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# BIOGRAPHY FOOTNOTES

The Newsletter of the National Centre of Biography

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Queensland paediatrician Emeritus Professor John Pearn received the Royal Life Saving Society's highest award, the King Edward VII Cup, from Queen Elizabeth II in November 2016 for his work towards the prevention of child drownings. John is the author of five ADB entries, the most recent on Sir Abraham Fryberg (1901-1993), public health physician.



# FROM THE DIRECTOR'S DESK



## Welcome to Issue 17 of *Biography Footnotes*

ANU Vice Chancellor, Professor Brian Schmidt, has appointed five new members to the ADB's Editorial Board for a five-year term beginning January 2017: Odette Best, Bridget Griffen-Foley, Catherine Kevin, Lenore Layman and Katerina Teaiwa.

As we all know, the ADB is a national collaborative project, the largest of its kind in the social sciences and humanities in Australia, and — at over fifty years old — the longest-running. Its survival is dependent on the voluntary contributions of hundreds of people throughout Australia, starting with the State and Specialist Working Parties which nominate the people who will have entries in the *ADB*, and then suggest the authors. Authors research and write their entries without remuneration. Some become so engrossed in their subjects they go on to write full length biographies. We are profoundly in their debt.

It is the job of the Editorial Board, chaired by Professor Tom Griffiths of the ANU, and consisting of representatives from all the Workings Parties, as well as the General Editor, Managing Editor, and the Dean of the ANU's College of Arts and Social Sciences, to set the direction of the ADB.

Ten years ago, women made up less than a third of the Editorial Board. Today, I am happy to say, women comprise almost one half (13 men, 12 women). The Board also has a significant Indigenous representation. In 2015 Dr Shino Konishi and Stephen Kinnane were appointed for five-year

terms as part of the ANU's commitment to its Reconciliation Action Plan. In addition, we now have Dr Odette Best, chair of the ADB's all-Indigenous Working Party. Associate Professor Katerina Teaiwi, chair of the Oceania Working Party has Pacific Islander heritage.

I wish to express my deep appreciation, and that of the ANU, for the commitment, scholarly excellence and public service of the ADB Editorial Board members with whom I have worked to date. And I look forward to working with all the new and continuing members over the next five, no doubt, challenging years. The Board's advice in advancing the NCB/ADB's Strategic Plan will be important, as will be the challenges set out in the University's new Strategic Plan, which the ANU Council recently endorsed.

The ADB's next Editorial Board meeting will be held on 4 April. Sadly, we will meet without Jill Roe who had served as a member since 1985 and was its chair in 1996-2006. In so many ways this number of *Biography Footnotes* is for our friend and advocate, Jill, who died in January. It includes a review of her latest book, her ADB Medal citation and her obituary.

**Melanie Nolan**

Director, National Centre of Biography  
General Editor, Australian Dictionary of Biography

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## Congratulations

to Dr Chris Wallace who has been awarded a three-year Discovery Early Career Researcher Award fellowship from the Australian Research Council to study the use of 'smart power' diplomacy. She will be focussing particularly on Ambassador Richard Gardiner Casey, his wife Maie Casey, and their press aide Patricia Jarrett, who served in Washington in 1940-41 and conducted a sustained campaign of private and public diplomacy to project an identity for Australia distinct from the then unpopular Britain with which it was usually conflated.

Chris is based at the National Centre of Biography while she works on her project.

## Indigenous Dictionary of Biography

Congratulations also to Dr Shino Konishi (University of Western Australia), Dr Malcolm Allbrook (NCB) and Professor Tom Griffiths (History, ANU) on being awarded an Australian Research Council Discovery (Indigenous) Grant to work towards an Indigenous Dictionary of Biography.

The project, worth \$732,704 over four years, is a collaboration between Indigenous researchers and the Australian Dictionary of Biography. The ultimate aim is to publish a supplementary volume of the *ADB* comprising biographies of 190 Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people. The team will also publish research articles that reframe Indigenous biographical practice.

## First Three Fleets Project

The NCB also received a \$44,000 ANU Research School of Social Sciences infrastructure grant in 2016 for its First Fleets project. Half of the money was used to purchase death certificates which, as well as providing peoples' cause of death, contain valuable details about employment, religion and previous marriages.

Some of the money was also used to create digital maps of the earliest maps of white settlement, including the very first map, drawn by naval officer William Bradley in March 1788. The other maps are Charles Grimes' surveys of the settlements in New South Wales and Norfolk Island in the 1790s and settlement maps of New South Wales and Tasmania in the 1810s.

The maps have been redrawn by the CartoGIS area at the ANU and placed over Google Maps. Links are being included between the names of property owners on the maps and their biographical records in our websites. (see inside for more information)

## How to Answer?

Still on the subject of convicts, the *ADB* gets asked all sorts of weird and wonderful questions. But this one was a beauty: 'Are some convicts still alive in 2016?' We hope not for their sakes. The last convicts transported to Australia arrived in Western Australia in 1868. The youngest was 19 years old at the time. That would make him 169 this year.

## Australia's Largest Family?

We recently added an obituary to *Obituaries Australia* for Johanna Stephan <http://oa.anu.edu.au/obituary/stephan-johanna-wilhelme-26927> who just may be the matriarch of Australia's largest family. She had 22 children – all single births – over a 32-year period, with the first born when she was 18-years-old. Remarkably, all her children lived to adulthood.

Perhaps the fact that Johanna was the local midwife and nurse had something to do with her children's good health outcomes? The family lived in a slab hut on a selection in Boonah, Queensland, and added on a room when needed as the family grew until the hut eventually had 15 rooms. When most of the children left home the ever practical Johanna turned part of the house into a hospital.

## Colonial Women in the ADB

Johanna is one of the women who have been nominated for an *ADB* entry as part of the *Dictionary's* colonial women project. There is still time to send in names of women, who flourished during the colonial period, who you think should be added to the *ADB*. Women account for only 4% of *ADB* entries for those years. We want to boost that number substantially by adding another 1500 entries.

Suggestions so far include:

Mary Stark (c.1850-1891). After teaching for 21 years in the Victorian Education service Mary was still designated a junior assistant. She unsuccessfully appealed for promotion to the Public Service Board, then mounted a legal challenge, and finally took her case to the Privy Council in London which, in May 1890, found in her favour. But by then her health had deteriorated. She died on the day she wrote her resignation letter.

Mary McLaughlan (c.1804-1830), a Scottish convict, was the first woman to be executed in Van Diemen's Land (Tasmania). She fell pregnant while assigned as a servant to a family and, as punishment, was sent to the Female Factory. Her newborn infant was later found dead in the water closet. Mary claimed the baby died during childbirth but was found guilty of murder and sentenced to hang. Her corpse was given to the Colonial Hospital and dissected in front of an audience.

Annie Caldwell's (1820-1890) husband died in 1856 leaving her pregnant with seven young children to support on a small farm at Gumeracha, north-east of Adelaide. In 1864 she set off with her children on an eight-week, 900 km, overland trek, through Bendigo to Albury where she selected a block of land. Annie remained in charge of the family farm until her death.

Mary Allport (1806-1895) was one of the most important early Australian artists.

She painted studies of flora, fauna, miniatures and landscapes. Many of her lithographs were published and she exhibited locally and internationally. For the Universal Exhibition in Paris in 1855 she exhibited a chess table with wildflowers painted in the squares.

Both Mary and her husband, Joseph (who has an *ADB* entry), were founding members of the Tasmanian Society (later Royal Society of Tasmania). Mary was also a founding member of the Tasmanian Archery Club.

## Biography Workshop

The NCB is continuing with its Biography Workshops this year. Authors are invited to come along and share with us the joys and difficulties in researching and writing their books.

The group meets at the ANU, usually on the last Thursday of the month at noon.

The first workshop was held on Thursday, **23 February**. Sue Taffe discussed her biography of Mary Montgomery Bennett, teacher and Aboriginal rights advocate.

In **March**, Libby Connors will talk about her biography of Dundalli, *Warrior: A Legendary Leader's Dramatic Life and Violent Death on the Colonial Frontier*, which won the 2016 Magarey Medal for Biography. (You can read Dundalli's *ADB* entry at <http://adb.anu.edu.au/biography/dundalli-12895/text23299>)

In **April** there will be two Biography Workshops. Gideon Haigh (11 April) will discuss his book on cricketer Victor Trumper and John Murphy (27 April), will be talking about his biography of H.V. Evatt.

In a first for us, in **May** we will be joined by both biographer, Garry Sturgess, and his subject, Barry Jones. It should engender some lively discussion.

Nick Brodie is joining us in **June** to discuss his book, *Kin*, the biography of his own family.

All are welcome to attend the workshops. Please email [adb@anu.edu.au](mailto:adb@anu.edu.au) for the venue.

The full year's program is available on the NCB's website at <http://ncb.anu.edu.au/biography-reading-group-2013>.

## Family History conference

The NCB, in association with the National Library of Australia and the Centre for Applied Research at Macquarie University, is holding a family history conference at the NLA on 3-5 November 2017.

Keynote speakers are being invited from England, New Zealand and the USA. There will also be a general call for papers.

More information about the conference will be available on the NCB's website in the coming months.

## ANU.Lives biography series

ANU Press no longer requires that authors have a strong association with the ANU for their work to be considered for publication. This is good news for the NCB which publishes the ANU.Lives biography series. You can find out more about ANU.Lives at <http://ncb.anu.edu.au/anulives>

## New PhD candidate

Susan Priestley has joined us this year as a PhD candidate. She brings a wealth of experience as the author of thirteen books, including a history of Mercy Private Hospital, Melbourne, and a biography of suffragist Henrietta Dugdale. She has also written seven *ADB* entries, and numerous articles and reviews. Her thesis topic is 'English Migration in the Generation before World War I as a Contributor to Australia's Diversity and Identity'.

## Biographical Dictionary of the Australian Senate

The Senate launched the fourth and final volume of the *Biographical*

*Dictionary of the Australian Senate* on 28 February. In it you will find concise biographies of 108 senators and one clerk whose term of service concluded between the years 1983-2002.

There are many familiar names, a significant number of women, and some controversial figures including Peter Baume, Flo Bjelke-Petersen, John Button, Don Chipp, Malcolm Colston, Pat Giles, Margaret Guilfoyle, Janine Haines, Cheryl Kernot, Jocelyn Newman, Chris Puplick, Graham Richardson, Susan Ryan, Peter Walsh, Reg Withers and Olive Zakharov.

The average entry is 2700 words; the ANU's Chancellor Gareth Evans has the longest entry at 4963 words.

