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ENNZ provides a forum for debate on environmental topics through the acceptance of peer reviewed and non peer reviewed articles, as well as book and exhibition reviews and postings on upcoming events, including conferences and seminars.

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EDITORIAL INTRODUCTION

JAMES BEATTIE

The first issue for 2011 is a bumper one, containing a rich variety of writing on the environment. First up, Victoria University of Wellington’s Amy Davis provides a fascinating examination of the environmental history of the Wellington suburb of Karori. In the next article, Lily Lee and Ruth Lam examine the story of Chinese market gardener and entrepreneur, 陈达枝 Chan Dah Chee, and the family business he established.

In the first of three book reviews, David Young reviews the recently-published Seeds of Empire..., one of the fruits of a multi-disciplinary Marsden-funded project led by Professors Tom Brooking and Eric Pawson. Next, Ondine Godtschalk examines the new overview of New Zealand’s quarantine history, by public historians Gavin McLean and Tim Shoebridge. The last is by Australian-based garden and heritage writer, Stuart Read, who reviews Kristin Lammerting and Ferdinand Graf von Luckner’s Inspirational Gardens of New Zealand. Finally, Ruth Morgan, University of Western Australia, overviews the ‘Nature, Empire and Power’ conference, held at the University of Waikato in December 2010.

It is also my pleasure to introduce two new associate editors to readers of ENNZ:

Dr. Catherine Knight is an independent researcher, who is employed by day as an environmental policy analyst. Her research focuses on New Zealand and Japanese environmental history. Her doctoral thesis explored the human relationship with the Asiatic black bear through Japanese history (available here <http://ir.canterbury.ac.nz/handle/10092/991>). She is particularly interested in upland and lowland forest environments and how people have interacted with these environments through history. Her publications can be viewed here <http://envirohistorynz.wordpress.com/articles/>. Catherine also convenes an online environmental history
Dr. Jonathan West was born and raised near Dunedin, and has only recently, and sadly, had to leave; he now works in Wellington as a historian with the Waitangi Tribunal. Before then he dallied overlong at the University of Otago collecting various degrees (the only one of which worth mentioning involves a thesis on the environmental history of the Otago Peninsula). This however did afford him a cherished freedom to wander at will in the wilds of Murihiku. His daughter’s arrival has somewhat curtailed such adventures (for now); only her charms could be compensation enough.
'FOR BEAUTY AND HEALTH':

NATURE AND ENVIRONMENT IN SUBURBAN KARORI, WELLINGTON

AMY DAVIS

Tho’ for Europe’s bold races there are plenty of places
Adapted as homes for the great and the small,
Yet for onward progressing and beautiful blessing
There is one whose position is far beyond all –
So haste where kind Nature’s arrayed in her glory
To pleasant, romantic, suburban Karori.

Selected images of the built environment were central to the presentation of suburbs as modern living spaces, with the ‘natural’ environment providing ways for suburban residents to understand and take pride in the space they lived in. This paper explores the extent to which ideas of native landscape were interlinked (and came into conflict) with ideas of the suburban landscape within the Wellington suburb of Karori during the 1930s.

As the poem above suggests, the idea of the suburb as a progressive, modern, and beautiful space where ‘Nature’ lives is one that dominated descriptions of Karori. This article will examine how the landforms of suburbs – vegetation, housing, and streets – are intertwined with the social, political, economic, and environmental values and ideals that have driven the continued representation of suburban environments as ideal living spaces. Beginning with an introduction to the historiography of suburban...

2 Auction Notice (1888) for land within Block 34, an Estate known as ‘Beautiful Karori’. Many advertisements were placed, poems (including this example) written in encouragement, and an open air concert held with free buses to and from central Wellington to entice prospective buyers. Margaret Patrick, ‘Beautiful Karori’, The Stockade, vol. 2, no. 2, spring 1974, p. 6; ‘Karori’, The Evening Post, vol. XXXV, issue 58, 10 March 1888, p. 3, col. 5.
environments, and a brief history of the Karori area, this article will examine the environmental images that helped to determine the shape and character of suburban Karori.

Suburban historiography

The history of the suburbs is generally viewed as a subfield of urban history. Most historiography is concerned with the origins, growth, and politics of suburbs, as well as the social structures they represent, particularly the gendered and family-oriented nature of suburban spaces. In 1994 however, Christine M. Rosen and Joel A. Tarr argued for an alternative urban perspective in environmental history, suggesting that urban environmental history should encompass ‘the effects of cities on the natural environment; ... the impact of the natural environment on cities; ... societal response to these impacts and efforts to alleviate environmental problems; and ... the built environment and its role and place in human life as part of the physical context in which society evolves.’ Although predominately discussing the need for environmental histories of the city, this argument can be easily extended to the suburb. For early suburban developers and residents, the suburbs provided an escape from the noise and evils of the city, where the advantages of country living were brought together with the advantages of city employment. As historical geographer Eric Pawson notes, the suburb represents a creative compromise between the unruliness of nature and the hazardous character of town.

Suburbs provide unique examples of planned, relatively recent, and dominant human landscapes. The 2002 New Zealand Official Yearbook recorded New Zealand as one of the most highly

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urbanised countries in the world, with 85.7 per cent of its population living in urban areas. While the suburb has been somewhat neglected as a site for New Zealand environmental history, a wealth of primary sources exist at both official archival repositories and within community and local history libraries. These often record local events, environmental issues, everyday interactions with the environment, and community-focused movements.

As Anselm Strauss has suggested, individuals’ representations of, and responses to, their environment are highly complex constructions. As more and more people live in urban and suburban environments, exploring the construction of a suburban image becomes especially important. Those who live in suburbs relate to and construct ‘place’ in important ways. As an integration of elements from more general environmental conceptualisations, as well as a reflection of individual experiences, and ‘history’ (actual and perceived), the constructed suburban environment provides an opportunity to examine how the ideals of community- and suburban-living were reproduced in New Zealand suburbs. Drawing on Rosen and Tarr’s perspective, this article takes a broad view of the New Zealand suburban environment, illustrating suburbs as contested natural environments through introductions of new flora and fauna, the maintenance of gardens and pasture, or through the re-creation of lakes and waterways. Secondly, this article also recognises suburbs as contested places of meaning, embodied by a sense of the past or what ‘was’ there, but also a progressive notion of what ‘can’ or ‘will’ be there in the future. Thirdly, like other places where humans choose to live, suburbs contain strong personal images and associations with the environment.

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**The growth of suburban Karori**

Karori, ‘the beautiful suburb’ as it was called by early land agents, is a particularly good example of how natural features and images were incorporated into the image of a modern and progressive suburb. Around four kilometres west of the city centre, Karori is located at the physical edge of the Wellington urban area. Established in 1840 by the New Zealand Company, the first permanent occupants of the valley were farming settlers who bought land within the 2,500 acres surveyed by the Company. With no permanent Māori settlement in the area, the New Zealand Company was able to release sections to intending settlers fairly quickly, dividing the land up into 25 one hundred-acre blocks. Both Wellington and Karori expanded towards each other, with the two urban areas becoming gradually connected (aided by the construction of the Karori tunnel in 1901), and the Borough of Karori was finally amalgamated into the City of Wellington in 1920.

By the 1930s, Karori had experienced rapid expansion growing from a small country suburb to a major commuter hub. At the time of its amalgamation with Wellington City in 1920, Karori was still largely a rural community of fewer than 2,000 people, with only part of the valley developed. Increased demand for family homes, and rapid subdivision of the large New Zealand Company blocks, meant that by 1939 however, around 6,500 people had made the Karori suburb their home. This development continued at a steady pace up to the early 2000s. Karori has reached near City status.

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12 ibid. Illustrated by Map 1.
14 Although the population of Karori remained fairly constant (between 1,000 and 2,000 people) in the twenty years between 1901 and 1921, rapid subdivision in the early 1920s led to a significant population expansion by the end of the second world war. See C. Hodder, ‘The Growth of Karori 1844-2006’, *The Stockade*, no. 42, 2009, p. 37.
landscape. Although particularly focusing on Karori around the 1930s, this paper will also consider how images of the environment are shaped over time, especially in regards to large subdivisions, where developments span larger time periods, and undergo many transformations.

While Karori is only one example among many suburban experiences in Wellington and New Zealand, the ideas and images that inform the building of Karori connect many of the themes raised in wider studies. Urban historian Ben Schrader has suggested that the ideals of nuclear family life, and an emphasis on community responsibility and integration were integral to the establishment of the state housing suburb of Naenae in Wellington's Hutt Valley. Although Karori planning was not based on either the application of the English 'new town' or 'garden city' model, deterministic understandings of the Karori environment appear to have been quite prevalent. Linking suburbs to the values and health of the people who inhabited them, the planning ideology held that the Karori suburb would produce heightened moral and ethical values in its citizens.

Advertising for suburban Estate sections in the late nineteenth century drew heavily on the perceived health benefits of living away from the city and in the country air. Publicity for the 'Bannatyne Estate' in 1904 confirmed earlier impressions of Karori as an area where no doctor had ever been successful in maintaining a practice 'for January-December no one wants a doctor'.

Importantly, a focus on the Karori suburban environment suggests a dominant presentation of Karori as a modern, progressive suburb, with its environment and amenities reflecting its civic pride. The idea of the built environment creating a sense of 'place' in the suburb is an idea illustrated by 'Looking for Betterment', who wrote to the Northland Mail in February 1934, lamenting the lack of civic facilities in Karori:

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17 Bee Dawson, A History of Gardening in New Zealand, Auckland, 2010, p. 218; Schrader, pp. 43-44.
19 'Bannatyne Estate Karori ATL 832.4799/gbbl/ca. 1904', 1904, Subject – Subdivisions – Brightacres (Campbell extension) 1935, Karori Library (hereafter KL).
When Karori had no drainage, no water, no gas, and no bitumen roads, the library and lecture room were in keeping with the general lack of civic facilities. Since then, the population has increased enormously and several hundred thousand pounds have been spent in providing all the amenities of a modern city, except those which most directly minister to its intellectual life. Is it not time that this beautiful suburb had something better than the community centre of a backblocks township?20

‘Looking for Betterment’ also illustrates the three broad themes that are interlinked and interwoven throughout the Karori suburban environment of the 1930s. The first theme argues that the native Karori environment is contested by human actions and interactions. Although there was a general community consensus on how the Karori area was to develop, the natural or native environment always provided challenges to these development assumptions. The second theme suggests that although a past environment was recognised, the importance of presenting and acting on future ambitions for the suburb was stressed. Modern suburban ideals emphasised how spaces were linked to the behaviour, values, health and experiences of the people who inhabited them. Thirdly, human ideas of how suburban spaces ought to look provided the ability for personal connections and associations with the Karori landscape.

**Contested Karori**

The most immediate way in which we can view the Karori suburban environment is through the contested origins of its establishment. Many of the natural features of the land, as well as the indigenous flora and fauna, informed at least one of the environmental images shaping the development of Karori. Karori Valley was covered in native forest and bush, making surveying and land-clearing difficult for farming.21 The indigenous forest

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landscape proved valuable, albeit a significant inconvenience, for Karori surveyors and farming settlers. Large tracts of kahikatea, miro, matai, totara and rimu were recorded on Karori sections, and provided many dominant first impressions of the Karori landscape. Timber from Karori was exported both to Australia and the United States, and was utilised as a building material for many of Wellington’s wooden houses. Farming of cattle, sheep, and small amounts of wheat was rapidly begun, and by 1895 settlers had removed most of the native bush and trees.

Access to Karori was a particular challenge for its early residents. The road to Karori followed a track that went from the top of Tinakori Road, over what was known as Baker’s Hill, down to the Kaiwharawhara Stream at the junction of what are today Chaytor Street and the Old Karori Road. Until 1888, this relative isolation meant the Karori Valley was mainly a farming community. Farmers and farming remained a key part of the Karori landscape well into the 1930s; however, this was gradually beginning to be overtaken by the building of houses for suburban residents. Although there had been European settlement in the area from 1840, Karori’s local residents were mostly farmers on small-landholdings, and it was not until the early 1900s, when advances in transport, particularly the building of the Karori Tunnel in 1901, allowed the first major push into the Karori Valley for housing.

The conflict between rural and urban spaces also constrained suburb building. Although several property owners such as Judge Henry Samuel Chapman chose to live in the early Karori suburb, because of its closeness to town, and its isolation from Māori conflict, the area’s ‘rural beauty’ also attracted many of Wellington’s well-to-do early settlers. With naturally fertile soils, residents such as Samuel Chapman were able to maintain model English gardens to match their stately homes. The

25 Shepherd, p. 60.
26 ibid., pp. 62, 64, 66.
28 Shepherd, pp. 62, 64, 66.
country life, views, and isolation were also highly admired. The Harrison family, building a house on Messines Road in the late 1920s, found the view from their section to be spectacular: a panorama of several glimpses of the harbour and open sea, around to Wright’s Hill and across to Johnston’s Hill. 29 Although many section purchasers could expect to find cleared and ready-to-build sections, this was not always the case. An increasing number of new suburban residents had to undertake land-clearing techniques to enable them to build their homes. Joyce Harrison recalls that although her father was a keen tramper, he had not anticipated the hilltop expanse of chest-high gorse and broom that had to be cleared before work on their house could begin. 30

Similarly, although Karori was close to town, residents often had to deal with an unexpected rural isolation. Although the Harrison family had been assured that buses to town were soon to be passing by their door, it was many years before they appeared, and several more years before they were scheduled to run routes closer than the main road. 31 The Harrisons also found that the milkman’s horse came only as far as ten houses down the street. Mail was, however, delivered to the house. 32

**Past and future landscapes**

The combining of past and future landscape images is a further theme which can be developed by examining the Karori suburban environment. This is particularly evident by the ways in which the Karori landscape was presented for suburban development and subdivision. The subdivision of large estates into housing blocks, and their subsequent advertisements, illustrates how future suburban images were presented to prospective buyers. The first major subdivision in Karori for housing was undertaken in 1888, and offered for sale sections within Block 34. 33

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30 ibid.
31 ibid., p. 6.
32 ibid.
33 ‘Magnificent Building Sections at Karori’, ATL 832.4799/gbkd/ka/1888/acc. 2913’, 1888, Local History Collection Karori Library, Subject – Subdivisions – Suburban Villa Sites 1879 (Douglas Aitkin
suitable for housing had risen dramatically over this period, with land in the vicinity realising as much as £150 per acre. 34 Altogether, 141 sections were offered up for sale, with 16 including main road frontages. Although originally bush, the land was promoted as cleared and flat, and previously used as pasture. 35 As illustrated by Map 2, subdivision occurred at a steady pace in Karori through the 1900s, particularly focussed on the years between 1904-7, and 1926-30.

