



BOAB BULLETIN

No. 142

October 2017

NOTICE OF GENERAL MEETINGS

commencing 7.15 for 7.30 p.m.

Dalkeith Hall, 97 Waratah Avenue, Dalkeith

Wednesday, 4 October 2017

“Offshore oil & gas projects in the Kimberley”

Jeffrey Haworth (Department of Mines, Industry Regulation and Safety, WA)

Wednesday, 1 November 2017

“1917 – E J Stuart puts in a lot of effort to exonerate Louis de Rougemont”

Hon. Peter Dowding SC (Former Premier and Member for North Province)

Wednesday, 6 December 2017

“Crosscurrents: law and society in a native title claim to land and sea”

Katie Glaskin (Assoc Professor, Anthropology and Sociology, UWA)

Members and visitors are invited to stay for supper after the meeting.
The Society asks a \$2.00 hospitality fee from non-members.

BOOK LAUNCH

Kimberley Society members are invited to attend the launch of *Return to Majaddin: a Kimberley homecoming* at 11 am on Sunday 8 October 2017, at Floreat Uniting Church, 50 Berkeley Crescent, Floreat. This book is the work of Ngarinyin Elder Eddie Bear who shared his family story with the Rev Dr Robert Hoskin over a seven-year period, beginning with their first collaborative journey to Eddie’s traditional lands of Majaddin in the West Kimberley. For more information, see [The Kimberley Voice](#) or email reh1@iinet.com.au (Robert Hoskin). A book note on *Return to Majaddin* appears on page 3 of this edition of the *Boab Bulletin*.

FROM THE PRESIDENT

In August I attended a Rock Art and Ethnography conference in Cusco, Peru where I gave several presentations, including one on our Kimberley Wanjinās. The wonderful Australian rock art is very poorly known in many parts of the world which is disappointing as it is some of the very best in the world. I gave another presentation in Peru's second city, Arequipa, in the south of the country, further spreading the word about the fantastic Kimberley rock art. I also had the opportunity to visit some petroglyph sites in Peru that date to pre-Inca times.

Further presentations on Kimberley rock art were given to Art Gallery of WA Members in a series of talks in September. I spoke on early European discoveries and the range in art styles across the Kimberley, and University of WA archaeologists (and Kimberley Society members) Peter Veth and Sven Ouzman spoke on recent archaeological discoveries.

As this issue of *Boab Bulletin* goes to press, the annual Kimberley Foundation Australia free public lecture is being presented at the University of WA Club by KFA Chairman Maria Myers AC, marking 20 years since the Foundation's formation.

So Kimberley rock art is getting plenty of publicity from a variety of people and places.

An unwanted legacy of my Peruvian adventure was a torn hamstring on the way down a mountain after visiting some largely undocumented archaeological sites. While the hamstring has been re-attached by surgery back here in Perth, it means I am pretty immobile for a few months while nature takes its course in the recovery. Still, I should be able to get to our meetings for the rest of the year and will hopefully be fit to get back into the Kimberley in 2018.

Mike Donaldson

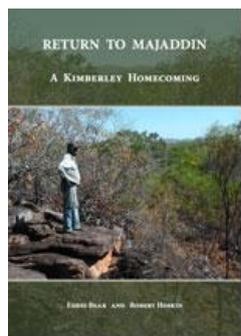
BROWNS RANGE RARE EARTHS

At Browns Range, 160 kilometres south east of Halls Creek, and six kilometres from the WA-NT border, Northern Minerals is almost ready to commission its rare earths project. At what will be Australia's first heavy rare earths production site, there is an airstrip, a tailings dam, and a 49-person camp. About fifty per cent of the ore that is to be processed during the three-year pilot phase has already been mined and stockpiled by the contractor MACA. The modules for the processing plant are being fabricated by another contractor in China. The first of them are due to arrive shortly, for assembly by Primero, which is an Australian company.

Scheduled to operate at ten per cent of the capacity of a proposed full-scale plant, the pilot project will set the scene for Northern Minerals to become the first significant producer of Dysprosium outside China. Dysprosium is a key additive that prevents large magnets used in electric engines from overheating and de-magnetising. With enthusiastic forecasts being tossed around for growth in the popularity and use of electric vehicles, Northern Minerals shares are becoming attractive to investors.

