

Reviews

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Darrell Lewis: *Where is Dr Leichhardt? The Greatest Mystery in Australian History*. Monash University Publishing: Clayton, Vic, 2013. xxiv + 416 pp., illus., footnotes, bibliog., index, ISBN: 9781921867767 (PB), AUD\$39.95 (PB).

Timed to coincide with the bicentenary of Ludwig Leichhardt's birth, *Where is Dr Leichhardt?* does not recount the life and deeds of early nineteenth-century Prussia's most famous export to Australia: this remarkable tale has already been retold many times, most recently in John Bailey's eminently readable 2011 biography *Into the Unknown: The Tormented Life and Expeditions of Ludwig Leichhardt*. Instead, archaeologist and historian Darrell Lewis collates and assesses the numerous attempts, over the past 160-odd years, to solve the mystery of Leichhardt's disappearance. Last seen in April 1848 on the frontier station of Mount Abundance in Queensland, the young explorer and his entire party—some six men, seven horses, 20 mules and 50 bullocks—vanished completely *en route* to the Swan River settlement in Western Australia. Fifteen search expeditions, nine lives, thousands of pounds and thousands of dollars later, Leichhardt's final resting place stubbornly remains unknown.

As those involved in the search for Leichhardt quickly discovered, the area in which he could potentially have disappeared is vast. Lewis sensibly divides the material into regional clusters, based around the two major routes Leichhardt is thought to have taken. Part One follows a northern arc across the Australian continent, from central Queensland through the Gulf of Carpentaria to the Tanami Desert/Victoria River region; Part Two takes a direct east-west route, moving from the south and south-east Simpson Desert through the southern Barkly Tableland to south-eastern Western Australia. Relevant discoveries and expeditions within these clusters are arranged chronologically and illustrated with

detailed maps, making navigation for the reader, if not completely straightforward, at least manageable.

For those whose first response to the title question was 'Who cares?', a word of reassurance: the precise circumstances of Leichhardt's demise don't particularly interest me either. Fortunately, this need not hinder a genuine enjoyment of the book. Its extraordinarily colourful cast of European and Aboriginal characters—explorers, squatters, trackers, prospectors, clairvoyants, charlatans—more than compensates for the slight weariness engendered by the mention of yet *another* tree marked 'L'. Some of the larger expeditions are themselves the stuff of legend. The ambitious and costly Ladies' Leichhardt Search Expedition of 1865, championed by Ferdinand von Mueller and funded by contributions from Queen Victoria, the Royal Geographical Society of London, and four Australian state governments, was torpedoed by James Murray, the expedition's surgeon, who narrowly escaped death by dehydration after giving in to despair and drinking himself insensible on medicinal brandy. Andrew Hume, a charismatic conman sentenced in 1866 to ten years' hard labour for robbery under arms, obtained an early release from jail with his extravagantly embroidered claims of a wild white man living far beyond the frontier, but ultimately perished while searching in waterless sand-hill country near Cooper Creek. Theories proposed to account for Leichhardt's disappearance similarly range from the plausible—died of thirst, killed or adopted by Aborigines—to the preposterous, notably the Brisbane spiritualist who heard directly from Leichhardt that he had been 'devoured by a shark in the Gulf of Carpentaria'.

While much of the material presented is fascinating in its own right, the insights it offers into broader issues in Australian historiography are equally compelling. Settler uncertainties around Aboriginal presence and agency are a constant theme. Frederick Walker insisted the Aboriginal

troopers who accompanied him on his search expeditions should receive a fair wage for their services, but had no qualms about shooting Aborigines who resisted or threatened him. Alexander McPhee, having received valuable information in the Great Sandy Desert from associates of the unusually pale-skinned Aboriginal man Jun Gun, demonstrated his gratitude by exhibiting Jun Gun to paying gawkers at Melbourne's local waxworks. Aboriginal accounts thought to relate to Leichhardt were received with equal measures of hope and distrust; explorer after explorer persistently underestimated Aboriginal abilities, assuming anything out of the ordinary, from skilfully crafted stone pillars to well-constructed shelters, could only have emerged from European hands.

A related theme is the extent to which Leichhardt took hold of the Australian imagination to become an overarching trope for the mystery and danger of the inland. His name was immediately linked to any tree marked 'L', despite the existence of at least two other possible candidates. Miscellaneous items were invariably attributed to him, however tenuous the connection: marks of axes or tomahawks (inland Aborigines could access such implements via trade links long before the first settlers arrived), old wagon tracks (Leichhardt didn't take a wagon with him), even a breech-loading rifle (a model not available at the time Leichhardt departed). For readers interested in the historical and ongoing formation of Australian identity, *Where is Dr Leichhardt?* is valuable not because it answers the title's question—though Lewis does have his own theory on this—but because it challenges us to think about why we continue to ask it.

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Clifford B. Frith: *The Woodhen: A Flightless Island Bird Defying Extinction.*

CSIRO Publishing: Canberra, 2013. 240 pp., ISBN: 9780643708707 (HB), AUD\$59.95.

Humans reached Lord Howe Island on 13 March 1788. On that day, on that small and isolated island, one of those first humans came across a small flightless brown bird. That bird, the Lord Howe Island Woodhen, was sporadically taken for food by visitors. Its fate, like that of all other animals, became tied to the decisions and actions

of humans. When people finally came to settle on Lord Howe after 1833, the Woodhen faced a permanent threat to its existence. Over the course of a century and a half, the Woodhen's population progressively declined under the assault of humans and their introduced pests, especially pigs and cats.

Once the Woodhen had roamed over much of the island, but by the 1970s the remnant population, fewer than 30 birds, and perhaps no more than three breeding pairs, was limited to a redoubt on the summit of Mt Gower at Lord Howe's southern tip. A captive breeding programme was suggested in the late 1970s and operated from 1980 to 1984. Combined with efforts to eradicate wild pigs and cats, the breeding programme allowed the Woodhen population to reach over 200 birds once more, avoiding extinction, reaching its presumed carrying capacity and hopefully securing its future.

