then inform water safety advocates of these findings. Third, water safety advocates need to use the evidence base to inform and target drowning prevention interventions. Finally, we need government and its various health, social welfare, immigration and education agencies to resource water safety organisations to implement drowning prevention strategies – it’s too important an issue to be left to chance, the alternative is more of the same next summer. Nobody wants that.

Dr Kevin Moran ONZM | Faculty of Education

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OUR 2015 DISTINGUISHED ALUMNI AWARD WINNERS

Quotable quotes, drawn from the warm and witty citations of our Alumni Orator, Associate Professor Allan Badley, who was himself awarded a Distinguished Alumni Medal in 2003:

On Sir Russell Coutts, competitive sailor and yacht designer

"Nowhere has Russell’s influence been more keenly felt than in the most recent edition of the America’s Cup. The transformational technology represented by the giant wing-sailed catamarans he introduced enthralled the world as they fought it out in the chilly waters of San Francisco Bay watched by millions of fans across the globe who should have been at work. It was bold and visionary. Some commentators likened it to Formula One; others, to T20 Cricket on water without the dreadful ad breaks.”

On Joan Withers, business leader and mentor

"Dress, sex as a power tool, balancing family and career and skills for leadership are just some of the topics covered in A Girl’s Guide to Business: Getting to the Top, a book written by Joan Withers, in the late 1990s. Unlike many self-help guides A Girl’s Guide to Business was the work of a woman who had made it to the top and was well on the way to establishing herself as one of the most influential women in New Zealand business.”

On Bryan Williams, former All Black and Pacific leader

"Bryan’s fame as the first Samoan Superstar commanded instant and enormous respect but, more importantly, it provided him with a tool to help others as he recognised the value of sport in building a sense of pride among Pacific communities. The many honours and awards that followed were in large measure in recognition for his remarkable services to the game and those who play it in New Zealand and elsewhere rather than for his transcendent gifts as a player. But most remarkable of all (to me at least) is that Bryan is still the only University of Auckland Distinguished Alumni medal winner ever to have appeared in my box of Weetbix.”

On Professor Christine Winterbourn, world leader in the biological chemistry of free radicals

"Listing among her other interests ‘the enzymology of myeloperoxidase’ when tennis would have sufficed, Christine Winterbourn is clearly a scientist of great seriousness in spite of her well-known weakness for free radicals. Christine’s contribution to the biological chemistry of free radicals has been enormous. Long recognised as a world authority in the field, she has honours that include the 2011 Royal Society of New Zealand Rutherford Medal and the New Zealand Association of Scientists’ Marsden Medal, awards given only to scientists of the highest distinction. On reflection, and on considering her very large published body of work, it’s unsurprising that there hasn’t been much time for tennis.”

On Fady Mishriki, wireless power expert, entrepreneur

"Good ideas have little chance of success without good management and with help first from Spark, then from the University’s business incubator, the Icehouse, Fady licensed three patents through Uniservices, a company devoted to the commercialisation of research carried out at the University of Auckland. It was at that point that he met Greg Cross, chairman of the Icehouse and a shrewd investor in technology companies. Together they set up a new company, PowerbyProxi, with Greg as Chief Executive. Not to be outdone for long in titular matters Fady is now Executive Vice President and Chief Tesla Officer of a company that has its headquarters and engineering centre in Auckland and branches in Austin, San Francisco and Atlanta. Is it any surprise then that Fady Mishriki, in spite of having electrocuted himself on three occasions, was named inaugural ‘Sparkie of the Decade’ by the SPARK $100K Entrepreneurial Challenge run by the University of Auckland Business School?”

On Bruce Pleston, Founder and Executive Chairman Mainfreight

"Bruce’s strong support for education is not just a legacy from his days as a teacher but a legacy to future generations of New Zealanders. It’s underpinned by both a philosophical belief in the power of education and good, sound business sense. As Bruce himself has observed: “The only way that New Zealand will progress economically is through having a highly educated population, with the highest expectations.” To that one might also add and a society in which business leaders recognise the obligation they have to help this noble cause.”

"On Fady Mishriki, wireless power expert, entrepreneur

"Good ideas have little chance of success without good management and with help first from Spark, then from the University’s business incubator, the Icehouse, Fady licensed three patents through Uniservices, a company devoted to the commercialisation of research carried out at the University of Auckland. It was at that point that he met Greg Cross, chairman of the Icehouse and a shrewd investor in technology companies. Together they set up a new company, PowerbyProxi, with Greg as Chief Executive. Not to be outdone for long in titular matters Fady is now Executive Vice President and Chief Tesla Officer of a company that has its headquarters and engineering centre in Auckland and branches in Austin, San Francisco and Atlanta. Is it any surprise then that Fady Mishriki, in spite of having electrocuted himself on three occasions, was named inaugural ‘Sparkie of the Decade’ by the SPARK $100K Entrepreneurial Challenge run by the University of Auckland Business School?”

Back row, from left: Sir Russell Coutts KNZM, CBE BE (1987); Young Alumnus of the Year Fady Mishriki BE(2005), BCom(2005)
Front row, from left: Bruce Plested DipTchg (1961), CA; Joan Withers MBA (1991); Professor Christine Winterbourn CNZM, FRSNZ, BSc (1963), MSc (1964), PhD Massey; Bryan Williams CNZM, SDM, MBE, LLB (1974)
One: Dean of Arts Professor Robert Greenberg, Emeritus Professor Charmian O’Connor, and Angela Rosati
Two: Hon Dr Pita Sharples and Arapera Sharples
Three: Finlay Macdonald, who convened the DAA panel discussion “Bright Lights”, and Carol Hirschfeld
Four: Sir Russell Coutts and Lady Jenny Coutts
Five: Distinguished Professor Richard Faull, Lyn East, Rt Hon Paul East, and Michael Fisher
Six: Professor Douglas Pratt and Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Strategic Engagement) Professor Jenny Dixon, who was Master of Ceremonies
Seven: Director of Alumni Relations and Development Mark Bentley, Joan Withers, and Brian Withers
Eight: Dame Rosie Horton, Michael Horton, Faye Sumner, and Jock Irvine
Nine: Professor Uwe Grodd, Colin Reid, and Elizabeth Evans
Ten: Bryan Williams and Janne Mildenhall
Eleven: Dr Marama Muru-Lanning, and Gerald Lanning
Twelve: Elaine Davies, Dr Dame Claudia Orange, Distinguished Alumna 1997, and Rod Orange
Thirteen: Dr Jennifer Te Paa-Daniel, Distinguished Alumna 2010, and Dr Roro Daniel

Photos: Godfrey Boehnke and Lydia Arnold
Fourteen: Musicians from the Royal New Zealand Navy Band
Fifteen: Satomi Suzuki-Badley, Emily Badley, and Associate Professor Allan Badley, who was Alumni Orator
Sixteen: Fady Mishriki and Olivia Mishriki
Seventeen: Associate Professor Manuka Henare, who gave the Mihi
Eighteen: Baritone Benson Wilson, graduate of the School of Music
Nineteen: Professor Christine Winterbourn
Twenty: University Chancellor Dr Ian Parton, and Vice-Chancellor Professor Stuart McCutcheon, who spoke about the role of small nations internationally and how the University can contribute as the largest provider of both higher education and research in New Zealand (see editorial page 3)
Twenty One: Bruce Plested, and President of the University of Auckland Society Amy Malcolm, who presented the winners’ medals

Visit the Alumni and Friends website to view a video of the speeches from the Dinner www.alumni.auckland.ac.nz
WHAT ADVICE WOULD YOU GO BACK AND GIVE TO YOUR YOUNG SELF?

This question, a challenge to all of us to take a thoughtful look at our lives, was put to each of our 2015 Distinguished Alumni by skilled facilitator Finlay Macdonald at the popular event called “Bright Lights”, held on 12 March at the Maidment Theatre.

Their answers, always insightful, were sometimes surprisingly frank.

Business leader Joan Withers: “I think the most important thing then and now was to be able to persuade good people to work with me. And I think I would have realised even more [by now] how important that is.”

Former All Black and NZ Rugby Union President Bryan Williams: “I would probably have said to him: ’Don’t party as much as I did.’ That word ‘balance’ has always been a key word for me. I’ve always said [to myself] when I’ve overstepped the mark in one way or another: ’Just keep the balance.’”

