

Abbeyfield

New Zealand

Message from the Chairman

Welcome to our first edition for 2007. It is pleasing that the Abbeyfield Societies in New Zealand are continuing to grow, both in number and experience. Last year we welcomed interest groups developing Abbeyfield house prospects in Wanganui, Greymouth and Westport, and this year we have received an application from Christchurch to establish a Steering Group in the Garden City.

On 30 March Abbeyfield Balmacewen in Dunedin officially opened for eight residents. The opening coincided, also in Dunedin, with the holding of a Building and Design Seminar for key people from several Abbeyfield Societies who have recently completed or are contemplating further Abbeyfield houses. The 20 people who attended compared notes, shared ideas, the good and the bad experiences as part of an overall learning curve.



Like the successful seminar last year in Hamilton, such seminars are a popular and informative way of sharing knowledge and strengthening the Abbeyfield family. Every project is different in that while the ethos and principals of the "Abbeyfield way" are observed and maintained, individual districts and towns have their own unique requirements and we learn from each other and are able to update our manuals of procedures.

A further highlight for those attending the Building and Design seminar was to travel to Queenstown and as guests of Abbeyfield Wakatipu view the ninth Abbeyfield House, located in Frankton beneath the towering and picturesque Remarkables. Occupancy is due to begin this month.

The elected Board of Abbeyfield New Zealand meets monthly usually by way of teleconference. Since last year's Annual General meeting last July the Directors with the General Secretary have been able to meet face to face in November which coincided with the opening of the Takaka House and again recently in Dunedin with the Balmacewen opening. Both meetings have been very positive and complement the monthly teleconferences.

The Annual General Meeting of Abbeyfield New Zealand will this year be held, again in Nelson, over the weekend of 28 and 29 July. I do hope each of our Societies will be able to send at least one delegate as we look to the future and the increasing demands we face in providing housing options for older people seeking companionship and the avoidance of loneliness in small community based households.

JB Munro
Chairman

ABBEYFIELD MEETINGS

The Annual General Meetings of the National Society, Abbeyfield Partnerships Limited, Abbeyfield Housing Company Limited and the Abbeyfield Foundation Charitable Trust will be held in Nelson on Saturday, 28 July - 9am-4.30pm and Sunday, 29 July - 9am-2.30pm.

Advance notice is being provided to allow early bookings at best cost. Additional time has been allowed this year to meet the requests of last years delegates for more time to share experiences, ask questions and seek advice of the collective wisdom available.

Attendance of local Society delegates will be at the local Society or Steering Committee's cost. Some billets are available.

Chris Armstrong
General Secretary

The graduate with a Science degree asks, "Why does it work?"

The graduate with an Engineering degree asks, "How does it work?"

The graduate with an Accounting degree asks, "How much will it cost?"

The graduate with an Arts degree asks, "Do you want fries with that?"

Resident Profile from Abbeyfield House, Stoke, Nelson

It's great to be young at heart This is Joan's adventure ...

At our recent House meeting Joan reluctantly shared with us that she had just celebrated another birthday by going on a tandem hang glide over Nelson. She didn't want to make a fuss, it was something she had wanted to do for a long time. So I went to visit her and twisted her arm to share the experience with us all and this is her story.

It's something Joan had always wanted to do. Many years ago she and her husband had been gliding and were surprised at the noise of the air rushing past even though the glider had no engine. When Joan moved to Nelson and heard about a tandem flight she thought "This time, I can do that!" So off she went and her instructor was a very nice young man (about 50ish!) who happened to be celebrating his birthday on the same day.

The adventure started with a van drive that zig-zagged up a very steep hill overlooking Nelson, and from the top you could see all around the district and Tasman Bay. The pilot put the machine together and told Joan, "When we start off it's a 1, 2, 3, so keep your feet moving as we run down the hill and before you know it we'll be up in the air."

So off they went and they were aloft for about 20 minutes. There was a camera in the corner of the glider and every now and again the instructor would tell her to look up into it. Joan held onto the instructor by loops in his jacket and they hung under the glider side by side with their legs stretched out behind them so that they were almost lying flat in the air. It was quite windy during the flight and, no, she didn't feel at all air sick!!

Then it was time to descend. "Oh dear" Joan thought, "what now, how do we get down?" but before she knew

it, they were shooting along the earth and landed - then she sat for a while to get her breath back!