Clifford Frith, an eminent Australian ornithologist who, among his many works, has studied another member of the Rail family on the Aldabra Atoll in the Indian Ocean, offers this book, part natural history and part contemporary history of science, as 'an historical and biological summary of the dramatic decline and amazing resurrection of the world's Woodhen population'. He opens the book with descriptions of the discovery of Lord Howe Island and an account of its environment. He moves on to describe the Rail family of birds, their evolutionary history, distribution throughout the world, their characteristics and many species extinctions. Only after these descriptions does the reader learn more of the titular bird: Frith describes early encounters with the Woodhen, its first scientific classification in 1869, and the many pressures on it through the early twentieth century until the 1970s. He then describes the efforts to conserve the bird through a captive breeding programme in the early 1980s. The main body of the book concludes with more specific ecology, behaviour and breeding habits of the Woodhen. One of the four appendices gives a detailed chronicle of the breeding programme.

Frith's is a thoroughly informative book. For its strengths, though, it is also an overwhelmingly descriptive book, uneven in detail and structure, and unsure of its purpose and audience. For one thing, I was left wanting more history; I suspect a general reader might feel

the same. Frith mentions several ornithologists and scientists throughout, but the reader gets no biography, no sense of the scientists' commitments, frustrations, philosophies, triumphs or failures, or the structures, bureaucratic or academic, in which they worked. Though central to the story, the reader learns little of Keith A. Hindwood, Charles E. W. Bryant, woodhen pioneers John Disney and Peter Fullagar, or breeding programme leader Ben Miller. The subject of this book, the Woodhen, is also mostly a mystery to the reader until Chapters 9 and 10, when Frith finally describes the bird, individually, in any detail.

Finally, I would suggest the book lacks a critical edge. Let me offer one example. At the heart of this book is a breeding programme. Yet Frith does not want to think critically about how these programmes, as a category and practice, are conceived and prosecuted, what their history is, what their successes and failures have been. Frith describes how the breeding programme was to begin with three Woodhen pairs at a time when only four breeding pairs were known in the wild, yet he does not pause to reflect on the gravity of a decision to sequester three of four remaining pairs from the environment, even if the aim was to help the bird. His description of those who moved to arrest the extinction of the Woodhen as 'a few enlightened and sensitive people' is indicative of the book's overall tone.

This book is a very well-illustrated and well-produced natural history. If it lacks a critical edge or intent to provide a contextualised or extensive contemporary history of science, it is nevertheless generally very informative about the Woodhen's fortunes. This small brown flightless bird, in spite of our human depredations against it, still visits its curiosity upon us, and so properly deserves our curiosity and interest.

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Veronica Bondarew & Peter Seligman:
The Cochlear Story. CSIRO publishing:
Canberra, 2012. 248 pp. (PB),
ISBN: 9780643097513, AUD\$49.95.

It was Horace Walpole who wrote that the deaf miss more nonsense than sense and thanks to the

people in this story many of the deaf obviously have much to be thankful for. Walpole, however, raises an important issue that this volume misses, to which I will return later in the review.

This book is essentially an insiders' account of the development of the cochlear ear implant device. In the mid 1960s heart pacemakers revolutionised the possibility of implanted devices, and changes to Medicare in the USA meant that earlier abandoned attempts to create an implanted hearing device could be revived. Perhaps the leaders of this were Blair Simmons and William House in the USA, although they took different paths. Simmons was keen on providing the best possible device whilst House was more interested in getting it out in the market. This tension continued to be a theme of the cochlear story for decades. Further complicating the issue was the inability of any of the various players in the USA, Britain and France to form a consensus between researchers, clinicians, surgeons and technicians about the way forward—and then there was the need for significant funding as well! Bondarew and Seligman's book is essentially about the success of the Australian venture in resolving these difficult tensions leading to the Australian device taking the majority of market share. It provides the companion volume to Graeme Clarke's account of his part in the development of the implant (*Sounds from Silence*, Allen & Unwin, 2000). Essentially based on a series of interviews with the major players, *The Cochlear Story* eschews other books in the field by taking an almost conversational tone, allowing the players' voices to speak without the interruption of any serious academic discourse. As such it aims to be an approachable explanation of the Australian success. Perhaps unconsciously (as there are no references in the book other than to some autobiographies and a handful of articles) it uses a Science Studies methodology to get into the way science is made in a detailed description of every process of the development of the device and company. In this it is very successful, although relatively uncritical.

I have a number of reservations, however. First, the documentation of the interviews is poor. It is difficult to know the context of the statements chosen—a difficulty any such book would normally have. Second, there is no reference to any of the literature in the field—the omission of Stuart Blume's work (*The Making of*

the Cochlear Implant, 2010) is puzzling, especially as he places the Australian efforts in their international and historical context. Third, there is no discussion of the fraught area of the history of human self-adaption such as the Renaissance syphilis nose jobs and nineteenth-century racial nose jobs and cosmetic surgery so widely discussed by important writers such as Sander Gilman. Furthermore, there is also nothing about the fraught politics of the deaf world—signing versus lip-reading and deafness as disability or a unique attribute—all of which had an impact on the development of cochlear implants. Perhaps some of the deaf agree with Walpole's statement and question the need for implants. In essence, I am criticising the book for being something it is not, which is not altogether fair. However useful as a source for future historians, to get a full understanding of the cochlear story this volume is best read in combination with others.

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Steve Morton, Mandy Martin, Kim Mahood and John Carty (eds): *Desert Lake: Art, Science and Stories from Paruku*. CSIRO Publishing: Canberra, 2013. 312 pp. (HB), illus., ISBN: 9780643106284, AUD\$59.95.

