

The last newsletter, with its focus on Gore High graduates in the church, featured the Rev Alex Barton, member of one of the school's most distinguished academic families. This edition looks at some of the school's law graduates, and foremost amongst these is George Barton. He tells the story of his education and outlines his career.

[photo]

The Barton family, Gore 1938: standing, left to right: Mary, Alex, Bob, James, George, Joan; seated: Jean, Rev Frazer Barton, Mrs Jeanie Barton, Frazer

Gore High and the Law

George Barton, Queen's Counsel

1937, the year I enrolled as a third former, was a time of change and impending crisis. On the world stage there was mounting concern about what appeared to be an inevitable war with Germany and Italy, although our mathematics master (Tommy Fyfe) expounded the view that New Zealand should as a priority prepare to meet the threat of a Japanese invasion.

At the national level the country was beginning to move out of the severe economic depression and the first Labour Government, soon to be re-elected into office, was expanding the system of social welfare and was shortly to introduce detailed social security legislation, which, incidentally, was hotly debated at school.

Within the school there were changes on many fronts. It was the first full year under the new rector, Mr Rowntree. The third form intake expanded beyond the traditional commercial and academic forms to include specific streams in Home Science, Trades and Rural. Mr Rowntree also introduced the house system. Traditional sporting competitions were retained, but contests were introduced between the houses in which collective activities were encouraged.

But in one respect there was a distinct break with tradition, not enthusiastically received in such a committed rugby stronghold as Southland, when Mr Rowntree introduced hockey as a boys' sport. Various hobby clubs were also introduced and Saturday evening badminton games in which Mr Rowntree and his wife participated. Finally, at the family level, 1937 was the year when my brother, Bob, left school to go and work on a farm in Waikaka Valley. Fortunately, two other older brothers remained, one of whom (Frazer) was a prefect and able, with pre-emptive advice, to steer me away from potential trouble.

Of the school buildings, the less said the better. Their inadequacies have been amply described in other reminiscences. But a school is more than buildings, much more. First the teachers: I always felt that I had a good relationship with them, although they may not always have seen it that way. As to the fellow students at the school, our situation was virtually unique: not only was the school co-educational, but there were boys and girls both from country and from town following in the one institution practical and commercial courses as well as theoretical and academic. There was no great run on Latin classes, but Latin was imaginatively taught by "Gaius" Patterson, with whom I often used to play tennis after school. Gore and the surrounding area was too small a catchment to justify having a separate school for Catholic pupils, so we had the advantage of a complete interdenominational education. Viewed in the round, Gore High in those days was truly a community school.

After four years at Gore High I moved to the Upper Sixth Form at Otago Boys High in Dunedin. The transition from a co-ed to a single sex school was relatively easy: I remain profoundly grateful for having had the experience of attending both types of schools. In my final year I boarded privately in accommodation shared first with Jim Wright, and later with Robert McBride, both ex-Gore High students.

For the next three years (1942-1944) I was a student majoring in Greek at the University of Otago, living at Knox College (where there were two other ex-Gore students, Bill Rowntree (son of the Rector) and Jack McQueen, both of whom were medical students). For two years I shared rooms in the College with Colin MacGibbon, also a medical student, who had been a contemporary in the Sixth. Later we were joined by Ewen Robertson, who after a short teaching career qualified and practised as a lawyer in Wellington and Lower Hutt before being appointed a District Court Judge.

In 1945 I moved to Wellington and, still being subject to the wartime Industrial Manpower Emergency Regulations, was employed in the Crown Law Office while enrolled at Victoria University College in the LLB course. At the end of the war, when the Manpower Regulations ceased to apply, I was able to work in a private law firm in Wellington until I graduated in 1948 with the conjoint BA. LLB degree in the University of New Zealand. In that year I had the great good fortune to have the opportunity to travel to England and to undertake research in International Law at the University of Cambridge under the supervision of the greatest international lawyer of the 20th century, Professor Hersch Lauterpacht. I had only recently married, so it was like a second prolonged honeymoon for my wife (Ailsa) and me.

After completing two years of study at Cambridge University leading to the PhD degree, I was offered a position in the Human Rights Division of the United Nations Secretariat at Lake Success on Long Island and later in Manhattan, New York. The work of the Division at that time was almost exclusively focused on the drafting of the International Covenant of Civil and Political Rights flowing from the Universal Declaration of Human Rights of 1948.

