

# Biography Footnotes, no 3, 2009

## From the Director's Desk

• ADB authors were, once again, well represented in the Queen's Birthday Honours List. Congratulations to:

Officer (AO) in the General Division

- Professor John Pearn
- Professor John Warhurst

Member (AM) in the General Division

- Dr Peter Attiwill
- Professor David Horner
- Associate Professor Michael Horsburgh
- Dr Anthony White
- Dr Colin Wrigley

Medal (OAM) in the General Division

- Mr George Brooks
- Associate Professor James Kohen
- Mr Jeremy Long
- Rev Father Brian Maher
- Mrs Judith Murdoch
- Associate Professor Bruce Pennay

• Our congratulations are also extended to ADB authors who won literary awards in the last three months:

- Jacqueline Kent's biography, *An Exacting Heart: The Story of Hephzibah Menuhin*, won the 2009 Kibble Literary Award. Jacqueline has written the entry on Menuhin for vol 18 of the ADB.
- Professor Jill Roe won the 2009 Queensland Premier's Literary Award for History for *Stella Miles Franklin: A Biography*. Jill was inspired to work on the full-scale biography after writing the ADB entry on Franklin.
- The chair of the ADB Editorial Board, Professor Tom Griffiths, jointly won the 2008 Prime Minister's history prize for his book *Slicing the Silence: Voyaging to Antarctic*. Tom's thoughtful essay on the Victorian bushfires, ['We Have Still Not Lived Long Enough'](#) won the 2009 Alfred Deakin Prize for an essay advancing public debate.

• The NCB has received a \$30,000 grant from the College of Arts and Social Sciences (ANU) E-Research Committee to create an online obituaries database. ADB author and member of the Commonwealth Working Party, John Farquharson, has generously donated hundreds of obituaries written for the *Canberra Times* to the project. In time, we hope to include all obituaries of Australians published in newspapers, magazines and bulletins, as well as some that we commission. The database will include fielded searches and should be available on the ADB's website in the New Year.

• Do you have any good stories to relate about the ADB or photos of book launches and other events organised by the Dictionary? We are preparing a history of the ADB for the website and are keen to include the reminiscences of those who have been associated with the ADB as paid employees, members of Working Parties or Editorial Boards, or authors. If you would like to participate in the history project please contact Christine Fernon at [christine.fernon@anu.edu.au](mailto:christine.fernon@anu.edu.au).



• The NCB now boasts three PhD students, the latest being Chris Wallace who started with us in August. Her thesis topic is 'Julia Gillard: The Politics of Political Biography'. Chris will also be exploring the challenges of writing mid-career biographies. The next round of PhD applications closes on 31 October. For further information about undertaking a PhD or an M Phil at the NCB, contact the Centre's Director, Professor Melanie Nolan at [melanie.nolan@anu.edu.au](mailto:melanie.nolan@anu.edu.au).

## FORTHCOMING EVENTS

- 9 November 2009: In association with the Research School of Social Sciences, ANU, and the Museum of Australian Democracy, the NCB is holding a day-long symposium at Old Parliament House on 'Gender, Politics and Biography'.
- 1 December 2009: The NCB will be celebrating the ADB's 50th birthday with a symposium on the history and future of the ADB.

Both events are open to the public and are free. See inside for more details.

# A\* Ranking? Surely ADB Online is not a Journal?

ADB Online has been listed as an A\* journal in the Australian Research Council's recently released rankings of C1 (refereed) journals for the Excellence in Research for Australia (ERA) assessment. This is the first time that the ADB has been listed in such rankings and is a significant achievement. Not only was the list compiled by a panel of expert advisers convened by the National Academy Forum but it was subjected to scrutiny by the academic community. A\* journals have been assessed as being in the top 6% - in terms of eminence, citation and impact - of the 7,693 international and Australian journals that were listed.

So, what does the ADB's A\* ranking mean? Basically, that after many years of lobbying, academics can finally claim ADB entries as academic publications for Department of Education, Employment and Workplace Relations points.

Each university research office is currently making its own assessment on the basis of how it interprets the 2008 Higher Education Research Data Collection (HERDC) specifications. Let us state the case to be made for the ADB being an A\* journal.

