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WARNING: Readers are notified that this publication contains the names and images of deceased persons.

About the Journal

The *Australian Journal of Biography and History* is an initiative of the National Centre of Biography (NCB) in the Research School of Social Sciences at The Australian National University. The NCB was established in 2008 to extend the work of the *Australian Dictionary of Biography* and to serve as a focus for the study of life writing in Australia, supporting innovative research and writing to the highest standards in the field, nationally and internationally. The *Australian Journal of Biography and History* seeks to promote the study of biography in Australia. Articles that appear in the journal are lively, engaging and provocative, and are intended to appeal to the current popular and scholarly interest in biography, memoir and autobiography. They recount interesting and telling life stories and engage critically with issues and problems in historiography and life writing.

The journal publishes peer-reviewed articles on Australian historical biography, including biographical studies, studies relating to theory and methodology, and the associated genres of autobiography, life writing, memoir, collective biography and prosopography. We are especially interested in articles that explore the way in which biography and its associated genres can illuminate themes in Australian history, including women in Australian society, family history, transnational networks and mobilities, and Indigenous history.

Submission Details

Please send article submissions or abstracts to the Editor, Dr Malcolm Allbrook, National Centre of Biography, The Australian National University. Email: Malcolm.Allbrook@anu.edu.au.

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Style and referencing: please use footnotes in Chicago style, and follow British spelling.

ARTICLES

Australian historians and biography

MALCOLM ALLBROOK AND MELANIE NOLAN

Australian biography amid the recent biographical turn

The publication of the first number of the *Australian Journal of Biography and History* provides an opportunity to reflect on recent Australian biographical practice.¹ By recent, we mean the last two decades, with our starting point Stuart Macintyre's 1998 survey of biography in the *Oxford Companion to Australian History*. He noted that the genre was wide-ranging:

The writing of a life is an activity practised by historians in company with other academic, professional and amateur writers. It is a popular and deceptively simple genre that spans the filial memoir and the critical study, and ranges from the formal record to the imaginative re-creation that spills into fiction.²

Macintyre pointed to a fork in Australian biographical practice in the 1950s (common to western historiographies) when, on the one hand, professional historians turned to biography and, on the other, academic historians developed a newly found 'mistrust', finding defects in adequately comprehending a completed life and a tendency to rely on singularity and individual agency in preference to structural causation.³ Biography is perhaps only just starting to shake off this history, although to some it remains academic historians' 'unloved stepchild, occasionally but grudgingly let in the door, more often shut outside with the riffraff'.⁴ Macintyre, however, found evidence that Australian historians had 'largely dropped any suspicion of the genre of biography' by the end of the twentieth century, not least because they recognised its considerable potential for bringing historical research to

1 The authors thank the three reviewers for their careful reading of the manuscript and their constructive suggestions.

2 Stuart Macintyre, 'Biography', in *The Oxford Companion to Australian History*, ed. Graeme Davison, John Hirst and Stuart Macintyre (Melbourne: Oxford University Press, 1998), 72.

3 Sabina Loriga, 'The Role of the Individual in History: Biographical and Historical Writing in the Nineteenth and Twentieth Century', in *Theoretical Discussions of Biography: Approaches from History, Microhistory, and Life Writing*, ed. Hans Renders and Binne de Haan (Leiden: Brill, 2014), 75–89.

4 David Nasaw, 'Introduction', *The American Historical Review* 114, no. 3 (June 2009): 573–78, doi.org/10.1086/ahr.114.3.573.

the attention of a public that had long been an avid consumer of biography.⁵ It had been a highly effective methodology in feminist history. As a consequence of such developments, Macintyre believed that historians 'who regard biography as a mere ancillary of their discipline underestimate it'.⁶

Most commentators agree that, while biography remained popular outside the academy in the second half of the twentieth century, academic historians preferred structural and social analyses and downplayed the potential of biography.⁷ Barbara Caine in her 2010 general textbook, *Biography and History*, pointed to a revival in interest among academic historians at the end of the twentieth century in Australia and beyond.⁸ She observed that:

Biography can be seen as the archetypal 'contingent narrative' and the one best able to show the great importance of particular locations and circumstances and the multiple layers of historical change and experience.⁹

Australian historians' enthusiasm for biography can be measured in various ways. If the sheer quantity of publications is any indication, Australian biography is enjoying, in the words of the late historian Jill Roe, a 'golden age'.¹⁰ Indeed since 2010 it has been a veritable torrent. The National Library of Australia's catalogue recorded 9,202 items under the subject area 'Australian biography', of which 8,664 were books. A breakdown by decade reveals the vast majority of works categorised as 'Australian biography' have been published since 2000.¹¹ Australian biographies are prominent among Australia's best-selling lists. Peter FitzSimons's publishers note that he is 'one of Australia's biggest selling non-fiction authors of the last twenty years'.¹² He has published biographies of iconic Australian figures such as the Antarctic explorer Douglas Mawson (2011), the bushranger Ned Kelly (2013),

5 For a discussion of academic historians turning again to biography, see Melanie Nolan, 'Country and Kin Calling? Keith Hancock, the National Dictionary Collaboration, and the Promotion of Life-Writing in Australia', in *Clio's Lives: Biographies and Autobiographies of Historians*, ed. Doug Munro and John G. Reid (Canberra: ANU Press, 2017), 247–72.

6 Macintyre, 'Biography', 72.

7 Hans Renders, Binne de Haan and Jonne Harmsma, eds, *The Biographical Turn: Lives in History* (London: Routledge, 2016).

8 Barbara Caine, *Biography and History* (London: Palgrave, Macmillan, 2010), vii. See also Prue Chamberlayne, Joanna Bornat and Tom Wengraft, eds, *The Turn to Biographical Methods in Social Science: Comparative Issues and Examples* (London and New York: Routledge, 2000). For a discussion on its overuse, see Simone Lässig, 'Introduction: Biography in Modern History—Modern Historiography in Biography', in *Biography between Structure and Agency: Central European Lives in International Historiography*, ed. Volker R. Berghann and Simone Lässig (New York: Berghann Books, 2008), 3.

9 Caine, *Biography and History*, 2.

10 Jill Roe, 'Biography Today: A Commentary', in 'Biography and Life-Writing', ed. Tanya Evans and Robert Reynolds, special issue, *Australian Historical Studies* 41, no. 1 (2012): 107–18.

11 Catalogue search, National Library of Australia website, accessed 5 September 2018, [catalogue.nla.gov.au/Search/Home?lookfor=Australian%20biography&filter\[\]=subject-cluster%3AAustralian%20AND%20format%3ABook&type=all&narrow=1](http://catalogue.nla.gov.au/Search/Home?lookfor=Australian%20biography&filter[]=subject-cluster%3AAustralian%20AND%20format%3ABook&type=all&narrow=1).

12 'Peter FitzSimons', Penguin Books Australia, accessed 28 May 2018, www.penguin.com.au/authors/peter-fitzsimons.

the explorers Burke and Wills (2017), the war heroine Nancy Wake (2011), the federal opposition leader Kim Beazley (1998), the aviator Sir Charles Kingsford Smith (2009), the boxer Les Darcy (2007), the cricketer Steve Waugh (2004), the World Cup-winning Wallaby captains, Nick Farr-Jones (1993) and John Eales (2001), and magazine queen Nene King (2002), as well as numerous military histories and an autobiography of his own childhood. His biography of Wake sold over 84,000 copies in 2017; the average academic tome sells less than 1 per cent of that number.¹³ As Ann Curthoys and Ann McGrath have suggested, 'popular historians often explore topics that others have researched and written extensively, and synthesizing in this way bring the story to a larger audience'.¹⁴ Popular memoirs can also be blockbusters; for instance, singer Jimmy Barnes's *Working-Class Boy* sold 132,000 copies in the year 2016–17.¹⁵ While sheer numbers of sales is a blunt instrument to measure impact, the biographical turn can also be measured in specialist publications. A range of history journals devoted special numbers to biography in the first two decades of the twenty-first century.¹⁶ Australian historians' recent enthusiasm can be gauged too by the special issue of *Australian Historical Studies* devoted to biography in 2012.¹⁷ Australian historians, moreover, have recently been developing a range of kinds of 'scholarly infrastructure' in biography, which we survey below.

The *Australian Journal of Biography and History* is being launched in response to historiographical developments that are evident locally. We expect a range of papers on Australian lives that experiment with porous boundaries, widen the scope and inclusiveness of the genre and vary conventional with traditional subjects. Australian lives are increasingly being considered in the context of larger cultures. We expect papers that consider whether and in what ways the 'biographising' movement has also contributed to a more fundamental 'shifting configurations of concerns, concepts, and methodologies' in Australian practices.¹⁸ Australian historians are not only investigating the interiority of their subjects, as much as the sources

13 Figures on HarperCollins website, accessed 28 May 2018, www.harpercollins.com/9781743095713/nancy-wake-biography-revised-edition/.

14 Ann Curthoys and Ann McGrath, *How to Write History That People Want to Read* (Sydney: UNSW Press, 2009), 5.

15 'Think Australian 2017', Books+Publishing, 2017, pamphlet, 19, accessed 28 May 2018, www.booksandpublishing.com.au/ThinkAustralian/ThinkAustralian2017.pdf.

16 For instance, the *American Historical Review* had a special number devoted to Biography in June 2009, the *Journal of Interdisciplinary History* in Winter 2010 and *Cercles: Revue Cercles: Revue Pluridisciplinaire du Monde Anglophone* in 2015.

17 Tanya Evans and Robert Reynolds were the editors of the *Australian Historical Studies* special issue on 'Biography and Life-Writing' (April 2012). It mostly consisted of papers presented to 'Faces in the Street: Biography and Life-Writing', which Evans had organised for History Week at the State Library of New South Wales on 6 September 2010.

18 Tom Wengraf, Prue Chamberlayne and Joanna Bornat, 'A Biographical Turn in the Social Sciences? A British-European View', *Cultural Studies, Critical Methodologies* 2, no. 2 (2002): 245–69; Simone Laessig, 'Toward a Biographical Turn? Biography in Modern Historiography—Modern Historiography in Biography', *Bulletin of the GHI* (Washington), no. 35 (Fall 2004): 147–54.

allow, a point we shall return to, but also to their experience and role by writing autobiographically in a style sometimes characterised as ‘egohistoire’.¹⁹ Secondly, a significant group of Australian historians is concerned with striking a balance between personality and context, and with considering the relationship between micro and macro levels of analysis; individuals are increasingly being considered in the context of larger social structures. We argue that Australian practices seem to differ from what is being described as the Dutch or European ‘school of interiority’ and these developments beg explanation.²⁰

Australian scholarly infrastructure in biography

Part of the explanation for the growth in publications in Australian biographies lies in the building over the last two decades of a research infrastructure in universities and libraries, supported by government grants and philanthropy. There are now prizes to encourage biographical writing, lectures that feature prominent biographers, biography research centres and courses in universities, public conferences and so on. Philanthropic involvement in the humanities has been notable, but until recently there has been limited commitment to biography, and thus government funding has been the principal driver of such research in the academy. Yet there has been a gradual increase in private support. For example, in 2001, the University of Adelaide’s Fred Johns Scholarship for Biography, which had been awarded just five times between 1938 and 1956, was rejuvenated and is now awarded annually.²¹ In 2015 Dr John and Dr Heather Seymour also established a summer scholarship for young postgraduate students undertaking biographical research at the National Library of Australia. Similarly, annual lectures in biographical practice feature in the Australian literary calendar, notably the Seymour series that was endowed in 2005, first in conjunction with the short-lived Biography Institute at The Australian National University (ANU), which functioned from 2005 until 2009, and later the National Library of Australia. This has brought a stream of international and local authors to discuss the genre in its immense variety.²² Beginning with Brenda Niall,²³ the series has alternated between Australian and British practitioners, and has been notable for the variety of its offering, dealing with subjects as diverse as biography in the electronic era (Lawrence Goldman, 2006), Australian identity (Jill Roe, 2007), methodology and ethics (Frances Spalding, 2010), intellectual biography

19 Anna Cole, Karen Hughes and Oliver Haag, *Ngapartji, Ngapartji: In Turn in Turn, Egohistoire, Europe and Indigenous Australia* (Canberra: ANU Press, 2014).

20 Daniel R. Meister, ‘The Biographical Turn and the Case for Historical Biography’, *History Compass* 16, no. 1 (January 2018): e12436, doi.org/10.1111/hic3.12436.

21 ‘The Fred Johns Scholarship for Biography’, Faculty of Arts, University of Adelaide, accessed 27 May 2018, arts.adelaide.edu.au/scholarships/fred_johns_scholarship.html.

22 ‘The Seymour Biography Lecture’, National Library of Australia, accessed 10 May 2018, www.nla.gov.au/events/seymour-biography-lecture.

23 Brenda Niall, *Life Class: The Education of a Biographer* (Melbourne: Melbourne University Press, 2007).

(Raymond Monk, 2014), political biography (David Day, 2009), biography and fiction (Robert Drewe, 2015, and Drusilla Modjeska, 2013), and family memoir (Raymond Gaita, 2017).

Publishers have also come to form part of the biographical infrastructure. Melbourne University Press, as Mark McKenna noted, has been particularly active publishing retired politicians' autobiographies, while in South Australia, the Wakefield Press has also been active in the genre.²⁴ Biographical works have regularly featured in the major Australian literary awards for non-fiction. McKenna's biography, *An Eye for Eternity: The Life of Manning Clark*, has been the most successful, taking out many of the major awards: the non-fiction category of the Prime Minister's Literary Award (2012), the Nettie Palmer Prize for Non-Fiction (2011), the Victorian Premier's award for non-fiction (2011), the Douglas Stewart prize (2012), the Queensland Premier's award for non-fiction (2011) and the Adelaide Festival award for non-fiction (2012). In 1996 Dr Geoffrey Cains, later joined by the late Michael Crouch AC, established the annual National Biography Award.²⁵ Recognising the best published work of biographical or autobiographical writing by an Australian, it seeks thereby to encourage 'the highest standards of writing biography and autobiography', and to promote public interest in biography.²⁶ The shortlists over its lifetime attest to the volume, and the variety, of Australian biographical writing. Not only has it featured historical and literary biographies of the famous and the infamous, but also captured autobiography and memoir. It has thus put the spotlight on such works as Barry Hill's biography of Theodore Strehlow, *Broken Song* (2002) and Phil Butters's life of C. J. Dennis, *An Unsentimental Bloke* (2014), while also featuring transnational Australian lives, such as Gabrielle Carey's family memoir of Randolph Stow, *Moving Among Strangers* (2013) and Peter Fitzpatrick's *The Two Frank Thrings* (2012), and sojourners such as Alison Alexander's *The Ambitions of Jane Franklin* (2013) and Alasdair McGregor's double biography of Walter Burley and Marion Mahoney Griffin, *Grand Obsessions* (2009).

24 Mark McKenna, "'The Character Business': Biographical Political Writing in Australia', in *A Historian for All Seasons: Essays for Geoffrey Bolton*, ed. Stuart Macintyre, Lenore Layman and Jenny Gregory (Melbourne: Monash University Publishing, 2017), 48–70.

25 The Rudd Labor Government established the Australian Prime Minister's Literary Awards in 2008 and biographies have won the non-fiction award: Evelyn Juers's *House of Exile: The Life and Times of Heinrich Mann and Nelly-Kroger Mann* won in 2009; Mark McKenna's *An Eye for Eternity: The Life of Manning Clark* won in 2012; Gabrielle Carey's *Moving among Strangers* and Helen Trinca's *Madeleine: A Life of Madeleine St John* were joint winners in 2014; Darleen Bungey's *John Olsen: An Artist's Life* and Michael Wilding's *Wild Bleak Bohemia: Marcus Clarke, Adam Lindsay Gordon and Henry Kendall* were joint winners in 2015; and Sheila Fitzpatrick's *On Stalin's Team* and Karen Lamb's *Thea Astley: Inventing Her Own Weather* were joint winners in 2016.

26 The State Library of NSW administers it, see 'About the Award', accessed 10 May 2018, www.sl.nsw.gov.au/about-library-awards-national-biography-award/about-award.

In universities, perhaps the most significant development in biographical infrastructure has been the inception in 2008 of the National Centre of Biography at ANU, and the decision to locate it in the Research School of Social Science's School of History. There had been short-lived predecessors, such as the Institute for Modern Biography at Griffith University (established in 1976) and the Institute of Biography, also at ANU, but the National Centre of Biography initiative has been sustained.²⁷ Its establishment was partly a matter of financial necessity. The *Australian Dictionary of Biography* (ADB) had been running since 1957 and, although it had organised the occasional conference and seminar, its sole function had always been the production of national biography. Yet by 2007 there was a widespread sense that its location within the university should be reconsidered—after all, among the 'family' of national biographical compendiums, it was conspicuous in being sponsored and supported by a university.²⁸ The resultant 'Gregory Review', though, recommended that ANU should retain the ADB, finding in it a 'data infrastructure' that would enhance the university's potential to undertake 'cutting edge thematic research'. It suggested that the ADB's days as a single purpose entity were numbered, and advocated ways of increasing its potential as a scholarly resource. In particular, it should become a vehicle for the study of biography, reformed and integrated into the discipline of history and be subject to comparable educational and research expectations as other university departments. Along with the production of the ADB, the centre should promote and host biographical research and publication, and become the leading venue for biographical research by accommodating research fellowships, postgraduate research and graduate programs.

The National Centre of Biography, although conspicuous in Australia, is not alone in an international context, although it is unique in its responsibility for a national biographical dictionary. There is indeed a certain kinship in the study of biography, with many research and teaching centres, including the National Centre of Biography, being members of 'The Biography Society', which is currently located at Aix Marseille University, France.²⁹ In 1988 the Centre of Biographical Research was established at the University of Hawai'i; it was formed around the international journal *Biography: An Interdisciplinary Quarterly*, which had been

27 The Institute for Modern Biography, School of Humanities, Griffith University, under the direction of James Walter, had visiting fellowships and a seminar. A Biography Institute at ANU, which Paul Pickering directed, mostly served the Seymour Lecture. See James Walter, ed., *Reading Life Histories: Griffith Papers on Biography* (Brisbane: Institute for Modern Biography, Griffith University, 1981); James Walter and Raija Nugent, eds, *Biographers at Work* (Nathan Queensland: Institute for Modern Biography, 1984).

28 The only other national dictionary project situated within academia is the Dictionary of Canadian Biography.

29 The Biography Society is a scholarly society of research, international and interdisciplinary, devoted to the development and the valorisation of the theory and the practice of biography. Its members are Aix-Marseille University, Biography Institute, Biographers International Organization, Center for Biographical Research—Hawai'i, Center for Microhistorical Research, Centre for Life-Writing Research—King's College, European Network on Theory and Practice of Biography, National Centre of Biography—Australia, International Auto/Biography Association, Oxford Centre for Life-Writing and Société des Anglicistes de l'Enseignement Supérieur (SAES). See biography.society.org/about/ (accessed 21 May 2018).

established in 1978.³⁰ A professor of history and biography theory at the University of Groningen, the Netherlands, Hans Renders has been head of its Biography Institute since 2004. He is tasked with developing ‘... theoretical framework with regard to biography as an academic genre’.³¹ A number of biography centres were established to promote scholarly collaboration in biography. At the City University of New York, the Leon Levy Center for Biography was established in 2007. In England, the Centre for Life History and Life Writing Research was established at the University of Sussex in 1999. At Kings College London, the Centre for Life Writing Research was formed in 2007, and in 2010 at Wolfson College, the Oxford Centre for Life-Writing was founded, initially under Hermione Lee, and now Elleke Boehmer. Kathryn Hughes is director of life writing at the University of East Anglia. In 1996 Jane Ridley founded an MA in biography at the University of Buckingham and, in 2001, East Anglia began offering an MA in biography and creative non-fiction. For its part, between 2012 and 2017, the National Centre of Biography offered a masters of biographical research and writing, a graduate program that had evolved from the ‘Using Lives’ postgraduate workshops co-hosted by ANU and the National Museum of Australia and convened by Nicholas Brown. The centre continues to teach a graduate level course in biography and history.

As well as promoting academic research and scholarly fellowship, publication remains fundamental to the National Centre of Biography’s role. While the *ADB*, which publishes online each year over 100 research-edited biographies of between 650 and 5,000 words, is its principal *raison d’être*, the centre puts out an array of other publications, including a newsletter, *Biography Footnotes*, and its regular column in the *ANU Reporter*, *Life Sentences*. It convenes an editorial board for the ANU Press series *ANU.Lives*, which, since 2014, has put out over a dozen monographs and edited collections, and in 2014 published online *Using Lives: Essays in Australian Biography and History*. The *Australian Journal of Biography and History* is a logical next step and is consistent with the recommendations of the Gregory Report that a National Centre of Biography should be ‘more outward looking’, and become a ‘focus for the study of biography in Australia, maintaining that study in line with the highest and most innovative biographical work internationally’.³² Existing journals will certainly influence the new journal, but it will aim to carve

30 Craig Howes has been the director of the Center for Biographical Research since 1997, and the editor and coeditor of *Biography: An Interdisciplinary Quarterly* since 1994. As CBR director, he is also general editor of the Biography Monograph Series, co-published with the University of Hawai‘i Press. Since 2000, he has served as series scholar and co-producer for the Biography Hawai‘i television documentary series.

31 It was relocated within the Department of History and Theory of Biography in 2012. It has two objectives, ‘to offer both a supportive infrastructure and more specific support related to a variety of subjects for graduate students engaged in biographical research’ and ‘to stimulate the further development of a theoretical framework with regard to the biography as an academic genre’. ‘About the Biography Institute’, University of Groningen, accessed 3 July 2018, www.rug.nl/research/biografie-instituut/?lang=en.

32 Australian Dictionary of Biography, Working Party Report to the Director (the Gregory Report), Research School of Social Sciences Review, 2007.

out its own domain in the sphere of biography and life writing. For example, *Biography* emphasises biography as a craft and a literary art, and seeks to be both interdisciplinary and United States-focused. Its articles aim to stimulate debate on the theoretical, generic, historical and cultural dimensions of life writing, and the integration of literature, history, the arts and the social sciences as they relate to biography. The journal *Life Writing* publishes articles on biography and autobiography, including scholarly articles and critically informed personal narratives, and again pursues the interdisciplinary, while welcoming contributions from specific disciplines. The *Journal of Historical Biography*, founded in 2007, set out to publish biographical portraits of prominent individuals, reviews, and theoretical, methodological and philosophical articles on the practice of biography and autobiography. Located at the University of the Fraser Valley, British Columbia, and funded by the Canadian Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council, it suspended publication in 2014. The formation of the National Centre of Biography at ANU, then, is a part of a wider institutional wave.

Australian biography and the legacy of existing structures

While part of wider international developments, the *ADB* was above all a product of Australian historical practice itself. During the 1950s historians accepted that there were sufficient Australian sources and historiography to sustain full biographies.³³ In 1957 Keith Hancock called a national conference at ANU, during which participants agreed that the priority on developing archival collections had scotched earlier concerns that sources were too meagre to sustain detailed biographical research. Three recent studies illustrate the point. Alison Alexander's portrait of Jane Franklin is impressively light on its feet, given that she drew on a huge body of hitherto unpublished research as well as Franklin's extraordinarily voluminous journals, more than 8 million words in total, to write full and astute biography.³⁴ Similarly, Mark McKenna utilised an immense archive to write his biography of Manning Clark.³⁵ Clark 'lived to be remembered'; there are 198 boxes of his papers in the National Library of Australia with various directions to future biographers within them.³⁶ Part of McKenna's task was an 'extended mediation on the Clark archive', always critically assessing it and 'wrest[ing] control of the

33 Nolan, 'Country and Kin Calling?', 247–72.

34 Alison Alexander, *The Ambitions of Jane Franklin: Victorian Lady Adventurer* (Crows Nest, NSW: Allen and Unwin, 2013).

35 Mark McKenna, *An Eye for Eternity: The Life of Manning Clark* (Carlton, Vic: Miegunyah Press, 2011).

36 Papers of Manning Clark, 1907–1992, MS 7550, National Library of Australia.

life from [Clark's] extremely controlling voice'.³⁷ Jim Davidson's biography of the historian W. K. Hancock drew on 45 archival repositories and private collections in Australia, South Africa, England, Ireland and the United States of America.³⁸ In her recent biography of the Australian author Randolph Stow, Suzanne Falkiner also worked with a vast body of personal memoirs, and letters, journals and papers held by the National Library of Australia, to document the story of one whose life and consciousness spanned Europe and Australia.³⁹ Such works show that Australian biographies cannot always be contained by the continent and its adjacent islands. Australian biography is written by Australians or about Australians, often involving subjects who were expatriate, had extensive sojourns elsewhere or were born outside the country. Some never even came to the land, but it lived in their imaginations, as with the *ADB* biographies of the Portuguese adventurer Pedro Ferdinand de Quiros (1563–1615) and the English writer Charles Dickens (1812–70).

Among the corpus of Australian historical biography are conservative as well as path-breaking works. Best sellers are not necessarily the best books, but everyone will have a personal favourite. Historians have recently published many standard biographies of significant Australians: Ann Blainey on Melba, and Alasdair McGregor on Walter Burley Griffin and Marion Mahony Griffin. The shortlist for the Prime Minister's award for Australian history in 2017 alone included two biographical works—John Murphy's life of H. V. Evatt and Neil McDonald's of the war correspondent Chester Wilmot⁴⁰—and two that utilised biography to relate significant events in Australian history: Charlie Ward's *A Handful of Sand* and Josephine Bastian's *A Passion for Exploring New Countries: Matthew Flinders & George Bass*.⁴¹ In the non-fiction category, Tom Griffiths's *The Art of Time Travel* deployed biography to illuminate the significance of historians to contemporary Australian life.⁴² Some biographical works will undoubtedly become classics; Barry Hill's *Broken Song: T.G.H. Strehlow and Aboriginal Possession* is notable not only for its detailed biography of the subject, but also for its interest in penetrating the deep psychology of the subject.⁴³ Raymond Gaita's 1998 biography of his father, *Romulus My Father*—which was made into a movie in 2007—grew out of the tribute he gave at his father's funeral, and developed less perhaps as a biographical account of a life

37 Mark McKenna, "A Gigantic Confession of Life": Autobiography, "National Awakening" and the Invention of Manning Clark', in *Clio's Lives: Biographies and Autobiographies of Historians*, ed. Doug Munro and John G. Reid (Canberra: ANU Press, 2017), 85.

38 Jim Davidson, *A Three-Cornered Life: The Historian W. K. Hancock* (Sydney: UNSW Press, 2010).

39 Suzanne Falkiner, *Mick: A Life of Randolph Stow* (Nedlands, WA: UWA Publishing, 2017).

40 John Murphy, *Evatt: A Life* (Sydney: NewSouth, 2016); Neil McDonald with Peter Brune, *Valiant for Truth: The Life of Chester Wilmot, War Correspondent* (Sydney: NewSouth Publishing, 2016).

41 Charlie Ward, *A Handful of Sand: The Gurindji Struggle after the Walk-Off* (Melbourne: Monash University Publishing, 2016); Josephine Bastian, *A Passion for Exploring New Countries: Matthew Flinders & George Bass* (Sydney: Australian Scholarly Publishing, 2016).

42 Tom Griffiths, *The Art of Time Travel: Historians and Their Craft* (Sydney: Black Inc., 2016).

43 Barry Hill, *Broken Song: T.G.H. Strehlow and Aboriginal Possession* (Milsons Point, NSW: Vintage, 2002).

than as a personal memoir to try to understand a complex and conflicted man.⁴⁴ *Rose Boys*, by Peter Rose, and *My Father's Daughter*, by Sheila Fitzpatrick, similarly illustrate the sometimes porous boundaries between biography, autobiography and memoir, and family history.⁴⁵ Alexis Wright's *Tracker: Stories of Tracker Tilmouth* is based on a wealth of oral interviews, the author portraying it more as a 'collective memoir' than a biography.⁴⁶

Such lists, though, overlook the lingering bias in the corpus of Australian biographical work. While there are many more biographies appearing on Australian women and Indigenous subjects, structural challenges linger. In 2011 a panel on International Women's Day at Melbourne's Readings bookshop discussed the under-representation of women on the literary pages of the major Australian newspapers, both as reviewers and as authors of the books reviewed. That same year, 70 per cent of the books reviewed in the *Weekend Australian's* books pages were written by men. The panel also discussed the absence of women as winners of literary prizes. Only 10 individual women had ever won the Miles Franklin Literary Award over its 54-year history. Women, though, are increasingly winning prizes for biography as Richard Evans, a long-time judge of the British Wolfson Prize, noted:

Nine out of the 21 winners in the last 10 years have been women, whereas in the previous 10 years there were only four women out of a total of 24 ... It's striking that the female historians who have won the prize have written about a whole variety of subjects ... True, these are not all books that have topped the bestseller lists. But that's only a crude and rather misleading yardstick. If you take quality history with an appeal beyond the academic, then women are finding publishers and readers and winning prizes too.⁴⁷

Nevertheless, most surveys indicate that biography is still mostly written by men about male subjects, a bias that strongly suggests that the most popular biographies continue to reflect the social, intellectual and political standing of a subject.⁴⁸ Antony Beevor, the author of many best-selling war accounts, suggests obvious historical reasons for this continuing partiality:

44 Raimond Gaita, *Romulus, My Father* (Melbourne: Text Publishing, 1998).

45 Peter Rose, *Rose Boys* (Sydney: Allen & Unwin, 2001); Sheila Fitzpatrick, *My Father's Daughter: Memories of an Australian Childhood* (Melbourne: Melbourne University Press, 2010).

46 Alexis Wright, *Tracker: Stories of Tracker Tilmouth* (Artarmon, NSW: Giramondo Publishing Company, 2017).

47 Richard J. Evans, "Big Books by Blokes about Battles": Why Is History Still Written Mainly by Men? *Guardian*, 6 February 2016, accessed 23 August 2018, www.theguardian.com/books/2016/feb/06/books-blokes-battles-history-written-by-men.

48 Evans, "Big Books by Blokes about Battles".

A male preponderance in historical biography is thus fairly predictable for the obvious reason that, until very recently, women had little chance of distinguishing themselves because of ignorant prejudice. And since books on major historical figures sell better than those on the lesser known, there is almost inevitably a self-perpetuating element there.⁴⁹

In the *ADB* only 12 per cent of its 13,000 biographical subjects are women, an imbalance that is even more notable when the early volumes alone are considered; in the first four volumes, 48 (just over 4 per cent) of the 2,212 subjects were women. Similarly, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander subjects have fared badly, and currently comprise only 1.6 per cent of 13,000 published *ADB* entries, and in some earlier volumes not a single Aboriginal person was considered sufficiently notable to warrant an entry. A conscious effort is needed to remove this bias, which not only entails an effort to notice and include, but a redefinition of what entails 'significance'. Thus in 2005 a supplementary volume of the *ADB*, funded by the Australian Research Council (ARC), had 30 per cent women and 9 per cent Indigenous subjects, a strategy that had a notable, though incremental, impact on the total corpus. The *Dictionary of New Zealand Biography* (*DNZB*), published from 1990 to 2000, adopted a more vigorous strategy to include Māori, which included establishing an advisory group, recruiting language experts and involving Māori as authors. As a consequence, the *DNZB* has two volumes of Māori and Pasifika New Zealander subjects, which are presented bilingually. Similarly, two recent projects of the *ADB* aim to increase the numbers and proportions of women and Indigenous people. Its colonial women project was launched in 2016 and, after a nationwide call for nominations, has developed a list of 1,500 women from the colonial era who warrant inclusion. The ARC-funded 'Indigenous Australian Dictionary of Biography' project, a joint venture between the *ADB* and the University of Western Australia, will add 190 new biographies to the online corpus, and will result in a stand-alone publication of new biographies and the existing 210 *ADB* entries on Indigenous subjects, some of them rewritten or substantially revised. As with New Zealand, the project represents a collaboration with Indigenous Australia and, as a consequence, substantial changes to the structure of the *ADB* have come about, both to its editorial board and, with the formation of an Indigenous Working Party made up solely of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander scholars from each state and territory, its working parties. Preparedness to enter a partnership with Indigenous Australia, though, also places an obligation on organisations such as the *ADB* to re-examine a *modus operandi* entrenched by 60 years of largely successful production. Not only does this mean a review of how subjects are chosen and a consideration of matters such as Indigenous intellectual property, but also a reconsideration of the parameters of 'national significance' to encompass Aboriginal meanings, and how the succinct style of the *ADB* biography can be adapted cross-culturally.

49 Evans, "Big Books by Blokes about Battles".

A distinctive Australian school of biography?

In a recent article, Daniel R. Meister argued that ‘a Dutch school of biography’ is seeking to combine biographical methods with the theoretical approaches of microhistory.⁵⁰ Biography is moving away from the ‘less scholarly life writing tradition’, which has been accused of marshalling the facts of a life for purposes that are unclear and ‘of searching for meaning in trivia’. In seeking a ‘middle ground’ between foregrounding the life and foregrounding the times, this approach to biographical writing recognises that individuals influence the institutional frameworks in which they live, and that their lives cannot be explained solely by the times in which they live and the institutional forces they are subject to. Failure to recognise individual agency will inevitably obscure the reality of peoples’ ‘complex, contradictory, messy lives’ and the ‘inexhaustible’ disparity, as Sabina Loriga put it, between explaining institutions through individuals and, conversely, individuals through institutions.⁵¹ The two spheres cannot exist in a vacuum, for just as biographers and microhistorians might ask how historical narratives relate to a real life, biography and microhistory can validate or invalidate theories about broader topics.

Biographers have generally been uninterested in theorising. As Ian Hancock recalled when he was beginning his biography of John Gorton:

Despite decades of theoretical under-nourishment, and feeling quite healthy nonetheless, I sallied forth remembering the tale of Hilaire Belloc’s water beetle—better just to swim, for to stop and think, would be to sink.⁵²

Yet there continues to be substantial discussion about the relationship between history and biography and, particularly in literary biography, the relationship between the biographer and the subject. If there is a theory of biography, it is perhaps what some have termed ‘expressivist anthropology’, the assumption that ‘by their words and deeds shall you know them’.⁵³ With the primary focus on the life itself, and the context of the life a secondary consideration, such a method, which has been called ‘classical biography’, is microhistory in its narrowest sense; as Meister remarks, it is like ‘identifying subjects as dots and refus[ing] to connect them’.⁵⁴ The biographical quest thus becomes one of selecting and capturing the ‘authentic’ expressions of a subject, assuming all humankind to be creatures of ‘self-defining subjectivity’.

50 Meister, ‘The Biographical Turn’.

51 Sabina Loriga, ‘The Plurality of the Past: Historical Time and the Rediscovery of Biography’, in Renders, de Haan and Harmsma, *The Biographical Turn*, 34.

52 Ian Hancock, ‘Biography and the Rehabilitation of the Subject: The Case of John Gorton’, in *Australian Political Lives: Chronicling Political Careers and Administrative Histories*, ed. Tracey Arklay, John Nethercote and John Wanna (Canberra: ANU E Press, 2006), 62.

53 Park Honan, ‘The Theory of Biography’, in *NOVEL: A Forum on Fiction* 13, no. 1 (Autumn 1979): 109–20.

54 Meister, ‘The Biographical Turn’, 5.

Various theoretical approaches are open to a biographer in seeking to understand the subject, including ego-psychology and psychoanalysis, and from this perspective it is interiority, rather than sociability, that is of interest. Microhistory, though, also has the potential to recognise that humans function in a range of milieu—social, political, economic and family—that are in turn shaped and influenced by larger forces and processes. This is territory in which historical biography should be comfortable, as it allows considerable scope to apply theoretical perspectives, as well as diverse historical perspectives including the transnational, environmental, political and Indigenous, in order to understand the individual as a social and political being. Academic historians have a concern for context and a training that enables them to establish it more fully than academics in other disciplines. To Meister, historical biography should ‘alternate its gaze’ between subject and context, seeking to examine both a life and historical events and processes to examine how they are interwoven.⁵⁵

So can we discern similar developments that might suggest an Australian ‘school’ of biography? We propose that a long-standing interest by Australian historians in autobiography and a growing interest in prosopography constitute two forms that have exercised a marked influence on Australian biography. Jeremy Popkin described how Australian historians adopted ‘egohistoire’ long before Pierre Nora challenged historians to consider ‘the link between the history you have made and the history that has made you’,⁵⁶ and thus to consider the links between biography and autobiography. Without what Popkin called the ‘theoretical pretensions’ of French egohistoire, Australian historians more than any other national group have used their autobiographical accounts to question major rungs of the Australian national story, and their works have come to be regarded as ‘major contributions to the national literature’.⁵⁷ As doubts arose about the ability of historical accounts to be objective, and faith in the grand narratives of liberalism, Marxism and nationalism declined, historians were increasingly drawn to approaches ‘that emphasised ordinary experience: microhistory, the history of everyday life, women’s history’.⁵⁸ The autobiographical writing of historians such as Keith Hancock, Jill Ker Conway, Kathleen Fitzpatrick, Manning Clark and Bernard Smith has long been valued in the Australian literary canon, as personal and family memoir certainly, but also for its capacity to ‘confront questions about the relationship between personal and national pasts that are quite different from those encountered by their colleagues in other countries’.⁵⁹ Of course it is the very diversity of autobiography that makes it

55 Meister, ‘The Biographical Turn’, 5.

56 Jeremy D. Popkin, *History, Historians, & Autobiography* (Chicago & London: University of Chicago Press, 2005), 74, 90; Jeremy D. Popkin, ‘Ego-Histoire Down Under: Australian Historian Autobiographers’, *Australian Historical Studies* 38, no. 129 (2007): 106–23.

57 Popkin, *History, Historians, & Autobiography*, 90.

58 Popkin, ‘Ego-Histoire Down Under’, 109.

59 Popkin, ‘Ego-Histoire Down Under’, 107.

such an attractive literary and historical form, and such accounts vary considerably in their approaches, perspectives and interests. For instance, Hancock, Smith and Clark appeared little concerned with the position of women in Australian society, and were more concerned with what they took to be the big questions of Australian identity, and intellectual and cultural life. In 1998 Conway argued that ‘memory’s plots’—the language and narrative forms of autobiography—were developed to interpret male lives. In the past, women writing autobiography experienced a degree of difficulty because the genre denigrated female experience and celebrated the ‘experience of the atomistic Western male hero’. She surveyed this cultural tradition from its eighteenth-century beginning with a careful analysis of autobiographies by Jean-Jacques Rousseau and Benjamin Franklin. The breakdown of the symbolic male hero was accompanied by changing cultural assumptions. Conway argued that patterns of autobiographical writing lay ‘not in theory but in cultural history’, with its forms and stylistic kinds varying.⁶⁰ Subsequently, Ann Moyal has pointed out that Australian women historians have taken up the autobiographical challenge in recent decades with gusto, establishing ‘a “complementary culture” to male autobiography with its ongoing emphasis on national identity and image’.⁶¹

Indigenous Australia was also of little interest, at least in the earlier autobiographical works of historians, although Clark and Smith later came to recognise that this was a serious absence. For Henry Reynolds, autobiography provided a vehicle for tackling an issue that he believed went to the core not only of his Australian identity, but also of his identity as an Australian historian. In his 1999 memoir *Why Weren't We Told?* he confronted the complicity of his discipline in concealing the violence and dispossession of the frontier, and in promoting what W. E. H. Stanner called the ‘great Australian silence’.⁶² Other Australian writers, although not strictly members of the discipline, also used an emerging consciousness about Aboriginal history in their memoirs and autobiographical works. For example, John Mulvaney, often called the ‘father’ of Australian archaeology, described the emergence of Aboriginal involvement in his discipline and the growth of his own awareness of Aboriginal history in his autobiography *Digging Up a Past* (2011).⁶³ Earlier, the poet and author Judith Wright wrote two memoirs of her family’s New England pastoral holding, *Generations of Men* (1959) and *A Cry for the Dead* (1981), in which she explored her own moral anguish over her love of the land and the guilt

60 Jill Ker Conway, *When Memory Speaks: Reflections on Autobiography* (New York: Alfred Knopf, 1998), 3–4. Previously Conway had edited *Written by Herself: Autobiographies of American Women: An Anthology* (New York: Vintage Books, 1992) and *Written by Herself, vol. 2, Women's Memoirs from Britain, Africa, Asia, and the United States* (London: Vintage, 1996).

61 Ann Moyal, ‘The Female Gaze: Australian Women Historian’s Autobiographies’, in *Clio’s Lives: Biographies and Autobiographies of Historians*, ed. Doug Munro and John G. Reid (Canberra: ANU Press, 2017), 65.

62 Henry Reynolds, *Why Weren't We Told? A Personal Search for the Truth about Our History*. (Ringwood, Vic.: Viking, 1999).

63 D. J. Mulvaney, *Digging Up a Past* (Sydney: UNSW Press, 2011).

of her family's invasion and dispossession of the Aboriginal traditional owners.⁶⁴ As a parallel phenomenon, Aboriginal writers were increasingly attracted to auto/biography and memoir to relate their own stories of colonisation and survival, and through this the history both of their own language groups and Aboriginal Australia. Sally Morgan's *My Place* (1987), although not the earliest Aboriginal autobiography, was the first to achieve mass sales in Australia and internationally. For the first time, many European Australians learned about the impact of past government policies on Aboriginal communities and families, and, perhaps more importantly, became aware of the strategies Aboriginal people had been forced to adopt in order to survive. In 1999 Conway noted that Morgan's narrative was 'in the first person', which was to be expected of an 'oral culture'; Morgan's resort to autobiography followed from the nature of her sources.⁶⁵ The 'Australian Indigenous Autobiography Archive' on the National Centre of Biography website lists only 50 such works, but it shows the depth and geographic range of a vibrant form of Aboriginal self-writing, holding details of works by significant Aboriginal Australians such as Cathy Freeman, Jack Davis, Charles Perkins, Anthony Mundine and Nova Peris.⁶⁶ Many document the stories of parents and grandparents, as well as the storyteller's childhood, and they often deal with the trauma of family separations, children's institutions and gaol, as well as the way people made a living and sometimes, despite the odds, thrived.

Family history, long the province of genealogy and amateur historians, has recently become an additional tool for Australian historians to illuminate aspects of Australian history. Graeme Davison, for example, began to write an account for his family—a common motivation for family historians—but decided it had much to reveal about Australian foundations more generally and so made it public.⁶⁷ Likewise Nick Brodie had long been interested in his family history, boasting forebears who were present at some of the formative events of Australian history—the first fleet, bushranging, Eureka Stockade and both world wars—and their experiences gave a new and often unique perspective.⁶⁸ Penny Russell is tracing her forebears, the Thompsons, a 'steerage class' family whose perceptions of class, commerce and religion in colonial Sydney acts as a powerful counterpoint to establishment accounts.⁶⁹ Similarly, Ann Curthoys identified members of her family in the 'Legacies of British Slave Ownership' database project. Led by the British

64 Judith Wright, *Generations of Men* (Melbourne: Oxford University Press, 1959); Judith Wright, *A Cry for the Dead* (Melbourne: Oxford University Press, 1981).

65 Jill Ker Conway, ed., *In Her Own Words: Women's Memoirs from Australia, New Zealand, Canada, and the United States* (New York: Vintage Books, 1999), 89–90.

66 Australian Indigenous Autobiography Archive search, National Centre of Biography website, ia.anu.edu.au/biographies/added/.

67 Graeme Davison, *Lost Relations: Fortunes of My Family in Australia's Golden Age* (Crows Nest, NSW: Allen & Unwin, 2015).

68 Nick Brodie, *Kin: A Real People's History of Our Nation* (Richmond, Vic.: Hardie Grant Books, 2015).

69 Penny Russell, 'Travelling Steerage: Class, Commerce, Religion and Family in Colonial Sydney', *Journal of Australian Studies* 38, no. 4 (2014): 383–95.

historian Catherine Hall at University College London, the project aimed to identify a hitherto hidden aspect of emancipation: the way that compensation payments by the British Government for those compelled to release slaves provided capital for ventures in the Australian colonies.⁷⁰ The presence of Curthoys's ancestors on the database provided a new perspective on their subsequent migration to Australia and efforts to establish themselves in a new land, one that may well have been shared by numbers of their fellow colonisers.

Even with the vastly improved access to historical and biographical sources the digital world has provided, deficiencies in the sources remain at particular points and in particular areas. It is partly to overcome such deficiencies, Curthoys recently suggested, that the perspectives of contemporary authors become so pertinent, as they provide an avenue to compensate for documentary silences and absences. A family historian can to some extent fill these gaps, not only by asking questions of the sources but also by marshalling such relative intangibles as family stories and myth, tradition and imagery. From a vantage point that is at once detached and intrinsically personal, and adopts a historical perspective that concurrently looks back and forward, *egohistoire* inserts the storyteller into the family narrative, and has rapidly become an effective method of Australian history-making.

In 1998 Macintyre observed that prosopography, or collective biography, had not been widely practised in Australia, but works such as Mollie Gillen's *The Founders of Australia* (1989), Janet McCalman and Mark Pell's *Who Went Where in Who's Who 1988* (1992), and McCalman's *Journeyings: The Biography of a Middle-Class Generation 1920–1990* (1993) suggested enormous methodological possibilities.⁷¹ The second way in which Australian biography might be considered distinctive, then, is prosopography. Australian historians have shown particular interest in collective biography in the last two decades. As with the motivation towards autobiography, explanations for the potential of prosopography in Australian history lie partly in the nature of historical sources, in which the state dominated colonial and postcolonial settlement and, in the process, built up a massive body of longitudinal data, from convict transportation, assisted migration, soldiers, mental health records of repatriated soldiers, stolen children and welfare records. Such records have long been available to historians, and compendiums such as 'Historical Records of Australia' and the three-volume *Dictionary of Western Australians*,⁷² were invaluable to historians of past generations. Yet the analytical power offered by computer technology now provides a means of enhancing their value, no less

70 Ann Curthoys, 'From Montserrat to Settler-Colonial Australia: The Intersecting Histories of Caribbean Slave-owning Families, Transported British Radicals, and Indigenous Peoples', A. W. Martin Lecture, ANU, 22 May 2018.

71 Macintyre, 'Biography', 72.

72 *Dictionary of Western Australians 1829–1914*, 3 vols (Nedlands: University of Western Australia Press, 1979).

labour-intensive in their initial phases than card and catalogue systems, but with a vastly increased capacity to organise, aggregate and manipulate the data to respond to historical questions.

McCalman went on to work with Hamish Maxwell-Stewart and others on the 'Founders and Survivors' project, a massive longitudinal study of 73,000 Tasmanian convict transportation records that built on Lloyd Robson's two-volume *History of Tasmania* (1983, 1990). The historical questions might have resembled those of past researchers, but the capacity to utilise 'big' data marked a turning point in Australian historiography. Mark Finanne's 'The Prosecution Project', which is documenting colonial criminal prosecutions in seven Australian jurisdictions over 150 years, is resulting in another exciting big database.⁷³ In a similar vein, the National Centre of Biography is conducting a project to digitally analyse the 4,500 people who arrived in Australia on the first three fleets. Again it is asking classic historical questions—where these people went, how they remade their lives in Australia, who their children and grandchildren were, and how these later generations fared. This project will eventually add about 110,000 individual records to the NCB websites. Such aggregate data allows prosopographical study in its truest sense, imparting a capacity to look at broad movements of people and generations, connections and networks, and to utilise digital tools, including the geospatial, to present and visualise the data. Yet importantly in the project of collective biography, it also seeks to incorporate depth by seeking means of tracking individuals and collectives across time and place. Big data can only do so much; there is no escaping the classic historical ventures of seeking out the material, recognising its relevance, trawling the newspapers in a quest made much easier by the search and find capacities of Trove, and then using often specially designed programs to extract their value.

With the onset of the digital realm, national dictionaries of biography have also had to make choices, and have not always immediately recognised the potential of digitisation to transform the value of their collections. The late Geoffrey Bolton, for example, wrote of the former general editor of the *ADB*, John Ritchie: 'His entrenched preference for the handwritten, although vindicated by his unfailingly neat calligraphy, left him slow to grasp the potential of online publication'.⁷⁴ Most national dictionaries have been online for some time, but the prevailing focus remains the individual and digitisation simply a new paper-free means of publication, albeit with vastly improved search and browse functions. This characterised the *ADB*'s initial response: costly, time-consuming but nevertheless essential machine-reading of the hardcopy volumes, the production of a CD and

73 The Prosecution Project, accessed 25 August 2018, prosecutionproject.griffith.edu.au/tag/mark-finnane/. See also Mark Finanne, 'The Prosecution Project: Investigating the Criminal Trial in Australian History', *Humanities Australia* 7 (2016): 35–45.

74 Geoffrey Bolton, 'John Ritchie: Consolidating a Tradition, 1987–2002,' in *The ADB's Story*, eds Melanie Nolan and Christine Fernon (Canberra: ANU E Press, 2013), 162.

subsequent upload to the web. The rise of the digital humanities, however, illustrated the potential to vastly enhance the value of collections such as the *ADB* through comprehensive indexing. This means that each of the 27,500 biographical entries on the three NCB websites—the *ADB*, *Obituaries Australia* and *People Australia*—are now linked and the information used to identify collectives and networks such as families, school and university communities, places of birth, military, business and professional associations. Such transformations are expensive, and the costs continue; the full potential of the digital world has meant firstly defining and then investing in a digital strategy. Two *ADB* positions have had to be allocated to the digital strategy, one solely devoted to programming, maintaining the system and developing tools such as family trees, geospatial material, graphs and charts to manipulate and display the data. The *ADB* has been entirely transformed, while losing nothing of its time-honoured reputation for the scholarly quality of its stand-alone biographies. Indeed this remains the primary interest of many of the 70 million users who visit the website each year. However, an increasing number are recognising the expansive nature of the *ADB*, particularly its potential for research. Compared with other big datasets, the *ADB* might be small-fry, but its particular value again lies in the depth of its material, and thus its potential to explore collectives as multidimensional and complex.

To conclude, there are good reasons for believing that the principles of autobiography and prosopography give Australian biography a distinctive flavour. They have arisen, as we have suggested, in response to particular historical characteristics, including the postcolonial impetus in the country since World War II, and the nature of the archive and its extraordinary value in a digital environment. We anticipate that future numbers of the *Australian Journal of Biography and History* will dwell further upon such matters, including the interrelationships of biography and theory. In this first issue, a diverse range of essays primarily relates to questions of individuals and the contexts in which they functioned, exploring as Daniel Meister puts it, the ‘middle ground’ between a life and the times. Four of them concern Australian women who operated and negotiated various fields of endeavour, only one of which—the role of headmistress of a girls’ school—was unambiguously a women’s domain. The profile of Miss Annie Hughston (1859–1943) by Mary Lush, Elisabeth Christensen, Prudence Gill and Elizabeth Roberts, all of them former students at Fintona during Hughston’s long tenure, shows how a strong figure could, perhaps, have a disproportionate influence on women entering male bastions. Similarly, Nancy Atkinson, a pioneering bacteriologist at the University of Adelaide, was not only a scientific researcher of note but also a teacher of generations of graduate students. Yet when the chair in her field finally became available, she was overlooked in favour of a male English import, despite having acted in the role for many years. She was valued it seems more for her teaching than her research, a classic tendency to ascribe to women in scientific circles a nurturing, rather than a knowledge-creating function. Jean Andruana Jimmy (1912–91), a Yupngayth woman from Mapoon in north

Queensland, became prominent in community leadership and land rights activism, areas that had been assumed to be male spheres. Yet leading her community was by no means as revolutionary as was often assumed by outside European observers, for Andruana saw herself resuming a role that was entirely consistent with women's responsibilities, as Geoff Wharton describes. Sophie Scott-Brown, in her portrait of the playwright and director Eunice Hangar's interpretations of the works of William Shakespeare, examines the nature of reading as 'a simultaneously social and individualistic activity' and its implications for understanding the way Australians have read English writers.

The article by Brendan Dalton on his distant ancestor Fredrick Dalton, a journalist and later a gold commissioner on the New South Wales goldfields, explores the potential of nineteenth-century mobilities in the formation of identity. In Dalton's case, he twice remade himself, the first time by escaping seemingly difficult circumstances in the United States to begin a new career with a new identity in Australia, and later by engineering his disappearance from his Australian family to resume his previous life. Karen Fox explores how family history can illuminate an understanding of legal and power relations in a geographic setting, in this case Sydney. The Stephens and the Streets, who between them produced four chief justices of New South Wales, at least four judges, and a number of barristers and solicitors, formed what can be called a legal 'dynasty' that exercised significant influence in the legal arena, as thus in politics and political administration. The article on André Kostermans, a renowned Dutch Indonesian botanist, by Michèle Horne, is on one level a story of shifting identity. Her subject was born in the Dutch East Indies and, after training in botany in Holland, returned to take up his profession in the land of his birth. Interned by the Japanese during World War II, he used his skills to supplement the diet of his fellow prisoners of war, many of them Australian, as well as to develop a 'bush' procedure for producing surgical-grade alcohol, actions that undoubtedly saved the lives of many. After the war, and having taken out Indonesian citizenship, his career was almost ruined by the government's response to his homosexuality. In the final essay, the University of Xian scholar Tiping Su, who spent a year as a visiting scholar at ANU in 2015–16, discusses the problem of the 'missing' Chinese in the *ADB*, explaining the various issues in identifying and historicising the many Chinese who sojourned in Australia, as well as those who stayed. In concluding he identifies a number of significant Chinese people who might warrant inclusion in the *ADB*, and proposes ways by which Australian and Chinese scholars might together approach the task both at a collective and an individual level

The Lady Principal, Miss Annie Hughston (1859–1943)

MARY LUSH, ELISABETH CHRISTENSEN, PRUDENCE GILL
AND ELIZABETH ROBERTS

Introduction

In 1881 the University of Melbourne opened its doors to women for the first time, but taking up this opportunity was not a simple matter in a community that in general did not value the higher education of women. Another problem was that many women were not eligible for entry due to the gap between the eight years of free education provided in ‘common’ (state) schools and university entrance level. This deficit could only be bridged by paying for tuition. A few common schools offered tuition in some subjects as an ‘extra’, but most university entrants were pupils from independent ‘high’ (i.e. secondary) schools. The options for girls in the eastern suburbs of Melbourne who wanted to qualify for university entrance altered little until the mid-1950s;¹ either they travelled to the inner city or entered one of a multitude of independent schools.

The independent school sector was made up of schools owned by individuals, churches and companies. We reserve the term ‘private school’ to refer to schools owned by individuals. In the early 1920s Fintona Presbyterian Girls’ Grammar School was, according to the *Argus*, the largest girls’ secondary school in Victoria.² This claim is incorrect, but if the writer meant the largest girls’ private school they may well have been right. In 1921 Fintona had approximately 450 pupils. At about that time other large private schools in the same area included Ruyton with 170 pupils³ and Lauriston with about 300.⁴ Fintona rivalled its largest church-owned neighbour, Methodist Ladies College (MLC), which had 514,⁵ and the pre-eminent (academically) school for girls, Presbyterian Ladies College (PLC), which had over 500 pupils.⁶ Miss Annie Hughston was the owner, principal and

1 Janet McCalman, *Journeyings: The Biography of a Middle-Class Generation 1920–1990* (Melbourne: Melbourne University Press, 1993), 114.

2 ‘Old Fintonians Celebrate Reunion’, *Argus*, 1 May 1924, 9.

3 Marjorie Theobald, *Ruyton Remembers 1878–1978* (Melbourne: The Hawthorn Press, 1978), 109.

4 Carolyn Rasmussen, *Lauriston: 100 Years of Educating Girls 1901–2000* (Sydney: The Helicon Press, 1999), 63.

5 A. Harold Wood ed., *Seventy-Five Years at Methodist Ladies’ College Hawthorn 1882–1957* (Melbourne: Spectator Publishing Company, 1957), 79.

6 Estimated from new enrolments and assuming a residence time of 2.5 years. PLC Melbourne Archive, Enrolment Book 1921–32, 185.

headmistress of Fintona and had, with her brother William, founded the school in 1896. Based on this growth there are grounds for regarding Miss Hughston as the most remarkable of a number of remarkable women who owned and operated girls' schools. The *Australian Dictionary of Biography* has no entry for the vast majority of these women, thus bearing out the contention of Marjorie Theobald, a historian of women's education, that 'women have been bundled unceremoniously into the lumber room of history'.⁷

Where women are remembered, it is usually in the partisan commissioned histories of the schools they once owned, but there is little about Miss Hughston in the only history of Fintona, published in 1946.⁸ To some extent, she was complicit in her own eclipse. She was averse to activities that brought her into public focus. As one student commented after a presentation by the students in her honour at the 1920 speech night:

We would have liked Miss Hughston to reply herself—but she never will speak in public and asked the Rev TJ Smith to reply for her. He made us laugh at the funny way he pretended to be Miss Hughston herself talking to us—but every now and again he forgot and became Mr Smith again.⁹

She wrote no memoir and kept no records. In this paper we set out to make Miss Hughston known. In reconstructing her life, we have made substantial use of public records, limited family and school records, and anecdotes. We start with her family background and her training, proceed to her work at her school and end with other aspects of her life.

Family background

Annie Hughston's parents were both Presbyterians born in Northern Ireland, Johnston (also spelled Johnstone) Hughston in 1820 and Catherine Wilson in 1835.¹⁰ The Wilson family settled in Victoria in 1841. Following the death of his first wife, Johnston arrived in New South Wales in 1855 from Canada where his family had migrated in 1833. At a time when formal qualifications were not required, he subsequently worked as an engineer-surveyor in Heathcote, Victoria, and in 1857 changed to a teaching position at the Heathcote school. He and Catherine married in 1858.

7 Theobald, *Ruyton Remembers*, 37.

8 Beatrice Chilvers ed., *The History of Fintona 1896–1946* (Melbourne: McCarron, Bird, 1946).

9 'Speech Day, 1921', *The Fintonian*, August 1922, 2.

10 Public Records Office Victoria (PROV), VPRS 13719/P1, Records of service for Johnston (1060) and Catherine Hughston (1058).



Figure 1: Miss Hughston's father Johnston and mother Catherine (with grandchild), dates unknown. Schools liked to employ husband and wife teaching teams. Johnston and Catherine were one such team.

Source: Personal collection Dennis and Heale.

The couple settled in Heathcote where Catherine joined her husband as a teacher in 1859 only weeks before the birth of Annie on 23 May 1859.¹¹ This was the beginning of a teaching partnership that stretched to their retirement. During these years, Catherine gave birth to another seven children, four of whom survived: Jane (1861), Robert (1864), William (1867) and Violet (1871). At the end of 1863, when Annie was four, the Hughstons moved to Berwick, close to the Wilson family farm. Several members of Catherine's family were on the Board of Patrons (Management) at the Common School established in Berwick in the late 1850s and may have been instrumental in securing for Johnston the position of head teacher.¹² In mid-1867, Johnston was appointed head teacher with Catherine as his assistant at the Wesleyan School in the growing mining town of Daylesford. There they raised their family and educated their children.

These were turbulent years in Victorian education.¹³ Less than half the school-aged population was enrolled in a school. Competition between state and denominational schools, some of which received state aid, was a part of the problem. Another difficulty was that church rivalries and competition for congregations resulted in regions with either an oversupply of church schools or none at all. Poverty and

11 Department of Justice, Victoria, Registry of Births, Deaths and Marriages, Births in the District of Heathcote in the Colony of Victoria.

12 L. J. Blake ed., *Vision and Realisation: A Centenary History of State Education in Victoria* (Melbourne: Education Department of Victoria, 1973), 3:1177.

13 Edward Sweetman, Charles R. Long, and John Smyth, *A History of State Education in Victoria* (Melbourne: The Education Department of Victoria, 1922), 17.

migratory populations, particularly in the goldfields, also contributed to low attendances. Then in 1872, following a royal commission, the *Education Act 1872* (Vic.) introduced reforms that made education 'free, compulsory and secular', and abolished state aid to denominational schools. In the reorganisation of schools that followed the 1872 Act, the Wesleyan School became Common School 903, which in 1875 was amalgamated with three others. Johnston was passed over as head teacher of the new school, a decision that must have bitterly disappointed him, given his support for reform.¹⁴ Yet, it should not have been a complete surprise. Letters from the Education Department to School 903 had informed him of several transgressions: he had employed under age staff, the 'programme of instruction was not observed', 'excessive holidays [were] given' and he had not promptly notified them when he discovered that the numbers of pupils had been misreported as 275 instead of 175.¹⁵ He was instead appointed as 'Special Assistant'—a position he held until his retirement in 1883. Catherine's position dropped from first to fourth assistant.¹⁶

Soon after Johnston and Catherine's appointment to School 903, the school had expanded enough to need additional staff. By 1873 there was a second assistant and three pupil teachers, including the young Annie Hughston, aged 13 years and eight months. Pupil teachers were teaching apprentices who, under supervision, taught lower classes all day and studied and took instruction themselves outside school hours. Their lives were bound by their school and, often, by family responsibilities,¹⁷ and the quality of their learning was dependent on their supervising teacher.

It could be argued that Annie's parents were not ideal models of pedagogy. Johnston had an 1849 letter of reference from Canada conveying 'much reason to express our satisfaction at this method of his teaching and the progress of his scholars',¹⁸ but in Australia praise was muted. He was acknowledged as well-meaning and 'seemingly anxious to do his best', and Catherine was, at times, commended for working 'honestly and well'. However, the inspectors' reports generally did not flatter either of them. Johnston's teaching style was described as 'poor—quite behind the age' and 'very weak'. One observer noted: 'I doubt he could give a lesson on anything'.¹⁹ Another suggested that he 'should be pensioned off at the first opportunity'.¹⁹ Catherine was described as being 'entirely destitute of energy or animation, [and] of but little use in the school'.²⁰ Inspectorial comments were notoriously harsh in these years as the Education Department tried to professionalise itself. Neither Johnston

14 Elizabeth Roberts and Mary Lush, 'William Hughston 1867–1930: His Life and Legacy', *Victorian Historical Journal* 86, no. 2 (2015): 299–320.

15 PROV, VPRS 796/P00019, Outwards Letter Books, Primary Schools.

16 Records of service for Johnston and Catherine Hughston.

17 Constance Tisdall, *Forerunners: The Saga of a Family of Teachers* (Melbourne: FW Cheshire Pty Ltd, 1961), 59.

18 Letter held by Catherine Dennis, Johnston's great-granddaughter.

19 Record of service for Johnston Hughston.

20 Record of service for Catherine Hughston.

nor Catherine could ever be accused of being uninterested in education. After their retirement—Johnston in 1883 and Catherine in 1886—both remained interested in the teaching lives of their children. Annie, Jane, William and Violet all taught and Robert's wife Grace, and Violet's husband Walter Murdoch, were also teachers. Walter Murdoch, later the respected essayist after whom Murdoch University was named, was clearly impressed by the Hughstons, explaining that he took up a foundation chair at the University of Western Australia in 1913 because 'I had a desire to show [Violet] and her brothers and sisters that I had the goods. I suspected myself of being a nobody and I wanted a chair as evidence that I was a somebody'.²¹

The Hughstons probably had an adequate income during their working lives and retirement, but not much of a capital reserve after the 1890s crash. The family account suggests that Catherine worked because husband and wife teams were the norm rather than out of financial necessity. Johnston was reputed to have a small private income.²² It is evident from the family history that there were major stresses in Catherine and Johnston's marriage. One example was Johnston's sale of the farm that Catherine had inherited on her father's death. This was done without her permission. The family postulated that this event triggered her uncle James Buchanan's support in parliament for the Victorian *Married Women's Property Act 1884*. Significantly, in 1891 all the women of the family, excepting Violet who was still at school but including Robert's wife, signed the Women's Suffrage Petition.²³ After retiring, Johnston and Catherine moved to Melbourne, where in 1889, they briefly owned a large property in Hawthorn.²⁴ Johnston returned to work in mid-1889, as the Depression took hold, retiring again at the end of 1890. He died in 1910 and Catherine in 1912, both of 'senile decay'.²⁵ Neither left wills filed for probate, suggesting that they died without substantial financial assets.²⁶ This interpretation is consistent with what we know about Miss Hughston's access to capital. Her first two land purchases in 1907 and 1910 were made with the help of mortgages, the first to Catherine's family and the second to William Ower, the father of one of her teachers.²⁷

21 Walter Murdoch as cited in John La Nauze, *Walter Murdoch: A Biographical Memoir* (Melbourne: Melbourne University Press, 1977), 57.

