

Writing New Zealand history in the twenty-first century



Winter Lectures 2009

at The University of Auckland

A series of six weekly lectures in the
Maidment Theatre, 8 Alfred Street

21 July – 25 August, 1-2pm

Everyone welcome, free admission

Further information
www.auckland.ac.nz/winter
373-7599 ext 87698

Winter Lectures 2009: Writing New Zealand history in the twenty-first century

The publication of Keith Sinclair's *History of New Zealand* (1959) was a key event in the articulation of New Zealand's national identity. In the early twenty-first century, though, a number of historians are questioning the nation's identity and culture, and wondering to what extent the cultural nationalism of the twentieth century was a construct. This series of lectures explores the ways the country's history has been written and understood, and suggests a number of ways that we might rewrite New Zealand in the twenty-first century.

Lecture 1

Tuesday 21 July, 1-2pm

Associate Professor Caroline Daley, Department of History, The University of Auckland: *Taking off the black singlet.*

The black singlet is a ubiquitous garment in the imagining of New Zealand. Rural, masculine, and hard-wearing, it is the woollen equivalent of number eight fencing wire. But what happens to our understanding of the past if historians take off the metaphorical singlet? This lecture will argue that the black singlet has straightjacketed the writing of New Zealand's history. Thankfully, a new generation of historians are delving into the wardrobe of the past and finding that satin and sparkles were part of the country's story, alongside boiled wool and nightshirts made from sugar sacks.

Lecture 2

Tuesday 28 July, 1-2pm

Dr Felicity Barnes, Department of History, The University of Auckland: *The Empire comes home: Reconsidering New Zealand culture and the role of Empire.*

New Zealand's cultural history has been profoundly shaped by legacies of imperialism – colonisation and the "nation". Empire itself, however, is strangely absent from this history. But whilst the sun seems to have set on imperialism here, other former colonies and their metropolises have made it the focus of renewed interest, particularly in terms of culture. In the process, older models of Empire and its edges have given way to newer formations that stress the transnational nature of imperial cultures. This lecture considers the possibilities created by bringing the Empire home, not only for New Zealand history, but for these new imperial histories too.

Lecture 3

Tuesday 4 August, 1-2pm

Associate Professor Tony Ballantyne, The University of Otago: *What happens if we take Gore seriously?*

This lecture will explore issues of place and space in New Zealand history and in historical writing about our colonial past. Using Gore as a case study, it will explore the importance of local institutions and the connections produced through churches, voluntary associations, print culture and civic life. It will examine how these local bonds were woven into larger provincial structures and will assess the extent to which they produced any sense of "New Zealandness". While there have been recent calls to think transnationally about New Zealand's past, this lecture argues that we need to think under as well as across the nation, contending the nation-state itself has colonised the colonial past.

Lecture 4

Tuesday 11 August, 1-2pm

Dr Aroha Harris, Department of History, The University of Auckland: *This is not a Renaissance.*

In the period 1945-1967 Māori communities, organisations and individuals did what they could to protect, maintain and revitalise Māori society and culture. Their efforts gave rise to informal Māori enclaves in predominantly Pākehā neighbourhoods, and sowed the seeds for longer-lasting innovations – usually credited to a later so-called Māori Renaissance – such as Māori play centres, churches and urban marae. These post-war Māori were creative negotiators. Their relations with the state were simultaneously more conflicted, more subtle, and more co-operative than has previously been acknowledged.

Lecture 5

Tuesday 18 August, 1-2pm

Dr Bronwyn Dalley, Deputy Chief Executive, Ministry for Culture and Heritage: *Some old stuff: Engaging a public past and present for the future.*

Second-hand is out; retro, vintage, and classic are in. The rebranding of old stuff as trendy and desirable is part of a broader and widespread public interest in the past. It is evident in the attendance at all manner of events, from rural art deco weekends to medieval jousting tournaments. Such public interest and sense of the past may have little interaction with the history that many practise within the academy, but we can learn much from this public engagement as we produce New Zealand history for the future.

Lecture 6

Tuesday 25 August, 1-2pm

Dr Deborah Montgomerie, Department of History, The University of Auckland: *Anzac anthems: New Zealand history and the two World Wars.*

New Zealanders are justifiably proud of their military history and New Zealand historians have written at length about wartime exploits. But where do the wars fit into the longer trajectory of New Zealand history? Fighting for King and country, we are told, helped transform New Zealand from dutiful daughter of Empire to independent nation. Yet it is hard to argue that if European international relations had taken a smoother course that New Zealand would have remained a British colony indefinitely. Personal narratives, the Anzac anthems penned by individual soldiers and their civilian supporters, allow us to consider the wider implications of the experience of war.

Inaugural Lectures

Nine recently appointed professors are delivering their inaugural lectures between mid-August and mid-October. Details at www.auckland.ac.nz/inaugural