

Editors' page

Three articles published in this second issue of *Historical Records of Australian Science* for 2019 are about the ways in which scientists employed by the Commonwealth Scientific and Industrial Research Organisation have driven research and development in the twentieth century. Two of these articles concern the roles that CSIRO scientists working with local people played in developing land resource surveys in the Territory of Papua and New Guinea before independence in 1975 and then in the new Papua New Guinea over the next two decades. As well as the immense benefit provided to the new nation to our north, the studies contributed to broader knowledge of land resources and resource use in the wet tropics.

CSIRO's oral history collection is designed to complement official governance documents and will be used in a larger project to write a history of the organisation. The authors of the article published here, who have conducted and documented the interviews, have described their methodology and provided excerpts that show the kind of information being collected. A strong theme of the oral histories is the organisation and management of CSIRO programmes, and the way those functions have evolved through successive reviews and the leadership of successive chief executives.

The work of Lothar Becker, a German naturalist who visited Australia twice in the middle of the nineteenth century is discussed by Thomas Darragh, who includes translations of the material published once Becker returned to Germany. This article is joined by specialist critiques of Becker's observations on Victorian fungi and Aboriginal culture as he (briefly) experienced them.

Our biographical memoirs provide readers with fascinating and important information about the careers of Australia's leading scientists. The biographers have gathered so much material that to include all of it in the memoirs would far exceed the journal's page limits, an over-supply of riches that we cope with by including extra information, along with bibliographies of their published work, in Supplementary Material that is accessible online to readers.

Anton Hales was a geophysicist who had leadership roles in his native South Africa, in the USA and in Australia, where he was the foundation director of the Research School of Earth Sciences at ANU. The memoir follows Hales' career and his evolution from a 'fixist' position with regard to the positioning of the continents, to the 'highly dynamic' view that most earth scientists share today.

Tony Linnane joined the young Monash University in 1962. Although he published significant research in areas such as interferon, membrane biology and genetics, he is best-known for his work on mitochondria, the energy powerhouses of cells. It was a field that he extended, in his post-Monash years, to the biology of ageing. As well as FAA, he was a Fellow of the Royal Society of London and that organisation will publish a biographical memoir in parallel with ours.

Bryan Womersley was a phycologist who found his research field, Kangaroo Island, close at hand and able to provide him with a wealth of new species. Such richness, in fact, that his biographer noted that there more than enough algae in the southern waters of Australia to satisfy many phycological careers. Womersley became a world-figure in this field of science that, although of interest to nineteenth-century scientists in Australia, only matured in the second half of the twentieth century. Womersley vigorously rejected people calling his beloved marine flora 'seaweeds' and it makes us wonder why they were ever considered to be weeds.

Book reviews are a valuable service that we provide to readers (and incidentally to authors and publishers) and we hope that the collection in this issue will send you to the library or the bookshop. It's interesting to note that there are six female authors out of nine.

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