Two months ago, when WA Premier Mark McGowan broke soil at the project site to mark the start of work at the pilot plant, it was reported that Northern Minerals had applied for Federal Government funding for a dedicated Aboriginal training centre at the mine site. No further news has been released but, if funding is secured, the centre will be run in partnership with Kununurra's Wunan Foundation.

BOOK NOTE



***Return to Majaddin : A Kimberley Homecoming* by Eddie Bear and Robert Hoskin.** [Hesperian Press](#), Carlisle, 2017, 181 pages, A4, illustrated, ISBN 978-0-85905-674-8, RRP \$40.

In the introduction, Robert Hoskin describes this book as Eddie Bear's story in which he (Robert) is co-author, narrator and translator. Linguistics come to mind here but they are not relevant. Instead, Robert seeks to translate Eddie's story to a wider readership by 'transporting his words and context into another culture and understanding'.

While *Return to Majaddin* grew out of the work that Robert did for his doctoral thesis, '[Beyond collaboration: trans-cultural journeys in the Kimberley](#)', it is not a recasting of his thesis. Reading both works gives a much broader understanding of the subject matter than just reading one or the other. I was pleasantly surprised to find the thesis easier to read than the book, having thought that Robert's exploration of 'a way of research with and relating to Kimberley Aboriginal people that acknowledges their relationship with the land and each other' might be weighty, dry, or both. It is neither, and its appeal is further enhanced by images of art and sculpture that Robert created on his Kimberley journeys.

A key difference between the two works is that, whereas the thesis is written in a consistent narrative style, the book has a mixture of styles. In the thesis, short pieces of conversation are presented to show how Ngarinyin and Worrorra people shared their culture, country and knowledge with Robert and others. Those pieces, often with indentation and no font change, are an integral part of smooth flowing text. In the book, many of the pages have bands of indented, italicised conversation. I found that layout disconcerting, and only partly because I had to adjust my rapidly aging eyes to each font change. Other readers, of course, might appreciate the visual distinction between Robert's words and those of others.

A determination to make that distinction clear underpins the production of the book. Robert is scrupulous in giving the people who contributed information to the book full credit for their input. But, in doing that, he frequently dons his narrator's hat to explain when, how, or in what context individual comments were made. I found that approach distracting and was glad to see the smooth flow of the thesis reproduced in other parts of the book.

Two other book notes in this newsletter discuss works that complement *Return to Majaddin*. Taken together, and read in conjunction with other books about Ngarinyin, Worrorra and Wunambal people, some of whom helped to create the old and the new Mowanjum, these books offer an amazing amount of information. *Return to Majaddin* is more than just Eddie Bear's story. It is the story of his family, their relationship with their country, and their involvement with Munja (a ration station for Aboriginal people), Mowanjum, pastoralists, missionaries, anthropologists, lawyers, townspeople and native title. The book's overview of pastoral settlement and life on Munja is bleak, reflecting Mary Anne Jebb's take in her book *Blood, Sweat and Welfare*. Robert notes (page 3) that the history told by Eddie and his family perhaps 'suffers from failing to be critical of what has been experienced, particularly when it comes to the impact of colonialism'. I disagree. Their 'focus on the positive side of their early experience with white pastoralists' is refreshing and very much part of the resilience they show in dealing with life's ups and downs. That, and a great selection of photos, offsets the heavier material presented in other sections of the book.

Cathie Clement

CAPTAIN MIZUNO'S FANTASTIC HOLIDAY : THE JAPANESE NON-INVASION OF AUSTRALIA

On 2 June 2017, Kimberley Society members and guests mingled and enjoyed an early supper before hearing from the evening's speaker, **Greg Dodds**. Greg is a Vietnam War veteran, former Military Intelligence Officer, and A grade Japanese linguist. His postings have included 25 years with the Department of Foreign Affairs at the Australian embassy in Japan. Greg's summary of his talk appears below.

Introduction

This talk addresses two points:

- ✚ the Japanese never intended to invade Australia. Indeed they went even further: they decided NOT to invade.
- ✚ There is only one incident recorded of a formed Japanese unit setting foot on Australian soil. That was a reconnaissance mission lead by a Captain Mizuno in early 1944.

