

JIM GARDNER

A Memoir

by Geoff Rice

A supplement to the 2012 Jim Gardner Lecture

© Geoffrey W. Rice 2012

ISSN 1176-0443

Published by

The Canterbury History Foundation

P. O. Box 29-070

Christchurch 8540

William James Gardner ONZM (21 October 1915- 14 July 2012)

1. Early Life and Education

Jim Gardner was born on his father's farm on the Lyndon Settlement at Waiau, North Canterbury, in 1915. His grandparents had settled at Cust, and built the first flour-mill there, but his grandfather died in an accident, leaving his grandmother to manage the mill and bring up a large family. Jim's own father died soon after he was born, so he was brought up by his mother and grandmother (and later wrote about his grandmother for *The Dictionary of NZ Biography*). His mother leased the farm and took her young family to live in Christchurch when Jim was still a toddler. At first they lived in Matsons Avenue, Papanui, then at 25 Paparoa Street. (The house is still standing.)

Jim was educated at Elmwood Primary School and travelled there by tram down Papanui Road each day. He later told his children how he once ran around the back of a tram and into the path of an oncoming Ford Model T. Luckily, he fell between its wheels and it passed harmlessly over him. The driver – a woman – took him home to his horrified mother.

He then moved on to Christ's College (Julius House), where he was a top scholar and a keen cricketer, before enrolling at Canterbury University College in 1933 to study French and History.

The first-year undergraduate History courses in those days comprised surveys of the European 'Great Powers' 1815-1914, with brief forays into America and Asia in the nineteenth century. The only New Zealand history available was as part of British Imperial History since 1815. At second year, students covered the early modern period of Europe, 1494-1715, and the British Empire before 1793. The third year was devoted to eighteenth century Europe.

At honours the Constitutional History of England since 1485 was compulsory, with three other papers which included Political Thought and the Peasants' Revolt. Each course had only one lecture a week, and students were expected to read textbooks, write essays and pass a three hour exam, with very little further instruction.

Jim had a year as Literary Editor of the student newspaper *Canta*, working alongside a certain Denis Glover, who was keen on poetry and printing, but he had no wish to match Glover's beer consumption, or his pugilism. Instead Jim was active in the Student Christian Movement, where he met fellow French student Margaret ('Madge') Biggar, who had been dux of Ashburton District High School. (She was the headmaster's daughter.) Madge was to graduate with double honours in French and Latin.

Jim graduated MA in 1937 with Honours in History and won the Bowen Prize. His MA thesis examined 'The Effect of the Abolition of the Provinces on Political Parties in the New Zealand House of Representatives'. Jim once told me that he wrote his thesis with scarcely any direction or supervision, and had no idea whether it would pass or fail.

Jim was our last personal link with the era of Dr James Hight and Miss Alice Candy, who together comprised the staff of the History Department in the 1930s. Hight was also Rector of the College (1928-41), which may explain why he had so little time to spare for supervision. Nevertheless Hight was Jim's mentor, and Jim later told me of his great admiration for 'The Prof', especially his meticulous scholarship, his absolute honesty and his self-effacing humility, qualities that became characteristic of Jim's own career.

After a year at Christchurch Teachers' College, he went teaching at Sydenham School, where he was appalled to discover that working class boys rarely washed, and smelt accordingly. (They objected when he brought soap to wash their hair.) By now Madge was teaching Latin and French at South Otago High School in Balclutha, but despite the distance (and the disapproval of both their mothers) she and Jim became engaged in 1939. They were to have three sons and a daughter: Robert James McKinlay ('Mac'), Richard Ronald, Helen Mary and William Maurice ('Morry').

2. War Service

Early in 1942 Jim donned his Territorial uniform and set off for Trentham Camp, where he was drafted into the NZ Medical Corps as a medical orderly or male nurse. After minimal training he went to Fiji by the troopship *Taroona* and helped form the 22nd Field Ambulance, which was then sent to New Caledonia,

where Jim's knowledge of French proved useful. (The locals called him 'le Professeur', on account of his archaic academic grammar.)

From there his unit sailed to Guadalcanal and the front line of the Pacific War. Japanese planes were bombing American naval vessels, and casualties were brought to the New Zealand field hospital with terrible wounds. Jim recalled that in camp they were more at risk from falling coconuts than Japanese bombs.

