

## Small group tour of Flinders Island

### Reading List

#### **'Me Write Myself': The Free Aboriginal Inhabitants of Van Diemen's Land at Wybalenna, 1832-47**

by Leonie Stevens

##### **\*Longlisted for The Dick and Joan Green Family Award for Tasmanian History\***

Exiles, lost souls, remnants of a dying race. The fate of the First Nations peoples of Van Diemen's Land is one of the most infamous chapters in Australian, and world, history. The men, women, and children exiled to Flinders Island in the 1830s and 40s have often been written about, but never allowed to speak for themselves. This book aims to change that.

Penned by the exiles during their fifteen years at the settlement called Wybalenna, items in the *Flinders Island Chronicle*, sermons, letters, and petitions offer a compelling corrective to traditional portrayals of a hopeless, dispossessed, illiterate people's final days. The exiles did not see themselves as prisoners, but as a Free People. Seen through their own writing, the community at Wybalenna was vibrant, complex, and evolving. Rather than a depressed people simply waiting for death, their own words reveal a politically astute community engaged in a fifteen year campaign for their own freedom: one which was ultimately successful.

This is a compelling story that will profoundly affect understandings of Tasmanian and Australian history.

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#### **Grease and Ochre: The blending of two cultures at the colonial sea frontier**

by Patsy Cameron

In the early years of the nineteenth century, a small number of European men moved from the river towns of northern Tasmania onto the small islands of Eastern Bass Strait. Taking Tasmanian Aboriginal women as their wives, the Straitsmen set up small-island homes on what became the colonial sea frontier. There have been many interpretations of the result of this blending of two cultures. Did it spell the demise of some of the clans, or, conversely did it ensure the survival of the Tasmanian Aboriginal people? Author Patsy Cameron has made a detailed study of the writings of Boulton, who visited Bass Strait six years before George Robinson, as well as Robinson himself and Stokes in 1839, to find answers to these questions. This book is an invaluable contribution to

Tasmania's historical tradition, focusing attention on the placescapes where modern tasmanian Aboriginal Culture was born.

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## **The Ghost And The Bounty Hunter: William Buckley, John Batman And The Theft Of Kulin Country**

by Adam Courtenay

**By the bestselling author of *The Ship That Never Was***

Just after Christmas 1803, convict William Buckley fled an embryonic settlement in the land of the Kulin nation (now the Port Phillip area), to take his chances in the wilderness. A few months later, the local Aboriginal people found the six-foot-five former soldier near death. Believing he was a lost kinsman returned from the dead, they took him in, and for thirty-two years Buckley lived as a Wadawurrung man, learning his adopted tribe's language, skills and methods to survive.

The outside world finally caught up with Buckley in 1835, after John Batman, a bounty hunter from Van Diemen's Land, arrived in the area, seeking to acquire and control the perfect pastureland around the bay. What happened next saw the Wadawurrung betrayed and Buckley eventually broken. The theft of Kulin country would end in the birth of a city. The frontier wars had begun.

By the bestselling author of *The Ship That Never Was*, ***The Ghost and the Bounty Hunter*** is a fascinating and poignant true story from Australian colonial history.

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## **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.

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