

# Art and Book



# Art and Book:

## *Illustration and Innovation*

Edited by

Peter Stupples

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Art and Book: Illustration and Innovation

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## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The Art and Book/Against the Odds Symposium was held in Dunedin, New Zealand, on October 16-18 2014. It was the sixth in an annual series of international symposia organised by the Dunedin School of Art at the Otago Polytechnic and departments at the University of Otago. The symposium was held jointly with the Otago Centre for the Book, University of Otago, which took 'Against the Odds' as its device. In the same year the city of Dunedin was making a bid for the title 'City of Literature' within the Creative Cities Network of UNESCO and the symposium was one of the many projects in support of that eventually successful bid. Events around the symposium demonstrated that the city did indeed have a thriving interest in the book through publishing, as well as possessing an array of libraries with significant and growing collections, that it also hosted a multiplicity of literary and book history events, supported by a strong tertiary educational sector with a research and development interest, not only in traditional and historical forms of the book, but also in taking a lead in new media forms of the distribution and promotion of the written word and its associated design, visual illustration and exemplification. The symposium and exhibition featured as events within the programme of the Arts Festival Dunedin.

The symposium was supported by the Dunedin City Council and, in particular, the Dunedin Public Library, which hosted the opening reception. Other institutions, such as the Hocken Library, the Special Collections and Otakou Press Print Room at the University of Otago, art galleries and bookshops within the city all opened their doors for TourTime, an afternoon event on the second day of the symposium. These institutions also participated as stakeholders on the symposium Steering Committee. Financial support was given by the Dunedin School of Art, the University of Otago, the Otago Community Trust and others.

A week-long exhibition was held in the Gallery of the Dunedin School of Art alongside the symposium, with works by many of the presenters, as well as examples of the publications of small presses. Outstanding among these artworks were the installations of Judith Poirier, professor of Typography at the École de design, Université de Québec à Montréal (UQAM) and Tom Burtonwood, Ryan Center Artist-in-Residence at the Art Institute of Chicago.

Particular thanks go to Dr Leoni Schmidt, Head of the Dunedin School of Art, Dr Donald Kerr, Special Collections Librarian, University of Otago, Dr Noel Waite, Liz Knowles, Kay Mercer, Tony Eyre, Philippa Duffy, Nicholas McBride, as well as Professors Keith Hunter, Pro-Vice-Chancellor Sciences, and Brian Maloughney, Pro-Vice-Chancellor Humanities, University of Otago for their assistance in making the symposium such a successful interdisciplinary occasion.

## INTRODUCTION

**A**rt and books have been inseparable from the beginning. The first signs standing for a linguistic concept, such as petroglyphs, were themselves a form of art: a mark standing for something other than its mere material self. We only know that these marks conveyed complex meaning, formed compound linguistic strings, a narrative, from the beginning of human settled civilisations, when the craft/practice was already far advanced, that is when marks standing for concepts, including numbers, were scratched onto damp clay tablets in Mesopotamia or onto bone in China.

From this early conceptual mark making we can already talk of “books,” the means to make and preserve a record—those fired clay tablets, rolled papyrus codices, calfskin parchments, bound sheets of paper. The very system of writing itself was an art form—first a pictogram, painstakingly etched or penned, then more hurriedly written in hieratic scripts that moved further and further from depiction, from pictorial beginnings into encoded information.

These crafted objects—books—made by specially trained members of a community, had great cultural value. They were made in scriptoria, scribes’ rooms, usually attached to secular palaces or religious foundations. Being literate was a special vocation, often priestly or carrying high rank in a civil service, such as that enjoyed by Chinese scholar-scribes.

The textual signs were often elaborate, extended into a decoration or accompanied by a pictorial representation, the two forms, as it were, coming from each other, going into each other, being a pair of interintelligible marks, imparting a specific cultural significance to the bare script.

These “books” were copied. They were collected into “libraries,” institutions that carried prestige for their political or religious owners, users, collectors. They held a record of significant transactions, the thoughts and wisdom of the culture, the history of a dynasty, the beliefs of a people, a priesthood. Libraries were catalogued. The catalogues catalogued. A written culture developed and flourished.

The cumbersome nature of early “books” was overcome with the development of printing on paper that continued the deeply embedded tradition of making the marks pictorial, the script an artform, the

illustrations at first printed from woodblocks. The scriptoria were replaced by printing presses and the scholar-clerks became publishers served by an army of printing workers.

In Europe books went from being rare, handmade commodities, available only in treasure houses of the learned and politically powerful, to become more common-place: the number of printed books in Western Europe went from two hundred million in the 16<sup>th</sup> century to a thousand million by the end of the 18<sup>th</sup>. In the nineteenth, with the social advance in literacy and print technologies, this number became uncountable. The book was now ubiquitous.

