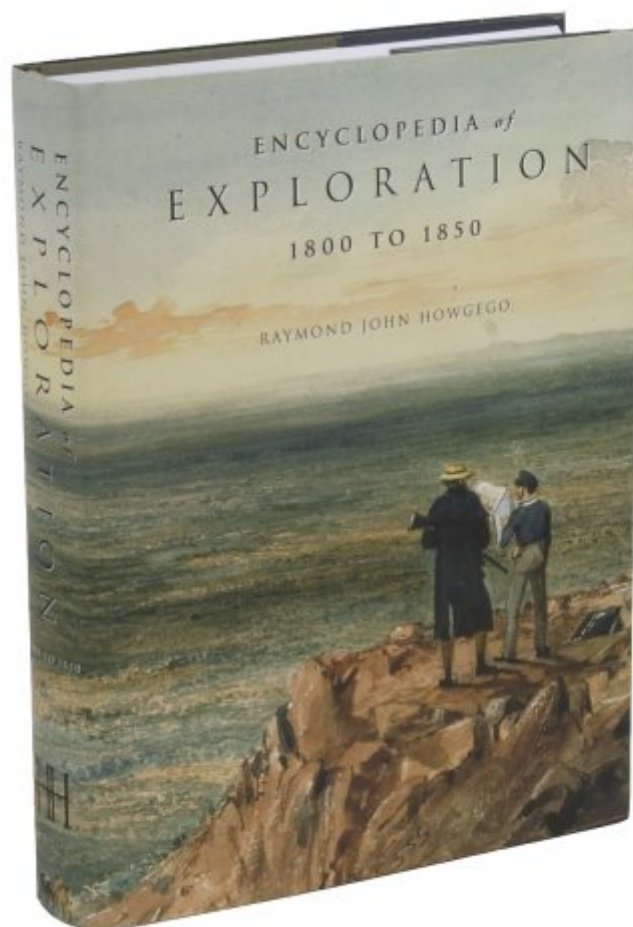


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## Encyclopedia of Exploration, 1800 to 1850: A Comprehensive Reference Guide to the History and Literature of Exploration, Travel and Colonization Betwe

*Raymond John Howgego*

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**Raymond John Howgego : Encyclopedia of Exploration, 1800 to 1850: A Comprehensive Reference Guide to the History and Literature of Exploration, Travel and Colonization Betwe** before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised Encyclopedia of Exploration, 1800 to 1850: A Comprehensive Reference Guide to the History and Literature of Exploration, Travel and Colonization Betwe:

In 732 major articles, Raymond Howgego's *Encyclopedia of Exploration 1800 to 1850* attempts to detail every significant traveller, voyager or expedition that set out during the period. Its indexes provide the names of over 3000 travellers and 1000 ships, while the bibliographies cite more than 10,000 works of reference. Extensive biographical information is included for the travellers themselves, placing every expedition thoroughly in its historical context. The text is fully cross-referenced between articles, whilst every article is supplemented by a comprehensive bibliography of both primary and secondary sources.

As we were taught in our distant childhood, it little profits that an idle king (doctor, botanist or missionary) mete and dole stuff by a still hearth. We cannot rest from travel, as these close-to-2,000 pages of double-columned small print attempt to prove. In a couple of beautifully produced volumes, each the size of a saddlebag, the former physics teacher and now keen traveller Raymond Howgego has listed the biographies of many of the happy heroes who strove, sought and found unknown lands beyond the sunset. From the Spanish Franciscan friar Matias Abad, who reached the Atrato River in Colombia in 1648 and whose enthusiasm for attracting settlers and prospectors to the regions, Howgego tells us, was cut short two years later when he was killed by an Indian spear, to the Russian naval officer Lavrentii A. Zagoskin who journeyed up and down the Yukon (known to the Russians as the Kvichpack), the Koyukuk and middle and lower Kuskokwim rivers, this delightful encyclopaedia reads more like Waugh and Firbank than Rand McNally. The famous are of course present in Howgego's magnum opus the Columbuses, the Bougainvilles, the stout Corteses but also hundreds of less notable globetrotters who knew better than to sit at home. With generosity verging on whimsicality, Howgego lovingly chronicles the wanderings of all manner of warrior, tramp, pirate, conquistador, tradesman, bureaucrat, entomologist, victim of wanderlust and learned cartographer, many of them as unusual as their explorations. No handicap is too great for those thirsty for distant waters. Hsieh Ch in Kao, illiterate and blind, travelled extensively in Europe (we are told by Howgego) between 1783 and 1797, producing one of the first Chinese accounts of the Western world which he dictated to a local schoolboy on his return. Some of his observations are, it would seem, a little unreliable. England, for instance, is to his sightless eyes a sparsely settled island, separated from the mainland, with a large number of rich families. The dwelling houses have more than one storey. No personal quirk is too trivial to be ignored by those hungry for fame. The Moldavian nobleman Nikolai Gavrilovich Milescu-Spafary was utterly intransigent in questions of etiquette. Educated in Constantinople, a student of all the arts and sciences, fluent in Greek, Russian, Turkish, Arabic, Latin and Italian, he arrived in Moscow in 1671 after having tried to usurp the position of one of his royal masters. Dispatched to China by Tsar Aleksey Mikhailovich, he delivered a letter from the tsar to the Chinese emperor and, for the first time in the history of the two nations, His Celestial Highness condescended to write back. Spafary, however, refused to accept the reply because the emperor had failed to address the tsar as an equal. No ethical principle is too minor to be upheld by those with a sense of mission. Francis Bond Head, English army officer and later governor of Canada, was sent in 1825 to Argentina, to work the gold and silver mine concessions that had been granted by the Argentine government to a London company. With a contingent of Cornish miners, Head crossed the Atlantic, rode through the endless pampas, found that the concessions had been granted to rival companies, led his men over the ice of the Andes into Chile, then travelled some 2,000 harsh kilometres prospecting for other mines, and, after discovering that local managers were reluctant to employ British workers, made his way back to Buenos Aires and from there returned to England. The company directors, furious at the money they had wasted, blamed Head entirely for the failure of the mission and refused him a salary, Howgego explains. In response Head wrote a narrative of his travels which forced the directors to give way. The book, which earned him the nickname of Ga -- by Alberto Manguel, followed on the heels of the widely acclaimed first volume of Raymond Howgego's *Encyclopedia of Exploration to 1800* comes this second volume, carrying the compilation to the middle of the nineteenth century. Once again, a reader cannot fail to be impressed by the energy and scholarly achievement of Raymond Howgego, who has turned the exact skills acquired in his training as a physicist into the meticulous scanning of literally thousands of sources in order to provide this overview of one of the great periods of travelling and exploration. As he points out in his introduction, the compiler has not chosen the fifty-year period from 1800 to 1850 simply on the basis of chronological convenience. Rather, he shows how the first half of the nineteenth century represents a distinct period in the history of exploration. These fifty years saw a renewed British interest in the search for the Northwest Passage, the consolidation of European control over the territory of the continental United States, and a steady extension of exploration into South-East Asia and the Pacific. Of the greatest interest for Australian readers is the fact that this volume covers some of the most important expeditions that charted this country's interior and found that much of its territory was inhospitable to settlement. The great explorations of central Africa undertaken by such famed figures as Burton, Speke, and Livingstone came after the cut-off point of this volume, though details of Livingstone's early African travels do receive attention. As was the case with the first volume, a reader will find pleasure in this compilation in a variety of ways. Dealing solely with Australian exploration, for example, there is the expected information to be found about such well-known figures as Matthew Flinders, the Blaxland, Wentworth and Lawson trio, and Charles Sturt. But, just as importantly, detail is provided on less familiar figures. Short of specialist knowledge, many readers will, like this reviewer, be grateful for the information provided

