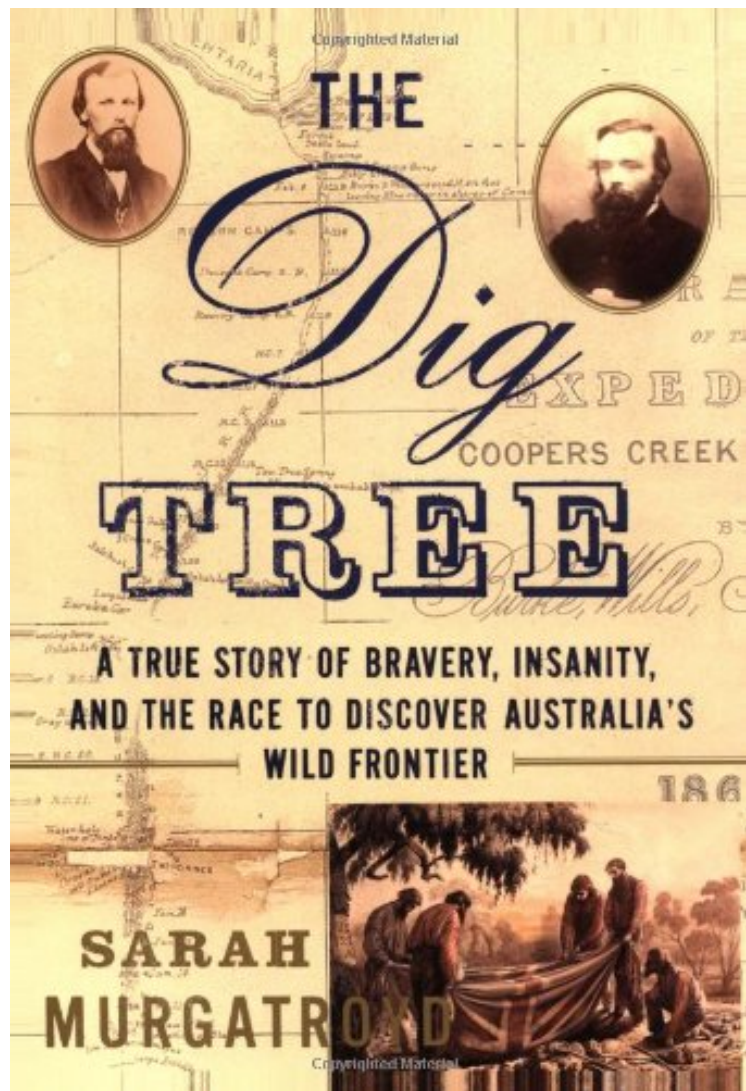


(Download) The Dig Tree: A True Story of Bravery, Insanity, and the Race to Discover Australia's Wild Frontier

## The Dig Tree: A True Story of Bravery, Insanity, and the Race to Discover Australia's Wild Frontier

Sarah Murgatroyd

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**Sarah Murgatroyd : The Dig Tree: A True Story of Bravery, Insanity, and the Race to Discover Australia's Wild Frontier** before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised The Dig Tree: A True Story of Bravery, Insanity, and the Race to Discover Australia's Wild Frontier:

0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. Dead HeroesBy George BurnsThe Australian Encyclopedia renders a clear verdict on the Burke-Wills Expedition. ..."largely owing to Burke's impatient temperament and complete

ignorance of bushcraft, it failed hopelessly." Ms. Murgatroyd fully justifies this verdict; but how did such a man (perhaps best known for his ability to get lost) come to lead an expedition across an empty continent? The architects of the disaster were the members of Australia's Royal Society who combined incompetence with greed. One might also ask why Burke would accept such a mission. He was a man desperate to become famous and to impress the teenage actress he was infatuated with. The actual expedition is described in exciting detail. No less interesting are the questions that remain. This is a book to be read and thought about. 0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. For Information and Enjoyment By A. Keffer For those of us who are not Australians, *The Dig Tree* provides a look into an iconic moment in exploration of that continent. The tale is highly engaging, and all-in-all is well written. Occasionally Murgatroyd ventures off to the side of the main narrative, and seems to be adding fluff to fill the story line, but in the end, all those sidetracks clearly are well connected to the story. Not only was the story itself interesting, but the book also offers a considerable amount of information about the physical landscape of interior Australia that most stateside folks lack. This is a book well worth reading both for information and for enjoyment. 0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. Five Stars By John R. Alger fascinating

