



Australian
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BIOGRAPHY FOOTNOTES

The Newsletter of the National Centre of Biography

Issue 20, December 2019

ISSN 1838-6377



L-R: John Kalokerinos, Malcolm Allbrook, Arthur Sinodinos, 21 November 2019, ADB Archives

A special issue of the *Australian Journal of Biography and History*, produced by the National Centre of Biography in association with the Canberra and District Historical Society, was launched by Arthur Sinodinos AO at the Hellenic Club of Canberra on 21 November (see page 4 for more information).

FROM THE DIRECTOR'S DESK



Welcome to Issue 20 of *Biography Footnotes*

I am pleased to announce that the ADB Editorial Board has agreed to the proposal to begin revising the *Australian Dictionary of Biography*, starting with the two earliest volumes, published in 1966 and 1967. 'Missing person' entries will also be added.

The 1116 articles in volumes 1 and 2 cover the floruit period to 1850. More than half a century's further research has revealed additional information about many of these subjects. We often didn't even have access to birth, death and marriage certificates when working on them. Early *ADB* entries are also attracting increasing criticism because they reflect the historiography of the time in which they were written, and are unable to answer the sort of questions that early twenty-first century historians are likely to ask, especially as whole groups, such as colonial women, indigenous people, and convicts, are underrepresented.

Our limited funding resources will not allow us to undertake a major revisions project as well as continue to work on articles for those who died more recently. So we have made the decision to put on hold working on entries for those who died post-2000. We are getting perilously close to the present anyway, and are experiencing increasing difficulties around privacy issues in gaining access to BDM certificates and other archival material.

Having said that we will continue with some limited strategic commissioning of subjects' lives who died post-2000, such as Don Bradman, Faith Bandler, Malcolm Fraser, Margaret Olley, Gough Whitlam, Betty Cuthbert and Nancy Wake.

The revisions project will begin in earnest in about seven years when the entries currently being edited, for those who died between 1991-2000, are all published on the *ADB* website. This gives us plenty of lead time to widely discuss how we want the 'new' *ADB*, which, unlike the 'original' print-based *ADB*, will be conceived of as an online resource, with possible spinoff print publications, to operate. We welcome your input.

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It is with sadness that we announce the death, in July, of Ann Moyal, the *ADB*'s first employee. It has been a privilege to have known her. One of Ann's first jobs at the Dictionary was to take a road trip around the country to gauge support amongst historians, librarians and archivists for the project. In her memory we have reprinted her report of her adventures.

This year also marks the 60th anniversary of Barry Jones's work on his remarkable *Dictionary of World Biography*, which the NCB and ANU Press have published since 2014. Barry has allowed us to share with you the revised 'Introduction' which will appear in next year's volume.

And, while we are thinking about the nature of dictionaries of biography, we have included Tom Griffiths's speech at the launch, in May, of the NCB's publication *True Biographies of Nations? The Cultural Journeys of Dictionaries of National Biography*, edited by Karen Fox, and Colin Nettelbeck's news about his organisation's new online French-Australian biographical dictionary.

Biography Footnotes is published online and as a pdf for the National Centre of Biography, ANU
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Congratulations

to Dr Carolyn Rasmussen, chair of the ADB's Victorian Working Party, whose book, *The Blackburns: Private Lives, Public Ambition* (MUP) won the 2019 Victorian Community History Publication Award. Carolyn also represents the Professional Historians Association (Vic & Tas) and the ADB on the State Library of Victoria User Organisations Committee.

NCB is moving

NCB staff are moving into a new (and, so far, nameless) building next to the A.D. Hope Building in Ellery Crescent at the ANU in April next year.

It is with sadness that we leave the Coombs Building having been one of its original occupants when it opened in 1964. We are even located in the same corridor as we were in 1964, and our general editor is in the same office, as the first GE.

To bid farewell to the building, and to celebrate the achievements of all those who have worked with the ADB over the years, we will be holding a party — where else, but in the Coombs 'Tea Room' — the place of so many past gatherings — next March. We hope that all former staff, authors, readers and supporters will join us.

We will let you know details about the date and time of the farewell gathering when they are finalised. Meanwhile we welcome any reminiscences about the ADB and the Coombs Building. You can send them to ncb@anu.edu.au

ADB vol 19

It is anticipated that volume 19 of the *Australian Dictionary of Biography*, consisting of entries for people who died 1991-95, will be published in the second half of 2020. The entries are freely available online via the ADB website but many people also like to read them in hardcopy. The volume will be published by ANU Press.

Acting General Editor

Dr Malcolm Allbrook will act as Director of the National Centre of Biography and General Editor of the ADB from January to July 2020 while Professor Melanie Nolan is on research leave.

Malcolm's contacts details are: malcolm.allbrook@anu.edu.au and (w) (02) 6125 4455.

Indigenous Australian Dictionary of Biography

The first two of the 190 *Indigenous Australian Dictionary of Biography* articles have been published online. They are:

[Woretemoeteryenner](#) (c.1795-1847), who lived and worked on the Bass Strait islands as a sealer during her childbearing years and later became a kangaroo hunter. She is part of a small group of palawa women who form a link between pre-European contact Aboriginal people and present-day Tasmanian Aboriginal communities.

[Annie Brice](#) (c.1849-1931), a Boandik woman, was taught to read and write by Mary MacKillop when the latter was a governess at Penola, South Australia, in the 1860s. Brice later assisted at a school for Aboriginal children, worked as a domestic servant and, despite enduring many hardships, is remembered as a proud Aboriginal woman and mother of 13 children.

It is hoped that a further 40 *IADB* entries will be published online in 2020.

Books to be published by ANU.Lives series in Biography in 2020

* Katherine Massam, *Between: Spanish Benedictine Missionary Women in Australia*.

* Len Richardson, *People and Place: New Zealand's West Coast in History*.

Some ADB statistics

It will probably come as no surprise to learn that Smith is the most common surname (for both women and men) of the 13,168 people who have entries in the *Australian Dictionary of Biography*. Mary (104 entries), followed by Margaret (64), and Dorothy (34) are the most common first names of women in the Dictionary. The most popular names for men are John (1165 entries), William (945), and James (597).

47.7 per cent of ADB subjects were born overseas, with 72.2 per cent of them having British heritage. If we look at the most recent period we are working on, people who died in 1991-95, the influence of the British is still strong with 47.8 per cent of those born overseas in that period coming from the United Kingdom.

Women account for only 12.5 per cent of all entries. Things are improving though. 17.5 per cent of those who died in 1991-95 are women, and the colonial women's project will culminate in an additional 1500 articles on women being added to the ADB. The *Indigenous Australian Dictionary of Biography* is aiming for equal representation of women and men.

The ten most common occupations (*NB subjects can have more than one occupation) for men in the ADB are politician (2189 entries), public servant (1822), pastoralist (1088), local government councillor (1029), army officer (1004), soldier (862), academic (846), local government head (662), company director (633), and journalist (577).

Women's ten top occupations are more broad ranging: women's activist (209 entries), schoolteacher (200), community worker (125), nurse (116), novelist (87), school principal (86), journalist (83), painter (82), poet (81), and public servant (80).

NEWS (cont'd)

Congratulations

to *ADB* authors and members of Working Parties who received Australian honours since the last newsletter:

Queens' Birthday Honours (2019)

Member (AM) in the General Division

Ms Suzanne Baker
Em Prof Richard Fotheringham
Rev Dr Thomas Frame
Dr Lenore Layman
Dr Andrew Lemon
Em Prof Anthony Radford

Dr Peter Read
Mr Andrew Spate

Medal (OAM) in the General Division

Dr Terry Grigg
Sister Mary Shanahan
Dr Deborah Towns

Deaths of *ADB* authors

It is with sadness that we note the deaths, that were reported to us since April 2019, of the following *ADB* authors:

John Bodycomb
John Bollen
Hal Colebatch
Thomas Faunce
Graham Freudenberg
David Hough
Jessie Serle
Victor Isaacs
Ian Jack
Richard Johnson
Ann Moyal
Jillian Oppenheimer

Australian Journal of Biography and History, no 2, 2020



The second number of the *Australian Journal of Biography and History* is a joint project between the National Centre of Biography and the Canberra and District Historical Society. It seeks to recognise the relationship between the study of biography, as exemplified by the *Australian Dictionary of Biography*, and the practice of local and family history and heritage, the mission of the society. Most of the contributors are members of the society, and have been involved in the often painstaking and minute study of aspects of the history of Canberra and its region for many years. In 'A City and its People: Canberra in the *Australian Dictionary of Biography*', Karen Fox explores Canberra history by discussing some of the wide array of people 'who have lived, worked, loved, and fought' in the district, and who are represented in the *ADB*. James McDonald, in his article 'A Good Sheep Station Ruined', examines pastoral innovation and enterprise in the region, with stations such as Henry 'Babe' Curran's Ginninderra a national exemplar of the wool industry. In a second essay, 'Migration as an Opportunity for Reinvention: Alfred Rich and Margaret Phillips', McDonald discusses the potential of immigration to refashion identities, using the biographies of Alfred and Margaret Rich, early settlers at Gundaroo, who had faced disadvantages in England because of their racial backgrounds.

'Three Years in the Life of Chief Constable Patrick Kinsela', by Gillian Kelly, considers the role of the first policeman in the district, who took up his posting at the nascent town of Queanbeyan in 1837, and in many ways exemplified the

system of justice in the region until his early death in 1841. While very little is known about Kinsela's life until he assumed the role, from then on his activities come into focus by virtue of his reports, reports in the local press and colonial government inquiries. Michael Hall, in his essay 'The Sentinel over Canberra's military history', explores the connections between the Anglican Church of St John the Baptist, now in the Canberra suburb of Reid, and the military, and the wartime experiences of some of its parishioners. The final two essays of the volume move towards aspects of the modern history of Canberra, the first exploring the life stories of Vince and Viola Kalokerinos who, for many years, ran a milk bar at Curtin, a place that has assumed a prominent place in both the commercial and social history, and indeed has become almost a part of the folklore, of the city. Their story is a reminder of the impact of Greek immigrants on the development of Canberra, and their willingness to work long hours to provide essential services to a population that was made up largely of government employees. Finally, Nick Swain discusses the life and work of one of Canberra's early photographic entrepreneurs, Les Dwyer, who came to Canberra as a construction labourer in 1924 but, as a consequence of the Depression and workplace injury, converted his hobby into an enterprise. Included also are two essay length review articles, and a series of reviews on recently published Australian biographical works.

The *AJBH* is available for purchase or free download from the ANU Press website.

OBITUARY – ANN MOYAL

Melanie Nolan pays tribute to Ann Moyal (1926-2019), the ADB's first employee

Ann Moyal's death in Canberra on 21 July 2019 breaks a thread — the last living connection with the establishment of the Australian Dictionary of Biography in the late 1950s.

