



Supreme Grand Royal Arch Chapter of New Zealand

Masonic Centennial Award

2014

**“The promotion and encouragement of excellence
and of skills in some aspect of professional, commercial,
technical, or other practical endeavour “.**

2014 CENTENNIAL AWARD AN INVESTMENT IN OUR FUTURE



The winner of the Royal Arch Centennial Award this year is Peter Almond, Associate Professor in Soil Science at Lincoln University in Canterbury. The funding will be used in a project aimed at improving the research models that predict future climate, taking in variables such as increases in atmospheric greenhouse gas concentrations.

Professor Almond graduated BSc (Hons) from Massey University and went on to do his PhD at Lincoln. He has been widely published in academic journals, and is a member of the New Zealand Society of Soil Science and a past president of the Australasian Quaternary Association. (The Quaternary Period spans the past 2.6 million years of the Earth's history. It is noted for dramatic and frequent changes in global climate.)

Professor Almond will use the Award to cover the costs of a scientific exchange with Dr. Sandor Gulyás of the University of Szeged in Hungary. Dr. Gulyás is an expert in geology and especially in the application of malacology and other techniques to the reconstruction of environmental conditions of the recent geological past.

Malacology is the study of molluscs – in the case of Dr. Gulyás, land snails. His research has focused on the wind-blown dust deposits (loess) in the Carpathian Basin of Hungary. The exchange programme will enable him and Professor Almond to transfer knowledge and skills, and importantly will result in the first malacological study of New Zealand loess.

Climate records deciphered from loess over similar periods of the past, but in different hemispheres, will allow important conclusions to be drawn about how the Earth's climate system works.

There is no one in New Zealand working in Dr. Gulyás's specialised area of geology, and the collaboration with him will open up new opportunities for research and co-operation in climate science, including the training of students. The collaboration will also allow integration of research findings at a global level.

Centennial Award committee chairman V E Comp Geoff Coker says Professor Almond's application presented a unique opportunity for the Order to make an investment in the future.

"This is a significant piece of research, not only for New Zealand but internationally," he said.

"The more we know and understand about climate change, the better we can plan for the future. This is work that ultimately will benefit the world of our children and grandchildren, and beyond."