

# Circa

## The Journal of Professional Historians

Issue six, 2018



Professional  
Historians  
Australia

# Circa

## The Journal of Professional Historians

Issue six, 2018

Professional  
Historians  
Australia



*Circa: The Journal of Professional Historians*  
Issue six, 2018  
Professional Historians Australia

Editor: Christine Cheater

ISSN 1837-784X

Editorial Board:  
Francesca Beddie  
Carmel Black  
Neville Buch  
Sophie Church  
Brian Dickey  
Amanda McLeod  
Emma Russell  
Ian Willis

Layout and design: Lexi Ink Design  
Printer: Moule Printing

Copyright of articles is held by the individual authors. Except for the purposes of private study, research, criticism or review as permitted by the Copyright Act, no part of this publication may be reproduced by any process without the permission of the author.

Address all correspondence to:  
The Editor, *Circa*  
Professional Historians Australia  
PO Box 9177  
Deakin ACT 2600  
[circa@historians.org.au](mailto:circa@historians.org.au)

The content of this journal represents the views of the contributors and not the official view of Professional Historians Australia.

---

Cover images:

*Front cover, top row, left to right:* Newman Rosenthal and Thomas Coates, Portuguese Governor of Dili and staff, Margaret Williams-Weir.

*Bottom:* 8 Hour procession, 1866.

*Back cover, top:* Mudgee policeman and tracker

*Middle row, left to right:* Woman and maid, HEB Construction workers.

*Bottom:* Walgett tracker and police

# Contents

EDITORIAL . . . . .	IV
<b>Part one: Explorations</b>	
Pathfinders: NSW Aboriginal Trackers and Native Title History MICHAEL BENNETT. . . . .	3
Working in the Dirt SANDRA GORTER . . . . .	11
<b>Part two: Discoveries</b>	
Unpacking a Legend MARGARET COOK AND ANNABEL LLOYD.. . . .	21
Not Just White Proddy Boys: The Melbourne Faculty of Education 1903-1973 JULIET ELLA FLESCH . . . . .	28
<b>Part three: Reflections</b>	
Looking at History: A consideration of two photographs; one from Darwin, one from Dili STEVEN FARRAM . . . . .	35
History And Significance of the Workingman’s Parliament LIBBY BLAMEY. . . . .	42
The Convict Ship Hashemy at Port Phillip: a cautionary tale DOUGLAS WILKIE.. . . .	50
<b>Part four: Practices</b>	
Community history and free software: the perfect match? LUCY BRACEY.. . . .	59
PARTICIPANTS WANTED: Benefits and challenges of developing exhibitions with community involvement BIRGIT HEILMANN.. . . .	65
Consulting 1.01: an introduction to business practice for historians ABIGAIL BELFRAGE . . . . .	69
<b>Part five: Reviews</b>	
<i>Australian Lives: An intimate history</i> JENNIFER DEBENHAM.. . . .	75
<i>Badge, Boot, Button: The Story of Australian Uniforms</i> LORINDA CRAMER . . . . .	77
<i>Independent Minds: A History of St George Girls High School</i> NEVILLE BUCH. . . . .	78
<i>Looking for Rose Paterson: how family bush life nurtured Banjo the Poet</i> MICHELE MATTHEWS.. . . .	79
<i>Living with the Locals: early Europeans’ experience of Indigenous life</i> EMMA DORTINS. . . . .	81
<i>The Crying Years: Australia’s Great War</i> JENNIFER DEBENHAM . . . . .	83
CONTRIBUTORS . . . . .	85

# EDITORIAL

Welcome to *Circa: The Journal of Professional Historians Issue 6, 2018*. Following the 'Working History' conference run by PHA (Vic) in 2016 presenters were invited to submit their paper for publication in *Circa*. Consequently, except for 'Unpacking the Legend', 'Looking at History' and 'Not Just White Proddy Boys', which were submitted in response to a general call for papers, the articles published in this edition are reworked conference papers.

The conference invited participants to consider the tensions and dilemmas of doing history -- how we communicate history in the digital age, how it benefits communities, organisation and individuals, whose history are we conveying, and what new challenges and practices will we face in the future. These considerations run through all the papers, which have been grouped into the journal's usual four sections – Explorations, Discoveries, Reflections and Practices.

Michael Bennett's and Sandra Gorter's papers explore ways of dealing with information that was tangential to their main fields of inquiry. Margaret Cook and Annabel Lloyd's paper literally traces the discovery of archival material that added depth to a local legend and Juliet Flesch's paper shows how short biographies can be used to challenge commonly accepted narratives. Steven Farram's and Libby Blamey's papers reflect on how historians interpret non-print sources, namely pictures and sites, while Douglas Wilkie untangles a problem created by the uncritical reading of secondary sources. Finally, Lucy Bracey, Birgit Heilmann and Abi Belfrage provide, respectively, practical advice on the use of free software to publish history, the pro and cons of developing exhibitions with community involvement, and the nuts and bolts of establishing a small business.

This is my first stint as editor following Sophie Church's decision to step aside in 2016. Her decision coincided with other changes to the Editorial Board. Kate Mathews and Sonia Jennings resigned in 2016 and towards the end of 2017 they were replaced by Brian Dickey (PHA SA) and Amanda McLeod (PHA Vic). I thank Sonia for her efforts in establishing the journal and Kate for her work as referee coordinator. My gratitude also goes to the remaining members of the Editorial Board (Francesca Beddie, Carmel Black, Neville Buch, Sophie Church, Emma Russell and Ian Wills) for their support during the transition phase.

*Circa* would not exist without its contributors who I applaud for their willingness to share their experiences as professional historians. This edition demonstrates the diverse range of skills necessary to practise as an historian in the twenty-first century. As usual the papers are eligible for the *Circa* prize, which will be awarded at the PHA National Conference, 'Marking Time', to be held in Sydney in August 2018. In the meantime, happy reading.

Christine Cheater  
Editor  
April 2018

## Call for Papers

*Circa: The Journal of Professional Historians, Issue 7*

Contributions are invited in the following categories:

Explorations: Issues we face as professional historians

Discoveries: Discovering and telling a story

Reflections: Thinking about history, its impact on us and our role in understanding it

Practices: Practical advice and guidance for professional historians

Reviews: Reviews of books, exhibitions, websites

Submission is open to PHA members throughout Australia. All articles (except reviews) will be peer reviewed. All submissions must conform to the requirements detailed in the guidelines for contributors, available at [www.historians.org.au](http://www.historians.org.au)

Direct submissions and correspondence to the Editor.  
Email: [circa@historians.org.au](mailto:circa@historians.org.au)

**Closing date for submissions: 31 July 2019**

Part one

# Explorations

Issues we face as professional historians





# PATHFINDERS

## NSW Aboriginal Trackers and Native Title History

### Michael Bennett

Historical research undertaken for native title claims rarely reaches the public sphere. The detailed reports prepared for claims are often confidential. In some circumstances, claimants are willing to see aspects of the research released and the content has the capacity to inform the wider public about Aboriginal history. A recent project by Native Title Services Corporation (NTSCORP) and the Indigenous Unit of NSW Police, after careful community consultation, sought to publicise the under-acknowledged contribution of Aboriginal trackers to policing in NSW from 1862 to 1973. Trackers used traditional bush skills to perform a variety of tasks such as pursuing bushrangers and finding people lost in the bush and their stories are sometimes vital evidence in native title claims. The project resulted in the Pathfinders website ([www.pathfindersnsw.org.au](http://www.pathfindersnsw.org.au)) which was launched in November 2016.

#### Introduction

Native title history is rarely public history. The historical reports written for native title applications, based solely on the documentary record, assess the continuity of traditional connection to land of the claimants. The reports are written for legal assessment and are required to abide by the rules of evidence as set down by the Federal Court of Australia. Inferences can be drawn, and firm opinions expressed, but they must be reliably linked to the documentary record. In NSW, where I have worked as a native title historian since 2002, reports are lodged with the NSW Crown Solicitors Office for assessment. They are subject to a confidentiality agreement which prevents public disclosure. The stories they contain rarely see the light of day.<sup>1</sup>

Confidentiality is an essential part of the process, particularly for the claimants. In agreeing to pursue native title, claimants realise that they are subjecting their lives, families and culture to legal scrutiny. The burden is on them to prove that they have maintained the traditional laws and customs which regulate their connection to the land from the time of first invasion to the present. Understandably, many claimants want assurance that their stories and cultural knowledge will be protected and not publicly disclosed to the point that control is lost. The confidentiality agreements that are signed between the NSW State government and the claimant's legal representative offer this assurance.<sup>2</sup> There is tension, however, in that many claimants, in my experience, are enthusiastic to see aspects of their stories told publicly in a respectful and informative manner. They wish to play a part in overcoming the

Great Australian Silence, the term anthropologist, W.E.H. Stanner, used to describe the overwhelming exclusion of Aboriginal people and their experiences from Australian History.<sup>3</sup> They want to educate the wider public about the traumas they and their ancestors have endured and the resilience they have shown in adapting to colonial society. It is here that native title historians can play a role by working with communities to give these stories a public face. In this article, I describe a collaborative project between NTSCORP, NSW Police and Aboriginal families from throughout NSW to research and publicise the history of Aboriginal trackers in NSW from 1862 to 1973.

#### Aboriginal tracker project

Without understanding why, the Great Australian Silence was firmly part of my childhood in Dubbo in the 1980s. Although I went to school and played sport with many Aboriginal children, Aboriginal history was rarely part of the curriculum and local content did not extend beyond a visit to the axe grinding grooves at Terramungamine by the Macquarie River. At home, however, I learned from my paternal grandfather about Alexander Riley, an Aboriginal man who had worked for the police as a tracker at Dubbo for many years in the first half of the twentieth century. I was fascinated by stories of Tracker Riley, as he was known, pursuing murderers and finding people lost in the bush. It was not until 20 years later when conducting research for the Tubba-Gah Wiradjuri native title claim that I realized the extent of his contribution to local Aboriginal and police history. Born at Nymagee in the 1880s, Tracker



Riley had strong links to Wiradjuri country on the lower Lachlan River. After spending time at Wellington, he married into a Tubba-Gah Wiradjuri family at Dubbo and took the job as tracker at the local police station in 1911, a position he held for almost 40 years.<sup>4</sup>

The research I was conducting for other native title claims in NSW soon revealed that Tracker Riley was far from alone in working for the police. In each claim area, there were usually at least one or two stations where trackers were employed; many of the trackers were also working on their traditional country. Their knowledge of country, apparent in the ease with which they moved across the land following the trails of criminals and the missing, was evidence of on-going connection. An opportunity soon arose to pursue more detailed research into the history of trackers in NSW and bring more of their stories to light.

In 2012, NSW Police celebrated 150 years as a unified force. A variety of events were held to mark the anniversary, including a march in Sydney and a police exposition in Dubbo. A pleasing aspect of the celebrations at Dubbo was the acknowledgement given to Aboriginal trackers from the various Local Area Commands of western NSW. I was approached by Ken Jurotte, manager of the Indigenous Coordination Team of NSW Police, to provide some historical information about the trackers and the stations where they worked. A special stall was set up at the exposition showing photographs of trackers and panels describing some of the cases they worked on. Tracker Riley's daughter stopped by to see the display about her father and non-Aboriginal members of the public shared stories about trackers they knew from the mid-20th century.

The celebrations at Dubbo spurred the interest of myself and the NSW Police in seeing that trackers were given proper acknowledgement for their work. In March 2013, the police, at the request of family members, placed a headstone at the grave of local tracker Jimmy Nyrang at Narromine Cemetery.<sup>5</sup> Several months later, Police Commissioner, Mr Andrew Scipione, attended a graveside service at Bourke for Frank Williams, a tracker who worked in western NSW for over 40 years. I was fortunate to attend both events. As a result, a partnership was formed between NTSCORP and the Indigenous Unit of NSW Police to further investigate the history of Aboriginal trackers in NSW. Funding was sought and gained from NSW Heritage to undertake detailed documentary and oral research with the aim of building a website, which records aspects of the history and provides further acknowledgement to the important role played by trackers to law enforcement in NSW.

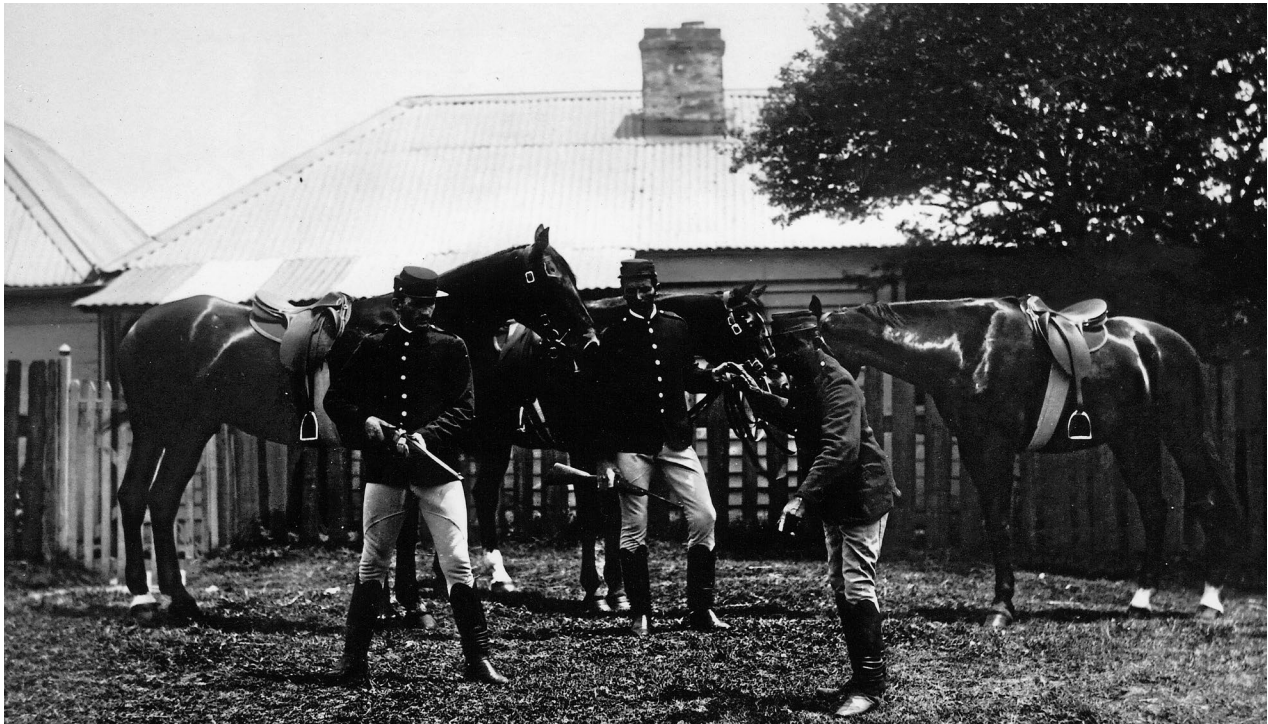
Research for the project commenced in July 2013. In the following two years, 44 descendants of NSW trackers were interviewed from across NSW and over 300 primary and secondary source documents relating

to tracker history were collated. Interviews were organised through existing contacts and additional ones provided by the community facilitation staff and Aboriginal board members of NTSCORP. The project was also promoted via the network of NSW Police Aboriginal Consultation and Liaison Officers (ACLOs) managed by Ken Jurotte. Several presentations were made to the Police Aboriginal Strategic Advisory Council (PASAC), which brings together peak Indigenous agencies from NSW. The project was also discussed at native title meetings and claimants sometimes came forward with stories about their tracker ancestors. As research progressed, a website designer was engaged and content prepared. As will be discussed below, the research showed that the variety of tasks performed by trackers was broader than previously thought, as was the distribution of stations where they worked. The research also uncovered essential information for native title claims as many trackers worked in their traditional country and sometimes incorporated ceremonial duties into their police work. These points are evident in the summary of research that follows.

### Historical summary

Little has been written about the history of trackers in the NSW Police Force.<sup>6</sup> Beyond several well-known trackers such as Alex Riley, very few have received acknowledgement for their service. An early account is found in Haydon's *The Trooper Police of Australia* published in 1911. Haydon noted that as early as 1826, Governor Darling recommended the employment of Indigenous assistants by the police. The habitual and organised recruitment of trackers, Haydon wrote, began soon after the NSW government instituted reforms to the police service in 1862. In that year, Sergeant Brennan employed an Aboriginal man named Emmett at the Yass police station. Inspector Sir Frederick Pottinger kept two trackers with him at Forbes.<sup>7</sup> Haydon also acknowledged the role of Sir Watkin Wynne<sup>8</sup> in the apprehension in 1867 of the notorious Clarke brothers who had been responsible for killing several policemen south of Braidwood.

Haydon noted that the goldfield riots at Lambing Flat in 1861 prompted the Cowper administration to devise the Police Regulation Act of 1862, which 'put all the forces under the authority of an Inspector General'.<sup>9</sup> Previously, control of the police was decentralised to local authorities. The creation of a new hierarchy placed superintendents above inspectors, sub-inspectors, sergeants and constables. The new Act did not mention Aboriginal trackers but their rank, obvious from their lower pay, was below that of constables. However, they were mentioned in the first Police Rule Book as belonging to a separate division within the police, together with the General, Detective and Water Police divisions.<sup>10</sup> A driving force in the creation of the



Walgett tracker and police c.1893 photograph courtesy of the Walgett Police Station

new division was Superintendent Martin Brennan who in the previous year had relied on two trackers to find several lost children near Binalong after a search by 200 townsfolk proved fruitless.<sup>11</sup>

Improved record keeping was a feature of the new police service. A salary register was established in Sydney recording the name of each officer, his rank and rate of monthly pay. A separate page was kept for trackers. Until 1882, the locality where each tracker worked was not recorded; only the region of their employment was written down. For the most part, only the first name of each tracker was entered into the register, a practice that continued until 1916.<sup>12</sup> This practice made it difficult to identify and trace individuals although newspaper articles sometimes provided additional biographical information along with birth, death and marriage certificates, and details provided by community members.

### Duties and skills

The skills of trackers were firmly grounded in traditional Aboriginal society, which as numerous accounts (and reports done for native title claims) show was not wholly destroyed by the process of colonisation. Social and economic structures adapted to the dominant white society and many traditional skills found new outlets.<sup>13</sup> Tracking skills, still essential for the food quest, were kept alive within communities and passed from one generation to the next. Tracker Riley learned his craft from the station blacks at Nymagee, as did Robert Robinson at Bulgandramine.<sup>14</sup>

William Robinson of the Grafton district followed his father into tracking at 18 and remained in the job for 47 years. Underplaying his ability, Robinson said he relied on 'commonsense and a sharp eye' to get the job done.<sup>15</sup> Cassidy Samuels of Singleton directly linked tracking to the hunting skills he learned from the 'old folks' when growing up. Cassidy spent three years working for the police at Brewarrina and when he was not on duty he spent his time hunting echidnas and pigs. Echidnas, or porcupines as he called them, were particularly difficult to track because their prints looked the same when viewed from opposite directions. He tracked them 'by looking at how the bush has been disturbed', more or less picking up subtle changes imperceptible to the untrained eye. He applied the same technique when tracking people: 'Sometimes you lose the track and then you look around till you pick it up again. If you can't see the footprints you look for sticks that have been moved and tell which way he's going by the direction they have rolled ... A man's tracks will tell you the condition he's in. If he's carrying something he's got a strong walk. If he's weak or leg-weary he drags his feet.' He adapted the same principles to tracking motor cars, noting that you could tell the direction in which a vehicle was travelling by examining the direction of the settled dust.<sup>16</sup>

Extensive kinship networks, a characteristic of Aboriginal life to this day and the basis on which native title claim groups are identified, helped promote the survival of tracking skills.<sup>17</sup> There is clear documentary evidence that trackers interacted from time to time



Mudgee tracker and policeman, late nineteenth century photograph courtesy of Mudgee Historical Society

stories and techniques. John Murray, tracker, was living at Eugowra when he married Polly Goolgong at Forbes in April 1883. Polly's father was also a tracker and after John Murray died, Polly married Billy Binigay, a tracker from the Murrumbidgee who was 24 years her junior.<sup>18</sup> Harry Nean tracked at Yetman for three months early in 1890. When he died at Moree from tuberculosis in November 1938, Robert St George, another well-known tracker from north-west NSW, informed the authorities about details of Nean's life.<sup>19</sup> The personal facts he reported suggest a close relationship between the two.

In the early 1940s, formal training became an important part of the transmission of skills. As we saw in the introduction, Tracker Riley helped to train cadets. In June 1941, three cadets were placed in his charge: Donald Bolt, Edgar (or sometimes Edward) Murray and Darcy Peckham. In their first week, he took them camping in the bush where 'real-life' tracking scenarios were played out. The cadets also received instruction in criminal investigation from a local detective. The intention was to later transfer the cadets to other stations where their education could continue with different trackers.<sup>20</sup> The skills they learned certainly helped Murray and Peckham to assist Tracker Riley in finding the remains of Desmond Clark. The scheme was evidently a success as the following year, two cadets from Wallaga Lake, Colin Walker and Jeff Tungai, were sent to Dubbo to commence their training.<sup>21</sup>

Horsemanship – skills learned by Aboriginal people in the aftermath of frontier violence when groups

element of tracking. At the very least trackers needed to know how to ride a horse just to do their duty. Patrols became common after the 1862 reformation and trackers often rode with constables and sergeants as they toured the local countryside to maintain a visible presence and enforce law and order. This may have been one of the aspects of the job that attracted Aboriginal men: there were few days stuck inside the station. Trackers had much outdoor work to do.

Even when they were back at the station, trackers often looked after the stables and sometimes trained the horses. William Christie, who tracked in Narrabri in the early years of the twentieth century, was also well known as a horse-breaker.<sup>22</sup> Isaac Governor of Yass was renowned for breaking in and caring for horses, a duty he carried out with distinction at the Redfern Depot from the 1920s.<sup>23</sup> Elsewhere, Tracker Jack kept the saddlery in good order at Trunkey in 1885.<sup>24</sup> In the western parts of the state horses were vital to cover the vast distances between stations. Trackers were sometimes called upon to transfer old horses out and bring fresh horses in. Tracker Jimmy undertook such duty when he left Byrock on 6 October 1887 for Girilambone where he picked up two new horses. One was kept at the Byrock Station while the other was taken to Gongolgon and given to the tracker there.<sup>25</sup>

Another job on horseback for trackers in the mining districts was guarding shipments of gold as they were transported from the fields into nearby towns. Several trackers in the central west of NSW worked on the Gold Escort, as it was called: Tommy Pearce regularly accompanied a Senior Constable en route between

Mt McDonald and Carcoar from 1882 to 1884. He usually stayed overnight at Carcoar before returning to Mt McDonald the next morning, but sometimes he escorted the shipment as far as Blayney. Tracker Billy replaced Pearce in late 1884 and worked on the Gold Escort throughout the following year.<sup>26</sup>

### Distribution of trackers

It is difficult to examine the geographical distribution of trackers between 1862 and 1883 as their names were not recorded against towns or villages in the Police Salary Register, only against general police districts. Between 1883 and 1916, the register records the location where trackers worked and 198 police stations in NSW employed trackers for at least a portion of that period. Using coordinates from the Geoscience Australia Gazetteer<sup>27</sup>, the distribution of stations is shown below.