It was the best day - a lovely day. Joan is surprised at the reactions of people who ask "Why do you want to do it?", but it's just something she did for herself. She says people should do things to try them out, and enjoy doing it for yourself. And then the next day she was off to enjoy a jet boat ride!

Joan is from Barbados, and lived there until she was nearly 18 years old. Then the British arrived to enrol girls into the ATS and sent them to type for the Americans in Washington DC. The girls lived in hotels and were very spoilt during their time there, Joan and her sister had a lovely time. When she was de-mobbed she sailed back to England (on the same ship as Winston Churchill) and became a radiographer then returned to Barbados for three years before coming over to New Zealand. She remembers arriving in February but it was freezing cold, and she wasn't too sure about the move if this was what summer weather was like. Joan married and stayed and has enjoyed her life and today still enjoys riding her bike, walking and tramping around Nelson with a local tramping club.

Joan is very happy at Abbeyfield, and enjoys the company of the other residents. I think we are lucky to have her in our family. People who enjoy living are a blessing to us all. I'll think a bit harder about my own flight, doing it instead of watching and dreaming about it!!!



Would Joan do it again? "Too right!" she replies

Editor's Note:

Way to go Joan, and thank you to Storyteller, Ann Armstrong, as well! I can't say I'd be brave enough to do the same as Joan, but, maybe, one day one day a very long way off I know there are more stories out there - would you mind sharing yours the Abbeyfield family? Send them in!

Regional Roundup of Abbeyfield Societies: March 2007

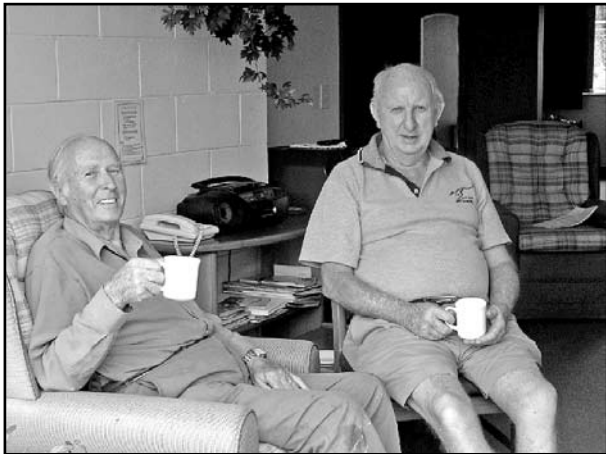
- Kaeo:** The word from Kaeo following the opening of tenders to build their five resident Abbeyfield house was “it’s do-able” but some negotiations will be required with the preferred tender submitter. A start on construction is likely to be delayed until around June. Exciting times are approaching for our friends in the North.
- Whangarei:** The house is full. The local Society hosted a meeting of the Abbeyfield Housing Company Directors late in January. The meeting was held in what will be the new office, formed from the former activities room and enjoyed morning tea with residents. Plans for the local Council to pipe the stream adjacent to the property are well advanced.
- Auckland:** The 10th resident should be in place by the time this newsletter is published. A new relieving housekeeping team has been recruited. Members of the local Society are busy settling into their new roles in operating an Abbeyfield house, reveling in the substantial (but welcome) change from the years of fundraising and project management.
- Hamilton:** The Waikato Society recently reported an over-full house with an 11th resident taking over the guest room. Fundraising is continuing with the aim to complete further enhancements to an already impressive house.
- Palmerston North:** The New Zealand Army apprentice training school has confirmed its interest in building an Abbeyfield in Palmerston North which should result in substantial savings. The local Society is currently working with the Army and architects to obtain the necessary consents and determine the total funding that might be required to complete the project. Local Chairperson Carolyn Hayes hopes the frustrations and delays will be just memories by the coming Easter and Abbeyfield’s next house will be under way by then.
- Masterton:** The Masterton Society unfortunately experienced three residents leaving late last year at almost the same time and those on the waiting list were not able to immediately take advantage of the vacant rooms. This has resulted in the house still having one vacancy.
- Nelson:** The Nelson Society is currently having the house at St Francis Way in Stoke re-painted and the spruce up is looking fantastic. Local volunteers held a working bee at the house Saturday, 10 March and a good turnout filled a large skip with rubbish as the gutters were cleaned, shrubbery trimmed and any weeds on the property “got the chop”.
The second project being planned by Nelson in Mata Close is on hold following rejection of an application by the local Council to the Housing Corporation for funding. A sub-committee is exploring all alternative options, so watch this space for progress.
- Motueka:** Local residents and volunteers were sad to hear that their long serving super-efficient housekeeper Lynley O’Connor is intending to retire soon. Lynley is one of Abbeyfield’s longest serving housekeepers having initially started a reliever in Nelson and she has personified the spirit of Abbeyfield service. We are all going to miss her.
- Golden Bay:** It’s amazing how the opening of a new house changes the focus of the local members and volunteers. After all those years of fundraising and campaigning the focus in Golden Bay is now on management, staff and recruiting residents (and, of course, basking in the warm glow of achievement.) Two suites remain to be filled, so if you fancy an idyllic retirement in Golden Bay, contact Chairperson Bev Jensen.
- Westport:** The local committee hosted Building and Design Committee convener Terry Foster and General Secretary Chris Armstrong recently. Their visit was to assist the committee in their consideration of alternative sites for a house, to give them guidance in preparing feasibility studies and grant applications and develop a plan to take the local project forward. Real progress is being made in Westport under the Chairmanship of Howard Havill and with the ‘drive’ of Elsie Connolly.
- Greymouth:** Terry and Chris traveled on from Westport to inspect a potential site in Palmerston Street, examine issues with the local committee, and brief local Council planning officers about Abbeyfield.
But who would be an Abbeyfield Building and Design convener? June and Peter Frankpitt delivered Terry to the Hokitika airport safely but flights were successively cancelled throughout the afternoon. A scramble for the few remaining motel beds saw our man in Hokitika eventually find the last room in town. Finally heading home to Auckland the next afternoon Terry was caught in a downpour at Christchurch airport with the plane embarking passengers a kilometre from the terminal! A wet, tired convener finally arrived home 24 hours late. And did I say that the office mucked up Terry’s original booking out of Auckland by putting him on a 7pm flight and telling him to be at the airport at 7am?
- Christchurch:** The Steering Committee is actively recruiting support and members to form a local Society, and looking forward to upcoming developments.
- Dunedin:** The Balmacewen house has accepted its first two residents. The contractor is completing retaining walls and driveways and landscaping has commenced. The local Society is recruiting additional residents and staff. They are also experiencing the change in direction and focus from planning, fundraising and building to the daily operating requirements.
- Wakatipu:** The new house at Frankton is nearing completion. Local Chairman Simon Hays advises that progress is good. The outside structure is essentially complete with plaster and painting finishing. The internal gib board walls are being stopped, and some inside painting will start this week. The site works are being tidied and a start on landscaping begins in about two weeks.