After a brief return to New Zealand, in time for the birth of his first son, Jim's unit set sail for Italy, by way of Egypt and the Suez Canal. He arrived in Cairo just in time to attend his brother-in-law's wedding in the Anglican Cathedral, where to his great embarrassment his squeaking army boots announced his late arrival. He reached Italy in the depths of winter, and later declared that he had never felt colder, travelling by truck from Taranto to the front line. There he first smelt the horrors of a big battlefield.

Wherever he was posted during the war, Jim organised cricket matches, and in Italy he once amassed a pile of American cigarettes to make a deal with some Italians to lay down a concrete cricket pitch. (It may still be there.) On leave he managed to visit Bologna and Venice. He finally transferred to the Army Welfare Service as an education officer, ending the war in Bari.

3. University Teaching

After the war he returned to teaching for several years at Papanui Technical High School until he was appointed a lecturer in History at Canterbury in 1948, on a starting salary less than he was earning as a teacher.

In the small History Department of the 1950s he taught a wide range of courses, mostly in European history, and developed a special third-year paper on the French Revolution, based on primary sources. Dr John Wilson, notable Canterbury historian, recalls taking this course and sitting in Jim's study going through original documents line by line: he adds, 'I can't remember all my classes and teachers with that immediacy and clarity, which says a lot about his teaching. I learned in those tutorials how to get information from original documents both to establish what happened and to explain why it happened . . .

He was certainly one of the few teachers for whom I had genuine liking as well as respect’.

One of the leading British historians of the French Revolution at this time was George Rudé, who taught at Adelaide and then Flinders before he went to Canada in 1970. Rudé visited New Zealand in 1962 to lecture on his neo-Marxist interpretation. Though this did not sit well with Jim’s more liberal views on the revolution, they met and became friends. (As a student I was once deeply impressed to discover that Jim had helped to translate some of the primary sources for George Rudé’s profile of *Robespierre* (1967), a standard international textbook.)

In the fourth-year honours class, students were obliged to study by documentary analysis. In the fifties the choice was simple: either eighteenth century English politics with Professor Phillips, or New Zealand constitutional history using a typescript book of documents edited by D. K. Fieldhouse.

In 1961 Jim introduced the first undergraduate survey course in New Zealand history taught at Canterbury, as part of a second-year course entitled ‘Pacific and Asian History’. Phil May helped to teach the New Zealand component of this course, whose popularity demonstrated a strong demand for more New Zealand history. One of the textbooks used was Bill Oliver’s *The Story of New Zealand*, which had been researched and written in the Canterbury University College library when Bill was a member of the lecturing staff in the 1950s. (Bill once told me that New Zealand historiography was then so under-developed that he was able to read everything ever published about New Zealand history over a single summer at a desk in this one library.)

I can still recall Jim’s undergraduate lectures on New Zealand history in the 1960s. Though he retained the formal style of delivery of Hight’s generation, and was always serious in tone, one sensed his enthusiasm for the subject, and we all enjoyed his occasional ironical, even impish, asides. His lectures were carefully-crafted scripts, as I discovered when I gave some of them for him in 1973 when he went on leave.

Jim liked to get to know his students as people, and would take his honours students to the Gardner family bach at Leithfield Beach for weekend historical

discussions and debates. (We may also suspect that this was yet another excuse for more cricket!) Jim's own family did not escape his enthusiasm for history. He carefully researched his family tree, identifying the 'eight tribes of Gardner' in New Zealand, and established contact with distant cousins, seeking stories about the family. His work facilitated several Gardner family reunions, where his farmer cousins would greet 'History Jim', as they liked to call him.

Professor David McIntyre arrived to join the History Department in 1966 and recalls that Jim used to jog around Hagley Park in the lunch hour 'in order to keep fit to play cricket'. He had started this routine when he turned 50. David further recalls:

Jim was a wonderful colleague to work with – genial, cheerful, hard-working, modest, and very original in his interpretations. He was very concerned for my welfare, and when I caught a bad dose of 'flu in my first month he remarked anxiously, "I hope he's strong enough for life in New Zealand".

He was keen to introduce me to interesting aspects of New Zealand culture. He took me along with Jock Sherrard over to the West Coast to see Phil May unveil an Historic Places Trust plaque in Ross, and on the way we stopped in the mountains for a cuppa. Out came a funny little metal cylinder which he stuffed with twigs and lit up – it was a Thermette.