A graduate of the University of Sydney (BA Hons, 1947), Ann Veronica Helen Hurley (later Cousins, Mozley and Moyal) set out for England on a scholarship to study for an MA at the Institute of Historical Research at London University. She did not envisage an academic career and, after a first successful year, she worked in Britain for a further eight years, half of that time as Lord Beaverbrook's research assistant. She wrote about that period of her life in *Breakfast with Beaverbrook* (1995).

In November 1958, on her return to Australia, Sir Keith Hancock employed her as a research assistant responsible for the 'organization of the Register of Australian Biography and preliminary work towards a Dictionary of Australian Biography'. In 1959 she became a research fellow and assistant editor of the *ADB*. That year she drove across Australia to set up the working parties in every state and to enlist historians' cooperation for the project. She recounted her experiences as the *ADB*'s first, and only, employee for nearly four years, in Chapter 2 of *The ADB's Story* (2013).



ANU Vice-Chancellor, Ian Chubb and Ann Moyal cut the ADB's 50th anniversary cake, 2009, ADB Archives

In 1962 Mozley took up a position at the Basser Library, Australian Academy of Science, where she began work on establishing an historical archive of Australian scientists. In 1963 she married the mathematician Joe Moyal. She worked in publishing in Chicago, returning to Australia to teaching positions at the NSW Institute of Technology (1972-



Ann Moyal, 2016, ADB Archives

76) and at Griffith University, where she was director of the Science Policy Research Centre (1977-79). Over the years she published widely on the social history of nineteenth and twentieth-century Australian science. In 1995 she founded the Independent Scholars Association of Australia. Appointed AM in 1993, she was awarded a D.Litt by the ANU in 1995 and D.Litt. honorary by the University of Sydney in 2007. She wrote about this part of her life in *A Woman of Influence: Science, Men & History* (2014).

Others will mark various aspects of Ann's many involvements. She was a member of the Emeritus Faculty at the ANU. Her association with the ADB spanned nearly seven decades. She submitted her 8th and last *ADB* article in October last year on the geophysicist and earth scientist 'Ted' Ringwood. She was pleased to be invited, saying 'moving towards the close of my historian's career, it would seem both symmetrical and quite rousing to appear among the contributors' of volume 19 which will be published next year.

Ann was one of the ADB's best friends: she was an honoured guest at the ADB's 50th anniversary celebrations in 2009, helping the vice-chancellor Ian Chubb cut the cake. She attended and spoke at our biography workshops and conferences regularly in her tenth decade and her familiar presence will be missed greatly.

Professor Melanie Nolan is the Director of the National Centre of Biography and General Editor of the Australian Dictionary of Biography.

ANNE'S ADB ROAD TRIP

In August-September 1959 Ann Moyal (then Ann Mozley) embarked on a two-month road trip around Australia to gauge the level of support for the fledgling ADB project. As a tribute to Ann, and to all those who worked so hard in establishing the ADB, we are publishing her report.

Report of My Journey to Perth, Adelaide, Melbourne and Hobart

I shall submit the report in two parts; (1) steps taken in connection with the Dictionary of Australian Biography [as the *Australian Dictionary of Biography* was then called], and (2) discussion and proposals on the work of the National Register.

Dictionary of Australian Biography

My journey has been a most profitable one. I have now had the opportunity of discussion and conversation with members of the History Departments of the four Universities, and in particular with the specialist Australian history staffs; with interested members of other Departments whom we might later want to co-opt to the Dictionary work; with the Archivists and Libraries of each centre; and, particularly in Tasmania, with the members of the Historical associations whose help with the early volumes of the Dictionary will be important.

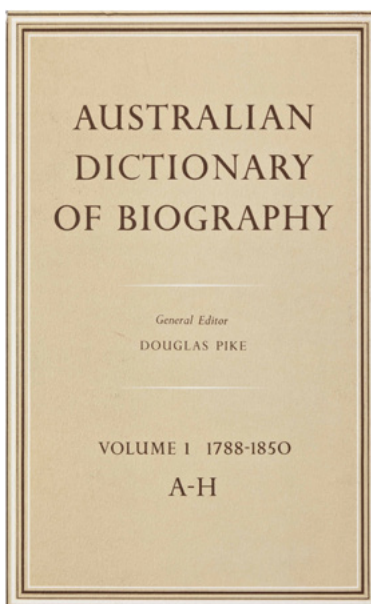
The overall response in all these discussions has been one of wide and genuine approval of the plan and a readiness to carry enthusiasm into action as soon as invited to do so. There was considerable surprise that we had progressed so far, though the view was general in academic and library circles that there was a need for a fullscale Dictionary of Australian Biography, and that now was the time to begin. Everyone agreed that this was the rightful task of a National University.

In view of this most positive reaction, it seemed appropriate to accept suggestions for provisional Working Parties and to arrange exploratory meetings. I did this in Adelaide, Perth and Hobart. With [Professor La Nauze's](#) coming visit to Canberra, there were no round table discussions in Melbourne, but I found my talk with [Dr. Serle](#) particularly profitable and encouraging.

Plans for Volume 1

In Hobart, after talking with Professor McManners [a cleric and historian of British religion and the Ancien Régime] and Mr. McRae, and independently with Mr. Sharman (the State Archivist) I invited a Working Party to meet and advise on the existing list of inclusions for the period 1788-1825 and to make suggestions. Its members are Mr. McRae, Chairman, Miss Janet McRae (Research Assistant in the History Department responsible for the collection of Tasmanian Historical Documents), Mr. Sharman (who will be replaced by Mr. [P. Eldershaw](#), member of the Archives staff when Sharman leaves in October), Mr. [Frank Green](#) (journalist and ex-Clerk of the House) and Mr. Garvie (President of the Tasmanian Historical Research Association and founder member of Tasmanian Historical Records Society). It has been suggested

that the Chairmanship should pass to Miss McRae when her brother goes on study leave in November.



This is a rather unusual Working Party; none of its members have a specialist knowledge of the period though all have a real interest in it. Their contribution will therefore be more of an industrious researching into claims for inclusion than the decisions from experience made by [Malcolm Ellis](#). For this reason they proposed that we should use the help and advice of members of the Tasmanian Historical Research Association for expert opinion on

particular small aspects of the early period and I have a list of interested members for this purpose. The Working Party also acknowledged that they would have some difficulty in nominating contributors for Volume 1 as there is a dearth in Tasmania of persons qualified to write on the first 25 years. Suggestions, they felt, would have to come in the main from N.S.W. and Victoria. The military and naval people, for example, would certainly be better dealt with from N.S.W.

A second meeting of the Working Party was called for September 16 and I now expect their amended list for Volume 1 together with a short Appendix list to supplement Professor [Manning Clark's](#).

As there was a meeting of the Tasmanian Historical Research Association while I was in Hobart, I was able to talk with many of the people to whom we will circulate the proposed list of inclusions. This is a most robust and lively association and their co-operation and interest in the Dictionary seems assured. I have, in addition, made arrangements with the editor of their journal to publish the list of Tasmanian inclusions in Vol. 1 (and any N.S.W. figures with Tasmanian connections) in this year's last issue. This will give the list the widest possible circulation.

Outside the Working Party, Professor McManners gives his blessing to the plan though he contemplates no active part

ADB ROAD TRIP (cont'd)

in it himself. He has a proprietary interest in the collection of Historical Documents by the History Department and feels that the gradual discovery of this material may provide good reason for a later reprinting of the Dictionary in straightforward alphabetical arrangements, when new light has been thrown on the earlier periods but this he feels is no argument for holding up the work now. [In 1959 and 1960, Period 1 was planned to include those who 'flourished' up to 1825; and Period 2 those who 'flourished' between 1826-50. It was decided to amalgamate the first two periods at the National Committee meeting of 13-14 August 1964.]

Plans for Volume 2

In each of the Universities I discussed our ideas for producing a second volume of the Dictionary, possibly in 1963. The concept of two chronological volumes covering the entire early period of the Australian Colonies, and produced almost simultaneously, was a popular one, and there seems no good reason against embarking on the early work of the second volume right away. In each State I formed the impression that while the History Departments are quite hard pressed on their own projects, they were genuinely disposed towards being identified with the Dictionary and making a start on it now.

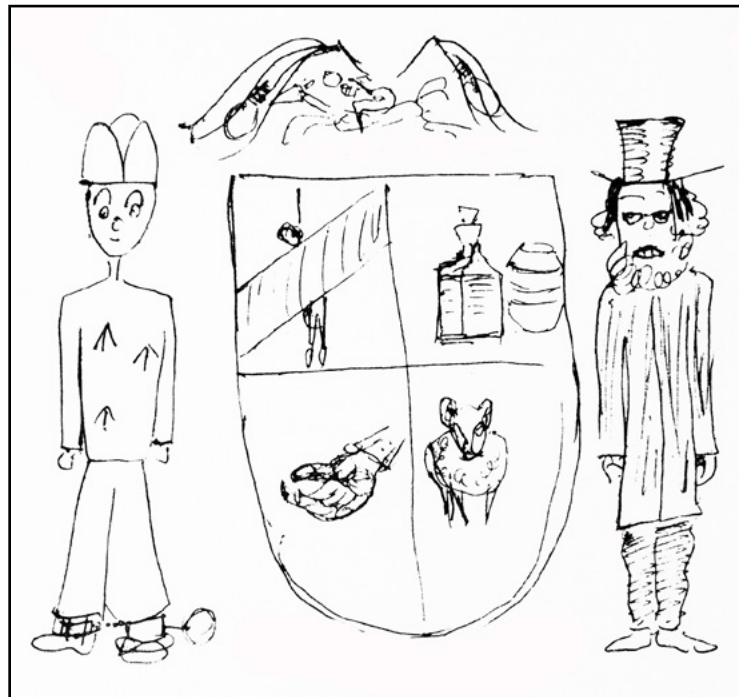
South Australia

In Adelaide, Dr. [Douglas Pike](#) is a strong advocate of the Dictionary plan and supports our ideas of centralisation in Canberra and an Advisory Committee consisting of one representative from each University to act in a consultative capacity. He would be the obvious choice for this and has expressed his readiness to take charge of the South Australian Working Party on the 1825-50 period. Dr. [Grenfell Price](#) was proposed as the second member of the team, and Mr. Finnis (local historian on the early period). Another candidate would be [Mr. Pitt](#), former Principal Librarian who began the Archives' biographical index.

At a provisional meeting of the Working Party, Dr. Pike presented a preliminary list of S.A. names for inclusion in Volume 2, which discussion reduced to 52. The amended list is attached. The intention was to have a further meeting with Dr. Grenfell Price (who was unable to join us in Adelaide) and to consider lengths for the proposed biographies. Dr. Pike thinks that the minimum length for a biography should not be more than 400 words; he contends that the articles should be candid and unbiased, maintaining that the Dictionary will

afford an opportunity of reducing some historical figures to size. His chairmanship should, I feel, offset the danger of the 'progenitor' emphasis in the S. Australian selection. He thinks we should consider extending the date of Volume 2 to 1856.

