

## Some Interesting Links with John Gould

By GREGORY M. MATHEWS, F.R.S.E.

Many years ago there came into my possession, through a daughter of John Gould, some interesting bird plates sent from Australia by Eli Waller, of Brisbane. These were of birds new to science since Gould had finished his great work.

Kendall Broadbent was collecting birds at the time and sending the material to Waller, who was then the best authority in Brisbane. Presumably Waller painted the birds.

Silvester Diggles, in 1866, Part VII., says of Eli Waller, "to whose large and valuable collection I am so much indebted for most of my figures and to whose scientific and extensive practical knowledge of the birds of Australia, and energy and perseverance as a collector, I am happy to bear testimony."

The first plate is the Blue-faced Lorilet, which is called *Cyclopsitta wallerii*, and is undoubtedly the first painting of *Opopsitta leadbeateri*. In Waller's writing is the following:—"This Parrot was collected by Mr. Broadbent in the scrubs of Rockingham Bay, both in the lower and mountain scrubs. It feeds on the native figs and other fruits indigenous to the scrubs of the north coast." "They are difficult," says Mr. Broadbent, "to obtain, and their presence is only to be found by the falling of the refuse of the fruit they are feeding on. They utter a weak screech when they enter and also when they leave, but make no noise while feeding."

A covering letter by Broadbent gives us the date:—

Edward Street, Brisbane,  
July 11, 1874.

To J. Gould, Esq.

Dear Sir,

The new Parrot *Cyclopsitta*, which you will receive the drawing of, you will see by the notes accompanying it, that it was collected by me at Rockingham Bay, and should it prove to be new I wish it to be called after my friend, Mr. Waller, of Brisbane, as a mark of my esteem for his kindness to me, and who has worked hard for many years collecting the ornithology of Australia.

I remain, dear sir,

Yours respectfully,

KENDALL BROADBENT.

This bird was named by Ramsay on November 5, 1874, or four months after Broadbent had sent his letter to Gould.

The next plate is *Collocalia francica terræreginæ*. Waller says, "This Swallow was also collected by Mr. Broadbent

on the coast range of Rockingham Bay. First seen at Dalrymple's Gap, they appeared to come from the north and return again in the evening. On the morning before rain this bird assembled in large flocks and just skimmed over the ground with great rapidity; they were all leaving about the latter part of June." This bird was described by Ramsay in *Proc. Zool Soc.*, 1874.

The next two plates are of Honeyeaters. Of *Ptilotis broadbentii*, the Bridled Honeyeater, Waller writes:—This *Ptilotis* is solely an inhabitant of the forest. Mr. Broadbent says he never saw it in the scrubs; it arrives in Rockingham Bay in March. It is not a plentiful bird and very shy, always keeping at the tops of the trees; it is very fond of feeding on the parasitical plants; it is a very pugnacious bird, driving all other birds that approach it. And should this species of *Ptilotis* prove to be new, after your careful examination, I trust that you will, by my wish, feel fully justified in adopting the name which I assigned to it."

I remain, dear sir,

Yours faithfully,

E. WALLER.

This was named *Ptilotis frenata* by Ramsay, at the same time as he named the former species in 1874.

Then comes *Ptilotis macleayana*, of Ramsay, 1875, of which Waller says:—"This *Ptilotis* is solely an inhabitant of the scrubs in the vicinity of Rockingham Bay. Mr. Broadbent says he believes this *Ptilotis* is a resident only of that port, he having shot it for the space of nine months. It is a very shy and rare bird, he (Mr. Broadbent) states that he never saw two together. In its habits it is like all other Honeyeaters, its food consisting of the honey from various flowers of the scrubs."

These four paintings were sent to Gould in 1874. I also have the original of some score of John Gould's plates, of which by far the most interesting to Australians is *Neophema splendida*, the Scarlet-chested Grass Parrot. This appeared in December, 1847, in Part XXIX. of his *Birds of Australia*, to replace the plate in Part II. of a single figure, done by Mrs. Gould in 1841. This shows Gould's work at its best. He worked with chalks and pencil, the result was then handed to H. C. Richter to be put on stone. The plate is signed "Gould, 1846," which is getting on for a century ago.

We must remember that in January, 1937, we shall actually celebrate the hundredth anniversary of the appearance of Gould's first book on the *Birds of Australia*. The original paintings of the *Birds of Paradise* are truly magnificent, and must be seen to be appreciated. We have:—

*Craspodophora magnifica*—The New Guinea Rifle-bird.

- \**Seleucides nigricans*—Twelve-wired Bird of Paradise.
- Drepanornis albertisii*—D'Alberti's Bird of Paradise.
- \**Epimachus speciosus*—Great Sickle-bill Bird of Paradise.
- Paradisea raggiana*—Marquis Raggi's Bird of Paradise.
- \**Paradisea minor*—Lesser Bird of Paradise.
- Manucodia comrii*—Curl-crested Manucode.
- Paradigalla carunculata*—Wattle Bird of Paradise.
- Parotia sexpennis*—Six-plumed Bird of Paradise.
- \**Lophorina* species.

Then of the *Birds of Great Britain* we have:—The plate of Red-starts with Gould's notes, the Eider Duck and Shel-Duck, and the Great-eared Owl, all splendid pieces of work.

Another very interesting plate is an original by Wolf, done for Gould's *Birds of Asia*, and signed "J. Wolf, 1857." It is of the Alligator-bird, and has all the notes and outlined drawings, for the help of the artist who was to put it on the stone.

\*The four marked with an asterisk have not been published.

**Bird Notes from Terrigal, N.S.W.**—On the afternoon of April 3, 1930, a small flock of Pied Oyster-Catchers (*Hæmatopus ostralegus*), ten in number, was on the beach here for about an hour. They were fairly tame and allowed one to approach within about 50 yards. They left in a southerly direction at 5.30 p.m.

On April 8 a local fisherman drew my attention to a large dark-coloured bird which was flying in large circles to the south eastward somewhat off shore. In a short time it came near enough to enable one to see it clearly without the aid of field glasses. There is no doubt in my mind that it was a Greater Frigate Bird (*Fregata minor*)—a bird I have often seen in the Islands and New Guinea. This seems a long way south for the bird—we are only thirty miles north of Sydney.

Since the scrubs and forest country have been cleared on this part of the coast the Black-backed Magpie (*Gymnorhina tibicen*) has appeared in fair numbers. There were none here about five years ago. The clearing of the scrubs has, however, driven several interesting birds farther back—namely, the Regent Honeyeater (*Zanthoniza phrygia*), the Topknot Pigeon (*Lopholaimus antarcticus*), the Eastern Whip-bird (*Psophodes olivaceus*). The Bell-birds are, I am glad to say, holding their own at present. By Bell-bird I mean the Bell-miner (*Manorina melanophrys*).—A. J. MACARTHUR, R.A.O.U., Onslow, N.S.W.