OUR DIPLOMATS
Working for Australia

A LIFE IN MEDICINE
UTAS doctors worldwide

THE HUTCHINS SCHOOL
the School for boys

TO BOOK A TOUR CONTACT: Emma on 6221 4236 or email emma.griffiths@hutchins.tas.edu.au

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Contents

3–5  A life in medicine
3  Selena Saykao, Tanzania
   Mansoor Mirkazemi, Australia
4  Zul Yaa kob, Malaysia
   Ann Sullivan, UK
   Joyce Thomas, USA
5  Richard Scolyer, Australia
   Frances Watkins, Australia

6  UTAS in journalism
Martinkus docos show reality of Afghanistan war

7–9  Alumni News Big Read
Artist Ron Brooks

10  New graduates
Paramedic graduates ride into the bush

11  Emphasis on environment
Nathan Bindoff: Scientific storyteller is lead IPCC author

12–13  Extreme Weeder raft the Franklin

14–19  Our diplomats
14  Julie Heckscher, Singapore
   Ben Rhee, Israel
15  Mark Pierce, India
16  Joanna Adamson, Ghana
17  James Wise, Thailand
   Lauren Bain, Indonesia
18  Geoff Tooth, Kenya
19  Peter Heyward, Pakistan
   Katie Hamilton, UK
20  Bruce Edwards, Afghanistan
21  Heidi Bootle, New Caledonia

22  Research at IMAS
23  Research at TIA

24–28  Keeping in touch
24  Denis Kosta: Relaxing with war games
25  Eoin Breen: The great scholarship hunter retires
26  New overseas exchange scholarship
   Arthur Cobbold Memorial Lecture Appeal
27–28  Six Degrees

29–30  Alumni events
31–32  Books

Alumni News is the regular magazine for graduates and friends of the University of Tasmania. UTAS alumni include graduates and diplomates of UTAS, TCAE/TSIT and AMC, and staff of three years’ service. Alumni News is prepared by the Communications and Media Office for the Advancement Office.

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Cover: Well-known UTAS alumni such as Neal Blewett and Rev. Michael Tate have represented Australia as diplomats. But which graduates of this university are overseas looking after Australia’s interests right now? Sharon Webb spoke to 11 diplomats and found not only are UTAS alumni among our most prominent ambassadors and consuls-general, but young diplomats have firm footholds on the ladder.
Welcome

Message from the Vice-Chancellor

The international focus of the two special features in this issue – devoted to UTAS graduates who are gracing the diplomatic stage and those working as medics around the world respectively – strikes a particular chord with me.

I have just returned from Europe, a trip that culminated with a ceremony in the beautiful Aula Absidale Santa Lucia in Bologna, in which the University of Tasmania became a signatory to the Magna Charta Universitatum.

This document, housed at the University of Bologna, asserts the role that universities must play in a changing and increasingly internationalised society to link culture, knowledge and research to social advance, and speaks with authority to fundamental principles that must be observed for this to occur:

These values endure even as the details of the university mission vary across location and time, and with changes in technology, knowledge and social need.

In affirming our commitment to these ideals we join more than 750 universities across 80 countries, including many of the very finest and most prestigious, in aligning our local mission and characteristics with the broader philosophies of the western university tradition.

The diplomats, the doctors – indeed all of the graduates featured in Alumni News – embody the values and aspirations not only of UTAS but of leading universities the world over.

I commend to you in particular the article on Mansoor Mirkazemi, who arrived in Tasmania as a 17-year-old refugee from Iran, with precious few possessions and even fewer words of English. After completing secondary school he spent a year performing voluntary service overseas, before being admitted to the UTAS School of Medicine. He graduated in 1995 and is now one of the country's leading plastic and reconstructive surgeons. His commitment to voluntary work abroad remains undiminished, each year travelling to Indonesia to treat children with cleft lips and palates, burn injuries, hand injuries and tumours.

The University of Tasmania also has a fine tradition of ensuring that Australia is well represented in diplomatic circles. Neal Blewett and Alfred Parsons, both former High Commissioners to the UK, and Allan Taylor, a former Ambassador to Indonesia who then became Director of the Australian Secret Intelligence Service, spring immediately to mind.

Following in their footsteps are the likes of Peter Heyward, the current High Commissioner to Pakistan; James Wise, our Ambassador to Thailand, and Geoff Tooth, who manages to wear many, no doubt colourful hats: High Commissioner to Kenya, Rwanda, Tanzania and Uganda, Ambassador to Burundi, Somalia and South Sudan, and Permanent Representative to the UN in Nairobi.

I hope you enjoy reading about these luminaries and the many other members of the UTAS global family who appear in this issue.

Warm regards,
Professor Peter Rathjen

A warm welcome to Young Dawkins

In recent months there has been a renewed excitement across the UTAS Alumni team with the key appointment of Mr Young Dawkins as executive director of advancement. This high level leadership role reports to the Vice-Chancellor and has broad oversight of both alumni and University of Tasmania Foundation activities at UTAS.

Young comes to us from Save the Children in London where he was philanthropy director, and before that he was vice principal, development and alumni, at the University of Edinburgh, Scotland.

Young brings with him a wealth of experience in the university and not-for-profit sectors and has a clear understanding about the important role alumni play in the life and continued development of the university. I welcome Young to Tasmania and look forward to working closely with him. I would also like to thank Melanie Roome who has led the advancement office admirably over the past year.

The UTAS Career Mentor Program, jointly coordinated through the advancement and careers offices, continues to grow from strength to strength with around 100 alumni-student partnerships running this year. Perhaps you could volunteer to assist, wherever you are. Please contact career.mentorprogram@utas.edu.au if you’re interested in helping in this way.

It has been encouraging that so many have attended alumni events this year. These have included presentations in Burnie, debates in Launceston, reunions in New York and London, and gatherings in Canberra and Copenhagen.

Please remain engaged and connected with UTAS as opportunities arise in the new year. A full report about alumni activities and developments, presented at the 2013 AGM, is available at the alumni page of the UTAS website for your information at www.alumni.utas.edu.au.

I thank the Alumni Committee and all advancement staff for their service to alumni in 2013.

With best wishes for the season,
Dr Ashley Townsend
Chair, University of Tasmania Alumni
Dr Saykao is the first woman from the Hmong culture to graduate in Australia as a doctor.

Chief medical officer for Care for Africa, she coordinates health programs, working in Australia and overseas in the Tarime district of Tanzania.

In Tanzania she leads Australian and Tanzanian health professionals, students and volunteers to conduct clinics in six community schools, seeing more than 2000 children a year.

“The clinics treat all children for intestinal worms which impacts on their growth, nutrition and concentration at school,” Selena said.

“Back in Australia, in the interest of sustainability I am preparing future volunteers, documenting our experiences by developing guidelines and operational handbooks, and consulting with experts to make the program better.

“Many people want to get involved in philanthropy – my job is to help them do so.”

DR SELENA SAYKAO, MBBS Hons 2009

Dr Mansoor Mirkazemi knew teachers at Elizabeth College in Hobart doubted he would achieve his goal of becoming a doctor. The 17 year-old had arrived in Tasmania in 1986 as an Iranian refugee with little English, so how would he qualify?

But Mansoor and his teachers, who he believes were influential in what he does today, worked hard and now he is a plastic surgeon in Melbourne.

Much of his work is in breast reconstruction for women who have had breast cancer, along with general plastic surgery and some cosmetic surgery. Dr Mirkazemi also travels to Indonesia every year as an Interplast volunteer to help those people who do not have access to medical treatment. He treats children with cleft lips and palates, burn injuries, hand injuries and tumours.

“The rewards are in helping someone extremely in need and going through a hard time,” he said. “I believe one person can make a difference in one person’s journey through breast cancer.”

Dr Mirkazemi attributes his interest in his challenging work to the time after he qualified as a doctor when his job was to assist Miki Pohl, consultant plastic surgeon at the Royal Hobart Hospital for 12 years. (Dr Pohl is now head of plastic surgery at Western Hospital, Footscray.)

Mansoor and his sister Mojgan initially arrived in Tasmania because their uncle, Daryoush Habibi, had been accepted to study engineering, gaining his PhD eventually in 1995. Mojgan studied pharmacy and now has her own pharmacy in Hobart.

Mansoor enjoyed anatomy; he was encouraged by Professor Peter Lisowski (d. 2007), who wrote a famous anatomy text and became emeritus professor at Hong Kong University and neurologist Dr Keith Millingen (d. 1994), a renowned teacher and founder of the UTAS School of Medicine with Sir Douglas Parker.

“It was a privilege having such senior, knowledgeable and caring lecturers. Many universities have stopped teaching anatomy in such detail but for my job it is important.”

DR MANSOOR MIRKAZEMI, MBBS 1995

Thousands of medical doctors have stepped out into the world from UTAS to practise their skills and further their careers. Sharon Webb spoke to seven doctors, working as far afield as Tanzania, London and Malaysia.
DR ZUL YAAKOB, MBBS 2000

Dryakob Works as Cardiologist in a private hospital in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia. He says coronary artery disease is the most common disease in the world and Malaysia is not exceptional.

“The best treatment for a heart attack now is emergency coronary angioplasty. As a cardiologist my life can be very unpredictable as I need to attend to patients having heart attacks at any hour,” he said.

“But I like cardiology because I really get satisfaction from saving a life.

“There’s nothing more satisfying than to see a guy who had a major heart attack and almost died, then recovering a few days later after coronary intervention, talking to his wife and children.”

When Dr Yaaakob was choosing which university to attend he also looked at Queensland, Adelaide, Flinders or Western Australia.

“Choosing the UTAS was because my (British) partner wants to travel to Australia once a year and I come back to Australia once a year and I keep in close contact with those friends even now,” she said.

“I chose Tasmania at the time because I saw a beautiful picture of Hobart surrounded by sea,” he said.

“I certainly enjoyed my stay there. Being apart from my family and culture taught me a lot and I am glad that important process happened in Tasmania because people are friendly there.

“I still remember very well the person who brought me to Tasmania. Professor McLeod, a physiologist who was the deputy head of the medical school at the time.

“I also remember Professor Kilpatrick, a senior cardiologist who taught my subject of interest; I also met him in 2007 in a cardiology meeting in Bangkok.”

“Dr Yaaakob says he would certainly recommend UTAS for Malaysians wanting to further their studies. Although there are now medical schools in Malaysia, UTAS is good for postgraduate studies.”

DR ANN SULLIVAN, MBBS 1988, MD 2011

As a Consultant Physician in HIV at the Chelsea and Westminster Hospital in London, Ann Sullivan is fulfilling her youthful dream to be a doctor as she attended St Thomas More’s School in Launceston.

“My years at UTAS really prepared me for what I’m doing now.”

“I particularly enjoyed the clinical medical work on the course.”

After doing her internship in Hobart and working at Sydney’s Prince of Wales Hospital, Dr Sullivan applied for a scholarship to work on the course.”

Dr Sullivan describes doing her Bachelor of Medical Science degree in the early 1980s as “a fantastic time”; she lived at John Fisher College, making many close friends.

“I keep in close contact with those friends even now,” she said.

“Having spent much of her career working in London, these days she mainly works with outpatients infected with HIV and researches expanded HIV testing. The Chelsea and Westminster has Europe’s largest HIV unit.

“It’s an interesting, fast-moving area and very rewarding,” Dr Sullivan said.

