Although ‘Melbourne—Stories from a City’ succeeds in introducing the uninitiated visitor to various important aspects of Melbourne society, notable gaps are apparent. Despite acknowledging the cosmopolitan nature of the city, no explanation is provided as to why these immigrants came to Melbourne or of their continuing impact. Such an explanation may be detailed in another of Melbourne’s museums’, the Immigration Museum, but as by far the largest and what will become the most visited museum in the city, by both tourists and locals alike, surely more reference should be made to these important components of Melbourne’s society in the Melbourne Museum? Similarly, in the exhibits dealing with society in the present day there is little mention of the arts and cultural life of the city or recognition of the role sport has played.

The most noticeable, and perhaps most surprising, aspect of the entire gallery is the conspicuous absence of interactive media. The gallery and especially the two exhibitions that have been discussed are largely devoid of such interpretative technology, despite its increasing use by other museums. One of the few exceptions to this is within ‘Melbourne—Stories from a City’, where the visitor may sit in a booth and listen to twelve Melbournians discussing their suburban lives. This minimal use of interactive material, however, is not necessarily a bad thing. The reviewer, along with many other museum patrons, finds that the constant use of technology to make museums more ‘entertaining’ can often detract from the message and histories they are trying to convey.

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Beside the Seaside traces the traditions and etiquette associated with nineteenth-century Victorian ‘sea bathing’. It informs the reader of the rituals engaged in by those making the journey to the wealthier resorts of Queenscliff, Lorne and Sorrento. It also looks at the local Melbourne seaside areas, such as St Kilda, Port Melbourne and Brighton; these suburbs were more accessible to day-trippers, who were usually Melbourne’s working-class.
This book is full of colour and black and white reproductions of postcards, photographs and paintings by artists such as Charles Conder, Tom Roberts and Eugene von Guérard. Although it is a delight to browse over and appreciate the beautiful images, a list of illustrations would greatly enhance this publication.

Inglis has drawn on diaries and family papers, as well as a substantial range of pamphlets and tourist guides, to describe the Victorian era’s expectation of bathing. We learn that the prescribed forms of bathing, according to a contemporary source quoted in the book (C. Steedman’s *Manual of Swimming*), were to be strictly adhered to: ‘For the robust and healthy, the best time for a bath in the open air is early in the morning’ when the body, strengthened by the night’s sleep, was better able to derive benefit from ‘the shock resulting from the immersion’ (p. 39). This, as Inglis comments, left little room for spontaneity (or weather), and it cannot be imagined that the chill of the dawn would have enhanced the bathing experience. As Jessie McDonald, one of the diarists referred to, notes: ‘children had to be dunked, until they were terrified of sea bathing’ before it ‘did them good’ (p. 39).

This study of Victorian bathing emphasizes that the activity was, more than anything, undertaken for its health-giving capabilities. Its medicinal qualities were necessary to inhibit the effects of the polluted state of post gold-rush Melbourne, caused by a combination of the growing population and a poor drainage system (p. 51).

The approach to bathing was scientific, and writers on the subject generally recommended that fifteen minutes was quite long enough to remain in the water. Men, or at least ‘strong men’, were advised to bathe before breakfast; but for young children, midday was considered the best time. The rule that many of us grew up with, that we should swim two or three hours after breakfast, may have originated at this time (p. 39).

The curative and health-giving qualities of seaside holidays were of course only part of the significance of these excursions. Another was the maintenance of social contact among the upper- and middle-classes where ‘ministers of the Crown, judges and retired legislators’ all took their ease at the fashionable resorts of Queenscliff, Sorrento and Lorne. It became a ‘social duty’ performed by the middle-class who saw a holiday by the sea as ‘a must’ (pp. 75-77). The code of conduct was advocated by etiquette books, and the rituals of the genteel, including the rules of promenading and rigid clothing standards, were closely observed.

Eventually, the introduction of ‘day trippers’, frequent ‘trade picnics’ and ‘cheap excursionists’ to the more exclusive resorts, meant the seaside areas of Lorne, Queenscliff and Sorrento witnessed an intermingling of classes. This change was not always welcomed. Other changes, such as mixed bathing, came into vogue before the First World War and marked the gradual decline of gentility at the seaside.

Those familiar with the inner city beaches, or the more distant peninsulas, will...
find the detailed accounts in this book, of the excursions of holiday-makers and day-trippers alike, as refreshing as the purpose of their visits.

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Jonathon Scott is to be commended for his groundbreaking interpretation of seventeenth-century British history, which focuses on the foment of intellectual ideas in England during the Civil Wars and the Interregnum. Scott begins with two conceptual assertions that resonate throughout the rest of the book. First, that the genuine English Revolution was one of belief; a view which previous historical positions have failed to adequately consider. Second, that the truly revolutionary and innovative development of the period was the emergence of radical belief. In order to facilitate this shift in historiographical emphasis, Scott invites the reader to turn ‘from so-called political and constitutional history – as if the two were self-evidently equivalent – to the history of radical belief’ (p. 35). By changing both historical emphasis and historiographical approach, he argues, it is possible to understand England’s century of conflict within a European context.

There are three parts to *England’s Troubles*. The first discusses the political instability which was the hallmark of seventeenth-century society. Here Scott frames the later mid-century conflicts within the broader contexts of the British Isles and Western Europe. Emphasising the importance of contemporary belief, he judiciously cites important primary source material to support his arguments while at the same time dextrously navigating his way through considerable body of secondary texts. His explanation of the failure of Caroline state-building is centred upon the inability of the Stuarts to present a palatable religious settlement to the English people. Implicit in Scott’s reading of events is the idea of a confessional divide, a construct prominent in European historical analysis, but not as evident in English historiography of the period. He argues that the rise of Puritanism, the vociferous variant of English Protestantism, was a response to the counter-reformation that ushered in the radical reformation of the mid-seventeenth-century.