

by Gardner's retrospective comments. Aptly, the group commences with his seminal *Landfall* article, 'Grass Roots and Dredge Tailings', which assessed the state of local history in the mid-1950s. After reviewing the ensuing debate, Gardner concludes that the agenda he then advanced has been only partially followed. Other papers focus on such varying topics as the genesis of the Sherrard Awards and the place of regional history in schools. Perhaps the gem is the 1984 paper comparing the origins of the Nelson and Canterbury settlements. Insightful and incisive, it continues to pose questions for students of New Zealand's other early 'planned settlements'.

Four papers discussing recent work in the field of New Zealand social history, at the same time seeking to locate regional and local history within this milieu, make up the second part of the collection. While disclaiming any intent to re-litigate old differences, Gardner characteristically sticks to his guns. Though continuing to disagree with Miles Fairburn's interpretations, he nevertheless pays generous tribute to the originality of Fairburn's work. Erik Olssen's Caversham study, considered an advance on his *History of Otago*, is warmly commended, while James Belich's *Making Peoples* and the *Historical Atlas* are subjected to constructive, but generally favourable, criticism. Most poignant is Gardner's evaluation of the contribution of Rollo Arnold to New Zealand social history: 'his work is nothing less than a landmark in the study of the early colonial countryside' (p.71). In his respect for the sources, and his careful yet innovative use of them, Arnold was clearly very much a man after Gardner's own heart.

The third part of the book is made up of seven methodological appendices. Drawing from his long experience, Gardner offers some practical suggestions for intending researchers. A discussion of how New Zealand's population was distributed in 1881, based on maps handily provided in a back pocket, is followed by a case study of the evolution of North Canterbury's communities between 1871 and 1886. Other pieces examine some social indicators of community status (particularly the incidence of schools and churches), political aspects of localism, and a tentative model of factionalism in colonial politics.

In these collected essays Gardner skilfully guides the reader over some of the (predominantly) country roads of New Zealand's colonial history, all the while avoiding the ruts and muddy sidetracks. They constitute an appeal to continue the historical journey, finding time to also clear away the adjacent 'blackened stumps' (recorded legends) and 'tangles of gorse and broom' (popular misconceptions and learned suspicions), which have obstructed earlier 'breakers in' (researchers) of New Zealand's colonial landscapes. One can only admire the singleness of purpose of a professional lifetime and Gardner's unflagging energy.

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Heathen in Godzone: Seventy Years of Rationalism in New Zealand. By Bill Cooke. New Zealand Association of Rationalists and Humanists, Auckland, 1998. 240 pp. NZ price: \$34.95. ISBN 0-473-05392-6.

BILL COOKE is one of the new breed of members of the Rationalist Society. From this useful vantage he has written a history which is colourful, frank and well-informed.

The Rationalist Society is a small organization. Founded in the 1920s, at its largest it never had more than a few hundred members (although it drew on many more

supporters and attenders). It was essentially an Auckland organization, although there were associated bodies in other towns. Yet it was a touchstone for some of the most contentious issues in New Zealand life, including sectarianism. Although the Rationalists had nothing but contempt for struggles within churches, they were important players in these controversies. Their language was often contentious; their willingness to challenge sacred cows strong. Moreover, in their heyday, the inter-war years, they drew on a glittering cast of supporters, particularly among their patrons. Sir Robert Stout, Frederick A. de la Mere, Thomas Hunter, J.C. Beaglehole and James Shelley were all linked in some ways with the association, although its most enthusiastic supporters were generally drawn from a range of self-employed autodidacts.

Cooke's book raises some significant issues. The huge groundswell for rationalism in Auckland in the late 1920s and early 1930s, although aided by their willingness to provide Sunday entertainment when movie theatres were closed, suggests the significant divide between ecclesiastical attempts to control leisure, and the general community. Consequently, the Rationalist Society had some significant links with the Labour party in its early years. Cooke is justified in identifying Savage, Webb, Parry, Fraser and Semple, as well as John A. Lee, with rationalism. Other accounts of the Labour party have tended to play this down and make more of Catholic support and Nash's Christian Socialism. Cooke is right to emphasize that political values cannot be understood outside of the intellectual and religious debates which have raged in the working-class community since the age of Paine.