“In the UK the number of people with HIV is increasing, especially in young gay men, but compared with the 1990s the infection is no longer a death sentence. It’s now a long-term management situation and far fewer people die from it these days.”

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In her busy schedule Dr Sullivan has time to be on the board of the British Association for Sexual Health and HIV, which provides guidelines for policy makers in that area.

“I come back to Australia once a year and because my (British) partner wants to travel in Australia I see more of the country than I did when I lived there,” she said.

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ELANOMA DIAGNOSIS EXPERT

Richard Scolyer believes it isn’t surprising he decided to take on pathology as a career.

“The pathology teaching at UTAS by people like David Challis and John McArdle (now both UTAS clinical associate professors) inspired students,” he said.

“ Compared with the size of UTAS, the proportion of graduates who have gone into pathology is incredible; when we get together we all come to the same conclusion. We can’t take our hats off enough to those guys.”

Professor Scolyer has worked at the Royal Prince Alfred Hospital in Sydney since 2001. He is a world expert in diagnosing skin cancer and president elect of the Australian division of the International Academy of Pathology.

His role at the Royal Prince Alfred is as consultant pathologist; he is co-director of research at the Melanoma Institute Australia and clinical professor at the University of Sydney.

Richard went to Riverside Primary and High Schools and then Launceston College; after university he did his internship at the Royal Hobart Hospital, completed his clinical training in Adelaide and Gosford, and pathology at the Canberra Hospital.

“ The RPA is the world’s largest melanoma treatment centre – and Sydney has the largest melanoma rate in the world.”

WE HAVE A GREAT TEAM OF PEOPLE DOING COLLABORATIVE RESEARCH INTO THE DISEASE.

“Until the last few years there were no effective therapies for melanoma, but the management of the disease has changed and we’ve been at the centre of this.”

Melanomas are visible and with early treatment surgical excision in 90 per cent of cases is successful, Prof. Scolyer said: “But when it moves to the internal organs the prognosis is dismal.”

Prof. Scolyer’s achievements are numerous: he has presented papers at more than 150 conferences worldwide and is a co-author of more than 250 articles and book chapters on melanocytic pathology and related research. In 2006, Professor Scolyer was awarded the degree of Doctor of Medicine by the University of Sydney and received a NSW Premier’s Award for Outstanding Cancer Research in 2009 and 2012.

But his response is to give credit to his UTAS mentors: David Challis, John McArdle and Professor Konrad Muller.

“As Sir Isaac Newton said: If I have been able to see further it is because I stand on the shoulders of giants. That is certainly very true in my case.”

HOBART DERMATOLOGIST FRANCES

Watkins is known in Tasmania for her work with cancer and other diseases of the skin – and also for her sculpture.

Her bronze figurative sculptures exquisitely capture grace and movement, whether she’s depicting a dancer, an athlete or a pregnant woman entitled Contentment II.

Dr Watkins attributes her absorption with depicting the human body partly to the intensive UTAS anatomy classes of her medical degree – “We dissected a cadaver for a whole year” – and partly to her fascination with a plaster cast of Michaelangelo’s David in London’s Victoria and Albert Museum when she was 10 years old.

It wasn’t until 2002 that she brought home a large lump of clay and sat it on the kitchen bench: “My husband asked me if I knew what I was doing; I thought it couldn’t be that hard.”

Several workshops later, one with noted US sculptor Richard Macdonald, Dr Watkins had learned how to make an armature (the framework holding a sculpture together) and has now had exhibitions at Tasmania’s Handmark Gallery and Meadowbank Winery, with another coming up at Handmark in December 2014 to show work made in her new studio.

While Frances had no burning desire to be a doctor, she enjoyed her studies and the camaraderie of her small class.

“I learnt from everything we studied,” she said. “Nothing was a waste of time. The lecturers wanted us to succeed and were always trying to get us through.”

Dr Watkins believes dermatologists can make a big difference to people’s lives when they alleviate the suffering and depression associated with skin disease.

“It can change an individual’s outlook and success in life,” she said.

Dr Watkins is married to Dr Bill Watkins, a fellow med classmate and now IVF specialist in Hobart. Son Timothy is studying engineering at UTAS and daughter Ella is studying acting and directing in Los Angeles.
Martinkus docos show war’s reality

By Sharon Webb

JOURNALIST JOHN MARTINKUS

reels off the date he was kidnapped in
the Iraq war as if it’s permanently scratched
on his brain.

“It happened on October the 16th, 2004 at
three in the afternoon,” he said.

“We were car-jacked outside the hotel, had
guns put to our heads and made to drive to
a part of Baghdad not under government
control. It was terrible. I thought: Here we go.”

Now journalism lecturer in the UTAS School
of Social Sciences, John’s war reporting for
Australian Associated Press and SBS in
Timor, Papua, Iraq and Afghanistan is the
reason the Australian War Memorial asked
him to do a month-long trip to Afghanistan
with artist Ben Quilty.

They wanted footage of Australian soldiers
at work there, to help people visiting the
Memorial understand the work of our troops
there.

The upshot was that John made three
short documentaries, the first of which is
now on the War Memorial’s website. Most
Australians would have never heard such
drawns of war’s atrocities.

Being shot at and shooting others, hearing
screeches of injured mates and picking up
children’s limbs after an improvised
explosive device goes off near a school
are among the inevitably horrible scenes
conjured up by Aussie soldiers, interspersed
by the reassuringly sane voice of John
Martinkus.

His war reporting experiences in Iraq and
Afghanistan meant he not only knew the
terrain and the issues, but also the questions
to ask to gain the insights needed by the
War Memorial.

“At the War Memorial our access was
much better than when I was with SBS’
Dateline,” John said. “We travelled in
military transports. There was lots of getting
up ridiculously early, standing in the cold,
lots of hurry up and wait.”

“We got the best material at the smaller
bases; the lower ranks were frank about what
they were doing. That was the case with the
Americans in Iraq; the closer you are to where
things are really going on, the more open they
are to discussing it without spin.”

John grins guiltily when asked how eager he
was to go back to Afghanistan. “I jumped at
the chance to go back – out of professional
curiosity,” he said.

“I wanted to see what had happened
since I left. It’s a fascinating country, quite
beautiful. And the people are amazing.”

While it’s obvious the reporter in John
Martinkus would choose to spend his
life reporting on war-torn countries, the
survivalist Martinkus knew he had to give
it away; gain a home, a family, a regular job.
He has worked at UTAS since 2009 and
enjoys it.

“Looking at others I knew who’d had similar
experiences or worse, I knew I couldn’t do
that work indefinitely; I’d either be blown
up or go mad.

“My wife was having twins, I was burnt out,”
he said.

And there are physical effects. After filming
in Afghanistan he got meningitis from an
infection in an eardrum he’d burst when
flying in a helicopter: “I’ve been almost
blown up and shot at pretty much for 10
years and one little perforated eardrum
got me. I’m deaf in one ear.”

And then there are the invisible effects of
the kidnapping.

Because there had been many kidnappings,
some drawn out, some where people were
killed, the victims’ stress levels were high;
they were players in their worst nightmare.

“They took us (Martinkus, driver Saif and
translator Hussein) to a room, blindfolded
us, tied us up, interrogated us – who are
we, what are we doing, are we spies?”

“My wife was having twins, I was burnt out,”
he said.

It was mainly Hussein, a really
knowledgeable bloke, who convinced
them I was a fair and impartial journo.

“They checked on the internet and came
back friendly, saying they’d release us.
They put a gun to my head while they
made a video where I asked John Howard
to take the troops out of Iraq. Then they
unexpectedly released us.”

Martinkus later wrote of that filming: I was
thinking, “It has all been a lie, they are not
releasing me, they just wanted to keep me
calm before they kill me”… Every moment
I expected to feel the knife on my neck.

But almost as terrifying were events back
in Australia. For his own political reasons,
foreign minister Alexander Downer said it
had been John’s fault he was kidnapped as
he was in the wrong part of Baghdad.

Then it got worse, and shock jocks John
Laws and Andrew Bolt joined in the chorus.

In John’s words: “I had been asked a
straightforward question as to why other
hostages had been killed and why I wasn’t.

To put it simply, I had been spared because
I was not associated with the coalition forces;
while other high-profile hostages were. That
was the grim reality of Iraq; if the insurgents
deemed you to be part of the coalition or
working for it, they saw you as a legitimate
target. My understanding of this reality had
contributed to my ability to negotiate.

But that wasn’t what the foreign minister
wanted people to understand. He wanted
to paint me as a supporter of – and a
sympathiser with – terrorists, a charge
that was then taken up by conservative
commentators.

These days some curious journalism
students ask John Martinkus about his
experiences.

“I have to stop myself telling them stories
with the presumption they know about it.
They were only ten years old in the nineties.

“But I do try to tell them journalists can be
motivated by bettering people’s lives, that
we’re not after fame and fortune. I genuinely
think those sorts of conflicts should be
covered.”

To see John’s documentaries see www.awm.
gov.au/exhibitions/afghanistan-australian-
story/
FORMER TASMANIAN ART SCHOOL academic Ron Brooks has won four Australian Picture Book of the Year awards for his illustrations and he’s been nominated for the prestigious Hans Christian Andersen Award in 2014. The Dream of the Thylacine was a book made for an artist like Ron Brooks.

There is the almost-mythical animal on his living-room wall, leaping through snowflakes and snowflakes, snout in the air, ears alert, bounding at life.

You could call Ron a picture book illustrator but you’d be wrong. He says it too: “I’m not an illustrator, I don’t know what I am. If I have some sort of talent it’s that I love good language as much as I do. That helps me make good books.”

So much for labels. You could decomplicate the issue by describing the way he not only illustrates the story but designs the whole book. Large or small? Rectangular or square? What font? How much white space? Whoever wrote the words, Ron creates the book.

He is a bit like the thylacine: complicated, full of contradictions. And he spends a lot of time faking it.

He has the air of an accomplished, creative man who’s forged his path – but he understates his talents. Japanese children mob him at book shows, authors jockey for him to work on their books – but he’s doubtful about his life’s journey.

You could put it down to depression. Just a few years ago he thought he’d never draw again, now admitting “it was a bad place to be. “But I realised I wouldn’t get a gun and shoot myself; I decided to write, to find out where I’d gone wrong.”

The result was Drawn from the Heart, an essay collection published in 2010. It worked: depression lifted, he worked on The Dream of the Thylacine with author Margaret Wild and The Coat with fellow Tasmanian Julie Hunt, the latter named 2013 Australian Picture Book of the Year.

Ron Brooks bustles around the living room of his home near Huonville, grinding beans with a noisy hand-grinder, frothing coffee expertly, searching out home-made biscuits from a jar on the top shelf. In a black cord shirt, sleeveless vest and sneakers he looks trendy in an understated way and completely comfortable.

“Know you not that my heart is a forest - run with me through trees of striply bark, run with me over creeks of flickering fish, run with me where the snow falls slow”.

continued overleaf...

Artist Ron Brooks: “I grew up loving what my eyes could see and every morning I could walk out on the verandah, see the sun coming up and the stringy bark trees, and out the back bush as far as you could run.”
Good teaching for kids and young adults is an enthusiasm of his.

A wander-weary freelance graphic artist who’d worked in the UK, Europe and New York, when a friend who taught painting at the Tasmanian School of Art asked him in 1987 whether he’d like a shot at teaching graphic arts there he said no.