What's an Invasion?

The insertion of military forces into a foreign country to capture and hold the reins of power. Thereafter, a puppet government controlled by the invading power will act in accord with the invader's wishes and interests.

Downed aircraft or sunk ships and their human cargo don't count. Few downed airmen plan to take over the enemy Government: they just want to get home.

Nor do prisoners of War or internees count.

Naval or air raids (Darwin, Sydney) do not count either.

Think of the German **INVASION** of Norway: they went there in 1940 and took over the entire country. They surrendered and left in 1945.

Did the Japanese have the capacity to invade us? Certainly not by their own accounts but the Australian government sincerely believed they were about to be invaded, as did our soldiers fighting in New Guinea.

But our sincerity has nothing to do with the question. It's what the Japanese planned that matters.

The Imperial Club Members Only

By the end of WW1, Japan already had a substantial empire; Taiwan 1897, Korea 1909 and mandated Pacific islands 1919. But it wanted substantial presence inside that most desired of all targets; China. But this was not to be, at least not without a substantial fight and a fight not only with the Chinese but also with other imperial powers.

Starting with Australia's opposition to Japan's anti racial discrimination proposal at Versailles in 1919 and the abrogation of the Anglo-Japanese Naval Treaty in 1922, the Japanese Government began to feel a sense of isolation from the Imperial Club that had presided over China's decline. Japan's departure from the League of Nations in 1927 and a series of "incidents" in Northern China in the early 1930s, Japan became the number one "rogue" imperial power in the Far East. That is to say, the imperial power that used the fig leaf of anti-imperial ideology to mask its own ambitions.

As the main victims of this process, the Chinese didn't buy it for a minute but other communities in Asia weren't so sure. Asia for the Asians had a certain simple appeal and European colonial powers enjoyed majority support among communities nowhere in the Asian Region. That the Japanese might be fairer and more just masters is another question.

Japan's domestic politics shifted from an apparently well rooted liberal democracy in the early 1920s to a military dictatorship in all but name in the mid 1930s. Open warfare with China began with landings in Shanghai in 1936 and the inevitable

friction with other imperial powers merely served to remind Tokyo that it had other scores to settle further South: Indo-China (France), Hong Kong, Malaya, Burma and India (the UK), Indonesia (the Netherlands) and the Philippines (the US). Remove those people and you would have an Asia for the Asians – or for the Japanese anyway but that is also another story.

Many people recognise the date 7 December 1941 but fewer people are aware of other Army offensives that happened on virtually the same date; the attacks on the Philippines, Malaya and Hong Kong. By early February, all of these had finished successfully and if the Japanese had planned to invade Australia, now was the time to strike. But they didn't and this takes us to the core question of my presentation. Did they or didn't they plan to invade Australia and if not, why not?

Not in the Plan

The driving personal force behind the overall Japanese strategy was Admiral Isoroku Yamamoto and he (correctly) believed that the US Navy was the trump card in the game; eliminate that and the Pacific would belong to Japan. Fail to do so and Japan's defeat was almost certain. While their attack on Pearl Harbor was a promising start, it was not enough and their clear defeat at Midway on 7 June 1942 meant that Japan would henceforth be on the defensive. There would never again be the shipping available to launch initiatives like an invasion of Australia.

However important the Imperial Navy may have been in the Tokyo hierarchy, it would be the Army that did the bulk of the work in an invasion and yet here too we draw a blank. After their stunning success in Malaya, the rather limited force of three divisions was quickly assigned to Burma and to Indonesia. There is no mention of invading Australia in these plans. Indeed, Yamashita is said to have estimated that eleven divisions would have been necessary to have conquered and occupied Australia. He also commented that capturing Darwin or Broome would mean nothing; the 2000 kilometres of desert before you reached any places of strategic interest served as a barrier, just like an ocean, except that the Army would have to deal with this, not the Navy.

Still, the idea of invading Australia was not stupid and it did have one enthusiastic supporter in the Japanese General Staff, naval Captain Seiichi Toyoda. He reasoned that the capture of Australia would finish off the need to expand further to secure the Coprosperity Sphere borders. Beyond Australia there was nothing but the wild Southern Ocean and the South Pole: even the Americans would take years to work out that one.