1. ADB Online has an ISSN (International Standard Serial Number), which identifies periodicals worldwide whether in printed form or online. Having an ISSN is necessary but not sufficient for the ADB to be recognised as a journal. Those involved with the ADB have long pointed to the ADB's trappings of a journal culture: its Editorial Board, State and Commonwealth working parties, original research, authors, professional editors, referee process, and its being issued in successive parts. The turning point, however, in terms of recognition, was in 2006 when the ADB went online.
2. To be classified as a C1 (refereed) journal, all the articles in the publication must be subjected to independent refereeing. ADB articles are independently refereed three times. All articles are read and reviewed by both the General Editor and one of seven section editors when they are received from the author. After the editorial process the articles are refereed a third time by one of the ADB's specialist editorial fellows. The author then considers and approves the edited piece. Few journals have such a thorough process.
3. ADB Online is an important and widely respected scholarly publication which disseminates original research. The contributors are academics and researchers with expertise in their areas. Their articles follow a particular structure which includes bibliographies. Peer review attests to the quality of ADB articles (see the [reviews](#) on the ADB's website). Citation and impact are more difficult to assess in the social sciences and humanities than in science, but one significant measure of the ADB Online's contribution to the research environment is its 60 million hits a year (and this number is growing).

Even given this evidence, academics may still battle to have ADB articles recognised by their universities because most of the articles are 500 to 750 words in length. As every ADB author knows, however, it takes as long to research a 500-word article as it does a 5,000-word essay and it is often a more challenging task to convey the essence of a life in 500 words.

With volume 17 of the ADB now online, hopefully most of our contributors will be able to count their articles in next year's ERA assessments. This is excellent news for the ADB community.

## **Symposium and Workshop on the ADB**

The Australian Dictionary of Biography is celebrating an important milestone this year. On 19 June 1959 the Dictionary's provisional Editorial Committee met for the first time in the office of its chairman, (Sir) Keith Hancock, at Old Canberra Hospital. Also in attendance were committee members, Professors Manning Clark and Jim Davidson, Laurie Fitzhardinge, Dr Robin Gollan and Ann Mozley (Moyal), the ADB's first paid employee. They defined their objective as the publication of the Dictionary of Australian Biography (as it was then called) within ten years and set up two Working Parties to organise the first two volumes. Since then 18 volumes of the ADB, containing some 11,500 biographies by over 4500 authors, have been published.

To celebrate the ADB's first 50 years, the NCB is hosting a symposium, 'Between the Past and Future: The Australian Dictionary of Biography' on 1 December 2009 in the Haydon Allen Theatre at the ANU. All are welcome to attend.

The program is still being finalised but confirmed speakers include:

- Dr Jim Davidson, biographer of the ADB's founding father, Keith Hancock
- John Calvert, biographer of the ADB's first General Editor, Douglas Pike
- Dr Chris Cunneen, ADB Research Fellow (1974-82) and deputy General Editor, 1982-96
- Professor Geoffrey Bolton, who has been associated with the ADB as an author and Editorial Board member from its beginning
- Professor Jill Roe, chair, ADB Editorial Board (1996-2006) and instigator of ADB Online

At 5.30 pm we will be hosting a function to celebrate the ADB's 50th birthday and to launch the ADB Endowment Fund campaign.

Those interested in attending the symposium should contact us at [ncb@anu.edu.au](mailto:ncb@anu.edu.au). The program and registration details will be posted on the NCB's website when they are finalised.

The proceedings will be taped and will also be published by the NCB's E-Press series.

The Editorial Board and ADB staff will be meeting in a workshop on 2 December to discuss future editorial directions for the ADB.

## **Symposium on 'Gender, Politics and Biography'**

The National Centre of Biography, in association with the Research School of Social Sciences ANU, and the Museum of Australian Democracy, is organising a symposium on 'Gender, Politics and Biography' to be held on Monday 9 November, 10.30 am to 4.30 pm, at Old Parliament House in Canberra.

A range of speakers, including academics, politicians, journalists, biographers and museum curators, will discuss how the issue of gender and politics has changed over time.

