

**AUGUST 2000**  
NUMBER 4  
PUBLISHED ANNUALLY

## EDITORIAL

With this expanded issue *NZWords* becomes an annual publication; better one full-bodied number than two more skeletal, we felt. Two of Harry Orsman's principal editorial assistants on the *DNZE*, Des Hurley and Bernadette Hince, are reunited here in intriguing articles about an elusive Kiwi bird and the subantarctic lexicon respectively; and we lead with a synthesis of our national nomenclature.

Speaking of names, there have been further developments in the saga of New Zealand sporting team-labels (see *NZWords* 2.1), and some useful feedback from readers. D. Robinson of Auckland notably took up the invitation to suggest labels for some existing and theoretical national teams, whimsically coming up with (among others) **Pot Blacks**, **Black Jacks**, **Wall Blacks**, **Fall Blacks**, and **Black and Tans** for a national snooker, bowls, squash, skydiving, and beach volleyball team respectively. Meanwhile at least one more actual example established itself in 1999: the women's basketball team predictably blended the existing **Tall Blacks** and **Silver Ferns** to be known as **Tall Ferns**.

Another name noticed last year was **Black Fins**, for New Zealand's team at the Pan-Pacific Swimming Championships. Tim Lovell-Smith informs us that a national Aussie Rules football team has dubbed itself the **Golden Ferns**, and Ron Palenski that **Fast Ferns** has been used in media releases from Athletics New Zealand (Ferns for men's teams now?). Some of the New Zealand women's hockey team recently gave the thumbs down to the media's **Stick Chicks** label—shades of the fuss over **Gal Blacks**. Finally, a batting collapse in March led to the *Evening Post*'s punning headline '**Slack Caps** Crumble'. We shall keep watching.

Tony Deverson

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**THE NEW ZEALAND  
DICTIONARY CENTRE**  
A joint project between VICTORIA UNIVERSITY OF  
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## FROM STATED LANDT TO AOTEAROA NEW ZEALAND: THE NAMING OF 'PACIFIC'S TRIPLE STAR'

TONY DEVERSON

Which prime minister of New Zealand was honoured in a nickname for his country? What animal introduced by James Cook has provided another, less than attractive term for 'our Free Land'? How did opponents of prohibition at the beginning of the 20th century refer to New Zealand? Just how many names for **Kiwiland** (including that one) have there been?

It is by no means unusual for countries to be variously named; both Britain and Australia, for example, have had numerous alternative designations (**the British Isles**, **Albion**, **Blighty**, **Pommeland**, **the Old Country**, etc.; **New Holland**, **Aussieland**, **Oz**, **Kangaroo Land**, **the Lucky Country**, etc.). New Zealand, however, appears to have been especially favoured with diversity of nomenclature, despite the comparative youthfulness of its own variety of English.

As with all facets of New Zealanders' unique vocabulary, Harry Orsman's *Dictionary of New Zealand English* (*DNZE*) is an invaluable source of information about the names-historical and modern, indigenous and imported, ephemeral and enduring, formal and informal—by which this country has been known; and the present collective discussion is much indebted to its meticulous documentation of them.

### WHERE WE ARE AT

Two familiar names embodying an external, northern hemisphere perspective on our region are **the Antipodes** and **down under**. The *DNZE* entries for these terms reveal that each has often been used with reference to New Zealand specifically, as distinct from Australasia in general, in certain contexts. Indeed, **down under** is first recorded as a noun here rather than in Australia (in 1905, ten years before the first Australian use, according to the *Australian National Dictionary* (*AND*)). In geographical terms **the Antipodes** was always more appropriately used of New Zealand than of Australia (the true antipodes of London, for example, being east of New Zealand). However, it is understandably rare now in anything other than jocular New Zealand usage, most of us having embraced the idea of living where we are, **under** (or **in the land of**) **the Southern Cross**, rather than imagining our place as the other side of the world from somewhere else.

The dominant Pakeha name since European contact in the 17th century has of course been **New Zealand** itself. As is well

known, this is a long-term legacy not of English but of Dutch exploration of the southern hemisphere, specifically of Abel Tasman's brief encounter with our western coastlines in the summer of 1642–43. The name **New Zealand** is sometimes wrongly attributed to Tasman himself. He did give it a name, but it was **Staten Landt**, on the bold hunch that he had come upon the western edge of a vast southern continent whose north-eastern end had (so it was thought) been discovered not long before by other Dutch navigators near the southern tip of South America, and given that name.

But Staten Landt was quickly revealed to be no more than a small island (now Staten Island, near Cape Horn), and when Tasman's chart was incorporated in world maps later in the 17th century his discovery bore the name **Nieuw Zeeland** or (in modern Latin) **Zelandia Nova**. No one knows who exactly was responsible for naming the country after one of the Dutch provinces in this way, but it was clearly devised as a companion term to **Nieuw Holland/Hollandia Nova**, by which name (the western half of) Australia was first known. (Holland and Zeeland are contiguous Dutch maritime provinces.)

The conversion of the Dutch name into English stopped short of full loan translation, which would have given **\*New Sealand** (compare German **Neuseeland**, Icelandic **Nýja Sjáland**, etc.), and early uncertainty about the second word's spelling is illustrated by the use in Cook's *Journals of New Zealand* and **New Zealand** as well as **New Zealand** (and **Newzealand**). The final, hybrid Dutch-English spelling has been known to mislead some people into seeing a historical connection with Denmark, whose principal island Sjælland has also assumed the form Zealand in English. Indeed, **Zealand** alone was an occasional literary or casual substitute for the full name in earlier times (first recorded 1793). It later gave way to **Zealandia** (on the model of **Britannia**), a suitably elevated term for the purposes of some colonial poets and others, and it is not entirely defunct even today.