In a style that was practically unique to the Japanese Imperial General Staff, he went ahead with preparing his proposal in the face of his superiors' opposition and it was considered briefly and rejected at an Imperial Council Meeting in 1941. Not prepared to take no for an answer, he went over the heads of the Ministers and pleaded his case directly to the Prime Minister, General Hideki Tojo. This gamble also failed – all he got was a screaming outburst that it was “not in the plan” but this time his superiors were waiting for him outside.

Thereafter, Captain Toyoda vanishes from the pages of history. Perhaps the most serious threat to our shores was sent to command a destroyer flotilla in the northern Kurilles for the rest of the war.

As for the rest of Japan's strategy, it went according to plan, initially anyway. The Dutch in Indonesia were swiftly subdued and the British bundled out of Burma. As mentioned earlier, Midway restored the balance of naval power in the America's favour and the Japanese found themselves playing catch up for the rest of the war. Ironically, the motive behind their campaigns in the New Hebrides and New Guinea that ended at Guadalcanal was to ensure that Australia and New Zealand were cut

off and could not be used as a logistics base by the allies. And they failed even in this modest effort. An invasion and occupation of Australia was not even possible after June 1942.

Part Two – Captain Mizuno and his trip to the Kimberley

We now move forward to early 1944. MacArthur has developed the island-hopping strategy that is taking the US Marines swiftly towards the Japanese homeland but the area immediately towards our north is relatively stable. More than 50 bombing raids on Darwin had prevented it from becoming a major allied base.

But while the possibility of Captain Toyoda's invasion of Australia had long since vanished, Japanese interest in what was going on here certainly had not. In late 1943, Japanese intelligence received reliable reports that a large scale secret airbase was to be built in the Kimberley which would give US bombers direct access to targets in most of Java. The construction of the base however could be harassed and delayed by their own bombers if they could confirm the reports and establish its precise location. So they turned to Captain Mizuno and his field intelligence detachment, known as the Matsu no Kikan based in Kupang in Timor.

Military intelligence varies in organisation and behaviour between countries. In the Japanese Imperial Army both officers and men were all graduates of the Nakano Intelligence School and could be relied on to scout an area and provide the accurate information that their tasking required. While the Kempeitai, the Military Police, was notorious for its brutality towards prisoners, the Military Intelligence were quite different and should not be taken lightly. They were determined to get the necessary information and knew how to do that.

Ten members of the Matsu no Kikan and about twenty Timorese left Kupang on an old fishing boat, the *Hiyoshi Maru*, on 17 January 1944. The Wet Season was ending and the planners must have hoped that even if the fishing boat was spotted by allied aircraft, it would not attract attention. They camped the first Admiralty Reef and then turned towards the Australian mainland.

At this point, an American submarine surfaced near the fishing boat and began following it. Whether the Japanese could have passed themselves off as Timorese to the Americans we will never know because a patrolling Zero appeared and began attacking the submarine, which hastily dived for cover. There are no records of this incident in US Naval records so the submarine was probably destroyed in the attack. In any case, after spending that second night on Browse Island, the fishing boat made its final approach and landed on the coast around midday on 19 January.

After camouflaging the boat, the Japanese conducted several clearing patrols in the immediate area. While they neither met nor saw another human during their stay, they did find several abandoned campsites and observed a column of white smoke rising from the top of a high cliff in the distance. They remarked that they felt they were being watched much of the time.

The second day they patrolled more extensively, including to the top of high ridgelines but saw no sign of human life. They did not mention coming across animals of any sort although kangaroos and wallabies abound in the area. In spite of my fanciful title, we should remember that these people were professional soldiers, not tourists, and would only report on that which was relevant to their task.

On that subject, they found plenty of places that might be suitable for a large airfield on the plateau back from the coast but they found no sign of work on constructing an airfield, even a preliminary clearing of the scrub. In fact, work started on Truscott Field a mere thirty kilometres from their landing site but six weeks AFTER their expedition, meaning that their information had come from plans rather than local

gossip or air reconnaissance. So who exactly had given them this information? A good counter intelligence drama here but a story for another time and place.

