

Small group tour of Melbourne

Reading List

Cry Me A River: The Tragedy of the Murray-Darling Basin

by Margaret Simons

The Murray-Darling Basin is the food bowl of Australia, and it's in trouble. What does this mean for the future - for water and crops, and for the people and towns that depend on it?

In *Cry Me a River*, acclaimed journalist Margaret Simons takes a trip through the Basin, all the way from Queensland to South Australia. She shows that its plight is environmental but also economic, and enmeshed in ideology and identity.

Her essay is both a portrait of the Murray-Darling Basin and an explanation of its woes. It looks at rural Australia and the failure of politics over decades to meet the needs of communities forced to bear the heaviest burden of change. Whether it is fish kills or state rivalries, drought or climate change, in the Basin our ability to plan for the future is being put to the test.

"The story of the Murray-Darling Basin ... is a story of our nation, the things that join and divide us. It asks whether our current systems - our society and its communities - can possibly meet the needs of the nation and the certainty of change. Is the Plan an honest compact, and is it fair? Can it work? Are our politics up to the task?"

The Ship That Never Was: The Greatest Escape Story Of Australian Colonial History

by Adam Courtenay

The greatest escape story of Australian colonial history by the son of Australia's best-loved storyteller

In 1823, cockney sailor and chancer James Porter was convicted of stealing a stack of beaver furs and transported halfway around the world to Van Diemen's Land. After several escape attempts from the notorious penal colony, Porter, who told authorities he was a 'beer-machine maker', was sent to Macquarie Harbour, known in Van Diemen's Land as hell on earth.

Many had tried to escape Macquarie Harbour; few had succeeded. But when Governor George Arthur announced that the place would be closed and its prisoners moved to the new penal station of Port Arthur, Porter, along with a motley crew of other prisoners, pulled off an audacious escape. Wresting control of the ship they'd been building to transport them to their fresh hell, the escapees

instead sailed all the way to Chile. What happened next is stranger than fiction, a fitting outcome for this true-life picaresque tale.

The Ship That Never Was is the entertaining and rollicking story of what is surely the greatest escape in Australian colonial history. James Porter, whose memoirs were the inspiration for Marcus Clarke's *For the Term of his Natural Life*, is an original Australian larrikin whose ingenuity, gift of the gab and refusal to buckle under authority make him an irresistible anti-hero who deserves a place in our history.

The Kangaroo Islanders: A story of South Australia before colonisation 1823

by W. A. Cawthorne

Written in the mid-1850s before any official or more orthodox history of the South Australian colony had appeared, *The Kangaroo Islanders* is one of the few colonial novels that represents in fleeting glimpses some of the improvisational and interactive encounters between the colonisers and the colonised on the edges of the island continent.

A remarkable and colourful book, this novel represents life on Kangaroo Island in the period between 1802–1836. Rick Hosking has annotated the book extensively with absorbing historical information and fascinating details of personalities and events, making this new edition of *The Kangaroo Islanders* a delight for both fiction fans and history buffs. And art lovers too, for the book includes pages of many of W.A. Cawthorne's best watercolours, reproduced in colour.

The Birth Of Melbourne

by Tim Flannery

In 1835 John Batman sailed up the Yarra and was astonished by the beauty of the land. It was a temperate Kakadu, teeming with wildlife and with soils rich enough to spawn pastoral empires. With the discovery of gold, the city was transformed almost overnight into 'marvellous Melbourne'. And yet, as Tim Flannery writes, the price paid was environmental ruin and the tragic loss of societies which had flourished on Port Phillip Bay for millennia. *The Birth of Melbourne* includes voices that range from tribal elders to Chinese immigrants, from governors to criminals. Among many others, John Pascoe Fawcner, Georgiana McCrae, J. B. Were, Antoine Fauchery, Ned Kelly, Marcus Clarke, Anthony Trollope and Rudyard Kipling contribute to this biography of our most surprising city.

Yarra: The History of Melbourne's Murky River

by Kristin Otto

It was John Wedge, Batman's private surveyor, who named the Yarra Yarra. In September 1835 he was at the Turning Basin with some Kulin and heard them identify the river as it came over the Falls as, he wrote, 'Yarrow Yarrow'. It was only some months later that Wedge discovered they had been referring to the pattern and movement of water over the Falls, not the river itself. And ever since, it has been the Yarra's fate to be misunderstood- maligned for its muddiness, ill-used as sewer and tip; scooped, sculpted, straightened and stressed, 'cleaned up' to the detriment of its natural inhabitants; built-over, under and beside; worked mercilessly and then bridged almost to maritime extinction. In Kristin Otto's superbly entertaining new history, the whole sorry tale is laid bare. From the creation stories of Kulin owners and geologist blow-ins (and Robert Hoddle's bad-tempered expedition to the headwaters) to the twenty-first-century waterside building boom, Otto traces the course of Melbourne's murky river.
