

A BRIEF HISTORY OF HAIKU IN NEW ZEALAND



FOREWORD¹

New Zealand is a country of islands—southernmost of the main islands is **Stewart Island** (Rakiura), famed for its oysters, mutton birds and fishing; the South Island (Te Waipounamu), with its snow-capped Southern Alps, forests, wildlife, farming, mining, greenstone (jade) and wild West Coast to the North Island (Te Ika-a-Maui) with its volcanoes, cities, sandy beaches and beautiful coastline. The abundant variety of our **landscape** has inspired poets and writers for generations and the tales of the islands include the oral tradition of the Maori (*tangata whenua*, or people of the land).

In 2014 New Zealand's population stands at just over 4 million people, and only a handful of these are poets who write haiku.

The movement of people and ideas from overseas countries to these islands is one of the givens of history. It is not surprising that haiku has also travelled on these journeys. These are haiku that inhabit small literary magazines and websites and of writers whose work does not always reach general readers. For some writers and editors who do find commercial audiences, it is a pleasure to appeal to readers who are curious about what is happening in the art of haiku. They create a small community of those who want to see haiku move and flourish.

In a small country such as New Zealand, it is extraordinary that, as part of their Millennium Project, the rural town of Katikati in the Bay of Plenty initiated the Katikati Haiku Pathway under the instigation of Catherine Mair. It is the largest collection of engraved haiku boulders outside Japan and the only haiku pathway in the Southern Hemisphere. To read more see “Katikati Haiku Pathway” below.

1. Authored by Patricia Prime.

Writers like John O'Connor, Cyril Childs, Ernest Berry, Owen Bullock, Catherine Mair and Sandra Simpson have attracted much attention over the years, but new writers are arising every year, fostered by publication, journals, the internet, conferences and competitions. The haiku culture involves new modes of creation, perception and communication: it pushes back the boundaries — personal, national and experimental.

The emotional and intellectual experiences in creation and reading changes each time a new work is produced and engaged. It is important that haiku are effective and pleasurable and afford new ways of seeing the world around us. That is the delight in learning from art.

FIRST STEPS²

Haiku-like images have been common in New Zealand poetry from about the 1950s. These were mainly due to the international influence of Imagist poets like Ezra Pound and Amy Lowell, who had been motivated in part by an early awareness of Japanese poetry. However, “establishment” poets such as A R D (Rex) Fairburn (1904–57) and the highly influential R A K Mason (1905–71) considered haiku to be “madmen’s poems”³ and other mainstream poets, such as Hone Tuwhare (1922–2008)⁴ who wrote haiku and called them such, didn’t much understand the form.

A few New Zealand poets, though, did have more direct contact with haiku and began to explore the genre in their own work. Three of these were Ruth Dallas, Rupert Glover and Howard Dengate. Unfortunately, we have no indication when these poets wrote their haiku, only when they published them.

Ruth Dallas (born Ruth Mumford, 1919–2008) first encountered haiku in 1937 at age 18 while reading Japanese poetry, and later in life she explored the genre more fully. If not the first, she was one of the first New Zealanders to write haiku. Many of her longer poems also contain haiku-like images.⁵

From the early 1960s an interest in Asian philosophies began to steer her already concise verse towards even greater “brevity and density.”⁶ Her 1968 book *Shadow Show* contains an imagistic poem, “On the Plains,” that, as John O’Connor rightly points out, starts with a three-line stanza that could be called a fine haiku:

The lark sings
And falls
Silent.⁷

2. Authored by Cyril Childs and Sandra Simpson. Cyril’s writing is taken from a section within the introduction to the *New Zealand Haiku Anthology* (NZ Poetry Society, 1993), subtitled “haiku in New Zealand.” That section has been used extensively here.

3. Conversation with John O’Connor in Christchurch, February 24, 2014.

4. See an example of a Hone Tuwhare haiku [here](#), accessed June 27, 2014.

5. <http://www.bookcouncil.org.nz/writers/dallasruth.html>, accessed February 2, 2014.

6. <http://nzbooks.org.nz/1999/literature/out-of-emptiness-breaking-janet-wilson>, accessed November 27, 2014.

7: <http://www.nzepc.auckland.ac.nz/features/dallas/dallas31.asp>, accessed February 2, 2014.

But the first time Dallas publishes poems she calls haiku is in her 1976 collection *Walking on the Snow*. This, O'Connor says, has "four so-called haiku and, although she doesn't call it so, 'Snow' is a haiku sequence."

She published her first poem in 1946 and her last collection, which contained haiku, in 2006.⁸ Dallas lost an eye in an accident at the age of 15 and, according to the author's note from her *Collected Poems* (University of Otago Press, 2000), in her later years, as her vision began to fail, the brevity of haiku allowed her to work easily without writing.

picasso print
cut to fit
her frame⁹

Rupert Glover didn't mention the term "haiku" in his pamphlet *Dragonfly Wings* (1971), but published eight of them, including (in 5-7-5)

The water is still,
The reeds are still, no movement
But dragonfly wings¹⁰

"To be honest I don't remember how I came across haiku," Glover says. "It would have been from Japanese translations but I can't recall where I saw them or who had written the originals."¹¹

Howard Dengate's "Edited computer-haiku" (*Morepork* 3, 1977) consists of 15 poems in one-line haiku form, though the images lack the clarity and spirit of haiku, as in

The saucepan flits / to the loving darkness / shower leaping.¹²

Two years later Outrigger Press (Auckland, New Zealand) published his *Incense and other Ecstasies* containing several haiku of much higher quality, including:

Behind this tree
in the mist
hides the forest

Stormbound under a rock
and for amusement
this drip! !¹³

8. Information supplied by John O'Connor in a letter dated January 20, 2014.

9. From *The Joy of a Ming Vase* by Ruth Dallas (Otago University Press, 2006).

10. By Cyril Childs from the introduction to the *New Zealand Haiku Anthology* (NZ Poetry Society, 1993).

11. Rupert Glover in an email, November 10, 2013.

12. By Cyril Childs from the introduction to the *New Zealand Haiku Anthology* (NZ Poetry Society, 1993).

13. *Ibid.*

O'Connor (1949–2015) was another who was developing an active interest in haiku in the late 1970s and early 1980s, recalling that he is likely to have written his first haiku in 1973 but that it was “tossed away” and the form not looked at again until 1978/79.

“I believe I was the first person in New Zealand to write a number of good haiku,” he says.¹⁴

The main impetus to the development and practice of haiku in New Zealand stemmed from an initiative by the New Zealand Poetry Society towards the end of the 1980s. Spurred by the enthusiasm, encouragement and commitment of committee member David Drummond, an annual haiku competition and anthology were instituted in 1987, with a children’s haiku contest added in 1997.¹⁵ (Read more about Drummond in the people section.)

“I believe Cyril Childs wrote his first haiku in 1990 while in Japan,” O'Connor says. But for people like Kon Kuiper and Chris Moise, haiku was more of a metaphor.”

Christodoulos (Chris) Moisa (a former secondary school head of art) and Koenraad Kuiper (Professor Emeritus in Linguistics, University of Canterbury) were poets “going their own way with haiku” (ie, outside the New Zealand Poetry Society) in the late 1980s and early 1990s.¹⁶

“I think I’ve done a thorough apprenticeship in the craft [of poetry] experimenting with different forms from sonnet, haiku, ballad to blues etc,” Chris Moise said in an interview in 2000. “The diversity of style has been seen as a weakness despite several critics pointing out that in the work there is a cohesive purpose.”¹⁷

Petals of prunus
reflect light
the house
shakes
—Koenraad Kuiper¹⁸

in the grip of illness
dreams are agile
sparrows
—Christodoulos E G Moisa¹⁹

“With Cyril’s work on the [*New Zealand Haiku*] anthology in 1992 and having it published the following year there was a real coming-together of the people who were writing haiku in New Zealand,” O'Connor says.

14. From a conversation with John O'Connor in Christchurch, February 24, 2014.

15. By Cyril Childs from the introduction to the *New Zealand Haiku Anthology* (NZ Poetry Society, 1993).

16. From a conversation with John O'Connor in Christchurch, February 24, 2014.

17. <http://www.moisa-artist.com/ONE%20EYED%20PRESS%201.htm>, accessed July 14, 2014.