Scientist Professor Christine Winterbourn: “I think I’ve probably done what I’ve wanted to do. But what I’d say to other people is that a lot … has happened without a lot of planning … I see some young people getting really stressed about: ’What should I do? What’s the best thing to do?’ I’d say to them: ’Don’t worry too much. Just make the best of how things are. Seize the opportunities.’”

America’s Cup skipper and yacht designer Sir Russell Coutts: “I think I’ve become a bit of a student of some of the management books I’ve read … One of the books I should have read years ago (I think it’s got a terrible title but there’s a tremendous amount of wisdom in it) is How to Win Friends and Influence People, by Dale Carnegie. I just wish I’d read that 30 years ago. It would have saved me a lot of heartache and” [with a big smile] “probably other people as well.”

Mainfreight Executive Chairman Bruce Plested: “I think [I’d say] ’Don’t miss those adversities or changes at the crossroads. Try to recognise that … hang on, this is a crossroad. How do I take advantage of it?’ Nearly everyone here tonight said their life was an accident … it wasn’t planned out … Try to make the most of those little accidents. Work your butt off at whatever you’re doing. All your part-time jobs, all your jobs as a waiter or waitress or barman: do them really, really well. Try to improve on them. It means you are learning, whatever you’re doing.”

Fady Mishriki, our Young Alumnus of the Year, speaking to his “older self”: “When I graduated … it was very difficult … to decide what I would do. You see a lot of young friends going on OEs … doing exchanges, getting exciting jobs in exciting-sounding cities. At the time that’s really tempting. It was hard to say ’No, I really want to do this in New Zealand’. I guess I’d tell myself: ‘Back yourself. You made the right decisions. Go forward. Just do it faster this time.’”

“Bright Lights”, formerly known as “Auckland Live”, allows members of the University of Auckland Society and the wider community to spend an evening in the entertaining company of our illustrious line-up of Distinguished Alumni, sharing their thoughts and insights as they converse in a lively and informal way with each other and with fellow alumnus Finlay (BA 1984), media commentator and Qantas Media Award winner.

For the Bright Lights session, recorded live, see www.alumni.auckland.ac.nz click at the left on

From left, below, are Joan Withers, Fady Mishriki, Russell Coutts and Bruce Plested
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BIG DATA FOR THE COMMON GOOD

Story Margo White

A magnet and the stock market obviously don’t have much in common with each other except perhaps from a behavioural point of view.

“As it turns out, statistically, the ups and downs of the stock market are similar to the microscopic fluctuations of the strength of a magnet,” says Professor of Physics Shaun Hendy.

Shaun is director of the University’s new Centre of Research Excellence (CoRE), Te Pūnaha Matatini, which opened in February this year. The Centre aims to answer some of the big questions in life by drawing on the increasing availability of big data sets to develop better models of the complex systems that underlie it – in society, the economy, and our ecology.

To continue with the magnet/stock market analogy: a magnet is the aggregate of the magnetic properties of millions of atoms, drawn into line by the force of their magnetic field. A stock market is composed of living breathing flesh-and-blood people, all behaving in different ways according to what they think is best at the time.

The atoms in a magnet will occasionally flip the orientation of their own magnetic field, the result being that the net magnetic field of all the magnetic atoms will fluctuate. But these fluctuations tend to be small because, when an atom flips, it will be drawn back in line by the magnetic force of all the other atoms.

If you heat the magnet, however, the atoms in the magnet are more likely to flip, and once the magnet gets really hot, it can lose its magnetic field altogether; the flipping of the atoms become so random that the tiny magnetic fields of each of the atoms cancel each other out.

This is a bit like the stock market in reverse; when it behaves normally, investors act independently, like atoms in a hot magnet. When it crashes, however, the investors all do exactly the same thing – they sell – behaving just like the atoms in a normal magnet.

Both the magnet and the stock market are examples of complex systems, which exhibit patterns of collective behaviour, says Shaun: “The way our bodies work, the way our brains work, but also how we organise ourselves socially, are all examples of complex systems.”

But complex systems are complicated, and involve so many components and intersecting relationships and interactions that they are difficult to describe.

This doesn’t mean it’s impossible to understand them better than we do, which is what researchers at Te Pūnaha Matatini intend to do – to find patterns in the complexity, or ascertain how the relationships between the various parts give rise to the collective behaviours of the whole.

The name of the centre means “the meeting place of many faces”, which reflects the unusual level of interdisciplinary collaboration involved, bringing together academics from a myriad of backgrounds: physics, computer science, mathematics, engineering, statistics, microbiology, management studies, economics, ecology, sociology, anthropology et al.

“There are a lot of interdisciplinary collaborations in academia,” agrees Shaun, “but this pushes that a bit further. We’ve assembled a number of people from very different disciplines in a room, and said, ‘What are the big problems we face, and how could this mix of people address them?’ So we’re trying to stretch ourselves, beyond the collaborations that more commonly arise ... It was a conscious attempt to take us out of our comfort zones.”

These may be academics from different
disciplines but they share a common mathematical language, which is a handy combination when trying to understand complex systems. But doing so will help us make better decisions, about how to actually realise the dream of a predator-free New Zealand, for instance, or inhibit the spread of infectious diseases, like flu.

The latter, in fact, is the area being investigated by one of the Centre’s principal investigators, Alexei Drummond, Professor of Computer Science at the University, whose research interests are centred on models of molecular evolution and population genetics.

“The common dogma is that there is no flu in New Zealand during the summer, that we get it every year from international travelers, who arrive at the airport, seed the infection early in the season which is then spread through human contact throughout the country.”

But there are more complicated dynamics at play. For instance, H1N1 flu arrived in 2009, when it mainly infected people in the cities, while those in the regions were affected by the usual seasonal flu, H3N2. The following year H1N1 spread in the regions, while those in the cities were infected by H3N2.

“So there are questions to be asked, about the way people move between the cities and regions, where people go to work, and to meet family, to travel for business. Those patterns of human movement can potentially be well understood, we know where people are and go every day. So we could bring in that big data, we could better contextualize our health informatics data, and make better strategies for controlling influenza.”

One of the problems with seasonal influenza virus is that it evolves so rapidly that the vaccines become ineffective as the virus’s genetic makeup changes. On the flip side, this rapid evolution means that the genome sequence of a particular flu virus can be used to identify where it came from. “So that part of the modeling we have great expertise in. The other side of the equation is identifying how to model human movement, social networks and contact.”

And that involves identifying data sets that can reveal patterns of human movement: cell phone data, for instance. “There are many different data sets that can be bought to bear on that side of the equation,” says Alexei. “So that’s where a lot of the research is, identifying the best data sets which characterise society at the right level, so we can better understand how this disease spreads.”

The data collected in relation to one problem, such as how respiratory diseases spread, could help inform other questions, such as how ideas and innovations are best disseminated. This is the area that Shaun is interested in. What, for instance, are the underlying forces that result in one part of a country being more innovative than another, and how does economic geography affect the innovative performance of New Zealand companies?

“The hypothesis is that the structures that underlie knowledge flow are similar to the structures that might transmit disease.” That is, they depend on social interactions, social movement, geography and so on.

In cities you generally have more daily encounters, and they are likely to be more diverse … And that diversity means you’re more likely to hear about something novel.

“Part of what we have to do is help people understand what they’re giving up when they share data, and that there can be benefits for us all to doing so.”

“One of the things we can observe is that big cities are more innovative, and the networks that people have are in bigger cities are denser. In cities you generally have more daily encounters, and they are likely to be more diverse – the people in your working week in Auckland will have a more diverse set of knowledge and skills than those you might meet in Wellington. And that diversity means you’re more likely to hear about something novel. It’s this relationship between novelty and diversity that we really want to tease out.”

There are several projects the Centre is looking at: why New Zealand, despite its increasing income inequalities, has shown an improvement in infant outcomes – and whether this provides insights that can be used to counter other negative outcomes associated with inequality. How can we get rid of those possums, rats, ferrets, that are bedevilling our local ecology?

Of course big data has developed some uneasy associations in recent years, something used by marketers and advertisers trying to sell us stuff, or spy agencies gathering too much of it at the expense of our privacy.

