

Shakespeare and New Zealand: 1912-1916-1964

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Prologue

This is a tale of three dates: 1912. 1916. 1964. Could these years, by any chance, be related? Specifically what does the available archive show of Shakespeare commemorations either within New Zealand or by New Zealanders abroad in these years? The bulk of this paper will be taken up with evocation of that evidence. My hope is to give a sense of what those commemorations were like and then, by reaching across these disparate dates, venture some thoughts as to what kinds of commemorations these might be classed as, and what forms of cultural capital they seek to create. In New Zealand as in Australia the ceremonies remembering the disastrous Gallipoli landings of 1915 are the most conspicuous and solemn form of public memory. A brief comparison with the form and tone of Shakespeare memory rituals will, I hope, prove instructive.

Object studies have been a dominant form of cultural history in the last decades, epitomised by the popular series of **X** (the World, Shakespeare, America) in so many objects from major museum collections. Studies *per annum* have also been popular, though there is not a phrase that describes them. These take a synoptic view of a subject, using a calendar year as the frame. The narrowness of this chronological time allows a sweep across a larger, more disparate archive than focusing on a particular kind of history (diplomatic, military, social &c) affords. James Shapiro's books *1599* (2005) and his recent *1606* (2015) are excellent Shakespearean examples. Through surveying everything that happened in those years Shapiro sheds a new light on the plays Shakespeare was writing or his company was performing in the designated period¹. In this year's forthcoming *Shakespeare and Antipodal Memory* (Bloomsbury 2016), where sections of this paper will appear, Philip Mead and Gordon MacMullan likewise claim 1916 as a pivotal year in the emergence of a global Shakespeare, with world-wide patterns of commemoration setting in train energies which, a hundred years later, our seminar can

been seen to inherit. The *annual* focus draws on the development of microhistory, and can be seen also as a form of post-Geertzian thick description. The assemblage here of three antipodean years allows us then to see in detail what happened, in Shakespeare guise, though certainly then sharing the disadvantage of the micro analysis in being not so deft at explaining the deeper causality of historical events.

Havelock North, 1912. [Havelock pix here]

On November 20, 1912, the townsfolk of Havelock North, a small rural service town in the North Island of New Zealand, began a three day Shakespearean Festival, raising funds to clear the debt of 700 pounds on their village hall. Many of the activities seem to have been modelled on the Earl's Court Shakespeare Exhibition earlier in 1912. The event began with a torchlight procession with townspeople in costume as a courtier and players from the time of Elizabeth 1. The procession was headed by a group on horse: Elizabeth herself, Sir Philip Sidney, Lady Carey, the Countess of Pembroke, and Admiral (sic) Francis Drake. They were followed by a Shakespeare group:

Shakespeare attended by Comedy and Tragedy and, on horse, his wife Ann Hathaway. They were followed by a group representing Shakespearean games, the casts of the various excerpts to be performed from 11 of the plays, Morris dancing troupes from, respectively the District (Public) School, and the Woodford House (Private) School for Girls. In the rear of the procession 11 people on horse represented a hawking party. A meat tea was served (a supper featuring meat dishes, a substantial form of the English-style early evening tea), and ices and cold drinks were freely available: late November is late spring/early summer in New Zealand, so cooling beverages could be useful. In a side show, among other delights you could “guess the weight of Sir John Falstaff.” “In their endeavour to transform Havelock into the Stratford-on-Avon of more than three hundred years ago”, a report in *The Hastings Standard* remarked, “the organisers succeeded admirably”². From the details of the report it seems as though the local performances were as well received as the equine parade. Nevertheless the debt was not quite paid down.

Perhaps the most striking Shakespeare linked activities undertaken by New Zealanders in 1916 were those in and around the Shakespeare Hut on Gower Street in Bloomsbury, just in behind where the University of London Senate House building now is. [images here]. On Monday August 4th, 1919, A.R.Stone “took the bus back to Kingsway and walked to the Shakespeare Hut. I called at the New Zealand Headquarters to see Thompson Mackay but the place was shut.”³ He adds, sadly, that “New Zealand control of the Shakespeare Hut ceased last week.” This would have been his third visit to the Hut during 1918-1919. Stone’s diary gives a definitive end to New Zealand soldiers’ fond associations with the Bloomsbury Hut over the previous thirty-five months for another soldier, Harry Hall, mentions his pleasure at attending the opening of the Hut:

Thursday 24th August 1916.