22 Anne Heale, 'The Family Reminiscences of Anne Heale, 1903–1992', Unpublished memoir, Fintona Archive, Melbourne, 1991.

23 Parliament of Victoria, Women's Suffrage Petition 1891, accessed 20 August 2015, www.parliament.vic.gov.au/about/the-history-of-parliament/womens-suffrage-petition.

24 PROV, VPRS 2339, City of Hawthorn Rate Book, 1889. The Hughstons are reputed to have owned other properties, but we have found no further evidence of ownership in either Camberwell or Hawthorn.

25 Department of Justice Victoria, Registry of Births, Deaths and Marriages Victoria, death certificates for Johnston and Catherine Hughston.

26 PROV, VPRS 28, Probate and Administration Files, Description of this series.

27 Department of Sustainability and Environment Victoria, Certificates of Title, vol. 02105 folio 818 (1907, mortgage discharged 1917), vol. 02347, folio 391 (1910, mortgage discharged 1919).



Figure 2: Annie Hughston as a girl. Annie started work in Daylesford, Victoria, as a pupil teacher supervised by her parents. She was 13 years old.

Source: Personal collection Dennis and Heale.

Teacher training

The young Annie's resignation as a pupil teacher in March 1874 may well have been prompted by the amalgamating of School 903, and it appears she then started on her high school education. In 1878 she briefly attended PLC in Melbourne,²⁸ but she matriculated from Daylesford Grammar in 1879, passing in Latin, French, arithmetic, algebra, Euclid and geography, but failing English.²⁹ In 1880 she set about qualifying as a teacher by becoming an unpaid assistant. The first year of teacher training involved a year working in a school after which an examination gave the student a qualification equivalent to a certificate of competency.³⁰ The second year was spent at the Teacher Training College. Annie 'failed for admission' to this second year,³¹ perhaps a victim of the policy giving preference to men.³² However, she was 'allowed [a] further trial' and Inspector Cox, who had damned her father, noted that she was 'intelligent and hardworking' and 'taught very well'. She seems to have been licensed to teach in 1881 and was appointed a temporary assistant at Common School 262 in Gisborne on 6 February 1882. She lasted nine days! She next appears in 1884 in the prospectus of PLC as a senior mathematics teacher. From her claim to have 13 years teaching experience at PLC, we can deduce that she started there in 1882.

Miss Hughston, as perhaps we should now call her, always cited her years at PLC as her teaching qualification. During those years she worked with J. P. Wilson (no relation to Catherine), the well-respected senior mathematics teacher and Shakespearean scholar.³³ He was awarded a doctor of laws while teaching at PLC. In 1889, PLC girls were the only ones to have gained first class honours in matriculation maths. They achieved that distinction 15 times between 1884 and 1889. Fitzpatrick considers Henry Handel Richardson's mathematics teacher in *The Getting of Wisdom* to be a libellous portrait of Dr Wilson. The name of the teacher, Dr Pughson, was thought by her to be a comment on the pug nose of Dr Wilson;³⁴ it may in addition be an oblique reference to Miss Hughston.

28 PLC Melbourne Archive, Enrolment Book 1878, entry 294.

29 University of Melbourne Archive, Matriculation records 1879.

30 Sweetman et al., *A History of State Education in Victoria*, 95.

31 Education Department of Victoria Records, Record of service for Annie Hughston, no. 5566.

32 Marjorie Theobald, *Knowing Women: Origins of Women's Education in the Nineteenth-Century Australia* (Melbourne: Cambridge University Press, 1996), 155.

33 Kathleen Fitzpatrick, *PLC Melbourne: The First Century 1875–1975* (Melbourne: The Presbyterian Ladies College, 1975), 79–98.

34 Fitzpatrick, *PLC Melbourne*, 91.



Figure 3: Miss Hughston in Canada, 1889. She took leave from PLC to travel with her father and cousin to Europe and to meet his siblings in Canada.

Source: Personal collection Dennis and Heale.

In January 1894 William Hughston, assisted by Violet, opened Camperdown High School in the western district of Victoria. The school was actively promoted at district events and advertised as catering for girls and boys, day pupils and female boarders, from kindergarten to matriculation.³⁵ Within a few months they had too many pupils to manage and, with the promise of many pupils taking ‘extras’ and a profit of £500 in their first year, William urged Annie to join them.³⁶ As an advertisement in the *Camperdown Chronical* shows, she did just that.³⁷

Perhaps from the very start, Miss Hughston saw this move as a step towards something more ambitious. As a woman, she was never going to be principal or headmistress of PLC.³⁸ Nevertheless, it was a risky choice. The people who opened schools in these times were many and various. Some women ran primary schools from their family homes, with perhaps a dozen children including their own. These and other variants of ‘Dame schools’ ranged from awful to excellent in the quality of the education they offered, but had in common the fact that they did not require much capital or involve much risk. Those who owned larger schools, such as Eliza Bromby of Ruyton and Isabella (Isabel) Henderson of Clyde, often had the backing of well-connected, scholarly families, or long-term partnerships with teaching colleagues.³⁹ As impressive as they may have been, the Hughstons did not have the sort of social and intellectual connections or the money of many of the private owners of successful schools in Melbourne. They did, however, have plenty of courage. Camperdown was a success while operated by the Hughstons, but they sold it at the end of 1895 and returned to Melbourne to open Fintona. Again, this was a gamble. Schools had closed through the Depression, even in the growing eastern suburbs, and Miss Annie Hughston and her brother William were not well known. For a young woman who first left school before she was 14 years old, it was an audacious step. All of the costs of a private school had to be covered by tuition fees because there was no state aid to non-government schools. The owners’ financial liability was not limited and, in contrast to many church schools, there was no governing body to absorb the costs associated with the premises and equipment.

35 Roberts and Lush, ‘William Hughston 1867–1930’.

36 Fintona Archive, E1/4, Letter from William Hughston to Annie Hughston, undated.

37 Classified Advertising, *Camperdown Chronicle*, 28 July 1894, 1.

38 PLC principals were male until 1938, Fitzpatrick, *PLC Melbourne*, 175.

39 Theobald, *Ruyton Remembers*, 40; Melanie Guile, *Clyde School 1919–1975: An Uncommon History* (Melbourne: Clyde Old Girls Association Inc., 2006), 16.



Figure 4: Miss Hughston's brother William, date unknown and her sister Violet, 1896. Miss Hughston left her teaching position at PLC to join her brother and sister in running a school they had opened in western Victoria. After a couple of years the Hughstons closed this school and opened a new one in Melbourne with Miss Hughston and William as principals and Violet as a teacher.

Source: Personal collection Dennis and Heale (William); National Library of Australia, 2987/3/670 (Violet).

Establishing a school in Melbourne

The *Argus* of 22 January 1896 carried an advertisement announcing a new school for girls; Violet also taught at this school, which was run from a rented mansion called 'Essington' in Mayston Street, Hawthorn. The Hughstons' first intake included boarders from their Camperdown school and the Goulburn Valley⁴⁰ where their brother Robert had recently been a medical practitioner. With day students there was a total of 14 pupils on the first day. The pupils' fees had to support three Hughstons and one employed staff member.⁴¹ The three siblings, and perhaps their parents, plus the boarders and a resident mistress, all lived at Essington. They offered all levels of education from kindergarten to matriculation. During 1897 William left Fintona, returning for 1901–03.⁴² At the end of 1897 Violet married Walter Murdoch at Essington⁴³ and continued in 1898 as a teacher of extras.

40 Fintona Archive, Document 6, Marion Wiseman, *Reminiscences of Fintona 1897–1901*, 1943.

41 Chilvers, *The History of Fintona*, 1.

42 Roberts and Lush, 'William Hughston 1867–1930'.

43 'Family Notices', *Australasian*, 15 January 1898, 55.

With the benefit of hindsight we can identify factors that contributed to the fate of independent schools, but determining what was the consequence of wise planning and what should be attributed to chance is difficult. Why did the Hughstons open a girls' school and not another coeducational school? We do not know. In the year before Fintona was founded, 1895, most (62 per cent) of the 1,200 pupils entered for matriculation examinations in Victoria were boys.⁴⁴ There were private, coeducational schools in Melbourne, but in the years to come single sex schools would be the most successful.

It was wise or fortunate planning that they located the school on the boundary of Hawthorn and Camberwell. The Hughstons would have known of, or foreseen, several factors that would contribute to their school's success here. The population of Hawthorn could afford school fees and valued education. In 1891 Hawthorn and St Kilda had more private schools per resident than any other parts of Melbourne.⁴⁵ The Hughstons were Presbyterians. Non-Anglican protestants (mainly Presbyterians and Methodists) made up an unusually large part of the community of Camberwell, 47 per cent compared to 34 per cent in the metropolitan area as a whole.⁴⁶ The population of the eastern suburbs was expanding as large estates were subdivided (Table 1). The increase in Camberwell was such that, assuming a proportional increase in pupil numbers, a school with 50 pupils in 1891 should have grown to 100 by 1911 and to nearly 200 by 1921.

Table 1: Population of some eastern suburbs of Melbourne, 1891–1933.

Source	Hawthorn	Kew	Camberwell
1891 census	19,585	8,462	6,204
1901 census	21,339	9,469	8,640
1911 census	24,407	11,148	12,462
1921 census	29,178	17,382	23,844
1933 census	33,758	25,486	50,052
increase 1891–1933	14,173	17,024	43,848

The area was connected to old and new suburbs by a train line between the city and Lilydale, so the catchment for the school was not entirely limited to walking or carriage distance. In the future there would be more stations and a tram line. A water supply for those near Burke Road was guaranteed by a water main; drains, sewers and electricity would arrive in the early 1900s.⁴⁷ Lastly, in the matter of location, there were a number of boom-era houses that were large enough for a small school.

⁴⁴ Matriculation records, 1895.

⁴⁵ Victoria Peel, Deborah Zion and Jane Yule, *A History of Hawthorn* (Melbourne: Melbourne University Press, 1993), 74.

⁴⁶ Geoffrey Blainey, *A History of Camberwell* (Melbourne: Lothian, 1980), 77–78.

⁴⁷ Blainey, *A History of Camberwell*, 47, 50, 70–71, 82–83.

Location and single sex education were not enough to guarantee success in a very competitive environment. Several local girls' schools already had records of achievement in matriculation examinations, including MLC, Ruyton, Grace Park and Newnham.⁴⁸ The proximity of Camberwell station might bring pupils to the school, but it could also take them away to the established schools in Auburn, Glenferrie and Hawthorn, or to one of the plethora of schools in the inner city. It was a bold and self-confident move to establish yet another school.

Schools were often named after a place of family significance. Fintona was a Roman Catholic parish (and town) in Northern Ireland⁴⁹ and Catherine's place of origin. In those days of deep division between Protestants and Roman Catholics it is surprising that the Presbyterian Hughstons risked being mistaken for Roman Catholics. In 1898 Miss Hughston wrote to William about an applicant for a teaching position: 'I have also to write to a Roman Catholic that I was rather taken with, and say that she won't do. The boarders' parents might object'.⁵⁰

It was the principal's task to convert potential pupils to enrolled ones. Miss Hughston's rural background and modest formal education may have appealed to upwardly mobile families who also had not had much education.⁵¹ As a senior mathematics teacher at a time when some thought mathematics bad for the female brain, it could be assumed that she took scholarship seriously. Competent management was promised by the fact that Miss Hughston had a 'clear grip on matters financial ... she could talk finance like a man'.⁵² On the other hand, she was not a blue stocking. She is remembered in her youth for her 'pretty dresses'.⁵³ She had non-academic pursuits; she played tennis,⁵⁴ exchanged knitting patterns with her mother,⁵⁵ liked dogs and could manage a cow and kitchen garden ('depressingly prolific in pumpkins and marrows') for the house.⁵⁶ As was common at the time, family was clearly the social focus of Miss Hughston's life, but there is evidence of treasured friendship outside family and Fintona. Her will included a bequest to a Miss Winter, who is described as 'my friend'.⁵⁷ This was a long friendship, probably dating from Miss Hughston's time in Camperdown. Miss Winter held several teaching positions including one at Fintona for about a year. She then became bursar of St Catherine's School, Toorak.⁵⁸

48 Matriculation records, 1895. Grace Park and Newnham no longer exist.

49 Padraic O. Gallachair, *Old Fintona: A History of the Catholic Parish of Donaghcavey in County Tyrone* (Monaghan: Cumann Seanchais Chlochair, 1974), 51.

50 Fintona Archive, Annie Hughston to William Hughston, 6 February 1898.

51 McCalman, *Journeys*, 69–70.

52 Fintona Archive, Document 1, Louisa Powell, Annie Hughston: An Appreciation, c. 1943.

53 Fintona Archive, Document 6, Marion Wiseman, Reminiscences of Fintona 1897–1901, 1943.

54 Fintona Archive, E1/2, William Hughston.

55 Fintona Archive, E1/3, Annie Hughston to Catherine and Johnston Hughston, undated.

56 Fintona Archive, Document 5, Isabella Curnick, Fintona 1905–1911, c. 1943.

57 PROV, VPRS series 7591/P2, unit 1207, Will of Annie Hughston.

58 St Catherine's School Toorak Archive, letter from John Winter to The Registrar, Teacher and School Board.

Physically, Miss Hughston was tall, at least as perceived by children, thin and stately with fine facial features. As she aged, her white hair was accentuated by her dressing mostly in black with a high collar. There are varying accounts of her personality. Her niece Anne Heale's reminiscences refer to Johnston's dominance being passed on to Miss Hughston. One of the students of the early 1900s said of Miss Hughston 'she was a dominating personality and yet such was her gift, she did not dominate us. There was real freedom of thought'.⁵⁹ There is the usual problem here that what might be called decisiveness in a man might be called dominance in a woman. Her great nieces, who only knew her as an old woman, found her strict and formidable on some occasions and welcoming on others.⁶⁰ According to a staff member, Miss Hughston had 'exacting, perhaps even severe, standards of work and efficiency'.⁶¹ By contrast, other people describe her as motherly.⁶² Violet said that Miss Hughston was 'a [mother] by instinct' because of her attention to individuals, but doubted that her pupils would have known of it. She stated:

We saw her at least three or four times a week and we both remember how constantly she talked to us about some problem that was troubling her—some girl that was unhappy, some other girl that was not doing well in her class, and so on.⁶³

Surviving reminiscences from early pupils give a warm account of their relationship with Miss Hughston. In a tribute after Miss Hughston's death, one pupil wrote, 'I think that each of us has been aware of her charm her open mindedness and that childlike quality in her that will never grow old'.⁶⁴ Miss Hughston shared the boarding house with pupils for about 25 years. One wrote:

Often on Saturday evenings she would suggest our having charades and she would supply odds and ends of properties in the way of old fashioned frocks and such to help us create the atmosphere we needed. As I look back, I can see her shaking with helpless laughter at our efforts, and there was no feeling of patronage about it ... On other Saturday evenings she would suggest our playing games that had a certain educational value, ... Although the games were ostensibly of an intellectual nature they invariably ended in a good deal of hilarity and fun.⁶⁵

Miss Hughston maintained the tradition of entertaining the boarders until the end of her ownership. Although the occasions were not frequent and took on a more formal note, the boarders continued to feel prized, rather than condescended to, in her presence.⁶⁶ The pupils of Miss Hughston's later years in the 1920s and 1930s mostly remember her as someone they saw passing by—strict, revered but not known.

59 Fintona Archive, Document 5, Isabella Curnick.

60 Interviews with Philippa Heale (Fintona Archive, Oral History Group Interview number 22, 2009) and with Catherine Dennis and Philippa Heale, 7 August 2014.

61 Fintona Archive, Document 2, Jeannie Ower, c. 1943.

62 Interview with Daisy Chancellor, 1978.

63 Fintona Archive, Document 3, Violet Murdoch to Mr Macaulay, 8 May 1943.

64 Phyllis Reichl, *Fintona: The Story in Pictures 1896–1986* (Melbourne: Fintona Girls' School, 1986), 40.

65 Fintona Archive, Document 1, Louisa Powell.

66 Oral History Group Interview 14, Dora Scales, 2009.

We used the words ‘bold’ and ‘courageous’ to describe Miss Hughston’s actions, yet, as her refusal to speak on speech nights suggests, she either lacked confidence or did not see public performance as part of her role. The suggestion that in educational circles women were ‘handicapped by their knowledge that their own education was very imperfect’⁶⁷ certainly applied to Miss Hughston. Women with university degrees were no longer rare in the ranks of teachers, indeed Miss Syme, whom she appointed in 1897, had a degree and a higher teaching qualification than Miss Hughston. Violet’s post-mortem description of Miss Hughston suggests another reason for her reluctance to make public statements:

She had a queer and erratic sense of humour, only to be detected by those who knew her well. It was perhaps her sense of humour that made her reticent about her ideals. She had a horror of high flown professions of any sort.⁶⁸

The hard work and anxiety associated with the constant drive to attract students in the early years are evident in a letter Miss Hughston wrote to William in 1898:⁶⁹

You will see by the paper that new pupils are to be enrolled tomorrow. I wonder how many will come ... I am rather dreading the first day I think it is always depressing ... No parents came today but perhaps they will come tomorrow ... I am going to try to go out a good deal. I think if you make yourself pleasant to people, it does good.

To describe the teaching load in these early years as demanding would be an understatement. Miss Ower, who was employed as a resident mistress in 1900–01 wrote:⁷⁰

There were at that time seven boarders. Three quite big girls (15 or 16) two younger girls of about 12; two little girls of 8 or 9 & ... a small boy of about five ... [T]he two resident mistresses ... looked after them in every way ... We were their mothers, their nursemaids, their sick-nurses; we supervised their homework, their manners and morals; we read them stories and played games with them ... Before I went to bed I went round and looked at all the boarders to make sure they were still breathing; to see that they were all properly covered ... These duties performed, I prepared my lessons for the following day. We had to make a schedule, detailing every lesson we were to give during the week, & how we intended to present it to our victims. Miss Hughston’s brother was at this time on the staff ... there were staff meetings every few weeks, at which we had to give ‘an account of our stewardship’ to him and to Miss Hughston. I taught in every period of every school day ... And on Saturdays there was ‘laundry’—& mending; & on Sundays church in the morning & Sunday school, at home, in the afternoons.

Exhausted, Miss Ower went on sick leave at the end of 1901 and was never again a resident mistress.

67 Fitzpatrick, *PLC Melbourne*, 30.

68 Fintona Archive, Document 3, Violet Murdoch.

69 Annie Hughston, 6 February 1898.

70 Fintona Archive, Document 10, Jeannie Ower, *Some Memories*, c. 1943.



Figure 5: Miss Hughston with Kitty Craig (her niece) in 1903. The Melbourne-based members of the Hughston family supported Miss Hughston by sending their daughters to her school.

Source: Personal collection Dennis and Heale.

Despite the herculean efforts of the teachers, finances were a ‘close shave’ and compromises had to be made when employing staff.⁷¹ In 1898 Miss Hughston engaged a Miss Sadleir, who ‘really had no testimonials’.⁷² The competitor for this particular job had better references, more experience and was better at music. However, she also ‘taught drawing chiefly from drawings’ and, fatally, cost £36 plus keep whereas Miss Sadleir cost £40 in total. This need for pragmatism tempered Miss Hughston’s philosophy that:

Every teacher at Fintona is, as far as it can possibly be managed, required to teach only those subjects in which she has made herself a specialist. The person who is able to teach *everything* with equal facility, is usually incapable of teaching *anything* as it ought to be taught.⁷³

71 Fintona Archive, Annie Hughston to William Hughston, 12 February 1898.

72 Fintona Archive, Annie Hughston to William Hughston, 12 February 1898.

73 Fintona Archive, Prospectus c. 1906.

Miss Hughston's choice of the motto *age quod agis*, which she interpreted as 'do one thing at a time, and do it thoroughly'⁷⁴ reflects the same thinking.

In the middle of 1899 Miss Hughston moved the school to a 'more commodious' house in Burke Road, north of Camberwell station, where more people were settling.⁷⁵ The school remained at this location for the rest of her ownership.

An event that Miss Hughston could not have foreseen in 1896 was the passing of the 1905 Act that made it illegal to run an unregistered school or employ an unregistered person as a teacher.⁷⁶ At this time Frank Tate was the permanent head of a reorganised Education Department.⁷⁷ Tate set about improving the standard of teaching and of accommodation in schools and, somewhat surreptitiously, pursued the establishment of state secondary schools. Most teachers supported aspects of this Act, but some saw the move into secondary schooling as 'destroy[ing] the free market for fee-paying education'.⁷⁸ The doomsayers would be proved right in part. In the 13 years following the passing of the Act, the number of private schools dropped from 757 to 499. Miss Hughston probably benefited from there being fewer schools competing for an independent school population that increased from 48,732 to 58,366.⁷⁹ The first lists of registered schools and teachers published in early 1907 show that her school was registered to teach at secondary, primary and sub-primary levels, and Miss Hughston herself was registered to teach secondary school based on her experience and qualifications.⁸⁰

The numbers of pupils grew steadily. The increase was greater than that predicted from demography alone (Table 1); by 1912 there were 140 pupils and by 1920 about 450 (Figure 6). Other girls' schools in the region also experienced substantial increases between about 1911 and 1920; for example MLC increased from 310 to 514 (1913–21)⁸¹ and Lauriston from 100 to 340 (1911–24).⁸² However, the competitive nature of schools meant that success was not assured. Tintern struggled, perhaps because the principal 'went to the "wrong" church and knew the "wrong" sort of people',⁸³ and Ruyton, under an academically demanding principal who disliked administration, became unprofitable and closed transiently in 1913.⁸⁴

74 Fintona Archive, Document 3, Violet Murdoch.

75 'Advertising', *Argus*, 24 July 1899, 3; Fintona Archive, Document 6, Marion Wiseman, *Reminiscences of Fintona 1897–1901*, 1943.

76 Registration of Teachers and Schools Act 1905.

77 Sweetman et al., *A History of State Education in Victoria*, 171–84.

78 Peel et al., *A History of Hawthorn*, 79.

79 Sweetman et al., *A History of State Education in Victoria*, 270.

80 Victoria, *Government Gazette*, 29 January 1907, 489, 523.

81 Wood, *Seventy-Five Years at Methodist Ladies' College*, 79.

82 Rasmussen, *Lauriston*, 45, 64.

83 Lyndsay Gardiner, *Tintern School and Anglican Girls' Education 1877–1977* (Melbourne: Tintern, 1977), 50.

84 Theobald, *Ruyton Remembers*, 88.

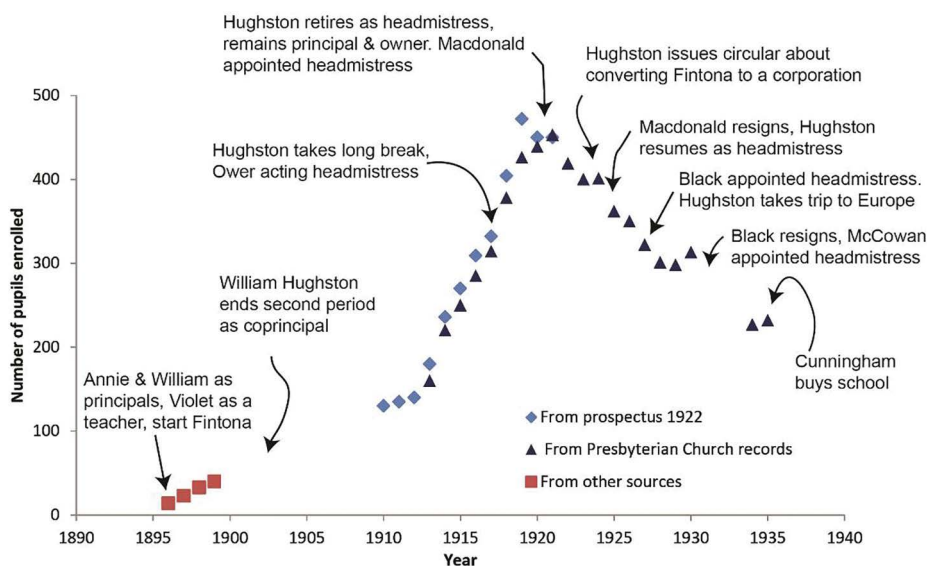


Figure 6: The rise and fall of pupil numbers at Fintona 1896 to 1934 linked to major events at the school.

Source: Authors' work.

A school with personality

Miss Ower, who returned to teaching in 1905, used the word ‘personality’ to describe Fintona.⁸⁵ Miss Ower would become Miss Hughston’s longest-serving teacher and an important source of support. They were opposites in both physique and character. Miss Ower was ‘short and portly’⁸⁶ and outgoing. Her pupils remember the fascinating content of her lessons and her spontaneity of delivery as a highlight of their week.⁸⁷ Miss Ower outlined in verse the comprehensive, liberal education they aimed to deliver at Fintona:

So go and take this message forth to all your kith and kin—
That they should come to Fintona if wisdom rare they’d win.
We’ll teach them how to read the script on Tutankhamen’s tomb,
And give them all the measurements of Shakespeares billiard-room.
We’ll teach them how to Eat More Fruit and take some home today;
How to Cross Crossings Cautiously—when nothing’s in the way.
We’ll teach them to put safety First—for taking risks is sin—
And we shall also teach them: ‘Nothing venture, nothing win.’
That early rising’s healthful we shall show to be absurd,

⁸⁵ Fintona Archive, Document 10, Ower.

⁸⁶ Oral History Group Interview 13, Jean Gunn, 2009.

⁸⁷ Oral History Group Interview 28, Joan Gabb, 2010.

Because the early worm is snapped up by the bird.
By very easy stages (for it can't be quickly done)
We'll teach them that the world is round and heat comes from the sun.
The politics of Ireland we'll make absolutely clear.
The European tangle quite straight-forward will appear.
We'll solve the burning question: 'What becomes of all the pins?'
And **after** every boat-race we shall 'tip' the crew that wins!⁸⁸

The curriculum

The offerings at girls' schools in this period are conventionally divided into scholarly subjects and accomplishments. Social skills were held to be an essential part of a girls' preparation for life after school. 'The idea of a profession or, worse, a "job" for the young ladies of the Tintern College would never have crossed the mind of Emma B. Cook.'⁸⁹ As late as 1920 there was an expectation that the pupils of some independent schools 'would never *have* to work'.⁹⁰ The expectations of pupils were, however, more nuanced than these statements suggest. The upper ranks of society supplied many of the first female graduates and professionals, including one of the first teachers appointed by Miss Hughston. Miss Syme, a qualified teacher with a degree, was the daughter of the philanthropically inclined Symes of Tourmont in Balwyn.⁹¹ Furthermore, the reality for some girls was that work was a financial necessity. However, pupils did not need a full secondary education for most occupations and most got, at best, a few years of 'finishing' in an independent school.⁹² Daisy Chancellor, who left Fintona in 1916, estimated that about 90 per cent of her class proceeded to a job or further education. If correct, this is high for the era. Of girls leaving school in the 1930s, 86 per cent of those at MLC and 73 per cent at Genazzano, girls' schools close to Fintona, went into jobs or training.⁹³ For most of the girls these occupations would be transient; the girls would not be in paid employment after marriage.

Miss Hughston was serious about scholarly education. She encouraged achievement by establishing, in about 1900, an unusual, non-competitive system of prizes such that '[t]he number of prizes was not limited, for whoever reached [a set] standard received a prize'.⁹⁴ She celebrated the passing of public examinations, entry to university and the gaining of degrees. Initially she taught all three of the matriculation mathematics subjects, the hardest of which was Euclid (geometry). Between 1896

88 Jeannie Ower, 'General Information', *The Fintonian*, August 1923, 16–18.

89 Gardiner, *Tintern School*, 15.

90 Guile, *Clyde School*, 48.

91 Patricia O'Dwyer, 'The Symes of Tourmont (Tour Mont)', Balwyn Historical Society, 2011.

92 Residence time at PLC just over two years, Fitzpatrick, *PLC Melbourne*, 125; 1–3 years at Ruyton, Theobald, *Ruyton Remembers*, 33.

93 McCalman, *Journeyings*, 183–84.

94 Chilvers, *The History of Fintona*, 2.

and 1899 two Fintona girls entered for matriculation Euclid and passed.⁹⁵ This is notable given Fintona's size and immediately established it as competitive with older and larger private girls' schools. The leading church schools were way ahead; MLC entered 35 pupils for Euclid and PLC entered 116. Only PLC girls (13 per cent of them) gained honours. As the school expanded Miss Hughston withdrew from classroom teaching.

The serious intent of Miss Hughston's curriculum was also evidenced by her school's approach to music and science. In girls' schools music was both an academic subject and an accomplishment. It was the approach taken to the subject that defined its intellectual content. Between about 1910 and 1928 Isabel Knox managed the music program, including the components offered as 'extras'. For some of this time Miss Knox also held an appointment at the University of Melbourne's Conservatorium of Music. She wrote *The Rhythmic and Aural Method of Teaching Music, Part 1*, with a foreword by Annie Hughston.⁹⁶ The method seems to have worked. The girls were spectacularly successful in university examinations and, in 1925, on his way to becoming a prominent conductor, teacher and administrator in Melbourne music, Bernard Heinze conducted the school orchestra.⁹⁷

When Miss Hughston matriculated there were no science subjects in the matriculation syllabus laid down by the university. Science was introduced in 1881, but only subjects that could be taught without a laboratory (physiology and botany) penetrated most girls' schools.⁹⁸ The argument for including science in the syllabus was that it trained pupils to make observations, evaluate evidence and draw inferences. When well taught, other subjects could teach pupils the same skills. Miss Ower described the teaching of geography thus:

There was no need to go far afield in those days for Geography excursions. Fields and open country came almost to our gates; & the creek that meandered through them provided examples in miniature of all the stunts a river can do.⁹⁹

At the turn of the century, physics and chemistry were taught at PLC, but to only a few pupils; seven PLC girls entered for either or both of these subjects from 1896–99.¹⁰⁰ By 1909 physics and chemistry were the fourth and fifth most studied matriculation subjects, despite the fact they were not taught in most girls' schools.¹⁰¹ Miss Hughston added physics and chemistry to her curriculum in about 1915.¹⁰² These subjects were

95 Matriculation records 1896–99.

96 Isabel Knox, *The Rhythmic and Aural Method of Teaching Music, Part 1* (Sydney: W.H. Paling, 1929).

97 'School Speech Days', *Argus*, 15 December 1925, 4.

98 Ian R. Wilkinson, 'Science in Victorian Secondary Schools in the Late Nineteenth Century', *History of Education Review* vol. 17, no. 2 (1988): 63–78.

99 Fintona Archive, Document 2, Ower.

100 University of Melbourne Archive, Matriculation records.

101 'University of Melbourne. Public and Matriculation Examinations', *Argus*, 22 January 1909, 16.

102 Fintona Archive, Prospectus c. 1916.

still not available in most independent girls' schools; indeed physics would not be on offer in many of them for another 20 to 30 years.¹⁰³ Miss Hughston's reasons for bringing in more science may have been its relevance in times of technological change (e.g. transport, communications and power), and the number of girls starting medical degrees. Daisy Chancellor recalled that two out of about 11 in her class in 1916 entered medicine.¹⁰⁴ Unfortunately, we cannot analyse the uptake of physics at Fintona or other girls' schools, because after 1903 the preserved records do not link the names of matriculation candidates to their schools. Miss Hughston must have been committed to science education because the total number of girls in Victoria taking physics was low. She would have subsidised science teaching. Despite this, some girls intending to do science still moved to the better equipped PLC for their last years of schooling.¹⁰⁵

Miss Hughston was also serious about equipping girls with social skills. She thought it important that the girls learn to be gracious hostesses.¹⁰⁶ In 1902 she encouraged parents who did not want a full secondary education for their daughters to nonetheless enrol them for 'such subjects as English Literature, Languages, Music, Painting, Elocution and Needlework'.¹⁰⁷ In 1920, to the applause of the all-male advisory committee of the Presbyterian Church of Victoria (PCV, see later), she introduced a senior, non-examination stream for girls who wanted 'to go on educating themselves for the duties of life'.¹⁰⁸ These duties included 'mothercraft' but apparently not cooking, because domestic science was not introduced until about 1930; nor, until the late 1920s, did they involve sex. According to Theobald,¹⁰⁹ sex education was often taught so obscurely ('your body is God's temple') that it was of little help to pupils. This also seems to have been true at Fintona. Girls of the late 1920s and early 1930s, when asked about sex education, were likely to respond that there was 'absolutely none, from anywhere'.¹¹⁰

Miss Hughston's support for both scholarship and accomplishments was not unusual. Although educationalists had long argued that education served women (and the nation) well whatever their occupation, educated women were expected to make their contribution to nation-building through their husbands and sons.¹¹¹ The headmistresses' association supported the pursuit of excellence in domesticity by establishing a syllabus for needlework.¹¹² In about 1920, Isabel Henderson, an

103 For example Lauriston (Rasmussen, *Lauriston*, 76) and Ruyton (Theobald, *Ruyton Remembers*, 108, 126, 128).

104 Interview with Daisy Chancellor, 1978.

105 Oral History Group Interview 28, Joan Gabb, 2010.

106 Dora Scales, Prue Gill and Suzy Chandler, Oral History Group, Release 2, 'The Education of an Educator', 2010, www.fintona.vic.edu.au/our-community/alumni/memorabilia/history.

107 Fintona Archive, Prospectus c. 1902.

108 Presbyterian Church of Victoria (PCV) Archive, Report of the Schools Committee, May 1920.

109 Theobald, *Ruyton Remembers*, 123.

110 Lis Christensen and Mary Lush, *We Can Still Remember: Girls at School, 1912–1934* (Compact disk), Melbourne: Fintona Oral History Group, 2014, Track 8.

111 'Fintona Presbyterian Girls. Woman's Place in Nation Building', *Argus*, 15 December 1925, 4.

112 'School Speech Days. Fintona Grammar School', *Argus*, 14 December 1920, 8; Christensen and Lush, *We Can Still Remember*, Track 5.

owner-principal prominent in public discussions about education, ‘embraced the newly revived notion of education for woman’s “true” vocation—that of wife and mother’.¹¹³ Miss Henderson and Miss Hughston were single, career women who both signed the 1891 Women’s Suffrage Petition. It seems inconsistent that, as women of achievement in their own right, they would readily accept their girls embarking on lives subordinate to men. However, these women were pragmatists and knew that most of their girls would follow the traditional expectations of marriage and family. Misses Henderson and Hughston’s expressed views and actions can also be interpreted as attempts to further the education of girls who would otherwise leave the school system. We should remember that this was a time when many children received no secondary schooling, and few completed it. When Miss Hughston introduced the non-examination stream, her school became overcrowded; therefore, whatever her motivation, it was not to increase enrolments.

Physical education

Achievement in accomplishments and academic subjects was not enough for a comprehensive education:¹¹⁴

Miss Hughston was as keen about the ‘sound body’ as she was about the ‘sound mind’ ... I remember that on one occasion Miss Hughston called all the girls who had headed their forms for the week to come out and stand in a row before her. Trying not to look too elated by the honour done them, they obeyed. Miss Hughston gave them one long, comprehensive look, & said ‘Well you’re a poor palefaced lot! I shall arrange that you all spend more time at sport’.

Daily sessions of physical education probably occurred from the outset and were certainly in place by 1906, as they were in many schools. Games were the best form of exercise and ‘ample space’ was provided for them.¹¹⁵ In 1907 and 1911 Miss Hughston bought, through mortgages, land adjoining the school, all of which was used for physical activities.

The open-air education philosophy took hold in Europe in the early 1900s. The first open-air school in Victoria was claimed to be Warwick Girls’ School in East Malvern, but in the same year as this report appeared, 1911, William Hughston started an open-air school for boys in Sandringham.¹¹⁶ In 1912 Miss Hughston bought a neighbouring house, this time without a mortgage,¹¹⁷ and in the next years

113 Marjorie R. Theobald, ‘Henderson, Isabella Thomson (Isabel) (1862–1940)’, *Australian Dictionary of Biography*, National Centre of Biography, The Australian National University, adb.anu.edu.au/biography/henderson-isabella-thomson-isabel-6631/text11423, published first in hardcopy 1983, accessed online 16 September 2018.

114 Fintona Archive, Document 2, Ower.

115 Fintona Archive, Prospectus c. 1906. Exercises were later contracted to the Bjelke Petersen Group, ‘Old Fintonians Celebrate Reunion’, *Argus*, 1 May 1924, 9.

116 Roberts and Lush, ‘William Hughston 1867–1930’.

117 Certificate of Title, vol. 02697 folio 294.

converted most of it to open-air classrooms. These had wire mesh on at least one side. The pupils within were protected from driving rain by lowering a canvas blind. In 1918 she bought and modified another house, this time for boarders, creating some open-air cubicles for bedrooms.¹¹⁸ Even the sick bay was open-air.¹¹⁹

Open-air education was adopted because of its presumed efficacy in preventing the spread of infectious diseases. Until immunisation was widespread and antibiotics became available, disease resulted in absenteeism and sometimes death. In 1912 alone, 59 Victorian schools were temporarily closed because of outbreaks of diphtheria.¹²⁰ At Fintona the number of attendance prizes, given for not missing one day at school, rose from 18 in 1914 to 48 in 1915, a change Miss Hughston attributed to her open-air classrooms.¹²¹ Another advantage of open-air classrooms was that they were cheap to build. Lots of schools had some. Fintona's open-air rooms remained a part of the school until Miss Hughston sold it. They are the aspect most cited, without resentment, by her last pupils as evidence of her 'advanced' ideas in education,¹²² although by then they were an anachronism. Before leaving open-air education, we should mention the view of some historians that the proprietors of open-air schools were eugenicists. We have argued elsewhere that this term is misleading.¹²³ We have not found any record of Miss Hughston's views about genetics, but she was not associated with the extreme form of eugenics later practised in Nazi Germany. She admitted girls with disabilities and Jewish pupils, some of whom travelled from distant suburbs to reach Fintona.¹²⁴

Organisation and innovation

From the outset Miss Hughston established herself as receptive to ideas and her school as 'progressive'. Miss Syme was often exhorted by Miss Hughston to 'think hard, & find me a new idea'.¹²⁵

A consistent theme throughout her years of ownership was that girls should be prepared for 'intelligent citizenship' and learn to behave appropriately in a range of situations.¹²⁶ From the start the girls held dances to which they invited boys.¹²⁷ This mixing of the sexes was seen by some as a form of 'moral decay' that divided the headmistresses of girls' schools for decades.¹²⁸ The girls were aware that they

118 Certificate of Title, vol. 02620 folio 523908; Reichl, *Fintona*, 24.

119 Fintona Archive, Oral History Group Interview 33, Jean Wilcox, 2010.

120 Claire Hooker and Alison Bashford, 'Diphtheria and Australian Public Health: Bacteriology and its Complex Applications, c. 1890–1930', *Medical History* 46, no. 1 (2002): 41–64.

121 Fintona Archive, Principal's Report 1915.

122 Christensen and Lush, *We Can Still Remember*, Track 4.

123 Roberts and Lush, 'William Hughston 1867–1930'.

124 Oral History Group Interview 28, Joan Gabb, 2010.

125 Fintona Archive, Document 6, Marion Wiseman, Reminiscences of Fintona 1897–1901, 1943.

126 Fintona Archive, Prospectus c. 1924.

127 Fintona Archive, Documents 5 and 7, Isabella Curwick and Louisa Powell (respectively) c. 1943.

128 Theobald, *Ruyton Remembers*, 123.

were participating in experiments. A pupil from the early 1900s commented that ‘sometimes the experiments were regrettable from [Miss Hughston’s] point of view but of huge interest to us’. One experiment was to allow the pianists among the girls to choose the hymn they played in morning assembly. “Earth is a desert dark and drear” was chosen so often that finally Miss Hughston ... stormed “Earth is not a desert dark and drear and Heaven is not your home. I will choose the hymns myself in future.”¹²⁹ Another experiment was the election of prefects. This too did not end well, resulting, in 1912, in the girls reporting in the school magazine their ‘shock’ at Miss Hughston deciding to appoint them herself.¹³⁰ Perhaps the most interesting thing about this event is that the girls were free to make such comment in public. Miss Hughston must have persisted with delegating tasks because in 1919 the advisory committee of the PCV reported that ‘both teachers and prefects are allowed more liberty, and undertake more responsibility than in most schools’.¹³¹

Experimentation continued in the 1920s with the Dalton plan and the house system. The Dalton plan aimed to develop the capacity of children in ‘self-help’ and ‘self-development’.¹³² One of its requirements was that a syllabus be prepared for every pupil. ‘Modified’ versions were adopted as an experiment by Fintona, Ruyton and Rosbercon in 1923. Miss Macdonald, then the headmistress of Fintona (see later), reported that, although (at its best) the system built self-reliance, the results of the trial were mixed.¹³³ She noted that it worked better in some subjects, for some teachers and with older children. It did not obviate the need for classroom teaching and increased the workload of staff. It required a good library and had implications for the architecture of schools. Rosbercon persisted with the Dalton plan, but most aspects were abandoned at Fintona and Ruyton.

Miss Hughston and her staff were early adopters in 1923 of the house system¹³⁴ and progressively developed it in ways that appear to be unique, but which may have owed something to a Dalton-like plan called the Howard plan.¹³⁵ Initially a means of organising the school’s sporting program, the house system expanded to include work and conduct.¹³⁶ By the end of the 1920s houses were the unit of organisation of the school, giving it a vertical structure in which girls were in daily contact with older and younger pupils.¹³⁷ The house mistress gave continuity to the pastoral care of girls in contrast to the transient form system.

129 Fintona Archive, Document 5, Curwick.

130 Fintona Archive, *The Fintonian*, 1912.

131 PCV Archive, Report of Presbyterian Schools Committee, 1919.

132 Tisdall, *Forerunners*, 234–41.

133 ‘School Speech Days, Fintona Girls’ Grammar’, *Argus*, 13 December 1923, 6.

134 Tintern 1924 (Gardiner, *Tintern School*, 78), Ruyton 1924 (Theobald, *Ruyton Remembers*, 114), PLC 1929 (Fitzpatrick, *PLC Melbourne*, 167) and Lauriston 1930 (Rasmussen, *Lauriston*, 86).

135 Anon., ‘Summary of an address given to the Assistant Mistresses Association’, *Australian Educational Quarterly* 1 (1924): 35–36.

136 Fintona Archive, Principal’s Report, 1925.

137 Timing based on comparison of c. 1927 and 1932 prospectuses; *The Fintonian*, May 1928.

Miss Hughston was not herself registered to teach in primary schools, but she saw early childhood education as crucial. Her progressive thinking extended to the kindergarten and junior forms. From the outset she emphasised the importance of play in learning. The girls learned a language by acting Little Red Riding Hood in French,¹³⁸ and had a garden in which they grew things and ‘received their first lessons in team work’.¹³⁹ At some time before 1921 Miss Hughston selectively adopted the Montessori system.¹⁴⁰

‘Recognition’ by the Presbyterian Church

The heads of most independent schools were committed Christians who saw faith as a part of education and the development of morals, thus distinguishing their offering from that of secular, state-run schools.¹⁴¹ Nearly all independent schools had a close connection to a particular church or denomination, which in some cases was formalised as ‘recognition’, thereby entitling the school to incorporate the name of that denomination in its name. Some schools were owned by a denomination. Association with a church served as an endorsement. The educationally pointless competition between denominations that contributed to the 1872 Act had not been extinguished. The Presbyterian Church was still involved in education to ‘promote the interests of Presbyterianism’,¹⁴² but its endorsement carried particular weight for girls’ schools because of that church’s involvement in academic education. In 1909 Fintona was recognised by the Presbyterian Church.¹⁴³

Recognition served the purposes of both sides admirably. It was usual for private schools to hold daily religious assemblies and weekly scripture lessons. By associating with the Presbyterian Church, Miss Hughston undertook to use the Presbyterian hymn book (which she probably already did), have a Presbyterian minister take scripture in the senior classes (one already did¹⁴⁴), and allow an annual inspection by an advisory committee to make sure ‘that religious instruction is systematically given, and that a good tone is maintained’.¹⁴⁵ The church specifically did not assume responsibility for school finances.¹⁴⁶ However, competition between independent girls’ schools was intense; if the church thought that Fintona was too remote from

138 Christensen and Lush, *We Can Still Remember*, Track 3.

139 Oral History Group Interview 13, Jean Gunn, 2009.

140 Fintona Archive, Prospectus 1921.

141 For example Theobald, *Ruyton Remembers*, 144; University of Melbourne Archive, 78/66, IASTV Minutes, unidentified loose clipping within.

142 PCV Archive, Proceedings, November 1905.

143 PCV Archive, Proceeding of State Assembly, May 1909.

144 Fintona Archive, Prospectus c. 1906.

145 PCV Archive, Schools Committee, May 1913.

146 PCV Archive, Schools Committee, May 1918.

PLC to compete, that was not the thinking at PLC. In November of 1909, the state Assembly rebuked Rev. P. J. Murdoch (Walter Murdoch's brother) of Trinity Church in Camberwell for promoting Fintona.¹⁴⁷

Miss Hughston's school was not particularly religious by the standards of the day. She chose a secular motto at a time when there was explicit mention of religion in many school mottos: 'the law of God is the lamp of life' (PLC); 'for God and home' (MLC); 'recte et fideliter', interpreted as 'upright and faithful' (Ruyton); and 'holiness, wisdom, strength' (Lauriston). Fintona's school song used a tune from the American civil war and its best verses, according to Miss Ower who wrote the other verses, had the distinction of being written by Walter Murdoch.¹⁴⁸ God is never mentioned, but there is evidence of commitment to other ideals. The song contains the usual sentiments that bedevil anthems, but it also has lines that suggest Miss Hughston's signing of the Women's Suffrage Petition in 1891 was not a casual act. At the time the song was written, women in Victoria had gained a vote in federal (1902) and state (1908) elections, but women in the United Kingdom were still involved in a violent campaign for their rights. The line, 'But though far and wide they wander for love or fortune or fame' seems to celebrate the widening of women's horizons beyond home and family and towards achievement in their own right.

Miss Hughston as a proprietor

One pupil commented, 'I don't think it entered our heads that Miss Hughston was making an income from the school',¹⁴⁹ but she did. Most proprietors needed their school to provide them with an income during their working lives and, on retirement, to return their capital or continue to provide a regular income. Miss Hughston was no different and there are indications that she considered selling Fintona on several occasions.

Catherine Hughston had helpfully suggested to her daughter in 1904 that she should sell up and go farming when her current lease expired.¹⁵⁰ The next mention of a sale is in 1914 when the 'Lady Principal' reportedly asked the PCV if it was interested in acquiring Fintona in the future.¹⁵¹ Miss Hughston turned 55 in 1914 and was entering her nineteenth year as proprietor. There was no urgency about her request. For the next 20 years the Schools' Committee of the PCV repeatedly suggested that the church should take over Fintona.

147 PCV Archive, Proceedings of the State Assembly, November 1909.

148 Fintona Archive, Document 10, Ower.

149 Oral History Group Interview 13, Jean Gunn, 2009.

150 Fintona Archive, Catherine Hughston (assumed) to William Hughston, 30 January 1904.

151 PCV Archive, Schools Committee, May 1914.



Figure 7: Miss Hughston (left) with Miss Macdonald (right) who took up the position of headmistress in mid-1921. Miss Hughston resumed the role herself at the end of 1924.

Image: *Australasian*, 10 May 1924, 61, via Trove.

Miss Hughston started to withdraw from daily involvement in the school when she and her adopted daughter Betty (see later) took an extended break with the Murdochs in Western Australia in 1917, leaving Miss Ower in charge. In 1920 Miss Hughston probably separated her living arrangements from those of the boarders by buying a neighbouring house, and further removed herself in 1922 when she moved to Balwyn.¹⁵² In 1921 she appointed Isobel Macdonald as headmistress while remaining owner and principal herself. Prior to this appointment Miss Macdonald was principal of a Presbyterian school in New Zealand. Miss Hughston would appoint headmistresses for all but two of the remaining 14 years that she owned Fintona.

By 1920 Fintona was so successful that it was severely overcrowded and faced with restricting pupil numbers in the short-term and mounting a building program in the longer term.¹⁵³ Miss Hughston owned the goodwill of Fintona and all of the land, equipment and buildings used, except for the flagship mansion, which the owners declined to sell. The need to expand, combined with the need of Miss Hughston (now in her early 60s) to secure a retirement income while allowing for the continuation of her school, presumably led to her taking an option in 1923 on Holmbush, a large house in Hawthorn with 2.5 hectares of land.¹⁵⁴ To buy this

¹⁵² Land title vol. 1706 folio 341086.

¹⁵³ Fintona Archive, Isobel Macdonald, Headmistresses report, 1921.

¹⁵⁴ Fintona Archive, "Holmbush." The Proposed New Fintona College', Circular, 1923.

property she proposed creating a company. Most school companies today are ‘not-for-profit’ organisations, but Miss Hughston, perhaps following a lead from Isabel Henderson’s disposal of Clyde, proposed a company in which the shareholders would be paid a dividend. The proposal was marketed as being both good for the education of girls and profitable. The details are interesting for the insight they give on the profitability of Fintona. Using data in the circular, which was based on past performance, we estimate that the annual dividend distribution could have been as high as £2,400. The annual profit was probably substantially more, as some surplus would have been ploughed back into the school. If there were around 500 students enrolled in the relocated school, each student would effectively contribute around £5 to annual profit, equivalent to approximately 20 per cent of the basic fee for the final year of secondary school.¹⁵⁵ Miss Hughston owned the present day equivalent of 11 blocks of land,¹⁵⁶ buildings (excluding the flagship mansion), contents and the goodwill of her school. In the proposed company she would have 50 per cent ownership, giving her effective control, and a handsome annual income of £900.

We do not know why Miss Hughston did not proceed to issue a full prospectus, but it is possible that there was insufficient interest from potential subscribers. Other schools experienced this problem. For example, in 1921, although Isabel Henderson accepted the amount, Clyde only managed to raise £7,500 of the target £20,000.¹⁵⁷ As far as we know, Miss Hughston did not again attempt to form a company. Her temperament may not have been suitable for self-promotion in an advertising campaign.

There is one further aspect of the proposal to form a company that is disappointing. Miss Hughston named five people as directors in addition to herself. This was an opportunity for her to contribute in a tangible way to the advancement of women, but she did not seize it. All of the people she nominated were men.

The decline of pupil numbers from their peak (Figure 6) to about 400 students in 1924 was the result of a policy decision to contain the size of the school,¹⁵⁸ but the enrolments did not stabilise at this level. Miss Macdonald left at the end of 1924. The Rev. Cameron stated at the 1924 speech night ‘that Miss Hughston ... who had retired four years ago owing to ill health, was again to resume the direction of the college’.¹⁵⁹ As this is the first mention we have found of ill health, this explanation for Miss Macdonald’s appointment to and departure from the school is not entirely convincing. It cannot be ruled out, however, because at some time in the later part of her life Miss Hughston developed diabetes.

155 Fintona Archive, Prospectus c. 1921.

156 Certificates of title to land purchases by Miss Hughston, excluding those already listed are vol. 02302 folio 214 (1920), vol. 2075 folio 414062 (1920), vol. 2056 folio 411187 (1923, mortgage discharged 1926).

157 Guile, *Clyde School*, 98.

158 PCV Archive, Schools Committee, May 1920.

159 ‘Speech Days’, *Argus*, 19 December 1924, 18.

When Miss Hughston departed in 1927 for a year in Europe with Betty, pupil numbers had decreased to about 320. Miss Marjorie Black was appointed headmistress. Interestingly, in an interview conducted in 1972, she referred to herself as having been the ‘acting headmistress’.¹⁶⁰ Miss Black was previously employed by the YWCA to work with adolescent girls. A feminist interested in psychology, she thought ‘the teen age is the period when the battle for an honest, pure, clear, righteous type of womanhood must be waged and won’.¹⁶¹ Her ideas were welcomed by some but shocked others—she smoked and sometimes showed her knees!¹⁶² Pupil numbers declined slightly during her tenure, which lasted until the end of 1930 when she resigned to run her own school in New Zealand.

The next appointee was Miss Jeannie McCowan. She was a teacher at PLC who, through her role in the Assistant Mistresses Association of Victoria, had worked on examination policy and teacher training. Another interest was teachers’ salaries, in which she tried to reduce the differential between men and women’s pay.¹⁶³ Unpopular with girls and staff, the blame for a further drop in student numbers (Figure 6) is often laid at her door.¹⁶⁴ The school operated at a loss during one year of her tenure, 1931.¹⁶⁵

Overall, between 1921 and 1929, Fintona ‘lost’ about 150 pupils, 50 of them planned. Yet the population of Camberwell continued to grow apace (Table 1) and nearby MLC increased by 230 pupils.¹⁶⁶ Between 1926 and 1930, state school enrolments in Victoria dropped by 3 per cent but those at independent schools rose by 5 per cent.¹⁶⁷ The conclusion that on average independent schools did not suffer a loss of enrolments during the Great Depression is not altered by extending the time frame to 1934. But the Depression’s effect on schools was uneven; all of the schools for which we have data suffered at least a transient drop in new enrolments. Nonetheless it is clear that Fintona suffered a particularly marked decline. Closure looked likely for Miss Hughston’s school. In dealing with the decline of Lauriston as the Irving sisters aged, Rasmussen suggests the problem was not the Depression but that the Irvings had allowed the school to run down.¹⁶⁸ Miss Hughston’s school, however, was not run-down. The teachers were not particularly old and some of them, for example Misses Penington, Cunningham, Hay (Iris), McCowan and Chilvers, would go on to prestigious careers. Dr Dora Scales, who entered Fintona

160 Marjorie Black, Interview by Mary Rose Goggs, 27 August 1972, transcript, J. D. Somerville Oral History Collection, OH 561/6, State Library of South Australia.

161 Marjorie Black, ‘The Adolescent Girl and the Y.W.C.A.’, *Sydney Morning Herald*, 23 January 1920, 4.

162 Christensen and Lush, *We Can Still Remember*, Track 6.

163 Marjorie Theobald, ‘Women Teachers’ Quest for Salary Justice in Victoria’s Registered Schools, 1915–1946’, *Melbourne Studies in Education* 25, no. 1 (1983): 1–43.

164 Joan Gillison, *Margaret Cunningham of Fintona* (Melbourne: Fintona Girls’ School, 1982), 65.

165 Fintona Archive, Jeannie McCowan School Report, 1934.

166 Wood, *Seventy-Five Years at Methodist Ladies’ College*, 79.

167 Wray Vamplew, *Australians: Historical Statistics* (Sydney: Fairfax, Syme and Weldon Associates, 1987), 338.

168 Rasmussen, *Lauriston*, 86.

as a boarder in 1934 and would herself become an educationalist, referred to the school having a ‘marvellously active attitude to education’.¹⁶⁹ Rather the problem may have been that ‘[the] private-venture girls’ ... schools [were] inseparable in the public mind from their powerful, charismatic owner-principals, who saw themselves (with some justification) as both pioneer figures and pace-setters in the education of girls’.¹⁷⁰ At Fintona, ‘Miss Hughston was the head and front of everything—the moving spirit behind the whole of the schools activities’.¹⁷¹ Even the partial withdrawal of these owner-principals from the day-to-day management of their schools may have inevitably weakened those schools in the public’s mind. Added to this would have been well-founded uncertainty about the long-term future of privately owned schools.¹⁷²

In 1929 Miss Margaret Cunningham was appointed as science mistress. She knew Miss Hughston and Betty and spent time with them during their 1927–28 trip to Europe.¹⁷³ Miss Cunningham had access to family capital and was a well-qualified teacher with strong ideas about education. While still in Miss Hughston’s employ, she pursued plans to open her own school at Tourmont in Balwyn. She promoted her school to some Fintona parents, who agreed to transfer their girls to Miss Cunningham’s school when it opened.¹⁷⁴ Instead, at the end of 1934, Miss Hughston sold the goodwill of Fintona to Miss Cunningham for the value of the annual fees of the pupils already enrolled for 1935.¹⁷⁵ Fintona continued at its Burke Road site in 1935 and then moved to Balwyn. Some sources suggest that relations between Miss Hughston and Miss Cunningham became and remained strained.¹⁷⁶ Miss Hughston may, not without reason, have felt that she had been white-anted. Miss Cunningham may have felt obstructed by Miss Hughston’s failure to attend some of the functions associated with the hand over on the grounds of ill health.¹⁷⁷ However, on balance it is likely that Miss Hughston was pleased to see her school continue. In the future Hughston descendants would be enrolled at Fintona and Miss Hughston was content to remain a creditor. We estimate that Miss Cunningham still owed most or all of the cost of the goodwill when Miss Hughston died in 1943.¹⁷⁸

169 Scales et al., ‘The Education of an Educator’.

170 Theobald, ‘Women Teachers Quest for Salary Justice’.

171 Fintona Archive, Document 2, Ower.

172 Tisdall, *Forerunners*, 225.

173 *Fintonian*, 1928, 12.

174 Oral History Group Interview 44, Beryl Beaurepaire, 2011.

175 Gillison, *Margaret Cunningham of Fintona*, 68.

176 Oral History Group Interview 44, Beryl Beaurepaire, 2011.

177 Gillison, *Margaret Cunningham of Fintona*, 75.

178 PROV, VPRS series 28/P3, unit 3800, Probate and Administration Files, Annie Hughston.



Figure 8: Still elegant, Miss Hughston near the end of her time as owner-principal. She sold Fintona in 1934 when she was aged 75.

Source: Collection Fintona Girls' School.

Contributions to the wider community

Independent schools like Miss Hughston's served their own pupils well, but it is less clear how well they served Victorian pupils as a whole. Did the independent school sector, through its resistance to the state's involvement in secondary education, restrict the availability of secondary schooling? This question is beyond the scope of this paper except for a mention of Miss Hughston's involvement with the Incorporated Association of Secondary Teachers of Victoria, later known as the Incorporated Association of Registered Teachers of Victoria (IARTV). We also look briefly at her use of scholarships.

In the elections following the passing of the 1905 Act, Miss Hughston was elected to the first council of the IARTV.¹⁷⁹ This council housed conflicts of interest. At one of the first general meetings of the membership, Misses Henderson and Morris, both council members, spoke against their own council's motion. That motion, which would have excluded state secondary teachers from membership, was defeated. In reporting this meeting, the press contributed to the invisibility of women by mentioning only the contributions of men. The minutes of the IARTV do not record, in this or any other meeting, Miss Hughston's opinions. She may have had more impact as a member of a committee that, in 1909, published a paper called 'Co-ordination of work in the sub-primary and primary grades of secondary schools'.¹⁸⁰ She was again on the council from 1917 to 1921 but it is not clear what she contributed or hoped to gain. She was an infrequent attendee of meetings (of 29 meetings held she attended 13). She may simply have found that 'running the school takes all my time and strength'.¹⁸¹

From about 1901, Miss Hughston offered scholarships 'to promising pupils who would otherwise be unable to continue their education'.¹⁸² The numbers on offer were not particularly generous—in 1920 there were two. Then as now, scholarships promoted the school's name at little cost. Before and early in the era of state secondary schools, the state made secondary education available to selected pupils by offering scholarships that were tenable in independent schools. Some independent schools did not accept these scholars because they thought they would lower the tone of the school,¹⁸³ but others would simply not have had any applicants. Between 1896 and

179 University of Melbourne, accession 1978.0066, minutes of the IARTV.

180 Co-ordination Committee of The Incorporated Association of Secondary Teachers of Victoria, 'Co-ordination of work in the sub-primary and primary grades of secondary schools: Report' (Melbourne: IASTV, 1909).

181 Fintona Archive, Document 1, Powell.

182 'Advertising', *Argus*, 14 January 1901, 3; 'School Speech days: Fintona Grammar School', *Argus*, 14 December 1920, 8.

183 Fitzpatrick, *PLC Melbourne*, 103; Theobald, *Ruyton Remembers*, 74.

1921, only 69 of 257 'ordinary' scholarships were offered to girls.¹⁸⁴ MLC and PLC were the main independent schools accepting these students. Fintona and Korowa accepted one pupil each.

Between 1920 and 1927 Miss Hughston was on the committee of management of the Boroondara Kindergarten in Richmond. She knew the directors. Gwladys Barker, the foundation director, and Bella Sutton, the director while Miss Hughston was in office, were both former pupils at Fintona. In a marked departure from her usual avoidance of public office, she was either president or vice president from 1922 to 1925.¹⁸⁵ These unpaid committees of management were an outlet for capable, well-off women. Miss Hughston's experience in developing Fintona was directly relevant to the kindergarten because it bought land and relocated during her period of membership. The Boroondara Kindergarten was part of the free kindergarten movement established in 1908 to 'develop proper habits and strong characters' in children, particularly in the poorer parts of inner Melbourne who were not a source of pupils for independent schools.

Aged in her late 40s or early 50s, Miss Hughston became a single parent when she took on the upbringing of a child born in 1907 or 1908,¹⁸⁶ who would be known as Betty Hughston. There was no Adoption Act in force in Victoria until 1929, so she was probably never formally adopted, although Miss Hughston refers to Betty in her will as her adopted daughter.¹⁸⁷ The first record we have of Betty is in 1913 when she received a kindergarten gift.¹⁸⁸ At school she was good at sport, and later was employed at Fintona as a sports mistress.¹⁸⁹ Miss Hughston's great nieces remember Betty as a warm-hearted member of the family with a taste for rally driving.¹⁹⁰ In 1933 Miss Hughston transferred one of the titles to land that made up Fintona to Betty, plus the title to their Balwyn home. Another title was transferred in 1938. Miss Hughston's old age was complicated by diabetes, but she was cared for by Betty, who was also her executor. Betty married when she was 39, after Miss Hughston's death, and died in 1983 aged 75.¹⁹¹

184 PROV, VPRS 14006/P0001, State scholarships for secondary students. Regulation xxi 1.

185 Beryl M. Hooley, *The Hope of Many Tomorrows: A Historical Sketch of Boroondara Kindergarten Richmond* (Melbourne: Spectrum Publications, 1987).

186 Betty died on 8 November 1983 aged 75, so she could have been born any time between 9 November 1907 and 8 November 1908.

187 Will of Annie Hughston.

188 'School Speech Days', *Argus*, 17 December 1913, 11.

189 Fintona Archive, Prospectus c. 1932.

190 Interview with Dennis and Heale.

191 Deaths in the State of Victoria No. 25668/83.



Figure 9: Betty Hughston, date unknown. Betty was informally adopted as a young child by Miss Hughston. She was a valued member of the Hughston family and inherited most of Miss Hughston's estate.

Source: Personal collection Dennis and Heale.