18. Information supplied by John O'Connor in a letter dated January 20, 2014.

19. *Ibid.*

“We had the 1993 anthology, the annual anthology for the Poetry Society contests, the contests themselves and the Katikati Haiku Pathway—and they’re all important . . . but they didn’t come out of nothing.”²⁰

The second issue of *Kokako* (2004) contained a “New Zealand Haiku Timeline” put together by editor Bernard Gadd (1935-2007) which began with the 1971 Glover pamphlet and includes:

- 1979: Publication of the collection *Steps of the Sun* (Caxton Press) by Ruth Dallas
- 1988: A New Zealand Poetry Society haiku reading at the Japanese embassy in Wellington
- 1990: R Takeshita delivers a lecture on haiku in Palmerston North [he/she is likely to have been working at Massey University with David Drummond, see Contests below]
- 1991: Japanese poet and editor **Kazuo Sato** lectures on haiku in Christchurch²¹
- 1995: *SPIN* journal issues *winterSPIN* with an emphasis on haiku and short poems (see more in Journals below)
- 1997: Haiku Sounds conference (see more in Gatherings below)
- 2000: Katikati Haiku Pathway opens (see more below).

To this list may be added

- 1995: Visit of Kenichi Ikemoto to Ernie Berry in Picton. Mr Ikemoto was in New Zealand on a research trip for his thesis but wanted to meet a New Zealander who wrote haiku. In a newspaper report, Ernie said it was the first time he had met someone else who wrote haiku.²²
- 2000: Weekend haiku workshop in Picton which saw 20 students tutored by Jim Kacian of the United States, then editor of *Frogpond*, the journal of the Haiku Society of America. Discussion about forming an association of New Zealand haiku writers also took place.²³
- 2005: First publication of online newsletter *Haiku NewZ* (see more below).

HAIKU CONTESTS²⁴

According to Cyril Childs in his introduction to the *New Zealand Haiku Anthology* (NZ Poetry Society, 1993), the main impetus to the development of haiku in New Zealand came from an initiative by the New Zealand Poetry Society in the latter half of the 1980s. This arose largely from the enthusiasm, encouragement and commitment of David Drummond (1938-1990).

An annual haiku competition and anthology (published initially by Drummond’s Nagare Press in Palmerston North) were instituted and from the 1987 competition, 92 haiku selected from

20. From a conversation with John O’Connor in Christchurch, February 24, 2014.

21. http://www.haiku-hia.com/snk_satou_en.html, accessed November 27, 2014.

22. Undated clipping supplied by Ernie Berry, December 2014.

23. From notes by Barry Morrell, dated October 3, 2000.

24. Authored by Sandra Simpson and Cyril Childs. Cyril’s writing is from his introduction to the *New Zealand Haiku Anthology* (NZ Poetry Society, 1993) and his introduction to the *Second New Zealand Haiku Anthology* (NZPS, 1998).

more than 600 entries were published in *A Fall of Leaves*. Writers from five countries were represented—Australia, Canada, Japan, the United States and New Zealand. In 1993, close to 1000 entries were received from 115 writers in eight countries (those for 1987 plus Croatia, England and Romania); and over 600 entries came from New Zealand.

Since 1990, the best entries in the haiku and the general sections of the competition—the winners and selected others—have been published in an annual anthology (under the imprint of the New Zealand Poetry Society since 1992). Since 2005 (with the exception only of the 2011 anthology) editors have served for two years each.

In 1997 the society, for a long time with the support of the Asia 2000 Foundation of New Zealand, included a section for youth haiku (17 and under) in the annual competition.

In 2014 there were 589 entries in the adult section with authors coming from six countries (Britain counted as one). There were 355 entries (276 primary/intermediate; 79 secondary) in the junior, lower-than-usual numbers in the latter because the contest wasn't specifically promoted, as usual, to targeted schools.²⁵

For some years the annual contests had Japanese judges but John O'Connor recalls pushing the NZPS to use an English-speaking judge with Elizabeth Searle Lamb invited to judge the contest in about 1994.²⁶

Other well-known writers to have judged the contest include Francine Porad, William Higginson (US), Kazuo Sato (Japan) and Janice Bostok (Australia).²⁷ Since the year 2000 the judges of the NZPS Haiku Contest have invariably been New Zealanders.

For a list of winners of the Jeanette Stace Memorial Award (made since 2008), please go to People & Poems below.

The Katikati Haiku Contest has been held biennially since 2000 with a senior and junior section. Although entries come from around the world, the contest is used as an opportunity to educate the local populace about haiku and the Katikati Haiku Pathway Committee encourages everyone to “have a go.” The competition is also a fundraiser for the pathway project.

The New Zealand journal *Kokako* held its first haiku contest in 2003 with then-editor Bernard Gadd saying “*Kokako* has decided to run a haiku (and senryu) contest for New Zealanders since New Zealand doesn't have its own haiku contest. We're sorry to exclude non-Kiwi readers (though expatriate Kiwis may enter) but point out that the NZ Poetry Society runs both an annual International Haiku and a Poetry contest.”²⁸ Since 2007 the contest has been open to poets of any nationality.

25. Figures from Laurice Gilbert, competition secretary, in an email dated July 2, 2014.

26. From a conversation with John O'Connor in Christchurch, February 24, 2014.

27. From the paper, “Haiku 45 South,” by Cyril Childs delivered at the fourth Haiku Pacific Rim Conference (Terrigal, Australia) in September 2009 and published in *Wind over Water*, the Conference Proceedings.

27. From *Kokako* 1 (2003).

Kokako's first tanka contest was held in 2006 and the two contests are now held on alternate years.²⁹

GATHERINGS³⁰

Although there are some places in New Zealand where a number of haiku poets live reasonably close together, for the most part writers are scattered far and wide. The national gatherings are enjoyable occasions for those who may be the only person with an interest in haiku in their particular city or area—it's a chance to put faces to names, establish friendships, learn and extend our skill sets.

Haiku Sounds, a weekend-long workshop for writers, took place in Picton in October 1997, the country's first such national gathering. This workshop, devoted specifically to haiku and its related forms, brought together 25 New Zealand haiku writers, many for the first time. It was organised by Ernest Berry under the auspices of the New Zealand Poetry Society and featured Janice Bostok of Australia as guest speaker and a visiting Japanese poet (unnamed in the newspaper report). Ernie received funding from Arts Marlborough and NZPS.³¹

A weekend haiku workshop was held at Queen Charlotte College in Picton at the end of September, 2000. Twenty participants from around New Zealand and including Janice Bostok, were tutored by Jim Kacian of the United States, then editor of *Frogpond*, the journal of the Haiku Society of America. The group read and discussed haiku, workshoped their own poems, had a ginko and kukai, discussed establishing an association of New Zealand haiku writers, and also tackled the vexed topic of a haiku definition.³²

Janice made a return visit across the Tasman Sea in 1998 when she attended the Into the Light Poetry Festival in Tauranga (organised by Sandra Simpson and Catherine Mair) and tutored a class on linked verse.³³ The festival was financially supported by TrustPower and Creative Communities.

The Windrift Haiku Group of Wellington hosted the first Haiku Festival Aotearoa in 2003 with out-of-town participants staying at the conference venue, the Stella Maris Centre in Seatoun. The key organisers were Jeanette Stace (1917–2006), Nola Borrell and Karen Peterson Butterworth. The festival featured workshops, speakers, a performance of haiku selected by Cyril Childs and read to specially written cello music, while the festival's final session provided the impetus to establish an online presence in the form of [Haiku NewZ](#).

Members of the Small White Teapot group in Christchurch offered to host the next HFA at that final session in Wellington and did so in 2008 at the Bishop Julius Hall (University of

29. Notice in *Kokako* 5 (September 2006).

30. Authored by Sandra Simpson.

31. From undated information supplied by Ernie Berry, December 2014.

32. From notes by Barry Morrell, dated October 3, 2000.

33. A *kasen renga* written at this session is likely to have been New Zealand's first. See Notable Firsts below for full details.

