



MODERN POSTCARD PRODUCERS

No.1 A.H. & A.W. Reed, by Bill Main

Undoubtedly the better known Reed of the two individuals who made up the business was A.W. Reed was born in 1908 in Auckland. In 1925 he joined his uncle A.H. Reed's religious supply business in Dunedin and established its general book publishing in Wellington in 1932. Until his retirement in 1971, he helped build A.H. & A.W. Reed into New Zealand's leading publishing house. A prolific author as well as a publisher, he penned over 200 books on a vast range of topics covering New Zealand, the South Pacific and Australia. Seven of his books are in print today, including the Reed Concise Maori Dictionary and the Reed Dictionary of Maori Place Names. He died in 1979.

From the postcards held in my collection it would seem Reed's began production of coloured postcards with a white border sometime in the early 1960s. During the next decade, they expanded their interest in tourist souvenirs to embrace a wide variety of novelties.

They began postcard production with a simple numerical series after the word REED on the bottom of their plain back cards. I only have two of these in my collection, with the highest number of the two cards being 508. By far the largest section of my Reed collection comes under the last of their series (?) which had a prefix of SR. These reached just over 1,000 entries before they ceased production (in the late 1970s?). I have 117 cards from this series. Other prefixed series were BG (only one card seen), D (highest no. seen 1031 but only 6 cards represented in my collection), K (highest no. seen 345), G (highest no. seen 111), VB (highest no. seen 406), VSR (only one card seen, no.377).



Clues on dating Reed postcards can be gained by the way they branded the cards they published over the years. The first (lower) was simply REED then the number. Later they ventured into a more descriptive display of emblems with a Kiwi and stylistic featuring with flax. The last emblem they used was a very simplified Kiwi.



Robin Smith took the photograph of the power house and Benmore SR 552, while one of the most notable scenic New Zealand photographers of the post war years, Martin Barrilball, captured this magical study of Mount Cook being dwarfed by Giant Mountain Buttercup flowers, SR 914. The caption on the Kauri Tree featured above left reads, "One of the mighty trees in Waipoua Forest, Northland. This tree has a girth of 55 ft. 2ins. and its approximate timber content would be 6,500 cubic feet and 78,000 superficial feet."

As we go to press [31.03.2003] we have established contact with a former Reed's executive who was responsible for their postcard/souvenir publications. We expect he will have much to add to our thumbnail sketch above. So look forward to a continuation of this article in succeeding issues of the Postcard Pillar. *Editor*

MORE ON REED POSTCARDS

Since the last issue of *The Postcard Pillar*, further details on Reed postcards have come to hand which give a better picture of their dating. This new material comes from Clive Woollett, a former employee of the company, who in association with Ray Richards has identified two important facts which add another dimension to the company's involvement with postcards.

The company began production of postcards in 1955-1957, not the early 1960s which I postulated in the last issue. Secondly, some editions of them were printed in Germany in association with the production of 35mm colour slides.

"Don Sinclair selected transparencies to make sets of 10 slides, boxed with a printed commentary for sale through tourist retailers, chemists and some photographic shops. The slides were produced in volume in Germany, imported into New Zealand under an import license system and subject to sales tax or import duty". Said Mr Woollett in a letter to me.

Some postcard editions were "printed in Germany on 18 image sheets in large print runs to provide a base low cost. Additional costs such as import duty, freight (shipping) and a fee to the Bigwoods for use of their images, led to cards retailing for sixpence each. The German printed cards were the "D" series and were sold by way of a printed order sheet. They were not of a very high quality but were cheap enough to attract a good retail market".

"Towards the end of the 1960s, Coulls Sommerville & Wilkie were able to print postcards locally on modern four colour print presses that still required 18 images to the sheet. Delivery now became a matter of weeks instead of months and the quality was vastly improved. These were marketed as Kiwi postcards. Cards now sold for 10 cents each. In the early 1970s Bascands imported high speed 4 colour web presses and colour scanners to do separations quickly. Postcards were now printed on a 9 image sheet allowing much smaller print runs. These were the new SR series and carried the Kiwi symbol".

