

Rotary Club of Christchurch South



13 Sept.2023

Dr Karen Pollard was introduced to club members tonight by member Robin Palmer.
Dr Pollard came to talk to us about star gazing in our city and the recently re- restored
Townsend telescope.

But first a little on Dr Pollard.

- Bachelor of Science (Honours) (University of Canterbury)
- Doctor of Philosophy (University of Canterbury)
- International Astronomical Union (IAU) (Professional Organisation): Member of
Division G (Stars and Stellar Systems)
- Royal Astronomical Society of New Zealand (RASNZ) (Professional Organisation):
Fellow and Council Member
- European Southern Observatory Visiting Scientist
- At age 9 bought here first telescope.



Townsend Observatory at
the Christchurch Arts Centre

Dr Pollard explained to members the experience of stargazing from the restored
Observatory Tower at Te Matatiki Toi Ora The Arts Centre.

From the tower you can view the Southern Sky through the Victorian-era Townsend Teece
Telescope, under the guidance of Townsend student astronomers from the University of
Canterbury.

The Townsend Observatory is owned and administered by the University of Canterbury, and is part of the Centre. The building collapsed in the February 2011 Christchurch earthquake but has since been fully restored.

James Townsend was one of the Canterbury Pilgrims, having arrived on the *Cressy* in December 1850.[1] In his retirement, he lived on Park Terrace, just north of the site of the Canterbury College. In 1891, he gifted his equatorial telescope to the college, as he wished to make it available to the community. Townsend's telescope was built by Thomas Cook & Son in 1864.

Triggered by Townsend's gift, the Astronomical Society of Christchurch made its funds of NZ£420 available to the college on the understanding that an observatory would be built. New Zealand was in a recession, and the college was reluctant to start a new building. Townsend died in November 1894 and did not see the observatory being started. In 1895, the decision was made to build a new biology building including a tower for the observatory. It was Benjamin Mountfort's last major design for the college and cost twice his estimate, but nonetheless was not lavish. In an editorial, the local newspaper, *The Press*, called it "a small but picturesque looking structure".

There were maintenance problems with the roof and the original canvas and wooden dome structure had to be replaced in 1914. In the early 1940s, the same problems occurred and the telescope suffered damage, but it was not until 1950 that the roof was replaced.

The observatory is open to the public from 8pm to 10.30pm, during the non-daylight saving months from March to October.

The observatory was destroyed when the part of the Arts Centre housing collapsed as a result of the February 2011 Christchurch earthquake. The historic Cooke 6" refractor telescope and its dome initially survived the collapse, but was subsequently run over by a bulldozer when rubble was being shifted. The main lense however remained unscathed. The university restored the telescope by the beginning of 2023. The restored tower opened as a hotel in 2022. Open nights with the telescope run by the University of Canterbury restarted after 12 years, on the 5th of May 2023.

The vote of thanks from our club was passed by Lew Brown who assured Dr Pollard that we will join the "star gazers" in the near future.

Thanks to Alan A. for the report.

20 Sept. 2023

We were privileged to have an address from Dr Vanessa Weenick, who is the National Party candidate for the Banks Peninsula seat. She became the candidate for that seat after a very vigorous selection process.

By way of background, Vanessa has been a GP for 20 years and in fact she has spent 22 years in the NZ Army rising to a rank of Major. That was largely full time employment in the Army and part in the Territorials. She advised she did two stints of service in Afghanistan and one in East Timor.

Vanessa thought of her experience during the Christchurch earthquakes in 2010/11. Her earthquake recovery team was based at the PGG building where there was considerable drama and part collapse of the building itself. She acknowledged that the experience has left most Cantabrians with the legacy of experiences – both good and bad.

Vanessa had a hip replacement in March last year and, during convalescence, it was a time for reflection and the conclusion that she did not want to go back in to clinical medicine. Whilst some years ago she did work for the Labour party team, she now aligns with the innovative and self discipline of National, and is proud to be part of that team.

