

Phanzine

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Editorial

Welcome to a new year and the first Phanzine of this year. The coming year promises to be another stimulating one for our organisation and inside we have more details on what is coming up for the rest of the year.

During the early part of this year, two issues involving Archives New Zealand have raised the question of how much information provision is enough. As historians, we want the most comprehensive breadth of research material to be preserved in our institutions, and we want to access to it, preferably sooner rather than later.

In January, the unwitting inclusion of classified information in David Lange's personal papers, held at Archives, gave a glimpse of the kind of material that sits on the other side of the wall marked 'secret'. It was a tantalising if ultimately frustrating event because it simply made Archives – perhaps understandably – anxious about its procedures and fearful of similar accidents. It subsequently blocked access to the papers of all politicians since 1939 until it could ensure that there was no more classified information lurking there. To many historians it seemed like a huge over-reaction and while we can understand the rationale behind the statutory requirement to keep classified material secret, it is not a hallmark of open democracies that these things be kept secret for longer than is absolutely necessary.

Of course, these kinds of papers will come to light in the fullness of time. However, if the Prostitutes Collective has its way, files gathered on working prostitutes before last year's law decriminalising prostitution will not. The Collective argues that, as prostitution is no longer a crime, it makes retention of the files unreasonable and unnecessary and leaves a stigma on anyone who has moved on to a new profession.

While it is understandable that anyone who was once breaking the law and now isn't would want to see such files destroyed, unfortunately, to coin a phrase, that's history. To expunge these files would be a pretty severe form of censorship; after all, the police did gather the information and use it for a purpose. One hundred or even 50 years from now, files on prostitutes will form a pretty interesting social record. Perhaps if they were embargoed until after the death of the person involved, there would be less anxiety.

Let's hope that opening up the past remains a straightforward matter. Our future depends on it.

Michael Kelly

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Profile: Margaret Tennant

Emma Dewson talks to Margaret Tennant, an academic historian making enterprising forays into public history and social policy.

Margaret, you've been very busy working on some new projects – can you tell us what you're working on at the moment?



I've started one project while finishing another – not desirable, but at least they're so closely related that they reinforce each other nicely. I'm writing the final chapter of a book entitled 'The Fabric of Welfare', which looks at government and voluntary provision of social services since the 1840s. I'm arguing for the lens to shift from

the welfare state to the voluntary (or non-profit) sector, but I'm also showing how interwoven the two sectors have been – so much so that the appropriateness of the whole notion of 'sectors' in social service provision needs to be questioned. I've been rather ambitious in trying to this all in one book, but I've found similar survey histories which show patterns over a long period of time really useful – even though PBRF requirements would suggest that stretching it out to two or even three books might have been a better strategy!

And the other project?

The second project involves a contract with the Ministry of Social Development and Johns Hopkins University to research the non-profit sector in New Zealand. This doesn't look only at social services, with which I'm reasonably familiar, but at sporting, cultural, religious and other organisations which fall under the rubric of 'civil society', to use the current buzz-word. In fact, part of the study is to define what is meant by the 'non-profit sector' in New Zealand. It's part of an internationally comparative project, so it has quite tightly structured – but very interesting – questions which need to be addressed.

You are part of a team contracted to do this. What benefits and disadvantages have you noticed with this team approach?

I've done collaborative research with another historian before, but this is a new ball game altogether. I'm

learning that I can't put my head down and simply get on with researching and writing the 'history' section (in between my other University duties) – there's a need to give quick feedback on other sections of the report and to take on board comments from both contracting agencies along the way, as well as the supervisory committee of 'stakeholders' set up by the Office of the Voluntary and Community Sector. There are regular meetings to attend in Wellington, international conference calls, public presentations to 'stakeholder groups' and endless emails copied from the various interested parties. There are sensitivities about how the project is described in public. And there are absolutely finite deadlines – but they're all things that public historians have to deal with to some degree.

All this can be an irritant and a distraction, but I'm seeing how the consideration given by a range of well-informed minds does result in a better product, even if you have to build this into your time-frame. And one of our team, Jackie Sanders, is an absolutely superb research manager as well as a researcher. I'm learning a lot from her about dealing with contractual requirements, and attention to detail on that front, as well as dealing quickly and firmly with issues that come up along the way – we're answerable to two masters, so this is important.

