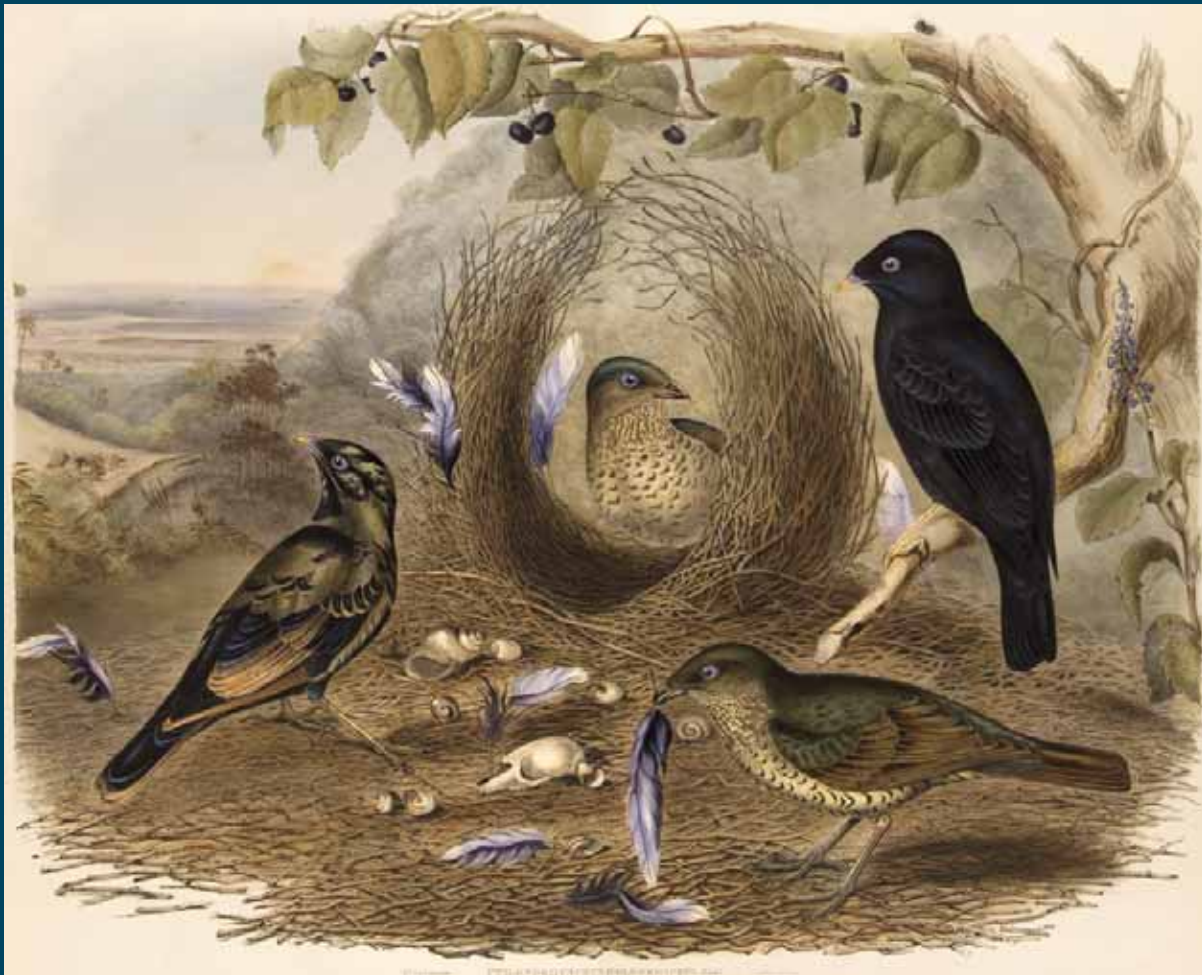


Birds of Australia *Treasures from the collection*



“How rapidly is this fine country unfolding her rich treasures ...of which, indeed, sufficient have been seen to rank her second to none in the interest of her productions.”

(Gould *Birds of Australia* vol 4 within the *Pitta iris* entry)

List of works

1. *Paradise Regained: a 19th Century Glass Bird Dome Case*

On loan from the Queensland Museum

Ornithologists and naturalists are excited by this case with its 25 mounted specimens as the male Paradise parrot (*Psephotus pulcherrimus*) is now an extinct species. A Mr W.J. Daniell who owned a draper's store in Gympie acquired this case in the 1870s as payment of a debt. He believed the birds were all collected in the Gympie area. The case was considered very special and was exhibited in the 1890 Paris Universal Exposition. Around 1912 Daniell's eldest daughter, Ann Mary, brought it to Brisbane and it remained in the family until December 1999 when two of his great grand daughters donated it to the Queensland Museum.

