

### **Views from the Pews: Building the body of Christ**

Christ's body is not made of reinforced concrete, although we as a church spend a lot of time on 'fabric', the care of infrastructure.

Rather, Christ's body is made of people, human beings. And not just those who are alive today; if you were to seek the foundations of this Parish, you would begin not with the Bishops and Deans whose names appear on boards, but with those who gave time to the Church, whose names are rarely mentioned unless we remember the dates of their funerals. There are thousands of such people, some well-remembered, some not. As generations pass away, as living parishioners come and go, we risk losing sight of those whose names are not well-recorded.

Fortunately, that does not apply to Alan Peart, whose name we can recall because he left a wartime memoir, and because many of us still remember his service as a Tenor in what was then a smaller Cathedral Singers than now. Alan and Jenny were energetic regulars, always dressed 'properly' and part of a large social group with close ties to Hamilton.

Alan always made light of his war service; his modesty is exemplified by the familiar joke about his medical inspection prior to flying training;

"Two doctors took an ear each – unless they could see each other, you were in."

He typifies what we mean by the body of Christ; modest people of whom there have been many in this place, who gave freely and generously of their professional knowledge. Alan was a civil engineer, a 'fabric man' to his fingertips, who would have taken a keen interest in our earthquake strengthening, as one involved with the building of Karapiro Dam with the Ministry of Works.

We mention Alan today only because he is representative of that group of church servants. But unlike many others he left a memoir as mentioned above; only by reading that do we realize the extent of his war service. He was very discrete otherwise. When pressed, all he would say was 'it's not really about me – it's about the blokes who didn't make it back.'

Alan's memoir is doing the rounds at the moment – every time it changes hands it is \$50.00 into the Earthquake Strengthening Fund. Alan would have approved. He remains part of our fabric, part of the Body of Christ.

*- Richard Swarbrick*