

Newsletter
May 2014

Community Historian

Our 2013 Community Historian, Davina Davis, unexpectedly passed away on 24 April. Sad news indeed. Davina lived in Geraldine but had held a curatorship at the South Canterbury Museum, Timaru for many years. She had charge of the Museum's collections, work which spilled over into researching, designing and writing text for a large number of exhibitions. She was a highly respected and warmly regarded member of the Museum's staff.

As Community Historian Davina proposed to research the social history of military volunteering in South Canterbury in the nineteenth century, an *entrée* as good as any other into New Zealand's settler society.

The Foundation has sent condolences to Davina's husband, Michael Meadowcroft. At the last meeting of the Executive, it was decided to re-advertise for a Community Historian.

'On the Hoof'

This is the title of Ruth Low's book on drovers and droving which Penguin will publish in August. Ruth was our Community Historian in 2009.

The book is described as a 'heartland history', based as it largely is on the oral reminiscences of about sixty old-time drovers. Their 'voices' are powerfully evoked as they tell of the hardships they endured, the skills required and the life-style the job imposed. Droving, of course, has a long history in New Zealand. Ruth covers the period from the beginnings of pastoral farming to the 'twilight years' when the industry was overtaken (quite gradually in remote areas) by road and rail transport.

The AGM

In the past this has usually been held in June. The date fixed by the Executive for this year's meeting is Monday, 15 September. Further information will be provided.

It is likely that the September date will be continued in future years, as it takes some time for fully audited accounts to be provided after the end of the financial year on 31 March.

New Head of History

Dr Peter Field's term as Head of the History Department ended in January. He has been succeeded by Dr Jane Buckingham who joins the Foundation's Executive as an *ex officio* member. Jane is a specialist in South Asian History but also has interests in the history of leprosy outside India, particularly in the Pacific Islands.

Peter Field has kindly agreed to continue on the Executive as a co-opted member.

Jim Gardner Memorial Lecture

This year's lecture is to be held on Sunday, 20 July in Room C3, Central Lecture Block on the University Campus. As usual, the proceedings will start with the presentation of the Rhodes Medal. The commencing time is 2.30 pm.

The Gardner Lecturer is Dr David Monger from the University's History Department. He is a war and society historian with particular expertise on the First World War.

Further information will be provided to members. Signage will be in place to direct those attending to the most convenient car parking and to the venue itself.

Windsor and Shirley

This is the title of the suburban history that the Foundation helped fund last year. The author, Roger Allen, is a long-time resident of the area, indeed as a boy roamed its sandhills and the marshes around Horseshoe Lake. The red-zoning of large portions of the district makes this an extremely apposite history. Much of the book deals with the pre-residential past when market gardens and small farms predominated, a semi-rural character that looks likely to be restored to some degree in the form of a river park.

Shirley got its name from Joseph Shirley Buxton, one of the first settlers. Windsor was named after royal Windsor, though in an interesting way. James Rowe, a pig farmer who took up land near the present day Palms, imported his Berkshire breeding stock from the royal farm.

Roger's book was launched on 24 May at Shirley Intermediate School.

Canterbury 100 - Help Tell the Story of Canterbury 1914-1918

Several organisations, including the Canterbury Museum, Air Force Museum and Christchurch City Libraries, have come together in this project which is designed to let Canterbury people share family stories and memorabilia relating to the First World War.

Canterbury 100 is to run until 2018, the centenary of the Armistice and Peace celebrations.

The opening event is a community day at the Air Force Museum, Wigram, on Sunday, 12 October. Members of the public will be invited to bring along stories and mementos of the War, especially anything relating to the period leading up to Gallipoli – recruitment in New Zealand, the voyage to Egypt, training in Egypt, the first engagement along the Suez Canal, the Anzac landings on the peninsula.

Staff will be on hand to document the material, as well as provide expertise in family history research and object identification and description. People can discuss the possibility of gifting their material or lending it for digitising or display.

The material contributed will provide the content for a community-based exhibition opening in April 2015, which will tell the story of 'Canterbury's Road to Gallipoli'. The exhibition will then be adapted to a more localised format for touring around communities throughout Canterbury.

The idea is to repeat the collection of stories and artefacts for the period leading up to the centenary of Passchendaele in 2017 and again the centenary of the Armistice in 2018. The 'Home Front' is equally in the minds of the organisers. Non-military material has the same value as military material in sharpening our understanding of a war that mobilised all sections of society.

At the conclusion of the project, stories will be archived to serve as a permanent memorial to the people of Canterbury who experienced the First World War. They will also, of course, serve as a useful resource for scholars.

There is a website that provides further information:

<http://canterbury100.wordpress.com/>

School Students' Competition

Arrangements are in hand for high school History students (Years 11-13) to take part in a writing competition organised by the Canterbury History Teachers' Association. Entrants will be set the task of writing a short piece of historical fiction set in the period of the First World War.

The Foundation has offered first and second prizes at each Year level, worth \$200 and \$100.

It is planned to present the prizes at a special event some time in September.

History Appeal

In conjunction with the Department of History, the Foundation has launched an appeal for funds to assist postgraduate students engaged in thesis research. Previous assistance has dried up in the wake of university budget cuts. CHF members should by now have received an appeal letter, and we would encourage all of you to make a donation, however large or small, to assist these students.