Desert Lake: Art, Science and Stories from Paruku is a collection of diverse perspectives about a little known part of Australia called Paruku, or Lake Gregory, on the border of the Great Sandy and Tanami Deserts. As the renowned scientist Jim Bowler explains in his contribution, a 2008 archaeological dig located a stone artefact at Paruku that enabled human occupation of the area to be dated back to approximately 50 000 years ago. Since that time, Aboriginal people have developed a rich and varied cosmology to account for this unique place; a cosmology that finds expression today in stories of the Dreaming held by senior Walmajarri custodians. Alongside tantalising accounts of such Dreaming stories and more contemporary Aboriginal histories told by Walmajarri and other Aboriginal people resident at nearby Mulan, this collection presents the varied attempts of non-Aboriginal people to understand Paruku, with contributions from scientists, artists and writers.

With fifty individuals listed as contributors, including many Aboriginal authors and collaborators, this book is a collective effort. In their chapter 'Everything comes back to here', two of the book's four co-editors John Carty and Kim Mahood outline the key conceptual issue that this publication addresses as the attempt to pose 'questions of truth' about Paruku that cut across the broad cultural divide between Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal people in Australia. These co-editors tell the story of a contest between scientific interpretations of an archaeological excavation site at Paruku and those of Aboriginal people who perceived an exhumed animal tooth as human. Referring to the archaeologists' inability to grant authority to this interpretation, Carty and Mahood state: 'It may have been a horse's tooth, but it was also a missed opportunity to open up a different order of truth'. This collection comes across as an attempt to remedy this missed opportunity, pursuing a more complementary relationship between Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal understandings of Paruku.

As Jim Bowler argues here, science might ideally comprise a kind of bridge rather than a boundary between Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal cultures. Chapters from scientists Rob Cossart and Rebecca Dobbs ('Water of life') and Steve Morton and Tanya Vernes ('The living world') go some way towards developing this bridge, or at least making a saltatory connection between two shores, with Morton and Vernes suggesting that attempts should not be made to 'merge' Indigenous people's knowledge with scientific knowledge but rather to 'leave space among ways of knowing, to use each where it is most fitting'. While this raises significant practical as well as theoretical problems relating to how Indigenous and other 'knowledges' are to be distinguished as such (particularly in the face of conflicts over development, where there may be more than 'two-ways' of responding to an issue), these scientists' contributions provide a valuable insight into contemporary forms of participatory natural resource management being developed at Paruku and elsewhere around Australia.

Chapters from writers like William L. Fox and artists like Mandy Martin provide an alternative response to these problems, with Martin suggesting that art might play a role in amplifying

'resonances' between cultures. Martin's stunning painting series *Falling Star* is an example, described by the artist (a non-Aboriginal person) as the result of an attempt to 'stay open' to meanings in the landscape as part of an imaginative engagement with Aboriginal senses of place understood as Country. Like Martin's paintings, artwork throughout this book by Aboriginal people, often in collaboration with non-Aboriginal people, illustrates intriguing resonances where multiple epistemologies clearly intermingle.

For example, John Carty and Hanson Pye's screenprint *Parnkupirti layers* presents text in English along with Aboriginal motifs explained elsewhere in the book as relating to *kuwarri* (present day) and *Waljirri* (the Dreaming). This manifests a creative response to archaeological work around Paruku, with each layer—the *Waljirri* marks, the English text, the *kuwarri* marks—seemingly written over the others, suggesting perhaps a palimpsest built up over the original indelible marks of the Dreaming. Kim Mahood's account of collaborative map-making is another example: fire and water maps prepared by Mahood and her Aboriginal collaborators combine topographical information with Aboriginal environmental knowledge in a form which appears genuinely intercultural.

While some contributions to this diverse collection are stronger than others (for example, William Fox's meditative poem 'Paruku suite' struck me as a somewhat superficial response to the lake and the complex cultural meanings documented by other contributors), the failures as well as successes of *Desert Lake* are part of its strength. There is clearly no single answer to the questions of truth posed by Carty and Mahood. Rather, this intriguing collection offers heterogeneous Indigenous as well as other Australian accounts of Paruku that complement, contest and sometimes contradict each other. Lavishly presented with illustrations on almost every page, this book provides a fascinating insight into a lively place remote from most people's experience of the Australian continent.

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Penny Olsen: *Collecting Ladies: Ferdinand von Mueller and Women Botanical Artists*. National Library of Australia, Canberra, 2013. 237 pp., ISBN: 9780642277534, AUD\$39.99.

From the National Library of Australia comes another volume showcasing works largely from the rare books and pictorial collections of the Library. In this case the focus is on fourteen women who painted Australia's wildflowers in the nineteenth century. This is a handsomely produced book and includes a generous selection of the works of the artists together with other illustrations (including portraits of the artists). A useful and extensive list of illustrations gives full details of the works reproduced in the book. Several repositories have permitted works in their collections to be included in the book, thereby shining light on some otherwise unknown painters. These institutions include the Allport Library and Museum of Fine Arts in Hobart, the Royal Botanic Gardens Melbourne, the Mitchell Library and the Art Gallery of Western Australia.

The women presented here had varying degrees of engagement in the botanical world of colonial Australia, ranging from a strong and capable interest in the science of botany (Louisa Atkinson and Flora Martin), to the need to earn a living (Helena Scott) and a wish to exercise their skills in creating paintings that did justice to the beauties of the Australian flora (Fanny de Mole and Euphemia Henderson). In describing their lives the author has successfully placed each of these women in the intellectual and scientific worlds they inhabited, giving details of the scientists (particularly botanists) with whom they came in contact. There is already a body of literature on the better-known artists, particularly Ellis Rowan, the Scott sisters and Louisa Atkinson but also including Margaret Forrest and Louisa Meredith. This book places those women alongside some of their equally talented but less well-documented colleagues and presents the world of early Australian botanical painting in accessible form. The extensive bibliography has some repetition, with numbers of citations listed more than once under different headings. In one instance a book with two authors has been listed in separate places under each author.