You say you've had a shift in focus for your work. How does this reflect your current interests and teaching?

Because I teach social policy as well as history courses, I've become interested in policy formation and an assessment of its impact, which can often be done only with reference to history. History's ultimately about people, and social policy impacts upon people – how it does this, and with what intended, or unintended consequences, is often judged best from a distance. So, I'm writing as much for a social policy audience as for other historians, and that's shaping where I present my work – the last paper I gave was at a Volunteering Research Conference in the UK, for example.

In what way is history contributing to policy development in the social policy area?

One of the questions asked in the Johns Hopkins project field guides addresses precisely this issue: what does the history of the non-profit sector suggest might be the most effective measures to foster its development in the future? I'm still thinking this through, quite

honestly. I certainly promote an understanding of historical patterns to my social policy students. They're often quite self-righteously outraged by past policies on adoption, or institutional care, or racial issues, and I try to point out that these policies were formulated by people who often considered themselves 'advanced' thinkers – just as they do – and that today's orthodoxies may be subject to equal condemnation in the future. In fact, in terms of my study, some of the highly fashionable 'managerialism' and contracting arrangements of the 1990s are already being criticised as narrow in conception and excessive in implementation.

One of the things that history does suggest about social policy in New Zealand, is how easily it's captured by a small group. New Zealand is so small, its politicians have always been so accessible (by international standards), and the lack of constitutional safeguards have contributed to this capture. But policy makers are never pleased to learn that their current pet project might have been tried before and found wanting. Although they may have an investment in not thinking historically, that's all the more reason why they should be exposed to the insights that history provides, and to the sense of themselves as part of an evolutionary, or reactionary process.

On a different matter: you teach a range of courses at Massey University in Palmerston North. Where do you think university history teaching is headed?

So much of what we decide to do in universities is determined by institutional factors rather than what we might consider ideal for our discipline. The requirements of a degree major, progression between levels, staff-student contact and the forms it might take – these are all shaped as much by staff numbers and availability, the degree of internal competition, and whether history is in a department on its own, or in a 'budget-centre' comprising several disciplines, for example. Under an EFTS funding regime, the numbers game has been dominant.

I think on the whole that teaching standards have improved and that more teaching is now done by researchers working at a high level, getting the dirt of history under their fingernails, so to speak. Staffing requirements may mean that there's more teaching of thematic papers, to which several historians can contribute. We're now required to be much more specific about course objectives and levels of achievement at different levels, but I'd be appalled if the unit standards approach came into the University.

What do you see as the main challenges facing public historians now-a-days?

I suppose for those without other institutional support, it's still the problem of getting commissions which recognise – and adequately recompense – their skills. Where institutional histories have been written, I suspect they tend to be cast in stone for some time. The revisiting and reinterpretation that's par for the course in other historical contexts may be slower to generate new public history projects. But team work on internet-based projects seems to be a new and exciting development, and this obviously requires new skills, certainly a move away from the historian writing alone for an audience used to a dominance of text with secondary illustrations.

What is your experience as an historian working away from a main centre?

Apart from dealing with endless Palmerston North jokes? I've spent blocks of time working in Wellington in the past, and I do miss the opportunities for networking and attendance at seminars on a variety of topics, or the quick trip into Archives to check something – from here I have to plan a research day in advance. But research leaves in another place are an atypical experience anyway, in terms of how you can organise your day. On the whole, Palmerston North is only two hours away from Wellington, with a good commuter train service – for a public historian using government archives, it may be easier working from Palmerston than from Dunedin. The internet is useful as well. Living in a provincial city makes you more aware that New Zealand history can be distorted by a concentration on the four main centres, that there's a need to be aware of alternative patterns – but Bill Oliver made that point thirty years ago.

And what are your future research plans?

The current project is throwing up more detailed topics in relation to the history of voluntary and community organisations. I'm also interested in the provision of services for the elderly over time, and at the growth of 'for-profit' social services. And there's one I've flagged for a while, stemming from earlier work on school medical services – changing attitudes to personal hygiene and cleanliness. The potential for new research is endless, really.

What's new at PHANZA

The coming year promises to be a busy one. Here's a brief rundown on the changes to the committee and some of this year's coming highlights.

