Thinking about Cultural Resource Management: Essays from the Edge.

The writer of the foreword to this book describes the author Tom King as ‘dedicated, acerbic, articulate, essentially rational, and at the same time passionate about issues that matter’, and as ‘the Chief CRM Curmudgeon’. King has a long history of pricking bureaucratic bubbles in the narrowly-defined USA cultural resource management (CRM) world, and warrants all these descriptors.

The book is a collection of old and new articles by King, and while largely devoted to very specific legislative and bureaucratic issues in the USA, has underpinning messages that are very much relevant to contemporary Australian heritage conservation. The core message is that CRM (or cultural heritage management as we might say) ‘is about finding solutions to human problems through human interaction’.

Sounds a bit high-falutin’ and off-key at first reading, but King’s meaning is that the main human problem involved is how to keep hold of what people value about the cultural past and present while getting on with the future. The ‘human interaction’ promoted by King is about finding ‘real and open consultation processes in which all concerned can freely participate’.

A secondary but related message is King’s belief that the National Register of Historic Places (the US equivalent of, and model for, our Register of the National Estate) has become so bureaucratically re-defined that it now actively prevents real consideration of the heritage values of all but the most nationally important heritage places. The questioning of the effectiveness of using lists to define heritage has been a concern felt by a number of Australian heritage professionals for many years, and King’s discussion sharpens the focus on that issue. It raises questions in relation to the Commonwealth’s proposed National List and heritage regime that deserve wider discussion.

The book paints a picture of the standardisation and ossification of a legislative and bureaucratic process that has become so legalistic, and so fixated on preservation of national-listed places, that the essence of consultation and negotiated outcomes have been forgotten. Any idea of evolving heritage values has been lost. Debate among professionals over National Register criteria (very like the RNE criteria, and the new National List criteria, both of which are based on the US model) overshadows the community’s legitimate desire to see a place’s value to them considered. The National Register process and the consideration of protective outcomes has, in King’s view, become a political act rather than the planning tool it was designed to be.

The book is also interesting in providing a context for the growth of the heritage industry in the USA, which separates it from the Australian experience in some pretty basic ways. The Commonwealth’s Australian Heritage Commission Act 1975 drew substantially on the US National Historic Preservation Act for its inspiration, borrowing the idea of the national register and requiring Commonwealth agencies to act responsibly in relation to Registered places and consider ‘prudent and feasible alternatives’ (words from s.30 of the AHC Act taken directly from s.106 of the US Act). However, the US experience has been profoundly influenced by a number of other factors over the last 30 years. One is the proliferation of legislation—there are at least four pieces of federal legislation dealing with archaeology alone, never mind other aspects of heritage and the state legislation. There has also been a very basic fragmentation of the various disciplines carrying out what we would call ‘heritage conservation management’. ‘CRM’ is seen as being almost solely the province of the archaeologists, while the architectural historians do ‘historic preservation’, and the historians do ‘public history’. And each profession has its own fragment of legislation and bureaucratic system to underpin their activities. As a result it is very difficult to get balanced multi-disciplinary views of the values of any given site. This fragmentation of effort and intellectual direction is deplored by King, who thinks that all disciplines should be involved in decision making, as should all other stakeholders who are not ‘professionals’, particularly the community.

While heritage professionals in Australia might have our concerns about other disciplines in the heritage field (and there have been some celebrated slanging matches within this journal over the years), we still generally see each other as working towards the same basic objective of heritage conservation. Australia ICOMOS has always seen itself as multi-disciplinary, and the Burra Charter, while initially influenced by an architectural view of place, has been revised to make clearly acknowledge a range of potential values of place. The Charter insists that a range of skills is needed to understand significance and plan for conservation. While we have associations of professional historians, professional archaeologists and architectural historians, it is the Burra Charter that is generally accepted by both heritage professionals and government agencies as the common standard that directs all professional roles in the heritage conservation process. There does not appear to be a similar unifying philosophy in King’s USA.

King’s conclusions are interesting given the current changes taking place in the Australian heritage regime. If starting with a clean slate, his advice would be:

• Don’t create a Register, in the sense of only giving credence to listed places—the fact that something isn’t amenable to listing or putting on a map shouldn’t bar it from being considered in planning’. Lists are a tool, not a god.
• Accept that change happens and don’t try to freeze heritage—balance gains and losses, and make sure all potential gains and losses are understood and considered.
• Establish a meaningful system to resolve conflicts over cultural heritage issues—don’t focus on academic debates about significance, but on what change means to those who value the place. Consider all views but don’t issue veto powers.
• Maintain flexibility in resolving conflict—mandate the use of informed, principled negotiation among all parties.

