

the stories of how people used or interacted with ... items, and perhaps continue to do so' (p.13).

As a rule, readers of this type of publication expect high production values, and the design of *The Lives of Colonial Objects* goes a long way towards satisfying this often exacting audience. However, the book's diverse photographic styles and their mixed quality, creates a slightly haphazard, 'scrapbooked' feel. Unfortunately, this weakens the overall impact of some of the main object images. And the captions, another critical interpretive feature of this genre, lose their independent storytelling potential due to unevenness in length and tone. This could put off readers who use them as the main point of entry into the book's content

The book's ambitions are clearly demarcated in an accessible introduction. Here, instead of outlining a theoretical approach, the editors enthuse about material culture, and emphasize how objects and their stories can 'inform and enrich major themes in the colonial history of Aotearoa New Zealand' (p.19). They repeat this straightforward proposition – that the value of objects for historians and history-lovers derives from their ability to enrich existing historical themes and narratives – several times. Admittedly, it is a tall order to expect a multi-authored volume of very short essays written for a general audience to revolutionize the existing historiography. However, the book's main proposition raises several related questions: does New Zealand's colonial history need enriching? If so, why? And do objects as sources enable historians to enrich, retell or upset that history in an innovative or particular way? A more theoretical afterword is a roll call of relevant academic literature, largely generated by museum studies, cultural studies and anthropology, but touches on these questions only in passing.

The Lives of Colonial Objects achieves what its editors hoped it would: it enriches and complicates New Zealand's colonial past – and with a deft and light touch. It is a first step along a path towards history with a material turn: the work for historians exploring the potential of objects as sources, to unsettle and reconfigure New Zealand's history, has just begun.

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Post Marks: The Way We Were – Early New Zealand Postcards, 1897–1922. By Leo Haks, Colleen Dallimore and Alan Jackson. Kowhai Media, Auckland, 2015. 327pp. NZ price: \$69.99. ISBN: 9780987654663.

Post Marks seeks to introduce readers to New Zealand picture postcards and invites them to consider what they reveal about life here at the time. The book focuses on the 25-year period from 1897, the year New Zealand's first official picture postcard was released, until 1922. It includes the peaks in New Zealand postcard production between 1903 and 1910 and again during the First World War. New Zealand postcards

in this context means those featuring local subjects, though they were not necessarily printed in this country. The many postcards used in New Zealand but not featuring New Zealand subjects are outside the scope of the book.

The authors are collectors of postcards and the majority of those included were sourced from private collections rather than public institutions. Their enthusiasm for the subject is clear and the introduction makes a sound case for using postcards as a portal into New Zealand's history, while acknowledging their limitations as a source. A generous selection of over 500 different postcards is included but the sheer volume of postcards available has meant the authors have decided to focus on lesser-known ones, featuring images that may have had little public exposure since they were created.

Alan Jackson's interesting short essay on the early history of the picture postcard in New Zealand usefully frames the rest of the book by placing the topic in the context of changes in communication technology, the international history of the postcard and the development of picture postcards in New Zealand. The remainder of the book is divided into four main sections: 'The Way We Were', 'The Great Outdoors', 'The Fat of the Land' and 'The Building of a Nation'. These sections are comprised of close-to-scale reproductions of the postcards with captions for each card, including the reproduction of panoramic postcards on fold-out sections. This is a real strength of this publication, as the detail in the original images can be appreciated. There are also 14 sections of writing on topics such as Antarctic exploration, exhibitions and tourism, which provide additional contextual information on the postcards depicted. Other sections highlight noteworthy postcards, though it is not always clear what makes these cards noteworthy compared to those around them.

Compared to other books surveying New Zealand postcards, especially William Main and Alan Jackson's *Wish You Were Here* and William Main's *Send Me a Postcard*, the key strengths of *Post Marks* are undoubtedly the reproductions of every postcard at a scale that allows the details to be appreciated and the close focus on the key years of postcards in New Zealand. While some information is provided on the postcards' publishers and photographers in *Post Marks*, *Wish You Were Here* remains a better source for that information. A list of postcard producers is included, but an index would have been a useful addition, especially given how many subjects reoccur throughout the book. In common with other publications on New Zealand postcards, the focus is on the cards rather than the messages. One noteworthy section does discuss the messages on a group of postcards. In another instance a message apparently written by the subject of the postcard, Makareti Papakura, is visible in the image but is not referred to in the caption, which seems a missed opportunity.

It was clearly a challenge to provide captions for each of the postcards and they vary in quality. Most provide useful contextual information that may not be apparent to the reader. At times they pick up details viewers might otherwise miss, and at best they point out the unusual events featured in the postcards, such as a horse being 'knighted' with a tiki. Other captions add little to what can be seen in the image. In some instances the information provided is of dubious relation to the image on the postcard. The book would have been improved if the authors had resisted the urge to add their commentary to every image.

Post Marks largely succeeds in its aim of introducing people to New Zealand postcards. What is enjoyable about this book is that it presents what Leo Haks mentions at the end of the introduction, ‘a kaleidoscope view of early New Zealand’ (p.13). It truly highlights the vast range of uses to which New Zealanders put millions of postcards, from the prosaic to the bizarre.

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A Bloody Road Home: World War Two and New Zealand's Heroic Second Division. By Christopher Pugsley. Penguin Books, Auckland, 2014. 620pp. NZ price: \$70.00. ISBN: 9780143571896.

A Bloody Road Home is a serious read. The latest in a long line of histories of the First and Second World Wars by Pugsley, it is the first to cover New Zealand's Second Division as a whole. Previous historians have approached each unit or campaign separately, such as Jim Henderson's history of the 22 Battalion and Monty Soutar's acclaimed *Ngā Tama Toa*. Weighing in at 2.3 kg and running to 620 pages, the book consolidates the numerous disparate histories. It looks at how the Division worked together (when it was able to) and how the commanders' different leadership styles worked for and against the Division. The role of Freyberg – particularly the way he juggled his own relationships with the British Army and New Zealand government – is also considered. Governor-General Lieutenant General Sir Jerry Mateparae provides the foreword and highlights the enduring legacy of the men of the Second Division, their experiences and sacrifices.

While this book is a worthy history, it is also an engaging read. The lively descriptions of campaigns and analysis of events and people are the strengths of this book. I found the descriptions of battles and camp life evocative and the analysis of the commanders' personalities interesting. Armed with extensive reading, and an understanding of strategy and the terrain where the battles were fought, Pugsley reassesses the work of other military historians. He explains the tactics of the commanders and the reasons for successes and failures. In particular, his descriptions of Crete and Greece highlight the expectations of the commanders and the realities on the ground.

As well as dealing with the battles and tactics, Pugsley examines the people involved: commanders and officers, soldiers and doctors. The commander of each unit is introduced with the words of his own men – taken from the diary, letters or oral history of a subaltern, not those of an officer, commander or historian. This is a nice touch, as we are encouraged to consider the commander from the point of view of his men.

Despite the focus on military history, the personal experiences of the men of the Second Division are evoked throughout. From the start, Pugsley tells the human stories of the men of the Division. He begins with the Morrison family. Four sons and