2. John Gould (1804–1881) *Synopsis of the Birds of Australia and the adjacent islands, 1837–1838* John Oxley Library, State Library of Queensland RBQ 598.2994 GOU

This Synopsis was published by Gould in four parts (January and April 1837, January and April 1838) and when bound together has 73 hand-coloured plates. The State Library of Queensland's copy concludes with the eight page paper, 'Description of New Species of Australian Birds' that Gould read to the Zoological Society, London in December 1837. He notes that most of the birds are in the author's collection but as he was yet to visit Australia that, *On his return from his intended visit to Australia these pages will be cancelled, and each species will be illustrated and described in accordance with the preceding portion of the present Synopsis.* This Synopsis is not the *Birds of Australia* (August 1837, February 1838) of which only two parts were published and the rest cancelled.

3–5. John Gould (1804–1881) *Birds of Australia Vols. I-III*

John Oxley Library,
State Library of Queensland
RBF 598.2994 GOU V1

Gould's *Birds of Australia* (1840–1848) is one of Australia's key scientific and artistic documents and was created to be a rare collector's item. Acclaimed as Gould's most renowned production, it has helped to ensure Australia's fame as a location of exotic flora and fauna. The State Library is fortunate to possess this bound set and considers it a very special treasure.

250 copies each with a total of 681 lithographic plates by various illustrators (of which 84 were by Elizabeth Gould and about 595 were by H.C. Richter) and text by John Gould were published in 36 parts between 1 December 1840 and 1848. The intention was that owners would have them bound them as seven volumes.

The John Oxley Library acquired this set from Philip McIlwraith Forrest's large book collection in 1936. Forrest was the son of John Forrest (1848–1911), one time owner of the North Australia Pastoral Company (Alexandria Downs, Inkerman, Woodstock). Philip, a retired grazier, lived at Bowen Terrace in New Farm, Brisbane during the late 1930s and early 1940s. After his death on 14 June 1964, his family home *Chiverton* in Toowong and more of his general collection was sold. State Library staff are working to establish who owned the set before him and where it was bound.

6. Envelope dated 2 July 1842 from John Gilbert to John Gould at 20 Broad Street, Golden Square, London.

The envelope bears John Gilbert's seal. Along the side in what is probably Gould's hand is written *call on Manning [?], Holborn [?]*

& see the *Garden Island Kangaroo*.
In pencil Pres by A.H. Chisholm Sept. 1940.
John Oxley Library,
State Library of Queensland
OM81–100

This envelope is intriguing and the source of valuable new information which has come to light during preparation for this exhibit. Recently Dr Clemency Fisher of the National Museums, Liverpool wrote:

The envelope is from Gilbert's letter No. 11 from Perth to John Gould in London which was mentioned as having been received in a draft letter sent in August 1844(i) but is now apparently lost.

Dr Clemency noted that it is not part of the Gilbert and Gould material which the 13th Earl of Derby bequeathed to the Museum (which he founded).

Articles in the *Times*, London (2 July 1938 and 17 September 1938) reveal how Alec H. Chisholm, who was President of the Field Naturalists Club of Victoria, got the envelope. The first article reports that while Chisholm was at a bird lover's meeting in Middlesex, he stated it was his intention to find out everything he could about Gould while in the UK. The second article, which is not signed but clearly by him, claims the material came from Gould's family via Mrs Edelsten of Streatham and her two grandsons, Dr. G. Edelsten (Hants) and Dr. A Edelsten (Somerset), and would go into Australian libraries. Aside from the envelope, Chisholm gathered key documents including Lady Franklin's diary and documents now in the Mitchell Library, Sydney and the National Library of Australia.

For information regarding the missing letter, see Alec Chisholm's article *The story of John Gilbert* (*Emu* vol 40. 1940, p 168) and *Scientists*

In nineteenth century Australia, a documentary history by Ann Moyal (Cassell, London, 1976 pp 68–70) (i) National Library of Australia manuscript no. 597

7. Letter from John Gould to R. Denny Esq. Dated 15 April 1851 and addressed from Gould's residence at 20 Broad St. Golden Square, London.

