

Waiapu Archives Report to Synod

As commented last year, with all the Diocesan changes in structures and personnel, the need for care in preserving records and maintaining our “corporate memory” becomes more urgent.

In this respect we note the passing of Canon Cherie Baker. In the 90s Cherie spent many voluntary retirement hours sorting and filing documents in the Diocesan Archives, when they were held in the Church Lane property. As a pioneering woman priest, Cherie was fastidious in caring for, and handing over to our Archives, her considerable files on the background to the Ordination of Women to the Priesthood, both locally, but also round the Anglican Communion: also her own personal papers, and copies of her own published works. We hope others will follow her example.

The exciting news is that “Ten Year Plan” launched by (retired) Bishop Murray Mills has been achieved in less than seven years! Our goal was to sort and file and box and record on computer all the existing papers - and recent additions – of Diocesan Secretaries, Bishops, Diocesan Standing Committee, Parishes, Waiapu Social Services (committees and agencies), Boards of Trustees, together with other archdeaconry and regional committees, Christian Education, Stewardship, and Ministry Councils, Youth Work and Te Amorangi Centre, Mothers Union, Association of Anglican Women, Girls Friendly Society, and personal records, to name a few - as well as our small historic library, drawers of plans and maps, and many photographs. It has been an undertaking not without high frustration and confusion at times - not all caused by lack of computer skills. But we are now more confidently able to reply to the many research requests we receive.

Jill King at the Diocesan Office continues to be the contact person for all Archive enquiries. The requests come on a very regular basis, with the emphasis on copies of lost or forgotten baptism records, copies of photographs and information about the history of various churches. Most weeks she is freed to spend some hours at the archives enabling a flow of records to be recorded. Lesley Ennor from the Cathedral parish has in her retirement continued to bring administrative and office skills to help with the classifying and listing of details in many of our records, again making the searches for information so much easier.

We again remind Synod members re Parish material. All ministry units have the responsibility to house carefully their own records, registers, correspondence, minutes, orders of service, newsletters and magazines. If they need advice or help with that important task we are happy to assist them. But especially where archival records are say over 50 years old, as well as when ministry changes and uncertainties put any records at risk, we advise them to be lodged with the Diocesan Archives. This is increasingly taking place.

Bishop Murray Mills