

Spring 2013
Volume 4, Issue 3

ISSN 1179-7681

Inside this Issue

1

Welcome

Niel Wright on Kate Gerard (1855-1934)

4

Classic New Zealand poetry by James H Sutherland

6

Comment on Donald H Lea by Mark Pirie

9

A tribute to S G August

11

Comment on William Taylor

12

Comment on H Farrington

Comment on *Chapbook*

13

Vincent O'Sullivan appointed NZ Poet Laureate

Donate to PANZA through PayPal

Recently received donations

About the Poetry Archive

PANZA
PO Box 6637
Marion Square
Wellington 6141

Poetry Notes

Quarterly Newsletter of PANZA

Welcome

Hello and welcome to issue 15 of *Poetry Notes*, the newsletter of PANZA, the newly formed Poetry Archive of New Zealand Aotearoa.

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

Articles and poems are copyright in the names of the individual authors.

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

<http://poetryarchivenz.wordpress.com>

Niel Wright on Kate Gerard

Wellington writer and publisher, Niel Wright discusses the early 20th century Christchurch poet Kate Gerard.

This year, I spent a fortnight at the National Library reading the poetry of Kate Gerard (1855-1934).

If she was a painter she would be called a primitive, but she is a poet, one might think just a religious poet, but in fact she writes epic narrative, only one piece on a specific bible figure Jacob. The rest is about historical figures or importantly a family chronicle.

She was a notable horsewoman in her young years and her poetry shows an intimacy with the natural world. Her poetry was written between the ages 61 and 79, and seems to have been triggered by WWI, notably Gallipoli.

Kate Gerard's Biography and Family Background

An Obituary of Kate Gerard is given in *Christchurch [= Lyttelton] Times*, November 30, 1934 (according to a clipping stuck in the Turnbull copy of *The Call of the Light*, Volume 8, 1933, as follows:

LATE MISS K. GERARD.

In the death of Miss Kate Gerard, which occurred yesterday morning, the Fendalton district has lost one of its oldest and best known residents. Miss Gerard, who lived with a younger sister, Miss Rose Gerard, at Willowbrook, 173 Fendalton Road, was a daughter of the late Mr and Mrs William Gerard, of Snowden Hororata.

She lived in the Fendalton parish for the last fifty-five years.

As a young girl, Miss Gerard was a wonderful horsewoman and was a well-known figure at hunt meetings in Canterbury.

St Barnabas Church and Sunday School at Fendalton owe much to her generosity. Only within the last few years had she given up her class of boys at the Sunday school.

During the war years she did all in her power to help the men who enlisted from the Fendalton parish, and in later

years she was a frequent visitor to Rannerdale Home. Miss Gerard is survived by her sister, Miss Rose Gerard, and by a brother, Mr George Gerard, the present owner of Snowden Station. The late Mrs George Rutherford and the late Mrs Murray Aynesley were also her sisters.

So far no record of date of birth for Kate Gerard has been found in New Zealand or English records, and records have yet to be turned up for the arrival of the William Gerard family in New Zealand or from wherever. It is believed books on Canterbury runholders should illuminate (see below). Whether the Annie in the burial records is one of her married sisters or a Rose by another name has yet to be determined. I told a friend my assessment that her father owned the Snowden Station when rural landholdings in New Zealand were immense. I was able to validate this statement by doing a Google search for South Canterbury runholder William Gerard which brought up a passage from a 2007 book called *Historic Heritage of High-Country Pastoralism: South Island Up to 1948*, 4.2.6 Flocks, where a sentence read

William Gerard had 30,000 sheep at Double Hill and 21,000 at Snowden [sic]...

Another Google search for William Gerard at Double Hill brought up passages in a book called *Calling the Station Home: Place and Identity in New Zealand High Country* by Michèle D Dominy, 2001, from which I quote as following:

William Gerard (1822-1898), according to MacDonald and McAloon managed Cheviot Hills, and his home was the first to be built there – part cob and part wattle and daub, with ten rooms and a veranda on three sides; Mrs Gerard kept three maids and many passers-through had to be attended to. Gerard’s holdings were extraordinary beginning with Snowden [sic] in 1866 and eventually encompassing almost all of the Rakaia’s north and south banks.

Jim McAloon’s analysis of the origins of the “southern gentry” reveals that powerful Canterbury names could belong to lower-middle-class individuals who, like many pastoralists, moved up in the colonies “with more talent than means”... William Gerard was the son of a small farmer who [ambiguous but apparently William] managed a property [Cheviot Hills?] before taking up Snowden (the parent property to Double Hill). Double Hill was offered for sale by auction in January 1874 but did not reach its reserve price of pounds 26,000, and so Palmer sold Double Hill privately to William Gerard of Snowden with 30,000 sheep and 114,500 acres for pounds 20,000. Gerard died in 1897 [sic] with ownership going to his son who held Double Hill country in its entirety till 1911 and 1912...

On the evidence of these accounts Kate Gerard born in 1855 was not born at Snowden Station. Whether she was born at Cheviot Hills or elsewhere, who knows? Christchurch founded in 1850 to exploit the sheep farming potential of the Canterbury plains, had a port at once at Lyttelton, to which a rail tunnel was opened in 1867. Beginning in 1863 by 1879 railway lines were extensive in the South Island, in effect providing railway sidings virtually to every farm gate, for instance at Coalgate ten miles from Hororata. I haven’t checked out specific historical details, but in effect by 1880 rural runholders could build town residences (eventual mansions) in Christchurch, say Fendalton, and get from their rural estates to their town residences by rail and buggy within an hour or two. I lived in this environment in my childhood and youth, when however the motorcar provided ready transport. It is said that Kate Gerard lived in the Fendalton parish for 55 years, ie 1880-1934, so from the age of 25. But she could long thereafter have had access to the Gerard runholdings readily enough.

Kate Gerard’s Poetry

I return to the subject of her poetry now that access with the completion of building alterations is again available to the Turnbull Library holdings of Kate Gerard’s books. The Turnbull Library has 12 of Kate Gerard’s books plus a couple of duplicates, but the Turnbull does not have *The Call of the Light*, Volume III, nor any other library. The Turnbull copies have been hard bound by the library. The Macmillan Brown library has three of her books, and Canterbury University Library a fourth. No other libraries report holdings. The titles of Kate Gerard’s 12 books of poetry suggest that she was religious but interested in horses. In her long life 1855-1934 it appears her books were written and published in the last 18 years of her life 1916-1934. The appearance is that Kate Gerard wrote her poetry between the ages of 61 and 79. One has to say she is a demotic poet, her main reading or book knowledge doesn’t go beyond the Bible, but she is not ill prepared or lacking in skill for what she does which is compile a corpus of epic narrative poems often lyrical and dramatic in form. Most of Kate Gerard’s poems are individually dated at the end. In some of Kate Gerard’s later books the text ends with a colophon consisting of her name and a date. A date of publication rarely appears, with the result that bibliographical dates of publication can vary perhaps without significance. The colophon date seems the best to use, but the records no doubt are too confused to bother much. Kate Gerard’s lyrics are short often dramatic, with a strong focus, but read in bulk they are tedious in spite of many delicate touches. However the lyrics both underlie and augment the narratives. Several of her longer poems are not narrative but discursive as a series of lyrics. Her narratives by contrast are decidedly long, usually dramatic, but they are swift moving, with frequent shifts of focus by means of neat transitions as she plays with imagery. Her narratives are significantly readable.

