

## Report: The Katherine Mansfield Centenary Conference

The Katherine Mansfield Centenary Conference (The Centre for New Zealand Studies, Birkbeck, University of London, in association with The University of Northampton) was held on 4-6 September 2008. Sixty nine papers were presented over three days with 110 delegates attending. Keynote speakers included C.K.Stead (novelist and poet), Vincent O'Sullivan (writer and editor of Mansfield's letters) and Kathleen Jones (biographer). It was particularly exciting to meet, and listen to, so many academics that were all passionate about their particular Mansfield angle. Though Mar just 34 years, she continues to engage and comman



Penelope Jackson (left) presenting the Nigel Brown painting to Gerri Kimbers of the Centre for New Zealand Studies at Birkbeck College, University of London.

My paper, titled 'Facing Katherine Mansfield', considered 18 portraits of Mansfield (photographs, paintings and sculptures) including three paintings made by Nigel Brown especially for the event. Generously Nigel Brown gifted one of his paintings to the Centre for New Zealand Studies so that the memory of Mansfield will continue in Bloomsbury where the writer lived as both a school girl and adult writer. My presentation was warmly received and I have been encouraged to write it up as a journal article (the conference organisers have suggested the publication of a post conference journal). I have also recently finished an article for *Bravado* magazine about one of the portraits I discussed in my presentation (due out in October).

Future plans from the conference include the formation of a Mansfield society which would further foster relations especially between New Zealand and the United Kingdom.

The conference was a wonderful opportunity not only to disseminate original research but to network in an international context. I would like to take this opportunity to extend my gratitude to the NZ-UK Link Foundation for supporting my travel to London.

Penelope Jackson  
September 2008