Having a ‘Themes’ section sets up the editors as a target for people to say, ‘But why wasn’t such a subject included?’ Rather adroitly, in his introduction to that section, Holden anticipates this charge by pointing out areas in which historians have hitherto ignored important links between the church and the wider society or at least understated their importance. Perhaps one clue to future study is provided ‘outside the book’, by Stuart Macintyre, who states in his Concise History of Australia that the ‘churches emerged in the late twentieth century to care for many of the casualties the state had abandoned and to help articulate the residual social conscience’. That massive task awaits its historians.

Anglicanism in Australia is not by any means the complete history of the Anglican Church from the First Fleet to the twenty-first century. The music of the church is one very large gap for a start. It is, on the other hand, indispensable to historians working in a wide range of fields as well as being of great interest to all members of the Anglican communion.

RICHARD TREMBATH
University of Melbourne


Of the four sesquicentennial commemorative books published by Melbourne University Press, Richard Selleck’s The Shop: The University of Melbourne 1850-1939 is the work of greatest significance. It serves as a follow-up to Geoffrey Blainey’s informative centenary history published in 1953. It also sits alongside Carolyn Rasmussen and John Poynter’s A Place Apart. The University of Melbourne: Decades of Challenge published in 1996: both are key recent histories of the University. Selleck’s depth of analysis and ability to provide a wide breadth of historical context are the two most startling features of this book. Clearly, here is a person with an intimate knowledge of the institution but one who has been at arms length for a sufficient length of time (he is currently an Emeritus Professor at Monash University, also known as ‘the Farm’) to give an objective account of the University of Melbourne. Even the title of the book, The Shop, taken from the unofficial moniker given to the University by its students, indicates his intuitive feeling for the institution.

Selleck begins the book with a discussion of the University of Melbourne as an Enlightenment tertiary institution, albeit a British one of the Victorian era, replicated in Australia. A considerable amount of time is devoted to discussing the minutiae of the University Council and the tensions that existed between it, the University Senate and various Victorian State governments. Rather than a prosaic account of conservative administrators, what emerges from Selleck’s excellent
discussion of the Byzantine nature of University administration is an intimate account of the triumphs and failures of the University from its inception to the outbreak of the Second World War. Council members such as Edward Jenks and Sir Redmond Barry emerge as alabaster, unsympathetic exemplars of Victorian social and political rigidity. Yet Barry’s central role in the development of the University seems to have been a key to its success.

For Selleck, the University is a powerfully conceived institution inspired by a secular philosophical vision (unlike the Oxbridge universities on which it was otherwise modeled), and a commitment to educational excellence and a sense of universitas. At the same time Selleck leaves the reader with a feeling that many of its laudable ideas were diluted through compromise: through nepotistic academic appointments and through decisions that determined the built environment of the Parkville campus.

Although Selleck is right to highlight the incredible achievement of early administrators in creating such an enduring institution against a backdrop of public ambivalence and financial constraint, his acerbic humour and analytical style means that The Shop is not a piece of sesquicentennial backslapping. Instead, Selleck has teased out stories about the University that explain the institution it has become in the present day. Many concealed themes emerge: particularly revealing is the understated influence of Scottish Universities and Trinity College Dublin in the development and ethos of the University. Another enduring issue is the predominance of the Faculty of Medicine in the administration of the University over a long period time.

There is a fascinating account of embezzlement from the University by the deputy registrar Frederick Dickson, whose massive theft of funds effectively bankrupted it. It seems astounding that the University Council was not aware of such a large-scale fraud. Other interesting themes to emerge include student life on campus and the role of the colleges in shaping its religious and social opinions, and in communicating these ideas to the wider community.

This is an important book that deserves a wider audience than those associated with ‘the Shop’. The historical trajectory of the University is, in some respects, analogous to those of Melbourne and Victoria during the period in question. Often Selleck’s provision of a broader historical context, through themes such as admission of women or access to study and teaching positions, reveals as much about Victorian societal norms as they do about the University itself. This is particularly the case in regard to issues of class and gender; topics that continue to pervade discussions about the cultural status of the University in the present day. The story of Bella Guerin, the first woman graduate of the University, is a revealing one. Guerin and the early female medical graduates were groundbreaking women whose role in the transformation of the University cannot be overstated.

Another key passage of the book is about the destruction of the career of Professor Marshall-Hall, the unconventional Ormond foundation chair of music who lived a bohemian lifestyle, by the University Council. It
indicates the fragility of tolerance and intellectual freedom and the willingness of many who espouse these values to abandon them for other less praise-worthy motives. Hall’s persecution also split the University, and was an early instance of a challenge to academic freedom.

