
The Annual Meeting of the Friends of the Hocken Collections was held on August 22nd in the Library's Seminar Room. There were over 30 members present. After the business of the meeting was concluded, Dr David Butts, and Andrew Matheson, two senior members of the staff of the Ministry for Culture and heritage spoke about ways in which the Ministry's responsibilities relate to the work of the Library. David is the Manager, Heritage Operations, including the History Unit and Te Ara.

The past year has been a reasonably full one for the Committee, with an emphasis on a review of its tasks in the light of the changing circumstances of the Library.

The election of the officers of the Friends was completed. They are as follows:

President:	Hon. Pete Hodgson
Vice President:	Donald Phillipps
Secretary:	Sara Barham
Treasurer:	Gerard Ellis
Committee:	Anna Blackman
	Tom Brooking
	Louise Croot
	Sharon Dell
	Paul Enright
	Lara Hearn-Rollo
	Mark Hughes
	Gregor Macaulay

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One of the two speakers, Andrew Matheson, has the particular responsibility for coordinating and managing the wide range of activities that will serve to remind New Zealanders of the role its troops played in the First World War. More than that, it will also focus on the 'home front' and on the profound impact the cost of war

in human lives had on our country's self perception.

The Hocken Library will have a significant role to play in this, along with other institutions and groupings within Dunedin and Otago. The Library's preparations for a four-year-long commemoration are well under way.

On the one hand there will be an opportunity to display its own significant holdings of such things as soldier's personal diaries and other memorabilia such as are found throughout the country.

On the other hand there are two particular and unique contributions the Library makes to our understanding of the cost of war. There are the records of the Otago Medical School's graduates who served throughout the conflict, wherever there was suffering to be treated. There is also the record of Archibald Baxter and his stance for pacifism which required bravery of another sort.

In all this it needs to be remembered that the University of Otago is in a special position to consider the war and its effects, through the presence of the Centre for Peace and Conflict Studies. The Centre, with the Library, offer a very special perspective on this formative event in our history

Diaries

Associated with this series of events is an important behind-the-scenes task. Hocken Library has quite a number of diaries kept by soldiers. These need to be transcribed – a task that, it might be suggested, is well within the scope of many Friends of the Hocken Collections. Your help will make a difference.

The Library will be more than interested to receive offers of help. It needs to be understood that, for the transcriptions to be of most use, they will have to be prepared according to best practice, and there will be training available to those who want to participate in this programme. If you are interested in offering your assistance please contact the Hocken Librarian for further information.

Annual Dinner

The Committee was pleased with the good participation of members at the Annual Hocken Dinner on September 2nd. Dr Helen Leach, our guest speaker, gave a fascinating talk on the formation of the Botanic Gardens, and particularly on the role 'prison' labour played in its construction on this important occasion. There was a certain quaint humour in being told that each day the convicts worked on the project their lunches were brought to them from town on the midday tram!

Ralph Hotere, ONZ

Members who were present at the funeral for the late Ralph Hotere may recall that Judith Ablett-Kerr, QC, who is the Chairperson of the Hotere Foundation Trust, stated that the Trust's collection of Mr Hotere's paintings and papers would be deposited with the Hocken Library. The Library, it should be remembered, already has significant holdings of the artist's work. This process continues, and has to take account of the additional material held in Mr Hotere's personal collection. The Library will then, it is expected, have the care of the work of a remarkable artist, whose own world-view was also deeply influenced by the tragedy of war.

Samuel Marsden

2014 also marks, at its very end, the bi-centenary of another historic event within our history. On December 25th 1814 Samuel Marsden preached a sermon to the Maori at Oihi, a small bay on the peninsula east of Kerikeri.

Marsden is, of course, someone of great importance to the Hocken Library. Dr Hocken's great coup, if that is the right word, was to obtain the manuscript journals and papers of New Zealand's first missionary. They will always remain a primary source for research on the earliest years of European contact. The Library's emphasis is on making this resource as accessible as possible – to which task the life-long labours of Professor Gordon Parsonson make a unique contribution.

Hocken Staffing

The role of research libraries such as Hocken is constantly under review. For Sharon Dell, the Hocken Librarian, this issue of accessibility is paramount. How is such a diverse collection of printed and archival, published and un-published, material to be searched by the public in as user-friendly a way as possible?

Friends, while endorsing the objective, will sense the complexity of this task. The new systems being assessed and developed need to match the Library's requirements. That, in turn, necessarily points to the need for increases in staffing levels. We will want to support the Librarian and her staff in these changing times.

Two dates

Wednesday October 16: Professor Peter Holland talk, "*Settlers' terrible trio: gorse, thistles and rabbits*", at the Hocken Library

Wednesday December 11: Friends of the Hocken Collections Christmas season function

Prepared by Donald Phillipps for the
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