

'A token of their love': Queen Victoria Memorials in New Zealand

Mark Stocker

New Zealand makes a particularly apposite case study as the sole colonial focus in this issue of *19*, although this writer must declare a certain bias. As not just part of the British world but in its self-image a 'Better Britain',¹ late-colonial New Zealand honoured its first head of state in the form of the Queen Victoria public memorials erected in its four major metropolitan centres: Auckland, Christchurch, Dunedin, and Wellington. With New Zealand's population of 815,862 in the 1901 census, Victoria was thus over twice as visible to her subjects as she was in the United Kingdom, indeed enjoying a more prominent profile than anywhere else in the British Empire apart from the Bahamas, Malta, and Mauritius, which were all far smaller colonies.² Her memorials were erected, as the quotation in the title of this article suggests, as tokens of colonial love and loyalty. To some visitors, such a relationship appeared comically enduring. In 1978 Bob Hope quipped: 'New Zealand is the only country where "God Save the Queen" is a love song.'³ Yet any study of the memorials reveals that a keen sense of local politics coexisted, often symbiotically, with the global, in a kind of imperial 'cementing' evident in their iconographic content, as well as what was said at the time of their erection. With the fascinating exception of the Queen Victoria at Ohinemutu, near Rotorua, colonial eyes were set on British sculptors as the sole providers of worthy memorials to her. Such an outlook would continue for another generation.⁴

¹ James Belich summarizes this late nineteenth-century phenomenon as 'a strong New Zealand collective identity as Better Britons; a patriotic and martial British "imperialism"; and an assumption of the full compatibility between the two'. See James Belich, *Paradise Reforged: A History of the New Zealanders from the 1880s to the Year 2000* (Auckland: Allen Lane, 2001), p. 116.

² Jennifer Powell, 'The Dissemination of Commemorative Statues of Queen Victoria', in *Modern British Sculpture*, ed. by Penelope Curtis and Keith Wilson (London: Royal Academy of Arts, 2011), pp. 282–88 (pp. 285–87).

³ *Heinemann Dictionary of New Zealand Quotations*, ed. by Harry Orsman and Jan Moore (Auckland: Heinemann, 1988), p. 349.

⁴ This was demonstrated when, in 1918, a local politician, W. H. Montgomery, advised his father-in-law, the Minister of Defence, Sir James Allen, that 'no narrow parochial feeling should induce the government to employ local artists' for memorials to the Great War. See Jock Phillips, 'The Quiet Western Front: The First World War and New Zealand', in *Race, Empire and First World War Writing*, ed. by Santanu Das (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2011), pp. 231–48 (p. 237).

Victoria before 'statuemanía'

The earliest representation of Queen Victoria in New Zealand public sculpture had relatively humble beginnings and a recent, tragic end. In a matter of seconds, the earthquake of 22 February 2011 destroyed William Brassington's corbels in the stone chamber of the Canterbury Provincial Government Buildings, Christchurch (1864–65). Spirited, if slightly naive, these carvings formed an integral part of first generation colonial architect Benjamin Mountfort's splendid Gothic Revival decorative ensemble. Besides Victoria, other corbels took the form of recognizable portrait heads of Prince Albert and Florence Nightingale.⁵ The German migrant and die-sinker Anton Teutenberg contemporaneously carved slightly more sophisticated matching corbels of Victoria and Albert for the entrance arch to the Supreme Court (now High Court) building in Auckland (1866), which still survive *in situ* (Dunn, pp. 13–15). An altogether more ambitious and remarkable instance of memorializing hybridity is the half-length, over life-sized painted wooden carving of Victoria at Ohinemutu, near Rotorua (*Fig. 1*).⁶ It was presented in 1875 to the Māori Arawa tribal confederation to honour its role as imperial and colonial *kūpapa* (allies) during the still recent New Zealand Wars. Crafted by an anonymous Italian, it was admired both for 'the happy air of dignity in the countenance, together with that peculiar look of matronly love which distinguishes Her Majesty'.⁷ In 1900 Patu Whitiki of Horohoro carved the pedestal, while the celebrated Tene Waitere constructed the accompanying canopy. Both exemplify the local Ngāti Tararawai tradition that dominated Māori carving in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries.⁸

The carving at Ohinemutu is an altogether different animal from Victoria's later metropolitan manifestations discussed below, and is no less interesting for it. The commission came not long after the first royal tour to New Zealand, undertaken by her second son, Prince Alfred, Duke of Edinburgh (1869–70). His warm interactions with Te Arawa — who admired the Duke's hunting and canoeing prowess as well as his kilt, which they likened to their flax *piupiu* — were recalled in a section of the

⁵ Michael Dunn, *New Zealand Sculpture: A History* (Auckland: Auckland University Press, 2008), pp. 12–13.

⁶ For a case study, see Mark Stocker, 'An Imperial Icon Indigenised: The Queen Victoria Memorial at Ohinemutu', in *New Zealand's Empire*, ed. by Katie Pickles and Catharine Coleborne (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2015), pp. 28–50.

⁷ 'Present of a Wooden Bust of Her Majesty to the Natives', *Taranaki Herald*, 7 July 1875, p. 2.

⁸ Roger Neich, *Carved Histories: Rotorua Ngati Tararawai Carving* (Auckland: Auckland University Press, 2001), pp. 64–69.



Fig. 1: Anonymous carver, *Queen Victoria*, 1873. Originally Tama-te-kapua, Ohinemutu, Rotorua. Relocated to Te Papaiouro Marae, Ohinemutu, 1900. Pedestal by Patu Whitiki, canopy by Tene Waitere. J. K. and H. D. Fuller Collection, Rotorua Public Library.

official handbook of the 1901 royal tour.⁹ Thirty years later, however, Māori had become increasingly marginalized from royal ritual. Culturally, they were at a low ebb on the home front, while overseas their leaders' requests for audiences at Court were declined.¹⁰ The demographic nadir of Māori occurred around 1900, when they amounted to little over 5 per cent of the population, at precisely the time that New Zealand was repeatedly touted as being '98.5 per cent British' (Belich, p. 189).

Similar percentages might perhaps be accorded to Pākehā (New Zealand European) monopolization and Māori disempowerment in relation to the memorials in Auckland, Christchurch, Wellington, and Dunedin, discussed below. The late nineteenth century was marked by several jubilees that witnessed the upsurge of the elderly Queen's popularity, starting with the Golden Jubilee (1887), which Victoria herself called 'this brilliant year'. Another fiftieth anniversary in 1890 commemorated the signing of New Zealand's founding constitutional

⁹ R. A. Loughnan, *Royalty in New Zealand: The Visit of Their Royal Highnesses The Duke and Duchess of Cornwall and York to New Zealand* (Wellington: Government Printer, 1902), pp. 389–90.