What were the circumstances that brought Betty into Miss Hughston's care? In the death notice Betty placed she referred to Miss Hughston as her aunt,¹⁹² although the great nieces' opinion is that she was not genetically related to them. We do not know what motivated Miss Hughston to adopt, but in the course of working with so many girls and young women, and having two medical practitioners in the family, she must have known quite a few 'unmarried mothers'. Another possibility is that Betty came to her attention through the free kindergartens. If so, Betty might have been a ward of state, but we have not been able to identify her in the registers.¹⁹³ The account passed down to Miss Hughston's great niece Catherine Dennis was that Betty was illegitimate and that her natural uncle 'came to see the family and so made sure that Betty would be well cared for'.¹⁹⁴

Legacy

A successful business offers the right thing, at the right time and in the right place, sometimes as much through luck as skill. Miss Hughston had her share of luck in the timing of economic recovery and the effects of government regulation, but she also made her 'luck' by locating her school in an area that would prove receptive to her competencies as an educator and administrator. She was an early adopter of ideas in education, and her pupils had a wider range of opportunities in a more tolerant environment than most. We tend to assume that the continuity of a school says something about the quality of its foundation, but many good schools closed, and many continuing schools did so in little more than name. For some 40 years after Miss Hughston sold Fintona, it remained vertically integrated, with a non-competitive prize system, and outdoor exercises in winter to make up for inadequate heating. Today, some schools have introduced vertical integration as if it were a new idea, the role of competition remains contentious and exercise has renewed importance. Miss Hughston's nature at least partly explains why she has been overlooked by historians of education. On the one hand, she shared a house with boarders for most of her working life and appeared before hundreds of girls each day, but on the other she was intensely private, and left few records of her life and work. Reserved rather than charismatic, she remains a stately but somewhat austere and mysterious figure.

Annie Hughston, and other female proprietors, offered their pupils a view of non-standard options for women. They did so through their very existence—that of single women running complex businesses exposed to regulatory and other risks and without the benefit of any state aid. Although the stereotype of these schools is

192 'Family Notices', *Argus*, 17 April 1943, 2.

193 PROV, VPRS 4527, Ward Registers, for 1910 and 1912 (1911 was not available).

194 Letter from Catherine Dennis to Mary Lush, 18 January 2015.

one of rigidity and social conservatism, in fact many were more flexible than their church and state counterparts, both able and prepared to experiment. The best of the ‘lady principals’ were strong women with business acumen and high ideals for the education of girls. Miss Hughston, who for most of her long career had no personal or professional partners, stands out among them. Her achievements were hers alone.

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Nancy Atkinson, bacteriologist, winemaker and writer

EMMA MCEWIN¹

In the last decades of the twentieth century, biographies of Australian women scientists, and articles and book chapters focusing on women's contributions to science during and after World War II began to emerge. Such works seek to acknowledge and highlight the achievements of women in both industry and academia, and to understand how they managed to pursue and negotiate careers in traditionally male-dominated fields. In the first half of last century, women were well represented, both as students and as staff members at many universities in Australia but, while men climbed the career ladder, the majority of women were 'more or less limited to the bottom rungs'.²

Yet there were a few exceptions and one was pioneering bacteriologist Nancy Atkinson. A graduate of Melbourne University, Atkinson was appointed lecturer in charge of the Department of Bacteriology at the University of Adelaide in 1942 when she was just 32 years old and was promoted to reader in charge less than a decade later.³ In *Irresistible Forces: Australian Women in Science*, Claire Hooker acknowledges that 'bacteriological research' in Adelaide was 'entirely supported' by Nancy Atkinson and that when she was appointed reader in microbiology at the university, this made her 'the first woman to gain such seniority'.⁴

Atkinson lived through the discovery and successful application of penicillin. In fact, she was the first person to produce penicillin in Australia,⁵ confirming 'its remarkable therapeutic effect in a limited number of cases'.⁶ She also made important contributions to the search for penicillin-like substances that could attack the bacteria of infectious diseases penicillin could not fight, such as tuberculosis,

1 The author thanks the peer reviewers for their constructive comments, and the editor for his help. The research was undertaken under a Bill Cowan Barr Smith Library Fellowship, awarded in 2016; special thanks to Lee Hayes and Marie Larsen at Rare Books & Special Collections, the Barr Smith Library, Adelaide.

2 Claire Hooker, *Irresistible Forces: Australian Women in Science* (Carlton, Vic.: Melbourne University Press, 2004), 41.

3 'High Post for S.A. Woman', *News*, 10 November 1949, 1.

4 Hooker, *Irresistible Forces*, 127.

5 'The Making of Penicillin', *News* (Adelaide), 20 October 1943, 4.

6 Nancy Atkinson, Application for the Chair of Microbiology, University of Adelaide, 20 December 1958, 3, Dr Nancy Atkinson (1910–1999) Papers, MSS 0065, Series 4, Rare Books & Special Collections, Barr Smith Library, University of Adelaide.

finding a cure for which was her 'great goal'.⁷ Her other main research focus, aside from antibiotics, was salmonellas. As the recognised Australian authority in this field,⁸ she became known as the 'Salmonella queen'.⁹

Born in Melbourne on 9 March 1910, and growing up in St Kilda, Atkinson was the only child of Stella Charlotte and Ralph Arthur Atkinson. Her father was managing director of a stationery company, Newell and Co. In March 1932, at the age of 52, he died of pneumonia.¹⁰ She always lamented the fact that he died too early for penicillin to save him, his death occurring only a decade before the first civilian, Anne Sheafe Miller, was successfully treated after she contracted an infection following a miscarriage.¹¹ An innately studious child, who was forbidden to do homework because it overstimulated her mind and prevented her from sleeping,¹² Atkinson excelled at school. Her son, Jonathan Cook, describes her as 'a genius; an all-round person' who had a gift for languages and for mathematics.¹³ She was educated at Oberwyl, a progressive private girls' boarding school in St Kilda, which offered Latin, Greek and mathematics as well as 'the usual subjects for girls'.¹⁴ The granddaughters of Charles Dickens, Violet and Kathleen Dickens, attended this school,¹⁵ and also Joan Lindsay, author of *Picnic at Hanging Rock*.¹⁶ 'Known for its elegance and French culture', Oberwyl was established in 1867 by Madame Elise Pfund, a Swiss art patron whose portrait was painted by Tom Roberts (and later purchased by two sisters from France), and who also founded the Alliance Française in Melbourne.¹⁷ In 1925 Atkinson was dux of the school,¹⁸ and in her leaving year

7 Atkinson, Transcript of an Interview with 'Neal', 29 April 1946, 3, Series 6, Dr Nancy Atkinson (1910–1999) Papers.

8 Charles Francis Fenner, ed., *History of Microbiology in Australia* (Canberra: Brolga Press, 1990), 549.

9 'Nancy Atkinson', in 'A Culture of Learned Professionals: Celebrating 50 Years of the Australian Society of Microbiology', special issue, *Microbiology Australia* 30, no. 3 (2009): 18, accessed 3 July 2017, microbiology.publish.csiro.au/?act=view_file&file_id=MA09S50.pdf.

10 'Family Notices', *Argus*, 15 March 1932, 1.

11 Eric Oatman, 'The Drug That Changed the World', *P & S: The College of Physicians & Surgeons of Columbia University* 5, no. 1 (2005), accessed 30 January 2017, www.cumc.columbia.edu/psjournal/archive/winter-2005/drug.html (site discontinued).

12 Jonathan Cook (son of Nancy Atkinson), Interview with the Author, 17 April 2016.

13 Cook, Interview with the Author.

14 Marjorie R. Theobald, 'Henderson, Isabella Thomson (Isabel) (1862–1940)', *Australian Dictionary of Biography*, National Centre of Biography, The Australian National University, adb.anu.edu.au/biography/henderson-isabella-thomson-isabel-6631/text11423, published first in hardcopy 1983, accessed online 21 November 2016.

15 'Oberwyl (Formerly Etloe Hall)', St Kilda Historical Society, 2005, accessed 30 January 2017, www.skhs.org.au/SKHSbuildings/27.htm.

16 Jenny Brown, 'Grand St Kilda House Oberwyl for Sale, Offering Insight to Melbourne's History', *Domain*, 24 February 2016, accessed 30 January 2017, www.domain.com.au/news/grand-st-kilda-house-oberwyl-for-sale-offering-insight-to-melbournes-history-20160223-gn044w/.

17 'Oberwyl', St Kilda Historical Society.

18 'School Speech Days: University High School', *Argus*, 19 December 1925, 20, accessed 9 February 2017, trove.nla.gov.au/newspaper/article/2174600.

she won the Alliance Française prize for French composition.¹⁹ Newspaper articles tracking her career suggest that she continued with French and that she had also studied German, reading scientific articles published in both languages.²⁰

In her book *Degrees of Liberation: A Short History of Women at the University of Melbourne*, Kelly Farley argues that a woman in the first half of the twentieth century was more likely to pursue a career in science if one or both of her parents were scientific and valued education.²¹ While the first factor did not apply to Atkinson, it seems the second did, for, according to her son, her parents were supportive of her decision to go to university and regarded it as a natural course for her.²² She began a science degree at the University of Melbourne in the late 1920s, majoring in chemistry before transferring to bacteriology; at the time, new disciplines were emerging in the biological sciences as a result of Louis Pasteur's research into infectious diseases in the late 1800s. Atkinson entered the university at a unique time for women whose access to science was helped by the small size of the scientific community, which, up until World War II, was not as highly regarded in Australia as in Europe and the United States of America.²³ The emergence of research institutes in the major states of Australia, initially in Melbourne with the opening of the Walter and Eliza Hall Research Institute in 1915, and soon afterwards in Sydney and Adelaide, as well as the growth of 'medical specialization' brought increased employment opportunities.²⁴ The war consolidated women's place in the scientific community and, furthermore, as Jane Carey notes, women were not 'unilaterally pushed out of their jobs at war's end'.²⁵

Ann Moyal attributes the 'significant movement of women in science' in the early 1900s to motivation, confidence and opportunities to pursue a career in research, and to the fact that there was 'a niche position captured by women, notably in Melbourne, in the young discipline of microbiology'.²⁶ Many of the women who graduated in the biological sciences from the University of Melbourne in the 1930s, around the time that Atkinson graduated, went on to have distinguished careers in bacteriology. They include Nancy Hayward, who became a senior lecturer at Monash University, Jean Tolhurst, Hildred Butler and Phyllis Rountree, all of whom went on

19 'University of Melbourne: March Supplementary Annual Examination, 1927', *Argus*, 1 April 1927, 5, accessed 9 February 2017, nla.gov.au/nla.news-article3846859.

20 'Fills Place for Professor: Important War-Time Post', *Mail* (Adelaide), 27 June 1942, 6.

21 Farley Kelly, *Degrees of Liberation: A Short History of Women in the University of Melbourne* (Parkville, Vic.: Women Graduates Centenary Committee of the University of Melbourne, 1985), 39.

22 Cook, Interview with the Author.

23 Jane Carey, 'Engendering Scientific Pursuits: Australian Women and Science, 1880–1960', *Limina: A Journal of Historical and Cultural Studies* 7 (2001): 18.

24 Nussy Allen, 'A Pioneer of Paediatric Gastroenterology: The Career of an Australian Woman Scientist', *Historical Records of Australian Science* 11, no. 1 (1996): 35.

25 Carey, 'Engendering Scientific Pursuits', 18.

26 Ann Moyal, 'Invisible Participants: Women in Science in Australia, 1830–1950', *Prometheus* 11, no. 2 (1993): 181.

to hold senior positions in major hospitals.²⁷ Dora Lush, a particularly promising microbiologist in the field of bacteriophages and animal viruses,²⁸ was not so lucky. After graduating BSc in 1932,²⁹ and working with and co-writing a number of papers with Frank Macfarlane Burnet, a leading figure in the development of medical research in Australia and director of the Walter and Eliza Hall Institute from 1944 to 1965, she died in 1943 of a highly virulent strain of scrub typhus caught from a soldier in north Queensland.³⁰ As was the case with Atkinson's father, at the time of Lush's death, medicine was not advanced enough to save her life. Just three years later, chloramphenicol became available to treat scrub typhus,³¹ which, according to Macfarlane Burnet, 'could have prevented even the signs of primary infection'.³²

When she graduated BSc in 1930, two years before Lush, whom she most certainly would have known, Atkinson became one of the first two students in the country to major in bacteriology.³³ She graduated MSc a year later. In 1932, supported by a grant, she worked as a research scholar in the Department of Bacteriology investigating pollution in the waters of Port Phillip Bay, and the public's immunity to typhoid and paratyphoid,³⁴ which inspired an abiding interest in water bacteriology. Between 1933 and 1937, she worked in the department as a demonstrator in Bacteriology I and Medical Bacteriology and gave practical lectures in Bacteriology II.

In 1937 Atkinson moved to Adelaide after being appointed assistant bacteriologist to Professor Albert Edward Platt at the South Australian Government Laboratory of Pathology and Bacteriology, which was incorporated into the Institute of Medical and Veterinary Science (IMVS)³⁵ the following year. When her appointment was announced in the *Adelaide News* in May 1937, it was explained that 'her exceptionally high qualifications' had given her 'an advantage over other applicants'.³⁶ The IMVS undertook research in clinical medicine and also offered teaching and laboratory services.³⁷ Situated in the grounds of the Adelaide Hospital,³⁸ it was an extension of the facilities already provided at the hospital for research into human

27 Fenner, *History of Microbiology in Australia*, 252.

28 Fenner, *History of Microbiology in Australia*, 267.

29 Rasmussen, Carolyn, 'Lush, Dora Mary (1910–1943)', *Australian Dictionary of Biography*. National Centre of Biography, The Australian National University, accessed 21 April 2017, adb.anu.edu.au/biography/lush-dora-mary-10874.

30 Fenner, *History of Microbiology in Australia*, 267.

31 Macfarlane Burnet, *Changing Patterns: An Atypical Autobiography* (Melbourne: Heinemann, 1968), 80.

32 Macfarlane Burnet, *Walter and Eliza Hall Institute, 1915–1965* (Melbourne: Melbourne University Press, 1971), 49.

33 The other student was Arthur Barclay Jamieson. The University of Melbourne was the first Australian university to offer the subject as a major in a science degree.

34 Elisabeth George, 'Woman's World Round-About', *Mail* (Adelaide), 29 April 1944, 15.

35 The IMVS is now known as SA Pathology.

36 'Melbourne Woman Given Research Post', *News* (Adelaide), 29 May 1937.

37 Brendon J. Kearney, 'The Institute of Medical and Veterinary Science', *Medical Journal of Australia* 167, no. 11 (1997): 614.

38 The Adelaide Hospital was officially renamed the Royal Adelaide Hospital in November 1939, "Royal Adelaide Hospital" Now', *News* (Adelaide), 2 November 1939, 9.

and animal pathology, bacteriology and biochemistry, and it collaborated closely with both the University of Adelaide and the hospital.³⁹ Atkinson's work at the institute was primarily in the field of medical microbiology, specifically research into the public's immunity to viruses such as influenza, mumps, measles and infantile paralysis, typhoid and typhus fever; this was in keeping with her previous experience in Melbourne, where she had conducted routine tests for the Victorian Department for Public Health.⁴⁰ Every year, 'tens of thousands'⁴¹ of such tests were carried out for the hospital, other hospitals in the state, and for medical and veterinary practices. Atkinson claimed that during her eight years at the IMVS, 'the number of specimens examined totalled about 150,000'.⁴²

In 1939, while still employed at the IMVS, she began working part time as a lecturer at the University of Adelaide, and she continued to work concurrently at the IMVS and the university until 1949.⁴³ According to Atkinson, Platt had 'invited' her to be a lecturer at the university in 1938,⁴⁴ as a new department of bacteriology was being developed. He had designed the Bacteriology I course, which he had introduced in 1936 following his appointment as lecturer in bacteriology in the Department of Pathology in the medical faculty in 1935. Although he had drafted the syllabus for the more advanced course of Bacteriology II, this was not offered until 1939, the year in which an independent chair and department were created and housed in the new laboratories, which had just opened at the IMVS.⁴⁵

In July 1939 Platt went abroad and did not return until September 1940. During his absence Atkinson took over his roles, becoming both acting head of the department and bacteriologist in charge at the IMVS. In 1941 Bacteriology II was offered for the second time (the intention was to run it only in alternate years) but Platt resigned in September that year, before the course had finished, to take up the position of acting director of the Department of Pathology at Prince Henry Hospital in Sydney. Atkinson was appointed acting head of the department on his resignation, and on Platt's recommendation, although, as explained to Atkinson by the then university

39 Charles Martin, 'The Institute of Medical and Veterinary Science, Adelaide: Opening of New Laboratories', *Nature* 144, no. 3643 (1939): 392–93.

40 Nancy Atkinson, Letter of Application for the Position of Assistant Bacteriologist at the Laboratory of Bacteriology and Pathology of the South Australian Government, 8 April 1937, Series 5, Dr Nancy Atkinson (1901–1999) Papers.

41 Nancy Atkinson, 'A Collection of Papers on Part 1: "Antibiotics of Australian Plants and Fungi"; Part 2: "Australian Salmonellas and Their Bacteriophages"', PhD diss., University of Adelaide, 1956, 1, Series 19, Dr Nancy Atkinson (1910–1999) Papers.

42 Atkinson, Application for the Chair of Microbiology, 2, Series 4, Dr Nancy Atkinson (1910–1999) Papers.

43 Until 1950, it was possible to hold joint appointments at these two institutions. Bernard Nicholson, *Institute of Medical and Veterinary Science: 50th Anniversary Review, 1938–1988* (Adelaide: Institute of Medical and Veterinary Science, 1988), 89.

44 Atkinson, Application for the Chair of Microbiology, 2, Series 4, Dr Nancy Atkinson (1910–1999) Papers.

45 Prior to this, as in most universities at the time, bacteriology was part of pathology and controlled by the medical faculty.

registrar, Frederick William Eardley, he (Platt) had advised against 'any addition' to her salary because a contribution for her 'services' was already being made 'to the funds of the Institute of Medical and Veterinary Science'.⁴⁶

In an interview soon after her appointment, Atkinson was quoted as saying, 'I feel that I have a great opportunity ... at the university in taking over the work of the professor, although I realise that it does not fall to a woman's lot to hold the professor's chair'.⁴⁷ Later she was to change her mind about this, as indicated in her bid for the newly created chair of microbiology in 1959. In her letter of application, she clearly indicates that she believed that she had by then long since qualified for the role, having carried out 'all the functions of a Professor of Microbiology' for years, despite her status remaining at lecturer level. The department, she argued, had been developed 'entirely' by her own 'personal efforts', for while Platt had 'laid the foundations', he had been absent for '15 months out of the two years and nine months that he was Professor'.⁴⁸

In 1942, following Platt's departure, Atkinson taught three subjects: Bacteriology I, Bacteriology II (which was offered again owing to student demand and thereafter offered every year) and Medical Bacteriology with minimal assistance, that is, with only one or two demonstrators. Her position entailed lecturing across four disciplines, for as well as being taught in science and medicine, bacteriology was also a subject in the faculties of Agricultural Science and Dentistry. Although it had traditionally been considered a medical subject (through the study of infectious diseases), Atkinson felt very strongly that much of bacteriology lay just outside the purview of medicine; she believed that it belonged more properly to the Faculty of Science⁴⁹ and designed courses to reflect this. In 1945 she revised and extended Medical Bacteriology to better accommodate dentistry students; in 1946 she designed a bacteriology course for agricultural science students and offered postgraduate courses to medical students. The following year she introduced postgraduate courses for dental students and a bacteriology course for pharmacy students. A decade later, she created a course in industrial microbiology for industrialists and engineers. Summarising her work in the department in her application for the chair of microbiology, she pointed out that she had sacrificed her own research to build a school of microbiology and that her decision to do this had been 'critical in the development of microbiology in the University', adding that, had she not developed science courses, 'microbiology would have been relegated to one or two applied courses'.⁵⁰ Throughout her years in the department, Atkinson campaigned tirelessly for more staff and teaching

46 F. W. Eardley, Letter to Nancy Atkinson, 1 December 1938, Series 4, Dr Nancy Atkinson (1910–1999) Papers.

47 'Fills Place for Professor', *Mail* (Adelaide), 6.

48 Atkinson, Application for the Chair of Microbiology, 2, Series 4, Dr Nancy Atkinson (1910–1999) Papers.

49 Atkinson, Draft of an article entitled 'Bacteriology in the Universities', 1947, Series 4, Dr Nancy Atkinson (1910–1999) Papers.

50 Atkinson, Application for the Chair of Microbiology, 1–2, Series 4, Dr Nancy Atkinson (1910–1999) Papers.

space, and more equipment and maintenance of equipment to accommodate growing numbers of students. She claimed that it was not until 1950, when her responsibilities at the IMVS ended and she was appointed full time at the university as reader in charge of the Department of Bacteriology, that she found the time to devote to her own research.⁵¹

While teaching and administrative duties took up much of her time at the university, Atkinson was kept busy with routine testing and research at the IMVS. The research work, which was largely funded by annual grants for salaries, focused on antibiotics, salmonellas and other groups of bacteria, bacteriophage and dairy bacteriology, as well as vaccines for tuberculosis and typhoid. On a small scale, in collaboration with medical practitioner Darcy Cowan, physician at the chest clinic at the Royal Adelaide Hospital,⁵² and founder of the South Australian Tuberculosis Association in 1943,⁵³ she prepared BCG (Bacille Calmette Guérin) vaccine, aimed at preventing tuberculosis.⁵⁴ In the 1940s the IMVS was the only laboratory producing the vaccine in Australia and carrying out research in this field. Though not strictly a cure, the vaccine acted as a preventative; the ultimate aim was to mass produce it to make it available to all Australians. Atkinson and her team treated batches of volunteers and had some success in suppressing tuberculosis infections. When funding was withdrawn by the federal government in 1949, the research was discontinued⁵⁵ and the production of the vaccine developed by Atkinson and Cowan was taken over by the Commonwealth Serum Laboratories.⁵⁶

Frank Fenner, a microbiologist and virologist, pointed out that, during World War II, 'in Australia as in other combatant countries much civilian research was focussed on the war effort'.⁵⁷ Macfarlane Burnet, who remarked that he would 'always regard the war and the immediate post war period as the time when the full possibilities of control of infectious disease were realized or could be clearly envisaged',⁵⁸ undertook research into influenza immunisation, and his assistant Dora Lush into scrub typhus until her premature death.

51 Atkinson, 'A Collection of Papers', PhD diss., 1–2, Series 19, Dr Nancy Atkinson (1910–1999) Papers.

52 Roger Clare Angrove, '1991—Tuberculosis Control in South Australia', Royal Adelaide Hospital, 1991, accessed 11 November 2017, www.healthmuseumsa.org.au/menu/1991-tuberculosis-control-in-south-australia/.

53 Philip Woodruff, 'Cowan, Sir Darcy Rivers Warren (1885–1958)', *Australian Dictionary of Biography*, National Centre of Biography, The Australian National University, accessed 11 July 2017, adb.anu.edu.au/biography/cowan-sir-darcy-rivers-warren-9845, published first in hardcopy 1993.

54 R. L. Worrall, 'New T.B. Director Should Have Widest Powers: Urgent Need for Australia-Wide Overhaul of Methods of Treatment', *Australian Women's Weekly*, 19 April 1947, 21.

55 'T.B. Vaccine Research: Work Ceases Through Lack of Funds', *West Australian*, 23 April 1949, 17.

56 Atkinson, Application for the Chair of Microbiology, 3, Series 4, Dr Nancy Atkinson (1910–1999) Papers. Cowan went on to establish the National Association for the Prevention of Tuberculosis sufferers and Bedford Industries, a rehabilitation facility for tuberculosis sufferers; Woodruff, 'Cowan, Sir Darcy Rivers Warren (1885–1958)'.

57 Fenner, *History of Microbiology in Australia*, 568.

58 Atkinson, 'Letter to the Deputy Vice-Chancellor, University of Adelaide', n.d., Series 4, Dr Nancy Atkinson (1910–1999) Papers.

At the IMVS, Atkinson and her team worked on antibacterial substances from penicillium mould to help in the prevention of bacteria in war wounds, as well as carrying out research into gastrointestinal infections and food poisoning.⁵⁹ She trained medical students to work for the pathology department of the Army Medical Corps and coordinated a course preparing bacteriologists to work in military hospitals, in which they would advise doctors in their diagnoses.⁶⁰ In 1942, one of her demonstrators, Joyce Hammill, née Gemmel Tassie, became the first student from the department to take up a military post, along with Madeleine Angel of the Department of Zoology.⁶¹ Hammill was given the rank of lieutenant.

As at the Walter and Eliza Hall Institute in Melbourne, the IMVS undertook research on influenza. In anticipation of another flu epidemic like that experienced in World War I, many scientists were working on developing vaccines, including Jessica Mawson, younger daughter of Douglas Mawson, the Antarctic explorer and professor of geology (1921–52) at the University of Adelaide. Jessica, who transferred from botany to bacteriology at her father's suggestion, and who had majored in bacteriology under Atkinson in the first year it was offered, was Atkinson's sole assistant in the Department of Bacteriology in 1939 when Platt was on leave and continued to work as a research assistant and demonstrator at both the IMVS and the university throughout World War II. In 1942 she became the first person in South Australia to isolate an influenza virus strain⁶² using a technique she had learnt from Macfarlane Burnet, which entailed taking the virus directly from humans and growing it in chick embryos.⁶³ In 1944, in collaboration with another assistant, Charles Swan, she mounted a live influenza vaccine trial using isolated cultures from Macfarlane Burnet.⁶⁴ Fortunately the world avoided a repeat of the epidemic of World War I.

59 'Fills Place for Professor', *Mail* (Adelaide), 6.

60 Elisabeth George, 'Vital War-time Role Played by Our University', *Mail* (Adelaide), 10 October 1942, 5.

61 George, 'Vital War-Time Role Played by Our University', 5.

62 Bernard Nicholson, ed., *Institute of Medical and Veterinary Science: 50th Anniversary Review, 1938–1988* (Adelaide: Institute of Medical and Veterinary Science, 1988), 89.

63 Fenner, *History of Microbiology in Australia*, 342.

64 Nicholson, *Institute of Medical and Veterinary Science*, 89.



Figure 1: Nancy Atkinson, probably at the IMVS, with a research assistant, Martin Hansen, c. 1939.

Source: Dr Nancy Atkinson (1910–1999) papers, MSS 006, 5, Series 2. Courtesy of Rare Books & Special Collections, Barr Smith Library, University of Adelaide.

The then director of the IMVS was an Englishman, Edward Weston Hurst. Well known for his research in neuropathology and virus diseases, he inspired Atkinson's interest in antibiotics and early research into antibiotics in moulds.⁶⁵ Her investigations led to the isolation of a new antibiotic, 'penicidin',⁶⁶ which turned out to be identical to several other mould antibiotics discovered in England and the United States at around the same time. Claviformin was the first mould antibiotic to be characterised and Atkinson's penicidin was identified with claviformin by Howard Florey, who took samples of her penicidin crystals to England for analysis after a visit to Adelaide in 1944.⁶⁷ She did not, however, undertake any further research into mould antibiotics, judging that the field 'seemed already overcrowded'.⁶⁸

Florey encouraged Atkinson to undertake research into antibacterial substances in fungi, arguing that she was in a unique position to undertake such a study at the University of Adelaide because John Cleland, professor of pathology from 1920 to 1948 (whose daughter, Joan Cleland, later Paton, was the first appointed biochemist at the IMVS), was an authority on classifying fungi. Cleland agreed not only to help Atkinson with identification but also with the collection of fungi on excursions into the Adelaide Hills.⁶⁹ In response to appeals in the local paper for plant and fungi samples, members of the public scoured their gardens and the city parklands for specimens, which they delivered to the gates of the institute on Frome Road.⁷⁰ Toadstools and mushrooms, as well as hundreds of kinds of flowering plants, many from the garden of the botanical artist and plant collector Alison Ashby,⁷¹ were collected and tested. Among those tested, the Geraldton wax and *Lepidium* showed the most promising results;⁷² of the small number of fungi specimens found to contain antibacterial substances, most were only active against the same diseases as penicillin. However, a substance found in the 'umbrella part' of 'a rare edible mushroom, *Psalliota xanthoderma*',⁷³ proved effective in killing (in the test tube), a wide range of disease germs unaffected by penicillin, including typhoid and tuberculosis germs; additionally, these germs had not acquired resistance, unlike penicillin and streptomycin.⁷⁴ Atkinson's research later expanded to include testing of dried plant specimens obtained from northern Australia and New Guinea, and the investigation of antibacterial substances in essential oils from native Australian plants, a field in which little had been published.

65 Atkinson, 'A Collection of Papers', PhD diss., 3, Series 19, Dr Nancy Atkinson (1910–1999) Papers.

66 'SA Scientist Finds New Drug', *Telegraph* (Brisbane), 2 April 1943, 2.

67 Atkinson, 'A Collection of Papers', PhD diss., 3, Series 19, Dr Nancy Atkinson (1910–1999) Papers.

68 Atkinson, 'A Collection of Papers', PhD diss., 1, Series 19, Dr Nancy Atkinson (1910–1999) Papers.

69 Atkinson, 'A Collection of Papers', PhD diss., 3–4, Series 19, Dr Nancy Atkinson (1910–1999) Papers.

70 'Woman Scientist's [sic] as Bacteriologist', *Advertiser* (Adelaide), 5 December 1945, 3.

71 Atkinson, 'A Collection of Papers', PhD diss., 4, Series 19, Dr Nancy Atkinson (1910–1999) Papers.

72 'Flowers May Give New Penicillin', *Barrier Miner*, 19 October 1944, 6.

73 Atkinson, 'Anti-Bacterial Substances in Australian Plants and Fungi', *Clinic*, July 1946, 2, Series 12, Dr Nancy Atkinson (1910–1999) Papers'.

74 'Mushroom Drug Checks T.B.', *Truth* (Sydney), 29 May 1949, 46.

At the same time, Atkinson pursued research into salmonellas, an interest that had started when she was working at the University of Melbourne and the senior lecturer, Thomas Screen Gregory, got her to make some salmonella antisera.⁷⁵ She had taken this salmonella to Adelaide and later sourced samples from other institutes.⁷⁶ In the 1940s and '50s her focus was on identifying strains of *Salmonella gastroenteritis* in Australia, outbreaks of which in the first half of the twentieth century were 'extremely common' and sometimes life-threatening.⁷⁷ Little research had been done on humans as carriers because it was thought that animals were the primary source of food poisoning.⁷⁸ Assisting her in investigating cases of gastroenteritis in South Australia were Gwendolyn Woodroffe, who, in 1943, was the first of Atkinson's students to graduate MSc in bacteriology; Maureen Macbeth, daughter of Alexander Killen Macbeth, chair of chemistry at the university from 1928 until 1954; and Jessica Mawson. The four women were described as 'the strongest team yet' to undertake such research,⁷⁹ which was carried out at a salmonella typing laboratory established by Atkinson. The laboratory was the first of its kind in the country, and one of only three in the world at the time capable of describing serotypes of this disease; many new ones were described, the most well known being *Salmonella adelaide*, first isolated in 1943 from a fatal case of enteritis.⁸⁰ In the same year, in collaboration with staff at the Adelaide Children's Hospital, Atkinson isolated, for the first time in South Australia, *S. typhi-murium*, commonly known as 'mouse typhoid', a leading 'cause of gastro-enteritis'.⁸¹ The laboratory sourced salmonella cultures from both humans and animals Australia wide, including from army hospitals as there were frequent salmonella outbreaks among troops. A severe outbreak in New Guinea and on Bougainville led to the isolation of a rare type, *S. belgdam*.⁸² Fenner noted that Atkinson's research interests 'extended well beyond the serological identification of salmonellae' to recognising 'the potential benefits of phage typing in epidemiological studies of outbreaks'.⁸³

In ABC radio interviews, articles for popular magazines and talks to local societies such as church groups, rotary clubs and public libraries, Atkinson educated the public about the dangers of pathogenic bacteria. She advocated precautions to eliminate the risk of salmonella infections; on a community level, she advised inspecting meat, exterminating rats and mice, pasteurising milk and ensuring the water supply was to a high standard. On an individual level, she recommended storing food, so that

75 Atkinson, 'A Collection of Papers', PhD diss., 6, Series 19, Dr Nancy Atkinson (1910–1999) Papers.

76 Fenner, *History of Microbiology in Australia*, 236.

77 Fenner, *History of Microbiology in Australia*, 237.

78 Atkinson, 'Food Poisoning and the Salmonellas', typed draft, Series 6, Dr Nancy Atkinson (1910–1999) Papers.

79 Elisabeth George, 'Woman's World: Round-About', *Mail* (Adelaide), 29 April 1944, 15.

80 Nancy Atkinson, 'A New Salmonella Type: Salmonella Adelaide', *Australian Journal of Experimental Biology and Medical Science* 21, no. 3 (1943): 171–73.

81 'Control of Food Urged: Expert Also Seeks Notification of Gastro-Enteritis', *News* (Adelaide), 11 January 1943.

82 Atkinson, 'Food Poisoning and the Salmonellas', Dr Nancy Atkinson (1910–1999) Papers.

83 Fenner, *History of Microbiology in Australia*, 237.

rats, mice and flies could not contaminate it, and keeping it cold, but also heating it sufficiently before consumption. She warned that tuberculosis, a common disease in cows, could be contracted by drinking milk. If a cow had mastitis, it could introduce bacteria into the milk that could lead to a number of diseases, including diphtheria, scarlet fever, typhoid, acute gastroenteritis or septic sore throat. If the milk were kept at a warm temperature for a period of time, this could also lead to disease.⁸⁴ Fearing a milk-borne epidemic as a result of unpasteurised milk,⁸⁵ in the mid-1940s she carried out tests for the Metropolitan Board of South Australia on the quality of milk, cream and ice cream to assess their suitability for human consumption, and tested penicillin on cows suffering from mastitis, which proved highly effective. Her research led to the establishment of the Metropolitan Milk Board in 1946 to standardise the production, sale, storage and delivery of milk.⁸⁶

Soon after moving to Adelaide, Atkinson had met Irving MacDonald Cook whom she married at St John's Church, Halifax, on 24 January 1942.⁸⁷ A trained architect who had been unable to find work after graduating, Cook had gone into the cinema business like his father, later becoming the South Australian manager of British Empire Films.⁸⁸ As Claire Hooker notes, for women, 'matrimony was regarded as a profession in itself'.⁸⁹ Yet, while marriage could have ended her career as it had and would for so many other women, it did not for Atkinson. In a newspaper article a few years into her marriage, she was described as 'belonging to that relatively small number of women who have proved themselves capable of combining two careers successfully'. The 'two careers' included her work as an academic and her role as Mrs Irving Cook, 'first rate cook and housekeeper'.⁹⁰ Undoubtedly it helped that Cook was supportive of her career. In an interview on 29 April 1946 she said, 'my husband is quite willing for me to continue my work here'.⁹¹ In 1948 they had a son, Jonathan, and before he was a year old Atkinson returned to work and soon afterwards embarked on a research trip. She had been granted leave of absence from the university to travel to the United States, Britain and Denmark over the summer vacation of 1949–50. She visited the medical school at Stanford University, where she had been invited as an exchange visitor to work with the American geneticist Joshua Lederberg on the immunogenetics of salmonellas.⁹² Lederberg later won (in 1958) a Nobel Prize for his research on bacterial genetics.⁹³

84 Atkinson, 'Milk', draft of an article, Series 6, Dr Nancy Atkinson (1910–1999) Papers.

85 'Milk-Borne Epidemic "Constant Danger"', *News* (Adelaide), 22 August 1949, 1.

86 'Milk-Borne Epidemic "Constant Danger"', *News* (Adelaide).

87 Newspaper Clipping of Marriage Notice, Series 1, Dr Nancy Atkinson (1910–1999) Papers.

88 'Visit of Film Company Manager', *Border Watch* (Mount Gambier, SA), 2 January 1947, 1.

89 Hooker, *Irresistible Forces*, 44.

90 'Woman Scientist's [sic] as Bacteriologist', *Advertiser* (Adelaide).

91 Atkinson, Transcript of an Interview with 'Neal', Series 6, Dr Nancy Atkinson (1910–1999) Papers.

92 Cook, Interview with the Author.

93 'Joshua Lederberg: American Geneticist', *Encyclopaedia Britannica*, 19 May 2018, accessed 14 June 2018, www.britannica.com/biography/Joshua-Lederberg.

Also included in Atkinson's research program was the study of the latest developments in polio research, which involved visiting research institutes as well as university departments to investigate teaching methods. Copenhagen was where one of the three salmonella reference libraries was located; the others were her own in Adelaide and one in London.⁹⁴ Having carried out research into milk-borne diseases and how to safeguard against them since the early 1940s, she also visited dairy farms in New York State and California to observe milk standards. She was impressed with what she saw in the United States and Britain, where even small farms were equipped with coolers and where milk was bottled before it was pasteurised.⁹⁵

A few months after her return, a polio research laboratory was opened at the medical school in the university.⁹⁶ Under Atkinson's guidance and funded by a government grant, tests were carried out on baby mice injected with specimens of the virus obtained from patients suffering from a polio epidemic in the late 1940s, in the first cases of polio in Australia.⁹⁷ In 1950 her marriage to Irving Cook ended amicably. Their son recalls his parents shared an interest in tennis (they had met at a tennis party) but were otherwise 'diametrical opposites'.⁹⁸ Yet, Atkinson's divorce from Cook had no effect on her career. The next year she was appointed OBE for her contributions to public health; she also began a PhD based on the research on plants and fungi she had undertaken during the war and immediate postwar years while working as head of both the IMVS and the Department of Bacteriology at the university.

The following year she married Hungarian-born Andrew Benko, whom she had met while Cook was away on business in Hollywood. Like Cook, Benko had trained as an architect, and had obtained his doctorate in Milan. A practising architect and a town planner, he was also, according to Jonathan Cook, 'highly academic' and, therefore, a better match for Atkinson.⁹⁹ The Benkos shared an appreciation for art and classical music, and enjoyed playing golf and taking annual trips to the Victorian snowfields. Jonathan, who remembers going to the snow with them sometimes, and recalls once having to drive home from Falls Creek in their tiny Ford Anglia after their chalet burnt down, admired them for being 'total stalwarts' despite being 'absolutely hopeless' at both skiing and golf.¹⁰⁰

94 Atkinson, 'The Salmonella Group of Bacteria', n.d., 15–16, Series 13, Dr Nancy Atkinson (1910–1999) Papers.

95 'Lessons on Treating SA Milk Seen on Trip', *Mail* (Adelaide), 8 April 1950, 33.

96 'Polio Laboratory Inspected', *Advertiser* (Adelaide), 17 June 1950, 5, Series 2, Dr Nancy Atkinson (1910–1999) Papers.

97 'New Type of Virus Discovered in SA: Polio Research Heartening', *News* (Adelaide), 21 December 1950, 4, Series 2, Nancy Atkinson (1910–1999) Papers.

98 Cook, Interview with the Author.

99 Atkinson, Application for the Chair of Microbiology, 'Appendix 1: Record of Positions Held, Duties and Responsibilities and Research Work', Series 4, Dr Nancy Atkinson (1910–1999) Papers.

100 Cook, Interview with the Author.

Just as neither a divorce nor having a child had derailed her career, a second marriage proved no hindrance either, as 1952 was also the year that Atkinson was appointed reader in charge of the Department of Bacteriology. Her research projects continued; she qualified for her DSc with distinction in 1957 and in 1958 she introduced a new course in chemical technology. Advertised as ‘a specialist course for food technologists’, it was aimed at students interested in working in the food or dairying industries.¹⁰¹ By this time, many of her students were enjoying successful careers. While Jessica Mawson had not continued work after her marriage in the mid-1940s, Atkinson’s first MSc student, Gwendolyn Marion Woodroffe, had joined the John Curtin School of Medical Research in Canberra in 1951, where she worked as a research assistant to Fenner on myxomatosis.¹⁰² Neville Fenton Stanley, a 1942 graduate who had worked as a demonstrator for Atkinson in 1943, had gone to work under Platt at the Prince Henry Hospital, probably at Atkinson’s recommendation, where he was later promoted to bacteriologist and senior research officer.¹⁰³ In 1948 Platt died suddenly at the age of 48.¹⁰⁴ At the time he was director of the Institute of Epidemiology and Preventative Medicine. Stanley was appointed acting director on his death and became director in 1954.¹⁰⁵ In taking over these joint positions initially held by Platt, and starting off in the role of assistant bacteriologist, Stanley’s career route almost mirrored that of Atkinson’s when she had replaced Platt at the University of Adelaide and at the IMVS a decade before, except that Stanley’s career took flight—by the mid-1950s, he was foundation professor of microbiology in the medical school of the University of Western Australia¹⁰⁶—while Atkinson’s came to a halt.

101 W. F. Nicholas (Secretary Food Technology Association of South Australia), ‘Special Notice to All Member Companies Re: Degree Course—Bachelor of Technology’, 13 January 1958, Series 8, Dr Nancy Atkinson (1910–1999) Papers.

102 Maggie Shapley, ‘Woodroffe, Gwendolyn Marion (1918–2012)’, *Australian Women’s Register*, 20 February 2013, accessed 14 June 2018, www.womenaustralia.info/biogs/AWE4881b.htm.

103 R. B. Lefroy, ‘Stanley, Neville Fenton (1918–1984)’, *Australian Dictionary of Biography*, National Centre of Biography, The Australian National University, accessed 11 November 2016, adb.anu.edu.au/biography/stanley-neville-fenton-15539, published first in hardcopy 2012.

104 ‘Sudden Passing of Professor A. E. Platt’, *Narracoorte Herald*, 12 April 1948, 1.

105 Lefroy, ‘Stanley, Neville Fenton (1918–2012)’.

106 Lefroy, ‘Stanley, Neville Fenton (1918–2012)’.



Figure 2: Nancy Atkinson at Falls Creek.

Source: Jonathan Cook.

In the summer of 1959, arguably at the height of her career, she applied for the chair of microbiology at the University of Adelaide. 'Senior lectureships', notes Moyal, were 'the exceptional woman's glass ceiling',¹⁰⁷ and this proved true for Atkinson who did not get further than the short list. The position was offered to the microbiologist and immunologist Derrick Rowley, who had worked with Alexander Fleming at the Glaxo Laboratories in London.¹⁰⁸ The reasons for Atkinson's failure to secure the position are not clear. Her son suspects it was because his mother did not have a medical degree,¹⁰⁹ unlike Rowley. There was also the fact that Rowley was British, which very likely worked in his favour. In a similar case, Dr Wilfrid Agar had been offered the chair of biology at the University of Melbourne in 1919 over Dr Georgina Sweet, a leading Australian parasitologist. Like Atkinson, who had been in charge of the bacteriology department in Adelaide for almost two decades when Rowley was appointed chair, Sweet had 'more or less run the [biology] department very successfully, for years'.¹¹⁰ Like Rowley, Agar was British and, as Claire Hooker argues, he was chosen because Britain was seen as "the centre" of research'.¹¹¹

Atkinson's gender was also undoubtedly a contributing factor. Certainly, other women academics had missed out on chairs because of sexual bias, most notably Ethel MacLennan, Sweet's protégé, who was unsuccessful in her bid for the chair of botany at the University of Melbourne in 1937 despite having an international reputation for her research in mycology (plant fungi) and extensive teaching experience. The then professor of botany, Alfred Ewart, admitted that he had not recommended her 'simply due to the fact that she [was] a woman'.¹¹² Would a man in the same position, and with her credentials, have been so quickly overlooked? It was not until 1978, two decades after Atkinson's application for the chair, and three years after her retirement, that the first woman chair was appointed at the University of Adelaide (Fay Gale in geography).¹¹³

Despite conceding that Rowley was a good appointment, Atkinson's former students recall that there was a general sense in the university that she should have got the position. She certainly took the rejection badly. After nearly two decades running the department without official recognition as the only person in charge (year after year in the university calendar, the role of professor had been left poignantly blank in the space above her name), she found it difficult to accept a man 12 years her junior taking over the department she had built up virtually single-handedly. 'She could

107 Moyal, 'Invisible Participants: Women in Science in Australia'.

108 'Obituary: Derrick Rowley (1922–2004)', *Adelaidean*, October 2004, accessed 15 August 2016, www.adelaide.edu.au/adelaidean/issues/7082/news7101.html.

109 Cook, Interview with the Author.

110 Hooker, *Irresistible Forces*, 51.

111 Hooker, *Irresistible Forces*, 52.

112 Hooker, *Irresistible Forces*, 56.

113 Nick Harvey, 'Obituary: Fay Gale AO', *Adelaidean*, June 2008, accessed 17 November 2016, www.adelaide.edu.au/adelaidean/issues/27061/news27160.html.

not cope with Rowley', recalls Lizzie Rogers, a former student of Atkinson's.¹¹⁴ When Rowley was appointed, Atkinson did not go into the department for some weeks until Rowley was compelled to move her things out of her office, which had become his on appointment as the new head.¹¹⁵ He removed her things into 'a kind of storage room', which she complained was too small. She was later moved to a bigger room on the floor above, near her lab.¹¹⁶ From then on, according to Ieva Kotlarski, who went on to become a senior lecturer in the department, Atkinson was 'sort of marginalised', but this was partly her own doing.¹¹⁷ According to Rowley's wife, Atkinson was resentful towards her husband and they never got along.¹¹⁸ It may have come as a relief to Atkinson and to others when, in 1967, she moved to the Department of Oral Biology after the teaching of microbiology to dental students was taken over by this department. She was to remain there until her retirement in 1975.¹¹⁹

It seems that, despite this setback, Atkinson's dedication to her work did not diminish. A student and assistant to Atkinson, Anne Moten, who described her as 'very nice to work for' and someone who 'never treated you as lowly', remembers her being 'very keen on her research'.¹²⁰ At around the time of her application for the chair, Atkinson became involved in the formation of the Australian Society of Microbiology. In fact, according to Fenner, it was 'largely due to the enthusiasm and drive of Nancy Atkinson ... that an Australian Society for Microbiology was established'.¹²¹ At the Australian and New Zealand Association for the Advancement of Science (ANZAAS) congress in Adelaide in 1958, she convened a meeting of about 50 scientists to discuss the idea of a society dedicated to the promotion and fostering of microbiology in Australia with a branch in every state. As the discipline had grown, she argued that there was a need for a forum focused on current research and the exchange of knowledge and ideas specifically related to microbiology rather than to science in general like the ANZAAS.¹²² Atkinson was appointed, along with Jack Harris of the CSIRO and Lance Walters of the SA Brewing Company, to draft a constitution.¹²³ She was the first honorary treasurer from 1959 to 1962, served as president from 1962 to 1964 and was later made an honorary life member. Her legacy is regularly acknowledged by the society; every annual scientific meeting is traditionally opened with the 'Nancy Atkinson Bell'.¹²⁴

114 Lizzie Rogers (former student of Nancy Atkinson), Interview with the Author, 19 November 2016.

115 Ieva Kotlarski (former student of Nancy Atkinson), Interview with the Author, 3 September 2016.

116 Kotlarski, Interview with the Author.

117 Kotlarski, Interview with the Author.

118 Betty Rowley (wife of Derrick Rowley), Interview with the Author, 14 August 2016.

119 Fenner, *History of Microbiology in Australia*, 37.

120 Anne Moten, Interview with the Author.

121 Fenner, *History of Microbiology in Australia*, 519.

122 'Chapter One: The Need for a Learned Society: Building a Community', in 'A Culture of Learned Professionals: Celebrating 50 Years of The Australian Society of Microbiology', special issue, *Microbiology Australia* 30, no. 3 (2009): 14.

123 'Chapter One: The Need for a Learned Society: Building a Community', *Microbiology Australia*, 15.

124 'Introduction: The Beginnings of a Society', *Microbiology Australia*, 8.

While still working full time as an academic, she wrote two books on art under her married name, Benko. The first, *Art and Artists of South Australia*, was an A–Z of South Australian artists, galleries, schools and events. She was a private art collector and, as she explains in her introduction, the book had developed ‘out of a personal interest’ in South Australian art and artists and a desire to inspire greater appreciation of the state’s art.¹²⁵ Influential people in the art world helped her to compile it. It was written under the guidance of the artists Ruth Tuck and Ivor Francis, and published in 1969 under the patronage of the Latvian father and son, Karlis and Andris Lidums, the directors of a gallery of modern art at Beaumont, Adelaide. As the first book to cover the subject of South Australian art and artists, it was an invaluable resource for art dealers and collectors and remains an important reference source, providing the only available biographical information on many of the artists listed. Atkinson’s biography of David Boyd, the figurative painter and potter, *The Art of David Boyd*, was published in 1973. It was the first biography of Boyd, the lesser-known brother of Arthur Boyd. Andrew Benko designed the book and sourced the details for the illustrations. Judith Wright wrote a foreword and the Lidums were again involved, having suggested the book and supported its publication. A few years later, Atkinson wrote a biographical entry for the *Australian Dictionary of Biography* on the English-born artist Gustave Barnes, who settled in Adelaide and later became the art supervisor at the Art Gallery of South Australia.¹²⁶

Atkinson’s interest in art was, according to her son, largely inspired by her husband. She had begun collecting in the 1960s when she and Benko would go to exhibitions and buy paintings by well-known Australian artists. Among others, works by Pro Hart, David Hesling and Sidney Nolan covered the walls of their North Adelaide home. As her son recalls, there was even ‘an antipodean head’ by Nolan in their bedroom.¹²⁷ In the late 1970s, however, she had to sell one of her Pro Hart’s, *The Geebung Polo Club*, when her winery proved more expensive than she had anticipated.¹²⁸ This was Chalk Hill Winery, which she had bought in 1973, two years before her retirement. She had begun to plan a winery in the early 1970s in the knowledge that on her 65th birthday she would be forced to retire, a prospect that devastated her.¹²⁹ It was important to have something to look forward to and she had developed an interest in winemaking through her course in food technology, which had brought her into contact with brewers and winemakers. She also saw it as a way of applying her knowledge of chemistry. ‘Chalk Hill’ was in McLaren Vale on 42 acres of land on which there were vineyards and an almond orchard.

125 Nancy Benko, *Art and Artists of South Australia* (Adelaide: Lidums Family, 1969), 7–8.

126 Nancy Benko, ‘Barnes, Gustave Adrian (1877–1921)’, *Australian Dictionary of Biography*, National Centre of Biography, The Australian National University, accessed 14 June 2018, adb.anu.edu.au/biography/barnes-gustave-adrian-5137, published first in hardcopy 1979.

127 Cook, Interview with the Author.

128 Cook, Interview with the Author.

129 Cook, Interview with the Author.

Benko had designed the buildings; he also greeted customers at the cellar door while Atkinson made the wine. They were both quite small physically. Locals recall him barely clearing the counter at the cellar door¹³⁰ and Atkinson (or Nancy Benko as they knew her) sitting so low down in her red Volvo that she had to peer through the steering wheel. She made a variety of wines—riesling, rosé, vintage and tawny port, shiraz, cabernet sauvignon, mead and sparkling mead—and won several prizes: bronze medals for her 1978 rosé and ruby red port; in the same year, silver medals for her vintage port and muscat; and, for several years running in the late 1970s, gold and silver medals for her shiraz.¹³¹ The winery was open seven days a week and she and Benko would drive there every day. On one occasion, Jonathan visited them on their return from Chalk Hill to find them both ‘completely purple’. A wine tank had overflowed and they had been engulfed by ‘a tidal wave of red wines and skins’.¹³²

By the time they sold the winery to the Harveys in 1995, who still own Chalk Hill, Atkinson had begun to suffer from dementia as her mother had. Locals, who had been interested in buying the winery, and who had been half promised it by her, were surprised when they drove past Chalk Hill and saw the ‘sold’ sign on the road. Andrew Benko had taken an instant shine to the Harveys and made a quick sale, and Atkinson had presumably forgotten any promises she had made.¹³³ Four years later, on 21 December 1999, she died, two years after her husband. While she had run Chalk Hill Winery for more than a decade and gained much pleasure from it, and a measure of success, she was, at heart, an academic, and one wonders what else she might have achieved had she not been forced to retire from the university. Even those students who had little to do with her knew that she was ‘someone important in the university, who was doing important research work’. Her son acknowledges that she ‘probably paved the way for other women’.¹³⁴ Certainly, her dedication to science was indisputable; this struck me when I came across a last will and testament in a box of her belongings at Chalk Hill. Dated 29 October 1940, it was written when she was 30 and new to Adelaide. In it she bequeaths all her ‘personal belongings’ to Jean Lockhart Sutherland, who had graduated MSc in bacteriology in the same year as Atkinson at the University of Melbourne, and all her ‘real estate and money’ to the IMVS, ‘to be used for the purpose of medical research’.

130 John and Diana Harvey, Interview with the Author, 3 October 2016.

131 Nancy Benko, Miscellaneous Papers, Chalk Hill Winery.

132 Cook, Interview with the Author.

133 Jock Harvey, Interview with the Author, 26 September 2016. Cook, Interview with the Author.

134 Cook, Interview with the Author.

Andruana Ann Jean Jimmy: A Mapoon leader's struggle to regain a homeland¹

GEOFF WHARTON²

Andruana Ann Jean Jimmy (1912–91), Aboriginal leader, land rights activist, local government councillor and poet, was born on 30 September 1912 near the Pennefather (formerly Coen) River, south-west of Mapoon Presbyterian mission, Queensland (established 1891), youngest of three children of Philip of the Rakudi People—probably a Yupungathi (Yupungathi) clan group—and Lorna (aka Maggie).³ Jean's traditional language name in the Yupngayth (Yupungayth) language was Andruana, meaning wattle flower, a name associated with being

1 Cultural warning: Readers of this article should be aware that some of the church and government archival records and publications of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries contain words that are now considered offensive. Such words may appear in the article where a quote is made from archival records or publications. The history also refers to persons who have passed away and to incidents of a distressing nature.

2 The author thanks Mrs Christine Cooktown, Ms Linda Cooktown and Ms Linda McLachlan for their support during the research for this article. Special appreciation goes to Ms Florence Charger, the late Mr Dan Cooktown, the late Mrs Harriet Flinders, Mrs Ruth Hennings and Mrs Florence Luff for generously sharing their personal memories of Jean Jimmy. Staff of the Community and Personal Histories section, Queensland Department of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Partnerships, as well as the Mitchell Library, Queensland Presbyterian Archives, Queensland State Archives and the State Library of Queensland all provided valuable advice and information. Appreciation also to Darryl Bennet and the referees for their welcome editorial improvements to the article.

3 The recording of Aboriginal people's names by Queensland Government officials and missionaries was haphazard during the mission era. It is common for several spelling variants of the same person's names to appear in church and official records. Frequently, traditional language names of the first generation were ignored by the missionaries and replaced with a single Christian name, which then became the family surname in the second generation. Sometimes the wife's surname would be assumed from the husband's first name, hence in some records, Jean Jimmy is recorded as Jean Gilbert, after her husband, Gilbert Jimmy. Jean's birth date was derived from her grave headstone at Mapoon. At the time of Jean Philip's birth, mission superintendents in Queensland were not required to register births, marriages or deaths of Indigenous residents of the mission reserve. Although the Mapoon missionaries did maintain a church baptisms, births, marriages and death register, now held by the manuscript collections of the Mitchell Library, Sydney, Jean Philip's birth does not appear to be recorded in that register (possibly because she was born on her father's traditional country away from the mission) or in the records of the Queensland Registrar-General. Mapoon Presbyterian Mission Station, Register of baptisms, births, marriages and deaths, Box MLK 2544, MLMSS 1893 Add-on 1173, Board of Ecumenical Mission and Relations (BOEMAR) Records, (Microfilm CY Reel 3568), Mitchell Library, State Library of New South Wales, Sydney.

Jean's birthplace is stated as Coen River on her marriage certificate and her parents' names on that certificate are stated as Philip and Maggie. Marriage certificate for Jean Philip and Gilbert Jimmy, 29 August 1933, Registration no. 1933/27111214, Queensland Registrar-General's Office. Coen River was renamed the Pennefather River in 1894, but it continued to be known locally as the Coen River by Mapoon people and so-described on Admiralty hydrographic charts until the 1960s. For further information, see Queensland Place Names Online Search website at www.derm.qld.gov.au/property/placenames/details.php?id=47589.

a strong woman through the power of the tree.⁴ Jean had one brother, Richard, who was born c. 1898 and became known as Dick Luff during the 1930s, and one sister, Maggie, born c. 1910, who married Frank Don at Mapoon Presbyterian mission on 12 December 1925.⁵

Mapoon community was established as the Batavia River Presbyterian mission on the western shores of Port Musgrave on Cape York Peninsula by Moravian missionaries: Rev. James Gibson Ward (1857–95) and Rev. John Nicholas Hey (1862–1951), who worked under contract to the Presbyterian Churches of Australia. Ward and Hey married Irish Moravian sisters, Matilda Hall Barnes (1861–1953) and Mary Anne (Minnie) Barnes (1869–1970). Matilda Ward—known in the mission as Aunt Tilly—started a school in 1892 and continued as the mission teacher until her retirement in 1917. Following Ward's death in January 1895, Hey became the mission superintendent, continuing in this role until he and Minnie retired in October 1919.

In sworn evidence before the chief justice of the Supreme Court of the Australian Capital Territory, Sir Richard Blackburn, on 1 September 1983, Jean Jimmy stated that her father's country was on the south side of the Pennefather River. Jean Jimmy, transcript of evidence given in *Comalco Ltd v. Australian Broadcasting Commission*, Supreme Court of the Australian Capital Territory, 1 September 1983, 3428, 3430, Cape York Collection, Hibberd Library, Weipa. During this evidence, at p. 3428, Jean also stated that she was 'from the Yupagnatte [Yupangathi/Yupungathi] tribe'. There are various spellings of the language and language group. The Australian Institute of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Studies Mura catalogue lists Yupangathi works under the descriptor 'Nggerigudi/Yupngayth people (Y19) (Qld SD54-03)'.

Jean's father, who was named Philip, or Phillip, or sometimes Philip the Evangelist, was photographed and recorded by W. E. Roth in October 1899, who stated that Philip was from the 'Rá Kudi [tribe]—south side of Pennefather River', Commissioner of Police anthropometric chart, registered number 43, compiled at Mapoon by W. E. Roth, Queensland Home Secretary correspondence bundle, 1899, Item ID 271658, Queensland State Archives (QSA). A Presbyterian Church publication dated c. 1924 contains a photograph of Jean's father with the caption, 'Philip, the Evangelist, an Elder of Mapoon Church and S.S. [Sunday School] Superintendent, Batavia [outstation]'. Presbyterian Church of Queensland, 'Missions to the Aborigines', 1924, 1. Printed pamphlet held in File D.5.1, by Presbyterian Church Archives, Brisbane.

The death certificate for Lorna Phillips [Philip] records that her two children at the time of her death were Maggie Don, 43 years, and Jean Gilbert, 40 years. Death certificate for Lorna Phillips, 1 December 1953, Registration no. 1953/45755923, Queensland Registrar-General's Office. In an interview for the *Napranum Cha* newspaper in 1986, Jean noted that her 'mother came from Batavia'. This may mean that her mother's traditional lands were in the vicinity of the old Batavia outstation or somewhere along the Batavia (now Wenlock) River. 'M.A.P.', *Napranum Cha: Weipa South*, no. 3 (December/January 1986): 24. A senior family member has also indicated that Lorna was a Yupangathi woman. Mrs F. Luff, pers. comm. to author, 16 November 2013.

4 Jean's language name was given to the author by Ms Florence Charger and the cultural meaning was provided by Mrs Florence Luff to the author on 16 November 2013.

5 Information about Jean's siblings has been obtained from: Marriage certificate for Frank Dan [Don] and Maggie Philip, Mapoon, 12 December 1925, Registration number 1925/3658880, Queensland Registrar-General's Office; Marriage certificate for Dick Phillip and Aggie, Mapoon, 3 May 1930, Registration number 1930/17241071; Death certificate for Lorna Phillips, 1 December 1953, Registration number 1953/45755923, Queensland Registrar-General's Office.

Mapoon country is richly endowed with coastal lagoons, tall eucalypt woodlands, paperbark woodlands and vine forests, as well as wild river estuaries and coastal waters with a wide variety of fresh and marine fish species, abundant bird life and many species of plants that provide natural bush foods and medicines. When the European missionaries came from the cool green farming lands of Germany and Ireland to the hot and humid tropical climate of Queensland in the pre-wet season of November 1891, they faced many trials, including tropical fevers, mosquitoes and an environment most strange to them. For the Aboriginal people who came to know these strangers, there were in turn many challenges in interacting with Europeans who could not understand their traditional languages, in missionary antipathy and fear of traditional cultural practices and in an underlying arrogance towards the Aboriginal way of life. Writing about his experience at Mapoon, Hey commented: 'Many of the old superstitious beliefs, though subdued, were not slain, and the appearance and reappearance of these dark elements often caused great disturbances and distress'.⁶

By late 1892, Batavia River mission became known by the Tjungundji language name Mapoon, meaning 'place where people fight on the sandhills'. For the first decade, Mapoon was a mission to Aboriginal people of the local area, particularly the Tjungundji and Yupangathi people; later people came in from the Pine River to the south, the Skardon River from the north, and the country to the east of the Batavia (now Wenlock) and Ducie rivers. Queensland's Northern Protector of Aborigines, Dr Walter Roth, decided in 1901 to remove children of mixed-descent from their families on cattle stations or near towns in the Gulf country. He and later protectors sent these children to be raised by the Mapoon missionaries as boarders in the mission dormitories. Although the government explained this as a form of child protection, it meant that they were effectively stolen from their parents by the police and many never saw their blood relatives again. Mapoon Traditional Owners befriended the removed children and gave them cultural identities to protect them in strangers' country. A third wave of migration to Mapoon mission included people from the South Sea Islands, such as Samoa, New Hebrides (now Vanuatu) and the Solomon Islands. They were employed by the Presbyterian Church in the early 1900s to assist the missionaries as boat crew, carpenters and gardeners.

⁶ J. N. Hey, *A Brief History of the Presbyterian Church's Mission Enterprise among the Australian Aborigines* (Sydney: New Press, 1931), 29.

At the time of Jean's birth, Mapoon had been operating as a mission for 21 years. Although some tribal groups had come to subsist in the sedentary village lifestyle encouraged by Hey, others continued to live on their traditional lands. Like most Presbyterian mission children of her time, Jean was sent to live in a girls' dormitory from the age of about five until she left school at 14.⁷ She rarely saw her parents during those years, because her father was an evangelist to traditional people near the Batavia outstation some 25 kilometres south of Mapoon (Figure 1).⁸ However, in her late teens she was able to spend more time with them and fondly recalled learning about traditional customs and knowledge from her mother. Jean later spoke about her mother's influence:

I don't know how old I was when my mother showed me all the bush medicine ... The first one she showed me was a grass. 'If you ever get married and you are walking through bloodwood country there is no water, but this grass I'm going to show you holds water.'⁹

It is uncertain which species of grass Jean was referring to, but there are tall woodlands near Batavia outstation containing bloodwoods such as *Corymbia nesophila* and *C. polycarpa*, with a grassy understorey. This traditional lifestyle had a strong spiritual dimension that is reflected in Jean's poetry and writing; for example, to avoid being struck by lightning: 'The old people [ancestors] say that pandanus is the lightning's cousin ... If you are walking on the plain, just go and stand under the pandanus if there is lightning'.¹⁰ To Mapoon people, every living creature and every part of the landscape has a spiritual dimension and that in turn provides a holistic strength to the people. Jean explained in an Indigenous book published for the Australian Bicentenary: 'We love to live at Mapoon, my heart is there because it's our country. It's healthy, we never get sick there'.¹¹

7 Jean Jimmy, interview broadcast in the documentary film *Welcome to My Home* (Brisbane: Comalco Limited, 1984).

8 Jean Jimmy, interview broadcast in the documentary film *Welcome to My Home*. In his annual report for 1931, the Mapoon superintendent, Rev. Percy Currell recorded that 'old Don and Philip are conducting regular worship in the bush with the Batavian tribe'. P. R. Currell, 'Mapoon Mission Station Annual Report for 1931', *Presbyterian Outlook* 15, no. 3 (September 1932): 20.

9 Interview with Jean Jimmy, 'M.A.P'. *Napranum Cha: Weipa South*, no. 3 (December 1985/January 1986): 24.

10 Interview with Jean Jimmy, *Napranum Cha*, 25.

11 Ann Jean Jimmy, quoted in Penny Taylor, ed., *After 200 Years: Photographic Essays of Aboriginal and Islander Australia Today* (Canberra: Aboriginal Studies Press, 1988), 272.