Canterbury). The major event at this festival was the launch of *the taste of nashi*, the third New Zealand haiku anthology (edited by Nola Borrell and Karen Peterson Butterworth, Windrift, 2008). *the taste of nashi* contains more than 200 haiku by 60 poets. One poet from Australia attended this HFA.³⁴

The third HFA was held in Tauranga at the Greerton Motor Inn in 2012, organised by Margaret Beverland and Sandra Simpson. This was the first HFA to feature an overseas speaker—Jim Kacian of the United States, who held two master classes, one on haiku and one on haibun. Among the attendees were five poets from Australia. The programme also included a visit to the Haiku Pathway in Katikati.³⁵ Financial support came from several funders including Legacy Trust, Tauranga Rotary and Creative Communities, as well as seed money from the organisers of the two previous events.

Four New Zealand poets attended the Haiku Pacific Rim conference in Terrigal, New South Wales, Australia in 2009³⁶ and in 2013³⁷ three New Zealanders were among those at the Haiku North America conference in Long Beach, California, as far as anyone knows, the first time New Zealanders had been represented at that biennial gathering.

It should be noted that, by and large, the opportunities to travel overseas to haiku conferences are at the poet's own expense with little, if any, public or arts funding available.

GROUPS

a: Windrift—Nola Borrell and Karen Peterson Butterworth

Wellington's haiku group has been travelling for about 16 years. It was launched after Ernest Berry organised the Haiku Sounds 1997 Picton gathering. That had Australian haiku matriarch Jan Bostok as guest speaker. Afterwards, Ernie invited interested poets to a hotel in Wellington to discuss forming a haiku group. There the name Windrift was decided.

At first, we met quarterly, with host/convenor Ernie coming with his wife, Triska, crossing Cook Strait from Picton. Poets' haiku were attached anonymously to a branched pot plant—the haiku tree—taken off one by one and discussed. Ernie designed flourishing multi-type invitations to “haikuing, fat chewing, funning . . . from high noon—till we drop.” We were asked to bring an original poem for the haiku tree, and write haiku using a phrase such as “roadside shrine,” “framed by the window,” or “patches of snow.” Haiku were “plucked, applauded and critiqued before the writer confessed.”

In about September 1999 the venue shifted to the home of Jeanette Stace, and Linzy Forbes became the invitation writer. Since Jeanette's death (2006) members have taken turns to host meetings.

34. Read more at <http://www.poetrysociety.org.nz/HA2008>, accessed December 6, 2014.

35. Read more at <http://www.poetrysociety.org.nz/HFA2012>, accessed December 6, 2014.

36. Read more at <http://www.poetrysociety.org.nz/HPR2009>, accessed December 6, 2014.

37. Read more at <http://www.poetrysociety.org.nz/hna13wrap>, accessed December 6, 2014.

Our practice, inherited from founder Ernie, is to email invitations to each workshop that invite all sorts of sensory and seasonal / New Zealand *kigo* and haiku sequences, with some branching out to tanka, haibun, even *renga*. Members are asked to bring news, competitions, articles, magazines and books. Frequently, invitations include “star” haiku as well as news. Ernie is a lively and constant email member.

How do people find out about us? We have developed the habit of writing a short account for *a fine line* (the NZ Poetry Society magazine and before that the NZPS newsletter). The call for a reporter generally is met by silence — or a groan — but someone always rises to the occasion.

We boosted our profile by holding a national conference, Haiku Festival Aotearoa, in March 2005 at Stella Maris in Wellington and buoyed by that success, Windrift launched into the lengthy project of collating and editing *the taste of nashi* (2008, edited by Nola Borrell and Karen P Butterworth), a collection of New Zealand haiku from the previous 10 years.

The group has been involved in Wellington area events such as Ikebana International 2006, haiku workshops at Hutt-Minoh House in Lower Hutt, and a haiku contest at the 2009 Festival of Japan, part of an Asian Festival organised by the Wellington City Council. We have a small “library” which is housed in cardboard boxes, much of it a legacy of Jeanette, and added to from time to time.

Nola Borrell has been the group’s most constant influence following Ernie and Linzy’s leadership, taking on various roles as convener, secretary, treasurer, and initiator of Haiku Aotearoa and *the taste of nashi*. For several years she led Windrift in a triumvirate with Jeanette and Karen. Nola is also the group’s contact on the NZ Poetry Society website.

Windrift (and Ernie) built on haiku interest already stimulated by the 1993 and 1998 haiku anthologies edited by Cyril Childs, and the pioneer work of John O’Connor. Visits from overseas haiku poets help too and these have included visits from Claire and Patrick Gallagher, George Swede and Anita Krumins, all from North America.

b: Small White Teapot — Barbara Strang

The Small White Teapot Group started in 2001 after Jim Kacian’s visit to Christchurch as part of his world tour, when he encouraged local groups to get together.

Joanna Preston, Jeff Harpeng, Greeba Brydges-Jones, Helen Bascand, Judith Walsh, myself and others were among the early members. We met regularly once a month in a café which has now been demolished. Our name was inspired by the white teapots the café used.

In 2002 the group produced an anthology, *listening to the rain*, edited by Joanna Preston and Cyril Childs, which was Highly Commended in the Haiku Society of America’s annual Merit Book Awards.³⁸

In 2008 we organised the Haiku Festival Aotearoa, a conference for writers of haiku and related forms, at Bishop Julius Hall, Christchurch.

38. http://www.hsa-haiku.org/meritbookawards/merit-book_archive.htm, accessed December 10, 2014.

In 2014 we have 10 members and still meet once a month to share our haiku.

We continued through the period of the earthquakes that devastated parts of Christchurch in late 2010 and early 2011. Our venue was then Avebury House in Avonside. It required repairs because of quake damage, but has just reopened, beautifully restored. In 2014 we held our first meeting there since 2011.

c: Other

There are, or have been, some invitation-only haiku groups running, but efforts to establish a haiku group in Auckland—the country’s largest city—have, as yet, not been successful.

JOURNALS³⁹

a: *winterSPIN* / *Kokako*⁴⁰

Patricia Donnelly (who writes/wrote as pnw donnelly) was the Auckland-based editor of *SPIN*, a poetry journal published three times a year. Catherine Mair, who lives in Katikati, remarked to Donnelly it was a pity there wasn’t a publication for haiku in New Zealand and Donnelly’s reply was, “well, why don’t you do it.”

It was decided to dedicate the winter issue of 1995 to “haiku, senryu, renga, tanka and small poems,” on the advice of John O’Connor in Christchurch, who warned that haiku itself may have been too small a field in New Zealand at that time.

Donnelly organised the printing of *winterSPIN*, as the issue was renamed, with Mair taking over responsibility for its printing after that as the haiku edition became an annual publication.

Mair was guest editor of *winterSPIN* from 1995 until 2001, with Bernard Gadd (Auckland) helping out from 1998. “I had no computer skills when I started,” Mair says. “I had to learn everything.”

The first *winterSPIN* contained many of the names who have formed the backbone of haiku in New Zealand—Cyril Childs, Ernest Berry, Karen Peterson Butterworth, Tony Chad, John O’Connor, Patricia Prime, Jeanette Stace and Catherine Mair.

Mair’s own discovery of haiku began in the late 1980s when she showed some of her poetry to well-known children’s author Phyllis Johnston of Tauranga. Johnston introduced Mair to another children’s writer, Jean Bennett (Tauranga) who sent Mair information about haiku, thinking it might interest her because of the nature focus in her work. “It was the first time I had heard the word, haiku,” Mair recalls.

39. Authored by Sandra Simpson.

40. From a conversation with Catherine Mair, December 2013; other information from *winterSPIN-Kokako* journals.

Johnston meanwhile, had put Mair in touch with David Drummond and she had become involved with a postal “orbit” workshop co-ordinated by Drummond (for more on Drummond see the People section).

the hills are sitting
on my shoulders; it's a bare
powerfully still day

—Catherine Mair, published by David Drummond in the Katherine Mansfield Centennial issue of *SPIN* (October 1988, number 8).

