

Phanzine

Newsletter of the Professional Historians' Association of New Zealand/Aotearoa

Vol. 21, No. 2, August 2015, ISSN 1173 4124

www.phanza.org.nz

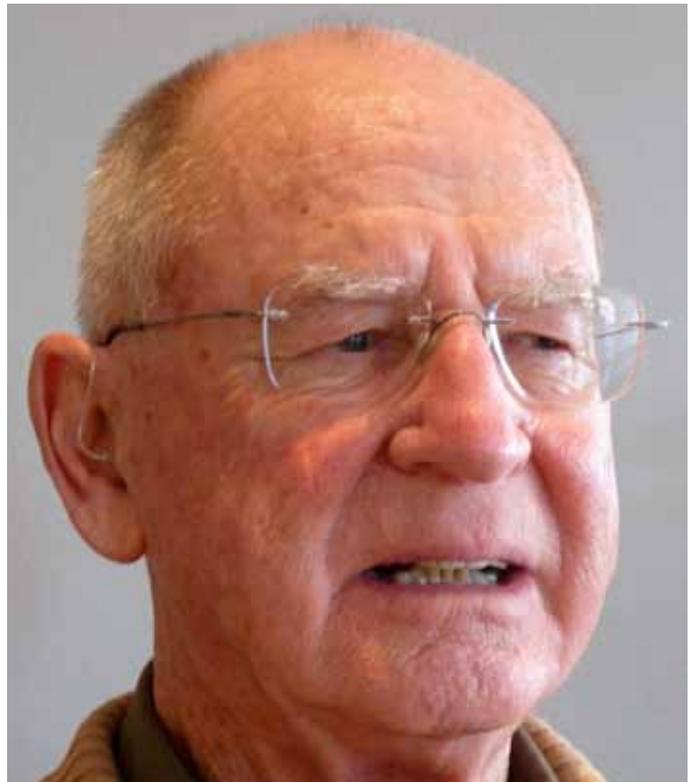
Ray Grover: archivist and novelist

David Young profiles long-time
PHANZA member, Ray Grover

A fit 84-year-old, Ray Grover is kicking back. He's just handed in the second of his war novels, this one on World War 2. It still awaits a title but, when published later this year, it will be shelved beside the first volume, his engaging and exacting *March to the Sound of the Guns* (2008). The first draws the lives, characters and fortunes of Kiwi soldiers before and through the Great War, a number of them reappearing in the new book.

An earlier novel, *Cork of War*, was set in the tumultuous Te Rauparaha era of the 1830s and 40s and was also meticulously researched from archives. In 1983 it won New Zealand's then supreme award (non-fiction), the National Book Award. It features Scotch Jock Nicol - a trader in mokomōkai (preserved, tattooed Māori heads) and a gunpowder maker - and his singular friendship with the Ngāti Toa chief Te Rangihaeata, whose last stand the warrior called Purutaua ('cork of war').

Ray's grasp of archives was realised as much in his work as an administrator as in his use of archival sources for creative purposes. He had a 30-year career in archives, starting at the Alexander Turnbull Library in 1959 under John Reece-Cole, and found himself as Chief Archivist of National Archives in 1981, a crucial time. For years the indifferently-led archives had languished in makeshift premises on



Vivian St, where the staff did their best in highly unpromising circumstances. The coming to power of the Lange-Douglas government in 1984 gave Ray his opportunity to make change.

When Graeme Hart's Rank Group managed to purchase the century-old Government Print business (at what was, controversially, about half its book value), Ray saw his chance to acquire the Government Print premises on Mulgrave St, which were spacious, brilliantly located and going begging. The building became, and remains, Archives New Zealand's Wellington repository.

► continues over page

INSIDE

- | | |
|--|----------------------------------|
| 1 Ray Grover: archivist and novelist | 8 News from the North |
| 3 Conference reports | 10 Victoria Square, Christchurch |
| 4 On being an 'official' historian | 12 PHANZA on Facebook |
| 6 Pukeahu National War Memorial Park: a review | 12 PHANZA Annual General Meeting |



PO BOX 1904, THORNDON,
WELLINGTON

► continued from front page

But Ray was often like this. I once joined him quietly getting alongside Prime-Minister-in-waiting Helen Clark, advocating for the protection and enhancement of archives, for sound processes and good management. A shrewd judge of character and a strategic thinker, in his books and in life he has been a defender of common decencies, the levelling power of rugby and the spirit of equality that made New Zealand the country it was before economic rationalism cast its spell.