The position in South Australia is therefore that a Provisional Working Party has been nominated, and we have a preliminary list for circulation. Dr. Price (who seems to have some reservations in view of his other commitments) is visiting Canberra in November and will talk with us then. If expansion of the Working Party seems desirable, Mr. Pitt might be invited to join it.



doodle for an ADB crest, thought to have been drawn by Dictionary staffer, Jim Gibbney in the 1960s, ADB Archives

Professor Stretton

endorsed the project and has offered to appoint a Research Assistant in the Department to help in the basic work for the S.A. contributions, a certain amount of which is likely to devolve on Dr. Pike. Among other members of the History staff there seems to be a very real interest in the Dictionary and, in particular, Dr. Inglis should be helpful when we reach the later period. The Archives people have also promised their support.

Western Australia

In Perth, Dr. Crowley's reaction was most enthusiastic and positive, and he at once offered to draw up a tentative list of inclusions for

Western Australia up to 1850. I took the opportunity therefore, as G. Bolton was also in Perth, to organise a provisional Working Party of Dr. Crowley, Miss Mollie Lukis (Government Archivist), Mr. Bolton and myself to discuss the W.A. position. Mrs. [Alexandra Hasluck](#) has been nominated as a fourth member of this Working Party, and she has the advantage of links in both Perth and Canberra.

The Western Australian contribution to Volume 2 will, of course, be comparatively small. The list which the Working Party considered when it met, contains 25 names of which a number have been marked for review against the other lists in order to determine relative importance. It was agreed that this method of comparative assessment would be the most satisfactory way of determining final allocation between the States. The W.A. list is hence essentially provisional; it does provide some estimate of lengths of proposed biographies. In the case of the West it was suggested that the practice of the *D.N.B.* in amalgamating the lives of father and son when one is of lesser distinction, could usefully be applied. This Working

ADB ROAD TRIP (cont'd)

Party shared the view that we have set our minimum wordage too high.

Dr. Crowley and Miss Lukis will certainly form a competent and hard working nucleus of the W.A. Working party, and Mrs. Hasluck would give it another dimension if she can be persuaded to join. The question of contributors is not likely to present many difficulties here; there are several obvious choices of authors, and Dr. Crowley will undertake two or three major ones, although there is a prospect of his absence in Malaya for two years. Miss Lukis has offered to do any research in the archives on the minor characters. The Working Party has supplied me with the names of persons among whom the list of inclusions should be circulated.

Victoria

In Melbourne, Dr. Serle gave me much of his time and many thoughtful criticisms and suggestions. He expressed the keenest interest in our proposals, and despite his own present undertakings, I am sure we can anticipate some very constructive help from him.

He recommends the following members for a Working Party on the 1825-50 period. Mrs. June Philips (Department of History), Philip Brown, Ian McLaren (Chairman of Historical Society) and himself. He would be willing to chair this group. One of the members of the Melbourne Library should, with the advice of the Librarian, be added to it.

Dr. Serle has also given me names of a number of people who will be useful for consultation on the lists of inclusions. He is also ready to make *Historical Studies* available to publicise the Dictionary project and for the publication of proposed lists of inclusions. The list for Volume 1 should, desirably, be printed in the March number. He advises that we should bring in the Historical Societies to help us as consultants, and that we should aim to associate some first class schoolmasters with the writing of Dictionary articles, flinging the net wide in order to bring in good people.

Importantly, he proposed that we should also be considering constituting a Working Party for the post 1850 period, as from the Victorian viewpoint, this will be when the strain will be felt, and that we should begin now accumulating material on these more difficult years.

This view is endorsed by Professor La Nauze who would, I gather, be prepared to take on the chairmanship (possibly with [Professor Crawford](#) or with Dr. Serle) of a later Working Party. Geoffrey Blainey is recommended as someone who would be a particularly useful member. Professor La Nauze feels that this long term group should at least make an early start drawing up names and estimating the problems. He has offered that a Department Research Assistant could be made available to help in the work.

The first step in Victoria is to assemble the 1825-50 Working Party (Mrs. Philips has indicated her willingness to join) to draw up a list; with this in progress we will be in a position to think in terms of the post 1850 Party.

Tasmania

The problem of two concurrent Working Parties arose in Tasmania. The view of the History Department was that the Working Party for Volume 2 should be drawn from completely different personnel than those engaged on the early period in order to ensure speed of production. Two names have been agreed upon, and others have been put up for consideration.

Mr. John Reynolds (who recalls your first advocacy of a Dictionary in the late 1920s) has offered his help. His own researches now lie in the field of Victorian mining and company history post 1850 and in later political biography and he has undertaken to give us consultative assistance there. At the same time he has agreed to work on the Tasmanian Working Party 1825-1850, and would be willing to take the chair. Mr. [K. Dallas](#) of the Economics Department has also consented to join.

Of the other names advanced, no real agreement existed in Hobart. [Mr. von Stiegletz](#), a Launceston local historian strongly recommended by Mr. Reynolds, was not supported by the academics; Mr. Stancombe of Launceston would make a sensible contribution but his specialist interests are surveyors and highways; Professor Townley, Department of Political Science, though he contends that he has moved away from historical interests of the last century into the post 1930s, would, I imagine, respond with the right approach.

My own feeling is that we should, in part, resist the opinion of the History Department and induce Miss McRae to sit in on the second Working Party as the documents she is investigating relate particularly to this period; and that we should also have an Archives representative, either Mr. Stilwell or Mr. Eldershaw, on this committee. We could continue to circularise the Historical Association and Royal Society members for this later period.

Mr. Reynolds, who showed a lively interest in our plans, underlines that we should be thinking about building up personal recollections of important recent figures from competent living contemporaries — if necessary by a process of interviewing and recording first hand impressions.

Conclusions

All these steps taken so far will need consolidating, and it seems desirable to constitute the Working Parties — which have in most cases already acted — by formal invitation as soon as possible.

I have indicated that we hope to clarify problems of organization and procedure after October, but I think my discussions and provisional arrangements should be underwritten from here before this. On organizational questions, there is no doubt that we will have support for centralization in Canberra, this is accepted everywhere as the obvious course. The University people felt that the proposed Advisory Committee of one of their members from each State, and acting in an advisory role would be adequate machinery for identifying them with the project. It would be helpful to devise a manual or procedure and policy for the Working Parties.

ADB ROAD TRIP (cont'd)

I gathered some opinions from people like Dr. Serle, Professors McManners and Stretton, Dr. Pike and Dr. Crowley on general questions of editorship. The proposal for separate editorship of each volume was a popular one among them. Finally the question of paying contributors seems to be clearly settled. There is certainly no question of it among academics, and in each Working Party the view was held that contributors would be found outside the range of freelance journalists and writers who would expect remuneration. Members of historical associations are most willing to give their help and their time and the Serle suggestion of using competent schoolmasters has much to recommend it.

National Register Work

Part of my time in each of the capitals was spent in investigating Library resources and in gathering opinions from the Librarians and the Archivists, as well as from the Australian historians, on how we could most effectively build up our Register material, and become in time the centre of biographical information. There was general support for this plan and concurrence that the A.N.U. was the legitimate place for developing such a centre.

Some idea of our present achievement was revealed in the Register Short List which has been distributed among the Libraries and History departments. There was comment and criticism on the selection reflected in the Register, and on the choice of sources, but there was also the view that we had progressed a long way in a useful direction. This criticism was helpful as it brought with it recommendations from each State of printed biographical sources which we should consider incorporating in the Register. It also exposed the immediate deficiencies that might be remedied, the most singular being the comparative neglect in our records of Western Australian, and to a lesser extent, of Tasmanian personalities.

The discussions convinced me of one thing: that to make the Register effective and representative, it would be necessary to ensure that material will flow in systematically from the States, both from the Libraries and Universities.

From the Library point of view I have gone some way to organize this. In Tasmania, the States Archives conduct research, often of a prolonged and serious kind, for enquiries. Much of this is biographical and I have worked through their files making lists of those from which useful material for the Register could be drawn. At some time, it would seem desirable to employ a researcher for a couple of weeks going through these files from my instructions to extract the material, I am sure the University could suggest someone. The Librarian and Archivist have promised henceforth to send me an extra copy of each piece of biographical research that is done. This will greatly strengthen our Tasmanian entries, particularly on the early period.

In Perth I collected material from their research files myself, and Miss Lukis the Archivist, is prepared to send copies of additions they make. The Archivist in Melbourne recommends a similar approach to the Trustees of the Public Library, and I think the process might be profitably applied to the S.A. Archives, the Mitchell and the Oxley Library.

From the point of view of general Library resources, I have been able to acquire a first hand picture of the biographical



Anthea Bundock, consulting the Biographical Register cards stored in her office, 2010, ADB Archives.

indexes of each Library and they vary considerably. At this stage it is quite beyond the range of possibility to consider incorporating this mass of material into the National Register, but with a knowledge of their range and contents, it will be possible to act as an informed channel of reference to them. These are, after all, the working tools of the individual State libraries and for the present we will benefit from the research they are carrying out through them.

The process of systemization can be extended to the Universities. Opinion in the History Departments points to the fact that they feel some responsibility in making a specific contribution to the Register work, and Melbourne and Hobart have offered to put a Research Assistant on the work of going through their theses abstracting biographical information. It is suggested that we invite each University to do this. Dr. Serle was also of the opinion that the Working Parties might be asked to draw up lists of names for the Register in addition to the Dictionary. This seems a heavy demand but in the normal way names discarded from preliminary Dictionary lists will be picked up for the Register.

The most important contribution the Universities could make, this is again Dr. Serle's suggestion, would be the collection of basic material for political monographs, on the lines of Martin and Wardle. Dr. Serle feels that the Melbourne History Department could organize such a one, with the help of Allan Martin and the research assistant Professor La Nauze has offered.

This is a most constructive offer and sustains our plan to produce these specialized monographs at regular intervals. My present intention is to make the first step towards remedying the Western Australian gap in our biographical work by organizing material for a monograph on members of the W.A. Legislative Assembly and Council 1870–1930. G. Bolton already has the basic framework for this and has offered to fill it out. I also discussed the idea in Perth with Dr. Crowley and Miss Lukis and they will give us local help in checking and adding to the material.

It is also my plan to arrange that material will flow in from the Historical Associations.

Source: Box 69, Q31, ADB Archives, ANU Archives.

FRENCH AUSTRALIAN BIOGRAPHY



The French-Australian Dictionary of Biography

The *French-Australian Dictionary of Biography* (*FADB*) is an initiative of the Research Committee of the Institute for the Study of French Australian Relations (ISFAR): <https://www.isfar.org.au>. The first entries were uploaded onto the web-based platform in 2018 (<https://www.isfar.org.au/fadb/>); over 25 have been created to date. While still very much in its early development phase, the *FADB* has the clear and significant ambition of becoming a full-scale expression of ISFAR's central purpose: the exploration, documentation and analysis of the multi-faceted relationship — historical and present — between the nations and peoples of Australia and France.