Double sided and attached to the front page of Gould's *Birds of Australia* vol 1.
John Oxley Library,
State Library of Queensland
RBF 597.2994 GOU V1

According to Dr Fisher (Liverpool Museum), R. Denny was a taxidermist from Leeds who worked on fleas, ticks and lice. He and Gould corresponded frequently as Denny helped to sell Gould's books including to the Gotts, one of whom is mentioned in the letter. One of the Gotts had written a version of *Birds of Australia* and subscribed to Gould's works. This explains Gould's suggestion to Denny that Gott be told that he needs this *Birds of Australia* as a continuation of what he currently has because perhaps it is more valuable than any of the others. The Mr John McGillivray referred to was a natural history collector then completing his two-volume *Narrative of the Voyage of H.M.S Rattlesnake* that recounted how items were gathered from islands and the north coast of Australia. Earlier in April he had written to Gould asking for two pounds. McGillivray died broke in Sydney.

8. Selection of eight birds' eggs

On loan from the Queensland Museum

9. Squatter pigeon skin (*Geophaps scripta*)

On loan from the Queensland Museum

10. Regent bowerbird skin male and female (*Sericulus chrysocephalus*)

On loan from the Queensland Museum

11. Silvester Diggles (1817–1880)

The Ornithology of Australia

S. Diggles, Brisbane 1865 – 1868, 1870.
Australian Library of Art,
State Library of Queensland
RB 598.2994 1870

This copy has hand painted illustrations.

There is a typed folder adhered to the front endpaper titled, *Companion to Gould's handbook or Synopsis of the Birds of Australia* which is the title of a later book by Diggles.

12–13. John Gould (1804–1881)

Birds of Australia Vols. IV-V

John Oxley Library,
State Library of Queensland
RBF 598.2994 GOU V1

14. John Gould (1804–1881)

Facsimile of *Birds of Australia*

Landsowne, Melbourne, 1972–73
John Oxley Library,
State Library of Queensland
RBF 598.2994 GOU V

This is displayed as a comparison with Gould's original Volume V.

15. Anthony Alder (1838–1915)

***17 Birds of Queensland*, c.1906**

Oil on artist's board, 542 x 425mm, signed LL
John Oxley Library,
State Library of Queensland
Acc 4100

Anthony Alder, who was trained as a wax and plaster caster, first came to Brisbane from England in about 1863 and was in Far North Queensland sketching the following year. Later he returned to London and worked as a taxidermist for the family business, Alder and Co in Islington. His entry won the gold medal for mounted natural history specimens at the 1871 London Exhibition.

Alder returned to Brisbane in August 1875 and operated as a taxidermist first in Queen Street and then in George Street. Alder did consultancy work for the Queensland Museum, illustrated for the *Queenslander* between 1895–96 and in 1907 finally became taxidermist for the Queensland Museum. He made the Aboriginal campsite diorama which was used there until 1985. In 1869 Gould gave Alder a copy of his *Handbook to the Birds of Australia* (1865) and it is assumed Alder collected specimens for Gould. Unfortunately none of the skins displayed in this exhibition are likely to have been prepared by Alder as he died in April 1915.

16. Skins to illustrate the birds in Alder's painting

On loan from the Queensland Museum

- a. Gouldian finch (*Erythrura gouldiae*) male and female
- b. Superb fairywren (*Malurus cyaneus*) male and female
- c. Spotted pardalote (*Pardalotus punctatus*) males
- d. Silvereye (*Zosterops lateralis*) females
- e. Red-backed fairywren (*Malurus melanocephalus*) male and female
- f. Chestnut-breasted mannikin (*Lonchura castaneothorax*) male and female
- g. Scarlet honeyeater (*Myzomela sanguinolenta*) male and female
- h. Redwinged parrot (*Aprosmictus erythropterus*) male

17. Charles Gordon Sebastian Hirst

(c. 1826–1890)

***Australian Birds*, 1875**

Watercolour on paper, 350 x 500mm
LL. painted (dal vero) C.G.S. Hirst, LR.
Brisbane July 1875

On frame: Australian Birds painted from life from the Collection in the Botanical Gardens, Brisbane, Queensland. Green Finch P, Blue Mountain P, Brown Paroquet, Red Bill.
John Oxley Library,
State Library of Queensland

Acc 4567

Born in Yorkshire, C.G.S. Hirst arrived in Sydney about 1870. He described himself as an architect, artist and author and by 1873 Hirst was taking commissions to paint houses, churches or whatever the locals wanted in southern Queensland. While not highly skilled, Hirst's work has a directness that supports his pride in painting from the actual object. Fortunately he labelled and often dated his paintings. Research by Judith McKay shows Hirst lost the design competition for the Mooney Memorial Fountain which is still at the corner of Queen and Eagle Streets, Brisbane. Hirst died in South Brisbane during March 1890 from an overdose of opium. The National Library of Australia, the Mitchell Library in Sydney, the Queensland Art Gallery, Queensland Museum and several private collections also hold his work.

