



Randell Cottage Writers Trust

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Randell Cottage Writers Trust: Annual Report 1 January to 31 December 2020

Introduction

This Report covers the period 1 January to 31 December 2020, the first year of the Trust's new calendar Financial Year. Because of the change of reporting year, there was no Annual Report done in 2019.

During this period, the Randell Cottage Writers Trust (RCWT) hosted two writers-in-residence at the Randell Cottage in Thorndon, Wellington. They were:

French writer and photographer, **Amaury da Cunha**, from January to June 2020.

New Zealand novelist, **Michalia Arathimos**, recipient of the 2020 Creative New Zealand Randell Cottage fellowship, from July to December 2020.

Both writers were happy to have the opportunity the residency offered them to advance their respective writing projects. They both found the Cottage comfortable, congenial, and a good place to write. They enjoyed being in Thorndon, close to the Botanic Garden and appreciated the proximity to the city centre and to Wellington research institutions such as the National Library, National Archives, interim central library, and Victoria University of Wellington.

Unfortunately, part of Amaury da Cunha's time in Wellington coincided with New Zealand's first Covid-19 lockdown which restricted his options for travel and public outreach. Nevertheless, he made the most of the opportunities that did arise to research his book on Minnie Dean and to undertake some travel to Southland. Despite the restrictions, he managed to take part in two public events.

Michalia Arathimos, for her part, made good progress on her novel *Cartographia* and undertook a full programme of public activities.

2020 Writers

Amaury da Cunha

French Randell Cottage writer/photographer, Amaury da Cunha, arrived in Wellington on 20 January 2020 for a five month stay. One of his first activities was to participate in the French Embassy's *Night of Ideas* at Te Papa on 31 January. In mid-February he took part in a *café littéraire*, organised by the French Programme at Victoria University.

His project for the residency was to write a non-fiction book about Minnie Dean, the notorious Southland "baby farmer" in the latter part of the 19th century. The Covid-19 lockdown seriously curtailed his ability to travel and research his topic and impacted on the number of outreach activities the Trust was able to organise with him. Amaury da Cunha was, however, able to carry out a good deal of research and draft several chapters of his book during lockdown, meeting his French publisher's demanding deadlines.



When lockdown levels eased, he participated in a very well-attended talk at Vic Books Pipitea organised by the Friends of Turnbull Library and chaired by publisher Mary McCallum of *Makaro Press* with writer Karen Zelas, the author of a verse biography of Minnie Dean.

Amaury da Cunha made the most of the lifting of Covid restrictions in May to travel to Southland to visit sites linked to Minnie Dean's life. He engaged in an evening of conversation on his book topic at the Alliance Française Wellington moderated by the Cultural Counsellor of the French Embassy, Stéphane Ré, and he spoke to a similar group at the Alliance Française Auckland before he departed for Paris on 14 June. We expect to receive his report on the residency soon.

Michalia Arathimos



Michalia Arathimos took up her residency after spending some years in Melbourne. She was thrilled to be able to live at Randell Cottage with her family and they loved the experience of being in a small, historic cottage. Michalia Arathimos's family links are to Wellington's Greek community and this inspires her reflections on themes of migration, identity, returning and belonging that she chose to explore in her novel *Cartographia*. She completed a significant part of a first draft during her stay at the Cottage. In her report on the residency (attached), Michalia Arathimos makes clear that she relished the opportunity to focus fully on her writing and to hone her craft. She enjoyed extending her connections among Wellington's community of writers where she found support, inspiration and ideas for future collaboration.

Besides maintaining an intensive writing schedule, Michalia Arathimos participated in the *Verb Wellington* festival; took part in Arohata Prison's Visiting Writer Programme; read from and spoke about her work on *Cartographia* to an enthusiastic audience at the National Library; gave an interview on RNZ National's *Standing Room Only*, and shared insights into her writing at the AGM of the Friends of Randell Cottage. She took part in the Randell Cottage Open Day in November 2020 where she joined other writers for readings in the garden (see below).

Writers Selected for 2021

In August 2020, a panel convened by the Embassy of France chose **Caroline Laurent** as the 2021 French Randell Cottage writer.

Born in 1988 and of French-Mauritian origin, Caroline Laurent grew up between French Polynesia, Bordeaux, Italy and Paris, where she currently resides. Her areas of interest include contemporary literature and non-fiction. In her second novel, *The Shores of Anger* (Prix Maison de la Presse 2020) she pursues her exploration of the colonial world and the lives of prominent women who have shaped history.



