Home is where the history is

BY SHARON WEBB

After 30 years of writing from north Queensland about the conflict between Europeans and Aborigines, Tasmanian historian Professor Henry Reynolds has come home.

From his Georgian home in the state’s most historic village, Richmond, he has produced a new history of Tasmania, to be available from Cambridge University Press in November.

Reflecting on the task, Prof. Reynolds says he came back so that he “could write as outsider and insider”; the child who grew up one day and saw a crowd milling around a girl and twin boys: so exotic! “The teachers said they were from Liverpool.”

“Then the ‘Baltis’, wearing suede shoes and corduroy jackets. In the summer of 1948-49 a work gang of Russians, Czechs and Germans – reffos – was laying water lines; we were fascinated by them.”

In his history of Tasmania Prof. Reynolds describes the economic highs and the stagnations of this smallest island state caused by convict influx, mineral boom and depression – and Tasmania becoming less and less significant in Australia as a whole.

Reaching across these roller-coasters says Prof. Reynolds are two Tasmanian voices: one carrying the shame and degradation of the convict era, as described by visiting writer Anthony Trollope who had “never met a people more critical of their own society.”

And the voice of native-born Tasmanians whose relationship to the landscape and climate of their country was strong, who regarded themselves as the children of the soil and as Prof. Reynolds claims “undoubtedly lay the foundations of the Tasmanian Green movement later in the 1950s.”

As any informed observer of Tasmania may comment, some things never change.

There’s no ‘I’ in team

BY CHERIE COOPER

WHAT MAKES a functional team, able to work together effectively? A new UTAS project aims to find out. PhD candidate in the UTAS School of Management, Sarah Dawkins, is investigating the collective psychological capacities of work teams – and she is calling on businesses and organisations to volunteer to help.

Research on psychological capacities such as resilience, optimism, hope and self-efficacy has shown they are directly related to positive employee performance, reduced absenteeism and increased employee commitment to their organisation. But little research has investigated the collective psychological capacities of work teams and the influence of these on various outcomes that are crucial to organisations.

Ms Dawkins said work teams are important to the success of organisations. “I want to find out what collective psychological capacities result in good team work but also what characteristics of a work team, such as team size and job interdependence, may enhance or inhibit positive psychological functioning within teams.”

The results will be used to help develop effective training to assist organisations and managers maximise the potential of their work teams.

“We are very keen to hear from organisations, businesses or managers interested in participating in our study,” Ms Dawkins said. 

Contact Sarah Dawkins, ph. (03) 6226 2712; email Sarah.Dawkins@utas.edu.au or Dr Angela Martin, ph. 6226 2713; email Angela.Martin@utas.edu.au

Dream of a Rhodes Scholarship? For information contact don.chalmers@utas.edu.au
Alumnus Sandy Duncanson to be honoured by bursary

BY LUKE SCOTT

Distinguished Former High Court judge Michael Kirby recently appealed for Australians to consider others for whom every day is a struggle, as he honoured the memory of UTAS alumnus and Hobart lawyer Sandy Duncanson.

Launching an appeal at the UTAS Stanley Burbury Theatre for an annual bursary for a UTAS student to advance a social justice project, Mr Kirby told the 780 people gathered that for some people “every day is a matter of keeping up the strength to continue”.

“Sandy Duncanson was a lawyer, but a lawyer with a difference. He was a person who had courage, and a person who had integrity,” Justice Kirby said.

“I did not know him personally but I have come to know his great struggle, especially at the end of his life.

“During Sandy’s law degree he was diagnosed with cancer. He had an enormous struggle with cancer, but enormous reserves of energy, dedication and courage. He had so many operations... Painful, long and distressing but he was determined to keep at it.

“At the end his haemoglobin was at such a level that the surgeon refused to perform another operation. But he found another surgeon, begged them to perform the operation and lived another year. Sandy was a person who was struggling and grasping for every hour and every day of life.

“Sandy Duncanson not only struggled for himself, but he struggled for others,” Mr Kirby said.

“He worked for the homeless here in Tasmania, in a legal organisation which was fighting for the rights of the homeless. We who live in warm, comfortable homes have to remember that that is part of reality, even in much blessed Australia.

“He also fought for refugees, going to the Woomera detention centre. He was a person who could empathise with a stranger, empathise with the disadvantaged.”

Launch of a bursary in memory of Sandy Duncanson: Former High Court judge Michael Kirby said lawyer Sandy Duncanson struggled for social justice for others.

AMC design skills on the line

BY NICOLE MAYNE

First and second year Australian Maritime College engineering students put their design and project management skills to the test for two of their most anticipated and challenging assignments.

The recent rat trap boat race and pasta bridge competition were the culmination of weeks of hard work and last-minute design tweaks.

The day started in the Model Test Basin with the rat trap race, where first year students competed for the title of fastest rat trap powered vessel over 10 metres. Chris Coppard’s team, D’One, took line honours with a time of 18:40 seconds.

Chris said the team’s model, Red Rocket, was built using balsa wood and finished with solar film.

“We went for the lightest possible construction that we could. It comes in at 380g – nice and light with a streamlined appearance reducing friction and drag,” he said.

Then second year students vied for the title of strongest bridge made from dried pasta – a one-metre span weighing less than 1kg and made from commercial pasta and glue.

This year’s winning team, Lord of the Bridges, smashed last year’s record of 134kg with an astounding weight-bearing effort of 174kg.

Two other teams also broke last year’s record: Dodger, Dodger Fabrications Inc and San Remo Structures.

While 2009 teams averaged 46kg, this year’s field almost doubled the effort with an average supported weight of 90kg.