¹⁰ Claudia Orange, *The Treaty of Waitangi* (Wellington: Bridget Williams Books, 2011), pp. 192–202.

document, the Treaty of Waitangi. Victoria's Diamond Jubilee (1897) prompted an empire-wide epidemic of 'statuemanía'.¹¹ And then in 1900, Canterbury, probably New Zealand's most parochially proud province, celebrated the Golden Jubilee of its settlers' arrival at Lyttelton, the port of Christchurch. Miles Taylor believes these represented 'probably the first occasions on which Pākehā really began to demonstrate their own version of patriotism and loyalty to Queen Victoria in a substantial way'.¹² Strident articulation of such sentiments certainly accompanied the earliest metropolitan memorial, and the only one unveiled in Victoria's lifetime, in Albert Park, Auckland.

'The People's Statue': Queen Victoria at Albert Park, Auckland

On 23 September 1896, Victoria had ruled for longer than any other English sovereign, hence an early headline about the Auckland memorial: 'The Record Reign: How It Should Be Celebrated.'¹³ A public meeting held in May 1897, a month before the Diamond Jubilee, considered such propositions as a Victoria Hospital for Children, a convalescent home, and an Institute for the Blind. Initially, the hospital won favour, but this was opposed by the *New Zealand Herald* which demanded 'a statue on the site of the flagstaff in the Albert Park. That would be a permanent and visible memorial of a memorable reign.'¹⁴ Much was made of the fact that the monument would be the first in the colony at a time when the four centres were still evenly sized and Dunedin was only just beginning to yield to Auckland in commercial and demographic significance.¹⁵ A *Herald* leader struck an oft-repeated note on the didactic value of a memorial. It would 'tell to our children's children and their posterity after them, how their fathers loved the best and greatest monarch that ever sat on the British throne'.¹⁶ The *Herald* then polled its readers, the first time — so it claimed — that such an exercise had been undertaken in New Zealand, and canily headed the listed options with 'Statues of the Queen'. Although the response (slightly under 2000 replies) was considered disappointing, the

¹¹ For a succinct discussion, see H. W. Janson, *Nineteenth-Century Sculpture* (London: Thames and Hudson, 1985), pp. 176–77.

¹² Miles Taylor, 'Queen Victoria and New Zealand', Margaret Avery Memorial Lecture, University of Waikato, 20 September 2006, unpaginated. I am grateful to Miles Taylor for making the script of his lecture available.

¹³ *New Zealand Herald*, 5 May 1897, p. 5.

¹⁴ 'A Statue of the Queen', *New Zealand Herald*, 12 May 1897, p. 4.

¹⁵ In the 1901 census, the population of Auckland was 67,226, Christchurch 57,041, Dunedin 52,930, and Wellington 49,344. See *New Zealand Official Year Book 1901* (Wellington: Government Printer, 1902), p. 366.

¹⁶ Leader, *New Zealand Herald*, 1 June 1897, p. 4.

statue won handsomely and a further public meeting endorsed the poll. Contribution boxes for what became known as ‘The People’s Statue’ were placed in central city locations on Jubilee Day, 22 June 1897, and within two days £150 17s. 9d. had been raised.¹⁷

Auckland’s self-image as a leading metropolis of ‘Better Britain’ was reflected in the *Herald’s* rejection of philanthropic options. The newspaper contrasted ‘the intense distress and painful poverty which unhappily exist in the United Kingdom [. . .] which no one will presume to say we have anything approaching a parallel in this [. . .] new land’.¹⁸ This material complacency was, however, accompanied by cultural deference in the assumption that

a high class work of art by a well-known English sculptor, erected upon a conspicuous site, would [. . .] not only serve as a permanent record [. . .] but would help to encourage in the community a love of art and a desire to beautify and adorn our city.¹⁹

Auckland was not alone in this mindset; throughout the empire remarkably few native-born or -based sculptors received commissions (Powell, p. 287).

Designs for the memorial came from Henry Armstead, Alfred Gilbert, the Wellington-based William Leslie Morison, Hamo Thornycroft, and Francis John Williamson.²⁰ By February 1898, the choice had narrowed to Williamson and Thornycroft. The latter’s design was regretfully rejected by the memorial committee which recognized its ‘great intrinsic merits’ but could not afford it.²¹ Despite Thornycroft’s greater artistic status, there were cogent reasons besides affordability for preferring Williamson. Even before the decision was made, the committee cabled him to send a photograph of his 1887 *Queen Victoria*, commissioned by the Royal College of Surgeons, London. This statue, as Williamson repeatedly told prospective patrons, was the one that ‘the Prince of Wales has publicly said he considers the best portrait ever executed of his mother’.²² The sales pitch worked: no fewer than nine replicas or close variants were respectively commissioned for Londonderry (1898), Auckland, King Williamstown, South Africa (1899), Paisley (1901), Hastings (1902), Christchurch (1903), Perth, Western Australia (1903), Wakefield (1905), and Rangoon (1908).

¹⁷ ‘Queen’s Statue’, *New Zealand Herald*, 22 June 1897, p. 8.

¹⁸ Leader, *New Zealand Herald*, 1 June 1897, p. 4.

¹⁹ ‘The Queen’s Statue’, *New Zealand Herald*, 23 May 1899, p. 5.

²⁰ Michael Dunn writes of Morison: ‘In fact, his relegation to obscurity is as complete as a century of neglect can make it’ (p. 31).

²¹ ‘The Queen’s Statue’, *New Zealand Herald*, 15 February 1898, p. 5.

²² Francis John Williamson, letter to Churchill Julius, 25 July 1898, Christchurch Cathedral, Archive 63.

Commissions from the Royal Family resulted in Williamson styling himself ‘the Queen’s Sculptor’ and later ‘Her Late Majesty’s Private Sculptor’. Victoria genuinely believed that ‘Mr Williamson has a great deal of talent as we know by his Busts of the Pces and Pcesses’.²³ The critic M. H. Spielmann was harsher:

It is doubtless owing to Mr Williamson’s legitimate desire to give pleasure to his Royal patron that he carried so far his skill in working out texture of draperies and the details of embroideries and lace and slurred over the hard facts of a face.

Yet Spielmann conceded that ‘he has well understood a certain side of what is liked in semi-official work’.²⁴ Williamson’s portrait closely resembles the Queen’s official Golden Jubilee photograph by Alexander Bassano, even to the extent of reproducing the fan and handkerchief. For the original statue, she had accorded Williamson seven sittings and lent him, as he later recalled, ‘the crown, robes, all jewels and orders as she was anxious that my work should be exact in every particular’.²⁵ Such exactitude ultimately mattered more to an Auckland audience than Spielmann’s sensibilities. At the public meeting that had endorsed the statue, an unnamed speaker was applauded for his assertion that ‘true art was that which most closely copied nature; if a faithful and true likeness of Her Majesty were erected, then it would be a work of art’.²⁶

Williamson was commissioned in February 1898, and his statue reached Auckland in January 1899 (*Fig. 2*). ‘A brilliant assemblage’ witnessed the unveiling on 24 May, the Queen’s eightieth birthday. The *Auckland Weekly News* reminded readers that this was ‘the first statue of Her Majesty erected in the colony of New Zealand. It is fitting that the statue should be reared in Albert Park.’ This had been the location of the Albert Barracks, constructed in the late 1840s, which subsequently housed imperial troops during the New Zealand Wars. Thus ‘from where the statue now stands military roads, military outposts and war vessels could be seen, all there in the name of Queen Victoria’.²⁷ James Belich claims that New Zealand ‘suddenly became more warlike’ in the 1890s and witnessed a near tripling in military volunteers between 1897 and 1902 (p. 79). The South African

²³ Mark Stocker, ‘Francis John Williamson (1833–1920): The New Zealand Sculptures’, *Art New Zealand*, 61 (1991–92), 73–79, 85 (pp. 73, 74).

