

THE UNIVERSITY OF AUCKLAND ALUMNI MAGAZINE | SPRING 2017

Ingenio



FROM COMICS TO SUPER HEROES

ENGINEERING
THE FUTURE

40 UNDER 40
Still young, flying high



THE UNIVERSITY OF
AUCKLAND
Te Whare Wānanga o Tāmaki Makaurau
NEW ZEALAND

Ingenio

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Ingenio website

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A FORCE FOR JUSTICE

At a time when countless millions of people have been displaced by conflict, and intolerance appears to be increasing, research universities such as ours have an important role to play in promoting informed debate, encouraging diversity, breaking down prejudice, and developing citizens and future leaders who are tolerant and have broad interests in and understanding of others.

Two characteristics of universities, research-informed teaching and our role as a critic and conscience of society, are in New Zealand enshrined in legislation – something that is not common elsewhere. This means that informed analysis and debate can be – and must be – one of our key contributions to international understanding.

The “fear of the other” is being used now, as it has been in other turbulent times, to encourage people to take sides in a contest for power, control and influence. The antidote to this fear, and a powerful element in attaining peace and advancing human rights and international justice, is to understand that other groups of humans are much like us, and that many of the problems and challenges facing us are shared. This is the kind of understanding that a university like ours can and

does create. Our high proportion of international students and staff, with over 120 nations represented on campus, and the experience of diversity that we consequently offer our community, contribute to that understanding. So too, our active membership of international consortia such as the Worldwide Universities Network and the Association of Pacific Rim Universities, and our encouragement of transnational exchanges and research collaborations, many of which address the most challenging global problems of our time, mean we are well positioned to promote international understanding and tolerance.

In this issue of *Ingenio*, two of our alumni profiles feature people who are actively involved in promoting peace: one is Grant Bayldon, the New Zealand director of Amnesty International; the other is Esther Harrop, a senior New Zealand Defence Force officer who has been serving with the peace-keeping forces in South Sudan.

Also appearing in this issue is an opinion piece by a staff member, Dr Ritesh Shah from the Faculty of Education and Social Work, whose research is concerned with the part played by education in preventing (or exacerbating) conflict or restoring peace.

Recently the University has launched

a new Master of Conflict and Terrorism degree led by Dr Chris Wilson from Politics and International Relations. The programme is very interdisciplinary, with courses from Politics, Criminology, History and Media Studies, among other disciplines. Still in its first year, it is receiving substantial student interest, particularly from overseas.

As a nation distant from the world’s major centres, New Zealand has a long tradition of being outward-facing. We travel frequently, a high proportion of us were born overseas, and we have strong ties all over the world through our diverse population and our trading links with Europe, Asia, the Pacific, the Americas and the Middle East. As New Zealand’s highest-ranked university, we are well-placed to foster acceptance and tolerance of other ways of life and to help work towards a better and fairer world, contributing to solutions for global problems and reducing the inequalities that often lie at the heart of conflict.

STUART MCCUTCHEON
Vice-Chancellor
The University of Auckland



ETHICS OF PEST CONTROL

Philosopher Dr Emily Parke from the Faculty of Arts is one of two University of Auckland academics who will be convening the first bioethics panel in New Zealand dealing with the ethical and social challenges involved in eradicating invasive predators.

The other is biologist and statistician, Dr James Russell.

The two are co-leading the panel of 11 people, which includes experts in genetics, law, indigenous world views and ecology, as well as a hunter and a psychologist.

The panel will advise on social and ethical issues relating to the Biological Heritage National Science Challenge-funded project “High tech solutions to invasive mammal pest control”.

This is part of a larger endeavour to make New Zealand free of rats, stoats, and possums by 2050.

Emily says the eradication project is driven by the search for new technologies, some of which might be controversial, such as investigating potential toxins that are specific to particular species, or using genetic editing techniques to drive pest populations extinct.

“So we need to stop and reflect on the possible social dimensions of these,” she says.

“It’s impossible to talk about conservation issues without bringing values in,” she adds. “For example how do we define an invasive or pest species in the first place? And why might we prioritise one species over another?”

In an unusual teaching collaboration bringing together science and the arts, Emily and James are co-teaching a postgraduate course in the School of Biological Sciences dealing with ethical issues in biology

HELPING RESEARCH IN SPINAL CORD INJURY

For 28 years Professor Louise Nicholson (now professor emeritus) has given the gift of her passion and expertise to her colleagues, her students and the wider community.

In the process she has earned much respect and appreciation in New Zealand and overseas.

On her retirement earlier this year, Louise, an internationally respected neurologist, made the decision, with her husband Jon, to donate \$1 million to the University of Auckland.

This, the largest single gift ever presented to the University by a staff member, will help enable work in her field to continue by providing funding for a PhD student working on spinal cord injury and repair at the Spinal Cord Injury Research Facility, which she helped to found.

During her time at the University

Louise was involved not only in teaching, research and administrative roles but also with the running of the Brain Bee Challenge, which encourages secondary students to develop an interest in the brain and neuroscience, and has attracted many of these young people into scientific careers.

Her family has many rich connections with the University, beginning with the enrolment of her mother in 1938 at what was then Auckland College of the University of New Zealand and continuing through four generations to the recent graduation of her eldest grandson, Taylor.

Photo: Louise leads the Graduation parade in autumn this year, just before her retirement.



DOCUMENTING 50 YEARS OF HISTORY

In March 1968, the first cohort of 60 medical students was enrolled in the new Auckland School of Medicine.

Since that time, the school has expanded to five times its original size, now enrolling nearly 300 new students annually into what has become the Faculty of Medical and Health Sciences, which trains undergraduate and postgraduate students in a wide range of health sciences and delivers professional courses in medicine, nursing, pharmacy,

dietetics, optometry, and imaging.

In preparation for the 50th anniversary, students from the History Department, led by Professor Linda Bryder, are interviewing key people who have been important in its development. These interviews and the information obtained from them will be used to create a publicly accessible website as a permanent record of the achievements and challenges of the last 50 years.

For information about activities planned for the anniversary year, see “Alumni network”, page 35.

Photo: In the beginning: The Medical School was officially opened by Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II.



NIGHT OF THE DAMES



From left: Dame Jenny Shipley, Dame Jocelyn Fish, Margaret Fish

This was a first for the University and quite possibly a record event for New Zealand: a gathering of 20 Kiwi Dames to celebrate the achievements of the Liggins Institute.

The glittering event, attended by 300 distinguished guests, was held to celebrate the research of the institute, which aims to give all babies a healthy start.

Each Dame hosted a table of ten in the pavilion at Old Government House, where dinner guests had the chance to hear about the institute's research both from senior academics and research participants.

Among the speakers were Sir Peter Gluckman, founding director of the Liggins Institute; Professor Frank Bloomfield, its current director; and renowned researchers Professors Jane Harding and Wayne Cutfield.

Two research participants also spoke. One was Amanda Kamani, whose children were participants in two studies led by Jane Harding, looking at whether

dextrose gel, used to treat low blood sugars in newborns, could be used as a preventative for the condition, which affects one in six newborns.

The other was Catherine Davies, who was advanced in pregnancy and was taking part in the NiPPeR study, looking at whether a special cocktail of vitamins, other nutrients and probiotics taken by pregnant women can help break the intergenerational transfer of obesity.

Dames who attended were Deidre Milne, Diane Robertson, Iritana Tawhiwhirangi, Wendy Pye, Paula Rebstock, Margaret Sparrow, Malvina Major, Jenny Shipley, Beverley Wakem, Cath Tizard, Lowell Goddard, Lesley Max, Kate Harcourt, Jocelyn Fish, Silvia Cartwright, Alison Paterson, Therese Walsh, Rosanne Meo, Susan Devoy and Rosie Horton.

Governor-General Dame Patsy Reddy was unable to attend but sent a pre-recorded video message to kick off the evening.



FAREWELL TO SIR JOHN GRAHAM

It was with sadness that the University community farewelled Sir John Graham (KNZM CBE), who died on 2 August.

Sir John, a highly-respected figure in education and sports, a former captain of the All Blacks and a long-serving headmaster of Auckland Grammar, had strong ties with the University, serving as Chancellor from 1999 to 2004 and on

the Council for six years prior to that. He was also an MA (Hons) graduate of our University, and was awarded the degree of Doctor of Literature (Honoris causa) in 2005.

John Taylor, senior advancement consultant at the University, knew Sir John over many years and describes him as “a brilliant sportsman and a fine educationist, who gave a great deal to the University, not only as Chancellor but also as a patron for the ‘Leading the way’ campaign”.

In sport he clocked up 22 tests as an All Black loose forward, including three as captain, and was elected president of the New Zealand Rugby Football Union in April 2005. He also managed the New Zealand cricket team from 1997 to 1999.

“However,” says John Taylor, “he never lost his love of sport at the grass-roots level and one of his great pleasures was to watch the University team play rugby.”

TEN BARS, ONE NIGHT

Auckland is the latest city to join a worldwide movement to transform bars into one-off lecture theatres for a night.

There were 20 talks at ten city bars on the same night: 29 August.

The event was free but required prior registration and every session sold out fast.

The organisers report that they've had great feedback. Those who went are requesting more events of the same kind, and owners or managers of the bars are keen to do it again next year – or even every week.

Among the academics taking part were microbiologist Dr Siouxsie Wiles on the quest for new medicines; Professor Tracey McIntosh on imagining a world without prisons; Dr Thomas Gregory on drones and the politics of killing; Professor Peter O'Connor, asking “Why do terrorists want to kill us?; and renowned marine scientist Professor John Montgomery, exploring the brains of sharks.

Raising the Bar originated in New York, with the idea of making education a greater part of a city's popular culture. It has since expanded to major cities around the world including San Francisco, Hong Kong, Sydney, London, Melbourne and now Auckland.

Staff who organised the event are already looking ahead to another one next year. Put it in your diary for August 2018, but don't forget you'll be needing to book in early.

This year's videos and podcasts are on www.alumni.auckland.ac.nz/rtb



Peter O'Connor speaks at the Birdcage.



AS LILBURN IS TO MUSIC

A landmark literary and cultural event took place at the Gus Fisher Gallery on 29 September: the launch of two important books, both closely associated with the University.

One was Terry Sturm's *Simply by Sailing in a New Direction*, an extensive biography of Allen Curnow. The other was Curnow's *Collected Poems*, co-edited by Terry Sturm and Elizabeth Caffin.

Allen Curnow lectured in English at the University from 1951 to 1976, while Emeritus Professor Terry Sturm also taught in the English Department from 1980 to 2006. Elizabeth Caffin is a former managing editor of AUP.

After Curnow died in 2001 Terry Sturm agreed to write a literary biography, and produce a comprehensive

edition of his poems. He received a Marsden Grant and a James Cook Fellowship for this, but in 2009 he died, leaving an exhaustively-researched draft of 460,000 words. His wife Linda Cassells then worked back through the draft on the basis of earlier discussions with her husband. And now the two books have been published by AUP.

"Allen Curnow was central to the mid-20th century search for what was distinct and special about New Zealand's place and history," said Associate Professor Alex Calder. "He is to poetry as McCahon is to art, as Lilburn is to music."

CAMPAIGN SUCCESSES

More than 4,000 donors have so far contributed to the University's Campaign For All Our Futures and 70,000 of our alumni are now actively engaged with the University.

The target set at the public launch in September 2016 was \$300 million. "Thanks to our generous donors, the total is now an extraordinary \$220 million," says Alumni Relations and Development Director Mark Bentley. "This includes gifts from hundreds of alumni and staff who have chipped in for student scholarships and research projects as well as funding for major programmes such as cancer research and entrepreneurship initiatives. Each and every gift makes a difference." Visit www.giving.auckland.ac.nz/campaign



EXTENDING THE POETIC PAGE AND STAGE

University alumna and associate professor, Dr Selina Tusitala Marsh, has been declared New Zealand's Poet Laureate for 2017-19.

The announcement was made at the University's Fale Pasifika at the launch of her latest volume of poetry, *Tightrope*, on Friday 25 August: World Poetry Day.

This honour recognises outstanding contributions to New Zealand poetry. Each Laureate is awarded \$80,000 over two years by the National Library of New Zealand Te Puna Mātauranga o Aotearoa to create new work and promote poetry throughout the country.

They also receive a carved tokotoko or orator's stick, symbolising their authority and status.

Said Selina: "It's a wonderful opportunity to extend the poetic page and stage to this nation's multi-coloured, multi-hued voices. Samoans have the to'oto'o, the orator's staff, a symbol of the authority to speak on behalf of a group. To be recognised in this way is breath-taking. To occupy the role is breath-giving; I can't wait to take the Laureate's tokotoko to the people and make poetry."

Of Samoan, Tuvaluan, English, Scottish and French descent, Selina was the first Pacific Islander to graduate with a PhD in English from the University of Auckland.

To read more about Selina, see the cover story of the Autumn 2009 issue of *Ingenio* (www.ingenio-magazine.com).

Photo: Selina receives the news of her award at the launch of Tightrope at the Fale Pasifika.



GONE TO PEGASUS

Former *Ingenio* editor and University alumna Tess Redgrave has written a novel which will be published by Mākarō Press in March 2018.

Gone to Pegasus was developed on the University's 2013 Creative Writing Course, with help from mentor Professor of English Michele Leggott. It is set mainly in Dunedin and Central Otago in 1892-93 and covers a pivotal time in New Zealand history. In particular it shines a light on Victorian concepts of madness and Dr Truby King's experiments at Seacliff Lunatic Asylum, as well as intersecting with and highlighting New Zealand women's struggle for the right to vote.

See more at www.makaropress.co.nz www.tessredgravewriter.com

ALUMNI POEM

Poems by an alumna

Alumna Elizabeth Smither is a poet, novelist and short story writer who was the 2002 Te Mata Poet Laureate.

She was made a Member of the New Zealand Order of Merit and received an honorary DLitt from the University of Auckland for her contributions to literature.

She was awarded the 2008 Prime Minister's Award for Literary Achievement in Poetry and the 2014 Janet Frame Memorial Award for Literature as well as the 2016 Sarah Broom Poetry Prize.

The poem we are featuring was chosen not only for its quality and wide appeal but also to celebrate the central figure on the beautiful cover of her latest volume. *Night Horse*, published in 2017 by Auckland University Press, is designed by Katrina Duncan, with cover design by Keely O'Shannessy.