Although Australian historians — at least since Ernest Scott's work in the early 1900s — have long been interested in the 18th and 19th century French voyages of discovery, it was not until the 1980s that French Australian relations first emerged as a discrete field of academic interest and research. Pioneering studies by Anny Stuer (1982, *The French in Australia*, Institute of Advanced Studies, ANU: Canberra, Immigration Monograph Series 2.) and Jean Rosemberg (1985, *The French in Australia*, M.A. thesis, Monash University) were accompanied by the founding of two similarly motivated institutions: The University of New South Wales French-Australia Research Centre in 1984, and ISFAR, originally based at Monash University, in 1985. The former had a relatively short life, but produced several symposia and publications which have had enduring relevance. For its part, ISFAR, while incorporated in Victoria, grew into a national body, with active members in all states. It created a bi-annual journal, originally entitled *Explorations*, which became *The French Australian Review* in 2014. Sixty-six numbers of the review have now been published.

Biography has been an important strand in the ISFAR journal from its inception. Early numbers included scholarly reflections on the lives of a variety of French individuals who could be seen as making notable contributions to the development of Australian society. The “gallery” included academics like Antoine Denat (1905-1976), whose career spanned four different Australian universities; or Nazar Karagheusian (1898-1968), a largely self-taught Parisian of Armenian background who lectured at the University of Melbourne for over thirty years; or Augustine Soubeiran (1858-1933), co-founder of Sydney's prestigious Kambala School; there were also musicians such as Henri Kowalski (1841-1916) and Léon Caron (1850-1905), and the photographer Antoine Fauchery (1823-1961). This paradigm of French presence and influence as expressed through biographies gave birth to a milestone publication in 2015: *French Lives in Australia* edited by Eric Berti and Ivan Barko (North Melbourne, Australian Scholarly Publications). ISFAR contributed to the conception and production of the book, and its member-

researchers produced many of the twenty-four biographical essays.

The *FADB* is not limited to the biographies of people with a French background. Many others have made important contributions to links between Australia and France. They come from a wide range of categories, stretching from the world of education to diplomacy, the arts, sciences and technology, trade, sport, and so on. Sometimes the *FADB* will include figures who already have entries in the *ADB*, but with specific emphasis on the French Australian connection. For example, while the *ADB* entry on NSW Premier [William Holman](#) (1871-1934) notes his Francophilia, the *FADB*'s entry provides much more detail about how his attachment to things French led to deepening relations between France and Australia, particularly during and just after the First World War.

The current ISFAR Research Committee consists of Stephen Alomes, Ivan Barko, Peter Brown, Jean Fornasiero, Kerry Mullan, Colin Nettelbeck (chair), and Margaret Sankey. In 2018, the committee compiled an initial list of over 100 names of subjects for the dictionary, together with a list of expert potential contributors. It was anticipated that the subject list would expand as the project gathered momentum; this has indeed proved to be the case. A standing invitation to suggest contributions is expressed on the website. The criteria for selection are 1) that the lives documented must be complete; and 2) that they must illuminate French Australian relations in some significant way. Guidelines for presentation and formatting are available for potential contributors. The author of the entry must obtain permission to reproduce any images used. The Research Committee determines whether a particular entry is included in the Dictionary. Draft entries are circulated to all members of the Research Committee for comments and suggestions. Once a decision to publish is reached, the entries are sent to the editorial team of *The French Australian Review* for final preparation. As with the *ADB*, entries provide essential bibliographical information, and are normally 600 to 1000 words in length. There is an ongoing procedure for correcting any errors that may occur in the entries.

The present web-based compilation process has been a practical way to get the dictionary up and running, but ISFAR remains open to the idea of book-form printing.

Colin Nettelbeck, University of Melbourne
chair, ISFAR Research Committee

Colin Nettelbeck is Emeritus Professor of French Studies at the University of Melbourne. Author of numerous studies of modern and contemporary French cultural history, he is currently working on a history of French Australian Relations from 1788 to the present.

COLONIAL WOMEN IN THE ADB

Emily Gallagher gives us an update on the ADB's colonial women project

Over the last six months, the colonial women project has received 91 nominations, bringing the total number of nominations to 733. We need a further 767 nominations to reach our goal of 1500 names.

Recent suggestions have included a diverse range of women, from international stage performers and singers to university graduates and writers. There are also lifesavers, midwives, business women, cricketers, explorers, doctors, artists, botanists, storekeepers, publicans, teachers, landowners, botanists, sex workers and agriculturalists as well as a philanthropist, horse trainer, activist and mayoress.



Flora Gregson, watercolour, c.1910, SLV.

Among the women nominated is the artist Flora Gregson (1854-1933) whose watercolour paintings were never exhibited during her lifetime but now provide a view of the Geelong and Gippsland district in the mid-nineteenth century; the publican Amelia Turner (1822-1906), who ran the Royal Hotel in Bendigo until her

retirement; and Sarah Gregory (1740-1807), a convict and pioneer settler of Norfolk Island. Other nominations include the pre-eminent Melbourne brothel-keeper Sarah Fraser (1824-1880), convict and mother of triplets Amelia Goodwin (c.1770-1834), and one of the first graduates of medicine from the University of Melbourne, Marie 'Amy' Castilla (1868-1898).

We are grateful to the members of the public, academics, local historians and genealogists who have generously shared their research and family history to support the nominations of these women.

It has been exciting to receive photographs with some of the suggestions. Sitting in an armchair with spectacles in her hand is the matron Sarah Birt (1809-1890). Birt migrated to Australia from England two years after the death of her husband in 1853 and was the first matron of the Protestant Female



Sarah Birt, photo provided by Mary Aut-Outh and Jo Shaw.

Refuge at Norwood and Church of England Orphan home on Carrington Street in Adelaide. Standing beside her husband is Ann Baulch (1847-1932), a pioneer selector in Western Victoria and the mother of 18 children. We have also received photographs relating to some of the existing nominations. The nephew of the writer Catherine E. Andrews (1861-1915) has provided two photographs of his aunt. Andrews, who wrote under the pen-name 'Mrs T. R. Andrews', published the 1895 novella *A Glimpse of Hell* and the novel *Stephen Kryle: An Australian Story* (1901).

Recently we have also been receiving a number of suggestions for women who died in the mid-twentieth century. While these women are not eligible for the colonial women project, where possible we will add their obituaries to *Obituaries Australia*.



Ann Baulch, photo provided by Kevin Witton and Penny Mercer.



Catherine Andrews, photo provided by Michael Trounson.

If you would like to nominate a woman for the colonial women project, please do not hesitate to get in touch with us at colonial.women@anu.edu.au

Emily Gallagher is a PhD Student in the ANU's School of History. Her thesis examines children's imaginations in Australia in the first half of the twentieth century. After being involved with the 'Recovered Lives' project earlier this year, Emily has been assisting with the colonial women in the ADB project.

BOOK LAUNCH

Tom Griffiths' launch speech for *True Biographies of Nations? The Cultural Journeys of Dictionaries of National Biography*, edited by Karen Fox, 21 May 2019.



Tom Griffiths, launching *True Biographies of Nations?*, 21 May 2019, ADB Archives

It's an enormous privilege for me to launch this book — it is edited by a dear friend, it grows out of the work of the ADB, an enterprise I esteem highly, and it offers us a rewarding and exhilarating journey through biography, history and historiography across the world.

I've read it with great enthusiasm. It's an even better book than I expected, and I expected it to be excellent! It is extremely well conceived, edited and introduced, and it is unusually cohesive as an edited volume of essays by various authors. It offers us a sustained exploration of the challenge of national biography in the digital age, in the era of revisionist histories and in a global and transnational world. It is very well written. That should be no surprise for its authors are historians, many of the best from around the world — and not only that, they are biographers, scholars who are adept at weaving together the personal and the national, and vivid social detail with analytical insight.

As Chair of the Editorial Board of the ADB, I'm steeped in the kind of discussions that gave rise to this book, yet there was so much that I learned from this volume, so much that delighted me. There is much in here to help us think about the intellectual revolutions that have swept through the discipline of history in the past half-century: social history, history from below, feminist history, Indigenous history, the biographical turn, prosopography, transnational history and now the current rise of antiglobalist nationalism. All these movements are like surging currents through the collection, and the authors

elegantly surf the rapids, always searching for a new way ahead for national biography. They wrestle constantly with the question of how can a collection of individual biographies tell the story of the nation itself. So the book is very satisfying in the way it represents historiographical richness and depth.



Karen Fox, editor of *True Biographies of Nations?*, 21 May 2019, ADB Archives

But perhaps even more rewarding is the way these essays enact a collective mission. In this era when the scientific template of research bullies the humanities to be more collaborative, I am inclined to defend and champion the value of the independent researcher and writer. However, when it comes to national dictionaries of biography, we humanities scholars and social scientists are way ahead of the scientists in terms of collective intellectual endeavour. These great multi-volume, multi-decadal national research enterprises — in Australia, New Zealand, Britain, Ireland, Scotland, Wales, America and Canada, to name the main ones featured here — these massive collegial enterprises bring together thousands of scholars from across their territories in long-term, genuine collaboration. So the spirit of this book is heart-warming, it is uplifting; for there is a strong sense of common mission and endeavour pulsing through it. Susan Ware, general editor of *American National Biography*, calls this 'the kindness of strangers', a professional generosity that lit up her life. The ADB benefits from this kindness too — and also from the kindness of lifelong friends.

We know that the craft of history has been transformed by the digital age, in information gathering, storage, retrieval and dissemination, and here is a case study of that transformation. As the American literary scholar Jack Lynch has argued, more has changed in the last twenty years in reference to publishing than in the previous three thousand. I learned a lot about invisible algorithms and the way they pre-determine our search results, about optical character recognition, about *Wikipedia*, good and bad. A good historical case is made for a sensible caution about technical novelty for its own sake.

BOOK LAUNCH (cont'd)

But what is so interesting is the way institutions that might at first seem to be large and lumbering — national, dispersed, print-based — have actually emerged from this challenge as impressively adaptive; they are relishing the new opportunities they have to synthesise data and to strengthen that old dialogue between biography and history with real networking muscle. Melanie Nolan's chapter about the *Australian Dictionary of Biography* makes this case brilliantly, and she argues that the ADB's 'old-fashioned' mission, as she calls it — its meticulous commitment to capturing representative as well as significant lives — stands it in good stead in the digital age.

I think people will look back on our time — the opening decades of the twenty-first century — as a golden era for the ADB. It will be seen as a period of calm but intense reflection on the historical traditions of a great collaborative enterprise and also a time of innovation and reform. Perhaps these years will prove as significant as the foundation years of the ADB. Thank you, Melanie, for your leadership and vision at this critical time.

There are important chapters here about why gender matters, by Susan Ware, and about the initiative to write an *Indigenous Australian Dictionary of Biography* by Shino Konishi. Ware and Konishi remind us that in spite of the feminist and Indigenous revolutions having swept through the history discipline since the 1970s, the uptake of their insights in the national dictionaries of biography was slow. As Susan Ware says about the poor representation of women: 'Why are we still having this conversation in the second decade of the twenty-first century?' She discerns that 'There is no grand conspiracy at work.' It's simply that you have to work against the grain to overturn prejudice and blindness; it is a struggle to upend the default situation; it requires hard, steady work. It takes time.

