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Coming up this year:

1. Power of the Pen : Writers and Journalists
2. Child and Adolescent Health
3. AGM 21 March

Registration Form - Series 1 2025

Payment methods in order of preference

1. Direct Credit to
Acc: 03 1746 0080910 000
2. EFTPOS
Debit card payment available on the day
3. Cash in an envelope, please, with your name or include this registration form. Amount enclosed \$30 per person

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We prefer to contact you by email. If you have an email address, and we are not aware of it, please let us know.

Spare paper copies of the brochure are always available if you are unable to print one for yourself.

Series Organiser

Pam Butler



February - March 2025

Series 1

Through the Lens of History: The Humanities as a Guide to the Present

Venue:	Windsor Community Church 19 Windsor St
Time:	10.00am
Cost:	\$30 per person

Our 4 speakers for our first series in 2025 are all Professors at the Otago University Humanities Division.

Research in the Division of Humanities helps us make sense of ourselves and our communities so that we may better understand our place in a rapidly changing world.

Series 1 - Through the Lens of History: The Humanities as a Guide to the Present

Session 1 : Friday 14 February

“Bringing the magic” – what do (effective) teachers do, and why does their work matter?

Presenter: **Professor Vivienne Anderson**



Synopsis: In this presentation, I reflect on the complexity and importance of effective teaching, and consider what ‘effective teaching’ looks like, based on my research with young people from refugee backgrounds and their teachers.

Bio: Professor Vivienne Anderson is Dean of Education at the University of Otago College of Education, a former primary school teacher, and mum of three adult children. Her research explores questions relating to educational equity and access using participatory, multilingual, and arts-based methods, most recently, with young people from refugee backgrounds and their teachers.

Session 2 : Friday 21 February

Exploring the Role of Religion in Archibald Baxter’s Life

Presenter : **Professor David Tombs**



Synopsis: Archibald Baxter is New Zealand’s most famous war resister. His story is well known

for several reasons, not least because of his account in his book, *We Will Not Cease* (1939), describing his mistreatment during the war of 1914–1918. We will assess the evidence for Baxter’s religious beliefs and values and discuss the very different views that have been offered to the question of the role of religious faith played in Baxter’s life.

Bio: David is an Anglican lay theologian, originally from the United Kingdom. He is Howard Paterson Chair Professor of Theology and Public Issues at the University of Otago, Aotearoa New Zealand. His work focuses on contextual approaches to public theology.

Session 3 : Friday 28 February

Narratives of the Built Environment

Presenter: **Professor Murray Rae**



Synopsis: Human beings have long understood that the buildings we build have more than a merely functional purpose. They speak of meanings and values and of what we aspire to as human beings. From the modelling of our own homes to the Parthenon in Athens, St Paul’s Cathedral in London, or the Sky Tower rising above the cityscape in Auckland, we craft the spaces we inhabit to tell stories about who we are, about what we believe in, and about what we hold dear. In this lecture we will explore a number of buildings around the world and the stories they tell of who we understand ourselves to be.

Bio: Murray is Professor of Theology at the University of Otago but began his working life as an architect. After establishing his own architectural practice in Auckland, he went on to study theology and philosophy in New Zealand, Germany, and the UK. His varied research interests include theology and the arts, especially architecture, Māori engagements with Christianity, Christian ethics, and the work of Søren Kierkegaard. He writes and lectures on theology and architecture and his recent books include

Architecture and Theology: the Art of Place (Waco, TX.: Baylor University Press, 2017)

Session 4 : Friday 7 March

Mothers in Seacliff Asylum

Presenter: **Dr Michelle Walker**



Synopsis: Taking mothers committed to Seacliff Asylum as a case study, my talk will bring to light that Aotearoa has a historical postpartum psychiatric illness ‘problem’ – namely, its’ inconspicuousness in public and historiographical narratives. Current public knowledge about postpartum psychiatric illness in New Zealand asylums remains vague, inaccurate, overly generalised, and clouded by stigma regarding historic psychiatric institutional care.

I will tease out care in asylums and explore mothers and their experiences at Seacliff Asylum, particularly from the 1860s to 1920. You will leave understanding more about why mothers were committed to asylums, what this meant for families and tie this all to a broader societal narrative about mothers who “went away.”

Bio: Dr Michelle Walker holds a PhD in History and Preventive and Social Medicine from Ōtākou Whakaihū Waka/Otago University. She examined the complex relationships between mental illness related to childbirth, motherhood, and gender in the New Zealand context between 1860-1980. She is a published author of two books, and several journal articles, and lectures in medical history.

Currently, Michelle is the Research Advisor for Te Kete Aronui/the Humanities Division. She has two school-aged daughters and leads an active life in Ōtepoti with her husband, Tim. She is also an accomplished singer, singing in Voices New Zealand Chamber Choir and Octagon Ensemble.