Figure 1: Jean Philip aged about eight or nine at Mapoon mission, c. 1921/22.¹²

Source: State Library of Queensland, negative number 109080, original print held in the Uniting Church Collection, reference code 2769, box 3923, SLQ.

¹² This photograph probably was taken by Miss Esther Finger, teacher at Mapoon from May 1921 to May 1922. 'Mission notes', *Presbyterian Outlook* 4, no. 34 (May 1921): 17. The caption on the reverse of the photograph held by the State Library of Queensland states: 'Jean Philip daughter of Philip the Evangelist'.

The missionaries taught the girls crochet, sewing and other handcrafts, as well as domestic science. In later life, Jean recalled with sadness that the mission teachers ‘cut out our language’, leading to the loss of spoken traditional languages at Mapoon. This was due to missionaries facing difficulties with the number of different languages spoken at the mission, and government policy that only English was to be taught in mission schools.¹³ During the first decade or so, the missionaries endeavoured to learn and speak in the local languages, but this had been abandoned by the time Jean attended school.¹⁴ Every part of daily life at the mission was strictly controlled by the superintendent, who was not only an evangelist, but also had statutory approval to control people’s behaviour, with powers such as the infliction of corporal punishment on any Aboriginal person under the age of 16.¹⁵

At the Mapoon Presbyterian mission church on 29 August 1933, Jean married Gilbert Jimmy, aged 27, a sailor who crewed on pearl-shell industry luggers and on the church’s vessels.¹⁶ Gilbert was born at Mapoon on 6 July 1906, son of Jimmie (aka Jimmy) and Georgina Jimmy (née Lee).¹⁷ Towards the end of World War II, Jean and Gilbert moved to Thursday Island, where Gilbert was employed by the coastal trading firm Burns Philp, and Jean was employed in domestic work.¹⁸ During the early 1950s Mapoon mission suffered from low financial support by Presbyterian congregations, while the Queensland Government was unwilling to fund the redevelopment of the community infrastructure. Traditional Owners and community members were excluded from a meeting held between church and government officials at Mapoon in April 1954, at which a decision was made to

13 For a description of the languages of the Mapoon region, see Terry Crowley, ‘The Mpakwithi Dialect of Anguthimri’, in *Handbook of Australian Languages: Volume 2*, ed. R. M. W. Dixon and Barry J. Blake (Canberra: Australian National University Press, 1981), 146, 148–50; Matilda Ward, undated manuscript, contained in Miscellaneous records re Mapoon Mission. Qld., c.1895–c.1967, BOEMAR records, MLMSS 1893/11 Items 1–16, CY Reel 2981, Mitchell Library, Sydney. See also Hey, *A Brief History of the Presbyterian Church’s Mission Enterprise*, 30; and Geraldine MacKenzie, *Aurukun Diary: Forty Years with the Aborigines* (Melbourne: The Aldersgate Press, 1981), 47.

14 For example, J. G. Ward’s (posthumous) and J. N. Hey’s ‘Coen R[iver]’ and ‘Mapoon R[iver]’ vocabularies published in John Mathew, *Eaglehawk and Crow: A Study of the Australian Aborigines, Including an Inquiry into Their Origin and a Survey of Australian Languages* (London: Nutt, 1899), 208–72. Coen River was the European name used for the Pennefather River between 1802 and 1894. Mapoon River probably refers to Port Musgrave and the Batavia (later renamed Wenlock) River. See also N. Hey, ‘An Elementary Grammar of the Ngerikudi Language’, *North Queensland Ethnography Bulletin No. 6* (Brisbane: Government Printer, 1903).

15 ‘Regulation 8 pursuant to the Aborigines Protection and Restriction of the Sale of Opium Acts, 1897 to 1901’, *Queensland Government Gazette* 85, no. 120 (11 November 1905): 1037.

16 Marriage certificate for Jean Philip and Gilbert Jimmy, 29 August 1933, Registration no. 1933/27111214, Queensland Registrar-General’s Office. Vessels that Gilbert crewed on included *Dinton*, 1926; *Acton*, 1928; *Willow*, 1929; *Acton*, 1930 and 1932; and *Marston*, 1933. Seamen’s Discharge Register 1926–1934, Shipping Master, Thursday Island, Item ID 516410, QSA. He also crewed on the *Linton* in 1939. Seamen’s Discharge Register 1934–1939, Shipping Master, Thursday Island, Item ID 516411, QSA.

17 Gilbert Jimmy’s birth date and parents are recorded in his Department of Aboriginal and Island Affairs personal file, 8G/267, Box 334, Item ID 725422, QSA.

18 Jean Jimmy, transcript of evidence given in *Comalco Ltd v. Australian Broadcasting Commission*, Supreme Court of the Australian Capital Territory, 1 September 1983, 3424–25.

abandon Mapoon and send the residents to Weipa Presbyterian mission.¹⁹ Few of the officials had any understanding of the deep cultural and spiritual connections that the people had for their traditional land and sea, so the stage was set for a long and bitter war of attrition. This was further complicated by the likelihood of large-scale industrial development following the discovery of economic bauxite deposits by the geologist Harry Evans in July and October 1955.

In about 1958 Jean and Gilbert returned to live at Mapoon and were alarmed to encounter a new mission administration led by the recently ordained Rev. Garth Filmer, who was unsympathetic to the community's desire to remain.²⁰ In that year, the Queensland Government issued mining company Commonwealth Aluminium Corporation Pty Limited (Comalco) with a special bauxite mining lease under the terms of a favourable state agreement Act, which did not recognise any prior land rights for Indigenous people of the region and made no provision for the loss of their reserve lands.²¹ One of the effects of the Act was that over one-third of the former Mapoon Aboriginal Reserve of 3,345 square miles was extinguished, and the reserve was reduced to 2,115 square miles. Under the terms of its reserve, the church was just a trustee for land reserved by the government and thus was unable to bring any legal action to protect the land interests of the Traditional Owners.²² Jean held the view that Mapoon was being closed to allow the miners easy access to her people's lands and later, during the 1960s and '70s, persuasively presented her opinion to the Australian public.

Jean and Gilbert, along with other community elders, vigorously campaigned against Mapoon's closure until their forced removal in 1963. They did this in the face of draconian state legislative powers still available to the mission superintendent to censor a resident's mail and to inflict punishment for disobeying his orders.²³ The legislation was used by two consecutive directors of native affairs, Cornelius O'Leary (1897–1971) and Patrick James Killoran (1922–2010), to override the community's opposition to the closure.²⁴ By mid-1961, the government had commenced building a new village at Mandingu (Hidden Valley) near Bamaga,

19 Report of Mapoon Conference held at Mapoon on Thursday and Friday, 8 and 9 April 1954, File AQ/7, BOEMAR Records, Box 19, MLMSS 1893 Add-on 1872, Mitchell Library, Sydney.

20 Jean Jimmy, interview with author, Weipa South [Napranum], 1 July 1975. A digital copy of this interview was made by ABC Radio National in 2012 and is held in the Cultural Keeping Place at Mapoon. Geoffrey Wharton, 'The Day They Burned Mapoon: A Study of the Closure of a Queensland Presbyterian Mission' (BA Hons thesis, University of Queensland, 1996), 25. See also G. L. Filmer, St Paul's Presbyterian Church, Gordonvale, letter to editor, *Cairns Post*, 4 December 1963, 7.

21 Special Bauxite Mining Lease No. 1 (now Mining Lease ML7024) commenced operation on 1 January 1958. *Commonwealth Aluminium Corporation Pty. Limited Agreement Act 1957* (Qld), sch. 1, cl. 8(a).

22 *Queensland Government Gazette* 198, no. 88 (5 July 1958): 1789.

23 'The Aborigines Regulations of 1945', pursuant to *The Aborigines Preservation and Protection Act of 1939*, *Queensland Government Gazette* 164, no. 90 (23 April 1945): 1063–73.

24 Rosalind Kidd, *The Way We Civilize: Aboriginal Affairs—The Untold Story* (St Lucia: University of Queensland Press, 1997), 216–23.

about 200 kilometres north-east of Mapoon.²⁵ From late 1961 until mid-1963, some Mapoon people moved voluntarily to this community—which became known as New Mapoon—but the Jimmy family and many others did not want to move away from their homeland.

The fight against the closure was supported by Joe McGinness (1914–2003), a senior figure in the Federal Council for the Advancement of Aborigines and the secretary of the Cairns Aboriginal & Torres Strait Islanders Advancement League.²⁶ In late 1962 McGinness issued a pamphlet, developed by Leonard Webb, entitled ‘They have made our rights wrong’, which set out the concerns of the Mapoon community.²⁷ Mapoon people living in Cairns held several street protests and distributed the league’s pamphlet, but few in Australian society were listening.²⁸ An unsympathetic Queensland media reported a statement by the Presbyterian Church that the Advancement League ‘was sponsored by the Trades and Labor Council, where known Communists were entrenched’.²⁹ In the Cold War era of the early 1960s, such derogatory statements by church and government officials easily distracted the media and public from supporting controversial social issues.

Determined to break the Jimmy family’s opposition to the closure, Killoran sent a visiting magistrate, Bernard Scanlan, to inspect Mapoon on 20 June 1963. During his interview with Scanlan, Gilbert Jimmy, at that time head councillor, spoke strongly against the church’s demands that Mapoon people should move north to the Bamaga area, but to no avail.³⁰ Killoran used Scanlan’s negative report about the community to justify his subsequent actions. On 15 November 1963 two Queensland police officers arrived at Mapoon on the Queensland Government vessel *Gelam* and executed a removal order for ‘disciplinary’ and ‘medical’ reasons under section 22 of the *Aboriginals Preservation and Protection Act*.³¹ The order was issued with the prior knowledge of the Queensland director-general of education and the general secretary of the Australian Presbyterian Board of Missions, Rev. James

25 The language name for the place where New Mapoon community was built is Mandingu. Injinoo Community Council, *Injinoo Handbook* (Injinoo, Qld: Injinoo Community Council, c. 1994). P. J. Killoran, Thursday Island, to Secretary, Aboriginal and Foreign Missions Committee, Brisbane, 5 July 1961, AFMC/CF 1961, Box MLK 2543, BOEMAR Records, Mitchell Library.

26 Sue Taffe, ‘The Cairns Aborigines and Torres Strait Islander Advancement League and the Community of the Left’, *Labour History* 97 (2009): 160–61.

27 Taffe, ‘The Cairns Aborigines and Torres Strait Islander Advancement League’, 160–61.

28 Ruth Hennings (née Warrack), speech at the opening of the Jean Jimmy Land & Sea Centre, Mapoon, 16 November 1963.

29 ‘Natives Moving to Cape’, *Courier Mail*, 24 January 1963, 8.

30 B. J. Scanlan, Visiting Justice, Thursday Island to Director of Native Affairs, Thursday Island, 26 June 1963, Director of Native Affairs Office (DNAO) File 1A/343, Visiting Justice—Bamaga and Gulf Missions Lockhart River, Mapoon & Weipa, Item ID 337346, QSA.

31 Director of Native Affairs to Officer-in-Charge, Police Station, Thursday Island, 14 November 1963, enclosing Removal Order No. 32/63, DNAO File 6D/25, Item ID 511511, QSA. M.V. *Gelam* was a motor vessel operated by the Sub-Department of Native Affairs.

Stuckey (1911–2000).³² It was served by the police upon 11 adult Mapoon residents, including Jean and Gilbert Jimmy, and some of their homes were destroyed.³³ Aboriginal people subject to the Queensland legislation at that time had no right of appeal against a removal order. The Jimmy family, Jean's daughter Constance and her family, Jean's brother Richard Luff and wife Victoria, Jean's sister Maggie Don and husband Frank, along with 14 other Mapoon men, women and children were aboard the *Gelam* when it sailed for Red Island Point. Jean recalled her feelings when they left Mapoon on 17 November:

The swamps were all stirred up—scared millions of birds. When we looked around we couldn't see the sun. The harbour was just covered with birds, all sorts of birds and the *Gelam* was sailing just under the shadow. When we came up right on the Cullen Point now the bow was just about to come out and the birds formed V, capital V ... Oh it was marvellous, you know we looking up to the sky and I said gee ... what these birds ... mean? I said maybe in ... years to come ... we'll fight it, fight and win the victory because it's more like a big fight between us and the Director.³⁴

Jean's commitment to the fight for her traditional homeland was sustained for the rest of her life. The journalist Claire Dunne, who travelled to Mapoon and recorded interviews with Jean in the early 1980s, found her sense of purpose remarkable, combining her traditional spirituality with the Christian religion she had been taught in the dormitory:

The man above who created you, he have a job for you and he push you. If not him, its the spirits of our people make it that way. God sees I must be the promised one who speaks on behalf of my people.³⁵

32 Director of Native Affairs to Director-General of Education, 5 July 1963, DNAO File 6D/25, Item ID 511511, QSA. Stuckey stated: 'There is the proposal that the major trouble movers shall at the recommendation of the stipendiary magistrate be removed which would mean that the situation ought not be difficult'. J. M. Stuckey, General Secretary, Australian Presbyterian Board of Missions, Sydney to W. Norgate, Presbyterian Missions Agency, Thursday Island, 5 July 1963, Aboriginal and Overseas Missions Committee correspondence file for Mapoon, 1963, Queensland Presbyterian Archives. Rev. James Stuckey served as General Secretary, Australian Presbyterian Board of Missions from 1960 to 1972. He passed away on 18 October 2000. Ted Stuckey, 'James Stuckey: Missionary 1911–2000', *Sydney Morning Herald*, 13 December 2000, 34.

33 Director of Native Affairs to Officer-in-Charge, Police Station, Thursday Island, 14 November 1963, enclosing Removal Order No. 32/63, DNAO File 6D/25, Item ID 511511, QSA; Director of Native Affairs, Thursday Island to Director of Native Affairs, Brisbane, 14 November 1963, DNAO File 6G/20, Part 2, ID506593, QSA; Aboriginal people subject to the *Aboriginals Preservation and Protection Act 1939* (Qld) had no legal right of appeal against a removal order under the Act.

34 Jean Jimmy, interview with author, Weipa South [Napranum], 1 July 1975.

35 Claire Dunne, *People Under the Skin: An Irish Immigrant's Experience of Aboriginal Australia* (Carlingford, NSW: Lotus Publishing House Pty Limited, 1988), 73. Clare Mary Elizabeth Dunne OAM (b. 1937) was a broadcaster and television personality who was involved with the development of the Special Broadcasting Service. She met Jean in Cairns while researching the lives of six prominent Aboriginal people for a proposed television series in 1980–81. Dunne's chapters (pp. 52–74) about her time with Jean are an insightful record of the Mapoon community's experiences.

When Jean and Gilbert arrived at New Mapoon there was a severe shortage of housing, due to poor planning by Queensland Government officials. The Presbyterian padre, Rev. George Taylor, reported to the church headquarters with disgust in October 1964:

When Mr Killoran was here some time ago, he admitted that what Jean Gilbert told the conference at Canberra, about the Mapoon people being forced to leave Mapoon was true ... The people arrived in November and December last year to a situation which in my opinion was scandalous. They had no houses to go into, and many promises that had been made to them had not been fulfilled. They are still badly overcrowded in the houses and this has been the cause of many visits by me to the Superintendent's office here.³⁶

The Jimmys eventually settled into life at New Mapoon but Jean continued to press for a return to her homeland. In 1964, she travelled 3,000 kilometres to Canberra to attend the annual conference of the Federal Council for the Advancement of Aborigines and Torres Strait Islanders.³⁷ She spoke about the attempts by the community to be self-sufficient and how the government broke the morale of the community.³⁸ The conference secretary, Pauline Pickford, reported that Jean was 'a most capable, dignified Aboriginal woman'.³⁹ Jean continued to lobby the Australian public through attendance and participation in national conferences during the next 10 years.⁴⁰

Following the advent of the *Aborigines and Torres Strait Islanders Affairs Act 1965*, the Queensland director of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Affairs endeavoured to increase the involvement of elected Aboriginal councillors in the management of their communities. At the first triennial election held in November 1969, Jean Jimmy recorded the highest number of votes and subsequently was elected chair of the New Mapoon Council.⁴¹ She served as chair until her resignation on 7 June 1971, prior to new council elections.⁴² In about 1974 Jean and Gilbert moved to the Weipa South community, which brought them closer to Mapoon. The construction

36 G. W. Taylor to Secretary, Aboriginal and Overseas Missions Committee, 11 October 1964, New Mapoon File, Aboriginal and Overseas Missions Committee Correspondence File, 1964, Queensland Presbyterian Archives.

37 Council for Aboriginal Rights (Victoria). Summary of the 7th Annual Conference of the Federal Council for Aboriginal Advancement, Carton Y603 (Box 5), Federal Council for the Advancement of Aborigines and Torres Strait Islanders Records, MLMSS 2999, Mitchell Library, Sydney.

38 Sue Taffe, *Black and White Together: FCAATSI: The Federal Council for the Advancement of Aborigines and Torres Strait Islanders 1958–1973* (St Lucia: University of Queensland Press, 2005), 191.

39 Taffe, *Black and White Together*, 192.

40 For example, Federal Council for Advancement of Aborigines and Torres Strait Islanders, 9th Annual Conference on Aboriginal Affairs, Canberra, April 1966; and Aboriginal and Islander Women's Conference for International Women's Year, James Cook University, 1975.

41 R. Trundle, Manager, Department of Aboriginal and Island Affairs, Bamaga, to Director, Department of Aboriginal & Island Affairs, 2 December 1969, File 9M/81, Administration—Bamaga—New Mapoon, Director of Aboriginal and Island Affairs correspondence files, Item ID 507740, QSA.

42 Acting Manager, DAIA, Bamaga, to Director, DAIA, Brisbane, 2 July 1971, File 9M/81, Administration—Bamaga—New Mapoon, Director of Aboriginal and Island Affairs correspondence files, Item ID 507740, QSA.

of a major bridge over the Mission River by Comalco in 1971 made it possible to drive by bush tracks from Weipa to Mapoon in a few hours. Jean contacted Jerry Hudson, a Mapoon man who was head stockman at Aurukun Presbyterian Mission, and invited him and his wife Ina to return and lead their people back to Mapoon.⁴³ First settling in May 1974, the Hudsons were joined by other families in September, constructing their homes from bush timbers and sheets of corrugated iron remaining from the original villages.

While much of her energy in later life was devoted to the redevelopment of her beloved Mapoon, Jean also was recognised as a leader by the people of her adopted community at Weipa South (now Napranum). She was elected a councillor of the Weipa South Council on 15 January 1982 and served one term as chair, from 18 January 1982 to 30 March 1985.⁴⁴ Jean Jimmy was probably the only Indigenous woman in Queensland and possibly Australian history to have been chair of the elected councils of two separate communities.⁴⁵ During her term at Weipa South, she oversaw the early stages of the transition from government control to a self-management model under the *Community Services (Aborigines) Act 1984* (Qld).

In 1984 Jean worked with community members to establish the Marpuna Community Aboriginal Corporation under the *Aboriginal Councils and Associations Act 1976* (Cth), and was elected the first chairperson of the corporation,⁴⁶ which was formed to assist Mapoon people back to their lands and to provide a path towards self-management of their community.⁴⁷ The corporation was successful in fulfilling its objectives and was succeeded by the Mapoon Aboriginal Council in 2000.⁴⁸ Jean never tired of advocating Mapoon people's cause. Appearing before the Senate Standing Committee on Constitutional and Legal Affairs at Weipa in 1981, she pleaded for her people to be able to return to Mapoon 'and set up their culture again. Mapoon did great things

43 J. P. Roberts, ed., *The Mapoon Story by the Mapoon People* (Fitzroy, Vic.: International Development Action, 1975), 16–17.

44 D. W. Hanlon, Manager, DAIA, Weipa to Director, DAIA, Brisbane, 5 January 1982 and minutes of Weipa South Council meeting, 18 January 1982, Administration—Weipa Aboriginal Council, File 16A/25 Part 2, Item ID 509022, QSA. Jean Jimmy's chaired her last Weipa South Council meeting on 20 March 1985. Minutes of Weipa South Council, 20 March 1985, AIA—Weipa—Administration Aboriginal Council, File 16-019-001, Item ID 646022, QSA. Alberta Cannon, Council Clerk, telegram to Department of Community Services, Brisbane, 1 April 1985, File 16-019-001, Item ID 646022, QSA.

45 New Mapoon (1969–71) and Weipa South (1982–85).

46 Registrar of Aboriginal Corporations, Certificate of Incorporation of an Aboriginal Association, Marpuna Community Aboriginal Corporation, 17 December 1984, document on website of the Office of the Registrar of Indigenous Corporations, accessed 9 April 2012, www.oric.gov.au. Silver Blanco, Chairman, Marpuna Community Aboriginal Corporation, personal comment to author, 1989.

47 Silver Blanco, [Notes on the formation of the Marpuna Community Aboriginal Corporation], 28 July 1989. Copy of document held by the author.

48 *Weipa Bulletin*, no. 1689 (31 March 2000): 1.

for the Army and Air Force during wartime. But all the people got was the destruction of Mapoon'.⁴⁹ Despite this deep sense of betrayal, Jean still was prepared to give to the nation when she considered the cause appropriate.

As a young woman, Jean was taught about bush foods and medicines by her mother and she generously shared that knowledge not with only later generations of her community, but also with the Australian Army's survival specialist Captain Les Hiddins, who recorded her information at Mapoon in 1983 (Figures 2 and 3).⁵⁰ Hiddins was conducting studies of Indigenous survival resources across northern Australia for the Australian Army, and had met Jean and other community elders during research in the Weipa–Mapoon area. Jean recalled how her mother had given her the ancient traditional method for treating blind boils with the leaves of a creeping vine: 'You have to boil the leaves or warm them against the fire. Then you just put them on the boil to make it better'.⁵¹

The traditional teaching of her parents inspired Jean throughout her life and her writing and poetry reflected her deep respect for those traditions:

The Bush was their home
They loved the smell of wild flowers
Because Nature has taught Aboriginals how to live in their own way.
For instance, when the drought is on the land
Each tribe knows how to find water
They have learnt it from animals and birds
Because animals, birds and tribes were the first created by Mother Nature in this land
They understood each other.⁵²

49 Australia, Senate Standing Committee on Constitutional and Legal Affairs, Reference: An examination of the feasibility, whether by way of constitutional amendment or other legal means of securing a compact or 'Makaratta' between the Commonwealth Government and Aboriginal Australians, Official Hansard transcript of evidence, 1983: 142. In 2010, a war memorial was opened at Mapoon to commemorate the World War II Army and Navy service of 16 Mapoon men, as well as 14 who served in the Civil Constructional Corps and community members who assisted Allied air crews.

50 'Survival Project', *Bauxite Bulletin*, no. 832 (13 May 1983): [2].

51 'M.A.P.' in *Napranum Cha: Weipa South*, no. 3 (December 1985–January 1986): 24.

52 Jean Jimmy, A history of Mapoon. Unpublished printed collection of Jean Jimmy's writing, copy given to the author by Jean Jimmy in July 1975.



Figure 2: Jean Jimmy with Captain Les Hiddins, Australian Army survival specialist, May 1983.

Source: Photograph published in *Bauxite Bulletin*, no. 832 (13 May 1983): [1].



Figure 3: Jean Jimmy at Mapoon, 1984.

Source: Portrait photograph by Charles Birkett in the possession of the author.

At Napranum on 26 April 1989, Jean Jimmy was an honoured guest of the then Queensland minister for community development, Bob Katter junior, at a ceremony to present the Deed of Grant in Trust over 183,960 hectares of former Mapoon Aboriginal Reserve lands to six Mapoon community trustees, including her only daughter Constance Annabel Cooktown.⁵³ Small-statured, and with great courage, determination and grace, Mrs Jimmy had inspired her people's struggle for their land and had won her fight with the Queensland Government. Predeceased by her husband on 11 December 1975 and survived by Constance, Jean passed away at Weipa Hospital on 17 October 1991 and was buried at the Mapoon cemetery (Musgrave outstation).⁵⁴ Her headstone unveiling ceremony was held at Mapoon on 26 June 1999.⁵⁵ A 1984 photographic portrait of Jean Jimmy by Charles Birkett at Mapoon is displayed in the foyer of the Mapoon Aboriginal Shire Council offices and the Mapoon Land & Sea Centre is named in her honour.⁵⁶

53 'Mapoon People Given Land Title', *Bauxite Bulletin*, no. 1135 (26 April 1989): 1.

54 The date that Gilbert Jimmy passed away, 11 December 1975, is noted in his Department of Aboriginal and Island Affairs file, 8G/267, Box 334, Item ID 725422, QSA. The Queensland Registrar-General does not hold a death registration for Ann Jean Jimmy. 'Mapoon Elder Passes Away', *Bauxite Bulletin*, no. 1262 (25 October 1991): 2; information transcribed from Ann Jean Jimmy's headstone, Mapoon cemetery.

55 The author attended this ceremony. (Note: Reference to this ceremony has been included because unveiling ceremonies are a very important part of the Mapoon people's cultural life and grieving processes.)

56 The Jean Jimmy Land & Sea Centre was officially named by Ms Linda Cooktown, in the presence of Mapoon Elders and Senator Jan McLucas, on 16 November 2013. The centre employs local Indigenous Rangers whose responsibilities include management and protection of the cultural and environmental heritage of the Mapoon land and sea country. They are carrying on the traditional ways so much at the heart of Jean's life's work.

Upstaged! Eunice Hanger and Shakespeare in Australia

SOPHIE SCOTT-BROWN

Early one April evening in 1950, in All Saints Hall, Brisbane, where we lay our scene, the Twelfth Night amateur theatre company put on its debut performance of *Upstage*, an original play by the company's dramatist, Eunice Hanger (1911–72), a Queensland-born teacher, playwright and Shakespeare enthusiast. As the curtain lifted and the audience settled into an expectant hush, a drawing room scene was revealed and a single female actor stood as still as a statue on the stage. What followed was an evening of Shakespearian drama—with a twist. The cast was comprised entirely of the bard's best loved female characters who, in a spirit of fun, were gathered together to elect a 'Miss Shakespeare'. Literary jokes abounded, but the play carried a more serious commentary concerning the position of women as actors in both the little (amateur) theatre movement and in Australian cultural life generally. This paper looks at how Eunice Hanger read, or rather reread, the works of William Shakespeare. Through this, it examines the nature of reading as a simultaneously social and individualistic activity, and reflects on its implications for understanding the histories of reading English writers in Australia more broadly.

Recent historiography on the reading of English writers by Australians has been largely preoccupied with the complex colonial context in which this took place.¹ Throughout most of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries Australia was the biggest market for British book exports, hampering the development of an independent Australian industry.² As John McLaren argued, 'no part of society maintained the imperial pattern more consistently than publishers and booksellers who exploited an Australian market held captive by its distance from the sources of capital'.³

1 For an overview of approaches to reading history in Australia, see Patrick Buckridge, 'The Historiography of Reading in Australia', in *Modern Australian Criticism and Theory*, ed. David Carter (Qingdao: China Ocean University Press, 2010), 139–52.

2 Martyn Lyons, 'Britain's Largest Export Market', *A History of the Book in Australia 1891–1945*, ed. Martyn Lyons and John Arnold (St Lucia, Qld: University of Queensland Press, 2001), 335–58; Brigid Magner, 'Anglo-Australian Relations in the Book Trade', *A History of the Book in Australia: Vol. 3, Paper Empires*, ed. Craig Munro and Robyn Sheahan-Bright (St Lucia, Qld: University of Queensland Press, 2006), 10.

3 John McLaren, 'Publishing of the Book in Twentieth Century', *The Book in Australia: Essays Towards a Cultural & Social History*, ed. D. H. Borchardt and W. Korsop, Historical Bibliography Monograph, no. 16 (Melbourne: Australian Reference Publications in association with the Centre for Bibliographical and Textual Studies, Monash University, 1988), 66. See also Graeme Johanson, *A Study of Colonial Editions in Australia 1843–1972* (Wellington: Elibank Press, 2000).

This went beyond the direct, physical presence of the texts, extending into an entire sociocultural apparatus encompassing everything from what was reviewed, promoted and disparaged in popular newspapers and literary magazines, to what was stocked in libraries or taught in schools or universities and how. Engagement with an English literary canon was an inherently politicised activity, one means by which English values and systems of meaning were assimilated and reproduced within an emerging Australian sense of national identity and cultural superstructure.

Perhaps the central figure in such a canon, Shakespeare's presence within colonial contexts was particularly politicised. Drawing impetus from postcolonial theory, much attention has focused on Shakespearean texts and their broader sociocultural apparatus (popular editions, textbooks, examination syllabi, official institutions and so on) as the visible traces of an insidious and ongoing British cultural imperialism.⁴ As the New Zealand Shakespearean scholar Michael Neill commented:

The decentering of Shakespeare has generally been more rhetorical than real. [T]he long and complicated history of Shakespeare's entanglement with Empire has ensured that (for better or worse) his work has become deeply constitutive of all of us for whom the world is (to a greater or lesser degree) shaped by the English language.⁵

While the cultural politics underpinning and infusing these texts undoubtedly provide a crucial optic through which to view the ideological nature of reading, this view can assume too uniform and stable a response to text from readers. As the Harvard literary scholar Leah Price observed, it risks overlooking significant tensions between the implied reader and the empirical audience.⁶ Furthermore, it does little to illuminate reading as an activity to examine how readers read, which, as Tim Dolin argued, is a localised practice characterised by trans-subjectivity.⁷

4 See Helen Gilbert and J. Tompkins, *Post-Colonial Drama: Theory Practice and Politics* (London: Routledge, 1996); Marion Campbell and Philip Mead, eds, *Shakespeare's Books: Contemporary Politics and the Persistence of Empire* (Melbourne: Melbourne University Press, 1993).

5 Michael Neill, 'Post Colonial Shakespeare? Writing Away from the Centre', *Post Colonial Shakespeare*, ed. Ania Loomba and Martin Orkin (London: New York: Routledge, 2002), 164–85.

6 Leah Price, 'Reading: The State of the Discipline', *Book History* 7 (2004): 303–20. Patrick Buckridge also emphasises the multiplicity of approaches to reading history, saying: 'The word [reading] carries not one but three distinct meanings, and this fact has influenced the range of its disciplinary canons and methodologies. The first is "reading matter" (*what* people read); the second the activity of reading itself (*how* they read); and the third is the social institution of reading (in effect, *why* they read—as when we speak about "the value of reading" or wonder gloomily about "the future of reading")'. Buckridge, 'Historiography of Reading in Australia', 139.

7 Tim Dolin, 'Reading History and Literary History: Australian Perspectives', *Australian Common Reader*, June 2008, accessed 3 January 2016, www.australiancommonreader.com/?p=13. See also 'The Secret Reading Life of Us', in *Readers, Writers, Publishers: Essays and Poems*, ed. Brian Matthews (Sydney: Australian Academy of the Humanities, 2004), 115–34.

This is the position taken by Kate Flaherty in her innovative study *Ours as We Play It* (2011), in which she argued:

To conflate Shakespeare as a static icon of cultural imperialism with what the Shakespeare play has meant, can mean and will mean in performance is too broad a stroke of criticism to be of any real use.

She continued: 'It is feasible to see Shakespeare's plays operating in Australian culture not as an occupier of space but as a space of play'.⁸ As her study further explored, Shakespeare's plays were also a site of potential cultural resistance.

This paper follows Flaherty in seeing the reading of Shakespeare in twentieth-century Australia as a complex and negotiated activity, both reinforcing and challenging the wider social order in which it took place. It further contends that a biographical approach can offer a means of bridging macro and micro perspectives on the histories of reading by considering the individual reader as a point of intersection for converging, contending and coexisting contexts in which their reading took place. The uniqueness of the experience was derived from the specific configuration of social factors that framed it.⁹ By using Eunice Hanger as a lens, this paper approaches the reading of Shakespeare as an idiographic experience and one firmly embedded within the larger sociocultural ecology in which she was situated.

The paper first considers the position of William Shakespeare as a cultural figure in Australia. It then discusses how Eunice's reading habits were shaped by her early life and education, before examining the creative reappropriation of Shakespeare in her one-act play *Upstage*. It argues that Eunice's rereading of Shakespeare suggests a dualist relationship, one cast and oscillating between personal identification and socially critical subversion.

8 Kate Flaherty, *Ours as We Play It: Australia Plays Shakespeare* (Crawley, WA: University of Western Australia Press, 2011), 20.

9 See Stephen Colclough, 'Readers: Books and Biography', *A Companion to the History of the Book*, ed. Simon Elliot and Jonathan Rose (Hoboken, NJ: John Wiley and Sons Ltd, 2011), 50–62.

Act 1: William Shakespeare in Australia

It is important to distinguish between Shakespeare the sixteenth-century playwright, and 'Shakespeare', the figure that literary critic Terry Eagleton described as:

Less an author than an apparatus—his name is merely metonymic for an entire politico-cultural formation and thus more akin to 'Disney' or 'Rockefella' than 'Jane Smith' ... The apparatus has long achieved autonomy of whatever individual gave rise to it in the first place.¹⁰

Both are equally 'real' in that they had, and continue to have, significant impact on global cultural history, but in all likelihood the man himself had little conscious intention or even ambition to become such a politicised symbol. Shakespeare was born in 1564. After several years as an actor, his career as the in-house playwright for the Globe Theatre took off in 1594. Like many of his contemporaries in the theatre, during his lifetime he lived mostly in obscurity, generally working collaboratively with actors and other writers, drawing inspiration from folk legends and historical epics, which he transformed in pieces of theatre.¹¹

The transition from man to myth began shortly after his death in 1616. In 1623, his plays were collected and published in the first folio at a time when the paper trade was in its infancy and a mass printing industry unimaginable. Such a collection was, therefore, rare and quickly became a prized object (a copy cost around £1—or over £95 in contemporary value). Recording the plays also ensured their continual performance and, as Gary Taylor noted, after actors came publishers, and after publishers came critics.¹² Shortly after the first folio appeared, a body of literary appreciation began to be published. For example, Ben Jonson wrote the eulogy to the first folio and John Milton's 'An Epitaph on the Dramaticke Poet W. Shakespeare' (1630) later appeared as the frontispiece to the 1632 edition of the folio.¹³

This alone might have been enough to ensure his reputation as a historically significant writer, but Shakespeare's fusion with English (often used interchangeably with British) national identity and political agendas further assured his prominence in English culture. Taylor further contends that Shakespeare's fortunes were closely aligned with the fall and rise of the English monarchy. On reclaiming the throne

10 Terry Eagleton quoted in Graham Holderness, *Cultural Shakespeare: Essays in the Shakespeare Myth* (Hatfield: University of Hertfordshire Press, 2001), 4.

11 For an overview of Shakespeare's life, see: Peter Holland, 'Shakespeare, William (1564–1616)', *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, 10 January 2013, accessed 7 July 2015, www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/25200?docPos=1

12 Gary Taylor, *Reinventing Shakespeare: A Cultural History from the Restoration to the Present* (London: Vintage, 1991), 13–30. See also Jack Lynch, *Becoming Shakespeare: The Unlikely Afterlife That Turned a Provincial Playwright into the Bard* (New York: Walker and Company, 2009).

13 John Milton, *John Milton: Complete Shorter Poems*, ed. Stella P. Revard (Chicester: John Wiley and Sons Ltd., 2009), 44.

and reinstating the monarchy, Charles II not only reopened the theatres, which had been closed for the duration of the Civil War and interregnum, but also promoted the playing of Shakespeare, a favourite of his executed father Charles I.¹⁴

The stage was set for Shakespeare's transformation into a national treasure; by the mid-eighteenth century, crowds were flocking to Stratford to glimpse the birthplace of the bard. In 1769 David Garrick, an actor and theatre manager, staged a Shakespeare jubilee attracting thousands. In the nineteenth century the Shakespeare Birthplace Trust was formed to oversee and regulate a flourishing Shakespeare industry. By the twentieth century enthusiasm for Shakespeare and all his qualities remained unabated. In 1970 the Globe Theatre was reconstructed to include a tourist centre.¹⁵ In 1999, Shakespeare was voted the English 'person of the millennium'.¹⁶ Richard Foulkes, reflecting on Shakespeare in the age of empire, argued that the performance of Shakespeare's plays created a sense of British nationhood both at home and overseas in the colonies, owing in part to the numbers of British actors that travelled to the far reaches of empire.¹⁷ Arguably, however, the picture is even more complex.

Turning to Shakespeare's fortunes in Australia, one way of discerning something of his presence in Australian culture is to run his name through the search engine of the *Australian Dictionary of Biography* (ADB). The ADB offers a useful research tool, albeit with limitations. As a national dictionary, entrants are chosen because they are judged to have made a notable contribution to Australian history. They are not, therefore, straightforwardly representative of the population as a whole. On the other hand, searching for references to 'William Shakespeare' within the entries is more than simply an exercise in cliometrics (counting the number of returns this yields); it offers an opportunity to situate readers within a thicker contextual background: age, location, occupation and the nature of engagement with the text.¹⁸ So, while the dictionary cannot be used in isolation to infer a nationwide pattern, it can indicate some avenues for further inquiry.¹⁹

14 Taylor, *Reinventing Shakespeare*, 13–30.

15 For a sustained critical analysis of the Shakespeare myth, see Holderness, *Cultural Shakespeare*.

16 Kate Watson Smyth, 'Shakespeare Voted Greatest Briton', *Independent*, 2 January 1999.

17 Richard Foulkes, *Performing Shakespeare in the Age of Empire* (Cambridge: University of Cambridge Press, 2002), 102–03.

18 See Katherine Bode, *Reading by Numbers: Recalibrating Literary History* (London: Anthem Press, 2012). Bode argues for the use of digital search tools for providing a much richer picture of reading as a localised activity. A useful point of comparison can be made here with the Reading Experience Database (RED) UK. First established by Simon Elliot in 1996, it was made an online resource in 2006. The database takes an expansive approach to popular reading experiences and the range of texts this included. It defines reading experience as: 'A recorded engagement with a written text—beyond the mere fact of possession'. Simon Elliot, 'The Reading Experience Database (RED), 1450–1945', RED Project, The Open University, accessed 15 December 2015, www.open.ac.uk/Arts/RED/. There are plans for an Australian equivalent of RED, see Patrick Buckridge, 'An Australian Reading Database 1788–', *The New Empiricism: eResearch and Australian Literary Culture*, ed. Katherine Bode and Robert Dixon (Sydney: Sydney University Press, 2009), 340–47.

19 See Franco Moretti, *Atlas of the European Novel, 1800–1900* (London: Verso, 1999), 146. Moretti suggests that national dictionaries can provide a useful index for inquiry.

Shakespeare's name appears 197 times in the *ADB* corpus, including in the following entries:

Table 1: A selection of results returned after entering 'Shakespeare' into the *ADB* online search engine (listed in order of birth).²⁰

Name	Date/Location	Occupation	Context of Reference
William Gore Elliston	1798–1872 Hobart, Tasmania	Schoolmaster and editor	Gave public readings of Shakespeare
Barnett Levey	1798–1837 Sydney, New South Wales (NSW)	Merchant and theatre director	Performed in and directed Shakespearean plays
Sir Alfred Stephen	1802–94 Sydney, NSW	Chief justice and legislator	Regular diner at the Shakespeare Club, NSW
George Matcham Pitt	1814–96 Richmond, NSW	Stockman and station agent	Shakespeare was favourite author
John Howard Clark	1830–78 Adelaide, South Australia	Newspaper proprietor	Shakespeare was favourite author
Mary Fanny Cathcart	1833–80 Melbourne, Victoria (Vic.)	Actress	Performed in Shakespearean plays
George Hawkins Ievers	1845–1921 Melbourne, Vic.	Estate agent	Member of a Shakespeare Society
Marian Fleming Harwood	1846–1934 Sydney, NSW	Scholar	Wrote a book: <i>The Cult of Shakespeare in Sixteenth Century Germany to the Present</i>
Alexander Leeper	1848–1934 Melbourne, Vic.	Educationist	Organiser of a Shakespeare Society
Zina Beatrice Selwyn Cumbræ-Stewart	1868–1956 Brisbane, Queensland	Community worker	Member of the Queensland Shakespeare Society
Thomas Henry Bath	1875–1956 Perth, Western Australia	Miner, politician, farmer, co-operator	Founded a Shakespeare Club
Gertrude Amy Roseby	1872–1971 Sydney, NSW	School headmistress	Inspiring teacher of Shakespeare
Enid Derham	1882–1941 Melbourne, Vic.	University lecturer and poet	Won the 'Shakespeare' Scholarship, University of Melbourne
Beatrice Mile	1902–73 Sydney, NSW	Bohemian rebel	Recited Shakespeare in the street (for money)
James Crawford	1908–73 Brisbane, Queensland	Journalist and playwright	Lectured on Shakespeare to fellow unemployed

²⁰ *Australian Dictionary of Biography online*, accessed 12 June 2015, adb.anu.edu.au/biographies/search/?scope=all&query=shakespeare&rs=&x=0&y=0. A word search using the term 'Shakespeare' turned up 217 results. Not all of these are connected with William Shakespeare the playwright; some are references to individuals with the same name or places presumably named after him. The table shows a selection of the results that directly refer to the man. While the choice of individuals named in this table was largely random, the entries included were selected to provide a reasonable reflection of the range of different relationships to Shakespeare. They also concentrated on figures who, while prominent in their own occupational fields or social spheres, were not popularly or widely known.

These results suggest a mixed picture. Shakespeare was irrefutably a figure of high culture, the height of dramatic achievement for actors and theatre directors such as Barnett Lovey and Mary Fanny Cathcart; a potent symbol of intellectual achievement for both scholars and students (Enid Derham, for example, or Marian Flemming Harwood); and a leisure pursuit for the well-to-do (a conversation topic between courses for Sir Alfred Stephen for example). Yet, when read closely, it is striking how his appeal crossed social, economic and cultural borders as he was beloved of bohemian rebel, stockman and educationalist alike. Also significant is how much of Shakespeare's cultural presence in Australia was mediated through unofficial means: though the formation of Shakespearean societies, as part of the life stories of individual actors or stage entrepreneurs and as the favoured private reading of individuals.

Richard Waterhouse has argued that, with regard to Shakespeare in Australia, the institutions of high culture were missing. There was, for example, no corollary of The Globe, or a national Shakespearean theatre company. Instead there was an aesthetic of high culture present in cultural discourse.²¹ The distinction is important. A discursive aesthetic is inherently more fluid than an institution that, from the bricks and mortar of its building to the rules and regulations of its administration, is defined by solidity. Shakespeare in Australia, then, was a malleable entity.

Situating this historically, Waterhouse argued that Shakespeare was initially far from an elite or scholarly figure. In early nineteenth-century Australia, theatre-going was a distinctly popular activity with the middle and upper classes staying away in disdain, finding both the audience, and actors, offensively crude. Furthermore, in early colonial popular culture there was a strong taste for melodrama that Shakespearean plays well satisfied.²² Waterhouse suggested that it was only in the second half of the nineteenth century that Shakespeare was subject to sacralisation, part of a wider process of distinguishing between high and low culture unfolding across the British Empire. Like Foulkes, he acknowledged the contribution of British actors and touring theatre companies who travelled to Australia seeking fame and recognition, not always forthcoming at home, in effecting this change. He notes that the growth of an urban popular culture, including sports and a wider range of theatrical entertainment, not only gave people greater choice of leisure activity but also increasingly removed Shakespearean drama, or more accurately Shakespearean language, from everyday life. Shakespeare, once disdained as popular, was effectively claimed by the colonial upper classes as a symbol of a refined and educated taste.²³

21 Richard Waterhouse, 'High Culture and Low Culture: The Changing Role of Shakespeare in Australia 1833–2000', in *O Brave New World: Two Centuries of Shakespeare on the Australian Stage*, ed. J. Golder and R. Madeleine (Sydney: Currency Press, 2001), 29.

22 Waterhouse, 'High Culture and Low Culture', 21–22.

23 Waterhouse, 'High Culture and Low Culture', 24.

In the early twentieth century, the transformation of Shakespeare from popular to elite culture intensified. Here again actors and theatre managers aided this process. Allen Wilkie, a British-born Shakespearean actor-manager, was, on his arrival in Melbourne in 1916, astonished to find that very little Shakespeare had been performed in Australia for several generations.²⁴ Moved to address such an omission, he set up a theatre company specialising in Shakespeare, going on to tour the country in 1920 and enjoying moderate, but not overwhelming, success. For all his efforts and ambition, Shakespeare remained without an institutional base, and with little funding available to support productions. As Penny Gay observed, the big Shakespearian productions of the early twentieth century were still put on by touring British companies, the most iconic of which was the 1948 Old Vic tour, which starred theatrical heavyweights (and the then-married couple) Laurence Olivier and Vivien Leigh.²⁵ Importantly, Gay noted, Shakespeare enjoyed more domestic success in the little theatre movement, which, from the 1930s, staged regular performances of his plays, suggesting a sufficient base of home-grown interest and talent. This prompted John Alden, the actor and theatre manager, to found the Australian National Professional Theatre Company in 1948, which embarked on a Jubilee Shakespeare tour in 1952.

Outside the theatre though, Shakespeare had a strong presence in Australian educational spheres. The late nineteenth century saw a mushrooming of Shakespeare societies, often publishing their own dedicated journals. He was also a regular subject of public lectures and a firm fixture in scholarly culture and educational practice. Yet much of this was discretionary. As Linzy Brady observed, in both the British and Australian schools of the early nineteenth century, Shakespeare was not initially a compulsory requirement but what she termed a form of ‘domestic didacticism’.²⁶ Adaptations of Shakespearean plays such as Charles and Mary Lamb’s *Tales from Shakespeare* (1807) were designed as attractive inducements for young readers rather than as texts to be formally studied. It was only following the introduction in Britain of public examinations in 1858 and the *Education Act 1870* that a shift occurred towards a more standardised model of educational provision that included Shakespeare on curricula and examination syllabuses. Even then, she argued, there remained a critical tension between the austere Shakespeare of the examinations and the more creative Shakespeare often taught in the classroom.²⁷

24 John Rickard, ‘Wilkie, Allan (1878–1970)’, *Australian Dictionary of Biography*, National Centre of Biography, The Australian National University, adb.anu.edu.au/biography/wilkie-allan-9096/text16039, published first in hardcopy 1990, accessed online 7 July 2015.

25 Penny Gay, ‘International Glamour or Homegrown Entertainment?’ in J. Golder and R. Madeleine, *O Brave New World*, 180–99.

26 Implying a teaching tool that was not part of a formal national syllabus but a personal, private choice made by individual teachers.

27 Linzy Brady, ‘From Domestic Didacticism to National Compulsory Examination’, in *Teaching Shakespeare Beyond the Centre: Australasian Perspectives*, ed. Kate Flaherty, Penny Gay and L. E. Semler (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2013), 10–13.

Shakespeare in Australia was a man of many parts. By the mid-twentieth century he remained an icon of a high English culture, a mark of a cultural refinement and a thorough English-language education. Yet the comparative lack of an institutionalised national presence meant that he also retained a degree of flexibility, having an equally, if not more, dynamic existence among independent readers, societies and amateur theatre groups.

Act 2: Eunice Hanger and William Shakespeare

Shakespeare was, then, an iconic cultural figure in Australia no less than in England. But how did our heroine, Eunice, encounter him? Eunice Hanger was born in Rockhampton, Queensland, in 1911, the third child of Thomas and Mfanwy Hanger both of whom were schoolteachers.²⁸ In his youth, Thomas, the son of a Rockhampton wheelwright, had been a bright student but his family's poverty had forced him to discontinue his studies and train as a pupil-teacher. He went on to a successful educational career culminating in his becoming headmaster of Gympie High School. These early restrictions fostered in him a deep value for education, in particular in literature and the arts, which he passed on to his five children, of whom Eunice and her brother Mostyn (later Sir Mostyn Hanger, a prominent Australian judge)²⁹ both won scholarships to study at university.

Eunice received a BA at the University of Queensland in 1932, later adding an MA (1940), both in the liberal arts. She joined the staff at Gympie High School in 1933, transferring to Rockhampton High School in 1940 and Brisbane High School in 1948. As a teacher Eunice was popular, and even acclaimed as outstanding. While at Brisbane High she joined a local theatre group, Twelfth Night, which began to stage some of her first plays along with adaptations of a number of authors including Shakespeare. As a director she was renowned for favouring the 'walk and talk' school of practice and for concentrating on the correct use of language in performances. Her first major success as a playwright in the little theatre movement came when *Upstage* was first performed in 1950. In this one-act comedy, Eunice protested against a lack of strong female roles in Australian amateur theatre, deliberately writing for an all-female cast and bringing together a collection of Shakespeare's best-loved heroines ostensibly to elect a 'Miss Shakespeare'. In 1958 Eunice was appointed lecturer in drama at the University of Queensland where she revitalised the University Staff Players and was the first to make production a compulsory

28 Richard Fotheringham, 'Eunice Hanger 1911–1972', *Australian Dictionary of Biography*, National Centre of Biography, The Australian National University, adb.anu.edu.au/biography/hanger-eunice-10407, published first in hardcopy 1996, accessed online 7 July 2015.

29 M. W. D. White, 'Hanger, Sir Mostyn (1908–1980)', *Australian Dictionary of Biography*, National Centre of Biography, The Australian National University, adb.anu.edu.au/biography/hanger-sir-mostyn-10408/text18445, published first in hardcopy 1996, accessed online 7 July 2015.

component of senior undergraduate renaissance theatre studies. In later life Eunice became known as a critic of the three-act realist drama, which she saw as dominating Australian theatre, and as a champion of Australian-born playwrights whose work she collected to the end of her life in 1972 (her collection is stored in the University of Queensland library).

What can this tell us about the kind of reader Eunice was? She was brought up in an environment that valued literature, the bright daughter of schoolteachers, a scholarship-winning student who studied for two degrees in the arts, and a teacher who then deciphered and disseminated her own learning to her students. She would, therefore, have had her initial reading of Shakespeare guided by teachers and lecturers, and her appreciation of his works assessed through the medium of examinations and essays. An early example of her work as a cultivated student of Shakespeare is her prizewinning essay 'The Charm of Shakespeare', published in a local newspaper when she was 17 and still a student at Gympie High School. The praise for her subject flowed, uncritical in its acceptance of his importance: Shakespeare is a 'great man', his melody is 'faultless', his verse 'full of beauties'.³⁰ As a teacher she was responsible for conveying and framing the appreciation of Shakespeare, instructing, guiding and assessing her students' literary appreciation of his works. As an actor-director heavily involved in amateur theatre, she was renowned for enforcing the correct use of Shakespearian language and stagecraft.

So far, Eunice appears as a well-educated, middle-class woman, successfully inducted into an Anglicised intellectual literary and artistic culture that, in her professional roles, she contributed towards reproducing and consolidating. At the same time, Eunice's background was more complex than simply that of the diligent student turned able teacher. Her life (1911–72) spanned a period of dramatic national change, throughout which Australia was renegotiating its relationship with Britain and its position as an independent nation in the world. The breakdown of the empire and the decline of Britain's position on the world stage had further cultural ramifications. Compared with the vibrancy and novelty offered by a youthful America and the glamour of Hollywood, traditional English culture appeared weary and outdated. Furthermore, for Western European and English-speaking nations, the mid-twentieth century was a period in which seemingly settled social conventions on class, ethnicity and gender were subject to question. The burgeoning women's movement was a major strand of this challenge, both in its focus on making women visible and in terms of the larger social critique advanced by some of its components. The creative arts offered important, more accessible, spaces for the expression and development of new ideas.

30 Eunice Hanger, 'The Charm of Shakespeare', *Sunday Mail* (Brisbane), 29 July 1928, 26.

In Eunice's specific family background, an important crucible in forming her attitudes was her father Thomas Hanger. His intellectual ambitions had been denied by poverty, giving him firsthand experience of, and a critical perspective on, social inequity, something he was determined to address in his professional life. The social mobility he had achieved, from pupil-teacher to headmaster, had come through his own efforts. When he read for a bachelor of arts at age 40 (1914, University of Queensland), he did so by correspondence, completing his assignments without direct supervision. As a thinker, Thomas was accustomed to being self-directed and driven. Despite enjoying a more consistent education than her father, Eunice also had direct encounters with inequality. While she and her brother were scholarship winners, Mostyn's achievements facilitated a high-profile career in the law, culminating in his appointment as a High Court judge. In her chosen professions, education and the dramatic arts, Eunice did not advance to leading roles, instead enjoying more modest successes. This might have been simply the result of their different ambitions and aptitudes but, undeniably, it would have been harder for Eunice as a woman to advance in quite the same way as her brother.

Nevertheless, it seems that she had acquired the family streak of independence in her thinking and reading habits. Returning to her youthful essay, 'The Charm of Shakespeare', alongside the enthusiasm of a high achieving schoolgirl for a literary icon, Eunice gave a more substantial hint of why Shakespeare was important to her: 'He gets exactly the right word from his abundant vocabulary and puts his idea just as he wants to put it'. She concluded: 'his power is infinite and infinitely valued, and probably to each reader means a different thing'.³¹ Eunice's bard was neither static nor exclusive; the root of his power lay in his use of language as a tool to vividly create and convey ideas. Social and family contexts were not alone in framing Eunice's perspectives—her Queensland location was also significant. Unlike the more populous cities of Sydney and Melbourne, both of which boasted established arts and theatre infrastructure, 1950s Brisbane did not have as extensive a theatrical culture. This would suggest that it was comparatively less accustomed, and thus less hospitable, to more experimental forms of drama, which tend to develop in response to dominant forms. The city was visited by the Old Vic 1948 tour, but on a truncated program. Alden's jubilee Shakespeare tour (1952) also briefly ventured north. Before the visit, he felt it necessary to explain the populist elements of Shakespeare to prospective Queensland audiences, presumably seeking to pre-empt cynicism or even hostility to Shakespeare as 'high culture' among the northerners.³²

Eunice shared something of this preference for Shakespeare as the people's playwright of his times. Her long-standing appreciation of Shakespearian language made her sceptical about the realist reinterpretations increasingly attractive to British

31 Hanger, 'The Charm of Shakespeare'.

32 Richard Fotheringham, 'Shakespeare in Queensland', in J. Golder and R. Madeleine, *O Brave New World*, 223.

companies during this time. In 1935 Laurence Olivier, one of the foremost actors of his generation, appeared in a performance of *Romeo and Juliet*.³³ He initially played Romeo, before swapping with director and fellow actor John Gielgud to play Mercutio in the second half of the run. Critical responses to the two performances were mixed. Olivier was seen as the more passionate and virile Romeo, but Gielgud was considered the more competent with Shakespeare's verse. Despite such reservations, Olivier continued to 'sell realism in Shakespeare'.³⁴ His *Hamlet* (1936) was deemed 'magnetic' and 'full of vitality', but lacking the linguistic grasp of the role's previous incumbent, Gielgud.³⁵ Undeterred, Olivier agreed to play Iago in *Othello* (1938). Much to the discomfort of Ralph Richardson, who kept his depiction of the Moor more orthodox, Olivier's Iago simmered with unexpressed sexual desire.³⁶ Turning what may have started as a professional weakness into a theatrical style, Olivier opened the door to a new approach to Shakespearian acting: 'un-patrician, muscular and anti-romantic', redolent with underlying class tensions.³⁷

During the Old Vic tour, Australian audiences had the chance to witness this firsthand, with Olivier taking the lead in *Richard III*. As in Britain, the performance prompted a mixed response, some critics lamenting the 'naturalistic' style and calling for a straightforward 'Australian' approach to Shakespearian performance.³⁸ In this case, 'Australian' style did not mean translating fair Verona into an outback setting and Romeo into a bushranger, but having Shakespeare as they liked him, back to basics, with linguistic proficiency favoured over the dramatic licence. As Waterhouse noted, the lack of an Australian national Shakespearian theatre company reinforced the dependency on touring British companies or reliance on localised amateur productions, unable to command the sort of prestige or financial support of a national body.³⁹ Eunice was among those sceptics. Conversely, this can be read as a conservative response from someone taught to understand and hold 'Shakespeare' in an elevated cultural position. In the twentieth century, Shakespearian language presented the major barrier to popular receptivity of his plays.⁴⁰ On the other hand, as she had written when still a teenager, Eunice saw language as integral to the conveyance of ideas, and responding to them was the personal prerogative of the reader. While playing Shakespeare always involved an act of interpretation, it was the actor's responsibility to restrict their interpretations to the perimeters set

33 Directed by John Gielgud at the New Theatre, 1935.

34 Richard Eyre, 'Laurence Olivier: The Most Revolutionary Actor of His Age', *Daily Telegraph*, 19 September 2007, accessed 23 January 2016, www.telegraph.co.uk/culture/film/3667981/Laurence-Olivier-the-most-revolutionary-actor-of-his-age.html.

35 Ivor Brown, 'Hamlet in Full', *Observer*, 10 January 1937, 15; 'The Old Vic', *Times*, 8 January 1937, 10.

36 Directed by Tyrone Guthrie with the Old Vic Theatre Company, 1938.

37 Eyre, 'Laurence Olivier: The Most Revolutionary Actor of His Age'.

38 Richard Waterhouse, 'Lola Montez and High Culture: The Elizabethan Theatre Trust in Post-War Australia', *Journal of Australian Studies* 21, no. 52 (1997): 148–58.

39 Waterhouse, 'High Culture and Low Culture', 29.

40 Waterhouse, 'High Culture and Low Culture', 24.

by language. The realist renditions offered by the likes of Olivier added an extra interpretive layer that could strain the textual content too far and even diminish its importance. This put the individual actor, and not the language and the ideas, to the fore of the performance. The audience, then, were being asked to respond to a Shakespearian play as well as a British actor's personal reading. For the forthright actor-director, performing Shakespeare demanded a faithfulness to the text—it was not the time for theatrical egotism. The impact of these convergent contexts for Eunice was a combined enthusiasm for education, literature and the arts but at the same time an independent mind and confidence in her capacity to challenge them. As an individual reader she harboured an appreciative but not uncritical mind. So, how were these formative experiences and learning environments brought to bear on her adult reading of Shakespeare?

Act 3: Upstage

One way of further gauging how Eunice interpreted Shakespeare is to consider how she used Shakespeare, appropriating and transforming the texts she had read into a different form. Her short comedy *Upstage* provides such an insight.⁴¹ The play was first performed by the Twelfth Night theatre group in Brisbane in April 1950 when Eunice, aged around 39, was firmly established in her teaching career and had a number of acting and directing credits to her name. It was written, in part, as a protest against the lack of substantial female parts in the little theatre movement that, ironically, was heavily weighted in favour of women who typically made up 80 per cent of group membership.⁴² The young Eunice had written effusively of her favourite Shakespearian heroines as 'charming, loveable women—the two Portias, Desdemona, Cordelia, Olivia, Viola and Juliet',⁴³ and she revisited many of them in *Upstage* with a cast including: Juliet (*Romeo and Juliet*, 1594), Desdemona (*Othello*, 1604), Ophelia (*Hamlet*, 1600), Cressida (*Troilus and Cressida*, 1601), Portia 1 (*Julius Caesar*, 1599), Rosalind (*As You Like It*, 1599), Viola (*Twelfth Night*, 1599), Imogen (*Cymbeline*, 1609) and Portia 2 (*The Merchant of Venice*, 1596).⁴⁴ The women were to be dressed in contemporary clothing, while the language moved between Shakespearian English, taken directly from the plays, and 1950s vernacular.

41 Eunice Hanger, *Upstage: A Comedy in One Act* (London: Samuel French, 1952).

42 Fotheringham, 'Shakespeare in Queensland', 226.

43 Hanger, 'The Charm of Shakespeare'.

44 Chronology taken from: Amanda Mabillard, 'The Chronology of Shakespeare's Plays', Shakespeare Online, 20 August 2000, accessed 11 June 2015, www.shakespeare-online.com/keydates/playchron.html. It should be acknowledged that the dates are approximate and relate to the first performances of these plays. It cannot be said with certainty exactly when they were first written.

The play is set in the 'other world drawing room' of William Shakespeare in which the women, summoned by the bard himself, gossip and bicker among themselves. It is later revealed that they are to be contestants in the first round of a 'Miss Shakespeare' competition, with further rounds, featuring other heroines, to be held later. This made a reference to the popularity of the 1950s beauty pageant, one stage on which women were allowed a presence, if not a voice or much of a personality. *Upstage* is defined by subversiveness. Eunice could have written a play with an all-female cast without reference to Shakespeare, but by drawing upon the iconic figure in English literature, she made her critique from within the same theatrical and literary culture that contributed to the restriction of women's participation in amateur dramatics in the first place. However, although working from the inside, she chose to use Shakespeare's characters in a discrete form rather than attempt a feminist reinterpretation of a Shakespearean play. Eunice reinforced her point by extracting and making use of a tension contained within Shakespeare's own portrayals of women. She juxtaposed Shakespeare's clever, cross-dressing heroines Viola, Rosalind, Portia 2 and Imogen who, as she directed in the notes preceding and introducing the characters' entries, were to appear dressed in slacks, with his classic tragic heroines including Juliet, Ophelia, Portia 1 and Desdemona directed to wear evening gowns. The play took up what one character referred to as 'the prehistoric argument of women's rights'⁴⁵ as the women debated the advantages and disadvantages of the two modes of femininity represented:

Viola: The boyish figure is the only thing nowadays.

Rosalind: *And* the outlook that goes with it, frank, outspoken—the sporting type.

Juliet: And glamour? ... There was a wave of this flat-chested, outspokenness you mention, it was merely a passing fashion, and nowadays it's glamour you want.

Desdemona: And the outlook that goes with that.

Portia 1: Men really like you to admire them you know.⁴⁶

In resuming 'the prehistoric argument of women's rights', Eunice placed Shakespearean drama in direct dialogue with contending representations of femininity in early 1950s cinematic culture that were also constructed and expressed through clothing and persona. The superstar female icons of the 1940s and 1950s showed a range of contrasting, but in many respects equally idealised, modes of femininity and female power. Stars such as Marilyn Monroe, Rita Hayworth and Grace Kelly projected images of beauty and goodness or, alternatively, glamour and smouldering sensuality. On film they were cast as either objects of male adoration and desire, or as temptresses distracting the hero from his true love or proper calling. Off-screen, their lives were no less romantic and dramatic. In 1949 Hayworth caused controversy by marrying

⁴⁵ Hanger, *Upstage*, 21.

⁴⁶ Hanger, *Upstage*, 19.

a prince and Kelly would later become the Princess of Monaco. Monroe too, despite studying for a degree in literature and art appreciation, was better known for her bombshell looks, tangled love life and tragic end.

There was, however, an alternative mode of female heroism on offer, best represented by the feisty, savvy Katharine Hepburn, who was regularly seen playing strong, articulate female characters, often dressed in trousers. In 1949 she appeared with Spencer Tracy (her real-life partner) in *Adam's Rib*, a story of two married lawyers opposing each other in court, prompting a battle of wits in a bid to win the case. In 1950, she appeared as Rosalind in a production of *As You Like It*, staged in New York's Cort Theatre, playing to full audiences for 148 consecutive shows.⁴⁷ Hepburn, the daughter of progressive parents, was herself an athletic and outspoken modern woman, risking her career with her public condemnation of the anti-communist movement. She lived much of her life independently, refusing to conform to the demands of the Hollywood publicity machine.⁴⁸ The cinematic culture of the early 1950s, then, offered two distinctive visions of femininity, one seemingly hyper-feminised, the other drawing upon qualities more traditionally associated with men. The effect of the latter was, arguably, not to transform women into men, but to create an ambiguous or transient space. In many respects, the androgynous qualities displayed by a figure like Hepburn anticipated, albeit tentatively, a key aesthetic in the subsequent 1960s countercultural revolution and in strands of the emerging feminist movement.