In the second half of the twentieth century, with the advent of computer technology, the death of the book was predicted, but it seems that the very opposite is now the case. Books are available to download, with their full-colour illustrations, including the facsimiles of parchments and codices, but in addition books are being printed in larger and larger numbers and in new forms, as the paper by Tom Burtonwood, in this selection of essays given at the Art and Book Symposium held in Dunedin in October 2014, makes clear. And the association of print and image, of print as image, as image in print, shows no sign of disappearing. On the contrary!

This book contains extended versions of nine of the twenty-seven papers presented at the symposium, a sample of the range of topics covered, from Modernist experiments of book creation and illustration to new versions of what a book might look like with the rapid rollout of new technologies, including 3D printing.

A number of papers presented the work of local, New Zealand, book publishers/presses, producing small run, books-as-art. In the exhibition that accompanied the symposium, these were represented by the work of Sally Hollis-McLeod (*Self-help Manual*, 2015), Wendy Kelly (*The Farm: An Anthology*, 2006; *Threads of Jason's Journey*, 2007; *From the Verge*, 2010), Judith Poirier (*Dialogue*, 2009; *Two Weeks-Two Months*, 2012) and Lynn Taylor (*365 Days*, 2010-11), as well as by the comics of Suzanne Claessen (*ShadowCostume/An Undercover Romance*), Andy Simionato and Karen ann Donnachie (*Fashion-Fiction; Who I Think I Am; Pink Laser Beam*). They are represented in this selection by Lesley Kaiser's extended essay on her pop-up books, that not only tells the story of this medium of the book arts, but also discusses technical issues of book-making as the foundation of tertiary-level courses in multimodal books, extending the range of the contemporary book but incorporating many of the craft skills of the past as options for the maker of the future.

Book illustration seemed a natural topic for such a symposium and this subject formed part of the spectrum of visual experiences available at the exhibition. Neil Emmerson showed an installation of a concertina book made entirely of lithographs printed on Chinese paper (*Lei Feng Mantra*, 1993). David Green, using a single-channel digital video, presented the work of the Kai Tahu artist Sandra Kellian, *Poutama* (1999), to give a visual sense of the artist gaining knowledge of her complex and hitherto insecure whakapapa (genealogy) as if seen through a series of clouded lenses. Here text and image were fused, but in the showing move against each other, hiding and revealing fragments over and over again, without resolution to a singular finality.

Peter Stupples' essay on *Malevich and the Russian Avant-Garde Book, 1913-1914* shows how the work of an artist, developing within its own pictorial biography, can tell its complex story against the grain of the book in which it appears, as if purposefully contrary to the tradition of "book illustration." This anarchic act was in keeping with the very notion of the Russian avant-garde book, to shake the foundations of tradition, and in shaking, shaking out the mind to be free to rethink the book, the visual, the idea, into a new space and with a new purpose—free-thinking for the future.

Picasso, rather than fighting the role of the illustrator, tried to join the visual with the text in the way he wraps his glaringly red marks tightly about the volume of Reverdy's *Le Chant des Morts*. Glyphs and fists and copulating signs of blood stain each page of verse, as if some Medieval scribe had cut his veins and let his blood run free before trailing his quill in the viscous liquid to laugh at death, to highlight sacrifice and make violence manifest. This avant-garde book, each page 42 x 32 cm, is radically defiant through the integration of art and text, quite contrary to Malevich's stand off from traditional illustration. This relationship is examined by Rodney Swan in his essay *Turning Point—The Aesthetic Genealogy Surrounding Picasso's Illustrations of Reverdy's Le Chant des Morts*.

In the exhibition, the Dunedin artist/printmaker Marion Wassenaar showed a charcoal book, a book burnt black, *Evolution of Industry* (2013), a copy of a book by David Hutchison MacGregor published in 1911, as a "response to the cyclical potential of disposable forms." The ideas behind the work are elaborated in her essay in this selection, *The Burnt Book as Art Object: A Remedial Reading*, ideas stemming from the writing of Malevich, in which she uses the words of the Russian artist to question the very notion of the archive, the book as repository of history and tradition.

At the same time as Malevich was upsetting Russian traditions of book illustration and the archive, Marcel Duchamp was working as a librarian and finding that books on perspective from the 16<sup>th</sup> century gave him ideas for creating Modernist artworks, as well as encouraging him to explore new “perspectives” on the work of art itself, leading to the “making” of his “readymades,” a creative process that evolved into his role as seer or guru of art theory in the mid-twentieth century, when text and visual became surreal handmaidens in critical thinking, as anarchic as Malevich, but without his political, messianic edge. Monica Lausch has explored the role of the library in the early development of Duchamp’s ideas in her essay *The Library as a Laboratory in the Search for New Perspectives: The Artist-Librarian Marcel Duchamp*.

A long way, both in geography and concept, even if not in time, are the four chapters that examine the relationship of image to text in New Zealand in the early-to-mid twentieth century.

