

Surplus stock of the twenty-eight parts of *The Emu* constituting Vols. xii to xviii are available from the Hon. Secretary at 1/- per part plus postage. This offer will not remain open indefinitely.

Members in arrears and those who have not yet paid the current year's subscriptions are requested to attend to their obligations in this respect.

Recently two pairs of Lyre-birds have been sent from Melbourne by 'plane and liberated in the National Park, near Hobart, Tasmania. This undertaking, carried out with the co-operation of the Chief Inspector of Fisheries and Game in Melbourne, was made possible by the donation, some years ago, by an anonymous donor, of a sum of money for the purpose.

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## Correspondence

To the Editor.

Sir—Can any members give an explanation of the following? Some years ago I found a mud nest like that of a Swallow affixed to the inside of a hollow tree about five feet from the ground. It was winter and the nest was empty, but directly beneath it was a considerable quantity of birds' excreta, consisting almost entirely of the husks of the seeds of the large cutting grass (*Gahnia*). It was in the bush and there were no Sparrows in the vicinity, nor, do I think, any Goldfinches. I can scarcely imagine any of our Parrots roosting in such a situation, in a small clearing near a habitation, and I do not think that the Beautiful Fire-tail (*Zonæginthus bellus*) eats much seed. Some bird which ate large quantities of cutting grass seeds had roosted there—what bird?

Yours, etc.,

G. MURRAY ANDERSON.

Hobart, Tas.,  
August 9, 1935.

## THE MYSTERY OF LEICHHARDT

To the Editor

Sir—We are all interested in the mysterious disappearance of the explorer Ludwig Leichhardt, with whom one of Australia's most notable field-workers in ornithology, Gilbert, was associated, and no apology should be necessary for asking members to transfer their thoughts for a moment from ornithology to explorations.

In 1848 Ludwig Leichhardt set out on an overland journey from Brisbane to Swan River (W.A.). His party consisted of himself as leader, 4 white men, 2 natives, 50 bullocks, 7 horses, 20 mules, but no carts or drays. The last *definite* trace of the party was on the Barcoo in Queensland. In 1856, A. C. Gregory discovered, near his camp on the Elsey in the Northern Territory, that trees there had been cut with an iron axe, and in 1884, when republishing the accounts of his various explorations, he stated that at that camp site there were remains of an old hut and the ashes of fires, etc., and from a comparison with other known camps of Leichhardt he considered it must have been one belonging to that ill-fated explorer.

Towards the end of last year Mr. R. Bristow Smith, District Clerk at Laura, S.A., forwarded to the Surveyor-General, a small brass plate, on which is stamped "LUDWIG LEICHHARDT 1848." He stated he had received the plate about 17 years ago, when he was about 14 years old, from Mr. Charles Harding, drover, who told him that he had found it attached to the butt of a rifle, which had been partly destroyed by fire, in a bottle tree, which was marked with an L, near Mount Inkerman. The mountain was said to be ninety miles from the Western Australian boundary—unfortunately it is not recorded on which side. It is said that Harding spent the greater part of his life in the far north droving. For a time he worked with his brother Joseph, who is said to have been a well-known identity in the far north and who founded "Crown Ponds" Station—apparently not to be confused with "Crown Point." Charles died in 1926 and we cannot trace his earlier movements or the location of Mount Inkerman.

I think this can be said to be the best and most reliable relic of Leichhardt's party. The bottle tree would most probably be *Adansonia Gregorii*, and if so, that should help to limit the search. I cannot trace the southern or eastern limit to which those trees grow. There is a small chance that the bottle tree may have been one of the Sterculiaceæ (*Brachychiton*), some of which carry the vernacular of bottle trees, but those trees do not, I think, extend so far westwards. Can any member please advise me of the location of Mount Inkerman (not the Queensland one) and the southern and eastern limit of the *Adansonia*, or supply any other information that will help to solve the puzzle.

Yours, etc.,

J. D. SOMERVILLE.

279 Goodwood Road,  
King's Park,  
South Australia.

Sept. 5, 1935.