

in this book. Identity is always part of a counter-argument to be refuted. Potter's case is convincing, but it means that there is a certain lack of fit between the substantive chapters and the invocation of the Seeley–Colley literature on Britishness in the book's introduction and conclusion. Potter wants to stress that imperial identity is significant generally *and* that it is not the most important variable in explaining the increasing links between British and Dominion news organizations up to 1918 and through the interwar period. These two positions are compatible, but a discussion of the one will be of limited use in illuminating the other, and vice versa. Different aspects of the imperial past are concerned, and different kinds of historical inquiry are required to explore them. As Potter's book shows, the imperial integration of the press was not primarily an ideological project. There were ideological preconditions for this press system — for instance, the interest of colonial readers in metropolitan news — but these are not matters that can be explained by writing about the politics and infrastructure of news. Potter's decision to concentrate on the business and politics of news is a perfectly legitimate one, and I would rather have a book on the press system than another study of the *Trivialliteratur* of empire: but this choice means that identity is not as useful a rubric for the subject as Potter suggests.

This criticism notwithstanding, *News and the British World* is a path-breaking book. It deserves a scholarly readership as broad as Potter's own research horizons. I am assigning it to my honours students this year; it is a pity that, at £50, it is not a book that one could ever ask them to buy.

CHRIS HILLIARD

John Pascoe. By Chris Maclean. Craig Potton Publishing, Nelson, 2003. 344 pp. NZ price: \$59.95. ISBN 1-877333-06-9.

IN THE CHRISTCHURCH OFFICE of Archives New Zealand there is a stained-glass window depicting Main Divide passes and river valleys, and notable explorers associated with them. John Pascoe is included — appropriately, for he was a mountaineer, historian and Chief Archivist as well as a distinguished photographer.

Each chapter is clearly thematic as well as being chronological, for each of Pascoe's personae dominated at a certain period of his life — but always there were the mountains. John Pascoe and his twin Paul were born small and prematurely, and John, the elder, was expected to follow his father into the law. He never qualified, but building on family holidays in the Canterbury foothills, devoted his energy to mountaineering (and was by no means the only despair of a high school physical education master to win alpine renown). The late 1920s saw the discovery of the potential which the Southern Alps, north and south of the Mount Cook region, had for unguided climbing and tramping. Pascoe excelled on long and arduous expeditions; not only was he the 'intelligence officer' responsible for planning routes — no small job then — he seems to have been better on mixed terrain rather than the more technical peaks of Mount Cook. Maclean's account of this critical phase in the development of tramping and climbing is outstanding.

In 1937 the 29-year-old Pascoe sought work in Wellington. He hoped to write guidebooks; instead he became an editor, specializing in photographs in the embryonic historical publications wing of Joe Heenan's Department of Internal Affairs. There Pascoe truly found his niche. At this time too he hit the international stage with the publication of his first book, *Unclimbed New Zealand*. For the rest of his life, Pascoe the writer and editor co-existed with Pascoe the bushman and Pascoe the photographer. He married the equally remarkable Dorothy Harding in 1940 — a marriage which humanized the rather gauche young man she met in the late 1930s. Wartime saw Pascoe develop his skill as

a documentary photographer and Maclean's discussion is a very useful insight into this dimension of the propaganda war.

In a sense the chapter on Pascoe as Family Man, while engaging, is not the basis for broader conclusions about family life in the 1950s. Nor really could it have been, as a sample of one, although the security and stimulation which parents could provide if they had the mind and modest means are well shown. But here too there is much discussion of Pascoe as photographer. Pascoe's own writing on the practice of outdoor photography was sparse and Maclean, perhaps unfortunately, devotes little space to discussing or assessing Pascoe's images. As a documentary photographer, Maclean stresses, Pascoe relied on the low-slung Rolleicord, which made it possible to take photographs without the subjects necessarily being aware of it. Much of Pascoe's documentary work was inspired. As an outdoor photographer, Pascoe seems to have eschewed striving for effect, and took photographs primarily to please himself. From his earliest work there is considerable care in composition. That this was due to talent and not simply persistence is suggested by the mercifully few examples of Pascoe's poetry.

During the 1950s, Pascoe began publishing alpine history, including his masterpiece, *Mr Explorer Douglas*. There is a good account of the efforts which this book, which is now a collectors' item, entailed. Pascoe combined this work with employment as the first secretary of the Historic Places Trust, the development of which Maclean discusses well. Pascoe's maxim on administration is worth remembering: 'delegate authority, make decisions without delays, don't fight on forlorn issues unless great principles are involved; cut all red tape to shreds unless it is needed as a protection against the wicked and the very foolish'. A brief period as controller of Wildlife was followed by Pascoe's last job, Chief Archivist. Here Maclean rebuts suggestions that Pascoe displayed little talent or energy. The position was an exercise in frustration given the attitude of the government and of other departments. While Pascoe secured better salaries, more positions, and a commitment (much delayed in execution) to proper facilities, a lingering sense remains that Ian Wards's criticisms had some merit. On the other hand, Archives lacked a sympathetic and literate Minister until Allan Highet (1975–1984) and a historical profession interested in New Zealand history only achieved critical mass at the same time.

Despite his intense and varied life, Pascoe was perhaps selectively known to specialists in his various fields. This biography integrates the life of this remarkable man across his numerous fields of interest, and does so sympathetically without being uncritical. Pascoe, especially in his younger days, could be bumptious and egotistical as well as naïve and dogmatic. The book is written, illustrated and produced to the highest standards.

JIM McALOON

Lincoln University