Kate Gerard uses formulaic phraseology repeatedly but not without intelligent variations. For people with an acquaintance with oral narrative poetry her performance is interesting and impressive as a comparable exercise by a literate poet. For the appreciative reader her poetry is outstandingly attractive. She certainly knows some significant things about epic narrative. Gerard's prosody is fairly simple. She writes consistently in rhymed couplets laid out on the page as quatrains. But she still achieves considerable variety between poems and as she proceeds. As for total output of verse, according to my count which should be checked Kate Gerard's output in her 12 accessible known books comes to 9066 lines on the basis of 4533 rhyming pairs printed as quatrains. Over all in individual length her lines would be comparable with mine, so her poetry amounts to about a quarter of my epic poem *The Alexandrians* and somewhat less than half of Domett's epic *Ranolf and Amohia*. However her corpus is certainly in the long epic class by length, by content and by style. These three New Zealand epics may count as the chief examples by New Zealanders. That is the class Kate Gerard deservedly enters, and in central respects she may be the best of the three poets in that genre.

Kate Gerard's poems frequently use the Medieval convention of opening with or involving a dream which is then narrated.

Kate Gerard has an apocalyptic viewpoint as I do, but she is a secularist in practice as I am. Her concern is national leadership, not surprisingly given her high southern gentry background, characterised above.

The theme of all Kate Gerard's poetry is doing the impossible, the nature of what is to be done and the cost of doing it.

This is the essence of Futurism. One might expect that religious writing about characters called Peter, Paul, Elizabeth, Nicodemus, Jacob, Martha, Mary, Joshua would deal with Biblical characters. Such is the case only with Jacob, but it is not at all the case with the rest.

There is only one Biblical character on whom Kate Gerard writes a long narrative poem. This is Jacob.

In the case of Jacob he is the Biblical figure she dreams about in *Jacob, The Destiny for All Nations* (1932), for which there is no named presenter to the Turnbull Library. 35 pages = 41 quatrains, plus 1 extra couplet rhyming with a quatrain ie as a sestet page 22.

My godmother Lillian Harris read me the Bible version of the Jacob story when I was a child. Gerard's is a considerably improved version. She dreams and presents the story of Jacob in her own terms, which are often very down to earth and natural. Many of her rhymes have identical wording. She is less lyrical and more purely narrative than otherwise she is. Like Milton she closely paraphrases the Bible at times, and is then not at her best. She sees Christ in the angel Jacob wrestles with. She sees Jacob and Laban as equally deceitful. She sees Jacob as the prototype of nation creating leaders. She uses the name Joshua for a long poem in *Behold the Light*, but it is not about the Bible Joshua in any detail at all and it is not primarily narrative. Similarly St Paul in *The Call of the Light*, Volume IV.

However she does write narrative poems at length on known subjects such as St George and the Dragon and Joan of Arc. The last of such narrative poems maybe the 1927 poem on Oates which only exists in typescript. And she already has miscellaneous narrative poems on fictitious figures down to 1925.

Gerard writes of a real person in *Captain Oates of Scott's Last Expedition to the Pole* (1927) in 42 quatrains dated April 1927, typescript foolscap. There in one word illegible beyond guessing.

She also deals with Robert Scott in *The Call of the Light*, Volume VI, but discursively without narrative. Her religious thinking is focused on the Christ Man whose experience she sees people since 1916 as sharing and having to share in terms of God's plan. She has a retrospective poem on Gallipoli (in *Behold the Light*), short enough to be reprinted (and I will

append it at the end of this essay). Gerard seems to have been motivated to poeticise in 1916 by war casualties. Thereafter she issued annual booklets of short poems often lyrical for eight issues, but progressively including narrative poems of length.

Conclusion

Gerard is probably the most definitive poet of her time world wide for an understanding of sociological psychology.

All Kate Gerard's poetry is full of delicate touches, simple but very effective ways of making words work poetically.

The fact is a competent reader like myself can recognise Kate Gerard as an extraordinary poet of world class in her way that any literate society would take pride in. In terms of New Zealand history her background is prestigious not just by reason of her family's role but also by reason of the role of the whole southern gentry society to which they belonged in south Canterbury. A leading figure from 1852 was Sir John Hall (1824-1907) politician and premier 1879-1882. My own family from 1840 at Akaroa was closely involved in south Canterbury all till well within my lifetime (born 1933).

Here is her shorter poem 'Gallipoli':

GALLIPOLI by Kate Gerard

"Greater love hath no man than this, that he lay down his life for his friends." – *John* xv, 13.

Suddenly, like a lion leaping
Upon his prey—
In the dark they leaped together—
Behold, a new day.

Leaping, man, man, man, together,
That all might see,
Thousands of miles o'er the water—
Gallipoli.

It was love, love, all together,
Making harmony;
Not counting the pain and sacrifice,
Making history.

Like the voice of many waters,
Making melody;
Reaching to the Heights away,
Resplendently.

Soul to soul, and heart to heart together,
The new dawn to see;
Mysteriously, leading, ever leading,
"The Isles of the Sea."

I climbed the steeps of Gallipoli,
Where the fight lay;
I saw the battleships at anchor,
Far in the bay.

Then I saw four men together, dead,
Beside their gun;
They had climbed the Heights
together—
They had won.

Beautiful they lay around their gun,
Waiting for the dawn,
With their faces turned to the East—
Behold, a new morn.

Then I heard the sound of the great guns
Firing a salute;
Then a wonderful silence came;
Then all was mute.

Then trembling from the far Heights
Came a new note;
From the silence, like a mighty sob,
Away to float.

Far away to the "Isles of the Sea,"
Making melody,
Like the voice of many waters
Making harmony.

Then I looked away at the Heights,
Where the light lay;
Then into the great depths below,
Into the bay.

Then from the depths, mysteriously
Came a hush;
Then the sound of many wings arising
With a rush.

Then I saw the vision glorious—
Behold He knew,
Saying, "I am Alpha and Omega;
I make all things new."

Then a hand—Like a man's hand—
came
With nail marks through,
And gathered them in a very tenderly—
Behold, he knew.

Then I heard a sound like weeping,
Saying, "God is there;
He has prepared a place ready"—
Behold, a prayer.

Then on the soft wind, like music,
Came a voice,
Saying, "I am Alpha and Omega—
Rejoice! Rejoice!!"

Saying they have climbed the Heights,
And drank the cup,
Unafraid of pain and sacrifice,
And followed me up.

They have lifted the soul of the nation
up,
Unconsciously,
Into love's wondrous fellowship—
Mysteriously.

Behold, they have climbed the Heights
The dawn to see,
To meet the face, like a man's face—
Mysteriously.

To find a hand like a man's hand, ready
To welcome His own;
For in the dark they leaped to follow
Him alone.

Behold, a Presence ever leading
To see a new day,
Leading the soul of the Nations up
To see God's way.

Leading up the Heights to understand
When their sight is dim;
Leading to take away their blindness—
Behold to love Him.

January 15th, 1924

Editor's Note: This essay is abridged from Niel Wright's *A Reading of the Aotearoa Epic Poet Kate Gerard (1855-1934)*, published 2013; for further background and a list of publications by Gerard see Niel Wright's essay on Gerard in *Poetry Notes*, Winter 2011.