The volume can be purchased online at [http://www.apf.gov.au/About\\_Parliament/Senate/Powers\\_practice\\_n\\_procedures/The\\_Biographical\\_Dictionary\\_of\\_the\\_Australian\\_Senate](http://www.apf.gov.au/About_Parliament/Senate/Powers_practice_n_procedures/The_Biographical_Dictionary_of_the_Australian_Senate) or from the Parliament House bookstore for \$79. The entries will also be available on the *BDAS* website around Easter.

## Congratulations

to *ADB* authors and members of Working Parties who received Australian honours this year:

### Australia Day Honours

Officer (AO) in the General Division  
Emeritus Professor Pat Grimshaw  
Dr Carol A. Liston  
Emeritus Professor Larry Sitsky

Medal (OAM) in the General Division  
Mr William (Bill) Bunbury  
Mr Michael D de B. Collins Persse  
Dr David J. Hough

## Deaths of *ADB* authors

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

Caroline Allport  
James Merralls  
Adrian Monger  
John Mulvaney  
Jill Roe



## Chris Cunneen pays tribute to his – and our – friend and colleague Jill Roe

With the death of Professor Emerita Jillian Isobel Roe on 12 January 2017 at her home in Pearl Beach, New South Wales, Australia has lost a great historian and the *Australian Dictionary of Biography* a staunch friend and supporter.

Jill was born on 10 November 1940 at Tumby Bay, in South Australia's Eyre Peninsula, fourth of four daughters of Edna Ivy Roe, née Heath, and her husband John, a farmer. Edna died from tuberculosis when Jill was fourteen months old, and John later remarried. Educated locally at Yallunda Flat Primary and then at Cummins Area schools, in 1955 Jill moved to Adelaide and attended Unley and Adelaide Girls high schools and then the University of Adelaide, where she obtained a BA (Hons). After obtaining a MA (Hons) from the Australian National University, under Manning Clark, in 1965, Jill taught briefly in London before taking up a tutorship in the discipline of modern history at Macquarie University in 1967, as one of Bruce Mansfield's first appointments. She was to remain at Macquarie – an inspiring and devoted teacher, supervisor, role model and eventually head of discipline – until her death. In 2013 the university awarded her the degree of Doctor of Letters.

Jill's connexion with the *ADB* began with her first articles in volume 3 (1969) and will extend to her twenty-first – on her Macquarie University colleague, Max Kelly – which remained partly written at her death and will appear in a future volume (with an asterisk). In a small but moving ceremony in Woy Woy hospital on her birthday last November, she was presented with the *ADB* medal for long and distinguished service; the citation appears elsewhere in this newsletter. As it shows, she has been an outstanding member of the *ADB* family. But she always responded to praise by saying "I get by with a little help from my friends". And the *ADB* has been a friend to her too, as it has been to many others. Bev Kingston has pointed out that a quick glance at Jill's astounding CV shows that she expanded three *ADB* articles into significant research projects: her first submitted entry, on Ada Cambridge (*ADB* 3 – 1969) was followed in 1972 by an article on Cambridge in *Australian Literary Studies*; the entry on George Sydney Arundale (*ADB* 7 – 1979) led to her *Beyond Belief: Theosophy in Australia 1879-1939* (1986), and of course, famously, the volume 8 entry on Miles Franklin (1981) resulted in her monumental work *Stella Miles Franklin: A Biography* (2008) as well as several other volumes of edited correspondence and writings. (At Jill's funeral in Pearl Beach last month, it was remarked that *Beyond Belief* would be worth republishing.) With Bev's help, Jill worked almost to the end, and her personal memoir *Our Fathers Cleared the Bush: Remembering Eyre Peninsula*, completed during her last illness, is reviewed in this newsletter.

These and her numerous other publications, such as her edited book *Social Policy in Australia: Some Perspectives 1901-1975* (1976), are notable contributions to Australia's



Jill Roe with Governor-General Michael Jeffery at the launch of *ADB Online*, 2006

intellectual life, but Jill wrote so widely and practiced her profession so expansively that to simply list the publications and the responsibilities she eagerly took on is to undervalue the individual achievements. Jill played an important role in the Australian Historical Association and the History Council of New South Wales. She was a passionate advocate for all libraries and especially of the State Library of New South Wales. In Stuart Macintyre's tribute and Desley Deacon's warm obituary in the *AHA Newsletter*, 13 February 2007, can be found many of the highlights of Jill's busy professional life, as well as perceptive insights into her personal qualities of warmth, loyalty and wit. And, as Stuart wrote, 'among the remarkable group of women who transformed the Australian historical profession Jill Roe was the principal enabler'.

Included in projects she enabled, which might be missed in the sweep of what has been described as "Jill Roe enterprises," were the Sydney History Group and the *Macquarie PEN Anthology of Australian Literature*. Jill was a founding member of the former, and a chief investigator and project leader at Macquarie University of the latter. These are only two of the many initiatives to which Jill gave her support and skill. Another, on Australian war brides in the USA, she handed happily over to her student and friend Dr Robyn Arrowsmith, who published *All the Way to the USA: Australian WWII War Brides* in 2013. Never very interested in war history, except to the extent that it impinged upon Miles Franklin, Jill was, however, drawn to women involved in peace movements, and in 2005 wrote the entry on 'Peace' in Mary Spongberg, Barbara Caine and Ann Curthoy's *Companion to Women's Historical Writing* (2005).

# JILL ROE (cont'd)

A writer and speaker of rare elegance and humour, Jill had an enviable gift for an original and memorable phrase – witness the chapter in *Beyond Belief* headed “Minds Maddened by Protestantism”, and her short address, “Belly-dancing in the Bush and other strategies for survival”, which was published in the *AHA Bulletin* in December 1998. As an historian, she was a true professional. When Jill researched something she did it thoroughly and then wrote up her findings. For example, she thought deeply about photographic representations of Miles Franklin, gave a talk about it at a gathering at Macquarie University Library and then published an article ‘Changing Faces: Miles Franklin and Photography’ in *Australian Feminist Studies* (2004).

I am so pleased that accompanying this brief tribute is a photograph of Jill in her prime – 2000 – taken by the talented Effy Alexakis, both a colleague and friend of Jill’s. As I look at it now, I can picture her standing up from the desk and telling us all, ‘that’s enough now, let’s get back to work.’

**\* Chris Cunneen has been associated with the ADB since 1974 as a research fellow, deputy general editor, and NSW Working Party and Editorial Board member. With Jill and others, he edited the Supplement volume of the ADB, published in 2005.**



Jill Roe, 2000

©photo by Effy Alexakis

## NCB Volunteers



The National Centre of Biography welcomes the assistance of volunteer help with its projects. Fleur Kelleher, Chris Hansen and Merle Hunt (from left to right, above) are providing assistance with the First Fleets project.



## Entries for those who died in 1993 will be added to the Australian Dictionary of Biography website this year. As usual they include a diverse range of people:

**Troy Lovegrove** (1986-1993) and **Eve van Grafhorst** (1982-1993) are the youngest people to have entries in that year. Many will recall their individual struggles with HIV-AIDS. Troy contracted the disease from his mother – who also died from the illness – in the womb. With his father he produced a documentary, *A Kid Called Troy*, which followed the last two years of his life.

The film presented the humanity of people living with HIV-AIDS and the difficulties experienced by their families at a time when prejudice against AIDS was widespread. In 1990, Troy and his father helped launch the AIDS Trust of Australia's paediatric fund-raising project 'Kids With Aids'.

Troy had considerable community support in his struggles with AIDS. Eve van Grafhorst's family faced such a level of discrimination and prejudice in Kincumber, New South Wales – including eviction from their home and having a high dividing fence built by a neighbour – that they moved to New Zealand in 1986. A documentary about Eve's experiences was made in 1994.

Black rights activist, poet, environmentalist, and educator **Oodgeroo Noonuccal** (Kath Walker) (1920-1993) began her working life as an underpaid domestic servant in Brisbane. In 1942 she joined the Australian Women's Army Service and later worked for Ralph and Phyllis Cilento who encouraged her artistic endeavours. By the end of the decade she had joined the Communist Party and the Brisbane Realist Writers Group. She published her first book of poetry in 1964; sales of her poetry were claimed to rank second to Australia's best-selling poet C.J. Dennis. As Queensland State secretary of the Federal Council for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Advancement she was heavily involved in the campaign supporting the 1967 referendum to empower the Federal government to legislate on Aboriginal affairs. She later stood unsuccessfully as both an ALP and Australian Democrat candidate in state elections. In 1971 she returned to her childhood home, Minjerribah, on North Stradbroke Island where she established a learning facility for children and continued to write poetry and children's books. With her son, in 1988 she wrote the script for *The Rainbow Serpent Theatre*, under her newly chosen name Oodgeroo (paperbark tree) Noonuccal (her father's clan).

**Murray Farquhar** (1918-1993) is best remembered for his spectacular fall from judicial grace. A working-class boy from Broken Hill, Farquhar saw action in Tobruk, El Alamein, Lae, and Tarakan, Borneo, during World War II before transferring to the Reserve of Officers in 1945 with the rank of major. In 1958 he qualified as a solicitor, was appointed a stipendiary magistrate in 1962 and chair of the bench of stipendiary magistrates in 1971. He retired from the judiciary in 1979. By then rumours about his gambling habit and his connections with criminals had begun to surface. In 1983 the ABC's Four Corners program broadcast allegations that Farquhar had interfered with committal proceedings against

Kevin Humphreys, president of the New South Wales Rugby Football League, who had been accused of defrauding the Balmain Leagues Club. A subsequent royal commission led to Farquhar being charged and sentenced to four years imprisonment for attempting to pervert the course of justice. After his release he was involved in several court cases including conspiring to obtain false passports which were to be used in a coup attempt against Philippines President Corazon Aquino. Farquhar claimed he was the victim of an elaborate confidence trick but he did not live to hear the verdict of the trial.

New Zealander **Fred Hollows** (1929-1993) arrived in Sydney in 1965 after being appointed associate professor of medicine at the University of NSW and chairman of ophthalmology at the Prince of Wales hospital. While treating the Gurindji people at Wave Hill Station in the Northern Territory, he became aware of the prevalence of trachoma amongst Aborigines. Federal government funding allowed him to establish the National Trachoma and Eye Health program in 1975. A visit to Nepal in 1985 saw the expansion of the program to developing countries. Appointed Australian of the Year in 1990 he set up the Fred Hollows Foundation in 1992 to ensure that his work would continue after his death from cancer.