The book also contains interesting discussions on the
repatriation of indigenous material and human remains, which King sees as having been distorted by concentrating on issues of ‘ownership’ that are culturally meaningless; and on the ethics of consultants giving independent and unbiased advice to clients, rather than selling their souls for profit—but this review has a word length...

The book, being targeted at US practitioners, suffers in the Australian context from its heavy emphasis on the US legislation and planning system. However, the underpinning issues are highly relevant to Australian heritage conservation practice, and the book should be compulsory reading for heritage professionals, both within and outside government agencies.

Michael Pearson

**Interpreting Historic House Museums**


Two themes entwine this book: that historic house museums are deadly static and that they are powerfully evocative. It is tempting to contemplate the possibility that they are in fact causally linked – that gazing at the dead, stuffed body of the past is entrancing, even erotic, in some scopophilic way. But that it not how the house museums presented in this collection want to be perceived. They aim to be lively and relevant, and the book is a compendium of bright ideas for enlivening house museums.

Yet the gloom that motivates this chorus of whistling in the dark is not a phantom mist. The excellent first essay, ‘Past, Present and Future’ by Patrick H. Butler, identifies four issues as challenges for house museums in the twenty-first century. He notes that changing technologies offer both opportunities and risks, not only in terms of their cost but also of the new standards they introduce. Second, he points to changing population demographics which may make house museums irrelevant to their communities. Third, he observes that funding remains difficult, whether from government or philanthropic sources. And last, he points out that there has been inadequate succession planning for the plethora of house (and other) museums established following the centenaries and bicentenaries of the 1970s.

This is plain talking, and it is justified in Australia as much as in the US. Butler asserts that though some find the house museum a charming escape from the modern world, it is not a sufficient rationale for an educational institution that wishes to survive in an era of pressure to justify its existence. His conclusion is that house museums must build purposeful relationships with their communities in all their diversity.

Rex M. Ellis’s chapter, ‘Interpreting the whole house’, picks up this theme. He is specifically interested in introducing black history into American house museums, which can be uncomfortable, difficult and resisted by traditional managers, guides and visitors. He makes the important point that the tremendous quantity of research available (over 2000 texts on slavery published in 1995-2000 alone) enables both more quantity and more authority in telling the stories of black house-inhabitants. This situation is slowly emerging in Australia too, as histories proliferate of Indigenous people’s interactions with white settlers, from the stock yards to the kitchen to the bed. But there is never enough precise history, even in the US, and Ellis makes an argument for drawing on comparative insights where we know blacks must have been – something stronger than an educated guess, but admittedly not as direct as evidence. He advocates that it should be presented as hypothesis, not fact, but that it is better to try this than to remain silent.

Nancy E. Villa Bryk writes a passionate contribution on her ‘moment in time’ interpretive technique at Greenfield Village: dramatic, story-infused glimpses into the life of house inhabitants suggested by meticulous compositions of furnishings, such as a scatter of children’s toys under a sideboard, or the bedside table of a sick servant woman. As an interpretive style this is not unfamiliar in our country, but Bryk adds a useful analysis of why it is effective interpretation. Houses are evocative, immersive environments, she says, and ‘moment in time’ installations add yet another detailed layer to that richness. The ‘moments’ visually convey the stories interpreters want to tell, eg about characters or events, to the particular benefit of visual learners, and they easily accommodate the insertion of hands-on activities for kinaesthetic learners. These are useful correctives to the habitual focus on language-centred learning in museums.

The book contains further chapters discussing the presence (or absence) of women and landscapes in historic house museum interpretation, and while they are sensible, they say little that is new. Several technical, operational chapters are, by contrast, novel contributions to the house museum literature.

Bradley C. Brooks writes on furnishings plans as process and product. The fundamental planning document of a historic house museum, furnishings plans have not been explicated since William Seale’s seminal book, *Recreating the Historic House Interior* (1979); Brooks’ contribution makes the important connection that the furnishings plan is (ideally) a subset of the interpretation plan (while acknowledging the many reasons why this doesn’t always happen). His picture of the triple nature of a furnishings plan as curatorial, interpretive and operational is a sound statement of real practice.