The poems are reproduced by kind permission of the publisher and the author.

Night horse

In the field by the driveway
as I turn the car a horse
Is stepping in the moonlight.

Its canvas coat shines, incandescent.
Around its eyes a mask
a Sienese horse might wear.

No banners stir the air, but mystery
in the way it is stepping
as if no human should see

the night horse going about its business.
The soft grass bowing to the silent hooves
the head alert, tending where

the moonlight glows and communes
in descending swoops that fall
through the air like ribbons

as the horse moves in a trance
so compelling, so other-worldly
it doesn't see the car lights.



Emeritus Professor C.K. Stead, another of our alumni, says: "Elizabeth Smither's world is the people she knows, the places she visits, the animals she encounters. As they appear in her work they take on mysterious, sometimes surreal, qualities. Her imaginative world is charming and enchanted, peculiar, whimsical and often very funny."

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HOUSE OF TRAVEL

CONFESSIONS OF A COMIC BOOK GEEK

LA-based alumnus Shane Thompson talks to Judy Wilford on a recent visit to his home town.

If Shane Thompson hadn't been a kid who loved comics, he wouldn't have been doing what he's doing now.

If he hadn't had a passion for collecting *Star Wars* figures and smurfs, he wouldn't have been nearly as good at what he does.

And the job couldn't even have been his childhood dream, since nothing like it existed then. Shane, an alumnus of Auckland (BA 1995) is based in Los Angeles as vice-president of Integrated Marketing for Warner Bros. Pictures – which means he works across all the marketing departments including the team responsible for all the ancillary products that help support the movie they are working on, but are in a separate revenue stream from the movie itself. These include the sound track, video

games, mobile games, DVDs, blu-ray and direct digital marketing through TV. They also include consumer products such as the toys, collectibles, action figures and t-shirts he used to collect.

“Interestingly,” says Shane, “that’s where a lot of the money is made. We might spend \$150 million to make the movie, plus tens of millions more to market it.

“But when you have to split profits with the movie theatre chains and other participants – that means you have to sell \$500 million plus worth of tickets to make it break even. This means a lot of the profit comes from the ancillary revenue down the line.

“We have to ask ourselves the questions: Are we going to make \$50 million from the products? \$10 million from the

sound tracks? \$40 million from home entertainment? These are all factored in when they greenlight the movie.”

Shane’s first step towards this kind of work came in the year 2000, just a few years after his graduation from Auckland and a few months into his OE in London.

A former colleague from New Zealand was working in a licensing agency that had just signed up on a new brand from Japan called Pokemon.

“It was new, it was big in Japan,” says Shane, “but it hadn’t yet gone offshore. An American investor had just bought the rights for the rest of the world and suddenly had this property that was exploding and they had no idea how big it was going to get.

“My former colleague said why didn’t I apply for the job. So I went in and met the head of creative. I didn’t have the background or experience but I think it was my passion and interest in learning about it that got my foot through the door. They only offered me three days a week”, says Shane wryly. “They weren’t sure how long this Pokemon craze was going to last.

“I was earning £16,000 a year, could barely afford to rent a room but I knew it was something I was excited about.”

Over the next few months Shane learned as much as he could – before receiving another call from his helpful former colleague. This time the job was with the company working on the *Spider-Man* movie. “Again it was being a comic book geek that got me the job,” says Shane. “A little passion and enthusiasm goes such a long way.”



Next came an unexpected offer of work from Warner Bros. on *Batman Begins*, which was filming in London and being directed by Christopher Nolan, starring Christian Bale and Liam Neeson.

“It was one of those interesting crossroads in your life. They wanted someone while they were filming, they said it would last nine months and they couldn’t promise beyond that.” In other words it was another risk, but one that paid off well.

“I was a production liaison, working on set every day, helping gather information for the companies developing all of the products and video games. They needed to know what the characters looked like, what kind of shoes they wore, what their clothes were made of. I would supply dimensions, samples, swathes of cloth. You have to develop relationships with the film director, the actors, the art and costume designers. You’re embedded in the production.

“In this first movie I think the filmmakers and studio saw that I really wanted it to succeed. Luckily that has led

“I was that kid glued to the TV who would try to spin around like Wonder Woman.”

to me working on every movie of those filmmakers since.”

These have included the later Batman films (*The Dark Knight*, *The Dark Knight Rises*), plus sci-fi dramas, *Interstellar* and *Inception*, the recently released World War Two drama *Dunkirk* for Nolan – as well as *Batman v Superman* and *Wonder Woman* for producer Charles Roven.

When I talked to Shane in Auckland, filming had just started on *Aquaman* on the Gold Coast in Australia. He’d taken a flying trip across the Tasman but was due back next day to plan the *Aquaman* range of toys in liaison with the movie’s production designer, and global toy-making company Mattel.

“We have to think, are we doing 20 or 30 products? What are they going to be? Will there be 12 action figures, eight vehicles, three play sets? They want to know what little children would want to play with, how they would interact with them.

“And that’s what you want – to have



people fully involved with the movie. They don't just want to watch it on the big screen. They want to interact with it, take it home and play with it. You're building life-long fans."

Next steps are to have the models built, returned to the film-makers for approval, painted in the US then sent on to China for mass production and distribution, carefully-timed to place them on the shelves just eight weeks before the movie opens.

"That's when it all comes together," says Shane. "Warner Bros. will be selling the movie. You'll see it on the TV, the buses, the billboards; the kids'll be buying the toys.

"It all comes together in a crescendo by the time the movie starts. And I'll see people wearing our t-shirts and think 'wow, that's great. They're helping promote the movie and they're even paying to do it.'"

Shane admits to being "a big kid at heart," who would have been a great consumer of the products.

"I'm lucky to have held onto that part of my childhood because I still look back on it fondly. Here in New Zealand my mum still has my comic book collections in boxes.

"For years, and years she used to ask 'When can I get rid of those boxes of comic books?' – that I've been collecting probably since I was eight.

"But now I don't think I'd ever be able to let them go. If I hadn't been a child who always had his nose in a comic book, I wouldn't have this understanding of the worlds that were created in those books. Even within my company now I think one of the reasons I've been successful is that I'm one of those people who are seen as experts, one that the others can turn to and ask, 'Would that have happened in the comics?' And I can say – 'yeah'.

"There's a lot to be said for finding a way to combine your career with your childhood passions and I think it's such an amazing place to get to in your life.

"I'd do this for much less money." He

sits back for a minute. "But I'm also glad they're paying me what they do," he adds with a warm smile.

I asked Shane about his most exciting moments.

"One of them is going on right now," he says, "because I worked on *Wonder Woman*, which seems to be having a cultural zeitgeist moment, and deservedly so. It's a wonderful movie, the highest grossing film by a female director, and the first movie with a lead female superhero that's doing so well.

"Watching the series in the 70s, I was

Wonder Woman actress, Gal Gadot. (Though a personal highlight for Shane was meeting Linda Carter, the original *Wonder Woman* from the 70s series).

But there was a disappointment, as Shane explains. "The programme wasn't so well received within the UN as we had hoped. When the announcement was made a group of women within the UN protested that *Wonder Woman* was not a good role model for women and girls: she was a fictional character who wore skimpy clothing and girls shouldn't have to aspire to be a particular body type. This

was frustrating because I don't think people fully understood that this character had been around for 75 years and stood for so many great things to so many people and they had reduced her to one physical aspect.

"But many women were also supportive. They were saying: 'Why can't we be smart and strong and still be beautiful and feminine?'"

This job that he loves doesn't come without stresses, Shane admits.

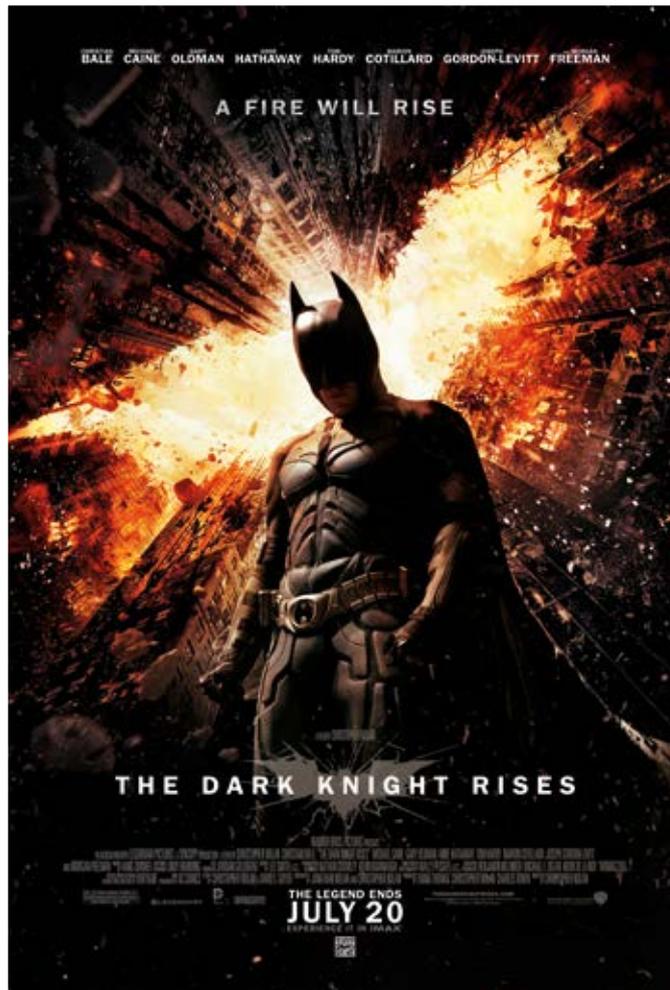
"You're working in LA, with top directors, top talent, sometimes temperamental personalities. I just try to do the best job I can and not get too involved with that.

"Sometimes when we're having a bad day we look at each other and chorus together: 'But we're making dreams come true'. It's somewhat sarcastic but also somewhat real.

"Or someone will ask me 'How are y' doing today?'"

and I answer 'Livin' the dream'. And once again it's partly ironic – but then, it's also true."

Shane was the first in his family to go to University; he has now generously funded a scholarship to give others the same chance.



that kid glued to the TV who would try to spin around like *Wonder Woman* did to get into her costume. Linda Carter was my idol."

The value of "*Wonder Woman*" as a role model was affirmed by her selection last year as "honorary ambassador" to the United Nations for the empowerment of women and girls.

Shane was involved in promoting the film in the context of that programme, a highlight of which was the speech made on the day of the presentation by *Wonder*

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AMNESTY IN ACTION

Alumnus Grant Bayldon (BA/BCom 1998) speaks to Judy Wilford on freedom and the fight for human rights.

“It could hardly have been a more tumultuous time. From Yemen to Syria to South Sudan to Burundi we’ve seen terrorism at its ugliest, war that has descended into the moral abyss of bombing hospitals and schools and behind it all the stench of superpower politics.”

These are the words of Grant Bayldon, executive director of Amnesty International, in his powerful introduction to an opinion piece published in the *Dominion Post* in July last year on New Zealand’s obligations and achievements during its two-year term in the UN Security Council.

He continues: “The biggest cause of horror has been the rise of explosive weapons in densely-populated areas, many of them dropped by plane. An astonishing 92 percent of the victims of these attacks have been civilians. Families like yours and mine, queuing for food, walking to school, running for shelter.”

His words are clear and strong. They are also an example of one of his own obligations in the position he holds – and of the main function of Amnesty International – to campaign to change the structures and systems that keep people oppressed, using strong, truthful voices to hold governments, businesses and organisations to account.

Grant’s conclusion on New Zealand’s Security Council performance, looking back from now, was, on balance, favourable: “The NZ Government did good work on practical steps to improve civilian protection. It also helped progress the move towards getting rid of the veto [the power given to each of the five permanent Security Council members to veto any UN resolution]. Now there’s a new initiative led by the French of voluntary veto restraint. And at least the UN is talking about it now.”

Amnesty International is not a think-tank, says Grant, and it doesn’t establish



development projects or give aid. Its work is based on the International Declaration of Human Rights, and its purpose is to create a chorus of voices to make a difference, with a focus on really tangible change that will affect individual people’s lives.

“One of my roles is to keep us focused on those campaigns where we can achieve wins,” says Grant.

And one of the recent wins has been on the “Double the quota” campaign, designed to persuade the New Zealand Government to lift the quota of refugees (unchanged for 30 years) from 750 to 1,500 – at a time when more people are being forced to flee from their homes than at any other time since World War II.

Amnesty is glad to have the support of other organisations such as AVAAZ (a US-based group that campaigns on issues of conservation and human rights). “What we’re trying to do, especially with government, is demonstrate that people really care about what we’re attempting to change. The more voices we have the better. And in this case, some quite unlikely allies came out: we were supported by celebrities and businesses, plus every political party except the government – including New Zealand First. It’s very powerful when you get voices from places you wouldn’t expect.”

Though the numbers weren’t doubled, they did go up to 1,000, which still gives reason to celebrate. “That’s 250 extra people each year who can restart their lives and get to safety. That’s not a small thing. And we haven’t finished yet,” he adds with a smile.

Another current issue close to home is

the abuse of asylum seekers and refugees in offshore detention by the Australian government.

“We definitely need to hear much more from the New Zealand government on this issue,” he says.

From Grant’s own life there’s at least one lesson to learn: if you want to have a mid-life crisis, best do it early.

At age 33 and at a high point in a successful career – as CEO of a Christchurch-based national law firm with a long history and a proud reputation – Grant was in a department store buying carpet for the lifestyle block he and his wife had recently bought, when he was suddenly struck by a compelling realisation: “This is not the life I intended to lead. What am I doing here? How did this happen?”

Not that it hadn’t been a great life so far, but he wanted something different, “something more” – something in tune with the conviction he’d had, even as a schoolboy at Auckland Grammar, that success was about much more than having a comfortable professional career.

With immediate, warm encouragement from his wife, Helen, he started exploring a whole new set of options which led him first into a fundraising role with Tearfund, an international development organisation. This meant relocating to Auckland – “at a third the pay and with houses at twice the price,” Grant says ruefully – but with an unrepentant smile. He now cycles to work and lives “the good life” in Mt Roskill, with his wife, four children, bees, chickens and a dog.