Literary agent, editor, writer, and peace activist **Florence James** (1902-1993) is best remembered for her novel *Come in Spinner*, co-authored with Dymphna Cusack and published in 1951. She later became a reader and talent scout for a number of publishing companies and was a member of the Women's International League for Peace and Freedom and the Campaign for Nuclear Disarmament. She was to spend a month in gaol after one anti-nuclear weapons demonstration. In 1990 the ABC broadcast *Come in Spinner* as a TV mini-series.

Many will have lived in a house built by **Albert Jennings's** (1896-1993) company. He built his first house in 1932 at Glenhuntly in Melbourne. A year later he began work on his first subdivision at Caulfield; other estates quickly followed. By the 1960s his company was Australia's largest home builder. It also built Wrest Point Casino in Hobart and whole mining towns. Despite financial setbacks, the company portfolio continued to grow to encompass ventures related to its core home and general construction businesses, including finance, transport, and caravans.

**Susan Felsche** (1961-1993) was the first Australian female soldier to die on overseas duty since World War II. A medical officer, Felsche was part of an Australian contingent deployed to Western Sahara in support of a United Nations mission. On 21 June 1993 she boarded an aircraft at Awsard bound for Dougaj. The plane developed problems soon after taking off and crashed, killing Felsche and others. Each year the Royal Military College awards the Major Susan Lee Felsche Memorial Trust prize to the best RAAMC graduate.

# TRANSPLANTED LIVES

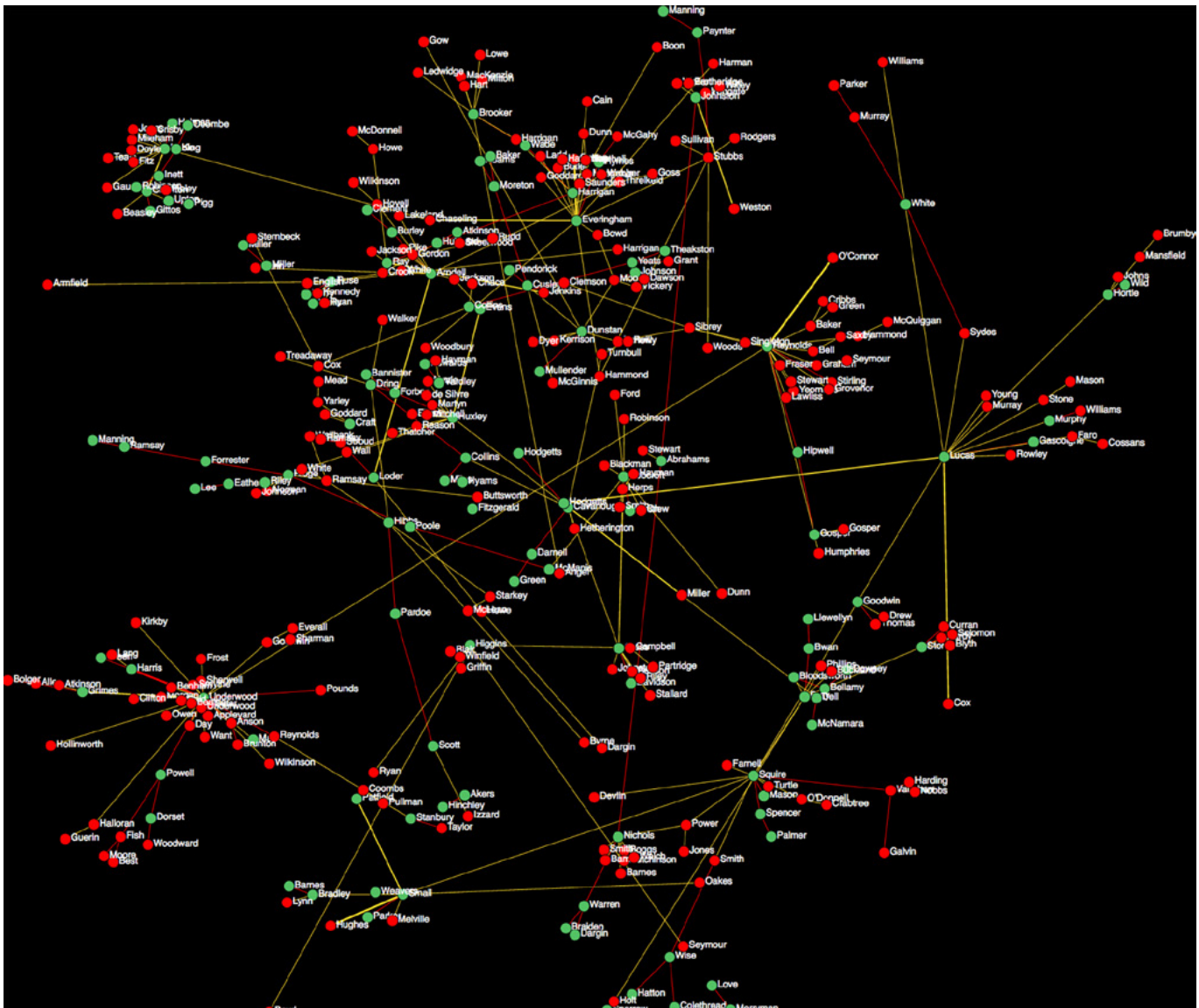
## Christine Fernon discusses the National Centre of Biography's project *Transplanted Lives: The First Three Fleets and their Families*

About 4500 people set off in the first Three Fleets from England to New South Wales in 1787-91. The NCB's project, *Transplanted Lives*, examines how those, who survived the journey, 'remade' their lives in the infant colony. We are also investigating how their children and grandchildren fared. We want to know what kind of society was transported to the colony? Did a convict past have an impact on the long-term prospects of families? What led to some families achieving prosperity over the generations while others weren't as successful?

Biographical records are being created for all fleeters and their family members (spouses, children, grandchildren) on our websites. Some fleeters, such as James Squire, Esther

Johnston and James Underwood, already have entries in the *Australian Dictionary of Biography*. Those with obituaries are being added to *Obituaries Australia*; records for everyone else are being added to the NCB's *People Australia* website. So far we have added 3000 records and have 'completed' (added all two subsequent generations of) 27 fleeters' families.

One of the interesting findings, that we have made so far, is the interconnectedness of the families. As the graph below shows, every family is interconnected. Even Governor Philip Gidley King and Lieutenant-Governor David Collins, who both had children with convict partners, are part of the network. You can view the graph at <http://peopleaustralia.anu.edu.au/group/1562/families>.



First Three Fleeters (green circles), their partners and their offspring.



# TRANSPLANTED LIVES (cont'd)

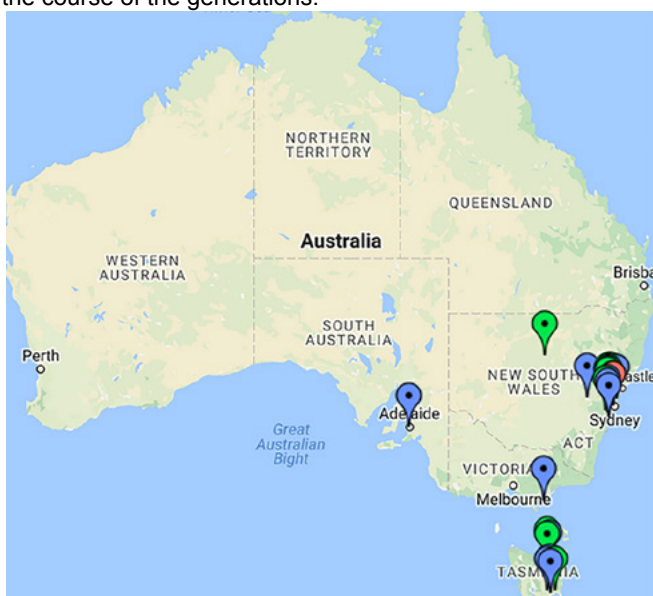
As shown on the graphs on this page we have used Google Maps to plot the birth and death places of the fleeters and their descendants. You can view these graphs at <http://peopleaustralia.anu.edu.au/group/1562/bloc> (birth) and <http://peopleaustralia.anu.edu.au/group/1562/dloc> (death).

So far over 99 percent of arrivals – both convict and free – from the three generations came from Great Britain. It's not until generation 2 (the fleeters' grandchildren) that migrants from non-British countries marry and/or have children with fleeters' descendants.

Place of death is perhaps the more interesting graph as very few people returned/migrated to Britain. Those who did make the journey were mainly government officials, members of the military and seamen returning after their tour of duty. Even many of them chose to settle in the colony. While the prohibitive cost of a sea passage may have kept some ex-convicts in the colony, for others it was a deliberate decision to remain. In 1809 Third Fleeter Charles Whalan, who went from being a felon to a trusted servant of Governor Macquarie, wrote to his siblings that 'I shall never anymore return to England to reside'. He went on to say that he had found 'true freedom' in the colony, 'if not for the body, then for the mind and the soul'. He told them that while he wasn't a serf in England he wasn't all that well treated either.

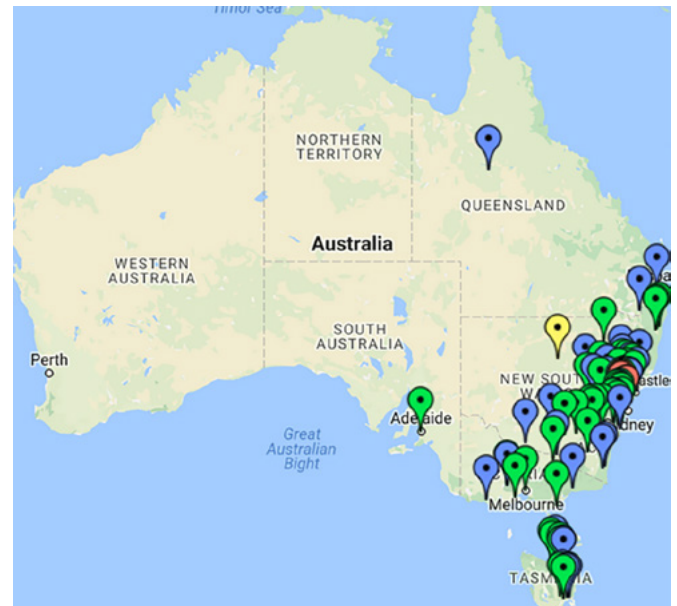
'Here it is different because everyone respects me and I do not fully understand why but I hope it is because I am an **equal** man. Goodbye to old England I say, for when I offended her laws I became one of God's chosen people for His chosen land'.

By charting place of death within Australia you can clearly see the spread of the colonists along the eastern seaboard over the course of the generations.



