(pessimistic) banner of Australian history writing. There is much in here to comfort the inheritors of the 'cult of the pioneer' and other celebratory versions of the Australian story.

Peel's clear and lively prose and Andrew Weldon's engaging (if not always historically accurate) cartoons make for easy and enjoyable reading. My only criticism is that, due to its brevity, the reader is sometimes left wondering why, how, or when an event occurred. For example, we are told about the 1975 Whitlam dismissal but not why it took place. Perhaps to overcome this fault, Peel provides the reader with a list of recent works which elaborate on many of the themes and issues discussed in his book. With competing versions of Australian history coming to the fore in recent political debate, Peel's work is timely, providing general readers with an up-to-date and accessible interpretation of Australia's past, thereby enabling them to challenge those who seek to legitimise ideas long since discredited. *A Little History of Australia* would make a great Christmas present. Taking approximately two hours to read, the volume could circulate around the whole family in time for discussion over Boxing Day lunch.

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With *Private Pleasures, Public Leisure: A History of Australian Popular Culture Since 1788*, Richard Waterhouse takes us on an entertaining and challenging journey through the history of popular entertainment in Australia. This is not a book concerned with the expression and development of high culture as a manifestation of a national identity (or the lack thereof) in the colonial context. Rather, the book claims to be the 'first comprehensive and overall history of Australian popular culture' (p. ix). In taking on this challenge Waterhouse has overcome a number of obstacles that have so far inhibited a sympathetic and successful study of the history of leisure in Australia. Unwilling to accept culture as clearly demarcated along boundaries of class, divided into high and low culture, and unwilling to accept that the transposition of cultural institutions, values and pastimes into the colonial context produced little more than inferior imitations of the original, Waterhouse examines Australian popular culture as a dynamic process of exchange across time, across classes, between high and low culture and between men and women. In order to facilitate his discussion, Waterhouse deals not just with popular culture, but also deftly interweaves a discussion of traditions and values associated with middle-class and respectable cultures.
REVIEWS

The main question Private Pleasures, Public Leisures sets out to explore is how Australian popular culture was formed and re-formed as a result of its interactions with other forms of culture, mainly British and American. A brief mention of the influence of increased European migration on the cultural homogeneity and self-assured ‘Anglo’ orientation of 1950s Australia is made towards the end of the book. Waterhouse demonstrates successfully that while there was nothing distinctive about the individual elements of popular culture which were drawn mainly from British and American examples, in the Australian context they were reassembled into a cultural web that was both cohesive and original (p. 36).

The other main theme underlying Waterhouse’s discussion of Australian popular culture is the issue of cultural control. From Australia’s days as a convict colony, when popular culture was actively discouraged, to the emergence of (often commercial) cultural institutions such as the theatre in the mid to late nineteenth century, and the introduction of new forms of entertainment such as radio, television and cinema in the twentieth century, figures of authority sought to regulate cultural expressions to suit their own ideas and values about the suitability of certain kinds of recreation, and the purpose of leisure. More often than not, however, attempts by figures of authority to restrict and control certain forms of popular culture (particularly those that involved drinking and gambling) were unsuccessful.

Private Pleasures, Public Leisures is very much a history of white Australia (for example, the cultural influence of the Chinese community during the gold rush era is not acknowledged). Aboriginal culture is consciously excluded, and Waterhouse acknowledges that the focus of his study is on urban rather than rural Australia. The real accomplishment of this book is that it draws together the study of the history of Australian popular culture (which has until now been confined to isolated studies) and suggests a coherent interpretation of the events within the Australian historical context. Largely based on primary research, the assembling of information for this book must have been a formidable task.

Structurally the book is divided into three sections, each of which deals with a separate broadly defined theme. Section 1, which deals with the transfer of English cultural values and institutions to Australia in the period leading up to the goldrushes of the 1850s, is by far the most fascinating as it is (to this reviewer’s knowledge) the first comprehensive survey of Australian popular culture during this era. Here Australian popular culture is examined within the context of the transformation of a set of pre-industrial values due to the emergence of a new set of values and pastimes which were associated with industrial life and urban culture. Section 2 continues this theme and offers a more detailed analysis of the new urban (American) culture, as well as the two way exchange of cultural values between urban working-class and respectable middle-class cultures in the second half of the nineteenth century. Section 3 (which covers the twentieth century) deals with issues of cultural convergence and explores the impact of new forms of entertainment such as cinema, radio and television on the leisure habits of Australians.
The study of the history of Australian popular culture is a field which is only just emerging. In this context Private Pleasures, Public Leisure, is probably not the last word on Australian popular culture, but it is the most comprehensive study in this field to date.

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Scholarly work on the history of sport in Australia has burgeoned in the last twenty years as sports history has moved from the margins of the discipline to being a respected field of inquiry. Sport in Australian History is a useful addition to the field, though it has a number of problems and certainly does not, despite the impressive title, satisfy the need for a comprehensive survey history. Sport in Australian History is part of Oxford University Press' 'Australian Retrospectives' series, which seeks to introduce important issues in Australian history to a non-specialist readership. For their part, Adair and Vamplew state that their aim is to stimulate debate about Australian sport in the past, present and future, a debate which they suggest has been hindered by the fact that 'sport has been widely viewed as a subject neither requiring nor deserving academic interest in Australia' (pp. xii-xiv). Given that the study of Australian sports history has supported a respected academic journal since 1984, that sports history is now taught in many universities, and that the number of publications in the field is substantial, such a claim is open to question. But more is still to be done, and bringing issues in Australian sports history to a wider audience in the interests of better-informed debate is laudable.

The authors begin with an assessment of the distinctiveness of Australia's sporting past, arguing that even though Australian sport does have some of its own distinctive features, some of the myths about Australian sporting history need to be dismantled; such as the common belief that sport in this country has always been egalitarian, and the myth that Australians are uniquely enthusiastic about sport. They certainly have valid points to make in attacking these myths, but the simplistic strategy of demolishing historical myths in order to tell a more accurate story is used to excess throughout the book.

There are two principal dangers in such an approach. The first is that the authors sometimes appear to set up non-existent mythologies to enable them to tell the 'real' story. For example, they suggest that popular mythology has it that there was once a golden age of sportsmanship, fair play and gentlemanly player and spectator behaviour which has disappeared in the modern era. Such a myth may once have existed, but I think that most people who take even the most passing interest in sport are somewhat better-informed than Adair and Vamplew would have us believe. Indeed, the recent efforts of football, rugby and cricket