But the models developed by researchers at Te Pūnaha Matatini, will not allow individuals to be tracked. “And we’ve chosen to attack problems that have strong elements of public good, and I think people are going to be more willing to give up data, if there’s a public good,” says Shaun.

“Part of what we have to do is help people understand what they’re giving up when they share data, and that there can be benefits for us all to doing so.”

Photo: Alexei Drummond (left) and Shaun Hendy.

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Ask Pacific Studies academic Dr Melani Anae about her greatest achievement since she joined the University staff in 1998 and her reply is prompt: “The Fale Pasifika,” she says. “When I became director of the Pacific Studies Centre in 2002, that [the fale] and consolidating a Pacific Studies curriculum was my first job and it was huge.”

Many at the University still remember the moving speech Melani gave at the 2004 opening of the University’s Fale Pasifika: the second largest in the world.

“My parents, like many other migrants, worked on factory floors, but they had dreams for us, their children, that New Zealand would be a better place for succeeding generations,” she told a crowd of 600.

“While they have longed for a place in New Zealand they could call home, they never could have imagined that Pacific communities would someday be so much a part of the New Zealand way of life that a fale like the one we are looking at now would be built in the heart of Auckland City.”

If anyone is a product of this “Pacific” dream then it is surely Melani herself. A New Zealand-born Samoan, she has always been fascinated by her own culture and history and has a BA, MA and PhD – all in Anthropology – from this university.

Director of the Centre for Pacific Studies from 2002 to 2006, Melani was instrumental in growing it from a small language-based programme into a collaborative hub for the study of Pacific culture, history, identity, art, language, performing arts and literature. In 2008 her research work and service to Pacific communities in New Zealand was acknowledged with a Companion to the Queen’s Service Order (QSO) medal. Today she is Director of Research at Pacific Studies Te Wānanga o Waipapa with expertise in Pacific identity and ethnicity, transnationalism, Pacific research methodologies and relational ethics.

“Melani, through her research, teaching and publications, is continuing to make a large contribution to our understanding of Pasifika communities, and especially, the Samoan community in Aotearoa,” says acclaimed novelist and Emeritus Professor Albert Wendt.

Albert was on staff and worked with Melani on getting the Fale Complex built. Now he says: “Whenever I see the complex, I think of Melani.”

Melani is a pleasure to interview: friendly, warm and relaxed with her time. As we sit in the Pacific Studies boardroom, she flings her long mane of hair back and laughs heartily as she tells me of her interests outside the University. “I am a member of the Alofa Tramping Group. Would you believe it, we’re probably the first Pacific Island tramping group ever!”

My partner is an avid tramer,” she explains. “He took me out to the Waitakere Ranges and saw I had stamina and endurance for multi-day tramps. Now we try to do two multi-day tramps a year. We’ve been all over the South Island to Nelson Lakes, the Rees Dart, Arthur’s Pass, Kahurangi and Mt. Aspiring National Parks and Rakiura (Stewart Island). We’ve done the Tongariro Crossing several times and I’ve managed to endure the hut culture: smelly socks etc. It’s a great way to see New Zealand with family and friends. And it’s what we share on the journey that matters.”

Whether out tramping or working as an academic, Melani is always aware of her journey as a Samoan woman in New Zealand.

As a 17-year-old she joined the Polynesian Panther party, the first Pacific Political Party in NZ – because she had a strong leaning towards social
Justice for minorities. "Now my teaching philosophy is reflective of this. I work to get students to value what they’ve taken for granted – their ethnic identity – to enable them to see it is a valuable asset and to apply that knowledge to optimise their contributions to both NZ and their own Pacific communities. 
(Incidentally her older brother is Anae Arthur Anae the first Pacific MP in the National Party and now the Manukau Ward Councillor on the Auckland Council.)

Melani’s parents were in the first wave of Samoan migrants to come to New Zealand in the 1950s. “My father hailed from the villages of Apia and Falelatai and my mother from Siumu. My father worked in a paper bag factory in Richmond Road, Grey Lynn, and my first job ever was at my dad’s factory in the school holidays. I remember thinking the work was so repetitive. Dad was the foreman at the time and worked really long hours but it made me respect him for the kind of job he was doing to support our family.”

Melani grew up in a villa in Home Street in Grey Lynn and was one of eight children: four boys and four girls. “We played in Newton Gully before there was a motorway,” she remembers. “But more than anything I loved being part of a large extended Samoan family* especially for to’ona’i (Sunday lunch) when we’d all get together after church with uncles, aunts and cousins and share food. Our church was the Newton Pacific Islanders Church in Edinburgh Street between the Pink Pussy Cat and the Pleasure Chest on K-Road.”

She went to Newton Central Primary School, Kowhai Intermediate and Auckland Girls Grammar. When she enrolled at university, as all the members of her family were expected to do, it was to study her own culture and its history. “I did a double major in Māori Studies and Anthropology. There was no Pacific Studies then.”

After an Anthropology masters exam, her professor called her up and said: “Have you considered doing a PhD?”

“If he hadn’t called me, I don’t know if I’d have done further study, because I was working full-time [for the Department of Māori and Pacific Island Affairs as a clerical assistant] and raising three young children.”

But thankfully Melani took her professor’s advice and the research from her PhD now forms part of numerous published journal articles, book chapters and a soon-to-be-published book titled No Ordinary Gods: Samoan elites in New Zealand. Her latest, Marsden-funded, project “Samoan transnational matai; ancestor god avatars or merely title holders?” returns to this material but extends its scope beyond New Zealand.

Samoans make up the largest Pacific ethnic group in New Zealand, Australia, and the US. In Samoan culture, families (āiga) are split up into groups or branches. At the head of every branch stands the matai, or head of the family.

“While there is increasing global concern about how the faamatai (chiefly system) is evolving,” explains Melani. “So there is a need for more evidence about how the transnational matai practise their roles and obligations to family in Samoa when they live, and in most cases settle, in another country. We need to understand the risks and gains associated with these processes.”

She says the research has always been in the back of her mind “because my father was one of the first pioneer transnational matai to come to New Zealand. Pioneer or settler transnationals travel and stay in a place. I'm looking at the pioneer generation who settled in these places as well as the first generation who were born outside Samoa. How have they taken on the Matai titles? Their experiences. Samoan-based matai are quite critical of how transnationals are ‘changing’ the faamatai. The way they are getting their titles, whether they have the right credentials, whether they are ‘really’ supporting their families and villages back home, are of increasing concern to matai in Samoa. I’m trying to clear up some of these misunderstandings/ issues and gain some empirical evidence of what, how and why transnational matai are actually contributing to their families and villages in Samoa, given that their focus is on trying to survive in a new land.”

Melani has been researching Samoan matai who have settled in Utah, Hawaii, Australia and New Zealand. The research will have an impact for the sustainability and wellbeing of Samoan families worldwide. She will eventually report back to six villages in Samoa and hold an international transnational matai symposium in the University’s Fale Pasifika.

It is only late in our conversation that Melani lets slip that she is in fact a matai herself. There are two types of matai: ali’i (loosely translated chief or high chief depending on a specific title’s rank) and tulafale (orator chief).

“Melani became an ali’i matai through her mother’s family, from which her title of Misatauveve originates. Of her own role she says: “It means serving and giving when the call comes from āiga here in New Zealand, Samoa or elsewhere. Service comes in the form of time, and money in the many family occasions which are celebrated, fund-raised for, and mourned by āiga for a plethora of reasons.”

“In my heart of hearts I celebrate the matai system,” she concludes. “It is the ultimate expression of the centrality of family in Samoan culture.”

Opposite: Melani, in front of the Fale Complex: the Fale Pasifika and the Pacific Studies Building.

See www.auckland.ac.nz/fale-pasifika
The work of neurobiologist Dr Melanie Cheung (Ngāti Rangitihi) from the University’s Centre for Brain Research is right at the forefront of an international thrust towards enhancing the power of the human brain in sickness and in health.

Melanie is leading a team of scientists and clinicians who are seeking to prevent the advance of symptoms in people with the gene for Huntington’s disease: a tragically disabling neurodegenerative disease that is inherited, incurable and inevitably fatal.