Other shortenings of **New Zealand** soon appeared. **N.Z.** is recorded before 1800, and other early forms cited in *DNZE* are **N. Zealand**, **N. Zealand**, **New Z.**, and **N.Z'd.** **N.Z.** is said to have become the standard abbreviation from about the mid 19th century; its modern style is most often **NZ**. Pronunciation of the abbreviation as two letters rather than two words appears to have

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developed in the early 20th century, giving rise to a new written form **Enzed** (also **En-Zed**, **En Zed**), which was first recorded (along with **Enzedder**) in 1917.

A different kind of abbreviation of the primary name is found in **New Zild** (also **Newzild**, **Noo Zild**), a conventional representation of the broad, maximally elided Kiwi pronunciation, which is traced in *DNZE* to the book *New Zild and How to Speak It* (1966), Arch Acker's answer to *Strine*, where **New Zild** is used both for the accent and for the country itself (although *DNZE* cites it as name of the country only from the 1990s). Other (less clipped) renderings of the broad New Zild pronunciation recorded in *DNZE* include **New Zillun(d)** and **Noo Zilland** and, more idiosyncratically, **NyaZilnd**, **N'yerzillun**, and **Newzyullind**. All such forms normally have either a jocular or a judgmental implication.

The use of a Dutch-derived name for what came to be English-speaking territory (Tasman after all never set foot in the country!) has from time to time rankled in certain quarters. In the 19th century several alternatives were proposed to better reflect the colony's British origins: **Austral Britain**, **Austral Albion**, **South Britain**, **Britannia** among them. At least **New Zealand** has less blatant colonialist overtones than any of those names would now have. All the same, it became common in colonial times for New Zealand to be designated the **Britain of the South** (or **Great Britain of the Southern Hemisphere** or **South Seas**, etc.). Analogous formations with more idyllic reference include **Eden of the Southern Sea** and **Wonderland of the Pacific**.

## INDIGENOUS NAMES

Nineteenth-century suggestions for English renaming have had a later counterpart in more recent calls for a change in favour of the Maori name **Aotearoa** (formerly also **Aotea-roa**, **Ao-tea-roa**; a shortened form **Ao-tea** is attested as well). It is unclear how old this name is in Maori, but its earliest reference appears to have been to the North Island only, and that is its use in many 19th-century English contexts also. In *DNZE* the earliest unequivocal use of **Aotearoa** for the whole country in an English source is 1878.

The literal meaning of this Maori compound, too, is far from generally agreed. The 'traditional' English translation is 'Land of the Long White Cloud', but Orsman's view is that 'Land of the Long Day' (or 'Dawn') or 'Land of the Long Twilight' have more to recommend them. A citation from the 1966 *Encyclopaedia of New Zealand* lists a number of other suggested translations.

**Land of the Long White Cloud** (with or without the initial capitals) has itself become a

familiar variant of the country's name, sometimes appearing as **Land of the Great White Cloud**, or in shortened form simply as **the Long White Cloud**. *DNZE* also records the ironic, punning deflations of this romantic image that have been coined: (**Land of**) **the Long White Shroud** (from the 1940s on) and (more recently) **Land of the Wrong White Crowd** (a 1980s graffiti) and **Land of the Long Black Cloud**.

In present-day use **Aotearoa** is the accepted Maori name of the whole country, and the North Island is **Te Ika a Maui** ('Maui's fish'). However, just as **Aotearoa** was used in the past of the North Island, so **Te Ika a Maui** has occasionally referred to the whole country. When Maori activist Titewhai Harawira went to the Netherlands in 1990 to request the Dutch authorities to 'reclaim' the name New Zealand in order to facilitate a change back home, she was reportedly advocating **Te Ika a Maui** and not **Aotearoa** as its indigenous replacement.

A further (obsolescent) Maori name is **Niu Tirenī**, the Maori transliteration of **New Zealand** (with many variants: **Niu Tirani**, **Niu Tirini**, **Nuitereni**, **Nui Tirenī**, **Nu Tirani**, etc.). This was more common than **Aotearoa** for a long time in the late 19th century and during the 20th, but it has fallen out of favour in recent times as Maori has increasingly shunned adapted English forms. Both **Aotearoa** and **Niu Tirenī**, however, are listed among the Maori place names approved for addressing purposes by New Zealand Post.

**Aotearoa** is one of the Maori words that penetrated the wider national consciousness during the Maori renaissance and reaffirmation of our bicultural heritage in the final decades of the twentieth century. However, calls for a name change for the country have arguably been overtaken by events. The primary English and Maori names are now increasingly found together, as **Aotearoa New Zealand**, **Aotearoa-New Zealand**, etc. (**New Zealand-Aotearoa** has also been sighted). This joint formation is the country's newest name, a mere dozen years old according to *DNZE*, and it looks set to grow in popularity.

## NICKNAMES AND NOVELTIES

Aside from the essential and official names in their various guises, there is a group of more informal nicknames alluding to certain national characteristics of Aotearoa New Zealand. Interestingly, some of these are overseas (especially Australian) coinages, having had little or no domestic currency. **Maoriland** is the earliest of these, recorded in *AND* from 1859 and *DNZE* from 1865; this was a common journalistic term in Australia in the 1880s and later (popularised in particular by the *Sydney Bulletin*), but it has long since had its day.

The New Zealand wild pigs supposedly descended from farm animals brought here

by James Cook gave rise in due course to the colloquial but unflattering **Pig Islands** (or less logically **Pig Island**), which is found from 1906, and is well known for example from James K. Baxter's use of the term in his poem sequence *Pig Island Letters* (1966). A *DNZE* citation from 1946 reports **Pig Island** as an Australian usage, but there is no entry for it in *AND*. Nor is there one for the obsolete **Fernland** (also **Land of Ferns**), also recorded in *DNZE* as a non-New Zealand, especially Australian, name (from 1926).

Conversely, three expressions found in Australian dictionaries but not in *DNZE* testify to New Zealand's susceptibility to earthquakes. *AND* has **Shaky Isles** (also **Shakey Isles**) and **Shivery Isles**, both of these again being associated with the *Bulletin*, and both dating from 1933 (just after Napier, that is). Other works list **Quaky Isles**, including the latest *Australian Concise Oxford* (3rd edition 1997).