As is still evident today, effective advertising, names and slogans were adopted as place markers, and for many years, the subdivided Block 34 was known as ‘Beautiful Karori’. 36 It was quickly realised that land agents might profit from the means used to sell the sections, and a talented land agent burst forth into the verse which begins this article. Numerous advertisements appeared for this subdivision in Wellington newspapers which emphasised the important future role of Karori, urging people to ‘haste where kind Nature’s enthroned in her glory./To delightful, retired, and suburban Karori’. 37 These promotions were to inform many later impressions of the area, and were evoked for the Karori Borough’s emblem, a rose, and motto: ‘for beauty and health’. 38

The natural landscape also lent its name to various built features, drawing on both past and future constructions of the landscape. The naming of these blocks and their surrounding roads provides us with an initial interpretation of the Karori environment. The romantic word ‘vale’ seems to have been favoured for property names in Karori, with examples found in Karori Vale, Campden Vale, Park Vale, and Eden Vale. F.W. Hurst, a foundation member of the Wellington Horticultural Society, was well-established at Campden Vale by 1851, selling fruit trees and other plants. 39 Eden Vale (also at various times known as Donald’s

34 ibid.
35 ibid.
39 Shepherd, p. 66.
Tea Gardens and the Karori Pleasure Grounds) also served as a popular Saturday afternoon entertainment for Wellingtonians. The grounds held tennis courts, garden walks, a lake and several ponds. Deteriorating grounds led to the demolition of the original residence by 1930, and much of the land was subdivided and sold. The image of the tea gardens remained part of the subsequent advertisements in auction notices, however, even if the physical site had disappeared. While not part of the original ‘Beautiful Karori’ subdivision, the block that later became the ‘Marsden De Luxe Estate’ drew on this comparison to advertise its sections. Estate companies, such as the Karori Gardens Estate Company, and Beautiful Karori Extension Limited also drew on these names to form their companies.

Auction notices for the ‘Bannatyne Estate’ of 1904 provide particularly useful examples of how past and future images of the landscape were used to present the suburb as both city and rural. Also drawing on the idea of ‘Beautiful Karori’ – ‘The name conferred by the whole of the people of Wellington upon this CHARMING SYLVAN SUBURB OF THE EMPIRE CITY’ – the advertisement further recognised Karori’s extensive forestry origins with an excerpt from John Milton’s *Paradise Lost*. Outlining Karori’s ‘woody theatre’, which contained the ‘loveliest hills and vales in New Zealand’; cedar, pine, fir, and palm trees were the chosen ‘scene’, rather than the indigenous matai and rata.

As Map 2 illustrates, almost all of the subdivisions for suburban housing that took place between 1878 and 1945 in Karori took European names. Often named after developers, or their family members, names such as, ‘Bannatyne’, Bristow, Monaghan, Fairview, Lancaster Park, Evelyn, ‘Marsden De Luxe’, Seaforth, Donald Brae, and Manchester Park still remain a significant part of Karori today. Other names presented images of the suburban environment, ‘Beautiful Karori’, ‘Homewood’, ‘Sunshine’, and ‘Brightacres’ being significant examples. Many of

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40 ibid., p. 195.
41 Company Records - The Karori Garden Estate Company Ltd, CO-W W3445 309* 1926/56, Archives New Zealand (hereafter ANZ); Company Records - Beautiful Karori Extension Ltd, CO-W W3445 362* 1929/92, ANZ.
43 ibid.
these subdivision blocks were former farm blocks, and could often be on particularly steep land. 44 In 1930, part of the land that formed Scapa and Firth Terraces had a previous incarnation as a large poultry farm. 45 Located on south-facing hills, the 1929-1930 ‘Sunshine Estate’ seems particularly misnamed. 46 The use of ‘Estate’, rather than subdivision to promote these blocks of land, also suggests a further set of class-orientated, European ideals.

The Karori suburban environment can be viewed through the different ‘progressive’ ideals of decision-makers and residents. Although the physical features of the land were critical to Karori’s suburban development, a number of organisations and individuals also played key roles. As argued by Max Neutze, in any study of the broad processes of urban development there are a number of ‘major decision-makers’ who ‘influence the shape of development’ of a city or suburb. 47 Four groups of Karori residents provide interesting avenues for this comparison: The Karori Borough Council, The Karori Progressive Association, land-holding farmers, and suburban residents. While recognising that these are often an overlapping set of actors, and do not represent all possible views of the Karori environment, grouping actors this way allows for a broader look at the differences between attitudes, and actions towards the Karori environment. Generally, the Karori narratives present a broad community consensus on the suburb’s future development, informed by images of previous developments, and progressive modern landscapes. 48

The Karori Borough Council had a short but vocal life as the dominant advocate for, and actor in, local issues. Active from 1891, the Council consisted of a variety of important local residents. 49 As a consequence of the amalgamation with

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45 ibid., p. 57.
48 ‘Karori Progressive Association Annual Meeting and Annual Report, 1933-34’, Local History Collection Karori Library, Subject – Community Organisations – Karori Progressive Association, KL.
Wellington City in 1920, an organised group of residents and ratepayers formed the Karori Progressive Association, providing and advocating local views on a wide range of issues related to the Karori community. Membership of the Karori Progressive Association remained reasonably high across the 1930s Depression; the paid membership of the Karori Progressive Association grew steadily from 387 members in 1933-34 to 504 members in 1934-35. Many members were representative of a household group, with estimates suggesting the Association reflected around a third of the Karori population by 1935. As a community organisation funded by private subscriptions, their views provided a limited range of opinions and were perhaps not entirely representative of the majority of the community. Additionally, the views of the Progressive Association came from the most vocal members of the community, and those who were able and willing to directly lobby the Council for ‘progressive’ change. However, the records of the Association provide a good indicator of the issues and challenges involved with suburban development.

From the Karori Borough Council’s establishment in 1891, natural beauty was a continually stressed aspect of the Karori environment. The Council’s motto for the borough ‘For beauty and health’, and emblem of the rose invoked particular images of their own. While there is no further reference in the minutes to the choice of these motifs, the appearance and upkeep of the general Karori area often appeared as a serious cause for community concern. The language used in the Progressive Associations’ 1933-1934 Annual Report re-evoked the image of ‘beautiful Karori’:

We note with much pleasure the efforts of those who have undertaken the upkeep of grass plots on the street sides. There is no more effective method than this of making Karori beautiful. Some of our streets have a park like aspect. There are instances, unfortunately, where residents, after a brief period  

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50 ‘Karori Progressive Association Annual Meeting and Annual Report, 1933-34’, Local History Collection Karori Library, Subject – Community Organisations – Karori Progressive Association, KL.
51 If one member is representative of four people per household. Population Karori ≈ 6,000 in 1935; 504 members of Association 1934-35.
of energy, have allowed their plots to slip back to rough grass, and we appeal to them to make renewed efforts and assist the Association in the beautification of Karori. Let us assure them that civic pride, which should commence at home, is a paying proposition.53

The appearance and upkeep of local Karori school grounds was also similarly recognised in the Progressive Association Annual Reports.54 Efforts to beautify the grounds of Marsden, Karori, and Karori West schools were undertaken by members of local school committees. The Karori West committee was singled out for particular praise, having completed a great deal of work in a short space of time.55 Re-inventions of English country gardens, orchards, and parks in the large Karori family estates of Homewood and the Donald Tea Gardens, combined native trees with European, North American, Japanese, and Australian plant species, reflecting both a colonial sense of order, nostalgia, and familiarity, and contemporary gardening trends.56

Making Karori the ‘best’ suburb was a significant part of the Progressive Association’s goals and ambitions, and the establishment of amenities was regarded as vitally important.57 A community sundial and birdbath were also erected as part of attempts to create a more aesthetically pleasing suburban environment. The resurfacing of roads and the provision of footpaths were also a cause for concern and much tension

53 ‘Karori Progressive Association Annual Meeting and Annual Report, 1933-34’, Local History Collection Karori Library, Subject – Community Organisations – Karori Progressive Association, KL.
55 ibid.
57 Stewart, Ignatieva, Meurk, and Earl, p. 150.
towards the City Council. Similarly, the aim of ‘progress’ in Karori Progressive Association also gave its members an important advocacy role. In 1933, it noted with much pleasure, the building of many new homes in Karori during that year. For the Association, it was gratifying to note that Karori continued to be the choice of so many home builders. As a reasonably small city, Wellington’s suburbs provided ample opportunity for a good-hearted rivalry and competition, similar to that which has been noted between other small New Zealand cities. Swimming baths, parks and other civic facilities, as well the growing size of the population within the suburb, were often evoked as a source of suburban pride. For the Progressive Association, the amenities of Lower Hutt provided an appropriate point of comparison. Images of Karori as a future population centre were often presented in an advantageous light. In recommending the construction of a civic centre and play area, the Progressive Association suggests favourably that Karori ‘is destined to become one of Wellington’s most densely populated suburbs.’

Although the image of ‘beautiful Karori’ is no longer a dominant presence, a romantic attachment to its ideal is often re-engaged. As Doreen Massey demonstrates, places are often articulated as an amalgamation of ideas and images from the ‘past’, present, and potential future. ‘The past’, in particular, is often seen in some sense to embody the real character of a place. Similarly, Karori Progressive Society members, concerned about the owners’ proposed subdivision of Johnston’s Hill, offered to purchase the area for use as a reserve of bush and open space in 1938. The owner agreed to sell for £2,500, well-under valuation. The Wellington City Council paid most of this amount, and local

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59 ‘Karori Progressive Association Annual Meeting and Annual Report, 1933-34’, Local History Collection Karori Library, Subject – Community Organisations – Karori Progressive Association, KL.
62 ibid.
64 ibid.
residents the balance.\textsuperscript{65} Today, Johnston’s Hill Scenic Reserve and its regenerating bush remains a local attraction.\textsuperscript{66} Similarly, a small plant museum on the site of the old Donald Tea Gardens was opened in 1976, encouraged by the owner. The Wellington City Council designated the area ‘a place of scenic beauty’ and placed it on the regional plan for future protection.\textsuperscript{67}

**Personal connections with the suburban environment**

As the photograph in Figure 1 illustrates, houses, fenced gardens, power lines, paved roads, tram wires and tracks give the impression of a growing suburb in 1930s Karori. However, farms and farming still provided a rural attraction for Karori residents in this decade. Although by then suburban development of Karori was well underway, farm land, parks, and reserves provided many local children with unsanctioned interactions with their neighbourhood environments. Farms are frequently remembered by Karori residents as local playgrounds for children. The position of the Welling and Beavis farms, close to newly-built suburban houses, attracted many local children.\textsuperscript{68} Gwen Beavis recounts that ‘Mr. Catanach, the local policeman, always said if ever a child was reported missing, the [Beavis] farm would be the first place he would look’.\textsuperscript{69} Another favourite playground was the Wellings’ farm. Joyce Harrison remembers that, as a child, she and her siblings ‘would wander over the grassy hillside…There my mother played golf and we flew kites, and collected mushrooms’.\textsuperscript{70}

Although living in a newly-constructed suburban Californian bungalow, for Harrison, the undeveloped land of the farms was a site for exploration and interaction with nature. An attempted capture of freshwater crawlies to keep as pets is remembered less successfully. ‘These were easily found in the boggy stream at the foot of Campbell’s Hill, and we planned to keep them in a bucket of

\textsuperscript{66} Shepherd, p. 139.
\textsuperscript{67} ibid.
\textsuperscript{68} illustrated by Map 2.
\textsuperscript{70} Harrison, p. 6.
water. They managed to crawl out, however, and, in death turned a nasty shade of orange.'\textsuperscript{71}

Figure 1: Cows being herded along Karori Road, Karori, Wellington, ca. 1930s. Reproduced with permission of the Alexander Turnbull Library, Wellington. PAColl-7081-23, Reference Number F-61936-1/2.