The other outstanding contribution on managing interpretation in house museums is Meggett B. Lavin’s discussion of the admirable program for the care and feeding of interpreters at Drayton Hall, a National Trust property in Charleston with sixteen part time interpretive staff. She describes the thoughtful training plan; expectations about good (and unsatisfactory) performance; a mentoring scheme for new interpreters; methods to enable staff to feel a sense of ownership of the site; opportunities for personal growth and professional development; and the personal support of camaraderie among staff. These approaches need not be confined to historic houses!

The energy and pleasure with which contributors to this book write of their work interpreting historic house museums sits oddly with persistent references to off-putting, old-fashioned styles, but alas, readers probably know what they mean. The US National Trust, the American Association for State and Local History and other organisations have in the last couple of years been conducting surveys and workshops on the future of house museums, driven by studies showing that a huge number are inadequately funded, stuck-in-the-mud and essentially unviable. Many of the same issues apply in Australia too – but so do specimens of best practice such as those documented in Donnelly’s book. Benchmarks of the best and the worst are valuable resources.

Linda Young
Cultural Tourism: The Partnership between Tourism and Cultural Heritage Management.


The central tenet of this volume is that for cultural tourism to be sustainable, partnerships are needed between the tourism and cultural heritage management sectors. The authors argue that 'the decision to embark on cultural tourism must be based on sound commercial tourism reasons first and heritage management reasons second, [a point] not appreciated by some members of the cultural heritage community who see tourism as a means of achieving other agendas' (p.6). The book aims to demonstrate why partnerships are necessary and the ways in which they improve the visitor experience and assist the conservation and interpretation of heritage places and attractions, making use of these 'tourism assets' sustainable. The book moves beyond the assumption that simply promoting cultural heritage tourism is a force for conservation.

For those who work and teach in the cultural or heritage tourism sector this volume goes some way towards filling a gap in a literature by recognising the limitations of either a tourism-centred or a heritage-centred approach by attempting to integrate the two. This is a welcome change but a major challenge given that, as the authors point out, the objectives of the sectors have been seen as conflicting and relationships between the two have not always been harmonious. Literature in the cultural tourism field has tended to be dominated on the heritage side by the management of tourism at particular types of sites, especially large sites such as castles or town centres or world heritage-listed sites. On the tourism side, the emphasis has been on typologies of tourism or tourists and in particular on issues of sustainable tourism in developing countries.

In taking an approach that seeks to identify key issues in building partnerships the book cuts across these subject areas. Along with its eclectic mix of case studies and inclusion of both tangible and intangible heritage, this makes it of potential value to a wide cross section of people.

McKercher, currently at Hong Kong Polytechnic University, has expertise in nature-based tourism. Du Cros is a consultant who has worked in Australian Indigenous archaeology and heritage management and is currently advising on tourism projects in Asia. The book brings together the authors' divergent experiences in 14 chapters. Following an introductory chapter 1, some of the challenges to achieving sustainable cultural tourism are presented in chapter 2; chapters 3 and 4 summarise core issues in tourism and cultural heritage management respectively. The remaining chapters attempt to integrate the tourism and heritage management issues presented earlier in planning for successful cultural and heritage tourism.

I have reservations about the success of this endeavour. Ultimately I am not convinced the book fulfils its aim of demonstrating that such partnerships are achievable and valuable. This is not a result of inappropriate or insubstantial content but rather of a lack of structure and integration in the material presented. In the end this acts to differentiate tourism and heritage management rather than bringing them into partnership.

There is so much useful information in this book, it is easy to lose track the relevance of some of the discussion; it would benefit from some clear sign-posting. Many issues are presented but for those working in or studying heritage tourism these will not be unknown. Translating some of the issues and problems into processes that address them would have made the book invaluable. In this regard the case studies could have provided vehicles if they were integrated into the arguments in a more discursive fashion. It may have been better to focus on a few case studies and follow them through each stage of the processes advocated.

The inclusion of an early chapter on intangible heritage is admirable and balances the emphasis on conservation of fabric in much heritage tourism literature. I feel, though, that the potential impacts and need for planning in presenting intangible heritage as a tourism attraction are not sufficiently followed through in the subsequent chapters.

An interesting point is the authors' claim that tourists are interested in 'authenticity' but not necessarily reality – tourists do not want a romanticised view of the past disrupted. What are the implications of this for heritage managers who seek to present the significance of a place accurately through interpretation? Does tourism potentially mean forsaking accuracy?