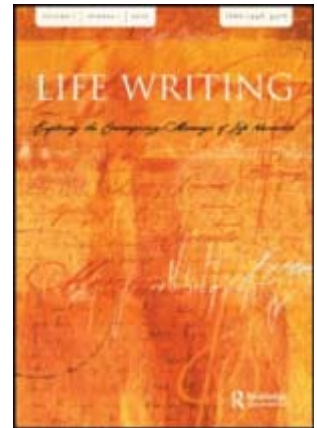
Political journalist, Laurie Oakes, will present a lunch-time address on 'The Personal & the Political: The Role of Personal Revelation in Australian Politics' in the Members Dining Room, where a delicious two-course meal will be provided by the award-winning caterers, Ginger Catering.

There is no charge for attending the symposium, but lunch will cost \$59 per person.

Those interested in attending the symposium should contact us at [ncb@anu.edu.au](mailto:ncb@anu.edu.au). The program and registration details will be posted on the NCB's website when they are finalised.

## Life Writing Journal

*Life Writing* is the first journal of auto/biography studies to be published outside Europe and the United States. It was launched at Curtin University, Western Australia, in February 2004 by Professor Sally Morgan, one of the foremost exponents of Indigenous life writing. In March 2004 Professor John Eakin, a leading pioneer in the field, launched us a second time at the Chinese University of Hong Kong. The enthusiastic support of these scholars indicates the quality that our young journal has succeeded in achieving.



The journal has three sections: Academic Articles, 'Reflections' and Reviews. We invite authors to submit articles that consider any aspect of the contemporary meanings of life narrative. We are particularly interested in work that aims to incorporate interdisciplinary perspectives, since we recognise that the growing field of auto/biography is one in which anthropology, history, cultural studies, literature, philosophy, psychology, sociology and visual studies are all contributing exciting and revisionary scholarship. The 'Reflections' section carries critically informed personal narrative linking theory and experience. We also welcome submissions which broaden the geographical focus of life writing. We aim to contribute to discussions taking place in 'western' life-writing circles, but we also encourage authors from places other than the US, Canada, Australia and Europe to consider submitting their work.

Articles of note already published include Sidonie Smith and Kay Schaffer's 'Venues of Storytelling: the circulation of testimony in human rights campaigns' and Michael Jacklin's 'Critical Injuries: collaborative Indigenous life writing and the ethics of criticism' (2004); Julie Rak's 'Bio-Power: CBC Television's Life & Times and A&E Network's Biography on A&E' (2005); Gerry Van Klinken's 'The Combative 'I': State Domination and Indonesian Self-writing' (2007) and Gillian Whitlock's 'Letters from Nauru' (2008).

Special editions of *Life Writing* have included issues on life writing and the public sphere (2004); cultural hybridity and 'mixed race' (2007); and most recently, a double issue on trauma in the twenty-first century (2008), guest-edited by Kate Douglas and Gillian Whitlock.

**by Dr Mary Besemeres**, co-editor, *Life Writing*

\*The NCB is arranging with Mary to set up a link from our website to the online version of *Life Writing* so that our readers may access a free copy of the journal.

## The Genesis of the ADB

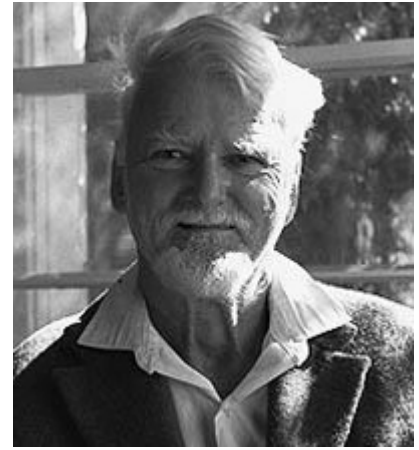
Laurie Fitzhardinge (1908-1993) is remembered at the ADB for having started the Dictionary's Biographical Register in 1954. As we have recently discovered, Fitzhardinge's involvement with the ADB goes back further than that - to 1951 when he pushed for the establishment of an Australian biographical dictionary unit at the ANZAAS Conference.

In an oral history interview, conducted by Barbara Ross in 1987 and held by the National Library of Australia, Fitzhardinge traces the genesis of his love of biographical dictionaries to the wet Sunday afternoons of his childhood spent reading his way through the *Dictionary of National Biography* in his school library. It was, he says 'an endless source of enjoyment ... I devised games, dodging about in it, opening a volume at random and then following all the cross references and following up the cross references to that, and so on'. The idea of one day compiling a Australian biographical dictionary



continued to occupy his thoughts while working at the National Library in 1934-44 and 'hardened' when writing his book on Littleton Groom. With one or two exceptions' he remarked, 'it was very difficult to get even the most elementary background information about the people, the cast'.