Born in 1931, Ray was the eldest son of an itinerant teacher and his wife who moved their four children from one small rural outpost to the next. Whangaroa, Oromahoe (near Paihia), Parikino, Matamata and Taumarunui. 'Here I was learning history through my pores,' he said. 'The Māori children at Oromahoe proclaimed themselves as the children of Hone Heke - always with a grin, not a smile, but a grin.' So he developed a familiarity with Māori through these places? 'Yes, but I wouldn't over-rate that because I've met too many Māori experts in my life - some of them Māori.'

Wherever the family settled, history seemed to settle upon him. Whangaroa presented the local history of the burning of the *Boyd*, and the cairn that memorialised the beginning of Methodism in New Zealand; Matamata gave up Joshua Firth's famous Victorian tower; the Bay of Islands offered the oldest wooden and stone buildings in New Zealand, with the Waitangi centennial celebrations in 1940 close by and still vivid in his memory. Parikino and Taumarunui, both on the Whanganui River, stimulated again the Māori and settler presence in his historical imagination, influencing his first novel. Often primary schools picked up on these matters for teaching, and there were books like *Our Nation's Story*, which he devoured. Those who argue that little New Zealand history was taught in New Zealand schools then only anger him. He is a charming, not an angry old man, but 'bullshit', injustice and self-serving behaviour do get his dander up.

His other preoccupation as he grew up was the war. He vividly recalls the declaration of the Second World War, which occurred just as the family was about to return to Whangaroa at the end of the school holidays: 'We knew before we left Matamata, because our hosts had two sons and one was 20 and had stayed up all night listening to the BBC, so when we woke up we knew we were at war.' The war was to stimulate his life-long interest in, and admiration for, both soldiery and pacifism. A family of four sons he knew included one who served in the merchant navy and another in the second echelon, while a

third was gaoled for pacifism. They appear in his new novel. He is deeply informed on his subject, perhaps the more so because a good mate of his is distinguished military historian Chris Pugsley.

Ray survived several years' boarding school while completing his secondary education at Wanganui Technical College and then attended Victoria University, where he majored in Political Science. After enrolling for a Masters he decided that the two years would be better spent in travelling. He headed off to London, working in bars and nightclubs around Soho and doing deliveries for Selfridges. He then headed up to the Scottish Highlands, where he laboured on a big hydro development scheme near Inverness.

'People talk about how hard it was to be themselves in the 50s, but I don't think it's changed.'

All the time, one senses, he was still heading for being a writer: 'I knew a lot of aspiring artists and painters.' He made his way back to New Zealand overland in 1956, via Turkey where he worked with an archaeologist for six weeks, then hitched before buying a third-class train ticket across Pakistan-India: 'Alone, but never lonely.' Home, he drove trucks for the installation of the Hanmer-Nelson transmission line.

Back in Wellington he worked as a sprinting gas meter reader, so as to allow for both an income and time to write. He threw himself into his first novel, *Another Man's Role*. Published by Janet Paul in 1967, it is loosely based on the 1941 murderous Stan Graham episode on the West Coast, but the main character was drawn from a fellow worker, a Korean War veteran. Late 1950s Wellington found him in a small Bohemian enclave of NZLit: Maurice Gee, Louis Johnson and Marilyn Duckworth especially; Ian Cross, Fleur Adcock, and James K. Baxter were also there: 'I admire [Baxter's] poetry, most of it is great, but I didn't much like him.' Contrary to popular belief about that period, Ray is an ardent defender of the 1950s in New Zealand, as well as abroad. It was, he believes, a time that offered enormous freedom to those who availed themselves of it: 'People talk about how hard it was to be themselves in the 50s, but I don't think it's changed.'

So his next novel, 'which I might not finish', he laughs, will be set in the 1950s. I think there is every chance that we will see it.

Conference reviews

Marguerite Hill from Canterbury Museum reports on two conferences held in Dunedin

The first, held in late April at the same time as Dunedin's ID Fashion Week, was the Costume and Textile Association of New Zealand's 14th annual symposium. The theme of the symposium was 'Contexts of fashion: materiality and the body'. These conferences are always a visual feast and incorporate historical and contemporary topics. The presenters were a mix of practitioners, designers, academics, knitters and artists. Presentations covered topics as varied as the clothing worn by the heroines of dystopian science-fiction novels and the role of professional seamstresses working in early Sydney.

This year's highlights included Patricia Wallace's fascinating and beautifully-illustrated paper about surviving Māori cloaks and weaving that can be found in museum collections. Another highlight was Lucy Hammonds's discussion of MTG Hawke's Bay's exhibition about Whetu Tirikatene-Sullivan. Tirikatene-Sullivan's long political career was examined through her stunning wardrobe. A supporter of Māori and Pākehā designers alike, she wore garments that represented her Māori identity as well as her role as Minister for Tourism. Her sense of style and the use of Māori motifs on many of her garments made her stand out from her more staid Parliamentary colleagues. Another fascinating paper was from Claire Regnault, who spoke about the work of photographer Yvonne Todd. She brought life to the artist's sometimes disturbingly lifeless works through a discussion of the models' clothing and styling.