Parks and reserves were also quickly established in Karori as housing developed, with many recorded on the site plans and auction notices, and used as selling points within advertisements. However, undeveloped land was often favoured by children as playgrounds. The long grass, broom, and gorse of the waterworks reserve were remembered as particular favourites.\textsuperscript{72} The lower dam, at what is now the wildlife sanctuary 'Zealandia', was also a favourite spot for swimming. As Joyce Harrison recalls, 'the return home back up those 250-odd steps was hard work', but fond memories of the spot were retained, and she was sad when the area was closed to the public, around 1933.\textsuperscript{73}

Predictably, the need for a safe, local swimming pool was frequently raised in Karori discussion groups. The lack of suitable swimming baths in suburban areas in which to teach children to

\textsuperscript{71} ibid.
\textsuperscript{72} ibid.
\textsuperscript{73} ibid, p. 7.
swim was recognised as a broad Wellington problem. Several pools seem to have been considered and erected in various locations. The controlled, and human constructed, aspects of these ‘natural’ environments are particularly notable. A natural pool at the top of Parkvale Street was expanded by locals for the summer of 1924-25. After prolonged discussions with the Council for a more permanent solution, the Karori community also took it upon themselves to fundraise for the Karori Baths in 1930. One very public spirited resident offered the required land to the Council at a price below the rating value, and gave a generous donation of £300 (the entire cost) towards the project. A third, publically-funded, baths were located in the ‘splendid location’ of the Karori School grounds. These baths were to be ‘set in good solid ground with valuable terraces and will be sheltered and sunny’.

Although a growing historiography has focused on the role of gardening in the suburbs as a site of personal relationship with the suburban environment, little evidence of this in the civic sphere is evident in the Karori archives. While more concerned with national social problems of the time, the ladies of the Karori Women’s Social Progressive Movement of the 1930s also shared an interest in gardening trends. Reporting on her trip abroad, member Mrs. McVicar loved visiting the different cities, singling

76 Karori Progressive Association Annual Meeting and Annual Report, 1929-30’, Local History Collection Karori Library, Subject – Community Organisations – Karori Progressive Association, KL.
77 ‘Karori Progressive Association Annual Meeting and Annual Report, 1933-34’, Local History Collection Karori Library, Subject – Community Organisations – Karori Progressive Association, KL.
out as Perth as a favourite for its ‘wonderful gardens’. Although gardening undoubtedly did occur in many of the new subdivisions in Karori (most having a fairly substantial allotment of land), civic focus was directed at the upkeep of lawns and kerbs, rather than criticism of personal gardens.

Conclusion
The Wellington suburb of Karori provides an insight into the modern and progressive ideals that were engaged with suburb-building. Although often positioned as a third sphere of living space – an alternative to the evils of the city or the distance of the country – the suburb can also be seen as a compromised space. By the 1920s the necessity of town planning and the ideal of suburban living were widely accepted by New Zealanders, although it was the grid, rather than the garden suburb ideal that found favour in Karori. An examination of the ways in which Karori residents discuss and engage with their environment (and advocate for change to it), provides an illustration of the ways in which the suburban environment is a contested living space, constrained by native landscapes, and the imagined future environment. The constructed suburban landscape also provides a place for personal connections and associations with the land, especially by children. Various residents and decision-makers presented the Karori suburban environment of the 1930s as an idealised space in which European ideals of modern living could be carried out through the naming of places, advertisements and community-building activities.


Key

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Period</th>
<th>Subdivision Details</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1878-1888</td>
<td>Darwin/Eagle St; 'Beautiful Karori'</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1901-1910</td>
<td>Karori Gardens; Bannatyne; Monaghan; Fairview; Stirling Terrace/Paisley Terrace; Lancaster Park; Evelyn</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1926-1935</td>
<td>Homewood; 'Marsden De Luxe'; Scater; Seaforth; Sunshine; Brightacres</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1939-1945</td>
<td>Donald Brae: Bristow; Manchester Park; Ellerton St</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1950-</td>
<td>Paparata</td>
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<tr>
<td>Green Areas</td>
<td>recorded in Auction Notices</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Welling and Beavis Farms</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Harrison Family House, 133 Messines Road</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Homewood</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Donald Tea Gardens</td>
<td></td>
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</tbody>
</table>
Notes on Map 2:
Taken from Auction Notices in the Karori Historical Society Archives, this Map illustrates a significant proportion of the Estate developments in Karori between 1878 and 1969.

The Map suggests that over time, Estate developments moved outwards from the main (Karori) road, in a broadly linear pattern, following established Block boundaries. Roads established by these Estates mostly follow straight lines, with only subdivisions in the late 1940s and 1960s following curvilinear patterns.

Some overlapping of Estates has occurred when land was not sold as proposed in original Auction notices, or was bought in large blocks and later re-sold.

Auction notices also illustrated that green areas were established and planned along with housing.

Compiled from (in date order):

‘Plan of Part of Sec. No. 39 Karori District ATL 832.4799/gbbd/ka’, 1878, Subject – Subdivisions – Section 36, 1852, Karori Library (KL).

‘Magnificent Building Sections at Karori ATL 832.4799/gbbd/ka/1888/acc. 2913’, 1888, Subject – Subdivisions – Suburban Villa Sites 1879 (Douglas Aitkin St), KL.

‘Plan of the Karori Gardens Estate’, acc. 2941, 1901, Subject – Subdivisions – Karori Gardens Estate, KL.

‘Bannatyne Estate Karori ATL 832.4799/gbbd/ca. 1904’, 1904, Subject – Subdivisions – Brightacres (Campbell extension) 1935, KL.


‘Map Stirling Terrace/Paisley Terrace, J. W. Henderson Subdivision’, 1906, Subject – Subdivisions – Sections 32, 33, 35, KL.

‘Plan of Thirty-Eight Magnificent Villa Building Sections ATL 832.4799/gbbd/ka’, 1906, Subject – Subdivisions – Karori 1906 (Bella Victoria Herman St), KL.

‘Karori 50 Desirable Building Sites ATL 832.4799/gbbd/ka’, 1907, Subject – Subdivisions – Karori 1907 (Huia Campbell Russell St), KL.

‘Plan of Lancaster Park Estate Karori’, 1907, Subject – Subdivisions – Homewood Estate 1907, KL.

‘Evelyn Estate ATL 832.47799/gbbd/ka’, 1910, Subject – Subdivisions – Donald Brae Estate 1939, KL.


‘Beautiful Karori: Marsden De Luxe Estate ATL 832.4799/gbbd/ka’, 1928, Subject – Subdivisions – Section 36, 1852, KL.


‘Seaforth Estate ATL 832.4799/gbbd/ka’, 1929, Subject – Subdivisions – Section 36, 1852, KL.


‘Donald Brae Estate ATL 832.4799/gbbd/ka/1939/acc. 12635’, Subject – Subdivisions – Donald Brae Estate 1939, KL.


Martin & Dyett, ‘Plan of Subdivision of Lot 18 D. P. 1223 being Part Sec. 36, Karori Regr. District’, 1945, Subject – Subdivisions – Section 36 Donald St 1935, 1945, KL.

Chan Dah Chee 陈达枝, or Ah Chee as he was more commonly known, was one of the most prominent and influential businessmen in the early years of Chinese settlement in Auckland. From his arrival in 1867 to his departure in 1920, Ah Chee contributed greatly to the growth and development of the Chinese business and market gardening community. Ah Chee spent over fifty years in New Zealand and deserves to be remembered as one of Auckland’s first Chinese pioneers in market gardening and business.

This story of Ah Chee is not only of a pioneering entrepreneur, but serves to highlight the significance of the Chinese contribution to market gardening and fruit and vegetable retailing more broadly. This story is not a complete account of Ah Chee’s life, rather it seeks to provide an insight into how he lived and a sense of what it was like to be an early Chinese market gardener in his time.

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1 This is an abridged version of Lily Lee and Ruth Lam, 陈达枝 Chan Dah Chee, 1851-1930: Pioneer Chinese Market Gardener and Auckland Businessman (no place: Lily Lee and Ruth Lam, 2009). This was a report prepared for and funded by Hans-Dieter Bader and Janice Adamson on behalf of Haydn and Rollett Construction, Auckland. The authors thank Drs Bader and Adamson for permission to draw from that research for this paper. A copy of the original publication can be obtained by contacting the authors: lily@rautaki.co.nz; mcrats@clear.net.nz

2 Chan Dah Chee is Ah Chee’s full name. It has been spelt in various ways over the years, however the Romanisation used in this document reflects the pronunciation chun daat jee favoured by Bruce Ah Chee, grandson of Ah Chee.

3 This story has been pieced together from a range of sources which include historical records and archives, interviews with family members, the findings from the archaeological discovery in 2006 and articles written by researchers.
The Story of Ah Chee

Born in 1851, Ah Chee grew up in the village Mong Ngow Dun, Tung Goon, China. At the age of 16, Ah Chee and his two brothers left their village in search of greater opportunities and the sun gum saan, meaning ‘new gold mountain’, the colloquial Chinese name for New Zealand and Australia. In 1867 Ah Chee and his brothers arrived in Auckland. Originally they had planned to travel to Dunedin (possibly to the Otago goldfields), but such was their seasickness that when the ship stopped in Auckland they too stopped to get off and stay.

From the time of Ah Chee’s arrival it is believed that he worked as a gardener. In the 1870s he was a familiar sight as an itinerant hawker along the foreshore area of Mechanics Bay, Parnell and Lower Queen Street, Auckland.

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4 Ernie Sai Louie, interview, 8 May 2004, Celine Kearney. In the Brief History of Chan Dar Chee, and his two sons, William and Clement, written for the Ah Chee family reunion, Chan Dah Chee is recorded as coming to New Zealand between the late 1860s and early 1870s.

5 Ah Chee’s older brother Chan Yun Gee (Sai Louie’s father) did not like the Auckland climate and returned to China.

6 From 1850 to 1875, the part of Queen Street north of Victoria Street was known as Lower Queen Street.
Ah Chee’s first recorded market garden was established on 7 ¼ acres (2.93 hectares) of leased land in Gillingham Street Parnell. The market garden had the auspicious name of Kong Foong Yuen 江风园 and was also known as ‘the garden of prosperity’. The gardens were central to the success and achievements of Ah Chee and provided him with a platform to expand into a number of business enterprises.

Family history records Ah Chee growing vegetables on the land as early as the 1870s. Land registry records show that the land was formally leased to Ah Chee and Ah Sec in August 1882. The lease was for 7 acres 1 rood 20 perch (just over 7 ¼ acres),

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8 The land (Pt. Allotment 1 Sect 98 & 99 Suburbs of Auckland, CT 6/180) had been part of the 1856 Auckland Hospital Endowment, and was granted by the Crown to the Auckland Hospital Board in 1859.
'with all buildings thereon erected', for a term of 21 years, at the annual rental of £95, in advance, payable on the 24th of October and April each year. The lessees were not to carry on any noxious or offensive trade or business on the said premises and ‘in the event of the lessees cultivating the said premises or any part thereof they shall do so in a proper and husbandman-like manner and so as not to unduly impoverish the soil.’9 Fifteen years later in 1897, Ah Sec’s share of the lease was assigned to Ah Chee. It was leased again in 1903 under Ah Chee’s name and then renewed up until 1920.10 In all, Ah Chee’s market garden was located at Gillingham Street for thirty-eight years.

The Kong Foong Yuen Garden was an ideal place for growing vegetables. It was situated in a small sheltered valley, with a northerly aspect and had soil of volcanic origin. The valley was once a raupo swamp,11 a natural collection point for the runoff from the slopes to the south and east. The Waipapa stream, fed by the springs in the Domain, flowed through the valley on its way down to Mechanics Bay. Over the years, the course of the stream had been dammed to run the flourmill, diverted to supply the rope

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10 James Ng, Windows on a Chinese Past, Otago Heritage Books, Dunedin, 1993, Vol. 4, pp. 156-157. Alexander Don’s Roll noted that in 1904 the rent on Ah Chee’s 6 acres at Parnell gardens was £90 per annum.
11 In the years to come, the low-lying, poor-draining land was to become the bane of the Auckland Rugby League Club; Carlaw Park was well-known for its muddy sports fields.
works and the tannery with water, and channeled to irrigate vegetable crops.

The gardens over the years accommodated a large number of Ah Chee’s immediate and extended family. Ah Chee’s wife and three sons lived in the main house and his nephew Chan Ying Kew12 (more commonly known as Sai Louie), his wife and young children were known to have been living in one of the adjacent cottages.13 As the families grew, it is likely the main house and other buildings were extended to accommodate the whole clan.

12 Although Chan Ying Kew was his proper name, he was given the nickname sai nui which means ‘little girl’, to protect him against ill-fortune. It was then recorded by immigration officials as ‘Sai Louie’. He was also known as ‘Chan Sai Louie’. Wong, Gilbert, ‘The Originals’, Metro, June 2004, no. 276, p. 64-73.

13 Ng, Vol. 4, p. 158-159. Alexander Don’s Roll gave the address for Chan Ying Kew (No. 2226) as Parnell Gardens in 1904. Sai Louie’s daughter May was born at Gillingham Street in 1912 and his son Gordon was also born there in 1915 (see May Sai Louie, interview, 21 December 2007, Lily Lee).
It is likely that Ah Chee and the family would have participated with friends and workers at the gardens in many of the Chinese customary celebrations.

