

Canterbury Historical Association

THE J. M. SHERRARD AWARDS IN

NEW ZEALAND REGIONAL AND LOCAL HISTORY

This biennial award was inaugurated by W. J. Gardner in 1972 to commemorate the life and work of the late John ('Jock') Sherrard, author of *Kaikoura: A History of the District* (1966), and to encourage scholarly standards in the research and writing of New Zealand regional history. The award is administered by the Canterbury Historical Association and currently has a value of \$1,000 which may be divided if there is more than one work deserving a major award. No application is required.

Seventeenth Judging (2012) for books listed in the National Library Catalogue in 2002 and 2003

The award has been in abeyance for almost a decade, due to other demands on the organiser's time, but efforts were made to revive the award in 2010, only to be further delayed by the Christchurch earthquakes and the illness of one of the judges. It is our intention to make annual awards over the next few years in order to make up for lost time.

The judges in 2012 were:

- Professor Geoffrey Rice, University of Canterbury (Organiser)
- Associate Professor Caroline Daley, University of Auckland
- Associate Professor Jim McAloon, Victoria University, Wellington

MAJOR AWARDS FOR 2002-2003:

Colin Amodeo, with Ron Chapman, *Forgotten Forty-Niners: Being an account of the men and women who paved the way in 1849 for the Canterbury Pilgrims in 1850* (Christchurch, Caxton Press, 2003)

Deborah Dunsford, *Doing It Themselves: The Story of Kumeu, Huapai and Taupaki* (Auckland, Kumeu District History project, 2002)

Roberta McIntyre, *The Canoes of Kupe: A History of Martinborough District* (Wellington, Victoria University Press, 2002)

HIGHLY COMMENDED:

Carol Dawber, *Inheriting the Dream: Cooperative Dairying in the Tasman Region* (Hawera, NZ Milk Products [Fonterra], 2002)

Bruce and Don Hamilton, *Never a Footstep Back: A History of Wanganui Collegiate School, 1854-2002* (Wanganui Collegiate School, 2003)

Scotts Gap: A History of the People and the District (Otautau, Scotts Gap Book Committee, 2002)

Judges' Comments:

MAJOR AWARDS

Forgotten Forty-Niners

This is a splendid book, thoroughly-researched, profusely-illustrated and well-written, with an excellent index, impressive bibliography and nearly thirty pages of informative endnotes, some of which are miniature essays in themselves. The structure is broadly chronological with thematic chapters interspersed. There are many useful maps, and numerous side-boxes containing primary evidence or explanations of contemporary terms. Whereas the author's previous book in the same format, *The Summer Ships* (2000), concentrated on the Canterbury immigrants of the early 1850s and their families, this work ranges more widely, with much detail on the early surveys of the Canterbury Block in Part One, and chapters devoted to the building of Lyttelton, public works, early Christchurch and the response of local Ngai Tahu in Part Two. Five appendices provide lists of names and explanations of place-names, along with a glossary of colonial expressions and a description of trigonometrical survey technique. The standard of design and production is very high, as we have come to expect from Caxton Press, with several sections of colour plates.

This is a major contribution to early Canterbury history, and to the settlement phase of New Zealand, setting a high standard for historians of other regions. The research behind some of the lists of names has been extraordinary, including a trip to Tasmania to track down the ex-convicts who worked for Captain Thomas in the building of the port town of Lyttelton. Though immensely detailed, the text is lively and often amusing. This is a 'must-read' for everyone interested in early New Zealand history, a rich and fascinating book.

Doing It Themselves

Written by a Masters graduate of the Auckland University History Department (who has since embarked on a PhD thesis), this is a very worthwhile and substantial district history, with excellent indexing, bibliography and referencing. It is a well-designed small-format paperback set in an attractive typeface (Adobe Garamond) which makes it easier to read than most of the densely-packed magazine-style local histories. It is concerned with the river valleys of Kumeu, Huapai and Taupaki which form the western headwaters of Auckland's Waitemata Harbour. (There is no location map, apart from an historic map on p. 36 and an undated subdivision map on p. 59.) The structure is broadly chronological, with chapters on the railway, kauri logging and gum-digging, orchards and dairying, community services, and domestic life, 'Frugal Times' in the 1930s, the impact of World War II (literally, when a USAAF Flying Fortress crashed at Brigham's Creek on 9 June 1942), post-war grape-growing and wine-making, the 1954 floods, and finally the transformation into 'ten-acre block' country. More than in most local histories, there is sensitivity to Maori land loss as European settlement advanced. Though based on extensive research and interviews, the evidence has been well-digested to produce a coherent narrative. Genealogists may lament the lack of detail on individuals and families that is typical of the compilation-style local history, but instead there is a distinct gain in clarity and analysis.