In 1967 New Zealand history became a full-year course at Stage I, and David suggested calling it 'New Zealand – Colony into Nation', borrowing from a well-known Canadian textbook, but Jim said we couldn't do that as there was still a question mark over the concept of 'nation'. In 1971 Jim and David McIntyre published *Speeches and Documents in New Zealand History* as a textbook for this course, and it remains a useful teaching collection of political and constitutional primary sources.

Len Richardson, whose 1968 MA thesis on West Coast coal miners had been supervised by Jim, returned with a PhD from the Australian National University in 1973 and helped Jim start the teaching of Australian history at Canterbury, one of the first such courses in New Zealand.

When Jim retired in 1976, his replacement was Chris Connolly, another ANU graduate, who was appointed as a specialist in Australian History.

With Professor Neville Phillips, Jim helped to revive the Canterbury Historical Association and organised its junior branch, which did excellent work in the schools. He was a committee member for many years, and finally served as president in 1976, his retirement year. In 1979 he was elected the association's first Life Member in recognition of a lifetime's support and service.

4. First major Work: *The Amuri*

While lecturing and raising a young family in a big house at 2 Hawthorne Street, Papanui (where in summer cricket nets were a feature of the front lawn and visitors would be invited to take a turn with bat or ball), Jim wrote his first book. *The Amuri: a county history* (1956) was a substantial and comprehensive study which set new standards for New Zealand regional history. It was commissioned by the Amuri County Council, and published with financial help from the Canterbury Centennial Association. Well-received at the time, it quickly sold out, and was reissued in an updated second edition in 1983. In his Foreword to the first edition, Sir James Hight referred to Jim's 'unusually wide and thorough' research, and his careful interpretation of North Canterbury history in the context of broader themes in Australian and New Zealand history.

Rollo Arnold's review of the second edition in the *NZ Journal of History* referred to 'the thoroughness of Gardner's original research, the balance of his presentation, and the maturity of Canterbury history in the 1950s' as reasons for the first edition's having worn so well over 25 years. He described the book as 'an encouraging illustration of the enduring qualities of good workmanship'.

5. Supervision of Research

Jim was a mentor to some notable New Zealand historians. We have already encountered Dr John Wilson, who followed in Jim's footsteps with his district histories of Cheviot and Waikakahi, and a large output on Christchurch and Canterbury historic places.

Philip Ross May's 1953 MA thesis on the West Coast gold rushes, supervised by Jim, was later expanded into a best-selling book with that title in 1962, reappearing in a revised second edition in 1967. Patrick O'Farrell, another of his students in the 1950s, went on to a distinguished academic career which made him a leading authority on the history of the Catholic Church in Australasia.

Gerald Hensley's 1957 MA thesis on 'The Withdrawal of British Troops from New Zealand, 1864-70: a study in Imperial relations' marked the start of his long career as a New Zealand diplomat and top civil servant, culminating in his headship of the Prime Minister's Department in Wellington. After his retirement, Gerald published a volume of memoirs, *Final Approaches* (2006) and an expert appraisal of New Zealand's relations with its wartime allies, 1939-45, *Beyond the Battlefield* (2009).

Brian Carrell, whose 1955 MA thesis was on the endowments of the Church of England in Canterbury, went on to become Assistant Bishop in the Anglican Diocese of Wellington.

In these years Jim also supervised an important group of MA theses on Canterbury elections, which made a major contribution to New Zealand political history. He was a 'hands-on' supervisor, covering drafts with helpful suggestions from his wide knowledge of New Zealand history.

Ned Bohan's 1958 thesis on the 1879 general election in Canterbury was the first of the series, which culminated with Clive Whitehead's thesis on the 1887 election. These theses seriously undermined the prevailing left-wing orthodoxy established by William Pember Reeves in his influential history, *The Long White Cloud* (1898). Many years later Keith Sinclair admitted to Jim that this body of detailed research had forced him to change his views on New Zealand's late nineteenth century political history.

After a career as an opera singer in Britain and Europe, Ned Bohan returned to New Zealand in 1987 and contributed an essay on Stafford to the *Dictionary of New Zealand Biography*, which he then developed into a full biography. This was soon followed by biographies of FitzGerald and Grey, as well as a series of historical novels set in nineteenth century Christchurch.

Ned Bohan remembers Jim thus:

Jim was a superb, demanding, but relentlessly cheerful and encouraging supervisor, ruthless with red ink emendations and insistent that not only should every statement and opinion be backed by evidence of meticulous research, but that one's prose must be purged of grammatical error. He played significant roles in both phases of my career as historian, for it was on his recommendation that Alex McLintock took me on as a research assistant for the *Encyclopedia of New Zealand*, then, thirty years later when I began work on the Stafford biography, Jim unstintingly offered advice. His letter of comments and notes after that book's publication was markedly reminiscent of those with which he had deluged me weekly as a thesis student.

