# An advance sample of **BOOK REPORTS**

for Members and Fellows ofFEBTHE ROYAL SOCIETY OF NEW SOUTH WALES2022

MINIA QUAER

### Announcing New Ways to Connect our Members

WHEN THE ROYAL Society of New South Wales was born in colonial times, most members knew each other personally. They used each others' libraries and shared ideas directly.

Nowadays, as the Society expands, we don't even know the names of many of our fellow members, and our most deeply interesting published work is mostly unfamiliar to them.

With this small preliminary sample of BOOK REPORTS the Society announces its newest initiatives, designed to cross the boundaries of research disciplines, and bring minds together in defiance of the isolating forces of our times.

They include:

- Promoting books by fellows and members to each other
- Responding to suggestions from fellows and members for a bibliography of works they have written, edited or contributed to
- Regularly reporting on books old and new, selected to interest readers
- Offering selected books for sale at money saving members' prices
- Circulating the comments and critiques members write on books being featured.

The Society has engaged the old Sydney firm, Halstead Press, to carry out the tasks involved. This year's inaugural full edition of BOOK REPORTS will deliver the results of the first round.

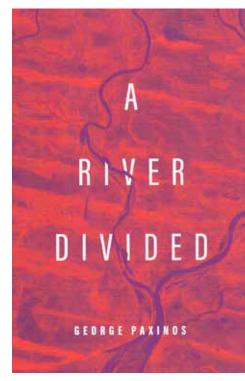
This advance issue is your invitation to participate.

### An Actual DNA Novel

GEORGE PAXINOS DistFRSN is one of the world's foremost explorers of the brain, and author of 58 scientific books, including The Rat Brain in Stereotaxic Coordinates. It's hardly surprising that his debut novel has been described as "thought expanding", but there are big surprises in its

contents, with forays into suspense and adventure, genetics and neurology, as its heroes travel four continents.

A River Divided—just published Hardie bv Grant in its "Heads and Tales" fiction list—is being translated in several languages for overseas release. Its plot and characters are the work of a very ambitious novelist. We won't tell you whether Prof. Paxinos succeeds or not: but one who believes he has is Anastassios Germenis (member of the Academy of Athens):



Paxinos, in this book, balances like a skilled acrobat over the cognitive and emotional convergence of the three cardinal coordinates of culture: science, religion and social organization. He is an acrobat without dogmatism, with the freedom that science affords to those who have managed to see its architecture from the inside . . .

**A RIVER DIVIDED** by George Paxinos Paperback. 372 pages plus gatefolds, 233mm x 150mm. Members' price \$25

### Three Decades of Newspaper Illustration

MY COLUMNS . . . are inevitably about intellectual concepts, even models of key relationships. Which, I've often thought, must surely be a challenge for any illustrator. Some artists struggle and need hints and reassurance . . . The best however are those who possess more imaginative, wider-ranging, less literal, even more playful minds.

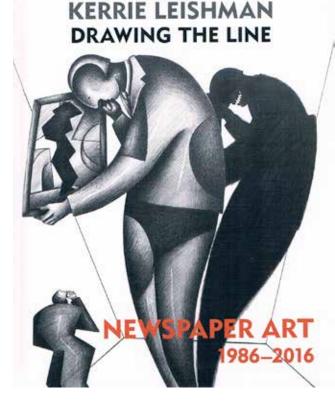


\*COTON FRATE, EVT TROUBLE LOOH sentime promoved by Research and the sentime to be sentimelable to the sentimelable to the sentimelable to the sentimel Ross Gittins FRSN

Ross Gittins is one of the Royal Society fellows among an array of favourite writers whose work has been illustrated in *The Sydney Morning Herald* and the *Financial Review* by Kerrie Leishman. This stylish volume brings together her best work with a selection of extracts and comments from the writers.

In this example from 2008, Gittins and Leishman foresaw economic woes while economists were predicting happy days.

