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, Pommierland, 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 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 Gil Blacks. Finally, a batting collapse in March led to the Evening Post’s punning headline ‘Slack Caps Crumble’. We shall keep watching.

From Staten Landt to Aotearoa New Zealand: the Naming of ‘Pacific’s Triple Star’

Tony Deveson

Tony Deveson
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Oxford University Press
CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

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 Stone, 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, Nyerzilun, and Newzyllind. 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 British 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 delusions 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 graffito) 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 Tireni, the Maori transliteration of Niue. With many variants: Niu Tirini, Niu Tirini, Nui Tireni, Nu Tiri, 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 Tireni, 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 ANZ from 1859 and DNZE from 1865; it 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 ANZ. 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 1928).

Conversely, three expressions found in Australian dictionaries but not in DNZE testify to New Zealand’s susceptibility to earthquakes. AND has Shaky Isles (also Shaky 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 Quacky 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 Mooland, 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 (obsolescent) names from the early 20th century include the scornful Woserland 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
Sheila Kolstad’s article on the word *snib* in our previous issue (October 1999) brought an interesting 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 lock and fixes the lock closed, or to a 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 distinctly 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.)

**MORE SNIBBING**

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.
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 ‘robbert ewe’.

Many terms from sheep stations, mustering, and shearing domains have been recorded in written form, but very few have been recorded from dairying areas and small farms, and Dianne is seeking these terms. She is also interested in rural collocations or collocations for particular words like ‘sound’, ‘country’, ‘condition’, ‘easy’, and ‘spell’ (for example, poor condition, low condition, sound condition, full condition, top condition, too little condition, too much condition, no condition, in condition, or out of condition). Country is used with ‘hard’, ‘broken’, ‘light’, etc. Many words are adapted from one part of speech to another; for example, a self-tossed huntaway, yarning cattle. Compound words and phrasal verbs litter the rural lexicon with richness, as do figures of speech and euphemism, and the lexicon is constantly moving and changing. We speak of two ‘units’ of lambs being sent to the works now, not ‘two truck-and-trailer loads’, and at the beginning of a millennium ‘conversions’ have nothing to do with one’s spiritual journey.

Dianne would like to hear from anybody who knows whether the legendary ‘Flying Gang’ of North Canterbury mustered the local wild horses as well as sheep on the extensive St Helen’s and St James’ stations. Perhaps a reader knows of local words for aged ewes or lazy dogs. If you can contribute words or phrases like those given as examples above, if you know of any ways in which rural words have changed their meanings or usage, or if you can suggest an appropriate resource or resourceful person who could contribute words, Dianne would be delighted to hear from you.

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A 1998 School Journal contained another interesting example:

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

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

THE HOKIOI

Hokioi (or hokioi) 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 hakauwai 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: ‘Hakauwai! Hakauwai! Hokioi! 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, ha! Dwelling afar in celestial space, the sleeping companion of Whaitiri-matakatoka.’ (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—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.’ Waku 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. Near 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 pakawaka 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 hokioi! He hokioi on high, he hari i te then (O friend! The hokioi 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: Pehakeke ree ahihi; hokioi ree po (The bat flies at twilight, the hokioi in the dark of night), or He hokioi ree po; he peka peka ree ahihi (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 ... “so The hokioi” was, according to a Ngaruawahia newspaper in 1862. ‘The name of hokioi was given to a Ngarunwahia

THE HARPGORNIS

When 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 Ihuruav where ‘all who had seen it pronounced this the true “Hokioi” of Maori tradition—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 shellfish’ (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 Maori, 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. (TNZK E: 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 ... as that as it flies ... makes a whistling noise or booming sound ... Rewi Maniopoto shouted the hokioi song when he travelled ... to the Wewera country in 1863 to stir up the hill folks to join in a confederation to expel the pakehas from Noterearea. (Pioneering Reminiscences of Old Wairau)

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 moa and many other native birds) probably became extinct about 500 years ago.

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

THE MUTTONBIRD ISLAND HAKAUWI

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

At night the fowlers gather round their camp-fires, and old songs are sung ... and ghost-stories retold. And in the darkness sometimes they hear the ghost-bird screaming its Hakauwi, hakauwi, Oid! 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 hakauwi from its call, is spoken of as a spirit. (TNZI 38: 340)

This hakauwi was heard rarely and only during ‘torching time’.

Kairopou said the Hakaui lived in the clouds over Foveaux Strait, hovering invisibly and crying piercingly ‘Hakauwi, hakauwi, ho!’ (Beattie, Our Southernmost Maoris)

There is an Hokioi above there, an Hokioi above there. Hark, the rustling as he shakes his wings! (Ogigo Witness, 18 Sep. 1896: 31)

In the South and in some parts of the North Island [the hokioi] is identical ... with the hakauwi 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 whistling sound made by the bird in flight. (Ogigo Witness, 11 Sep. 1912: 76)

No one seems to have ever seen a hakauwi, but ask any muttonbirder and someone in the group will be sure to have heard the strange call of hakauwi, hakauwi, hakauwi, high in the midnight sky followed by the sound of a clanking chain. (Jenkin, New Zealand Mysteries)

THE HOKIOI

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 hakauwi and hakauwi ... 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 [hakauwi] seems to have been limited to only some of the muttonbird islands in the South Cape area ... Poutainga, 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 hakauwi was that it resembled ‘a sound as if a cable chain was lowered into a boat’ ... Many people still refer to the hakauwi as if it were the chainbird. (Notornis 34: 96)

At night this great bird shrieks ‘hakauwi’ loudly three times in succession and then there follows a whirring noise like a hawser chain running out. (Beattie, Traditional Life Ways of the Southern Maori, p. 177)

A heavy whistling sound passed over our heads, and within a few seconds called ‘Hakauwi, Hakauwi’. 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 hakauwi bird. A whist 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, Hakauwi! Hakauwi! 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, From Marble Mountains, 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 falling 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 storm-battered dragons. Or of hokioi ... huge birds. (Holme, The Bone People, p. 262)

The hakauwi of the southern muttonbirders 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 ‘hakaui’ is heard, all the titi ... come out of their burrows to listen, and that the hakauwi 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 hakauwi, Miskelly (Notornis 34) concludes that, whereas the northern hakauwi 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 hakauwi 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 ‘Hakauwi, hakauwi, 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 ‘Buggy the snipe’ ...
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. There are several examples: Gough Island in the South Atlantic, 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 Maori 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 Galloplius 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-epsilon 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 your self 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 raucoous 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 tomtit.

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
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 Expeditions 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 after Robert Campbell of the Sydney firm of Campbell & Co., owners of the sealing ship. It had no scientific name until as recently as 1955, when W.R.B. Oliver declared:

The Snares Penguin is thus nameless, and to remedy this I propose the following: Eudyptes robustus sp. nov. ... Head jet black, paler on the crown; remainder of upper surface bluish black, each feather having a narrow central streak of pale blue. A rather narrow pale golden yellow band begins near each nostril, passes over the eye and ends in a backwardly and downwardly projecting crest. (The Emu 53 (2), p. 187)

The words cited here, and the New Zealand subantarctic region, are just a small part of the finished dictionary. Snow and ice features 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.