

Diana Unwin (1923-2014)
remembered by Chris Greenwood

Philanthropist, peace campaigner, feminist, human rights advocate: over the course of her long life Diana contributed, both financially and in terms of time and energy, to a vast array of humanitarian causes, directly and indirectly enabling many people around the world to enjoy a better life. In 1992, the Grace Memorial Trust was established by Diana in memory of her mother, and has been a generous supporter of many causes in New Zealand and overseas. The

Trust's focus on peace, dispute resolution, prison reform and restorative justice culminated in 2013 with the endowment of the inaugural Chair in Restorative Justice at Victoria University, Wellington. Appropriately, the Chair is to be named after Diana.

Diana was a strong advocate for the policies of WILPF and worked tirelessly to this end. Diana believed in the power of the individual, particularly in democratic countries like New Zealand. She believed that individuals could effect change, often more easily than structured organisations. She believed doing something had an effect and doing nothing had an effect. And that formed her personal philosophy, and that was how she structured her life.

After returning from her 'OE' in Europe during the 1950's and deeply committed to the cause of international peace, justice, and humanitarianism, she founded the South Canterbury branch of the United Nations Association. Diana organised a series of residential seminars for high school students highlighting the work of the United Nations and promoting the ideals of international understanding, world peace and human rights.

Diana was involved with numerous other international relief and philanthropic organisations, and campaigned to raise funds for development programmes, refugee associations, and child sponsorship. It was at this time Diana, through Save the Children, began to sponsor a girl from a family in Italy. This began a relationship

extending to three generations who she continued to visit over the next forty years.

In 1984, and one of the defining experiences of Diana's life, was her time at Greenham Common - one of the peace camps set up by women from all over the world to protest against the Cruise missiles stored there. The fact that the peace women maintained non-violent but determined action earned credibility. And the symbolism of defenceless, unarmed women protesting against the authority of the United States Air Force and supportive British establishment had a huge impact on Diana. Each woman showed determination to withstand the primitive conditions, horrible weather, dreadful intimidation and official harassment, negative media attention, and derision by some of the local community. Some women ended up with a gaol sentence. There were many sacrifices but the women did not budge.

Diana continued to travel internationally in the cause of world peace. In 1986, she joined part of 'The Great Peace March' across America. People of all ages, their common interest being their opposition to nuclear weapons, walked from town to town. They were fed and welcomed by some, shunned by others. As with the Greenham Common experience Diana was impressed by the effort of each individual's contribution and the good will and cooperation that kept the moving city of 500 people fed, washed, healthy, and the children cared for and educated, and all of them on the road.