Chemistry’s 50-year celebration set to explode

BY SARAH NICHOL

The Sandy Bay UTAS campus has been home to test tubes, pipettes and a plethora of chemicals for 50 years in the Chemistry Building on the Sandy Bay campus and the School of Chemistry is planning to celebrate with a big bang.

Since 1961 the school has become one of Australia’s leading chemistry research institutions. In the recent ERA rankings, the School of Chemistry was given the nation’s equal highest scores for analytical and inorganic chemistry.

Head of school Associate Professor Greg Dicinoski said the school’s particular strengths lay in separation science and synthetic chemistry and he hoped it would remain that way.

“I hope we continue to excel in our core areas of expertise in research and teaching,” he said.

One significant contribution of the school over the past 50 years has been to act as a powerful catalyst to bring about environmental, industrial and regulatory change.

“In the mid-1970s the School under Professor Barry Hurrah was pivotal in identifying the extent and impact of heavy metals in the Derwent Estuary,” he said.

This achievement, and many more, will be celebrated on September 1 with a full day symposium. Researchers will reflect on each decade of the past 50 years and the scientific discoveries and teachings of the school.

UTAS Vice-Chancellor Prof Peter Rathjen will unveil an interactive, educational periodic table of elements in the morning and the symposium will be followed by networking drinks in the evening.

Assoc Prof Dicinoski said he hoped many people would attend this free event and help celebrate 50 years of chemistry in Sandy Bay.

On campus

Kimonos and kitseke at Kitsune

The new Kitsune: Kimono and Kitseke Club recently held its first meeting in the UTAS School of Asian Languages and Studies, where UTAS students such as Olivia Swann, Yuki Sun, and local comic artist, Casandra James practiced wearing kimonos.

Staff, students and others keen on traditional Japanese attire attended to chat and eat. Kitsune, meaning ‘fox’, is a play on the Japanese word kiti seki, the term for the formal study of wearing a kimono.

Head of School Dr Barbara Hartley spoke about the “enormous complexity of kimonos protocol and principles”. To join the club contact: Hitomi.Yoshida@utas.edu.au

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Contributions are welcome, but items with a strong appeal will be given priority. The Editors reserve the right to edit copy or hold it over for a later issue and is under no obligation to publish contributed material. The opinions expressed in Unitas are not necessarily those of UTAS. For a list of Unitas deadlines and guidelines, visit us at: www.utas.edu.au/events/unitas.html
Sim Man boosts ambos’ confidence

By Luke Scott

The School of Nursing and Midwifery’s most enduring patient, Sim Man 3G, is being used to train volunteer first aid officers from St John Ambulance.

Manager of Simulation Operations and Development Nigel Chong said the $100,000 state-of-the-art mannequin was being put through its paces helping to train a group of over 15 volunteer St John members in northern Tasmania.

The community support program was developed with the support of head of school Professor Denise Fasert through a collaboration between Mr Chong, Sharon Orchard from St John Ambulance.

“St John Ambulance approached us to see if we would be interested in doing a community-based program with them to train their volunteers in basic life support, trauma training and deterioration training,” Mr Chong said.

“I thought it would be a good way to link with the community so we started a 12-month voluntary program with them to embrace the year of the volunteer.”

The School of Nursing & Midwifery Simulation Centre is one of the leading centres in Australia, gaining national and international recognition for innovation and curriculum development.

Mr Chong donates his time to assist St John volunteers who come in after-hours and carry out various scenarios within the centre.

Mr Chong said Sim Man 3G could be used to simulate a diverse array of medical ailments and injuries, and some very detailed scenarios had been created.

“All of the St John Ambulance volunteers are normal folk in their day jobs, but on weekends they have to function as first aiders, and sometimes they deal with horrible stuff,” Mr Chong said.

“It is wonderful that we have the opportunity to assist such a community organisation with our resources and expertise.”

“The response from St John Ambulance is that they have seen a marked increase in the confidence of their members. Mr Chong said the success of the program showed the value of simulation within the medical field, much as it had done for the aviation field.

“Flight simulators train pilots how to react in an emergency calmly and make the right decisions … it is the same principle,” he said.

“You can make a mistake here in a safe environment and it is not punitive. We actually encourage mistakes as this allows for students to reflect and learn.”

St John Ambulance volunteer Aaron Cassidy and Sim Man 3G wrangler Nigel Chong get to grips with the advanced medical training mannequin.

No dummy: St John Ambulance volunteer Aaron Cassidy and Sim Man 3G wrangler Nigel Chong get to grips with the advanced medical training mannequin.

Getting the gen from an artificial ‘expert’

By Sarah Nicol

Aspiring teachers, doctors and pharmacists at UTAS could be problem-solving by using a simulated ‘expert’ within a few years if a new computer-based learning program goes ahead.

Current discussions among the Schools of Computing and Information Systems, Medicine and Pharmacy could eventuate in the new program, already trialled at the Hyundai automotive company in South Korea, being adapted to focus on relevant case studies and problems in these areas.

Associate Professor Byeong-Ho Kang believes that while some knowledge can be learnt through books or direct teaching, other things can be taught more easily through case studies.

“Problem-based learning requires an expert to explain to students how a decision is made and assess their problem-solving skills. But many of these experts, especially in medicine, are often busy,” he said.

“This program will mean the students can learn from an artificial expert.

“It is especially difficult for medicine students to apply what they have learnt in class in a real health setting. If students have more opportunities to learn through problem-based case studies, these difficulties can be resolved,” he said.

But this will not be the only benefit. Assoc. Prof. Kang’s computer program will also assess the way students answer problems, determining their understanding of an issue.

His trials of the program in Hyundai’s steel factory have indicated that inexperienced workers can quickly learn what is needed to run the factory.

The program’s research team, also including Assoc. Prof. Justin Walls and Prof. Gregory Peterson, will apply for funding this year and should be operational within three to four years. If it is successful, it could be used in other educational fields such as engineering.