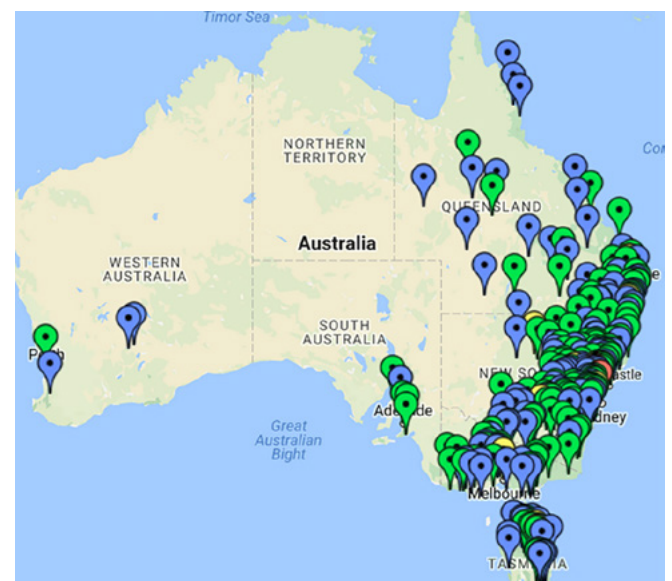
Place of Death, Generation 0

The graph for Generation 0 (above), the fleeters, shows the population centred around Sydney and the Hawkesbury in New South Wales, and Launceston and Hobart in Tasmania.



Place of Death, Generation 1

Generation 1 (the children) (above) spread out towards Queensland and Victoria as a result of pastoral expansion.



Place of Death, Generation 2

Generation 2 (the grandchildren) (above) are still on the move – further into Queensland, with many more also moving to Victoria after the gold rush. A few – all from the same family – had made the leap across to Western Australia.

Creating a new family network in the Australian colonies was important to many of the fleeters and their descendants. When a decision was made to branch out – to set up a new pastoral station or farm many miles away – usually two or three members of the family embarked on the undertaking.

We have created a number of miscellaneous graphs to display the data that we are collecting (3000 records to date). They can be viewed at <http://peopleaustralia.anu.edu.au/group/1562/graph>, and include the age of fleeters upon

# TRANSPLANTED LIVES (cont'd)

arrival, age at marriage and birth rate. The fleeters, we have so far recorded, had 6.5 children; the next generation had 7.6 children.

The average age of death is an interesting graph. Many will be aware that the first generation of 'native born' colonists were often referred to as cornstalks because they were taller, and better fed in their youth, than their parents. While this may be true it doesn't appear that they lived longer than them.

We have two cause of death graphs. The second graph was created because the first gave a distorted picture in that the vast majority of generation 0 (the fleeters) arrived in New South Wales as adults. But, even when we excluded those aged under 18 from the study, this did not improve their longevity. In fact the first generation died at a slightly younger age than their fleeter parents.

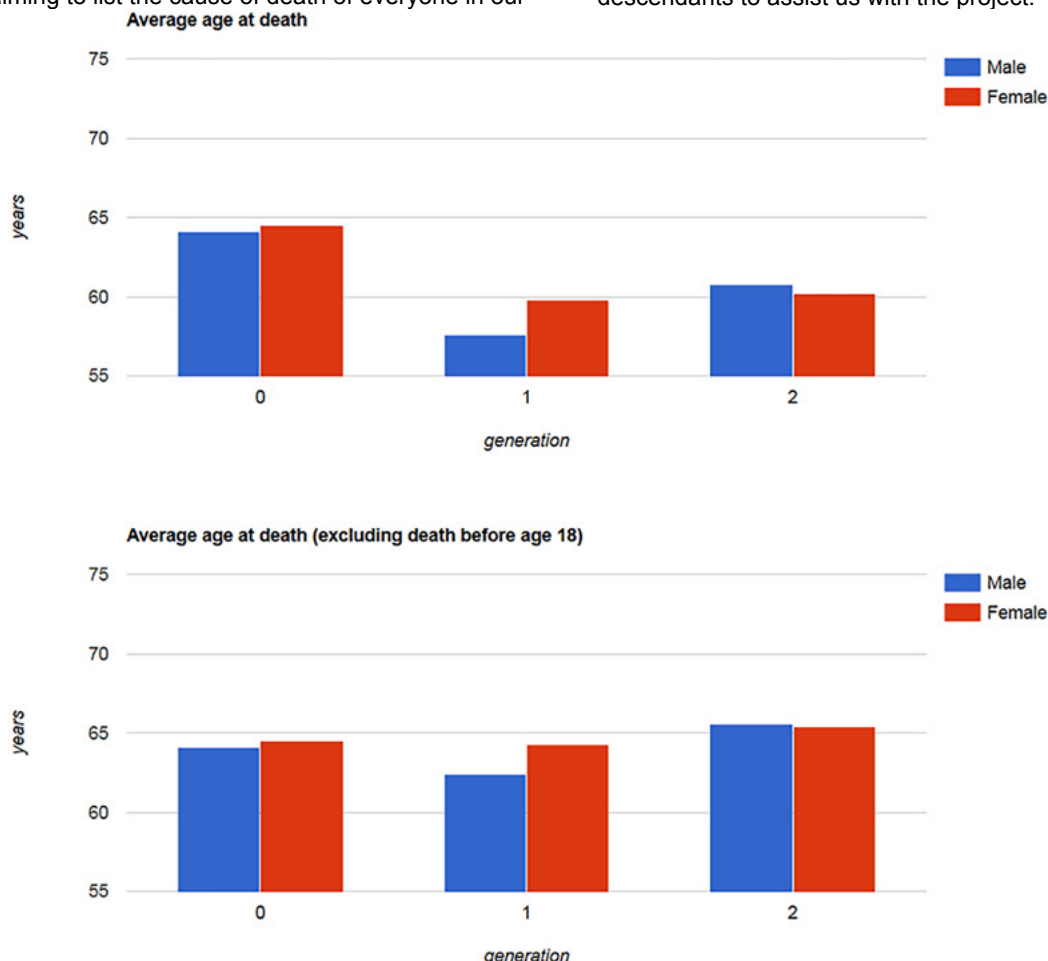
Having said that, coming to the colony **did** have a significant effect on the average age of death overall when compared with people living in England at the same time. An article on 'Life Expectancy' by Max Roser <https://ourworldindata.org/life-expectancy/> gives 40 as the average age of death for both sexes in England between 1788-1880, rising gradually to 54 in 1912. The average age of death, we have so far recorded, for the fleeters' male children is 58, and 60 for their female children.

We are aiming to list the cause of death of everyone in our

study. Unfortunately civil registration didn't start in the colonies until around the 1840s (1856 in New South Wales) but it is possible to pick up mentions of causes of death prior to that in newspapers and other sources. From the information we have so far gathered heart disease was, by far, the leading cause of death across the generations. General debility, which we've used as an overarching term for non-specific causes of death (such as 'senility', 'general decay' and 'natural causes'), given by doctors to describe old age, was the second most common cause, followed by stroke, pneumonia, tuberculosis and bronchitis. Complications arising from childbirth was a significant killer of women, coming in at number four after heart disease, general debility and stroke.

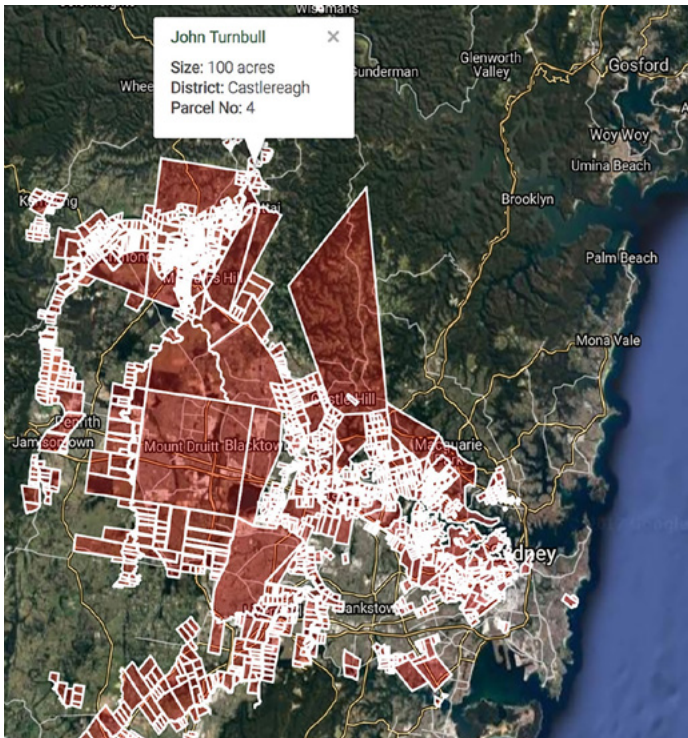
One of the more remarkable findings has been the high percentage of marriages/partnerings in all generations. It is well-known that there was a gender imbalance in the colonies, initially because of the higher proportion of male convicts being transported, and then because of the larger number of men migrating, particularly during the gold rush era. It is far too early into the study to make generalisations but it does seem that the local-born male population had no trouble finding partners. We are finding a fairly low incidence of single men in the families in our study.

We will be soon be creating a Facebook page to display some of our findings and as a means of encouraging fleeters' descendants to assist us with the project.





# TRANSPLANTED LIVES – MAPS



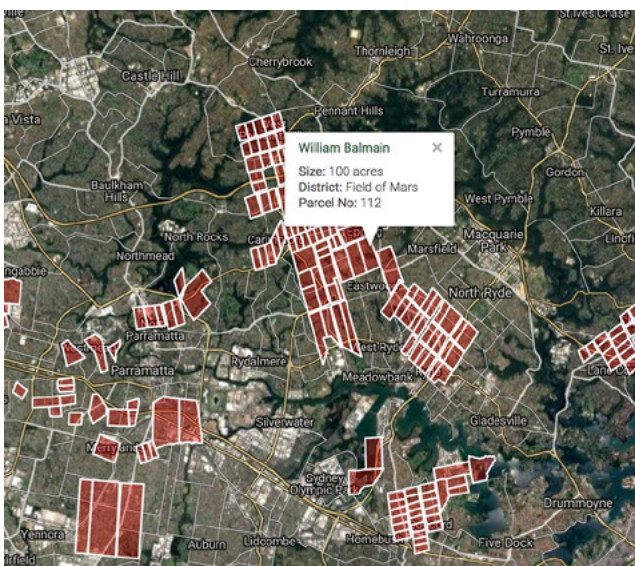
Plan of the Allotments of Ground, Granted from the Crown in New South Wales, by J. Burr and G. Ballisat, 1814, overlaid on Google Maps

The NCB has digitised six colonial settlement maps as part of its *Transplanted Lives: The First Three Fleets and their Families* project. The ANU's CartoGIS area redraw the maps so we could overlay them on Google Maps. This allows viewers to see what now exists at each property location.

