



AUTUMN 2008

Victorious

MAGAZINE FOR FRIENDS AND ALUMNI OF VICTORIA UNIVERSITY OF WELLINGTON

The chemistry of conservation

Targeting the tweenagers
New Zealand's Alpine Fault

Marine biology in Moorea

As the causes of the global decline of coral continue to be debated, Victoria marine biologists are taking a closer look at an unstudied and widespread species that is detrimentally affecting coral in French Polynesia.

Described as “an odd and inconspicuous creature” by Dr Jeff Shima, the giant worm snail lives coiled inside coral and feeds by casting a mucus net over the coral from an opening that measures up to 25mm in diameter.

Jeff suspects that the effects of the worm may be as strong as those caused by disease and bleaching—a phenomenon often attributed to global warming. In turn, the recent global decline in reef-building corals results in habitat losses that threaten marine biodiversity, fisheries, and the economies of many Pacific Island nations.

With more than 15 years of reef fish ecological research behind him, Jeff is working with Dr Nicole Phillips, and University of Florida collaborator Professor Craig Osenberg and his students to determine the biology of the snail, and its ecological impact.

Jeff says the project arose from a somewhat serendipitous observation. “We noticed that, not unlike many other places around the world, living corals were disappearing from our study sites in Moorea, and so we started to compare photographs taken over a five-year period.”

Ubiquitous to Indo-Pacific reefs, the snails were once harvested by Moorea islanders, and the impact on the snail population since harvesting stopped 25 years ago is another aspect under investigation.

From May the team will set up research sites at different places around the island to study the interactions between corals and the snails. They aim to determine the factors regulating worm snail populations, and the extent of the worm snails’ impact on coral decline.

Jeff says Moorea—a sister island to Tahiti—is both exceptionally beautiful and unparalleled as a base for marine research on coral reefs in the Central Pacific. Jeff’s team works from the University of California’s research station in a collaborative arrangement stemming from Jeff’s undergraduate days at the University of California at Berkeley. He has maintained an active research programme on the island since his first biological fieldwork there in 1992.

“At peak times of year, Moorea has one of the highest concentrations of marine biologists in the Pacific, per capita. This means that local people are accustomed to, and very supportive of, scientists zipping around their lagoons to study seemingly obscure things.

“Moorea is an excellent place to network with other leading researchers from institutions worldwide, and the collaborations that I have developed with other scientists who work there have led to shared funding bids, good times, novel science, and co-supervisory arrangements for some of my PhD students.”



The tube openings of a pair of worm snails and the mucus 'nets' they cast to feed. Credit: Craig Osenberg.

PhD student Shane Geange surveys an experimental reef. Credit: Jeff Shima.



From the Vice-Chancellor

As New Zealand heads towards the country's parliamentary elections later this year, debate about the concept and role of leadership has already begun. One of the most memorable pieces of advice given to me on the subject of leadership came when I was appointed head of what is now the Victoria Management School in 1997.

A then Professor of Management, Richard Dunford, told me that in my new role I would experience private victories and public defeats and that I should take the public defeats on the chin while toasting my victories in the privacy of my own office.

I soon learnt that he was right, and that the most challenging aspect of leadership is dealing with people's perspectives of your decisions, and their expectations.

The real challenge of leadership in universities is to make consultation genuine, to engage with all arguments and seek to carry people with you but to make the decisions that are in the best interests of the University, and, having done so, to have the resolve to carry these decisions through.

As George Bain, former Vice-Chancellor at Queen's University in Belfast, said, a Vice-Chancellor is "less a CEO who can manage by diktat and decree and more a managing partner in a professional firm who manages by persuasion and negotiation".

At Victoria we celebrate the leadership of both our academic and alumni communities. Last year Professor Paul Callaghan won the Blake Medal for Leadership, and this October the third annual Distinguished Alumni Awards evening will celebrate the extraordinary success of several Victoria alumni.

The University takes a proactive stance on issues of equality in leadership; last year the University supported the inaugural Women in Leadership programme, and the 2008 New Zealand Census of Women's Participation showed Victoria to be one of two universities leading the tertiary sector in terms of the number of women in senior academic roles. This year we are again running our Leading People programme—a professional development course available to managers—to assist individuals to be better leaders, but to also help the University to achieve its strategic objectives by enhancing its staff's management and leadership capabilities.

The University also strives to produce graduates who have the leadership skills so essential to today's global marketplace. To be officially launched in July, the new Victoria International Leadership Programme is a programme for students structured around the themes of global leadership and connectedness, and cross-cultural communication.

I look forward to celebrating the first graduates of this programme, the first of its type in New Zealand, for it is just as important to celebrate leadership as it is to provide life-changing opportunities for emerging leaders.

Professor Pat Walsh, Vice-Chancellor



A hawkfish against a transplanted coral in Moorea. In the background, Professor Craig Osenberg (University of Florida). Credit: Jeff Shima.

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Cover image: Postgraduate student Rebecca Yeats examines a map stored in temperature-controlled archives at the National Library in Wellington.

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Genetic networks and drug discovery

In an unassuming laboratory tucked away in the Kirk Building on the Kelburn Campus, scientists are unravelling knots that have stalled the global pharmaceutical industry.



PhD students Veronica Venturi and Peter Bircham with Professor Paul Atkinson.

Unique to the Southern Hemisphere, the Chemical Genetics Laboratory is stacked with state-of-the-art equipment used in the search for new drug combinations to target congenital disease.

Professor Paul Atkinson, with Drs David Bellows and David Maass, leads a team of 17 researchers and postgraduate students, who, in less than 18

months since the laboratory was launched with funding from the Tertiary Education Commission, have secured a major collaborative project with the RIKEN Institute in Japan.

With a direct spin-off for novel drug discovery, disease diagnostics and the prediction of side effects, their research also attracted funding of \$500,000 from the Foundation for Research, Science and Technology.

Paul says finding the right drug is not simply a matter of testing several hundred chemicals.

“Drug discovery has slowed down significantly in the past decade because scientists have discovered nearly all of the drugs that target single genes, in the case of genetically simple diseases. Now it’s all about discovering the combinations of genes to target with a combination of drugs, for complex diseases, and we need to know the networks of genetic interactions to do so.”

He says the pharmaceutical market is one of the main industries that will benefit from chemical genetics—an emerging discipline in genomics and a powerful tool.

The RIKEN Chemical Biology group is headed by Professor Hiro Osada, and the collaboration is a direct outcome of a New Zealand

Government-sponsored delegation—of which Paul was a member—that visited Japan to identify and investigate research potential. The Chemical Genetics team will screen bioactive compounds provided by the Japanese laboratory, and will take advantage of the Japanese Institute’s complementary capability in new chemical genetics tools.

This project also includes the collaboration of Associate Professor Peter Northcote and the University’s Marine Natural Products team who investigate the anti-cancer, anti-inflammatory and immuno-suppressive potential of compounds they isolate from marine life. The organic chemists supply the Chemical Genetics Laboratory with compounds isolated from native sea sponges that are then screened for pharmaceutical potentiality.

Environmental Science and Research Ltd is also integrally involved and two of its employees work full-time with Paul.

More information about chemical genetics can be read at: www.victoria.ac.nz/biodiscovery/

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Protecting cultural icons

The words and images of global advertising campaigns for PlayStation, Lego, Fischer skis, and cigarettes indicate the international vogue for Māori culture.

This appropriation of Māori culture conflicts with comparable business protocols and is of little benefit to Māori, says Aroha Te Pareake Mead, senior lecturer in the Victoria Management School.

“If users don’t acknowledge the source and inspiration of Māori cultural expressions used in campaigns, there is little benefit for Māori. In the commercial world, businesses can’t take someone else’s trademark, or copy their ideas. There are strict protocols to seek consent before using someone’s work but a real reluctance to treat indigenous cultures in this same way.”

Aroha says a Jean Paul Gaultier campaign featuring models with painted-on moko (traditional tattoos) is one of the worst examples she has seen of the ‘hijacking’ of Māori culture.

“Aside from using a really poor moko design, the campaign depicted Māori culture in a way

that you couldn’t possibly take a positive message from.”

She says Māori is not the only culture to suffer the misuse of indigenous knowledge and cultural expressions; the extent of the problem has demanded the attention of the United Nations (UN). Nineteen UN agencies are currently working in this area, and two treaty bodies are designing legal instruments to wield against the worst offenders.

Aroha says that the problem isn’t restricted to the inappropriate use of cultural images and words—it also extends to the misuse of traditional medicinal knowledge and resource management.

A member of the Governing Council of the International Union for the Conservation of Nature, Aroha encourages people and businesses to look at indigenous cultures through an ethical lens and to adopt the principles of prior informed consent and reciprocity before



Aroha Te Pareake Mead and Nelson Mandela.

venturing into the use of indigenous cultural icons for commercial purposes.

“There are examples of indigenous culture that are being used well. In New Zealand, the partnership between Adidas and the All Blacks portrays the best associations between Māori culture and the product—leadership and prowess in sports. Adidas has sought advice about the symbols they are using, and has a website addressing their use of Māori culture. This is a win-win situation.”

