



SUMMER 2008

Victorious

MAGAZINE FOR FRIENDS AND ALUMNI OF VICTORIA UNIVERSITY OF WELLINGTON

Robins can count

False memories

Rewriting our legal history



Art in our own backyard

Emerging from the Mount Victoria tunnel for the first time, Angela Blachnitzky saw something unusual. Outside a pale-blue 1900s villa sat a sofa of a similar colour and era. “It looked so inviting,” says the Lecturer in Communications Design. “It was not clear to me that, in New Zealand, it’s common to put sofas outside, so I took a picture. It looked so nice. Nice, cosy and comfortable.”

Coming from Germany, Angela was impressed by this quirk of New Zealand culture. “As a German, I could never stand to have my own couch outside in the rain. I think I can speak for 99 percent of Germans when I say that we would never do that! But, if the couch were to have rain protection, then it would be okay.”

As she found more examples of dilapidated lounge suites in backyards and on verandas around Wellington and the North Island, Angela’s curiosity grew into her first official photography project. In August, her exhibition at Toi Poneke Gallery, Outside Culture, was received with great interest.

“At the opening, lots of people came to me and said they had déjà vu. Some would say, ‘I had exactly the same chair 20 years ago’—they remembered the furniture from their youth. Some people were surprised that the furniture was worth taking photographs of—they found it interesting that for me it was unusual. I opened their eyes a bit.”

This custom, which New Zealanders take for granted, isn’t just unheard of in Germany—it has been banned in several cities in the United States, partly due to the fire hazard, but mostly to the shabby look of old couches that have been battling the elements.

Having lived in Wellington for two years now, Angela believes that Wellingtonians are, generally, very tolerant of shabbiness. “I was really

shocked in the beginning about all the worn-out things; the clothing, houses and cars—they are not in good condition! Everywhere I looked it was shabby. I think the good side of this is that Wellingtonians don’t worry very much about how everything looks. If clothing or anything is still functional, then why should it be replaced?”

The aesthetic that this tolerance creates—for instance, an elderly orange vinyl chair abandoned in the long grass of someone’s lawn—appeals to Angela. “Sometimes it looks like it can’t be true—it can’t exist in reality—and other times it looks normal. It’s the boundary between surrealistic and very normal that interests me most.”

It has fascinated others too. “The press were very interested in my topic, so I thought I really had to continue with this. Normally the end of a research project might be an exhibition, but for me this was the starting point. I thought it might be easy to make a photographic coffee table book, but I also wanted to know a lot more about the background and history of this custom.”

To create a book that not only has brilliant photography but also academic grounding, Angela has approached several lecturers from the Schools of Architecture and Social and Cultural Studies. With their help and with a more thorough tour of New Zealand, Angela plans to embark on intensive research into both the history and aesthetics of our outside culture.

If you enjoy lying in the sun on a sofa in your backyard, or know of a particularly good example of indoor furniture being used outside, Angela would love to hear from you.

angela.blachnitzky@vuw.ac.nz
www.outside-culture.co.nz
+64-4-463 6407



Armchairs in the garden: a photo from Angela's exhibition, 'Outside Culture'.

From the Vice-Chancellor

When I wrote about our Strategic Plan for *Victorious* last year it was still a work in progress. I am pleased to be able to write that it has now been signed off by the University Council.

Success for a university such as Victoria University is hard to define. That is because success means different things to different people.

I believe that for Victoria to be successful, our University community has to accept and support a high standard of behaviour and performance, and we have to achieve our goals while staying true to our values.

Finalising our new plan has required a huge commitment from many of Victoria's people. I am grateful for their efforts, and for the result. Through the process of developing this new plan, we have established values, a mission and goals that will define our success over the next five years.

The values express our underlying principles, or the ethical framework, that guide our university. The mission will challenge and direct us for the next five years, helping us to set priorities in research, teaching and learning, and guiding our decisions on where best to focus energy and resources.

We will achieve success through our goals, which make the direction tangible and provide us with a mandate for positive change.

I cannot think of a time when having a robust guiding document like the one we have developed has been more necessary.

These are turbulent times in terms of the global and local economy, funding, competition, market demand, capability development and productivity. As a university, while our commitment to quality must be unwavering, our efforts must now be refocused by achieving more within our total revenue.

The University community will also need to carefully manage the natural tensions that arise when balancing the requirement to deliver on our plans and targets against the equally important need to look after the academic and general staff who make up Victoria, hold firm to our values and maintain the financial surpluses necessary for future investment.

I believe the University community has the resolve to use this plan constructively to direct the way their Faculty, School or Central Service Unit can best contribute to the overall strength of Victoria.

Professor Pat Walsh, Vice-Chancellor



Victorious is published by Victoria University of Wellington, Te Whare Wānanga o te Ūpokoro o te Ika a Māui, PO Box 600, Wellington, New Zealand. www.victoria.ac.nz

To notify a change of address, or to sign up to the email newsletter *Life after Vic*, email alumni@vuw.ac.nz or call +64-4-463 6700.

Editor: Melanie Carpenter

Editorial Team: Amy Brown, Heidi Stedman, Sharon Stephenson, Ann Thomson.

To contact *Victorious* or to submit a story idea, email melanie.carpenter@vuw.ac.nz

Photographs (unless otherwise credited): Image Services, Victoria University of Wellington. Cover image: Neil Mackenzie, Onlinefotos Ltd.

Cover image: Dr Kevin Burns (right), from the School of Biological Sciences, and Dr Jason Low (left) from the School of Psychology at Karori Wildlife Sanctuary in Wellington with a New Zealand robin.

ISSN 1172-0387 © Victoria University 2008

Content

2 Research and Innovation

A look at the diverse range of remarkable research by staff and students

9 Learning @ Victoria

Stories that showcase the quality and variety of learning and teaching at Victoria

13 Alumni News

News from our graduates, and events of interest to alumni and members of the University community.

18 Gifting

Stories about those who have donated funding, resources and time in their support of the University

19 Off the Press

Reviews of recent publications by Victoria authors, published by University Press (VUP)

20 Town and Gown

The best of both worlds—where Victoria meets the community for activities, performances and the sharing of expertise



Rewriting history

The hunt for New Zealand's lost, hidden and forgotten legal documents will see history books rewritten.

"This has shown us how little we actually know about New Zealand's early legal history. We have found so much new information that early standard histories of how our courts functioned will have to be rewritten. There's just a more complex picture than we were aware of," says project leader Dr Shaunnagh Dorsett.

More than 1,350 archival items from 1841–1883 were found around the country during the first stage of the major project, providing an insight into New Zealand society and legal history in the early years of the colony.

"People were going to court in astonishing numbers for an amazing number of small matters: unpaid sheep, disputes between farmers about fence posts and pigs trespassing on property," says Shaunnagh.

Researcher Associate Professor Geoff McLay says he was also surprised at the volume of cases on debt recovery. "The people were quite litigious in a way that always surprises me. Wellington was a very small place at the end of the earth where you'd have thought they'd be all coming together and making things work."

The discoveries of a notebook compiled by the registrar of the first Chief Justice of New Zealand, William Martin, and the diaries of William Swanson, the second Attorney General of New Zealand, have also shed light on New Zealand's legal system.

The team has just received another two years' funding from the New Zealand Law Foundation. Shaunnagh and Geoff are joined by



Left to right: Richard Boast, Megan Simpson, Shaunnagh Dorsett, Geoff McLay

Associate Professor Richard Boast and Megan Simpson (Faculty of Law) and Mark Hickford and Damen Ward (Crown Law Office).

"Having found all the sources, the next stage is largely collecting, transcribing and noting the cases in an online public database. We will also provide surrounding material to help understand important cases," says Shaunnagh.

www.victoria.ac.nz/law/nzlostcases

nzlostcases@vuw.ac.nz

Exploring addiction



Cigarettes and ecstasy seem distinctly different. One is legal, addictive and its long-term effects are well known. The other is illegal, commonly seen as non-addictive and its long-term effects are a mystery.

Despite this common perception, research shows that components of cigarettes are having similar effects on the brain as ecstasy.

Professor John Miller, from the School of Biological Sciences, found this while looking at the neurobiological effects of drug abuse. "We're finding that there appear to be non-nicotinic components that are having effects on the addictive activity of cigarettes."

Understanding the causes of addiction—such as the effect a drug has on the levels of dopamine, serotonin and noradrenalin in the brain—can lead to finding a solution for it. "We hope that eventually, clinically, we could give drugs that would help people break the habit."

This research can be applied more generally to the basic biology of drugs—how they work and what changes occur in the brain over both the long and short term. "There needs to be a lot of work done in this area, because people use drugs like ecstasy as if they're totally harmless when they're quite the opposite."

