



JOHN CAWTE BEAGLEHOLE OM 1901-1971

The death of John Cawte Beaglehole on 10 October 1971, in his seventieth year, deprived the Academy of one of its most distinguished Honorary Fellows; but beyond this, it is a grievous loss to the intellectual life not only of New Zealand but of Australasia. This old usage is followed deliberately, for it was a province, or a realm, of the world's history which he had made peculiarly his own through his magisterial contributions to the saga of European discovery in the Pacific; and regret at the loss must be tempered by the reflection that, although he did not live to finish his projected biography of Cook, his greatest achievement—the massive edition for the Hakluyt Society of the journals of Cook and Banks—was triumphantly completed in 1967.

Apart from this superb monument, Beaglehole contributed much to the history of his own country, while *The Exploration of the Pacific* has maintained for nearly forty years its position as the best introduction to a great theme. As a historian, Beaglehole had all the gifts: imagination, meticulous thoroughness, empathy, a fine prose style; he was one of those rare scholars not afraid of feeling and its expression, yet always scrupulous that it should spring naturally, not rhetorically, from a foundation of rigorous scholarship. A humanist of wide interests and sympathies, he was a poet of real achievement, deeply responsive to music and painting, skilled in typography, and ever ready to give time and stimulating thought to the development of a just appreciation by New Zealanders of their own history, as in his work for the centennial historical committee and the Historic Places Trust. An episode of academic obscurantism during the Depression was responsible for the odd entry in *Who's Who* of 'odd jobs, 1933-35', but even without this he would have been a bonny fighter for civil liberties; but always a magnanimous one.

Nothing that he wrote was without quality; and the zest and universality of the man shine through the impeccable documentation of the editor of genius. *Endeavour, Resolution, Adventure, Discovery* - the names of Cook's ships form a fitting summary of John Beaglehole's work and character.

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Photo: Carlotta Munz