The publication of Percival Serle's two-volume *Dictionary of Australian Biography* in 1949, though a commendable effort, convinced Fitzhardinge that writing biographical dictionaries 'is no longer a one-man job. It's got to be a team job on the model of the DNB'. Then teaching at the University of Sydney, Fitzhardinge managed to convince his colleagues that the project would be a good publication for the Sydney University Press. When travelling around England later in the year, he visited the offices of the DNB, discussing with the editor their methods of compiling entries.



Appointed Reader in History at the ANU in 1950, Fitzhardinge says he made 'a typically Fitzhardingian feeble and waffly attempt' to get the Dictionary off the ground. 'I'd prepared a plan for the preparation, within our resources more or less, of a dictionary of biography – not to be written by the Department, to be an all-over effort, but not to be attempted all at once. My idea was that the Department as coordinator, whenever it, meaning I, became aware of someone working on a particular person, someone of special interest, we would commission them to do a *DNB*-style article on this person which we would then put into a file and, in order to keep interest alive, we would circulate these, presumably in mimeograph form, like the Law Book publications, in a loose-leaf thing which eventually would be the *ADB* and would then be made up and printed as volumes. I tried to interest Frank Eyre of the Oxford University Press in this, but he wasn't interested. He said that the idea of doing it in instalments in loose-leaf had no attraction for them whatever. They wouldn't touch it. So then it proceeded to lie in the ground for [Keith] Hancock to plough and water' – which he did in 1957.

Although he never managed to get the *ADB* 'off the ground', Fitzhardinge played an important role in its development as a founding member of the Editorial Board. His most significant legacy, though, is undoubtedly the Biographical Register, which is still being maintained and now boasts over 350,000 biographical citations about Australians. Started on index cards (we still have the original cards), the Register was transferred to an in-house database in the 1980s and will soon take on a new form as the online obituaries database, where it will be easily accessible to all researchers.

## Book Review

**Book Review: Anne Summers, *The Lost Mother: A Story of Art and Love*, Melbourne University Press, 2009, 354pp**

Pictures ask questions. In *The Lost Mother: A Story of Art and Love*, feminist Anne Summers pursues answers to questions manifest for her in Australian painter Constance Stokes' 'Alice' (1933). The painting's model was Summers' mother, then just ten-years-old Tuni Hogan. In *The Lost Mother* Summers chases down the story of the object, the image and the model that, combined, constitute 'Alice'. The quest is triggered by the death in 2005 of Tuni – by then the 81-year-old widow Tuni Cooper – and Summers' drive to resolve outstanding issues in her relationship with her.

Summers sleuths three 'Alice' angles.

What was the life of the object and its latent, missing twin (a possible second Stokes portrait using Tuni Hogan as a model for a Madonna)? Constance Stokes' career is surveyed – commercially successful, critically well regarded by a certain group of rich collectors and art world insiders, but lacking the heft or personal narrative pungency to imprint her name on the history of Australian modernism. The lives of the painting's purchasers are sketched: Russian émigré Lydia Mortill and her antipodean husband, Melbourne



businessman William Mortill. 'Alice' was hung in the Mortill's Hawthorn mansion Tay Creggan and stayed there when the Catholic Church bought the property in 1939, before making its way serendipitously some years later to the Cooper family home in Adelaide. On Tunī's death, Summers inherits the painting and hangs it in her Sydney home, where she 'could not help but wonder what it was that had drawn Constance Stokes to my mother'.

This leads into Summers' contemplation of the image – for Stokes, for Lydia Mortill and for Summers herself. Based on good, old-fashioned historical research, she teases the story beyond the known facts of the life of the artist and the buyer into speculations on the twentieth-century lives of these two very different women. Stokes – Catholic, conventional, self-ascribing career struggles to her 'married with children' status – counterpoints the childless Lydia Mortill's orchestration of a beau monde life in interwar Melbourne. Woven through this is the story of Tunī Cooper and her daughter, so different again.