'Museums Aotearoa: Communicating culture' was held in early June. With a focus on communication in museums, there was an emphasis on science communication and new technology. Dr Phil Manning from the Interdisciplinary Centre for Ancient Life was a popular keynote speaker. A dinosaur expert, he spoke about tailoring scientific information to different audiences and media. Judging by the video clips he showed, he seemed to be up for anything that might encourage children to get excited about science.

The conference was opened by the Hon. Maggie Barry in her role as Minister for Arts, Culture and Heritage. Dunedin Mayor Dave Cull (her former *Garden Show* 'chippy', as the Minister pointed out) contributed to the plenary session, showing his deep understanding of the value of arts, culture and museums to his community.



Group at 'Fashion Spectacular 73', an event at the Overseas Terminal, Wellington, designed to raise money for HELP (Help Every Little Person). From left: Dr Denis J Sullivan, Whetu Tirikatene-Sullivan (Minister of Tourism), Aylene Drewitt (one of the organisers of HELP), Josephine Brodie (coordinator of the 'spectacular'). Further negatives of the Evening Post newspaper. Ref: EP/1973/1048/12-F. Alexander Turnbull Library, Wellington, New Zealand.

Highlights of the conference included being piped from the Dunedin Art Gallery to Toitū Otago Settlers Museum for the Museum Awards dinner, in true Dunedin style; and the presentations at Larnach Castle and Olveston House about the realities of keeping a historic house (or castle) afloat as a successful tourist attraction. The shorter sessions, especially the soap box breakfast, were the most fruitful, as they gave researchers and museum practitioners an opportunity to talk about the work that they were doing.

Next year's conference will be an Australasian affair, with a joint Australia and New Zealand conference to be held in Auckland.

On being an 'official' historian

Tim Shoebridge from the Ministry for Culture and Heritage reflects on his involvement with the First World War Centenary History Programme

In 2012 I briefly reviewed Hew Strachan's *The First World War* for this publication, praising the book's clarity and concision. The older 'classic texts' of First World War historiography, I opined, 'were aimed at people with a searing interest in military minutiae and an appetite for 500+ pages of dense and unrelenting text.' Strachan's book, by contrast, was interesting, enjoyable, and well-balanced between the war's competing narrative strands. 'Even the who-shot-who-from-which-ridge-with-which-gun sections - which, I confess, I was dreading - were easy to follow, and pitched just right for those like me who have to look up "bridgehead" and "enfilading" in the dictionary.' There have been many moments over the past three years when I've looked back nostalgically on these sentiments, my own personal phase of Edwardian innocence 'before the war'.

Since then I've been involved with two books in the First World War Centenary History Programme, and the days when I needed to look up 'enfilading' in a dictionary are, for better or worse, behind me. Co-writing *New Zealand's First World War Heritage* (2015) with my History Group colleague Imelda Bargas has been my main project, but I also spent 10 months in a supporting role on Damien Fenton's *New Zealand and the First World War 1914-1919* (2013). These are among the six titles being produced for the programme by the Ministry for Culture and Heritage. Six more from Massey University and one from the New Zealand Defence Force add up to a baker's dozen that will occupy a couple of feet of bookshelf space when completed.

I remember feeling slightly overawed by the gravitas of contributing to any 'official' history series, let alone an official war history series. The wall of red and green spines of the Second World War official history series loomed on our library shelves - almost 40 years of work by a variety of scholars, tens of thousands of pages embracing each theatre of war, each arm of service and many smaller units, as well as a two-volume history of the home front. The less-beloved, semi-official 1920s First World War campaign and unit histories occupied a single shelf nearby, presenting that war in the blow-by-blow chronological style of senior army officers cobbling history together from unit diaries and fading memory. What could I add to this massive body of work?

Our series, produced by a loose coalition of organisations, will not be 'official' in the same sense as the Second World War series, which was produced by an official war history unit which branded the phrase 'official history' on the cover of each of its volumes. But the Ministry's books in this series, at least, are funded by the state, and all the volumes go out with the imprimatur of the government's official commemorations on the front cover. Whatever its formal status, the reading public will regard it as 'official'.

