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The Seven Servants of Ham

LABOURERS' LETTERS FROM WELLINGTON IN THE *NEW ZEALAND JOURNAL*, 1840–1845

SEVERAL YEARS AGO David Fitzpatrick noted that 'the materials of family history' had assumed increasing importance in studies of immigration. '[O]ld photographs, diaries and letters', combined with genealogical methods, allow historians to 'reconstitute the personal stories' of migrants.[1] A number of New Zealand historians have done just that. Raewyn Dalziel's research on 1840s immigrants to New Plymouth involved genealogical techniques.[2] Rollo Arnold's *Farthest Promised Land* traced 'ordinary people whose family traditions are rooted in the English villages'.[3] More recently, Jock Phillips and Terry Hearn have drawn on 'family histories collected by members of the New Zealand Society of Genealogists'.[4] Of the many forms of private documents used in studies of colonial immigration, used letters have perhaps proved of greatest interest. In 1972 Charlotte Erickson's book of English–American correspondence demonstrated the contribution letters could make to studies of 'the process of migration and the impact of this experience upon the migrant himself'.[5] Angela McCarthy described letters as a fascinating 'source for exploring New Zealand history' and used them to draw attention to 'the critical importance of kin and neighbourhood connections' of Irish migrants to New Zealand.[6] Similarly, Frances Porter and Charlotte Macdonald have used extracts from early immigrants' letters to identify women's experiences of 'unsettlement' and 'destabilisation'.[7]

Editors of collections of migrants' letters often note the scarcity of personal letters written by the 'labouring poor'. As Macdonald has recently observed, in New Zealand's archives 'correspondence from those who sailed steerage or were at the wage-earning end of colonial society' is scarce.[8] While 'originals' may be difficult to come by, published letters attributed to labourers were often included in contemporary newspapers and pamphlets. Yet collections such as Erickson's excluded letters previously published 'in pamphlets designed to stimulate emigration' because of their bias.[9] When Arnold cited labourers' letters from newspapers and union newsletters, he was criticized for using 'untrustworthy' sources.[10] Fitzpatrick chose to 'follow Erickson's precedent by excluding letters published in newspapers', and argued that while such letters may 'exhibit an intimate or personal tone', they could be editorial inventions.[11] He also suggested that even with authorship established, 'the functions of these letters were fundamentally changed by their removal to the public domain' and that 'editorial excisions render textual analysis unfeasible'.[12] Similarly, David Gerber suspected that some letters attributed to migrating labourers were crafted 'to *appear* to be personal documents, when they actually were composed for use as propaganda, for or against emigration'.[13]

During the early 1840s, letters attributed to 'emigrants of the labouring classes' and addressed to their families and neighbours in England were published in the *New Zealand Journal* (NZJ), a newspaper allied with the New Zealand Company. Brief excerpts from these have served 'to provide colour or drama in historical narratives and to provide documentation for societal and group generalisations sourced from other primary texts, social science theory, or the manipulation of aggregate data taken from other, published, often official sources'.[14] But the letters have largely been overlooked as objects of study in their own right. Bearing in mind the warnings of previous scholars, how might we detect 'editorial excisions' in these letters? What might be the new functions of personal letters when relocated in an unashamedly propagandist colonial newspaper? What directions might a 'textual analysis' of them take?

The letters at the centre of this article were attributed in the NZJ to members of a group whose identities were recorded in family histories.[15] Phillips and Hearn refer to one of these as follows: 'English investors in company land often encouraged their employees to emigrate. A.G. Tollemache, the proprietor of Ham House in Surrey', had purchased sections in Wellington and '[i]n May 1841 the *Lord William Bentinck* arrived' with a group of families and single workers from the estate.[16] Of the seven sponsored male employees, three were single (Charles Stent, William Smith and Charles Brown). The four married male labourers were John Howell (with wife Ann and five children under 14), William Dew (with wife Ann, seven children under 14 and a daughter of 15), Samuel Retter (wife Jane and two children under 14) and John Philps (wife Catherine, four children under 14 and son aged 14).

Liz Stanley's idea of an 'epistolarium' provides an analytical frame to study these published letters.[17] According to Stanley, 'as an epistolary record in their own right',[18] the letters are 'referential of a person's life and its historical and relational context, with the focus on content and its recording of factual information'.[19] They are also 'the total surviving letters with a complex and perhaps unknowable relationship to the total actually written. In addition, they are '"ur-letters" produced by transcribing, editing or publishing activities.'[20] Stanley's model encourages an interdisciplinary reading of the letters, weaving together genealogical, micro-historical, rhetorical and sociological resources.

Stanley draws attention to the 'performative, textual and rhetorical aspects of letters'.[21] The 'I' who writes to 'you' is 'not the "actual person" but an epistolary version or emanation of them'.[22] It is important to explore how epistolary 'selves' are constituted in (to use Peter Gibbons's phrase) 'particular social, geographical and ethnic (and interethnic) settings'.[23] As 'one of the most stylised of literary forms',[24] the letter is performative of other scripts.[25] Erik Olssen has suggested that 'Only by excavating the tropes of nineteenth century language can we start reconstructing the immigrants' psychic and mental maps and relating them to their new landscapes'.[26] The 'mental maps' of these letters' writers and editors were enabled and constrained by the conceptual, educational and material resources available to them in rural England, as participants in the New Zealand Company's systematic colonization scheme, and in the wider world 'system of production and consumption and exchange, not simply in limited economic terms, but also in social and cultural terms'.[27]

If the signatories of the NZJ letters are identifiable historical 'actors', *could* they write (were they literate) and, if so, *did* they write the letters attributed to them? Can the information in them be verified by independent sources? How did the group become involved in the project of colonization? Who were the editors of the NZJ? How did they acquire the letters, for what purposes and with what effect? How did editing change the texts? Were the letters written with publication in mind? Did the writers 'consent' to publication? Of what value might these labourers' letters in the NZJ be to researchers? Addressing each of these questions in turn, this article falls into five parts. Details of the writers is followed by a case study of one author's letters. Having introduced the labourers' sponsors, the NZJ and its editors, the editorial interventions in the nine letters are examined and the letters' value as resources for historical research is discussed.

Ham House is now managed by Britain's National Trust, which encourages research on the house and its owners, inhabitants and employees.[28] The Ham emigrants were amongst the 'lower orders' of what Arnold described as a 'three-tiered system of landlord, farmer and landless labourer'.[29] In Surrey, as elsewhere, 'most of the land was owned by the gentry, rented by the farmers, and worked by the landless labourers'.[30] Lionel Tollemache, 8th Earl of Dysart, owned 66% of the land (485 acres). A recluse, he lived in London, leaving his two younger brothers to run the estate. The elder, Frederick Tollemache MP, lived at and managed Ham, and the younger brother, Algernon, managed the family's wider investments, including the purchase of land in New Zealand.[31] The family owned three large farms that were run by tenant farmers and 'the majority of the agricultural workers had no landholding of their own, but were employed as labourers by these three men'.[32]

Eight of the many letters published in the NZJ bore names of members of the Ham migrants. Two were attributed to the Retters: one, addressed to Jane Retter's mother, was signed 'Samuel and Jane Retter'. The other, to Jane's brother, was signed 'S. J. Retter'.[33] There were four signed 'William Dew': three to his brother John,[34] and one to 'Hon. Frederick Tollemache'.[35] The name John Philps was attached to a letter 'to his brothers and sisters'.[36] Charles Brown's letter was addressed 'To the Hon. A. Tollemache, Ham Surrey'.[37] But were these and similar letters editorial fabrications? Could the Ham labourers even read and write?