And they are doing this in a totally new way: not through a process of drug discovery (though Melanie has done her share of this in the past) but through an intensive programme of carefully-crafted brain plasticity-based cognitive exercises specifically chosen to address the symptoms of Huntington’s disease.

Says Melanie “There’s an adage that says: ‘Neurons that fire together wire together’. If you can get a group of neurons [the nerve cells in the brain that process and transmit information through electrical and chemical messages] to consistently fire together, then you can change a pathway. This process, called brain plasticity, is essentially what our research is about.

“So what we’re trying to do is harness the brain’s natural processes to change the way it functions and stimulate its own pharmaceutical stores in a way that helps it fix itself.

“The types of improvements can be very specific because you can design particular inputs to engage the parts of the brain that need to be strengthened.”

All scientists depend on those who have gone before, and this research, funded by the Health Research Council and Fulbright New Zealand, builds on the ground-breaking work of Distinguished Professor Richard Faull (Ngāti Rāhiri, Te Ātiawa), Director of the Centre for Brain Research (and a member of the team), who overturned traditional scientific thinking in the early 2000s through his discovery that the mature brain was capable of growing new cells and repairing itself.

Melanie’s other mentor, supporter and collaborator is neuroplasticity pioneer Michael Merzenich, Professor Emeritus at the University of California, San Francisco, co-founder of Posit Science and author of Soft-Wired: How the New Science of Brain Plasticity Can Change Your Life. His work has resulted in the development of brain plasticity-based cognitive exercises designed to stimulate and strengthen pathways in the brain in order to combat the symptoms of at least 30 different types of neurodegenerative diseases and disorders from autism to Alzheimer’s disease and from schizophrenia to stroke.

With Michael Merzenich, while on a Fulbright Scholarship to the United States, Melanie selected 33 sets of exercises (from among around 200 sets available) that were likely to be effective in addressing the early symptoms of Huntington’s disease: the exercises train attention, working memory, processing speed, sequencing, temporal processing, emotional recognition and mental flexibility.

Using these selected sets of exercises, Melanie and her team have developed a treatment requiring 30 minutes of computer-based “brain training” five times a week over 40 weeks. The exercises are designed to train the participants specifically in those capacities that are impaired in Huntington’s disease.

Forty of these people are doing the selected brain plasticity-based exercises and a control group of 40 are doing a more general cognitive training. Half of the participants are asymptomatic carriers of the Huntington’s disease gene while the other half are members of the same families but are not carrying the gene.

The researchers are not sure if brain plasticity-based training will be able to cure the disease completely. However, Melanie says that they hope to cause a delay in the symptoms and enhance the brain power of all groups in the study.

Michael Merzenich’s motto is: “Go faster,” she says.

“As a research team we feel like we’re sprinting. If we can slow the disease progression by five years, in the 40 people with Huntington’s disease that we are training, that will save the Government something like $15 million. And if we can delay the symptoms by five years for those 40 people, that takes away 200 years of human suffering. Take our work out into the world and we might be able to reduce the suffering by hundreds of thousands of years.

“So – we have to go faster.”

The work cuts across the lines between disciplines, as Melanie explains.

The participants undergo MRI (magnetic resonance imaging) scans to allow examination of the structure and function of their brains; neuropsychological assessments to measure
A half-hour’s mind-limbering every day would be seen as just as important as a physical fitness regime.

At the time of the interview there are some signs of a lift in mood and improved memory among participants.

Richard Faull describes this work as “remarkable” not only because it is the first research in the world to focus on the effects of cognitive exercises on the progression of Huntington’s disease but also because of a second dimension that is an intrinsic part of the research. This is its focus on developing protocols appropriate to Māori researchers and communities.

The base for this dimension of the research was laid more than eight years ago when Melanie (who is of Māori, Asian and Pākehā ancestry) was working towards her PhD, supervised by Richard Faull and Professor Mike Dragunow. At the time her research required that she handle human brain tissue, which would not normally have been acceptable within Māori cultural values and traditions. With advice from Michael Walker (Te Whakatōhea), a Professor of Biological Sciences and a valued mentor, she approached the kaumātua from her own iwi (Ngāti Rangihī) to ask them to give their blessing for her research.

Richard Faull, Mike Dragunow and Michael Walker came with her to the hui at which the matter was discussed. Also accompanying them were a mother and daughter from a family with the gene for Huntington’s disease. “The human experience was what touched their hearts,” says Melanie. After discussion and consideration, they gave their permission.

When Melanie asked the elders of the iwi for details about the protocol she should use, they said: “You will have to discover it. You are going beyond the boundaries of our knowledge of tikanga”.

Melanie and her team are still on that voyage of discovery: working out the protocols that are appropriate for new research – in a way that is respectful to the culture and the participants, is in accord with Kaupapa Māori, and has the blessing of the communities.

For the current study, most of the research team and all of the project’s participants are Māori, drawn from 14 different communities.

The work incorporates tikanga (Māori values and customary practices) and is very much a combined effort, with a whole clinical team working with the researchers in the communities so that those undergoing the research programme receive the best possible care as they participate in the research.

Over 80 weeks they have four appointments with neuropsychologists and a neuropsychiatrist, seven with the HD specialist nurse, and a yearly whānau hui with the research team. A meeting is also being planned to bring together all the communities.

The team includes specialist research nurse, Jo Dysart, who has had more than 20 years’ experience working with patients with Huntington’s disease, and “knows more about their needs than almost anyone else” says Melanie, Richard Faull, who “plays an important role as a world leader in brain research, but also offers kindness as well as expertise, and has a wonderful way with communities”; Dr Hemi Whanga (Ngāti Kahungunu, Ngāti Tahu, Ngāti Mamoe, Waitaha), a linguist who looks after translations and ensures clarity of communications; Dr Wairora Port (Te Rarawa, Te Aupōuri), “a wonderful kiau in her 80s who not only guides us with tikanga, but studied Māori experiences of DNA testing for familial cancers for her PhD, so she knows her stuff”; “our brilliant research assistant Emma Lambert” (Ngāti Mutunga, Ngāti Tama), “the top Huntington’s disease neuropsychologist in New Zealand,” Associate Professor Lynette Tippett, Dr Greg Finucane, “our Pākehā HD specialist neuropsychiatrist, “who speaks better Māori than me”; Mike Merzenich, “who is one of the worlds leading experts in neuroplasticity”; and neuro-psychologist, Dr Margaret Dudley (Te Rarawa, Te Aupōuri), “who has developed Māori-specific protocols for neuropsychological testing”.

One simple example is that when participants come to the hospital the research assistants welcome them, karakia, show them around, eat with them, so that they feel at home in what is, to many of them, a “foreign” place.

Says Melanie: “I tell the participants before we karakia that in Māori culture we are taught that karakia is as much about soothing the soul as it is about talking to God. The heartfelt karakia that some of them pray often move us to tears.”

The researchers believe there could be exciting results coming out of the study within six months, leading to a new era of treatment for patients with Huntington’s disease.

They also believe the work is likely to show that the selected brain plasticity-based exercises can significantly enhance brain power in all participants, including those who are healthy (bringing thoughts of a future where every gym would include a computer-room, and a half-hour’s mind-limbering every day would be seen as just as important as a physical fitness regime.)

On several journeys to the United States, including her recent Fulbright Scholarship, Melanie has had the opportunity to develop relationships with other indigenous peoples and to see how the research protocols translate into other cultures.

The protocols, she concludes, are about being human. They are about connecting in holistic ways.

“We’re discovering that what is good for Māori is likely to be good for others as well.”

BRINGING HISTORY ALIVE

At the beginning of the 1990s, alumnus David Verran (MA Hons 1973) had just started working in Auckland Public Library’s New Zealand and Pacific section when he began fielding enquiries about the city’s historic Symonds Street cemetery.

“Patrons were asking who was buried in the cemetery and we couldn’t tell them,” he recalls. “We had a whole lot of disparate resources, and descriptions of tombstones that weren’t correct.”

David’s response was to set up a database for the cemetery using what was known and then matching information and getting some regularity. He did further research and began giving talks on the cemetery and taking tours, sometimes up to two hours long, around the site.

“It’s a model Victorian cemetery transplanted to Aotearoa,” he says, “and it’s an important historical record and final resting place for many of Auckland’s early settlers.”