“But I kind of fell in love with Hobart and the art school was fantastic there in Hunter St with every studio looking out over the Derwent River. I thought it was a beauty: the facilities were stunning, the best I knew. I like the old-fashioned idea of ‘applied art’ – actually bringing a bit of art into design.”

With his then wife Margaret supporting the idea and the thought that it would be good for his two young children to grow up in a small city, in mid-1988 Ron began the task of lifting the design department from the doldrums.

The students’ learning changed, Ron maintains.

“They’d never heard of illustrators, even painters; I found that shocking really. I did all I could to introduce them to things that would be helpful and inspiring – and I encouraged a lot to leave.

“But student numbers increased because I sat on interview panels for applicants, being unfriendly to those who didn’t have the goods and doing all I could to attract the smart ones. And the place really started to change in my second year.”

Ron loved the teaching: “A few things gave me insights into where kids of that age were at. We snotty-nosed kids thought we knew it all. Don Wordsworth loved Mallacoota too.

“In grade four an absolute genius of a teacher, Don Wordsworth, arrived. He was in his early twenties and was a gift to the whole town.”

Don Wordsworth loved Mallacota too.

“We snotty-nosed kids thought we knew our area but this Melbourne teacher straight out of teachers’ college helped us know it better. We’d do our classroom work in the morning and in the afternoon he’d take us on bushwalks and teach us about plants and animals.

“And he could draw. We’d do the work in the first period and in the second, he was a total genius. We’d walk into the classroom where there were two blackboards. The left side was wall-to-wall-filled with a beautifully-lettered story he’d written for us – about a shipwreck, a local history, birds that nest on Gabo Island, a cubby house he’d built.

“And on the right, say if the story was about birds on the island, there’d be coloured chalk drawings of the island, the birds and their nests and eggs. He knew a whole lot about birds.”

After that year, Don Wordsworth, the teacher who cared about kids, moved on. In two years Ron Brooks went to Bairnsdale Technical College, the school for kids who’d become tradies, and there was Wordsworth again – teaching maths.

“He was a brilliant maths teacher and maths became my best subject. And again, we’d do the work in the first period and draw in the second; he was a total genius. I had him for two or three years.

The “mad, lunatic English teacher”, Chester Eagle, was passionate about literature, says Ron, and introduced him to Australian literature.

“He was a crazy, wild teacher who would be unemployable today because he’d break every rule in the book. A good teacher is incredibly important; I wish they were more valued.”

A third thing inspired the young Ron Brooks: a series of cheap prints by the masters adorning the walls of Bairnsdale Tech.

“Bairnsdale was a big old art deco building, cold and unfriendly, but in the corridors were these famous paintings: Monet, Van Gogh. In maths Picasso and Cezanne were on the wall. I couldn’t believe what Cezanne had done with a landscape. I’d try to draw...
Ron is adamant that he began life with no innate skill in drawing. Even so he tried with Don Wordsworth, and eventually studied at Swinburne and RMIT art schools.

But it seems that he has an inbuilt talent for absorbing what’s around him and leaping right into those worlds.

His description of working on a book seems to translate as him living in a story for a while. In his head, could he be a character? Or at least a benign, close onlooker?

“The reason I illustrate is because of the writing,” Ron says. “What drives me is beautiful text, beautiful language – when an author has written a story using language in such a way that it turns my heart around.

“The language has to be unlike anything I’ve seen before, in a new or fresh way. All the books I’ve done I’ve loved the stories.”

Maybe ‘book-maker’ would be a better way to describe Ron Brooks’ work because he makes a new book every time he takes on a story.

You will never pick up a book and predict from the look of the pictures that Ron was the illustrator because no two books look alike, down to the fonts he chooses for the text – mostly hand-lettered by himself.

“It’s all about trying to find the right visual choice.

“The Coat (an unappreciated coat languishing on a scarecrow in a field until a man puts it on; as the coat gets its freedom, it becomes magical) is beautiful but complex, so it has to be read intelligently. So I chose a font that required children to read carefully.

“Fox breaks every god-damn rule; the story is so confronting and painful it needs to be lettered in such a way it can’t be breezed through. I wanted the reading of the text to be as confronting as the text itself is. In comparison, The Coat flows beautifully, it’s sophisticated so it must be treated in a different way.”

Ron’s treatment of children’s stories this way has had its critics.

Some disliked the childlike pen and ink word scratchings of Fox, Margaret Wild’s story of a dog and a magpie injured by bushfire and the ensuing tragedy, as distracting: “I took the cue from my six-year-old and did all the lettering with my left hand – with hand and heart connected, but the logical part of the brain turned off,” was Ron’s explanation to readers.

But other readers saw the point: “It seemed just right, irregular and uneven, like a young child’s writing, but very purposeful; some words looked effortless and tense,” wrote one.

And another flung herself right into the story along with Wild and Brooks: “It is written in serial-killer scrawl, with the words all over the page at wonky angles, the drawings are hectic and scratchy and terrifying and of course I give it five stars because I absolutely loved it.”

In Wild’s and Brooks’ other recent book, The Dream of the Thylacine, Ron indulges his passion for landscape and this time the journey is Tasmanian throughout. Just ten paintings including views of the entrance to Bruny Island’s Cloudy Bay Lagoon, the Walls of Jerusalem, Mt Field, Freycinet Peninsula, Arthur’s Peak – and “the rocky outcrop from up the back here”.

“Landscape’s my big love,” Ron says.

“Stick me outdoors on a canvas stool with an easel and paints and I’m as happy as a pig in a paddock.”

But somewhere behind the façade of the accomplished artist is the thylacine, standing alone on a rocky east coast outcrop, gazing far out to sea.

“Know they not that my spirit flies free - Seeking the mouth of the river, the arms of the mountains”.

Seeking the mouth of the river: Ron indulges his passion for landscape in The Dream of the Thylacine with Tasmanian locations like this one, a view of the entrance to Bruny Island’s Cloudy Bay Lagoon.
Paramedic graduates ride into the bush

In August, 31 trailblazer paramedics graduated from a new UTAS course in Sydney. Now they are scattered around NSW, saving lives.

By Peter Cochrane

Simon Chivers’ first call-out as a newly minted paramedic was to attend a rider who had fallen from a horse, suffering serious pelvic and neck injuries. Since then he has, in his own words, treated “everything from bloody noses to a double-stabbing”.

It is the unpredictable nature of the job that he finds exhilarating: “You never know what you are going to turn up to … it’s a bit like spinning a chocolate wheel”.

Simon was one of 31 admitted to the degree of Bachelor of Paramedic Practice after two years of intensive study at a ceremony in Sydney mid-year. Sixty students had started the fast-track degree in 2010.

At 49 he was the oldest graduand of the cohort, and the one with the most varied background: originally a research scientist at the Royal Botanical Gardens, he then went into project management in construction, before he and his wife became professional actors, touring Australia for five years, performing at about 200 schools a year.

At the time of writing, he was in the middle of his second nine-week roster at Ryde in Sydney’s north-west. His shift had started at 7pm the previous night and finished at 9.15 that morning. At one point in the evening he, along with his paramedic mentor – obligatory in the first year – and an escort nurse were transporting a stabilised patient to hospital when they came upon a “nasty MVA” (motor vehicle accident).

“It’s a constantly changing landscape,” he says – in more ways than one. The Ryde station sits on the borders of the northern, western and southern sectors so he can find himself ranging across a huge chunk of Sydney, depending on the operational need.

An even greater geographical challenge awaited Sarah Mead on graduation.

In her posting to Wentworth, Sarah Mead has ventured further afield than any of her colleagues – as she puts it, “as far as you can go and still be in NSW”.

Although Sarah is a country girl, a posting to the bush wasn’t her first choice, she admits. “I nominated Sydney East (central Sydney) as my first choice.”

Nevertheless, after nearly six hectic years in the Big Smoke, she is settling back into a rural lifestyle as one of seven paramedics – including another trainee, a Charles Sturt University graduate – based in Wentworth but servicing a large, remote corner of the state.

“We also perform back-up for our colleagues in Broken Hill 230 kilometres to the north and in Balranald 180 kilometres to the south-east as well as Mildura just across the border.”

The coordinator of UTAS” Sydney paramedic practice program, Dr Paula McMullen, said her staff was incredibly proud of these graduates’ accomplishments.

“Their hard work and commitment were infectious … They’ve set a very high benchmark for our future students and those of other universities to strive to achieve.”
Emphasis on environment

Scientific storyteller is lead IPCC author

By Miranda Harman

NATHAN BINDOFF’S FRAMED NOBEL Prize facsimile sits at the back of his office bookshelves. Among sundry academic books and plaques it’s dusty.

Professor Bindoff, coordinating lead author for the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC), is keen to point out that the facsimile says he ‘contributed’ to the Nobel Prize, which was awarded jointly to the IPCC and Al Gore in 2007, the Nobel Prize for Peace. “It’s not for Science, but for the policy relevance of the work,” he says.

It’s probably not something he expected when he lived on Cadbury’s Estate in the 1960s, growing up the son of a punch-card operator at the chocolate factory in the Hobart suburb of Claremont. It was the era “just before computers”.

Prof. Bindoff, an oceanographer with the Antarctic Climate and Ecosystems Cooperative Research Centre (ACE CRC), the Institute of Marine and Antarctic Studies at UTAS, CSIRO and the Centre of Excellence for Climate System Science, has been a coordinating lead author twice, one of few scientists to have had a such a senior IPCC role twice.

His career has grown organically from his interest in physics and mathematics as a UTAS undergraduate.

A self-confessed “solid, but not brilliant student”, he enjoyed the scientific storytelling from interpretations of geological formations and geophysical measurements. The leap of understanding during his two-year honours project about how science can interpret the environment – working out some of the structures of the earth by understanding its electrical properties for example – set Prof. Bindoff up for a life of environmentally-based research.

In those days field trips, formative in gaining deep respect for field measurements and interpretations, were on land. But during his PhD at ANU Professor Bindoff’s attention turned to the ocean. His voyages, two years at sea over his career, started with ten days into the Tasman Sea on HMAS Cook.

He believes his key strength is his ability to observe and analyse data. His career evolution has included a keen interest in and respect for climate modelling, reflected in his leadership of the Climate Futures for Tasmania project and his directorship of the Tasmanian Partnership for Advanced Computing.

As well as the Nobel Prize from his IPCC work, Prof. Bindoff counts the continued monitoring of the Mertz Glacier region in Antarctica as a career highlight. He was at the ACE CRC in its earliest days, with the influence of program leaders such as John Church, Bill Budd and Ian Allison.

“They really did foster excellence and facilitated clever and exciting and novel and innovative projects,” he said.

Research into the characteristics of Antarctic Bottom Water around the Mertz Glacier region, crucial to building an understanding of the global ocean circulation, began around this time: “That work has been collaborative, beginning with the first ACE CRC voyage in 1993.”

Another career highlight was the facilitation of other people’s careers – “from students to research fellows” – from temporary to permanent positions.

And what about applying to be part of a third IPCC report?

“It’s risky to your health,” he said. “You give a lot up but you get a lot back too. I’ve been more engaged with the climate science and you have the privilege of working with good people on a common theme and that has enormous consequences for your thinking. Working with 200 other scientists on a regular basis – stuff has to rub off, and it does. You’re there in the conversation.”

