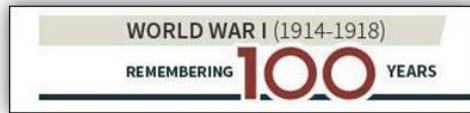


IN TOUCH

Nurses' Memorial Chapel Newsletter

December 2015

www.cnmc.org.nz



Greetings to all our supporters...

The focus of the year was the commemoration of the centenary of the torpedoing of the Marquette. The Friends committee had established a Marquette Planning Group in June 2014 and both groups worked assiduously to organise events to appropriately recognise the centenary of the tragedy which resulted in the deaths of many of those on board, including the three nurses associated with Christchurch Hospital whose loss was the impetus for the building of the Nurses' Memorial Chapel. As previously reported a well attended presentation marked the 99th anniversary.

In 2015 October 23rd fell within Beca Heritage Week in Christchurch which provided added interest and opportunities for publicity which is likely to have contributed to attendance numbers. This mitigated somewhat the disappointment that the continued closure of the chapel meant it was not able to be a venue for the service, as the almost 400 people who attended this could not have been accommodated in the chapel.

SUMMARY OF EVENTS

Friday October 23rd

A commemorative service at St Michael and All Angels Church conducted by Rev'd Father Andrew Starky and Canon David Morrell and attended by His Excellency Lt Gen The Rt Hon Sir Jerry Mateparae, GNZM, QSO, Governor General of New Zealand, who gave the keynote address, Her Excellency Lady Janine Mateparae, and a wide range of representatives from nursing, the District Health Board, Defence Force and Army and Navy Organisations, Christchurch and Waimate City Councils, and Government Agencies.

As well as His Excellency, speakers included Lt Col Lee Turner, CO of the Royal NZ Nursing Service, Lucas Cummings, Navy League Sea Scout, and nurses Anne August and Carol Ferguson, relatives of two survivors of the Marquette.

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At the conclusion of the service the Governor General laid a wreath on behalf of the Chapel Trust and Friends Committee. Ray Wootton laid a wreath on behalf of the Friends membership and other floral tributes from family members and the Mayor of Waimate District were added later.



Following the service there was a function in St Michael's School Hall for the relatives of those who had been on the Marquette. The function began with an award ceremony for the Navy League sea scouts and cadets who were the winners in the Navy League essay competition for which the topic was "The Marquette". The awards were presented by Rear Admiral Jack Steer to the winner, Lucas Cummings and three runners up - Heath Cummings, Isobel Rutherford and Matera Hutana.

York Minster

At a Trust AGM Pam Wilson proposed that a wreath be laid in Westminster Abbey to mark the Marquette centenary. We were unable to arrange this, however with the help of our treasurer Ann Morrison's cousin Mary, who lives in York, a wreath was laid in York Minster where there is a memorial board. The wreath was laid during evensong – a beautiful service which was well attended by both locals and tourists. Canon Peter Moger spoke about the sinking of the Marquette and there was a minute's silence after Mary laid the wreath.

Copies of the Friday 23 service sheet are available. Anyone who was unable to attend the service who would like a copy, please contact Ray (3844275).

Thursday 22nd and Friday 23rd

“Roses of No Man’s Land” is a dramatised story of the nurses on the Marquette specially written and produced by St Margaret’s College staff and performed by the students. This was reported as a very moving experience.

Saturday 24th

The display in St Michael’s School hall was magnificent. It included military nursing history, the Marquette nurses, war memorabilia, collections of stamps, postcards and letters, a commemorative wall hanging, a relatives’ table to share stories and catch up with others, genealogy assistance. The centennial rose and chapel note cards were available for sale. The event was very well attended throughout the day and I was very proud of our team on duty.



Sunday 25th

This morning there was a presentation in the chapel garden by Jude Turner who talked about the development of this special area and the significance of the plants chosen. White crosses identifying the 10 nurses lost in the Marquette were placed in the lawn over the commemoration period.

COMMEMORATIVE CRUISE

A commemorative voyage remembering the WWI ANZAC Nurses began at the end of August. Some of our members joined that cruise and attended our commemorative service dressed in the uniforms they had worn. Rose Whittle, one of the participants, provided this report:

Nearly 60 nurses and additional interested passengers commenced an eight-day journey on the small ship MS Serenissima to sail in the wake of the World War One ANZAC Nursing Sisters. This commemorative voyage departed from Athens calling first at the beautiful Greek island of Skiathos. Soon after leaving this island our ship was able to hover over the wreck of the Marquette, during which time speeches were made and a wreath was placed overboard; a poignant moment for all on such a calm balmy Mediterranean evening. The city of Thessaloniki in Greece was our next port where we visited the Mikra Commonwealth Cemetery and another wreath was laid for those lost on the Marquette. A short trip across the Aegean Sea then took us to the island of Lemnos where we were able to re-enact the arrival of the Nursing Sisters in Mudros Harbour. Many on board were fortunate to be able to wear replica nursing uniforms donated from the television series ANZAC Girls which made it all the more ‘real’ for us and also the people of Lemnos. Next stop was the city of Canakkale where we travelled by bus to the Gallipoli Peninsula visiting Lone Pine, Anzac Cove and Chanuk Bair. Again this was an emotional day as we reflected on the events that had occurred there, and remembered those whose lives were lost or changed forever. Istanbul was our final destination and arriving at sunrise was a beautiful sight with the skyline of mosques and minarets reflected in the pinky-blue morning light. Our last experience together was a visit the Florence Nightingale Museum, by special permission, which was a most appropriate conclusion to this very memorable nursing journey.



