

# GRADUATE WOMEN CANTERBURY

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## NEWSLETTER OCTOBER 2016

### Notice of Annual General Meeting

The Annual General Meeting of the Canterbury Branch of Graduate Women will be held on **Tuesday 18th October 2016 at 1.30 pm at 9 Creyke Rd.**

The business of the meeting will be:

1. Confirmation of the minutes of the previous AGM
2. Presentation of Annual Reports and Financial Statements
3. Election of Officers
4. General Business

We urgently need new members on the committee to replace those not continuing, particularly a Treasurer, so please do consider joining us. The duties are not onerous and meeting times can be arranged to suit. A nomination form was included in last month's newsletter or contact the President or Secretary as above. Nominations may also be taken from the floor at the meeting.

Afternoon tea will be served following the meeting.

### Previous Branch Meeting Report

In September, the eleven branch members in the photo below enjoyed a visit to Rutherford's Den at the Arts Centre which has been extensively remodelled. The building suffered a great deal of damage but the old wooden lecture theatre pews, original fireplaces and slate blackboard were able to be removed and preserved. The interactive exhibits tell the story not only of Ernest Rutherford's life and work, but also the work he inspired and the students he taught. After Rutherford's Den the group was able to inspect and admire the great amount of restoration that has taken place in the Great Hall. For those of you who have not been to the Arts Centre recently, a visit is highly recommended.



# Trust Board Report

## Scholarships and Awards

Our focus this month has been to develop processes and put in place the application forms and regulations for the revised scholarships and awards reported on last month. Discussions with personnel in the universities have helped us along this path and are assisting us with the promotion of awards.

Our endowed scholarships are being reviewed in light of the adoption of our Graduate Women Canterbury name and these will reflect the origins of the scholarships and original name in the introduction to each of the awards.

## Undergraduate Endowed Scholarships 2016

**Caitlin Swan was the recipient of our Undergraduate Endowed Scholarship level 400 – 600.** She is completing a Bachelor of Arts with Honours in Māori and Indigenous Studies. Next year, if accepted, she will undertake a Master of Teaching and Learning as my goal is to become a Primary teacher. She says " I chose to gain a Bachelor of Arts before completing a teaching qualification because I wanted to learn Te Reo Māori and broaden my perspectives and experiences. I am passionate about revitalizing Te Reo Māori and believe that Māori language and culture are integral to being a New Zealander. I want to become a teacher and create a learning environment that supports all children to develop and extend themselves by not only pursuing their interests and skills but by also discovering what challenges them as, I believe, without challenge one can never truly grow." Caitlins aim is to complete a Master of Teaching and Learning she says "I believe that it's focus on Māori success, research and reflective practice that will provide me with excellent strategies to continually try to improve my teaching. "

I would like to thank you again for funding this scholarship as it has greatly helped to make my goals achievable. I hope that in the future I will be able to give back to the community some of the support you have shown me.

## Claire Elliot was the recipient of our Undergraduate Endowed Scholarship level 300.

Claire is known to the Tuesday team as an enthusiastic student employee. Claire is completing the final year of her Bachelor of Speech and Language Pathology.

## Promoting a new image

The adoption of the Graduate Women Canterbury Trust name alongside our international and national organisation has been aided considerably by the revamped interactive website and we are immensely grateful to our web mistress Angela Devonport for both her patience but more importantly for her design flair. A major step will be moving into the social media scene.

## Canterbury Westland Schools Science Fair 2016

Merle Sheat and Hilary Stubbs were our judges at this event the organisation of which had been developed to adapt to a new venue for the event. Our judges sort to reward those whose projects reflected original research.

First prize at the Junior level went to Anna Christenson Year 7 for a project on the effect of street lighting on streams.

First prize at the senior level went to two students from Cashmere High whose project looked at the impact of coffee ground on propagating fungi.

## Health and Safety Act 2016

Jill Van der Geer took us through the requirements for implementing the act. The Trust Board recognises its responsibilities for health and safety of all on site at 9 Creyke Road and will act in accordance with University of Canterbury's Health and Safety Policy. The academic dress hire team will assist Jean in developing the policies and procedures to maintain and safe work environ.