From Hyundai to UTAS students: Assoc. Professor Byeong-Ho Kang from the School of Computing and Information Systems is working on a computer simulated ‘expert’ for problem-based learning in education, medicine and pharmacy.

In conversation

With leadership comes responsibility

Professor Peter Rathjen

VICE-CHANCELLOR

Development of the University of Tasmania strategic plan will be a focus of the next few months, building upon the undoubted achievements of the EDGE agenda. While the details will be the subject of considerable and constructive debate, there are some grounding principles that we must remain the cornerstones of our strategic direction.

Key to our thinking must be the leadership role the university has in this state, not only in the provision of tertiary education and as a major economic contributor, but also as an agent of innovation and cultural change.

Increasingly this year UTAS will ask different parts of the community to evaluate how we are performing in this context – what we are doing well and how we might improve, providing context to our deliberations about the shape and substance of our institution in five to 10 years.

To survive and prosper we must identify what is special and distinctive about this university and promote that difference nationally and on the world stage. We also need to ensure that the university is and remains relevant to whole of the Tasmanian community.

Institutional leadership must be matched with the capacity to deliver. Universities, long the custodians of collegial decision-making, are not immune to the need for effective and decisive leadership at critical times. This will be vital as the university and the sector faces the challenge of an increasingly complex operating environment.

With this in mind I have announced a new senior management structure for the university, based around clearly defined portfolios and lines of communication, and which will redefine and invigorate the leadership team for UTAS. The changes will place a greater emphasis and importance on innovation in research and teaching, and will help to drive investment and community engagement.

We have the rare chance to conceptualise our future at a time when increased globalisation and changes to national policy settings create opportunity. Insight, debate and collaboration will enable us to define the change that best suits our values and aspirations – and to deliver it in an environment of collegial support.

UTAS can lead its own destiny; it is in the interests of the state that we do so with passion and confidence, enriching our future and enabling community advancement.

I encourage you to make contact with me at: vice.chancellor@utas.edu.au with any feedback.

Peter Rathjen

www.utas.edu.au/vc
Canberra, Suva act like two parties in a bitter divorce

Australia needs to rethink its approach to assisting the return of democracy to Fiji says RICHARD HERR

In December 2006 Commodore Voreqe (Frank) Bainimarama, Commander of the Republic of Fiji Military Forces, ordered his troops to depose the government of Laisenia Qarase, the fourth coup in Fiji since May 1987.

Much of Australia’s relationship with Fiji since has been defined by the motivation to return Fiji to parliamentary democracy.

The painful fact is that both sides have distrusted and discredited the commitment of the other to returning Fiji to parliamentary democracy.

I have been involved in this process since December 2007. The then ‘interim government’ set up a community-governmental process – the National Council for Building a Better Fiji. I served as an unpaid advisor on parliamentary and electoral reform to the council. The output from that was a set of principles: the Peoples Charter for Change, Peace and Progress.

This charter formed the core of a process that the interim Government intended to unite Fiji through reforms to create a non-racial, democratic, corruption-free country liberated from its historical ‘coup culture’ and return it to parliamentary democracy.

There were difficulties implementing this.

On the interim government’s side, Australia and New Zealand were seen to be prejudicial to success as they appeared opposed to it in their actions and public pronouncements.

From Australian perspective, the council process was exclusionary; key actors were not included and it had too many interim government personnel associated with it. Moreover, the expulsion of members of diplomats and journalists made Canberra suspicious of the real intentions of the interim government.

I believe the relations between Canberra and Suva have been too dominated by reading motives into the actions of the other side without an adequate basis for their judgments.

Fiji military man a checkpoint in Suva during the December 2006 coup. (Photo: AAP/Mick Tsikos)

I have likened the deteriorating relationship to an increasingly bitter divorce. Both sides have focused more on their grievances than on opportunities for reconciliation. This reconciliation, however, can only be achieved when elections are held.

Australia’s problem is that the path to elections in 2014 as announced by the second Bainimarama Government in July 2009 is now set.

Continuing the estrangement Fiji does not advance Australia’s interest in an effective return to parliamentary democracy by a single day. The opportunities for assisting in this process diminish every day the entanglement continues.

In my view Australia really needs to rethink its approach to assisting the return to parliamentary democracy in Fiji. We are now much closer to September 2014 than we are to December 2006 … and the clock ticks on.

Richard Herr is Academic Director, Parliamentary Law, Practice and Procedure Course, Law School, and Honorary Research Associate, School of Government, University of Tasmania. He is also Adjunct Professor of Governance and Ethics, Fiji National University.
Snapshots: Her view of history

A simple happy snap – one of thousands acquired by School of English, Journalism and English Languages senior lecturer Nicola Goc at garage sales over the years – has inspired a new research project: Snapshot Photography and the Female Sense of Self. Dating from the 1920s or perhaps the early 1930s, it's a sunny example of vernacular photography – a pastime sparked by George Eastman's introduction of the Kodak camera (“you press the button, we do the rest”) in 1888.

It was the playful poses struck by the three bathing beauties – who, as the shadow reveals, are being photographed by a fourth female – which aroused Dr Goc’s curiosity. An intriguing inscription on the back reads: What do you think of Helen here?

“It was an image which spoke to what I was thinking about – with the advent of snapshot photography at a time when first-wave feminism was at its height, how did women choose to represent their sisters, their friends, themselves? And did they present themselves the same way in formal photographs or when men were taking the photographs. ‘Here three women are performing for the camera but the camera is not being held by a man; I’m sure that the snap is not intended for a male audience. They are just being themselves.”

The Kodak camera was a revolutionary invention: portable, affordable and empowering. Previously photography was the domain of the wealthy and middle classes. George Eastman made it accessible to the common man – and more importantly, the common woman.

