

due attention to New Zealand experiences in the context of Australasia, but also the wider world of which both were a part. We need more histories like this that attempt such huge tasks to make us really think about our own frameworks and assumptions, and how we might in Coleborne's words 'extend our readings of families, 'madness', and the asylum for years to come' (p.153).

*Hunting: A New Zealand History*

by Kate Hunter. Random House, Auckland, 2009; 320pp.  
ISBN 9781869791544

Reviewed by Tom Brooking

This engagingly written and attractively produced book has made a significant contribution to our social, environmental and cultural history by paying attention to a topic neglected for too long by academic historians – hunting. As Kate Hunter demonstrates, nineteenth-century migrants from Britain relished the freedom to hunt and fish without fear of being gaoled or deported for poaching. All kinds of settlers hunted, both to augment their diets and for the sheer pleasure of roaming freely across the land in pursuit of game only available to the aristocracy in Britain. As New Zealand became more urban, hunting and fishing became more specialized in both the occupational and recreational senses, but some New Zealanders, along with tourists, still fish and hunt in the twenty-first century. Yet the only attention paid to this topic by academics apart from Hunter, is a PhD thesis on game hunting by Claire Brennan and another on duck shooting written by Carmen McLeod.

Brennan's work highlights that New Zealand's lack of mammals, or charismatic fauna like that of Australia, caused some problems for a country presenting itself to the world as a kind of parkland waiting to be developed. This lack helped bring about the introduction of large game such as deer, familiar fish, particularly trout and salmon, and familiar birds such as quail and pheasants along with breeds of ducks such as the mallard. Later pests such as rabbits and possums were also introduced to provide game for shooting as well as a supply of fur. The history of hunting is, therefore, intricately linked to the story of acclimatization and, consequently, of the environmental history of New Zealand. Understanding the significance of hunting thereby helps us better understand the making and building of a new society in what Alfred W. Crosby describes as a 'neo-Europe'. Furthermore, the so-called 'cultural turn' in historical writing has shifted attention from the narrow world of high politics and big business towards popular leisure activities and everyday work practice; and hunting involved both dimensions. Hunting has been much written about by so-called amateurs in a range of glossy magazines along with richly illustrated books and it has also received

considerable attention from such successful fiction writers as Barry Crump and Jack Lasenby. Yet, despite shifts in international historical fashion and interest, it continued to be neglected partly because parts of the New Zealand academy judged it an unsuitable topic for serious investigation. Such arrogant dismissal, however, became unacceptable once both environmental and cultural history gained momentum. This shift makes Hunter's book topical if somewhat overdue.

Hunter begins by tracing through the game available in New Zealand from first European contact. She then describes efforts made to compensate for missing animals through their deliberate introduction until several of those game animals especially rabbits, deer and, a little later, possums, turned into pests which ravaged the environment and undermined the productive base of New Zealand farming. Redefinition of game as pests brought about much more concerted state-assisted efforts at control and the end of the earlier reckless approach to acclimatization. The second chapter moves on to examine 'hunting for the pot', as carried out by both Maori and Pakeha. Naturally this chapter along with chapter three on 'Bringing home the bacon', also overlaps into culinary history and there are plenty of interesting recipes made available to food aficionados. The third chapter also examines trapping, skinning and taxidermy and shows how many families relied on hunting to augment incomes. Chapter four on the 'Sportsman's paradise' rather concentrates on recreational hunting and its promotion for tourists. Hunting for pleasure and sport has a somewhat different dynamic than hunting out of necessity. Hunter's research reveals that acclimatization societies' desire to keep the two separate led to tensions between amateur and professional hunters and distortions in terms of game that can be served in restaurants. Even today trout is prohibited from being served in restaurants while most salmon is 'farmed'. The final chapter on 'Collecting and conserving' tracks early efforts at conserving or stuffing game. Legislation aimed at banning the hunting of many native birds impacted most severely on more remote Maori communities that still depended on supplementing their diet with the bounty of the bush. The State then changed the rhythm of hunting activity by unleashing major campaigns against deer and possums from the 1930s and 1950s respectively. Rabbit farming was banned from 1956, thereby removing rabbit meat from public sale. The use of 1080 poisoning from this time onwards also complicated and reduced opportunities for hunting.

Hunters and hunting became less popular concurrently as an increasingly urban New Zealand became suspicious of armed recreationalists wandering the countryside. Farmers engaged in ever more intensive forms of farming also tended to become less tolerant of hunting on their property unless it involved control of pesky, wild pigs. Dairy farmers, in particular, became less inclined to allow access for fishing, especially after the Fish and Game

organization waged a campaign against 'dirty dairying' in the late 1990s. Hunter ends by telling the extraordinary story of the domestication of deer carried by the capture of wild animals from helicopters, an activity that further reduced the amount of game available for hunting. The end result is that hunting has become less popular in the early twenty first century while hunters are an increasingly marginalized group. Yet as Hunter concludes: 'Hunting is everywhere in New Zealand's past. That past is very recent and we remain connected through our families and whanau, our kitchens and communities, and through the history of the land itself'.

The text is augmented throughout by over a hundred evocative and well chosen illustrations, many of them in colour. The majority are photographs but Hunter also uses posters, original documents and maps effectively. Random House must be congratulated for such an attractive production. Inserts and boxes also break up the main text, a practice which seems to disrupt the flow to readers of my generation but which will appeal to younger readers from the 'visual generation'. Indeed one hopes that given the eye-catching production and lively text, school pupils as well as university students and interested lay readers will gain much useful knowledge as well as pleasure from reading the book.

My only quibble is that Hunter could have attempted a slightly longer conclusion which spelt out the significance of her findings more fully, especially in terms of what she has added to an admittedly thin historiography. Perhaps, too, she could have made more of the work of Mike Davis on the escalating slaughter of wild animals that occurred around the globe in the second half of the nineteenth century. But she can do this in academic journals knowing that she has produced a book which will stimulate further debate and discussion because she has recovered so much of a world that many urban New Zealanders, both Maori and Pakeha, have lost.

### *No Fretful Sleeper: A Life of Bill Pearson*

by Paul Millar. Auckland University Press, Auckland, 2010; xi, 380pp., [40]pp. of plates. ISBN 9781869404192

Reviewed by Lee Wallace

Bill Pearson and I go way back. Not that I ever knew the man, except in 1981 as the author of 'Fretful Sleepers: A Sketch of New Zealand Behaviour and its Implications for the Artist' (1952) and *Coal Flat* (1963), both compulsory texts on a dreary second-year New Zealand literature course taught by Frank McKay at Victoria. Ten years later when I embarked on my doctorate, I read *Rifted Sanctuaries: Some Views of the Pacific Islands in Literature* (1984) and 'Beginnings and Endings' (1990), both mandatory reading for