• The other UTAS-affiliated researchers listed on the IPCC web site as being senior members of Working Group 1 are: Dr Steve Rintoul (CSIRO/ACE CRC), coordinating lead author for chapter 3 of Climate Change 2013 – The Physical Science Basis; Dr John Church (CSIRO-UTAS PhD Program in Quantitative Marine Science), coordinating lead author, chapter 13, and Dr Ian Allison (ACE CRC), co-lead author, chapter 4. Dr John Hunter (ACE CRC) is a contributing author to chapter 13.

• Nathan Bindoff talks about the IPCC and its role at https://vimeo.com/74904969
Emphasis on environment

Extreme Weeders raft the Franklin

By Sharon Webb

There’s a tradition on a rafter’s first trip down the Franklin River in Tasmania’s southwest wilderness that at the confluence of the Franklin and the Gordon River a swim is obligatory. According to alumnus Graeme Pennicott, who joined the Extreme Weeders on an expedition last summer, the water temperature is rather cool.

“You jump out of the raft into the pleasant water of the Franklin and swim the 10 meters into the Gordon,” he said. “The Gordon’s much colder because the water’s coming out of the bottom of Lake Gordon.”

Graeme, formerly principal of Meander Primary School, joined ten others to weed locations down the Franklin. Most were alumni and members of the UTAS Whitewater Rafting Club, led by alumni Grant Dixon and Ben Hill who work for Tasmanian Parks and Wildlife.

Travelling in blow-up rubber rafts they camped along the way, sometimes under over-hanging rock cliffs, using maps and GPS to locate sea spurge in sand-dunes and particularly infested areas of blackberries. Using specially-packaged pesticide and protective gear, they waded knee or waist deep to infested areas, cutting and throwing weeds above flood level so they didn’t contaminate the river further down.

Grant Dixon carried out surveys along the river, taking photos, and comparing locations with old photos to measure degradation and erosion. The weeding expedition happens every couple of years.

“Although the water levels were low it’s one of the great wilderness journeys in the world,” Graeme said.

“When you get half-way down you’re so far away from anywhere you’ve got to be self-sufficient. The old piners went a fair way and had no mod cons like satellite phones or personal locator beacons. It’s certainly not for the uninitiated.”

The Irenabyss on the Franklin River: Alumni Jenny Calder watches the second canoe come through the Irenabyss. For safety reasons the rafts stayed close together.

Camping on the Franklin: At the end of the first day alumnus Ed Hill and rafting guide Shaun Clement set up their tent.
Emphasis on environment

Shooting the rapids: Two expeditioners watch from the riverbank as other rafters shoot the rapids on the Middle Franklin.

Graeme believes the camaraderie on such trips is a bonus – but there were opportunities to get away and explore the river.

“The Newlands Cascades are quite speccy; when there’s no-one else around you get the feeling of how it was hundreds of years ago.

“It’s been a long-term goal of mine to do the Franklin. I planned to do it at the time of the demos (1982) but it fell through.”

Graeme’s done many wilderness trips and in comparison, the Extreme Weeder’s expedition wasn’t really roughing it: no dehydrated foods but rather wraps with tomatoes, cheese, cabana and fresh-grown sprouts for lunch all the way down.

“We even had dessert a couple of nights,” he said.

But the lack of hardship didn’t detract from the experience.

“When you’re out there it flashes through your mind that if there was some sort of disaster and we were the only people left...” Graeme mused.

“Anyway, a week in the quiet of the wilderness puts a lot of things in perspective.”

- Franklin expeditioners: alumni Grant Dixon, Graeme Pennicott, Ted Ross, Selina Bryan, Ben Hill, Jenny Calder, Jennifer Andrew. Also rafting guide Shaun Clement and wilderness volunteer Joel Murray.

Extreme weeder team: Alumnus and former Meander Primary School principal Graeme Pennicott (yellow helmet) names the Franklin River one of the great wilderness journeys of the world.
Well-known UTAS alumni such as Neal Blewett and Rev. Michael Tate have represented Australia as diplomats. But which graduates of this university are overseas looking after Australia’s interests right now? Sharon Webb spoke to 11 diplomats and found not only are UTAS alumni among our most prominent ambassadors and consuls-general, but young diplomats have firm footholds on the ladder.

**JULIE HECKSCHER**  
*deputy high commissioner to Singapore, BA, LLB Hons 1986*

In 2001 while Julie Heckscher was on a diplomatic posting to Russia, she sat in the Russian space control centre listening to the Russian space control team reporting back on every stage of the controlled descent and breakup of the Mir space station. At the time it held the record for the largest artificial satellite orbiting the Earth, and as it entered Earth’s atmosphere somewhere near Fiji and burned up, Julie remembers people sobbing over its demise.

“I thought: I wouldn’t be doing this if I’d stayed a lawyer in Hobart,” she said. “Being a diplomat is a lot of slog and long hours but it’s an interesting life.”

Now on the last leg of her Singapore posting, Julie lives a life where work and leisure merge in the form of conversing at diplomatic cocktail parties with people she’s never met before, opening exhibitions, delivering speeches and supporting a UN women’s fund-raising ball.

On the night she spoke with *Alumni News* she was hosting a dinner party for five Singapore foreign affairs officials; her husband, formerly in the New Zealand foreign ministry, was cooking three courses while Julie finished her day at the office.

“My role is wide-ranging over foreign affairs, trade, investment, defence and education,” she said. “Singapore is a regional hub for Australian businesses; Blundstones was here just two weeks ago.”

Singapore also has a large Australian community of about 27,000 people.

Julie grew up in Hobart, attending Rosetta Primary School and St Michael’s Collegiate. She followed up her UTAS arts/law degree with a masters in international relations at Monash but still looks back on her UTAS days with fondness.

“I spent two years at Christ College and I remember Don Chalmers as a delight and Kate Warner as inspiring,” Julie said. “Some of my best friends are still in law, accounting, nursing or teaching in Tasmania.”

After working with law firm Dobson, Mitchell and Allport, Julie decided to take a different direction and a pay cut to move into DFAT.

She wants a similarly interesting life for her own nine year-old daughter Sasha, who has travelled to postings in Canada and Russia with her parents and now learns Mandarin as she attends her Singapore international school. She is having what Julie calls “a very different upbringing from my own but an incredibly useful upbringing.”

“Sasha loves being here; she has been involved in Chinese, Malay and Indian festivals, she’s the only Australian in her class and growing up with people who have different thoughts and belief systems.”

**BEN RHEE**  
*third secretary Israeli Embassy, Tel Aviv, BA 2007*

Having lived in Israel for around six months, Ben Rhee knows Australians have a limited view of the country.

“Life here is so different from the one-sided, conflict-focussed view we get in Australia,” he said.

“The food is amazing, as are the arts and the concerts; it’s a vibrant culture where people are energised about expanding themselves and debating issues.

“And there’s a huge beach culture; people are out running, surfing, swimming.”

Israel is an eye-opener for Ben, who grew up in Oatlands and the Huon Valley where his dad was a council clerk. Most of his friends from those days are now farmers, rounding up sheep on motor bikes while Ben is on his diplomatic entry posting as third secretary in Australia’s Tel Aviv embassy.

But it isn’t his first time living overseas. After Huonville High, Hobart College and his time at UTAS – where he remembers “an amazing social life, an amazing set of lecturers and sitting in the library looking out at Mt Wellington” – Ben did his masters degree as an exchange student in Sweden.

He also worked with some development agencies there before joining DFAT as a graduate, rotating through the Canberra department in areas such as Pacific bi-lateral relations, trade and the crisis consular section which dealt with diplomacy in areas as the political conflict in Egypt and the Fukushima nuclear disaster.

After six months in the Fijian High Commission last year, Ben was given his first three-year posting to Israel, where he works on Australia’s economic and political relationship with the country.
MARK PIERCE

MARK PIERCE SAYS HIS MEMORIES of the University of Tasmania are “bitter sweet”.

“It’s because so many of us leave after graduation; we’re focussed on the mainland rather than staying at home – when by all rational criteria Tasmania is more beautiful than the rest of the world, certainly the rest of Australia.”

Mark joined DFAT at the tender age of 21. But not before lecturers Michael Roe (now professor emeritus) and Malcolm MacRae (d. 1974) instilled a love of history into young Pierce – a love that motivated him to complete a masters in the subject at Queens University in Canada.

A senior career officer with DFAT before taking on the Mumbai posting six months ago, Mark was assistant secretary of the department’s south and central Asia branch. He has served overseas as minister-counsellor at the Australian Embassy in Washington; chargé d’affaires in Rome; and minister in Berlin and Paris, with earlier postings in Tel Aviv and Ottawa.

“I find Mumbai intrigues and beguiles me more and more. It’s a wonderful place of constant variety, 17 million people.

“The traffic and infrastructure are difficult, you’ve got to adjust because anywhere you need to go takes an hour. I put my office in the back of the car – my ipad, my phone.

“Mumbai’s a lot like Cairo: full of enormous charm in its history, architecture, colour and vibrancy. If you’re bored with the place there’s something wrong with you.”

India has much potential for Australia, Mark says. The size of the country means he works closely with his colleagues, the high commissioner to India and another consul-general located in Chennai.

“Gujarat and Maharashtra, the two economic powerhouses of India, along with the state of Goa, are my responsibility. There are really big challenges in agriculture, education, resource supply and infrastructure and we need to make sure India knows what Australia has to offer in those areas.”

Mark and his wife Joanna Hewitt AO (secretary of the federal Department of Agriculture Fisheries and Forestry 2003-2007) live in an eighth-floor apartment in Mumbai.

“We’re three blocks from the Arabian Sea and on the other side of us is the Persian Gulf,” he said.

“When I step out of the lift onto the street it’s completely different from anywhere I’ve ever lived in Australia.”
When Joanna Adamson was in the office of a Ghanaian government minister recently she was astounded to discover he’d learnt about Australia in school geography classes and had drawn maps showing the location of Australian cities. “The main thing Australians are known for here is our mining expertise; there are about 20 mining and mining services companies here, the first ones having come to Ghana in the early 1990s,” she said. “This is a substantial commercial interest for Australia.”

“And increasingly we’re known for programs where Ghanaians and others study in Australia and come back with their own impressions of the country.” Joanna also has non-resident accreditation to the west African countries of Burkina Faso, Côte d’Ivoire, Guinea, Liberia, Mali, Senegal, Sierra Leone and Togo—altogether equivalent to around 39 per cent of Australia's surface area. “Those other countries know even less about Australia but we’re working on that,” she said. “I visit, talk to people and wrangle media coverage. African countries voted overwhelmingly for Australia’s membership of the UN Security Council in 2013 and 2014—and the Ghana Writers’ Association has just chosen Australia as a focus country for their annual festival. The work is certainly very diverse.”

When Joanna was studying music and law at UTAS she had a dream of working in diplomacy. “I didn’t have a clear idea of how to go about it but it seemed interesting and glamorous. Now I know it’s not as glamorous as you might think!” Having moved to Hobart from Canberra when she was 15, she attended Elizabeth Matriculation College and loved Hobart; her dad ran a pharmacy in Sandy Bay.