“I don’t think anybody realises what a huge hit the Kodak #1 camera would be,” Dr Goc said. “Before then, photography was really complex, toxic and dangerous – it was an elite, rich male hobby. But thanks to Eastman, everyone could afford to capture themselves and their families, and their own interests, visually. “Men took amateur photography to the next level by joining camera clubs and taking aesthetically appealing images. It was left to women to take the snapshots, which were often poorly constructed but tell you so much about them and their lives.”

A dawning realisation for Dr Goc as she trawled op shops, garage sales and bookshops here, on the mainland and around the world, was that it was also the women who became the visual archivists. The family photo albums she picked up invariably bore a woman’s inscription.

Eastman recognised that very early on, hence the advent in 1893 of the Kodak Girl, a fashionable, young, vibrant and independent woman who often appeared in ads in a distinctive striped dress. Until the mid-1920s she roamed the world freely taking pictures.

The female sense of self in the late 19th century and early 20th century was also being influenced by another ground-breaking invention: the halftone reprographic process, which allowed photographs to replace sketches of women in display advertising and on the fashion pages of mass-circulation newspapers and magazines.

“We have this sense from formal portraiture of women in the late 19th century and early 20th century being rigid … that our great grandmothers were cardboard cut-outs,” Dr Goc reflects. “But in the snapshots they took of each other they did outrageous things – a 40-year-old woman with her legs up in the air, with another woman, pretending to be a wheelbarrow, for example.”

Of course these fun images didn’t make it into the family albums. “Women were doing their own gate-keeping – women still do. I’ve got boxes of snaps of women having fun but they are loose images. It seems they were consigned to shoe boxes rather than being added to albums for public or even family consumption.”

Dr Goc began collecting photographs at the age of 13, not long after she became the first person in her working-class family to get a camera, a Kodak Instamatic. Initially, her interest was in very early photography – that of the 1850s and 1860s – and she focussed on formal portraiture and those heavy leather family albums of the time. “I thought they were a window into another life.” Later her focus switched to the vernacular version.

“Snapshot photography is the one place where a media historian can look and say this is how people really were. It’s not an aesthetic creation, it has a wonderful authenticity – complete with unintended shadows and someone’s finger in one corner.”

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How parents help kids cope

Easing child anxiety: A new UTAS study by Dr Mandy Matthewson is investigating childhood anxiety.

IY CHERIE COOPER

UTAS PSYCHOLOGIST Dr Mandy Matthewson is calling for parents to be involved in a study on child anxiety.

Anxiety is one of the most commonly experienced psychological problems in primary-school-aged children, characterised by feelings of fear, unease and panic, though symptoms and levels of severity can differ from person to person.

According to Dr Matthewson children can build resilience to anxiety a number of ways, including support from their parents.

But is a mother’s support better than a father’s support, depending on the gender of the child?

Dr Matthewson’s latest research project, “Exploring Parental Influence on Childhood Anxiety and Self-Efficacy,” aims to find out.

She has previously investigated how the support of mums and dads relates to anxiety in boys and girls. Her research found that high levels of support from fathers influenced resilience to anxiety in both boys and girls.

Dr Matthewson also found effective communication from mothers helps resilience to anxiety in sons and support from fathers helps daughters cope.

“This relationship also appears to be mediated by parents’ own levels of anxiety,” Dr Matthewson said.

Dr Matthewson’s project will build on this research and further investigate mothers’ and fathers’ levels of communication, involvement and self-efficacy (coping strategies) and the effect this has on their children’s experiences of coping with anxiety.

“Through questionnaires and interviews, we hope to more clearly define why and how mothers and fathers each influence their children’s coping and resilience to anxiety.

“The project will examine, among other things, whether there are differences in the way mothers and fathers are involved with and communicate with their sons and daughters,” Dr Matthewson said.

“We will also look at whether parents’ own coping strategies influence their children’s anxiety and self-efficacy in different ways, depending on the gender of the child in relation to the parent.”

Biological parents who live with children aged between eight and 12 are being sought for this study. Participants (parents and children) will be asked to fill in questionnaires. For more information contact Dr Matthewson, ph 6226 2241.

AMC resources impress US fish expert

Australia’s fish farms impress: Fish immunology specialist Professor Ken Cain has spent five months on sabbatical at the Australian Maritime College.

While at UTAS Prof. Cain contributed to Prof. Nowak’s projects in mucosal immunity in fish, vaccine development for Yersiniosis in salmon and tuna immunology.

“I have been impressed with research at the National Centre for Marine Conservation and Resource Sustainability,” he said.

“The fish holding and laboratory facilities are impressive and essential for research conducted here.

“My time at UTAS was very productive; I hope to update course materials back in Idaho by including much more on Australian fish health issues and aquaculture opportunities and to establish collaborations to open up future opportunities between the two institutions.”

In a recent talk to staff and students Professor Cain highlighted the vital role of conservation aquaculture in managing fish stocks.

Funding the fight against cancer

Improving cigarette smoking quit rates: Dr Stuart Ferguson from the School of Pharmacy recently has received a grant for his research from Cancer Council Tasmania CEO Darren Carr.

Cancer Council grants

Early Career Researcher Small Grants

Professor Richard Tumer (Menzies Tasmania and Royal Hobart Hospital) – $12,000, Tasmanian Women’s Anal Neoplasia study.

Dr Jac Charlesworth – $14,000, epigenomics of familial prostate cancer.