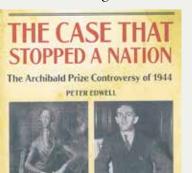
**DRAWING THE LINE: NEWSPAPER ART 1986–2016** by Kerrie Leishman. Hardback. 128 pages + endpapers, 236mm x 192mm. Members' price \$32



### Australia's Biggest Art Scandal

IN THE 100 YEARS of the Archibald Prize, 1944 stands out. While Australians fought desperately in New Guinea, and German resistance was collapsing round Leningrad, a legal battle about portraits captured headlines nationwide.

William Dobell won the world's richest portrait prize with a radical image of his dear friend Joshua Smith, and one



Les relations general d'alors francés les relations d'alors de la construcción de la cons of the losers, Mary Edwards, exploded in rage. She briefed Garfield Barwick QC, Australia's future Chief Justice, to get the award overturned in the Supreme Court. The scandal which brought hundreds of thousands of spectators to the Art Gallery of NSW also embroiled leading figures in the media, the law, politics and the art world. *The Case that Stopped a Nation* is a rivetting blow by blow account. The illustrations are eye catching, including a previously unpublished and unexhibited Dobell study of Smith.

Unsurprisingly, Mary Edwards has gone down in cultural history as an arch villain. She was Peter Edwell's great aunt; but he doesn't evade the shabbiness of her behaviour. Like everyone involved in the complex tale, however, she emerges as a complex figure acting on complex motives. Some of the contentious issues are still revisited in the modern Archibalds—happily with less acrimony than in 1944.

#### THE CASE THAT STOPPED A NATION: THE ARCHIBALD PRIZE CONTROVERSY OF 1944 by Peter Edwell.

Hardback. 232 pages + endpapers, 233mm x 170mm. Illustrated in colour and B/W. Members' price \$30

### Time to Overturn the Status Quo

HUGH MACKAY FRSN, author of 22 books, won acclaim as a social researcher by seeing challenges and reading trends in data. His newest book observes depression and anxiety brought on by the alienating consequences of a pandemic, and bushfires with all they signify. Readers join a search for the way back to hope, trust and optimism. The thinking behind Mackay's recommendations isn't simplistic, but there is a beguiling simplicity in his underlying remedy: kindness.

He urges readers not to let go of questions we ask ourselves: What really matters to me? Am I living the kind of life I want? What sort of society do we want to become? Pointing to displays of kindness and consideration, sacrifices for the common good, and heightened appreciation of local communities, he asks "Could we become renowned as a loving country, rather than simply a 'lucky' one?"



Most would rather not have been brought to the pass we're in. But for Hugh Mackay it presents an opportunity. He envisages a compassionate, cooperative, inclusive, egalitarian, harmonious country. He argues that the way there is for each individual to live as if we have it already.

This can't be marketed as a novel message. You can get the same thing from the Chinese philosopher Mencius, 24 centuries ago, and inspiring people through the ages who've lived by the light of compassion with glorious results. But eloquent words like Mencius's and Mackay's are an achievement. Even cynics may struggle to deny that *The Kindness Revolution* is the right book for imperfect times.

THE KINDNESS REVOLUTION by Hugh Mackay. Paperback. 272 pages, 232mm x 150mm. Members' price \$21.

### WINNING HOMES

75 AUSTRALIAN HOUSE DESIGN COMPETITIONS



TIM REEVES

# Prize Winning Domestic Architecture

THIS SURVEY, by the award-winning author of 100 Canberra Houses, begins in 1827 with Australia's first house design competition—for a new Government House in Sydney. Architects who entered were annoyed when 1st Prize went to Eliza Darling, the Governor's wife.

The book goes on to feature many well known architects and firms, with house designs for prime ministers, archbishops and other notable individuals, as well as humble cottages. The many photos and plans are a treat, although several pictures from the 1960s suffer from fuzzy reproduction.

It's fascinating to follow the evolution of techniques and styles. Absorbing reading for anyone who lives in a house, and potentially a good gift.

WINNING HOMES: 75 AUSTRALIAN HOUSE DESIGN COMPETITIONS by Tim Reeves. Paperback. 176 pages + gatefolds, 235mm x 215mm. Illustrated in colour. Members' price \$45





THE PEOPLE'S PARK

HISTOR)



A History of the Australian National Botanic Gardens DON BEER

# Gardens and Botanical Research

BOTANY has been one of the main strands of Australian science since Day 1, and botanic gardens have been centres of research since before the Royal Society of NSW began. Three books featured here present botanists and their work, and the magnificent parks and gardens they work from.