Music, piano in particular, was her great love and Joanna spent a year full time at the UTAS Conservatorium of Music, inspired by former dean of the Con, the late Graeme Buchanan, who she describes as “a superb piano teacher”. “And I loved the final year law subject, jurisprudence; getting into the philosophy of law was fascinating.” It was through law that Joanna joined DFAT; after doing her articles and working for the Tasmanian and then other parts of the federal public service, she joined DFAT as a lawyer. While she admits it’s common for diplomats to have a background in law, political science, international relations and languages, critical personal qualities are necessary. “DFAT is fond of saying it’s important you do well in your degree so you know how to study,” she said, having pointed out that she and her staff have had to learn lots about the west African countries they work in. “But adaptability is absolutely critical, as is an interest in the world. Empathy, being a good listener, the skills of logic and persuasion too.”

Just a year into her three-year appointment, Joanna is settling into the Ghanaian lifestyle with her husband Geoff, now retired but formerly New Zealand High Commissioner to South Africa and Malaysia. Having moved with his appointments over the years, the situation is reversed – “a perfect balance” Joanna says. After working long hours promoting Australia’s interests the couple walks their Ghanaian brown dog, Kofi, whose name means ‘boy born on Friday’, before a swim.

And while socialising is necessarily part of the job, there’s always the company of what Joanna refers to as the “sisterhood” of female diplomats in Ghana, around a third of whom are women.
JAMES WISE  
Ambassador to Thailand, BA Hons 1976

ASKED TO DEFINE THE WORK OF AN Australian diplomat, James Wise turns to the words of another distinguished University of Tasmania alumnus and diplomat, Ashton Calvert, the long-term secretary of the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade. “He said: We’re trying to tilt the balance a little more in Australia’s favour in everything we do,” James said. “That was well-captured.”

James Wise is one of the most senior Australian diplomats, having had his first posting to Port Moresby in 1983, followed by Moscow, Bangkok (as deputy head of mission) and in 2003, high commissioner to Kuala Lumpur.

Bangkok is Australia’s busiest consular post, he says, simply because of the high numbers of Australians visiting – more than 900,000 in 2012. Australia has a substantial government to government relationship with Thailand and encouraging stronger business and education relationships between the countries is high on the diplomatic agenda.

“Thailand has the second largest economy in Asia, a very sophisticated economy,” he said.

“But most Australian businesses look to Europe and the US rather than Asia – and universities have much stronger links there too.

“There are a lot of Thai students in Australian educational institutions but academic and research links are well below potential. And the yawning gap is the absence of Australians studying in Thailand.”

James Wise grew up on Flinders Island, attending the area school there and then boarding at Scotch Oakburn College in Launceston.

At UTAS he developed his love of history: “I was fortunate in my first year that an institution, George Wilson, introduced me to Indian history, followed by Dr Asim Roy. “People called George ‘the red professor’; he led campaigns against the Vietnam War and pioneered the study of Asian history in Australian universities.” (George Wilson began teaching Pacific and Asian history at UTAS when he arrived in 1947.)

James recalls “fine teachers” at university: Bill Joske’s philosophy lectures, James McAuley – “the way he read poetry was outstanding” – Margaret Scott’s lectures on Shakespeare and the Reverend Dr John Wall’s Chaucer lectures.

But history is his abiding interest: “We can only begin to understand cultures effectively if we know a reasonable amount about their history and where they are in their stage of development, economically and culturally.”

In Bangkok James lives in a house behind the embassy “a beautiful house built with the embassy in the 1970s”; the public rooms are downstairs and he and his wife are upstairs.

Working days are long, work events extend into weekends and in his little spare time James is learning the challenging Thai language.

“What I enjoy most is the variety,” he declared. “This is a job of enormous variety.”

DR LAUREN BAIN  
Political counsellor, Indonesian Embassy, Jakarta, PhD 2005

Indonesia and Indonesian studies have always been Lauren Bain’s passion.

She heads up the embassy’s 12-member political section; as political counsellor, Lauren manages bilateral relations with Indonesia, looking at Indonesian domestic politics and its effects on the relationship between the two countries. The section also deals with issues such as counter-terrorism, nuclear disarmament and counter-proliferation and legal cooperation.

Lauren joined DFAT as a graduate as she was completing her PhD in Indonesian studies with UTAS.

She went to Indonesia on an arts internship, becoming interested in the arts there as it related to politics and decided to do a doctorate supervised by UTAS’ Professor Barbara Hatley.

In Indonesia Lauren met several people who worked for Australia’s Jakarta embassy and applied to DFAT. Her first posting was to Kuala Lumpur.

“It’s a job I love and I’m fortunate to be in Indonesia at a time of interesting events,” Lauren said. “I use my Indonesian language skills every day.”

Lauren lives in a house close to the embassy with her husband, a diplomat with Germany’s embassy in Jakarta, and her two young children. Her five year-old daughter is quickly picking up Indonesian at the cosmopolitan Jakarta International School.

“Living in Jakarta has its challenges; it’s a city of 12 million people into which another eight million commute every day,” Lauren said. “It’s crowded and polluted and the traffic can come to a complete standstill. Having a love for the culture certainly helps because it’s not easy to get around.”
Our diplomats

GEOFF TOOTH high commissioner to Kenya, BA Hons 1987

On one day recently Geoff Tooth opened a women’s shelter in the biggest slum in east Africa, represented Australia at a UN environmental meeting then attended a dinner with the President of Kenya – and that day only partly describes the work he does. Geoff became Australia’s high commissioner to Kenya in late 2010. He is also currently high commissioner to Kenya, Rwanda, Tanzania and Uganda, Ambassador to Burundi, Somalia and South Sudan, and permanent representative to the UN in Nairobi, including to the UN Environment Program and Habitat.

And he loves it. His enthusiasm and energy for the job comes through in his descriptions of Nairobi – “a terrific city with an ideal climate” – the rich history of the African countries in which he works and his joy in experiencing the wildlife. It’s as if his former postings to Wellington, Vienna, Port Moresby and Seoul have all been leading to Kenya.

Geoff’s outgoing personality adorns the DFAT website in a video interview, enlivening the somewhat stuffy image of the government department with his love for the job. But you’d be wrong to assume a highly academic background.

“At university I was heavily involved in student politics and a lot of other things. I had a fantastic time and learnt a lot,” Geoff said. “Charlie Touber was student union president and I edited Togatus for a year, worked in the bar and was student union treasurer – a great deal of fun and a fair distraction from study. “I wasn’t one of nature’s academics but I did a whole lot of other things including plenty of sport. I’m not sure you can have that range of experiences at other universities; my friends at Sydney seemed to spend a large chunk of time travelling between uni and home.”

Still, Geoff lists Emeritus Professor Harry Gelber and Graham Smith in politics, Emeritus Professors Rod Thomson in history and Bill Joske (d. 2006) in philosophy as memorable teachers.

Growing up on Tasmania’s north-west coast Geoff attended Reece High and Don College. His father Dr John Tooth was a psychiatrist there; later he become head of the Tasmanian Department of Mental Health, set up Adards nursing home and was for a time a UTAS professor. He was also president of Jane Franklin for more than a decade and Geoff says he is now retired, living in Fern Tree.

Geoff maintains that family and university life gave him what he regards as essential qualities for diplomatic life: “I recently chaired a recruitment process for DFAT; we select 20-50 graduates a year,” he said. “We looked for people who we thought were practical, smart and flexible – could jump between environments and issues and essentially, could get on with people.”

Geoff’s wife Joanne and his children Rhys and Elizabeth are in Nairobi too; Joanne brings her Canberra public service skills to the charity organisations she is involved with. The family lives in a house which is big by Australian standards – mainly because half of it is used for official events they host. In the week of the interview, they had entertained 22 people from Kenya’s mining industry and the 15-strong Australian rugby sevens team – with a couple of house guests from Tasmania.

While Geoff’s daily work with his high commission staff of 80 keeps him busy on matters as wide-ranging as processing refugees on their way to Australia, dealing with complex consular cases and taking care of Australian mining and investment issues, he tries to get out every few weeks into “the wonders of Kenya”.

“Yes, Nairobi has traffic and security issues, and the recent Westgate tragedy has had an impact on all living here. But on the weekend I was driving among elephants, walking with giraffes and visiting the most famous chimp sanctuary in the world,” he said. “These are experiences that will stay with my family for life.”

Geoff Tooth, Australia’s high commissioner to Kenya, BA Hons 1987: Gatina Primary School children in the biggest slum in East Africa are involved in the Australian-funded Little Sports program, recently the subject of an ABC news report.
**OUR DIPLOMATS**

*Peter Heyward, Australian High Commissioner to Pakistan, BA 1979*

**HEYWARD FAMILY GET-TOGETHERS** are not easy to organise these days. As the Australian high commissioner to Pakistan, Peter Heyward is based in Islamabad. His two daughters live in Geneva and Rio de Janeiro respectively. One of his three brothers, Mark, lives in Indonesia, having married an Indonesian woman and converted to Islam. The other two brothers, Nicholas – managing director of the Tasmanian Symphony Orchestra – and James, a builder, live in Hobart, along with mother Peggy. (Mark and Nicholas are also UTAS alumni, as was father Oliver, a Rhodes Scholar.)

Recently the Heywards did manage the rare feat of sitting around the family table, all at the same time, in Hobart. They came together for a double celebration – Peggy’s 90th birthday and the launch by Tim Bowden of Mark’s book *Crazy Little Heaven*, an account of a remarkable expedition into the interior of Indonesian Borneo but also a reflection on life.

Peter Heyward graduated from UTAS with a BA, majoring in philosophy, in 1978. “In those days it was possible to follow your muse,” he recalls.

“UTAS was small then but it had some good people in the School of Philosophy – Professor Bill Joske was good value, and Ed Salinas, a lecturer who specialised in German philosophy which was counter to the British empiricist trend of the day; that really interested me. I also had a remarkable tutor in Winston Nesbitt.”

Around the time he graduated Peter was interviewed for the diplomatic service but wasn’t successful. Instead he married, started a family and joined the public service, initially working in the Department of Transport. When the Hawke Government relocated the Australian Antarctic Division to Hobart he joined the AAD to recruit expeditioners, and later worked on Antarctic policy. In 1989 he was seconded to Foreign Affairs in the lead-up to the landmark 1992 UN Conference on the Environment and Development in Rio.

“Foreign Affairs didn’t have anyone who was familiar with all the international environmental agreements, which had been my focus at AAD. I was also asked to support Sir Ninian Stephen, the former Governor-General who had become Australia’s first Ambassador for the Environment.

“Foreign Affairs eventually offered me a permanent job and I stayed.”

His first diplomatic posting was to Argentina as deputy head of mission, followed by a move to Geneva as deputy head of the Australian Permanent Mission to the UN and then his first ambassadorship, to Brazil.

“I also covered Columbia and Venezuela, which made me responsible for a fair chunk of the continent.”

Timor-Leste beckoned next, for three years, followed by 18 months back in Canberra and then the posting to Islamabad in June last year.

“Professionally, Pakistan is a fascinating place – how could it not be with a set of neighbours such as Iran, Afghanistan, China and India?”

Controversy over the mass culling of Australian sheep aside, Australia is well regarded there, he said.

“We have a common heritage in the British Commonwealth and you should never underestimate the ability of cricket-playing nations to understand each other!”

**Katie Hamilton, third secretary, High Commission, London, BAntStud Hons 2006**

**IF AUSTRALIA EVER HAS AN EMBASSY** in Antarctica, Katie Hamilton will be posted there. Currently third secretary at the High Commission in London, she completed her Melbourne University science/law degree honours year on a scholarship with UTAS – because of her fascination with Antarctica.

