

Archivally Speaking

No. 2 — April 2006

An occasional newsletter for those interested in the Archives of the Catholic Diocese of Christchurch.
Preserving the foundations of tomorrow's Diocese

FIRE, FLOOD and SILVERFISH

A workshop for all those interested in archives, especially smaller collections, such as at home or in the parish or school. The emphasis will be on conservation.

Saturday, June 10, 1.30pm - Cathedral House meeting room, Barbadoes Street, Christchurch.

Speaker: Jane Teal, Archivist, Christchurch Anglican Archives

This will be a "Hands-on" workshop. A gold coin donation is requested to cover the cost of materials.

The workshop is for all those interested in the history of the Catholic Church in the Christchurch Diocese, whether it be at parish, school or diocesan level.

The day will finish with afternoon tea. To give us an idea what materials to supply and how many to cater for, could those who intend attending please contact one of the following.

Michael Hanrahan, mhhh@xtra.co.nz Ashburton 03 308 8853 (evenings)

Merle Conaghan, sandmcon@xtra.co.nz Christchurch 358 8758

FROM THE ARCHIVIST

Time makes documents so frail, yet it is this same element which adds increasingly to their value. It is impossible to keep every scrap of paper which comes into our homes, churches or other institutions, so we have to discern. Some material is sufficiently important to make this easy. Some records must never be lost; but coming down a scale from there, where do we draw a line? The two militating factors are Time, and suitable Space. Our Archive Afternoon last Novem-

ber was such a success as to prove further that there is an abundance of knowledge and willingness to assist in the giving of Time to the work of filing material, but Space!. Our Diocesan Archive is so small that it has become almost a shambles. Fortunately, some attention is being given to this problem.

Time is Added Value. One day I climbed up into the tower of the Ashburton church, and on going through a manhole I disturbed a

piece of newspaper, sheets of which had been laid before the concrete had been poured for this upper floor. When I came down I picked up this tiny scrap of paper. It was dated 1931 and contained an advertisement for my uncle's Motor-Trimming workshop in Kilmore St! Why, after 70 years, should I be the one to disturb and then read that scrap of paper? Do I file it or fire it?

Kevin Clark

The Photo project

Progress so far

For almost a year a team of dedicated people has been spending most Thursdays at Cathedral House working on a project to catalogue and store photos from the diocesan archives.

Each photo has been copied onto a sheet with space for information about the photo.

The original photos have then been numbered and filed in acid-free folders which in turn are placed in acid-free file boxes and placed in the

archives room.

Two sets of the record sheets have been produced, one to be kept in the archives as a master catalogue, the other to be used to obtain more information about the photos.

The project looked as though it was nearing completion at about 1600 photos, but recently it has caught the imagination of people who have come to hear of it. They have started searching cupboards and drawers, with the

result that the collection is now approaching the 2000 mark.

However, we are now reaching the next stage, the identification of photos that have little information.

This will require more than just the small team that has worked on the project to date.

We are asking for the help of people from throughout the Diocese to assist with having photos identified in their areas.

What you can do

The catalogue consists at present of 12 folders, arranged in four broad categories — Individuals, Groups, Buildings and Events.

Many of the older photos are identified — it is mainly the ones from the 1950s onwards where there is a lack of information.

We would like people from different areas to take a

folder at a time and show it to older people in their parishes — priests, parishioners and religious.

Any information obtained is simply written straight onto the back of the record sheet.

A co-ordinator will be responsible for keeping track of where folders are and keeping the project moving.

This is an easy and enjoyable part of the project, but it could be time consuming. It would suit retired people who have a good knowledge of the people in their areas.

If you think you could help with this work in any way, please contact one of the people whose names and emails are on the front page.

And some other things

In addition to the catalogue of photos in the archives, we are creating a digital collection and a corresponding printed catalogue. It currently has about 500 photos in it.

These are mainly photos that are in other collections. Permission has been obtained to add a digital copy to the diocesan collection and they have then been scanned.

They have come from private collections, family collections such as wedding albums, other archives and museums.

Some photos have also recently been taken using digital cameras and these are in the digital collection.

If you are aware of any photos that could be scanned for this collection, or if you are in a position to take photos of

buildings in your area, we would appreciate hearing from you.

The archives collection is very light on photos of buildings and people—it has a lot of events. Often country museums hold this type of photo in their collections.

At a time of change, it would also be good to record things as they are now.