MEMBERS' PRICE FOR ALL THREE BOOKS: \$93

# **THE ROYAL BOTANIC GARDEN, SYDNEY: THE FIRST 200 YEARS.** Edited by Jennie Churchill, introduced by Peter Valder. Hardback. 272 pages + endpapers, 268mm x 218mm. Illustrated in colour and B/W. Members' price \$44

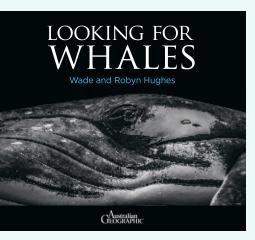
THIS BOOK is such a beautiful object it's worth having even if you're not a plant person. Expert contributors, such as Brett Summerell and Barbara Briggs, have written chapters on their own areas in Australia's oldest scientific institution—collections, research, the Herbarium, botanical illustration, Aboriginal precursors etc. Other chapters review pioneering work of great botanists, like the Cunninghams, Joseph Maiden and Joyce Vickery, along with a good selection of 21st century research. More could have been said on the Gardens' place in the city and the world around them. Otherwise it's comprehensive, and complex—the chronological index is a good idea.

**THE PEOPLE'S PARK: CENTENNIAL PARK** by Paul Ashton FRSN, Kate Blackmore and Armanda Scorrano. Paperback. 192 pages + gatefolds, 218mm x 250mm. Illustrated in colour and B/W. Members' price \$33

ADVOCATES LAMENTED from early times that the primacy of the Royal Botanical Gardens denied Centennial Park sufficient resources and personnel to realise its potential for progress in botany. In fact though, under the management of such scientifically minded directors as Joseph Maiden and George Darnell-Smith, it repeatedly proved its value as a home for test plantings and research in plant husbandry. Abounding in current and historical images, this book also recounts the role of Centennial Park as one of the world's great urban parks, a venue for recreation and celebrating national milestones.

### **MIRACLE ON BLACK MOUNTAIN** by Don Beer. Paperback. 330 pages, 233mm x 168mm. Illustrated in colour. Members' price \$26

THIS COLOURFUL HISTORY of the Australian National Botanic Gardens in Canberra delves into the Gardens' origins, their achievements in research, collection and outreach, and the careers of resourceful and peculiar people who worked there. A detailed and sensitive account of the world's most complete collection of Australian plants, the people who built it and who study it.



### At Home with Whales

AUSTRALIAN WRITER and underwater photographer Wade Hughes has spent more time amongst whales than almost anyone on Earth, resulting in a string of awards for his uniquely revealing photos of whales—whales being themselves in the moods and phases of life. He and his wife Robyn take their cameras to some of the harshest ocean environments, bringing back images of six species featured in this astonishing book.

In the Foreword, whale biologist Prof. Hal Whitehead explains how their photos and observations have transformed understanding of whale communities and behaviour.

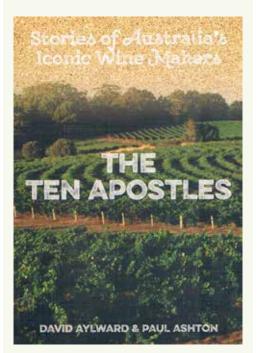
**LOOKING FOR WHALES** by Wade Hughes FRGS and Robyn Hughes. Hardback. 88 pages, 220mm x 245mm. Illustrated. Members' price \$33

# Australia's Best Wineries

IN FAMOUS WINEGROWING DISTRICTS of Western Australia, South Australia, Victoria and New South Wales, Prof. Paul Ashton FRSN and David Aylward find Australia's ten best wineries. Winemakers who care for terroir rather than celebrity reveal what it is about their land, their passion and their practice that makes the best wines you'll find anywhere.

This deliberately provocative book is only of interest to people who like wine. Such readers will be encouraged to test its claim that just ten wineries in a whole continent are really excellent.