John, Dr Darren Day and Dr Bronwyn Kivell, also from the School of Biological Sciences, have joined forces with the School of

Psychology's Professor Susan Schenk, a major player in the research of self-administration and relapse, who has recently been awarded significant Marsden funding for her work in this area. The two groups have been working together to research both the behavioural and biological effects of drugs.

"That works out well, because we can then link the neurochemical changes with the behavioural effects of the drug, whether it's just developing a dependency or relapsing after abstinence," John says.

While discovering the long-term effects of relatively new drugs, like ecstasy, is important, finding a way to clinically reverse adverse effects could be achievable too. "If you know that a particular receptor is involved in the bad effects of the drugs, you can then block that receptor. The only way you can do that is by understanding the system, which is what our research aims to do."

john.h.miller@vuw.ac.nz
+64-4-463 6082

Smiley, you're on candid camera!

Love it or hate it, the pictographic smiley face now populates online conversation.

Emoticons—icons reflecting emotion—add a human touch to the written word by expressing feelings or humour.

Made from punctuation marks, they have extended beyond the original smile, frown and wink to include an astonishing array of expressions and even accommodate ethnic differences and additional body parts.

It was the chance discovery of emoticons in a 19th-century typographical journal at St Bride's Printing Library in London that inspired a research project for Sydney Shep, Senior Lecturer in Print and Book Culture and Printer at Wai-te-ata Press.

The invention of the modern emoticon is generally attributed to Scott E. Fahlman, a computer scientist. He was the first to use :-D online at work in 1982, telling his colleagues to turn their heads sideways to see the smiley.

However, in a trade journal for typographers and printers dated February 16, 1882, Sydney uncovered faithful, grumpy, indifferent and astonished emoticons—or 'portrait paintings by type' as they were called then.

"Everyone thinks emoticons are so new but in actual fact the idea of creating an additional commentary to the written word goes way back. You see things like fingers pointing at important text in medieval manuscripts, giving cues to readers. Fahlman just captured emoticons in the new, online environment," she says.

Web logs, emails and instant messages often feature exaggerated use of spelling and punctuation, the use of capitals, spacing and special symbols for emphasis.

So why do we need these visual markers of our speech?

Sydney says smileys add "voice to the page", by punctuating the written word with human emotion, and signalling the intent of the writer.

Over time, they have developed into much more complex punctuation drawings and there's one for every occasion. "You can have a cat or a koala, an angel or the pope, Elvis with his lock of hair or Marge Simpson with her big hair do."

The Milk Processor Education Program in the United States is using the first branded emoticon, a milk moustache, to encourage American teenagers to drink milk.

Kim Li, a Google software engineer, has developed face-warping software which personalises a smiley, or wink, or frown, with one's own identikit.

As part of her research into the cultural history of emoticons, Sydney uncovered how the idea of emoticons spread around the world in the days before the internet.

She spent several months this year trawling through 19th-century journals in various countries, and discovered a major international network of circulation for emoticons and other social information.



"No matter where in the world they were published, 19th-century typographical journals were far more than vehicles for the latest domestic and international trade news, or technical information," she says.

The typographic press would reprint things they read about in journals if they thought it would be useful to people in their locality. This was how emoticons spread so widely years before the internet was available.

"Reading the journals is like a microcosm of all this totally fascinating history; it provides a window on the social and cultural history of the printing fraternity. They are more than just ephemeral monthly journals that are dated; they are full of rich history.

"For the printing press, journals were about creating memories and nostalgia of the craft of printing. The typesetters saw themselves as top craftspeople. They were desperately trying to retain this image."

Sydney will present her research findings at Typeshed 11, an international typography symposium to be held in Wellington in February 2009.

COMMON EMOTICONS

- :-) Happy
- :-(Sad
- :* Kiss
- ;-) Wink

sydney.shep@vuw.ac.nz
+64-4-463 5784



Believe it or not

Does God exist? Were the All Blacks poisoned during the 1995 World Cup? Is it dangerous to swim straight after eating?

With the *Sunday Star-Times*, Senior Lecturer in Psychology Marc Wilson presented these questions and more to more than 5,000 New Zealanders via one of the largest surveys of paranormal belief ever conducted.

The idea for this survey began in 2003, while Marc was teaching a course to psychology students bored with statistics. "I looked for ways of dressing up research methods and came across a body of literature about why people believe in paranormal phenomena. The students' reaction to this was really positive, so I had to find out more."

What began as a teaching aid has grown into a thorough investigation of New Zealanders' beliefs.

Women tend to believe in everything, except UFOs and the homegrown conspiracy theory that the All Blacks were poisoned. This is a common finding and Marc would like to know why. "It's completely intellectually unsatisfying to sit back and say, that's because women are emotional and credulous."

The survey has yielded many other findings that Marc would like to delve into further. The paradox that those who feel socially disengaged—thus less likely to trust people—are more likely to believe urban myths, interests him. So does the prospect of re-releasing the survey in 10–20 years, to see how beliefs have changed.

"Belief in paranormal things has increased over the last 30–40 years. One of the explanations for this might be that we're turning away from organised religion; if organised religion serves some kind of psychological function, we need to fill that gap with something else."

For now though, Marc is busy creating a new survey with Dr Peter Ritchie and Professor Phil Garnock-Jones from the School of Biological Sciences. "Instead of asking about people's beliefs in weird things, we're going to find out what provokes belief in more reputable concepts, like evolution, but concepts for which most people don't have any direct evidence themselves."

marc.wilson@vuw.ac.nz
+64-4-463 5225

Giving Kiwis a better service



Left to right: Elizabeth Eppel, Derek Gill, Bill Ryan stand by a public display in the Old Government Building

As a career public servant, there's little Derek Gill hasn't seen of New Zealand's public sector landscape.

So the Visiting Senior Research Fellow at the Institute of Policy Studies (IPS), currently on secondment from the Ministry of Social Development, was uniquely placed to contribute to the research project, 'Better Connected Services for Kiwis'.

"The IPS was commissioned by the Emerging Issues Programme, a strategic alliance between the public sector and the School of Government, to look at how public sector staff collaborate across agencies to deliver positive outcomes for ordinary New Zealanders," says Derek.

"We wanted to see how staff worked across boundaries and why they did what they did, especially in the absence of any formal collaboration arrangements."

The research team, which included two public servant practitioners and two academics, developed seven case studies of recent interagency staff collaboration that achieved positive results for Kiwis.

"We looked at examples where staff took a client-centric approach, rather than a transactional approach, meaning they didn't just do one part of the process and then fob the client onto another department; they used their

initiative and creativity to provide a whole-of-government response to the issue."

A series of national workshops was also run with staff from various agencies to find out why and how they worked collaboratively.

"We found lots of examples where agencies are working together in spite of the system, rather than because of it. What the project uncovered was that there's lots of rhetoric, but little knowledge of what really happens at the front line and why and how staff work together."

Derek says the findings have been presented to public sector chief executives and he is confident the team's work will translate into better services for all New Zealanders.

"Joined-up government isn't about throwing out everything public servants currently know and do. It's about adding new ways of working to their repertoires so that better outcomes for Kiwis can be achieved more often and in a wider range of circumstances."

A more detailed account of the study can be read at ips.ac.nz/events/completed-activities/joiningup.html

derek.gill@vuw.ac.nz
+64-4-463 6996

Moving the boundaries

Dr David Pauleen's favourite work/life balance story involves a private sector employee who dropped his cellphone in the sea while kayaking.

"When the insurance company asked why he had his work cellphone with him in the middle of the ocean, he replied he was expected to respond within 30 minutes if called," says the School of Information Management Senior Lecturer.

Welcome to the 21st century, where information and computing technology have blurred the line between work and play.

It's a subject David and his colleague, Dr Brian Harmer, recently turned the spotlight on with their research into how New Zealanders use information and computing technology (ICT) in their everyday lives—and its impact on work/life balance.

"We were interested in how ICT has given rise to a mobile workforce. This means that people can work from home, while in transit or on the road, and at times and places that were traditionally seen as being private, such as evenings and weekends," says David.

The pair explored the perspectives of New Zealanders who use network connected productivity tools such as laptops, cellphones and other Personal Digital Assistants, to discover the impact these have on their work and lives.

The study, entitled 'Moving the Boundaries: The impact of mobility on work and life', began in October 2006. It asked more than 40 employees from both the private and public sectors a series of questions aimed at uncovering how they worked with technology every day—from the time they got up until the time they went to sleep.

While the research is ongoing, David says their work/life balance findings illustrate that contemporary work practices, coupled with the ubiquity of communication channels, allow staff to overcome the constraints of office time and geographical location to work when and where it best suits them.

"For many respondents, this means they are able to be more flexible in their work practices and therefore able to prioritise personal issues; for example, starting work earlier and leaving at 3.00pm to pick up their children from school. Technology also allows some workers to maximise the productive opportunities of every minute of the day, such as the rail commuter who catches up on work during time that would have been lost otherwise."