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Targeting the 'tweenagers'

A Government-funded psychology study will examine an understudied sub-group of pre-teens that marketers and the media have labelled 'tweenagers'.

Awarded Marsden funding of more than \$481,000 last year, Dr Sue Jackson's research responds to recent academic and public concerns that some media representations of girls and women encourage girls to grow up too fast.

"There's been a lot of focus on adolescent girls, but pre-teens are an age group about which we know remarkably little. This is a neglected population and one that's increasingly targeted as a unique consumer market," says Sue, a senior lecturer in the School of Psychology.

With University of Canterbury senior lecturer Tiina Vares, Sue will investigate girls' everyday experiences and perspectives of the popular culture niche that targets them.

One of the aspects of the three-year study will examine girls' and young women's perceptions of their representation in adult ways, such as images of girls wearing revealing clothing, or made-up and posed like adult women.

"At present, no-one knows how girls themselves are interpreting these kinds of representations, so how can we talk about their influence when we don't actually know what girls are doing with those images?

"There seems to be an impression that young people are media sponges that sit and watch a television programme and absorb everything they see. But research out there shows they're not media sponges—they're actually pretty critical."

She says the qualitative nature of her research will not result in wide-sweeping conclusions about whether or not girls are growing up too fast because of images in the media.

"Qualitative research focuses very much on meaning and meaning-making. If we find these representations are being read by girls as 'this is how to be sexy' and 'this is what you need to wear' and it's become a preoccupation, then we can comment, but only about this group of girls' perspectives."

She will also look at the kinds of popular culture girls use in their everyday lives and the extent to which they incorporate aspects of what they see, listen to, watch, and read into their activities, aspirations, and identities. The results will provide valuable information for the



Dr Sue Jackson with examples of popular magazines aimed at the 'tweenager' market.

international research community, media studies academics, and policy makers.

"I think there is potential for what comes out of the study to be of great interest to a diverse section of the community. When you publish something innovative and point to what work needs to be done next, you generally find that the public pick up on it as well."

Sue and Tiina aim to collect data from a sample of 50 girls aged 10-13, evenly split between Wellington and Christchurch.

"We've decided to use video diaries to collect most of our data. What we know about children is that they are sophisticated in terms of their use of technology—some of them are more so than their parents! So video diaries are very appropriate and open up avenues for recording all the types of media they actually use."

Subjects will be asked to use a video camera to film a 'bedroom tour' and to record their thoughts about the posters on their walls, websites they visit, and books and magazines they read. Focus groups will also be organised to gain more in-depth perspectives.

Data collection will begin this year, with a follow-up round next year for comparative purposes; Sue and Tiina are interested in the ways girls' popular-culture interests and responses change as they mature.

During the three years, the researchers will publish academic papers, present at conferences, and work closely with each other and their associate investigators in the United Kingdom.

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Apartment life in a new light



Krystle Stewart with a lux meter used to measure daylight in New Zealand apartments.

Taken for granted, daylight is a natural phenomenon that is becoming an increasing rarity for apartment dwellers as high-rise blocks proliferate.

The New Zealand Building Code sets a minimum amount of natural light exposure for new apartments. Building science Master's student Krystle Stewart has created an assessment tool to help meet these requirements.

"In the third year of my building science degree I did a small research project on daylight in the urban environment. I found that in some situations it is not possible for lower level apartments to achieve the minimum natural light requirement, but with the Building Code compliance documents as they are currently written it was possible for these apartments to still be built," she says.

Krystle says part of the problem is that there is no easy way to predict daylight availability throughout the day. "Simulating how daylight will behave in a room is the most effective method but, due to the complexity and time required to gain accurate results, simulations are not routinely done."

She created the tool, a spreadsheet program, to identify when simulations are needed to prove that a new building will meet the requirement. Seven environmental factors, including apartment type, location, and colour are given a rating to represent the extent they affect daylight access. The ratings are entered into the

program that then automatically analyses the information entered and calculates whether a simulation will be required.

Krystle says that the adequacy of daylight is an important issue for New Zealand.

"We are at a point where urban living is becoming more common. Natural light is needed in living spaces for health and well-being, but is also an excellent way to reduce energy use in a time of increasing energy costs and demand."

The tool is currently being refined to have a stronger mathematical basis with the advice of architects and councils—users of the Building Code.

Dr Michael Donn, Krystle's supervisor, says that her work will make it clear to developers how to create apartments that comply with the intentions of the Building Code.

The New Zealand Building Code requires a minimum light level of 30 lux—a measure of how much light reaches a surface. At 30 lux a person can make out the words in a book but would need to turn a light on to read comfortably.

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Hard-to-find books at your fingertips

Digitised versions of rare and out-of-print books, images, music, manuscripts, and journals are receiving 10,000 visits a day on the New Zealand Electronic Text Centre website.

In its eighth year of business, the Centre publishes historic documents such as the original *Sure to Rise Cookery Book* (Edmonds, 1914) and Walter Buller's *A History of the Birds of New Zealand* (1888).

Director Alison Stevenson says the Centre's goal is to both provide access to items of New Zealand and Pacific Island cultural heritage and develop new and innovative methods in online publishing.

"Most of our material is out of print, or is available but with limited copies in the library or in archive book collections, whereas the New Zealand Electronic Text Centre is globally accessible."

She says resources like the *Sure to Rise Cookery Book* are useful not just for research but also as items of wide nostalgic appeal to New Zealanders at home and abroad.

"This is a book that many people's grandmothers probably used recipes from."

A major project for the Centre was to digitise a collection of 19th century 'Maoriland' literature—a genre that Alison describes as an important, but undervalued, aspect of New Zealand's cultural history.

In January, a collection of historical text on Māori tattooing was made available.

"Horatio Gordon Robley's 1896 publication of *Moko; or Maori Tattooing* is a key resource. He came to New Zealand in 1864 with the British Army but was also an artist, and became interested in moko design while here," Alison says.

The team also works with partners in the cultural heritage and e-publishing sector on a wide variety of digitisation and digital content delivery projects.

Last year, they digitised 100 years worth of science texts for the National Library of New Zealand, and this collection is currently the Library's most heavily-used web resource.

More than 2,500 fully-searchable items are available, free of charge, at:

www.nzetc.org/index.html



Deciphering demographics

A busy day during term-time at the Faculty of Commerce and Administration provides a cross-section of contemporary New Zealand society for demographics researcher Dr Paul Callister.

The Faculty's mix of Māori, Pacific Island, Chinese, New Zealand European, and Indian students embodies a changing New Zealand demographic.

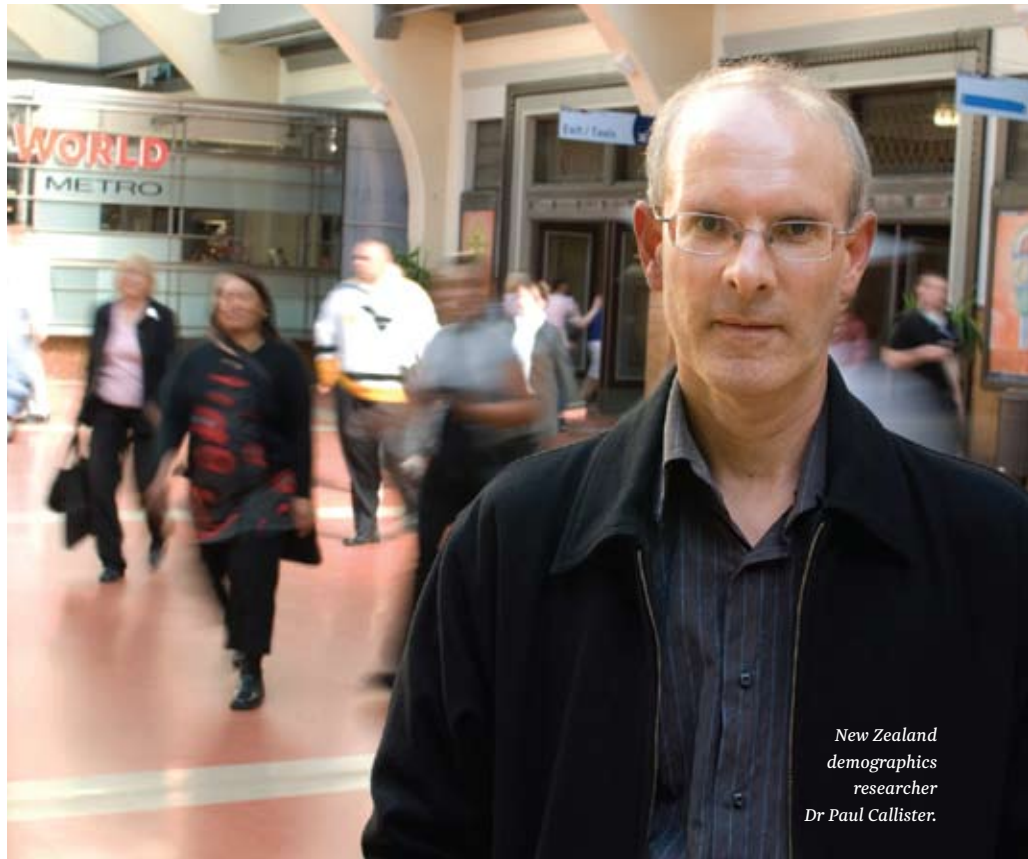
At first a variable in his labour market research, ethnicity is something that Paul has since come to think of less as a category than as a complex self-defined grouping that young New Zealanders have very different ideas about.

