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# Poetry Notes

## Quarterly Newsletter of PANZA

### Welcome

Hello and welcome to issue 16 of *Poetry Notes*, the newsletter of PANZA, the newly formed Poetry Archive of New Zealand Aotearoa.

*Poetry Notes* will be published quarterly and will include information about goings on at the Archive, articles on historical New Zealand poets of interest, occasional poems by invited poets and a record of recently received donations to the Archive.

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The newsletter will be available for free download from the Poetry Archive's website:

<http://poetryarchivenz.wordpress.com>

### Rowan Gibbs on *Kowhai Gold*

*Wellington writer and bibliographer Rowan Gibbs discusses the important and much maligned 1930 Kowhai Gold anthology, edited by Quentin Pope, in particular the problems relating to a contributor withdrawing material from it, which resulted in differing bound copies found to be still available in collector's and library's hands.*

Much has been written about this anthology, little of it polite. Curnow's label "lamentable... insipidities mixed with puerilities", and the charge of "a fanciful aimlessness" about its contents,

arising out of a "lack of any vital relation to experience" (for references see the index to his *Look Back Harder*, 1987), still spring most readily to mind – despite the partial rehabilitation in Trixie Te Arama Menzies's article 'Kowhai Gold – Skeleton or Scapegoat', *Landfall* 165 (March 1988) pp.19-26, which demonstrated that the "poetic tradition" it embodies is not as isolated (a "continuum": p.20) as has been claimed, both from what preceded it (Alexander and Currie) and what followed (Curnow).

This literary critical analysis of the book has overlooked and obscured its bibliographical interest, which proves to be more than mere curiosity.

Comparison of a number of copies reveals that the anthology as planned included the work not of fifty-six poets but of fifty-seven: lurking in the index and bibliography of a few of the earliest copies off the press (and even in the text of a single rogue specimen found) is "Geoffrey de Montalk". A poem of his, 'The Song of a Dead Rat', was originally on p.154, and its removal has involved not only the replacement of that leaf, but alteration of the Contents, the Bibliography, and the Index, together with the last two leaves of the text, from where the original poem, P W Robertson's 'Invocation', was transferred to fill in the lacuna left by de Montalk's departure.

One might have hoped for a great story behind all this – Potocki's poem or character unmasked as offensive at the eleventh hour, perhaps, but it seems the reason was much more prosaic. The poem itself, despite its alarming title, was not to blame – it had been printed

previously in Potocki's (admittedly self-published, but with the blessing of J H E Schroder) *Wild Oats* (Sumner, 1927). In the introduction to his *While Howls and Grunts* (Palmerston North, 1997) Potocki gives the explanation: "...There was the affair of *Kowhai Gold...* in which a poem of Ours, which had been praised long ago by the late Ian Donnelly, was included without so much as a By-Your-Leave, and without the family patronymic Potocki, while infamous poetasters had pages & pages. We insisted on their taking this poem out..."

Potocki seems here to be alleging as many as four reasons for the excision of the poem: they didn't ask; they got his name "wrong"; he didn't like the company of his fellow poets; and (worst) Pope chose only one poem by him. (All rather sad, as the only other New Zealand verse anthology, Niel Wright assures me, that has ever included Potocki is Helen Shaw's *Mystical Choice*, 1981: a long wait). Removal of Potocki's poem involved excision of seven leaves of text from every copy of the already printed (and, in the case of most copies, bound) book, and their replacement with corrected leaves. These were at first (probably with copies that had already been cased) pasted in; later (presumably with copies still in sheets) they were sewn in sections. The mechanics of the task must have been considerable, even for Dent, who at their huge Temple Press complex in Letchworth Garden City had a large staff and did their own typesetting, printing, sewing, and casing. Inevitably an occasional copy escaped correction, in whole or in part, and in a few copies the "cancels" (replacement leaves) were wrongly inserted – fortunately, as it is from these "hybrid" (and "freak") copies that the original form of the book must be reconstructed, for no surviving unaltered copy of the original printing has yet come to light.

Possibly none ever left the warehouse: even the British Library deposit copy is catalogued as having 173 pages, which indicates that it was a corrected copy; and the details of the book supplied by Dent to the *English Catalogue of Books*, issued in advance of publication for

booksellers to place orders from, lists it as having 173 pages; it gives the month of publication as October. Further, D'Arcy Cresswell's critique of "this amusing, remarkable book" in *New Zealand News* (London), no.91, 18 November 1930 p.11, gives the number of contributors as fifty-six, indicating that his review copy was a corrected copy. (Fairburn called Cresswell's "a vile sniggering review", and wrote a "dignified reply" in the next issue of *New Zealand News*, 2 December, p.6, pointing out that "Cresswell withdrew several of his poems from the book before publication".)

I was able to inspect fourteen copies of the book, in libraries and in private hands; one library copy (a corrected copy) is not recorded as it had been rebound and resewn, obscuring its status.

(a) Original printing (assumed – no copy located):

This is distinguished by having *all* the following points:

- (i) The last leaf of the 'Contents', [A8], pp.xv-xvi, is integral and sewn, and lists on the recto the de Montalk poem as on p.154 of the book (between Isobel Maud Peacocke and C S Perry), and on the verso P W Robertson's 'Invocation' as starting on p.168, following A H Adams's 'Sydney';
- (ii) The leaf [L5], pp.153-154, is integral and sewn, and prints on the recto the end of Peacocke's poem and on the verso 'THE SONG OF A DEAD RAT' by "Geoffrey de Montalk";
- (iii) The last two leaves of the main text, [M4, M5], pp.167-168 and 169-170, are integral and sewn, and print on p.168 Adams's 'Sydney' and below it the first half of Robertson's 'Invocation'; on p.169 the second half of 'Invocation'; p.[170] blank;
- (iv) The leaves [M6] and [M7], pages 171-172 and 173-174, are integral and sewn, pp.171-3 being the "Bibliography" with "Geoffrey de Montalk: / Wild Oats, The Author, 1927" as the final entry on p.172; p.[174] blank;
- (v) Leaf [M8], pages 175-176, is integral and sewn, p.175 being "Index", with "Montalk, Geoffrey de, 154" the fourth item in the right hand column; p.[176] is the Temple Press colophon.

(b) The first corrected copies:

These have the above seven leaves ([A8], [L5], [M4-M5], [M6-M7], [M8]) excised and reprinted replacement leaves pasted in:

- (i) Page xv replaces the listing for de Montalk at p.154 with P W Robertson, and page xvi deletes Robertson at the end, leaving Adams's 'Sydney' the final poem in the book;
- (ii) Page 153 is as before but p.154 deletes the de Montalk poem and prints Robertson's in its place;
- (iii) Page 167 is as before but p.168 deletes Robertson's poem, leaving the lower half of the page blank; pages 169-170 now contain the "Bibliography" (with de Montalk deleted);
- (iv) The Bibliography continues on p.171; p.[172] is blank; p.[173] is the "Index" (deleting de Montalk); p.[174] blank;
- (v) Page [175] is the colophon; p.[176] blank.

And so the number of leaves is the same, but at the end the pagination is altered and there is one extra blank page. The cancelling (replacement) leaves [A8] and [L5] are of course single leaves, and [M4-M5] is a fold (a conjugate pair of leaves); however, [M6,M7,M8] seem (oddly, and surely inconveniently) to be single leaves, though they perhaps vary from copy to copy: in one copy seen, (g) below, [M7,M8] appear to be a fold but in (h) [M8] is pasted in back to front, meaning that it must be a singleton.

Of (b) four copies have been seen (Turnbull Library 175,582 and 173,589; National Library copy; copy belonging to Rowan Gibbs which had belonged to P W Robertson, so a contributor's copy).

(c) Final corrected copies:

These have the text as in (b) but the corrected leaves instead of being pasted in have been newly printed and are part of the sections and sewn in.

(Only one copy has been seen of this final state, belonging to Niel Wright, probably indicating that most of the copies sent to New Zealand were sent fairly early.)

In fact, due no doubt to the complicated (and probably rushed) nature of the operation, many copies (indeed, the majority of those inspected) were

corrected only in part: the following “hybrid” copies have L5 or M4-M8 uncorrected (no copy has been found with A8 in its original state):

(d) A8 and L5 corrected and integral as in (c) but M original (meaning that de Montalk appears in the Bibliography and Index but not in the text, and Robertson’s poem is printed twice, on p.154 and pp.168-9).

(Three copies of (d) were found: Turnbull Library 45,032 and two belonging to Rowan Gibbs, since sold.)  
(e) A8 and M corrected and integral as in (c) but L5 original and printing the de Montalk poem (though it is deleted from the Contents, Bibliography and Index): this is the only copy located with the de Montalk poem still present. (This copy belonged to John Reece Cole and is now in the Turnbull Library.)

(f) A8, L5 and M all corrected, but A5 is pasted in as (b) whereas the other leaves are sewn in as (c).

(Two such copies seen: Wellington City Library and Victoria University.)

The two final variants are best regarded as accidental “freaks”

(g) As (b) but L5 is pasted in back to front (making the order of pages 153, 155, 154 and splitting Peacocke’s poem in two).

(One such copy seen, in private hands, which had belonged to a contributor.)

(h) As (b) but M8 is pasted in back to front (this could be easily done as one side is the colophon and the other side is blank).