According to Sai Louie’s daughter May, the Ah Chees lived quite lavishly. There were servants who helped with the housework and handcrafted their clothes. They had a privileged upbringing with extensive trips back to China.14 Ah Chee was also prominent within Auckland social circles, as this article from the Observer and Free Lance (1894) shows:

On a recent Monday afternoon Lady Glasgow sent a note to her greengrocer (Ah Chee) that she and her daughters would pay him a visit at his home at Mechanics’ Bay Gardens on the following day. At the time appointed the ladies duly arrived, and were entertained by Mrs Ah Chee. The Ladies Boyle played and sang, partook of afternoon tea, fruit, etc., and the whole party (yellow and white) had a good time. Lady Glasgow requested a photo of the Chee family group for her album, and the delighted Chee immediately ordered a splendid enlarged photo. Ah Chee forwarded Lord Glasgow a present of half-a-dozen silk handkerchiefs from the Flowery Land. Aren’t the opposition greengrocers just mad!15

Ah Chee assisted many Chinese workers to come to Auckland where he provided work and accommodation on the gardens. The men were sponsored by payment of travel expenses and the poll tax. They were offered work on the market gardens, in fruit shops and other enterprises. Some of the men working at Ah Chee’s garden were named by Alexander Don16 as living at ‘Ah Chee’s Gardens, Parnell’ in 1904. These were:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Name</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Chau Kee 周基</td>
<td>Chan Yee Tim</td>
<td>陈汝恬</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wong Shee Kwun 黄树羣</td>
<td>Kwan Yee Woon 关汝焕</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shum Yung Mui 关汝焕</td>
<td>Lai Moon Gum 黎满金</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wai Chung Leung 韦仲良</td>
<td>Ng Hin Ting 吴衍庭</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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14 May Sai Louie, interview, 27 December 1987, Eva Ng.
15 Observer, 31 March 1894.
16 Ng, Vol. 4, pp. 160-161. The names were translated into English by Reg Wong Toi.
Immigration records show numerous Chinese were beholden to Ah Chee for work and aid during the turn of the century. The Presbyterian missionary, Alexander Don (1857–1934), recorded a number of Chinese who gave their place of contact as Ah Chee’s Queen Street shop or Ah Chee’s garden.

This cluster of kith and kin living and working at Kong Foong Yuen was most likely to have cultivated vegetables using methods that were familiar to them from rural Kwang Tung. It is likely that seeds were saved from harvest to harvest, leaving the heads or pods to dry in the sun on large circular bamboo trays. The seeds sown in smaller beds were transplanted as young plants and carefully tended, weeded, and watered to ensure that they grew into mature crops. The gardeners would probably have used a bamboo pole with buckets attached to each end to transport water around the garden, and may have even used a chain pump to irrigate their crops.

Blood and bone and other manures such as horse or fowl manure, and perhaps even night soil were used to enrich the soil. It was common to use draught horses to till the soil and with Auckland’s warm, frost free climate at least two or even three crops could be grown from the same piece of land each year.

The main vegetables in demand in Auckland during the late nineteenth and early twentieth century included cabbages, peas, beans, lettuce, tomatoes, pumpkin, kumara and potatoes. The vegetables, freshly harvested, were often sold directly to the Auckland housewife; Chinese men hawking their produce from house to house were a familiar sight in the suburbs of Auckland. In Epsom the hawkers were described as ‘Chinese with pigtails and cone shaped straw hats with long poles over their shoulders, and baskets suspended from each end with vegetables.’

Ah Chee also employed workers to distribute vegetables to boarding houses, hotels and his shops in Queen Street. One such

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17 Ng, Vol. 3, p. 235.
18 Ng, Vol. 4, Alexander Don’s Roll.
19 Ng, Vol. 1, p. 19 has a photo of the type of chain pump used for irrigating crops in China in the 1900s.
20 Using human waste was a very common practice in South China until more recent times. It was highly unlikely to be practised in commercial gardening in New Zealand, but was not unheard of in home gardens.
worker, Wong Mong Jook, who arrived in New Zealand on 27 November 1907, took up his first job in Ah Chee’s market garden. His initial tasks included delivering vegetables to shops by horse and dray.22 Ah Chee’s nephew, Sai Louie, also sold produce. May Sai Louie recalls that: He used to drive a horse and buggy delivering the goods to the hotels and carrying the heavy bags of potatoes and carrots up the stairs.23

In 1905 with the purchase of 35 acres of market garden in Avondale, it is likely that the relatively small garden at Gillingham Street was also used as a depot for processing and packing vegetables and other goods such as ginger and picked vegetables. It is not known when members of the Ah Chee family moved away from Gillingham Street. It may have occurred as the individual families became more established and the children grew older. It is probable that the market garden workers would have stayed on, living in the houses and working the fields.

In 1920, after at least 30 years as a market garden under Ah Chee family’s care, the land and buildings were returned to their owners who were to lease it to the Auckland Rugby League Club for their playing fields. Using horse-drawn equipment, picks and shovels, volunteers helped shift the old house down from the southern ridge and turn it into the first dressing rooms for the players. The volunteers also constructed a 640-seat grandstand and the park, named after James Carlaw, was opened on 25th June 1921.24

23 May Sai Louie, interview, 21 December 2007, Auckland, Lily Lee.
24 James Carlaw was the chairman of the Auckland Rugby League committee that secured the land and developed the ground.
Archaeological findings at Kong Foong Yuen

The archaeological discovery in 2006 of Ah Chee’s market garden provides a great insight into how Ah Chee, his family, relatives and workers lived and functioned. This discovery is significant as it is one of the first, and largest, archaeological excavations of an early Chinese site in the North Island.\textsuperscript{25} It is also an important addition to the historical record of Chinese market gardens in early Auckland. The final report will soon be available through the New Zealand Historic Places Trust.\textsuperscript{26}

Of interest amongst the artefacts are the brown bulb-shaped clay bottles used to hold *ng ka pei*, a rice wine infused with the skins of five different fruits. This wine was very common amongst the early Chinese gold diggers who drank it for medicinal purposes. Likewise market gardeners, who suffered from *foong sup* (the rheumatic pains resulting from long hours of physical


Figure 5: Ah Chee’s garden at Gillingham Street showing house on southern ridge with addition to eastern side, remnants of market gardens, and horses preparing the ground for sports fields. (c.1921, Auckland Rugby League Museum).
work in all weather conditions), often drank it to ease the pain.\textsuperscript{27} The large quantity of rice wine bottles found suggests that it was commonly used at Kong Foong Yuen.

![Implement examples](image)

Figure 6: Implements typically used by Chinese market gardeners such as hoes, pitchforks and grubbers were found at the site. Also found were shards of crockery typical of chinaware of the time. (2007, Lily Lee)

A letter to the editor, written to the local newspaper when the Auckland Rugby League Club started converting the market garden to a sports field, mentions two cottages that were occupied by the Chinese.\textsuperscript{28} This letter probably refers to a house that was uncovered during the archaeological excavation: the house that was on the southern ridge which was destroyed by the establishment of the southern grandstand of the rugby field (formerly James Robertson’s house). Ah Chee and his family probably lived in one, and Sai Louie and his family probably lived in the other. Sai Louie may have lived in the house on the ridge as

\textsuperscript{27} According to Gwen Sai Louie (Ernie Sai Louie’s wife), this was one of the main reasons for its use.

\textsuperscript{28} Letter to the Editor of Auckland newspaper, c. 1920-1921, in Auckland City Council Valuation Field Sheets, ACC 213/25b Box 25, Auckland City Archives.
a photo of Sai Louie’s wife shows a stepped ramp up to the front door.29

Figure 8: Foundation of brick chimney with two fireplace openings, one facing north and the other (larger) facing south. (2007, Lily Lee)

Ah Chee probably extended the buildings and storage sheds as his business expanded and by the late 1890s there were a number of buildings on the site. A mortgage deed of 1897 (R57-183) suggests that the buildings were already established at this stage. Dr Bader gives his description of the site:

A 1908 survey map shows the area around the flour mill occupied by several buildings, mainly one storey buildings, mainly along the back of the ropewalk, intersected by a drainage channel. The buildings form a small precinct, possibly gated with a small stream running throughout the complex. A bridge links the buildings on either side of the stream... This gated building complex was probably used for the accommodation of workers as well as the place to prepare the produce for the two

29 This is the building that the Rugby League club volunteers eventually moved down from the ridge to use as their dressing sheds. Auckland Rugby League, ‘Carlaw Park’, Rugby League Annual, 1933, pp. 197-199.
greengrocer shops Ah Chee owned on Queen Street.\textsuperscript{30}

A large part of the precinct including the earlier flour mill was not excavated and is still in situ beneath the playground of the kindergarten currently occupying the site.

\textbf{Establishing other Market Gardens}

Ah Chee looked to establish more market gardens as demand for fresh vegetables increased. He provided produce for his own shops, which also supplied bulk orders to shipping lines, boarding houses and hotels. His gardens also supplied other shopkeepers and wholesalers throughout Auckland.

In the 1890s Ah Chee and three others (Ah Chong, Ming Ling and Ah Hing) leased one of the first recorded Chinese market gardens in Epsom from the Potter family.\textsuperscript{31} The district of Epsom was ideal for market gardening with its fertile volcanic loam soil, and as early as the 1870s the Government had earmarked Epsom


\textsuperscript{31} Bush, p. 77.
for this purpose.\textsuperscript{32} In 1904, Alexander Don records the following eight kinsmen as living at Ah Chee’s garden in Epsom.\textsuperscript{33} They were:

Chan Chee Pui 陈柱培, 
Wong Tung Ying 黄同英, 
Chan Yun Hee 陈仁禧, 
Chau Hin Yueng 周显扬

Chueng Chun 张春, 
Lu Shack Chuen 卢石泉, 
Chau Kin Wah 周健华, 
Chau Gee Sing 周志成.

From 1905 Ah Chee was noted as the owner and occupier of 35 acres of land in Rosebank Road Avondale.\textsuperscript{34} This was another fertile volcanic site ideal for market gardening. At the time Ah Chee’s garden was the biggest market garden on the Rosebank Peninsula. It continued to be used as a market garden until World War II when it became the site of the US Navy hospital. In 1945, after the war, the site was used for the establishment of Avondale College and Avondale Intermediate. Another Chinese family, the Ah Joongs who were related to Ah Chee, also gardened in Rosebank Road.

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\textsuperscript{32} Bush, p. 17.
\textsuperscript{33} Ng, Vol. 4, pp. 160-161.
\textsuperscript{34} Avondale Road Board rate book, Auckland City Archives, AVB 005/1.
Another market garden was established at Patumahoe, eight kilometres from Pukekohe, in 1925. It was located in Day Road and covered thirteen acres.35 Both the Avondale and Patumahoe market gardens were involved in a 1929 Government enquiry into the conditions and wages of Māori women working on Chinese market gardens. Although the committee found that as a general principle it was not in the interests of public morality for Māori women to work in Chinese market gardens, it was often out of economic necessity and any prohibition would result in hardship.36

35 Franklin County Council Rate Books, Mauku Riding, 1925 to 1930.
It is thought that there were other market gardens leased by Ah Chee over this period, however no accurate details have been found. For instance, Cleave’s Auckland Provincial Directory for each of the years from 1894 to 1898 lists a market gardener by the name of ‘Ah Chee’ in Kuaotunu, however it is not known whether this refers to Chan Dah Chee. In another example, the same Directory for 1919 and 1920 has listings for ‘W. Ah Chee’ in Marua (Whangarei), but it is not known whether these refer to market gardens or not.

**Business Enterprises**

It was the success of his gardens that enabled Ah Chee to move rapidly into other business enterprises. By the 1880s and 1890s he had established a number of businesses. The Auckland Star of 7 January 1929 described how he achieved success with ‘his baskets filled with produce harvested from his leased gardens in Gillingham Street ... and ... by honest trading and attention to business he climbed slowly up the ladder of business success.’

It was not long before the volume of trade produced by Ah Chee’s businesses had grown large enough to warrant a fleet of
carts to transport goods around Auckland. From 1895 to 1899, he had four horse-and-cart teams based at Mechanics Bay. There was also an additional one based at Arch Hill in 1897.37

![Figure 12: Ah Chee & Co delivery truck (c. 1920s-1930s, Mavis Lowe)](image)

In the 1880s Ah Chee established a string of shops along Queen Street in Auckland. Trading as Ah Chee & Co, he acquired his first fruit shop at 13 Queen Street, opposite the Chief Post office in 1880. Although this shop started in a small way, by 1894 it had expanded to include imported Chinese groceries and merchandise. It was ideally situated for the public and remained the main shop until closing in 1928. The *Auckland Star* records:

> It was with a foresight that was characteristic of him that the founder of the firm chose his place of business, as it was immediately opposite the Auckland railway station, close to the waterfront, and ideally situated to cater for the requirements of the growing population of the North Shore suburbs.38

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37 Auckland City Archives Register of Licenses: Drivers; Porters; Carriages; Carters; Private Carts, 1895-1899, ACC 343 Item No 1, Pages 83, 91, 98, 101, 105, 112.

38 *Auckland Star*, 3 December 1927, p. 12.
The second shop was at 1 Queen Street, at the corner of Quay Street opposite the ferry building. This shop was known as a major supplier to the shipping lines and hotels.

During the late 1800s and early 1900s, Ah Chee was also involved in running dining rooms, or small restaurants, firstly in Customs Street East in 1887 and 1888, and then at 29 and 187 Queen Street in 1889 to 1893.39

![Figure 13: Ah Chee Dining Room at 29 Queen Street (Josiah Martin, 29 January 1890, 7-A7720, Sir George Grey Special Collections, Auckland City Libraries)](image)

In 1919 the company opened a new shop at 242 Broadway, Newmarket. Its position alongside the entrance to the Newmarket railway station made it ideal for sending fruit and vegetables to out-of-town customers.40 At about the same time, Ah Chee & Co opened another shop, with accommodation above it, in Parnell.41

In December 1927 a new shop was opened at 61 Queen Street, opposite the Dilworth building, to replace the main shop. On the occasion of the opening of the new fruit shop, the Auckland Star wrote that ‘The firm has had a most successful history, for the reason that the endeavour has always been made to give the utmost satisfaction to the public, and thus business connections made have always been maintained.’42

Alice Wong (daughter of Clement Ah Chee) recalls six shops owned by Ah Chee in Queen Street. There was ‘one at the

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39 Auckland City Archives, Burgess Roll, 1890-1891, ACC396 Item No 1d Page No 1.
40 New Zealand Herald, 3 July 1976, p. 15.
41 Bruce Ah Chee, interview, August 2006, Lily Lee.
42 Auckland Star, 3 December 1927, p. 12.
bottom of Queen Street, one opposite the Chief Post Office, one where the Great Northern Arcade is now, one above the junction of Queen Street and Victoria Street, one by the Regent Cinema, and one by the BOAC office in Queen Street.43

Through all of his shops Ah Chee built up a large clientele and their operations were considered of a sizeable scale. He set high standards amongst all his shops and had a policy of only selling goods of the best quality and value.