Committee

The committee has had one change. Melanie Lovell-Smith has resigned and been replaced by Kynan Gentry. Ky is working for the Ministry for Culture and Heritage and has just co-edited *Heartlands: New Zealand Historians Write About Where History Happened* with former PHANZA president Gavin McLean. We are very grateful to Melanie for her contribution for the period she was on the committee.

New logo

This is the first issue of Phanzine that uses our new logo. It was designed by graphic designer Kris Sowersby and will feature on all our publications and correspondence in the future. We hope to launch the new logo at an event later this year, in conjunction with a revamp of the website.



Conference

PHANZA traditionally holds a conference-like event every two years. This year we are in discussions with the Ministry for Culture and Heritage's History Group with a view to putting on a combined public history conference towards the end of this year. We'll keep you posted on developments.

Website

We intend to undertake a revamp of the website this year, with an emphasis both on upgrading its appearance and making it more user-friendly for our members. When we established member homepages on the PHANZA website some years ago it gathered only modest interest from our members. We would like to make it simple for members to set up their own pages and so we intend utilising some basic tools so that everyone can do just that. We hope to hold a workshop on setting up homepages in conjunction with the launch of the new logo.

The invisibility of disability history

Hilary Stace takes an uncompromising look at a forgotten part of New Zealand history.

New Zealand Sign Language is about to become the third official language of Aotearoa New Zealand. This significant recognition has come in legislation supported by all parties in Parliament apart from ACT. The second reading was interpreted into NZ Sign on the floor of parliament and relayed on screens for those in the gallery.

Until quite recently New Zealand Deaf have been denied their own language, as the hearing mainstream enforced lip reading and speech in residential schools. As with Te Reo, children were punished for using their natural language. Yet NZ Sign – New Zealand's own indigenous dialect of an international language – survived and now thrives. Recognising it as an official language marks the first steps in undoing all the ways that society impacts deleteriously on people with hearing impairment in New Zealand. A broader history of disability in New Zealand will follow the lead of disabled people who make a distinction between

impairment (what people have) and disability (society's reaction to impairment). Such a history will involve making visible the way society impacts upon people with physical, sensory, cognitive and psychological impairment in New Zealand.

The United Nations is finalising a new convention of the rights of disabled people. The committee overseeing the process is chaired by a New Zealander and the New Zealand delegation of government officials and NGO representatives is making a large contribution to the convention's draft. The representative for People First, an international advocacy group for people with intellectual impairments, is also a New Zealander.

Local technological innovations have made a major impact on the ability of people with various impairments to participate in mainstream society, for example in providing machines to assist the literacy of people with vision impairment.

Only 30 years ago New Zealand had a very high rate

of institutionalisation of its population, including many children. They were locked up not for what they had done, but for who they were. The labels used indicate their status as other – handicapped, retarded, mental defectives, loonies. A ‘restorative justice’ process is now collecting stories of the abuse experienced by those who had the misfortune to find themselves so removed from mainstream society.

Media reporting of these events is almost non-existent. The Press Gallery was deserted for the recent second reading of the New Zealand Sign language Bill. Yet one in five New Zealanders have an impairment, so while there is the occasional media reference to the disabled hero or victim, the coverage does not reflect any form of proportionality.



William Downie Stewart (1878–1949), lawyer and politician, in London in 1932. (Alexander Turnbull Library PAColl-7081-59)

And where are these stories reflected in our museums or written history? Te Papa – Our Place – recently had an international exhibition on the wonders of genetic technology and its potential to remove the concept of disability from our culture, but as yet has had no exhibition acknowledging of the contribution of disabled people to the culture of Aotearoa New Zealand. And where are the artifacts: the heavy old wheelchairs, the

ancient Braille machines, the eugenic texts, the iron lungs, the machines that gave ECT to (often) unanaesthetised patients, or the photographs from institutions such as Templeton or Kimberley?

There are infrequent samples in the public historical record. The Dictionary of New Zealand Biography has the occasional story, such as the first blind graduate and those who lived with the effects of polio and war injuries. Gerard Smyth’s documentary on Templeton Hospital followed the consequences of closure on the lives of the inmates who were finally allowed to be part of a family, choose who they lived with, get married, and seek restorative justice, after decades of being denied these ordinary life choices.

