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NEW ZEALAND STUDIES

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ABOVE: Nola Luxford, New Zealand Hollywood hopeful, on roller skates, c1912.

COVER: A studio portrait of Nola Luxford taken in the 1920s.

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Celebrating a productive year

Despite the flurries of contradictory winds and gales, the Stout Research Centre may be said to be flourishing. An overall list of the publications which it has nurtured and sponsored has yet to be compiled but the case of books installed in the entrance hall is now full to overflowing. Perhaps this may seem a boastful note on which to begin an editorial marking the end of the fifth year of our publication but this issue well illustrates the diversity of work going on within the Centre. Martin Lodge, a former Fellow and now lecturer in music at the University of Waikato, writes on the tragic life of the gifted New Zealand composer Anthony Watson, whose major works are now readily available on CD and in score, published by the Wai-te-ata Press of Victoria University. Edmund Bohan, the current Fellow and a notable opera singer, gives a tantalising glimpse of the subject of his next biography in his article on Edward Fitzgerald. His greatly-praised study of Stafford reached the final stages of the Montana Book Awards.

The articles on Nola Luxford and Amy Bock traverse quite different territories, the former as an actress in the silent film era of Hollywood, the latter as one of the first New Zealand cross-dressers. Studies in popular themes are now taken for granted in numerous universities – the divisions between high and low (or popular) culture are being dissolved. Until the advent of the large-scale pop scene entrepreneurs in the 1960s there were fewer rifts within the cultural spread. T.S. Eliot could write as vividly on Marie Lloyd in the music hall as he could on Dante.

There have been gains in other areas as well. The recent one-day conference on the great International Exhibition of 1906–1907 at Christchurch will result in a symposium to be published in association with the Museum of New Zealand, when it opens in early 1998. The Conference itself was the subject of a Concert FM documentary by Paul Bushnell, broadcast on 14 and 16 October, in which various participants spoke and Edmund Bohan, accompanied by Margaret Nielsen, sang the pastoral song, 'Tillage and Shepherding', part of Alfred Hill's *Exhibition Ode*, the first time it had been heard, most probably, since its original performance on 7 November 1906.

In February next year, before the official opening of the 1996 session of Parliament, another Stout Research Centre event will be focused on the newly-refurbished Parliamentary buildings, when a one-and-a part-day conference will be held on Sir Keith Holyoake entitled 'Towards a Political Biography'. Those who know Sir Keith only from his monumentally-booted statue in Molesworth Street are likely to be surprised. As Robert Chapman put it in *The Oxford History of New Zealand*: 'A master of consensus-making, Holyoake happily ran a Cabinet where he listened, quizzed and quietly commanded for eleven years'. A final date has yet to be fixed for the conference, a feature of which is that the former MP's Association is cooperating in its organisation so there will be an input of political and public service expertise.

Finally, only a handful of copies remain of the March 1995 issue which featured the speech of the President of the Czech Republic, Václav Havel, which was published subsequently in a variety of sources, including *New Zealand books* and the *New York Review of Books*. To have been able to publish such a fine address made a satisfactory conclusion to five years of editing this journal under its original title. The greatly differing nature of the three issues of 1995, including that on Maori Language, well illustrated the range and purpose of the publication. As the journal changes its name to *New Zealand Studies*, your editor has decided the time is now opportune to hand over to a successor who can develop it further under its new rubric. In retrospect, the 'only begetter' of the *Stout Centre Review* should be saluted at this point for his vision and percipience – the former Director, Jim Collinge – as should the first and most devoted designer – Roger Joyce – as well as the lynch-pin of the whole enterprise, our secretary Valerie Jacobs.

J.M. THOMSON