New Zealand's lost heritage: the stories behind our forgotten landmarks / Richard Wolfe

New Zealand has a disappointing record of preserving our oldest and proudest buildings. In this book well known historian Richard Wolfe features 20 notable structures which no longer exist. Each building is discussed and illustrated, including the circumstances of its demise, from the Ruapekapeka pa in Northland (burned down deliberately), the Admiralty House in Auckland (demolished to make way for new roads) through to TJ Edmonds landmark factory (bulldozed). What emerges is a fascinating social and historical narrative.

Cathedral of the sea / Ildefonso Falcones

In the tradition of Ken Follett's "The Pillars of the Earth," here is a thrilling historical novel of friendship and revenge, plague and hope, love and war, set in the golden age of 14th-century Barcelona. Arnau Estanyol arrives in Barcelona and joins the powerful guild of stone-workers building the magnificent cathedral of Santa Maria del Mar, while his adoptive brother Joan studies to become a priest. As Arnau prospers, he secretly falls in love with a forbidden woman. When he is betrayed and hauled before the Inquisitor, he finds himself face-to-face with his own brother. Will he lose his life just as his beloved cathedral is finally completed, or will his brother spare him?

A teardrop on the cheek of time / Diana and Michael Preston

In 1631, the heartbroken Moghul Emperor, Shah Jahan, ordered the construction of a monument of unsurpassed splendor in memory of his beloved wife. Theirs was a story of passionate love: although almost constantly pregnant Mumtaz Mahal followed her husband on every military campaign. When Mumtaz died in childbirth Shah Jahan created an extravagant memorial for her. The Taj Mahal took twenty years to build and depleted the Moghul treasuries. Shah Jahan was to pay a greater price for his obsession. He ended his days imprisoned by his own son in Agra Fort, gazing across the river at the monument to his love.

The President’s lunch / Jenny Bond

Robbed of her home and job by the Great Depression, the future looks bleak for Iris McIntosh - until a chance encounter with America's indefatigable First Lady, Eleanor Roosevelt. Propelled into the White House's brilliant inner circle, Iris finds herself at the centre of momentous change ... and her heart torn between two men. But her loyalty lies with a third: the complicated and charismatic President Roosevelt, who will ultimately force her to question everything she believes in. A compelling story of politics and power, love and loss, set in one of the most exciting and cataclysmic periods of history.

Peggy Guggenheim: mistress of modernism / Mary V. Dearborn

This biography of Peggy Guggenheim an infamous, multi-talented art collector and personality. Great-granddaughter of Swiss immigrant Simon Guggenheim, and daughter of Benjamin Guggenheim, who went down on the Titanic, Peggy was an extremely controversial figure, censured for everything from stinginess to sexual voraciousness. She was at once one of its most significant patrons and promoters as well as its impresario, with her personal and professional life intermingled. Mary Dearborn's provides a colourful story of this complicated, talented woman and the culture that shaped her and that she went on to transform.
Adventures in architecture / Dan Cruickshank

Dan takes us to the buildings he believes have changed the world, revealing how truly great buildings function, material and purpose connect to all other parts of life. Do his chosen buildings live up to expectation, or does he find disappointment and lost ideals? Dan looks at places, both those that are famous and those that are not, the Catherine Palace in St Petersburg, the Minaret of Jam in Afghanistan, the Hanging Temple in Shanxi in China, through to the building of an igloo, man's earliest exercise in the creation of shelter, in Greenland.

Five bells / Gail Jones

On a radiant day in Sydney, four adults converge on Circular Quay, site of the iconic Opera House and the Sydney Harbor Bridge. Crowds of tourists and locals mix, enjoying the surroundings. But just as the Quay resonates with Australia's past, each of the four carries a complex history, haunted by past secrets and guilt. Ellie is preoccupied by her sexual experiences as a girl, James by a tragedy for which he feels responsible, Catherine by the loss of her beloved brother in Dublin, and Pei Xing by her imprisonment during China's Cultural Revolution. By nightfall each life will have been transformed by the events of this day.

Set in darkness / Ian Rankin

The 11th Inspector Rebus novel. Edinburgh is about to become the home of the first Scottish parliament in 300 years. As political passions run high, DI John Rebus is charged with liaison, thanks to the new parliament being resident in Queensbury House, bang in the middle of his patch. But Queensbury House has its own, dark past. Legend has it that a young man was roasted there on a spit by a madman. When the fireplace where the youth died is uncovered another more recent murder victim is found. Days later, in the gardens outside, there is another body and Rebus is under pressure to find instant answers.

Tapestry / Fiona McIntosh

In 1978, Jane Maxwell is celebrating her engagement to Will but though she should be deliriously happy, she is plagued by doubts. When tragedy leaves Will hanging between life and death, Jane's guilt makes her determined to save him. In 1715, the Earl of Nithsdale joins the Jacobite rebellion for Scottish independence but the cause is lost and the Earl is sentenced to be beheaded. Jane finds herself swept away and trapped in the past. Convinced that saving Nithsdale will also save Will, Jane embarks on an audacious plot to rescue the Earl from the Tower of London. Past and present become entwined in a gripping race against time.

More books related to theme:

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Balthazar Jones and the Tower of London Zoo / Julia Stuart
The lost prophecies : a historical mystery / by the Medieval Murderers ; Bernard Knight ... [et al.]
The Return / Victoria Hislop
The embassy of Cambodia / Zadie Smith

Non fiction
The amazing world of James Hector / edited by Simon Nathan and Mary
An excellent recruit : Frederick Thatcher, architect, priest and private secretary in early New Zealand / Margaret H. Alington ; with architectural assistance from William H. Alington

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