Mair is delighted to have been the editor who published the first haiku by Ernest J Berry (then Picton, now Blenheim), a writer who has gone on to much international success.

Gadd and Patricia Prime took over as co-editors of *winterSPIN* from 2001 and in 2003 they took the bold step of breaking away—renaming the annual journal *Kokako* (after a native bird with a particularly melodious song). It began to appear twice a year from 2006.

In 2015 Prime continues as a co-editor. Other editors have been/are Bernie Gadd (2003–05, died 2007), Owen Bullock (2005–08), Joanna Preston (2008–12) and Margaret Beverland (2012–present).

b: *Valley Micropress*⁴¹

Micropress, a title and ethos founded in Australia by Gloria B Yates, began in New Zealand under the editorship of Kate O'Neill of Nelson who was vehement that it was to be a publication point for “popular poetry,” which she also described as “poetry people would read.”

Tony Chad of Lower Hutt became fascinated with haiku in the mid-1990s, when he first came across the form. In 1997 he received funding from Creative Communities to attend Haiku Sounds in Picton to take a workshop under the direction of Janice Bostok, Australia's leading haiku writer.

“I have been able to pass on some of what I learned there in workshops I have run myself, including at secondary schools and community centres,” he says.

And it was also in 1997 that O'Neill asked Chad, in a letter dated June 23, 1997, to establish what would ostensibly be a North Island edition of *Micropress*, while she continued with a South Island version. O'Neill, who had been living in Australia but was a New Zealander, had been publishing *Micropress* for 18 months at that stage.

“My association with *Micropress Yates* means we print each other's poems,” she wrote. “Poets submitting to either *Micro* know they are also giving permission to be published into the other.”

41. From information supplied by Tony Chad, December 2013.

Chad, who has been the only editor of *Valley Micropress*, decided not to label his edition “North Island,” but chose instead to use the name *Valley Micropress* to reflect a flavour of where he lived (the Hutt Valley, near Wellington). The first edition was published in November 1997 (Volume 1 Issue 1), and contained haiku by Pat Prime and others.

Valley Micropress is published 10 times a year and generally always contains some haiku and/or tanka, along with the occasional haibun. The South Island version is no longer produced.

Yates (1933?–2008) founded *Micropress* in Australia in 1996. She was slum-born in Britain and educated at Oxford and Edinburgh universities, thanks to scholarships. She was a teacher, poet and editor and once bred red cows just for their colour on a green hillside.⁴²

Micropress Australia is now known as *The Mozzie* (from *Micropress Oz*). *Valley Micropress* proclaims in every edition “Networking with *The Mozzie*” and includes poetry by Australians (not Japanese forms) and *Mozzie* contact details.⁴³

c: *a fine line*

The magazine of the New Zealand Poetry Society is published every 2 months, both in hard copy and online and is edited by Laurice Gilbert. The magazine includes a section called “haikai café” for the publication of haiku, senryu, tanka and haibun by NZPS members. Kirsten Cliff was the most recent selector, editing the section for 3 and a half years to the end of 2014.

a fine line also contains reports from the Windrift haiku group.

d: Other

A few other journals will consider haiku and occasionally print them—such as *Takabe* literary journal, a quarterly based in Christchurch, and *Poetry NZ* (Auckland).

Tauranga-based *Bravado*, which was published three times a year from November 2003 to July 2010,⁴⁴ often included haiku and related forms. *Bravado* 3 (November 2004) contained “The Elusive Haiku,” an article by Cyril Childs exploring the attempts to define the form.⁴⁵

HAIKU NEWZ WEBSITE⁴⁶

The website was established in 2005 as a direct result of the first Haiku Festival Aotearoa. Founding editor Sandra Simpson continues in the role to date.

Because there is no New Zealand haiku association, *Haiku NewZ* is an important tool in providing a focal point for the country’s haiku community. The site is updated as necessary

42. **Biographical information** from *Simply Haiku* vol 3 no 4 (winter 2005).

43. *Valley Micropress* 17:6 (July 2014).

44. Publishing dates from an email from former *Bravado* co-editor Jenny Argante, July 20, 2014.

45. Personal examination of *Bravado* 3.

46. Authored by Sandra Simpson.

and fully updated (the monthly article changed, competition listings reviewed, news added) once a month.

The site, which features several pages, provides information, both national and international, on events, competitions, groups and journals. As well, there is a collection of links to online resources, a monthly article, a showcase of New Zealand haiku poets and their work, a selection of favourite haiku and commentaries on them by writers from around the world, and other information.

Haiku NewZ is found on the New Zealand Poetry Society website, the society having offered a free home to the pages since *Haiku NewZ* was founded. The NZPS site itself is hosted and supported by Signify, a web company based in Wellington.

The *Haiku NewZ* pages also draw a significant number of readers from outside New Zealand and the site is regularly praised for its accuracy and comprehensiveness.

Visit *Haiku NewZ*.

HAIKU AS PUBLIC ART

a: Katikati Haiku Pathway—Sandra Simpson

The pathway was officially opened in June 2000, with 24 engraved river boulders, as one of New Zealand's Millennium Projects (its specially designed footbridge was dedicated as the sun rose on January 1, 2000). It is the only such pathway in the Southern Hemisphere, and the largest collection of "haiku stones" outside Japan.

The driving force behind the creation of the pathway was Catherine Mair, a well-known haiku poet, who has long links with Katikati and particularly the Highfields side of the land the pathway is on as it had been part of her family farm. When the hard decision came to sell the land, Catherine convinced the developer that the riverbank area of what was to become a housing subdivision should form a haiku pathway.

Her vision—also prompted by a chance remark from Australian poet Janice Bostok that she would like to see her words engraved into stone—coincided with a drive to reclaim the Uretara Stream for the town. The river had been a vital link between settlers and the outside world in the 1870s, but 120 years later the land around the river behind the main commercial area was a wasteland.

The pathway runs either side of the Uretara Stream and links the town's centre with the Highfields subdivision via the footbridge. The pathway has already been extended once and there are long-term plans to extend it further. The park-like setting, which includes trees, seats, and picnic tables, is also a popular venue for the town's annual Summer Twilight Concerts and fundraising was under way in 2014 to build a permanent stage in the park.

Another three haiku boulders were engraved in mid-2007, while a new entry sign, which features a haiku engraved on a metal plaque, was added in late 2008, bringing the total number of pathway project haiku to 31. The three boulders at The Landing, the site of the jetty where the town's first Ulster Irish stepped foot in their new home, were, in 2010, joined by nine new poem boulders, with one poem engraved on to an existing boulder on the main pathway and another added behind the library.

The 45 poems will soon be joined by at least one more as plans are under way in 2015 to install a new haiku.

Each of the boulder poems has been carefully selected to reflect its surroundings and Catherine hopes the pathway is a constant voyage of discovery, with visitors finding new dimensions each time they're there, depending on the hour, the weather, the season.

The Katkati Haiku Pathway Focus Committee was reformed in 2006 and acts as *kaitiaki* (guardian) of the pathway, working closely with the local council. For more information on the pathway and to view photographs, go [here](#).

[Read a 2005 interview](#) with Catherine about the pathway.

b: Japanese Memorial Garden, Featherston⁴⁷

Also known as the Peace Garden, this garden commemorates the Japanese dead from the so-called Featherston Incident of February 25, 1943 when Japanese POWs staged a sit-down strike at their camp—after a Japanese officer was wounded the unarmed POWs rioted and camp guards fired without being ordered to do so.

Sixty-eight Japanese died and 54 were injured. One New Zealand soldier was killed by ricochet and six were wounded.

The camp at Tauherenikau, 2km east of Featherston had been the largest military training camp in New Zealand in World War I. In 1942, at the request of the United States military, it was re-established as an internment camp for Japanese soldiers captured in the Pacific, mainly Guadalcanal.

Although a discussion about a “peace garden” at the site began in the 1970s, the Featherston Returned Services Association (RSA) always opposed the idea. In 1995 Nakamoto Toshio, head of Masterton's Juken Nissho timber mill, offered to finance a peace garden at the site but it still ran into local opposition. However, by 2000 the local council was supporting the plan and the garden opened in 2001.

