

early elite of Canterbury and other Wakefield settlements. It is time for this historian, who knows so much about nineteenth-century Auckland/Tamaki-Makau-Rau, to indulge in a little 'history from below' to balance out his extraordinary contribution to our understanding of New Zealand's 'history from above'.

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*Sport and the New Zealanders: A History.* By Greg Ryan and Geoff Watson. Auckland University Press, Auckland, 2018. 464pp. NZ price: \$65. ISBN: 9781869408831.

THIS BOOK PRESENTS us with a puzzle: if sport has been played continuously and energetically in New Zealand for as long as Māori and Europeans have lived together (and physical pursuits were of importance in both societies before the 1770s), what is it that makes such activities both supremely important and, at the same time, of no real consequence? This is the 'paradox of play' that C.L.R. James's *Beyond a Boundary* (1963) captured. Sport was the place that revealed most about the society 'beyond the boundary', as it declared itself concerned only with what occurred within its bounds. The many questions that arise from this conundrum, about race, locality, religion, gender, sexuality and, particularly, class, are all tackled in this splendid, comprehensive and careful study.

Ryan and Watson do not provide easy answers to these questions, thank goodness. In a broad chronological span, stretching from pre-1840 to 2015, they set out a profusion of sports and games, an intensity of competition, a uniquely New Zealand variant of 'utilitarian amateurism' (the dominant ideology from the 1890s to the 1990s), and a sporting culture in which local government played a crucial part. A delicious specificity of clubs, prizes, teams and occasions bursts forth from the pages. Continuities in the desire to play, in the collective pleasures of team contests and associated socialising, in identifications with place and other communities, and in rivalries on and off the field, are strong threads.

Within that longer picture, however, are critical phases. In the early years games were played with the people and resources to hand: horse racing on the beach, canoe and whaleboat racing on the harbours at anniversary day festivals, cricket matches on improvised grounds. These gave way to a period in which clubs and competitions formed, if only to flourish for a season or two. An early pragmatism in choosing opponents, adopting rules (often on a match-by-match basis), and selecting team members (and adjudicators) by availability rather than preference or skill, laid an enduring foundation for the myth of the classlessness of New Zealand sport.

In one of several iconoclastic challenges, Ryan and Watson show how swiftly and energetically class distinctions *did* appear. As soon as there were enough people in a place to form teams and clubs with those of like mind and tastes, people did so. Canterbury cricketers, Auckland yachties, Wellington footballers (and everything else) formed clubs around distinctions of residence, school, church, occupation and wealth. Those unspoken, but fully recognized, features that made some people

more congenial as team mates than others expressed the class, rank and wealth divisions that soon formed in cities and towns (and between such places and rural hinterlands).

Sports and competitions came and went before the more stable local, provincial and, much later, national organizations appeared. Ryan and Watson's chapters on the hinge period, 1880–1920, provide the finest discussion of the forces that drew places like Dannevirke and Temuka into wider connection, while also pushing back against perceived attempts to control or diminish local autonomy. Delineation of the tensions between local and centralizing tendencies is superb, and for this reason alone the book is a masterpiece. The lovely squabbles between Canterbury sporting doyens and their Auckland and Wellington (and, to lesser extent, Otago) co-adjutors, between provincial rugby selectors, and between people who played the game for love and those who played for cash and winning, all offer deep insights into the spaces where people live beyond those categories we otherwise investigate: work, politics, family, and criminal courts. *Sport and the New Zealanders* deserves a place alongside Richard Holt's *Sport and the British* (1989), Tony Mason's *Association Football and English Society, 1863–1915* (1981) and Eduardo Galeano's *Football in Sun and Shadow* (English translation 1995).

Ryan and Watson show how sports, for all their popularity, required money; how huge a place horse racing (and controlled gambling) occupied; how middle-class patrons (with money and influence) were vital in bringing some sports to the fore, while others languished on the margins of respectability and viability. And how, for all the hegemony that rugby union and cricket have enjoyed (and continue to enjoy), there have been alternative codes and communities. There is an evident relish in Ryan and Watson's account of rugby league's thriving life in some Catholic, working-class and Māori communities.