Among these are the first Governor of New Zealand, Captain William Hobson (d.1842), a Judge of the Native Land Court, Frederick Maning (d.1883), adventurer Baron Charles Philippe de Thierry (d.1864) and the first mayor of Auckland Borough Council, Archibald Clark (d.1875).

The cemetery was closed in 1886 but relatives could still be buried in family plots and David estimates there are up to 15,000 there. “But we can probably document only 7,000,” he adds. “Even though many do not have headstones or identified grave sites, people are still acknowledged on our database and that’s important,” he says.

David’s work on the cemetery is just one example of how this accomplished reference librarian and historian is bringing local history to life in a unique and refreshing way. Anyone who has ever been to the third floor of Auckland Public Library in the last 25 years or so to research local history will have encountered his distinctive figure: tall, lean, cheerful and bubbling over with enthusiasm and knowledge.

“David’s the organ grinder at the library’s Auckland Research Centre,” says Emeritus Professor of History and Auckland historian, Russell Stone. “If anyone asks me how to source something I send them straight to David. He is a great repository of knowledge and a formidable historian in his own right.”

A fourth-generation New Zealander whose family is immortalised in the naming of Verrans Corner in Birkenhead, David reeves off his own early history as though it’s neatly typed on a reference card: “I was born in a Devonport nursing home. Grew up on Birkenhead Point. Went to Birkenhead Primary, Northcote Intermediate and Westlake Boys. I was in the same class as [former Vice-Chancellor] Sir John Hood.” He pauses. “I haven’t seen him to speak to for 45 years.”

In 1973 David got an MA Hons, second class, first division, in History at the University of Auckland. From there he went to Library School in 1974 and then to his first job at Hamilton Public Library. In 1976 he became librarian at Te Atatu Peninsula Library and by October 1977 he was ensconced at Auckland Central Library, where he has been ever since.

“When I started working in libraries I found this exponential range of source material, which got me interested in writing history,” he says.

Soon David, who is now the Team Leader for the Auckland Library’s Central Auckland Research Centre, was spending his weekends writing the histories of the local government officers’ union and then the brewery workers’ union.

And then he came across some transcriptions of oral histories of Northcote. “These made me aware of a Māori community there and no one knew anything about it – the Māori were squatting on Catholic Land – so I looked through Catholic archives and found a newspaper reference that gave me the dates and all that sort of thing. It was a clipping attached to a document in Catholic Archives. Apparently 400 acres had been given to the Catholic Church and a Māori tribe were allowed to squat there by a local priest and they were still there in the 1920s. Their children were schooled at the local Catholic school. Eventually the local cop eased them off.”

This discovery piqued David’s interest in the history of the North Shore. “It really showed me that there were things there under the surface that hadn’t been told. So I started to give talks and wrote something for the Auckland Waikato Historical Journal and eventually gave a paper to the New Zealand Historical Association.

Soon these activities ballooned into a commission from Random House to write a history of the North Shore. “I was the only man standing. Or rather the only person, he chuckles. “I pulled a whole lot of stuff together and the 70,000 words seemed to just arrive.”

The North Shore: An Illustrated History has had one re-print, sold more than 4,000 copies and earned praise from fellow historians such as Dr Graham Bush, former University Political Studies lecturer, who says: “it is very impressive, both in terms of underpinning research and the vast breadth of topics covered” … and “it surpasses by far anything else written about the history of the North Shore”.

During the writing of the North Shore history, David became interested in transport entrepreneur, politician, businessman and racehorse-owner Ewen Alison, who once owned the Waitemata ferries – the main service between the city and Devonport.

“He was an unknown but important figure in our history so now I’m writing his biography. He was at the forefront of the fight with the miners’ union during 1913 and 1914, but his overriding passion was horses, he was a racehorse owner and chairman of the Jockey Club. He started out in life as a type-
setter for the Herald. Then he went farming, started an abattoir with his brother, got elected to the Waitemata county council, bought up land, got into the Ferry Company and took it over. He had good business acumen and eventually became Mayor of Devonport. So he’s got all these things going on and it’s how they mesh that I’m interested in. Alison died in 1945.”

David edits *New Zealand Legacy: Journal of the New Zealand Federation of Historical Societies* and writes a monthly column in the North Shore-based Channel magazine. He is still doing a couple of tours a year to Symonds Street Cemetery although, in part as a result of his efforts, the Auckland Council and Heritage New Zealand are now working on a landscape and heritage plan for the cemetery and a Friends group has been formed.


But for David it is simply that “people need to be able to relate to what you’re writing”. He cites the work of Michael Bassett “who has got the trick of getting popular history out there” and he has always admired New Zealand historian and former Emeritus Professor Keith Sinclair – “an historian that was out in the public arena”.

“I think history is telling a story about where we have come from,” says David. “And it’s about problem-solving. I like to find out what is really going on with something, I check sources back against other sources and I verify them – and then I explain it to people.”

Simple as that!

LIPPINCOTT’S CHAIRS

**Story Tess Redgrave**

In November 1924, American architect Roy Lippincott wrote a three-page letter to the Auckland University College’s President and Council setting out the raison d’être behind the rimu furniture he intended designing to go with his magnificent new Arts Building and ClockTower.

In keeping with Arts and Crafts ideals of the time, which meant that everything in a building’s interior from light fittings to furniture was created by the architect as part of a holistic schema, Lippincott wrote that as the wood finish of the building was rimu, the furniture also should be of this material, which has a grain “at times almost theatrical in its effect”.

He said he would design some 250 arm, desk and straight-backed chairs for the University College with all surfaces flush and no right-angled corners to collect dirt. “We suggest that the upholstery be in genuine hide,” he added, “as this is the most durable and sanitary material for the purpose, and when the order is a large one it has been our experience, that the expense is little, if any, above that of less satisfactory materials ..”

Now just over 100 years later this same thoughtfulness and eye for detail has been applied to 15 Lippincott chairs that have been in storage and have now been given another lease of life as part of the refurbishment of the upper South Wing of the ClockTower.

“We chose the best from a number we have in storage,” says Rosemarie Dunning, a University Property Services Project Manager and furniture purchaser on the refurbishment project.

Rosemarie located a special green-coloured pure wool fabric (the colour echoing the trees outside the ClockTower rooms) from New Zealand company Textilia Fabrics, who source their wool from a sheep station in Akaroa. The chairs were then re-furbished by Auckland-based Philip King Furniture Restorers. They will now be used as “art and perch chairs” for visitors to the Vice-Chancellor’s new suite.

“They are not a design you could sit on for very long,” says Rosemarie.

Salmond Reed Architects has led the renovation of the South Wing of the ClockTower, part of the building long hailed as one of Auckland’s iconic architectural masterpieces and the jewel in the University’s crown.
FROM SUCCESS TO SUCCESS

Alumni achiever Nishika de Rosairo (BCom, BCom (Hons), MCom 2004) answers some questions about her life.

Where did you grow up?
I was born in Zambia to an expat family. After eight years of living there, I spent the next seven years of my life in Sri Lanka. From there my parents moved to New Zealand when I was 15, and I spent the next ten years in Auckland before moving to the US.

Tell us a little about your career
After studying business at the University of Auckland and then completing a year-long exchange into the MBA program at the University of Washington, I was sponsored by Deloitte Consulting to move back to the US. I spent nine years working for Fortune 500/Silicon Valley companies including Deloitte Consulting, Apple, Salesforce, Cisco, Levi, and others. Then I left it all behind to launch a contemporary womenswear clothing brand called de ROSAIRO (www.dEROSAIRO.com). We opened a year ago with the goal of re-imagining the wardrobe of the women in tech, which is why we are headquartered in San Francisco -- the technology capital of the world. We’re now carried in specialty boutiques around the US and ship all over the world.

How did you develop a passion for fashion?
My mother used to design and sew these beautiful dresses for my sister and me when we were younger. She made us understand how important it is to dress the part. So when I was six I dreamt of building my own fashion brand. Three business degrees, nine years in corporate America, and with no fashion training or experience, here I am, finally. Our goal through de ROSAIRO is to empower the modern woman through what she wears and how that impacts on how she feels and leads.