On Tuesday inst. went to opening of AOTEA ROA HUT-good-free supper.⁴

There is no evidence that this loss-leading opening offer was repeated, but one aspect of the Hut soldiers clearly appreciated was its value for money, as one of the cheapest places they could stay in London, whether on leave from the Western Front or from the main training facility for New Zealand soldiers based in England, the camp at Sling on the Salisbury Plain. William Miller in a letter to his mother reported enthusiastically on the Hut's virtues:

Shakespeare Hut is run by YMCA and no matter when a soldier arrives he can always get a meal. The place was crowded with soldiers on leave. It cost sixpence for a bed. The dormitories were all full as well as a big hall which was laid down with wire stretcher about six inches from the floor. We slept in this concert hall. [T]ea consisted of 1 sausage, 1 egg, potato, 1 slice of bread and a piece of pastry. The whole lot cost 1/3 and we considered that cheap.⁵

Miller concisely reviews the main features of the Hut that attracted soldiers, and led them clearly to recommend it to each other⁶. As a place to sleep for the night it was effectively a back packer lodge for soldiers (similar to so many such places in Bloomsbury and shading up to Kings Cross and St. Pancras Stations now). The concert Hall which Ailsa Grant Ferguson has shown to be a space for professional performance on this occasion was pressed in to use as an extra dorm room. Soldiers clearly felt they ate well at the Hut and, moreover, considered it good value for money. New Zealand soldiers were well paid while on service (compared to their English counterparts) but their diaries are full of the kinds of quick accounts and reckonings of sums of money to hand familiar to anyone who has travelled on a limited budget. Miller's remark that the tariff for bed and board was cheap is replicated in many of the diaries, as the soldiers were clearly alert to getting value for money and are colloquially terse when they feel they have been ripped off⁷. Along with the guarantee of a good sleep and a good feed, soldiers were deeply appreciative of the chance to wash and scrub up before hitting the town. The most frequent

action on arrival reported in the diaries, irrespective of time of day, was to have a bath, as Andy Dewar records on February 4 1918:

I had a bath, a change of underclothing, a shave and haircut... It was a little touch of Heaven after nearly twelve months of Hell across the ditch!⁸

He repeated the pattern for the first morning of each of his three subsequent visits to the Hut, on 18 December 1918, and May 17 and June 17 1919. As with Stone's diary and many others I have read, these entries remind us that for Commonwealth soldiers (as for Americans), their War in Europe extended for months beyond the Armistice of November 11, 1918, as the logistics of returning soldiers to their homelands were complex. Then too soldiers were still required for the range of duties we now group under the umbrella term "peacekeeping." For the duration of the war, soldiers were entitled to leave after a year's service. The rhythm of visits to the Hut notably increases after November 11, 1918, so leave was clearly (and understandably) more readily granted after hostilities ceased.

Of course not all soldiers kept diaries, though there are letters and diaries from several hundred New Zealand soldiers; and not all this material will have survived. Then too not all the diarists consulted for this project felt their time in England worth mentioning in detail and focused on recording action at the front, picking up their entries only when they returned to the battle front. Those quoted from here, however, tended to be enthusiastic chroniclers of all their experiences. Volunteering (or being conscripted as soldiers were for the latter years of the War), turned them into tourists and they perforce underwent a version of the experiences New Zealanders group under the term *OE* (Overseas Experience). Fighting for the Empire might seem an unnecessarily grim way to gain such experience, but their records show them contriving to take pleasure where they could, hence their delight in the pleasures of the Hut and London's other attractions. They frequently seem to have dedicated themselves to sampling London's great attractions on fast forward⁹. Leave afforded them but a few days in London, and they would know there was no guarantee of a return. Thus they hustle along to St. Pauls and the

