

## National Centre of Biography News

August 2024

In this issue of the newsletter, Dr Sam Furphy shows how we are using sound to create a multi-sensory experience in the *ADB*. Plus there are plenty of notices and announcements to keep you up to date with all things biography. Got your own biographical news to share? Send us an email at [ncb@anu.edu.au](mailto:ncb@anu.edu.au).



The Australian Crowd, by Stephen Baxter (2014)



Jas H. Duke, 1987. Photograph by Darce Cassidy.

### Listening to lives in the *ADB*

Capturing a biographical subject's appearance and personality in a well-crafted sentence is a fine art that *ADB* authors and editors have practised for decades. Since moving online we have been able to complement textual representations with visual likenesses. More recently, the addition of sound recordings to some *ADB* entries has further expanded their potential as a biographical form.

A good example is a recently published [entry](#) on the anarchist poet Jas H. Duke (1939–1992). Born in Ballarat, Duke trained as an aeronautical engineer before moving to Britain in 1966, where he 'was part of the "politico-psychedelic underground" centred around the anarchist movement.' Returning to Australia in 1973, for two decades he was 'a fixture at Melbourne poetry readings and festivals' and a champion of 'dadaist, concrete and conceptual poetry.'

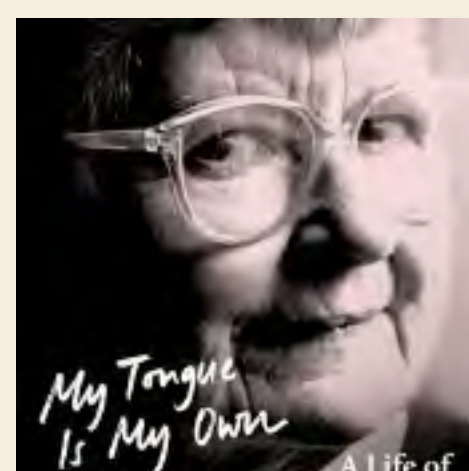
In the entry author Alan Wearne captures his subject's appearance and personality in one efficient sentence: 'A stocky man with a shaved head and a solid beard, Duke was forceful in his speech and in the delivery of his poetry.' As Duke himself later recalled: 'I started performing as a timid person with a stutter but the spirit of the times soon converted me into a bellowing bull.'

This evocative description is complemented both by a photo of Duke and by a link to an online [audio recording](#) of Duke reciting one of his best-known poems. Recorded by the ABC in the early 1980s but never broadcast, 'Shit Poem' was inspired by Duke's employment in the sewerage department of the Melbourne and Metropolitan Board of Works and is a good example of his workplace poetry.

The use of sound in the *ADB* is in its infancy, but it has the potential to enhance and complement the traditional text-based approach of a biographical dictionary.

-Dr Sam Furphy, academic & research editor

## News & notices



### Magarey Medal

Congratulations to Ann-Marie Priest who was awarded the Magarey Medal for Biography for *My Tongue Is My Own: A Life of Gwen Harwood* (La Trobe University Press, 2022).

Congratulations also to Jillian Graham, who was highly commended for *Inner Song: A Biography of Margaret Sutherland* (Miegynah Press, 2023).

Read the full citations [here](#).



### National Biography Award

The National Biography Award, presented by the State Library of New South Wales, celebrates excellence in biography, autobiography, and memoir writing.

This year's winner is Lamisse Hamouda for her book *The Shape of Dust* (Pantera Press).

The Michael Crouch Award for a Debut Work was awarded to Jillian Graham for *Inner Song: A Biography of Margaret Sutherland* (Melbourne University Publishing).

Read more about these prizewinners and the other shortlisted works [here](#).



### Call for papers

The call for papers for 'The Privilege of Trailblazing' project is now open! Centring on a workshop to be held in March 2025, the goal of this project is to produce a set of essays investigating trailblazing women. More info [here](#).



### Biography workshop

For the August Biography Workshop (29 August), Nick Hordern will explore the hitherto unknown life of Lorraine Murray, sex worker, counter-espionage informant, and Knightsbridge society matron. More info [here](#).



### Publishing family stories

On 4 September the National Library of Australia will host a panel discussion titled 'Memory to manuscript: Publishing family stories'. Authors Tess Scholfield-Peters, André Dao, and Sam Vincent will be in conversation with Virginia Haussegger to share their experiences of writing about family members. Free but registrations essential. More info [here](#).



### Asia-Pacific Lives exhibition

From 9-23 September the exhibition *Asia-Pacific Lives* will be on display in the foyer of the RSCS Building. A collaboration between the NCB and the School of Culture, History & Language for the [Immersionia](#) festival, it will showcase some of the individuals from the *ADB* whose stories reveal the myriad connections between Australia and the Asia-Pacific region. More info [here](#).



### The people behind Penfolds

The NCB thanks Penfolds for the generous gift of *The Rewards of Patience*, a history and guide to the rich story of this pioneering Australian wine company and the vintages it has produced.

In honour of International Shiraz Day on 25 July, you can read the story of winemaker Max Schubert and the making of the famous Grange – published in Volume 19 of the *ADB* in 2021 – below.

## ADB feature entry

Each month we highlight an entry from the *Australian Dictionary of Biography*.

South Australian-born Max Schubert went from working odd jobs at Penfold's Wines to becoming an established winemaker and the creator of Grange, 'Australia's most famous, expensive, and sought-after wine.'

Read about his fascinating life story in his *ADB* entry, authored by Charles Gent, [here](#).