With our first son, who had been born in New York, we returned to New Zealand in 1952 to live in Wellington where we bought our first house from Jim and Lorraine (Cameron) Wright, who had been several years ahead of me at Gore High. I took up an appointment in the Faculty of Law at Victoria University College where, with the exception of a brief period as a partner in a law firm in Wellington, I remained for the next 24 years, first as Senior Lecturer, then as Reader in Law, and finally as Professor of Jurisprudence and Constitutional Law and taking my turn as Dean of the Faculty of Law.

My appointment at the University had included the right to practise as a barrister, and I availed myself of that right quite considerably. Over the years students have commented that they liked to think that with teachers exercising such a right they had the assurance that the teacher was looking beyond the purely theoretical to the practical disciplines of the subject being taught.

In 1976 I resigned from the University to devote myself exclusively to practise as a barrister, primarily, of course, in New Zealand, but also appearing as counsel in the Judicial Committee of the Privy Council in London and in cases in the courts in Samoa, the Cook Islands, Nuie, Sabah, and Sarawak.

Disappointingly, it is rare for me to meet many old friends from the School, but I frequently see Derrick and Brian Scobie (fellow members at St Ninians Uniting Church, Karori, Wellington), and Honor (Smith) Brown at Kiwitea, Feilding; and I

have been very pleased in recent years to renew friendships with Ngaire (Watson) Pryce in Blenheim, and June (Eastwood) McClure, who died earlier this year. ♦

A lawyer on board

George Barton initially set out to write about GHS law graduates of older generations, but no one could come up with enough names. There was Hallam Smith (LL.B. Otago 1935) Keith Monaghan, who practised at Edendale and Ewen Robertson, mentioned here as a district court judge.

Hallam might have put this shortage of lawyers down to the standard of Latin teaching at the school in his day -- he passed all his other matriculation subjects in the fifth form but failed Latin twice and had to go to John McGlashan for his senior year, which must have been embarrassing for his father as chairman of the board.

McGlashan not only delivered the necessary Latin pass, but he also began his legal papers there. George Barton's comments suggest things had much improved by his day.

Where there has been a strong relationship between the legal profession and the school's Board of Governors.

One way or another, members of the same firm were associated with the board almost continuously from 1911 to 1998, each recruiting the next young family man to take his place.

It began with E.C. Smith, a passionate believer in education -- he would have been the first generation of his family to get to secondary school -- who joined the board even before he had children, and served from 1911-48, with 38 years in the chair. He died in 1947 after one last gruelling trip to Wellington, not knowing the board had finally been successful in gaining a long-overdue replacement for a school facility. His son Hallam served 1953-70, persuading Harry Barton to take his place, 1970-82. Hallam felt strongly that the board (and also the borough council) needed a lawyer to keep them out of trouble legally, Harry says. He agreed, and on retirement persuaded Alan Gray to stand for the board. Alan served 1982-98, and was consequently involved in assisting the school through the Tomorrow's Schools reforms in 1989 and the founding of the Board of Trustees. He was co-opted to the BOT after his sons David, Roger and Michael left school.

Alan Gray died in 2000 after a heroic battle with illness, and warm tributes were paid to him as a senior member of the Southland law scene, and for his strong sports and community involvement. He had come to Gore in 1961 to work for the firm then known as Smith and Barton, which evolved through various partnerships, until founding AB Gray and Associates (now continued by David Gray, see p.5) in 1986. He was a strong supporter of the school, and his family says he gained great satisfaction from his involvement with its successful operation and management. A keen cricketer, rugby player and deerstalker, Alan was also very involved in his boys' sporting careers, and consequently in athletics coaching and administration. ♦

From the Rector's Desk

Greetings from Gore. I have just completed my first 6 months as Rector. In writing this report it is with both gratitude and a sense of relief that I reflect on the achievements of this half year.

There have been many changes. The school's senior management team has a new look, with Jackie Barron, Melanie Hamilton, Jeanette Bell and myself. We began the year with a retreat where we set the main direction for 2003 and worked through our various leadership roles.

The roll has increased for the first time in several years, to 577 New Zealand and 24 international students. This has brought extra staffing and funding which gives the school more flexibility to implement initiatives.

The junior school has taken on a new focus as we reward students for exhibiting the essential learning skills, such as cooperation, organization, being on time, communicating and engaging in their learning. At the end of the first reporting period, only 5% of year 9 (third form) students were not performing at the required level to graduate to year 10 next year. The Junior Graduation Programme is certainly motivating our young people in their learning.