But there might have been security problems on both sides. There was no mention of such a reconnaissance by the Japanese on our side for about six months (there couldn't be: we knew nothing about it) when suddenly every pub north of Carnarvon resounded with stories of how a "Jap Battalion" had been slaughtered by the local militia, the police, the Tuesday Morning playgroup and so on. Usually, the teller of the story had played a "key role."

But while most of these stories were exaggerated or false, the location was usually dead accurate. So did we have a spy in the Japanese ranks? Sadly no. It was probably the talk of Aboriginal groups who kept a close watch on the comings and goings of strangers onto their land.

So what should we say about Japanese plans to invade Australia?

Firstly, the idea did make some sense but the task was beyond the resources the Japanese High Command had at their disposal. While the initial campaigns were swift and brilliant in their execution, the Japanese planning staff were not to know this beforehand. Most campaigns do not go exactly to plan and prudence demands that reserves be kept aside for the unexpected. To be at the gates of Singapore was unexpected alright but who could have predicted the brilliance of Yamashita (and the incompetence of his opponents)? Any follow-on invasion of Australia would have required resources that the Japanese Army did not have, in South East Asia anyway. Probably the more important factor that protected us from a Japanese invasion in 1942 was our inability to fit within the definition of what the Japanese believed they were doing. Liberating Asian countries from white colonialism was their main game and our Aborigines were not Asian. And to most Japanese of the time, they were barely human. They had just finished their own campaign of "assimilate or perish" against the Ainu in northern Japan so they had an odd empathy with us and our White Australia policy.

The Aborigines themselves had firm opinions about colonialism, as do an increasing number of white Australians these days, but you have to try to get into the minds of people at the time. Many more of us thought that our presence here was natural and eternal, regardless of Aboriginal interests. And the Japanese General Staff might have just given us the benefit of the doubt.

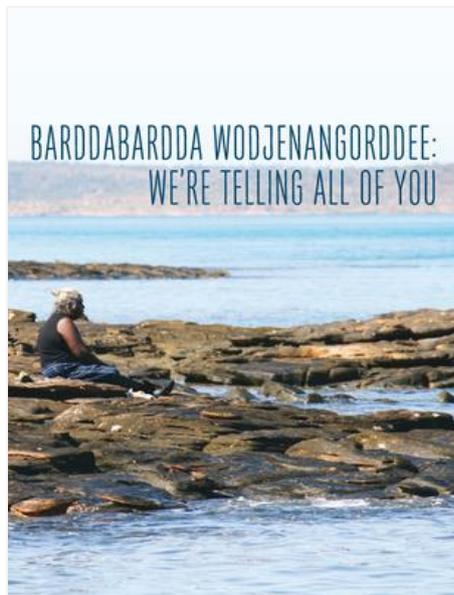
Finally, remember the window of opportunity to invade Australia: it was within the frame of 8 December 1941 – 7 June 1942 or not at all.

The question you might take away is why we are so given to this idea of Australia being "saved" from invasion. The war is now seventy-five years ago and counting, yet we are still susceptible to images of "them" storming south to take us over. If we were Russians or Chinese with community memories of millions of dead, it might be at least understandable, but Australians? Doesn't our own propaganda have a use by date (on ourselves)?

Perhaps the answer is the darkest of insults. The Japanese simply weren't interested.

It would be churlish of me to pretend that these thoughts are my own. Peter Stanley, the former official War Historian at the War Memorial and now working at the University of Queensland, issued the most basic challenge in demanding that proponents of the Battle for Australia scenario simply produce the proof. They say the Japanese planned to invade Australia so produce the plans. And of course they can't. There were none.

BOOK NOTE



Barddabardda Wodjenangorddee : We're Telling All Of You. Compiled and written with Dambeemangaddee People by Valda Blundell, Kim Doohan, Daniel Vachon, Malcolm Allbrook, Mary Ann Jebb, and John Bornman. [Dambimangari Aboriginal Corporation](#), Derby, 2017, 416 pages, full colour images, ISBN 9780646967646, paperback, RRP \$44.99.

