

The University of Otago editors, 1992–1995

**ANNABEL COOPER, MAUD CAHILL,
BARBARA BROOKES AND EDITORIAL COLLECTIVE.**

Around the time that the first paper in what was then Women's Studies at the University of Otago was taught – in 1990 – Barbara Brookes floated the idea that an Otago group might respond to the Wellington editors' wish to hand over the editing of the *Women's Studies Journal*. Interest was forming around the fledgling Otago programme, and a heterogeneous group emerged, which included academics with real jobs, academics with temporary jobs, and postgraduates. Where are they now? Barbara Brookes is a professor of history; Maud Cahill sells rare books; Judith Collard is a senior lecturer in Art History; Annabel Cooper heads the Gender Studies programme; Bronwyn Dalley is the Chief Historian; Judith Duncan teaches Education; Penny Griffin is Widening Participation Officer at the University of Nottingham; Sarah Williams teaches Anthropology at Evergreen College in Washington State; Elizabeth Kerr chairs the Historic Places society in Dunedin; Jane Malthus has shown academic life her heels and taken to painting and Vivienne Scott-Melton teaches Sociology in Auckland. Others participated for shorter periods.

We built on many years of work put in by the Wellington editors. It seemed timely to introduce a process of blind review, so that authors could list publications in a peer-reviewed journal. We contemplated repealing the ban on male authors, but because we disagreed on this matter, canvassed the membership of WSA, whose majority decision was against repeal. Strangely, we were the only editorial group so far to have published a male author as a co-author in an article (perhaps predictably?) on the internet. We instituted the shift to publication by Otago University Press, in an attempt to relieve the production burden on subsequent editors and we compiled an index to the first ten volumes.

The learning curve was steep. We learned about finances the hard way. We learned how much voluntary labour was often necessary to bring work through the review and editorial process to publication. We learned that only much more hard work than you ever expected can

bring a journal to publication on time. We learned that collectives are time-consuming, that factions occur, that sisterhood has its limits.

Looking back at ‘our’ issues, the six from 1992–1995, though, we’re pleased. The list of authors (take a glance) includes many who have become much more famous names than they were then, many who have kept on producing great work in all sorts of contexts here and elsewhere, and thankfully, it includes the names of women who didn’t have real jobs then and do now. We hope the *Journal* helped. We like the fact that the academic standard was high, but that the *Journal* was open to exploratory work and experimental forms. It’s eclectic and it’s interdisciplinary: a snapshot of a moment in the development of a new and growing field.