**THE TEN APOSTLES** by David Aylward and Paul Ashton. Paperback. 136 pages, 220mm x 152mm. Illustrated in colour. Members' price \$26



### The Halstead Treasury of ANCIENT SCIENCE FICTION



### Ancient Imagination Based on Science

FICTIONAL NARRATIVES in this book, written from a thousand to over 2,000 years ago, come from China, Greece, the Middle East, Japan and Italy. They describe other worlds, star wars, force fields, weird lifeforms, and our planet seen from far away. Its varied treats include a Japanese story of advanced alien visitors, Plato's Atlantis, and science fiction by such famous writers as Lucian and Cicero. They have been chosen (and in some cases translated) by Matthew Richardson MRSN, whose commentaries link their insights to surprisingly sophisticated work by ancient evolutionists, geologists, physicists, anatomists. inventors, astronomers, explorers and philosophers.

There's no introduction. After "contents" you go straight into Plato, which is unusual. An explanation at the end and the commentary following each item do the job instead.

**THE HALSTEAD TREASURY OF ANCIENT SCIENCE FICTION** Edited by Matthew Richardson. Paperback. 192 pages, 215mm x 153mm. Members' price \$20

### Journeys Beyond Science

TONY GREY MRSN is best known for promoting medical research, supporting the arts, and his eminence in the business world. Yet what specially interests him about human beings is their aptitude and craving for spiritual experience that transcends scientific explanations and material rewards.

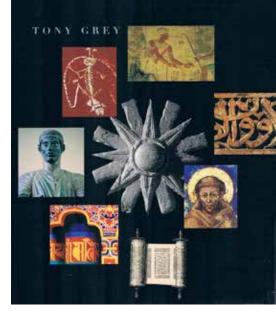
His Seven Gateways is a handsomely presented and thought-provoking travel book that takes readers beyond the secular world to places steeped in historyplaces which engage visitors on a profound spiritual level:

- Indjuwanijuwa in the Northern Territory
- Abydos, Egypt
- Delphi, Greece • the Great Mosque • Assisi, Italy
- the Kingdom of Bhutan
  - in Damascus
- Jerusalem's Western Wall

On the whole Seven Gateways makes very rewarding reading, though it leaves unexplored some issues which sacred sites raise about faith and the psyche. Its greatest strength is in using history, to understand why some sites are so effective in connecting people with their spiritual faculty.

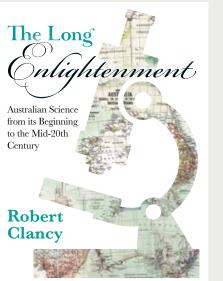
SEVEN GATEWAYS by Tony Grey. Hardback. 368 pages, 230mm x 153mm. Illustrated. Members' price \$48

# SEVEN GATEWAYS



# Roots and Branches of Australian Science

THIS NEW HISTORICAL SURVEY of Australian science by Robert Clancy FRSN is certainly a smart looking volume, with large pages and many remarkable illustrations not found in other histories. The following description of its content comes from the review in Historical Records of Australian Science.



Robert Clancy has included everything, both pure and applied sciences, with chapters on the natural sciences, agricultural science, anthropology, chemistry, biomedical science, geology, surveying, astronomy, physics and engineering.

Under each of these headings, the author provides a brief history of the relevant discipline, as well as short biographical accounts of its more important contributors and a brief summary of their contributions. He finishes the book with some very pertinent criticisms of the present state of Australian science, including the lack of government support for it. He argues that for many years Australia contributed to global science way beyond what would be expected from such a relatively small population. However, Clancy urges, that contribution is now seriously imperilled . . .

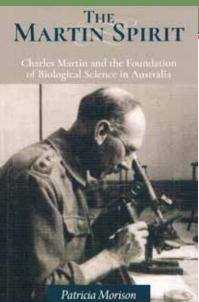
The review concludes: "Clancy is also to be lauded for covering disciplines, such as agriculture and engineering, that tend to be overlooked in the history of science."