To illustrate this impression, he recalls a conversation he overheard on the train among a group of secondary school pupils. Their discussion revolved around the status of a young man they saw at the station—specifically as to whether he was a skater (skateboarder) or not. A Māori girl in the group said that she thought he was Māori, to which her friend replied that “he couldn’t be a Māori cause he was white”.

“All these different concepts are going through their heads—of skin colour, of groups such as skaters, of what it is to be Māori. What I’ve seen in all of my research is there is much more fluidity around ethnicity and identity than perhaps we generally think,” Paul says.

A Senior Research Fellow at the Institute of Policy Studies in the School of Government, Paul deciphers statistics gathered in official data sets, like the 2006 New Zealand Census, for the insights they offer into New Zealand society.

Awarded \$1.7 million of Foundation for Research, Science and Technology (FoRST) funding in 2006, his most recent research programme examines specific trends and their impact on New Zealand’s labour market and workforce. Particular attention will be paid to the difference between levels of achievement among women and men in tertiary education, particularly within Māori and Pacific Island



*New Zealand
demographics
researcher
Dr Paul Callister.*

populations, and the links between gender and migration to and from New Zealand.

Paul will also follow up on a trend he has seen building over the past few years that he calls “the missing men”—a group of men he describes as missing from education, from employment, and from family life. Less likely to complete census forms, this group is not represented in official statistics.

Ultimately Paul aims to provide information that will then be applied to improve the outcomes of New Zealanders identified in demographics as disadvantaged.

Among the wide variety of demographic-related topics of potential research interest, Paul often finds the best leads in other areas of statistical analysis or simply by looking at the world around him. Most recently this prompted a closer look at trends in ethnic inter-marriage.

His analysis of this type of marriage, where partners are from different ethnic groups, suggests that categorising by ethnic groups is

likely to become quite difficult for statisticians, researchers, and policy makers in the future. Both birth and registration data and census data show that a small but growing proportion of New Zealanders report more than one ethnic group.

“What we are seeing is new mixes that we haven’t seen much of historically. Whereas Māori and European marriages and Pacific and European marriages are strongly, and traditionally, represented, we are now seeing emerging trends in marriage among Māori, Asian, and Pacific people.”

The FoRST-funded, three-year research programme, conducted by Paul and his colleagues in the Institute of Policy Studies, involves researchers from Victoria and Waikato Universities, government agencies, iwi, and the private sector.

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Sounding out the Alpine Fault

Essentially a 500km crack in the Earth's crust, New Zealand's Alpine Fault is known as a geological paradox for the fact that there are very few earthquakes for a fault of its size.

This comparative seismic inactivity has led to two very different schools of geological theory. One proposes that the Fault is strong and absorbs elastic energy that is released as a major earthquake every 300 years, while the other describes a weak geological zone that releases energy in short bursts too small to be detected.

Awarded more than \$800,000 in government Marsden funding in 2007, a team led by Professor Tim Stern will apply, for the first time, modern technologies and techniques to characterise the central section of the Fault.

A geophysicist in the Institute of Geophysics and School of Geography, Environment and Earth Sciences, Tim says that very little is known about the South Island fault that, along with the San Andreas fault in California, is one of the best examples of its type.

With the collaboration of scientists from Auckland University, Duke University (US), and GNS Science, Tim's

New Zealand's Alpine Fault

- Stretching for more than 500km from the Milford Sound to Blenheim, it is one of the country's largest faults and the dominant structure defining the Australian-Pacific plate boundary in the South Island.
- Geologists describe the Fault as a paradox; for such a large dominant fault it is comparatively inactive. No major earthquakes have occurred on the Fault since Europeans settled in New Zealand and a magnitude-8 earthquake has not been recorded in New Zealand since 1855.
- Victoria alumnus and geologist Harold Wellman was the first to discover and map the Fault in 1948 when he proposed that rocks that were once adjacent to each other had been separated by 480 kilometres as a result of movement along the Fault—a radical idea at the time.
- Lying along the spine of the Fault, the Southern Alps are one of the fastest-rising mountain ranges in the world; over the last five million years they have been moving up at an average rate of 1cm each year.

team will drill eight bore holes and install seismographs—high-powered stethoscope-like devices—between Whataroa and Fox Glacier. Here, where the Southern Alps rise to their highest, there has been little seismic activity in the past 200 years.

From depths of up to 250m underground and away from the interfering noise of wind and rain, the seismographs will send recordings of tiny everyday tremors to solar-powered receivers on the surface to be collected for analysis.

“What we want to do is listen to the chatter, if you like, of what happens deep down of the tectonic plates—where we suspect there could be many small earthquakes,” Tim says.

At present, New Zealand’s quake monitoring network can only detect earthquakes greater than 2.5 on the Richter scale.

“But by listening in via the seismographs in bore holes, we think we can pick up tremors of magnitude less than 0.5, and because of the way the Richter scale works, these are quakes a thousand times less energetic than those of magnitude 2.5.”

Tim says the project builds on a large collaborative project in the 1990s where Victoria, GNS, and US geologists used offshore boats and sound sources such as airgun shots (see diagram) to create a seismic profile of the Alpine Fault.

From these images, the scientists mapped the physical properties of the plate boundary zone for the first time and found evidence of high fluid pressure within the Fault. The presence of high-pressure water is a strong indicator that mineralisation is occurring, and in turn, contributes to information about

the ways in which seismic waves travel through layers of rock beneath the Earth’s surface and suggests that the Alpine Fault may move in a different manner from regular faults.

“A lot of science is serendipitous and if you go out looking for something you often find something else,” Tim says, referring to this discovery that prompted the larger investigation.

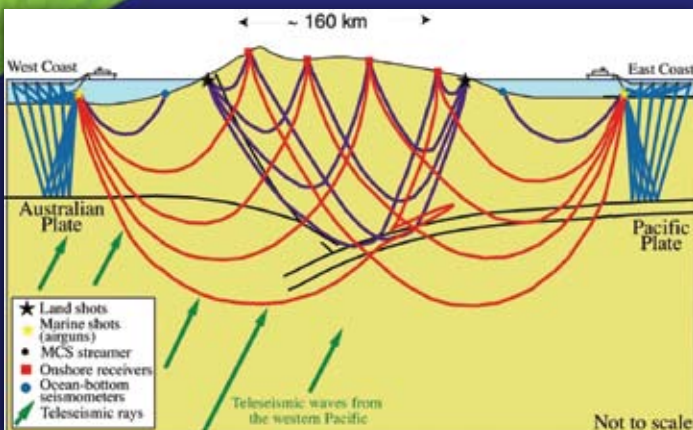
He says that time and patience reap rewards with this type of research and describes the latest project as “a bit of a fishing expedition”.

Bore hole seismographic testing was developed by Japanese geologists who first determined fault movement in the absence of earthquakes—a phenomenon known as slow or silent earthquakes.

Tim says slow earthquakes have previously been detected beneath the North Island’s east coast and Manawatu regions, but that it is unknown whether the central section of the Alpine Fault also experienced them.

More information about geological research at Victoria can be read at: <http://www.victoria.ac.nz/geo/>

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A cross-section of the South Island showing the rise of the Alpine Fault and the pathway of seismic waves sent from both land and ship-based sound sources to receivers. A type of sound wave (seismic waves) provides accurate information about the geometry of rocks and layers beneath the Earth’s surface; the velocity of the wave is related to the density and type of rock.

FROM THE VICE-CHANCELLOR PROFESSOR PAT WALSH

Shaping a strategic plan

In 2008 Victoria University continues to be a leading Australasian research and teaching institution with a strong tradition of achievement in both spheres.

In order to maintain and build on this tradition we need to continue to develop and refine our guiding documents to ensure Victoria's ongoing contribution to New Zealand's cultural, economic, and social development, and to international partnership and scholarship.

At the time of writing, the first round of consultation for the

University's new Strategic Plan is underway. By the end of August we aim to have finalised a plan that will guide the University over the next 5-10 years.

The new Strategic Plan will better align Victoria's objectives with a rapidly changing social, commercial, and educational dynamic. The Plan complements our Investment Plan—the mandatory document negotiated with the Tertiary Education Commission that provides the basis for government funding.

When focusing on the Investment Plan last year, University Council members reflected that the changed strategic environment meant that many of the objectives compiled in 2004 for the current Strategic Plan were no longer relevant, or able to be measured in a meaningful way.

