

unusual concession almost certainly negotiated by her influential fiancé. The couple set up house, with appropriate staff, on a five acre property in Fendalton, where Millicent was born in January 1888, just three weeks before school began. Despite her excellent health, the strain of fulfilling the duties of wife, mother and mistress of a busy household was telling on Helen by 1892. She took leave and the couple travelled to England for some months. In 1894 she resigned from the school and later that year bore a stillborn child.

Macmillan Brown also resigned, on health grounds, in 1895 and thereafter much of the couple's time was given to a search for health — both were insomniacs — and to travel. They visited Britain and the Continent twice more, the second time taking their two daughters (Viola was born in 1897) and a nurse/governess, for almost two years. During this trip, Helen suffered a miscarriage and her continuing ill-health after they returned home (Millicent wrote) made her father impatient and irritable. Already unwell when the family set off for a North Island holiday in early 1903, Helen became ill in Rotorua and died there on 3 February. The feminist Grossman blamed her premature death on the impossibility of combining career and marriage in a colonial environment (although she had resigned from Christchurch Girls' almost a decade earlier). Lovell-Smith asks whether married life had 'inflicted on her a gradual but inexorable decline as a result of her husband's strong and egocentric personality', but rejects this view because of the strength and determination Helen displayed in other parts of her life. Instead she blames the health services of the day, the insomnia never properly dealt with and the miscarriage, from which she never recovered.

This balanced and eminently readable biography is attractively illustrated and well referenced. By giving life to an outstanding but reticent woman, it provides valuable new insights into girls' education and academic marriage in late Victorian New Zealand.

DOROTHY PAGE

Dunedin

Making Waves: Captain Jock McGregor — Shipmaster, Wanganui Pioneer. By Felicity Campbell. Steele Roberts, Wellington, 2004. 272 pp. NZ price: \$44.95. ISBN 8-77338-27-3.

JOCK MCGREGOR'S leap from a cliff top into the Whanganui River narrowly averting death from a determined and armed taua is a well-known drama from Wanganui's early history. But until now, not a lot more was generally known about him.

Although this doughty Scot, a great-grandson of Rob Roy McGregor, left few papers, Felicity Campbell (herself a direct descendant of an early Wanganui family) has pieced together an engaging life of a remarkable man. Campbell fills out McGregor's portrait by researching and detailing the key local and national histories that framed McGregor's bold and enterprising activities. And she indulges in some imaginative reconstructions that, rooted in fact, add credible lustre to her account. It is not so different from the technique employed by James Belich in his *Titokowaru's War*.

McGregor bears so many of the traits and experiences of those who left poor families in their homelands, in this case Cherry Bank, near Perth, Scotland, for the uncertain opportunities of New Zealand in the 1830s, he could almost be drawn from fiction. His experience can be summed up in the cliché, 'Fortune favours the brave'.

The 22-year-old Jock was ranging across the Tasman from Launceston in whaling enterprises before 1835, then he settled at Port William, Stewart Island, where he built a raupo house. By 1840 he had taken as his wife Hinekawa, daughter of Tutepourangi,

paramount chief of Ngati Apa, Ngati Kuia and Rangitane. Campbell's scholarship adds to existing accounts of this incident, but adopts Olive Baldwin's view that, in return for his life in battle with Te Rauparaha's forces, Tutepourangi ceded the precious Rangitoto (D'Urville) and the other lands his people had held in Te Tau Ihu (top of the South) to the invading Ngati Toa. (I note that the recently published, *Te Tau Ihu O Te Waka*, by Hilary and John Mitchell, has not offered this interpretation.)

In 1840 McGregor committed a defiant and little known act of compassion that was in every sense almost the mirror image of the disgraceful *Elizabeth* incident. It ought to be remembered if only to remind ourselves that by no means all early pioneers were self-serving bastards. McGregor was sailing his self-built 25 tonner, *Surprise*, when he learnt that 'Bloody Jack' Tuhawaiki had captured seven of Hinekawa's people, holding them on Ruapuke Island. When he knew that Tuhawaiki had left for Sydney, McGregor took his ship and with two crew, Hippolyte and McDonald (who became patriarchs of thousands of South Island Rangitane descendants), rescued the captives and delivered them to the Marlborough Sounds. McGregor knew that he risked utu from the powerful Tuhawaiki and this appears to have been a motive in his seeking out the more distant location of Wanganui, where he became its first permanent Pakeha resident in 1840. Hinekawa died shortly after the birth of their only child, Teone, who was brought up by his Rangitane relatives, even though Jock tried on a number of occasions to bring him back into his family fold.