One of the most powerful addresses I ever heard (at the Many Faces of Abuse Conference, 2005) was given by an Australian woman whose physical impairment was so severe she could not speak. Her story was read by a colleague. Institutionalised in the 1960s as a preschooler after her parents were told it was the right thing to do, she eventually won her freedom through the courts, went to university, wrote her autobiography, and now champions the rights of other disabled people to live ordinary lives. At the same conference, an Australian medical ethicist – who uses a motorised wheelchair and requires oxygen and pain killers to live each day – challenged our non-disabled understanding of the concepts of suffering and patience, and sought forgiveness for the historical abuse of disabled people.

Eugenics is another aspect of our history of disability. The assumption that disability can and should be bred out of the population still threatens the very existence of disabled people. This philosophy was alive and well in New Zealand for much of the last century. Across the country from farm leaders to the liberal elite there was much fretting about how to promote breeding for the good of race and empire, while preventing the undesirables from so doing. Truby King’s aim was to improve the breeding stock and produce good soldiers out of a motley population.

Sadly, the language and aims of eugenics still thrives here in the minds of some politicians or scientists. The targets of modern eugenicists are immigrants, poor people, those from other ethnicities, people with mental illness or other impairments. For many scientists, doctors and geneticists, biotechnology is the respectable front for the new eugenics. In such discourse, disability is synonymous with unhealthiness, suffering and affliction, and thus denies the basic humanity of disabled

people. So it is not surprising that disability and disabled people's stories are not sexy topics for positive media portrayals, historical study or documentation.

Just days after the Sign Language Bill had its second reading, accompanied by silent acclamation of a large contingent in the gallery, National Radio's Nine to Noon featured a piece on the desirability of screening of babies for deafness and subsequent surgical cochlea implants for these new-borns. There was no mention of informed consent, undesirable medical side effects, or, most importantly, that these children might have a right to grow up participating in their own deaf cul-



Returned servicemen embroidering as part of their convalescence c.1918. (Alexander Turnbull Library PAColl-5932-27)

ture. No member of the deaf community took part in the discussion. But like the Australian policy makers who decided that Aboriginal children were better off with white families, the doctors and media stars are not the ones who will have to live with the consequences. A deaf ear has, yet again, been turned to the cry of disabled people: "nothing about us without us"!

In many ways the invisibility of disability now has parallels with the situation of Maori a hundred years ago – an interesting sideline culture, but inevitably dying out. Just as feminists, gays and Maori activists fought and continue to fight for their rights it is now time for disabled people to become proudly visible and tell their own stories. And while there are now a number of programmes on disability taught at various tertiary institutes around New Zealand, there is only one programme in Disability Studies taught at post graduate level; at least that is taught by a disabled person.

There are some great stories out there of disabled people and their achievements – not as heroes or victims, but as ordinary people contributing to the diversity of New Zealand's heritage and culture from their own lived experience. As historians, curators and researchers we have a responsibility to work in partnership with disabled people to help make disability history visible.

Heritage

Michael Kelly gives the Historic Places Trust a well-deserved plaudit. Plus, coastal protection and the difficulty of protecting Auckland's housing heritage.

A new order

This column hands out plenty of brickbats, some of them aimed at the Historic Places Trust. So it is very pleasing to be able to congratulate the Trust for its decision to seek a heritage order for the Jean Batten Building in Auckland (see Phanzine Vol.11 no. 1). This building, more correctly known as the Jean Batten Place Departmental Building, is a significant government office building constructed at the beginning of World War II. It is owned by the BNZ and under threat of demolition.

A demolition consent hangs over the building, recently reconfirmed by the High Court, so the Trust almost immediately followed registration of the building as Category I in December 2005 with an announcement that it had given notice of a heritage order. It remains to be seen if the heritage order is confirmed under

the Resource Management Act, but the significance of this move can be quickly gleaned when one considers that the Trust has sought no more than a handful of heritage orders since the Historic Places Act was passed in 1993.

So this intervention is significant, not because of this particular issue but because the use of heritage orders reveals a stiffening in the Trust's resolve and a greater willingness to use all its protection options to save heritage. This approach is also important in the message it sends the Trust's long-suffering supporters and stakeholders, who have watched with frustration as the Trust has given the appearance of not wanting to take on heritage battles. It offers hope that in future fights (and there are plenty just round the corner) the Trust will be in the trenches with its traditional allies.