Classic New Zealand poetry

This issue's classic New Zealand poetry is by James H (Hector) Sutherland (1925-1994). He was one of the young writers (along with Louis Johnson) associated with the small magazine *Chapbook* edited by Ronald B Castle 1945-50.

Sutherland contributed to *Chapbook* from Auckland. He also wrote essays and fiction and was a contributor to Noel Farr Hoggard's *Arena*.

Sutherland has 11 titles in the National Library catalogue, mostly fiction. Sutherland was born in Te Puke in 1925. He is the descendant of Nova Scotians of Waipu and the Danes of Dannevirke.

His early education was at Morrinsville District High School.

As a young man, he worked as a temporary lighthouse keeper at Moko Hinau Lighthouse from November 1949 (with his cousin E D N (Norm) Miller as Principal Keeper).

He also worked as a farmhand and schoolteacher and had a variety of other work experience before attending the New Zealand Library School in 1973 and training to be a librarian.

Based in Auckland and Hamilton, he was a Field Librarian with the Country Library Service.

During his lifetime, he lived mainly around Morrinsville, Auckland, and Hamilton. He married (Dorothy E R Sutherland) but divorced.

In later years, he spent his time visiting libraries in the North Island until, in 1990, a breakdown in health forced his retirement from the library profession.

Throughout his life, he contributed articles and reviews to a number of publications like *The Journal of Agriculture*, *New Zealand Books*, *Historical Record* and the *New Zealand Libraries* journal.

His realist stories appeared in *NZ Home Magazine*, *Arena*, *Pacific Moana Quarterly*, *The School Journal*, *The Weekly News* (Auckland) and the *Auckland Star*. The New Zealand Broadcasting Service (from 1955) aired around thirty of them on radio.

After retirement, he was also a guest of PEN at the Frank Sargeson flat in Auckland.

There's a short article on him 'J H Sutherland's honest picture of New Zealand' by J S Gully in *Pacific Moana Quarterly* 5:2 (April 1980), p. 132.

He was working on a biography of E D N Miller at the time of his death aged 68 in January 1994. His burial was cremation.

His poems are of interest to the 1940s generation of New Zealand writers and give us an Auckland poet of the period outside the usual emerging group of Keith Sinclair, Kendrick Smithyman et al.

Sutherland writes a brand of Georgian realism in his verse, raw but lyrical often philosophic.

Sutherland's books (privately published from Morrinsville) are: *Driftwood and Other Stories* (1976), *The Earth and Other Stories* (1977), *The Elver* (novel, 1978), *Green and Golden Island; and A Lighthouse Dog Named Prince* (two biographical stories based on diary entries and letters, with E D N Miller, 1979), *Sunrise on Hikurangi* (biography, with William Taylor, 1981), *Rundle's Hill* (novel, 1984), *So Shines a Good Deed* (short stories, 1992), *Camell Milk the Terrible and Other Stories* (1993) and *Cruel River* (a remake of *The Elver*, novel, 1994).

He also wrote a *Select Bibliography of Wanganui and District From 1960-1970* (1973) and edited a personal account of the First World War, *The Twilight Hour* by William Taylor (1978).

Sutherland receives a mention in the *Oxford History of New Zealand Literature in English* for his depression era novel *The Elver*. He is not mentioned in the *Oxford Companion to New Zealand Literature*, while *Fresh Fields: More Writing from Out of Town* (2001), edited by John Gordon, appears to be the only anthology to feature him. In *Chapbook*, however, he humorously wrote in an early essay, 'A Word of Advice to Young Writers', his own mention for an exhaustive anthology of literature of the Georgian Age:

Another obscure writer who can hardly be said to survive is James Sutherland (1925-19--). He seems to

have attempted most of the shorter forms. Some poems and stories may still be read, without enjoyment, in collections of N.Z. work of his time. His essays are of no importance. (*Chapbook*, No. 23, 1949)

Sutherland would enjoy the irony of his work being picked up in *Poetry Notes* twenty years after his death. He did not believe his work would be read in a hundred years' time.

Poems by James H Sutherland

FULL MOON

I turn moon-blinded eyes to the tawdry
glory
Of the lights upon the town,
Turn from the gold-hazed east to the
colder north,
Turn from the summit and walk down.

The moon blesses the houses with silver
pity,
Makes their outlines beautiful;
Cabbages are as wet with dew as roses
are;
And little creeks brim full,

Brim full as the sea of magic and
mystery;
The smoke-blighted poplar tree
Stands serenely as her sisters by
meadows stand;
The moon shines also on me.

And the dreary songs I sing, my pride,
anger,
The silly words I say
Are hushed in the stillness and kindness
of moonlight,
Hushed, hushed away.

(*Chapbook*, No. 25)

HILLSIDE

High on the hill in soft grass I lay.
The autumn sun caressed the ground;
Thistles grew and bracken; fresh-cut hay
Was near enough to smell; there was a
sound
Of bees working in the clover flowers,
I watched the thistledown in the sky for
hours.

In a far valley a train whistle blew
And over the pines rose a puff of smoke.
A sheep strayed near, not seeing me there,
too,
And slowly grazed away. I dozed. I woke.
I lay for hours on that friendly hill.
I think my happy Youth lies there still.

(*Chapbook*, No. 26)

FARM HAND

He drives the cows through a muddy
creek.
His coat is torn and his gum-boots leak.
Water drips from his hair and stings his
eyes.
He calls his dogs with cursing cries.

The cows stand in muck to the knees,
The boss-cows under the boxthorn trees.
The yard drains are all a-flood
Choked with sticks and stinking mud.

Most teats are mud-chaped and raw.
The cow-pox on his hands is itching
sore.
The skim pipe is blocked again.
He carries the pig food down in the rain.

He reads the paper, talks and smokes.
His tea is hot. He splutters and chokes.
He sits at the fire, feels good to be alive.
He's up next morning at half-past five.

(*Chapbook*, No. 26)

BOY

His eye is clear, pathetically sure of life,
His brow untroubled, yet I long to take
his hand,
Guide his feet where my own once
stumbled –
What use? He would not understand.

His voice rings sad autumn yearnings in
my heart
And I suddenly see that his youth is my
youth!
What he holds carelessly, I squandered I
know how;
But I have no words with which to
phrase for him the truth.

He walks in sunshine and birds sing for him
And all the green mysteries of the fields he knows.
His winsomeness touches me as he passes by
And a flock of my wistful thoughts follows where he goes.

(Chapbook, No. 27)

THE POOL

Here is a gutter-pool, rainbow-smearred with oil,
Covering with green slime cigarette tin-foil,
Orange peel and glass – but reflecting the sky,
Cold-blue, with clouds wind-driven and high.

Because the present is too difficult for me to control,
I try to bring the past and future into a unity, a whole.
I relate the soul-sadness that now up-springs
With re-called and preseen images the water brings...

The quick glinting wind-fretted willow leaves
And stream with tossed pennies of sunlight and breeze,
The moonlight bay with piper leaping flashing white,
And the wash of sea heard from my bed at night...

I note how the green moss grows in the pavement cracks nearby,
I smell the air-tang and hear the harsh seagull cry,
I see even here a sun-and-water gleam –
I take away today's pool and tomorrow's dream.

