From the Barracks to the Burrup: The National Trust in Western Australia
Andrea Witcomb and Kate Gregory
University of NSW Press/National Trust of Australia (WA), 2010
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Institutional and organisational histories tend towards chronicling major events and acknowledging those who played significant roles. From the Barracks to the Burrup accomplishes this basic task but moves several steps beyond to provide a critical interpretation of the history of the National Trust in Western Australia. This history is set in the larger context of the state’s social and economic development and is presented in relation to broader heritage issues with local, national and international resonances.

All the controversies, vested interests, personalities, policies and priorities that have reigned at different times are given their due. There is potential for disorder involved in writing a lucid book about such a complex history, but this innovative and beautifully produced volume succeeds in presenting a coherent account of the many intersecting influences that produced the built heritage organization of the WA National Trust.

The book is structured in three main, broadly chronological sections. Part 1 looks at early concerns about history, heritage and the origins of the National Trust in Western Australia. This is set within the broader frame of the clash between development and commercial interests, referred to here as ‘modernity’, and the development of sense of place, its significance and its endangerment. Part 2 deals with the difficult and ever-changing issues of conservation, preservation, interpretation and presentation of built heritage. The last section charts the development of heritage legislation and the usually conflicting aims of community, heritage groups, developers and governments.

Some readers will no doubt want to argue with the emphasis given, or not given, to the many and varied elements of the Trust and its role in the state’s heritage protection. I would like to have seen more on intangible heritage and dissonant or conflicting heritage. Others may well wish to see less. Similarly there will be different views on the political aspects of the Trust’s activities and of heritage generally in relation to state and local governments.

The Conclusion provides a valuable discussion of the issues involved in indigenous heritage and the inevitable tensions between those interests and those of resource development, particularly in relation to the unique petroglyphs of the Burrup Peninsula. In this respect, the authors here point out that ‘Indigenous heritage is no longer the heritage of the ‘other’. The past the Trust is fighting for is not only more inclusive and reaching back to deep time – it is also a landscape in which it is possible, indeed necessary, to practise a politics of care for one another.’

Optimistic though these lines might seem in development-obsessed Western Australia, they are well worth highlighting. In many ways they can stand for the history, present and likely future of the Trust as its volunteers, paid officers and supporters pursue an often rocky road to bring heritage concerns to the attention of the broader community. While segments of that community may frequently need convincing of the value of heritage, especially where it conflicts with monetary interests, over its fifty-year existence the Trust has ensured that place and past are firmly on the agenda in any proposed development.

The authors, editors and publishers of this book have made a significant contribution to a developing hybrid genre – the sumptuously illustrated and presented coffee table book that includes a scholarly account and analysis of its subject matter. Despite the complexity of many of the matters addressed, the text is always clear and readable without ‘dumbing down’ the issues. The illustrations chosen, while visually appealing, are well presented and captioned, extending and amplifying the text rather than simply decorating the pages. The sources include oral history interviews, organisational records, government and other reports, letters and a range of secondary historical, theoretical and heritage works. These are all deployed deftly in support of the arguments presented.

From the Barracks to the Burrup is a success in every sense, establishing a new standard and model for future attempts at similar projects. As one product of an Australian Research Council Linkage grant in which academics partnered with the Trust, this book also shows how professional scholarship and community aspirations can combine to produce outcomes of enduring value for all concerned.

Graham Seal
Fantastic Dreaming: The Archaeology of an Aboriginal Mission

Jane Lydon

Alta Mira Press, 2009


RRP $49.95

Some of the first physical traces left in the Victorian landscape by European settlers were those of Major Thomas Mitchell's dray as it passed through the soft earth and left tracks that remained visible for years. As a slowly fading image of the passing of people and animals through country it is a powerful one that remains in the imagination of the reader throughout this book. Soft footed wallabies and bare footed humans had never before left permanent tracks in the sandy soil such as these.

Jane Lydon's book is a case study of Ebenezer Mission, a utopian ideal transported from Germany to the Wimmera River at Antwerp. The book explores the interwoven relationships between the Wergaia people and the Moravian missionaries who sought to shape their lives between 1859 and 1904. As an archaeologist, Jane Lydon is concerned with the ordinary stuff of people's lives, and in the stories that can be told through building remains and camp litter. Through extensive historical research, surveys and talking to descendants of those who lived at Ebenezer, she has collected the stories of a place where key themes of Christianity, the Enlightenment and Aboriginal Dreaming were interwoven.