LETTER TO THE EDITOR

I was very pleased to read your article about the Reed postcards, as I've been working with these for my PhD research on modern South Pacific postcards. Thought you might be interested in my brief write up on the Reed cards I have:

In the course of my research on modern postcard publishing in the South Pacific I have acquired a total of 366 cards that were published by A.H. and A.W. Reed. Of these, 257 were purchased in one lot from a Wellington stamp and coin shop and appear to have been used to keep track of the stock held by a firm, as they list on their backs figures next to dates "April - 76 4200, Stock 31/8/80 - 127W., 2635 C." [K147]. As with this example, many have figures for several locations, which would appear to include Auckland, Wellington and Christchurch. The figures commonly range between the mid hundreds to five thousand, with the largest number being 21,000 in January 1968 for a card showing the Gondola above Queenstown with the lake and mountains in distance [SR 435]. A couple of cards include stock figures for an "M. F. Hunter", which is credited on a couple of cards as the distributor M.F. Hunter Holdings Ltd. These two cards also list the printer as Bascands Ltd., Christchurch. Some cards include extra comments about the cards such as "Faulty Printing returned Sept 1967", "Delete", "Caption change", "Incorrect. Re-ordered March '80". One includes the comment "Royalty: Bigwood" [SR 1501] which relates to the photographers credited, K. & J. Bigwood. Comments such as these seem to make more sense for the publisher of the card to make than a dealer, so it is possible that these may have been stock cards for Reed publishing itself.

The Reed company started publishing books during 1907 in Whangarei, moving to Dunedin in 1925. They set up an office in Wellington in 1932, which became their head office in 1940. Mention of their range of cards is made in the 1957 biography of the company: *The House of Reed*. The company's interest in tourist related publications was at that time a recent development, and alongside their range of tourist books "A production of attractive view cards in full colour also contributes to the tourist consciousness of the county." (p53) View cards are also mentioned in relation to the range of 35mm. transparencies that the company was publishing at that time.

On the basis of the cards I have access to, I have developed the following working chronology of cards published by the firm A.H. & A.W. Reed.

Reed Series

In the late fifties A.H. And A. W. Reed publishers started to produce view cards. They are identified by the word "Reed" beside the serial number. Of the two I have, one [Reed 26] has a white border around the image similar to a photograph, and is dated 10/9/59. This is a crudely coloured black and white photo printed with brief information and a reference number on the back in green ink. I also have an unused card [Reed 505] with the back printed in black that does not have a border around the image, but have no way of dating it's production/use. (see footnote*)

Kiwi Series D. This range of cards bear the Kiwi logo; a kiwi beside the word Kiwi which is in a stylised font. This logo is mentioned in the book *The House of Reed*: "The name Kiwi was adopted as being the most typical of New Zealand and is now in use for colour viewcards and booklets..." (P61), and it would appear that the logo was created on the basis of this name. The back of the cards are printed in green,

and a D. has been added to the serial number i.e. "Reed D.144" Photographers begin to be credited at this stage.

SR 106 to 438 - 1965 to 1967

The verso of the cards are printed in black ink, and an oval has been added to the logo along with the Reed colophon which depicts a NZ variety of reed. The logo is in the middle of the bottom of the cards, with the Serial number below this. The "D" has been replaced by the letters "SR". Some cards from 1966 use the form "S.R." while some from 1967 use "SR." Photographers are credited on most cards.

SR 439 to 780 - 1968 to 1972

In addition to the logo, the text "PUBLISHED AND DISTRIBUTED BY [Logo] A.H. & A. W. REED has been added to the back.

SR 805 to 895 - 1972 to 1973

The back now has a vertical line dividing the address from the space for the message, as well as the words "POSTCARD" above the logo and a square labelled "POSTAGE STAMP". On some cards the serial number is on the right hand side of the logo/publishers text.

SR 896-962 - 1973 to 1975

The line dividing the back runs the full length of the card, with the logo on the left of the line, "Published and Distributed by A.H. & A.W. REED SR..." on the right, and "POSTCARD" has moved to the top left of the address area.

SR 969-1010 - 1974 to 1975

A major change in the layout of the back. The Reed/kiwi logo was replaced with a more stylised kiwi silhouette in a "TV Screen" shaped box. The text "A New Zealand Kiwi Postcard" runs up the middle of the cards, with three lines for the address. Two lines at a right angle form two sides of a box round the stamp/frank area on the top right of the card. The text "Published and Distributed by A.H. & A.W. Reed". is still on the bottom right of the back with serial number at the end, in the bottom right corner. I have one card with serial number G 114 in this format.

K 13-335 - 1975 to 1980

Same layout as the SR Frank Box cards. The serial numbers vary in format, low numbers cards use K ##, in the middle 100s "K ###" begin to appear and in the mid 200' "K ### becomes common.

VB 380-410 - 1980s

Same layout as earlier "Frank Box" cards, but on a lighter stock with gloss back. The photographs are copyrighted to the photographers. Serial numbers are in the format "VB###" None of the cards I have in this series have been used for stock take or posted. A couple [VB 394, VB 410] of the cards feature then and now images and text which contrast 1880s views with 1980s ones.

