



GRADUATE WOMEN CANTERBURY

PO BOX 6733, CHRISTCHURCH 8442

Website: www.canterburynzfgw.org.nz

PHONE 364 3530 & FAX 364 3583

E-mail: branch@graduatewomencanterbury.nz

PRESIDENT: Helen Heddell
SECRETARY: Geraldine Murphy
TREASURER:
MEMBERSHIP:

Phone 03 312 0404
Phone 383 3958

email helenheddell@xtra.co.nz
email geraldinemurphy@xtra.co.nz

NEWSLETTER FEBRUARY 2017

Next Branch Gathering

Helen Heddell, our President has very kindly offered to host members, their families and friends at a lunch to be held on Sunday 12th February at 12.30pm. Those who attended the the Conference in October and the November branch meeting will agree that Helen provides most delicious food and in addition you are assured of a very pleasant day out on a farm in the country.

Helen's address is 1592 Tram Rd and to get there, take the northern motorway, cross the bridge and take the first exit on the left. Then drive 15kms up Tram Rd and 1592 is on the right by a pine hedge. The house is the first on the driveway and there is ample parking under the trees.

The Oxford market is held on Sunday mornings and you might like to go there first.

If you are coming would you please let Geraldine Murphy (contact details above) know by 8th February, along with the number attending and whether you would like a ride.

Agnes attended branch meetings regularly and in addition was the coordinator of the branch Friday Morning Group, members of which met in Agnes's house once a month. Through her numerous contacts Agnes was able to arrange a wide range of speakers resulting in many lively discussions.

As you can see from the following eulogy Agnes led a most eventful life, particularly in her early years.

Agnes was born on the 7th April 1915 at Inverurie just north of Aberdeen. She was christened Agnes Georgina after both her parents, George and Agnes Burr. Soon after she was born her father obtained a new job as resident manager of Springfield Farm, near the town of Cupar in Fife. Her younger brother George was born there and Agnes attended school in Cupar. In a departure from tradition in the wider Burr 'clan', Agnes went on to further study at one of Fife's more illustrious places – St Andrew's University and stayed during term time at a distinguished hall of residence, called University Hall. In the late 1930's Agnes graduated with a Master of Arts degree from St Andrews and sought a job which would let her get some O.E..

MEMBERSHIP NEWS

Agnes Cooper one of our oldest members (yes we do have another older one) died recently aged 101. Agnes joined the branch in the 1940s and thus was a member for around 70 years! Until fairly recently

So, in September 1939, when hostilities began in Europe, Agnes was already at Alexandria in Egypt, teaching at the Scottish School for girls, founded in 1925. During holidays, she was able to get around Egypt and see the sights, such as the Great Pyramids near Cairo, and she toured with colleagues on a visit to the Holy Land.

After WW2 broke out, New Zealand soldiers of the 2nd NZEF began arriving in Egypt and a certain sergeant Cooper of the 18th Battalion, accepted an invitation to be entertained by some of the teachers at the Scottish School for Girls. From early 1940 Ivan Cooper visited the school, dating Agnes Burr, whenever he had leave to do so. On the first of July 1941, Agnes and Ivan were married at St Andrew's Church in Cairo. For a time after that Agnes carried on teaching in Alexandria, then she got transferred to married women's quarters in Cairo out of range of the Italian and German bombers.

However, a year after their wedding, Ivan had his left leg shot off below the knee fighting Rommel's tanks at the Battle of Ruweisat Ridge. He was shipped back to New Zealand on a hospital ship while Agnes made her way there on a circuitous route via South Africa and Australia, avoiding Japanese raiders in the Indian Ocean.

Once Agnes was settled with friends in Auckland and Ivan was walking again, they bought a house in Auckland and the first two of Agnes's three boys (Neill and Douglas) were born. Then Ivan took all four of them back to England because he had a new job as a fitter of artificial limbs and went to learn the latest British and American techniques of this trade.

At the top of his profession back in New Zealand Ivan was appointed to manage the Christchurch branch of the 'Limb Factory' as the family called it. The four of them settled in Papanui and there, son number 3 (Alan) arrived. Once her youngest son was old enough to go to school, Agnes resumed teaching again at St Margaret's College. In the 1960's both Agnes and Ivan became elders of Knox Church. Occasionally Agnes played the organ for services there. 1967 was the last year that the Cooper family of 5 resided together. By then the one who was the smallest had grown to be the largest and the middle one (Doug) got married and moved away to Invercargill at the end of that year.

