

Biography Footnotes:

the newsletter of the National Centre of Biography
no 4, 2009

From the Director's Desk

- The National Library of Australia has launched its new 'Trove' search facility. As well as providing a single point of access to the rich resources held by Australia's cultural institutions, including the text of digitized newspapers, Trove provides links to authoritative websites such as the ADB. A search for Edmund Barton, for example, will direct researchers to the ADB's article on Barton. Some of my staff and I recently met with the Director-General of the NLA, Jan Fullerton, assistant directors, Margy Burn and Warwick Cathro, and the manager of Resource Discovery Services, Basil Dewhurst, for a demonstration of Trove and to discuss possible areas of collaboration in the future. You can check Trove out at <http://trove.nla.gov.au/>.
- The ADB's State, Commonwealth and Armed Services Working Parties are currently drawing up preliminary lists of individuals, who died in the 1990s, who will be included in the ADB. The lists will be posted on the ADB's website for public comment before the final selection is made.
- Following on from the success of its recent symposiums on 'Gender, Politics and Biography' and 'The ADB: Between the Past and the Future', the NCB plans to hold another two symposiums in 2010. The first will be on 'Snow White and His Seven Dwarfs'. Snow White, of course, refers to Sir Robert Menzies. And the seven dwarfs are the seven, legendary, 'vertically-challenged' Commonwealth public service mandarins who 'ruled' the country in the 1950s and 1960s. There is some debate about who the dwarfs were - and who they were not. Frederick Wheeler, although a very powerful head of Treasury, was too tall to be a dwarf and the National Librarian, Harold White, while short enough, lacked the political clout to qualify. Most agree that the dwarfs were Henry Bland, Allen Brown, John Crawford, 'Nugget' Coombs, Richard Randall, Frederick Shedden and Roland Wilson.
- The NCB will also be holding a symposium on 'The Life of Information: Online Dictionaries, Encyclopedias and Collections' in 2010. Evolving digital genres provide alternatives to traditional print modes of publication and enable new approaches to research and analysis, offer new channels for communication and have the potential to make historical research more relevant and more accessible. The symposium will explore the dynamic nature of these large information resources and ask which formats for recording and presenting the past are likely to survive the digital revolution to become long-lasting records of place, culture and identity.



NCB Director, Melanie Nolan

- Donations to the ADB's Endowment Fund campaign stand at \$100,025. Our immediate target of \$200,000 will enable us to re-engineer the ADB website so that we can start adding more digital resources, including thematic essays. Ultimately we aim to raise \$4m so that we can rewrite/revise the earlier volumes of the ADB. A copy of the Endowment Fund form is included at the back of the newsletter. If you have any suggestions as to how we can promote the Endowment Fund please let us know. All donations are tax deductible.
- We have had many requests for the papers given at the ADB's 50th birthday symposium and celebratory birthday party to be placed on the NCB's website. The papers will be published in a special tribute volume next year. For the benefit of those who were unable to attend the ADB's birthday party we have included, in this issue, the speeches by Ian Chubb, Barry Jones and myself, along with some of the photos taken during the day.
- Like many organisations involved with historical projects, the ADB hasn't been very good at preserving its own history. We have no photos, for example, of the launches of the early volumes of the ADB and very little in the way of reminiscences from the thousands of people who've been involved with the Dictionary over the years. If you can help us fill in any of these gaps, for our history of the ADB to be published next year, we'd be very pleased to hear from you. You can contact us at ncb@anu.edu.au or (02) 6125 4146.
- The NCB's Biography Reading Group held its last meeting for the year on 26 November. David Lee joined us to discuss his recently completed biography of Stanley Melbourne Bruce, in which he re-conceptualises Bruce as a nationalist, imperialist and internationalist. The BRG will re-convene on 25 February 2010. If you would like to join the group please contact us at ncb@anu.edu.au
- Such is the success of ADB Online that many libraries are now disposing of their hardcopies of the Dictionary. Last year we learnt of a public library that was selling its volumes, for \$20 each, at a sale of unwanted books. Now we hear that a university library, faced with a shortage of shelving, has removed its volumes of the ADB.
- It is with sadness that we report the deaths of the following ADB authors during the year: Don Dickson, Anne Gollan, Chris Jeffery, Bruce Mitchell, Frank Rickwood, David Spencer, Marjorie Tipping and Maria Varvaressos.

The NCB Farewells Anthea Bundock

The ADB's Biographical Register Officer, Anthea Bundock, retired on 3 December after a long and varied career at the Australian National University.

Anthea's links to the university go back further than most, having attended the old Canberra High School, which now houses the ANU's School of Art. She recalls watching with interest, from the school playground, as the Coombs building emerged in the mid 1960s, little realising that that was where she would spend most of her working life. She was one of the few of us who could easily navigate its maze-like corridors. Lost people were always directed to her for rescue.



Anthea Bundock

Anthea began working at the ANU in 1968 during university summer vacations. After taking her degree in 1972 she spent several years in London working for the BBC and the Royal Institute of British Architects. On her return, she renewed her ties with the ANU, working in various temporary jobs – and gaining enormous experience - while raising two children. From 1982 to 1998 she worked part-time as an administrator in the History Program at the Research School of Social Sciences and undertook a range of part-time research jobs at the Australian Defence Force (1988-1989), the Gallipoli 75 Project at the Australian War Memorial (1989-1991) and the Australian Heritage Commission (1992-1994). She also undertook contract work for Dr Cameron Hazlehurst and other academics.