Next step was into marketing at Oxfam, where he later became deputy

director (and director of operations) before being invited to take his present position, which he describes as his “dream job. Amnesty gives the ultimate environment for working on systems and structures and creating change, because that’s what it’s all about.

“It was also a chance to lead an organisation that has incredible international respect and a wealth of global knowledge and experience. We’re present in 70 countries and work in about 150. The name, Amnesty International, opens doors with governments, media and decision-makers in ways that few others do in the international space.”

Though the tradition of writing floods of letters (originally mainly to help free “prisoners of conscience”) has been largely replaced by on-line communication, members are encouraged to use both: “As mail volumes go down, letters become more powerful because it’s becoming much rarer to receive them.”

I ask about the challenges, which he admits can be confronting.

“You can’t overstate the levels of abuse

“Some of them are still holding silent vigils, holding photos of their loved ones.

and damage that human beings will do to each other – and working for a human rights organisation we see every day what that means. Here in New Zealand we’re insulated, but those are the issues we’re working on.”

Grant’s most recent trip overseas was as part of a mission to Sri Lanka, where a report was being launched on the history of disappearances.

“Tens of thousands of people have disappeared over the years – perhaps hundreds of thousands – many picked up by death squads and bundled into white vans, never to be seen again. The civil war finished in 2009 and a lot has improved since then, but there is still in many places a climate of fear and intimidation by security forces, and there’s been almost no justice for what’s gone on in the past.”

Grant met with quite a few groups of families, mainly mothers.

“Some of them are still holding silent vigils, holding photos of their loved ones, holding onto hopes that they are still alive, still imprisoned somewhere. Often

the women are within a few kilometres of a military base: they’re seeing the people go past every day that they think are responsible.”

One of the paths for bringing the Sri Lankan Government to account has been international pressure, so Amnesty International sees its role as part of that.

“We can come in and say things it’s not safe for the local people to say,” says Grant, though he adds a hasty proviso. “We always have to take the lead from those who are living there. We need to be sure that what we do makes them safer, not less safe.”

Is it difficult to stay politically neutral when speaking out strongly on human rights abuses?

“I don’t find it a challenge because we can absolutely take sides on issues,” says Grant. “If a government has closed its borders and is turning back refugees, probably sending them back to their deaths, then we can and do take sides on that. What we can’t do is endorse any particular party or leader.

“We still get constantly criticised for being biased, but it’s quite reassuring that we get accused of bias by both sides at the same time.”

Grant, who majored in sociology for his arts degree and always had an interest in social justice, is “a big fan of a liberal arts education. There were real challenges for a 17 or 18-year-old going into courses like sociology, or even economics or political science. They made you really think about your assumptions, and question things

you’ve never questioned before about the way the world works. It was quite a defining experience for me. But I was also keen to do something that would give me a good professional start, so I did a Commerce degree as well – I guess it was a buck each way.”

Grant sees the universities and Amnesty International as closely aligned in the value they place on freedom of thought.

“In so many countries academics are persecuted, along with journalists and human rights advocates. There’s not the freedom to explore ideas in the way we take for granted in New Zealand. An example is the sweeping purges taking place now in Turkey, with thousands of journalists and university staff fired or in prison.”

Grant has good reason to be aware of this. His counterpart in Turkey, the executive director of Amnesty International, and its chairperson, are both in prison now for speaking out to protect human rights.

“In New Zealand we’re very lucky,” says Grant. “We don’t have to be brave to criticise the government. In a lot of the countries we’re working in you do absolutely have to put your life, your family, your freedom on the line.”

CAN WE IMPROVE SOCIETY THROUGH UNDERSTANDING OF INJUSTICES?



Activists and families of the disappeared from Sri Lanka stand outside the Palais de Nations in Geneva. Behind them is a sari designed by the mothers of the disappeared. Photo Amnesty International.

ENGINEERING THE FUTURE

Research at the University's Newmarket Campus gives a glimpse into a changing world. Helen Borne joined a group of Engineering alumni on a tour behind the scenes.

Places on a special tour of the state-of-the-art Engineering facility at Newmarket were snapped up within hours.

And in spite of stormy weather on the day it was almost a full turn out, including a high school student who was lucky enough to tag along with his grandfather.

From 1948 to 1969, the University's Engineering School was housed at the Ardmore Aerodrome in old World War II military barracks, and it was alumni from this era who were invited on the

tour, and were keen to see how much had changed and what was new.

Opened in 2015 and home to around 3,000 pieces of specialised equipment, Newmarket was purpose-built to foster interdisciplinary research and industry collaboration.

Our tour began with the NZ Product Accelerator, which provides the "glue" to connect more than 300 companies, many of them high-risk ventures.

It's led by the University and involves partnerships with other universities and research institutions across the country.

ROBOTS VS SHARKS

Who wouldn't prefer to send a robot into shark-infested waters instead of diving in oneself?

At Newmarket, we were introduced to a new robot project – with a robot designed to go into the ocean on missions that have up until now been undertaken by human divers.

However these dives are risky for the divers and expensive for their employers.

The robot, or remotely operated vehicle (ROV), was developed by Auckland start-up company Boxfish Research, whose tale begins with three men in a shed and someone who knew someone.

The three men are diving buddies Axel Busch, a software engineer, Craig Anderson, an electronics engineer and Ben King, a mechanical engineer, who had already worked with the Product Accelerator on a previous product, Wine Grenade.

The three began working together on a ROV device in 2014. But this moved closer to becoming a commercial venture when in July 2016, the Product Accelerator hosted an innovation day at Newmarket for Sanford, New Zealand's largest fishing company.

Product Accelerator business development manager Brian McMath invited the Boxfish team, which arrived with its 28kg ROV prototype in a carry case.

What followed was a trip to mussel farms in Coromandel and to Sanford's salmon farms at Big Glory Bay in Stewart Island, where great white sharks, unsurprisingly, create a significant safety issue for divers.

The ROV was sent down into the ocean to make inspections and carry out real-time monitoring.

Axel says the Product Accelerator provided critical connections and "kept the ball rolling" with industry while Boxfish worked on developing the ROV for demonstrations.

A year after the meeting at Newmarket, Boxfish has moved into its

first real premises, which were formerly a dive shop with a dive pool that's perfect for testing the ROV.

And next year, to prevent damage to fishing industries and the environment, New Zealand will become the first country in the world to introduce legislation aimed at inspecting ships for contamination from invasive species.

This could potentially open up a local and export market for the ROV technology.

"Everyone else is looking to New Zealand to find a way to deal with this type of legislation," Axel says.

Meanwhile back at Newmarket development continues, and a PhD project has just begun in the Department of Electrical and Computer Engineering to further develop the ROV's navigational capability.

Robots utilising expertise from the University's engineering researchers have already been used in the health sector, and more recently work has begun with the agritech industry on robots to pollinate or pick fruit.



Above: The Boxfish remotely operated vehicle (ROV). Ben King operates the ROV.



America's Cup secrets

Work in the Centre for Advanced Composite Materials (CACM), our next stop, has fed into one of our nation's proudest recent moments, the 2017 America's Cup victory.

University engineers have conducted testing for Team NZ right back to the first challenge, mounted in 1986.

In 2017, most design aspects of the America's Cup boats were standardised, with only a few, such as the foils, the rudders and the wing masts, able to be designed by individual syndicates.

"The work that we did was testing the materials that they were going to build their foils from, determining the mechanical performance properties of the carbon fibre materials," says Graeme Finch, business development manager at the centre.

And it wasn't only Team NZ that called on our researchers' expertise. The Warkworth-based Oracle team also put its materials through their paces at the Newmarket campus, perhaps surprisingly, given the secrecy and controversy that surrounds America's Cup racing.

"I believe it is a reflection of our expertise and our integrity that we were engaged with both the challenger and the defender," says Graeme.

He grew up wanting to be an inventor and looking for that elusive 'great idea'. A lightbulb moment came when he was on his OE in London.

BMW goes electric

Another high-profile client is BMW (Germany). A team at CACM, led by its director, Professor Simon Bickerton, has developed a revolutionary tool for use in manufacturing composite components for the all-electric BMW i3 and the BMW i8 plug-in hybrid.

The production process for making the carbon fibre components that are used for the door frame and boot structures of the i3 and i8 involves "resin transfer moulding technology".

In the past, a sample was cut out of the pre-form taken to a lab for testing. Results would take hours to produce, during which time hundreds more of the same product had been made, all of which could potentially be wasted – along with the sample, which was destroyed in the process of testing.

The Newmarket team has developed a "non-destructive inspection tool",

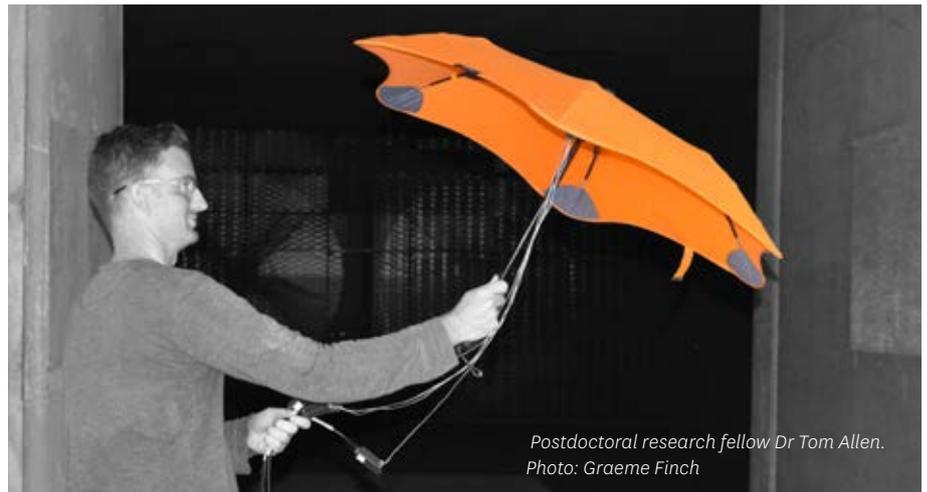
which produces the answers needed immediately and doesn't destroy the sample in the process.

This device generated a lot of interest at the factory, with BMW entering it into the German Composite Association Innovation Awards. It is now in use in BMW manufacturing plants in Munich.

"The type of material being used was up until now only seen in high-end super cars such as McLaren," says Graeme.

"This is the first time someone like BMW, who's making hundreds of thousands of cars per year, has applied this technique to mass production; they aim to make a million composite components a year."

He says the incorporation of composites into the automotive industry will increase rapidly, mirroring the changes that have already happened in the aviation industry.



Postdoctoral research fellow Dr Tom Allen.
Photo: Graeme Finch

Reinventing the umbrella

Umbrellas can be annoying. They can turn inside out in the wind, poke a passer-by in the eye, stab you in the foot and generally self-destruct at the worst possible moment.

Fortunately engineering alumnus Greig Brebner and science alumnus Scott Kington decided to do something about them.

Greig says he grew up wanting to be an inventor and looking for "that elusive great idea". A lightbulb moment came when he was on his OE in London in 1999: the umbrella was not doing its job properly and needed a rethink.

So he started on a project to create his own design while still in the UK and finalised the first product after returning to New Zealand, hence the Blunt umbrella. The first version was a stick

umbrella but the next major challenge was to produce a smaller umbrella which would perform just as well.

The company is now about to launch its latest model following testing in late 2016 and early 2017. "There's one component that's quite key to making it work, a 'clip-in strut' which can flex and operate like a hinge," says Greig.

To test it they started by putting gauges over the whole umbrella, attached to a computer which measures strain levels. They worked out the worst case scenario in the wind tunnel facility at Newmarket, simulated that into another machine, then put the umbrella through a range of tests with repetitive load to see how durable it was.

"It gave us a lot of security around that one part," says Greig.

Pushing the boundaries

The Engineering Workshop is a magical place where you can see things being created in real time.

The people on our tour party were totally engrossed; one alumnus said he could happily spend a month down there.

The workshop produces custom-made parts, mostly for research projects in the Faculties of Engineering and Science.

“We’re here to try to do different things, not produce what you can buy in industry,” says Steve Warrington, the technical services manager who heads up the workshop.

“The benefit of having a facility like this, and the people that we have here,

is that we’re used to doing prototyping and we’re used to doing something that is outside of the norm. We’re always pushing the boundaries with what we can produce.”

The workshop works on around 700 jobs a year and among the most interesting and challenging, says Steve, has been the work over a number of years on inductive power pads with Professor John Boys and Professor Grant Covic, who are internationally recognised experts in Inductive Power Transfer (IPT).

Designing and making mobile weather radars for the Department of Physics was another memorable task.

These were used in the Snowy

Mountains in Australia for research into cloud seeding, a technique for changing clouds by adding other substances to them – to produce more rain, for instance. A later model of this mobile weather radar unit is being used by Auckland Council when planning for heavy rain events.

Our last stop is to inspect a large 3D printer. Steve says smaller 3D printers will one day be in many homes, much like ink jet printers are now.

“Another five years and everyone will have them, but they’re not really a silver bullet,” he says. “They’re just another tool, and the technology is constantly changing. We have to move really quickly to stay up with it.”



This is the type of rocket launcher from which the University satellite will be launched. Photo Rocket Lab. Above is a model of the CubeSat.

What’s next?

Our tour complete (though we’ve covered just three of 22 areas) Dean of Engineering Professor Nic Smith talks about what the future might look like, with driverless cars, robots, personalised healthcare, and 3D printers that will produce goods at home as we need them.

How will engineers be part of this future? How does this change the way our students need to think?

An ambitious new student project based at Engineering, the Auckland Programme for Space Systems, partly answers these questions. The mission is to send the first-ever University of Auckland satellite into space; 16 teams

The mission is to send the first-ever University of Auckland satellite into space.

have presented ideas for a satellite mission using a miniaturised 10cm cubic satellite. Next year one “CubeSat” will be launched by New Zealand company Rocket Lab, from its base at Mahia Peninsula.

The challenge is to successfully send a satellite into orbit, but it’s also about developing future-proof ways of thinking; of being able to take in the bigger picture and put our knowledge to work in unconventional ways.

CAN WE PIONEER A NEW WORLD OF DESIGN AND INNOVATION?





