

# ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Some 60 years ago, in the introduction to his path-breaking *West Coast Gold Rushes*, Philip Ross May wondered whether one could acknowledge a debt to a place and its people. In different ways, May, Patrick O'Farrell and Bill Pearson, the three writers whose work inspired this book, accepted that, as the question applied to their particular 'West Coasts', it most certainly could. The attempt to understand how each of them came to see the West Coast, and tracing the enduring influence of their writing, has enriched and sharpened my own sense of what the relationship between people and place has been over the last 150 years. Reading again the work of the subsequent generation of writers who have stood, as it were, on their shoulders has strengthened my conviction that the West Coast has continued to nurture historians and writers deeply conscious of this distinctive relationship. Long may it do so.

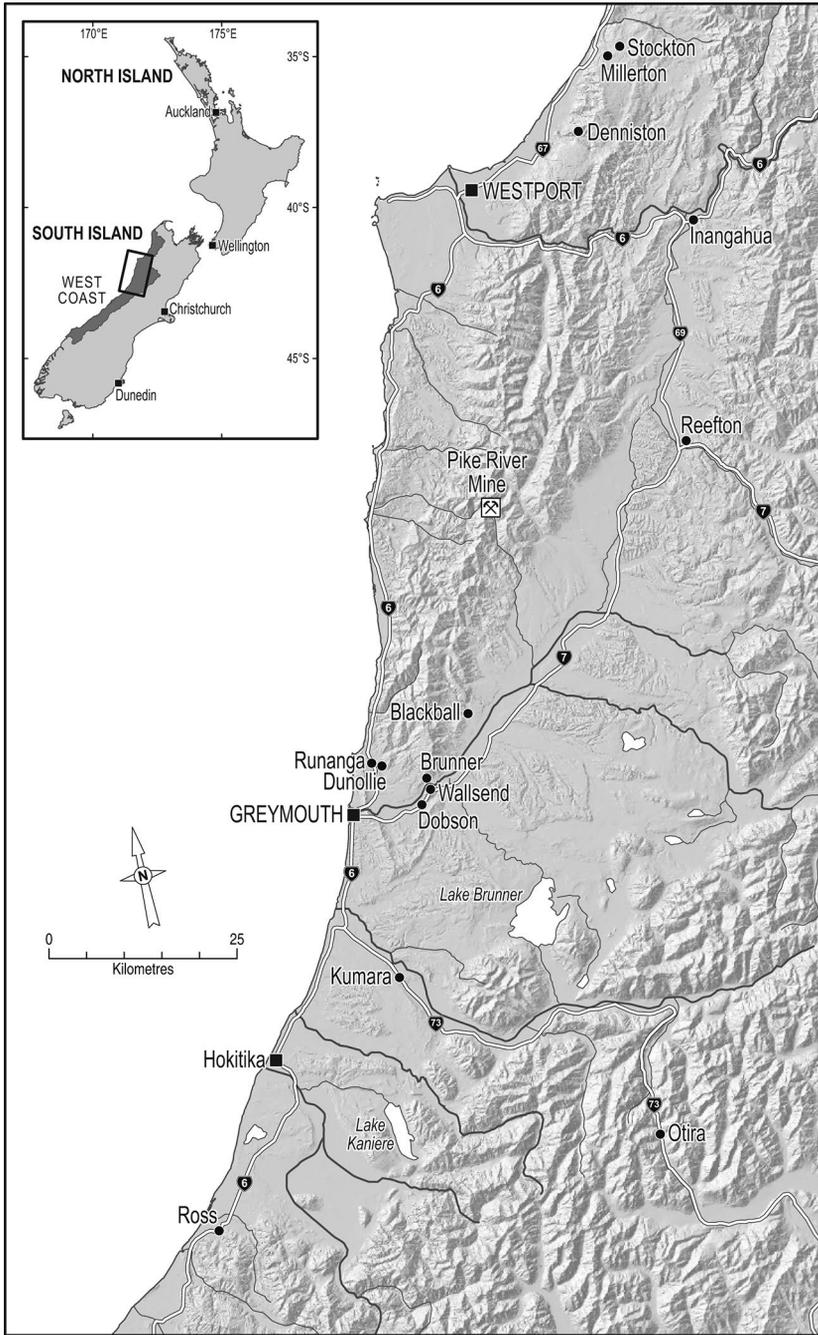
The greatest debt is to my wife, Beverley, whose particular 'West Coast' was shaped by life in Blackball and Ahaura and owes much to her maternal grandparents, Ann and Bill Bromilow, who arrived from Wigan in the first decade of the twentieth century and feature in the photo of the Blackball Socialist group in Chapter 6. Christopher, Jeffrey and Philippa May made available a photo of their father at Captains Flat, New South Wales, taken by Jeffrey in 1969 when the family was living in Canberra. Gerard O'Farrell kindly allowed the reproduction of a photo of his father while Patrick was working on his doctoral thesis at The Australian National University in the 1950s. My indebtedness to all those who have sought in their writing to understand the Coast is acknowledged throughout the text.

I have benefited over the years from discussing the West Coast and its history with a great number of people, especially Tom Brooking, Chris Connolly, Graeme Dunstall, Patrick Evans, Stuart Macintyre, Jim McAloon, Doug Munro, Paul Millar, Philippa Mein Smith, Melanie Nolan, Erik Olssen, the late Elizabeth Plumridge, Luke Trainor and Brian

Wood. I have been talking about the Coast with Des Wood since we were at primary school in Greymouth just as Pat O'Farrell made his way over the 'Hill' to begin his university studies.

The mysteries of the modern publication process have been made much less painful by my daughter Shelley, who understands these things. I am grateful to Emily Tinker and the publishing team at ANU Press and also its eight anonymous readers who provided helpful suggestions for improving the manuscript. Geoff Hunt has been an extremely patient, cheerful and perceptive editor and is beginning to experience life at the northern extension of the South Island's West Coast discussed in this book.

Len Richardson



**Map: The West Coast, South Island, New Zealand.**

Source: The author.

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