Figure 14: Ah Chee’s shop on right at 13 Queen St in 1890s (c. 1890s James D, Richardson, 4-284 Sir George Grey Special Collections, Auckland City Libraries)

Exporting of Fungus
The dried fungus called muk yee meaning ‘wood ear’ is much sought after by the Chinese as a culinary delicacy.44 In 1871 Chew Chong discovered the fungus growing abundantly in Taranaki and began purchasing it from Europeans and Māori to export it to China. The trade soon flourished and many others became involved in the collecting, buying and selling of dried fungus. In 1890, fungus represented 46 per cent, compared with gold that

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43 A Brief History of Chan Dar-Chee, and his Two Sons, William and Clement, 1991. Alice refers to the locations of the buildings as they were during the 1960s.

44 Botanical name, auricularia.
represented 32 per cent of the total value of exports to China and Hong Kong.45

Very early on, Ah Chee branched out into the exporting of the dried fungus. He purchased fungus from agents who had set up depots around New Zealand, as well as buying it directly from the people who had collected it. Kathleen Garner was one such person. She remembers as a young girl collecting fungus for Ah Chee at Grahams Beach on the Awhitu Peninsula. She recalls ‘collecting sugar bags of fungus off the fallen karaka trees from down in the gullies, drying this out on sheets of iron, having to ram it into bags, and then selling it to Ah Chee in Auckland to make some money.’46

![Ah Chee's supply depot in Little Queen Street](image)

Figure 15: Ah Chee's supply depot in Little Queen Street, with truck parked outside, between Wingate & Co Ltd and Whitehead’s Silver Grid. (James D. Richardson, 27 August 1927, 4-7647, Sir George Grey Special Collections, Auckland City Libraries)

The exporting of fungus was a very successful enterprise for Ah Chee. Such was the strength and volume of his fungus exporting business that there was a dedicated supply depot located in Little Queen Street which was between Lower Albert Street and Queen Street. The cable address of the company was “Fungus” and it warranted two telephone lines.47

45 Ng, Vol. 3, p. 304.
46 [http://www.aspincustodians.com/sportmemories.htm](http://www.aspincustodians.com/sportmemories.htm)
‘Fungus put grandfather on his feet,’ Tommy Ah Chee has observed. Exporting of fungus to Hong Kong certainly provided Ah Chee with greater credentials to go on to import goods into the country. An example from the correspondence files of the Customs Department illustrates:

Ah Chee is either a partner or a close business connection of Kwong Tai Ou. He ships fungus to Kwong at cost price and receives silk in return at cost. Ah Chee says that local houses such as Milne and Choyce and John Court could not buy off Kwong at the prices on the invoice because there would be no profit for Kwong; it is only in consideration of Ah Chee acting as a buyer of fungus that he can get these prices.

Other Business Interests
Ah Chee established banana and ginger plantations in Fiji. This was to ensure a continuous supply of bananas for the shops, and ginger for the pickling factories that were owned by the company. Ah Chee entrusted his nephew Sai Louie to oversee the plantations. Ernie Sai Louie said, ‘because of his business acumen, his Uncle Ah Chee sent him to Fiji where he was made responsible for starting and maintaining a banana and ginger plantation. This was to ensure that Ah Chee would have a continuous supply of these products for his factories and shops that were based in Auckland.’

Correspondence between the Customs Department and Ah Chee serves to illustrate the range of goods that Ah Chee & Co imported, for example, preserves, fireworks, and Chinese groceries. At the time of a shortage of eggs in Auckland, he imported Canadian chilled eggs which were of great demand in his Queen Street shop. Ah Chee also had a rabbit business in

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48 New Zealand Herald, 3 July 1976, p. 15.
49 Customs & Marine Department, Inward Correspondence, BBAO 5544 236a 1913/2591.
50 Ernie Sai Louie, interview, 8 May 2004, Celine Kearney.
51 Customs & Marine Department, Inwards Correspondence, BBAO 5544 105a 1908/796; BBAO 5544 124a 1910/1537; BBAO 5544 148a 1913/1446.
52 A Brief History of Chan Dar Chee.
Rosebank Road, where skins were sorted, cured, sold and exported. Prior to export they were stored at a depot in Stanley Street, at the bottom of Constitution Hill, where trucks and vegetables were also kept.\textsuperscript{53}

Further interests included sheep farming and a poultry farm near his gardens in Rosebank Road, Avondale. There he adopted the technology of egg incubators, which had been recently introduced into New Zealand.\textsuperscript{54}

Ah Chee’s family
Ah Chee was a family man who surrounded himself with his clan. Kong Foong Yuen provided a place where he could house and care for his family, close relatives and other fellow countrymen. He lived and socialized communally with them and also involved many relatives in his business enterprises. In particular his wife,

\textsuperscript{53} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{54} Ibid.
nephew and two sons played a pivotal role in contributing to his business success. In 1882 Ah Chee became a naturalized New Zealander which allowed him to bring his wife Joong Chew Lee out from China. She arrived in 1886, and was one of the very few Chinese women in New Zealand at that time. The 1881 census records only nine Chinese women in the colony compared with 4995 men so it was certainly unusual for Chinese women to be with their menfolk. Joong Chew Lee was a very capable and strong woman. Her grasp of the English language and ability to read and write Chinese greatly assisted Ah Chee. She played an important role in overseeing many aspects of her husband’s business. Grandson Bruce Ah Chee, now aged 93, recalls that his grandmother was very supportive of her husband. Joong Chew Lee was also known to be prominent in Auckland’s Chinese Christian community.

Ah Chee and Joong Chew Lee had five children all born in Auckland. Their first two children were twins who died at birth. William Ah Chee 陈华富 (Chan Wah Fook) was born on the 25th December 1889, then Clement Ah Chee 陈华东 (Chan Wah Dong) born on the 29th November 1892, and lastly Arthur Ah Chee 陈华英 (Chan Wah Ying) born on the 19th March 1895.

Ah Chee’s three sons were amongst the earliest group of Chinese youth in Auckland and also amongst the earliest full-blooded Chinese to be born in New Zealand. They had a privileged upbringing attending Wellesley School and Auckland Grammar School. The fact that Ah Chee was a prosperous businessman meant that the boys as they became young men had access to wealth and opportunity. William and Clement both worked in their father’s company Ah Chee & Co from an early age. They took on a number of responsibilities and were able to utilize their education and skills to assist their father to progress the business. The youngest son Arthur left New Zealand to live in China in 1915.

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55 The Brief History of Chan Dar Chee, and his two sons, William and Clement names Ah Chee’s wife as “Rain Chee” and said she was born about 1869; the actual date is not known.
56 Outlook, 1 August 1908, p. 13.
57 Ip, p. 42.
58 Mavis Lowe says her grandfather William Ah Chee was friends with the Kerridge family.
Nephew Sai Louie was another important family member.\textsuperscript{59} Ah Chee brought him to New Zealand at the age of 16 in 1894. Sai Louie was to play an integral role in Ah Chee’s businesses and success and was known as an astute and clever business man. His roles included the purchasing and exporting of fungus, the importing of Chinese foodstuffs, managing the fruit and vegetable businesses and handling all Chinese correspondence.\textsuperscript{60}

It is evident from the family’s involvement in the business, that Ah Chee relied greatly upon the skills and abilities of his sons and nephew to assist him. He provided them with much responsibility and felt confident that they could continue his business once he returned to China.

\textbf{End of an era}

In 1914, Ah Chee handed over the management of the company to his two sons William and Clement.\textsuperscript{61} Both were astute businessmen and had spent time working in different parts of the various business enterprises. William initially took the reins of

\begin{figure}
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\includegraphics[width=0.5\textwidth]{figure17.jpg}
\caption{Joong Chew Lee, wife of Ah Chee (c. 1920s, Bruce Ah Chee)}
\end{figure}

\textsuperscript{59} For more information on Chan Ying Kew, see \textit{Chan Ying Kew and Chung Han Lim} based on an interview with Ernie Sai Louie, 8 May 2004, Celine Kearney.

\textsuperscript{60} May Sai Louie, interview, 21 December 2007, Lily Lee.

\textsuperscript{61} \url{http://timespanner.blogspot.com/2008/10/ah-chee-family-on-rosebank.html}
the company and it continued to prosper and expand for a decade or so.

William continued to successfully manage the fruit shops and the import and export businesses until he became ill in 1927. During William’s illness, Clement looked after the company and then when William died in 1929, Clement took over the reins and continued the family business until he and the family returned to China. About this time Clement proposed the idea of a Chinese market. Negotiations between A. B. Donald Ltd and the Chinese growers led to the establishment of a new company called ‘Produce Markets Ltd’. Both the Chinese growers themselves and the Donald family were shareholders in the new produce marketing company.62 Despite Clement’s original proposal, he was not included as a director but in 1931 he became a shareholder.63

However, as James Ng commented, Ah Chee’s sons were ‘typical of the second generation, they expanded very quickly, borrowed money and in the end could not repay it.’ The leases ran out on the market gardens and were not renewed or were taken over by others; most of the businesses were sold.64 In the 1930s Clement left the company and New Zealand to live in China. The Great Depression had brought about a downturn in trade and the consequent financial collapse of many businesses throughout New Zealand; Ah Chee & Co was but one of them.

Unfortunately the demise of the company also coincided with the death of Ah Chee in Hong Kong in March 1930, aged 79 years. Madame Joong wrote to her grandson Norman (William’s son) to tell him of Ah Chee’s death and funeral arrangements. Ah Chee’s funeral was held in Kwang Tung and it is highly likely that he was buried within the grounds of his mansion at Tung Shan. Within the next five years Madame Joong also died.65

63 The first general meeting of shareholders of Produce Markets Ltd was held 17 October 1930 with Fong Foo Soo, Thomas Wong Doo Senior and Thomas Wong Doo Junior as directors, and W. A. Donald as Chairman.
64 A few of the businesses were taken up by other family members. For example, Norman Ah Chee (William’s son) continued the Newmarket fruit shop for a time before renting a premise and moving his fruit shop to Remuera Road. Nephew Sai Louie took over the fungus trade and set up a fruit and grocery business in 171 Queen Street, Onehunga in 1929.
65 David Wong, 22 October 2009, personal email communication with Ruth Lam.
From humble beginnings as a market gardener and produce hawker in New Zealand, Chan Dah Chee became a successful and prominent businessman. He worked hard and made the most of opportunities that came his way. He certainly fulfilled the dream of going to a strange land to make his fortune and he returned to his homeland of China with his wealth. The mansion that he built in Tung Shan is testament to his success.

Ah Chee was known as one of the ‘leading Chinese’ in Auckland. In this capacity he was called upon, along with James Ah Kew and Thomas Quoi, to ensure that Chinese language versions of the newly-passed Opium Act were distributed to every Chinese household in the Auckland area.66

James Ng remarked, ‘Ah Chee was a true pioneer of his times, he was one of Auckland’s founding fathers of Chinese “the Sew Hoy of Auckland”. His influence was of a huge magnitude’.67

Appendix: Chinese market gardens in early Auckland
On 23 October 1866, a ‘party of 16 Chinese arrived at Auckland and established market gardens.’68 There is no further information relating to this newspaper report but this group could be considered to be among the first Chinese market gardeners in Auckland. According to the Census for 1867, the total population of the Auckland province at that time was around 48,000. However as the Census did not collect any information either on the Chinese or on market gardening, we can only imagine the situation from 1871 onwards. The Census for 1871 recorded a total of only eight Chinese living in Auckland. In that same year, a report to the Chinese Immigration Committee noted that 49 Chinese gave their occupation as market gardeners however the majority of them lived in Otago and Westland.69

According to the census figures for 1874 there were fifteen Chinese (fourteen men and one woman) living in Auckland in

66 Customs & Marine Department, Inward Correspondence, 1865-1890, BBAO 5544 212a 1902/1150.
67 James Ng, 4 December 2007, personal communication with Lily Lee.
68 Auckland Star, 23 October 1956. From a chronology, compiled by Mr Forbes Eadie between 1937 and 1940, of the information found in the shipping lists of the troopships that arrived in Auckland between the 1860s and WWI.
contrast to a total population of 67,451. By 1886, the number of Chinese in Auckland had increased significantly to 163 persons (157 men and 6 women) with the total population nearly doubling in numbers to 130,339. It is not known how many of the Chinese in Auckland were working in market gardens.

The New Zealand-wide economic depression of 1886 to 1893 was severe and impacted on the whole population. Chinese market gardeners were also affected. Ah Quoi, a prominent Aucklander who was also known as Thomas Quoi, was reported as saying:

They used to earn on an average £2 to £4 a week, now they do not earn ten shillings. New chums cannot get a living if they come out, and the Chinese at Arch Hill are in a very bad state just now, they are not earning tucker. They work from daylight to dark. They do not look at the clock to see when it is time to stop...70

Acknowledgements
Our grateful thanks are extended to the descendants of Ah Chee who helped us write this story by sharing their lives and experiences, their personal information and photos, and by verifying information found in other sources.