18. John Gould (1804–1881)

Birds of Australia Vol VI

John Oxley Library,
State Library of Queensland
RBF 598.2994 GOU V1

19. John Gould (1804–1881)

Birds of Australia Supplement 1869

John Oxley Library,
State Library of Queensland
RBF 598.2994 GOU SUP

The John Oxley Library purchased this in 1936 as part of the Philip McIlwraith Forrest Esq. collection.

20. Neville W. Cayley (1886–1950)

What Bird is That?

A Guide to the Birds of Australia

Angus & Robertson, Sydney 1931
Australian Library of Art,
State Library of Queensland
RBHMON CAY

Neville William Cayley was the son of Neville H.P. Cayley who had also painted Australian birds but with a more artistic than ornithological cast. After 1925 when his illustrations were included in the famous 1925–26 *Australian Encyclopaedia*,



1



2



3



4

Neville W. Cayley became Australia's best known bird painter. In particular, his *What Bird is That? A Guide to the Birds of Australia* long remained a household fixture ready to do duty on picnics or bush walks.

21. **Gregory M. Mathews** (1876–1949)
The Birds of Australia
 Witherby & Co, London, 1910–1927
 Vol. 6, 1916–17
 John Oxley Library,
 State Library of Queensland
 RBF 598.2994 MAT V6

22. **E.F. Robinson**
Photograph album, October 1918
 John Oxley Library,
 State Library of Queensland
 Acc 6673

This private album records local Brisbane birds and animals and is typical of what a talented amateur photographer could technically achieve.

23. **Neville W. Cayley** (1886–1950)
The Fairy Wrens of Australia: blue birds of happiness
 Angus & Robertson, Sydney 1949
 Australian Library of Art,
 State Library of Queensland
 RBHMON CAY

24. **Penny Olsen**
Feather and brush: three centuries of Australian bird art
 Melbourne, CSIRO, 2001
 John Oxley Library,
 State Library of Queensland
 Q 598.0222 OLS

In 2002 this book won *The Australian's Award for Excellence in Educational Publishing*. Dr. Olsen is

a Visiting Fellow at ANU and in 1997 was awarded the D.L. Serventy Medal for services to Ornithology.

25. **Ruth Venner** (1944–)
Alphabet Bird Book, 2000
 Concertina artist's book folded to form pockets holding coloured photocopies of Venner's illuminated drawings of birds.
 Australian Library of Art,
 State Library of Queensland
 RBHMON VEN

Ruth Venner came to Australia in 1972 and after travelling the continent became South Australia's first calligraphy teacher in 1982. Since 1991 she has lived in Northern New South Wales or Queensland and has exhibited at the Tweed River Regional Gallery, the Nimbin Regional Gallery, the Gold Coast Art Gallery and the Redland Museum, Cleveland. Her work has also been seen in Britain, New Zealand, Germany, Canada and China. In 1996 and 1997 she was included in the Bokugei Pictorial in Tokyo and in 1990, 1997 and 2006 visited China to share ideas on calligraphy with artists and to exhibit her own work. She describes herself as artist, calligrapher, poet and writer.

26. **Mary Newsome** (1936–)
Bird colours on creek scrolls, 2002
 Artist's book published Villa Modeste Workshop, Melbourne
 Based on the artist's book, *A Creeky Labyrinth*.
 ed. 2/20
 Australian Library of Art,
 State Library of Queensland
 RBHMON NEW

Mary Newsome lives in Melbourne but has travelled and studied in London and Paris. She exhibits with Gallery 101, Melbourne. Her work is also in the collections of Monash University Rare Books

Collection, the State Library of Victoria and the Art Galleries of New South Wales, Queensland and South Australia. In 2005 she won the Southern Cross University Acquisitive Artists' Book Award. Newsome became interested in artists' books while in Paris during 1994.