It is the third element that provides the underlying tension in *The Lost Mother*: the relationship of Tunī and Anne. The 2000 autobiography *Ducks on the Pond* explains, and *The Lost Mother* amplifies, Summers' difficult teenage years at home with parents Tunī and Austin. By the time Summers (b.1945) left home in tumultuous circumstances at 17, Betty Friedan's *The Feminine Mystique* (1963) hadn't even been published. There was then no even faintly feminist tract to help Summers negotiate her relationship with her father who turned on her when she reached adolescence. Caught between the exigencies of her feisty daughter, her marriage and her other children, Tunī packed Anne off to Melbourne – incredibly, and satisfyingly for the shape of Summers' story, to board with a community of Catholic nuns called 'the Grail' at...Tay Creggan. It was there that Summers was shown the picture painted by Constance Stokes of her mother as a ten-year-old 'Alice' nearly thirty years earlier.

Loss links the women who figure in *The Lost Mother* – Tunī, Stokes, Mortill and, not least, Summers herself. Writes Summers towards the end: 'I had, almost literally, been forced from my home'. Worse, she and her mother in a fundamental way lost each other.

(For) a 17-year-old it was...a bruising experience and there is no doubt that it hurt me. I took it out on the women of the Grail and anyone else who crossed my path and tried to assert authority over me. And, I realise now, I took it out on my mother. I punished her for not choosing me by closing my heart to her. I would be dutiful but that would be all.

*The Lost Mother* starts out poignantly but hopefully. It is a quest tale driven by a quietly desperate sense of lost love, tinged with a true desire for atonement.

Mum would've been excited by my discoveries. She often complained that I did not really understand her, or know her. She would have thought I was now trying to make amends. I like to think she would be flattered to be the focus of my attention.

Yet for the long middle of the book, as Summers traverses the lives of Stokes and Mortill in detail, it becomes charged with a growing sense she will avoid the underlying issue: her relationship with Tunī. It's with relief, then, that Summers takes it head on in the final chapter, completely and heartwrenchingly. She doesn't spare herself or skimp on the pain experienced when Tunī's death finally – emotionally – reverberates through her. It's too late in some ways, but not others, to rework the relationship and for Summers to achieve some peace. *The Lost Mother* is her passage to that point.

Pictures always ask questions and *The Lost Mother* answers some posed by another portrait of a twentieth-century Australian woman, also by an Australian artist: photographer Carol Jerrems' 'Anne Summers' (1974).

In *A Book About Australian Women* (1974), Jerrems with editor Virginia Fraser assembled an astonishing collective portrait in which several notable figures of Australian Second Wave feminism appear. Amongst them are the cheerful looking revolutionary 'Lyndall Ryan' (1974) in Annandale, a multifarious 'Beatrice Faust' (1974) in Carlton, a gloweringly insolent 'Kate Jennings' (1974) in Glebe and the Brandoesque, camera-toting 'Digby Duncan' (1973) outside the Sydney Filmmakers Co-op in Darlinghurst.

Jerrems' portrait of Summers stands apart from these others. Then in her late twenties, Summers already had a stellar record as feminist activist and historian; she had just completed her doctorate in history at the

University of Sydney and the following year would see publication of her pathbreaking (and bestselling) book, *Damned Whores and God's Police* (1975). She was on the threshold of a brilliant journalistic career with the Fairfax press. There and later, working for the Hawke and Keating Governments, and in between as editor of *Ms. Magazine* in New York, Anne Summers always had a great personal publicity shot – confident, direct, glamorous even – for the inevitable marketing needs of a high-profile career.

Jerrems' portrait captures an uncertainty in Summers not evident after her professional rise – a hesitation, a weariness that speaks of where she has come from and what she's been through as opposed to where she is going. Summers sits on a fresh, neatly made bed with daisy print sheets; alongside there is a tea chest with an alarm clock, African violet, two books and a glasses case on it; a shriven sandstone wall stands behind. It looks like a novitiate's cell. The bed and the room may not even be hers, yet Jerrems has caught something perhaps lingering in Summers from her days as an 17-year-old exiled from home with the 'Grail' nuns at Tay Creggan.

