

the Treaty of Waitangi Act 1975. Thus what some Māori propose for themselves may not necessarily be good for us all, including other Māori. Given this context, museum professionals will surely wish to carefully consider just what they want their particular institution to endorse and, equally, what they want it not to endorse. *Museums and Māori* certainly goes some way towards answering the first half of this proposition, but it falls somewhat short on adequately addressing the second half.

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NOTES

- 1 Peter Munz, 'Te Papa and the problem of historical truth', *History Now*, 6, 1 (2000), pp.13–16.
- 2 Alan Ward, 'Historical methods and Waitangi Tribunal claims', in Miles Fairburn & W.H. Oliver, eds, *The Certainty of Doubt: Tributes to Peter Munz*, Wellington, 1996, pp.140–56.
- 3 Kerry Howe, 'The politics of culture: a personal history of history in New Zealand', in Roger Openshaw and Elizabeth Rata, eds, *The Politics of Conformity in New Zealand*, Auckland, 2009, pp.13–24.
- 4 D.J. Round, 'Two futures: a reverie on constitutional review', *Otago Law Review*, 12, 3 (2011), pp.525–56.

Letters from Gallipoli: New Zealand Soldiers Write Home. Edited by Glyn Harper. Auckland University Press, Auckland, 2011. Xiv + 320pp. NZ price: \$45.00. 9781869404772.

THE GALLIPOLI CAMPAIGN OF 1915, in which French and British imperial forces unsuccessfully attempted to seize the Gallipoli peninsula, open up the Dardanelles Straits and facilitate the seizure of the Ottoman capital, Constantinople, has fascinated historians and students of the First World War for nearly a century. One of several 'sideshowes' concocted by strategists in response to the stalemate on the Western Front, it has retained as prominent a place in the popular memory of First World War 'futility' as far bloodier campaigns on the Somme and around Ypres. It has, as Glyn Harper notes, been particularly prominent in both New Zealand and Australian understandings of the war. Although New Zealand's bloodiest day of the war occurred later, at Passchendaele, it was at Gallipoli that New Zealanders made their 'first significant military engagement on the world stage' (p.1) and the losses suffered (2779 deaths, according to Harper, following Richard Stowers's *Bloody Gallipoli*) were 'catastrophic' compared to previous military ventures in South Africa, Samoa and elsewhere (pp.26, 297). Anzac Day is thus the crucial day of commemoration for New Zealanders, acknowledging Gallipoli's special place in New Zealand's war, despite the larger casualties of other campaigns, and notwithstanding Harper's suggestion that the ideal date to commemorate the nation's contribution would be 8 August, when New Zealand soldiers played their most substantial part in the campaign, in the assault on Chunuk Bair (p.227).

Letters from Gallipoli is the product of Harper's efforts in collecting over 600 letters concerning New Zealanders' roles in the campaign. The book features 190 of these letters, gathered from archives, private collections and the pages of the metropolitan press, as well as a handful from previously published collections. His appendix contains details of the 125 authors cited, of whom 119 were New Zealand men and women serving on the Gallipoli peninsula, or in support of the campaign. These letter writers ranged from already prominent figures like Colonel William Malone, killed in command at Chunuk

Bair, through many junior officers and lower-ranked soldiers, to an unnamed nurse who survived the sinking of the transport ship *Marquette*. Of those cited, 20 died during the campaign, and a further 20 in subsequent campaigns, or as a result of wartime wounds. James Hargest, having survived the war, served again after 1939, escaping from a German prison camp before finally dying in combat in 1944. Many of the letters were written from ships or hospitals by men recovering from wounds, indicating both the unusually dangerous nature of the campaign and the difficulty of writing at the front. The collection provides insights into the experiences of Gallipoli which are in places heart-rending, and often surprisingly candid and explicit, and is a welcome addition to our knowledge of the campaign as its centenary approaches.

The letters are mostly left to speak for themselves. Harper generally declines to interfere with the language or sentence structure of his writers. When first quoted, details of the individual's life and service are provided where known, but otherwise Harper makes little attempt to elaborate on the letters. This approach may be considered both a strength and weakness. It avoids diluting the force of the texts themselves, and Harper justifies his approach by asserting that the letters alone may 'move the reader as close as possible to what actually happened'. He is clear that readers should not simply take every letter as unproblematic truth but, for him, the benefits of these 'immediate first-hand impressions' outweigh the possibility of being misled by false recollections or statements (p.x). However, this hands-off approach is also frustrating on occasions when there are clear opportunities to contextualise the soldiers' comments with further sources. Describing his involvement in the Second Battle of Krithia, for instance, Bob Tilsley mentions his promotion to sergeant for gallantry and a promised mention in despatches (p.126). It would have been interesting to compare a brief extract of official reports of the action with Tilsley's own account. While in some places understatement or exaggeration can be deduced from a letter's tone, in others it is very difficult to judge how much the writer is including or excluding. Likewise, it is hard to explore an individual's changing perspective over time since their writings are, in nearly all cases, scattered across the chronologically arranged chapters, and the nuances of their writing styles are difficult to recall amongst so many other examples. Further, one chapter on the exposed position, Quinn's Post, uses letters entirely obtained from press pages, but Harper offers no commentary on how far these may have been edited, and what forms of 'mythology' newspapers may have been promoting through the accounts (a topic about which he is otherwise uncompromising — see below).

