



IN TOUCH

*The Friends of the Nurses'
Memorial Chapel Newsletter*

April 2026

www.cnmc.org.nz

The Summer season has now become Autumn. It has been a busy start of the year, and hopefully you have had some time to enjoy the sunshine when it came.

The Chapel now has new opening hours
April – August – 12 – 2pm (Winter)
September – March – 12 – 3pm (Summer)

We are having a number of visitors coming to the chapel earlier and overall, we have seen slightly more visitors in the last few months.

Events at the Chapel

We have had some weddings at the chapel already this year which is a delight to see, and we have a few more booked throughout the year. It is lovely to see the chapel being used for different events.

We are welcoming nursing reunion groups and it is a pleasure to host these groups and find out their stories, and memories of the chapel.

We will be a part of **Open Christchurch** this year on 1-3 May 2026. This is an event organised to celebrate the architecture of Christchurch and has some very interesting venues to attend.

Christchurch Heritage Festival this year is from 16 to 26 October 2026. The theme this year is Connections and the Chapel will again be a part of this festival.

ANZAC DAY



The ANZAC Day Service will be held at **9:30am on Saturday 25th April 2026.**

The white crosses were placed on the grass in the Chapel Garden last week before ANZAC Day. We have the ANZAC knitted Poppy Broaches for sale at \$15 with the wool donated by the RSA.

This year we have ceramic poppies available for \$15. These have been donated to us by the New Zealand Remembrance Army. \$5 from each sale will go to cover costs of production. The Remembrance Army are a nationwide volunteer network committed to remembering the people who served and to the restoration of all graves and memorials of those people



AGM

The next AGM will be at **10am on Saturday 13th June 2026 (this is a date change)**, at Manawa in Antigua Street. We look forward to seeing you all.

Resources

We have a plentiful supply of tea towels cards, garden maps, tote bags and Anna Rogers book "Stand for All Time", ANZAC Poppy Broaches, and ANZAC Ceramic Poppies.

Museum News

One of the great outcomes of last year's event is that relatives of the WW2 nurses continue to make contact. Andrea continues to update her material.

Blanche Helliwell served on the hospital ship Oranje as Sister in Charge from 1941 to 1945. In January, the museum group were delighted to meet with Linda White, Blanche's niece. As there is a large archive of Blanche's material at the Cotter museum, we invited Rachel Milner to join us. Linda shared first hand memories of her aunt, photographs and other material.

The NZ Remembrance Army will commission a headstone for Blanche. Terry McLaughlin (who also volunteers at the Chapel) hopes it will be in place by International Nurses' Day. We have a small display about Blanche's service on the Oranje in the museum.



Talking about hospital ships, David Morrell has provided six digital images of the Grantully Castle, first as a troopship for Gallipoli and secondly as re-painted in Malta, as a hospital ship. There is a photograph too.

Recently, the Gorman family kindly donated Marquette victim Mary Gorman's medals and medallion. A beautiful gold medal, known as the Token of Honour, is included in the Collection.

The museum group is looking for a new member following Jude's retirement. If this might interest you, contact one of us.

Nanette Ainge, Convenor, NMC Museum Sub-committee

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In Remembrance – Ray Wootton

Ray had a long association with the Chapel and was President of Friends of the Chapel from 2010 to 2018. A kind leader, she wisely guided us through the tumultuous and difficult years following the earthquakes. She arranged the transfer of all the contents of the Chapel to Wigram Airforce Museum for safekeeping. We all learnt so much from their wonderful museum staff, so the Chapel benefitted in many ways.

In 2015 she oversaw the Marquette centennial commemorations and in her quiet, organised and effective way, chaired the Friends Committee until 2018.

Remembering too her huge contribution to nursing education in Canterbury.

We extend our sincere sympathy to her sister Beverley and family.

Nanette Ainge

Volunteers

We are having a lot of interest in volunteering and have welcomed several new volunteers this year. We very much appreciate the volunteers, without whom we would not be open to visitors. Thank you for all your service.

Our volunteers continue to support the Chapel by doing a shift once or twice every 4-6 weeks to enable us to keep the Chapel open 3 afternoons a week. If you are a volunteer and not able to fulfil your allocated shift, please, using the volunteers contact list, try to find someone who may be able to swap with you. Volunteers are all very obliging and will help if they can.

If you have a friend or know of someone whom you think would enjoy being a volunteer, please let me know. We are always looking for new people.

Membership

With careful consideration from the Friends Committee, it has been decided to increase the membership fees. These will be discussed at the AGM in June.

Life Membership: \$175.00 one off payment

Adult: \$30.00 per year

Senior: \$25.00 per year

We are always trying to build our membership, so if you know of any past or present nurses who would be interested in joining the Chapel family, please encourage them to do so. When renewing your subscription please ensure all your details are up to date for us to accurately maintain the data base. All membership fees can be paid through the internet banking or through our website. Please include your name and subscription amount.

Please confirm we have your correct membership details, and you consent to the Chapel sending you newsletters and updates on Chapel events by emailing chapelfoc@gmail.com

The Friends Bank account number is
Westpac 03 1707 0017417 000

Steph Cook
President

