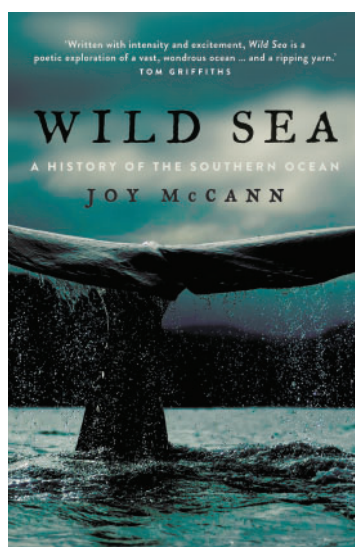


Reviews

Compiled by Peter Hobbins

Department of History, The University of Sydney, NSW 2006, Australia.
 Email: peter.hobbins@sydney.edu.au



Joy McCann:

Wild Sea: a History of the Southern Ocean. New South Publishing: Sydney, 2018. 256 pp., ISBN: 9781742235738 (PB), \$32.99.

Oceanic history—an approach that re-positions both individual seas and the singular, interconnected world ocean as central frames of historical analysis—is rapidly emerging as a distinct and influential sub-field. Joy McCann’s *Wild Sea* provides an absorbing overview of the history of the Southern Ocean and is a welcome contribution to this trend.

The book aims, in the words of the author, to ‘offer another way of seeing the Southern Ocean’. In this it succeeds, bringing together a range of interconnected stories that make this work an invaluable introduction to the history, and to a lesser extent the historiography, of the world’s southernmost ocean.

Wild Sea is a compelling book that is generally successful in walking the line between popular and scholarly history. It is a work of clear, concise prose that draws on a wide range of historical, scientific and literary sources without demanding specialist knowledge of any particular field or discipline. The breadth of McCann’s research is evident in thirty-six pages of detailed endnotes, while a comprehensive index ensures that this will be a useful reference work.

The book is structured around seven broadly thematic chapters: ‘Ocean’, ‘Wind’, ‘Coast’, ‘Ice’, ‘Deep’, ‘Current’, and ‘Convergence’. While evocative, these titles give little indication as to the specific contents of each chapter; the Antarctic Convergence, for example, is examined in ‘Current’, not ‘Convergence’, which instead deals with the history of conservation. A more systematic introduction to explain the organising logic, beyond the general prelude, would have been valuable.

Within each chapter, McCann blends a personal account of her own experiences of voyaging in the Southern Ocean with a collection of stories connected to the chapter’s theme. ‘Wind’, for

example, uses the Roaring Forties, Furious Fifties, and Screaming Sixties to explore stories of wandering albatrosses, sailing routes, phantom ship legends, and solo circumnavigations. ‘Current’ is similarly eclectic, bringing together stories of the pioneering *Challenger* oceanographic expedition of the 1870s, the search for sea monsters, deep-sea exploration in the twentieth century, and the development of the theory of continental drift. The effect is immersive and enthralling, but what is lost is any clear sense of an overarching argument, or indeed of any coherent argument within each chapter. This weakness is magnified by the absence of a conclusion.

This lack of a systematic introduction and conclusion, and the consequent dearth of an overarching argument, is one of the book’s two key shortcomings as a work of academic history. The second is that McCann does not situate her work in its historiographical context. This is an understandable casualty of the book’s efforts to appeal to a wide audience, but it means that the significance of McCann’s work tends to sit beneath the surface without ever being openly articulated. To gain a fuller picture of where this work sits in the burgeoning scholarship of Antarctica, the Southern Ocean, and oceanic history, *Wild Sea* needs to be read alongside other recent works, such as Alessandro Antonello’s historiographical overview of the field in his contribution to the edited collection *Oceanic Histories*.

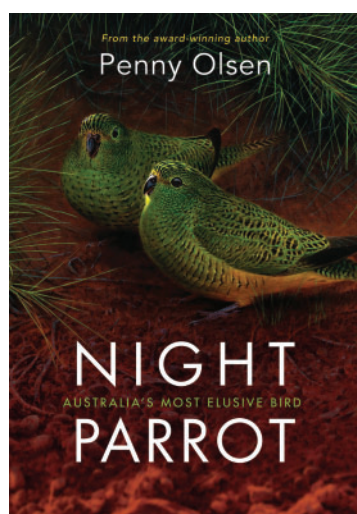
While McCann moves rapidly between the islands, continents, cultures, industries, plants, and animals of the Southern Ocean world, it is the ocean itself that sits at the heart of the book. The focus is not on the connections between peoples and spaces across the Southern Ocean, but on their shared connections to it. This is the book’s greatest strength. Many Australian readers would, for example, be unfamiliar with the history of the Indigenous peoples of Tierra del Fuego, but McCann’s ocean-centred approach brings the Selk’nam, Haush, Yaghan, and Alcaluf into the same frame of analysis as European whalers, sealers, and other seafarers, Māori in New Zealand, and the Mirning people of the Great Australian Bight. In doing so, *Wild Sea* both demonstrates the cultural and environmental centrality of the Southern Ocean and provides an important reminder of the value of such ocean-centred histories.