Jock's active life progressed from gritty hardship to bourgeois comfort as the colony grew up and he succeeded in establishing more property and income for himself and his family. This seamanship and enterprise made him a very early trader between Wellington and Wanganui, working across the settlement's notorious bar. With his knowledge of Maori he was able to develop relations that enabled him to acquire land and build the first hotel on the riverbank. He was there to see the Wakefields' botched attempts to purchase the city; it was his ship, *Surprise*, that brought the Spain Commission to investigate the purchase. He had personal relationships with Topine Te Mamaku, old Hori Kingi Te Anaua and Pehi Turoa and the other local chiefs who had apparently so casually agreed to the sale of the town. McGregor was there to provide accommodation as the early settlers arrived, he experienced the skirmishes of 1847 and, while barely touched upon in the book, lived through the New Zealand Wars of the 1860s. He was personally known to the Rev. Richard Taylor, the local missionary and recently the subject of a biography by John Owens.

While McGregor's prosperity grew, he was to remain disappointed in his one great ambition, to ensure a line of his McGregors to succeed him. He remarried, another Scot, but the marriage was barren. He brought out a succession of other close relatives and helped to set them up in the town. In the end, after a nasty tumble from a horse in 1879 near a property of his at Aberfeldy, it seems that he was no longer himself. A gold-digging Scots housekeeper, Boyd, managed to have him change his will in her favour. The true relations, acting on promises and expectations, were moved to court action and a ding-dong row ensued. At this point, Campbell's judgment deserts her, and she includes a lot more detail on the trial than we need, skewing the weight of the book. Ironically, through the estranged Teone, McGregor does leave a vast array of McGregor progeny, all of them proudly Maori-Scots and this has to be his greatest legacy.

As a dweller in McGregor's old place, at Cherry Bank, Wanganui, Campbell is an enthusiast who has made a fine contribution to local history, deeply informed by research into the significant national events that affected New Zealand's early colonial days. Perhaps even more importantly, Campbell has won the support of some of McGregor's well-informed Maori descendants who have assisted her with insight through many of the curly cultural/historical issues that arise.

A general map of New Zealand would have helped but this is another good book, nicely illustrated and beautifully designed that, one suspects, might not have seen the light of day but for the dedication of its publisher, Steele Roberts.

DAVID YOUNG

Nelson

On and Off: Opera in Auckland 1970–2000. By Nicholas Tarling. Dunmore Press, Palmerston North, 2002. 179 pp. NZ price: \$37.00. ISBN 0-86469-431-8.

THE PRESENTATION OF GRAND OPERA in Auckland from 1970 to 2000 was, writes Nicholas Tarling, an ‘on-and-off business’ (p.7). The reasons for this, he suggests, were the high cost of producing and touring grand opera, coupled with high audience expectations, the small size of Auckland (in terms of the population numbers needed before grand opera is financially viable), the city’s distance from the country’s political centre, and the failure of various Auckland-based opera ventures to attract corporate sponsorship. The changing fortunes of opera in Auckland are conveyed through Tarling’s descriptions of what was presented periodically on the city’s stages and the activities that took place offstage in order to achieve this.

This book is described by its publishers as ‘a colourful contribution to Auckland’s history’, of special interest to opera lovers and ‘those who manage and who fund organisations that deal with various art forms’ (p.7). The interests of the latter group are privileged by Tarling. This is evident in his emphasis on the business behind the presentation of opera, specifically the business of lobbying for its ongoing financial support, rather than the nuts and bolts of actually producing it. Such a focus sets Tarling apart from Adrienne Simpson, who highlights the performance side of our operatic heritage, and is the only historian consistently publishing in the area of New Zealand’s opera history.¹ Elsewhere Tarling has called for historians to take ‘fuller account of the performing arts’ than this, and perhaps *On and Off* might have been written along these lines.² However, the issue is not overtly taken up in this book. Instead, the author’s intention is to explain opera’s chequered past in Auckland — without accusing its administrators of mismanagement or Aucklanders of philistinism — so that readers involved in the business side of opera and other art forms may profit from past mistakes (pp.7–8).

Tarling’s narrative begins with opera’s rather dented public profile after the New Zealand Opera Company’s collapse in 1970. The book goes on to trace the various Auckland-based organizations set up to keep professional grand opera going on a national basis. The formation of these groups coincided with changes to the forms, function and funding of national culture. Cultural expressions and forms that were perceived to be more relevant and appealing to a wider community gained both the Queen Elizabeth II Arts Council’s favour, and its financial support. This ideological reorientation — which Tarling does not draw out as fully as he might for general readers — affected opera directly. It was dismissed and marginalized by the Arts Council for being expensive, elitist and obsolete. It was this attitude, and associated erratic funding, that made it almost impossible for opera to continue.

This discouraging state of affairs was turned around in the 1980s and 1990s. According to Tarling, it was Jonathon Hardy, the director of Auckland’s Mercury Theatre at the beginning of the 1980s, who rescued opera from its maltreatment. This was because Hardy responded to the Arts Council criticisms with a sophisticated and relevant theory of opera and operatic practise — one that spelt out how and why it should be supported as a New Zealand art form (pp.61–5). As a result, through the 1980s the Mercury received,