Tower of London, to the Palaces and the British Museum (effectively just down the road from the Gower Street Hut). They are fascinated by the Tube (there being no such thing in New Zealand then or now), but maintain a sense of colonial independence. Thomas Mitchell reports being in a group of twenty soldiers who, on October 17 took a guided bus tour: “We visited the Tower of London, St. Paul’s Cathedral. Royal Stables, Westminster Abbey.” “What a great city,” he marvels. “No doubt it is a proper empire city... The underground trains are marvellous.” Yet, perhaps with a sense of colonial truculence, he defensively claims that “[there] are just as fine buildings in NZ. I would not want to live here.”¹⁰

On the evening of this tour, Mitchell records another familiar London tourist activity: he went to an (unnamed) play at night. He also reports the hazard of London playgoing in 1917: “Terrible Zep raid at 8.30pm.” Since Thomas Platter’s visit in 1599 taking in a show has of course been reckoned one of the delights of “London town”, as not a few of the diarists breezily describe it. Victor Lawn “on Leave in Blighty (sic)” late in 1918 took in *Maid of the Mountains*, *Chu*

Chin Chou, The Boy, Eyes of Youth, Chinese Puzzle, La Pouppe, Tails Up, Yes Uncle, Fair and Warmer"¹¹. Lawn, like many of the soldiers, opted for West End entertainment. Likewise in 1916 John Moloney and his companions "chose *Razzle Dazzle* at the Empire. It was very bright." There is some pathos in his final comment, which underpins the appeal of a musical after months at the Front: "To us after months of starvation in the musical line, it was delightful to hear even the rag time of a revue"¹². It seems as though soldiers were far more likely to take in a ragtime musical than attend as we might a Shakespeare show. In the accounts I have read (from approximately 300 soldiers) I have found dozens of such visits to light entertainment, but only two clear descriptions of attending a Shakespeare play. An unknown soldier went to a performance of *Twelfth Night*, 19 February 1919¹³; and in March, 1916, Francis Levenson Gower West went

...to *The Taming of the Shrew* at the Apollo Theatre. Oscher Asche & Lily Brayton were good as usual. First time I have seen this play & first one of Shakespeare's I have seen in London.¹⁴

West does not seem to have stayed at the Hut, as his diary reports instead weekend stays at country Houses, and his comments here suggest he was more accustomed than most soldiers to take in high as opposed to popular culture. The infrequency of soldiers taking in a Shakespeare show underlies a key aspect of the archives I have so far consulted. From the outside the Hut looks like a successful simulation of an Elizabethan Manor house, an anticipation of the Globe's current South Bank simulation of Elizabethan playing spaces. Soldiers report eating, sleeping and listening to music. In postcards they can be seen relaxing in the lounge, playing billiards, writing letters in the library. But did they engage in any Shakespearean activity? I have found no such reports from soldiers who stayed at the Hut itself. A soldier wrote home to the Dunedin Shakespeare Club, October 11, 1917 reporting that he had been in "the Middle Temple Dining Hall & stood on the actual boards where Shakespeare first played *Twelfth Night*"¹⁵. In April 1919 Harry Hall took a day trip and

Reached Stratford-on-Avon about 11.30.... Had lunch in the town and then went over to the house of Shakespeare's birth place

and then to the village church where Shakespeare is I think...went about a mile out of town and went over to Anne Hathaway's cottage.

This is a Stratford-upon-Avon circuit familiar to many

Shakespeareans. Francis Bennett notes a similar 'soldiers' excursion to Stratford-on-Avon' which was advertised at the Hut. 'To me', Bennett continues, 'it was more a pilgrimage than an excursion'¹⁶.

With the soldiers' visits to Shakespeare plays this suggests that,

though some soldiers were mindful of Shakespeare as part of the

English legacy the chance disasters of war allowed them to inspect,

they were in a distinct minority. Some of the soldiers were quite

bookish, such as William Smallfield who during the War was reading

George Eliot's *Romola*, rereading Dickens' first blockbuster *The*

Pickwick Papers, and eagerly anticipating the next Conan Doyle. In a

few cases this bookishness took Shakespearean form, as it did with

Edward Millar, who writes to his mother 24 February, 1918 that,

"escorted by an erudite gentleman", he had been on the Strand and

Fleet Street "where I bought a volume of Shakespeare's sonnets and poems"¹⁷.