Featuring 68 ornamental cherry trees in 2 rows, it also contains a plaque⁴⁸ with this haiku by

47. The information for this section has mostly been taken from the [Australian and New Zealand Environmental History website](#), which provides much more detail.

48. Go here for a photograph of the [plaque](#).

Matuso Basho (translated by K.J. Nysse of the Batavian Rubber Company in 1979):

behold the summer grass
all that remains of the
dreams of warriors

c: Poem in Queen Street, Auckland⁴⁹

In 2007 it was revealed that a public artwork in Auckland's main street — Queen Street — would use a “haiku” by well-known mainstream poet Hone Tuwhare. The Katikati Haiku Pathway Committee wrote to Auckland City Council, respectfully pointing out that the poem was not a haiku and asking if the title might be reconsidered.

Haiku

Stop
your snivelling
creek-bed:

come rain hail
and flood-water

laugh again

—Hone Tuwhare⁵⁰

Tuwhare was becoming frail—it was only a year before his death—and his caregivers acknowledged receipt of the letter, although no further correspondence was received by the Katikati committee.

The \$250,000⁵¹ artwork comprises a band of light set into the pavement alongside Tuwhare's poem engraved into the pavement (alongside the Civic Theatre).

The poem was used with no title and the words “creek-bed” were replaced with “Horotiu,” the name of a stream that has been paved over and now runs under Queen Street.

The artwork, it is fair to say, has not been a success. Glass artist Elizabeth McClure requested that her name be removed from it (saying she had acted as a conceptual artist only) and only a few months after installation the piece was requiring repair.⁵²

This “haiku” is discussed further in Mainstream Poets & Haiku below.

49. The artwork is discussed [here](#), accessed July 16, 2014.

50. An [obituary](#) and a [biography](#) for Hone Tuwhare, both accessed July 16, 2014.

51. http://www.nzherald.co.nz/nz/news/article.cfm?c_id=1&objectid=10457774, accessed December 10, 2014.

52. http://www.nzherald.co.nz/nz/news/article.cfm?c_id=1&objectid=10457536, accessed December 10, 2014.

PEOPLE & POEMS

a: Active & recently active writers

To read short biographies and haiku or tanka by contemporary and leading writers in New Zealand, go to the [Showcase](#) page of *Haiku NewZ*.

b: Special mention

Cyril Childs (1941–2012)⁵³

Thanks to Child's efforts in editing and publishing the first and second *New Zealand Haiku Anthologies* (in 1993 and 1998), the haiku community in this country not only began to coalesce, but to flourish to the point where several Kiwi writers—Childs included—are recognised internationally. His signature haiku style was one of simplicity and an easy way with language. Yet, he somehow managed the difficult trick of making each haiku worth reading several times to discover the depths hidden behind the mild exterior. Something like the man himself.

His haiku story began when living in Japan for 12 months from 1989. Childs had gone to Japan on a science research fellowship and came away with a love for Japanese culture, in particular haiku. He once commented that he thought the reason why a good number of people with science backgrounds write haiku is that it requires an almost-scientific close observation of the natural world.

A past-president of the NZ Poetry Society, Childs judged the society's haiku competition three times, and was co-judge of the Haiku Society of America's premier award in 2000. He was an advocate for Kiwi writers using their own language and culture in their poetry and selected Kiwi haiku for two years for publication in the New Zealand Poetry Society's newsletter, as well as being one of the four selectors who assisted the co-editors in production of the third NZ haiku anthology, published in 2008.

Childs published *Beyond the Paper Lanterns*, his own book of haiku, longer poems and haibun, as a limited edition in 2000—the first 100 copies went so quickly he had another 100 done. Sub-titled “a journey with cancer,” the book details the diagnosis, treatment and death of Vivienne, his first wife, as well as their two trips to Japan. A copy was carried to the summit of Mt Fuji in 2000 by American haiku poet Jerry Kilbride in a climb organised by the US Breast Cancer Fund.

Childs loved sport, particularly cricket and rugby, and was thrilled to have nine haiku selected for publication in the 2010 anthology of New Zealand cricket poetry, *A Tingling Catch*. Although he had largely put aside haiku for the last couple of years of his life to concentrate on the biography of his namesake uncle, Childs still had poems published regularly. Two of his haiku are engraved on boulders on the Katikati Haiku Pathway.

53. This section is taken from a tribute written by Sandra Simpson and read at the funeral of Cyril Childs in Dunedin on February 1, 2012. Read the full text [here](#).

Jeanette Stace (1917–2006)⁵⁴

Stace first became involved with the New Zealand Poetry Society in the mid-1980s, and in 1986 became secretary, and although “unofficial” by 1989 was back in harness by 1990. She was the society’s informal historian and for a long time her home address was the address for the Poetry Society.

In 1991 Stace took over the running of the International Poetry Competition for two years. She retired as secretary in September 1993 and was presented with a walnut plate for her work. However, Stace remained a committee member and by September 1994 she was back fully into the secretarial role, until replaced by Elizabeth Crayford.

Stace co-edited three Poetry Society anthologies: *Frosted Rails*, 1990 (with Harry Ricketts), *Balancing on Blue*, 1991 (with Bill Sewell), *Ginger Stardust*, 1992 (also with Bill Sewell). She finally resigned from the committee in 1999, at a mere 82 years old. She never complained about her age, or indeed confessed to it. In 2005 she judged the Junior Haiku Competition, and thoroughly enjoyed reading the more than 1000 entries, the highest ever received in this section.

As well as her long involvement with the NZPS, Stace published extensively in both New Zealand and overseas: she contributed to the two New Zealand haiku anthologies, and published her own collection, *Across The Harbour* (Bearfax Publications). She hosted the Windrift Haiku Group, and was a member of Zazen, an Australasian email haiku group started in July 2000. One of her haiku is engraved on a boulder on the Haiku Pathway in Katikati.

Stace helped organise the first Haiku Festival Aotearoa in 2005 and led a workshop (we didn’t know she was nearly 88). And in the week of her funeral one of her haiku was part of an Ikebana-Haiku-Bonsai Exhibition in Wellington and she had planned to help with a haiku workshop.

The year she died she won the international section of the Ito-en Oi Ocha New Haiku Contest and the [Japanese] company published the winning haiku on its bottles of green tea.⁵⁵

In 2008 her estate established a cash award in her name for the winners of the NZPS International Haiku Contest and the Junior Haiku Contest. To date Jeanette Stace Memorial Awards have been made to Erika Galpin (Nelson) and Charlotte Trevella (Christchurch) in 2008; Claire Knight (UK) and Sophia Frentz (Tauranga) in 2009; Greg Piko (Australia) and Amelia Stapley (Christchurch) in 2010; Quendryth Young (Australia) and Ashleigh Goh (Christchurch) in 2011; Katherine Raine (then Owaka) and Richard Ngo (Auckland) in 2012; Ernest J Berry (then Picton) and Harry Frentz (Tauranga) in 2013; Vanessa Proctor (Australia) and Amy Wells (Leeston) in 2014.⁵⁶

54. From a tribute written by Laurice Gilbert and Nola Borrell and read at the funeral of Jeanette Stace in October, 2006. Read the full text [here](#).

55. From the introduction by Jane Shallcrass to *Green Tea, Haiku & Other Poetry* by Jeanette Stace (Bearfax, 2007).

56. Details from Laurice Gilbert in an email dated December 9, 2014; and NZPS anthologies.

Kerrin P Sharpe

Kerrin P Sharpe is an independent self-employed teacher of creative writing, and a poet. She has been teaching haiku since about 2001 as part of her creative writing classes for young people aged from six to 18. Sharpe teaches at a number of schools around Christchurch, including St Andrew's College (where she is Writer in Residence), Rangī Ruru College, Selwyn House, Fendalton School, Paparua Street Primary and Ilam (secondary schools and primary schools).

