

CANTERBURY/WESTLAND BRANCH



of the
**NEW ZEALAND
FOUNDERS
SOCIETY INC.**



President's Report presented at the 2018 AGM

It has been one year since a few of us gathered to form an interim committee in an attempt to restart the Canterbury/Westland Branch of NZ Founders.

I must thank Mel Opie for the tremendous organisation and secretarial duties he has carried out. Without Mel's support, I would have struggled.

It has been a pleasure meeting members at our gatherings held at The Old Vicarage and our Christmas function at McLauchlan's at their Birch Hill Road farm. Mel Opie arranged a visit to Christ's College, which was attended by four including Mel, followed by lunch then at the Bunsen.

With the Christchurch 22 February 2011 earthquake, the Branch went into recess. At our first meeting, John McSweeney gave us a run down on the Canterbury/Westland Branch. John also had the financials and archives. Over the past year, we have advertised by way of contacting past members; pamphlets in libraries; on Facebook; Neighbourly; word of mouth and starting our own Facebook page. I did find some resistance in 'is this group elitist?'

We have not sought national membership fees - \$20 per member. This was to encourage people to join. Knowing that the Branch had \$4K in the NZ Founders Bank Account from which the \$20 national body fee per member could be taken, we took up that option. Signatories for the bank account are yet to be updated and changed. As there is no current cheque book and no need for signatories to sign, this has not been a pressing issue. Our trusted Treasurer, Ray Absolum, has had a very quiet year!

My other concerns: how do we go on? Many years have passed since the inception of the NZ Founders. Today I find people are interested in genealogy and DNA. There are historical and genealogy bodies throughout the country. Below are examples of active interest groups on Facebook.

- DNA Detectives Down Under
- New Zealander of Irish Descent
- West Coast = New Zealand History
- Genealogy New Zealand Super Sleuths
- Ashburton District Family History
- NZ Society of Genealogists (Cant'y Branch)

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2018-19 Branch Committee:

Chairman: Pam Absolum
Deputy: John Mc Sweeney
Secretary: Melville Opie
Treasurer: Ray Absolum
Committee: John McSweeney
Ilan Wilkins
Mary-Jean
McLauchlan

Our thanks go to **Alan Airay**, committee member for the critical 2017-18 year, in which we re-established ourselves as a functional branch. That was a time when we had only 4 or 5 active members at any one formal meeting and it was so important for our credibility as a branch, to be able to have a committee supporting our major office holders. Alan is one calendar year outside of the NZ Founders cut-off date for full membership, his ancestors arriving Hokitika, 1 March 1866 in the same vessel, *Alhambra*, as that of Richard 'King Dick' Seddon, so just 59 days short of full membership opportunity, but Alan remains as an Associate. We are so grateful for your support Alan.

Canterbury-Westland Branch Facebook site.

President Pam has set up and is maintaining this site wonderfully well with frequent updates. [This is a closed group, so available only to invited persons. Let Pam know \[pamsymay@gmail.com\]\(mailto:pamsymay@gmail.com\) if you want to be a group member.](#)

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President's Report cont'd

I opened a site on Facebook which is: Canterbury/Westland Branch. *[see p1 for details]*.

How do we cover such a large area - Canterbury and Westland - for our meetings and activities to be inclusive of potential members? The distances are great and there are now more populated areas in comparison from when the Branch was formed here:

- Do we email/post members newsletters with information/stories of interest to keep regular contact going. Can we get members to put stories of interest on the newsletter.
- Should we meet twice a year?
- Do we pay for advertising in the local newspapers and/or Press?

How do we go forward?

We are also the only Branch in the South Island.

Thank you for your attendance and support.

Pam Absolum.

Bullet Points from 2018 AGM

Election of Officers: see page 1, above.

Treasurers Report:

- Treasurer Ray reported that there has been little financial activity in this 'restart' year and that we are solvent with term deposit and cheque accounts.
- ANZ Bank: signatories: John McSweeney. Pam Absolum, Ray Absolum, Melville Opie.
- Charity donations cannot avoid tax.

