

confessed, unfit, fogies (Dr. Allen among them), since the entire group completed a circuit of the reserve. Stretching from sea-level to hill-crest, the reserve offers a range of habitats, and with its potential for succession to mature forest may develop into an important forest reserve. It also has the potential to support a wide range of bird species, and, given its proximity to other large areas of native forest, may be important in enriching the avifauna of the hills to the north of Dunedin. Orokonui and the neighbouring areas of forest would certainly suit an avian cacophony in addition to the chirpings of assorted nature-trippers.

Footnote. Our circumnavigation of the Orokonui Reserve involved a walk (some skipped) down an unformed ‘paper road’ on the western side of the reserve. The DCC Planning Department have confirmed that the public do have legal right of access down this road. However, it would be courteous to inform the landowner, Mr E Davis, before you cross his land, especially as the route is close to his house. – *Ed.*

Book review

Gum

The story of eucalypts and their champions

by Ashley Hay

Published in 2002 by Duffy & Snellgrove, NSW (275 pages)

The subjects of the book are the trees, ubiquitous in Australia, which were collected by Daniel Solander and Joseph Banks in 1770 and given the name gum trees because they “oozed a thick, sticky resin”. Banks failed to publish the descriptions of the gum trees and it was not until 1786 that the name *Eucalyptus* was coined by the amateur French botanist Charles Louis L’Héritier. The genus name refers to the cap (calyptra) on the gum nuts that covers the flower bud. The complexity of eucalypt taxonomy is mentioned, although we are spared the details and instead readers are given many interesting facts about gum trees. One such example is that Italian monks created a eucalypt liqueur called *Eucalitano* to celebrate the draining of a marsh by a blue gum plantation (*Eucalyptus globulus*) at the monastery at Tre Fontane.

Hay describes how initially gum trees were considered ugly by the colonists, but soon their unfamiliar form became recognised as majestic and beautiful. A personal history of the eucalyptographers provides little known information including how Mueller was progressively ousted from the Botanic Gardens in Melbourne that he had helped to establish. May Gibbs personalized eucalypts through the gumnut baby cartoon characters, Snugglepot and Cuddlepie. Through her stories, Gibbs also educated

Arlene McDowell

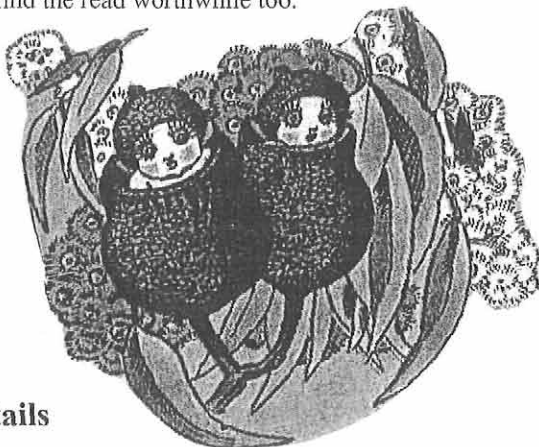


children about the flora and fauna of the Australian bush and the importance of conservation. Conservation is also raised with the issue of logging old-growth eucalypt forest in the Styx Valley in Tasmania.

The language used was non-technical and accessible, although sometimes the writing style was a little awkward because of long sentences. A useful (and diverse) bibliography of works that have been directly quoted is included. Hay also acknowledges the people she consulted in the preparation of the book, however I am aware of some prominent eucalypt scientists who were not included. The book is not a complete treatment of all those who have been involved with eucalypts, however I don't think that was the aim of the author. Hay is a new convert to the magic of gum trees, and has interwoven the many facets of society that involve gum trees – from botany, through art subjects to their utilitarian value as timber. I hope that I have not been misguided in my enjoyment of the book (because it reminds this Aussie of home) and that others interested in botany will find the read worthwhile too.

*Available for purchase from
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(less 10% with a UoO staff/
student ID card).*

*Snugglepot and Cuddlepie,
the gumnut babies
May Gibb, Australia*



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