(One such copy seen: J C Beaglehole Room copy at Victoria University.)

**Rowan Gibbs**, author of this article, has recently published a cricket book, *W W Robinson on the Cricket Field*. Copies available from Rowan at:

[rowan.gibbs@paradise.net.nz](mailto:rowan.gibbs@paradise.net.nz)

Rowan also notes further about Kowhai Gold editor *Quentin Pope*:

“Regarding *Pope’s own poem ‘Retrospect’*, *Eric McCormick said (An Absurd Ambition, 1993, p.41): “...That is emulation [of Rupert Brooke] carried to the point of caricature... Kowhai Gold contained at least three versions of ‘The Great Lover’ alone... and Brooke was in effect the chief contributor to that ignoble collection”.*

## Obituary: Trevor Reeves



### OBITUARY FOR TREVOR REEVES by Dr Michael O’Leary

Dunedin poet and publisher Trevor Reeves died recently in Dunedin after a long illness. Reeves was a major player in New Zealand literary publishing in the 1970s, this can be seen by his publication list below. In more modern times he was neglected as the juggernaut of public funded university presses has taken over the high ground of publishing. Yet, without people like Reeves who considered publishing poetry in particular a necessity to the culture of New Zealand it is doubtful whether recent publishing would exist. Reeves was one of those people who ‘believed’ in literature, so I have included his answer to a questionnaire he completed for an MA thesis I wrote on small press publishing in New Zealand. Just looking at his publication line-up shows the type of publisher he was. He was also a poet himself, which gave him further authority to have his ideas expressed. And this is the reason I wrote my thesis, published by Steele Roberts in 2007 as a book, so that people like Reeves could have their say in a literary culture which was fast becoming forgetful of those who had gone before as they begin to die off. So, I salute Trevor Reeves for his contribution and hand the floor over to you:–

**Publisher: Caveman Press. Trevor Reeves a poet and a printer who has worked tirelessly for many political as well as literary causes over more than**

**thirty years. Presently he is involved in on-line publication on the internet, the highlight of which is an international literary review entitled *Southern Ocean Review* which Reeves edits. It also appears in a hard-copy edition.**

**1 – What was your initial reason for getting involved in publishing? Please try to think of this in the spirit of what you were thinking and doing at the time.**

I had been writing poems and sending them off for publication for a while, and in the course of which, corresponded with Brian Turner who was at the time an editor with Oxford University Press in Wellington. In a letter I received early in 1971 he told me he heard that I was about to set up a press. That was news to me, but I thought “why not,” so I wrote down the name of my press that simply popped into my head at the time: Caveman Press.

**2 – Who or what was your main influence behind your decision to publish? These may include literary or non-literary influences.**

My main influence was Lindsay Smith who, through the ’60s had been a music student at Otago University. He also wrote poetry and in the course of our friendship I became interested in doing that too – having given up any idea of continuing with my music interests. His book of poems *Skyhook* was ready for publication, and I decided to publish it. My brother, Graeme, an accountant, took an interest in the finances and to some extent distribution of Caveman Press. We acquired a 1914 Golding Platen disc-inker letterpress machine as a donation from Whitcoulls and I learned how to do letterpress printing, firstly using handset type, and later linotype. Alan Loney joined us in late 1971 and handset his own book, and was a helpful influence as we progressed.

**3 – In your choice of authors was the main consideration for inclusion philosophical, literary or pragmatic?**

I think literary was the principal consideration in choice of work to publish. However, we did take a policy direction which included publishing the work of overseas writers. A principal influence was my association with Don Long, an American who came to New Zealand with his parents at the age of 14. He wrote a lot of poetry, eventually setting up *Edge* magazine, which published a lot of overseas work. We were not interested in philosophical directions in the writing, specifically. The main criteria being that it must be creative. Nor were we interested in ‘movements’ such as post-modernism etc. We were not university orientated but on the other hand, we did not exclude ourselves from their influences. Another influence in our choice of authors was to see if we could include graphic material to complement the written work. We did this successfully with artwork complementing books by the likes of Stanley Palmer (Tony Beyer), Ralph Hotere (Hone Tuwhare) and Barry Cleavin (Lindsay Smith) etc. To an extent we were ‘creating’ our own market for poetry collections, so the pragmatism of choosing already successful authors did not really enter into our calculations.

**4 – “...and if there is still a number of commissioned works which seem to have been dreamed up by a sabotaging office-boy on an LSD trip, there are now each year a growing quantity of books which worthily add to our literature.” Professor J.C. Reid from an article introducing New Zealand Books in Print, written in 1968. I interpret Reid’s assessment as an indication of the rift between the acceptable ‘worthy’ literature as endorsed by academia, and the new wave of sabotaging office boys and girls who at that time commissioned publishers to put out their works, or simply published things themselves, and in many cases the work of their friends. Comment on this quote in relation to the ‘Vanity Press’ vs ‘Real Publishing’ debate.**

To a large extent literature has never been the exclusive preserve of

academia, although issues of ‘professionalism’ continually arose in the 1960s and ’70s and even later, where academics liked to suggest that writing of superior quality arose out of the academic process. There are elements of truth in this, but traditionally, the bulk of truly great writing comes from no really specific area of society. This is particularly true of American writing where nationalism is not an obsession such as it has been in New Zealand and Canada and some other countries. Also the grants systems in New Zealand and Canada tend to favour writing by academics, for academics.

In general, there is a sort of levelling-out phenomenon in place in any society, so that bad work, whether it be academically derived, or those by ‘ordinary members of the public’ (for want of a better description) will ultimately be seen for what it is – good or bad; popular or shunned.

Funding has always been a problem for literature. Funders, for instance the New Zealand Literary Fund, which was replaced by the QEII Arts Council, then Creative NZ, had always been starved for funds. I was appointed to the New Zealand Literary Fund Committee in 1973 for a three year term, and in those days we had no more than \$4,500 each year to dispense.

There was pressure to give grants to well-established presses rather than small private presses, which was probably fair enough, but I can say that the emphasis has now changed quite a lot. In those days there were people on the committee who knew writing well but came, not just from the universities, but from publishing, bookselling, schools etc.

These days with the rapid rise of the ‘corporate culture’ the people making grants – mainly those trained in administration – are less likely to say ‘what’s the work like’ and more, ‘who the hell is he/she.’

As to the “Vanity Press” there has always been a lot of that, and even more these days. In fact, because of the decline of printed literature (for instance 90% of all New Zealand’s bookshops are owned by one man), and the rise of the Internet, printed books are more

often than not subsidised by their authors, or paid for in full by them. However, that includes books by academics, particularly in the non-fiction field.

Also there is the advent of printing technology which enables you to go to a printer with a computer disk and ask the printer to ‘docutech’ 200 copies please – all at a reasonable cost. I am presently doing this for authors with the press that succeeded Caveman Press, Square One Press.

I believe “real publishing” is just that – any sort of publishing is real publishing, whether it is on-line on the Internet or even on CDs. I don’t think the term “Vanity Press” has much currency any more. You can spend six months writing a book, give the manuscript to a publisher who publishes it at his own expense, perhaps with the aid of a grant, then get no return at all in terms of royalty as a return for the work you put in. Is that “Vanity Publishing”? Or you could put up the printing cost, then go halves with the publisher on the sales of the book, after he has paid the distribution cost – and still make no return on your efforts. In a sense, all publishing is vanity and the methods by which the publishing is done do not change it from being just that. So you might as well call vanity publishing, real publishing.

Some publishers have a different view. For instance, the publishers who award the Pushcart Prize in the USA deliberately exclude from consideration any work that has appeared solely on the Internet, claiming that this work is “Vanity” publishing. Of course it isn’t, because somebody has to pay for it, and more likely than not the author doesn’t get a return just in the same way as he gets little or no return in the ways described above, from print publishing. The New Zealand Society of Authors (PEN) are seeking to establish their membership status criteria in that writers who are published on Internet magazine (of which there are thousands throughout the world, now) as insufficient reason to allow them ordinary membership. I believe this is divisive and backward-looking. Literature endorsed by academia has, in my opinion, no more claim to quality

than non-academic literature not endorsed by academia. An example is the work of American writer Charles Bukowski, who never went near a university in his life.

However, his books are the most borrowed works of literature in USA libraries, both public and academic. His works beat the rest, hands down. If you bring up the subject of Bukowski in library lists on the Internet, such as “Cafe Blue” a university-based university list, you will get a diatribe of abuse, as I have received. Bukowski came through the “wrong door” and is deeply resented.

In New Zealand you have the modest example of Alan Duff (did I say modest?) whose work is not academically based or accepted, breaking sales records. Things have moved along from the days of J C Reid, although I would have no criticism of his worth and place in New Zealand literature. A fine writer and editor, indeed.