(Chapbook, No. 28)

Poems © J H Sutherland

Comment on
Donald H Lea

AN ACCOUNT OF THE FIRST WORLD WAR POET DONALD H LEA by Mark Pirie

Donald H (Henry) Lea (1879?-1960) is a significant New Zealand poet of the First World War. He is in fact the closest thing Kiwis have to a Rupert Brooke in New Zealand poetry.

I first came across his name looking up a poetry journal called *Verse* that he edited from 1935-38 in Ōtaki (not to be confused with the journal *Verse* from Temuka in the same period). Further searches at the National Library revealed that he had several collections of poetry published in England between 1917 and 1919 and gained some prestige at the time for his war verse hitherto forgotten. As with some other poets profiled recently in *Poetry Notes*, Lea does not appear in any New Zealand anthology that I'm aware of, but he is listed with other New Zealand poets of this period in *New Zealand Literature Authors' Week 1936: Annals of New Zealand Literature: being a List of New Zealand Authors and their works with introductory essays and verses*, page 68: "Lea, Donald H. *Stand Down!* (v) 1917; *A number of things* (v) 1919; and *Dionè, a spring medley* (v) 1919."

The name Donald H Lea does not appear in *New Zealand Biographies* at the National Library, and I've not found any Obituary for him.

A Tapuhi search shows correspondence from Lea for J C Andersen's *Author's Week 1936* bibliography, along with a music score ('Free I was as mountain air; for high voice and piano / words by D H Lea; music by J M Turpin; Oct 1947') contributed to Ernie Asher's sheet music archive. There is also a letter by Lea to the Turnbull Library relating 'to books by Lea for the Churchill auction' in 1942 along with inward correspondence from Lea in William Hugh Field's papers. There's more about Lea in Papers Past searches, including book reviews in *The Otago Daily Times*, *New Zealand Free Lance* and the *Wanganui Chronicle*, and

a number of mentions in news reports nationwide of the publication of his soldier verse *Stand Down!* illustrating its prominence at the time. Sir Thomas MacKenzie aided the book's publicity. As then High Commissioner for New Zealand in London, he contributed the brief foreword.

Lea distributed his journal *Verse* in England and New Zealand inviting subscribers and not looking for Government subsidy. It's mentioned in the *Otago Daily Times*, 13 July 1935 (a brief write-up). During his time as editor, Lea was in contact with other newspapers and magazine editors in the UK (*Grouse*) and in New Zealand (Noel Farr Hoggard's *Spilt Ink*).

Lea is also mentioned in Niel Wright's *Notes on Some Outlets for Demotic and Georgian Poetry in the 1930s in Aotearoa* (2002) and Stevan Eldred-Grigg's bibliography to *The Great Wrong War* (2010), the only contemporary mentions I've seen of Lea's work. Lea does not appear in official literary histories of the 1990s or the regional history of Otaki by Francis Selwyn Simcox published in 1952.

Lea's Publications

Lea's poetry publications, all handsomely printed including the journal *Verse* being hand-printed for the author, are as follows:

1. *Stand Down!*; with a foreword by Sir Thomas MacKenzie, 79 pages; 17cm, 17 poems. London: Elkin Mathews, 1917.
2. *A Number of Things* viii, 91 pages; 20cm. Birmingham: Cornish Brothers Ltd [for the University], 1919. Turnbull copy inscribed by the author.
3. *Dionè: A Spring Medley* ix, 34 pages; 20cm, one poem sequence in 25 parts. Birmingham: Cornish Brothers Ltd [for the University], 1919.
4. *Verse* Vols. 1-12; 22-23cm. Otaki [N.Z.: D.H. Lea, 1935-1938]. Vol. 8 is signed 'Prof J Shelley' [then Director of Broadcasting] inside the copy, suggesting they were Shelley's own copies that he had bound and given to the National Library of New Zealand.

Lea's Library Holdings

International library holdings are as follows, showing Lea's prominence overseas at the time of his publication: *Stand Down!* is in 27 libraries on WorldCat: Library of Congress; HathiTrust Digital Library; Simpson University; Wisconsin; Southern Illinois University; Princeton; University of Michigan; Bay Path College; Clark University; SUNY at Buffalo; Texas A&M University, San Antonio; Harvard and Wheaton College, Buswell, USA; Toronto and Alberta, Canada; National Library of Scotland; the British Library and Cambridge, UK; University of Cape Town, South Africa; Alexander Turnbull and National Library of New Zealand [Wellington], University of Canterbury, Dunedin Public Libraries and Hocken [Dunedin]; State Library of New South Wales; National Library of Australia and State Library of Victoria, Australia. *A Number of Things* is in 12 libraries: Harvard; SUNY at Buffalo and Union College, USA; Alberta, Canada; Trinity College, Dublin; National Library of Scotland; National Library of Wales; the British Library and Cambridge, UK; University of Cape Town, South Africa; Alexander Turnbull [Wellington] and Adelaide, Australia. *Dionè* is held in eight libraries: Emory University and Harvard, USA; National Library of Scotland; National Library of Wales; the British Library and Cambridge, UK; Alexander Turnbull [Wellington] and Adelaide, Australia. *Verse* is held in five libraries: Harvard, USA; Hocken [Dunedin]; Alexander Turnbull [Wellington]; Victoria University and the State Library of New South Wales, Australia.

Biography

Lea was born in the UK [Edgbaston, Warwickshire, England] around 1878/79 of Scots family origin. It is not known exactly when he settled in New Zealand but in 1908 he was a visitor to Wanganui from Auckland and by the 1911 Electoral Roll, he was a farmer and businessman in Westmere, near Wanganui. Advertisements in the *Wanganui Chronicle* show Lea advertising his Westmere honey for sale. He addressed

the Beekeepers' Conference in June 1913. Also in 1913, he was involved as a director with the Lickall Inflator Company (N.Z.) Ltd, registering to sell a patented pump for inflating rubber tyres. An article in the *Free Lance*, 25 July 1918, gives some biographical detail:

Mr. Lea, is of Highland descent, but was born and bred in the Midlands. Equipped with a first-rate education and the training of an engineer, he left the Home Country some years ago to seek health in the colonies, and after considerable wanderings he settled down at Westmere, where he surrounded himself with bees, fruit and flowers. His property had just been brought past the first stages of discomfort when the war broke out and he went into camp [Corporal 5th Reinforcements, 1915]. His health broke down in camp and he was discharged, but after a short interval he again volunteered and sailed with a later Reinforcement. He was gassed at the battle of the Somme and since then has been an invalid in military hospitals and among relatives.

Afterwards he became a farmer in Ōtaki, living first at Golf Links Road and later at Old Coach Road. Lea married Mary Montgomerie Anderson in 1923 and the couple had a son (according to Lea's 1930s poem in *Verse*). Besides farming, his interests included politics, fishing, and active tennis and golf (before the war). He was a member of the Wanganui Golf Club 1914-15 playing in the 1915 Imlay Cup tournament, and his name comes up in numerous tennis tournaments in Wanganui 1909-1911. Archives New Zealand holds his NZEF personnel file, not yet available online. Lea, interred at the Ōtaki cemetery, died in 1960.