For me, the challenge of such a project was twofold. On the one hand there was the weight of expectation of being an 'official' voice: people will naturally expect an 'official' history to be of high quality, its facts and interpretations beyond reproach. Equally important, at least in my imagination, was the need

I constantly shadow-boxed with imagined foes . . . They skulked in the back of my mind, their nostrils flared for subliminal messages, waiting to pigeonhole me as a chest-beating militarist or a sandal-wearing peacenik.

for my work to appear impartial when viewed from any angle. I constantly shadow-boxed with imagined foes - the self-proclaimed experts who lurk at both ends of the political spectrum, entrenched in narrow specialisms and wearing their deep convictions as badges of honour. They skulked in the back of my mind, their nostrils flared for subliminal messages, waiting to pigeonhole me as a chest-beating militarist or a sandal-wearing peacenik.

I soon realised the only sensible thing was to banish such thoughts and focus on writing the best book I could, in the hope it would be received and considered on its own merits.

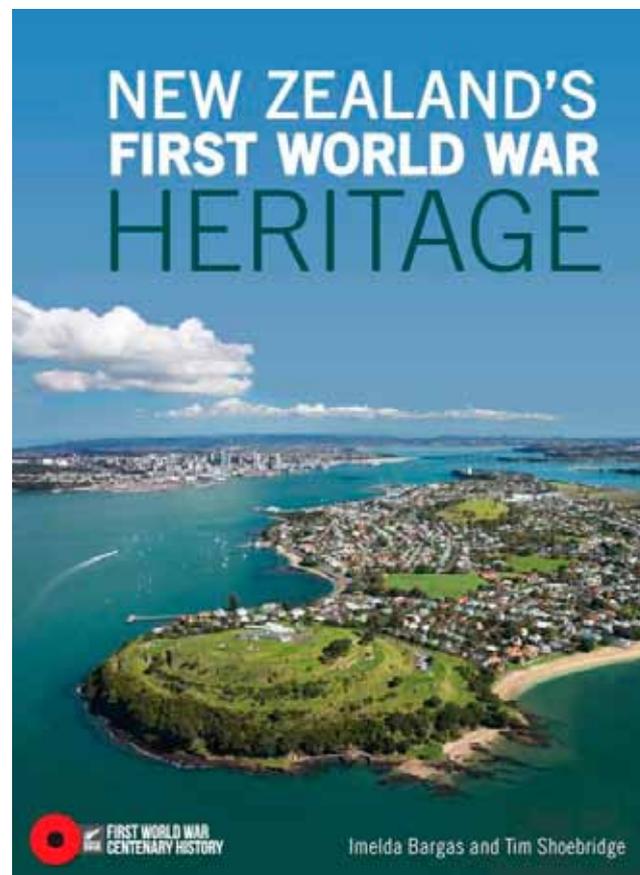
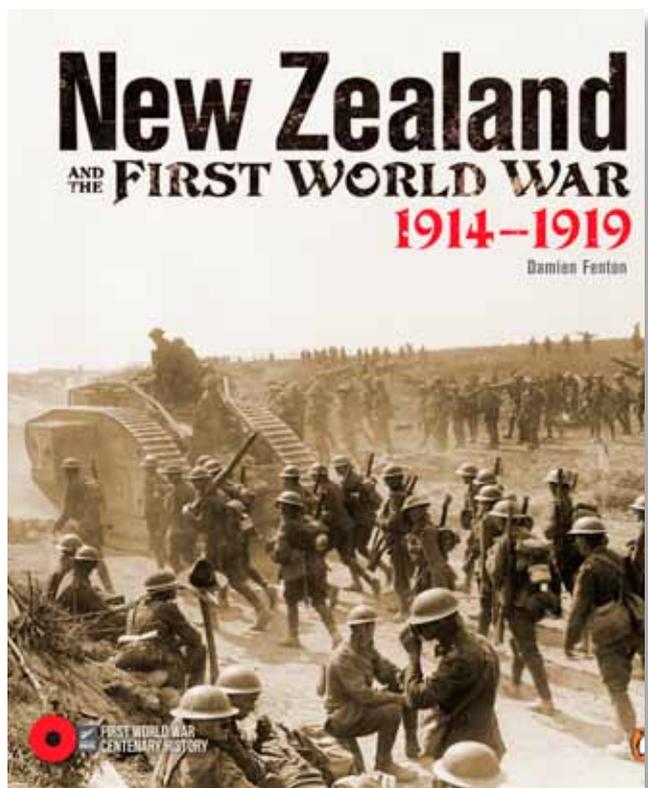
The new series was, of course, a different proposition from the two earlier ones, which had been produced in the aftermaths of the wars they documented. While lacking the immediacy of lived

experience, our series would draw on a century of scholarship and new research tools. There was no longer an appetite for 50 volumes of unit-based war history documenting the experiences of, say, the Base Paymaster's Depot or the Field Butchery, interesting as these might have been to specialists. Rather, we collectively set out to provide a broad overall coverage of the war's various stories that would appeal to diverse readerships.