CRACKING THE AUTISM CODE

Jessie Jacobsen, Young Distinguished Alumna
2010 (left), with PhD Student Whitney Whitford.
Photo Godfrey Boehnke

Dr Jessie Jacobsen and the Minds for Minds team at the University of Auckland have already made internationally significant discoveries in the area of genetic sequencing to isolate the causes of autism and neurodevelopmental disorders. Julianne Evans reports.

Life can be a lonely journey if you experience the world very differently to other people but don't know why.

This is often the fate of many on the autism spectrum and their families.

The sharp rise in conditions included in the classification of autism spectrum disorder (ASD) has led some to controversially label it an epidemic.

But what if you could get an accurate genetic diagnosis for autism? Could it lead to earlier detection, more specific and effective management and, ideally, a brighter future, particularly for those affected by ASD and their families?

Imagining that outcome, and already making significant progress towards it, is what drives neuroscientist Dr Jessie Jacobsen, School of Biological Sciences. It was her fascination with the genetics underlying human conditions, especially those affecting the brain such as Huntington's Disease – an area in which she's worked with renowned brain researchers Distinguished Professor Sir Richard Faull and Professor Russell Snell

– that led her to autism: a pioneering field rich with possibilities.

It's now estimated that one in 68 people are on this spectrum in the US, and in New Zealand it mildly or profoundly affects more than one in 100 of us. These are large numbers, even allowing for wider screening and more accurate diagnosis and the re-categorising of conditions such as Asperger's Syndrome under the umbrella.

Officially defined as having “impaired social or communication skills, repetitive behaviours or a restricted range of interests”, ASD's causes have been a matter of heated debate and “many urban myths,” says Jessie.

Some combination of environmental and genetic factors appears to be the consensus, with the latter usually different for each individual, depending on their unique gene variants.

And rather than a single “autism gene,” scientists have identified multiple genes that in particular combinations can add up to a risk factor for ASD, while admitting that many genetic factors remain mysteries to be discovered.

Acknowledged as a high flyer by senior University colleagues such as Emeritus Professor Louise Nicolson and former Dean of Science, Emeritus Professor Dick Bellamy, 35-year-old Jessie has already had a distinguished early career.

As part of her post-doctoral research,

she worked at the Center for Human Genetic Research at Massachusetts General Hospital and Harvard Medical School: “I was fortunate to be able to learn from and now collaborate with colleagues in Boston who work on particularly complex, and previously unknown types of genetic variation.”

Returning to New Zealand in 2012 on a Neurological Foundation of New Zealand repatriation fellowship, Jessie was awarded a Rutherford Discovery Fellowship to help establish a genetic research project, based at the University, for autism spectrum and other neurodevelopmental disorders.

Working collaboratively with her team, which includes Professor Russell Snell, Associate Professor Klaus Lehnert and a number of postgraduate students, Jessie's leading-edge project invites members of families affected by autism to submit blood or saliva samples. The team then examines or “sequences” the DNA.

This “sequencing” is carried out to determine the precise order of nucleotides within a DNA molecule. Jessie explains the process.

“Chromosomes are a thread-like structure of nucleic acids found in the nucleus of most living cells, and they carry genetic information in the form of genes. The genetic code consists of four letters: A, T, G and C, and each represents a chemical building block of

DNA, the molecule that encodes the information necessary to build life as we know it. Once sequenced, we compare an individual's genome (a person's complete set of genes) to a reference to see what is different, rare and biologically relevant to autism."

"The changes in DNA can be complex," says Jessie. "It's like proofreading a book; you're looking for things like missing paragraphs or letters, repeats, changes in the way the words read, an extra volume of a whole book, something that stops mid-sentence or a deletion of a whole sentence, even a single letter change – all of us have different variants that make us unique. There are so many ways that our DNA is stitched together."

The "fun time" is when the team examine what they've discovered and interpret what might be a causative variant for autism or a related neurodevelopmental disorder.

"We get in a room together and go through all the variants – people's brains have different approaches to the same information, so it's always a team effort – we continually learn from each other, and have a lot of fun in the process."

Jessie says the genetics team is keen to move some of its research findings into clinics here: "We've just received funding from 'A Better Start' national science challenge and 'Cure Kids' to help us develop a clinical panel of the most frequently-affected genes in children diagnosed with autism."

"In this way we can contribute to a future in which the clinician will have a cost-effective panel of genes that they can directly check when making a diagnosis.

"Historically, there have been many changes in the behaviourally-based diagnostic criteria, which can make consistent diagnosis a challenge. We'd like to help improve that," she says.

Jessie believes families affected by profound autism deserve all the help they can get.

"An earlier diagnosis leads to earlier and more targeted interventions, which can make a big difference."

Once they have individual DNA results, clinicians like Auckland neurologist Dr Rosamund Hill, who is an honorary academic in the School of Biological Sciences, along with clinical geneticists at the Auckland District Health Board, authenticate the results and deliver them back to the families.

There have already been some exciting breakthroughs.

"Some things we're discovering for the first time in New Zealand, which is really exciting, or we are discovering variations that have been seen only a few times in other countries – which helps provide evidence that they are indeed causal," says Jessie.

Researchers are able to deposit or publish their findings on an international database so that knowledge is shared.

She says that particularly now, as a mother of a young child herself, she can understand how parents feel about getting a diagnosis.

"I underestimated how much families appreciate just having an answer. There can be a lot of guilt and wondering: 'What could I have done to prevent it?' With the right knowledge, we'll be able say, 'It's nothing you've done, nothing that could have changed things.'"

One such family has a daughter, Sofia, who is affected by autism. Sofia's father

"It's like proofreading a book: you're looking for things like missing paragraphs or letters."

feels incredibly grateful for the work Jessie and Minds for Minds is doing.

"The involvement in the project was an opportunity for us to understand more about our daughter's condition, which had been described as global developmental delays, and as being on the autistic spectrum," he says.

He says the research resulted in findings that were far more valuable than he'd hoped for: "This research picked up a rare chromosome disorder called 2q37 deletion. A diagnosis is something we've never had and this has made it possible for us to understand so much more about why our daughter is like she is."

He says it's been a big relief and helped the family understand that issues they were aware of, such as hyper-mobility, are actually features of 2q37.

"It's enabled us to get further tests done for things specific to 2q37 such

as potential heart defects and kidney conditions; thankfully the tests have all been positive so far," he says.

There is still a long way to go in understanding the biological basis of autism, and Jessie is the first to acknowledge that a genetic approach is not always going to be the only answer, which is why the Minds for Minds research network was established.

"Children with autism seem to have an increased incidence of gut issues for example, so work is currently being done by Associate Professor Mike Taylor in Minds for Minds, investigating the microbiology of the gut and gut health.

"But if you can improve diagnosis, it's easier to go forward. Finding an answer, even for one family, is important, so we can say, 'here's the DNA variation, here's what caused it.'"

This question is being addressed by other minds all over the world: "Microbiologists, physiologists, psychologists, and importantly, our wonderful New Zealand clinicians. The only way we can tackle a complex issue like autism is if we all work together."

Jesse and her team would like to thank all the families involved in this research, as well as the Oakley Mental Health Foundation, the IHC Foundation and the Minds for Minds Charitable Trust.

More information about this project can be found at www.mindsforminds.org.nz

CAN WE UNCOVER THE MYSTERIES OF THE HUMAN BRAIN?



40 UNDER 40

This month we launch the University's inaugural 40 under 40 to recognise alumni who have made significant contributions by that age. Andrew Patterson gives a brief introduction to these talented achievers. For the full profiles of all 40 recipients see www.alumni.auckland.ac.nz/40under40

In New Zealand and around the world we have more than 185,000 alumni.

Almost 70 percent of these – 121,000 – are under the age of 40.

Recognition of achievements often comes later in life, but Alumni Relations and Development Director Mark Bentley says he felt it was important not to wait any longer to celebrate these high-achieving alumni in a range of professions and locations.

“The 40 under 40 came about because we were often hearing about the significant achievements of our alumni through a variety of avenues, including social media, and we wanted to recognise them also,” says Mark.

“We knew others in the University community would feel the same. By sharing the stories of our inaugural 40 with our other alumni we can all draw inspiration from their accomplishments.”

In a world that is increasingly dominated by high achievers under 40, including Facebook founder Mark Zuckerberg, recently elected French President Emmanuel Macron and the rise of new Labour Party leader Jacinda Ardern, it seems the mantle of leadership is being passed to a new generation.

Mark says the list was drawn from alumni the University had come across in the past few years. Making the final selection was not easy.

“It was a satisfying but challenging task that required many meetings and a lot of research and healthy debate for the selection committee to decide on the 40 who made the cut. All have had professional success, community involvement and/or University engagement.”

In responding to a series of questions, many of the nominees expressed their gratitude to lecturers and academic staff who had influenced their lives and helped steer them on their chosen paths.

Alumni wishing to submit nominations for next year's list are invited and encouraged to do so. (See address below.)

Business leaders

- *To me, university is more than just gaining knowledge; it's about understanding who you are:* Emma Dawson, global head of talent development, Dropbox
- *It's OK to take the road less travelled – in fact it will probably make you stand out from the rest:* Dane Fisher, general manager of global business and transformation brand, Infiniti Motor Company Ltd.
- *Information-sharing across different businesses is key:* Dave Larsen, chief executive, Rayglass Boats
- *The world is inherently complicated. Simple ideas enter the brain quicker and stay there longer:* Jaimes Leggett, group CEO - M&C Saatchi
- *Success is about how you think, how you make decisions and most importantly how you lead:* Caroline Rawlinson, CFO, TradeMe



ALEX FALA

Being required to listen to motivational tapes at an early age while travelling on family road trips might be considered a somewhat extreme form of cultivating success but Alex Fala says it was an effective way his parents instilled in him and his sisters a drive to succeed.

“It worked without crossing the line into being pushy.”

Having gained a Rhodes scholarship in 2003 and spent time at international management consultancy McKinsey & Co, Alex was appointed CEO of online sales platform Vend in 2016, after previ-

ously working for Les Mills International, Trade Me and Orion Health. Being mentored by some of New Zealand's business elite along the way has played a powerful role in where he finds himself, he says.

And when it comes to his biggest lessons, Alex is unequivocal.

“My biggest learning is to always be learning. We live in a time where most of the world's knowledge is available in our pockets, in real-time, in every possible format. This is a privileged world but also a harsh one, where the slow and complacent are eaten by the agile and hungry.”

Influencers

- *I wasn't a great student, particularly in my early years:* Duncan Greive, editor/publisher, The Spinoff
- *I've always admired people who are humble:* Max Harris, Examination Fellow, All Souls College, Oxford
- *My time at University gave me a political and sociological grounding I didn't know I craved:* Elisapeta Heta, architecture graduate, Jasmox
- *At University I experienced many examples of professional and personal generosity:* Chye-Ching Huang, Federal Tax Policy, Center on Budget and Policy Priorities
- *Surround yourself with people who are smarter and better than you, and books that elevate you:* Robyn Scott, CEO, Apolitical
- *Hard work and determination become what others call luck:* Alanna Simpson, senior disaster risk management specialist, World Bank Group



CHLÖE SWARBRICK

For someone who never intended pursuing a career in politics and describes herself as “shy and introverted,” alumna Chlöe Swarbrick (set to be a Green MP) always looks very composed.

As an aspirant to the Auckland mayoralty last year she surprised everyone, including herself, by polling almost 30,000 votes on an almost zero budget. That was after going in with no expectations, given the other well-funded campaigns.

It's hardly surprising for someone who is driven and not afraid to take a risk. Completing a BA/LLB in just four and half

years, she says she didn't see the point in taking on debt for longer than necessary: “Student life is not exactly comfortable financially, so I was focused on completing my studies and didn't participate that much in student life outside of classes.” Starting her first business with her partner in men's fashion at 18, using \$10,000 saved from working part-time in retail, Chlöe says she learnt anything is possible with the right mindset: “I learned our generation can do anything with confidence and Google. For me it's about flexibility and critical-mindedness.”

Performers

- *The greatest joy in life is to never stop growing and learning:* Tianyi Lu, conductor, Melbourne Symphony Orchestra
- *We may only be a small part, but we need to choose wisely what we want to be a small part of:* Kimberley Hikka, North Iraq logistics manager, Médecins Sans Frontières
- *I have learned how to take small steps toward something greater, even when I cannot see how they will add up ahead of time:* Kate Newby, artist
- *Growing up, time spent watching TV had to be matched by time spent reading; I slogged through a lot of Enid Blyton:* Ben Sanders, author
- *My parents read to me, encouraged me to read and talked about books as if they were alive, present, and utterly vital:* Anna Smaill, poet and novelist
- *The hardest work you'll ever need to do is the work on yourself:* Kristian Schmidt, show host, WAV media



RUBAN NIELSON

Psychedelic rock group Unknown Mortal Orchestra (UMO) frontman and former Mint Chicks guitarist Ruban Nielson said he was “flattered” when told he was being inducted into the University’s inaugural 40 under 40.

Ruban, though now based in Portland, Oregon, remains strongly connected to the place that was formative in his music career. But getting into university was never a foregone conclusion and it was the support he received from Orewa College that helped smooth his pathway. “Things going on in my home life made

it hard to be a student until I left home to begin at university.”

Having completed his degree in Fine Arts at Elam in 2002, including collecting the Sir James Wallace Prize, Ruban says his biggest influence has been his father Chris. “As a kid, his stories of hanging out with people at Elam while studying music really stoked my desire to be there.”

One piece of advice from Elam has stuck. “I remember the tutors saying things like ‘it takes ten years to become an overnight success’ which is really important for young ambitious people to hear.”

