

been made of the registers (and allied sources) in a variety of contexts, and that a number of historians have commented at some length on their strengths and weaknesses. Michael Bagge offers a straightforward account of the decisions of successive governments during the 1970s and 1980s to construct the Clyde Dam, specifically the National government's 'indifferent attitude towards environmental and legal procedures' and 'its abuse of power'. Finally, Sue Heydon's essay details the history of Khunde Hospital in Nepal.

It will be apparent that the approach to and use of the terms 'landscape' and 'community' and the presumed interaction between them is diverse, sufficiently so that I wonder whether the collection is appropriately entitled. Indeed, some of the essays fit less within the rubric of 'Landscape/Community' as they do within that of cultural origins, cultural transfer and cultural change. Some essays do deal with the theme of landscape and community, although the former tends to assume a static rather than dynamic quality and presence. That is not to challenge the integrity and value of the essays themselves. Indeed, the range of sources explored, the concepts applied, the methodologies employed, the analyses offered and the conclusions drawn all point to real strengths in historical method and exposition. The essays by Wanhalla and Clarke were particularly enjoyable, not least for the fact that they point to the many exciting themes which remain underexplored, especially the ways in which the diverse varying socio-cultural groups which arrived in New Zealand chose to assess, interpret, organize and change the particular spaces in which they elected to settle, and the manner in which specific cultural forms were transferred, adopted and modified. We have some way to go before we can confidently link shapes in New Zealand society with shapes on New Zealand ground.

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The House of Reed 1907–1983: Great Days in New Zealand Publishing. By Edmund Bohan. Canterbury University Press, Christchurch, 2005. 228 pp. NZ price: \$39.95. ISBN 1-877257-32-X.

EDMUND BOHAN'S WELL-RESEARCHED, LIVELY HISTORY of the publisher A.H. and A.W. Reed is a welcome addition to research on New Zealand commercial history. The skeleton of the Reed story is well known. Alfred Reed (A.H. Reed), Dunedin manager of the New Zealand Typewriter Company, devout Christian and lay preacher in the Methodist Church, ran a small mail order Sunday school supply business with his wife, Isabel. When turnover reached £1000 per annum in 1907, he sold his interests in typewriting and with £500 capital pursued the Sunday school supply store business full time. In the 1920s, while still concentrating on the church and Sunday school market, Reed extended into bookselling from his six-person Dunedin office. In 1925, Reed's nephew, Alexander (Clif) Reed, joined the firm as office boy.

In 1932, 25 years after commencing, the small firm published its first book: a collection of the late Reverend Rutherford Waddell's writings. Further publications followed, often of a historical, cultural, religious or biographical nature — many as joint-ventures with printers, such as Coulls Sommerville Wilkie, or with financial contributions from authors. The same year as its first publication, the firm opened a Wellington branch headed by nephew Clif. For the next 30 years, the two Reeds rose to prominence as publishers and authors. Though A.H. was perhaps New Zealand's most widely read author, Clif himself wrote over 200 titles. In 1974, when the government-sponsored Authors Fund commenced, the pair topped the list of recipients.

In 1941, the firm was converted into a limited liability company, and by the end of World War II, with a staff of 11, Reed's yearly output of titles had doubled to over 40. In the 1950s, under Clif's leadership, the firm advanced into educational publishing,

contributing significantly to a threefold increase in the firm's turnover during the decade. Reed's public profile, however, was larger than its organizational size or financial strength. In 1961, when the firm became a non-listed public company, its staff numbered 20.

Organizationally, during the 1960s, the firm expanded threefold and by the early 1970s had over 70 employees — partly due to the establishment of an Australian arm in 1964, managed by John Reed, son of Clif. With the pressures of running a larger organization, and his own health suffering, in 1970 Clif Reed turned to financial advisor and accountant Malcolm Mason for assistance. It was, as Bohan rightly suggests, a pivotal phase in the life of the firm. Mason increasingly asserted his control over the business, and a rule-bound, cost-centred approach replaced the old honour-bound, organic style of family management that had so characterized Reed's organizational culture.

The ruminations and fractions erupting over the following eight years proliferate in the pages of Bohan's history, until John Reed returned from Australia in 1978 to ceremoniously oust Mason and reassert control over the family firm. It was a valiant rescue but one launched too late. Downsizing New Zealand staff from 85 to 34 returned the firm to more sensible numbers, but two years earlier, Mason's dictatorial style had ejected most of the firm's long-serving publishing talent. Perhaps inevitably, John Reed oversaw the friendly sale of A.W. and A.H. Reed to Australian Book Publishers (ABP) in 1983.

For Bohan, writing the history of A.H. and A.W. Reed was a difficult task. The 120 boxes in the Reed archive at the Alexander Turnbull Library were perhaps a mixed blessing, and he has straddled a line between a history of Reed's literary contribution to New Zealand identity and a more conventional business history. It is the former on which the strength of the book lies. Though lengthy, Bohan's account does not have the same degree of economic context as Gordon Ogilvie's recent study of Ballantynes, nor is it as incisive as earlier New Zealand firm studies, such as those by Brian Healy on New Zealand Forest Products, or John Angus on Shacklock.¹

Bohan, at ease with dissecting the literary merits of writers and works, devotes almost whole chapters to book-by-book analysis of the various publications coming out of the Reed machine. Toward the end of the book, he is confronted with the tasks of a business historian, and must offer summation and explanation for the eventual demise of this, the most well-known of New Zealand publishing houses. Here, he falters. Though the main events are laid out, Bohan struggles to make sense of the commercial and economic events erupting within the firm. Capital shortfalls are incessantly termed 'crises', but the emotive tenor without sufficient analysis does the term no justice. What was precipitating these financial shortfalls? What events were behind changes in turnover? What was the cash position of the firm?

Too often, it seems, Bohan accepts the summations of his oral sources and misses the opportunity for further insight. In the background of the text, other plausible scenarios wait to be cracked open. Was the firm overstocking? Did the seasonality of the education business trigger capital shortfalls? Was there insufficient or unrealistic forward financial planning on the part of management? Was the firm publishing insufficient mainstream titles (such as the founders had often penned) to produce a steady income stream from 'middle New Zealand'? Was this small but vibrant publisher rapidly losing market share in New Zealand?

That such a list of questions can be raised suggests that more forceful analysis of the rich data the author had on hand could have rendered a more convincing explanation for the business difficulties that led to the 'gentle expiration' of this high-profile New Zealand publisher.

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