

Deed makes the salient point throughout the book that cemeteries were not static places, but changed with shifts in religious belief, fashion, transport and growth of cities. Though the original surveyors of major towns such as Wellington, Dunedin and Auckland made ample provision for cemeteries according to town planning principles, population growth meant that by the latter quarter of the nineteenth century these first-generation cemeteries were full, had fallen into disrepair or were uncomfortably close to housing. The newer cemeteries that were built to replace the first-generation ones capitalized on modern transport links of railways so they could be further away. They were also shaped by modernization of shipping in the later nineteenth century which allowed imported materials such as sandstone, granite and marble to become more available for those with the means to commemorate their dead in style. These large stone markers are the monuments that have remained visible today, and of course obscure the fact that the majority of those buried in these and the older graveyards were remembered with wood, metal or nothing at all.

Māori urupā and funerary practices also shifted during the nineteenth century, incorporating some European and Christian elements and retaining other traditions. Deed explores in some detail the long-term effects of differing Pākehā and Māori attitudes towards the long dead with analysis of the decay and neglect of many European cemeteries in major cities and the well-kept Māori burial grounds.

There are many fascinating details in this book. The story of the grave of ‘Somebody’s Darling’, washed up on the banks of the Clutha River in Otago, is intriguing for what it says of memorialization and emotion among settlers. Romantic stories of the man, perhaps a lonely aristocrat, perhaps a drunk butcher, swirled about the burial of the unidentified man and William Rigby, who marked the grave and then requested his own burial in the next grave.

Overall this is a rich and interesting book that will be invaluable for any historian exploring cemeteries, burial practices and memorialization of the dead. While its detail will be embraced by New Zealand historians and those interested in local, regional and family histories, its findings have wider significance for historians of memorialization, commemoration and burial practices throughout the nineteenth-century settler colonies.

DIANNE HALL

Victoria University, Melbourne

Sorrows of a Century: Interpreting Suicide in New Zealand, 1900–2000. By John C. Weaver. Bridget Williams Books, Wellington, 2014. 449pp. NZ price: \$59.99. ISBN: 9781927277232.

Sorrows of a Century is an exceptional work, and could be considered one of the most important books of New Zealand’s history. John C. Weaver interprets witnesses’ depositions and other evidence contained within inquest case files relating to around half of all suicides that occurred in New Zealand over the twentieth century. This exceptionally large and detailed data set of over 11,000 files is the basis for an outstandingly thorough study. It provides a significant corrective and refreshing

advance in the field of suicide studies, as well as valuable insights into New Zealand's social and medical history. This study uncovers comprehensive information about suicide, from who killed themselves and how, at what times and places, to the biggest and most important question of all: *why* do some people end their own lives? Weaver insists on the need to explore people's individual histories and situate them in the wider historical context of socio-cultural, political and economic changes. The inquest evidence reveals there could be multiple, concrete contributing factors in suicide, which counteracts the preference often demonstrated by psychologists and psychiatrists since the 1980s for regarding most suicides as caused by mental illness. Mental illness and depression are shown to be problem-laden concepts which varied significantly in use and understanding over time.

The eight chapters are arranged thematically. The first chapter gives a statistical overview of the broad patterns and trends regarding suicide, outlining the continuities and changes over the century. Subsequent chapters impressively combine both quantitative data and the qualitative evidence available from inquest records. Chapter two details gender relations and the role of male rage and violence, and sexual/relationship problems in precipitating suicide; while chapter three investigates causal connections between (lack of) work and male suicide in particular. By examining case studies across different eras of financial crisis and prosperity, Weaver untangles the challenging complications connecting economic circumstances and suicide. The possibility of considering some suicides as self-euthanasia is addressed in the next chapter, alongside physical illness and trauma (including war injury) as leading motives for suicide, particularly for older people.

The second half of the book is even more hard-hitting. Chapter five addresses in detail the role of mental illness in suicide over the century. This is shown in all its complexities to be one of the prominent motives, but by no means the paramount cause of suicides. Moreover, the dominant widespread understanding that difficult circumstances could lead to troubled mental states was inverted in the 1980s, particularly by those employed in psychiatry and psychology to treat those very 'illnesses'. Weaver is skeptical of those who invert the causal sequence to prioritize mental illness above the stressful life circumstances which were shown in previous chapters to be common contributing factors to suicide. Furthermore, he identifies substance abuse, particularly alcohol abuse, as 'the century's most stealthily destructive force in peacetime affluent societies' (p.197). It is in relation to rising youth suicide rates (chapters six and seven) that the controversy about the ascendancy of mental illness or socio-cultural factors in precipitating suicide really comes to the fore. Poorly explained statistics contributed to a media-driven panic c.1988–1996 about rising youth suicide rates. Much previous research has failed to separate pre-adolescents (up to and including 14 year olds) from the older cohorts of adolescents (aged 15–19) and young adults (aged 20–24), which is crucial for understanding changes in suicide rates and determining patterns of causality.

Weaver exposes inconsistencies and illogicalities in the medical explanation of suicide as being due to mental illness, and identifies the negative consequences that societal changes could have for young people. Emotional trauma from soaring rates of family breakup, violence and disharmony in home environments, fallout from the 'sexual revolution', premature and dysfunctional romantic/sexual encounters, increased pressures regarding physical appearance, school pressures and other factors combined to lower self-esteem and make life difficult for young people to endure.