New Zealand was a British colony established in the Antipodes in the mid-nineteenth century on islands remote from Europe, but the settlers brought with them varieties of European, particularly British culture, including the book. New Zealand publishing, art and design took its lead from Britain, reproducing a culture. When education foundations were established they were based upon British prototypes. Noel Waite documents the arrival of the Scot David Con Hutton as Provincial Drawing Master of Otago in 1870 and his establishment of the Dunedin School of Art the same year. Whilst initially using British textbooks to teach his charges, as an ambitious art educator he soon published his own manual, *Second Grade Freehand Drawing*, in 1881, photolithographed at the Printing Branch of the New Zealand Survey Department in Wellington. What Waite makes clear is that “art,” in this colonial context, reproducing the current culture of industrial design of the “mother” country, meant technical drawing and the design of European ornamentation. Being in the remote South Pacific signified nothing as European taste prevailed and art was most decidedly in service to industry and settlement. Books looked and felt like British books, both in content and imagery.

This was still true a quarter of a century later when the *The Red Funnel* was published as a journal for clients of the Dunedin-based Union Steamship Company, explored in the essay by Mike Hamblyn. The rig of the journal, like that of the ships of the company, was British. Though a “literary magazine,” the cut of the jib was middle-brow, meant for English-speakers in New Zealand, and throughout the Empire, passing their time reading pieces by, for example, the school-teacher Edith A. Howes, born in England, but since childhood living in New Zealand. Her

stories were illustrated in *The Red Funnel* by the Yorkshire-born Robert Hawcrige, who lived in Dunedin and succeeded David Con Hutton as Master of the Dunedin School of Art. Though Maori were mentioned in Howes' stories it was as if they were transformed from a noble race of Polynesians with a proud ancestry in Aotearoa and Te Waipounamu into legendary creatures of exotic folklore, no different in character and treatment to the cultures of other "natives" found in the far-flung corners of Empire. A reminder, if such were needed, that books are cultural products, set firmly in traditions of time and place of origin—that origin often being the furniture of the minds of writer, artist and publisher.

Richard Thomson, in his essay *The Descent to the Coffee Table*, comments on the continued significance of British dominance in the publishing industry into the 1960s. In particular he takes as his field the publication of books that were not regarded by the critics and members of the book trade as "books," in particular the albums reproducing photographs of scenes of the New Zealand landscape that were meant to be placed on coffee tables as precious objects, displaying the beauty of bush and beach, snow-capped mountains and productive, but picturesque, agricultural plains. Such albums were given as presents, often to visitors from overseas. They were affirmations of the positive and exotic. They were by no means particular to New Zealand or even the British Empire, but a fashion in book production across the world where nations competed for the authentication of their cultural landscape.

However, in the past twenty years, the book has been subject to the revolution in technology brought about by computers, and in distribution by the intertwined powers of globalisation and the internet. At first the book reeled as if in mortal spasm, but by embracing the technological revolution and using it to regain traction, the history of book has been reenergised. New Zealand is no longer distant from the world (and is no longer a colony in any Imperial sense) but conjoined with every other culture through the technical webs of the twenty-first century. Lesley Kaiser who teaches the design, production and illustration of the book at the Auckland University of Technology, exemplified this cultural break with the past in her essay. She describes the development of a course in the creation of multimodal books with the aid not only of contemporary computer technology but also a knowledge of the crafts that went into the making of books in the past and across a range of cultures. The book is now both ubiquitous and global

Yet those who hoped that the technical revolution had now exhausted its power of inventiveness were to be shaken out of their complacency by 3D printing technologies, as Tom Burtonwood explains in his essay. Books of

three-dimensional artworks can now be produced that exactly copy every fold and contour of the original. Indeed, as Lucy Johnston has shown, in her compilation *Digital Handmade* (London: Thames and Hudson, 2015), CAD and CAM, laser-sintering and rotational moulding are being put to use in the art and design worlds to create works that often seem to be crafted as in the past but have been constructed with new digital skills. In their glittering array they are brought to us by Thames and Hudson through the medium of the traditional craft of the book, published, written and illustrated, but every artist/designer's section includes an essential link to their own website: the book has become the base camp for further expeditions to information and ideas beyond its covers.

The book is not dead. Its life is extended, revitalised. It is a necessary adjunct for creators, thinkers, movers and shakers in the astonishing world in which we now find ourselves. New chapters in that story begin here.

## CHAPTER ONE

# “FULL STEAM AHEAD!”: A HISTORY OF *THE RED FUNNEL*, THE ORGAN OF THE UNION STEAM SHIP COMPANY 1905-1909

MICHAEL HAMBLYN

*The Red Funnel*, published between 1905 and 1909, was a publication of the Dunedin-based Union Steam Ship Company. This magazine can be seen as a precursor to our modern in-flight and travel magazines. While a variety of writers have picked through *The Red Funnel* when writing about New Zealand’s literary past, the magazine is little known.<sup>1</sup> This chapter hopefully corrects this situation, by being the first in-depth history of this magazine, describing its origins, growth and eventual demise.

At first glance, it may seem incongruous that a shipping company should publish a literary magazine. However, large corporations are often publishers. They regularly produce a variety of printed material: annual reports, prospectuses, advertising in a variety of formats, brochures, tickets and “in-house” magazines which are meant to inform employees, heighten morale, and entertain clients. Indeed, in the late nineteenth-century, the Union Steam Ship Company had commissioned passengers and journalists to write up colourful descriptions of the company’s tourist cruises around the Pacific Islands. These accounts were reproduced in national and overseas newspapers. A major theme of this chapter will be to discuss why the Union Steam Ship Company took the publishing of publicity material from newspaper accounts gleaned from passengers’ experiences, as well as those of journalists, to a higher level, when it commissioned a literary magazine in 1904.

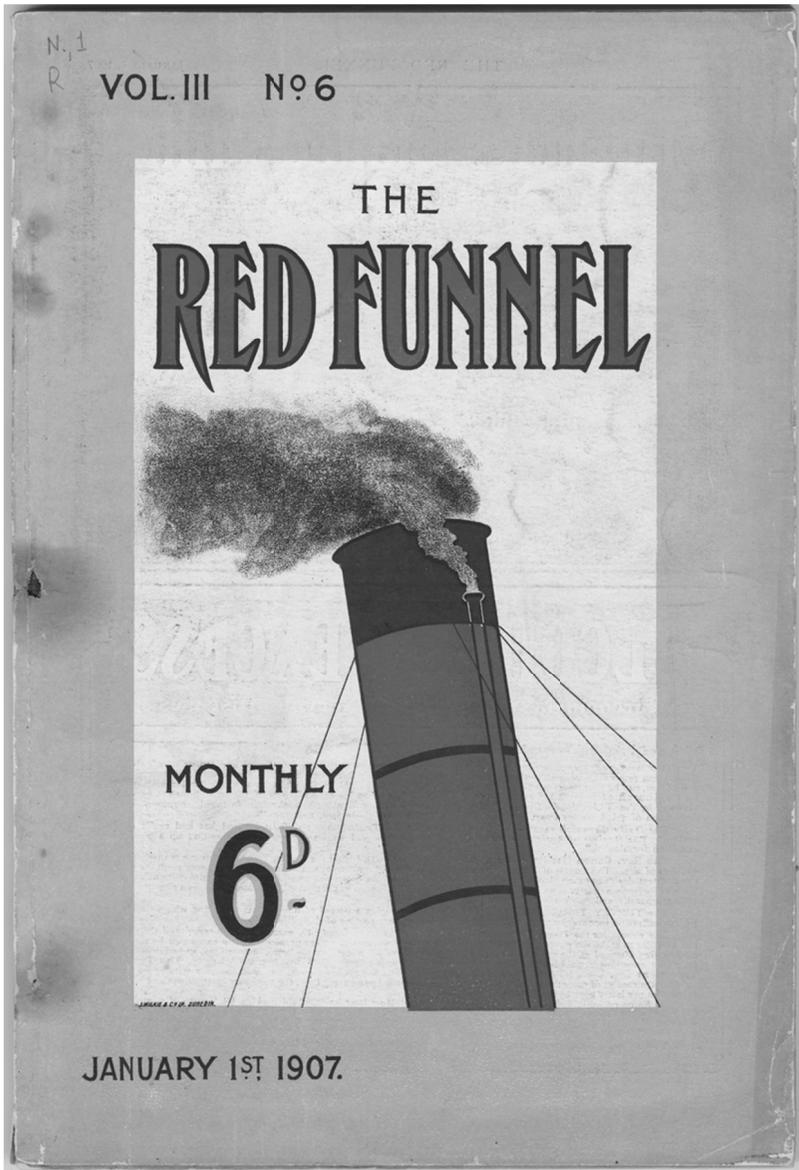


Fig. 1-1. Cover of *The Red Funnel* 3:6, 1 January 1907, 17 x 25cm, courtesy of Hocken Collections, Uare Taoka o Hakena, University of Otago.

## Background: Mrs Forrest Ross

In the late nineteenth-century, the Union Steam Ship Company publicised its cruises around the Pacific, and further afield, by inserting descriptions of its tours into national and overseas newspapers. The company commissioned passengers to write up descriptions of their travels. Unhappily, much of the work penned by passengers was not of a high standard, and so at the turn of the century journalists were approached to compile descriptions, which were also placed in a variety of newspapers. The principal journalist the company employed, and the only one I have been able to locate, was Mrs Elizabeth Forrest Ross, journalist and wife of the famed mountaineer and later First World War reporter, Malcolm Ross. Mrs Ross was first approached by the company in 1899, and asked if she would be available to take part in an excursion aboard the steamer “Waikare” in its forthcoming cruise around the Pacific Islands. In modern parlance, she was “embedded” by the company. In a series of letters and memos to Mrs Ross, the company made it clear what sort of articles it wanted. It needed “bright and brief descriptive comment,” which could be sent to New Zealand newspapers, as well as to those in Australia, Great Britain and the United States of America. It is worth tracking through the correspondence which led to her appointment and the terms under which she was employed, as it threw light on what the company wanted and reflected upon what *The Red* became.

On the 20 June 1899, Mr T.W. Whitson, company secretary, wrote:

Dear Bessie,

We have had several applications from competent people to make the “Waikare” trip for the purpose of writing up an account of it for the press in exchange for a free passage. I have asked Mr Mills to give you the preference as I understand you are very desirous to go—and he has consented. I take it for granted that you can secure insertion of your description in several of the leading papers. I may mention that *Telegraph* in Sydney is willing to give us space for a really good descriptive article. What we want is an effectively written account of the trip, giving a little practical information, and drawing special attention to the objects of interest natural and human, with bright and brief descriptive comment. The tendency of most correspondents is to be too diffuse and florid, the consequence of which is that the reader’s attention slackens off, and he gets tired of looking for the grain of wheat in the bushel of chaff. I feel sure that if you laid yourself out for it you could give just what we wish and keep him interested to the close. On that supposition we would re-issue it in pamphlet form as an advertisement for next year’s trip, and you could enlarge it for that purpose with such matter as need not be included in a

newspaper article. The pamphlet would be fully illustrated. We have made arrangements with Muir & Moodie (late Burton Bros.) for a series of photographs of the places visited, and you could work in union with Moodie so that your description would lead up to the views which we would select for reproduction.

Please think over the proposal carefully and wire me if you are prepared to undertake the work as indicated. The trip is a magnificent one—of endless variety, and offers an opportunity to distinguish yourself which may not occur again.

The “Flora” leaving Wellington on Monday 3<sup>rd</sup> of July will connect with the “Waikare” at Auckland.

Yours sincerely  
(Sgd) T.W. Whitson.<sup>2</sup>

Mrs Forrest Ross telegraphed the next day of her willingness to go and in early July Mr W. Whitson wrote to Captain Richardson of the S.S. “Waikare,” saying:

Dear Sir,

Mrs. Malcolm Ross goes as Literary Correspondent for half a dozen New Zealand and several Australian and English papers and as we are anxious that the descriptions should be effective and serve as an advertisement for future trips I should be glad if you will see that every facility is given to Mrs. Ross for writing, and also for seeing what goes on that it would be an advantage to report.<sup>3</sup>

In late June 1899, Mr Ross wrote a letter from the Christchurch Press Company Ltd to Mr Whitson, supporting his wife’s opportunity of going on the “Waikare”, although he admitted that:

Your letter offering Bessie the chance of going in the “Waikare” came as a surprise. Immediately on receipt of it I telegraphed the principal New Zealand newspapers about accepting articles.<sup>4</sup>

These included the *New Zealand Herald* (Auckland), the *Evening Post* (Wellington), the *Critic* (Wellington), *The Press* (Christchurch), *The Otago Daily Times* (Dunedin), and the *Daily Times* (Masterton). He went on to note that he was adding some Australian newspapers to the list but continued with:

I am sorry you did not let us know about the matter sooner, as I could have arranged with some American newspapers and American and English magazines for special articles and photographs. I will, however, still write

to the Editor of the San Francisco Examiner and the Secretary of Reuter’s Agency in London both of whom were so highly pleased with my work in Samoa...<sup>5</sup>

Ross then noted that he hoped his wife would be well reimbursed, given that she was being taken from her Parliamentary duties and from her work on the newly established *Critic*. Malcolm Ross received a reply on the 26 June:

Dear Ross

I have your letter of 23<sup>rd</sup> inst and note the papers in which Bessies (sic) description of the Waikare’s trip will appear.

It continued:

While pleased to know they will be read by the subscribers to the principal New Zealand papers, you will readily understand we do not set much store on these for advertising purposes. New Zealand does not possess in large numbers the leisured class from which we draw excursionists (sic) for such trips as the Waikare’s. It is in places further afield that we are desirous of these being made known. Australia and England are the hunting-grounds to which we look for our tourists, so that an account in the Melbourne and Sydney papers is of greater value to us than any report published in the New Zealand press.

Bessie will appreciate it is not a question of filling so many columns. What we want is a descriptive people will read with pleasure interest and profit, one that will make the reader exclaim after perusal—well, that’s a fine description of a splendid trip—I must try and arrange to make it next year”!... You say, rightly enough I daresay, that reports of last year’s trip were not much to boast of, but they were those of the work of amateurs who went as ordinary passengers and paid their own fares, so that we could not control them in any way. This year it will be quite different and I am sure Bessie will justify her selection.<sup>6</sup>

Accordingly, Mrs Ross wrote pieces describing the places of interest that the ship visited and what the passengers saw, as well as descriptions of the social life on board ship. There was a distinct class system aboard these vessels and Bessie’s reports usually referred to the society women by name, how many children accompanied them, and the number of domestic staff in attendance—the maids went unnamed.

This arrangement continued until the turn of the century and then there was a pause of some years, until A.A. Brown appeared and prepared the ground for *The Red Funnel*. Journalism was all very well, but by the early

years of the twentieth-century something more was needed. Enter *The Red Funnel*, whose emergence arose for a number of reasons.

As already mentioned, large corporations are often publishers, either in their own right or by some *de facto* arrangement with independent writers or publishing houses. Also the company needed a new promotional vehicle, which happened to coincide with a period of commercial expansion. Other shipping corporations were producing “in-house” magazines, upon which *The Red Funnel* would be modelled. The Company had expressed dissatisfaction with “embedded” journalism, be it from passengers or from professional journalists, although no criticism was aimed at Mrs Ross. Finally, the demise of the *New Zealand Illustrated Magazine* in 1899 had produced a vacuum in the publishing scene, which *The Red Funnel* filled.

Writing about the *New Zealand Illustrated Magazine*, Dennis McEldowney wrote:

The factual articles, however, were nearly all descriptive and there was virtually no social or political analysis or criticism. As in *Zealandia*, ‘New Zealand’ stood for ‘scenic wonderland’; and for a more distinctive national identity they still looked to the Maori. With writers like Elsdon Best, James Cowan, Johannes Anderson, Apirana Ngata, there was more depth and accuracy than hitherto, but as J.O.C. Philips has said “This was not a multi-cultural movement; but one that answered strictly Pakeha needs—an effort to provide instant history and mythology in a new and unlettered land.”<sup>7</sup>

Even this degree of nationalism faded, and the *Illustrated* lost its way, among articles about Windsor Castle and the Battle of Trafalgar, before its career was ended in 1905. The cue was taken up by its immediate successor, the *Red Funnel*, published in Dunedin by the Union Steam Ship Company but, it was made clear, as a literary magazine, not a tourist guidebook. It disclaimed any intention to be “local.” “It is the ambition of its publishers to extend its circulation throughout the Empire.” A strong Australian content, including articles on federal politics by W.A. Holman and serials by Ethel Turner, became dominant over time, supplemented by material from elsewhere in the Pacific and from Europe. The dream of an Empire-wide circulation proved a chimera and the *Red Funnel* folded in 1909.<sup>8</sup>

Finally, the success of *The Red Funnel* can be attributed to the efforts and energy of A.A. Brown, an American who became its editor and manager.

## **Mr A.A. Brown and the Origins of *The Red Funnel***

The origins of *The Red Funnel* lie with the American, Mr A.A. Brown, an official working in the insurance industry in Wellington. On the 23 June 1904, Brown wrote to Mr James Mills, Managing Director of the Union Steam Ship Company, suggesting that they establish a magazine, in which the activities of the company might be publicised. Quite why Brown chose the Union Steam Ship Company is unknown. It is possible that Brown had written similar letters to a variety of large corporations and the Union Steam Ship Company was the one which took him up on his offer. His letter read:

Dear Sir,

The suggestion herein is prompted by an extensive experience in conducting trade and transportation journals in the United States, where the great railway systems issue monthly magazine (sic) devoted to literature, travel, industry and the development of the particular system each magazine represents. Each of these several journals are more than self sustaining, and such representative publications as “The Four Track News” representing The N.H.C. & H.R.R., “The Big Four Gazette” representing the C.C.C. I & St. L.R.R., “The Setting Sun” representing the S.P.R.R. are most valuable and profitable properties, commanding a continuous advertising patronage from the many industries interested in furnishing supplies of every description from locomotive and rails to stationery for the office.

The magazines have for their chief object the education of the public to the comforts of travel, the splendors of contiguous scenery, the health producing quality of resorts, and I have no doubt they have contributed in no small degree to the abnormal development of travel in the United States. This leads to my suggestion. i.e., that such a magazine could with twofold profit be issued by the U.S.S. Co.

*Name*—I would suggest “The Red Funnel,” to be published monthly.

*Advertising*—It would be a magnificent clientile (sic) among the providers of the U.S.S.Co. in N.Z., Australia, Tasmania, Samoa, Hawii (sic) and B.C. The co-operation of the C.P.R.R. could easily be depended on for a very considerable support as its contiguous territory is now being thrown open to the world. Its great mountains and beautiful streams furnish untold sport to the lover of the gun and rod, and such a magazine would be a valuable medium for the exchange of tourist information between the Southern Hemisphere and Canadian resorts. Its advertising pages could be filled with the announcements of manufactures of machinery, oils, tools, paints, glue, upholstery, ship chandlers supplies of all kinds, and everything entering into the operations and furnishings of a great S.S. line, including coal, etc. The field is too great to attempt to further itemize.

*Its character*—It should be edited with as great care as the popular monthlies. It should be devoted to travel, scenic beauties of its contributing territories. Contributed articles from passengers with literary tastes (and their name is legion) illustrations (exterior and interior) of new vessels and modern S.S. developments, illustrated articles on the inception and development of the U.S.S. Company. Perhaps some attention should be paid to yachting, new patents relating to shipbuilding, literature, editorial notes, etc.

*Circulation*—The distribution of such a magazine should be upon the vessels of the U.S.S. Company and should equal the saloon travel of the fleet. Each edition should be executed in the highest style of the printers' art. Passengers would value such a magazine as a souvenir of their journey, and on taking it to their respective houses it would inspire others to travel to the profit of the Union S.S. Company.

Thus, briefly, have I outlined a monthly magazine and I would thank you for an interview that we might go fully into detail if you consider with favour the subject suggested.

Awaiting your reply I am with very great respect,

Yours truly

(sgd) A.A. Brown  
88 Coromandel Street  
Wellington.<sup>9</sup>

J. Mills wrote next day to the company's Wellington representative, saying:

Dear Kennedy,

I have had a letter from A.A. Brown of 27 Lampton (sic) Quay, Inspector of Agencies in N.Z. for New York Life Assurance Co. making suggestions with reference to a proposed publication in the interests of the Coy.

I daresay you know him, and if so I shall be glad if you will advise me what sort of man he is—as to appearance, personal surroundings, and probable capacity. He writes a very good letter, and if you think I would like the man, and he gives you the impression of being capable, it is probable I may entertain his proposals.

Yours truly

(sgd) J.Mills.<sup>10</sup>

On the 29 June, T.W. Whitson wrote to Mr Brown, acknowledging receipt of his letter and he continued:

The Managing Director has instructed me to acknowledge receipt of your favour of 23<sup>rd</sup> instant, and to thank you for your suggestion that the Company should issue a monthly illustrated Magazine with a view to

keeping the attractions of the Colony, and facilities offered by the Union Company’s services, constantly before the public. He is keeping your letter beside him, and will give it his consideration shortly, and write to you.<sup>11</sup>

From there, the letters flowed thick and fast. On 6 July, W.A. Kennedy wrote to James Mills to say that while he had not had the opportunity to meet Mr Brown, he added: “I must say he is spoken of by a representative of a rival establishment as being smart and capable.”<sup>12</sup> Kennedy and Brown did subsequently meet up and in the wake of their meeting, Brown wrote to Mills, saying in part:

Such a magazine would lend distinction to the Company issuing it, and reflect upon those responsible for its existence.<sup>13</sup>

Soon, the letters got down to brass tacks: James Mills wrote to W.A. Kennedy, saying that:

He [Brown] is a presentable looking fellow of the educated American type, and he certainly impresses me with the idea that where journalism or advertising is concerned he has a thorough grip of the subject. A representative of another American insurance Co., informs me he is undoubtedly “facile princeps” in the art of lecturing and expressing himself clearly and to the point.<sup>14</sup>

By the beginning of August, the company had given sufficient thought to the idea to have justified a long memo, written by the company’s Secretary, Mr Whitson, in which points, both for and against, were expressed. Whitson appears to have been charged with presenting a summary and he erred very much on the side of caution. Taking on the role of a “Doubting Thomas,” he wrote:

I think the idea of a monthly magazine published in the interests of the Company an attractive one, but the more closely I look into it the more insuperable appear the difficulties in carrying it out.

Whitson’s concerns centred around a variety of issues. Firstly, he thought Mr Brown’s estimated circulation figure of 15,000 too high; Whitson thought it more likely the company could dispose of about 8,000 copies, leaving 7,000 unsold. Secondly, he noted that Brown “anticipates a large return from the advertisements of those who supply us with stores.” Again, Whitson thought Brown too optimistic, writing that:

Suppose by pressing them on the quid pro quo principle we secured an advertisement from every contractor, and from the merchants in the ports where we stock stores, Dunedin, Wellington, Sydney, Melbourne, the total number would not be large. Suppose we secured 25 pages at £40 per annum per page that would equal £1,000 per annum, less 20% = £800—and I think this is taking a liberal view that sum (sic) would represent the income of the magazine suppose all the numbers printed to be sold, for taking the most favourable view the price of the magazine would not do more than cover the cost of printing and paper (1/- ea. less 25%).<sup>15</sup>

Thirdly, there were the issues of finding contributors and of the existing competition. Pessimistically, he wrote:

Then I see a great difficulty in securing contributors in the Colonies—men whose names would be a draw—for it must be borne in mind that every month some special feature would have to mark the issue, and the circle of prominent writers in the Colonies is very limited.

I do not know of any New Zealand or Colonial Magazine that has had a successful career—or whose contents would compare favourably with any very ordinary magazine issued at Home—and it must be taken into consideration that the Magazine proposed would be a competitor with such magazines as the “Strand,” “Windsor,” “The Royal”—which can be bought for sixpence and which include amongst their regular contributors some of the most celebrated writers of the day, whilst their illustrations are numerous and executed in the very best style.

Finally, Whitson approached the topic of Brown himself. While acknowledging Brown’s apparent success in this field in America, (Brown had not produced any proof of his previous work at this point) Whitson pointed out that in his view, there was no comparing magazines in Europe with those in North America. Indeed, Whitson wrote:

Mr. Brown speaks of having had extensive experience in conducting similar magazines in the United States, and presumably he is prepared to undertake the charge of the magazine he suggested. One naturally wonders why if he has conducted successful ventures of the sort in the United States he is content with an Insurance Agency in New Zealand. It would I think be well to see some of his successful work in this direction before going further...<sup>16</sup>

Despite Whitson’s words of caution, the publication went ahead, and in December 1904, the *Otago Daily Times* reported that:

The Union Steam Ship Company of New Zealand (Limited) is now engaged in the preliminary work incident to the publication of a first-class literary magazine, the initial number of which will appear in about April next year under the title of “The Red Funnel.” This is but another step made by this popular company to meet every demand of the public. The magazine, we are informed, will in no wise be a guidebook or traveller’s handbook, but will be confined exclusively to the varied literature for the home, the club, the library, and for the traveller by rail or sea. It will maintain a dignity of character that will reflect the highest and noblest emotions of Australasian manhood and womanhood, and present to the world’s readers a reflex of the life and aspiration of a people altogether too little known beyond the borders of their own land. Its contributing staff will be drawn from the ranks of the ablest writers, statesmen, educators, journalists, missionaries, travellers and popular authors of fiction, who will unite in making each issue a literary mirror reflecting the brightest gems in Australasian literary life.<sup>17</sup>

What is remarkable about this publication is that it sprang into the world fully formed, like Athena from the forehead of Zeus, and it flourished, despite competition from the Company’s steamers’ on-board libraries.

*The Red Funnel’s* main purpose then, was to publicise the company (and by extension, its tourist routes); to entice the would-be traveller to book an excursion; and to entertain paying passengers. Long sea voyages could be tedious and there were times when people needed solitude—and a good book.<sup>18</sup>

### ***The Red Funnel* Appears**

Having already provided some early publicity for *The Red Funnel*, on 11 July 1905, a celebration was held to mark the inaugural edition of the magazine. According to the *Otago Daily Times*:

a unique ceremony took place at the publishing department of Messrs J. Wilkie and Co., Vogel street (sic) yesterday afternoon, when the first number of the literary magazine, “The Red Funnel,” was published.<sup>19</sup>

Guests included Mr James Mills, managing director of the Union Steam Ship Company, Mr C. Holdsworth, the company’s general manager and Mr A.A. Brown, the editor and manager of the magazine. Some idea of the commitment made by Wilkie and Co., can be gained by the fact that:

for the purposes of the magazine, new Cottrell (American) and Payne (English) presses have been imported, and a new cutter, a stitching machine, revolving collator, and 1000lb of new type have also been obtained.<sup>20</sup>

Note was also made that it had taken an effort to find quantities of appropriate paper for the first issue. 15,000 copies were printed at 6d each and these were sold at their wharf-side offices throughout New Zealand. In an editorial entitled LET US UNDERSTAND EACH OTHER, the magazine's editor stated that "The *RED FUNNEL*, as the present number indicates, is a literary magazine. It is not its purpose to be a guidebook, a time-table, or handbook of excursion routes," and goes on:

That it is published by the Union Steam Ship Company of New Zealand (Limited) is merely an incident. The company, realising the necessity for an up-to-date popular magazine in Australasia, undertook the work that others with less enterprise failed to see the necessity. The magazine is intended to be more than a local production. It is the ambition of its publishers to extend its circulation throughout the Empire. Its success means much for New Zealand, for wherever the magazine may be read the place of its publication will become better known, and measured to some extent by the excellence of the publication, which will reflect in some degree the character of the people and country from whence it comes.<sup>21</sup>

Manager and editor A.A. Brown was an indefatigable traveller and "booster" of industry, wherever he found it. He travelled around New Zealand and overseas, (presumably by company steamer!) soliciting articles from the regions and further afield. In 1906, for example, he addressed the Dunedin Progressive Society's meeting as a guest speaker in the Dunedin Trades' Hall and delivered a lecture entitled "Across the American Continent," taking "the audience with him from Boston right across to San Francisco, stopping at the principal cities and places of interest to describe the industries, some of huge dimensions like the oil, iron, tool and canning."<sup>22</sup> He also gave talks on "From Coast to Coast through Canada," illustrated with lanternslides, the profits of which went to worthy causes such as the Free Kindergarten Schools in Dunedin.

### **Literary and Pictorial Content**

From the first, the literary and pictorial content of *The Red Funnel* followed no particular theme. Its subject matter wandered haphazardly in much the same manner as a latter day *Reader's Digest* or *National*