Bruce Ah Chee, son of Clement Ah Chee and grandson of Ah Chee. On his return from China, Bruce attended Newmarket School for a couple of years then worked for Francis Wong Hop for three to four years before starting his own carrying business. In 1944, he married Grace Gee (Gee Mu Duk) the daughter of Gee Dong from Gee Wong Tong, Jung Seng. Bruce was interviewed by Lily Lee in August 2006 and October 2007.

May Sai Louie, daughter of Sai Louie. May (Chan Sen Keen) and her family lived with Ah Chee in Tung Shan from 1924 before returning to New Zealand in 1929. She worked with her parents in their shop in Onehunga for 59 years. May was interviewed by Eva Ng on 27 December 1987 and by Lily Lee on 21 December 2007.

70 Report from Auckland correspondent in Wanganui Herald, 7 May 1888, p. 2.
Gwen Sai Louie, Ernie Sai Louie’s wife and daughter-in-law of Sai Louie. Gwen (Wong Koon Wun) is the daughter of Robert Wong Toi (Wong Yeu Toi) from Ging Boi, See Yip and Gock Oi Toi of Jook Sow Yuen, Chung Shan. She married Ernie Sai Louie (Chan See Chun) in 1952. Ernie’s father took over the dried fungus trade from Ah Chee & Co and then started up a fruit and Chinese grocery shop at 171 Queen Street, Onehunga. It was Ernie’s job to collect the dried fungus that was sold to agents in the 1930s, 1940s and 1950s. On his frequent trips down country he would take Chinese foodstuffs with him to sell. Gwen was interviewed by Lily Lee in November 2007 and September 2008.

David and Susan Wong, children of Alice Wong Hop (nee Ah Chee) and grandchildren of Clement Ah Chee. Alice and her husband Francis Wong Hop had a fruit shop in Symonds Street, Royal Oak. Francis also transported produce twice a week to provincial towns such as Cambridge, Morrinsville, Te Aroha, Waihi and Paeroa. Susan compiled the family history booklet titled ‘A Brief History of Chan Dar Chee and his two sons, William and Clement.’ David is writing a family history of Clement Ah Chee and his descendants.

Mavis Lowe is the eldest daughter of Norman Ah Chee and granddaughter of William Ah Chee. In 1930, when Mavis was two years old, her mother died. She was then looked after by her grandmother Loo Yuk Ngan at Ah Chee’s house in Tung Shan with other members of the Ah Chee family until she was about ten years old. Mavis remembers her grandmother talking about Kong Foong Yuen. Mavis and her grandmother returned to New Zealand with Clement, Tom and Betty in 1938. In 1951 Mavis married Harry Lowe (Lowe Yee War) from Yuen Ha, Poon Yue. They grew kumara and glasshouse tomatoes and cucumbers in Roscommon Road, Wiri for eleven years before moving to Alfriston Road, Manurewa to grow strawberries, glasshouse tomatoes and glasshouse grapes. Mavis and Harry retired from growing in the early 1990’s. Mavis was interviewed by Lily Lee in May 2009.

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David Young

This is a bold venture with a bold title and an even bolder subtitle, one in a series of such books examining “how and why our environment changes”. Supported by a Marsden Grant, its editors have commissioned a strong group of contributors from the three South Island universities to develop this enterprise, including besides themselves: Paul Star, Vaughan Wood, Peter Holland, Jim McAloon, Robert Peden and Jim Williams.

Written with an international academic teaching audience in mind, each essay sets out its intentions in an introduction and then follows its analysis with a formal conclusion. While essays are pithy and spare, together a wide range of topics is covered, so that the overall effect is of discursiveness, but with a relentlessly sharp, schematic focus chapter by chapter. Seeds of Empire begins with the naturalization of grasses in a land previously of wetlands, forests and tussocks that had evolved largely for anything but what was to come – ruminants and large mammals. The book then seeks to explain how through experiment and trial and error, settlers began to develop grass seed that suited a range of the soils and conditions that New Zealand experiences, as well as the animals that they introduced.

Settlers’ first discovery was that once forests had been felled and fired, the flush in the nutrient-rich ashes lasted no more than a few seasons. Then came the quest for permanent pasture, and hence the nation’s Faustian bargain with guano began. This was imported first from Peru, we learn, as early as 1854. It rapidly became an addiction from which few farmers even nearly 160 years later – and to the ruin of Nauru – have yet recovered. (The book provides a graph of the rising demand for artificial fertilizers from 1890 to 2000. Our productivity from it is described in a fleeting reference from Samoan historian, Damon Salesa as yet another iteration of colonization.)

For those of us accustomed to what are now almost monthly pleas from the environmental lobby for the dairying
industry to internalize its costs it may be of interest to learn that nutrient accounting was espoused – in another on the hoof reference – by the versatile German chemist Justus von Leibig in a publication in 1845. "Nevertheless, imported guano and rock phosphate came at a cost to producer and consumer alike, and it was several decades before the true cost to the New Zealand environment was recognized." This dates from 1891, from the polymath Sir James Hector.

In some ways little has changed. Some farmers welcomed the addition of science, others pooh-poohed it. Getting the balance right between practicality and where the data led was the trick, as was noted by visiting writer Andre Seigfried, a geographer and political commentator, who visited New Zealand in the early 1900s.

*Seeds of Empire* recounts the nation’s never-ending quest to perfect a product that will satisfy a market; what the sadly now disbanded Ministry of Agriculture and Fisheries Quality Management organisation used to call “plough to plate” marketing and later ‘plate-to-plough.’ It is a quest that is, of course, eternal. The surprise is that the systematics of improvement began so long ago. The model employed in this book’s research inevitably uses the popular core-periphery paradigm, but it refines this in adopting a model of mobility, network and web which implies feedback loops, with consequential and continuing refinements and contributions from both core and periphery.

The interactive, on-going reciprocal nature of the relationship has been closely drawn by Jim McAloon in his chapter on mobilizing capital and trade. Wool from Australasia got on the international map by 1876, at the Philadelphia Exhibition; by the 1890s the intensification of “the refrigerated economy” saw a shift from private to state provision of advice on grassland development.

Once the Department of Scientific and Industrial Research was established in 1926 there was an overemphasis on what was termed the ‘grasslands revolution’ led by the indomitable Bruce Levy, and one driven by plant genetics more than plant ecology. Influenced by British ideas, this approach took no account of native vegetation. It spanned the country in ways that may have restricted a more diverse and heterodox agriculture. It has taken most of us a long time to make an indigenous response to that.
Since the arguments are spare and evidence is necessarily highly selective, one reads this book wanting more. It is a book more fully understood by a reading of its complement from the same editors, *Environmental Histories of New Zealand*. Where might future lines of enquiry fall? Contributor Vaughan Wood is working on a book on Akaroa cockfoot grass. One could imagine, using this model, a Ph.D. or two more falling out of the multiple interests of the grasslands experimenters of the past 100 years. Potential revised biographies also include those of: James Wilson (forestry), Herbert Guthrie-Smith (conservation), Frederick Hilgendorf and James Grigg.

This is proudly a South Island enterprise, and just occasionally, this emphasis shows through as a mild limitation. For instance, James Wilson (one of the most innovative and energetic of all the late Victorian, early 20th century farmers, who rose to Cabinet, and as a ‘wise use’ farm forester was influential in the formation of the Forest Service) is described as living ‘in the Manawatu’. Now, for all those who live south of the Waitaki River, it is worth remembering that the Rangitikei River is just as important a divide in the North Island, separating the Manawatu and the Rangitikei – but the still significantly Scots community who live to the north of that river just don’t make the same kind of fuss about it as do their southern cousins. A small matter, I know, but not the only loose caption.

My only other concern is that the title’s tag-line, ‘the environmental transformation of NZ’ is not entirely accurate. Pawson and Brooking’s previous collaboration, *Environmental Histories of New Zealand* might more easily have carried such a catchline. Arable farming, forestry, even wine and orcharding, are not the focus of this book, although it does show for some decades into colonisation that a future rooted in grasslands was by no means a certainty. So ‘The grasslands transformation of New Zealand’ I feel might have served this book better, because it is more concerned with grasses and the science of what varieties best grew and provided most feed. It’s what the authors like to refer to as addressing “the silences of grass” (a slightly odd reference to its long unfurrowed academic history).

Nor is this a narrative history – geographers and economists play too big a part in it for that! But what those contributors bring is something else. For example, the chapter on “Learning about the environment”, by Peter Holland, with its
discussions on how Pākehā learnt from Māori, contains a marvellous diagram displaying how the vocabulary of Joseph Greenwood, a Banks Peninsular settler, changed in his diary between 1844 and 1847 as he became more familiar with the weather. This chapter, too, is tantalizing in its brevity, and perhaps raises more questions than it answers. Indeed, *Environmental Histories*’ first chapter by Atholl Anderson on the Māori colonisation of New Zealand, would greatly amplify a reading of this chapter, as would Geoff’s Park’s chapter on swamps in that same volume in regard to some later chapters in *Seeds of Empire*.

While attractively produced, with a clever cover image and excellent tables and graphs, drawings of seeds, this book is selling online for $151.95 (AUS), $174.95 (NZ). A useful, impressively researched text, it seems a great pity therefore that it is unlikely to reach anyone other than an academic audience.

ONDINE GODTSCHALK

In recent years, New Zealand has dealt with a number of highly publicised biosecurity breaches, perhaps none capturing the public imagination more than didymo, with its evocative moniker rock snot. But, as Gavin McLean and Tim Shoebridge’s Quarantine! Protecting New Zealand at the Border demonstrates, New Zealand has a long history of battling to keep pests and pestilences from plaguing its shores. Commissioned by the Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry Biosecurity New Zealand (MAFBNZ), and produced by the History Group of the Ministry of Culture and Heritage, Quarantine! offers a detailed account of New Zealand’s regulatory and administrative approach to biosecurity since 1840, tracing the development of one of the world’s most stringent and highly-regarded biosecurity control systems.

Quarantine! is mostly concerned with New Zealand’s external borders, and the measures adopted to patrol the country’s sea and air ports. As the authors’ acknowledge, ‘internal borders’ also play a role in biosecurity management, but all topics need to be confined to be manageable. The bulk of the book focuses on plant and animal quarantine, after an initial chapter on human quarantine. In this first chapter, McLean and Shoebridge provide an informative overview of pre-1939 quarantine practices, adopted to manage the flurry of potentially disease-carrying humans arriving on passenger ships. They canvas attempts to ‘pre-screen’ immigrants before they boarded ships in England, and the establishment—and subsequent disestablishment—of quarantine islands near New Zealand’s main ports, enlivening their narrative with particular accounts of ‘diseased’ ships, and tales of occasional passenger rebellion in the face of detention in quarantine.

The book’s emphasis on New Zealand’s response to various threats at its border means the more complicated aspects of quarantine history—quarantine as a means to control or exclude sections of society considered undesirable for reasons beyond risk to public health—are underexplored: less desirable classes and
races wishing to immigrate to New Zealand were subject to greater scrutiny, while debates around quarantine legislation inevitably evoked racist tones in attempts to ‘protect’ New Zealand from the ‘yellow peril’. Also missing are references to promotional literature which flew in the face of quarantine and contagionist concerns by advertising New Zealand’s benevolent climate as an immigration attractor and potential palliative for those looking to recover their health.¹ Finally, given the book’s all-encompassing title, I would have liked the authors to revisit the subject of human quarantine in a later chapter, to touch on contemporary challenges – especially in the wake of SARS and swine flu – although I accept this may have taken the book a little beyond its history of MAFBNZ ambit.

The remaining chapters, divided chronologically, trace the changing dynamics of animal and plant quarantine in New Zealand. While environmental historians have paid plenty of attention to the plants and animals that have crossed our borders, less attention has been given to the role of biosecurity in helping New Zealand protect its environment and the industries that depend on it – both the agrarian sector and, more recently, the tourist benefit derived from the country’s indigenous flora and fauna. Biosecurity therefore has long been an essential plank in helping the country maintain its viability and identity, although it has not always been an easy task as Quarantine! makes apparent. As the authors note, Department of Agriculture biologist Thomas Kirk thundered in 1895 that ‘at the present time our ports are open for the introduction of every abomination’ and he charged as unpatriotic colonists who took biosecurity risks and therefore put personal profit ahead of the interests of the wider community.² With the establishment of fumigation sheds around the country by 1899, quarantine efforts received a significant boost from whence, as suggested by the main thrust of the book’s narrative, the quest

¹ Linda Bryder, “‘A Health Resort for Consumptives’: Tuberculosis and Immigration to New Zealand, 1880 – 1914,” Medical History, 1996, 40, pp. 453-471. Significant work has been undertaken in Australia on the ways quarantine was used to bolster a ‘white Australia’, see for example Bashford, Imperial Hygiene: A Critical History of Colonialism, Nationalism and Public Health (Hampshire: Palgrave MacMillan, 2004).
to police our borders has been a continuous but mostly successful struggle in the face of ever changing challenges.

McLean and Shoebridge point to the rise in aviation as one of the biggest challenges for border control. While shipping improvements reduced travel times and therefore increased some pests’ chances of surviving the journey (containerization in the 1970s provided a particularly hospitable environment), the start of trans-Tasman and trans-Pacific air flights in 1940 posed a new raft of challenges. Insects, most worryingly the malaria-carrying anopheline mosquito, could survive air flight, and from 1951, aircraft spraying was introduced. Such fears prompted the Department of Health to issue a poster targeting tourists, rather unfortunately headed “Not Welcome in New Zealand”. While the poster went on to explain that malaria and mosquitoes were the unwanted visitors, the Tourist and Publicity Department ensured the poster was modified before too many tourists took offence. Anecdotes such as this scattered throughout the book enliven what could otherwise be a rather dry account of regulatory and administrative change.