From the employer's perspective, the key advantage of such a workforce is getting potentially 24 hours of work from employees for the cost of an eight-hour day.

David says he wasn't surprised by results that showed New Zealanders are working longer hours.

"But we were surprised that people thought ICT gave them more control over their work/life balance. The reality is, they're not in control—they're on call almost 24 hours a day."

As technology gets more sophisticated, more employees may find little delineation between their work and their home lives, says David.

"When your work/life balance gets out of kilter, there is the potential for burnout, resentment, family problems and an erosion of private life. Both staff and management need to be aware of

making independent choices about the extent to which they adopt and appropriate ICT, and where and when they work."

So far, the pair's findings have been presented at a number of conferences and, in December, David will travel to Paris to present a paper at an international ICT conference. Journal articles are under review and more are in the pipeline.

Dr Harmer, meanwhile, is on research leave in Australia where he is progressing this study with a look at new forms of nomadic workers, typically autonomous knowledge workers who have the freedom to choose what time of the day or night, where in the world, and in what circumstances to work.

david.pauleen@vuw.ac.nz

+64-4-463 6886





Birds of a feather flock together to count

They're a threatened species and found only in New Zealand, but these robins are anything but bird brains.

That's the finding of scientists from Victoria University who spent 15 months studying the small black birds.

Dr Kevin Burns, Senior Lecturer from the School of Biological Sciences, and Dr Jason Low, Senior Lecturer from the School of Psychology, achieved a world first with their research, which showed the New Zealand robin, *Petroica australis*, is one of the few animals in the world that can 'count'.

"We discovered that wild robins have numerical abilities that enable them to store pieces of food in 'caches' or special stashes and then remember how many pieces of food are stored in each cache," says Kevin.

While most animals can distinguish between small quantities—usually less than four—and others can also distinguish between larger quantities after extensive training, the ability of wild animals to count is completely unknown," says Kevin.

The study, which ran from May 2006 to August 2007, focused on wild robins in Wellington's Karori Wildlife Sanctuary. Biological Sciences student Simon Hunt conducted the experiments in which robins were shown different amounts of meal-worms, or meal beetle larvae, that were then hidden in hollowed-out tree trunks.

"When given a choice between one or two worms, the robins invariably went for the bigger meal."

As the number of items hidden in each spot increased, so did the robins' ability to go directly to the spot that contained the higher number of meal-worms.

"What really surprised us was that when the numbers increased in each spot—such as four worms in one and seven in the other—the robins still went for the larger number. We knew they'd have no trouble with smaller numbers

like two or three but to be able to distinguish up to seven worms was astounding and, we believe, the first time this has been demonstrated in the absence of training anywhere in the world."

The birds' numerical abilities dropped when the numbers reached more than seven. However, their performance was found to be greater than that of infant humans and the higher primates, like chimpanzees, orangutans and gorillas.

But, as Kevin points out, there's a critical reason for the birds' mathematical skills—survival of the species.

"In summer, male robins are the perfect mates and fathers to their offspring which they in fact raise. But, come winter when food becomes scarcer, all bets are off and it becomes a desperate battle of the sexes where males and females will hoard and hide food from one another."

Female robins will tend to observe where their male partners hide their cache and when the male is away foraging for food, the female will usually "raid the cache and rob their partner blind".

The female will always raid the cache with the largest amount of food.

"We asked ourselves, how does she know to rob the site with the biggest food source? And that's when we started to think that these birds understood the concept of amounts."

Being able to 'count' food also works in the males' favour as they are able to prioritise which caches they should defend from their thieving partners.

"The males get very aggressive when they catch their female partners stealing from them. The birds can get seriously hurt."

Knowing how many items are stored in particular cache sites also helps the robins prioritise the retrieval of food before it decays.

This study provides a critical link to understanding the evolution of numerical competency—it shows that robins use a sophisticated numerical ability to retrieve and pilfer stored food.

In a second trial, the scientists looked at the robins' reactions when meal-worms were concealed under a trapdoor.

"The robin could clearly see us put two worms into the tree-trunk, but of course we hid one under the trapdoor. When the robin tried to retrieve two worms and could only find one, he or she would literally go berserk, making a 'ticking' sound that showed they were angry."

They would also search for longer when they expected to receive more food.

Kevin admits a key reason for their trial's success is the nature of these birds.

"Robins are such fearless, friendly birds that will come right up to you and watch you carefully to see what you're doing. My colleagues in the UK and US can't believe that we have such close access to these birds and, in fact, that New Zealand has so many birds that don't regard humans as predators."

For Jason, who helped design the trial and whose usual field is the developmental psychology of infants and young children, surely working with birds presented a different set of challenges.

"Not really, since I work a lot with children who have limited verbal skills," he says. "The experiment we used with the robins, where we hid various amounts of food to see which one they'd go for, was very similar to the kind of experiments that we design to test cognitive ability in young children."

The next phase of the trial is to see how the robins perform when three cache sites are used. And there are also plans to test their abilities with more complicated maths, such as basic adding and subtracting, says Kevin who is again working with Jason to design the experiments.

"We're also keen to see if age is a factor in the robins' numerical ability. As the robin gets older, does he or she get better at counting? And by the same token, are younger birds' numerical skills not so sharp?"

Earlier this year, Kevin presented the research to New York's Cornell University, while Jason has been contacted by psychology researchers at Germany's prestigious Max Planck Institute.

"They are interested in the way the robins' behaviour mirrors that of children," says Jason. "Our research has been as well received by the psychological community as it has by the world of biological sciences."

kevin.burns@vuw.ac.nz
+64-4-463 6873

Marvin gets emotional

He'll get angry if he meets an intruder, surprised if he finds an unexpected shortcut or frustrated if he comes across too many obstacles.



Marvin the robot and Professor Dale Carnegie
Photo credit: The Dominion Post

Marvin the robot isn't just a talking security guard that can move at 35 kilometres per hour—he now has a repertoire of human emotions including happiness, surprise and fear.

Short for Mobile Autonomous Robotic Vehicle for Indoor Navigation, Marvin is the creation of Professor Dale Carnegie.

"When he's angry, he'll change his shape. Not only does he come closer to you, but his head comes up and forward so he's looming over you—it's very intimidating. His eyes also change colour to an angry red," says Dale.

And, as if emotions weren't enough, now Dale and PhD student Adrian Jongenelen are working to increase Marvin's range of vision and make sure he registers obstacles faster by developing a new camera system.

"At the moment, he can see up to three metres. If he's travelling at his top speed of 35 kilometres per hour and detects an obstacle, it's game over—it's too late to stop," says Dale.

"The new system will instantly tell Marvin the distance to an object, even up to 50 metres away."

Victoria's School of Engineering Computer Systems Group is devoted to designing autonomous robots like Marvin.

"We are trying to make all our robots autonomous so that you can give them a task and then walk away. That really makes us different from other mechatronic institutions in New Zealand."

Dale's team is also working on creating a team of search-and-rescue robots. "No robot has ever saved a person's life in a disaster situation and that's something we would really like to change."

In their current design, a base robot called the 'grandmother', would run the search and rescue operation from a safe spot. It would send several 'mother' robots into a disaster site, which would drop off hundreds of 'daughter' robots.

The 'daughters' are the size of a mobile phone and are designed to penetrate into the search site, signalling to their 'mother' when they find a trapped person.

dale.carnegie@vuw.ac.nz
+64-4-463 7485

There's Merit in Meyer's work

Loved and loathed alike, New Zealand's secondary school qualification, NCEA, has stimulated debate around the country since it replaced School Certificate and Bursary in 2002.



Professor Luanna Meyer and her research team might not have been in the spotlight as much but they have played a significant role behind the scenes, informing debate about and the policy behind the controversial qualification.

"NCEA is a qualification whereby students receive credits for achieving preset standards. Students accumulate credits throughout the year when they complete assignments or sit exams and must achieve a set number of credits to receive their qualification: an NCEA certificate," she says.

"Our earlier research showed some design features of NCEA could motivate students to 'do their best' or 'do just enough', and not surprisingly that latter apathy prompted much debate."

Over the past three years, Luanna's team has interviewed and surveyed more than 4,000 students from 20 schools for their longitudinal study on how NCEA relates to student motivation and achievement.

They saw a marked improvement in student motivation after a policy change in July 2007. Students can now receive an NCEA certificate at

each year level endorsed with Merit or Excellence if they receive outstanding marks for each of their credits during the year.

"After the policy change, motivation was higher for students who knew about the endorsements, and said they mattered to them, than for students who said they did not know about the endorsements," says researcher Associate Professor John McClure.

"This is an encouraging sign, as research typically shows that motivation declines the more years of school you go through."