The official historian's task becomes slightly more

last-posting of the official commemorations, or into a what-does-it-all-mean, why-are-we-celebrating-it backlash. Happily, neither scenario came to pass.

It's been a fascinating, enjoyable, and engrossing experience, and ultimately a great privilege, to be involved with the series. More titles will appear over the next few years, and soon enough the finished set will take its place alongside the earlier ones. Whatever posterity makes of it, I'll always be pleased to have played a small part in making it happen.



complicated when, as happened with *New Zealand's First World War Heritage*, the book was scheduled to be launched during the commemoration of the centenary of the Gallipoli landing, with public interest in the war at its peak.

Releasing books into such a climate of expectation is a mixed blessing. As an author, I was caught between an urge to embrace a never-to-be-repeated opportunity to promote the book, and a fear that it would be co-opted either into the flag-waving and

Pukeahu National War Memorial Park: a review

Pukeahu National War Memorial Park, in Mount Cook, Wellington, opened in April 2015. Michael Kelly – also a nearby resident – casts a critical eye over the new park

Pukeahu was expensive to build – controversially so. The combined cut-and-cover tunnel and park cost \$120 million, but it's also the outcome of a remarkable transformation of the landscape.

It's pertinent to reflect on the park's genesis. As part of his vision for the National War Memorial, which opened in 1932, architect William Gummer envisaged a grand boulevard sweeping through Te Aro (and its workers' slums) to Lambton Harbour. Needless to say, this was never built. Buckle Street, which became part of State Highway 1, continued to run past the National War Memorial, and traffic volume kept growing.

In 2005, the government acquired the land on the northern side of Buckle Street to create a park. Despite this, the Labour-led government, concerned about the cost, could not bring itself to commit the money to do the obvious thing, which was to remove the traffic entirely from in front of the memorial by building a tunnel. A proposal to realign the road to divert traffic away from the front of the Memorial ran into strife with the adjacent Mt Cook School. The Ministry for Culture and Heritage, manager of the Memorial and park, had the plans for the present park drawn up a decade ago, but seemed resigned to leaving the road where it was. Eventually, in 2012, with the centennial of the Gallipoli landing looming, the National-led government took the plunge and passed legislation to build the tunnel and put the park on top. It was a bold, if last-minute move, but perhaps it was politically easier for them than for their opponents.

Construction took 30 months, admirably efficient given the complexity of the job and the restrictions of the site, which included having State Highway 1 diverted directly north of the excavations. When the tunnel opened, in November 2014, the diversion and tunnel roof were covered over with fill, and work on the park began. For all intents and purposes, the whole thing was finished with several weeks to spare. It was opened by the Governor-General Sir Jerry Mateparae and Prime Minister John Key on 18 April 2015.

The park's utility was instantly vindicated when an extraordinary number of people – over 40,000

– attended the dawn service on Anzac Day. A crowd like that had not been seen at the site since the dedication of the National War Memorial on Anzac Day 1932. (The dawn service may have to return to Pukeahu, instead of being held at the Wellington Cenotaph, just to accommodate the number of attendees.) In the six weeks that followed, 30,000 people visited the National War Memorial and Hall of Memories. Some of those people were visiting the Great War exhibition in the former National Museum and called in on the way, but a great many, including countless school groups, were taking the opportunity to visit for the first time. The whole area is now busy from dawn to dusk, being a major walking and cycling conduit, a place to meet and of course a place of contemplation.

And so to the park itself, and to this viewer's eye, it's hard to escape three main features.

The first of these is the hard landscaping, which gives the park such a satisfying appearance. The elegant design and the concrete and stone finishes, sculptures and walls (all top quality) imbue the park with an appropriately stylish sheen. The parade ground, composed of thousands of granite pavers, is a magnificent venue for formal ceremonies and a splendid setting for the Carillon tower.

Then there are the tunnel portals. Arras Tunnel is aptly named after the town in France where, in World War I, New Zealand troops excavated a vast underground system and tunnelled under enemy lines. But it is surprisingly and, it must be said, disappointingly short. The carriageways at either end eat into the park a long way and, although there are undoubtedly engineering and cost factors to account for this, it robs the park of much-needed space. It's just about the only discordant feature of the whole place.