## Half a Walnut Tree

*This is the story of Quin and is a project the trust supported through a special project grant award.*

Quin Tang was born in Beijing Sept 1962 to divorced parents, and lived with her mother in the first three years of her life. Quin's mother was murdered in August 1966 in Beijing during the Cultural Revolution. After her mother's death, Quin's father was exiled into a Chinese Communist labour camp in the countryside for twelve years, so Quin spent her childhood until the age of 16 in multiple foster placements. The book, a copy of which Quin has gifted to us, shares her life journey with others, especially for people who might go through disaster and difficulties as they embark on their own journey of grieving and healing. Quin says she wanted to

'give something back to the Canterbury community which has blessed her family greatly'.

The copy of the book is held at 9 Creyke Road and I encourage you to read it.

In addition, many of you will be interested to read Geraldine's review of Quin's book that summarises the book so well.

*I first met Quin some 15 years ago when she was a student at Canterbury University and seeking help with her English writing skills. As a recent Chinese immigrant bringing up two young daughters on her own, Quin was struggling with academic study and considering abandoning it. However to her credit she persevered and her efforts were rewarded with a BA in Psychology and Gender Studies. This was followed by MA and MEd degrees and a Post Graduate Diploma in Health Science (Distinction). Her aim is to complete a PhD in the future.*

*Quin's book seeks to publish her life story "Grieving and Growing" that provides a wonderful example of how with courage and determination, the most adverse circumstances can be overcome. Not only has Quin proved this through her educational success, but during her life Quin has faced the murder of her mother by Red Guards during the Chinese Cultural Revolution, the exile of her father, a new life in a very different country, a violent marriage and recently she survived the collapse of the CTV Building on 22nd February.*

*Quin's memoir is also an important contribution to Chinese migrant literature as she recounts the difficulties she faced as new migrant in coping in a society with radically different cultural practices from her own, for instance around childbirth and care of the mother afterwards. Her experiences will help to provide New Zealanders with a better understanding of cultural differences.*

*Apart from being Quin's personal story this is also a valuable historical record providing a first-hand account of the horrors of life in Mao's China. She also writes of her forebears and the importance they placed on education not only for sons but also for daughters. Her*

*grandmother who obtained a teaching certificate in 1914 was politically active and met her husband on a student protest. Her grandfather, a medical doctor and later army officer, defied the traditional patriarchal society and gave his four daughters the same educational opportunities as his son and all five children graduated from universities. One aunt became a lecturer at Beijing University. It was Quin's grandmother and her four aunts who showed her what women could achieve.*

**Geraldine Murphy**

## REPORT OF NZ FEDERATION OF GRADUATE WOMEN INC. ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

Twenty eight members (10 from the Canterbury Branch) attended the National AGM held on Saturday at the John Brittan Seminar at the University of Canterbury. The meeting commenced with a discussion on the name change to Graduate Women leading on to members' thoughts for the future. It was agreed that we need make the most of strengths such as having secure funding from regalia hire and seek opportunities to have an influence in areas such as education and advocacy.

Most of the proposed constitutional changes were passed and our new name is now Graduate Women New Zealand Incorporated. See below for the rationale for the changes from Ann Pomeroy and the complete list is on the national website [www.nzfgw.org.nz](http://www.nzfgw.org.nz)

As the proposed National Executive members had been moved and seconded and there were no further nominations, the following were elected. Congratulations to Bernadette, our former President who is now the National President.

## NATIONAL EXECUTIVE 2016-2018

**President/ Chair NZFGW Charitable Trust:**

Dr Bernadette Devonport (Canterbury)

