

January-February 2022

### **GENERAL MEETING**

### The next meeting at Stirling House is on Wednesday 16 February at 6pm when Brendan Kelly will speak about 'Gerald Raikes - a discreet silence'. Refreshments available from 5.30pm; Bookshop open until 6pm.

Gerald Raikes arrived in Western Australia in 1883, departing disgraced and dishonoured in 1895. Raikes was an educated man with impeccable family credentials, who made himself a popular and useful member of Perth society. He was an assiduous person of neatness and order, a diligent public official, possessing the distinct mark of a gentleman. His organisational skills as a social host were refined and he was a prominent arranger of community fundraising events. He also became well known in local society as an amusing and popular amateur entertainer. The well-connected Raikes entered the civil list in 1888 and, by February 1893, had risen to become Sub-Collector of Customs in Perth. Gerald Raikes was also homosexual and in December 1894 his well-practised world of genteel civility tumbled down, after he was charged with gross indecency. When the prosecution failed to present a case, Raikes was discharged by the magistrates and immediately left the colony. The ignominious end to Gerald Raikes' career caused much indignant outrage, not so much about his alleged acts, but rather the perceived miscarriage of justice. For twelve years he lived a useful life in newly thriving Western Australia. His spectacular fall from grace is a story of high moral judgement and shifting societal values.



**Brendan Kelly** is a public servant with an enduring interest in WA's civic history and cultural progress. Brendan has a specific interest in the colony's social development between 1875 and 1895, particularly the world of amateur entertainment. He is especially intrigued by the lesser-told stories of everyday people in a class-ridden society. Brendan has previously written for *Early Days* on the career of journalist Francis Hart. He has also published *Bogans Booze & Bad Tattoos*, a rollicking memoir of his twelve years as a Bunbury City Councillor.

# Tuesday Treasures

These popular morning talks will continue this year. Join us for a cuppa while we hear more stories from the Museum's collection, and share your memories.

Tues 1 February:The heyday of Perth's<br/>department storesTues 2 March:Clocks

### RWAHS Giant Second Hand Book Sale on Saturday 2 & Sunday 3 April 2022



Please bring any books you no longer want to Stirling House or call the Office on 9386 3841 to arrange a pick up. All books, except textbooks and encyclopedias, are wanted. Please deliver all large donations for sorting to 24 Barnfield Road, Claremont, & phone Nick on 0409 290 895. Many thanks in anticipation.

### DID YOU SAVE THE DATE? Wednesday 30 March

### TIME TO MAKE A BOOKING – limited numbers - see the flyer

An exclusive visit to Mark Creasy's gem collection and mining book library. This is a fundraising sunset adventure enabling you to explore the wonders of nature – featuring gems from West Australia and across the world. Join us in viewing these precious stones displayed exquisitely. You will be immersed in an Aladdin's Cave of wonders. These opportunities to view private collections are rare.

### The Natural History Cabinet and Library of Mr Mark G Creasy, Prospector

The private natural history collections of Mr Mark Creasy fall into three broad categories: mineral specimens (a focus being Australian); Skylab (in orbit 1973-1979); and mining paraphernalia, art, and ephemera (such as theodolites; Meissen porcelain; safety lamps; &c.). The sole focus of the library is the subject of the earth sciences (mining, mineralogy, geology, mine surveying, crystallography, metallurgy, &c.), paying special attention to works published prior to 1870.

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# History in the City

Dr Bill Edgar gave an interesting talk about WA's convict era to conclude our program for 2021. Although the foundation of the Swan River Colony was driven by James Stirling's enterprise, energy and salesmanship, the colony soon languished from a labour shortage. Bill Edgar explained the difficulties early settlers encountered and the strong influence of the York Agricultural Society to do something. Following changes in thinking and social reformers' input, the British government designed a more effective and humane system for the operation of convict transportation by 1 June 1850, when the first batch of 75 convicts arrived in the colony on board the *Scindian*. After being granted his ticket-of-leave, following a period of good behaviour in prison, a convict was conditionally free. J S Battye commented: ... thus the colony celebrated its twenty first birthday by assuming the character of an actual penal settlement'. Many fascinating aspects of this particular chapter in WA's history as outlined in Bill Edgar's books 'LAGS', A history of the Western Australian convict phenomenon and also The Precarious Journey of Her Majesty's Convict Transport Ship 'NILE' to the Swan River Colony, 1857. During afternoon teatime, it was remarkable to discover that a large number of people having a cuppa were actually related to or descendants of convicts.



