

DES News

November 2008 | The Newsletter for Engineering Science Alumni and Friends

Welcome to this first edition of DES News

Welcome to this first edition of DES News, our newsletter that will keep you, our Alumni, our Alumni-in-waiting (ie current students) and friends of the Department of Engineering Science (DES), up to date with what is happening in the extended DES family.

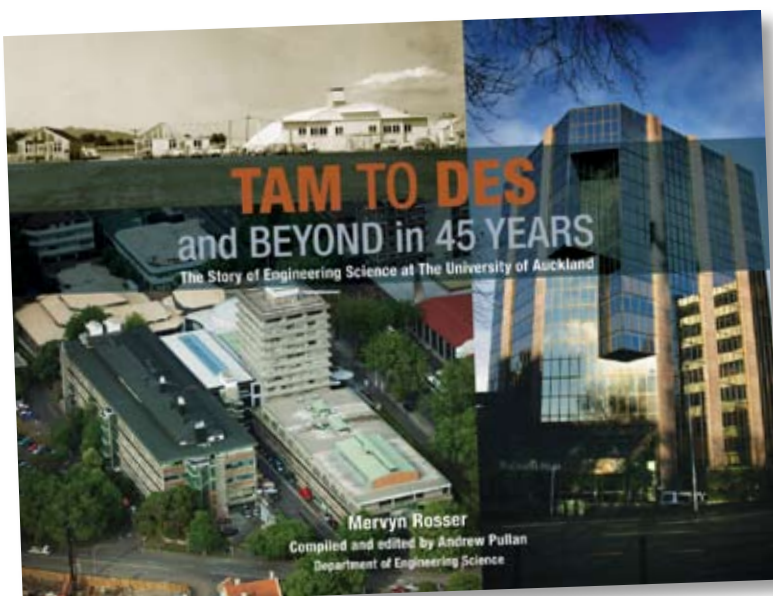
The Department has long valued its relationship with its Alumni, and while most, if not all, staff members keep in contact with various groups of students, the Department as a whole has not itself regularly engaged with all our Alumni and friends collectively. This is something that the Department seeks to begin to address via this newsletter. This follows on from a very successful anniversary dinner (see page 3) that was held on 30 August this year.

It has been a very busy year for the Department with a number of special happenings. The new Head of Department (and first Department Alumnus to hold that position) was appointed and took over the reins on 1 February; the Department's presence at 70 Symonds St was officially recognised; a book documenting the history of the Department was completed; two new postgraduate scholarships were announced; and the Department celebrated both 45 years of existence and 40 years since its first graduates completed at a dinner on 30 August. The Department has also undergone a facelift, both physically (with new posters, artwork and photos put up around the place) and in cyberspace (with the launch of its new website). Staff were also busy with various teaching and research activities, and it is very pleasing to note that the Department rates as one of the best academic units in the entire country (as evidenced by the recent Performance Based Research Funding rankings).

I hope you enjoy this newsletter and associated photos. Please feel free to provide feedback, using the email below, on this newsletter and any other aspects of the Department.

Professor Andrew Pullan, Head of Department, hod_des@auckland.ac.nz

The Story of the Engineering Science Dept



A commemorative book celebrating 40 years since the first graduates of the department completed has been released.

HOD Professor Andrew Pullan says Engineering Science, which started as a mathematics arm of engineering, has quietly grown into one of the highest performing research departments in NZ.

"Engineering Science is about harnessing the power of mathematics and computers and combining it with human intelligence to solve every day problems. Our 40th anniversary is an opportunity to recognise the contribution that Engineering Science has made to the development of some the high-tech aspects of New Zealand engineering," Professor Pullan says.

How to Help

The Department has had a number of enquiries from Alumni and friends as to how they can help. There are many ways that you can help the Department, and some of these are listed here.

1. Pass this newsletter on to other Alumni and other interested parties
2. Providing opportunities for our students to gain practical work experience over the summer period at your place of work
3. Providing ideas and mentorship in Part IV projects
4. Financial donations for summer studentships and/or scholarships.

If you would like to help in any way please contact the HOD on hod_des@auckland.ac.nz

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- The 40th Anniversary Dinner
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Official Opening of Department's "New" Location

It has been 45 years since the Department was first established, 43 years since the degree in Engineering Science was first offered, and 40 years since the first group of students completed. Since that time the Department has had four homes – Ardmore, the 8th floor of the tower block of the Engineering Building, the 6th floor of the back block of the Engineering Building, and now 70 Symonds St.

The circumstances that led to the Department being at 70 Symonds St were the fact that the Engineering Faculty needed more space at 20 Symonds St, and the Auckland Bioengineering Institute was already there. However, there was no official opening of the new premises – rather the Department just moved in over a period of time and continued working. Given that 2008 was a special anniversary year for the DES, it seemed a perfect time to officially recognise the Department's presence at 70 Symonds St.

To mark the occasion, a number of new photos and honours boards were unveiled by Mervyn Rosser, Jill Segedin and the Dean of Engineering, Professor Michael Davies. Mervyn unveiled photos of the founding staff members and a small plaque describing the history of the Department. Jill Segedin unveiled three honours boards – one for the best Part IV project prize, one for the Senior Scholars, and one for the winners of National and International Awards. Finally, the Dean unveiled photos of the former (and current) HODs. The event was followed by a small reception.



The Department history book is proudly launched by (left to right) Jill Segedin, Andrew Pullan and Associate Professor Mervyn Rosser, and (on right) Mervyn Rosser salutes the late Professor Cecil Segedin.