She is a long-time supporter of the NZPS Junior Haiku Competition and submits on behalf of many of her students — and has a remarkable track record. “Their great performance in the competition always astounds me,” Sharpe says.⁵⁷ In 2014 all the prizes in the junior section, bar one commended, were won by her students.⁵⁸

However, she doesn't write haiku herself, although recalls Bill Manhire saying in the 1970s about her poetry that it was “haiku like.” “I think he meant it was very image based,” she says, “and it is.”⁵⁹ Sharpe's third book of (long form) poetry, *There's a Medical Name for This*, was published in August 2014.

Sharpe also occasionally teaches Western haiku to adults at the [Hagley Writers Institute](#) in Christchurch, part of a community college.

As well as Sharpe, Christchurch also has a [School for Young Writers](#) that teaches haiku. Among the staff is Doc Drumheller, a published haiku poet.

David Drummond⁶⁰

I became involved about the middle 1980s, attending New Zealand Poetry Society meetings. Among the members were David and Wilhemina Drummond, both on the staff of Massey University, who used to come regularly from Palmerston North for the monthly meetings [in Wellington].

David had developed an interest in haiku (perhaps through the Japanese department at Massey) [he was a science lecturer] and it was they who really got the NZPS competitions going with the two sections – general and haiku. It was David who organised the first international competition in the late 1980s, and he arranged publicity overseas. From the beginning entries were received from the US, Canada, Japan, Australia, and later Croatia and Romania.

57. From an email from Kerrin Sharpe, July 15, 2014

58. In a phone conversation with Kerrin Sharpe, September 6, 2014.

59. *Ibid.*

60. This report was written by Jeanette Stace. Her notes, written in 1999, were supplied by Nola Borrell, December 12, 2013. Stace died in 2006.

The Drummonds were also responsible for the publication of the early anthologies, in association with the Poetry Society through the small Nagare Press which they owned. Some of the distribution was done through Brick Row Press [editor Oz Kraus], of Auckland, and at this time there were two separate anthologies of competition results, a general one and a haiku one (one of the haiku ones, *A Fall of Leaves* won an award from the Haiku Society of America).

They appointed judges, etc (I don't know if they paid them, the first haiku judges came from the Japanese department at Massey), and were generally responsible for the competition and publication.

Sadly, David died in 1991⁶¹ and I, as secretary then, carried on the organisation of the competition which I did for two or three years, before the NZPS took over responsibility for publication of the anthology (by then just one combined version.)

David is listed as co-editor for four anthologies, 1988-1991 inclusive.

MAINSTREAM POETS & HAIKU

Ruth Dallas

As mentioned in the First Steps section poet Ruth Dallas (1919–2008) first encountered haiku in 1937 at age 18 and later in life explored the genre more fully. If not the first, she was one of the first New Zealanders to write haiku. Many of her longer poems also contain haiku-like images.

Dallas once said that the practice of haiku was “an excellent discipline, encouraging observation, lateral thinking and a feeling for words.”⁶²

Alan Loney, master-printer and poet, was Printer in Residence at Otago University in 2008 and during this time hand-set and printed a limited edition (100 copies) of unpublished poems by Ruth Dallas. Before she died, Dallas gave the Otakou Press permission to print a selection of her published poems. After her death, a number of unpublished haiku written by her were discovered and the text printed by Loney contained most of these.⁶³

61. Oz Kraus in *PNZ* #30, February 2005: There was an accident in one of the physics laboratories at Massey, involving a radioactive spill. Drummond was one of the first on the scene, and led the clean-up himself. David appeared unwell at our first meeting and I later learned he had developed aplastic anaemia, a type of leukaemia often induced by exposure to high levels of radiation. His therapy failed to produce results and he entered Palmerston North Hospital just after he completed the preparation for the second issue of *Poetry NZ*. <http://www.poetrynz.net/archives/issue-30/>, accessed November 24, 2014.

62 The comment was made to Cyril Childs and is quoted in his paper, “Haiku 45 South,” delivered at the fourth Haiku Pacific Rim Conference (Terrigal, Australia) in September 2009 and published in *Wind over Water*, the Conference Proceedings.

63. http://www.otago.ac.nz/library/printer_in_residence/previous.html, accessed July 12, 2014.

circling the rocks
all night the sea
drums and sings

A [biography and a set of haiku](#) by Ruth Dallas are available on the *Haiku NewZ* Showcase page, thanks to the efforts of Cyril Childs. The first line of the following haiku—which won the contest—became the title for the New Zealand Poetry Society anthology in 1996.

catching the rainbow
on a floating thread . . .
a new-born spider

Bill Manhire: Haiku & Me⁶⁴

I think I would first have come across haiku not in the schoolroom, which I guess is where most New Zealanders make the encounter, but in two anthologies: *The Penguin Book of Japanese Verse* (1964) and Kenneth Rexroth's *One Hundred Poems from the Japanese* (1955), both of which are still on my shelves. There was also Ezra Pound and Imagism, and his “hokku-like sentence”:

The apparition of these faces in the crowd: Petals, on a wet, black bough.⁶⁵

I think, though, that for me haiku was simply one instance of the short poem, as promoted by people like Robert Bly in, for example, his little 1971 anthology *The Sea and the Honeycomb*—which focused on “the poem of three or four lines.” I still have this book, too. Similarly, short poems by children in Elwyn Richardson's wonderful book *In the Early World*⁶⁶ were important to me when I first started teaching creative writing.

I wrote about haiku as part of a column on short poems for *Quote Unquote*⁶⁷ years ago (reprinted in my essay collection *Doubtful Sounds*⁶⁸). It was before my computer files, but I've found it on [Google Books](#).

Part of the essay says: If the danger with epigrams is the ease with which a clever rhyme can pass itself off as a telling idea, the danger with haiku is that a few autumnal mood words will

64. Bill Manhire is one of the most influential and successful poets in New Zealand. He founded and for many years headed the International Institute of Modern Letters at Victoria University of Wellington as director of the prestigious creative writing programme. He retired in 2013. Graduates of the course include many of New Zealand's most accomplished contemporary writers.

Manhire has won the New Zealand Book Awards poetry prize five times and was the 1997/1998 New Zealand Te Mata Estate Poet Laureate. In 2005 he was made a Companion of the New Zealand Order of Merit for services to literature and later that year was named as an Arts Foundation of New Zealand Laureate. In 2007 he won the Prime Minister's Award for Literary Achievement.

65. Pound's poem as published in 1913 in the literary magazine *Poetry*.

66. *In the Early World*, first published 1971 and now in several reprints, is considered to have changed the course of education in New Zealand and around the world with its child-centered approach.

67. *Quote, Unquote*, a New Zealand literary print magazine, 1993–97, edited by Stephen Stratford.

68. *Doubtful Sounds* by Bill Manhire (VUP, 1999)

often do perfunctory duty for a poem. For what it's worth, my favourite short poem—indeed, the shortest poem I know—is by Aram Saroyan. Once you have seen it (or it has got you in its sights), you can gaze for a long, long time:

eyeye

I remember John O'Connor writing to me after the column was published and sternly telling me off for perpetuating the notion that English haiku usually have three lines and 17 syllables. (This little poem in *Snorkel* was partly a joke about the 17-syllable idea. It was written years later—but maybe it was a long-distance response?)

spring rain
spring⁶⁹

The outgoing Poet Laureate in 2013, Ian Wedde, asked me to write a “renga” with him. Read the result [here](#).

I tweet little poems from time to time, though I'm not sure (despite the title of one of them!) I would want to call them haiku:

Summer

there, where the coast
turns the corner

Cicada

I am still trying to see your song

Christchurch Haiku

London bus to Camberwell Green
drives past
Ruamoko Solutions.

Domestic Interior

Let us turn, then, to the man and woman reading,
happy beside the waterfall beside the lamp.

69. Published in *Snorkel* 18, 2013.

from *Hirohito* by Bill Manhire⁷⁰

I am writing my book about him,
A Modest History of the Wind,
but I am in difficulty:

chapter after chapter
is being blown away.

There he is: the warrior on a white horse—
blown away.

And there: the Shinto priest
planting rice seedlings
in the palace gardens.

Gone.

And look: there is Hirohito
winding his Mickey Mouse watch.
Tick-tock: the wind takes him.

Petals blown away—
as in a haiku,
as in a tanka.