A cheque from Auxiliary was presented by President Rachel Roe to Michael Nind, Convener of the Society's Library Committee. The sum of \$2,500 will go towards conservation of library resources.

Many thanks to our History in the City team, our wonderful guest speakers and valued attendees to our program.

We look forward to your company in 2022 on the first Wednesday of the month (March to December) at Citiplace Community Centre, Perth Railway Concourse at 2pm; \$5 entry includes afternoon tea. Our first talk for the New Year will be:

2 March: Greg Benjamin – WA History before 1829 – Ancient Australia, Aborigines, Boat arrivals.

**Rachel Roe** 

# Library News



Morning tea to farewell Library volunteers Trish Fallen and Pat Thorn. With grateful thanks for your contribution from all members!



A warm welcome to new library volunteer Jeanette Longwood who will take over cataloguing duties.



Volunteer Conservators Ulli Broeze and Genvieve Konig encapsulating our Reference Library's Lindsay Peet Collection of early real estate maps.

# **Plenty of Festive Cheer**



It is always a delight as the sun is setting to walk across the front lawn and into the beautiful heritage home of Marie Louise and David Wordsworth. It was here in the garden that over 100 members of the Society met to enjoy the annual Christmas Party. One of the many pleasures of this event is meeting up with old friends and having an opportunity to make

some new ones. As the wine flowed and trays of food arrived, the seats along the veranda and beside the pool quickly filled while the air was full of lively chatter and laughter.

Sally Anne Hasluck, vice president of the Society, welcomed everyone and spoke about the highlights of the past year. She gave special thanks to Dr Lenore Layman for her tireless hard work and professionalism as editor of *History West* and to Lesley Burnett, our wonderfully efficient and welcoming Community Officer. The Tours and Events Committee comprising Nick Drew, Ron Bodycoat and Judy Dill Macky were thanked for their hard work in making the evening run so smoothly. Sally Anne reflected on what it is that underpins the work of the Society and identified three core elements: the people who tell their stories, the collections that represent people's lives, and the ongoing commitment to research found in the annual *Early Days* publication.

A very successful raffle had been organised by Pamela Statham Drew with two beautiful hampers and a magnum of champagne going to the lucky winners. Sally Anne presented Marie Louise with a bouquet of flowers as a token of thanks from all the members for her kindness in opening her home for the event while Steve Errington gave David Wordsworth a very special book, *Swan River Colony, The First Twenty-One Years* written by Pamela Statham Drew. As Steve told us, several of the pictures in the book had come from Marie Louise's art collection which are now housed in the National Gallery of Australia.

It was a fabulous night and a fitting end to another full and varied year for the Society and its members.



Marie Louise and David Wordsworth and their daughter, Sara



**Rhuwina Griffiths** 

Marie Louise being presented with Pamela's new book by Steve Errington



The drinks team



Jo Cornish and Pamela Statham Drew

# Visit by MLA Nedlands



Dr Katrina Stratton, MLA for Nedlands, and her son Oliver welcomed for a guided tour of the Society; and additional welcome to Oliver who signed up as a student member.

L to R: Lennie McCall, Robert Nicholson, Oliver Stratton, Dr Katrina Stratton and Sally Anne Hasluck.

#### Correction - on page 8 of December 2021 issue Stories from the Storerooms: Perth International Exhibition 1881

In citing some of the Western Australian exhibitors at the grand Exhibition, 'Alfred' was credited with Henry Passmore's work. A mistake which we regret!

### **Community Talk** Dancing through the Ages

Pamela Statham Drew

Pamela's talk celebrated the Society's holdings relating to dance - invitations, dresses, dance cards, fans, gloves, shoes, jewellery and photographs - a substantial collection because, until recently, dance has been a major means of community entertainment and bonding. The first colonial settlers at Swan River in 1829 brought with them the fashions of England when ballroom dancing was coming into vogue. Families who were newly prosperous mimicked their social superiors in manners, attempting to marry their daughters into the aristocracy, however poor the gentleman! And, as the girls had to meet the young men, dances became a suitable way of becoming acquainted, but there were strict rules governing the protocols of the ballroom.

