

Physics & Astronomy

FROM THE HOD (ASSOC. PROF ROGER REEVES)

Welcome to the last newsletter of 2007.

As the University year draws to an end we can reflect on what has been an eventful year. Over the last 12-18 months we have had quite a few staff changes. In late 2006 our long serving Department Administrator, Gill Evans retired to be replaced extremely capably by Rhondda. And of course last year Mike Clark retired. His finance role has been filled by Xuefeng who because of his previous roles in the Registry brings a wealth of experience and perspective to our operation. And with all these personnel changes Rosalie has ably steered us through the processes. Also over the last 18 months we have integrated four new academic staff into the Department, Dharmavir, Juer-gen, Richard and Jon-Paul. Finally, associated with staff changes has been of course the retirement of Ross Ritchie after many years with us. It was certainly a pleasure to be able to acknowledge Ross' fine contribution to the department last Wednesday at a BBQ function. Later in the newsletter is a small piece about that occasion.

Perhaps I can be a little self-indulgent and provide my perspective on my first year as HoD. I hope I don't have so many reviews to undertake next year. It started with convening the panel for the BE(Hons) review, to be followed by Dept submission to the BSc review and finally taking part in the Dept and Technical Services reviews as part of the College of Science Plan.

I know that we will have a BSc(Hons) review sometime soon and of course we have to think about implementing recommendations of any reviews that affect us. I have found the position of HoD to be very satisfying as there are many interesting aspects that challenge ones mind. The spread of tasks from finance to admin to personnel interactions is very comprehensive. And then of course on top are the activities in teaching and research that are the reason for our existence. I will be looking to do things better next year and have some particular improvements in my own performance to address.

As a Department I believe we have done very well this year. We have had a good year for research with a high level of productivity and large numbers of thesis students graduating. And our teaching is going well. But we have to be vigilant to keep our Department as one of the best in Australasia. A challenge for us is to do better there as the retention rate from 100 to 200-level needs improvement.

Finally, to finish off the column there are many people to thank. My group of research students and collaborators have had a tough year having to share my time and I really appreciate their tolerance. Next year will be better.



Christmas Leave Dates 2007/2008

The University will close at the end of Friday 21 December and will re-open on Thursday 3 January 2008.

During this period (including statutory and University holidays) the Security Office (under the Main Library) will be open around the clock.



And of course a big thank you to everyone in the Department for their work this year and support provided.

I hope you all enjoy the break away and have a safe and happy Christmas.

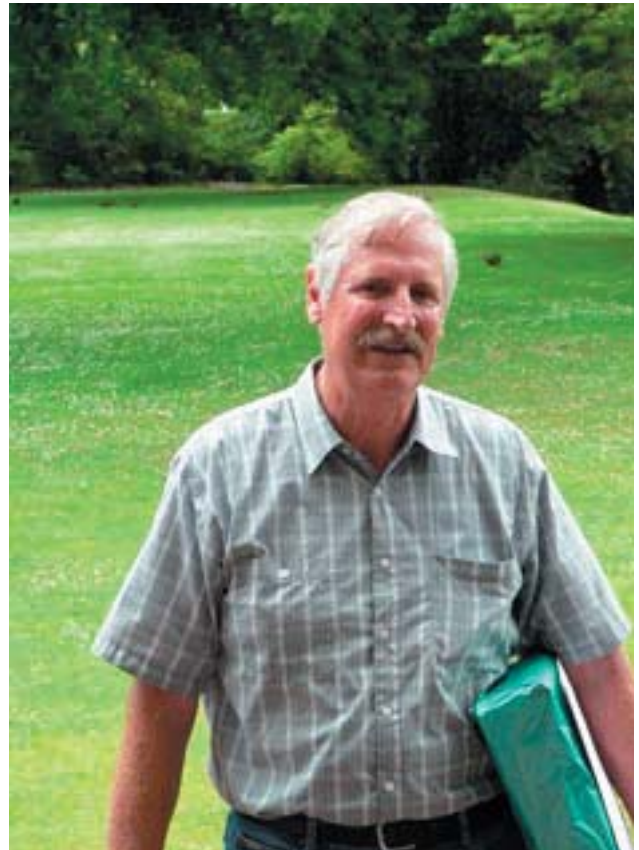
Roger

Department End-of-Year Picnic

A new tradition was initiated with our end-of-year picnic at Orton Bradley Park located at Charteris Bay on the 9th December. We had fantastic weather almost too hot for french cricket - but some did attempt it. The children enjoyed the play area and paddling in the stream. It was a wonderful opportunity for staff (current and retired), students and their families to mix in a relaxed informal manner in a very scenic setting. Next year with more advanced warning we'll look forward to an even larger turn out.



to head of the electronics workshop. Once again Ross we all wish you the very best and are extremely relieved that you will continue to be on contract and accessible to the department.



Ross's wife Frances and daughter Jessica. below

Retirement Function for Ross Ritchie

On Wednesday the 12th of December a retirement function was held at the staff club for one of our longest serving technicians - Ross Ritchie. After a very tropical day the weather cleared for a BBQ under the verandah - which provided once again a great opportunity for staff (current and retired) and students to mix socially. Ross was acknowledged in speeches for his amazing skills and for the advanced technical input that of course has developed over his time with the Department - starting out as a crystal grower and advancing through



Photos from Ross' Retirement Function



A celebration for the end-of-year 2007 Graduates

Yesterday evening a function was held in the department to acknowledge our end of year graduates and their families.



A Minties moment. [Mike Clark]



Up Up and.....



This must be AWAY!!!

This was the exit of the 18 inch Brashear refractor telescope from Mt. John.

It is not nearly as bad as it looks. It was more of a 'spin and twist' than a crash. However, there were those immediate glances, that although unsaid, meant " who's going to tell Town about this?"

Surprisingly the soil was deep and very soft so no actual harm was done.

Oh, and by the way - we forgot to tell Town. Thought it best that way... Mike Clark

SCHOLARSHIPS

View on line at <http://www.canterbury.ac.nz/scholarships/noticeboard/dec2007sci.shtml>

CHRISTMAS PRODUCTION A DIVINELY INSPIRED CHRISTMAS CAROL



7:30pm Fri 21st Dec & Sat 22nd Dec, St
Bede's Auditorium
(210 Main North Rd).

Tickets are \$10 or \$12 at the door.
See Kate
(Rm 807, kpm29@student.canterbury.ac.nz) f
or more information or tickets.



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