Luanna says that, overall, their research suggests young people in New Zealand are ready to work hard to attain their goals. "The challenge now is to make sure they know the endorsements and opportunities on offer."

The research team includes Dr Kirsty Weir (Ako Aotearoa: National Centre for Tertiary Teaching Excellence) and Luanna, John, Associate Professor Frank Walkey and Lynanne McKenzie (Victoria University). The research is supported by a Ministry of Education research contract.

luanna.meyer@vuw.ac.nz
+64-4-463 9598

Food security in the heart of Africa

Alexa Funnell spent seven weeks last year on Malawi's Likoma Island exploring the impact of gender and income on food security.

The isolated central African island on Lake Nyasa, which measures just eight kilometres by three kilometres, is home to 10,000 people, making it a unique research location.

"Malawi is very low on the Human Development Index, and Likoma Island is a particularly interesting case study because its land isn't very fertile and the community relies on a weekly ferry to supply more than 70 percent of their food. Unfortunately the ferry is unreliable and regularly breaks down or is delayed," says the Master of Development Studies student.

"Ideally they would be able to grow enough food on the island to sustain the population, or at least be able to afford to buy enough in the event that they couldn't grow it."

Alexa interviewed 32 people from four villages around the island—half men and half women—as part of her research.

"Most people I spoke to were only eating once a day and the 'hungry season' hadn't even started. Sometimes, they eat only once every two or three days if food is short."

Her research shows that if a woman in the household is earning money, she will spend all that money on food, education, health and other basic necessities.

"If men are earning money in the household they will put a certain amount towards food, but men will often spend money on additional items like alcohol. It's not that they don't want to help the family, they just see the household as the woman's domain and food is not always their top priority."

All the participants Alexa interviewed, bar one man, agreed that women were more careful with money.

A severe shortage of employment opportunities and depleted fish stocks around the island also contribute to a household's lack of food.

"Everyone I approached was so keen to participate. It was amazing to be welcomed with such generosity and good humour and experience life in their community."

Alexa is now writing up her Master's thesis and maintains frequent contact with Likoma Island.

Children on Likoma Island, Malawi

alexa_funnell@hotmail.com



Art of a nation

Visitors to a major Te Papa exhibition are likely to stay for 14 minutes, study one exhibition piece closely and focus on the historical sections if they are female.



Vera Mey (right), Chloe Searle (middle) and Leah Sheppard (left)—all studying towards a Master's in Museum and Heritage Studies—recently examined whether a Te Papa exhibition's visitor experience goals were being met. They observed the habits of 55 visitors over a seven-hour period.

New Zealand's national museum, Te Papa, has a long-standing exhibition called *Toi Te Papa: Art of the Nation*, which highlights 1,000 years of New Zealand art.

Its visitor experience goals are twofold: for visitors to understand the history of European and Māori art and for them to engage in the broad display of works.

"There's something for everyone, whether you're a lover of historical or more contemporary art," says Vera.

The trio found there were almost equal numbers of male and female visitors to the exhibition during their observation period, with 75 percent of the visitors coming alone or in pairs.

The average time spent by surveyed visitors was 14 minutes, with just over half the visitors staying less than 10 minutes. Although this seems like a large number, it suggests that half the visitors are there intentionally—not just by coincidentally coming across the space.

Chloe says observing what people did when they were at the exhibition was surprising. "Of those we studied, more women tend to look around the historical sections; those visiting in groups of the same generation are more likely to study works closely; and only two visited all the spaces within the exhibition."

Leah says she was interested to find that the layout of the exhibition successfully aided visitor retention. "The space and signage are geared towards visitor retention—so people have an opportunity to see and learn about as many of the works as possible."

The three agree the research was a great chance to see theory in action. Their findings, which they were invited to present to the exhibition team, will contribute to Te Papa's upcoming evaluation of the exhibition.



FROM THE ASSISTANT VICE-CHANCELLOR (ACADEMIC) DAVID CRABBE

Critical and creative thinking, communication and leadership

Whether Victoria University's students graduate in English or engineering they must have the skills to succeed in their chosen workplace and, in many cases, to carry on to further study.

Victoria is committed to helping all its students develop four important student attributes: critical thinking, creative thinking, communication and leadership.

Critical thinking goes beyond the ability to absorb given information to knowing how to analyse and evaluate information through logical thinking. Creative thinking is the ability to develop something new or to see new patterns, new ways of expression, new associations and new solutions to problems.

Communication skills for graduates include the ability to describe, explain, persuade and negotiate, using clear written and spoken language in a variety of genres including reports, reviews and proposals.

Victoria has produced some of New Zealand's top leaders. Not everyone can be a leader in a traditional sense, yet every Victoria graduate should be able to contribute to leadership in many ways—by taking multiple perspectives on problems, by being a good team player, by being able to identify and manage ethical issues, by self-management through goal setting and planning and by being sensitive to intercultural issues in modern society.

Across the University we are actively working on initiatives which ensure all our undergraduate students are working towards these attributes, whether it is through the courses they take towards their degree, or extra-curricular activities. These initiatives are one part of an on going project called *Pathways to Success*, a report on undergraduate teaching and learning that was endorsed by Victoria's Academic Board in 2007.

Programmes are currently reviewing the way in which their majors contribute to the acquisition of our four graduate attributes. When these reviews are completed, the University will be able to present an overview of degree structures and outcomes in a clear, simple and standardised way.

The next task for the *Pathways* project is to focus on the quality of teaching and learning. We have chosen to address students' first-year experience in particular. The first year of study is when students face the transition from school

Creative thinking is the ability to develop something new or to see new patterns, new ways of expression, new associations and new solutions to problems.

to university: from small classes within a reasonably small community to large classes in a large community, from a more structured environment to one where there is less

monitoring of the progress students are making towards high achievement in their courses.

Four large 100-level courses have been chosen for development in 2009 with the intention of exploring different learning opportunities and promoting in the course members a sense of belonging to and participation in a scholarly community. The teaching teams, together with a support team with expertise in teaching, learning and resources, will set development goals, explore new ways of achieving those goals and evaluate the success of what is done. The results will be written up for the benefit of the wider University community.

I look forward to sharing our progress on these innovations with you in a future issue of *Victorious*.

Latin American links

Victoria University's ties with Latin America are strengthening thanks to a number of international initiatives.

Chilean PhD student Erasmo Macaya is at Victoria studying the genetic diversity of a brown seaweed, the 'giant kelp' *macrocystis*, to ascertain genetic differences between the dispersed algae.

He says that, although split by the Pacific Ocean, New Zealand and Chile have a kelp connection. *Macrocyctis* is found in New Zealand's cool waters, and off the coast of Chile, Argentina, South Africa, the United States, Canada and southern Australia.

"The kelp is an important economic resource; it's used for food for abalone (paua) aquaculture, as fertiliser and alginate (gel) extraction. Ecologically it's very important as it provides food and a habitat for thousands of organisms."

Erasmo is one of nine Chilean PhD students studying at Victoria University, jointly funded

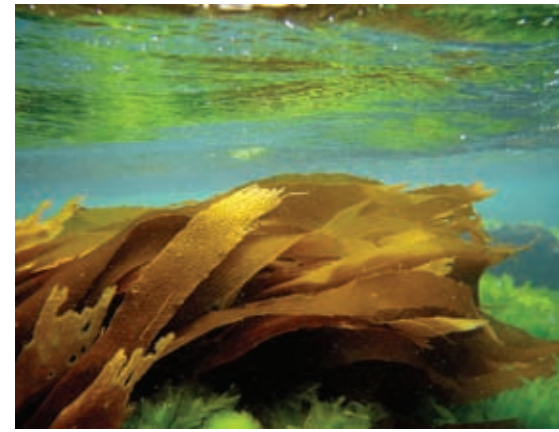
between Victoria University and the Chilean Government, and delivered through Chile's National Commission for Scientific and Technological Research (CONICYT). The four-year scholarship, established in 2004, enabled Erasmo to complete his PhD in an English-speaking country.

Victoria's Institute for Links with Latin America (VILLA) also fosters academic and student relations with our Pacific partners.

Institute Director, Associate Professor Warwick Murray, says Victoria's engagement with Latin America is long-standing—going back to the work of the School of Geography in the 1970s.

Founded in December 2007, VILLA aims to formalise and encourage this interaction, stimulate postgraduate research in areas of interest to both parties, connect diplomatic staff and academics and promote wider academic, student, community and business interests in Latin America.

"New Zealand has growing economic, political and cultural links with Latin America, including



trade agreements and academic exchanges. To interact with its nations effectively and sensitively we need stay abreast of their issues, challenges and cultural changes," says Warwick. To this end, VILLA hosted their annual Latin America seminar on contemporary cultures in Latin America in September.