Studies of early nineteenth-century literacy often rely on the signatures or 'marks' on marriage registers. David Vincent concluded that 'By the third quarter of the eighteenth century . . . at least one labourer and servant in three could sign the marriage register'.[38] While some spent brief periods at a school, many learned the rudiments of literacy at home with the help of cheap primers and spelling books.[39] Ham migrants John and Ann Howell had 'both signed [the marriage register] with a cross'; there are no recorded letters from this couple.[40] Independent evidence of William Dew's literacy has also not been found.[41] But one of his NZJ letters reported 'my boys are grown very fast; they go to school on the same terms as at home'.[42] There had been a National School (run by the Anglican church's National Society for Promoting the Education of the Poor in the Principles of the Established Church) in Ham since 1817, and small charity and dame schools were quickly established in Wellington.[43] So, even if William could not write, it

is reasonable to assume that at least some of his children could. No independent evidence exists as to the literacy of Charles Brown or John Philps. John was the brother of the fourth, and only female signatory, Jane Retter. Jane and Samuel Retter had each signed their names on the Cheam parish register.[44]

However, ability to sign one's name was not an indication of writing fluency. From their founding in 1811, National Schools were designed 'to communicate to the poor … such knowledge and habits, as are sufficient to guide them through life, in their proper stations … and to train them to the performance of their religious duties by early discipline'.[45] The National, charity and dame schools taught reading first, and 'it has been calculated that, in the seventeenth century, a child of average ability would have mastered that skill by the age of seven and would only learn to write if he stayed a further year'.[46]

As Vincent argues, 'letter writing is a clear reflection of the employment of literacy'.[47] When the Whig–Liberal government introduced the penny post in 1840, they assumed that 'emigration would become more attractive if there was regular correspondence with those who were already experiencing the delights of a new life in the colonies'.[48] By 1845 'Ham had a very good postal service'.[49] Material artifacts for writing had also become more accessible; by 1838 steel nibs 'could be bought for 4 pence a gross'.[50] And writing manuals and copies of model letters were widely circulated, phrases from these evolving into a 'common rhetoric' between separated kith and kin.[51] As Fitzpatrick wrote: 'The placing of the sender's address and the date, the wording of a greeting, the choice of message above the signature, even the selection of pen and paper, all carry powerful social connotations. To ignore these nuances is to invite either ridicule or indignation from the reader.'[52]

But if the Ham migrants *could* have written the NZJ letters, *did* they? Fortunately, there is evidence in the form of a ninth, unpublished letter. On 12 October 1844 Wellington's *New Zealand Spectator and Cook's Strait Guardian* carried a notice from the Post Office: 'The mail per the *Bella Marina*, for London, will be closed this day, at 10 o'clock'. On 8 October, Jane Retter had written two letters: one to her brother Henry, the other addressed to her mother, 'Mrs Philp Malden Near Sutton Surry Europe "Per Bella Marina"'. The *Bella Marina* berthed in London on 26 January 1845. Jane's letter to her mother was delivered to Malden bearing a 'Ship Letter' stamp, a Wellington post-mark and a British one showing its date of arrival. It remained in the Philp family. In the 1980s, a photocopy was made and a typed transcript of this supplied to Evelyn Pritchard for her book on Ham.[53] A copy of the original letter can be found in Figure 1.[54] Digital enhancement makes it possible to decipher more of Jane's handwriting and so fill in some of the gaps in the transcript contained in Pritchard's book.

Figure 1: Original letter from Jane Retter to her mother, 8 October 1844.

Jane Retter's other letter of 8 October to her brother Henry surfaced in the NZJ three weeks after the *Bella Marina*'s arrival, in the form of 'Extracts of a letter from Wellington'. So we have three letters by Jane: an 'original' in her own handwriting (8 October 1844), and two attributed to her and published in the NZJ: the 'Extracts of' her letter to Henry dated 8 October 1844 and Jane's earlier letter to her mother dated 15 May 1844.

Setting aside for the moment the question of editing, Jane's two published letters can be read *as if* they were faithful to her originals. But who is the textual 'self' constructed and projected in these published texts? In his discussion of 'the forms of rhetoric employed in the letters of the unlettered' Fitzpatrick noted that 'their narrative was typically preceded by an elaborate sequence of formulaic phrases, enquiries, declarations and exhortations. These may be classified under five categories. An introductory phrase was commonly followed by a reference to the exchanges of correspondence, discussion of the health of sender and recipient, and an affirmation of religious faith. The courtesies often encased a brief message or proverb.'[55] It was customary to refer to the writing of 'these few lines' and/or 'taking the "quill' or the "pen in hand"; and "sitting down".'[56] Jane's letters began this way:

MY DEAR MOTHER, With pleasure I once more take my pen in hand to write to you, hoping it will find you in a good state of health, as, thank God, it leaves me and mine at present. My dear mother, I heard from you when my brother John received a letter from Henry, and was very sorry to hear that you had been very ill.[57]

Jane's polite salutation was an expression of her 'continued participation in a ceremonious culture'.[58] As Fitzpatrick suggested, the 'semi-public' or shared process of letter writing and reading 'exposed both emigrants and those remaining . . . to a wide range of letters that might serve as self-replicating models . . . . The distinctive vernacular of letters, like dialect speech, developed through reiterated exchange, imitation, and response in kind.'[59]

As with McCarthy's Irish–New Zealand letterwriters, Jane Retter performed the courtesies of kinship. Giving news of third parties, she presumed 'a social world known in common that is not delineated in detail and largely taken for granted'.[60] Jane's brother John and sister-in-law Catherine Philps had emigrated with her. Another brother in England (Henry) had written to John, who had told Jane about their mother's illness. This cross-referencing exemplifies the second dimension of the epistolarium, the relationship of the surviving (published) letters to the (unpublished) total actually written. Editors such as Erickson often 'omitted references to letters, to health, and messages from other immigrants and to other persons'.[61] So it is interesting to see them remain in these letters in the NZJ.

In addressing her mother, Jane wrote and projected her 'self' as a dutiful adult daughter. In Gerber's terms, 'Personal identity depends on the assurance that we are indeed the same person we always have been, and it is served most profoundly by abiding relationships with significant others'.[62] He sees the epistolary 'self' as meeting a 'psychological need for continuity. Immigration has always put migrants at risk of a radical rupture of the self.'[63] Jane's texts enacted old scripts of family obligations in rural England. Jane had three brothers: John (who had emigrated with her), George and Henry (still in Surrey).[64] She urged her mother, her recently widowed brother George and his little son to join her in New Zealand. She offered to support her mother 'without any need of work' and, having recently lost her own baby son, to bring up her motherless nephew:

> Please to give my kind love to my brother George, and tell him if he would like to come to New Zealand, he shall have my place as a home, and I will be a mother to his little boy, for I love my brother George as I love my life. I have had one dear little boy since I have been in New Zealand, but I am sorry to inform you that I lost him at nine months old. I think if my brother George should come he would do very well, if he is but steady; but I will not persuade him either way — let him and every one else please themselves; but I can assure you that I do not repent coming out, for I have now two cows and a heifer, and one acre of land, which cost us twenty pounds.[65]

Jane's text is somewhat ambiguous about the desirability and ease of emigration. Her cautious 'I will not persuade him either way — let him and every one else please themselves' resembles Erickson's characterization of private letters: 'in contrast to published letters, these private letters rarely encouraged migration. The phrase "I will not encourage anyone to come" was *a liet-motif* of the private letter, even when migrants declared themselves to be satisfied with their own decisions.'[66] In the same letter Jane holds out the 'public' promises of the Wakefield scheme: familial stability, economic self-sufficiency and social mobility. That both messages remain suggests a relatively light touch to her letter's editorial inscription.

Jane's second published letter, to her brother Henry, bore both Jane's and Samuel's names, but was written by Jane:

> My dear brother, I am happy to inform you that I am happy and comfortable. My husband is in a constant place, where he has been these two years, under the sheriff of Wellington. Wages are reduced; my husband gets only a pound per week, but we have not lately interfered with his weekly money, for we have made the produce of the two cows keep us. We sell new milk at 6*d*. per quart, skim milk at 4*d*. per quart; fresh butter at two shillings per pound. Both our cows are within three months of calving: my heifer grows a fine little beast. Don't forget the seeds I mentioned in my other letter. Please to send me a few furze seed, and some damson, and some white bullace.[67]

Jane was not unusual in writing about wages and including lists of prices. It has been suggested that many such lists, being regarded as repetitive or dull, were subject to editorial excisions.[68]

Read in sequence, Jane's two published letters suggest deteriorating economic conditions (wages were lowered).[69] But, at the same time, they created a positive impression of a land of opportunity. Through thrift and steady work, Jane and Samuel, landless labourers in Surrey, had become owners of an acre (and later two acres) of land.[70] Jane's skills as a dairy farmer and gardener, a domestic producer and a trader made the family self-sufficient, able to save Samuel's wages and accumulate capital.[71] If George were to emigrate, and exhibit 'steady' qualities, he too would prosper.