He was still, at heart, my supervisor, yet he was always more than that, for through our mutual passions for music and cricket we became friends. (He was a tenor stalwart of the Royal Christchurch Musical Society for many years.) He faithfully followed my singing career until its very end, and he even read all my books, except, sadly, the most recent. One can ask no more of any friend.

6. Massey

Jim's own major research projects in these years were a history of the Reform Party and a biography of New Zealand's longest-serving conservative Prime Minister, W. F. Massey. His three articles and a slim booklet for schools on Massey were for many years the only reliable academic works on these subjects, and were often cited, but the big books never eventuated, mainly because the university would not fund the extended study leave he needed to immerse himself in the archives in Wellington. (However, he once confided to me that he never really warmed to Massey as a person, and it always helps a biographer to have at least some small spark of liking for their subject.) His research notes and interviews with Reform Party stalwarts were later deposited in the Macmillan Brown Library at Canterbury University.

7. Regional History Advocate

In 1957 Bill Oliver was editing the literary journal *Landfall* while its founder-editor Charles Brasch was on leave, and he invited Jim to contribute an article about New Zealand local history. With the ideas and details of his *Amuri* fresh in his mind, Jim wrote a seminal article entitled 'Grass Roots and Dredge Tailings: Reflections on Local History'. While part of the article commented on the spate of Otago centennial district histories that appeared after 1948 (and their deficiencies) most of the article expounded his lifelong convictions about the value of local and regional histories as building-blocks for national history, and correctives to what he called 'schematic history', especially Marxist history. (This earned him a sharp rebuke from Keith Sinclair at Auckland!)

Jim urged more thorough research in primary sources, and the full scholarly apparatus of footnotes and indexes, to improve the usefulness of local histories for other historians. He also suggested that the Historic Places Trust should organise a conference on local and regional history, and sponsor a journal in which both 'amateur' and 'professional' historians would be happy to publish.

These were prophetic words. The conference later came with the founding of the New Zealand Historical Association, and the journal later appeared in 1983, thanks to the initiative of John Wilson, as *NZ Historic Places*.

Jim's emphasis on local and regional history ran against the mainstream tide in New Zealand historiography at this time, led by Keith Sinclair, which had a strong nationalist and political emphasis. After Jim's retirement, the growth of social history in New Zealand university history departments led more and more thesis students to look for evidence and test-cases at the local level, while national-level political history tended to be left to the political scientists. Now it is hard to imagine New Zealand history without the fine-grained local studies of historians such as Erik Olssen, Rollo Arnold or Caroline Daley.

8. The Sherrard Award

Jim soon had an opportunity to put his ideas into practice. Across 1970-71 he raised funds almost single-handed from historical societies and historians all over New Zealand to set up the J. M. Sherrard Award in New Zealand regional history in 1972, as a memorial to his friend 'Jock' Sherrard. Jock had also served in the NZ Medical Corps and was a teacher who had written an outstanding district history of *Kaikoura* (1966) under Jim's guidance. They had been tramping companions in North Canterbury while Jim was writing his Amuri history, exploring the early stock-routes. Jock died suddenly in 1969 while playing tennis, and Jim resolved to establish an award in his memory. He then organised it for the next twenty years.

The biennial Sherrard Award has succeeded beyond expectations to raise scholarly standards in the writing of New Zealand local and regional history. The fund, augmented by further donations and a government grant, is invested with the Canterbury Historical Association and the prize is now worth \$1,000.

9. Canterbury Histories

In the fifties and sixties Jim was also heavily involved with the 3-volume provincial *History of Canterbury*, editing volume III, and editing and contributing to vol. II. This centennial project was plagued by delays and changes. It had first been planned as part of New Zealand's centennial celebrations in 1940, but was suspended because of the war, then one of the intended authors was killed in action in Italy. The project was revived in 1949 as a contribution to the Canterbury provincial centennial of 1950, with a large committee including representatives from both North and South Canterbury. The first volume covering the foundation period up to 1854 appeared in 1957, written by L. C. Webb and Carl Straubel. 'Unforeseen difficulties' delayed the production of volume II, covering the period 1854-76, so priority was given to the third volume, 1876-1950, written by Dr W. H. Scotter.