How has your education at Auckland helped with your career and business?
The Organisational Change and Innovation honours degree I was invited to study at the University was a unique learning experience that challenged my thinking and resonated on multiple levels. I also had two professors who played instrumental roles in mentoring me. I owe a lot of the initial success in my career to their dedication and thoughtfulness. And once I gained that solid platform, I had only one choice, which was to leap forward.

What has given you most satisfaction and enjoyment?
I don’t tend to look back. I like to look forward. But what does give me satisfaction is seeing each day as a summation of what’s gone before. I know I can only do what I do today because of what has happened in the past.

You’ve had a lot of success in life. Tell us about something you’re proud of.
One source of pride is in seeing things that have changed because of my own influence or actions. In real estate I am proud of what the Real Estate Institute accomplished when I was on the board. When we changed from the pound to the dollar, for example, real estate agents were reluctant to list prices of houses in dollars because it made them look so much higher. The large companies were able to set an example. When we changed, it influenced others to change as well.

What are the things you want to do that you haven’t done yet?
"With the growth of the internet and the ease of travel I feel my horizons are growing wider. Most of the new things I’m wanting to do are in the athletic sphere. I’m looking forward to competing in the World Masters Games. I did intend to limit myself to three disciplines -- swimming, biking and triathlon -- but now I’m thinking I might just add a fourth -- running, on the assumption that my hip, broken when I fell off my bike in 2014, will be fully functional by 2017."

It seems very likely that Garth’s example will influence others to compete as well.

ESCAPING THE ORDINARY

The name of alumnus Garth Barfoot (BCom 1958) will be familiar to most readers. Garth is a notably successful businessman, one of three directors of Barfoot and Thompson Real Estate.

However, readers may not be aware that he is also a high-achieving sportsman. Since completing his first triathlon at the age of 56 Garth has competed in more than 30 long distance triathlons all over the world, and, at 78, is currently the International Triathlon Union Long Distance World Champion for his age group. He is also an ambassador for the World Masters Games, which are to take place in Auckland in 2017. www.worldmastersgames2017.co.nz

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CARING TO LISTEN

Story Judy Wilford

Lauren Donnan’s older brother Andrew, generally known in the family as Beefy, loves nothing better than to make her laugh.

“He’s incredibly vivacious and funny,” says Lauren. “And,” she adds, with a wry and affectionate smile, “he is incredibly loud.”

Beefy, seven years older than Lauren, is now 34. He has autism, ADHD and an intellectual disability. And Lauren, now in her third year as a PhD student in Education, became one of his principal carers from the age of 14, after their “strong and wonderful” mother died following a six-month illness.

Lauren has a close and loving family: she, Beefy, her other brother Robert (now 32) and their father give each other plenty of affection and support. However, their father, an international flight attendant, often has to be away from home. And almost without words, says Lauren, she took on her role in caring for Beefy.

This challenging and life-changing personal experience is now informing her PhD thesis, which won second place in last year’s University 3-Minute Thesis competition.

The research, supervised by Associate Professor Toni Bruce and Professor Janet Gaffney, is focused on “young carers”, their experiences and their needs, and how these can be provided for in terms of social policy. A “young carer”, as defined by Lauren in her study, is someone under 25 who is giving a significant amount of care to someone (a brother, sister, parent, grandparent, aunt or uncle, neighbour or friend) who has a physical or mental disability, an illness such as cancer, a drug or alcohol problem, or is elderly.

Lauren originally intended her PhD study to be about ways people interact with those who have disabilities. However, just one month into her research, she discovered the body of literature about young carers.

“I’d never thought of myself as a ‘young carer,’” said Lauren. “But when I started watching video clips of young carers in the UK, I saw the stories were about my life.” This was an enormously emotional insight. Suddenly, she was not alone.

And as a young carer and a gifted scholar, she is in a position to make a unique contribution in this field.

Lauren’s research is structured around 40 interviews with young carers – with an auto-ethnographic element included, since many of the interviews triggered memories that helped Lauren validate her own experiences and gain a deeper understanding of the lives and needs of others. She has kept a diary through the research process and has also undergone counselling herself, which she advises for anyone undertaking research on a sensitive or highly emotional topic.

Participants in her research are Māori, Pacific, Asian and European, and range in age mainly from 20 to 27, though many commenced caring at a much earlier age and one was a carer from the age of four. The youngest in the study is 11.

For many of these young people the interview with Lauren was the first time they had ever been asked what the experience was like for them and what kind of support they needed. “When I met them I would often just have to ask one question and wouldn’t need to speak again. We’ve cried together and laughed together. It is an emotional time,” she says.

Often, young carers have been seen as the “naughty” children at school: “They are absent because someone has to go to hospital, or they arrive late because the person they are caring for is up all night.”

Sometimes the teacher doesn’t understand their situation. Sometimes they say nothing because of family privacy or because they fear their role as carer, which they often see as “hard, but incredibly rewarding”, will be taken away by people who want to protect them. However, the lack of age-appropriate support can lead to difficulties with education – and make it harder to lay a solid base for adult life.

Lauren has a strong drive to ensure that the young carers’ voices are heard and are then translated into policy, so that they get the support they need.

“Young people’s voices are so powerful. We need to listen to what they say.”

Already she leads an organisation called “Young Carers New Zealand”, with an advisory group of six current and former young carers. She is writing a column for young carers in the Family Carers magazine, has created a ‘Young Carers’ Facebook page (with funding supplied by the Ministry of Social Development), and was recently invited to be a keynote speaker for a Youth Carer Conference in Taiwan.

However, one of the things that has pleased her most was an invitation to consult for the Ministry of Social Development on the New Zealand Carer Strategy Action Plan, because this marks the first time young carers have been included in policy. Her latest task was to prepare and deliver an evidential brief to the Ministry of Social Development, and present at parliament on the preliminary findings from her research.

Lauren is excited that young carers’ own voices are being heard, and she hopes that her research will make a real difference for many young carers in New Zealand.

To see Lauren’s 3-Minute Thesis presentation, visit www.auckland.ac.nz/three-minute-thesis-competition

Photos: Beefy and Lauren, at her wedding last year (above), at the piano, aged nine and two (far left), and just having fun together aged ten and 17 (left).
ALUMNI & FRIENDS EVENTS
Reconnect, Celebrate And Remember
MAY TO DECEMBER 2015

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Update your details now and be in to win an Apple iPad Mini

For more information about alumni news or to ensure you receive an invitation to an event being held in your area please visit www.alumni.auckland.ac.nz/update to update your details. Go in the draw to win one of three Apple iPad Minis if you update your details by 31 July 2015.

GRADUATION GALA CONCERTO COMPETITION
Alumni and Friends of the University (especially graduands and their families) are warmly invited to join us at the Graduation Gala Concerto Competition at the Auckland Town Hall at 7.30pm on Thursday 7 May. The concert will feature School of Music soloists Bradley Wood (piano), Jane Sohn (piano) and Lauren Bennett (violin), who will each perform a concerto with the University of Auckland Symphony Orchestra, conducted by Leo Phillips, to compete for a grand prize.

The competition will also feature a newly commissioned work by Leonie Holmes, Where the Tui Sings Three Notes, for the University of Auckland Chamber Choir, conducted by Karen Gryllis. Special guests include Te Oti Rakena (baritone), Morag Atchison (soprano), Robert Wiremu (piano) and James Tibbles (organ).

For more information visit www.creative.auckland.ac.nz/gradgala. Admission is free, with no tickets required, but please arrive early to secure seats.

AUCKLAND WRITERS FESTIVAL, 13–17 MAY 2015
The University is delighted to again support the Auckland Writers Festival, a festival of literature and ideas.

The University of Auckland Writers’ Festival Debate: "Everyone has the absolute right to offend"

Staff, alumni and friends of the University are invited to attend the University of Auckland Festival Debate on Wednesday 13 May, 8–9.30pm, ASB Theatre, Aotea Centre.

In a year where freedom of expression is being severely tested, we ask whether the right to offend is absolute? What constraints, if any, should be imposed on this human right, and by whom?

For further information about the debate see news story page 5.

Standard ticket price is $40 per person, early bird price is $35 per person, alumni discounted ticket price is $32.00 per person. To take advantage of the special alumni ticket price you will need to book by calling Ticketmaster.