In 1998 Anthea joined the staff of the ADB as its full-time Biographical Register Officer. As well as maintaining the Biographical Register, by collecting and indexing contemporary reference material on a huge range of people who might, one day, be included in the ADB, she was responsible for resolving corrigenda inquiries – a task that has become a lot more time-consuming since the ADB went online – and assisted members of the public seeking biographical information.

In her retirement, Anthea plans to travel and to continue working on her history of the Jacaranda Press, which is best known for its educational titles and atlases. She will also continue her involvement with the Friends of the ANU Classics Museum, the Canberra Historical Society and the MV Cape Don Society, and may put all she has learnt as the ADB's Biographical Register Officer to good use by setting up as a family history researcher. We are sure there are few better qualified for the task.

The ADB Celebrates its 50th Birthday

For those people who were unable to attend the ADB's birthday party on the evening of 1 December, we have included the transcripts of the speeches given by the General Editor of the ADB, Professor Melanie Nolan, ANU Vice-Chancellor, Professor Ian Chubb and the Hon Barry Jones AO.



ADB's 50th Birthday cake

Professor Melanie Nolan: We are here this evening for two reasons – to celebrate the ADB's 50th birthday and to launch its Endowment Fund campaign.

Those of you who attended today's session in the Haydon-Allen Theatre will know that 50 years ago, on 19 June 1959 to be precise, the ADB's provisional Editorial Board met for the first time in the office of its chairman, Sir Keith Hancock, in the Old Canberra Hospital. They determined that they were going to publish a national dictionary of biography. It was a brave decision. All of the dictionaries of biography in other countries had begun with major benefactions from either governments or private individuals. The ADB started with a £1000 per year grant from the Research School of Social Sciences at the ANU and a £4500 grant, to be spent over three years, from an anonymous donor – whose identity we still, unfortunately, don't know.

But the ADB had one thing that the other biographical dictionaries lacked – a vast army of volunteers including academics, independent scholars, librarians, archivists, and family historians. Over 4,500 people have so far given freely of their time to write articles for the ADB, hundreds of others have sat on the State, Commonwealth and Armed Services Working Parties, and on the ADB's Editorial Board. The ADB simply could not have existed without this help and we are very grateful to you all.

Sir Keith Hancock, and all of those who attended that first Editorial Board meeting of the ADB would, I think, be proud of what the ADB has achieved in the last 50 years. Sir Keith was, of course, a forward thinker. He would understand that we cannot stand still. The internet offers us many exciting opportunities. It is an expensive beast however. In 2006, with the help of a \$1.5m grant from the ARC, the ADB went online. Three years later we are already in discussions about the need to update our software.

The ANU has generously funded the ADB over the years, and will continue to do so, but we will also need to find external sources of funding to continue to grow and benefit from new and cutting-edge developments.

The ADB: The ANU Honouring Its Foundational Role

The ANU's Vice-Chancellor, Professor Ian Chubb, gave the celebratory address at the Australian Dictionary of Biography's 50th birthday party on 1 December. Here is an edited transcript of his speech.

Professor Ian Chubb: It is a pleasure to be here tonight to help celebrate the 50th anniversary of the Australian Dictionary of Biography.

There have been many landmark achievements for the ADB and I know that you have discussed some of them today. I have flicked through a number of the volumes. I can't say that I've read them all, and I can't say that I've read every bit of every one I've flicked through. But it is fascinating to get the insights into the lives of people who helped shape this country. We learn from the ADB what the people did, where they came from and the ideals that inspired them to help build this nation of ours. It is critically important that those of us, who are presently in positions where we can influence the future directions of this nation, do actually learn a bit, and understand a bit, and take lessons from the people who went before us and laid down the paths that a number of us now follow.

I guess it wouldn't surprise you if I were to tell you that my favourite reading – apart from politics and apart from listening to the news all day today, which was a great lesson in contemporary politics [Tony Abbott toppled Malcolm Turnbull as the Leader of the Federal Liberal Party] – is biography.

I have been associated with a number of the ADB's celebrations: Volume 16 in 2002 and vol 17 in 2007 have been published in my time as Vice-Chancellor of the ANU. I had to read the following words two or three times before I got the intent of their meaning. Let me read them to you as they were given to me, 'I might just get in volume 18 due to be published in 2012' [laughter]. I thought to myself, well, that's a bit presumptuous [you have to be dead to get into the ADB]. Then I thought, well, hang on a second, what do they know that I don't. Then I put it together with the other two launches and guessed it means that volume 18 might well be launched in 2012 when I should, according to the terms of my employment contract, still be the Vice-Chancellor.

I also attended – and, I may say, remember very fondly and with a sense of excitement – the launch of ADB Online in 2006. On that occasion I described the ADB as one of the jewels in the ANU's crown. I don't think that I can get a better description than this. The ADB illustrates well what a national university ought to be doing: working in partnership with others, not pretending that it holds the entire resource in the palm of its own hand but working with others to create something that wouldn't be created without the national university performing the role that a national university ought to.

The ADB is one of Australia's great national enterprises. It may well be true that the ANU, as Melanie so kindly put it in her introductory speech, 'generously' funds the ADB – I'll have to have a look at that [laughter]. £1000 indexed over 50 years is probably quite a bit of money these days [laughter]. But it would be folly for us to



Professor Ian Chubb

presume that we ourselves could construct a work of this complexity and of this dimension by ourselves. We need our colleagues. We need a lot of people to work with us to create the ADB. But somebody has to take the responsibility for ensuring that it happens and I think that responsibility is one of ours.