Shakespeare too had written in a context in which notions of gender were a prominent feature in the collective consciousness. He was, after all, the quintessential Elizabethan writer with all of his major works appearing in the decades following the defeat of the Spanish Armada (1588) and Queen Elizabeth I's dramatic transformation into a female war leader. This was also a period in which bodily issues (or lack of) were prominent for other reasons. By the 1590s, there was no hope that Elizabeth, then in her sixties, would produce an heir, leaving uncertain the fate of England after her death. Despite, or perhaps because of, this uncertainty, the late sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries were a fertile period in literature and the arts, with much of what is commonly associated with Elizabethan culture produced during this time.⁴⁹ To this extent, both the 1590s and the 1950s can be seen as compressing into their cultural forms some consciousness of, and response to, challenges and impending changes to existing social and political structures.

47 In 1955 Hepburn toured Australia with the Old Vic theatre company playing in a number of Shakespeare's comedies, including portraying Portia in *The Merchant of Venice*.

48 Andrew Britton, *Katharine Hepburn: Star as Feminist* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1994).

49 For example Edmund Spenser, Ben Jonson and Christopher Marlowe.

In terms of how this was manifested in Shakespeare's plays, while characters like Puck (*Midsummer Night's Dream*, 1595) showed a playfulness with gendered characteristics as a fairy or sprite, even a boy one, he is rarely manly in a conventional sense. *Merchant of Venice* (1596) was the first to make this device central to the plot and to focus it on a human woman rather than a supernatural being. Portia's cleverness as Balthazar, the young man of the law, provides the play's climax that, despite being described as a comedy, contains intensely dramatic moments, not least in Portia's famous speech concerning 'the quality of mercy'. *As You Like It* (1599) and *Twelfth Night* (1599) followed shortly after and, here again, disguise permitted the women to perform important roles and to address male characters on an equitable footing, something not as evident among Shakespeare's other female characters.⁵⁰ In *Cymbeline* (1609), written and performed six years after the Queen's death and James I's coronation in 1603, Imogen's disguise as Fidele does not have the same narrative significance, nor she the same dramatic presence, of the earlier examples.

Eunice's preferred mode of femininity is made clear. *Upstage* gives an explicit advantage to the slacks-wearers. For example Imogen, referred to as an 'accidental' slacks-wearer, remarks, 'girls in slacks are strong-minded, they take their futures into their own hands', implying that women in this mode (and this apparel) could carry, even command, a story alongside their male counterparts. The play also has the slacks-wearers, led by Portia 2, the first and most audacious of the slacks-wearers, doing the most to disrupt protocol, interrupting speeches, refusing formalities and, as the stage directions firmly instruct, laughing frequently, even mockingly, at the use of Shakespearian language. By contrast, the girls in gowns see their futures as inextricably interwoven with their corresponding males, often resulting in a tragic demise, as Desdemona sighs dismally: 'Yes, it's a man's world and when your man doesn't want you anymore, or when he's dead, you might as well be dead'.⁵¹ Without a man, then, female presence on the stage was not only unnecessary, but also impossible. Reinforcing this, the gown-wearers chastise the slacks-wearers for their disrespectful behaviour. Here it is Juliet—perhaps Shakespeare's most iconic tragic-romantic heroine and, supposedly, the epitome of childlike innocence and femininity—who takes the role as instigator. The somewhat cynical depiction of Juliet in the play further reveals something of Eunice's position. Far from innocent, she is presented as acutely conscious of the sexual power contained within her form of femininity and wields this as a tool to achieve what she wants (see Juliet quote above). In this sense, the debate is more about the most effective form of femininity for the manipulation of men than it is about the mode most empowering for women.

50 This is not to imply that other of Shakespeare's females do not have strong roles *as females*. Lady Macbeth (*Macbeth*, 1606), Beatrice (*Much Ado About Nothing*, 1598) and Kate (*The Taming of the Shrew*, 1590) all have strong characters and powerful speeches but these are often framed in a combative mode, as a form of inter-gender sparring rather than as a reciprocal conversation.

51 Hanger, *Upstage*, 16.

The action comes to a climax when Portia 2 and Juliet go head-to-head over Romeo who, it is revealed, has been secretly courting Portia 2 on the side. Portia 2 argues that instead of coquetry and misery, she has offered him 'frank honest friendship as well as love'.⁵² This time, however, the clever noblewoman is not triumphant. Juliet reveals that she knows that in *The Merchant of Venice* Portia 2 deliberately selected the song that played in the background as Bassanio, her would-be lover, was forced to choose a bride by casket lottery. Her shrewd choice of song ('Tell me, where is fancy bred') stirred memories that prompted him to correctly pick out the casket that bore her name. This is the secret that Juliet threatens to reveal to 'Will' (Shakespeare) who, we are told, thought the song 'a happy accident' (in the actual play the episode is indeed left ambiguous⁵³) and did not suspect Portia's sleight of hand. That Portia 2 is horrified by Juliet's threat and gives up Romeo to her rival to protect her secret makes two suggestions: that the playwright himself would not be happy to learn that such female cleverness and subterfuge had been used against him and also that, for Eunice, subversion could go only so far. It could not amount to total defiance.

This was not the only jibe to be levelled at the great bard, and more particularly his elevated position in literary culture. Not only is his name consistently shortened to the informal and familiar 'Will', there are numerous innuendos to his own lack of fidelity to his wife Anne Hathaway, his slovenly habits as a writer and his tendency to waste his money at *The Mermaid* tavern.⁵⁴

The characters also discuss the trajectory of his career knowingly, for example:

Juliet: Did it work out alright?

Imogen: Perfectly Juliet. I had a happy ending. I belong to the last period.

Portia 2: I don't. I had a happy ending but we middle period girls worked for it. I consider I earned my happiness.⁵⁵

This discussion develops into literary critique. Portia 1 (the loyal wife of Brutus in *Julius Caesar*), a gown wearer, argues that the cleverness, comedy and happy endings of the slacks-wearer's plays are 'common place', 'potboilers', and a product of Shakespeare's later period when he was past his best.⁵⁶ It is, she continues (perhaps to articulate the views of a dominant literary establishment), the tragedies that really matter. This the slacks-wearers reject in a storm of animated protest with Viola claiming to have the best poetry, Rosalind the best prose and Portia 2 the best

52 Hanger, *Upstage*, 31.

53 William Shakespeare, *Merchant of Venice*, Act 3, scene 2.

54 Hanger, *Upstage*, 24.

55 Hanger, *Upstage*, 14.

56 Hanger, *Upstage*, 18. Here it must be assumed that she is referring to *As You Like It* (1599) and *Twelfth Night* (1599), as *The Merchant of Venice* (1596) appeared before *Julius Caesar* (1599), *Hamlet* (1600) and *Othello* (1604), although not before *Romeo and Juliet* (1594).

laughs, all significant advances on the heavy-handedness of the tragedies. As Imogen says: 'There's quite as much thinking in comedy as in tragedy you know', to which Portia 2 adds (one suspects with pointed meaning): 'And more social criticism'.⁵⁷

The most telling critique of all comes at the very end of the play when the imminent arrival of the man himself is announced, although he is never actually seen. This is done through the full quotation of Milton's 'Epitaph on Shakespeare' (1630) which begins with the lines:

What needs my Shakespeare for his honoured bones?
The labour of an age in piled stones?
Or that his hallowed relics be hid
Under a starry pyramid.⁵⁸

In this poem, Milton, writing in the first half of the seventeenth century, was concerned to honour Shakespeare and elevate him to the position of literary deity beyond mere 'mortal monuments'. Yet, albeit unwittingly, the epitaph also offers an alternative reading, one that appears to anticipate and critique something of the 'bardolatry' that was to follow. The poem goes on: 'Then that our fancy of itself bereaving, does make us marble with too much conceiving'. This line addresses the dangers of idolisation that risked paralysing, or turning to marble, the receptivity of what Shakespeare did best—writing and staging plays. The closing lines further reinforce this: 'That kings for such a tomb would wish to die'. A king who prefers death and an elegant monument rather than life and action is not a good leader of people. The choice of Milton's epitaph is a powerful and revealing conclusion to the play. Given that Eunice was an experienced teacher of the liberal arts, it is unlikely that it can be seen as anything other than a deliberate, expressive choice.

While subversion was the play's dominant mode, like Portia 2 it stopped short of total defiance. The humour depended largely on caricature that required an in-depth knowledge of a character's essential dramatic traits, playfully parodied but fundamentally respected. In the play, Ophelia is frequently made to exclaim 'oh yes I'm *dying* to hear it' or 'I'd have gone simply *mad*'.⁵⁹ Lady Macbeth is suitably bloodthirsty, Imogen artless and Portia 2 quick-witted; all are captured with precision according to type, enhanced by a skilful interweaving of direct lines and speeches from the plays into the otherwise 1950s vernacular dialogue. This obvious expertise applied not only to the plays but also extended to the biographical-historical context of Shakespeare the man, to subsequent scholarly critique of Shakespeare-the-myth and to Shakespeare's presence in contemporary theatre and cinematic culture, such as Olivier's film version of *Hamlet*, released in 1948. Through these layers of intertextual reference, *Upstage* demonstrated a thorough knowledge not only of Shakespeare but also of the whole discursive and performative apparatus surrounding him.

57 Hanger, *Upstage*, 18.

58 John Milton, 'Epitaph on William Shakespeare' (1630).

59 Hanger, *Upstage*, 12, 14.

However, the most important aspect of *Upstage*, was that it retained a comedic outlook and did not tip over into satire. As a literary strategy, comedy may play with and subvert norms; it may, as Imogen and Portia 2 acknowledge, be critical, suggesting the need to look at a situation and laugh at its silliness or irrationality. But the general mood is redemptive rather than the bitter, cynical humour of satire. The reader or viewer can laugh along with the hapless protagonists, knowing that with each disaster they will pick themselves up, dust themselves down and, hopefully, learn a lesson. They may even triumph in the end. While *Upstage* teased at the reverence placed upon the bard, it did so affectionately, never dismissing him out of hand. Arguably, the purpose here was to act as a corrective to the rereading of Milton's epigraph, the warning that idolisation obscured what Shakespeare really was: the player's playwright, who wrote robust stories for a wide audience. For Eunice, with her passion for his rich use of language, in which was encoded all manner of human experiences, this was the Shakespeare she wished to reclaim for women actors.

Epilogue

What can be drawn from Eunice's rereading of William Shakespeare? From a young age her disposition as a reader was shaped by two combining and contending modes: receptive and critical. She brought these to bear on her reading of Shakespeare, encountering him both as a rich intellectual resource and also as part of a dominant literary and theatrical culture that provided women with limited opportunities to participate. In her rereading of Shakespeare, she utilised his literary status but also subverted it to make her point. At the same time, as a playwright and actor, she demonstrated a deep knowledge of and appreciation for his work. In this way, Shakespeare was at once a teacher-mentor and a point of critical departure for Eunice and the young women of the Twelfth Night amateur drama group.

Eunice Hanger was one individual and it is not wise to extrapolate her experiences to all Australian readers of Shakespeare. What she demonstrates is the complexity experienced by Australians encountering English writers and the extent to which reading was a continually negotiated and localised activity. These writers and their works were inscribed with loaded messages of power relations but they were also sources of intellectual and emotional stimulus, addressing large and abiding human questions. Reading could be both, and almost simultaneously, a restrictive and emancipatory activity, shaped by and struggling between multiple, overlapping sociocultural, political and personal contexts. In Eunice's case, the struggle had a relatively happy ending. Moving deftly between inspiration, appreciation and critique, she used Shakespeare as a platform to forge a space for her own voice, contributing, as she did so, to a wider process of cultural challenge and social change.

Frederick Dalton (1815–80): Uncovering a life in gold

BRENDAN DALTON

My father died in 1997 at 70 years of age. He had grown up without a father. In 1927, a few months after my father's birth, my grandfather Herbert Arthur Dalton died. The male influences in my father's early life were his maternal uncles—the Leonards—and the Christian Brothers. He grew up with a very strong sense of his own history as fundamentally Irish Australian, Catholic, working class and, in spite of his name, as a Leonard. Dalton being a fairly common Irish name, he assumed that his father's family had the same background. For my father there was pride in this ancestry; pride based in the love he felt for the unpretentious, deeply religious, funny, heroic (World War I being a very big part of his family story) and loving people, the aunts and uncles that he had known. While he may have been comfortable with this story, my father felt its contradictions, at times deeply.

We have one photograph of my Dalton grandfather, bending to reward a happy and well-trained dog: an Airedale. The man is already 50, tall, in a dark suit and moustachioed in the style of Henry Lawson, almost stereotypically 'Australian' from the period before World War I. His look could not be more different to the big-eared, long faces and shorter statures of the Leonard males. I have known this photograph all my life and I also know that my father rarely looked at it. Perhaps the mystery of his father was too great and the need to know more, too profoundly insatiable.

Apart from the photograph, my father knew some facts of his father's life: that he had worked for the financier and company director Sir John Garvin; that he had managed Garvin's rural properties and had trained his polo ponies. My grandmother was in service in one of the Garvin households where the two had met and, in 1922, married—my grandfather was 47 and my grandma, Barbara Catherine Leonard, was 23. As a small boy my father said that he had once met one of his Dalton aunts, an encounter not fondly recalled with a tall woman dressed in black; the encounter had scared him. He knew very little about his grandparents, only that his grandfather, Frederick, had some official position at Forbes and that there may have been an obituary in a Sydney newspaper.

In the mid-1980s my father suffered from several serious medical conditions. A discussion with my doctor about family medical history led me to realise how little I knew about the Daltons. So, on a cold, grey, Canberra day in July, seeking shelter in the National Library of Australia, I talked to a librarian about the meagre

scraps of information I had on Frederick Dalton. I was able to browse the stacks for the thick blue volumes of the New South Wales (NSW) *Police Gazette*. Within 20 minutes, references began to appear to appointments as a gold commissioner, police magistrate and warden in places like Uralla (1860), Nundle (1864), Forbes and Grenfell (1867 and beyond). On a later visit, the librarians took me to the microfilm readers to review issues of the *Sydney Morning Herald* (*SMH*) and other colonial newspapers. If you have experience in searching through an unindexed nineteenth-century newspaper on a microfilm reader, you will know how headache-inducing it is to search for one name. Among the jumble of news, editorials and obituaries, no reference appeared to Frederick Dalton. However, among the advertising from January 1881, a large government notice stood out, seeking information on the whereabouts of Frederick Dalton Esq., police magistrate, Forbes.¹

This revelation of my great-grandfather's disappearance was shocking: a senior official late in his career vanishing without a trace. For his family in 1880 his disappearance must have been devastating. Combined with my grandfather's late marriage and relatively early death, his disappearance also provided a possible explanation for our lack of knowledge about our Dalton relations. The information suggested there was much more to be discovered, but I still had little understanding about what a gold commissioner, police magistrate or warden was, or about Frederick Dalton's life. That is where my research may have stayed. However, in 2012 a professional interest in technology, and a suggestion from my eldest brother, led me to the historic newspapers searchable through the National Library of Australia's Trove web portal. Entering details relevant to what I knew of Dalton's life, immediately I began to uncover more detail on him than I had imagined existed, not just his appointments and promotions, but information about his career, his family, and, eventually, his thoughts and views of the communities he worked in. Equally important, I was able to identify a series of articles in the *SMH* as almost certainly the work of Frederick Dalton.²

1 *Evening News* (Sydney), 10 January 1881, 1.

2 There are about 90 articles in the series, most using the byline 'Special Reporter' common in goldfields and other special reports in the *Sydney Morning Herald* from the gold rush era. The series covers tours of the Western, Southern and Northern goldfields over a period of two years from mid-1858. Giving a wealth of detail on the goldfields and goldfields life, these articles are well known and widely quoted. Authorship, however, has been unclear because of the nineteenth-century practice of not naming journalists. I had come across references to Dalton having written for Fairfax, but I had not been able to attribute articles to him. In early 2014, based on two references to a Mr Dalton of the Fairfax Company making donations to the Sydney Museum of geological specimens from specific locations I was able to triangulate the locations, times and nature of the specimens with articles from the same locations, at the same times and referring to the same geological issues. I have since found more circumstantial evidence for his authorship; Dalton taking up his first gold commissioner position in Uralla, at about the time that the articles stop, also in Uralla. More recently I have used Trove to find references from a Tasmanian newspaper in the 1870s to a Mr Dalton who had written from Adelong in 1859 (in turn referencing Rev. W. B. Clarke's 1860 book which used Mr Dalton's analysis, see note 22) and made accurate predictions based on geological analysis; this appears to reference the southern goldfields tour also in 1859. Lastly, with the help of Dr Peter Crabb (researching another gold commissioner journalist and colleague of Frederick Dalton, Charles de Boos), I was put in touch with research being undertaken by Dr Alexis Antonia from the University of Newcastle who is using software to analyse digitised texts. Her analysis shows that the *SMH* articles from the goldfields between 1858 and 1860 use very similar language, grammar and style to later documents from the 1870s authored by Frederick Dalton.

A dinner at Grenfell

Located 350 kilometres south-west of Sydney, Grenfell was proclaimed on 1 January 1867 and, by 1877, was a settled and prosperous community of several thousand citizens. During its first decade, it had contributed millions of pounds to the wealth of the colony. The town's foundation, wealth and population all sprang from gold. The town was situated on the site of the original gold diggings astride Emu Creek, a few kilometres north-east of the Weddin Mountains. Europeans had settled the area in the late 1830s establishing a few large sheep stations.³ The area continued to be home to Aboriginal people as it had for tens of thousands of years, but by 1877 their presence was recorded only in newspaper reports of proceedings in the magistrate's court.

At 9 pm on Monday 11 June 1877 a banquet was held in the town to inaugurate the new court of quarter sessions and to welcome its new judge. For the town in its tenth year, it was also a coming of age celebration. A local journalist described the festivities:

There were roast turkey, duck, fowl, tongue, with vegetables, including green peas. There were vases filled with fragrant flowers as ornament ... There was every variety of puddings, tarts, custards, jellies, oranges, apples, pears, muscatels, and nuts. Nor should we omit to mention the abundance and excellence of the wines, spirits, ale and porter, and the superior manner in which everything was served. In each department all was of the best class, and the wants of the guests were anticipated by the alacrity and care of a numerous and skilful body of attendants.⁴

Presiding over the feast was the police magistrate Frederick Dalton. At 62 he was already suffering the consequences of a hard life, with years spent working on goldfields and camping in the bush on several continents. He had been associated with Grenfell from its beginning, describing his first night in the area in November 1866:

It was then so much of a wilderness that [I] had some difficulty in finding the locality of the goldfield. Literally there was no road to it. Upon [my] arrival [I] managed to obtain shelter for a night under a sheet of bark.⁵

3 Brundah station, originally surrounding the town of Grenfell to the south-east, was taken up by Mr John Butler Wood at the age of 17 in 1836. Two years earlier Wood, from an established squatter family, was one of the first whites to explore the area. His reminiscences, published after his death, describe the large Aboriginal population of the area, and the tension between the newcomers and the original inhabitants. The frontier was only 'settled' after violence and murder on both sides, but with shockingly callous, murderous tactics employed by some of the squatters and their shepherds. A description can be found in the Grenfell Record and Lachlan District Advertiser, 14 January 1919, 2.

4 Grenfell Record and Lachlan District Advertiser, 16 June 1877, 2–3.

5 Grenfell Record and Lachlan District Advertiser, 16 June 1877, 2–3.

The Weddin or Emu Creek rush was big, and government, after more than a decade of rushes, was quick to see the need to bring order to the field. So Dalton, an experienced gold commissioner and police magistrate, was ordered to station himself there. There is no record of how he spent his second night on the field, most likely he gave up his sheet of bark for a tent and quickly had a site marked out for his official residence on what became known as Camp Hill. In December he was briefly joined by the gold commissioner from Forbes, 20 miles to the north, who reported favourably on the field and quickly left.⁶ A surveyor had also been sent and his energies ensured the basic street plan of the town of Grenfell had been laid out before the end of 1866. These were temporary visitors; Dalton's job was to stay.

A journalist from Bathurst visited in January 1867 and described the goldfield at the height of its first summer, with a population of over 5,000 diggers:

A cloud of dust was hovering over the town as if from some mighty conflagration ... dust was omnipotent and accompanied by a fiery sun and strong wind the reverse of pleasing or delightful.⁷

The noise of mining operations was incessant. A rush site was a place of intense physical activity, with miners digging and sometimes blasting through rock, often only a few feet from where they slept. Amid the maelstrom the new boom town was forming:

The town of Grenfell extends some two miles already, and is hourly lengthening at each end ... In it are situated the principal buildings, the two banks ... upwards of forty public houses all licensed, some built of iron, some of weatherboards, some of bark, while others are composed of all three together, and some even consist of a few poles held together by stout calico.⁸

Frederick Dalton Esq: A biography

Frederick Dalton had been a world traveller, digger, social commentator, columnist, geologist and goldfields magistrate. An influential public figure, his activities were well documented in the newspapers and official journals of his time. The lives of many of his friends and colleagues are recorded in the *Australian Dictionary of Biography*, but fate, and the nature of his contribution to early Australian public life, meant that his life and work has been largely forgotten. In 1872 in evidence to the NSW royal commission into the regulation of gold mining, Dalton (then a goldfields magistrate of over 10 years standing) stated that he had arrived in the

6 *Illustrated Sydney News*, 15 December 1866, 3.

7 *Empire* (Sydney), 8 January 1867, 5.

8 *Empire* (Sydney), 8 January 1867, 5.

colony in 1853. Mr Robert Masterton Vaughn, justice of the peace at Grenfell and soon to be member of the NSW Legislative Assembly, was vice chairman of the banquet on that winter night in 1877. In one of his several speeches he recalled:

How strangely things came about in this world ... he first met their worthy Chairman, Mr Dalton, many years ago, when crossing the plains from the Atlantic to the Pacific, in the States of America, both then on their way to another land of gold and excitement.⁹

That Dalton came to Australia from California is corroborated by Vaughn and others, but little else is certain about his early life. He claimed to have been born in Edinburgh in 1815, his father Colonel Tudor Dalton. His later writings suggest that he had been educated in Scotland and that he was well read. He seems to have had knowledge of literature, history, science, economics and theology, and his understanding of theoretical and practical geology at a time when the science was in its infancy suggests training, but no evidence for this has been found. It is also possible that, as well as the United States of America (USA), he travelled throughout the United Kingdom and Europe.

Dalton had crossed the Pacific to get to Sydney after spending time in North America: 'In the year 1852 I travelled through the Utah territory, situated in the heart of the great American desert, 1200 miles from the nearest abode of civilized man'.¹⁰ Calling himself a 'settler' in the USA, his writings suggest he had been there and in Canada for some years before his journey to California. He may have held some kind of official position in California in relation to gold, or he may have been there simply as a digger. Dalton admired but was also critical of the USA, in particular 'the insecurity of life and property; the ordeal of blood, anarchy, and confusion that every State founded by the American Union has passed through'.¹¹ His criticisms of the American frontier may have had a personal element. In reminiscences, he was described on several occasions as having a malformed or wry neck. In at least one account this was attributed to him having run afoul of the lynch mob in California: did a mob attempt to hang him? It certainly made a good story but his wry neck may have also been caused by one of many riding accidents. We know that Dalton had a very personal experience of frontier lawlessness. He describes being caught up in frontier tensions in the Utah Territory where, 'my being mistaken for a Yankee nearly cost me my life, proving myself an Englishman saved it'.¹²

In 1852 news of the discovery of gold in NSW reached the west coast of America, and by 1853 Dalton was in Sydney. Between 1853 and 1858 he tried his luck in search of gold on the Victorian fields, in northern NSW and in southern Queensland. In

9 *Grenfell Record and Lachlan District Advertiser*, 16 June 1877, 2–3.

10 *Sydney Morning Herald*, 26 January 1859, 3.

11 *Sydney Morning Herald*, 20 April 1859, 5.

12 *Sydney Morning Herald*, 26 January 1859, 3.

all likelihood, he is the Mr Dalton described as one of the discoverers of the diggings at Fairfield not far from Tabulam.¹³ In 1856 he married Rosa Lavinia Wood; he was 41 and she was 18. Two years later their first child was born at Tabulam and Dalton recorded his profession on the birth certificate as 'farmer'. He may have tried farming after some success as a prospector. His intimacy with the problems faced by 'new chum' farmers attempting to replicate modern 'scientific' farming techniques in the bush is reflected in one of his *SMH* columns: 'A saying ... current both in the Canadas and the Western States, that the 'emigrant capitalist farmer must first be ruined before he can succeed', and experience justifies the assertion'.¹⁴

Dalton's next decision in mid-1858 was to leave hearth and home for two years. Opting for a steady income, but often a bed under the stars, he took on the job of a goldfields columnist for the *SMH*. His first column was a description of the 'Western Road' out of Sydney and over the Blue Mountains to the western goldfields, the settlements along the way, the geology and appearance of the landscape, the engineering of the roads, its bridges and the mountain passes. From the start he commented on NSW society as he found it and as he thought it could be.

Dalton seems to have stayed on the goldfields of the western slopes of the Great Dividing Range for almost a year. In his articles, collectively titled 'A Visit to the Western Goldfields', he travels up the water courses talking to diggers, describing their habitations, the sites of rushes and former rushes, the towns that are beginning to be established, and the characteristics of the Chinese, Australian born, European and American diggers. He gives detailed descriptions of the geology and geography of the gold bearing regions, information on what the digger will find there, and the prospects for gold, based on the author's geological analysis.

13 *Sydney Morning Herald*, 17 March 1858.

14 *Sydney Morning Herald*, 28 January 1859, 3.



Figure 1: Frederick Dalton's recorded travels in NSW, the gold regions he wrote about and the towns where he and Rosa were based in the course of their public service career. In his year on the western goldfields his route followed the watercourses criss-crossing the mountainous tableland to the north of Bathurst. His travels to the south and north followed the more direct routes shown.

Source: Map reproduced with the kind permission of Dr Peter Crabb and Clive Hilliker, Fenner School of Environment and Society, The Australian National University.

Dalton the journalist

During 1859 Dalton travelled south to the foothills of the Snowy Mountains and the gold town of Adelong, writing a series entitled 'A Visit to the Southern Goldfields'. In his final series, 'A Visit to the Northern Goldfields', he travelled up the Clarence River to the northern goldfields, Tabulam and beyond, almost to the Queensland border, ending in early 1860, the last article posted from Uralla in northern NSW.¹⁵ *SMH* columnists rarely received attribution and Dalton's authorship of these articles went unrecognised until 2014. There are regular references to his writing and work as a geologist of gold in the newspapers for the decade after his columns appeared. His views on gold in quartz from the goldfield at Adelong are quoted by the Rev. W. B. Clarke, sometimes styled the father of Australian science, in his 1860 book *Researches on the Goldfields of Southern Australia*.¹⁶ The gold rushes were mass movements of diggers, informed mainly by rumour and luck, and little influenced by scientific analysis. Dalton's writing brought a level of empirical analysis backed by theory to *SMH* readers. He covered each of the major fields of NSW and commented on prospects elsewhere, informed by Clarke and Count Strzelecki's earlier work on the geology of NSW. His geological explanations were detailed and perhaps dry for a lay audience, but he sought to demystify science. After a discussion of the chemical and geological process that led to the creation of the quartz reefs at Adelong, he commented that:

Long dissertations written upon the dipping and rising of quartz reefs, according to some geometrical rule, will, I fear prove to be as the philosopher's stone of the middle ages. Nature is a simple chemist, and varies her productions according to the materials upon which she operates.¹⁷

A few weeks before Charles Darwin's publication of *On the Origin of Species*, Dalton shared with his reader a profound sense of awe at the scope of geological time observable through science. Still in the bustling boom town of Adelong, he wrote:

If a granite pebble could write its history, what man's life would suffice to enable him to read, to follow it in its varied migrations during the lapse of a thousand ages through the incandescent fires of the new born earth, the ocean's depths, and the wreck of continents.¹⁸

15 As well as the formally titled "A Visit to..." articles, there are several stand-alone essays and three articles about the trip from the western fields south to Adelong, each individually tilted according to the main towns he encountered on the way.

16 Rev. W. B. Clarke, *Researches on the Goldfields of Southern Australia*, (Sydney: Redding and Wellbank, 1860). This work may owe more to Dalton's influence than attributed; for example, Clarke's chapters on the economics of gold mirror articles written by Dalton in the previous year.

17 *Sydney Morning Herald*, 28 September 1859, 8.

18 *Sydney Morning Herald*, 19 September 1859, 2.

He was equally interested in other themes, in particular how the gold mining industry could be improved with appropriate government support. In one example (again from Adelong), he called on the government to provide more scientific support for the diggers by the appointment of a government chemist to advise on the extraction of gold from ore.¹⁹ Appropriate forms of government assistance to the mining industry would be a topic of public debate over the next decade.

Dalton's columns engaged with the other political topics of the day, including state support for the Church of England, education and land reform. He was a member of the Free Church of Scotland, which argued that state support had led the established church to become remote from its people and their communities. Dalton and his fellow believers thought that NSW, with its new and increasingly democratic self-government, was in a position to change the status quo inherited from the United Kingdom. His travels through NSW gave him a unique perspective on rural society and allowed him to develop the theme of bringing Christianity to the goldfields and rural NSW as a necessary condition to the establishment of a civil society. This could be done, he believed, by providing state support for all Christian sects (with the exception of Mormonism) to support the foundation of rural churches.²⁰ He painted a sometimes bleak picture of rural life dominated by ignorance, lawlessness and alcohol-induced indolence. In addition to a Christian ministry, he advocated state support for education. He wrote about what he saw and, in so doing, brought the plight of rural communities before his audience, adding fuel to the reformist fire:

How the unhappy children are fed is a mystery; that they are fed somehow is pretty certain as they are numerous, their little spare forms and joyless faces may be seen scattered amongst the huts, or gathered in groups listlessly passing away the precious hours under the shade of some huge log; poor children, theirs is a dreary existence—nurtured in ignorance, familiarised with vice from their cradle, unhabituated to the restraints of civilization ... The country is responsible to the Christian world for the education of these infants; while we are splitting hairs, weighing atoms, and battling for the supremacy of dogmas or creedless systems of education, they are fast approaching a state of primeval barbarism, and their benighted and lost souls will cry to Heaven for vengeance upon those who have thus left them to perish.²¹

19 *Sydney Morning Herald*, 4 October 1859, 8.

20 *Sydney Morning Herald*, 26 January 1859, 3.

21 *Sydney Morning Herald*, 25 October 1859, 3.

Dalton maintained that government land distribution policies, little changed from those of a colonial plantation society dominated by large landholders, were very much to blame for the state of rural society:

We have hitherto been endeavouring to build a house by commencing at the garret—to plant a nation without a yeomanry—and what have we produced[?] Let any man visit the clusters of pothouses in the interior, miscalled towns and villages.²²

His use of the word ‘yeomanry’, introduced in his first column, advertised his views in a political debate that had been underway for over a decade, and aligned his thoughts with reformist circles in Macquarie Street and Westminster. Samuel Sidney, in his popular 1852 work *The Three Colonies of Australia*, wrote:

Australia was a country in which any industrious man could thrive; that there was ample verge and room enough for millions; that land which squatters then and now assert to be only fit for sheep pasture would support yeomanry in comfort and independence.²³

Sidney believed that Britain’s vanishing ‘pastoral arcadia inhabited by sturdy 40 acre yeomen ... could be revived in Australia’.²⁴ He was influenced by Charles Dickens, whose own widely popular magazine expressed similar views about the opportunities in Australia. Dickens and Sidney joined literary forces with Australian reformers like Caroline Chisolm, linking social and land reform in Australia to a broader political reform agenda in Britain.²⁵ Perhaps because they were brought up on the art and literature of romanticism, this notion of an idealised, lost British arcadia struck a chord with mid-Victorian readers and it permeates much of Dalton’s writing. Dalton took up the cause of land reform in rural NSW, with the digger cast as yeoman. His writing and his thoughts on reform are underpinned by a social and economic framework combining scientific advice to industry, assisting a landed and thus self-sufficient digger to better direct his energies, and creating wealth in Christian communities and generating sustainable economic growth for NSW. Although his focus was on the goldfields, Dalton also explored the idea of reform within a larger context—the economic and social development of Australia. He expressed his disgust of colonists who were ignorant of its beauty and potential:

22 *Sydney Morning Herald*, 19 August 1859, 2.

23 Samuel Sidney, *The Three Colonies of Australia: New South Wales, Victoria, South Australia; Their Pastures, Copper Mines and Gold Fields*, 2nd ed. (London, 1853; Project Gutenberg of Australia, 2014), gutenberg.net.au/ebooks14/1400441h.html.

24 Robert Hughes, *The Fatal Shore: A History of the Transportation of Convicts to Australia 1787–1868* (London: Pan Books in association with Collins, 1988), 558.

25 Hughes, *The Fatal Shore*, 559.

Some soulless biped in Victoria is reported to have deliberately written that ‘Australia is not worth fighting for’. Has he ever witnessed the glories of her sun-lit mountains, the broad and fertile valleys, the noble forests, the grassy plains, and the countless streams of her interior the future happy homes of millions of our race as yet unborn? Has he had no visions of future empire, of the destiny that awaits our children in this noble land?²⁶

Throughout his columns, Dalton wrote about his overseas and particularly his American experiences. His observations on North America display a detailed knowledge of goldfields technology, river transport on the Ohio and Mississippi, forestry and road engineering in California and Canada, and an understanding of frontier history. His descriptions were intended to provide examples particularly of technology and innovation that could be productive in Australia. In one article Dalton noted that he had been asked by his editors to review land distribution practices on the USA frontier.²⁷ His account was not sympathetic, highlighting arbitrariness, a lack of sympathy for the individual and the potential for the system to be manipulated by the rich, better informed or better connected. Why did the *SMH* want this analysis and, more broadly, why was a conservative publication interested in accounts that continually called for social and political reform? The special reporter was considered to have expertise on America. The *SMH*’s purpose in seeking this specific column was to dispel myths circulating in the colony about the superiority of the USA’s system. More generally perhaps, its columnist’s views suited a conservative journal that saw that, on the back of the major population boom brought by the gold rush, some form of reform was required to maintain social cohesion.²⁸ Reform for Dalton did not require revolution or separation from the Crown. His views on land reform are framed within a fundamentally English constitutional model that sought stability through continuity, and the creation of self-sufficient Christian communities in a fundamentally British, imperial world.

Without further research it is difficult to judge the influence of Dalton’s columns. They did not seem to spark debate in letters to the editor, but they were referenced in other discussions and on occasions were reprinted in other publications. In a media landscape in which the newspaper was the only form of public information and entertainment, the columns were produced almost fortnightly over two years in one of the largest circulation newspaper of its day. Significantly, Dalton was appointed as a gold commissioner in the early weeks of the reformist administration of Sir John Robertson, who was elected in March 1860. His was clearly a political appointment and Robertson, as both premier and minister for lands, delivered a land reform bill that conformed to Dalton’s views, opening up land for small-scale farming.

26 *Sydney Morning Herald*, 26 August 1859, 2.

27 *Sydney Morning Herald*, 8 June 1859, 4.

28 Perhaps Dalton’s reform politics also coincided with an attempt by the paper to take circulation away from Henry Parkes’s struggling and more reform-centric journal *Empire*.

Dalton, the gold commissioner

In mid-1860 Dalton's columns ended abruptly, the last being from the Rocky River goldfield in northern NSW, less than 2 kilometres from Uralla. Two months later the newspapers announced his appointment as a sub-commissioner at Uralla.²⁹ The administrative system had been in place since the earliest days of the gold rush in NSW, when John Richard Hardy was appointed commissioner on the first diggings at Ophir near Bathurst.³⁰ As police magistrate, he was empowered to raise a force of special constables, collect licence fees from diggers and to 'protect those engaged in digging'.³¹

By the time of Dalton's appointment eight years later, there were 23 commissioners on the NSW goldfields, comprising three chief commissioners, 11 assistant commissioners and nine sub-commissioners.³² Gold commissioners were appointed for two-year terms and the positions were keenly sought. Initially, many were retired military officers or men whose family background and connections in the United Kingdom gave them 'gentleman' status in the colony. The *Police Gazette* of 1860 listed Dalton's annual pay as £300 plus expenses for the upkeep of his horse. Gold commissioners were well-paid men of authority and status.

The Rocky River was an important goldfield and, at its height, there were thousands of diggers working the reefs on Mount Walsh and Mount Jones, as well as the alluvial workings along the river. Larger and more established goldfields such as 'the Rocky' had a commissioner's camp that may have included accommodation for the officers, and accommodation and stabling for mounted police troopers and their horses.

29 *Sydney Morning Herald*, 14 July 1860, 4.

30 Nancy Keesing, 'Hardy, John Richard (1807–1858)', *Australian Dictionary of Biography*, National Centre of Biography, The Australian National University, adb.anu.edu.au/biography/hardy-john-richard-3715/text5831, published first in hardcopy 1972, accessed online 6 April 2015.

31 *Sydney Morning Herald*, 29 September 1851, 2.

32 Hon John P. Hamilton QC, 'History of Gold Commissioners in NSW', oldmountainltd.com.au/history-commissioners-gold-nsw.



Figure 2: Commissioner Hardy collecting license fees.

Source: George Lacy, *The First Commissioner Hardy Collecting Licenses and Diggers Evading* (1851).
Courtesy National Library of Australia, nla.pic-an3103343-v.



Figure 3: A gold commissioner's hut and commissioner's camp. Dalton wrote about the unprepossessing nature of Australian bush architecture.

Source: Henry John Douglas Scott, *Gold Commissioners Hut Tambaroora Diggings*, ca April 1853 / Henry Scott Montagu, 1st baron (1853). Courtesy State Library of New South Wales.

Uralla became Dalton's base for several years. Rosa joined him and the growing family moved with him as his public service career took him to different goldfields in the northern gold regions. Newspaper reports show them working together to develop the civic institutions that Dalton had seen as lacking in rural communities. As early as December 1861, the *Freeman's Journal* noted preparations for a visit to Uralla by the Catholic archbishop:

The interior arrangement of the Church is not completed, and too much praise cannot be bestowed upon Mr and Mrs F. Dalton, for their indefatigable exertions in extemporarily making the requisite arrangements for holding Divine service.³³

The sub-commissioner's work life was largely on horseback, travelling up and down the creeks and rivers, visiting other sites a few day's ride from Uralla. Accidents and falls from horses were common. Dalton fell from his horse or buggy on several occasions, at least once requiring a period of recuperation due to a 'concussion of the brain'.³⁴



Figure 4: Gold commissioner getting off his horse. This image from the 1850s suggests an alignment with the military.

Source: George Lacy, *Gold Commissioner Dismounting at the Avisford Stable, Meroo Gold Field* (1850). Courtesy National Library of Australia, nla.pic-an3103592-v.

³³ *Freemans Journal*, 21 December 1861.

³⁴ *Argus*, 27 January 1862, 7.

As a columnist, Dalton had pointed out the lack of scientific advice available to the digger. In September 1863 Dalton was on the Woodsreef field and the *SMH* noted:

Mr Dalton, as is well known to most people in the Northern district, is a geologist of great experience, and his opinion of the richness of this goldfield, expressed by him some time ago, is being pleasingly verified in the increased quantity of gold obtained from the alluvial diggings. Alluvial work previous to Mr. D's arrival here was nearly totally neglected, but ... his judicious suggestions ... [are] resulting ... in increased remuneration to the workers.³⁵

Dalton's geological advice to the diggers set him apart from his colleagues. These activities were well reported and do not seem to have come into conflict with his duties as a magistrate and regulator.

In December 1864 at age 49, Dalton was promoted to assistant gold commissioner and police magistrate at Nundle, 100 kilometres south of Uralla.³⁶ As a magistrate he investigated a much reported murder at Bowling Alley Point, a mining village on a bend in the Peel River a few miles north of Nundle. The case shocked Australia. Mrs Butler, the wife of an innkeeper, had been stabbed in her bed in a frenzied attack:

An inquest was to have commenced before Mr Gold Commissioner Dalton on Wednesday last, so that the facts connected with the dreadful deed will doubtless soon be revealed ... Mrs Butler, the wife of an innkeeper ... had been murdered ... In one of the rooms of the inn, lying on a single bed, the clothes on which were completely saturated with blood, the body of the unfortunate woman covered with stabs in almost every part. The body was dressed in the usual night dress, as if the deceased had retired to rest ... The body presented a most horrible sight. From the appearance of the clothes on the bed, a terrible struggle must have taken place ere death ensued.³⁷

In April 1862, in an incident reported as the 'Forage Investigation', Dalton provided evidence of corrupt practices by his superior James Buchanan, the chief gold commissioner in northern NSW: 'one of the charges against Mr. Buchanan, as proved. Mr. Dalton, the sub commissioner, had complained that twelve bags of corn had been received at the camp; without weighing'.³⁸ Buchanan, who resigned, was initially found guilty after a local enquiry. On appeal to the court in Sydney, the charges were dismissed. Buchanan subsequently stood for and won the northern goldfields seat in the NSW Parliament at the 1863 election.³⁹ His election and possible antagonism to Dalton may have had an impact on Dalton's career. In late 1865, Charles Cowper formed a new government with an agenda to cut

35 *Sydney Morning Herald*, 2 September 1863, 8.

36 *Maitland Mercury and Hunter River General Advertiser*, 6 October 1864, 3.

37 *Queanbeyan Age and General Advertiser*, 27 July 1865, 3.

38 *Examiner* (Kiama), 22 April 1862, 3.

39 *Newcastle Chronicle and Hunter River District News*, 22 April 1863, 3. This was the election in which it was rumoured that Frederick Dalton might also stand for the same seat.

government spending. The government concluded that gold commissioner functions could be carried out more cheaply by unpaid justices of the peace. The services of 14 commissioners were dispensed with in 1866.⁴⁰



Figure 5: Image of the petition from the Chinese residents on the Rocky River to retain Dalton as a commissioner. The original 1.2 metre scroll is held by the NSW State Archives.

Source: Courtesy State Archives of NSW.

There were representations from the diggers and shopkeepers of the northern goldfields to keep Dalton, but they were ignored, perhaps because many of the petitioners were from the friendless and discriminated-against Chinese community.⁴¹ The *SMH* suggested politics had played a hand and that he had lost his position because he lacked friends or had enemies in Sydney.⁴² In 1866 Dalton turned 51 and, by early November, he and Rosa were living in Sydney, where he was referred to as the 'former Gold Commissioner, Nundle'. We know this from a well-reported personal tragedy: the death of their four-year-old son Frederick Dalton junior, who had fallen from a cart in Devonshire Street, Surry Hills.⁴³

A few weeks later Dalton's professional fortunes had dramatically changed when he was appointed police magistrate to a new rush, several hundred kilometres south-west of Sydney. On 1 January 1867, the site of the rush was proclaimed as the new township of Grenfell. Newspapers suggested that a population of 20,000 could be expected, but it was a time of drought and conditions on the field were tough. For Dalton, conditions were at best, rudimentary. A journalist commented:

The Court house is the most extraordinary specimen of building I ever saw; it is simply some stout forked poles ... these are crossed by other saplings, and on the top of this a heap of boughs, just to shade the sun off. The magisterial chair was ... once ... a candle box set on end ... the table was formed of the lid of another box fixed on the top of four forked sticks ... Mr. Dalton holds high court at this unique court-house, and the public stand all round to hear the police business, two men were under examination for robbery ... and there must have been a crowd of not less than 500.⁴⁴

40 *Sydney Morning Herald*, 9 June 1866.

41 *Sydney Morning Herald*, 9 June 1866.

42 *Sydney Morning Herald*, 26 January 1866.

43 *Sydney Morning Herald*, 6 November 1866.

44 *Maitland Mercury and Hunter River General Advertiser*, 10 January 1867.

As a police magistrate, Dalton was kept busy with the administration, not just of mining regulations, but also all aspects of government administration. In January 1867 the newspapers reported him hearing a case of attempted murder and robbery.⁴⁵ Other early cases show him attempting to resolve conflicts between miners and squatters.⁴⁶ His workload grew rapidly:

With a population of nearly 5000 persons, it is unjust to expect one man to administer the law in all its forms, without an unreasonable demand being made upon his time. I do know positively, that fourteen hours a day is below the average time now occupied in the discharge of the multifarious duties imposed on the Police Magistrate.⁴⁷

In February 1867 Dalton's responsibilities were expanded to include the Forbes police district 65 kilometres to the north.⁴⁸ At 52, he again became something of an itinerant administrator, travelling regularly between Grenfell and Forbes and other outlying population centres. He was to spend the next 17 years in the central west of NSW. In late 1869 his base was moved to Forbes, the more established centre.⁴⁹ While this caused grumbling in Grenfell, the implications for Dalton in his middle 50s were significant.⁵⁰ For most of the following decade he was consistently styled as the police magistrate for the Lachlan, responsible for the administration of justice and mining regulations over a vast territory. By 1874 he was described as the gold commissioner for the Billabong goldfield (later Parkes) and police magistrate for Grenfell, Forbes, Condobolin and Lake Cargelligo. The distance between Lake Cargelligo and either Grenfell or Forbes is close to 250 kilometres. In a horse drawn age, the trip to Lake Cargelligo would have taken the better part of a fortnight, camping in the bush on the way. There are descriptions of Dalton travelling further west than Cargelligo undertaking geological surveys. He also travelled east, on one occasion as far as Mount Canobolas near Orange.⁵¹ Within this area, and for a population of between 15,000 and 40,000 people (the population fluctuated with the rushes), he was the primary judicial and administrative officer.

There were further rushes around Grenfell and Forbes, at Lake Cargelligo and beyond. In the early 1860s the town of Currajong had sprung up around a rush. In 1871 Dalton was asked to visit the area to confirm a new rush. Bushman's Lead

⁴⁵ *Empire*, 18 January 1867, 5.

⁴⁶ *Empire*, 11 February 1867, 5.

⁴⁷ *Sydney Morning Herald*, 15 June 1867, 7.

⁴⁸ *Sydney Morning Herald*, 20 February 1867, 5.

⁴⁹ In late 1869 the town of Grenfell held a farewell meeting at which they presented their police magistrate with a gold watch (*Sydney Morning Herald*, 12 October 1869, 5); by 1870 he was stationed at Forbes, where he had been instructed to reside because of the greater 'distribution of population in the district of Forbes' (*Empire*, 3 September 1870, 3).

⁵⁰ This controversy requires further investigation as some newspaper accounts state that he was again retrenched in late 1868. If so, he was reappointed a few months later as police magistrate at Forbes and also retained all of the responsibilities he had held while stationed at Grenfell.

⁵¹ *Clarence and Richmond Examiner and New England Advertiser* (Grafton), 16 December 1876, 3.

became one of the richest goldmines in the colony. The premier, Henry Parkes, visited Forbes and Currajong in 1873. In both places, Dalton escorted him into town accompanied by a contingent of local mounted police. As a sign of his standing in both communities, Dalton made the welcoming speeches, presided over the banquets and conducted the visitors on tours of the towns.⁵² In honour of the premier's visit, Currajong's name was changed to Parkes.

Dalton's official headquarters remained at Forbes. His responsibilities in Grenfell diminished with the arrival of the court of quarter sessions and the activity of the local justices of the peace, whom he had trained,⁵³ but he remained a frequent visitor to adjudicate mining disputes. At Parkes, where the population reached 20,000, he visited for several weeks at a time in his circuit around the region. While there, he lived in one of the hotels and set up his court room in another. In late 1866 a journalist visiting the Emu Creek field described Dalton going about his duties:

Mr Dalton seems a great improvement on the old Bashaw style of commissioner. When you call upon him to decide a dispute he is not away playing billiards, nor does he consider it necessary to eye you over in the Simon Tappertitt⁵⁴ style before attending to business ... disputes are heard impartially by Mr Dalton, and investigated with pain and courtesy of manner without the necessity of men touching their hat continually or putting 'sir' to every expression ... You see a mob of men about every quarter of an hour in the day, about a dozen of whom are gesticulating fiercely ... and four or five challenging their opponents to single combat. The commissioner, or rather police magistrate ... is sent for. Down he comes post haste, the row ceases; a pause of a few moments two or three men are sworn; a few, terse questions are put; the regulation briefly commented on bearing on the point in dispute; the decision given in six words and before the disputants can look round them, the mining judge is a hundred yards off to another little mob, at the top of the gully who are going through the same exciting game.⁵⁵

In his earlier articles, Dalton had been critical of the gold commissioners who were depicted as remote, absent from the field, or off hob-knobbing and perhaps colluding with the squatters against the interests of the diggers. When he became a gold commissioner, he seems to have taken his own criticisms very much to heart. A digger's primary objective was to find gold. Maintaining the peace on a goldfield could best be achieved by keeping the diggers at their work and by the speedy, public resolution of disputes. The goldfields judges were intended by government to be authority figures. The only descriptions of Dalton come from the *Police Gazette* at the time of his disappearance at the age of 65. He was described as 6 feet tall, with steel grey whiskers and a distinctive military bearing.⁵⁶ Commissioners and police

52 *Sydney Morning Herald*, 22 August 1873, 3.

53 *Grenfell Record and Lachlan District Advertiser*, 5 June 1909.

54 A reference to the Dickens character 'Barnaby Rudge'.

55 'From the Weddin Diggings', *Empire*, 17 December 1866, 5.

56 *NSW Police Gazette* December 1880.

magistrates wore military style uniforms—a connection intended to suggest that the goldfields were under a form of para-military control. The goldfield magistrates had real power. They controlled, or at least could command, the local mounted police forces, and had the power to detain members of the public, who had no recourse to trial by jury; nor did defendants in most cases have access to professional representation in court. Remote from Sydney and with limited oversight, it is no wonder that these men could abuse their power and become, at least in the journalists' perception, like the archetype of their Ottoman counterparts, lazy, partisan and prone to arbitrary decisions.

Dalton was not immune from criticism and had enemies. By mid-1869, for reasons that remain unclear, at least some of the community in Grenfell were keen to have him replaced. In another instance a memoir depicted him, perhaps from late in his career, as being sarcastic in his dealings with miners.⁵⁷ Yet, in a Trove search yielding nearly 1,000 references to Dalton in contemporary newspapers, these comments are rare exceptions. Overwhelmingly, he is depicted as 'a practical miner and practical commissioner, shrewd and quick in detection of any defect, but careful in dealing out justice, off-handed, kind, and conscientiously just'.⁵⁸

Dalton's adherence to the Free Church of Scotland, with its emphasis on leadership within and not remote from a community, influenced the way he went about his work, and the broader role he developed as a community leader, helping to establish churches, education and healthcare in the growing towns in his region. Dalton saw the need for frontier communities to develop within a framework of tradition. An incident in his first year at Grenfell shows little tolerance for those who would challenge established mores:

Mr Dalton made it his business in going to the proprietor of the theatre and told him if he allowed a lecture to take place he would commit him to gaol for three years. ... [T]wo persons waited on Mr Dalton at his place of residence, and enquired his reasons for such conduct, when he told them his reason was that Tom Paine's works were to be read to the public, and he would not allow it.⁵⁹

Some Grenfell residents were caught off guard by their magistrate's response and Dalton was accused by some of high handedness. As a magistrate his job was to enforce the authority of the Crown, but there was something more to this incident. Dalton, in his earlier writing, depicted England's economic and social traditions as a model for a peaceful and prosperous NSW. At the other end of the scale, the capricious and sometimes brutal forces he had observed in the settlement of the USA frontier were as the antithesis of orderly and peaceful development. Like the majority of his reform minded peers, Dalton was a confident son of the British

57 *Grenfell Record and Lachlan District Advertiser*, 31 October 1916, 2.

58 *Australian Town and Country Journal*, 28 October 1871, 7.

59 *Mining Record and Grenfell General Advertiser*, 3 August 1867, 2.

Empire, proud of England's traditions and a loyal subject of Queen Victoria. As some residents on the Grenfell diggings found, Dalton's world had no place for the words of the old republican and revolutionary, Thomas Paine.

By the 1870s alluvial and near surface mining was becoming a thing of the past. Mining became more scientific, more of an industry and, while prospectors remained, miners led more settled lives as employees rather than lone operators. Dalton's columns had predicted this future as well as the need for investors to support more complex mining ventures. His columns strongly supported a role for government, reducing the risk to investment by providing specialist scientific advice. His own public career shows his efforts to advise diggers. It would be interesting to know whether more private advice was provided across dining tables, to the burghers of Forbes, Grenfell and Parkes. That Dalton pursued a bigger role for government in supporting the industry is clear. In 1879 at his instigation, his superiors provided a grant of £250 to support a team of prospectors in the hope of finding new leads, 'the men agreeing to work wherever, the Government inspector, Mr. Dalton, elected'.⁶⁰

In January 1872 Dalton went to Sydney as a member of a committee of officials advising on new goldfields regulations.⁶¹ A new system to regulate mining had been proposed as one of the major recommendations from a long running royal commission.⁶² This recommendation was to establish a number of mining regions each administered by a warden. The new system was implemented in the *Mining Act 1874* (NSW). The new regulations removed the old system of gold commissioners and Dalton became one of the first of the new mining wardens. In this role, he presided over a mining court that met at standard times. This was a more professional and more regular judicial system of regulation. Rulings were published, the warden's courts were supported by clerks and other judicial officers, with plaintiffs often represented by lawyers.

Dalton's territory remained large and while he had more support in the form of clerks of petty sessions, and JPs in the population centres, he was still required to travel large distances to administer justice. In September 1879 the newspapers reported his new two-year appointment as the warden of mines and police magistrate at Forbes.⁶³ He and Rosa were living outside Forbes at a property called Sunnyside with their large family of 11 children. In late 1879 he attended the marriage of his eldest daughter into a prosperous Sydney family. Perhaps he was thinking of retirement; however, in accepting the appointment, he was also accepting another two years of almost constant travel, responsibility for a region of tens of thousands of square kilometres and tens of thousands of souls.

60 *Australian Town and Country Journal*, 8 November 1879, 23.

61 *Sydney Morning Herald*, 19 January 1872, 4.

62 Royal Commission of Inquiry into the Working of the present Gold Fields Act and Regulations of NSW and into the best means of securing a permanent water supply for the Gold Fields of the Colony, 1870–71 [NSW State Archives].

63 *Australian Town and Country Journal*, 27 September 1879, 13.

Last drinks

The communities under Dalton's jurisdiction prospered. The towns celebrated their prosperity and, as first citizens, he and Rosa sponsored banquets, picnics and galas at Grenfell, Parkes and Forbes. We are lucky to have so much detail on the banquet at Grenfell in June 1877. It was clearly enjoyed by all who attended. The food and wine, accompanied by music and singing, was topped off by toasting and formal joviality. The twenty-fourth recorded toast was given by the vice chairman of the welcoming banquet, Mr Robert Matterson Vaughn JP.⁶⁴ A digger of long standing, he had also come from California in 1853 to try his luck on the Australian goldfields. At Grenfell he decided to throw in his lot with the colony by becoming a British subject. This allowed him to buy land and become a local magistrate. For most of the decade preceding the banquet, he and other local landowners (mainly the pastoralist J. Wood JP) had assisted Dalton in the administration of justice in the region.

In Vaughn's speech of thanks at the banquet, he commented:

He had lived to see the place pass through the different phases that occurred to nearly all gold fields. First we had the whirl and excitement that attends the stage of getting rich claims, and a great deal of gold. Then came the usual state of depression that always follows the failure of the mines. Then came the steady, gradual improvement that follows other and more permanent industries, and we now see a state of prosperity that most persons acquainted here in the early days never anticipated ... When he came to Grenfell, about the first man he met, that he knew, was Mr Dalton, after years of separation, during which both had passed through the usual hardships and trial that attend the life of gold seekers; and now we meet again this evening, and have the honour to mutually thank you for the kindly manner in which our names are mentioned in connection with this banquet.⁶⁵

Fifteen years Dalton's junior, Vaughn was later elected a member of the NSW Legislative Assembly. The two had met as wanderers half a world away and were now burghers, solid, wealthy citizens of communities they had themselves forged.

In 1880 Dalton turned 65. The previous year had brought mixed blessings. He had enjoyed the marriage of his eldest daughter, but had also suffered an accident, being thrown from his buggy on the road from Parkes to Forbes. Although suffering from increasingly poor health, in September 1880 he was well enough to undertake a police enquiry into a suspicious death at Condobolin. After a month away

⁶⁴ Justice of the peace and later member of the Legislative Assembly for Grenfell. Ann-Mari Jordens, 'Vaughn, Robert Matterson (1833–1908)', *Australian Dictionary of Biography*, National Centre of Biography, The Australian National University, adb.anu.edu.au/biography/Vaughn-robert-matterson-4774/text7943, published first in hardcopy 1976, accessed online 17 September 2018.

⁶⁵ *Grenfell Record and Lachlan District Advertiser*, 16 June 1877, 2–3.

and a trip of 100 kilometres back to Forbes, he set off again almost immediately. He told someone that he was heading west but instead went south by public coach. The official reporting states he was last seen at Harden-Murrumburrah, suffering from ill health and poor eyesight. The official reporting suggests he caught the train south, but he was never seen again.⁶⁶

An investigation must have taken place and there are records in the NSW, Victorian, South Australian and Tasmanian police gazettes seeking information on his whereabouts; what happened to him? He is recorded as having withdrawn a very large amount of money, 200 sovereigns, from his bank account just prior to his disappearance, at least double the average annual male wage in 1880. There were suggestions many years later that he was ‘much harassed by domestic troubles and worried by family expenses’.⁶⁷ The train journey from Murrumburrah south, even today, winds through very isolated country, and in 1880 much of it was heavily forested. Travelling alone and in increasingly poor health Dalton was vulnerable. Perhaps the lure of such a large amount of money was too much, and he was robbed, killed and his body disposed of on a stretch of isolated track?

Dalton’s life and work provide insights into some significant and little discussed questions of Australian history and culture. His work and writing enlighten understandings of the formation of the public service, government attitudes to science, the development of the mining industry and the responsibility of the state for education. He wrote as a commentator and worked as a crown official at a time of profound change in Australia—in population, in economy and at a time when many of the civic patterns that we recognise and expect today were being established. Dalton was very much a part of this change.

As an official, he was responsible for settling thousands of individuals into new communities. This peaceful movement and settlement is remarkable in itself, but Dalton’s writing also played a part in establishing the conditions for that settlement, highlighting significant issues for NSW society outside the capital. He proposed a different vision for settlement, one of social cohesion and economic growth. Dalton’s ideas were part of a British liberal tradition evolving in the mid-nineteenth century, seeking reform within the English system, not revolution. It drew on idealised English traditions of authority and was supported by a romantic historicism in English art and literature. He saw this liberal vision as foundational to the British Empire—a foundation myth. But these ideas were not purely mythic; they sought to provide a practical and common sense framework for the settlement of Australia.

66 There were suggestions that he had caught the train on to Melbourne and then took a ship out of the country. Several years later, reports that he was seen at Manly beach in Sydney, and that bones found while building a new hotel in Murrumburrah were his proved to be dead ends. The lack of reporting of a formal investigation is surprising, and may have led to the speculation that the government knew more about his disappearance. Many police records from the period, in both Victoria and NSW, were destroyed in the 1960s.

67 *Grenfell Record*, 4 April, 1921, 2.

Writing for the *SMH* from the western goldfields, somewhere on the Turon River, in 1859, Dalton told his readers:

I have a promised task to perform; a digger's widow has solicited me to write an inscription for the tombstone of her husband. He rests in the golden earth where he laboured, amidst the glooms of the wild and tangled forest, 'God has spoken, and the strong heart she leaned upon is broken.'⁶⁸

For most of his professional peers, the story of their lives ends in a printed summation; a death notice, an obituary, but not for Dalton.⁶⁹ For him the trail of words continues sporadically for a few decades until those who remembered him were gone.⁷⁰ Like the goldfields where he spent his energies, the print story of his life petered out. If he had the opportunity to write his own epitaph what might he have said? With his faith in the future of his adopted country and its future generations, I suggest that he would have simply used the practical words he wrote on leaving the grave site on the Turon: 'It is done and we will go forward'.

Postscript

Frederick Dalton's story ended at Murrumburrah in November 1880, but the life of the man who went by that name continued. Shortly after completing this article I received an email from Wendy Levot, an experienced genealogist and also an ancestor of Dalton. She told me that he had adopted the name as an alias in 1857 soon after marrying Rosa, and that his real name was Bartholomew Frederick Lloyd. Rosa was also involved in this change of identity, and subsequent research suggested some of the reasons. The crucial piece of evidence unlocking the mystery to Frederick's disappearance was a birth record for Rosa and Frederick's second child

68 'A Visit to the Western Gold Fields No. VIII'. *Sydney Morning Herald*, 21 January 1859, 2. Dalton does not identify the site of the grave although in the context of the articles it cannot be far from Sofala.

69 No obituary has come to light. Several years after his disappearance, Rosa was awarded a £500 annuity by the NSW Parliament. Within his family the only story about his disappearance that has survived is told by the descendants of one of his elder daughters who, after marriage, travelled to the United Kingdom. It relates that he was killed by bushrangers while protecting a shipment of gold; a story that echoes the true story of Dalton's colleague, Gold Commissioner Grenfell of Forbes, in whose posthumous memory the town was named. Rosa, with four children under the age of ten, struggled with the loss of her husband. Unfortunately, it was not the only seismic family shock she had to deal with in her later life; her eldest daughter divorced, under what would be considered 'scandalous' or, to my more sympathetic view, tragic circumstances. Rosa died in 1901 in Sydney; her youngest son, Herbert Arthur Dalton, completed the details for her death certificate. The confused details it contains strongly suggest that Herbert had little contact with his older siblings and knew little of Rosa and Frederick's life, his father having disappeared when he was six years old.

70 There are several reminders of Dalton's life and work. Grenfell and Parkes have a Dalton Street. In Grenfell it is now a dusty laneway off George Street, the old main street. Dalton Street in Parkes is one of the main streets in the town's CBD. A current Parkes resident also recalls stories of the old magistrate, told to her by her father. Such stories include how Mr Dalton accompanied the premier into town, how he was the miner's friend and how he disappeared mysteriously (although she was told that the government really knew what had happened to him). More prominent than all of these is the petition from Chinese miners now available on the State Archives of NSW website and his writings for the *SMH*; often quoted for the detail they provide on gold rush history.

Emily. While there is no birth registration for an Emily Dalton, there is a birth registered for an Emily as the child of Bartholomew Frederick and Rose Lloyd.⁷¹ The registration matches much of what we know of the Daltons. The baby is recorded as having an older sister, Sarah Louisa, born 18 months earlier, matching the date of birth of Sarah Louisa Dalton. The registration records the father's employment as 'journalist' and this also fits with Frederick Dalton who was working on his series 'The Western Goldfields' for the *SMH* at the time. The likelihood that Dalton and Lloyd were the same person has been strengthened by DNA evidence linking the Australian Dalton and Irish Lloyd families, through textual analysis of Lloyd's and Dalton's writing, and by the many links in Dalton's life story and that of Lloyd.

So who was Bartholomew Frederick Lloyd? Fredrick was born in 1810 at Athy, Ireland, into a large and well-connected family of Church of Ireland clerics and academics.⁷² His father, Robert Lloyd MD, was a Trinity-educated physician.⁷³ In 1818 he was at Cambridge University and by 1821 he lived and had a practice in Grosvenor Square in London.⁷⁴ At 15 Frederick Lloyd was a midshipman in the Royal Navy⁷⁵ and, after five years at sea, spent the next 20 in business as a publisher, map maker and stationer. In 1833 in London, he married Mary Anne Bull and over the next 20 years the couple had six children. Moving the family to Edinburgh in the early 1840s he established his business as 'B. F. Lloyd and Co.', and tasted material and professional success that also placed him in social proximity to the small but dynamic scientific and intellectual life of the city. In Edinburgh in the 1840s he experienced at first-hand the religious reform movement in the Church of Scotland. The year 1848, though, was one of economic depression, and the threat of bankruptcy forced the sale of both his personal and business assets. Frederick

71 New South Wales Registry of Births, Deaths and Marriages: registration number 803/1859: birth of Emily J. Lloyd, Sydney.