The greatest concentration of trackers was in the central-west and north-west areas of the state where pastoralism and agriculture operated intensively. More people and greater stock densities meant larger numbers of stock thefts and disappearances and that in turn meant more work for trackers. Of the eight places that continuously employed trackers between 1882 and 1916, five were from this area (namely Cassilis, Coonamble, Moree, Walgett and Yetman). The remaining three towns where trackers were

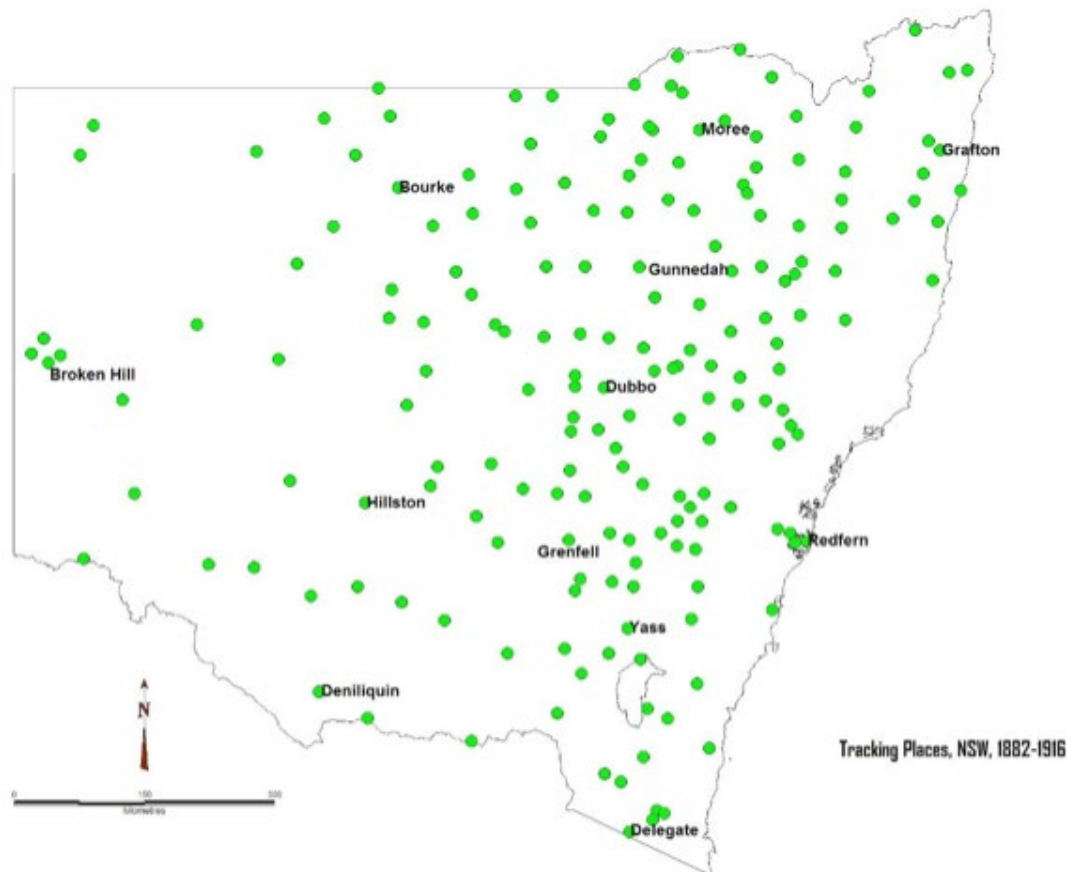
continuously employed were Deniliquin, Grafton and Hay in the Riverina. Predictably, trackers were more spread out in the sparsely populated western parts of the state and had to travel further when a job came up. More so than elsewhere in NSW, horses were a necessity for trackers in the west (as they were for other police in these areas).

Trackers were rarely employed in coastal NSW, particularly in the south and mid-north where the coastal strip was narrow, and pastoralism and agriculture were less intensive. The exception was the Northern Rivers district around Grafton where the coastal strip was wider and cattle was an important industry. These areas were not without substantial Aboriginal populations and any man wishing to track had to travel far to find work. For instance, Harry Pickalla, a south coast man, moved to the Moree district in the north-west of the state.

### Recruitment

Haydon noted an inclination of senior police in NSW to hire trackers from the local Aboriginal camp. An Inspector told him:

When I want a boy for bush work I go straight to the nearest tribe and pick out the likeliest looking of the lot – one of about seventeen or eighteen, if possible. After he has served me I send him



Police stations where trackers worked, 1882–1916

back, knowing that I can get him again if needful, and that in the meantime he won't be rusting.<sup>28</sup>

This tendency is supported by the biographical data of some trackers which shows that they worked in their broad traditional country. Harry Nean, for example, was born in Gamilaraay country at Mount Lindsay in northern NSW in 1874. His father, also a Gamilaraay man, was born on the Liverpool Plains to the south in the middle years of the nineteenth century. Harry worked as the tracker at Yetman (to the north-west of Moree) for three months in early 1890. He died at Moree in 1938.<sup>29</sup> A parallel situation is evident from the life of Jack Parker who was born at Gingie near Walgett in 1873 and spent three years as the Walgett tracker in the first decade of the twentieth century. He married Ellen Clark, also of the Walgett district, at Gingie in circa 1894 and died at Walgett in 1915. Overall, I have been able to assemble biographical data for 20 trackers who worked in Gamilaraay country between 1888 and 1973, and 16 of them were born within Gamilaraay country and were descended from identifiable Gamilaraay ancestors. They were clearly Gamilaraay men working in Gamilaraay country, although most seem to have worked at times outside of the area of their local clan estate.

There is evidence from other parts of NSW that trackers worked in their traditional country. Late in the nineteenth century, Matthews met a tracker at Goodooga named George Sharpley who was combining his police work with ceremonial activity. Sharpley was a messenger helping to organise an initiation ceremony that picked up the message stick from Tatalla while on official police duty and transported it to Goodooga where he passed it on to the next courier.<sup>30</sup> The story also suggests that some Aboriginal people were attracted to tracking by the possibility of combining paid work with traditional life. The travel which tracking involved, particularly in western NSW, would have allowed a tracker to visit sites and maintain social relationships across a wide area.

### **The importance of kin**

Working on country had implications for trackers when they were asked to pursue other Aboriginal people, particularly close kin. The repercussions are evident in the story of Jackey Bundah who worked at Walgett in the 1870s. In early 1877, an Aboriginal man named Charley Combo escaped from Walgett Gaol while on remand for assault. Combo's father was known as the 'King of Walgett', a mistaken interpretation of Aboriginal society, but an indication that he was a senior man. Combo's sister was Jackey Bundah's wife. The police regarded Bundah as an 'expert and keen tracker'. They ordered Bundah to pursue Combo

and he was recaptured 14 days after his escape at Ulah Station, approximately 30km from Walgett. The following day Combo was returned to Walgett Gaol and that night, two young Aboriginal men launched a 'murderous assault' on Bundah on the edge of town. It was clearly an example of traditional Aboriginal law in operation, a revenge attack upon Bundah for having assisted in the recapture of Charley Combo.<sup>31</sup> Bundah survived his injuries, including a fractured skull, and later returned to his job. He does not seem to have, however, tracked other Aboriginal people again.

Other Aboriginal men on the run from the police often felt safe from trackers when ranging through their traditional country. Billy Bogan (aka William Field) came from the Bogan River to the north of Nyngan. He probably spoke the Wailwan dialect of the Ngiyampaa language. In 1882, he was employed as a tracker at Warren on the Macquarie River. In 1895 he was convicted at Cowra Court of housebreaking and stealing, and sentenced to three years in Bathurst Gaol. Manacled to a German prisoner named Albert Katz, Bogan overpowered the guard and stole his revolver and keys. After freeing themselves from the manacle, Bogan and Katz leapt from the train. Katz was soon recaptured, but Bogan headed west towards his traditional country where he stole food from a farm after threatening the farmer's wife with the revolver. He then headed north along the corridor between the Bogan and Macquarie rivers and eventually entered Queensland. A year later Queensland police, with the aid of several Queensland trackers, recaptured him near Charleville. He later said that he never feared the NSW trackers when on the run.<sup>32</sup> The likely reason is that he was related to the NSW trackers sent to pursue him and remained confident that their kin obligations to him over-rode their duty to the police.

### **Conclusion**

The information presented in this article has formed part of the material included on the Pathfinders website. Based on Google maps, users can click on icons that link to biographical summaries of trackers or stories from the police stations where trackers were employed. A more detailed history of trackers is also accessible plus other features, such as a timeline. Acknowledgement is given to the numerous family members who have shared stories about their tracker ancestors and given permission for the information to be included on the website. As more information is added, it will become an increasingly useful resource for Aboriginal people researching their own history and also a teaching tool for the wider public.

The project has also enabled some of the evidence used for native title to be presented publicly. Stories about trackers working on their traditional country, using deep knowledge of the landscape to conduct

police work, demonstrate continuity of culture. It is clear that trackers had to obey Aboriginal law when working for the police or suffer the consequences. The key to the completion of the project and the public presentation of tracker history is working with community. By liaising with Aboriginal families, taking account of their expectations for control of information, and keeping them informed of developments, stories can be presented publicly in an appropriate manner for the benefit of all.

## Notes

- 1 For an in-depth discussion of the writing of history for native title in NSW, see Michael Bennett, 'History and Native Title in New South Wales: An Overview', *Circa, The Journal of Professional Historians*, Issue 3, 2012
- 2 For the current map of native title claims in NSW, see [www.nntt.gov.au](http://www.nntt.gov.au)
- 3 WEH Stanner, 'After the Dreaming' in *White Man Got No Dreaming, Essays 1938-1973*, Canberra, ANU Press, 1979. For an account of how historical practice has altered in the past 50 years see Caroline Beasley, 'The Breaking of the "Great Australian Silence": how and why the writing of Indigenous Australian history has changed over the last 40 years.' *ANU Undergraduate Research Journal*, Volume 5. 2013
- 4 Interview with Bernadette Riley, Dubbo, 10 March 2015
- 5 Interview with Ruth Carney and Violet West, Dubbo, 27 April 2012
- 6 For an account of trackers and Aboriginal guides in the period before 1862, see Don Baker, 'John Piper, "Conqueror of the Interior": Aboriginal guides in the Hunter Valley, New South Wales' in Shellam, Nugent, Konishi and Cadzow (eds.) *Brokers and Boundaries: Colonial Exploration in Indigenous Territories*. ANU Press and Aboriginal History, Canberra, 2016
- 7 AL Haydon, *The Trooper Police of Australia: a record of mounted police work in the Commonwealth from the earliest days of settlement to the present time*. Andrew Melrose, London, 1911: 387
- 8 The original of his name is unknown. According to Haydon, Wynne died in 1887 at Forbes, but no death certificate has been found (also see *Narrabri Herald* 12 August 1887: 2).
- 9 See Hilary Golder, *Politics, Patronage and Public Works: The Administration of New South Wales*, Volume 1 1842-1900, Sydney, UNSW Press, 2005: 171 for an account of why control of the police service in NSW was dispersed before 1862.
- 10 *Police History Book: Official Magazine of the Australian Police Historical Society*, August 1987: 41
- 11 LE Hoban, 'The Aboriginal Police Tracker'. *NSW Police News*, September 1991: 19
- 12 It is likely that the practice continued past 1916 – later records are not publicly available.
- 13 Heather Goodall, *A History of Aboriginal Communities in New South Wales, 1909-1939* Unpublished PhD thesis, University of Sydney, 1982: Michael Bennett, 'The economics of fishing: sustainable living in colonial New South Wales.' *Aboriginal History*, Volume 31, 2007.
- 14 Undated article by Steve Hodder, published in the *Dubbo Liberal* 2003 (Dubbo and District Library, tracker file)
- 15 *Koori Mail* 16 December 1992: 1; *Koori Mail* 2 November 1994: 2
- 16 *New Dawn* October 1973: 15
- 17 See Gaynor McDonald, 'Does "culture" have "history"? Thinking about continuity and change in central New South Wales' *Aboriginal History*, 25, 2001 for discussions of wide social networks in Wiradjuri communities
- 18 Marriage certificate of John Murray and Polly Goolongong 1883/004595; marriage certificate of Billy Binigay and Polly Murray 1918/011515, New South Wales Registry of Births, Deaths and Marriages
- 19 Police Salary Register 1890 SR 11/16355 Reel 1970, State Records Authority of New South Wales; death certificate of Harry Nean 1938/024202
- 20 *Dubbo Dispatch* 6 June 1941: 4
- 21 *Dubbo Dispatch* 1 June 1942: 2
- 22 *Tamworth News* 23 October 1908: 3
- 23 *Dawn* February 1952: 12
- 24 Carcoar Police Diary of Duty and Occurrences SR 7/6178, State Records Authority of New South Wales
- 25 Byrock Police Diary of Duty and Occurrences SR 3/2985, State Records Authority of New South Wales
- 26 Carcoar Police Diary of Duty and Occurrences SR 7/6178, State Records Authority of New South Wales
- 27 <http://www.ga.gov.au/map/names> (accessed numerous times)
- 28 Haydon 1911: 388
- 29 Police Salary Register 1890 SR 11/16335 Reel 1970, State Records Authority of New South Wales; NSW death certificate 1938/24202
- 30 R H Matthews, 'Message Sticks'. *Science* 21 July 1898: 142
- 31 *Evening News* 8 March 1877: 2
- 32 *Wagga Wagga Advertiser* 19 November 1895: 2; *Singleton Argus* 18 November 1896: 2



Contouring land for a subdivision: HEB company files

# WORKING IN THE DIRT

Sandra Gorter

A quarter of a century ago in the wake of the 1987 share market crash, management theorists supporting neoliberal free-market theory and its associated privatisation of industry, brought change to the civil construction industry in New Zealand. A four-year study of the New Zealand company HEB Construction revealed a picture showing that the polar opposite of what was proposed has actually been achieved.

## Introduction

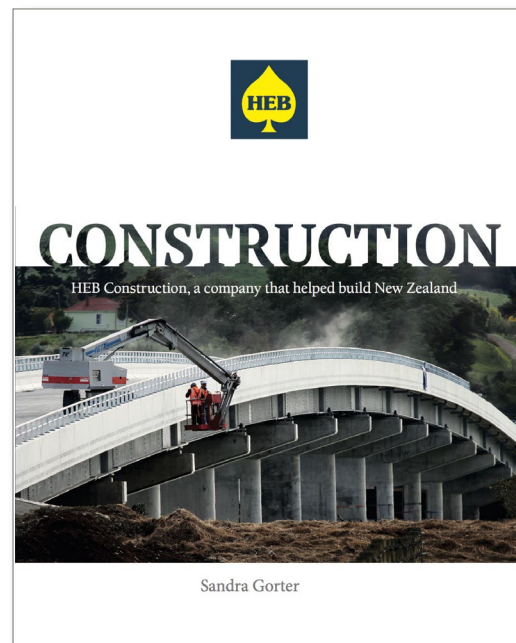
At the beginning of 2012, a history was commissioned by HEB Construction, a civil construction company based in Drury, New Zealand. Apart from a list of six people to be interviewed, little initial direction was provided as to what was required, who the intended audience was — whether it was intended as a collection of memorabilia or as a marketing document — and no company supervisor was appointed for the project. Documents such as company records beyond seven years had largely been destroyed in clean-ups along the way, and little or no attention had been paid to filing documents and images prior to 2003.

Civil construction is working with, moving and reshaping land — the drainage, sewers, roads, bridges and gently contoured subdivisions that the people who operate machines, move earth, lay drains, build bridges, foundations, and design the works do. HEB started as a drainage company in 1975, with Bruce Pulman and his family assuming full control in 1982, and in 2003 HEB also became a contractor for a range of civil structures such as bridges and concrete panel buildings.

## Project structure

The project began with interviews of the list of six people provided at the initial meeting as the only identifiable starting point for the project. Each interview provided direction as to where documentary information might be sourced, and indications as to other people with in-depth knowledge of the company and the industry. By broadening the scope of people interviewed to include those outside the company — clients, industry leaders, competitors within the industry, national and local body politicians, and community leaders — a broad picture of the civil construction industry began to emerge. Consequently over 250 interviews were conducted.

Direction for the project came primarily from the information provided by the interviewees, including company owner Bruce Pulman, with whom the writer met on an approximately monthly basis. Information



Book Cover

provided by other interviewees sometimes surprised him, but he supported the inclusion of dissenting views in the record.

The civil industry in Auckland where the company initially did the majority of its work, comprised a relatively small population of people contracting to do the region's civil works. These people were familiar with each other and their work, and company leaders were personalities well known to each other personally, and to those who worked for them. The 40-odd years of working lives of people, in this case the industry's workers and leaders, coincides approximately with the period covered in the company history, 1975–2007. By default, the company history then also became a history of the working lives of the people who had worked at or with HEB during that period.

As the company had begun in 1975, a decade-based history seemed to be the logical construction for the project, as each decade was marked by a downturn that changed the industry. Civil construction is largely



Some of the people interviewed



The work they did, and do

a speculative endeavour at the forefront of economic activity in that if there is an economic downturn, forward planning for these works can be deferred or cancelled altogether. The effects of industry 'downturns' were so marked, that work simply disappeared and, for each decade, there was a period of four or more years when work slowed to a trickle when many operators and contractors became financially unviable.

Simply noting that the downturns occurred would have left a hole in the story, one that the people who contributed to the history would have noted and found unsatisfactory. An explanation and background of the wider picture was therefore required to satisfy the observation of industry downturns made by all the people interviewed. This led to an investigation of economic recessions, the marked changes in work practice that occurred after each one, a discussion of neo-liberal policies, and their effect on the industry, as will be discussed later in this paper.

### Extension of the project time frame

The researcher had subcontracted to HEB since 1989 in a family land surveying company involved with set-out — transposing information from engineers' plans on to the ground, to enable earth workers to create the works. This industry experience provided not only vital background information but was also a foundation for trust when the need to extend the project's timeframe arose. Initially negotiated as a one-year contract, much of the information required for the entire project was gathered in that initial year, with writing for the 1975–87 period largely complete. After the initial year, the project progressed on a month-by-month basis, with writing, research, collating of information,

interviews, transcribing, the assembly and filing of over 2000 images, and production management, all done by the writer, taking around three-and-a-half years.

Book design began in mid-2015 but soon hit difficulties. The original independent designer designed the cover and layout for the initial chapters. He then became contracted to a design company and took the project with him to that company. Production was delayed while he settled into the new company's work schedule, and he then left the company with around two-thirds of the project to complete. Assigning the work to in-house designers was not successful due to a mismatch between the image narrative and understanding of how the image narrative worked in with the written narrative. In all, the design process took two years. The books were due from the printer in late October 2017.

### Method

The basis of the project was the over 250 transcribed interviews already described, supported by documentary evidence and images. The technique for preliminary interviews was to have a prepared list of no more than six general questions about the person's career both before and at HEB, which provided the interviewee with the opportunity to structure the interview to their particular view of the company and the industry. Subsequent interviews with the same person then focussed on more specific questions arising from the preliminary interviews.

It was necessary for the interviewer to transcribe the interviews personally in order to pick up the full information offered, which often digressed from the specific questions asked, providing valuable information

for later sections of the work. The close attention required when transcribing revealed information that may not have been noted had the interviewer only taken question-specific notes. The transcripts also revealed occasions when it had appeared during the course of the interview that questions had been answered, but where no factual information had been imparted.

Generalisations that emerged from these interviews include:

- » The people who work with dirt are mainly men, although this is changing
- » They are very articulate and relate good, amusing and accurate factual accounts of their work; they have the confidence to construct strong, logical verbal arguments, and quickly identified the pertinent areas where documentation was required to provide substance to the history
- » The people interviewed repeatedly remarked on a distinct change in industry work practice that they felt had led to a loss of efficiency in the work. This was identified as having occurred in three approximate eras, focussing on an approximately five-year period around 1990. This period was later identified as being when neoliberalism entered New Zealand politics with both Labour and National governments.

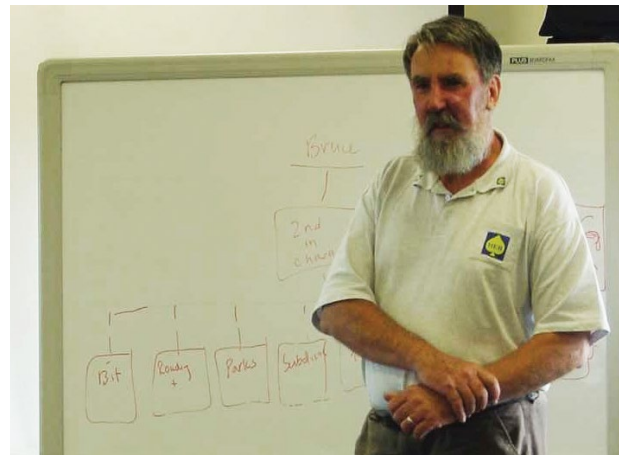
Specific points that arose during the course of the project were:

### 'Flat' management

This was a distinctive feature of the company's management structure, namely 'Bruce, and everyone else'. In this model, every person was essentially their own senior management, responsible for everything from quality control, to invoicing, and debt collection, to health and safety, to ensuring forward work, as well as doing their particular work on or off site. The only person people answered to was Bruce Pulman with only one manager, Keith Sime, supporting the work. Everyone else, project managers, consultants, co-workers and clients, was treated with equal respect.

Interviewees repeatedly gave accounts of how every person on site, from the engineer to the machine operator to labourers, was responsible for enabling the success of a job. The first two of these quotes are from project managers, the third is from an earthmoving operator:

*There were some that you could just say, go and fix that job there and they'd do it. You had that capability (to manage a job), without you actually having to go out with them.<sup>1</sup>*



Keith Sime, HEB manager 1981 to 2011 (Operations, Tenders and other roles), explaining the 'flat management' structure on whiteboard in background; HEB company file

*I'd be on site before they got there and I'd just leave a note under the wiper on the digger. That's what you've got to get done, see you in a couple of days.<sup>2</sup>*

*When Keith was run off his feet he would just leave the plans under a manhole lid or something ... or under a rock. And he said I'll send you a surveyor tomorrow to look at your job. Ring me up and tell me what you need. And we'd just do it.<sup>3</sup>*

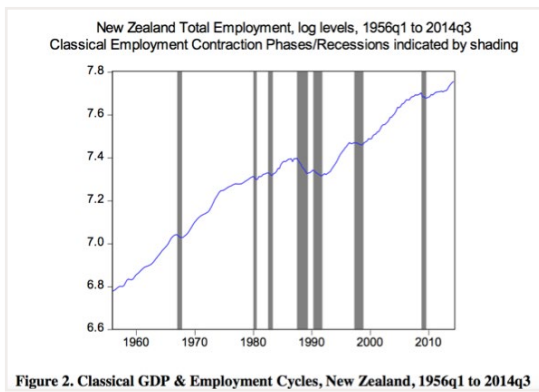
This aspect of work prior to 2000, with its strengths and weaknesses, obligations and responsibilities, was commented on by almost every person interviewed.

### The use of language

The use of language has undergone a remarkable change since 1975 when the HEB story starts. The transcripts revealed that the people interviewed who had worked in the pre-neoliberal political era prior to around 1990 were highly articulate, their language was generally a series of fact-based information and anecdotes, punctuated with vernacular usage of subject-specific vocabulary. By contrast, the professional language of the industry after the year 2000 contained far lower levels of specific, verifiable, contestable facts.

### Business cycles

Those who had worked in civil construction for more than two decades commented on the 'boom and bust' nature of the industry. The ups and downs of the industry were tracked and an approximately ten-year cycle emerged. Economic historians Viv Hall and John McDermott published a number of papers on the topic and the one of principal interest to this study was their paper *Recessions and Recoveries in New Zealand's Business Cycles*.<sup>4</sup> Their empirical evidence



VB Hall and C. John McDermott, *Recessions and Recoveries in New Zealand's Post-Second World War Business Cycles*; Reserve Bank of New Zealand, April 2015

coincided with the anecdotal observations of the people interviewed for the study, providing a statistical background for the patterns of high and low work in the industry.

### The rise of documentation

The beginning of the period covered in the project was a time when people felt that documentation implied mistrust between two parties, at a time when trust was the basis of many transactions. Although all contractors worked for pre-agreed rates, the rates were often agreed with a handshake. Despite a history littered with emotionally and physically stressed contractors, and contractors who did not survive financially, that time of 'handshake' deals and the autonomy that went with the work was recurrently commented on with regret at its passing. Its replacement with documentation in the workplace that formally tracked responsibility and liability, was seen as a retrograde step in efficiency and job satisfaction. The need to increasingly adopt documentation for evidence and communication therefore met with resistance as it was introduced, because of the implication of untrustworthiness. Once documentation was widely accepted in the industry this association diminished for the older workers, coinciding with its adoption as normal practice by the incoming generation of workers.

