

## Notes:

### New publications

#### ***Matauranga: a radical experiment in education*** by Jeremy Rose

Edward Blishen once noted 'that in all the millions of words written annually about education, one viewpoint is invariably absent - that of the child. The client of the school. It is difficult to think of any other sphere of social activity in which the opinions of the customer are so persistently overlooked'. I came to the same realisation while searching for books to give me ideas for a planned history of Matauranga - one of New Zealand's first alternative primary schools.

Where were the books by the pupils of A.S. Neill, Tolstoy and John Holt? How did they feel about progressive education? It was a fruitless search.

Perhaps, as one educationalist said to me 'It was not surprising, as one would expect the pupils of schools like Summerhill to be, in general, well balanced forward-looking individuals not interested in introspection'. It was a tidy explanation - but not one that rang entirely true.

I knew from conversations with fellow ex-Matauranga students that many of them had given a great deal of thought to their primary years and believed there were valuable lessons to be learnt.

From the time former Matauranga teacher Mike Regan and I first discussed the idea of a book - five years ago while I was studying journalism at the Wellington Polytechnic - I was determined it would be from the pupils' perspective. This was later slightly tempered by a former pupil when she mentioned that what she loved most about Matauranga was that it was a family school where the parents were as much a part of the school as the pupils.

Matauranga was set up in 1963 by a group of Wellington mothers keen to see a school run along similar lines to play centres. There was no corporal punishment, parents were expected to help, teachers were called by their first names and children were given a real say in the running of the school at a weekly meeting. It closed in 1982. In February this year a group of former pupils, teachers and parents gave me the go ahead to use money left over from its collapse to fund the research and publishing of a book.



*Children on a swing in the Botanical Gardens, mid-1970's*

During a four month period earlier this year 40 former pupils, 20 parents, eight teachers, three educationalists and a cake shop owner near the school were interviewed for the project. They were taped and on average took an hour each. Copies are to be deposited in the Turnbull Library. I am neither an educationalist nor an historian so much of my methodology is no doubt unorthodox. Very early on in the interviewing process I threw away my list of questions because at times it seemed to have an almost magical ability to make the most articulate of people become stuttering mutes. Instead I encouraged people to talk freely about their time at Matauranga.

One of the most common questions asked of alternative schools is "What's going to happen when the kids hit the *real world*?". Nearly thirty years after Matauranga opened we can begin to answer the question. They have become teachers, cafe owners, dole bludgers, journalists, actors, bookbinders, missionaries, peace activists, trainers of dogs for the blind, self employed crafts people, strippers, farmers, house wives and husbands, artists, ambulance officers, trade unionists and much more. In short they have gone on to fill jobs in virtually all spheres of life. The one thing those interviewed had in common was that they had happy memories of their primary schooling. Most, but by no means all, felt their progressive primary schooling had benefited them, as the following quotations show: 'As far as I'm concerned Matauranga was spot on' said Flip Calkoen. Matauranga has a very special place in my heart, I feel very privileged to have gone to there', Flip Calkoen. On the other hand Tor Riley felt 'It was an interesting social experiment that was a waste of money'. In Brent McIntyre's words, "Well, we had a good time eh? So it must have been a good school". But there were those who held loftier ambitions for progressive schools. English educator Susan Isaacs, whose ideas partly inspired Matauranga, said: 'The aim of modern education is to create people who are not only self-disciplined and free in spirit, gifted in work and in enjoyment, worthy and desirable as persons, but also responsible and generous in social life, able to give and to take freely from others, willing to serve social ends and to lose themselves in social purposes greater than themselves'.

The interviews with former Matauranga pupils, parents and teachers that make up the bulk of the book, do I believe shed some light on how it did on that score.

*Matauranga; a radical experiment in education* contains a short history of the school, chapters

on self-government, transition to the state system, learning through play and the collection of more than fifty interviews. It has twenty photos from the school's nineteen-year existence. I am indebted to Hugo Manson, New Zealand Oral Archive, for valuable technical advice and the Jack Ilott Foundation for financial assistance.

*A4, landscape format, 152pp*

*\$25 (plus \$3 p&p) from*

*The Bureau, P.O. Box 6398, Te Aro, Wellington.*

*(or phone Jeremy Rose (04) 801-7722, or Mark Cubey (04) 854-677.)*

**Alberton and Its Family** by Jan Harris

Alberton, the home of the Kerr Taylor family for over 100 years, was bequeathed to the New Zealand Historic Places Trust in 1972. This specially commissioned report describes Alberton's beginnings as a pioneer's farmhouse, the addition of the ornate balconies and towers, the era when Alberton was "the manor" of Mount Albert, and its many years as a self-sufficient country estate as well as a family home. The report discusses Allan Kerr Taylor's role in public and social life and, from the evidence available, makes observations about the lives of the women of Alberton, particularly Sophia Davis, Allan's second wife, and her daughters. Other chapters focus on the servants and the house and garden.

The report reproduces family trees, photographs, plans and maps of the house and selected contemporary documents.