Other Latin American links include the jointly-funded programmes in Portuguese and Brazilian culture thanks to the Brazilian Government, and recently the Mexican Embassy donated a number of books to VILLA and the University's library.

warwick.murray@vuw.ac.nz
+64-4-463 5029

Victoria's pioneers

Victoria International's Simon Hodge describes the small but significant group of Saudi Arabian students at Victoria University as pioneers.

There are 55 Saudi Arabian students at Victoria this year. Most are completing English language programmes before beginning their undergraduate or postgraduate degrees.

"A lot of countries in the Middle East are looking towards developing their human infrastructure. At present, they depend on migrants to do much of their work for them and are looking to up-skill their populations," says Simon, Victoria International's market services co-ordinator for the Middle East.

Each year, more than 8,000 Saudi Arabian students leave home to study at tertiary education institutions around the world on the King Abdullah Scholarship Programme.

Of the students who reach Victoria University in Wellington, most are interested in commerce and science degrees—particularly in the areas of engineering and computer science.

"In a way, these students are pioneers. They are the first students from Saudi Arabia we've had here at Victoria and it's an incredibly challenging process for them. They're under a



Celebrating a year's hard work—Victoria's Saudi Arabian students and support staff

lot of pressure; they only have a certain amount of time to complete their English studies and for many students it's their first time overseas."

To better support the students the University has hired native Arabic speaker Assma Bouhalba as a student administrator.

"English is the second language for Saudi Arabian students. They listen to songs in English, they know sayings and they'll watch American movies—although they're not in a Kiwi accent," says Assma.

The University has held extra workshops for the students on what studying in New Zealand is like and has invited speakers to inform staff on what life is like in Saudi Arabia.

The number of Saudi Arabian students is not expected to rise next year, but the University will host one special student. A sheikh from the Saudi Arabian royal family will travel to Wellington to begin a PhD in Religious Studies with supervisor Professor Paul Morris.

simon.hodge@vuw.ac.nz
+64-4-463 9470

The Kiwi prefab

Master of Architecture student Pamela Bell is researching prefabricated homes as a possible solution to New Zealand's housing affordability woes.

Prefabrication is a word that, for some, conjures up connotations of being cheap, flimsy, identical and temporary.

"Historically, architect-designed prefabricated buildings have failed commercially around the world," says Pamela.

"One of the biggest problems I've discovered is consumer perception about what prefabrication is."

Prefabrication is defined as anything that is constructed away from the building site and brought to site. Technology means that what can be drawn on a computer can be cut out by a computer-controlled cutter, and then assembled onsite or at the factory and delivered—with all the individuality and input consumers demand.

"We use prefabricated elements today in most of our constructions. So really, the discussion is about how we might bring more pre-finished elements to the building site or how we make the construction process somehow more efficient."

Pamela says the resurgence in contemporary prefabrication is being led mainly from the United States, from Los Angeles on the west coast and New York on the east. There are a number of passionate individuals driving the movement in New Zealand.

"I'm also interested in some of the sustainable benefits prefabrication could bring, such as minimising waste from economies of scale and more closely calculating the usage of materials."



Dispelling myths: prefabricated buildings on display at the Museum of Modern Art in New York

"My feeling is that incorporating prefab into our construction industry will result in homes of a higher quality, which are delivered in a quicker way and there may be cost savings to this process."

So what would a Kiwi prefab look like?

"I think the big thing with Kiwi ingenuity is that we can use whatever bits and pieces suit us. We'll be assembling from a collage of what's available in the world for our unique conditions."

pam_bell@xtra.co.nz

How do you feel about the Māori language?

Fear of mispronouncing Māori words and place names may be stopping many non-Māori New Zealanders from speaking the Māori language.



That was one of the findings of a study conducted by Julia de Bres, Research Fellow at the School of Linguistics and Applied Language Studies.

As part of her PhD, Julia looked at the attitudes and behaviours of non-Māori New Zealanders towards te reo (the Māori language) and the way they did, or didn't, support its use.

The research, which ran from 2005 to July 2008, included a survey of 80 people in a range of white-collar public and private sector organisations in Wellington. In-depth interviews were then conducted with 26 of those respondents.

Julia was surprised at the results, which were more positive than previous research had suggested.

"Around 56 percent of people were active supporters of the language, 38.8 percent were not interested in speaking the language and just 5 percent thought only English should be spoken in New Zealand."

The biggest surprise was the level of self-consciousness that many non-Māori New Zealanders felt about correctly using te reo.

"Many of those who were strongly supportive of the language said they still felt inhibited, for example, about pronouncing Māori place names in case they got them wrong or because of others' attitudes towards them."

Julia's research also looked at the New Zealand Government's approach of supporting and encouraging the use of te reo by non-Māori New Zealanders.

"I found that the Government's main focus has been on promotional campaigns, like Māori Language Week, and a range of materials such as phrase books. When I looked at the Welsh and the Catalan experiences, I found some marked differences, because these other two governments tended to support the language in a more actively inclusive way, encouraging all citizens to speak the language, rather than prioritising one ethnic group. There may be a lesson for New Zealand in that."

Julia, who speaks four languages, has no personal connection to the Māori language.

"But I'm a New Zealander and therefore the Māori language and culture is a big part of my identity."

julia.debres@vuw.ac.nz
+64-4-463 5639

False memories

Think you remember your student days at Victoria as if they were yesterday? New research shows that some of your memories could be completely wrong.

Psychology PhD student Lauren French tested whether people's memories change when they talk about their experiences.

Seventy-six percent of the research participants had at least one false memory following discussion, remembering things they could not possibly have seen.

"It is scary how easily people incorporated new information into their memories. People have so much faith in what they 'remember', but it doesn't actually take much for people to remember seeing things they did not see—things that actually contradict what they did see."

The justice system relies on witnesses and victims to remember what happened and who was at fault in criminal cases. When two people remember the same information, it provides strong evidence that the information is accurate.

"But this research shows that two people might remember the same details because they discussed them, not necessarily because they experienced them.

"The difficulty is that you can't know whether a memory is false or not. Memory is a reconstructive process, not the permanent record that people tend to think it is. Even when people are absolutely confident in their memories, their memories can be completely wrong."

Lauren says false memories could mislead the course of an investigation, or the outcome of a trial, potentially leading to the conviction of an innocent person or the acquittal of a guilty person.

Other research shows that discussing an event isn't the only way people's memories can change.

Any situation where people might be exposed to new information—reading about the event in the news, dreaming about it, exaggerating or minimising the story when one retells it—could have an effect too.

To conduct the research, which involved 400 participants, Lauren used a relatively unknown but ingenious technique developed in Japan by Professor Kazuo Mori.

Using Mori's light polarisation technique, participants feel as though they have shared an experience: they sit next to each other and watch a movie on the same screen at the same time, but actually see slightly different versions.

The movies follow a man at a party while he meets people, makes drinks, gets bored and snoops around the house.

Both versions of the movie are identical except for eight critical points. For example, in one version, the main character steals a wallet, but in the other he just looks through the wallet and puts it back where he found it.

When the pairs discussed the movie, they exposed each other to some misleading information from the version of the movie they saw.

"Then to find out what each person really remembered, they completed an independent memory test so we could see whether they reported any details from their partner's version of the movie—details they could not have seen themselves.

"In every one of my experiments discussion corrupted people's memories—people reported seeing details that they could not have seen."

Lauren says people were especially likely to report a false memory when the suggested information was conveyed by a credible, trustworthy source, such as their romantic partner.

"Given that people in romantic relationships know each other very well and presumably see each other as credible and trustworthy, it's not surprising that people's memories were likely to be influenced by their partner."

Lauren was runner-up in the 'Science and Our Society' category at the 2008 MacDiarmid Young Scientists Awards, presented annually by the Foundation for Research, Science and Technology.

lyfrench@gmail.com



Conquering the language barrier



When Khoa Nguyen came to New Zealand from Vietnam at the age of 23, he couldn't speak English and hadn't completed high school—now he's climbing the corporate ladder in Wellington.

After 13 gruelling years of constant study at Victoria, he had learnt English, completed a Bachelor of Commerce and Administration and become Victoria's first Bachelor of Tourism and

Services Management graduate. He also has a Graduate Diploma in Business Studies from Massey University and is now a registered Chartered Accountant.

Khoa, a successful professional volleyball player in Vietnam, was never considered 'academically able' and his family thought he wouldn't succeed in his education. However, a fierce determination and competitive nature meant that failure was not an option.

Khoa says he was the first student in the library and the last to leave every day. He sat mock exam after mock exam. His theory was that if he was going to be equal to, or better than, a native English speaker he would need to work three or four times harder to achieve the results he wanted. If a native English speaker spent one hour studying then Khoa would spend three to four hours studying the same subject to overcome his shortfall in English and do better.

