



NEWS RELEASE

Premier of New South Wales

2010 NSW PREMIER'S HISTORY AWARD WINNERS ANNOUNCED

Tuesday, 26 October 2010

Premier Kristina Keneally and Minister for the Arts, Virginia Judge, tonight announced the winners of the 2010 NSW Premier's History Awards and the 2010 History Fellowships at a special gala dinner at The Mint in Sydney.

Historical works documenting the growth of an inner Sydney suburb, the Eureka Stockade and an Aboriginal community's first encounter with Europeans in outback Australia have all taken out prizes at this year's awards.

Prize money totalling \$130,000 was awarded to the winners of the history awards and fellowships. Winners are selected by a judging panel independent from the Government.

"Now in their 14th year, the NSW Premier's History Awards recognise the invaluable contribution Australian historians make to our knowledge of contemporary and historical events, both locally and overseas," Ms Keneally said.

"The Premier's History Awards honour distinguished achievement in historical research while encouraging the community to appreciate and learn from the work of our historians.

"I congratulate all of tonight's shortlisted authors and the winners on their thought-provoking works.

"Several of the winning works are impressively researched accounts of the settlement of Australia in the late 18th and early 19th centuries.

"This year, the award-winning works also document some of Australia's defining moments – frontier life on the goldfields, the outback rocket-testing at Woomera and the humble beginnings of our biggest cities."

Premier Keneally also announced the recipients of the annual 2010 NSW Archival Research Fellowship, the annual NSW History Fellowship and the biennial Indigenous History Fellowship.

The fellowships are offered to historians to undertake work on an innovative research project of interest relating to New South Wales.

THE WINNERS OF THE 2010 NSW PREMIER'S HISTORY AWARDS:

The General History Prize – \$15,000

Dr Lisa Ford: *Settler Sovereignty: Jurisdiction and Indigenous People in America and Australia, 1788-1836.*

An account of how late eighteenth and early nineteenth century colonists negotiated both the contradictions and blunt violence resulting from settling in a land that somebody else called home.

The NSW Community and Regional History Prize – \$15,000

Pauline Curby: *Randwick*.

This book embraces the history of Randwick's local industry, sporting identities, suburban growth, crime, and the ongoing relationship between the area's Indigenous and European residents.

The Australian History Prize – \$15,000

Dr Bain Attwood: *Possession: Batman's Treaty and the Matter of History*.

A meticulously researched and wide-ranging book that considers the only treaty document drawn up in Australia, between John Batman and the Kulin Nation, and the many stories about it.

The Multimedia History Prize – \$15,000

Martin Butler and Bentley Dean: *Contact*.

This documentary uses extraordinary footage of a group of Aboriginal women and children from the Martu people encountering a group of white men in the desert taking part in the Blue Streak rocket testing in Woomera.

The Young People's History Prize – \$15,000

Jackie French: *The Night They Stormed Eureka*.

This novel combines the rigour of historical research and literary imagination to entrance young and old readers about the events surrounding the Eureka Stockade.

WINNERS OF THE 2010 HISTORY FELLOWSHIPS:

NSW Archival Research Fellowship – \$15,000

Amanda Kaladelfos

The Fellowship winner will be using the funds to research and write a history of capital punishment in NSW from 1855 to 1939, when the last person was hanged.

NSW History Fellowship – \$20,000

Pauline Curby

This year's winner will examine the social dislocation suffered by World War I returned servicemen and its link to public debate around the death penalty in NSW.

Indigenous History Fellowship (biennial) - \$20,000

Robert Evitt

The Fellowship recipient in 2010 will examine the impact of traditional Aboriginal fire regimes on biodiversity, using a comparative study between NSW and Far North Queensland.

2010 PREMIER'S HISTORY AWARDS SHORTLIST – FULL JUDGES' COMMENTS

GENERAL HISTORY:

Lisa Ford, *Settler Sovereignty: Jurisdiction and Indigenous People in America and Australia, 1788-1836*

Harvard University Press

Settler Sovereignty is a thoughtful and impressively researched account of how late eighteenth and early nineteenth century colonists negotiated both the contradictions and blunt violences that were produced by settling in a land that somebody else called home. Through her account of how settlers imagined, debated and contested the rule of law and the imagination of political space in Georgia and New South Wales between 1788 and 1836, Ford is able to reveal the emergence of global languages and practices of law-making and their contestation and implementation "on the ground." Via a series of case-studies that dramatize the political and legal contests that surrounded the usurpation of Indigenous space and the extension of everyday sovereignty over the lives and bodies of Indigenous

people, Ford is able to remind us how settlement and colonization required tremendous political, social and intellectual work to make these transformations and violences seem coherent.