### Prescriptive vs litigious control: the engine behind industry change

The 40-odd years covered in the project encompassed three periods of work practice referencing around 1990. These were the period prior to 1990, 1990–2000 when new work practices were bedded in, and 2000 to the present day. These periods were marked by a change from prescriptive control of quality, to what this writer has termed litigious quality control within the industry.

Prescriptive control involved work being done, inspected, and if passed for compliance the engineer,

the contractor and the subcontractors were paid. If the work encountered unforeseen difficulties or problems, or was not passed for compliance, the parties had to work together to complete remedial work before they were paid. The civil construction industry was controlled by this method prior to 1990. Under this system every attempt was made to avoid remedial work because of the added cost involved, and the opinion was expressed that quality was probably of a higher standard than strictly required. Lawyers, the requirement for documentation and their costs, were a very small part of contracting at this time and were generally not included in the tender price of the work.

Litigious control happens when every aspect of work is legally defined and documented. Should any defects or unforeseen events in the work or practice occur, the engineers, contractor and subcontractors need their own retrospective documentation to present in a court of law, or they can be held liable for both the costs of the remedial work and associated legal costs. This form of control requires the cost of training and employing people with legal or semi-legal skills at almost every level of work. These people and their skills are now an integrated cost of civil construction.

Prior to 1990 the catch-cry of a successful contractor was 'quality on time', a seemingly subjective claim. But should the client, whether private, council or government, be unhappy with work done, the contractor's reputation was impacted. Therefore, current work had to be done to the current client's satisfaction in order to secure a reputation and therefore forward work. As today, the lowest price tendered for a job has by far the strongest likelihood of winning the work, but reputation was strongly protected because of its significance for securing forward work.

The disruption to business activity and personal lives caused by union actions from the 1970s — in particular strikes where unions such as watersiders and meatworkers in both New Zealand and Australia held frequent, costly, inconvenient stop-works or strikes — was the backdrop of the recent past to the introduction of litigious control. Union actions were equated with Soviet Communism and were frequently referred to in the introduction of laissez-faire neoliberal policies, which were portrayed as the empowerment of the individual against the controlling mechanisms of the unions, and liberalisation from control by the state.

The rhetoric of neoliberalism was delivered by people such British prime minister Margaret Thatcher and New Zealand's minister of finance in 1991 with powerful statements such as these extracts from the preamble to the delivery of New Zealand's 1991 budget:

- In preparing this Budget, the Government had in its mind the New Zealand that will emerge as our children grow up.

- A society where many more New Zealanders will have the pride and satisfaction of providing for themselves and their families.
- A society where workplaces are creative and dynamic, where management and workers cooperate to find the best means of adding value to their products.
- Tonight's budget is about how we as New Zealanders can turn this vision into a reality.



Finance Minister Ruth Richardson delivering the New Zealand budget, 1991. Ruth Richardson webpage

Similar promises were made in publications such as Manifesto '93 distributed by New Zealand's National Party that provide the range of desirable outcomes that could be delivered by neoliberal policies by 2010.

Coinciding with the rise of laissez-faire neoliberalism, six pieces of legislation were applied to civil construction industry practice in New Zealand.

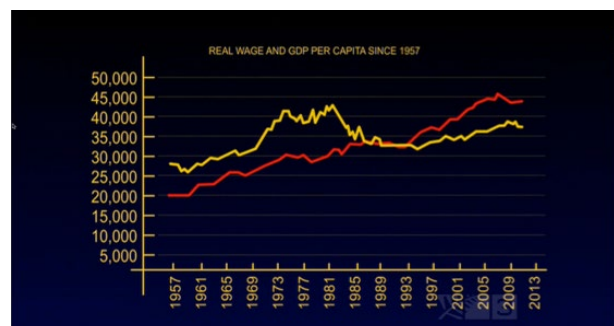
### 1. The repeal of the *Liens Act* (1987)

Civil work such as drainage, earthworks, road construction or surfacing is very difficult to undo. Therefore, where a client chooses not to pay once the work is done, there is little the contractor can do about it. The Liens Act gave contractors the right to force clients to arbitration, and title to land was not cleared and the land could not be utilised until the dispute had been resolved. The repeal of the Liens Act in 1987 took away the contractors' right to secure debt for work done on a piece of land, unbalancing the power relationship between contractor and client. The result was the cost of engaging lawyers to secure the payment for work done — a cost that has become embedded in the industry.

2. *The Education Act* (1989) changed the way civil engineering technicians and apprenticeships were managed and was promoted as putting the power to educate in the hands of the contractors. But education is not civil engineering contractors' primary field of expertise, and by the end of the 1990s, other than the university based engineers, who already had their own niche in the workplace, the industry needed to recruit project managers from overseas.

3. *The Building Act* (1991) led to the 'Leaky Homes' episode in New Zealand where neither the government that had passed the legislation that led to housing water-tightness problems, nor the councils that enforced the legislation, nor the companies that produced the product behind the issue, were liable for the costs of \$11.3bn worth of mistakes. Individuals who owned the homes and the self-employed builders who had been required to build them to specification, carried the bulk of the wide-ranging costs associated with this mistake. This breaking of a code of trust between the governing bodies and those governed was felt in civil construction where people had worked alongside those who had been bankrupted by the episode.

4. *The Employment Contracts Act* (1991) disempowered the people who did the majority of civil construction work — those with non-university qualifications, in particular the self-employed 'labour-only' crews with minimum business skills, who had to compete with minimum rates labour-exchange workers. This led to a commodification of people who worked in civil construction as real wages, which had exceeded GDP per capita before 1987, dropped below GDP per capita levels after 1987. This gap continues to grow.



Real wage and GDP per capita since 1957; TV3, MindTheGap program, 29 August 2013

5. *The Resource Management Act* (1991) was and still is regarded as an excellent legal tool for the well-intentioned to protect the environment. But accounts of abuse of the intention of the Act for capital or personal gain by councils, government departments, private companies and individuals, are legion.

## 6. *The Health and Safety in Employment Act (1992)*

While there was a clear need to address health and safety concerns in the industry prior to 1992, the high level of legal and documentary oversight required from the structure of this Act added corresponding levels of cost to construction.

In approximately 1993/1994, formalised quality control was introduced to civil construction at HEB. Without the prerequisite certificates such as TSQ or ISO to document not the specifics of how a particular job would be done, but a general documentation of the many specified areas of work, a company was not eligible to submit tenders. In an often-recounted incident at HEB, when the company owner Bruce Pulman was told in the early-1990s that formal, documented quality control was 'a coming thing' he infamously responded, 'we're not having any of that crap here'. But by 1997 HEB had their own documented quality certification so they could tender for work. Documented quality control was possibly the most restrictive of the changes to the industry, and even though engineers questioned its effectiveness it has now become embedded in the industry.<sup>9</sup>

There was a joint meeting with the Contractors Federation, the Association of Consulting Engineers, Auckland City Council, and Transit, in the late '90s at Ellerslie racecourse, and (engineer) Peter White said 'Look, I've got some concerns about this — we can do all this paperwork, but if we're building a lemon, all this paperwork isn't going to change us building a lemon, it's just going to record that we've built a lemon!' And a man who was working for Transit who were then the body for government road construction in New Zealand, said 'BUT! You've got a certified lemon!' It brought the house down. That is the risk the system now runs.<sup>10</sup>

### **The outcome of these policies**

The figures for the cost to build three specific roading works in 1980, 1986 and 1998 were obtained, and the specifications presented to two independent engineers, and four HEB engineers, who were asked to estimate the cost to build those works today. All of the respondents had a minimum of 20 and up to 40 years of experience in estimating for tenders. All referenced and emphasised the changes in regulations and construction requirements that have occurred over the period, that estimating for tenders is at best an imprecise science, and that inflation has had a differential impact on the various components of the costs. With adjustment for inflation, the lowest of the mean estimates indicated an increase of two times (standard deviation approximately 30 percent) and a higher end of three times the cost, with one instance indicating



Bruce Pulman, company owner 1982 to 2015

an increase of ten times the cost of construction since the introduction of policy changes. Taking the variables into account, the mean figures therefore expressed a range indicating an increase in the cost of civil construction in the order of two to three times.

As well as an increase in the cost of civil construction, the cost in human capital to the industry has possibly been greater. The workers who construct the civil product sold by the companies are paid less, and express lower job satisfaction in work where responsibility is lower. The amounts paid to those who manage, and the usefulness of the people who ensure compliance, are questioned by those with practice-based skills. The people who demonstrated their ability to efficiently self-manage prior to the year 2000, are either retiring or are near retirement. At the same time there has been a rise in the number of unskilled, short-term labourers in the industry.

Finally there has been a loss of independence in the New Zealand civil construction industry. New Zealand's four largest civil construction companies — Fletcher, Downer, Fulton Hogan and HEB — build the majority of the country's roads, bridges, motorways and land development. With the parent companies for three of these now in the hands of large internationals, control of the country's construction and profits from the activity mostly go offshore.

### **Conclusion**

While not a traditional starting point for a history, the oral history interviews and the documentary sources that they led to provided ample evidence for a compre-



HEB Project Managers Colin Coupar (1994 to current) and Patrick Gallagher (1985 to current)

hensive history of a company and an industry. Whilst there was some — very limited — access to company minutes and reports, fuller access would have changed the nature of the history. Information conveyed by such an account would not necessarily have provided a fuller picture of the company or the industry that it operated in.

The approach was sufficiently successful for the commissioning body (Bruce Pulman) to agree to extend the work from one year, to completion five years after it was originally commissioned. Just as importantly, the extension of the number of interviewees from the initial six to over 250 is an indication of the level of trust extended by the interviewees to the project and its writer.

A number of people who worked in the civil construction industry prior to 1990 expressed concern at the added costs neoliberal-inspired policies have brought to civil construction. They speak of the efficiencies of prescriptive control, and their belief that prescriptive control is the most efficient way to access human capital and skills. They are critical of the industry's engagement with legal activity, referencing the disproportionate financial costs of legal activity compared to the cost of the base activity, and tight profit margins of civil construction.

It is unlikely that the workplace changes that coincided with neoliberal politics will be undone. However, when another downturn in the Hall McDermott economic cycle occurs, clients with the power to change the regulatory environment, such as government organisations, may look for ways to cut

costs. At this point they may consider the opinions expressed by those in the history of this construction company.

## Notes

- 1 Ken Simms, interviewed by author June 2013, recording and transcript held by author.
- 2 Patrick Gallagher and Mike Cope, interviewed by author January 2014, recording and transcript held by author.
- 3 Lionel Landon interviewed by author January 2014, recording and transcript held by author.
- 4 VB Hall and CJ McDermott, *The New Zealand Business Cycle: Return to Golden Days?*, Australian National University, *CAMA Working Paper Series*, August 2006: Hall VB and McDermott CJ, *Recessions and Recoveries in New Zealand's Business Cycles*, 15 June 2011, [https://www.rbnz.govt.nz/-/media/ReserveBank/Files/Publications/2015\\_https://www.rbnz.govt.nz/-/media/ReserveBank/Files/Publications/Discussion%20papers/2014/dp14-02.pdf](https://www.rbnz.govt.nz/-/media/ReserveBank/Files/Publications/2015_https://www.rbnz.govt.nz/-/media/ReserveBank/Files/Publications/Discussion%20papers/2014/dp14-02.pdf)
- 5 Ken Simms, interviewed by author, January 2013, recording and transcript held by author.
- 6 R. Richardson (1991) *Appropriation Bill (No. 4) – Financial Statement*. *New Zealand Parliamentary Debates*, 517, 3254-3268, p5
- 7 [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Leaky\\_homes\\_crisis](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Leaky_homes_crisis)
- 8 Keith Sime, interviewed by author, March 2012, recording and transcript held by author.
- 9 Email Dave Bates NZTA August 2014. TSO1, December 1997
- 10 Keith Dick, interviewed by author, June 2012, recording and transcript held by author.
- 11 Keith Sime interview, 2012

Part two

# Discoveries

Discovering and telling a story







# UNPACKING A LEGEND

## Margaret Cook and Annabel Lloyd

Legends are part of Australian folklore — the bush, adventure and a heroic ability to take a risk are all key elements of the stories elevated from a factual base that define our popular culture. Ask people in South East Queensland about the 1893 flood and many will tell you the ‘legend of Billy Mateer’. It is the story of stockman Billy Mateer, who rode a horse over swollen rivers for Henry Plantagenet Somerset, to warn Brisbane of approaching flood. Mentioned at a Commission of Inquiry in 1927 and in newspaper articles, the legendary or mythical status remained unresolved. In September 2016 Brisbane City Council archivist, Annabel Lloyd, uncovered a single file that revealed new evidence. In unpacking and exploring the back story of a single archive file, we offer an insight into the intersection of archival and historical practice. The status of the legend was confirmed — a classic story of heroism against the elements.

### ‘Discovering’ an 80-year-old file

Over 120 years after the 1893 floods devastated South East Queensland, one legend endures – that of stockman Billy Mateer and his heroic efforts to warn Brisbane of coming floods. The story has resurfaced in a 1927 Commission of Inquiry, newspaper articles, a twenty-first century film *Deluge* and most recently in blogs and Wikipedia, some suggesting the ride is equivalent to Australia’s iconic tale of the ‘Man from Snowy River’.<sup>1</sup> Mateer’s ride has been the subject of at least 12 poems and a painting.<sup>2</sup> Different versions of the tale exist, with little known of the hero, Mateer. An unprepossessing file in the Brisbane City Archives (BCA) and the combined efforts of an archivist and a historian helps shed some light on this intriguing tale, while exposing some of the challenges historians face in our work.

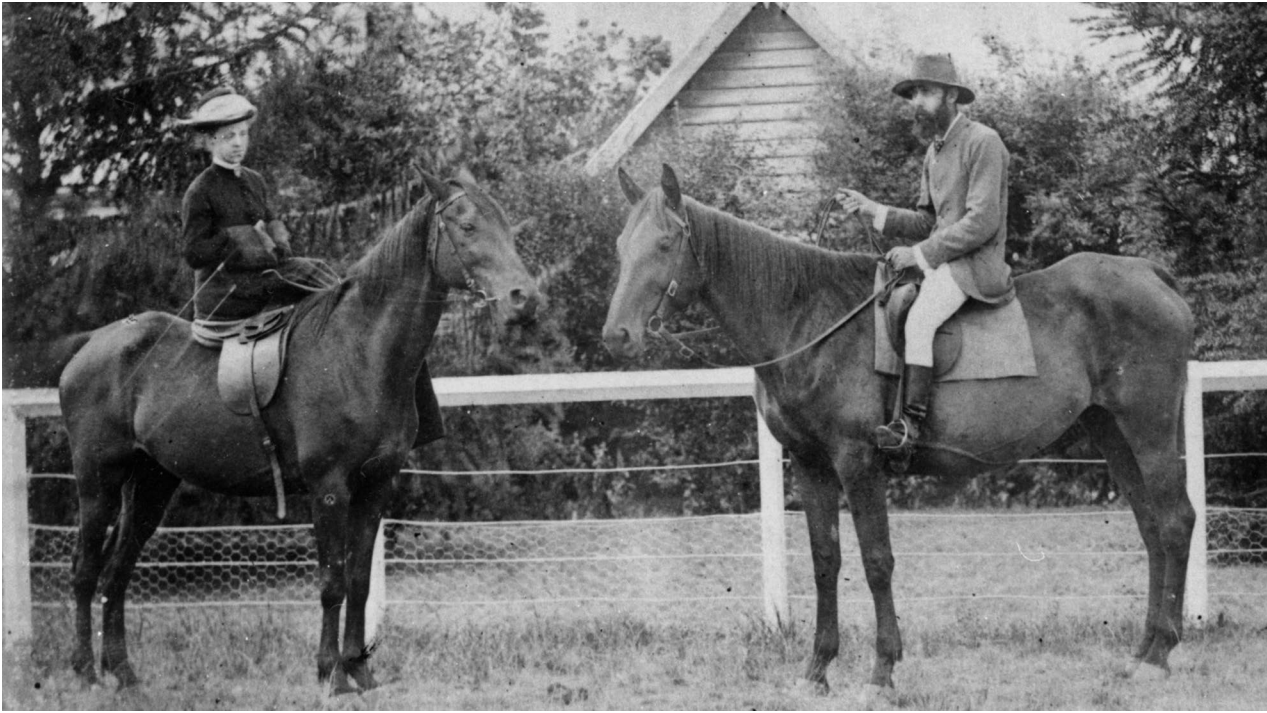
Amongst the backlog of un-accessioned files at the BCA lay five remaining boxes of an original 40, all with the uninformative label ‘WSS pre-1940s’. They had been transferred to the custody of the BCA from the council’s secondary storage records area along with many others, about 15 years ago. They had been boxed up originally by the Water Supply and Sewerage Department in about 1971 when space problems forced the department to reorganise its files. They lay untouched for some 45 years. There were few markings and no transfer lists to help with provenance or contents and, with the material physically stable, no particular priority was assigned to its processing other than noting it would require time and a task for completion by the Brisbane City Council archivist, Annabel Lloyd.

For an archivist or historian, un-accessioned records can hold the promise of a wrapped gift. In this case it was the second last box to be appraised that was to provide the biggest surprise. Crammed into the box with water supply related material lay a single file,

marked with ‘313’ circled in the left hand corner and offering no clues as to its content. The file contained 54 well-preserved pages, including newspaper clippings, hand-written and typed letters and sketches (one converted to a blue print). Inside the back cover was a faded typed label: ‘H. P. Somerset Description of the 1893 flood file’. Joyously, it was discovered that many of pages were written by Henry Plantagenet Somerset and Billy Mateer, their signatures confirming authorship. The pages held clues to the Somerset and Mateer legend.

When initially telling council colleagues about her find, Annabel encountered a common response – ‘where did you find that?’ – as if, after 20-odd years of being the Brisbane City archivist, she should have discovered it by now. The reality is that, by necessity, archivists must prioritise their work resources. Appraisal, particularly of material without any control systems, is a slow and meticulous task that takes time and focus, despite the increasing pace and demands of the archival work environment and the expectation that digitalisation will somehow make it faster and simpler. Appraisal is arguably the most skilled and rewarding aspect of an archivist’s job. Annabel reflected on what she might have done with the file had she ‘discovered’ it 20 years ago when both she and the archives were very new, and she lacked the depth of knowledge about the functions and activities of the Brisbane City Council that she has now. Of course, the file would have been retained. The fact that its subject matter was floods — specifically Brisbane River — and that the file includes handwritten correspondence are significant retention ‘triggers’ in their own right.

Finding the file when she did, however, meant that Annabel knew exactly who Somerset and Mateer were, the legend the file related to, and its importance. It was certainly a eureka moment. A critical success factor in developing the BCA has been building



Henry Plantagenet and Katherine Somerset at Cressbrook; undated, State Library of Queensland, accession number 6029

stakeholder relationships. Importantly Annabel knew who to share the find with — someone who would not only share her excitement, but would also make use of, and help disseminate, the valuable knowledge within the pages: historian, Margaret Cook. Like any historian looking at an archival file for the first time, Margaret came with cultural baggage, hers perhaps a little heavier than usual. She had been studying Brisbane floods for the past 18 months so knew of the 1893 floods and the legend. As archivist and historian worked together, bringing the characters and events to light, neither realised what an enjoyable journey unpacking the legend would become!

### Henry Plantagenet Somerset

Henry Plantagenet Somerset was a firmly established member of the pastoral elite who claimed forfeiture of a British peerage, and a direct descendent of the Plantagenet line of British kings. Henry was born in 1852 at Fort Armstrong, South Africa, while his father, Colonel Charles Somerset, served as governor-general of the Cape Colony. The Somerset family relocated to India where Charles Somerset served with the 72<sup>nd</sup> Highlanders in the Indian Mutiny, later dying in England from his wounds. Following the mutiny, Henry's mother and four children fled to England, where Henry was educated at St Mary's Hall Naval School, St Paul's Naval School and Wellington College, succeeding both academically and in the sporting arenas. On holidays in Europe in 1870, Henry was imprisoned in Paris during the Franco-Prussian War. In 1871 he abandoned his intended military career and migrated to Australia on

the ship *Polmaise*.<sup>3</sup>

In Australia he found employment and gained his early pastoral training on David McConnel's property, Cressbrook, near Esk. His natural aptitude brought reward when he became manager of McConnel's property Mt Marlowe, while he invested £1000 in bullocks and horses. On 7 July 1878 he married the eldest McConnel daughter, Katherine Rose, in Berne, Switzerland (Figure 1).<sup>4</sup> Henry and Katherine returned to Queensland in 1880 and until 1885 Henry managed Ramornie Station on the Clarence River, New South Wales, then Gordon Brook until 1888. He exchanged a lease of 10,000 acres at Mt Stanley he had held for 20 years, for 5000 acres at Caboonbah, roughly 4.8 km below the junction of the Stanley and Upper Brisbane rivers (Figure 2). He built his family home, well above the cliff, in 1889/1890. Somerset continued to prosper, and such was his wealth he suffered the considerable loss of £11,000 worth of stock in the 1893 floods.<sup>5</sup> He owned several pastoral properties, including Caboonbah and Kobada at Mt Bepo, Toogoolawah, by 1930.<sup>6</sup>

Somerset served as the Conservative member for Stanley in the Legislative Assembly (upper house) for 16 years. First elected in 1904, he served until 1920, not seeking re-election. He declined the portfolio of agriculture minister but successfully advocated the extension of the railway and tramway in his local area.<sup>7</sup> A long-term advocate of damming the Stanley River for flood mitigation, when the government consented in 1935, the dam and associated village were named Somerset in his honour. Katherine Somerset died in

February 1935. Henry Somerset died after a six-week illness on 11 April 1936, aged 84, at 'Telkawarra', Caboonbah, the home of his daughter Doris and her husband Richard Waite. He was survived by one son and five daughters. Somerset's fame includes warning Brisbane of impending floods in 1893.

### The 1893 floods

The summer of 1892–93 had been exceptionally hot in much of the Queensland colony, with drought in the western part of the state. The drought broke in 1893, as Brisbane experienced extreme rainfall with 1025.9mm falling at the Brisbane Regional Office in February.<sup>8</sup> Caboonbah afforded Somerset a bird's eye view of the floodwaters as they poured down the Stanley River. He had witnessed floods in 1890, when water submerged his house to shingle height.<sup>9</sup> As the 1893 flood waters passed this earlier flood height, on 2 February Somerset sent a telegraph from nearby Esk to Brisbane, informing John McDonnell, the Under Secretary for the Post Office: 'Prepare at once for flood. River here within 10 ft of 1890 flood, and rising fast; still raining'.<sup>10</sup> Within days Brisbane was inundated; floodwaters peaked at the Brisbane Port Office gauge on 6 February, reaching 8.35 metres. Brisbane then experienced a second, smaller flood which peaked on 13 February. Heavy rain brought a third flood to Caboonbah on 16 and 17 February. Somerset again tried to warn Brisbane of the imminent flood, but with lines washed away, telegraphs from Esk were no longer possible.<sup>11</sup> He then reputedly sent horseman Billy Mateer over the D'Aguilar Range to North Pine (now Petrie) to telegraph a flood warning to Brisbane, where the floodwaters reached 8.09 metres at the Port Office gauge on 19 February.