*The Lost Mother* is an object lesson from Summers in what is to be wrung from really looking at an artwork. It will have resonance for a generation of Australian women who came of age as the mighty breaker of Second Wave feminism rolled in and propelled them forward – as well as for their daughters and even grand-daughters who in turn have had to negotiate their own relationships with them. Now in their sixties and seventies, Second Wave pioneers like Summers opened the path forward and we owe them for it.

**by Chris Wallace**

\* Chris is a political journalist and PhD student with the NCB. She has published biographies on *Greer: Untamed Shrew* (1997), *Hewson: A Portrait* (1993) and *The Private Don* (2004).

## Prime Minister Kevin Rudd Speaks About the Importance of Biography

*At the launch of Tom Keneally's history, **Australians: Origins to Eureka**, on 27 August 2009 at the National Library of Australia, Prime Minister, Kevin Rudd spoke eloquently on the important place of biography in telling our nation's history.*

*Here is what he had to say:*

Keneally's 'book is also a reminder of just how much history matters. I'm reminded of the insights of John Keane, the Australian author of the definitive biography of the great American revolutionary Thomas Paine, and yes, I'm wading my way through that biography at present. As Keane says, historical biography is itself, in essence, a form of democracy. As he says, and I quote him: "Democracy among the living requires democracy among the dead, in that votes must be extended to the most disenfranchised of all constituencies - our silenced ancestors". It's a remarkable insight that deserves attention.

At its highest, biography writing isn't "wielding the pen to protect an idol". It isn't muck-raking. And it's not just ripping yarns. In fact, it does have a higher purpose. Biography is the fulfilment of a duty owed by every generation to those who have gone before us, and able to be claimed against those yet to be born. A duty to capture, to preserve and to transmit the stories - the legacy of each generation. Because a human voice - a human life - retains its validity, its power and its relevance beyond its physical demise. As we build on the work done in our name and on our behalf by our forebears, we honour them best by listening to their voices from the past. Tom's book does that.

As Keane reminds us, it's not easy to untangle the complex threads of a human life far removed from the biographer's lived reality – as he says, "a biography is never straightforward". But the great challenge of the biographer is to offer readers the opportunity to ponder the subject themselves, "thereby encouraging them to tinker with their own sense of reality". It is two hundred years since the death of Thomas Paine - yet in Keane's world, Paine today "strikes our times like a trumpet blast from an ancient world". His ideas are still debated, and his words are still quoted, by the decision-makers of the present day. And we are cautioned not to consign him to the shelf of those who are described as "dead white European males".

Instead, he suggests, Paine can prove to us still that “the dead are sometimes more alive than the living.”. Of course few individuals achieve Tom Paine’s place in history. But Tom Keneally’s book certainly reminds there is a rich array of lives that have together shaped the character this nation, Australia, just as Paine did for his adopted nation, America.

And as a biographer, I suspect that Tom’s background in literary fiction gives him better insights than most into the workings of the human heart, as he has reflected in these pages on those attributes that together make up our national character. The love for history is, I believe, the hand-maiden of country. Not a blind, unthinking love - a love that refuses to accept that mistakes were made and opportunities lost. But a history that unapologetically celebrates the good. A history that equally unapologetically exposes the bad. And a history that draws upon both to inform our current age. That I believe is the best approach to the great stories that make up our national story. It’s not hagiography. Nor is it futile brow-beating. Instead, it’s a willingness to embrace the past, warts and all. To recognise there are competing strands in any nation’s history – of inclusion and exclusion; of hope and of fear; of progress and of stagnation. And, informed by a genuine engagement with our history, to move forward with absolute optimism and determination for the future.’.

[Click here](#) for the full text of Rudd’s speech.

## Phar Lap: A Legendary ADB Tale

*The Australian Dictionary of Biography does not include biographies of mythical creatures or animals. If we did, the legendary Australian racehorse, Phar Lap, would certainly be included. The late Barry Andrews, who contributed 27 articles to the ADB, also wrote one fictitious entry, in immaculate ADB house-style, on ‘LAP, PHAR (1926-32), sporting personality, business associate of modest speculators and national hero’. Barry delivered his article as an after-dinner speech at the first ‘Making of Sporting Traditions’ conference in 1977. Says Michael McKernan, ‘We laughed until we could bear no more; the timing of the performer and the occasion was perfect. It was a privilege to have been there.’ Barry’s article has also greatly amused ADB staff over the years. We hope that you, too, will relish it.*



LAP, PHAR (1926-32), sporting personality, business associate of modest speculators and national hero, was born on 4 October 1926 at Timaru, New Zealand, the second of eight children of Night Raid and his wife Entreaty, nee Prayer Wheel. The family had military connections, including Carbine and Musket (q.q.v.) although Raid himself had emigrated to Australia during the first World War.

