



Annual Report

For the year ended 31 March 2015

Introduction

1. The year 1 April 2014 to 31 March 2015 was another full and successful year for the Randell Cottage Writers Trust. In keeping with the Trust's aims of welcoming one French and one New Zealand writer-in-residence to the Randell Cottage in Thorndon each calendar year, three writers (two French and one New Zealand) occupied the Cottage during the period covered by this report.

2. Now in its thirteenth year since its establishment in 2002, the Randell Cottage Writers Trust is pleased to report that its profile and reputation remain high; twenty six writers have benefitted from the residency; and the number of associated publications and literary awards has continued to grow impressively. The Randell Cottage Writers Residence attracts a pleasing number of applications from writers in both New Zealand and France.

3. Background on the Randell Cottage Writers Trust and a list of current Trustees is attached.

Resident writers 2014-2015

4. In the first half of 2014 the French writer-in-residence was Than-Van Tran-Nhut; from July to December 2014 New Zealand writer, Tina Makereti, was the Creative New Zealand Randell Cottage fellow; and French writer, David Fauquemberg, was the Randell Cottage resident from January to June 2015.



Than-Van Tran-Nhut



Tina Makereti



David Fauquemberg

5. Reports by Thanh-Van Tran-Nhut and Tina Makereti are attached. These reflect the value both writers feel they gained from their time spent in the Randell Cottage and their appreciation of the opportunities offered by the residence for focusing on their writing projects. Tran-Nhut's appreciation of the proximity to research institutions in Wellington and her delight in the stimulating environment of the capital were reported in our Annual Report for 2013-14. She returned to France in June 2014 and has since completed work on the novel that she began while at the Randell Cottage. She, and we, look forward to its publication soon.

6. Tina Makereti also made good use of the research facilities at the nearby National and Turnbull Libraries. She was pleased at the headway she was able to make in researching and shaping her new novel during her time at the Randell Cottage. Since then she has continued this work which involves further historical research. While at the Randell Cottage Tina Makereti also completed an essay for the 2014 *Landfall* 2014 Essay Competition which was published in *Landfall* of May 2015. She has also noted that her husband, Lawrence Patchett, was able to take advantage of the family's time at the Cottage to complete his own novel for which he had a Creative New Zealand grant.

7. In the first half of 2015 French novelist, David Fauquemberg, travelled widely in New Zealand from his Randell Cottage base, meeting a wide range of people, collecting material and seeking inspiration for a work of fiction that will draw on his experience in this part of the world. Fauquemberg's previous novels have sprung from his intensive involvement in different countries and cultural environments.

8. All three writers have established reputations and previous publications to their names. In each case, they were selected from strong fields of candidates which attest to the continuing interest and popularity of the Randell Cottage writers' fellowship. The Randell Cottage Writers Trust is delighted with the high calibre of writers applying for the residence. Such was the quality of the applications for the 2015 Creative New Zealand Randell Cottage New Zealand fellowship, that in November 2014 a selection panel convened by Vincent O'Sullivan and comprising Dame Fiona Kidman, Sarah Dennis, Jill Rawnsley and Maggie Rainey-Smith, agreed to split the 2015 residency between two highly-regarded New Zealand writers, Witi Ihimaera and Owen Marshall. The Trust is proud to welcome these two celebrated writers to the Randell Cottage.

Events and Public Outreach

9. As agreed, each writer participated in public readings, interviews or seminars to promote interest among the wider community in their writing and in literature generally. These events were open to the public, free of charge (with koha welcomed). Interest has been high and audiences enthusiastic.