Speakers at the ADB Symposium: (L-R) John Calvert, Geoff Bolton, Wendy Birman, Sue Edgar, Chris Cunneen, Ann Moyal, John Poynter, Jim Davidson and Gerry Walsh

The founder of the ADB, Sir Keith Hancock, envisaged that the dictionary would operate as an example of 'co-operative federalism'. Its editorial staff is located here in the Research School of Social Sciences at the ANU but it relies on the co-operative work of a vast army of people throughout the nation. So far, for example, 4500 or so authors, by no means all academics, have contributed to the ADB over the years. Countless local and overseas advisers in learned and

professional societies, archives, libraries, public offices and elsewhere have given assistance. Hundreds of academics and specialists have also cheerfully given their time to sit on the ADB's nine Working Parties and Editorial Board. I'm sure there's a rather special definition of the word 'cheerful' in that description. I'm sure that hard decisions and difficult decisions have had to be made over that time. But they would have been made 'cheerful' by the regard in which their labour is held.

Not many organisations get the benefit of such voluntary work these days. We could reasonably argue - all of us here and all of the contributors to the ADB - that the dictionary is both a gift to the nation and a national project. It is one of those things that you rarely see in Australia, and probably rarely in Australian learned communities - a monument of collaborative scholarship. It's an example of the ANU honouring its foundation role of undertaking projects of national importance which would not otherwise have been embarked upon. Many of you will know that I'm heartened by the Prime Minister of Australia who has been saying in several of his speeches recently that the whole issue about the ANU - issues of national importance, the role of the national capital and nation building - are important for him and for his government. I think that the ADB is the sort of illustration that shows that we can do it. That we aren't myopically, narrow-mindedly and parochially, short-sightedly saying 'This is ours, nick off'. We are saying 'Yes, we are a resource for this nation. Yes, we can work on issues of national significance. And, yes, we will do things for the benefit of this nation in the longer term.'

In 2006, as I said earlier, I was present at the launch of ADB Online. All the previous volumes up to that point went online without cost to its users and it is now the first port-of-call for researchers in Australian history, at home and abroad. It attracts, what I think to be a staggering, 70 million hits per annum. 70 million people go on to the web, have a look at ADB Online and get information from it. That's an immense resource that we are making available to the community at large. A lot of those hits come from outside

this country. If we were to envisage, as the founders did, the ADB as being a statement of Australian identity then it is important that it reach out to the world.

The reason, too, why it gets all those hits is because it's not a comic book, it's not a caricature. It's serious material that is available to people. The reviews of the ADB confirm this. Of course, there are lots of reviews that talk about its scholarly merits. You would expect historians to praise it but Lloyd Robson (himself the subject of an entry in volume 18, to be published in 2012) noted, in 1980, its wide utility and usefulness. 'The *Australian Dictionary of Biography* is of absolutely superb value for the historian, the journalist, the antiquarian and for that impossible target, the customer and consumer, the intelligent layman'. A lot of those 70 million hits it attracts would be from intelligent laymen and women looking inquisitively to find out about things.

Novelists like Thomas Keneally openly admit to 'plundering' its narratives for their own work while George Johnston said The ADB is 'a gallery of very well-rounded portraits, often carefully considered with psychological insight, which are far removed from the usual dried-up biltong of most biographical compilations'. Peter Corris commented that 'The *Australian Dictionary of Biography* continues to be one of the ever-shrinking number of things Australians can be proud of'. That's a bit depressing really. I don't think that's really true. We've always got the Sydney Swans [laughter] – and a few things like that. Can football teams get into the ADB? Probably not! They'd have to die and then I wouldn't have anything to celebrate.



Audience at ADB Symposium 'Between the Past and the Future'

The issue for us is to recognise and celebrate an achievement that we can all be proud of. An achievement that illustrates, demonstrates and educates simultaneously. Geoffrey Blainey said, in that context, that 'The *Australian Dictionary of Biography* will probably be the most valuable reference work in Australian history; it is already one of the most readable works on Australian history'. All of those are important comments. They all position the ADB and position it well. Those sorts of attitudes are the sort of attitudes that drive ADB staff, Working Parties and authors forward to make sure that this is a continuing work, that it will continue for as far ahead as we can see.



Participants at the workshop on the future of the ADB

50th birthdays are both a time of celebration and reflection. Indeed, I can still remember celebrating and reflecting at mine [laughter]. Tomorrow, I am told, you will have a workshop to discuss future directions for the ADB as it embraces the latest developments in technology and takes another step forward.

Most of the ADB founders are no longer with us. But we have with us today one who was there from the outset. Ann Moyal, or Ann Mozley as she was then known, was its very first staff member. Sir Keith Hancock singled out two people who helped launch the ADB - Laurie Fitzhardinge and Ann Moyal. Of Ann he remarked, 'If it had not been for [her] the Dictionary would have sunk at the outset of its voyage'. Ann represents the many men and women who have been associated with the ADB over the years, our absent colleagues and supporters. And, as somebody without whose presence the dictionary would have sunk at the outset of its voyage, we all owe her, the Australian community owes her, and the 70 million people who hit on the website each year owe her, a great debt of gratitude. For all those reasons I'd like to call on Ann to help me cut the celebratory cake.



