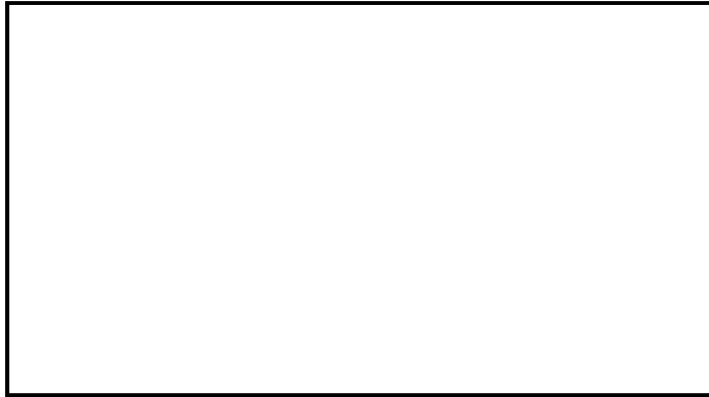


Friends of the Nelson Library Inc.
Private Bag 41
Nelson
March 2009



Affix stamp here

The Friends of the Nelson Library
Private Bag 41
Nelson, 7042

Such are the ways of fate in this harsh world; today you are lifted gently into the saddle, and tomorrow the saddle is placed on your shoulders.
A Persian saying.



The "Astrolabe" in French Pass

2008–2009

Friends of the Nelson Library Committee

- Barbara Rhodes (Chairperson) 545 1646
- Mary Belser (Secretary) 548 9721
- Dixie St Johanser (Treasurer) 545 1668
- Jill Blechynden (Book Sales) 548 0075
- Joanna Innes Walker
- Helen Newnham
- Jim Roxburgh
- Christopher Vine
- Priscilla Wardell

Nola Leov has been co-opted to continue representing the Friends of the Library on, and chairing, the committee handling the disposal of the remainder of the microfilming funds.

NB: From time to time members may be phoned to advise of upcoming events and the like. If you do not wish to be called, please let the secretary or chairperson know.



“I have met but one or two persons in the course of my life who understood the art of walking who had a genius, so to speak, for sauntering” *Henry David Thoreau.*

Remember to slow down a bit sometimes and cultivate the ancient art of **sauntering**. What is all the hurry? Leave home earlier, drive slower, reduce fuel consumption and your blood pressure! Ed.

TELL ME MORE ABOUT FRIENDS OF THE LIBRARY ...

Friends of the Library groups are people who are interested in supporting & promoting their library and strengthening its links with the community. The Friends of the Nelson Library was formed in 1991, and supports all three Nelson Public Libraries. Friends can be active or supporting members. “Active” members have a more hands-on approach.

Members may help organise or promote events and activities for the Libraries or the Friends. They may assist in running the monthly book sale at the Elma Turner Library, or be called on for other practical assistance.

Remember: Members will receive a 10% discount on (non-sale) books at Page & Blackmores!!! You'll have to show your current Friends' card.

Cut here

Yes, I'd like to join

\$10 p.a.

Please make Cheque payable to *Friends of the Nelson Library Inc.* Please mail with form to: The Treasurer, Friends of the Nelson Library Inc, Private Bag 41, Nelson, 7042.

Name (please print) :

Address :

.....

Phone

Email (optional)

Preferred membership type: Active Supporting

Members receive \$6 of Library vouchers each year that can be used for reserving books, borrowing CDs & DVDs.

fied, or stop in a place where they are totally invisible, to take photographs. I personally have had to jump my VW over all of these. For a long time there was mud, mud churned up by logging trucks, or by kids out from 'civilisation'



View from the road: Okure Bay and D'Urville Island.

doing wheelies in the gullies. But for those of us with pre-road experience, it is still a marvel, and our hearts are full of gratitude to those who built it.