Entrepreneurs

- *Recognise your strengths and surround yourself with brilliant people who complement your skill set:* Mimi Gilmour, creative leader and CEO, Burger Burger Ltd.
- *Everything is broken down into steps and you figure it out as you go. The important thing is to think big and be fearless in your approach:* David Higgins, boxing promoter, Duco Events founder
- *Leaders I admire have great interpersonal skills and can bring calm to chaos:* Angela Lim, doctor/CEO/board member, Ministry of Youth Development Partnerships Fund
- *The people who influenced me initially were the naysayers, including the boss who fired me when I suggested a new business idea:* Hannah McQueen, founding director, enableMe
- *If you embrace being patiently impatient, good things will happen:* Ben Young, CEO, Nudge



CHRIS HEASLIP

Growing up in Kumeu Chris Heaslip never anticipated his Christian faith would be the catalyst for co-founding a highly-successful tech start-up business. However, in church one day, feeling that discomfort you feel when you don’t have cash on you for a donation, Chris envisioned a cloud-based, mobile commerce system that would allow church-goers to give money as easily as buying a song on iTunes. With Elliot Crowther, he co-founded PushPay, mortgaging his house and pouring every cent into the fledgling

business – which very nearly turned in on itself in late 2013 when he had to tell the company’s eight staff it was unable to make payroll. They all stayed anyway and this was a turning point. Within weeks additional investors were found and these days Pushpay is growing fast. Chris, who completed a Master of Commerce (Taxation) with honours at the University of Auckland, now lives with his family in Seattle, chasing the next big opportunity for Pushpay – in a country where 37 percent of the population attends church weekly.

Humanitarians

- *Knowledge matters more than ever; it drives creativity and social progress:* Geoff Cooper, international financial economic associate, Federal Reserve Bank of New York
- *My parents were factory workers, I became a chief executive at 36; I can only imagine what my kids will be doing:* Peter Fa'afiu, partner, Navigator Ltd.
- *Higher education is a powerful driver for change; it is the reason I have a voice and can advocate for the voiceless:* Rez Gardi, solicitor, Chapman Tripp
- *We need to constantly challenge ourselves and others, adapt, be creative, learn from our failures:* William Pike, director, The Pike Experience Ltd.
- *We can digitise the world but nothing really happens without the human connection:* Amber Sainsbury, trustee, Dramatic Need
- *Learning to trust my instinct has helped me make decisions quickly:* Qiuqing Wong, CE, Borderless Productions Ltd.



KIRI TOKI

One of the most idyllic places to grow up in New Zealand would have to be Aotea Great Barrier Island. The Hauraki Gulf's northernmost island is a haven for solitude, only interrupted by the lapping of waves on its deserted beaches. But for Kiri Toki, a born and bred local of Ngāti Wai and Ngāti Rehua descent, the island's isolation was no barrier to building the early foundations for her own education and her eventual move to Switzerland where she is now based. Graduating with a BA/LLB (Hons) in 2011, including being named the NZ

Law Society Centennial (Māori) Scholar, and then completing an LLM as a Fulbright Scholar at Harvard Law School, has led to her current role at the World Intellectual Property Organisation (WIPO) in Geneva.

Says Kiri: "My time at Harvard reaffirmed my belief that the quality of education at the University of Auckland is truly world class. At Harvard, I never felt out of my depth or technically disadvantaged. In fact, because of my time at Auckland, I feel like I thrived. Without this foundation, I could never have reached my present position."

Disruptors and Innovators

- *Embracing frustrations, living unconventionally, taking hard risks deliver the best outcomes:* Dr Rosie Bosworth, planner/project manager, Rethink X and Sustain Ltd.
- *My biggest learning was in learning how to learn:* Alexei Dunayev, CEO, TranscribeMe
- *Figuring out the problems was important learning:* Dr Elizabeth Iorns, CEO, Science Exchange
- *A strong appreciation of both engineering and sales has been pivotal:* Ben O'Brien, CEO, StretchSense Ltd
- *People, relationships, teamwork are the important part:* Simon Talbot, plastic surgeon, Partners Healthcare
- *Where I gave something everything I was deeply rewarded and satisfied:* Amar Virk, group lead of special projects, UberEverything at Uber



IPSHITA MANDAL

Moving to New Zealand at 12 after emigrating with her family from India was a new start for Ipshita Mandal. She completed a BTech in Biotechnology with first class honours in 2011, and was top student in her graduating year. Given an enviable choice between a Fulbright scholarship to study in the US or a PhD scholarship to study chemical engineering at the University of Cambridge in the UK, she chose Cambridge, where her research involved engineering a novel polymer membrane device, with applications in pharmaceutical drug purification and

waste water treatment. Then after spending time at Bactevo, a Cambridge-based platform technology start-up, as Chief Business Officer she joined the global management consultancy McKinsey and is now based in India.

Ipshta has been nominated twice as one of 50 Movers and Shakers in BioBusiness in the UK, and has won the 2013 Cambridge University Entrepreneurs Award, as well as being nominated a Leader of Tomorrow at the 43rd St Gallen Symposium in Switzerland, the world's leading forum for international debate in politics and economics.

TOUR OF DUTY

Alumna Lieutenant Colonel Esther Harrop speaks with Sharon Stephenson about her life with the NZ Army and her recent experiences in a country torn by war.

Here's what Lieutenant Colonel Harrop remembers about South Sudan: the heat, the squalor, the unpaved roads that became rivers of mud after the rainy season. Not to mention the extreme poverty and violence, and the time an 11-year-old boy pointed a loaded AK47 at her.

"I'm making it sound so grim and at times it was, but it's also a country full of the most beautiful people suffering from displacement and violence, from man-made famine and horrific abuses," says Esther of her 10-month UN peacekeeping deployment.

The 45-year-old, who graduated from the University with a BCom in Marketing and Management in 1995, was working with former Labour leader David Shearer, who heads the United Nations' peacekeeping mission in South Sudan.

"I was the New Zealand Senior National Officer and Military Assistant to David, which basically involved advising him on the military aspects of what he was doing. David has amazing knowledge of the humanitarian sector in conflict-ridden places such as Somalia and Iraq, but this mission comprises around 70 percent military personnel, so that's where my experience came in."

Esther's role included supporting David in Juba, the capital, as well as travelling around South Sudan, a country roughly the size of France, visiting mission members and humanitarian agencies and providing the conduit between the 13,000-strong military peacekeeping force, and their leadership.

"The travel was tiring, and testing, usually in helicopters, small fixed-wing planes and often armoured vehicles. The roads there are terrible so most long distance travel was by helicopter."

Esther was the most senior female military officer at the UN base of around 2000 people, including 500 civilians. Because of the volatile nature of the region, all mission personnel were placed on a curfew (7pm-6am), but outside this Esther managed to drive herself to the market to buy food and have clothes made by a local tailor.

"We've had lots of training on how to handle ourselves in certain situations, so although I would never take an unnecessary risk, I'm not the the kind of person to hide away on the base all day. When I had the chance I'd go out and interact with the locals as far as possible."

Even if that means a child waving an AK47 in your face?

"We learn how to de-escalate situations like that," she says. Which is pretty much all she will say about that particular incident.

The mandate of the mission in South Sudan – which gained its independence from Sudan in 2011 after an earlier agreement that signalled the end of the longest-running civil war in Africa – is to protect civilians, investigate human rights violations, provide humanitarian assistance and assist in furthering the comprehensive peace agreement signed in 2013 between factions within the new nation.

Esther was one of only five New Zealanders and the sole NZ Defence Force member based in the capital Juba. Her personal goal when she left NZ was to make a difference: to leave the UN mission in better shape than she found it – which sounds like a huge challenge but proved less difficult than she thought it might have been.

"I know I made a difference to some of the men's perceptions of women in the military. My presence took a lot of guys by surprise. I was working with Indians, Nepalese, Rwandans, Chinese: there are 52 different nations in the force. A lot of those nations don't have female officers or if they do, the women are in specialist roles such as in the medical area, and are somewhat limited in the roles they fulfil on operations.

"I was upset at first that many of the men couldn't even look me in the eye. But



I was the deputy chief planner, responsible for developing plans for the operations of the UN forces in South Sudan. They had to work with me and do what I asked them to. It was a new experience for many of them to have a competent female officer in charge.”

On International Women’s Day a colleague phoned Esther with a heartening message about the males in the forces: “You’ve no idea how having a senior woman in the Force headquarters is changing their perceptions.”

As a woman in uniform, she was also able to relate in a different way with the local women and children: “The UN has made a big push to have women in peacekeeping,” Esther explains. “Many of the women and children in South Sudan (and other countries where the UN has military peace keepers) have been treated with shocking cruelty by men from various factions in ongoing conflict. The stories you only occasionally hear back here are true. Conflict-related sexual violence and villages razed by fire – torture, beatings and killings. They are often terrified by the sight of a man in uniform.”

Esther and other women in the force, were able to talk with them, to be accepted by them, to create respectful relationships of a kind that at times were closed off to her male colleagues.

For most people, the prospect of being away from family and friends in one of the most politically and economically unstable regions in the world might not be terribly appealing, but when you’re the mother of four boys, the youngest only three years old, it can be even more difficult.

“I’m lucky I’ve got a lot of support from my husband Stephen, who was able to quit his job before this deployment to keep things ticking over,” says Esther. That includes the children and the couple’s 17-acre property in Pauatahanui.

“It would be too hard to do what I do without his support.”

Before South Sudan there were two deployments to Bougainville, one of which saw her recognised as a Member of the New Zealand Order of Merit (MNZM) in 1999. There was also a three-year stint with the Canadian Army and time logged at bases including Waiouru, Linton, Trentham and Burnham.

Before that there was a happy childhood in the Auckland suburb of Mt Albert, where Esther was the youngest of five. Along with her four brothers, she



played an instrument (the French horn) and her accountant/musician father was keen for his children to follow him either into the world of music or number crunching. Esther chose the latter, signing up for a BCom in marketing with the vague notion of going into the corporate world.

Nothing in her background suggested a career in the armed services but nibbling at the edges of her university years were the Territorials. She’d been introduced to the weekend pursuit and discovered she loved being outdoors.

“The structured nature of the services also really appealed to me, as well as the idea of doing something that could make a difference,” she says.

From there it was a short leap to signing up for an intense five-day selection process with the NZ Army. Esther got through that and then spent a year at officer cadet school in Waiouru.

She did a few military history papers through Massey and chose her specialty – supply and logistics, which is how she ended up in Fort Lee, a US Army base in Virginia, where she spent 12 months completing a masters in science in logistics management from the Florida Institute of Technology.

One of Esther’s favourite roles since then has been her three-year secondment to the Canadian Department of National Defence, from 2009-2012, where she managed the Canadian Forces Light Armoured Vehicle (LAV) fleet both in Canada and on operations in Afghanistan.

“The Canadians had a large fleet of around 150 LAVs in Afghanistan and they had lost over 100 soldiers in those LAVs, basically because Improvised Explosive Devices (IEDs) would rip through the bottom of the vehicle. My

role was to manage a team of engineers who designed survivability add-ons to the vehicles to ensure that soldiers would be better protected in an explosion.”

“I had limited French, but that didn’t stop us gelling as a team and we managed to outfit 120 LAVs with the survivability kits. As far as I’m aware, there have been no deaths in those LAVs since then.”

Her efforts were also recognised with a Golden Anvil Award from the Canadian government.

Esther had barely returned from South Sudan when she was appointed deputy director strategic engagements (regional) and defence adviser Pacific. It’s a role that will see her foster New Zealand’s defence relationships in South East Asia and the Pacific – in particular Samoa, the Cook Islands and Niue.

It will, of course, involve more time away from her husband and children Nelson (12), Abraham (10), Solomon (6) and Wolfgang (3). But Esther is looking forward to it, and particularly the opportunities it offers her to further develop her leadership skills.

“I’ve always had a leadership mindset and the Army fosters that, as well as strong emphasis on team membership. Last year I was selected for a New Zealand Leadership Institute programme at the University of Auckland, which was incredibly useful in bringing together all the strands of my leadership experience. It really encouraged me to carry on.

“As long as I’m making a difference, I’ll keep doing what I’m doing.”

CAN WE PREPARE YOUNG NEW ZEALANDERS TO BE GLOBAL CITIZENS AND INFLUENCERS?





Photo: Anas al Baba/Oxfam

EDUCATION IN TIMES OF CONFLICT

A global concern

According to the 2017 Global Peace Index, the world is less peaceful now than it was a decade ago.

Growing outbreaks of disease and famine, displacement from land because of climate change, increasing competition over scarce natural resources, a protracted global economic slowdown, shifting geopolitical landscapes and violent extremism have all contributed to more protracted and frequent conflicts.

In contemporary times, the greatest burden of such violence falls on civilian populations. At present, a record

65.6 million people have been forcibly displaced from their homes and in 2016 alone, an estimated 265,000 civilians lost their lives due to armed conflict.

The contemporary problem: short-sighted approaches to peace and security

The evidence points to a failure of the way peacebuilding has been deployed in recent decades. The most telling sign of this is that, since 2000, 90 percent of violent conflicts are not new but rather reoccurrences or consequences of past tensions.

Internationally-led peacebuilding and reconstruction efforts in recent years

have often been driven by geopolitical and economic interests of the “powerful” rather than the needs of citizens on the ground. The result is that emphasis has been given to opening markets to trade, strengthening law and order, and introducing weak forms of democratic governance. This has been to the detriment of significant investment in or attention to social services like education.

This narrow conception of peacebuilding has, in part, been driven by our desires to keep conflict at bay from our own soil rather than concerns for the sustainability of our diplomatic, defence and development efforts

Ritesh has had extensive experience researching the role of education in countries with a history of conflict. The photo to the left shows something of the situation in Gaza, where his experiences during several visits have provided him with a more complex insight into concepts such as resilience. “We can easily assume that conflict-affected societies are depressed, and lack resilience. But one of the things that has come through to me from my time in Gaza is that people have their own mechanisms of coping, and ensuring that life goes on, despite the kind of gross violations of rights that are in place there ... Palestinians comprise some of the most highly educated but poverty-stricken people in the world. I’ve never been anywhere where I’ve seen education so highly valued.”

overseas. This myopic view is no longer tolerable or conscionable given that the New Zealand government, alongside 192 other countries, has agreed to the Sustainable Development Goals, which at their core are about ensuring just, peaceful and inclusive societies by 2030.

We can no longer neglect our moral and ethical obligation to eradicate the economic and social costs of violent conflict on society. Part of the solution relies on giving more attention to social services, such as education, at all stages of a crisis – from humanitarian relief to longer-term peacebuilding efforts.

Education’s conflicted role

Education is recognised as an important catalyst for promoting psychosocial recovery, normality, hope, and the inculcation of values and skills for building and maintaining a peaceful future. It also has an important role in reconciliation or nation-building goals through the messages and shared values it can promote, restoring social cohesion that is often eroded during conflict.

