

Introduction

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There is a Māori whakataukī that says ‘whaowhia te kete mātauranga’ – fill the baskets of knowledge. The baskets on the cover of this issue of the *Turnbull Library Record* were created by Christine Hellyar for an exhibition held in the Turnbull Gallery. A collaboration between three artists, it featured artworks made in response to items in the Turnbull collections. New art was created, and new knowledge generated. The image of the basket is appropriate for this issue of the *Record*, which contains a miscellany of articles contributing new knowledge. Research libraries enable the creation of new knowledge, and this issue demonstrates the wide range of topics scholars are investigating using Turnbull collections.

Simon Chapple’s article, ‘From Missionary Counts to the First Official Māori Census of 1858’, looks at early information about Māori collected by church missionaries. Dr Chapple suggests that little attention has been paid to New Zealand missionaries as early demographers of Māori. He traces what information they collected, why they collected it, and shows how their work evolved into the first official census of Māori in 1858.

In 2015, Gerry Kimber received a Friends of the Turnbull Library research grant. In “‘Tea, Zen and Cosmic Anatomy’”: The Mysticism of Katherine Mansfield’, she depicts a writer whose deep interest in spirituality was evident in her personal life and her writing. Dr Kimber suggests Mansfield was ‘as early as 1908 ... formulating opinions which today we might almost term “new age”.’

In ‘The New Zealand Opera Company (1954–1971): Notes Towards a History’, Doug Munro describes his approach to writing a history of the company that was founded by his father. A significant cultural endeavour of its time, the New Zealand Opera Company did not enjoy ongoing survival. However, Munro’s theme for this history is ‘not failure – but rise, fall, and lingering demise’.

Ruth Lightbourne gives us a glimpse into the life of Clementina Gordon. Who was this woman who lived in rural New Zealand, had an interest in rare books, and was handy with a rifle? Dr Lightbourne gives insights into what brought Clementina to New Zealand and documents aspects of her unconventional life.

Finally, in our basket is a photographic essay by Simon Nathan, ‘Celebrating Waiuta’s Silver Jubilee: A Photographic Record by Joseph Divis’. Views of the West Coast gold-mining town’s jubilee celebrations in 1931 show a once-prosperous town, and illustrate the way anniversaries were celebrated by local communities around New Zealand in the first half of the 20th century.