Cancer Council Tasmanian NHMRC Reviewed Grants

Associate Professor Greg Woods – $70,000, evaluation of the ability of vitamin D and metalloclofenes to protect against UV radiation induced skin cancer;

Dr Jo Dickinson – $10,000, prostate cancer risk variants against UV radiation induced skin cancer;

Dr Stuart Ferguson – $15,000, development of vaccine for Yersiniosis in salmon and tuna;

Dr Joel Power – $10,000, epigenetic regulation of the leukaemia inhibitory factor receptor by RUNX1.

Dr Adele Holloway – $49,500, regulation of the leukaemia inhibitory factor receptor by RUNX1.

Associate Professor Greg Woods – $10,000, prostate cancer risk variants against UV radiation induced skin cancer.

Cancer Council grants

Improving cigarette smoking quit rates: Dr Stuart Ferguson from the School of Pharmacy recently has received a grant for his research from Cancer Council Tasmania CEO Darren Carr.
Collaring the elusive Tassie quoll

BY JANETTE BRENNAN

Criminal parents have an increased likelihood of producing criminal offspring, a study by the Tasmanian Institute of Law Enforcement Studies and the Australian Institute of Criminology recently found.

Study co-author Dr Vanessa Goodwin, a post doctoral fellow with TILES and the current Tasmanian shadow Attorney-General, said the research was based on six Tasmanian criminal families.

“The purpose of the study was to confirm that crime is concentrated in certain families in Tasmania,” Dr Goodwin said. “It also determines the respective influence of criminal mothers and fathers on the likelihood of their children becoming involved in crime.

“While the influence of criminal fathers on their sons has been demonstrated through other criminological research, a criminal mother’s impact on her children’s risk of offending has been less clear.

“The findings demonstrate that while the influence of the father’s criminality is strong for both sons and daughters, having a criminal mother will also increase the level of risk and there is a cumulative impact where both parents have a criminal record.”

For this project, the first of its kind in Tasmania, she used a collar made of soft suede to which two devices were attached: a VHF transmitter which sent a radio signal to allow her to track animals to their dens; and a GPS logger that recorded the location of animals every two hours for five days a week, and every twenty minutes two days a week.

Her aim was to collar mature females – the females being preferred as they tend to stick to their own patch, usually forest about two or three kilometres square, whereas the males are free-ranging.

But first she had to trap them. “In the first two weeks we were trapping about 20 devils a day. We trapped 19 male quolls before we caught a female big enough to collar.”

Ms Troy and her small team – a French intern and two volunteers, from Canada and the USA respectively, both with extensive radio tracking experience – spent 2½ months at Woolnorth. Working seven days a week they managed to trap and collar seven females, each wearing a collar for four weeks.

Having trialled a prototype collar at Bonorong Wildlife Sanctuary and satisfied the university’s Animal Ethics Committee that the quolls would not suffer or be imperilled, she was delighted with the outcome.

“We had no problems with the collars. The quolls were weighted twice during the four weeks that they wore the collars and all quolls either maintained their weight or gained weight. All the collars were retrieved.”

Ms Troy is now preparing to write her thesis, aided by “lots of GPS dots”. This could be one doctorate which partly came about through joining the dots.

The apple doesn’t fall far from the tree

BY PETER COCHRANE

The spotted-tail quoll may be the second largest of the world’s surviving carnivorous marsupials but that doesn’t mean it’s easy to find.

Zoology PhD candidate Shannon Troy realised just how elusive this creature is when she embarked on a project to place radio collars on quolls at Woolnorth on Cape Grim.

The spotted-tail quoll is, as described by Ms Troy, “fierce and mysterious”. Once inappropriately known as the tiger cat, it’s considerably bigger than the eastern quoll, with males weighing up to seven kilos. Solitary and nocturnal, it competes directly with the Tasmanian devil and eastern quoll for food.

Its rarity can be partly attributed to natural factors such as large area requirements and low reproductive rate, and partly to external factors such as habitat loss. Female spotted-tail quolls live on average for three years and do not usually breed until their second year, which may mean just one litter per female per lifetime.

Hitherto little was known about the creature’s foraging and denning habits in Tasmania, a gap in our knowledge that Ms Troy has sought to bridge. “The aim of my research is to firstly find quolls, and then try to figure out what habitat is critical to their survival,” she said.

The researchers worked on the conviction records of 714 people known to criminal justice professionals over a number of generations. All offences, even traffic offences, were included in the data. But the focus of the research was on serious crimes, such as assaults, car theft, some drug offences, destruction of property and unlawful possession.

The study found that a son with no criminal parents had an 18% likelihood of committing a serious offence … if both parents were criminals, the probability of the son having a criminal record was 67%.

For daughters of parents with no criminal records, the probability of her having a serious criminal record was 8%. The figure rose to 26% for daughters with a criminal father and 17% for those with criminal mothers. If both parents were criminals, the probability of the son having a criminal record was 76%.

In implementing these programs it is important to try and avoid labelling children as offenders or criminals to try and reduce the risk of a self-fulfilling prophecy.”
Australian historians to converge on Inveresk

BY SHARON WEBB

UTAS historians will take the lead at the four-day annual conference of the Australian Historical Association, to be held at the Inveresk campus from July 4.

Organiser and head of the School of History and Classics Dr Tom Dunning said around 250 historians from around Australia will attend what he called “very much a working historians’ conference” including historians from as far afield as the US and Finland.

One high point of the History at the Edge conference is sure to be a plenary session on the first full day, with the former Justice Michael Kirby speaking on Why Australia Doesn’t Have a Bill of Rights.

Other highlights include UTAS Professor Henry Reynolds speaking on Australia’s Love Affair with War in the conference’s final plenary session on The Big Questions for Australian Historians, and the 2011 Vogel Prize winner Rohan Wilson in conversation with Professor Ann Curthyys of the University of Sydney about his book about the Aborigines of north-eastern Tasmania, The Roving Party.