Also in this colloquial set are the predictable **Kiwiland** (land of kiwis and/or Kiwis), which surprisingly appears to date only from the 1940s, but now enjoys regular journalistic and colloquial currency; and the much rarer **Moaland**, suitable perhaps only for reference to pre-European and even pre-Maori Aotearoa.

Historically, within the country, New Zealand was after 1840 known as **the Colony**, and subsequently as **the Dominion**, the title it carried from 1907 until the 1940s or somewhat later. Now it is simply **the country**, or more formally **the nation**, and of course **home** (as opposed to **Home**) for those Kiwis who are temporarily absent from it. Other miscellaneous historical (obsolete) names from the early 20th century include the scornful **Wowserland** of the anti-puritans at the height of the prohibition movement; **Seddonland**, an ironic view of a country under one of its more autocratic leaders, Richard John Seddon ('King Dick'); **Diggerland**, coined in World War I; and **Fuller's Earth**, a predictable pun alluding to the prominence of Benjamin and John Fuller in the local theatre and cinema business.

Like the USA and Australia before it, New Zealand was more than a hundred years ago christened **God's own country**. *DNZE*'s first citation is dated 1892, and Seddon is credited with popularising the phrase during his period of power (*DNZE* also records the ephemeral variants **God's** or **Ward's Loan Country** from the freely borrowing period of Seddon's immediate successor). Since then, however, the epithet has more often than not been applied ironically and without full conviction. Shortening quickly produced **God's own**, respelt in the 1960s as **Godzone** (**Gordzone**, **God-Zone**, etc.), neatly reintroducing a term of place into the name.

Another celebrated vision of New Zealand as heaven on earth was embodied in Austin

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Mitchell's work *The Half-gallon Quarter-acre Pavlova Paradise* (1972), entered in DNZE under the shortened **quarter-acre pavlova paradise** (and variants). With this satirically intended title we reach the (unclear) boundary between names, which are institutionalised and repeatedly used, usually with initial capitals, and descriptions, which are occasional, individual, and often literary. Readers will find many of the latter in Harry

Orsman and Jan Moore's *Dictionary of New Zealand Quotations*, for example Tasman's famous reference to 'a great land uplifted high', Mansfield's 'a little land with no history', and an anonymous World War I editor's greeting from 'that glittering pearl set in the Southern Pacific Ocean-New Zealand'.

Finally, according to Orsman and Moore (Introduction pp. xix–xx), New Zealand (in

its three major islands) is also the intended reference of Thomas Bracken's otherwise obscure phrase 'Pacific's triple star', which God is urged to guard in the fifth line of our national hymn, 'God Defend New Zealand', which in the Maori version now preferred by many becomes the name alone—**'Aotearoa'**.

*Editor Tony Deverson has called New Zealand home since 1955.*

## MORE SNIBBING

Sheila Kolstad's article on the word **snib** in our previous issue (October 1999) brought an interested reaction from a number of readers. Some provided useful information on its listing in several Australian dictionaries, clarifying its status as an Australasian and not just a Kiwi item. In particular we were fortunate to receive the additional material below from Dr Pauline Bryant (ANU, Canberra), the leading authority on regional variation in Australian English lexis.

### SNIB IN AUSTRALIA

**Snib** is alive and well in Australia, where it keeps doors closed securely. It can be used as a noun referring to the mechanism which works only from one side of a door in a Yale-type lock and fixes the lock closed, or to a latch; and as a verb meaning to engage the mechanism or latch. As part of mainstream Australian English, it appears in *The Macquarie Dictionary* (1997) and not in *The Macquarie Dictionary of Australian Colloquial Language*

(1988). As a word used elsewhere in the English-speaking world, it does not appear in *The Australian National Dictionary* (1988), which contains words only used in Australia or having particular significance in Australia.

Like some other words thought of as distinctively Australian (and New Zealand?)—**chook**, for example, or **skerrick**—it has dropped out of use in its original British dialect while continuing in use where it was taken by the dialect speakers. However, not all Australians are familiar with the word, as its use is regional within Australian English. It is used in the South-East language region (Victoria, Tasmania, southern New South Wales) as a regional alternative to the Australia-wide use of **lock** and **latch**.

The well-known regional uniformity of Australian English rather obscures the less well-known regional diversity, and **snib** is just one example. This seems to parallel the

situation in New Zealand, which is known for 'the absence of regional differences' in New Zealand English (see Gordon and Deverson, *New Zealand English*, 1998) in spite of evidence for several regionalisms.

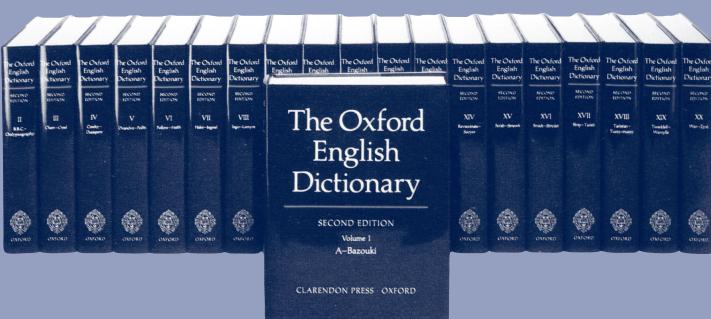
Words shared by both New Zealand and Australia are not uncommon, and **snib** is an example of this also. Some words that at first sight seem distinctive to this part of the world might be shared even more widely. Further study might find that people in other English-speaking countries also regularly **snib** their doors.

(Pauline Bryant is the author of a forthcoming book, *Australian English: A Dialect Survey of the Lexicon*, to be published by John Benjamins in its 'Varieties of English Around the World' series. A volume on New Zealand English in that same series, edited by Allan Bell and Koenraad Kuiper, was also recently published.)

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# FROM THE CENTRE



**GRAEME KENNEDY, DIRECTOR  
NEW ZEALAND DICTIONARY CENTRE**

In March 2000 the *Oxford English Dictionary* became available online. As a consequence, users of the monumental second edition of the dictionary (OED2) will no longer have to wait for the third edition to find entries for words and usages that have entered the English language since 1989. More than 9000 new entries have been added to OED online, and there will be quarterly updates of a thousand new words or revisions of entries from earlier editions.

