

Flotsam and Jetsam Number 94: November 2021

30th ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING 2021

Notice is hereby given that the 30th Annual General Meeting of the Friends of the Hocken Collections will be held online, via the Zoom application, at

5:30 pm - Wednesday, 17 November 2021

The Zoom link and instructions will be sent on the weekend of 6/7 November.

BUSINESS

1. Apologies
2. Confirmation of the Minutes of the 29th Annual Meeting, held 18 November 2020
3. Adoption of Annual Report and Statement of Accounts for the year ended 30 June 2021
4. Hocken Librarian's report
5. Election of Office-bearers for the ensuing year:
 - i. President
 - ii. Vice-President
 - iii. Honorary Secretary
 - iv. Honorary Treasurer
 - v. Committee of at least 5 members
6. Any other Annual General Meeting business.

Mark Hughes
Honorary Secretary

At the conclusion of the Annual Meeting business, circa. 6.15pm, Sharon Dell, Hocken Librarian (retiring) will speak on
"Chances, Choices and Changes"

2020-2021 OFFICE BEARERS

President: Rev. Donald Phillipps

Vice-President: vacant

Immediate Past President: Hon Marian Hobbs

Honorary Secretary: Mark Hughes

Honorary Treasurer: Carol Melville

Committee: Sara Barham, James Beattie, Professor Tom Brooking, Louise Croot, Laurence Fearnley, Lorraine Isaacs, Claire Matthewson

Attending Committee meetings: Hocken Librarian, Sharon Dell; Friends Committee/Library Liaison, Anna Blackman

Friends' Address: PO Box 6336, Dunedin North 9059.

Contacts:

Hon. Secretary, (03) 479 8206

Membership & Marketing: hockenfriends@gmail.com

TALK SERIES

The Covid-19 regulations continue to hamper our forward planning. For the third time we were forced to postpone the much anticipated talk by the FOHC Award recipient Jonathan West. He has a contract with OUP to publish his book on the southern lakes by 2024.

The Committee has now, with his agreement, set a new date – 16th March 2022 – with Dr West. He has offered this title: 'Winsome to Worldly: Lake Wanaka and its people'.

It is hoped that on 18 May the newly appointed Vice Chancellor of the University of Otago – Professor David Murdoch – will be our speaker.

DR HOCKEN'S OLDEST BOOK

In 2007 Stuart Strachan and Linda Tyler's *Kā Taoka Hakena: Treasures from the Hocken Collections* was published. A page was devoted to a book entitled *I Discorsi*, published in 1621. Now that its 400th anniversary has been reached it might be of interest to share a little more information about this volume.

The author **Pietro Andrea Gregorio Mattioli** (1501–c 1577) was a doctor and [naturalist](#) born in [Siena](#). He received his MD at the [University of Padua](#) in 1523, and subsequently practiced in Siena, [Rome](#), and elsewhere. He became personal physician of [Ferdinand II, Archduke of Austria](#) in [Prague](#).



A careful student of [botany](#), he described 100 new plants and coordinated the [medical botany](#) of his time in his *Discorsi* 'Commentaries' - on the *De Materia Medica* of [Dioscorides](#). The first

edition of Mattioli's work appeared in 1544 in [Venice, where the Hocken copy also comes from](#). The *Commentarii* were translated into [French](#) (Lyon, 1561), [Czech](#) (Prague, 1562), and [German](#) (Prague, 1563).

Mattioli added descriptions of some plants not in Dioscorides and not of any known medical use. This marked a transition from the study of plants as a field of medicine to being a study of interest in its own right. In addition, the [woodcuts](#) in his work were of a high standard, allowing recognition of the plant even when the text was obscure. A noteworthy inclusion was the tomato, the first record of the vegetable being grown and eaten in [Europe](#). As Dr Donald Kerr has noted, Dr Hocken himself always had an interest in botany and the medicinal use of plants.