Jean Batten Building (Martin Jones, Historic Places Trust)

Coastal protection

The recent intervention by Chris Carter, Minister of Conservation, to prevent the destruction of the salt marshes at Whangamata for a marina certainly caused considerable distress to the supporters of the proposed marina (or a 'carpark' as the Minister described it). Much was at stake, including \$1.3 million of supporters' money on costs already incurred in getting past the Environment Court.

However, Mr Carter's action was an important one for a number of reasons. Although the decision by the Environment Court was in itself a tight and controversial one, the Minister had other, long-term reasons to oppose the marina. The day after his decision the Minister announced a review of coastal development, citing the community's concern at the loss of New Zealand's coastline to excessive development. It was a shrewd political move, but it also helped focus attention on a matter that is undoubtedly of huge concern to New Zealanders - our coastline is disappearing under a wave of development.

While the coastline is valuable for many reasons, it also contains the vast majority of our archaeological sites, which are, in the case of Maori sites, a heritage resource unique to New Zealand. Although our pre-1900

archaeological sites are automatically protected by the Historic Places Act, the Historic Places Trust is under sustained pressure to give consent to applications to destroy or modify sites. It would help if most sites were listed by the relevant local authority, but they're not. The answer just might lie in a broad-ranging review of coastal protection under the New Zealand Coastal Policy Statement.

Adam and Sally's place

In last August's Phanzine (vol. 11 no. 2) we looked at Auckland's new heritage rules to protect inner-city character housing. Mayor Hubbard's brave new world is already looking a bit tattered after commissioners granted consent to former New Zealand test cricketer Adam Parore and his partner Sally Ridge to demolish their 100 year old house in Freeman's Bay, valued at a mere \$2.4 million. The so-called 'celebrity couple', who only bought the house two years ago, were the first to challenge the rules that require a resource consent to demolish a specially zoned house i.e. built before 1940. Theirs is one of 16,300 houses affected by the rule changes.

In making their decision, the commissioners agreed that the house had heritage value and was not beyond repair, but they considered that demolition would have only a minor effect on the "streetscape, visual amenity and heritage character of the area." As the whole purpose of the new rules was to try and put an end to this kind of outcome, it's already apparent that forcing someone to get a resource consent to demolish their house is not any sort of deterrent to the well-heeled, unless the council is prepared to appeal the commissioners' decision. That seems doubtful given that more homeowners are starting to line up to take their own shot at the rules.

As if to underline the fragility of the council's new approach, a council officer gave consent to the demolition of a house in Marine Parade, Herne Bay, unaware that it was about 100 years old. The New Zealand Herald reports that the officer, described as the council's 'architectural specialist', visited the property twice and relied on the word of the demolition contractor that it was built after 1950. He concluded that no resource consent was required for the demolition. His decision was apparently based on an inspection of the exterior, which was clad in modern materials, but the paper quoted the daughter of a former occupant who said it was 'obvious from the outside that it was built before 1940'.

Conference review: 'Unleashing collections: cloth, costume and culture'

Kirstie Ross looks back at a conference devoted to improving accessibility to textile collections.

The fifth annual symposium of the New Zealand Costume and Textile Section (NZCTS) of the Auckland Museum Institute was held in Wellington 24–29 March. As its name suggests, the conference was conceived as a forum for textile collections to be 'unleashed' and as an opportunity to make them accessible, physically and intellectually.

Around 120 people gathered from around New Zealand, along with a smattering of scholars and curators from Australia, and most who attended are involved in textiles and costumes collections in some way – creating, caring, and interpreting them. On the menu were demonstrations, tours, conference papers and poster sessions.

The conference was a joint venture between Te Papa and the Fashion and Textile Department of Massey University's College of Creative Arts. The 'new' museum hosted public demonstrations and staff led tours of collections exhibitions while the 'old' museum on Mt Cook was the venue for the conference proper.

The broad emphasis on accessibility meant that philosophical issues affecting the culture of collecting cloth and costume could not be fully addressed. Hopefully there will be time to pursue these concerns at future conferences.

For the first day of the conference my administrative duties prevented me attending the tours of Te Papa's textile stores and I only glimpsed demonstrations of tivaevae making, taaniko and other Māori weaving techniques, lace and quilt making.