However, some academics are still maintaining the “myth of difference” and various policies of exclusion. A case in point was the publication of the revised *Oxford History of New Zealand Literature in English* in 1998. A whole chunk of writers and publishers from the early to mid 1970s and even later, were omitted, including myself and Caveman Press. Also other presses at the time that had broken the ‘nationalistic’ mould and reached outside New Zealand to publish, were excluded. Surprise omissions include Jim Henderson and even a former holder of the Burns Literary Fellowship at Otago University, John Dickson! Spectacularly missing was Stephen Higginson (who at one time was an editor and writer at Caveman Press) and his magazine, *Pilgrims*. It was not easy to contemplate that this was the result of incompetence. One instance was a mention of *Private Gardens*, New Zealand’s first anthology of poetry for women poets – published by Caveman Press in 1977. Not only did this highly regarded and completely sold out book get scant attention in the *Oxford History*, but the editors did not even have the courtesy to attribute the publication to Caveman Press – so

Caveman couldn’t even make it into the index, even on those grounds! Oxford’s website has done a bit of a “catch-up” of some of the more glaring omissions, but not of any significance.

### **5 – Initially, was your focus outwardly cosmopolitan or inwardly New Zealand looking, and how has this emphasis changed over the years?**

Initially, the focus of Caveman Press was inward focusing – local authors etc., but became outwardly cosmopolitan in response to what could be described as a literary movement – not academically based, I might add, to contrast the work of overseas with what writers here were producing. The aim of this was to try to broaden the range of subject matter and modify the influence of those who were looking for the “Great New Zealand Novel” to “The Great Novel”. This was my focus right up until Caveman Press ceased publishing literature to concentrate on publishing general books of non-fiction, in the early 1980s.

With the demise of other magazines and publishers in the 1980s things quickly returned to “normal”, where the inward looking past had re-established itself with the help of academia, which had been affronted by the “office boy” publishers. In fact I was an office boy in a wool store until I threw in the job in 1974 to become a full-time publisher.

At that time I was appointed to the New Zealand Literary Fund through the influence of Patricia Godsiff, then retired as a Nelson school headmistress. That appointment enraged some writers who considered themselves firmly established and calling the shots. Two of these, tried to browbeat and cajole me into relinquishing the appointment. They may have won in the end, after Middleton set up a petition to ask the Minister of Internal Affairs to have me removed. I was not re-appointed.

With the advent of the Internet in the early 1990s, literature became more global. More overseas writers began being published in New Zealand magazines – both on-line (although my *Southern Ocean Review* is still really the only international one), and in print

(*Takahe*, *JAAM* etc.), but not in *Landfall* and *Sport*.

However, the definite up-side was that more New Zealand writers were publishing in overseas magazines – particularly magazines on the Internet. This was especially gratifying, because even though most Internet magazines are based in the USA and are already internationally focused, New Zealand writers are making it into these publications against very stiff competition indeed. This can only help raise the standard of New Zealand writing published here in New Zealand, and indeed this is happening now. The “outward-looking” revolution that began in the early 1970s has resumed. The younger generation of writers and publishers, such as Mark Pirie, seem prepared to continue it. Creative New Zealand, of course, is still reluctant to fund publications with overseas content in them – even though the New Zealand writers may be getting substantial overseas coverage in them. Such considerations do not affect funding in, say, the USA, where the criteria is whether the content is worthy or not, not where it comes from.

### **6 – What were your methods of printing and distribution as a publisher? Did you receive any financial or other assistance from either public organisations, or private sponsorship?**

With Caveman Press there were some grants applied for and received, but not many. We received no assistance from public organisations, and only a little from private donations. Sales of poetry in those days were buoyant, and there was no significant shortfalls in returns. *Private Gardens* for instance, although well funded, sold 1275 copies – a pleasing result. Also, in those days there were few photocopiers, so copyright was not significantly breached as is the case these days, particularly with the advent of the Internet.

Methods of printing in the early days of Caveman Press began with handsetting letterpress, then linotype, with all the production being done “in house”. This changed later to using regular printers using offset with type and paste-ups

supplied. Later, we used overseas printers where there was a need to do overseas imprints for publishers overseas (such as a Graham Billing novel we published). These days the wheel has turned full circle, with the shrinkage of demand for printed collections of poetry for instance. Small runs of books – say, 50-100 copies, can now be done on a high quality photocopy machine. An example is the 50 copies on paper we publish every issue of *Southern Ocean Review*, concurrent with the Internet version, which so far has received over 20,000 “hits”. In an age where the booksellers’ monopoly will not stock poetry books on principle, private distribution by mail order, supply to libraries, and publishing on the Internet is the order of the day.

**7 – How much of your publishing was commissioned and paid for (either fully or partially) by the author? Was your operation helped by the voluntary work of friends and family?**

In the 1970s none of our work was commissioned or paid for. We are looking at this now, however, as the market for printed books continues to shrink. The publishing operation then certainly benefited from the voluntary help of friends and family. Later in the 1970s, with a publishing office and other activities developed such as graphic design and marketing – and also with book importation – our publishing became more professionally based, employing editors and people to help with distribution.

**8 – What has been the cost to you personally in terms of time, money and resources, of being involved in publishing in New Zealand? You may consider this in relation to more difficult areas such as relationships with friends, family etc. also.**

In terms of time and money, we had some successes and some failures. In terms of money, we always made money from publishing and distribution overall – at least until the exchange rate reverses in 1981-82 which left us (along with other distributors such Fullertons)

no alternative but to cease publishing and distributing under that imprint. Square One Press was established later in that decade (1980s) and we are still going today. I never begrudged any time I put into writing and publishing. Even less so now, as the urge or need to ‘earn’ a living is now more or less absent.

**9 – Where do you place yourself and your achievements as a publisher (and as a writer if applicable) in the history of the modern-day New Zealand literary scene? Do you feel that your contribution has been adequately acknowledged.**

Having no place set for my activities in publishing and writing by the *Oxford History of New Zealand Literature in English*, it is difficult to assess my achievements as a writer and a publisher. As a writer I believe I made some considerable headway in the short fiction milieu, having had stories placed overseas in print and Internet magazines – some for quite considerable payments, even on the Internet. My publisher (HeadworX) had applied for a Creative NZ grant for my book of short stories, *Breaker Breaker and Other Stories* but there is no guarantee of success there, as they may decide that since my work is not well known here, it is no good. [In fact, it was subsequently turned down. – Ed.] Corporate managers now read the manuscripts (if indeed that is what they do) and they may well decide that Te Papa or the Edinburgh Tattoo is worthy of more money than my little book. At one stage Caveman Press in the mid-1970s was publishing half the total books of poetry published in New Zealand. With other publishers at the time, mostly young, we were up to the three quarter mark, I estimate. I am heartened by the “young crop” of writers and publishers coming along. They are a realistic lot and I learn from them, now, in terms of the technologies of publication and distribution. Some have had to step over high hurdles set by established academics, when in fact they are academics too. It seems to be a different scene.

One of the tools of academia is to set up writing courses. This is practiced widely

in America, and we have our breed of it in New Zealand. I am not against this, as surely the arts faculties need more encouragement in this age of corporate utilitarianism where the funding favours buildings and institutions rather than creative individualism. A lot of the work submitted from American poets with PhDs or MFAs in creative writing is pretty pedestrian, convoluted, or dreadfully negative.

A lot of the writing courses carefully teach bad writers on how to become mediocre ones. Well, mediocre ones can become better ones, so maybe we need those writing courses. But it would be a mistake to say that those who didn’t attend writing courses are mediocre writers or worse, never to become really good writers.

We really need some unbiased and objective commentators on the general overall scene in literature in this country. From a general perspective and not via an academic viewpoint. I am hopeful.

T.R. Dunedin, 2000.

**Caveman Press Bibliography 1971-1983**

**Key:**  
**Author**  
**Title**  
**Date**  
**Type & No. of copies printed**

BAXTER, James K.  
*Ode to Auckland and Other Poems*  
 1972  
 Poetry (2000)  
 BAXTER, James K.  
*Letter to Peter Olds*  
 1972  
 Poetry (100)  
 BEYER, Tony  
*Jesus Hobo*  
 1971  
 Poetry (350)  
 BEYER, Tony  
*The Meat*  
 1974  
 Poetry (150)  
 BILLING, Graham  
*The Primal Therapy of Tom Purslane*  
 1980  
 Novel (1000)