**CIR:** Dr Sita Venkateswar (Manawatu Branch)

**PAC:** vacant

**Marketing:** Dr Jo Innes (Manawatu Branch) from April 2017

**Secretary:** Hannah Gray (Otago)

**Treasurer:** Margaret Ellett (North Shore)

**NZFGW Charitable Trust Secretary and Awards**

**Convener:** Dr Vivienne Bryner (Wellington)

**NZFGW Charitable Trust Treasurer:** Pat Sivertsen (Independent Member)

**Committee Member:** Queenie Lin (Wellington)

**Immediate Past-President:** Dr Ann Pomeroy (Wellington)

**Other:**

**Editorial Committee:** Dr Gail Adams-Hutcheson  
Editor *NZFGW News*, Dr Ann Pomeroy

**Facebook/website:** Shabnam Seyedmehdi , Dr Amanda Taylor, Nicole Steele



After a delicious lunch supplied by President Helen Heddell, Lynda Murchison, President of North Canterbury Federated Farmers spoke on her experiences as a woman in farming. As well as farming in partnership with her husband, Lynda has also worked in resource management in Canterbury for some 20 years, for district councils the Regional Council, and Ngāi Tahu. She also runs her own consultancy and along with lecturing part-time at the University of Canterbury in resource and environmental management, she is also studying for a PhD looking at environmental ethics in New Zealand farming. Lynda spoke of the sexism she had experienced in organisations she has been involved in and how she had learned to fight it. She also spoke of the need for universities to adjust the PhD system and make it less restrictive for mature students as they usually do not need the supervision that younger students do.

## Regalia Hire Report

A successful ARA graduation was held recently. Thanks to all who assisted with handing out and collecting regalia. Enrolments for Canterbury's December graduation are coming in steadily and we are also receiving schools orders for prize-givings.

Jean Sharfe – Regalia Hire Manager

## FROM THE NATIONAL EXECUTIVE

### *Rationale for proposed constitutional changes*

There seems to be some misunderstanding about the proposed constitutional changes among members. I will attempt to clarify some of the issues here:

Firstly we have been communicating the changes via NZFGW News so that the time constraint (two calendar months' notice) was met by National Executive. The information went up on the website at the end of July and the newsletter also went out at the end of July with a link to a chart on the website showing the existing wording and the proposed new wording. There was a brief description of the changes and the reasons for them in the newsletter. We also called for nominations for the various vacancies on the National Executive in a timely manner, but had limited response from members [does anyone actually read the newsletter?].

We have been trying to improve communications between the branches and National Executive so that everyone is aware of what's going on. To this end, Presidents have been joining in on the National Executive conference/video calls.

Some members have expressed a concern that we are no longer holding a conference. This isn't exactly the situation. There is some confusion with the term 'conference' which can mean an assembly or gathering of the members where business is discussed, or it can mean papers, workshops, panels etc. about matters of interest to members. With the shift from a three year conference cycle with its mid-term council meeting, we now have conferences and council meetings alternate years. Strictly speaking these are exactly the same as annual general meetings so we have chosen to call them AGMs, and wish to update the constitution to reflect that. This brings us into line with Branches which also run AGMs. This shift is an attempt to improve communications. An AGM means that everyone receives an update on what we have been doing, and is invited on an annual basis to discuss NZFGW business.

Fewer and fewer members have been choosing to attend a meeting which has a Conference format (i.e. with papers and other presentations). In 2014 less than 10% of members attended. It is very hard to bring top calibre speakers to a meeting

with only 30-50 women attending. I signalled this at the end of the 2014 conference that we needed to make changes, and these have been the subject of two strategic thinking sessions by National Executive (one of which was attended by Branch Presidents). So while in theory it is a great idea to have a traditional conference, every second year is too often. We are better off holding awards events and other such activities open to the public which advertise our work and draw in new members.

The proposal to shift to one person one vote is to encourage attendance. We think members are more likely to come to the AGM if they can have a say, and their say counts. At the moment the system is deeply inequitable with the largest branch having only one more vote than the tiniest branch, and the smallest branches having a larger impact on voting than their size strictly speaking justifies. The idea is to also encourage engagement even if voters can't attend in person by allowing proxy votes.

Finally we want to return to the system we used to have whereby the President is voted in a year before she takes office. This gives her a chance to learn the business if not already part of NE, and work on finding committee members when NE members step down at the end of their terms.

*Ann Pomeroy National President*

## Heritage Week

### **Tour of Heritage Houses**

Take a self-guided tour around six heritage houses, including the Ngaio Marsh House. No disability access.

### **Date and Time:**

16 October, 10:00am-4:00pm. Cost \$25. Tickets (with list of houses) available from Paper Plus, Merivale.

*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*