Last November, the school was successful in contesting some significant funding from the Ministry of Education to enhance our provision for students with special learning needs. We have established a Learning Centre, which, when fully operational, will help students with needs as diverse as reading to connecting to a polytechnic course or a tertiary paper from Massey University.

This is the first year in the history of education in New Zealand that schools are having to account for the achievement of their students to both the community and the government. To this end, Gore High School has established four general learning goals for 2003. They are:

- Implement the Junior Graduation Programme at Year 9.
- Develop a school-wide literacy strategy.
- Develop a mentoring programme that enhances relationships within the school and between the school and the community.
- Enhance relationships between the school and the Maori community and the general appreciation of Maori culture within the school.

The year 13 students (7th formers) have all taken on leadership responsibilities with juniors or primary school students. This involves anything from tutoring reading with an eight-year-old, to coaching a basketball team. Various leaders and celebrities such as Bill English, Jo Seagar and Ruth Aitken (Silver Ferns' coach) have visited the school and spoken to the students about mentoring and leadership responsibilities. The PTA held a very successful fundraiser in the school hall on March 28th. It was the "Great Debate". Ian Tulloch chaired the teams as they debated whether or not "the students of today have it too easy". The affirmative consisted of Bill English, Jackie Barron and Paul Johnstone and the negative, Eric Roy, Penny Simmonds and Bruce McPherson. In the midst of much confusion and hilarity, it was often difficult to discern who was arguing what! The event was fully supported by the community with the hall bursting with both people and laughter. It was a wonderful evening and a credit to the effort of the PTA.

If you have friends who get *The Ensign*, then you may want to ask them to send you some of our fortnightly publications by our Journalist Club. We are buying space to both profile the school and give our journalists the experience of presenting their work to the local community.

I hope you enjoy this issue of the Foundation newsletter. The first prominent lawyer associated with the school would have been Robert McNab, the son of Alexander McNab after whom the McNab house was named. Robert helped establish the school in 1908. I have recently profiled this family in the school as part of a series of

assemblies in which the origins of our House system; Anderson, Cargill, Hunter and McNab will be articulated.

If you would like to visit the school or correspond with me please feel welcome to do so. My email address is ecrosbie@gore-high.school.nz

Eoin Crosbie

These days law is a common destination for Gore High graduates -- last year three Year 12 students indicated that's where they were heading. Here are stories of two young women who both graduated from GHS in 1997, Rebecca as dux.

Rebecca Laing

Why I made the shift to Christchurch to study law and commerce at the University of Canterbury is still a little of a mystery to me. All I can say is that I had always wanted to be a lawyer and I did not want to follow the crowd and go to Dunedin. Besides, I like good weather.

Law was at once fascinatingly like what I had thought it would be, and yet, totally alien.

In first year it is a process of elimination more than the study of the true substance of the law. There are too many people wanting to give law a dabble, so the universities cull a little at first year. They mainly do this by the process of eliminating people who do not want to do a whole lot of reading and effort. It is a useful process as the rest of the degree is exactly about these elements. If you work and put in the hours, it is not that difficult, and sometimes, can even be fun.

Not that you could survive without social events. Straight law could kill you. That is where the second degree, sport and numerous social clubs kick in – BBQs take on a new light – they can start at noon and do not have to involve food (unless it's a poorly cooked sizzler) or sun. Going to a hall was the best idea out for me as it was this atmosphere that highlighted the wonders of the social life available at Canterbury. It's less in your face than Dunedin, but the fun is there if you wish to find it. A hall is also a great place to find a partner as it turns out... which leads into why I have now relocated to Wellington. It could have been because of a fantastic job offer with Buddle Findlay, but it probably wasn't.

Not that the job offer with Buddle Findlay came off. I was made aware of the harsh realities of law and contract quickly. Being made redundant before you start, but after you relocate, can do that. The lessons kept coming though, as fantastic people and a little stress-motivated action soon resulted in another fantastic job offer with Chapman Tripp. I'm soon to find out about real law work when I finish the professional's course in April, get admitted as a solicitor (after 5 years and 3 months of effort have resulted in a Human Resources Commerce degree and a first class honours law degree), and start work. I have summer clerked with Anderson Lloyd, and then Buddle Findlay, but I'm still certain I have a lot of lessons to come. That's the thing with law as a career – it is always challenging you. ♦

Hilary Grant

I was Otago-bound for five years at university, what seemed then to be an eternity. Making the cut at the end of my first year it was confirmed – I was set for a law degree and to enter second year law (the hardest year of my life!).