He says his ultimate goal is to prove that a non-native English speaker can climb the corporate

ladder in New Zealand.

"My biggest barrier has been language. My formula for success has been to stay focused, go the extra mile and improve my English by absorbing myself with native speakers.

"Even though I have been disadvantaged by a language barrier I am determined to show that I can succeed in the corporate world by working hard and going the extra mile."

As General Manager of Corporate Services at the Building and Construction Industry Training Organisation, Khoa is responsible for the financial strategic direction of the organisation as well as overseeing information technology and telecommunications, marketing, training and human resources.

"My goal is to become a CEO in three to four years, before I reach 45. Ultimately I want to become a consultant to foster business links between New Zealand and Vietnam."

khoa.nguyen@bcito.org.nz

Music degree the key

There aren't many companies that set out to employ music graduates, but for contemporary music publisher, Promethean Editions, it's a key requirement.

It just so happens that all the current and former staff of this company are Victoria University alumni.

"Having a background in composition or musicology is essential when working with musicians, composers and others in the industry," says company founder Ross Hendy.

Promethean Editions, which represents some of New Zealand's best known composers including Gareth Farr and John Psathas, publishes sheet music and provides publishing services to composers. It also does promotional work to generate performances.

The Wellington company was set up 12 years ago by Ross after he completed a Bachelor of Music in Composition at Victoria.

"As a student, I had the software to do all my own music typesetting and composition. By the time I had finished my degree I was doing work for other publishers and had enough work for a full-time job. I decided that, rather than work for other people, I would generate my own intellectual property."

Promethean's business model differs from other publishing companies, most of which are based in London or New York. They put a lot of effort in to selling sheet music editions and do much of their work online. They are also unique in that they print most of their sheet music digitally.

"The large publishing companies print on big runs and hold a large physical inventory," says Ross.

"We hold our inventory electronically. We push the technology to its limit and expect high standards but it's a very economical way to meet demand."

Although he hasn't set out to employ Victoria graduates exclusively, the music community is small and it just happens that all the staff studied music at Victoria.

Current staff include Alison Grant who completed a Master's in Composition at Victoria, Charley Davenport, a cellist with a Master's in Musicology from Victoria, and Jared Commerer, a music Honours student. Former staff who are also Victoria graduates include Thomas Liggett, Aaron Lloyd and Stuart Coats.

www.promethean-editions.com



Left to right: Jared Commerer, Ross Hendy, Charley Davenport and Alison Grant

Big business

Claire Eeles relishes a challenge and has found herself in the perfect position in the North American business world.

Since completing a Bachelor of Arts (Hons) in politics at Victoria and a Postgraduate Diploma in Business from Massey, Claire has worked for some of New Zealand's largest companies including Fletcher Challenge and The Warehouse Group.

After a stint in the United States as a supply chain strategy consultant, and time in Sydney and back home in Auckland working in the building industry, she is now working for Restoration Hardware, a San Francisco-based high-end furniture and furnishing retailer.

"I really enjoy the dynamic nature of North American business. The business environment is very competitive with significant customer challenges, complex market segmentation, powerful global brands and best practice companies and ideas."

She is Vice President/General Manager of Restoration Hardware's to-the-trade business,

which focuses on the residential, commercial and hospitality trade segments.

"I haven't really followed a formal career plan. I've been very opportunistic, following the road less travelled to take on interesting challenges in different functional areas, industry segments and countries. The common theme in all my jobs has been either building a brand new business or improving the performance of an existing business."

Like all home-specialty United States retailers, Claire's business has been hit hard by the recent economic crisis, but she sees it as an exciting learning opportunity.

"Tied to the decline in residential development, US home specialty retailers have been hardest hit. Many of our competitors have gone out of business and others are managing their cashflow on a daily basis. We have a great team and the challenge for the next few months is to help lead a large business through uncertain times. This is valuable business experience for me."

Claire's office is in San Francisco, but she lives in Vancouver, Canada, which has a good



international airport to travel from every week to visit customers in cities like New York, Miami, Los Angeles and Las Vegas.

She's also involved in New Zealand Trade and Enterprise's North American Beachheads programme that provides local mentors for New Zealand businesses wanting a presence in North America.

"My perfect role would be to build on this work and give something back to New Zealand by leveraging my North American contacts, market knowledge and diverse business experience."

ceeles@restorationhardware.com

Influencing climate change



Some people choose to make a difference by influencing the Government's policy agenda, others immerse themselves in projects at grassroots level. Environment expert Ben Gleisner has chosen both.

When Ben came to Victoria University to complete his Bachelor of Science and Master of Environmental Studies, he had a plan to work in environmental policy at government level.

"I had been working on grassroots environmental projects for several years," he says.

"I set up a charitable trust in Golden Bay and owned a café in Dunedin, but I wanted to be more involved in big-picture policy formation. Central government seemed like a logical choice and was also a good place to diversify the skills I had obtained."

Ben worked for the Ministry for the Environment as part of his Master's placement then went to The Treasury after graduating.

As The Treasury representative on the New Zealand delegation for international climate change negotiations, Ben has been leading the economic analysis on a future agreement.

As if this hugely influential role wasn't enough, Ben also set up a Wellington-based not-for-profit organisation, 'the 42collective', which aims to encourage more environmentally and socially aware personal lifestyle choices and business practices.

"We are currently focusing on the theme of food, and encouraging people to grow their own vegetables, support local producers and generally be more aware of the environmental and social impacts associated with food consumption," says Ben.

The 42collective is also helping local cafés with sustainability issues, through a project due to be launched in early 2009 called "The Conscious Consumers' Guide to Wellington Cafés".

Ben's motivation comes from knowing that he can make a difference. "If someone had asked me when I was a student what my dream job would be, my current role would meet all the criteria—working on an influential issue in an influential position, while doing a bit of grassroots stuff on the side, it is ideal."

bengleisner@gmail.com

Join the Hunter Club

Retired staff from across the University gathered in August 2008 for the inaugural Hunter Club meeting.

The Club is a new initiative that will keep the University in touch with retired staff from its wider alumni community.

The first function included an afternoon tea and an address from the Chancellor, Tim Beaglehole, who gave his thoughts on 'The Changing Face of Victoria'.

Vice-Chancellor Pat Walsh says the University values its extended community, whose members give back to Victoria in so many ways—by serving on the University Council and the Board of Trustees of the Victoria University Foundation, or by leaving a much appreciated bequest to the University.

The Hunter Club will meet every two months on Wednesday afternoons in the Staff Club. If you are interested in attending or finding out more, contact Diana Meads, Fundraising Manager, Victoria University Foundation, on +64-4-463 6030 or at diana.meads@vuw.ac.nz

25 years of MBA

Next year the Master of Business Administration programme celebrates its 25th anniversary. Everyone who has graduated from this programme, or has been associated with it, will be invited to a celebratory event, date and venue to be advised. Email arun.elias@vuw.ac.nz to register your interest. Further information will be available in due course.

Celebrating 100 years of Earth Sciences at Victoria

Next year marks the centenary of the appointment of Charles Cotton to Victoria University. He started as a Lecturer in Geology and in 1921 became the University's first Professor of Geology.

To celebrate, the School of Earth Sciences is organising a reunion weekend for all Geology and Geophysics alumni on 29 August 2009 at Victoria University and on 30 August 2009 in a Wairarapa vineyard. This is an opportunity to renew old friendships and enjoy a weekend of activities. Register your interest through our website or email suzanne.weaver@vuw.ac.nz with 'Reunion' in the subject line.

Distinguished alumni

Many Victoria University of Wellington alumni go on to reach great heights in their chosen fields.

The Distinguished Alumni Awards celebrate the outstanding contribution of these alumni to their profession, community or country. Award recipients epitomise the attributes of a Victoria University graduate—leadership, creative and critical thinking and communication skills.

This is the third group of recipients who will be presented their award at the Annual Alumni Dinner on Thursday 23 April 2009. If you would like us to keep you posted on this event, email leah.johanson@vuw.ac.nz

Bill Day



Bill Day (BA 1982, LLB 1986, MBA 1993) is recognised worldwide as a successful entrepreneur, explorer and businessman who has contributed at the highest level to private- and public-sector life. He is the Managing Director of Seaworks Ltd, a specialised marine company that he took from a start-up commercial dive company to a small multi-million dollar business. Seaworks lays underwater cables, runs underwater robots and works in the offshore oil and gas industry.

Seaworks also undertakes the marine management for Stephen Spielberg and Peter Jackson movies. It runs specialised ships and underwater robots throughout the Middle East from its base in Dubai.

Bill was the Ernst & Young Entrepreneur of the year in 2000. He has given three summers of his life to searching in the sub-Antarctic for the wreck of the General Grant and is a keen diver, skier and pilot.

