

Correspondence



Dear Editors,

Gavin McLean's rather condescending review of *'Above the City': A History of Otago Boys' High School 1863–2013*, contains what I consider to be a reflection on my integrity as an historian. He states that my claim to have been given the freedom to make my own assessments of the school's history without fear or favour should be read 'with a Lake Ellesmere of salt'.

To substantiate this slur he cites an *Otago Daily Times* article of 25 July 2013 (the correct date is 7 August 2013) on the book's delayed publication, which includes the then OBHS rector's statement that 'a couple of chapters had some things that were changed'. Had McLean read a little further he would have discovered my immediate and emphatic response in the following *ODT*, which ends 'the fact that I would *not* countenance wholesale changes to chapters on the school's more recent history accounts for the delay in publication'. In the event, despite considerable pressure from interested parties (including threatened lawsuits), not one word of my original manuscript was altered, and after several months of legal wrangling the book was published entirely uncensored.

McLean also makes much of the brief contributions from the school's last two rectors, Michael McMillan and Clive Rennie, which take up a mere 18 of the book's 472 pages. I describe these in my introduction as 'not part of my history proper', which effectively ends in 1986. The remainder of McLean's review contains too many inaccuracies and misreadings to be mentioned here, but which I intend to address in another forum.

Dr Rory Sweetman
Dunedin
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