At the end of my third year I managed to find myself a summer job with Kevin Phillips at Macalister Todd Phillips Bodkins in Queenstown to gain that invaluable “work experience” that every employer wants you to have but is not willing to give you! I spent the first few days sitting at my desk wondering what the purpose of university was when it had failed to teach me the fundamentals of what I really needed to know to be able to practise. By the end of the summer however I had gained an insight into the legal profession that produced an eagerness keen enough to see me return for another stint at Mac Todd the following summer.

At the start of my degree, I had thought it could only be the result of some small miracle that I would flounder my way through to the end of those five years to emerge as a qualified solicitor. In hindsight it is hard to believe I am now out in the work force. My time at university flew and given half chance I would go back and do it all again – who wouldn't go back to repeat the best years of their life?

I now have a job in Christchurch at Duncan Cotterill Solicitors on the litigation team doing a variety of work and will be admitted to the bar in September. The learning curve is massive but the experience I gained over my summers working has been invaluable. I love the job and couldn't ask for a more approachable, supportive, realistic and professional environment to work in. ♦

Rebecca Moody (nee Tulloch)

My life at GHS began in 1991 and ended in 1995 when I finished 7th form and couldn't stay any longer. I enjoyed a great life there (although options were limited as both my mum and dad went to GHS) and made some very good friendships. From GHS I went to University of Otago, originally to study accounting, but found this was too boring, so I studied Law instead. I did however get my accountancy fix by marrying an accountant, farming boy Aaron Moody, when I was 21.

After completing university and being admitted to the bar in May 2000, Aaron (regrettably a Menzies graduate!) and I came to London. Aaron works at Westminster and I have worked on Fleet Street for the last 3 years at Freshfields Bruckhaus Deringer, an international law firm. I work in Litigation and help run our Support department incorporating 45 staff, 40 paralegals and 5 IT staff, specializing in disclosure and trial preparation.

We offer our clients a case document management and paralegal service. The document management service includes a team project managing the documents of large cases. The paralegal team, including some NZ/Australian law graduates with working visas, scan and input documents into databases, review documents, prepare document bundles for Court, proof read and deal with general case administration.

Freshfields cases are generally very large, and therefore the most effective means of document management and exchange is electronic, utilizing databases for case management and the storage of large quantities of data. Documents are scanned and input into databases that are specifically created for each case, which are then used to produce disclosure lists. Multi users in different countries can search and sort the

data, viewing actual documents and running a variety of standard and customized reports.

It's a 45-minute endurance tube ride into work but London has its compensations with amazing career, travel and money opportunities. Although we are both permanently employed and Aaron travels extensively with his work, we travel as often as we can and try to enjoy what the UK has to offer culturally, right down to our local church which boasts 52 nationalities.

London is a very transient place, but you'll always find an ex-GHS pupil trying their luck in the big smoke somewhere.

Other young law graduates include two from the class of 1987:

Former head boy Craig Copland is now a senior tax manager with PricewaterhouseCoopers, Dunedin, in the Taxation Services area. The tax discipline enables him to use both his law and commerce degrees in applying relevant tax legislation and cases to business situations, Craig says.

Former deputy head girl Elsja Kinley (nee Fettes) is currently a full-time mother-at-home to two children after working for several years for a Dunedin law firm.

Also in Dunedin is Paul Buckner, a partner at Downie Stewart

Going back a little further:

David Gray

David (GHS 1976-80) says one of the reasons he chose law was observing what his father, Alan Gray, did professionally.

"I liked the fact that he was able to make things work for people. This was usually in a farming or property context, but could be about disagreements, or connected with business. I enjoyed the fact that the law could be used to make a certain transaction happen, to help solve someone's problem."

David's first job, while still at university, was working with his father, then with a large law firm at Wellington where he was involved with the legal work for some very large companies, and later with general practices at Alexandra and Queenstown. He comments: "Today I still consider that my job is to make things happen for people and to protect their interests. In Gore I am involved with property, farming, business, trusts, estates and numerous other things that a lawyer will deal with in general practice. To a large extent these have not changed over the years, but how much work needs to be done depends on the state of the economy. Of course there have been changes to the law to be taken into account, and you are always coming across unique circumstances. This makes the practice of law particularly challenging, and rewarding."