The reviewer, Peter Hobbins, is not an uncritical admirer, and he points out omissions, including Alfred Selwyn's recognition of Palaeozoic glaciation in Victoria well before comparable findings that the book mentions by Edgeworth David in NSW.

However readers have been commenting on Clancy's remarkably complete grasp of his sweeping subject matter, so it will be interesting to see if many other provisos of this nature emerge. The Long Enlightenment is considered an important work and we hope to extract from other reviews in future issues of BOOK REPORTS.

THE LONG ENLIGHTENMENT: AUSTRALIAN SCIENCE FROM ITS BEGINNING TO THE MID-20TH CENTURY by Robert Clancy. Hardback. 184 pages + endpapers, 270mm x 216mm. Illustrated. Members' price \$38

# Inspiring Lives

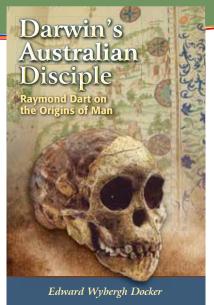


**THE MARTIN SPIRIT** by Patricia Morison. Paperback. 296 pages, 230mm x 153mm. Illustrated in B/W. Members' price \$32

FOR VICTORIES against disease, and for the stimulus he gave Australian science, Charles Martin ought to be a household name. Arriving from London in 1891, he worked alongside J.T. Wilson, Anderson Stuart and other members of the Royal Society of NSW. Discoveries in platypus physiology and snake venom surprised the world, but his most influential achievements are in understanding and preventing infection. He infused Sydney and Melbourne with "the Martin Spirit".

Martin was inspirational in helping young colleagues and establishing women in science careers. Later he joined the CSIRO's myxomatosis campaign against rabbits, and research to improve woollen textiles. This readable digest of his life and work also introduces prominent contemporaries and characters such as Martin's superstitious wife and gifted daughter.

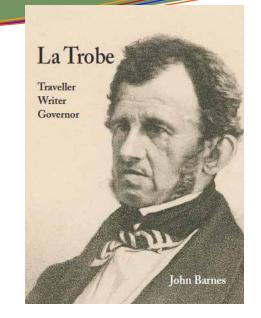
#### MEMBERS' PRICE FOR ALL THREE BOOKS: \$88



**DARWIN'S AUSTRALIAN DISCIPLE** by Edward Docker. Paperback. 160 pages, 230mm x 153mm. Illustrated in colour and B/W. Members' price \$26

THE SCIENTIST WHO REWROTE the origins of the human race was born above his father's fruit shop during the Ipswich floods. Raymond Dart left Queensland to study in Sydney and London with Royal Society luminaries J.T. Wilson and Grafton Elliot Smith, before going to Africa and discovering Australopithecus. Dart's work on evolution established the African origins of mankind vindicating Charles Darwin's idea. A giant in world science, Dart was neglected at home.

Edward Docker's biography surveys his exceptional life and revolutionary work.



LA TROBE. TRAVELLER, WRITER, GOVERNOR by John Barnes. Hardback. 384 pages + endpapers, 248mm x 175mm. Illustrated in colour. Member's price \$45

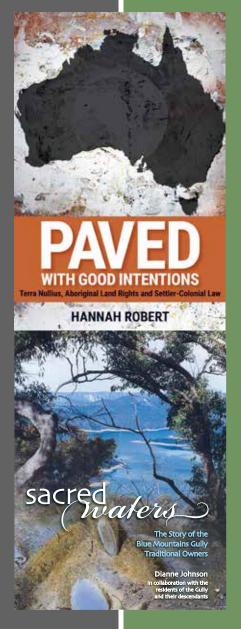
"LA TROBE" in place names, and signs of his influence in parks, gardens and institutions, testify to the travels and explorations of Charles Joseph La Trobe, and the impetus he gave to learning and science in Australia. Yet the man who became Administrator of Van Diemen's Land, and Victoria's first Governor, is misunderstood. "A man of a thousand occupations," said Washington Irving, and a versatile, untypical Englishman emerges from Barnes's research.