During the week interested historians will be treated to guided tours of midlands properties Pan-shanger and Connemara, both of which are not ordinarily accessible to the public.

With eight concurrent sessions taking place at any one time, venues across the School of Visual and Performing Arts and the School of Architecture and Design will be in use, with the conference dinner to be held in the Academy Gallery and diners surrounded by the current exhibition.

The focus of the conference will be Australian history with an even more definite emphasis on Tasmania.

National themes will encompass Australian masculinities, with papers on gentleman bushrangers, Marcus Clark and early colonial bohemia; Australian urban history and animal and plant stories with papers on the adoption of dogs by Tasmanian Aborigines and the decline of hemp cultivation.

Tasmanian themes will include new perspectives on Tasmanian Aboriginal history, with a paper by UTAS historian Dr Shane Breen on genocide in Australian history and another by noted University of Newcastle historian Professor Lyndall Ryan, where she questions whether the Black Line was an expensive mistake or a strategic success.

For Launcestonians a conference highlight will be a panel session on Anti-Transportation (in its Home City) with Professor Hilary Carey from the University of Newcastle examining the legacy of Reverend John West, anti-transportation campaigner, historian and first editor of the Examiner newspaper.

Dr Dunning said UTAS postgraduate students would have a significant role in presenting papers at the conference “because they are the historians of the future”.

AMC to host fluid mechanics conference

THE AUSTRALIAN MARITIME College will host national and international experts in the field of fluid mechanics when it holds the 18th Australasian Fluid Mechanics Conference (AFMC) in December 2012.

AFMC is a prestigious biennial conference series covering the general field of fluid mechanics in all engineering and scientific disciplines. It has been running since 1962.

The Australian Maritime Fluid Mechanics Society (AFMS) selected Launceston to host the event on the strength of AMC’s presentation and a comprehensive site review.

The conference will be chaired by AMC’s Caviation Research Laboratory Manager, Dr Paul Brandner.

“This is an exciting opportunity to internationally showcase Tasmania, the Australian Maritime College and the University of Tasmania, as well as host a memorable conference following the successful 11th AFMC in Hobart in 1992,” Dr Brandner said.

The conference website will be set up shortly with the first announcement to be made in June.

Adapting to change focus of maritime forum

2011 Maritime Forum delegates: Including Justice James Allop, AMC Board member and president, NSW Court of Appeal; Dr David Sterrett, chair; AMC Board; keynote speaker Mr Koji Sekimizu, director, Maritime Safety Division – International Maritime Organization, London; Professor Malek Pourzanjani principal, AMC; Graham Peachey, CEO, Australian Maritime Safety Authority. (Note: This list is the front row only)

KEY FIGURES FROM industry, government and academia discussed the issues facing the maritime industry at the 2011 Maritime Forum recently held at the Australian Maritime College.

Navigating Change examined proposed changes to Australia’s shipping policy and the opportunities and challenges they present.

Mick Finley of the Australian Maritime Safety Authority chaired the discussion, which featured presentations from major industry stakeholders, including the Maritime Union of Australia, Australian Shipowners Association and Brisbane Marine Pilot.

Other topics canvassed by guest speakers over the two-day forum included maritime policy, supply chain issues, regulatory reform, shipping logistics, shipping and the marine environment, port operations and contemporary issues in marine insurance.

Delegates also toured AMC and its training and research facilities.
Achievement

Bouquets

Sandra Bales

Sandra has been awarded the Robert Gatterby Memorial Trust Scholarship. Currently in the second year of her agriculture degree, she hopes to work as an advisor in north-eastern Tasmania specialising in animal nutrition. Sandra’s experiences on a Canadian beef and cropping farm and a Danish dairy farm helped her decide on a career in agriculture.

Damon Thomas & Grant Cooper

Damon and Grant are co-winners of the Brian Frikis Memorial Medal, awarded for the Bachelor of Education (Honours) graduate with the highest grade point average in their final year. Education faculty awards included in the dean’s honour roll were awarded at ceremonies in Burnie, Launceston and Hobart.

Morgan Pauley

Morgan is the 2011 winner of Southern Water Steve Balcombe Scholarship. Morgan is the eleventh recipient of the prestigious scholarship, established in honour of the inaugural Hobart Water chairman and UTAS engineering graduate Steve Balcombe. Morgan will receive $3000 a year from the scholarship during her engineering studies and will work at Southern Water during holidays.

Ocean wave energy

Research team: Professor Neil Bose, Mr Gregor Macfarlane, Dr Laurence Goldsworthy, Dr Tom Dennis.
Partners: Oceantire Limited.
The project: A team led by Professor Neil Bose of the Australian Maritime College will receive $342,000 over three years to develop an optimised design for ocean wave energy extraction devices, known as oscillating water columns. An oscillating water column uses a large volume of moving water as a piston in a cylinder. Air is forced out of the column as a wave rises and fresh air is drawn in as it falls. This air movement turns a turbine at the top of the column. The project is in an extremely important area for Australia because wave energy is an essential part of our low emissions energy mix and is important to our energy security,” Prof. Bose said.

Hydro turbines

Research Team: Dr Jane Sargison, Dr Alan Henderson, Dr Jessica Anderson, Dr Gregory Walker, Dr Marian Piekutowski.
Partners: Hydro Tasmania.
The project: The School of Engineering’s Dr Jane Sargison has been awarded $148,000 over three years to investigate the unsteady operation of hydroelectric turbines. The ability to rapidly start hydroelectric turbines is of significant value to electricity utilities as it provides the opportunity to sell ancillary services to the National Electricity Market in case of sudden increases in system load or the loss of generating capacity. The knowledge gained from Dr Sargison’s investigation will then be applied to developing control and operational methods for Hydro Tasmania to facilitate more efficient and rapid turbine loading.