In our collection is a tiny, but well-used book titled *The Ballroom Guide*, which saw numerous editions over the 19th century. According to the *Guide*, one had to have a large space to give a ball. The ballroom must have room for an orchestra or quartet with a reception room for guests to leave their outer garments, and a refreshments room where cool drinks were available and chaperones sat. The supper room must be a separate area again where guests could sit for a meal.

The guest list for a particular ball was a matter of deep concern. At the ball introductions were not given away lightly. The *Guide* instructed: 'No gentleman should ask a lady to dance with him until he has received an introduction to her. This may be given through members of the family giving the ball, or the ladies chaperon or one intimate friend may ask permission to introduce another'.

And of course every dance for the evening was set out in special Dance Cards of which the Society holds a number. Dance cards were either sent with the invitation or handed out at the door as people arrived. The Guide stated: 'It is convenient and inexpensive to have the dances printed on cards ... with dances on one page and spaces for engagements on the opposite one... A pencil should be attached with a ribbon'.

Then there were rules for accepting or declining an invitation to dance: 'To accept one bowed the head but to decline with delicacy and without giving offence is more difficult. "I am engaged" suffices when that expresses the fact, when it does not and a lady would rather not dance with the gentleman she must excuse herself as well as she can but it is in good taste for her not to dance at all in that set'.

Appropriate dances were quadrilles – stately procession dances with differing beginnings and ends. They were easily followed, non-vigorous, ritualistic dances which people enjoyed, and were an excellent *milieu* for showing off dresses. Quadrilles were usually followed by waltzes and maybe a polka. The Guide suggested that the evening might end with what was called a 'country dance', such as the Roger de Coverley or the Pride of Erin.

The first ball in the colony, attended by 180 people, was held in September 1831 just outside the Barracks where Lieut Gov James and Ellen Stirling were staying. The ball was held in army tents supplied by the 63rd Regiment, the first Government House not being completed until 1835. Fletcher Moore described the programme in detail and the *Guide*'s recommendations appear to have been followed to the letter. Moore wrote:

The ball was kept up with the greatest of spirit until 6 in the morning; and the dancing almost without interval – contra dances, quadrilles, Spanish dances and gallopades. I never before witnessed such gaiety at a ball, nor ever before danced so much in one night; four rooms and an arcade were all filled, and connected with the verandah; a superb tent was fitted up decorated and festooned with naval flags and in this we had supper - an elegant and abundant one – at midnight.

Moore also wrote a special song, titled 'Western Australia for Me', for the occasion and sang it as his tribute to the new colony. It went in part:

- From the old Western world, we have come to explore The wilds of this Western Australian shore; In search of a country, we've ventured to roam, And now that we've found it, let's make it our home.
- And what though the colony's new, Sirs, And inhabitants yet may be few, Sirs,
- We see them increasing here too, Sirs, So Western Australia for me.

Ellen chose a night with a full moon so these settlers could see their way home, diminishing the need for outside lighting. Lighting inside the tents was generally from oil lamps because candles were too dangerous. Decorations, we are told, were branches of eucalypts strung at the top of the walls, and possibly, as it was September, the wattles were out.

Many balls followed this initial one over the centuries and the Society's dance collection has grown in size. Just a quick look behind the scenes reveals our storage problems and highlights why we need a new building and are fundraising to achieve it!











Many thanks to the museum team who ensured that ball gowns from some of the major periods – the crinoline, the flapper were on display.

### Museum News A lady's travelling case



When elite ladies travelled in the 19th and early 20th centuries, by coach, ship, train or motor car, they did so in style, carrying with them among their many pieces of luggage an essential item — their

travelling case. We are therefore really delighted to receive this donation of a 19th century brass-inlaid and velvet-lined lady's travelling case from Annette Rowlands, a descendant of the case's original owner Anne Lefroy. The case was passed down through two well-known Westralian families, the Lefroys and de Burghs.

Anne Lefroy married John McClintock in 1829, the year she turned 21. She was given this case on her 21st birthday, depicted by the engraving of her initials and the month and year of her birthday in the silver-topped bottles and containers in the case. The silver tops were also engraved with the Lefroy family's Huguenot crest and their motto 'Mutare Sperna' (I Spurn to Change). In their early years of marriage, Anne and John travelled widely through Europe, putting the travel case to good use. They often spent time in Italy during the Irish winters.

