

Newsletter – December 2009

2010 Community Historian

The Canterbury Community Historian grant for 2010 has been awarded to Dr Jean Garner, writer of the 1995 biography of Sir John Hall. She will be preparing the publication of letters written in the 1860s to a female relative in England by four women members of the Hall family.

Dr Garner will write introductory and concluding essays, complete annotations, and work on the selection of illustrations, a bibliography and index. The letters have already been transcribed by Mrs Kate Foster, at Terrace Station, where they have been added to the comprehensive archives of Hall books, documents, and papers.

These interlocking letters open a rare window on the lives and thoughts of women in Christchurch, Timaru, and on a sheep station, sometimes offering different interpretations of the same events, and also insights into the domestic lives of George, Thomas, and John Hall.

Dr Garner and Mrs Foster have found that the letters reveal how the writers adapted to the colonial environment, what they missed after emigrating, their focus on the lives and education of children, and their adjustment to difficult travel and intermittent communication. Many letters touch on social life, religion, health, and friendships. Publication in 2011 is projected.

Museum to Publish Adamson Pictures

In the middle of next year the South Canterbury Museum intends to publish the book written by our Community Historian, Rhian Gallagher, on the work of the Mount Cook guide and photographer, Jack Adamson.

This is expected to be a fine presentation of outstanding alpine photography drawn from the Adamson collection of glass plates and prints in the museum. It is likely to accompany exhibitions of the pictures in Timaru, at Mount Cook, and elsewhere.

The Foundation has reserved \$2000 to assist with the cost of publication.

Up-to-the-Minute History of the Port Hills

Phillips and King have added a third splendid book to their series of revival publications. This one is more than a well produced facsimile or reprint: it is a complete revision and updating by Gordon Ogilvie of his 1978 treasure house, *The Port Hills of Christchurch*.

Here is history, from Maori times, that connects with today. This book is really two dozen stories of the settlements, valleys and other landscape features, suburbs, major properties, and events, from Godley Head at the east end of Lyttelton Harbour to Gebbies Pass at its head. A definitive account of Harry Ell and the all-important Summit Road between those points ends the tour.

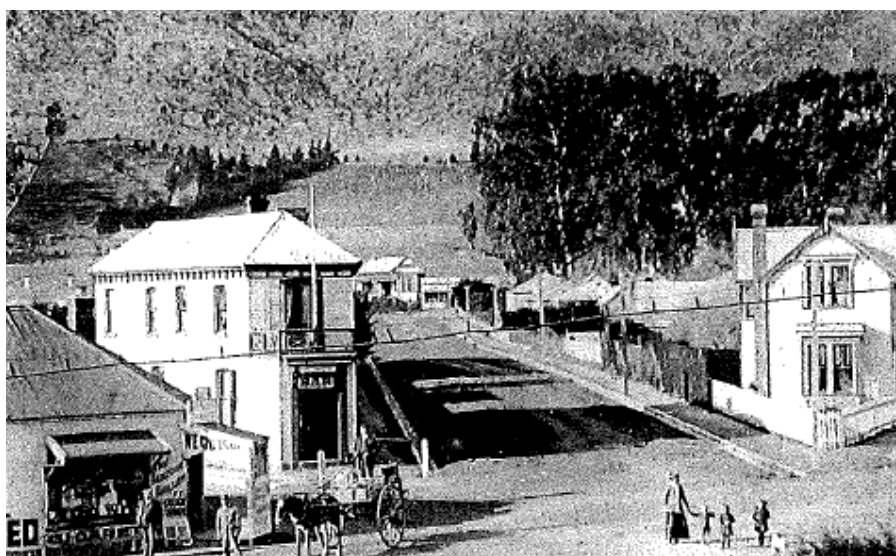
“Without the Port Hills giving distinction to its southern skyline, Christchurch would be a scenic disaster,” says Gordon Ogilvie in his introduction. “The hills are its salvation.” His stories show how the hills have given handy relief and recreation to Christchurch citizens; how residential development, industries, bird and plant life distinguish the slopes and valley floors; and how the challenges, opportunities, and inspiration of life on the hills have attracted or influenced thousands of people.

Indeed, if the characters in these stories, the politicians, entrepreneurs, farmers, the military, the writers, artists, engineers and traders, rascals and villains, adventurers, sports people and other hillsiders were struck from Christchurch history the city’s story would also begin to look rather flat.

As to be expected from Mr Ogilvie, relevant anecdotes flow, and the telling ripples with names and evocative detail; rows, scandals, crimes, as well as great achievements, skills and foresight write social history. The tour provides a veritable who’s who and pauses here and there for the histories of churches, schools, pubs, and clubs. No wonder, and for the benefit of researchers, does this book need more than eighteen metres of index for its 344 pages.

The RRP is \$65. The University Bookshops in Christchurch have signed copies. Members of the Foundation may order a post-free copy by phone if this is more convenient: 0800 827 266.

Earlier books in this series have been a reprint of Gordon Ogilvie’s *Banks Peninsula; Cradle of Canterbury* and a facsimile of Robert Logan’s 1987 comprehensive *Waimakariri; An Illustrated History*.



View of Heathcote Valley shops, 1900.

The Godley Gifts – E J FitzGerald's Watercolours

Members who would like to view FitzGerald's watercolours painted in the first years of the Canterbury settlement can inspect them online. A huge sum has been spent on reproducing these and the Seadrift picture story that FitzGerald gave to Arthur, the son of J R Godley. A limited edition of the three volumes is available. Haydn Rawstron and the John Robert Godley Memorial Trust have arranged the online viewing at www.godleygifts.co.nz for free inspection.

Help for Story of a Versatile Vessel

The Foundation has promised \$1000 to help the MV Tuhoe Kaiapoi Rivertown Trust publish Colin Amodeo's history of the auxiliary schooner berthed in the Kaiapoi River. For 25 years Mr Amodeo has been gathering information on the ship, including oral history accounts from wartime crew. She did service in World War 2.

The Trust continues to raise funds for the publication *Tuhoe Tales*, which is likely to be early next year. The Tuhoe has just had its 90th birthday and is the last working, wooden motor schooner in the South Island.

She was built for the Northern Steam Ship Company as a shallow-draft vessel for trading through the smaller ports of North Auckland. From 1942 to 1945 she served in the Small Ships Section of the United States Army as a supply ship in South-East New Guinea and then on the Queensland coast.



After the war the Tuhoe traded out of Kaiapoi until she became a floating art gallery there in the 1970s. Since being restored in the 1980s she has made regular passenger trips on the Kaiapoi and Waimakariri rivers

The 128-page book will commemorate the dedicated work of the trust's members and volunteers to save her from the scrappers and to maintain the little ship at marine survey standard.

Outstanding Subscriptions

Quite a few subscriptions remain due for the 2009-10 year and the Executive Committee hopes that all members will soon support the Foundation with their \$40 sub to help our cause.