As well as the market for international students having changed significantly, the recent tertiary reforms have created an environment where the amount of government funding is limited. This moves the strategic imperative from one of growth to one of a focus on research, quality, increasing postgraduate enrolments, and carefully managing the provision of undergraduate programmes.

As I have just outlined, we are faced with changing imperatives in terms of how our funding environment works, and while the Investment Plan sets a range of targets and goals, it does not encompass all aspects of what we do.

Recognising that circumstances are now different, a new Strategic Plan will build on the interdisciplinary strengths articulated in the Investment Plan, respond to the opportunities that the current environment brings, address capability development needs, and integrate strategic planning and resource allocation.

Although much of the content will be subject to consultation and debate the Investment Plan, the Research Strategy, and the Pathways to Success Project, which sets the direction for teaching and learning, are important reference points. The approach to creating the Strategic Plan is essentially an iterative one, where senior management staff set down their thinking which is then subject to analysis and challenge resulting in further changes and refinement.

The new Strategic Plan will better align Victoria's objectives with a rapidly changing social, commercial, and educational dynamic.

Since early April we have sought and received the University Council's direction and advice, undertaken the analysis needs to answer key questions, and evaluated the academic and financial

implications of the University in the next five to ten years. This was followed by consultation with Faculty, School, and Central Service Unit heads, and the broader University community will be consulted later this month.

In a future issue of *Victorious* I hope to share with you further progress on the development of Victoria's new Strategic Plan.



Notice of forthcoming Court of Convocation Election

The election of two members to the University Council by the Court of Convocation is set for October, and in July a call for nominations will be made.

All Victoria graduates are members of the Court of Convocation, as are non-graduates who voted in one or both of the two preceding ordinary elections in 2000 and 2002, and both groups are eligible to nominate and vote.

The Victoria University Council consists of 20 members, five of whom are elected by the Court

of Convocation. The terms of appointment of two members—Ms Rosemary Barrington and Dr Jock Phillips—expire at the end of December and both are eligible for re-election.

All graduates since 2000 are automatically enrolled in the Register of the Court.

For information on how to check your registration and to receive voting papers, visit: www.vuw.ac.nz/alumni

Further details of the University Council and its members can be read at: www.victoria.ac.nz/home/about/council

The chemistry of conservation

The pinkish staining on the maps seemed at first innocuous, but a closer examination under the microscope revealed a photo-reactive oxide likely to cause further degradation if left unchecked.

Rebecca Yeat's practicum in the temperature and humidity-controlled cartographic collection rooms in Wellington's National Library has been a core component of her postgraduate diploma in heritage material science.

Affecting hundreds of maps that the Library is legally bound to protect and preserve, the pink staining is most likely caused by reactive zinc oxide in the backing adhesive, says Rebecca.

The backing is well adhered; the sample she examined back in the lab at the School of Chemical and Physical Sciences took a couple of days to remove, rendering the option to remove the backing on all the maps economically unviable. Rebecca says this treatment is also likely to be more detrimental to the maps than the preventative measure of storing the maps in

conditions that inhibit chemical reactions of the oxide.

"By finding out what is damaging an item, we can then advise people on the best ways to store them. The Library is a fantastic place to do a practicum because conservation is such a huge part of their responsibility," Rebecca says.

Rebecca graduated with a degree in history and art history in 2004, and having studied first-year science papers, was attracted to the new postgraduate courses in heritage materials science.

Course co-ordinator Associate Professor Gerald Smith says students from a wide range of science and arts backgrounds have enrolled in the new programme. Particularly popular is the option to take heritage materials papers as part of a Master's in chemistry, and students new to chemistry can take a bridging course in the basics.

By learning the ways in which heritage materials deteriorate through the application of the latest chemical and physical technologies, students learn the best means to preserve them.

Dr Smith says that the power of modern scientific methods in the preservation and authentication of works of art, documents, and



Postgraduate student Rebecca Yeats examines a map stored in temperature-controlled archives at the National Library.

antiquities for forensic science examination is increasingly being recognised. Graduates of the programme will be qualified to be at the head of the global trend in art and museum conservation, archaeology, and forensic evidence related to heritage materials.

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Anthropology and India

In September, Rhodes Scholar Amanda Gilbertson will leave the comparative calm of Wellington for the teeming streets of India.

The University's first anthropology student to win a prestigious Rhodes Scholarship, Amanda, will spend a year in Chennai studying the changing outlooks and lifestyles of India's urban middle classes.

Based in the southeast coastal city, she will conduct ethnographic research in schools as part of her DPhil in Anthropology at Oxford University.



"I'm interested in exploring how Indian culture and values associated with modernity are being inculcated in India's schools and how this impacts on the identities, values, and aspirations of the students, their parents, and teachers," Amanda says.

"For example, I'll be looking at the difference between what kids want to be when they grow up, and what their parents and teachers expect of them."

Indian philosophies relating to the concept of personhood—what it means to be human—are traditionally described as markedly different from Western philosophies. The evolution of this concept is another area of interest for Amanda who aims to examine the extent to which the change in this understanding impacts on other aspects of Indian culture.

A Rhodes Scholarship is one of the best opportunities a young academic could have, and at Oxford Amanda will study under the

supervision of South Asian anthropologist Dr David Gellner.

Victoria anthropology programme director Associate Professor Jeff Sissons says the scholarship reflects a sophisticated level of theoretical and anthropological thinking.

This was demonstrated in her Master's thesis in which she compared the ways New Zealand-born Indians talked about their 'Indian-ness' with how academics had written about ethnicity generally. The fieldwork involved in this study inspired Amanda to take her research to a doctoral level.

Born in South Africa, Amanda represented Swaziland in swimming before moving to New Zealand at age 14. She loves living in Wellington and intends to return to New Zealand with her doctorate.

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Beyond the bandwidth

With impressive precocity the Victoria Broadcasting Club (VBC) has shaped up as an epitome of contemporary student radio in its first year of broadcasting.

Launched as a pilot project with funding from the University, the VBC has since gathered sufficient student and community sponsorship and support to fill a niche left empty when the Victoria Students' Association sold its station in the 90s.

Known affectionately as 'the Veeb', the station broadcasts on 88.3FM from its studio on the Kelburn Campus, and streams live on the internet. It also makes available its shows, features, and documentaries as pod-casts. Student groups have the opportunity to host regular shows, and the station's news bulletins feature both mainstream news and that specific to students.



VBC volunteers gathered for a first-anniversary photo on the Hunter Building lawn.

For Wellington's music community, the VBC offers invaluable support as both broadcaster and sponsor. Business and production director Douglas Tereu says the local scene has embraced the station as something new and different, as have local businesses who appreciate the benefits of advertising through a community-based and technologically savvy organisation.

Programming co-director Kristen Paterson describes the VBC's point of difference: "We're strictly non-commercial and offer creative opportunities for students and the community—not just in broadcasting, but also in general daily station operations, script-writing, production, and marketing."

One of the station's main aims is to help bands to thrive; they sponsor bands' month-long

residencies at a popular venue, host a monthly DJ night, and are soon to launch the first local music CD sampler.

The popularity of the station, and the professionalism of the volunteers who drive it forward, culminated with a remarkable first birthday party supported by three venues and 31 bands. Aptly named 'Here's to Future Days', the anniversary festival was touted as a "celebration of intelligent and interesting bands at the forefront of their particular creative dimension" and as a "perplexing array of everything currently right about the independent music scene in New Zealand".

You can tune into the VBC, or read more about the station, at: www.vbc.org.nz/

Redesigning life on earth

It is 2088 and planet Earth is struggling to sustain life as we know it today. The only solution is to shift the human population to a virtual world, but how?



A futuristic, more efficient human, as conceived by design students.

This is the challenge set before final-year industrial design and digital media students this year, who, for their major project, will design the migration of the human population to an internet-based virtual world.

Course co-ordinator and lecturer Ross Stevens acknowledges that the idea of 'plugging into' a virtual world conjures up uncomfortable images for many, such as those of the 'human farms' ruled by robots as popularised by the blockbuster hit *The Matrix*.

"The challenge for students this year is to present a virtual life, as opposed to the physical life we have now, as a positive thing," he says.

The project is part of the design-led futures programme underway in the School of Design. The School was founded in 2005 with a \$650,000 grant from the Tertiary Education Commission, and each year collaborates with an industry partner to write the final-year project brief.

Students then work with international design professionals, academics, and researchers to create design solutions for future living scenarios.

"By their final year, students have reached the point where they know the fundamentals of design, but still have a healthy dose of freshness and creativity that is so vital to design. It is that freshness that interests our industry partners, who receive suggestions as to what their future market may be like. At the same time, our students learn that their imaginative thinking can inspire meaningful change," says Professor Simon Fraser, head of the School.

For this year's industry partner, Vodafone, the students' ideas as to how telecommunications might operate in 80 years time will offer valuable insights that will help the company position itself for future development.

"Very seldom does any business get the chance to think further than a few months out, let alone several decades," says Raphael Hillbron from Vodafone.