Given the sheer breadth of this work and the sources it draws on, it is perhaps inevitable that some errors of fact are to be found. For the most part these are exceedingly minor, but some are more glaring. For example, McCann conflates two expeditions, one a whaling venture in 1893 and the other a Swedish scientific

expedition in 1902, that were undertaken in ships called *Antarctic*. This leads to a peculiar situation in which Norwegian whaling entrepreneur Svend Foyn is said to have financed an expedition eight years after his death. It is unfortunate that such straightforward errors were not corrected.

These criticisms notwithstanding, *Wild Sea* deserves to be read widely. It is a thoroughly researched and exquisitely written book that provides an excellent introduction to the often-overlooked Southern Ocean for those interested in the region or in the new oceanic history.

Rohan Howitt
Department of History
The University of Sydney



Penny Olsen: *Night Parrot: Australia's Most Elusive Bird* CSIRO Publishing: Clayton South, 2018. 360 + viii pp., illus., ISBN: 9781486302987 (PB), \$49.99.

The subtitle does not exaggerate by calling the night parrot Australia's most elusive bird.

This almost mythical species, even if common, would attract attention for its lifestyle—a parrot that lives in remote places and

runs around on the ground at night like a quail. That it has always been scarce only adds to this mystique. Since the first European encounter with this species in 1845 on Charles Sturt's expedition to central Australia, fewer than 30 specimens have been obtained, all but two dating from before 1900. Despite occasional speculation that the night parrot was extinct, it inspired futile searches, persistent rumours and unsubstantiated reports. While it has always attracted a certain level of attention, events in the past decade have again vaulted this bird into the spotlight, making it an opportune time for this book to appear.

This is not the first time that Penny Olsen has written about the night parrot. Her chapter, 'Night parrots: fugitives of the inland', in the book *Boom & Bust: Stories for a Dry Country*, was probably the best, easily accessible summary of knowledge of this species up to that time. Her new book offers two significant developments beyond any other work that has yet appeared.

First, the greater length of the book has permitted Olsen to present details too often lost in the repetition of a core of night parrot stories. Accounts of this bird invariably concentrate on a few key events and players, with those having less impact frequently disregarded. Nonetheless, the latter are an important part of the history of this species and Olsen rectifies their perpetual omission.

Second, for those individuals and places whose roles are regular components of night parrot lore, additional details are

provided that flesh out the people beyond their focus on the search for this bird. For instance, F. W. Whitlock, the celebrated ornithologist, is noted for his searches for the parrot in Central Australia. However, unknown to all but a very few is that before he achieved this status, Whitlock first came to Australia to hide from the law after embezzling money from his firm in England. Perhaps the most prominent figure in night parrot history is F. W. Andrews, who collected most of the known specimens. While his reputation in this regard is legendary, narratives are usually limited to the acquisition of specimens, with his failures and near misses omitted. Olsen gives Andrews a justifiably extensive treatment.

The text throughout is comprehensively referenced with both early and recent citations, including many archival items from digitised Australian newspapers. There is always the threat when presenting numerous historical details that the text will become bogged down in a dry and unfriendly chronicle. This is not the case here: Olsen is an engaging writer and the text is flowing and accessible.

While these detailed accounts are expansions on previous work, the second major aspect of the book moves it into a realm never before available. The public announcement in 2013 of the discovery and eventual capture of live night parrots in western Queensland was an earth-shaking event in the Australian ornithological community. This remarkable find—confirmation that the night parrot did indeed still exist—led to an initial period of cooperative efforts to find more birds.

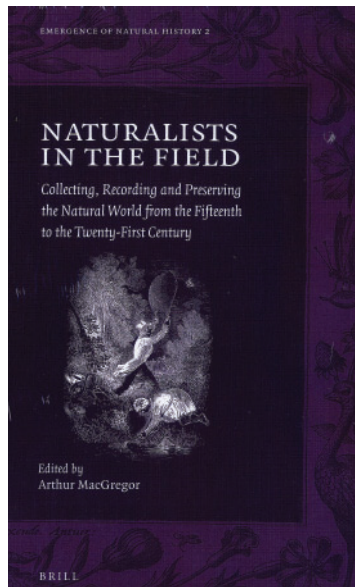
This mission was pursued with considerable collaboration. Slowly, however, there was a breakdown between the participants. There have been additional finds in western Queensland and in remote parts of Western Australia, increasing the known distribution and extending the knowledge of the bird's biology. At the same time, the saga has been accompanied by non-collegial rivalries, unhelpful secrecy and even intimations of scientific fraud.

Olsen's narrative of happenings since that rediscovery has a sense of immediacy. There is a bias, however. While Olsen had extensive access to the accounts of one side of the story, there is no counter input from the other, despite these individuals having been invited to contribute their own perspectives. It is also evident from the text where the author's sentiments lie. Readers will have to judge for themselves how they view the competing stories, particularly in light of more recent events since the publication of the book.

The events of the past decade leading up to this point in the ongoing chronicle of the night parrot have not been published in such depth anywhere else. This alone makes the book an important historical contribution, and even more so when coupled with the extensive early history. A further bonus is the numerous archival and contemporary illustrations, including those of the recently photographed parrots and their associated habitats, which support the text throughout.

Olsen's book is an appealing, accessible and valuable treatment of one of Australia's most iconic and enigmatic bird species.