on men like the Anglo-French surveyor and engineer Francis Luis Barralier. In 1802 Barralier, accompanied by four soldiers and five convicts, set out to cross the Blue Mountains. Whether he did, indeed, reach the summit of the Great Dividing Range remains uncertain, but the importance of his expedition has been overshadowed by the later successful crossing achieved in 1813. Other names associated with Australian exploration that do not trip lightly off the tongue but receive due attention include the German geologist Johann Menge, who established the presence of South Australia's mineral riches and assisted in the settlement of the Barossa Valley, and the Scots botanist Charles Fraser, who not only laid out the Royal Botanic Gardens in Sydney but was also involved in the exploration of both the Swan and Brisbane rivers. South-East Asia and the Pacific occupy a much more important place in this second volume than its predecessor. Although the interior of New Guinea remained unexplored, the smaller islands of the Pacific were visited frequently, while Burma now became a target of imperial rivalry and Thomas Stamford Raffles took the momentous decision to establish British settlement in Singapore. Almost inevitably, in a work of remarkable scholarship compiled by a single person, readers with their own specialist knowledge will find, or think they have found, the omission of a name or an expedition. The only example this reviewer offers is the understandably obscure French missionary priest Charles-Emile Bouillevaux (1823-1913), who travelled to the ruins of Angkor in December 1850. It may well be that Howgego has opted to include a reference to Father Bouillevaux when he provides details of the sustained exploration of the temples at Angkor that began with, and followed, the visit to them by the much better known French -- by Dr. Milton E. Osborne.

About the Author Raymond Howgego is an independent researcher, scholar and traveller, who has been researching the history of exploration for much of his adult life. His travels have followed in the footsteps of the explorers to most parts of the world - Europe, the Middle East, Central Asia, India, West Africa, South America, the Cape Verde Islands, Uganda and Ethiopia; and more recently overland from China to Tibet and across the length and breadth of Australia. His numerous excursions in search of local sources of information have afforded the opportunity to add to a lifetime's accumulation of travel literature. He has recently been appointed to the Council of the Hakluyt Society. Brian Turner noted in a recent article on the Encyclopedia that 'The soft-spoken physicist turned travel-scholar speaks and speed-reads every European language (except Basque and Finnish) plus Arabic, and has translated into English many travel narratives himself. Howgego is also a great serial traveller; he has stood at the same spot as Speke at the source of the Nile, sailed through the Straits of Magellan, and followed the tracks of the Conquistadors through Bolivia. In 1994 Howgego and his companions were the first Europeans to cross the Torugart Pass from Kyrgyzstan into China since the Russian Revolution. Minutes after his jeep had crossed an unstable section of Pakistan's precipitous Karakoram Highway, the road collapsed into the Indus. Ray has also voyaged down most of the world's great rivers, including the Niger in flood, when neither bank was visible. His favourite destination? 'Kashgar is my centre of the universe'. And favourite country? 'Iran; the Zoroastrian monasteries of central Iran fascinate me and the Islamic architecture of Esfahan is heart-stoppingly beautiful'.