²⁴ M. H. Spielmann, *British Sculpture and Sculptors of To-day* (London: Cassell, 1901), p. 19.

²⁵ Quoted in Elisabeth Darby, ‘Statues of Queen Victoria and Prince Albert: A Study in Commemorative and Portrait Statuary 1837–1924’ (unpublished doctoral thesis, University of London, 1983), p. 320.

²⁶ ‘Auckland and the Record Reign’, *New Zealand Herald*, 15 June 1897, p. 5.

²⁷ ‘The Queen’s Statue’, *Auckland Weekly News*, 2 June 1899, supplement, p. 1.



Fig. 2: Francis John Williamson, *Queen Victoria*, 1898–99. Albert Park, Auckland.
The Author.

War, which broke out five months after the unveiling, enjoyed enthusiastic national support, and is significant to the political context of subsequent memorials, especially that of Christchurch.

A tone of imperial patriotism, together with local civic triumphalism, resounded in the *Auckland Weekly News*: ‘Certainly there are no people in the whole of Australasia who have done so much for this part of Queen Victoria’s new empire as Aucklanders.’ Readers were also reminded that

the foundations of Auckland province were cemented with the blood of Maoris slain in battle, and to-day the foundation on which Auckland’s statue of the Queen rests, is of stone cut and quarried at the instance of the Maoris in peace and amity, as a token of their love for the great Empress.²⁸

As if to confirm this, a body of Waikato Māori — erstwhile foes in the New Zealand Wars — lined the railings that guarded the statue, augmenting the ‘stalwart’ assembled artillerymen. Māori oratory played no part in the formal ceremony, however, in which the Governor, the Earl of Ranfurly, delivered a ‘vigorous and manly speech, such as went to the hearts of the sturdy Britains [*sic*] of the South’. Upon the unveiling, the crowd let forth ‘three lusty British cheers for the Queen’, while war vessels in Freemans Bay thundered a royal salute.²⁹

In retrospect, Williamson’s statue seems a modest one for such panoply. It was only the sixth public sculpture of its kind erected nationally and the first in Auckland. The memorial committee found that donations did not necessarily flow as freely as monarchical sentiments, a problem also encountered by later counterparts in Christchurch, Wellington, and Dunedin. Auckland perhaps suffered for having been first off the production line, encouraging her younger sisters to be more glorious and victorious Victorias. If the statue disappoints, this is not because it lacks the intricacy, inventiveness, or drama of a New Sculpture counterpart such as Alfred Gilbert’s famous Victoria Memorial at Winchester Castle (1885–1912). Such qualities could hardly be expected from his senior and more conservative contemporary Williamson. Rather, it is too short for an outdoor public monument, the bronze measuring 180 cm and the memorial in its entirety some 450 cm from its Māori-hewn foundations to the lightweight crown favoured by the unostentatious Queen. Christchurch learned from Auckland’s example and within two years of the unveiling, Williamson was engaged on a new, taller version. The *Press* thus reported that ‘with a figure 18in. higher, and a pedestal higher in proportion, the [Christchurch] statue should be a very imposing one’.³⁰

²⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 1.

²⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 2.

³⁰ ‘The Jubilee Memorial Statue’, *Press*, 29 November 1900, p. 2.

Queen Victoria in Christchurch: 'a slice of England, cut from top to bottom'

Christchurch's 'imposing' statue was first mooted in the context of the Canterbury provincial jubilee of 1900. Like Auckland, this was no foregone conclusion. In a series of meetings in July and August 1900, the General Committee of the Jubilee Commemoration considered the most suitable and enduring means of celebration. In late July, readers of the *Press* were invited to suggest ideas and a lively debate ensued. From an initial twelve options, the list grew daily to reach a bewildering 113. Besides a 'full-sized statue of the Queen', ones of Lord Roberts and William Baden-Powell were proposed, reflecting the impact of the South African War.³¹ From the 1294 votes cast, the most popular option was completion of Christchurch Cathedral, a celebration — or to its critics an indictment — of the Anglican ideals behind the settlement's foundation. Second also came the completion of the cathedral, but with the north transept wall reserved 'for those who have fallen, or who may in the future fall, fighting for the Empire'. Third came the Mayor William Reece's own suggestion of 'a group or obelisk in the city commemorative of "The Queen", "The Pioneers", "The Industries" and, if thought desirable, the sending forth of our young men to South Africa'. Fourth was a 'full-sized statue of the Queen'.³²

Several correspondents protested at the proposal to complete the cathedral. A *Press* editorial, appealing for the obliteration of 'all elements of sectarian difference', failed to calm feelings.³³ At a memorial committee meeting in August, Reece deftly reversed the rankings and his proposal was carried by a large majority. Reece had recently contacted David Goldie, Mayor of Auckland, and had also heard that

a very fine statue of the Queen in sitting posture had been done by Mr Williamson [. . .]. A replica in bronze of this might be obtained at a fairly moderate cost [. . .]. He hoped to see the whole matter placed in the hands of some well-known and distinguished artist at Home, so that the statue might be one of which they could be proud, and also act as an object lesson to their rising artists.³⁴

Henry Wigram, chairman of the committee, advocated a memorial that would link the Canterbury pioneers

³¹ 'Canterbury Jubilee Memorial', *Press*, 30 July 1900, p. 3.

³² 'Jubilee Memorial Suggestions', *Press*, 4 August 1900, p. 7.

³³ Leader, 'The Jubilee Memorial', *Press*, 10 August 1900, p. 4.