Walter Boles
Australian Museum



Arthur MacGregor
(ed.): *Naturalists in the Field: Collecting, Recording and Preserving the Natural World from the Fifteenth to the Twenty-First Century*. Brill: Leiden, 2018. 999 + xxxix pp., illus., ISBN: 9789004323834 (HB), €270.00.

Among the numerous illustrations in this book, there are depictions of exotic animals in Florentine Renaissance art, a giant squid drawn by a sixteenth-century fish merchant at The Hague, and the striking image of gold-banded snake-skin, collected on the Indian sub-continent in 1826. Pic-

tured too are etchings of American birds by the eighteenth-century naturalist Mark Catesby, delicately hand-coloured drawings of protozoa gathered during HMS *Challenger*'s 1872–6 expedition—a circumnavigation of the globe—and photographs of Canadian grizzly bears taken by remote camera a mere four years ago. Together, these images reflect something of the temporal span and geographic breadth of this remarkable publication. As a scholarly treatment of the history of specimen 'collecting, recording and preserving', it is a significant addition to the history of natural history as a whole.

Edited by Arthur MacGregor, *Naturalists in the Field* is the second publication in Brill's series, *The Emergence of Natural History*. There are thirty chapters and a bonus eighty-three pages of appendices. The latter contain some key historical texts related to specimen collection, dating from the seventeenth, eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. They inform potential field collectors about desirable specimens, and provide instructions as to the best way of securing and preserving them. MacGregor provides a useful discussion of these texts in his introductory first chapter.

The book's thirty-one contributors have expertise in one or more of several disciplines—from botany, entomology, ichthyology and ornithology to museology, geography, cultural history and the history of science. They were 'encouraged to follow their respective instincts in order to communicate most vividly the results of their own researches'. The resultant set of essays are various in their approach, grounded in original research, and seasoned by each author's enthusiasm for the subject matter. All make for engrossing reading.

Some contributors focus their discussions of collecting on a particular location—areas of early modern Europe, for example, the Russian Empire, Canada, India, South Africa, Brazil and Australia. Collecting and preserving practices and problems—and the specimen collector's tools of trade—are also subjects for discussion, while some writers devote their chapter to one particular collector. Eschewing new biographies of celebrated naturalists, they shine a light on the experience of others who are less well known, such as the London apothecary, James Petiver, and Scottish-born entomologist, John Russell Malloch.

As far as possible the essays in this book are ordered chronologically. Beginning with Medici menageries in Renaissance Italy,

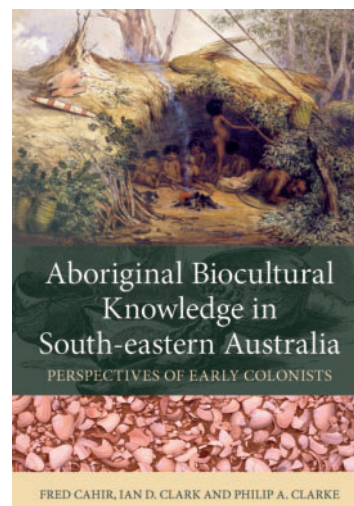
they reveal developments in collecting, recording and preserving specimens up to the present day. Contemporary technology facilitates—and conservation considerations often require—the use of less-intrusive modes of data collection than in the past. Readers are likely to agree with MacGregor that the book reveals the evolution of 'the study of natural history ... from an entirely speculative exercise to an essentially systematic pursuit'.

But this multifaceted historical account also offers more. Its chapters illuminate several key themes in the historiography of specimen collection, not least the influences that stimulated or constrained it and the links between its practice, personal prestige and political power. The significant contribution that Indigenous populations often made to field work is also acknowledged, as is the function of specimen collection as a stimulus for trade. This book, as its editor warns us, was never intended to be 'encyclopaedic'. However, it was disappointing for this reader to discover that the cabinet and field collectors who people its chapters are almost entirely male.

Several chapters have particular relevance for historians of Australian science. Separate discussions by Glyn Williams and Robert Huxley examine the experience of naturalists attached to sea-going exploratory expeditions in the Pacific. In a third, A. M. Lucas elucidates the changing contexts of specimen collection across the territory that became Australia in 1901. In this chapter, two female field collectors appear at last: Georgiana Molloy in Western Australia and the indomitable German, Amalie Dietrich, in Queensland.

As one would expect from Brill, the quality of this book's production is excellent. Along with its appendices, there are useful reference lists, a comprehensive index and over two hundred illustrations. Typological errors are surprisingly few for a book of this size. An incorrect page number in an index reference to William Hay Caldwell, seems to be an aberration. Both entertaining and informative, clearly written and drawing on original research, this book is likely to be read both by scholars and by readers simply interested in natural history and field collecting. It is arguably too costly to find a place on many private book shelves, but *Naturalists in the Field* certainly deserves a place in the libraries of tertiary institutions and in major public libraries.

Anne Coote
University of New England



Fred Cahir, Ian D. Clark and Philip A. Clarke:
Aboriginal Biocultural Knowledge in South-eastern Australia: Perspectives of Early Colonists. CSIRO Publishing: Clayton South, 2018. 334 + xxiv pp., illus., ISBN: 9781486306114 (PB), \$69.95.