72 Sir Bernard Burke, *A Genealogical and Heraldic History of the Landed Gentry of Ireland*, rev. A. C. Fox-Davies (London: Harrison and Sons, 1912) contains a detailed genealogy of the Lloyd family. Details under the heading 'Lloyd of Lossett', pp. 411–13. Close family members held positions of power and influence in British society in the course of the nineteenth century. An uncle, Rev. Humphrey Lloyd DD, and his cousin Rev. Bartholomew Lloyd DD, were both Provosts of Trinity College Dublin, noted educationalists and, in Bartholomew's case, a much praised mathematician and physicist. Another first cousin, John Thomas Ball QC, was a Tory MP who was attorney-general under Benjamin Disraeli and went on to become the chief legal officer for Ireland. Multiple references including the *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*.

73 Robert commenced at Trinity College in 1800 at the age of 15. He was a 'pensioner', meaning that he held a scholarship from the university. He was awarded a BA in 1805 and MB and MD in 1817. George Dames Burtchaell and Thomas Ulick Sadlier, eds, *Alumni Dublinenses: A Register of the Students, Graduates, Professors and Provosts of Trinity College in the University of Dublin (1593-1860)* (Dublin: Alex. Thom & Co., 1935), 507, digitalcollections.tcd.ie/home/index.php?DRIS_ID=LCN10378529_0003.

74 For references to Robert's career see 'Robert Lloyd', *Lives of the Fellows, Royal College of Physicians*, 2009, accessed 23 September 2018, munksroll.rcplondon.ac.uk/Biography/Details/2779. See also *The Royal Kalendar, and Court and City Register for England, Scotland, Ireland, and the Colonies 1824* (London: William March & Son, 1824), 283 and 394; and for confirmation of London address and an interesting investigation of Robert's activities as a dissector, see report on a coronial inquest in *Globe*, 12 July 1821, 4.

75 Royal Navy personnel transcriptions, HMS *Sparrowhawk*, 1829; search.findmypast.com.au/record?id=gbm%2frn1831%2f35126; HMS *Icarus*: search.findmypast.com.au/record?id=gbm%2frn1831%2f35125.

immigrated with his family to the USA where he started afresh as a stationer at Chicago. In 1852 with his wife's blessing—and possibly spurred by the death of his second son Frederick—he and his eldest son, Horace, joined a wagon train heading for California. Misadventure followed, first on the prairie where Horace went missing and was presumed dead, and later when, as mentioned previously, an incident in Utah led perhaps to him being robbed.⁷⁶

Lloyd's misadventures in California led him to start afresh and so he took ship from San Francisco, arriving in Sydney in July 1854.⁷⁷ A few months later he was running a storehouse at Maryborough supplying goods for the coastal cane farms and newly established runs in the interior. Between 1854 and 1856, under the name 'B. F. Lloyd', he advertised his business in the Sydney press, and later wrote a letter to the editor expressing his opinion about Maryborough, and seeking fairer treatment of the Aboriginal population.⁷⁸ He came to Australia down on his luck, but the evidence suggests that in his first two years he prospered in Sydney and Maryborough. In May 1856 Lloyd married Rosa Lavinia Montgomery at Maryborough;⁷⁹ he was still married to his first wife, Mary Anne, who was alive and well, and living in Chicago. Perhaps, Frederick married Rosa imagining that his past life, family and connections could remain anonymous in this distant outpost of empire. Unfortunately for him, he was not the only member of the Lloyd family in Oceania. One of his first cousins, Rev. John Frederick Lloyd, was rector of Saint Paul's in Auckland, New Zealand. In an environment in which colonial newspapers were widely circulated, it is likely that, having seen his cousin's name in the *SMH*, Rev. J. F. Lloyd tried to contact him. The name 'B. F. Lloyd' also brought with it a business reputation, and for more than a decade had been a prominent presence on Hanover Street, Edinburgh. For much of the 1840s, and before that in a partnership as 'Caldwell and Lloyd', his name was associated with publications and stationery products that were widely advertised in newspapers and sold across Britain.⁸⁰ However, B. F. Lloyd had been bankrupted. Newspaper advertisements notifying the world of his status as a bankrupt are still

76 'Another Enoch Arden', *Iron County Register* (Ironton, Montana), 5 October 1882, 6.

77 New South Wales, Australia, Unassisted Immigrant Passenger Lists, 1826–1922, 12 June 1854, vessel Arnaud.

78 The letter was headed 'Wide Bay' and signed 'B. F. Lloyd, Maryboro, 25th November 1854'; it was written in response to an article in an earlier edition of the paper. *Sydney Morning Herald*, 15 December 1854, 4. For other newspaper advertisements for the business, see *Sydney Morning Herald*, 10 March 1856, 1; 11 March 1856, 1; 12 March 1856, 1; *Empire*, 10 March 1856, 1; 11 March 1856, 1; 12 March 1856, 1.

79 New South Wales Registry of Births, Deaths and Marriages: registration number 1655/1856: marriage of Bartholomew Frederick Lloyd and Rosa Lavinia Montgomery, Maryborough, Wide Bay, New South Wales.

80 Throughout most of the 1840s, numerous advertisements for the company's products appeared in British newspapers, first for Caldwell, Lloyd & Co. and then, from January, 1844, for B. F. Lloyd & Co. For example, *Morning Post* (London), 1 November 1841, 1; *Scotsman* (Edinburgh), 11 June 1842, 1; *Bell's Life in London and Sporting Chronicle*, 12 June 1842, 1; *Scotsman*, 24 January 1844, 1; *Aberdeen Press and Journal*, 31 January 1844, 2; *Sheffield Independent*, 18 October 1845, 11.

discoverable on the internet today.⁸¹ Bankruptcy was a significant social stigma for a gentleman and perhaps this taint on his reputation had been pointed out to him as he sought to establish himself in business in NSW.

Frederick's marriage to Rosa seems to mark a decision to stay in Australia and assume the life of a gentleman and member of the colonial elite. In this context, Rosa's family background might also have created challenges. Rosa (or Rose as she was probably known) had been born in Australia in about 1838 to John Montgomery and Sarah (Sally) Donnelly.⁸² Both had been convicts from the north of Ireland, John had been transported for life for crimes against a landowner,⁸³ and Sarah, a former servant, for seven years for theft from her employers.⁸⁴ John and Sarah probably never married, but the couple had five children over more than a decade, and lived near Windsor, west of Sydney. By the 1850s Sarah seems to have become an alcoholic and a petty criminal; only a few months after Rosa's wedding, she died from alcohol poisoning in Darlinghurst gaol.⁸⁵ Rosa's brothers were also less than model citizens, with one continuing to live on the wrong side of the law well into the 1870s.⁸⁶

In 1857 Frederick left Maryborough and started to establish himself under his new name. For the next 23 years, he and Rosa had a family, made friends and contributed to the development of Australia as the Dalton family. The year 1879, though, was a big year for the family and it may have been these events that led to Frederick's decision to 'disappear'. His eldest daughter had married, requiring not only a wedding befitting her family's standing, but also a dowry payment. There had been an addition to the family with the birth of another daughter, and Frederick now had eight children to provide for; there is evidence that his family commitments were straining his finances.⁸⁷ His brother-in-law, Rosa's older brother, became an outlaw in 1879, and was shot and killed by the police. Added to these trials, he was in poor health, and so, on top of financial stress, and concerned that Rosa's siblings would bring him into disrepute, perhaps he just wanted to get away—to return 'home' to Britain for his final years? A few months after his mysterious disappearance in 1880, B. F. Lloyd reappeared in London recuperating at Guy's hospital and claiming to be a former sugar planter from Queensland. In London, Frederick may have reconnected with members of the Lloyd family. At some point he learnt that his son Horace had not been lost on the prairie after all. After an

81 For examples of the bankruptcy notices, see *Morning Post* (London), 20 December 1848, 4; *Perry's Bankrupt and Insolvent Weekly Gazette*, 23 December 1848, 984; *Perry's Bankruptcy Gazette*, 23 December 1848, 983; *Scotsman*, 10 October 1849, 1; *Inverness Courier*, 28 December 1848, 4.

82 John Montgomery's death registration.

83 See for example Ticket of Leave, 19 May 1830, NSW State Record Office NRS12202.

84 See for example Certificate of Freedom 10 September 1832, NSW State Record Office 12210.

85 There are multiple sources for Sarah's continuing brushes with the law through the 1840s and '50s. The inquest into her death was widely reported, see for example *Empire*, 22 September 1856, 4.

86 Multiple references to James Montgomery and horse theft; see for example *NSW Police Gazette* No. 28, 9 July 1879, 264, which gives a description of his death.

87 *Grenfell Record*, 4 April 1921, 2.

absence of 30 years, in 1882, Frederick returned to his family in Chicago where he found Horace, his daughters, grandchildren and his first wife Mary Ann. His return and the tall (and mostly inaccurate) tales of his adventures were recorded by a local newspaper and reprinted across the USA.⁸⁸ Mary Ann and her family were never told about his younger wife and his many children in Australia. He lived until 1886, surviving both Horace and Mary Ann, who died within 18 months of his reappearance. Today, an impressive headstone stands under an oak tree in the city's Rosehill cemetery, beside that of Mary Anne and his American children. Meanwhile in Sydney, Rosa's final resting place is unknown.

88 'Another Enoch Arden', *Iron County Register*, 6.

Australian legal dynasties: The Stephens and the Streets

KAREN FOX

The word ‘dynasty’ evokes images of hereditary rulers, striding dusty castle corridors where their families have ruled for centuries. It might also suggest dominant political families, like the Kennedys, in republican settings like the United States of America. The term can, however, also be used to describe prominent families in other fields, such as business or the law, in which a succession of individuals from one family have scaled the heights of their profession. A number of such families have lived and worked in Australia, and their stories are captured in the biographies told in the *Australian Dictionary of Biography* and the associated People Australia websites. This article explores the stories of two families who might be thought of as Australian legal dynasties: the Stephens and the Streets. Between them, these two families produced across several generations four chief justices of New South Wales—and one person who turned the job down—as well as at least four other judges, and numerous successful barristers and solicitors.

The Stephens family who came to be renowned in the legal world in Australia were a branch of a notable British clan, several of whose members were distinguished in the law in England, and one of whom—Sir Leslie Stephen—was the first editor of the *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*. The first lawyer in the branch of the family that was to become eminent in Australia seems to have been James, a conveyancer, who was born in 1733.¹ James and his wife Sibella had several children. Among them was another James, who became a member of parliament and Master in Chancery, and whose own children included Sir George Stephen QC; Henry Stephen, serjeant-at-law; and Sir James Stephen, permanent under-secretary of state for the colonies.² Another son of James and Sibella was John. Initially a lawyer with a large practice in England, he moved to the West Indies with his wife, Mary Pasmore, who was herself the daughter of a solicitor. There, at St Kitts in 1802, was born Alfred.³

1 J. M. Bennett, *Sir Alfred Stephen: Third Chief Justice of New South Wales 1844–1873* (Sydney: The Federation Press, 2009), 2.

2 Bennett, *Sir Alfred Stephen*, 2; Ruth Bedford, *Think of Stephen: A Family Chronicle* (Sydney: Angus and Robertson, 1954), 2.

3 Bennett, *Sir Alfred Stephen*, 2–3; Bedford, *Think of Stephen*, 4.

It was from Alfred and his father that the Australian legal dynasty of Stephens would develop. After a childhood spent largely in England, Alfred returned to St Kitts with his father following a financial failure, and there worked in John's office, learning the law.⁴ Returning to England in 1818, Alfred became a student at Lincoln's Inn, living at first with his mother. He read law with his cousin Henry, and also benefited from an association with James, the cousin who later became under-secretary at the Colonial Office.⁵ In 1824, John was appointed as commissioner of the Courts of Requests in New South Wales, and Alfred decided that he too would seek better prospects in Australia.⁶ With his wife Virginia (née Conssett), he arrived in Hobart in January 1825.⁷

Admitted to the Bar in Van Diemen's Land in February 1825, before long Alfred had become solicitor-general and crown solicitor; he later became attorney-general.⁸ According to his biographer, John Bennett, he made a significant contribution to legal reform during his time in Van Diemen's Land, particularly by playing a part in the institution of a civil jury of four people.⁹ After Virginia died in 1837, however, he resigned his post as attorney-general. The following year he married Eleanor Bedford. Meanwhile, John had become the first puisne judge of the New South Wales Supreme Court, and twice acted as chief justice in the absence of Sir Francis Forbes.

Alfred's next move was to New South Wales, where, like his father, he soon became a puisne judge. Sir James Dowling, who was then chief justice, was pleased at the appointment. His wife, Lady Dowling, reported to her son:

The accession of another judge is material to your father especially as Mr Stephen is clever, gentlemanly and cordial, with the advantage of 13 years colonial experience, above all price in such a position.¹⁰

A few years later, in 1844, Alfred became acting chief justice; he was confirmed in the office in June 1845. In Bennett's view, it was:

A distinguished tenure, not only because of his practical, if sometimes severe, decisions and his keen legal mind, but also because of his untiring efforts to dispense justice efficiently and to improve its administration.¹¹

4 Bennett, *Sir Alfred Stephen*, 3–5; Bedford, *Think of Stephen*, 4–5.

5 Bennett, *Sir Alfred Stephen*, 7–10; Bedford, *Think of Stephen*, 5–6.

6 'Government and General Orders', *Sydney Gazette and New South Wales Advertiser*, 12 August 1824, 1.

7 Bennett, *Sir Alfred Stephen*, 10–11; Bedford, *Think of Stephen*, 9–10.

8 J. M. Bennett, *Portraits of the Chief Justices of New South Wales 1824–1977* (Sydney: John Ferguson, 1977), 20.

9 Bennett, *Portraits of the Chief Justices*, 20.

10 Bennett, *Sir Alfred Stephen*, 111.

11 Bennett, *Portraits of the Chief Justices*, 20–21.

He worked hard, as a letter from Eleanor to his daughter Virginia Hewlett in England in 1856 lamented:

Your suspicions are right as to your Papa having too much to do. He really looks much worn and fatigued and suffers very frequently from headaches. He literally *never* seems to have a leisure hour.¹²

Briefly the first president of the Legislative Council after responsible government, following his retirement from the chief justiceship in 1873 Sir Alfred was a member of the council and lieutenant-governor (1875–91). He died in October 1894. In a tribute to him, Sir William Windeyer praised ‘the swiftness of his apprehension [and] the subtleness of his reasoning and his grasp of principle’, and recalled his enjoyment of his friendship.¹³

Sir Alfred was the most successful and well-known of John Stephen’s sons, but he was not the only one to enter the legal profession, nor to achieve high position. At the time of John’s death, in 1833, all of Alfred’s four surviving brothers were also ‘practising Law in some form or other in various colonies’.¹⁴ His eldest brother, Sidney, was a barrister in St Kitts and Australia before moving to New Zealand as a puisne judge of the Supreme Court.¹⁵ John was a Police Court practitioner and an alderman for the city of Melbourne.¹⁶ Younger than Alfred were Francis and George. Francis was a solicitor in Sydney and proprietor of the *Australian* newspaper.¹⁷ George, who had been a clerk in the Supreme Court of Van Diemen’s Land during his brother’s time as solicitor-general, and who had briefly worked with Francis in his legal office in Sydney in 1836, became advocate-general and crown solicitor in South Australia in 1838 as a result of a lucky confusion of himself with Alfred. After a stint as colonial secretary in the colony, and another as government secretary to Sir John Hindmarsh in England, he returned to Australia, where he practised law, entered politics and conducted business. He ended his career a faith healer, in which occupation he became something of a celebrity. In 1881, the *Goulburn Herald* described how he had attended to one man by:

Breathing on the parts affected, making passes, and then ordering the patient to throw away his stick, which he did, and walked around the room and downstairs with the utmost celerity.¹⁸

12 Bedford, *Think of Stephen*, 120.

13 ‘Sir Alfred Stephen. Judge Windeyer’s Tribute. Remarks by Attorney-General’, *Evening News* (Sydney), 18 October 1894, 6.

14 Bedford, *Think of Stephen*, 19.

15 Ronald Jones, ‘Stephen, Sidney’, *An Encyclopaedia of New Zealand*, ed. A. H. McLintock, originally published 1966, *Te Ara—the Encyclopedia of New Zealand*, updated 22 April 2009, accessed 12 June 2014, www.TeAra.govt.nz/en/1966/stephen-sidney.

16 ‘Funeral of the Late John Stephen, Esq.’, *Courier* (Hobart), 4 November 1854, 2.

17 ‘Anecdotal Photographs. No. 51.—Sir Alfred Stephen, C.B., G.C.M.G.’, *Table Talk* (Melbourne), 21 October 1892, 3.

18 ‘Mr. George Milner Stephen’, *Goulburn Herald*, 30 July 1881, 2.

Sir Alfred Stephen had 18 children, nine with Virginia and nine with Eleanor, although three did not survive past their first year. Of his eight surviving sons, five entered the legal profession. Eleanor observed that 'the Law seems the easiest and most natural of the professions for our boys', for 'Papa's position gives him the opportunity of putting his sons forward in the Law, whereas other professions require what he has not—*money*'.¹⁹ Consett, Alfred's second son, was admitted as a barrister and solicitor in Van Diemen's Land in 1849, and later that year also in New South Wales.²⁰ After a short time in practice with Charles Lowe, from 1852 until 1864 he practised alone. His brother Septimus, who had been articled to Consett since 1858, became his partner in the firm of Stephen and Stephen in 1864.²¹ Septimus continued the practice after his brother's death in 1872, and it eventually became known as Stephen, Jaques and Stephen. The two brothers also shared a parliamentary career; Consett was the member for Canterbury in the Legislative Assembly in New South Wales for almost a year, from December 1869 to December 1870, and Septimus held the same seat between 1882 and 1887, when he moved to the Legislative Council.

Sir Alfred's third son, (Sir) Henry, was an associate to Sir James Dowling as well as to his father, and was admitted to the Bar in 1850. He had a general practice, and, in 1879, was appointed QC. Having several times refused the position of solicitor-general, in 1879 he also refused that of Supreme Court judge on the grounds that the salary would be insufficient, being much less than he could make as a barrister. Some years later, however, in 1887, he accepted the job, becoming a puisne judge of the New South Wales Supreme Court.²² Later, he was acting chief justice (1902–04). In 1914 he recalled that he first went on circuit 'in the bushranging days'. 'I remember procuring a revolver', he said, 'though I had a feeling I would be shaking too much to do any good with it if the ruffians bailed me up'.²³

Two other sons also made their living in the legal profession. Cecil, who was Sir Alfred's sixth son, was an associate to his father before entering practice himself. Appointed KC, he was also offered a position on the Supreme Court bench, and even the role of chief justice, though he never accepted either. According to an obituary, he was 'noted for his great ability as a pleader', and had 'that calm, dispassionate judgment and impartial view that, combined with the highest legal talent and

19 Bedford, *Think of Stephen*, 133, quoted in Martha Rutledge, 'Stephen, Sir Alfred (1802–1894)', *Australian Dictionary of Biography*, National Centre of Biography, The Australian National University, adb.anu.edu.au/biography/stephen-sir-alfred-1291/text7645, published first in hardcopy 1976, accessed online 22 May 2014.

20 'Local', *Cornwall Chronicle* (Launceston), 14 July 1849, 718; 'Law Intelligence', *Sydney Morning Herald*, 24 December 1849, 2.

21 See *Sydney Morning Herald*, 2 September 1864, 1.

22 'Mr. Justice Stephen', *Sydney Morning Herald*, 21 May 1887, 13.

23 'Sir Henry Stephen. Eighty-Eighth Birthday. Talk About Old Times', *Sydney Morning Herald*, 7 December 1916, 6.

ability, would have made him an ideal Judge'.²⁴ Ernest, the youngest surviving son, was admitted as a solicitor in 1871. Briefly in the family firm, he was later a senior partner in another.²⁵ According to Sir Alfred's granddaughter Ruth Bedford, 'some said he was the most brilliant of the brothers, but he had too little staying power and too many hobbies'. He played the piano so well that 'one wished he would never get off the piano stool'.²⁶

Both grandsons and great-grandsons followed the family tradition and entered the law. Among Sir Alfred's grandsons, (Alfred) Consett was admitted as a solicitor in 1882 and became a partner in Stephen, Jaques and Stephen, as did (Sir) Colin, who was admitted to practice and made a partner of the firm in 1896, and Leonard, who was known for his philanthropy, especially with the Boys' Brigade.²⁷ Colin was also a noted amateur jockey, whose first win was in 1892 on a horse named Pro-Consul; later in life he chaired the Australian Jockey Club.²⁸ Henry Montagu practised as a barrister in Sydney, while Noel Campbell was admitted as a solicitor in England, although he never practised. Milner was admitted to the Bar in 1896, and went into practice on his own. He became a KC in July 1928. Appointed a puisne judge in 1929, he became 'the fourth generation of his family to sit on the Supreme Court bench in New South Wales'.²⁹ Alfred Hewlett, a son of Sir Alfred's daughter Virginia, who had moved to England on her marriage, came out to Australia to be articled to Septimus, but later decided against entering the law and returned to England, where he took orders.³⁰ Another grandson, Alfred John, was intending to study for the Bar when he died of typhoid fever on a trip to India in 1890.

Among Sir Alfred's great-grandsons were both eminent lawyers and some who may have been, had not their lives been cut short. Adrian Consett, who had received an LLB degree in 1915 and who was also a noted writer of plays and essays, was killed in action in March 1918; he had been awarded the Croix de Guerre for his actions at the Somme and the Military Cross for his conduct at Passchendaele. Montagu Consett died at the age of 32 in 1920, a 'promising' young member of Stephen, Jaques and Stephen who had been admitted as a solicitor in 1914. (Sir) Alastair began his legal career in 1923 as an articled clerk in Stephen, Jaques and Stephen, being admitted as a solicitor and becoming a partner in the firm in 1926, where

24 'Death of Mr. C. B. Stephen, K.C. A Distinguished Career', *Sydney Morning Herald*, 4 July 1910, 8.

25 Bedford, *Think of Stephen*, 176.

26 Bedford, *Think of Stephen*, 176.

27 'Late Mr. Leonard Stephen. Proposed Memorial', *Sydney Morning Herald*, 13 December 1923, 9; 'Boys' Brigade. Leonard Stephen Memorial. Proposed Gymnasium', *Sydney Morning Herald*, 11 January 1924, 8.

28 'A.J.C. Chairman. Death of Sir Colin Stephen. Notable Figure. Formerly an Amateur Rider', *Sydney Morning Herald*, 15 September 1937, 18; 'Sydney Turf Club. Queen's Birthday Meeting. Second Day, Saturday, May 28', *Sydney Morning Herald*, 30 May 1892, 6.

29 Martha Rutledge, 'Stephen, Edward Milner (1870–1939)', *Australian Dictionary of Biography*, National Centre of Biography, The Australian National University, adb.anu.edu.au/biography/stephen-edward-milner-1300/text15101, published first in hardcopy 1990, accessed online 22 May 2014.

30 Bedford, *Think of Stephen*, 229–30, 242.

he remained until his retirement in 1975. Leslie Consett was admitted to the Bar in November 1927, his admission being reported by the *Sydney Morning Herald*, which emphasised that he and Alastair 'represent[ed] the fifth generation' of the family involved in the law and judiciary in Sydney.³¹ He, too, became a member of Stephen, Jaques and Stephen.

Lawyers and judges were also to be found in the wider Stephen family. Sir Alfred's nephew Frank, who had, like him, been born at St Kitts, was solicitor to the Melbourne City Council. Both of Frank's sons, Frank junior and Sidney, became solicitors in Melbourne. Alfred's first cousin once removed, James Wilberforce Stephen, was a judge of the Victorian Supreme Court from 1874.

Reading law with Cecil Bedford Stephen in the 1880s was a young Philip Whistler Street, the founder of another great New South Wales legal dynasty. Born in 1863, he was a great-grandson of William Lawson, one of the early explorers of the Blue Mountains. He also had at least one eminent lawyer and judge in his ancestry: Sir Thomas Street (1625–95), a judge of the Court of Common Pleas from 1684.³² With his brothers John William and Edric, Philip attended school at Miss Amelia Hall's private school at Waverley House, where Alfred Consett Stephen was also a pupil.³³ After admission as a solicitor in 1885, John practised in partnership with Banjo Paterson for some years, and then in sole practice. Another of Philip's brothers, Kenneth Leslie, began in the legal profession, being articled to Alfred Jaques of Stephen, Jaques and Stephen. Following his father's death, however, he gave up his articles and went to work on pastoral stations, later moving to the United States.³⁴

John Rendell Street, Philip's father, greatly admired the legal profession, and Supreme Court judges like Sir William Windeyer, Sir William Manning and Sir George Long Innes (who had been an associate of Sir Alfred Stephen). Influenced by his father's feelings—as perhaps his brothers were—Philip entered the law.³⁵ He was admitted to the Bar in 1886, a year after his brother John's admission to practice as a solicitor; his admission was moved by Cecil Stephen.³⁶ In 1888 he married Belinda Poolman, who was later described by her son Kenneth as 'an indefatigable worker in all the great philanthropic and humanitarian movements in New South Wales'.³⁷ Having built up a good practice, Philip was appointed an acting judge of the New South Wales Supreme Court in July 1906, becoming in February the following year judge

31 'Legal Family. Five Generations. Interesting Record', *Sydney Morning Herald*, 19 November 1927, 17.

32 Bennett, *Portraits of the Chief Justices*, 47; Kenneth Whistler Street, *Annals of the Street Family of Birtley* ([Sydney: K. W. Street], 1941), 9.

33 Street, *Annals*, 127.

34 Street, *Annals*, 135–36.

35 Street, *Annals*, 139.

36 'Law Report', *Sydney Morning Herald*, 26 August 1886, 5.

37 Street, *Annals*, 153.

in bankruptcy and probate. From 1918 he was chief judge in equity.³⁸ He was also in 1918 royal commissioner in an inquiry into the 1916 convictions and sentences of 12 Industrial Workers of the World sympathisers.

Senior puisne judge when the chief justice, Sir William Cullen, resigned in 1925, Philip was appointed in his place, 'the first time since the appointment of Alfred Stephen [when] the government decided to promote the senior judge as Chief Justice'.³⁹ Shortly after his appointment, the Sydney *Sunday Times* carried a profile of Belinda, describing her as bringing 'to the position of wife of the Chief Justice of New South Wales an immense store of knowledge of social problems, and an equal amount of charity'; she was a 'ceaselessly busy woman'.⁴⁰

Sir Philip left office in 1933, 'after a term exceeded only by Sir Alfred Stephen'.⁴¹ He was lieutenant-governor from 1930, and several times administered the state.⁴² In his first year in the position, as adviser to the governor, Sir Philip Game, he had been 'drawn into the constitutional imbroglio that led to the dismissal of [premier J. T.] Lang'.⁴³ At his funeral in September 1938, Bishop Arnold Wylde described him as 'sound in judgment; wise in counsel; expert in knowledge; tolerant, and of wide sympathy; kindly and gracious, and with a deep love of everything beautiful in life'.⁴⁴

All three of Sir Philip's children—all sons—entered the law. His eldest son, Kenneth Whistler, received his LLB in 1914, and then, after World War I had broken out while he was on holiday in England, enlisted. He began legal practice, having been admitted to the New South Wales Bar in 1915, after his full-time military duties ended in late 1919. By this time, he was also a married man; he and Jessie Mary Grey Lillingston had been married in February 1916. Born in 1889 in India, Jessie had met Kenneth at the University of Sydney, where she gained a BA in 1911; the pair had both played hockey, and belonged to the university's dramatic society.⁴⁵ Jessie, who as a child had prayed to be turned into a boy so as to escape the restrictions placed on girls, became a committed feminist advocate.⁴⁶

38 Bennett, *Portraits of the Chief Justices*, 39–40.

39 'Chief Justice. Mr. Justice Street', *Sydney Morning Herald*, 21 January 1925, 14; Bennett, *Portraits of the Chief Justices*, 40.

40 'Wives of Our Famous Men. Mrs. P. W. Street', *Sunday Times* (Sydney), 22 February 1925, 13.

41 J. M. Bennett, 'Street, Sir Philip Whistler (1863–1938)', *Australian Dictionary of Biography*, National Centre of Biography, The Australian National University, adb.anu.edu.au/biography/street-sir-philip-whistler-8696/text15217, published first in hardcopy 1990, accessed online 22 May 2014.

42 Bennett, *Portraits of the Chief Justices*, 41.

43 Bennett, 'Street, Sir Philip Whistler (1863–1938)'.

44 'State Funeral. Late Sir Philip Street. Impressive Scenes', *Sydney Morning Herald*, 14 September 1938, 18.

45 Lenore Coltheart, ed., *Jessie Street: A Revised Autobiography* (Sydney: The Federation Press, 2004), 21, 23.

46 Coltheart, *Jessie Street*, 8.

From 1921 to 1927 Kenneth lectured in law, part time, at the University of Sydney; he also had a general practice. In 1927 he was appointed to the Industrial Commission, and in 1931 to the bench of the Supreme Court of New South Wales.⁴⁷ His father being then chief justice, Kenneth became ‘a “brother judge” of his father’.⁴⁸ This unusual circumstance was remarked upon in the press.⁴⁹ Acting chief justice and senior puisne judge when Sir Frederick Jordan died, he became chief justice in 1950. He ‘was assured that the legal profession’s regard for him was “based on its knowledge of him alone and not on any reflected glory of his ancestor”’.⁵⁰ Sir Kenneth retired at the age of 70 in 1960. He had been lieutenant-governor since 1950, and remained in the role until he died in February 1972. Like his father, he administered the state several times.⁵¹

Meanwhile, Jessie became well known for her political views as a feminist activist, campaigner for Aboriginal rights and supporter of peace and socialism. President of the United Associations of Women for many years, by 1943 she was ‘Australia’s leading feminist’.⁵² She was a member of the Australian Labor Party, twice defeated for election in the seat of Wentworth, in 1943 and 1946, and in 1945 was ‘the only female adviser in the Australian delegation to the United Nations Conference on International Organization’ in San Francisco.⁵³ In 1949 she stood for election as an Independent Labour candidate in the seat of Phillip. In the context of widespread fear of the ‘red menace’, she was also by this time somewhat notorious. Her interest in and sympathy for socialism and the USSR had led to criticism, and she came to be called ‘Red Jessie’.⁵⁴ After spending some years overseas, she returned to Australia in 1960 and began work on her memoirs; she died in 1970.

Sir Philip’s second son, Laurence Whistler, had just become an associate to his father when World War I broke out in 1914. He took part in the Gallipoli landings on 25 April 1915 and was killed in action in May.⁵⁵ Another Street whose legal career was cut short by the war was Geoff, Philip’s nephew. He had entered the University of Sydney intending to pursue a legal profession, but his undergraduate studies were interrupted by the outbreak of war. Returning from service in the Australian Imperial

47 Bennett, *Portraits of the Chief Justices*, 48.

48 Bennett, *Portraits of the Chief Justices*, 47.

49 For example: ‘Father and Son. Judges at One Time’, *Advocate* (Burnie, Tas.), 16 December 1927, 5.

50 J. M. Bennett, ‘Street, Sir Kenneth Whistler (1890–1972)’, *Australian Dictionary of Biography*, National Centre of Biography, The Australian National University, adb.anu.edu.au/biography/street-sir-kenneth-whistler-11790/text21091, published first in hardcopy 2002, accessed online 22 May 2014.

51 Bennett, *Portraits of the Chief Justices*, 49.

52 Heather Radi, ‘Street, Lady Jessie Mary (1889–1970)’, *Australian Dictionary of Biography*, National Centre of Biography, The Australian National University, adb.anu.edu.au/biography/street-jessie-mary-grey-11789/text21089, published first in hardcopy 2002, accessed online 12 June 2014.

53 Radi, ‘Street, Lady Jessie Mary (1889–1970)’.

54 Coltheart, *Jessie Street*, 217; Geraldine O’Brien, *Dynasties 2: More Remarkable and Influential Australian Families* (Sydney: ABC Books, 2006), 211.

55 Street, *Annals*, 182–83.

Force, he became a pastoralist and member of the federal House of Representatives.⁵⁶ Minister of defence from November 1938, he was killed in 1940 in the Canberra air disaster, together with Jim Fairbairn, the minister for air; Sir Harry Gullett, the vice-president of the executive council; and Sir Brudenell White, the chief of the general staff.⁵⁷ Only two months before, along with Fairbairn, he had survived another crash with minor injuries.⁵⁸

Ernest Whistler, the youngest of Sir Philip's children, was admitted to the Bar in 1924, having been an associate to his father while a student at law. Like his father, he preferred the equity jurisdiction, and he built up a significant practice in this area. His wife, Norah Knox, was a niece of Sir Adrian Knox, chief justice of the High Court of Australia.⁵⁹ However, suffering ill health, he later left the law and entered business; he was a director of the Commercial Banking Co. of Sydney Ltd and of Tooheys Brewery Ltd, and chairman of City Mutual Fire Insurance Co. Ltd and Geigy (Australasia) Pty Ltd.⁶⁰

A third-generation chief justice of New South Wales, and lieutenant-governor, was Laurence Whistler Street. Born to Kenneth and Jessie in 1926, he served in the Royal Australian Naval Reserve in World War II. Later in life, he recalled that 'it was more or less taken for granted that I would do law, ever since I was in primary school', and that he was keen to begin.⁶¹ He graduated from the University of Sydney with a law degree in 1950, having as a student been associate to Sir William Owen, a Supreme Court judge.⁶² As a young lawyer, he later remembered, he was 'very anxious to succeed on my own right, rather than simply as a son of a prominent father'.⁶³ He was admitted to the Bar in 1951 and appointed QC in 1963; he also lectured in law at the University of Sydney for some years. Appointed as a Supreme Court judge in 1965, he became chief justice and lieutenant-governor in 1974.⁶⁴ In the media, the unusual circumstance of three chief justices in one family was noted. 'Chief Justice Street?' asked the *Woman's Day*, 'Now That Sounds Familiar...'⁶⁵ Sir Laurence retired in 1988 and became a commercial mediator.

⁵⁶ Street, *Annals*, 128–29.

⁵⁷ 'Army Chiefs Perish in Canberra Air Disaster', *Canberra Times*, 14 August 1940, 1.

⁵⁸ 'Ministers in Air Crash. Escape with Minor Injuries', *Canberra Times*, 4 June 1940, 3.

⁵⁹ Street, *Annals*, 185; 'Society Wedding', *Sydney Morning Herald*, 22 April 1925, 16.

⁶⁰ O'Brien, *Dynasties* 2, 217; 'Death of Mr E. W. Street at 69', *Sydney Morning Herald*, 18 August 1967, 10.

⁶¹ O'Brien, *Dynasties* 2, 218.

⁶² Bennett, *Portraits of the Chief Justices*, 63.

⁶³ Australian Broadcasting Commission, 'Street', *Dynasties*, Series 3, Episode 1, 9 November 2004, transcript, accessed 12 June 2014, www.abc.net.au/dynasties/txt/s1005646.htm.

⁶⁴ Bennett, *Portraits of the Chief Justices*, 64.

⁶⁵ Marianne Pretorius, 'Chief Justice Street? Now That Sounds Familiar...' *Woman's Day*, 3 June 1974, 4–5, 9. See also, for example: Gavin Souter, 'A Recessive Gene That Came Good', *Sydney Morning Herald*, 12 April 1974, 7; David Armstrong, 'A Third Chief Justice in the Family', *Australian*, 11 April 1974, 1.

One of Sir Laurence's daughters, Sylvia Emmett, became a federal magistrate; another, Sarah, was admitted as a solicitor and became an employment recruiter; and a son, Alexander Whistler, also entered the law, being admitted to the Bar in 1982 and becoming an SC.⁶⁶ In 2004 he told the Australian Broadcasting Corporation's *Dynasties* television program that he wore his father's wig and bar jacket, and that he had in his chambers books belonging to his father, grandfather and great-grandfather. 'I'm extremely aware of the heritage every time I put on my wig and gown and every time I walk into court,' he said.⁶⁷ Other descendants have also continued the family's legal tradition.

These two families—the Stephens and the Streets—are not the only prominent legal families in Australia. There are also, for instance, the Windeyers, the a'Becketts and the Winnekes. Nor are these the only 'dynasties' in Australia, using the term in the sense of families in which a succession of members have made their mark in the same field. There are political dynasties, such as the Downers, Creans, Katters and Anthonys; business and philanthropic dynasties, like the Myers or the Horderns; media dynasties, including the Fairfaxes, the Symes, the Packers and the Murdochs; and even artistic dynasties, such as the Boyds. Many of their stories are also to be found in the *Australian Dictionary of Biography* and associated People Australia websites—or likely will be one day. As many reviewers of the *ADB* have noted over its long life, it is the history of Australia writ through individual lives. In the stories of these dynastic families, it is also the histories of many varied professions, writ through the lives of the dynamic and engaging characters who contributed to those professions in Australia, and who flourished in them.

66 O'Brien, *Dynasties* 2, 221; Australian Broadcasting Commission, 'Alexander Whistler Street', *Dynasties*, Series 3, Episode 1, family tree, 9 November 2004, accessed 12 June 2014, www.abc.net.au/dynasties/txt/s1228318.htm; Susan Wyndham, 'Sir Laurence Street: The Man Who Can Challenge a Government', *Good Weekend*, 16 February 1985, 7.

67 Australian Broadcasting Commission, 'Street', *Dynasties*, Series 3, Episode 1, 9 November 2004, transcript, accessed 12 June 2014, www.abc.net.au/dynasties/txt/s1005646.htm.

Jungle stories from ‘Dok’ Kostermans (1906–94), prisoner of war on the Burma–Thailand railway

MICHÈLE CONSTANCE HORNE

Introduction

While living in Bogor in Indonesia during the mid-1980s, I became aware of an eccentric character who everyone referred to as ‘Dok’ Kostermans. I had heard a number of stories about Kostermans’s World War II (WWII) experiences and how he was lucky to have survived. There were also stories about his more recent jungle expeditions to remote tropical areas of the Malaysian Archipelago. He was a prodigious plant collector and highly regarded in his field of botanical taxonomy. With his reputation preceding him, when I met him one night at a birthday party, I was surprised to be introduced to a tall lanky man wearing a red wig. The occasion called for dress-up and he had come as Harpo Marx. Kostermans, then in his seventy-eighth year, exuded good humour, a zest for life and physical stamina that never seemed to diminish.

André Joseph Guillaume Henri Kostermans had endured a life-changing experience as a prisoner of war (POW) on the Japanese Burma–Thailand Railway. For me, in 1984, his stories of brutal imprisonment during WWII were my first exposure to POWs taking a measure of control of their lives while under the domination of their Japanese captors. This was before Lieutenant Colonel E. E. Dunlop’s war memoir, *The War Diaries of Weary Dunlop*, was published and my historical knowledge of the POW experience was limited.¹ Kostermans was a graphic storyteller and would colourfully recount his POW experiences to anyone who would listen.

Kostermans’s stories intrigued me and I felt that there was more to uncover. Archival searches gave insights to his Bogor stories but it also uncovered secret aspects of his life. An unpublished autobiographical account from the time he lived in Java until 1978 was a treasure trove of his life’s experiences and, in particular, his POW memories of the Burma–Thailand Railway. Surprisingly, however, it was Australian

1 E. E. Dunlop, *The War Diaries of Weary Dunlop: Java and the Burma–Thailand Railway, 1942–1945* (Melbourne: Nelson, 1986).

archival material that held the key to understanding Kostermans's scientific contributions to saving POW lives. This is the story of a controversial man who was deeply admired but also shunned for his frailties.

Kostermans's formative years

André Joseph Guillaume Henri Kostermans was born on 1 July 1906, elder of two sons, at a hospital in Purworejo (Central Java), a garrison town for the colonial state of the Dutch East Indies (Indonesia).² His Dutch father, Adriaan M. Kostermans, was a contracted public servant who taught basic education and the Dutch language to local Javanese children in the nearby town of Wonosobo on the Dieng Plateau.³ Kostermans's mother, Marie J. A. (née Beljaars), came from Maastricht (southern Netherlands) where the Catholic faith was part of the fabric of society. Even in remote Wonosobo, a priest would visit them at their home to administer the ceremonies of their faith. Kostermans's formative years were spent immersed in both the Dutch and Javanese cultures. Owing to Marie's poor health, Kostermans and his younger brother, Désiré, were mostly cared for by a Wonosobo woman. Kosterman attended Dutch administered schools for Javanese children, playing barefoot with his classmates in the rice paddies, and exploring the nearby mountainous tracks. A biology teacher encouraged Kostermans to take an interest in the natural richness of the countryside around him. He made an extensive butterfly collection that he carried with him to Maastricht when the family was repatriated to the Netherlands.

At the time when the family left Java, Kostermans was in his second year at a Dutch High School (HBS) in Bandoeng (Bandung, Central Java). He easily made the transition to life in the Netherlands because he had a talent for learning and did well academically at the Maastricht HBS. Following his high school years, he spent the obligatory two years as a conscript in the Dutch military. In 1925 he chose to study at the renowned biology department at Utrecht University. Following completion of his bachelor of science degree, he decided to specialise in taxonomic botany under the supervision of Professor A. A. Pulle. For his master of science degree he studied the botanical family Hernandiaceae of Surinam. He continued to study under Pulle

2 A. J. G. H. Kostermans, 'Levensgeschiedenis [autobiography]', transcript of interviews, Herbarium Library, Naturalis Biodiversity Centre, Leiden, Netherlands. In 1978, Kostermans was interviewed by his friend Marius Jacobs at the Leiden Herbarium. In 1981, Jacobs transcribed the five hours of interviews as background information for his 'Kostermans Seventy-Five' (see note 13). The five magnetic tapes are stored at the centre's Herbarium Library. The interviews and transcripts are in Dutch.

3 Official public notice in the local Dutch East Indies newspaper *Bataviaasch nieuwsblad*, 20 August 1904. A. M. Kostermans was appointed to teach at Wonosobo, Central Java. Delpher, accessed on 12 March 2016, www.delpher.nl.

for his PhD, researching the botanical family Lauraceae of Surinam.⁴ Included in his thesis was a chapter entitled 'Useful Plants' in which he explored well-known publications that had investigated medicinal and practical purposes of plants.⁵

Return to Java as war loomed in Europe

Kostermans had in mind that his future career was in the Dutch East Indies but he needed funds to return. He applied for and received the 1938 round of the prestigious Dutch 'Buitenzorgfonds' grant for promising botanists to undertake a six-month research project in Java.⁶ It is likely that Kostermans sought a permanent move to Java that allowed him to return to the cultural and tropical environment of his childhood and an escape from his family's strict Catholic expectations. It is not hard to imagine that the Netherlands' cold, damp winters turned Kostermans to think of living in the warmer climate of his childhood. The smells of street vendors cooking with chilli, garlic and fish paste combined with the humid warmth of the evening would have been a strong psychological force that played on his nostalgic mind. Perhaps too he believed that colonial Java offered a more tolerant attitude towards homosexual men than was the case at that time in the Netherlands.⁷ Although his memoirs did not admit to his sexual preference, later events showed this to be the case. However, this apparent tolerance in the colony did not last long as there was a concerted police operation a few months after Kostermans arrived in Batavia to purge the colonial public service of known homosexuals.⁸

Kostermans booked a return passage by boat to Java, leaving the Netherlands on 9 July 1938.⁹ The boat trip took approximately a month, which placed him in Batavia (Jakarta) by the middle of August 1938. According to the Buitenzorgfonds guidelines, Kostermans had been instructed to report to the Botanical Station at Buitenzorg (Bogor) as part of the conditions of the grant.¹⁰ Over the years when talking about this period of his life, Kostermans gave little detail about what happened once he had arrived except to highlight his collecting expeditions funded by the grant. He made a number of small collecting trips over a two-year period to

4 The Lauraceae family includes well-known plants such as cinnamon spice for cooking, bay leaves for flavouring, camphor for moth repellent and medicinal purposes, and myrtlewood and stinkwood for building furniture.

5 A. J. G. H. Kostermans, 'Studies in South American Malpighiaceae, Lauraceae and Hernandiaceae, Especially of Surinam' (PhD thesis, University of Utrecht, Netherlands, 1936).

6 Letter from A. A. Pulle to Koninklijke Akademie van Wetenschappen, 13 December 1935. Noord-hollands Archief, correspondence regarding selection of Buitenzorgfonds. Scan number 119/719, Archive No. 64, Inventory number 129.

7 Robert F. Aldrich, *Colonialism and Homosexuality* (London: Routledge, 2003), 185.

8 Aldrich, *Colonialism and Homosexuality*, 185–212.

9 Letter from A. A. Pulle to Koninklijke Akademie van Wetenschappen, 1 June 1938. Noord-hollands Archief, correspondence regarding selection of Buitenzorgfonds. Scan number 31/719, Archive No. 64, Inventory number 129.

10 Internal department letter, Koninklijke Akademie van Wetenschappen, 10 June 1938. Noord-hollands Archief, correspondence regarding selection of Buitenzorgfonds. Scan number 28/719, Archive No. 64, Inventory number 129.

islands in the Bay of Batavia and Batam, West Java and Noesa (Nusa) Kambangan¹¹ on the south coast of Central Java. In 1950, G. C. C. J. van Steenis, a highly regarded Dutch botanist, scathingly assessed Kostermans's prewar plant collection and botanical methodology, writing, 'the collector failed to make sufficient notes *in situ* and did not know himself the localities of the plants collected in the islands near W. Java, so plants of several islands are mixed up'.¹² This was not an auspicious start for a man who later became known for his extraordinary plant collecting and taxonomic identification skills.

Kostermans's war

The Netherlands was officially neutral when the British and French declared war on Germany in September 1939. However, in May 1940 Hitler bombed the Dutch seaport, Rotterdam. The city was devastated, convincing the Netherlands Government to officially surrender on 15 May. Initially, the war in Europe did not greatly affect the Dutch East Indies. The colonial government focused more on local issues, such as the nationalist Indonesian movement, than Japanese expansionist policies. When Japan bombed Pearl Harbor on 7 December 1941, the Netherlands government-in-exile declared war on Japan the following day. Now the Dutch East Indies was a direct target for Japan and the colonial government began recruiting men into their military forces. Because Kostermans was a Dutch national, he was drafted into the Royal Netherlands East Indies Army (KNIL) as a private (infantry) in early 1942.¹³ With the threat of an imminent Japanese invasion of key islands such as Java, the KNIL was incorporated into the hurriedly formed Allied Forces that brought together the American, British, Dutch and Australian commands.

Kostermans was stationed in Buitenzorg (Bogor, approximately 50 kilometres south of Jakarta) where he and his fellow soldiers had been given rudimentary instruction in warfare techniques. Following the fall of Singapore on 15 February 1942, the Japanese invasion of Java came quickly and decisively. The next few days were chaotic as he and his compatriots moved up the mountainous road from Buitenzorg to Bandoeng. On the way, they encountered a group of Japanese soldiers on bicycles.¹⁴

11 Noesa (Nusa) Kambangan has a link to modern history. It is the island that was used for the execution of Australian convicted drug traffickers in 2015. It was a prison island during the Dutch colonial period, and remains a maximum prison facility for Indonesia.

12 C. G. C. J. van Steenis, ed. *Flora Malesiana. Series 1, Spermatophyta* (Djakarta: Noordhoff-Kolff, 1950). Often referred to as the 'Green Bible' among Dutch botanists; green because of its green hardcover, and bible because it included extensive notes about the methodologies for botanical collecting and taxonomy.

13 Marius Jacobs, 'Kostermans Seventy-Five', *Reinwardtia* 10, no. 1 (1982): 9–20. Jacobs published this article (English) as a tribute to his close friend. He used the autobiographical tapes as a basis for the article. See note 2 above.

14 Dunlop, *The War Diaries of Weary Dunlop*, 45. Dunlop described the Japanese soldiers using bicycles to move around the countryside and also to escort POWs on forced marches.

The enemy was dispatched with a well-directed hand grenade: Kostermans's only act of war.¹⁵ When the group arrived in Bandoeng they discovered that the KNIL had capitulated to the Japanese on 9 March. Kostermans was interned as a POW.¹⁶

Kostermans now faced the realities of life as a captive of the Japanese. At first he was put to work 'pushing and pulling dirt carts through Bandung'.¹⁷ He was humiliated but noticed that, although the local people watched, they seldom jeered. Lieutenant Colonel E. E. 'Weary' Dunlop's memories of his first six months as a POW in Bandoeng add to Kostermans's brief descriptions of his early POW experience. Dunlop had noted that, despite the complete takeover of the colonial government and infrastructure, the Dutch POWs were 'optimistic as to the length of their troubles and pin much faith to an old Javanese legend that "Java would be conquered for 100 days"'.¹⁸ Very quickly, the violent intimidation and threats by the Japanese to execute POWs became reality. Kostermans witnessed the bayoneting of POWs who attempted to escape.¹⁹

In June, Kostermans was transferred by train to Tjilatjap (Cilacap), on the south coast of central Java.²⁰ Now the hard work, deprivations and senseless punishments began to badly affect him. For eating the left over contents of a discarded condensed milk tin, he was made to stand in the sun for six hours with the tin on his head until he collapsed. The next move was to Singapore 'packed like herrings in a tramper (goods transport ship), closed in by barbed wire everywhere'.²¹ His internment in the Changi POW camp was a precursor to the treatment that the Japanese meted out to their prisoners as the years passed. His recollections of Changi describe the increasingly difficult conditions. Food was scarce. He turned to collecting whatever remained of the plants in the compound. The POWs were fed 'stinking par-boiled rice, mostly it was vomited out again' or 'partly unhusked rice that caused intestinal bleeding'.²² One of his close friends was taken to hospital suffering from the poor diet but 'never came out alive'. In October 1942, Kostermans was among the thousands of POWs who were transported by train in 'hermetically closed metal

15 Jacobs, 'Kostermans Seventy-Five', 11.

16 Kostermans's Japanese internment card shows his rank to be Sld. Inf. (Soldaat), which is equivalent to Private Infantry in the English system of rankings. 'Japanse interneringskaarten, Surname: Kostermans', Nationaal Archief, accessed 4 September 2016, www.gahetna.nl/en/collectie/index/nt00425/e8bf00ac-148f-102f-a8e2-0050569c51dd/view/NT00425_Japanseinterningskaarten/sort_column/prs_achternaam/sort_type/asc/q/zoekterm/kostermans/q/comments/1.

17 Marius Jacobs, transcript of Kostermans's 'Reminiscences of a Prisoner-of-War in Thailand', undated, possibly 1978, Kostermans biographical archives at Leiden Herbarium, Naturalis Biodiversity Centre, Netherlands, 3 pages. Language is English.

18 Dunlop, *The War Diaries of Weary Dunlop*, 11.

19 Jacobs, 'Reminiscences of a Prisoner-of-War in Thailand', 1; Dunlop, *The War Diaries of Weary Dunlop*, 14. In Dunlop's camp, three Dutch escapees were tied to poles and bayoneted to death.

20 Jacobs, 'Reminiscences of a Prisoner-of-War in Thailand', 1; Dunlop, *The War Diaries of Weary Dunlop*, 50–55. Dunlop recorded the movement of Dutch troops to Cilacap (Tjilatjap) in his diaries.

21 Jacobs, 'Reminiscences of a Prisoner-of-War in Thailand', 1.

22 Jacobs, 'Reminiscences of a Prisoner-of-War in Thailand', 1.

vans' to Bampong in Thailand.²³ Many suffocated on the four-day journey: 'corpses had to remain in the van, because of the control of numbers'.²⁴ The Japanese had no tolerance for escapes; thus the POWs had to prove that no one had absconded on the journey.

There have been numerous accounts of the appalling treatment of the POWs who laboured on the Japanese Burma–Thailand Railway project. War Crimes Tribunal records and autobiographical accounts have given graphic interpretations of the cruel punishments and abysmal camp conditions.²⁵ Kostermans's reminiscences of the railway construction were equally harrowing. Starting from Kanchanaburi, he and his fellow prisoners trekked up the Kwai (Khwae) Noi River 'on bare feet, mostly empty stomach, working as tree cutters, moving and digging earth'.²⁶ He was in an advance party, working, and walking, all the way to the 'Three Pagodas Pass' (108 km from Bampong).²⁷ Camp accommodation along the way consisted of abysmally constructed bamboo huts, tightly packed with 200 men in each. The meagre rations provided by the Japanese were supplemented by the POWs, who captured anything that crawled, flew or swam. All prisoners used the same poor sanitation facilities. Consequently, dysentery among the POWs reached epidemic proportions. Kostermans recognised that his knowledge of tropical plants and ethnobotany had a practical use. He obtained permission from the Japanese to roam the jungle and collect edible plants and grasses. In the evenings he brewed leaves from *Psidium guajava* (Myrtaceae) to make 'tea for diarrhoea'.²⁸ Although the tea did not cure the diarrhoea, it gave some relief from the debilitating symptoms. Kostermans found edible plants and grasses to cook up a 'grass soup'. The soup provided a small amount of the vitamin riboflavin necessary for the body to convert carbohydrates into energy.²⁹ He made these concoctions in large quantities and encouraged his fellow prisoners to drink them.

When the railway was substantially completed in October 1943, thousands of men had died or were critically ill. Kostermans's own health had considerably deteriorated. He had contracted malaria and dysentery, was malnourished, and his legs were covered with large festering sores. When he was given a dire prognosis

23 Jacobs, 'Reminiscences of a Prisoner-of-War in Thailand', 1.

24 Jacobs, 'Reminiscences of a Prisoner-of-War in Thailand', 1.

25 Two well-known accounts are Dunlop, *The War Diaries of Weary Dunlop* and Albert Ernest Coates and Newman Hirsch Rosenthal, *The Albert Coates Story: The Will That Found the Way* (Melbourne: Hyland House Publishing, 1977). In this publication, Coates also gave an account of the War Crimes Tribunal proceedings in Japan held after the war (Appendix 1, 175–81).

26 Jacobs, 'Reminiscences of a Prisoner-of-War in Thailand', 1.

27 Stylised map of the Burma–Thailand Railway at the Australian War Memorial site showing relative distances between camps, 'Stolen Years: Australian Prisoners of War', accessed 23 May 2018, www.awm.gov.au/visit/exhibitions/stolencyears/ww2/japan/burmathai.

28 Jacobs, 'Reminiscences of a Prisoner-of-War in Thailand', 1.

29 Rosalind S. Hearder, 'Careers in Captivity: Australian Prisoner-of-War Medical Officers in Japanese Captivity During World War II', (PhD thesis, University of Melbourne, 2003), 96. In this study, Hearder wrote that, although the riboflavin content was small, 'grass soup' still provided the much-needed vitamin.

by a Dutch doctor, he thought he would not survive.³⁰ Useless to the Japanese in his present condition, Kostermans and other seriously ill prisoners were evacuated on a barge to a hospital camp further south along the Kwai Noi River.³¹ The move was life saving for Kostermans. He was no longer required to work on the railway, had access to better quality food and received medical care. His leg was saved from amputation by treating the ulcerated sores with a very painful remedy of Glauber's salt (sodium sulphate decahydrate) solution and placing the leg 'in the river and letting the small various fishes nibble out the pus of sores'.³²

In his last year as a POW, Kostermans was transferred to the newly built hospital camp at Nakom Paton approximately 50 kilometres from Bangkok. In late December 1943, Lieutenant Colonel A. E. Coates had been assigned by the Japanese to become its chief medical officer. Coates arrived soon after to supervise the building of the hospital's infrastructure, including an operating theatre.³³ This hospital, sited on disused rice paddies, was designed to accommodate up to 10,000 seriously ill and disabled men. Although the camp periodically flooded during tropical downpours or was without water during the dry season, the bamboo dormitory huts were well built and conditions were better than the prisoners had experienced while working on the railway. In June 1944, the hospital began receiving large groups of prisoners, and by August there were 7,353 POWs.³⁴ Dunlop and Kostermans arrived around this time in separate groups. Although this was a hospital camp, Kostermans remembered that a high earthen dyke, encircled by a deep trench filled with barbed wire, surrounded the camp. By the end of 1944, conditions declined further as the Allied forces began to make gains and the Japanese became increasingly nervous about the progress of the war.

Throughout the building of the railway, the Japanese provided grossly inadequate supplies of medicines and surgical instruments. Fortunately there were many well-educated men like Kostermans who had scientific professions before the war; the dire circumstances brought together these inventive minds to produce jungle medicines.³⁵ At the Nakom Paton Hospital camp, Kostermans, in collaboration

30 Jacobs, 'Kostermans, Levensgeschiedenis', 6.

31 It is likely Kostermans was moved to Chungkai Hospital Camp where Dunlop had been assigned as the chief officer by the Japanese. Both Dunlop (Dunlop, *The War Diaries of Weary Dunlop*, 331) and Kostermans mention the senior Dutch officer, Dr Metz (Metzer).

32 Jacobs, 'Reminiscences of a Prisoner-of-War in Thailand', 1–3.

33 Coates and Rosenthal, *The Albert Coates Story*, 122–23.

34 A. E. Coates: 117. Lt. Col. A. E. Coates 'Medical—Attendance of POWs', "Table A, Camp Strength", Australian War Memorial, AWM54 481/8/13, Part 4 of 6.

35 Katie Mills and Michèle Horne, 'Jungle Camp Science: Do-it-Yourself Medicines in Two POW Hospital Camps on the Japanese Burma–Thailand Railway, 1942–45', *Health and History*, Australian and New Zealand Society of the History of Medicine, 2018 in print. This article comprehensively describes the alcohol distillery process in the Nakom Paton makeshift laboratory, and includes a drawing of the laboratory by British POW, Jack Chalker.

with Private G. W. Chapman (a British POW with a PhD), produced the camp's own pharmaceuticals and the surgical alcohol required for the operating theatre.³⁶ Kostermans reported on their laboratory:

Originally the laboratorium premises consisted of a small part of one of the store huts, but later on the I.J.A. [Imperial Japanese Army] built us a separate hut for the combined alcohol and drug manufacture ... all the equipment furniture etc., had to be made by ourselves; it was not even possible to get the necessary materials from the I.J.A. and most of the equipment had to be scrounged from the POWS.³⁷

In their makeshift laboratory, Kostermans and Chapman developed an ingenious method for producing high-quality alcohol. Although the process for fermentation and alcohol extraction was well known, the challenge was to design and build a distillery that would produce large quantities of surgical-grade alcohol.³⁸ They were assisted by an Australian tinsmith, Private Norman Sachse, who soldered together discarded milk tins with stolen battery acid. When the battery acid was not available they drained dead men's stomachs for hydrochloric acid to maintain the distilling apparatus.³⁹ This became one of Kostermans's favourite stories, knowing that a listener would squirm when he recounted the gory details. They carried out many experiments under these primitive conditions with different fungi on rotting rice to make a 'starter'. Spreading new rice on bamboo matting, the 'starter' was used to inoculate rice to begin fermentation. Twenty-four hours later, the inoculated rice was added to water in earthen Thai jars for further fermentation. After three days the distillery apparatus was set up to pass steam through the fermented mixture in the jars to extract the alcohol.⁴⁰ The distillery laboratory is featured in an Australian documentary made shortly after the war and also features on the Australian War Memorial's website.⁴¹ Kostermans is seen in this film testing the quality of the alcohol.

36 A. J. Kostermans, 'Report of the Biological Department of Nakom Paton Hospital', 23 August 1945. Included in Captain G. H. Nicholson, 'Records—War Relics—Siam'. Military History Field Team, 1945, AWM, (1127/HN), Clasn. No. 492/4/2. Products included pH indicators, clove oil, ink, medicinal tobacco for asthma, saline solutions for transfusions, paper. This report was the key to understanding Kostermans's stories about his time as a POW.

37 A. J. Kostermans, 'Report of the Biological Department', 1.

38 G. W. Chapman, 'The Preparation of Surgical Alcohol', 'Medical—Attendance of POWs: Diaries kept by Lt Col A E Coates', AWM54 481/8/13, Part 2 of 6.

39 Jacobs, 'Reminiscences of a Prisoner-of-War in Thailand', 3.

40 Jack Bridger Chalker's drawing of the distillery apparatus in the makeshift laboratory at Nakom Paton is reproduced on the Australian War Memorial website: 'Nakhon Pathom—Alcohol Distillery and Vinegar Plant', accessed 22 May 2018, www.awm.gov.au/collection/C344500.

41 After peace was declared in the Pacific, Lady Mountbatten visited Nakom Paton. She requested that a documentary film be produced to show the various facilities of the hospital camp. The film was made and is available on the Australian War Memorial website (*POW's in Thailand*, documentary (Bangkok, Thailand, 25 August 1945), F01539, www.awm.gov.au/collection/F01539/). The hospital's alcohol distillery process is featured in the film. Kostermans is shown working in the distillery room. Photos of the distillery room and explanatory text can be found on the Australian War Memorial website, accessed 18 February 2016, www.awm.gov.au/collection/118848/.

The collaboration between Kostermans and Chapman was jungle science at its most effective. The alcohol production was such a success that:

The Japs became more friendly as they came secretly to ask for a pint of the first distillate but it ended the first Xmas as after Xmas day there was not a drop of alcohol left for the operating theatre⁴²

After the war, both Coates and Dunlop credited Kostermans and Chapman for their inventive work.⁴³ Coates wrote: 'Kostermans was to prove immensely useful to us. He experimented with many theories and ideas in an effort to find positive solutions'.⁴⁴ He had requested that Kostermans and Chapman write reports about the pharmaceuticals they had produced in the Nakom Paton makeshift laboratory.⁴⁵ Although the reports were short due to the lack of typing paper, they gave an insight into the difficulties of producing the pharmaceuticals. Fortunately, they were kept with diaries that Coates later deposited in the Australian War Memorial. In addition, the chief of staff of the Royal Dutch Army, General S. H. Spoor, sent a personal letter to Kostermans to thank him for his work in aiding sick POWs.⁴⁶

Collecting a career

Kostermans was impatient to resume his career after peace was declared. Repatriation of the POWs was a difficult logistical task for the Allied Command in the period immediately after the Japanese capitulation.⁴⁷ Rather than wait in the camp for his passage back to Indonesia, Kostermans organised a plant-collecting expedition, returning to the jungle areas of the Kwai Noi River. He had requested and received funding from the American botanist E. D. Merrill,⁴⁸ and obtained permission from Coates to take 11 Japanese, themselves now POWs, to assist him. Surprisingly, Kostermans was given permission by the British Command to use a Japanese locomotive on the disused railway up to the Three Pagodas Pass to expedite the trip.⁴⁹ This image, of Kostermans accompanied by Japanese POW assistants on a locomotive steaming its way along the railway line that had claimed so many Allied POWs, must be one of the more bizarre of the war.

42 Jacobs, 'Reminiscences of a Prisoner-of-War in Thailand', 3.

43 E. E. Dunlop, 'Medical Experiences in Japanese Captivity', *British Medical Journal* 2 (1946): 486. Dunlop lists a number of life-saving initiatives, including the production of alcohol for surgical purposes.

44 Coates and Rosenthal, *The Albert Coates Story*, 125.

45 A. J. Kostermans, 'Report of the Biological Department' (also archived in AWM54 481/8/13); G. W. Chapman, 'The Preparation of Surgical Alcohol'.

46 The Dutch KNIL commander, General Spoor, escaped to Australia for the duration of the war. Kostermans gave the letter from General Spoor to van Steenis. A possible reason for him doing so may have been to show van Steenis that he (Kostermans) had made worthwhile contributions during the war while a prisoner.

47 Sue Ebury, *Weary King of the River* (Carlton, Vic.: Miegunyah Press, 2009), 308–9.

48 Dr E. D. Merrill (1876–1956) was a significant figure in the field of botanical taxonomy in the United States of America. At the time Kostermans applied for expedition funds, Merrill was administrator of Botanical Collections at Harvard University, a role that included managing a number of botanical institutions including director of the Arnold Arboretum.