Ian Chubb and Ann Moyal cut the ADB's birthday cake

Barry Jones Launches the ADB Endowment Fund Campaign

The Hon Barry Jones AO has had a long association with the ADB both as an author and avid reader. Here is an edited transcript of his address at the launch of the ADB's Endowment Fund campaign on 1 December.

I'm really very delighted to be here. I've always seen the ADB as one of the great achievements, certainly probably the greatest single achievement in the humanities in Australia - a work of endless fascination and inexhaustible richness. One of my very favourite entries is Peter Howell's entry on Sir Ellerton Becker who was a benefactor of the Academy of Science. It's just a wonderful piece of writing. It's been a particular pleasure to meet Peter here this afternoon and talk about that remarkable entry. It is one of the funniest entries, I must say, in the entire series. I do very seriously commend it to you [we have included it on page 15].



Barry Jones launching the ADB's Endowment Fund

I'll just begin with a slight caution. It's terribly important that you don't see the ADB in too modest a light. Not two hours ago I came into this very foyer where there was a book launch on in a completely different discipline. I either misread my notes or somehow the notes were wrong and I'd gone here rather than down to the Haydon-Allen Tank. So I was here and an academic, a professor from the University of Melbourne, came up and said 'Hello! What are you doing here?' I said 'I've come for the ADB function'. He said, 'The ADB?' I said 'Yes, the Australian Dictionary of Biography.' He said, 'Never heard of it.' And I began to worry that maybe C. P. Snow was on to something, that there is still, unhappily, that divide between people in particular disciplines. I'd like to see far more emphasis placed on just the size and range of the ADB's achievement. Everything the Vice-Chancellor said was right. If anything he, characteristically, understated it. I rather like that quotation that I saw somewhere from Michael Fogarty that 'the ADB has become the book-end of Australian society as we know it'. If you really want to get a sense of the richness and the complexity of emerging Australian society you'll find it in the volumes of the ADB.

Having said that, it's also true that as with some other historic works it's clear that the perspective of the ADB has changed quite dramatically. If you look at the two first volumes you can see that they were of quite modest length. You've got figures, whose implications for the development of Australian society were enormous, who were despatched in two or three pages. That's one of the reasons they're looking for an expanded endowment fund. It will give the ADB an opportunity for the rewriting and re-consideration of how Australians lived - from not only after 1788 but before that as well - and how they organised themselves including, of course, the original inhabitants. That's got to be rethought and it's about time that we did it.

This is an ongoing Endowment Fund. It's very important to recognise that the original Endowment Fund was established back in 1997. It was really the work of the late, very distinguished John Ritchie and began with the donation of \$100,000 from Mrs Caroline Simpson who was associated with the Fairfaxes. There were significant donations from the Myer Foundation, and Melbourne University Press disgorged some of its gains and the ANU, itself, gave money. But now there is a need for the ADB to go on to the next

phase and to raise a good deal more money to expand what it can do. Depending on how much money is raised you can see that there are all sorts of priority goals. Melanie Nolan has emphasised that there are six goals.

- (1) With \$100,000 it would be possible to do very significant work on the Obituaries Database that will replace the Biographical Register that's been maintained by the ADB since 1954. The obituaries database will include digitised copies of obituaries from newspapers, magazines and bulletins and will be fielded to enhance its usefulness as a research tool.
- (2) If \$200,000 were raised then it would be possible to re-engineer the ADB Online site, which is currently built on architecture designed in the 1990s. The ADB and ADB Online websites would also be integrated and the ADB's banner would be re-designed to brand the ADB as an ANU product. This would reflect tremendous glory on the Vice-Chancellor [laughter]. It would immortalise him one might say [laughter].
- (3) \$400,000 would lead to a named, annual lecture series in biography and would enable the NCB to bring accomplished biographers to the Centre to interact with faculties and staff, and foster new ideas and research and collaboration.
- (4) The \$600,000 goal would create PhD scholarships in biography to be associated with the NCB and to establish a number of PhD scholarships to generate ideas, challenge stereotypes and accepted wisdom, push the boundaries of intellectual thought and contribute to debates in biography.
- (5) The big goal of \$1m would be to have a Biography Fellow at the NCB. It would be the first named, endowed Biography Fellow in an Australian university.
- (6) You can't say they're unambitious. The next goal is \$4m. With that they can begin the process of rewriting the ADB beginning, as I mentioned, with vols 1 and 2 published in 1966 and 1967. That's where you've got a majority of the corrigenda and that's where, no doubt, there's some room for serious rethinking. So it's really part of a wider long-term strategy to establish a Centre of Excellence to produce an Encyclopedia of Australia which would be a large and even longer-term Humanities and Social Sciences digital research agenda.

The ADB, like the university itself, has a great deal to be proud of. It ought to be better known. It ought to be prepared to blow its trumpet a bit. I often wonder where are the T-shirts and, indeed, what's the message that you put on the T-Shirt. It's very important that you don't play too humble a role. This is a major enterprise in assisting Australians to identify where they've come from and, perhaps, gives them some additional thoughts in where they are going.

I suspect that as you take the begging bowl around you'll probably need some assistance. I'd be happy to help in any way that I could. You've got to set your

objectives very high. And you've got to make it clear to the Prime Minister and the deputy Prime Minister – even the Leader of the Opposition – that this is a project of very high national significance. And the Australian community has to get behind it and there has to be a far higher level of understanding of the role of the ADB so that there's not a single professor of any university on this continent – plus Tasmania – and especially from the University of Melbourne, who can say, 'ADB – don't seem to know the name'.