The Canoes of Kupe

Martinborough is a district rather than a region, but this very fine study has many of the hallmarks of a successful regional history, setting the district in a wider context and showing how it exemplifies certain themes in New Zealand's national history. Produced by an academic press, it has passed the close scrutiny of editors and proof-readers, with excellent indexing, bibliography and referencing. The earlier chapters are meticulous and nuanced on the advance of European settlement, and its impact on Ngati Kahungunu, but the chapters on the colourful 'Johnny' Martin's impact on the district as land speculator, politician, and runholder tend to be a little too celebratory at times. His grandiose plans for the township named after himself (laid out in the form of a Union Jack) failed to materialise, yet he left a fortune to be shared by his descendants. Relations between settlers, Maori and the state in the late nineteenth century are analysed expertly. More could have been made of some aspects of the district's development, especially between the world wars, but the more recent advent of vineyards and life-style retirees from Wellington is well-described.

HIGHLY COMMENDED

Inheriting the Dream

This is a fine example of the commissioned history, written by an experienced local historian with six illustrated histories and three novels to her credit. Though the bibliography is brief, the book has an excellent index and is well-designed, with a reader-friendly typeface. The structure is chronological, proceeding approximately decade by decade from the early cream cooperatives through 'Better Herds and Greener Pastures' to amalgamation, expansion and 'Adding Value', leading up to the formation of Fonterra in 2001. There are numerous illustrations, with good captions, and boxes with a photo and brief biography of key people across the years. It may surprise some readers how prone modern dairy factories are to the risk of fire. There is a clear location map at the start, and lists of directors, secretaries and managers are tucked away at the back. The book is well-written, with nice touches of humour and even a few 'yarns', yet is clearly based on solid research in minute books and company records. Future business historians will probably wish there had been more detail on financial matters, and historians would have wanted more on the broader context of farming and links with local merchants in the region, but this book is a model of its kind: lucid, readable and well-balanced.

Never a Footstep Back

At 600 pages this is a massive school history, but it has 150 years to cover and Wanganui Collegiate has national importance as one of a handful of elite private schools that has contributed a significant proportion of New Zealand's leaders and sportsmen. Sport does loom rather large, but, as the authors explain, that was the way it was. The structure is straightforwardly chronological by headmasters, with an excellent index and numerous endnotes. The research effort has been exhaustive, yet the writing is lucid and entertaining, and the tone is not unduly celebratory. There are numerous illustrations, but it is a pity that so many are of poor quality, especially the more recent ones. There is a good colour section, dominated by sport, and useful side-boxes explaining particular episodes or events. The school faced major financial problems in the 1990s, and these are discussed frankly and impartially, but at the time of writing the school was once more 'in good heart'. This is a solid school history, but somehow not quite up to the high standard of Don Hamilton's superb history of Christ's College.

Scotts Gap

This district lies 13 km north-west of Otautau in Southland, and was named for the early settler Matthew Scott whose run originally encompassed most of the district from 1857 to 1873. Though compiled by a committee, with different authors for different parts and many contributed sections, this is one of the best of recent district histories published in New Zealand. It has an excellent index, and though there are no footnotes, the sources are clearly acknowledged at the start. The core of the book comprises family histories, and some of these are fascinating, but all of the essential features of a district history are covered, from schools, churches, halls and sawmills to roads, railways, drainage and mail services. Farm titles and the school roll are placed at the end. This is a substantial district history, well-edited and proof-read, but the small typeface makes some pages appear rather dense and hard to read. It is a great credit to all of those involved.

Sixteenth Judging (2004) for books listed in the National Library Catalogue in 2000 and 2001.

MAJOR AWARDS:

Paul Monin, *This is My Place: Hauraki Contested, 1769-1875* (Wellington, Bridget Williams Books, 2001)

Russell Stone, *From Tamaki-Makau-Rau to Auckland* (Auckland university Press, 2001)

HIGHLY COMMENDED:

Garth Cant & Russell Kirkpatrick (eds), *Rural Canterbury: Celebrating its History* (Wellington, Daphne Brasell Associates & Lincoln University Press, 2001)

Dinah Holman, *Newmarket Lost and Found* (Auckland, Bush Press, 2001)

SPECIAL COMMENDATION:

Leslie Dew, *The Great Northern: the story of the Waiau Branch Railway* (Christchurch, Weka Pass Railway Inc., 2001)