I'm thrilled and proud of the work we are doing now on Indigenous biography. Melanie Nolan describes that slow revolution on our home turf. Shino reflects on how Indigenous biographies are being reconceptualised, and also on how writing Australian Indigenous lives might have a radical influence on the craft of biography itself. How might a biographical dictionary incorporate ancestral beings, totemic animals or significant landforms? And what about known ancient individuals? It is worthy of celebration that Malcolm Allbrook's biography of *Mungo Lady and Mungo Man* was published online by the ADB this year.

Let me finish with some words about two other chapters. There is one here by Dafydd Johnston on Welsh Biography and the

role of national biography in becoming a truly bilingual country. This alerts us to the role the ADB might play in introducing Australians to more Indigenous languages. Incidentally, as a descendant of Welsh immigrants from goldfield days (my middle name is Rhys), I'm pleased to see Johnston invoking my noble ancient forebears, Gruffudd ap Cynan [d.1137] who resisted the Normans, and Sir Rhys ap Thomas, who is said to have slain Richard III himself at the Battle of Bosworth in 1485. A few years ago I walked for nine days up and down the green, wet hills of central Wales following the footsteps of Owain Glyndwr, a potent figure of Welsh folklore who led a rebellion against the English crown in 1400. On the way, I could stop in any pub in the slate-grey villages and get a conversation about Glyndwr. Such is the enduring power of biography.



L-R: Melanie Nolan, Tom Griffiths, Karen Fox, Emily Hazlewood (deputy manager, ANU Press), at the launch of *True Biographies of Nations?*, 21 May 2019, ADB Archives

The other chapter that deserves special mention is Barry Jones on 'Writing a Dictionary of World Biography', a grand enterprise that has been supported by the National Centre of Biography and published by ANU Press. In turn, Barry has been a magnificent champion of the ADB. Barry, who commands so much knowledge, lists his areas of weakness as 'sport, popular music, ballet, ornithology, gardening and fourteenth-century

Islamic tiles.' He sees his *Dictionary of World Biography* as 'a guidebook for the abundant life'. Barry's colossal life-long biographical project has been to encompass the world in a singular, humanist vision. Ultimately such a vision is held together by selection and judgement. Selection, judgement and scholarship: these are the luminous qualities that distinguish national dictionaries of biography from *Wikipedia*.

Karen Fox is a wonderful scholar nurtured in our school, a research fellow with the National Centre of Biography, a research editor with the ADB, and (amongst other work) is author of the significant biographical study, *Maori and Aboriginal Women in the Public Eye: Representing Difference, 1950-2000* (2011). She has done a marvellous job editing this stimulating collection. I congratulate Karen and her impressive team of writers, and have great pleasure in launching this rewarding book to readers far and wide.

True Biographies of Nations?: The Cultural Journeys of Dictionaries of National Biographies had its genesis in a conference organised by the National Centre of Biography in 2016. You can download or purchase the book from [ANU Press](#)

Professor Tom Griffiths is Chair of the Editorial Board of the Australian Dictionary of Biography and Emeritus Professor of History in the School of History at the ANU.

DICTIONARY OF WORLD BIOGRAPHY

Barry Jones reflects on his *Dictionary of World Biography*, a project he began 60 years ago as a school teacher in Melbourne.

For more than 60 years I have worked in short bursts on my magnum opus, the Dictionary of World Biography (DWB).

It demonstrates my preoccupation, even obsession, about making sense of the world to myself and sharing those insights to others. The work, inevitably, is highly personal, even semi-autobiographical, projecting my involvement in politics, teaching history, extensive travel, and absorption in music, literature, the arts, religion, philosophy, ethics, and decades of work with a disaster relief organisation and campaigns to reduce blindness.

I was profoundly influenced by the great philosopher Bertrand Russell, whom I observed in Melbourne at close quarters as a student in 1950. He said: 'Three passions, simple, but overwhelmingly strong, have governed my life: the longing for love, the search for knowledge, and unbearable pity for the suffering of mankind'.

*I set out the convoluted history of the Dictionary of World Biography in my autobiography *A Thinking Reed* (Allen and Unwin, 2006). A variant of the text appeared as 'Introduction' in six editions of the DWB published by the Australian National University Press, 2014-19.*

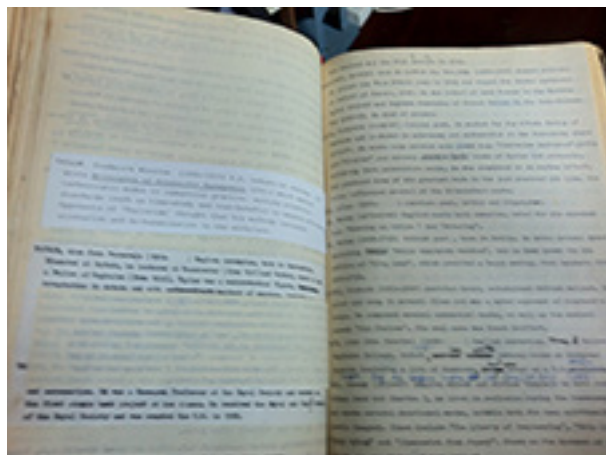
True Biographies of Nations? (edited by Karen Fox, ANU Press, 2019), a collection of papers presented at a seminar in 2016 about dictionaries of biography generally, includes my 'Writing a Dictionary of World Biography'.

This Introduction draws from all three sources.

In the mid-1950s I had been puzzled that no comprehensive biographical dictionary was available in paperback at a modest price. I determined to fill the gap. As a university law student I had been concerned that so many contemporaries had either a sketchy, or nonexistent, grasp of recent political history, let alone familiarity with great composers, or philosophers, or of discoverers in other disciplines, such as medicine. References to my heroes Bertrand Russell, Albert Schweitzer, or Albert Einstein drew a blank. Important and controversial Australians, such as Billy Hughes, John Thomas Lang, or Percy Grainger, were forgotten, or had never been known. I was trying to pursue the concept of 'the abundant life' and I felt pained that so many had no access to the unfamiliar. If they knew nothing of Bach or Michelangelo, they were missing something significant. I always planned that my *DWB* would be more than a collected list of names, dates, and places. It was always intended to provide a hook, something that encouraged the reader to pursue the subject: in effect, sharing my enthusiasms.

In comparison to national dictionaries of biography, my attempt has been an overview, analogous to what H. G. Wells had attempted, if that does not sound too pretentious, admittedly limited by my lack of expertise in some areas and remoteness from primary sources, but fortified by the (small c) creator's knowledge and experience.

While I was teaching history and literature at Dandenong High School, I typed away furiously on my old Olivetti. I retain three bound volumes of my first draft bearing the final date of 5 May 1959, when I was only 26. The text runs to 837 foolscap pages, with about 430,000 words and 6,000 entries. Amendments and new entries over the next 20 years were pasted in. Some of



pages of one of the original manuscript volumes of the *DWB*

the original text survives in later, much expanded, editions, now about double in length.

I was confident, perhaps over-confident, about the quality of my research. I had sent drafts to many subjects, inviting comments, and received valuable information from E. M. Forster, P. G. Wodehouse, Ezra Pound, Oskar Kokoschka, Vladimir Nabokov, Graham Greene, Iris Murdoch, Noam Chomsky and John Updike. Igor Stravinsky wrote: 'Glad you corrected all those absurd inventions of my so called "biographers" and, not critical, but critical (sic) reviews in musical periodicals you mention ... Thanking you very much for all these corrections.'

Obsessed about correcting error, I did not necessarily accept everything that my subjects told me. My approach was opinionated and subjective. I set my entries in the broad sweep of history, pointed to relationships between major characters and their times, and challenged errors in other reference books. I was making judgments all the time. I included cross references (*) and a bibliography to encourage discursive reading.

Apart from teaching, my long period on the television quiz 'Pick-a-Box' had just begun. Eisenhower, Khrushchev, Mao, de Gaulle, Macmillan and Menzies held office and (other than me) only Queen Elizabeth II is a link with that bygone era.

I wrote to Penguin Books in Harmondsworth, London, and received a thoughtful and encouraging letter from A. S. B. Glover, a classical scholar and editor. In January 1961 I took my first draft to London and arranged a meeting with Penguin Books. Charles Clarke, a senior editor, began by reviewing my entry on the psychiatrist Carl Gustav Jung, and this impressed him enough to offer me a contract and a generous advance. Unfortunately, soon after the contract was signed, Clarke left Penguin for the Tavistock Institute, and years of uncertainty and confusion followed.

There were deep divisions within Penguin Books, and very strong differences of opinion about whether they should be publishing general reference books at all.

After the departure of Glover and Clarke, the project drifted for years. There was obvious concern about the credibility of a young antipodean author, of whom they knew nothing. I was

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then advised that M. Vibart Dixon, a former editor-in-chief of *Chambers's Encyclopedia*, had been brought in to edit my material. Oddly, I never met, spoke to or corresponded with him. He died in 1967.

An attempt to break up the text and send it off to specialist editors ended in high farce. In 1969 I received the first page proofs only to find that many entries in the letters B (Bach, Beethoven, Berlioz, Boulez, Brahms, Britten, Bruckner, Byrd) and H (Händel, Haydn, Heine, Hemingway, Herodotus, Holbein, Homer, Horace, Victor Hugo, Jan Hus) had gone missing. Confucius and Goya had dropped out too. After a blazing row, Penguins pulled the plug and after more years of delay offered a handsome cash settlement in 1977.

After another hiatus, an unexpected invitation came for the work to be published by Macmillans in London. The offer had been arranged by M. Vibart Dixon's son. Dixon, a committed Anglophile and empire loyalist, had weeded out many of my non-British entries and presumably was responsible for the dropped out entries.

Despite my reservations, I weakly agreed to the offer, anxious to see my work in print, even if it meant sharing royalties (and credit) with Dixon's family.

Then another fiasco. Despite promises that I would see the final proofs to ensure that missing entries were inserted, the work went to printers and binders without material on hundreds of subjects, including George Bush Sr, then US Vice President, Hua Guofeng, China's head of state, François Mitterrand, France's President and two Australian stars, Patrick White and Gough Whitlam.

The volume was published in London in October 1981 as '*Macmillan Dictionary of Biography* by Barry Jones and M. V. Dixon.' A biographical note on the authors read, 'Dixon's work on the *Macmillan Dictionary of Biography* was completed before he died in 1967'. This seemed to be self-evident.

I protested vigorously. The work received a generous review in the *Times Literary Supplement* by Sir William Haley, former editor of *Encyclopedia Britannica* to which I responded angrily. I wrote a sharp attack on the bungled project which appeared in *Private Eye*.

The *Rutledge Dictionary of People* by Barry Jones and M. V. Dixon, published in New York in 1981, was news to me, as with the *St Martin's Press Dictionary of Biography* (New York, 1986).