Despite my reservations about the overall success of the argument for a partnership between heritage management and tourism, I found the book useful for the many issues it raises. The aims are high – which is always admirable – and this is a work-in-progress towards achieving those aims. As such it makes a valuable contribution to the literature.

Anita Smith

Principles for the Conservation of Heritage Sites in China.

The Getty Conservation Institute, Los Angeles, 2002; English-language translation with Chinese text of the document issued by China ICOMOS

At the 5th World Archaeology Congress held in Washington DC in June 2003 the multiple expressions of heritage management in China were showcased in a mind-boggling display featuring the landscapes of ancient communities as well as individual sites with incredibly complex conservation and management challenges. For a country with an archaeological and architectural heritage of overwhelming significance, obviously there is a need for a set of principles to guide conservation actions. Principles for the Conservation of Heritage Sites in China is the product of a cooperative effort between the State Administration for Cultural Heritage, China (Zhang Bai, Deputy Director-General, SACH, Beijing and Jin Hongkui, Deputy Head, Department of Conservation, et al.), the Getty Conservation Institute (Neville Agnew, Martha Demas and Guolong Lai) and the Australian Heritage Commission (Sharon Sullivan and Kirsty Altenburg). The China Principles project was initiated in 1998 with a series of workshops that further strengthened the linkages between the three partner institutions as well as involved Australia ICOMOS. Brief and presented in both Chinese and English, it is the commentary as well as the principles that provide the most up-to-date and extensive expression of heritage philosophy yet drafted.

The introductions by Agnew, Demas and Zhang Bai set an appropriate context for the 38 principles. Article 1 defines
heritage for the purposes of the guidelines as ‘physical remains that were created during the history of humankind’. Article 3 in part will be familiar to Australian readers as heritage is defined as ‘historical, artistic and scientific values’ with the perplexing omission of social. However, lest readers feel that they have hit upon a fundamental weakness in the China Principles, social and economic values are dealt with extensively in sections 4 and 8 and in other sections of the commentary. It is understood that the principles are defined in a restricted manner to attain conformity with the national heritage legislation but that the commentary was considered an appropriate place to introduce new concepts.

Some of the principles resonate with the emphasis of the Burra Charter, however many go considerably further. Article 9 commences the heritage process with ‘identification’ as does the Australia ICOMOS Burra Charter. But elsewhere (pages 4 and 5 of Values and Heritage Conservation, a Research Report, Getty Conservation Institute 2000) it is asserted that the process should begin with raising ‘awareness’. Both terms, identification and awareness, seem to imply that a degree of expertise is required to initiate the heritage conservation process, but perhaps the latter implies less reliance on those who know what heritage is!

Article 12 makes two excellent points, the need for on-site archives and the requirement for a buffer zone. Although heritage charters almost universally recognise the need to maintain an archival record, none that I know of emphasises the need to have that record at the heritage place. Not having the record or copies of the key documents at the heritage place tends to weaken the authority of site managers and places them in a subservient position to the office, where the records are maintained and some degree of gate-keeping may take place. The stress on the need for a buffer-zone to control development is obviously essential.

Article 23 I find interesting in that ‘alterations to the historic condition may not be made for cosmetic purposes or to attain completeness’. However in Comment 13.3 1.i, it is stated that reconstruction can be considered in instances where people have a ‘strong memory and connection with it’. And Articles 26 and 27 emphasize the need for after-excavation care for the site and appropriate presentation.

The commentary elaborates on the various principles and introduces relatively novel ideas, such as found in clause 7.4.2 where a review panel that is not directly involved in the conservation process is required. Australia should try it some time!

When read between the lines, the guidelines and commentary provide an invaluable window into the management of heritage in China. The reader might wish to compare the Burra Charter with the China Principles and draw their own conclusions as to the strengths and weakness of each document. However, it is obvious that the China Principles have benefited considerably from a series of workshops that extended over years as well as the patronage of the GCI and AHC that facilitated those workshops. A description of the China Principles Project is at http://www.getty.edu/conservation/activities/china/china_publications.html and the Principles for the Conservation of Heritage Sites in China is in pdf format at http://www.getty.edu/conservation/activities/china/.