Ivan loved being a member of the Riccarton Rotary Club and when it brought its women's equivalent (the Inner Wheel Club) into being, Agnes soon joined. She became one that club's stalwarts and on more than one occasion represented it overseas. In early 1971 in their 30th year of marriage, Agnes was bereaved of her beloved Ivan when he died in a sudden flood while out fishing. Agnes was also a member of the Canterbury branch of the Federation of University Women. In the 1990's she and some other members of its Local History Group co-wrote a book entitled 'Round the Square – A History of Christchurch's Cathedral Square'. Agnes was almost ready to retire from teaching when she became a grandmother for the first time. Douglas and Airdrie's, Helen and Alice were born in 1973 and 1977, and in 1987 the mother of three sons became the grandmother to 3 girls with the birth of Susan to Alan and Elaine. By then a member of St Stephen's church, Agnes eventually made her last move of abode to the Elmswood Retirement Village where for many years she owned Villa 7, the only brand-new house she had ever lived in. 'Nan' has met 2 of her 4 great-grandsons. 2-year old Michael LaRooy who was born in England came first. He is now 10 years old and his younger brother James (Alice's 2nd son, born in Scotland) is 5. Nan's other great-grand sons are 5-year old Oscar Phillips who she met when he was also just 2 years old and 2-year old Max Phillips (Helen's two boys, both born in London).

Agnes celebrated her 100th birthday on the 7th of April last year. Those of her family who could, all joined her and she had a happy day. On October 21st, she died peacefully in her bed at Elmswood, aged 101½ years.

November Branch Meeting

Branch members pictured below had a very pleasant Christmas morning tea on the lawn of 9 Creyke Rd and enjoyed catching up with one another.



The Story of Sadie Balkind

Every year the Branch Trust grants scholarships and awards under the name of Sadie Balkind. Sadie was a branch member whose bequest enabled the granting of these awards and she also left us the following (unfortunately incomplete) memoir.

I am the youngest child of a long spread out family (my eldest sister was 21-22 when I was born). She came to live in New Zealand later on. My family of 3 sisters and 2 brothers were all born in Melbourne. I arrived a fortnight after my mother arrived in Christchurch with two of my elder sisters, 3

and 6 years old and the younger of my two brothers, about 12, I think. My father had arrived earlier to arrange a house etc. What the trip was like for Mother, I don't care to think; the 3 year old was one of those youngsters always fretting, the other two were up to everything, especially my brother.

So, I was born in Christchurch near the Avon River in the suburb of Dallington and we moved to a house in Sheldon St, Opawa on a terrace overlooking the River Heathcote where we stayed till I was nearly 8. I didn't go to school except for a few weeks towards the end of 1919 when I was over 7. Then my father bought 'Woodham' in Woodham Rd in Dallington and the Avon River ran at the edge of our 24.5 acres, but the house, gardens, orchards, stables and garage were in the 12.5 acres that were ours. We had a Jersey cow called Honey (and she was) and later a red Hereford too. We always had a mother cat and kittens in Opawa and a dog and fowls and plenty of space there. We had more at Woodham! I went to school (North Linwood Primary) in 1920 when I was nearly eight. I'd been reading since I was 3 and knew all my tables, but not subtraction of more than 2 figures, nor much about multiplication – which made things a bit difficult since I went into Std 1 at once. I went through primary with an exceptional class (there were 103 in it in Std 5). The first two teachers (new) couldn't cope but the third one was fine. No strap used after his first fortnight. Our Std 4 teacher was Sadie Dobson – a crackerjack – she and O'Connor (Std 5 and part of Std 6) were the best two teachers I had until I met Dr Jobberns when I did Geog1 as an extra with Hist 11 in my Teachers' College year. Teachers' College was not satisfactory for graduate studies but Mr O'Connor was Head of the Normal School where I went for a teaching section. Sadie Dobson, by then Mrs Penny was also on the staff and I visited her classes.

This was an appointment to the Division of Teachers College for graduates who were being trained as teachers for secondary schools.

Later on when I was teaching at Palmerston North GHS I met Mr O'Connor twice on train journeys from Wellington and Palmerston

North. He recognized me and came up to talk, interested and interesting as ever. He was then an Inspector of Primary Schools. Later on I had Sadie Penny's adopted son in one of my 'minor' groups when I was a Senior Lecturer for Dev. Students specializing in English. (Sadie's boy was in a group taking English as a secondary subject, his major was History). When I became an Inspector of Secondary Schools I inspected both Sadie (who was 'retired' but still teaching at a private school and acting as librarian (which was one of my special fields).. It's odd to think of inspecting someone who had taught you – but that happened more than once. Sadie and I have never been out of touch for any length of time over the years. She must be over 80 and has heart trouble but is still as game as Ned Kelly and still writing.

(Now back to me) Linwood Primary, Avonside Girls High (by a curve of the Avon River near Linwood Ave). Then to university, Arts course, MA Honours in English (and Franch 111, History 1, Latin 1, Education 1, Geog 1, Hist 11.