The Australian Memorial, much mocked for the Indian origin of its brilliant red stone, is a striking sight. As the stone weathers and the colour softens, its hue is starting to match the local red brick that features on nearby buildings. Manufactured by prisoners on Mt Cook itself, these bricks were used on the two buildings that bookend (and are integrated into) the park – the Mt Cook Police Station (1892) and the former Army General Headquarters



Pukeahu National War Memorial Park, looking towards the Australian Memorial

Building (1911), plus the nearby, historic Tasman Street brick wall. The Australian Memorial's presence is entirely appropriate, but its impact on the landscape is surprisingly modest. To these eyes, it should have been at least a third bigger.

There are other features of note. The two timber entrance pavilions are trilateral structures that are something of a counterpoint to the regularity of the park landscaping and aforementioned buildings. The grassed, terraced lawns are likely to soon be the home of more memorials from other countries. The area is festooned with objects and symbolic features. These include the haunting sculpture by Darcy Nicholas of a faceless wahine who represents women as the forgotten victims of war and conflict, and two large boulders carved with Maori motifs representing Ruapehu and Tongariro. The historic, relocated Home of Compassion Crèche (1913), now beautifully restored, is a highly visible feature of the eastern end of the park. All in all, quibbles aside, the space is very impressive.

Since its opening, it hasn't all been plain sailing for the park. Cyclists and pedestrians have complained about the tiny lips that delineate the park's roads from the open spaces, although that seems to have faded away as people get used to the design. More seriously, some of the park's steps and wall surfaces are being damaged by skateboarders, who were all over the place from the moment it opened. The Ministry for Culture and Heritage is hoping that public education will persuade them to take their boards somewhere else but it hasn't worked yet. Another issue is the speed with which motorists drive through the Tasman/Tory Street intersection. This is supposed to be a space shared with cyclists and pedestrians, but many drivers are barely slowing down. More traffic calming measures (perhaps large speed bumps at the entrances to the intersection) are needed.

By any measure, the park has been a success. It has quickly been adopted by locals and its present utility is obvious. It will be interesting to see how, and to what extent, the park is used by generations to come.

News from the North

Sandra Gorter reports on a very successful symposium in Auckland, and asks some Auckland historians about their work



Emerson Vandy from the National Library speaking about Papers Past to the Auckland symposium

‘Working with...’ symposium

On 25 July, PHANZA held a day-long symposium in Auckland, packed with speakers providing information and updates on useful tools and techniques for historians.

The venue for the symposium was kindly made available by the National Museum of the Royal New Zealand Navy (the Torpedo Bay Navy Museum). It was held in their conference facility, the School Room, with breaks for lunch and refreshments in the War Room next door. There was ample opportunity to mix with other historians and enjoy the unique location of the museum on Devonport’s beautiful waterfront.

Michael Wynd, historian with the Navy Museum, was MC for the day and opened the symposium with an introduction to the wealth of historical artefacts and information the museum holds. He also shared some of the stories of the men and women the museum’s collection represents.

The talk on stylish historical writing by Helen Sword of the University of Auckland made us all think more deeply about how we convey history, the tools we use to tell the story, and how best to communicate with our intended audience.

The passion and enthusiasm that many of us feel for our own

subject was encapsulated by Raewyn Paewai from Auckland Libraries as she told of the depth of resources available for those working with Māori information and, in particular, the information held within the Auckland Libraries system. She also told of snags and pitfalls that can be encountered when gathering information, and the rewards when those difficulties are overcome and the sought-for information is finally found.

Mark Stoddart spoke after lunch about the sheer quantity of information held by Archives New Zealand, where he is Auckland Regional Archivist. He

explained how the archives operate and, in particular, how best to use the Archway records system, what kind of information can be found, and how to access the letters, documents and information easily and quickly.

Sarah Murphy from the Office of the Ombudsman gave an enlightening talk on the workings of the Ombudsman's Office, and specifically what kind of information can be accessed using the Official Information Act, how the Act is applied, and recent examples to illustrate its use for the audience.

Papers Past is used by most historians and everyone learned

something new about this popular resource as Emerson Vandy from the National Library talked about what is currently available on the site and the latest projects about to be released by the Library.

The day was finished with an 'Out in the Open' session, chaired by Lucy Mackintosh, at the Patriot bar in Devonport, where those gathered shared accounts of the tremendous variety of their work. Topics ranged from landscape history to fashion, naval, genealogical, construction, war and many others. It was fascinating to hear the range of work undertaken by

other historians.

The day was truly a team effort. Many thanks to the Navy Museum for their beautiful venue, to all of the speakers, and to the Auckland team of historians: Michael Wynd, Angela Lassig, Debbie Dunsford, John Adam, Lucy Mackintosh, Sandra Gorter and to Louise Shaw who coordinated the catering in the face of a last-minute rush of registrations, valiantly supported by PHANZA Treasurer Eileen Barrett-Whitehead, who had come up from Wellington for the day and helped Louise prepare lunch and refreshments for everyone attending.