The highlights of the next two days for me were informative papers about a range of textiles and costume, such as Korean wrapping textiles called pojagi from the Chosen dynasty; the evolution of the New Zealand police uniform; and the origins of felt souvenir badges. I was sorry to have missed a paper about an unprovenanced muka (fine flax) flag languishing in the British Museum.

Unlike previous NZCTS conferences, several high profile visitors presented papers. As a warm-up event, Rosemary McLeod gave a public talk about her collection of women's home textile crafts, also the subject of her recent book *Thrift to Fantasy*. McLeod's talk reminded me that insights beyond the autobiographical may be gained from personal collections of home-made domestic objects. She also revealed the pervasive power of a familial taste, evident in her conviction that green and purple are the most vulgar colours in the world.

Less successful was a history of embroidery given by Alastair McLeod from the English firm of Hand & Lock, the 'world's finest provider of hand embroidery since 1767'. McLeod presented his talk in a heavily braided and embroidered 19th century naval uniform, the rustling of which was amplified distractingly by his microphone.

Australian quilt collector and scholar Annette Gero described her research into an unprovenanced quilt, reputedly marking the signing of the Suez Canal treaty between England and Egypt. Another influential Australian dress historian, Margaret Maynard, spoke about her current project, a cultural history of Australian women's fashion photography in the 20th century.

Maynard engaged with the central issue affecting dress history now that it has infiltrated the academy: providing it with contexts and theory. Maynard described her approach to this problem as 'ecological', which, I think, is another way of saying that she creates contexts by doing primary research. Historians may find this a little surprising but this is one result of the bigger debate initiated by the shift of authority away from costume curators, and their putative emphasis on describing techniques and materials. However, Te Papa and Massey University's combined efforts to unleash collections of cloth and costumes is indicative that here in New Zealand this authority is being shared.

Kirstie Ross is a member of PHANZA committee and a Te Papa curatorial staff member.

Trade Union History Project goes online

Neill Atkinson welcomes the latest addition to New Zealand's growing online history community, the Trade Union History Project.

The TUHP was formed in 1987 to foster and record New Zealand trade union and labour history and help preserve valuable union archives, many of which were then under threat from the closure and amalgamation of unions. A number of PHANZA members have been active in the TUHP over the years, including Jock Phillips, Richard Hill, Peter Franks, Kerry Taylor, David Verran, Warwick Johnston, Neill Atkinson and current TUHP Chairperson David Grant.

Though the TUHP has been a latecomer to the web scene, its new site makes up for lost time with a range of useful features for its members and anyone interested in New Zealand labour history. Alongside the usual information (contact details, membership forms, a list of committee members and the TUHP's rules) the site offers a short history of the organisation; a record of its numerous seminars, publications, exhibitions and

other achievements; electronic copies of recent TUHP Newsletters; a list of recommended reading on New Zealand labour and trade union history; links to local and overseas history, union and related websites; and a detailed timeline of New Zealand labour history. And that's just a start – more features will be added to the site over the coming months.

The front page highlights upcoming events, including the launch of the TUHP's latest book, *Revolution: The 1913 Great Strike in New Zealand*, on 1 May, an exhibition on the 1913 Strike which opens at the Museum of Wellington City and Sea in August, and the TUHP's next seminar in November this year, which will explore New Zealand's links to the Spanish Civil War. Be sure to check the site regularly for updates on these and other events.

Catch the site at www.tuhp.org.nz.

Accessing LINZ's paper records

At LINZ, the future is electronic, but as Rebecca O'Brien points out, it may not necessarily be good news for researchers or the documents themselves.

In 1998 Land Information New Zealand (LINZ) initiated Landonline, a new electronic database that, for a fee, allows online access to registered users to the land transfer documents registered under the Torrens system, which was introduced in 1870 as a method of guaranteeing title to land by registering title.

Landonline does not provide access core paper records created prior to the Torrens System. Crown Purchase Deeds, Crown Grants and Deeds must be accessed in person at one of the five LINZ processing centres.

These core paper records contain unique information that is the fundamental source of information for determining the history of New Zealand's land tenure. They are crucial to the work of private researchers as well as a to work of a wide range of organisations, including the Waitangi Tribunal, the Crown Forestry Rental Trust, Maori groups, the New Zealand Historic Places Trust, and the Ministry of Culture and Heritage. Issues that hinder access or use of these records hinder the work of these individuals and organisations.

