

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.

Although Levin began in 1886 as a flag-station (lean-to shed) on the Wellington and Manawatu Railway, it had no particular railway shape to it. This was because the land the railway company expected was never fully made over to them. Instead, Ballance saw it as a good site on which the government could establish a 'village settlement' of quarter-acre urban plots, 5–20 acre 'suburban' farms and orchards, and larger outlying farms, the town sites to be sold at auction, the others at a fixed price on deferred payment, or taken up as government tenancies. The railway contributed by bringing the selectors to view what they might purchase, which in the event was not the town sections but the suburban and rural ones. This could be interpreted as 'settlement', but as we do not know much about what happened to these purchases over the next two decades, we could legitimately regard it as speculation (not a bad word in the nineteenth-century lexicon). One purchaser who does have a high profile in the book, Emma Ostler (widowed mother of the writer Helen Wilson), was 'particularly active' in buying up and selling sections.

This dealer society did in time become a farming one, but the transformation of 'forest into farm' followed, rather than led, the process — not sturdy yeomen with axes but businessmen with saw-mills seem more important in shaping Levin than either the railway or the village settlement. The railway served the millers, who were usually investors in it and procured sites and sidings from it, but they made use of it rather than the other way around. One mill and all its workers and equipment was transported by rail from a worked-out concession at Wainuiomata to the great bush inland from Lake Horowhenua. This was in 1889, which is to say late in settlement history. The millers' approach was conservative, if not exactly conservationist: the forest was a resource to exploit rationally rather than an obstacle to be eliminated. Their aim was to saw timber, and to make high-value mouldings and joinery. Lowland podocarp were still being milled in World War I, and in the gorges up to World War II.

The millers were there for decades, and it was they who established the nucleus of the town and gave it its peculiar qualities of commercial acumen, business co-operation, religious non-conformity (Methodism especially), modernizing energy and marked capacity for community building. These qualities, the availability of land, and the town's proximity to Wellington, were what attracted secondary industry to Levin in the decades after World War II. By then the millers had mostly gone, and a wave of outsiders, often retired 'experts', assumed leadership. Some of them were not only alien but cranky, and that Levin survived their stewardship, and that of the neo-liberals in Wellington in the 1980s and 1990s, testifies to the solidity of what had been done before. It is appropriate that Dreaver should attend so closely to what that was, down to the Levin District Fitness Committee, although it is a pity that the massive task set him precludes a wider view, which might, for example, note the difference from nearby Maori Otaki (which knew Levin as 'sawdust town'). Although embraced in a rather self-conscious way in community-building, Maori remained largely on the other side of the lake, which is at odds with the rich earlier history of the Horowhenua. As for the lake, while it appears in splendid representations on both front and back covers, it hardly features in the book itself, except as the town sump. But Anthony Dreaver has contributed much already to that richer history, notably in *Horowhenua County* and his biography of Leslie Adkin, and this is an impressive addition to that achievement.

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