RECORD

We await the DVD from our official videographer who recorded the service and prize giving function. On behalf of the Air Force Museum which is recording the work of the Cultural Collections Recovery Centre, Broadcast Media New Zealand filmed aspects of the Saturday display and Cass Marrett, a student from the NZ Broadcasting School spent time filming the displays and interviewing people in the hall. We look forward to the results and hope to display some material at our AGM in May.

PUBLICITY

Numerous articles and reports have been written about the commemorative activities and many expressions of congratulations received. This is appreciated because the Friends and Marquette committees and Trust chair, David Morrell, have worked very hard in various ways in what has been a time consuming exercise. Many people and organisations have assisted us in the process and new links established throughout the country and overseas.

From remembering the past to looking to the future...

UPDATE RE THE CHAPEL RESTORATION

Richie Moyle, Christchurch City Council Project Manager for Heritage Rebuild reports:

Beca the consulting engineers for the project have completed to date a Cloud Point Survey of the building which enables us to get a very accurate plan of the existing structure which can also be used for 3 dimensional modelling. This is beneficial when looking at the strengthening option for the site. Tonkin and Taylor have completed a Geotech survey of the site where they have installed four bores to ascertain the ground conditions. This report has been forwarded through to Beca to assist with the design. During the last six weeks we have also had an emergency lighting survey completed and also a fire protection report completed. Both of these are required for Resource and Building consent application and approvals. The premises have also had asbestos testing completed and we are currently awaiting the report. Beca are now working through the preliminary designs for initial approval by all stakeholders (including the Trust). Once this has been gained final design and documentation will commence for Resource Consent, Building Consent, tender and construction.

GARDEN

The chapel garden is looking particularly colourful at present and Botanic Gardens staff worked hard to specially prepare for the commemorative period. All the plant name tags were redone. Louise Young the garden “caretaker” is especially pleased with the growth of the plants and thinks the drier winter may have helped. We are grateful for the continuing high standard of work of the staff. The garden is well worth a visit. Space is at a premium and there is no further room for commemorative planting.

“ADDITIONS” TO THE FRIENDS FAMILY

The commemorative activities have resulted in increased membership, donations and income from the sale of cards. The cards depicting the memorial window and “Poppy’s window” in particular have been popular. Both have appeared on stamps, the latter being part of New Zealand Post’s Christmas stamp issue. Cards can be purchased from Beverley Rayna or via the website.

CHAPEL CONTENTS

The Cultural Collections Recovery Centre closes at the end of this year but the Air Force museum has made storage available to us in another area. We are grateful for the continued support from the museum staff and to the “Thursday group” who have packed all the furniture and items in preparation for their being transferred to pallets in readiness for removal to their new temporary home. Although the packed items will not be as accessible as they have been, the museum acquisitions committee will continue their work on the inventory and we hope to display some items in the Christchurch RSA.



BOOK LAUNCH

Following the Saturday display military historian Sherayl McNabb held a gathering to launch her book which marks the centenary of the New Zealand Army Nursing Service, established in April 1915 and now known as the Royal New Zealand Nursing Corp. (RNZNC). Sherayl kindly presented a signed copy of her book to Ray Wootton who accepted it on behalf of the Friends of the Chapel. It is a “weighty tome” packed full of information and photographs and provides a valuable resource.

WEBSITE

Neil Hellewell has transformed the chapel’s website and continues to work on improvements in this. Subscription payments and donations are now possible via the site and there is a shop window from which the note cards may be purchased. With the loss of wedding bookings the sale of cards is the only source of income supporting the ongoing work of caring for the chapel’s contents. Additional merchandise is being considered and will be advertised on the website.

SUBSCRIPTIONS

At the AGM this year the proposal to align the Friends subscription year with the calendar year was approved. This means that 2016 subscriptions are now due. Any subscriptions paid over the last three months, (that is since October 2015), will cover next year’s subscription. It is hoped that this will remove the confusion over eligibility to vote at the AGMs which are held in May.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The members of the Friends of the Chapel have been unwavering in their support and special mention must be made of the Christchurch School of Nursing Association. Over the last two years organisation of the commemorative events has required an enormous input from many people and the committee appreciates all their efforts as well as the financial support from the Lotteries Commission WWI Event funding, CCC Beca and the Canterbury DHB.

Current Committee members:

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CHRISTMAS GREETINGS

The Friends committee sends best wishes for a happy and safe Christmas and New Year.

Ray Wootton
President