For an interactive view of past student projects, visit www.designledfutures.com

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Learning on location in Antarctica

On a blistering hot Waitangi Day this year, 46 people across New Zealand were thinking about thermal clothing, thick socks, and woolly hats.

As members of the inaugural Victoria University Antarctica Peninsula study tour, they were preparing for a once-in-a-lifetime expedition on the Professor Molchanov, chartered to voyage around the islands scattered at the tail of the Peninsula, which curves towards South America like a scythe.

Led by geologists Professor Peter Barrett and Dr Dan Zwartz the 11-day tour was organised by the Centre for Continuing Education & Executive Development, departed from Ushuaia—a tourist hot-spot on the very tip of Argentina.

A beautiful region where steep mountains and plunging glaciers flank narrow channels filled with an amazing variety of icebergs, the Peninsula attracts the richest array of wildlife to the Antarctic.

For many people the tour realised a long-held dream, and the opportunity to travel with, and learn from, Professor Barrett—Wellingtonian of the Year 2006 and one of New Zealand's leading Antarctic climate change researchers—was too good to turn down.

For all the information relating to Antarctica out there—in the media, threaded through literature and art—being able to turn to guides with questions, on location and in the thick of it, was invaluable.

A series of pre-tour lectures proved an excellent chance to learn about the history, geology, and ecology of Antarctica as well as the pivotal role

the Continent plays in climate change research. They had also a chance to get to know each other a little before leaving—another point of difference between this tour and others.

The tourism model that prioritises education and a conservation mindset, and that sees the employment of geologists and zoologists as guides, is one that Professor Barrett and Dr Zwartz endorse strongly, and is one that makes for a better Antarctic experience.

Of all the wonderful wildlife and places we saw, highlights of the tour include:

- The first landing on Devil's Island in brilliant sunshine where the group was greeted by hundreds of clamorous Adelie penguin chicks in varying states of moult.
- A cruise in the zodiacs manoeuvring through “growlers” and “bergy-bits”,

getting up close to amazing chunks of ice, and to a leopard seal resting on a floe.

- A barbecue dinner and dancing on deck while anchored in the calm of Cierva Bay.
- A visit to an Argentine research station on the Antarctic Continent itself. For some of the group the visit ticked off the last of all seven continents travelled.
- Writing postcards at Port Lockroy, a former British naval base and historic site that is now a museum.
- Swimming in the thermal waters of a volcanic caldera on Deception Island.

A more detailed daily account of the tour can be read at: <http://www.slice-of-ice.blogspot.com>

Details of upcoming study tours can be read at: ceed.vuw.ac.nz



Taking a break on Devil Island, home to thousands of Adelie penguins, with the Professor Molchanov in the background. Credit: Stephanie Gray

Who's new



Rob McBrearty

Rob McBrearty's role as the business development manager of VicLink is to protect and commercialise intellectual property generated by academic staff. VicLink connects the private sector to University research and consultancy expertise. Part of Rob's role is to build and further develop industry relationships. Before Victoria he was a professional mountain guide for eight years—

guiding clients up Mount Cook, heli-ski guiding, and supervising the safety of scientists in Antarctica. In his undergraduate years at Victoria he was an avid member of the tramping and mountaineering club and graduated from Victoria in 1981 with a BSc. Rob has also worked in the pharmaceutical industry for 12 years in marketing, business development, and general management roles. He established the first New Zealand company to sell contact lenses directly to consumers.



Professor Martin Manning

Climate scientist Martin Manning is a professor and research fellow in climate change in the School of Government. The inaugural holder of the chair, Martin will help to establish the New Zealand Climate Change Research Institute, a centre based at Victoria that will facilitate the collaboration of researchers nationwide in order to seek the best ways of understanding and responding to climate change. He will also contribute to the National Climate Change

Centre—a collaborative initiative between Victoria and Canterbury Universities and Crown Research Institutes. A Victoria alumnus, Martin was previously the director of the Working Group One Support Unit for the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) and a member of the IPCC management team for five years prior to that organisation winning the 2007 Nobel Peace Prize.



Professor Terry Stokes

One of Professor Terry Stokes' roles as head of the School of Government is to further develop the School's close relationship with the public sector and government, and to maintain the balance between 'public good' research and more applied research and consultancy. The School is New Zealand's leading supplier of education and research in public policy and public sector management. With extensive experience across the public and tertiary

education sectors, Terry last worked as a consultant in the Australian tertiary sector. Before that, he was a general manager at the Department of Education and Training in the state of Victoria. He has held senior advisory positions at Monash University, the Australian Research Council, and the National Health and Medical Research Council, and was a pro vice-chancellor at Central Queensland University.



Professor Bob Buckle

Professor Bob Buckle's new role as Pro Vice-Chancellor and Dean of the Faculty of Commerce and Administration marks his return to academia after a number of years in the public sector. In his previous position at Treasury, he had a leadership role in the macroeconomic policy priorities and research programme. In 2006, as chair of the APEC Economic Committee, he was responsible for leading the development of a policy-focused

programme aimed at promoting structural policy reform across the Asia-Pacific region. He will continue in this APEC position until December 2008. At Victoria, Bob is a member of the University's senior management team, convener of the Faculty board, and is responsible for the Faculty's academic programme.



Professor James Belich

James Belich joined the Stout Research Centre in the Faculty of Humanities and Social Science this year as a professor of history where he leads scholars in New Zealand history, literature, and comparative history. James' recent work on the British world and imperial history aligns with one of Victoria's strongest research areas; the University's history programme was ranked the highest among New Zealand universities in the 2007 Performance-

Based Research Funding assessment. An eminent historian and prize-winning author, James has held previous academic roles at Victoria, and has returned to the University after 11 years at Auckland University where he held the inaugural Keith Sinclair chair in history. He was made an Officer of the New Zealand Order of Merit in 2006.



Professor Tim Naish

As the newly-appointed director of the Antarctic Research Centre, Professor Tim Naish will further shape the centre and the expertise and capability of its researchers. He deputised to former director Professor Peter Barrett for three years, and during this time led a Marsden-funded collaborative project between researchers from GNS Science—where he still holds a part-time research position—and the Antarctic Research Centre. He continues to lead

a multi-million dollar Antarctic drilling programme funded by the Foundation for Research Science and Technology that brings together researchers at GNS Science, and the Universities of Victoria, Canterbury, and Otago. Tim also directs the Antarctic Research Institute—a research centre based at Victoria that will facilitate the collaboration of researchers nationwide.



**FROM THE VICTORIA
UNIVERSITY
FOUNDATION
EXECUTIVE
DIRECTOR TRICIA
WALBRIDGE**

A new year has brought new beginnings for the Victoria University Foundation.

Firstly, I am very pleased to announce the appointment of Diana Meads as the Foundation's fundraising manager with special responsibility for bequests.

Diana graduated with a BA from Victoria University in 1974 and since then has had a variety of roles as a librarian, and as a fundraiser for the Royal New Zealand Ballet, the National Library, and the Book Council.

A bequest is a most valuable form of support for Victoria. It allows the donor to truly make a difference in an area of their choice at the University without impinging on their own financial needs during their lifetime.

The Foundation recently received an extremely generous bequest of almost \$1 million from the late Robert Bostock, who was keen to support students coming to Victoria University from a

number of central Wellington schools. The first Robert Bostock Scholarships will be awarded at the end of 2008.

Another welcome change occurred on 1 April this year when the donation rebate limit on charitable giving of \$1,890 was removed by the Government. From now on donors will be entitled to claim a 33.3 per cent tax rebate up to the level of their annual net income for donations to charities that are registered with the Charities Commission—as the Victoria University Foundation is.

We very much hope donors will take advantage of the new rebate provisions to think about making a larger gift to Victoria than they might have previously considered, or to make a gift on a regular basis.

The John Bailey Road Safety Research Fund

A training system to improve road users' judgement of speed and distance, and that aims to lead to a reduction in traffic accidents, is a direct outcome of a project funded by the John Bailey Road Safety Research Fund.

Developed by School of Psychology researchers Professor David Harper and Dr Maree Hunt, the training aims to improve 'gap-acceptance decisions'—those involved in judging whether it is possible to complete manoeuvres such as overtaking, and crossing the road on foot, before the arrival of an oncoming vehicle.

They say that while the ability to simultaneously take into account the distance to, and the speed of, an oncoming vehicle, is required to accurately determine when the vehicle will arrive, most people rely heavily on distance when making gap assessments without taking speed information into account.

The John Bailey Road Safety Research Fund was established with a \$100,000 donation to the Victoria University Foundation.

Dr John Bailey spent his working life researching road accidents and drink-drivers, and providing an authoritative scientific view on road safety policies at international conferences, in parliamentary select committees, and to the media. John Bailey's widow, Dr Margaret Bailey, assisted John with

his research, keeping scrapbooks of road accident cuttings from newspapers as they were frequently an important informative source for his research.

A lifetime of dedication to road safety research naturally led to a bequest to establish the fund, says Margaret, who also made a personal donation to one project.

Professor Harper says the funding was critical to the employment of research assistants who collected data for the project.