Literary Style

Lea's verse is mostly popular. He writes mainly public verse satire sharing similarities with other New Zealand poets of the Thirties like Whim Wham and Robert J Pope. He can also write serious lyric poems, elegies and sonnets, and does feature a 25-part poem sequence in

his repertoire. This sequence *Dionè* is a competent effort on his behalf and an unusual addition to classical verse. *Stand Down!*, Lea's first book, is his most successful collection and contains a number of his key poems like 'My Son', 'Entreaty', *Stand Down!*, and 'Stand-To!'. Some are in Scots dialect as soldier monologues. *Stand Down!* gives a first-hand account of his experience in the trenches of France and general commentaries on soldier-life and is not out-of-place in comparisons with a number of the First World poets like Sassoon and Brooke. Lea's poems had previously appeared in *Chronicles of the New Zealand Expeditionary Force* and *Pearson's Magazine*. Sir Thomas MacKenzie wrote in his foreword: '[Lea] is a not unworthy member of that small body of poets and writers who number among them Rupert Brooke, Donald Hankey, "Ian Hay", and others who have offered their services to the Empire, some of whom have made the Great Sacrifice.'

Lea's second book contains general verse possibly dating back to before the war along with a section of war verse. *A Number of Things* includes fishing, the art of rhyme, personal poems, English and New Zealand poems, light verse and polemic. Poems had previously appeared in the *Birmingham Post*, the *Fishing Gazette*, *Chronicles of the New Zealand Expeditionary Force* and *Pearson's Magazine*. One of the poems, 'Forgotten Birthright', addresses land reform in England (for the *small man*) citing his Colonial experience in New Zealand as positive example. Lea's foreword to this poem originally appeared in Captain Byron's pamphlet *The Land for Fighting Men* (1918).

Dionè is his most ambitious work and not entirely successful. It's what I'd describe as a commendable poem and not to be despised. It's a meditation in narrative form concerning *Dionè* (Venus) as the Goddess of Pure Beauty in 'music, flowers, and so on'. This somewhat departs from classical historian's views of *Dionè* (Venus) as the Goddess of Love and Beauty.

The journal *Verse* (1935-38) is all verse by Lea, and is mostly (unsigned) popular political satire and rural verse, with some material reprinted from Lee's English

collections. Each volume contains an original epigram on the front cover/title page. It's entertaining and lively verse and not without some skill.

The banes of his thoughts in *Verse* are Michael Joseph Savage and the Labour Party of the Thirties along with Hitler, Mussolini and Lenin. He writes using direct speech and modern dialect and colloquial expressions of the day. *Verse* includes several longer sequences serialized throughout the 12 volumes: 'Songs of a Dairy Farmer', 'Songs of Exile' and 'Fairy Farming' (an epic narrative work). The final volume 12 announces the winding-up of *Verse* with no reasons given but I suspect he must've found it hard-going to come up with work of quality in each issue and his original intention of inviting contributions other than his own didn't eventuate. The subscription list grew slowly, didn't provide the finances to pay contributors, and perhaps didn't reward his effort. He closed *Verse* down, vowing 'some day to try again'.

I will now provide brief examples of his verse.

As with Apirana Taylor's first collection, *Eyes of the Ruru* (1979), Lea's first book contains a single poem that could well stand as a lone anthology piece for years after.

The short lyric 'My Son' is perhaps not bettered in Lea's earlier or later work, as also noted by Sir Thomas MacKenzie.

MY SON

BOYHOOD's days—
A face sun-kist;

And all my world was glad;
When sleep came on like a moorland mist.
On my dear, laughing lad.

Manhood's days—
Red lips he kist,

And all his world was glad;
And life was wrapped in a golden mist,
And I, a little sad.

"PRO PATRIA,"
For him, I wist,

Held fragrance, like spikenard—
And if Death came like a moorland mist,
Why—death was not so hard!

His elegy 'Entreaty' is also moving:

ENTREATY

For the "Wounded and Missing"

If they have stayed one single tear,
Or eased one heart of pain;
If they have held one flower dear,
Counted one gift as gain;
If they have slaked one parchèd tongue,
Or comforted one child—
Oh Thou, who on the cross hast hung
And wast by man reviled,
Still, now, their anguished, sobbing breath,
Send, of Thy Mercy, swift-winged Death;
Of Thy great mercy, grant them death,
Who suffer all alone.

A fine example of his soldier verse is 'Stand-To!', more in line with Sassoon than Brooke:

STAND-TO!

"STAND-TO!"
And twilight creeps o'er No-man's
dreary land,
As down and up the trench, from man to
man
The word is passed; the trench? a
sodden ditch
That writhes and twists in torture as it
runs
Close set on either side, with fetid walls
In which the shallow-buried dead
decay!
Where nameless horrors lie, and cast
their spells
To chain the limbs and root men to the
ground.

The sentries go to rouse and waken men
Unwashed and foul, unkempt and
hollow-eyed;
Men unrefreshed by broken, bastard
sleep
Woo'd in the lairs they share with
vermin vile;
Men who resent, with sullen curse and
mutter'd oath,
Th' awakening to Reality far worse
Than any dreams such cuckold sleep
could bring.

Stumbling from partial safety
underground,
All weary unto death, and leaden-
limbed,

They come to hazard life upon a main
With Death, whose dice are loaded for
the game—
Yet that White Flame men call th'
immortal soul
Burns bright and clear with steady
gleam, and warms
Their hearts to high resolve; they,
steadfast, come
To stand to arms and carry on. "Stand-
to!"

Another of his more interesting later works is his poem to Jean Batten, the aviator, in *Verse* Vol. 7 (1936):

NEW ZEALAND LASS WITH A HIELAN' NAME

(TO JEAN BATTEN)
Who flew solo from England to Australia in
five days 21 hours—London to Darwin—
and Sydney to New Plymouth in nine and-a-
half hours, thus breaking all previous
records. Oct. 16, '36.

Out, over the curving blue you came,
Our lass with the Hielan' eyes and
name,
Up-borne on the hueless, ambient air,
(One with all Cosmic Things)
Cool, reticent, gay and debonair.
White Lass of The Silvery Wings,
And never in all the world, I ween*,
Is a prouder, or better lov'd lass than
Jean.

O Nerve high-strung and Spirit aflame,
Our Lass with the wistful eyes and
name—
O Spirit that steadies the flinching flesh
And out of air-weariness wrings
Victory, breaking Sleep's drowsy mesh,
Tir'd Lass of the Silvery Wings,
And none was gladder than I, I ween,
To know you had made your land-fall,
Jean.

So much you have won that is fairer
than 'fame,'
Brave Lass, who has banner'd
New Zealand's name—
A Gossamer Web—an aerial wake—
You have spun between two
Hemispheres;
An Imperial Love is the guerdon you
take—
And love liveth longer than 'Cheers.'

Love loop you and guard you—a
 'laurel,' I ween,
 Can only 'pancake' on your hair, my
 jimp* Jean.

*a Scots expression

*Slender, graceful, slight, neat.

I'll end with the following sonnet from
 the last volume of *Verse* in 1938,
 illustrating his skill as a sonneteer:

IN WHISPERING HOURS

When hatred of all evil is the measure of
 love for good, man will have attained
 Wisdom. – D.H.L.

Today has been a blue Ming Vase, safe-
 held
 Between my hands—fill'd with the
 Sun's flame-flowers,
 Glaz'd like the hyaline Sea. The
 whispering hours,
 Under cool skies of Spring, flow'd
 down and swell'd
 In long, clean curves to shape the
 whole—stay'd, quell'd
 The frothy hate man's foolish heart
 outpours;
 And sweeten'd Love, weak wanton-
 loving sours.
 Yet, moony Night day's beauty far
 excell'd.