In sociologist Dorothy Smith's terms, Jane's letters were organized by the wider world system of 'social relations coordinating activities in multiple sites'.[72] They 'stretched out' what had once been English village networks of kinship across oceans. By encouraging Henry to send seeds for familiar crops, Jane participated in a wider economic project, soliciting investment and labour for the fledgling colony: 'Dear brother, please to tell Mr. Warner that we have not got many wheelwrights: here we have so many barbers, tailors, ribbon-weavers, button-makers. Please to tell Mr. Tollemache they are not farmers, and we want farmers in a new colony; these are useful members. We have far too many lawyers; I believe some of them are going home in the same ships they came out by. Retter says he should like to see Mr. Tollemache at New Zealand.'[73] Here Jane herself, and on behalf of her husband, appealed to her 'betters' across the English rural class divide, asking her brother to pass on information to Mr Warner (the wheelwright in Ham) and Mr Tollemache (her former employer).[74] Her use of 'Mr' indicated that these were persons above her in the social hierarchy. Formerly amongst the landless labourers and at the bottom of rural Surrey's three-tiered class structure, Jane and Samuel were now 'smallholders' in its terms. Economically independent, the Retters felt they could approach Mr Tollemache, not out of personal need, but out of mutual concern for the enterprise of colonization. In this the letter both enacted and subtly rewrote old scripts.

The epistolary self constructed in Jane's published texts was motherly, dutiful, independent and hard working. Her letters forged and sustained familial, neighbourhood and economic connections between places, illustrating 'the complex dialectics between individual and society'.[75] At this time, the NZJ carried

news of skirmishes between Māori and settlers over land. Jane reassured Henry that he need not fear 'savagery': 'Dear brother, we have found the natives very civil, but some have found them very troublesome. Where the land is not fairly purchased, we cannot get anything of the natives without the money. If we can get the land claim settled, we are in hopes that the place will flourish both for the poor and rich.'[76] Jane implied that some 'natives' had not been treated equitably. Their property rights had not been protected. Fair treatment of indigenous peoples, according to the laws of the market, was necessary to 'civil-ize' (render them civil) by locating them equitably in the systems and hierarchies of the colonial order. This language of civilization and savagery would not have been so prominent amongst the landless labourers in Ham. It emanated from the immediacies of Jane's new location in a fledgling and troubled colony. To excavate the tropes of nineteenth-century language, it is necessary to look at the Ham group's sponsorship by the New Zealand Company more broadly and the Tollemache brothers specifically.

Labourers had to perceive some advantage to leave families forever, cross oceans crammed below decks in poorly ventilated and unsanitary conditions, and spend up to six months in 'a small recess about 6.5 feet in both height and width'.[77] During the 1830s and 1840s in Surrey (as elsewhere in Britain) agriculture was depressed.[78] The end of the Napoleonic wars had seen around 350,000 soldiers discharged into the British economy; there was widespread underemployment, especially in the winter months, and increasing rural unrest.[79] The extremes of the three-tier system described by Arnold had intensified, 'partly through the continued decline of the yeoman, the owner-occupier of a small-holding, who formed an intermediate class, and partly through the further extension of enclosures of open fields, commons and wastes, which removed the labourers' claims of property in the land'.[80] Reforms of the Poor Laws discouraged outdoor relief work and encouraged confinement of paupers in feared workhouses.[81] The workhouse for the Ham area was in Kingston, a nearby village.[82]

Edward Gibbon Wakefield described New Zealand as 'one of the finest countries in the world, if not the finest, for British settlement'.[83] A prolific reader and writer of political economy, his theory of systematic colonization was a blueprint for a new colonial order.[84] The New Zealand Company, a commercial venture, translated his theory into practice. While the new colony would emulate the better features of British society, Wakefield did not want to transplant its pauperized or aristocratic extremes. Instead, as John Martin explained, 'He aimed at two groups: the hard-working labouring class, which suffered from low wages and insecure employment, and the respectable but "uneasy" middle class, which found it difficult to maintain its position in conditions of extreme competition and vulnerability.'[85]

Racialized binaries of civilization and savagery consistent with contemporary stadial theories of racial development infused Wakefield's writing. Pat Moloney explained that most European observers judged Māori 'to be "superior" specimens of the human family . . . because of their rapid "progress". The arts of civilization the Māori were rapidly adopting and excelling in were commercial ones . . . and, as a consequence of these activities (as well as land sales), accumulating capital.'[86] Wakefield planned to integrate Māori throughout the strata of his new society on

the grounds that 'The New Zealanders are not savages properly speaking, but a people capable of civilization. A main object will be to do all that can be done to get them to embrace the language, customs, religion, and social ties of the superior race.'[87] As Olssen outlined, 'many nineteenth century Britons thought of colonisation as both the possibility of creating a new civilisation and of failing to descend into savagery'.[88] Civilization and savagery were tropes in Jane Retter's letters.

Jane and Samuel's recruitment as emigrants was contingent on their conforming to the New Zealand Company's requirements for the new colony. Its colonization scheme had three main features: '1st, the sale of lands, at an uniform and sufficient price; and 2ndly, the employment of a large portion of the purchase-money, as an immigration Fund': 'The great object of the price is to secure the most desirable proportions between people and land; but the plan has the further result of producing a revenue, which will not only supply the requisite profit to the shareholders of the Company, but furnishes the means for an Immigration Fund, — a Fund constantly applicable to the purpose of bringing labour to the colony, — that is in causing the best SORT of colonisation to proceed at the greatest possible rate.'[89] Jane Retter's appeal to Mr Tollemache for the 'right kind' of immigrant, promoted this economic agenda.

The Tollemache brothers were involved with the New Zealand Land Company from its beginnings. In 1840, the company announced that it had 'Capital, £100,000, in 4000 shares of £25 each, all paid up' and listed 22 shareholders, of whom the Hon. Frederick Jas. Tollemache, MP was one.[90] Even before Port Nicholson (Wellington) had been surveyed, land orders were sold; the drawing of 100,000 acres of Wellington lots was held in London on 29 July 1839. The Tollemache family purchased 48 of the 1100 Wellington balloted lots: Algernon bought 33; Frederick 12; and three other Tollemaches one section each. Dudley Sinclair, a nephew of the Tollemache brothers, bought nine.[91] Sinclair immigrated to Wellington in 1839, supported his uncles' interests and was a contact between the Tollemaches and their former employees.[92]

From the money raised at the 1839 land ballot, 75% was set aside to support emigration, and purchasers such as the Tollemaches were urged to submit the names of 'labouring persons . . . for a free passage, for the approval of the company. In the selection of labouring emigrants, the company has undertaken to give a preference to applicants who shall be engaged to work for capitalists intending to emigrate.'[93] The company also noted that it would give preference to '[a]gricultural labourers, shepherds, bakers, blacksmiths, braziers and tinmen, smiths, shipwrights, boat-builders, wheelwrights, sawyers, cabinet-makers, carpenters, coopers, curriers, farriers, millwrights, harness makers, boot and shoemakers, tailors, tanners, brickmakers, lime-burners, and all persons engaged in the erection of buildings'.[94] Jane Retter's letters reiterated the prioritizing of these occupations in the recruitment of immigrants.

The company enticed labouring emigrants with prospects of economic prosperity and class mobility, arguing that the 'sufficient price' for land 'diminishes the period during which the labourer must work for hire, and by the rapid progress

which it imparts to the best sort of colonisation, it explains to the Labouring class of immigrants that every one of them who is industrious and thrifty, may be sure to become not merely an owner of land, but also in his turn, an employer of hired labourers, a master of servants'.[95] Jane and Samuel's letters described how being 'industrious and thrifty' had elevated their status to that of owner-proprietors of an acre of land.