The Wimmera River from its beginnings in the Pyrenees near Ararat to its end in the lakes of Hindmarsh and Alba cuts through the Big Desert was the ribbon of life that defined people's use of the land both by the Wotjobaluk people and the squatters and the missionaries who arrived subsequently. Ebenezer nestles into a wide bend of the Wimmera River on a traditional camping site. The aerial photograph of the mission shows the cleared and ploughed land either side of the river that still retains a small band of trees following the watercourse. There is a powerful sense of the genius loci in this photograph, of Ebenezer being a meeting place of two cultures.

“Fantastic dreaming” was the phrase used by the Moravian missionary Friedrich Spieseke to describe his vision of a mission in the Wimmera, and in appropriating a word used to describe an Aboriginal view of the world, it sets the scene for a dualism in the meeting place that was Ebenezer. On the one hand there was the missionary view of an utopian vision through a suffering Christ, and on the other there was an Aboriginal idea of a ‘conscious landscape’ alive with meaning (Lydon 2009:45).

One of the central ideas in Fantastic Dreaming is the exploration of the Moravian idea of utopia expressed in the spatial organization of the mission buildings. The principles of their faith were expressed in the design of their settlements (Lydon 2009:103). The central open square defined by houses represented an outward directed mission, with the dominant buildings of the Church and the Mission House as the centre of communal life placed strategically along one side. But the sense of community intended by this spatial organization was also be interpreted as an instrument of control and surveillance by the Wergaia people. Religious communities were not so far removed from penal institutions in seeking to exert control over people's lives.

Lydon explains how control and surveillance could be successfully thwarted by mobility and evasion, two tactics successfully employed by Aboriginal people. The Wimmera River and its remnant tree cover provided just such places for escape and privacy. Segregation by gender and age was a part of the spatial organization though the rigidly enforced ‘choir’ system of separate dormitories for girls and boys, men and women. This cuts a swathe through Aboriginal ideas of extended family and kin, and is at the heart of the nation's continued inability to house Aboriginal people appropriately even to the present day.

Archeology is primarily concerned with material culture and Lydon's book sets out to explore a number of ideas about material culture at Ebenezer. This ranges from stone tools and household goods to photographs of people. The home was seen as an indicator of civilization and the extent to which it was furnished with artefacts and goods was seen as a measure of advancement towards an ideal of work and home life modelled on the missionaries own lives. Material culture has often been categorized by the notion of authenticity leading to narrow interpretations of 'Aboriginal' and 'European' artefacts. The study of Ebenezer is important to illustrate that appropriation of European material culture by Aboriginal people furthers the notion that “identity resides not in the object itself but in its role within a network of social relationships” (Lydon 2009:65).

Fantastic Dreaming still retains some of the form and structure of the PhD thesis on which it is based, and reads in places like a report with conclusions and a degree of repetition. There is some uneven writing that introduces the author as narrator and protagonist for a particular point of view, making sure the reader has grasped the point. There is also much material that is of a more general nature about Aboriginal history in Victoria which is well covered in other publications and does not necessarily serve the central thesis of uncovering the meanings inherent in Ebenezer.

There are many fascinating insights into the mission as a place of exchange of culture provided by this book. This is set within a wider context of both secular and religious thought and writings of the late eighteenth and nineteenth century. Fantastic Dreaming sets out to explore many things and it does so in a scholarly fashion. The endnotes to each chapter are extensive and illuminating, and the range of sources are extensive, representing a wide range of views. The strength of the book comes from Lydon's own intimate knowledge of the place through archeological surveys and through talking to Aboriginal people descended from those who lived at Ebenezer.

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William Wardell and Genazzano FCJ College
By Ursula M. de Jong, Genazzano FCJ College, 2009.
ISBN: 9780646513065
RRP $50.00

In de Jong’s previous work, William Wilkinson Wardell: his life and work: 1823-1899, T.A. Hazell comments in the foreword that the author has ‘developed a sensitive and profound appreciation’ of Wardell’s work, and in the process raised awareness about Wardell’s ‘contribution to the culture of nineteenth century Australia’ (de Jong 1983: 3). This latest publication on Genazzano FCJ in Kew, Melbourne continues that admiration and celebration of Wardell’s work by de Jong, who has published extensively on this renowned architect/engineer’s work during the intervening years. Much like the College itself, this publication has taken numerous years to be realised and as the acknowledgments attest, employed the services and skills of numerous people, including Genazzano FCJ College archivist, Julianne Barlow, and de Jong’s research assistant, Joan Kenny.

