

Living in the 20th Century: New Zealand History in Photographs 1900–1980. By Bronwyn Dalley. Bridget Williams Books and Craig Potton Publishing in association with the Ministry for Culture and Heritage, Wellington, 2000. 280 pp. NZ price: \$49.95. ISBN 1-877-24212-8.

DEMONSTRATING her comprehensive knowledge of twentieth-century New Zealand society, and writing in the crisp, clear style that rendered her major work on child welfare (*Family Matters*) so accessible, Bronwyn Dalley has structured this visual study of images from the Archives New Zealand photographic collection around six main topics: paid and unpaid work, recreation and leisure, communication, accommodation and shelter, hair and clothing, food and drink. A final section focuses on the main public events that official photographers recorded throughout the century. Short introductory essays for each chapter incorporate both an overview and perceptive analysis of the main social changes. The dominant themes are illustrated with a selection of black and white images, each identified by date or decade and, generally, regional location. Detailed Archives New Zealand references are listed for every photograph. Chapter endnotes are also comprehensive and draw heavily on recent scholarship, thereby providing readers with a useful reading list on social and cultural history.

While the text discusses changes over the entire century, the dominance of the middle decades reflects the emphasis of official photographic activity. Some 144 images relate to the 1950s–1960s, 59 to the 1970s through to the mid-1980s, and 160 cover the 1900s–1940s. The most significant periods of change, in Dalley's view, were those associated with the two world wars, and she challenges prevailing notions of the 1950s as a decade of conformity and dullness. Cultural and socio-economic differences are also stressed, although the more visible ethnic diversity of New Zealand society in the second half of the century is not well represented in the chosen images. An obvious effort has been made to give representative regional coverage but there is a noticeable preponderance of images (more than 70) from Wellington and its environs. Only two wet-weather images are reproduced (pp.114, 249) and summer is the season most commonly depicted. Dalley does not indicate what proportion of the nearly one million Archives New Zealand images she viewed while making her selection, but both gender and generational balances have been attained.

For the most part, Dalley's captions are a model for a photographic history, informative, analytical and succinct. The very few questionable assertions and inaccuracies (e.g. pp.63, 164, 173, 253), curious captioning (pp.57, 198–9) and the lack of linking commentary when images reproduced in different parts of the book are obviously joined in the collection (e.g. pp.55/162, 104/171) are only noticeable because they are not the norm. All of the images have been reproduced with a clarity that makes possible close reading of the visual texts. Most are presented as full or half-page plates, and very few of the larger images lose significant detail when printed across two pages. Generous margins and an uncluttered layout add to the appeal of this book. The successful collaboration between Archives New Zealand and the (renamed) History Group in the Ministry for Culture and Heritage has been enhanced by the professionalism of their co-publishers.

For a new generation of readers *Living in the 20th Century* will be the stimulus that Keith Sinclair and Wendy Harrex provided earlier in *Looking Back* (1978). Over the past three decades, though, historians have come to critique their sources more closely and Dalley's own work, in *Fragments* (2000) especially, has challenged readers to consider new perspectives. It is therefore disappointing that there was not a rather more extensive treatment of some of the central issues that underpin the basic conception of this work,

particularly the role of the official photographer in recording and promoting the work of the state, and the intellectual challenges for an historian working within the constraints of such a collection. A brief note on the growing accessibility of the under-utilized Archives New Zealand images would also have provided further encouragement for other researchers to search these sources. Such is the overall impact and achievement of this work, though (and the very successful photographic exhibition that accompanied its launch) that one can only hope Archives New Zealand will be encouraged to commission more publications of a similar kind.

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Common Ground? Heritage and Public Places in New Zealand. Edited by Alexander Trapeznik. University of Otago Press, Dunedin, 2000. 169 pp. NZ price: \$39.95. ISBN 1-877133-91-4.

LIKE RELIGION AND POLITICS, architecture can excite heated debate between followers of divergent persuasions. Temperatures are rarely higher than when buildings are poised between salvation through the efforts of historic preservationists and demolition for new development. Common interests can be hard to find. The question mark in the title to this collection carries a lot of freight. While editor Alexander Trapeznik and the contributors to the volume are generally 'upbeat' about the future of historic places and the existence of a public consensus on the virtues of preserving our 'cultural heritage', their text reveals myriad competing interests, a shifting political environment and a shallow public pocket in the management of what can be seen as priceless 'national treasures'.

The purpose of *Common Ground?* is not so much to make the case for historic preservation, heritage or public history (the nomenclature is itself the subject of much reflection throughout the book) but rather to bring together a range of perspectives from those working in the area. The book seeks to act as a guide to those working with New Zealand heritage issues, as well as to provide a wider readership with some knowledge and reflection on the development of heritage practice and policy. The main focus is on buildings and sites: historic places and structures.

A central dilemma running through the book is one of history as process and history as exotic object or destination. Practitioner Jeremy Salmond notes that a building 'is inconveniently sedentary'. Unlike the object in a museum collection it cannot be taken to a purpose-designed place for special care, interpretation and display. The architect working on a historic site or building must work in the real world. Carrying responsibility for preserving, maintaining and possibly also restoring the physical remnants of a structure, the architect's concern is immediate and measurable. The historian making a case for preservation or involved in debate over its future interpretation is more likely to have a wider interest in narratives surrounding the site or structure. Between such standpoints there can be a gulf. Is the purpose of the building as a historic place intended to be a place to visit one point in the past (often the original structure and purpose), or to show a changing galaxy of purpose, use and context?

Different conflicts exist around the functional use made of New Zealand's historic places, as Gavin McLean's chapter 'From Shrine to Shop' demonstrates. While an earlier heritage tradition was inclined to treat historic places as reverent showcases (notably the house museum), McLean charts a growing pluralism, commercialism and popularization.