Auckland historians

At another recent get-together, some Auckland-based historians talked about their research – here is what they said.

DEBORAH DUNSFORD

What is your current field of study?

I'm writing a history of Mount Albert for the Mount Albert Historical Society to be published at the end of 2016. The suburb had its own council until it amalgamated with Auckland City in 1989 and there is still a strong sense of its individuality. By the 1880s, it was one of Auckland's spacious and prosperous suburbs. Businessmen who had done well built grand and beautiful homes in Mt Albert and travelled into the city each day.

I am also interested in the history of my own suburb of Milford. Our local residents' association organises an annual event as part of the Auckland Heritage Festival. We have an afternoon of live music, vintage cars, and show our collection of historic photos.

What has been your favourite tool or resource?

The Auckland City Archives has been a fantastic resource for Mt Albert, but I have to say I'm still in love with Papers Past. Another decade please, National Library!

LUCY MACKINTOSH

What is your current field of study?

I'm mainly concentrating on my PhD at the moment, which is a cultural history of several historic landscapes around Auckland: the Domain, One Tree Hill (Maungakiekie), the Otuataua Stonefields in Mangere. It focuses on the interactions between humans and their environment and the ways in which people crafted narratives of identity through each of these places. For my paid work I've been writing registration reports for Heritage New Zealand Pouhere Taonga and researching

the history of Cornwall Park for the Cornwall Park Trust Board's 100-year master plan.

What has been your favourite tool or resource?

National Archives, City Archives, survey maps, archaeological records, Papers Past, Auckland Museum records, Māori Land [Court] minute books and just recently all the wonderful records that John Adam has so kindly lent me on the Auckland Domain.

JOHN ADAM

What is your current field of study?

I'm currently doing research on a wall for a property developer, guided by Auckland Council, on a property in Gillies Avenue. I'm looking at the history of the wall in the context of a grand garden that covered this area, that was developed in the early twentieth

▶ continues over page

► continued from page 9

century by Alfred Kidd. I'm also doing a report for Auckland [Council] on the Three Kings, looking at the history of the extensive stone walls that run right through the private and public residential lands from pre-contact, basically extending the work of archaeologists.

What has been your favourite tool or resource?

Auckland Museum, their advisors were making field trips in the 1930s and taking wonderful photographs.

LOUISE SHAW

What is your current field of study?

I'm following up on an Australian woman who helped to start the physiotherapy schools both in Sydney and Dunedin, it's an extension of research I did for the centenary of the Physiotherapy School at the University of Otago. So I'm actually working with Australians more at the moment than I am with Kiwis.

What has been your favourite tool or resource?

It's hard to choose. There was the sheer delight of eventually tracking down family descendants in Sydney and being able to share email correspondence with them about their maiden aunt. An excuse to visit the archives at the Royal Prince Alfred Hospital in Sydney was also very productive.

SANDRA GORTER

What is your current field of study?

I'm doing a history of HEB - one of the 'big four' of New Zealand's construction companies. They're really interesting because although they've been involved - and not as junior partners either - building iconic works like the Arras Tunnel and Transmission Gully in Wellington, and ALPURT and Highbrook interchange on Auckland's motorway, they've had an active policy of trying to have a nil public profile, linked to their acute awareness of how New Zealand's 'tall poppy' syndrome works. Up until very recently they weren't run as a corporate and even today there's a very tangible sense of 'family' in the company.

What has been your favourite tool or resource?

The tool I've used the most are the hundreds of interviews I've done, and as they're mostly the nicest people this work has been a real pleasure. I've been linking HEB and the construction industry with the country's politics and economic cycles which show up starkly in this industry.

Victoria Square, Christchurch

Geoff Rice explains how his research was able to contribute to public discussion about an important feature of the Christchurch landscape

My history book *Victoria Square: Cradle of Christchurch* was published last November by Canterbury University Press in the midst of public outcry over plans to remodel this green and leafy part of the quake-ravaged city. The Canterbury Earthquake Recovery Authority (CERA) had released a plan to replace the trees and curving paths of the 1989 redesign with a large square of lawn, like a parade ground, surrounded by straight paths and walls. The statues would be moved (yet again) and one side of the open space would be occupied by food stalls.

I was invited to speak at a public forum held at the restored Knox Church and said that, while the history of Victoria Square recorded many changes over 150 years, the city planners of the 1980s seemed to have got it right, and the square had become a much-loved public space. It was one of the few parts of the inner city that came through the earthquakes of 2010-11 almost unscathed. Some bits were broken, like the Bowker Fountain, and needed fixing, but the basic design was sound and should not be changed.