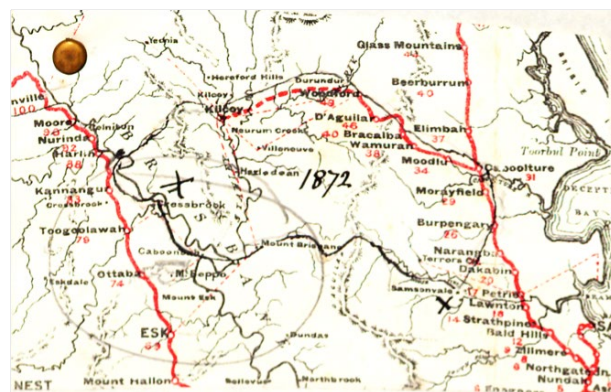
The Mateer legend appears to have come to light in 1927 at a Commission of Inquiry into the Brisbane Water Supply held by A. Gordon Gutteridge. The full transcript is held in the BCA. Henry Somerset was called as an expert witness and recounted his tale of the 1893 floods. Somerset informed the Commissioner, 'I heard a tremendous roar like a train coming out of a tunnel... I looked up the river and saw a wall of water coming down 50 feet high'. Undoubtedly the tale had become over-dramatised in 40 years of telling, but nevertheless Somerset realised the extreme localised rainfall would produce a major flood. He sent his men home to their families and telegraphed the postmaster general, Mr Unmack, to warn Brisbane but, Somerset claimed, all but Harry Baynes ignored it. When a third flood came a fortnight later Somerset 'sent a good man with two horses over the range into North Pine'. The last horse got bogged and the rider walked. Consequently, the warning arrived too late, 'about the same time as the river'.<sup>12</sup>

### The story revealed

Here these archival pages bring the legend to life, recording both the drama of the events as well as the practical responses to the floods. The file opens on 18 April 1932 when Somerset wrote a lengthy letter to Walter Bush, with a fulsome account of his recollections of the flood events of 1893. Walter Ernest Bush (1875–1950) eventually became Chief Engineer of the Brisbane Water Supply and Sewerage Department in February 1929. After initial training and working as an engineer in England he migrated to New Zealand in 1905. In 1906 Bush became Auckland City Engineer where his involvement in the city's planning included both social and engineering considerations, becoming highly regarded for his work.

In Brisbane, his first task had been to furnish council with a report on Brisbane water supply and flood mitigation needs in 1930, in which he recommended construction of a dam on the Brisbane River near the present site of Wivenhoe Dam. Unique amongst council officers of the time he engaged in what today would be termed community consultation. In 1931 he followed up his initial report with a visit to the Stanley River area, visiting Caboonbah and Somerset. Bush was a devout Baptist, becoming a lay preacher and church secretary for the Main City Tabernacle in Brisbane. A big thinker, he took his Christian duty to improve the condition of his 'fellow man' seriously.<sup>13</sup> Somerset, it appears was pleased to find someone who would help him impress upon local and state governments the need for future flood monitoring. Somerset seemingly enthusiastically shared his story with Bush, even carefully hand-drawing a map of the events which Bush had his staff turn into a printed map.

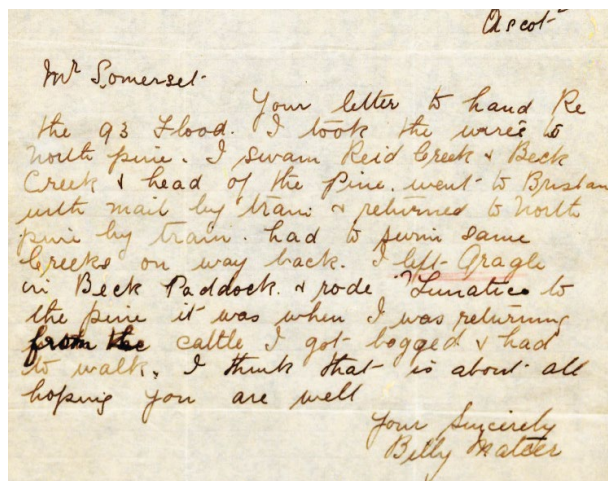
Bush, it seems, fell afoul of council politics. In the political and financial turmoil facing the new Jones Labor administration after the 1934 council elections, his position was terminated in May 1934, one month shy of the completion of his five-year contract. Thus, the last letter on the file, dated December 1934, a reply



Somerset's annotated map in file showing the location of Caboonbah (marked by star); BCA file.

to Somerset's request for a copy of his memories, is from the business manager of the Water Supply and Sewerage Department. The file was then closed, stored and forgotten. Bush remained in Brisbane after he left council and worked as a consulting engineer. He maintained his strong community ties, becoming increasingly active in the Baptist Church and secretary of the Queensland Town Planning Association. He was also a key player in the establishment of the Montrose Home for Crippled Children at Corinda (now a major Queensland disability support services provider) and remained on its board until his death. Later he and his wife moved to Moorooka, coincidentally the same suburb in where his file lay forgotten in the archives. Bush died in January 1950.

Somerset's letters to Bush are extremely detailed in some areas (Figure 3). In his initial letter we learn of the roar of the water, the speed at which it rose beyond the 1890 mark, of Somerset moving stock, sending his employees home to their families and sending a telegraph to the postmaster general, warning of imminent floods in Brisbane. Somerset repeats his belief that his warning was ignored during the first flood. In his own hand, Somerset explains how, with the telegraph lines washed away in the first flood, when the third flood approached he instructed a 'good game stockman from Mr W. Kent's station Dalgangal' who 'happened to be' at Caboonbah, to take two horses and cross the swollen river and the D'Aguilar Range to North Pine (now Petrie) to warn Brisbane of a second approaching flood. Somerset cannot recall the stockman's name but as a grazier, is certain of the pedigree of the two horses, 'Orphan' by 'Oakwood' and 'Lunatic' by 'Gostwyck'. He recalled that 'Lunatic' got bogged in the scrub at the head of that river, and the stockman had to travel on by foot,



Billy Mateer to Henry Somerset; BCA File;

arriving too late to warn the city. Somerset lamented the loss of a 'valuable horse', taking some comfort that he had done his best.<sup>14</sup>

Nine days later, on 27 April 1932, Somerset wrote again to Bush in great excitement. He had been trying to recall the name of the stockman 'as he deserves most honourable mention for such a feat in such weather'. Somerset's letter reveals an extraordinary coincidence worth repeating. Somerset was standing on a corner of Queen Street where, he writes,

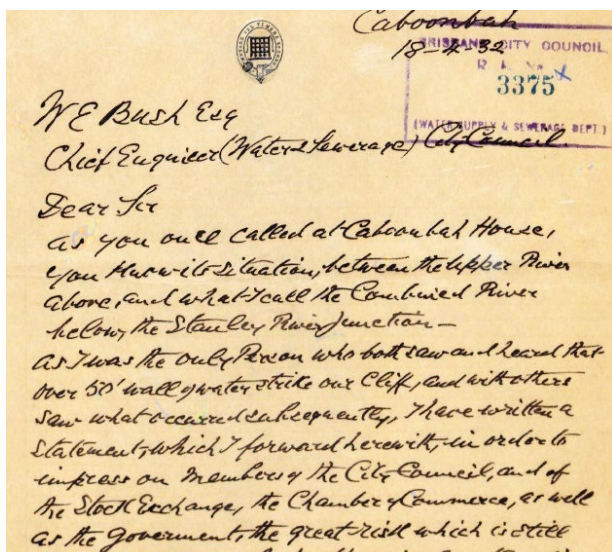
*A stout florid man said good day to me, good day said I (while scanning his face). You know me and I know you, but I don't remember your name, who are you? Billy Mateer said he, the chap who rode 'Lunatic' when 'Oracle' broke away.*

Somerset marvelled at the coincidence and asked that Bush add Billy Mateer's name to his previous account of the story. He wrote that Mateer now worked for the Tramways Department at the Brisbane City Council.

Mateer's account raised discrepancies (Figure 4). The one which concerned both Bush and Somerset were the horses, prompting Somerset to write to Mateer for clarification. Somerset himself was convinced that 'Lunatic' had become bogged in the scrub beyond the range and sought clarification from Mateer as to how he returned to Caboonbah.

Billy Mateer replied:

*I took the wires to North Pine. I swam Reid Creek and Beck Creek at head of the Pine. Went to Brisbane with main by train and returned to North Pine by train. Had to swim same creeks on way back. I left Oracle in Beck Paddock and rode Lunatic to the pine it was when I was returning from the cattle I got bogged and had to walk. I think that is about all.*



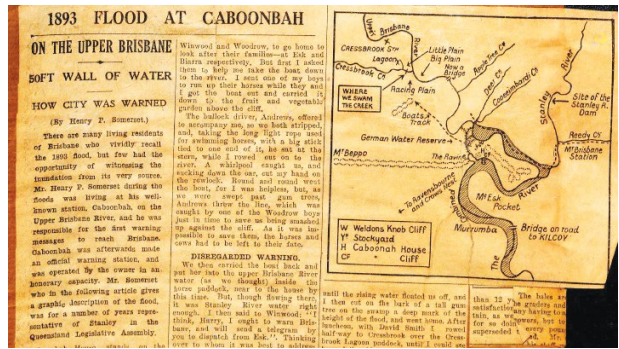
Somerset's annotated map in file showing the location of Caboonbah (marked by star); BCA file

Somerset seeks further clarification with a set of questions. He appears to be dissatisfied with the response, telling Bush that either Billy 'has been drinking or he has somehow become confused'. The horse details seem to preoccupy Somerset and he sets great value on his own account, disputing the discrepancies between his and Billy Mateer's stories as the result of Billy's memory loss or alcohol consumption. The file reveals the problem of memory. Created almost 40 years after the flood, Somerset was now an elderly man. His own memory is fallible as he insisted his telegraph from the first flood was ignored, although it was published in several newspapers.<sup>15</sup> He possibly confused the two major floods.

Somerset suggests that if the story is to be published in newspapers, as Bush wishes, then the Mateer story should end with his arrival at Petrie.<sup>16</sup> Such an account appeared in the Brisbane Courier on 6 May 1932 (Figure 5). The story reappeared in the Daily Mail on 10 June 1932, with neither the number or names of horses mentioned and ending with Billy Mateer getting the telegraph through safely (Figure 6). Somerset was clearly impressed with his account as he requested reproductions and a sketch map from the council business manager so that he could send a copy to HRH The Duke of Gloucester and the Premier, William Forgan Smith. The business manager tactfully suggested that 'no good purpose can be served' by furnishing a copy to the Duke.<sup>17</sup> Here the file ends, on 19 December 1934.

**A Memorable Ride.**  
 How Brisbane was warned of the great flood of 1893 has never been recorded in detail in print, and the story makes interesting reading. At the critical moment the telegraph failed. Mr. H. P. Somerset, on whose property at Caboonbah the flood gauges were situated, and who had been advising the heights as the river rose, realised that unless a warning was sent through to Brisbane a fearful catastrophe would occur. He enlisted the assistance of "Billy" Mateer, a stockman, and offered to provide him with two horses in order to ride across the D'Agullar Range to North Pine at top speed and send a telegram to the metropolis. Rowing a frail canoe, Mr. Somerset swam his horse, Oracle, across the river, and tethered it on the bank. Then he returned and swam another horse, named Lunatic, across. While he was landing Lunatic, Oracle broke loose and re-swam the river, which was nearly a banker, and running very swiftly, landing half a mile downstream. Lunatic alone had to carry Mateer on his memorable race against death and disaster, and both of them arrived safely at North Pine, whence the message was despatched. Although the message was received in Brisbane much later than if the telegraph line had been working, it prevented heavier loss of life and property.

Brisbane Courier, 6 May 1932, p. 10



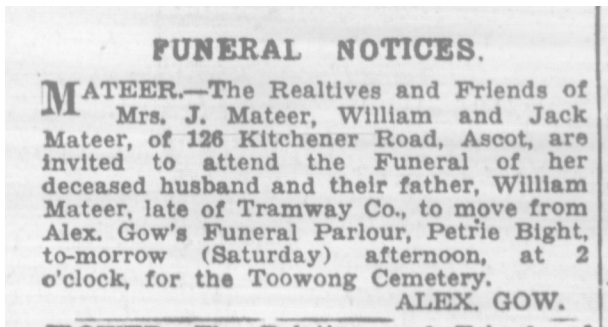
Daily Mail, 10 June 1932; clipping in BCA file.

The file gives some clues about Billy Mateer but required expansion with historical research. William (Billy) Mateer was born on 28 January 1870, eldest child of David and Elizabeth Mateer (née Kennedy), near Taroom in central Queensland. By 1893 Billy had employment as a stockman at Dalgangal station. On 4 July 1902 he married Johanna Jardine and, by 1903, still listed in electoral rolls as a stockman, had moved to Castlemaine Street, Paddington in Brisbane. Annabel Lloyd then had another archival breakthrough, following Somerset's clue. As a tramway employee, Billy Mateer had a Brisbane City Council staff card (Figure 7).

DATE	REFERENCE	POSITION	PLACE	REMUNERATION	ALLOWANCE	REMARKS
1-1-21		Driver (Horse)	M. O. S.	4 2 6		London and other 1/6 6
1-2-21				4 11		10/6
1-7-21		Elect Lab		4 7		£ long and other 1/6 6
2-2-21				4 9 7	3/6 Oct	£ long and other 1/6 6
2-7-21				4 9 7		£ long and other 1/6 6
1-5-21	1913/6			11 5		£ long and other 1/6 6
1-8-20				4 6 5		£ long and other 1/6 6
1-12-20				4 3 5		£ long and other 1/6 6
1-1-21				4 - 5		£ long and other 1/6 6
2-9-21				3 13 2		£ long and other 1/6 6
25-11-21						Deceased

Billy Mateer staff card; BCA

In 1917 William Mateer had joined what was then the Brisbane Tramways Company as a carrier — driving a horse cart around the depots. In December 1921, probably when trucks took over the carrying trade, he moved to the Electrical Laboratory, most likely employed as a general labourer, where he remained. In September 1931, as happened to most council employees, his hours were reduced as a result of the Depression. It would appear he was still employed when he died on 23 November 1934, as noted on his card. He had moved to 126 Kitchener Road, Ascot, not far from Somerset's city address, 110 Yabba Street, Ascot. When called on to give his version of events, Mateer was, as Somerset states, 'greatly altered in 39 years'. Even when Bush met Mateer in 1932 to clarify his version of the events, he seemed surprised to find



Funeral notice, *Telegraph*, 23 November 1934, 8

an old man. He informed Somerset, 'I was interested in seeing Mateer, and told him he must have had the spirit of adventure highly developed at time, but he has altered considerably since'. Somerset put it more bluntly: 'stout' and 'florid'. Mateer died soon after on 23 November 1934, leaving a wife and sons, William and Jack (Figure 8).<sup>19</sup>

The file reveals much of Somerset — a grazier concerned about his stock and his staff. From the correspondence we learn that Somerset tried to save his cows and horses, until leaving them to 'their fate'. He recalls that his warning saved a friend £3000. Somerset recalled that he lost 350 prime bullocks just sold to Baynes Brothers at £5.10 per head, 281 fat bullocks from Hereford Paddock and another 379 for the Meat Works in the Mt Esk Pocket Paddock, all of which 'washed away to past the Eagle Farm Wharf alive on their way to Moreton Bay'. He lost £9 per head in addition to 'other horses and cattle swept from other paddocks'. A notation in the margin estimates losses of £11,000, with a second pencil notation adding that he had 1650 prime fat bullocks and had hoped to gain a £600 profit that year.

What is missing from the file is just as interesting as the contents. Somerset's own family members remain shadowy figures. There are minor references to taking the family (except his wife) to Sapphire Gully to view the floodwaters and his mother-in-law home returning to Cressbrook. A small pencil annotation at the bottom of a typed page records that Katherine Somerset had given birth to their daughter Doris during the floods. Perhaps the female archivist and historian viewing the file were more prone to a sense of injustice, that post-partem Katherine was virtually absent from the file. There is a mention that Somerset looked out of his wife's window at the rising floodwaters, but no mention that Katherine was in bed recovering from childbirth, left with the baby as others fled to safety. In a subsequent letter on file Somerset again makes a passing reference to Doris, telling Bush 'Wife has it that Doris was born 12 February'. Little wonder then that an official birth notice for Doris could not be found in the newspapers, as there had been for his previous children.

Perhaps the most extraordinary thing about this file, even more surprising than its survival and discovery, is its creation itself. Compiled within a few years between 1932 and 1934 and seemingly prompted by William Bush's interest in the 1893 floods, the opportunity for its creation was almost lost. Bush had left council employment months before the file was closed. Billy Mateer died the month before the last letter was written in December 1934. Katherine Somerset (never consulted to validate the story) died in 1934 and Henry Somerset died in 1936. The opportunity had almost been lost.

## Conclusion

Unpacking the legend has shed light on the events of the 1893 floods and those involved. It provided further evidence that Billy Mateer's ride did take place, but the details may be forever lost in conflicting memories. This article reveals the challenges facing historians when dealing with oral history and memory, blurred with the passage of time. Both Mateer and Somerset believed their individual versions, even though Somerset admitted to a failed memory. Discrepancies were dismissed by Somerset as evidence of Mateer's possible drinking, not his own faded, 40-year-old memories of man now in his 80s.

The legend has been strengthened; it is no longer a myth. Inconsistencies remain and readers are still left to draw their own conclusions, but with more documentary evidence and certainly more personal accounts to add colour to the events, the weight of evidence validates the Mateer story. The joint project between Annabel Lloyd and Margaret Cook has shown how the combined professional expertise of archivists and historians can produce a fascinating result.

## Notes

- 1 Commission of Inquiry into the Brisbane Water Supply, Report of Evidence, 1927. BCA 0790; *Esk Record*, 18 June 1932, p. 1; *Brisbane Courier* (BC), 6 May 1932, p. 10; *Daily Mail*, 10 June 1932; *Courier Mail* (CM), 25 November 1958, 2; Erik Eiksen, "Flood Wave Hits", *Australasian Rodeo-Country Music*, February 1983, 27-29; Brian Eriksen, "Three cyclones hit coast in 1893 floods", *QT*, 22 September 1982, 7; 'Deluge: the true story of the Great Brisbane Flood of 1893'. Crystal Pictures presents a film by Martin Overson, [Margate, Qld.], Crystal Pictures, c2000; <http://blogs.slq.qld.gov.au/jol/2009/05/08/stockman-billy-mateer-saves-the-day/>; [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/1893\\_Brisbane\\_flood](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/1893_Brisbane_flood); "Hopes to rebuild Caboonbah", *Queensland Times* (QT), 14 May 2009, <https://www.qt.com.au/news/Caboonbah-historic-home-fire/227977/>
- 2 Private correspondence with Tony Hammill
- 3 *CM*, 13 April 1936, p. 13; *Sunday Mail*, 12 April 1936, p. 3; *QT*, 13 April 1936, p. 6
- 4 *Queenslander*, 2 August 1878, p. 129; *Telegraph*, 11 April 1936, p. 6
- 5 *QT*, 13 April 1936, p. 6; *Queenslander*, 18 July 1929, p. 17 and Somerset flood account.

- 6 *Worker*, 14 April 1936, p. 5. Electoral Roll, Darling Downs, Esk, 1930, p. 34
- 7 *Telegraph*, 1 April 1936, p. 5
- 8 Bureau of Meteorology, Australia Station 040214 (Brisbane regional office latitude 27.48 and longitude 153.03)
- 9 Erik Olaf Eriksen, Cuttings on the 1893 Brisbane River Flood. Fryer Manuscript. 61UQ ALMA
- 10 *BC*, 3 February 1893, p. 5
- 11 *Telegraph*, 3 February 1893, p. 6
- 12 Commission of Inquiry, Fifth Day, 19 August 1927. BCC Archives, BCA 0770
- 13 <http://www.teara.govt.nz/en/biographies/3b61/bush-walter-ernest>, Accessed 3 October 2016
- 14 Somerset to Bush, 18 April 1932
- 15 *BC*, 3 February 1893, 5; *QT*, 4 February 1893, 5; *Queenslander*, 11 February 1893, 278. Mater's telegram was not published
- 16 Somerset to Bush, 11 May 1932
- 17 Somerset to the Business Manager, 4 December 1934; Business Manager to Somerset, 19 December 1934
- 18 *Australia, Marriage Index, 1788-1950*, [database on-line]. Provo, UT, USA: Ancestry.com Operations, Inc., 2010; Paddington- Brisbane Division Electoral Roll, 1903, p. 26
- 19 *Telegraph*, 23 November 1934, p. 8

# NOT JUST WHITE PRODDY BOYS:

## The Melbourne Faculty of Education 1903–73

### Juliet Ella Flesch

Although the University of Melbourne was founded as a secular institution its Faculty of Education during the twentieth century included a surprisingly high number of men (ranging from 15 to 20) who held positions in various Christian denominations. Despite this, and despite the fact that no woman was appointed to a Chair until almost 100 years after the Faculty was established, Education at Melbourne University was not entirely populated by white, Christian men. This paper details the careers of two women (among many) and three men whose careers make this clear.

When I wrote histories of the departments of Property & Buildings, Physiology, and Biochemistry and Molecular Biology at the University of Melbourne, the religious affiliations of the staff did not impinge on my consciousness. My history of the Faculty of Education/Melbourne Graduate School of Education was different. This paper was inspired by a former staff member who wrote in terms that suggested a white, Christian and somewhat blokey culture:

It was jokingly said that appointments to the staff were alternately Catholic and Protestant, Catholic for Associate Professor Aughterson and Protestant for Professor Frederick, an enthusiastic Methodist. When I joined the full-time staff it numbered twenty or more and of those, at least fifteen had regular church affiliations, Catholics, Anglicans, Methodists, Presbyterians and me, the sole Baptist: we sat on church and denominational committees, were Sunday School teachers or lay-preachers and wrote for church journals and magazines. That is, we shared a common culture, and that made our functioning as a department comparatively relaxed. At one point, I recall, we had on our staff two Protestant clergymen and two Catholic priests.<sup>1</sup>

The Education Faculty of the University of Melbourne was not a WASP male enclave, as this paper makes clear.

The University of Melbourne was established in 1853 without a chapel, and by a founding Act of Parliament permitted only four clergymen on the 20-member Council.<sup>2</sup> Churches had to fund their own colleges and the Act stated explicitly that:

No Religious Test shall be administered to any person in order to entitle him to be admitted as a student of the said University or to hold office therein or to graduate thereat or to hold any advantage or privilege thereof.

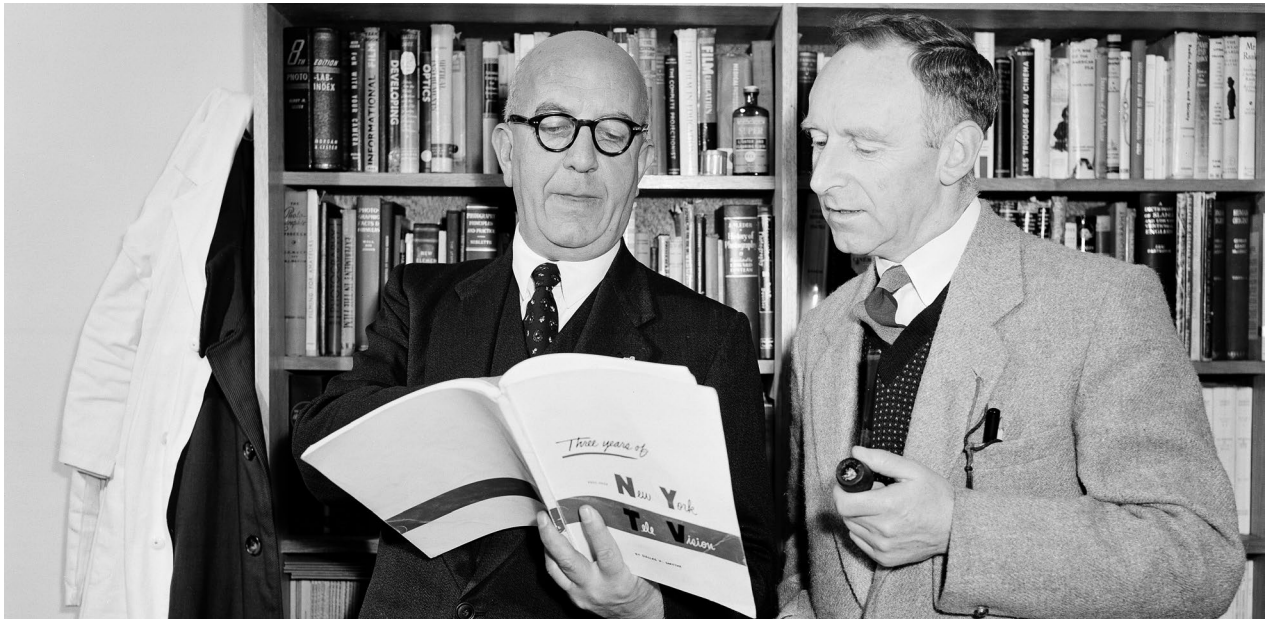
Apart from the religious affiliation of so many staff, two characteristics of the Faculty's first century do, however, stand out. The first female Professor was not appointed until 1992, and until halfway through the twentieth century had only one non-white senior staff member.

