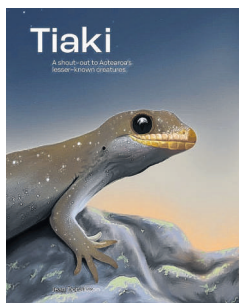


# Small book highlights big losses

TIAKI  
Jean Donaldson  
Potton & Burton

By TRACIE BARRETT



Ahakoia he iti, he pounamu.

Although it is small, it is greenstone.

This proverb is apt for both Jean Donaldson's small book *Tiaki*, at just 79 words, and for the lesser-known creatures she writes of and illustrates.

A chilling part of her introduction is a list of the birds, bats, frogs, skinks and geckos indigenous to New Zealand but now extinct, and the roll of names is a reminder that so many of our unique creatures are endangered.

Targeted at young adults and older children, Donaldson's words and beautiful digital illustrations will attract some older readers too.

Most will know of the pekapeka tou roa, or longtailed bat, after it beat out more brightly plumed rivals to be named Forest and Bird's Bird of the Year in 2021, but other creatures in this book will be new to many readers. Some, such as the Canterbury hobbled weevil and the Mohokinou stag beetle, are so endangered, it seems only a matter of time until they vanish.

One hopes Donaldson's loving depictions of these overlooked animals and insects will inspire other young New Zealanders to explore how they can contribute to the survival of our unique species.

Tracie Barrett is an ODT reporter

# Researcher's life of peace

PEACEMONGER: OWEN WILKES:  
INTERNATIONAL PEACE  
RESEARCHER  
ed by May Bass & Mark Derby  
Raekaihau Press

By JESSIE NEILSON

New Zealander Owen Wilkes (1940-2005) has been hailed a "veritable walking think tank for the international peace movement", a peace researcher without peer. Wilkes travelled and campaigned widely in his untiring mission to expose and to halt the presence of foreign military instruments in New Zealand and elsewhere. From here to the Antarctic, New Guinea to Sweden, he sought critical engagement with nuclear issues from the 1960s' post-Cold War years onwards.

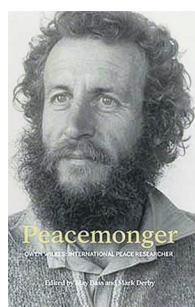
Wilkes' signature campaign focused on drawing attention to alien military installations, particularly American, on the landscape of New Zealand. The proposed Omega Station in the South Island was an impassioned protest. From this and other anti-base projects he rose to become a dominant figure and a familiar name in the peace movement.

In this collection of essays by those who knew him as colleague or friend we glimpse a man of great integrity and accomplishment. He is also painted as obstinate, someone who would not suffer fools or accept half-hearted efforts. He held up his own life to these standards too.

As Wilkes' myriad interests included archaeology, horticulture, house-building, farming, researching, and beekeeping, in addition to world peace, the essays are from some of these different stages and areas of his life. The



Peace researcher Owen Wilkes spent time in the Antarctic.  
PHOTO: LLOYD SPENCER DAVIS



first essay discusses his time in the Antarctic, his honing of "antennology" — the art of inferring the specific functions of military objects from pictures of their antennae, and the placement of small nuclear reactor, "Nukey Poo". Later essays address his time in Scandinavia, working, among other projects, at the Stockholm International Peace Research

Institute, a country from which he was expelled for his efforts; his cheerful embracing of the climate in Norway, and the energy efficient house he built on the West Coast. The contributors are largely but not all New Zealanders, and they include Maire Leadbeater and Nicky Hager.

Some of the content of these essays overlaps, and thus gives different perspectives and memories. The strongest collective view is of an endlessly resourceful individual, completely dedicated to his pursuit of transparency in military matters, the exposing of governmental disingenuity. He saw no hope in a nuclear world. Wilkes is acknowledged as an assiduous researcher, gathering available material pre-internet and painstakingly trying to complete the jigsaw. He was admired, albeit reluctantly, by the SIS: "Wilkes brings a sophistication to anti-SIS activity that has not been much in evidence in the past".

However, in the later essays more clues are dropped about his fragile psychological state, especially towards the end of his life. In the concluding essay his partner May Bass shares the personal, from which other contributors steered clear. This helps round out the honest picture.

This is a worthy tribute to a man held by his peers as completely humble and unpretentious, thorough, and highly intelligent. As *Peacemonger* outlines, Wilkes' contributions to the field have been of the highest level, setting the standard for all those activists and scholars who follow.

Jessie Neilson is a University of Otago library assistant.

# Lively and harrowing adjunct to exhibition

GALLIPOLI: THE SCALE OF OUR WAR

By Puawai Evans, Michael Keith, Christopher Pugsley & Richard Taylor  
Te Papa Press

By JIM SULLIVAN

More than 3.5 million people have visited Te Papa's *Gallipoli: The Scale of Our War* exhibition since it opened in 2015 and the scheduled 2019 closing has been extended to at least Anzac Day 2025.

Even then, there are many who will never get to Wellington and this book is the next best thing to being there.

Designed with the same flair which went in to the exhibition with its Weta Workshop gigantic human figures and dramatic settings, the book is a fine blend of photography, artwork and tightly written text.

The writers, all experts in their field, provide a succinct account of the exhibition's purpose, planning and execution. The role of Gallipoli's military history is described by Chris Pugsley who, having already authored one of the best books about the conflict, compresses his expertise into a lively and harrowing 50-page chronology.

We have long-dismissed generals and politicians as the focus of our war histories and in *Gallipoli: The Scale of Our War* the cast includes the men in the shallow, grenade-bombarded trenches, the under-fire Maori contingent providing pioneer engineering, the



nurses on the hospital ships and many others not sufficiently acknowledged in the very first accounts of Gallipoli.

Of course, the leaders and medal-winning heroes are there but now and the once-minor figures are literally larger than giants in the fine detail of the models.

The chapters on the making of the exhibition reveal the secrets of the patience and skills needed to produce human figures which are as true-to-life as such ingenuity can make them.

Just how they got such realistic hairstyles (10 specialist hair technicians were involved), teeth (which seem to belie the suggestion that New Zealand recruits had poor dental health) and 10-day stubble (the mannequins were given an appropriate level of shaving after the facial hair had been inserted) will no longer be a mystery to you.

Like many recent histories, the book has drawn on the wealth of online information now available and the increasing number of diaries, photographs and letters now in archives to provide the "before the war and after



Maheno School pupils visit the *Gallipoli: The Scale of Our War* exhibition, which opened at Te Papa in Wellington in 2015. PHOTO: ODT FILES

the war" histories of the Anzacs.

To this treasure trove, focusing on the individual, the exhibition adds a new dimension — "the big picture" — realised through the massive murals which are the backdrop to the figures.

Fine artwork shows entire companies in formation on the beach and a complete platoon edging its way up the gullies. VC winner, signaller Cyril Bassett, is pictured on the ridge he trekked over and the route of his telephone line is clearly shown.

The exhibition shows us a Gallipoli that films have attempted to describe and books, until this one, have never quite been able to recreate.

*Gallipoli: The Scale of Our War* may inspire you to visit the exhibition before it closes and that is no bad thing.

Jim Sullivan is a Pateaaraa writer

City of Literature South D Poet Lorikeet  
**Jenny Powell**

ŌTEPOTI - HE PUNA AUAHA  
DUNEDIN UNESCO  
CITY OF LITERATURE

Photograph: Writing a poem about Teddy  
with Room 8, Tainui School  
www.cityofliterature.co.nz