It would seem that rationalist sympathies within Labour declined during World War II, although Cooke does not ponder as to why this occurred. Almost alone, Lee remained self-consciously rationalist in those years, although he added to this an intense anti-Catholicism. It is a curious combination, a reminder that rationalism operated in many respects as an ultra-Protestant group. Some of its members were former Catholics, and others had once been active in Protestant groups. One could wish that Cooke had made more of this affinity. Lee ended up in a position very like that of the Protestant Political Association. Had Cooke traced more of the decline of sectarianism in the 1940s with the formation of the National Council of Churches, he might have offered a clearer explanation for the sudden isolation of rationalism in the wartime era.

In contrast he does offer significant explanations for the decline of rationalism in the 1950s and 1960s. He attributes this particularly to the negative stance of the Rationalists' Association, its preoccupation with ardent attacks on religion and its failure to offer a framework of values for the more secular and humanist post-war world. The bitter rows within the association are treated with the dispassion of one who thinks a great opportunity was lost. Cooke makes much of the growth of the Humanist Society, with its more positive support for a lively secular intellectual life. I am not sure that the humanist formula was quite as successful as is implied. Cooke has no time for the 1990s and its love of the non-rational. Rationalism is obviously not about to recover its influence.

Cooke complains vigorously that the Rationalists have been poorly treated by historians, citing myself as the key offender (although the footnote on page 8 indicates that we bear each other no ill-will). Reading his account, I am contrite in part, although not completely. My own work has largely focused on the wave of freethought in the 1880s. This came to an end with the political success of the Liberal party. His study certainly demonstrates that there was a similar wave of rationalism in the 1920s and 1930s, and I reflect that again it was brought to an end (although less dramatically, since no politicians were at the heart of the association) with the success of the Labour party. I am impressed by the depth of rationalist sympathies in Auckland in that age, although my research indicates an equal depth of fundamentalist Protestantism in the

same place at the same time. The need to interpret politics with reference to religious sectarianism is apparent from the story. In some ways the decline of the churches and their loss of status in society after World War II took away the force of the rationalist protest. Rationalism is thus a part of the social history of New Zealand at certain critical points. Cooke's book is a helpful reminder that anti-religious forces are an important part of the intellectual texture of our society.

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Girls & Women, Men & Boys: Gender in Taradale 1886–1930. By Caroline Daley. Auckland University Press, Auckland, 1999. 216 pp. NZ price: \$39.95. ISBN 1-86940-211-1.

VITICULTURALISTS and wine buffs need no introduction to an area of New Zealand long renowned for its Mission vineyards, but few historians have had reason to take notice of the small semi-rural community of Taradale eight kilometres southwest of Napier — until now. For Caroline Daley's gendered history of this Hawke's Bay locality is superb. Cogent argument, crisp style, carefully structured paragraphs, finely crafted character portraits and deftly shafted comparative dimensions are all based upon a comprehensive and meticulous research effort that is clearly outlined in the wide-ranging bibliography and detailed references. Daley aims to encourage others to see the potential of gender as a useful category for social analysis. In this goal she has succeeded, magnificently.

The introduction demystifies the basic concepts of a gendered approach and explains, in direct and accessible prose, the focus of the enquiry, an examination of both the shared and the different ways in which Taradale's population negotiated, measured and interpreted the notions of femininity and masculinity which, implicitly and explicitly, surrounded their lives. Daley describes the Greenmeadows/Taradale/Meanece area (a map would have been helpful) and gives the rationale (administrative and environmental) for the 1886–1930 time period covered. For this first explicitly gendered history of a local community in New Zealand historical writing, Daley has chosen to explore kinship, work and leisure, and she has done so by exhaustive investigation of published and unpublished materials and the compilation of a database containing details on 9000 Taradale residents. Chapter 2 draws, as do all those succeeding, on both oral and documentary sources but it makes particular use of evidence gleaned from some 4000 birth, death and marriage records. Daley's exploration of family ties and the meaning of family in the lives of Taradale's citizens reveals the centrality of kinship. Here, as elsewhere, she engages constructively and succinctly with contemporary historical debates but is not diverted by them. For this and later chapters, reader understanding of the basic arguments and key findings is enhanced by her consistent use of two stylistic strategies: clearly demarcated paragraphs of introductory and concluding text; and individual or family case studies. Some of the pen portraits are poignant, a few are exceptional. All are thoroughly documented in the endnotes.

Work and leisure are each allocated three chapters, the first of which explores shared experiences, the second and third then dealing, respectively, with women's and men's activities. It is this readiness to examine what the men and women, girls and