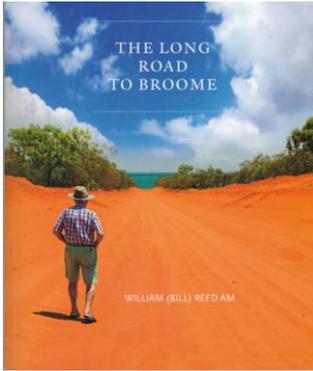


# Kimberley Society

## Book Note



*The Long Road to Broome* by William (Bill) Reed. [Allure South Sea Pearls](#), Parkwood (Qld), 2016. Paperback, 135 pages, ISBN 9780994409928, RRP \$29.00.

Bill Reed's memoir, *The Long Road to Broome*, was launched just before my recent visit to Broome. It was prominent and selling well at the local newsagents. Unfortunately the previously well stocked Kimberley Bookshop is both closed and empty.

I asked my friends in Broome if they knew Bill. "Oh yes," they all said with a smile. He is certainly a well known Broome identity, and a talented raconteur, a skill which he has carried over to his book. He has written other books, for example *Fish and Fisheries of Northern Nigeria*, but I doubt whether they are as entertaining as his recent reflections.

Bill was born and raised in Queensland, became dux of his school and studied zoology at university. He then worked for the fisheries department in New Guinea, got sick and wanted somewhere dry. Where better than the Sudan, then the Persian Gulf, Nigeria and Tahiti? Whenever a project collapsed or he had to flee from danger, he had the good fortune that another and better job came along. I suspect that this was because of his expertise and reliability rather than the good luck he suggests. Eventually he finished up in Broome, where he stuck, first as a consultant to pearling firms, then growing cultured pearls himself and finally retailing. He has been a major figure (indeed probably **the** most important person) in modernisation of the pearling industry in Broome over the last twenty years.

Each chapter of the narrative deals with an exotic location in which the author was stationed. The pages are interspersed with boxes in which there are vignettes of characters he met and amusing tales of their escapades. Others deal with more technical details of pearls and the pearling industry. There are also plenty of photographs, both ancient and modern.

If you read this book you will not only smile but will know more about the qualities of *Pinctada maximus* and other related species.

*The Long Road to Broome* is available at [Allure South Sea Pearls](#), at the company's showroom at 25 Dampier Terrace, Broome, and in selected book stores.

*Hamish McGlashan*