Extensively and meticulously researched by architectural historian de Jong, William Wardell and Genazzano FCJ College takes the reader through the entire journey from envisioning, financing, constructing and finally using the Convent and School in Kew by the Faithful Companions of Jesus (FCJ) Sisters, staff and female students. Through the usage of letters, oral accounts and historical photographs, de Jong brings a sense of immediacy to the past. Meanwhile, the reading of the building itself, enables de Jong to draw upon her background in architecture, and provides an enriched experiential description of the building and setting.

With no elevations or plans, a bird’s eye perspective drawn by Wardell c. 1888/1889 is the only original drawing that remains. The drawing expresses and celebrates Wardell’s skill and encapsulates the notion that hand drawings are an effective method to represent an idea. This perspective allowed the Sisters to have an image of what Genazzano FCJ would look like when completed, with a chapel, convent, dormitories and the school itself. As de Jong states in Ch. 4, ‘Imagining the new Convent and School, Kew’, the drawing also ‘gives us entry into the mind of [Wardell]’ despite the temporal and spatial distance. Furthermore, Wardell’s bird’s eye perspective affirms the importance of hand drawings, especially in an era where tertiary institutions and the architecture profession itself are somewhat prioritising the use of computer-aided design tools, and thus sidelining the art and skills required for hand drawings.

Completed in 1891, the three-storey, asymmetrical, brick building was designed with the principles of ‘integrity, simplicity and truth’ and represents a clear influence of Gothic Revival (de Jong 2009: 31). This is expressed in the proportions, scale and detail of the design. Through words and pictures, de Jong examines the various elements that comprise the building, including the attention to detail executed by Wardell from the joinery to the brick finish. Chapter 8, ‘Reading the Wardell Building at Genazzano FCJ College’, acts as a guided tour of the building as it exists today; a tour that is accessible to architects and laypeople.

Regarding Wardell’s attention to detail, de Jong attributes this to the influence of Gothic Revival architect, Augustus Welby Pugin. In Chapter 5, ‘Building the new Convent and School, Kew’, de Jong (2009: 69) discusses how the former Chief Architect of Victoria was influenced by Pugin’s two basic design principles, namely (1.) the removal of features that do not aid ‘convenience, construction or propriety’; and (2.) that all ornament should enhance the ‘essential construction of the building’. For de Jong the latter is highlighted with Wardell’s preoccupation with quality materials and workmanship. As the letters attest, the architect also communicated frequently with the contractor, even beyond the building’s completion. For example, when Genazzano FCJ sustained weather damage in 1894, Wardell wrote to the contractor to remedy the issues. In conjunction with this, de Jong addresses and vehemently dismisses claims that Wardell was an ‘imitator’ of Pugin and argues despite signing his initials in a similar manner and sketching the older architect’s works, Wardell did not confine himself to Pugin’s influence (de Jong 2009: 43).

Besides the design and construction process, de Jong provides a historical narrative for the FCJ Sisters, including their arrival in Australia and the prominent role, Reverend Mother John Daly played in the building’s establishment. Of note, de Jong (2009: 27) addresses how Genazzano FCJ was constructed with the intent to bridge the ‘social divide’ and be a school for both the impoverished and the daughters of wealthier families in Melbourne. To this end, the Sisters envisioned a building that was both ‘practical’ and ‘symbolic’. Despite minimal involvement with designing schools since his arrival in Australia, Wardell was aptly suited to realise this vision when his services were engaged in either late 1888 or early 1889. Unfortunately, no clear record exists as to how Wardell was introduced to the Sisters.

With the ongoing economic depression throughout Melbourne in the late nineteenth century, this vision was repeatedly jeopardised, as the FCJ Sisters encountered difficulties funding the building. In this regard, the written correspondence between Wardell and Reverend Mother John Daly, which is the focus of Chapter 2, ‘May God grant that light will arise out of this darkness...’, provides a rich insight...
into the relationship between the two central figures. Even as the Sisters were dependent on Wardell’s guidance and leniency regarding payments, the letters also reveal how Wardell was dependent on the Sisters obtaining the necessary funds to realise his own vision. Whilst Wardell took great pains to explain the contractual obligations and possibilities for financing, the frustration and even a hint of anxiety is evident from Wardell when the Reverend suggests alterations to the design, including omitting the second floor and various ornaments. Wardell was adamant that such suggestions, if implemented, would be “ruinous to its effect and appearance” (de Jong 2009: 14).