David, who fitted providing this contribution in amongst duckshooting and professional commitments, is a supporter of his hometown's attractions and amenities, including its many sporting and recreational opportunities. "It offers good schooling, is a reasonably busy hub of a greater rural catchment, it's safe, and a good place for my family," he says. ♦

Virginia Wilson

It's always risky to suggest someone was the first, but it does seem likely Virginia Wilson was the first girl from GHS to venture into law school.

She certainly had no role model from family or community, but it was rector Doug Olson's suggestion that she should do a combined arts and law degree at Otago University and see where it led. Virginia was fairly sure she didn't want to teach, and wanted "something more" than just an arts degree. Her speech teacher Mrs Sanders added further encouragement.

Looking back now on a career mostly in property law, Virginia feels she might have been better with a commerce degree, but this would have been even more difficult at the time, given the relatively unsupportive social environment at the university. It was hard enough going at the law school for an 18-year-old girl in 1967, where she never had more than four women students in a class.

"It was quite daunting," she says.

Nearly forty years later, Virginia looks back at huge changes in the profession as far as attitudes to, and opportunities for, women are concerned. It's not just there are more women, she says.

"They seem so self-assured and accomplished at what they do. They're lovely girls and they've had the benefit of a wider variety of subjects to choose from."

The course was very standardised in the past. New areas of legal practice have also evolved, with interests like intellectual property and environmental law, and now practitioners have backgrounds as diverse as science or technology.

Virginia is a partner in the practice Eagles, Eagles and Redpath in Invercargill. ♦

Jane McMeeken

There is no doubting however that Jane McMeeken is the first girl from GHS to become a judge, and that right now she is one of only three women judges in the South Island. Recently transferred to Christchurch from Whangarei, Jane says she is thrilled to be back down south, even if noticing a slight drop in temperature.

Jane got her start in the law because it fitted in with her commitment to sport. She wanted to play serious basketball at university, and the Legal Systems paper fitted the right timetable slot. Law had never been suggested at school, but Jane says she had been given the message she was capable of doing more than just a B.A., and timetable demands for medicine and dentistry didn't look so accommodating.

Thus are careers built.

Then during her first year she holidayed with UNICOL hostel friend Bridget Beattie, whose father (later Sir David Beattie) was a high court judge. He spoke very seriously to these two young students about the importance of women studying law, then entering the profession in positions that were very publicly visible. Law should be seen to be more representative, he said. He was very encouraging of the idea of studying criminal law.

“I had no perception of what he was talking about at the time, but it struck a chord,” Jane says.

“He was my first mentor, and he was very happy when I was appointed a judge.”

Jane works in both the District Court and the Family Court. Her mother, Lynley McMeeken, has also returned south to Christchurch. ♦

Doug McPhail

It's a long way from a farm boy from Waikaka Valley to sitting in the GATT trade rounds, working for the U.K. diplomatic service as a delegate for Hong Kong. Doug McPhail says this is the thought that crossed his mind during his nine-year career working for the Hong Kong government as a trade lawyer. This was the second of what he describes as three careers, beginning with working for State Advances in Invercargill, after law school and three years OE. Fed up with that, he applied for a job with Maori Affairs in Rotorua. Then on to Hong Kong, followed by nine years as a legal adviser to the Rural Bank.

For the last 10 years he's been in private practice in Wellington as a specialist in Maori Land Law -- he's also the author of a text on this subject.

Why law? That's another of the things he used to ponder in Geneva, Doug says. But as the third son in a farming family, his services were not required on the farm, and he was free to think of other things. The other students who graduated from Gore High in 1958 (Rory Gollop, Joy Allan, Colin Downes, Geoff Soper, Bruce Timpany, Murray Speden and Gordon Gardiner) have all done interesting things, he says.

Besides that textbook, Doug has recently published a book of poetry, illustrated by his artist sister Heather Baskeville-Robinson. Brother Neil still lives in Gore, Ewen is in Mosgiel, and Anne in Wanganui. ♦

Other known ex-GHS lawyers include Doug McPhail's contemporaries **Bruce Timpany** (now running a law firm in Timaru); **Ross McLennan** from Matakura who is a lawyer with the police; **Warren Taylor** -- who had only one year at GHS, but several years in practice in Gore with the firm then known as Smith, Barton, Gray, Brown and Taylor. He moved to Christchurch and thus did not inherit the firm's service on the board.

Another lawyer whose name frequently appears in southern 'social notes' is Queenstown-based criminal lawyer **Kevin Phillips** (graduated from GHS 1967), whose extremely busy court schedule prevented his completing a planned contribution to this newsletter.

