

Reviews

The Summer Ships. By Colin Amodeo. The Caxton Press, Christchurch, 2001. 360 pp. NZ price: \$69.95. ISBN 0-908563-91-4.

Remembering Godley. Edited by Mark Stocker. Hazard Press, Christchurch, 2001. 128 pp. NZ price: \$29.95. ISBN 1-877270-03-2.

THE CANTERBURY REGION has long been well served by its professional and part-time historians. Its substantial historiography includes both regional and local studies, institutional and community histories, family and individual stories, urban and rural accounts. Increasingly, histories of Canterbury demonstrate a more comprehensive awareness of the nature and legacies of cultural encounters especially during the nineteenth century. Yet, in choosing to revisit the foundation era of the Canterbury settlement, both author Colin Amodeo and editor Mark Stocker demonstrate that even the most familiar of ostensibly well-known stories can be enlivened and elaborated when fresh research perspectives are adopted.

Amodeo's work focuses on the first six ships chartered from England to New Zealand by the Canterbury Association in 1850–1851. Part One, 1848–1850, covers the administrative preparations, the response of 'colonists' and 'emigrants', and the shipboard experience or, more appropriately, ordeal for those who suffered prolonged personal discomfort or lost loved ones on the way. What distinguishes this account from related publications is the range of personal case studies that Amodeo has woven into the text. He writes comparatively of conditions, captaincies, medical services, seamen, matrons and constables on board the six vessels that arrived in that summer: the *Charlotte Jane*, *Randolph*, *Sir George Seymour*, *Castle Eden* and *Isabella Hercus*. For each of these emigrant ships, there is a detailed list of passengers (age, name and class of accommodation), together with an appendix of boat dimensions, history and registration. The height between decks on the *Isabella Hercus*, for instance, was a mere 6.6 feet. Entertainments and 'diversions', smells, activities, epidemics, food supplies and ships' newspapers all feature: Amodeo has gleaned a wealth of anecdote and example from family histories, newspaper reports, manuscripts and recollections recorded much later in life. His referencing of the documentary and visual material used throughout the book is superb. Detailed endnotes frequently elaborate on the text or make reference to conflicting accounts. Genealogists especially will be able to make extensive use of the many research leads which Amodeo's meticulous documentation provides.

The seven chapters in Part Two deal with the vicissitudes and achievements of that first establishment year, 1850–1851. Complementing the written text is a rich variety of visual material, much of which is historical, some present day (gravestones in particular). Impressions from the pages of the *Illustrated London News* are reproduced with corrective captions. Paintings are interpreted and photographs generally located and dated. The number of illustrations, the quality of their reproduction and the generous layout of the pages all contribute to the impression that Caxton's tradition of excellence in book production has been well maintained with this volume.

Amodeo highlights the dismay — and protest — of the early arrivals when confronted with the demand that they should pay customs duties on all of their personal possessions. He provides comprehensive lists: of the occupants of the Lyttelton Immigration Barracks

and the duration of their stay; the 54 deaths in one Lyttelton church burial register from December 1850 to December 1951; four pages of child baptisms in 1851; some six pages of school attendances in the same year. Such details emphasize the visible presence of children and youth in the foundation era, an impression reinforced by case studies which include young people as well as adults. Some of the vignettes highlight practical concerns. Such was the state of Cashel Street late in 1851, for example, that all (male) residents were asked to donate an hour's labour on road works. A local clergyman was one of the first to wield his spade and pick 'in a thoroughly workmanlike manner' according to one contemporary observer (p.254). A chapter on the 'Mosquito Fleet', the boats and their owners who transported so much of the new arrivals' possessions from Lyttelton to Christchurch, clearly portrays the cost and anxiety of those who feared, with frequent justification, that the Sumner Bar would cause yet another capsizing and loss of precious cargo.

Amodeo is generous in acknowledging the assistance that he received from archivists, librarians, family researchers and professional historians but the conceptualization and labour of producing this popular history are his achievements. The 'time, patience, determination and an inexhaustible supply of photocopy money' to which he refers in the Preface have been very well invested.

New perspectives are also a feature of the interdisciplinary and multi-authored set of essays on Canterbury's 'founding father', John Robert Godley. In a lively introduction, Mark Stocker queries the level of contemporary knowledge about the Irish High Anglican whom the leading English statesman, W.E. Gladstone, regarded as 'a King among men'. This book had its genesis in Stocker's research into sculptor Thomas Woolner's statue of Godley, a bronze monument which architectural historian Jenny May shows to have had a somewhat peripatetic history in the centre of Christchurch. Both Benedict Read and Mark Stocker provide well-crafted accounts of sculptor and statue respectively. Residents and tourists alike should now be able to view this unique artistic work with far more appreciation of what and who it represents.