Unfortunately, in humanitarian settings, education is poorly prioritised, and often even more poorly funded. The result is that approximately 30 million children remain out of school during periods of displacement or conflict – which represents half of the global out-of-school population. Furthermore, after the cessation of hostilities, efforts are often made to restore schooling to those affected by conflict, but often with little thought to underlying structural conditions in education which may have precipitated or fuelled conflict.

Matters as simple as the distribution of textbooks or other learning materials

across a country, or as complex as what language children should be taught in, are often poorly considered by policymakers and international advisers tasked with reconstruction. This fails to ensure that education is safe, inclusive, equitable and accessible for all, and has been shown to lead to significant levels of drop-out, due to the irrelevance or poor quality of the education that is provided. This creates a vicious cycle, where education itself becomes a grievance against the state (or occupying power) for some, and a site of future conflict. In a global economy where knowledge has become commodified and has become a key instrument for upwards social mobility, education systems which actively or passively exclude citizens from full participation are demonstrated to have a strong correlation with the renewal of violence.

A future focus

What I and a growing number of colleagues have been arguing in recent years is that during and immediately after periods of conflict, we must do two things better. One is to ensure that education and other social services are not left as an afterthought, but are considered from the outset of efforts to stabilise and transform societies affected by conflict. New global funding mechanisms such as the “Education Cannot Wait” initiative are emblematic of this, and our own government could contribute, as part of its humanitarian aid package, to this.

Importantly though, we must uncouple education aid from military interventions – a phenomena which we’ve seen too often in recent years,

including from our own government’s involvement in Afghanistan – to ensure that schools, students and teachers do not become part of the ideological battleground for winning “hearts and minds”.

The other important issue is that we must demand more from education in such circumstances. It is insufficient to restore educational provision without any consideration for the cultural, political, economic and social structures it feeds into and contributes to shaping, in areas affected by conflict.

Transformative remedies through education require significant consideration of social justice concerns – of redistribution, representation and recognition within the system itself, and of the broader intersections schooling has with the political economy.

Only then is reconciliation, and the potential for achieving the global vision of a peaceful, inclusive, and just society – as articulated in the Sustainable Development Goals – fully possible.

Dr Ritesh Shah
Critical Studies in Education
Faculty of Education and Social Work



THE ULTIMATE IN BURIED TREASURE

Dr Sascha Nolden speaks with Sharon Stephenson about a fruitful union of arts with technology.

They were the eighth wonder of the world until the 1886 Tarawera eruption buried the famous Pink and White Terraces at Lake Rotomahana, south of Rotorua.

But it took a University of Auckland arts graduate, Dr Sascha Nolden, to uncover historical survey data that may well lead to their rediscovery.

It all started when Sascha (DipPerfArts 1998; MA in German with first class honours 2003; PhD - Dean's list 2007) was curating an exhibition at Auckland City Library about German geologist Ferdinand von Hochstetter, who travelled to New Zealand as part of the *SMS Novara* expedition from Austria in the late 1850s and stayed on to conduct the first-ever geological survey in the provinces of Auckland and Nelson.

While doing research for the 2008 exhibition, Sascha tracked down Hochstetter's field survey notebooks in

Basel, Switzerland. These detailed the only pre-eruption survey data of the terraces.

"I had to completely digitise the notebooks in Basel, because I wasn't able to bring them back to New Zealand," says Sascha. "And then I set about translating the notebooks from the original old form of German, which had never been done before."

In late 2015 he began to collaborate with researcher Rex Bunn, who used Sascha's translation to reverse-engineer Hochstetter's survey data to plot the possible locations of the once popular attraction. Their research placed the three terraces largely beneath land – and not at the bottom of Lake Rotomahana, where they were widely believed to have been buried.

"Evidence suggests the locations may have survived the eruption," says Sascha. "We now believe the terraces are buried

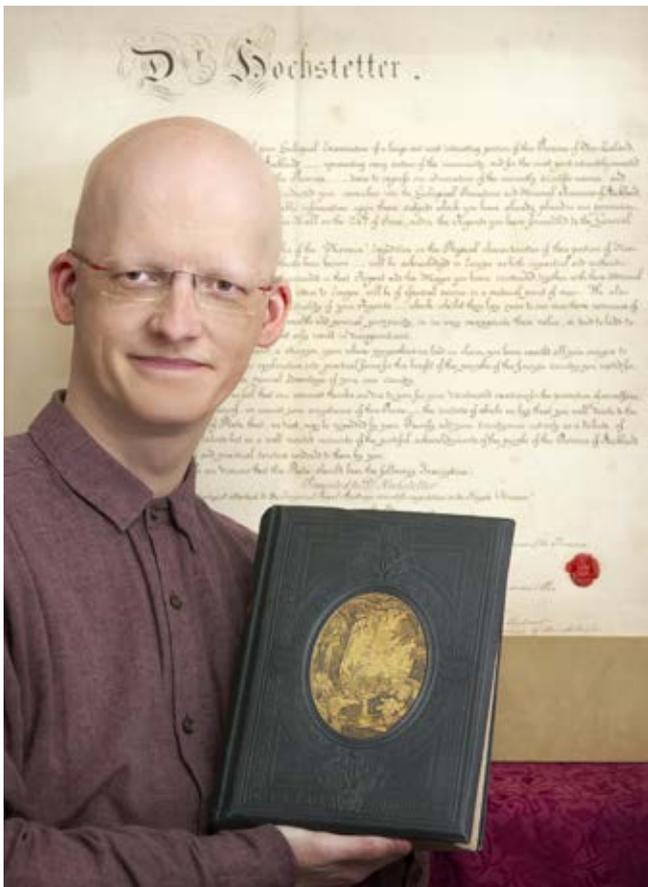
in 10-15 metres of ash, with the lower reaches of the white terraces under the lake bed near the shore."

The new lake, he explains, is ten times the size of the old lake before the eruption – and also much deeper, at about 100 metres, compared with the pre-eruption depth of just a few metres.

The pair's findings were published in June in the *Journal of the Royal Society of New Zealand* to coincide with the 131st anniversary of the Tarawera eruption.

Their research came six years after GNS Science reported it had discovered part of the Pink Terraces at the bottom of Lake Rotomahana. But by 2016, GNS had dismissed those claims, concluding the majority of the terraces had been destroyed.

Sascha, who fits his independent research around his day job as a Research Librarian at the Alexander Turnbull Library, believes he and Bunn have come



“The historical German connection with New Zealand is often underestimated, particularly the role of naturalists such as Hochstetter, because so much of their original material is in German. With his archival skills and his ability to decipher the most idiosyncratic German script, Sascha has made material available that many New Zealand researchers had no idea existed. It is a perfect example of how arts and science can work together to explore new frontiers of knowledge.”

Sascha is holding his own copy of Hochstetter's 'Neu-Seeland' (1863), a very special copy as it bears an inscribed dedication from Hochstetter's widow, Georgiana, to Andreas Reischek (1845-1902), dated Christmas 1889, the year that Reischek returned to Austria after spending 12 years exploring in New Zealand. In the background is the original "testimonial" presented to Hochstetter at the conclusion of his visit in 1859, as a gesture of acknowledgement by the people of Auckland Province. Photo by Sandy B Nolden, 2017

closer than anyone since the eruption to finding the terraces, which, without the pre-eruption survey data, were assumed to be lost. He says the next step will be to use ground-penetrating radar on the sites they've identified.

"This will reveal if silica is present and, if that's the case, then the second phase will be core-drilling to retrieve rock samples."

If the first and second phases prove successful, the third phase would be to excavate the area.

"We are working closely with the local iwi as to the next steps, as it is very much in their hands," says Sascha, who will continue as an historical consultant and adviser on the project.

It's not the first time humanities and science have worked together. "I have always worked closely with scientists in very productive collaborations, especially in the geosciences. I see my role as discovering and making accessible, but also contextualising, historical information," he says.

Professor Emeritus James Bade, director of the Research Centre for Germanic Connections with New Zealand and the Pacific, said he was delighted with Sascha's role in helping to establish the exact location of the Pink and White Terraces.

"With his archival skills and his ability to decipher the most idiosyncratic German script, Sascha has made material available that many New Zealand researchers had no idea existed."

Note: *Sascha's PhD at the University, supervised by James Bade, focused on the correspondence over many years between Ferdinand von Hochstetter, who returned to Austria in 1860, and Julius von Haast (for whom Haast Pass was named), who had accompanied him on his geological expeditions in New Zealand and had become a valued friend.*

This year's paper was entitled "Forensic cartography with Hochstetter's 1859 Pink and White Terraces survey: Te Otukapuarangi and Te Tarata".



John Kinder – Encrusted terraces at Rotomahana – Otukapuarangi, 1865. Hochstetter Collection Basel. (Sascha Nolden and Sandy B Nolden, Hochstetter Collection Basel Part 1: New Zealand Paintings and Drawings 2012).



Josef Selleny – Hochstetter in his cabin on the frigate Novara, 1857 (Mike Johnson and Sascha Nolden, *Travels of Hochstetter and Haast in New Zealand 1858-1860*, 2011, page 24)



John Kinder – Otukapuarangi, 1865. Hochstetter Collection Basel. (Nolden and Nolden 2012).

LEVELLING UP THE PLAYING FIELD



“My students drive me. They’re the change-makers of the future. I love standing in the foyer of the Kate Edger Building, students streaming past me; a river of hope heading into the future and I’m being pushed along in the current.”

“People are not what you think, they’re what they think,” says Jackie Ede, with one of her wry smiles. She smiles, and laughs, a lot.

It’s a great line, one of many produced in our rapid-fire conversation about learning, level playing fields, students who don’t fit the mainstream model and how you make life at University as fair for them as possible.

Jackie has the title of ‘Learning Disabilities Adviser’ and currently lives under the umbrella of Libraries and Learning Services, Te Tumu Herenga, after having had various homes in the past.

She rather wonderfully described what her job involves in a recent *UniNews* staff profile:

“I question, listen, respond, assess, evaluate, recommend, review, motivate, suggest, nudge, encourage, laugh (a lot), redirect, reframe, reflect and sometimes pull my hair out.”

The very existence of a person (or in this case, a team of people) whose job involves helping students living with what some refer to as ‘invisible disabilities’ like dyslexia, Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD) and Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD) succeed at University can be considered a triumph for inclusivity and advancement in how educators’ think, says Jackie.

Acceptance that people learn in diverse and unique ways has been a long time coming. While the UK identified dyslexia as a real condition around 25 years ago, it wasn’t until 2007 that the New Zealand government acknowledged that dyslexia existed as a legitimate disability.

Prior to this, she says children with these conditions largely went undiagnosed and unsupported, often leaving them to fail at school with no likelihood of ever achieving their astonishing academic potential.

“Recognising dyslexia was a game-breaker” says Jackie. “Up to that point, people often didn’t succeed in school if they were ‘neuro-diverse’, they simply didn’t survive. But now in 2017 we’re starting to see kids who were diagnosed with a learning challenge ten years ago and have had the support ever since, which is great.”

Support for students with invisible disabilities at this university is slowly gaining momentum. Two University of Auckland educators with psychology

backgrounds, Emmanuel Manalo and Glenis Wong-Toi, were the first people to start assessing and helping these students, as distinct from those with physical disabilities or mental health conditions, who are supported by Student Health.

Jackie joined them on contract in 2004 and over time they grew into the 'Learning Disabilities Programme'.

Fast forward to 2017 and there are now three learning disabilities advisers working alongside around 300 students each year.

So if you're a student who would like help, how do you go about it?

After registering at Student Disability Services, students make their way to Jackie's office on level 3 of the Kate Edger Building to be screened and tested for a range of conditions.

"The first time I see a student I say, 'Congratulations, you made it. If you've got this far, you have a reasonable chance of success because here, you get to work to your strengths'."

Sometimes she's the first to pick up a problem that might have existed for years. When this happens students are often surprised – and very relieved – to discover that there's a reason behind why they think like they do and, secondly, that it's okay to think that way. And unsurprisingly, a difficulty in one area can have side effects in others.

"We often deal with factors of co-morbidity, and we have to ask which is the primary impairment. Someone might start out by thinking they have a handwriting disability for example; however testing then reveals they have ADHD. Or someone with ADHD might also have depression; as a student adviser, you have to deconstruct what's going on.

"It's not always easy and we don't always get it right but an educated shot is better than nothing."

Then she makes a cunning plan for their future academic success, which involves understanding their capabilities and tapping into their potential, as well as mapping out obstacles or barriers to learning.

She says all sorts of things, some of them quite minor, can be adjusted to make a difference: where they sit in a room, who they sit with, the brightness of the lights, the level of noise, the way assignments are given and testing is done. In some cases, it's a matter of thinking outside the square: "That's where the magic happens."

I imagine it must be a fine balancing act, bearing in mind how stretched lecturers usually are?

"Academic staff are generally happy to help once they understand what is going on for a student. From time to time, I'm probably seen as a troublemaker. My own kids have dyslexia, so I can be very tenacious when things start to look 'unfair'. Luckily we have some really robust processes here for students with disabilities so this doesn't happen often."

Fortunately for these students, there has also been a change in teaching techniques to favour a more student-centred teaching and learning approach across the board, says Jackie.

For example, the Physics department has recently adopted a studio style environment for some of their courses, where students work in multi-ability groups of three alongside lecturers and tutors.

"The shift from passive to active learning has worked really well for our students. To quote a student; 'This is how physics should be'."

"The world is a better place because we don't all think the same."

Debates are still raging about the benefits of a label; is the possible stigma and stereotyping that comes with it worth the support a diagnosis brings?

"On balance I think it's better to own the label," says Jackie. "The more people we know personally who have these issues, the more open we become to the concept of difference. Let's face it, we all fall somewhere on a continuum of ability; I'm not great at baking cakes but I can make a mean curry. Similarly, a student may not be a fast writer but their ideas may be astounding. Every student presents with a unique set of strengths and weaknesses so I think it's better to consider the individual first, then the label."

The widespread assumption that digital learning is the way forward for neuro-diverse students needs to be challenged, Jackie believes.