Jim was one of the general editors for this volume, and, as other members of the original committee died or retired, he became the driving force behind the completion of the project. He edited Volume II, which finally appeared in

1971, with political and economic chapters by Harry Scotter and Gerald Hensley, and five shorter chapters on cultural aspects. Jim contributed to the one on education.

Then at short notice he was called on to help complete the *History of the University of Canterbury* when the original author was compelled by ill-health to abandon the project. A completely fresh start had to be made in 1971. Jim's garage at his new house at 32 Hawthorne Street suddenly became filled with box-files from the university's archives, as he struggled to master a mass of detail in a very short time. He wrote the first section, on the period 1873-1918, while Eric Beardsley and Edward Carter wrote the next two sections. They got it done just in time for Caxton Press to produce a handsome volume for the university's centennial celebrations in 1973.

This unexpected project aroused Jim's interest in the early development of higher education in Australia and New Zealand, and he undertook further research in Australia, resulting in his 1975 Macmillan Brown lectures, subsequently published as *Colonial Cap and Gown* (1978). This was a comparative study of the five earliest Australasian universities, demonstrating the importance of trans-Tasman links in the nineteenth century. Jock Phillips, in his review in the *NZ Journal of History*, wrote that it was 'most readable, written with the characteristic elegance and wit of Canterbury historians'.

10. Historic Places Trust

Jim also poured his abundant energies into the New Zealand Historic Places Trust, as a co-opted member of the national board from 1958, and as chairman of the Canterbury Regional Committee. After the passing of the 1980 Historic Places Act, he was elected as one of the three regional representatives, serving until 1989.

As a member of the Buildings Classification Committee he undertook a regional pilgrimage around New Zealand, with Geoff Thornton and Chris Cochrane, and proposed the Trust's A and B classification system, in which buildings of national importance were accorded an A and those of regional importance a B.

In those years he was the life and soul of the Canterbury Regional Committee. He conducted field trips and got interested in cob cottage restoration, an obvious link with his North Canterbury farming origins. He was actively involved in the restoration of Tiptree Cottage, an early cob house on the outskirts of Christchurch, and the Esk Head Station homestead in North Canterbury, which he said was ‘the most enjoyable repair job’.

Jim wrote several reports for the Trust, and contributed articles to its journal, *NZ Historic Places*. He was also on the editorial committee that produced the landmark volume *Historic Buildings of New Zealand: South Island* in 1983.

John Wilson edited *NZ Historic Places* for twenty years, and recalls that Jim was one of a small group of historians including Ruth Ross, Neil Begg and Tim Beaglehole who played a critical role in ensuring that the Trust’s work was marked by strict adherence to the highest standards of historical accuracy and sound rigorous research. Jim insisted that historical significance should be given at least as much weight as architectural or aesthetic importance in the classification of buildings by the Trust.

11. An Active Retirement

Jim retired from Canterbury University as a Reader (Associate Professor) in 1976, to devote more time to his family (his son Morry had been seriously injured in a gliding accident), but his boundless energy kept him as fit and active as ever. He was the Canterbury over-60s road-running champion for two years, 1976-77, and with Phil May had converted half the History Department staff (and Charles Manning from Classics) to jogging in the lunch hour.

Jim’s passion for cricket never dimmed. John Cookson recalls that he was a shrewd spin bowler and a solid tail-end batsman for Old Collegians in the President’s grade well into his seventies. For many years he also captained the University staff team in its annual matches against the staff of Lincoln College, competing for ‘the Parton Ashes’, named after a notable professor of Chemistry. Jim also organised friendly cricket matches between the departments of Classics and History, and as a newly-appointed lecturer (but a hopeless cricketer) I participated in the last of these in the early seventies.

As a long-serving vestryman of St Paul's Anglican Church, Papanui (and for many years the only tenor in the choir), Jim wrote about its history and was involved in the preservation of this historic early Canterbury church. He also conducted walking tours of Papanui for the Historic Places Trust, pointing out historic homes and cottages and talking about the people who had lived in them.

12. The NZHA

In 1979 Jim was invited to be the founding president of the New Zealand Historical Association, with myself as secretary and Chris Connolly as treasurer. Before this there had been occasional conferences of university historians, mostly concerned with external examining and revision of the History curriculum in schools, but no national body existed that could speak for academics and teachers alike. (A New Zealand Historical Society had existed in the 1930s, based in the North Island, but had not survived the war years.)

