

# Successful succession of physicists continues

By John Gibb

Adam Norrie, a University of Otago doctoral student, has joined an elite group of Otago physics achievers by winning the prestigious Hatherton Award.

The award has been made annually since 1997 for the best scientific paper by a PhD student at any New Zealand university in the physical sciences, earth sciences and mathematical and information sciences.

New Zealand has eight universities, from which winners of the Royal Society of New Zealand award may hail.

Despite those long odds, Otago University physics graduates have achieved a remarkable record by gaining the award three of the nine times it has been given.

Mr Norrie (27) said his recent success was "rather humbling".

He is involved in research into Bose-Einstein condensate, a mysterious fifth state of matter which appears at extremely low temperatures, close to absolute zero.

The award citation noted that his winning paper had made significant theoretical contributions and "lays the foundation to the novel concept of quantum turbulence".

Otago graduate Dr Craig Rodger, now an Otago senior lecturer in phys-



PHOTO: PETER MCINTOSH

**Place in the sun . . . University of Otago physics doctoral student Adam Norrie (centre), who recently won the Hatherton Award, shares a moment of celebration with previous Otago University winners Robert McCormick (left) and Dr Craig Rodger.**

ics, received the first Hatherton Award in 1997. Robert McCormick (25), a doctoral student supervised by Dr Rodger, also won, in 2002.

Dr Rodger was "tremendously proud" to have gained the award and said it was "simply wonderful" that other Otago physics students had also since done so.

That continuing success reflected the strength of the department's research culture and the high quality of Otago physics students, Dr Rodger said

in an interview.

Earlier this year, Mr McCormick also won a Young Scientist Award from the International Union of Radio Scientists, enabling him to attend the scientific organisation's recent general assembly in New Delhi, India.

He was one of only 150 young scientists from throughout the world selected to attend, and the only one from New Zealand.

Mr McCormick said he had enjoyed taking part, and had gained a rare

chance to meet the President of India, Dr Avul Abdul Kalam, during a tea party the president hosted for the young scientists at his official residence.

Dr Abdul Kalam is an engineer who previously worked in the Indian space programme. He takes a strong interest in the work of young scientists.

• The Hatherton Award is named after the late distinguished scientist Dr Trevor Hatherton, a former president of the royal society.