³⁴ 'The Jubilee Celebrations', *Press*, 21 August 1900, p. 2. Williamson went on to execute seated statues of Queen Victoria in Croydon (unveiled 1903) and Farrukhabad (unveiled 1905). Further Indian casts after the latter model were erected in Muttra, Etah, and Bulundshahr. See Mary Ann Steggles and Richard Barnes, *British Sculpture in India: New Views and Old Memories* (Kirstead: Frontier Publishing, 2011), p. 266.

with those of her sons who have fallen in South Africa — the beginning of our Jubilee period with the end — both under the shadow of that sovereign who has preserved the devoted love and loyalty of her Empire throughout our provincial history.³⁵

Canterbury School of Art teacher Charles Kidson provided a set of drawings with ‘a view to giving the people of Canterbury and the artist in London’ an idea of what the memorial might look like.³⁶ Yet in response to the Auckland-based sculptor Allen Hutchinson ‘pointing out that it was unfair not to give artists in the colony a chance to compete for the designs’, Reece granted a month’s extension to make this possible.³⁷

In the event, no such entries were received. The committee had already been in correspondence with Williamson, who advised that a memorial as suggested would cost 1800 guineas, some £600 more than the simpler Auckland precedent. He recommended a standing figure of the Queen, which would be £175 cheaper than the proposed seated version. On 11 January 1901 the Jubilee Memorial Committee endorsed this and placed its order for the statue, together with a granite pedestal.³⁸ Accompanying bas-reliefs would be commissioned when sufficient funds permitted. Twelve days later Queen Victoria was dead, and the recommendation was hurriedly ratified. Wigram stressed urgency, rightly anticipating that ‘a large number of statues of the Queen would be likely to be ordered’.³⁹

The ‘Jubilee Memorial’ was now renamed ‘The Queen’s Statue’ by the *Press*, which intoned:

From every part of the Empire comes news of movements [. . .] to erect statues of the Queen. Christchurch, the capital of this ‘slice of England cut from top to bottom’ will not be laggard in this work of love and loyalty. The claims of the Jubilee memorial on Canterbury men and women were strong and insistent; the claims of the Victoria memorial are imperative.⁴⁰

The newspaper tempered reverence with pragmatism in opposing suggestions that Thomas Woolner’s statue (1863–65) of John Robert Godley, founder of the Canterbury province, should be moved from its prime location facing the cathedral to make way for the Queen: ‘We do not like this moving of the statues of our dead.’⁴¹ A supporter of this gentlemanly move

³⁵ ‘The Jubilee Celebrations’, *Press*, 21 August 1900, p. 2.

³⁶ ‘The Jubilee’, *Press*, 4 October 1900, p. 6. Kidson’s drawings were reproduced in the *Weekly Press*, 10 October 1900, p. 62. For Kidson, see Dunn, pp. 32–35.

³⁷ ‘The Jubilee’, *Press*, 13 December 1900, p. 6. For Hutchinson, see Dunn, pp. 36–37.

³⁸ ‘The Jubilee’, *Press*, 12 January 1901, p. 10.

³⁹ ‘The Jubilee Memorial’, *Press*, 30 January 1901, p. 4.

⁴⁰ ‘The Statue of the Queen’, *Press*, 19 February 1901, p. 4.

⁴¹ *Ibid.*, p. 4. For the Godley statue, see *Remembering Godley: A Portrait of Canterbury’s Founder*, ed. by Mark Stocker (Christchurch: Hazard Press, 2001).

was the architect Frederick Strouts, who demanded: ‘Who would not give place to such a Queen?’.⁴² In the event, a site in nearby Market Square was chosen in March 1901. This space would be renamed Victoria Square when the statue was unveiled two years later.

In June 1901 the Duke of Cornwall and York (later King George V) laid the foundation stone on the Christchurch leg of his royal tour. At the ceremony, the acting Mayor A. E. G. Rhodes explained the significance of the memorial. He made no mention of Queen Victoria but instead referred to the anniversary of the Canterbury settlement and to the current South African War. This was probably due to protocol that discouraged personal references to the Duke’s late grandmother. The Duke, however, stressed precisely this function, describing the future memorial as

the tribute of affection to our late dearly beloved Queen. I should say to you: teach your children to look up to it as a memorial of her whose life was a noble example of devotion to duty, of tender sympathy, and of loving regard for the well-being of her people, and to us all a priceless heritage.⁴³

In its coverage of the ceremony, the *Press* cried ‘Bravo Christchurch!’, clearly moved by the warm reception accorded to the Duke and Duchess ‘who had journeyed so far to practically demonstrate the fact of the indivisibility of the Empire welded together as it is by the links of love and affection for the Throne they represent’.⁴⁴

The progress of the memorial in Williamson’s studio in Esher was closely chronicled. ‘Delight’ was expressed by William Pember Reeves, agent-general in London, but the claim that it was ‘an entirely new and original statue’ was somewhat exaggerated.⁴⁵ A ‘spot the difference’ comparison between Auckland and Christchurch would reveal minor changes: the handkerchief and fan held by the Auckland figure were replaced by a more stately sceptre. Williamson made more radical alterations to Kidson’s proposed relief panel designs, replacing his version of the Canterbury pioneers with ‘a representation of the arrival of the colonists’. The sculptor also recommended that the reliefs portraying ‘typical forms of industries’ formed separate compositions on the upper parts of the pedestal. For a further one hundred guineas, Williamson offered to provide four such figures, representing manufactures, pastoral activities, education, and agriculture.⁴⁶ These suggestions were adopted.

⁴² Frederick Strouts, Letter to the Editor, *Press*, 5 March 1901, p. 2.

⁴³ Loughnan, p. 230. See also Judith Bassett, ‘“A Thousand Miles of Loyalty”: The Royal Tour of 1901’, *New Zealand Journal of History*, 21 (1987), 125–38.

⁴⁴ ‘The Ceremony in Victoria Square’, *Press*, 24 June 1901, p. 7.

⁴⁵ ‘Jubilee Memorial’, *Press*, 27 September 1901, p. 3.

⁴⁶ ‘Jubilee Memorial’, *Press*, 25 January 1902, p. 5.

Another nine months elapsed before the statue itself was ready, and ‘strong disapproval’ was expressed by Reeves over the delay. Such situations often occurred in Victorian sculpture. Williamson’s explanation — identical to that later offered by Alfred Drury in relation to his Wellington Memorial — was perfectly legitimate: the veritable logjam of statuary, especially Queen Victorias, awaiting casting at the foundry.⁴⁷ With the roll of honour relief for the recently concluded South African War, such delay was probably fortunate. The list of those commemorated was still not finalized, and notices were inserted in newspapers asking for names to be forwarded.

The statue was shipped to Lyttelton in January 1903 (*Figs. 3, 4*). Only one panel, giving the Queen’s dates of birth and death, accompanied it. This sufficed for the opening ceremony, held on the Queen’s birthday, 24 May, now styled ‘Empire Day’.⁴⁸ The occasion provided an opportunity for further pronouncements on the late sovereign and the province. Reece asked, ‘what would our children and future generations learn from that bronze and that stone?’. The answer was ‘above all things our love for our late Sovereign Queen Victoria’. They would also learn ‘of the grand old pioneers who left the Old Country and who came out here to found the Britain of the South’. Equally important was

the tribute we paid to the Empire, in that we suffered the best of our life’s blood to fight for it [. . .]. The monument would also tell of the visit of the son of our King [. . .]. And those who in the future looked at the monument would find that we consider our success was founded upon arts and industry, and last, but not least, upon our grand free system of education.

Reece hoped the latter would be extended ‘so that every boy and girl qualified to do so might reach the University’.⁴⁹ Imperialist patriotism and progressivism were thus intertwined; the memorial nicely embodies the political values of the long Liberal premiership of Richard John Seddon (1893–1906).⁵⁰

It was all the more poignant that Reece’s references to the Canterbury pioneers, the South African War, arts, industry, and education were in the abstract, as these reliefs still awaited completion. Fifteen months elapsed before the second unveiling in April 1904, when focus

⁴⁷ ‘Jubilee Memorial’, *Press*, 22 October 1902, p. 7.