Her election campaign for the Lyttelton seat has currently seen 16,000 doors knocked on with the Electorate. She confirmed that she is #40 on the National list and, if she doesn't win the seat, National would need close to 43% of the vote for her to become a List MP.

There was considerable discussion at question time and Vanessa impressed with both her knowledge of National party principles and issues, and her ability to rationally discuss the major topics affecting New Zealanders today. In summary, we were privileged to have an address from a very forthright and knowledgeable political candidate, and we wish her well on the 14th October.

Thanks to Alan S. for the report.

Presentation of projects

- > On Sunday , Athol and I were invited by Heidi, (the Council's Park Ranger) to attend a presentation of local landscape projects that she has been involved with over the last five years.
- > Unfortunately, Athol was unable to attend due to having covid. It was really great seeing the presentations of other projects, (mainly in reserves and esplanades). Meeting the other project leaders was also really interesting and our Rotary Club project was well received and congratulated on.
- > Yours in Rotary Service
- > Sara



Upcoming Meetings

4 October

Tracey McLellan

Labour Party Candidate

11 October

Steph Walker

Word Christchurch – To bring the community together through its love of words

18 October

Josie Ogden Schroeder – YMCA in Christchurch and our new building

Upcoming Events

23 September

Cashmere Stream Esplanade

Friday 10th November & Saturday 11th November

Dementia Appeal 2023

Notices

Cashmere Stream Esplanade

> A postponement date has been confirmed for Saturday 14th October at the Cashmere Stream Esplanade from 10-12 midday. More details to follow.

> Regards

> Sara

Board of Trustees

> A meeting will be held on Wednesday 27th September at 5.05pm. Please can you confirm your attendance to Sara.

Fundraising Committee

A reminder that there will be a meeting of the Fund Raising Committee after our Rotary meeting this Wednesday. This is to discuss & begin planning for the Boulder Bay Walk, as presented to the club by President Mel.

Christchurch South Community Garden

Every Wednesday 1pm to 2pm, 188 Strickland Street, come along and lend a hand.

Archives

We are now at the point of collecting photos from members, past members, honorary members and friends of Rotary for our archives.

Please contact Kim at tanner.kimberley@gmail.com if you have any photos from the year **2000 onwards** of **significant events**. We are hoping to have this project completed by the end of this year

Duties

Duty	27-Sep-23	4-Oct-23	11-Oct-23
Cash Desk	A Airay	G Bailey	S Harris
Cash Desk	R Palmer	M Bruce	P Mears
Reception	S Mackenzie	D Peterson	H Garlick
Speaker's Host	S Harris	S Mackenzie	G Dockrill
Grace	S Harris	S Mackenzie	G Dockrill
International Toast	S Mackenzie	D Peterson	H Garlick
Thanks to Speaker	R Palmer	G Bailey	S Harris
Quote for the Week	A Airay	M Bruce	P Mears
Speaker Reporter	G Bailey	A McKinnon	A Airay
Sergeant	A McKinnon	A McCully	R Palmer

Leave

Who	From	To
M Whitehead	9/9/15	TBA
J Wylie		TBA
S Hays	11/8/20	TBA
K Moss	24/6/23	TBA

Don't forget to follow us on Facebook and Website

The link for the club web pages is: www.christchurchsouthrotary.org.nz

The link to club Facebook pages is: <https://www.facebook.com/ChristchurchSouthRotary/>

Reminders

APOLOGIES

- Record your apology at the Reception Desk at a prior meeting OR
- Email: chcsouthrotary@gmail.com before 11.00am on the Wednesday; you will get a reminder a couple of days before the meeting re apologising and to advise if bringing guests.
- Emergency apologies to Alan McKinnon (021 142 7668) or Club Secretary Viv Ellis (027 490 3161)

DUTIES

If you are unable to carry out your allocated duty, it is YOUR responsibility to arrange a substitute.

LEAVE OF ABSENCE

Please advise all leave of absence (three or more weeks) to the Secretary by email or in writing.