Prospective emigrants were assured in company advertisements that, on arrival in Wellington, they would be met by company staff, housed temporarily in company barracks, and, if not already contracted to employment, helped to find work. The company 'would give them employment in the service of the company, if from any cause they should be unable to obtain it elsewhere. The emigrants will, however, be at perfect liberty to engage themselves to any one willing to employ them, and will make their own bargain for wages.'[96] Offered these conditions and opportunities, and sponsored by their former employer, a company shareholder and director, the seven male 'servants' of Ham, their wives and their children, joined the 242 steerage passengers on the *Lord William Bentinck*. After five months at sea, they landed in Wellington on 18 May 1841. William Wakefield, the company's agent in Wellington, informed the company secretary of the ship's safe arrival, commending 'the high order in which I found her immigrants who . . . have been very well selected'.[97]

To ensure steady supplies of capital and labour, the company needed propaganda. Describing himself as 'only a generalizer or theorizer,' Wakefield left 'all the filling up of an exterior project to others. In fact I have not time to attend to details, almost every hour of my day, to say nothing of nights, from year's end to year's end, being engaged in taking care of the principles and main points of our New Zealand enterprise.'[98] Wakefield described his personal mission as both theoretical and polemical, the latter involving 'the persuading of all sorts of dispositions to pull together for a common object'.[99] As Philip Temple argued, Wakefield's 'acute awareness and use of the influence of papers and magazines on middle-class opinion explain much of the success of his propaganda'.[100] Temple estimated that the company or its supporters produced around 200 books, which collectively created 'a propaganda image of New Zealand as a green and pleasant and fertile land, sparsely populated with friendly natives and ideally suited for the foundation of an antipodean Britain'.[101]

The NZJ was not directly owned or run by the New Zealand Company. When the company secretary sent William Wakefield '12 copies of the first number of the *New Zealand Journal*', he described it as 'wholly independent of the Company; neither the Directors nor any person in the Company's employ being interested in it'.[102] But the NZJ's editor and founder, the young British lawyer H.S. Chapman, was one of the company's strongest supporters.[103] Chapman emigrated to New Zealand in 1843, after selling the copyright to the NZJ.[104] Amongst the subscribers to Chapman's farewell presentation was the Hon. A.G. Tollemache.[105]

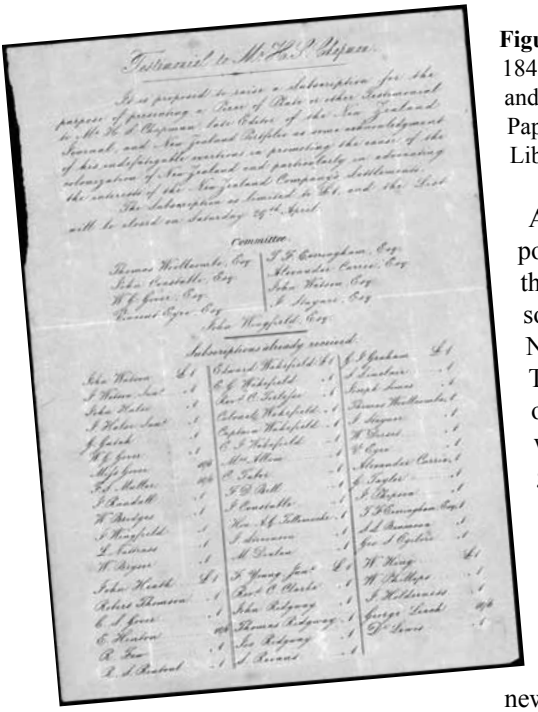

Figure 2: Testimonial to Mr H.S. Chapman, 1843–1844. Chapman, Eichelbaum and Rosenberg families papers, MS-Papers-8670-041-01, Alexander Turnbull Library. Reproduced with permission.

As Erickson pointed out, 'the policies of newspapers influenced their choice of letters for publication', so an understanding of those of the NZJ and its editors is essential.[106] The journal's three purposes were outlined in its prospectus. The first, was 'To enforce and illustrate the great principles which distinguish the New British System of Colonisation'. Second, the NZJ aimed 'to make known in England, and the Colony, reciprocally, whatever it most concerns each to learn about the other'. Finally, the newspaper wanted 'to insert original contributions from persons in the Colony, or connected therewith'.[107] The inclusion of emigrants' personal letters was clearly in keeping with this mission.

Between 1840 and 1843 Chapman corresponded with his friend Samuel Revans, who had immigrated to Wellington and established the *New Zealand Gazette and Wellington Spectator*. The writing, lives and relationships of these men support Patrick Day's argument that it was the interests of the colony's emerging upper class that were represented and advanced by its newspapers.[108]

Published in London, and aimed at British readers, the NZJ also had a small circulation in New Zealand. It was included in the list of newspapers supplied in the Wellington Exchange Room established 'for the purpose of affording facilities to professional gentlemen, merchants and traders generally, of access to the public newspapers, and . . . a rendezvous for the transaction of mercantile and other business'.[109] Chapman expected that he would enjoy an easy move into New Zealand's colonial elite because of his work on the journal: 'I am known to everybody in New Zealand, to most of the leading settlers personally and to others by name as I have been their staunchest advocate for the whole period of the existence of the Colony.'[110] By 1845, the NZJ could claim a British readership 'for the most part amongst influential men to this country; — noblemen, gentlemen and others, who are either personally interested in the colonies; or at least indirectly so'.[111]

Revans's *Gazette* office served as the depot for Chapman's NZJ and vice versa. The men promoted each other's papers: 'My remarks on your paper had a decidedly good effect in the way of increasing its circulation.'[112] Letters between Revans and Chapman were replete with suggestions on how their papers could influence company policy and investment in the colony. Revans urged Chapman

to 'Write in favour of raising land to £2 — if it be less we shall be without labour. The Company must now cease giving Cabin passages — or they will ruin the Colony. It is the way to introduce the outcast gentlemen of England here; and will leave little for the labour fund.'[113] In its third report, the New Zealand Company reiterated the point: 'The land warded to the Company is utterly worthless, unless they can people it with emigrants: — and these not of the labouring class only, but also of capitalists able to remunerate labour in anticipation of its more or less distant returns, who alone can purchase land, and whose profitable use of it is absolutely dependent upon a sufficient supply of labour.'[114] The company's secretary urged William Wakefield, its agent in Wellington, to 'stimulate the Colonists to write by any opportunity to their friends at home. They may be assured that not the most trifling facts relative to the Country, — to their condition and mode of life, — and to their prospects, whether individually, or as connected with the Colony, will be received without Interest here. This remark is equally applicable to the labouring Emigrants, as to the more wealthy class of Settlers — the condition of the working people and their families will always be an object of peculiar solicitude with the Directors, and of great moment to the character of the Settlement.'[115]

But how were personal letters to be obtained for printing in a paper addressed to the British public? As Charlotte Macdonald has observed, letters were 'often passed from one hand to another'.[116] They were also copied and copies circulated widely. Many of the letters published in the NZJ were headed 'Copy of a letter'.[117] Writers were often unaware of the existence or whereabouts of these copies. As with Gerber's study, 'gossip, or to put a less judgmental face on it, social intelligence, circulated in the international mails with alarming rapidity'.[118] Revans rebuked Chapman for unauthorized publication: 'The appearance of the private letters in the papers with names attached have created quite a row. The Evans and Riddifords are quite indignant and say they can bring a charge of deception against Ward [the Company secretary]; that a certain letter had been lent him in confidence and that the next time he met the party he presented him a copy of it in print.'[119] Chapman even published his own private letters from Revans, who responded angrily: 'Your continued publication of my private letters, containing my private affairs is I must say a most indelicate breach of confidence . . . . Your judgment should make you aware of the effect of much that you publish.'[120]

Like other newspapers, the NZJ included 'open letters' addressed to its editor but 'actually addressed to "the public, a collectivity of addressees"'.[121] Others were in the format of 'private' letters addressed to individuals. The Ham letters were all in this category. Six were addressed to family members: 'My dear' (or Dear) Brother (William Dew, Jane Retter); 'My Dear Mother' (Jane Retter); 'Dear brothers and sisters' (John Philps). Charles Brown addressed Algernon Tollemache as 'Honorable Sir', and William Dew greeted Hon. F.A. Tollemache as 'My Dear Sir'. Dudley Sinclair addressed Algernon Tollemache as 'My dear uncle'. One of William Dew's letters bore the heading 'Copy of a letter' and one of Jane Retter's, 'Extracts of a letter'.

The Revans–Chapman correspondence described letters being passed through company circles. Through their sponsors, Frederick and Algernon Tollemache, the Ham emigrants had an immediate connection to the company's ruling elite. Frederick, an MP, company shareholder and director, spent much time in London.

Algernon, who managed the family's New Zealand investment, maintained close contact with the emigrants and their families. Passing their letters to the NZJ would have been consistent with common practice. Between 1849 and 1855 Algernon made the first of three trips to New Zealand, and the letters he wrote to Frederick while he was away contained regular news of the Ham emigrants.[122]

At the outset of this article the *possibility* that the Ham emigrants *could have* written the letters attributed to them was raised. That Jane Retter *did* write her letters is evident in the form of an 'original' letter to her mother (8 October 1844), stamped with the dates, mode and destination of delivery. Jane's published letters were to her mother (15 May 1844) and 'Extracts of a letter' to her brother Henry (8 October 1844). As Stanley points out, 'There is always a referential basis, of particular lives lived in specific social contexts and historical circumstances, to the epistolary'.[123] One would expect overlap between contents of two letters written on 8 October 1844. But, as dialogical creations, the 'structure and content' of letters 'changes according to the particular recipient'.[124] How Jane expressed herself, what and whom she wrote about were influenced by the nature of the relationship she had with her mother and with her brother.