By phone: Call 09 570 9745 and quote promotional code ALUMNI. There will be no transaction fee.

By internet: http://www.ticketmaster.co.nz/ Input the ALUMNI promotion code box and click the arrow to gain the discount ($5 transaction fee).

For more information please visit www.writersfestival.co.nz

Want a closer relationship with your alma mater?
Join the University of Auckland Society at www.society@auckland.ac.nz.

Celebrating Success:
Distinguished Alumni Award nominations close 30 June 2015
The awards will be presented at the Distinguished Alumni Awards Dinner in March 2016 in Auckland. Up to five awards are presented each year to honour alumni who have made outstanding contributions, through their achievements to their professions, their communities and globally. The Young Alumnus/Alumna of the Year award was introduced in 2006 to recognize alumni 35 years or under who have already demonstrated outstanding achievement in their career.

To download and fill in nomination forms visit www.alumni.auckland.ac.nz.

Connecting Alumni and Friends:
International Alumni Network
If you live outside of Auckland and would like to be involved with local alumni, we encourage you to contact your Volunteer Alumni Co-ordinator (VAC). If you would like to consider being a VAC for your area, please contact Kirby-Jane Hallum, at k.hallum@auckland.ac.nz for further information.

Please visit www.alumni.auckland.ac.nz and click at the left side on Alumni clubs and contacts for more information about our international contacts in your area.

Follow us on Facebook [Facebook graphic] www.facebook.com/UoAAlumni

Alumni gather in Samoa
The University held its first Alumni and Friends reception in Samoa at the end of February at the Tanoa Tusitala Hotel in Apia, The Prime Minister of Samoa, the Hon Tuilaepa Sailele Malielegaoi, gave the opening address, during which he expressed his support for the formation of an alumni network.

Associate Professor Damon Salesa, director of Pacific Studies and Strategic Engagement, gave the guests an update on developments at the University, while Professor Jenny Dixon, Deputy Vice-Chancellor, Strategic Engagement, spoke of the University’s latest research and initiatives, especially those centred on the Pacific.

Jenny said both she and Damon received significant feedback that people were keen for an alumni group to be set up.

ALUMNI PROFILE

ALUMNI PROFILE

Autumn 2015

ALUMNI PROFILE

Ingenio
Visitors to a unique exhibition at the Gus Fisher Gallery later this year will have a chance not only to see the artworks on display but also to experience a completely new way of interacting with visual art.

Two academics from the University of Auckland, cognitive neuroscientist Associate Professor Tony Lambert and art historian Greg Minissale have been working on an innovative project where they record the movements of people’s eyes while they are looking at artworks.

An especially original feature of the exhibition is that visitors will interact with displayed images through their eye-movement behaviour. That is, the images in some exhibits will be dynamic and changeable, with changes being determined by the eye behaviour of the viewer.

Eye movements are the frequent actions that we carry out but are rarely conscious of performing. For example, you are moving your eyes several times per second as you read these words. Cognitive neuroscience research has shown that these movements are controlled by a complex interplay of conscious and non-conscious processes. This exhibition, the outcome of a conversation between Greg and Tony, will explore the consequences of disrupting the normal interplay between conscious visual experience and the complex mechanisms that guide our eyes, as we look at visual art.

Although scientists and artists have collaborated in the past by using eye tracking technology as a tool for studying how people look at paintings and other artworks, this exhibition called Eyetrackers represents a radical departure. In Eyetrackers, the technology and the art are fully integrated – in an important sense, the eye-tracking is the art.

Eyetrackers will be shown at the Gus Fisher Gallery from 7 August to 5 September. There will be large screens and video loops, eye tracking devices and in situ artworks drawn from the University collection. A postgraduate student from the Art History department will be working alongside Tony and Greg, conducting formative and summative evaluation of the exhibition.

The exhibition will allow visitors to experience eye tracking technology themselves in real time, and in so doing they will become conscious of how they look at objects and paintings. Some exhibits will illustrate eye scanning directly, by replaying the eye movements made as a viewer inspects and explores an artwork.

The exhibition will challenge assumptions about how we think we behave with artworks, and also about how we go about gathering information and pursuing interests that may even be unknown to us. In addition there is a slightly sinister aspect to the exhibition – and to the research – since the technology links to surveillance culture and closed circuit television, with the concomitant implications for privacy and autonomy.

It also raises questions of the gendered politics of the gaze. This is because art has traditionally structured images of women’s bodies to attract the male gaze. Eye movements that are attracted to certain areas of the pictorial space can be revealed in eye tracking technology, eye behaviour that is often involuntary. Sometimes the gaze is directed to parts of the picture by unconscious desires unknown to the viewer. Other artworks arrest the eye or suggest shapes or forms that create anxiety about visual pleasure.

Whereas in daily life we are very often unaware of how our eyes wander or are attracted to salient features, Eyetrackers will offer viewers the rare opportunity to experience how artworks contrive to direct the gaze.

Above: In the portrait of George Nepia by Tom Hanover, the red lines represent movements of the eyes (saccades) from one visual location to another. The red circles represent fixations – periods when the eyes remain still. The diameter of each circle represents the duration of a fixation – how long the person looked at this part of the picture. This is 15 seconds of eye monitoring data. The numbers inside the circles represent the order of fixations.

Left: Hye Rim Lee, Mesh, 2001, digital print on vinyl. This work from the University’s Art Collection is one of those that will be exhibited in Eyetrackers.
The Centre for Brain Research (CBR) is an excellent example of the magic that results when donor meets researcher. In December 2014, the CBR celebrated its fifth anniversary along with 430 guests.

"You’re all here for a reason," the Director of the CBR, Distinguished Professor Richard Faull, told the group. "Every single person in this room has had a role to play, from our scientists, clinicians and community partners to our donors and supporters."

The CBR story is about world-class research, developing new therapies, training scientists and clinicians, engaging with communities, and influencing health policy.

It is also a story of partnership, with organisations and individuals who have backed the CBR’s goals with their philanthropic “dream money”, funding that now totals over $10 million. This support has been critical to establishing the Stroke Research Clinic, the Spinal Cord Injury Research Facility, the Dementia Research Clinic and to work in the areas of animal behavioural research, Parkinson's disease, Huntington's disease, motor neurone disease, tinnitus and dyslexia. One of the CBR’s most ambitious developments has been establishing an Academic Neurosurgical Unit in partnership with the Neurological Foundation of NZ.

After many successes over its first five years the CBR has now become a national Centre of Research Excellence (CoRE). From January 2015 the CBR became co-host of Brain Research NZ – Rangahau Roro Aotearoa with researchers at the University of Otago, and in conjunction with teams from the Brain Research Institute in Christchurch, the University of Canterbury and AUT University. With government investment of $30 million, the aim of this CoRE is to unlock the secrets of the ageing brain and develop new therapies and better clinical and community care to enhance brain health throughout life for all New Zealanders.

With one in four members of the community affected by brain disorders at some stage of their lives, representatives of 24 community associations such as Alzheimers Auckland were a special part of the guest list at the celebration.

“You are the reason and the driving force for why we exist,” Richard said. “Our dream is to give a brighter future to all those affected by disorders of the brain.”
With the death of Distinguished Alumnus Sir Ian Athfield in January, New Zealand lost one of its greatest architects. He had gone from enfant terrible of the 1960s and 70s to much respected elder statesman of New Zealand architecture. In 2012, he was awarded the Designers Institute of New Zealand’s John Britten Black Pin for services to design; in 2013 he was made an Icon of the Arts Foundation of New Zealand; and on 31 December 2014, he was recognised as a Knight Companion of the New Zealand Order of Merit for services to architecture.

Ath, as everyone knew him, grew up in Christchurch. He completed the University of Auckland’s Diploma of Architecture in 1963. He then moved to Wellington and after almost five years with Structon Group, established his own firm, Athfield Architects.

Athfield houses were immediately distinctive, with multiple small spaces and varied roof forms staggering up and down Wellington hillsides. Ath also provided a challenge to local authority rules and processes, and became an important public voice within New Zealand architecture.

He achieved international recognition in 1975-76, winning a high profile international competition for “squatter housing” in Manila. It remained unbuilt, but is recorded in Sam Neill’s documentary, Architect Athfield.