Editor's note: While researching questions for Bill Manhire I found this reference: "A Ralph Hotere painting from 1970, *February, May and the Birds of Ice. The Moon Drowns in its Voices of Water*, uses a haiku by poet Bill Manhire for its title," accessed July 12, 2014.

If this was indeed a haiku, it would make Manhire among this country's earliest practitioners. By email on July 12, 2014, Manhire wrote: The "February, May" piece you mention . . . was never in three lines, I'm afraid (though in drawings Ralph sometimes made it three lines, and even four). And I suspect it's not me but others who have referred to it as a haiku.

"I think you're right about the need for three lines, though—even granting that syllable counts and so on aren't at the heart of things in English haiku. Somehow two lines is too tidy and absolute; three lines allows all sorts of 'unbalancings' and asymmetries."

70. Published in *Sport* 3, 1989. The full text is [here](#), accessed November 27, 2014.

Hone Tuwhare's Haiku⁷¹

Until the publication in 1993 of the *New Zealand Haiku Anthology* it was not possible, reading New Zealand material, to know what a haiku was.

Before that our sources of information were two-fold: School texts and scattered 'haiku' in volumes of (sometimes) otherwise competent work. The textbooks first.

Typical of them is the redundantly titled *Creative Poetry* by R G Wilson:

The Haiku

Something about it	:5
Some other useful facts here	:7
Make it do something	:5

An especially "refined" example on [Captain James] Cook's landing at Gisborne: "White bird on wide seas / Brought wonders to waiting tribes / Fears for the land's future."

One cannot expect too much. Neither, as it happened, did one get too much from poets operating outside their areas of knowledge. One suspects that

Stop
your snivelling
creek-bed:

come rain hail
and flood-water

laugh again⁷²

—Hone Tuwhare⁷³

acquired its title "Haiku" in justification of its brevity. Otherwise, shades of Columbus on the shores of North America calling the inhabitants "Indians." He didn't know where he was.

It is unnecessary to point out why Tuwhare's poem is not a haiku or to labour the obvious deficiencies of others of this ilk. We are, I think, beyond that point.

71. This article, by John O'Connor, was published in *winterSpin* in 1995 (the article has been altered slightly by the author in 2014). It has also been renamed "Hone Tuwhare's Haiku, a Critical View." The original title was "Beyond Masks and Pretenders."

72. In 2007 a public artwork in Auckland's main street—Queen Street—used the Tuwhare "haiku" discussed [here](#), accessed July 16, 2014. When the project was first publicly discussed the Katikati Haiku Pathway Committee wrote to the Auckland City Council, respectfully pointing out that the poem was not a haiku and asking if the title might be reconsidered. When it was unveiled, the poem was used with no title and the words "creek-bed" were replaced with "Horotiu," the name of a stream that has been paved over and now runs under Queen Street.

73. An [obituary](#) and a [biography](#) for Hone Tuwhare, both accessed July 16, 2014.

Increasingly, New Zealand poets are saying that it is not good enough to be ignorant about haiku if you wish to write them. Standards are rising as Henderson's *Haiku in English* and *An Introduction to Haiku* are read and understood. Cor van den Heuvel's seminal *The Haiku Anthology* is now more widely known, as is William J Higginson's *The Haiku Handbook* and Blyth's most important works, *Haiku* and *A History of Haiku*. The recently published *A Haiku Path* chronicles the Haiku Society of America's first 20 years (from 1968) and the HSA journal, *Frogpond*, is also increasingly read in New Zealand — as it must be if standards are to continue to rise.

We are, then, past the stage of poets hiding behind the title “Haiku” to justify a short nature poem, and beyond the pretenders who write, or write about, haiku without expertise or knowledge.

Tailpiece: I showed this brief article to a (non-haiku) poet who wanted to know why the Tuwhare poem was in my opinion clearly not a haiku. Most important of several reasons is that the poet does not deal with what is happening now (the basis of haiku), ie, what was before him at that moment. His approach is precisely the opposite. Had Tuwhare written from that experience it might have something like:

late summer—
a hint of river
through the stones

That would be reasonably true to his cognition. More interesting perhaps, and certainly more concrete and suggestive:

late summer—
a glint of river
through the stones

BOOKS

With the notable exception of the New Zealand Poetry Society (annual contest anthologies; two haiku anthologies), there are no significant publishers of haiku in New Zealand and there never have been. Writers tend to bring their work by self-publishing or using (very) small publishers.

a: Collections

The most recent collections — not chapbooks — by notable writers are:

into the vanishing point by Helen Bascand (2007).

Forgotten War, a Korean War haiku sequence by Ernest J Berry with Jerry Kilbride (Post Pressed, Queensland, Australia, 2000).

Isthmus, tanka by Tony Beyer (Puriri Press, 2004)

waking echoes, haiku & haibun by Nola Borrell (Korimako Press, Wellington, 2013).

breakfast with epiphanies, by Owen Bullock (Ocean Books, Tauranga, 2012).

beyond the paper lanterns, a journey with cancer by Cyril Childs (Paper Lantern Press, Wellington, 2000).

In Transit by Doc Drumheller (Cyberwit 2011), haiku by the author translated into several languages by people he met on his travels.

Caterpillar by Catherine Mair (1990).

Parts of the Moon, selected haiku & senryu by John O'Connor (Post Pressed, Queensland, Australia, 2007).

Bright the Harvest Moon, haiku & renga imitations by John O'Connor (Poets Group, Christchurch, 2011).

Selected Haiku by Ron Riddell and Raul Henao (Casa Nueva Publishers, 2009), claimed as “the first co-authored book of haiku between a New Zealand and Latin American haiku poet.”⁷⁴ The book was published in Medellin, Colombia, as part of the inaugural Hana Matsuri festival of Japanese Culture, the first convocation of haiku poets within Colombia.

breath by Sandra Simpson (Piwakawaka Press, Tauranga 2011).

Green Tea, haiku & other poetry by Jeanette Stace (Bearfax Publications, 2007, published posthumously).

Suchness, Zen poetry & prose by Richard von Sturmer (HeadworX, Wellington, 2005).

b: Notable Anthologies

a fall of leaves (published on behalf of the New Zealand Poetry Society by Nagare Press, Palmerston North, 1987).

74. <http://www.ronriddell.com/publications/books-for-purchase/33-selected-haiku.html>, accessed, July 12, 2014.

Winter's Blossom, edited by Harry Ricketts, Yoko Beard, David Drummond and Makoto Tanake (published on behalf of the New Zealand Poetry Society by Nagare Press, Palmerston North, 1989).

Annual NZPS competition anthologies since 1992.

New Zealand Haiku Anthology, edited by Cyril Childs (New Zealand Poetry Society, Wellington, 1993).

The Second New Zealand Haiku Anthology, edited by Cyril Childs (New Zealand Poetry Society, Wellington, 1998).

Listening to the Rain, edited by Cyril Childs and Joanna Preston (Small White Teapot Group, Christchurch, 2002). Highly Commended by the Haiku Society of America Merit Book Awards, 2003.

the taste of nashi, edited by Nola Borrell and Karen Peterson Butterworth (Windrift, Wellington, 2008), informally the third NZ haiku anthology.

A Tingling Catch: A Century of New Zealand Cricket Poems 1864-2009, edited by Mark Pirie (HeadworX Publishers, Wellington, 2010) included haiku by **Cyril Childs**, **Andre Surridge** and **Tony Beyer**.

100 Tanka by 100 Poets of Australia and New Zealand edited by Amelia Fielden, Beverley George and Patricia Prime, illustrations by Ron C Moss (Ginninderra Press, 2013). The first trans-Tasman collection of tanka.

still heading out, edited by Jacqui Murray and Katherine Samuelowicz (paper wasp, 2013). The first collection of trans-Tasman haiku honoured the memory of John Knight (1935-2012), poet, founder of paper wasp journal and owner of PostPressed publishing.

NOTABLE FIRSTS

In 2012 Dunedin writer Ruth Arnison offered Otago (South Island) artists haiku written by North Island poets to act as inspiration. The resulting When North meets South exhibition was held at Bellamy's Gallery in Macandrew Bay, Dunedin in November 2012. Twelve poets each supplied six haiku to inspire pottery, painting, jewellery, printing, clothing, assemblage art and floral work. The artists didn't know who'd written the haiku and the poets didn't know which artist had chosen their work. Read more [here](#).