Taken as a work that highlights some of the women who painted the Australian flora in the nineteenth century, describing their lives and giving the reader a glimpse of their work, this book succeeds admirably. However it is less successful as a contribution to the history of Australian natural history. Ferdinand von Mueller has been used as a means to provide a framework to draw these women together. The implication is that he had direct and even close connections with them all. But this is not the case, the connection (where there was one) being of varying degrees of closeness. Certainly some did enjoy a near association with Mueller. His niece, Marie Wehl, and his one-time fiancée, Euphemia Henderson, have to date been largely unknown as illustrators of Australian wildflowers and are here given a welcome prominence. Others such as Louisa Meredith and Ellis Rowan corresponded with him and sent paintings so that he could identify the plants they had illustrated. Rosa Fiveash is not known to have either met or corresponded with Mueller, her botanical activities being largely in connection with South Australian botanists. Similarly Gertrude Lovegrove was associated with William Baeuerlen, who was himself a collector for Mueller, but there is no demonstrated connection between Lovegrove and Mueller.

The title of the book also suggests that these women were collectors of specimens. Prominence is given in the first chapter to advertisements placed by Mueller in various colonial newspapers appealing for people to collect plants for him. In particular his plea was addressed to ladies who might otherwise be without suitable intellectual activity. However, few of the women in this book were in fact collectors. Louisa Atkinson stands out as one who was both collector and artist. Even here Mueller was not Atkinson's only botanical contact. As she corresponded with and collected plants for Mueller, so too was New South Wales botanist William Woolls equally a member of her botanical network. Atkinson was a knowledgeable and discerning botanical observer, a fact acknowledged by both Mueller and Woolls. She was not content with just painting the flora but published widely on botanical subjects. Her keen eye enabled her to collect numerous new species, some duly named after her by Mueller.

In fact, few of the women who collected for Mueller illustrated what they collected. Several hundred women are known to have collected for Mueller, and some of them are discussed in the first chapter of the book, but they did not illustrate what they collected. More usually Mueller was sent paintings to identify the plants, those paintings being returned to the artist.

A welcome feature of the book is the inclusion of illustrations of fungi, organisms normally overlooked in books devoted to painters of the Australian flora. It is perhaps not too big a leap to connect the fact that women such as Marie Wehl and Louisa Atkinson painted these unusual subjects with the direct influence and encouragement of Mueller. However, in presenting the work of these women the author has not made those links. Indeed, there is no analysis of the merits as botanical documents of the works presented, nor of their relationship to the discovery of Australian plants. Works reproduced range from the scientific exactitude of the Scott sisters to the free-flowing and decorative paintings of Euphemia Henderson and Fanny Charsley. Accurate depictions of plants can be valuable in identifying plants, being necessary ancillary documents to specimens themselves. For fungi in particular, specimens of which dry shrivelled and misshapen, drawings taken in the living state are vital for accurate identification. The extent to which the work of the artists presented in this book might be considered as useful identification aids and as contributing to our understanding of the history of Australian botany has not been examined by the author.

Helen M. Cohn

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Peggy James: *Cosmopolitan Conservationists: Greening Modern Sydney*. Australian Scholarly Publishing: North Melbourne, Vic., 2013. xii + 291 pp., ISBN: 978-1-925003-08-6, AUD\$39.95.

'Greening' in the subtitle of Peggy James' book *Cosmopolitan Conservationists: Greening Modern Sydney* cleverly encapsulates the many and varied ways in which (what we might now call) Sydney's early twentieth-century urban conservation network was active in making, or

ensuring, greater provision of green spaces, protecting existing places of natural beauty and natural resources, and campaigning for their better management. The story is told through the lives of eight individuals—David Stead, Walter Burley Griffin, Charles (C.E.W.) Bean, Thistle Harris, Norman Weekes, Marie Byles, Myles Dunphy, and Annie Wyatt—who were beginning to think about their relationship with the environment and their place in the world differently.

The book commences at the turn of the twentieth century and opens with a dispassionate description of the state of Sydney's environment. Potent images of plague conditions, pollution from extermination attempts, inadequate provision for sewage and noxious industries, and poorly planned inner city housing settlements are interwoven with descriptions of extant indigenous shoreline plant species and aquatic life, remnants of banksia scrub in Sydney's inner eastern suburbs, and hillsides retaining sandstone woodlands and heaths, waratahs, Christmas bush, goannas, owls, koalas and king parrots. The book then follows the actions of an elite group, mostly well educated, well-connected, and middle class, who mobilised to protect vast areas of Sydney's natural beauty that were under increasing threat from intensified industrial and suburban development, as a resource for future economic and spiritual prosperity. (Not until after the Second World War would campaigns be argued on the grounds of environmental protection for its own sake.)

After a brief description of the late nineteenth-century conservationists that this early twentieth-century wave followed, James moves into longer biographical chapters. The chapters are organised chronologically around a series of different campaigns, each of which provides a window onto the complex ecologies of the different sub-networks involved. Through this structure we come to understand a social movement from multiple vantage points; from the perspectives of people concerned not only about Sydney's natural and built environment, but about health, education and social reform, recreation, and garden suburb planning. The individuals James follows were active across different suites of organisations, including the Wildlife Preservation Society, the Australian Forests League (and various local Forest Leagues), the Rangers League, civic protection

leagues, suburban progress associations, the Parks and Playgrounds Movement, the Town Planning Association, and bushwalkers, and occasionally worked with or alongside local and state governments to achieve their objectives.

