

Far from Home: The English in New Zealand. Edited by Lyndon Fraser and Angela McCarthy. Otago University Press, Dunedin, 2012. 234pp. NZ price: \$45.00. ISBN: 978 1 877578 32 8.

FROM THE COMMENCEMENT OF EUROPEAN SETTLEMENT until the 1970s migrants from Europe's Atlantic archipelago consistently made up over 90% of annual inflows to New Zealand, with over 50% from England alone in most years. Yet, until recently, the contributions of these ethnic groups attracted little scholarly attention. The background and culture of the dominant migrant group were viewed as foundational, not problematised in any way, and therefore not meriting serious investigation. While Jock Phillips and Terry Hearn have recently provided an outline of the composition and pulses of English migration to New Zealand, as the editors of the present volume suggest, much more needs to be known about 'the experiences, attachments and identities of English migrants' (p.7). The essays presented are an important early step towards filling the gap.

But as several contributors demonstrate, it is tricky to establish just which elements of New Zealand culture are distinctively English. As Stephen Constantine shrewdly opens: 'It is not easy to find the English in empire.' Neither physical characteristics nor any strong sense of Englishness marked out those born in England. Nor did place of birth fundamentally shape their colonial social interactions, religious persuasions or political allegiances. From the early eighteenth century a utilitarian concept of 'Britishness' had been deliberately promoted in an endeavour to meld the peoples of Great Britain and Ireland, and in the course of the nineteenth century the notion was carried by migrants to the wider Anglophone world, blurring national identities. While the Scots, Welsh, later the Irish, clung to aspects of their culture, the English, as dominants, felt little need to culturally assert themselves. And in New Zealand, as the locally born soon came to outnumber migrants, the emergence of a synthetic 'New Zealand British' identity provided further camouflage. Careful unpicking is therefore necessary.

The contextual background is provided by two distinguished international migration scholars, Constantine and Marjory Harper. Constantine provides the demographic context, sketching population flows within the nineteenth- and early twentieth-century empire, and seeking to establish the magnitude and direction of specifically English migrant streams. His essay is empire-wide rather than simply New Zealand focused, and he considers both the motives and incentives for migration and the mechanisms by which it was promoted. Intriguingly he notes that while New Zealand may have come to be regarded as 'the most English' of British possessions, with England unquestionably providing the greatest number of migrants, the relative percentage of English was amongst the lowest in the imperial settler colonies. Proportionately, there were more Scots and Irish in New Zealand than in Britain itself. A valuable summary, Harper's essay is more concerned with the detail of English migrant recruitment and experiences. Her recounting of a selection of responses to encountered destination realities is salutary. Harper questions the idea of 'undifferentiated migrant Britishness', arguing that the newcomers long held to their national and regional identities. The issue in New Zealand is for how long, and the evidence suggests that, for the English, regional or district affiliations were always stronger. While there is little that is really new in these two essays, they provide a solid foundation for those that follow.

Together constituting an enticing miscellany, three essays offer insights from ongoing New Zealand-based research projects. Greg Ryan's rollicking account of the transfer of English beer brewing and drinking customs is juxtaposed with Angela McCarthy's more sober study of the English in New Zealand's mental asylums, the trio being rounded out by Lyndon Fraser's even more sobering discourse on 'English ways of death'. Ryan makes a strong case that by the 1860s beer had become the alcoholic drink of choice and that English influences dominated the local brewing industry. How New Zealand

beer styles evolved is detailed, as are beer drinking practices, with colonial pubs, as 'at home', functioning as centres for social and cultural interaction. Mining asylum records, McCarthy points to the under-representation of English migrants amongst inmates relative to their share of the colonial population. She also notes that the English were singular in not attracting the pejorative diagnostic labelling associated with other ethnicities, and ponders the reasons why. There is also valuable discussion of what the asylum records reveal about motives for migration. Fraser is concerned with migrant attitudes to death and funerary practices, emphasising the adaptation or reinvention of transplanted traditions. An absorbing exploration ranges from death on voyages, through monuments and wills, to the deaths of children and tokens of remembrance. The extent to which death shadowed nineteenth-century migrants is feelingly conveyed. While elements of all three essays have been presented elsewhere, the authors stress more research is required.

Two essays are primarily based on textual research. Lachy Paterson questions whether Māori saw any difference between the various British migrant streams, and if so whether they fully recognised the category 'English'. His research is founded on searches of Māori-language newspapers, selected English-language publications and school textbooks published before 1914. Among Māori writers, he concludes, England (Ingarangi) became shorthand for Great Britain; similarly, English (Ingarihi) represented British. In translations from English to Māori the same renderings pertained. Paterson concludes that although Māori were perfectly aware of the differences between the ethnic streams from the Atlantic archipelago, their encompassing 'Pakeha-ness' was what was considered most definitional. More orthodox is England-domiciled Janet Wilson's survey of writings of English arrivals between 1860 and 1914. The theme is the migrant outsider. From a postcolonial stance, she discusses the expressions of dislocation arising from coming to terms with a new environment. Even the 'Maoriland' writing tradition, evident from the 1890s, remained the literature of the outsider. In Wilson's view all writing by settlers pre-1914 was essentially 'British literature' written in New Zealand. She argues that, to some degree at least, New Zealand literature will always be connected with Britain, citing in support the contemporary work of Peter Bland (immigrant from England) and Fleur Adcock (emigrant to England).