- BILLING, Graham  
*Changing Countries*  
1980  
Poetry (400)
- BROOKS, Jocelyn  
*Ill Conceived*  
1981  
Law and abortion practice in New Zealand (700)
- CARON, Elsa, et al.  
*Fri Alert*  
1974  
Politics (3000)
- EDMOND, Murray  
*Entering the Eye*  
1973  
Poetry (400)
- ENSING, Riemke, ed.  
*Private Gardens*  
1977  
An anthology of New Zealand women poets (1250)
- FOX, William L.  
*Trial Separation*  
1972  
Poetry (400)
- GARDNER, Ray  
*The Drug Book*  
1978  
A drug addict's story (600)
- JOHNSON, Ingrid  
*The Paper Midwife*  
1974  
Home birth (2000)
- JOHNSON, Louis  
*Onion*  
1972  
Poetry (150)
- KEMP, Jan  
*Against the Softness of Women*  
1973  
Poetry (400)
- LASENBY, Jack  
*Power*  
1972  
Poetry (150)
- LIST, Dennis  
*Pathways into the Brain*  
1973  
Poetry (400)
- LONEY, Alan  
*The Bare Remembrance*  
1971  
Poetry (300)
- LONG, D.S.  
*Borrow Pit*  
1971  
Poetry (350)
- MCALPINE, Rachel  
*Stay at the Dinner Party*  
1977  
Poetry (500)
- MCALPINE, Rachel  
*Lament for Ariadne*  
1974  
Poetry (500)
- MELLING, Gerald  
*Open Schoolhouse*  
1980  
Environments for children in N.Z. (1000)
- MELLING, Gerald  
*Joyful Architecture*  
1980  
The genius of New Zealand's Ian Athfield (1250)
- MITCALFE, Barry  
*Migrant*  
1975  
Poetry (400)
- MITCHELL, David  
*Pipe Dreams in Ponsonby*  
1975  
Poetry, 2nd ed. (400) 1st ed. published by Stephen Chan, 1971
- MORRISSEY, Michael  
*Make Love in All the Rooms*  
1978  
Poetry (400)
- NOAKES, John  
*Life in N.Z.*  
1979  
N.Z. Listener quotes & cartoons (2000)
- O'BRIEN, Karen  
*Woman's Work*  
1981  
Women at work (1000)
- OLDS, Peter  
*Lady Moss Revived*  
1972  
Poetry (150)
- OLDS, Peter  
*4 V8 Poems*  
1972  
Poetry (150)
- OLDS, Peter  
*Freeway*  
1974  
Poetry (450)
- OLDS, Peter  
*Beethoven's Guitar*  
1980  
Poetry (500)
- OLDS, Peter  
*Doctor's Rock*  
1976  
Poetry (500)
- PATERSON, Alistair  
*Cities and Strangers*  
1975  
Poetry (500)
- REEVES, Trevor  
*Stones*  
1971  
Poetry (600)
- REEVES, Trevor  
*Unemployment in the 1980's*  
1983  
Politics (200)
- REEVES, Trevor  
*Apple Salt*  
1975  
Poetry (500)
- ROWE, Rosamond Agnes  
*Feet Upon a Rock*  
1981  
Autobiography (3000)
- SMITH, Hal  
*Divided We Stand*  
1981  
Poetry (3000)
- SMITH, Lindsay  
*Skyhook*  
1971  
Poetry (350)
- SOUTHAM, Barry  
*Mixed Singles*  
1981  
Short stories (500)
- SOUTHAM, Barry  
*The People Dance*  
1982  
Poetry (500)
- TUWHARE, Hone  
*Something Nothing*  
1974  
Poetry (1000)
- TUWHARE, Hone  
*Come Rain, Hail*  
1973  
Poetry (2000)
- TUWHARE, Hone  
*Sap-wood and Milk*  
1972  
Poetry (3500)
- WANTLING, William  
*San Quentin's Stranger*  
1973  
Poetry (800)

Summer 2014

WANTLING, William  
*Obscene and Other Poems*  
1972

Poetry (150)

WRIGHT, Judith  
*The Fourth Quarter*  
1976

Poetry (400)

*Editor's Note:* In addition to Dr Michael O'Leary's bibliography of Trevor's Caveman Press, PANZA member Mark Pirie has compiled a bibliography of Trevor Reeves' other publishing venture Square One Press.

Square One Press published a mixture of non-fiction, art, poetry, fiction and political or satirical books, some of which he co-published or authored with his wife, the painter/artist/cartoonist Judith Wolfe.

Mark writes: 'I knew Trev personally. I first met him and his wife Judith in Dunedin, 1999, when I was writing my MA on Louis Johnson. He gave me a copy of Louis' biker poem *Onion* and a whole stack of other Caveman books and showed me letters he'd received from American poets Charles Bukowski, A D Winans and William Wantling, very impressive to any aspiring young publisher. I was just 25. Trev holds a special place in my memories.'

**Square One Press Bibliography  
1984-2010 by Mark Pirie**

*Replicar!: a century of motoring in North Otago and beyond* / Rona Adshead, Rex Murray.  
c2002.

*Weatherboard: poems* / Tony Beyer.  
2000.

*Real fire: New Zealand poetry of the 1960s and 1970s* / selected by Bernard Gadd.  
c2001.

*Last conspiracy* / Allen Gray.  
c2000.

*Dunedin holocaust: the tragic fire in the Octagon Buildings, Dunedin, 1879* / John McCraw.  
c1998.

*Early days on the Dunstan* / John McCraw.  
c2007.

*Fruitful land: the story of fruitgrowing and irrigation in the Alexandra-Clyde district* / John McCraw.  
c2005.

*Gold on the Dunstan* / John McCraw.  
c2003.

*Golden junction: episodes in Alexandra's history* / John McCraw.  
c2002.

*Harbour horror* / John McCraw.  
c2001.

*Mountain water & river gold: stories of gold mining in the Alexandra district* / John McCraw.  
c2000.

*Harrowing times* / by Neale McMillan, Murray O'Neill and Trevor Reeves.  
c1996.

*Dear pal: a kiwi battler in the South Island outback* / Barrie Mann.  
c2003.

*Positively architecture!: New Zealand's Roger Walker* / by Gerald Melling.  
1985.

'Oh, Baxter is everywhere': some Dunedin poems / by Peter Olds.  
c2003.

*Colosseum: poems* / Frank Pervan.  
c2007.

*Treadmill: poems* / Frank Pervan.  
c2007.

*Abuse of power: the story of the Clyde Dam* / Trevor Reeves & Judith Wolfe; introduction by John Kennedy; [cartoons by Judith Wolfe].  
[1990]/

*Breaker breaker & other stories* / Trevor Reeves.  
c2001.

*Crossroads* / poetry by Trevor Reeves; paintings by Judith Wolfe.  
c2009.

*Hand in hand* / Trevor Reeves, poems; Judith Wolfe, art.  
c2007.

*Poetry book to cuddle up in bed with* / Trevor Reeves.  
2003.

*Southern ocean review: international on-line magazine of the arts*. Eds. Trevor Reeves/Judith Wolfe. Nos. 1-50, 1996-2009.

*Greenhouse New Zealand: our climate: past, present and future* / Jim Salinger; [graphics by Judith Wolfe].  
c1991.

*Footprints on a gravel road: stories and poems* / by Barry Southam.  
2005.

*Fishing stories for the ninety percent* / Bruce Tapp.  
c2006.

*Milton: the story of a lockout* / David Tranter.  
c1996.

*Clyde on the Dunstan* / Isobel Veitch.  
2003.

*From Wells Fargo, California, to Cobb and Co., Otago* / Isobel Veitch; illustrations by Judith Wolfe.  
c2003.

*Cuban cocktail: poems* / Isha Wagner.  
c2007.

*Indian shadows: poems* / Isha Wagner.  
2008.

*Whispers: for David* / Isha Wagner.  
c2010.

*Huey Hydro of Clyde*: [cartoons / by Judith Wolfe]  
1984.

*In the grip of evil: the Bain murders* / Judith Wolfe & Trevor Reeves.  
c2003.



*Nazi holocaust for beginners* / Judith Wolfe & Trevor Reeves.  
2006.

## Classic New Zealand poetry

This issue's classic New Zealand poetry is by Alice Mackenzie (nee McKenzie) (1873-1963).

She has recently received increased attention and her pioneer diaries/writings from the remote Martin's Bay near Milford Sound were this year in the Turnbull Gallery Exhibition, Logs to Blogs and its accompanying ebook, at the National Library of New Zealand. Laura Kroetsch wrote a Masters thesis on Mackenzie's life writing, *Fine in the morning: the life writing of Alice McKenzie: a thesis submitted to the Victoria University of Wellington in fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of Master of Arts in English* / by Laura C. Kroetsch.

The only New Zealand anthologies to pick her up appear to be John Gordon's two rural writing anthologies, *Out of Town* (1999) and *Fresh Fields* (2001). *Fresh Fields* includes the following bio note:

### ALICE MACKENZIE

Daughter and chronicler of the remarkable McKenzie family who settled on a 40-acre block at Martin's Bay, 15 miles north of Milford Sound. In 1902 she married Peter Mackenzie of Glenorchy, where they farmed until retirement in Queenstown. Aged 71 she wrote her only [non-fiction] book, *Pioneers of Martin's Bay*, though for many years, she contributed jokes, verse and articles to farming magazines.

Alice's book of poems (under the name of Mrs Peter Mackenzie) was published c1946, and her highly regarded non-fiction book on Martin's Bay was published in 1947, running into several more reprints or editions in 1952, 1970 and 2006.

### Poems by Alice Mackenzie

#### MARTIN'S BAY

On the West Coast of Otago  
There's a place called Martin's Bay,  
From Lake Wakatip[u] it is  
Only sixty miles away.

Few human beings there reside,  
Pioneering is their way;  
But there is room for many more  
To live at Martin's Bay.

There many fertile acres are  
Of uncultivated land,  
Growing the wild native trees  
Untouched by human hand.

And among the trees and ferns  
Which grow so dense around,  
Living in fearless liberty,  
Wild birds do there abound.

From the hour the light of dawn  
Proclaims the rising sun,  
They make the bush with music ring  
Until the day is done.

On its shores the breakers  
Of the ocean roll for ever,  
And many lovely scenes we see  
Upon its lake and river.

The lake is Lake McKerrow,  
Which lies in calm repose;  
The river is the Hollyford,  
Which to the ocean flows.

On the river Hollyford  
Such lovely scenes we see;  
The trees beside its waters  
In them reflected be.

And on that solitary lake  
We hear no human sound;  
On its wooded shores there are  
No dwellings to be found.