This is not to say, however, that Harper's editing is inattentive. He has made substantial efforts to uncover fuller details of the writers' lives, and his juxtaposition of soldiers' perspectives is deft in places. In discussing New Zealanders' perspectives of Australian comrades in Cairo, for instance, the critical comments of one soldier are preceded by a much more generous perspective by another (pp.49–50), while an encouragement to a family to give money for the relief of Belgian refugees is placed alongside a second judgment that plenty of money had already been raised for them, and not enough for wounded New Zealanders (pp.65–67). Such touches help to emphasise that the letters represent individuals' opinions and not a general perspective. The relentlessness of the testimonies in places, though sometimes repetitious and difficult to digest, perhaps also mimics the relentlessness of service in Gallipoli, where rest zones far from the front, 'enjoyed' by soldiers on the Western Front, were unavailable. As one soldier reported: 'All day long it is nothing but firing — warships, artillery ...' (p.117).

Most valuable in this collection, perhaps, are the astonishingly candid and detailed statements made by some men. Letters published in newspapers refer freely to the killing of surrendering Ottoman troops, as does a letter written by a soldier to an apparently unfamiliar schoolboy (pp.213–14). The chapter on Chunuk Bair, meanwhile, featuring

several substantial ‘worm’s-eye’ accounts of the fighting, ends movingly with a long letter to a dead comrade’s family, outlining the significant trouble taken to try to find his belongings and have them returned (pp.263–68). Beyond this, what is striking is how similar the New Zealanders’ priorities were to those of soldiers in other places. Food was rarely good or plentiful enough and the soldiers, contrary to older scholarly perspectives about soldierly alienation from civilians, were anxious to receive letters from home, and eager to describe the interesting sights of the new places they saw.

While prioritising the letters’ content, Harper is, nonetheless, concerned to prevent his collection from confirming unwarranted myths. Gallipoli was not, he insists, a brilliant strategic opportunity let down by poor organisation. Even if it had succeeded, the war would probably not have been shortened. New Zealanders, meanwhile, should not flatter themselves that sustained retention of Chunuk Bair would have won the campaign. It was ‘just another hill’ (p.23). Harper divorces these ‘realities’ from any suggestion that the campaign was meaningless, however, regarding it instead as ‘a victory of the human spirit over death, suffering and the futility of war’ (p.33). I am not entirely persuaded that the materials he supplies bear out this claim, but the individual perspectives his book reveals are valuable and eminently readable contributions to a much-discussed event.

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Making Sheep Country: Mt Peel Station and the Transformation of the Tussock Lands. By Robert Peden. Auckland University Press, Auckland, 2011. 280pp. NZ Price: \$49.95. ISBN: 978-1-86940-485-7.

SHEEP HAVE BEEN ON THE MINDS of New Zealand authors recently. In the past few years we have seen the appearance of Christine Fernyhough’s best-selling children’s book *Ben & Mark: Boys of the High Country* (Random House, 2009) about Mt White station, Hazel Riseborough’s AUP double *Ngamatea* (2006 and reprinted twice in 2007) and *Shear Hard Work* (2010), along with Roberta Macintyre’s more panoramic Penguin general history *Whose High Country?* (2008). One has to wonder whether the tenure review process renewed the focus on high country stations, or if the ascendancy of dairying and agribusiness has created nostalgia for sheep and their country. Nostalgia and romance are not words I would associate with Robert Peden’s book, however. *Making Sheep Country* is assiduously researched and carefully argued.

In large part, the book is a rebuttal of what Peden calls the ‘orthodox account of pastoral impact on the tussock grasslands’ (p.x). He makes a convincing case that much recent thinking about high country environments has been based on outdated science published in the early and mid-twentieth century. Given that the science of tectonics (and the uplift of the Southern Alps and deposition of scree) was not well understood until the 1980s, earlier authors cannot be blamed, I don’t think, for linking ‘erosion’ with over-grazing and rabbits. Peden is right to question, however, the ‘self-perpetuating’ view (p.48) that pastoralists’ misunderstanding of the landscape, ‘indiscriminate burning’ and overstocking have led to ecological disaster across the entire high country. This, he shows, is based on selective evidence and has been accepted by eminent botanists and historians without interrogation (pp.48, 238). In his chapter about fire as a management tool, Peden cites several historians who have used the — let’s face it — terrific story of Lady Barker and her friend Alice setting the hillside alight for an afternoon’s entertainment. But, as the author points out rather laconically, the example describes one person’s ‘feeling of elation . . . it is not a statement about the use of fire as a tool of management of a pastoral