⁴⁸ See, especially, Martina Droth, ‘Empire Day Unveilings and Ceremonies’, in *Sculpture Victorious: Art in an Age of Invention, 1837–1901*, ed. by Martina Droth, Jason Edwards, and Michael Hatt (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2014), pp. 127–31.

⁴⁹ ‘Canterbury’s Jubilee Memorial’, *Press*, 26 May 1903, p. 5.

⁵⁰ For an overview of the Liberal era (1891–1912), see Michael King, *The Penguin History of New Zealand* (Auckland: Penguin, 2003), pp. 258–82.



Fig. 3: Francis John Williamson, *Queen Victoria*, 1901–04. Victoria Square, Christchurch. Wikimedia Commons.

fell inevitably on the roll of honour. The *Press* took another opportunity to wax patriotic, paying tribute to the record ‘in imperishable bronze’ of Canterbury’s sons who had died in South Africa. At a time when major coverage was accorded to the Paris–Madrid motor race, the newspaper



Fig. 4: Francis John Williamson, *Education*, detail from *Queen Victoria*. Victoria Square, Christchurch. The Author.

could now dare to claim that ‘Queen Victoria has become more of a memory than would have been deemed possible when grief at her death still lay heavy upon us’.⁵¹ Little was said of the memorial’s artistic qualities. Was it ever regarded, as was originally hoped, as ‘an object lesson’ to ‘rising artists’? Probably not, but the reliefs and upper figures possess robust realism that reflects the neoclassically trained Williamson’s responsiveness to the New Sculpture. To modernist eyes, the Athena-like ‘Canterbury’ sending forth her ‘Roughriders’ (the Third Contingent of Boer War Volunteers) to South Africa may appear an incongruous conflation of ossified classicism and contemporary military realism (Fig. 5). Yet Williamson’s pictorial competence and the immediate intelligibility of the composition remain impressive. Perhaps the most remarkable achievement of the memorial is its visually – and economically – effective iconographic combination, offered by no other comparable edifice known to this author. In short, its concept represents ‘Kiwi ingenuity’ *avant la lettre*.



Fig. 5: Francis John Williamson, *Canterbury Sending Forth her Roughriders*, detail from *Queen Victoria*. Victoria Square, Christchurch. The Author.

⁵¹ Leader, ‘To-Day’s Ceremony’, *Press*, 7 April 1904, p. 4.

Queen Victoria in Wellington: an edifice 'of national character'

Wellington entered the monumental game later than Auckland and Christchurch. The Queen's death acted as an immediate catalyst and, with the emotion it generated, the statue fund stood at £1022 by early February 1901. Attempts by the secretary of the memorial committee, Charles Collins, to appeal to the whole colony for donations towards an edifice 'of national character' were, however, 'looked upon unfavourably'. The *Otago Daily Times*, for example, complained that 'it is really too much to ask the people of Dunedin [. . .] to contribute towards the erection of a statue which the large majority of them would never see'.⁵² Such responses caused 'considerable disappointment' in Wellington: 'the antagonism is looked upon as a relic of provincial jealousy, which was thought to be dead.'⁵³

Acting on behalf of 'the Citizens of Wellington', Premier Seddon cabled Reeves in London to secure 'the services of a first-class artist [. . .] who would supply a creditable statue for the sum of £3000', over twice the total budget of the Auckland memorial.⁵⁴ Reeves confirmed that the sum was sufficient, and proposed to negotiate with sculptors Edward Onslow Ford and Hamo Thornycroft 'with a view of arranging for the production of a statue [. . .] worthy of erection in the capital city of our colony'. He contacted English newspapers to publicize the proposal and named the sum. Although Reeves predictably received 'several applications' from interested sculptors, he did not favour a competition as 'first-class artists decline to compete in such cases'.⁵⁵ As leading sculptors of the time, Ford and Thornycroft would have made obvious choices, certainly more so than the brilliant but erratic Alfred Gilbert. Thornycroft, however, had less interest than his contemporaries in executing Queen Victoria portraits, while the chronically overworked Ford died suddenly in December 1901. The field was thus open to a sculptor of almost equal prominence, Alfred Drury (1856–1944).⁵⁶ Drury had studied under Jules Dalou at the National Art Training School in South Kensington, where one of his contemporaries was Arthur Riley, director of Wellington Technical School and on the memorial committee. By August 1902 Drury's model had arrived for inspection, prior to its scaling up.

Spielmann believed Drury represented 'the highest contemporary standard of English sculptors', while fellow critic A. L. Baldry called his

⁵² Leader, *Otago Daily Times*, 8 February 1901, p. 4.

⁵³ 'The Queen's Statue in Wellington', *Press*, 13 February 1901, p. 7.

⁵⁴ Prime Minister's Office to William Pember Reeves, 1 February 1901, Archives New Zealand IA 1/1901/939.

⁵⁵ William Pember Reeves to Richard John Seddon, 23 February 1901, Archives New Zealand IA 1/1901/939.

⁵⁶ For Drury, see Susan Beattie, *The New Sculpture* (London: Yale University Press, 1983), pp. 107–21, 167–74.

work ‘nobly imagined and finely thought out’.⁵⁷ A generation younger than Williamson, Drury’s imaginative range was greater and he was already an associate member of the Royal Academy, a status denied Williamson. And while Williamson delivered the dignified realism required of such commissions, Drury’s work offered the sensuality, charm, and refinement of turn-of-the-century New Sculpture, going beyond exactitude without sacrificing formality. Spielmann called his Victoria statues ‘good, reticent and full of character’ (‘Modern British Sculpture’, p. 505). Drury executed three of them: those at Portsmouth (unveiled 1902) and Wellington (1905) are identical (Fig. 6), while the still larger one at Bradford (1904) has been described as imparting ‘a regal and imperialistic air to the image of Victoria’ (Darby, p. 383).

Three bronze pedestal reliefs were commissioned for Wellington and these assumed an entirely different, less provincial character than their Christchurch counterparts. Their subjects comprised *The Signing of the Treaty of Waitangi*; *Fine Arts, Literature and Music*; and *The Inventions of Victoria’s Reign*. Using the lost-wax process to ensure fineness of detail entailed ‘a tremendous lot of work’ for Drury.⁵⁸ He exhibited *Fine Arts, Literature and Music*, with its gracefully draped ‘female figures in flowing raiment’ at the Royal Academy in 1904, prior to its shipment overseas. However, *The Signing of the Treaty of Waitangi* has monopolized subsequent historical attention (Fig. 7). The *New Zealand Times*’s London correspondent called it ‘a very striking and original piece of work, worthy of the historic importance of the event it commemorates’.⁵⁹ By signing the treaty, Māori leaders had ceded the young Queen *te kāwanatanga katoa* (‘the complete government’) over their land (Orange, pp. 47–48). Drury was given historical advice in reconstructing the scene by Major General Horatio Gordon Robley, who had illustrated episodes from the New Zealand Wars in the 1860s and whose *moko* (facial tattoo) illustrations, even today, are admired by ethnologists for their authenticity.⁶⁰ The Māori chief shown signing the treaty is a reluctant signatory, who has come ‘without his war-paint to indicate [. . .] protest’.⁶¹ Yet he will shortly shake hands with the governor, Captain William Hobson, who will declare ‘*He iwi tahi tatou*’ (‘We are all

⁵⁷ M. H. Spielmann, ‘Sculpture’, in *Encyclopaedia Britannica*, 11th edn (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1911), <<http://www.theodora.com/encyclopedia/s/sculpture.html>> [accessed 18 December 2015]; A. L. Baldry, ‘A Notable Sculptor: Alfred Drury, A.R.A.’, *Studio*, 37 (1906), p. 16.