I don't think it's quite accurate to say that I'm launching the Endowment Fund. It's really a re-launch of the Endowment program. But I think you've got to dream large - have very large objectives and I believe the objectives are realisable. If I can help in any way in the process of talking to people in government I'd be very glad to do that. And your Vice-Chancellor – there's no-one more effective in the Commonwealth as a negotiator than Professor Chubb. So, I'm very glad to be here and I'm very glad to relaunch this Endowment Fund. It deserves to do well. The work that's been done at the ADB needs to be understood as being absolutely essential to Australia. It's very high on our national priorities. Thank-you.

The Vice-Chancellor, Professor Ian Chubb, then rose to his feet and pledged \$100,000 to the Endowment Fund. The money will go towards redeveloping ADB Online so that it can include more digital resources, including thematic essays.

Research Fellow Vacancy at the NCB

The National Centre of Biography has successfully attracted funding for a new research fellow position at the Australian Dictionary of Biography. The successful applicant will spend half of his or her time editing ADB entries and the remainder pursuing an independent research program.

Role Statement

1. Achieve a continuing high level of personal scholarship in life writing and biographical research;
2. Carry out research editing duties;
3. Contribute to building digital capacity, create partnerships nationally and internationally, disseminate digital scholarship and generally develop E-Learning and E-Research projects;
4. Attend conferences and present papers and seminars in history and life-writing and biographical history;
5. Conduct research in biography (including comparative history where relevant) and prepare conference and seminar papers and publications from that research;
6. Help to develop workshop, seminar and conference programs for the Centre;
7. Contribute to the supervision of postgraduate research projects and contribute to postgraduate and other teaching programs as required;
8. Attend meetings in association with research or the other work of the National Centre of Biography and History Program, RSSH, CASS, and University meetings, and play a major role in planning and committee work; and
9. Other duties consistent with the classification of this position.

Qualifications

1. PhD in History or equivalent qualifications.

Experience

1. Demonstrated capacity to undertake research and publish in the field of biography.
2. Proven ability to administer research and/or teaching programs.
3. Evidence of advanced writing, research and editing skills.
4. Recognized digital, online and E research skills.

Attributes

1. Strong interpersonal skills including the capacity to work constructively as part of a team and with a wide range of people.
2. Ability to research, analyse and edit ADB entries and willingness to develop existing professional and technical knowledge, skills and experience.
3. Ability to work to deadlines and a high level of initiative.
4. A demonstrated high level of understanding of equal opportunity principles and a commitment to the application of EO policies in a university context

For **further information** contact the Director of the NCB, Professor Melanie Nolan, on ph (02) 6125 2131 or email at melanie.nolan@anu.edu.au.

The full job advertisement and application form can be found at <http://jobs.anu.edu.au/PositionDetail.aspx?p=994>

Applications close on 31 January 2010.

ADB Medal Awarded to Ann Rand

An ADB medal was awarded to Ann Rand at a special meeting of the ADB's Tasmanian Working Party on 14 December. We include the text of the medal citation.

Anne Rand was one of the first generation of local graduates who in the mid 1950s advanced to higher degree research, using the resources of the recently established Tasmanian State Archives. The outcome was an excellent thesis on 'The assignment system of convict labour in Van Diemen's Land'. In the early 1960s she was Research Assistant in the History Department, University of Tasmania. In that role she assisted much in preparatory work for the early volumes of the *Australian Dictionary of Biography*, in which Tasmania had substantial representation. She was also a member of the State's working party, one consequence being that her name joins those of only two others among official listings for both the first volumes of the *Dictionary* and the most recent. This period also saw her brilliant editing of a major Vandiemonian document, *Journals of the Land Commissioners of VDL*.

In 1988 Anne resumed association with the *Dictionary* as working party member and as research assistant, resigning in late 2008. As research assistant, she used the relatively few hours of funded time to astonishing effect, gathering data on a great number of individuals and always willing to seek some additional datum. That work has been essential in the party's selection of entries, and will doubtless prove of continuing value to researchers. Meanwhile Anne has continued other historical work, *inter alia* voluntarily preparing superb indexes to the *Tasmanian Historical Research Association Papers*; she was also joint author of a silver-jubilee history of the University's medical school.

ADB Medal Awarded to Helen Jones

An ADB medal was awarded to Helen Jones at a special meeting of the ADB's South Australian Working Party on 14 December. We include the text of the medal citation.

Helen Patricia Jones has given remarkable service to the *Australian Dictionary of Biography*, having been a member of the South Australian Working Party more than thirty-four years. Until just recently, she had missed only one Working Party meeting since April 1975. She has also produced more than twenty-five ADB entries. Her articles have been outstanding: well-researched, well-written and awe-inspiring. She is skilled in the difficult art of compression.

Helen gained her MA and PhD in history at the University of Adelaide and became one of the most successful lecturers in the South Australian College of Advanced Education. The contribution to knowledge made in her books – most notably, *Nothing Seemed Impossible: Women's Education and Social Change in South Australia, 1875-1915* (1985) and *In Her Own Name: Women in South Australian History* (1986, revised edition 1994) – was acknowledged by her being appointed AM in 1995.

