



AUCKLAND MEDICAL HISTORY SOCIETY

NEWSLETTER DECEMBER 2021

2021 In retrospect

Once again, our programme in 2021 has been disrupted by the Covid 19 pandemic. Three of our five scheduled meetings (on 4 March, 2 September and 4 November) had to be cancelled. Professor Ian Reid's much anticipated lecture on the history of bisphosphonates has now been cancelled twice, but Ian has kindly promised to give his lecture in 2022. We did manage to hold two very successful meetings. On 6 May we had two outstanding lectures: a fascinating talk on osteo-archaeology from Dr Shirley Wallace and an excellent lecture from Professor Nikki Turner on the history of rubella vaccination. Nikki has had a leading role in the management of the Covid 19 vaccination programme. The second meeting on 1 July featured lectures from our Past President and outstanding lecturer, John Collins, on Sir James Simpson and one from your current President on Marshall MacDonald, a physician/neurologist/psychiatrist in Dunedin in the early part of the 20th Century. These two meetings were preceded by *Special Interest Tours* of the Ernest and Marion Davis Library organised by Judy Murphy helped by Melanie Mirfin. These small group tours looking at some of the lesser-known objects were informative, well attended and popular. We are planning to hold these events prior to each lecture in the future.

In 2021 we had decided to change the format of our programme so that we held alternate monthly meetings. The Executive decided to discontinue the dinners preceding the lectures. The reason for stopping the dinners was in part the uncertainty surrounding the Covid19 pandemic, but also the time and effort involved in organising the dinners. While the dinners were enjoyable social occasions, the Executive believe the Society should focus more on the history of medicine. Some prospective new members, especially younger people, felt excluded by the atmosphere of the dinners and were discouraged from joining the Society. While our two meetings were well attended again this year, the involvement of new members and supporters, especially young people and academic historians, is still a major challenge facing the AMHS.

Annual General Meeting.

It was not possible to hold an AGM this year when our meeting on 4 November was cancelled. It was not practical to convert this to a Zoom meeting and the executive committee has unanimously agreed to defer the AGM until the end of 2022.

Executive Committee 2021.

John and Jenny Collins retired from the Executive at its last meeting. Both have given invaluable service to the AMHS during a time when there have been several challenges and important changes in the function of the AMHS. John Collins has served on the Executive for six years, including four years as our President and as Immediate Past-President for one year. The Society will miss his leadership and his superb chairing of our meetings. It should be remembered that in addition to his term of office as the President of the AMHS, John has been working extremely hard in successfully completing his thesis for a Ph.D. in history. The AMHS congratulates him on this achievement. Jenny Collins' contribution to the AMHS has been no less important. She has been our Secretary for the last four years. Her management of the Society's affairs has been discharged with great efficiency and unfailing courtesy and cheerfulness. John and Jenny Collins' presence on the Executive will be badly missed. We wish them well in their retirement from the Executive, but I am confident they will have more to contribute to the Society in the future.

Neil Pollock has bravely volunteered to take on the secretarial duties in 2022. Peter Holst has continued as our long-serving popular and efficient Treasurer. Peter has been Treasurer for 10 years. He has agreed to continue for another year, but he is keen to step aside if a replacement can be found.

I am also grateful to the other members of the Executive Committee (Pat Clarkson, Tom Miller, Judy Murphy, Peter Stone and Helen Taber) for their contributions to the Society this year.

Programme 2022

On account of the likelihood that there will be Covid19 restrictions continuing into 2022, it has been decided to defer the start of the programme for 2022 until it is clearer when we can hold meetings in the Ernest and Marion Davis Library. At the moment, the plan is to start in May. Peter Stone will continue as our programme organizer and he is arranging a programme for 2022. If you would like to contribute to the programme in the future, or if you know of someone who would be a suitable speaker, please let Peter know via secretary@amhs.co.nz

Annual Subscription

Because of the Covid 19 restrictions, the AMHS was unable to offer members value for their subscriptions during 2021. Similar problems are likely next year. Therefore, the Executive has decided that we will forego an annual subscription for 2022. In lieu of an annual subscription, we encourage **Friends** and supporters of the AMHS to make donations to the Society. (See www.amhs.co.nz / Donations for details) Donations will also be invited at the conclusion of each of our meetings.

2021 AMHS Essay Prize winner

I am delighted to announce the winner is Mia Rutledge, top student in History 367: Health, Medicine and Society. Mia's outstanding essay was described by the marker of the essay as a *beautifully written, thoughtful response incorporating multiple case studies, primary source evidence, and analysis of the historiography on the subject to the question posed: "Discuss David Arnold's claim in his book *Colonizing the Body: State Medicine and Epidemic Disease in Nineteenth-Century India* (1993) that Western medicine became a critical battleground between the colonised and colonisers."* Congratulations Mia.

Archives

Pat Clarkson has continued her work as our archivist in trying circumstances. During the lockdown she was unable to visit the Ernest and Marion Davis Library. She has compiled a list of talks given to the Society. This list can be found on our website under *publications, Auckland Medical History Society 50 years*. There is a collection of manuscripts related to the talks dating from the 1980s. Many of these are now digitised and available by request via the Secretary secretary@amhs.co.nz (or Pat Clarkson via the Ernest and Marion Davis Library EMDavisLib@adhb.govt.nz)

Awake All Hours

One of the new books received at the Ernest and Marion Davis Library and recommended by Pat Clarkson is *Awake at All Hours*. This is the story of the New Zealand junior doctors' rebellion of 1985. It is an interesting and very readable, well-written account of events by anaesthetist Jeremy Cooper, who was intimately involved in events, and Selwyn Parker. Copies are available from Amazon.com.

Best wishes for 2022. I hope that next year will be a happier one for the AMHS.

Neil Anderson

President
Auckland Medical History Society