Supporting the Hut from “Home”

New Zealanders back home were well apprised of the Hut and its restorative importance for London-based leaves, through letters such as McMaster’s, and the postcards many sent home with images of its rooms¹⁸. New Zealand newspapers reported enthusiastically on the Hut. They show that, at least in 1916, the story of the Hut’s origins was known to many, for they report the backstory of the £70,000 raised for a National theatre and the diverting of the location for the Hut¹⁹. Fundraising was a prominent Shakespeare theme in 1916, and this applied to the Hut also. New Zealanders knew how well used the hut was. Stories placed late in the year emphasize the success of the hut and the quality of its fit out, costed at an initial £8,000). But, these stories continue (striking chords familiar to anyone who has been involved in second-phase fundraising), the Hut needed more. More curtains and furniture, more equipment was needed for it to be fully furbished. If the Dominion could rally with £2,000, that would seal the deal. Again here it is striking that the

emphasis is placed on the comfort and solace for the troops; this is borne out by the postcards as well.

In support of the Hut the archives show a bounty of Shakespeare activities. The three hundredth anniversary of Shakespeare's death was widely noted in newspapers, and a constant stream of reports kept readers up to date with English celebrations. On April 29, *The Auckland Star* went large with a full broadsheet page, showing the celebrations in England, and putting in populist form key known facts about Shakespeare's life and times. They foreshadow what will surely be a deluge of such sections, in Saturday Arts pages and Sunday supplements and across public tv and radio throughout the English-speaking world in 2016. In 1916, these pages often featured a depiction of Shakespeare being worshipped by his children, his characters who look upon him. The implication I think must be that settlers in their colonies are the real descendants of Shakespeare, part of the cultural 'better Britain' Belich describes.

Reports throughout February, March and April designate May 3 as the official tercentenary day. May 3 was reserved to accommodate the shift from the Julian Calendar (observed in England until 1752) to the reformed Gregorian one. The Stratford Parish record clearly shows Shakespeare dying April 23 (as opposed to the purely mythic convenience of accepting it as the birth date), so jumping ten days gets you to May 3. Gordon MacMullan also explains that this was also to avoid April 23 of that year, which fell on Easter Sunday. Thus through April and May, celebrations were staged across the land; these were partly in Shakespeare's honour, and partly to fund raise for the war effort. In June Wellington's Shakespeare Tercentenary Committee could hand over £248. 4s & 7d. for the Belgian Red Cross fund. At this time there was a Wellington Shakespeare Club, as there still is, but they were unable to help as for some years they had been unable to attract decent numbers to their readings and talks. The *ad hoc* 1916 committee did rather better, staging a three-day Shakespeare festival at the Opera House on Courtenay Place, with community performers acting scenes from Shakespeare and

Shakespeare related musical items. An editorial in *The Dominion*, April 22 (the day before Shakespeare's 'birth' and death day) expounded Shakespeare's centrality to children of the Empire, and in a sermon late in April at the Unitarian Free Church in Wellington the Reverend Augustus G. Hale addressed the rhetorical question: 'Is Shakespeare worth remembering?' The reports of this sermon, the 1916 equivalent of a TED talk, appeared in a range of newspapers across the southern part of the North Island.

Wellington was founded as Port Nicholson in 1840, and has always prided itself on its level of cultural achievements. In 1916, however, public zeal for Shakespeare can be seen across the whole of New Zealand. The Grafton Shakespeare club, on the outskirts of what is now Auckland's downtown core held a May 3 recitation event. The Auckland Public Library exhibited their bequest from Sir George Grey of the first four Folios, and the 1640 edition of Shakespeare's poems²⁰. In Wanganui the Wesley Guild held Shakespeare recitations and in Levin a Festival was staged, again with the stated aim of

raising funds, in this case for the for the Red Cross. Further north in Hawera, a concert and Shakespeare recital was held.