At the New Zealand Dictionary Centre in Wellington our constantly updated database of distinctively New Zealand words and phrases can be accessed electronically by OED editors at Oxford so that new words and meanings in New Zealand English can be reflected in the very latest version of the OED online. National dictionary centres in Australia, Canada, South Africa, and the United States similarly contribute to this up-to-date picture of lexical innovation in the English language.

Senior Research Fellow at the New Zealand Dictionary Centre Dr Des Hurley, who earlier contributed to the *Dictionary of New Zealand English* as science editor, and who has edited the *Dictionary of New Zealand Political Quotations*, published by OUP in July 2000, is currently responsible for noting and recording in our database many of the new words and usages that became established in New Zealand English particularly during the 1990s.

## THE RURAL LEXICON

Dianne Bardsley is working in the Dictionary Centre on a PhD fellowship researching aspects of the development and diversity of rural New Zealand English. She is interested particularly in regional variation and local usage of words or phrases that relate to rural life and work. In some areas, for example, farm cadets were called 'silver-tails'; a species of scrubby trees in Southland was called 'gummy-gummies' and lambs were 'mothered-on', not 'mothered-up'. The disease caused by cobalt deficiency was called variously 'bush sickness' or 'bush disease', 'Hope Disease', 'Morton Mains' disease', and 'Tauranga sickness'. A lambless ewe that attempts to 'adopt' the lamb of another ewe might be called an 'Aunty' or a 'robber ewe'.

The **New Zealand Dictionary Centre** is jointly funded by **Oxford University Press** and **Victoria University of Wellington** to research all aspects of New Zealand English and to publish New Zealand dictionaries and other works.

# MAILBAG

The Editor of *NZWords* welcomes readers' letters and other contributions on their recent observations of New Zealand usage, both positive and negative. Please write to:

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The Piha Ngati-We-Were-Here-Firsts are led by Sandra Coney, an articulate and stroppy kaumatua with impeccable connections.

A 1998 *School Journal* contained another interesting example:

The real gannets hongi with two of the concrete gannets.

The use of **kaumatua** and **hongi** in these contexts suggests that they have become an integral part of the New Zealand English lexicon. John would be pleased to hear about similar examples noticed by readers of *NZWords*. Please be sure to include the name and date of the publication along with the quotation.

Both John Macalister and Dianne Bardsley can be contacted at the New Zealand Dictionary Centre, Victoria University of Wellington, Freepost 3589, Wellington, phone 04 463 5634. Their e-mail addresses are [dianne.bardsley@vuw.ac.nz](mailto:dianne.bardsley@vuw.ac.nz), [john.macalister@vuw.ac.nz](mailto:john.macalister@vuw.ac.nz).

Work on the design and editing of a new encyclopedic English dictionary for New Zealand is also proceeding at the Centre. It is due for publication in 2003. Tony Deverson, who has edited a number of New Zealand editions of Oxford dictionaries (including the *New Zealand Pocket Oxford Dictionary* and the forthcoming third edition of the *New Zealand Oxford School Dictionary*) is working with me on the project. In the meantime, David McKee and I have almost completed a learners' dictionary of New Zealand Sign Language, which is due to be published at the end of 2000.

Staff at the Centre working on these projects continue to be grateful to the body of observant readers and listeners who note new or distinctive words and meanings and who let us know about them. Our email address is [nzdc@vuw.ac.nz](mailto:nzdc@vuw.ac.nz). Do keep up the good work.

# THE MYSTERIOUS HAKUWAI AND THE ANCIENT HARPAGORNIS

## DESMOND HURLEY

When I was working on the *Dictionary of New Zealand English* I was intrigued by this entry for *breaksea devil*.

**breaksea devil.** Obs. [f. the name of Breaksea Island ...] A sound of rushing air, attributed to a phantom bird; or the bird species (*hakuwai* q.v.) that causes the noise. See also *hokioi*.

All the people frequenting this [west coast of Otago] believe in the existence of an extraordinary bird, or phantom, which they can never see, but only hear rushing past them through the air with the rapidity of a falling rocket, and making a terrible rushing sound. The Maories declare that it is a bird possessing many joints in its wings. The whalers call them break-sea-devils, after the name of an island where this phenomenon is of most frequent occurrence. (*Tuckett's Diary*, 24 May 1844)

### THE HAKUWAI

The Maori word *hakuwai* (or *hakawai* or *hakuai*, or any of at least five other variant spellings, including the European *harkowhy*) was defined by Williams in his *Maori Dictionary* as 'an extinct bird heard at night'. Elsdon Best (*Maori Religion & Mythology*) thought the *hakuwai* was a mythical bird. Anderson, however, saw a connection with the ancient eagle, *Harpagornis moorei*.

It is a moot point whether the name *hakuwai* was derived from *hokioi* to explain the frightening sound of the mysterious *hakuwai* in flight ... or whether *hokioi* has been adopted, as an imperfect rendition of *hakuwai*, to provide a name for the eagle legend (*Prodigious Birds*).

### THE HOKIOI

*Hokioi* (or *hokioe*) is, according to Kerry Hulme in *The Bone People*, 'an unknown (and maybe legendary) kind of bird'. Williams said it was held in superstitious regard by the Maori and never to be seen.

The *hokioi* or *hakuwai* is a bird that abides in the heavens or on lofty peaks, that ... never descends to the lowlands, but ... is occasionally heard far overhead in the dead of night crying its own name: '*Hakuwai!* *Hakuwai! Hohol!*'-as others give it: '*Hokioi, Hokioi, Hu!*' This presumably mythical bird ... is said to be peculiar for having wings with four joints. A song of yore addresses the bird as: 'A *hokioi* on high, a *hokioi* on high, *hu!* Dwelling afar in celestial space, the sleeping companion of Whaitiri-matakata.' (Best)

The Maori told Best that, although the bird was extinct, their ancestors had seen it. It was a very powerful bird, a huge hawk. It lived on bare-peaked mountains and did not frequent plains, but 'when it flew abroad-not every day-it was seen by our ancestors ... It was red, black and white, a

bird of fine plumage, of a greenish-yellow aspect, and had plumes on its head; a large bird, like a moa in size.' *Waka Maori* (Oct. 1872) described it as a very large extinct hawk, 'red, black and white, a feathered bird, somewhat yellow and green, with a plume on its head'. Both tell the following story.