"Some students don't want to take that route. They can get swamped by social media, emails, information coming at them from all sides and suffer overload. Online quizzes are another good

example, some students simply say, 'That quiz doesn't work with how I learn'. Agile thinking is then required on our behalf to figure out the workarounds."

She says a learning discrepancy can impact more in some courses and environments than others.

"In medical school for example, it's important to have good working memory because you have a lot to learn. One student might need to look at something three times to remember it, whereas someone with a weaker working memory might need to look at it seven times. In a test-heavy environment, this can become an insurmountable hurdle."

Some of Jackie's students are very literal thinkers so their take on university processes can be both surprising and understandable.

"Like the student who thought the expression 'office hours' meant you could regularly spend an hour meeting with the lecturer/tutor in their office, as opposed to a time between which someone will be available in their office to speak with any number of students. Simply, sometimes the easy stuff is harder than the difficult stuff for our students."

And predictably, life is not all bouquets and gratitude in the learning adviser's world.

"A comment I hear regularly is: 'But how are these students going to get on in the real world if they don't have people like you to help them and advocate for them?'"

And her response?

"I throw the question back at them. University is not the real world; when in the real world are they going to have to do tests and exams under that level of pressure? When will they have to attend lectures and complete assignments?"

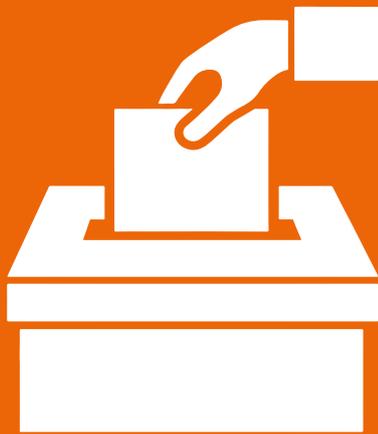
In fact, says Jackie, in the 'real world' a learning impairment more often than not transforms into a gift.

"The world is a better place because we don't all think the same. Watch this space. My students are the future game-changers. Researchers, writers, poets, scientists, doctors, historians and makers; they're busy making a difference and not caring about being different."

Julianne Evans

CAN WE CELEBRATE OUR DIVERSITY
AND CREATE AN INCLUSIVE SOCIETY?





SHOULD VOTING BE COMPULSORY IN NEW ZEALAND?

We asked this question of two expert academics in politics, and a postgraduate student who has been working through the Centre of Innovation and Entrepreneurship on developing a solution for getting people more engaged in politics.

MORE FREE OR LESS FREE?

I didn't have a vote in a national election from 1997 to 2005. I wasn't in a non-democratic state, I was in the UK and then in New Zealand, disenfranchised by the vagaries of electoral cycles and immigrant qualifying periods. On election day 2005, visiting London, I made it to the ballot box in New Zealand House with seconds to spare, narrowly avoiding making it 11 years without a vote.

That would have been 11 years a slave, according to Jean-Jacques Rousseau, who remarked that voters are only really free when voting, being prone to slavery the rest of the time. He also argued, famously, that individuals are rightly "forced to be free" in being constrained and guided by the general will.

Would compulsory voting make people more free or less free? The philosophical-political conundrum continues, probed recently in debates in the vein of Rousseau on "republican" freedom as non-domination, with the thought that anyone who doesn't vote is effectively under the dominion of those who do.

In practical political terms, however, do we need to address the conundrum right now? Participation in New Zealand elections has fallen over time, which is worrying and needs action. But there are many reasons why people don't vote and there are many types of response to be explored before coercion tops the agenda.

Don't expect me to list the possibilities here, as if proffering alternative instant solutions (e-voting is the notorious example). It's complicated. There are factors external to procedure too, of course, including the role of a changing media as well as what happens in politics itself. (By the time you read this, will the Ardern effect have mirrored Britain's Corbyn effect in raising interest among young voters?)

At the 2014 election, the Electoral Commission started picking apart the problem statistically, confirming that voters aged 18-39 – the young-ish – have under-average turnout, as do Māori. But in a linked survey only four percent of eligible voters who didn't vote offered a reason in the "can't be bothered" categories.

More cited barriers of work, health,

religion, transport or being away from home.

This suggests barriers to overcome before compulsory voting is the resort. It also suggests how compelling people to vote is likely to punish further those least free in other ways, being likely disproportionately from more marginalised groups. A vote to introduce compulsory voting would then be “mainstream” older New Zealanders telling their younger, diverse fellow citizens what to do, again.

Dr Geoff Kemp teaches politics in the School of Social Sciences

THE ‘MISSING MILLION’

Persistent patterns of low turnout by those who are less well off, young or from diverse ethnic backgrounds worries many political scientists and commentators, who argue that participation is crucial for an effective democracy. Of course there are others who claim that non-voters are satisfied with politics or are not sufficiently interested to care.

However, the fact remains that over time, turnout in New Zealand has steadily declined. Rueing and wooing the “missing million” is a familiar refrain. Many hoped new Labour leader Jacinda Ardern would appeal to younger voters because she was of a different generation to Bill English, social media savvy and cognisant of the issues of import to the under thirties. Ardern’s promotion also made the electoral race much closer. This is significant because the more competitive a campaign, the more likely turnout increases since people believe their vote can influence the outcome.

However, this is a serendipitous factor and one that is unlikely to reverse the downward trend evident in New Zealand. Does this mean then that compulsory voting is a viable and valuable solution?

I believe so. Compulsory voting enhances turnout significantly (it is 94 percent in Australia) ensuring that political parties of all persuasions have an incentive to appeal to as many voters as possible. In voluntary systems parties can choose to target only those voters they expect will turn out.

Second, compulsory voting supports the principle of one vote, one value – a

core element of any democracy. Most Australians support it, and accept it as a reasonable obligation, not unlike stopping at a red light, or paying taxes.

Finally, scholars argue that when we have a sense of control over the political system we are more contented, and society is more stable and inclusive as a result. If the need for political control is continually thwarted, voters may become deeply alienated, which in turn may lead to more extremist political action.

In 2014 over 50 percent of voters who responded to the New Zealand Election study supported the introduction of compulsory voting here. So the time is right to bring our missing million into process and build a happier and more inclusive democracy.

Associate Professor Jennifer Curtin is co-author of the book *A Bark but No Bite. Inequality and the 2014 New Zealand General Election.*

SWIPING ON POLICIES

A decline in voter turnout may have prompted some of us to think, “Our next door neighbour has the mandatory voting rule in place, so should we be following suit?”

I personally believe that voting should not be compulsory in this country. It goes against the core principle of democracy and that is freedom. Even though we mostly revere freedom of choice and speech, we seem to forget that this freedom also imparts the privilege to remain silent. Therefore, forcing a New Zealand citizen to vote is an infringement of their liberty.

Furthermore, a high voter turnout doesn’t necessarily correlate to a politically engaged electorate. I would rather see a smaller voter turnout of informed and engaged voters than a 100 percent voter turnout with a high number of ill-informed and disinterested people at the ballot box. So, the real question is not about making voting compulsory but about how we can make our citizens more politically engaged.

Nowadays people are sourcing information through Facebook and YouTube, and through the hundreds of news apps available in the palm of our hands, at the touch of a button. These are the ultimate tools to get people,

particularly youth, engaged in news and politics.

Through an app, users can keep track of the changes in the political landscape related to the issues that they care about, as they happen. They can give their opinions on changes which can be recorded and tracked. And they can see which party’s policy and stance they agree with the most.

Though this may not be the complete solution to the lack of voting in this country, it does help with making an informed decision on who to vote for. If you can swipe on a phone, then you can swipe on policies that can shape your entire future.

Sahara Dhunnookchand is one of seven University of Auckland students who have worked with mentor Dr Jamie Newth at the Business School on developing an app to encourage younger New Zealanders to engage with politics. The VoteSmart NZ app was due to be launched in early September.

WHAT DO YOU THINK? SHOULD VOTING BE COMPULSORY?

The views of our contributors are intended as the beginning of a discussion, which our readers can then respond to. Please visit our Ingenio website www.ingenio-magazine.com or write a letter to the editor to continue the conversation.

You can also comment on “Taking Issue” topics from previous issues, including gender inequality in the world of work and New Zealand’s response to the refugee crisis. Letters to the editor are also welcome. Please email to ingenio@auckland.ac.nz or post to Ingenio, Communications and Marketing, Private Bag 92019, Auckland Mail Centre, Auckland 1142.

The views expressed above reflect personal opinions and are not those of the University of Auckland.

DOING WHAT YOU LOVE

Our two alumni featured on this page both live in Australia, but that's not the only thing they have in common. Both have found ways of combining their passion with their work and of earning a living through what they most enjoy.

Susannah Fullerton, nee Wilson

(BA 1979), OAM, FRSN

Where are you living and what are you doing?

I'm living in Sydney where I'm a literary lecturer, giving talks to a great variety of groups about famous authors and their works. I also lead literary tour groups of Australians and New Zealanders to see places connected with writers in the UK, France, Italy, New Zealand and the United States. I've published several books about Jane Austen and about famous authors who visited Australia, and have written and recorded an audio CD called *Finding Katherine Mansfield*. For 21 years I've been president of the Jane Austen Society of Australia.

What do you love about living in Sydney?

It has some great bookshops, and fabulous libraries and literary festivals. I love its vibrant literary community and enjoy all the societies of which I'm a member, including the Australian Brontë Association, the Dylan Thomas Society of Australia, the Kipling Society, an Anthony Trollope reading group and the New South Wales Dickens Society, which will host an international conference next year.

Is your study at Auckland important to what you do now?

It was in the English Department at Auckland that I first studied a Jane Austen novel. I'd read most of them, but that was when I first read *Mansfield Park* and came to realise, through my study, what depth there was to Jane Austen's

novels. In my new memoir *Jane & I: A Tale of Austen Addiction*, I write of how vital that was to me and what happiness it gave. I was only 16 when I began my BA at Auckland; yet from my first day, when I heard Professor Musgrove declaim from Marlowe's *Dr Faustus*, I felt I was at home and knew that in one way or another my career must include English Literature.

To see how Susannah has turned her hobby into a career – see susannahfullerton.com.au



Andrew Marmont

(BA 2007)

Where are you living and what are you doing there?

I live in Melbourne, Australia, and work as a freelance journalist. I mostly cover sport, including rugby league and cricket, working with magazines like

Big League and *Rugby League World*. I also do some corporate writing, and have just published my first book, which is about rugby league and is called *Their Finest Hour*. Rugby union dominates in New Zealand but rugby league captured my imagination. It was fast, the commentators loved it and I grew to love it too.

What do you love about where you're living and about what you're doing?

Melbourne is such a diverse and lively city. There are always things happening and lots of sport on all year round, which is great for my work in sports media. Rugby league is growing in popularity, with the Storm (the first professional rugby league team based in Victoria) doing consistently well, plus World Cup and State of Origin matches that are always strongly supported. The weather is great, warm in summer and cold in winter.

Is your time at the University of Auckland important to what you do now?

Doing a variety of subjects and topics allowed me to appreciate creativity from different angles. I know that writing long essays helped with the discipline and structure I needed to write the book.

I credit a lot of my success in sports media to Gavin Ellis, who taught politics and media studies. We had frequent chats about journalism, and he really helped me in getting there. I also think the social skills you develop while studying, particularly in group study, help with corporate life and networking.

Photo: Andrew at a press conference with Melbourne Storm – interviewing Storm coach Craig Bellamy. Photo supplied by Melbourne Storm.

VOLUNTEER PROFILES

Meet Summer Wu (below, left) and Ruonan Duan – our Volunteer Alumni Coordinators in Shanghai. Summer gained a Master of Commerce and is an International Marketing Consultant for Bocconi University. Ruonan did a conjoint Law (Hons) and Arts degree and is a Banking and Finance Associate at UK-owned law firm Allen & Overy.

Both have fond memories of their student days. Summer recalls how chatting with classmates of different nationalities in the Business School's kitchen exposed her to new cultures and helped her to make friends. Similarly, Ruonan remembers hanging out with her friends in coffee shops while they discussed such big questions as the meaning of life and their hopes and dreams after graduation. Following university, Summer and Ruonan made the move to Shanghai. For Summer, the city's strategic location in the heart of Asia provided a great platform for travelling but was also close to her hometown Anhui. Ruonan, on the other hand, began her career in well-recognised New Zealand law firm Chapman Tripp. While working on transactions backed by Chinese investors, she was given the opportunity to move to Shanghai, and jumped at the chance.

Outside of work, Summer finds cooking an enjoyable distraction after a tough day. Ruonan, who is an active volunteer and recently lent her time to a tree-planting project in Inner Mongolia, enjoys travelling to different parts of the world to hit the ski slopes.

Summer and Ruonan are keen to hear from alumni based in Shanghai. They aim to support alumni in their professional and personal lives through networks and to foster pride and life-long connection between the University and its graduates. Visit alumni.auckland.ac.nz to find out more about the Shanghai alumni network.



ALUMNI AND FRIENDS EVENTS

We host alumni and friends networking functions and special events throughout the year in New Zealand and all over the world. These events give a great opportunity to reconnect and refresh networks. In many cases, you'll also be able to hear about the latest University news, research and innovations taking place on campus. In the run-up to Christmas we are excited to have the annual Golden Graduates Luncheon and the University of Auckland Society AGM and Christmas Function happening right here in Auckland. We will also be hosting special events in London and Tauranga. Don't miss out – visit alumni.auckland.ac.nz/events to keep up to date.

INTERNATIONAL ALUMNI NETWORKS

With over 185,000 alumni living in 147 countries our alumni networks bring together groups of alumni living all over the world. Our networks are run by Volunteer Alumni Coordinators (VACs) who help alumni remain connected with the active life of the University.

Check out the map below to see where in the world our VACs are located. Find the volunteer closest to you, make contact and start a conversation.

Details of all our VACs can be found on our website. If there isn't an existing alumni network where you are, you may want to start one and consider being a VAC. Contact us at alumni@auckland.ac.nz for further information.