Across Cook Strait, South Island towns were not to be outdone. Nelson staged a concert and in Ashburton, about an hour south by car from Christchurch, the Baring Square Literary Guild hosted an evening both of recitations and a lecture on Shakespeare's biography. The discovery of gold made Dunedin the first wealthy New Zealand town; like Wellington it still prides itself on its cultural capital²¹. Here the Congregational Church on Moray Place, right in the middle of town, hosted an address on Shakespeare's humour and recitations of musical items; the lecturer was Professor Gilray from the University of Otago. Local academics were put to good use in Auckland and Wellington also. Newspapers kept people abreast of the main themes of these lectures. As they reported the festivities in Stratford-upon-Avon, so too they recounted the views of English scholars. Sidney Lee's lectures on Shakespeare and Empire and Shakespeare and the War were given prominence. On May 3 *The Auckland Star* carried what reads like a full summary of the lectures, emphasizing themes

relevant directly to the War effort: ‘Generally speaking, Shakespeare’s dramas enforce the principle that an active instinct of patriotism promotes righteous conduct.’ The promulgation of Shakespeare as an instrument of righteous conduct is an unsurprising public observation from the middle of the Great War. Lectures on righteous conduct, by themselves, do not fully account for the panoply of Shakespearish activity New Zealand archives reveal. I think there is perhaps a subtler way of accounting for the variety and relish with which New Zealanders, especially at home, far away from the Western Front, went about celebrating Shakespeare. Of course many people were aware of Shakespeare as a crucial cultural legacy brought to the South Pacific by their ancestors. But, in many circumstances, they also enjoyed hearing his plays and debating Shakespeare related issues. I call this the scandal of pleasure, and this for me forms a key link to the other leave activities of the soldiers. It makes human sense that, against *The Face of Battle*, as John Keegan so famously described it, people would seek out pleasure wherever they could. That seeking of pleasure, Shakespearean or otherwise,

taking in *Twelfth Night* or the *Rag Time Revue* was not separate from the war effort.

The Shakespeare Hut is a resonant image for the idea of commemorating Shakespeare; and the activities in New Zealand for the tercentennial year have, in part, a Shakespeare basis. The Hut's Elizabethan-style façade, however, can also be seen as a kind of empty Shakespeare shell, concealing within a range of other, quite different activities. There is a commemoration of Shakespeare, especially visible in New Zealand newspapers from 1916, but Shakespeare is far from being the only preoccupation we can trace. As for the soldier's themselves Shakespeare takes his place within a much wider, very intense commitment to pleasure as a respite from their duties and discomforts while on active service.

Shakespeare Clubs: Dunedin and Parnell

A further usefully specific source for tracking 1916 activity are the records of Shakespeare Clubs. I will discuss two whose records survive intact, Dunedin and Parnell. Every year from the 1880s

through to the 1950s, the Dunedin Shakespeare Club aimed to present three public readings in large theatre²². They met constantly throughout the year, to organise, rehearse and then critique each of the readings, which were then reviewed by the local press as attentively as if they were fully staged performances. The actors, by custom, wore full evening dress. On such a scale, in 1916, the Club presented three plays to the paying public: *The Taming of the Shrew*, *Richard III* and *Hamlet*. These were all well received. The April performance of *Richard III* took in thirty four pounds at the box office. The club resolved to absorb all the expenses associated with the reading and donate all this money to ‘the Soldiers Sick and wounded fund’, thus foregoing a third of their performance revenue for the year.

The reading of *Richard III* took place on April 27, the week of the tercentenary of Shakespeare’s birth. *The Otago Daily Times* fulsomely recounted English tercentenary events (as did many New Zealand newspapers). The paper reported a speech before the reading itself, which noted the anniversary. In peace time the celebrations would have been far more extensive, and any funds raised would have

supported the campaign for a national (that is to say English) Shakespeare Theatre. The Great War then being fought meant a retrenchment of Shakespeare celebrations and made it more appropriate for funds to be diverted (as the Club then resolved) to support the War. Participating in Shakespeare and supporting the war could then be seen as one and the same thing. The reviewers had some criticism of the performances, but noted the deployment of ‘Mr Hanlon’s elocutionary powers.’ Alfred Charles Hanlon had served as President of the Club and was a celebrated New Zealand trial lawyer, noted for the grand eloquence with which he mounted his defences. Those gifts obviously served him well in playing Richard, one of the first great orators Shakespeare invented. ‘Indeed, at one time’, Geoffrey Hall notes in his biography of Hanlon, ‘he seriously considered acting as a career. Elocution and dramatic recital seduced him’²³.

The Minute Books of the Parnell Shakespeare Club also survive complete from the 1880s through to the 1930s. These afford a

comprehensive glimpse of what such a club engaged in, not just in 1916, but for the duration of the War²⁴.

