

## Editorial

PETER WHITEFORD

Some readers may be aware of the serious financial challenges that are being faced right now by our parent institution, Victoria University, and by other universities in New Zealand. Funding for the tertiary sector has been severely constrained for many years, and the COVID-imposed loss of large numbers of international students has exacerbated that situation. For Victoria, in particular, this has led to some proposals for quite major changes to operations across the University, with potentially significant losses of academic and professional staff.

At the time of writing this editorial, no final decisions have been made about those proposed cuts, but it is clear that—whatever decisions are made—the impact will be severe. Research Centres such as the Stout Centre have not yet been affected, or subject to such proposed changes, but are all subject to review in the very near future, and we may well see significant change in these areas of the University’s operation too. The *Journal of New Zealand Studies* has always greatly valued the support of its contributors, reviewers and readers, and we look forward to your continued support when the review commences. The *JNZS* is one of the few avenues for the publication of academic research that has a specific focus on New Zealand Studies, and we believe it provides a crucial outlet for that research.

The rich variety of such research is apparent in this latest number of the *Journal*—indeed, it might almost have been assembled to display that variety. The concentrated focus that we achieve with a ‘themed’ issue is something that we all deeply value; but at the same time, the serendipity of this ‘bricolage’ has its own excitement and coherence.

David Ciccoricco’s opening article looks at the ‘challenge of doing history in the digital age’ with a particular focus on literary forms that are ‘born-digital’; from the other end of the spectrum, the digitization of historical archives has enabled a range of new approaches to research, whether through the scrutiny of statistical records, as in Margaret Galt’s analysis of the movement of British settlers, or Kristyn Harman’s examination of the kind of marginal figure—a Spanish-American black whaler—who is usually ignored by official histories.

Such digital records, of course, are only partial, and scholars remain very aware of the need to get amongst the sometimes dusty records of (for example) the Public Service (as in Mike Roche’s exploration of the public life and work of Alexander McGavock) or the official records that Martin Fisher investigates to reveal the challenges faced by Ngāi Tahu in their efforts to retain control of the Tūtaepatu lagoon—an important mahinga kai/food gathering site for over 300 years.

Re-thinking old books and the ideological assumptions that may underpin their narratives is at the heart of Paul Moon’s consideration of George Craik’s now largely forgotten *The New Zealanders* (1830), just as Lyman Tower Sargent explores the equally forgotten writings and beliefs of Frank Thomas Moore, a strange figure who claimed messianic status in the Wellington suburb of Johnsonville.

Not all contributions draw on archival records to quite the same degree. Alice Wang considers the history of the migration of Asian people to New Zealand and their relationship with Māori,

both as a way of highlighting the ways in which those communities have interacted and as a way of considering her own heritage and identity.

And while the articles by Penny Griffith and by Vickie Hearnshaw and Mark Stocker do make considerable use of archives and correspondence, they do so in ways that provide rich visual stimulation for us as readers. The digital production of this Journal allows us to present their stimulating works in full colour and in high quality reproductions—something that we would scarcely have been able to achieve in a wholly print environment. So we celebrate, in this issue, the digital and the print archiving together.

New Zealand art and literature, New Zealand identity, the relationships between people (tangata whenua and tauwi), the insights provided by analysis of big data alongside the careful attention to the lives of the easily marginalised—these are the subjects we explore in the field of New Zealand studies and these are the topics we delight in publishing in the *Journal of New Zealand Studies*.

*Peter Whiteford.*