

Note from the Editors

Past a certain point, all the dates grow hazy
and confused, and the clarity of history
becomes the fog of legend.

— George R. R. Martin, *A Dance With Dragons* part 2: After the
Feast (*A Song of Ice and Fire*, Book 5)

The importance of history is not only to study it, but also to prevent it from being forgotten by future generations. Historical topics sometimes come and go in popularity and what was widely studied becomes neglected and unfashionable. Economic history, once cutting edge, now is often relegated to economists rather than historians. Other historical topics might never receive a moment in the spotlight. These topics, unpopular or discarded, run the risk of being forgotten or becoming a ‘fog of legend’. The focus of the *Melbourne Historical Journal* this year is to shine a spotlight upon histories that have become neglected or have always been so.

Neglected history, or uncovering areas of neglect in the scholarship, is what good historiography already does or aims for. What then do we mean as a ‘neglected history’? This journal defines neglected histories as themes, periods, geographical regions, historical methods, and historiographical approaches that have either received little

study, or have fallen into disuse. The aim is to invigorate discussion and showcase research into fields that are not currently prominent. Often, when historians talk about neglected histories they mean topics that have fallen from popular consciousness. Rather we are aiming our interpretation of a neglected history as one that may have been forgotten by both popular memory and academic study. Thus even within mainstream academic historiography there are periods or aspects of histories that are overlooked.

Our first feature article by Gillian Russell, the newly appointed Gerry Higgins Chair in Irish Studies at the University of Melbourne, focuses on the neglected source of printed ephemera. She traces the application of the term ephemera to the transitory existence of print to the medieval period, and the rise in the use of the term in the 1960s and 1970s.

We are also proud to publish the Greg Denning Lecture of 2013 presented by Tiffany Shellam, Shino Konishi and Maria Nugent. Their article titled 'Aboriginal Australians and Boundary Crossings' draws on the influential ideas of writing cross-cultural history pioneered by Greg Denning. It considers the relationships between Aboriginal guides and colonial explorers as a meeting between two worlds. It positions these meetings in relation to the American historian Richard White's concept of the middle ground and shows that in spite of the unequal power structures the relationship was dialogic rather than dialectic.

Our graduate articles this year all address a history that has been neglected or overlooked, and their focus is to bring

attention to these histories. Thomas James Rogers analyses the maritime strike of 1890 and re-aims the spotlight on how topic has been understood by historians. It is a period that is not widely remembered, is not part of the national narrative, and has been discarded by academic circles as an area of study. Frank Garmon uses the Society for Establishing Useful Manufactures (SEUM), the brainchild of Alexander Hamilton and Tench Coxe, as a case to study to examine the effects of early American technology transfer, and argues that the failure of the SEUM paved the way for future industrial innovation in the nineteenth century. We are delighted to present the Norah Schuster Essay Prize and Presidential Address of 2012–13 written by Angeline Brasier. This article examines how the experimental use of saline drinks and venous injections on convict cholera patients at Coldbath-Fields Prison contributed to present day cholera treatments.

Brett Goodin examines the role of education and literacy in supporting the large-scale migration of African American from the South during the Great Migration. Bryony Cosgrove draws attention to archival material that has been brought to light, only fall back into the shadows. Her article makes a case for the republication of a collection of letters written by Indigenous Australian women in Victoria between 1867 and 1926, first published in an edited volume in 2002, emphasising that they represent a still too rare voice for these women in the historical record. She underlines that such letters not only provide historical source material (which, in her view, has been underused to date), but are important as family records in their own right. Our final graduate article is

from Dashiell Lawrence, who examines the near forgotten scheme to settle Jewish emigrants in Western Australia.

Our cover image depicts nature reclaiming what used to be a major traffic way, a scar cutting through the landscape of New Zealand's Buller region. Until the Seddonville branch line railway closed in 1981, thousands of people travelled on this route and millions of tonnes of goods were transported; now it is neglected and largely forgotten. Yet the glimmer of light at the end of the tunnel highlights that historical neglect is not permanent, that the tunnel is not necessarily abandoned but repurposed as a walking track and habitat, and as times change so do uses and understandings. Just as with the glimmer of light, the articles in this journal all shine on topics that have been neglected, or have fallen into disuse.