In 1914 for example, the Club met nine times, reading together six plays, including *Henry VIII*, though the minute book shows no recognition of the debate initiated in the romantic era as to determining the hands of Shakespeare and Fletcher in the piece. In 1915 there were ten meetings, reading six plays followed by an evening of anthology pieces. In 1917 they met ten times, reading nine plays.

Through 1916 the Club adhered to its customary schedule, which a 1915 rule change had put on a more regular footing, meeting every fortnight from May 12 to October 13, with the postponement of the July 21 meeting ‘the weather was very bad on the previous day’, as indeed it often is in New Zealand in July. These of course are the months which extend from late autumn through to early spring, with coolish nights and plenty of rain pouring from the Tasman Sea across the Auckland isthmus. Presumably the club members had other things to do outdoors in the long summer evenings, turning to cultural

matters as the evenings close in, as New Zealanders still do now, especially with chamber groups, symphony orchestras and opera. Meetings were held in member's houses and at each a play or part of a play was read. In 1916 the Club worked through *Henry V*, *The Taming of the Shrew*, *Richard III*, *The Merry Wives of Windsor*, *Coriolanus*, *Two Gentlemen of Verona*, and *Macbeth*; and they finished the year again with an anthology evening from *The Merchant of Venice*, *Coriolanus*, *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, *The Taming of the Shrew*, *Henry VIII*, *Anthony and Cleopatra*, *The Comedy of Errors*, *The Tempest*, and *Romeo and Juliet*, thus generously sampling the tragical, historical and the comical and, we might note also, from across the accepted chronological range of Shakespeare's output, from perhaps the very first (*Two Gentlemen of Verona*) to almost the last (*Henry VIII*).

The secretary records intriguing evaluative comments. Most of the full plays were read over two nights, taking in Acts 1-3 one night, followed by Acts 4-5 at the next meeting. Some of these are puzzling

to modern eyes. The minutes note that for *Two Gentlemen of Verona* (Sept 15, 1916):

A good bit of cutting is necessary in this play a few long speeches were shortened. We were indebted to Miss Wright for a pretty capable rendering of the Song. “who is Sylvia”. It added much to the Interest of the Play.

But really the play is pretty short; so I do wonder what they chose to cut, and what this suggest about the Club’s reading pace, perhaps a good deal slower than the briskness of, say, *Shenandoah Express*.

You would expect a decent “who is Sylvia” to be sung in pretty much any restaging of the play; and it is no surprise to find a 1916 group unstimmed by the issue around the attempted rape in the last act, and our subsequent difficulty accepting the (tonally jarring) rapprochement between Valentine and Proteus. The next fortnight saw the Club read *Macbeth* ‘with cuts’, the minutes note; again the comments are instructive:

It is practically a one man & woman Play, & to lengthen it there is good deal of padding in it. If it could be done with the music which was written for it-it would probably improve it greatly.

Fans of the Middletonian witch scenes, or the semi-operatic Restoration adaptation likely would agree.

Subscriptions were set at 2s 6d, and meeting in members parlours must have kept costs down. Accordingly the club ran a surplus that year. Some of this was used to fund tickets for members to see the Allan Wilkie productions toured from Australia in 1916. Members opted either to see *Twelfth Night* or *The Merchant of Venice*. The minutes describe the reading series as a 'season', as we would understand a repertory programme from a professional theatre company, as if the Club thought of its readings as a kind of performance. Their enthusiasm for attending Wilkie's shows suggests the Club understood Wilkie's company to be offering something

different from the Club, more coherent and extensive than any local, New Zealand-based Shakespeare event could, at that time, be expected to provide.

Of the War, the Minutes make no direct mention. Modern Shakespeareans will note the reading of the martial-themed *Coriolanus* and *Henry V*, but at these entries there is no overt editorialising that might open out a 1980s-style cultural materialist reading of the Club's activities. Perhaps one way to understand this is to see the Club to be not so much a response to the War as a way of escaping it.