Hansen makes no comments on gender, but all the clergy were men. This paper does not contain any great revelations and it emphatically does not make any allegations of either anti-Semitism or other racism: it seeks only to show that the Faculty was not defined by white Christian men. It provides a view of the Faculty of Education through five biographical vignettes.

The first two men of interest, Newman Rosenthal and Manuel Gelman were appointed to the Faculty of Education more than ten years before Ian Hansen. They were on the staff during his first years in the Faculty, but though he notes the Christian affiliations of three-quarters of the staff, he mentions neither their strong Jewish connections nor those of Barbara Falk, who made no secret of her origins, responding merely when people asked her whether she was Jewish by asking what exactly they were trying to establish.<sup>3</sup>

**Newman Hirsch Rosenthal (1898–1986)** the first head of the Audio-Visual Department, had a long and distinguished career in the University and beyond. His entry in the Australian Dictionary of Biography misspells his middle name but notes that at some time he changed it temporarily to Henry.<sup>4</sup> After teaching Chemistry at





Newman Rosenthal and Thomas Coates preparing material for a seminar to be held in Lucknow, India in November 1957; National Archives of Australia

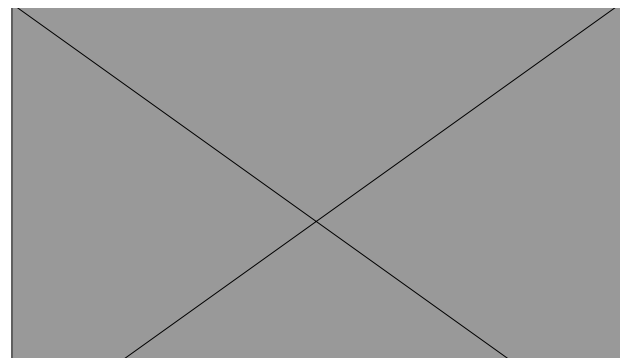
Xavier College for 20 years, he enlisted in the RAAF in 1941 and headed its Visual Training Section at Albert Park. This was transferred to the University and initially named the Visual Aids Centre in 1946. Rosenthal was Director of what became the Department of Visual Education for 20 years. It operated from a succession of huts and spare rooms until 1957 when it finally got its own building, adequately equipped for preparation of all visual aids including television.<sup>5</sup>

Rosenthal was significant in Australian cultural life for other reasons. He edited the *Australian Jewish Herald* from 1926, and later the *Australian Jewish News*. He reviewed books on Jewish history and culture and wrote on the history of Jewish settlement in Australia, publishing *Look Back with Pride*, on the Hebrew congregation at St Kilda in 1971 and *Formula for Survival*, on the Ballarat Hebrew congregation in 1979.<sup>6</sup> He was founding honorary secretary of the Victorian branch of the Australian-Asian Association for ten years and helped establish the Freedom to Read Committee when Mary McCarthy's novel *The Group* was banned in Victoria.

**Manuel Gelman (1910–1993)** lectured in Method of Modern Languages in the Faculty of Education and in Music Teaching in the Conservatorium of Music. He was a truly memorable teacher, of enormous influence in training language teachers, especially French. He had been dismayed to find he could not really communicate when he went to Paris, despite having studied French in Australia for years. The Modern Languages Association of Victoria (MTLAV) paid tribute to his classrooms 'noisy with the spoken, sung, and recited foreign language', his 'classes for

thousands of refugees from Nazism' and 'the cratesfuls of colourful posters, brochures and pamphlets he persistently extracted every time he went abroad for free distribution to our members'.<sup>7</sup> As well as being heavily involved in organisations such as the MTLAV Gelman played a vital role in the Alliance Française. He was made Chevalier de la Légion d'Honneur, Commandeur des Palmes Académiques and Chevalier de l'Ordre Nationale du Mérite. He was also a middle distance runner, tennis player and surfer, becoming the President of the Australian Jewish Athletics Clubs (AJAX) in 1933 and organising its Senior Sports Festivals for Jewish youth in Melbourne, Sydney and Brisbane. The Manuel Gelman Award for Teaching Excellence was endowed by his widow in 1996. Two prizes are awarded annually to Masters students, one for the teaching of languages, the other for teaching of music.<sup>8</sup> Gelman himself left bequests to Jewish Care and AJAX.<sup>9</sup>

The Faculty of Education boasts an exceptionally high number of memorable women, notably Alice Hoy,



Gelman's sketches of himself as muso and teacher; Courtesy of Mrs Sylvia Gelman

Olive Wykes, Wilma Hannah, Gwyneth Dow and Elwyn Morey: Olive Battersby is only one among many.<sup>10</sup>

**Olive May Battersby (1924–1996)** was born in England, arriving in Australia in 1939. She took her BA from the University of Melbourne in 1946 and was appointed Secretary to the Professor of Education, George Stephenson Browne the same year, becoming the Faculty's Librarian, with the status of Senior Tutor in 1948. She spent the next four decades in the Faculty.

She interviewed prospective students in Education for 20 years but it is as Librarian of the Faculty that she is best remembered. Olive Battersby oversaw and inspired the transformation of a small collection of books maintained by the Melbourne University Press for the use of Masters of Education students into a resource of significance to the University of Melbourne and beyond, simultaneously completing her own professional qualifications. By 1987 the library had a staff of six, a substantial Curriculum Resource Centre, a unique collection of Australian school textbooks and a collection to support the work of the Centre for the Study of Higher Education, itself a body of international importance.

Battersby was at various times Secretary of the Victorian Branch of the Library Association of Australia (LAA) serving twice on the organising committee of the LAA biennial conference. Within the University of Melbourne she worked on fundraising committees for the rebuilding of Wilson Hall and the establishment of St Hilda's College and International House. She was a committee member of Staff and Distaff for nine years, including two as President. She was the second woman President of University House in 1982 and 1983. She was on the Council of Graduate House. She won a Fulbright award in 1952 to work with JF Cramer, Dean of Education and later foundation President, of Portland State College, Oregon. After her 12 months in America, she spent a further three months in Europe.

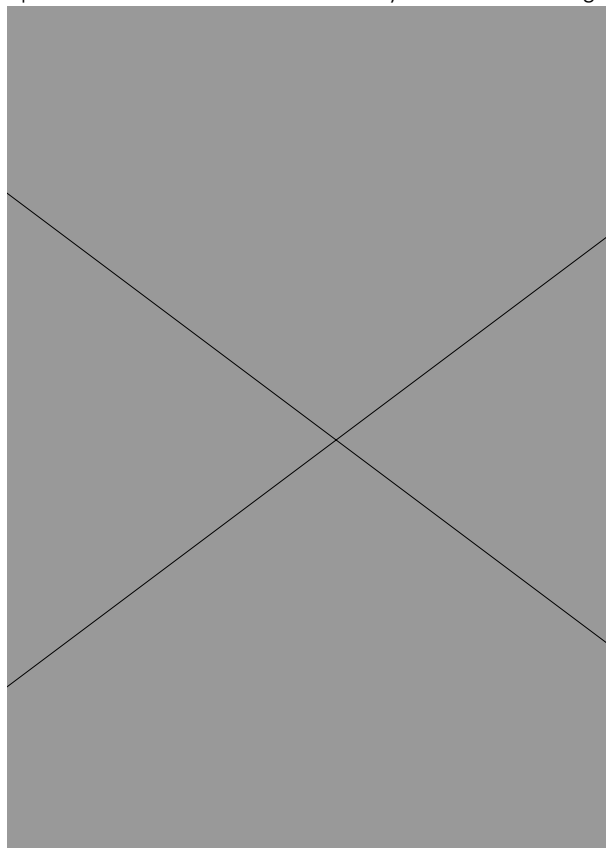
In the Faculty of Education Battersby assisted in organising the annual Theodore Fink Memorial Seminar for 28 years as well as the annual Frank Tate Memorial Lecture. She was a member of the Victoria Institute for Educational Research from 1949 and of the Australian College of Education from 1971. In 1987 she was awarded the University's Silver Medal for exceptional service. The Olive Battersby Scholarship endowed by her brother and sister is awarded to a student in the Master of Teaching with particularly high academic achievement records.<sup>11</sup>

**Margaret Rose Williams (1939–2015)** was never a member of the Faculty and graduated before Hansen joined it, but her time at the University of Melbourne proved the springboard for an extraordinary career and she herself recognised her singular position there.



(l-r) Kwong Lee Dow, Olive Battersby, Stephen Murray-Smith, Donald Cave. UMA Media & Publications BW/P/19,048

When she took her DipPhysEd from Melbourne she was the first Aboriginal Australian to graduate from any Australian university. She taught for the next 23 years, but her career was far from ordinary. Margaret Williams-Weir, who met her husband while she served in the Canadian Navy from 1966 to 1969, was a Malera-Bandjalang woman from the Grafton region of northern New South Wales. In 1956 she matriculated from Casino High School and began her university studies in Arts at Queensland University.<sup>12</sup> She and Geoffrey Penny of Western Australia were the first Indigenous Australians to matriculate to an Australian university. She transferred to the University of Melbourne to study Physical Education, and with a scholarship, spent 1958 and 1959 in University Women's College.



Margaret Williams-Weir in naval uniform; courtesy of Melissa Williams

She was to retain a connection to the College all her life, having been very conscious that she was a trail-blazer in a privileged environment. Margaret Williams-Weir taught in Australia, Canada and Great Britain, taking a Master's degree in Education and PhD entitled *Indigenous Australians and Universities: a study of postgraduate students' experiences in learning research* in 2000 from the University of New England.

When she returned to Australia with her husband in 1978, they taught in the remote Northern Territory community of Yuendumu for four-and-a-half years, after which she worked as Aboriginal Education Co-ordinator for the Australian Education Union, now the Australian Teachers' Federation. Williams-Weir was the first Aboriginal person to be employed by a national union. Active in the work of the National Aboriginal Education Committee, she contributed to the National Policy for the Education of Girls in Australian Schools in 1987 and was in the Secretariat of the Aboriginal Education Policy Task Force which reported in 1988<sup>13</sup> For six years she was the national coordinator of the National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Veterans' and Ex-service Persons' Association, and after she and her husband left Canberra and returned to Grafton in 2007, she remained an active member of the South Grafton RSL sub-branch while continuing to lecture on a sessional basis.

In 2015 the University of Melbourne honoured her by creating the position of Dr Margaret Williams-Weir Vice-Chancellor's Fellow of the University of Melbourne and naming the postgraduate students' lounge in the Melbourne Graduate School of Education the 'Dr Margaret Williams-Weir Lounge'. The inaugural Fellow, announced in August 2015, was Noel Pearson.<sup>14</sup>

**Kwong Lee Dow AO, AM (1938–)**, my second non-white subject, is a living legend in Australian education and known worldwide. His parents were Australian-born and he is probably the only Australian academic to be the hero of a book for children. *Kwong Chiu's New Year Clothes*, published in 1947, was described as being ahead of its time in its representation of cultural diversity, well before multiculturalism became an accepted concept in Australian society.<sup>15</sup> The author was his mother, Sylvia Chew Lee Dow (1909–1983), a graduate of the Melbourne Teachers' College who had started primary teaching when she was still a teenager, completed the College course in primary teaching in 1930 and in infant teaching in 1931. Kwong Lee Dow came to the University in 1956 on an Education Department studentship which bonded graduates to three years' teaching in a state high school. He was the first Science studentship-holder to be allowed to take the honours year and on graduation Lee Dow spent one year teaching at Melbourne High School and the next at the Teachers' College. He spent 1964 in

the University of Melbourne School of Chemistry in a team devoted to a major secondary school curriculum project which led to publication of the textbook *Chemistry a Structural View*.<sup>16</sup>

In 1966, Barbara Falk offered him a Senior Lectureship in the Centre for the Study of Higher Education. There he was principally concerned with assisting staff in Medicine and Science. This assistance was hands-on and direct. Falk believed strongly in observing how teachers worked and basing advice on their performance. He was also heavily involved in establishing and administering the BSc (Education) which was offered from 1967 to 1980. Lee Dow's promotion to the third Chair in Education in 1973 was somewhat controversial, not because anyone doubted his capacities, but because he did not have a higher degree. He held the position of Dean of Education from 1978 until he became Deputy Vice-Chancellor with special responsibility for human resource management in 1998. His influence extended well beyond the University and the nation. He became Vice-Chancellor in 2004 and at the end of his term was awarded an honorary Doctorate of Laws.<sup>17</sup> He was appointed Member of the Order of Australia for services to education in 1984, received the Sir James Darling Medal of the Australian College of Educators in 1994 and as well as the award from the University of Melbourne he received honorary doctoral degrees from the University of Ballarat in 2007 and the Hong Kong Institute of Education in 2009. In 2005 Kwong Lee Dow was awarded the Gold Medal of the Australian Council for Educational Leaders and a Career Achievement Award from the Australian Learning and Teaching Council in 2007.

From these brief biographies it is evident that the ethnic and religious composition of the Faculty of Education in its first century was more complex than one might deduce from Ian Hansen's summary. Appointments to senior positions, particularly since the implementation of the Melbourne Curriculum in 2008, have continued this trend, notably in non-European staff.

## Notes

- 1 Ian Hansen, *The Naked Fish: an autobiography of belief*, Wakefield Press, Adelaide 2002, p 126. Hansen was a member of staff from 1962 to 1990
- 2 Victoria. Parliament, *An Act to Incorporate and Endow the University of Melbourne* [Assented to 22 January 1853]. Published as a Supplement to *Victoria Government Gazette* of Wednesday January 26 1853, no 5.
- 3 Conversation between Barbara Falk and Juliet Flesch, date uncertain
- 4 Carole Hooper, 'Rosenthal, Newman Hirsh (1898–1986)', *Australian Dictionary of Biography*, MUP, Melbourne, 2012. His RAAF record is under 'Rosenthal, Newman Henry' NAA: A12372, O35368

- 4 NH Rosenthal, 'Building for Audio-Visual Aids', *University Gazette*, September 1957: 28-29
- 6 Newman Rosenthal, *Look Back with Pride: the St. Kilda Hebrew Congregation's first century*, T. Nelson, Melbourne, 1971; Newman Rosenthal, *Formula for Survival: the saga of the Ballarat Hebrew Congregation*, Hawthorn Press, Melbourne, 1979
- 7 RS Horan. 'Manuel Gelman: a tribute'. *Babel*. v. 28 no 3(1975):9
- 8 UTR6.324 Manuel Gelman Award for Teaching Excellence
- 9 <http://www.jewishcare.org.au/how-to-give/wills-bequests/honouring-our-bequestors/bequestors/max-gelman-z-l>
- 10 For a short biography of Gwyneth Dow see Juliet Flesch. 40 Years/40 Women: biographies of *University of Melbourne Women*, published to commemorate the 40th anniversary of the International Year of Women. Melbourne: University of Melbourne Library, 2015 and for one of Alice Hoy see Juliet Flesch and Peter McPhee. *160 Years/160 Stories*: Brief biographies of 160 remarkable people associated with the University of Melbourne. Melbourne: MUP, 2013.
- 11 UTR6.264
- 12 'Aboriginal Girl Matriculates', *Canberra Times*, 11 January 1957:2
- 13 Australia. Aboriginal Education Policy Taskforce. *Report*. Canberra, 1988
- 14 <http://newsroom.melbourne.edu/NoelPearson2015>
- 15 Sylvia Chew, *Little Chiu: a series of stories*, Written by Sylvia Chew; illustrated by Jean Elder, Murfett, Melbourne, 1947. Book 1. *Kwong Chiu's New Year Clothes*
- 16 D.R. Stranks [et al.], *Chemistry, a Structural View*, Melbourne University Press, Melbourne, 1965
- 17 Lee Dow's career is described in more detail in the citation for his LLD, which can be found at [http://www.unimelb.edu.au/unisec/calendar/honcausa/hon.html?\\_ga=1.193091117.1495603952.1435801020](http://www.unimelb.edu.au/unisec/calendar/honcausa/hon.html?_ga=1.193091117.1495603952.1435801020) as well as the MGSE website: [http://www.cshe.unimelb.edu.au/people/lee\\_dow.html](http://www.cshe.unimelb.edu.au/people/lee_dow.html).

Part three

# Reflections

Thinking about history,  
its impact on us and our role in  
understanding it





# LOOKING AT HISTORY:

## A consideration of two photographs, one from Darwin, one from Dili

Steven Farram

Images are often used as aids for understanding history and for communicating research outcomes. In this paper I discuss two strong historical images, one from Darwin in the early twentieth century and one from Portuguese Timor (Timor-Leste) from immediately after World War Two. I talk about the circumstances under which these photographs were taken and how we can interpret them in terms of what we know they represent and how they could enhance our understanding of historical events. I also talk about alternative readings of the images.

### Introduction

Photographs are often used as aids for understanding history and communicating research outcomes. Until relatively recent times, however, most historians deemed photographs as mere illustrations for their textual analysis and not as part of the historical evidence itself. Critical evaluation of photographs for use in the writing of histories became more common in the 1990s and 2000s, but not all historians are convinced this is a valid practice. Doubters argue that a photograph is not a replication of exactly what was 'in front of the camera lens' and it does not depict 'the "reality" of the setting or event'. In this view, a photograph cannot be considered as 'evidence' because it could have been 'posed' or manipulated in a number of ways.<sup>1</sup>

Nevertheless, many historians accept that photographs can be critically evaluated in a similar way to primary source documents. In order to do this several things must be considered, including attempting to uncover the motives of the photographer and the values and assumptions that might have informed their work.<sup>2</sup> The values and assumptions of the original audience for the work should also be considered and we must not allow our own prejudices to influence our interpretation. The latter is a difficult task but must be approached with conscious effort. Other 'essential questions' we should ask are where was this photograph taken, and when? If the photograph includes people (as do the two examined here) we should ask who are they, what are they doing, and what can the photograph tell us about their lives?<sup>3</sup>

### The two photographs

For this article I have selected photographs encountered during research in my main areas of interest: north Australia and Southeast Asia. The Darwin photograph allows discussion of the issue of photographs of Aboriginal people and facilitates discussion of the use of supporting documentary evidence, such as newspaper articles, and physical evidence, such as buildings. The Dili photograph is used as an example of how photographs can be examined to help us understand matters from the past, in this case Australia's prior ambitions in its region. It also allows for discussion of the interpretation of uniforms, insignias and so on. The examples are by no means exhaustive but are deemed to provide a useful introduction to the potential use of photographs as historical evidence.

This photograph is held in Darwin at the Northern Territory Library (NTL). The photograph appears on the NTL's PictureNT website with the title 'Woman and maid'. It has the further description:

Maid servant (nurse or companion?) wearing crucifix stands beside well dressed [sic] lady with high necked blouse, large embellished st[r]aw hat, long white gloves, seated in cane chair outside Government House. Possibly Cissie McLeod and Mrs Mugg (B. James)

The idea that the young woman in the photograph is an employee of the other woman is enforced by the



'Woman and maid', Jean A. Austin Collection, Northern Territory Library

'subjects' listed for the photograph: 'Domestic staff, Fashion, servants'.<sup>5</sup>

Another photograph in the NTL collection is titled 'Group at presentation', but has the further description:

Crowd seated inside Palmerston Town Hall Smith Street, dressed clothing of the time. Gilruth presents bravery award to Cissie McLeod for saving Mrs Mugg from drowning

In this case we are also given the photographer's name, WJ Barnes, and a date, 1 September 1913. Given the recurrence of the names Cissie McLeod and Mrs Mugg it is reasonable to assume the photographs are related. When looked at closely it can be seen that both women from the first photograph appear in the second photograph as well and seem to be wearing the same clothes and adornments (in the case of the younger woman, this includes a medal), so it is likely the two photographs were taken on the same day.

The NTL has another copy of the second photograph titled 'Ceremony'.<sup>7</sup> The photograph is dated 12 September 1913 and has a detailed description, which in part reads:

Cissy McLeod, foster daughter of Capt Frederick and Mrs Mugg, receives the Bronze Medal of the Royal Humane Society of Australasia at a reception in the Palmerston Town Hall from the Administrator Dr J.A. Gilruth. On 9th January 1912 Cissy had jumped off the Railway Jetty to rescue her foster mother who had fallen in in the darkness.

A third copy of the second photograph is held by the



'Group at presentation,' Jean A. Austin Collection, Northern Territory Library



Northern Territory Archives Service (NTAS).<sup>8</sup> The NTAS description of the photograph is:

Half caste Sissy McLeod receiving medal for bravery in rescuing Mrs Ryan, manageress of Victoria Hotel when she fell off wharfe [sic] when farewelling friends; at Town Hall Smith St, early 1900s.

The various titles and descriptions of the photographs make it difficult to be certain of who and what we are looking at. Are the people in the first photograph Cissy (Cissie, Sissy) McLeod and Mrs Mugg? Or Cissy McLeod and Mrs Ryan? Was Cissy a maid or nurse? Was the photograph taken at the Town Hall or at Government House? Was it taken on 1 or 12 September? Who was the photographer? Clearly, not all the information given with the photographs can be correct, but the detailed description for the photograph 'Ceremony' gives it an air of authority. After checking various sources it was found that that description was based on a report titled 'Presentation to Miss Cissy McLeod' that appeared in the *Northern Territory Times* (NTT) on 18 September 1913. That report declares the ceremony took place on 12 September and after the event a photograph of the gathering was taken by WJ Barnes, a well-known local amateur photographer. It seems likely that Barnes then took a photograph of just Cissy and Mrs Mugg together.

Cissy McLeod had received earlier press attention in 1907 when she won a number of prizes for her sewing work at the annual show. In 1910, she was awarded a prize for achieving the 'highest mark for school work' amongst the fourth class Convent School students that year. Two years later, Cissy was reported to have performed in a children's play as part of the fundraising program of the Methodist Church. Although she was a Catholic school student Cissy, like Mrs Mugg, was an active member of the Methodist congregation.<sup>9</sup>

Providing descriptions for archival photographs can be difficult when little is known of their origins. Archivists are usually cautious when describing such photographs and for this reason many can be found with prosaic captions such as 'Two men' or 'Man and a woman'. Sometimes, however, caption-writers can be less prudent. The title and description of the first photograph which suggest that Cissy McLeod was a maid or nurse may have been based on an assumption that a young Aboriginal woman standing next to a well-dressed European woman must be her employee. This is not an unreasonable assumption, as many young people of Aboriginal descent who lived with European families during this period were assigned servants. Cissy, however, was always referred to as the Muggs' foster-daughter in local reports. Meanwhile, the declaration that the photograph was

taken at Government House is difficult to understand, as most of its external walls are and were (according to photographic evidence) dissimilar to the one shown. On a visit to the Town Hall site I was able to identify the exact spot the photograph was taken due to the distinctive patterns in the rough stone wall. The final words of the description, 'Possibly Cissie McLeod and Mrs Mugg', seem to have been added at a later date at the suggestion of historian Barbara James (now deceased) who must have known of Cissy's story and realised that the fact the young woman in the photograph was wearing a medal and holding what appears to be a rolled-up certificate indicated the photograph was taken following a presentation.

The description of the NTAS photograph, which replaces Mrs Mugg with Mrs Ryan, is at first puzzling. However, the NTT ran an article titled 'A Narrow Escape' on 19 March 1909 that described how Mrs Ryan had fallen off the jetty and into the harbour a few days earlier but was rescued by two local men. It seems reasonable to assume that the caption-writer knew this story and also the one of the presentation made to Cissy McLeod and somehow joined them together. And the date given for the photograph 'Group at presentation' could have been due to the caption-writer being aware the photograph must have been taken in September 1913, but was not sure of the exact date, in which case the first of the month was used as a default date.