27. **Kylie Stillman** (1975–)
Dusky robin, 2004
 Artist's book
 One paper sculpture, carved into book mounted on white board within a wooden frame on verso of frame: Code: KS 5023
 Australian Library of Art,
 State Library of Queensland
 RBHMON STI

Kylie Stillman was born in Mordialloc, trained at RMIT and still lives in Victoria. She also exhibits in Sydney, Tasmania and New Zealand. In 2006 an Australia Council grant enabled her to use the Council's Studio in Milan. Her work is also held in the special collections of Fisher Library of the University of Sydney, Macquarie Bank and the State Library of Victoria. For Stillman this book's carved-away text creates a tone which mimics the absent creature's markings and plumage which for her is the opposite of illustrations in bird watching manuals. Hence the bird's absence frees the viewer to have a personal interpretation of her artwork. She is represented by Utopia Art, Sydney.

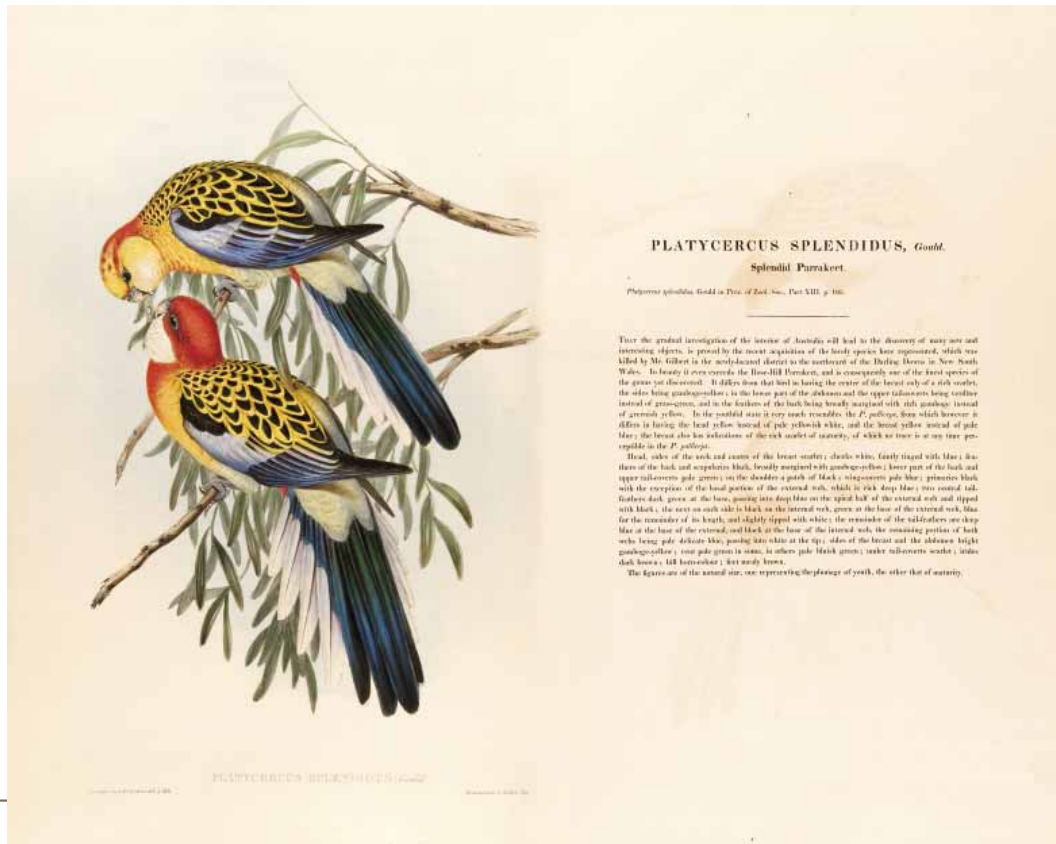
28. **Prepared Albert's lyrebird male**
(Menura alberti)

On loan from the Queensland Museum
 Named for Prince Albert (Queen Victoria's husband), this species is confined to south-east Queensland and northern NSW. Its tail feathers are less developed than the Superb lyrebird and it inhabits a smaller geographical range.

What does an illustration and text in Gould's *Birds of Australia* tell us?

On the lower left hand corner is written J Gould and HC Richter del et lith.

This shows that both Gould and H.C. Richter created the image. Gould did the original sketch, indicating colours and details, and H.C. Richter created the design and hand painted it to Gould's approval. Del is short for the Latin 'delego' to assign or to transfer, et is Latin for 'and' and lith, is short for lithography and originates from the ancient Greek word for stone.



