

already committed to smaller houses and an accompanying rather than custodial role. The Tahitian context was markedly different from that of Australia and New Zealand, and makes for interesting reading.

One slight drawback to this history is the prodigious amount of detail that tends to interrupt the narrative, with the result that this is more of an historian's book than a book for the general reader. The dilemma every historian faces is how much information to include, especially when writing the seminal book on a topic, with the accompanying concern that what is not included will be lost. Given the radical changes in religious life over the past 40 years and the possibility that traditional religious life may come to seem quaint or incomprehensible to future generations, Kovesi has probably made the right choice to include more rather than less information.

There has been a tendency among some modern historians to downplay or ignore the significance of religion and religious organizations in general histories. This handsome publication with its generous number of photographs and careful research should ensure that the contribution of the Sisters of the Good Shepherd to the welfare of women and girls at risk in the South Pacific area will not be under-estimated or forgotten.

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*Jaycee: Developers of People, Builders of Communities.* By Graham and Susan Butterworth. Ngaio Press, Wellington, 2008. 293pp. NZ price: \$49.95. ISBN 978-0-9582855-0-6.

GRAHAM AND SUSAN BUTTERWORTH'S HISTORY OF JAYCEE is a meticulous and perceptive account of the organization, its members and activities, and its place in New Zealand society over 75 years. A branch of the United States parent organization, Jaycee aimed to provide young New Zealand men (and later women) with the education and skills needed for success in business and community leadership. Its heyday ran from the 1950s to the 1970s, and membership peaked at just under 7000 in 1972–1974. As a commissioned history, the narrative is necessarily comprehensive and pays appropriate attention to countless individuals and Jaycee events. The authors' accomplishment is in the successful navigation of this detail through clear and lively prose. The narrative is well organized, diverting to cover concisely the many aspects of a national organization over 75 years, but always driving the story forward and placing events in a broader social perspective. An extensive oral history project contributes to the text and the book is well illustrated.

One of the strengths of *Jaycee* is its depiction of communities and their building of much-needed social infrastructure in the immediate post-war decades. The authors argue that the modest historical scrutiny to date of conservative society in New Zealand has reinforced an accepted view of a regulated, stiflingly conventional and boring society. Instead they contend that the enthusiasm and energy with which young New Zealand men embraced Jaycee indicates their perspectives on life were not limited to 'rugby, racing and beer'. Jaycee men are portrayed as ambitious, eager to learn (the thirst to understand new technology was apparent) and committed to the wellbeing of their own communities, but also outward looking to the world. The Jaycee ethos of education and 'active service' in the community covered the spectrum: commerce, agriculture, science and manufacturing; public health, education and welfare; democratic civil leadership and international understanding. The text conveys a strong sense of optimism about New Zealand's prospects, and the place that young men would play in the country's economic and social development. Jaycee membership was also inherently conservative at this time,

and the book gives an insight into this group of young establishment men as activists for government policies, rather than against.

The book marks but does not slavishly celebrate 75 years of Jaycee. There is no shying away from the problems that Jaycee have faced since the 1970s. A frank discussion of the weaknesses of direction and judgement particular to New Zealand Jaycee is placed alongside the impact of the social, economic and generational challenges that have cut a swathe through all the service organizations. New Zealand's changing society is further reflected through Jaycee's struggle with the admission of women as full members and attracting Maori to the organization.

The substantial purpose of the book as a record and analysis of the Jaycee organization is complemented by these revealing insights into community attitudes and responses to broader events and policies of the day. By its geographic sweep it delves into the social setting and economic progress of communities the length of the country. The extensive nature of Jaycee activities means this book offers rewards to those with interests as diverse as health, education, business, farming ... the list could go on.

Graham and Susan Butterworth state that their goal was to set the history of the Jaycee organization in New Zealand against the wider social context, and this they have certainly done. It is a welcome and overdue departure from the style and quality of histories of the major service organizations to date. Its success can be seen in the broader challenge it lays down to all organizations, clubs and communities contemplating the publication of their story; a patchwork history is no longer an option. The Jaycee organization is to be congratulated for recognising this and taking on the project of funding professional historians, rather than settling for yet another amateur attempt. Their reward is this discerning and high-quality history.

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*Levin. The Making of a Town.* By Anthony Dreaver. Horowhenua District Council, Levin, 2006. 385pp. NZ price: \$85.00 hardback, \$45.00 paperback. ISBN 0-473-10845-3.

LEVIN BECAME A BOROUGH IN 1906, long after its neighbours, Palmerston North (1877), Feilding (1881) and Foxton (1888). This time-lag seems to have been a shaping influence on the town as it emerges from this text. I say 'emerges from' because Anthony Dreaver's handsomely produced book is achieved with a dedication to detail which brings us firmly into the place, but a modesty of interpretation which leaves the dynamics which shaped it somewhat beneath the surface of the text. Here and there a reference is made to Levin being a typical town, but there are some features which seem to me very peculiar to it.

In his excellent history of *Horowhenua County and Its People* (1988) Dreaver provided a clear sketch of why in the 1880s the old Manawatu County split into six as locals bid to direct public expenditure into their own patches. The timing and purpose of the move to borough status in *Levin* is not quite so fully explored. The petition to become a borough emanated from the Chamber of Commerce and was supported by storekeepers, publicans, lawyers and land agents. The opposition was led by saw-milling interests and others with rights over 5–20 acre lots surrounding the town. The promoters wanted this 'suburban' land included in the borough boundaries, possibly to bring it under the provisions for rating it on unimproved value (although this is not mentioned). The opponents wanted not only to fend off borough rates of any kind but probably to do so until they could subdivide and sell their sections (although this is not much examined either). These different categories of land stemmed from one of Levin's three origins, as a John Ballance 'village settlement'. The other two origins were as a railway town and as a saw-milling centre.