



President's Report – May 2014

The 2013/14 year has been what could be best described as maintaining a holding pattern where we have catered to the level of interest within the community. The events that occur annually took place – the Lebanese flag flew with great pride from the Mayoral balcony on 22nd November to commemorate Lebanon's Independence Day, Lyn and I placed a wreath on behalf of the community at the Anzac dawn service, we represented our community at the Otago Anniversary Luncheon held at the Dunedin Club in March, and we had another excellent Christmas function at Glenfalloch.

In addition to the above we held a Zonks tournament in mid-winter. What we lacked in numbers of entrants was more than offset by the age old competitive spirit amongst our people. The worthy winner after a hard fought tussle was Peter Palmer with Frank Coory as runner up.

The major project this year has been producing the book "Scattered Cedars". It was a very big job involving many people, but the end result made the effort well worthwhile. We owe a huge debt of gratitude to Dr Matthew Farry for his informative, humorous and passionate account of the history of our community. He gave us a unique insight into who we were, and how we became what we are today. Matthew has the gift of being able to weave factual information with the art of storytelling. Up until Matthew wrote this historical piece, we could only rely on hearsay and anecdotal stories, now we have a comprehensive account of our community and the significant contribution it made to the City of Dunedin.

Such a book deserved due recognition, so in March of this year we launched it in both Dunedin and Auckland. Matthew and his wife Janette were our special guests for the Dunedin launch. Matthew spoke at both launches and as expected he gave compelling addresses at both.

The other project of significance in the 2013/14 year was The Genographic project conducted by Dr Lisa Matisoo-Smith who is Professor of Biological Anthropology in the Anatomy Dept at Otago University. The study, sponsored by National Geographic, is collecting data from over 100,000 individuals worldwide to study human migration patterns.

A number of our community participated in the project by means of a simple cheek swab. The swab traces both the Mitochondrial DNA that is passed on only through the maternal line and the Y-chromosome which traces the paternal line. Lisa presented each participant with a written report of their particular ancestry.



Our community was recently gifted a book from the Dunedin Botanic Garden in recognition of the partnership between two of Dunedin's time honoured institutions. The inscription also acknowledged the gift of the Cedars of Lebanon garden to the city of Dunedin from our community, stating that we had created a long lasting legacy for the city.

For the last couple of years I have announced my intention to step down from the presidency in the hope of making way for some renewed energy and a fresh approach. I have also signalled my concern for the club around lack of succession. Unfortunately nobody seems interested in taking over the reins, so out of respect for the position, I feel I cannot simply leave it vacant. I will stay on until such times that a suitable replacement can be found.

When we sold our clubrooms back in 2003, we were forced to confront the fact that the Cedars of Lebanon Club in Dunedin as we knew it, would not be around in its present form for many more years. Understandably, we continue to cling to it emotionally and spiritually, but the reality is, the purpose for which the club was formed, has long since passed. We are now a virtual club with a website as our focal point. We have worked hard to reposition the club over the last ten years and believe we now have a club that is updated in concept and honed to serve our needs and level of community interest.

I would like to thank the committee and other people who are happy to give of themselves, for their continued effort. All the events we run like lunches for the seniors, drinks nights and the Christmas function take quite a lot of organising.

I feel honoured to have been President of our club for the last fifteen years. As stated earlier, I think it would benefit from some fresh perspective and renewed energy, but in the mean time I will serve the position and the community to the best of my ability.

Richard Joseph

RICHARD JOSEPH

PRESIDENT