'We were hit so early and so hard ... by that cultural tsunami, that wave of invasion'. In these few powerful words, Yorta Yorta/Dja Dja

Wurrung man Tiriki Onus summed up both the importance and the difficulty of his research on the resurgence of the *biganga* (possum skin cloak) in south-eastern Australia. Currently a lecturer in Indigenous Arts and Culture at the Wilin Centre for Indigenous Arts and Cultural Development, Melbourne, Victoria, Onus shared these reflections at the symposium 'Repatriation Revisited: Indigenous Heritage and Gestures of Return', held in Canberra on 5 October 2018.

Aboriginal Biocultural Knowledge in South-eastern Australia has been compiled and published for related reasons. Its authors, historians Fred Cahir and Ian D. Clark, plus social anthropologist Philip A. Clarke, document 'a discernible bias towards remote northern regions' currently pervading Aboriginal studies in Australia. This skew is due largely to 'the process of British colonisation having begun in the south', meaning that to date, 'Aboriginal Biocultural Knowledge in south-eastern Australia has been poorly researched and subsequently poorly understood'. Their work aims to redress this imbalance, bringing together early colonists' descriptions of Aboriginal knowledge of country in south-eastern Australia from a wide range of published literature and archival sources, in the hope that this compilation 'will encourage greater Aboriginal involvement in heritage interpretation ... add to the scholarly discourse about Australian frontier history ... [and] contribute to a greater appreciation of the shared histories of Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal Australians'.

Inevitably, given the book's title, the authors commence with a series of definitions. 'Aboriginal Biocultural Knowledge', they state, has been chosen in preference to the more common 'Traditional Ecological Knowledge' with a view to emphasising 'that Indigenous-held information about the environment integrates culture and nature' and ensuring that such information 'does not simply become a commodity detached for broader consumption by the general public'. 'South-eastern Australia' refers to 'the region of mainland Australia from the mouth of the Murray River in South Australia, eastwards across all of Victoria to the south-east of coastal New South Wales', a definition justified by environmental similarities and shared cultural attributes amongst Aboriginal groups inhabiting the region.

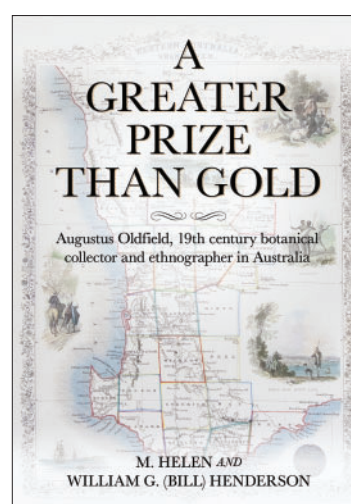
Subsequent chapters take a three-pronged approach to a particular category of Aboriginal Biocultural Knowledge. Each chapter offers, first, an ethnographic summary based on European records; second, consideration of 'the extent to which colonists used this knowledge and the degree to which they understood it'; and third, discussion of the interplay between Aboriginal and European knowledge systems and the implications of this convergence. Chapters are roughly equal in length, ranging from 15 to 21 pages, but vary widely in scope: some—'Totemic life', 'Space', 'Time'—are extremely broad, others—'Plant food', 'Animal food', 'Watercraft', 'Shelter: housing', 'Clothing'—are relatively specific, and the remainder—'Terrestrial spirit beings', 'Water spirit beings', 'Water', 'Fire in Aboriginal south-eastern Australia', 'Wellbeing', 'Healing', 'Trade'—sit somewhere in between.

The resulting volume is somewhat uneven in quality. All chapters contain valuable excerpts from primary source material, but while some—notably 'watercraft' and 'fire'—are both informative and readable, others make little effort to weave a coherent narrative around what are sometimes very lengthy quotations from primary sources. In several cases material is repeated across chapters, and the book as a whole would have benefited from more systematic cross-referencing between its constituent parts.

Doubtless these problems are partly a result of source material limitations; as the authors themselves acknowledge, the early colonists' writings they draw on document, 'in piecemeal fashion', only 'a fraction' of Aboriginal Biocultural Knowledge. However, I suspect that they are also an unavoidable result of 'trying to make the knowledge systems of modern Western Europeans and Indigenous Australians work together'. This aim is both laudable and very necessary, especially in the context of natural resource management, but it is also enormously difficult. Qualitative, adaptive, oral, rural, holistic forms of knowledge do not translate easily into atomised chapters on printed pages. I am reminded of a lecturer during my undergraduate years comparing Anglo-Saxon epic poetry in written form to a butterfly specimen impaled on a pin: beautiful, yes, but only a lifeless shadow of the original.

That said, the authors of *Aboriginal Biocultural Knowledge in South-eastern Australia* should be congratulated for producing a richly detailed reference work that brings together in one place information on important topics from a very diverse range of sources. The volume's contents complement those of other significant contributions to the field, notably Bill Gammage's *Biggest Estate on Earth* (2011) and Bruce Pascoe's *Dark Emu* (2013), both of which deal with the whole of Australia but address a narrower range of topics. The authors acknowledge that '[t]he act of recording ... Indigenous Biocultural Knowledge by itself will not preserve it in its earlier forms', but hope that 'historical records of knowledge ... could inform contemporary Indigenous peoples who are looking back into the past as inspiration for developing a modern non-Western perspective of country'. I share this hope, and conclude, with reference to my opening quotation, by observing that Fred Cahir's chapter on 'Clothing' cites numerous, often appreciative descriptions by early colonists of the manufacture, decoration and use of possum skin cloaks.

