

any general conclusions. This extremely competent and thorough (if brief) explanation of the administrative history of wildlife management is unlikely to be modified in the future, but it leaves several questions unanswered. The relative significance of enthusiastic amateurs and vested interests compared with officials and politicians in developing policy and administrative structures should have been assessed more explicitly, and the structures designed to save wildlife and their habitat needed closer analysis: and is the Department of Conservation an improvement (as the account implies)? How successful was the Wildlife Service overall? The scientist/field officer split, and the split between both these groups and the administrators, could have been developed: did these rivalries delay desirable outcomes, or were they just the typical jealousies inherent in any system? Can the splits (which persist) ever be resolved? Should there have been more academic training of field officers? Was the saving of indigenous species really part of a Pakeha search for national identity (p. 207)?

The reader is left with the impression that the author has been obliged to avoid making value judgements because of the nature of 'public history'. It would be a pity if this variety of history has to opt for a non-controversial chronicle of events that underplays the personalities and the passions. Perhaps because many of those involved in recent developments are still alive, and government departments were looking over the author's shoulder, he felt obliged to take a detached viewpoint, but detachment can lead to a bald tale that is likely to limit its interest largely to those directly involved. Certainly the rigours of a two-year time-frame from start of project to completion limited the possibilities for adding the 'human interest' aspects that would widen the book's appeal. It is written solely from departmental files, scientific literature and other primary documents; the lack of oral interviews is presumably a deliberate omission, but it is unfortunate. Hidden away in the final footnotes (p.244, no.32) is Ralph Adams' eulogy for the Wildlife Service. 'Hatched in obscurity, nurtured spasmodically, fledged through commitment, destroyed in full flight!' If the emotions implied in this eulogy had been brought out in this book it would have become much more than the commendable piece of research it is. Personalities and value-judgements have a place in public history too!

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Gadfly: The Life and Times of James Shelley. By Ian Carter. Auckland University Press in association with the Broadcasting History Trust, Auckland, 1993. 339 pp. NZ price: \$39.95. ISBN 1869400852.

JAMES SHELLEY, who was born in England in 1884 and died there in 1961, was Professor of Education at Canterbury College (1920-1935) and Director of Broadcasting (1935-1949). Little known now, Shelley was once the most public professor in New Zealand. Inter alia, he founded the Canterbury College drama society and the Canterbury Repertory Theatre, inaugurated novel schemes of adult education, and played a significant part in the campaign for better school buildings. He had a lifelong interest in art and drama and was a considerable actor. He was a skilled craftsman and miniature painter and produced stage settings, costumes, properties, illuminated addresses, apparatus for the psychological laboratory he established at Canterbury, and an improved gramophone stylus with equal facility.

As Director of Broadcasting he worked early and late, fostered radio drama, including local works, peremptorily prohibited the airing of some popular songs and had a major role in the establishment of a national symphony orchestra. In 1949, recently widowed, just knighted and deeply depressed, he returned to Britain.

Shelley wanted to be an actor or architect but his parents were discouraging so he became a pupil-teacher and rose rapidly to become Professor of Education at Hartley University College, Southampton, a few months short of his thirtieth birthday. He enlisted as a private in the Army Supply Corps in 1915, served in Ypres as a lieutenant in the Royal Artillery, and was Major Shelley, Chief Instructor of the Army Education School when he applied for the chair at Canterbury in 1919.

His preferments owed a good deal to friends or patrons — Prof. J. J. Findlay at Manchester University, Baron Gorell in the Army Education Corps, Peter Fraser in New Zealand — but Shelley's own capacities and striking presence were decisive. He lectured tirelessly, usually impromptu, on education, life, culture, art, democracy and drama and his audiences generally loved it. Just what captivated them is now rather hard to discern (he forbade note-taking). You had to be there, I suppose.

Shelley was a complex, sometimes contradictory man. He preached high culture but was addicted to detective novels; he did not send his son to school until he was ten, then he sent him to the Cathedral Grammar School whose headmaster had a reputation as a flogger.

Shelley's son doubted that there would be sufficient material for a book. (Shelley kept no diary and was a notoriously bad correspondent.) Against the odds, Ian Carter has written a very good book about a remarkable man. He has travelled widely and dug deep in British and New Zealand archives and interviewed surviving relatives and students. In places, the scent grows thin but Carter makes some shrewd casts. The result is a detailed, well-documented work which includes some well-chosen photographs and two fine reproductions of Shelley's art.

There are, however, a few lapses in proof-reading: a bibliographic reference appears in the wrong place as well as the right one (cf. pp.329 and 330) and the date in the last paragraph on p.81 is wrong. Carter's style is sometimes playful, allusive or metaphorical. The result is generally but not invariably happy. On p.191, for example, we learn that 'Shelley rowed stroke on the battering ram' and on p.193 women members of an improving society are described as 'culture vulpine' (foxy ladies?)

Do we now see Shelley plain? Not entirely, of course, but we see him much more clearly than he has been seen for decades. A former student referred to Shelley's 'major weakness' but did not give details. Carter says that it is not hard to work out what this must be, and then goes positively Delphic about it. (Fair enough, I think.) That aside, this book provides a detailed, convincing account of Shelley's methods and likely motives, his achievements and disappointments. Ian Carter and the Broadcasting Trust are much to be commended for providing a suitable memorial to a fascinating character.

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