

## **Presbyterian Research Centre Incorporating the Archives Research Centre & the Hewitson Library**

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The first year of the new Centre has been both challenging and rewarding. While the Archive has faced the retirement of long standing Archivist Yvonne Wilkie, and worked towards a smooth transition, the Library has refocused its direction to be more outward looking while ensuring its ongoing service to its historical community.

The November meeting with members of the Executive of the Synod of Otago & Southland and the Council of Assembly was an opportunity to share what we do, and discuss how we can contribute to the life of the Presbyterian Church of Aotearoa New Zealand. We appreciated being able to meet with the group in the library and archive and hope it was a useful time for all. We are grateful for the continued support of the Synod of Otago & Southland in all our work and look to ways to improve the service and support we are able to give in return.

### *Staffing:*

The Centre has farewelled three staff during 2013. John Timmins, Hewitson Librarian from 2005 - 2013, and Jane Bloore, most recently Reference Assistant in the Archives Research Centre, but previously Acting Hewitson Librarian (2000 - 2001), have both contributed hugely to the work of the Library and Archives.

In December we said farewell to Yvonne Wilkie, Director of Archives for the past twenty years. Yvonne has been hugely influential in the development of the PCANZ Archives Research Centre as it grew from its Historical Records Committee roots, and is greatly respected for her knowledge, initiative, and determination. Her successor has recently been appointed – Eva Garbutt, who is currently Curator of Archives at North Otago Museum, and starts here on 28 April.

Myke Tymons has been confirmed as Curator of Photographs and Audio Visual collections. One of his top priorities will be to transfer the current inhouse photographs database onto ARK, the archives management system, enabling the search of these records online. In time, we expect to be able to have thumbnails of images displayed, facilitating the use of the collection.

The Presbyterian Research Centre is fortunate in having a group of dedicated volunteers who support both the Archives and the Library. Most have been doing this for many years, but there are several recent additions, Michael Inglis, who is assisting in both areas, and Fiona Polson, who is helping with the cataloguing backlog in the library. I would also like to take this opportunity to thank Norah Calvert, Barbara and Rex Weavers, Marni Boynton, Val-mai Shaw, Val Williams, and Joan Firth, all of whom make a significant difference to the running of this Centre. 2013 also saw Christine Mulligan and more recently Rachel Hurd generously contributing their time. During the second part of the year the Centre collaborated with Dunedin Public Libraries in hosting an intern from Germany. Anne Ullmer was with us for three months and the experience was very successful.

### *Archives Research Centre:*

There have been several significant collections rehoused with the Archive in Dunedin. North Otago's records have been relocated, and most significantly, the records displaced after the Christchurch earthquakes have been moved to Dunedin. Knox Church (Dunedin) records are in the process of being returned, and a consignment of records from Greymouth and district churches has recently been received.

Work has started on the move of ARK, the archives management system, to a web based service. In the future it will incorporate the records of the photographic collections and allow the archives collections to be far more visible to the Church and the research community. Once people are able to search the archives through the web, we expect a surge in interest in the records as people realise their diversity and reflection of NZ's religious and social history.

#### *Presbyterian Research Network*

Archivist Yvonne Wilkie, and Photographs Curator, Myke Tymons, gave a presentation to the Presbyterian Research Network entitled *Witness and Response – Presbyterians through the Lens of a camera*. Archives has approximately 180,00 visual images: photographs, slides, film-strips, videos, which are being carefully preserved, thanks to the support of the General Assembly and the Synod of Otago and Southland.

#### *Hewitson Library:*

The focus has been on the Library's realignment from part of Knox College to being an integral part of the wider Presbyterian Church of Aotearoa New Zealand, while maintaining the Library's historical roots. All operational processes have had to be re-examined, in particular the finances. The Commission of Knox and Salmond Colleges has been working with the Library to clarify the details around the various funds supporting the book purchases. The Special Funds are integral to the Library, and are the basis of much of the draft Memorandum of Understanding between the Presbyterian Research Centre and Knox College which redefines the relationship between the two.

The research significance of the Hewitson was highlighted by a visit from the Rev Prof Kyo Seong Ahn, from the Presbyterian College & Theological Seminary in Seoul, as he spent several weeks researching the Rita Mayne England book collection, and the Rita and John England archival collections. There is a push to get this collection catalogued as quickly as possible to make it accessible. Treasures continue to be discovered in the Rare Books, and getting these records online is key to this collection's discoverability.

#### *Electronic Access:*

The decision by the University of Otago Library to move to a new Library system made continuing in the University system problematic and approval was given for the Hewitson to commission a new library management system and migrate its records out of the University Library's. Work on this began in December 2013 and the system (Koha) went live in February this year.

The use of social media and the provision of electronic resources are both key to the life of the Presbyterian Research Centre, and the more that can be provided through electronic means the further we are able to reach, whether it be through electronic journals, ebooks, or digitised photographs. The new system fully supports the use of ejournal and ebooks and allows the Library to provide a better service to those outside Dunedin.

The Hewitson Library now subscribes to the EBSCO *Religion & Philosophy* e-journal package, which is available to all members of PCANZ. It offers access to 300 full text current journals and is regarded as one of the key electronic journal packages in this field.

#### *Visit to Auckland:*

Yvonne Wilkie and I travelled to Auckland in August to meet with key groups. It was an opportunity to introduce the new Presbyterian Research Centre, talk about how it can support their activities, and how it could contribute to workshops to advise and assist on setting up systems for good record-keeping practice.

*Future developments:*

Generally 2014 will be a year of consolidation as the Centre finds its place and embeds its activities. 2014 will see the development of the new library management system, and we expect to have the archives system online. Some progress toward the digitising of key photographic collections is also planned.

The work around the library management system will continue and become increasingly beneficial. Forays into the purchase of ebooks will benefit all within the PCANZ and extend the reach of the library and its resources.

Eva Garbutt will begin as Archivist in April. One of her strengths is a knowledge of electronic document records management and we expect to be in a position to advise groups within the Church.

There has been a huge influx of records during the year, particularly with the arrival of both North Otago and Christchurch records. The aim is to have all incoming collections at least recorded in brief as soon as possible after arrival to enable access to them.

The Library's collections are being weeded of duplicates that are no longer required. Once this process is complete the main collections will be critically examined with the help of subject specialists. The storage areas also need urgent attention, but it is critical to maintain the historical integrity of the collections

*Thanks:*

We acknowledge the support of all those who work with the Presbyterian Research Centre and appreciate the contribution made to continuing and developing the services of both the Archives Research Centre and the Hewitson Library. I look forward to working with the Synod of Otago and Southland through another year to support the Church community and ensure the Centre provides a proactive and supportive service to its community.

Anne Jackman  
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