The School by the River 1937 [photo]

Fifth year Otago University medical students' social medicine research essays held at the Medical School Library provide some wonderful insights into New Zealand society -- and the minds of medical students. This 1937 essay by ex-Gore students N.D. (Digger) McCreath and B Nixon "A Health Survey of the Town of Gore, N.Z." contained the following assessment of the school. Whether there was any tongue-in-cheek in the writing is hard to say, (the essays appear to be deadly serious) but surely the writers in this case took pleasure in slating the classroom conditions and reporting on their old teachers:

The High School is situated on the west bank of the Mataura River some 30-40 yards north of the traffic bridge. This situation is most unsuitable for a high school as it is low lying, damp and cold. There are three buildings, the main building, which is of brick, and two smaller buildings, one of brick, the other wood. Both boys and girls attend the school, and in the standard academical subjects, they are taught together. Average attendance for last four years --Girls 126, boys 128, total 254

STAFF: There are 13 on the regular staff -- 7 men (including the Rector) and 6 ladies, and they impressed us as being a fine class of teachers.

CLASSROOMS: The classrooms with the exception of two cannot be praised in even one respect. The worst fault is undoubtedly the lighting. In quite half of these rooms, artificial light is used all winter. Not only that, but the windows are placed at the back of the rooms with the result that the pupils cast shadows over their work and the teachers have to face the light all day. The ventilation in some of the rooms is, we consider, quite inadequate. Nor is the heating exempt from criticism. Each classroom is heated by a coal stove placed in one corner of the room. The heat given off is unevenly distributed and no attempt is made to regulate the humidity of the atmosphere. The teachers all complain of the very dry heat in the rooms. The wooden building previously mentioned was built some seven years ago, and consists of two classrooms which are very much superior to the other classrooms. The lighting is from the sides, ventilation is excellent and altogether these rooms are much more pleasing.

On the whole the classrooms are depressing and must be prejudicial to the health of the pupils.

In previous years the school uniform has not been insisted upon, with the result that the pupils have had rather a motley appearance. This year it is being insisted upon however and the adoption of a school uniform will no doubt raise the tone of the school. [Another of Mr Rowntree's reforms, no doubt, but also a reflection of the end of the depression years.]

We are informed that a new school will shortly be built near the present Hostel buildings. The present school buildings, in view of the situation, condition of the classrooms, and smallness of the grounds, are definitely unsuitable.

The proposal to build an up-to-date school close to the Hostel is to be strongly recommended. The present staff and far-sighted Rector teaching the many subjects on the curriculum in the happier surroundings of a modern school and boarding establishment surrounded by excellent playing areas would do much for the advancement of the mental and physical welfare of the young people of this district. ♦

Fish and Chips

News of Tony Woodbury in the last newsletter roused memories for many of John Gillies, for as new teachers together in 1958 they became collectively known as "Fish and Chips".

John, who left at the end of 1963 for South Otago, had two terms in the inspectorate, helped inaugurate Kingswell, and ran Central Southland College in Winton for eight

years, has found useful retirement occupation in helping his wife Noeline with her art classes. "From principal to dogsbody" he calls it.

He recalls how well built GHS was -- the only way he could create access for the bees to the hive he kept in his science lab was by boring a hole in the window frame. Many years later, as inspector, he was able to ask the new incumbent of his classroom "What vandal would put a hole in the window like that?"

The Gillies are now retired to Rangiora ("We like small towns"), where Noeline takes 60 children a week for pottery, painting and drawing. ♦

John Grigor -- Remembering a talented teacher

News of ex-Gore High people sometimes filters through only very slowly, but students from 1959-62 will be sad to hear of the premature death of John Grigor in 1999. Gore High was John's first teaching post, and wife Judy says he really valued those years under the guidance of HOD Mac McCartney, a wonderful boss and friend. "He really set John up as a secondary teacher," she said.

John rose to increasingly senior teaching positions, undertaking the challenges that included a major building programme in the expansion of Waimate High and being principal of Aranui High with 2000 plus students and 80 staff. After his appointment as principal of Oxford Area School (he wanted to also work with primary children before retirement) he was also seconded to train Boards of Trustees in financial management for Tomorrow's Schools.

The Grigors took early retirement, going back to Judy's patch at Gore Bay, where they built their own house, and travelled overseas, before John lost his battle with leukaemia. ♦

Joe Butler's Memorial Garden

This story appeared as a gardening feature in the *Southland Times* and is not in the printed version of the newsletter.