Why and how it was made has been told beautifully by Ian Dougherty in *The Making of the French*

Pass Road, published late last year. Here I have to declare an interest, because my father was chairman of the board which did it, a brother-in-law was also a member, my brothers were involved with the construction, and I helped collect some of the material. But for me its importance lies in the way it reflects a period of New Zealand history when local body representatives had to have muscle as well as nous, and when a remote community could initiate a public work of magnitude and achieve it without having to struggle with endless legal requirements. It was also a time when government was eager to assist in the development of the rural sector, rather than focus on major areas of population.

The book reflects the place's remarkable beauty, and the cover photograph gives an immediate idea of the magnitude of the job. Was it worth doing? The question is linked to wider ones concerning economic, political, and social events which have adversely affected both the Sounds themselves and New Zealand in general over the ensuing fifty years, and should be pondered with some seriousness.

Ian Dougherty: *The Making of the French Pass Road in the Marlborough Sounds*, published by No Ordinary Life on behalf of Downer EDI Works, 2008.

A Few Words From Barbara

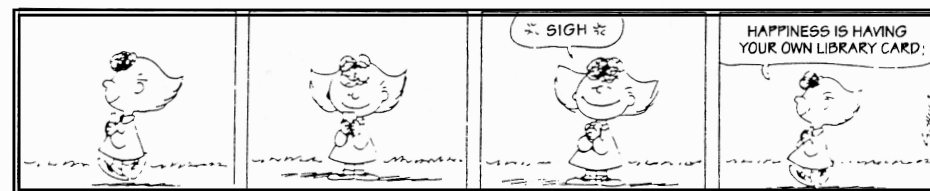
Greetings to you all.

Following positive feedback from members, the committee has decided to continue the newsletter in the current format. Thank you to those who have offered to contribute material.

In the midst of the current economic downturn, we should, perhaps, reflect on the value of our library. We are offered study or reflection space with tables and comfortable chairs; we can read newspapers or magazines; listen to music, do research or homework; computers can be booked, and computer classes are available for beginners; book discussion groups and public talks can entertain, book sales offer bargains; children have a wonderful space to grow into the world of reading; trained staff can help with everything from school projects to locating a particular book about which a library patron may have only the sketchiest details. In a way, a library can be seen as almost a comfortable extension of one's own home! Reference source, refuge, entertainment centre, meeting place - times have changed and libraries have changed with them. They have moved beyond "SHUSH!", that's for sure.

Planning for our 2009 monthly Sunday talks is well underway, with the first three speakers booked: Rachel Ryan (March), Dick Rawson (April) and Bev Greig (May). See more details overleaf.

Barbara Rhodes (chairperson)



Friends of the Nelson Library Talks 2009

Six talks are planned for this year, one a month, on a Sunday, from March to August. All will be held in the Elma Turner Library Activities Room, starting at 1:30pm. Entry fee will be \$2 per person.

The first 3 are as follows:

Sunday 15th March: *An armchair OE to Ireland.* Presenter Rachel Ryan invites us to join her on a tour of the west and south west of Ireland. Rachel owns and operates a walking business, *Walk the West of Ireland*. Rachel's aim is to give walkers an in-depth experience into rural, local Ireland - an authentic immersion into the landscape, the culture, and the very character of Ireland... an exploration of what it is to be Irish.

Sunday 5th April: *Southward Ho! A Tale of Colonisation, Adventure, War and Peace.* Dick Rawson, a retired surgeon, has followed his interests in family history and researched the extended family of Henry Freer Rawson (1839–1879), colonist, war hero, engraver, celebrated painter, dentist and incendiary.

Sunday 3rd May. Bev Greig, a 63 year old grandmother, will share her experiences of cycling in Europe (and elsewhere). How did it all start? Where to next? Come and be entertained and inspired!

