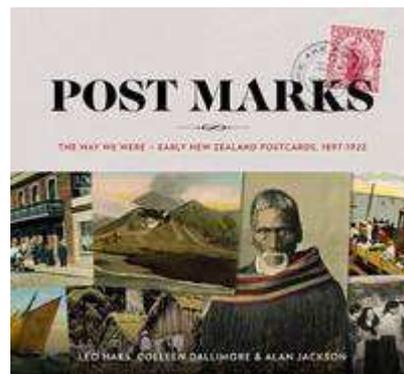


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## Book Review: Post Marks, by Leo Haks, Colleen Dallimore & Alan Jackson



The aim of this book is to provide an introduction to New Zealand picture postcards beginning in 1897, when the first official postcard was published. The 25-year period that this book covers includes the boon years in New Zealand postcard production, 1903-1910 and World War 1.

As a lifelong collector, Leo Haks wondered what visual material would catch his eye when he moved to New Zealand to live with his partner and co-author Colleen Dallimore. Good examples of early New Zealand photographs were hard to find: however, many had been reproduced as postcards. This book is the result of collecting postcards through eight years of buying postcards in second-hand shops, from dealers and on-line.

Their other co-author Alan Jackson has been a collector since childhood – collecting postage stamps initially, then moving on to collect all things connected in some way with the post: New Zealand and other postal markings, pictorial postcards, cinderella stamps and stamps of the world, especially those relating to World War 1. He has also written extensively on these subjects.

Some of the most interesting postcards in this book came from the collectors of the New Zealand Postcard Society. The Society's quarterly magazine, *Postcard Pillar*, published its 100th edition in August 2013. It has also published an index of the first 30 years of Pillar postcards and its website offers articles from early editions of the magazine: [postcard.org.nz](http://postcard.org.nz). This book draws from these resources and more to present a kaleidoscopic view of early New Zealand.

**Every subject that you can possibly think of is reproduced into a postcard.** From portraits, events, scenery are all covered in this book. Most of us will have sent

postcards of some sort while on holiday. I know I have, and of course postcards are still widely available for purchase now. The photos on the front provide a fascinating insight into our history and of course events of families, and on to towns, cities, livestock, sport, mining and landmarks.



One of the rarest postcards is actually a leaf, from the *Brachyglottis repanda* tree (bushman's toilet paper). Postcard collectors say most leaf postcards originated from Stewart Island. Leaves as postcards were banned by the Post Office in 1915.

Some of the subjects reproduced onto postcards I found quite funny: One example is a portrait of Amy Bock. She entered into New Zealand's first same-sex marriage without her partner realising she was a woman. Bock, who dressed as a man under the name of Percy Carol Redwood, married Agnes Ottaway on April 21 1909. Bock gave Ottaway one hundred pounds worth of jewellery that had been obtained fraudulently. The marriage only lasted three days before Ottaway discovered the truth. Bock was imprisoned for two years. She had already served prison terms for theft and fraud in Christchurch, Wellington, Dunedin, Oamaru and Timaru. Bock remained on the wrong side of the law until she died on August 29 1943.

Another example of an unusual subject, was a postcard of a two-headed calf. A two-headed calf would have been an unusual challenge for a taxidermist but not a unique sight in a livestock-rich nation, where animal deformities can be expected but are not usually revealed so publicly reproduced as a postcard. This postcard satisfied the Victorian curiosity for the bizarre.

The history of postcards is a fascinating subject and I found this book hard to put down once I started reading. The research that has gone into producing it is mind-blowing. A fantastic book.

Reviewed by Christine Frayling

*Post Marks: The Way We Were – Early New Zealand Postcards 1897 – 1922*

by Leo Haks, Colleen Dallimore & Alan Jackson

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