



# Kimberley Society

## Book Note

***Stone-Age Bushmen of Today: Life and Adventure among a Tribe of Savages in North-Western Australia* by J R B Love, 1936; reprinted as *Kimberley People: Stone Age Bushmen of Today*, compiled and published by David M Welch, 2009, Australian Aboriginal Culture Series no. 6, 276 pages, map. ISBN 9780977503568 (pbk.), RRP \$50.**

The Reverend J R B (Bob) Love (1889-1947) was a renowned Presbyterian missionary who lived with people of the Worora Tribe at Port George IV, from 1914 to 1915, and Kunmunya, from 1927 to 1940. On joining the Mission he quickly learned the Worora language and acquired an intimate knowledge of the day-to-day lives of the people. Although the primary purpose of the Mission was to bring Christianity to the 'savages', Love did not seek to dissuade them from continuing their own religion and most aspects of their culture, seeking instead to serve by example. By the time that he left the Mission in 1940, many primitive cultural practices, such as infanticide, revenge killing, and cannibalism, had almost disappeared. Those practices may have been maintained among the people of this area for many thousands of years, but they almost ceased after only 26 years of life at the Mission.

Love published his book on 'Stone age bushmen of today' in 1936 and it subsequently remained out of print for more than 70 years. The book describes the interaction between some traditional Kimberley Aborigines and Presbyterian missionaries during the early 20<sup>th</sup> century. The book is very well written and absorbing to read. The most striking and important addition to the new edition is that of many excellent photographs, never before published, that were sourced by David Welch from Kimberley photographic collections around Australia. The new edition contains 167 photographs, compared with only 22 in the 1936 edition. Among the new photos are many that were taken by Love himself and 49, all of which are in colour, are derived from Welch's own field work in the area. To do the photos justice, the book is printed on 115 gsm Lumi Silk artpaper, section sewn.

David Welch is to be congratulated for this excellent book, the sixth in his series of publications on Aboriginal culture. I can thoroughly recommend it to members of the Kimberley Society, especially those having special interests in the Aboriginal people.

*Phillip E Playford*