Some of the lives James traces have been well documented elsewhere. Walter Burley Griffin, Marion Mahony Griffin, and their work in Australia and overseas have been the subject of extensive academic inquiry. Thistle Harris, C. E. W. Bean, and Annie Wyatt have separately been subjects of biographical study. Dunphy is well recognised in histories of the Australian environment movement and Harris's contribution to the Australian native plant movement is well-recognised in garden history. The life and work of Marie Byles and, even more so, Norman Weekes, however, are considerably less well-explored and for this reason alone the book demands attention.

Deserving of serious attention is the weaving together of the familiar and the new in a relational biography of a network, as James calls it, and the Sydney landscape. In doing so, James reveals complex relationships between individuals (personal and professional), the many organisational perspectives from which they acted and interacted, different central concerns, and the many causes they championed.

For this reason *Cosmopolitan Conservationists* is a persuasive argument for approaching history from multiple angles. It is not a new approach to history or environmental history. But as this book reveals it can be a productive one for moving beyond description and the fashioning of traditional dichotomies, instead opening up possibilities for exploring the more nuanced realities associated with the interchange of ideas and the complexities of the catalysts that spur people into action.

By exploring a network, the book necessarily spans a vast territory in terms of the societies and advocacy groups with which the eight individuals were connected, and the campaigns and debates invoked. The range of primary materials referenced—clearly combed with a patient and detailed eye—is impressive. It was exciting and a pleasure to encounter many illustrations that were unfamiliar. The book's concentration on a small slice of a much wider network, and the relatively narrow time period (c.1900 to 1960) and geographical scope (the greater

Sydney region), however, give the book focus and make it absorbing reading. Most notably, the intricacies of the network the book explores should make this book of wide interest to audiences of Australian political, town planning, and garden history, natural and cultural heritage conservation in Australia, and Australian studies generally.

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Ian Fraser and Jeannie Gray: *Australian Bird Names: A Complete Guide*. CSIRO Publishing: Collingwood, 2013. xv + 336 pp. ISBN: 97806431044693, AUD\$49.95.

Species names can be derived in many ways. They may be descriptive: for example, White Faced Squeaker and *Pardalotus quadragintus* ('forty leopard-spotted bird'); geographical: Cape York Lorilet and *Ptilotus novaenoriae* [found near New Norcia, WA]; analogous: Native Pheasant and *Aplornis cantoroides* (resembling *Aplornis cantor*); eponymous: Prince Albert's Lyrebird and *Tringa bonapartii*. Fraser and Gray give useful etymologies of both 'common and scientific names of every Australian bird', that is, all species in *Systematics and taxonomy of Australian birds* (2008). They discuss the reasons for the names, give something about the author of the name, and comment on the aptness of them. Under 'other names' we find common and scientific names that have been used. This well-written book will be an entertaining and informative companion to those interested in birds, and knowing the derivation of the name may aid understanding of what, at times, might seem arbitrary and arcane.

The two indexes, to common and scientific names, are very helpful. The latter, in particular, is extremely valuable as the head-words include not only genera but also species epithets, so that a quick check shows, somewhat surprisingly, that there are only two species named for John Gould. There are four species with the epithet *whitei*, but for only one is the White for whom it was named identified, with suggestions that another is a false eponym.

Historians of exploration and the biological sciences may find tidbits of information that will help them interpret other material, but there is no

guarantee that what is being sought will be found. I looked in vain for the etymology of *Casuarius johnsonii*, a Cassowary named by the botanist Ferdinand (von) Mueller in 1866. According to the *Australian Faunal Directory* this is considered valid as the subspecies *Casuarius casuarius johnsonii*, but Fraser and Gray make no mention of it in their entry for *Casuarius casuarius*, nor of the synonyms *Casuarius casuarius hamiltoni* or *Casuarius australis*. I then checked half a dozen species chosen at random from the index: in all cases the AFD included synonyms not included by Fraser and Gray.

Turning to historical documents gives a better check of how useful the entries might be to readers of this journal. I checked names of ten of the many bird specimens sent by von Mueller in the second half of the nineteenth century to what is now the Staatliches Museum für Naturkunde in Stuttgart and listed there in a manuscript inventory in February 1896. I also made AFD searches on the Stuttgart names. Two names were in both AFD and this volume, two were in this volume but not in AFD, four were in AFD but not this volume, and two were in neither; one name in neither source was probably a misapplication to a Stuttgart specimen of the name of a non-Australian relative. So, despite 60% not being found, it has helped clarify twenty percent of the names in my short historical test list that were not identifiable from the other major source.

Provided we recognise that Fraser and Gray do not include every name that has been given to Australian bird species, it will be a useful back-up to other sources for identifying historic allusions to Australian birds, as well as a valuable addition to bird watchers' libraries.

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Braund, J. (ed.): *Ferdinand Hochstetter and the Contribution of German-Speaking Scientists to New Zealand Natural History in the Nineteenth Century*. Peter Lang, Frankfurt a.M., 2013. x + 314 pp. ISBN: 9783631604063. 62 Swiss Francs (approx. AUD\$70.00).

Just as in nineteenth century Australia, German-speaking scientists made enormous contributions to New Zealand science in far greater

proportion than their numbers would suggest. This book is a major contribution to documenting their involvement in the form of a collection of sixteen essays arising out of an international symposium held in September 2008 in Auckland on the theme of the book's title.

Part one consists of six essays on general aspects of German-speakers' contributions to New Zealand natural science, anthropology and exploration from the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. Part two consists of ten essays on the topic of Ferdinand Hochstetter, his colleagues and the *Novara* expedition.

The scholarly introduction by the editor James Braund, which places Hochstetter in the context of New Zealand science, is a comprehensive overview and summary of the involvement of German-speakers beginning with the Forsters, who travelled on James Cook's second voyage. The extensive footnotes provide an introduction to the available literature on the people mentioned.