Gerber argues that if we 'consider the language, form and content of the immigrant letter a problem that we must correct, rather than an opportunity to extend and to deepen our understanding, the further we drift away from being able to use it to know the creativity, mental worlds and experiences of the letter-writers'.[125] For Gerber, 'raw texts 'give compelling evidence of depths of feelings and self-consciousness of mental states and emotions in a poetic language . . . one feels the force of an extraordinary creativity that strains against its technical deficiencies'.[126] Jane's unpublished letter to her mother read: 'My Husband and i often talks you all over we should be very happy to see you all again but to that we never shall . . . . My D Mother i have found many of your words came true since i have been in New Zealand when i first come & hear many a hour have i past with tears in my eyes thinking of you'. In the NZJ Jane's mother was told, 'I think it very unkind, I have written home twice before, but have received no answer; but I think "out of sight out of mind". You think you shall never see us again, and you do not care for writing to us.' Noting 'the urgency and intensity' of such texts, Fitzpatrick argued that 'the letter was indeed often pictured as a life-line, and its absence as a harbinger of death'.[127] The 'Extract of' Jane's letter to Henry was more circumspect, lacking such emotive intensity. However, having had recent news of Henry (via his letter to John Philp), Jane might not have been anxious about his welfare.

The mother–daughter dynamic in Jane's letters had a distinctive timbre. Jane wanted to share news of her children. When she left Ham Jane was pregnant; two infant sons travelled with the Retters and a daughter was born at sea. In the first NZJ letter, Jane wrote of losing a son born in New Zealand and she offered to care for her widowed brother and his son. Her second letter she noted, 'if you was to see my two little boys you would not know them they grow two fine boys they mind my cows in the bush'. Jane's emotional need was clear.

Both letters of 8 October depicted Jane and Samuel as 'doing well'. Mention was made of Samuel's position as 'groom for the Sherriff of Wellington'; and although wages were depressed they could still save, subsisting and trading surplus

from Jane's garden and cows. To both mother and brother Jane wrote: 'I have no person to come to ask me for rent or rates or taxes for the ground that i live on is my own bought and payed for'. But to her mother she added: 'perhaps if we had staid in England we should been in some workhouse before this'. Whether or not a similar reference in Henry's letter had been 'excised' we cannot determine.

All three of Jane's letters contained news about other Ham emigrants. To her mother Jane wrote, 'John and his family is well please to tell my Brother Henry that William Smith and Charles Brown and William Dew and his family . . . they are all well. Please to give our kind respects to Gridley and let him see this letter and my brother Henry's letter ditto'.[128] Jane's published letter to her brother instructed him to send seeds and to pass on to 'Mr Warner' and 'Mr Tollemache' her list of desirable immigrant labour skills. Jane's mother lived in Malden, close to but not in Ham. While all three letters solicited labour and capital, they asked recipients to approach different village networks. 'Dear Mother' was to 'Tell Stumpy Harris that he had better come for we shall soon be making New streets and roads'.

For Stanley, letters were tempered by their writers' understanding of the letter's recipients as 'a (writing) self in waiting'.[129] But the Ham emigrants often wrote *as if* to a wider audience. The 'selves' in waiting anticipated in these letters were also *acting* selves, who, though passed messages to third parties, would encourage investment. As with Dalziel's New Plymouth immigrants, the Ham group encouraged others from their village to join them.[130] Letters were powerful recruitment tools.

While selection for publication was an indication of editorial intervention, a more direct manifestation of it was an editorial endorsement of Willam Dew: 'The writer of the above letter is a respectable and most industrious man, who was for some time in the employment of the Honourable F. Tollemache, and his statements may be relied on.'[131] Dew told his brother, 'I and Howell have taken an acre of land between us and have a good garden'. He was adaptable, working as a sawyer, despite 'not being accustomed to it'. He asked his brother to 'give my duty to Mr Algernon; tell him I intend to write to him further particulars about the country in a short time'.[132] His subsequent letter to Algernon Tollemache described continuing economic relations amongst his former employees: 'I have got half an acre of land in cultivation . . . . Retter has got nearly an acre of land in cultivation, he had a prize for his barley the first year. Philps has opened a brickyard, and is likely to do well. Howell is a bullock driver.'[133] Dew asked his brother John to tell their brother Benjamin 'to be steady and industrious, and he will prosper'.[134] Industriousness was a recurring trope in the company's texts. As noted earlier, one of the promises held out to emigrants was the chance to become 'an employer of hired labourers'.[135]

John Philps was about to become such an employer. He and his eldest son, Henry, ran their own brick works:

> I take this opportunity of writing, as it is a very wet day, as I have but very little time; for when the weather is fine I am at work, from daylight till dark, for Henry and myself is making bricks, for it has been a hard task for me, for it has cost me twenty pounds for the fitting up the place and tools; but, thank God, I have burned one kiln of bricks, and have another made, and I hope in three months more I shall have more time to myself, as I intend to have a man to help me.[136]

As with the letters in Fitzpatrick's study, employment was 'the key to prosperity'.[137]

Wakefield had intended that the qualities needed to thrive in Wellington made it feasible for working people to challenge English extremes of hereditary privilege. While wealth was welcome, idle 'gentlemen' were not. As Dew explained, they 'walk the beach and smoke their cigars, and spend their money in the grog shops'.[138] Dew, on the other hand, had 'enjoyed the sweets of a sober life since I have been in New Zealand'.[139]

While some of the topics in the Ham letters were paralleled in collections of previously unpublished Australian (Fitzpatrick) and American (Gerber, Erickson) letters of the time, the intensity and tone of the NZJ's preoccupation with 'natives' was distinctive to the New Zealand context. From its first issues, the NZJ portrayed Māori in terms of the 'stadial' theories of development that were current amongst scientists of the period, and which were noted earlier as informing Wakefield's writing. Moloney describes H.S. Chapman, who was still editing the NZJ at the time the first six Ham letters were published, as personally espousing this theory by placing 'Māori one step in advance of American Indians on the ground that they were "cultivators", not simply "hunters".'[140] His successor continued this policy. In 1845, the year the last of the Ham letters (Jane Retter's) were published, such statements continued to inform the journal's frequent ethnological contributions. For example: 'their acute remarks . . . on subjects with which they are familiar, their keen perception of their own interest, and the readiness with which they appreciate any new thing of real practical usefulness to them, soon prove that their intellect merely requires a little cultivation to place them on a footing with their civilised brethren. Their curiosity is not childish wonder, but the result of a quick, inquiring mind.'[141]

Like many other labourers' letters in the NZJ, the Ham group's texts described Māori in everyday language compatible with this terminology. Charles Brown referred to Māori as 'a very civilized sort of people: they come and sit in your house, and talk in their language as if the place belonged to them; but will take nothing without asking for it'.[142] William Dew wrote that a 'principal delight of the children is to learn the native language'.[143] Jane Retter explained that 'None of you need be afraid of the natives, for they are civilized.'[144]

During this period (1841–1845) the company's 'purchase' of Māori land had come into question. The NZJ reported on the Spain Commission's inquiry into land titles; the Wairau Massacre near Nelson (which had had terrified Wellingtonians); skirmishes between Māori and settlers at the Hutt; and the contempt with which Wellington 'notables' held the Governor in Auckland. The journal also expressed outrage at what it perceived to be the Crown's 'leniency' towards rebellious Māori. By 1845 the company's propaganda image of 'a green and pleasant and fertile land, sparsely populated with friendly natives and ideally suited for the foundation of an antipodean Britain' no longer prevailed.[145] Instead the NZJ increasingly assumed a political role in London as a mouthpiece for Wellington's beleaguered settlers. Like the company with which it was aligned, the NZJ was in conflict with the Crown, the Church Missionary Society, the Governor in Auckland and the Colonial Office.[146]

The Ham letter writers played down the danger surrounding racial tensions. William Dew portrayed conflict in the Hutt Valley as a minor setback:

'Mr. [Dudley] Sinclair wished me to take some of Mr. Algernon's land, but it is so far off; the natives will not allow any one to go there at present', adding that 'They are very civil in the neighbourhood of Port Nicholson'.[147] Charles Brown reported that, 'We was, soon after our arrival, put under arms, in consequence of a native being found dead in the flax, all owing to the Chief, Wara Pora; but he is now Matu Matu, (that is, meaning dead).'[148] Jane's two letters of 8 October referred to 'a great deal of distrefs in the place although thank for the distres of the place have not made any difference to me for my Husband is in a constant place'.[149] The published letter to Henry adopted a political stance, attributing the 'distress of the place' to 'the non-settlement of the land claims, and a great deal through drink'. If the land claim was settled, 'we are in hopes that the place will flourish both for the poor and rich'.[150]

While it is evident that the NZJ's editor had transcribed the labourers' 'original' texts to approximate the syntax, grammar and spelling of the NZJ's upper- and middle-class readers,, the Ham group's authorship of the original letters is no longer in doubt. Whether or not they had anticipated publication in the *New Zealand Journal*, these writers had not intended their letters home to be private in today's sense of the word. They wrote for a semi-public audience, expecting and indeed requesting recipients to share their letters with extended family around village communities with the Tollemaches and with other investors and sponsors.