In his introduction to the *Second New Zealand Haiku Anthology* Cyril Childs notes that the country's first book of haibun had appeared — *Shadow Patches* by Catherine Mair and Bernard Gadd (both New Zealand) and Janice Bostok (Australia). The book was published by Hallard Press, Auckland in 1998 and launched at that year's Into the Light poetry festival in Tauranga. The first haibun published in New Zealand may have been "Tararau Creek Road" by Catherine Mair, which appeared in the 1996 edition of *winterSPIN*.

stolen time by Catherine Mair and Patricia Prime (Highfields 19, 2006) is likely to have been the first collection of tanka published.

The first tanka competition in New Zealand was run by *Kokako* in 2007, a contest that now alternates years with the journal's haiku contest.

Perhaps the first renga by New Zealanders and published in New Zealand were: “the heron flies” by Linzy Forbes, Barry Morrall, Cyril Childs, Jeanette Stace and Alan Wells (however, many of the conventions of the *kasen* (36-verse) form were either not known or ignored); and “pieces of cloud” by John O'Connor and Cyril Childs, which comprised 18 verses and more closely follows convention.⁷⁵

The first traditional *renga* is likely to have been written at the 1998 Into the Light festival. The workshop was led by Janice Bostok of Australia, a *doyenne* of haiku and its related forms. The authors of the 36-verse *kasen* “Out of the Light”⁷⁶ were Jan Gerritsen, Mary Buckton, Jack Ross, Kai Jensen and Barry Smith, none of whom have forged a lasting career in haiku, although Barry Smith writes the occasional haiku.

STATUS OF HAIKU IN NEW ZEALAND, A SUMMING UP⁷⁷

Haiku is taught in primary and secondary schools as part of the national curriculum. Unfortunately, it still relies upon the 5-7-5 form with one teacher saying “but if it isn't 5-7-5 how do I know it's a haiku?” There are teachers who will be teaching haiku well, but I suspect there are many who are not, simply because they don't know any better. Young writers in Christchurch benefit from the work of Kerrin P Sharpe (see above), which is reflected in the annual results of the NZ Poetry Society junior haiku contest.

Within mainstream poetry, there is little or no recognition of haiku as a legitimate form of poetry. Haiku is rarely published in New Zealand's major literary journals — and when it is, the poems are generally not what haiku poets would regard as haiku.

Haiku seems to be regarded by the poetry establishment as something “lesser,” despite several poets who move comfortably in both worlds, and have achieved recognition in both, including John O'Connor, Catherine Mair and Owen Bullock.

The late Hone Tuwhare was a highly regarded poet but although he might have called some of his poems haiku, he was either writing under a misapprehension or hadn't bothered to find out much about the form.

But, I protest
my love for you
isn't minimal :
it is animal
—Hone Tuwhare⁷⁸

75. Both published in *winterSpin* (1995).

76. Published *winterSPIN* (1998).

77. Authored by Sandra Simpson.

78. <http://honetuwhare.org.nz/more-poems/>, accessed November 27, 2014.

Read more about another Tuwhare “haiku” in the essay by John O’Connor, above.

The annual—and highly regarded—journal *Sport* published a “collection of haiku” by playwright, actor and poet Uther Dean in issue 42 (2014, edited by Fergus Barrowman of Wellington). Reviewer Febriani Idrus wrote⁷⁹: “. . . a collection of haiku [that] also managed to say a lot with a little, using the haiku form to perfectly (and often weirdly) present some of the grains of absurdity or sadness scattered through our lives: (“All the sad robots/Pretend to robot smile/At their robot friends.”)”

Which, lamely, is 5-6-5.

Janet Charman, a long-form poet, says: “I like to describe it [haiku] as like a little shock of intense language”⁸⁰ which indicates some understanding, yet her 2010 effort “100 snapshots” belies that comment.⁸¹

Haiku writers are fond of saying that poets wouldn’t call something that doesn’t follow the scheme of a sonnet, a sonnet, yet poets seem perfectly happy to call things that aren’t haiku, haiku.

However, two well-known and highly respected mainstream poets have both used the haiku form at various times and both have an understanding of the form—Ruth Dallas and Bill Manhire are probably the only two “A-team” poets who have got it right, at least some of the time. More about them and their work can be seen in *Mainstream Poets & Haiku*.

Cyril Childs, speaking in 2009 to the fourth Haiku Pacific Rim conference, believed the publishing of the long-form poetry and haiku winners in the New Zealand Poetry Society contests in a single anthology since 1990 was an “indication of a healthy degree of acceptance, if not complete acceptance, of haiku into the ‘mainstream’ of New Zealand poetry.”⁸²

Certainly, for the relatively few haiku poets in New Zealand, there are plenty of names among them that are recognised internationally. Mostly, though, poets are scattered around the country which creates a lack of cohesion and strength within the community. Not having a national association does, I believe, allow haiku poets to be ignored by other poets and writers. Discussion about forming an association arises now and again, particularly at national gatherings, but there is a lack of will to take on establishing such an organisation and (volunteer) staff it. However, a national association would go a long way to raising the profile of haiku and its practitioners in New Zealand.

79. <http://booksellersnz.wordpress.com/2014/04/14/book-review-sport-42-edited-by-fergus-barrowman/>, accessed July 11, 2014.

80. http://www.nzherald.co.nz/entertainment/news/article.cfm?c_id=1501119&objectid=10669509, accessed July 12, 2014.

81. <http://www.nzepec.auckland.ac.nz/features/home&away/charman-sydney.asp>, accessed November 27, 2014.

82. “Haiku 45 South” by Cyril Childs, delivered at the fourth Haiku Pacific Rim Conference (Terrigal, Australia) in September 2009 and published in *Wind over Water*, the Conference Proceedings.

The New Zealand Poetry Society is the default home of haiku poets and has generously provided free space to the *Haiku NewZ* website. It is an association that has been beneficial to both parties and the well-established NZPS apparatus means it is likely that any national haiku association will be later, if indeed, ever.

I wish I could say that there is a fresh wave of new-generation haiku poets emerging in New Zealand but, writing this at the end of 2014, that wave is nowhere in sight. Newcomers arrive on the scene in dribs and drabs and are generally in the older age bracket. However, the NZPS junior haiku contest is a valuable investment in our future and, given its longevity, it is to be expected that in time that investment will pay off when some of the school-age writers who have participated so enthusiastically return to the form.

For the good of the health of haiku in New Zealand I would urge every member of our community to consider volunteering an hour or so of their time at a nearby school to ensure that some students at least are being taught what haiku is, rather than what it is not.

New Zealand has some resounding echoes and parallels with Japan, including geography and seismology. We have exported many rugby players and coaches to strengthen their national team and imported (besides lots and lots of vehicles) haiku, ikebana and *taiko* drumming. While the cultural imports may be practised by relatively few, they are nonetheless practised with enthusiasm and skill.

The opening of the world through the internet has also had a role to play in the upskilling of New Zealand haiku poets. It is now possible to submit to almost any journal, whether online or paper, by email; write with poets anywhere in the world; participate in online workshops and forums; and keep online journals for all to read. Connections are made, as are friendships. Advice, critiques and publication opportunities are only a mouse click away.

The downside of the burgeoning online presence of haiku is the lack of quality all-too-often evident (beer haiku, anyone?, or how about haiku to resign by?) but again those competent in haiku and the world-wide web can see it as an opportunity to educate others about haiku. And it doesn't matter whether you're sitting in Invercargill or Iceland, Kaitaia or Kathmandu.

I will close this section by quoting Cyril Childs who in 2009 said: "I venture to claim that haiku is currently alive and thriving in the Shaky Isles [New Zealand]. To my eyes the future looks rosy—and I'm confident it will be rosy—just as long as the passion for the form and the voluntary efforts evident today are maintained or surpassed in the future."⁸³

Cyril, as always, has it pretty right.

83. Ibid.