Through the lens of plant and animal quarantine we glimpse parallel histories of transportation, technology, science, gendered labour relations and professionalization in New Zealand. For example, McLean and Shoebridge draw on oral histories to profile the work of quarantine officers themselves, highlighting the shift from a male-dominated workplace comprising men from farming backgrounds to an environment requiring tertiary training in sciences, bolstered by internal training and examination. In an all too familiar theme, as women began to join the service from the late 1960s, the authors show how they had to prove themselves in ways that men did not and, while supported by senior staff, they faced resistance in the field from men unable to accept that women could work in challenging quarantine environments such as on ships.

Elsewhere, the authors highlight how the massive increase in traffic and cargo across our border has demanded the development and use of new technologies and processes. As the feasibility of comprehensive hands-on ‘shake and sniff’ inspection diminished, profiling and risk-analysis methods became the main quarantine management tools. Following a series of biosecurity breaches in the 1990s, including the arrival of the white-spotted tussock moth, an injection of funding enabled the introduction of
the detector dog programme—leading to the now common sight of dogs inspecting passenger luggage at airports—and the widespread introduction of x-ray machines.

While mostly national in focus, *Quarantine!* also highlights the way international frameworks increasingly define national responses to issues and problems, particularly when they might impinge upon trade. Increased global management of quarantine/biosecurity requires New Zealand to abide by a number of international regulations, including the 1994 Sanitary and Phytosanitary Measures Agreement which lays out conditions for countries to negotiate quarantine measures whilst minimising trade restrictions. As McLean and Shoebridge note, such requirements place added pressure on quarantine administration by essentially removing the option of a “zero-risk” approach. The fine line between necessary biosecurity control and the use of such measures for trade protection is an on-going debate, evidenced by New Zealand’s long-running battle with Australia over its ban on New Zealand pip fruit because of fireblight.

The friction between environmental, scientific, policy and trade imperatives is also evident in the final chapter’s discussion of quarantine after deregulation, tariff removal and the public-sector reforms of the 1980s. More open market access prompted an increase in fruit and vegetable imports, along with other high-risk biosecurity items such as cars, while the shift to a user pays model and the introduction of instant fines for passengers carrying biosecurity risk items changed the nature of quarantine administration. Not all the changes have been welcomed: tighter controls at airports prompted a backlash from those who felt harassed compared to the treatment they received in other countries, while the inspection of VIPs’ baggage caused the odd diplomatic stoush. And in a back-to-the-future moment, McLean and Shoebridge detail how pre-screening in country of origin has been reintroduced, but this time for produce and products rather than people.

*Quarantine!* is a nicely presented and colourful book, and the care and attention over its appearance enhances its accessibility. Generously illustrated, the text makes good use of cutaway boxes to provide informative asides or biographies of key figures in a way that does not interrupt the main narrative. However, the insertion of a two-page profile of ex-quarantine officer Jenny Lynch at the conclusion of the final chapter does
make for a slightly unusual end point. Although well-footnoted, the omission of a bibliography/reference list, or at least a further reading list, is perhaps unfortunate, given the book’s likely appeal to school students. Unfortunately the endnotes for the Prologue appear to have been unintentionally omitted: hopefully this oversight can be corrected in any subsequent reprintings.

All up, Quarantine! provides an informative and accessible account of quarantine administration in New Zealand and would make a good reference text for anyone embarking on research that touches on biosecurity in New Zealand. And as a record of public history, Quarantine! would provide an excellent resource, and enriching context, for anyone working in this area of government.
This book looks great on first glance. If you picked it up off a bookshop shelf and flicked through, von Luckner’s photography alone would start you thinking, “I should buy this”.

Perhaps that’s symptomatic of what in recent decades garden books have become. Cook books of my mother’s era were workaday things, with colour photographs. They were mostly small format and had pages heavy with text. Cookbooks, like garden books, have become a phenomenon, with rising standards of photography, typesetting, books-as-seductive ‘must-haves’, often regardless of whether they have any meaningful content. Quite collectable for those who never cook: are there similarly garden books for lounge-chair non-gardeners?

I suppose garden selections depend a great deal on the author’s contacts and extent of travel: how well do they know a country?; can they convince owners to ‘share’? Some gardeners are proud to show off, others shrink and value privacy above all else.

It’s interesting to flick through Lammerting’s book and to contrast it with Derek Fell’s Great Gardens of New Zealand (2003), Mary Burnard’s The New Garden Heritage of New Zealand (1990) or Barbara Matthews’ Gardens of New Zealand (1983/8). Contrast helps to flesh out the trend: and that trend is less and less text (and history), and larger and larger images – even when a selection of the same gardens bobs up in each survey. Perhaps the differences in selections say more. Will a long-resident Kiwi make a clearer or muddier survey of what makes Kiwi gardens ‘tick’, to convey their essence? Will a newcomer/outsider have a clearer view unclouded by local loyalties, small-town and bloodline ties? There are merits either way. It’s not easy to pinpoint what makes a New Zealand garden unique. It may be easier to say what makes it inspirational. Inspiration in the owners or creators of course can
differ from inspiration given to a visitor – and varies with their familiarity and frequency.

I wanted to like this book more than I ended up doing. Dipping in and out of it (another modern trend with book production, targeting and time-poor buyers/owners) is fine, a brush over each garden gives an idea of its character, place and the intent of the creator(s). A lingering leaves one aware of the ‘glissando’ approach that seems the book’s strength and its failing. Not much depth is given, or can be, in such a format and product.

In Inspirational Gardens, twenty-seven gardens are featured from north to south. Some are old but most quite young – 10 to 30 years seems the more common time span covered. Statistically, we buy and sell homes every 4-6 years so perhaps this is a long time span? But as someone who often finds gardens the more inspiring the older (and less titivated) they are, I beg to differ.

The book leads you to conclude that New Zealand gardeners are still taking inspiration from European gardens, albeit transplanted into and onto Antipodean landscapes. A good acid test for any purportedly ‘national’ garden survey is how many of them have native plants in them and how are these treated. This is very telling of ‘bedding down’ in a landscape; putting down roots beyond the first few generations of migration, ‘camping’ and ‘settling’, the process of mental and physical embedding, belonging. By this I don’t mean ‘native-only’: but it is instructive to focus on the few such shown.

The text is ‘coffee table’ and saccharine in tone – laced with adjectives like ‘stunning’, ‘breathtaking’ – not that New Zealand landscapes aren’t, but over-use can quickly diminish their power or credibility. Lammerting describes the landscapes as ‘endless’, something risible to a Kiwi long-residing in Australia. New Zealand’s landscapes might be big and seemingly ‘empty’ to a European used to paucity of scale and density of settlement, but hardly ‘endless’. What about Africa’s, America’s or Russia’s plains?

Sloppy botanical naming and captioning let this book down. It’s hard to get right every time but for the book’s price it should be better. Butler Point’s ‘manuka’ trunks shown on p.9 are clearly kanuka to be that tall! It’s a garden book but barely two images show anything of Butler Point’s historic buildings – a great pity. Captions such as those on pp.10-11 point up imported ornaments yet omit to ‘locate’ them in the South Pacific. The New
Zealand cabbage tree (p.10) and New Zealand kawakawa (p.11) go unmentioned. If I were a foreigner buying this it’s exactly such plants I’d want identified. English buyers gaga over New Zealand flax cultivars might be delighted to learn more of our plants. Captions like that on p.12 mentions daisies where none are anywhere in view, whereas the ‘lichen’ shot on p.15 makes no mention of the New Zealand tui perched mid-shot: why?

Escapism and conjuring up ‘somewhere else’ (from New Zealand!) seem common here. Lammerting’s PalmCo garden in Kerikeri is described as “South Sea/Pacific”, yet the plants shown are mostly Californian desert fan palms, Canary Island dragon trees, South African birds of paradise flowers, Central/South American in origin. Does ‘look’ or ‘theatre’ over-ride accuracy: who cares where the effect comes from? Many a Hollywood Tarzan movie shot inside a warehouse in California never got any closer to an African jungle than the local pot plant shop – does it matter in a garden book? On p.23 is the first of several mentions of Gardens of (Inter/)National Significance, and the New Zealand Gardens Trust. I am suspicious of the vaunted claims of this system. It seems heavily weighted towards ‘feature’ gardens open to visit, often ‘commercial’ in focus and presentation. Of course visiting gardens is a major popular pastime and pleasure. This phenomenon is nothing new: Vauxhall Gardens in London’s suburbs or Caserta’s palace grounds near Naples offer 17th and 18th century equivalents: what bothers me are the criteria – judged by whom for whom. And the youth of the chosen gardens. Most date from the early 1990s, some after 2005, and surely all of which are too young to be nationally significant. And their quantity? I wonder how many can be of ‘national significance’ before the term becomes a cliché. Would ‘regional’ be more honest /less marketable? Is the focus more on ‘show’, ‘surface appeal’ or ‘makeover’ than sustainability, endurance and soul? Should it be?

‘Chinaberry’ on p.29 might be more widely known here as white cedar or Persian lilac or Indian bead tree. ‘Ixia viridiflora’ on p.30 is lime green: the lilac/pink one shown is *I. flexuosa*. Its home, Woodbridge, is claimed to be a New Zealand garden, large and with a ‘free spirit’, yet noting its owners annually travel overseas and bring ideas home with them, it seems derivative, with few New Zealand plants bar tree ferns and renga renga lilies. It could be anywhere, in England’s south, South Africa, south-eastern Australia?
Ted Smyth’s name changes from the title on p.36 to column two: now he’s Tom! He of course deserves inclusion here as a notable modernist and minimalist, much copied. Perhaps these are less gardens than wealthy stage sets but they are no less marvellous for that. He seems also genuinely curious about and reflective on the landscapes he works in: with Auckland’s volcanic scoria, boulders and plants always featured or somewhere in view, along with a few favoured exotics: aloes, bromeliads, aeoniums. Note that spelling, the italicised “Bromelia” (p.38) doesn’t exist: these are Alcantarea or Vriesia sp. I wonder if the kaitaki stones on p.38 should be ‘kaitiaki stones’ – i.e. guardians, or is their origin Kaitaki? I love the irrelevant p.39 mention of stones worn smooth by the sea, “like those found in the Seychelles”. Perhaps the author’s a regular there – stones on any sea coast are sea-worn! I think it open to challenge that Smyth is the ‘founder’ of modern garden design in New Zealand: he perhaps founded minimalist garden design, quite a different thing. What about modernists such as Alfred Tschopp, Odo Strewe (publishing in magazines) and Anna Plischke producing modern gardens in the 1950s? All were influential two decades before Smyth. Poor history perhaps, but good myth-making!

Ayrlies always shows up in such surveys. What a pity that one of its highlighted plants is the Cocos Island/Queen palms over the pool (p.43). This species is a serious environmental weed in Sydney and I wager is getting into South and West Auckland bush as easily. There are far better palms to feature in such a prominent, visited and over-published, location. The yellow candelabra primulas above are in fact Phelodaxa: the caption’s P. bulleyana is apricot. The ‘lime green cypresses’ (p.47) seem far more like golden honey locust (Gleditsia) or black locust (Robinia) in form and colour than any cypress. The ‘Bush Noon’ (p.48) would be a more helpful caption if it added ‘kangaroo paw’.

Trudy Crerar’s formal row of titoki trees in giant planter pots are the best thing in her garden (pp.52-3), yet their name is New Zealand ash, not ‘NZ oak’: the leaves are pinnate like an ash. And Lomandra x ‘Tanika’ is a matt rush, not a grass. Again sloppy captioning won’t help keen gardeners find the right plant if they want to emulate some of these ideas. This garden is of interest, being basically urban and formal but making use of native plants. Perhaps there should be more of this in New Zealand’s gardens as a whole?
Mark Read’s prize-winning Takapuna garden (p.57) is intriguing yet poorly described. If its planting at the front and lining the drive ‘incorporates it into the surrounding environment’, this is not borne out by the photographs, which show a high grey cement wall that obscures the house/surrounding environment. Text and images seem at odds here, which is unfortunate.

New Zealand is one of the great rhododendron-growing climates in the world and Hollard Gardens (established, 1927) and Pukeiti (established, 1951) feature this genus, in two of the book’s oldest gardens. Sadly no image actually shows Hollard Gardens, an inexplicable omission. Couldn’t one of the loving close-ups of “rhodos” been substituted for a landscape shot of Hollard’s?

One of the best gardens in the book for me is Te Kainga Marire in New Plymouth: all native, rich in ‘bush feel’, texture and layering – beckoning exploration. Yet again poor botany lets down its captions: ‘ponga’ trunks (p.74) are in fact wheki ponga (Dicksonia spp. not Cyathea) with quite distinct ‘bark’ effects. This may not matter to a European but to an Antipodean or someone trying to grow wheki ponga, the former is far hardier than the latter. Southern English gardens such as Heligan can keep dicksonias alive. Accuracy matters. Cyathea medullaris (mamaku) is shown with its larger fronds (top right p.74 and ditto p.75) yet the distinction is not made – again, a pity. The standout plant Xeronema’s home on the Poor Knights Islands (p.76) is to, not ‘in’, the north of New Zealand – bad grammar.