The distant echo of the sea  
And black swan's note so clear,  
And the whirr of the wild duck's wing  
Are the only sounds we hear.

#### THE HILLS OF WAKATIP[U]

How beautiful the hills around  
In winter do appear,  
With their snowy covering  
Gleaming bright and clear.

Those lofty hills of Wakatip[u]  
Look so bright and fair  
With their snow-encrusted peaks  
Uplifted in the air.

As they stand in snowy splendour  
O'er the lake so dark and deep,  
In its waters are reflected  
Each brightly gleaming peak.

When in the summer they are seen,  
They charm the stranger's eye  
With their rugged peaks outlined  
Against the clear blue sky.

Each precipice upon those hills  
Is so clearly seen,  
And the valleys at their feet  
Are robed in verdant green.

Though those hills of Wakatip[u]  
In summer look so fair,  
It is in the winter they  
Their loveliest aspect wear.

When the winter sun is setting  
And its parting rays are streaming,  
Then those hills of Wakatip[u]  
Are in their true beauty gleaming.

Then those hills do look so bright  
Reflecting back the sunset's glow,  
With the dying light of sunset  
Tinting all the gleaming snow.

#### MEMORIES

Her form it is bent, and dim is her sight,  
Her face is all wrinkled, her hair is so  
white;  
She is bent with the weight of eighty  
long years,  
A life of some pleasure, but far more of  
tears;  
Play an old tune with a haunting refrain  
And that old, old woman is young  
again.

Place a sweet flower in her trembling hands,  
Her thoughts will fly to far-away lands,  
For the sound of a tune or the scent of a rose,  
And back to her youth her memory goes;  
She forgets the long years of sorrow and pain,  
And that old, old woman feels young again.

**HONEYSUCKLE**

Upon an old and ruined wall  
The honeysuckle twines,  
Hiding all the wall's defects  
With starry blossomed vines.

How beautiful those starry flowers  
Which are so sweet and fair,  
And breathing to the evening breeze  
A fragrance sweet and rare.

It climbs around the ruined wall  
And covers it complete,  
Covering all the wall's defects  
With flowers so pure and sweet.

The honeysuckle seems to me  
A friend so brave and true  
Who shields the weakness of a friend  
From the world's heartless view.

And if misfortunes on me fall  
And all seems dark before me,  
Like honeysuckle be some friend  
To shed sweet influence o'er me.

**LAKE HAYES**

Leaving Queenstown far behind  
With all its lovely bays  
The strangers' eyes are charmed again  
In gazing on Lake Hayes.

Girt round by mountains high and steep  
Lake Hayes doth peaceful lie  
Reflecting back those lofty hills  
Which tower against the sky.

Looking from its eastern shores,  
When the sun sinks o'er the mountains  
    steep  
Reflecting back the Remarkables  
Upon those waters dark and deep.

To see it in the summer time  
With green fields of McIntyre and Baird,  
To a diamond set in emeralds  
It well could be compared.

A few short years ago Lake Hayes  
Did undiscovered lie,  
The only sound to break the gloom  
The seagulls' plaintive cry.

But now its scenes are altered  
With dwellings on its shore,  
No longer now Lake Hayes can claim  
Its solitude of yore.

The glossy surface of the lake,  
The hills which proudly stand,  
Impress upon a thoughtful mind  
The work of our Creator's hand.

**THE HOLLYFORD VALLEY**

Away in the depth of a forest so wild  
The Hollyford Valley in solitude lay;  
The Hollyford River, in sunshine and shade,  
Flows down through that valley to reach Martin's Bay.

In the long years gone by, the early  
Pioneers  
They tramped where even no track  
could be found;  
They forded the rivers, and walked  
through the bush,  
Then set up a tent and slept on the  
ground.

No matter what obstacles came in their  
way,  
They struggled along in those long,  
lonely years;  
Now they are dead and their labours are  
o'er,  
But we honour the names of those  
early Pioneers.

The Tourists now drive where the  
Pioneers trod,  
And a road through the Hollyford  
winds its way,  
And the ring of the axes is heard in the  
bush,  
Where the road is being formed to  
Martin's Bay.

There once was a wedding held in the  
valley,  
The only wedding that ever had been;  
Sunset wild flowers graced the wedding  
feast,  
And the hall was a bower of ferns so  
green.

Many a pair have left a church door  
And paced to the tune of a wedding  
march,  
And swords were held high over their  
heads  
To form for them a victorious arch.

In the Hollyford Valley this couple went  
forth  
With bushmen and roadmen on each  
side  
Holding shovels and axes to form an  
arch  
To honour the bridegroom and his fair  
bride.

No organ there played a wedding hymn,  
No wedding bells for them did ring;  
But high in the trees above their heads  
For a choir the wild birds sweetly sing.

**WHEN THE TIDE WAS LOW AT MARTIN'S BAY**

I stood upon the sandy shore  
As evening shadows fell;  
The sun was sinking in the west  
Across the ocean's swell.

O'er the sea the sun was casting  
Each brightly tinted ray  
As the waves came sweeping  
To the shore at Martin's Bay.

The moon was rising o'er the hills  
As the sun sank in the west,  
And the silvery moon was gleaming  
On the ocean's heaving breast.

And those ever-moving waters  
Sparkling brightly as they roar  
And are dashed in foamy billows  
On that wild and lonely shore.

All around are wooded hills,  
No matter where your eyes are turning;  
You see no human habitation  
Except where one lone light is burning.

Here solitude doth reign supreme,  
All scenes are lone and drear,  
But there is music in the loneliness  
Which solitude will make us hear.

A whispering sound among the trees,  
There is music in the ocean's roar,  
There's a voice in the wandering breeze  
Which is sighing along the shore.

And the voice of Nature speaks to us  
In every flower that grows,  
And the voice of God is calling us  
In every breeze which blows.

(From *Poems* by Mrs P. Mackenzie,  
c1946)

## Comment on Yilma Tafere Tasew

### **YILMA TAFERE TASEW'S REFUGEE PUNK METAL ANTI- AESTHETIC** by Dr **Teresia Teaiwa**

In 2010 I wrote a foreword for a volume of Yilma Tafere Tasew's poetry that promised to be the first in a series. In that foreword I tried to frame Yilma's writing for a Wellington audience. You see, Wellington is not just the political capital of New Zealand, it is also the cultural capital. Poetry is therefore accorded a particular currency in this city—poetry that is cerebral, artful and refined, that is. The type of poetry that appeals to the city's cultural elite has the air of the New Zealand String Quartet, the bouquet of a Marlborough Sauvignon Blanc and the taste of a Kāpiti Kikorangi or regional blue cheese about it. So in the foreword I tried to speak directly to the Wellington aesthetic and challenge the city's connoisseurs to reckon with the way they were demanding certain things from poetry—things like refuge, liberation, and transcendence from the mundane, the literal and the artless realities of most people's lives. In trying to respond to his new volume of poetry, *Broken Wings* (2013) I was sorely tempted to recycle the last foreword I wrote for him. Because Yilma's poetry

still fails to conform to—and, in fact, flouts—the hegemonic standards of literary taste in Wellington. But after reading through this new collection of poems, I am convinced that there is something new to say about Yilma's work. I want to call it an Afro Punk anti-aesthetic, but 'Afro Punk' as a term has already been domesticated and packaged for commodification by others. Maybe it needs to be called a Refugee Punk Metal Anti-aesthetic. Of course, this is not to say that Yilma's personal sense of style emulates in any way the stereotypical image of an urban punk or heavy metal rocker; in fact, far from it. Yilma dresses with the panache of a Third World Intellectual—he can look elegant in his Ethiopian national dress, and dapper in a leather bomber jacket with a red neck scarf with white tee shirt and dark jeans. Indeed Yilma could hold and has held his own perfectly well in the company of Wellington's cultural elite. But if we understand his poetry as a representation of his interior life, as I suggest we should, then the Refugee Punk Metal Anti-Aesthetic goes kind of wild.

What are the basic principles or characteristics of a Refugee Punk Anti-Aesthetic? Well, punk is always anti-aesthetic, in its rejection of middle-class and bourgeois pretensions. So a Refugee Punk Metal Anti-Aesthetic, especially as exemplified by Yilma in his poetry, would refuse the temptation to make a lived experience palatable. Would refuse to render the experience of refugee camps hauntingly beautiful; would reject the notion that a diasporic refugee experience could easily be integrated or assimilated into a new culture of privilege; and would not hesitate to offend or upset its audience with blunt truths and violent imagery or energy. For me, there is no question that Yilma's poetry in *Broken Wings* is working within a Refugee Punk Metal Anti-Aesthetic.

Not being a fan of hard-core punk, myself, I must also admit that I am not a fan of Yilma's poetry. By this I mean that Yilma's poetry demands much more of its audience than a banal declaration of "fandom". What a

Refugee Punk Metal Anti-Aesthetic demands is visceral engagement accompanied by counter-hegemonic political action. But there is no cookie-cutter template provided for Yilma's audience.