Photo © Philippe Matsas

Unfortunately, 2021 Covid-19 border restrictions prevented Caroline from taking up her residency as planned. The Trust hopes she will be able to do so in 2022.



Lynn Davidson: In November 2020, a selection panel chaired by Trustee Stephen Stratford, selected NZ poet and novelist, Lynn Davidson, as the 2021 Creative NZ/Randell Cottage Writing Fellow. Lynn Davidson's most recent publication was the poetry collection *Islander*. She had won the Poetry New Zealand's 2020 Poetry Award and holds a PhD in Creative Writing from Massey University.

Lynn Davidson said she was delighted to be the

2021 Randell Cottage resident and was looking forward to living and working in Randell Cottage. *It feels remarkable to be supported in this way, at this moment, as I write about my family's migrations between Scotland and New Zealand, and about my own migrations between Scotland and New Zealand. My particular interest is in uncovering the story of my great aunt, Vida, which I began in my*

flat in the eerie quiet of an empty Edinburgh City and will continue to explore in the supportive quiet of the Randell Cottage.

News of Former Randell Writers

We were delighted to see the publication in France in January 2020 of *HIC*, the new novel by Amélie Lucas-Gary, the ground work for which she began during her stay at Randell Cottage in 2018

Equally, we welcomed the progress towards publication of Amaury da Cunha's book *Baby Farmer* scheduled for February 2021 by Editions Plein Jour in Paris.

There was good news too for Paddy Richardson whose novel *The Green of the Spring*, on which she was working while at Randell Cottage in 2019, was also due for publication in 2021. A sequel to Paddy Richardson's earlier novel, *Through the Lonesome Dark*, the new work charts the fortunes of Otto Bader, interned as an "enemy alien" on Somes Island in Wellington Harbour during the First World War.

Also in 2020, Beverley Randell's beautiful book, *Heart of Flame: Katherine Mansfield's Flowers and Trees*, with illustrations by Jenni Shoesmith, was published by Steele Roberts Aotearoa Ltd.

Two Randell Cottage French writers, Pierre Furlan (2004) and Trinh-Van Trinh-Nhut (2014) were invited to join a group of former Katherine Mansfield Menton Fellows in planned celebrations of the fiftieth anniversary of the KMM Fellowship in Menton, France in September 2020. Sadly, Covid-19 restrictions meant that these events had to be cancelled.

Open Day

On 1 November, as part of Wellington Heritage Week, the Randell Cottage Writers Trust and Friends Association joined forces with two other Thorndon creative residencies – Lilburn House and the Rita Angus Cottage – to organise linked public Open Days at the respective venues. This proved to be a very successful formula as the three trusts are physically close enough for people to take part in a *Historic Thorndon Walking Tour* guided by a hand-drawn map by conservation architect, Chris Cochran. The combination of literature, music, gardens and lovely weather drew good numbers to visit all three heritage properties. The Randell Cottage offered afternoon tea and a series of readings in the garden by Michalia Arathimos, Ruby Solly and Linda Burgess.

Feedback was very positive. An estimated 150 people enjoyed the opportunity to visit the heritage cottage and learn about its history.



Randell Cottage Profile

The number and quality of applications received from France and NZ in 2020 was testament to the continuing high level of interest from writers in both countries.

With the aim of encouraging applications from NZ's diverse communities and younger writers, the Trust explored new approaches and platforms to publicise its call for applications for the residency, making it clear that it welcomed interest from Maori and Pasifika writers and from writers who reflect NZ's cultural diversity and identity. The 15 applications received represented a pleasing diversity of gender, community and age.

Trustee Christine Hurley led a significant website upgrade project in 2020. Funded by a "transitional grant" from Creative NZ, the upgrade aimed to achieve a more interactive, inclusive and informative website. It included the commissioning of a professional short film *Saving Randell Cottage* which documents the history and restoration of Randell Cottage in a lively interview with William Randell's descendants, Beverley Randell Price and Susan Price. The film incorporates before and after images of the successful restoration in progress resulting in the comfortable home for writers that Randell Cottage is today.

The Trust was delighted to collaborate with Godwit Films and Three Hats in the making of the film and website management. In a second, informal video on the website, Michalia Arathimos invites viewers to visit the Cottage and share her perspectives as a resident writer. A further new feature is the addition of an article on pre-colonial Thorndon by historian Lou Ormsby. The revamped website www.randellcottage.co.nz offers updated news items about the Trust, Friends and writers, as well as the Cottage history, events and Trust reports.