In part one, Horst Dippel examines European knowledge about New Zealand in the late eighteenth century and the differences in interpretation of the Maori between Johann Forster and his son George resulting from their visits in 1773 and 1774. Peter Clayworth discusses the visit of Baron Carl von Hügel in 1834, including a detailed summary of Hügel's journal of his visit. Ivo Holmquist summarises information on Swedish natural scientists who visited the Pacific, with an emphasis on Sven Bergren's visit to New Zealand in 1873–1875. The subantarctic Auckland Islands were the location of the German 1874 Transit of Venus expedition. Elliott W. Dawson and Hilmar W. Duerbeck give an account of the expedition, James Bade discusses the work of expedition photographer Hermann Krone, and David Bade provides an account of the history of human contact and naming of features on the islands.

Part two opens with an essay by Hermann Mückler outlining Austria's unsuccessful attempts at establishing overseas colonies, beginning in the eighteenth century in Africa, India and the Nicobar Islands. To the surprise of this reviewer, the voyage of the *Novara* was not just a scientific expedition but was intended to play a role in obtaining an overseas colony for Austria. Secret instructions to the commander of the expedition, Commodore Bernhard von

Wüllersdorf-Urbair, on this subject were never implemented because of the political climate in Europe, which meant Austria could not afford to annoy either friends or potential enemies.

David G. L. Weiss in his essay traces the beginning of the Austrian navy and Austrian trading voyages with a discussion of Austrian involvement in the construction of the Suez Canal and its bearing on Austrian colonial ambitions. He then goes on to discuss the preparation and outfitting of the *Novara* and the role of photography on the expedition.

Christa Riedl-Dorn examines the background of the naturalists of the *Novara*, the reasons why they were chosen and the instructions they received. Translations from the diary entries of Georg Frauenfeld, zoologist of the expedition and accounts of the work of Anton Franz Jelinek, botanical collector, and Joseph Selleny, artist, are given. She also discusses the later work of Austrian scientists, Andreas Reischek and Robert Lendlmayer von Lendenfeld, and the visits of the Austrian naval vessels *Saida* in 1891 and *Panther* in 1905. Joseph Selleny is discussed in more detail by Helge Selleny.

The personnel involved in botanical collecting aboard the *Novara* were Hochstetter, Eduard Schwarz, Jelinek and Frauenfeld. Robert Pils outlines their work, lists the numbers of plants they each collected and summarises the difficulties that both Jelinek and Frauenfeld faced with lack of space and the clashes of personalities that arose.

James Braund and Michael Johnston detail the field-work undertaken by Hochstetter in the North Island and in Nelson Province after the departure of the *Novara*. One of Hochstetter's party on his North Island expedition was the draftsman Augustus Carl Frederick Koch, who was provided by the Provincial Government to assist Hochstetter in mapping and to act as meteorologist. Rolf W. Brednich presents biographical information on this little known figure. Another member of the party was the photographer Bruno Hamel, about whom virtually nothing was known until the work of John Webster published here. The final essay by Michael Organ summarises Hochstetter's travels in Australia.

Four of the essays by Austrian historians have been translated from German by James Braund and provide an introduction for English-speakers

into the work of Austrian scholars of the *Novara* expedition.

The *Novara* geologist, Hochstetter, played a significant role in establishing geology as a science in New Zealand. He opened up an opportunity for the young Julius Haast, who was to go on and make an important and lasting contribution to New Zealand science.

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Graham Joyner: *Monster, Myth or Lost Marsupial?* Hayes UK & Thomas: Canberra, 2012. vi + 133 pp., index, ISBN: 978-0-646-51637-0, AUD\$25.00.

David Waldron and Simon Townsend: *Snarls from the Tea-Tree.* Arcadia: North Melbourne, 2012. 186 pp. + Index, illus., ISBN: 978-1-921875-83-0, AUD\$34.95.

Australia is home to such a wide range of unusual and interesting fauna that one has to wonder what impels people to want to add to that range with creatures of arguable authenticity. The two books reviewed here focus on aspects of a range of creatures that at some time since the arrival of Europeans on this continent have exercised the imagination of the public. Although markedly different in most respects, these two books have at least one thing in common: in both cases the authors' point of focus is on the evidence and the process and methodology employed in attempting to understand this evidence. Neither book aims to make a case for or against the particular creatures studied.

The animal at the centre of *Monster, Myth or Lost Marsupial?* is variously referred to as Yahoo, 'the Australian Gorilla' and the 'Hairy man'. Despite the book's title, the author insists that it is not about this mysterious being but, rather, a range of aspects of the process of proving or disproving the existence of the creature. In fact, this slim volume has three stated aims: (1) to examine in some detail both the observations made in the nineteenth century regarding the so-called 'yahoo' or 'Hairy man', and 'the names associated with them' [ie. the observers]; (2) to reveal the truth about both the Yahoo and Yowie and their interrelated pasts; and (3) 'to analyse the reaction of science to the yahoo, to show that many of the assumptions

made by scientists ... are based on poorly constructed arguments, and to suggest that something ignored or forgotten ... can still be a proper object of enquiry'.

The Introduction provides some elaboration of the three stated aims given. The author is driven by the belief that scientists have been misled in dealing with the question of the Yahoo by their fixation on the need for material remains of the creature as proof. By adopting a purely scientific approach they have ignored a range of evidence from other disciplines such as linguistics, anthropology and oral history. In arguing his case, Joyner seems to use a very narrow, essentially mathematical or philosophical definition of 'proof'. This leads to some rather dubious statements, for example that 'something cannot be evidence of itself'. Assertions and statements are made that are neither elaborated nor substantiated; it is claimed, for example, that 'the Yahoo is best thought of ... as some recently extinct marsupial' but no evidence is provided that this is anything more than the author's belief.

This Introduction is followed by five chapters, the first of which focuses on what a study of Aboriginal languages can tell us about the nature of the Yahoo. The succeeding four each tell the story of a particular series of sightings of a mysterious creature. The original book, published in 2009, finished with the 'Conclusion', which follows these chapters. But this reissue contains a postscript, the main purpose of which seems to be to allow the author to sound off about how the book was misunderstood by reviewers and other commentators.