Gareth Morgan



Dr Gareth Morgan (PhD 1982) is an economist, portfolio investor, motorcycle adventurer and fisherman. He has instigated three successful businesses—economics consultancy, Infometrics Ltd; personal portfolio management business, Gareth Morgan Investments; and Gareth Morgan KiwiSaver.

He is a well-known columnist and for over a decade has contributed to publications including *National Business Review*, the *New Zealand Herald*, *The Dominion Post*, *The Press*, *Evening Post* and the *New Zealand Listener*. He is also a television debater and sought-after conference speaker.

Gareth's past directorships include Property For Industry Limited, the Advisory Board of Work and Income New Zealand, the Board of law firm Phillips Fox, Greens Industries Ltd, TradeMe Ltd and public-listed company Direct Capital Partners Ltd.

Gareth graduated from Victoria University with a PhD in 1982 before joining the Reserve Bank of New Zealand to develop its macro-economic forecasting model. He founded Infometrics with Andrew Gawith in 1983.

Melissa Moon



Melissa Moon (GradDip Teaching 1998) is a world-class runner with 21 national athletic titles and seven national cross-country titles—a feat that no other New Zealander has achieved. She has represented New Zealand in more than 20 international events and won the World Mountain Running Title in 2001 and 2003.

In 2007 she was selected to participate in the Blue Planet Run, an event involving 20 runners running 15,200 miles across 16 countries to raise awareness of the world's safe drinking water crisis.

Melissa is heavily involved in volunteer work for several charities, as well as mentoring underprivileged youth. She is a qualified physical education, health and special needs teacher. She formerly worked for Wellington High School's Learning Support Unit and volunteers for Meals on Wheels, Project K and the New Zealand Muscular Dystrophy Association. She is an outreach worker at the Compassion Centre and is a special Ambassador for Sport and Recreation New Zealand. Melissa is also a sought-after motivational speaker.

Raewyn Dalziel



Raewyn Dalziel (BA 1965, BA (Hons) 1966, PhD 1970) is a notable New Zealand historian who has served the Auckland and national scholarly community with distinction in her role as the Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Academic) at the University of Auckland.

She has made a major contribution to the teaching of history and historical research, has published extensively on New Zealand politics and social history and has worked across the spectrum of New Zealand history.

As well as a highly distinctive service to academic administration she has chaired the Advisory Committee of the Historical Branch of the Department of Internal Affairs and the New Zealand History Research Trust.

As member of the National Archives Advisory Committee, she worked on a number of government working parties on tertiary education. She served a term as president of the New Zealand Historical Association and on the Humanities Panel of the Marsden Fund.

In 2006, she chaired the Humanities and Law Panel for the Performance Based Research Fund and in 2001 represented the tertiary education sector on the Prime Ministerial delegation to Korea. Raewyn was made an Officer of the New Zealand Order of Merit in 2004.

Anne Meade



Anne Meade (BA 1967, BA (Hons) 1973, PhD 1979) is a visionary leader in early childhood education with roles spanning teacher, researcher, lecturer and policy adviser.

She was the convenor of two major ministerial working groups on early childhood care and education which have formed the basis of two significant reform programmes for early childhood education in New Zealand.

Anne was the Director of the New Zealand Council for Educational Research for six years, Chair of the Special Education Board and member of the Council governing Wellington College of Education.

She is currently the director of Anne Meade Associates, an educational consultancy specialising in educational research, advice and writing with a focus on early childhood education.

She was awarded a Queens Service Order in 1991 and made Companion of the New Zealand Order of Merit in 2008.

Peter Boshier



Judge Peter Boshier (LLB (Hons) 1975) was nominated in 2006 by the *New Zealand Listener* as being in the top 50 outstanding New Zealanders.

As the Principal Family Court Judge of New Zealand, he has a longstanding interest in Pacific youth justice and in child offenders. He is committed to working with the Government to continue to reform the Family Court so its processes provide efficient and economic access to justice.

He joined Wellington firm Macalister Mazengarb Parkin & Rose as a law clerk in 1973 and became a partner 1979. He was a council member of the Wellington District Law Society in 1987 and appointed as a District Court Judge to Auckland in 1988. In 1993, he completed a Committee Report

reviewing the Family Court. A number of changes to the practice were suggested and have been implemented since.



Celebrating 75 years of Weir House

More than 200 former Weir House residents gathered together in Wellington during November for a weekend of celebrations to mark the 75th anniversary of the Hall of Residence.

As well as a science and art tour on the Kelburn Campus, the weekend included a lively debate on the topic 'My real education took place at Weir'. The highlight of the reunion was the International dinner at Te Papa on Saturday night. The theme recognised a more recent tradition where the international residents of Weir House take control of the kitchen and share their favourite dishes with their New Zealand friends. The evening at Te Papa included international cuisine and performances by Cook Island group Atiu Mapu and a dragon dance troupe from the Wellington Chinese Cultural Centre. The weekend concluded with a relaxing family day on Sunday.

Professor Tim Beaglehole, Victoria University Chancellor and former Weir House warden, says the weekend was a great success.

"It was wonderful to see such a good representation of former residents from across the decades. It was a perfect opportunity to meet old friends."

Since opening its doors in 1933, the popular Hall of Residence has been a Victoria University and Wellington icon. Today it is home to 315 students, some of Victoria's brightest young scholars who go on to be successful alumni in Wellington, New Zealand and around the world.

Supporting young poets



When Sonya Clark visits her grandparents she passes the farm of a lady with a fearsome reputation, one that inspired her to pen the award-winning poem 'Mrs. Potts'.

Sonya, a 16-year-old student at Karamu High in Hastings, won best lyric poem in the New Zealand Post National Schools Poetry Awards run by Victoria's International Institute of Modern Letters.

Along with \$500 prize money for herself and \$500 for her school's library, Sonya's poem was turned into a song by musician Samuel Flynn Scott of The Phoenix Foundation. The recording is available at www.loop.co.nz and a music video is available on YouTube.

Epsom Girls Grammar student Manon Revuelta was named the overall winner for her poem 'Flotsam and Jetsam', receiving \$500 and a laptop.

The winners were selected from a shortlist of six finalists in each category. Also recognised was Kerrin Davidson from St Andrews College, Christchurch, who won a trip to the 2009 Sydney Writers' Festival as the creative writing teacher of the year, an award based on student nominations.

The Victoria University Foundation raised sponsorship from New Zealand Post for this competition and an associated writing festival.

New Zealand Post has been a generous supporter of a number of projects through the Foundation over the years, including the New Zealand Post Writers' DVD project, the Chair of Malay Studies, the Don Trow Visiting Fellowships in Accounting Research, the Institute for the Study of Competition and Regulation and a programme for business journalists.

www.victoria.ac.nz/modernletters/activities/schools-festival/schools-festival.aspx

Mrs. Potts—Winner, Best Lyric Poem By Sonya Clark, Karamu High School, Hastings

I
We spied on her
naked,
washing in the Waiau:
collecting smooth river stones,
bum to the sky.

II
Large
breasts bursting
out of her apron,
like warm apples spilt
from a strudel.

III
The gangs let their pig dogs
loose on her sheep.
The heart stained wool
clung to the grass.
Later I heard her gun.

IV
Then saw the dogs swinging
upside down
by their feet.
Tied to the barbed wire fence
by the main road:

heads brushing the grass
but not touching.

V
Cigarettes and chocolate
licked her teeth.

Left on old lips,
were crooked
bite marks
in the skin.

Helping hand for historical study

A keen interest in researching her genealogy prompted Brenda Joyce to establish a history scholarship in her father's name.

Jack Pearce (1911–1994) wanted to study at university but was not encouraged to by his parents. University education was rare in those days and Brenda says Jack's father, her grandfather, probably assumed that as he had been successful in life without further study his son could do the same.

After retiring from a career as bank manager, Jack was delighted to be able to complete an extra-mural degree in economics and banking at the University of Sussex in England.

Like her father, Brenda too enjoys research and study—particularly in the areas of history and genealogy. It is in the former subject that Brenda decided to establish the Jack Pearce Scholarship through the Victoria University Foundation.

Brenda made the decision after reading a book by the late New Zealand historian and author Michael King. In it he wrote of how much he appreciated receiving a grant that enabled him to concentrate solely on research and writing for a year.

Although Brenda has had no previous personal connection with Victoria University, other than living in Wellington, she wants to be able to meet future scholarship winners and visit staff in the history programme.

The Jack Pearce Scholarship will be offered annually to full-time Master's or PhD students researching New Zealand or English history. The first applications are due this year and Brenda says she is looking forward to reading the submissions.

"Researching genealogy and history makes people and places come alive. You can't discover everything there is to know and you can't ever say you've finished."