Kakadu bushfires

Research team: Professor David Bowman, Dr Brett Murphy.
Partners: Kakadu National Park.
The project: The School of Plant Science has been awarded $60,000 over three years to explore how bushfires in northern Australia are impacting on biodiversity. The project will compare fire regimes and populations of a fire sensitive tree, Callitris intratropica, in Kakadu National Park to other areas in central Arnhem Land to see how fire management can be optimised to prevent further biodiversity loss.

‘This vital funding will help Tasmanian researchers working with industry and other partners to find tangible, workable solutions to real issues.’ — Senator Kim Carr

Queen’s birthday honour for designer of disability aids

BY LUKE SCOTT

THREE MEMBERS of the UTAS community were acknowledged in this year’s Queen’s birthday honours. Honorary research associate and visiting fellow, Dr Tony Sprent was made a Member of the Order of Australia and former senior educator.

Member of the Order of Australia: Dr Tony Sprent was recognised in the recent Queen’s birthday honours.

Over the years he has put his skills and knowledge to use in his workshop, designing and building precision instrumentation for a wide range of applications. Dr Sprent said he was particularly proud of his work as technical coordinator of TADTAS, a not-for-profit organisation dedicated to improving the independence, dignity and quality of life for people with disabilities by designing and building technical aids which are not normally available commercially.
Back on the open road for the dean

Prof. Allan Carmichael lives in a residential college with other students, many of whom are studying medicine. Interest squad, he switched from agricultural science to science then transferred to Monash University to study medicine.

“I was always interested in genetics and the most interesting genetics in those days were in medicine, particularly in child health and paediatrics.

I finished my degree and moved to the Royal Children’s Hospital and spent about 20 years there. I thoroughly enjoyed that time.”

In retirement Prof. Carmichael’s more official roles will be replaced by those of home renovator, bush walker, traveller and most importantly, grandfather to twins.

Professor Carmichael counts the growth of his faculty and course redevelopments as career highlights.

“The development of a Department of Rural Health, the Rural Clinical School and the facilities for those, as well as Medical Sciences 1 building in Hobart have been major pluses.”

“Growing up on a farm influenced my support of rural programs in Tasmania.”

And the love of motorbikes? “We were early to take on motorised equipment in farming. My father was one of the early farmers to use a tractor, instead of horses.

“When motorbikes came into vogue in the 50s he got one and I used it on the farm.”

A healthy career: Professor Allan Carmichael is retiring as dean but will take on new roles as grandparent, home renovator and motorbike mechanic. Allan is pictured with his 1976 Norton 850 Commando.

BY CHERIE COOPER

Allan Carmichael reckons it’s time to get on the road again.

As he retires from his role as dean of Health Science, Professor Carmichael will get to work restoring a couple of vintage motorbikes.

“One is from 1926 and it’s in rideable condition but it needs work.”

Once they are fixed he will take them out on the open road. Although he is retiring from his role as dean, Prof. Carmichael is not keen to stop work altogether.

He is scaling back to three days a week, working on faculty projects, doing medical education nationally, working on paediatric education and research — and seeing a few patients.

From a small boy living on a dairy farm in Victoria to dean of the Faculty of Health Science at UTAS, Professor Allan Carmichael has always known the value of hard work. To this day he says cows are “not his favourite”.

He came to Tasmania as Professor of Paediatrics and Child Health, which then was a department within the School of Medicine.

He was acting dean and head of that school in 1997 then was appointed to the combined role in 1998.

But he didn’t set out to study medicine.

“My mother strongly encouraged her children to go to university — unusual at the time as most boys left school and worked on the farm.”

At Melbourne University

Michael Schlitz teaches two printmaking classes at the UTAS School of Art and has been teaching, working and exhibiting through much of Australia and in Japan. At Melbourne University

“I was very lucky because these prizes are a lottery; it comes down to whether someone likes your picture and sees something in it,” he said.

“It’s a very subjective thing.”

Next year the prize will go to a self-portrait.

Michael said he spent the money on a printing press. While he still prefers to print by hand, the press will make his work more versatile.

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UTAS moves into Indiana Jones territory

Archaeology and Its Significance: Dr Geoff Adams is introducing the first archaeology course to UTAS in Semester 2, open to students of all disciplines.

In Semester Two this year, Archaeology and Its Significance is a second year course, open to students from any faculty. “We’re hoping for a broad range of students as possible, from a variety of disciplines,” unit coordinator Dr Geoff Adams said.

While other courses with archaeology aspects are taught at the university, this will be the first dedicated unit, but it assumes no prior knowledge of archaeology.

Dr Adams said it would introduce students to the types of methodology available comparing text and archaeology, looking at the pros and cons of each.

“We’re trying to get students to think for themselves,” he said.

The course will touch on Greek, Roman, Egyptian and Levant archaeology dating from 1000 BC through to 400 AD.

“It’s a fairly wide range of material,” Dr Adams said.

One topic of interest is the link between Greek historian Herodotus and the Scythian tombs in modern day Russia and the Ukraine. In these tombs the bodies of warrior women froze, preserving their skin. Archaeologists were able to see their henna style warrior tattoos and confirm Herodotus’ writing of the tattooed warrior women.

“The topics we’ve chosen for the unit are not only for methodological merit but also cultural interest,” Dr Adams said.

He said students seemed excited by the course.

Doctor Adams has worked at UTAS since 2008 and has participated in archaeolog-ical digs in Silchester and West Sussex in the United Kingdom and Pompeii in Italy. He is returning to Pompeii in August for a month.

Most of Dr Adams’ research is on material in Italy and Greece.

Enrolments in this course are now open. Contact the UTAS Info Centre on 1300 363 864 for more information.