Social historian Jean Garner had the challenging task of revisiting Charlotte Godley, whose perceptive and forthright correspondence has long been quoted by writers on nineteenth-century New Zealand (and is also well used in *The Summer Ships*). The quality of the relationship between Charlotte and her husband is sympathetically portrayed as are Charlotte's positive attitudes to so many of the everyday problems of those years. As Amodeo details, though, there were limits to Godley tolerance: a fortnight of sharing their quarters with Canterbury's bishop-designate, Thomas Jackson, whom Charlotte clearly disliked, prompted the Godleys to decamp to an unoccupied raupo house and two V-huts near the Deans at Riccarton (p.191).

Godley's close friendship with the mercurial James Edward FitzGerald is described in Edmund Bohan's exploration of these two men, their ideals of pilgrim Canterbury, and their relationships with political contemporaries, George Grey and Edward Gibbon Wakefield in particular. Bohan's detailed knowledge of provincial and general government politics and the key players of this period enable him to set Canterbury issues within that wider context. Godley's influence in New Zealand affairs clearly extended well beyond the barely three years that he spent in the colony itself.

Historian Steven Grainger uses an effective theatrical analogy in the second of his two chapters on Godley. The 150th anniversary of the founding placed Godley at centre stage. How would he be played? As dilettante? Altruist? Profiteer? For Grainger there is no disputing Godley's seminal influence: this local leader emerges as a 'surprisingly pragmatic and astute figure', who endeavoured to formulate the best possible solutions for the social, political and economic realities of the new settlement. Grainger highlights Godley's administrative skills and the influences of religion, education and upbringing on his policies. A preceding chapter provides an overview of Godley's entire career,

ended prematurely by his death, at the age of 47, in November 1861. The Godley family background is itself well detailed in the opening essay, written by John Robert's great-grandson, Lord Kilbracken, perhaps better known to New Zealand readers as the editor of Charlotte's *Letters from New Zealand 1850–1853*, published in 1951. And as with other chapters throughout this book, well-captioned photographs and paintings complement the text while endnotes and a bibliography provide the basis for further exploration.

Remembering Godley succeeds in its objective of providing contemporary readers with a fuller understanding of the ideals, achievements and life of an extraordinarily able Victorian. The complementary nature of these two new works is manifest. Godley's task was a complex one, made all the more challenging by the particular personalities, issues and interests that existed within the Canterbury settlement in its foundation years, an amalgam well described by Amodeo. Colonial achievements, and their consequences, still need to be much more widely known. These two accessible and attractive books should facilitate that process.

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One Flag, One Queen, One Tongue: New Zealand, the British Empire and the South African War, 1899–1902. Edited by John Crawford and Ian McGibbon. Auckland University Press, Auckland, 2003. 225 pp. NZ price: \$39.99. ISBN 1-86940-293-6.

The Impact of the South African War. Edited by David Omissi and Andrew S. Thompson. Palgrave, Basingstoke and New York, 2002. 313 pp. US price: \$79.95. ISBN 0-333-77699-2.

ANNIVERSARY often prompts history. The centennial of the South African War (1899–1902) has provoked many to reassess the war's military, social and cultural impact upon South Africa and in the rest of the British Empire. Both collections reviewed here claim the South African War as the first real empire-wide conflict since the war brought together British and colonial troops from South Africa, India, Canada, Australia and New Zealand in common cause. Both therefore emphasize the need to investigate the wider imperial impact of the South African War. And they draw contributions from historians of former colonies as well as Britain to reinforce this point.

One Flag, One Queen, One Tongue is a collection of 13 essays arising from a symposium held as part for the official commemoration of the departure of the first New Zealand contingent for the war. The volume begins with Ian McGibbon's discussion of the origins of New Zealand's involvement in the war in which he reminds us just how much New Zealand's security was bound up with the fate of the British Empire. Military history is a focus of the collection. In a welcome piece of transcolonial history Stephen Clarke assesses the influence of British officers in Australasia; John Crawford investigates the training and battlefield experience of the New Zealanders at war; Colin McGeorge examines the social composition of the New Zealand troops and British historian Thomas Pakenham discusses the contribution of imperial forces at the front. The role of New Zealand women in both supporting and opposing the war is investigated by Megan Hutching and Ellen Ellis, Ellis's essay highlighting the role of New Zealand teachers in the concentration camps. Although officially a 'white man's war', Ashley Gould's interesting essay points to the small but significant contribution of Maori as soldiers. And Malcolm McKinnon's thorough and provocative essay investigates opposition to the war, finding little and concluding that a comparative history approach is required if we are to understand the enthusiastic imperialism that swept the empire. Finally there are