Still unsure of her career direction after doing her articles at Melbourne law firm Mallesons and a role as judge’s associate for the president of the Victorian Court of Appeal, Katie joined DFAT in 2011 as a policy graduate, having enjoyed the law/policy aspect of her UTAS studies.

“I was attracted to DFAT because you can work in totally different topic areas across the department; I started in the marine environment section, then worked on the Middle East and then on trade law,” she said.

The variety of work as a diplomat still appeals to Katie. London is her first three-year posting after six months in Honiara and working as part of the regional assistance mission in the Solomon Islands. She has been in London only a few months, living in Notting Hill and finding her work role varied. And yes, there are some Antarctic issues coming up as well!
BRUCE EDWARDS

BRUCE EDWARDS HAS JUST arrived to work at Australia’s embassy in Kabul, Afghanistan and says the city is everything he expected.

“On the short drive from the airport the security situation was exactly what I’d read about; Kabul is very much a fortified city,” he said.

“Where we live at the embassy is all compounds behind several layers of security. There is an ever-present threat but we’re a bit insulated from it because of the security contractors looking after us every day."

Bruce’s appointment is as political secretary. Any one day he may be working on regional co-operation, preparing for a diplomacy event, monitoring the human response in Syria or watching an Australian jazz trio performing.

“Variety is the real attraction of the job,” Bruce said, although he looks regretfully at the stunning mountain range surrounding the city wondering what sorts of activities would be possible there – and knowing he’s unlikely ever to travel there.

Bruce graduated from UTAS in 1996 with an honours graduate diploma in Antarctic studies, following through on his fascination with that area of the world. UTAS was his choice because of the university’s multi-disciplinary approach and lecturers from the Antarctic Division who were at the forefront of Antarctic research.

He began his career working in Canberra with the Department of Sport and Territories, then spent six years in Vietnam and the Solomon Islands.

“In Honiara I worked with the embassy as a locally-engaged staff member and it stood me in good stead to move into DFAT.”

In May this year Bruce ended a three-year appointment in Beirut as deputy head of mission, coming back to Canberra to prepare for the Kabul job.

On the way to Kabul he married in Scotland; his wife Anisa is a humanitarian adviser in relief response in Dublin.

For the foreseeable future they will see each other intermittently: Bruce works two months on and one month off, such is the life of a diplomat in a war-torn country.

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Bruce Edwards, political secretary at Australia’s Afghanistan Embassy in Kabul.
Our diplomats

HEIDI BOOTLE
consul-general in Noumea, New Caledonia, BCom 1992

At 42 years old Heidi Bootle is Australia’s consul-general in Noumea, New Caledonia but she confesses to not being much of a life planner and “just kind of rolled into” her diplomatic career. Her role in Noumea includes strengthening bilateral relationships in the French Pacific, including in the area of trade. This includes providing support and advice to Australian businesses wanting to work in the area; nickel mining and engineering services are the main ones.

And then there are consular issues, particularly in association with the cruise ships. Australians are increasingly attracted to cruise ship tourism and over 200,000 of them drop into Noumea in a year. “If Australians get into difficulty we’re a point of contact,” Heidi said.

“Situations with medical issues including for elderly people happen regularly; we have good hospital facilities here but medical evacuation can still be necessary in serious cases.”

In addition, the consul-general has a diplomatic role in managing the bilateral relationship with both representatives of the French government and the government of New Caledonia, as well as being Australia’s permanent representative to the regional organisation, Secretariat of the Pacific Community.

“It’s quite different from the role in my earlier posting to the Solomon Islands, which was about development and aid,” Heidi said.

And different too from her earlier posting to Australia’s consulate-general in Paris, where she spent three years as first secretary. “Paris was busy and fabulous,” she said. “It’s probably my favourite city in the world, although it was difficult to enjoy it because I was working so hard.

“I was at the Quai d’Orsay visiting the Foreign Ministry a couple of times a week; I took so much out of the experience – the cultural experience and the language skills. These days I enjoy reading a novel in French.”

Not having learnt French at Hobart’s Clarence High is a matter of regret for Heidi. Students were allocated languages to learn – hers was Indonesian. “I really wanted to learn French but my name started with B so I couldn’t! Before I went to Paris I did an intensive 40-week French course in Canberra and improved over the time in Paris.”

French won’t be problematic for Heidi’s two sons. Her eldest, now 16, is at boarding school in Canberra and lived in Paris with her; her youngest, six, has been with Heidi in Noumea for almost two years and is fully bi-lingual, attending a French school.
How Australia and India broke up – 100 million years ago

By Sam East

Dr Jo Whittaker from the UTAS specialist Institute for Marine and Antarctic Studies (IMAS) likes to solve jigsaw puzzles. Now this marine geoscientist is tackling the biggest puzzle on the planet – the formation of continents.

Jo is reconstructing how the Indian, Australian and Antarctic tectonic plates separated over the past 200 million years, forming the Indian Ocean and the continents as we see them today. This information will help us model climate change better, find new gas resources, and understand the dynamics of the land in which we live.

The piece of this jigsaw she is now working on centres on two underwater plateaux, the Batavia and Gulden Draak Knolls, towering about 3000 metres above the Perth Abyssal Plain (PAP), which is around 1600 kilometres off the coast of Geraldton in Western Australia. In November 2011, Jo’s team mapped and sampled rocks from both knolls. Based on the evidence so far, Jo says, it looks like they split from the margins of the moving Indian Plate about 100 million years ago.

But in order to be sure, and to properly understand the sequence of development of the Indian Ocean Basin, Jo needs to have those rocks properly dated and identified.

“The seas surrounding Australia harbour unique ecosystems and support valuable industries such as oil and gas production, fisheries and tourism,” says Jo. “Despite our reliance on these industries and our penchant for living along the coast, large tracts of Australia’s surrounding ocean floor remain unknown and unexplored.”

This year Jo won one a prestigious L’Oréal Australia and New Zealand For Women in Science Fellowship which came with $25,000 worth of prize money. Jo will use this to fund this next stage of research.

Fishing for change; enhancing Australia’s seafood futures

Professor Reg Watson has recently taken up a new position at UTAS’ Institute of Marine and Antarctic Studies – Professor of Fisheries and Modelling.

Seafood production is an important part of Australia’s economy and future food security. Additionally, fisheries are both vulnerable to, and a cause of, changes in the marine environment.

Prof. Watson said IMAS would enhance Australia’s future seafood production and marine food security by projecting the effect of natural and man-made factors such as climate change and overfishing, and then use computer models to find our best future options.

“Our aim is to establish limits to sustainable growth in fisheries while safeguarding seafood for Australians.”

Prof. Watson brings with him a wealth of experience from a global fisheries context. Most of his significant research and many of his publications have been possible because he found ways of mapping global fisheries catches with precision that had never been done.

He has also developed the means to show where fishing effort is expended.

In his current work at IMAS he is extending this to the ability to trace where all imported global seafood are caught and evaluate its impact at the source (and importantly the impacts of climate change on that fishing and our future seafood supply).

Prof. Watson has also developed mapping techniques that follow global mariculture production to our supermarkets.

He wants to use ‘big picture’ analysis to support Australia’s future and begin collaborations with those who do similar work with global land food production.
Agriculture research gains national recognition

THE TASMANIAN INSTITUTE OF Agriculture’s position as a provider of world-class agricultural research and teaching has resulted in its significant national and international profile.

TIA has more than 150 research projects underway; impact-focused, innovative research generating in the region of $14 million for 2013 alone.

The outputs of TIA’s research are integrated into undergraduate teaching, while more than 80 postgraduate students play a key role in TIA’s research.

An example of the pay-off for students is UTAS agricultural science PhD student Adam Langworthy’s winning of the AEV Richardson Memorial National Student Award for 2013; it recognises the best undergraduate student honours research project as part of an agricultural science (or related) degree.

In addition to local and nationally-based research, TIA staff also work on many projects outside Australia, including research partnerships with overseas universities and agricultural research organisations, as well as assisting countries to increase their agricultural productivity and sustainable resource use.

Some of these projects include...

Investigating our red meat’s long life
TIA has won a national tender worth $1.1 million over three years to uncover the secret to Australia’s long-shelf-life meat.

The research is being carried out by TIA’s Food Safety Centre, headed by Professor Mark Tamplin and Associate Professor Tom Ross, driving innovation, creating career opportunities and delivering direct benefits to Tasmanian meat producers, processors and exporters.

The project aims to define why Australian meat has an extended shelf-life. It seeks to provide exporters with ways to manage and extend shelf-life of their meat, provide tools to monitor and manage processing conditions and develop modifications of local processing operations for international markets. It’s a great example of using highly targeted science to underpin successful industry outcomes and provide industry-ready professionals.

‘Microwaving’ pinot noir wine
Research by Dr Anna Carew into the potential for microwaves to improve the quality and colour of the state’s renowned pinot noir is generating considerable industry interest.

Dr Carew is investigating a novel red wine maceration process which employs microwave to heat red grape must. Initial results are revealing a fuller flavoured wine with more tannin.

Dr Carew presented her research at the 15th Australian Wine Industry Technical Conference, and received the award for best student poster for oenology: Microwave maceration of pinot noir: phenolically equivalent, aromatically distinct. Her invited oral presentation on the topic was judged best oenology presentation in the fresh research section.

Collaborative projects with Sense-T
TIA is working closely with Sense-T on a number of research projects, harnessing the potential of sensors and data to deliver improved ‘real-time’ information to producers and providers.

These collaborations in viticulture optimisation, beef and dairy optimisation and pathways to market provide answers to consumers about where their food comes from, how it was produced and if it is safe.

As part of the five-year, $10m project, data will be collected on conditions under which food is produced, processed, transported, stored and sold.

Setting academic standards for agriculture
A new teaching research project headed up by Dr Tina Acuna will research and develop a national academic standards statement for agriculture and related disciplines, representing the pass level of achievement expected of a graduate with a bachelor’s degree.

Led by UTAS with the University of Adelaide, the University of Western Sydney and Charles Sturt University, the project will contribute to the national regulation framework currently being developed across the higher education sector. It is timely given the current demand for graduates in agriculture and associated disciplines.

To develop the agriculture-specific standards, the project team is consulting with industry stakeholders, academics, students and the Australian Council of Deans of Agriculture. For more information see www.agltas.edu.au
By Lana Best

In the globally competitive world of tabletop games, 33-year-old Denis Kosta prefers to sit at a scene craftily cobbled together from paper mache and coir mat offcuts to shuffle miniature men with guns around a battlefield.

The Launceston finance manager with T as Health Organisation North’s mental health services is one of a small, obsessed group of tabletop gamers, around 100 statewide, who pursue a hobby assembling and painting squads of miniature plastic models and sending them into historic or futuristic warfare. The games include hand-held games, console games, arcade games, online games, computer games and internet games.

The pastime attracts a surprisingly large contingent of enthusiasts around Australia; in more populated countries like the US there are entire circuits of competition catering for thousands of tabletop gamers.

But participants must have a tough skin – and get used to being labelled a nerd or worse by the uninitiated.

“No doubt you can get some strange looks when you tell someone that you play with toy soldiers,” Denis laughed. “But kids think it’s really cool, and my wife is supportive, she even helps me paint sometimes.

“My Croatian parents really don’t get it though, and I’m fine with that.”

