

## The Archives

This year has seen a notable change in the type of requests that are received by the Archives. With more material available online, requests have become very specific, complex, and detailed. In addition, some of the requests involve Registers that are still in use in Parishes, and this adds to the complexity, especially as Parishes have amalgamated or changed their boundaries and Registers have become mislaid in the process. Individuals need to be able to access this information, particularly those relating to the sacrament of Baptism, for matters as widespread as proof for marriage overseas, entry to a church school, or ordination.

A reminder that if the first entry in any Register is 50 years ago (at present that is 1974) then it should be in the Archives. Parishes are advised to photocopy the last five pages and hold them in the parish for ongoing pastoral contacts. This will decrease backwards and forwards emails, especially as many enquirers are unsure about the exact parish or location, they are requesting information about.

Cemeteries too have been under the researcher microscope. Linking entries in a Burial Register with a plot on the ground is not always easy. Plot numbers have changed as headstones have been re-ordered, and there is no guarantee that because a service took place in the church, that a burial took place in the adjacent cemetery.

The Wednesday and Friday volunteers have continued their transcription of early Baptism Registers. Each group comes to the Archives twice a month. Hilary Rayner, Ruth Stamler, Dorothy Burrows, and Hank van Til have completed twelve large registers, with another twelve in various stages of transcription and checking, but not yet digitized. Prue Purser has completed transcribing the dirty and water damaged registers that were retrieved after the Methven safe was stolen and copies have been sent to the Parish. In addition, she has begun to tackle the Geraldine, Temuka, Te Ngawai and Fairlie Registers for areas that were originally part of a far-flung parish. The return of Lorraine Owen, a previous Grove Road volunteer, means her work on the transcription of the first Christchurch–St John Register will complete the early coverage of the central city churches.

The decision to digitize the Cathedral Baptism Register that dates from 1881 and continues to be used has meant that a large proportion of the funds set aside for digitization this year have been expended. This process which involves the overhead capture of pages so that there is less strain on Register bindings and tight gutters, requires specialist

equipment and staff. Christchurch is very fortunate to have those skills available in Christchurch at New Zealand Micrographic Services.

The details of the Christchurch Diocesan digitisation and transcription, along with those from all three Tikanga can be found on the subscription-based site Pūtake at <https://putake.recollect.co.nz/>. Those interested in Parish History ancient and more modern would find it well worth investigating the Diocesan and National Newspapers that are freely available at Pūmotomoto <https://kinderlibrary.recollect.co.nz/> and now cover the sometimes overlapping years 1861-66, 1876-78, 1870-1910, 1911-1946, 1946-1976, 1989-2009.

There is of course the ongoing work on the collections and in house enquiries. Sometimes a box contains material that needs to be re-housed as a result of all the moving, but over all there are fewer and fewer surprises. Major additions to the collections this year have come from the Parishes of Malvern, St Luke's and Timaru, Anglican Social Services, and the Bicultural Committee. In house enquiries are steady and it becomes clearer all the time, the value of having the Archives in the Diocesan Office.