BOOK LAUNCH: *FUTUNA - LIFE OF A BUILDING*

For the past two years, Nick Bevin, Gregory O’Brien and other members of the Futuna Charitable Trust have been digging through archives, bibliographies and a myriad of other sources, to piece together a visual and verbal record of the chapel, from late 1950s until the present.

*Futuna - life of a building* features over 130 photographs, as well as plans and sketches by both John Scott and Jim Allen, many of which have never been published before. The book tells the remarkable story of the chapel’s inception and construction, and its status beyond as well as within the architectural world. The book also tells the vexed story of the chapel’s sale to a developer in 2001 and its subsequent dereliction and, at the eleventh hour, rescue. Like its subject, the book will speak not only to architects but to people interested in cultural studies, visual arts, religious history, spirituality and many other fields of human endeavour.

With essays by Chris Cochran, David Mitchell, Niall McLaughlin, Gregory O’Brien and Nick Bevin and photographs by Paul McCredie and Gavin Woodward, the book has been designed immaculately by Diana Curtis. Victoria University Press entered into the spirit of the project generously and with aplomb. The end result is a book which will, we believe, enhance the mana of Futuna and raise awareness of the chapel internationally and at home.

As well as taking the reader through the chapel’s history, *Futuna - life of a building* offers a tour of the building itself, pointing out the many remarkable details which make this such a singular building.

The book will be available in good bookshops around the country from mid-July. It will be launched formally at Unity Books, Wellington, on 2 August.
COLOURS OF FUTUNA
CONCERT SERIES

The switch to late summer for the concerts this year made for a warmer environment and a magnificent display of colours moving across the wall behind the performers. The performances were a varied mix ranging from solo guitar, through solo voice, instrumental duos or trios to choirs. Designed for contemplation, with its soaring volume and play of coloured light, the chapel has wonderful acoustics for both quiet and fortissimo sounds. Though choral voices could blend and sound as one, equally the intricate notes of guitar or harp could be distinguished one from the other. The music created a treat for everyone present.

Bernard Wells (recorder) and Martin Ryman (harpsichord) took the audience to Baroque London with the Beautiful sonata by Handel, and works by his contemporaries. Later in the series, the Paris of the early twentieth century was evoked by Lala Simpson with her presentation of the achingly beautiful songs of Edith Piaf, accompanied by accordionist Jonathan Berkahn.

Two guitarists presented recitals this year; Chris Hill, who also studies the design and construction of classical and flamenco guitars, played a self-built guitar; and young guitarist Jake Church played works by young New Zealand composers who were in the audience. Although different, in both concerts the atmospheric qualities of the music and the guitar and the atmosphere of the Chapel combined to create magical, memorable experiences.

The harp duo of Michelle Velvin and Jennifer Newth similarly exploited the atmosphere of the chapel in their unique performance, as did the Nikau Trio’s combination of strings and woodwind. The McLellan, Squire, Hobbs Trio, all strings, played Mozart, Beethoven and Telemann in a classical concert that nevertheless harmonised well with the Modernism of the chapel’s design.

Finally, the WOSOSI Singers with their concert of World Music and then the Festival Singers filled the chapel with sound and musical colours, voices blending and soaring to the space high above the singers and audience.

Music in the chapel connects it with the past and with the world, and with us in the present. There is no better way to maintain the life of the chapel than for it to be filled with the spirit of music which is shared will all who come to listen or take part.

FUTUNA VOLUNTEERS FOR OPEN DAYS

The Trust would like to take this opportunity to thank the group of residents who volunteered to host the Open Days at the Chapel following the Annual Open Day and up to Easter. Over the 9 days there were 40 visitors who came and signed the Chapels visitors book.

The Trust endeavours to have the Chapel available for visitors as much as possible within its resources. The effort by these volunteers is one of the critical times of the year being late summer when the Chapel can be opened every day for an extended period of time. There are several residents who have keys and if a visitor is seen standing looking at the Chapel they are asked if they would like to see inside and are the doors are unlocked.

As the Chapel’s profile increases the Trust wishes to try to have the Chapel open and accessible every day. How this will be achieved is yet to be determined but the Futuna Volunteers have shown that by having the Chapel doors open visitors can come and visit and spend time in the wonderful colour light filled interior.

The more the Trust can have these Open Days promoted the more visitors are likely to come. Many thanks to Joy Bickley Asher, Patrick Mahoney, Dawn Bertenshaw, Pam Davis, Diana Cheney, Nina Parker, Dinnie Hall and the organiser and Futuna Trustee Bernie Pool.
FUNDING FOR BUILDING PROJECT

The next building project (see Peter Parke’s article) will commence later this year. And be undertaken by LT McGuinness Limited. The four roof/window fins are to be rebuilt following the findings of the building exterior investigation carried out by Win Clark, Heritage Seismic engineer in 2014/15.

