

THE GREAT AUSTRALIAN COLOUR BOOK OF MINAC

Or: *What I've Been Up To Lately And Why I Have Nothing Else In The February 1977 Mailing Of FAPA*

Rushed out by John Bangsund, PO Box 434, Norwood, SA 5067, Australia

oo

6 January This day last year I stopped for a few minutes in Grong Grong, New South Wales, to take some photos of the place for Ursula. A whole year ago: that's pretty incredible. I wrote about this and other adventures for FAPA, but to my shame I realize that I've never sent you the Philosophical Gas in which they appeared (33), nor the two subsequent issues, nor Stunned Mullets 4 and 5. When the November bundle arrives, with its up-to-the-minute address list, I'll send out a post-mailing, promise.

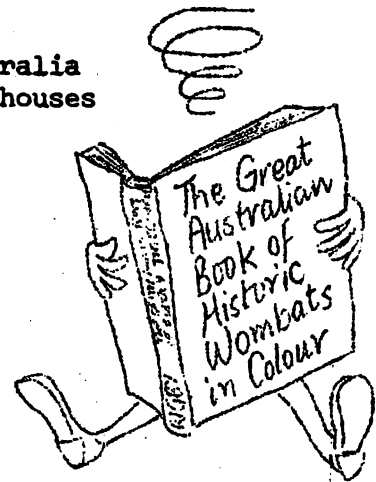
Sally and I indexed a history of Cobb and Co. during the Xmas break, and I've since been working on a book about the Gippsland Lakes. In my spare time I've been researching a little book on Tasmania that Rigby's have graciously, if somewhat skeptically, commissioned, and I hope to get down there before Easter to see what I'm writing about. My other book (you can tell that a man has become a filthy pro the minute he says 'my other book') is a guide to the history, activities, properties and so on of the National Trust of South Australia. It has to be completed, preferably printed and published, by the end of February. To keep me occupied during my meal breaks and while I'm in the bathroom, Rigby's keep on giving me urgent little proofreading and editing jobs.

That, basically, is why most of you haven't heard from me for a while. I guess I understand now why I haven't had a letter from Sam Moskowitz since 1967.

During 1976, quite often I caught myself experiencing the odd feeling that I had been reading an awful lot, far more than I have for some years, but that there wasn't more than a handful of books I could point to and say I'd read lately. There are reasons for this. When Sally and I arrived in Adelaide we had about twenty or thirty books that could be described as 'Australian, non-fiction'. Now there are about four hundred, of which I have read perhaps a dozen from cover to cover; the rest I have at least skimmed, to the extent that I know what is in them, and about fifty I have dipped into at some length. Sally can read three books a day when she's in the mood, and people like Leigh Hyde, I know, can read faster than they can turn pages, but I am strictly a two or three a week man - so all that Australianiana has taken up a fair amount of my book-reading time. The following list perhaps explains the rest of that odd feeling. These are the books I have worked on since I started with Rigby's on 12 January last year. The list is mainly for my own reference, but you may find it mildly interesting.

- T. K. Fitchett: *The Vanished Fleet*
- Frank McManus: *The Tumult and the Shouting*
- A. Sierp: *Colonial Life in Tasmania*

C. P. Mountford: Aboriginal Spirit Children
 Judith Brown: Country Life in Pioneer South Australia
 Valmai Phillips: The Romance of Australian Lighthouses
 Harry Frauca: Adventures with Australian Animals
 C. Ollier: Ayers Rock and the Olgas in Colour
 Jocelyn Burt: Victoria
 T. K. Fitchett: Royal Mail
 E. J. Goodrick: Life in Old Van Diemen's Land
 R. M. Younger: Australia! Australia! vol.2
 A Modern Approach to Garden Composting
 True Australian Air Stories
 How to Make Your Fortune in Australia
 Pictorial History of Cobb and Co.
 O. S. Green: The Gippsland Lakes
Sketchbook series:



Canberra
 Geraldton
 National Trust (Victoria)
 Bassendean and Guildford
 Carlton and Parkville
 Port Pirie
 Southern Vineyards
 Magill
 Sydney Harbour
 Mosman
 Hindmarsh
 Toowoomba

Kensington and Norwood
 Old Victorian Country Pubs
 Cairns
 Ipswich
 Mildura and Wentworth
 Cedric Emanuel's Melbourne
 Angaston
 Richmond and East Melbourne
 Frankston and Mount Eliza
 Southern Vales
 Ballarat
 Historic Richmond

Less than a book a week: that's not too many. But when you consider that in the period from 19 May 1975 to 5 January 1976 I worked on thirty-two books for the Australian Government Publishing Service, and that as well as editing things for AGPS I was their Acting Standards Officer, which meant checking all of the Government Printer's jobs and a fair swag of departmental publications for style, format and presentation (and reading a lot of this stuff simply because I was interested), it will not surprise you when I say that I have learnt more about Australia in the last twenty months than I ever learnt in the preceding thirty-six years. I feel as though I have joined an entirely new fandom - and that I know as little about its subject matter as I knew about science fiction in 1964, when I wrote my first fanzine article. If history repeats itself, I should be starting up a modest journal called Australian History Review before the year is out.

The fact is that history is repeating itself, of course, and I've learnt enough from the last time round not to go publishing a history fanzine. Instead, while there is a market, I shall write modest little books about Australian history, and be paid for 'em.

I grumble a fair bit about my work (ask Sally!), and doing it freelance means I have a lot less time for all sorts of other things I enjoy, but basically I'm very happy about it.

I hope you are the same, whatever you're doing.

Cheers,
 JHB