

2014 MATTHEWS AWARDS ANNOUNCEMENT

Best Article

For the award for the best article published in our journal, this year the Awards Committee had a particularly rich field from which to make a decision, because the first two issues presented most of the papers given at the centenary conference of the establishment of the Royal Canadian Navy. Nonetheless, a short list was created. Amongst that list, as one committee member noted, “quality is not an issue.” Therefore, after some discussion, noting that one of the objectives of our society is to promote research on nautical subjects, it was decided that the award should be presented for a work by a young scholar.

The Matthews Award for the best article published in our journal in 2014 therefore goes to

John T. Girder, for “ ‘Tis a shameful confession’: steam power and the Pacific maritime labor community”.

A committee member noted that it is superb research on a big subject, and represents a major piece of work. It is not telling tales out of school to note further that this article received “rave reviews” during the peer review process.

Best Book

The number of submissions for the Matthews Award for the best book published in 2014, written by a Canadian on any subject, or by anyone on a Canadian subject, was lower than it has been in recent years. That did not make the decision any easier.

As chair of the awards committee, after I sent out the request for submissions, I received a query from one publisher. Were we interested in a memoir type of work, or only scholarly works? In response, while I noted that indeed we have generally given our award to a scholarly work, I hoped that we would not be blind to a Dana, *Two Years Before the Mast*, or a Blanchet, *The Curve of Time*, both acknowledged as literary classics. The submissions did indeed include two memoirs which did not simplify our task. Ultimately however, we came down to a short list of two books.

Which to choose? One committee member said, “Fine judgement call -- and a tough one. I’m wavering all over the place!” Another said, “I’m frankly in a bind”. Both books were recognized as “truly life works”.

Ultimately, the decision was made in a manner not unlike that for the best article. Noting the eligibility criteria, we chose a work by a Canadian on a Canadian subject over a work by a Canadian on any subject.

Honourable Mention

The Awards Committee would like to present an Honourable Mention to

Barry Gough for *Pax Britannica: Ruling the Waves and Keeping the Peace before Armageddon*, published by Palgrave Macmillan.

One committee member noted that what he had “regarded as a brilliant synthesis of a bunch of literature ... [was] considerably more than that. Gough book is something bigger -- a substantial essay of globalism in the 19th-early 20th century” In it, he really addresses all of the

big historiographical issues in studies of British imperialism for the past 50 years, ... including the superb chapters on controlling the slave trade.

Along the same lines, another member noted, 'It is balanced, judicial and comprehensive. It also covers a vast topic.'

In sum, the committee agreed that Gough's book is 'life's work' in the sense that it brings together his reading and reflections over a whole career. It will rank up there with such scholars as Arthur Marder and Gerald Graham.

Mathews Award

And so, the Mathews Award for the best book published in 2014 is awarded by the committee to:

Gordon Smith, Edited by Whitney Lackenbauer - *A Historical and Legal Study of Sovereignty in the Canadian North: Terrestrial Sovereignty, 1870 - 1939*, published by the University of Calgary Press in the Northern Lights Series.

We must be grateful that the literary executors of Smith, who died in 2010 turned to Lackenbauer to prepare the manuscript for publication.

The committee noted that "this is the product of literally decades of meticulous research, and it provides truly foundational information for a big field". Further, "Smith is tackling an exclusively Canadian issue, or at least one that is central to our national interests. He has done original work to an exhaustive level and, I suspect, it will serve as a foundation for much academic focus in the years if not decades to come."

In conclusion, the committee would like to thank the authors for their work, and the publishers for their submissions. We also wish to acknowledge, yet again, the much appreciated advice of Faye Kert, our book reviews editor, who drew our attention to some books that might otherwise have been missed.