Mattioli was a renowned botanist and physician, and this is attested to by his many published works. A dozen titles over his name were published between 1533 and the time of his

death. His methods included the frequent testing of the effects of poisonous plants on prisoners in order to popularize his works -- no doubt a common practice at the time. On the other hand he was the first to describe the problem of cat allergy.

His post in the Imperial Court as physician granted him immense influence. He did not tolerate either rivals or corrections. The naturalists and physicians who dared to disagree or correct him did so at their peril. Some of the most important men of the day were admonished, rebuked, or pursued by the Inquisition. This gave rise to the long-term domination of Mattioli's version of *De Materia Medica* throughout the continent, especially in northern Europe.

DR HOCKEN'S OLD FRIEND

Very shortly before the opening in 1910 of the original Hocken building and its collection, the good doctor's health had deteriorated to the point where he was unable to attend the ceremonies. He was, of course, devastated. He wrote to his friend of long-standing, George Fenwick, the proprietor of the *Otago Daily Times*, to share his sadness. They were both deeply committed men, and Hocken said of himself. 'I have always held that it is the bounden duty of every citizen to do something for his State, in the welfare of which his own happiness and prosperity is very largely found.'

Sir George Fenwick (1847-1929) Knight Bachelor, a relatively rare honour in New Zealand, awarded in this case by the Imperial Government for his achievements in raising money for the unemployed in England. As George Griffiths has noted, this was ironic 'for few New Zealanders ever did as much for their local community as did Fenwick.

Born in Sunderland he came to Dunedin with his family when he was nine. His first employment was as a printer and in 1868-69 he started his first newspaper venture at Lawrence. He returned to Dunedin in 1875 and within two years had gained control of the *Otago Daily Times*. For 40 years he led innumerable campaigns for reforms of all varieties and raised

large sums for local causes and institutions. He was an energetic man of broad interests, with a strong sense of history.



It was to this man that Dr Hocken addressed his final plea. He was concerned that full provision had yet to be made for the appointment of a 'proper librarian.' He described his ideal as an archivist, a person

of culture, with 'some predilection for historical research' – a man who would be more than a librarian in the ordinary sense of the word. Hocken hoped there might be a person who combined the possession of wealth, who was imbued with patriotism, who was public-spirited, who would take steps to establish a fund which would adequately maintain the usefulness and efficiency of his collection. Fenwick must have guessed who Hocken had in mind.

Not too long before, the matter of providing dedicated space for the Dr Hocken's collection had become an urgent priority for Fenwick. The latter was fearful that the delay in the redemption of the provision to provide suitable accommodation might lead to its loss. According to a lengthy tribute to Fenwick in the *ODT* in 1923, he had a sort of flash of inspiration one morning as he was walking down to his office from Mornington.

When he got there he advised his staff that he would be out for the day, and he immediately set about a personal canvass of his friends and acquaintances to collect £1000 (the equivalent of \$370,000 in today's money) by the end of the day. He had not quite achieved his goal by that time, so in the evening he took to his telephone and was eventually successful. He continued his canvassing over the next fortnight or so, and by that time had raised £3000.

Fenwick knew that the project would probably cost double that figure. He took the initiative in bringing together a small deputation of Dunedin

leaders to approach the Government. This they duly did, and had a very favourable reception from Sir Joseph Ward the Colonial Treasurer. He promised to take the matter to the Cabinet, who eventually agreed to provide the necessary subsidy based £ for £ on moneys raised by public subscription. So the Hocken Wing was built.

When, at the end of his life, Hocken shared his concern with Fenwick about the need for a 'proper librarian' he may well have been expressing a concern that there should be appointed a permanent librarian. W.H. Trimble, a Dunedin scholar and book-shop owner had been tasked with the responsibility of cataloguing the holdings of the Collection. He was given this responsibility on a short-term basis, and remained with the Library until late 1912 when his task was completed.