None of the known contemporary Northern Territory press reports that mention Cissy McLeod acknowledge that she was of Aboriginal descent, although that would have been common knowledge in Darwin. The story of Cissy's heroism in rescuing Mrs Mugg was reported interstate, however, and in nearly every case Cissy's Aboriginal status was highlighted with headlines such as 'An Aboriginal Heroine',<sup>10</sup> 'A Dusky Heroine',<sup>11</sup> and 'A Brave Act. Plucky Half-Caste Girl'.<sup>12</sup> Another difference to the Northern Territory press articles is that many of the interstate reports make no mention of Cissy's relationship to Mrs Mugg, as if she was a mere passer-by, whereas others state simply that Cissy lived with the Muggs, or that Cissy was employed by Mrs Mugg. Some of the interstate reports claim that Cissy was a 'nursegirl', but they do not say who she worked for and there is no indication elsewhere that she performed this function for Mrs Mugg or that Mrs Mugg needed any nursing. It seems unlikely that the caption-writer who suggested that Cissy was a nurse was influenced by these reports, as that person seemed unaware of the identity of the people in the photograph.

Cissy was adopted by Captain and Mrs Mugg from her European father, Arthur McLeod, storekeeper of Borrooloola. It is unknown if her Aboriginal mother ('Polly', according to Cissy's birth certificate) had any

say in the matter. By all accounts Cissy was hard-working, brave, a good student, a loving daughter and a devout Christian. For Europeans who valued such attributes she would have been a source of pride and Cissy's photograph can be read as a celebration of her successful assimilation into European society. Assuming that WJ Barnes was the photographer, one of his motivations in taking the portrait of Cissy and Mrs Mugg could have been to make a record of this success. Barnes was known to have entered his photographs into the annual Darwin show and he may have planned to do so with this photograph. He may also have made the photograph as a memento for some of the people present. The copy now held by the NTL is described as being '18 x 13 cm', so it is reasonably large. The photograph comes from the collection of Jean A. Austin, a daughter of Administrator Gilruth, the man who presented Cissy with her award. The connection with Gilruth may have led to an assumption that the photograph was taken at Government House.

While Cissy McLeod's portrait could be read as portraying European triumph over her Aboriginality, some observers have noted that many Aboriginal people today simply ignore such interpretations and would treasure any photograph of their ancestors as 'a means of strengthening the continuity of family, an affirmation of Aboriginal identity and a means of negotiating sociality through time and space by

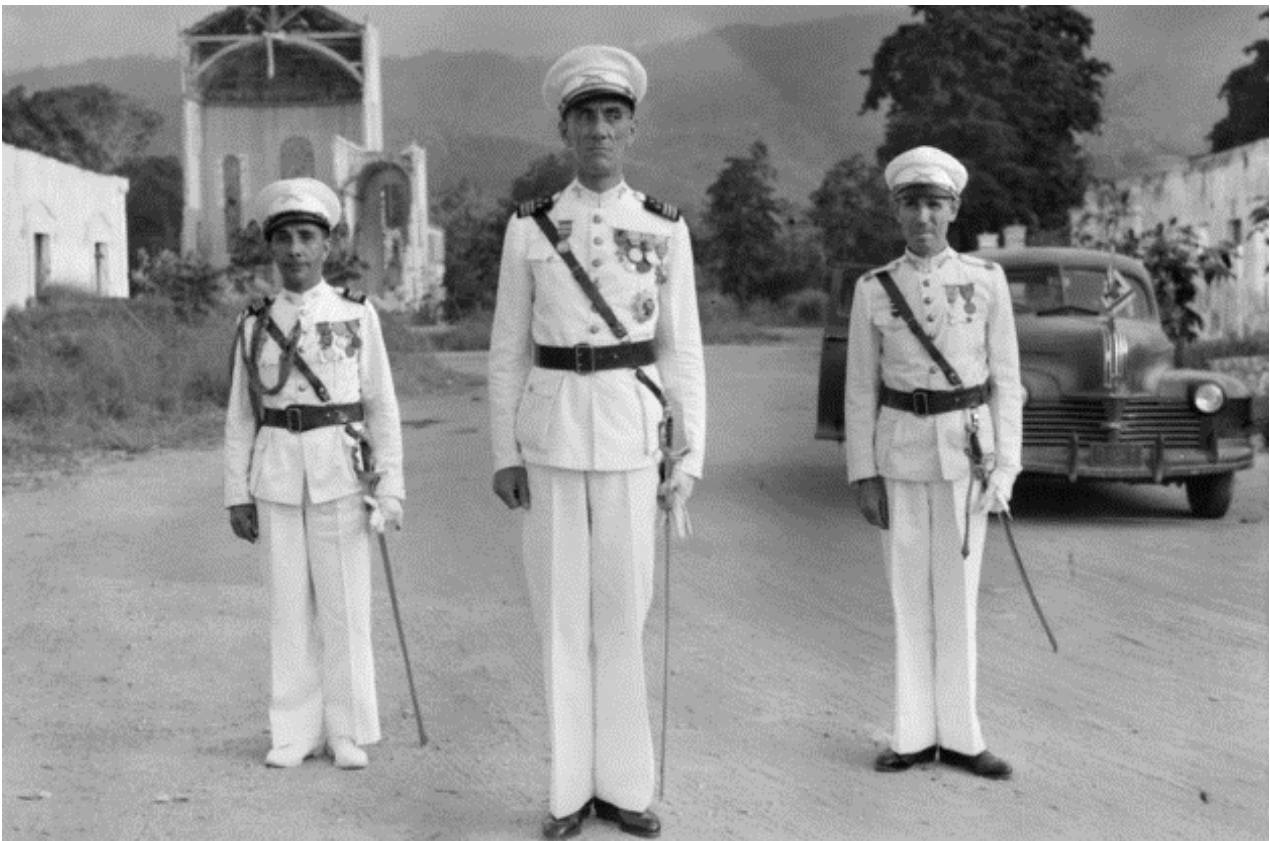
validating the past'.<sup>13</sup> There is also no reason why Cissy or her family should not have been proud of her achievements. Cissy McLeod, however, died of tuberculosis in 1928; she never married and appears never to have had children.<sup>14</sup> It is unknown whether any other descendants of her biological parents can be found in the Northern Territory today.

One matter not mentioned so far is that Cissy McLeod did not remain in Darwin all the time. For example, just a few weeks after she received her award and medal, Cissy travelled with Mrs Mugg to Adelaide.<sup>15</sup> Captain Mugg, meanwhile, travelled to many places along the Northern Territory coast and elsewhere. In 1908, Captain Mugg took his wife and Cissy with him on a trip to Kupang in Timor,<sup>16</sup> which is a good segue to our next photograph, as it was taken on Timor, although many years later and at the opposite end of the island.

#### **Photograph two: Dili, Portuguese Timor, 1945**

This photograph, taken shortly after the end of World War Two, is held at the Australian War Memorial (AWM) in Canberra. The detailed description for the photograph to be found on the AWM website<sup>17</sup> reads:

Dili, Portuguese Timor 1945-09-24. A small party of Australian troops under VX89 Brigadier L.G.H. Dyke DSO, Commander of Timor Force, landed in



Australian War Memorial, Photo no. 119627

Dili and were made welcome by the Portuguese governor, Senhor Manuel Ferreira de Carvalho. The governor and his aide-de-camp and chief of staff arrive at the formal ceremony held in Dili township (Photographer Sergeant K.B. Davis)

This description provides much of what historians would hope for, including the who, when and where, and the name of the photographer. Davis was an official photographer for the Australian Army's Military History Section. The online description tells us nothing of the photograph's materiality, but it has clearly been taken by a professional and is probably printed on high quality paper. The caption was likely added to the photograph soon after it was taken and the two were then filed in a methodical manner. There is little doubt that the photograph is what it claims to be and there is no need to replicate the verification process that occupied so much time with the previous example. The AWM website shows that in the weeks and months that followed the taking of this photograph, Davis took scores of others in Dili and elsewhere in Portuguese Timor, many of which corroborate what is said to be portrayed in this one. There is, however, a lot of information not provided in the description of this photograph, such as why it was taken, and the nature of the ceremony referred to, which makes it necessary to seek different sources. Meanwhile, this photograph and others can be examined in detail to discover other clues.

The photograph's caption declares the Australian troops 'were made welcome' by Governor Ferreira de Carvalho. One can imagine that the governor was diplomatic, but the truth is the Portuguese were wary of the Australians and with good reason. Against Portuguese wishes Australian troops had landed in Dili in December 1941. Following this violation of Portuguese neutrality, Timor was invaded and occupied by Japanese forces in February 1942. The Japanese initially allowed the Portuguese administration to continue, but in 1943 the Portuguese were placed in detention and the governor held under virtual house arrest in his palace. After the Japanese capitulation, Australia occupied the eastern Indonesian archipelago for the Allies. Australia informed the United Kingdom (UK) that it believed Portugal was 'unfit to be entrusted with defence of territory so important to the security of this area' and proposed that after accepting the Japanese surrender, Australian forces should remain in Portuguese Timor until the conclusion of defence and economic arrangements first proposed in 1943. The UK persuaded Australia to abandon this plan.<sup>18</sup> Nevertheless, only weeks before this photograph was taken an Australian representative asked the Portuguese ambassador in London how his government would respond to the suggestion of a 100-year lease of

Portuguese Timor to Australia. The ambassador replied that Portugal could not relinquish sovereignty of any of its territory.<sup>19</sup> It is probable that Governor Ferreira de Carvalho knew of such intrigues.

Australia learnt that the Japanese had not established separate commands in eastern and western Timor, so only one surrender ceremony was necessary, which took place at Kupang on 11 September 1945.<sup>20</sup> Meanwhile, the Japanese transferred authority to the Portuguese in eastern Timor on 5 September 1945. Portugal let it be known it therefore considered an Allied occupation of its territory completely unnecessary.<sup>21</sup> However, Australia remained determined to appear as the victor in Portuguese Timor and on 23 September Brigadier Lewis Dyke of the Australian forces arrived in Dili. Dyke formally notified the governor of the surrender of Japanese forces on Timor. At Dyke's suggestion, he and Ferreira de Carvalho made speeches at a public ceremony the following day acknowledging Australia's association with the liberation of Portuguese Timor.<sup>22</sup>

This is the ceremony referred to in the photograph's caption. The clearly staged photograph shows the governor, his aide-de-camp and chief of staff standing to attention in the middle of a road. It seems the three men have just arrived from the governor's palace in the motorcar seen behind them. It is curious that one of the motorcar's doors is still open, as if the men had been brought specifically to this place for the photograph and would then move on. The ceremony must have been held nearby, but by taking the photograph here Davis was able to include the remains of the Dili cathedral, the tallest building in the town. The cathedral had suffered heavy damage from aerial bombing, as had the buildings on either side of the road. Other photographs show nearly every building in the town had suffered lost roofs and other damage. Some minor damage would have occurred at the time of the Japanese invasion, but the majority was caused by bombing raids conducted by the Royal Australian Air Force during the occupation.

Although there was money to be made from coffee and a few other products, Portuguese Timor was not wealthy, with the majority of the people living as subsistence farmers. Dili was rather a small place; outside the capital there was little development, and few Portuguese lived in the colony. So why was Portugal determined to remain in control there? One reason was pride. Portugal had been a mighty imperial power. It still retained Angola and Mozambique in Africa, which were large and prosperous, but Portugal's might in Asia had been eroded by the other colonial powers, especially the Netherlands and the UK. Of the remaining fragments, Diu and Goa in India, Macau in China, and Portuguese Timor, the latter was the largest. Some of that Portuguese pride might be seen

in the expression on Governor Ferreira de Carvalho's face in the photograph. In this and some of the other photographs taken at the time, the governor's expression might also be interpreted as showing mild levels of indignation and suspicion. The general tone of Ferreira de Carvalho's subsequent report to his government was one of satisfaction in deterring the Australians from any inappropriate action while they were in his territory.<sup>23</sup>

What was Davis's motivation in taking this photograph? The obvious answer is that it was part of his job and this is just one of many photographs taken in Portuguese Timor at the time. Other photographs document matters such as the destruction of Japanese war materiel, and there are several portraits of individual Portuguese and Timorese who assisted Australian troops when they conducted commando operations against the Japanese during the period February 1942 to February 1943. These latter photographs can be seen as part of an effort to commemorate and honour those people. The photographs of the ceremony to commemorate Australia's role in the liberation of Portuguese Timor are, I believe, quite different. Portugal did not request such an action and it had many reasons to be suspicious and resentful of Australia's behaviour. The photograph of the governor and his staff is evidence of a time when Australia sought to take control of Portuguese Timor. In that ambition Australia did not succeed, but in this and other photographs taken in Portuguese Timor at the time, Australia's role in the Japanese defeat is highlighted and the role played by the Portuguese diminished. It is as if Australia sought to take possession of the territory through a camera's lens. Used in conjunction with other sources these photographs enhance our understanding of the events they portray.

Before leaving this photograph, there are some other issues that could be considered. For example, we are told the photograph portrays the governor, his aide-de-camp and his chief of staff, but none are identified further. While it can be assumed that the central, foremost figure is the governor, some knowledge of military uniforms could help identify the others. Specifically, it will be noticed that the man to the governor's right wears a braided cord hanging from his right shoulder. This device is known as an aiguillette, a common badge of office for aides-de-camp in many military services, although it can signify other honours. The assumption that the aiguillette-wearer is an aide-de-camp appears justified by the existence of other photographs that show this man greeting Brigadier Dyke on his arrival at Dili, as the meeting and hosting of visitors is one of the common duties of the post. A close study of the three men's emblems of rank and the military decorations they wear could provide further interesting information.

## Conclusion

Critical evaluation of photographs for use in the writing of histories is a relatively recent practice. Historians must take care in using such material and need to ask various questions relating to a photograph's provenance, probable motives of the photographer, and other matters, as outlined earlier. In the two examples examined here it has been shown that it is easy to come to wrong or incomplete conclusions and that a close study of supporting evidence is often critical to our understanding. Whether the material being examined is a written text, a photograph or other source, a cautious approach is essential. A photograph can be 'faked', but so can a document. If it is accepted that the assessment requirements for photographs and the textual primary source documents traditionally used in historical analysis are really not so different, there seems little reason for historians to avoid the use of photographs as evidence. On the contrary, provided normal precautions are taken there is much to be gained.

## Notes

- 1 Penny Tinkler, *Using Photographs in Social and Historical Research*, Sage, London, 2013, pp. xiii, 5-7
- 2 Frederick D. Drake and Sarah Drake Brown, 'A Systematic Approach to Improve Students' Historical Thinking', *History Teacher*, Vol. 36, No. 4, August, 2013, p. 472; David P. Peeler, 'Deconstructing American Photographs', *American Quarterly*, Vol. 42, No. 3, September, 1990, p. 507
- 3 Drake and Drake Brown, 'A Systematic Approach to Improve Students' Historical Thinking', pp. 472, 482
- 4 Tinkler, *Using Photographs*, pp. 23, 94-5. The notion of photographs as 'a form of material culture' is discussed in Elizabeth Edwards and Janice Hart (eds), *Photographs Objects Histories: On the Materiality of Images*, Routledge, London and New York, 2004. A number of the papers acknowledge photographs as part of the historical record, but the idea of their critical evaluation for use in the writing of histories is less developed. A good overview is provided in the editors' own paper, 'Introduction: photographs as objects', pp. 1-15.
- 5 'Woman and maid', PictureNT website, <http://hdl.handle.net/10070/33195>, accessed 2 August 2016
- 6 'Group at presentation', PictureNT website, <http://hdl.handle.net/10070/34698>, accessed 2 August 2016
- 7 'Ceremony', PictureNT website, <http://hdl.handle.net/10070/49465>, accessed 2 August 2016
- 8 Database description for the photograph NTAS, HSNT, NTRS 1854, Item 2183
- 9 *NTT*, 16 August 1907, 30 December 1910, 3 October 1912, 15 July 1922
- 10 *Truth* [Brisbane], 7 December 1913
- 11 *Advertiser* [Adelaide], 26 August 1913
- 12 *Singleton Argus*, 28 January 1913
- 13 Sylvia Kleinert, 'Aboriginality in the city: re-reading Koorie photographs', *Aboriginal History*, Vol. 30, 2006, p. 71

- <sup>14</sup> *NTT*, 13 April 1928
- <sup>15</sup> *NTT*, 2 October 1913
- <sup>16</sup> *NTT*, 20 March 1908
- <sup>17</sup> Photo no. 119627, AWM website, <https://www.awm.gov.au/collection/119627/>, accessed 4 August 2016
- <sup>18</sup> Steven Farram, 'Portugal and the Netherlands in Timor, 1945-1949', in Sarah Smith, Nuno Canas Mendes, Antero B. da Silva, Alarico da Costa Ximenes, Clinton Fernandes and Michael Leach (eds), *Timor-Leste: The local, the regional and the global*, Swinburne Press, Hawthorn, 2016, p. 118
- <sup>19</sup> Steven Farram, 'Australian interest in Timor: A historical overview', in Dennis Shoemith (ed.), *The Crisis in Timor-Leste: Understanding the Past, Imagining the Future*, CDU Press, Darwin, 2007, p. 57
- <sup>20</sup> Farram, 'Australian interest in Timor', p. 57
- <sup>21</sup> Geoffrey C. Gunn, *Timor Loro Sae: 500 Years*, Livros do Oriente, Macau, 1999, pp. 231-2
- <sup>22</sup> Farram, 'Portugal and the Netherlands in Timor', p. 118
- <sup>23</sup> Manuel de Abreu Ferreira de Carvalho, *Relatorio dos acontecimentos de Timor*, Imprensa Nacional, Lisbon, 1947, pp. 459-66

# THE HISTORY AND SIGNIFICANCE Of the Workingman's Parliament

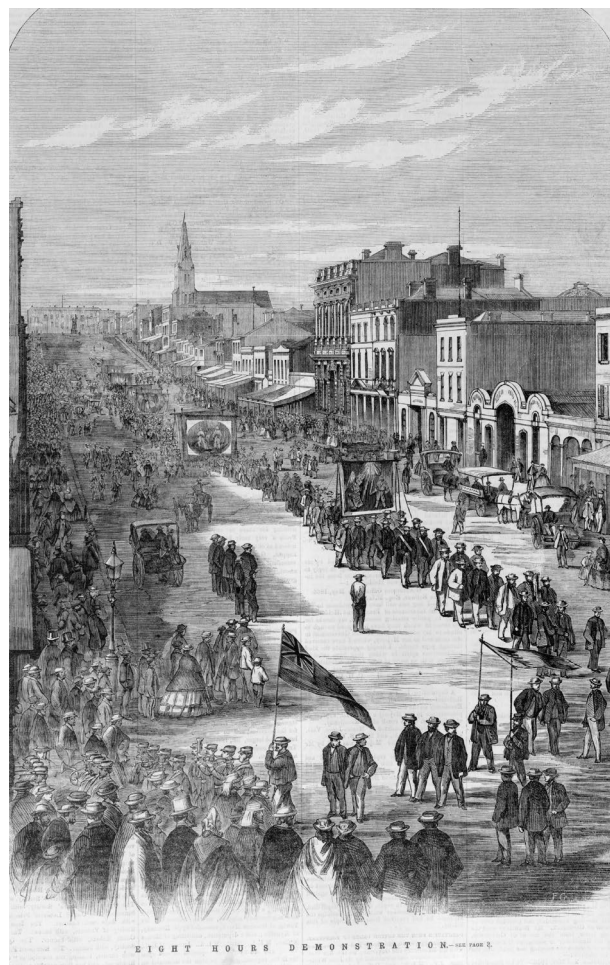
Libby Blamey

The Victorian Trades Hall, Carlton, has been the centre of the local union movement since the first, temporary, hall of 1859. In 1874, the first stage of the Reed & Barnes designed building was constructed. As the labour movement matured, the building complex evolved, with Trades Hall's ninth stage completed in 1925. The campaigns, events and decisions which have emerged from the 'workingman's parliament' have had broad implications for the social history of Victoria beyond the building and its tenant union members. How does an understanding of the historical development of Trades Hall assist in assessing the significance of the place? How can history inform a nuanced understanding of the importance of the built fabric of a classical style civic building constructed over decades?

## Introduction

Trades Hall, Carlton has been the centre of the Melbourne and Victorian union movement since the construction of the first temporary hall at the site in 1859. As the labour movement matured through the nineteenth century, the campaigns, events and decisions which emerged from the 'workingman's parliament' have had broader implications for the social history of Victoria than just for the building and its tenant union members. While the union movement has diversified beyond Trades Hall, the well-occupied and well-used building remains the symbolic heart of the labour movement in both Melbourne and Victoria. Trades Hall is occupied by the Trades Hall Council as well as individual unions and, more recently, other community groups. The building – Trades Hall – and its peak body – the Victorian Trades Hall Council – are intrinsically linked; one could hardly exist without the other. For the purposes of this paper, 'Trades Hall' refers to the building, with the Victorian Trades Hall Council referred to as such.

In early 2016, heritage consultants Lovell Chen prepared a conservation management plan (CMP) for Trades Hall. Conservation management plans are detailed investigations into the history, fabric and significance of a heritage place, and this deeper understanding leads to policy and guidelines for the conservation and management of these important buildings. Heritage legislation, as related to places, is focused on fabric and the history of Trades Hall, its occupants and the contribution of both to the local and broader labour



Eight-hour procession through the city, 1866. *Australian News for Home Readers*, State Library of Victoria



Trades Hall from Lygon Street. Lovell Chen, 2016

movement is complex and multi-layered. Although not all strands of this history could be comprehensively researched and analysed as part of the preparation of the CMP, the report explores how the built form of Trades Hall can illustrate both the significance of the building itself and the broader importance and impact of Victoria's labour movement. This article examines how a more nuanced understanding of the historical and social significance of Trades Hall was developed, and how the work of the historian complemented the work of other heritage professionals in the preparation of this more detailed assessment of significance. Along with an overview of the growth and importance of the union movement in Victoria, I will use an example of one room of the building, the Banner Room, to examine the input of history and the work of historians in drawing out the meaning and significant values of the place.

Trades Hall is included in the Victorian Heritage Register (VHR) for its significance to the State. As is the case across Australia, heritage places in Victoria are assessed against a range of criteria to establish significance. These include, amongst others, historical, social and architectural values, for which Trades Hall is listed. Although a comprehensive history has not been previously prepared on the place, the work of historians including Carlotta Kellaway, Keir Reeves and Colin Long, RMIT academic Cathy Brigden and Peter Ludvigsen have provided valuable comment in relation to Trades Hall's place within the broader cultural, political and social context.

### The building

Trades Hall is a substantial, mostly two-storey, rendered brick building sited on a prominent corner at

the intersection of Lygon and Victoria streets, Carlton. Its architecture draws on classical and Italianate influences, typical for public buildings of mid-to-late nineteenth century Victoria. Although presenting as a nineteenth century building, it was constructed in stages between 1874 and 1925 to accommodate the ever-increasing numbers of trades unions in individual rooms and communal spaces. Trades Hall comprises numerous small offices and hallways, and larger meeting spaces, and although its exterior appears to be well resolved, internally the connections between the various stages have resulted in awkward junctures and an almost rabbit warren-like feel. While many rooms seem utilitarian, just as many were designed to facilitate the specific requirements of the various unions in their occupation of the building.