Kahu, the harrier hawk, claimed that he could reach the heavens, the *hokioi* said that only he could do so. The *hokioi* asked Kahu, 'What sign will you give?' Kahu replied-'*Ke'* and asked the *hokioi*: 'And what will then be your cry?' Said the *hokioi*: 'This-*Hokioi! Hokioi! Hu, u!*' Then they flew upwards. Nearing the heavens, winds arose and clouds appeared and baffled the hawk who cried '*Ke!*' and returned to earth. As for the *hokioi*, it disappeared in the lofty heavens.

*Hu, u!* represents the whirring of the *hokioi*'s wings in flight.

In another version, Kahu said: 'You cannot fly so high that the earth is lost to view. You cannot fly any higher than ... the fern bird.'

This so annoyed *Hokioi* that he challenged Kahu to see which could go the highest. They both commenced their flight ... As the harrier was ascending, he saw a fern plain on fire and flew back down to prey on the vermin escaping from the fire. Immediately *Hokioi* cried: '*He pakiwha Koe*' (You are a boaster) and continued flying upward. He went so far that he never returned to earth again, but sometimes at night he is heard calling out his own name in derision to Kahu-'*Hokioi! Hokioi!*' (Best)

This fable gave rise to the Maori proverb: *E hoa! He hakuwai te manu e karanga tonu ana i tona ingoa* (O friend! The *hakuwai* is a bird that is ever calling out its own name), used to rebuke someone who keeps boasting of their own importance (Riley, *Maori Sayings*).

Another proverb was used to speed travellers on their journey: *Pekapeka rere ahiahi; hokioi rere po* (The bat flies at twilight, the *hokioi* in the dark of night), or *He hokioi rere po; he peka peka rere ahiahi* (The *hokioi* flies by night, the bat in the twilight).

The old-time Maori disliked travelling in the dead of night and believed the *hokioi* had supernatural powers. It was a messenger for the gods who lived in the darkness of Te Po ... When Te Rauparaha needed ... help it was on the *hokioi* he called. He composed and recited a chant asking a section of the Ngati Awa people to ally with him against the Waikato tribes. The *hokioi* was asked to return with a favourable response, which it did, it seems.

Other interpretations warn that no matter how things may change, old habits do not; and that a cunning man is unlikely to disclose his ideas to his companions however much he is prompted.

The name *Hokioi* was given to a *Ngaruawahia* newspaper in 1862. 'The name was derived from a semi-fabulous bird of evil omen ... "The *Hokioi*" would brook no rival in its nest in the rearing of its cantankerous brood ...'

### THE HARPAGORNIS

What was the "*Hokioi?*" Sir George Grey thought that it might be the extinct New Zealand Eagle, *Harpagornis moorei*, excavated by von Haast at Glenmark in 1871. Buller thought Grey might be right. Buller had earlier favoured a bird like the Great Frigate Bird after one had been killed by the natives at Ihurau where 'all who had seen it pronounced this the true "*Hokioi*" of Maori tradition-a long-winged bird that is supposed to soar in the heavens, far above the range of human vision, and to descend to the shore at night to feed upon shell-fish' (*History of the Birds of New Zealand*).

Haast also connected *hokioi* with *Harpagornis*. The large bird of prey met with in the heart of the Alps ... may be the Movie or *Hokioe* of the Maoris, or even the *Harpagornis*.

(*Geology ... of Canterbury & Westland*)

Duff (in *Pyramid Valley*) concurred, and a recent article identifies it with rock-shelter drawings.

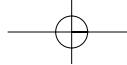
Hector thought *Harpagornis* probably fed on moas.

As the small Harrier now flies leisurely during the day time over the plains and downs in search of food ... so The *Harpagornis*" doubtless followed the flocks of Moas feeding either upon the carcasses of the dead birds, or killing the young and disabled ones. (TNZI 4: 194)

A giant eagle, *hokioi*, features in several Maori legends. One describes a cloaked Maori moving through the forest being mistaken for a moa and carried off by the eagle!

Could *Harpagornis* have done this? In *Prehistoric New Zealand*, the authors referred to Haast's eagle as 'the largest, most powerful eagle in the world'. It is believed to have been about twice the size of the common harrier hawk, a heavily built bird weighing up to 15 kilograms with a 3-metre wingspan, comparable with that of the Andean condor.

It had massive pelvic bones and a large, strong down-turned beak, well equipped for tearing into flesh. The legs were strong, relatively long ... with massive claws as big as those of a tiger, reaching lengths of 75 mm, and would have been used just as effectively for grasping and holding prey ... It is likely that *Harpagornis* was a forest eagle, which did not engage in sustained long-distance flight ... probably similar to the forest eagles of Africa, South America and India, and the Australian wedge-tailed eagle. As all these eagles had prominent crests on their heads,



it is likely that *H. moorei* had a similar tuft of head feathers. (Brazier et al., *The Great New Zealand Fossil Book*)

These authors conclude from its size and weight that it was probably capable of killing the largest of the moas.

It probably waited patiently for hours on end on high branches for prey to appear. Then silently it would sweep through the forest at 60 to 80 km per hour and could strike down and stun a 250 kg full-sized moa with the force of a concrete block dropped from the top of an eight-storey building ... It is also likely that the eagle often ventured down on to swamp surfaces to kill and feed on trapped or dying moas.

Trotter and McCulloch, however, in *Digging Up the Past*, conclude that it was a carrion eater, living off the carcasses of larger birds.