UTAS books

Health and Well-being: A Social and Cultural Perspective

Edited by Dyeth Li, Department of Rural Health (Nova Science Publishers, 2011)

This book focuses on the social and cultural aspects of health and well-being in current societies and cultures. Traditionally health research has placed a greater emphasis on physical and clinical aspects such as diseases, medical treatments and rehabilitation. With an increasing interest in population health, particularly in the current context of globalization, the sphere of health research has been expanded to cover social and cultural factors which not only affect health conditions of individuals and communities but can also be determining health factors in some respects.

Everyday Life in British Government

By Rod Rhodes, School of Government (Oxford University Press, 2011)

In this new piece of political anthropology Rod Rhodes uncovers exactly how the British political elite thinks and acts. Drawing on unprecedented access to ministers and senior civil servants in three government departments, he answers a simple question: "What do they do?"

On the basis of extensive fieldwork, supplemented by revealing interviews, he tries to capture the essence of their everyday life. Rod Rhodes describes a storytelling political-administrative elite, with beliefs and practices rooted in the Westminster model, which uses protocols and rituals to domesticate rude surprises and cope with recurrent dilemmas.

Teaching Entrepreneurship to Undergraduates

By Colin Jones, Australian Innovation Research Centre (Edward Elgar, 2011)

The aim of this book is not to suggest what should be taught, or how to teach entrepreneurship (or enterprise) to undergraduates. Rather, it’s aim is to provoke deeper engagement with how to think about teaching entrepreneurship in higher education. It has already been acknowledged as the first book to attempt an in-depth exploration of both the philosophy and practice of entrepreneurship education with its unique emphasis not upon teaching but on processes of learning.

Considering Animals: Contemporary Studies in Human–Animal Relations

Edited by Carol Freeman, School of Geography and Environmental Studies; Elizabeth Leane, School of English, Journalism and European Languages; and Yvette Watt, Tasmanian School of Art (Ashgate 2011)

Taking their cue from the specific “animal moments” that punctuate our relationships with non-human animals, experts from the biological sciences, humanities and social sciences engage with issues and debates central to human-animal studies. Considering Animals brings together contemporary international case studies from across the globe that examine our interactions with animals. Given current discussions about the status of animals and the widespread extinction of species, this is an important and timely collection.
Looking to the laureates

BY FIONA HORWOOD

W hen Clare Smith found out she had been selected out of the 20,000 applications from around the world to go to the 61st Nobel Laureate Meeting in Lindau, Germany this year, she couldn't believe it.

Late last month 24 Nobel laureates and 570 young researchers from 80 countries met for a week to exchange ideas, discuss projects and build international networks. Only six Australians were selected by the Australian Academy of Science and the Nobel Laureate Committee to attend this year’s meeting, dedicated to physiology or medicine.

Clare Smith is a UTAS PhD student, currently completing her thesis into novel antimalarial treatments at the Menzies Research Institute Tasmania. Her interest in medical research began when she came to Menzies on work experience while in high school.

“I’m now deciding what to do after my PhD so I’m hoping to be inspired by the laureates,” she said before she left.

“I’m keen to meet Professor Peter Agre who received the 2003 Nobel Prize in chemistry for discovering aquaporin (the membrane protein that transports water in and out of cells of the body). He extended his studies of aquaporins to malaria and is now the director of the Johns Hopkins Malaria Research Institute in Baltimore, USA.

“He might have some good advice for a student in the malaria field!”

“Another laureate I would love to meet is the 2009 Nobel Prize winner, Professor Elizabeth Blackburn, a homegrown laureate.

“The Australian students heading over to the meeting are trying to organise a lunch with her so hopefully she will have some good stories and advice for us,” she said.

Clare is currently staying on after the Nobel Laureate Meeting to work at the Pasteur Institute in Paris during July and August.

“We have a close collaboration with Odile Pajalal, an internationally renowned researcher in malaria research, who I will work with at the Pasteur Institute. This will provide me with a great opportunity to work in an international lab, learn new skills, make collaborations of my own and complete a project I started as part of my PhD. This trip will be funded by the Austral-Europe Malaria Research Cooperation.

Clare was also recently awarded the Bede Morris Travelling Fellowship by the Australian Academy of Science. The fellowship is awarded annually to a scientist doing research in France and will help cover Clare’s living allowances while studying in Paris.

Sandra works on a better future

Looking for inspiration from the Nobel laureates:
Menzies Institute PhD student Claire Smith was one of only six Australians selected to go to the 61st Nobel Laureate Meeting in Lindau, Germany in June.

BY LUKE SCOTT

A SCHOOL OF HUMAN LIFE SCIENCES nutritionist Sandra Murray has taken a leap into celebrity after being selected to appear on the cover of this year’s northern Tasmanian phone directory.

The phone book cover recognises an individual each year by featuring them on the cover.

A spokesman for Sensis, which publishes the Yellow Pages, said the theme for the 2011 cover was ‘Australians creating a better future’ and Sandra’s selection was due to her passion to share and promote sustainable living alternatives.

As the Launceston facilitator of Transition Town, a global response to climate change and peak oil, Sandra helps bring local people together to instigate community-led sustainability programs throughout Launceston and northern Tasmania. One of the initiatives she has worked on is the establishment of communities which support residents wanting to grow their own organic produce.

“It is important to look after our communities now for future generations and I’m humbled to be recognised by Sensis as an Australian creating a better future,” she said.

In addition to her local work, Sandra was one of two Tasmanians selected to be trained by former US vice-president Al Gore in 2009 to deliver local presentations on climate change.

Yellow Pages marketing manager Rachel Pelle said the ‘Australians creating a better future’ theme was particularly relevant in the current environment.

“We felt Sandra was a great example [and] we are delighted to feature her on the cover of the 2011-12 Launceston directory,” Ms Pelle said.