PAUL IRISH

HIDDEN in PLAIN VIEW

The ABORIGINAL PEOPLE of COASTAL SYDNEY

Paul Irish has breathed new life into people written out of history.
STAN GRANT
**Hidden in Plain View: The Aboriginal People of Coastal Sydney by Paul Irish (NewSouth Publishing)**

**Judges' Comments**

This is a remarkable history of Aboriginal coastal peoples from Sydney Harbour to Port Hacking and inland along the Georges River. While Aboriginal people all but disappeared from official colonial narratives during the nineteenth century, they survived those difficult first decades and remained living on the coast on their own terms. Irish demonstrates a continuity that is too often presumed to have been disrupted.

Irish also provides evidence of sustained interactions between the newcomers and Indigenous people that, while sometimes violent and disrespectful, could also be mutually rewarding. The book is enhanced with paintings and photographs of Aboriginal people and their urban and rural environments, while the book’s informative maps provide a visual guide to the mobility of Sydney’s Aboriginal people. It is ‘a history grounded in places and objects and still carried in living memory’.

Paul Irish has written a book of admirable passion and clarity. He combines understandings passed on to him by Aboriginal descendants — including the La Perouse Aboriginal community — with evocative descriptions penned by visitors to the area. This important book points to an unresolved crisis in historical authority. Its message goes to the heart of present-day attempts to formulate new ways to recognise past wrongs and to envisage a better shared future.


**Links**