

# Stout Centre Review

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## Stout Centre Review

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*Editor*

J.M. Thomson

*Executive editor*

John Thomson

*Assistant editor,  
design and production*

Roger Joyce

*Secretary*

Valerie Jacobs

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The Secretary, Stout Research Centre, PO Box 600, Wellington, New Zealand, Telephone (04) 472 1000

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## Stout Research Centre

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## *A welcome response to our questionnaire*

Many readers responded to the questionnaire inserted in our last two issues and we are grateful for the numerous stimulating points made, the criticisms and suggestions.

Altogether, the answers showed that our readers are interested in an extremely wide range of topics and supported our editorial policy to satisfy this, provided that articles on seemingly recondite and specialised subjects are written in an informative and accessible manner. They appreciated the care taken with illustrations and design. Above all, many of the comments will spur the editorial staff along. We would not be human if we did not take heart from such views as 'given the budget and resources available it is admirable that a publication of such high quality is produced'.

Among points which invite discussion are the following: 'who makes the decisions as to which Stout Centre seminars are included in the Review?', asked one reader. It sometimes may seem that we have omitted to publish a lively seminar, but a number of factors arise. A speaker may be already committed to another publication or may have a book in progress which takes precedence. On other occasions, spoken material is not always successful on the printed page. The suitability of individual seminars is discussed by the Director, the Editor, the speaker and other interested parties.

'Any chance of expanding it to appear more frequently or to contain more articles per issue?', asked another reader. 'There is little enough opportunity for worthwhile articles to be published in New Zealand and any more would be welcome'. 'You should try to get people beyond those actually in residence at the Centre', suggested a third. 'It might be an idea to build an issue occasionally around a topic and invite readers to submit articles'. These points concern us greatly, the immediate obstacle to implementing them being our financial restraints. Already the *Review* eats up more of the Centre's income than it should. But the publication must develop, and we shall strive to find ways of enabling us to do so.

Brad Patterson's articles were considered 'quite outstanding', and religious and philosophical contributions were asked for as were those on women and gender relations, literary topics, landscape and history.

Over the next few issues we intend to supply the following services: the provision of an index, a follow-up to 'work in progress' papers with details of the completion of the research project and the initiation of a Notes and Queries department. This will begin as soon as we have sufficient inquiries and we invite those interested to submit relevant questions covering fields within the Centre's brief. We shall also include more details of the activities of former Stout Centre residents.

To the reader who asked for 'a better balance - more analysis of changes in the society, theory and explanation' and added 'these are momentous times, but you would hardly know it from the *Stout Centre Review*', we defend ourselves thus: Although we may not appear to take an active part in the cut and thrust of topical concerns we have published important articles on the interpretation of the Treaty of Waitangi, on land claims before the Tribunal, and on the constant need for a re-evaluation of the past. Colin James's recent book *New Territory: The Transformation of New Zealand 1984-92* is directly concerned with these themes and is the immediate result of his holding the Stout Centre Fellowship for a year, help which he generously acknowledges. The annual Stout Centre conferences have also often been in the front-line of debate.

Above all readers liked the 'work in progress' feeling of the journal: 'I believe it would be a mistake to extend it into something more solid; there is often a freshness to it which could easily be lost if articles were mulled-over longer, or fitted into a precise, uniform format. Clearly it needs more secure financing ... The Stout is a unique New Zealand studies centre'. The same correspondent also felt that the *Review* needed 'a more accessible title such as 'New Zealand Studies'. Comments please.

J.M. Thomson

*Cover: Delapidated Marlborough cob cottage on the outskirts of Blenheim, 16 February 1993. Photo by Burwell Hunt.*