The committee's first task was to organise a conference at Canterbury University in 1981, which attracted a large number of interested parties from all over the country. It was agreed that the NZHA subscription should include a subscription to the *New Zealand Journal of History*, which had been produced by the Auckland History Department since 1967. The aim of the NZHA was to bring together academics, teachers, archivists and local historians in a spirit of friendly collaboration. A newsletter was started, and links were established with historical societies across the country. A constitution was drafted, and Jim put a great deal of time and energy into making sure that the NZHA was established on firm foundations.

Unfortunately, when the executive moved to Auckland in 1982, most of these initiatives faded. The archivists and teachers set up their own regional associations, then their own national bodies. The NZHA has remained primarily an academic body, now rivalled in membership by PHANZA, the Professional Historians' Association of New Zealand/Aotearoa.

13. *Provincial Perspectives*

In 1980 Jim was pleasantly surprised to be handed a *festschrift* at a ‘This is Your Life’ party. Entitled *Provincial Perspectives* and edited by Len Richardson and David McIntyre, it contained six chapters on a variety of topics, not all confined to Canterbury. Bill Oliver, by now Professor of History at Massey University in Palmerston North, contributed a preface by way of tribute, and had this to say about Jim:

‘. . . the true bent of his character and interests . . . may be defined as a stress upon the authenticity of a particular community – the town, the county, the electorate, the province, the city, the university. The recognition and exploration of this particular social reality has always been informed by a quiet reverence towards the people who constituted it.

. . . In his writing and in his speaking, he can be pointed, sharp, censorious at times . . . But he has always managed to be respectful to the people in his pages’.

Bill then revealed that he had persuaded Jim to contribute a chapter on New Zealand’s nineteenth century economic history to the forthcoming first edition of the *Oxford History of New Zealand* (1981). Like all of Jim’s work, this was a careful and well-balanced survey, providing students with plenty of facts and statistics for use in their essays. It was retained, virtually unchanged, in the revised second edition of 1992.

Jim constantly reminded his students that nineteenth century New Zealand could not be understood without reference to Australia, and once again he was ahead of his time in this emphasis. The exchange of goods, ideas and people across the Tasman Sea has been never-ending, and its study has at last become a major theme in the present era of trans-national history-writing. Jim was later warmly approving of the initiative by Peter Hempenstall and Philippa Mein Smith to set up a NZ-Australia Research Centre in the History Department.

14. The DNZB Project

Again through his friendship with Bill Oliver, Jim became heavily involved in

the *Dictionary of NZ Biography* project. This started in the 1980s with lavish government funding (from lottery profits) and aimed at producing its first volume in time for the country's sesquicentennial celebrations in 1990. Unlike most other projects of this kind, and the previous *DNZB* edited by G. H. Scholefield for the 1940 centennial, the new dictionary adopted a 'slice' approach, devoting each of its five volumes to a few decades, with a deliberate editorial policy of including people from all walks of life, rather than the usual parade of mayors and politicians. Bill Oliver also insisted on the highest possible standards of scholarship and accuracy; some of the dates in the old *DNZB* were found to be wrong. A major effort was made to find previously neglected women, and Maori.

Jim's extensive range of contacts with Historic Places Trust volunteers enabled him to assemble a strong Canterbury Working Party, with myself again as his secretary. Canterbury also had the advantage of the Macdonald Dictionary of Canterbury Biographies in the Canterbury Museum, an extensive collection of handwritten file-cards based on newspaper research about nineteenth century Canterbury people. This enabled the Canterbury researchers to get off to a flying start, while some other regions had to start from scratch. However, not all of the carefully-researched nominations could be included in the printed volumes.

Bill Oliver's determination to include a cross-section of the population led to a memorable clash of opinion with Jim at a meeting in 1988. Jim objected to the inclusion of the notorious Australian bushranger Martin Cash, who was a Christchurch policeman but also a brothel-keeper in 1860, pointing out that many worthy pioneer women such as his own grandmother in North Canterbury had been left out of the final selection. After a brisk but good-humoured exchange of views, in which Bill stuck firmly to his policy, a compromise was reached; both Martin Cash and Jim's grandmother appeared in volume I, published on time in 1990.

Jim felt he had done his bit, and had another project to finish, so I took over from him as Canterbury Regional Convenor for the rest of the *DNZB* project.