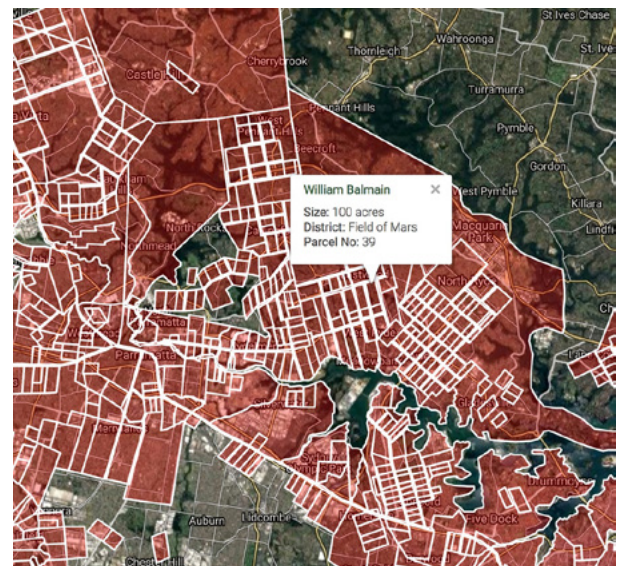
*Plan of the Allotments of Ground, Granted from the Crown in New South Wales*, by J. Burr and G. Ballisat, 1814 (left) is one of the maps we have digitised. You can view it at <http://peopleaustralia.anu.edu.au/entity/12456>

The names of all 1200 property owners are listed in the right column of the web page. Clicking on a name takes you to their property in the map where their name and property size is shown in a pop-up box (see example shown on the left). If the landowner has an entry in one of our biographical websites, clicking on their name will take you to their record. A link to the catalogue entry for Burr and Ballisat's original map, held in the State Library of New South Wales, has also been included.

A special feature of this map is the link to Charles Grimes' plan of the settlement of New South Wales in 1796 (click on the 'Show 1796' button in the right column). Toggling between the two overlays shows the expansion of settlement in the colony during the intervening years. Switching between them also enables you to check if an early property owner still held that property in 1814. In the example below, William Balmain did.



section of Plan of the Settlements in New South Wales, by Charles Grimes 1796, overlaid on Google Maps



section of Plan of the Allotments of Ground, Granted from the Crown in New South Wales, by J. Burr and G. Ballisat, 1814, overlaid on Google Maps

As well as the Burr and Ballisat map we have digitised:

William Bradley's map of Sydney Cove, 1788 <http://peopleaustralia.anu.edu.au/entity/12451>

Settlements in New South Wales, 1796 <http://peopleaustralia.anu.edu.au/entity/12454>

Settlers' Blocks on Norfolk Island, 1796 <http://peopleaustralia.anu.edu.au/entity/12455>

Settlement map of Port Dalrymple, Tasmania 1819 <http://peopleaustralia.anu.edu.au/entity/12452>

Settlement map of Derwent River, Tasmania, 1819 <http://peopleaustralia.anu.edu.au/entity/12453>



# A ROYAL TOUR OF THE ADB

## ADB research editor **Karen Fox** explores royal tours through ADB entries

In 1954, when Queen Elizabeth II visited Australia – the first reigning British monarch to do so – she was greeted with passionate enthusiasm. She travelled the country for two months, and Australians turned out in their thousands to see her. No royal tour since has elicited so much excitement.

Less spectacular they may be, but royal tours have a longer history and are still regular happenings. Since 2010, for example, Prince William has visited three times, including touring flood-damaged parts of Victoria and Queensland in 2011, and Prince Charles and the Duchess of Cornwall have toured twice, most recently in November 2015. The Queen travelled to Australia in 2011, when she attended the Commonwealth Heads of Government meeting in Perth, and Prince Harry attended the centenary celebrations for the Royal Australian Navy in 2013. In April 2014, the visit of the Duke and Duchess of Cambridge drew large crowds and extensive media coverage.

Royal tours are back on the scholarly agenda too. Last year a conference entitled 'Royals on Tour: The Politics and Pageantry of Royal Visits' was held at the University of Sydney, not long after the publication of historian Jane Connors's *Royal Visits to Australia* (2015) by NLA Publishing. The history of Australia's relationship with the monarchy, too, has recently been recounted in David Hill's *Australia and the Monarchy* (2015).

My own interest in the history of royal tours was sparked by their relationship to the history of the honours system, which I have been researching for some time. Royal tours have often been the occasion not only for investitures, at which recipients have had the opportunity to receive their distinction from the sovereign or a member of the royal family, but also for special distributions of honours, especially to those who assisted in organising or running a tour.

Such honours usually take the form of appointment to the Royal Victorian Order. The *Australian Dictionary of Biography* (ADB) and its associated websites contain the stories of numerous people appointed to this order since its establishment by Queen Victoria in 1896. Some of those were governors, such as Sir Day Hort Bosanquet, who received the order's highest honour, GCVO – Knight Grand Cross – in 1907 before his arrival in Australia, where he became the governor of South Australia; his entry is by Peter Howell.

Others to have been knighted in this order include Sir Charles Marr, who had helped to organise three royal tours by the time he was appointed KCVO – Knight Commander – in 1935; Sir Reginald Pollard, who was Queen Elizabeth II's Australian secretary for her 1970 visit; and Sir Doug Nicholls, who 'hosted' the Queen in 1977. C.J. Lloyd, Chris Clark, and Richard Broome, respectively, authored their entries.

Among those who have helped to arrange and run royal tours are Herbert William Lloyd, an army officer appointed CVO – Commander – for his work as transport officer during the Prince of Wales's 1920 visit (ADB entry by Warren Perry);



Queen Elizabeth and Prince Philip at Central Station, Sydney, 1954, courtesy of State Records New South Wales

Keith Spann, the secretary of the Queensland premier's department, who had directed the 1977 royal visit (entry by Ross Laurie); and Edward Parkes, the Tasmanian director for the 1934 tour of the Duke of Gloucester (entry by Darryl Bennet). Women to have been appointed to the order include Dame Roma Mitchell, the first woman appointed a supreme court judge in Australia and the first woman to become a State governor, who will undoubtedly be included in the ADB in due course.

Of course, Australians have experienced royal tours in many ways besides directing or running them, and some of these stories too can be found in the ADB. John Antill's entry by Harold Hort, for example, notes that he composed *Music for a Royal Pageant* for the 1962 royal visit, while florist Beatrice Stewart's entry (by Marianne Payten) tells us that she supplied decorations for St Andrew's Cathedral in Sydney for the Queen's visit in 1954. There are also photographers, such as Duryea Townsend, whose entry by R. J. Noye observes that he was official photographer for the 1867 royal visit, and filmmakers, such as Walter Franklyn Barrett, who documented the 1901 visit by the Duke and Duchess of Cornwall and York and Stanley Hawes, who produced 1954's *The Queen in Australia* (their entries are by Martha Rutledge and Graham Shirley respectively).

And then there is Lionel Logue (entry written by Suzanne Edgar) who received his MVO – Member 4th class – not for helping to organise a royal tour, but for his work as speech therapist to the Duke of York, later King George VI, which was dramatised in the film *The King's Speech*.

With the ADB's ever-expanding online indexing and searching capabilities, royal tours have become just one of many kinds of events that can be explored through the ADB and its associated websites. Doing so provides glimpses into various facets of Australian life – in this case, the experiences of those who have had a brush with royalty during one of the many royal tours in Australia's history.



# WHO WAS SAMUEL COX?

Samuel Emanuel Cox (1773-1891), <http://adb.anu.edu.au/biography/cox-samuel-emanuel-sam-1933>, is currently the oldest person in the *Australian Dictionary of Biography*, coming in at a whopping 117 years. But there is a lot about aspects of his fantastic life story that don't quite ring true.

Cox claimed, in his old age, that his real name was Samuel Jervis and he had been born in 1773 in Wales. He said that when he was young, his father was killed in a hunting accident and he was placed in the care of his uncle, Captain Jervis. Earl St Vincent, who was to become First Lord of the Admiralty, was another uncle.

Young Sam finished his schooling at Oscott College, now a Catholic seminary in Birmingham, England, and was then taken on a voyage of the South Seas aboard the *Regent Fox*, captained by his uncle. Learning that his uncle planned to kill him for his inheritance Sam decided to remain ashore when the vessel drew in for water near the River Tamar in Van Diemen's Land. And that is how, in 1789, Sam became the first white person to settle in Tasmania.

He was looked after by Aborigines until befriended by the Cox family in about 1812; he subsequently took their surname. Not much is known about his mid years, or whether he had a family; he never mentioned any. He later worked as a jobbing gardener in the districts of Patina, Carrick and Longford. In the 1880s the Tasmanian newspapers began to take an interest in the now old man, living alone in a rough hut in Carrick near Launceston. There was some scepticism about the truth of his stories, particularly his claim to have lived with Aborigines, but other elderly residents of the area said they could remember him being an old man when they were young.

In 1887 it was reported that the 113-year-old was still remarkably vigorous and independent, walking four miles, two or three days a week, to town for his provisions.

Three years later Sam was fined 5 shillings for being drunk in public. The case was reported in the papers, with one person wryly commenting that the old man should have been awarded 5 shillings for being able to get drunk at such an advanced age. By now living at the Launceston Invalid Depot, Sam had become a celebrity. The depot's superintendent Alfred Jones planned to send his photograph to the distinguished Edinburgh journal, *Scotsman*, which had recently included a photo of a woman who had become famous in Scotland for merely turning 100. Jones planned to send, with the photo, the message that it was Tasmania's glorious climate that enabled people to live such long lives. Meanwhile, a local entrepreneur proposed to take Sam on a tour of Australia, feeling confident people would pay money to see such an old man.

Sam died at the Invalid Depot a year later. His age was given as 110 on his death certificate.

How much of his story is true? Was he Samuel Jervis or Samuel Cox or someone entirely different?

A number of people have investigated his claims over the years. They have found that Oscott College, where Sam supposedly went to school, did not start taking pupils until



Samuel Cox, by Stephen Spurling, State Library of Victoria, 1890

1794 – when Sam would have been 21 and was supposedly already in Tasmania. There is no evidence of a ship called *Regent Fox* in the vicinity of Tasmania in 1789 or of a Sam Jervis living with Aborigines. And Earl St Vincent does not seem to have had a brother who was a sea captain though, apparently, after Sam's death one of the Earl's relatives did verify Cox's claim that he was related to the Earl.