VB 456-483 - 1980s [?]

The frank box has been taken off the back. There is a rectangle with rounded corners around the four address lines with the word "Address" forming part of the top of this rectangle. The serial numbers have been shifted to the bottom left corner of the verso, and their format is now "VB###". None that I have are used or dated in any way.

Darren Schroeder

* This letter had hardly been received when I acquired a Reed card 41 featuring a view of Egmont which was printed by Dennis Productions for A.H. & A. W. Reed 182, Wakefield Street Wellington. MOB was dated 1957. Dennis Productions were an English company.Ed.

MODERN POSTCARD PRODUCERS

No. 2 Pictorial Publications Limited and the New Zealand Souvenir Company Ltd.
by Bill Main

Although this study has been based on a relatively small cross-section of postcards produced by Pictorial Publications Ltd. (PPL) and The New Zealand Souvenir Co. Ltd., a pattern has emerged which gives some idea of the two companies' total production over 54 years from the early 1950s to the present.

When PPL began printing postcards in 1949, they did so by using colour photographs of New Zealand scenery which were supplied by the owner J. Lloyd Wilson. These cards have a distinctive white border with the title and P. P. L. Hastings and the P. prefix catalogue number printed in this space. They were produced in this fashion until the early 1970s, when images that were bled off the edge of the card first appear (the earliest post-marked card seen in the above survey is dated 1972). Titles in white now appeared in an black elongated box at the foot of the photograph. This method of titling carried on until the change of ownership occurred in the 1990s. The PPL imprint and P. catalogue number are now shown on the address side of the card.

From 1970 onwards, cards marked with the distinctive Tiki emblem on the back appeared under the Ppl imprint, featuring a Hei Tiki and Talaha (hardwood weapon). This production period saw a dramatic increase in the number of cards produced with over 1,500 postcards being added to the catalogue of views. This format persisted until the early 1990s when the native Wood Pigeon back made its debut.

Production figures diminished during the 1990s with only about 750 being added to bring the total of cards produced by PPL to around 4000. During the latter part of this period a Kiwi was substituted for the native Wood Pigeon on the back of the card.

In the late 1990s PPL company was taken over by The New Zealand Souvenir Co. Ltd. It was sold to Darryl Hook, a former employee of PPL, who continues to produce postcards maintaining the highest standards. The New Zealand Souvenir Co. Ltd. is the principal sponsor of the 2003 Postcard Convention in Hastings. Current batch numbers for postcards have reached 4565 (June 2003).



The three distinctive backs that denote the chronological sequencing of P.P.L. & the NZ Souvenir Co.

MODERN POSTCARD PRODUCERS

NO.3 Colourview Publications

by Bill Main

Colourview postcards first appeared on the market in the 1970s under a company called Fotocentre Oamaru Ltd. It was formed by Len Johnstone who had a photographic business that catered mainly for weddings and portraits. He saw a niche in the market and began producing postcards and colour slides from his own photographic views. These were called Colourview Productions and were produced to a very high standard. As well, they undertook to produce postcards for Friend Wholesale and Colin Branch - of Rotorua.

Originally the layout of the back of their cards had two distinct characteristics: a Tiki where the stamp should be placed and a simplified map of New Zealand with an arrow pointing to the place where the view had been made. The Tiki was removed on request of the Post Office and currently has a bar coding.

The numbering system for Colourview cards is also rather distinctive with a two letter coded prefix. These stand for areas of New Zealand. For instance NL represent postcards from Northland, AA - Auckland, RT - Rotorua, and so on down the country to CM - Canterbury Mountains, QD - Queenstown -, WH - Westland/Haast, WM - Westland Middle and WU - Westland Upper. There is also a category for GI - General Interest views like Kiwis etc.

In 1997 the company name was changed to Colourview Publications and it continues to be a leading supplier of tourist material. Its current General Manager Nolan J. Culleton forwarded to our office a selection of current stock which we publish along with a card from the past showing Mt. Ngauruhoe erupting.

At the foot of this page we show the distinctive map of New Zealand with an arrow indicating where the photograph on the reverse was made. This feature has carried over to cards produced today. The middle illustration featuring the Harbourside area of Oamaru displays not only the trademark map but also a legend explaining the five featured photographs and some promotional graphics. THE GAME PLAYED IN HEAVEN" card has all the feel of a "give-away" postcard, advertising as it does The Rugby Post, a shop in Worchester Street Christchurch. The J/N prefix needs some explanation as does the non-appearance of the familiar arrow. We hope to carry an explanation of this variant in the next edition of *The Postcard Pillar*.



THE GAME PLAYED IN HEAVEN.