At that stage another approach was made to the University Council to recognise the need for continuity. The meeting assembled the facts so far as available income was concerned – the Memorial Committee had £1200, the interest being available. There was a City Council grant of £25 p.a.; the Hocken Trustees made the same amount available; the University Council made a grant of £26 p.a.; and there was Mrs Hocken's donation of £100 per year for five years. All this made it possible for the continuing appointment of Mr Trimble, while leaving enough for the purchase of books to broaden the Collection. Piecemeal maybe, but a step towards the recognition of the place of the Collection in New Zealand historiography that Hocken believed it deserved.

When Trimble's *'Catalogue of the Hocken Library Dunedin'* was published it could be said that it established the authority of the Collection. But in another sense it was George Fenwick who had the last word – at least for the time being. In 1914 the Government Printer produced Hocken's *The early history of New Zealand; being a series of lectures delivered before the Otago Institute; also a lecturette on the Maoris of the South Island*. By way of introduction Fenwick wrote a memoir of the life of T.M. Hocken – there was none better qualified to do so.

The two men had become acquainted with each other soon after Fenwick returned to Dunedin in 1875, and they remained firm friends, sharing similar interest and goals for the rest of their lives. Fenwick, as much as anyone, helped ensure that Hocken's hopes for his Collection were realised.

FOHC AWARD

Your Committee has set a goal to make another research award in 2023. Tenure will be from January of that year. It will need to call on its existing investments to do this, but a campaign is being planned to raise by way of donations at least \$5,000 of the \$10,000 needed.

REVIEW OF THE HOCKEN COLLECTIONS

The major review of the Hocken Collections has been the centre of attention for some time, as members can imagine. Interested parties including the Friends were invited to make submissions. Louise Croot undertook the task of finalising the formal submission, and members of the Committee participated in this process. Our emphasis was on the national importance of the Collection, on the historic nature of the Trust as a responsibility of the University of Otago, and on the role the Collections play in the living history of Dunedin and the Otago region.

The Review panel received many submissions, undertook many interviews, and appreciated the opportunity to make a tour of the Hocken. The panel provided a confidential verbal report back to the staff, and the panel's written report with its recommendations is currently in preparation.

NEWS FROM ANZAC AVENUE

- On Monday September 13th the Hocken reopened at Alert Level 2. There was no question this time as to whether the public were permitted on site – it was acknowledged they should be welcomed back alongside the University community.
- The next exhibition, ***Kaleidoscope World: Forty Years of Flying Nun***, is due to open on Friday December 3rd. However, the planned

official opening can take place only if we are back down to Alert Level 1.

- The Curator of Maps, Karen Craw, retired on October 8th. It is hoped to hold a proper farewell function once the Collections are back at Alert Level 1.
- Vacancies within the Hocken now await the outcome of the Review recommendations. This, of course, places extra pressure on the Hocken staff.
- Professor David Murdoch, newly appointed Vice-Chancellor, and his wife and several other family members, were recently given a Saturday tour through the Hocken by the Librarian.
- The University Library has recognised the need to undertake a significant physical reshuffle of large sections of the Publications Collection in order to maximise shelf space and restore logical sequencing of collections once more. A team of student assistants have been hired for 5 weeks to undertake this necessary project.
- And last, but not least, Sharon Dell, the Hocken Librarian, notes that she has less than two months remaining until her retirement.

WHAT WAS NEWS A CENTURY AGO

Some of what was recorded about Sir George Fenwick in the preceding pages came from an article in the *ODT* published exactly 100 years ago. At least two full columns were devoted to an account of this man's contribution to Dunedin and New Zealand life. We seem to do that only in obituaries these days – the more's the pity.

FOHC MEMBERSHIP

Subscriptions: Individual \$25 per annum; Joint \$30 per annum; Life Member \$250; Joint Life Member \$300

Friends are reminded that subscriptions are due, and to note that cheques can no longer be accepted. Online payment: Westpac 03 0903 0393175 000 – "Subscriptions" in Particulars field, surname/initials in Code/Reference fields.

Prepared by Donald Phillipps for the Friends of the Hocken Collections, P.O. Box 6336, Dunedin North 9059.