Helen's work for the *Australian Dictionary of Biography* merits separate acknowledgment. Her research has enabled her to bring to notice many women who otherwise would have been overlooked. As a result, since work on the preparation of Volume 7 of the ADB began in 1975, South Australia has consistently nominated a considerably higher proportion of women subjects than has emerged from anywhere else in the country. And the decision to produce a supplementary volume allowed Helen to bring forward significant women who had been overlooked when the early volumes were in preparation. The members of the Dictionary's Editorial Board have much pleasure in awarding Dr Jones the ADB Medal.

ADB Entry on Sir Jack Ellerton Becker

During his speech at the launch of the ADB Endowment Fund Campaign, the Hon Barry Jones AO, said that one of his 'very favourite entries' in the ADB was Peter Howell's article on Sir Ellerton Becker [see page 8]. We reprint it for your interest.

BECKER, Sir JACK ELLERTON (1904-1979), entrepreneur, was born on 4 October 1904 at North Unley, Adelaide, only son of Percy Harold Becker, clerk, and his wife Mabel Martha, née Gully. Jack attended public schools and was apprenticed to a jewellery manufacturer. Capitalizing on the craze for popular music, he taught himself to play the banjo and other instruments. From the age of 16 in his spare time he gave lessons so profitably that he was able to visit the United States of America.

From 1926 Becker worked as a salesman at Allans Ltd's music shop in Adelaide. On 1 November 1928 at St Augustine's Anglican Church, Unley, he married a fellow employee Gladys Sarah Duggan. He promoted the formation of fife bands in fifty-three schools, selling them instruments made to his design. The English music firm, Boosey & Hawkes Ltd, gave him their South Australian agency. In 1932 he quit Allans and founded the Adelaide Drum and Fife Band, comprising the top two hundred schoolboy players. It performed several week-long seasons in Adelaide's largest theatres, gave wireless broadcasts, and toured Melbourne and Sydney in 1936-37; some parents resented having to pay for the expensive uniforms that Becker ordered.

In 1932 he had named his studio the Adelaide College of Music. For part-time teachers, he engaged soloists from leading dance bands and from the Adelaide Symphony Orchestra. He formed huge banjo, saxophone and other ensembles, including 'the world's largest' boys' military band. As the conductor, he stood, massive and broad-shouldered, resplendent in a scarlet uniform with gold aglet, brass buttons and white gloves. Avowedly to raise money for patriotic and other causes, but also to publicize his college, Becker established the Music League of South Australia which mounted *On Parade*, an annual extravaganza involving one thousand players. The first production, in December 1939, set the pattern: seats for all nine performances sold in advance, and, after Becker claimed most of the proceeds to cover expenses, there was a modest surplus for charity.

The sale of Adelaide College in 1942 gave Becker his first fortune. His earlier diversification into pastoralism had failed, and wartime controls limited his profits when he sold the twenty-four blocks he had bought at Torrens Park in 1941. Thenceforward he speculated primarily in rural land which was ripe for closer settlement or suburban subdivision. Learning the results of David S. Riceman's work on mineral deficiencies in the soil at Robe, in 1943 Becker bought 7000 acres (2833 ha) of the well-watered but barren Ninety Mile Desert (Coonalpyn Downs) in that region and invited Riceman to conduct experiments there. Riceman found that the addition of traces of copper and zinc had significant effects. Becker sold the land for forty times his purchase price. The commissioner of taxation demanded a cut, but the High Court of Australia held that the land had not been bought for profit-making by resale.

More gainful speculations followed near Adelaide, with Becker's solicitor and accountant devising complex tax-avoidance schemes. Becker's most dramatic coup was facilitated by Premier Playford's tardiness in giving the South Australian Housing Trust

adequate funds to buy land for the satellite city of Elizabeth. In 1957, shortly after Becker had bought 1266 acres (512 ha) there for £149,000, the trust was finally empowered to begin to acquire it. Becker haggled and received £853,000. Despite admitting that he had known the land was likely to be designated as urban, he persuaded the High Court that his purchase had been for pastoral purposes; the taxation commissioner's demand for £350,000 was dismissed with costs.

In 1960-61 the Australian Academy of Science was in financial difficulties. Its president Sir John Eccles secured Prime Minister (Sir) Robert Menzies's agreement to recommend Becker for a knighthood—if he came to the rescue. Following long negotiations, the tycoon contracted to give £200,000 over ten years. This arrangement settled the academy's debts and created an invaluable endowment fund. Having severed connexions with their only child because she had married a naval stoker against their wishes, the Beckers also undertook to make the academy their principal and residuary legatee. Becker was appointed a fellow (1961) of the academy and knighted in 1962, and the academy's Canberra headquarters was named Becker House. The Commonwealth Scientific and Industrial Research Organization's scientists and Sir Mark Oliphant were appalled, but Eccles had brooked no opposition. There was much chaff about Sir Ellerton's honours being obtained on hire purchase; wits asked if the laurels could be repossessed because his instalments were often in arrears.

In 1971 the Beckers retired to Pembroke, Bermuda, where they built a villa with grounds containing an artificial waterfall and a garden gnome. Sir Ellerton died there on 9 May 1979 and was buried on the island. His daughter, an impoverished, invalid pensioner, received nothing. Lady Becker died on 3 January 1985. Since then the academy has received a further \$3 million from the estate. A perfectionist and 'a great hater', obsessional in his quest for wealth, status, *objets d'art* and luxurious living, Becker had retained few friends. His one 'generous' action was a tax-deductible purchase of privilege.

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A Dictionary of Public Figures

Buried now a second time
by alphabet and golden year
(floreast circa 1880)

the outlines of their lives
are fleshed again from paper;
their myths persist

or are straightened slightly
by proud great-nieces and
polished by scholars.

