

# CANTERBURY HISTORY FOUNDATION

## NEWSLETTER

May 2017

### **Gardner Memorial Lecture**

This annual event will be held on Sunday, 23 July. There is a change of venue to note: the Jack Mann Auditorium, University of Canterbury's Dovedale Campus (the old College of Education). Further notice will be given to members.

Our lecturer is Dr Evgeny Pavlov who teaches Russian History in the University's History Department.

In recognition of the centenary of the Russian Revolution, he will speak on Russian leadership during and since 1917.

### **Rhodes Medal Award**

The 2017 medal winner is Margaret Harper who for many years worked in the New Zealand Room, later the Aotearoa New Zealand Centre at the Central Library.

Margaret initiated and developed the Christchurch Street and Place Names Project over some twenty years. It is an authoritative source for a wide variety of local historians, easily accessed through the Christchurch City Libraries' website under Heritage.

As is customary, the Medal will be presented at the Gardner Lecture.

### **Generous Donation**

Roy Ferguson, a graduate of the History Department, who has recently retired after a very distinguished public service career, has donated \$5,000 to the Friends and Graduates' Fund which the Foundation administers on behalf of the Department. The Fund provides grants to post-graduate student researchers to help meet travel and research expenses.

Roy spent most of his career in Foreign Affairs, capping it with a term as Ambassador in Washington, 2006-10. On his return to Wellington he worked in the Department of the Prime Minister and Cabinet.

He remains convinced of the importance of the Humanities. 'My time at Canterbury', he says, 'and study of History in particular had a big impact on my life'.

Roy's warm recollections of Canterbury were echoed by Professor Brian Stoddart, also a History graduate, who visited the Department in March. In his career Brian taught extensively in Australian universities, served as Vice-Chancellor of La Trobe University in Melbourne, and advised a number of foreign governments and universities on tertiary education. He was adamant that he had never encountered a better teaching department than the one he experienced at Canterbury.

### **Glentunnel and Steventon**

On Sunday, 26 March, the Foundation, in association with Frieda Looser History Ltd, organised an all-day trip to the Glentunnel Museum and Steventon (famous as Lady Barker's home, Broomielaw). Steventon, a homestead dating back to the 1860s, is now open by prior arrangement. Glentunnel Museum has fine displays recalling the district's coal-mining, brick and tile manufacture, pottery works and railway. Several mining cottages remain. The Library next door to the Museum is an architectural gem.

### **Community Historian**

In the last Newsletter we advised that this scheme, long part of the Foundation's programme, was no longer deemed eligible for Rata Foundation funding as it was conceived to be an award made to an

individual whatever its wider benefits for the community. Rata now directs its grants to community groups for special or particular projects.

We are delighted to be able to report that we are able to continue making these awards. The capital of the Rhodes Medal Fund produces sufficient surplus income to meet the annual cost. Paul and Sally Rhodes, the donors of the Medal, have with their usual generosity agreed that we might use the money for this additional purpose.

### **Captain Thomas**

Colin Amodeo's latest book, *Tracking Captain Thomas*, has just been published by Caxton Press with the assistance of a grant from the Foundation.

Little is known about Thomas before and after his time as Chief Surveyor of the Canterbury settlement, 1848-51. This work is a brave attempt to fill the gaps, though in many places the author remains baffled by complete absence of information. Speculation is often all that is left. We have to be content with a sketchy account of his time in the army and his travels in America after selling out as a lieutenant. Mystery surrounds how he gained (or did not gain) the rank of captain!

Thomas arrived in Wellington in 1840 to begin the New Zealand phase of his life. These chapters are easily the fullest in the book. Of particular interest is Thomas's early exploration of parts of the lower North Island in the early 1840s and his evident ambition to set himself up for life as a runholder. He had no time for the small farmer economy that Wakefield and Godley envisaged for Canterbury.

The story becomes shrouded in haze again after his departure from New Zealand in 1851. Even the date and place of his death remain unknown, whether in England or Australia. We do know he was back in Australia in 1854, for a short time supervising mining operations.

Colin Amodeo's research has been exhaustive, and this may be as much as will ever be known about the man who prepared the way for the Canterbury Association settlers of 1850.

### **Banks Peninsula Place-names**

This is the subject of Gordon Ogilvie's latest book. The Foundation has made a grant to assist its publication.

Another book of interest to Peninsula aficionados is Jane Robertson's *Head of the Harbour* on Governor's Bay, Ohinetahi, Allandale and Teddington, which the Foundation also supported. It was published in December last. Its content and production standards do great credit to author and publisher.

### **J.M. Sherrard Award**

Instituted in 1972 to recognise excellent work in Local and Regional History, this was the 21<sup>st</sup> judging covering books published in 2014-15. In these two years over 800 titles appeared relevant to the purpose of the Award.

The Award, made biennially, is administered by the Canterbury Historical Association.

The winner is Catherine Knight for her environmental history of the Manawatu, *Ravaged Beauty*, published by Dunmore Press. 'A scholarly and engaging work which gives the reader a rich and nuanced understanding of the region and its history' was the judges' comment. The author has subsequently produced another acclaimed work, *New Zealand's Rivers: an Environmental History*.

### **SOCIAL FUNCTION:**

**Do join us on 23 May at the Arts Centre at 5.30 pm as we welcome a group of new life members.**

Light refreshments will be provided, and followed by a private viewing of the recently-reopened Logie Collection of Classical Antiquities.

Where? Old Chemistry, entrance from Hereford Street (a security guard will be at the door.)

Please advise the Secretary if you are coming: 355-7402, or [geoff.rice@canterbury.ac.nz](mailto:geoff.rice@canterbury.ac.nz)