*A4, sidestapled, soft cover, 70pp (incl. 17pp of bl. & w. photos and drawings).*

*SBW 0-908577-14-1*

*\$19.95 (excl. postage) from*

*N.Z. Historic Places Trust*

*P.O. Box 2629, Wellington.*

**A Handbook for Researchers** by Jan Harris

This is a straightforward, readable guide intended for non-professional researchers, whether beginners or experienced. Although written primarily for those researching for the New Zealand Historic Places Trust, it is hoped that the handbook will also be a useful tool for other researchers, educationists and students.

Topics covered include project planning, visiting the site, interpreting and assessing information, oral history, sources, and writing the research report.

*A4 saddlestapled, 36pp*

*ISBN 0-908577-16-8*

*\$10.00 (excl. postage) from*

*N.Z. Historic Places Trust*

*P.O. Box 2629, Wellington.*

## New Publication from the Stout

### **Migration and New Zealand Society**

A collection of all but three papers delivered at the Stout Research Centre's Sixth Annual Conference.

A4, soft cover, 141pp.

\$12.00 (incl. G.S.T. and postage) from  
Stout Research Centre, Victoria University of  
Wellington, P.O. Box 600, Wellington

## 1991 Stout Research Centre Conference

**Friday September 6 to Sunday September 8**

### AUSTRALIA-NEW ZEALAND RELATIONSHIPS

The conference is planned to be a wide-ranging one covering many aspects of trans-Tasman relationships.

Anyone who wishes to offer a paper at the Conference is asked to contact the Director as soon as possible.

Stout Research Centre, P.O. Box 600, Wellington.  
Ph. (04) 721000, ex t 8877.

## Stout Research Centre residents, 1991

**Dr. Brad Patterson** will be working on a study of the political economy of settlement in the Southern North Island districts between 1840 and 1876. This study will endeavour to examine contemporary theories of colonisation, both in Britain and the colony and to establish what happened in practice. A central theme in his study will be the interaction between the development of a regional economy and the colonial political system.

**Dr. Patrick Day** of the Sociology Department, University of Waikato will be writing a history of broadcasting in New Zealand.

**Dr. Noeline Alcorn**, Director of the Centre for Continuing Education, University of Auckland will be working on a study of Dr. C.E. Beeby and his contribution to education. Dr. Beeby was founding Director of the N.Z.C.E.R., Director of Education 1940-1960, Ambassador to Paris, 1960-3, and Deputy Director-General UNESCO.

**Grahame Anderson**, Architect, has a Claude McCarthy Fellowship to research the New Zealand voyage of Abel Tasman.

**Professor Thomas Isern**, Professor of History at Emporia State University, Kansas, will be in residence as a Fulbright Scholar from June until December. He is a specialist in the history of the Great Plains of North America and proposes to do comparative research on the agricultural history of the tussock grasslands of New Zealand.

## Pen-Stout Research Centre Fellowships

Five writers have been appointed Pen-Stout Research Fellows. They are, in order of residence:

**Elizabeth Knox** (February-March), of Wellington, who is completing the manuscript of a novel *Treasure*, commencing work on a novella, and an essay on Vulgarity for the catalogue of an art exhibition.

**Jan Kemp** (April-May), a New Zealander presently teaching English at the National University of Singapore, who is completing a novel *The Last Married Man*, set in England, New Zealand and Hong Kong.

**Judith Holloway** (June-July), of Porirua, who will be working on a novel spanning five generations of a New Zealand Maori-Pakeha family.

**Jeanette Galpin** (August-September), of Marton, who will be putting together a collection of short stories and researching a novel set in wartime Wellington.

**Sarah Quigley** (October-November), of Christchurch, who is working on the life and poetry of Charles Brasch.

## RECENTLY PUBLISHED BOOKS

by

STOUT CENTRE FELLOWS AND RESIDENTS

Donald Harman Akenson *HALF THE WORLD FROM HOME: Perspectives on the Irish in New Zealand 1860 - 1950* Victoria University Press, Wellington, 1990

Charlotte McDonald *A WOMAN OF GOOD CHARACTER: Single women as immigrant settlers in nineteenth-century New Zealand* Allen & Unwin/Historical Branch, Wellington, 1990

William Renwick *THE TREATY NOW* GP Publications, Wellington, 1990

Adrienne Simpson (editor) *OPERA IN NEW ZEALAND: Aspects of history and performance* Essays by Jeremy Commons, William Dart, Peter Downes, Roger Flury, Adrienne Simpson, John Mansfield Thomson and Roger Wilson. The Witham Press, Wellington, 1991

John Mansfield Thomson *THE OXFORD HISTORY OF NEW ZEALAND MUSIC* Oxford University Press, Auckland, 1991

## HOW TO JOIN THE STOUT CENTRE

Membership is available to all interested in New Zealand history, society and culture. Members receive a free copy of the quarterly *Stout Centre Review* and details of the activities and seminars of the Stout Centre. They also pay a reduced fee for attending the annual conference. Ordinary membership costs \$25 p.a., Student membership \$8, Non-residential (outside Wellington) \$8 and Corporate membership \$300. Please send a cheque to the Stout Research Centre, to the Secretary, Stout Research Centre, Victoria University of Wellington, Box 600, Wellington.