Denis is partial to WWII scenarios and on a table in his garage his tanks, soldiers and enemy troops are carefully manoeuvred according to a telephone book of stringent rules, the precision of a tape measure and the luck of a roll of a dice.

As young teenagers Denis and his brother Daniel spent hours fighting each other with toy soldiers. Denis couldn’t believe his luck when he started his commerce degree at the UTAS Newnham campus and found a group of students and several academics who also liked their miniature military.

The University War Game Club, later to become the Launceston Gaming Club, was supported by the student union and still meets twice weekly at new St Leonards clubrooms.

Daniel is the club’s vice president and Denis an active member when he can drag himself away from his latest obsession, his one-year-old daughter. Tabletop gaming provided a way to de-stress and relax as his career progressed from accounting, to stockbroking to various roles with the Tasmanian Department of Health.

According to Denis, war games appeal mainly to history lovers with “mathemathical, competitive minds”; he is happy to slot himself into that category but added that it’s mainly fun.

“Some people just like the toy figures and to paint them up; they’re happy with a ‘beer and pretzel’ game,” he said.

“Others enjoy the competition and take it seriously, playing in regular tournaments held with two Hobart clubs, sometimes with Melbourne enthusiasts.”

The games regularly go for more than two hours and can involve wartime scenes from Biblical battles between Egyptians and Hittites to the WWII-themed Flames of War, to modern warfare fresh from Afghanistan to fantasy-futuristic game systems such as Warmachine, Warhammer and Blood Bowl.

Single figurines can cost $10 to $150 while larger units and pre-designed scenery can easily stretch into thousands of dollars.

Some players paint with painstaking precision, others are slap dash and some don’t bother at all. But it’s scale that really matters, and only armies of the same scale can battle each other.

For more information go to http://lgc.bringthatstuffon.com
The great scholarship hunter retires after 20 years

By Peter Cochrane

HE LYNCHPIN OF THE TASMANIA Scholarship Program has retired (for a second time), after nearly two decades of total commitment to donors and students. Eoin Breen was formally farewelled at the end of August, leaving, as University of Tasmania Foundation chair Colin Jackson noted, large shoes to fill.

His legacy is a healthy scholarships program, Mr Jackson said: “More than 500 students are currently supported through the foundation, nearly 200 of whom have been personally shepherded by Eoin this year alone.

“Furthermore, he has shown an uncanny knack of turning scholarship support into bequests – and bequests into scholarships during the life of the donor.”

Ably assisted by Lyn Webster and Cathy Makin, Eoin built a program that began with the awarding of the first cohort of nearly 100 scholarships in 1995. His notable achievements include the Old Hobartian Centenary Scholarship, which has raised $123,000, and the Sue Napier Scholarship in Education, with $258,000 funding students in the Bachelor of Education and Masters in Teaching.

Another former UTAS mainstay, Amanda Wojtowicz, who retired as director of events and protocol earlier this year, said in her tribute: “Eoin really created the Tasmania Scholarship Program as we know it.

“The successful characteristics of the program are very much his – a singular focus (this is how he can remember probably every student’s name); an enjoyment and celebration of their successes; his integrity in relation to the intent of the donors, and their relationship with their scholars and UTAS; his very canny management of the money and most of all, his unswerving commitment to the program.

“He also provided much more personal support to students who found themselves in difficulty from time to time – providing wise counsel, and sourcing washing machines, fridges and cash.”

Eoin Breen retirement: “An uncanny knack of turning scholarship support into bequests – and bequests into scholarships during the life of the donor.”

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Keeping in touch

An exchange scholarship opens the world

Exchange scholarships open up the world for students

The 2013 Round of the New Overseas Exchange Scholarship Program established by the University of Tasmania Foundation has begun, with scholarship recipients travelling to Canada, USA, Switzerland, Norway and Denmark. They are experiencing international study across arts, business, economics, education, law, medicine, and marine and Antarctic studies.

The foundation has made the program a funding priority to ensure as many applying students as possible can benefit from the opportunity of broadening their horizons and experiencing the world through their chosen area of study.

The initial funding for this Overseas Exchange Scholarship Program has been provided through a bequest made to UTAS by HF Lovett.

Continued support is provided by donors to the UTAS Annual Appeal, and the UTAS Foundation said that 10 students have been enabled to study one semester internationally in 2013. This program has been boosted by a donation establishing the Barney Rodgers Overseas Exchange Scholarship establishing six scholarships of up to $5,000 each for one semester’s international study.

This scholarship is designed to assist current UTAS students with the significant travel costs for an approved international exchange with another university.

Scholarship student Arlie McCarthy is benefitting from one of the Barney Rodgers scholarships and said the opportunity to study in Svalbard, Norway, would introduce her to people involved in polar research.

“I’m excited to experience this challenging environment,” she said.

“This scholarship will greatly assist in covering some of the additional costs involved with travelling to such a remote place.”

Arthur Cobbold Memorial Lecture Appeal

The UTAS Foundation is currently seeking gifts in support of an endowed annual lecture on contemporary medical issues in memory of Emeritus Professor Arthur Cobbold OBE AM.

The Arthur Cobbold Memorial Lecture Appeal is aiming to raise $100,000 to endow this lecture in perpetuity.

Prof. Cobbold contributed to the University of Tasmania first as Foundation Professor of Physiology, then as Dean of Medicine for a record 13 years. He was an inspirational lecturer as well as a highly competent researcher, and over 21 years his leadership, determination and his political skills guided the School of Medicine from humble beginnings into today’s success.

Dr Rob Walters, chair of the Arthur Cobbold Memorial Lecture Appeal Committee said Prof. Cobbold shaped the School of Medicine and the lives of many of those in it.

“He was much loved by his students and over three decades had immense influence on all issues medical in Tasmania,” he said.

“In tandem with university duties, Prof. Cobbold played a pivotal role in the development of health policy and facilities in Tasmania and oversaw the development of teaching facilities at the Royal Hobart Hospital. He was a long-term member of the board of the Royal Hobart Hospital and its chairman from the mid-1980s.”

Prof. Cobbold received an OBE and AM for services to medical education; in 2000 he was awarded an honorary Doctor of Medicine by UTAS. He died in December 2009.

The Arthur Cobbold Memorial Lecture was held in August, with Professor Kim Rainsford, Emeritus Professor of Biomedical Sciences, Sheffield Hallam University UK, speaking on Pain, Pills and Ageing.

Donations to the Arthur Cobbold Memorial Lecture Appeal are tax deductible and will further medical education in Tasmania. To donate see www.utas.edu.au/foundation/donate

Arlie McCarthy: Scholarship to do polar research in Norway.

Professor Arthur Cobbold
Keeping in touch

1970s

David Ritchie BA Hons 1970. David Ritchie has recently returned to Australia after four years as Australia’s ambassador to France. He has spent more than 43 years in foreign affairs, beginning in 1975 at the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade (DFAT) in Canberra. Over his career he has taken on many postings and titles including high commissioner in Sri Lanka and deputy high commissioner in London. David also spent six years as head of the DFAT divisions of Europe and the Pacific and has taken on roles such as speech writer and working in the office of the Minister of Foreign Affairs.

David says as he is now retired he is currently “in the process of decompressing” his life but is still working, including chairing the graduate recruitment committee of DFAT and working for the National Security College at ANU on the Pacific.

Bob Cotgrove BA Hons 1971. Retired UTAS academic and former Tasmania University Cricket Club player Bob Cotgrove was selected in a 17-player Australian Over 70s cricket squad to tour England this year. The squad played nine one-day matches in England, including two Test matches against an England XI. Bob scored 147 runs at an average of 49.0, took five wickets at 32.0, and held three catches.

Bob is an honorary associate in the UTAS School of Geography and Environmental Studies. He came to UTAS as a mature aged student and made his debut for TUCC for 1965-66 season aged 27. After graduating he joined the then Geography Department. In 1985 he graduated with a UTAS MTransEc degree and in 1991 an MSc(Econ) from UCL in London. He is currently studying for an Associate Degree in Dementia Care.

Despite starting his cricket career with TUCC at a late age, Bob scored more than 9,000 runs and took 193 wickets in 28 seasons with the club before retiring from TCA grade cricket in 1994 aged 55. He now plays over-age cricket with the Australian Cricket Society’s ‘Last Over XI’, playing in eight annual Australian National Over 60s tournaments representing teams from Tasmania.

1990s

Dr Alex Chong MBBS 1995. Dr Chong is an orthopaedic surgeon in an 80-bed private hospital in his home town, Batu Pahat, Malaysia. Since 2008 he has done joint replacement and trauma surgery, after working in five hospitals around Malaysia following six years at UTAS.

Dr Chong studied at UTAS after gaining a scholarship because in the 1990s there were few medical schools in Malaysia.

“I enjoyed my degree, it was the most interesting time of my life because I’d never been out of Malaysia before,” he said. “In my undergraduate days I planned to do anaesthesiology but as I started getting postings I became more interested in orthopaedics,” he said.

Nicky Pollington BSc Hons 1995.

Nicky went to UTAS initially to study psychology but over time she had devoted herself to geology at the Australian Research Council Centre of Excellence in Ore Deposits. Nicky’s father is a geologist and she grew up spending time in the field with him. Now senior geologist at Pitt and Sherry, a consulting engineering company in Hobart, Nicky said her chosen career feels like a natural progression. The opportunity to travel for her work was always a key factor in her love of geology and her work with Pitt and Sherry includes this.

She is focused on facilitating the geotechnical, environmental and mining facets of the industry working harmoniously together.

Nicky’s partner James and eight year-old twins Thomas and Lily think her job is great and enjoy talking rocks and mining.

‘Ungatea Kata MED 1999 and John Phelps MED 1986. Dr Kata was, for several years, the principal of Tupou High School in Tonga and is now the Academic Dean at Tupou Tertiary Institute. Both institutions are part of the Free Wesleyan Church of Tonga’s Education System. Rev. Dr Kata is also a faifekau, an ordained minister in the church.

John Phelps, formerly a Tasmanian school principal, has worked as an education consultant in Europe, South East Asia and the Pacific for the past eighteen years. He is currently studying for a Doctor of Education degree, based on his five years’ work in Tonga. The two have worked together during John’s years as a consultant in Tonga and chatted at a recent gathering of some Tongan alumni in Nuku’alofa, the nation’s capital.

The Kingdom of Tonga is a tiny independent country located in the south-west Pacific. Many of its citizens who wish to gain advanced degrees do so by attending overseas universities and the University of Tasmania has been a popular choice in recent decades. When ‘Ungatea gained her UTAS MED her full name was Siosi’ana ‘Ungatea Taonganui Fonua.
Keeping in touch

2000s

**Michael Bernacki** BArch Hons 2003. Since graduating, Michael has been based on the Gold Coast at one of Australia’s largest architecture firms, DBI Design. In this position Michael has travelled the world working on luxury resorts and high end residential projects in Abu Dhabi, China, Dubai, Fiji, India, Indonesia, Japan, Macau, Malaysia, Thailand, Taiwan, Vanuatu, Vietnam and most major cities within Australia. He has been a key senior team member of 29 state, national and international award winning projects for DBI. Michael also operates his own off-shoot boutique office which has recently undertaken projects in America, including an apartment renovation overlooking Central Park in New York (a penthouse formerly owned by Calvin Klein) and a private beachfront residence in Malibu. Michael hopes to return to Tasmania soon to work in partnership with a firm or continuing his boutique office, producing contemporary architectural residences in Tasmania and worldwide. He strongly believes his education from the School of Architecture at UTAS gave him his career building blocks. As a student he won 15 awards in student and professional categories, including the Mount Nelson Award. When Michael is not working he can be found at his favourite coffee haunts and eateries in Byron Bay or snowboarding mountains of fresh powderfalls somewhere around the world.