The story of how the Sisters obtained the finances to continue with the construction, as Wardell intended, is a major preoccupation throughout the publication. Besides placing heavy reliance on the written correspondence that occurred from Wardell to Mother Daly, de Jong also refers to oral accounts that have been passed down through generations of FCJ Sisters. These oral accounts, along with extensive research with FCJ in the United Kingdom, allow de Jong to piece together how the Sisters funded the building. It is revealed that the Sisters obtained funds from the FCJ Sisters in the UK, in part through the mortgaging of a Convent.

The incorporation of oral accounts as a valid historical source is interesting, considering the debates surrounding its usage. Regarding this, the author addresses the concerns that oral accounts are dependent on retrieved, subjective memories, but nonetheless includes them within the text due to the “collective memories” of the Sisters generating “common threads” (de Jong 2009: 80). In effect, de Jong challenges what feminist historian, Judith Allen (1986: 176-177), refers to as the discipline’s masculine focus, whereby oral history is dismissed as lacking credibility and primary sources, including written accounts, are prioritised. For Allen, oral accounts enable the lives of women, who historically have been absent from written accounts, to be documented. This is likewise the situation with the FCJ Sisters, where only Wardell’s letters survive the passage of time and oral accounts are required to fill the historical gaps of struggle and determination. This incorporation of oral accounts only seems appropriate in a publication which documents and celebrates the achievements of the FCJ Sisters of Kew and the educational aspirations for its female students.

Whilst the building has been “silently present” throughout its existence in the FCJ community (de Jong 2009: 143), the author’s latest publication enables Wardell’s Genazzano FCJ to exit the silence. de Jong gives full voice to the design and construction process, together with what inspired the building and the struggle to realise it. Moreover, de Jong, once again, demonstrates what T.A. Hazell refers to as Wardell’s “refined appreciation of the past and a confident vision of the future” (de Jong 1983: 3). The vision of both the Sisters and Wardell continues to be realised, with Genazzano FCJ remaining a celebrated educational institution and community one hundred and twenty years since it was first established.

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Broken Hill: A Guide to the Silver City

Vines, Elizabeth

City of Broken Hill, Broken Hill, 2010

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Broken Hill, as members of ICOMOS and TICCH will attest, has a rich heritage. The silver, lead and zinc lode (now known simply as the ‘Line of Lode’) discovered in 1883 proved to be unlike many Australian mining prospects; it was phenomenally rich! In fact it is still being mined over 120 years later. Such was the success of mining that the influence of Broken Hill spread well beyond the limits of the Barrier Ranges to hydro-industrialisation in Tasmania, timber milling in the north coast of NSW, steel in Newcastle, smelting in Wales and beneath Hill 60 in Belgium.

Around the mines a town grew. Notorious in its early years for its ramshackle nature and poor living conditions, Broken Hill later transformed by the coming together of Union pressure and industrial welfarist policies into a neat city with gardens and sports fields.

Facing the challenge of declining mining activity, Broken Hill City Council has been working to conserve its heritage in order to attract tourists as an economic alternative to mining. Liz Vines was appointed as a heritage advisor to Broken Hill City Council as part of the then NSW Heritage Branch’s program of funding heritage advisors across NSW. It is well known that her work as a heritage advisor has made a significant contribution towards preserving Broken Hill’s heritage.

In writing Broken Hill: A Guide to the Silver City, Liz Vines has taken this heritage work one step further and has presented a very attractive view of the heritage of Broken Hill for the visitor. This is not a history of Broken Hill along the lines of Blainey and others, nor is it a technical discussion of the mining industry. In the historiography of Broken Hill it stands as an informed guide to the town in the footsteps of Curtis’s 1908 work and as a worthy replacement to Greg Drew’s 1991 guide The Silver Trail.

What first grabs the reader’s attention is the design and illustrations. From the eye-catching reproduction of Sam Byrne’s North Mine to the mixture of contemporary images by Bruce Tindale and historical images. In particular, there are numerous ‘then and now’ illustrations which are subtly presented allowing the reader to draw comparisons and wonder why the changes occurred. The historical illustrations...
are reproduced with attention to detail and clarity so that they are actually readable (unlike too many other publications).

The text accompanying the photos provides a basic but well-informed introduction to the history and heritage of Broken Hill. It is difficult to strike a balance in a work of this size between the superficial and the detailed treatment of Broken Hill’s history. Some might prefer a bit more contextual information, particularly on the housing, the poor quality of which was seen as a major problem in the period c1900-1940. Similarly, there is no mention of Herbert Hoover, despite the critical role he played in the operationalisation of the froth flotation process and the success of the Zinc Corporation. But maybe this is too specific for a work that is attempting to paint a broad picture. There is a short bibliography for those wanting to explore Broken Hill’s history further.

