

valuable, but some other shots are rather obscure. Plans usually show a curving tree-lined drive and a heart-shaped roundabout in front of the house with, say, a rose garden at one side. Pergolas were frequent. Rock gardens, ferneries and lily ponds contributed to more elaborate schemes, such as Greenhill near Hastings or Homewood at Karori. The general character was more rustic than formal and there is little evidence of sculpture, urns or fountains. There was considerable earthmoving on occasion but clients were expected to plough gardens areas and to take delivery of the great boxes of plants, which were sent by rail from the Christchurch nurseries. At the peak of operations 80 men were employed in the North Island alone.

Buxton twice formed a limited company. The first went into liquidation in June 1926 as the wool wealth declined and the second, under the name of Alfred Buxton and Sons, met a number of problems of which the Napier earthquake was one. He returned to Otaki to grow cut flowers for market, employing wartime staff when he could get them and occasionally fulfilling a landscape commission for old clients. He died in 1950.

Different readers will find different interests in this book. By no means least is Buxton's involvement with trade organizations, the New Zealand Association of Nurserymen, which became the New Zealand Horticultural Trades Association, and the Institute of Horticulture, which was originally known as the New Zealand Bud Selection Committee. These are areas of particular interest.

During the course of early research, with some chapters already written, Tipples was badly injured in a road accident and he completed the writing on a word processor borrowed as an aid to his rehabilitation. It may, then, seem a little unkind to comment on the number of literals which have survived into print but they are so many that they must reflect upon the standards of publication in his department. Having said that one must also say that the book is essential reading for anyone interested, however remotely, in its subject matter.

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The Botanic Garden Wellington. A New Zealand History 1840-1987. By Winsome Shepherd and Walter Cook. Millwood Press, Wellington, 1988. 396pp. NZ price: \$79.95.

ONE OF the most enduring and attractive legacies for our towns and cities from the Victorian era is their botanic gardens. When these were first established, they were not particularly attractive. In swamps or on hillsides unwanted for other purposes plantings were made of exotic trees. The gardens were an act of faith in the future—a very Victorian phenomenon. Today, as those who visit these gardens in Australia, especially Victoria, and New Zealand, discover, most of the trees planted in the Victorian era are fully mature and the gardens are in the full glory that the Victorians only dreamed about and planned for. But the gardens had other purposes which were just as characteristic of the Victorian era although meaning much less to us today. They were, for instance, a practical application of principles of colonization and imperialism. From Kew Gardens seeds and plants were distributed throughout the Empire. The gardens were to be the seed-beds for experimentation in the adaptation of European plants and trees to New World conditions. In the tradition of Joseph Banks they were intended to show what species could profitably be propagated in the New World. Some of these experiments were remarkably successful: this book shows the major contribution of the Wellington Botanic Garden to the 'acclimatization' of *pinus radiata* in this country. From the garden seeds and plants were distributed all over New Zealand. A fascinating part of this book is the tracing of these distributions.

Wellington's Botanic Garden dates back almost to the beginning of European settlement. A botanic garden was seen as a desirable feature of an early Victorian town and there was provision for one in the New Zealand Company's original plan for the settlement.

For the urban historian detailed studies of botanic gardens offer much of interest. Many of the sites that were chosen were on the margins of recently established towns. As the towns grew, the gardens became increasingly a part of the life of their towns and in particular had a role to play in satisfying the growing needs for space and facilities for urban recreation. This trend could conflict with the more scientific horticultural objectives which had been prominent in the founding of the gardens. Thus in Wellington the ground used for Hector's Teaching Garden became first of all a very formal parterre and then the location for a sound shell. The creation of Anderson's Park was a response to the great shortage of recreational space for the people of adjacent residential districts but did great damage to the northern end of the hills on which the Garden was located. Now in its turn it is threatened by the growing pressure for car-parking space for visitors to the new tea-rooms and expanded Begonia House.

This book is a lavish production in two parts, divided at 1891 when the Wellington City Council assumed responsibility for the management of the Garden. It is superbly illustrated with many facsimile reproductions of key documents and photographs showing changes over the years. The layout is expansive and in some aspects confused and over-indulgent. There is a complete change in the organization of the text at mid-point. In the first part a wide margin is left for notes but it is infrequently used, resulting in a wasteful and pointless abundance of white space. In the second part this margin disappears and the text fills the entire page. In some chapters it flows on for page after page without any breaks, leaving the reader feeling rather exhausted, especially in view of the small size of the type.

The first section, by Winsome Shepherd, is particularly valuable for the insight it provides into the connections between the management of the garden and the infant colony's scientific-horticultural elite. The second section, by Walter Cook, contains a fascinating study of the antecedents of the various landscape features of the Wellington Botanic Garden in the design of European estates and gardens. This is a most valuable contribution to horticultural history. The book is a thorough and meticulous study of the development of the gardens. It deserves a readership wider than that which may result from its apparently parochial subject and its high price.

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Private Superannuation in the Banking Industry. A Centennial History of the Bank of New Zealand Officers' Provident Association. By N.C. Quigley, Bank of New Zealand Officers' Provident Association, Wellington, 1988. 362pp. NZ price: \$15.

THE OLDEST private superannuation scheme in New Zealand was established by the Bank of New Zealand in 1878, although it only began operating in 1887. This volume serves as a centennial history of that event. However, it offers much more than most books of the celebratory genre, thanks largely to the employment of a professional historian as author, rather than a former employee of the association. The BNZ superannuation scheme replaced previous discretionary retirement payments by the bank to long-serving staff with a system of defined benefits. Qualification for the scheme required long and loyal service, reflecting the principal motive for superannuation as a form of collateral in the labour contract to ensure staff loyalty. Thus early superannuation schemes prolifer-