1964

In 1964, the inhabitants of Stratford, Taranaki mounted an April School's Festival to celebrate Shakespeare's birthday, one of several fitful attempts by this Stratford, "where all the street are named for Shakespeare", to capitalise on the happenstance of the linkage between this new world Stratford and that which straddles the Avon River in England. Katherine Scheil includes this NZ Stratford in her

lively survey of global attempts to monetise *stratfordiness*²⁵.

Newspaper commentary in 1964 drew attention to the guild of Stratfords, in particular highlighting the early success of Stratford, Ontario, then in its first decade as a Shakespeare festival town. As Scheil notes, New Zealand's Stratford has not really been able to capitalise on a similarly long term basis. Photos show however, that Stratfordians exuberantly embraced the 1964 anniversary in a "roistering" way. **[pix here]** For three successive Mondays they were entertained by excerpts or shortened versions from seven plays, performed by a wide range of local high schools: public, private, single sex and co-ed²⁶. A highlight was the banquet imaged below, with townspeople dressed as Elizabethans, relishing neo-Elizabethan fare of syllabub and soup, roast and sweet meats. Fifty years on what we might note is the strong patina of 1964 style which overlays any serious attempt at recreating 1564. "From an artistic point of view", the Festival report notes, the event "was most satisfactory". However, despite this success, and excellent attendance, the treasurer regrets that the event lost several hundred pounds. Coverage in the local

papers suggests that, the loss notwithstanding, Stratfordians were happy to commemorate their Shakespeare heritage.

Epilogue

In 1916 New Zealanders, like their Australian cousins, committed to another commemoration. April 25 1916 saw the first remembrance ceremonies in New Zealand and in theatres of combat in Europe and the Middle East, to commemorate the landings on the Gallipoli Peninsula a year before. The attempt to seize the high ground above the Dardanelles was a famous disaster; the pointless sacrifice of several thousand New Zealand and Australian soldiers has been remembered ever since. Throughout Australasia, April 25 remains the most solemn of days of public commemorations. There are no veterans left from the Gallipoli Campaign, but the marches of veterans of later Wars to dawn ceremonies at local cenotaphs (to

recall the dawn landings), draw ever larger crowds. Thousands of young New Zealanders trek every year to Gallipoli itself, in search of some mystical epiphany of “nationhood”.

Commemorating Shakespeare shows New Zealanders in a quite different light. There are notes of solemnity, such as those sounded by the most serious of bardolaters, or even by those most certain that Shakespeare was Bacon, or Elizabeth I or Marlowe or the Earl of Oxford. The pr spin around the three commemorative years studied here makes a serious case for New Zealand Shakespeare. What was done in 1912, 1916 and 1964, newspapers from the time suggest, was high and noble. But it was often conducted in something of the “holiday humour” Rosalind describes. New Zealanders enthusiastically dressed up in an early form of what we would now call Elizabethan cos play. They ate Elizabethan food with relish. How much they might know of the diet of any of their sixteenth century ancestors, or the finer points of starching a ruff collar is besides the point. To criticise the commemorations on that basis would be, perhaps, overly academic and arcane. Through these three disparate

years, we can see New Zealanders conscious of the centrality of Shakespeare to the idea of England some (but not all of them) inherit. Their playful embrace of that heritage suggests a Shakespeare not so much integral to national identity as rather a cultural attribute they might take on and take off at will.

An early highlight of the Shakespeare 400 celebrations in New Zealand is a nine week season of plays in a pop-up Globe (<http://www.popupglobe.co.nz/>). This is a simulation of the 2nd, post-1613 Globe, built from steel tubing, plywood and aluminium. “Twill away again” after the last show on April 23, prepped to pop up elsewhere as required. Ticket sales are high: New Zealanders remain keen to commemorate Shakespeare it seems in this kitset way, a cultural accessory ready to wear.

¹ See also for good examples: John E. Wills, Jr., *1688: A Global History* (2001); Florian Illies, *1913: the Year before the Storm* (2013); Keith Jeffery, *1916: A Global History* (2015).

² Hastings is the largest town closed to Havelock North.

³ A.R.Stone Diary. Alexander Turnbull Library Wellington MS-Papers-11199-58. For convenience I will note archive details for each record for the first quotation from each ms source.

⁴ *Diary and Letters of 2nd Lieutenant Harry Frederick Hall*. National Army Museum Accession No. 2002.534. MSS-074. Hall was killed in action at the Battle of Messines, Belgium in 1917.