Not a man who courted popularity, as we read in his efforts to reserve lands for conservation, to restrain colonisation and, with poor success, to protect Victoria's Aborigines. Because La Trobe examined so much of the world close up, and came from a large and unusual family, this biography carries a great deal of information. It makes a handsome, if weighty, volume, enlivened by La Trobe's own evocative water colours, and extracts from notebooks.

# Re-inventing Land Rights

GENERATIONS before "Terra Nullius" and longer still before Mabo, Aboriginal land rights were built into the instructions for colonists, especially to Victoria and South Australia. Fine phrases meant nothing in the face of an onslaught of settlers. Law lecturer Hannah Robert prises apart processes which reinvented colonial thinking and redefined words, to obliterate rights and drive Aborigines to the margins: the way colonists exploited humanitarian rhetoric developed by England's anti-slavery movement, to oust Aboriginal claims; how they reinvented property law and exploited economic theory to secure their own title.

**PAVED WITH GOOD INTENTIONS** by Hannah Robert. Paperback. 176 pages, 230mm x 153mm. Illustrated. Members' price \$29



# The Valley Peoples' Story

THIS BOOK is both a careful environmental history and the moving story of the Aboriginal people in a unique and beautiful part of Australia. The Burragorang Valley is now profoundly changed by flooding for the Warragamba Dam. But the valley's Gundungurra people, and the Darug people of the lower Hawkesbury maintain traditions of the submerged land and memory of encounters with white settlers as long ago as convict times.

The late Dianne Johnson's success in detailed reconstruction was based on prodigious archival research and personal connections—which won Sacred Waters the NSW Premier's History award.

**SACRED WATERS** by Dianne Johnson. Hardback. 240 pages + endpapers, 282mm x 210mm. Illustrated. Members' price \$57

### "Practical Solutions for a Habitable World"

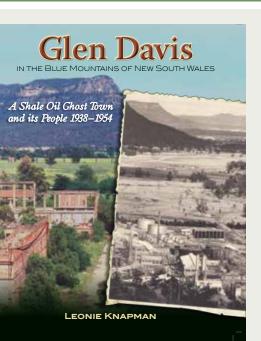
As THE WORLD experiences catastrophic bushfires, hurricanes, storms and floods at an ever-increasing rate, the effects of our changing climate become harder to ignore. But is it too late to act? How did we get here and what can we realistically do about it?



**Planet of the Trees** explains the consequences of increasing greenhouse gasses and how we can take advantage of humanity's potential allies, trees. The climate has fluctuated a great deal over the aeons, and life has adapted or perished.

Aimed particularly at "climate alarmists and deniers," this book may not have much information that is new to experts, but Halkett's probing hypotheticals together with his exploration of natural systems in an urbanised world make it an intriguing read for the inquisitive mind.

**PLANET OF THE TREES** by John Halkett Paperback. 176 pages, 230mm x 153mm. Illustrated in colour. Members' price \$31



### An Industrial Ghost Town

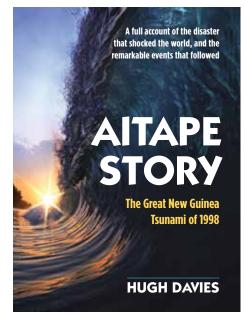
MASSIVE RUINS tower above the scrub of the remote and inaccessible Capertee Valley of NSW, like an ancient city in the jungle. This big, richly illustrated book recaptures life on the bustling streets of 60 years ago, and paints vivid pictures of fire-belching furnaces and noisy worksites. Hours from cities and towns, the beautiful, isolated setting of Glen Davis was once the incongruous home of Australia's largest oil refinery.

Leonie Knapman reconstructs the town, and draws the characters of a bygone time.