One needs to conjure up a screaming guitar and bass as one reads the poems in this collection. Each of the words we must imagine becoming indistinguishable from one another as they are screamed by a vocalist, so that whatever pathos there is, is transformed into the rage of a mosh pit. Most of the poems Yilma has compiled here end with three lines repeated deliberately, anthemically: "Not at all! Not at all! Not at all!" By proposing a framework for understanding Yilma's poetry I could be seen as re-enacting the sorts of domesticating interpretive work that other literary critics are often criticised for. But I would suggest that if there was an interpretive framework that was bound to be subversive—even of its own theorists—it would be a Refugee Punk Metal Anti-Aesthetic. It's guaranteed to "spit/vomit", and "spite/vomit" in your face.

You won't be able to come away from reading the poems in this collection and declare that you enjoyed them. You shouldn't be able to enjoy this poetry because refugees should not have to leave their homes or lose their family members along the way; they should not have to suffer the indignities and violence of refugee camps; nor the abjection of trying to integrate into an apathetic and sometimes hostile host country. Long may Yilma Tafere Tasew's Refugee Punk Metal Anti-Aesthetic continue to strike dissonant chords in a city that prefers to hear symphonies.

*Dr Teresia Teaiwa is a poet and critic who teaches at Victoria University of Wellington.*

*Yilma Tafere Tasew's new collection Broken Wings is available from Steele Roberts Ltd in Wellington.*

# Comment on Lawrence Inch

## LAWRENCE INCH'S 1968 *SCRIP OF JOY* by Niel Wright

The other day came to my notice a New Zealand poet I had never heard of before, Lawrence Bates Inch. But we are finding a lot of this cultural amnesia. However a Google search brings him up as poet and lawyer, so he is not without trace on the New Zealand literary scene. I got the following information on him from Rowan Gibbs. It is not official births/deaths information, but is reliable.

Lawrence Bates Inch was born 11 September 1904 and lived to 1991. His parents were Richard Thomas Inch and Emma Haigh/Haig. Lawrence's wife was Zera Emla Yorke, and they had a number of children with numerous descendants.

Lawrence Bates Inch is the author of the book of poems and literary criticism, *My Scrip of Joy*, published in 1968 in Auckland but bound in hard covers in Hong Kong.

Lawrence Inch in this his sole book is trying to tell the truth about poetry, which for him in his lifetime is identified as Georgian.

There is a growing sense of the presence of the Georgians. Mark Pirie has identified Lawrence Inch whose 1968 book *My Scrip of Joy* is a very late Georgian manifesto and a very sharp anti-Modernist blast.

Inch does not use the term Georgian but words like *real poetry*, *true poetry*, but what Inch describes and prescribes as such is exactly the same as what all the other Georgians say is poetry in the Georgian mode (since 1910).

The key words in Georgian aesthetic are joy and human experience, so very much with Inch. However Georgian poetry can also be mournful and abstract. This is the paradox of Georgianism, depicted most strongly in Wordsworth's sonnet 'Surprised By Joy', a reflection on the death of his daughter. It can be seen as the most

powerful sonnet in English, as J H E Schroder thought.

Georgian poetry takes Wordsworth as its model and sees Robert Bridges as exemplifying the technical standard to be achieved.

The great early example of a Georgian poet is Rupert Brooke, who is let it be said a very fine poet with unique technical insights. See my numerous writings on him. Inch quotes Wordsworth's poetry, Keats's literary theories and admires Robert Bridges and Rupert Brooke.

There was nothing implausible about presenting a Georgian manifesto in 1968.

Following on from *New Zealand Poetry Yearbook* (1951-1964) which Curnow declared to be Georgian, Charles Doyle in 1965 issued his anthology *Recent Poetry in New Zealand* also intentionally Georgian, in which Fleur Adcock and C K Stead were presented as Georgian.

A R D Fairburn and Lawrence Bates Inch were born in the same year, 1904. Inch indicates (page 84) that he knew Fairburn personally in 1948 when Fairburn gave him an autographed copy of *He Shall Not Rise* Fairburn's 1930 book of poems.

Inch mentions only two New Zealand poets by name, A R D Fairburn and R A K Mason of whom he says on page 83: "The New Zealand scene? There are or were two, and only two, who wrote anything approaching true poetry, according to my appraisal. They were, of course A.R.D. (Rex) Fairburn and R.A.K. Mason. Their craftsmanship was outstanding..." but both of whom he sees as Georgians lost the plot early on. Inch was an intelligent and well-read man. In his prose commentary in *My Scrip of Joy* he quotes 37 poets or critics. He includes a set of 38 poems in *My Scrip of Joy* with the impression given that it is his complete oeuvre; if so he is the author of a monobibliion like Catullus, whom however he doesn't name. In page 3 of the preface Inch says the monobibliion published in 1968 was already extant in 1933 when he was 29. Mark Pirie comments that Lawrence Inch's poetry lacks my humour. Is humour an essential or only a graceful feature of Georgianism?

Lawrence Inch shows no awareness of women poets.

Lawrence Inch also shows no awareness of the ecological debasement of the natural world. Nevertheless as pseudo Shakespeare said long ago 'Poor inch of nature'. (See the 1986 Oxford *Complete Shakespeare*, *Pericles* Act 3, Scene 1, line 34, or my edition of *Pericles The Marina Scenes Edited*, line 52, for the phrase above not given otherwise in modern editions.)

Inch writes 11 poems in regular rhymed stanzas, as well as a series of 8 canzonets, 12 line poems. In these modes you can say Inch is an O Exclamatory poet. As such he is hardly effective.

Probably because of his admiration for Shakespeare and Wordsworth whom he fails to match however, Inch writes 4 blank verse poems, tending to rhetorical rhythms, and also one in free verse; the latter expressing his critical views, all the former his intellectual sense of nature.

The rest of Inch's poems are sonnets, 21 of them using various rhyme schemes on seven rhymes.

If you are going to write sonnets, you have got to be prepared to load your lines with detail. Inch succeeds in doing this for perhaps a dozen sonnets, the best of which are XIII, XIV, XXIII, XXVIII, XXX, XXXI.

Inch does not mention any non English speaking poets, but he does show similarities to Victor Hugo in his use of words, very admirably so when at his best. This is very high praise.

See my book on the text of A C Hanlon, another poet apparently within A R D Fairburn's circle. Hanlon also wrote and published sonnets in quantity in the early 1930s.

On evidence it certainly looks that four young male Georgians poets with contact between them in the early 1930s in New Zealand had a failure of spirit leading them for whatever reason to fall silent or change their tune (in Fairburn's case). A C Hanlon in his 80s reprinted his sonnets from the early 1930s, but in garbled texts. Lawrence Inch alone 35 years later upholds his Georgian aesthetic by a critical manifesto, for which he is to be thanked and commended.

Inch does not name Curnow but to my eyes he refers to him on page 89 by alluding disparagingly to the poem 'Wild Iron'. This passing reference does suggest that in 1968 Inch could not see far beyond Curnow's three anthologies as setting forth New Zealand poetry as tendered from 1945 on. Inch states very firmly on pages 103 and 108 that since World War II precious few poems have been published to match the finest written prior to then.

The significance of Lawrence Inch as a poet and critic and coeval and friend of A R D Fairburn is that in 1968 he put on record his Georgian poetry and stated in the strongest terms his detestation of poetic modernism as evident in New Zealand, a dismissal with which now 45 years later with 80 years of New Zealand modernism to judge by I may in hindsight wholly agree.

*Dr Niel Wright is a Wellington writer, critic and publisher. He is a co-founder of and archivist for PANZA.*

## Comment on Martin Wilson

### AN ACCOUNT OF THE AOTEAROA POET MARTIN WILSON by Mark Pirie

Martin Wilson (1924-1980) is a little known New Zealand writer of some interest and quality. A short fiction writer and poet, he was a well-known teacher and singer, excelling in many fields.

He published two books: his *Collected Poems and Short Stories* in Rarotonga, 1969, along with an earlier memoir *In Search of the Great Fleet* (1962), which appeared under his given Māori tribal name of Rākamamao ('god of winds', cf *Journal of the Polynesian Society*).

The latter is a work of non-fiction and interprets the voyages of the great Māori canoes to New Zealand. Wilson dedicates his memoir to the late Chief Utiku Hapeta, of Ngāti Raukawa, Ōtaki. Hapeta clearly first told Wilson the story of the canoe landings as a child in

Ōtaki and its legend must've consumed him thereafter. At the time of writing the memoir Wilson was a teacher at Murapara Rangitahi College, where he may have received his tribal name. Details of his education are: Ōtaki State Primary (1929-36), Levin District High School (1937-39), Horowhenua College (1940), and Victoria University of Wellington (post-war) where he took a Master's degree in English and a double Bachelor's degree in English and History.

In 1948, he married Prudence Joan Milligan and the couple had four children. He was Anglo-Catholic. Wilson's stories and poems first appeared in the *NZ Listener*, *Te Ao Hou* and the *Weekly News* (Auckland) in the 1960s. His poem 'Leaving for Aotearoa' (*NZ Listener*, 17 July 1964) like his memoir *In Search of the Great Fleet* appeared under his given Māori tribal name of 'Rākamamao'. A story 'All-Night Radio' was in the *Weekly News*, January 1962, under another pseudonym 'Dominic Linton'. His first known publication aged 15 years, however, appears to be a letter to the *Evening Post*'s "Postscripts" column in Papers Past. He sent in a sonnet by Tennyson (on the Russian invasion of Poland) that he likened to the outbreak of war in Europe and the German invasion of Poland in 1939.