Through Brian Stonier, Macmillan Publishers Australia took over the rights from London and published three editions to my satisfaction.

In 1994, Michael Wilkinson of Information Australia, in Melbourne, published a much expanded edition, renamed

Dictionary of World Biography, dropping M. V. Dixon as co-author, launched jointly by former Prime Ministers Gough Whitlam and Malcolm Fraser. Further editions followed in 1996 and 1998, the last being co-published with *The Age*.

I revised interminably, especially after discussions with people such as Isaiah Berlin, Francis Crick, James Watson, Peter Medawar, Max Perutz, Michael Tippett, Karl Popper, Henry Moore, Ernst Gombrich and Benoit Mandelbrot.

Then, after 1998 came a long hiatus, when multi-volume or single-volume reference books such as *Encyclopaedia Britannica* or the *Columbia Encyclopedia* were going out of print because of the availability of millions of entries on *Wikipedia*.

In 2011, Garry Sturgess conducted a long series of interviews with me for the National Library of Australia's oral history project. Years later he began work on a documentary film, *Barry Jones: In Search of Lost Time* (2018). He was an enthusiast for the *DWB* and helped to persuade the National Centre of Biography at the Australian National University, which does the editorial work for the *Australian Dictionary of Biography*, to exhume, update and revise my obsession.

At the ANU Melanie Nolan and Tom Griffiths have been enthusiasts and encouragers and proposed that the *DWB* appear both as an ebook and in traditional printed form. Gareth Evans, as ANU's Chancellor, was a benign influence. Christine Fernon has been an exemplary (occasionally exasperated) editor and I am deeply grateful for her skills and patience over six years. After decades of frustration, working on the project with Michael Wilkinson and then the ANU team proved to be stimulating, enjoyable and productive.

In 2014 ANU E Press produced the work, revised and rewritten again, in paperback and online. Then Michael Wilkinson published a handsome hard-cover version in 2016 in conjunction with ANU Press.

Inevitably, my work is semi-autobiographical, reflecting my own experience, understanding, attempts to grasp a world view, dealing with diversity, and trying to neutralise prejudice. I was always a very rapid and — more important — efficient reader and over the decades I have consumed thousands of books, including novels, biographies, plays, and poetry, as well as being an assiduous visitor to art galleries and museums, a modest collector of art works and archaeology, and a concert hall habitué.

Travel was also a very important factor.

In Paris in May 1958, I had witnessed the collapse of the Fourth French Republic, and this, followed by years commuting to France as Australia's representative to the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO: 1991-95) and the World Heritage Committee (1995-96), fuelled my interest in French history, especially the French Revolution,



Barry Jones at the launch of the *Dictionary of World Biography* by ANU Press and National Centre of Biography, 2013, ADB Archives

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art, music, politics, science, and architecture. I have visited France more than 40 times. My obsessions included revolutionary and political history, Montaigne and Pascal, Debussy and Ravel, Proust, films, churches and cathedrals, Cavallé-Coll organs, menhirs and dolmens in Brittany, and prehistoric cave art in the Dordogne. Entries on de Gaulle, Mitterrand, Chirac and Macron, Simone Veil and Viollet-le-Duc have been enlarged as I better understand complexities.

It was inevitable that there would be some bias in entry selection towards the twentieth and twenty-first centuries — the lifetime of my readers, reflecting their desire for information to understand the context of how we live now, the impact on politics, revolutions, ideology, technology, science, World Wars I and II, the Cold War, literature, art, film, music, and media. Of my 30 longest entries, 11 subjects were active in the twentieth or twenty-first centuries. I have made some attempts to write about The Beatles, who have had (I am told) a continuing influence. Despite my long (and increasingly unhappy) career in politics, I tried to be clinically detached in my entries on public figures, and would immodestly point to entries on Harold Macmillan, Margaret Thatcher, and Richard Nixon. However, I have not disguised my loathing of totalitarian systems, whether Left or Right, and entries on Hitler, Stalin, Mussolini, and Mao are obvious examples. I felt that my explanation of ideologies was a strength and over many years I have tried to cover my areas of weakness, such as sport, popular music, ballet, ornithology, gardening, and fourteenth-century Islamic tiles.

I was exhilarated by the challenge to rethink and rewrite my positions on great historical figures after many years of deep reading, travel, and reflection. Time in Egypt, Spain, Turkey, Brazil, Peru, and Cambodia led to fresh insights, major revisions, and expansions of many entries — for example, Tutankhamun, Dilma Rousseff, Fujimori and Pol Pot. Visits to Rome in 2013 and 2014, followed by reading Mary Beard's *SPQR: A History of Ancient Rome* (London: Profile, 2015), fed my obsessions about the Caesars, the papacy, early church architecture, and Caravaggio, resulting in significant revision and expansion of many entries. Similarly, nine days in Iran in 2015 led to a reconsideration of Ferdowsi, Hāfēz, Sa'di, Rumi, Omar Khayyam, al Ghazālī, and the Shi'ite/Sunni schism.

Time in Bourges, Chinon, Blois, and Canterbury led to rethinking about Jacques Coeur and early capitalism, Eleanor of Aquitaine, the Dukes of Guise, Thomas Becket, and Geoffrey Chaucer.

Access to Nobel Prize archives provided insight into the selection (and rejection) process. I drew attention to contemporary recognition, or lack of it. In the entry on James Joyce, I pointed to the long list of great writers who had failed to win the Nobel Prize for Literature: Ibsen, Tolstoy, Strindberg, James, Hardy, Conrad, Gorki, Proust, Rilke, Musil, Joyce, Woolf, Pound, Borges, Malraux, Greene and Auden.

Writing *The Shock of Recognition: The books and music that have inspired me* (Allen and Unwin, 2016) forced me to rethink the achievements of Homer, Dante, Chaucer, Montaigne, Cervantes, Shakespeare, Johnson, Gibbon, Sterne, Dickens, Dostoevsky, Tolstoy, Proust, Joyce,

Beckett, Kafka, White and Coetzee, Bach, Haydn, Mozart, Beethoven, Schubert, Wagner, Debussy, Ravel, Stravinsky and Shostakovich. This, inevitably, led to extensive revision, or indeed re-composition, of many entries in the *DWB*.

The latest edition of the *DWB* (2019) has the equivalent of 940 full pages of text, more than 8,500 entries, and 910,000 words. Four factors determined entry length: likelihood that the entries would be frequently consulted, availability of resource material, degree of influence that the subjects had on how we live (language, invention, medicine, war, nutrition, religion, philosophy, information, exploration, entertainment, culture and so on), and the extent of cross-referencing to other subjects in the *DWB*.

Of the thirty longest entries, ten are of English-speaking subjects (Shakespeare, Franklin Roosevelt, Lincoln, Churchill, Joyce, Dickens, Ford, Oliver Cromwell, Washington, Margaret Thatcher), seven German (Wagner, Mozart, Bach, Beethoven, Hitler, Goethe, Marx), three Italian (Michelangelo, Dante, Columbus), two each are French (Napoléon, Proust), Russian (Tolstoy, Stalin), and Spanish (Picasso, Cervantes), and one each is Greek (Homer), Aramaic (Jesus), Chinese (Mao), and Hindi (Gandhi). Nine are writers, twelve political leaders, four composers, two artists, and one each are religious (Jesus), political philosopher (Marx) and manufacturer (Ford).

It is a matter for regret that only Jesus, Mao, Gandhi, and possibly Homer were not of European ancestry, and that reflects the cultural biases that influence me and my potential readers. I try to compensate, but it is a formidable task.

My Shakespeare entry, by far the longest, has 2,386 words, with 56 cross-references (indicated by *), emphasising his life, his sources, the context of his work in the times of Elizabeth I and James I, and his influence on later writers, as well as including a bibliography. Thirty-seven plays are referred to, but in context, not set out in tabular form.

In recent editions I have made significant changes in the names for entries, moving away from or adding to the familiar Anglophone versions (Philip > Felipe > Philippe) to the spelling in the original language, or, with Chinese entries, the nearest equivalent, for example **Samuel** (Shmu'el), or **Jinnah, Muhammad Ali** (originally Mahomedali Jinnabhai) or **Yongle** ('perpetual happiness': personal name Zhu Di).

How tactful does an encyclopedist have to be in writing about living subjects? Publishing serious entries on the living may inhibit discussion of sensitive issues such as sexuality, mental and physical health, addictions and obsessions, or financial links, and much primary source material will be inaccessible or embargoed. Postponing treatment of subjects still living, and presumably not eager to be eligible, gives future biographers space and time to reflect instead of rushing to judgment. I had no such inhibition with my *DWB* and emphasised linkages between past and current subjects.

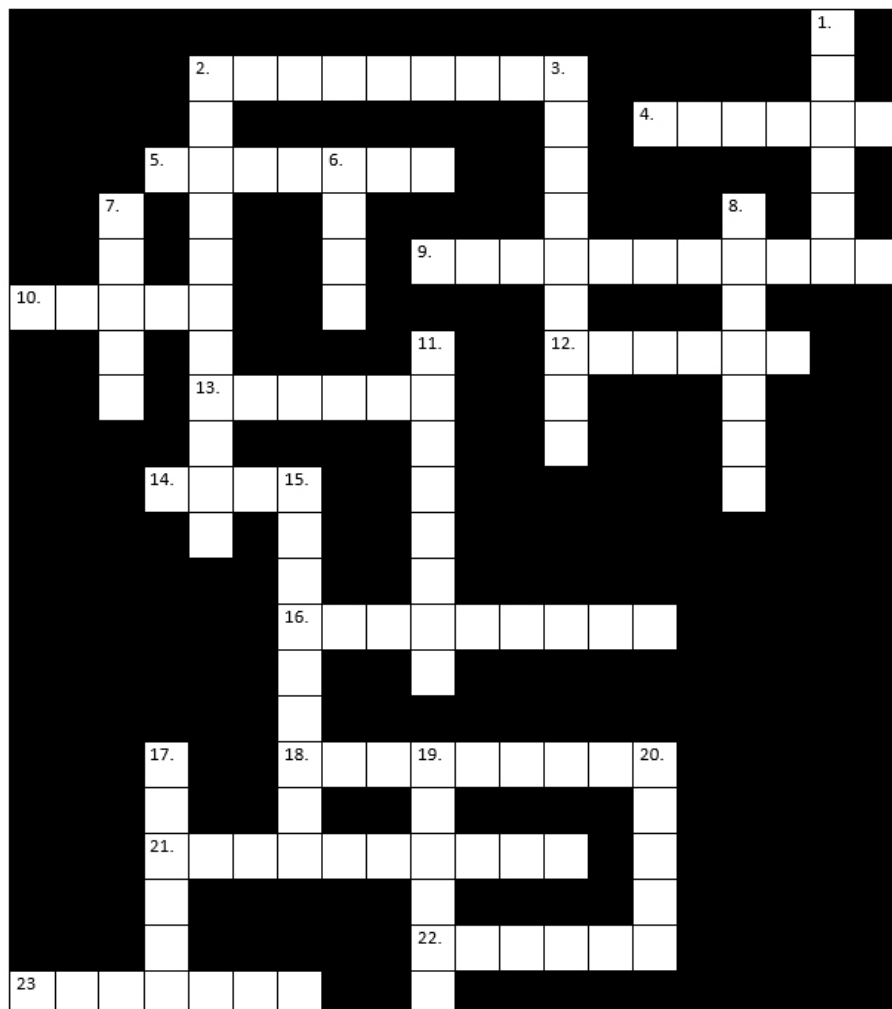
Since turning 86 my writing and revision for the *DWB* has been stimulated by a sense of urgency, with time running out.