Sociologist David Pearson's contribution is much more contemporary, employing different sources and methodologies. Drawing from 82 extended interviews with post-World War Two migrants, he probes their motives for migration, their pre-departure impressions of New Zealand, and their attitudes to both their old and new countries once established. Two clear cohorts are identified: those who arrived before the 1980s upheavals in Britain and New Zealand; and those coming later. Pearson suggests the latter tended to be more highly qualified professionals or migrants of means, in contrast to the earlier state-assisted skilled workers. And it was not just a matter of occupational and asset differences. Those arriving before the 1980s were 'settlers' by inclination, generally set on building new lives. Later arrivals were often more mobile, open to opportunities elsewhere if they arose, and therefore might more properly be regarded as 'sojourners'. What all of the migrants shared, however, was a desire for social and material benefit, and New Zealand continued to offer not only prospects for improvement but also living patterns bearing some resemblance to those left behind.

The collection with which this volume most appropriately bears comparison is Tom Brooking and Jennie Coleman's *The Heather and the Fern: Scottish Migration and New Zealand Settlement* (2003). From the same publisher, it has a similar structure and number of essays. It exhibits many of that publication's strengths, but also some of its weaknesses, even if the existence of the latter should not be construed as criticism of the editors (or indeed the contributors). The shallowness of the potential author pool, for example, has tended to limit the extent of topic coverage. Further, as with most collections, the essays vary in depth and readability. The editors recognise these limitations, offering

the volume as a starting point in ‘filling the silences’. Without question, *The Heather and the Fern* helped consolidate growing scholarly interest in New Zealand’s Scots. If *Far from Home* prompts deeper investigation of New Zealand’s English migrants Lyndon Fraser and Angela McCarthy will have rendered New Zealand scholarship and a wider reading public signal service.

BRAD PATTERSON

Victoria University of Wellington

Mad on Radium: New Zealand in the Atomic Age. By Rebecca Priestley. Auckland University Press, Auckland, 2012. xii + 284pp. NZ price: \$45. ISBN: 978 1 86940 727 8.

MAD ON RADIUM deals with the atomic or nuclear aspects of New Zealand’s history over the last 120 years. The subjects covered by Priestley range from the use of radioactive material in medicine to the involvement of New Zealand scientists in the development of the atomic bomb and the anti-nuclear movement which came to the fore in the 1980s. A book dealing with such a wide range of matters could easily lack cohesion, but Priestley skilfully uses both thematic and narrative approaches to produce a substantial and engaging book. *Mad on Radium*, in many respects, complements Malcolm Templeton’s 2006 book *Standing Upright Here: New Zealand in the Nuclear Age 1945–1990*, which examines nuclear issues in New Zealand’s foreign policy.

The first chapter of the book discusses the alacrity with which New Zealanders embraced the discovery of radioactivity and related advances. This enthusiasm is reflected in the book’s title and comes from a comment in 1914 by the government’s expert on the therapeutic use of mineral waters that the ‘public are mad on radium’. During the early years of the twentieth century treatments such as soaking in hot radioactive baths and drinking radioactive water were widely popular. The persistence of a belief in the health-giving powers of radiation among some New Zealanders is one of the more startling findings set out in this work. Priestley’s account of the rapid adoption of x-ray technology in New Zealand during the decades before the First World War is thought-provoking and certainly points to the need for more study of the adoption of new technologies in New Zealand during this period.

A wide range of consumer products and services made use of radioactive material or x-ray technology. Particularly disturbing was the employment of special x-ray machines or ‘pedascopes’ in shoe shops to assist with the fitting of new shoes. These devices were common across New Zealand during the 1940s and 1950s, and it was only in 1969 that the last pedoscope was withdrawn from service. Priestley also notes how references to radiation were for many years used by advertisers to suggest that their products were new, powerful and generally more desirable.

Central to the book are the chapters that focus on the ‘dawn of the atomic age’ during the Second World War and developments during the 1950s. The part played by New Zealand scientists in the development of the atom bomb and the first British nuclear reactor has been discussed before, but Priestley’s account is typically well written and well rounded. New Zealand’s role sprang mainly from the efforts of the physicist Ernest Marsden, the long-time head of the Department of Scientific and Industrial Research. Marsden was a consummate networker and for many years a key figure in New Zealand science. He features prominently in *Mad on Radium* and is clearly worthy of a full biography. Also discussed in this part of the book are the contribution made in the post-war period to the British nuclear programme by New Zealanders, the establishment of a team to conduct atomic research at the Dominion Physical Laboratory and proposals for the construction of a research reactor in New Zealand. New Zealand’s involvement in the British nuclear