Much of his best poetry is collected in his self-published *Collected Poems and Short Stories* of 1969. (The book is held by PANZA and the Turnbull, Hocken, University of Otago, Victoria University, University of Waikato and Auckland University Libraries.) It features work from 1939-69. The first poem in the book was written at Levin District High School aged 15 years and the collection takes in the Second World War, as well as his teaching time in Sarawak, Malaysia, and Rarotonga, Cook Islands. His poetry (as with Alistair Te Ariki Campbell's) noticeably moves from Elizabethan, Romantic and Georgian forms to free verse by the 1960s. His oeuvre also includes a verse novelette *Dominic and Laura*, on the imagined taboo love relationship between a teacher and pupil based on an actual case in Cromwell.

His fiction includes the rare cricket story 'A Polynesian Cricket Match'. Martin Wilson retired to Kerikeri where he died in 1980 aged 56 years. A search at the National Library brought up the following Obituary in NZ Biographies from *Northern News*, 4 September 1980:

#### MR MARTIN GORDON WILSON

The death occurred recently of Mr Martin Gordon Wilson, of Kerikeri, who was well-known as an English teacher, singer, actor and a man of many talents in many fields. Aged 56 years, Mr Wilson was a former President of the Northland Swimming Centre and a delegate to the New Zealand Amateur Swimming Association in Christchurch. Born in Otaki, Mr Wilson went to school there and later at Horowhenua College.

#### FLYING

He seemed to have a natural interest in flying and, while working for the Union Company in Wellington he joined the Air Training Corps – a voluntary organisation – and was proud to be in the first squadron to be formed in New Zealand.

In 1942 he joined the RNZAF and eventually had his first solo flight in February 1943.

A few months later he received his wings at Calgary, Canada, and was then seconded to England in the 201 Flying Boat Squadron.

After the war Mr Wilson went to Victoria University for his BA majoring in English and History and there he met his future wife Pru and the couple married in 1948.

Graduating from Wellington Teachers Training College, he worked at schools in that area and three years later achieved his Master's degree in English.

It was in 1953, the same year, that Mr Wilson decided to do something he had always wanted, and began taking serious singing lessons from Mr Stanley Oliver, in Wellington. This led to a very distinguished singing career which included winning gold medals in many competitions. Mr Wilson was a

soloist in Oratorio Messiah on five occasions, and broadcast solo items and radio operas.

He also sang with the New Zealand Opera Company in two NZ premiers, *Amahi and the Night Visitors*, and the *Consul*.

One of his biggest thrills was to be asked by Mr Oliver to sing in his Schola Cantorum firstly because this was by invitation only and secondly because they sang unaccompanied church music, which Mr Wilson loved.

PIPES

Mr Wilson, who was living with his family at Wainuiomata, taught at the Hutt Valley High School for nearly eight years and started the school's pipe band having played the pipes himself from an early age.

In 1958 he was appointed head of English at Waimate, first assistant at Murapara Rangitahi College in 1961, and in 1963 first assistant in English at Te Aroha College.

The year 1966 saw a move for his family to Sarawak, when Mr Williams was appointed Head of English at the Tanjong Lobang School, Miri, under the Colombo Plan.

Ill health began to dog him, however, and after a spell at Hawera, again as head of English, he and his family retired to Kerikeri where Mrs Wilson was appointed to Head of English. It was in Kerikeri that Mr Wilson became a co-founder of the Kerikeri Swimming Club, was its president for two years and a competent time-keeper as well.

With swimming came an interest in life saving, as an examiner and other ways. Last year he was awarded the Commonwealth Council certificate of thanks from the Royal Life Saving Society.

Mr Wilson is survived by his wife and four children.

There is no mention of his teaching time as Head of English at Tereora College 1968-69, Rarotonga, Cook Islands, or his literary works in his Obituary, and I don't know of any New Zealand anthology that picks him up. A

TAPUHI search at the Turnbull says similar:

Name: Wilson, Martin Gordon  
1924?-1980

Biography: School teacher, singer.  
See New Zealand Biographies

As well as short fiction and poetry, Wilson contributed historical articles, a book review of Hone Tuwhare's *No Ordinary Sun* and correspondence to *Historical Review: Bay of Plenty Journal of History*.

Here are some examples of Wilson's poetry: the earlier more Georgian love lyric written in Canada during WWII and the later 1964 free verse of 'Leaving for Aotearoa':

**HE ADDRESSES HIS GIRLFRIEND**

In days gone by, together we have  
swum

With slanting shadows on the pool, the  
sun

Above, the river dark below; or spun  
By roaring, racing seas: when we were  
young.

In days gone by, 'neath laughter-  
splintered sky  
We've lain and watched the blind-flying  
clouds go by  
Across the sky, and slept in sol's fat-  
summered eye,  
When laughter, love, and tears were  
done.

*Canada 1943*

**LEAVING FOR AOTEAROA**

*E koro e ngaro  
he takere waka nui*

They hoist their sails at last  
Huge raupo breasts that swell and strain  
Lifting the red life over Kiwa's Great  
Ocean

Red red the kura gleams  
The incomparable the sacred ornament  
Red-feathered girdle of Taputaputatea  
Lead lead the Godwits forth

The great birds tremble  
Their flashing foam-lashed pinions  
Dip and sway  
Clamour of voices from the 'house'  
A new invocation to the gods  
Tangaroa the long-eared listens  
They leave no trail

They have made their choice  
A people committed they glide  
On Pacific's red flood-tide

In the bow-sheltered by Kura-head  
They test their nets for other flying-fish  
The shell-tipped hook gapes for the  
shark

With eyes that reach beyond the stars  
The tohungas wait for the new ground-  
swell

For the tremble beneath them  
They wait for the new sky overhead  
The bright land firm beneath their feet

The birds the birds are on the wing

*Mark Pirie, author of this article, is a  
New Zealand poet, editor, publisher and  
archivist for PANZA.*

**Comment on John  
O'London Literary  
Club, Wellington**

There is nothing written on the John O'London Literary Club (1937-1941) in our literary histories so any information on the formation and doings of this club is of interest.

Based in Wellington (much like the present New Zealand Poetry Society), the club had other members in rural areas around the country. The club took its name from the *John O'London's Weekly* magazine in London and saw themselves as a New Zealand branch. They aimed high respecting the standards set by their London link. Like-minded friends/literary activists co-founded the club at 98 Tasman Street around July 1937 and it had its first meeting in August that year at 196 Lambton Quay with Keith Kuring and Mary Kitching presiding. The first Chairman-Secretary of the club was

Bob Harrison d. 1939. The succeeding Chairman was Max Butterton, with Mary Kitching as Secretary.

The members, self-confessed amateurs, used to meet once a month on a Tuesday at the Beehive Chambers, 71 Courtenay Place, Wellington.

Occasional meetings were also at the Turnbull Library 1940-41 where C R H Taylor, the Chief Librarian, was a guest speaker. The club held competitions for stories, poems and book reviews using outside literary judges.

The number of members (largely women) numbered in the 20s to begin with and steadily grew. From 1940-1941 the club issued monthly letters to members through their club secretary Mary Kitching; some of these are in the Turnbull.

At each meeting, invited speakers and members gave talks, and members read fiction and poems and reviewed copies of *John O'London's Weekly*. There were occasional performances of music and drama.

Guest speakers included George Joseph (UK journalist), Ian Gordon, C A Marris, P A Lawlor, O N Gillespie, G Stewart (of *New Zealand Railways Magazine*) and C R H Taylor.

Most members of the club are not known now, but like a number of other groups from the 1920s-1940s, their members were widely published. The well-known poet Gloria Rawlinson joined in November 1940. A M Taylor, another woman member of Berhampore, was in the anthology edited by Helen Longford, *Here are Verses* (1937). Perhaps their leading member was Roma Hoggard.

A detailed summary of the club's history is given in their first annual *Review* for 1939, a cyclostyled booklet numbering 80 copies. The editor was Max Butterton.

Also included in this annual is a list of members and their positions within the club and a detailed summary of key members complete with notes about their publication history. It's worth reprinting here, to give an idea of the outlets available to writers at that time:

*Mary Beckett*: Poems in *Australian Women's Mirror*, *Dairy Exporter*, *NZ*

*Mercury*, *NZ Mirror*, *NZ Women's Weekly*.

*M Butterton*: Poems in *Evening Post*, *The Dominion*, *Public Service Journal* and *Centennial Anthology*. Articles in *Southern Stars* and *One Hundred Years of Astronomy*.

*Mabel Clapson*: Is an artist, whose water colours have been exhibited in the New Zealand Academy, and recently has been engaged on Centennial mural work.

*Dorothy Esher*: Poems in *Australian Woman's Weekly*. Articles in *New Zealand Railways Magazine*.

*Gwen Harrison*: Illustrated poems in *The Australasian* and *New Zealand Herald*. Article and illustrations in *New Zealand Railways Magazine*. Second prize in NZ Women Writers' and Artists Society's competition for the Donovan Cup (story).

*Roma Hoggard*: Poems, stories, and articles in the *Australian Women's Mirror*, *The Mirror*, *New Zealand Railways Magazine*, *Dairy Exporter*, *Tui's Annual*, *Auckland Weekly News*, *New Zealand Herald*, *Woman*, *New Zealand Farmer*, *Women's Weekly* and *Free Lance*.