The case passed to Anne's niece Freda Lefroy who travelled with the case extensively in Australia, Great Britain and Europe and later passed it on to her great niece Mary de Burgh. Mary in turn passed it to her niece Jo Ottaway and then to her cousin Annette Rowlands, and finally to the Society.

### And now to the case!

These travel cases, also called vanity or dressing cases or boxes, were believed to have originated in the late 18th century to accompany upper class men during travel. They were usually quite plain. Ladies' cases gained popularity in the 1830s and 1840s and became more decorative. They generally comprised variously shaped glass bottles and containers with silver mounts that were often engraved, gilded, chased, pierced or inlaid. They were designed to contain jewellery, perfumes, powders and pastes, lip and hair ointments and oils, toothbrushes, soaps, manicure sets, writing inks, matches, spirits and other miscellaneous creams, lotions and tonics.

This Lefroy case measures 30cms x 20cms x 14cms high. It was crafted by Thomas Briggs of Piccadilly who was listed in the *Dictionary of English Furniture Makers 1660-1840* as a writing desk and dressing case maker from 1819-1835.



Inside the case are several glass bottles with the owner's details and Lefroy family motto engraved on the silver lids. Two of the bottles can be identified as having contained 'Camphorated Spirits' – used on the skin as a painkiller for cold sores, insect bites and minor burns – and 'Superior Sal Volatile' – smelling salts. Another circular glass container holds eight foreign coins – fifty cents (1893) from Ceylon, ten Vatican State Soldi (1867), five German Pfennig (1875), and five other indecipherable foreign copper coins.



In the remaining space beside the bottles is a large lift -out tray with small rectangular shaped handles on either side to enable it to be removed from the case. The tray contains three rectangular-shaped

glass containers, all with the silver cover engraved with the same initials and family motto. The long one would have been used for jewellery and contains remnants of a chain from a jet necklace popular in the Victorian era. Another rectangular container holds some pencil leads and also a clay necklace, possibly a souvenir from Greece or Egypt. The third container also contains remnants of a necklace which appears to have a black metal chain attached to a piece of engraved jet set on a circular metal base. There are also two lozenge -shaped pieces, possibly jet, with a harlequin pattern.



The top tray also has a leather-lined tray containing nail files and a stiletto with engraved mother of pearl handles, a silver miniature bookmark in the shape of a

trowel with 1887 markings, a 6.5cm long cylindrical foliate designed silver tube which unscrews to display ounce measurements written on the inside, a miniature striated orange stone handled seal with floral emblem stamp, a glass cylindrical tube containing granules of calcium carbonate and a yellow metal miniature propelling pencil with removable lid.



The space under the top tray is a velvetlined compartment holding a miniature book with a green leather cover from the Religious Tract Society entitled 'Small Rain Upon Tender Herb'.

My doctrine shall drop as the rain, my speech shall distill as the dew, as the small rain upon the tender herb, and as the showers upon the grass. (Deuteronomy 32.2.)

There is also a heavily embossed and encased silver note pad (7cms x 4cms) with a silver pencil inserted alongside.

In these times those who were wealthy enough to do so travelled often for extended periods. For this life a lady's travel case with items for dressing, toiletries and adornment was an essential item of luggage. That they were often also beautiful in appearance and exquisitely crafted made them valued items of family inheritance, and now – as in the case of Anne Lefroy's case – wonderful additions to museum collections.

#### Bruce Hoar, museum volunteer

# Welcome to all new members of RWAHS in 2021

A new members' morning tea and tour was held at the end of last year. New members were introduced to all parts of Stirling House – exhibition, museum, library, bookshop, storage areas and office. Volunteers talked about the work they do and morning tea was a happy opportunity to get to know one another. The Society welcomes all new members and hopes they enjoy the benefits of membership to the full. We look forward to catching up with all of you!



Front row: Rachel Roe, Jill Munro, Sharon Barba, Julie Taylor, Margaret Bell. Back row: Michael Nind, Simon Watson, Geoff Perkins.



Mandy Loton, Sue Clarke, Carole Grant, Nigel Grant



### **Affiliates News**

**Fremantle History Society** said a final farewell to former President and Life Member Dianne Davidson. Di and her husband Ron were two of the founders of the Society and were vital to its growth and survival. Di is also widely remembered for her publications, *Women on the Warpath*, and *Fighting for Fremantle*, which she jointly authored with Ron. The Society's research scholarship has been rebadged the Ron and Di Davidson Research Scholarship 'in honour of these two passionate people who gave so much and have left such a rich legacy'.