"Not only did the generous funding make the research possible, the research experience was invaluable for the research assistants, one of whom has gone on to do PhD studies and another who is now employed as a researcher in the road safety area."

John Bailey had a close connection to the University. His father, Professor Colin Bailey, was a professor and department head in the Faculty of Education, and both John and Margaret completed their Bachelor and Master's degrees in mathematics and chemistry at Victoria.

After completing doctorates in quantum chemistry at Oxford University, Margaret and John returned to New Zealand where John began investigating the impact of newly introduced alcohol blood-testing legislation on the road toll.



John and Margaret Bailey married on a brilliant summer's day in December 1966. In the background – the Hunter Building on the University's Kelburn Campus.

After John's death in August 2005 at the early age of 61, Margaret and the executors of his will established the fund and assessed suitable projects for research. Two projects to date have been granted more than \$60,000; one of these looked into the safety of older pedestrians—an area that Margaret says John was particularly interested in.

The Laywood Chan Charitable Trust Scholarship

Generous donations from two family members have made a significant impact in the Faculty of Law, funding an international symposium, a visiting law lecturer, and a new scholarship.

Chaired by Professor of Law Susy Frankel, the inaugural International Economic Law and National Autonomy conference was supported by Victoria alumna Yvonne Y.F. Chan.

A law Honours graduate, Yvonne says her desire to give back to the faculty that fostered her career motivated her donation to the Victoria Foundation. The donation also coincided with her grandfather's 100th birthday and made a unique gift to mark the special event.

Half of the donation will be distributed to selected international symposia every second year over the next six years. The other half will fund a visiting lecturer from Renmin University in Beijing.

Yvonne's father, Laywood Chan, made a separate donation to establish a scholarship for students studying Chinese language and literature. Third-year students who wish to take Honours in Chinese, and who are enrolled in a specific research paper, will be eligible to apply for the Laywood Chan Charitable Trust Scholarship in 2009.



The Orator

Judged the winning entry of the Embassy Trust Prize, a film-script by Tusi Tamasese tells the story of a young Samoan chief who overcomes a fear of public speaking to make a speech that changes everything.

Then a Master's student in the International Institute of Modern Letters, Tusi received the \$1,000 prize for *Orator*, a story that is based partly on his own reservations about public speaking, and also on his experience of growing up as a young chief on Upolu Island in Samoa.

Graeme Tetley, scriptwriter of acclaimed New Zealand films *Vigil* and *Out of the Blue*, says Mr Tamasese's script, *Orator*, is an assured telling of a fine story and a "humane script beautifully and powerfully imagined, executed, and achieved".

The Embassy Theatre Trust, with the Victoria University Foundation, established the annual prize for the best feature film-script as part of

its aim to support the infrastructure of the theatre and film industry.

Victoria scriptwriting programme director Ken Duncum says that while Tusi's script was a clear winner, the calibre of writing from the 10 Master's students was consistently high.

"The overall quality of writing increases year by year, as does the calibre of the students who apply each year for this very competitive course.

"This is indicative of how healthy the scriptwriting industry is becoming here and of how much more strength there now is in this art-form."

Mr Duncum says that students who complete the postgraduate programme leave the International Institute of Modern Letters with a high-quality full-length script that they can then offer to producers.



Adam Prize benefactor Denis Adam with prize-winning writer Eleanor Catton.

Rewarding the writer

Supported by Wellingtonians Denis and Verna Adam through the Victoria University Foundation, the Adam Prize is awarded annually to an outstanding student in the Master's in Creative Writing programme in the International Institute of Modern Letters.

The most recent recipient is Eleanor Catton, whose novel *The Rehearsal*—the story of a sex scandal at a girls' school—was praised by the judges as "viciously funny, wonderfully fresh and bold—a dazzling new voice".

One month before the Adam Prize was announced, Eleanor won the *Sunday Star-Times* short story competition—the youngest writer to do so in 23 years. Damien Wilkins, co-convenor of the Master's programme, says that the two major prizes underline the breadth of Eleanor's talent, and that *The Rehearsal* in particular is a remarkable achievement.

Of the standard of work submitted for final assessment by the 20 students, Damien says "there were several books worthy of winning the Adam Prize, and a number of these fiction writers and poets are sure to figure in literature in the future."

Weir House 75th anniversary

A home away from home for first-year students since 1933, Weir House celebrates its 75th anniversary this year.

Former residents and alumni who have connections to the historic Hall of Residence are encouraged to update their contact details with the Alumni Relations Office so that they may be invited to attend anniversary activities.

Please email the main office at alumni@victoria.ac.nz to do so.

Residents reminisce

For Karen Wallace, 1981 was a year that saw the genesis of many life-changing events. As a first-year student in Weir House, she met husband-to-be Mark Robbins, lifelong friends, and future work colleagues. “My memories, ranging from fond to not so fond, include the constant social events, pranks like soaping floors and moving a resident’s room contents to the quad, and, of course the food.” Karen graduated with a BCA in 1985 and has since worked mostly in the public service, starting as an auditor for the Audit Office, before moving onto human resources and management. She is currently chief operating officer at the Wellington City Council. Karen and Mark have three teenage daughters and live on a lifestyle block in the Akatarawa Valley. In between work and family commitments Karen puts a lot of time into hockey, as a spectator, manager, and administrator.



A resident in 2002, James Clark graduated with a BCA/LLB last year. “One of the best things about Weir House was that just about everyone was studying law, so there was always someone willing to share notes or discuss the cases that just didn’t make sense.” In his year James helped to organise a golf tournament, in which students used plastic mini-golf sets and took turns to construct holes to play. He and his peers also significantly boosted the business of the then-fledgling Hell Pizza company. “We were always looking for any half-decent excuse to order that yummy pizza that was only a short stroll across the Kelburn Park.” After completing his degrees James joined the Wellington offices of Russell McVeagh in their corporate law team as a law clerk and has since taken up a role as a solicitor.

Andrea Lil moved to Wellington, and into Weir House, from the expanses of Mid-Canterbury farmland in 1995. As a first-year student she appreciated the House’s ‘Guardian Angel’ mentoring system. “My guardian angel became a close friend, pushing little notes and poems under my door when I was feeling a bit rough.” Andrea graduated with a BBS in 1996, and again with a BArch in 1999, and is now an architect with Novak and Middleton. Recently she has been on a team that analysed Wellington City Council housing and provided recommendations as to how these could be upgraded to modern, safe, secure, and healthy environments. In her spare time Andrea plays netball and is the president of the Wellington chapter of Junior Chamber International. Through her membership with the group—known as the Jaycees—she has developed skills in leadership, debating, public speaking, committee process, motivation, and volunteering.



Mike Chan graduated with his second degree—a BCA—in 1978 after a BA in 1976 and set the standard for his children. Mike’s elder son and daughter both graduated from Victoria with double degrees, and another son is currently in his third year here undertaking—you guessed it—a double degree. Mike was a Weir House resident in 1972 and 1973 on the C floor and the new wing respectively. A keen rugby player, he was a member of the infamous Keith Murdoch Revival Choir which played in the J4 grade and had a very successful season. The ‘Murdochs’ have since stayed in touch; they reunited in Napier four years ago, and are planning another reunion event. In 1977 Mike joined the accounting firm Barr Burgess and Stewart (now PricewaterhouseCoopers) and left in 1984 to form Sherwin, Chan & Walshe where he is still today.

In the words of Fleur Adcock

Internationally renowned poet Fleur Adcock joined hundreds of graduands from the Faculty of Humanities & Social Sciences in December when she crossed the stage to be conferred with an Honorary Doctorate in Literature.

Ms Adcock's first published poems appeared in Victoria student newspaper *Salient* in 1952, and the following paragraphs (abridged) are taken from the speech she made to Victoria graduands with whom she shared experiences of her time at Victoria in the 1950s.

On lectures: Things were very formal in those days—no Christian names. It seemed strange enough to be addressed respectfully as “Miss Adcock” when I was just a kid straight out of school, but it was even more peculiar in the third term of my second year to be addressed as “Mrs Campbell”. I was still only 18. But then the University itself—or Victoria University College, in those days—was only just over 50. The Hunter Building, which to me and my friends was the University, was only in its forties, probably about the same age as those “elderly”



professors. Upstairs was the library, where we used to sit studying between classes; in the basement was the cafe—very important—and next to it the women's common room where we could loaf around gossiping about how we'd seen James K. Baxter queuing for coffee. It was really quite a small world.

On lecturers: Actually they weren't all particularly old—it's just that they struck us like that, partly because we were so young and partly because some of them were rather weird, or at least very learned. We felt there was a certain distance between them and us. The great Ian Gordon was Professor of English, and for Classics we had another eminent Scot, Professor Murray, a very sweet man but terribly shy.

On English as a subject: You can spend a lifetime exploring its wonderful resources and how to use it properly. After all, one benefit of becoming intimate with a foreign language is that it makes you look more closely at your own and try to see exactly how it works. Never despise grammar: a fascinating machine, full of cunning tricks and clever devices.