It is not difficult to understand why readers would mistake the focus of Joyner's book. Firstly, despite the author's claims that it is not about the Yahoo as such, since the creature runs so strongly through the work and is mentioned so often, it is natural that it attracts readers' attention. Secondly, whatever messages the author intends to give are difficult to prize from the narrative. The book contains many sentences that are so complex as to defy interpretation, and some that make no sense at all. The author seems to have an aversion to the use of commas. An outstanding example of all of this is the first sentence in the Conclusion, which is 73 words long, in at least seven clauses, with just two commas. The book sorely needed the attention of an editor.

Snarls from the Tea-Tree would have benefited also from the occasional input of an editor (or proofreader) but the glitches here are minor and not such as to distract from the narrative. It is a book of two quite disparate parts, presumably reflecting the interests of its two authors. It is a difference that is evident in both subject matter and the style in which the parts are written.

In the Introduction, Waldron spells out the purposes of each section. In the first, titled 'Making sense of the history', Waldron traces the folklore history of sightings and other evidence of big cats in Victoria. These three chapters are arranged in chronological order and cover the period from the earliest days of European settlement to 2011. Media reports relating to the various sightings of big cats are examined, from the episode of the Tantanoola Tiger in the early 1890s to a supposed puma on the slopes of Mount Warrenheip, close to Ballarat, in the mid-1990s. Throughout, these reports are considered in their social contexts and related to the broader study of the historical and cultural relationships between Europeans and Australian environments.

The second part of the book is headed 'The evidence' and comprises two chapters by Simon Townsend. The first of these is an introduction to the field of cryptozoology, a comparatively recent sub-discipline that, to use Townsend's words, 'ties together the discipline of anthropology by analyzing folklore and zoology'. The following chapter is an interesting detailing of the types of evidence examined in this field (such as tracks, drag marks, kills, and scats); the tell tale characteristics of a range of creatures thought (at various times) to have been responsible, and the forensic strategies and methods employed, including photograph and DNA testing, in assessing the evidence.

The Conclusion is short, as such things should be, but is essentially a summary of Waldron's chapters. Only the final paragraph—unfortunately, poorly written—is an acknowledgement of Townsend's contribution to the book.

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R. J. W. Selleck: *Finding Home: The Masson Family*. Australian Scholarly Publishing: North Melbourne, 2013. 442 pp., ISBN: 9781921875885, \$39.95.

Based on the extended Masson family, Selleck develops an interwoven story of professorial recruitment by an Australian university, temporary and permanent migration, familial relationships in Britain and Australia, and changing social mores in the late nineteenth and early twentieth century, including the education of women. The nexus at which these threads intersect, and at which many of the changes become evident, is David Orme Masson and his wife Mary née Struthers, who came to Melbourne from Scotland in 1886 when Orme took up the chair of chemistry at the University. Both were the children of professors at the University of Edinburgh, David Mather Masson and John Struthers holding chairs, respectively, of anatomy and rhetoric and English literature.

Establishment values were strong. Struthers allowed his daughter to marry only after Orme Masson had demonstrated his ability to keep her, that being when he secured the Melbourne chair. When it came to the servants and the running of her household, Mary drew on 'her mother's example of benign superiority over somewhat troublesome lesser beings'. Nonetheless, Selleck chronicles Mary's warm relationship with Jessie Inglis, who came as nursemaid for her children but later served as companion and then lived with Mary's daughter Marnie (Marjory) and her husband Walter Bassett and their family.

The extensive correspondence that passed between members of the Masson family in Melbourne and their relatives in Scotland has allowed Selleck to expand from a simple family narrative to a rich and interesting commentary. Setting off each morning from their home on the Melbourne campus, named 'Chanonry' after his wife's childhood address in Aberdeen, to his office and laboratory, and retiring to his study on most evenings, Orme left the running of the household and the raising of the children (James Irvine 1887, Flora Marjorie 1889, and Elsie Rosaline 1890) to Mary and the domestic staff, while he developed and taught the growing chemistry curriculum and the governance of the university. Moving in circles that included

Justice 'Harvester' Higgins and the anthropologist Baldwin Spencer, Masson was appointed by the Australian Government to chair inquiries into such disparate matters as the use of silver coinage and the determination of when sheep were too wet to be shorn. Selleck described Orme's research as 'solid', which I think is a fair assessment, and noted his support of research by his students. Research gave way to organisation, at which Masson excelled, founding the Society of Chemical Industry of Victoria and the Melbourne University Chemical Society, assisting in the birth of the Australian (later Royal Australian) Chemical Institute, championing Antarctic research under the aegis of the Australasian Association for the Advancement of Science, leading the Australian National Research Council and serving on the Council for Scientific and Industrial Research.

Mary and Orme contributed to Australia's efforts in World War I, Orme through technical contributions and Mary through the Red Cross and other fund-raising bodies such as the Victorian Patriotic League. Their politics was always on the right, 'bigoted' according to Selleck. A particular low point was their opposition to the appointment of the Jewish-Australian Isaac Isaacs as Governor-General in 1930 although Orme later referred to him as 'a very able old man'. In one of his pithy phrases, Selleck notes Mary's letters of support for young Australians making their way in English society, reflecting her absorbing, and mistaking for virtues, 'its class and racial prejudices'. Even more conservative was the Massons' son, always known as Irvine, who completed his BSc, majoring in chemistry, at Melbourne before leaving to study at Cambridge and making a career in Britain that concluded with a Vice-Chancellorship at Sheffield. He never revisited Australia and, married to an Edinburgh cousin, kept his distance from the Melbourne family. Marnie, as noted above, married a local war hero and engineer, Walter Bassett, and settled into domesticity in Melbourne. Elsie married the Polish anthropologist Bronislaw (Bronio) Malinowski, a match at first opposed by Orme, and the couple led a peripatetic life as Bronio's studies took him to Pacific Islands and to appointments in Britain and America.