Michalia Arathimos was the 38th writer in residence at Randell Cottage since 2002. The number of writers from NZ and France has given rise to a large body of published material and on-going contacts between literary communities in both countries. Nearly all the writers have been very happy in the Cottage environment, finding it a comfortable, secure, well-located and inspirational haven, allowing them freedom to think, research and write.

The residency and Trust are well-established in Wellington's cultural landscape and the capital's network of creative residencies. The growing body of its fellows can claim an important place on the national and international literary scene. The Trust is committed to supporting individual writers' careers and making literature more accessible to the public. In so doing, it is building stronger collaboration with Wellington institutions, creative residencies, the Embassy of France and the Wellington City Council.

Friends of Randell Cottage

The Trust and Friends Association enjoyed good working links and cooperation during the year. The Friends stood ready to help with occasional unbudgeted costs if need be. To an extent, Covid-19 limited the activities of the Friends, but under their new President, Leslie Brown, and the Executive

Committee, the Friends AGM in July reported a positive situation. The Association's financial situation was stable, with some \$25,000 in the Friends' saving account and membership at 47 individual members, 6 family or group memberships and 3 business members. Michalia Arathimos was welcomed to the AGM where she spoke about her background and inspiration for her novel *Cartographia*.

The Friends continued to provide valuable support to Trust activities and the writers during the year. They were actively involved in Open Day, welcoming visitors, organising afternoon tea, running a raffle, overseeing the Koha box, and generally ensuring everything went well.

Embassy of France

Close relations with the Embassy of France are vital to the Trust's operations. This year the Trust was delighted to have strong Embassy support for its activities, notably from Ambassador Carta-Le Vert and Cultural Counsellor, Stéphane Ré. The Embassy underlined the status of the RCWT French residency as a "flagship" cultural project for France in NZ. We appreciated the Ambassador's welcome presence at Open Day. Two Trustees, Jean Anderson and Sian Robyns, took part in the French writer selection panel, convened in August by Stéphane Ré. Caroline Laurent was chosen as the resident writer for 2021. With border restrictions looking likely to continue into 2021, the Trust and the Embassy agreed to reschedule the dates of the 2021 NZ writer to accommodate a possible later arrival by Caroline Laurent if need be.

The Trust has excellent relations with the Alliance Française Wellington (AFW). While Amaury da Cunha's overall programme around the country was constrained by Covid-19, he was nevertheless able to take part in an interesting evening hosted by the AFW. The Trust was grateful to the AFW for making its rooms available to the Trust and Friends for their regular meetings.

In May, the Embassy and Trust met, as agreed, with the Arts Foundation to decide on the sum to be transferred from the Arts Foundation sub-trust for the 2021 French writer. It is pleasing to see this arrangement, set up in 2016 with a legacy endowment from the terminated NZ France Friendship Fund, working smoothly in support of the French Randell Cottage writer.

Finance and Maintenance

The Randell Cottage Writers Trust is dependent on generous support from funders, notably Creative NZ, the Wellington City Council, and the NZ France Friendship Fund investment at the Arts Foundation. It receives occasional donations and koha and a steady, if modest, income from rental of a garage in Sydney Street West.

As a result of a successful application in 2019 to Creative NZ for an annual Arts Grant (following Creative NZ's review of its arts investment strategy which ended the Trust's eligibility for a three-year Toi Uru Kahikatea investment grant), the Trust was pleased to receive sufficient funding to pay an increased stipend to the 2020 NZ writer. Annual Arts Grant applications are now the norm for the Trust's commitment to fund a NZ writer each year.

Agreement was reached with the Arts Foundation on funding for the (hoped for) 2021 French writer. Liaison with the consultancy Brown Bread which manages the Arts Foundation is working well.

The Wellington City Council offered the Trust a year's extension of its three-year Contract Funding through to June 2022 while the Council undertakes a review of its arts funding.

Exceptionally in 2020 the Trust was grateful to receive a legacy grant of \$39,140 from the winding up of the NZ France Friendship Fund. Trustees agreed to ring fence this one-off payment to be used for specific approved projects that are expected to be required in the future. The first such project would probably be the planned exterior painting of the Cottage in early 2021, a quote for which Trustees accepted in December.

Trust finances were responsibly managed in 2020, the first full year of the new calendar Financial Year. An operating loss of \$3,788 was recorded. A copy of the accounts as submitted to the Charities Service is attached to this report.