10. In the case of the French writers, the Embassy of France in Wellington organised a programme of public lectures and outreach in Wellington and in other centres, primarily under the auspices of the Alliance française. Both Tran-Nhut and Fauquemberg were interviewed by Radio New Zealand's Concert Programme; the *Dominion Post* carried an interview with Tran-Nhut; both gave very well-attended speaking engagements at the National Library; David Fauquemberg spoke to creative writing students at Victoria University of Wellington and was a featured writer at Auckland City Gallery's French Weekend 2015. Tran-Nhut kept a lively blog about her time in New Zealand and her tribute to Wellington, *Two Seasons and Countless Treasures*, was published in an edited form in "Capital" magazine of October 2014. A second essay, set in an imaginative space between 1850s and modern-day Wellington, was published in the *New Zealand Journal of French*

Studies (Volume 35, Number 2, 2014), as part of a set of three essays by former French Randell residents

11. During her time at the Randell Cottage, Tina Makereti gave a seminar for students at Victoria University's International Institute of Modern Letters. She took part in a national essay-writing colloquium and joined forces with Witi Ihimaera for a public reading of their work at Millwood Gallery in Thorndon. As the 2014 recipient of the Maori Book Awards prize for fiction for her novel *Where the Rekohu Bone Sings*, Tina Makereti is regularly invited to take part in speaking engagements.

12. The annual Randell Cottage Open Day was held on 28 September 2014 to coincide with the Wellington City Council's Spring Festival. Visitors were treated to a fascinating historical talk by Beverley Randell Price about the early days in the historic Randell Cottage. Despite miserable weather, the numbers visiting the Randell Cottage were higher than ever before. The Trust was honoured by the presence of Mayor Celia Wade-Brown and representatives of our key partners who attended a stakeholders' celebration held on the same day.

Growing reputation

13. Feedback to the Board and the Friends of the Randell Cottage attests to the growing profile of the Trust and appreciation of its role in offering a residence for writers in a range of fields. Increasingly, the Randell Cottage Writers Residence is seen as an established part of the capital's cultural landscape and its network of creative residencies. The Trust is committed to supporting literary excellence and, in doing so, to strengthening its collaboration with Wellington institutions, creative residencies and the City Council.

14. Throughout the year, the Randell Cottage Writers Trust continued to enjoy close links with the Embassy of France in Wellington. The Embassy coordinates the selection of the French writer, oversees his/her programme, and strongly supports the Trust and its activities in a number of practical ways. The Embassy sees the Randell Cottage as a key element in its cultural activities in New Zealand and as an excellent example of France/New Zealand cultural collaboration.

15. Besides the activities of the current writers-in-residence, literary successes by former residents continue to augment the status of the Creative New Zealand Randell Cottage

Writers Residence. Tina Makereti's success in the Maori Book Awards deserves special mention. In October 2014 a series of public events and interviews were organised around the return to Wellington of award-winning New Zealand writer, Kirsty Gunn, Randell Cottage resident in 2009. In April 2015, the first-ever Randell Cottage writer, Peter Walker, launched his latest novel *Some Here Among Us* at Unity Books with Trustee Fiona Kidman in the chair.

16. Randell Cottage events are publicised on the Trust's website (www.randellcottage.co.nz) and Facebook page (<https://www.facebook.com/RandellCottage>) both actively maintained by the Friends of the Randell Cottage Association. These contain a wealth of information about the writers (past and present) while updates and newsletters keep the public informed about upcoming events, Trust and Friends news including literary successes of some of our Trustees and Friends members.

Friends of the Randell Cottage Association

17. Under their President, Sian Robyns, and the Executive Committee, the Friends Association has continued to play an active role in support of the Trust and the writers. Sadly, the tragic death in October 2014 of their lovely young Treasurer, Nicole Sharp, cast a shadow over the Friends and their operations.

18. During the year the Friends successfully reached their fundraising target to help re-roof the Cottage. They were responsible for organising Open Day at the Cottage and played a lead role in organising and supporting outreach events involving the Randell Cottage writers. A membership drive has lifted membership numbers to 85 and this, along with donations, has had a consequent healthy effect on Friends' finances. The Friends have helped welcome writers to the Cottage, assisted with development and maintenance of the garden at 14 St Mary Street, and managed the Trust's website and publicity which underpin the Trust's outreach and cultural interaction. As is the case each year, in 2014 the Friends provided invaluable support to the Board's selection panel for the Creative New Zealand Randell Cottage New Zealand resident writer.

Finance and Maintenance

19. The Trust gratefully acknowledges its sponsors without whose support it could not continue to operate. Financial support from **Creative New Zealand** pays the stipend for the

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New Zealand writer. The **France/New Zealand Friendship Fund** supports the French writer, including a return airfare between New Zealand and France. A grant from the **Wellington City Council** enables the Trust to meet a large part of its operating and maintenance costs.