Lambert also described the *hokioi* as a large bird of prey

with wings two fathoms long ... that as it flies ... makes a swishing noise or booming sound ... Rewi Maniopoto shouted the *hokioi* song when he travelled ... to the Urewera country in 1863 to stir up the hill folks to join in a confederation to expel the pakehas from Aotearoa. (*Pioneering Reminiscences of Old Wairoa*)

Although there is some conflict in these accounts—mountain-tops or forest dweller, predator or carrion-eater—there is general agreement on most points (including its crest). More importantly, Brazier et al. conclude from fossil remains that

*H. moorei* lived into at least the early phases of Maori settlement. Because of the widespread destruction of habitats and loss of prey species that took place during these times as a result of Maori hunting and use of fire, *H. moorei* (along with the moas and many other native birds) probably became extinct about 500 years ago.

So these *hakuwai* and *hokioi* legends could have been based on *Harpagornis*—a real pre-European bird.

## THE MUTTONBIRD ISLAND HAKUWAI

Is this, however, the same *hakuwai* as the *hakuai* of the southern muttonbird islands, which also has a strange and mysterious call?

At night the fowlers gather round their campfires, and old songs are sung ... and ghost-stories retold. And in the darkness sometimes they hear the ghost-bird screaming its *Hakuai*, *haku-ai*, *Ooh!* and then a hair-raising swoosh of great wings as some mysterious creature of the crags sweeps past them in the night, crying as it goes ... This bird, called the *hakuai* from its call, is spoken of as a spirit. (TNZI 38: 340)

This *hakuwai* was heard rarely and only during 'torching time'.

Kaiporohu [said the *Hakuai*] lived in the clouds over Foveaux Strait, hovering invisibly and crying piercingly 'Hakuwai, hakuwai, ho!' (Beattie, *Our Southernmost Maoris*)

There is an *Hokioi* above there, an *Hokioi*

above there. Hark, the rustling as he shakes his wings! (*Otago Witness*, 18 Sep. 1890: 31) In the South and in some parts of the North Island [the *hokioi*] is identical ... with the 'hakuwai' which has seven joints in its wing, lives in the sky, and presages trouble ... Its cry was 'Hokioi! Hokioi! Hu!' The last word represented the whizzing sound made by the bird in flight. (*Otago Witness*, 11 Sep. 1912: 76) No one seems to have ever seen a *hakuwai*, but ask any muttonbirder and someone in the group will be sure to have heard the strange call of *hakuwai*, *hakuwai*, *hakuwai*, high in the midnight sky followed by the sound of a clanking chain. (Jenkin, *New Zealand Mysteries*)

## THE HOKIO

The *hokioi*, says Williams, is 'the messenger bird'. *Hokioi*, the verb 'to descend', is also 'a bird, probably the same as *hokioi*, with variant spellings of *hakuai* and *hokiwi* ... an extinct bird of nocturnal habits, held in superstitious regard by the Maori, said to be never seen'. A more recent reference (*New Zealand Catholic*, 30 January 2000) describes the *Hokioi* as 'a spiritual messenger bird'. Tregear's *Maori-Polynesian Dictionary* defines *hokioi* as a mythical night-bird

whose cry 'Kakao, kakao' is an omen of war. This hoarse cry is caused by the choking in its throat, caused by the hair of the warriors who will fall in the coming battle.

## THE CHAINBIRD AND THE BREAKSEA DEVIL

I have found only one other reference to *Breaksea Devil*:

The strange birdcall [*hakuwai*] seems to have been limited to only some of the muttonbird islands in the South Cape area ... Poutaima, Big Island, Solomons and the Green Island, though a similar strange bird, called by whalers the Breaksea Devil, was said to be heard on Breaksea. (Jenkin)

The *chainbird*, however, or more specifically its cry, is mentioned more frequently. The sound, has two elements: the bird cry and a subsequent whirring noise, which has been likened to 'a jet-stream', 'a blind rolling itself up', or even 'a shell passing overhead'.

The most popular description of the call of the *hakawai* was that it resembled 'a sound as if a cable chain was lowered into a boat' ... Many people still refer to the *hakawai* as if it were the *chainbird*. (Notornis 34: 96)

At night this great bird shrieks '*hakuai*' loudly three times in succession and then there follows a whirring noise like a hawser chain running out. (Beattie, *Traditional Lifeways of the Southern Maori*, p. 177)

A heavy swishing sound passed over our heads, and within a few seconds called '*Hakuwai*, *Hakuwai*'. Then followed ... a sound as if a cable chain was lowered into a boat. (*Southland Times*, 28 June 1931: 3)

No-one has ever seen [it], no-one knows what it is like. Muttonbirders who have heard the strange sound of its passing over the islands at night speak of the ha-ka-wai bird. A swish of

wings close overhead, a sound like the rattle of chains when a boat lets the anchor down, again the sound of wingbeats and the cry floating earthward from the heavens, Ha-ka-wai! Ha-ka-wai! in a drawn-out singsong with accent on the first and last syllables.

(Dempsey, *Little World of Stewart Island*, p. 61) He heard the harkowhy up in Canaan on the Takaka Hill, the ghost-bird never seen ... crying like a chain rattling. (Henderson, *Down from Marble Mountain*, p. 142)

The one feature common to most accounts is a sense of dread.

Edward Edwards, stay at home with your children,

Far in the bush the *hokioi* is calling  
And whets his beak on the sound of death.  
(*Landfall* 27: 177)

There is nothing to be seen but you hear a cry, a dreadful laughter floating down from the heights. 'Hokioi-Hokioi' is the cry, and as it ceases you hear that eerie whistle as a bird swoops down and up again into the blackness and silence of the night sky. (Reed, *Myths and Legends*, p. 193)

The clouds are long and black and ragged, like the wings of stormbattered dragons. Or of *hokioi* ... huge birds. (Hulme, *The Bone People*, p. 262)

The *hakuwai* of the southern muttonbirds also introduced another concept: the Father of the Muttonbirds.

a supernatural being variously described as being the father of the Mutton Birds, calling them away on their northern migration; or as a Maori Eagle, with joints on its wings. (Notornis 34: 112)

A Maori tradition says that when the '*hakuai*' is heard, all the *titi* ... come out of their burrows to listen, and that the *hakuai* always fly one way and never seem to return. (Our Southernmost Maoris)

The reference to jointed wings occurs in several accounts and points to its being a remnant of the giant eagle story.