Hilary Howes
School of Archaeology & Anthropology
The Australian National University



M. Helen & William G. (Bill) Henderson:

A Greater Prize than Gold: Augustus Oldfield, 19th Century Botanical Collector and Ethnographer in Australia. The Book Reality Experience, Western Australia, 2018. 520 + xxx pp., illus., maps, ISBN: 97806482222-31 (PB), \$77.00.

This book presents the biography and botanical endeavours of Augustus Frederick Oldfield (1821–7), active in Australia 1845–62. At 1.8 kg with 550 pages in an A4 format, few figures and a seemingly 'wordy' text, I wondered at first what would make Oldfield's life and botanical activities worthy of such extensive treatment. The work is presented largely in chronological order, starting with his family's

history (about 60 pages), his activities in Australia (the bulk of the text at about 300 pages) and his 'declining years' in England, spent in increasing blindness and strained financial circumstances (about 45 pages). The work concludes with several appendices, an extensive bibliography and a detailed index.

One of the authors, Helen Henderson, is a great grand-niece of Oldfield, a connection that has clearly led to the extended family history component of this work. Henderson has a PhD in anthropology, and was latterly President of the Federation of Australian Historical Societies. Her co-author and husband Bill Henderson had a career in surveying for the Western Australian Government and an involvement in the Royal Western Australian Historical Society Council. The work is claimed to be the culmination of over twenty years of research.

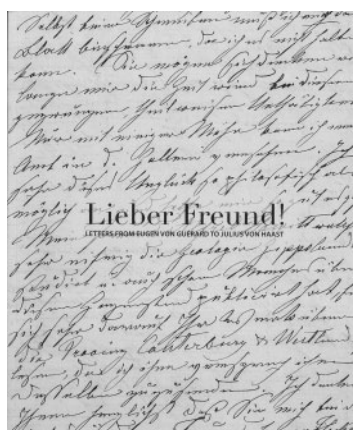
Although dense with information that is well referenced, the work reads somewhat long-windedly and judicious editorial pruning of some chapters would have been beneficial. For example, most of Chapter 1, 'The changing socio-cultural environment in England 1800–1897' is superfluous to Oldfield's scientific contributions. Indeed, the lack of independent editorial supervision becomes more obvious as one proceeds through the book, with many sections in need of a drastic shortening or sometimes complete deletion.

As a researcher of Australian botanical history, the parts of this work of most interest to me were contained in two sections. First, the introductory summary, 'Augustus Oldfield's contribution to science' and second, 'Collecting for Dr Ferdinand Mueller', which spans most of the latter half of the work. It is due to Oldfield's collaboration with Mueller that his contribution to Australian botany came to maturity. Mueller consistently cited Oldfield's botanical collections in descriptions, especially in the earlier issues of his *Fragmenta Phytographiae Australiae* and co-authored several new species (as Oldfield & F. Muell.). At least 21 species were named in Oldfield's honour, some by George Bentham in *Flora Australiensis* but mostly by Mueller in *Fragmenta*. Bentham also cited Oldfield's collections, many of which were specimens having been sent directly to William and Joseph Hooker at Kew earlier during his time in Australia, then later dispatched by Mueller as duplicates of specimens in the Melbourne herbarium.

Although there is usually an essential benefit in including direct quotations in historical works, there are an inordinate number of fulsome extracts, primarily from correspondence, and secondarily from previously published works. Many could have been briefly paraphrased to allow greater flow of the narrative, enhance readability and shorten the text.

Indeed, my only real criticism of this work is its length. There is a good case of 'less would be more'. A secondary criticism is the lack of a tabular time-line of Oldfield's life and botanical activities. The inclusion of such a seemingly simple summary would provide a much-needed contextualization of what is an overwhelming amount of information. Overall this is an exemplary scholarly treatment of the life and achievements of a little-known but otherwise significant botanical collector. It is recommended for researchers with an interest in botanical collectors who were active in Australia, and those studying early taxonomy, especially of the floras of Tasmania and Western Australia.

John Leslie Dowe
Australian Tropical Herbarium
James Cook University



Thomas A. Darragh & Ruth Pullin: *Lieber Freund! Letters from Eugen von Guérard to Julius von Haast.* Art Gallery of Ballarat, Ballarat, 2018. 81 pp., illus., ISBN: 9780648162162 (PB), \$35.00.

Between them, Tom Darragh and Ruth Pullin have decades of experience researching and writing about German Australia. Their collaboration in translating, editing and introducing this collection of letters from the first director of the National Gallery of Victoria, Eugen von Guérard, to New Zealand museum director, Julius von Haast, has resulted in a work of the highest quality. While Guérard is well known in Australia, Haast will be little known to many readers of *Historical Records of Australian Science*. The letters he received from Guérard, however, shed light on the importance for German residents of the antipodes in finding peers who could understand and encourage them in their experience as cultural outsiders. An impressive number, indeed, managed to obtain important colonial positions.