The Worora people of the north west Kimberley coast (here known as the Dambeemangaddee in accordance with the Dambimangari Title Determination Area—the language now spelt Woddordda), have been remarkably well documented in previous books, e.g. the Rev. Love's *Stone Age Bushmen of Today* and Maisie McKenzie's *The Road to Mowanjum*.

The difference with this book is that it springs from the Aboriginal people themselves and, with Fremantle Press as the publishing consultant, it has been produced by the Dambimangari Aboriginal Corporation. In particular, it is based on the wisdom of two elders, Donny Woolagoodja and Janet Oobagooma, whose words are quoted verbatim. In addition there is a group of anthropologists and historians, whose well documented research and encounters with now departed elders have been invaluable. To bring such a team together to produce such a large, comprehensive, detailed and readable book is indeed a major achievement.

The stated 'purpose of this book is to bring together information about our country, culture and ancestors to serve as a resource for current and future generations of our people, and as a source of information for others interested in our history and culture'.

Part One: "The Country and Its Culture" deals with the creation stories, the Wandjina religion and culture, and anthropological culture; important for future generations of Aboriginal people and to the anthropology student as well. Chapter 1 is offered as a [sample chapter](#) on the Fremantle Press website.

"Encounters with Outsiders" provides a comprehensive review of contact with Europeans. This is a great summary of this subject (and it is pleasing to note how often our *Kimberley History* is referenced).

Parts Three to Six, deal with the different areas of the land (*dambeema*), the family histories of the ancestors who lived there, their stories and sites of interest and relevance. The pictorial depiction is particularly impressive, ranging from relevant landscapes in the area, historical photos from many archives, to rock art and its meaning. The book delights the eye as well as the intellect.

Any vigorous culture must have its roots well grounded its history. But no culture is static and must evolve to be relevant to the contemporary society. How Dambeemangari culture will change or survive in the 21st century remains to be seen. However, this groundbreaking work, in opening a traditional life to a wider audience, is an important step in the evolution of a culture and an example that others we may hope will follow.

Hamish McGlashan

OCCASIONAL FOOTBALL COLUMN

REVIEW OF KIMBERLEY PLAYERS FOR THE 2017 YEAR

Firstly, [Joel Hamling](#). He has now played 45 games for the Fremantle Dockers after being originally drafted from the Cable Beach Football Club via Claremont to Geelong, Western Bulldogs and finally with the Dockers. He seemed to generally be acknowledged as the Dockers recruit of the year and played very effectively as a defender. I saw him playing in the Derby where he had a quiet game with 7 possessions in a game where Josh Kennedy kicked 3 goals 2 behinds for West Coast Eagles. I would say he has been one of the more consistent players for Fremantle and would have played the whole season with them.

The next player down is [Cedric Cox](#), Brisbane Lions, 9 games and 1 goal. I had the pleasure of finally seeing this young man play for Brisbane Lions in Round 19 where the Lions were soundly trounced 113 points to 45. However Cedric showed a lot of pace and reminded me of Bradley Hill who plays for the Dockers. [Mark LeCras](#) from West Coast tried to chase him down and it was almost comical but LeCras clearly tried very hard. By the end of August Cedric had signed a two-year extension to his contract, locking him away until the end of 2020 according to the *West Australian*. The article said he had found this an easy decision because "It's exciting, I just love this place, love the Club and the people around it. It's the reason why I signed." Hopefully there will be more excitement to see from this young man.

In the *West Australian* on 31 July, following the West Coast game, there was the question "Does Cedric Cox have a future?" The response: "Absolutely. The Halls Creek youngster's goal against Carlton last week was all class, and his blistering run from Defence to burn off Mark LeCras in the first quarter yesterday was just as exhilarating. The Lions 4th pick in last year's national draft at 24th overall makes mistakes but his weapons and a willingness to take the game on which makes him an exciting prospect".

Now to [Francis Watson](#), West Coast Rookie. This young man's season was interrupted with quite a significant ankle injury and returned at the end of the season, where a comment in the *West Australian* showed that he flashed in and out of the game but had no real impact. In the end of season [review](#) in the *West* on 18 September 2017, Watson was given a grading of C with this comment: "Looked likely to force his way into the team early, but got injured and was quieter upon his return. Has pace and some promise."