As historical resources, the Ham letters help researchers retrace labouring immigrants' 'psychic and mental maps'.[151] In citing the tropes of civilization and savagery, capital and labour, thrift and hard work, these 'letters of the unlettered'[152] were informed by the popularized forms of the mental maps of nineteenth-century ethnology and political economy available during the writers' upbringing, limited schooling and labour as rural poor, and by their subsequent involvement with the New Zealand Company. In published form (as 'ur-letters') their original texts, lightly over-written by the editorial hand, became bi-vocal utterances, speaking in the interests of both capital and labour. Mediating between places and crossing rural England's class-divide, their letters were active engagements in the political, commercial and social projects of building a new colony.

The labourers' letters were one way for new migrants to make sense of and make their mark on their new landscapes. Writing could reduce the risk of a 'radical rupture of the self',[153] creating a 'new epistolary version or emanation'[154] and connecting the new and the old 'social, geographical and ethnic (and interethnic) settings'.[155] In their letters, the Ham group sustained their English identities (as dutiful daughters, objects of charitable benevolence and so on), while also forging and projecting new personae as enterprising, socially mobile, adaptable colonial subjects. For this group at least some of the promises of the Wakefield scheme would become a reality.[156]

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NOTES

1 David Fitzpatrick, ed., *Oceans of Consolation: Personal Accounts of Irish Migration to Australia*, Ithaca and London, 1994, pp.viii, 5.

2 Raewyn Dalziel, 'Emigration and Kinship: Migrants to New Plymouth 1840–1843', *New Zealand Journal of History* (NZJH) 25, 2 (1991), pp.112–28 and 'Popular Protest in Early New Plymouth: Why did it Occur?', NZJH, 20, 1 (1986), pp.3–26.

3 Rollo Arnold, *The Farthest Promised Land: English Villagers, New Zealand Immigrants of the 1870s*, Wellington, 1981, p.xii.

4 Jock Phillips and Terry Hearn, *Settlers: New Zealand Immigrants from England, Ireland and Scotland, 1800–1945*, Auckland, 2008. *Settlers* also drew on 'the more than 3000 biographies now available in the *Dictionary of New Zealand Biography*' (p.vi).

5 Charlotte Erickson, *Invisible Immigrants: The Adaptation of English and Scottish Immigrants in Nineteenth-Century America*, Coral Gables, Florida, 1972, p.2.

6 Angela McCarthy, 'A Good Idea of a Colonial Life: Personal Letters and Irish Migration to New Zealand', NZJH, 35, 1 (2001), p.2.

7 Frances Porter, Charlotte Macdonald and Tui MacDonald, eds, *'My hand will write what my heart dictates': The Unsettled Lives of Women in Nineteenth-Century New Zealand as Revealed to Sisters, Family and Friends*, Auckland, 1996, p.3.

8 Charlotte Macdonald, 'Introduction', in Charlotte Macdonald, ed., *Women Writing Home 1700–1920, Vol. 5, New Zealand*, London, 2006, p.xiii.

9 Erickson, p.4.

10 McCarthy, p.2.

11 Fitzpatrick, p.26.

12 ibid.

13 David Gerber, 'The Immigrant Letter Between Positivism and Populism: American Historians' Uses of Personal Correspondence', in Rebecca Earle, ed., *Epistolary Selves: Letters and Letter-Writers 1600–1945*, Aldershot, 1999, p.37. Emphasis in original.

14 ibid., p.38. See also, for example, their use in Dalziel, 'Popular Protest in Early New Plymouth', pp.3–26; Philip Temple, *A Sort of Conscience: The Wakefields*, Auckland, 2002.

15 One of the married couples, Jane and Samuel Retter, were my mother's paternal great grandparents. I am indebted to Michael and Vivian Retter, who organized the 1999 Retter family reunion and shared their extensive genealogical research.

16 Phillips and Hearn, pp.65–66. Phillips and Hearn's information is based on a family history supplied by the New Zealand Society of Genealogists. See also Evelyn Pritchard, *The 1841 Emigrants from Ham to New Zealand Sponsored by Algernon Tollemache of Ham House,* Richmond, 2003. I have established e-mail contact with some of Pritchard's informants and thank them for assistance with this project: Barbara Kay (Auckland); Barbara Hindle-Owen (Madrid); Alan Tollemache (Wellington); Linda Hansen (Switzerland).

17 Liz Stanley, 'The Epistolarium: On Theorising Letters and Correspondences', *Auto/ Biography*, 12 (2004), p.204.

18 Margaretta Jolly and Liz Stanley, 'Letters as/not a genre', *Life-writing* 1, 2 (2005), p.100.

19 Stanley, p.211.

20 Jolly and Stanley, p.100.

21 Stanley, p.211.

22 ibid., p.214.

23 Peter Gibbons, 'The Far Side of the Search for Identity: Reconsidering New Zealand History', NZJH, 37, 1 (2003), p.41.

24 Fitzpatrick, p.485.

25 For a sustained discussion of performativity see Judith Butler, *The Psychic Life of Power: Theories in Subjection*, Stanford, 1997.

26 Erik Olssen, 'Where to from here? Reflections on the Twentieth-Century Historiography of Nineteenth-Century New Zealand', NZJH, 26, 1 (1992), p.73.

27 Gibbons, p.41.

28 I would like to thank Victoria Bradley, Curator of Ham House, for putting me in touch with descendants of the Ham emigrants and of the Tollemache family, with librarians and with other researchers and for access to the files kept at Ham House. See The National Trust, *Ham House, Surrey*, London, 1995; Evelyn Pritchard, *Ham House and Its Owners through Four Centuries 1610–*

1948, Richmond, 1998; Evelyn Pritchard, *A Portrait of Ham in Early Victorian Times, 1840–1860,* Richmond, 1991.

29 Arnold, p.18. See also Pamela Horn, *Life and Labour in Rural England, 1760–1850*, Basingstoke, 1987.

30 Arnold, p.18.

31 Pritchard, *The 1841 Emigrants*, p.96.

32 Pritchard, *Portrait of Ham*, p.16.

33 Samuel and Jane Retter, 'Letter from Wellington, May 15, 1844', *New Zealand Journal* (NZJ), 18 January 1845, p.21; S. Retter and J. Retter, 'Extract of a Letter from Wellington, 8 October 1844', NZJ, 15 February 1845, p.6.

34 William Dew, 'Copy of a Letter From William Dew to His Brother, Port Nicholson Nov 7 1841', NZJ, 1 May 1842, p.104; William Dew, 'From William Dew to His Brother, Mr James Dew, Gardener, Ham, near Richmond, Surrey, Wellington, 2nd October, 1842', in *Letters from Settlers and Labouring Emigrants in the New Zealand Company's Settlements of Wellington, Nelson and New Plymouth, from February 1842 to January 1843*, London, 1843, pp.35–37; William Dew, 'From William Dew to His Brother, Mr James Dew, Ham, Surrey, 25th December, 1842', in *Letters from Settlers*, pp.58–60.

35 William Dew, 'Letter to the Hon. F.A. Tollemache from a former servant, Wellington, New Zealand, July 9, 1843', NZJ, 20 January 1844, p.352.