⁵⁸ Alfred Drury, letter to the Mayor of Wellington [John Aitken], 17 December 1903, Wellington City Archives (WCA), Box 1977, Part 1.

⁵⁹ ‘Statue for Wellington: Noble Monument of Queen Victoria’, *New Zealand Times*, 29 November 1904, p. 6.

⁶⁰ For Robley, see Leonard Bell, *Colonial Constructs: European Images of Māori 1840–1914* (Melbourne: Melbourne University Press, 1992), pp. 99–124.

⁶¹ ‘Statue for Wellington: Noble Monument of Queen Victoria’, p. 6.



Fig. 6: Alfred Drury, *Queen Victoria*, 1901–05. Cambridge Terrace and Kent Terrace, Wellington. The Author.



Fig. 7: Alfred Drury, *The Signing of the Treaty of Waitangi*, detail from *Queen Victoria*. Cambridge Terrace and Kent Terrace, Wellington. The Author.

one people') (Orange, p. 60). The Reverend Henry Williams, leader of the Church Missionary Society in New Zealand, looks on benevolently.

In 1991 William Renwick described the relief as a piece of New Zealand European or 'Pakeha self-congratulation', which celebrated the benefits that the imperial connection was supposed to bestow on Māori.⁶² This represents a common interpretation at the time of the treaty's angst-ridden sesquicentenary commemorations. Renwick's verdict now appears a good instance of 'the enduring myth of exceptionally benign Maori–Pakeha relations' providing a soft target for later historians.⁶³ The latter often underestimate the important role that Māori-related iconography played in visual representations of New Zealand. While the posture of the reluctant signatory appears submissive, Drury makes the scene look dignified and credible. He portrays the symbolic moment of an act of trust between two peoples, one that gave Māori the rights and privileges of British subjects. The relief's success led to its frequent depiction in history textbooks and also on the 1940 centenary ten shilling banknote.⁶⁴

Drury's reliefs are rare examples of the New Sculpture produced for a specifically New Zealand context. Their appeal is probably greater today than that of the statue. Massive in scale — at 305 cm, over twice her actual height — Victoria is portrayed in her bodice and a full skirt, embroidered with a decorative motif of national emblems at the hemline. She wears her customary small crown over her long widow's veil, and carries her sceptre and orb. The latter, surmounted by a figurine of Victory, echoes the motif first used in Gilbert's Winchester Memorial (Powell, pp. 284–85). The weight and mass of the cloak are strongly emphasized and in sheer bulk, the statue conveys 'the magnitude and strength of the British Empire' (Darby, p. 382). Perhaps it was her sister statues in Portsmouth and Bradford that

⁶² William Renwick, 'A Variation of a Theme', in *Sovereignty & Indigenous Rights: The Treaty of Waitangi in International Contexts*, ed. by William Renwick (Wellington: Victoria University Press, 1991), pp. 199–220 (p. 202).

⁶³ Belich, p. 190. Such an approach can rebound. Michael Hatt's discussion of the Wellington memorial contains several historical errors, including the claim that land confiscation was the cause rather than the consequence of the New Zealand Wars. He states that the breach of the Treaty of Waitangi by settlers was 'erased in the monument', when it was almost certainly never even contemplated. See Michael Hatt, 'Edwardian Monuments to Victoria', in *Sculpture Victorious*, ed. by Droth, Edwards, and Hatt, pp. 120–26 (p. 125). To their credit, Hatt and fellow curators of 'Sculpture Victorious' adopted this author's suggested substituted text for the exhibition timeline. See 'Statue of Queen Victoria 1905', <<http://www.centerforbritishart.org/victoria-monuments/214/statue-of-queen-victoria>> [accessed 18 December 2015].

⁶⁴ Reserve Bank of New Zealand, 'The History of Bank Notes in New Zealand', <<http://www.rbnz.govt.nz/currency/money/0094089.html>> [accessed 18 December 2015]. See also Renwick, p. 200.

provoked George Bernard Shaw to complain irreverently of Victoria ‘being represented as an overgrown monster [. . .]. All young people today [1919] now believe that she was a huge heap of a woman.’⁶⁵

Casting the statue was delayed for the same reasons as Williamson’s counterpart in Christchurch, and caused similar concerns to its patrons. In March 1904 Drury explained to J. R. Palmer, town clerk of Wellington:

The statue being so great in bulk it is impossible for them [the Morris Singer Foundry in Frome, Somerset] to cast more than one such figure at once. Before the death & as a result also of the death of the late Queen — they had a tremendous rush of work — so they were only able to start casting a short time ago.⁶⁶

These delays resulted in the monument being unveiled without its main reliefs, a situation that again paralleled that of Christchurch.

The unveiling on 29 April 1905 was performed by Ranfurly’s successor, Lord Plunket, who emphasized the importance of the capital having ‘a worthy monument’. In its original location in Post Office Square, close to the waterfront, the statue assumed for Plunket the significance of a mini-Statue of Liberty:

I personally think it a very happy circumstance that this statue should stand where it does, for it proclaims to the anxious, weary immigrant, as he arrives upon your shores, that besides the better material prosperity he has been led to expect, he has come among a loyal people, and is under the British Constitution, with the freedom which every British subject enjoys, and which is the envy of every foreign nation.⁶⁷

Compared with what the Christchurch *Press* would have made of it, coverage of the event in the Wellington *Evening Post* was perfunctory and the sculptor was even misidentified as Drury’s lesser-known contemporary, Henry Pegram.⁶⁸ Could this have been because Christchurch took its role as ‘The Britain of the South’ more seriously? Or was Queen Victoria already becoming a distant memory by April 1905?

Subsequent history of the respective memorials in Christchurch and Wellington provides a telling contrast in attitudes to heritage. The former

⁶⁵ G. B. Shaw, ‘The Ugliest Statue in London’, *Arts Gazette*, 31 May 1919, p. 273. Cited in *Bernard Shaw on the London Art Scene 1885–1950*, ed. by Stanley Weintraub (University Park: Penn State University Press, 1989), p. 428.

⁶⁶ Alfred Drury, letter to J. R. Palmer, 10 March 1904, WCA, Box 1977, Part 1. See also Hatt, pp. 122, 124.

⁶⁷ ‘The Queen’s Statue: Unveiled on Saturday’, *New Zealand Times*, 1 May 1905, p. 7.