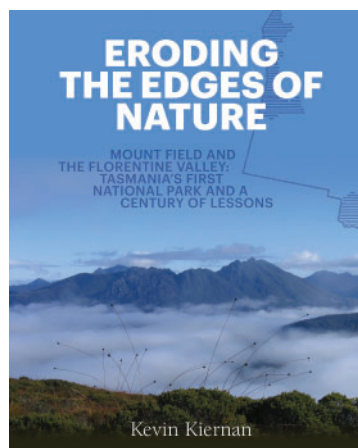
Twenty-two letters survive from Guérard to Haast; but unfortunately none the other way. Nevertheless, this correspondence allows some insight into both sides of the friendship. Topics regularly discussed between the two men included philosophy, numismatics, domestic life, travel, illness and references to other leading Germans in Australia and New Zealand. Pullin and Darragh state that these letters are 'among the more personal' of Guérard's surviving corpus, although they are rarely intimate and never indiscreet. It is almost as if Guérard decided only to write letters to Haast that could be published either at the time, or later, without causing offence.

This diplomatic tone is exemplified by references to Baron Ferdinand von Mueller (a correspondent of both men), who lost his position as director of the Melbourne Botanic Garden in 1873. Guérard suggests that Mueller himself contributed no little to his situation because he did nothing to disguise his disappointment, but quickly added: 'I hope you will not think that I harbour any kind of ill-will towards our compatriot, but I am very sorry, particularly because he is a German, that on account of his peculiarities he is made fun of and shunned by so many people'. Guérard's concern for Mueller's reputation as a fellow German also has an element of self-interest in it, as Guérard implied that the British could not be expected to distinguish the character of one German from another.

Along with translations of the twenty-two letters, this collection contains three letters from Guérard's daughter, Victoria, to Haast, and one from Guérard to Austrian geologist Ferdinand von Hochstetter. Pullin and Darragh have illustrated their book with high quality images of Guérard's paintings, pages from his sketchbooks, and photographs of Guérard and Haast's institutions and family members. The correspondence will be invaluable to scholars in several fields including colonial history, museology, numismatics, and to those interested in relationship between science and the arts. In particular, this collection helps us perceive how German

intellectuals came to understand the physical landscapes of their adoptive countries.

Sara Maroske
Royal Botanic Gardens Victoria



Kevin Kiernan: *Eroding the Edges of Nature: Mount Field and the Florentine Valley: Tasmania's First National Park and a Century of Lessons*. Fullers Publishing: Hobart. 2018. 488+ vi pp., illus., ISBN: 9780648218029 (PB), \$80.00.

The often fierce debates that revolve around conservation of natural resources in Tasmania have been the stuff of headlines over many decades.

Kevin Kiernan believes that these arguments largely stem from past failures in nature conservation. In *Eroding the Edges of Nature*, he closely examines the history of the Mount Field National Park, in south central Tasmania, 64 km north-west of Hobart. As the first National Park established in Tasmania—just over 100 years ago—its past is seen as a microcosm of the history of nature conservation in Tasmania.

Kiernan writes as an insider and participant, active on both sides of the conservation debate in Tasmania. A sixth-generation Tasmanian, from an early age he experienced the beauty and grandeur of areas of old-growth forest, including around Mount Field. He was a leading figure in the 1970s protest movement that opposed the inundation of Lake Pedder. In the following decade, Kiernan discovered Aboriginal artefacts in Fraser Cave (now Kutakina) that ultimately proved the Pleistocene presence of Indigenous people on the island. He was also a key element in stopping the construction of a hydroelectric dam on the Franklin River. Later Kiernan worked for 15 years with the Forest Practices Board and the Tasmanian Forestry Commission.

The book begins with an Introduction in which the author is refreshingly forthright and clear about his reasons for writing, his background and his philosophical position. The text is organised into four parts, each serving a group of events, movements and issues, while Parts 2, 3 and 4 also feature a chapter on the wider context. These digressions broaden consideration of the factors that influenced human feeling, thinking and decision making in historical contexts. In Kiernan's own words, 'sometimes it is only through the joining of the most disparate and seemingly irrelevant of dots that something closer to the true picture will start to emerge'.

Part 1, 'Establishing Tasmania's first national park', provides a brief overview of the European 'discovery' and exploration of the western forest area of Tasmania, between Port Macquarie and the Derwent Valley. An early proposal to create a small reserve around Russell Falls failed under opposition by the Corporation of Hobart. Success came in 1912 through the efforts of the newly formed National Parks Association. Mount Field National Park was finally proclaimed, and opened in October 1917.

The natural and cultural values of the area are detailed, including those relating to the local geodiversity. This is Kiernan's speciality

but it is generally unknown. He insists that the recent concentration on the value of biodiversity may distract visitors from appreciating other ways in which National Parks are special places. Regrettably, the new park did not include several local landscape features, such as June Cave, Marriotts Falls and Sharps Falls. These exclusions meant that the Park was badly compromised from the start, a compounding problem as it became a model for the reservation of further areas.

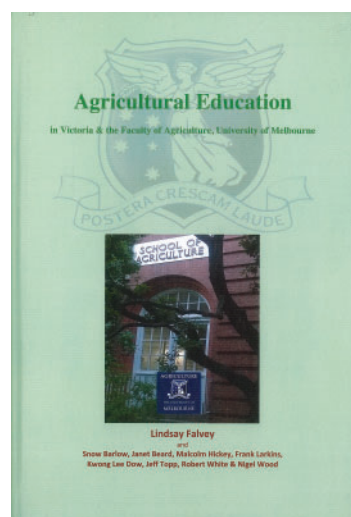
One recurring theme is that economic opportunities and making money have always claimed the greater influence in managing Tasmania's natural heritage. Part 2, 'Abusing the heirloom', spells out how—on many occasions and in many ways—these undercurrents led to a diminution in park facilities, size and management. As the title suggests, this is a sorry tale of corporate control versus nature appreciation. Over succeeding decades, parts of the Park were revoked for logging and water capture. Other parts were burnt, causing environmental damage through landslides, soil degradation and vegetation change.