Membership:

- Currently, 13 active members from a contacts list of 30. *[Numbers of 'Actives' and overall contacts have each about doubled over the year].*
- President Pam has had some success, advertising in libraries, 'Neighbourly' and the likes. Retirement villages (not rest homes) suggested as possibility.

Subscriptions:

- All categories of membership \$20/year to National Body. Branch, nil.

Other Business:

- NZ Founders Annual General Meeting, June 16, New Plymouth
- Committee member to National Conference – *to be held in abeyance.*
- Most-favoured meeting days: weekdays
- A vote of thanks was accorded the 2017 year office holders and helpers.

Guest Speaker:

Our thanks go to Carolyn Adams, Secretary for the NZ Founders Association and President for the Waikato Founders Branch, who gave us insight into her interesting journey in the Founders Society - how it gradually evolved, until today she holds key positions at National and Branch levels.

Also, throughout our meeting, Carolyn gave us great guidance towards the running our Branch, particularly in the key areas of membership, subscriptions and Branch status.

April Tour – Riccarton House and Bush.

followed by afternoon tea.

Date: **Sunday, 29 April 2018. 2.00pm**



Deans cottage

CANTERBURY
HERITAGE AWARDS
2016 HERITAGE TOURISM
AWARD WINNER



Historic homestead



Tours – Riccarton House and Bush

www.riccartonhouse.co.nz

Guided Heritage Tours. To view the house we have guided heritage tours that operate every day. Experience the pioneering family story of dreams, love and promises ...

Guided tour: We are pre-booked, as a private group. **Friends/guests are welcome**

Programme:

- tour of Riccarton House 1.45 – 2.45pm,
- afternoon tea 2.45 – 3.15pm.
- tour of Riccarton Bush 3.15 – 3.45pm

Costs:

- House and Bush jointly \$20
- House tour only \$12. A'noon teas \$9.00

Don't miss this wonderful opportunity!



Riccarton Bush

AROUND THE AGM TABLE:



Sec. Mel



Ian Wilkins

John Mcsweeney



Mary-Jean McLauchlan



National Sec. Carolyn Adams



Pres. Pam

Belinda Jones Treas. Ray

Ann Brown

Margaret McMurtry

ANZAC DAY COMMEMORATION



I am pleased to report that we had an excellent AGM with a good turnout of members and two new members. Our guest speaker, Carolyn Adams from Hamilton, gave us an excellent enthusiastic view on NZ Founders Society, which was very encouraging to us. The committee continues to work on making an interesting programme for the year. We also will be able to advertise in the hope of gaining more members.

We come together and share our forebears stories of where they came from, ships they travelled on, where they settled and how they managed to live, build homes, raise families and work. Certainly, they needed to be strong to survive the primitive conditions that they experienced when they got to New Zealand. Without our efforts, their stories will be lost forever.

We will remember on Anzac Day, that many of our forebears went to WWI to fight for 'freedom' 100 years ago. At home, families supported each other and communities. What was thought to be 'an adventure' turned out to be, as we now know, a nightmare. WWI had a huge human cost to NZ with 5% of its military aged men killed - 18,166; NZ population being just over 1 million.

In researching the Absolum family, we found Ray's great uncle Abraham Absolum, head postmaster at Ross, Westland and first born son, Norman William Leslie Absolum, born 26 January 1884. Norman, who was killed on 26 March 1918 and is buried at Grevillers (New Zealand) Memorial, Grevillers British Cemetery, Pas-de-Calais, France. How heartbreaking such events, for parents, siblings and families.

We shouldn't forget 10,000 horses that went overseas to serve in WWI. Only four came home. Bess was the only horse to return from the Middle East and 3 others from the Western Front.

Women also served: A new book just released: "Make Her Praises Heard Afar" by Jane Tolerton.

The history books tell us that about 550 New Zealand nurses went to WWI while other women stayed home, knitting, fundraising and looking after families and farms. Many women too, went as doctors and ambulance drivers, munitions workers and mathematicians, civil servants and servicewomen in British units, and in many other roles. They mainly paid their own fares and worked for very little. Some provided amenities for soldiers and others, and these have often been attributed to the military or men's groups.

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NZ Founders Soc., website. www.nzfounders.org.nz/ Ctrl+click: