

Ngā Pūtahitanga / Crossings

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“Beware the Snufflebust, My Son!”: Clough Williams-Ellis in New Zealand, 1947-1948

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Abstract

On a journey to see their New Zealand-based scientist daughter, Dr Charlotte Wallace (1919–2010), Clough Williams-Ellis (1883–1978) and Amabel Williams-Ellis (1894–1984) were initially reticent about their perceptions on New Zealand; however, this was not to last. During their visit, the Williams-Ellises travelled extensively and gave interviews. Speaking to a meeting of the New Zealand Institute Architects in Wellington, Clough was critical of the government’s state housing scheme, declaring that the houses were “just little bursts of sound, whereas they could have been linked up to make a tune.” Presumably, he was criticising the regularity of the suburban rhythm with its solitary houses siting on individual sites and a material palette that included the houses’ ubiquitous concrete tile roofs. The Assistant Director of Housing, Reginald Hammond, and the Minister of Housing, Robert Semple, were swift to react, with the minister declaring Williams-Ellis to be a “snivelling snufflebuster.” Others leapt to Williams-Ellis’ defence. The exchange was reported throughout Australasia. This paper discusses response to Williams-Ellis’ criticism in a locale where architectural visitors were rare, and where criticism from the home country was rarely welcome.

In 1947 the British architect Clough Williams-Ellis (1883–1978) and his wife Amabel Williams-Ellis (née Strachey) (1894–1984) embarked on a tour of Australia and New Zealand for several months’ duration under the auspices of the British Council.¹ Well-known through their publications and media profile, the Williams-Ellises gave numerous talks and interviews while in the antipodes. This paper focuses, in particular, on comments Clough Williams-Ellis made on New Zealand state housing and the response this provoked.

In Australia

The Williams-Ellises arrived at Freemantle on the S.S. *Antenor* on 28 October for a month-long visit of Australia.² Their forthright observations were reported. Amabel’s provocative statement that Australian women were over-worked and should restrict their housekeeping duties to 60 hours rather than to the 75 hours that they already undertook was widely published

in Australia and New Zealand.³ Clough lectured to the Victoria League in Adelaide, to the Royal Victorian Institute of Architects in Melbourne and to the NSW branch of the Royal Australian Institute of Architects in Sydney.⁴ He was critical of Adelaide's sprawling suburban development, which was in line with his future pronouncements on other development in the antipodes.⁵ His verdict on the Sydney site was reported:

Sydney's Site Superb: Although he had not had a great deal of time to view the City of Sydney he was already satisfied that it possessed the finest site in the world. Stockholm and Venice paled into significance [*sic*] beside it. The city undoubtedly possessed a great future. Things can be done if enough people desire it and want to do it passionately enough. The Plan for Sydney development which is being prepared by the Cumberland County Council was only just in time. "Be bold," he said, "in your undoing, as well as in your doing." He would look forward to coming back to Sydney in the future to see its development even if at that time he should only be an astral body.⁶

In his autobiography, Clough wrote that they "whizzed around [Australia] for a few weeks seeing all the places and people that they possibly could, from academics and sheep-ranchers to tycoons and, of course, architects."⁷ He added that upon departing Australia on 28 November, he delivered his verdict on Sydney:

But the country, as a whole, despite a quite inadequate group of first-rate technicians, I found most dangerously "un-planning" minded. Being asked by an enquiring reporter with pencil poised, on embarking at Sydney for New Zealand, for my reactions to "our great city and wonderful harbour," I replied, "Only if you undertake that whatever I say shall appear at unedited." That being promised, I dictated my brief valedictory message:

By God what a site!

By man what a mess!

And he kept his word – as subsequent press reverberations made abundantly clear.⁸

This present research has yet to locate this account in Australian newspapers, although his comment appeared in the New Zealand press shortly afterwards.⁹ This barbed observation was obviously at odds with the earlier, more couched statement that he had made in Sydney,

which is quoted above. Comments voiced during the New Zealand tour would draw similar controversy.

To New Zealand

The Williams-Ellises arrived in Wellington on 2 December on the *TSS Wahine*. While their journey was in part a holiday, an exploration of the distant region of the empire and an outreach to the architects and planners there, the principal reason for their journey was to visit their daughter New Zealand, Charlotte (1919–2009), who was due to give birth to twins in Hamilton.¹⁰ Clough had recently stepped down from his brief Chairmanship of the Stevenage New Town Development Corporation – a position he found himself ill-suited to. The Williams-Ellises had two other children: Susan (1918–2007),¹¹ and a son, Christopher (1923–1944), who had died at Cassino. In 1945 Charlotte had married a fellow scientist, and New Zealander, Lindsey Wallace in London before moving to his homeland the following year.¹² Lindsey and Charlotte were both then working at the Ruakura Animal Research Station. Their twins were born two weeks prior to the arrival of their British grandparents.¹³ After being welcomed to Wellington by Joe Heenan, the Under-Secretary of the Internal Affairs Department,¹⁴ the Williams-Ellises quickly made their way northwards to their daughter and her family.

Clough and Amabel Williams-Ellis were also familiar names in New Zealand. He was an outspoken commentator on architecture and town planning and his publications were readily available.¹⁵ She was a regular contributor to *The Spectator* and her views on various matters were frequently reported. Clough gave lectures on architecture and planning and both husband and wife gave radio talks, with Amabel speaking on the work of scientists in the “Broadcasts to Schools”¹⁶ radio programme. In a land where visiting architects from abroad were a rare occurrence, Clough’s comments the country’s architecture would draw much interest.

In Wellington

The Williams-Ellises returned to Wellington in late January.¹⁷ Clough studied the proposed town plan for Upper Hutt, viewing that region from air and on the ground. The Mayor of Upper Hutt, E.W. Nicholas, reported that while it was impossible for Clough to report on the details of the scheme in the time available, he had expressed general agreement with the proposed plans.¹⁸ Contemporary photographs indicate that Upper Hutt was then still a rural town, with little of the proposed works begun.

On 28 January the Williams-Ellises were given a civic reception by the Wellington Mayor, William Appleton, with the Prime Minister and the High Commissioner for the United Kingdom, Sir Patrick Duff, in attendance. That night, Clough spoke to the Wellington branch of the New Zealand Institute of Architects (NZIA) where he made critical observations on the government's state housing. This programme, which paralleled British council housing developments, had constructed some 26,000 detached state houses across the country in addition to large housing blocks in Dixon Street, Wellington, and Greys Avenue, Auckland, and medium-size blocks planned for Wellington.¹⁹ The morning press reported his comments:

The speaker said he thought that the State houses were good, but they failed by being peppered about – not integrated. They were a very good example of how variety can become tedious – lots of trouble to change the colour of the roofs, and the patterns, etc, to no real effect. With a little more care and ingenuity, the houses could have been linked up, and something more made of them.

“As they are today,” said Mr. Williams-Ellis, “they’re just little spurts of sound, whereas they could have been linked up to make a tune. They are, however, a treat to what had been going on up till the war, and the point from which you could build up something more suited to your climate and background...” Pisé would give a feeling of solidity; the aspect of not being here today and gone tomorrow, which a timber house tends to give you. A pisé house built from suitable soil near at hand rises like a lark from the furrow.²⁰

It seems almost certain that the Williams-Ellises would have also seen the recent Hayes Paddock development in Hamilton when visiting their daughter.²¹ Constructed between 1939 and 1945, this was planned as a garden suburb of more than 200 detached state houses.²² There were other state houses erected in Hamilton and elsewhere as well.²³ Clough's survey of the Hutt Valley, perhaps, more strongly contributed to his perceptions of the government's housing scheme. It was later reported that at Lower Hutt he had seen “the rather dreary effect ... [of] the massing of new State houses in huge blocks across the valley and up into the hills,” which raised the ire of that city's Mayor, E.P. Hay.²⁴ The observations on state housing that he made to the members of the NZIA were reprinted throughout the country.²⁵

A Snivelling Stuffbuster

The following day, G.W. Albertson, the Director of Housing Construction in the government Public Works Department, retired after 40 years of government service.²⁶ This department

oversaw the government's state housing programme. His farewell function was attended by the Prime Minister, the Minister of Works, Robert (Bob) Semple (1873–1955), and the Assistant Director of the Housing Construction Department, Reginald Hammond. Semple could not resist making an oblique reference to Williams-Ellis' statement on state housing. Semple was quoted in the evening newspaper:

I am proud of the housing department... and I will defend it against all the snivelling stufflebusters in the world. There are some people in New Zealand who could never say anything decent about anybody. They were snivelling when they were born and they will be sniffing when they are put in their coffins. ... Notwithstanding all the trials and tribulations forced on people by international gangsters, I can say that New Zealand leads the world. It has done a good housing job as any other country in the world, if not better.²⁷

Inevitably, Semple's spirited comment overshadowed Albertson's retirement, to the extent that the senior civil servant could justifiably have felt aggrieved. Semple was noted for his lively language.²⁸ A New South Wales-born miner, he emigrated to New Zealand about 1903²⁹ after being black-listed following strike action in Victoria. He was an active unionist on New Zealand's West Coast before moving to Wellington where he advanced his political career, becoming the Minister of Public Works between 1942 and 1949 in the First Labour government. He never lost his rumbustious manner and continues to be noted for his "sometimes extravagant rhetoric."³⁰

The Response

Semple's epithet, "snivelling snufflebusters," was familiar to many New Zealanders then. The expression "snufflebuster" is dated to Australia of the 1870s,³¹ and in some quarters had become part of New Zealand speech. Semple is recorded as using the term "snivelling snufflebuster" from the mid-1930s onwards.³² News services ensured that his comment created a minor media flurry throughout New Zealand and Australia, with much comment in the public opinion columns.³³ The leader writer in the Christchurch *Press* took exception to Semple's pronouncement:

Mr Semple cannot disgrace himself without disgracing the Government for which he speaks and the people who have lifted him high enough to make a spectacle when he falls. He has offended before, without being rebuked by his leader. The Prime Minister can undo, so far as it can be undone, the harm done by his vain

colleague's unruly tongue, and should undo it. It will be better for him to speak than for Mr Semple.³⁴

Clough restated his views to a reporter from the Dunedin newspaper, the *Otago Daily Times*:

The State houses were much the best part of every New Zealand town and it was a pity that they were not more readily distinguishable. "They are a terrific boon to you. It is grand that they are so good when they might easily have turned out to be disastrous like some of our council houses at Home." The one drawback, he said, was in the matter of grouping. "I wish that as much care had been given to this matter as to the designing, but, no doubt, that will be attended to in future," he said. With careful use of colour grouping State houses could be made to play a much more important part in the planned growth, of the Dominion's towns and cities.³⁵

A few days later, the leader writer in the *Otago Daily Times* added:

But if the Housing Department is ready to listen to criticism and to accept suggestions, it does not need to await the arrival of a distinguished overseas visitor. The tenant or the prospective occupant of a State house can supply these. It is desirable that the settlements should be pleasing to the eye and that the individual houses should be aesthetically satisfying, but in the present emergency it is of prime importance that the houses should be designed for speedy construction.³⁶

On 1 February the Williams-Ellises left Dunedin for Stewart Island where Clough had been commissioned to design a house of rammed-earth construction for Amabel's second cousin once removed, Noeline Baker (1878–1958).³⁷ Returning to the South Island a few days later, he mused upon the neologism to a reporter:

Mr Semple suggests ... that I do not know much about New Zealand. That, to my regret, is unfortunately true though I am now repairing the deficiency most diligently in the hope that my knowledge may one day match my admiration.

I will confess indeed that I am still so ignorant that I don't even know what a "snivelling snufflebuster" is except that – in Mr Semple's opinion – I myself am

one. I have a great liking for vigorous sounding words that are new to me, and when they are abusive, as from its context “snufflebuster” would seem to be, I treasure them for suitable future use myself. But not of course until I have discovered the precise meaning, which consultation with several experienced seafaring men, who should I feel have known, has so far failed to reveal.

One cannot be too careful, for though quite possibly a perfectly proper expression for a Minister to use in reference to a visiting technician – against within his gates – it might not otherwise be thought good manners.³⁸

He then discussed how his criticism was meant to be constructive and that – like government officials in the home country – Semple should remain receptive to helpful observation voiced by a subject expert:

The possibility of course remains that Mr Semple has himself been misreported as I feel sure that I must have been, for in striving to comment helpfully on his department’s impressive achievements, I have been scrupulous to be far more polite than I ever am at home. But there the ministers who invite my constructive criticism well know that I have only one interest, and that is to help them get any job of work done as well as it possibly can be done.

It seems a pity that Mr Semple should be so impregnably unreceptive and consequently unaware of ideas that, in contrast, I have found my brother architects and town-planners in New Zealand eager to discuss with alert intelligence and an open mind. Actually, I have said so much in praise of New Zealand’s admirable housing effort that I feared I was becoming rather a bore about it, all my friendly comments being inspired by the feeling that any country that could do as well as that, might well do even better, especially in such matters as grouping and harmonious integration.

And so you could and should, and no browbeating by anyone will ever make me say that you have already 100 per cent. perfection when you manifestly have not – any more than we have in England.³⁹

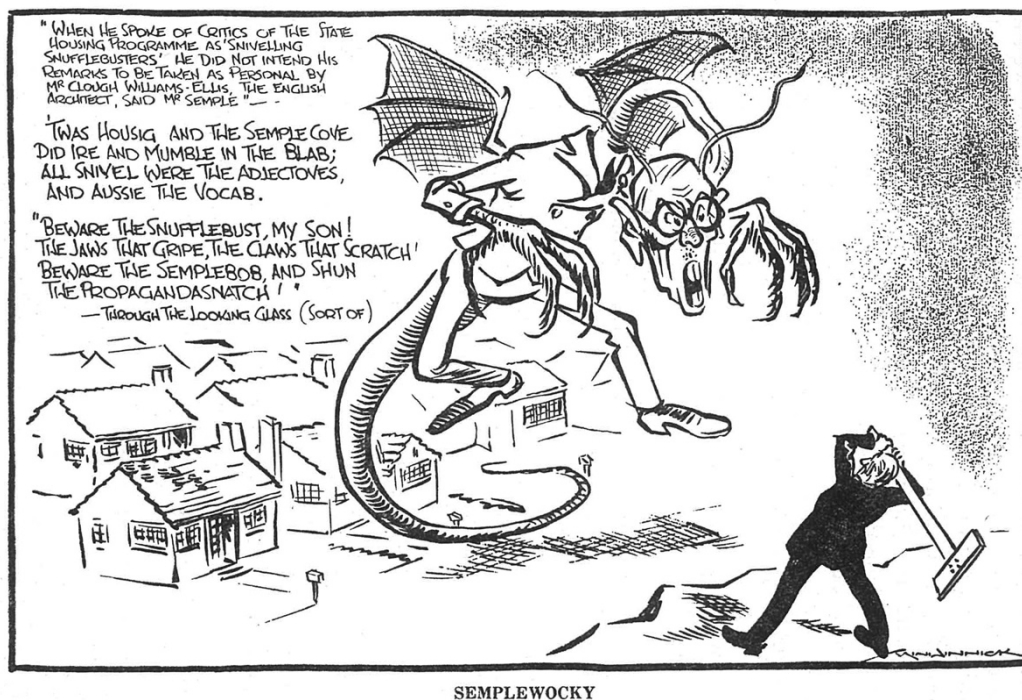


Figure 1. Gordon Minhinnick, "Semplewocky" (*New Zealand Herald*, February 10, 1948, 8). Reproduced with permission of the *New Zealand Herald*.

Gordon Minhinnick (1902–1992), the cartoonist of Auckland's politically centre-right *New Zealand Herald*, revelled in the controversy. Regularly making fun of the Labour politicians, he had often mocked Semple for his colourful language and particular hobby horses.⁴⁰ Minhinnick parodied Lewis Carroll's poem from *Through the Looking Glass*, "The Jabberwocky" with a cartoon entitled "Semplewocky" (Figure 1).⁴¹ Here Williams-Ellis was depicted defending himself, with vortal tee-square at hand, against a winged-monster with a face of Semple. However, unlike the monster emerging from the forest in John Tenniel's illustration (Figure 2), Minhinnick showed the "Semplewocky" rising above a sea of uniform state houses. His parodying text read:

When he spoke of critics of the state housing programme as "sniffing snufflebusters" he did not intend his remarks to be taken his personal by Mr Clough Williams-Ellis, the English architect, said Mr Semple.

Twas housig and the Semple cove
Did ire and mumble in the blab;
All snivel were the adjectoves,
And Aussie the vocab.

“Beware the Snufflebust, my son!
The jaws that gripe, the claws that scratch
Beware the Semplebob and shun
The Propagandasnatch!”⁴²
– Through the Looking Glass (sort of)



Figure 2. John Tenniel's illustration of the Jabberwocky from Lewis Carroll's *Through the Looking-Glass and What Alice Found There* (1871). Wikimedia Commons.

Gordon Minhinnick had trained as an architect which may further explain his particular interest in the housing programme. Prior to his full-time employment as a cartoonist, he was articled to Prouse and Gummer architects (later Gummer and Ford) for four years in the 1920s, and he had completed some architectural papers at Auckland University College.⁴³ The image must have appealed to Clough, who – perhaps flattered by the attention – included the image in his 1971 autobiography.⁴⁴ Nevertheless, when considered in the context of Minhinnick's

wider oeuvre, the cartoon must be seen as an example of his long-term opposition to Labour, and against Semple in particular.

Making Up

On 9 January 1948, as he departed for Australia to secure steel supply, Semple unconvincingly claimed that he did not know of the comments that Williams-Ellis had made at Albertson's retirement function, and that his reproach was directed at critics of state housing generally:

My remarks were directed at critics within New Zealand. I was amazed to read the reply by Mr Williams-Ellis. He put up a straw man, for I was not referring to him. I take no exception to reasonable, rational criticism, and do not object to visitors offering suggestions on housing or any other scheme, for I realise that no scheme or individual is infallible. We have to improve things by trial and error, and any help is welcome. I am sorry if I wounded the feelings of Mr Williams-Ellis. After I saw his reply to me I read his original statement, and take no exception to it. I will not go into details as to just what a "snivelling snuffle-buster" means at this stage, but if Mr Williams-Ellis will call on me, I will try and [sic] enlarge his Australian vocabulary.⁴⁵

Mr. Semple said that the blame for coupling his and Williams-Ellis' remarks lay with the Wellington morning newspaper.⁴⁶ In turn, Williams-Ellis responded:

Everything seems quite amicably settled now... I am glad it is not a quarrel between Mr Semple and myself, as that would be foolish. I am sure we would both be interested in each other's points of view. We were both quarrelling not with ourselves but with bad building and bad planning. I am looking forward to meeting Mr Semple.⁴⁷

A week later the Williams-Ellises were hosted to afternoon tea with the Prime Minister, where Clough attempted to restore relations with Semple, who was then still abroad. "I await his return, and we will probably fall on each other's necks. It is obviously absurd for us to be firing bullets at each other when they are meant for other people. I hope that the things that have happened will turn out to be the basis of a firm and cordial friendship," he stated.⁴⁸ Presumably, Clough was well aware that his advice had fallen on unwilling ears.

Criticism of State Housing

New Zealanders did not take kindly to criticism voiced by visitors from abroad. Nevertheless, such people were routinely asked of their opinions, and many made observations. Several visitors criticised New Zealand housing through this period: less than twelve months before the Williams-Ellis' visit, the editor of the *Statesman* of India, Ian Stephens, had been critical of the perishable building materials used in New Zealand,⁴⁹ and ten years later Nikolaus Pevsner would make, what would become, oft-quoted criticism of its suburbs in a BBC radio talk.⁵⁰

Reporting Williams-Ellis' comments in 1948, a reporter in the *Southland Times* had observed the sensitivity of New Zealanders to comments made by visitors from the home country:

Criticism of the State houses are, however liable to rouse keen resentment from Cabinet Ministers and housing officials, who are extremely sensitive on this subject... Criticism [by Williams-Ellis] of the types of house and the effect of the scheme as a whole has been deeply resented. ... It is apparently from the experience of visitors to New Zealand that although New Zealanders, especially their Mayors, politicians and Government officials, are happy to bask in the warmth of any praise that may be offered, they are acutely sensitive to criticism.⁵¹

However, it may have been more complicated than this. Support for Labour was waning, and they would lose the election to the conservative National government in late 1949. Semple, who was then 74 years old, must have felt the burden of his years, which coupled with an awareness of growing opposition to his party, could have put him under some additional stress. It is possible this may have triggered the response he voiced at Albertson's farewell.

Williams-Ellis Reflects

In March 1948, Clough Williams-Ellis underwent leg surgery in Wellington.⁵² The Williams-Ellises were expected back in Britain on 22 May which suggests that they left New Zealand in early April.⁵³ Later, Clough would recall his antipodean sojourn in his 1971 autobiography, describing the controversies regarding his comments on Sydney town planning and on New Zealand state housing. He further recounted that he had recorded six radio programmes, "a sort of testament, a planning credo and commentary with special reference to New Zealand's many problems," which would be played after his departure from New Zealand.⁵⁴ "[I do not know] what was generally thought of my delayed legacy," he wrote, "but as the New Zealand architects, like the Australian, subsequently elected me to honorific status in their Institutes, I

conclude that they were mostly with me.”⁵⁵ In 1948 the Council of the NZIA accorded him the, then unique, status of “Corresponding Member.”⁵⁶

Endnotes

- ¹ “U.K. Visit as Bursaries,” *Sydney Morning Herald*, January 17, 1948, 2.
- ² “Well-Known British Architect to Visit Australia,” *Construction* (Sydney) 59 (October 22, 1947): 4; “News Flash,” *News* (Adelaide), 28 October 1947, 3.
- ³ “60-Hr. Week Urged for Housewives,” *News* (Adelaide), November 5, 1947, 3; “Housewives Grumble Too Much,” *Daily Telegraph* (Sydney), November 9, 1947, 7.
- ⁴ “‘New Town’ Planner,” *The Advertiser* (Adelaide), November 4, 1947, 3 ; “Clough Williams-Ellis to Lecture in Melbourne and Sydney,” *Construction* 59 (November 12, 1947): 3.
- ⁵ Margaret Forte, “Noted Town Planner Finds Adelaide Suburbs ‘A Tragedy’,” *News* (Adelaide), November 5, 1947, 2.
- ⁶ “Town Planning With Gusto: The Inimitable Mr. Clough Williams-Ellis: An Inspiring Address,” *Construction* 59 (19 November 1947): 6. Also reprinted in *Building and Engineering* 11 (November 24, 1947): 55, 57.
- ⁷ Clough Williams-Ellis, *Architect Errant: The Autobiography of Clough Williams-Ellis* (London: Constable, 1971), 251.
- ⁸ Williams-Ellis, *Architect Errant*, 251.
- ⁹ “Building a Better Britain: The Aims of Her Town Planners, Explained by One of Them,” *New Zealand Listener* 18, no. 443 (December 19, 1947): 6; “Planning of Cities,” *Press* (Christchurch), February 12, 1948, 3. Richard Haslam would later cite Williams-Ellis’ comment on Sydney as summing up “the enlightened attitude he hoped to create, not only in Australasia, but in the Middle East and the Mediterranean...” Richard Haslam, “Wales’s Universal Architect: Sir Clough Williams-Ellis (1883-1978),” *Country Life* 174, no. 4483 (July 21, 1983): 130.
- ¹⁰ Amabel Williams-Ellis to Foss Shanahan, letter. January 23, 1948. “Visits to NZ: Mr and Mrs Clough Williams-Ellis, 1947,” PM 59/3/316 Pt 1. R18869979, Archives New Zealand, Wellington. File opened November 1947; closed 19 March 1948.
- ¹¹ Susan would later spearheaded the production of Portmeirion ceramics.
- ¹² “Farm Science: Progress in Britain Dominion Expert Returns,” *Te Awamutu Courier*, November 1, 1946, 3.
- ¹³ “Births,” *The Times* (London), November 22, 1947, 1.
- ¹⁴ “Famous Architect, Novelist Visit N.Z.,” *Northern Advocate* (Whangarei), December 2, 1947, 5; Sir Patrick Duff to Alister McIntosh, letter. December 5, 1947. “Visits to NZ: Mr and Mrs Clough Williams-Ellis, 1947,” PM 59/3/316 Pt 1. Heenan had recently managed tours of Eleanor Roosevelt (1943), Lord and Lady Mountbatten (1946) and Field Marshall Viscount Montgomery (1947). Rachel Barrowman, “Heenan, Joseph William Allan,” *Dictionary of New Zealand Biography*, first published in 1998. *Te Ara – The Encyclopedia of New Zealand*, <https://teara.govt.nz/en/biographies/4h24/heenan-joseph-william-allan>.
- ¹⁵ His recent publications included *The Adventure of Building* (1946), *An Artist in North Wales* (1946), *On Trust for the Nation* (1947), *Living in New Towns* (1947), and *Building in Cob, Pisé, and Stabilized Earth* (1947 reprint).
- ¹⁶ On these programmes, see www.rnz.co.nz/national/programmes/afternoons/audio/201833297/sound-archives-broadcasts-to-schools.
- ¹⁷ Amabel arrived on Monday 26 January, with Clough arriving the following day. Amabel Williams-Ellis to Foss Shanahan, letter. January 23, 1948. “Visits to NZ: Mr and Mrs Clough Williams-Ellis, 1947,” PM 59/3/316 Pt 1.
- ¹⁸ “Upper Hutt Visit: Town Planner’s Approval,” *Evening Post* (Wellington), January 30, 1948, 9.
- ¹⁹ On the programme at that time, see Cedric Firth, *State Housing in New Zealand* (Wellington: Government Printer, 1949).
- ²⁰ “British Architect Criticises Failings in State Housing,” *Dominion* (Wellington), January 29, 1948, 8.
- ²¹ Hayes Paddock is only 2 miles distance from Ruakura.
- ²² Ann McEwan, *The Houses of Hayes Paddock, Hamilton* (Hamilton: Ramp Press, 2008).
- ²³ McEwan, *Houses of Hayes Paddock, Hamilton*, 20.

²⁴ “State Housing Scheme: Overseas Visitors Interested,” *Southland Times*, February 4, 1948, 6.

²⁵ “State Houses ‘Little Bursts of Sound’,” *Northern Advocate*, January 29, 1948, 4; “Variety Tedious: Dominion’s State Houses English Architect’s View,” *Gisborne Herald*, January 30, 1948, 3.

²⁶ “Director of Housing Farewelled After 40 Years of Service,” *Dominion*, January 29, 1948, 9; “Mr G.W. Albertson,” *Evening Post*, January 30, 1948, 6.

²⁷ “Quick Work: House Every 20 Minutes: Homes for the People,” *Evening Post*, January 30, 1948, 8.

²⁸ Laura Dooney, “PhD Research Highlights Unparliamentary Language in New Zealand,” *Stuff*.

December 7, 2016. www.stuff.co.nz/national/politics/87193693/phd-research-highlights-unparliamentary-language-in-new-zealand. Ruth Graham, “Withdraw and Apologise: A Diachronic Study of Unparliamentary Language in the New Zealand Parliament, 1890-1950,” PhD diss., Victoria University of Wellington, 2016.

²⁹ “Mining Life Contrasts,” *Sydney Morning Herald*, October 16, 1954, Herald magazine section 9.

³⁰ “Mining Life Contrasts”; Len Richardson, “Semple, Robert,” *Dictionary of New Zealand Biography*. <https://teara.govt.nz/en/biographies/3s11/semple-robert>.

³¹ *The Northern Miner* (Queensland), February 19, 1876, 2.

³² “Mr. Semple’s New Phrases: Forceful Denunciation of Critics,” *North Canterbury Gazette*, August 18, 1936, 5; “Christchurch South By-Election,” [letter] *Press*, May 23, 1939, 5; “Minister 67 Does Hard Labour,” *The Daily News* (Perth), March 19, 1940, 18; “The Sniffing Snufflebusters [letter],” *Otago Daily Times* (Dunedin), July 26, 1941, 13; “Oh! Mr Semple,” *Waikato Times* (Hamilton), May 24, 1945, 2.

³³ The news services were Associated Press (NZ), Australian Associated Press and Reuters. Items include: “Critic Assailed,” *Gisborne Herald*, January 30, 1948, 6; “Strong Reply,” *Ashburton Guardian*, January 30, 1948, 3; “Sniffing Snuffle-Busters: Semple Replies To Critics Of State Houses,” *Northern Advocate*, January 30, 1948, 6; “Mr Semple Snorts,” *Herald* (Melbourne), January 30, 1948, 2.

³⁴ “Semple’s Temples,” *Press*, January 31, 1948, 6. A letter followed “Semple’s Temples,” *Press*, February 3, 1948, 2. This may have been written by the editor, Pierce Hugo Napier (Hugo) Freeth who was editor between 1932 and 1957.

³⁵ “State Houses: ‘Best Part of Towns’: Architect’s Opinion,” *Otago Daily Times*, February 2, 1948, 4.

³⁶ “State Housing,” *Otago Daily Times*, February 3, 1948, 4. John Rowley Moffett, who was the editor at that time was may have been the author.

³⁷ They both shared common ancestors, Sir Henry Strachey (1736–1810) and Lady Jane Strachey (1738–1824), who were Noeline’s great-grandparents and Amabel’s great-great-grandparents. The house was later built with timber by a Scandinavian boatbuilder.

³⁸ “Architect Replies to Mr Semple: ‘Snivelling Shufflebuster’ Not Understood,” *Southland Times* (Invercargill), February 7, 1948, 4. It is possible that the reporter was the newspaper’s editor and future editor of the *New Zealand Listener*, Monte Holcroft (1902–1993).

³⁹ “Architect Replies to Mr Semple.”

⁴⁰ He had frequently mocked Semple’s advocacy of the use of construction machinery over wheelbarrows and his frequent statements that people should “get their running shoes on.”

⁴¹ “Semplewocky,” *New Zealand Herald*, February 10, 1948, 8. See Gordon Minhinnick, *More Minhinnick: Cartoons from the New Zealand Herald* (Auckland: Wilson and Horton, 1949).

⁴² Compare Carroll’s text:

’Twas brillig, and the slithy toves
Did gyre and gimble in the wabe:
All mimsy were the borogoves,
And the mome raths outrabe.

“Beware the Jabberwock, my son!
The jaws that bite, the claws that catch!
Beware the Jubjub bird, and shun
The frumious Bandersnatch!”

Martin Gardner, *The Annotated Alice: Alice’s Adventures in Wonderland and Through the Looking Glass by Lewis Carroll* (New York: Bramhall House, 1960), 191.

⁴³ Ian F. Grant, “Minhinnick, Gordon Edward George,” *Dictionary of New Zealand Biography*, first published in 1998. *Te Ara – The Encyclopedia of New Zealand*, <https://teara.govt.nz/en/biographies/4m55/minhinnick-gordon-edward-george>

⁴⁴ Williams-Ellis, *Architect Errant*, 252.

⁴⁵ “State Housing Critics: Minister’s Observations Not Personal: Mr Semple Explains,” *Ashburton Guardian*, February 9, 1948, 4. This Press Association report was reprinted throughout the country.

⁴⁶ More correctly, a Wellington evening newspaper first made this connection. "Quick Work."

⁴⁷ "Planning of Cities," *Press*, February 12, 1948, 3.

⁴⁸ "It is Probably my Welsh Blood," *Evening Post*, February 19, 1948, 10.

⁴⁹ Ian Stephens, "Imperfect Paradise: A Stranger's View of New Zealand," *New Zealand Listener* 16, no. 396 (January 24, 1947): 7.

⁵⁰ "City Planning Urged to Avoid 'Suburban Chaos'," *Press*, August 11, 1958, 10; "Suburb is N.Z.'s 'Visual Horror,'" *Press*, November 14, 1958, 20; Nikolaus Pevsner, "The Ingratiating Chaos: Impressions of New Zealand," *The Listener* (London) 60, no. 1547 (November 20, 1958): 825-27. This was a transcript of Pevsner's radio talk that was broadcast on the BBC Third Programme on the evening of November 11, 1958.

⁵¹ "State Housing Scheme: Overseas Visitors Interested."

⁵² Clough Williams-Ellis to H.P. Jefferies, letter. March 13, 1948. "Visits to NZ: Mr and Mrs Clough Williams-Ellis, 1947," PM 59/3/316 Pt 1.

⁵³ "Court Circular," *The Times*, April 24, 1948, 6.

⁵⁴ These recordings will be the subject of further research.

⁵⁵ Williams-Ellis, *Architect Errant*, 254.

⁵⁶ This membership type was especially created for Williams-Ellis. Readers should be wary of interpreting this as a snub; at that time the institute's rules determined that Honorary Fellowships were awarded to non-architects only, so Williams-Ellis was elected an Honorary Corresponding Member. Ref. NZIA Executive Committee minutes 1946-1958, November 3, 1948, p. 111; November 17, 1948, p. 166. Item 48, NZIA Archive, Tapuaka, Te Herenga Waka – Victoria University of Wellington. However, a decade later British architects who visited – namely Sir Robert Matthew and R.I.B.A. President, Kenneth Cross – were made Honorary Fellows, as were Nikolaus Pevsner and the R.I.B.A. Secretary, Cyril Douglas Spragg. Ref. NZIA Executive Committee minutes, August 1958 7, p. 710. Item 48, NZIA Archive; *New Zealand Institute of Architects: Year Book 1959* (Wellington: NZIA, 1959), 85.