In Part 3, 'Adding value to the park', the author relates how strategies and movements changed in the continuing battles between conservationists and developers. In the final decades of the twentieth century, conservationists began taking direct action and participating in the formal political process. At the same time, procedures for achieving nature conservation became more complex. Highly detailed scientific studies of the natural and cultural features of the Mount Field and Florentine Valley areas were required to substantiate the need for ongoing protection.

The concluding Part 4, 'Managing for the future' assesses the present state of the park and how the sins of yesteryear created situations that require careful management. There are numerous, often competing interests to balance in regard to public use of the park, as well as the ever-present threat from commercial developments.

Kiernan pulls no punches in his history of conservation in Tasmania. In many places his prose is uncompromising to the point of being polemical. This is not a criticism; the subject is one of enduring import and urgency, and demands nothing less than the clarion call presented here. Kiernan's book is an attempt to educate a wider audience to the dangers of complacency about the current state of nature. He is to be commended for this work.

Gary Presland
The University of Melbourne



Lindsay Falvey, Robert White, Malcolm Hickey, Nigel Wood, Snow Barlow, Janet Beard, Frank Larkins, Kwong Lee Dow and Jeff Topp:

Agricultural Education in Victoria & the Faculty of Agriculture, University of Melbourne. The Society of Old Agricultural Fellows: Melbourne, 2017. 220 + x pp, illus., ISBN: 9780975100059 (HB), free online at <https://oafslive.files.wordpress.com/2017/08/agricultural-education-r.pdf>.

This book surveys agricultural education in Victoria from the 1860s until the University of Melbourne established the merged Faculty of Veterinary and Agricultural Sciences in 2014. Its story centres on interactions between the Faculty of Agriculture at the University of Melbourne (the Faculty), founded in 1905, and the six Victorian Colleges of Agriculture and Horticulture, three of which were established before it. The narrative also includes the Faculty of Agriculture at La Trobe University, established 1968, plus Marcus Oldham Agricultural College, an independent provider created in the early 1960s. From that period onward, agricultural education became a highly competitive environment. Attempts to win a lucrative slice of the pie—and the hearts and minds of potential students—greatly influenced the ups and downs of the above teaching institutions.

The Faculty reached its high point over the period 1925–56, when Sir Samuel Wadham was dean. During this time it held total sway over academic agricultural science education in Victoria, as new disciplines were picked up and taught with vigour. Following Wadham's retirement, large gaps in the appointment of full-time deans left the Faculty short on strategic planning until the 1990s. As an example, there was ongoing argument as to the best timing and location for Melbourne University agricultural science students to undertake their year of practical instruction. Choices varied between years 1, 2 or 4, while the shifting sites included Dookie Agricultural College, the State Research Farm at Werribee, or the Faculty's Mt Derrimut campus. Finally, it was concluded that time away from the main university was simply unproductive.

From the 1960s, Marcus Oldham College, near Geelong, and La Trobe's Faculty of Agriculture provided alternative perspectives on agricultural education. Furthermore, with long-term appointed deans, they lured away potential students from the Melbourne faculty. With financial restrictions constraining government budgets from the late 1970s, the agricultural colleges were cast adrift from the Department of Agriculture in the 1980s. Predictably, the contest for resources, prestige and a place in agricultural academe intensified. All lost out in the battle, each attracting lower student numbers overall. The authors remark that: 'The Faculty, over this period was myopically preoccupied with its comfortable position, largely unbothered by the University administration so overlooking La Trobe's more popular course'.

One major planning deficiency across the sector was a lack of coordination between the Faculty and the Board of Agricultural Education, and the Department of Agriculture. This disconnect between education providers and the largest employer of their graduates came to beleaguer the agricultural education sector when the colleges were forced to merge after the Dawkins reforms of the late 1980s.

In a Prefatory Note, the authors state that this account 'relies on the views of informed participants raised in the integrated field of agricultural science, and who by nature and training attempt to reduce personal bias and to place their observations into a living context'. There are no citations from the minutes of the Faculty of Agriculture, nor from the many reports and inquiries into agricultural education and practice that were conducted from the late nineteenth century onwards. Such research might have provided an alternative perspective to the memories and personal notes of surviving participants. The result is that it is difficult to determine who were the true antagonists hindering strategic planning for

integrated and coordinated agricultural education in Victoria, other than in remembered generalities such as politicking, internecine disputes, regional and local interests, and poor due diligence.

Anyone connected to agricultural education, or who worked in the public agricultural and veterinary fields over 1950 to 2014, will find this book an intriguing read. It is truly surprising to learn how long it took before decisive action brought about reform in the agricultural sector. Only time will tell whether century-old issues have been laid fully to rest. Perhaps universities are the source of good intrigues. There were certainly machinations aplenty in the closure of teaching at the Melbourne Veterinary School in 1927—but that is the subject for another history.