If Samuel Cox was his real (rather than assumed) name then who was he? One possibility is Samuel Cox, who arrived in Tasmania in 1825 as a steerage passenger aboard the *Phoenix*. In 1828 he was found guilty of committing an 'unnatural crime' and sentenced to two months' gaol. In 1835 he was again sentenced to gaol, this time to two years' hard labour in a chain gang for assault with intent to commit an unnatural act on a 13-year-old boy. He was described by the papers at the time as an 'old man'. If they meant he was at least 50-years-old then he would have been around 106 in 1891. Did he make up this story to hide his real past?

He could also have been the Samuel Cox who arrived as a convict in New South Wales in 1817 aboard the *Shipley*. He, too, would have been an old man if still alive in 1891.

We may never know who Samuel Cox really was. Except that as an old man he told a great yarn that had many enthralled.

# JOHN MULVANEY (1925-2016)

## **Malcolm Allbrook surveys John Mulvaney's contribution to the *Australian Dictionary of Biography***

With the death of John Mulvaney on 21 September 2016, Australia lost one of its most important voices. Much has been written to honour his memory as the 'father of Australian archaeology', the historian, the public intellectual, and as one who was fearless in his defence of Australian heritage and our natural environment. The Australian Dictionary of Biography has also lost a great friend and contributor. His twelve entries demonstrate a depth of research which, in his clear and sometimes spare prose, provide perceptive interpretations of the significance of his subjects. Spanning the life of the *ADB*, they reflect his interests in archaeology, anthropology and history, and particularly his abiding commitment to Aboriginal Australia.

Mulvaney's *ADB* entries include Walter Baldwin Spencer (1860-1929) and Francis James Gillen (1855-1912) who together wrote two seminal texts on Aboriginal societies in central Australia. In 1985 Mulvaney had published a full biography of Spencer; *So Much that is New*, at nearly 500 pages a major work on this science academic, university administrator, anthropologist and connoisseur of the arts. His *ADB* entry was published in Volume 12 (1990) and lucidly summarises the achievements of this outstanding Australian polymath. Born in England, Spencer graduated from Oxford in 1884, and was appointed foundation chair of biology at the University of Melbourne in 1887. He enthusiastically set about the rapid development of the department into a major centre of research on Australian biota. Characterised by Mulvaney as 'the embodiment of controlled energy', Spencer brought his skills to many areas in addition to the academic world; he revived the Royal Society of Victoria, and encouraged his students to undertake field research. He became a trustee of the National Gallery of Victoria and an honorary Director of the National Museum of Victoria. He also acquired an enthusiasm for Australian Rules football, serving on the board of the Carlton Football Club and as chairman of the Victorian Football League (1919-26).

Yet it was his for contribution to the field of anthropology and ethnography that Spencer is best known, particularly his scholarly partnership with Francis Gillen. The two had met in 1894 after Spencer had been recruited as zoologist and photographer on the Horn scientific expedition to central Australia and subsequently undertook a number of field expeditions, co-authoring two works which became classics in Australian anthropology: *The Native Tribes of Central Australia* (1899) and *The Northern Tribes of Central Australia* (1904). In some ways the two were polar opposites but they respected each other enormously. Gillen was Australian-born, with a 'boisterous Irish humour' and was a strong supporter of Home Rule for Ireland. As a special magistrate at Alice Springs, he had been a powerful advocate for Aboriginal legal rights 'at a time when 'dispersal' was a convenient euphemism for murder.' William Henry Willshire (1852-1925), policeman, whose *ADB* entry Mulvaney wrote for Volume 12 (1990), was one of those unsuccessfully prosecuted by Gillen after he had led a police party which had attacked and killed two sleeping Aboriginal men at Tempe Downs in 1891. Mulvaney was clearly horrified by Willshire's capacity



John Mulvaney, 2010

to 'commit mayhem at will,' and the relish with which he later characterised his activities. While some settlers praised his 'daring and efficient devotion to duty', Mulvaney records that he was 'contemptuous of Aboriginal lives and culture,' and that his 'terrorism survives in Aboriginal oral tradition.' The author's own contempt for his subject becomes obvious when he records that, in 1908, Willshire failed in his bid to become State protector of Aborigines. 'Although the post was inappropriate', Mulvaney writes, 'his credentials were unquestionable for his subsequent twelve years as a nightwatchman at the Gawler Road abattoir, Adelaide.' The subtlety but clarity of this judgement is withering, surely not only Mulvaney but the *ADB* at its best.

Gillen had come to know many of the Arrernte elders and this level of acceptance facilitated the Spencer/Gillen partnership, allowing them to document the society in such detail. One of these men was Erlikilyika, otherwise known as Jim Kite (1865-1930), whose *ADB* entry was published in the *ADB Supplementary Volume* (2005). Nicknamed by Gillen 'the subdued' for his 'quiet, agreeable and reliable character', he joined the 1901/2 expedition as a guide and became indispensable as an interpreter, in Mulvaney's words, 'virtually as a research assistant.' Spencer survived Gillen by seventeen years and it is again due to Mulvaney that we can appreciate the depth of their relationship; in 1997, with Howard Morphy and Alison Petch, he published an edited volume of Gillen's letters to Spencer (*My Dear Spencer: the Letters of F.J. Gillen to Baldwin Spencer*).



# JOHN MULVANEY (cont'd)

The collaboration between Spencer and Gillen resulted in an important collection of photographs and movie films, as well as some of the first wax cylinder sound recordings. On his retirement, Spencer donated the entire collection, including many bark paintings, to the Museum of Victoria. After leaving Australia in 1927, two years later he journeyed to Tierra del Fuego. Suffering from angina pectoris, he met his end in a 'snowbound hut on Navarin Island' and was buried in Chile. Mulvaney praises Spencer as 'an approachable, enthusiastic teacher, a brilliant lecturer' and a 'kindly humanitarian'. Yet his anthropological legacy is mixed. His collections 'endure as a priceless Aboriginal archive', and have allowed Aboriginal people from central Australia to recover their heritage and researchers to reinterpret his findings. But his understandings of central Australian society tended to be 'mechanistic', for he saw Aborigines as dehumanized 'survivals' from an early stage of social development. Thus in contemporary Australia, the work of Spencer has come to resemble a 'fossilised' remnant of Australian anthropology in the same way as he had come to view Aboriginal society.

By contrast W.E.H. (Bill) Stanner (1905–1981) represents one of the foremost voices in modern Australian anthropology. Mulvaney knew him well, and drew on this familiarity in his *ADB* entry (Volume 18, 2012). Born in Sydney, Stanner had studied anthropology under A.R. Radcliffe-Brown and Raymond Firth, and undertaken fieldwork at Tennant Creek and Port Keats before completing his PhD at the London School of Economics under Bronislaw Malinowski. Appointed reader in anthropology and sociology at the Australian National University after two years at Makerere College, Kampala, Uganda, he became professor of anthropology in 1964. Continuing his earlier field work amongst the Murrinh-patha people at Port Keats, he studied religion, ritual and the complexities of social change while also undertaking archaeological excavations and visiting remote rock art sanctuaries with Indigenous elders.

With a desire to promote research on Aboriginal societies, Stanner became a member of the interim council of the Australian institute of Aboriginal Studies (1961–62), now AIATSIS, and convened and chaired a national conference to survey the state of Aboriginal studies. Later, with Barrie Dexter and H.C. Coombs, he was a member (1967–76) of the Council of Aboriginal Affairs. In the discipline of anthropology, he is known chiefly as an interpreter of Aboriginal religion, as Mulvaney remarked, his texts forming 'densely written commentaries that require concentration to comprehend the spirituality of Murrinh-patha society.' Importantly he understood Aboriginal societies as dynamic and adaptive; as his famous portrait of the elder Durmagum demonstrated, he sought to humanise and individualise by 'emphasising historical change and concepts of ritual value and transaction.' As Mulvaney points out, Stanner was thought by many of his contemporaries to be aloof and reserved: 'Ignorant of his pre-war radicalism and his Aboriginal advocacy, they found his formal dress and speech, and his clipped moustache, redolent of unpopular connections with senior military and political figures.' Yet Stanner, perhaps more than anyone, stirred Australians to start thinking about the impact of colonialism on Aboriginal societies and 'with great dignity and implicit outrage' pressed governments to recognise Aboriginal people

in Australian law. In his 1968 Boyer lecture series 'After the Dreaming', he raised public consciousness of the absence of Aboriginal people in Australian history by coining the term 'the great Australian silence' while, in his 1979 series of essays *White Man Got No Dreaming*, he offered the Australian public a possible key to understanding the Dreaming – 'it was, and is, everywhen.'

While Spencer, Gillen and Stanner constitute a tribute to three foundational exponents of Australian Aboriginal studies, Mulvaney's other *ADB* offerings show the range of his fascination with Australian history. Another anthropologist William Lloyd Warner (1898–1970), an American, was known for his investigations into Aboriginal social structure, and for the first serious assessment of the influence of Macassan trepangers on north coastal Aboriginal society. Aldo Giuseppe Massola (1910–1975), who became known to archaeologists as 'an expedition cook, notable for his wine supplies, exotic meals, and his cheerful and generous company,' became curator of anthropology at the Museum of Victoria in 1956 and was responsible for reorganising the collection, including rescuing Oenpelli bark paintings used as trestle-tables. A flawed but irrepressible figure, Massola was twice convicted of theft from the museum's collection and spent a year in gaol, although in the latter case the magistrate adjudged him to have been 'an obsessed collector rather than a thief in the ordinary sense.'

Mulvaney's early studies of classics and ancient history are reflected in his biographies of Jeremiah Matthias Murphy (1883–1955), and Jack Lockyer O'Brien (1909–1965), classicists who had taught him at the University of Melbourne. Murphy had been a confidant and adviser to Archbishop Mannix and, apart from his contribution to improving relationships between Catholics and the rest of the university community, had 'an irrepressible sense of fun' and an 'old-world sense of courtesy' which was 'surely taxed ... by the pressures of increased student numbers and changed post-war expectations.' O'Brien was 'a meticulous linguist with a penetrating grasp of the logic and nuances of a language,' who based his lectures totally on primary sources. He never published any of his research 'perhaps because his combination of perfectionism and humility discounted his originality.'