Admission here is by committee
with death the first requirement —
this mild St Peter's gate of three

will vanish also into the text.
Clergymen, graziers, colonial mayors,
owners of goldmines or morning papers ...

their public lives are shown and kept
as notable crustaceans
the white flesh private

underneath. The sum of all these shelves
is what we are
or what they'd have us be,

each row a long sarcophagus or crypt —
the earlier volumes wearing already
the discontinued smell of yellow,

only the recent fresh to the nose.
Public Figures (1880)
Pressed flat with watchchain and cigar

wince and flinch as
year by year
the sweaty thumbs turn through them.

by Geoff Page

* Geoff Page is a Canberra poet. In 1982-84 his wife, Carolyn, worked for the ADB. The poem is reprinted from *Collected Lives* (Angus and Robertson, 1986) with the author's permission.

Book Review: Jacqueline Kent, *The Making of Julia Gillard*, Penguin/Viking, 2009, 328pp, \$32.95.

Many people want to know about Julia Gillard, undoubtedly the most powerful woman in Australian Federal politics today - what makes her tick and how she came to be such a star parliamentary performer.

The Making of Julia Gillard, gives us an insight into what has made this formidable politician. But we get very little about her personal life, how she operates and keeps up with her personal workload of three key portfolios, Industrial Relations, Education and Social Inclusion.



Kent writes that ‘only once did I feel I had slipped below the surface: when I asked her about her relationship with Bruce Wilson. She shrugged it off with, “Oh well, these things happen”. When I pushed a bit, quoting some of the more unpleasant tabloid headlines and saying, that must have impressed you, she flashed “Not so much”. And for a second I saw how that squalid scandal-mongering had hurt her’.

[In 1995, Gillard worked on a case for Bruce Wilson, the AWU secretary, in an intra-union dispute, and began an affair with him. After several months it was discovered that Wilson was defrauding the union. As soon as it was discovered, Gillard ended her relationship with Wilson. There were headlines such as ‘How Gillard’s Ex Scammed’ and ‘Con Man Broke my Heart’].

Julia Gillard has been considered to be very much in control in her relationships with men. ‘But that doesn’t mean her heart is not engaged’, Kent says. ‘Close friends knew how upset she was about what happened with Wilson. It hurt her a lot. She put a lot of trust in the guy’.

Gillard came to Australia as a four-year-old with her parents, who came from Wales as ‘Ten-Pound Poms’. They settled in Adelaide where her parents were determined that their children would have the chance of an education, which they had not.

After Mitcham Primary and Unley High School, she started at Adelaide University in 1979. Soon she became involved in student politics and in 1982 became education vice-president of the Australian Union of Students. The AUS secretariat was in Melbourne, where she finished her arts-law degree at the University of Melbourne.

In 1987, leaving student politics behind her, Gillard got a job as a solicitor at Slater and Gordon. There she developed her capacity for work, being often in the office at six in the morning. She was soon moved into industrial law, in which she became a specialist. But she had never taken her eye off a political career, despite her success as a lawyer. For her ‘law was always an offshoot of politics rather than politics as an offshoot of law’, says Andrew McKenzie, a former Gillard colleague.

Kent says that Julia Gillard is ‘one of the most single-minded and determined realists in this or any other Australian Government’. It was that determination and persistence that got her into politics. After finishing with the law, Gillard twice failed to gain Labor preselection for a Federal seat. She was thwarted in this by Kim Carr and Lindsay

Tanner. Before she finally cracked it, she served as Chief of Staff in John Brumby's office when he was leader of the Opposition in the Victorian Parliament. There she gained a useful insight into politics, which helped her when she finally entered Parliament, as Member for Lalor, in October 1998.



Jacqueline Kent

Though at first people were slow to take to Gillard, she is now very popular with the public. From an early age, she made clear the domestic arts have no great appeal for her. And she has no children either. When Senator Bill Heffernan launched a personal attack on her saying that she was unfit for leadership because she was unmarried and childless, she won sympathy and support for her composure in handling an unprovoked political onslaught, which backfired. Heffernan was widely ridiculed and John Howard made him apologise.

Of course, she still attracts hostility in some quarters. That is inevitable for one who plays the political game for what it is and because she doesn't display the vulnerability expected from women politicians. She knows who she is and where she is going and the media know she is not about to let them run the agenda. She is adept at switching topics and not following interviewers' leads. She says what she wants to, and nothing more. She thinks quickly on her feet and never succumbs under pressure.

Throughout her parliamentary career Gillard's advancement has been helped by Simon Crean and Mark Latham. After the 2001 election when Simon Crean became Leader of the Opposition, Gillard was promoted to the Front Bench as Immigration spokesperson. With support from Simon Crean and Mark Latham, she went on to become shadow Health Minister. She was as close as anybody to Mark Latham when he decided to resign as Labor leader after the 2004 election. It was Latham who first put her forward as a possible Labor leader. She remained loyal to Crean and Latham by publicly defending them, despite criticism within the party.

In the lead up to the 2007 election, Gillard teamed up with Rudd and won. She had not been a Rudd supporter until she was nudged into it by Kim Carr. She and Rudd agreed to run on a joint ticket, with Rudd as leader and herself as deputy. The rest, as the saying goes, is history.

