Stout Centre Review

Volume two: number two

February 1992

Contents

SARAH V. QUIGLEY  Man missing  3
Towards a biography of Charles Brasch

ELIZABETH KNOX  A doubtful guest  7
Impressions from a year at the Stout Centre

THERESA SAWICKA  A Polish Christmas  9
Ritual drama and the experience of the Pahiatua Poles

Stout Research Centre events  21
Editorial

'Handwriting ghosts not only the bodily sounds of speech, but its sensuous pauses', writes Elizabeth Knox in her account of what it is really like to be a PEN Writer's Fellow at the Stout Research Centre. 'Typed question marks, semi-colons, full stops are not gestures - written they are, minute, but meaningful, like finger movements in Thai dancing'. She continues, '... I finished my novel. All year I was busy and content'. Once more the wisdom of providing an ambience and leaving residents to evolve their own best routine has revealed itself.

It is the fruits of this policy that make up the contents of this issue, with promises of larger works to come. Sarah Quigley's article on writing a biography of Charles Brasch must whet the appetite for the year 2000-plus, the date on which his personal papers become available. But many such works have taken over a decade and she has been able to gather the reminiscences of Brasch's contemporaries while they are still here. Theresa Sawicka's account of the Polish Christmas at Pahiatua is part of a larger study in which the exceedingly fine photographic documentation tells a story as moving and harrowing as the text.

Material for subsequent issues will continue to be drawn primarily from the weekly seminars at the Stout Centre. The November issue will feature the facsimile publication of the recently discovered Kellom Tomlinson baroque dance manuscripts and the diary of Joseph Lowe, dancing master to the family of Queen Victoria at Balmoral from 1852-60, edited by Jennifer Shennan and Alan Thomas respectively. Jennifer Shennan has taken up residence in the Stout Research Centre to develop an archive of New Zealand dance.

J. M. Thomson

Cover: Polish children aboard the 'General Randall', October 1944. Prime Minister Peter Fraser holds a child; Countess Wodzicka, wife of the Polish Consul, stands beside him. [John Pascoe Collection, Alexander Turnbull Library]