[photo]

The memorial garden is a place for quiet reflection

Who wouldn't like to be memorialised in a garden?

Gardeners often nurture – or gift to others – plants with special memories of family and friends, maybe grandma's favourite sweetheart rose, or something with an evocative name, like the red rose "Loving Memory".

But a whole garden – that's a much rarer phenomenon.

Such a garden was dedicated in Dunedin last weekend, located in the grounds of Mercy Hospital in Roslyn.

It also provides an interesting example of matching design to site, and to personal memories and the special needs of its users.

The story behind it is sad: the very premature death a year ago of Joe Butler, remembered in Southland from the 1980s as a gifted teacher, and more recently in Dunedin as a bright light on the legal scene.

Before he died, Mr Butler and his wife, Denise, talked about a gift to the hospital in thanks for the care received there.

They thought of a painting, but staff suggested this project instead, having noted Mr Butler loved to get outside, and the difficulty once he was wheelchair-bound. Mercy Hospital has beautiful grounds, featuring mature trees, rhododendrons, camellias and magnolias, but the land is steep, and there are few sitting-out spots. Access was therefore a primary consideration in creating a semi-secluded corner for peaceful reflection, with plants chosen for colour and fragrance, for their personal associations, and to match the wider setting.

The project was a collaborative effort by family members, under the technical direction of brother-in-law Alan Dippie, of Nichols Garden World.

He describes it as an excellent site, in an elevated position like a little lookout, set against a backdrop of established rhododendrons and feature trees.

Immediately behind is a mature lime tree, which will add its own special beauty through the seasons, and alongside an existing bed of annuals, currently set with ornamental kale and polyanthus.

The access path winds only slightly down to the sunny, north-facing seating area, which is partly enclosed by trellises, soon to be smothered in clematis.

Mrs Butler found the Oamaru stone sculpture centrepiece, entitled “Lily”, by Janine Weir, after months of searching.

The planting colour scheme is restful, with mainly soft muted tones, including the Sisters of Mercy’s old favourites, camellias and lavender, and irises, which had special meaning for the Butlers themselves.

Boronia, daphne, jasmine, wallflowers (both yellow moonlight and lavender coloured) scented clematis, and of course the lavender hedge, are generous in their fragrance, along with weeping maples (both green and burgundy), Shirotae flowering cherry trees, and, of course, roses: Peace, Heritage, Warm Wishes and Just Joey.

There are also leucodendrons, which should thrive in the drier conditions, and can be cut to take inside.

Together, the language of the flowers and the inscription on the sculpture, “May the day never burden,” offer comfort and inspiration.

“I think it would be something Joe would be proud of,” Mrs Butler says.

Even before final completion, the garden began to be used by staff having their lunch, patients getting fresh air, and families just waiting.

Mercy hospital chief executive Michael Woodhouse says Mr Butler was already well known at the hospital as a member of the ethics committee, even before he became a patient.

The garden was a practical and generous gesture, “but more than that, it captures the essence and personality of Joe himself. ... It is a permanent memorial to a popular and loved patient and friend.”

The Mercy gardens are primarily for patients and their families, but members of the public often come to enjoy them, especially in spring when the garden is at its most colourful. ♦

Off to London: Debra Roy

[photo]

If Debra Roy thought getting to the Genesis National Science and Technology Forum in Auckland during her summer holidays was a once-in-a-lifetime experience, then what comes next should be out of this world.

At the forum she was chosen as one of two New Zealand reps to go to the London International Youth Science Forum from 23 July to 6 August.

The annual Genesis forum brings together 136 bright young teenagers for an intense academic programme taught by top university lecturers at several tertiary institutions, supplemented by visits to sci-tech companies

The programme was an eye-opener on potential applications of science and technology to real-life situations, Debra said. The lessons were practical, and sometimes involved the use of some very hi-tech equipment, as in a lecture on separating serum protein by electrophoresis. In a psychology class on the physiology and function of the brain, she got to hold a real human brain; and at Medlab Debra observed samples of different diseased blood cells under a microscope.

Visiting Genesis Technology revealed the importance of genetic research and engineering to New Zealand, she said. One example is the need in the forestry export industry to grow better quality wood more intensively to keep up with the world-wide market.