36 John Philps, 'From J. Philps, Brickmaker, Wellington, December 12, 1842', in *Letters from Settlers*, p.54.

37 Charles Brown, 'From Charles Brown, Bricklayer, to the Hon. A. Tollemache Ham, Surrey, Wellington, 10 October, 1842', in *Letters from Settlers*, pp.44–45. Pritchard was unaware of this letter from Charles Brown, stating that 'no reference to Charles Brown has been found' other than a mention of him in one of Jane Retter's letters. Pritchard, *The 1841 Emigrants*, p.59.

38 David Vincent, *Literacy and Popular Culture: England, 1750–1914*, Cambridge, 1989, p.12. This was based on his survey of 10,000 marriages from ten registration districts.

39 Vincent, passim. See also Pamela Horn, *Education in Rural England, 1800–1914*, New York, 1978. There were small fee-paying dame schools, Sunday schools, church or charity schools.

40 Pritchard, *The 1841 Emigrants*, p.8.

41 Pritchard wrote that 'although when his children were baptised, William Dew's occupation was given as labourer, in 1841 he was a servant at Ham House' (Pritchard, *The 1841 Emigrants*, p.13). She noted that one of William's brothers, Benjamin, had not been able to write his name when he had rented a house in 1840, but that he was then a young man and there are suggestions that he learned to read as an adult (Pritchard, *Portrait of Ham*, p.83). However, it was William's other brother, John, to whom William addressed his three letters.

42 Dew, 'Copy of a letter from William Dew to His Brother, Port Nicholson Nov. 7 1841', NZJ, 1 May 1842, p.104.

43 Vincent described the curriculum of 'National Schools' as follows: 'New pupils were to be taught to say their Lord's Prayer and the Creed before their first reading lesson, and thereafter the teaching of literacy was only important insofar as it provided a medium for instruction in religion and moral duties. In this context reading was obviously more useful than writing' (p.74). For details of schooling at Ham see Pritchard, *Portrait of Ham*, pp.46–48. For a discussion of the schooling available to the Ham group's children in Wellington, see George Macmorran, *Some Schools and Schoolmasters of Early Wellington*, Wellington, 1900; Sue Middleton, 'Schooling the Labouring Classes: Children, Families and Learning in Wellington, 1840–45', *International Studies in Sociology of Education*, 18, 2 (2008), pp.133–46; Helen May, *School Beginnings: A Nineteenth-Century Colonial Story*, Wellington, 2005.

44 On 28 March 2009, I received the following e-mail from Sue Giddings, Archives & Local Studies Assistant, London Borough of Sutton Local Studies Centre: 'Thank you for your e-mail regarding the marriage of Samuel J. C. Retter and Jane Philp. I can tell you that on the 1st January 1836 they both signed their own names in the register. We hold the original registers and microfiche copies of the Cheam parish registers 1538–1952.'

45 Horn, *Life and Labour*, p.122.

46 Vincent, p.10.

47 ibid., p.17.

48 ibid., p.37.

49 Pritchard, *Portrait of Ham*, p.79.

50 Nigel Hall, 'The Materiality of Letter Writing: A Nineteenth Century Perspective', in David Barton and Nigel Hall, eds, *Letter Writing as a Social Practice*, Amsterdam and Philadelphia, 1999,

pp.83–109.

51 Fitzpatrick, p.viii.

52 ibid., p.485.

53 Barbara Kay of Auckland provided Pritchard with this transcript, which is copied in Pritchard, *The 1841 Emigrants*, pp.51–52.

54 The digital copy reproduced in the appendix to this paper was sent to me by Barbara Hindle-Owen, now resident in Madrid, and I thank her for it. She writes: 'My uncle Charles Hindle showed me the letter in the late 1980's (it was found in my grandmother's belongings when she died). I don't have the original — which possibly is in my cousin's possession . . . but luckily I was given a photocopy years ago, which I reproduce here in PDF. It is a most endearing letter, which brought tears to my eyes on reading it. I do hope that the original has been carefully preserved over the years, as it was in a rather fragile state when I last saw it!' (e-mail: Hindle-Owen to Middleton, 27 February 2009). In days before the availability of scanners, Hindle-Owen had supplied Barbara Kay (Pritchard's informant) with a typed transcript from this photocopy. Digital enhancement has made it possible for me to decipher most of the missing phrases in the transcription supplied to Pritchard, who wrote that the 'question marks had been added by a relative either to draw attention to something that could not be understood or where the writing was illegible'. Pritchard, *The 1841 Emigrants,* p.52.

55 Fitzpatrick, p.486.

56 ibid., p.487.

57 Samuel and Jane Retter, 'Letter from Wellington, May 15, 1844', NZJ, 18 January 1845, p.21.

58 Fitzpatrick, p.495.

59 ibid., p.501.

60 Stanley, p.212.

61 Erickson, p.9.

62 David A. Gerber, 'Acts of Deceiving and Withholding in Immigrant Letters: Personal Identity and Self-Representation in Personal Correspondence', *Journal of Social History*, 39, 2 (2005), p.318.

63 ibid.

64 Pritchard, *The 1841 Emigrants*, p.57. There were also two sisters, Jemima and Martha, who were not mentioned in Jane's surviving letters. See also the Retter family tree created by Michael Retter of Ashurst as publicly available on the ancestry.com site.

65 Samuel and Jane Retter, 'Letter from Wellington, May 15, 1844', NZJ, 18 January 1845, p.21.

66 Erickson, p.5.

67 S. Retter and J. Retter, 'Extract of a Letter from Wellington, 8 October 1844', NZJ, 15 February 1845, p.6.

68 Erickson, p.9.

69 The uncertainty over Māori land claims had slowed the rate of capital investment; trade had diminished and money was scarce. See Temple, pp.230–1, 250–1, 300–10, 359–69.

70 The acre (and later two acres) was in Pitt St, Wade's Town (Wadestown today). Louis Ward, *Early Wellington*, facsimile ed., Wellington, 1928, p.313.

71 Reductions in the wages of male labourers were also made in New Plymouth at this time: Dalziel, 'Popular Protest', p.23.

72 Paraphrased from Dorothy Smith, 'Institutional Ethnography', in T. May, ed., *Qualitative Research in Action*, London, 2002, p.18.

73 S. Retter and J. Retter, 'Extract of a Letter from Wellington, 8 October 1844', NZJ, 15 February 1845, p.6.

74 Pritchard, *The 1841 Emigrants*, p.14.

75 Gibbons, p.41.

76 S. Retter and J. Retter, 'Extract of a Letter from Wellington, 8 October 1844', NZJ, 15 February 1845, p.6.

77 Pritchard, *The 1841 Emigrants*, p.78.

78 J. Hill and M. James, 'Swing Riots in Surrey', in M. Holland, ed., *Swing Unmasked: The Agricultural Riots of 1830 to 1832 and Their Wider Implications*, London, 2005, pp.26–61.

79 M. Holland, 'The Captain Swing Project', in Holland, ed., *Swing Unmasked*, pp.1–25.

80 Arnold, p.19.

81 Horn, *Life and Labour*, pp.26–46.

82 Pritchard, *Portrait of Ham*, p.57.

83 Edward Gibbon Wakefield to Charles Torlesse, 12 May 1837, in *Copies of Letters from Edward Gibbon Wakefield and Members of his Family, 1815–1853*, Add. 35261 ff.75, British Library.

84 Erik Olssen, 'Wakefield and the Scottish Enlightenment, with Particular Reference to Adam Smith and his Wealth of Nations', in Friends of the Turnbull Library, eds, *Edward Gibbon Wakefield and the Colonial Dream: A Reconsideration*, Wellington, 1997, pp.47–66; Smith, p.45.

85 John Martin, '"A Small Nation on the Move": Wakefield's Theory of Colonisation and the Relationship between State and Labour in the Mid-Nineteenth Century', in *Edward Gibbon Wakefield and the Colonial Dream*, p.110.

86 Pat Moloney, 'Savagery and Civilization: Early Victorian Notions', NZJH, 35, 2 (2001), p.162.

87 Wakefield to Torlesse, 12 May 1837.

88 Olssen, 'Wakefield and the Scottish Enlightenment', p.73.

89 'New Zealand Land Company', *New Zealand Gazette* (NZG), 2 May 1840, p.1.

90 'New Zealand Company', NZG, 12 December 1840, p.1.