### The labour movement and development of Trades Hall

The labour and social reforms originating from Trades Hall from the mid-nineteenth and into the twentieth century had foundations in the reform tradition of colonial Victoria. It was a progressive environment in which the demands of workers were given fair hearing, influenced by factors including the wealth of the gold rush era, the democratic principles on which prominent Victorians wished to shape the new society, the skilled, articulate and in-demand workforce, the connections between various cultural and political institutions, and the political successes of the miners.<sup>1</sup> Victoria came to be seen as a pioneer of the 'eight-hour day', with the Eight Hour Day movement and Eight Hour Day marches a highly visible campaign for better working conditions by trade unions from the 1850s.<sup>2</sup> Victorian stonemasons achieved an eight-hour day in

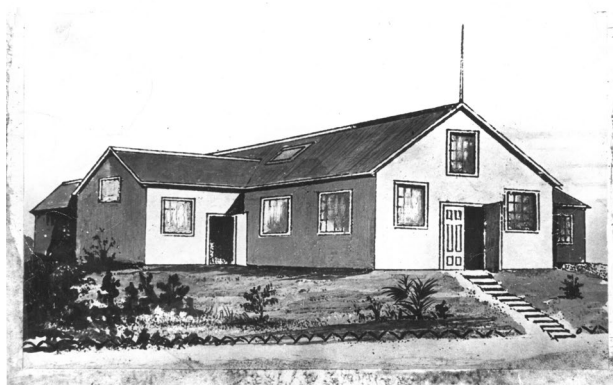
April 1856, followed by other building trades including painters and plasterers. While some newspapers such as the Herald proclaimed the marches to be 'childish and useless perambulations'<sup>3</sup>, public opinion and sections of the media supported the movement, as did the Haines ministry, pitting the government against its own Parliament House contractors – although presumably the government found support from the contractors' workers. As noted by labour historians Julie Kimber and Peter Love, the Eight Hour Day movement shrewdly linked its cause to the wider public good, ensuring its success.<sup>4</sup>

Even during the campaign for better conditions, leading unionists were aware of the benefits of purpose-built and centralised facilities for the trades. The leader of the masons, J Galloway, suggested that a Trades Hall and Literary Institute should be established, proposing that:

... each Society shall have its own Committee-room, but only one general lecture room open to all the trades, also separate rooms for classes, open to all, and a reading room and coffee-room, free to all the members of the various trades ...<sup>5</sup>

Carlotta Kellaway notes that it was implicit in Galloway's suggestion that while society committee rooms would be restricted to the seven building unions of the Eight Hours' trades, the lecture rooms would be open to the other trades, already indicating that unions were not limiting the membership of their hall.<sup>6</sup> A site was granted in Carlton, and the first Trades Hall was opened in May 1859, at a ceremony attended by 1000 people.<sup>7</sup>

Operation of the Trades Hall was to be 'vested altogether in the working classes'.<sup>8</sup> Although Mechanics Institutes were also formed for the benefit of workers, they were supported by public donation, and designed to ' "agreeably occupy" the "mental vacancy" of working men'.<sup>9</sup> Instead, Trades Hall was supported by funds raised by the unions that formed the Trades Hall Council, and the building was occupied



Undated illustration of the 1859 'temporary' Trades Hall building (demolished). Victorian Trades Hall Council



Reed & Barnes design for Trades Hall, 1874 (1968.0013, Drawing no. 4, Job 20). Trades Hall, Bates Smart Collection, University of Melbourne Archives

and managed by their representatives. The unions were 'in fact their own landlords'.<sup>10</sup>

As well offering self-improvement in libraries and reading rooms, the Trades Hall offered meeting and office space, enabling discussion and debate between trades regarding conditions, pay and legislation relating to workers. The hall also allowed for large social gatherings, further increasing the connections between the trades groups and their union delegates. Although initially established by the original Eight Hour trades (masons, carpenters, bricklayers, plasterers, plumbers and quarrymen), the growth in number and diversification of its occupants reflects the broadening of Trades Hall's agenda.

In 1873, a new and permanent Trades Hall building was constructed to the design of noted architects, Reed & Barnes. The grand building was to be added to in a number of stages until the mid-1920s, as increasing accommodation was required. The construction of the Trades Hall building was linked to the growth and prosperity of trade unions; funds collected during boom periods resulted in additional wings. Conversely, economic depression led to a decline of the wealth of the unions, and a slow-down in works to the building. Each stage allowed for the accommodation of more tenant unions.

Works in the 1880s and 1890s also resulted in more formal, and larger, council chambers to enable forums of union members and their representatives, and the Trades Hall Council committees. Use of the hall was high, with 59 societies renting rooms in Trades Hall by December 1885, providing revenue of £519<sup>11</sup>. This relatively low total is indicative of the cheap rent that the Trades Hall offered the unions for use of the building. The arrangements for tenancy are somewhat unclear, but this number indicates that multiple union representatives were accommodated in each room. By 1890, Trades Hall had 50,000 members, representing 85 different trade societies.<sup>12</sup> The societies which were members of Trades Hall included such trades as



gas stokers, brick makers, painters, cigar makers, silk hatters, felt hat makers and brush makers, illustrating the array of trades and specific skills of the nineteenth century workforce.<sup>13</sup> By the 1890s, the Trades Hall library was one of the most heavily patronised in the city.<sup>14</sup>

The two-storey building of 1873 comprised library and committee rooms, meeting rooms, and the Friendly Society's meeting room, later the first council chambers. As Cathy Brigden commented in 2005:

Erecting a permanent structure may have appeared to many to be but a premature and grandiose dream of a group of colonial unions, but it inserted the Victorian union movement and the colonial working class into the landscape and the building environment of the colony, from where they have never been removed.<sup>15</sup>

Reeves and Long observe that the siting of the building is also important; there are former working-class suburbs to its north, west and east, and the city is immediately to its south. The increasingly prominent building was a landmark to the residents of Carlton and Fitzroy and to parliamentarians in nearby Spring Street. Furthermore, Trades Hall was central to the Eight Hour Day celebrations: union members would meet at the building on the morning of 25 April each year where the parade would commence, before heading through the main streets of the city. Reeves and Long note that these celebrations represented 'one of the city's first, and greatest, public activities'.<sup>16</sup> Importantly, the parades were a means of both fundraising for the Trades Hall building program and maintaining the movement's prominence.

From the 1880s, the Trades Hall Council broadened its agenda, including supporting female unionists during the Tailoresses' Strike of 1883. Labour historian Raymond Brooks described this as a significant step, a sign that Trades Hall was attempting to exert influence



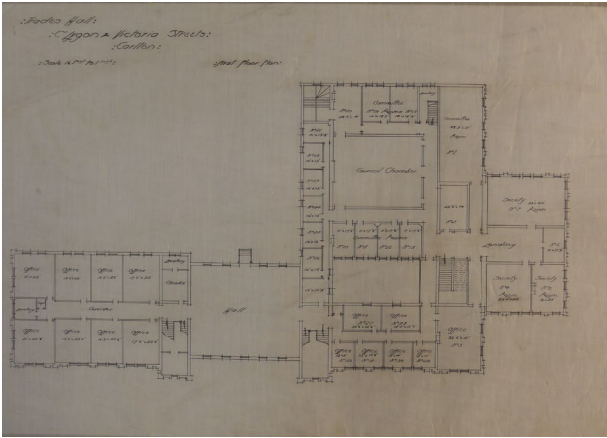
Eight Hour Day procession, c. 1906. State Library of Victoria

on both the conduct of the strike, and the growing number of trade societies in Melbourne.<sup>17</sup> In a move which both legitimised the work of female unionists and brought them under the watch of Trades Hall, the Female Operatives Hall was subsequently constructed in the north-east corner of the site. Trades Hall itself, however, remained the domain of 'working men'.

Trades Hall was described in the *Picturesque Atlas of Australasia*, published in 1888, as the 'Parliament of Labour'.<sup>18</sup> The author, Andrew Garran, described the operation of the elected Trades Hall Council, which dealt with disputes between employers and employees and had 'other matters affecting the welfare of the operative classes'.<sup>19</sup> Notably, Garran also recognised the importance of the work of Trades Hall; the comprehensive representation of a diversity of trades at the building and within its council meant it had 'a voice potential in the social polity of the metropolis and its suburbs'.<sup>20</sup> With the strong labour movement within Victoria, other trades hall buildings followed from the late 1880s, including Ballarat (1887), Geelong (1890) and Bendigo (1896). Interstate, trades halls were constructed in the late nineteenth century in the cities of Adelaide (1884), Brisbane (1891) and Sydney (late 1880s, opened 1895). The Melbourne Trades Hall is the oldest surviving trades hall in Australia and both the original, temporary timber building (1859, demolished) and the first section of the permanent building (1874) predate other trades halls in Victoria and across the country.

The prominence of Trades Hall continued into the twentieth century, with an article of 1903 noting 'no one who is familiar with the recent political history of Victoria can doubt that the Trades Hall is an important factor in political affairs'.<sup>21</sup> The fraught anti-conscription campaign of Trades Hall Council in World War One saw a broadening of its workers' welfare agenda: unionists were concerned that with working class men forced to fight overseas, 'capitalists [would] bring in cheap, non-unionised, coloured labour and break the trade union movement'.<sup>22</sup> By the end of the war, the building comprised 31 offices plus an additional 15 undesignated rooms, 11 committee rooms and three society rooms, along with the council chambers, library, secretary's room, the caretaker's quarters and the Female Operatives Hall.

From the building, Trades Hall Council has engaged in a wide range of campaigns relating to workers' rights, including equal pay for men and women and the introduction of a 40-hour week, now accepted as basic standards for many, although not all, workers. From the 1960s, after what became known as the 'split', a number of large unions and the ALP departed the building. The future of Trades Hall was debated, reaching the point of a proposal to demolish the building and redevelop the site. However, the late



First floor plan of Trades Hall, 1922 (1968.0013, 1922, Job 20). Trades Hall, Bates Smart Collection, University of Melbourne Archives

1980s saw Trades Hall Council's revival as a vocal political protest body, with the building often the focus of large protests. In 1989, the site was added to the then Historic Buildings Register, and subsequently transferred to the VHR in recognition of its historical, social and architectural significance.

### Assessing the significance of Trades Hall

To generalise, heritage professionals have different ways of 'reading' a building. An architect or architectural historian may look for a tell-tale detail signalling the work of a noted architectural firm, or a construction method that was in fashion for a mere few decades. They too may look for symbolism stretching back to classical periods, alerting them to the ambitions of the building's owner. The work of the historian, however, is often to look inside the building to find meaning: why it was built, and why there, what happened inside those spaces, and why are those events important? The historical research undertaken on a heritage building serves a number of purposes. In the first

instance, it gives a chronology of the development of the site and the reasons for that development. It also underscores an assessment of the significance of the building, with an understanding of where it sits in the context of local or Victorian history. In all of this the history is linked to the fabric, how events, movements, people and stories resulted in the extant building. Both primary and secondary sources are used, often with a focus on visual sources, which give an indication of why the building was constructed and what has changed. It is the historian's role to interpret these sources, to draw out the information required to give an understanding of the main source – the building itself.

The historical research on the Trades Hall building needed to address both its construction and the development of the union movement. The collection of architectural drawings of Reed & Barnes, held by the University of Melbourne Archives, illustrated the various additions and schemes developed for the building, and provided valuable information on how intact the building remains. Newspaper articles on the movement and the building, photographs of the site, and the archives of the Trades Hall Council were also important sources.

While the Trades Hall building clearly has aesthetic significance as a substantial nineteenth (and early twentieth) century institutional building, designed by prominent architects, it is its distinct historical significance that distinguishes the 'workingman's parliament' from other large nineteenth century public buildings. An understanding of the social, political and economic context in which it was built, and its connection to the labour movement, is essential in exploring this significance more fully.

Helen Bennett commented in *Circa in 2014* that for the historian, 'the meaning of a place is largely

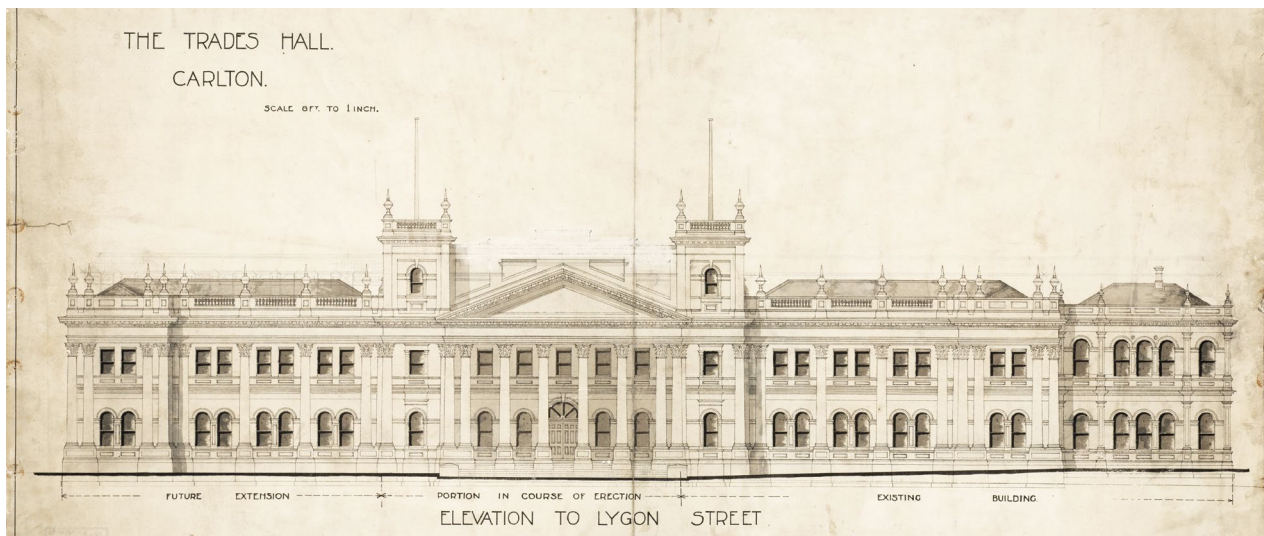


Illustration showing the works to be completed along Lygon Street from 1917 (1917, Job 20): Trades Hall, Bates Smart Collection, University of Melbourne Archives

dependent on the perspectives of the cultural group that created it'.<sup>23</sup> The 'cultural group' for Trades Hall is both specific and broad: it is the Eight Hour Day movement and the individual trades unionists, but equally it is the nineteenth, twentieth and twenty-first century labour movement and Victoria's working class communities. As political academic Peter Love comments in the *Encyclopedia of Melbourne*, the labour movement was 'one of the most significant social movements in Melbourne for much of its history' and has 'played a prominent role in the economic, political and civic life of the city'.<sup>24</sup> Reeves and Long further note that few Victorian institutions have had as much and continuous influence over Victorian and national affairs.<sup>25</sup> They state:

It is difficult to exaggerate the significance of the Trades Hall Council to the development of Victorian and Australian society over the last 150 years... Whether leading, supporting or opposing, Trades Hall has ... been involved in most major political debates in Victoria.<sup>26</sup>

The impact of the labour movement on Victorian society is clearly significant, with reforms relating to working hours, wages and conditions the result of political agitation, much of which emanated from Trades Hall. Through individual unions, its council and various committees, the Victorian Trades Hall Council sought to influence and support these reforms in Victoria and further afield, and was a prominent contributor to debates. The influence of the Trades Hall bodies would not have been so great had it not been for the Trades Hall site and building.

However, in this heritage assessment, the significance of the movement needed to be linked to the fabric of the building, to establish how the importance of the labour movements and of Victoria's working class political campaigns are both demonstrated in the building and linked to its very existence.

As noted previously, numerous small offices and meeting spaces were added to the building over the 50 years of its construction. This co-location of an increasing number of trade unions allowed discussion, debate and sharing of information between union members. The success of this model, proposed by the leader of the masons in 1856, and the importance of Trades Hall Council as a peak body, is demonstrated by the fact that more and more offices were added. The unions recognised the benefit to their cause by being part of Trades Hall. The building was also funded by union members for their use and is therefore indicative of the growth of the movement through the nineteenth century.

The historical research undertaken also gives background to the architectural grandeur of the

building; it was a statement of intent of the union movement, to be a permanent and important institution for the workers of Victoria. It is, as Reeves emphasises 'a most tangible manifestation of labour movement aspirations and activities' and a 'vital physical symbol of the influence of the Victorian labour movement'. The Trades Hall building enabled the Victorian trades unions to exert their influence beyond the building trades and the conditions under which their members were employed, to wider workplace reform. Trades Hall continues to be the focus of the union movement in Victoria and is the longest continually operating trades hall site in Australia.

One role of the historian in heritage is, as Helen Bennett noted, to decipher meaning from heritage places. I would argue that this goes further: to find meaning and value in spaces. The purpose of a conservation management plan is to go beyond an understanding of the significance of the place as a whole; it looks at the elements, fabric and areas which can be considered of primary, contributory or little significance. While spaces considered to be of primary significance often are more intact or more elaborate, the ongoing occupation of Trades Hall by the union movement meant that there are spaces which, although at first glance may appear modest, go a long way towards demonstrating this use and the operation of Trades Hall.

### Case study: Banner Room

As noted in the introduction, the focus of this article is on what history and the work of the historian brings to an understanding of heritage significance, and is illustrated in the case of one small, unassuming room at the Trades Hall, the Banner Room. This room is accessed from a covered yard at the rear of the building, and not linked to any other internal spaces. The Banner Room was constructed in the second stage of the building's development of 1882, in a long



Covered yard at rear of 1882 addition to Trades Hall. Lovell Chen, 2016



Interior of Banner Room. Lovell Chen, 2016

thin wing behind the 1874 building.

The room is largely utilitarian in its finishes: exposed brick walls, lathe and plaster ceiling, timber skirtings, and batten and paired entry doors. A single, timber-framed arched window on the south wall lights this space. The room retains beams at ceiling height, which are fitted with small rollers. It is these beams that indicate the room's function: the careful storage of banners for use in marches and Eight Hour Day celebrations.

As shown earlier, the Eight Hour Day anniversary parades and marches were a significant annual event for Trades Hall and the unions. Eight Hour Day had



Banner of Amalgamated Society of Carpenters & Joiners, Victorian Branch, 1914. Museum Victoria Collections

a number of objectives: it was a celebration of the union movement's achievements, a chance to raise funds, and a reminder to the community (and no doubt politicians) that the trades movement was vocal, numerous and enduring. The parades were complemented by the use of the large banners made by union members, which signalled the movement's ambition and broader political agenda.

The banners were works of art; pieces were made with care and were full of symbolism. Appropriate storage was needed and the banner room filled this function. This storeroom needed to be easily accessed, with space for large groups to gather for the parades, hence its siting at a back corner of the building, opening to a large yard and laneway, rather than accessed within the main building. By examining newspapers, building plans, photographs and incorporating an understanding of the role of the Eight Hour Day parades, it became clear that this small room was essential to the movement, and intrinsically linked to the operation of Trades Hall. This room, however, is no longer used for this purpose; the banners long have long since been removed. A collection held at Museum Victoria, however, is included on the Victorian Heritage Register, and the significance of the built heritage of Trades Hall is inextricably linked to the significance of this moveable heritage.

The Banner Room's back-of-house location and utilitarian character belies its importance to both the Trades Hall building and its links to the Eight Hour Day movement and the ongoing success of the labour movement in Victoria. It was through an understanding of a broader historical context and operation of Trades Hall, that the 'primary' level significance of this particular space to the whole building was identified.

## Conclusion

Heritage is an industry comprising specialists from a variety of backgrounds. The work of historians in heritage complements the work of other heritage professionals, by providing meaning and context for how and why buildings developed as they did, and underscores any assessment of significance. The research that I undertook as the historian on the Trades Hall CMP, along with earlier work by other historians, enabled a deeper understanding of the Trades Hall building, both the place as a whole and the individual spaces within it. It also contributed to an understanding of the complexity of the significance of the place, as the centre of labour and working-class politics in Victoria, and the role that it, and its occupants, played in the labour movement of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. Ultimately, this research and assessment has broader implications, contributing to the protection and preservation of the building and its future management.

## Notes

- <sup>1</sup> See Renate Howe, 'Social Reform', e-Melbourne, Encyclopedia of Melbourne, University of Melbourne, <http://www.emelbourne.net.au/biogs/EM01391b.htm>, accessed 26 February 2016
- <sup>2</sup> Geoffrey Blainey, *A History of Victoria*, Second Edition, Cambridge University Press, Port Melbourne, 2013, p. 110
- <sup>3</sup> *Herald*, as quoted in Jeff Sparrow, *Radical Melbourne: A Secret History*, Vulgar Press, Carlton North, 2001, p. 183. Original article not sighted.
- <sup>4</sup> Julie Kimber and Peter Love (eds.), *The time of their lives: the Eight Hour Day and Working Life*, Australian Society for the Study of Labour History, Melbourne, 2007, p. 12
- <sup>5</sup> *Argus*, 23 April 1856, as quoted in Carlotta Kellaway, 'The Melbourne Trades Hall Council: its origins and political significance, 1855-1889', PhD thesis, Department of Politics, La Trobe University, 1973, p. 24
- <sup>6</sup> Carlotta Kellaway, 'The Melbourne Trades Hall Council: its origins and political significance, 1855-1889', PhD thesis, Department of Politics, La Trobe University, 1973, pp. 24-25
- <sup>7</sup> *Age*, 25 May 1859, p. 5
- <sup>8</sup> *Age*, 15 September 1858, p. 5
- <sup>9</sup> Leigh Boucher, 'Mechanics Insitutes', e-Melbourne, Encyclopedia of Melbourne, University of Melbourne, 2008, accessed via <http://www.emelbourne.net.au/biogs/EM00913b.htm>, 29 September 2016
- <sup>10</sup> *Age*, 12 December 1885 as quoted in Carlotta Kellaway, 'The Melbourne Trades Hall Council: its origins and political significance, 1855-1889', PhD thesis, Department of Politics, La Trobe University, 1973, Appendix A, p. 455
- <sup>11</sup> *Age*, 12 December 1885, p. 9
- <sup>12</sup> Gordon McCaskie, 'Trades Hall and the union movement' in Peter Yule (ed.), *Carlton: A history*, Melbourne University Publishing, Carlton, 2005, pp. 420-21
- <sup>13</sup> See reports in *Argus*, 13 June 1885, p. 10; 25 September 1888, p. 14; 7 January 1888, p. 11; 18 December 1886, p.12, 9 October 1886, p. 10, 4 June 1887, p. 11 and 22 November 1886, p. 9
- <sup>14</sup> Keir Reeves and Colin Long, *Trades Hall Heritage Study*, undated, held by Trades Hall Council, p. 10
- <sup>15</sup> Brigden, Cathy, 'Creating Labour's Space: the Case of the Melbourne Trades Hall', in *Labour History*, No. 89, November 2005, p. 138
- <sup>16</sup> Keir Reeves and Colin Long, 'Trades Hall Heritage Study', undated, held by Trades Hall Council, pp. 8-9
- <sup>17</sup> Raymond Brooks, 'The Melbourne tailoresses' strike 1882-1883: An assessment', in *Labour History*, No. 44, May 1983, p. 29
- <sup>18</sup> Andrew Garran, *Australia - The First Hundred Years: Being a facsimile of volumes I & II of the Picturesque Atlas of Australasia - 1888*, Ure Smith, Sydney, 1974, p. 238
- <sup>19</sup> Andrew Garran, p. 239
- <sup>20</sup> *Ibid*, p. 239
- <sup>21</sup> *Age*, 8 May 1903, p. 4
- <sup>22</sup> Gordon McCaskie, 'Trades Hall and the union movement' in p. 423
- <sup>23</sup> Helen Bennett, 'History, Heritage and the Professional Historian', *Circa: The Journal of Professional Historians*, Issue 4, 2014, p. 51
- <sup>24</sup> Peter Love, 'Labour', e-Melbourne, Encyclopedia of Melbourne, University of Melbourne, <http://www.emelbourne.net.au/biogs/EM00819b.htm>, accessed 1 March 2016
- <sup>25</sup> Helen Doyle 'Trade unions', in Graeme Davison, John Hirst and Stuart Macintyre (eds.), *The Oxford Companion to Australian History*, Oxford University Press, Melbourne, 2001, p. 654 and Keir Reeves and Colin Long, Trades Hall Heritage Study, 2015, unpublished report for Cultural Heritage Centre for Asia and the Pacific, held by Trades Hall Council, p. 1
- <sup>26</sup> Keir Reeves and Colin Long, Trades Hall Heritage Study, 2015, unpublished report for Cultural Heritage Centre for Asia and the Pacific, held by Trades Hall Council, p. 10
- <sup>27</sup> *Ibid*, p. 1, 10

# THE CONVICT SHIP *HASHEMY* AT PORT PHILLIP:

## A cautionary tale

Douglas Wilkie

The stories written by historians are interpretations of the past, and most historians write credible, well-written historical interpretations. But the stories written by historians can sometimes inadvertently misrepresent the past. The story of the arrival of the convict ship *Hashemy* at Sydney, having been turned away from Melbourne, in June 1849 has been repeated by many professional, amateur and popular historians. The ship's arrival and subsequent anti-convict protest meetings in Sydney not only became a turning point in the anti-transportation movement in Australia, but also added to an already existing antagonism on the part of Sydney towards its colonial rival, Port Phillip, or Melbourne. The story is not true and is based upon a fallacy. This article will reveal how an error in Australian colonial history has been perpetuated, whether deliberately for political motives or through careless methodology, and how in turn erroneous stories were quoted as secondary sources, causing the error to be repeated, eventually entering the realm of popular historical fact.