On the right hand page are Gould's notes about the bird.

Platycercus splendidus, Gould, indicates that John Gould was the first to name and describe this bird. It also gives the reference to where he first described the bird as the Proceedings of the Zoological Society of London, Part XIII.

On the lower right corner is written Hullmandel & Walton Imp.

This identifies the company that printed Gould and Richter's lithograph. Hullmandel (1798–1850) was one of London's finest printers and printed the famous editions of Turner's engravings.

For those interested in bird watching

- The Royal Australasian Ornithologists Union changed its name to Birds Australia in 1996. The Birds Australia Southern Queensland branch has a quarterly newsletter, *Rosella Ramblings* and a useful website www.users.bigpond.com/basqld
- The national journal *The Emu* was first published in 1901 and is a leading journal for ornithological research and reviews in the Southern Hemisphere. Online content can be found at www.publish.csiro.au/
- The Birds Queensland website at www.birdsqueensland.org.au is run by the Queensland Ornithological Society and promotes the scientific study and conservation of birds.
- John Gould's *Birds of Australia* can be viewed online through the National Library of Australia's website at www.nla.gov.au/apps/cdview?pi=nla.aus-f4773



Queensland
Government

Key Figures

Alexander Hugh Chisholm (1890–1977)

Without A.H. Chisholm our knowledge of the Australian visit by John and Elizabeth Gould and John Gilbert would be poorer, and the key documents he collected during his 1938 visit to the UK as President of the Field Naturalists Club of Victoria may not now be in Australian collections. These included Lady Franklin's diary, letters between John and Elizabeth Gould, and the diary John Gilbert kept on his fateful 1845 journey with Leichhardt. Chisholm was born in Victoria, and had worked as a journalist in Brisbane, Sydney and Melbourne. He was editor of the *Argus* (Melbourne), the new edition of the *Australian Encyclopaedia* and Honorary editor of *The Emu*, the Journal of the Royal Australasian Ornithologists' Union (now Birds Australia).

Some of Chisholm's publications which pertain to this exhibition are: *Bird Seeking in Queensland: 1770–1922* (1922); *Strange Journey: the adventures of John Gilbert and Ludwig Leichhardt* (1941); *Story of Elizabeth Gould* (1944); and *Explorer and his birds: John Gilbert's discoveries in 1844–45* (1945).

Silvester Diggles (1817–1880)

While little known today, Brisbane owes much to Diggles. Born in Liverpool, he settled in Brisbane after 1854 where he founded the Brisbane Choral and Philharmonic Societies. In 1862 he also helped to establish what was to become the Queensland Museum. He supported himself by teaching music and drawing as well as repairing musical instruments. Aside from music and religion, Diggles' interests were entomology and ornithology. As well as numerous articles on both fields, his major contribution is *The Ornithology of Australia* (1865–68, 1870) which was published in 21 parts, each containing six lithographed hand-coloured plates of illustrations drawn either by himself or his niece Rowena Birkett. In 1871–72 Diggles travelled with the Australian Eclipse Expedition to Cape Sidmouth in North Queensland. It appears that Diggles may have collected specimens for John Gould. To ensure cheaper access to *Gould's Birds of Australia*, Diggles published the *Companion to Gould's handbook: or, Synopsis of the Birds of Australia* (1877) which contained about one-third of the original examples.

John Gilbert (1812 or 1815–1845)

John Gilbert worked as a taxidermist at the Zoological Society of London with John Gould, and in 1838 was hired by Gould to accompany

him to Australia as a collector. Initially they worked together in Tasmania until early 1839 when Gilbert left for the Swan River settlement. Five weeks after arriving in Perth, Gilbert reported to Gould that he had collected 200 birds, 25 skeletons and some skinned animals. His first collection was shipped to London in May 1839 and another was sent before he left in January 1840. After a brief return visit to London, Gilbert was back in Perth by July 1841 and stayed 17 months collecting 432 bird specimens of which 32 were new finds to Western Australia. In January 1844 he returned to Sydney and spent six months travelling up to the Darling Downs where he found the Paradise Parrot. In 1845 Gould named this species *Platycercus pulcherrimus*. The Queensland Museum's collections include a journal, probably belonging to Gould's secretary E.C. Prince, which shows that while Gilbert's salary was £100 per year plus expenses, by 1842 he was receiving 10 percent of the relevant Gould book sales and some of the specimens.

