

Recovering and situating life stories in *Taking to the Field: A History of Australian Women in Science*



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BIOGRAPHY WORKSHOP
SERIES 2023



Jane will be presenting by Zoom; attendees may participate by attending the Zoom broadcast in seminar room 6.71, RSSS Building, or Zoom in via their own devices.

Biography Workshop National
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Drawing on my recent monograph, this paper reflects on the potential and pitfalls of using life stories as a basis for writing broader histories, particularly in women's and gender history. Histories of women in science are dominated by biographical approaches. In *Taking to the Field*, I set out instead to present a broad historical narrative, but one that incorporates individual women who were either prominent in their field or obscure but exemplary of typical experiences, activities and contributions.

Life stories, then, were still essential to writing this general history. Recovering these women's lives involved chasing fragments of evidence across diverse locations and stitching them together in a labour-intensive process very different to most 'mainstream' histories, where navigating the archival record is far more straightforward. At the same time, situating these women's individual stories within their broader context was imperative to avoid presenting them as aberrant or exceptional. It was also essential to understanding the (significant) forces that supported women's entry into science – a field where it is typically assumed they didn't exist.



Jane Carey is an Associate Professor in History at the University of Wollongong. Her research spans across settler colonial, women's and Indigenous histories with a focus on whiteness and empire.

She is the co-editor of numerous collections including *Re-Orienting Whiteness* (2009), *Creating White Australia* (2009), *Indigenous Networks: Mobility, Connections and Exchange* (2014), and *Colonial Formations* (2021). Her most recent book is *Taking to the Field: A History of Australian Women in Science* (Monash University Publishing, 2023).

Time:

Thursday 27 April 2023,
11:00am-12.30pm

In Person:

Seminar Room 6.71
Level 6 RSSS Building
146 Ellery Crescent

Zoom option:

Meeting ID:
849 0058 9945

Password: 630803

Join Zoom Meeting:
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