Penpal Corner

The Abbeyfield office recently received an e-mail from Abbeyfield Ryde, England, suggesting pen pals between New Zealand and England. There are some Abbeyfield Houses in New Zealand that currently have pen pals in other countries and we await more information from Abbeyfield Ryde.

What a great way of sharing experiences, and getting ideas from others about activities, lifestyles, etc!

What do you want to see and read in the newsletters? Ideas are always welcome, along with articles, snippets, jokes, opinions and the Editorial Red Pen will be used minimally – wherever possible!



Ray and Hugh – a couple of young volunteer gardeners at Abbeyfield Nelson who listened in to Joan's story (and got a cuppa for their trouble) but are determined to keep their feet "on the ground".

Abbeyfield International News

John Turnbull has retired as Abbeyfield International Chairman, replaced by Allan Snowie. We were fortunate to have John Turnbull in New Zealand to open our Hamilton and Takaka Houses late last year.

A reminder that memberships are due for renewal from 1 April. Reminders will be sent out from the Abbeyfield NZ office.



The Last Laugh ...

I was out walking with my 4-year-old daughter. She picked up something off the ground and started to put it in her mouth. I took the item away from her and I asked her not to do that. "Why?" my daughter asked.

"Because it's been on the ground, you don't know where it's been, it's dirty and probably has germs" I replied. At this point, my daughter looked at me with total admiration and asked, "Mummy, how do you know all this stuff?" "Uh," I was thinking quickly." All mums know this stuff. It's on the Mummy Test. You have to know it, or they don't let you be a Mummy."

We walked along in silence for 2 or 3 minutes, she was evidently pondering this new information. "OH ... I get it!" she beamed, "So if you don't pass the test you have to be the Daddy."

"Exactly" I replied with a big smile on my face.

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Closing deadline
for the next
newsletter is
15 July 2007