Researchers may be surprised to know that LINZ considers that 'overall customer satisfaction with LINZ's paper records service is high' and the department now has the best ever documentation of its records and storage management standards are the highest they have been. Yet records continue to deteriorate unchecked, as the accompanying images show. Others have been lost through a lack of security. Inter-related records and indexes are often stored in different locations and there is no catalogue or reliable index – or trained staff – to assist researchers to utilise these records effectively.

Action is needed and LINZ has recently progressed a project that will impact on how these records are accessed in the future. Over the next 6-8 months options for 'appropriate access, including preservation and storage options' will be considered. As this statement shows, LINZ is showing a strong inclination towards electronic access.

Accessing records electronically delivers benefits on both a practical and historical preservation level so the



LINZ records in poor condition, Wellington Processing Centre (R. O'Brien)



An incomplete set of Crown Grants at LINZ Wellington Processing Centre. (R. O'Brien)

research results clearly support electronic delivery and the move to 100% e-lodgement.

This will improve researcher access to these valuable documents. Yet merely creating copies will not enable researchers to rapidly identify the number and types of records held by LINZ. In the submissions received by LINZ on the copying project, a number of

submitters indicated the importance of indexing any information copied. There has been no indication from LINZ that this will be undertaken when the copying project commences.

LINZ plans to consult with stakeholders on the recommended option for access and will report to the Minister for Land Information by 1 July 2007.

On history and sacred cows

Malcolm McKinnon draws some universal conclusions from a battle over Indian history curriculum in California.

History is about the past, but can be one of the most charged subjects in the present. New Zealanders know this well from the process of investigating Māori claims against the Crown – ‘the Treaty process’. This process has both drawn on and produced quite different kinds of histories, as has been ably explained in a number of recent works, such as Giselle Byrnes’ *The Waitangi Tribunal and New Zealand history*. In such contests the practice of Western historiography has often collided with ‘ethnohistory’ – the sense that peoples have of their own past. But the contest is also a debate between a government largely informed by Pākehā or European patterns of conduct and representatives of an indigenous, colonised and minority population.

Similar debates have occurred in other parts of the world, involving for instance, aboriginal people in Australia and first peoples in Canada. But debates between ‘history and historiography’ can also arise in quite different circumstances.

In California state textbooks come up for review every six years. In the latter months of 2005 two groups – the Vedic Foundation of Austin, Texas and the state chapter of the Hindu Education Foundation lobbied for

changes to the way the favoured sixth grade (11-12 year olds) history textbook dealt with the history of Hinduism and early India. In particular they sought a reduced emphasis in the textbooks on the caste system and on accounts of Hindu oppression of women. They took issue with the textbook statements that social practices such as untouchability and caste discrimination were ‘central tenets’ of Hinduism, which they argued fail to point out that such customs were also found in non-Hindu communities throughout South Asia.

The academic community, and in particular the community of Indologists – academic specialists on early and medieval South Asian history, literature and culture – mobilised against the Foundations’ campaign. Led by Harvard University Sanskrit scholar Michael Witzel, they said that the proposals were ‘unscholarly’ and adopting them would trigger an ‘immediate international scandal’. A group in California, Friends of South Asia, who described themselves as ‘a group of Hindus, Muslims, Christians, atheists, agnostics, and others with roots in South Asia’, also lobbied against the changes. The debate became colourful with one protagonist arguing that the sixth-grade classroom had

'become the battleground for geo-politically charged fights where the anti-Hindu biases of the academicians are ruling the roost'.

'History is probably one of the most emotional and difficult subjects to sort out' said Glee Johnson, president of the California Board of Education. 'People care about these issues. It's their blood. But it's not always easy to tell what's factual in this arena, and when you're trying to distil world history to sixth-graders you need to be really careful.'

Vinay Lal, a professor of history at UCLA, was opposed to the Hindu lobbyists: 'I don't think you could find a single scholar of Indian history in the entire United States who teaches at a research university who would support (the Hindu group's) position. Most people on their side are Indian engineers, physicists, chemists, who think their opinion is just as good as those who have spent a lifetime studying these subjects.'

Website review

Michael Kelly ponders the broadband issue and revisits a key player in the history of New Zealand music.

Broadband anyone?