The eastern steeps of Kapiti were lit
 By th' un-umber'd moon. The slow-
 curving bay
 Was silver to the sand. By Beauty's
 Writ,
 Such island-loveliness did this convey:
 The hates and loves of men will wisdom
 reach
 When hate and love are measure each
 for each.



Don H Lea, 1918

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

A tribute to S G August

**S. G. AUGUST—POET,
 BOOKMAN, FRIEND** by
Alex Robertson

The work of S G August does not fill a
 large or important niche in the literature
 of New Zealand, nor is it well known
 outside of his home county of
 Southland, but he was a poet and a
 bookman in the truest sense. He was,
 however, so unassuming and modest of
 his attainments, that most of his
 productions were printed under a
 pseudonym and he was also quite aware
 of his limitations.

Now if in humble verse I speak my
 mind,
 And you will say, 'Tis only good in
 parts,
 It does not mean that I am poesy
 blind.
 Nor a mere dabbler with the higher
 arts,
 But that full utterance is beyond my
 voice.

The verse was conventional; he had no
 vital message to deliver nor original
 idea to expound; but he sang from the
 heart of everyday thoughts and
 emotions, so that careless critics will
 dismiss his poems as just another book
 of verse. His poems and other writings
 are scattered over a large number of
 New Zealand and Australian
 publications; some of the best have been
 collected in a few slim booklets, and a
 very few have been singled out for
 inclusion in New Zealand anthologies,
 but the measure of his life's work
 cannot be judged by these. What he will
 be remembered for most was his kindly
 personality and the far-reaching
 influence he was able to exercise on
 others, by his enthusiasm for what was
 best in literature. He had an intense love
 of books and reading, and was

especially well up in the study of
 modern poetry, and he had the rare gift
 of being able to share his passion and
 create in others a desire for culture. He
 was one of the founders of the W.E.A.
 in Invercargill, and from its inception,
 besides being secretary, he conducted
 the classes for English and Literature,
 and thus was able to meet those to
 whom his wide reading and experience
 would be most beneficial.

Samuel Gottlieb August was born in
 Invercargill in 1880, his father was a
 German and his mother a Scotswoman,
 both of them representing the finest
 types of their respective nationalities.
 After leaving school he was employed
 for some time in his father's furniture
 factory, but feeling that this was not his
 vocation he became a school teacher,
 and was for some years located at
 country schools in Southland. He
 became possessed of a quiet, sober-
 minded horse and rode from and to the
 city everyday, and he and Rosinante
 became well-known characters on the
 highway. Teaching was not a very
 lucrative profession in those days, so he
 again changed and became manager of
 the furniture department of Bray Bros.
 He had early developed a taste for
 literature and this was to become his
 passion in life, occupying his leisure
 time in reading, studying and writing.
 One of his earliest successes was an
 essay on Sir George Grey, for which he
 got the prize in the *Young Men's
 Magazine* in 1908, and from then on he
 began to contribute poems and articles
 to different magazines, and thus he
 started on his literary career. At the
 Jubilee Competitions in Christchurch he
 won both the first and second prizes for
 poems, the judge being Professor
 Macmillan Brown. It is interesting to
 note that about this time another now
 well-known New Zealand author, Miss
 Edith Howes, was a near neighbour in
 the same street in Invercargill.
 His first collected book of poems, *A
 Trinket of Rhyme*, by L V Kaulbach was
 published in Melbourne in 1913;
Stewart Island Verses, by Southerner,
 came out in 1923; *The Oreti Anthology*,
 by Southerner, in 1933; and *The Song of
 Children of Leda*, by S G August, in
 1935. Quentin Pope's anthology
Kowhai Gold reprints one of his lyrics

'I would have song' and in the *Centennial Treasury of Otago Verse* there are five of his poems, including that quaint conceit 'And there was Yang Chow'.

At ninety years of age, blind, deaf and senile,
Yang still kept poetising.

For seventeen years he contributed a poem every week to the *Southland Times*, and as might be expected, the quality was uneven. Much of it was topical verse and is now of little interest, but in other lyrics he displayed a rare gift of invention and fancy that is very charming. He wrote no long poems, but at his best he excelled in those little lyrics that reveal his love of the idea in all things.

He was also a supporter and occasional contributor to *Aussie* during the lifetime of that ambitious Australian monthly. He had a great admiration for the work of W H Davies, and some of his poems are dedicated to him.

His interests were not all in business and literature, however, and he worked with tireless energy at any scheme he had on hand. He was not interested in organised sport, but was fond of outdoor life, and was an enthusiastic swimmer. He was a prime mover in an effort to convert part of the waterfront at Invercargill into a pleasure resort, but owing to its unsavoury neighbourhood Pleasure Bay proved a failure. He then transferred his enthusiasm to Oreti Beach, about six miles from the city, and this splendid beach is now the most popular seaside resort for the people of Invercargill. He had not travelled to other lands, so his knowledge of them is derived from books, but he was a loyal Southlander, and his poems are of the plains and mountains, the sea and the islands of the southern province. The quiet beauty of Stewart Island attracted him, and he spent many holidays there and put into verse the charms of the 'island of the fadeless heavenly glow'. He was also interested in amateur theatricals, and an embarrassing contretemps happened once, when he was acting a story without words at the Invercargill Competitions. It was a very touching story, 'Success Came Too

Late', about a poor old author whose masterpiece had been rejected time after time, and he and his daughter were starving—there wasn't even a bone in the cupboard. The daughter decided to try once again with the MS, and this time she was successful and received a bag of gold in payment; and set off for home with the glad news. In the meantime the privations had been too much for the poor old dad; he had fallen from his chair and lay stretched out on the floor dead when the daughter joyfully rushed into the room. Overwhelmed with grief she was supposed to throw herself on his breast, but miscalculated the distance and slumped down on the more sensitive part lower down, which caused the dead man to double up and roll over. There was a roar of laughter from the audience, who wanted an encore, but the curtain was hastily rung down. Sooner or later, all good bookmen say to themselves: 'Let's start a magazine,' and Sam was of the number. Milton began it with his *Mercurius Politicus* in 1645 (a complete set of this rare paper is in the Melbourne Library) and down the years what brilliant company of writers have launched their sheets upon a critical world—Addison and Steel (the *Spectator* and *Tatler*); Johnson (the *Rambler* and the *Idler*); Defoe and Wilkes, and last, but by no means least, C R Allen (the *Wooden Horse*). Sam's excursions into journalism were short-lived, but he had the satisfaction of knowing that he had achieved his ambition. The *Stewart Island Chronicle*, an unpretentious journal of topical interest, came out in 1920 and was sold for 1d weekly, and, as might be expected from the name, was not very serious. The *Kiwi*, 1923, was a more ambitious effort, sold for 1s. It had a character sketches and clever caricatures of local celebrities. There were poems and articles including contributions by Shaun O'Sullivan (J J W Pollard), a poem by the Rev. Robert Francis, of Bluff, and a travel sketch by W Quinn. In an editorial he refers to Katherine Mansfield, who had died earlier in the year. 'A literary genius, undoubtedly our best prose writer.' About 1933, having accumulated a vast collection of books, he realised a long-

cherished ambition and opened the Georgian Bookshop, and this became the Mecca of all book lovers. Old ladies who wanted a nice book to read on Sunday, children for their school books or adventure stories, subjects for technical works, and ardent collectors hoping to find an over-looked rarity on the shilling shelves, all were catered for, and received the benefit of Sam's expert knowledge. I confess that I was one of the above collectors, but alas, I made no finds. Sam knew too much about books. In the small back room of the shop an informal literary club of book lovers were usually gathered, and there were endless discussions and arguments on books and their writers, and very candid were the criticisms of the latest best sellers. Sam, like his greater namesake, presided and delivered judgment; but unfortunately there was no Boswell present, so a record of the talks and weighty decisions has not been preserved for posterity. Sam died suddenly on April 29, 1941, at the age of 60 years. He was not married, but he left many sincere friends to regret his comparatively early death. He was very generous with his books and many will cherish his gifts he made of well selected volumes, inscribed with his kindly greeting. The Georgian Bookshop was closed after his death and his immense stock of books were sold and scattered, and Invercargill is now a benighted place with nowhere for a bookworm to browse at leisure. As a citizen, a bookman, and a good friend and companion Sam will be long remembered by all who knew him, and as for the future may his contribution to New Zealand letters not be forgotten.