All non-discretionary operational costs such as insurance, rates and maintenance were paid on time and accountability obligations were met on schedule.

No major maintenance projects were undertaken during 2020. Routine maintenance, including an overhaul of the heat pump in the Cottage, was carried out as necessary along with replacement of worn items and cleaning between writers to keep the Cottage comfortable, well-equipped and secure.

The regular gardener kept the garden healthy and attractive in keeping with the heritage character of the Cottage. He cleared the brick paths of weeds and the gutters of leaves. The Cottage and garden looked lovely on Open Day.

Trustees

In 2020 Trustees accepted with regret the resignation of Bridget Hargreaves and welcomed Koenraad Kuiper as a new Trustee.

Sarah Dennis

Sarah Dennis
Chair
Randell Cottage Writers Trust
31 August 2021

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 (1867) 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 38 writers of literary significance from both countries.

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.

The Trust acknowledges a lasting debt of gratitude to Settlers Beverley Randell-Price and Susan Price, descendants of William Randell and his wife Sarah.

All Trustees and members of the Friends of Randell Cottage Association are volunteers from a variety of backgrounds. The Patron is the Ambassador of France to New Zealand, Her Excellency Sylvaine Carta-le Vert. In 2016 Board members appointed founding Trustee Dame Fiona Kidman as Trustee Emerita.

Randell Cottage Writers Trust Board of Trustees 2020

- Trustee Emerita Dame Fiona Kidman DNZM OBE
- Associate Professor Jean Anderson
- Sarah Dennis (Chair)
- Bridget Hargreaves (Secretary)
- Christine Hurley
- Koenraad Kuiper
- Emeritus Professor Vincent O'Sullivan, DCNZM
- Sian Robyns
- Gordon Stewart (Deputy Chair)
- Stephen Stratford
- Anita Woods
- Treasurer: Jenny Ang

Randell Cottage Writers as at 2020

Michalia Arathimos	2020	Amaury da Cunha	2020
Paddy Richardson	2019	Karin Serres	2019
James Norcliffe	2018	Amélie Lucas-Gary	2018
Stephen Daisley	2017	Josef Schovanec	2017
Stephanie Johnson	2016	Nicolas Fargues	2017
Owen Marshall	2015	Witi Ihimaera	2015
David Fauquemberg	2015	Tina Makereti	2014
Than-Van Tran-Nhut	2014	Denis Welch	2013
Estelle Nollet	2013	Vivienne Plumb	2012
Florence Cadier	2011	Peter Walker	2011
Pat White	2010	Yann Aperry	2011
Fariba Hachtroudi	2009	Kirsty Gunn	2009
Olivier Bleys	2008	Jennifer Compton	2008
Nicolas Kurtovich	2007	Whiti Hereaka	2007
Beryl Fletcher	2006	Annie Saumont	2006
Renée	2005	Dominique Mainard	2005
Pierre Furlan	2004	Michael Harlow	2004
Charles Juliet	2003	Tim Corballis	2003
Nadine Ribault	2002	Peter Wells	2002

Michalia Arathimos: Report to Randell Cottage Writers Trust

As current resident at Randell Cottage I feel extremely indebted to the Trust for giving me time and space to write creatively. But the benefits of such a residency are not confined to giving a writer time. When you are accorded such physical and practical support as a writer, particularly if you have written alongside other commitments for a long time, it can feel like a great gift, but also it can force you to new levels of commitment. Having six months to work on their craft in an uninterrupted setting would force most writers into a deeper professionalism.

Another transformational aspect of a residency like this is the sense of affirmation you gain from being named as 'a writer'. Such opportunities not only validate the writer but preserve writing itself as a valid option, a 'proper job' in an increasingly vocationally-driven world, where even tertiary education is phasing out or reducing funding to arts programmes. Aside from time to write, this residency in particular also offers rich opportunities for writers to make connections, both with publishers, other writers and their readership. Since my arrival at the cottage I have been offered mentoring-style friendship by very established writers, been offered ongoing employment, and had work commissioned by several publications, all of which would not have happened were I not the Writer in Residence at Randell Cottage. Such connections are invaluable to a writer like myself especially, who is developing industry relationships.

As a six-month-long residency, the Randell Cottage Trust offers something unique in Aotearoa's letters. Aside from a very few year-long residencies which are offered by universities, the opportunities to delve into a book-length project are extremely limited in Aotearoa. A prose work is a thing that takes many more hours than other genres of work, and being funded for such a stretch is extremely motivating for writers of longer sustained works of fiction. And where most residencies are won by very established writers, Randell Cottage Trust supports emerging writers, like myself, clearly judging the writer by what they think of their actual creative work, and not merely accolades.