By combining the methodologies of transnational and comparative history, Ford reveals the global intellectual context that shaped the extension of settler regimes of law, their application on the ground in two local contexts, and the ways in which these seemingly local contests remade global currents of legal practice and thought. Through close attention to both the ideas and practice of law, Ford reveals a surprising transition in both settler contexts. In both Georgia and New South Wales, settlers had a much more flexible sense of sovereignty than the simple story of taking possession would seem to suggest. In the initial moments of settlement, Indigenous people were differentially subject to the rule of settler law; the even application of jurisdiction – the foundation stone of western systems of law – happened much later than we might think.

Through a meticulous reconstruction of court cases, legislation and the debates that surrounded them, Ford is able to reconstruct how the relationship between settlers and Indigenous peoples was transformed over a fifty-year period. This is not simply an intellectual and legal history; Settler Sovereignty sparkles with the lives, arguments, personalities and tragedies that accompanied settler colonialism. The book reminds us that the boundaries of jurisdiction in which we now live were produced by people struggling to make sense of transformations that remade the political geography of the world. This book is history at its best; it takes a contemporary article of cultural and legal faith and makes it look strange. It asks us to reconsider at what moment colonization actually “happens,” and in doing so, powerfully reminds us of the contingency and specificity of our own world.

NSW COMMUNITY AND REGIONAL

Pauline Curby, *Randwick*
Randwick City Council

This book sets a new benchmark for the writing and production of local history. The author has embraced all the topics one might expect to find in a municipal history - such as the growth of local industry, sporting identities, the growth of suburbia - and added others that often do not get explored eg crime, and the ongoing relationship between Indigenous residents and Europeans. These subjects are treated intelligently - in a manner that demonstrates the author is very familiar with contemporary historiographical debates. The style is crisp and very readable.

The discussion of Long Bay prison is especially fascinating and conveys the processes of institutionalisation very well. The author makes good use of photographs of inmates from the State Records Office of NSW and also the more recently uncovered Police 'mugshots' from the Historic Houses Trust collection. The endnotes in general evince a really thorough examination of research material from local and state newspapers, to State archives, historical societies and of course municipal records. The acknowledgements too demonstrate a wide ranging discussion with local people - so important for the creation of good local history.

It is the use of illustration and the quality of the imagery chosen that particularly sets this book apart. The pictures are integral to the text - rather than decoration - which can only be the result of many hours of careful research in picture collections. That so many of those selected have been reproduced in such clarity is remarkable. The double page spreads allow the reader to pore over scenes and carefully examine clothing and technology and landscape and facial expression in great detail. The designer of the book is to be congratulated for the appealing layout and the quality of the imagery. It is a first class job. Randwick Council, too, is to be applauded for commissioning and supporting such a project.

AUSTRALIAN HISTORY

Bain Attwood, *Possession: Batman's Treaty and the Matter of History*
The Miegunyah Press. An imprint of Melbourne University Publishing Ltd.

In 1835, near the Merri Creek which flows into the Yarra River, John Batman (1801-39) entered into a treaty with the Kulin Nation on behalf of the speculative private company, the Port Phillip Association. Batman, so the story goes, exchanged an annual consideration along with axes, blankets, mirrors and trinkets for what was to become the site of Melbourne – ‘the place for a village’, as he noted in his journal – and a large area to the north and south-west of the city. In so doing, he, along with John Fawkner, came to be remembered as Melbourne’s founder. But the process of remembering Batman

has been complex and at times fraught. And it tells us more about the creation and reproduction of founding myths and imperial, colonial and post-colonial attitudes to land ownership and Aboriginal sovereignties than Batman's treaty. Indeed, it seems that we do not know whether the treaty making actually took place. But in one sense this does not matter: as Attwood notes, 'What is more important historically are the stories that have been told about it'.