Brian Egloff

The Reality of A Dark History, From Contact and Conflict to Cultural Recognition


This book was commissioned as an integral part of the Queensland Heritage Trails Network project. It aims to provide background information for non-Indigenous history and museum groups on Aboriginal Peoples and Torres Strait Islanders in order to help them involve local Indigenous communities in their projects. As the Minister for Arts, Matt Foley writes in the foreword: ‘This impressive book reveals Queensland’s buried heritage—the history of the relationships between the Indigenous and non-Indigenous inhabitants... its primary purpose for the Queensland government is to promote reconciliation...through a better understanding of Indigenous history.’

In an innovative approach to research the author was advised on the content and protocols by an Indigenous Working Group. It comprised mostly Brisbane-based public servants who volunteered their time to advise on tone and proper language so that the book, a government document, would have credibility with the ATSNI communities.

The book is a collation from historic books, letters and reports written by white people and by black people writing about their experiences in the last century. It is arranged in seven chapters: European documentation of the prehistory of Queensland; Explorers’ observations of Aboriginal Peoples’ and Torres Strait Islanders’ culture; Settlers’ first encounters with Traditional Owners; Early consequences of European occupation; The administration of the 1897 Act (and subsequent acts to 1975); The reality of ‘living under the Act’; The continuing culture of Indigenous Australians. Each chapter concludes with a very general summary and a note for readers interested in further information to consult works listed in the bibliography.

However, as the book is also seen as a learning tool and guide for community museums, I would have been interested to see a summary containing the main points arising from each chapter. For example, chapter 1 could cover the following points made in the text about Dreaming tracks, stories and rock art: ‘Dreaming stories travel over vast distances or tracks, and parts of the story belong to various regions or groups, while some relate to a specific place’ (p.10); ‘...only that part or version belonging to the storyteller may be told’ (p.11); ‘Evidence of occupation to a certain date does not necessarily preclude earlier occupation, a belief held by Indigenous peoples. The data is simply confined within the parameters of the scientific methodology’ (p.12); ‘Each symbol may encapsulate a variety of meanings, and the level of interpretation will depend on the ritual knowledge of the artist and the viewer, and on an understanding of the ancestral landscape’ (p. 16). Most of us whitefellers have so much to learn that we need all the help we can get from well-arranged data.

The summary for chapter 2 commences with the observation that ‘The first encounters of Aboriginal Peoples and Torres Strait Islanders with European settlement were different from area to area throughout the colony; largely dependent, it seems, on the time of contact and the economic circumstances driving the process.’ (p.89) A table showing the time of first contact for each district would be very useful for local community museums, as would a map showing the tribal groupings across Queensland. Much regional material is
available in university collections, heritage studies commissioned by the Cultural Heritage Branch of the Environmental Protection Authority, and in the Australian Institute of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander studies, and a guide to this would be invaluable to community museum groups. The bibliography, while comprehensive in terms of general history, does not help with this regional or district breakdown. It does have a page of useful addresses for websites concerned with Native Title reports and procedures.

The chronological history shows contact, conflict and massacres on the pastoral and mining frontiers, control on reserves, desolation and the division of families. These stories have been told before but The Reality of A Dark History brings them together in a concise fashion. Thus it builds on the work of Ros Kidd on the administration of the draconian Queensland laws (36 between 1865-1999), on histories of individual reserves such as Thom Blake’s story of Cherbourg, and on the personal recollections of black people living under the Act.

The final chapter on continuing culture shows the ongoing battle within the framework of Queensland legislation for Traditional Owners to show connections to the land over which they want their native title recognised. The Cultural Record (Landscapes Queensland and Queensland Estate) Act 1987 is totally dysfunctional with regard to protecting designated cultural heritage sites, despite its carefully integrated name. The chapter concludes with useful sections on Indigenous Land Corporation properties, urban Aboriginal leadership and Aboriginal art.

After years of oppression Indigenous peoples are taking initiatives. Oodgeroo’s vision of integration, So black and white may go forward together ‘...’ is slowly occurring. This general history will assist communities in that task.

Jane Lennon

A Past Displayed: Public history, public memory and cultural resource management in Australia’s Northern Territory


This modest-looking paperback with its obligatory cover image of an iron-roofed country store explains its purpose clearly in the subtitle. David Carment considers how Northern Territorians ‘have thought about their histories and how these histories have been interpreted as part of wider strategies concerned with education, museums, national parks and tourism’. His expertise in both academic and public history also gives this book wider significance. Carment places the Northern Territory experience in context by discussing public history and heritage generally in Australia and draws on the substantial body of work produced by historians outside as well as within academia. He also covers the often-separate areas of museums, heritage places and cultural tourism, and European and Aboriginal heritage. For all of these reasons, this book should be required reading for Australian historians and others engaged in cultural resource management.