**GLEN DAVIS** by Leonie Knapman. Hardback. 272 pages, 282mm x 215mm. Illustrated. Members' price \$57

### Diving into the Tsunami

THE PAST 25 YEARS have brought three massive tsunamis, each taking thousands of victims, to remind the world that natural disasters are as dire as ever. Books that have followed give gripping accounts for general readers of the Boxing Day and Fukushima disasters, but Aitape Story offers more: a scientist's explanation and testimony of the first and closest of the three tragedies—a humane, comprehensive and unsensational treatment which

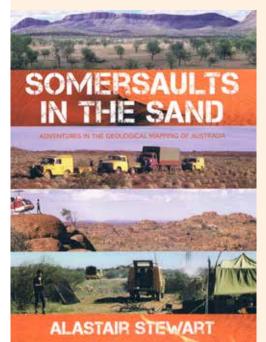


takes in the seismic origins, relief efforts and long-term ramifications as well as the disaster itself. Amongst the abundant illustrations are homely but haunting pictures by local artists of the natural savagery they witnessed. Prof.

Hugh Davies, of the ANU's Research School of Earth Sciences, was one of the first geologists on the scene, talking to survivors when chaos reigned. He tells of the day itself, and the unlucky people along the New Guinea coast, as well as explaining the science, describing the relief effort, the rebuilding and the ramifications.

**AITAPE STORY: THE GREAT NEW GUINEA TSUNAMI OF 1998** by Hugh Davies. Hardback. 200 pages, 255mm x 190mm. Illustrated in colour. Members' price \$34

# **Pioneering Geologists**



THE ILLUSTRATED STORY of people who went deep into remote Australia to make the resources boom possible. Alistair Stewart is one of the geologists who reached places only known to Aborigines, completing maps for the first time for the Bureau of Mineral Resources. He vividly recalls months living in a swag, escaping hazards, unlocking the mysteries of ancient rocks-a world of extremes and run ins with four wheel drives, helicopters, wild creatures, and crackpots.

**SOMERSAULTS IN THE SAND** by Alastair Stewart. Paperback. 160 pages, 250mm x 190mm. Illustrated in colour. Members' price \$29

### Looking Forward to Looking Backwards

BOOKS DUE FOR PUBLICATION in 2022 that we're expecting to feature in future BOOK REPORTS include some important forays into history. One of them is Anne Coote's keenly anticipated history of the Royal Society of NSW, and its precursors, from colonial beginnings to World War I. We understand it is a richly illustrated book which follows the collaborations of many of the leading scientists and thinkers in New South Wales.

Meanwhile *The Possibly True Story of Martin Gardiner* by Graeme Cohen FRSN is already well advanced towards its publication. In late colonial times Martin Gardiner was Australia's most published mathematician and a prominent member of the Society. He was no saint though, and if Graeme Cohen has written a warts and all account it will make more interesting reading than an encomium.

That question of how forthright a historian has to be with disagreeable material will be one of the issues raised in *The History Industry*—a collection edited by Paul Ashton FRSN and Paula Hamilton, also due early in the year. Each chapter surveys a facet of history in Australia, such as museums, public history, publishing, and universities. Members of the Society are amongst the contributors, and the chapter on digital media is by Tim Sherratt, whom some members will remember for his pioneering work in the Australian Science Archives Project.

Prices still aren't available, so we're not yet taking orders for these forthcoming publications. We aim to secure stock to offer this year in BOOK REPORTS.

### Get your Book into BOOK REPORTS or the Bibliography

BETWEEN THEM, MEMBERS of the Society have written thousands of books, but so far there's no list we can go to to find out what they are. To remedy this we need everyone to return the Book Information Form, sent out with BOOK REPORTS, and also available online.

This will enable the Society to compile an RSNSW Bibliography of books written, edited and contributed to by members. Send in as many forms as you need, by post, email or online. if you can't fill in every box, it doesn't matter. From this information, some titles will be selected to feature in BOOK REPORTS. That selection will be guided by various factors, including availability of stock to offer at members' prices, and current general interest to members.

### Contribute to BOOK REPORTS

We don't want to fill BOOK REPORTS with puffery from publishers, "a page-turner", "must read!" and so on. Instead, members who know the book can give us their comments to publish with names—as brief reviews, critiques, accolades, questions to the author, and so on.

Please don't hold back, and start if you like with books featured in this advance sample. Any that elicit a response have better chances of reappearing in the next issue. And if we haven't included a book you believe deserves attention, let us know with some written comments.

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### *Receiving* BOOK REPORTS

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If you'd like to receive the paper edition, please let us know the right postal address.

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