

pastoral, agricultural, horticultural, administrative, civic and social life of the colony, although tempered by the parlous state of their finances.

Enriching the family saga is a large cast supporting the brothers, including courageous women — wives and daughters — working behind the scenes, bearing, raising and burying large numbers of children supported (or not) by other relatives back in England reluctantly coerced into underwriting their latest venture. Additional minor players include governors, secretaries, newspaper editors, brave sea captains and hard-nosed Quaker businessmen.

Settlement of South Australia had originally been conceived following the ideas of another British Quaker, Edward Gibbon Wakefield, and the book is also in part a history of some of the Quaker families of the early settlement.

The brothers deal with various emotional crises apart from financial worries including their commitment to identify as Quaker, the moral dilemma of the dispossession of the Aboriginal people (“no European could ever do them any material good”, p.227) and family feuding. Their life accounts are interspersed with contributions from cousins, offspring, brothers-in-law and their wives.

The narrative has been constructed from family diaries, letters, newspapers and other primary sources and is rich in detail of the social history of the period. A number of the family in England were writers, and their descendants demonstrate a corresponding facility with language. While Barton’s economic decisions at times seem foolhardy, his words convey a disarming delicacy, as when he describes the economic downturn that ruined him as “a cloud [...] over the colony” (p.155) or his “chequered life [...] very few enemies and many friends” (p.244). Stephen, the Fenimore Cooper reader, while somewhat overshadowed by his big brother, is also passionate and adventurous: “I have made it a rule [...] never to give up a thing while there was a chance left [...] *Don’t give up the ship* is the finest maxim ever was” (p.133).

Chequered Lives provides a powerful lens to look at the early history of South Australia. Galsworthy meets Clavell — alongside the excellent historical research, this book is also a really great read.

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The Whitlam Legacy. Edited by Troy Bramston (Sydney: The Federation Press, 2013), pp. xxiii + 518. AU\$59.95 (hb).

The appearance of a new anthology on the Whitlam government raises the question: when will we come to terms with the Whitlam years? There have been in effect three generations of such collected essays: by “those who were there” (*The Whitlam Phenomenon*, ed. Bruce Grant, 1986); by those whose early political acculturation was shaped by the phenomenon and can’t let it go (*It’s Time Again*, eds Jenny Hocking and Colleen Lewis, 2003); and now by those who weren’t born until after the dismissal (as Troy Bramston concedes). This is to oversimplify: there are familiar names from those earlier cohorts in this collection too, but there’s no doubting the driving impulse of generational succession in trying to make sense of the change, drama, inspiration and mistakes of that era. None of these books is able to escape from the thrall of Whitlam himself: his enormous capacities, equally substantial flaws and gift for theatre mean it’s a story that will continue to run. As Alfred Deakin remarked in 1909: “The mischief is that democracy in Australia [...] insists on attaching an extraordinary significance to the personality of its political leader”.

Each of these books captures something of the historical moment in which they were conceived, each has gems (not least Whitlam's best short account of his own government in Hocking and Lewis). But this latest is by far the most comprehensive and useful in its effort not only to identify what endures from "the legacy" (the sole preoccupation of earlier attempts), to explore cabinet, caucus, the public service and the exercise of power, and to canvass policy in some detail, but also to account for the disastrous misjudgements of that tumultuous administration.

The collection is bookended by Bramston's account of his fascination with Whitlam's history and ascension, and by Paul Kelly's astringent summary of the legacy. Graham Freudenberg provides a marvellous consolidation of "Whitlamism", of "speechmaking as policy making" and of what we have lost as politicians have turned their backs on advocacy and education as integral to their "art". The book's programmatic attention to political style, media and campaigning; the management (and mismanagement) of government; to views from those in cabinet, those on the backbench and those inside the Prime Minister's Office; and then to policy is invaluable. Whitlam himself traversed the policy field in detail in his *The Whitlam Government* (1985), but we needed this corrective. It is only through such detailed attention to policy that one can assess what was pioneering, and what has lasted; it allows, too, for Carol Johnson's measured summation of Whitlam's place in the Labor tradition later in the book. The surprising omission, given Whitlam's concern with the cities, is any attention to the government's innovative approach to urban and regional development.

Notwithstanding the revelations about the dismissal in Jenny Hocking's recent biography of Whitlam (volume 2, 2012), no-one can afford to miss the fascinating additional detail offered here of the interplay between Whitlam (as always, thinking he could simply sail over, or crash through, an impediment), and the equally egotistical (but far more ego-defensive, and hence dangerous) John Kerr. Bob Carr's "I was a teenage Whitlamite" can safely be skipped, and most of the reflections offered by old stagers towards the end of the book offer little that is new, except now for their rueful recognition of how things might have been managed better. But perhaps this is fresh to the Bramston generation, and that is the point.

I am with Freudenberg in thinking that we have lost something vital in the disappearance of leaders who can articulate the connection between guiding principles and policy fundamentals. Political historians should be reminded again of the extent to which Whitlam was a game-changer. I am less persuaded that there is much to be learned that is of contemporary applicability; or that current leaders would know what to do with the "legacy" if there was. The social context, the diminution of our expectations of government, the very ways of thinking about politics have been altered so irrevocably (not least by his Labor successors) that the Whitlam phenomenon is now an historical event: a new paradigm for social democracy is yet to be found.

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Australia and the Vietnam War. By Peter Edwards (Sydney: NewSouth Publishing, 2014), pp. xxvii + 338. AU\$49.99 (hb).

Peter Edwards brings to Australia's role in the Vietnam War an expertise and perspective born of his position as official historian, as general editor of the nine volumes in the official history series on Australian involvement in the Southeast Asian conflicts, 1948-75, and as author of the two volumes that cover strategy and