Furthermore, the neo-liberal economic revolution in New Zealand in the 1980s and 1990s and unprecedentedly high unemployment rates amongst youth were crucial factors, alongside alcohol and drug abuse; and less protective treatment of what was a steady percentage of youth with mental health problems also contributed to an increasing suicide rate for the nation's young people. The final chapter addresses the question of why some people kill themselves, while others in the same situations do not. It delivers an in-depth critique of suicide studies, detailing the many problems with the aggregate data that most suicide researchers rely on, and its unreliability across time and between different countries. Sociology and psychology are revealed as pseudo-sciences, especially in regard to suicide research, and any notion that suicide is explainable through theory is resolutely dispelled.

This is an exceptionally challenging read. All the worst aspects of human society are detailed, as they contributed to people's suicides. Fortunately, the book is well written with a clear structure, and Weaver's refreshing frankness and use of colourful adjectives assist the reader's engagement with the unremittingly grim subject matter. There is a wealth of information summarized in the many tables and graphs, and a few select images. While initially appearing a daunting length, the considerable complexities regarding suicide mean this book is actually very concisely written. The extensive endnotes and bibliography are comprehensive and well-organized; however, the index could be improved in future editions as it is unreliable in listing all mentions of some subjects.

Sorrows of a Century is also an exceptionally controversial book. It acknowledges the ugly realities of life, such as the many different ways people can be intensely cruel to others. Controversial revelations include evidence that, for some, suicide could be a rational act, a well-thought-out and logical solution to their situation according to their worldview. This is an enormous affront to the current dominant theories of suicide as an abnormal, irrational action resulting from biochemically unwell minds. Weaver is unafraid of making criticisms where he finds they are due according to careful, critical scrutiny of the evidence. There is no shying away from criticizing the bad parenting and dysfunctional family environments, for example, that could contribute to suicides, particularly amongst younger people. Indeed, one of the author's enduring concerns is that the emphasis in recent decades of focusing on the presumed mental illness of people who commit suicide is an oversimplification which 'removes from scrutiny the conduct of people around the deceased' (p.256), or the wider negative trends in society. Many people, even those without professional vested interests, do not want to even consider these as causal factors in suicide; yet surely full understanding of the causes of suicide is important if effective steps are to be taken toward prevention.

The book's conclusion is understandably pessimistic towards current prevention strategies. The case-based evidence from the historical approach taken in this book shows the need for longer-term measures or what Weaver terms 'deep prevention', which is 'nothing more – but also nothing less – than putting into action a concern and respect for those around us' (p.339). While this is admittedly utopian, 'deep prevention' appears to have been effective in two areas in the past. The introduction of social welfare and improving treatment of the elderly, including through palliative care, were likely effective in reducing suicide rates.

Few people in New Zealand have not been affected by suicide to some extent, and *Sorrows of a Century* should be of personal interest to many. This book would make particularly beneficial reading for those working in all aspects of mental health,

suicide research and policy making, if only they have the courage. Furthermore, it is an exceptional example for historians of all stripes to read and emulate, for it demonstrates rigorous collection and use of documentary sources, an effective combination of qualitative and quantitative analysis, and the courage to criticize and make bold assertions that challenge the status quo, all based on a fundamental concern for objective evidence above self-interested ideologies.

GRACE BATEMAN

University of Otago

Rushing For Gold: Life and Commerce on the Goldfields of New Zealand and Australia. Edited by Lloyd Carpenter and Lyndon Fraser. Otago University Press, Dunedin, 2016. 344pp. NZ price: \$45. ISBN: 9781877578540.

As a historian of the Victorian goldfields, and particularly the Bendigo goldfield, I would argue that the importance of the New Zealand gold rushes cannot be underestimated. On Bendigo by the early 1860s miners had moved from the phase of simple alluvial mining to horse-puddling and quartz reefing, which were to be crucial for the long-term future of the field. A drought in the summer of 1865–1866 virtually destroyed the industry. Without water to drive the newly erected stream machinery, quartz reefing was brought to a standstill. In the grip of this drought the New Zealand gold rushes promised a new form of livelihood and perhaps riches. No census was taken during these years, but local mining registrars frequently bemoaned the loss of population. The New Zealand rushes took residents from all walks of life, and had a critical impact on the development of Bendigo. One example that appeals to me is the set-back that mining unionism suffered because of the New Zealand rush. After waging a battle to win an eight-hour day in 1865, the Bendigo Miners' Union simply folded when its leader Robert Clark left for New Zealand. His union was not revived until 1872.

Lloyd Carpenter and Lyndon Fraser have done a wonderful job in bringing together a collection of essays that helps us understand the links that were so strong between Victoria and New Zealand in the 1860s. Their book is divided into five sections: Trans Tasman, Māori and Chinese, Gold Rush Women, Goldfields Society and Goldfields Heritage.

In the opening essay of the first section, Chris McConville, Keir Reeves and Andrew Reeves explore the early economic links between Otago and Victoria and analyse how these links have continued into this century. In a short essay they can only skim over the economic links between Victoria and Otago, and the chapter alerts us to the need for a more extensive study. Business archives, such as the Michaelis-Hallenstein papers, have yet to be analysed in a detailed way. Daniel Davey explores the links that emerged between New Zealand and Victorian miners, and Terry Hearn makes great use of shipping lists to plot the rush of Victorians to Tuapeka. John Angus concludes the first section with a marvellous account of the political career of Vincent Pyke. Pyke is well known to historians of Victorian mining through his legislation to manage company formation, but this chapter reminds us that local politics in New Zealand and Victoria had many similarities. In both societies local issues played a