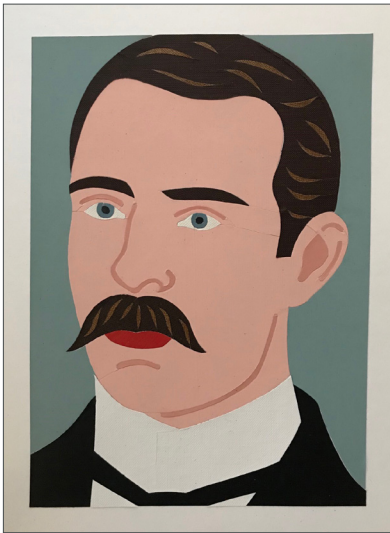


# Downfall

## *The Destruction of Charles Mackay*

PAUL DIAMOND



\$45

CATEGORY: Biography

ISBN: 978-1-99-101618-8

ESBN: 978-1-99-101620-1

THEMA: DNB, 5PSG, JBSJ, DNXC,  
NHT, 1MBN

BIC: BGH, 5SG, JFSK2, BTC, HBT,  
1MBN

BISAC: BIO006000, SOC012000,  
HIS004000, TRU010000

PUBLISHER: Massey University Press

IMPRINT: Massey University Press

PUBLISHED: November 2022

PAGE EXTENT: 328

FORMAT: Limpbound

SIZE: 206mm x 153mm

RIGHTS: World

AUTHOR'S RESIDENCE: Wellington

### AN IMPORTANT NEW HISTORY THROUGH A QUEER LENS

1920 New Zealanders were shocked by the news that the brilliant, well-connected mayor of genteel Whanganui had shot a young gay poet, D'Arcy Cresswell, who he thought was blackmailing him. They were then riveted by the trial that followed.

Mackay was sentenced to hard labour and later left the country, only to be shot by a police sniper during street unrest in Berlin during the rise of the Nazis.

Mackay had married into Whanganui high society, and the story has long been the town's dark secret. The outcome of years of digging by historian Paul Diamond, *Downfall: The destruction of Charles Mackay* shines a clear light on the vengeful impulses behind the blackmail and Mackay's ruination.

The cast of this tale includes the Prince of Wales, the president of the RSA, Sir Robert Stout, Blanche Baughan . . . even Lady Ottoline Morrell. But it is much more than an extraordinary story of scandal. At its heart, the Mackay affair reveals the perilous existence of homosexual men and how society conspired to control and punish them.

This important new history is a careful examination of an important and little understood moment in our past and is unique for the queer lens through which it views the complex lives and motivations of key figures in late-Edwardian New Zealand and the systems within which they operated.

### ABOUT THE AUTHOR

**Paul Diamond** (Ngāti Hauā, Te Rarawa, Ngāpuhi) is Curator Māori at the Alexander Turnbull Library. He is the author of *A Fire in Your Belly* (Huia, 2003), *Makereti: Taking Māori to the world* (Random House, 2007) and *Savaged to Suit: Māori and cartooning in New Zealand* (Fraser Books, 2018), and has also worked as an oral historian and broadcaster. In 2017 he was awarded the Creative New Zealand Berlin Writer's Residency.

### SALES POINTS

- An important new history
- An impressive contribution to New Zealand's growing acknowledgement of its queer history
- Well written and engaging