MODERN POSTCARD PRODUCERS

No.4 Whitcombe & Tombs (Whitcoulls)

Whitcombe and Tombs was established in Christchurch in 1883 by George Whitcombe - bookseller and George Tombs - printer. They became known to generations of New Zealanders through their school books which had large sales. Shortly after the turn of the century, they opened a branch in Wellington to be followed by a succession of shops in all the main centres.

Their involvement in the production of postcards can be traced back to 1904-05, when they issued a sepia series of vignetted photographs featuring lithographed views of Wellington and Christchurch (top right). This was followed by a coloured series of Christchurch and various black and white comic cards.

Their next set of cards appeared in the mid 1920s, with Auckland as the subject. These are noted for the decorative border. Once again they favoured a brown ink when it came to printing, settling on a darker brown when it came to choosing an ink for the cream tinted card. These cards were produced in two batches, Series One and Series two. At the bottom of the address side is the inscription Fine Art Productions Printed By Whitcombe & Tombs Limited.

The last series to be issued shortly before WW2 put a curb on production appeared under the imprint of the New Zealand Sportsmen's and Tourist Wonderland imprint with an identical baseline credit as above. On the picture side of the card, the title was laid on top of the image at the bottom, along with the name of the photographer Revell. Once again the cards featured a sepia and cream tinted finish with scenes in and around Auckland and a smattering of Rotorua and the North Island Central Plateau views.

Finally, in the early 1960s, Whitcombe & Tombs decided to undertake a more ambitious project involving views that embraced the whole country. For this important assignment they engaged Gladys Goodall who was to remain with them until they left the business of printing colour postcards.



LYTTLETON, THE PORT OF CHRISTCHURCH, N.Z.

W. H. J. Revell



THREE LAMPS, PONSONBY



OLD St. Thomas, 1840s, AUCKLAND, N.Z.

REVILL, 1840s



BEYNDOR SQUARE, BLENHEIM, N.Z.

W. F. 15

MODERN POSTCARD PRODUCERS

N0.5 National Publicity Studios

There has been a long tradition with Government Departments being involved in the production of scenic view postcards, which began in 1902 with the first series of lithographed views by the artist Benoni White. These were printed by A.D. Willis of Wanganui. These in turn were followed a few years later by another series using photographs. The use of photographs to promote New Zealand's scenic attractions was reactivated when the National Publicity Studios were established as part of the Information Section of the Prime Minister's Department in the late 1940s. However, prior to this it had been their function as a branch of the Department of Tourism and Health Resorts to "supply or produce general publicity photos for use in New Zealand and overseas and maintain a central library of such images". This directive manifested itself in the late 1930s with a series of black and white RP postcards, some of which were hand coloured. Strange as it may seem, only a small proportion of those produced were credited directly to the National

Publicity Studios. A distinguishing feature which identifies them despite their anonymity was the use of a chisel tip pen script in the white border below the image along with a negative number. How these were marketed remains unexplained. Looking through the cards which turn up, it is not surprising to find a number which are self promotional by virtue of the fact that they feature Government Tourist Bureau Hotels. While there is a naivety about these postcards, they were the only ones in circulation after the great depression until commercial interests re-established themselves after WW2.

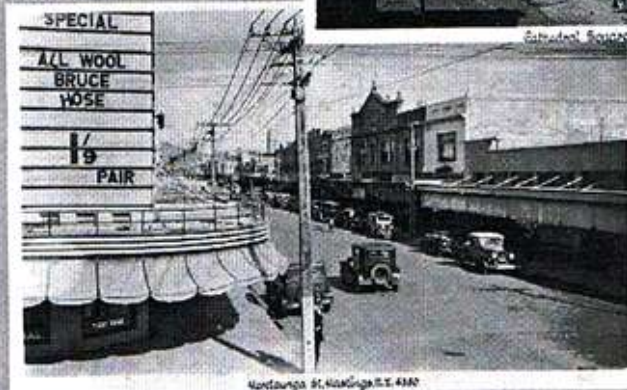
Although there was a heavy concentration on views of Rotorua, their cameramen in the 1950s were directed to all corners of the country. Dating them can prove quite challenging. One of the cards in my collection has a MOB from Rotorua and is dated 28/1/41. In another instance, I have a card which states the the sender bought it in Woolworths.