In an exhaustive article on the *hakuwai*, Miskelly (*Notornis* 34) concludes that, whereas the northern *hakuwai* was probably *Harpagornis*, 'many pieces of puzzle are still missing and other pieces have been shoe-horned into place'. Among various possibilities suggested in the past were the black petrel, the frigate bird, a large shearwater, the mottled petrel, and the diving petrel. Miskelly has recorded the cry of the southern *hakuwai* and believes that it is 'the Stewart Island Snipe indulging in its aerial display' and that the legends of the southern muttonbirders arose from its diving behaviour.

It's a neat and convincing answer, but tremendously unexciting. I can't help wondering whether, on misty nights with a terrible screeching of wind and the terrifying cry of 'Hakuwai, *hakuwai*, ho!', the ancient ghostly *Harpagornis*, the Father of all Muttonbirds (if they be the same), sweeps down from the sky with clattering of chains, sweeps up another unsuspecting muttonbirder from an offshore island and flies off muttering 'Bugger the snipe' ... Desmond Hurley is Senior Research Fellow at the New Zealand Dictionary Centre in Wellington

# COLD WORDS

BERNADETTE HINCE

Eleven years ago, I began collecting quotations (on 6 x 4 inch cards) for a small glossary of Antarctic words. It was the result of several agglomerating factors: a long interest in Antarctica; withdrawal symptoms from the *Australian National Dictionary*, where I had worked as science writer for several years in the mid 1980s; and a new job at the Bureau of Mineral Resources in Canberra. Many scientists at the Bureau had worked in Antarctica, and when I listened to their stories, they would occasionally use a term I hadn't heard. There seemed enough such words for an experimental collection to begin, and I started one.

The project has grown from a small glossary into a 900-page manuscript, defining about 2000 words, and using quotations for each of these entries. The resulting work, the *Dictionary of Antarctic English* (DANTE to me), has recently been accepted for publication. It follows the pattern of the *Oxford English Dictionary*, and is a standard 'historical dictionary'. Harry Orsman used the same method for his *Dictionary of New Zealand English* (DNZE), a lifetime task for which he has received richly deserved acclaim.

My dictionary has grown both in number of definitions and in scope. Having begun with continental Antarctica and the main English-speaking nations there (Australia, New Zealand, Britain, South Africa, and the United States), it rapidly became obvious to me that the string of inconspicuous islands scattered in the Southern Ocean ought to be included. From these, which included for example Gough Island in the South Atlantic, it seemed logical to widen my net just a little and capture Gough's custodian, Tristan da Cunha, and the Falkland Islands, both outposts of the English-speaking world, each with a fascinating lexicon of its own.

When it came to the subantarctic words, New Zealand had a strong influence. The Antipodes Islands, Auckland Islands, Campbell Island, the Snares, and the Bounty Islands have all contributed words to DANTE. So did Macquarie Island, an Australian possession that features in New Zealand English, as Orsman documented, at least in the case of the plant **Macquarie cabbage** *Stilbocarpa polaris*. Although the Macquarie cabbage takes its name from an island now belonging to Australia, the earliest quotations I have found are those in the *Transactions of the New Zealand Institute* (1870 and 1883), both recorded by DNZE. This plant occurs on the Auckland, Campbell, and Antipodes Islands, as well as on Macquarie, and has been reported from the Snares. In the days when sealers and whalers visited these islands, the

plant's fleshy and mustardy leaves were eaten as a green, and were regarded as an excellent antiscorbutic. The leaves sound less than appetising; in 1955 B.W. Taylor wrote:

*Stilbocarpa polaris* is the 'Macquarie Island Cabbage' used by the sealers of the nineteenth century as an anti-scorbutic ...

and he added in a footnote:

The petioles taste like celery when cooked; pickled rhizomes like turnips; and leaves when cooked like wet blotting paper.

(*The Flora, Vegetation and Soils of Macquarie Island* vol. 2: *Botany* Antarctic Division, Melbourne, p. 131)

Interestingly, in the subantarctic the same plant has another name, **Maori cabbage**, which in New Zealand English means especially the sow thistle (**Maori puha**), and certainly not the subantarctic plant. 'Maori' here probably had the sense of 'growing wild, non-domesticated' (see DNZE p. 472), and was applied to the *Stilbocarpa* by early Macquarie residents. G. Ainsworth wrote in Douglas Mawson's 1915 *Home of the Blizzard* (vol. 2, p. 179):

Here and there across its surface were huge mounds of earth and rock and, occasionally, a small lakelet fringed with a dense growth of tussock and Maori cabbage.

The same sense of wildness or lack of domestication accounts for the term **Maori hen**, used on Macquarie- as in New Zealand - for the bird *Gallirallus australis*. The name and the bird were both brought to Macquarie from New Zealand in the 18th century. In 1909 one of the island's residents

supplemented the dry stores left by the schooner with a diet of Maori hen, a flightless land bird found on the island, and sea-elephant tongues, 'quite good eating when properly cooked'. (J.K Davis, *High Latitude*, 1964, p.124)

Many sources suggest that wekas were brought by sealers as a source of food. Ainsworth, also in 1915, said that wekas 'were introduced twenty-five years ago by M. Elder, of New Zealand, a former lessee of the island, and multiplied so fast that they are now very numerous' (*Home of the Blizzard* p.174)

The more common term on the island for the bird was the one more often used in New Zealand: **weka**, which features in a poetic burst from a homesick islander in 1970,

writing about indigenous treats on Macquarie:

When you're tired of ancient eggs for brekker

How about toasting a tasty weka?