Miss Hoggard published a collection of her poems entitled *Interlude* recently.

*Dorothy Jesson*: Poems and stories in the *Free Lance*, *Dairy Exporter*, *Taranaki Daily News*, *Auckland Star* and *Evening Post*.

The Club congratulates Mrs Jesson on winning for the second year in succession the silver cup offered by the Drama League for original one-act play.

*Mary Kitching*: Poems and stories in *Tui's Annual*, *Dairy Exporter*, *New Zealand Railways Magazine*, *The Dominion*, *New Zealand Mercury*, *Auckland Star*, *Christchurch Sun*, *The Mirror*, *Sydney Sun*, *The*

*Queenslander*, *Christchurch Star*, *Radio Record*, *Evening Post* and *New Zealand Dairyman*.

*Esma Kuring*: Poems and stories in *Evening Post*, *The Dominion*, *The Mirror* and *Point Blank*.

*Keith Kuring*: Poems and articles in the *Free Lance*, *NZ Mercury* and *New Zealand Yachtsman*.

*Bathia Luttrell*: Poems and stories in the *Evening Post* and *Auckland Star*.

*Review* also included poems and short stories by its members and comment from some of the guest speakers. The 1940 issue for instance features C R H Taylor on the records of New Zealand history/literature, O N Gillespie on New Zealand poetry and comment by Ian Gordon on the similarities between early American literature and early New Zealand literature. Gordon was soon to edit *New Zealand New Writing*. Nellie E Donovan writes on the New Zealand novel and J R Hervey (a friend and judge of the club's 1940 poetry competition) on writing poetry. *Review* of 1940 (now properly printed) adds other new member names like Patrice Morant (author of *The Chaplet*, Hokitika, 1937), Stella Lee, R Morant, V May Cottrell and W R Davidson. Formed close to the Centennial celebrations of 1940, the club was optimistic for the future hoping to be part of the Golden Age of New Zealand poetry. Ending in 1941, the club like many things found itself disrupted by the Second World War.

Article by Mark Pirie

## National Poetry Day poem 2013

For National Poetry Day, 16 August 2013, PANZA posted a classic New Zealand poem on their website by John Henry Dillon (1860-1922). Dillon was a New Zealand-born Manawatū poet and builder, living in

Palmerston North. He was the son of John Frederick and Maria Dillon. His only collection *Echoes of the War and Other Poems*, appeared in 1897 printed by Wm. Hart, Caxton Printing Works, Palmerston North, and J C Andersen lists it in his *1936 Author's Week* bibliography.

As well as poems concerning the land wars of the 19th century ('The Fall of Von Tempsky' for instance) and pioneering bush-life, the book contains a moving poem about the wreck of the steamship Wairarapa on the Great Barrier Rocks in 1894.

Andrew Fagan recently revisited this tragedy of New Zealand's past for TV One's series about New Zealand disasters, *Descent from Disaster*.

Dillon's poem further illuminates the tragedy by offering a powerful insight into the ferocity of the ocean and illustrates the helplessness of the passengers aboard at the time the ship struck the rocks.

The poem will register strongly for all who lost family members in the tragedy. PANZA recognises John Henry Dillon as a rewarding and worthwhile poet of the 19th century. He doesn't appear in any New Zealand poetry anthology that PANZA is aware of.

**John Henry Dillon**

**THE WRECK OF THE WAIRARAPA ON THE GREAT BARRIER ROCKS**

On a dark October evening, at the silent midnight hour,  
Through the surge of maddened waters as they rush around her side;  
With her head towards the harbour, though the storm clouds darkly lower,  
Sweeps the steamer Wairarapa like a giant in his pride.

'Twas a summer Sabbath evening that had lulled them to their rest,  
Who were sleeping in their cabins, dreaming little as they lay  
Of the danger just before them, as they broke the billow's crest,  
Ploughing onward in the darkness o'er the dawning of the day.

For the fog was thick about them, hanging like a winding sheet,  
And the waves beneath it murmured sullen, as they hurried by;  
And the winds with fiendish hissing round about the rigging bent,  
As they swept towards the danger hidden from the keenest eye.

Danger! what of danger was there when the ship was stout and tried,  
She had breasted many a billow, passed unscathed through many a gale;  
When the tempest in its fury swept across the ocean wide,  
She had kept undaunted onward, never did her engines fail.

Danger! yes, when darkness gathers o'er the bosom of the deep,  
And a heavy fog sinks slowly like a pall o'er land and sea;  
Then 'twere better to be tossing on the wide expanse than keep  
Where the jagged rocks are jutting, and the shore is on the lea.

For she speeds across the billows, cutting through the sheets of foam,  
Still unchecked, though prudence whispers caution on so wild a coast;  
And a sense of dire forebodings fill the anxious souls of some,  
Though the captain keeps his vigil, and each man is at his post.

Yet they watch with straining vision through the darkness of the night,  
For the friendly beacon flashing o'er the dense enfolding gloom;  
Hoping still to catch the glimmer of the Mokohinui light,  
Never dreaming they are dashing madly onward to their doom.

Sudden breaks a cry of warning from the look-out all too late,  
As with eager eyes down-bending through the gloom he sees below  
Whitened foam and curling waters; telling of a coming fate,  
And the startled winds give echo, breakers underneath the bow!

All too late; one moment longer, o'er the man beside the wheel,  
Quick to action, hears the order of the captain, comes the shock;  
With the dreaded awful grinding of the fated vessel's keel,  
As she goes to helpless ruin on the jagged Barrier rock.

God can this be true! that blindly, on this wild temptuous night,  
Far away from friend or succour, far away from human care;  
Midst the heavy brooding darkness, with the tempest of its height,  
They have rushed upon destruction in their madness unaware.

Was it madness! who can answer? Only on the Judgement Day,  
When from silent depths of ocean shall the dead return again;  
And the veil that shrouds the future be for ever rent away,  
Will those lost effects and causes, with their issues be made plain.

Ah, but then that scene of terror, as the waves like wolves in chase,  
Swept across the hapless vessel all unhindered as she lay;  
Like a worn-out panting quarry, in the long and weary race,  
Driven from its native refuge, hunted down and run to bay.

Then above the raging water, reaching upward to the sky,  
Mingled with the storm wraiths shrieking, burst that helpless frenzied wail;  
Moan of mothers in their anguish, sending up the pleading cry,  
Most for loved ones swept to ruin where no help could e'er avail.

For like sheep without a shepherd, scattered impotent and frail,  
Helpless in their awful peril, racked with anguish and despair;  
How they battle with the fury of the unabated gale,  
Lifting still the heart's petition in the broken voice of prayer.



Flung in helpless dire confusion, on the  
wave-washed slippery deck,  
Hurled resistless from their foothold,  
swept away across the side;  
Tossed like bubbles on the billows, as  
they broke around the wreck,  
Till the living hope within them and  
the breath of courage died.

Women frail of form and lacking  
strength to buffet with the wave,  
Reared in luxurious lap and nurtured in  
the midst of warmth and ease;  
Now the sport of angry waters where  
the strongest and the brave,  
Sink in helplessness and shudder in the  
trough of angry seas.

Tossed about amongst the wreckage,  
bruised and battered on the sand,  
Caught upon the backward roller as it  
followed in retreat;  
Lifted up upon the breakers, flung again  
upon the land,  
Till the spark of life was stifled and the  
heart had ceased to beat.

Never from the jaws of ruin, yawning  
ready to devour,  
Struggled mortal in his peril, grappling  
fiercely with his doom;  
More than they who with the fury of the  
tempest in its power,  
Fought with death amidst the waters in  
the almost stygian gloom.

See those manly swimmers striking  
bravely for the wave-beat rocks,  
Where the slippery foothold threatens  
death e'er they shall reach the crest;  
Scarcely refuge there for human, where  
the screaming seagull flocks,  
And amongst the ragged ledges high  
above them builds her nest.

Now they reach the place of safety, now  
the life-line stretches tight,  
Down whose narrow way of rescue  
they who cluster on the deck;  
And amongst the clammy rigging in the  
bitter blasts of night,  
Fain must pass to leave behind them  
all the perils of the wreck.

But alas! no hand can ever reach to  
rescue those whose life  
Ended with that Sabbath sunset, never  
more to see the light;  
Lost amidst the briny waters in the vain  
unequal strife,  
As the billows broke above them in the  
death fogs of the night.

Morning breaks, and through the  
mistage looks the sun o'er sea and  
land,  
On the wreck amongst the breakers, on  
the wreckage on the beach;  
On the lifeless forms now scattered in  
the seaweed and the sand,  
Flung like refuse of the ocean up  
beyond the billows reach.

Morning breaks to wails of sorrow from  
the hearts bereft that mourn,  
Far and wide, in hall and cottage,  
waiting vainly evermore,  
For the loved ones lost and sundered,  
riven from their lives and torn,  
Loved ones whom with greeting never  
shall they welcome at the door.

Though mayhap when years have  
ended, when the storms of life at last,  
And the partings borne in anguish, and  
the waiting days are o'er;  
Hands may join in tender greetings,  
while the memories of the past  
Cease for ever in the sunlight of that  
bright eternal shore.

Poem © John Henry Dillon 1897

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