

that humane treatment was 'surely an equally valid, if less quantifiable, measure of success' (p.91). This could also have applied to Seacliff. Medical statistics are in themselves problematic. As Somerville notes for Ashburn, a certain Louisa M. contributed four recoveries to the statistics in ten years. Susan E. was also discharged as recovered and remained at Ashburn Hall 'as a guest', dying three days later. Nor should doctors' own assessments be accepted at face value. It is hard to believe the assessments recorded unquestioningly by Susan Fennell in her chapter on Seacliff, 1912–1948, that injections of malarial serum to treat general paralysis of the insane produced 'remarkable results' and that 'responses were also favourable using tuberculin' (a treatment developed in the early twentieth century for tuberculosis, which was soon found to be totally ineffective, though a useful diagnostic tool).

I have one minor point to contribute to the history of Ashburn Hall. Alan Somerville notes that the names of the wards reflected inspiration from the great nineteenth-century psychiatrists (or 'alienists'), Tuke, Pinel and Conolly, although he pondered where the name of one ward, Mitchell, came from. This was almost certainly S. Weir Mitchell, the famous American neurologist, who set up a special hospital for neurology in Philadelphia in 1863 and pioneered the 'rest cure' for neurasthenics.

This is the second set of essays to come from postgraduate student work in the Otago history department (the first being *When the Waves Rolled in Upon Us: Essays in Nineteenth-Century Maori History*). The volume fills a real gap in the historiography of mental illness in New Zealand and will serve as a model to other university history departments of the contributions that postgraduate students can make to wider historical endeavour.

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In Step With Time: A History of the Sisters of St Joseph of Nazareth, Wanganui, New Zealand. By Diane Strevens. David Ling Publishing, Auckland, 2001. 331 pp. NZ price: \$34.95. ISBN 0-908990-74-X.

DESPITE the Gothic animadversions of many of its critics, from within no less than from without the fold, the Catholic Church is not monolithic. Nor has it ever been, the council of Trent — and various well-publicized authoritarian episodes — notwithstanding. True, its institutional structures may be hierarchical, its doctrines based on assumptions of transcendence, and its formal disciplinary tradition directive rather than indulgently consensual. Yet it has always possessed, and rampantly so since the Second Vatican Council of the 1960s, a measured capacity for flexibility that has allowed an appreciable degree of adaptation and innovation, although rarely enough to satisfy those of its critics strongly wedded to fashionable causes. Heterodoxy has sometimes flowed from orthodoxy and always the noumenal essence of the Church is expressed in a multitude of tangible institutions. Although grounded in faith, these are at once mutable and imperfect, flourishing and faltering in specific niches of time and place, where historians snare them.

It is a particular — and rare — merit of Diane Streven's well-titled book that the narrowly focused narrative indicated in the subtitle is set within a broad context that acknowledges the theological and ecclesiastical ramifications of her subject. Why is it that so much church history seems to ignore religion? That is not the case here. This is not just an institutional chronicle, but it is one that shows an intellectually invigorating understanding of the Catholic church within which the 'Black Joes' had their being, and as part of which they marked out a considerable place for themselves in New Zealand history.

The Josephite congregations grew out of a plan concocted in South Australia by a pious but resolute young woman named Mary McKillop and an intellectually gifted priest named Julian Tenison Woods. Their idea was to found an order of nuns, the Sisters of St Joseph, to provide a Catholic education for poor children living in small, scattered communities. That was accomplished in 1866, and met with marked success. In 1872 they expanded to the Bathurst diocese of New South Wales. Then a schism occurred. Were the Sisters to have as their primary superior the bishop of the diocese or the Mother General of the order? It is a classic problem. (Suzanne Aubert also encountered it.) The Bathurst community opted for the former arrangement. Accordingly, they split with McKillop, and later adopted a black habit, in contrast to her 'Brown Joes'.

It was from Bathurst that the Sisters came to New Zealand in 1880, where they soon became a major presence in the Wellington diocese. From their base in Wanganui, where they had eight foundations by 1942, they spread mainly through southern Taranaki and Hawke's Bay and up to Ohakune. The 253 women who made this growth possible helped make the local convent school an influential element in the social landscape of small-town New Zealand. There Catholic children acquired religious knowledge with their education, and there children of all denominations were taught music and elocution and art. If not of the world, the Sisters were firmly in it.

In telling their story Strevens identifies them individually (the last recruit joined in 1977) and describes their conditions of life. She also explains the evolution and organizational structure of their religious congregation, paying particular attention to the way it responded to and was affected by the tsunami politely known as Vatican II. Moreover, the text is enhanced by clear maps and tables and by many illustrations so that narrative and analysis are well balanced and reader-friendliness is ensured. If there is anything to quibble about it is Strevens's use of the politically loaded and etymologically false neologism 'Aotearoa-New Zealand'. That term is not one for scholars. Her book is, though.

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Heaton Rhodes of Otahuna: The Illustrated Biography. By Geoffrey W. Rice. Canterbury University Press, Christchurch, 2001. 383 pp. NZ price: \$49.95. ISBN 1-877257-03-6.

ROBERT HEATON RHODES had a long life (1861–1956), an unusually large portion of it spent in the public eye. His father, who bore the same name, was one of three brothers who were among the earliest settlers in the South Island, having arrived in Canterbury and jointly established estates on Banks Peninsula before the coming of the first four ships of the Canterbury Association. Their partnership (says Geoffrey Rice) was 'very successful'. Each made a fortune from wool exports, town supply and land speculation, actualizing the dictum of which Gary Hawke has long reminded us, that those in the beginnings of the colonial pastoral economy had a head start on the highway to wealth.

Consequently, when the father of Heaton Rhodes died in 1884, the son inherited a landed estate, which made him, according to Rice, 'one of the wealthiest young men in Canterbury, if not New Zealand'. At the time he was in the midst of an extended sojourn in England where he acquired a public school and Oxford education and was called to