49 Jacobs, 'Kostermans, Levensgeschiedenis', 7–8; Jacobs, 'Reminiscences of a Prisoner-of-War in Thailand', 12.

This eight-month expedition was not without its dangers and presented Kostermans with many challenges along the way. Green timber had been used to construct sections of the railway and, by late 1945, some of the sleepers had buckled. Similarly, some of the bridges had shoots sprouting on the superstructure. Kostermans had recounted the story to Jacobs: ‘When passages looked risky—some of the beams of the bridges began to sprout already—the engine was sent across first’.⁵⁰ Kostermans and the crew would run behind, reboarding the locomotive when they felt the dangerous section had been passed. There were also risks to their personal safety from armed gangs roaming the countryside in the power vacuum created by the Japanese capitulation.⁵¹ Despite these challenges, Kostermans had a successful expedition. He sent 2,000 dried herbarium specimens to Merrill at Harvard. Disappointingly, van Steenis, the editor of the prestigious ‘Cyclopaedia of Collectors’, barely recognised the significance of Kostermans’s Thailand expedition.⁵²

Following the Kwai Noi River trip, Kostermans returned by boat to Java in a period of heightened Indonesian nationalism.⁵³ The nationalist leaders Sukarno and Mohammad Hatta had proclaimed Indonesian independence on 17 August 1945 after the Japanese capitulation two days earlier. However, the Dutch returned as colonialists to regain control with the assistance of British troops. The various political interests, the British included, made this a chaotic time in the political centres of Batavia (Jakarta) and Buitenzorg (Bogor). Some of the Dutch residents wanted to turn back the clock to 1941 while others were aware that they needed to negotiate a power-sharing arrangement with the Indonesian leaders. International pressure on the Netherlands resulted in the government formally transferring its sovereignty to the Republic of the United States of Indonesia on 27 December 1949.⁵⁴

During this period of political instability, Kostermans began to consolidate his collecting career based at Buitenzorg. F. A. Endert, secretary of the colonial Committee of Economic Plants, appointed Kostermans to assist with updating the renowned ‘Useful Plants of Dutch East Indies’ publication, *Nuttige Planten van Nederlandsch-Indië*.⁵⁵ The remuneration was small but it signified recognition

50 Jacobs, ‘Reminiscences of a Prisoner-of-War in Thailand’, 12.

51 Chalong Soontravanich, ‘Small Arms, Romance, and Crime and Violence in Post WW II Thai Society’, *Southeast Asian Studies* 43, no. 1 (2005): 30; Ebury, *Weary King of the River*, 309; Coates and Rosenthal, *The Albert Coates Story*, 149.

52 Van Steenis, *Flora Malesiana*, 299. Van Steenis wrote: ‘Early in 1946 he made an expedition in Siam with Bloembergen and den Hoed, proceeding on his own’.

53 Van Steenis, *Flora Malesiana*, 299. Van Steenis wrote: ‘Returned to Java September 1946’.

54 A. Goss, *The Floracrats: State-Sponsored Science and the Failure of the Enlightenment in Indonesia* (Madison, USA: University of Wisconsin Press, 2011), 136.

55 Karel Heyne’s Dutch language book *De nuttige planten van Nederlandsch-Indië* (*The Useful Plants in the Dutch East Indies*), published in three volumes from 1913 to 1917, were iconic books among Dutch botanists. There were several attempts to update the manuscripts and publish them in English. Kostermans was involved in this project over a number of years. The updated version was never published.

of Kostermans's taxonomic skills among the Dutch botanists. For this assignment he travelled throughout Indo-China to search for new cropping plants that had potential to be introduced into Indonesia.

In 1947 he gained a permanent appointment as forest botanist with the Forestry Service in Buitenzorg.⁵⁶ His first assignment was to accompany a group of foresters on a six-month survey expedition of a remote region in the Momi-Ransiki area on the Birds Head Peninsula (Dobetai Peninsula), western Nieuw Guinea (Province of West Papua, Indonesia).⁵⁷ With his POW experience still fresh in his mind, Kostermans had the skills to deal with the challenges this remote area would present. The Nieuw Guinean boatmen dropped the forestry group on a deserted beach in the Ransiki area with their food supplies and equipment.⁵⁸ The group had an agreement with the boatman to pick them up in six months. They completed the survey one month early, allowing Kostermans an opportunity to undertake an arduous side-trip to Mt Arfak (highest point in the province at 2,940 m elevation). He was keen to search for a rare medicinal plant, the Massoia tree, that other plant collectors had failed to find. Kostermans took with him two local men because the foresters would not go with him on this difficult mountain climb. Food supplies were low but his ingenuity for using available resources was as strong as ever. They ate local plants or caught live food such as small birds that they half-cooked on a fire. When retelling this story, Kostermans would mention an alleged cannibalism attack on a missionary that was meant to be a warning for him not to go. He found the Massoia tree and the find was all the more sweet for its rareness. Back on the beach waiting for the boatman to return he used discarded oil drums for drying the collected plant material. His botanical colleagues considered his preservation methods crude but it allowed him to collect and process many more specimens than he otherwise could. He estimated that 3,000 plant specimens were collected on this trip.⁵⁹

Kostermans was happiest when he was on a plant-collecting expedition to a remote locality. He was keen to search unmapped forests because he was concerned that species would disappear without them being found and classified. On his seventh expedition to Borneo (Kalimantan) he had prearranged a meeting with Sven Gillsäter, a Swedish photographer. By then, Kostermans's reputation as a plant collector 'extraordinaire' had preceded him. Gillsäter describes their first meeting: 'A fair-skinned man, a head taller than the paddling Dayaks, rose easily in the slender canoe and stepped ashore'. Kostermans was 'bare-foot and wearing nothing but a pair of shorts, he is as much at home in canoes and in the virgin forest as the

56 'Personal News', *Flora Malesiana Bulletin* 2, no. 1 (1947), accessed 15 March 2016, www.repository.naturalis.nl/record/533215.

57 The survey's findings were documented in a report. D. A. Boon, A. J. G. H. Kostermans and P. Tideman, *Bosonderzoek Kolonisatie Object Momi-Ransiki New Guinea / Rapport Samengesteld Onder Leiding Van D. A. Boon Door A. Kostermans En P. Tideman: Dienst van het boswezen in Indonesië*, AFD Bosplanologie, 1948.

58 Jacobs, 'Kostermans, Levensgeschiedenis', 11.

59 Jacobs, 'Kostermans, Levensgeschiedenis', 10.

Dayaks, whose language he speaks fluently'.⁶⁰ Gillsäter's account demonstrates how comfortable Kostermans was with local people. Travelling together for two weeks, Gillsäter wrote:

As the days passed I was more and more impressed, not by his botanical knowledge—of which I am not qualified to judge—but by his unsurpassed ability to get on with the Dayaks and with nature. A man like André Kostermans makes up for the errors of many white men in these parts.⁶¹

Gillsäter wrote graphically about the jungles of Borneo, describing them as fascinating, cruel and alien: the leeches that tumbled from the trees when they smelt a perspiring body, sticking fast on a victim's neck, legs, anything exposed; the filming of a crocodile and the disaster that struck when one of the canoes capsized into the swirling river, the reels of film lost; the portage of the equipment when the river became unnavigable, scrambling along an almost invisible track, up slippery hills, down into deep ravines and over slimy rotten tree trunks; the gloomy denseness of the jungle cutting out the light; and the rain that came down in buckets.⁶² Gillsäter found this environment hard going but Kostermans relished the challenges of these expeditions.

While Kostermans was establishing his botanical career, the political situation for Dutch scientists working in Bogor was changing. After the formation of the Indonesian Republic, the scientists were encouraged to remain working in the new political environment.⁶³ As the 1950s proceeded, the emerging Indonesian elites increasingly controlled the political and economic appointments in scientific institutions. Indonesian science graduates now were leading many of the nation's institutes.⁶⁴ As part of the decolonisation process, the Indonesians made it clear to the Dutch scientists that they were no longer welcome and should leave.

In 1958, Kostermans was given a choice by the head of the Forestry Service (his employer) to either leave or become an Indonesian citizen.⁶⁵ Before the Dutch Government recognised Indonesia's independence in 1949, he had predicted this situation, saying to his Dutch colleagues that it 'was evident to him that the Dutch would never be able to hold the country, he could as well make friends with the people'.⁶⁶ Many of his colleagues, including van Steenis, Donk, Endert and Bloembergen, returned to the Netherlands to establish their careers in universities

60 Sven Gillsäter, *We Ended in Bali*, trans. F. H. Lyon (London: Allen and Unwin, 1961), 79–90. In this segment, Gillsäter recounts his meeting with Kostermans on a riverbank in Borneo and their travels together. This trip was either in 1956 or 1957.

61 Gillsäter, *We Ended in Bali*, 79–80.

62 Gillsäter, *We Ended in Bali*, 81–83.

63 Goss, *The Floracrats*, 146.

64 Goss, *The Floracrats*, 146–47.

65 Jacobs, 'Kostermans, Levensgeschiedenis', 21–22. Dual citizenship was not a choice as neither the Netherlands nor Indonesia allowed dual citizenship status.

66 Jacobs, 'Kostermans, Levensgeschiedenis', 10.

and national institutions.⁶⁷ Unlike his peers, Kostermans created ties with Indonesia. He purchased a house with a glorious view of the Kebun Raya Bogor (Bogor Botanical Gardens). He also set himself the task of building a world-class herbarium in Bogor, persistently lobbying Indonesian officials for funds.⁶⁸ However, relinquishing his Dutch citizenship and becoming an Indonesian citizen had economic ramifications for him. As an Indonesian Public Servant, his salary was extremely low and he was compelled to seek overseas funded contracts to supplement his income. He also lost his life's savings in the Netherlands by becoming an Indonesian citizen.⁶⁹ From an economic perspective alone, it is understandable that none of his Dutch colleagues, many with families, would make the same decision.

Kostermans sought help from an Indonesian professor, his close friend, Eddy Noerhadi, who had a teaching position at the Bandung Institute of Technology. Noerhadi facilitated the paperwork and untangled the complicated process that dragged on for some time. In 1961, Kostermans left Bogor to embark on a collecting expedition in Sumbawa still not knowing the outcome of his application for citizenship. While there he received a telegram to say that all was in order but he was required to return to Jakarta immediately. This was not an easy return trip. Sumbawa is a remote island in the east of the Indonesia archipelago: travel was by boat to Lombok; overland by bus to the capital of Lombok, Mataram; plane to Denpasar, Bali; and, finally, another plane to Jakarta. When he arrived in Jakarta he was told that he was not required in person. He was given the certificate of citizenship personally signed by President Sukarno. Not to miss the importance of his change of citizenship, Kostermans held a huge party inviting friends and acquaintances. To reflect his Indonesian citizenship he took the name Achmad Jahja Goh Hartono Kostermans, using the initials of his Dutch name.⁷⁰ Many of his monographs are published under his Indonesian name.⁷¹

67 After the war, van Steenis returned to the Netherlands; he went back to Indonesia in 1949 and returned to Leiden in 1950. Bloembergen spent time in the Netherlands and Indonesia and returned to the Netherlands in 1955. Kostermans's friend from his university days, M. A. Donk, head of the Herbarium Bogoriense, returned to the Netherlands after being fired by his Indonesian employers in early 1955. F. A. Endert retired in 1952 and returned to the Netherlands.

68 Jacobs, 'Kostermans, Levensgeschiedenis', 15, 17–21. President Sukarno was instrumental in granting funds for the herbarium project. The Bogor Herbarium was completed and officially opened in April 1970.

69 Jacobs, 'Kostermans, Levensgeschiedenis', 22. Kostermans claimed he lost 20,000 guilders (approximately 60,000 euros in 2018 currency value). His comment was that it was a pity but he had never regretted it.

70 Jacobs, 'Kostermans, Levensgeschiedenis', 21–22.

71 W. J. J. O. de Wilde and P. Baas, 'In Memoriam Professor A. J. G. H. Kostermans (1906–1994)', *Blumea—Biodiversity, Evolution and Biogeography of Plants* 40, no. 1 (1995): 1–13. A Bibliography of Kostermans's publications is listed in this publication. An in-depth listing for his numerous collecting expeditions, 1939–66, is recorded in the *Flora Malesiana*. M. J. van Steenis Kruseman, 'Kostermans, Prof.dr. André Joseph Guillaume Henri ('doc')', *Cyclopaedia of Malesian Collectors*, accessed 19 September 2016, www.nationaalherbarium.nl/FMCollectors/K/KostermansAJGH.htm.



Figure 1: Herbarium, Naturalis Biodiversity Centre, Leiden, Netherlands, 2016. Plant material attached to herbarium sheets are stored in boxes.

Source: Photograph by M. Horne.

In the late 1960s, Kostermans was at the peak of his collecting career, specialising in tropical forest trees. His taxonomic skills and photographic memory allowed him to collect prodigiously. In 1981 Jacobs attributed 25,000 specimen types to Kostermans. Mounted onto herbarium sheets, these specimens were deposited around the world including the Herbarium Bogoriense, Rijksherbarium Leiden (now Naturalis Biodiversity Centre), Kew Royal Botanical Gardens and Harvard University Herbaria.⁷² His prolific collections are now considered invaluable because of the diversity of plant specimens, some of which have become extremely rare. They are all the more precious, as many of the specimens originated from areas that have been destroyed by urbanisation and plantation development.

Kostermans's taxonomic skills for documenting plants collected from remote jungle areas qualify him as a collector of the highest order in the twentieth century. In a quantitative study, Bebber and others (2012) investigated the traits of prodigious plant collectors to identify those who had made extraordinary contributions to the discovery of plant species.⁷³ From their study they observed that 'plant collecting is a specific skill that seems to be developed by certain individuals over a considerable length of time'. They suggest that 'relatively few people develop the key skills and interests for really productive plant collecting'. Kostermans was passionate about finding as many species as possible before they were irretrievably lost to science. In today's assessment of a legacy, Kostermans's 'big hitting' collecting career continues to contribute to the knowledge base for future scientific endeavours in the field of plant diversity.

Educating the family

Kostermans never married, nor did he have a lifelong partner. He created his own family by 'fostering' Indonesian children, giving them opportunities they would not have had otherwise.⁷⁴ How many children he fostered is unknown, although he would often say that the number was the same as his age.⁷⁵ Some of his fostered

72 Two examples of Kostermans's plant specimens mounted on herbarium sheets: (1) Herbarium, Kew Royal Botanical Gardens, apps.kew.org/herbatcat/getImage.do?imageBarcode=K000695164; (2) Harvard University Herbaria, accessed 19 September 2016, kiki.huh.harvard.edu/databases/specimen_search.php?mode=details&cid=84571.

73 D. P. Bebber, M. A. Carine, G. Davidse, D. J. Harris, E. M. Haston, M. G. Penn, S. Cafferty, J. R. Wood and R. W. Scotland, 'Big Hitting Collectors Make Massive and Disproportionate Contribution to the Discovery of Plant Species', *Proceedings of the Royal Botanical Society* 279 (2012): 2269–274, 2272.

74 Kostermans's 'fostering' of children is a broad term based on the Indonesian *anak angkat*, which is translated as 'adopted child'. Culturally it is not unusual for children to live with adults who are not their biological parents but are part of the extended family. It is unusual for an adult outside the extended family to 'foster' children. Fostering is not based within a legal procedure.

75 A letter, dated 19 July 1970, from E. H. Walker to K. F. Dumont (see page 33) together with Kostermans's five page CV/autobiography, dated 1962, are archived at the LuEsther T. Mertz Library, the New York Botanical Garden, under the Kent Parsons Dumont collection of documents. There is a specific entry for these documents under Dumont's correspondence section. Some of the 'fostered' children did not live with Kostermans but were under his guidance for education and mentoring. He often sought overseas scholarships for them.

children made good lives for themselves and followed diverse occupations. If one of the children showed an aptitude for higher learning, Kostermans encouraged the child to study at university level.

While away on a collecting trip in July 1969, one of the foster children was shot and died. On his return to Bogor, Kostermans was drawn into the investigations by the police and was charged on suspicion of inciting the murder and possessing an illegal firearm. The news of his arrest and detainment in a Jakarta jail rippled through the Bogor and international scientific communities. Articles in the Indonesian and Dutch newspapers began to appear, including the Dutch daily morning newspaper *De Telegraaf* with a headline, 'Ex-Dutchman Prof. Kostermans in Indonesia sick in jail'.⁷⁶ While the state prosecutor built the case against him, he remained in jail for three months in appalling conditions, his health deteriorating. He was released to a friend's care and placed under house arrest in Bogor. Over the following year, the case was brought before the Bogor court a number of times with various charges including one of 'homosexual sex with minors under the age of 21 years'. Finally, on 8 September 1970, Kostermans was given the verdict that the 'illegal firearm' charge and the 'homosexual sex with minors under the age of 21 years' charge stood. He was given 10 months jail, with previous jail time and house arrest to be taken in consideration. In the head judge's summing up of the case, the judges acknowledged that it should not be forgotten that Kostermans had supported 38 children over the years and several of them had already graduated. The head judge concluded: 'but the law was the law and the defendant, Kostermans, had been proven guilty' ('Tetapi, hukum adalah hukum, terdakwa A.J. Kostermans terbukti bersalah').⁷⁷

Over the years, the facts of this pivotal event for Kostermans had been lost through innuendo and rumour among his friends and colleagues. The Dutch newspaper *Het Vrije Volk* had labelled the case as bizarre, and the paper's reporting was convoluted, making it difficult to understand the proceedings.⁷⁸ Kostermans's own memory of the period between his foster child's death and his quick departure from Indonesia for a number of years after his release had glaring omissions. When he related the story to Jacobs in 1978, he spoke at length about the case, in particular how the gun had come to be at his home, but nothing about the 'homosexual sex' charge. However, Mien Rifai, a close friend, wrote in a 1995 obituary that Kostermans 'was silently discharged from his post in the Forestry Service without

76 'Ex-Nederlander Prof. Kostermans in Indonesie Ziek in Cel' ['Ex-Dutchman Prof. Kostermans Sick in Jail'], *De Telegraaf*, 14 August 1969.

77 'Kostermans Divonnis 10 Bulan Penjara' ['Kostermans Sentenced to 10 Months Prison'], *Sinar Harapan*, 9 September 1970, 3.

78 'Botanicus Staat Terecht in Bizarre Moordzaak' ['Botanist Is on Trial for Bizarre Murder Case'], *Het Vrije Volk: Democratisch-Socialistisch Dagblad*, 13 August 1970, accessed in Delpher, 12 March 2016, www.delpher.nl.

a pension because of his conviction for sexual perversion'. Rifai further added: 'but homosexuality was not the motive of his adopting so many children because I knew very well that he did not take advantage of all those boys'.⁷⁹

The later years

Before the tragedy of the foster child's murder, Kostermans's scientific reputation had earned him a number of prestigious international positions. In 1967 he held a guest professorship at Kentucky, Lexington, United States of America. In 1969 he was in Ceylon for the 'Smithsonian Flora of Ceylon' project. Following his release from jail in late 1970, he went to Aarhus, Denmark, and also visited the Leiden Rijksherbarium and the Kew Gardens while in Europe. In 1973 he held a guest professorship at Zurich, Switzerland. From 1975 to 1978 he held the position of B. A. Krukoff botanist at the Leiden Rijksherbarium.⁸⁰ Throughout his later years he remained a forceful figure in taxonomic botany internationally and in Indonesia. He continued to publish prodigiously, mostly taxonomic articles on the family Lauraceae but also on other plant families.⁸¹ By the mid-1970s Kostermans had re-established himself in Indonesia by becoming involved in research that promoted and documented plant resources of South-East Asia; he was working with the Southeast Asian Regional Centre for Tropical Biology (BIOTROP), an Indonesian centre for tropical biology that was set up in 1970 to train junior scientists and provide senior scientists with opportunities to conduct research.⁸² One of the founding members of the international cooperation program PROSEA (Plant Resources of South-East Asia), he was also the scientific advisor for the Indonesian PROSEA project.⁸³ In 1990 he was awarded the prestigious Dutch Commander's Cross of the Order of Oranje-Nassau in recognition of his life's work in botany, promotion of good relations between the Netherlands and Indonesia, and commitment to the education of Indonesian botanists.⁸⁴

At the end of his life Kostermans became a strong advocate for conserving Indonesia's forest, having become troubled by extensive logging of native forests and the resulting loss of biodiversity. He expressed his frustration with the Indonesian Government for allowing the rapid extinction of Indonesia's forests that had made

79 A. Rifai Mien, 'Kostermans: The Man, His Work, His Legacy', *Plant Diversity in Malesia III*, Proceedings of Symposium 1995, ed. J. Dransfield, M. J. E. Coode and D. A. Simpson, Royal Botanical Gardens, Kew, 1997, 229.

80 These appointments are listed in W. J. J. O. de Wilde and P. Baas, 'In Memoriam Professor A. J. G. H. Kostermans (1906–1994)', *Blumea—Biodiversity, Evolution and Biogeography of Plants* 40, no. 1 (1995): 3.

81 His scientific publications are listed in de Wilde and Baas, 'In Memoriam Professor A. J. G. H. Kostermans', 6–13.

82 Goss, *The Floracrats*, 166.

83 P. C. M. Jansen, 'The Prosea Programme (Plant Resources of South-East Asia)', *Flora Malesiana Bulletin* 12, no. 7/8 (2001): 359–63, accessed 29 September 2016, repository.naturalis.nl/record/532837.

84 De Wilde and Baas, 'In Memoriam Professor A. J. G. H. Kostermans', 1–13.

them famous within scientific circles.⁸⁵ His adopted country, he believed, had not sufficiently recognised him for the contributions he had made to botany.⁸⁶ In modern Indonesia, however, Kostermans is remembered with respect. After the funeral ceremonies on 11 July 1994, he was buried in the Dutch cemetery of the Kebun Raya Bogor. The Indonesian Government had given special permission to allow the burial in a cemetery that had been closed for 100 years. In recent times, an information board has been placed at the entrance of the cemetery. On the board is written:

The most recent grave is that of Prof. A.J.G.H. Kostermans who died in 1994—a renowned botanist from the Netherlands who became a citizen of Indonesia in 1958. Kostermans is buried near the plant environment he loved, in accordance with his wishes. The Indonesian government awarded him for his services to science.⁸⁷

His grave was initially marked with a wooden cross that Kostermans had requested to signify his life-time's taxonomical work with lowland forest trees. When the cross rotted in the tropical environment, his grave was substantially upgraded with a large headstone and horizontal red, white and blue grave markers. The headstone includes the inscription 'born Dutch in Purworejo on 1 July 1906 André Joseph Guillaume Henri, died Indonesian in Jakarta on 10 July 1994 Achmad Jahja Goh Hartono KOSTERMANS'.

In their 1995 memoriam, de Wilde and Baas named Kosterman as one of the most important post-WWII South-East Asian botanists and a leading expert on the family Lauraceae.⁸⁸ His prolific collections of botanical specimens deposited in world-renowned herbariums continue to inform botanists of the plant diversity that existed in areas now lost to deforestation. To the end of his life, Kostermans continued to be academically active, completing his final major scholarly work in 1993, a work still considered the seminal taxonomy of mangoes.⁸⁹ His scientific work is highly regarded by botanists but his work as a Japanese POW in the makeshift laboratory at the Nakom Paton hospital camp is less well known. Kostermans's and Chapman's inventive pharmaceutical work saved the lives of many fellow POWs, including Australian servicemen with whom they had laboured on the Burma–Thailand Railway. This forgotten contribution is an aspect of his life about which he was rightly proud.

85 Melody Kemp, 'Doc Kostermans: Botanist Extraordinaire', *Inside Indonesia*, no. 40, September 1994, 24.

86 Kemp, 'Doc Kostermans: Botanist Extraordinaire', 22.

87 Text on the information board at the Dutch cemetery, Kebun Raya Bogor, about Kostermans' gravesite. Kostermans became an Indonesian in 1961, not 1958 when he began the process of naturalisation.

88 De Wilde and Baas, 'In Memoriam Professor A. J. G. H. Kostermans', 1.

89 A. J. G. H. Kostermans and J. M. Bompert, *The Mangoes: Their Botany, Nomenclature, Horticulture and Utilization* (Cornwall, UK: TJ Press, 2012). Personal communication with P. Horne. Originally published in 1993.



Figure 2: Kostermans's grave, Dutch cemetery, Kebun Raya Bogor, 2016.

Source: Photograph by P. M. Horne.

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Chinese in the *Australian Dictionary of Biography* and in Australia¹

TIPING SU

Chinese people and other ethnic groups in the *Australian Dictionary of Biography*

According to Tom Griffiths, chairman of the editorial board of the *Australian Dictionary of Biography* (ADB), the dictionary is ‘the largest and most successful cooperative research enterprise in the humanities and social sciences in Australia’, which captures ‘the life and times and culture of this country in an absolutely distinctive and irreplaceable way’.² Since the first volume was launched in 1966, more than 4,500 authors have contributed just over 13,000 entries. The general editor, Melanie Nolan, has observed that ‘the dictionary has survived the test of time, providing material for others to construct their own images of the “real” Australian or the “typical Australian”’.³ To reflect this ‘real Australian’ ethos, the ADB records the cultural heritage (ethnicity) of subjects. Of the top 10 ethnicities in Australia, as recorded by the Australian Bureau of Statistics, a search on the ADB website (adb.anu.edu.au) found that, as of September 2018, 6,624 subjects were of British heritage (4,841 English, 1,624 Scottish, 159 Welsh), 294 were from New Zealand, 32 were Chinese, 10 were Indian, none were of Philippine or Vietnamese heritage, 88 were Italian, 29 were South African, two were Malayan and 321 were German.⁴ Thus, people of Asian heritage are clearly under-represented. To illustrate the significance of this omission, or neglect, I will take the Chinese entries as an analytic group, and suggest where improvements could be made. The Chinese are of particular importance because they were the largest non-European group in the Australian population in the nineteenth century.

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2 Tom Griffiths, ‘Foreword’, in *The ADB’s Story*, ed. Melanie Nolan and Christine Fernon (Canberra: ANU E Press, 2013), xi.

3 Melanie Nolan, “‘Insufficiently Engineered’: A Dictionary Designed to Stand the Test of Time?’, in Nolan and Fernon, *The ADB’s Story*, 22.

4 Australian Bureau of Statistics, 3412.0—Migration, Australia, 2013–14. ESTIMATED RESIDENT POPULATION, Australia—Top 10 countries of birth—30 June 2014, accessed 2 August 2016, www.abs.gov.au/AUSSTATS/abs@.nsf/allprimarymainfeatures/41C0506CD4276A2CCA257F8500171C5E?opendocument.

The 32 Chinese are represented in 13 volumes and the *ADB online* (one in Volumes 6, 9 and 14; two in Volumes 3, 7, 11, 12, 13 and 17; three in Volumes 5 and 16, and the 2005 supplementary volume; and five in Volume 18). Three further biographies have been published online and will appear in Volume 19. Of these 32 people, 10 were born outside China, eight in Australia, one in Malaysia and one in Papua New Guinea. They worked in diverse areas: Lowe Kong Meng and William Joseph Liu were merchants; Lester Leon and Rose Maud Quong were artists; Shen and Lee were restaurateurs; William Ah Ket was a barrister; Caleb James Shang was a herbalist; Harry Chan was a politician; Hoi Meen Chin was a photographer; Samuel John Tong-Way was a teacher; and Chang was a surgeon. All had been to school and four proceeded to obtain degrees.

Seventeen of the China-born Chinese came from Guangdong province, the others coming from Shanghai (Egge, Chang), Shandong (Bing Guin Lee), Jiangsu (Kiangsu) (Wang) and Beijing (Shen). Almost all were merchants except two missionaries (Cheong Cheok Hong and Ten), one market gardener (Kong Shuen Lau), one riverboat captain (Egge) and one cardiac surgeon (Victor Peter Chang). Fourteen had gone to school at least for several years, and some went on to college (Cheong Cheok Hong and Wang), while Victor Chang obtained a PhD after arriving in Sydney in 1951. Although the biographies do not mention the educational qualifications of the remaining six people, they were all able to speak English.

From this we can see that 80 per cent of the Chinese subjects in the *ADB* went to school, and all of them spoke some English, which shows that education or involvement with the local community was a factor in their significance to Australia; nearly two-thirds were merchants; and Guangdong was the main place of origin of many of the Australian Chinese. To some extent, these people came to represent the Chinese in Australia, but there are others who were neglected or under-represented; for example, those who participated in the gold rushes, of whom only one (Ah Mouy) appears in the *ADB*.

The 'missing' people

It is hard to be precise about the first Chinese person to arrive in Australia, although it is believed to have been Mak Sai Ying, or Mak O'Pong, who arrived in Sydney on 27 February 1818 on the *Laurel*, an Indian-built vessel, possibly a part of the East India Company fleet.⁵ Some believe that the first recorded Chinese-born settler was a carpenter, Ahuto, who came to Australia as a free man in 1803, rather than Mak Sai Ying, who may not have been born in China. Some Chinese-born people

5 'Mak Sai Ying Aka John Shying', Parramatta Heritage Centre, City of Parramatta Council, 27 January 2018, accessed 24 April 2017, arc.parracity.nsw.gov.au/blog/2017/01/27/mak-sai-ying-aka-john-shying/. The date of his birth is not confirmed yet. According to the Parramatta Heritage Centre, he was born in 1798.

may have arrived in Australia much earlier, but no extant document shows this. James Donohoe suggested that 'the Chinese were regular visitors to North Australia from the eleventh to the fourteenth century where they gathered beche-de-mer, or sea cucumber, which was a known delicacy'.⁶

Few documents about the Chinese in Australia were written before the gold rush, but one man, Louis Ah Mouy (1826–1918), changed this. 'His arrival', wrote Ching Fatt Yong in Volume 3 of the *ADB*:

Coincided with the discovery of gold in Victoria. He broke the news to his brother at Canton and his letter was said to have prompted the migration of many thousands of Cantonese to the Victorian goldfields in the 1850s.⁷

According to Australian official data, there were 2,341 Chinese people living in Victoria in 1854 and the number expanded rapidly to 24,732 in 1861.⁸ In the meantime, Chinese people arrived in other Australian colonies. For example, 8,000 left Victoria following the imposition of punitive taxes and immigration restrictions there and in South Australia. In 1861 the number in New South Wales had risen to nearly 13,000, with over 38,000 Chinese people in Australia altogether. This is the peak of Chinese immigration to Australia during the first 100 years of European settlement, although official data may understate the actual numbers; some estimated there were more than 200,000 in the 1870s, which cannot be verified. Chinese official data shows that approximately 55,000 people left for Australia between 1851 and 1875,⁹ and almost all these people came for gold. After the gold rush some of them settled down and became permanent residents, although there were not many new immigrants added (Table 1).

Thus during Australia's first 100 years, the population of Chinese was quantitatively and proportionally small. The year 1861 witnessed a peak, when the proportion of Chinese-born in the Australian population was 3.3 per cent (see Table 1). The overwhelming majority of these immigrants were men who came without their wives, so that:

The Chinese in Australia had a staggering sexual imbalance. In 1861 Victoria had 8 females out of a total Chinese population of 24,732 and New South Wales had 2 in a total of 12,988.¹⁰

6 James Hugh Donohoe, *The Forgotten Australians: The Non Anglo or Celtic Convicts and Exiles* (North Sydney: J.H. Donohoe, 1991), 51.

7 Yong Ching Fatt, 'Ah Mouy, Louis (1826–1918)', *Australian Dictionary of Biography* (Melbourne: Melbourne University Press, 1969), 3:19–20.

8 刘渭平. 澳洲华侨史. 台北: 星岛出版社, 1989: 28 [Weiping Liu, *Overseas Chinese History of Australia* (Taipei: Singtao Books, 1989), 28].

9 Liu, *Overseas Chinese History of Australia*, 28.

10 Jupp, *The Australian People*, 79.

There was thus little prospect of a significant second generation, as shown in Table 2. Although data on the second generation after 1921 has not been obtained, the diminishing numbers of first generation Chinese augured a slow growth of the second generation. However, among these second generation there do appear to be some eminent figures, like Billy Sing.

Table 1: Chinese living in Australia 1854–1947.

Year	Vic.	NSW	Qld	SA	WA	Tas.	NT	Total Chinese population	Total Australian population	%
1854	2,341							2,341		
1856		1,806						1,806		
1857	25,424							25,424		
1861	24,732	12,988	538	40 (inc. NT)	20	30		38,348		3.3
1871	17,935	7,220	3,305					28,460		1.7
1881	12,128	10,205	11,229	4,151	145	844		38,702	2,250,194	1.7
1891	8,489	13,157	8,524	182	917	939	3,613	35,821	3,174,392	1.1
1901	6,247	10,222	7,672	287	1,521	506	3,072	29,527	3,773,801	0.78
1911	4,707	8,226	5,995	255	1,812	427	1,331	22,753	4,455,005	0.51
1921	2,825	6,617	3,585	254	1,226	235	475	15,224	5,435,734	0.28
1933	1,690	3,398	1,705	89	672	104	129	7,792	6,629,839	0.12
1947	1,112	2,529	656	137	310	54	59	4,858	7,579,358	0.06

Note: Data on Chinese populations for 1921 from Australian Census records differ from that published in Liu, *Overseas Chinese History of Australia*, 30–38.

Sources: Australian Bureau of Statistics. Australian population totals 1881–1911 from *Census of the Commonwealth of Australia*, Vol. III, 1911, 2055; data for 1861–91 excluding the total Australian population from James Jupp, *The Australian People: An Encyclopedia of the Nation, Its People and Their Origins* (North Ryde, NSW: Angus & Robertson Publishers, 1988), 299; data for 1854, 1856, 1857, 1901 and 1911 are from Liu, *Overseas Chinese History of Australia*, 30–38; data for 1921 from *Census of the Commonwealth of Australia*, Vol. 1, 1921, 49; data for 1933 from *Census of the Commonwealth of Australia*, Vol. 1, 1933, 844; data for 1947 from *Census of the Commonwealth of Australia*, Vol. 1, 1947, 786–87.

Table 2: The second generation of Chinese in Australia, 1881–1921.

Year	Vic.	NSW	Qld	SA	WA	Tas.	NT	Total
1881	169							169
1891	888	867	50	5		117	91	2,018
1901	1,002	1,041	800	48	48	103	48	3,090
1911	892	1,132	719	104	60	102	8	3,017
1921	1,017	1,394	957	116	118	59	8	3,669

Source: Liu, *Overseas Chinese History of Australia*, 30–38.

In proportional terms, only 0.24 per cent of the entries in the *ADB* are Chinese people. In their various professions, regions of origin and educational backgrounds, the Chinese in the *ADB* also demonstrate the diversity of Chinese overseas experience, just as contemporary studies in the areas of history and ethnography show.¹¹ At the same time, as studies of the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries show, ‘overseas Chinese communities have been portrayed as conservative and homogenous collectives’.¹² To some extent, this stereotype has been reflected in the *ADB*. Only one goldminer (Ah Mouy, 1826–1918) appears, although ‘at its peak in 1858 the Chinese population of the Victorian goldfields number[ed] 33,673 of a total population of 171,647’.¹³ This may suggest a poor understanding of the complexity of Chinese communities and ‘the shifting, fluid character of Chineseness’.¹⁴

A number of historical factors might have contributed to the Chinese being a neglected or ‘missing’ people in the annals of the *ADB*. Firstly, the vast majority of the gold-seekers were poorly educated. The gold rushes in 1850s Australia attracted thousands of Chinese gold-seekers from Canton (Guangzhou) and surrounding counties. According to the *Report of the Select Committee of the Legislative Council on Chinese Immigration* of 1857, two-thirds of Chinese immigrants to Victoria were said to be farmers with no property, and the other third were artisans, shopkeepers and merchants. Most of them were less educated, partly because of the rural economy and partly because of their geographical isolation from cultural centres,¹⁵ so they left few written documents about themselves and their lives in Australia. Furthermore, they had few social connections with other communities, and were even isolated from other Chinese communities of different dialects. To complicate matters further, many were considered in China to be an underclass who had abandoned their homelands, and hence were deemed pariahs with no records in the official documents of their country.¹⁶

Secondly, most of the overseas Chinese in Australia tended to isolate themselves from the outside world. Most came to Australia with a common ideal and desire—to return to the Flowery Land where their ancestors were buried and to retire there.¹⁷ They may be classified more as ‘sojourners’ than settler immigrants, retaining connections with the home environment, sending remittances when they could and, in general, working towards the day when they could return. Thus they tended

11 Kevin Rains, ‘Webs of Association: Examining the Overseas Chinese Social Landscape of Early Cooktown’, *Chinese Southern Diaspora Studies* [南方华裔研究杂志] 6 (2013): 25–44.

12 Rains, ‘Webs of Association’, 25.

13 Jupp, *The Australian People*, 79.

14 Jane Lydon, *Many Inventions: The Chinese in the Rocks, Sydney 1890–1930* (Clayton, Vic.: Monash University Press, 1999), 13.

15 C. F. Yong, *The New Gold Mountain: The Chinese in Australia, 1901–1921* (Richmond, SA: Raphael Arts, 1977), 1.

16 Liu, *Overseas Chinese History of Australia*, 72.

17 Yong, *The New Gold Mountain*, 2–3.

not to involve themselves deeply in the local society, preferring instead to maintain, where they could, family or kinship networks. The presence of kinsmen was vital for the maintenance of social environments that not only provided security and mutual support, but also maintained the values and practices linking sojourners with their families at home.¹⁸ Although the Chinese and Europeans were interdependent for particular commodities and services, the Chinese sojourners may also have aspired to maintain formal distance and independence, and their relations with the Europeans remained short-term and utilitarian. Therefore, these people had little social power within the European colonial system and their connections with the wider world were superficial and minimal,¹⁹ so they were not recorded in Australian official documents.

Thirdly, racial barriers prevented the Chinese immigrants from becoming involved in colonial Australian society. Visible contrasts, such as language, clothes, hairstyle, habits, customs, traditions and modes of life maintained the gap between Chinese and the European majority and ensured that they remained 'foreign'. In addition, episodes of racial violence on the goldfields deepened Australian hostility to the Chinese sojourners:

An objection to the different Chinese value system, a fear of being overrun by the vast population of China and the perceived failure of Chinese immigrants to assimilate with white society.²⁰

Thus 'except for business contacts, there was negligible social and cultural intercourse between these two races which represented two different cultures—the Oriental and the Occidental'.²¹

Of course, the overseas Chinese experience was diverse and some became actively involved in local society and had rich interactions with Europeans; most of those in the *ADB* fall into such a category. Even in such business contacts, Europeans who dealt with Chinese businesses could turn against them to pursue their own interests. Under these circumstances, some Chinese chose the path of assimilation and largely abandoned their ethnic identity. For instance, Jimmy Ah Foo, from Cooktown, died in 1916 in the care of his westernised family and was given a Christian burial in the Protestant section of the Longreach cemetery.²² For these reasons, the overwhelming majority of overseas Chinese in Australia became 'missing' people; but there are still those who escaped the net of history and became visible.

18 Rains, 'Webs of Association', 30.

19 Rains, 'Webs of Association', 25–36.

20 Rains, 'Webs of Association', 29.

21 Yong, *The New Gold Mountain*, 5.

22 Rains, 'Webs of Association', 36.

Who could be added to the *ADB*?

The arrival of indentured Chinese labourers into Australia may date back to 1848, the *Sydney Morning Herald* reporting the arrival of 120 Chinese labourers from Hong Kong on 6 June 1848. Others arrived on 7 July, while another group landed in Australia on 2 October 1848.²³ Among the gold-seekers arriving after 1851 from Canton (Guangzhou) and surrounding counties, two-thirds were indentured labourers.²⁴ Chen Ah Kew, as Barry McGowan relates in *Tracking the Dragon* (2015), was one of them.²⁵ According to his family members, he came to Australia at age 17, landed at Robe in South Australia, and trekked 500 kilometres to the Victoria goldfields, thereby avoiding the Victoria poll tax. He spent most of his life in Australia and became economically successful, developing ‘contacts and friendships at the highest levels in white Australia’, before he took his family back to his hometown in 1901 and died shortly afterwards in 1902.²⁶ Later, his offspring emigrated to Melbourne one after another.

However, the vast majority of indentured labourers are hard to trace, as with most of the goldminers. They were seen as part of an amorphous mass and not recognised as individuals until much later, when some became prominent citizens in their own communities, such as Chen Ah Kew. The indentured labourer is one of the significant missing categories in the *ADB*. Apart from gold-seekers, there were many other missing people—Sun Johnson (孙俊臣), for instance. He was the co-founder and editor of the first Chinese-language newspaper in Sydney, *The Chinese Australian Herald* (廣益華報 [Guangyihuabao]) (1894–1923), the title meaning ‘paper for extending benefits to the public’.²⁷ Born in either 1865 or 1868, he was educated in Hong Kong and then London before migrating to Sydney in the late 1880s. He wrote and published a book under the title *Chinese English Self-Educator* in 1891, and was involved in both the European and Chinese communities, achieving a wealth of cross-cultural experience, which in turn equipped him to be one of the bilingual leaders of the Chinese community.²⁸

23 *Sydney Morning Herald*, 3 October 1848, 2, accessed 23 October 2016, trove.nla.gov.au/newspaper/article/12910790.

24 Yong, *The New Gold Mountain*, 1.

25 Barry McGowan, *Tracking the Dragon: A Study of the Chinese in the Narrandera District of New South Wales* (Wagga Wagga, NSW: Museum of the Riverina, 2015), 5.

26 McGowan, *Tracking the Dragon*, 108–9.

27 ‘Chinese-Language Australian Newspapers’, *Chinese–Australian Historical Images in Australia*, Chinese Museum, accessed 23 October 2016, www.chia.chinesemuseum.com.au/biogs/CH00047b.htm.

28 Mei-fen Kuo, ‘Modern “Imagined” Chinese Community in 1890s Colonial Sydney’, *Chinese Southern Diaspora Studies* 2 (2008): 38–39.

The idea of a 'white Australia' has a history of more than 100 years and can be traced at least to 1841, when an immigration committee believed that 'coolie immigration would lower the living standards of white men'.²⁹ The gold rush in the 1850s consolidated the foundations of this idea on the grounds that 'the influx of Chinese diggers caused alarm, fear, mistrust, and misunderstanding'³⁰ among Europeans and 'a comparative handful of colonists may be buried in a countless throng of Chinaman'.³¹ Therefore, 'hostility to the Chinese, manifested in petitions and at public meetings, was also demonstrated more directly'.³² In order to make a living and ensure the acceptance (or at least escape ostracism) of oneself or one's family, many Chinese people would adopt a strategy of assimilation and abandon or conceal their past and traditions, and even social networks, including Anglicising their names and converting to Christianity,³³ such as Jimmy Ah Foo (as mentioned above),³⁴ 'Billy' Sing and others.

An obituary for William Edward 'Billy' Sing (1886–1943) was added to the online Obituaries Australia in 2016 but his Chinese heritage was not mentioned. In fact his father, John Sing (c. 1842–1921), came from Shanghai and worked as a drover, and his mother, Mary Ann, came from England as a nurse. He lived in a time of considerable anti-Chinese sentiment and became the subject of racial prejudice due to his ancestry, although his family lived a westernised life.³⁵ Therefore, he had been forgotten for a long time until a statue was unveiled in his hometown of Proserpine, Queensland, in 1995. He is regarded as the most successful sniper in Australian army history, fighting at Gallipoli and the Western Front, and winning a DCM and a Belgian Croix de Guerre.

Some Chinese people stayed in Australia for a short time but exercised great influence among overseas Chinese, such as Wang Ronghe (Wong Yung Ho 王荣和)³⁶ and Liang Qichao (梁启超). Wang Ronghe, a general from Fujian Province, was delegated by the Viceroy of Liangguang (两广总督) and the central government of the Qing Dynasty to investigate overseas Chinese in South-East Asia and Australia. Arriving in Darwin in 1887, he travelled to Sydney, Melbourne, Adelaide and Brisbane, receiving a warm welcome from Chinese residents³⁷ and Australian

29 Yong, *The New Gold Mountain*, 11.

30 Yong, *The New Gold Mountain*, 11.

31 Geoffrey Serle, *The Golden Age: A History of the Colony of Victoria, 1851–1861* (Parkville, Victoria: Melbourne University Press, 1963), 334.

32 Andrew Markus, *Fear and Hatred: Purifying Australia and California, 1850–1901* (Sydney: Hale & Iremonger, 1979), 22.

33 Barry McGowan, 'From Fraternities to Families: The Evolution of Chinese Life in the Braidwood District of New South Wales (NSW), 1850s–1890s', *Chinese Southern Diaspora Studies* 2 (2008): 25–30.

34 K. J. Rains, *Cedars of the West: The Ah Foo Family Story* (Melbourne: Chinese Heritage in Northern Australia, 2011).

35 John Hamilton, *Gallipoli Sniper: The Life of Billy Sing* (Sydney: Pan Macmillan Australia, 2008), 19.

36 Sing-Wu Wang, 'Diplomatic Relations between China and Australia Prior to the Establishment of the Chinese Consulate in Melbourne in 1909', *Chinese Culture* (Taipei) 6, no. 2 (1969): 27–42.

37 'The Chinese Commissioners at the City Mission Hall', *South Australian Advertiser*, 25 June 1887, 6.

colonial governments, until rumours began to circulate that his survey was a prelude to large-scale migration from China. He presented a detailed report about his survey to the Chinese Government, revealing for the first time the landscape of the overseas Chinese in Australia.

Liang Qichao (1873–1929), a chief leader of the ill-fated Hundred Days' Reform in 1898, was the first man of letters and scholarship to set foot in Australia when he arrived in Perth on 25 October 1900; he stayed for half a year to 'enlist financial and political support' for his reforms, that is, 'to compass the downfall of the Empress Dowager, secure the reinstatement of the Emperor and the establishment of a liberal and representative form of government'.³⁸ He was well received by state governments and welcomed by the Chinese in Australia. 'His tour resulted directly or indirectly in the formation of ten branches of the Chinese Empire Reform Association in Australia and the collection of at least £5,000 from Chinese in this country.'³⁹ During this period, he composed 27 poems about his travels, many of which were published in the *Tung Hua News* (东华新报) and later were included in his *Ice-Drinking Room Combined Collected Works* (《饮冰室合集》) and an uncompleted monograph, 'Chinese History of the Latest Decade' (《中国近十年史论》).

The nineteenth century witnessed the humiliation and disasters of modern China after the Nanking Treaty of 1842. The Chinese Government and Emperor were busy with domestic and foreign challenges and had no time, willingness, or ability to worry about overseas Chinese. Under the circumstances, only two officials kept a watch on overseas Chinese in Australia: Zhang Zhidong and Xue Fucheng. Zhang Zhidong (1837–1909) submitted a memorial to the throne on 25 February 1886 to investigate overseas Chinese in South-East Asia and Australia when he held the post of viceroy of Liangguang, and appointed Wang Ronghe and Yu Qiong as commissioners.⁴⁰ Based on Wang and Yu's report, he submitted another memorial on 24 October 1887, in which he recorded part of Wang's report about the Chinese in Australia and, unsuccessfully, suggested the establishment of an embassy in Sydney to protect the interests of Chinese residents.⁴¹ Xue Fucheng (1838–94) was assigned as imperial envoy (ambassador) to the United Kingdom, France, Italy and Belgium in the spring of 1889. He considered Australia to be a part of Great Britain and included Wang's report about the Australian Chinese in his *Diplomatic Journal of Four Countries* (《出使英法比四国日记》). He was also the author of an essay entitled 'On Independence of Australia' during his tenure, which showed his

38 Yong, *The New Gold Mountain*, 122.

39 Yong, *The New Gold Mountain*, 124.

40 苑书义、孙华峰、李秉新主编. 张之洞全集(奏议). 石家庄: 河北人民出版社, 1998: 401 [Shuyi Yuan, Huafeng Sun and Bingxin Li, eds, *The Complete Works of Zhang Zhidong (Volume of Memorials to Emperor)* (Shijiazhuang: Hebei Renmin Press, 1998), 401].

41 Yuan, Sun and Li, *The Complete Works of Zhang Zhidong*, 607.

preference and confidence in Australia. He noted the differences between Australia and South-East Asia, and expressed his confidence that the Chinese would contribute effectively to the country's future.

Conclusion

As a national biography, the *ADB* not only records the past but also reflects the present, with state working parties being allocated quotas on the basis of the current population when determining subjects of articles. The small numbers of Chinese people in the *ADB* can be explained largely by virtue of their 'invisibility' in colonial Australia, but this invisibility is also indicative of the attitudes that partly led to the ideal of white Australia. In one sense, all the 'missing' people mentioned above, just to name a few, are important and valuable. Many of the Chinese men were prominent merchants, gardeners or farmers in regional Australia and significant contributors to their local communities, although they may not be 'famous' on a national scale. Should this disqualify the Chinese people and other non-Europeans groups from inclusion? What percentage should each ethnic group occupy? Who could be 'representative and famous'? All these questions are worthy of discussion.

BOOK REVIEWS

Michelle Grattan review of Tom Frame (ed.), *The Ascent to Power, 1996: The Howard Government*

(Sydney, NSW: UNSW Press, 2017), 352 pp., PB \$39.99, ISBN 9781742235288

More than a decade after he lost office and his own seat of Bennelong, the Liberals still regularly ask John Howard to campaign. It is a mark of the respect in which the former prime minister is held by his party, which has him on a pedestal only a little lower than the one reserved for Robert Menzies. It is also a judgement about the drawing power he is thought, rightly or wrongly, still to command in a section of the electorate.

Howard's reputation comes not just from his government's longevity (nearly 12 years), its signature achievements (gun control, the GST) and his management of a sometimes fractious backbench. It is also that he greatly benefits by comparison with his successors. The next Liberal prime minister, Tony Abbott, was deposed by his followers, while at the time of writing Malcolm Turnbull had a mixed record in governing. As well, although we should be wary of romanticising the Howard years—there were dramatic ups and downs, tensions within the government, and the reform record was less than that of the Hawke–Keating period—they do represent for the most part a more orderly, positive period of politics than we have had since, under either Labor or the Coalition. There was pressure on Howard's leadership from his deputy Peter Costello, but even when defeat loomed, his party stayed behind him. In contrast, the political execution of prime ministers was a regular feature of the following years.

The Ascent to Power, 1996: The Howard Government, volume 1 (Sydney: NewSouth Publishing, 2017), edited by Tom Frame is the first of a series of four books on the 1996–2007 government, drawing on Howard's official papers, which are now held at UNSW Canberra. While much has been written on the period, Frame says Howard's government 'is now being consigned to history', which allows and requires a different perspective to the 'commentary' appraisals made closer to the time. 'Commentaries can deal with matters of historic significance, but commentary is not history', Frame says, although some would argue for a more nuanced distinction, taking into account that the good contemporary appraisals were the so-called first drafts of history, benefiting from personal access and the bird's eye view.

The book is in five sections, covering the mood running up to the 1996 election, the election's outcome, assuming government, the achievements and challenges of the first year, and a look forward as well as an assessment of those first days. Its contributors are drawn from both observers and participants. There are chapters from Howard and then-deputy prime minister John Anderson, and a range of academics. The collection includes some niche pieces—John Nethercote on the public service 'history wars' and Andrew Blyth on radical activist Albert Langer's challenge to the voting system.

Howard came to the leadership just over a year before the March 1996 election, long after he had been written off following the 1989 coup that toppled him in opposition. He had learned much, and changed, in the intervening years, but some things remained steadfast: his core conservative values (albeit tempered by pragmatism), his policy commitments in areas such as taxation and industrial relations reform and, above all, his determination to be prime minister, which equalled the Liberals' desire to wrest back power. The party had failed to win the so-called 'unlosable' 1993 election; its desperation not to let opportunity slip through its fingers again facilitated a smooth transition from its accident-prone leader Alexander Downer to Howard.

The sweeping 1996 victory was widely attributed to the shift to the Coalition of the 'Howard battlers', mainly blue collar workers and their families who had previously been Labor supporters. But in his chapter Ian McAllister, director of the Australian Election Study, an academic survey of political attitudes done after each election, challenges the conventional claim about the battlers' movement in 1996. He argues that:

The evidence based on large-scale public opinion surveys conducted immediately after the 1993, 1996 and 1998 elections, suggests that the conventional interpretation of battlers winning the election for the Liberals is an attractive myth.

The bulk of the battlers' political migration happened in 1993; the Coalition retained the overwhelming majority of them, and topped up, in 1996.

David Kemp looks through a long lens: Robert Menzies's forgotten people and Howard's battlers were not identical but overlapped, and both 'shared a fear of declining opportunities and jobs':

With the gradual 'middle classing' of Australian society over the past five decades, the blue-collar vote has moved towards the Liberals although the party's success in winning traditional Labor voters varies from election to election. In 1996, a well-conceived and finely executed campaign capitalised on this trend.

In his chapter, Howard notes his surprise at the size of the Coalition win, which gave him a 45-seat majority, while the 1998 result—in which his government, campaigning on its proposed GST, just clung on while losing the popular vote—‘was much closer than I had expected’. It is a reminder that, despite all the polling, election results can vary from expectations, as happened in 2016, when Labor came closer to ousting the Turnbull Government than had been previously anticipated. The big majority meant Howard went into his first year with strong momentum. This was significant for both his radical gun law reform—his response to the Port Arthur massacre in April 1996—and the tough 1996 Budget. Anderson notes the importance of timing in politics, arguing that:

The two Coalition parties would not have been as accommodating of the need for change had Port Arthur happened a year later. By then, the Coalition’s ‘honeymoon’ was over ... and regional members would have been in a far more argumentative frame of mind.

The 1996 Budget, delivered by treasurer Peter Costello, with its pathway back to surplus, set up the Howard Government for later successes. It stands in stark contrast to Joe Hockey’s 2014 Budget, the first after the 2013 Coalition return to power. That budget began the demise of the Abbott Government. Both were harsh, but the Hockey one had more political blind spots and gave minimal heed to the issue of fairness. There were, however, other big differences that contributed to one budget being a success and the other a disaster. In 1996, the voters were already distrustful of politicians but this had worsened by 2014. The 24-hour news cycle gave a louder voice to the aggrieved. And the Senate held the whip hand over the Abbott Government, so it suffered the pain of proposing unpopular measures without the gain of being able to implement them.

Howard writes that while managing the Senate was a challenge in his government’s first few years (he later got control of it, causing other problems but that is another story) he had less difficulty with the upper house than either Abbott or Turnbull:

The big difference was the outlook of the principal crossbench party: the Australian Democrats. Although the Australian Democrats were closer to Labor than the Coalition, we knew where they stood on most issues and could take a moderate position on a range of issues.

In the government’s initial year, it was able to negotiate a package of substantial industrial relations changes with the Democrats. In its second term, the centre party would give it the GST, after insisting on big changes. For the Democrats, their reasonableness became a slow poison, a major factor in their eventual death. Abbott faced a fragmented, publicity-seeking, idiosyncratic Senate crossbench; crucially, however, he lacked the necessary negotiating skills that Howard possessed. Under the Turnbull Government, more deals got done with the Senate than the Abbott Government could achieve.

The Howard Government dealt with the fiscal adjustments it needed to make faster and more effectively than its Coalition successor. Despite the budget 'black hole' it inherited from Labor, the ALP had left a good legacy for the next government. 'Policies introduced by the previous Labor Government were generating benefits by the time the Coalition won office in 1996', Warwick McKibbin writes. Then:

The prudent fiscal policy of the early Howard years produced a vital financial cushion for a small open economy whose income was highly dependent on the value of commodities. And while a good fiscal position was essential from a risk management point of view, fiscal prudence also made tax reform a real possibility.

When he had available revenue, Howard's attitude was that a good amount of it should be spent—on tax cuts, family benefits and the like—often to the frustration of Costello. One of the criticisms in later years of the Howard Government was that it did not put the largesse of the good times away as insurance, or spend more it on productive infrastructure. Howard was always unrepentant about his priorities.

As Frame says, the 1996 election of the Howard Government 'marked a turning point for Australia'. Just as did Bob Hawke's victory in 1983. In each case, this was not just because the incoming prime minister would prove strong and effective in governing, but also because the times were changing. In the 1980s, Australia was facing irresistible pressures to open its economy, and the Labor Government proved up to the challenge. In the mid-1990s, economic reform was still an imperative. However, by then the social landscape was transforming, bringing identity politics and culture wars. Howard resisted social change, was a cultural warrior and set his jaw against 'political correctness'. He struggled with how to respond to Pauline Hanson, who won a House of Representatives seat at the 1996 election as an independent after being disendorsed by the Liberal Party for racist remarks. Moderate Liberals were critical of Howard's failure to quickly confront the challenge she would pose. He argued his approach was strategic; others read his motives as less pure. Paul Kelly writes: 'When Howard looked at Hanson supporters he tended to see them as Howard battlers'.

In his 'With the benefit of hindsight' chapter, Frame considers the start of the Howard administration and concludes that: 'The government had not done enough in 1996 to ensure it would be re-elected. Conversely, it had done nothing that would seriously imperil its chances'. There had been the problem of breaking 'non-core' promises and the first losses for breaches of the code of conduct. But the bad times for the government were still ahead, as were important successes.

This collection contains interesting material but there are some gaps. It would have been enhanced by a more thorough look at the media landscape of the time, before its transformation, which continues to proceed apace. On the economic side, a pick-apart of the 1996 budget process would have been fascinating. So would a breakdown of the first Howard ministry, in terms of gender, occupations before

parliament, education and other variables. Indeed, a closer look at the parliamentary 'class of '96', which included a reasonable influx of women—the size of the 1996 swing helped female candidates who were running in marginal seats—could have been valuable. It is easy to forget, now that the right is so shrill and assertive, that the parliamentary Liberal Party of those days was much more ideologically mixed. Finally, the volume could usefully have included more detailed analysis of Howard's style, which is touched in many pieces, including those by Anderson and Michael L'Estrange. The latter writes of his observation from the vantage point of Cabinet secretary that Howard:

Brought clear authority and strong leadership to the functioning of Cabinet. But he also brought a deep sense of collegiality, pragmatism, openness to compelling arguments consistent with the Coalition's vision for government, a focus on the political management of important policy decisions, and effective chairmanship in the broadest sense of the term.

Howard's evolution from the 1980s to the mid-1990s is a story of growth and resilience. The qualities of leadership always form a rich lode for historians and politician scientists. In Hawke and Howard, Australians had two leaders with whom they identified. While they were totally different—the larrikin Hawke, the straight-laced Howard—they possessed one implant essential to successful leadership: the ability to inspire trust. Deep dives into Howard's personality and mode of political management, with case studies of decision-making helped by the cache of documents available at UNSW Canberra, should feature in future volumes. The final volume, I am told, will focus on Howard's style and the government's culture, so it may be a case of the best coming last.

Ragbir Bathal review of Peter Robertson, *Radio Astronomer: John Bolton and a New Window on the Universe*

(Sydney, NSW: NewSouth Publishing, 2017), 432 pp., HB \$59.99,
ISBN 9781742235455

Peter Robertson is to be congratulated on writing a book on the life and scientific work of one of Australia's elite astrophysicists. He has done a remarkably good job in giving us not only aspects of his forceful personality and drive but also his scientific achievements. John Bolton was one of a small group of British intellectuals who had left Britain after World War II to make Australia their home. The other prominent ones were Joseph Pawsey and Paul Wild. They were all involved, in one way or another, in constructing, testing and using equipment for the war effort. All had a very strong foundation in university physics. While studying at Cambridge University, Bolton had absorbed the Cavendish string and sealing-wax tradition that was to prove very useful in his early experiments at the Dover Heights field station where he built rudimentary antennas.

It was at Dover Heights that Bolton, Gordon Stanley and Bruce Slee discovered a strong source of radiation emanating from Cygnus. This proved to be a fundamental discovery of the utmost importance. An analysis of the source revealed a rather surprising result: the Cygnus source was at a distance of 1,000 million light years. In their book, *Radio Astronomy*, Joe Pawsey and Ron Bracewell commented:

The identification of such a strong source ... carries with it an astonishing astronomical implication ... it maybe possible by radio means to extend the bounds of the observable universe beyond the optical means.

This discovery and the subsequent discoveries of other sources—Taurus A, Virgo A and Centaurus A—pushed Australia into the forefront of the new field of radio astronomy. As Robertson notes in his book, 'a new branch of astronomy had been founded—extragalactic radio astronomy' (p. 100). The youthful trio of John, Gordon and Bruce would go on to carve out distinguished careers in radio astronomy.

Despite his great success in finding radio sources that attracted international interest, there were other competitors in the radiophysics group who were competing for the same scarce resources. Bernie Mills, a highly innovative physicist, had been

experimenting with different arrays and came up with an innovative design in the shape of a cross, which consisted of a long array in both the north–south and east–west directions. Unfortunately, Bolton’s suggestion of a new radio telescope was rejected. Mills went on to become a professor in the physics department at Sydney University.

Despite Bolton’s disappointment, a new door opened up for him in the United States as the institutions there were gearing up to get into the new field of radio astronomy. Reviewing Bolton’s career, Robertson notes that he was appointed a senior research fellow at Caltech (California Institute of Technology). He was later promoted to the position of professor of radio astronomy and director of the Owens Valley Radio Observatory. While at Caltech he built the radio telescope at Owens Valley. He was awarded the California Scientist of the Year award by the California Museum of Science and Industry. Rudolph Minkowski, a distinguished American astrophysicist, had this to say about Bolton’s nomination:

John Bolton combines a broad and penetrating understanding of the scientific problems of radio astronomy with outstanding technical ability. He possesses the uncommon gift of solving instrumental problems, not by the brute force of large size, but by ingenious design of equipment ... In a short time his leadership has established in California one of the world’s most outstanding centres of research in radio astronomy.

Bolton stayed at Caltech for about six years before coming back to Australia to build his most ambitious radio telescope—the Parkes Radio Telescope. An international project, it became famous quite quickly with the discovery of a quasar. According to Bolton:

The occultation of 3C273 is one of the things [that] made it famous in its early days. However, there were a whole series of discoveries I think [that] were just as important. I would place, certainly on an equal footing, the discovery of polarization in the extragalactic radio sources as one of the fundamental discoveries. The mapping of the polarization gave us directly the mapping of the magnetic fields in these objects’.

Receiving images of the first moonwalk, the Parkes Radio Telescope hit the international headlines when it was used as a communication link in the Apollo program. Bolton was in charge of the operations at the Parkes Radio Telescope.

Bolton led a very productive life as one of the pioneers of Australian radio astronomy. He was recognised for his work in the scientific community, being awarded the Royal Astronomical Society’s gold medal. The citation read, ‘in recognition of your outstanding contributions to both radio and optical astronomy ... and your role in the development and inspiring leadership of two major radio astronomy observatories’. Robertson has written an excellent account of the scientific achievements of Bolton, a pioneer of radio astronomy in Australia and the United States. It is a book that should be read by people who are interested in the works of Australian scientists who have contributed to international astronomy.

Darryl Bennet review of Peter Monteath, *Escape Artist: The Incredible Second World War of Johnny Peck*

(Sydney, NSW: NewSouth Publishing, 2017), 328 pp., PB \$29.99,
ISBN 9781742235509

Approximately 30,000 Australian soldiers, sailors, airmen and army nurses became prisoners of the Axis powers in World War II. Most Australians know about those the Japanese captured and incarcerated in their occupied Asian territories; such expressions as ‘Changi gaol’ and ‘Burma–Thai railway’ are very familiar. Australians generally know less, however, about the country’s servicemen—some 8,000 of them—captured by the Germans and Italians. Peter Monteath is one of a number of historians who are performing a valuable service in telling the stories of Australian prisoners of war in Europe. Monteath’s latest book, *Escape Artist: The Incredible Second World War of Johnny Peck*, is an important contribution to the field.