Brenda doesn't plan to do further study herself as she prefers directing her own research and writing. She has published a number of books and articles on her family's history including, *The Pearce Papers: A story of an ordinary English family through four centuries*.

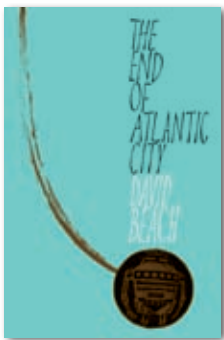
Off the Press

The end of Atlantic City and *Some Other Country: New Zealand's Best Short Stories* 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 www.victoria.ac.nz/vup

The end of Atlantic City

By David Beach



To write one collection of prose chopped wittily into sonnets is unusual in the 21st century, but to follow it up with a second book of such a similar shape is rather bold.

Unusual and bold are both apt descriptions of David Beach's second collection, which, with a consistently wry, omniscient point of view, ranges from the battlefields of the *Iliad* to the urban dramas of Te Aro, Wellington. Whether describing Troy ("A disgusting state of harmony reigned/ at the Greek camp") or students dragging a couch outside a university hostel to sun themselves, Beach's agile voice and anthropologist's eye for detail manage to bring the scene to life with a glib, concise vividness.

The syntax and diction required to maintain the sonnet form pushes these poems into a more interesting, fast-paced shape than, perhaps, if they were written in free verse. Rereading is often necessary to appreciate the humour and precision of Beach's storytelling and observations.

Those familiar with Te Aro (Glover Park, Hell Pizza, Taranaki Street and the Bypass are all immortalised here) or the *Iliad* (albeit a unique retelling) will possibly get more immediate pleasure from this collection. However, it is less the subject matter than Beach's distinctive voice that will appeal to readers.

David Beach's first collection of prose sonnets, *Abandoned Novel*, won the \$65,000 Prize in Modern Letters for emerging writers. He is now a retired mail sorter.

Some Other Country: New Zealand's Best Short Stories

Edited by Marion McLeod and Bill Manhire



Since 1984, *Some Other Country* has grown and changed, marking the progress of New Zealand's best short fiction. Now in its fourth edition, it has five new stories by Charlotte Grimshaw, Damien Wilkins, Alice Tawhai, Tracey Slaughter and Jo Randerson.

Ordered chronologically, this comprehensive collection doesn't just display the shifting style of New Zealanders' writing—from Katherine Mansfield's Bloomsbury influences in 'At the Bay' to the brusque lyricism of Keri Hulme's 'Hooks and Feelers' to the intensely intimate voice of Tracey Slaughter's 'Consent'—but the way in which the country's landscape and concerns have changed, or, in some cases more interestingly, remained the same. Family, beaches, friendship, drinking and urban settings echo throughout this time capsule of a book, but never seem dull due to the range and skill of the voices explaining them.

While a number of these stories are classics, there are others, such as John A. Lee's 'Man's Inhumanity To Man', written in 1936 about an alcoholic vagabond tricking publicans out of their beer, which are exciting surprises. It's the combination of variety and quality that makes this an important anthology and an enduring recommended text for many of New Zealand's university English courses.

Marion McLeod, a widely respected reviewer of contemporary fiction, was the co-editor of the Oxford University Press anthology of New Zealand women's fiction, *Women's Work*.

Bill Manhire is one of New Zealand's finest practising poets. He directs Victoria University's well-known creative writing programme at the International Institute of Modern Letters.



Amy Brown reviews books for *The Lumière Reader* and the *New Zealand 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 2008 by Victoria University Press.



Online guide to the 1800s

The New Zealand Electronic Text Centre has made a digital version of New Zealand's first encyclopaedia. *The Cyclopaedia of New Zealand, Volume One: Wellington Provincial District*, which weighs 5.1 kilograms in hard copy, was produced in 1897. The online resource contains a wealth of information on New Zealand's social history, including a collection of biographical portraits, a town and country gazetteer and surveys of local trades and businesses. You had to pay to get yourself into the encyclopaedia unless you were a particularly prominent person, as the volumes were a money-making venture. Also available now is *Volume Six: Taranaki, Hawkes Bay and Wellington*.

www.nzetc.org/tm/scholarly/tei-corpus-cyclopaedia.html

Young connections

The Youth Connectedness Project, jointly run by Victoria's Roy McKenzie Centre for Family Studies and the New Zealand Council for Educational Research, is now in its sixth and final year.

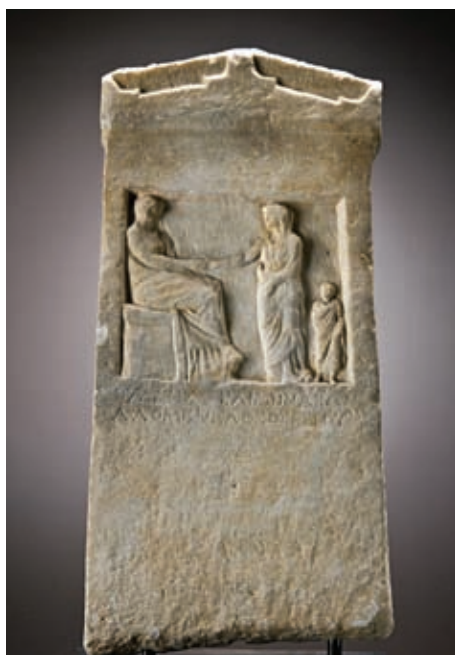
The research project has involved more than 2,000 young people, 1,500 families and 100 North Island schools. Its focus is surveying young people's 'connectedness' with the different parts of their lives—family, friends, school and the community.

Project Director Paul Jose says the essential idea behind the project has been confirmed. "Youth who are well connected to their family, school, peers and community are



likely to report greater wellbeing one year later. If society works hard to enhance connectedness in youth, we are likely to have happier young people."

www.victoria.ac.nz/youthconnectedness



Ancient experiences

This ancient Greek gravestone is the newest addition to Victoria's classics museum. The marble sculpture can be traced back to the first century BCE in Asia Minor. Museum co-ordinator Dr Judy Deuling says the addition of the gravestone is a "wonderful luxury", providing visitors with an opportunity to see and experience ancient remains. The piece shows the deceased seated, and the inscription reads 'Tateis and Menakon farewell Laomenea, the wife of Theokritos'. Interestingly, the boy wears a Roman toga, possibly reflecting the influence of Rome at this time. The museum, which has been at Victoria for about 50 years, is regularly visited by secondary school students and teachers, and is a focal point for prospective university students. The public are also welcome to visit.

Judy.deuling@vuw.ac.nz
+64-4-463 6783

A recreational gem

The new Taputeranga Marine Reserve will ensure the future of some of New Zealand's most iconic marine species—including rock lobster, paua and kina.

Victoria University marine biologist Dr Jonathan Gardner says these species will thrive in the reserve that has, until now, been heavily fished.

"Not only is this a unique zone of important biodiversity, it's right on the doorstep of the capital city. It's an incredible resource for more than 450,000 people in the greater Wellington region, many of whom already get so much out of this charismatic and dynamic stretch of coastline."

Jonathan is the chief scientific adviser to the Marine Reserve Coalition who, in 1995, began work on an application for the reserve.

www.victoria.ac.nz/cmeer



Island Bay, Wellington



'Spin: versor, versari' by Vivian Lynn, installed at the Adam Art Gallery

I, Here, Now

Wellington's Vivian Lynn is perhaps best known as the artist who notoriously used human hair in a number of large-scale installations dating from the early 1980s.

Less well known is the fact that she's used a range of media—including sculpture, printmaking and collage—to develop a complex body of work that asks questions about the nature of being, especially if one is a woman.

I, HERE, NOW: Vivian Lynn at the Adam Art Gallery will exhibit a selection of works from Vivian's 40-year career, canvassing the diverse range of media she has used and drawing out her underlying themes.

Exhibition curator and Adam Art Gallery Director Christina Barton says Vivian's work deserves better recognition, both for its marvellous technical virtuosity and its critical examination of society.

"She is an artist for our times: in her refusal to develop a signature style, in her practical reiteration of the notion that forms and materials can, in themselves, engender meanings, and in her continual attempts to develop new modes of socially engaged practice."

Assistant curator Laura Preston says it's challenging to survey 40 years of work. "We wanted to address Vivian's diverse output and to prove her work's contemporary resonance. We built the exhibition around a statement that Vivian put up on her studio wall in the early 1960s: 'I, Here, Now'. Vivian continues to use this statement as a way to approach her work, life and relationship to society."

The exhibition, which runs until 15 March 2009, will be accompanied by an illustrated catalogue that documents Vivian's work and features fresh interpretations of her practice.

The Adam Art Gallery is a purpose-built public gallery based at the University's Kelburn Campus. Details of upcoming exhibitions can be read at

www.victoria.ac.nz/adamartgallery



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.