91 'List of original one-acre sections in the town of Wellington, and their purchasers', in Ward, pp.191–206. On 23 October 2008 I received an e-mail from Charles Kidd, editor of deBrett's Peerage, and I thank him for his assistance. He informed me that Dudley Sinclair was the eldest son of Lady Catherine Camilla Sinclair, née Tollemache. 'Mr Sinclair' is referred to in several of the letters.

92 Dudley Sinclair emigrated to Wellington in 1839 and served as a contact for his uncle's business. He was part of Edward Jerningham Wakefield's immediate circle, but fell out of favour when he 'deserted' Wellington, sold all his land and moved to the new capital in Auckland as a land speculator. Edward Jerningham Wakefield, *Adventure in New Zealand*, facsimile ed., London, 1845. Sinclair wrote letters to his Uncle Algernon and the NZJ published 'Copy of a letter from Mr D. Sinclair to his uncle, February 9th 1842', NZJ, 23 July 1842, p.7.

93 Dalziel, 'Emigration and Kinship', p.19 discussed the influence of wealthy landowners and others involved with the Plymouth Company on villagers' decisions to emigrate.

94 'Regulations for Labourers Wishing to Emigrate to New Zealand', NZG, 21 April 1839, p.7.

95 'New Zealand Land Company', NZG, 2 May 1840, p.1.

96 'Regulations for Labourers Wishing to Emigrate to New Zealand', NZG, 21 April 1839, p.7.

97 William Wakefield, 'To the Secretary of the New Zealand Company', Wellington, 8 June 1841, NZC 3/1, Archives New Zealand, Wellington (ANZ).

98 Edward Gibbon Wakefield to his father, 22 October 1841, Correspondence of E.G. Wakefield, mainly relating to 1815–1853, Copies, Add. 35261, British Library. Emphasis in this and other extracts in the originals.

99 ibid.

100 Temple, p.145.

101 ibid., p.195.

102 I. Ward Esq. to Col. Wakefield, 10 February 1840, NZC 102/1 (No. 41), ANZ.

103 Six of the eight NZJ letters attributed to members of the sponsored group from Ham, and the letter from the Tollemache brothers' nephew Dudley Sinclair, were published during Chapman's editorship. William Dew's fourth letter (dated 9 July 1843) and the two attributed to Jane and Samuel Retter (written 15 May and 8 October 1844) appeared in the *Journal* in 1845, two years after Chapman's departure. Despite the change in editorship, the flavour and the mission of the NZJ remained unchanged. In 1843, some of the letters published during Chapman's tenure were reprinted as a book, *Letters From Settlers and Labouring Emigrants, in the New Zealand Company's Settlements of Wellington, Nelson and New Plymouth, from February 1842 to January 1843*. In this were reprints of four of the five letters the NZJ had attributed to Ham emigrants during this period — two of William Dew's three, the single surviving letter from Charles Brown and one by John Philps.

104 'The New Zealand Journal Has Ceased to Exist', *New Zealand Spectator and Cook's Strait Guardian*, 9 April 1851, p.3.

105 Records of a testimonial presentation to Mr H.S. Chapman for his work on the New Zealand Journal, MS-Papers-8670-041, Alexander Turnbull Library, Wellington (ATL).

106 Erickson, p.4.

107 'Prospectus of the New Zealand Journal', NZG, 4 July 1840, p.4.

108 Patrick Day, *The Making of the New Zealand Press: A Study of the Organizational and Political Concerns of New Zealand Newspaper Controllers 1840–1880*, Wellington, 1990.

109 'Port Nicholson Exchange Room and Public Library', *New Zealand Gazette and Wellington Spectator*, 26 December 1840, p.3.

110 H.S. Chapman, 'Letter to His Aunt', Wellington, 31 August 1840, in Chapman, Eichelbaum and Rosenberg Families' Papers, MS-Group-0754, ATL.

111 'Our Journal', NZJ, 11 October 1845.

112 Revans to Chapman, 27 June 1841, in S. Revans, *Copies of Letters from Samuel Revans, vol 2,* p.138, QMS-1687, ATL.

113 Revans to Chapman, 12 June 1840, in S. Revans, *Copies of Letters from Samuel Revans, vol 1,* p.50, QMS-1687, ATL.

114 *New Zealand Gazette and Port Nicholson Spectator*, 22 May 1841, p.2.

115 I. Ward, 'Respecting the New Zealand Journal and Mr Ward's Pamphlet with Recommendation to Frequent Correspondence', NZC 102/1 (No 41), 1840, ANZ.

116 Macdonald, p.xv.

117 William Dew, 'Copy of a Letter From William Dew to His Brother, Port Nicholson Nov 7 1841', NZJ, 1 May 1842, p.103.

118 Gerber, 'Acts of deceiving', p.323.

119 Revans to Chapman, 1 January 1841, in *Copies of Letters, Vol 1*, p.64.

120 Revans to Chapman, 3 June 1842, in *Copies of Letters, Vol 2*, p.176.

121 Stanley, p.208.

122 Tollemache Family Correspondence, 1847–1872, Micro-MS-0960, ATL. Also discussed in Pritchard, *The 1841 Emigrants*. Thanks to Lord Sudely, a Tollemache descendant, for sending me a photocopy of this correspondence.

123 Jolly and Stanley, p.101.

124 Stanley, p.203.

125 Gerber, 'The Immigrant Letter', p.49.

126 ibid., p.48.

127 Fitzpatrick, p.485.

128 Evelyn Pritchard's transcribed version of this was: 'Please to give my kind respects to Gridly and let him see this letter and my brother Henry Retter (?).' Pritchard, *The 1841 Emigrants*, p.52.

129 Stanley, p.212.

130 Dalziel, 'Popular Protest', p.14.

131 H.S. Chapman, editorial comment, NZJ, 1 May 1842. This further supports the argument that the Tollemaches were the conduit between the recipients of the letters and the NZJ's editor.

132 William Dew, 'From William Dew to His Brother, Port Nicholson Nov 7 1841', NZJ, 1 May 1842, p.103.

133 William Dew, 'From William Dew to His Brother, Mr James Dew, 2 October 1842', in *Letters from Settlers*, p.36.

134 William Dew, 'From William Dew to His Brother, Mr James Dew, Ham, Surrey, 25th December, 1842', in *Letters from Settlers*, p.60.

135 'New Zealand Land Company', NZG, 2 May 1840, p.1.

136 John Philps, 'From J. Philps, Brickmaker, Wellington, December 12, 1842', in *Letters from Settlers*, p.54

137 Fitzpatrick, p.565.

138 William Dew, 'From William Dew to His Brother, Mr James Dew, 2 October 1842', in *Letters from Settlers*, p.37.

139 ibid.

140 Moloney, p.160.

141 'Aborigines of New Zealand (From Brown's New Zealand)', NZJ, 27 September 1845, p.249.

142 Charles Brown, 'From Charles Brown, Bricklayer, to the Hon. A. Tollemache Ham, Surrey, Wellington, 10 October, 1842', in *Letters from Settlers*, p.45.

143 William Dew, 'From William Dew to His Brother, Port Nicholson Nov 7 1841', NZJ, 1 May 1842, p.103.

144 Samuel and Jane Retter, 'Letter from Wellington, May 15, 1844', NZJ, 18 January 1845, p.21.

145 Temple, p.195.

146 ibid., pp.230–1, 250–1, 300–10, 359–69; Ward, *Early Wellington*, pp.131–9; E. Jerningham Wakefield, pp.506–11.

147 William Dew, 'From William Dew to His Brother, Mr James Dew, 2nd October, 1842', in *Letters from Settlers,* p.36.

148 Charles Brown, 'From Charles Brown, Bricklayer, to the Hon. A. Tollemache Ham, Surrey, Wellington, 10 October, 1842', in *Letters from Settlers*, p.45.

149 This phrase is taken from the unpublished letter.

150 S. Retter, and J. Retter, 'Extract of a Letter from Wellington, 8 October 1844', NZJ, 15 February 1845, p.6.

151 Olssen, p.73.
152 Fitzpatrick, p.486.
153 Gerber, 'Acts of deceiving,' p.318.
154 Stanley, p.214.
155 Gibbons, p.41.
156 Further information about the lives of the Ham emigrants and their descendants can be found in Pritchard, *The 1841 Emigrants*. A detailed family tree of the Retters is available through libraries subscribing to ancestry.com websites. Samuel Retter died in April 1862 at the age of 64. Jane Retter lived as a widow for 38 years. Born in 1811, she died in 1900 in Wellington, aged 89. In 1893, at the age of 82, Jane signed the Women's Suffrage Petition.