15. *A Pastoral Kingdom*

By now Jim was 75, when most academics are reduced to pruning the roses, but in 1992 he published another classic of New Zealand historiography, *A Pastoral Kingdom Divided*, the inside story of the 1890s break-up of the Cheviot estate. This was a fascinating detective story, based on bank archives and personal correspondence, which punctured several orthodox myths about the Liberals' 'bursting up' of the great estates.

In his long and admiring review for the *NZ Journal of History*, Brad Patterson judged this book to be Jim's 'finest written contribution to New Zealand historical scholarship', adding that it was a work only someone of his breadth of knowledge could have attempted. He thought that Jim was 'New Zealand's most undersung, and modest, historical master craftsman'.

16. *Where They Lived*

Five years later, Jim self-published yet another book. *Where They Lived* (1999) was a collection of his previous articles on local and regional history, with some fresh research, stressing the importance of large families in the early development of farming in Canterbury.

Part One included his 1957 *Landfall* article, with his complementary articles on New Zealand regional history from the *NZ Journal of History* in 1979 and *Historical News* in 1980. An article comparing the founding of Nelson and Canterbury from *Historical News* in 1984 was followed by an updated overview of regional history from the *NZHA Newsletter* of 1989.

Jim's comments on these early pieces are fascinating, and show how his thinking matured and developed across the years.

Part Two began with a review of Erik Olssen's *Caversham*, hailed by Jim as 'a new light in local history', but mainly comprised three substantial commentaries on the *New Zealand Historical Atlas* (1997), Miles Fairburn's controversial 'atomisation' theory (and his criticisms of Jim's approach to community), and the major contribution of Rollo Arnold (who died in 1998) to New Zealand social history.

An excellent collection of photographs with explanatory captions demonstrated many of the themes Jim had been emphasising throughout his career, with statistical appendices to provide further support for his arguments about population distribution and family size in nineteenth century Canterbury.

17. The Jim Gardner Lecture

The Canterbury History Foundation was established in 1999 as a fund-raising body to assist the History Department of the University of Canterbury, and to promote historical research and publication in Canterbury, as well as to promote awareness of the social value of history in the community.

Jim's name will be remembered for many years to come thanks to the lecture series set up by the Canterbury History Foundation to honour his name. The annual Jim Gardner Lecture has already attracted some outstanding contributors, and in published form is deposited in public and university libraries. It will now be known as the Jim Gardner Memorial Lecture.

18. Public Recognition

In 2007 Jim was appointed an Officer of the NZ Order of Merit, for services to historical research, a long-overdue public recognition of a lifetime's achievement and dedication to the discipline.

The late David Hamer, Professor of History at the Victoria University of Wellington, once wrote in a review of *Provincial Perspectives* that Jim had 'over the years earned the deep respect of his fellow historians in New Zealand for his contributions to the academic study of regional history'.

Though his colleagues twice nominated Jim for the award of an honorary doctorate, his innate modesty made him unwilling to accept such an award, even though his published corpus amply justified it.

19. *Arbitration*

In 2009 Jim amazed us all by producing yet another book, *Prelude to Arbitration in Three Movements: Ulster, South Australia and NZ*. This was a slim paperback of 174 pp, but written with the clarity and liveliness of a young scholar's mind. At its core was an unpublished study he had written back in the 1950s, but he had expanded and updated it with further research in Australia.

Jim McAloon's long review in the *NZ Journal of History* described the book as a set of linked and reflective essays, showing unusual perception, with a sound grasp of the context in the three places under review: 'Any scholar should feel pleased about having written this book; it is an additional distinction that it comes at this point in so long and fruitful a career'.

20. End of the Innings

In 2009 the History Department at Canterbury celebrated the centennial of James Hight's appointment in 1909 as the first Professor of History at what was then Canterbury College, and Jim agreed to say a few words at the dinner held in the University Staff Club, along with David McIntyre, Gerald Hensley, Marie Peters, Ned Bohan and John Cookson. The centennial cake was cut by Jim, with Patricia Morrison, as the oldest surviving History graduates present.

Advancing age was slowing Jim down, but only gradually. He was still riding his bike well into his nineties, and he walked every day, whatever the weather.

The earthquakes of September 2010 and February 2011 seriously damaged Jim's house at 32 Hawthorne Street (the brick cladding of both end walls collapsed), but he and Madge preferred to stay put until repairs could be made. Like many older Christchurch residents, Jim was deeply saddened by the loss of so many historic buildings, but his everyday cheerfulness and optimism remained undimmed.