On 17 September, I had a spare hour and popped down to Leederville oval to see Claremont Colts playing against East Perth. Claremont features [Shaquille Morton](#), 19, from the Waringarri Crows, [Damon Enosa](#), 18, from Towns Football Club in Broome, and [Joseph Pedley](#), who is also 18, from Port Wyndham Crocs. Pedley wore my old favourite number 26. They were down 5 points at three quarter time but by the end of the game had won by approximately 3 goals. I had to leave at three quarter time because I only had an hour's parking for my car.

I am still not sure what will happen to Kimberley players in the future, whether they will still play with Claremont or whether they will be aligned with Fremantle Dockers.

Finally, [Sam Petrevski-Seton](#) in a [Season review](#) by Julian Trantino from Carlton Media: "In just his first season, Petrevski-Seton became a regular in the Blues' engine room, playing 20 out of a possible 22 games and earning a Rising Star nomination in Round 7." He also kicked 10 goals in his 20 games.

Jack Vercoe

THE MERMAID BOAB

More than 1500 nautical miles and several months after striking a reef off the Queensland coast (near the present day town of Bowen), Lt Phillip Parker King and his crew finally found a suitable beach at which to careen their ailing vessel, Her Majesty's Cutter *Mermaid*.

King showed dedication to his duty, faith in his and his crew's capabilities, and, I think, extreme optimism when he decided to push on to the north and west coasts of the continent rather than take the damaged ship on the much shorter journey back to its base in Sydney. Not that that would have been necessarily any less hazardous a journey of course. In addition to their daily duties of sailing the ship and carrying out their hydrological surveying tasks, the small crew (19 men plus a cocker spaniel I believe) also had to man the pumps to keep the ship afloat.

What King had been seeking was a sheltered beach onto which he could float the vessel at high spring tide so that he could lay the ship on its side to carry out repair work during the ebb tide cycle of around a fortnight before refloating it on the next spring high. Other features he sought were a supply of fresh water, shelter from rough weather, protection from the perceived threat from the Macassan trepang fishing fleet, minimal harassment by the Aboriginal inhabitants and a place where the crew could camp ashore for the duration. At Careening Bay they found these features and were able to carry out repairs to the ship, including attempts to stem the many leaks. They were very lucky to find a supply of fresh water at this beach during the dry season as the ephemeral creek must have benefitted from an unseasonal rainfall event filling several small rock holes. One can imagine King's consternation when, on relaunching the ship, it still leaked like a sieve. The structural repairs thankfully, however, were found to be effective.

The site, which is now within the Prince Regent National Park, is a particularly important place not only from the nautical/European historical viewpoint, but also from a scientific perspective because, during their enforced stay there, King's botanist Alan Cunningham was able to collect extensively amongst the plants and animals of the area. As a consequence it is the "type" locality for a number of species and, perhaps surprisingly, it was where the iconic Frilled Lizard (perhaps better known as the "frill-necked lizard") was first collected and scientifically described. This reptile now has the scientific name *Chlamydosaurus kingii*. In many trips to the area I am yet to see one there! King also noted evidence of Aboriginal occupation in the area, indicating its importance to them as well.

The many tasks King had been directed to carry out by his masters during his survey work included leaving clear indication of his landings. Here he decided to leave an inscribed copper plate bearing the details of the visit and, when they returned a year later they found that the plate had been removed; probably put to much better use by the local Uunguu people. Fortuitously however, his artisans had also inscribed "*HMC Mermaid, 1820*" on a "bifurcated" boab tree. The inscription is still readily legible today and the tree is commonly known as the "Mermaid Boab".

In about three years time, the 200th anniversary of the inscription will be upon us. I think that it is an event which should be cause for celebration. To this end I have alerted the Parks and Wildlife Service (PaWS) of the Department of Biodiversity, Conservation and Attractions, the Kimberley Development Commission and other government bodies of the situation. The response received has been positive.

I am, however, concerned that the tree itself could suffer catastrophic collapse at any time because it is developing a lengthening crack between the "bifurcations". This crack was not visible before 2005 but is now obvious as can be seen in the photos on the next page. PaWS have had the tree assessed by a competent arborist who

gave it a clean bill of health (particularly in as much as it had no sign of internal rot) but the crack continues to grow and I am hopeful that planned structural pruning in the near future will relieve the strain on the tree and extend its life somewhat.



