

Archives Report for Synod 2023

The chickens have come home to roost... or the time people spent on their family trees during covid lockdowns are increasingly affecting the Christchurch Anglican Diocesan Archives.

No longer do researchers want to add leaves to the family tree, but they want to know the detail of the social history that surrounds them. In the past this had a great deal to do with church associations for example the choir, Vestry, Mothers' Union, attending Sunday School, in Church Wardens' lists or any of the outside organizations that had parish links. This has resulted in the opening days twice a month on a Wednesday well used, and an increased number of detailed responses to emails from all over the world.

Meanwhile the unpacking continues, often in a response to a research request from both in-house and outside. Surprises still turn up in the oddest boxes, the result of making the best use of available space during the move. Unpacking also provides an opportunity to re-house those items that are not so regularly required for research purposes. Financial records are also being scrutinized and disposal undertaken.

In house requests are always on the top of the list of work to do. This regularly involves detailed research for Church Property Trustees, using a combination of Trustee, Diocesan and Parish resources. It is always a delight to find a parish that has recorded its bequest decisions and forwarded the information to the Diocesan Office.

Increasing too are the number of requests from overseas, particularly for proof of Baptism prior to Marriage. Accuracy is the key when recording information in Parish Registers. There have been a number of instances in the past year where it has been found that Baptisms have been omitted from Registers, or recorded inaccurately despite clear proof and information from a family. Burial cards too, needed to be entered into Registers.

Parish visits have been on the agenda. In January time was spent in the Parish of Oxford-Cust, while Highfield and St Mary's in Timaru, Fendalton and Malvern as well as Anglican Social Services are already on the calendar. Visits provide an opportunity for conversations with those who are responsible for parish record keeping, the disposal of items that are not considered archival, and in many instances adding items to archival collections that already exist within the Diocesan archives.

The volunteers, Hilary Rayner, Hank van Til, Ruth Stamler and Dorothy Burrows, continue with their transcription of early Baptism records for Putake. Early Timaru, Woodend and Akaroa Baptism Registers have

recently been completed and will be added soon. They have been joined by Prue Purser who is transcribing the Methven records that were found wet and dirty after the safe was stolen. Their state is a salutary reminder that using ink that leaches onto the next page, fades, and runs when damp is not a good combination with a Parish Register.

<https://kinderlibrary.recollect.co.nz/> provides access to both Putaki and Pumotomoto where the most recent Diocese of Christchurch additions have been additional Year Books, St Saviour's Orphanage Monthly News and Anglican Action in its entirety.