A break into commercial work followed, along with astonishing buildings such as Wellington’s First Church of Christ, Scientist. Then, in 1987, the firm was commissioned to design the city’s Civic Square. This led to more public and institutional work, including the Wellington Public Library, a lead role on the development of the Wellington Waterfront and much educational work, notably at Victoria University’s Kelburn Campus, including the wonderful Adam Gallery and the impressive new Hub.

Athfield served as President of the New Zealand Institute of Architects from 2006-2008, as a member of the New Zealand Historic Place Trust’s Board of Trustees and Māori Heritage Council from 2009, and as Architectural Ambassador to quake-damaged Christchurch from 2010.

He is survived by his wife Clare, sons Jesse and Zac, their wives Xia Li and Sarah, and five grandchildren. He is, and will continue to be, deeply missed by many more.

Dr Julia Gatley
Associate Dean, Architecture and Planning

Ian Athfield. Photograph by Kristian Frires.

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**Glow-in-the-dark bacteria**

**Question 1:** Researcher Dr Siouxsie Wiles and her colleagues at the University’s Department of Molecular Medicine and Pathology are creating glow-in-the-dark bacteria in order to better understand how to prevent and fight diseases. What is the name of a well-known disease that they are targeting?

**The times they are a-changin’**

**Question 2:** An icon of the 1960s recently lent his name to the University’s campaign to raise funds for its Creative Thinking Project. What is the name of this poet and musician?

**Every dollar counts**

**Question 3:** If a NZ resident makes a gift of $100 to their area of interest at the University, how much can they claim back as a tax rebate?
THE ALUMNI PROFILE

Then It Was Now Again

This volume of selected critical writing tells the story of a range of controversies, innovations, revolutions and disputes in New Zealand poetry, theatre and drama over the 40 years between 1973 and 2013.

Twenty-four individual pieces of critical writing from alumnus and Associate Professor of English Murray Edmond (BA 1971, PhD 1996) have been selected and arranged. The cumulative effect is a drama with a cast list that includes figures such as James K. Baxter, Janet Frame, Mervyn Thompson, Kendrick Smithyman, Front Lawn, The Topp Twins, Martyn Sanderson, Alan Brunton, David Mitchell, and Professor Michele Leggott.

The intention of the book is to be provocative: provoking thought, memory and feeling. Murray proves to be an opinionated guide through debates about the efficacy of poetry, the nature of artistic revolution, the effect of political change on art, and the interface of social action and artistic practice.

Then It Was Now Again is published by Atuanui Press.

SLEEP SISTER

Sleep Sister is both intelligent and cutting, an evocative and moving first novel by alumna Karen Breen, published in March 2015 by Eunoia Publishing.

Gilly and Marina, and their little brother Davy are running wild with all the other children at a remote campsite on a beautiful northern beach in 1979. While the adults party, the children’s games grow more reckless.

Over the next seven years the family tries to forget the tragic events of that night, but 1987 is the year that blows everything apart. A death in the family creates shifts in loyalty. Trust is betrayed and new alliances are formed. The family is forced to face up to the past.

Karen Breen is a both poet and a performer. Though this is her first major poetry collection to be published, her poems have appeared in *Landfall, JAAM, Brief, Takahē* and Poetry NZ. She has performed her work widely, often in collaboration with other poets, musicians, visual artists and dancers.

AT THE MARGIN OF EMPIRE

In this biography, *At the Margin of Empire: John Webster and Hokianga, 1841-1900*, alumna Jennifer Ashton (PhD 2012) uses the life of one man as a lens through which to view the history of New Zealand and the shifting relationships between Māori and Pākehā.

Born in Scotland in 1818, John Webster came to New Zealand in 1841 and spent most of the rest of his life in Hokianga. *Jennifer’s book, published in April by Auckland University Press, charts his colourful experiences carving out a fortune as the region’s leader timber trader and cultivating connections with the leading figures of the day. Māori and Pākehā. Webster fought alongside Tāmati Wāka Nene in the Northern War, married one of Nene’s relatives and built up his kauri timber business through trade with local chiefs. He was also friends with Frederick Maning, and visited by George Grey, Richard Seddon and other luminaries of the day. Jennifer’s PhD thesis, completed in the History Department at Victoria University of Wellington in 2007, is available as a PDF from Auckland University Press.*

Its widely respected authors, Athol Anderson (Ngai Tahu), emeritus professor at the Australian National University, Dr Aroha Harris (Te Rarawa, Ngāpuhi) (BA 1989, PhD 2007) senior lecturer in History at the University of Auckland, and the late Judith Binney (former Emeritus Professor of History), set out to create a book for all New Zealanders and to address a gap they saw in our written history.

Working with a team of historians and researchers they have drawn from a wide range of stories and perspectives to tell the story of Tangata Whenua through history, archaeology, traditional narratives and oral histories, and through artefacts, sketches and photography.

A BOOK FOR ALL NEW ZEALANDERS

*Tangata Whenua: An Illustrated History*, published by Bridget Williams Books, is New Zealand’s first comprehensive, one-volume history of Māori.

This large, ambitious and beautifully illustrated book follows the footsteps of Māori from Asia and the Pacific to the present day in Aotearoa.
In the Department, she was placed on the Dean's list, won a special postdoctoral award from the Kate Edger Educational Trust, and was nominated for the Vice-Chancellor's Prize for Best Doctoral Thesis.

MURDER THAT WASN’T

Murder that Wasn’t: The case of George Gwaze tells the story of a man who was twice charged and twice acquitted of the rape and murder of his ten-year-old adopted niece, Charlene Makaza. This is a gripping account of a miscarriage of justice by alumna Professor Felicity Goodyear-Smith (BSc 1974, MBChB 1977, DIPOBST 1982, MD Medicine 2012), Head of Department of General Practice and Primary Health Care at the University. Felicity, as a qualified general practitioner and forensic physician, was an expert medical adviser at the trial.

Her book meticulously explores the facts surrounding the case, based on scientific, medical and court records and individual interviews, to give a true account of this family’s extraordinary story. It is published by Otago University Press.

AFTER WONDERLAND

Alumna Linda Darby (BA 2013, BA Hons 2013) has had her masters short film After Wonderland accepted into the Cannes Short Film Corner, as part of the 68th Festival de Cannes 2015.

The film tells the New Zealand story of an only child, Alice, who struggles to stay visible in her 1960s oddball family. She falls for the temptations of Dylan, who leads her to a kind of wonderland, away from the dark truth of her parent’s double life. When Alice’s choices begin to unravel and threaten her life, her distant father emerges from his hidden war room to reconcile the damage. Alice realises hope is possible.

The 10-minute film is based on a true story, with a strong focus on family dynamics. It has seven originally composed songs written and performed by Manaf Ibrahim, also a University of Auckland graduate (BMus 2013).

Linda hopes to attend the Festival de Cannes this May and is looking at crowd funding to ensure she gets there. See https://www.pledgeme.co.nz/projects/3283-get-a-kiwi-film-maker-to-cannes

AD 1363

Jake Mahaffy, Senior Lecturer in Film, Television and Media Studies, had his short film AD 1363 selected for the 2015 Sundance Film Festival in Utah. It was selected as one of 60 short films from over 8,000 international entries and was one of only three New Zealand films or co-productions to premiere at Sundance this year.

This is Jake’s sixth film at Sundance since his feature-length film Wear screened there in 2004.

The footage used to create AD 1363 was originally shot on 16 mm film in Massachusetts with a local blacksmith who had fashioned his own set of working plate armour in his forge. This footage was used for a film called Inertia, which screened at Sundance in 2008.

AD 1363 was the second film from this footage, completed by Jake after he immigrated to New Zealand and joined the staff of the University of Auckland.

Alumnus Luke Bell-Booth (Bachelor of Visual Arts, 2004), now a BA (Hons) student in film production, and alumnus Peter Simpson (BSc 1999, MA 2013) who is now a staff technician for Media, Film and Television, were directly involved in the composition of special effects and post-production for the film. Peter also assisted Jake in shooting additional knights in armour at a farm in Drury.

AD 1363 screened at Sundance as part of the Shorts Programme in late January.

Still from the films: The image above is from After Wonderland and the image below is from AD 1363.
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