I'd been writing 'poems' and short stories since I was 5 but had to give that up when I started teaching secondary school in Palmerston North (1938) – no free periods, Fr for 6A and B, English, History, Geography

Recently Ellen McCrae, Chair of the Trust was contacted by Chris Lloyd from Australia who is researching the Balkind family and of course saw reference to our Sadie Balkind Scholarship on our website and wanted to know the connection. Ellen explained the origins of the scholarship and sent him the story that Sadie had written of her life. He replied as follows:

Her opening statement is certainly not exaggeration. Her father Lazarus Wolf Balkind and his brothers, Leopold, Abraham and Zorach and their sister Elke were all born in Latvia. All except Elke emigrated and all of the latter to Australia and New Zealand with the exception of Abraham who went to England. Leopold, Zorach and Lazarus all lived in New Zealand at various stages and were mainly involved in the import of

'drapery', jewellery and various other luxury items which brought in from Europe. Sadie's uncle Zorach was the first to settle in Dunedin while Lazarus built his business, after a number of setbacks, in Bendigo and Melbourne. Lazarus was subject to considerable public anti-Semitism in the Australian press and I suspect this was one of the reasons for the family's move to Christchurch. He set up various drapery and money lending operations out of Colombo Street in Christchurch which I suspect were based on Zorach and Leopold's original businesses after they had moved to Sydney.

They were frequent travellers within New Zealand, across the ditch and to Europe and almost entirely by ship. This kept them in contact with the broader trading networks of their extended family and those of the Jewish diaspora from the specific part of Latvia (Liepāja in Courland) they came from. With the exception of Lazarus they all married women who were from that part of Latvia. Lazarus marries Lillias Baxter Syme in 1891. Lillias was born to George & Jane (nee Clifford) in Malvern, Victoria in 1875. She was sixteen years old when she married. Reading between the lines of the press and primary sources I suspect that Sadie's mother was a pretty formidable person with both business acumen and a fair level of pragmatic tolerance, particularly given Lazarus's various foibles.

It would be interesting to know what contact Sadie had over the years with this broader Balkind family. Leopold moved to New York where all but one of his children were born. Abraham died in Newcastle on Tyne and Elke in Germany. My key subject is Zorach who moved to Australia and built a successful business importing goods from Europe. He had four children of his own and adopted his nephew (his wife sister's son) Albert Gluckman who was born in New Zealand.

The Balkinds I have researched were actively involved in their religion and most particularly Zorach who started off doing recitation and singing in Dunedin and Christchurch Synagogues. All were significant charitable contributors. It would be interesting to know whether Sadie maintained her faith.

Graduate Women International (GWI) appeals to governments, legislators, civil society, and individual citizens to mobilise for every person's right to a quality education

Geneva, Switzerland, December 10, 2016 -- On this Human Rights Day, Graduate Women International (GWI) advocates for each person's fundamental right to education and notes that education through secondary school should be compulsory for all boys and girls. In accordance with Article 26 of the Declaration of Human Rights, all children are born with the right to education, regardless of their sex, race, religion, or any other defining characteristic. The theme of this year's Human Rights Day is "Stand Up for Someone's Rights Today!". Human rights belong equally to everyone; therefore, people must speak up for those whose rights are at risk. GWI takes a stand to increase access to education on behalf of all children who are at a disadvantage.

GWI President Geeta Desai states, "Across the world, inequality exists within education and all basic human rights. It is critical for those in a position of power and influence to take initiative and make a difference. It is within GWI's mission to bring secondary education to all children, especially girls, who lack the opportunity. GWI expresses concern that children living in the poorest 20 percent of households are nearly four times more likely to not attend school than their richer peers.¹ To counteract this issue, GWI is working to advance education with a gendered human rights perspective."

From the United Nations Women's Newsletter



International Women's Day is celebrated around the world on March 8th. This is a time to reflect on progress made, to call for change and to celebrate acts of courage and determination by ordinary women who have played an extraordinary role in the history of their countries and communities.

The focus is on appreciating the diverse social, cultural and political achievements of women globally. The United Nations theme for 2017 is '[Women in the changing world of work: planet 50:50 by 2030](#)'. The theme considers how to accelerate the 2030 Agenda, building momentum for the effective implementation of the new Sustainable Development Goals,

The theme will also focus on new commitments under [UN Women's Step It Up initiative](#), and other existing commitments on gender equality, women's empowerment and women's human rights.

Some key targets of the 2030 Agenda:

- Ensure that all girls and boys complete free, equitable and quality primary and secondary education.
- Ensure that all girls and boys have access to quality early childhood development, care and pre-primary education.
- End all forms of discrimination against all women and girls.
- Eliminate all forms of violence against all women and girls in the public and private spheres, including trafficking and sexual and other types of exploitation.
- Eliminate all harmful practices, such as child, early and forced marriage and female genital mutilation

Disclaimer: while every effort has been made to ensure the accuracy of information in this newsletter, neither Graduate Women Canterbury Branch nor the editor accepts any liability for any errors of fact or opinion