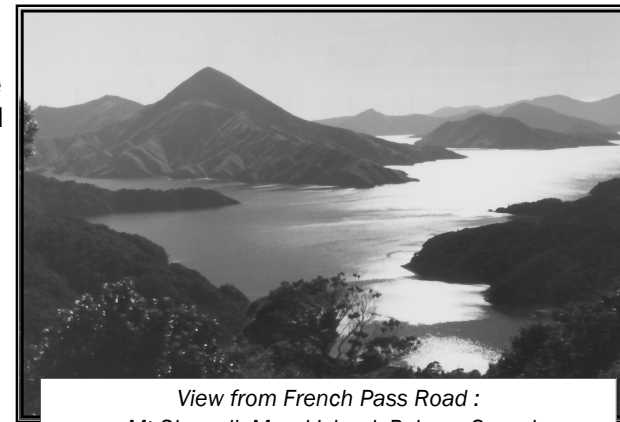


Progress? *Contributed by Nola Leov.*

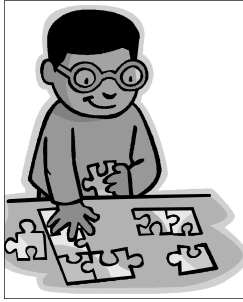
When I was a little girl, I lived not far from French Pass. Since there were no roads at all, travelling to and from boarding school bordered on the epic. There were three ways of doing it. The one we preferred, though it was laborious, entailed a string of children and our mother lugging our suitcases over a steep and at times zigzag track to Admiralty Bay. There we were picked up by 'Uncle' Garry Hope, and taken in his launch all the way to Nelson. Sometimes the trip was glorious, at others one gazed for hours into mountains of green water and hoped to die. Another, equally laborious, took us in the same manner as far as French Pass, where we lay about the boarding house sitting room until the time came to go out on another launch in the starry dark to meet the *Matangi* or the *Arahura*. The ship slowed, the launch tied up alongside, and we scrambled up a short and salty ladder, to be entertained to hot tea by the crew and dree the rest of the night until we reached Nelson, which always seemed to be crackling with frost. And the school hall rocked and swayed through the whole of assembly.

The third way was also by launch, a five hour journey to Havelock, and then a long bus ride over the hills, where again death seemed preferable to the endlessly swinging corners and mountains of dust. For many years afterwards, this was how I travelled to and from University, and later my job, and the smell of diesel still evokes for me the bustle of the Havelock wharf in the early morning, and the trip itself, where the diesel was sweetened with the smell of freshly baked bread.

All of this ended with the making of the French Pass road. It was, and still is, a challenging journey, even though much of it is now sealed, corners smoothed, and views, where a break has been permitted in the vegetation, superb. Now the main hazards are one's fellow drivers, who take the road too fast, swing over into the opposite lane to get their vast boats around bends, or just because they are terri-



*View from French Pass Road :
Mt Shewell, Maud Island, Pelorus Sound*



Something for the Library

At our last meeting the committee decided to meet the cost of replacing the wooden toys, puzzles and games that are kept in the Children's Library for visiting children to play with. We felt it was time to focus on the children, having, last year, paid for new book bags for house-bound library patrons. We will, of course,

still make a substantial donation to the library later in the year, as usual. That amount will be set at the 2009 AGM in September.



A simple fable.

There was a man who had four sons. He wanted them to learn not to judge things too quickly, so he sent them each in turn on a quest to look at a certain fruit tree that was a great distance away. The first son went in winter, the second in spring, the third in summer, and the youngest son in autumn.

When they had all gone and returned, he called them together to describe what they had seen. The first son said the tree was bare and ugly, bent and twisted. The second son disagreed and said it was covered with green buds and full of promise. The third son said it was laden with blossoms that smelled so sweet and looked so beautiful that it was the most graceful thing he had ever seen. The youngest son disagreed with all of them. He said the tree was ripe and drooping with fruit, full of life and fulfilment.

The father explained that they were all right, for each of them had seen only one season in the tree's life. He told them that you cannot judge a tree, or a person, by only one season; that the essence of who they are, and the pleasure, joy and love that come from that life can only be measured in the end when all the seasons are up.

