The Falkland Islands Journal: Recording the life and times of Islanders for 50 years

Did you know that the beautiful Quality Street lady began life on Ross Road in Stanley or that 782 islands make up the archipelago - not the 776 usually quoted? All this and much more contained in the Journals were honoured to have dedicated contributors who do an immense amount of work documenting the history of the Islands out of sheer interest, in love, and for the place.


Then there are people who simply have an interesting story to tell about the Falklands; often their own or their family’s experiences.

Look out this year for Tony Carr’s Falkland Memories.

He spent his childhood in the Falklands (1938-1946), his father being stationed there as a customs officer.

They are lovely reminiscences; he remembers playing in the lifeboat of the Crickieh Castle which was slowly rotting away behind the Town Hall. That prompted me to use a painting of the Crickieh Castle (see next page) on this year’s cover.

The ship was eventually wrecked between Cape Horn and the Falklands in 1912 with eleven survivors reaching the Falklands in an open lifeboat after eight days of incredible hardship; an amazing feat. There is a badge from the boat in the Museum in Stanley. These historical connections are fascinating.

There have been a huge range of

The Journal team work closely with the National Archivist and the Director of the museum and her staff.

Most museums have some form of publication outlet to report on their activities and to issue more in-depth reports on particular areas of research they are carrying out or targeted exhibitions they have mounted. Often a lot of work goes into presenting these exhibitions and when they are taken down, the material can be forgotten about.

The Falkland Islands Journal is an ideal medium to present this material and I am happy to report that the Journal and the museum will be more closely integrated from now on.

The Journal is sold in the Falklands and distributed globally to a range of subscribers. This year, we

were delighted that it was being brought together two individuals who did so much to bring the Journal to fruition.

1961 first cover: Oil painting of Stanley by Tommy Thompson.

Tommy painted this in the late 1960s while he was Colonial Secretary in the Falkland Islands and it hung in Sullivan House where he lived with his wife Sheelah.

One evening the then Governor Sir Cosmo Haskard and Lady Haskard were having dinner with the Thompsons at Sullivan House. Sir Cosmo admired the painting on the wall and Tommy promptly took it down and gave it to him. The painting has been a great favourite of the Haskards ever since and hangs in their family home, Tragariff, Bantry, Co Cork, Ireland. It is a constant and very pleasant reminder to them of the view they had from Government House eastwards along Ross Road towards Stanley.

Both they and Tommy were delighted that it was being used on the front cover of the 50th issue of the Journal. This is highly appropriate since it brings together two individuals who did so much to bring the Journal to fruition.

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Wally MacBeth holding the shotgun used to kill foxes with children Raymond, Rowena and Marie
topics over the years; everything from history of FIGAS and flying, maritime history, Falkland families, natural history (eg the Warrah) birds, rocks, and people with interesting Falklands’ connections. One of particular recent interest was from Ross Road to Quality Street: The Life of Ellaine Terriss. She was an actress, born in the Falklands and eventually ending up as the patroness on the lid of Quality Street tins. Any documenting of history is important as so much gets lost in the mists of time. There have been some important, widely cited articles in the Journal. Many of Phil Stone’s excellent geological articles are widely consulted on global databases and Robin Woods’ 2001 article (with a small correction the next year) on the number, size and distribution of islands in the Falklands archipelago is the most widely cited article published. This was the only published analysis of the personal impact of the process on farm life in the Islands themselves—it should be compulsory reading. They are particularly important as records of family histories.

The level of detail in Laoisa Bishop-Newman’s article on Tuberculosis (2013 issue) is quite phenomenal and will stand as a definitive medical testimony. There are many personal accounts by children of ‘what their parents did in the war’. These are, without exception salutary and moving. Other examples include Alastair Summers’ article in 1993 (they were then 14) on the Bertrand and Fenton families with a great collection of photographs. Mark Pollard (he can be proud of this one) and Wayne Clements’ prizewinning entry (1994 - they were 14 and 13 respectively) on Stanley and Darwin Cemeteries is indispensable. Many people have told me how useful it has proven to be.

A 14-year-old Nick Rendell won the Senior School Prize in 1995 with a comprehensive article on FIC Colonial Managers; I often refer to that one. If you need to know any May Ball winner, go to Samantha Brownlee (2002) or the history of the German Camp - Hannah Pointing 2005, or who has ever lived on Seedge Island (Matthew Lazo - 2007). In the latter you will have an account of the island which could not be bettered. The late Jane Cameron once told me this entry alone made the whole competition worthwhile. However it is unfair of me to select articles in this way, every one of them is interesting in its own right and makes a significant contribution, I just seek to give a flavour of what is in there.

If you don’t have all the back issues, the CD ROM will soon remedy that.

This year’s Journal has an interesting combination of an article from the A&JHC and an independently submitted piece of history. Zoe Miller (Great-granddaughter of Sydney Miller) has a highly commended project on Roy Cove printed while in the same issue, Colin Young, who was Grasslands Officer in the 1960s, recalls his memories (and some historic photographs) of grassland improvement at Roy Cove. Both articles intertwine beautifully.

It gives me great pleasure that we are able to facilitate the documentation of the history of the Falklands over the past 50 years and beyond through encouraging the likes of Colin to publish his memoirs and Zoe to have the remarkable history project appear in print.

And finally, if you were to ask me what was the most moving article to have been published over the past 50 years, it would be hard one to call. All of the above have given us great pleasure in publishing them. However, in 1991, after I had edited my first issue, the late Kitty Bertie called me round to her house to ask if I would publish a series of sketches she and Cecil had done on Camp life in the Falklands. I was deeply moved that she had entrusted them to me. It filled me with the reality of the precious gift I had been entrusted with and, of course, they appeared in the 1991 issue. They are quite delightful.

If I could finish with Sharon Jaffray’s review of the 4th Edition of the FIJ CD ROM in the Penguin News (31st March 2017) I “…be warned that you should make sure you have plenty of time before inserting the disc into your computer….you will find so many interesting articles along the way that you can expect to lose at least a couple of hours… While most of these searches could be carried out on the internet, I doubt the information available would be so in-depth….. and one of the special things about the CD is that many of the articles are written by people we know”. Therein lies the value of the FIJ over the past 50 years.