A spindly, unattractive youth with chestnut hair, Lap was educated privately at Timaru until January, 1928, when he formed a liaison with the Sydney entertainment entrepreneur Harold Telford. With Telford, Lap moved to Sydney and established premises in the suburb of Randwick, a number of short term (distance) ventures were unsuccessful, although after James E. Pike (q.v.) commenced employment and Telford became a silent partner, the business flourished. A small, dapper man who dressed flamboyantly in multi-coloured coats and hats, Pike’s nervousness caused him to lose weight before each speculation with Lap; yet their affiliation lasted for over two years and proved beneficial to hundreds of Australian investors.

The most successful years were between 1930 and 1932, when the business expanded into Victoria, South Australia and Mexico. Pike and Lap received numerous awards for services to the entertainment industry, including an MC in 1930; they shared with Telford a gross taxable income of over 50,000 pounds. This income was substantially increased, however, by generous donations from several Sydney publishers, including Ken Ranger and Jack Waterhouse (q.q.v.)

Early in 1930 Lap journey to North America to strengthen his interest there; Telford, who disliked travelling, and Pike, who had weighty problems to contend with, stayed behind. Tall and rangy, known affectionately as ‘Bobby’, ‘The Red Terror’ and occasionally as ‘you mongrel’, Lap died in mysterious circumstances in Atherton, California, on 5 April, 1932, and was buried in California, Melbourne,



Canberra and Wellington. A linguist as well as a businessman, he popularised the phrase 'get stuffed!' although owing to an unfortunate accident in his youth he left no children.

I. Carter, *Phar Lap* (Melbourne, 1971), and for bibliog; information from J. O'Hara and T.H. Mouth; inspiration from anon. ADB contributors.

**by B.G. Andrews**

(reprinted from *Sporting Traditions: The Journal of the Australian Society for Sports History*, vol 5, no 1, Nov 1988, pp 7-8

## Three-Year Postdoctoral Fellowship Offered at the National Centre of Biography

The NCB is offering a unique postdoctoral fellowship for a scholar who has recently completed a PhD in History or is in the process of submitting their thesis. As well as pursuing their own independent research in life writing and biography, the successful applicant will spend half of their time working with the experienced staff of the Australian Dictionary of Biography, researching and editing entries. As anyone who has worked at the ADB can testify, it is a marvellous training ground for those interested in honing their editing skills, and learning the techniques of skilful and precise writing.

During their time at the NCB, the postdoctoral fellow will be expected to:

- achieve a continuing high level of personal scholarship in life writing and biographical research
- be involved in professional activities including research editing
- attend conferences and present papers and seminars in history and life writing and biographical history
- conduct research in biography (including comparative history where relevant) and prepare conference and seminar papers and publications from that research
- help to develop workshop, seminar and conference programs for the Centre and contribute to the supervision of postgraduate research projects and contribute to the postgraduate teaching program as required.

**Applications close 15 November 2009.**

The successful applicant will take up their position on 1 January 2010. 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](mailto:melanie.nolan@anu.edu.au)

[Click here](#) for the full advertisement and application form for the fellowship.

## Who's Using ADB Online?

The ADB has been accessible online for three years and its use steadily grows. We now receive over 60 million hits a year. We hope to conduct a survey of users, soon, to better understand who they are, what kinds of searches they are conducting and, most importantly, their rates of satisfaction with the site.

Meanwhile, our statistics show that about 60% of users are in Australia and 13% in the USA. Rather surprisingly, given our strong historical ties, only 3% of searchers are from the UK. While most users arrive at the site via a search engine, 33% are conducting direct searches, that is, they have either bookmarked the site or are conducting further searches having arrived at ADB Online. Users are also making extensive use of the links provided between entries, confirming our belief that they are eager for more information.