⁶⁸ ‘The Queen’s Statue’, *Evening Post*, 29 April 1905, p. 6.

was cleaned and moved several metres in the landscaping of Victoria Square in 1989 and received a subsequent cleaning in the mid-1990s. Its Wellington counterpart was moved in 1911 from its original site to a median strip dividing Kent and Cambridge Terraces. Exposed to heavy traffic, it is visually compromised by nearby power poles and trolleybus wires. The memorial file in the Wellington City Council archive forms testament to bureaucratic inertia and neglect. Desultory attempts were made to improve its appearance. In 1947 the council gave the statue several coats of lacquer, producing a ‘sickly, bright, greasy appearance’. This angered New Zealand’s leading sculptor of the time, Richard Gross, and the lacquer was soon removed in response.⁶⁹ In 1954, when Victorian sculpture had reached the nadir of its critical reputation, the *Evening Post* declared the memorial to have ‘no artistic pretensions (though such, in all seriousness, were once claimed for it)’.⁷⁰ In the 1960s steps were built around the statue to counteract the gradual tilting that had occurred over the years. No attempt was made to clean it and repeated but inept offers from schoolchildren and voluntary organizations were declined. Attempts in the mid-1990s to relocate Victoria to her original site foundered, following vociferous protests from residents and businesses in the locality — Mount Victoria — who wished her to stay put.⁷¹ In 2000 the council finally announced that the memorial would be repaired and cleaned in time for the centenary of Queen Victoria’s death in January 2001.⁷² A reflection (or refraction) of the belated postmodern appeal of her memorial was its role in December 2008 as focal point for a light show by the ‘Finalist’ painted sculpture art movement to accompany the official announcement of Wellington as Arts Capital of Australasia. Images projected onto Victoria included a massive water lily and a Union Jack.⁷³

The beautiful south: Queen Victoria in Dunedin

Like Wellington, Dunedin resolved to erect a Queen Victoria Memorial after learning of her death. The *Otago Daily Times* stridently supported the cause, asserting in early February 1901:

We repeat that the statue must be adequate: a paltry or unworthy memorial of Queen Victoria would be a shame to

⁶⁹ Richard Gross, letter to Will Appleton, 6 November 1947, WCA, Box 1977, Part 1.

⁷⁰ *Evening Post*, 6 March 1954, p. 3.

⁷¹ Wellington City Council, *Report of the Commissioners on an Application to Relocate the Queen Victoria Statue to Post Office Square*, 10 June 1996, WCA.

⁷² *Evening Post*, 29 August 2000, p. 4.

⁷³ ‘Wellington “the Arts Capital of Australasia”’, <<http://wellington.scoop.co.nz/?p=48>> [accessed 18 December 2015].

the community. Dunedin loyalty is no mere lip service, and Dunedin affection for the Queen's memory is no conventional complaisance.⁷⁴

In a subsequent editorial, the newspaper observed that 'Dunedin would achieve a somewhat unenviable distinction' if, alone among the metropolitan centres, it could boast no fitting memorial to the departed monarch.⁷⁵ This would have reduced Dunedin to the status of considerably smaller towns such as Napier and Nelson where ambitious plans to erect statuary soon foundered because of their modest demographic and economic bases.⁷⁶

At a public meeting in late February 1901, Dunedin Mayor Robert Chisholm advocated a Queen Victoria Free Public Library as a memorial. Such utilitarianism provoked fiercer opposition than that encountered in Auckland four years earlier, probably because grief for the recently deceased Queen was still intense. Keith Ramsay, shipping agent, former mayor, and Presbyterian, considered it 'shocking taste on the part of the citizens to take advantage of the Queen's death' by promoting a library.⁷⁷ In its report, the *Otago Daily Times* regretted that 'a good deal of unnecessary heat' had entered the discussion.⁷⁸ It proved sufficiently hot for Chisholm to resign from the memorial committee chairmanship three weeks later. He was replaced by Sir Henry Miller, Speaker of the Legislative Council.

Selection of the sculptor was entrusted to a former Dunedin politician, Richard Oliver, then living in England. The committee initially suggested that a replica of Princess Louise, Duchess of Argyll's marble statue of her mother Victoria (1893; Kensington Gardens, London), might be considered.⁷⁹ This drew a brusque response from the *Otago Daily Times* which, with some justification, claimed that 'no statue of any importance now in existence reveals the personality of the late revered Queen so inadequately'.⁸⁰ Its portrayal of the young Victoria at the time of her coronation was considered inappropriate for Dunedin over sixty years later. With the imminent visit of the Duke of Cornwall and York, the *Otago Daily Times* proposed that he should lay the foundation stone, which he consented to do. If he was

⁷⁴ Leader, *Otago Daily Times*, 8 February 1901, p. 4.

⁷⁵ Leader, *Otago Daily Times*, 20 February 1901, p. 5.

⁷⁶ For the proposed Napier statue of Queen Victoria, see *Poverty Bay Herald*, 22 February 1901, p. 2. A public meeting was held on 26 March 1901 to discuss the possibility of a Nelson statue, chaired by the mayor, J. A. Harley. It resolved to adjourn for a month; no further meeting is recorded. See 'Proposed Queen Victoria Memorial', *Nelson Evening Mail*, 27 March 1901, p. 2.

⁷⁷ 'Memorial to the Queen', *Otago Daily Times*, 1 March 1901, p. 2.

⁷⁸ Leader, *Otago Daily Times*, 2 March 1901, p. 6.

⁷⁹ See Jo Darke, *The Monument Guide to England and Wales: A National Portrait in Bronze and Stone* (London: Macdonald, 1991), pp. 60–61.

⁸⁰ Leader, *Otago Daily Times*, 29 March 1901, p. 4.

remotely weary of such tasks — this was the fifth and final stone that he laid on his New Zealand visit — the punctilious and dogged future sovereign gave no such indication. He affirmed that ‘we are right to perpetuate’ the memory of the ‘ever-lamented Queen [. . .] by the highest powers of the sculptor’s mind and hand’ (Loughnan, p. 323). The *Otago Daily Times* would remember these ‘moving words’ at the unveiling almost four years later.

As with Christchurch, there was early mention of considering local artists: Allen Hutchinson was noted by the *Otago Daily Times* as ‘a sculptor of considerable talent’.⁸¹ However, the role given to Oliver by the memorial committee made a British sculptor virtually inevitable. Working together with several other ‘old New Zealand colonists’ living in England, Oliver commissioned Herbert Hampton (1862–1929).⁸² This represented a sound choice, although Hampton’s art historical status is far more obscure than that of Drury or Williamson. Hampton suffers as a lesser light in a constellation of talented late nineteenth-century sculptors and has received little mention even in recent literature. Educated in London and Paris, he exhibited fifty-five works at the Royal Academy between 1889 and 1927. While he broke no new stylistic ground, he revealed unusual aptitude for carving in marble when most contemporaries favoured modelling and bronze-casting: indeed, from 1897, bronzes accounted for 77 per cent of Queen Victoria statuary (Powell, p. 285).

