



Newsletter – May 2011

The Foundation's AGM has been set for Thursday, June 30. A new venue is required because of earthquake damage to the University Staff Club. This year's meeting will be at 5pm in the Chateau on the Park, at the corner of Deans Avenue and Kilmarnock Street. A formal notice, annual report and accounts will be mailed early in June. If members have address changes, please inform the secretary.

Vice-President's resignation

Simon Dorset's resignation as Vice-President and as a member of the Executive was reluctantly accepted in February. Simon, a life member, joined the Foundation at its launch in April 1999, and has been on the Executive in most of the years since then. Although he has promised continuing interest and support, he has had to conserve time for teaching in the School of Law and for other important commitments.

When the Executive received the resignation, the President, Alan Hayward, thanked Simon for his conscientious work and advice, and particularly for leading the establishment of the sub-committee on business history: his professional skills, watchfulness over the affairs of the Foundation, and contributions at the committee table would be missed. The committee unanimously acclaimed these sentiments.

The Jim Gardner Lecture

Dr Chris Connolly will give this year's Jim Gardner Lecture on Sunday, 21 August. Because our usual venue for the afternoon lecture will not be available, we will use the auditorium at Villa Maria College, Peers Street, Upper Riccarton.

Dr Connolly will retire in June after teaching history at the University of Canterbury since 1977. He will then complete a long-researched book, "Democracy in World History", which discusses democracy from hunter-gatherer times to the present. Members and friends are likely to find his democracy theme for the 2011 Gardner Lecture highly topical.

Chris Connolly's history studies began in Australia and in recent years his teaching and research have focused mainly on themes in world history. For the lecture, he is preparing to speak on why modern democracy developed first in Western societies and on why it has more recently begun to emerge strongly in other parts of the world.

Letters to Grace launched by CUP

Dr Jean Garner's work as Community Historian last year supplemented the years of laborious transcription by Mrs Kate Foster of letters written in the 19th century by women in the Hall family in Canterbury to an English relative, Grace Neall. Dr Garner's notes, and an essay to put the letters in their historical and family context enrich this significant correspondence. It tells of the writers' activities, health, interests, and family and social concerns. Canterbury University Press offers the book at \$40, free delivery in NZ: CUP, Private Bag 4800 Christchurch 8140; phone (03) 374 3100; or mail@cup.canterbury.ac.nz. The book was launched on 28 April.

State of the Archives

CANTAGE, the network of local archivists, has reported on Christchurch archives after the 22 February earthquake. A month afterwards, the condition of archives in the central city Red Zone was still not fully known. News about the rest is mixed. In many cases, work is in hand; and websites provide the latest information.

Among repositories in the CBD, the Methodist Archives in Latimer Square and the Anglican Diocesan Archives have not been accessed at all. In the Central Library and Archives New Zealand the main damage appears to have been to shelving and cabinets; much material spilled onto the floors. The Radio NZ Sound Archives building in Chester Street West had to be vacated. It lies in the drop zone of the damaged Copthorne Hotel. The holdings will be transferred.

The Kaiapoi Museum was the worst hit in September. The building was hurriedly demolished, but the collection was rescued in the nick of time by volunteers who were prepared to take the risk. The Sumner Museum, a 102 year-old brick building on shallow foundations, was hit hard in February. Its fate has yet to be determined, but may be decided in its favour thanks to earthquake strengthening completed in 1987. Readers may have seen on TV how some material was removed for safe keeping. Lyttelton's museum, containing valued local, maritime, and Antarctic materials, was badly damaged. Staff from the Air Force Museum at Wigram and members of the Lyttelton Volunteer Fire Brigade removed important items, now stored at Wigram.

Rangi Ruru School archives were in the old house Te Koraha. It, too, suffered serious damage; but the records were little affected. Other collections, at the Christchurch Art Gallery, Christ's College, and St Margaret's College, seem to have escaped lightly. Those at College House, Ilam, the Air Force Museum, and the City Council Archives at Sockburn appear to have survived scot free. – *Report by John Cookson.*

Next Community Historian award deferred

On the eve of asking the Canterbury Community Trust for another donation to sustain the Community Historian scheme, the Executive resolved to defer the application for a year. The decision was made out of regard for the high demand likely to be put on the Trust because of the Canterbury earthquakes. It was unanimously agreed that reducing the demand was a gesture that might assist applicants with urgent needs.

The February earthquake also caused postponement of a fund-raising concert. If the artists are available, a programme of fine and popular music from light opera and modern musicals should be possible later this year.

Henry Williams – his own story

One of our members, Caroline Fitzgerald, has edited and prefaced the personal letters and journals of the Revd Henry Williams, written in his early years as a missionary in the Bay of Islands. Like the text for her 2004 book of letters by Henry's wife, Marianne, Henry's came her way as a great-great-granddaughter of the couple. Caroline's grandfather inherited and, over many years, transcribed the letters. The originals are held in the Auckland Museum Library.

Te Wiremu – Henry Williams: Early Years in the North (349pp) covers 20 years of his life in Paihia, life among warring tribes, travelling with Maori, teaching, translating, peacemaking, boatbuilding and looking after a family. These books give finer insights into the early work and influence of Henry Williams among Maori and his critical