Use of the site is fairly consistent throughout the day with the peak period being 9 am to 10 pm EST. Weekdays are the peak usage days. There is a fairly sharp slump in use on Saturdays (presumably people

are shopping or playing sport or engaging in other activities). Usage picks up again on Sunday.

‘Caroline Chisholm’ is the most frequently requested search term and has been every month since the ADB went online. We have no explanation for this phenomenon other than that a lot of schoolchildren must be studying her. ‘Ned Kelly’ is the second most requested article. Among women, Vida Goldstein, Mary MacKillop, Nellie Melba, Edith Cowan and Margaret Preston rate highly while Douglas Mawson, Peter Lalor, Andrew Fisher, Bennelong, Henry Parkes and Pemulwuy are the most frequently requested men. On a lighter note, ‘John Curtin’ is the most frequently misspelt search term with a considerable number of people asking for ‘John Curtain’. Surprisingly, James Cook, the prime ministers, premiers and governors do not generally appear in the top 20 search terms. Perhaps users are relying on other sites for this material.

It is, of course, not possible to glean from the statistics just who our users are. We believe, though, that schoolchildren are probably the single highest group of users, followed by family historians. From the emails we receive it is also obvious that many public servants, particularly those working in heritage areas, rely on the ADB Online. The ‘curious’ are also a significant group. The number of people searching for ‘Ian Fairweather’ increased markedly following the airing of the ABC documentary on the late artist in July. A large proportion of those searches were conducted the night the documentary aired. Fairweather remained a very popular search for the next three days and came dangerously close to knocking Caroline Chisholm off her ‘perch’ as the most requested search term of the month.

Other users discover ADB Online in surprising ways. We received an email recently from a woman who found an old bottle, imprinted with ‘H Jones & Co (Sydney) Pty Ltd’, washed ashore on a beach in Southport, England. Her curiosity aroused, she googled the name and ended up at the ADB entry on Henry Jones, jam manufacturer, who, with others, formed the limited liability company, H. Jones & Co. Pty Ltd in 1899. She was delighted to find the information and our website. We, too, marvelled at the incredible search possibilities and outreach made possible by moving the ADB to the online environment.

## Public Art at the ANU

*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 second of the columns appearing in the series ‘Life Sentences’.*

Take a walk around the ANU campus and you’re likely to be struck by the vast number of art works. Plaques usually accompany the pieces, but how many *ANU Reporter* readers know the stories behind the objects?

It’s no accident that ANU has a rich collection of outdoor sculpture. Since its founding in 1946, the University has deliberately planned its architecture and landscape design to create an integrated environment.

Many of the commissioned sculptures are by well-known artists, such as Gerald Lewers (1905-1962).

Two of Lewers’s sculptures, *Relaxation* (1953) and the *Lady Theaden Hancock* memorial fountain: *Swans in flight* (1961), stand near University House. Michael Crayford’s biography of the artist is in the [ADB Online](#).

Lewers was born on 1 July 1905 in Hobart to Quaker parents. Soon after the family moved to Sydney. Lewers grew up on the North Shore, where he developed an interest in the Australian bush. He later enjoyed carving animals and birds in wood and stone, including penguins, ants, numbats, kangaroos, giraffes, dolphins and fish. His ‘love and understanding for the wood and stone of his own land, coupled with his sensitivity for the inner life of wild animals and birds ... led to some of his finest and most distinguished works’, Crayford writes.

The recipient of over 15 major commissions, Lewers studied art in Sydney, Vienna and London.

*Relaxation*, a reclining sandstone figure of heroic size, is recognisably human, but also has a 'satisfying fluid abstract shape'. The ANU sculpture walk booklet suggests that the 'sunset laminated sandstone almost looks as if it could have been carved by those age-old shapers of stone, wind, water and time'.

*Swans in flight* was commissioned by historian Sir Keith Hancock in memory of his wife and her love of swans. The sculpture booklet describes the bronze sculpture as: '[f]luid as a splash of molten metal, this folding arabesque of birds expresses the collective motion of a flock, yet also evokes the complex mechanism of feathers overlapping scale-like on a single wing'.

While holidaying in Queensland, Lewers was thrown from a horse and fractured his skull. He died of a brain haemorrhage on 9 August 1962.

**by Dr Barbara Dawson**

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