“Seeing the manufacturing of humidifier packs for respiratory systems at Fisher and Paykel Healthcare made me realize how much research and engineering goes into producing a small piece of equipment. It made me appreciate the development and engineering put into everyday devices around me.”

The Genesis programme also included plenty of social and sporting activities, and Debra was pleased to meet others who will be doing the Health Sciences Course at Otago University next year. She also represented the Forum in a live interview with Mike Hosking on the TV show Breakfast.

In London she will be one of 250 students from 50 countries, attending lectures by world-recognized scientists, visiting science museums and research and industrial establishments, like the Royal Hospital of St Bartholomew. They will also have the opportunity to visit universities like Oxford and Cambridge, go sight seeing and go visit the theatres.

The other student chosen is Ben Dunn, son of two ex-GHS students Helen (Voss) and the Rev Peter Dunn of Waipu.

“They chose two country bumpkins!” Debra said.

But they are also two young people very ready to step forward and take their place in the scientific world, as Debra’s summary of her Genesis experience shows.

“I am filled with confidence and motivation to enter into a future career involved in science, particularly in the field of medicine.”

Debra was sponsored to the Genesis Forum by the Rotary Club of Gore. ♦

International teaching award: David Ryan

[photo]

Last November David Ryan, now Professor of Operations Research and former Head of the Department of Engineering Science at the University of Auckland, received the prestigious international INFORMS award for the teaching of OR/MS practice. (OR is the mathematical engineering underpinning complex operations such as airline schedules.) This was the first time the award from the professional association has gone outside the US.

The citation for the award states David Ryan has inspired and educated a generation of successful OR/MS practitioners in New Zealand and throughout the world.

“Under his leadership, the University of Auckland attracted world-class faculty and developed superb graduate and undergraduate programs in operations research. The hallmark of the group is research and teaching driven by real problems, standing on a tripod of theory, practice and implementation. In Professor Ryan’s approach to OR education, real problems are used to motivate methodology that is introduced with humor, intuition and rigor. As one student put it, “in virtually every lecture, he would mention some of the real applications he was working on, while still presenting the material in a rigorous manner. We learned the mathematical concepts, what they mean and how they are used.”

Many of Professor Ryan’s former students are OR practitioners in industry, and a few are themselves teachers of OR practice. They all cite his infectious passion and boundless enthusiasm as instrumental in their educational and career choices.

For more information see:

www.informs.org/Prizes/TeachingORPracticePrizeDetails.html#2002

David attended Gore High for his senior years 1961-2, then did an MSc at Otago, a PhD at ANU in Canberra, then a fellowship at Harwell Atomic Research Centre in the UK. before returning to New Zealand. Despite the commercial opportunities in his line of work, he has preferred to stay with teaching; his nomination for the INFORMS award came from his former PhD. students, 20 of whom attended the ceremony.

David’s parents, Tom and Marjorie were in Gore recently on a caravanning holiday, from Tauranga, clearly enjoying their retirement, and singing the praises of the south. Tom was First Assistant (deputy rector) 1961-65. A tremendous number of very high achievers come out of schools like Gore, he says.

He went from Gore to Tokoroa, not an up-market school, yet 18 of its staff went on to head other schools.

While Tom says he didn’t understand a word of the lecture David delivered at the INFORMS ceremony, he was enormously proud that the award was for teaching.

Tributes from students included comments like, “I was a mediocre maths student until I met Professor Ryan.” Teaching is in the family. Seven out of ten in the next generation of Ryans and their spouses work in education. Graeme, who also attended GHS, is head of a Taupo school, though Alison broke the mould and went nursing. ♦

Gore (Main) School 125th Jubilee

Labour Weekend, 2003

24, 25, 26 October

Many ex-GHS pupils will have had their primary education at Gore Main School, which celebrates its 125th jubilee at Labour Weekend. Gore Main functioned as a district high school up to 1908, and was the parent school to GHS.

CELEBRATION PROGRAMME

Friday night:

7-11pm St Andrew’s Hall, registration, get-together, supper

Saturday:

10am-12 at the school, more registrations,

1.30-4.30pm Roll call, decade photos, etc

7.30pm -- Croydon Lodge buffet dinner

Sunday:

9.30am church service at St Andrews, followed by lunch in the hall

Registrations close 31 AUGUST 2003

Forms and details available from The Secretary

Gore 125th Jubilee

Gore Main School

Ardwick Street

GORE

Telephone: 03 208 7615 Fax: 03 208 1715

www.goremain.school.nz

office@goremain.school.nz