The Randell Cottage Trust also has a tangible commitment to serving communities that might not usually find literature accessible. In my time at the cottage I was honoured to be welcomed into Arohata Prison to read as a visiting writer, along with other more standard literary engagements. In this way the Trust's actions really do filter through to many diverse and minority groups that are demonstrably underrepresented in literary circles.

Lastly, residencies very often exclude female-identified writers with children in the years when writers are doing their best work. I know many writers who are unable to undertake residencies because of their work and childcare commitments. I've been extraordinarily lucky in that the Randell Cottage Writers Trust have allowed me to bring my partner and two children with me. Opportunities like this for working writers with children are almost unheard of worldwide. (If anyone doubts this, do a search).

The Trust is doing work that is both radical and necessary, and offers opportunities that are unique in Aotearoa."

Michalia Arathimos
8 March 2021

Review Report

To the Members of the Randell Cottage Writers Trust

Report on the Performance Report

We have reviewed the accompanying performance report of Randell Cottage Writers Trust which comprises the entity information, the statement of service performance, the statement of financial performance for the year ended 31 December 2020, the statement of financial position as at 31 December 2020, and the statement of accounting policies and other explanatory information. This report is made solely to the Members of the Randell Cottage Writers Trust. To the fullest extent permitted by law, we do not accept or assume responsibility to anyone other than the members, for our Review work, for this report, or for the opinions we have formed.

The Trust's Responsibilities

The Trustees are responsible for: (a) Identifying outcomes and outputs, and quantifying the outputs to the extent practicable, that are relevant, reliable, comparable and understandable, to report in the statement of service performance; (b) the preparation and fair presentation of the performance report which comprises: • the entity information • the statement of service performance; and • the statement of financial performance, statement of financial position, statement of accounting policies and notes to the performance report in accordance with Public Benefit Entity Simple Format Reporting – Accrual (Not-For-Profit) issued in New Zealand by the New Zealand Accounting Standards Board, and (c) for such internal control as Committee determine is necessary to enable the preparation of the performance report that is free from material misstatement, whether due to fraud or error.

Review Responsibilities

It is our responsibility to express an independent opinion on the financial report presented by the Randell Cottage Writers Trust and report to you. Our responsibility is to express a conclusion on the performance report. We conducted a review of the statement of financial performance, statement of financial position, statement of accounting policies and notes to the performance report. We are also required to conclude whether anything has come to our attention that causes us to believe that the performance report, taken as a whole, is not prepared in all material respects in accordance with the Public Benefit Entity Simple Format Reporting – Accrual(Not-For-Profit).

Basis of Opinion

A Review includes examining, on a test basis, evidence relevant to the amounts and disclosures in the financial report. It also included assessing: * the significant estimates and judgements made by the Trust's in the preparation of the financial report, and * whether the accounting policies are appropriate to the Trust's circumstances, consistently applied and adequately disclosed. We planned and performed our Review to obtain all the information and explanations which we considered necessary in order to provide us with sufficient evidence to give reasonable assurance that the financial report is free from material misstatements, whether caused by fraud or error. In addition to my capacity as Reviewer we have no involvement with the Trust.

Qualified Opinion

In common with other organisations of similar nature, as a review procedure it was not practical to extend my examination of income beyond the amounts received as shown by the books and records of the Randell Cottage Writers' Trust. This year Randell Cottage Writer's Trust has chosen to prepare financial statements on a Tier 4 basis (previously Tier 3). In addition, due to changing the financial year from March to December they have prepared accounts for the 12 months ended 31 December

2020 and removed previous comparatives for 31 March 2019, comparatives will be included from this year on. Subject to the above reservation, in my opinion, the attached financial performance report fairly reflects the financial position of the Randell Cottage Writers' Trust as at 31 December 2020 and its financial performance for the year ended 31 December 2020; and the entity information and its service performance for the year then ended in accordance with Public Benefit Entity Simple Format Reporting – Accrual (Not for Profit). It should however be noted, that the accounts have been prepared on the going concern assumption and is dependent on future continued funding being obtained as outlined in the notes to the accounts.

My Review report was completed on 03 June 2021 and my qualified opinion is expressed as at that date.

G Cross (signed)
Accountant Cross Financial Services Ltd, Wellington