In 1901 Orme's patron, Sir William Ramsay, recommended him to head a new research

institute in India. Masson declined, and there were other suggested appointments in Britain that he did not follow up. In 1916, however, he applied for the Principalship at Edinburgh University but, being unsuccessful, decided to remain in Melbourne rather than return 'home', a decision confirmed on post-retirement visits to the old country. Other professors did return, chemists Robinson and Read and physicist Threlfall among them, but Orme Masson stuck it out until the end. Rich obituaries followed his death in 1937, and others have written about his chemistry, and Len Weickhardt's *Masson of Melbourne* (1989) covered in detail the period of the professoriate, 1886–1923.

As Australian science grew through accretion and innovation, Roy MacLeod's 'crimson threads of Empire' remained strong. Selleck shows us how they were woven into social, familial and educational networks of great power and some poignancy. Thirty pages of notes and bibliography and fifteen of index make the book and its sources accessible.

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Ian D. Clark and Fred Cahir (eds):

The Aboriginal Story of Burke and Wills: Forgotten Narratives. CSIRO Publishing: Collingwood, Vic, 2013. xix + 314 pp., illus., bibliog., index, ISBN: 9780643108080 (HB), \$59.95.

The Aboriginal Story of Burke and Wills is the second of two projects initiated by the Royal Society of Victoria for the 150th anniversary of the Victorian Exploring Expedition of 1860–1861. The first, *Burke and Wills: The Scientific Legacy of the Victorian Exploring Expedition* (2011), reassessed the scientific achievements of both the Burke and Wills party and subsequent relief expeditions, overturning the long-standing assumption that such achievements were minimal or non-existent. *The Aboriginal Story of Burke and Wills* focuses on the diverse associations of various Aboriginal peoples with these expeditions, the nature and repercussions of the cross-cultural encounters that took place, and the ways in which they have been remembered

by subsequent Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal generations.

The widely varying backgrounds of these expeditions' numerous participants and the broad range of Aboriginal peoples with whom they came in contact offer a rich terrain for reflection and re-examination. This richness is reflected in the variety of approaches employed by the volume's contributing authors and the breadth of source material they draw upon. Philip A. Clark, for example, considers the general failure of Burke, Wills and others to access Aboriginal ecological knowledge. Luise Hercus assesses expedition members' records of Aboriginal words and phrases in the light of current knowledge of the Paakantyi, Karnic, Yarli, Murray River and Kulin languages. Fred Cahir and Darrell Lewis examine Aboriginal oral traditions relating to the Victorian Exploring Expedition. David Dodd and Peta Jeffries analyse German expedition members' written and visual records of their encounters with Aboriginal cultures; Paul Lambeth explores, through art and poetry, what it meant for Burke and Wills to be non-Indigenous in an Indigenous land.

The quality of this volume is somewhat uneven. The best contributions are very good indeed: Deirdre Slattery challenges and inspires with her examination of alternative versions of the Burke and Wills narratives as potential tools to help 'develop relevant and productive practices for living in Australian conditions as custodians rather than as conquerors or settlers', while Leigh Boucher's meticulous examination of Alfred Howitt's 'successes and their remembrances' powerfully illustrates the ways in which his relief expedition's complex relationship with, and heavy dependence on, Aboriginal peoples and knowledge were rewritten to support a narrative more consistent with the needs of settler nationhood. Other contributions, while not without merit, are flawed. Peta Jeffries' chapter suffers from poor structure and insufficient awareness of its inherently speculative nature: her exploration of Ludwig Becker's 1861 painting 'Water reservoir at Mutwanji' as an attempt to express 'a spiritual connection and acknowledgement of the earth centre as Mother, as home' is original and compelling, but her claim to have 'proven ... what Ludwig Becker and his artwork aspired to do and be' is overconfident, to say the least. Fred Cahir commences his chapter on

Aboriginal oral traditions by acknowledging that 'scouring through historical records produced by non-Aboriginal people in search of accounts by Aboriginal people about non-Aboriginal people is particularly problematic', but the remainder of his examination proceeds on precisely this basis, giving his initial caveat the nature of a throwaway line. David Dodd usefully draws attention to Hermann Beckler's 1867 description of a corroboree on the Darling Downs, including notations of individual songs performed during the ceremony, but his translation of Beckler's written account sits uneasily between German and English: how else to explain phrases such as 'these in the highest degree involved excited actors' and 'it ... caught my attention too much that I could not sleep'?

Churlish though the comment may appear, the book as a whole is also marred by insufficient copy-editing. A good copy-editor, for example, would surely have corrected the assertion that Aboriginal people were accused of 'anthropology [sic], ritual sacrifice and survival cannibalism'. More importantly, words frequently appear twice in succession or are missing altogether; punctuation is idiosyncratic and often ambiguous; the index is incomplete; even the chapter headings are occasionally inaccurate. The overall effect is jarring and detracts from an uninterrupted enjoyment of the book's content.

These criticisms notwithstanding, *The Aboriginal Story of Burke and Wills* successfully offers valuable 'new perspectives on the story of Burke and Wills' and eloquently acknowledges 'the Aboriginal contribution to the Victorian Exploring Expedition and the subsequent relief expeditions'. Its admirably multidisciplinary, generously illustrated contents introduce Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal readers alike to the Yandruwandha and their life-saving hospitality towards John King; to Watpipa the 'old man', who acted as guide to Beckler and his party; to the 'brave and gallant native guide' Dick and his countryman Peter, who rescued Alexander McPherson and Myles Lyon from starvation; and to Mr Shirt, a canny diplomat who perished after leading an attack against expedition members at Bulloo. These are forgotten narratives worth remembering.

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