View across Victoria Square, Christchurch, showing statues of Queen Victoria and Captain Cook, 7 June 2012. Effects of the Canterbury earthquakes of 2010 and 2011, particularly of Christchurch central business district (CBD). BeckerFraserPhotos: Photographs relating to the Canterbury earthquakes of 2010 and 2011. Ref: PADL-000767. Alexander Turnbull Library, Wellington, New Zealand.

Having stuck my neck out as a public historian, I was invited by CERA to join a Community Reference Group to advise on the repairs and remodelling.

CERA was forced to pause, and called for public submissions. Over 2,000 citizens expressed their views. Their overwhelming message was that Victoria Square should be left as it is, and CERA's budget of \$7 million for the revamp would be better spent elsewhere, repairing damaged roads and infrastructure. Having stuck my neck out as a public historian, I was invited by CERA to join a Community Reference Group to advise on the repairs and remodelling.

Analysis of the public feedback reinforced the message of the public meeting. Commercial uses

such as food stalls were firmly rejected, and the statues should stay where they are, people said. The November plan was scrapped.

However, Victoria Square is part of CERA's Avon River Precinct Project, and some changes will need to be made alongside the river to link with a proposed cycleway and art trail. Grant Edge, one of the landscape designers of the 1980s redesign, is also on the Reference Group, and is determined to make sure the bureaucrats respect the public's wishes. Though the public outcry failed to make a bestseller of my book, my research helped to make it a well-informed debate.

Postscript: A draft Victoria Square restoration plan was released for feedback in July, with submissions closing on 31 July. Feedback from this latest round of consultation will be incorporated into the final Victoria Square restoration plan, in conjunction with the Community Reference Group. The final plan is due for release in September.

PHANZA Executive Committee

Ewan Morris (President), Ministry for Culture and Heritage president@phanza.org.nz

Karen Astwood (Secretary), IPENZ and freelance historian secretary@phanza.org.nz

Eileen Barrett-Whitehead (Treasurer), freelance historian treasurer@phanza.org.nz

Sandra Gorter, freelance historian

Marguerite Hill, Canterbury Museum

Paul Husbands, Waitangi Tribunal

Lucy Mackintosh, freelance historian

Margaret Tennant, freelance historian

David Young, freelance historian

Phanzine is published three times a year by the Professional Historians' Association of New Zealand/Aotearoa.

You can contact us by mail: The Editor, *Phanzine*, PO Box 1904, Thorndon, Wellington

or at editor@phanza.org.nz

This issue was edited by Ewan Morris.

Disclaimer: Opinions expressed in *Phanzine* are not necessarily those of the editors. Photos and illustrations are credited where applicable.

© PHANZA 2015



PHANZA on Facebook

In June this year, PHANZA expanded its social media presence by creating a Facebook page: <https://www.facebook.com/ProfHistoriansNZ>. This is another means of promoting interaction among our members, and with others interested in PHANZA's activities. It will not replace the notice emails sent directly to members, however. Content suggestions for the Facebook page can be sent using the page's

messaging function or by emailing secretary@phanza.org.nz. Among other things, we welcome notices about books our members have recently published.

Also, a reminder that PHANZA has a Twitter account, expertly managed by Marguerite Hill, which is a great way to learn about things going on in the wider history world: <https://twitter.com/phanzasecretary>.

PHANZA Annual General Meeting

PHANZA's AGM was held on 14 August at St Andrew's on The Terrace, Wellington. Ewan Morris was elected as the new President, while Karen Astwood and Eileen Barrett-Whitehead were re-elected as Secretary and Treasurer. Lucy Mackintosh from Auckland has joined the PHANZA Committee as a new member (you can read about Lucy's work in 'News from the North' elsewhere in this issue).

The meeting thanked outgoing President Bronwyn Dalley for her huge contributions to PHANZA not only over the past year but ever since PHANZA started. (She was our first President 20 years ago!)

Outgoing Committee members Margaret Pointer, Geoff Rice and Elizabeth Cox were also thanked for their valuable work on the Committee.

There was a useful discussion of amending PHANZA's Constitution, a matter on which the

Committee is currently seeking members' feedback. Some proposals about Constitutional amendments were included in the documents for the meeting, and have been circulated to members for comment.

Please send feedback to president@phanza.org.nz, or by mail addressed to the PHANZA President, by 30 September 2015. Once members' feedback has been received, a revised version of the Constitution, indicating proposed changes, will be prepared and circulated to members.

Proposed amendments to the Constitution would be put forward for approval at the next AGM.

The meeting ended with an interesting discussion of what it means to be a professional historian; who should be allowed to call themselves historians; and whether the term 'public historian' is more useful than 'professional historian'.