Margaret River & Districts Historical Society

Centennial of Group Settlement celebration Saturday 26 March 2022, 10am-3pm Old Settlement grounds, Margaret River www.mrdhs.com.au

If you have a history of group settlement in your family, we would love to hear from you with any stories or photos you might like to share with the MRDHS Just email thru the above web page.

**Maritime Heritage Assn** Journal includes a fascinating account by Ross Shardlow of a piece of scrimshaw that belonged to the Tapper family, and now the Mews family. It is thought to be a sketch of the *Rockingham*, the ship that brought the Mews family to WA in 1830. The author explores the evidence on the scrimshaw and the history of the *Rockingham* in an article which will interest all those fascinated by scrimshaw.

**Melville History Society**'s latest newsletter contains an interesting article by Penhale Martin on her family history research. She issues a warning to us all that so much of our received family stories, told and re-told, turn out with research to be fiction, myth, legend not fact. Penhale's wise warning — check and corroborate everything.

Moora Historical Society is raising funds for the refurbishment of the Midland Railway Co. Locomotive, F Class Number F41, which is a stationary display in the centre of town. The Moora Tidy Town and Tourism bought the loco some thirty years ago and it was repainted then; so it is in need of a tidy-up, paint job and cleanup of the area. The Society gained a grant of \$5000 from CBH Grass Roots program, \$10,000 from the Shire of Moora's Community Budget and \$1000 from the CWA Moora Branch. A successful open day was held at Berkshire Valley on 23 October with about 300 people attending; together with a book launch on the history of the Volunteer Defence Corps during World War II. It is the fourth book in Bob Sheppard's 'Midwest at War' Series. For enquiries, email kayelewis1@bigpond.com

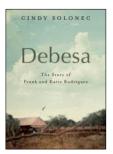
**Rockingham District Historical Society** is planning two interesting visits in the first months of 2022 first to Cockburn's Azelia Ley Museum and then to Fremantle's Shipwreck Museum to see the Wooden Boat Building Exhibition (which is open from December 2021 to the end of April 2022). Both visits well worth making!

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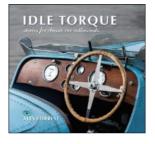
Wendy Lugg, Anne Hairsine, Auriol Weigold, Ernest Toms

# **Booked in for a Cuppa**

Our pre-Christmas booklovers' gathering proved a most enjoyable event despite the 41° heat of the day! MC Patrick Cornish presided, dispensing spot prizes along the way, Val and Ainslie provided morning tea and cakes, and the Bookshop was kept busy with sales. Many Xmas presents were bought as well as purchases by keen readers who found books that personally appealed.



Our first author and speaker was Dr Cindy Solonec, a Nigena (Nyikina) woman from the West Kimberley, born in Derby, whose book *Debesa, the story of Frank and Katie Rodriguez* was published by Magabala Books. Cindy explained that on that auspicious day – 8 December – her parents Frank and Katie married 75 years ago. They shared a strong background of Catholicism as novice monk and nun although Frank was a Spaniard by birth and Katie a Nigena girl. Cindy described her book as a social history of marginalised West Kimberley people over four generations from the 1880s. It is a fascinating story.



*Idle Torque* by author Alex Forrest showed us the variety of subjects in the world of books. It is a collection of stories originally appearing in Alex's popular column in the *West Australian* newspaper. But each story had a life of only one day before that newspaper was discarded; so it was suggested to the journalist that a book publication would both gather all the stories in one place and ensure they had a longer life. And so we dipped into the world of classic cars that had found their way to Western Australia; Alex's passion for classic cars was tangible and infectious!

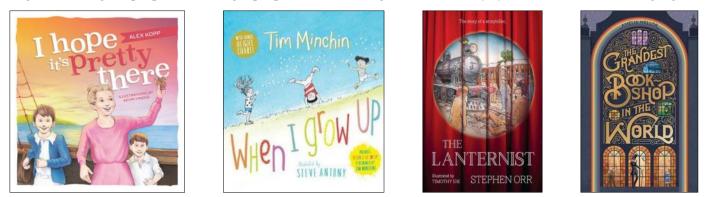


Also passionate is the author of our third book – *Naturalist on the Bibbulmun. A walking companion.* Professor Leigh Simmons is an evolutionary biologist and ecologist who came to UWA from England in the late 1980s. He could not be with us on the day and Lenore Layman briefly introduced his book.