Gilbert had heard of Leichhardt's plan to go overland to Port Essington, and managed to convince a hesitant Leichhardt to let him join the expedition. The group started from Jimbour on the Darling Downs on October 1, 1844. Tragically on 28 June the following year, Gilbert was killed by a flying spear when local Indigenous inhabitants made a night attack on the expedition's camp at the base of Cape York. Leichhardt sent Gilbert's diary and bird specimens on to Gould. Thanks to A.H. Chisholm this diary is now held in the State Library of New South Wales' Mitchell Library.

See H.A. Chisholm, *Strange New World: the adventure of John Gilbert and Ludwig Leichhardt* (1941).

John Gould (1804–1881)

John Gould was born in Dorset in 1804 and in 1824 became a taxidermist in London, a career which provided a good living as stuffed birds and animals were considered refined interests amongst the upper classes. By 1827 Gould had become Curator and Preserver at the Museum of the Zoological Society of London, a job which involved stuffing specimens and placing and describing them within the hierarchical Linnean system of Order, Family, Genus and Species. Gould quickly became an authority on birds and saw most of the new exotic specimens and skins which came into London from all over the world. The term *skin* refers to a stuffed specimen without its skeleton and with its outer surface sewn together.

In 1829 Gould married Elizabeth Coxen (1804–1841), a governess and talented amateur artist. John and Elizabeth began what would be a very lucrative international business. She studied lithography and together they produced and published *A Century of Birds from the Himalaya Mountains* (1830–32) with 80 of her illustrations. In the next few years Gould established himself as an expert naturalist and successful publisher, and played a part in Charles Darwin's findings on evolution. By comparing the specimens Darwin showed at the Geological Society in London on 4 January 1837 with others, Gould found the birds were not wrens as Darwin thought but a new species of finches specific to certain Galapagos Islands. Darwin relied on this discovery in his key report, *Zoology of the Voyage of H.M.S Beagle*, Part III.

Another of the Goulds' projects was the five volume *Birds of Europe* (1837) with 3000 plates. Edward Lear, of *The Owl and the Pussy Cat* fame, had started this but, needing money, sold his plates to Gould. Later on Gould occasionally used Lear as an illustrator. Gould also produced the four part *Synopsis of the Birds of Australia and the Adjacent Islands* (1837) which had 73 plates and showed 168 bird heads.

In 1838 Gould gave up his post at the Zoological Society and headed for Australia. Accompanied by Elizabeth, their eldest son Henry, the collector John Gilbert and their servants, Gould landed in Van Diemen's Land (Tasmania) in September 1838. Gould and Gilbert collected there for several months before Gould left for Sydney in February 1839 and Gilbert was sent to collect specimens near Perth. Elizabeth's two brothers had settled at Yarrundi in NSW and Gould went to visit them and work around the Liverpool Ranges. After briefly returning to Tasmania for the birth of another son, Gould travelled to Adelaide to meet up with Charles Sturt, Surveyor-General of South Australia, who was going down the Murray River. Together they visited the Murray Scrub area, Kangaroo Island and Mount Lofty Range. Gould then took his family to Yarrundi to visit Elizabeth's brothers before returning to London in August 1840. Elizabeth died the following year aged 37 after the birth of her eighth child.

Together with his collectors Gould collected over 800 birds and about 70 examples of quadrupeds. 300 new species were discovered, however some

Before John Gould

were subsequently downgraded to subspecies (although many still keep their Gouldian names). Interestingly, Gould introduced the budgerigar – a corruption of the Aboriginal name – to Britain.

Gould had a rare combination of knowledge, ability and business sense. As a respected naturalist he advanced science and exploited the wonderful possibilities coloured lithography afforded books designed for rich collectors.

As well as *Birds of Australia* (1840–1848) and its *Supplement* (1869), Gould went on to produce many more books including *A monograph of the Macropodidae, or family of kangaroos* (1841–43) and *The Mammals of Australia* (1845–63). By 1866 Gould had at least 1000 subscribers from all over the world for his publications.

Gould had suffered poor health for some years and died in 1881. His collection of Australian specimens is held in the Academy of Natural Sciences, Philadelphia as the British Museum claimed it could not afford to acquire them. Fortunately, the Museum was able to afford the remaining 12,395 specimens (including his hummingbirds) which gives Gould a continued presence in London where he lived and worked.