The cost of this work is in the order of $100,000 + GST. The Trust have been very fortunate to receive $50,000 + GST from the Lion Foundation through the auspices of the Karori Brooklyn Community Charitable Trust. The Trust has also made an application to the Wellington City Council Built Heritage Incentive Fund for funding and this is currently being assessed by the WCC. A announcement of the allocation, if successful, is in early August 2016.

The Trustees have also decided to meet any financial shortfall from Trust reserves that have been built up over recent years from the successful Futuna Lecture Series. In addition suppliers of building products are also being approached for donation of materials for the project which will also assist in minimizing the costs to the Trust.

WOODWARD IMAGES OF FUTUNA CHAPEL MADE ACCESSIBLE

In September 2014 the Trust received a message from Robin Skinner Dean at the Victoria University School of Architecture that “The negatives of Gavin Woodward’s photos of Futuna are now lodged at the JC Beaglehole Room at VUW. They appear in Russell Walden’s book Voices of Silence.”

This came as a complete surprise as the Trust had been making inquiries over the years as to the possible whereabouts of these images but with no success.

There are over 200 of the original coloured 5” x 4” transparencies taken between 1985 and 1986 by the late Gavin Woodward that can be viewed in the JC Beaglehole room. The discovery of these images was very timely as the research for the recently published book ‘Futuna - Life of a Building’ had recently commenced. The book editors selected 43 of these images making sure they had not been previously used in Russell Walden’s book on Futuna ‘Voices of Silence’.

Professionally scanning colour transparencies so that they are suitable for print publishing is an expensive exercise. The Trust successfully applied to the Warren Trust and the scanning was arranged and co-ordinated by Sue Hirst of the JC Beaglehole Room and Michael Parry, VUW’s Digital Initiatives Co-ordinator.

To view these images currently an appointment is needed and the images have to be handled with great care using white cotton gloves and viewed on a light box. The Futuna Trust approached Michael Parry last year and discussed the possibility of having the remaining 160 + images scanned. Whilst they could not fund this exercise Michael Parry suggested, that if the Trust was successful in obtaining funding, that the University would catalogue the images and set up a publically accessible website to view the images. This is part of their mandate to make the collections that the University holds more accessible and available to a wider audience. The outcome of this project will be the provision of an online space within the VUW collections for the digital images that will open and available to the public.

The cost of the scanning of the remaining images is $2,162 + GST and the Trust made an approach to the Warren Trust to see if they would be prepared to fund all or part of this project. This application has been successful so the scanning project is now underway. The Trust will announce the launch date of the on line collection in due course.

These images have brought an amazing luminous highly saturated colour to the book. They have also provided the Trust with a record of the original detail of the Chapel before it was sold. The scanning quality allows a fine detailed digital exploration of the images. Close viewing of these images are also improving the Trust’s understanding of the aging of the Chapel since the photos were taken 30 years ago.

The Trust wishes to thank Robin Skinner, the Warren Trust, the JC Beaglehole Room, staff, Michael Parry and NZ Micrographic Services Limited.

The Trust wishes to thank Robin Skinner, the Warren Trust, the JC Beaglehole Room, staff, Michael Parry and NZ Micrographic Services Limited.
BUILDING RESTORATION UPDATE

From Peter Parkes

Following on from the previous newsletter the Trust has now accepted a price from the building contractor LT McGuinness to undertake the refurbishment work on the roof fins. A number of material suppliers have been approached to donate materials for the work. These fins are the high slender panelled walls at the outer end of each of the roof ridges which abut the triangular coloured acrylic clerestory windows.

Their timber sub-framing was found to be deteriorating badly and their outer ledging edge timber was discovered by Win Clark during the seismic investigation undertaken in 2014/2015, to be readably flexible under hand applied forces. The framing of these fins is to be rebuilt and stiffening devices inserted into them.

Their fibrolite cement board panelling, cedar battens and copper flashings are also to be replaced with new like-for-like materials. Considerable care is being taken to maintain the existing overall appearance of the fins in line with the conservation plan and resource consent. Whilst applications for funding this work are still in progress, it is intended that this work will be completed by the end of this year.

Victoria University Press warmly invites you to the launch of

Futuna: Life of a Building
edited by Nick Bevin and Gregory O’Brien

on Tuesday 2 August, 6.00pm–7.30pm
at Unity Books
57 Willis St, Wellington

Refreshments will be served, all welcome.

VUP