

# **Annual Report of the National President to 30 Sept 2002.**

## **The Theosophical Society in New Zealand (Inc.) National President's Report**

### **Convention 2002**

This was held in Palmerston North at Fergusson House of Massey University. We were honoured to have Diane Kynaston, the former General Secretary of the Australian Section as our guest speaker. Diane's presentations were well received by those attending.

Our own local speakers also rose to the occasion by presenting some very inspiring workshops, discussions and talks which were well prepared. Members of the Palmerston North Lodge did a great job organizing and preparing the venue and generally seeing that all were catered for. The members who attended the convention enjoyed to opportunity to help out in the kitchen in the preparation of meals as well as cleaning up afterwards. Much of the valuable interaction seemed to happen there.

### **"Theosophy in New Zealand"**

Hugh Dixon has done a great job as the Editor of our quarterly magazine, which is one of the Sections main forms of keeping members in touch with the current happenings within our Section. We have increased the size of the Magazine (from the September issue) so that we could incorporate the old HQ newsletter into the magazine with a section written by the National President and a page devoted to upcoming events.

### **School of Theosophy**

This year we began a new educational initiative with a focus on giving interested members an opportunity to tune some of their skills in the presentation of theosophy. Over Queens Birthday weekend we held a session that was devoted to aspects of presenting talks which includes discussion around what we are trying to achieve when presenting theosophy. This weekends sessions were facilitated by Hazel Menehira, Bryan Pollock, Sandy Albiston and Gavin Laurie. Some 22 students took part in the weekend.

### **Video Library and Cassette Centre**

This is receiving some use during the year. Our main activity has centred around looking at options of digitizing this material to make it more easily available to members and the public. We currently have some proposals before us and are looking for some voluntary contribution to make it all possible.

### **Springbrook Sponsorship**

The Australian section once more offered to sponsor a NZ student to attend their school during April of this year. The NZ Section assisted Sandy Albiston with some travel sponsorship to attend the school. Sandy brought back to NZ some excellent new skills and ideas which she shared with us over Queens Birthday weekend.

### **Overseas Lecturers**

After our Convention in January Diane Kynaston toured some of our branches and study centres. We also had Anthony Pisano, an Australian member from the Theosophy and Science group of Sydney tour some of our branches discussing with members and the public Genetic Engineering and its relationship to the holistic world view. Anthony was well received by NZ'ers and in 7 days spoke at 8 branches, gave a talk to the Green Party in Wellington as well as interviews for Radio Active and the National Programme.

### **National Lecturers**

We have been fortunate to have a number of our members willing to lecture at various branches and study groups around the country. Our National President visited all branches and was keen to meet as many members as possible. The various lecturers travelled to areas of the country where they gave talks, held discussions or seminars open to the public and members, with travelling and advertising expenses being subsidized by the Headquarters. This work has become important to help in the work of the branches around New Zealand.

### **Study Groups**

Headquarters are now serving six study groups: - Gore, Takaka, Rotorua, Dannevirke, Gisborne and Christchurch with interest in forming a new group coming from a new member in Wanaka.

These groups are making use of visiting speakers, literature, the video library, and the postal library. They provide a valuable link to the Society for people living in outlying areas.

### **Donations to Libraries**

Eight new books have been sent to all branches and study centres during the year in an effort to ensure that updated books are available to members and friends. Branches can also purchase books directly from

Akasha Books at very good discounts.

### **Headquarters Library**

Headquarters members, and members in general, continue to make good use of our local library facilities. We lent out 244 books during the year.

### **Archives and Reference Library**

The archives room has had a good cleanout this year and is now back to an orderly state with additions being catalogued. We have a small group who are looking more seriously into what we need to do to protect this valuable asset as well as define what should be kept in the reference library. The archives contain many valuable papers, original audio tapes and slides which need much better protection, as well as cataloguing.

### **Headquarters Meetings**

We have continued to hold a simple lunch and meeting on the first Thursday of every month in HPB Lodge. Thanks must go to the National Vice-President and all the speakers who agreed to present something at these gatherings.

### **Property at Orewa**

Our thanks are due to Garth Williscroft for his work as caretaker of Orewa since 1989. We now have appointed Stuart Brydon as Maintenance Overseer and JoyeMichelle Mitchell as the Tenancy Overseer.

### **Strategic Planning**

This year the Executive Committee have taken the draft working papers from the work of the previous year and focused mainly on the Governance Plan of the National Society. This is looking at how we, as a national organization, operate and make decisions. The final draft of this work will be presented to the convention for their discussion and, if all proves well, will be adopted

### **Email**

More and more of our correspondence is now accomplished through email. All the Executive Committee are on email which has made communication much easier this year. It allows us to keep branches much more informed as events take place.

The Theos-NZ discussion list (often also called Live-Wires) has continued to see some active discussion this year for members who enjoy discussing theosophy in this way.

### **Headquarters Members**

We have put into place several new schemes to keep in touch with our headquarters membership. We are now sending them a regular newsletter and have set up some email lists to keep them informed of events happening, general announcements, and to provide them a space where they are able to discuss theosophical ideas amongst themselves.

### **Membership Details**

Total Number of new membership:	127
Total Number of outgoing members	191

A decrease of 47 members giving us a total of 1036 members.

### **Died**

Joyce Betson -HPB, Bessie Basler - Orewa, Howard Egarr - Orewa, Len Hersey – Whangarei, Jack Patterson – HPB, Jannis Hannah – HPB, Leslie Londesbrough – HQ, Mavis Hardy – HPB, Jean Cole-Baker – HQ, Elsie Nicholls – Wellington, Nigel Browning – Palmerston North, Bernard Walsh – Napier, Allan Sylvester – New Plymouth, Anthony Clayton – Nelson, Marcia Mackie – Wellington, Joy McCaskey – Wellington, Norman Johnson – Palmerston North

### **Acknowledgments**

It is the dedicated work of many people that collectively make up the power that energizes our Society. To thank them all individually would be an impossible task as each of our branches includes workers, both the obvious ones and the ones that work quietly away behind the scenes without anyone being aware of them.

I do wish to express my appreciation of the help given by our National Vice President, Vivienne Berry-Evans who has put so much effort and time into organizing this years lecture programme and assisting so ably in the strategic process the Executive have undertaken.

Our Treasurer Graham Eden who comes into the office for at least two days a week to see to the societies finances and for his valuable help and advice in the maintenance of the societies assets and investments.

To Marilyn Hannah who is ever in the office dealing with the day to day issues that arise and for making sure that everything happens so smoothly. Without the valuable work done by Marilyn the office would not be able to run so efficiently. It is a pleasure to work along side her.

John Vorstermans  
National President