The book opens with a chapter on ‘Public history, cultural resources and the study of memory’ that is a model of its kind and deserves reprinting and a wide readership. It is followed by a chapter on history and cultural resource management in the NT and then by chapters on the Territory’s national parks, government and non-government museums, the Heritage Highway, and urban heritage in the Top End and Central Australia. The book is 133 pages and includes an index and extensive endnote references, including to internet sources.

Carment uses many of his own photos that complement the text by showing not only heritage places but also words and images used in signage and pamphlets.

Carment writes clearly and without jargon, moving easily from the general to the particular and discusses the work of individuals as well as that of agencies and organisations. His assessments are both frank and fair. For example, in the chapter on the Museum and Art Gallery of the Northern Territory, he discusses its ‘highly politicised’ and sometimes contentious history, records its popularity, and concludes that its representations of NT history were of mixed quality and impact. The best were done by Mickey Dewar, he says, but her ‘area of work was clearly under resourced ...’. A visitor to all the MAGNT’s history displays only encountered an incomplete coverage of the Territory’s past’. As Carment explains in the following chapter, the Territory’s non-government museums ‘adopted similar approaches’. (p 67) In my view, the same criticism can be levelled at all of Australia’s major public museums, and (despite the good work of the History Trust museums and the SA Museum) South Australia does not even have a South Australian museum history.

A surprising omission in this otherwise comprehensive account is any reference to the deliberate government action to promote awareness of Territory history by funding the annual NT History Awards. They were established in 1979 and may be the earliest of their kind in the country. The first award was to Peter Donovan for his book, At the other end of Australia. Nor are Donovan’s several NT histories and heritage studies mentioned by Carment. This may reflect his focus on the 1990s, but it should be acknowledged that some significant historical and heritage work was done in the 1970s and early 1980s, for example at Pine Creek, much of it carried out for the Conservation Commission of the NT. A Past Displayed would have also benefited from a general concluding chapter, drawing together some of Carment’s general comments in the introduction and the thoughtful conclusions he provides to each individual chapter.

A more important omission, and my only real regret about this invaluable book, is that it excludes the recent past by ending in 1998, but that regret is shared with (and explained by) Carment himself. My own experience with the National Trusts (including in the NT) and with history and heritage at national, territory and state level since 1998 suggests that history, heritage and the National Trusts are all under siege and that the gains Carment documents – particularly in relation to government support – are already slipping away. On the other hand, there is now a Professional Historians Association (NT).

Susan Marsden

Australian Defence: Sources and Statistics. The Australian Centenary History of Defence Vol VI.


To celebrate the centenary of the Commonwealth defence function in 2001, Oxford University Press produced a seven-
volume series covering the Army, Navy, Air Force, the Australian Defence Force, the Department of Defence, and an atlas of Australia's wars. The series is edited by distinguished military historians Peter Dennis and John Coates. The sixth volume Australian Defence: Sources and Statistics, edited by Joan Beaumont and reviewed here, is, despite its unpromising title, in fact a historiographic review of fundamental issues and sources in Australian defence history.

The publication of important works on military history usually goes unremarked in the pages of Historic Environment. This is unfortunate, demonstrating the lack of engagement between heritage practitioners and military historians. It is marked in Beaumont's volume by the lack of reference to the buildings and places where some of the history actually took place, as well as to heritage work on them. The poor understanding of military history demonstrated by many heritage assessments and the absurd treatment of defence in the Heritage Commission's Historic Themes Framework shows that heritage practice has some way to come as well.

Beaumont's volume presents the broad range of military history in Australia: it is not just battles and machinery, but about the broader role and impacts of the defence function in Australian society and in Australia's external relationships. As Beaumont says in the introductory section, 'the book aims to provide the reader with guidance about the current state of research on all major aspects of the history of the Australian Defence Force.' (p.12)

The volume is divided into two sections, the largest being themes and issues in Australian defence history, the second being research sources and statistics. There is a brief introduction and an index. The introductory chapter gives a broad overview of ADF history, outlining its development from the official histories of Bean and Long, to the involvement of academic historians and the development on in-house historical research by the various service arms. There's also a brief section on defence ranks and insignia, allowing one to distinguish, for example, between Rears and Vices.