As any fule kno, the difference between broadband and dial-up is like light and day. Anyone who has dipped into their pocket for broadband enjoys express download speeds and its near instantaneous convenience.

We know that broadband uptake in New Zealand is slow, the product of overpricing, a lack of infrastructure and complacent telcos. Governments around the world recognise the importance of internet access, but many are placing a greater emphasis on broadband as an important fillip to education and economic activity. On a fundamental level, the ability to move larger packages of information quickly is obviously a boon. Who wants to put a document on a disc and post it when you can send it electronically?

Another problem is that many sites, especially overseas, are geared up for users with faster transmission speeds and so they use clever graphics or information providers (Java or Macromedia for instance), expecting their audience to be able to enjoy the experience. While they may have those tools, dial-up users are not going to want to wait around while they download an elaborate opening page.

Universal broadband uptake is a long way off, but it needn't be. New Zealanders are famously enthusiastic

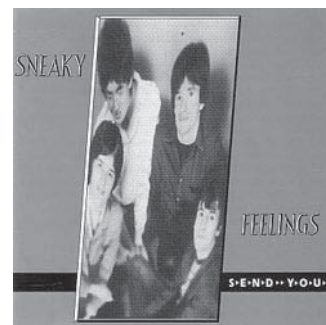
In the face of conflicting information, the California Board asked its advisory panel on curriculum in November 2005 to evaluate each proposed change on the basis of historical accuracy. At the end of February a special committee of the Board voted unanimously to overturn a majority of contentious changes proposed by Hindu groups to the school textbooks.

For New Zealand historians it's a reminder that debates on history teaching can be played out in a variety of different contexts. In California, the protagonists were not 'the government' and the colonised, but a department of education and lobbyists for an immigrant socio-religious community. The debate in California was between the written historical record and a form of ethnohistory, but the advocates of the latter were very remote from that history when compared with Māori claimants in the Treaty process.

consumers of new technology, but they won't pay the earth for it. There is well-founded cynicism that we pay far more than we need to for our telecommunications. Throw in the issue of connection speeds and it's hardly surprising the government issued a few threats at Telecom. The cost of broadband would have come down eventually but there is no point in waiting for that to happen at Telecom's leisure. They have to improve capacity and charge a fair price. Soon, we hope, even impecunious historians will be able to enjoy its benefits.

Flying Nun

New Zealand music is enjoying a remarkable period of success. New Zealand albums and singles top the charts regularly and New Zealanders choose to listen and buy local music – partly because 20% or more of the music played on radio is locally made, or is it the other way round? Whatever the reason, there is now a generation of New Zealand youth who have no idea that New Zealand mu-



The cover of the Sneaky Feelings' classic *Send You*.

sicians once could not get their music played on local radio. But that was the situation here for decades.

When I was a callow youth, my friends and I deliberately sought out New Zealand music for the joy of hearing someone from our country singing about our culture, but we often had to buy it without hearing it, unless a certain band was touring in support of its latest record, or a record store owner would indulge us. It was very frustrating because the heroic bands of those days – The Clean, The Verlaines, The Chills, Toy Love, Sneaky Feelings etc. – were making great music. But programme directors at radio stations (with the unquestioned exception of student radio) would not play it. If the cultural cringe existed, then this was one of the most ridiculous examples of it. When word of mouth and some savvy, strategic buying pushed The Clean's Tally Ho into the upper reaches of the charts in 1981, it took programme directors totally by surprise. But still they refused to play it.

The Clean were the early stars of Flying Nun records, which Roger Sheppard founded in Christchurch (no, not Dunedin) in 1980 and now, 26 years later, remains the standard bearer of New Zealand music. The

stable of artists, former and current, is formidably long, and you can read all about the history of each of them on Flying Nun's website at www.flyingnun.co.nz.

The history page is reached from the main menu and opens with a lengthy but well-written (in 2003) history



An early publicity shot of Flying Nun favourites The Verlaines.

of Flying Nun by Sneaky Feelings' main man Matthew Bannister, who is a talented writer and wrote a well-received book about the story of his band.

From that page you can go to the old Flying Nun site for its band histories. The material is a bit out of date in some cases – it was last updated in 2002 – but it is still a significant resource for anyone interested in the most important record label in New Zealand music history. There are even real audio clips to remind you why listening to New Zealand music is a pleasure, not a chore.



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