Who would have thought, after 400 newsletters we're still going strong. To commemorate the 400th issue I have dug out some of our good times over the past 10 years.
Young Sam Hickford who was player for a day - 2009

Selwyn's new office after the quake - 2011

It's all about the gloves - 2011
The morning crew having to have their cuppa in the Atrium - 2013

Graeme and his passenger - 2013

Personal earthquake protection system trialled - 2013
Richard getting close to the PM at the official sod digging of RSIC - 2014

The FERG lads - December graduation 2014

378 field trip to Blue Duck Reserve - 2015
Kenzie meets a Prince - 2015

Pink leggings and Socks with jandals - Loud shirts 2015

Origami expert takes up weaving - 2015
The Braindeers at Quiz night - 2015

Angus & Fergus - 2016

Bill(y) goat and Gavin goat - 2016
Farewell to Gavin Tisch
The school gave a fond farewell to Gavin on Friday 31st March.

For the past four years he was the school's purchasing officer. He ordered, unpacked, entered data and ticked boxes with quiet efficiency. Before that he worked in the labs and in the field working alongside his lovely wife Maggie. He worked tirelessly plotting up at Cass assisting with Ashley Sparrow’s work. A lot of ground work was made for future students to start their own research there. Being an active member of the staff wasn’t enough so Gavin took quite a few courses over the years to fulfill his interest in biology even more. The last course he completed was 211 Insect Biology, which hopefully is coming in handy with his bee keeping at home.

Apart from the above he was also one of the lads who did their bit over the years to lug equipment and furniture around the buildings. He also provided, along with everybody else, treats for morning teas and my personal favourites, savs and tommy sauce!! The morning brigade will be one man down and the corridors will seem even more quieter. We are losing another fabulous technician whom both staff and students will miss immensely. Enjoy your bees and the wonderful life that awaits you.
PhD oral exam completed

Richard White had his PhD oral exam on Wednesday 29th March. His senior supervisor was Professor Angus McIntosh. The title of his thesis is 'The influence of drought on Neochanna apoda metapopulation persistence under global warming and land-use change'.

Richard has been one of those star pupils you only get very rarely. As you can see from above, he stepped in quick to have his piccie taken with the Prime Minister. Richard obtained his B.Sc. (Pilgrim Prize), M.Sc. (First Class) (UC Masters scholarship) and now his Ph.D. (Roper scholarship), all at Canterbury. Congratulations Richard!

Recent publications in the school


Raoul completed his MSc with Associate Professor Ximena Nelson. Check out Raoul’s research on his publication below.


This is Jonathan’s second paper from his PhD.


In the spotlight

UC Teaching Award

Pieter Pelser, has just been advised by the UC Teaching and Learning Committee that he will receive a University Teaching Award when they are formally announced during Teaching Week.

As in previous years, this year there were more nominations than available awards. The selection committee was impressed at the impact that Pieter is having with students and colleagues.

This is a significant award, and a great recognition of Pieter’s commitment to our students and our teaching mission.

Funding success

Congratulations to Jason Tylianakis, who has had year-2 funding confirmed for two 5-year projects in the Bio-Protection CoRE at Lincoln University. For two projects: 'Scenario modelling of the evolution of host resistance', and
'Understanding how community interaction networks resist and respond to invasions'. Funding for year 2 of the program (2017) is $161,000.

For this New Zealand parrot, 'laughter' is contagious

When people are feeling playful, they giggle and laugh, making others around them want to laugh and play too. Now, researchers reporting in Current Biology on March 20 have found that the particularly playful kea parrot from New Zealand has a "play call" with a similarly powerful influence. When other kea hear that call, it puts them into a playful mood.

The findings make kea the first known non-mammal to have such an "emotionally contagious" vocalization, the researchers say. Earlier studies had made similar findings for chimpanzees and rats.

"We were able to use a playback of these calls to show that it animates kea that were not playing to do so," says Raoul Schwing of the Messerli Research Institute in Austria. Read the full story at Phys Org, Science Daily.

Being cheeky is infectious for these parrots - Mashable Australia
Cheeky native New Zealand parrot the kea's laugh is infectious - scientists - TVNZ, with video
Playing Parrots Produce 'Contagious Laughter' - Forbes
Meet the New Zealand parrot whose "laughter" is contagious - CBS News
Birds of play demonstrate the infectious power of emotion - Nature
Kea playfulness is contagious, study finds - Australian Geographic

I decided not to add the five pages worth of media outlets that picked up the story...

UC students discover native birds thriving on Ilam campus

As part of a lab exercise for their Biology course, a group of second-year UC Science students created a bird atlas of the UC campus in Ilam and compared it to a similar atlas from 1990, created by a BSc student in Zoology.

UC School of Biological Sciences academic Professor Jim Briskie says it is likely that the changes are due to the increased plantings on campus of native trees favoured by native birds, and decreased open space, which is the habitat favoured by many introduced species.

Read the full article at UC Communications.

What book is that?

“Fair is foul, and foul is fair. Hover through the fog and filthy air.”

399: "Greed is a sin, 717." Sister Sage was beside her again. "Take care."

Answer: The Bees by Laline Paull

and now for something completely different...

Simon's Cat - Dinner Date: Main Course
Cat Owner Interrupted During BBC Interview

Thought for the week

Goodbye..?
Oh no, please.
Can't we go back to page one and do it all over again?

~ Winnie the Pooh