

BOOK REVIEWS

W. R. GUILFOYLE. R. T. M. Pescott.

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price: \$9.75.

In 1974 the name of Guilfoyle raises the real estate value of properties for sale in Victoria. At the national level, it provides Australian landscape designers with a reliable standard of measurement. The international reputation of his achievements were summarised, in the published account of a visit in 1973, by the Arboretum of the Barnes Foundation from Pennsylvania where they refer to the Royal Botanic Gardens in Melbourne in the following terms:

"It is difficult to conceive a garden in which the three objectives of botany, horticulture and landscape design are more skilfully combined than in this one"

We know little of the man who enriched our national resources with these aesthetic and scientific assets. A stone tablet in the Gardens states that he retired in 1909 after 36 years in office; the longest tenure of any Curator or Director. The Government Gazettes of the period show he was appointed as a supernumerary employee from 21.7.1873 until he was appointed to the full-time staff from 1.7.1876, on a salary of £500. Controversy, reverence, romanticism but predominantly the unknown, dominate the verbal legends that have survived Guilfoyle. His written work is largely technical and professional.

Mr. R. T. M. Pescott, the fifth successor to Guilfoyle, has produced the first biography of the man. In spite of the difficulties of such an undertaking, the author's careful researches have led to a splendid publication, full of surprises and with sources of information always well documented.

The first chapter on the Guilfoyle family provides a useful perspective for the later chapters which explore William and his background in more detail.

Born in England on 8th December, 1840, he came to Australia with his parents when he was less than ten years old. His father Michael had been trained under Joseph Knight, of the Royal Exotic Nursery, in King's Road, Chelsea, who sent Michael to many parts of Britain to layout parks and gardens. In Australia, Michael established an exotic plant nursery close to Sydney and developed it into a family business with his sons. William, the eldest son, was educated with the aid of relatives and tutors before he went to Lyndhurst College and then to a private school. He was taught english, science and classics, all of which are reflected in his writings. In 1867 Ferdinand von Mueller proposed him for Fellowship of the Linnean Society, and later he joined other scientific societies.

After botanical excursions to sub-tropical areas in Northern New South Wales, and Southern Queensland, and as botanist on a South Sea Islands expedition with H.M.S. "Challenger" in 1868, during which he collected plants for the Botanic Gardens in Sydney, he settled on his father's newly acquired property in the Tweed River District. There, with two brothers, he grew a wide range of sugar cane varieties, tobacco, maize, opium, cotton, coffee, and peanuts, from 1869 until 1873.

Mr. Pescott's account of von Mueller's removal from office and the appointment of Guilfoyle in 1873, is the most objective that I have read on this controversial issue. His re-discovery of Sayce's plan for the domain, published in 1873, has been reproduced on the inside covers and anyone familiar with Mueller's Garden and the present Gardens, can see how the plan was transposed from the Domain to the Botanic Gardens. The years from 1873 until his marriage in 1889, retirement in 1909 and death in 1912 are well explored by the author in a sensitive and interesting style. The reader may be left with the sense that there is still more information hidden in the family archives. If such untapped sources remain in existence this biography may stimulate them to come to the surface.

—D. M. CHURCHILL

The Kew Record of Taxonomic Literature relating to Vascular plants for 1971. Published by Her Majesty's Stationery Office, London, 1974.—ix, 394 pp. £14.00 net.

The *Kew Record* seems likely to become one of the major tools of taxonomic botanists working with vascular plants. It is intended that publication will be on a yearly basis.

This work has been compiled in England by the staff of the Herbarium, Royal Botanic Gardens, Kew. This account of its contents has been summarized from the Introduction by the Director, Professor J. Heslop-Harrison. It covers literature about flowering plants, gymnosperms and ferns. All papers relevant to taxonomy in the broad sense have been included, but papers in related fields, such as pure genetics, cytology and physiology, with no evident taxonomic significance, have been omitted. Wherever possible the entries have been placed under systematic groups, and the sections on nomenclature, chromosome surveys, chemotaxonomy, anatomy and morphology, palynology, embryology and reproductive biology include only general papers which cannot conveniently be referred to a systematic group. Papers on phytosociology which have usually