Barry Jones, 'Introduction' to the 2020 edition of Dictionary of World Biography to be published by ANU Press in association with the NCB.

ADB CRYPTIC CROSSWORD

Try your hand at the ADB's version of a cryptic crossword

From the clues below, can you work out which surnames we have selected from the ADB's list of 'Proposed Entries for People Who Died 1991-2000' (<http://adb.anu.edu.au/adb-entries-1991-95/>)?



Need more help?

While it is usual for a cryptic crossword to have two parts — a straight clue and a hidden clue — in the ADB's puzzle the straight clue is omitted. Instead we have provided the answers in a clueless find-a-word on the next page.

ACROSS

2. Bonny child.
4. A tired tyre?
5. Put down the legal profession.
9. Beloved, fix everything.
10. Around rim ... except after c.
12. Roughly date some cathedral town.
13. Slippery grease.
14. Roam around.
16. Knives found in English county.
18. Go in cages, awkward!
21. Christmas visitor mimes operatic solo.
22. Monarch in disarray at the midpoint, or perhaps his champion?
23. A priest perhaps?

DOWN

1. Kangaroo perhaps?
2. It is as light as a ... sturdy heavy weight? A chair perhaps?
3. At midday turn small measure into a litre.
6. An arm or leg perhaps?
7. Deciduous tree.
8. A person with good fortune.
11. Faith embraces bed.
15. Pan Orville
17. Sidney? No, that's not the way you spell it!
19. Anglican hides a tuneful bird.
20. Alien swallowed conflict.

ADB CROSSWORD (cont'd)

Clueless find-a-word

see the previous page for more information.

N R O T W E T T D K A J B S F
E I K N K R A Q T N N O E A N
G N P Y C I B L L O O I I D A
A S O B U A Y E L M C R G I Z
S E L T L P C E E W B S R H Y
C A N I S E E R N A R A U L T
O G U M A R N W I S M I E R L
I E D R H U E R A A I S G I T
G R T I K A N H T R A D M H N
N S H E Q E L N T C T B S A T
E D A V E B A L H A R O M V A
H W I L T S H I R E E Y S V O
L A C C U N O O N R L F Y G F
L A I D L A W A F O B I R C H
Q S Z G D K I C H E K R A L C

Still stumped? The solution to the crossword is on page 21

Kiera Naylor joins ADB Staff

Kiera Naylor is joining the ADB in March 2020 as its Indigenous Australian Research Officer. The Vice-Chancellor has provided funding for the position. Kiera will initially work on the *Indigenous Australian Dictionary of Biography*. She will also be involved in the project to revise *ADB* volumes 1 and 2, which will see the inclusion of many more indigenous biographies. Her role also includes research and updating of the ADB [Aboriginal reserve/mission map](#).



Kiera holds a Bachelor of Arts with First Class Honours, majoring in Medieval Studies and English, and is currently completing her PhD at the University of Sydney on the "Life of St Chad": edition, translation, and commentary' which focuses on biographical and linguistic issues including the place of oral traditions in the written record. Kiera is a descendant of the Bundjalung and Gumgaynggirr nations of northern NSW. She grew up in Western Sydney and is currently learning Gumbaynggirr.

ADB Editorial Board, April 2019



Back Row L-R: Malcolm Allbrook, Odette Best, Shino Kinosh, Catherine Kevin, Pat Buckridge, Frank Bongiorno, Stephen Garton, Lenore Layman, Patrick Cornish, Geoff Ginn

Front Row: L-R: Bridget Griffen-Foley, David Lee, Melanie Nolan (General Editor, *ADB*), Tom Griffiths (Chair), Chris Cunneen, Bev Kingston, Carolyn Rasmussen

PERCY BLACK (1877-1917)

Peter Gifford tells us the remarkable story of World War I soldier, Percy Black, described by VC winner Lawrence McCarthy as 'the bravest man I have known'.

Members of the Irish community throughout Australia, and in particular Western Australia, have been active in the past few years in commemorating [Martin O'Meara](#), the only Irish-born soldier in the First AIF to win the Commonwealth's highest award for martial bravery, the Victoria Cross (VC).

O'Meara, who was born in 1885 at Lorrha, County Tipperary, is fully deserving of this attention, not least because his award was one of very few for saving life rather than taking it — he was a stretcher bearer during the savage fighting at Pozieres, on the Western Front, in August 1916. He had, according to Richard E. Reid, author of his entry in the *Australian Dictionary of Biography*,

... behaved in a manner which led one officer to describe him as 'the most fearless and gallant soldier I have ever seen'. He was credited with having saved the lives of over twenty-five wounded men by carrying them in from no man's land 'under conditions that are undescrivable'. Even after the battalion was relieved its commanding officer, Lieutenant-Colonel [E. Drake-Brockman](#), saw O'Meara returning to the front line through the bombardment to rescue two wounded comrades despite having himself 'reached a position of comparative safety'. At other times he had, on his own initiative, brought up much-needed supplies of grenades, ammunition and food.

O'Meara was promoted to corporal and then sergeant before the war ended, but the overall experience broke him. After demobilisation in Perth in 1919, his health failed and he spent the remaining 16 years of his life in a mental hospital.

He was one of 63 members of Australian military units that were similarly decorated with the VC during that conflict. Of those men, 12 apart from O'Meara — or nearly 20 per cent — had obviously Irish names. Another two AIF men — including a South Australian named [Arthur Sullivan](#) — won the VC while fighting as volunteers with a British unit in the unsuccessful Allied intervention against the Bolsheviks in North Russia in 1919. What should also not be overlooked is that many other VC winners, and men with records equally distinguished, also had Irish antecedents including as recent as their parents.

One such soldier was Major Percy Black, whose parents were both born in Ireland. Like O'Meara, Black was a member of the 16th Battalion, and was also decorated for bravery at Pozieres. There were other similarities; both men had enlisted as a private soldier at Blackboy Hill camp on Perth's outskirts, they were unmarried, and both had been working in rural occupations in Western Australia before the war — O'Meara as a railway sleeper-cutter in the hills near Collie, and Black on the Goldfields. C. H. Ducker's entry for Black in the *Australian Dictionary of Biography* states that:

[Percy Charles Herbert Black](#) (1877-1917), soldier and goldminer, was born on 12 December 1877 at Beremboke, Victoria, eleventh child of William John Black, farmer, and his wife Ann, née Longmore; both parents were natives of Antrim, Ireland. He was educated at Beremboke State



Percy Black, c.1914, Australian War Memorial, J00369

School and became a carpenter before going prospecting on the Western Australian goldfields. In 1901-13 he worked claims at Black Range and Sandstone and was mining at Mount Jackson when World War I broke out.

Black enlisted as a private in the 16th Battalion, Australian Imperial Force, on 13 September 1914 and sailed for Egypt in December. He first saw action at the Gallipoli landing on 25 April 1915 when his unit took over the Pope's Hill zone. Within a week Lance Corporal Black, who headed one of the machine-gun crews, had been highly commended by his commanding officer. Though wounded in the hand and the ear he refused to leave his post until his weapon had been smashed by Turkish bullets. On 2 May he mounted a machine-gun beyond Gully Ridge; his only companion was shot dead but Black, surrounded by Turks and without any assistance, fired into the enemy lines until his ammunition was exhausted. For this action he received the Distinguished Conduct Medal and five days later was commissioned second lieutenant in the field. He was mentioned in dispatches on 5 August, promoted temporary captain four days later, and remained at Gallipoli until the evacuation. [Charles Bean](#) later described Black and his No. 2 gunner H. W. Murray as 'men of no ordinary determination' and their 'magnificent' machine-gun section as 'possibly the finest unit that ever existed in the A.I.F.'.

What this necessarily brief account does not say is that Black had no military experience at all before the war. His mate

PERCY BLACK (cont'd)

Harry Murray, a reservist in his native Tasmania before moving to Western Australia, eventually became a lieutenant colonel in command of a machine gun battalion, and the most highly decorated fighting infantryman of the entire British army in World War I. Murray was likewise decorated with the DCM — the second highest award for enlisted men after the VC — for his service on Gallipoli. Both gained their commissions in recognition of their Gallipoli achievements. Murray survived the war, winning in the process the VC, CMG, Distinguished Service Order (DSO) and Bar, DCM as mentioned, along with the French Croix de Guerre, and was mentioned in despatches four times.

After the Gallipoli evacuation, the Australian infantry units were deployed to the Western Front to face a new enemy, the German Army. Black — now promoted to major — initially was sent to the 'nursery' sector near Armentieres

before the 16th was moved to fight in the trenches at Pozieres in 1916. Many a Digger said, 'If there was a hell on earth, then Pozieres was it'; both O'Meara and Black would have concurred. The Australian sector of the frontline occupied an area a little less than two kilometres square. The Germans had their corps artillery — a thousand guns in all — ready and waiting to pound the Australians, which they did relentlessly for more than a month.

According to the Australian War Memorial, soon after the 16th's first attack at Pozieres, in which they had taken and secured a German trench, the battalion was subjected to a fearsome barrage. An incoming 5.9-inch shell landed so close to Black that he was buried up to his neck in earth and rubble. As his men frantically moved to dig him out, Black calmly declared: 'I can feel a terrible pain in my right shin'. He felt sure that his leg was broken, but was relieved to find the cause of his discomfort was a strip of hot, metal shell casing pressing against the skin of his lower leg. Black's dauntless manner of leadership against incredible odds served only to bolster his reputation. At Mouquet Farm in August 1916, Black was badly wounded in the neck while immobilising a German machine gun. He was evacuated to a field hospital but the severity of the wound required specialist treatment in London. His heroism and action under fire had not gone unnoticed by his CO, Colonel Drake-Brockman, who recommended Black for the Distinguished Service Order to accompany his DCM from Gallipoli; Black also received the French Croix de Guerre and was mentioned in despatches twice.

His next and last engagement was the disastrous first battle of Bullecourt on 11 April 1917, an attack on the heavily fortified Hindenburg Line in which incompetent British staff planning resulted in two Australian brigades, the 4th and 12th, suffering

almost 3,400 killed or wounded, while more than 1,000 men from the 4th Australian Division were captured. Tanks, sent in to clear a passage through the barbed wire, failed to reach their objective and the infantry found themselves facing intense machine-gun fire along an unbroken wire entanglement. Black's 'B' company captured the first trenches and pressed on towards the support-line, but he was then shot through the head; he was one of 640 casualties in the 16th Battalion that day. Harry Murray, who had been transferred to the 13th Battalion, was following the 16th, and saw them caught against the wire. Murray made a frenzied search for his mate's body; however he has no known grave and his name is commemorated on the Villers Bretonneux Memorial, France.