Patea: What Works?

The derelict and contaminated site of Patea's former freezing works has long been a blot on the coastal south Taranaki town.

A fire that raged through the site for four days in February reminded New Zealanders of the impact of the ruins on both Patea residents, who live downwind from the site, and visitors to the close-knit community.

A crumbling smokestack that juts in stark contrast to panoramic ocean views welcomed Victoria graduate Nick Jones to the town he stumbled across while travelling through Taranaki one summer. From there, the derelict buildings became the focus of his fourth-year landscape architecture project.

His design concepts for the site intend to revitalise the historic freezing works—New Zealand's first and the major employer for Patea until its closure 25 years ago.

“The remains are a part of New Zealand's foundational industrial heritage and while a degree of the landscape's preservation is important, the place must remain relevant locally, economically, and environmentally,” Nick says.

“This resulted in a mix of downgrading and decontamination to preserve part of the historic

structure, and designs for a plant nursery to provide local employment and plants for council use, or a craft brewery to attract tourists.”

Shaped with the supervision of Associate Professor Penny Allan and senior lecturer Martin Bryant in the Faculty of Architecture and Design, Nick's designs are currently on display at the South Taranaki District Museum as part of the exhibition *Patea: What Works?*

Nick says that people's personal perspectives shaped designs that originally took a ‘post-industrial park’ theme.

Running until 30 May, *Patea: What Works?* features the work of renowned photographer Russell Stewart (Massey University), landscape architect Alice Cullen, and Jonny McCormack and Chris Sharland—photographer and editor respectively of *Vice* magazine.

Museum curator Meredith Robertshawe says the exhibition showcases interesting and practical potential plans for Patea, and in April Nick will present his work to the public, iwi, and councillors.

Science on the marae

Normally a place to prepare and share food, the wharekai at Pukemokimoki Marae in Napier became a makeshift laboratory for four days in January.

There, in lab-coats and gloves, participants in Te Wānanga Pūtaiao (science summer school) programme extracted DNA from strawberries, broad beans, and other foods.



Dr Adele Whyte and Kaya extracting DNA in the wharekai at Pukemokimoki Marae. Photo by Wesley Lagolago.

The wānanga was instigated by Pukemokimoki Marae and led by biologist Dr Adele Whyte. Past and present mentors from Te Rōpu Āwhina—a mentoring scheme for Māori and Pacific undergraduate and postgraduate science students—and academic staff in the Faculty of Science and the Allan Wilson Centre also participated.

Adele says the idea to take science onto the marae evolved from the science outreach work

of Āwhina members in schools in Wellington, Porirua, and Wainuiomata. “Everyone wanted to make a useful contribution to their communities and to share the research work we were doing with them.”

Adele (Ngāti Kahungunu) grew up in Napier, and the programme was also a pertinent opportunity for her to contribute to her community.

She says the wānanga made science accessible, relevant, fun, and exciting for more than 60 people, ranging in age from 5–75, who joined the programme.

One day focused on the marine environment, with seminars on aquaculture and marine protection. Another physics-themed day introduced people to light and sound waves, liquid nitrogen, and superconductors. The DNA extraction demonstrations and exercises were part of a day of discussions around genetics and whakapapa (genealogy).

The wānanga was organised in partnership with community leaders; a range of possible topics were discussed with the marae committee who then selected three deemed to be most relevant to their community. Kaumātua shared their perspectives and knowledge on each of the topics throughout the day.

Adele says that other iwi have expressed interest in co-hosting a similar wānanga since the inaugural event and that she and the others look forward to future programmes.

Adele is a Māori Fellow in the School of Biological Sciences—a School for whom science outreach is a serious commitment. Staff regularly contribute their time and expertise to primary and secondary schools, and to community events.

Remembering New Zealand's first woman graduate



If Stephanie Smith's (right) hood seems a little faded that is because it is more than 130 years old. Stephanie graduated in December with a PGDipArcRec and was delighted to wear the hood that Kate Edgar wore when the University of New Zealand capped her as New Zealand's first female graduate in 1877. A delicate shade of rose-coloured silk, the hood belongs to Stephanie's sister in law, a granddaughter of Kate Edgar. Stephanie set a record of her own in 1977 as the first New Zealand woman to win a Rhodes Scholarship. With her in the photo is Glenys Bullivant who graduated with a PGDipArcRec in the same ceremony—more than 45 years after she first crossed the stage to be capped with her BA in English and History. Glenys follows in the footsteps of her father, Rhys Griffiths, who was a graduate of Victoria University College in the 1920s.



An inaugural reunion in Germany gathered more than 60 alumni at an event hosted at the residence of His Excellency Alan Cook, New Zealand Ambassador to Berlin. Pro Vice-Chancellor (International) Professor Rob Rabel says that people travelled as far as from Munich to attend the reunion, and that more than half of the group were law graduates. He says the enthusiasm of the group has inspired plans for a follow-up reunion in 2009.

Calling all beehivers for a cyberhui



Like it or not, cyberhui, beehiver, and Maorioko are official New Zealand English words, and part of a unique vocabulary that defines us as kiwis.

During Matariki (Māori New Year) celebrations in June last year, the University's New Zealand Dictionary Centre distributed the first of 12 Word of the Month posters to draw attention to the distinctive dictionary entries.

Sent to libraries, schools, and galleries worldwide, the elegant and simple posters reflect the uniqueness of New Zealand vocabulary and design. Each poster displays the

chosen word of the month and they were extremely well received says Dianne Bardsley, lexicographer and Dictionary Centre director.

Dianne and Centre researchers are interested in new words and the way in which people use and adapt old ones.

"One thing that makes New Zealand English distinctive is the borrowing of Māori words to compile words like cyberhui," she says.

"It's also becoming more common to change word forms. Nouns are increasingly being used as verbs—these days you can go 'antiquing' in Greytown."

The project team created Word of the Month bookmarks for conference delegates during Readers and Writers Week last month, and has considered printing postcards of the posters.

Dr Sydney Shep, director of Wai-te-ata Press, led the team who generated and designed the different fonts for each poster and bookmark.

"At Wai-te-ata Press, we have a long history of involvement in all things New Zealand. The opportunity to contribute to a well-designed package that is an aspect of New Zealand's cultural heritage fits our brief really well."

Aside from this project, the Centre maintains and develops a database of New Zealand English vocabulary, conducts research in the area, and compiles and publishes dictionaries and thesauruses.

There are 40,000 words in an ever-expanding database that is updated daily with new words and examples of their usage.

And if you were wondering, a cyberhui is a computer-focused seminar, a beehiver someone who works in the iconic Wellington building, and Maorioko a popular karaoke competition screened on Māori TV.

www.victoria.ac.nz/lals/research/nzdc
www.vuw.ac.nz/wtapress/

Satellites and the centenary

Resplendent in period costume, Victoria GPS enthusiasts helped to run a treasure hunt as part of the Dominion Observatory's centenary celebrations late last year.

The humour in the juxtaposition of handheld Global Positioning System (GPS) devices with

the full frocks and waist-coats was not lost on the hunters looking for treasure in the Wellington Botanic Gardens.

With the assistance of Dr Mairéad de Róiste and PhD students in the School of Geography, Environment and Earth Sciences, the treasure hunters used GPS to find a series of boxes using co-ordinates as clues.

Developed by the United States military for navigation purposes, GPS uses a series of satellites to help navigate or survey the Earth's surface. Mairéad says that while increasingly accurate devices are now installed for civilian use in cars and boats, there is an element of skill involved, particularly in the hunt for carefully-concealed treasure.

Students at Victoria are taught how to use GPS to collect spatial data or for surveying within Geographic Information Systems (GIS) courses

in the School of Geography, Environment and Earth Sciences. GIS is a valuable tool for mapping, spatial analysis, and data storage and in the past students have mapped mountain biking trails on Makara Peak, bus services in Wellington, and landslide hazard areas.

The GPS treasure hunt was run in conjunction with the Department of Conservation as part of wider celebrations to commemorate the Dominion Observatory. With strong ties to mapping and navigation in New Zealand, the Observatory was crucial to the creation of the New Zealand Map Grid (recently replaced by the New Zealand Trans Mercator Projection).

New Zealand readers with their own GPS devices can log on to www.geocaching.com and find the co-ordinates of a number of permanent treasure hunt locations.



From left, Laura Warman, Mairéad de Róiste, Andrew Rae, Michael Sloan, Stephan Guess, and Nikolaus Fegert.

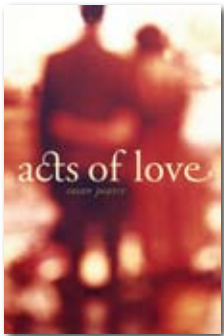
Off the Press

Acts of Love and *Blame Vermeer* are two recent works published by Victoria University Press (VUP) and reviewed for *Victorious* by Amy Brown.