To round out this short survey of Mulvaney's contribution to the *ADB*, two short biographies of Aboriginal people build on colonial records by including birthplace and language affiliation; yet the biographies of Johnny Mullagh (1841–1891) and Tulaba (1832–1886) demonstrate two very different forms of colonial relationship. Much has been written about Mullagh the cricketer, one of the stars of the tour of England by a team of Aboriginal cricketers in 1867–68, but Mulvaney cautions that, as tales of his celebrity as a local hero 'lack verification and either contain racist overtones or exude sentimental paternalism, they are best ignored.' By contrast Tulaba (1832–1886), Mulvaney points out, spent much time teaching the colonial ethnographer and farmer A.W. Howitt, who had been a mentor to Baldwin Spencer, about his traditional systems of kinship and his genealogy. Born in East Gippsland he was known also as Burrumbulk, Karlbagwran, and by his European name Billy McLeod; his nickname was Taenjill, meaning 'incessant talker.' Through Howitt we know

# JOHN MULVANEY (cont'd)

that he was a member of the Bruthen clan of the Brabiralung division of the Kurnai people and had worked as a drover and stockman on his traditional country. At Howitt's urging he revived the jeraeil, a male, regional initiation ceremony which had last been performed in the 1850s. Missionaries at the nearby Lake Tyers station had discouraged ceremonies because of concerns that people would desert the mission and their work. Yet Howitt was keen to observe and record the ceremony and, although Tulaba was unhappy about him observing the ritual, he 'overcame his scruples.' Many of these records are now held by the Museum of Victoria.

John Mulvaney made a significant contribution to the ADB through these twelve entries on a group of diverse but significant Australians. He retained his interest in the *Dictionary* until shortly before his death. When I last saw him at the School of History Allan Martin lecture in May last year, we chatted for a while about the forthcoming National Centre of Biography conference 'True Biographies of Nations' for which he and his wife Liz had registered. We had known each other since he had visited my partner Mary Anne Jebb and I while he was in Western Australia researching his book *Encounters in Place: Outsiders and Aboriginal Australians 1606–1985*. He had seemed venerable even then but his interest in Mary Anne's knowledge of the Lock Hospitals which had confined Aboriginal people off the coast near Carnarvon in the early twentieth-century was respectful and generous.

Similarly he was grateful for the work we had put into transcribing the journals of Captain Collett Barker at Raffles Bay and King George Sound (Albany), particularly given the near illegible handwriting of this admirable and unusually perceptive colonial figure. Later he would draw upon our work for his 1992 book (with Neville Green), *Commandant of Solitude: The Journals of Captain Collett Barker, 1828–1831*, and *The Search for Collett Barker of Raffles Bay* (1994). After we had moved to Canberra we caught up many times and he seemed pleased when I told him I was working for the ADB. While he expressed his admiration for the *Dictionary*, he made it plain that he had written his last entry, accurately predicting that I was about to ask him if he would write his thirteenth article. He told me that he understood but did not entirely approve of the ADB's decision to move into the digital era, and seemed reassured when I told him that Volume 19 would eventually appear in book form to supplement his full collection. The computer age was not something he felt inclined to tackle; he mentioned without any suggestion of prejudice or intolerance that for him the biro was technological innovation enough. Although his attendance at school of history seminars and NCB events had declined as his health deteriorated, whenever he made it along his presence lent a dignified air to the proceedings, a reminder not only of his outstanding contribution to the academic life of the ANU but of the continuity of the university's intellectual tradition. He leaves a gap that cannot be filled.

*\* Malcolm Allbrook is a Research Fellow in the National Centre of Biography and Managing Editor of the Australian Dictionary of Biography*

## NCB Visiting Fellow – Elleke Boehmer



The NCB was pleased to welcome Professor Elleke Boehmer as a Visiting Fellow in February. Elleke is professor of World Literature in English, in the English Faculty at the University of Oxford. She is also Director of The Oxford Research Centre in the Humanities and Deputy Director of the Oxford Life Writing Centre at Wolfson College. She has written five non-fiction works and five novels, and is a foundational figure in the field of colonial and postcolonial literary studies.

Her non-fiction books include *Colonial and Postcolonial Literature* (1995, 2005); *Empire, the National, and the Postcolonial, 1890–1920: Resistance in Interaction* (2005, 2002); *Stories of Women: Gender and Narrative in the Postcolonial Nation* (2005); and the biography of *Nelson Mandela* (2008). *Indian Arrivals 1870–1915: Networks of British Empire* (2015) won the ESSE 2016 prize for Literature in English. Her novels include *The Shouting in the Dark* (2015, long-listed for the *Sunday Times* Barry Prize); *Screens Against the Sky* (1990, short-listed for David Hyam Prize, 1990); *Bloodlines* (1997, shortlisted for the Sanlam prize); and *Nile Baby* (2008). She also published the short-story collection *Sharmilla and Other Portraits* (2010). A new collection of stories is in progress.

While in Canberra Elleke gave a public talk at the ANU about Nelson Mandela as both a national and global leader. She has also been researching 'southness', for a planned novel that is to be set in Antarctica. She is hoping to return to Canberra in October for further research and to present a workshop on the topic of 'southness'.



**Desley Deacon** reviews Jill Roe's book *Our Fathers Cleared the Bush: Remembering Eyre Peninsula* (Wakefield Press, 2016).



Roe family portrait, Jill sits on her father's lap, 1945

Jill Roe and I are part of a generation that fled the bush. I was brought up in a little country town 100 miles north of Brisbane, Jill on a wheat and sheep farm on Lower Eyre Peninsula in South Australia. I left to go to boarding school in Brisbane in 1955, when I was fourteen years old. Jill left the same year, aged fifteen, to go to high school in Adelaide. Neither of us returned, except to visit family. I cannot imagine returning, even in memory, to that rural childhood, or to contemplation of its present as the glamorous hinterland to that international resort, Noosa – our family beach of long ago. But Jill, in her early seventies, went back to Tumby Bay to see where memory took her. Perhaps the pull was stronger because her childhood was spent on the land – the land, as her title states, that ‘our fathers cleared.’

*Our Fathers Cleared the Bush* is not, strictly speaking, a memoir. She is, as her subtitle puts it, ‘*Remembering Eyre Peninsula*,’ not her particular father, John Roe, or the youthful Jillian Isabel Roe. Jill uses her own story – very sparingly – as a starting point, as she puts it, ‘to capture some key aspects of, and moments in, the regional experience over time.’ But much of the enjoyment of the book comes from that personal story, which is dramatic and fascinating. Jill Roe was born in Tumby Bay, on Spencer Gulf, South Australia, in 1940 to a mother who was already ill with the tuberculosis that killed her fourteen months later. Her father, with three older daughters to raise, sent her at twelve months to be cared for by her maternal grandmother and unmarried aunt, 160 kilometres up-country at their prosperous Pygery farm. On Christmas Eve 1945, when she was old enough to begin school, her father came to reclaim her for life at the 800 hectares family farm at Yallunda Flat. In 1950 Jill’s father married again, to the widow of an Anglican clergyman who had died soon after he arrived from England. Jane Roe strengthened the family’s determination that the four girls be educated to earn their own living. The Area School offered their agricultural course only to boys; and it did not provide the Latin that was required for matriculation. So Jill was sent off to Adelaide to complete her schooling to become a teacher like her sister Heather.

As Jill’s subtitle reminds us, *Our Fathers Cleared the Bush* is as much about geography as about history or memoir. One of our most distinguished historians, Jill is also a closet geographer. This was a major interest of her high school

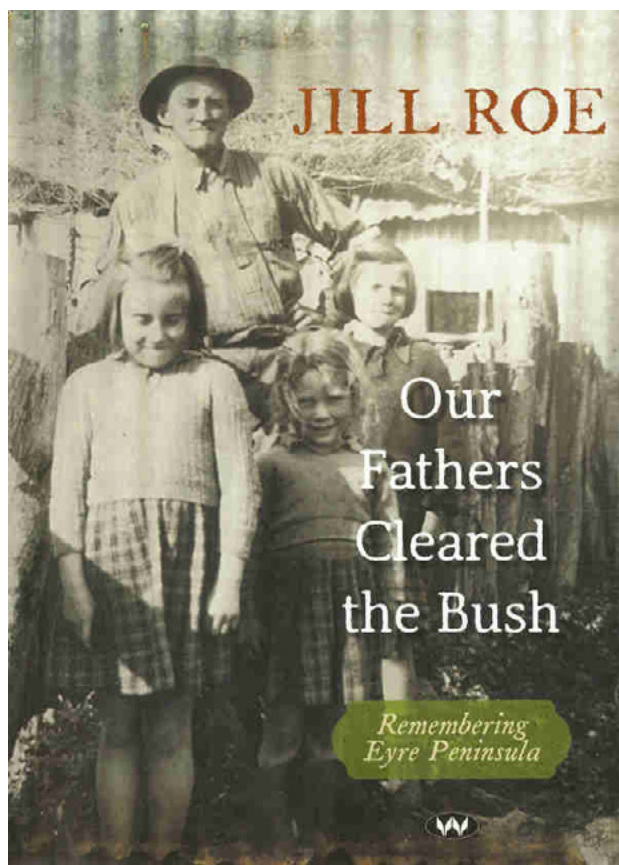
years, she tells us, which led her to research aspects of the Eyre Peninsula for a class project. Her history has always been strengthened by this interest. Her first major work was *Marvellous Melbourne: The Emergence of an Australian City* (1974), the result of her 1963 Masters thesis. Likewise her lifelong interest in biography – and her devotion to the *ADB* – owes as much to geography as to history. Her masterpiece, *Stella Miles Franklin*, begins with a map and, unforgettably, a description of Miles’s mother, four months pregnant, riding from Brindabella Station in the high country of southern New South Wales, to Talbingo, ‘following a bridle track westward over the Fiery Range through Argamaong to Lacmalac, east of the township of Tumut, turning south thereabouts for Talbingo, where, at the junction of Jounama Creek and the Tumut River, her redoubtable mother, Sarah Lampe, oversaw considerable estate.’

*Our Fathers Cleared the Bush* has terrain that is equally striking, and women who are equally redoubtable. Eyre Peninsula is an area that attracts extreme descriptors – oldest, largest, driest, most remote. Reached most conveniently from Adelaide by boat until recently, its coastline was marked by the jetties Jill fondly remembers. Closer settlement followed the railways, beginning in 1906 in Port Lincoln in the southeast, and moving up the central spine to Ceduna. Jill’s maternal and paternal grandparents were among these settlers, arriving by boat and failing in several locations until they found their relatively productive farms – the Heaths on the flat sandy mallee country at Pygery, on the railway line 230 kilometres north of Port Lincoln and the Roes at the relatively fertile Yallunda Flat, 30 kilometres inland from Tumby Bay, close to the railway hub, Cummins, and 170 kilometres south of Pygery. (Google Maps is a very helpful supplement to Jill’s map to locate these tiny settlements and understand their geography.) Both grandfathers died young, leaving their stalwart wives to make a go of it on those farms. Jill notes that the idea that women had been undervalued in Australia came as a surprise to her when she first encountered it.