At lunch-time when you're feeling blue,  
Cheer yourself up with a roast gentoo,  
And then at the end of a day of toil  
You won't go wrong with a rocky or royal.  
When life becomes a trifle drab, it's  
Time you enjoyed some well-hung rabbits.

(in Ron Gosman ed., *Homers' Odyssey: Macquarie Island Magazine*)

The bird was later exterminated from the island, but not before it gave rise to the idiosyncratic coinage **unweka'd** -an adjective that neatly now applies to Macquarie Island itself. Australian ornithologist Ken Simpson coined this term, which I urge readers to remember for that moment of need, in *Aurora* (November 1966, p. 26):

The most serious crime that wekas committed, however, was to have raucous territorial fights with their neighbours just outside the sleeping donga windows. No hour of the day or night was sacred. No month of the year was left unweka'd.

As biologists know, in general the diversity of species diminishes as one travels from the equator towards the poles and, correspondingly, the plants and animals that do occur are in staggeringly large numbers. Even so, the subantarctic islands have a fair crop of endemic birds, some plants, and some fish. The isolation of an island habitat has allowed various species to wander sufficiently far from the parental path to establish themselves as separate species or subspecies. Almost all of these are distinguished by an epithet that reflects the island's name. Most terms in DANTE from New Zealand's subantarctic include the name of an island, and most are the English names of birds or plants. So, for example, there are the **Auckland Island flightless teal**, **Auckland Island lark** or **pipit**, the extinct **Auckland Island merganser**, **Auckland Island prion**, **Auckland Island rail**, **Auckland Island shag**, **Auckland Island snipe**, and **Auckland Island (tom)tit**.

One of the terms in my dictionary that does *not* apply to plants, animals (non-human), or meteorological phenomena is one restricted to the New Zealand subantarctic: **Cape Expeditioner**. During World War II, from March 1941 until October 1945, the New Zealand government sent small numbers of men to Campbell Island and the Auckland Islands as coast-watchers. In order to minimise chances of this action being detected by the enemy, the code name 'Cape

Expedition' was given to the project. At least one of those selected for each three- to five-man group was a scientist, who made valuable natural history observations while on the islands.

The expeditioners were sent for periods of a year, but one of them, J. H. Sorensen, found the life to his liking and stayed for several years. The tensions of life with a handful of other men, in complete isolation, for a year and sometimes more, must have been considerable, and to me it is unimaginable that anyone could volunteer to stay longer. Perhaps the frustrations of such a solitary life account for the zeal with which the men shot goats on one island; Conon Fraser describes this on Ocean Island, one of the Auckland Islands:

A number of goats liberated in 1886 had apparently become numerous by 1903, and the island abounded in goats by 1907. They continued to thrive on it until they were shot out, as food and for environmental purposes by the Cape Expeditioners in the 1940s. (*Beyond the Roaring Forties: New Zealand's Subantarctic Islands*, 1986, p 123)

During his years on Campbell Island Sorensen kept meticulous records (now housed with the Department of Conservation in Wellington) of daily scientific observations. He later remembered a possible sighting in 1943 of a very rare bird, the **Campbell Island teal**:

A smallish duck ... made a short flight from a brackish pool above highwater mark to the sea, between Windlass Bay and Northwest Beach ... in failing light ... This may well have been a Campbell Island Teal. (A. M. Bailey and J. H. Sorensen, *Subantarctic Campbell Island*, 1962, p. 245)

This small, brown, more or less flightless duck (*Anas aucklandicus nesiotis*) now lives only on Dent Island in the Campbell Island group.

Campbell, originally Campbell's, Island was named by Captain Frederick Hasselburgh after Robert Campbell of the Sydney firm of Campbell & Co., owners of the sealing ship Perseverance. It is about 600 km south of Stewart Island, and is the most remote of New Zealand's subantarctic possessions. In 1969 former inhabitants, or **Campbell Islanders**, were invited to attend a solemn New Zealand rite:

Notice to all Campbell Islanders: Rugby game on Saturday next 14 December. (*The Islander: The Quarterly Bulletin of the Campbell-Raoul Island Association* 4 (Feb) [p. 3])

The uninhabited subantarctic Snares Islands of New Zealand are closer to home, lying only a hundred kilometres south-west of Stewart Island, at 48° S, 166°30' E. This

## NZWORDS COMPETITIONS

Perhaps it was the wrong time of the millennium, or lexicography is even harder than we thought, but a disappointing two entries only were received for our Competition No. 2—which at least simplified the selection of the two prize-winners. The editor diplomatically awards joint first prize to Alan Papprill, whose *Devil's Dictionary*-style definitions included 'popular 6.00 p.m. television entertainment programme punctuated by advertisements' for **Fast Food**, and to Denis Welch, who defined **children** as 'species invented to provide a market for tomato sauce', and **golden handshake** as 'farewell gesture made with two fingers'.

For Competition No. 3 we will take a different tack, in an attempt to generate more participation. At the Dictionary Centre we are interested in any project work being done as part of the study of New Zealand English in the nation's classrooms. We would like teachers and classes engaged in any such work to submit a summary and/or sample of their investigation and of their findings (concerning New Zealand words, or whatever).

Prizes as usual for the best two submissions received by 30 November 2000.

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**DEADLINE FOR NEXT ISSUE: 31 March 2001**

**Payment:** The publisher reserves the right to edit or not to publish letters and articles submitted. There is no payment for letters. Payment for articles accepted for publication is by credit note from Oxford University Press for books from its list to the value of NZ\$100.

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**Back issues:** Back issues currently available (upon request): October 1999.

### NZWORDS

NZWords is published by  
**Oxford University Press**  
253 Normanby Road  
South Melbourne VIC 3205  
Website: www.oup.com.au  
Email: cs@oup.com.au  
Free-Phone: 0800 442 502  
**Publisher:** Ray O'Farrell  
in partnership with

**The New Zealand Dictionary Centre**  
Victoria University of Wellington  
Phone: (04) 472 1000  
Fax: (04) 463 5604  
Email: nzdc@vuw.ac.nz

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ISSN 1440-9909