Peck’s war was certainly extraordinary. It may readily be summarised from the pages of *Escape Artist*. Born on 19 February 1922, John Desmond (sometimes Desmond John) Peck falsified his age to enlist in the Australian Imperial Force (AIF) on 15 December 1939. He sailed for the Middle East in January 1940 and joined the staff of the AIF’s Overseas Base in Palestine. From September he served with the 2/7th Battalion, which took part in the campaigns in North Africa (January 1941), Greece (April) and Crete (May). One of the men left behind in the hasty evacuation from Crete, he escaped twice from captivity. Following his recapture in April 1942, he was transported to Rhodes. From there, after a breakout and failed attempt to flee to neutral Turkey, he was sent in June to a prisoner-of-war camp in northern Italy. Twelve months later he escaped but was caught and imprisoned in a civilian gaol at Vercelli, near Milan. He was released in September 1943, when the armistice between Italy and the Allies came into effect.

Instead of making a quick, easy getaway to Switzerland, Peck stayed behind and set up an organisation to help other former prisoners evade local fascists and the German occupying forces. He estimated that his network guided more than 300 Allied soldiers to refuge in Switzerland by the end of January 1944. Earlier, he had merged the organisation with an Italian network run by Giuseppe Bacciagaluppi. Peck had

also begun carrying out sabotage operations with partisan groups. In February the Germans apprehended him. He reported that he was tortured, court martialled, sentenced to death and placed in San Vittore prison, Milan, to await execution.

Escaping in May 1944 during an Allied air-raid, Peck made his way to Switzerland. There, the clandestine Special Operations Executive (SOE) recruited him and, on 5 August, he crossed back into Italy as a British liaison officer with the partisans. After an anti-fascist coalition declared a free republic in the Ossola region in September, the Germans moved to put down the rebellion. Peck participated in the ensuing battle, claiming to have commanded 30 officers and 450 men of the republic's partisan army. In October, he made his last crossing to Switzerland and thereafter took no further part in the war. He had remained a private soldier throughout his adventures but he appears to have held informal commissioned rank while with the SOE.

It was obviously not the author's intention that the book would be a biography of Peck; it deals only briefly with his life before and after the war. His mother died when he was seven and his father remarried. By his own account, he had been unhappy at home and had run away at 13, although—judging from affectionate letters he wrote to his family during the war—any estrangement from his father and stepmother had soon ended.

From Switzerland in 1944, he was sent to the United Kingdom, where he married an English woman. Returning to Australia in 1945, he was awarded the Distinguished Conduct Medal—second only to the Victoria Cross among the decorations for gallantry available to soldiers—and commissioned as a lieutenant in the Australian Military Forces. After the war, he went back to England and had a successful career as a company executive. He died in 2002.

The author has been industrious in searching for primary and secondary sources in Australia, the United Kingdom and Italy. Peck's oral and written testimony, however, is the sole evidence he cites for much of the narrative in *Escape Artist*. If quotations from Peck's prose in the book are any guide, he was an accomplished writer, especially for a person said to have left school at age 13 and then to have worked as a farmhand before joining the AIF. To illustrate, pages 90–91 of *Escape Artist* reproduce passages from Peck's manuscript 'Captive in Crete', describing the hospitality of the local people. Although close to starvation under the German occupation, they felt honour-bound to share their scarce food with fugitive Allied soldiers. Peck wrote of them, in part:

They would share their last piece of bread with us and we would all sit around the table dipping the hard crust into a cup of olive oil and vinegar, and, if we were lucky, crunching away on a piece of raw onion. Sometimes the host, with vast ceremony after the repast, would bring out his only cigarette and, solemnly cutting it into three, would pass the pieces around with the air of an ambassador handing out cigars after a banquet.

Peck would have been a most unusual man had he not, consciously or unconsciously, selected what to place on record about his experiences. Moreover, he had the literary skills subtly to accentuate or elide. Some slanting of his account is only to be expected. There is evidence qualifying Peck's version of some events and Monteath either includes it without comment or omits it. For example, the historian Roger Absalom believes that Peck exaggerated the importance of his escape network in Italy compared to Bacciagaluppi's operation.¹ *Escape Artist* does not mention the point, perhaps because it is a minor one. But there are other instances in which the book might have made use of sources apart from Peck's testimony.

Peck's early army service in Palestine is a case in point. According to *Escape Artist* (p. 8), as early as March 1940 Peck was seeking a posting from the base staff to a fighting unit. His captain had recommended him for promotion, and his transfer to an infantry battalion was imminent. The plan came unstuck when the army discovered that he was underage. Rather than be sent home, Peck made a personal appeal to Lieutenant General Sir Thomas Blamey, the AIF's commander in the Middle East. Blamey ordered that Peck would serve as his batman until he decided he was mature enough for infantry duties. Monteath continues: 'What followed for Peck were some months of frustration, though devoid of any ill-will towards Blamey ... he continued to badger Blamey until he finally got his way' in September.

This telling ignores salient facts and is inconsistent with the timing of events, as documented in Peck's record of service² and other sources. Blamey did not arrive in the Middle East until 20 June 1940.³ The official record has Peck remaining on the base staff until he was posted to Blamey's headquarters on 12 August. Precisely one month later, he was transferred to the 2/7th Battalion. Blamey selected his personal staff with great care. Norman Carlyon, his aide-de-camp, reported that he chose his original batman because his civilian occupation of dry cleaner equipped him to look after the general's uniforms.⁴ This man could have been absent because he was ill or on a course in August–September 1940, or he may have been posted elsewhere and a permanent replacement not yet found. In either of these cases, Peck's employment in the role would have been temporary. Conversely, it is possible Blamey intended that Peck would be his permanent batman. But he is unlikely to have selected a soldier who made it clear that he wished to be elsewhere. Whatever the situation, the story of Peck's chafing for months of an 'indeterminate' (p. 8) period on Blamey's staff, while the commander assessed his suitability for transfer, looks like a romanticised reconstruction of events.

1 Roger Absalom, *A Strange Alliance: Aspects of Escape and Survival in Italy 1943–45* (Accademia Toscana Di Scienze e Lettere 'La Colombaria, Firenze, 1991), 52–53.

2 National Archives of Australia, B883, VX9534, PECK DESMOND JOHN, accessed 26 May 2018, recordsearch.naa.gov.au/SearchNRetrieve/Interface/ViewImage.aspx?B=6211291.

3 *News* (Adelaide), 21 June 1940, 1, accessed 26 May 2018, trove.nla.gov.au/newspaper/article/132009054.

4 Norman D. Carlyon, *I Remember Blamey* (South Melbourne: Sun Books, 1981), 7.

Peck was not a well-disciplined soldier. He was found guilty of five military offenses between April 1940 and March 1941.⁵ Three of the convictions resulted from his taking unauthorised days off and the fourth from his disobeying an order. The fifth is discussed below. Military officers are generally tolerant of other ranks who occasionally misbehave, if they are good at their day-to-day work and exhibit qualities required in combat. Peck's subsequent record would suggest that he was in this category. His captain may well have retained his good opinion of him and Blamey may have recognised his potential, too. *Escape Artist* does not mention his disciplinary record. Did the author believe it was another trivial matter, detracting unnecessarily from Peck's great achievements? If so, he missed an opportunity, provided by this independent evidence, to explore elements of Peck's character. There was another matter on which the author might have commented.

The pages of *Escape Artist* are enlivened by vignettes on a number of Peck's fellow escapees. Among those in northern Italy was the remarkable and redoubtable Sapper Jens Francis Jocumsen (1912–91), of the 2/7th Field Company, Royal Australian Engineers. He spent all his time with the partisans. Monteath compares him to Peck. Jocumsen 'craved direct engagement with the enemy, the action of a skirmish or a firefight', whereas Peck was 'an organiser, building a network ... dedicated to the task of rescuing men so that they might live to fight another day' (pp. 174–75). Jocumsen's instinct was to fight; Peck fought only when it was sensible to do so.

In a later report of his activities, Jocumsen identified two British liaison officers who, on arrival in Italy, 'commenced to sell their stores to the highest bidders' (p. 218). Monteath states that one of these officers was possibly Peck but he offers no commentary on the matter. Were they making money for SOE or were they profiteering? At the very least, the reader is entitled to be told that the author does not know the answer. Despite their different personalities, Jocumsen and Peck were friends, so Jocumsen was unlikely to report unfavourably on Peck. Perhaps Peck was not one of the officers involved. Or maybe Jocumsen saw no harm in profiteering.

Here, Peck's fifth offence in Palestine reenters the picture. He had been caught in possession of cigarettes pilfered from the officers' mess. Add an earlier fact—one Monteath does report—that Peck had stolen a bicycle to facilitate his flight from home as a teenager and Peck emerges as a man who might have been unscrupulous enough to profiteer. At any rate, available independent evidence confirms that, when young, he was rebellious, brazen and careless of conventional standards of conduct. The evidence Monteath accumulated for *Escape Artist* proves that he was also headstrong, brave, resourceful and intelligent. It is reasonable to suppose that his

5 NAA, B883, VX9534, PECK DESMOND JOHN.

less commendable traits were as important as his admirable qualities for performing audacious and deceptive deeds behind enemy lines, efforts that saved many lives and contributed significantly to the Allied war effort.

Historians are enjoined to write accessible prose and engage the general reader. Peck's story is ideal for popular history but this book takes informality in expression too far. Its clichés, mixed metaphors and disconnected participial phrases are distracting, and its intermittent awkward sentences can make for hard reading. In the discussion (p. 11) about the impending assault on Bardia, Libya, where Peck is to have his 'baptism of fire', we learn that Bardia 'would not be an easy nut to crack' and that 'the landscape surrounding it was a quintessentially western desert landscape.' Reflecting (p. 20) on the reception invading German troops would receive from the Greeks, the author observes that: 'With friends in high places in Greek politics, the military and the economy, a German presence was unlikely to provoke ... opposition'. On page 207 the Allies' improving strategic position is discussed. 'Yet', we are told, 'there was also a downside to this favourable turn of the tide'. These faults probably reflect the lack of time a busy academic has for drafting. Editing would have eliminated them. As with many scholarly books these days, the text suffers from the absence of competent editorial attention.

It is much easier to pick holes in a work of history than to write one. Notwithstanding the problems of evidence and editing in *Escape Artist*, Monteath tells the story of Johnny Peck's war with verve. Interweaving descriptions of broader geopolitical and strategic developments with the narrative of Peck's exploits, he has produced a lively, engaging, fast-paced account, certain to appeal to many readers.

Barbara Dawson review of Stephen Foster, *Zoffany's Daughter: Love and Treachery on a Small Island*

(Canberra, ACT: South Solitary Press, 2017), 152 pp., PB \$29.95,
ISBN 9780646971414

From the outset, the reader of *Zoffany's Daughter* is intrigued. The contents list, which seems to channel Plato or William Hazlitt, prepares him or her for the dialectical nature of the treatise that follows. There are questions. But do we find answers?

The clever choice of the title immediately alerts us to the patriarchal (and misogynist?) society in which the story is set. The first page of text—a newspaper report from the London *Morning Chronicle*, October 1825—tells us, but does not inform us, of the protagonist's true identity. She is Mrs Horne, 'wife of the Rev. Mr. Horne of Chiswick' and daughter of 'the celebrated Zoffany, the painter'. No hints, yet, although we have already learned of her husband and father's occupational status and, where applicable, title. The society in which she dwells, however, is well spelled out. It comprises a small group of people, contained—geographically and numerically—on the small island of Guernsey, one of the Channel Islands, with legal connections to both Britain and Normandy.

By birth and marriage, this person is a 'lady'. She has two daughters, again, both unnamed. One is 18 years old and 'very fine and accomplished', as befits young ladies of that time. Jane Austen's Regency period is over but, in less than 12 years, the Victorian era would dawn. Mr and Mrs Horne's other daughter was a 10-year-old child. Mrs Horne may well have been 'exemplary in her conduct as a mother', but her outward expression of her maternal love in her endeavour to maintain her attachment to her children had transformed her, by the end of the newspaper report, to 'this strange and dauntless woman' (pp. 1–2). Directly and subconsciously, the reported details reflect and assume the paternalistic foundations, not only of Guernsey society, but also, as Stephen Foster will point out, its legal statutes and their interpretation.

Having introduced the other main players, the author immediately sets the scene for modern readers. The lady, now 'woman', is Cecilia, her husband is 'Thomas', and the children who are pertinent to this tale are 'Clementina' and the younger one, 'Laura'. We are now led on an intriguing investigation. Clementina is the chosen storyteller for the hidden historical details and narrative additions that cry out to be heard.

It was a chance finding of the newspaper clipping in a Scottish family's archive that led Foster on his quest to find out more. Such is the mind of the inquisitive historian. By asking questions such as 'what happened next?' and 'why was this so?', he leads us on his quest to unravel past deeds and to explore the permutations, complications and outcomes. The reader is immediately pulled into the unfolding drama.

After 22 years of marriage and seven surviving children, Cecilia and Thomas separated. This followed 'unfortunate disputes', which were exacerbated by the opinions and emotions of members on both sides of the married couple. All these 'injudicious intruders' were said to have had 'violent tempers' (p. 10). Cecilia was able to take with her two of her three daughters, and Thomas Snr was to provide her with £300 annually for the following three years. She and the girls seemed to have subsequently moved to France, then Jersey and, in mid-1825, to Guernsey.

Versed in his research of time, place and circumstances, Foster now concocts diary entries to tell the proceeding story of Cecilia and her daughters, through the pen of Clementina. Much of this commentary is a conduit to describe the town of St Peter Port, recount some Guernsey folklore and introduce subsidiary characters. Foster has had some fun here, with his zest for storytelling, his wit and 'winks' and his splashes of irony.

At the end of only about six weeks on the island, Cecilia realises that Thomas Horne, with his friend (and brother-in-law), and his son Thomas, has arrived to try to persuade her to return with him to England. Foster depicts Zoffany's daughter as sassy and resolute, despite her predicament; he also gives a light plug to feminism by allowing Cecilia to demand for Clementina's equal right to remain in the room, like her brother, during a discussion on the women's future.

Foster has dug and delved into the intricacies of British custody laws—and their application to Guernsey—with which Cecilia has to wrangle. At a court hearing to resolve the custody of the younger daughter, Cecilia loses to her husband the right to keep Laura with her. Instead of acceding to the court's demands, Cecilia—with the help of her enigmatic 'friend', Jean de Jersey—has her daughter ferreted out of her lodgings to a hiding place in the home of M de Campourcy, 'a man of the strictest honour and respectability' (p. 51). Cecilia, on the other hand, goes to prison. This term is extended when another court hearing fails to exonerate her.

The plot thickens when the seemingly affable and obliging M de Jersey is revealed to be a rotter. His deeds and motives have not been purely philanthropic, but are now seen to have been a means to press his success in his matrimonial designs on Clementina.

Released from gaol, Cecilia and a Guernsey resident, Mr Brock, go to Laura's hideaway. In trying to physically remove Laura, an altercation takes place. Here the author has been able to turn to documentary evidence from the oral (Cecilia's) and written testimonies in the following court proceedings, reported in no less than five newspapers. The unreliability of oral testimony is no better evidenced than in these various recordings of the same interactions that occurred at M de Campourcy's home on 18 November 1825; Cecilia, Louis-Prudent de Campourcy, Jean de Jersey and John Brock all give differing versions of the scene from their own recollections or point of view. In the light of these discrepancies, is the assumptive filling-in of Foster's interspersing commentary in this tale so radically subversive?

Foster's précis on microhistory reflects his interest and ability to think 'outside the box' and gives courage to historians, perhaps unschooled in traditional methods, to follow their own leads and depths of analysis. For this forensic historical search, who were the author's intended readers? As well as providing a fascinating story from the past—one that would immediately engage an educated lay public—this history gives a boost to ongoing discussions by academic historians as to where the discipline of history writing could be heading.

Perhaps, here, the argument for the now apparently defunct psychohistory could make a play. The narrative hinges on the initial intemperate behaviour of the married couple. Instead of considered resolution, marital disruption increased, apparently aided and abetted by relatives of similar propensity for strident, perhaps violent, interference. Angry dispositions fuelled fierce reaction. Within the narrative, Cecilia is shown to be reckless, but also resolute. Conciliation did not seem part of her personality. Rather than being 'determined' and 'defiant of convention' (p. 135), could Cecilia's behaviour be assessed as stubborn and foolhardy? And did her stubbornness reflect her personality, rather than her values or her grievances? Mary Nicholls's *Australian Dictionary of Biography* entry on Cecilia's brother, Thomas Horne, reveals a similar 'recklessness' and degree of instability in his behaviour. Perhaps Laura inherited the same genes? This may seem to be drawing a long bow, but the implication of personality or character on events can sometimes enter the analysis of historical action. Because Clementina is largely the invention of the author, she shows no such traits—always the voice of reason and explication.

Foster takes us on a narrative journey, fleshed out, along the way, with biographical details and issues such as custody rights and religious sectarianism. In his last chapter, 'On History & Fiction', he justifies the course he has chosen to take, particularly in the moments when he comes to crossroads or impediments in the story. To infuse literary tension, he has allowed some of the elements of intrigue and suspense characteristic of novels to form part of the narrative basis of Cecilia's dilemma. His visit to Guernsey provided him with a greater awareness of sense of 'place' and the inclusion of reproductions of maps and lithographs from the Priaulx Library, St Peter Port, Guernsey, has enriched the finished work.

Published by South Solitary Press, Canberra, and also by Blue Ormer Publishing, Cookham, United Kingdom, the book's glossy cover features one of Zoffany's paintings. The font and the textual presentation are clear and the endnotes are refreshingly well spaced. A nice editorial touch is the leaving of the right margin of Clementina's diary entries unjustified.

Stephen Foster's journey as a historian has been marked by innovation. His past publications include *Australia 1788–1988—A Bicentennial History* (an executive editor, 1987); *The Making of the Australian National University: 1946–1996* (co-authorship, 1996), which was described as 'a model university history'; *Frontier Conflict: The Australian Experience* (coeditor, 2003); and *A Private Empire* (2010). In 1988 he had proposed to the director of the Research School of Social Sciences, ANU, the development of an Australian Biographical Computer Database (to be placed on disc), to further the reach of the *Australian Dictionary of Biography* to interested consumers of history. Later, his CD-ROM, 'One Destiny! The Federation Story' (1997), and his work as content development and technology manager at the National Museum of Australia to oversee 'the latest technical display wizardry' (*Canberra Times*, 3 February 2000), fed and extended his interest in visual methods of historical interpretation and outreach.

In *Zoffany's Daughter*, the author's interest in visual portrayal continues; biographical and historical evidence from artistic representations, including paintings, complements his documentary approach. Clementina's diary as a visual aid to the inner eye might be seen as his latest, successful, innovation to this genre. Perhaps we should await a version of *Zoffany's Daughter* on YouTube!

Nichola Garvey review of Kerrie Davies, *A Wife's Heart: The Untold Story of Bertha and Henry Lawson*

(St Lucia, Qld: University of Queensland Press, 2017), 243 pp., PB \$29.95, ISBN 9780702259661

'A wife's heart must be the tomb of her husband's faults'. This nineteenth-century viewpoint in essence proclaimed that, as you have made your bed, so you must lie on it. However, Bertha Lawson, wife to celebrated Australian writer, Henry, did not just 'put up and shut up'. She railed against her husband's alcoholism, filed for legal separation and brought their two children up on her own.

Much has been written about Henry Lawson, 'the poet who created mateship. The Dickens of the Bush. He's been mythologised, anthologised and analysed. Bertha has been forgotten'.¹

There has also been much written about Henry's mother, Louisa, an early feminist and publisher and an outspoken campaigner of women's rights—particularly of women who found themselves in bad marriages. Ironically, it was Louisa who in 1890, six years prior to Henry and Bertha's meeting, wrote an editorial titled, 'The Divorce Extension Bill or The Drunkard's Wife', and coined the phrase, 'a wife's heart must be the tomb of her husband's faults'. Louisa tolerated no man who lacked in his duty as husband. Despite this, she was no friend to Bertha and showed very little empathy towards her daughter-in-law, whose husband, her son, was a drunk.

A Wife's Heart, by Kerrie Davies, started out as her own personal memoir for her PhD in literary journalism at the University of Sydney. At some stage in her early research, Davies stumbled across Bertha's story. Seeing similarities in their respective statures as single mothers married or formerly married to artists with unpredictable employment and fluctuating parental commitment, Davies sets out to compare and contrast their experiences. Her aim is to bring light to an untold aspect of Lawson's life and, through memoir (both hers and Bertha's), to document some self-exploration and understanding of her own life.

1 K. M Davis, 'Mrs L, A Work of Literary Journalism, and Exegesis: The Poetics of Literary Journalism and Illuminating Absent Voices in Memoir and Biography' (PhD thesis, Department of Media and Communication University of Sydney, 2017), 20.

The book is based on a selection of letters between Henry and Bertha. Adding to this are letters from friends of the pair, as well as later memories and memoirs. Some of Henry's poems and stories, which are considered to be autobiographical, are also used as evidence in time. Finally, Davies punctuates the narrative with her own personal anecdotes about present-day domestic life.

A Wife's Heart begins by showing the application made by Bertha Lawson for her legal separation from Henry, dated 1903. The very next page is an affectionate letter from Henry to Bertha. In the first chapter we switch to the present and the author introduces herself as a character within the book and as narrator.

Davies makes clear from the start that she is on the side of Bertha, the ex-wife, whose ex-partner is hopeless about paying child support. There is an honesty within Davies's opening chapters; she does not try to pretend that she is anything other than in the camp of the spurned wife. (Was it Freud who first posited that all biography is in some way autobiographical?) Davies shows her kinship throughout the narrative by comparing the failures of their respective husbands and the slack that each of them took up in response.

Davies takes the view that Henry was shielded from due criticism because of his situation of being (a) a man and (b) a famous author whom the public wanted to put on a pedestal. While Davies's own husband is not a celebrated artist she does wonder why it is so easy for men, in today's society, to get away with being absent fathers in all the physical, fiscal and emotional senses of the word.

Davies's work is ground-breaking in its focus on Lawson's life between the sheets. It tackles the oft-neglected 'history of emotion', of what goes on behind closed doors, the lifting of the bedcovers, with close attention to marital satisfaction and its constant bedfellow, marital disappointment. It is easy to understand why historians err on the side of caution when it comes to documenting the highly subjective realm of marital tit for tat. There are always two sides to the story. Although in this case it is more Bertha's side that Davies is on.

With scant and fragmentary evidence of the Lawsons' lives an impediment, Davies seeks to bolster the narrative by interspersing her own experiences. As a reader, although I am happy to be carried along and allow the pretext that she and Bertha share a fate, some of the examples with which she pairs herself with Bertha do not exactly match up, so that we might be talking about a domestic incident versus a career example, whereupon I find myself wondering, *where's the connection here?* While the book does offer something new in the extensive work on Lawson, it has its limitations.

The presentism within the narrative is distracting. When Davies compares her life to Bertha's she is comparing from a present-day perspective—a kind of, 'I know what I've had to go through, I can only imagine how much more difficult Bertha's life

was'. Yet we do not know whether Bertha's life was typical or extraordinary. What percentage of mothers worked outside the home? How many were educated and what were the social norms of the day? Bertha was a career woman; how many women at that time could claim that? In its drive to tell the viewpoint of the disappointed wife (I kept *my* promise, Husband!), the book overlooks the importance of setting a story in its historical context.

With questions of context playing at the corners of my mind, I was often jolted out of the narrative with the author's delivery of present-day perspectives. It is one thing to overtly choose to pull the reader back and forth in time, but it is quite another to be able to pull this technically tricky writing skill off. I was often happily ensconced in the Bertha–Henry story only to be yanked out of my reverie, and then often not rewarded for the change. I found myself wondering why, if the author is going to the effort of contrasting her own marital life, she would not do it in a more compelling, and revealing, way. I wanted to ask: *Why are you holding back? Give of yourself and I will come with you.* Without Davies's commitment to the exposé of her own life in the story the reader is left wondering, *well what does it add? Anything at all?*

Perhaps the most distracting aspect of the book was that I was not sure what it was trying to be. On a functional level, with its lack of a contents page, chapter headings and dates of letters (which were, at times, out of order with the chronology), it shied away from signposting the story. On a more fundamental level, I was left wondering, *what is it? Is it a biography, life writing, memoir, an untold story?* It does not fit neatly into any of these categories, certainly not in a way that would withstand serious scrutiny.

So Davies is experimenting with genre; the references to her own life may be authentic and verifiable but we are not entirely sure. Of course, Hayden White suggested that historical and biographical narratives are a poetic process and:

Verbal fictions, the contents of which are as much *invented* as *found* and the forms of which have more in common with their counterparts in literature than they have with those in the sciences.

Biography and memoir are literary genres and any boundary blurs. In this case, I think the biography could be written without the memoir. For all the questions of genre—categorisation, context and delivery—I found myself drawn back to the historical story (and is not that the litmus test of whether a book is any good or not?). I found myself always wanting to go back to the Lawsons' lives in *A Wife's Heart*. It did take me on a journey, to life at the turn of the twentieth century, a journey of early married life with all its hopes, that somehow seemed to mirror Henry's career, so promising at first, wasted at the end. I did get a sense for Henry, lovable and hopeless, and for Bertha of whom, little by little, the reader's view is transformed.

Les Hetherington review of Eric Berti (conceived and introduced) and Ivan Barki (ed.), *French Lives in Australia: A Collection of Biographical Essays*

(North Melbourne, Vic.: Australian Scholarly Publishing, 2015), 453 pp.,
PB \$39.95, ISBN 9781925333039

One of the challenges of digitised records over hardcopy publications is the ability to search them using a range of criteria. The *Australian Dictionary of Biography* (*ADB*) and its related databases—all searchable through the People Australia portal (peopleaustralia.anu.edu.au)—are a case in point. For example, for historical and current political reasons, Australia's relationship with France is a topic of high interest today. A search on place of birth through People Australia reveals 66 individuals born in France who made their mark on Australian society. Fifty-three have biographical entries in the *ADB*. This does not include the entries from H. J. Gibbney and Ann G. Smith's *A Biographical Register 1788–1939: Notes from the Name Index of the Australian Dictionary of Biography* (Canberra, 1987), which do not yet appear to be digitised, so the total number is likely to around 70. The coverage could be broader—this small but influential community has been present consistently through the period of Australia's European settlement. Would there not be more than around 70 individuals born in France who have left their mark on Australian society over the last two and a quarter centuries?

This is, in fact, the case, and it was encouraging to see the recent publication of *French Lives in Australia*, 'a collection of biographical essays' edited by Ivan Barko with assistance from Edward Duyker and William Land, under the inspiration of France's consul-general in Sydney from 2012 to 2015, Eric Berti. This book complements the *ADB* and its associated resources in relation to the French community in this country, expanding where there is overlap, and enabling older *ADB* entries to be updated and new biographies to be added.

In its seven sections, *French Lives in Australia* attempts both to cover the whole history of French contact with Australia, starting with the early explorers and continuing on to the post–World War II era, and to represent the broad range of activities in which the France-born participated. Consequently, like the *ADB*, it is highly selective, the limitations of a single-volume publication, albeit of some 450 pages, restricting the number of people it could cover in appropriate detail. The very useful inclusion of

Eric Berti's contextual introductory essays preceding each section enables a small number of others—musician Horace Poussard and engineer Eugene Nicolle (also in the *ADB*), for example—to be briefly mentioned, but only 24 people are given full treatment. Laudably, only 10 also have entries in the *ADB*, so the book adds 14 lives to the existing biographical corpus. That more than half the subjects in *French Lives*—all worthy inclusions—are not in the *ADB* illustrates the depth of the relatively small French community in Australia, the impact it had in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, and the wide range of engaged and influential citizens France shared with our developing country. It shows how mere numbers do not best illuminate the presence of communities in Australia during the first century and a half of European settlement. Although fewer than 5,000 strong around 1900, the France-born occupied positions of influence and, as *French Lives* shows, had done since the days of early exploration.

My own interest in Australia's French community encompasses the late-colonial and early Commonwealth period, from around 1880 up to the 1930s, so I was particularly interested in Parts III–VI: the 'founders', business and professional people, artists, diplomats and soldiers of this period. Among the founders and soldiers, the Playoust family are well represented, with both the patriarch, George (whose brief obituary appears on the Obituaries Australia website), and son, Jacques, given chapters that include reference to their wider family in both business and World War I contexts. George, Jacques and family arrived in Australia in 1889 as French demand for wool led to the establishment of permanent wool-buying representation in Melbourne and Sydney. Born in France but growing up in Sydney, Jacques travelled to France on the outbreak of war in 1914 to join the French army, later serving as a liaison officer with the AIF, before returning to re-establish the family in business in Sydney. A brother-in-law, two brothers and a cousin, all Sydney residents at the outbreak of the war, were killed in action. Eric Berti's introduction to the section on the wars mentions research showing 500 Frenchmen and Belgians from Australia fought during World War I, of whom 85 were killed. However, it is not clear if this includes French-born members of the AIF or locally born sons of French parents. Would such men expand the numbers of French-background soldiers even further?

Other biographies show French commercial and business engagement went well beyond wool buying. Another businessman included is Charles Phalempin, who established the French bank the Comptoir National d'Escompte de Paris, in Melbourne, bringing about 'a revolution' in banking in that city, according to one regional newspaper.¹ Phalempin's work took him away from Australia on occasions, but he spent the greater part of the 1880s and 1890s here, and briefly returned in the early 1900s, prior to being appointed to a position in London, where he died in 1918.

1 *Gundagai Times and Tumut, Adelong and Murrumbidgee District Advertiser*, 22 November 1881.

Among the artists, writer Céleste de Chabrillan and musician Léon Caron are two whose chapters complement biographies in the *ADB*, both benefiting from having more space available to include greater detail and from the passage of time since their *ADB* entries were first published (1969), taking advantage of further scholarly research undertaken in the meantime. Similarly, the chapter on Augustine Soubeiran provided the author with the opportunity to flesh out considerably the shorter entry from the *ADB* (1990), especially the uncertainty about Soubeiran's early years and her role during World War I in the French–Australian League of Help. Important as her role was during the war years, her career in education, teaching French, establishing Kambala School in Sydney and actively participating in the Alliance Française, would in itself have justified her inclusion.

Mention of de Chabrillan and Soubeiran highlights the relative under-representation of women in the book. Only four of the biographies are of women (although one, on sisters Berthe Mouchette and Marie Lion, is a double entry). Given the absence of any earlier work of this nature and the times it covers, it is perhaps explicable that there would be more men than women in a list of prominent French people in this country. However, other women than those included were not absent or invisible. Among the most prominent in her day and later, through her daughter, was Alice Charbonnet-Kellerman. A pianist, piano teacher and composer, she has been the subject of academic study at Melbourne University. Charbonnet-Kellerman was the mother of the much more famous Annette Kellerman, whose biography can be found in the *ADB*.²

Another high profile member of the French community in her own right was Juliette Henry, the wife of artist Lucien Henry, mentioned in Berti's essay on 'French artists in Australia'. Lucien is the subject of an *ADB* entry (from 1972) in which Juliette is briefly mentioned. But Juliette had led an adventurous life prior to arriving in Sydney in 1874 as Mrs Lopes Rastoul, with her two Lopes children, Jose and Angele. She was then the wife of Dr Rastoul, a Communard she had accompanied to exile in New Caledonia. She had been expelled from that colony following discovery of her husband's secret correspondence. Dr Rastoul drowned in 1875 while attempting to escape from the Isle of Pines. Juliette married Henry, another former Communard who had served out his term of exile and settled in Sydney, in January 1880. Henry left Sydney—and his wife—in 1891 to return to France where he sought to publish and popularise his Australian-influenced designs and art. Afterwards Juliette became a prominent French language teacher and organiser of the Sydney French Literary Circle—which warrants a mention in Berti's biographical chapter on French Consul-

2 For Charbonnet-Kellerman, see J. G. Bong, 'Alice Ellen Charbonnet: A French Musician in Nineteenth-Century Australia' (Masters Research thesis, Faculty of Music, University of Melbourne, 2006); and for Annette Kellerman, see G. P. Walsh, 'Kellerman, Annette Marie Sarah (1866–1975)', *Australian Dictionary of Biography*, National Centre of Biography, The Australian National University, adb.anu.edu.au/biography/kellerman-annette-marie-sarah-6911/text11989, published first in hardcopy 1983, accessed online 3 November 2015.

General in Sydney, Georges Biard d'Aunet—until her death in 1898. By that time she was regarded as a woman of 'high education, graceful presence and charming manners' who had made a significant contribution to the spread of French literature and 'knowledge of the foremost writers of la belle France'.³ This work was resumed after some years break by her daughter, Angele Higinbotham.

Other people who might have been included also come to mind. On the business side, there were two significant developments relating to French representation in Australia in the early 1880s. One was the establishment of the Comptoir National d'Escompte. The other was the commencement of regular services to Australia ports by the French shipping company Messageries Maritimes, which established an office in Sydney in 1882. André Conil oversaw the beginning and first years of operation of the company, from 1882 until 1892, before returning to Japan, where he had been posted prior to his arrival here. In relation to the bank, another subject might be Charles Shard, Phalempin's colleague and brother-in-law, who managed the Comptoir d'Escompte's Sydney office from 1882 until his retirement in 1920. Mentioned briefly in the chapter on Phalempin, Shard, despite his French business association, and his wedding notice in Melbourne's newspapers describing him as the eldest son of Charles Shard 'of Paris', may not meet the basic criterion of being himself French, as he was born in Bath. Significant local businessmen who were France-born include George Fesq, whose wine business, Fesq and Company, is still in family hands today. Indeed it is Fesq and Company's proud boast that it was founded in 1848 and is 'still owned by the family and the fifth and sixth generations work in the business'.⁴ Another, André Leverrier, operated an import business in Sydney for many years in the second half of the nineteenth century. He is mentioned briefly in the *ADB* entry for his son, Francis Hewitt Leverrier.

In the professions, Dr Louis Laure might have been accorded a biography. He is mentioned briefly in the *Biographical Register* and his obituary is on the Obituaries Australia website, but these brief factual accounts do not do justice to his wide engagement in Sydney society. He arrived in Sydney with his family in 1868 and was president of the French Club in the 1880s and of the French Benevolent Society for several years after its establishment in late 1891. A long-time private practitioner, Laure was also associated with St Vincent's Hospital. Outside his work he was an enthusiastic and, from all accounts, capable amateur singer. He departed Australia on retirement in 1901, leaving behind daughters and businessmen sons-in-law to continue the family association with Australia for many more years. The detailed report in *Le Courrier Australien* on 2 November 1900 of a 'banquet d'adieu' given in his honour reflects the high standing Laure had in the Sydney French and wider community.

³ *Evening News*, 26 January 1898, 4.

⁴ See www.fesq.com.au/.

Dentist Jules Joseph Lachaume might also warrant some notice. After setting up practice in the Hunter Valley north of Sydney in the late 1850s, Lachaume moved to Sydney in 1870 and, having settled into a practice he continued for more than three decades, he devoted himself to community activities in the 1880s and early 1890s through the *Cercle Français*, or French Club, of which he was president and vice-president for some years. From the late 1890s he combined dentistry with ownership and management of the Bondi Aquarium, an amusement and entertainment theme park at Tamarama Beach that was the Luna Park of its time. Among French musicians in Australia in these years, as well as Madame Charbonnet-Kellerman, more might be made of Horace Poussard's life. He is given room in Berti's introductory essay on French artists in Australia, but a more detailed life would reveal more about him and the place of French musicians in Australian cultural life at the time. Henri Kowalski might have been given more attention. Already 'renowned' in 1881,⁵ shortly after his arrival, his impact on music in the Australian colonies, especially in Sydney, was significant, as was his engagement in French community affairs in the late 1880s and early 1890s. His farewells on his departure in 1896—supposedly temporary, but he never returned—almost matched those of Dr Laure a few years later.⁶ Likewise, while Lucien Henry has been the subject of much study, his fellow Commune exile Alfred Tischbauer has been relatively neglected and could warrant mention. Before he left for the United States in 1903, where he worked in theatre and film set design, he contributed not only to painting but also set design for the 1879 International Exhibition in Sydney and for the theatre in Melbourne, and to art education in Sale in Victoria.

These alternatives are not suggested to replace any of the biographies included in *French Lives in Australia* or in the *ADB*. All the current subjects deserve their place and all their biographies are well researched and well written. What the suggestions of additional lives illustrate is that, this admirable book and earlier publications notwithstanding, there is still much to explore before the contribution of the French to Australia and Australian life can be adequately appreciated.⁷ This is an excellent book that complements the *ADB* well. It is a very good introduction to the history of Australia's French community. But perhaps there is room for another volume: *More French Lives in Australia*? Or perhaps this volume could be the inspiration and a starting point for new researchers and scholars to explore more deeply the different

5 *South Bourke and Mornington Journal*, 29 June 1881.

6 See reports in the *Sydney Morning Herald*, 15 and 28 September 1896.

7 For example Anny P. L. Stuer, *The French in Australia* (Canberra: Department of Demography, Australian National University, 1982) and 'The French', in *The Australian People: An Encyclopaedia of the Nation, Its People and Their Origins*, ed. James Jupp (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001); Patricia Clancy and Jeanne Allen, *The French Consul's Wife* (Melbourne: Melbourne University Press, 1998); Ann Stephen, ed., *Visions of a Republic: The Work of Lucien Henry* (Sydney: Powerhouse Publishing, 2001); and Stephen Dando-Collins, *Pasteur's Gambit: Louis Pasteur, the Australasian Rabbit Plague and a Ten Million Dollar Prize* (North Sydney: Random House, 2008).

aspects of French lives in, and their contributions to, this country? Room might be found for the publication of such research on the People Australia or Obituaries Australia websites, which are not as limited by space as are hard copy publications.

Given its virtues, it might be churlish to point out two infelicities in the book—one a typographical error and the other an omission. Both relate to the French diplomatic presence in Sydney. The easiest to dispense with seems to be a simple editing error. In the appendix listing French diplomatic representation in Australia, the surname of Consul Henri Léon Verleye has been left out. His name is given as Henri Léon. The other occurs in the footnote on page 158 in which information is provided about three consular staff and one ambassador who died while posted to Australia. In fact, there was a fourth consular official who died *en poste*. Edward, Marquis de Rostaing, vice-consul in Sydney, became ill and later died in the premises of the French Club in Wynyard Square, on 24 August 1888, aged 47 years.⁸

8 *Evening News*, 25 August 1888; NSW Index to Births, Deaths and Marriages, Deaths, 1499/1888.

Juliette Peers review of Deborah Beck, *Rayner Hoff: The Life of a Sculptor*

(Sydney, NSW: NewSouth Publishing, 2017), 280 pp., PB \$49.99,
ISBN 9781742235325

Since the early 1960s, contemporary sculpture in Australia has enjoyed both a secure market and appreciation, facilitated by state and corporate patronage of contemporary sculpture, that has continued to the present day. Figurative sculpture has always been placed in a marginal niche isolated from the dominance of the landscape and nationalist trends in the teaching and exhibiting of Australian art history. It took nearly three decades for the work of Bertram Mackennal to be celebrated in an authoritative survey exhibition, about half a century after curators and academics had collaborated to present ground-breaking overviews of his painter contemporaries such as Roberts, Clubbing, Streeton, Bunny and Fox, even though his achievements were far more significant globally.

Complex extended—and accurate—publications on historic figurative sculpture are fairly rare and thus Deborah Beck's recent biography of celebrity Sydney sculptor of the interwar period Rayner Hoff is welcomed for adding fresh and important visual and written material to the available literature. The rich cache of unfamiliar photographs and personal testament around interwar Sydney's professional art circles makes this an essential addition to any academic or curatorial library. Overall the detailed treatment of the life and work of a figurative sculptor is rare in the often repetitive treatment of Australian art history by publishers in this country, who are generally chary of committing to bringing non-celebrity artists into print. In many cases across the last three decades, monographs upon outlying figures in Australian art history are often self-published and self-funded, even by writers with academic training, given the reluctance of commercial publishing to engage with non-standard art histories. More often than not such narratives are by family members and amateur historians, with all the obvious limitations of such origins. Deborah Beck's thorough professionalism and her sophisticated and informed grasp of the broader art economy in which her subject flourished shines out against many similar studies. As noted above, any study of historical sculptors and sculpture in Australia extends knowledge in a limited field.

The only accessible overview history of Australian sculpture to this day, Graham Sturgeon's *Development of Australian Sculpture* (1978) is grotesquely marked by its author's intolerant mid-century haute modernism. His overt prejudice, obsession with the erotic as liberation and would-be clever one-liners remains a public indictment of not only Sturgeon's intellectual limitations but also those of his colleagues and peers who accepted this restricted and biased history as plausible, not to mention those in the book trade who brought it to publication. His voice and those of other Australian writers were embarrassingly out of date because Susan Beattie's and Benedict Read's publications, which appeared in London at the same date, transformed the whole field of nineteenth-century sculpture, rendering it scholarly and acceptable. In effect, the disconnect to global scholarship seen in Sturgeon's history actually confirmed Australia's status as marginal and out of touch in global terms, precisely in the manner that was feared by ambitious cultural elites and progressives in mid-century Australia and in the Whitlam era.

Ken Scarlett was more respectful of a wider range of sculptors than Sturgeon, and recorded all those who could be reasonably documented in his monumental *Dictionary of Australian Sculptors* (1980). Yet as curator, historian and critic, his loyalties lay more towards his contemporaries and colleagues: living practitioners. Curiously, female historians and curators have been more committed to historical sculpture in Australia across many decades, including Deborah Edwards of the Art Gallery of New South Wales, a sole institutional voice, and many freelance curators: Judith Mackay, Robyn Tranter, Jane Lennon and the present author. Deborah Beck's biography affirms the trend of female curators and historians validating the back story of Australian sculptural history against a general trend towards apathy amongst the art history discipline. This gender divide is by no means a given, and the spread of writers and curators engaged with historic sculpture is more balanced globally in the English-speaking world across the genders with names such as Ben Read, David Getsy, Jason Edwards and Mark Stocker being consistent players. Figurative sculpture, far from being dull and pedestrian, throws up the strange and localised limitations of Australian engagement with historic art and presents a challenge to both tolerance and knowledge and, thus, there are multiple inducements to sideline it.

Noel Hutchison, alone amongst mid-twentieth century modernist writers on sculpture, found time for historic figurative sculpture. His was a different take, a quasi-Maoist approach that affirmed popular taste against intellectual pretension, suggesting that it was 'ordinary people' who stepped up to the plate when art professionals failed dismally. He wrote that council workers, gardeners, tradespeople and historians of local and folk culture, in particular, knew and loved outdoor sculptures and cared for them and their aesthetic presence within the public space

far more than university or public gallery staff. He discussed historic sculpture, particularly public monuments, as a medium for preserving both the aspirations and technical skills of past communities.

Some recent research around Australian local war memorials, such as Donald Richardson's, has also followed a similar diffused para-Maoist/regionalist trend of emphasising the importance of even humble monuments to the community that envisaged and erected them. Public sculptures enjoy multiple lives, and strange folklores and myths globally consolidate themselves around monuments in everyday experience. Sitting on certain statues late at night supposedly ensures pregnancy or conjures up the dead, depending on which location a traveller may find themselves; rubbing the foot or nose of certain statue brings good luck; beer cans are wedged into outstretched hands during New Year's celebrations; and rainbow scarves are wrapped around the neck of austere Christian and straight generals at Mardi Gras and Pride March time.

Sculpture's vivid contribution to a democratic visual experience is now rendered impossible to uphold due to postcolonialism. Whilst one can understand arguments that monuments of the past alienate modern diverse communities by celebrating individuals responsible for crimes against subaltern people, one could also note that paintings' multiple colonial histories and complicities, particularly the cultural appropriations and the *a priori* indebtedness to racist inflections within anthropologies and museums, are subject to far less agitation and complaint, despite being equally discriminatory. The supposedly deserving sub-genre of sculpture can be treated as sacrificial because it is already seen as less important, leaving the centre unimpaired by new modes of thought. Debate around monuments celebrating the Confederacy, including when protesters remove monuments themselves when authorities have been tardy, makes discussion around figurative sculptures and public commissions complex, almost impossible in today's political climate. The suppression of debate registers even more because the best and most elaborate Confederate monuments are rife with unconventional imagery that undermines the certainties of Darwinism and neoliberalism and the near-universal confirmation of 'winning' and 'success' in the present day. Taking down these sculptures removes the public presence of unpredictable, non-standard content. At the same time, the virtually unanimous condemnation by scholars of such statues as abhorrent political symbols indicates how difficult it remains for aesthetic and art historical practices to embrace nineteenth- and twentieth-century figurative sculpture as aesthetic entities in their own right. The creative, technical and emotional aspects of a public monument are nonexistent in the face of the political and social oppression that monuments now are assumed to exert. Any ideational and visual potential is now erased, a highly reductionist and simplistic point to arrive at. Whilst fluid and accessible, Deborah Beck's biography of Rayner Hoff unfolds against an increasingly uncomfortable and acrimonious global context for public memorials and portrait sculptures—both of

which were important threads of Hoff's output—that renders the reception and reading of the book far more complex than it would have been even a few years ago. Never losing its moral footings, Beck's life narrative unfolds somewhat within an audacious inflexion as she takes her subject on face value, places him and his work at centre stage and narrates events and chronologies rather than drill down into politics and coded meanings. She prioritises her subject and his art above contemporary means of reading, relying upon the testimony and documents of his era to inform her narrative and facilitate her interpretation.

Beck's biography is both accessible in tone and impeccably comprehensive in its coverage. It matches the well-crafted literary nonfiction that is the staple of British and North American publishing industry, whereas Australian biographical and history texts tend to cluster at the far ends of the spectrum: direct, conservative narratives written often by ex-journalists and formal, thesis/argument-based academic publications, which prioritise issues rather than the lived experience and often are dense and austere. General readers will find Beck's prose clear yet rich and engaging, capturing ideas and events in evocative, but never forced and overwrought, imagery. The reader is swept along by a narrative that is as warm and direct as creative writing. Nor does Beck engage in self-aggrandising technical pyrotechnics to draw attention to her own skill set; instead, she keeps her subject and his wide range of colleagues always in the foreground.

The photographs, particularly the images of Hoff's studio and his many assistants, as well as images of lost works and family photographs, are a major resource. The images of work in progress open up the complexities of sculptural practice, and the intricacies of process and collaboration that were essential in producing the type of monumental public sculpture that was Hoff's speciality and is little understood beyond specialists within the sculptural history discipline. Beck makes good use of the oral history material collected by Deborah Edwards three decades or so ago, when many of Hoff's circle were still alive. She has also traced Hoff's early years in greater detail than hitherto outlined. Her treatment intersperses a life narrative with detailed thematic breakouts about particular aspects of Hoff's work.

Simultaneously, the narrative is rendered more complex by hints of an elusiveness about Hoff. Beck points out that the range of firsthand recollections reveal deep contradictions around Hoff's character and lifestyle. She outlines the divergences but does not second guess as to an ultimate judgement in light of insufficient evidence. Hoff was also enigmatic in that he was an unlikely figure to rise to social and cultural prominence in Sydney. He was born into a family of working-class artisans on the Isle of Man and could be a poster boy for the ideals of Morris and Ruskin, and Noel Hutchison too, exemplifying the inherent artistic abilities of the working classes. Concurrently, Hoff's career demonstrates how the 'new imperialism' of the

late nineteenth-century and pre–World War I era could offer unprecedented social mobility to white working-class men, and thus his story captures something of the loyalty that the system bought from its minor players.

Hoff's rise was spectacular, from provincial art school in Britain, to winning the Prix Du Rome and then travel out to Australia. Once arrived he not only single-handedly developed the sculptural department of the newly formed National Art School, with the help of his brother who also emigrated to Sydney, but also energised and consolidated the whole public face and reputation of the organisation, in effect becoming what is now known as a brand ambassador. Although he was recognised as talented, his early British career was patchy and troubled by disputes. He did not initially show much of the potential that would rapidly emerge once in Sydney. Hoff was charismatic and both staff at the National Art School and a wide range of Sydney professionals gravitated to him and supported his projects. Beck documents Hoff's wide range of contacts and his productive friendships that enriched Sydney art circles with frequent collaborations and shared projects. His intellectual cogency shows up the febrility of his colleague Norman Lindsay, although sharing similar pictorial imagery. The confident development of a distinctly individual identity in his oeuvre, the melding of art deco and early modernist stylisation onto British 'New Sculpture' style ornament and nuance, achieved with more dash than his contemporary Paul Montford in Melbourne, also is spectacular.

Equally, there is a thread of unexpected melancholy within the positivist framework due to the rapid dissipation of Hoff's achievements and fame after his sudden and premature death, despite the stellar heights that he reached. His wife and children sank into suburban anonymity, and the family never spoke much about him in later years, although unlike other families they did preserve documentary material. Many of his *in situ* commissions were lost in the 1960s and 1970s building boom in Sydney. Again one notes that sculpture that does not meet fashionable expectations is neither appreciated nor advocated for. Beck implicitly reproaches the deployment of short-term and superficial judgement and makes a plea for approaching the past without preset templates. Hoff's story offers ambiguity and ironies; if the sexual energy and polarities of his gender representations evokes the imagery of fascism, at the same time he encouraged his female students wholeheartedly, trained them thoroughly and offered them unexpected, unconventional opportunities, especially his prompting them to work in heroic scale, far removed from the inaccurate yet tenacious stereotype of women artists of the past being hobbyists and watercolourists. Sadly, with the exception of Barbara Tribe, most of his female students' careers subsided into domesticity with the increasingly social conservatism of the later 1940s and 1950s. During the 1920s and 1930s, Hoff's students produced a large oeuvre of ambitious sculptures, also well covered by Beck.

Although often assumed to be a conservative artist, Hoff produced some of the most directly articulated antiwar artworks seen in Australia prior to the era of the Vietnam War (apart from some remarkable works by Hilda Rix Nicholas). Again we are back at the irony whereby monumental sculptures are both erased as artworks and yet are supremely vulnerable to the comments and opinions of those who share public space with them. Large figurative groups were excluded from the finished design of the Shrine in Hyde Park, Sydney, due to their confronting imagery, hidden by the nominal excuse that they were too expensive to produce and install. They remain percipient and controversial. The sculptural group named as the *Crucifixion of Civilisation* (1932), a nude woman hanging limply from a cross made of armaments, with rubble, discarded weapons, mangled and wounded bodies at her feet, is particularly confronting and cuts across much popular Anzac mythology, even today, let alone in 1932. The protests driven by senior figures of the Catholic Church, that the sculpture was an insult to the Crucifixion and a Protestant conspiracy to alienate Catholics from the Shrine and deny their voice in public commemorations of the war dead, offer a powerful insight into the mindset of sectarianism and its influence on Australian public life. On the other hand the religious protests, like the issues of costs, also masked the uncomfortable nature of Hoff's implied reference to violence against women in both peacetime and in war. It remains unlikely that these works will ever be completed. Beck has long been a champion of these censored works and devotes particular attention to this core moment of Hoff's professional life, mustering unfamiliar visual and written sources. Whilst one can find obvious links to the imagery and energy of fascism in Hoff's art and also some public pronouncements, these sculptures are the antithesis of both fascist and imperialist/right wing symbolism and ideologies, and also directly confront attitudes about power, gender and patriotism that flourish today.

Beck's documentation of Hoff indicates how much is left out of the traditional, neat, Bernard Smith-derived Australian art history teleology of an evolution towards modernism that remains silent about the possibility that so-called 'conservative', and, therefore, sidelined artists, could make a valid contribution to cultural life in Australia. Few books on Australian art reach this position of critique of the characteristic silences and omissions of art historical constructs, or share the deft authority of Beck in setting out an alternative vision.

Today's public sphere is increasingly dominated by sloganeering, Twitter's brevity, the single punchline logic of memes and a belief that the refusal to compromise or offer concessions is a desirable sign of political and social integrity. When parties act as if positions can only be absolute and when feeling aggrieved becomes a mark of *virtu* and a licence to do and say anything with impunity, Deborah Beck's biography of Rayner Hoff offers a thoughtful and valid alternative to, and mild protest against, the rule of stereotype, generalisation and certainly. Concurrently she brings her subject vividly to life for her readers and intervenes on behalf of the Cinderella of the Arts.

Stephen Wilks review of John Murphy, *Evatt: A Life*

(Sydney, NSW: NewSouth Publishing, 2016), 464 pp., HB \$49.99,
ISBN 9781742234465

When Herbert Vere Evatt died in November 1965 he was buried at Woden cemetery in Canberra's south. His grave proclaims him as 'President of the United Nations' and reinforces the point by bearing the United Nations (UN) emblem. Misleading as this is—as president of the UN General Assembly rather than secretary-general, Evatt was more presiding officer than chief executive—it broadcasts his proud internationalism. The headstone inscription is equally bold—'Son of Australia'. The Evatt memorial in St John's Anglican Church in inner Canberra is more subtle. This depicts a pelican drawing its own blood to feed its young, a classical symbol of self-sacrifice and devotion.

These idealistic, almost sentimental, commemorations clash with the dominant image of Evatt as a political wrecker. This casts him as the woefully narcissistic leader of the federal parliamentary Labor Party who provoked the great split of 1954, when the party's predominantly Catholic anti-communist right exited to form the Democratic Labor Party and help keep Labor out of office for the next 18 years. This spectre looms over Evatt's independent Australian foreign policy and championing of civil liberties during the Cold War.

John Murphy's *Evatt: A Life* is the fourth full biography of the man, not to mention several more focused studies. This is better than most Australian prime ministers have managed. Evatt invites investigation as a coruscating intelligence with a clarion world view. His foremost achievements were in foreign affairs, a field attractive to Australian historians. He also has a certain dramatic appeal—Evatt depicted as the hero who thwarts Menzies's attempt to outlaw the Communist Party, only to have the split and the Petrov defection cruelly deny him the prime ministership.

The scale of Evatt's papers held by Flinders University is just one of the problems he poses to biographers. How to balance his self-centredness with his high ideals? Did his bellicosity really give Australia a say amongst the world's powers? Was his confidence in UN-led multilateralism justified? Did he cause the split? And were his tantrums mere peccadillos or evidence he was unsuited to public life—indeed, was he mentally ill, as some contemporaries suspected?

The most extensively researched pre-Murphy biography of Evatt was produced by Peter Crockett in 1993 using the same title. This had a strong focus on his subject's intellectualism and underlying psychology. Crockett's critical intensity and semi-thematic approach came at the expense of fluency and clarity. Crockett found Evatt the thinker, seemingly his strong point, to lack originality or even cohesiveness. As a High Court judge before he entered federal politics in 1940, Evatt was a liberal jurist who revered the law but 'expressed emotions through the law rather than revealing them naturally'. Evatt's otherwise formidable legal skills left him underdeveloped elsewhere. His policy responses were distorted by reliance on institutional and legal solutions. Equally seriously for a would-be prime minister, his grasp of economics was patchy.

Yet, as a student, Evatt had excelled at everything from mathematics and ancient history to football and cricket. His publican father died when Evatt was aged just seven and his mother almost cruelly drove her sons to achieve. Two of his brothers died in the Great War. Would young Bert have benefited from a true mentor who guided his talents and nurtured his empathy? The adult Evatt tends to be defined more by his limitations than his strengths, a testament to how glaring these shortcomings were.

Murphy avoids taking previous biographies as navigation points and draws foremostly on primary sources. A well-known firsthand observation came from an American journalist who found Evatt intellectually complex but emotionally simple. Paul Hasluck's typically acerbic analysis in *Diplomatic Witness* is also influential, not least as Hasluck claimed that, with the exception of John Burton, there was 'no other official who saw the minister at closer quarters in his foreign affairs work'. His assessment was that Evatt's 'great intellectual gifts' were 'analytical rather than creative' and limited by 'lack of depth of knowledge of international affairs'. Strangely, few have repeated Hasluck's memorable account of Evatt gesturing to challenge Churchill during a meeting in wartime London only to wilt before Churchill's withering glare. Other contemporaries considered Evatt too complex to sensibly generalise about.

Murphy only cursorily surveys Evatt as judge. More attention is given to Evatt's service in the Curtin and Chifley governments as minister for external affairs and attorney-general, his personal zenith. Evatt's wartime goals were to give Australia an international voice and to secure supplies. Crockett conceded that Evatt won the attention of the major wartime powers but added that his belligerence compromised his effectiveness. The problem with this is that the Australia of the time hardly had any international standing to compromise. Evatt had long strived to assert Australia's still nascent nationhood. His 1924 doctorate on the Crown's relationship with the dominions explored questions of national status. Evatt oversaw Australia's belated adoption of the Statute of Westminster in 1942.

Murphy's use of overseas sources, including the Franklin Delano Roosevelt Library and Justice Felix Frankfurter's papers in the Library of Congress, provides evidence of how Evatt appeared to other nations. Roosevelt's quip that Evatt was a burden placed upon him by the Lord is less significant as a reflection of Evatt's personality than of his capacity to seize attention. Beside this, complaints from diplomats about his pugnacity seem twee. Evatt's discovery of the 'beat Hitler first' policy during his 1942 mission to Britain and North America strengthened his determination. His wife, Mary Alice, accompanied him on long, dangerous wartime trips. Hasluck recalled her calming influence on her husband.

Murphy explores Evatt's world-view. In a September 1944 speech he proclaimed a vision of the emerging 'world organisation' as central to the postwar world. This explored the constitutional machinery that the future UN would require to uphold world peace, the importance of economic justice in international stability and how the UN could maintain a balance between great and small nations. Yet Murphy agrees that Evatt was prone to a short-termism and lacked a sophisticated grasp of world affairs. He made only one ministerial trip to Asia (other than stopovers)—to occupied Japan in 1947. His interest in Asia seems to have settled on how to expand Australia's role in the region in cooperation with the colonial powers.

Evatt made Australia's foreign policy his own. His efforts to sideline Frank Forde as nominal leader of Australia's delegation to the 1945 San Francisco conference to draft the UN Charter have entered folklore. The story of a local shipbuilder who had to provide separate ships for Forde and Evatt to christen simultaneously seems to be essentially true. Such antics obscure Evatt's considerable contribution to the UN charter. The legalistic nature of the San Francisco conference suited Evatt. His deep faith in the UN system, lauded at the time, now casts doubt on his judgment.

The foremost mystery about Evatt is why he came to be Labor leader following Chifley's death in 1951. It is not just that he was a middle-class professional leading a solidly working-class party. Evatt lacked grounding in the party's organisation and closely intertwined trade union movement. Murphy concludes that Evatt was chosen simply as the party's ranks were so depleted. Anointing Evatt saddled the Australian Labor Party with a leader who disdained teamwork and ignored its formal structures. Worse still, Evatt took the party reins at a critical time of rising internal tension. His reluctance to compromise and lack of a solid power base within the party made him ill-suited for averting the split.

This raises the other great Evatt mystery, an exercise in counterfactualism. Would this most damaging of Labor schisms have been averted had Evatt not been leader? Crockett concluded that, although Evatt did not fundamentally cause the split, he contributed 'to a considerable degree'. Murphy considers that this question 'goes to the heart of biography', because 'it asks whether our subject is an actor with a degree of control, or is acted upon by overpowering events and influences'.

He decides that, although Evatt determined when the split happened, it is hard to see it not occurring at all even without him: the powder keg already existed and it was a deeper struggle than Evatt could decisively influence, especially in Victoria. The split actually prolonged Evatt's leadership. Not only was there still no obvious alternative, but also his removal would have been seen as a victory for the right.

Evatt's October 1955 Molotov speech—when he solemnly informed the House that the Soviet foreign minister had assured him documents on espionage provided by Petrov were fakes—stands second only to Earle Page's 1939 attack on Robert Menzies as Australia's most notorious political statement. It was not a naive effort to genuinely ascertain the truth, but more the product of Evatt's legalistic belief that Molotov be allowed a say. There is no greater instance of his misjudging the reactions of others.

More appealing Evatt traits included charity and a fondness for children. He retained enough self-awareness to envy the socially adept. His cultural hinterland extended far beyond politics to encompass classical music and modern art, not to mention pretensions to be a historian. This resulted in his 1938 study, *Rum Rebellion*. Characteristically, he wrote as Governor Bligh's advocate, reducing his account to a simple polarity. A telling indication of how he saw the world is his declaration that historians had insufficient training in the law to reach sound conclusions—the law, he knew, could bring out all truths. Evatt's biography of Premier William Holman was a better book but was more an account of early New South Wales Labor than of Holman the person. We are not dealing with a good historian wasted on politics.

Murphy is reluctant to indulge in bush psychology, but would a more socialised Evatt have been so driven to pursue politics? Politics brought out his worst traits of self-importance, suspicion and naivety. A particularly black mark is that he habitually failed to return borrowed books. Late in life, Evatt was drawn to the Tom Bass sculpture at Melbourne University depicting the trial of Socrates, hinting at a self-image of a misunderstood defender of liberty who would ultimately triumph.

Murphy is not so much sympathetic to Evatt as concerned to explore his subject, finding him 'sad rather than mad'. During the split, Evatt was 'somewhat unhinged', but it is hard to determine if this was physiological or the 'the extreme reaction of a paranoid narcissist put under incredible pressure'. Murphy stays properly cautious about assertions of a medical condition or use of damaging drugs, but is clear that dementia took hold after Evatt exited politics in 1960 to become chief justice of New South Wales.

This foray into biography succeeds. Murphy tasked himself to 'make sense' of his subject by delineating both character and identity. Evatt's duality lends itself to such analysis, but less attention is paid to what his achievements and failures imply for

the wider history that swirled around him. Significantly, Murphy's picture of Evatt differs from those by Crockett and Hasluck more in detail and emphasis than in fundamentals. His balancing of chronology and analysis sustains narrative clarity.

Evatt does not inspire regret that he failed to become prime minister. The real loss is that he was too contorted to make full use of his high intelligence and abundant energy. Nominal commitment to good works is, alone, no proof of greatness; it needs to be matched by the ability to implement them. The stress most accounts of Evatt place on the split and his misperformance before the Petrov royal commission may seem unbalanced, but these embodied the fundamental flaws that undermined his effectiveness.

Yet, after reading Murphy, it is still possible to warm a little to Evatt's high ideals, eccentricity and ultimate sadness. The fact remains that, like Menzies, John Latham, Gough Whitlam, Dick Hamer, Don Dunstan and other gifted lawyers, he chose a life of public service over personal gain.

Notes on contributors

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Darryl Bennet was employed by the *Australian Dictionary of Biography* in the Research School of Social Sciences at ANU from 1989, being deputy general editor from 2001 until his retirement in 2008. He shepherded the project for the ADB to go online from about 2003 to 2007, and was awarded an ADB medal in May 2009 for his service to the ADB, which is ongoing. Darryl is currently a member of the ADB Editorial Board and an ADB research fellow.

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Dr Barbara Dawson worked for the *Australian Dictionary of Biography* in the Research School of Social Sciences at ANU as a research editor from 1999 to 2011. She is now a school visitor in the School of History. She has written widely on Australian colonial history.

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After a career in the public service and having an MA and BLitt, Les Hetherington enrolled in the National Centre of Biography, ANU, to write a thesis part time on 'Vaillante Soeur: Marie Caroline Niau and Her Family in France, England and Australia, 1820–1956', a transnational, cross-generational and women-centred microhistory of Marie Caroline Niau, her daughter Josephine Hyacinthe Niau and their family. Les died in September 2018 and this review is published posthumously.

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Dr Stephen Wilks completed his PhD entitled “‘Now is the psychological moment’—Earle Page and the Imagining of Australia’ earlier this year. He was awarded The Australian National University’s College of Arts and Social Sciences PhD Publishing Prize to rework his thesis for publication. After a career in the public service, he has now joined the National Centre of Biography on a new political history research project, which the Department of the House of Representatives is funding on speakers, deputy speakers and clerks of the house going right back to Federation, a pilot that, it is envisaged, will lead to a broader dictionary project.