Besides Dunedin, Hampton executed memorials to Victoria in both England and India: Ipswich, Lancaster, Jabalpur, and Nagpur. The Lancaster memorial (unveiled 1906) is an elaborate and considerably more expensive version of its Dunedin counterpart.⁸³ Both works combine a marble statue with subsidiary, lower level, bronze ornamentation. Hampton’s fastidiousness was indicated in his rejection of two flawed blocks of marble for the Dunedin carving, which helped explain the four-year gap between dedication and unveiling.⁸⁴ The impression left by the regal figure in her state robes is rigid, frigid, and even intimidating (*Fig. 8*). Perhaps this is mitigated by the relatively benign, if predictably unamused countenance of the Queen. At the memorial committee’s behest, she was portrayed not as the elderly woman of Drury’s effigy, but in middle age, ‘that period of her life best known to New Zealand colonists who came to this country 30 or 40 years ago’.⁸⁵ The use of marble unintentionally reinforces Victoria’s status as ‘the Great White Empress’, yet this seems strangely appropriate

⁸¹ Leader, *Otago Daily Times*, 2 April 1901, p. 4.

⁸² For Hampton, see *Who Was Who 1929–1940* (London: Black, 1941), p. 587.

⁸³ Darke, pp. 239–40. For Hampton’s Indian memorials, see Steggles and Barnes, pp. 49, 89, 292–93.

⁸⁴ ‘Queen Victoria Memorial Statue’, *Otago Witness*, 29 March 1905, p. 33.

⁸⁵ ‘Queen Victoria Memorial Statue’, *Otago Daily Times*, 24 March 1905, p. 3.



Fig. 8: Herbert Hampton, *Queen Victoria*, 1901–05. Queens Gardens, Dunedin. Wikimedia Commons.

given Dunedin's overwhelmingly 'Old British' racial configuration as well as its southerly latitude. Other than the Duke of Cornwall and York's farewell intonation of '*Kia Ora!*' — warmly reciprocated by the crowd — any Māori presence related to the Dunedin memorial appears non-existent from newspaper reports (Bassett, p. 135).

At the unveiling ceremony on 23 March 1905, Plunket praised the ‘energy and good taste’ of the memorial committee. Its efforts had culminated in ‘not only a lifelike representation of her late Majesty, but [. . .] a monument to the sculptor who formed it’. As an archetypal, ‘improvident’ Irishman, Plunket teasingly praised ‘Scotch’ Dunedin for raising such a monument in ‘no parsimonious spirit’. Indeed, at slightly over £3000, it cost over twice the Auckland memorial and almost a third more than those in Wellington and Christchurch. Other speeches variously described it as an encouragement to ‘all that was artistic’ and ‘a product of the highest art’.

References were also made to ‘the splendid figures at the base of the statue’, representing Wisdom and Justice, qualities described as ‘the most significant points of her Majesty’s reign’.⁸⁶ The impact is similar in Lancaster, where Jo Darke considers the subsidiary sculpture ‘the real reward of the monument’ (p. 240). The motif of two meditative, seated sculptures flanking the main figure is found on a smaller scale in Gilbert’s Victoria Memorial at Winchester and this soon became part of the common language of the New Sculpture. As a friend of Gilbert who inherited his studio and later, reverently, reconstructed the original model of the famous Eros statue, Hampton would have acknowledged such links.⁸⁷ These female personifications, together with the charming pair of early Renaissance-styled putti supporting the central bronze panel, soften the statue’s austere aspect (*Fig. 9*). Unfortunately, proper appreciation of the memorial in its entirety has long been impaired by its site at the very edge of Queens Gardens (formerly The Triangle), alongside the major traffic thoroughfare of Cumberland Street. In 1905 its proximity to the proposed new railway station as well as to Dunedin’s commercial centre, The Exchange, would have seemed highly appropriate.

The Dunedin memorial, compared with that of Wellington, seems to have generated greater civic pride, fervour on the part of the press, and certainly the longest unveiling ceremony. Reviewing the ‘worthy and beautiful statue’, the *Otago Daily Times* regarded it in a wider, historical context: ‘Every monument erected [. . .] forms a valuable asset not only for the citizens of today but for the men and women of tomorrow.’ The newspaper solemnly advised ‘the present generation’ of its responsibility to record ‘the young country’s history. What better way to do so than to erect monuments?’⁸⁸

⁸⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 3.

⁸⁷ Richard Dorment, *Alfred Gilbert* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1985), p. 303.

⁸⁸ Leader, ‘The Queen Victoria Statue’, *Otago Daily Times*, 24 March 1905, p. 4.



Fig. 9: Herbert Hampton, detail from *Queen Victoria*, 1901–05. Queens Gardens, Dunedin. Wikimedia Commons.

Conclusion: an ‘honoured memory’

This article has considered that moment in ‘the young country’s history’, when proudly imperial and fiercely local ideals helped define what might be called a ‘proto-Dominion’ sense of identity. It seems remarkable that

such prominently located signifiers of that identity, the memorials to ‘the extraordinary queen who gave her name to the era’, were effectively disregarded for so long.⁸⁹ In the period between the unveilings and the outbreak of World War II, they would provide a focal point for the patriotic and charitable activities of the Victoria League, named for the sovereign. Founded in London in 1901, several years elapsed before branches were established in New Zealand, and there is no mention of them in accounts of the memorials. Yet by the early 1910s, the league was making a significant cultural imprint in its educational and charitable activities, as well as pouring remarkable energy into the maintenance of historic graves and headstones. In 1923 the Canterbury branch resolved that on Empire Day ‘a wreath should be placed on Queen Victoria’s statue in Victoria Square’, Christchurch, in ‘honoured memory of the Queen and also of the men who fought and died in the South African War’.⁹⁰ Only recently have concerted attempts been made to ‘recover the history’ of the league and other related patriotic organizations. Like their backcloth of Queen Victoria statuary but perhaps even more so, they were for long politically unfashionable, even unacceptable, victims of the condescension of a nationalist and then bicultural posterity. In his essay ‘The State of Victorian Studies in Australia and New Zealand’, Miles Fairburn laments the related neglect among his fellow historians of ‘the minds of the people’ that created the built heritage of Australasia, as distinct from the places and spaces themselves.⁹¹ I concur, and have attempted to plug a small gap in this area.

⁸⁹ John M. MacKenzie, ‘Introduction’, in *The Victorian Vision: Inventing New Britain*, ed. by John M. MacKenzie (London: V&A Publications, 2001), pp. 9–25 (p. 10).

⁹⁰ Katie Pickles, ‘Colonisation, Empire and Gender’, in *The New Oxford History of New Zealand*, ed. by Giselle Burns (Melbourne: Oxford University Press, 2009), pp. 219–41 (p. 232).

⁹¹ Miles Fairburn, ‘The State of Victorian Studies in Australia and New Zealand’, in *The Victorians Since 1901: Histories, Representations and Revisions*, ed. by Miles Taylor and Michael Wolff (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2004), pp. 230–43 (p. 235).