2005



2016

Over the last few years I have taken cuttings from the tree and, with the help of friends more skilful than me, have grafted them onto boab root stocks. These trees are genetically identical to the *Mermaid Boab* and have been/will be planted out in Broome, Derby, Kununurra and hopefully Wyndham where they will have interpretive signage adjacent to them. Perhaps part of any 200th celebration could involve the planting of a “new” Mermaid Boab at Careening Bay.

The story of Phillip Parker King’s voyages (in the *Mermaid* and the *Bathurst*), is not well known to Australians, but in my opinion, is the stuff of a potential full length film. The book *King of the Australian Coast* by Marsden Hordern provides a wonderful account of his voyages, and a newer book titled *Phillip Parker King: 1791-1856: a most admirable Australian* by Brian Douglas Abbott is also available.

Chris Done

THE NATURAL WORLD OF THE KIMBERLEY

It is now nearly a year since our seminar on The Natural World of the Kimberley; we promised a book of the proceedings and no doubt many of you are wondering where it is. The process of producing the book has been based on the experience gained from our previous publications *Rock Art of the Kimberley* and *Kimberley History*. The aim was to speed up and smooth out the several stages needed to make a book with multiple authors.

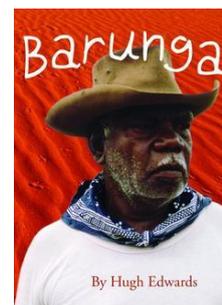
The first stage involved collecting papers from the speakers. I assumed that scientists would be more efficient meeting deadlines than historians. (How naive can one get?). Last month we received the last of the papers we can expect to get. After the editorial sub-committee viewed the papers and, where necessary, transcribed audio recordings and PowerPoint presentations, they handed the papers to the professional editors for detailed review. Their task was to ensure consistency of style and readability. Sometimes shortening was needed, or explanation of scientific terms, or more information to elucidate salient points. That entailed considerable dialogue between editor and authors and several rounds of revision; a time consuming task for both sides.

Eventually, when the chapters and photographs were sent to the graphic designer, there was more dialogue between the editors, graphic designer and editorial sub-committee. The preliminary drafts of the completed chapters look sensational. All Kimberley society members will wish to buy at least one box! We are now approaching the final stages. We do not wish to take any short cuts which would compromise the final polish of the book.

Hamish McGlashan

BOOK NOTE

Barunga by Hugh Edwards. [Dambimangari Aboriginal Corporation](#), Derby, 2015, 128 pages, illustrated, ISBN 9780646939025. This book has had a long and unusual gestation. Mary Durack was asked to write the biography in the early 1970s but could not undertake the task due to her involvement with her family history *Kings in Grass Castles*. Hugh Edwards was asked to take over and he interviewed Albert in Derby over a period of three years. Unfortunately, Albert died after a stroke and, for cultural reasons at that time, when there were objections to a dead man's name or photographs being published, the manuscript lay in a drawer for the next forty years. The Dambimangari Corporation then came to the rescue.



Albert Barunga was a remarkable man. His story is also prominent in Maisie McKenzie's *The Road to Mowanjum* and in *Barddabardda Wodjenangorddee: We're Telling All Of You*. He was one of a select band who successfully negotiated the difficult journey of transition from a traditional Aboriginal life to becoming a leader respected by all communities. Hugh Edwards is a polished scribe who has transcribed Barunga's life in a most readable form. I was gripped by Barunga's experiences as a boy and young man, an adventure story that all can enjoy. Ex-Derby-ites will also appreciate the meeting with other citizens they would have known in the past.

The mood of the book reflects the ethos of the time that it was conceived and drafted – the mid-seventies. Although Barunga and his culture, which he tried to preserve, suffered from the intrusion of the *kartia* (white man), there are few recriminations; the mood is less assertive than we are accustomed to nowadays.

This is a short volume in a large paperback format. Anyone with an interest in the West Kimberley will thoroughly enjoy the read.

Hamish McGlashan

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