We shall remember you in days to come
And take new heart and think of times long gone,
And death shall hold you in no silent land.

(First published in C R Allen's magazine, *The Wooden Horse*, Vol. 2, No. 3, 1951)

Comment on William Taylor

William Taylor (1894-1991) is a little known New Zealand poet. It's fair to say that there are a paucity of his poetry texts now surviving in New Zealand libraries, so any information on this author is highly desirable.

PANZA member Mark Pirie first came across his name in relation to two works of biography edited by James H Sutherland: *The Twilight Hour* (an account of William Taylor's experiences on the Western Front during World War I) and *Sunrise on Hikurangi* (an account of Taylor's experience as a farmhand on the East Cape of the North Island 1912-13). *Sunrise on Hikurangi* lists two poetry collections published by Taylor:

The Wandering Hand, 1963
Where Nature Smiles: Whangamata,
1965

The latter collection ran in to two editions. The Turnbull Library in Wellington holds a copy of the 1979 2nd edition as does University of Waikato and Auckland Libraries. Two other libraries in the North Island also hold earlier editions of this title (Thames and University of Waikato), including the first edition of 1965.

No library in New Zealand, however, holds Taylor's first collection of 1963. We may be the worse for this yet it is not uncommon for some New Zealand poets not to have comprehensive holdings in the National Library of New Zealand. Another case is the Tauranga poet Kathleen Hawkins, who has produced more booklets than her holdings show in the National Library. *The Twilight Hour* includes the following biography:

WILLIAM TAYLOR was born in Wellington on 11th February, 1894. He was the only boy in a family of five. His father was a marine engineer with the Union Steamship Company. About a year after Bill was born Mrs Taylor

and her three children moved to Auckland, a port of call for Mr Taylor's ship. Bill's two younger sisters were born in Auckland.

THE TWILIGHT HOUR takes up the story from here, and through the war years [Bill served with the NZEF, 12th Reinforcements]. Bill is now writing recollections of the years he spent on the East Coast, immediately before the war and after his return. Bill married in 1922, and soon after took up land in the Waikato and spent the next thirty years developing it. During this time he spent fifteen years with the W.E.A. A breakdown in health in 1949 forced him to give up farming, but when he recovered he became a partner in a hardware business in Whangamata. He retired from this in 1968, and since his wife's death in 1973 he has lived at Whangamata. He has a family of four, eleven grandchildren and seventeen great-grandchildren. A daughter died when she was only twenty-three. Bill's hobbies are shell-collecting and writing verse. He has previously published two booklets of poems.

It doesn't state when his verse writing began, but the booklet on Whangamata clearly dates from the 1950s/1960s. A description of Taylor's verse in *Where Nature Smiles: Whangamata* would be pleasant rhymes celebrating a place, comparable to George E Dewar's works on Nelson and Otago.

The booklet features 11 poems on aspects of Whangamata and focuses specifically on the ocean, sailing, seaside and land features, e.g. its pohutukawa and pine trees and its natural beauty.

A good example of Taylor's style is the following lyric:

WHANGAMATA

I know a place where sunlit waves
Come pounding in through summer
days
Break with an unceasing roar
And creaming, surge along the shore.

I know a place where golden sand
Lies burning 'tween the sea and land
Grey sand dunes clad with marram grass
O'er which the fleeting shadows pass.

I know a place where hills stoop low
Pohutukawa in beauty grow
By a river flowing silently
Down to meet the restless sea.

I know a place where launches ride
Swing slowly with the changing tide
While flocks of quarrelsome noisy gulls
Swoop and soar around their hulls.

I know of a place where salt winds play
Upon the waters of a bay
Small dinghies to a jetty tied
Tug at their tie-ropes side by side.

I know a place where islands sleep
Their lullaby the crooning deep
Around their feet the waters break
I do not think they will ever wake.

I know a place where tall pines grow
Covering the ridges row on row
Among them like broad ribbons white
Fire-breaks wander out of sight.

I know of a place where sharp saws
whine
Through slender trunks of fallen pine.
I still can smell the fragrance where
The heart of pine lies white and bare.

I know a road that winds and turns
I know a heart that often yearns
Like that road to travel far
And rest, at last, at Whangamata.



Bill Taylor

Comment on H Farrington

In the 1930s, a poet by the name of 'H Farrington' appeared in the Wellington small magazine, *The New Zealand Mercury*, and became involved with the local literary scene.

His contributions show an artist's appreciation of form and beauty in the classical Greek sense. The poems imply an interest in sculpture and female nudes.

They seem to have appealed to Helen Longford, the woman editor, who had a well-known enthusiasm for atmosphere and beauty in art.

BEAUTY

"Beauty is only skin deep," it is said
Yet ... the most beautiful sight I have
ever seen

Was a slim young girl, sun-tanned, with
firm hips and breasts,
Splashing in the blue waters of some
golden bay.

God can make or mar; he moulds with
His own hands
Beauty and ugliness; yet on that golden
beach
His work personified in that slim young
girl
Whose sun-kissed body gleamed and
flashed in the bright sun...

(*The New Zealand Mercury*, January
1935, Vol. 2, No. 10, p. 4)

RETREAT

I chanced upon an Eden;
Beautiful girls splashing in blue water,
Nude and lissom in the noon-day sun,
Slim, white bodies, small pointed
breasts,
Laughing eyes, and golden locks
agleam;
Like children they frolicked
Splashing and cleaving their way
Through the transparent limpid water
Through which could be seen
Their beautiful bodies, pearly limbs...

Until ... I chanced upon their virgin
retreat:
Like slim nymphs they scuttled among
the bushes,
White and gold among the russet leaves,
Leaving a stark blue lapping pool,
Rippling, rippling in the silence.

(*The New Zealand Mercury*, November
1935, Vol. 3, No. 8, p. 2)

'H Farrington' author of these poems
appears to be Hastings McLeod
Farrington (NZ Electoral Rolls,
Wellington North, 1928, 1935 and
1938). Farrington was born in 1907. He
is the son of Agnes and Malcolm
Farrington.