I think it sad that the Richmond Garden in Carterton is vaunted as being internationally significant – it’s hardly Versailles, Schönbrunn, Studley Royal or Aranjuez, all formal gardens listed on the World Heritage List. Perhaps the New Zealand Gardens Trust thinks it needn’t convince anyone but itself of such stature? The garden seems wholly derivative – a kind of ‘House & Garden’ lift – the oeuvre of undoubtedly lucrative and successful garden ‘designers’ such as Paul Bangay (Australia), Russel Page (UK/Europe), but ‘New Zealand’? More like a stage set from France or Italy dropped in and around a New Zealand house. I can’t make out a single native plant – the water at least is local. Odd but undoubtedly the garden of an architect’s daughter and a mathematician: and good on them, having fun! How much more exciting would this be if the pleached hedges were Nothofagus sp. and the box balls and cubes were made of Gaultheria, Coprosma,
Lophomyrtus – move over, France! Of course even the captions get it wrong – fanned hedges are of beech, not ‘beach’!

Assisi Gardens, near Masterton, is full of Echium pininniana, (not ‘pinnfolium’ – p.90) and Viper’s bugloss is actually Echium vulgare, a lower weedy species, quite different. At least they’re playing with native hedges (Corokia sp., p.93) – bravo! Spiky combinations of flax, grasses and echiums work very well here. And animate in the constant winds no doubt.

Woollaston Estates’ winery with its green roofs (not as stated ‘roofs’) of tussock seems eminently well-grounded in a sea of grasses, though contrasting with bright green paddocks beyond! It’s good to see an industrial building trying to fit into its landscape and using all-native plants to do so. More of these would be inspirational indeed. No doubt the insulation value of an earth roof on a winery building makes good economic and thermal sense too.

Lammerting’s lack of research again shows on p.100’s claim that wine has only been grown and pressed professionally for a few decades in New Zealand – rot: perhaps ‘on an industrial scale’ might be true. James Busby’s vineyards in Waitangi and Northland in the 1830s; the Reverend Samuel Marsden’s in Kerikeri from 1819 and the French (Lavaud), Monte in Otago from the 1860s offer mockery of this ‘fact’ – the second wave of wineries and perhaps widespread export date from the ‘Dalmatians’ and 1970s on, but not the first.

Hortensia, Blenheim’s gazebo, is claimed to be French (like its owners), yet isn’t. ‘Gazebo’ isn’t the French word for ‘beautiful view’ – that is ‘belle vue’. Gazebo, the word, has disputed origins (likely Middle-English/Latin, corrupted) though these structures are built for views. My French dictionary says gaze means ‘gauze’, actually! P.114-5’s captioned ‘Acacia podalyriifolia’ is in fact Podalyria calyptrata, a pea bush from South Africa, not wattle. Last time I knew the plural of chateau was chateaux (cf ‘chateaux’, p.123) – Madame’s French seems lacking for someone German!

A highlight for me is Jimma’s garden by the sea at Seddon (Marlborough). To my expatriate eyes, this is ‘stunning’. Striking in its sensitivity to the wind-blown, salty yet beautiful coastal views and its all-native (bar the golden lupins redolent of coastal dunes) plants and rolling drifts of planting seem well-adapted and settled: yet it only dates from 2000. The house has a green roof and nestles into its surrounds. Only a folly skylight pokes up
above the green and gold waves. Restraint and 'fit' seem well-thought through and likely to survive, far more so than some 'transplanted Sissinghurst/Versailles'. I found his grove of upright lollipop ngaios amazingly formal. Either he's pruning them up on straight trunks or they're something else, like a *Pseudopanax*; the crowns are so marvellously tight they seem far from 'shaggy/irregular' ngaios. Again why can't natives be pruned, like a marvellous parallel 'sand dune' garden on Melbourne's Mornington Peninsula, Fiona Brockhoff's *Karkalla* is pruning local she oak (*Casuarina glauca*) into lollipops on poles/half spheres on ground. She clearly has had great fun and in its way, exactly what the wind does to them in such situations: why ever not!?

Similarly Ralf Kruger's Queenstown gardens seem well-adapted to their adopted landscape. He's clearly been growing and studying NZ plants for decades in Germany before migrating. Perhaps, too, Otago's dramatic montane landscapes are not such a change of 'scenery' for high-altitude Germans, Austrians, French or Swiss? His work deserves wider coverage. He appears to have a real feel (like Jimma) for the landscapes and plants he has adopted. A certain boldness and largeness of scale fits such large scale settings very well, in my view.

*Ohinetahi* (1970+) bobs up time and again in such books, deservedly so. Gardening on a volcanic rim and not far from fault lines brings rather more chaos to the evident order here than perhaps has been its experience to date. *Sissinghurst*-transplanted the garden plane may be, but Kent has nothing like a caldera as backdrop, nor the limpid mud-silt-blue of Lyttelton Harbour as backdrop. Such advantages! Again an architect's garden and it shows. Great to see Miles Warren reworking it into bolder reds: way too much cream in such situations! Nice too to see plain concrete block used so elegantly (he has for decades), an overlooked very 'kiwi' everyday material worth elevation. But England holds swain: a kowhai, single cabbage tree (and some wonderful 'lines' of *Hebe topiara*) seem the only natives to have 'jumped the fence'. Bit more reworking would make it sing stronger. *Libocedrus, Plagianthus, Hoheria*, totara and *Coprosma* could replace yew, hornbeam, beech and box – surely?

Sloppy history again appears in Lammerting's discussion of Akaroa's *Tree Crop Farm*. It wasn't Capability Brown who 'jumped the fence and saw all nature as a garden'. It was William Kent, his
competitor. Brown demolished the fences altogether and brought grass and sheep up to the house's windows.

Hamilton Gardens' history guidebook claims that New Zealand gardens are getting more conservative with time. This seems borne out by many of the selections in this book, such as the Trott's garden in Ashburton (p.172). Isn't a knot garden being 'a natural work of art' a tautology? A 'work of art' is by definition 'artificial' – something made cf. 'natural' – even if the ingredients themselves are living, natural plants. And I think it fairer to say knot gardens were not 'rediscovered' in the 20th century. They'd been lovingly replanted in some instances in each century since the middle ages, but were popularly revived in the 20th.

The other highlight for me is Broadfields near Christchurch – reinvented European formality but using New Zealand plants instead – boldly and well: with totara hedges, native shrubs replacing herbaceous border plants... Makes others trying to 'do formal' look very formulaic. Not to knock them: they're done beautifully – but less 'inspirational' than this is. Pity p.194's formal vista isn't centred on the power pole over the fence and hedge (can't hide it. Perhaps in time those kauri trees will!) Wonderful that this is an 'allotment' garden with no house either. It is intriguingly silent on what David Hobbs' wife thinks of it all. Does she want flowers? Or does she enjoy having time free to herself!?

Larnach's Castle garden also is a regular flag-bearer for New Zealand gardens (and buildings), and with ample justification. This is gardening (heritage 'rescue' and business-running) with verve and aplomb. And great to see it under snow. But here small things let the text down: 'Neo-Gothic' is less accurate than Italianate-Gothic for the house. European trees and shrubs are not the only things planted near the castle. Two cabbage trees flank its front steps, a rimu grows close to its northern side and several large native beech are to its south (shown on p.212 and labelled 'cedars!') and a large northern rata is on its northern lawn not far from the house. Are these not all native trees? I'd question whether the glass-topped cupola, box parterre (a very French word/concept) and border are in fact 'British' style par excellence. Far more continental (Franco/Italo/Indian) in effect and eclecticism, I would say. If that's British, so be it. Interesting that Margaret Barker is growing totara-clipped hedges and planting a great number of native plants in the gardens now – in its own 'transplanted exotic' way,
the castle is innovating. Its south-Pacific garden full of Gondwanaland-shared plants between fragmented continents is one of the absolute highlights of this place. It's worth a visit alone.
In December 2010, scholars of environmental history, history of science, geography, and literature convened at the University of Waikato in Hamilton, New Zealand, to explore the themes of nature, science, and power in the British Empire. The papers and conversations held during the two-day symposium revealed myriad of ways in which people have historically made sense of place and the impact of place on people in settler societies.

The enormous area that the Australasian and Pacific regions cover was highlighted through a study of the island groups of Hawai‘i and Aotearoa, in which David Young explored the role of the natural environment in shaping cultural practices. He suggested that the migration of peoples from eastern Polynesia to the two archipelagos, where the climate and resource abundance significantly diverged, might account for some of the subsequent differences in their mythology and language, customs, and use of water. These relationships with water, he argued, were disrupted and irrevocably altered with the European colonisation of these islands.

It is difficult to overstate the scale of the transformations that colonisation, mass migration and the spread of Western ideas wrought upon other cultures and ‘natural’ environments, particularly from the eighteenth century. As Joseph Lawson explained, the influence of Western agronomy extended even to the newly conquered territories of northern and western China during the Qing dynasty. Symposium convenor James Beattie related how, in the nineteenth century, Chinese from Guangdong moved backwards and forwards from their home to New Zealand, establishing networks of environmental exchange and imposing their belief-systems on New Zealand’s environment. Whether they were of Chinese or European-descent, the colonists of New Zealand brought with them a host of beliefs that informed their perceptions of the Antipodean environment and the ways their presence shaped it. In her study of colonial literature,
Kirstine Moffatt unravelled the range of different responses of Europeans to the New Zealand environment and its Māori inhabitants. For the Māori of the South Island, European contact led to intermarriage and the advent of missionary activity. Although colonisation brought an end to many traditional practices, Michael Stevens explained that it sustained and strengthened the tītī (muttonbird) harvest, which continues to this day. These findings, which offer similarities with the Australian experience, provide insights into the ways that colonists attempted to make sense of their surroundings and indigenous peoples, and the ways that indigenous peoples responded to colonisation.

Colonial efforts to understand Australasian climates were important in making sense of place and vital to the success of the agrarian enterprise. But the unfamiliar seasons of the colonies stalled the application of agricultural and pastoral practices based on British experiences. The development of an understanding of the New South Wales (NSW) climate at the turn of the nineteenth century was shaped, Claire Fenby argued, by the tension between the colonists' hopes and the realities they faced. The extremes of drought and floods, the hallmarks of Australia's extremely variable climate, pushed the settlers to establish reliable water supplies and to explore the plains beyond the Blue Mountains. The capricious climate and its effects on river systems, water supplies and settlements continued to drive colonial efforts to understand the weather. Scientists also had to contend with growing demands to predict the weather and to determine the extent to which colonisation had affected the climate. Emily O'Gorman and Stephen Legg examined the complicated nature of these inquiries in colonial NSW, Victoria, and South Australia as early meteorologists and other 'experts' jostled in the press for the authority to dominate scientific discourses on the climate, river flows, and forestry.

These colonial climate knowledges became increasingly professionalised in the twentieth century through the institutionalisation of the meteorological and climatological sciences. Settler understandings of weather and climate were transformed by the creation of extensive networks of observation and data collection, and the use of scientific interpretation and standardised training. Nevertheless, it retained this Western lens of inquiry at the expense of indigenous knowledges. Furthermore,
as Chris O'Brien argued, this ongoing application of European meteorological science to the study of Antipodean climates might be inappropriate for depicting the physical realities in question. In tropical Australia at least, western calendrical time imposes a sense of order that misrepresents and impedes understandings of the climatic conditions of the top end. Elsewhere, such as in southwestern Australia, changes in the climate sciences since European colonisation have led to the re-interpretation of regional climatic characteristics and, as a result, to the sustainable limits of land-use and settlement.

Changes to the climate sciences have also been shaped by wider political and economic contexts. Matt Henry provided an insight into the implications of the geopolitical rivalries between the United States and the United Kingdom for the development of meteorological networks in the South Pacific on the eve of the Second World War. Cooperation between states has also played a significant role in enabling better understanding of regional climates and in developing common approaches to sustainability problems, such as energy use and anthropogenic climate change. Such a regional approach, as Tai Wei Lim and Stephen Nagy explained, is particularly important for areas like the South Pacific. Here, the vast differences of wealth and scientific expertise between countries demand the sharing of resources and knowledge to adapt to, and possibly mitigate, the challenges of environmental change. Perhaps, as David Young suggested, countries in Australasia and the Pacific regions could learn lessons from their first peoples about adaptation to a changing world.

But instead, many scientists, military officials, and 'visionaries' have long advocated technological interventions to change the atmosphere and climate for the supposed benefit of humankind. The most recent incarnation of such interventions is the idea of geoengineering. Keynote speaker James R. Fleming (Colby College, USA) outlined just some of these schemes in an overview of his recently published monograph, *Fixing the Sky: The Checkered History of Weather and Climate Control* (Columbia University Press, 2010). Fleming's research has uncovered numerous episodes in American history of the desire to change weather conditions, for purposes such as agricultural benefit or military control. But Fleming also found that there were concerned observers who counselled caution. In his paper, he argued that historians have an important role in the current
debates about environmental change, by providing a humanities perspective on the issues that continue to challenge policymakers and scientists.

Given the echoes of place-making, science and imperialism throughout the symposium papers, it was fitting that participants enjoyed a tour of the Hamilton Gardens. The Gardens' Director Dr Peter Sergel revealed the maze-like grounds of the unique botanic gardens and lovingly explained the stories behind some of the showcased landscapes. These gardens were remarkable recreations of far-flung places, from Muromachi Japan to 1950s California, and from the Indian Char Bagh garden to nineteenth century England. Dr Sergel also showed the participants the foundations of the Fantasy Collection and the recently completed Te Parapara Garden.

As the sun dipped below the horizon on the last day of the symposium, the participants unwound over fish and chips, and a friendly match of cross-Tasman backyard cricket. And enthusiasm for future research collaborations continued long after the symposium’s First XI had retired.