



## THE TRUTH ABOUT LAWRENCE & KANGAROO

THE launch of Robert Darroch's e-book *The Scaly Back of a Reptile...and the Horrible Paws*, took place at a private lunch for "The True Believers" followed later by a larger launch in Sydney's Rocks area.

### THE SCALY BACK OF A REPTILE...

Click [HERE](#) to read this book



*Kangaroo (greyscale), by Sidney Nolan*

THE Quest for Cooley is over.

In September 2013, the *DH Lawrence Review* - the main international academic journal of Lawrence studies - published Robert Darroch's article, "Looking Over Lawrence's Shoulder", which tells the story of how *Kangaroo* came to be written, and how DH Lawrence encountered a real secret army in Australia in 1922, and wrote a novel about this unexpected encounter.

*Rananim* is publishing here the book Darroch has written about the 40-year search for the truth about *Kangaroo*...what he calls THE QUEST FOR COOLEY. Click [HERE](#) to read the book.

Entitled *The Scaly Back of a Reptile and the Horrible Paws*, the book will no doubt cause a stir in Lawrence, and even wider circles, as it overturns more than 90 years of literary criticism about Lawrence's 1923 Australian novel.

The book contains an updated version of the *DHLR* article, and some previously unpublished illustrations inspired by *Kangaroo* - in particular some scaring images painted by Australia's most famous artist, Sir Sidney Nolan.

### A Gathering of the "True



*Rob Darroch addresses the lun*

ROB DARROCH's e-book, *The Scaly Back of a Reptile...and the Horrible Paws*, was launched at a private function at Bondi

It was a gathering of the "True Believers". Rob had helped him in his research over the past 40 years. He wrote *Kangaroo*, how he encountered a secret army day-by-day, even hour-by-hour, while he was in Thirroul in 1922. The lunch also marked the public article on the chronology of Lawrence's time in NSW in the *DH Lawrence Review*.

Each guest had provided crucial information to help with the "Thesis" (as Dr Andrew Moore has dubbed it) and I gave each of them a copy of a CD of his e-book as a gesture of thanks.

In a brief speech, Rob said that his e-book, which I had to produce from the finished text, was the future scholarship he had paid tribute to each in turn. (For details and a picture of the lunch see [over page.](#))





If you wish to join the DH Lawrence Society of Australia, it's free. Just send us your name and email address. Click [HERE](#)



*back to page 1*

**A GATHERING OF THE  
"TRUE BELIEVERS"** *cont'd from previous page*

Rob Darroch began by mentioning the contributions made to his research by Paul Delprat, Peter Coleman and Garry Shead (pictured on previous page)...

**Paul Delprat's** cousin, D.G. Hum, whom Lawrence had first met on board the *Osterley* en route to Ceylon, had introduced Lawrence to the Friend family and Jack Scott at that afternoon tea party.

**Peter Coleman**, as NSW Chief Secretary in 1976, had given Rob privileged access to the "Secret Bundles" in the Mitchell Library which contained information about members of the secret army organisation in the 1920s.

**Garry Shead**, the creator of an extensive suite of paintings and etchings about Lawrence and *Kangaroo*, provided many illustrations for Rob's e-book, along with Paul Delprat. Shead is currently making a film about Lawrence and *Kangaroo*.



*Robert Whitelaw with his copy of the  
Scaly Back CD*

**Robert Whitelaw** discovered the "house set sideways by the lagoon" at Narrabeen where Lawrence and Frieda, on the day after they arrived in Sydney, met some of the members of the secret army at an afternoon tea party (as described in *Kangaroo*).

**Rob Douglass's** (right) great-uncle was Jock Garden, Secretary of the NSW Trades & Labor Council, on whom Lawrence based the trade union boss, Willie Struthers, in *Kangaroo*.



*Rob Douglass*

**John Ruffels** contributed invaluable research for many decades, particularly during the 1980s when Rob Darroch was away in London.



*John Ruffels*



*Sue Delprat and John Ruffels*

Four other people had contributed invaluable information and help, but were unable to attend. They are: **Andrew Moore**, whose knowledge of secret army activity in Australia is second to none; **Humphrey MacQueen**, who provided Rob with information about the Australian Protective League; **Evan Williams**, who was responsible for saving Wyewurk from destruction by having it listed as a Heritage property; and **Sally Rothwell** (Oatley), whose father was Jack Scott's step-son.



Rose Gissing (back) Peter Coleman (l) and Garry Shead (r)

Also present at the lunch were **Rose Gissing**, who is helping to produce Garry's film; Sue Delprat, wife of Paul Delprat and manager of the Julian Ashton Art School; and **Sandra Darroch**, who produced the e-book and has been a firm believer in the "Darroch Thesis", while also acting as devil's advocate to test Rob's research.



Sandra Darroch - the truest of the True-Believers

The lunch took place on the Darrochs' balcony overlooking Bondi Beach, and the conversation criss-crossed over a table laden with salmon and a symbolic dish of kangaroo curry.

Click [HERE](#) to read Rob's latest diary entry on the subject.

*Report of the launch by Peter Coleman in his Spectator column 12/10/13*

The next launching in a busy week was a more revolutionary event. It was of an e-book, designed to be free, and launched by the author, Robert Darroch. *The Scaly Back of a Reptile and the Horrible Fans* is the culmination of Darroch's more than 3 years' research into D.H. Lawrence's weeks in Sydney and the South Coast in 1922. (His explanatory subtitle is 'The Search for the Truth about D.H. Lawrence's Kangaroo.' The main title is taken from Sidney Nolan's cruel painting of Patrick White.) So that he is able to diarise almost every hour of every day that Lawrence spent in and around Sydney. What sustained him has been the conviction that the political theme of *Kangaroo* is not, as is often claimed, a novelist's transposition to Sydney of fascistic developments observed in Italy but the analysis of developments that Lawrence had stumbled on in Australia, especially the organisation of ex-servicemen into a secret militia ready to combat communistic subversion in New South Wales. Darroch's identification of figures on whom the fictional characters are based will not convince the die-hard sceptics but will impress most readers. He shows that *Kangaroo* evokes not only the daily life of Australia in the 1920s but its clandestine politics as well. The text is beautifully illustrated by Garry Shead and Paul Delprat. Check it out yourself on [www.dhlawrencesocietyaustralia.com.au](http://www.dhlawrencesocietyaustralia.com.au).

### ROB DARROCH'S TALK AT THE OCTOBER ROCKS MEDIA LUNCH

On October 23, Rob Darroch gave a talk about his 40-odd years' research into DH Lawrence's time in Sydney and Thirroul in 1922



Rob Darroch (right) addressing Rocks Media Lunchers following the launch of his e-book, *Scaly Back*... (From left to right) Robert Whitelaw, Jill Lester, John Lawrence, Michael Lester at Curry at the Rocks restaurant



*Also among the attendees at the Rocks Media Lunch were (l to r) Sally Rothwell (whose father was the step-son of Jack Scott, a central character in Lawrence's time in NSW), John Rothwell, Antony Carr and Graham Bates*



*(l to r) David Say, Chris Fox, Evie Harrison, Greg Lenthén and Lindsay Foyle*