Ryan and Watson are energetic debunkers. New Zealanders' belief in a classless, race inclusive, rural-based origin to sporting success is captured in the eternal image of the farm-based Colin Meads as an exemplary and game-winning All Black forward. Yet most All Blacks came from urban rather than rural areas, and from professional and skilled rather than labouring or unskilled backgrounds. Most of what we have been told about 1905 is wrong. While demolishing these shibboleths, showing us history rather than mythology, the authors are fully aware of the role that such ideas have in popular discourse, in how New Zealanders use sport to talk about values, and about themselves.

The collective nature of New Zealand life and its transformation into a more individualized state in the neo-liberal 1980s is another major theme. Attention is also given to sport's social divisions. Women and men did not participate or compete equally. Māori and Pākehā might be thought to have done so, but this has often not been the case in reality. Able and disabled athletes feature in later chapters, as do competitors identifying as non-heterosexual (though we still await a non-heterosexual All Black).

There is much to celebrate in this book: the collaboration of two scholars, both inspired by Len Richardson's Sport and Society course at the University of Canterbury; the utilization of a generation's worth of theses in history and other disciplines that have dug productively into sporting history; and an elegant book design (not to be taken for granted).

If there are small quibbles, one might wish the authors did not repeat the myth that ‘historically speaking, New Zealand is a young country’ (p.3) when their own first chapter would suggest otherwise; that the gender discussion probed more of how sport shaped a changing New Zealand masculinity; and that Raewyn Dalziel’s ‘Colonial Helpmeet’ was the beginning, rather than the end, of formulations of gender relations in the colonial period. And if there is a bit more Canterbury in these pages than a Wellingtonian can easily stomach, that just proves the authors’ argument that provincialism is alive and well!

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*Fearless: The Extraordinary Untold Story of New Zealand’s Great War Airmen.* By Adam Claasen. Massey University Press, Auckland, 2017. 495pp. NZ price: \$59.99. ISBN: 9780994140784.

BLOOD, MUD AND SHRAPNEL are the enduring images of World War One. Its imprint is strong on the public consciousness of New Zealanders, especially around Anzac Day. In particular, the Gallipoli campaign has long dominated New Zealand’s public memory and, therefore, been the focus for historical research. Over the years, the shift from Gallipoli-based research to the battles on the Western Front has slowly addressed this historiographical imbalance. However, the focus on land-based warfare has also meant the war in the air has been generally neglected. A small body of literature by historians such as Errol Martyn and Ian McGibbon has laid much of the groundwork regarding New Zealand’s involvement in the war in the air.

The impetus for *Fearless* comes from the Centenary History Programme, funded by the Ministry for Culture and Heritage, Massey University and the New Zealand Defence Force. Its brief is to produce authoritative and accessible print histories on New Zealand and World War One. About a dozen publications were planned for, and just over half have already been published.

Adam Claasen draws the reader in by opening with the improbable near-death experience of ace pilot Keith Caldwell. Standing with one foot on the rudder, Caldwell waved to a fellow airman, who mistakenly thought it was a heroic gesture, before he plunged to his death. In fact, like something out of a movie, Caldwell jumped at the last minute, rolled and stood upright. The laconic entry in his logbook ‘Very lucky’ (p.16) epitomises the forthright character of one of New Zealand’s outstanding wartime pilots. Claasen recounts numerous instances of bravery and recklessness from the New Zealand airmen.

The text follows a chronological structure that serves the reader well. The pithy chapter titles, like ‘Dust and Dysentery’, ‘Bashed into Shape’ and ‘Bloody April’, set the tone for each section. The early chapters provide an overview of the pre-war efforts to introduce aviation into New Zealand. The New Zealand government