20. The Trust continues to face tight financial constraints. The audited annual Statement of Financial Performance for 2014-15 is attached. As can be seen, at the end of the Financial Year expenditure was \$4,279 above budget. New insurance requirements meant a significant increase in the house insurance premium on the property in 2015. Rates, maintenance, cleaning and gardening costs have been carefully managed. The Board is grateful to the generosity of individual donors who have enabled it to meet certain unexpected expenses. The Trust is currently considering a quote for the work on the Cottage roof. The Trust and Friends are committed to keeping the Randell Cottage in sound order and are currently pursuing fundraising opportunities. The Board hopes its sponsors will continue to look favourably on the Trust's activities and achievements.

21. All Trustees are volunteers from a variety of backgrounds. Their names are attached at Annex. The Board has managed the operations of the Randell Cottage carefully and all maintenance requirements or replacement of essential items have been attended to promptly. The paths are cleaned and the guttering checked twice-yearly. A gardener has been engaged for four hours a month and his work is supplemented by voluntary working bees carried out by Trustees and Friends which help keep the garden at the Cottage in good order as befits the Cottage's heritage status. The native section planted in 2013 is developing very well.

22. The three writers-in-residence during the period covered by this report have all been happy in the Randell Cottage and appreciative of the opportunities it has offered. They have found it a comfortable, secure, well-located and inspirational haven, allowing them freedom to focus on their writing projects. The Trust is delighted to have been able to support their contributions to French and New Zealand literature.

**Randell Cottage Writers Trust, P O Box 25204, Featherston Street, Wellington 6146,
New Zealand**

SARAH DENNIS

Chair

Randell Cottage Writers Trust

29 July 2015

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**The Randell Cottage is supported by Creative New Zealand, the New Zealand-France Friendship Fund,
the French Embassy and the Wellington City Council.**

Randell Cottage Writers Trust: Background

The Randell Cottage Writers' Trust, established in 2002, was documented by way of a Deed dated 19 September 2001 and updated on 30 June 2014. Benefitting from the generous gift of Hugh, Beverley and Susan Price, the Trust owns a fully-restored and equipped historic cottage in St Mary Street, Thorndon, Wellington, which is registered as a Category II Historic Building with Heritage New Zealand.

The purpose of the Trust is to support literary excellence and exchanges between France and New Zealand. The trust offers a six-month residency in the Randell Cottage to one French writer and one New Zealand writer each calendar year. Since 2002, the Cottage has hosted 26 writers of literary significance in both countries.

The Trust receives financial support from Creative New Zealand through a three-year contract grant under *Toi Uru Kahikatea*; from the French Government through the France-New Zealand Friendship Fund and the French Embassy; and from the Wellington City Council under a three-year Funding Contract. Creative New Zealand funds the stipend of the New Zealand writer; the France-NZ Friendship Fund meets the travel and living costs of the French writer; and WCC funding goes towards operational costs such as rates, insurance and maintenance of the Randell Cottage. The Trust is deeply appreciative of this support without which it would be unable to fulfil its objectives.

The Trust is registered with the Inland Revenue Department and is exempt from taxation and gift duty. It qualifies for the personal taxation rebate for any donations over \$5.00. GST is paid on income and the Trust is registered for GST purposes. It is registered with the Charities Commission.

Co-Patrons of the Trust are the Governor General, Lt GenThe Rt Hon Sir Jerry Mataparae, and the Ambassador of France to New Zealand, Her Excellency Florence Jeanblanc-Risler.

Randell Cottage Writers Trust, P O Box 25204, Featherston Street, Wellington 6146,
New Zealand

Board of Trustees 2015

- Associate Professor Jean Anderson
- Sarah Dennis (Chair)
- Bridget Hargreaves
- Dame Fiona Kidman, DNZM, OBE
- Emeritus Professor Vincent O'Sullivan, DCNZM
- Beverley Price, MNZM
- Susan Price
- Sian Robyns
- Gordon Stewart
- Jo Thorpe
- Anita Woods
- Secretary/Treasurer: Jenny Ang.

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