Percy Black, sitting behind a machine gun, Australian War Memorial, J00385

Murray, who won a DSO in the same action, noted in a letter to a comrade that he was 'frightfully grieved', and indeed Black's loss is said to have reverberated throughout the AIF. The Bullecourt action is the subject of a diorama in the Australian War Memorial; a nearby painting by Charles

Wheeler DCM is entitled 'Death of Major Black'. In 1917 his returned 16th Battalion comrades also installed a memorial plaque to him in St George's Cathedral in Perth.

Ducker maintained that Black was a man "of splendid physique, quiet and unassuming in manner" ... 'a born leader of men and a natural soldier' and his courage was a byword.'" Charles Bean, the official war historian, who saw all the major actions involving Australian soldiers at Gallipoli and in France, dubbed him 'the greatest fighting soldier in the A.I.F.'

As Jeff Hatwell put it in his fine biography of Black and Murray, *No Ordinary Determination* (2005), 'such a distinction is of course impossible to prove, but one who had a firm view on that point was Lawrence McCarthy, VC, one of the 16th Battalion's notable personalities (and one of the 13 AIF VC winners with Irish surnames).

I have fought alongside VC winners — Murray, Jacka, Axford, Hamilton, Carroll and O'M[e]ara, and I make bold to say we all take our hats off to Percy Black as a brave soldier and leader in battle. It may be asked what particular formula can be used in allocating degrees of bravery. This question would trick me, but in spite of it I again assert that Percy Black is the bravest man I have known.'

Peter Gifford is a former ABC journalist and a multi-faceted historian. He has published in the fields of military and labour history and ethnohistory. Peter is currently an ADB Editorial Fellow and a member of the ADB's WA Working Party. He has written three ADB entries and is currently working on a fourth, on Don McLeod, a prospector and activist who helped Pilbara Aboriginal people organise a strike in the 1940s which broke the conditions of virtual slavery imposed on them by pastoralist pioneers nearly a century before.

ADB REACHES FOR THE STARS

Stephen Wilks discovers an ADB author's message for intelligent extra-terrestrials

The two Voyager space probes, launched in 1977 to explore the solar system's outer planets and each still hurtling through yet more distant space, are arguably humanity's greatest exercise in discovery. Rather less well-known is that they have a link to the Australian Dictionary of Biography.

Both spacecraft have affixed to their side a gold-plated copper phonographic record that bears images and sounds of life on Earth. This is in the hope of their falling into the hands (tentacles?) of intelligent extra-terrestrials — a chance so slim it is clearly more a gesture of unity and wonder to us earthlings.

One of the many human voices used on these records is that of an ADB contributor, the late Ralph Harry, at the time of recording Australia's Ambassador to the United Nations. He wrote just two *Dictionary* entries, but fine and major ones on Sir [Thomas William Glasgow](#) and on his own grandfather Sir [Frederick Holder](#), first Speaker of the House of Representatives. Ralph's contribution to the Voyager records also stands out. His short greeting from the people of Earth was delivered in Esperanto, using words of his own choice; 'Ni strebas vivi en paco kun la popoloj de la tuta mondo, de la tuta kosmo' — 'We strive to live in peace with the peoples of the whole world, of the whole Universe...'

For those understandably inspired by this, see; Carl Sagan et al., *Murmurs of Earth: The Voyager Interstellar Record*, Random House, New York, 1978; and Jonathan Scott, *The Vinyl Frontier: The Story of the Voyager Golden Record*, Bloomsbury, London, 2019. Harry gave his own short account in *Adventures in Esperantoland*, Australian Esperanto Association, Redfern, 2015.



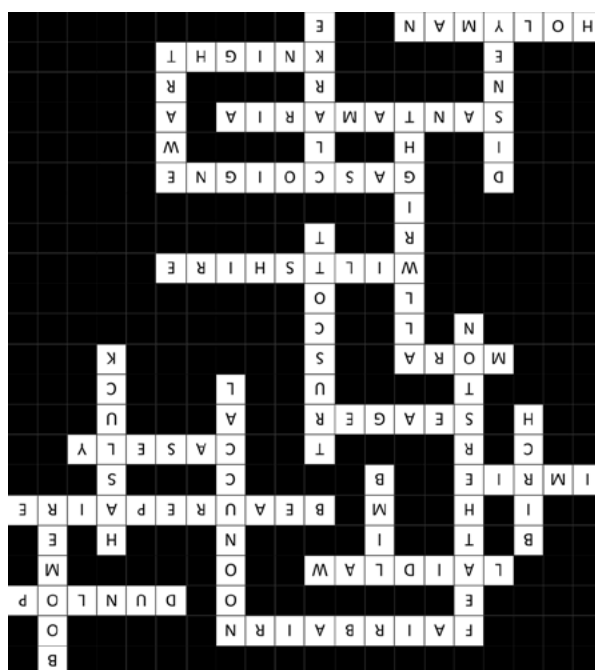
The Voyager's Sounds of Earth record which contained Australian Ambassador (and ADB author) Ralph Harry's short greeting.

Stephen Wilks is a research editor at the National Centre of Biography. He is currently working on the *Dictionary of the House of Representatives* pilot project. His book 'Now is the Psychological Moment' — Earl Page and the Imagining of Australia is in progress with ANU Press.



NCB Phd candidate Nichola Garvey (far left of photo) attended the Biographers International Conference in New York in May this year.

While there she met (from right) Hans Renders (who was a Biography Fellow with the NCB earlier this year), Nigel Hamilton, Ina Caro, and Robert Caro.



Answers to the ADB Cryptic Puzzle.

ALEXANDRA PEAL OF BELLS

The Alexandra Peal of bells, installed in the Imperial Institute, London, in 1892 has a fascinating Australian connection.



A researcher in England, who is writing about architect Thomas Edward Collcutt (1840-1924), recently contacted the Australian Dictionary of Biography for assistance in finding information about Elizabeth M. Miller, a millionairess from Melbourne, who donated the peal of bells to the Collcutt-designed Imperial Institute in London in 1892.

Thanks to the National Library's Trove it didn't take us long to find the woman's identity — [Elizabeth Mary Millar](#) (not Miller). But Elizabeth was no millionairess and it is doubtful she actually paid for the ten magnificent bells that make up the Alexandra Peal, that still ring in the Queen's Tower (the only part of the Institute still standing).

So, what is the real story?

Elizabeth and her talented, civil engineer husband, [John](#), arrived in Victoria from Ireland in 1854. John was employed on many water projects in the state including the River Plenty Tunnel in Melbourne. He is best remembered, however, for heroically saving passengers after the clipper *Schomberg*, on which he was travelling, was wrecked near Port Fairy, Victoria, in late December 1855. The family moved to New Zealand in 1863 where John worked as the city engineer at Dunedin, before being involved in disagreements that led to his dismissal. He died in 1876 and Elizabeth returned to Melbourne where two of her sons [Charles Gibson](#) and [Edwin Franks Millar](#), lived. Both were civil engineers and, later, successful railway contractors and timber merchants. *Vanity Fair* in 1894 reported that Charles was also 'an excellent host, who can tell a good story well; and notwithstanding all his wealth and all his virtues he is quite a modest man'.

The paper added that he:

owns railways, tramways, goldmines, sheep runs, timber forests, vineyards, and other properties in the fifth continent of the globe. He also owns the *Saide*, which is one of the most beautiful of yachts, built at Leith, and fitted in Melbourne with Eastern luxury. For he is devoted to yachting, knows most seas, and has made himself as much at home among the cannibals of the Southern Pacific as he is as chief guest at a big dinner. He has also weathered typhoons in the China Seas, cyclones and straight gales elsewhere, and has generally made himself master of a craft which has steamed five hundred miles during a voyage of twice as many thousand.

In 1890 Charles Millar became the first Australian to be elected to the Royal Yacht Squadron 'on the personal initiative of the Prince of Wales'. The Prince, at the time, was also heavily

involved in overseeing the construction of the Imperial Institute in London. Built to celebrate the Queen's Golden Jubilee in 1893, it was being funded mostly by private donations and gifts. As Elizabeth Millar was not independently wealthy, it seems likely that it was her son Charles who financed the fabrication of the bells. Whether the gift was in exchange for Charles's membership of the Royal Yacht Squadron or because of his friendship with the Prince is a matter of conjecture.

We don't know how much the 10 bells cost — but they were expensive. Cast by John Taylor and Co, one of the world's leading bell makers, which has been operating in Loughborough, Leicestershire, since the 14th century, the bells range in size from 2 feet 4½ inches to 4 feet 11⅝ inches and in weight from 6 cwt 2 qr 16 lb to 38 cwt 1 qr 15 lb. The firm also cast the bells at St Paul's Cathedral, London, and, more recently, the National Carillon in Canberra.

The London Institute's bells are known as the Alexandra Peal by permission of the then Princess of Wales. The individual bells were named Victoria (after the Queen), Alfred and Arthur (after the Queen's sons, the Dukes of Edinburgh and Connaught), Albert Edward (the Prince of Wales); Alexandra (the Princess of Wales); and Maud, Victoria, Louise, George, and Albert Victor (after the Prince of Wales's five children). Each bell also carries the inscription 'Elizabeth Millar gave me — The Loughborough Taylors made me.'

The bells were rung for the first time by Queen Victoria when she opened the Imperial Institute on 10 May 1893. Mrs Millar was sent an autographed letter from the Prince of Wales thanking her for her gift. She was also awarded the Jubilee medal in 1893; the only Australian resident to receive that honour.

The bells weren't a feature of the original design of the Queen's Tower. Consequently, by 1938 their 8 ton weight had caused the tower to sway a foot from its alignment. The tower's base was reinforced in the 1960s and now sways much less.

While most of the Imperial Institute was demolished in 1957, the Queen's Tower, with the Alexander Peal of bells survived. The tower now belongs to Imperial College but the bells remain the property of the monarch. They are rung on royal anniversaries and during Imperial College degree ceremonies.

Elizabeth Millar died, aged 85, at St Kilda, Melbourne, in September 1895, leaving no significant inheritance. Her son Charles died a wealthy man in the Canary Islands in February 1900.



WANTED

More women for the ADB

Fewer than one in twenty of the *Australian Dictionary of Biography's* entries for the colonial period are of women.

You can help us add another 1500 women by nominating those you think should be in the ADB.

To learn more about the colonial women in the ADB project and to download the nomination form go to: history.cass.anu.edu.au/centres/ncb/colonial-women-adb

If you would like to donate to the ADB Endowment Fund to help sponsor this project, please see adb.anu.edu.au/adb-endowment-fund/