Bain Attwood's meticulously researched and wide-ranging book considers the only treaty document drawn up in Australia and the stories about it that have circulated in the culture. Most of these have been used to buttress settler claims to the land. But Attwood also explores ways in which Aboriginal people have used the treaty to assert their sovereignty. On National Aborigines Observance Day in July 1969, the Aborigines Advancement League (Victoria) handed a reproduction of the treaty deed to the Victorian Minister of Aboriginal Affairs, seeking rent and acknowledgement of land ownership.

Possession is an outstanding contribution to Australian history. Masterfully crafted, it lays bare the Batman treaty for what it was: a massive, disingenuous though ultimately failed land grab. And it demonstrates the importance of this treaty, in terms of legal precedent and humanitarianism, in forcing NSW's colonial government to make up its mind about sovereignty in a broad imperial context. Discussions of reconciliation, material culture, local history, memory and public history powerfully remind us of the corollary of being a nation without a treaty.

MULTIMEDIA

Martin Butler and Bentley Dean, *Contact*
Contact Films Pty Ltd

In 1964, when the Blue Streak rocket tests were due to be staged out of Woomera, a survey team of white men was sent out in trucks to make sure the landing zone in Western Australia's Great Sandy Desert was completely clear.

In an extraordinary conjunction of chance events, the patrol encountered a group of Aboriginal women and children from the Martu people. These people had never seen white men before. Even more extraordinary, this world-changing encounter was recorded on film by Patrol Officer Walter MacDougall.

Martin Butler and Dean Bentley use this footage as the core of their documentary, but they take great care not to treat the footage as a curio or a sensationalist 'scoop'. Rather, by telling the story mainly in the voices, journeys, dances, songs and gestures of the Martu people who still carry the memories of that fateful encounter, the film grants its audience a deep view into the radically different realities that collided in the desert.

An account of cosmic dimensions, 'Contact' makes extremely effective use of Martu testimonies to build, layer by layer, a deeply felt understanding of the way the Indigenous world cracked open, but also survived, as the women and children negotiated their way through all the vulnerability and confusion. We learn how their displacement has continued to shape their lives right up to the present day. 'Contact' is a model of cross-cultural history-telling, paying respect to the many different values and presumptions that were driving all participants in the drama. And it pulls no punches when the hard themes of colonialism and displacement have to be confronted.

YOUNG PEOPLE

Jackie French, *The Night They Stormed Eureka*
Harper Collins Publishers Australia Pty Ltd

This delightful novel combines the rigour of historical research and literary imagination to entrance young and old readers alike and make them want to know more. This is the story of Sam, a troubled teenager who travels back (was it a dream?) in time to the Ballarat goldfields. The year is 1854 and she finds herself taken in by Mr and Mrs Puddleham who run a cook shop at the diggings while dreaming of something bigger one day. First and foremost it is a story, a fictional representation of the events around the Eureka Stockade where 'all the rights I took for granted started', remembers Sam. The reader travels with Sam as she experiences the people, the conditions, the issues and the turbulent, violent and bloody moment of the Stockade itself. We see the sights, hear the voices, the cacophony and chaos of sounds, smell the earth and even taste life on the diggings.

Readers learn a lot about the events and people associated with the Stockade. The story is grounded in historical research which gives it a texture, believability and authenticity. Yet, young readers are not being lectured to. Although about an important historical event this is not a history lesson, despite the fact that there are important lessons to be learned, not least about the nature of history itself. The book imaginatively engages students and teachers to think about the gold diggings and Eureka beyond the story itself. The author's notes at the end are like a conversation between the author and the reader. It provides an explanatory note on terms, language and key events including a description of what happened after the Stockade. And, finally, it provides recipes and handy hints from Mrs Puddleham's 'instructory almanac', so that young readers can engage creatively with the history into the future.

The Night They Stormed Eureka is a masterpiece of historical empathy. What makes this a brilliant work for engaging young people with history is that, as a work of fiction, it allows them to experience the past for themselves and to make their own imaginative leaps and judgements. Because Sam is from the future we see her being able to anticipate events and outcomes and thinking again, with renewed insight, into why the past, events like Eureka, mattered at the time and should continue to matter today. The author's notes are a lovely, creative input allowing readers to navigate the story, to know which bits are true and which are fictional, reminding us of the constructed nature and subjectivity of history. What a joy! An excellent book and much deserved winner of the Young People's category.