lay multiple and competing identifications, beliefs and behaviours, which were integral to the convict experience. The pity is that there are so few convict accounts that reveal this. It is because Pybus and Maxwell-Stewart so sensitively used sources that this book is so important. For Australians the convict past is shrouded in myth-history and any book that reminds us of the complex historical reality it actually was deserves a wide general readership.

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Alison Weir is a well-known author of popular royal histories. Having investigated one of England’s most notorious disappearances in The Princes in the Tower, Weir turns her detective skills to what she describes as ‘the most celebrated mystery in Scottish history’ - the murder of Henry Stuart, otherwise known as Lennox or Darnley, on 10 February 1567 in Edinburgh. Lord Darnley was Mary, Queen of Scots’ second husband and Weir’s publishers make the brave claim that this study of events surrounding his murder sheds ‘a brilliant new light on the actions and motives of the conspirators and, in particular, the extent of Mary’s own involvement’.

Mary Stuart remains one of the most enigmatic and controversial figures in British history. While the more recent spate of Marian studies have revised the traditional comparison of the beautiful but silly Scottish queen with the plainer but far wiser Elizabeth I, Mary still tends to be portrayed as a romantic woman constantly undermined and used by others. Although Weir goes to great pains to point out the queen’s generosity, bravery and sporadic ingenuity, her Mary falls well within conventional interpretations. What Weir does challenge, however, is the lingering suspicion that Mary may have been involved in the murder of her childish and vicious husband. Although Weir concedes that Mary was well aware of Darnley’s duplicitous behavior and his probable involvement in the slaughter of her Secretary, Rizzio, ‘the integrity of her character’ precluded her from any involvement in the crime.

Weir dispenses with the eighteen years of Mary’s life before she left the French court in August 1561 in a mere sixteen pages before introducing the various Scottish and English protagonists and mapping out their relationships. The book’s introdutory listing of Dramatis Personae, usefully divided into ‘Protestant Lords’ and ‘Catholic Lords’, proved very necessary when navigating the intricate machinations of Scottish court politics. Weir vividly conveys the ‘hornets nest’ of conflicting interests and power plays that the young widow found herself embroiled in when she arrived in Edinburgh.
Weir states ‘I make no apologies for the long build-up to Darnley’s murder’ and *Mary, Queen of Scots and the Murder of Lord Darnley* is indeed a long, meticulous investigation. The author’s greatest strength is her ability to keep track of individual characters, and reassess material that has been gone over many times before. By combing through, comparing and cross-referencing contemporary diplomatic reports and personal letters, Weir shows that many of the accusations against Mary regarding her adultery with Bothwell and her involvement in Darnley’s murder are flawed. They are based either on the trumped-up evidence of staunch Protestants determined to bring down the Catholic queen or on documents composed after the murder in order to prove her guilt. Weir has attempted to overcome the fact that the Casket Letters, crucial in proving Mary’s guilt, were lost centuries ago, by trawling through the records of Mary’s trial and comparing copies of individual letters in order to highlight her premise that the Casket Letters were forgeries, albeit forgeries based on genuine letters. This conclusion is hardly new in that Antonia Fraser came to a similar conclusion in her 1969 biography of the queen that was republished in 2002.

Such has been the output in Marian studies in the last few years that it is necessary to place Weir’s findings in context. Her conclusion that Mary, ‘one of the most wronged women in history’, was ‘in many respects innately unsuited for the role to which she had been born’ lies somewhere between the judgments reached by two academic historians, Jenny Wormwald and John Guy. In *Mary, Queen of Scots: Politics, Passion and a Kingdom Lost* (Tauris Parke, 2001), Wormwald states that Mary failed as a queen because she was unable to fulfill the central tenet on which sovereignty is based in that she was incapable of ruling effectively. Her conclusion contrasts with that of Guy in *My Heart is My Own*: *The Life of Mary, Queen of Scots* (Fourth Estate, 2004). Guy goes further than Weir, who portrays Mary as an adequate queen placed in an untenable position, to suggest that it was Mary’s ability to rule effectively against all odds and her popularity with the people that made her so dangerous in the eyes of Elizabeth’s minister, William Cecil. Guy points out that by marrying a fellow great-grandchild of Henry VII, Mary legitimately hoped to strengthen her dynastic claim to the English throne. While Weir sees the marriage as being the cause of Mary’s downfall, the turning point for Guy comes when Darnley’s murder puts an end to Mary’s negotiations with Elizabeth to become her heir. Like Weir, Guy analyses the Casket Letters but he goes further than she does to suggest exactly how they were forged. Rather than suggesting that the Scottish Lords were collectively responsible for Mary’s downfall, Guy points the finger firmly at Cecil who he suggests was so obsessed by the threat he believed Mary posed to Elizabeth and the Protestant succession, that he devoted his life to securing the Scottish queen’s demise. While Guy has produced a scholarly yet colourful story punctuated with his own challenging conclusions and lively colloquialisms, Weir, in her determination to ‘leave no stone unturned’, has produced a worthy but somewhat dull book in which her conclusions tend to get lost in a sea of detail.
Mary, Queen of Scots and the Murder of Lord Darnley includes 32 illustrations, notes, a bibliography and invaluable genealogies depicting the dynastic claims of the Lennoxes and Hamiltons as well as the Tudors and Stuarts,

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Anthologies of war writing and travel writing are common. Robin Gerster and Peter Pierce, however, have been perceptive enough to identify the link between war, travel, and Australians’ relationships with the world. This book reminds us that so much of Australian travel, at least until the mid to late twentieth century, was military in character. Rich veins of travel experience, especially that of the mass or average Australians, are available here, enabling the collection to range over the past one hundred and twenty years of Australian travel and conflict abroad. The cultural impact of the intersection between war and mass travel on Australia is the central theme, and the accounts of wartime experience are well rounded by their consummation in the modern battlefield ‘pilgrims’, who arrive on foreign shores as the cultural inheritors of the Anzac experience.

Readers seeking the ‘face of battle’ in this collection will be disappointed: the point is not to find new perspectives on the experience of battle, but to acknowledge that ‘the war experience [has been] a cultural as well as military challenge’ (p. xi). Through their selection of the writings of those who travelled to war—soldiers, nurses, male and female correspondents —the editors have attempted to give a sense of the way in which Australians have been drawn closer to the rest of the world. The structure of the book reveals the development of Australian attitudes, from the insularity and deference of a British colonial society, to a gradual coming to terms with Asia and our regional identity.

Sections on colonial conflicts and the First World War reveal the extent to which travel could reinforce Australians’ negative cultural (largely racial) preconceptions. The pervading sense of racial superiority granted by a British identity is well captured in passages dealing with Australian encounters with indigenous Africans, Afrikaners, and in the First World War, the indigenous people of Egypt, or the ‘Gyppo’. C. E. W. Bean’s cautionary What to Know in Egypt compares unfavourably with the atypical Hector Dinning, who revels, almost defiantly, in the local culture. Selections from the Western Front reinforce how notions of race and civilisation pervaded Australians’ reactions to their travels. They also illustrate the tendency of travel to romanticise the homeland, and to emphasise national distinctions: Joe Maxwell’s account of the