Connect with us

www.facebook.com/UoAAlumni

www.linkedin.com -

[Auckland University Alumni & Friends](http://AucklandUniversityAlumni&Friends)

www.twitter.com/AucklandAlumni



50TH ANNIVERSARY OF MEDICAL AND HEALTH SCIENCES

The University's Faculty of Medical and Health Sciences is celebrating 50 years in 2018. The faculty has become one of the most productive research entities in the University. As well as training generations of new doctors, medical scientists, nurses, optometrists and, more recently, pharmacists, it has played a significant part in moving the University to its pre-eminent position among New Zealand universities. Activities planned for the celebration include an open day, an evening lecture series and a celebration dinner. Keep an eye out for more details in the next few months on the faculty website, Facebook page and in alumni newsletters.



Geophagy 2017
Installation with recycled pallets, second hand clothing,
monitors with 5 single-channel, looped HD videos.
Installation dimensions variable.

AIDE DE MEMOIR

Story by Linda Tyler

A unique and exciting creative space can be found where art and science meet.

And this is the space that award-winning artist Dr Ruth Watson has had the chance to explore this year as inaugural artist for the University's new "Creative Arts Science Collaboration (CASC)".

Ruth, a senior lecturer in the Elam School of Fine Arts, has a strong interest in memory and representation: for over 30 years she has been making works, in a variety of media, that deal with maps, how they are made, used and represented.

For the CASC collaboration she has chosen to work with neuropsychologist Professor Donna Rose Addis, who uses neuroimaging to understand how our brains function to remember the past and imagine the future.

Eventually an art work will be produced that will reflect on how we remember what we've experienced as well as how we use memory to simulate future events and construct a sense of identity. This will build on the ideas from Ruth's video "Unmapping the World", shown as part of Ruth's recent solo exhibition titled *Geophagy*.

This word, which means literally "eating the earth," refers to the effects of excessive consumption by humans on natural resources. The show included works Ruth made during her residency at the Headland Centre of the Arts in San Francisco in 2015. She'd received the Fulbright-Wallace Trust Award for the work "Telluric Insurgencies" the previous year, and the prize enabled her to make "The Surface of Things," a video work which responded both to the Headlands site – a former military barracks – and to the decommissioned Nike missile site nearby.

The real scene-stealer in the exhibition was the eponymous work in the foyer – "Geophagy" – where piles of discarded clothing were tossed over a stack of pallets under the dome. Cascading shirts and skirts created an effect like a static fountain: an oil strike on Shortland Street. Five television monitors were lodged at different points playing looped videos with voices reading extracts from a variety of texts: Jorge Luis Borges' *The Library of Babel*, Benjamin H. Bratton's *The Black Stack*, Donna Haraway's *Staying with the Trouble: Making Kin in the Chthulucene*, Susan Schuppli's *Slick Images: the photogenic politics of oil and*



Unmapping the World 2017
Single-channel, looped HD video
with screen and loungers
Duration 7:23

Hito Steyerl's *In Defense of the Poor Image*.

With this work, the artist is commenting on environmental disasters, and the part played by fast fashion.

"We're of an age where we can remember our mothers making most of our clothes and you would buy something as a treat. Now it's the reverse – we buy everything and throw things away at the drop of a hat. The work is about a particular form of

“Like a trigger of memory these hands precipitate a montage of images”

consumption – most of those clothes have got plastic in them. The stack is 200 kilos of clothing ordered from a company that sells second-hand clothes by the kilo. All those plastic microfibres go out into the ocean when you wash them, and so fish are eating them and they are killing life on earth – but we don't really think about this when we buy, let alone wash, our clothes.”

"Unmapping the World," set up like a home movie, with screen and bean

bags to watch it in, takes the viewer on a journey down memory lane.

It begins with a vintage porcelain ornament – a kitsch pair of hands with painted fingernails. Modelled to look like they are cradling something – a baby's head, perhaps – these ceramic hands are a memorial to an ideal of femininity that has passed into history. Like an aide-de-memoir, a trigger of memory, these hands precipitate a montage of images of the wilderness of Antarctica, and instructional films on map use.

As the video progresses, items and objects are produced, from which can be constructed a fragmentary narrative. A green handkerchief, for example, introduces the story of the death in childbirth of the artist's Irish great-great-grandmother, Sarah.

Through "Unmapping the World," the artist examines her own decision not to have children: was she consciously trying to reduce the squeeze that burgeoning human populations have put on the planet or was she traumatised by having read the coroner's account of Sarah's death?

This work is Ruth's point of connection with the research of Donna Rose.

CASC links the Faculty of Science and the Faculty of Creative Arts and Industries.

BLINDED BY LIGHT

Between now and 31 October you have a chance to take a peek at what the University of Auckland Art Collection has tucked away.

Decent Exposure: The University Art Collection Undressed features 25 nudes, semi-nudes and demi-nudes in what Associate Professor Linda Tyler describes as, "a jaunty local riposte to the *Body Laid Bare* exhibition staged at the Auckland Art Gallery earlier this year."

The exhibition showcases masterpieces from leading contemporary New Zealand artists Yuki Kihara, Rohan Wealleans, Ioane Ioane and Lisa Reihana, New Zealand's 2017 Venice Biennale Representative.

One of the highlights is "Charis, Santa Monica, 1936" (seen below), by Edward Weston, a seminal figure of American twentieth-century photography.

"Blinded by the light, the woman in this photograph turns her head from the sun," wrote Andrew McKay in a recent *UniNews*. "Weston's use of light and shadow are striking, illuminating the angles of Charis's body, the folded legs and the encircling arms. The long limbs are contorted, yet relaxed, making her seem like a flamingo at rest, calm and peaceful."

The show, curated by the students of Art History 744: Art Writing and Curatorial Practice, is open weekdays 11am to 4pm.



A BETTER ENDING

Loss and betrayal, secrets and lies, love and redemption, hope and heartbreak: these are the themes of a new novel, written by Amanda Lyne (MA 1998, PostGradDip Bus 2010), who will be familiar to many readers as the former Alumni Manager of the University.

A Better Ending is her first novel, published last month, in which she explores the destructive impact of poverty and of intergenerational cycles of behaviour including rejection, abuse and infidelity. The story is crafted around the dramatic and sometimes tragic events in the lives of three generations of her family, whom she describes as her “feisty, beautiful and broken ancestors”, all born in the Midlands in the UK.

Amanda, who was also born in the Midlands and came to New Zealand with her parents and her two brothers at the age of five, worked for 14 years in



Alumni Relations at the University of Auckland before leaving two and a half years ago to follow a dream. She now lives and writes in Mangawhai.

To learn more, see a video interview with Amanda on the *Ingenio* website: www.auckland.ac.nz/ingenio

WIN A COPY

A Better Ending is now out in print – on demand. To enter the draw for one of two free copies of the book, email j.wilford@auckland.ac.nz with the subject line, A Better Ending.

TUAI A TRAVELLER IN TWO WORLDS

Aripping yarn of clashing cultures, ocean adventures and romantic foreign travel in strange lands is rarely a fitting blurb for an academic book.

But *Tuai: A Traveller in Two Worlds* by Professors Alison Jones and Kuni Kaa Jenkins is exactly that.

Compellingly written for a general audience, it focuses on the extraordinary story of Tuai, a young Ngare Raumati chief from the Bay of Islands (born about 1797) who, after befriending European traders and missionaries, set off in 1817 for England with a travelling companion Titere, to “explore the world and its riches and bring them back to his people”.

And so the pair’s many adventures on convict ships, in exotic foreign ports and as guests of honour at high society London dinners unfold.

The product of five years of intense research and partly funded by a Marsden Fund grant, the handsome, 288-page book (Bridget Williams Books, 2017) is rich with details of the earliest encounters between Māori and Pākehā



Nie Zélande, pencil, ink and watercolour by Antione Chazal after Jules-Louis, 1826. Alexander Turnbull Library C-082-102.

and features a number of images that have never been reproduced before.

Alison (from the Faculty of Education and Social Work) did the writing and researching, while Kuni (professor at Te Whare Wānanga o Awanuiārangī) stimulated the project. While Alison’s research took her to Paris, Sydney and Shrewsbury, she also used the rich resources in the Marsden Online Archive at the Hocken Library, Otago University.

An important connection was made by chance, with Professor James Sneyd from the Mathematics Department at Auckland, who, while researching his family in England, had come across a diary belonging to his aristocratic ancestors. Written in 1818, it told of New Zealanders at a “grand cannibal dinner” in London and proved to be a treasure trove of information about how

the two young Māori men were received in polite English society.

Tuai was not the first Māori to travel to England in the early 1800s, says Alison, but he was of the first generation of Māori “to travel confidently overseas from a country still dominated by traditional culture and ancient ways”. Being curious and ambitious, he hoped to make use of all the technological advancements of the industrial age, particularly its superior weaponry, to help his people, who were facing the expansion of their rivals Ngāpuhi. He was “a great teacher of the Europeans he met, and had a shrewd analysis of what Māori could gain from a strategic relationship with the Pākehā”.

Tuai died of unknown causes in the Bay of Islands in 1824, aged only 27. Julianne Evans

FROM KINGSEAT TO SUNDANCE

To be found in the rich line-up of alumni talent at this year's New Zealand Film Festival were not one, but two films by Toa Fraser: *6 Days*, a fictional re-creation of an invasion by six gunmen of the Iranian Embassy in London, and *The Free Man*, a documentary that follows world champion freestyle skier Jossi Wells as he travels and trains with The Flying Frenchies, a group of extreme sport eccentrics.

Also having its first showing was Florian Habicht's *Spookers*, a documentary portrait of the popular theme park occupying the former Kingseat Psychiatric Hospital, where fiends lie in wait to terrify tens of thousands of screaming – and paying – customers.

Roseanne Liang won the New Zealand's Best Short Film competition with her 11-minute short *Do No Harm*,

an action movie that descends into bloody mayhem when violent thugs storm an operating theatre. *Do No Harm* premiered in January at the Sundance Film Festival.

Other short festival films by alumni included *Stay* directed by Graig Gainsborough and Luke Thornborough, where the lives of June and her pet dog Lucas change forever; *The Coffin Club* (Briar March), a musical documentary about celebrating life and death; and *East Meets West* (Julie Zhu), in which a Chinese grandmother finds kinship on her bus trip to the Asian supermarket.

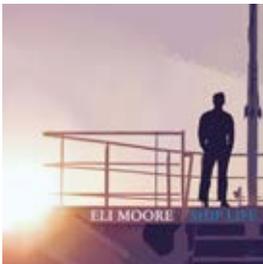
In front of the cameras instead of behind them was alumnus Bill Direen, a compelling performer renowned for his voice, prose, poetry and songs – described by Steve Braunias as “very likely a genius”. Film director Simon Ogston, in *The Memory of Others*, followed Bill through his first national tour in more than a decade in what became a thoroughly engaging cinematic trip through our cultural landscape.



From *Stay*

MUSICAL VOYAGE

Three years and 47 countries ago, alumnus Eli Moore (BMus 2009) left New Zealand to see the world.



A graduate of the University of Auckland's Jazz Programme, he took on the role of showband pianist on various cruise ships, which gave him the material for his debut album.

Comprising 12 songs with elements of jazz, folk, country and musical theatre, world music and rock, the album, *Ship Life*, was produced by Eli, who wrote all the arrangements for his additional singers and musicians. Recorded at Black Orange Studios in Mt Roskill – the personal studio of another Auckland graduate, Vivek Gabriel – it is a local effort which involved many of Auckland's working musicians.

Songs include “Ghost”, featuring slow jazz and a Fleetwood Mac-inspired burst of spread vocals and keyboards and “Lost in Palamos,” a celebratory salsa number

about getting lost in foreign lands.

Ship Life marks Eli's debut as a producer and singer-songwriter. It can be purchased on CD Baby (<https://store.cdbaby.com/cd/elimoore>)

FORK IN THE ROAD

“I would get off the bus midway up Symonds Street, throw my pack over my back and feel the bounce in my step as I pounded downhill with hundreds of students unloading from a dozen buses.”



And that was just the beginning.

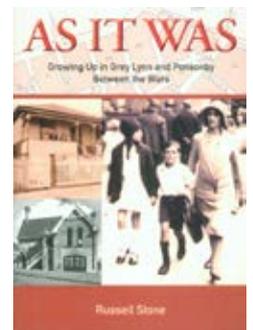
In her self-published memoir, *Fork in the Road*, alumna Marie Darragh tells of her 11 years at the University of Auckland as a mature student.

She wanted to graduate in an exotic subject but in the end settled for what she calls “plain old English”. It was during her University years she would find the answers to her life-long questions.

Copies are available for \$20 from 2000mardar@gmail.com

AS IT WAS

Emeritus Professor Russell Stone (History), who grew up in Ponsonby and Grey Lynn, has reached an age and stage in life where he can be regarded as not



just an historian but as part of the stuff of history itself, someone qualified to tell us at first hand just what life was like when he was young. When he was born in 1923, Greater Auckland had a population of 165,000. Today the figure is one and a half million. Life was simpler, relatively uncomplicated. But it was also harsher, with much hard physical labour for men and women. The memory of World War One was still raw. And although the attitudes and practices of our colonial past were still to be seen on every hand Auckland, just like New Zealand as a whole, was already passing the threshold to modernity.

In this book, published by David Ling Publishing, Russell Stone shows how the life in Auckland at that time can be seen as a forerunner of our way of life.



Hats off to you!

Congratulations on being a graduate of the University of Auckland!



You are a graduate of a world-class university. You have new challenges, goals and exciting opportunities ahead of you.

In October/November the University is running a **Graduate Destination Survey** to learn more about your experiences after graduation. We want to know what you are doing now, and how your programme has prepared you for new challenges and opportunities.

As a graduate we know you have a busy new life. Taking the time to complete the survey is a way you can give something back to the University.

How will my feedback help?

We will use your feedback to help future students understand where their programmes might take them, and to continue to make improvements to the University of Auckland experience.

But wait, there's more...

You have a chance to **WIN** one of 10 travel vouchers. You can travel anywhere you want from any destination in the world!

1 voucher worth
\$1,000

2 vouchers worth
\$750

3 vouchers worth
\$500

4 vouchers worth
\$250

What do I have to do?

- We are looking for all 2016 graduates.
- Check if your contact information is correct at www.alumni.auckland.ac.nz
- At the end of October/early November you will receive an email or phone call asking you to participate in our short survey.
- It will only take 5-10 minutes of your time and your feedback is confidential.

For more information go to www.alumni.auckland.ac.nz or send an email to gds@auckland.ac.nz