After a bout of pneumonia which proved hard to shake off, Jim's energy gradually ebbed until he died peacefully, surrounded by his family, on 14 July 2012. For a former expert on the French Revolution, it was an appropriate date: Bastille Day.

Erik Olssen, former Professor of History at Otago University, first met Jim at his MA viva in the 1960s, and has never forgotten the encounter: ‘Small, keen, alert, always with a smile and an acute observation – that is my abiding impression of Jim Gardner’. Erik also served with Jim on the Historic Places Trust, and when nominated for the Buildings Classification Committee he asked if this one was worth the extra time: ‘Jim was unusually definite. This committee, he assured me, would let me come eyeball to eyeball with the grass-roots of New Zealand history. And so I accepted, and so it proved to be’.

Jim Gardner was a remarkable New Zealand historian, an unrepentant South Islander and a proud Cantabrian, who has been an inspiration to us all for his devotion to the discipline and his dedication to worthwhile historical projects. Though short of stature, he radiated liveliness. Any conversation with Jim soon produced laughter. He made many friends and scarcely any enemies. Those of us privileged to have been his colleagues and friends over the years also knew him to be a man of great integrity, compassion and generosity.

Jim, we salute you.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I am grateful to Madge and her daughter Helen for sharing with me their memories of Jim, and for making available extracts from his notes about his life, written for the family in recent years.

I am also grateful to Ned Bohan, John Cookson, David McIntyre, Erik Olssen, Len Richardson and John Wilson for sharing their recollections of Jim.



Editorial staff of the student newspaper 'Canta' in 1934.



Graduation portrait, 1937



Jim and Madge, 1942



NZ Medical Corps in Fiji, 1942

Jim in front row, far right.



Jim in Venice, 1945



Gardner family, c.1957



Jim with his class at Papanui High School 1947.



History Cricket team, 1973

Back row, from left: Geoff Rice, Vincent Ham, Brian Wearing, Phil May, Neville Bennett, Charles Manning (Classics), Vincent Orange.

Front row from left: Jim Gardner, John Cookson, Geoffrey May, Luke Trainor.



History Department staff, 1976.

Back row from left: Ian Catanach, Linda Rickerby (Secretary), Geoff Rice, Craig Harlan, Alan Conway, Betty O'Dowd, John Cookson, Gowher Rizvi (visiting Fellow from Oxford), Graeme Dunstall, Len Richardson, Neville Bennett, Vincent Orange, Barbara Bellerby (Secretary), Brian Wearing.

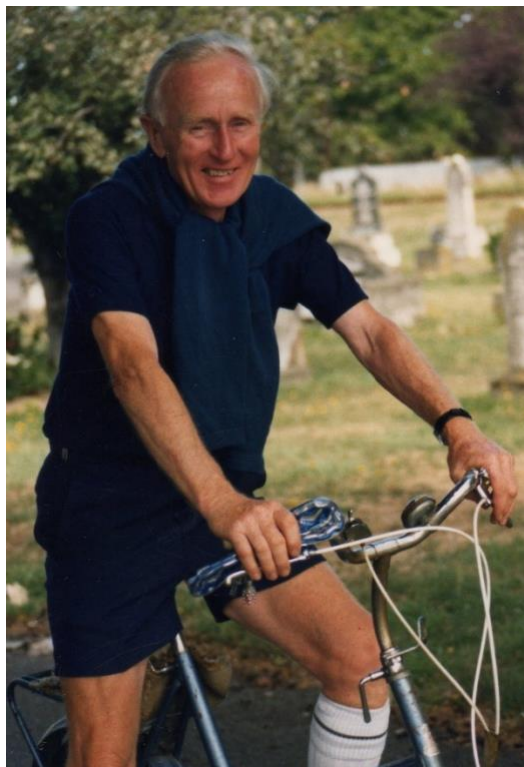
Front row from left: Sam Adshead, Jenny Murray (Tutor), David McIntyre, Marie Peters, Angus Ross (External Examiner from Otago), Jim Gardner, Mhairi Erber (Tutor), Otway Woodward, Michelle Downer (Secretary), Phil May.



Jim planting a tree on his retirement, 1976.



Jim on a tramping trip in Taranaki



Jim on his bike in the graveyard of St Paul's, Papanui.



Jim Gardner Memorial Seat, University of Canterbury, 2019

Plaque donated by the Canterbury History Foundation.

From left: Professor John Cookson (CHF Chairman), Dr John Wood (UC Chancellor and CHF President), Helen Gardner, Professor Geoff Rice (CHF Secretary).