Featured Alumni – Carolyn McKenzie, class of '91

As a fresh faced student embarking on the horrific experience of "Enrolment Day" for a BCom/BSc, Carolyn found herself totally lost on campus – somehow ending up at the Engineering School. Encountering a lovely man with a gentle smile (Professor Collins – at the time, TAM Head of Department) who began citing the joys of an Engineering Degree, she explained – whilst trying not to hurt this kind man's feelings – that whilst her father had vast mechanical aptitude, changing her car tyres was a struggle at best. However, after explaining her love of numbers but the ironic desire for practicality (definitely ironic if you knew Carolyn well), this man with the gentle smile convinced her of the endless possibilities of "life as a TAM".

Never regretting her last minute change into Engineering, Carolyn's career began with an engineering software focus but in later years, has centred on project management including software implementations and business acquisitions. She has worked for Beca Carter, Telecom, Coca-Cola Amatil and Progressive Enterprises (to name a few), but recently returned to her engineering roots, having joined Fisher & Paykel Healthcare as a Project Manager in their Research & Development division. Surrounded by engineers (including Engineering Science graduates) she loves her new role and looks forward to seeing the next generation of Engineering Science graduates walking down the F&P hallways.

Work aside, Carolyn and her partner Scott, a builder and sound engineer (the practical side of the relationship!) are in the midst of opening a recording studio based in East Auckland. Along with their two cats, this keeps them out of trouble most days."

The Story of the Engineering Science Dept – continued from page 1

The department's operations research expertise is widely applied in industry, and optimisation models developed in the department are used in such diverse areas as scheduling Air New Zealand crews, optimising electricity generation, and improving ambulance response times. The department's simulation software has also been used in America's Cup yacht design.

Its graduates include Peter Hunter, who pioneered computer modelling of the human heart and now leads Auckland's Bioengineering Institute and the founders of several important technology companies, including Orion Health and Optima Corporation.

"Although much of our growth can be attributed to improvements in computing, the world is experiencing an increasing appetite for clever mathematics applied to engineering problems, and this is driving the need for graduates who have the ability and training to contribute to this growth" Professor Pullan says.

The commemorative book, titled TAM to DES (Theoretical and Applied Mechanics to Department of Engineering Science) and Beyond in 45 Years was written by Mervyn Rosser, who founded the Department in the 1960s with his colleague, the late Cecil Segedin. The book is full colour and features short biographies on numerous staff and former students. It also includes a "Success Stories" section, articles on non-academic aspects of life in the Department (eg field trips and t-shirts) as well as a list of every completing student. Interestingly, the book was professionally designed by Jill Segedin, Cecil's younger daughter.

If you are interested in acquiring your own copy of this book, please contact esc_admin@list.auckland.ac.nz (the cost is \$30 plus postage and packing).

40th Anniversary Dinner

An extremely successful anniversary dinner was held at the Langham on 30 August.

The event attracted over 380 people and included a number of special guests – the Vice Chancellor (Stuart McCutcheon), the Deputy Vice Chancellor Academic (Raewyn Dalzell), the Dean of Engineering (Michael Davies), the former Dean and Alumnus from the class of 1973 Peter Brothers, the former former Dean Ray Meyer, members of the Department’s external advisory board and many current staff and students. Also present were founding staff member Mervyn Rosser (together with his wife and family), Rosemary Segedin, Jill Segedin, and Marin Segedin (the two daughters and younger brother of the other founding staff member, the late Cecil Segedin), various former staff, and Alumni from almost every single year group, dating back to the class of 1968. The Department’s first PhD student, Don Campbell, who completed in 1974 and the Department’s first female graduate Susan Spencer (class of ’75), who was also the Department’s first female PhD student (1983) were both present. Some year groups had very impressive turnouts, with the entire class of ’87 turning up for the event.

The gathering was entertained by stories of the “old days” from Mike O’Sullivan (the longest serving staff member), Peter Jackson (Alumnus of the first group of students, of which there were five) and Mervyn Rosser. A number of professional photos were taken during the evening, and these can be found at www.esc.auckland.ac.nz/engineering-science-40th-anniversary. There was also the odd song or two played during the evening, the words of which had been composed many years earlier by various students, and which were specially recorded for the dinner. The words to these songs (and the story behind one of them) are included on the back flap of the book “TAM to DES and Beyond in 45 Years” (see article on the front page).

Thank you to our sponsors

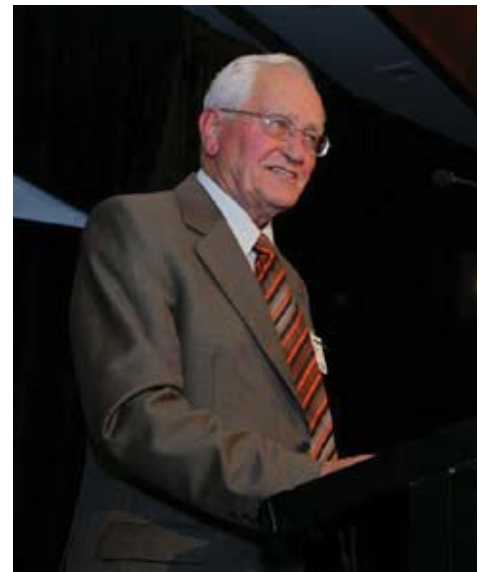
The Department is grateful to the organisations listed below for their sponsorship of the dinner. Without their generosity the event would not have been able to go ahead.

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The Bioengineering Institute

**Capricorn
Solutions Ltd**



Clockwise from top left: Guests listen attentively to speeches. Founding staff member Associate Professor Mervyn Rosser addresses the gathering. A lively throng of Alumni and guests enjoy drinks before dinner. Department HOD Professor Andrew Pullan welcomes Alumni and guests to the 40th anniversary dinner.