⁵ William Miller *Letters WWI*. National Army Museum, Waiouru, NZ. Accession no. 1991.2781. By “tea” here Miller seems to mean the light meal taken in the late afternoon, as it would be understood in New Zealand and England during this period.

⁶ The hut is also marked in official soldier’s diaries for the War, which show those on leave key locations throughout central London.

⁷ New Zealanders’ accounts of their experiences in war-time Cairo, another potentially bewildering urban environment, and vaster by far than any available in New Zealand, show similar anxieties about the cost of pleasure.

⁸ *Uncle Andy’s Diary: The War Experiences of Andrew Stewart Dewar*. Hocken Library Dunedin MS-4072.

⁹ For more on London as a refuge and self-consciously constructed “home” for New Zealand soldiers, see Felicity Barnes, “Bill Massey’s Tourists in the Big Smoke: Rethinking the First World War’s Role in New Zealand’s National Identity,” *Journal of New Zealand Literature* 33: 2 (2015): 89-107.

¹⁰ Thomas Mitchell, *Diary and Postcards*, Alexander Turnbull Library, Wellington, New Zealand, MS-Papers-10024.

¹¹ Victor Charles Lawn, *Diary...1916-1919*. National Army Museum, Waiouru, New Zealand, Accession No. 2007.861 Acc 095.

¹² John Keith Moloney, 1893-1971: *War Diary*. Alexander Turnbull Library, Wellington, MS-Papers-1194.

¹³ *Diary: Unknown Soldier-England and France-WWI*. National Army Museum, Waiouru, New Zealand. Accession No. 1999.3183, MSS 131.

¹⁴ Francis Leveson-Gower West, *Diary Gallipoli & Western Front WWI & Post-War*, Book 3
27 Jan 1916-13 July 1916. National Army Museum, Waiouru, New Zealand Accession No.
1993.990.

¹⁵ Letter to Secretary, Inwards Correspondence Dunedin Shakespeare Club, Hocken Library, Dunedin MS-550/010. The signature on this letter is indecipherable, but this soldier knows enough to be aware of John Manningham's account of seeing *Twelfth Night* in the Middle Temple Hall, February 2, 1602. If not the first performance of the play it is very likely that the play was then quite new.

¹⁶ *A Canterbury Tale: the Autobiography of Dr. Francis Bennett* (Wellington: Oxford University Press, 1980), 89.

¹⁷ Edard Percival Millar, *Letters: England & Western Front-WWI*. National Army Museum Accession no. 1987.1645.

¹⁸ Soldiers' mail was censored, for military intelligence, but this of course would not cover leave activities in London.

¹⁹ This was the reported sum. Gordon MacMullan's chapter here, "Forgetting Israel Gollancz", gives the correct figures.

²⁰ Grey's generosity is authoritatively described in Donald Jackson Kerr, *Amassing Treasure for All Times: Sir George Grey, Colonial Bookman and Collector* (New Castle, Delaware; Dunedin: Oak Knoll Press/Otago University Press, 2006). The Auckland Public Library is one of only two Australasian Institutions with copies for the full set of Folios, the other being the State Library of New South Wales.

²¹ In 2014 Dunedin was designated a UNESCO City of Literature, the only New Zealand City to receive this honour. See: <http://www.dunedin.govt.nz/your-council/latest-news/december-2014/dunedin-thrilled-to-be-unesco-city-of-literature>.

²² Dunedin, in the South Island of New Zealand, was the first wealthy New Zealand town, after the gold rush in its hinterland in the 1860s.

²³ www.teara.govt.nz/en/biographies/2h11/hanlon-alfred-charles

²⁴ Details and quotes from Minute Book 8, Parnell Shakespeare Club, Records, 1883 – 1938, MS 234
Auckland War Memorial Museum Library.

²⁵ "Importing Stratford," *Critical Survey* 24, no. 2 (2012), 71-82.

²⁶ These anticipate the Shakespeare's Globe New Zealand Shakespeare in Schools Festival (which has run since the 1990s) where in regional and national contests, New Zealand High Schools compete to perform Shakespeare. The best actors are invited in to a ten day workshop in London, acting on the stage of the Shakespeare Globe theatre.