Details of forthcoming publications by VUP can be read at: <http://www.victoria.ac.nz/vup/>

Acts of Love

By Susan Pearce



Weaving between early 60s America and contemporary New Zealand, Susan Pearce's debut tells the story of Rita, a woman anxious to love, and to be loved, well. As an American teenager, Rita leaves her haranguing mother and unaffectionate father to find love with People Under God's Command, a religious cult led by charismatic Leland Swann. As a middle-aged mother in New Zealand, Rita's comfortable family life is upset by Leland's attempt to resume his, now defunct, cult in Wellington.

Like other novels, such as Margaret Atwood's *Alias Grace*, that alternate between different settings but retain, largely, the same cast of characters, *Acts of Love* maintains a swift pace, feeds the reader answers gradually, and accordingly increases its tension. By the book's final chapters, the pressures of Rita's youth, her relationship with her daughter, Stella, and Leland's return have gathered to a satisfying peak.

Pearce's characters, from Rita's endlessly patient husband, Bill, to Betty, Leland's glamorous but troubled wife, are confidently portrayed as they grapple with the heaviest, and, perhaps, most common, of life's problems. Questions of moral goodness, love, and spirituality resonate between the characters and the settings. Without oversimplifying or sentimentalising her subjects, Pearce, with a careful eye for detail and a strong ear for dialogue, allows each of her protagonists to, eventually, answer their own questions.

As the cover suggests, *Acts of Love* is a warm novel about family relationships, in particular marriage. More importantly, though, it is fast-paced, enjoyable, and plotted around a strong, original idea.

In 2001, Susan Pearce completed an MA in creative writing at Victoria University's International Institute of Modern Letters. She now lives in Wellington with her husband and young son, and teaches Short Fiction at the Institute.

Blame Vermeer

By Vincent O'Sullivan



The Oxford Companion to New Zealand Literature mentions Vincent O'Sullivan's ability to mock, satirise, and laugh, but also to find dignity in unexpected places; these talents are all present in *Blame Vermeer*.

As the title implies, O'Sullivan's latest poetry collection is occupied with art and the ways that it influences, and is influenced by, our perceptions of history, death, love, and, indeed, life. This description sounds vague and lofty, but the poetry certainly isn't. O'Sullivan's sense of humour, and technical skill, successfully reduces large themes to pithy jokes; this is exemplified in 'Offcuts', a section of which, titled "Thank you, Uncle", goes, "How nepotism's darling rides the swell—/ If only talent had been hers as well!"

The prominent wry streak in this collection is balanced by the poems' intellectual rigour and the poet's apparent affection for form. This balance is evident in the collection's final poem, 'How things are', a deceptively simple, and almost unfashionably beautiful, story about the poet burying a dead starling. The poem carries the existential weight of its title effortlessly.

O'Sullivan's 40 years of writing fiction, reviews, plays, biographies, essays, and poetry give *Blame Vermeer* a resonance absent in the collections of younger, less experienced writers. While stereotypically 'young' writing—experimental or confessional—can be exceptional, the confidence, maturity, and fullness of this collection make it particularly rewarding.

Vincent O'Sullivan is a Professor Emeritus at Victoria. His collection, *Nice morning for it, Adam*, won the Poetry category of the 2005 Montana New Zealand Book Awards, and in 2006 he was awarded \$60,000 for poetry at the Prime Minister's Awards for Literary Achievement.



Amy Brown reviews books for *The Lumière Reader* and *The NZ Listener*, and works as an editor in the Communications and Marketing team at Victoria University. Amy is a graduate of the MA course in creative writing at the University's International Institute of Modern Letters, and her first collection of poetry—*The Propaganda Poster Girl*—was published in May by Victoria University Press.

Remembering Mark Twain

Does this man look familiar? Mark Twain, American satirist, lecturer, and writer toured New Zealand in 1895 and playwright and writer in residence David Geary is keen to hear from anyone possessing information, especially family stories, about the tour. A Victoria graduate, David is the 2008 Writer in Residence with the University's International Institute of Modern Letters. His chief writing project is a full-length play based on Twain's tour, and David says he is particularly interested in an incident when a man broke into Twain's Wanganui hotel room to warn him of an assassination plot. Sketched by artist William Mathew Hodgkins, the cartoon depicts Twain lecturing in Dunedin; the writer later recalled his impressions of New Zealand in *Following the Equator*.



Naming babies

With the bright idea to name two hatchling tuatara from Matiu/Somes Island after the taniwha of Wellington Harbour, Brian King won a naming competition run by the Department of Conservation. Brian is pictured with Victoria tuatara researcher Sue Keall who holds either Ngake or Whataitai in her hand on the island sanctuary where they were released after hatching from eggs incubated in the School of Biological Sciences. The hatchlings grew up surrounded by University staff, and the academic matter of naming the two tuatara was thrown open to the public with the idea of increasing awareness about the sanctuary and its population of native species. More than 300 entries were received in the competition.

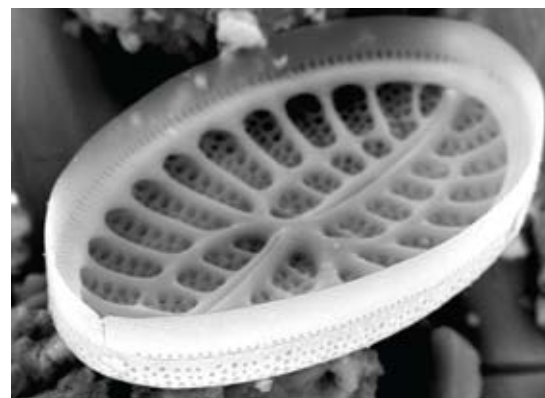


Victoria to the rescue

In the photo, members of Vic Rescue—an urban search and rescue team registered with the Ministry of Civil Defence and Emergency Management—demonstrate a ladder slide on campus. The rescue manoeuvre was one of several advanced techniques demonstrated by the dedicated team of current and former staff and students, who are required to complete weekly training exercises during the semester. Fully-trained Vic Rescue members are proficient in various urban, high-angle, and swift-water rescue disciplines and the public demonstration, one of several held each year, intended to both show this and recruit new members. Members have the opportunity to complete training units that can lead to national qualifications in civil defence, urban search and rescue, and emergency preparedness. More information about training and membership can be read at: www.rescue.vuw.ac.nz/

Little critter uncovered

The diatom in this scanning electron microscope image is a new genus identified by Dr Margaret Harper during a marine 'bioblitz' on Wellington's south coast. A world first, the bioblitz catalogued more than 220 different species ranging in size from a giant orca sighted off



Island Bay to many kinds of microscopic one-celled algae. The diatom, a single-celled phytoplankton species that is found in all types of water, was spotted on a piece of seaweed collected by a diver and brought to Margaret for closer inspection. It is one of at least five new species identified during the search. Co-ordinated by the University's Centre for Marine Environmental & Economic Research, the Wellington City Council, and Forest & Bird, the event involved a large number of professional scientists acting in a volunteer capacity.



Bringing back *The Balcony*

The fact that *The Balcony*—a lengthy masterpiece of French absurdist theatre—had not been staged in New Zealand for 30 years did not deter Stuart Henderson.

The up-and-coming director and Victoria alumnus was first inspired to produce Jean Genet's three-hour-long masterpiece after reading the stage directions.

Performed by Victoria theatre students and set in a brothel, the production was part of Stuart's Honours project and examines society's expectations and illusions of power.

Of Jean Genet (1910–1986), Stuart says the playwright's lack of formal education and time in prison shaped the dark themes for which he was famous.

"It was his life experiences and gift for poetry that made him write, and he had an ability to see what most people can't."

A 'black-box theatre', the University's Studio 77 proved an ideal venue for the cast of 17.

"We curtained off what we weren't using to create an intimate space so that the audience would have more of a sense of being part of it. The actors were so close that you could almost reach out and touch them."

Stuart says the adaptable studio and a highly committed crew helped to bring the long and complex production to fruition.

Bronwyn Tweddle, theatre lecturer and Stuart's production mentor, says *The Balcony* was a very ambitious undertaking for a student.

"It is a huge play for a young director, and very much about creating images and layers of social masks. The characters have a cynicism and world-weariness which is difficult for a young cast to pull off, but Stuart worked very hard with his actors to bring the world of the play to life."

A first-class Honours graduate in theatre and English literature, Stuart will this year commence a Master of Arts in Directing at Royal Holloway, University of London. In 2006 he was awarded the theatre programme's Dronke Prize in Drama.



How will future generations remember you?

For some of New Zealand's best and brightest, the only thing that stands in the way of their dreams is the lack of funds to make them real. By making a bequest to Victoria University, you can help to open those doors and allow these talented students to really excel.

You can choose to create a scholarship in a subject of your choice, direct your bequest towards research, or simply leave a gift to be shared in the future. Whichever you choose, it is a legacy that will be remembered forever.

If you'd like to know more about how to make a bequest to Victoria University, contact Diana Meads at the Victoria University Foundation, in confidence on +64-4-463 6030, via email at vuw-foundation@vuw.ac.nz or by mail at Victoria University Foundation, PO Box 600, Wellington, New Zealand.