Leigh Simmons' delight in the Bibbulmun Track grew as he and his family took day-walking trips along sections of it. At the same time he learnt more about the biodiversity hotspot in which he found himself — southwest WA. He and his son Freddy walked the entire track in sixty days, documenting flowers and plants, and the book is a by-product of that walk. He thought his book could serve two purposes. 'Firstly, it would be a wonderful memoir and travelogue for Freddy as a souvenir from the trip. And secondly, I thought it could be a good message to the people in Western Australia and globally, of the importance of natural habitats t can be found.' He has also written a great read for the armshair walker!

and biodiversity that can be found'. He has also written a great read for the armchair walker!

The Bibbulmun Track, a 1003km walking track winding through the bush from Kalamunda to Albany, began in 1972 as a dream of a few committed individuals (bushwalkers and foresters) to build a track from Lancelin to Albany. The State government agreed and the track began to take form. The State's sesquicentenary in 1979 gave the task a boost and an initial rough track was built, but it was not until the 1990s that a major upgrade saw a first-rate walking track emerge from the bush. It was completed in 1998 and named The Bibbulmun to acknowledge the region's Aboriginal people, the Noongar people; with the Waugul used as the key symbol on all the track's signage.



Our last speaker on the day was Sue Clarke who provided her listeners with a splendid assessment of some new books that might appeal to young readers — up to five/six year olds and those ten to thirteen. Sue's wise advice ensured that some lucky children will particularly enjoy their holiday reading.

The Society thanks the entire team of staff and volunteers who made our regular 'Booked in....' another happy success.

## **Book Reviews**

### Margaret Bell, *Where are the Terrells?* Ancestors of four Bell Children and When They Came to Australia, Bell Design, Kensington, 2021. 55 pp. In Library.

### **Reviewer: Pamela Statham Drew**



This colourful and cleverly designed book introduces children to genealogy in a fun way and includes some history. It focuses on four Bell children — the children and grandchildren of the author — but is written for a wider

audience. It takes the children back to discover their grandparents on both sides of their family, and to find the first of their line to reach WA – some 22 families.

Each double page contains colour charts showing how the current children are related to the family on that page. The first family, the Cranes, came with Thomas Peel. Their daughter Hannah married an Eakins whose daughter married a Bell. But on the left hand side of the double page entry is a letter to England, this one postmarked Clarence. The letter gives an accurate assessment of the conditions in that place in 1829-30 and is made to look like an old letter. Then there is a short history of the Cranes – James Crane was an engineer and builder and built the first causeway, and made bricks used in the Hampton buildings among other activities.

The book shows children how interesting it can be to follow their family backwards into the past. It introduces them to the various ways in which information can be found – each family having a letter

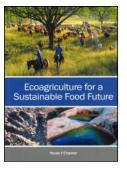
Community Officer: Editor *History West:*  Lesley Burnett Dr Lenore Layman

Opinions expressed in *History West* are not necessarily those of the Royal WA Historical Society (Inc.).

to relatives abroad, a dictionary-type entry on the family, a muster giving the ship they came on, and such like, followed by a short biography of the family. There is a colourful sketch of the family – and a wonderful colour code linking each family to the four Bell children — and a colour wheel at the back brings them altogether.

### Nicole Y Chalmer, *Ecoagriculture for a Sustainable Food Future*, CSIRO Publishing, 2021. E-copy in Library.

### **Reviewer: Steve Errington**



Despite the title, the book incorporates a technical history of land use in Western Australia with the Esperance region as a case study. Included are important aspects of the development of the agricultural and grazing industries, both the triumphs of trace elements and the disasters of salinisation from over-clearing. Esperance, where the author farms, receives detailed treatment

from J S Roe's first reports in 1848, through massive American investment in the 1950s to the present.

This is a technical book and is somewhat challenging for a non-specialist reader without a background on structure of soils etc. However, it prompts reflection not only on the increasing acceptance of Aboriginal burning to maintain open forests (and prevent bushfires) but also on the growing debate on whether Aborigines were mere transient hunter-gatherers. (R M Lyon reported in 1833 that they neither sow nor reap and have no domesticated animals). The book started life as a PhD thesis and is therefore thoroughly endnoted. It is well-indexed, but thinly illustrated.

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