**Luke Viney** BEd 2011. Luke works as a Year 7 teacher at Smithton High School on the Tasmania’s north-west coast, where he teaches a wide range of subjects including English, maths, science and history. “I really enjoy the relationships I’ve developed with the staff and students at the school,” he said. “Teaching a wide variety of subjects is a challenging yet rewarding experience.” The learning experiences that the University of Tasmania provided me with helped me to develop my confidence as a teacher, prepared me for the challenge of teaching multiple curricula, and allowed me to make connections with a wider learning community.”

**Caitlin Midson** BA 2009, MTeach 2011. Caitlin is a recent UTAS alumnus who teaches history and English to Year 7 and 8 students at Burnie High School. She has worked there for two years. She says it is a fantastic school with a strong vision to enable children to realise their potential and through her education studies, UTAS prepared her to be a positive contributor to the school. “I continue to learn and grow every day within the challenging and rewarding world of teaching,” Caitlin said. “I found that UTAS really prepared me for the world of teaching, but more generally, the degrees I studied opened my eyes up to issues in the world and allowed me to be a critical and productive global citizen.”

Caitlin studied through distance education, completing both degrees while feeling supported and included.

**Suneesh Sunny** GradCertBus 2012. Suneesh works at Caterpillar Underground Mining’s Burnie operations, where he works as a product reliability engineer. His graduate certificate of business was his first experience of an Australian university and now he is enrolled to do an MBA at UTAS in 2014. Suneesh migrated to Australia from India, arriving in late 2010; his wife and three year-old son joined him a year later. He said Australia was one of his “most sought destinations”. “Initially I worked in Perth, WA for a company called Advanced Braking Technologies as a design engineer for a few months,” he said. “Employment with Caterpillar brought me to Tasmania; I had heard more than enough about Tasmania’s beauty and charm and its own uniqueness in lifestyle. “I approached UTAS because was I looking to pursue studies in management.” Suneesh said the chance to study locally, to share ideas and meet new people has broadened his horizons and supported his work at Caterpillar.

Port Hedland is the world’s largest bulk tonnage port, exporting more than 288 million tonnes of cargo in the last financial year. Much of that cargo is iron ore, mined in the Pilbara. Growing up in a family of marine engineers as the only daughter with three older brothers, Kate became a deck officer aged 19 and sailed out of Sydney Harbour on her first ship, a crude oil carrier. Mostly she was the only woman on the ship and at times was at sea 32 days straight.

After 12 years at sea she qualified for her Master Class 1 and took command of her own ship as a ship’s captain in the Merchant Navy. Kate’s brother James Semmens (BTech (Marine Eng) 1997) was also a student at the AMC and is now a marine engineer. He married UTAS nursing student Hilary van Emmerick (B Nursing 1965) and they now have three children and live in Hobart. Kate and her partner have a house in Hobart where they plan to return to when they leave Port Hedland one day.

• To hear Kate talking about her work see blogs.abc.net.au/wa/2013/08/only-shells-on-the-ship.html

Please send your news via email to: Alumni.Office@utas.edu.au
You can also post your news to the UTAS Advancement Office, Locked Bag 1360, Launceston, Tasmania, 7250.
Alumni events in 2013

UTAS ALUMNI HAVE HELD EVENTS in 2013 around Australia and internationally with the aim of catching up, meeting new friends and hearing interesting speakers.

Many international graduands celebrated before graduating at the University Club on the Sandy Bay campus in August, and more than 100 alumni from UTAS courses at the Shanghai Ocean University in Shanghai in July. Interesting guest speakers at drinks and canapés evenings included alumnus Tim McCormack (LLB Hons), who spoke in July in Burnie at the Cradle Coast campus and at the RACV Club in Melbourne.

Tim is special adviser on international humanitarian law to the prosecutor of the International Criminal Court in The Hague. He is also Professor of Law at the Melbourne Law School and adjunct Professor of Law at the University of Tasmania Law School. His topic was From the Netherlands to Van Diemen’s Land and back again: A Tasmanian perspective on the pursuit of global justice.

ABC announcer Tim Cox interviewed Oxfam CEO and alumna Helen Szoke (BA 1977) at an event in Brisbane in July, and South Australian ombudsman Richard Bingham spoke at an Adelaide gathering.

In Launceston a debate on the question of whether bigger is better for Tasmania involved debaters Allan Garcia, Phil Bayley and Sophie Rigney for the motion and Professor Julianne Schultz, Alexandra de Blas and Senator Peter Whish-Wilson against.

ABC presenter Roisin McCann chaired the debate which was won by the team for the negative.

Debates and speakers entertain UTAS alumni
Alumni events in 2013

Shanghai

Shanghai alumni gathering: More than 100 alumni from the joint UTAS – Shanghai Ocean University program gathered in Shanghai to socialise, joined by the dean of the Faculty of Science, Engineering and Technology, Professor Margaret Britz.

Melbourne

Tim McCormack in Melbourne: Alumni Tony Kyriacou, Joshua Brownlie and Ryszard Szymanski at the RACV Club.

Adelaide


Richard Bingham in Adelaide: Alumni Ross Sawyers and Mary Findlay enjoyed chatting after hearing South Australian ombudsman and UTAS alumnus Richard Bingham speak at a drinks and canapés event.
Revisionist histories

In this accessibly written volume, Marnie Hughes-Warrington discusses the paucity of work on revision in history theory and raises ethical questions about linear models and spatial metaphors that have been used to explain it. *Revisionist Histories* emphasises the role of the authors and audiences of histories alike as the writers and rewriters of history. It shows that the ‘sides’ of history cannot be disentangled from one another, and that they are subject to flux and even destruction over time.

Incorporating diverse and controversial case studies, including the French Revolution, Holocaust Denial and European settlers’ contact with Native Americans and Indigenous Australians, *Revisionist Histories* offers both a detailed account of the development of revisionism and a new, more spatial vision of historiography.

The forgotten war

Australia is dotted with memorials to soldiers who fought in wars overseas. Why are there no official memorials of the wars fought on Australian soil between Aborigines and white colonists? Why is it more controversial to talk about the frontier wars, how many people died and whether the colonists themselves saw frontier conflict as a form of warfare.

From ashes to ashes

Peter Morrison follows in his father’s footsteps as a teacher, except that Peter finds himself marching to the beat of two different drummers. While one leads him to teaching and family, the other draws him to illicit love and classroom scandal. With maturity, Peter rights his choices, retiring as a respected school principal. But verging on dementia, he hears again the beat of the other drummer. During his life Peter faces the challenges that may crop up in the classroom and staff room: discipline problems, conflicts over corporal punishment, handling teachers’ union disputes, the Vietnam protest movement’s impact on schools, a sexually precocious student using blackmail … the warp and woof of classroom life. But couldn’t this be the pattern for anyone’s life?

In August 1943 in the despair of a Japanese POW camp on the Thai-Burma death railway, Australian surgeon Dorrigo Evans is haunted by his love affair with his uncle’s young wife two years earlier. Struggling to save the men under his command from starvation, from cholera, from beatings, he receives a letter that will change his life forever.

This savagely beautiful novel is a story about the many forms of love and death, of war and truth, as one man comes of age, prospers, only to discover all that he has lost. One reviewer has described this book as “a masterwork by one of Australia’s best writers”.

The narrow road to the deep north

Richard Flanagan’s first novel in five years is about the cruelty of war, the tenuousness of life and the impossibility of love.

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Veils and tin hats: Tasmanian nurses in the Second World War

By Peter Henning, self-published 2013.

**We all kept our tin hats on, but I’m not sure what protection from bombs we hoped to get from that.** More than 200 Tasmanian nurses enlisted in Australian and British military forces during the Second World War. They formed a cross section of Australian nurses who enlisted and, in microcosm, their experiences replicated those of the whole with few exceptions. They are not too large as an overall cohort to prevent attention to individual and small-group experiences in some detail. This closer focus enables an exploration of the diversity of experiences of nurses, the dangers they faced, the conditions under which they worked, and the impact of the war on their lives.

The book contains more than 200 photos, includes nominal rolls of Tasmanian nurses and AAMWS and is indexed.

Preaching the gospel


A minister said he was used to writing essays but reading an essay-like script from the pulpit didn’t seem to get him anywhere. What could he do? The first section of this book teaches writing in a style suitable for speaking: phrasing, punctuating and paragraphing ready for preaching.

Having learnt the art in part one, what does a minister do at a funeral? There is no set text for the usual style of presentation: just in front of him, people in great need. As is described in part two, start to trace the events of the deceased person’s life in such a way that mourners will then be led into the wonders of the gospel.

Crazy little heaven: An Indonesian journey

By Mark Heyward, Transit Lounge Publishing 2013.

When alumnus Mark Heyward first went to Indonesia to teach at a small school in east Kalimantan, little did he realise how life-changing his decision would be. Within three years his Australian life would be behind him and he would be travelling with fellow adventurers across remote Indonesian Borneo. The story of that remarkable expedition coalesces with the author’s longer journey into the complex heart of Indonesia. Spanning two decades, it takes the reader from a treasured childhood in Tasmania to a new life in the world’s most populous Muslim nation. When Mark meets and falls in love with Sopan, he must make another life-changing decision.

The perfect wife

By Katherine Scholes, Penguin 2013.

Kitty Hamilton arrives in Tanganyika with high hopes for her new life. An exciting adventure halfway across the world could be just what she and Theo need to recover from the scandal that almost tore them apart. In this wild and foreign land, where very different powers prevail, the head can’t always rule the heart. As old wounds resurface and new passions ignite, Kitty and Theo confront emotions that push them beyond the boundaries of all that they know and believe in.

*The Perfect Wife* is a breathtaking story about the struggle between duty and desire, jealousy and love, commitment and freedom. And the need to follow the call of your heart, wherever it may lead you.

The lamington enigma: a survey of the evidence

By Maurice French, Toowoomba Tabletop Publishing 2013.

In two parts, this book first describes the rise of the lamington cake from its invention around 1900 to an afternoon tea dainty and an essential fundraising tool for schools, Scouts, Girl Guides – and then and to its status as a national icon. It also assesses the claims of various places including Toowoomba, Ipswich and Brisbane in Queensland, New Zealand, Scotland and even Poland and the USA, to be the birthplace of the lamington and of various people to be the “creative inventor” of the cake.

The book draws on cultural anthropology, culinary histories, newspaper cookery/ household hints columns, old recipe books, family histories and oral traditions.
A bright future, defined by a rich past.

The University of Tasmania is an institution of global standing and impact. Founded over 123 years ago, we are now ranked in the top 2% of universities worldwide.* It's the merging of rich heritage with a commitment to excellence in teaching and research that guarantees our greatest achievements are still to come.

Tomorrow starts today.

*Academic Ranking of World Universities 2013
The University of Tasmania understands what it means to be successful. We are ranked in the top 2% of universities worldwide*.

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• Environmental Planning / Management
• Health Management
• Policy Management

And to sweeten the deal UTAS Alumni receive a 10% discount on fees.

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