

Editors' Page

In this issue we publish our second commissioned *Historical Records of Australian Science* Review, three Memoirs, six Historical Articles, a Historical Document, and our usual contribution of Book Reviews handled by Dr Peter Hobbins.

The *Historical Records of Australian Science* Review is, 'Remembering the Spread of Western Science', by Professor Warwick Anderson, University of Sydney. A leader in the field of history of science, Anderson takes as his starting point the work of George Basalla in the 1960s. Anderson analyses the challenges to Basalla's proposal and concludes that no single framework suffices to explain the globalization of science. We consider that Anderson's essay will become essential reading to historians of Australian science.

Each of the Memoirs commemorates the life and work of a Fellow of the Australian Academy of Science. Their fields of expertise were biochemistry (Ward), neurophysiology, specifically vision research (Bishop), organic chemistry (Cavill), and aquatic ecology (McComb). Colin Ward's major achievement was probably the structure of the insulin receptor, concluded during the sort-of-retirement that is not uncommon among dedicated scientists. Colin's online encyclopedia CSIROpedia is a rich source of information about the organization that nurtured his career and many others. Peter Bishop developed new instrumentation for the examination of the vision process and, based on the observations made by him and his collaborators, established the theoretical bases of the vision process. Bishop, a former chair of this journal's advisory committee, was also a Fellow of the Royal Society of London and the RS will publish the memoir in a forthcoming issue of their *Biographical Memoirs of Fellows of the Royal Society*. Ken Cavill, whose career moved with the institution from Sydney Tech to the University of New South Wales, was a world leader in the isolation and identification of the chemical substances that are found in the defensive and communication secretions of ants. Arthur McComb began his research career with work on the plant growth substances, gibberellins, but is better known for his later work on the ecology of Western Australia estuaries and coasts.

The breadth of subjects covered by the Historical Articles is exemplified by authors writing for us about the search for a biological control agent for the rabbit plague, by further commentary on the nomenclature of palms, and by the travails of astronomers

who have nursed their research journal from its beginning in 1967 as a series of conference proceedings. Libby Robin and Stephen Boyden write about the 1965 proposal for a National Biological Centre in Canberra, a celebration of human ecology as yet unrealized there. They argue that the proposal anticipated the recent treatments of the Anthropocene and the 'museum of ideas'.

Two historians write about Marcus Oliphant. Darren Holden follows his article in the previous issue with another about Oliphant's role in Anglo-American relations during World War 2 and his warning of America's intention to maintain hegemony over atomic research. Katherine Keeble suggests a reassessment of Oliphant's role in the attempts to establish Canberra as a major centre for nuclear research through the construction of an accelerator. She rejects the idea promulgated by his biographers that Oliphant was a failure, when in fact his work was of world standard although progress was hampered by poor financial support and the lack of a skilled scientific-technical workforce in Australia.

Because of the likely interest in it, we made Holden's article freely available for one month. It was publicized to news media through SciMex (Australian Science Media Centre), and Holden wrote about it for *The Conversation*. It thus attracted much broader attention than we would normally gain from the journal's readership. There was good publicity, also, for Dr Pete Minard's article on the search for evidence of marsupial carnivores, in particular the marsupial lion *Thylacoleo carnifex* that existed in Australia and left us its bones. He followed with a piece in *The Conversation* that, like Holden's, directed readers to this journal. *Australasian Science* will also publish an article on his work.

Under the heading of Historical Documents we publish Tom Darragh's analysis of some of some correspondence of Ludwig Leichhardt, only recently brought to light. The involvement of German scientists in nineteenth century Australia has been a recurring theme and of course Ferdinand von Mueller features in Tom's story. The Leichhardt correspondence is included in the Supplementary Material.

Sara Maroske, *Royal Botanic Gardens Victoria*
Ian D. Rae, *University of Melbourne*