5400 Postmaster Street Wellington.



Edinburgh Square Christchurch N.Z. 4913



Martinsburg St. Auckland N.Z. 4382



Victoria Street Melbourne N.Z. 4901

MODERN POSTCARD PRODUCERS

N0.6 The Royal Series

The earliest reference to Royal Studios is found in Stones 1917 Almanac, with their address given as 78 Willis Street, Wellington. In 1924 Royal Studios moved next door to 80 Willis Street. This address became the base for a partnership which was formed between Harold Emmett and Heaton C. Peart, who not only rented the premises but the right to use Royal on their real photo postcards which began to appear in the late 1920s. The earliest postmark seen on one of these is 1927. By 1939, the partnership had been dissolved with Peart operating a studio in Hokitika. Emmett continued to be listed in directories at 62 Willis Street until 1947. A small proportion of their real photo postcards are credited to Emmett, with the largest portion not attributed to either with only a rubber stamp on the back acknowledging Royal Series. This stamp was changed at least twice during their association, and others have been seen which bear no mention of the Royal Series (possibly after Emmett & Peart had parted company). However, the very distinctive titling along the lower edge of the photograph and a credit to Peart plus a catalogue number readily identify the origins of their cards. On one card (conceivably one of the earliest because of its low catalogue number 632), the rubber stamp incorporates the information that the Royal Series agents were Hicks, Smith & Wright of Wellington. On yet another card, a view of Auckland, was "Printed specially for N.L. Stevens, Bookseller & Stationer, P.O. Bookstall, Featherston Street, Wellington". From the number of cards which credit Peart, it is obvious that he was responsible for the bulk of the Royal Series. Beyond an extensive coverage of Westland scenery and Wellington City views, cards of Auckland, Christchurch and Dunedin can be found, indicating that they were endeavouring to give their series national coverage, no easy task considering the downturn in the economy caused by the Great Depression.

While information on Emmett is sparse, we know more about Peart.

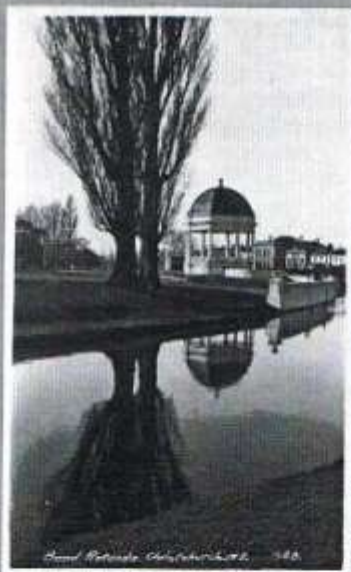
Peart first came to notice in 1921 when he won an amateur photo competition which was run by the *Auckland Weekly News*. By 1926 examples of his scenic work from Westland were being published in the *Mirror*, a prestigious Womens magazine. After he dissolved his partnership with Emmett, he worked for a short time with another photographer in Wellington called E. T. Robson. As WW2 broke out, he moved back to Westland where he'd begun his career and ran a very successful business in Hokitika for many years. In 1941 he attended a conference of the New Zealand Professional Photographers Association in Wellington where the accompanying portrait of him wearing a winged collar was located in the Associations archives.

Peart's work with a camera warrants special mention. All his views (many of them sepia toned) often have exceptionally good skies because he mastered the use of filters to perfection. His studies of art Deco buildings in Wellington and Auckland employ camera corrections to keep perpendiculars vertical without distorting them with camera tilt. More especially his views of scenery in Westland and the Southern Alps are wonderful studies in monochrome.

A very large collection of Royal postcards can be studied in Wellington's Museum of City & Sea. A donation of 150 postcards from an Australian benefactor gives an excellent survey of this firms achievements. I would like to acknowledge help in preparing this article which was supplied through information from Alistair Robb, who is currently compiling a list of all their Wellington cards.



This portrait of Heaton Peart came from a group photograph of Professional photographers who were attending a conference in Wellington in 1942. It is shown with some of the Royal Studio postcard backs.



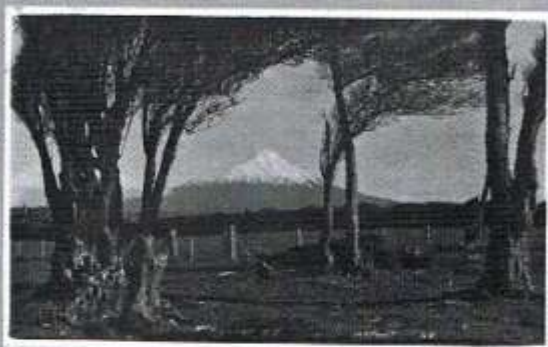
Grand Rapids, Michigan, U.S.A. 1925



Tower Hall, Auckland, N.Z. 1925



Mount Cook, New Zealand, N.Z. 1925



1925



Mount Cook, New Zealand, N.Z. 1925



1925



1925



1925



1925