A few biographical details are traceable
on this author in Papers Past.
He first attended Croydon Preparatory
School and later at Wellesley College
received a swimming prize and was
involved in swimming sports and life
saving 1921-24. After school, he turns
up again fined for traffic offences 1927-
29, attending a Wellington wedding
(Joan Wright-Russell Pope) in 1932,
visiting London in April 1933, and
contributing letters to the editor at *The
Evening Post* (one letter over
Wellington street names, 23 August
1933 and a further letter about New
Zealand writers and a proposed New
Zealand Authors' Week, 16 August
1935).

I will reproduce the letter below
replying to other letters noting the lack
of support for local authors and
publishing outlets and the need for a
New Zealand Authors' Week.
Farrington gives an interesting view on
the fate of New Zealand's literary
magazines during this period, including
Longford's *New Zealand Mercury*:

Sir,—I noted with interest recent
comments on New Zealand literature
by your correspondents "John Dene"
and D. McLaren. That the New
Zealand reading public has ever been
apathetic towards our literature and
the work of our authors is exemplified
in the poor support given to our
literary magazines (the few that
remain in existence, that is). During
the past thirty or forty years many
gallant journals have made their

appearance in the interests of our
literature, and the New Zealand
reading public have, to their
everlasting shame, allowed them to
fade into oblivion. Several literary
journals today are endeavouring to
keep afloat, but with a very apathetic
support from the public. The sooner
our reading public (if we have one)
take note of journals issued in the
interests of literature in the Dominion
the sooner will be laid the foundation
of a national literature and a reading
public. The work of such writers as
C. R. Allen, Edith Howes, James
Cowan, G. B. Lancaster, Isobel M.
Peacocke, and many others, most of
whom made their reputation overseas,
is mainly confined to the columns of
newspapers, for the simple reason that
magazines that endeavour to support
them are in their turn not supported by
the public. Such a condition is
deplorable in a country with nearly a
hundred years' heritage, and the few
that really have the foundation of a
national literature in their hearts are to
be heartily commended for the vital
suggestion of a New Zealand Authors'
Week.—I am, etc.,
H. FARRINGTON.

D. McLaren replied (*The Evening Post*,
20 August 1935) disagreeing with "John
Dene" and concurring with Farrington's
view of local writers and literature.
Farrington later wrote book reviews
(sent from overseas?) for the literary
magazine *Arena* No. 15 (1947) and No.
19 (1948), including a review of a North
American poetry anthology.
After which he seems to have faded
from sight. He may have returned
overseas to serve in the armed forces
during World War II and live in the UK
[London].

Article by Mark Pirie

Comment on *Chapbook*

Chapbook is mentioned in the *Oxford
Companion to New Zealand Literature*

(1998) but the write-up is too brief for the seriousness of the journal.

The journal was originally a private magazine (Nos. 1-5) and the official journal of the Zillah Castle Chamber Music Society and the Zillah Castle String Quartet edited by Ronald B Castle, a Wellington poet and musical instrument expert 1945-50.

Castle stated that *Chapbook* 'exists for the encouragement of creative work' and was an open door for New Zealand writers.

Chapbook, a co-operative, was non-profit and did not pay its contributors. The journal featured literature, music and art and published translations, poems, stories, sheet music and essays along with artworks/illustrations.

The leading contributors were Betsy Gerrin, D Mona Castle, Ronald B Castle, D M Phipps, Una D Scott, Beryl Golden, Powina Grey, Louis Johnson, James H Sutherland, K E S Gunn, T France, Kathleen Hawkins and T J Chapman. Children like Jeanette Scott also appeared.

A frequent illustrator was Auckland's Jim Beveridge.

Although the first nine issues were very small, the magazine grew in scope and seriousness, becoming international, and was around 40 pages an issue towards the end of its run. It concluded with issue No. 28 in 1950.

Some of the later work featured was of very high quality, particularly the overseas contributors from Canada, the UK, France and North America, e.g. Ignace M Ingianni (USA), the late M E Ballantyne (New York) and Lex Anderson (Scotland).

Some of the New Zealand contributors have substantial outputs, e.g. Powina Grey [Evelyn Macdonald] b. 1870 has a 300-page collected edition of his poetry. The articles of music criticism are particularly notable for music scholars. The literature articles give a strong European focus of the UK, France and Spain.

Castle certainly deserves credit for building this magazine up and providing support for a promising new generation of the '40s that included James H Sutherland and some of Louis Johnson's earliest uncollected efforts at poetry.

Vincent O'Sullivan appointed NZ Poet Laureate

PANZA would like to congratulate Vincent O'Sullivan on his recent appointment as New Zealand's Poet Laureate.

More information at the National Library's website:
<http://nzpoetlaureate.natlib.govt.nz/2013/08/your-new-poet-laureate.html>

Donate to PANZA through PayPal

You can now become a friend of PANZA or donate cash to help us continue our work by going to <http://pukapukabooks.blogspot.com> and accessing the donate button – any donation will be acknowledged.

Recently received donations

Michael O'Leary – 13 titles plus *Paneta Street* by Michael O'Leary CD.

Rowan Gibbs – around 250 titles (3 boxes of books, newspapers and periodicals).

Mark Pirie – 40 titles.

Madeleine Marie Slavick – 16 [16 Wairarapa poets for Poetry Day 2013].

PANZA kindly thanks these donators to the archive.

About the Poetry Archive

*Poetry Archive of New Zealand
Aotearoa (PANZA)*

PANZA contains

A unique Archive of NZ published poetry, with around five thousand titles from the 19th century to the present day.

The Archive also contains photos and paintings of NZ poets, publisher's catalogues, poetry ephemera, posters, reproductions of book covers and other memorabilia related to NZ poetry and poetry performance.

Wanted

NZ poetry books (old & new)
Other NZ poetry items i.e. critical books on NZ poetry, anthologies of NZ poetry, poetry periodicals and broadsheets, poetry event programmes, posters and/or prints of NZ poets or their poetry books.

**DONT THROW OUT OLD NZ
POETRY! SEND IT TO PANZA**

PANZA will offer:

- Copies of NZ poetry books for private research and reading purposes.
- Historical information for poets, writers, journalists, academics, researchers and independent scholars of NZ poetry.
- Photocopying for private research purposes.
- Books on NZ poetry and literary history, and CD-ROMs of NZ poetry and literature
- CDs of NZ poets reading their work
- Inspirational talks on NZ poets
- Video/DVD/film screenings of documentaries on NZ poets
- Readings/book launches by NZ poets
- Educational visits for primary schools, intermediates, colleges, universities and creative writing schools/classes.
- The Northland Writers' Walk (in planning)

Spring 2013

You can assist the preservation of NZ poetry by becoming one of the Friends of the Poetry Archive of New Zealand Aotearoa (PANZA).

If you'd like to become a friend or business sponsor of PANZA, please contact us.

Contact Details

Poetry Archive of NZ Aotearoa (PANZA)

1 Woburn Road, Northland, Wellington
PO Box 6637, Marion Square,
Wellington

Dr Niel Wright - Archivist
(04) 475 8042

Dr Michael O'Leary - Archivist
(04) 905 7978

email: pukapuka@paradise.net.nz

Visits welcome by appointment

Current PANZA Members:

Mark Pirie (HeadworX), Roger Steele (Steele Roberts Ltd), Michael O'Leary (Earl of Seacliff Art Workshop) and Niel Wright (Original Books).

Current Friends of PANZA: Paul Thompson, Gerrard O'Leary, Vaughan Rapatahana and the New Zealand Poetry Society.

PANZA is a registered charitable trust