But Jill is above all a historian. She divides her book into ten chapters that run in roughly chronological order. Her first and last chapters take us from Gondwana through to the first pastoral settlement in the 1860s and from the 1960s to the present. But the central chapters, drawing on her own bush childhood in the 40s and early 50s and a multitude of other accounts, are the most charming and valuable part of the book.

Two chapters stand out. In ‘Farming is Fun’ – a partly ironic chapter title taken from a book published in 1952 about a citysider’s attempt to set up a hobby farm – Jill looks at the farming of that period from a child’s point of view, pointing out that it was often much more fun on the farm than at school. Some jobs, such as stone picking and collecting kindling for the wood stove, were disagreeable, but picking peas, moving the sheep and chopping firewood were enjoyable (‘It helped you grow strong and stay fit’). And there were the animals. The cows spelt drudgery and the pigs were ‘no fun’; but the horses and dogs made much farm work seem like

# BOOK REVIEW (cont'd)



play. The chapter on 'The School Bus' evokes an educational experience that was fast disappearing – first of all the horse-drawn jinker that took her and her sisters to the one-teacher school at Yallanda Flat, then the series of ramshackle 'buses' that delivered her from the age of ten to the Cummins Area School. Like most things when Jill was around, the hour each way in the school bus was fun. They sang the popular songs, mostly from the Hillbilly Half Hour – 'You Are My Sunshine', 'China Doll' – and Jill learned to yodel. This chapter affectionately recalls the one-teacher school, whose students numbered between six in 1944 (three of whom were Roes) and twelve in 1948 (with two Roes), until it was forced to close in 1951, when the number dropped to five. She has no recollection of what she learnt there, but does remember the heroic young teachers who often brought a glimpse of city modernity to these rural children.

It is surprising how similar my Queensland childhood was to Jill's. Although I was not from a farming family, my small town supplied many of Jill's pastimes on the farm – yabbing in the creek, which was also our swimming pool, gathering mushrooms in the paddocks, enjoying 'the top of the milk' [cream], drinking tap water out of the corrugated iron tanks, the excitement of the floods, dirt roads, the ubiquity of the railway, listening to the Hillbilly Half Hour as we went off to school, sports days, the pictures and dances in the local hall, pre-Coke soft drinks, the Royal visit and our new dresses for the yearly Show. But her life was much more attached to the land. Like all farm children she helped to collect the eggs and bring in the cows, and as she got older, to milk them. She spent hours playing in the creek, intent on her self-imposed

task of clearing out tiny channels to help it flow. Even more interesting, the favourite game at school was something called 'Little' – basically playing farms in miniature, following in the playground what was happening through the seasons at home. This was a game dominated by the boys (though Jill seems to have been an energetic player), reflecting the idea that farming was a man's job, despite the evidence of Jill's competent grandmothers. In my small country town school of seventy pupils, in contrast, we played rounders or cricket, which required both girls and boys to play in order to have the numbers for a game.

An interviewer asked Jill some years ago if she still had a spiritual life (she had gone through a period of intense religiosity as a young woman). Her reply is revealing: 'I consider myself to have a classic Australian position, which is that the land and the environment just uplift me.' *Our Fathers Cleared the Bush* shows us the origins of that 'classic Australian position' and is a product of it. For Jill, what uplifts her is closely related to what she calls 'country-mindedness'. Much of the book is a search for the source of this country-mindedness. Jill finds it in the miracle of the growth of communities in these isolated settlements. The central chapters of the book highlight this growth, the first focusing on the church, the next on the Queen's visit in 1954 and the third on the annual Show. Jill's first church – an Anglican one – was a corrugated iron hall at Pygery, the second, again corrugated iron, at Yallanda Flat, this time the western edge of a Methodist circuit based at Tumby Bay. This fortnightly service, followed by lunch with the minister, was essentially a sociable occasion, 'a sign of belonging and respectability.' In contemplating the determined spread of the various religions through this sparsely populated region, Jill's account of the priest whose nineteenth century parish covered the whole of the west coast, where services were held in whatever accommodation was available, reminded me of my aunt in western Queensland with whom we often holidayed, whose house was used for the district's occasional Methodist services.

In an attempt to trace the fortunes of country-mindedness Jill returned to Eyre Peninsula, first in 1997 with her sister, Heather, next in 2007 with her childhood friend, 'Woodie' (Helen Bartley), and then in 2013 with historian David Carment and scholar-librarian Baiba Berzins. She found the Yallanda Flat Show still going strong, but its grocery shop was long closed and its basketball courts unused. The centre of population had moved to the towns, and to the north, and increasingly interstate. By the late '60s and early '70s John and Jane Roe were spending the winter in Queensland. And for those who holidayed close to home, Tumby Bay, she realised, is now 'the Riviera of Eyre Peninsula' (rather like Noosa from my childhood). Generally she agrees with Judith Brett that 'under market-oriented policies people began to think the country did not matter much except for holiday, and maybe some foods.' All the more reason, she argues, for historians like herself to reawaken interest in country lives, in order to help Australians to recognise that 'the resilience and adaptability country people have shown in the past will be vital to any effective response to the challenges that now confront us.'



This book has many riches. There are the more singular ones, such as the information that the footrace in the film *Gallipoli* was run on the Yallunda Flat showground and that Peter Weir discovered the ideal location for the recreation of Anzac Cove in Farm Beach, near Port Lincoln. But one of the most interesting is the chapter on 'Survival: The Aboriginal Experience.' Starting with the idea of a sort of family history in a wider historical context, Jill soon realized that there was much more to the story of Eyre Peninsula. It was both daunting and exciting, she writes, 'to think that the place I come from reaches way back to the fragmentation of the ancient super continent known as Gondwana'; and, 'paradoxically, the faces that have been newest to me have been those whose forebears have been on the Peninsula for the longest time.'

Do not go to *Our Fathers Cleared the Bush* for a sustained account of the history of Eyre Peninsula or of the Roe and Heath families. This book is more like a series of yarns by an intelligent, well-informed, thoughtful person drawing on her own experience and her wide reading – and the voice is that of Jill at her most entertaining – chatty, discursive, witty, down to earth, opinionated. You will learn much about this out-of-the-way corner of Australia and the history of its white settlement, as well as a considerable amount of its Aboriginal history. But I warn you it will leave you longing for more. What of this little girl who never knew her mother, whose farmer father was a great reader and married a cultivated Englishwoman, who went off to Adelaide at age fifteen to prepare for life as a schoolteacher?

As we hear, in the midst of writing this review, that Jill has succumbed, at the tragically young age of seventy-six, to the illness she has struggled with for the past year, we know that we will hear no more from her pen of that little girl. We will be reminded by other writers that she was one of Australia's greatest historians, awarded an Order of Australia and a Doctorate of Letters (Macquarie University) for her contributions to the profession, Fellow of the Australian Academies of the Social Sciences and of the Humanities, former President of the Australian Historical Association and of the History Council of New South Wales, longtime member



of the Board of the Australian Dictionary of Biography, its president for ten years, and recent recipient of its Medal. For those of Jill's readers who will want to know how that 15-year-old farmer's daughter got from Yallanda Flat to the heights of Australian intellectual life, let us hope that Jill is as lucky in her biographer as Miles Franklin was.

***Desley Deacon is Emeritus Professor of History at the ANU. She recently completed a biography of Australian-born actor, Dame Judith Anderson. She also wrote the ADB entry for Anderson.***

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# JILL ROE RECEIVES ADB MEDAL

On 10 November at a function in Woy Woy, Jill Roe was awarded an ADB Medal for her long and distinguished service to the *Australian Dictionary of Biography*. Here is the citation:



**NSW Working Party, 2009**

L-R: Barrie Dyster, Ross Curnow, Andrew Moore, Stephen Garton, Chris Cunneen, Jill Roe, Murray Goot, Nancy Cushing, Bridget Griffin-Foley, Jack Carmody

When Geoff Serle wrote to Jill Roe in February 1985 asking if she would be willing to join the Editorial Board of the Australian Dictionary of Biography, he indicated that the board was meeting the need for younger members, more women members and people interested in the twentieth-century. He got all that and more when Jill accepted. Her exceptional intellectual and leadership qualities were formally recognised in 1996 when, following the retirement of Ken Inglis, Jill became the fourth person, the only woman and the only non-ANU-professor, to chair that board. She served two five-year terms (1996-2006). In the second her strong support for the online development of the ADB was crucial. Equally important was her resolute advocacy in support for the dictionary in the uncertain times that followed the premature retirement of John Ritchie as General Editor, ensuring the eventual appointment of Di Langmore to succeed him. After standing down as chair, Jill has remained an active and influential member.

Jill's association with the ADB dated back to her undergraduate days at the University of Adelaide, where Douglas Pike had been a teacher, before he took up the general editorship in 1962. Her first article for the ADB, on the writer Ada Cambridge, was published in 1969 in volume 3, when she was teaching history at Macquarie University. Since then she has written another nineteen articles on a wide range of characters. Two resulted in published books: George Sydney Arundel (vol. 7) led to Jill's *Beyond Belief*:

*Theosophy in Australia 1879-1939* (1986), while her entry on Miles Franklin (1981) grew more than twenty years later into her monumental, prize-winning, *Stella Miles Franklin: A Biography* (2008). In addition Jill published scholarly editions of Franklin's correspondence, *My Congenials* (1993), and topical writings, *A Gregarious Culture* (2001). Franklin promoted 'Australian culture' as opposed to 'culture in Australia', and by herself emphasizing this distinction, Professor Roe has justifiably claimed her own place in



**First meeting of ADB Supplement steering committee, 2000**

L-R: Beverley Kingston, Chris Cunneen (editor), Jill Roe, Stephen Garton

scholarship charting the emergence of Australian national identity. It is more than fitting that the farmer's daughter from Tumby Bay, in South Australia, who became an inspiring teacher and outstanding administrator at the Department of Modern History at Macquarie University (since its foundation in 1967), has recently completed her personal history of the Eyre Peninsula, *Our Fathers Cleared the Bush*.

As an active member of the ADB's New South Wales Working Party from 1988, Jill has exercised exemplary committee skills in what is often a vigorous debating process. In 2001, as chief investigators, Jill, Stephen Garton and Beverley Kingston successfully applied for an Australian Research Council grant to produce the *ADB Supplement*, which was published in 2005. She was a significant member of a dedicated team which oversaw the project, and which included her insightful gem of an article on Olaf (Mick) Sawtell, "Socialist agitator and Emersonian".

Jill Roe's long and distinguished connection with the ADB makes her a worthy recipient of the ADB medal.