On 3 December 2007, Julia Gillard, at the age of 46, was sworn in to be Deputy Prime Minister, Minister for Employment and Workplace Relations, Minister for Education and Minister for Social Inclusion. She and Kevin Rudd had worked out this particular range of responsibilities for her precisely because they were so compatible. With the exception of the Prime Ministership and Treasury, Gillard's portfolios were the most wide-ranging and influential in the Rudd Government.

As Minister for Industrial Relations and Education she has abolished Work Choices, replacing it with her Fair Work Bill, and introduced an educational revolution, which is still being played out over league tables. It is an argument she is determined to win. A lawyer friend once said, 'If ever I meet anyone tougher than Julia Gillard I'll fall over. There isn't anyone'. That is what has made her such a star parliamentary performer. She is unflappable and articulate, knows what she wants to say and lets it go at that.

Kent gives lots of clues about Gillard in this book: how she relaxes, her relations with men, her reading habits. 'I don't read seriously', she told Kent. 'Mysteries, detective novels, stuff like that. One of our Commonwealth car drivers keeps me supplied'. She told Kent that she was just too busy to get back to serious reading. But there is still a lot more to come out about Gillard than Kent has been able to reveal. She says that having this book written about her makes her 'feel rather like a lab rat'. However, she gives little away. 'Under that engaging manner is a reserved person, a woman who is very self-protected'.

This is a competent biography as far as it goes. However, politics is a new field for Kent, who has won national awards for her earlier highly acclaimed, *A Certain Style, Beatrice Davis, A Literary Life* and *An Exacting Heart: The Story of Hephzibah Menuhin*. She has made a good fist of Julia Gillard, but I found her analysis of policy decisions, with which Gillard was associated, a little too detailed. A more general outline would have sufficed. In the recounting of them, I sometimes lost sight of Gillard. But overall, this is a well researched book that deserves to be read widely.

Kent's book is the first of two biographies of Gillard. The second, written by political journalist Christine Wallace, entitled *Gillard*, will be published next year by Allen & Unwin. That was straight forward enough until the recently appointed editor of *The Monthly*, Ben Naparstek, seeking to create some mischief, asked Christine Wallace to review Kent's book. If Wallace had had any sense she would have gracefully declined Naparstek's offer. But she went ahead and damned Kent's book with faint praise, making a fundamental mistake along the way by suggesting that the book was authorised by Gillard. It was not approved by Gillard, who agreed to interviews long after Kent began her research. Naparstek defended his choice of Wallace by declaring she was 'the most qualified person in the country'. Kent was outraged, as was her Penguin publisher Ben Ball. 'I make mistakes, too,' said Kent, 'but this one was a clear conflict of interest'. It will be interesting to see who Naparstek gets to review Wallace's book.

by John Farquharson

* John is an ADB author and member of the ADB's Commonwealth Working Party. He worked previously as a political journalist and was a former deputy editor of the *Canberra Times*. He is now a freelance writer.

Life Sentences

The editor of the ANU Reporter, Simon Couper, invited the National Centre of Biography to contribute a series of columns on subjects in the Australian Dictionary of Biography which would be of interest to its readers. This is the third in the series.

George Bernard Shaw suggested that a gentleman is someone who endeavours to put in more than he takes out. By that criteria three individuals who have contributed to the public service and then ANU – or vice versa – would likely have gained Shaw’s approval.



Hugh Ennor

Fin Crisp was the first professor of political science at Canberra University College, which later became part of ANU. He arrived in 1950, having had the experience of working in and then leading the Department of Post-War Reconstruction in the 1940s. Maintaining town-and-gown links, he was chairman of the Commonwealth Banking Corporation from 1975 until his death in 1984. Although he opposed what he called the ‘shotgun wedding’ of the College and the research-only ANU in 1960, he worked hard for the reshaped university. Disillusioned by the student unrest in the 1970s, in the John Curtin lecture in 1974 he portrayed the ‘disaffected darlings’ as the ‘the gravediggers of academic freedom’. He retired in 1977.

Like Crisp, John Crawford’s time at ANU coincided with an increase in student disquiet. Crawford had a major career in the Commonwealth Public Service (including a stint in the Department of Post-War Reconstruction at the same time as Crisp) before moving to ANU. Founding director of the Bureau of Agricultural Economics from 1945 to 1950, he was subsequently secretary of the departments of Commerce and Agriculture from 1950 and then Trade from 1956, where he supervised the negotiation of trade agreements with Britain and Japan. In 1960 he joined ANU as professor of economics and director of the Research School of Pacific Studies. He served as Vice-Chancellor from 1968 to 1973 and then Chancellor from 1976 to 1984. ANU historians Stephen Foster and Margaret Varghese write that instead of being phased by the years of student unrest that marked his stint as Vice-Chancellor, Crawford ‘exuded reason and understanding’.


Some people moved from ANU to a substantial role in government – a transition that could cause friction with their former academic colleagues. Hugh Ennor came to ANU as a foundation professor of biochemistry. Dean of the John Curtin School of Medical Research from 1953 to 1967, then Deputy Vice-Chancellor from 1964 to 1967, he was a member of the government-appointed Martin committee on the future of tertiary education in Australia. From 1967 he was secretary of the Commonwealth Department of Education and Science, and later the Department of Science. In 1975 Ennor’s department was blamed for the government’s decision to reduce the funds of the Australian Research Grants Committee.

To honour their contribution on campus and in the capital, buildings at ANU are named to commemorate these three gentlemen.

by Pam Crichton


* Pam is a Research Editor with the ADB; from *ANU Reporter*, Spring 2009, p 8

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