Gregory Macalister Mathews (1876–1949) Although Mathews was educated at the Kings School, Parramatta, and jackarooed in Far North Queensland, his obsession for Australian birds began during a visit to the British Museum after he and his wife went to live a hunting and fishing life in England. Mathews began to amass a collection of skins and some 5000 books from which he had mastered enough information by 1910 to produce volume one of his *Birds of Australia*. The final twelfth volume appeared in 1927 but two supplements followed. From 1912–1927 Mathews privately published *The Austral Avian Record*. He returned to Australia between 1939 and 1946 and assisted the National Library of Australia in organising his gift of papers and books. Mathews' trinomial naming system to account for geographic differences in species remains controversial but eased the difficulty of reclassifying Gould's incorrectly identified new species as sub-species. Mathews' collection of some 40,000 specimens was second largest to Gould's and, unfortunately as with Gould's, was sold to a collection in the USA. His *The Birds of Australia* is the last of the very large folio colour plate productions to emulate Gould's.

John Gould's responses to Australian flora and fauna were informed by two key philosophical and scientific paradigms of his day. First was the perception that Australia's remoteness and the exoticism of its species could provide the missing links to the Enlightenment's notion of Natural Order. The second was the Swedish naturalist, Carolus Linnaeus' (1707–1778) taxonomy or system for structuring living things into a hierarchical order.

Even before 1500, European thought had positioned Terra Incognita (which became Australia) either as a blessed Paradise where the lost tribe of Israel might be found or an accursed place. This split persisted and even Erasmus Darwin (1731–1802), who was Charles' learned grandfather, concluded that as kangaroos must be a cross between rabbits and rats, kangaroos and, by extension, Australia, were bizarre and unnatural. To some, the plausible explanation for kangaroos and flightless birds was that God had created Australia after the seventh day just to show that he could. Whatever the reason, Australia was a continent that fascinated science, and indeed was the first to be explored for science.

William Dampier convinced the Royal Society in 1699 to sponsor his second voyage and the inclusion of the first trained illustrator to accompany such a trip. Dampier's 1703 account, *Voyage to New Holland*, provided the impetus for Joseph Banks' forceful insistence that Daniel Solander a zoologist, and Sydney Parkinson, an illustrator, accompany him on Cook's first voyage (1768–71). Parkinson was the first to list Aboriginal names of birds and prepared *A Vocabulary of the People of New Holland*. Their effort recorded over 90 species of Australian birds. Interest boomed and John Latham's *General Synopsis of Birds* (1801) attempted to name all Australian birds by comparing several collections of skins in London. More examples were collected by Ferdinand Bauer and Robert Brown when they sailed with Mathew Flinders on *The Investigator* in 1801. Indeed, well before Gould arrived in Australia in 1838, the painter John Lewin had produced *Birds of New Holland*, the first book with colour plates to be published in Australia. A fire destroyed most of Lewin's 1808 production but he republished in 1813 and later Gould revised its 1838 edition. By this time about half of the Australia's 745 species were recorded and collecting birds, flora and fauna was big business.

Taxonomy

A brief introduction to taxonomy is useful in order to understand the names Gould and others apply. Like every naturalist, Gould was indebted to Carolus Linnaeus. While hardly the first to try and order the world, Linnaeus became famous for his universal hierarchical family tree which found a place for all living matter within set categories.

For instance the Black-headed Pardalote is classified as:

Kingdom	Animalia
Phylum (division)	Cordata
Class	Aves (bird)
Order	Passeriformes
Family	Pardalotidae
Genus	Pardalotus
Species	P.melanocephalus (under debate as a sub-species)

Passeriformes is the Order for almost half the bird species known as perching birds. This grouping is partly based on their throat construction which enables them to sing, the anatomy of their feet which have three toes pointing forward and one pointing backward, and that they eat honey (non-passerines do not). Most passeriformes have coloured eggs and it is now thought that most originated in Gondwana.

Scientists continue to refine these categories and invent more names. A general introduction can be found on the Wikipedia website at www.en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Bird_classification

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Cover illustration:

Ptilonorhynchus holosericeus, Kuhl. (Satin bowerbird)

Images:

1. *Platycercus ignitus*, Leadb.: (Fiery parakeet)
2. *Pardalotus melanocephalus*, Gould. (Black-headed pardalote)
3. *Malurus amabilis*, Gould. (Lovely wren)
4. *Platalea regia*, Gould. (Royal spoonbill)
5. *Menura superba*, Shaw. (Lyre-bird)
6. *Platycercus splendidus*, Gould. (Splendid parakeet)

All plates and pages from *The Birds of Australia*:
in seven volumes by John Gould (1804–1881)