The harrowing true story of the Burke and Willis expedition team who took on the Australian wilds 150 years ago--and lost. They departed Melbourne's Royal Park in the summer of 1860, a misfit party of eighteen amateur explorers cheered on by thousands of well-wishers. Their mission: to chart a course across the vast unmapped interior of Australia, from Melbourne to the northern coast. Months later, only one man returned alive--with tales of heroism, hardships, and lost opportunities that were by turns terrifying and darkly comic. Drawing its title from one of the few remaining traces of the expedition, *The Dig Tree* combines the danger of Sebastian Junger with the irony of Bill Bryson to relive the tragic journey of these completely initiated adventurers. The cast of characters includes the expedition leader; a reckless, charming Irish policeman known for getting lost on his way home from the pub; an eccentric nature enthusiast from Germany; an alcoholic camel handler; and a rogue American horse-breaker who is just in it for the money. For nine harrowing months, their quest for glory shifts from idiocy to perseverance and then inexorably toward tragedy. The nightmare culminates in a last haunting message left behind a group of desperate and dying men--the word DIG carved into what is now Australia's most famous tree. *The Dig Tree* follows this compelling journey through a forgotten corner of history to examine a daring expedition that came unbelievably close to success only to let it slip away.

From Publishers Weekly In a thorough but somewhat languid narrative, Murgatroyd chronicles the mid-19th-century trek led by Robert Burke to penetrate Australia's unforgiving interior and chart a course from Melbourne to the northern coast. The book, like the expedition itself, is a little slow to get going and, like the bulk of the territory the motley adventurers encounter, is exceedingly dry. While Murgatroyd does an exhaustive job of charting the group's movements and outlining the political machinations behind their quest, Burke's scant journal gives her little to draw on to make the story truly come alive. His second in command, the scientist William Wills, was more elaborate in his own writings, but decidedly practical. At one point, Murgatroyd despairs: "If only Burke had been a writer. His emotions surged so much nearer the surface than those of his deputy that he might have revealed more than just temperatures and plant names." But the book shows the obvious top-notch research one would expect from a seasoned journalist, and Murgatroyd unearths enough quirky facts to develop her main characters beyond the constrained outlines of a history textbook. She is also unflinching in portraying a campaign that, despite being elaborately equipped, was so shockingly unprepared and misguided that its account borders on black comedy. Burke, a volatile, impetuous leader driven by ego, was selected by a chummy, old-boys' network that cared more about his lineage than his qualifications. His poor decisions and leadership, combined with a considerable amount of bad luck, make for the type of hardship and disaster that will keep readers interested, even if they find themselves thirsting for a story that's a little more satisfying. Copyright 2002 Reed Business Information, Inc. From Booklist "The history of Australian exploration is littered with the corpses of men who underestimated the power, the size, and the unpredictability of the outback," Murgatroyd writes. This book is the tale of one such group, the ill-fated Burke and Wills expedition that set out in August 1860. Robert O'Hara Burke was an Irish police officer who not only possessed no exploration experience but also was notorious for getting lost in his own neighborhood. Surveyor William Wills, third in command until Burke fired his deputy, was a copious note-taker and documented the 5,000-mile journey, which commenced in Melbourne and took the men almost up to the Gulf of Carpentaria in the north. Along the way the group splintered into three separate groups, with only Burke and Wills' small group reaching the northernmost point. Along the way, they encountered varied terrains--including grasslands and swamps--and Aboriginal people, many who brought the explorers food. Eventually, many of these explorers succumb to malnutrition and starvation. Both fascinating and tragic, Murgatroyd's book will appeal to those interested in expeditions or Australia's past. Kristine Huntley Copyright American Library Association. All rights reserved From the Inside Flap The harrowing true story of the Burke and Willis expedition team who took on the Australian wilds 150 years ago--and lost. They departed Melbourne's Royal Park in the summer of 1860, a misfit party of eighteen amateur explorers cheered on by thousands of well-wishers.

Their mission: to chart a course across the vast unmapped interior of Australia, from Melbourne to the northern coast. Months later, only one man returned alive--with tales of heroism, hardships, and lost opportunities that were by turns terrifying and darkly comic. Drawing its title from one of the few remaining traces of the expedition, *The Dig Tree* combines the danger of Sebastian Junger with the irony of Bill Bryson to relive the tragic journey of these completely initiated adventurers. The cast of characters includes the expedition leader; a reckless, charming Irish policeman known for getting lost on his way home from the pub; an eccentric nature enthusiast from Germany; an alcoholic camel handler; and a rogue American horse-breaker who is just in it for the money. For nine harrowing months, their quest for glory shifts from idiocy to perseverance and then inexorably toward tragedy. The nightmare culminates in a last haunting message left behind a group of desperate and dying men--the word DIG carved into what is now Australia's most famous tree. *The Dig Tree* follows this compelling journey through a forgotten corner of history to examine a daring expedition that came unbelievably close to success only to let it slip away.