Andrew J. Turner
Veterinarian
Melbourne



Malcolm Macmillan:

Snowy Campbell: Australian Pioneer Investigator of the Brain. Australian Scholarly Publishing: North Melbourne, 2016. 390 + xi pp., illus., ISBN: 9781925333749 (PB), \$44.00.

It was very pleasing to see Malcolm Macmillan's long promised biography of Alfred Walter (Snowy) Campbell (1868–1937). As expected, Macmillan has produced another exhaustive study in the history of the neurosciences. This intellectual biography of Snowy

Campbell attempts to gather together all the available evidence to assess the importance of his contribution to the developing understanding of the brain during a seminal period in the history of the neurosciences. In his efforts, the author was hampered by the total lack of Campbell's private papers. Yet contrary to the statement of some other reviewers of this book, Campbell was not really forgotten, but he certainly deserves this contemporary re-evaluation in a full-length biography.

The book begins with a lengthy account of Campbell's forebears and the particularly interesting time they had establishing a pastoral run in the face of natural disasters and bushrangers. The author then pieces together Campbell's early years, including schooling in Mittagong. Although founded in 1856, the University of Sydney Medical School did not really get going until the arrival of Thomas Anderson Stuart in 1883. With only one teacher and a handful of students, the new school was obviously not attractive to Campbell. So in 1885, like many of his contemporaries, Campbell opted to study medicine in Edinburgh—the centre of quality university medical education in the British Empire. The University of Melbourne's Medical School had been operating for two decades and boasted nearly 100 students, but its course lasted five years and Edinburgh's was four. Even with the inclusion of travel and

accommodation, a degree in the United Kingdom was still cheaper. In 1890 it was reported that there were over two hundred Australian students at Edinburgh alone, of whom three quarters were medicals. Macmillan writes at length about this phenomenon.

Edinburgh proved exceptionally suitable for Campbell. He forged a distinguished reputation as a sportsman and developed an interest in the mental sciences. After graduation in 1889 he travelled to the Continent, working with the neurologists Heinrich Obersteiner in Vienna, Richard von Krafft-Ebing in Vienna, and Arnold Pick and Hans Chiari in Prague. Having acquired new knowledge and skills, he returned to Edinburgh and completed his Doctor of Medicine thesis on alcoholic neurosis.

Campbell then began a period in lunatic asylums, culminating in fourteen years as assistant medical officer and pathologist at the asylum at Rainhill, near Liverpool—the largest in the UK. Although he claimed that his decision was made due to his interest in mental sciences, such positions were generally lowly paid and involved enforced bachelor existence. They were thus often taken because it was very expensive to buy into private practice.

Such a large institution, however, provided Campbell with the raw material for research and he took advantage of it. In this period he published the bulk of his work, and it is these chapters where Macmillan shines as a scholar. As proved in his earlier work on Gage and Freud, Macmillan is very good at forensically dissecting swathes of detailed academic research and reaching plausible, if sometimes controversial, conclusions. These skills come to the fore as he undertakes to show how Campbell was often unfairly attacked or, when originality was attributed, overlooked. His work included the general paralysis of the insane; bacterial causes of the ever-present colitis; and the histopathology of shingles, in collaboration with rising star, Henry Head. The crowning glory of Campbell's research was his pioneering work on the cerebral cortex, the outmost wrinkled layer of the brain, mapping its distinct regions with function.

Although initially well reviewed, Campbell had made enemies with a school of English researchers, led by Victor Horsley, when he confirmed Charles Sherrington's research that established the separation of the neural sensory and motor areas. Unfortunately,

shortly after Campbell published his cerebral cortex findings, the German neurologist Korbinian Brodmann produced a similar study. Campbell's enemies persisted in claiming Brodmann's work was superior, and that it even predated Campbell, to the point where this view became orthodoxy in the discipline.

Campbell decided to return to Sydney in 1905 but, as Macmillan has unearthed, he applied for the foundation Chair in of Pathology at Sydney University in 1901. He also sought the position of the first Inspector-General of the Insane in Victoria in 1904. Campbell's lack of success raises interesting questions. Perhaps being an Australian who by-passed the new colonial university medical schools told against him, even though most of the professors in Sydney were Edinburgh trained, while those in Melbourne qualified in London or Australia. Certainly, when Campbell left England, there was a significant and growing group of Australian-trained researchers on the brain under the leadership of Grafton Elliot Smith who would have provided haven. The English anatomist H. G. Parsons complained bitterly in 1921 that since the outbreak of the First World War, the Anatomical Society had been over-run—even monopolised—by Australians. Oddly, however, I have not been able to find any correspondence linking Campbell to this group, which includes J. P. Hill, J. T. Wilson and Charles Martin.

On return to Sydney, Campbell married his childhood sweetheart, set up the first neurology practice in Australia, taught a little, bird-watched and played golf. He served during the First World War and continued his investigations, but the medical research climate in Australia did not become really developed until after the Second World War.

I would have been happier with a much more substantial index to be able to cross-check the contents, but overall this book provides an excellent study of an important Australian scientist and practitioner.

Ross Jones
Department of Anatomy and Neurosciences
University of Melbourne
Centre for Health Law and Society
La Trobe University