The major section of the book consists of fourteen themes, ranging from Defence Policy to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders. Each section is further broken down into short reviews written by experts in the field. In some sections there are potted biographies of key players such as generals, public servants and Ministers. All are fully referenced in the text, making it easy to search. Using this section is relatively easy and it seems that most aspects are covered, although in some cases rather briefly.

To develop my previous comment, the one area Beaumont fails to cover is the built fabric of the military. There is only one specific entry relating to fabric: a discussion of fortifications which mentions some key works, but not, for example, those on Sydney's fortifications carried out by the National Parks and Wildlife Service. Drill halls don't get a mention although they have been extensively studied in Victoria and Queensland. And how can one present HMAS Cresswell without mentioning the 1982 conservation plan and its discussion of the unusual 'Garden City' design for the site?

There is no discussion on construction during World War II, when so many military bases were established using a variety of construction types, as researched in a number of heritage studies. Post-war use of these buildings, often sub-standard, was a significant issue in recruitment and retention for the Defence Forces, yet that issue is discussed on p.247-250 without any reference to examples of buildings. Such absences point to a significant area of overlap between military historians and heritage practitioners which needs to be developed.

The section on sources covers reference works (such as the Official Histories), the national and state archives, museums and overseas archives. There are an number of minor points to note here. RAAF Wagga's museum, for example, is not mentioned. Greater discussion of the varying levels of service in the National Archives of Australia would forewarn researchers, as would a comment on the lack of finding aids there for research on buildings and land. There is no discussion of the relevant journals for Australian military history, to encourage researchers to look out for newly published material.

Nonetheless, this book is useful in two ways. Firstly, it is a road map to the major issues and literature of Australian military history. This is of great utility for heritage practitioners who are not totally familiar with the literature. The second use is for occasional factual clarification, if you can't separate Morsh from Monash. In this respect it has less breadth than the Oxford Companion to Australian Military History but covers topics in more depth.

Overall this volume is an essential tool for research into the military history of Australia and for heritage practitioners working on defence sites in Australia. It is well worth its exorbitant price.

Iain Stuart

The Birth of Melbourne

This book is described as an anthology of the city of Melbourne. Tim Flannery, Director of the South Australian Museum, has a significant reputation as an author and presenter of new approaches to old issues. As a consequence, it could have been expected that this book – which he edited and provided the introduction for – would shed new light on the settlement or development of Melbourne as a city. However, The Birth of Melbourne does not seem to make the most of its opportunities, in terms of the scope of the topic and its presentation.

It comprises a fascinating but almost indigestible range of commentary on the emerging settlement in Port Phillip, from the earliest European sighting of the bay in 1802 through to a novelist's reflection on the city in 1907. The book is thus a collection of contemporary comments on Melbourne over a period of a hundred odd years, gleaned from a range of sources such as newspapers, diaries, letters, manuscripts and court proceedings. Each entry has a short paragraph of explanation and then an extract of varying length. Whether the introductory note to each entry was the work of Flannery or others is not clear. What is obvious, and somewhat overwhelming, is the sheer number of excerpts and the breadth of the material.

The table of contents is no help in determining which entry relates to what subject or date, which makes it very difficult to form any coherent impression of the direction of the text. I kept looking for a sense of sequence or grouping of themes or subjects. The contents should have been divided into periods or subjects, or at least the titles of the extracts and dates included as a guide to their contents. This would not have been too hard,
given that other books on the history of Melbourne, particularly Miles Lewis' admirably organised history of the city (published in 1995), are available to provide social, political and environmental context. When there is no index, some helpful detail in the contents is essential. And it seems a pity the illustrations are so meagre given the wealth of information in the text.

Flannery's introduction is in part a retelling of his recollections of a utopian childhood by and in Port Phillip Bay, touching in its personal nature, and sobering when the relentless degradation of that marine environment is considered (fortunately, effective rehabilitation of the ecosystems seems to be well underway). This introduction does attempt some chronological divisions of events, which would usefully have been carried over into similar division of the following text.

Generally, I feel that the topic is admirable, but the execution lacking. The whole publication has a sense of frugality about it. I can imagine a completely different style of book emerging from the material that has been so painstakingly assembled, but no doubt budget was an issue. In its published form, however, it could usefully serve as a source book for creative historic writing. The entries are often amusing and thought-provoking and present a broad range of experiences in and around the developing city in the nineteenth century.

Katrina McDougall