The book also includes sections on the heritage programs at Broken Hill which are illustrated with a series of interesting before and after shots of conserved and reused buildings. The extensive arts program is also covered, again with a series of excellent illustrations.

The suggested tours focus on the built heritage, largely because the mining heritage is mostly still in operational areas and therefore not accessible for tourists. There are tours of the central city and, in a very useful pamphlet, tours of the broader area of Broken Hill are set out. Curiously there is little mention of Broken Hill’s parks and gardens such as the Zinc Lakes, which are not only historically important but restful places for the visitor.

There is so much to see and enjoy at Broken Hill and Liz Vines and Bruce Tindale have really done the heritage of Broken Hill proud.

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**Cultural Diversity, Heritage and Human Rights: Intersections in Theory and Practice**

*Michele Langfield, William Logan and Máiréad Nic Craith (eds)*

*Routledge, London, 2010*

ISBN 10:0-415-5637-4

RRP $43.95

This is a worthy but sad book. Voltaire’s Dr Pangloss’ repeated and delusional ‘it’s all for the best in the best of all possible worlds’ kept coming to mind. One could imagine a university exam: ‘Consider the destruction of the Buddhas of Bamiyan by the Taliban, the intersection of cultural values and the role of competing cultural diversity and human rights law in theory and practice. Take Pangloss’ position, discuss’.

The book summarises the existing international legal framework on the protection of cultural heritage as a human right and is honest in title and content dealing with theory and practice in a sensible way. Having arguably Australia’s most distinguished academic lawyer in the field of human rights, Professor Hilary Charlesworth, ‘set the scene’ is a real coup.

The UNESCO Convention on the Protection and Promotion of the Diversity of Cultural Expressions (2005) is the only one that directly addresses cultural diversity. However there are ‘culture provisions’ especially regarding art in other covenants. The *International Covenant on Economic Social and Cultural Rights* and the *International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights* have been interpreted as requiring States to take measures to promote and protect cultural diversity. The principle of non-discrimination, which is one of the foundational legal imperatives of human rights also protects cultural diversity in that governments are required to ensure that all people in their jurisdiction can freely exercise their cultural rights.

The first Chapter by Logan et al. rehearses the background issues well. The authors point out the tensions between individual and collective rights, which lie at the heart of many debates concerning the status of cultural rights as human rights. Their discussion of the notion of ‘outstanding universal value’ in the World Heritage Committee reminded me of personal battles with ICOMOS and UNESCO 35 years ago regarding the logo of UNESCO (a stylised Greek temple), which was hardly a symbol understood by two thirds of the world’s people.

The most optimistic chapter interestingly is that by Jérémie Gilbert, where he notes that human rights law has begun to recognize Indigenous land tenure systems in many states. Nagata introduces an interesting concept of ‘elasticity’ of heritage constructs between conservation and human rights. This seems to be a good way of looking at the dilemmas raised in the rest of the book. But central to any change in the ‘weight’ or ‘authority’ given to heritage issues within the international human rights mechanisms is the perception that the UNESCO treaties are somehow peripheral to the human rights instruments adopted by the UN General Assembly such as the International Bill of Rights. This marginalization has occurred despite the fact that the UNESCO treaties form the *lex specialis* (i.e. the most relevant law) in relation to cultural diversity. Similarly, cultural rights have, until recently, been consistently overlooked within the ‘mainstream’ mechanisms for the promotion and protection of human rights. It is to be hoped that the appointment of the new Independent Expert on Cultural Rights by the UN Human Rights Council will help to remedy some of these shortcomings and even bridge the divide between the different institutions dealing with heritage, cultural identity and human rights issues.

Most of the later chapters deal with specific instances where heritage sites and intangible heritage could, and in some
instances have, played important roles in healing and understanding. But each of the authors of these chapters point out the complexities of doing this. Logan’s Chapter on the Tay Nguyen gongs make particularly interesting reading as it unveils the rapidly changing intersections between cultural heritage, minority peoples’ rights, politics and a range of international protection instruments. But his conclusion ‘Let them decide for themselves’, seems difficult when contemplating the Buddhas of Bamiyam.

Reading this book and reflecting on the 35+ years since the World Heritage Convention came into force one recognises the fragility of the whole ‘World Heritage project’. Is there a better alternative?

I strongly commend the book. An engaging, if not cheering read.

The author wishes to thank Ms Joanna Bourke-Martignoni of the University of Fribourg Law School, Switzerland, for advice.

Max Bourke

Max Bourke is a former CEO of the Australian Heritage Commission and the Australia Council for the Arts.