Chris McAuliffe and Peter Yule’s *Treasures: Highlights of the Cultural Collections of the University of Melbourne* is the visual highlight of the one hundred and fiftieth celebrations. Lavishly produced and packed with excellent images from the cultural collections of the University, it serves as a compelling visual reminder of the University of Melbourne’s status as a sandstone institution. This impressive looking book also highlights an all too rare example of the positive effects that private benefaction can have on public cultural institutions.

The nineteenth century photographs of the University grounds make for excellent reproductions. However, more recent innovative features of the Parkville campus may have been included. This book would have benefited from additional modernist and contemporary examples of the built landscape of its grounds, such as the Ellis Stones garden and the recent Sidney Myer Asia Centre. Given McAuliffe’s background as a renowned contemporary art curator, and a biographical sketch that mentions his interest in the relationship between Australian art and punk rock during the 1970s, the paucity of examples of contemporary built cultural landscapes is unusual.

*Treasures* does contain one glaring howler and that is the erroneous reproduction and attribution of the University of Melbourne grant of arms(29). What is provided is a document about Sir Samuel Wilson’s (benefactor of Wilson Hall) coat of arms. The original is also part of the University Archives collections and is readily identifiable by the familiar University crest and insignia. It can be viewed on-line through the University Archives online picture catalogue. Although primarily intended as a coffee table monograph it contains many interesting descriptions of the cultural treasures by an impressive array of contributors. These would have been more readily accessible if an index had been included.

*Treasures* stands as an engaging publication that both confirms and advertises the extensive cultural collections held at the University of Melbourne. Despite its occasional errors, probably the result of time constraints more than anything else, it also provides a snapshot, via its list of contributors, of those involved in the acquisition and coordination of the University of Melbourne’s cultural collections. McAuliffe and Yule are to be acknowledged for bringing such a diverse group of collaborators together in producing this book. Selleck’s *The Shop* is a profoundly researched book, containing over one hundred pages of citation and bibliographical details as well as many interesting illustrations. This thoughtfully written book should enjoy a long shelf life as a key reference work not only about the University but also about Victorian educational, social and cultural life between 1850 and 1939. That Selleck does so in a way that celebrates the achievements of this institution while also acknowledging its limitations is to be admired. While for most historians more treasures are to be found in Selleck’s *The Shop* McAuliffe and
Yule’s *Treasures* still serves as a timely reminder of the evidentiary potential of material culture, and also how exquisite it looks in such a high quality production.

KEIR REEVES  
*University of Melbourne*


These days it is fashionable, when writing or reviewing, to declare one’s ‘personal interests’ in the subject under review, whether one’s personal interests are the possession of AMP shares, or being a recipient of government largesse or whatever. I too shall be upfront and declare at the outset that my wife and daughter both teach young Oromos English and I am disposed to greet the first major study of this people’s experiences in Australia with great sympathy. Fortunately, Greg Gow’s book is illuminating, well written and genuinely moving.

As the author points out early in the book, knowledge of the actual existence of the Oromo, prior to the 1990s, was largely restricted to other inhabitants of the Horn of Africa (8). Even today, the fact that there are approximately two thousand people from Oromiya living in Australia, many in the inner western suburbs of Melbourne, where the author himself lives and works, is probably not widely known. The problematic and disputed history of the Oromo is treated with great care by Gow as he traces, quickly and efficiently, a tragic tale of persecution and exile as the Oromo struggle for their political, ethnic and linguistic identity within a ‘greater’ Amharic speaking Ethiopia. Most recently, this struggle occurred under the appalling Mengistu regime, though his less murderous successors also seek to deny the existence of a separate Oromo culture or polity. The Oromo are exiles in their own country, let alone in Melbourne.

In the previous paragraph I said that the author traced the Oromo history ‘quickly’. This was deliberate for Gow’s is not primarily a ‘history’, though it is highly significant for those studying the modern history of East Africa and its diaspora. As MUP state on the book cover, this study falls into three overlapping categories – ‘Immigration Studies, Anthropology and Cultural Studies’. I would be tempted to throw in ‘Family Studies’ as well for that is another theme which emerges in this book – how a group attempts under conditions not of its choosing to re-establish family and community ties. Indeed, this brings us close to Gow’s central thesis as he describes Oromo life in Australia – ‘Oromo cultural formation in Melbourne is constituted as real through the many acts of linking, voicing and living Oromoness, in which language … enables the transformative articulation of “home” even away from “home” ’ (149).

That quotation comes from the last paragraph of the book which in one sense is a pity for such a succinct statement at the start would have