If you give up when it is winter, you will miss the promise of your spring, the beauty of your summer, and the fulfilment of your autumn. Do not let the pain of one season destroy the life of all the rest. Do not judge life by one difficult season. *I'm not sure they got the pear's life cycle right but it IS a fable! Ed.*

BOOK REVIEW

“Singled Out” by Virginia Nicholson. Penguin/Viking

Not one of my nine aunts married. They were of that generation whose potential partners were smothered in the mud of Paschendale or slaughtered on the Somme, the youthful sacrifice on the altar of the “War to end Wars”.

“Singled Out” is a wonderfully researched and sensitive account of the lives of many of these “surplus women” as they were termed; involuntary spinsters whose dreams of matrimony and motherhood were transformed, often enough, into careers of significant and dedicated work, emancipated lives with new relationships - and of course, “auntdom”.

It never occurred to me when, as a very young boy, I was cuddled and kissed by this plethora of aunts, that the embraces I received were those that would probably never be bestowed on an adult partner. When, later, they came to visit me in my London house, there was usually a quiet visit to the Unknown Soldier's tomb in Westminster Abbey.

Aunt Margery - surrounded by a felicity of cats, filled whatever void there was by her “gals”, to whom she devoted her life as housemistress at Cheltenham Ladies College.

The pattern of changed lives was repeated time out of mind, and this book chronicles many such with brilliant detail; careers transformed to blossom, sometimes - in writing, politics and public service.

This is a perceptive testament to a now extinct generation. A thought provoking book.

Christopher Vine.



Do you know what can never be satisfied? The eye of greed. All the world's goods cannot fill the abyss of its desire.
A Persian saying.



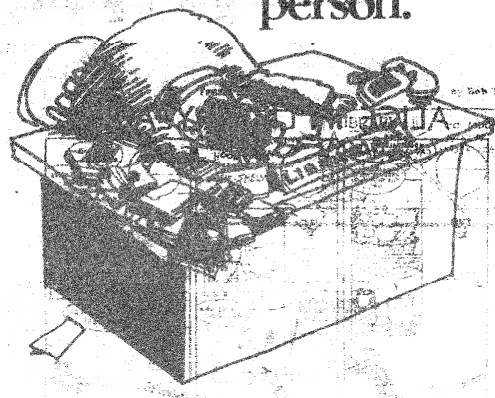
UPDATE

Digitisation of Historical Society Journals.

Some twelve people, or their next-of-kin, have still to be contacted for permission to copy their articles. The earliest of the articles involved dates back to 1955, with the rest ranging through the years until one in 1998. A list of these names is available from Nola Leov, 547 5288.

The Microfilm sub-committee will meet early in March

This is the desk
of an overworked,
overwrought, overlooked,
overdrawn but still
basically fun
person.



There are ten commandments for the wise. Nine say "Be silent!" One says "Say little!"

Islamic wisdom



Book Review by Brian Prendergast SHANTARAM by David Roberts. Picador 2007.



David Roberts

This is a large novel, written at such a pace that the reader is carried along at full gallop almost all the way. Much of it is autobiographical and the author has packed more into his life than the rest of us would cram into a dozen lifetimes.

Greg Roberts is an Australian university graduate who turned to drugs and earned himself a prison sentence of nineteen years. He escaped over the wall of Melbourne Gaol, and by ingenuity and daring got himself to Bombay (now Mumbai) where the bulk of the novel is sited. There, now known as "Lin", he lives in the slums, works for a gang boss and becomes highly skilled at forging passports, amongst other illicit accomplishments.

Under his new identity Roberts makes many Indian friends and not a few enemies, sometimes with violent consequences, graphically described. He also has an ill-fated love affair with a European woman domiciled in Bombay. Despite this, one always has the feeling that he has found a spiritual home in this city which he sees through such affectionate and sympathetic eyes.

Towards the end of the book Lin takes part in a disastrous expedition to Afghanistan, which, like several other contemporary novels, sheds more light on the conflicts debilitating that unfortunate country.

Shantaram is a blockbuster of a story, written by a highly intelligent man, a philosopher and a fluent narrator. It leaves a lasting impression as a portrait of Bombay, a city of beauty beset with crime and squalor, yet with people of all classes that one would be privileged to call "friend".

NB: Author's picture is from the internet.