In 1849 the British government was still transporting large numbers of serving convicts to Van Diemen's Land, but the transportation of convicts to New South Wales had been discontinued for several years. As well, since 1846, smaller numbers of 'exiles' were being sent to the Port Phillip District of New South Wales. Exiles were generally young convicts who had served two years of their sentences, learning useful trades in prisons such as Pentonville, and were then given the option of remaining in prison, or being sent to Port Phillip. There they would be given a conditional pardon and allowed to live freely, on the condition that they did not return to Great Britain before the term of their original sentence had expired. Most 'exiles' went on to live good and productive lives, but there many who caused trouble and became known as 'Pentonvillains'. By 1849 the program of sending exiles was opposed by most residents of Port Phillip, and by Superintendent Charles La Trobe who had originally accepted exiles to help address a labour shortage. Antagonism towards exiles was compounded by thousands of ex-convicts moving to Port Phillip from Van Diemen's Land during the late 1840s. Many of these 'expierees' subsequently lived honest and productive lives, but there were enough dishonest expierees for public opinion to become polarised against convicts of any description.

In 1846, WE Gladstone, the Colonial Secretary in London, suggested that a 'modified and carefully regulated introduction of Convict Labourers into New South Wales' would be desirable.<sup>1</sup> Despite an Anti-Transportation Committee being formed in Sydney,

Governor Charles FitzRoy told London the scheme would be supported by the majority of the population; in September 1848, the Earl Grey announced that ships would be chartered to transport serving convicts to New South Wales.<sup>2</sup> These ships were the *Hashemy* and the *Randolph*. In her 2011 study *From Convicts to Colonists: the Health of Prisoners and the Voyage to Australia, 1823 – 1853*, Katherine Foxhall stated:

In 1848, Lord Grey re-introduced transportation to New South Wales. Rejected by colonists at Port Phillip, the *Hashemy* would be the first convict ship in a decade to sail to Sydney. Historians have vividly described the mass opposition that the *Hashemy* received as it arrived in Melbourne and Sydney, but the circumstances of its departure from Britain were equally traumatic.<sup>3</sup>

Foxhall's article is an excellent account of the role of surgeons on convict ships; the relationship between the *Hashemy* and Port Phillip raises questions, however. Foxhall's sources for the *Hashemy* statement were Kirsten McKenzie, *Scandal in the Colonies* and AGL Shaw, *Convicts and the Colonies*. McKenzie told how the *Hashemy* arrived at Sydney in June 1849 'having nearly provoked riots in Melbourne en route'.<sup>4</sup> This appears to have its origins in Shaw's 1966 statement that 'in May the *Hashemy* ... almost provoked riots [at Port Phillip] and had to be sent to Sydney'.<sup>5</sup>

Following the genealogy of sources back though AGL Shaw, we find that, in his 2003 *History of the Port Phillip District* Shaw stated, 'When the *Hashemy*

arrived ... [in May 1849] ... La Trobe, fearing trouble sent her on to Sydney with her passengers still on board .... In August, when the *Randolph* reached Port Phillip, the *Argus* prepared for action again'.<sup>6</sup> Shaw gave his sources as 'the correspondence between officials in Melbourne, Sydney and London',<sup>7</sup> and referred to his own 1966 *Convicts and the Colonies*, Alan Gross's, Charles Joseph La Trobe,<sup>8</sup> and Ernest Scott's article 'Resistance to Convict Transportation'—none of which referred directly to any primary documentary sources regarding the *Hashemy*.<sup>9</sup> Scott's article stated, 'when in May, 1850, the *Hashemy* arrived in the bay, she was at once directed to proceed to Port Jackson' by Charles La Trobe, Superintendent of the Port Phillip District.<sup>10</sup> He repeated this in his *Short History of Australia*.<sup>11</sup> How Scott concluded the *Hashemy* arrived at Port Phillip in May 1850 is unclear, and his error was repeated by numerous historians over the next 60 years.<sup>12</sup>

In 2003 Shaw moved the 1850 date back to May 1849 but still had La Trobe sending the *Hashemy* 'on to Sydney with her passengers still aboard'.<sup>13</sup> TA Coghlan avoided giving a specific date but still had the *Hashemy* arriving in Sydney, 'a landing having been refused them at Melbourne in accordance with Governor Fitzroy's promise'.<sup>14</sup> Margaret Kiddle enhanced the description:

The crowd which collected to prevent the landing of the men looked so ugly that La Trobe, watching anxiously, ordered the captain [of the *Randolph*] to proceed to Sydney with his unwanted cargo. When a second ship the *Hashemy* arrived a few months later he followed the same procedure'.<sup>15</sup>

Kiddle cited the *Argus* of 9 August 1849, which referred only to the *Randolph* and said it was 'the first of the polluting ships', and the *Argus* of 22 August, which referred to an anti-transportation meeting but said nothing about the *Hashemy*.<sup>16</sup>

Where did Ernest Scott get the idea that the *Hashemy* came to Port Phillip? Historians of the late nineteenth and early twentieth century were divided in their opinion. Robert Thomson, Henry Gyles and Arthur Jose each said the *Randolph* was bound for Melbourne and the *Hashemy* for Sydney.<sup>17</sup> In the 1883 edition of his *History of Australia*, GW Rusden, after observing that 'Melbourne as usual was demonstrative' about transportation, simply said the *Hashemy* arrived at Port Jackson in June, with no mention of a stop at Port Phillip, and went on to describe the arrival of the *Randolph* in August.<sup>18</sup> However, by 1897 Rusden changed his mind and claimed the *Hashemy* came to Port Phillip before being turned away.<sup>19</sup> Likewise, in 1906 Philip Gibbs claimed the *Hashemy* 'entered Port Phillip'.<sup>20</sup> Neither of these historians cited their sources and to understand the development of this confusion

about the *Hashemy* we must go back to the primary sources of 1849 and look at contemporary reports and correspondence.

### Contemporary sources

In *Convicts and the Colonies*, AGL Shaw stated he had referred to original correspondence.<sup>21</sup> Most of the letters relevant to the 1849 convict ships are contained in *Further Correspondence on the subject of Convict and Transportation (In continuation of Papers presented February and July 1849)* presented to both Houses of the British Parliament on 31 January 1850. Nowhere in this correspondence is there a reference to the *Hashemy* calling at Port Phillip. Between February and April 1849 there were numerous reports of the impending arrival of the *Hashemy* in contemporary newspapers, but none suggested it was bound for Port Phillip.<sup>22</sup> Nevertheless, when Governor Charles FitzRoy visited Melbourne in March 1849, a deputation representing the people of Port Phillip, and Superintendent Charles La Trobe, extracted a promise from Fitz Roy that *should* any convict ships arrive at Port Phillip, they *could* be diverted to Sydney. This was a hypothetical situation.

On 17 April 1849, Henry Parkes and the Sydney Anti-Transportation Committee met to prepare for the arrival of the *Hashemy* at Sydney,<sup>23</sup> and on 20 April the *Sydney Morning Herald* published strong criticism of FitzRoy's promise to divert convict ships from Port Phillip.<sup>24</sup> A few days later the Anti-Transportation Committee demanded an explanation from FitzRoy<sup>25</sup>, and criticism of both FitzRoy and Port Phillip was also expressed in the Legislative Council in May.<sup>26</sup> *The Herald* continued reporting on the *Hashemy* being bound for Sydney throughout May and June.<sup>27</sup> When the *Hashemy* finally arrived on 8 June it reported that it stopped only once during the voyage, at the Cape of Good Hope.<sup>28</sup> Melbourne knew nothing about the *Hashemy*'s arrival until 15 June when the *Argus* carried the news from Sydney.<sup>29</sup> When the second ship, the *Randolph*, arrived at Port Phillip on 9 August 1849 the *Argus* proclaimed, 'the convicts are in the bay, and it behoves us to see that they obtain no footing here'. Henry Gyles Turner recalled that, 'the public did not evince any excitement' and two days later the ship was on its way to Sydney.<sup>30</sup>

The story that the *Hashemy* was sent from Port Phillip to Sydney came neither from the official correspondence, nor the contemporary press, but originated in Sydney when the separate issues of FitzRoy's promise to the Port Phillip deputation in March, and the arrival of the *Hashemy* in June, gradually became merged. Soon after the arrival of the *Hashemy*, Robert Lowe, Henry Parkes and Archibald Michie spoke at an anti-transportation meeting in Sydney. None suggested the *Hashemy* had been diverted from Port Phillip.<sup>31</sup>

However, when FitzRoy's opinion that many of these protesters were the 'idlers' and 'mob of Sydney' was published in the Sydney press in August 1850, indignation erupted.<sup>32</sup> Gideon Lang wrote to the *Sydney Morning Herald* on 14 August 1850 and discussed the issues surrounding the arrival of the *Hashemy*, and FitzRoy's promise to the Port Phillip deputation. Lang did not connect the two, but their juxtaposition set the pattern for linking the two issues.<sup>33</sup>

In September 1850 the idea that the *Hashemy* had been intended for Port Phillip was presented to the New South Wales Legislative Council by WC Wentworth, who was opposed to Port Phillip's separation from New South Wales, and complained that its residents had delivered a petition to 'prevent their community from being contaminated by the convicts expected to arrive in the *Hashemy*'. Wentworth, like many in Sydney, blamed the arrival of the *Hashemy* on Port Phillip.<sup>34</sup> His comments were misleading but were reinforced at an anti-transportation meeting in Melbourne on Monday 23 October 1854, when William Kerr said 'the ships *Randolph* and *Hashemy* had arrived with convicts. But these ships had also been obliged to leave our shores'.<sup>35</sup> Kerr's reference to 'our shores' was to Australia rather than Port Phillip. His address came after one delivered by Archibald Michie in which the anti-transportation sentiment of 'all the colonies of the Southern Hemisphere' was expressed.<sup>36</sup>

Most contemporary historians of Victoria and Van Diemen's Land either ignored the *Hashemy* or reported it going directly to Sydney with Thomas McCombie

noting that, 'on the 11th June, a violent meeting was held at Circular Wharf, Sydney, in consequence of the arrival of the *Hashmey* [sic] from Port Phillip'.<sup>37</sup> Early historians generally separated the *Hashemy* incident in Sydney from the *Randolph* diversion from Port Phillip but over time the names *Hashemy* and *Randolph* became connected to Port Phillip. An illustration in *Melbourne Punch*, in May 1856, depicted La Trobe as Boadicea and was titled *La Trobe and the Chieftains resist the landing of the convicts*. It showed two unnamed ships.<sup>38</sup> *The Argus* named them as the *Hashemy* and *Randolph*.<sup>39</sup> Further reinforcement occurred in 1863 when former editor of the *Argus*, Edward Wilson, mistakenly recalled, 'In 1849 when Lord Grey sent to Port Phillip the *Randolph* and the *Hashemy* ... we adopted as our motto "The Convicts shall not Land" ... and Mr. La Trobe sent the ships away again'.<sup>40</sup>

Despite Wilson's error, in August 1864 the *Argus* clearly stated that in 1849 'it became known that the British Government had chartered two ships, the *Randolph* and the *Hashemy*, to proceed to Melbourne and Sydney respectively with convicts. It was with the former vessel that the people of Melbourne were chiefly concerned'.<sup>41</sup> But the connection persisted, especially in Sydney. The 1866 Handbook to Sydney and Suburbs informed its readers that in 1849, London had sent 'the "*Hashemy*" convict ship, with orders to disembark the convicts at Melbourne', and La Trobe sent them on to Sydney. In October 1881, the *Clarence and Richmond River Examiner* claimed,





In the reign of governor Fitzroy an attempt was made to arrest transportation from England to Australia, and in the height of excitement the ship *Hashemy*[sic], with convicts, arrived in Hobson's Bay, when the residents of Victoria refused to allow them to be landed, and Governor Fitzroy ordered the vessel on to Port Jackson.<sup>43</sup>

And again in 1890, James Sheen Dowling, a Sydney barrister in 1849, remembered the *Hashemy* 'with upwards of 200 convicts not allowed to land at Melbourne, coming to Sydney to discharge her objectionable cargo'.<sup>44</sup>

Dowling's colleague, Robert Lowe, a leader of the anti-transportation protests in Sydney in 1849, was the subject of two biographies published in 1893, one by James Hogan, the other by Arthur Martin. An extract from Hogan's work was given wide publicity during 1893 and described the day the *Hashemy* arrived at Melbourne where, 'so intense and demonstrative was the popular fury that the captain did not dare even to attempt to discharge his repulsive living cargo'.<sup>45</sup> The second biography, by Arthur Martin, claimed the *Hashemy*, 'being unable to land her cargo at Melbourne, sailed for Port Jackson'.<sup>46</sup> In 1883 Martin left Melbourne 'embittered by friends shunning him'<sup>47</sup>, and in return had complained that Victorian historians 'have quite forgotten, the magnificent stand which Robert Lowe made in Sydney' on their behalf.<sup>48</sup> Martin criticised George Rusden's 1883 mild account of anti-transportation sentiment – 'Melbourne, as usual was demonstrative' – and claimed that 'There were men ... among the "demonstrative" early colonists, who marched down to Hobson's Bay with the view, if necessary, of preventing by force the landing of this first batch of Earl Grey's criminal hordes'.<sup>49</sup>

Martin relied on the version given by Archibald Michie in an 1868 lecture in which Michie recalled how 'a large body of spirited colonists ... marched down to Sandridge, resolved that a newly arrived cargo of convicts, per ship *Hashemy*, should not land here'.<sup>50</sup> He ignored the fact that Michie's lecture had been criticised by the *Argus* as betraying 'political bias',<sup>51</sup> and of making statements that were 'altogether untrue, and nothing more than the every-day experience of a Victorian resident is required to show their complete fallacy'.<sup>52</sup> Michie's account of marching down to Sandridge in May 1849 simply could not have happened. As a Sydney barrister he was involved in an important court case in Sydney during May 1849, he was giving lectures in Sydney, and he was a prominent speaker, along with Robert Lowe, at the protests against the *Hashemy* in Sydney on Monday 11 June 1849.<sup>53</sup> Michie may have marched down to Circular

Quay, but he certainly did not march down to Hobson's Bay.

With two biographies of Robert Lowe circulating, and both Lowe's and Michie's flawed versions of the *Hashemy* affair being given prominence, contemporary historians had new sources upon which to draw. In 1895 Edward Jenks had the 'unfortunate *Hashemy* ... driven with her convict cargo from Melbourne to Sydney'.<sup>54</sup> In 1897 GW Rusden, undoubtedly conscious of the criticism of his earlier work by Arthur Martin, revised his 1883 *History of Australia* to reflect a similar account. But not all historians fell into line. In 1904 Henry Gyles Turner and Alexander Sutherland clearly stated that, 'Of the two ships which had been chartered, the *Hashemy* was ordered to Sydney and the *Randolph* to Port Phillip'.<sup>55</sup> By the first two decades of the twentieth century the story of the *Hashemy* was evenly divided between sailing to Port Phillip first – Scott, Coghlan and Gibbs – and sailing directly to Sydney – Turner, Sutherland, Thomson and Jose. The opinions of later historians varied depending upon which of these secondary sources they preferred.

Charles Bateson's 1959 *The Convict Ships 1787–1868* was described by Foxhall as 'the only substantial study of convict voyages', and by popular historians as 'the definitive guide to Australia's period of transportation' – thereby giving credence to anything listed by Bateson – and he listed the *Hashemy* as arriving at Port Phillip in May 1849.<sup>57</sup> Bateson claimed to have referred to the captain's and surgeon's journals, but from these he was unable to determine an exact date, so opted for sometime in 'May 1849'. An exact date of arrival was given by James Cripps, who was part of the military contingent on board the *Hashemy* in 1849.

In 1906 Cripps wrote his *Reminiscences* and claimed to have arrived at Hobson's Bay, Port Phillip, on 1 June 1849.<sup>58</sup> He related how the *Hashemy* stopped at the Cape of Good Hope, and then set sail 'bound for Melbourne; where we intended to land our prisoners'.

There was nothing particular occurred during the voyage from the Cape to Melbourne worth recording. We arrived in Hobson's Bay on the evening of 1st June 1849. When it became known that the convict ship *Hashemy* was in the harbour, it aroused the inhabitants of Melbourne to the highest pitch of indignation, and so intense and demonstrative was the popular fury, that the Captain did not dare even attempt to discharge his living cargo. ... Physical force was threatened but it was probably the kind heart rather than the fears of Mr Latrobe which induced him to insist that the *Hashemy* should proceed to Sydney. The Captain was therefore ordered to clear out with all possible speed, which was immediately

complied with.<sup>59</sup>

However, if this really happened, why was it not mentioned in the official correspondence and newspapers of the time? After Cripps's death in 1917 an obituary appeared in the *Argus*.

Sergeant-Major James Cripps ... enlisted in the 99th Foot, and sailing as one of the guard on the *Hashemy*, the last convict ship to come here. He saw the angry, threatening crowds on Circular Quay, Sydney, whose deputies drew up the historical "Protest" in June, 1849.<sup>60</sup>

Not a word about coming to Port Phillip. Indeed, Cripps's choice of words betrays his inspiration: 'so intense and demonstrative was the popular fury that the Captain did not dare even attempt to discharge his living cargo' is almost identical to Hogan's description, 'so intense and demonstrative was the popular fury that the captain did not dare even to attempt to discharge his repulsive living cargo'.<sup>61</sup> Although Audrey Oldfield, in *The great republic of the southern seas*, accepted Cripps' story as a reliable primary source, it is clear that his 'reminiscences' are far from reliable.<sup>62</sup>

That leaves us to ask whether the Master of the *Hashemy*, Captain John Ross, the surgeon, Colin Arrott Browning, or the religious instructor, John Henderson, had anything to say. Captain John Ross's journal mentions passing Cape Otway and Wilson's Promontory early in June but makes no mention of a detour into Port Phillip Bay.<sup>63</sup> Nicholson's *Log of Logs* combined Ross's Cape Otway and Wilson's Promontory entries into 'Port Phillip' – which is technically correct – but the *Hashemy* was *passing* Port Phillip on 1 June 1849, not *stopping* there. Surgeon Colin Browning compiled the required surgeon's report for the voyage, and also wrote *The Convict Ship*, describing the *Hashemy's* journey from England to Sydney – neither document mentions stopping at Port Phillip.<sup>64</sup> In fact, the health officer's report clearly states that the only port of call was 'Cape of Good Hope 26th April 49'.<sup>65</sup>

John Henderson, the religious instructor, kept a diary during the voyage. After leaving Cape Town on 26 April, on 1 June Henderson registered the ship's location as 39.26° south and 131.44° east – south of South Australia; on 4 June they were at 39.12° south and 142.22° east – 'Entered Bass Straits between Cape Otway & Kings Island in the afternoon ... sailed on under easy sail but going pretty fast'; on 5 June, they were close to Wilson's Promontory, at 39.31° south and 146.11° east – 'beating about in the eastern part of Bass Straits the wind being unfavourable for passing out'; on 6 June – 'beat out of Bass Strait'; 7 June – 'Sailing along the coast of Australia all day'; and on 8 June – 'Coasting along, arrived between the heads at

dusk ... find that the people are averse to the reception of the prisoners'.<sup>66</sup> Not a word about the people of Port Phillip also being 'averse to the reception of the prisoners'.

## Conclusion

After AGL Shaw wrote *Convicts and the Colonies*, his statement about how 'in May the *Hashemy* and in August the *Randolph* almost provoked riots and had to be sent to Sydney without unloading their "passengers" ', was subsequently cited by many historians, both amateur and professional, including Francis Crowley, *A Documentary History of Australia: Colonial Australia, 1841-1874* (1980) and Russel Ward, *Australia Since the Coming of Man* (1987).<sup>67</sup> Perhaps the most significant in disseminating the error to genealogists was Keith Clarke in *Convicts of the Port Phillip District*, where he cited Shaw's statement as his only source for claiming the *Hashemy* 'arrived in Port Phillip Bay and La Trobe defied the Imperial Government by refusing permission for the convicts to land. After a delay the *Hashemy* was sent on to Sydney'.<sup>68</sup> A popular 'convict website', *Convicts to Australia*, claims the *Hashemy* 'arrived in Sydney on June 9, 1849, but not before discharging her surviving Parkhurst boys in Victoria in May 1849'.<sup>69</sup> The website gives its source as Ian Nicholson's *Log of Logs*, and Paul Buddee's *Fate of the Artful Dodger*.<sup>70</sup>

The secondary sources on the *Hashemy* incident are often unreliable and contradictory, and many cite equally other unreliable secondary sources as their sole evidence. The primary sources – not only the correspondence between La Trobe, FitzRoy and London, but also the journals left by the master, surgeon and religious instructor on the *Hashemy*, and contemporary press reports and shipping lists – provide clear and conclusive evidence that the *Hashemy* did not stop at Port Phillip in May 1849 before arriving at Sydney on 8 June. The official *Guide to convict records in the Archives Office of New South Wales* accordingly states the 'Prisoners did not disembark at Port Phillip but were sent on to Sydney'.<sup>71</sup>

Does it matter whether the *Hashemy* went to Port Phillip or not? It matters partly because historians should correct mistaken perceptions when new evidence is found, when the old evidence itself is valid but belongs to a different puzzle, or when what was thought to have been valid evidence is found to have been fabricated or imagined. It is also important because many people in Sydney came to believe the arrival of the *Hashemy* was a direct consequence of FitzRoy's promise that La Trobe could divert convict ships from Port Phillip. That belief, together with FitzRoy's failure to fully explain the reasons for his promise, led to a dramatic escalation in the already bitter antagonism towards Port Phillip. In the atmosphere of such hostility

it was easy for politicians, journalists, and ultimately historians, to write about and perpetuate myths that suited their own parochial prejudices.

During the 1840s, the Middle District of New South Wales, based on Sydney, was heavily reliant on wealth from the Port Phillip District, yet, since the late 1830s the independently minded people of Port Phillip had justifiably blamed Sydney for appropriating revenue that should have been spent in Port Phillip.<sup>72</sup> Governor Gipps complained that if Port Phillip's money was spent solely on Port Phillip, Sydney would not be able to pay its bills.<sup>73</sup> By 1849 Port Phillip's imminent independence, cutting off Sydney's major revenue source, was bad enough – but the idea that Port Phillip had persuaded the Governor to transfer the *Hashemy* convicts to Sydney was just too much. The people of Sydney blamed Port Phillip not only for their loss of revenue, but also for an influx of new convicts. They were wrong on both counts. Charles Joseph La Trobe was entitled to wish that Port Phillip revenue should be expended in Port Phillip alone – and he did not send the *Hashemy* to Sydney. That idea originated from and was perpetuated mainly by people such as WC Wentworth in Sydney itself, and repeated by historians ever since.

Note: A longer version of this article was published as 'The convict ship *Hashemy* at Port Phillip: a case study in historical error', *Victorian Historical Journal*, vol. 85, no. 1, June 2014.

## Notes

- <sup>1</sup> A. G. L. Shaw, *Convicts and the Colonies: A Study of Penal Transportation from Great Britain and Ireland to Australia and other parts of the British Empire*, London, 1966, p. 318.
- <sup>2</sup> NSW Parliamentary Papers, *Votes and Proceedings of the Legislative Council during the session of the year 1849*, vol. 1, Sydney, 1849; A. G. L. Shaw, 1966 p. 324
- <sup>3</sup> Katherine Foxhall, 'From Convicts to Colonists: the Health of Prisoners and the Voyage to Australia. 1823 – 1853,' *Journal of Imperial Commonwealth History*, vol. 39, no.1, 2011, pp. 1–19
- <sup>4</sup> Kirsten McKenzie, *Scandal in the Colonies*, Melbourne, 2004, pp. 173-4
- <sup>5</sup> Shaw, 1966 pp. 317, 318, 324
- <sup>6</sup> A. G. L. Shaw, *A History of the Port Phillip District: Victoria Before Separation*. Melbourne, 2003, pp. 208-9, 294 n. 36
- <sup>7</sup> *Ibid*, p. xvi
- <sup>8</sup> Alan Gross, *Charles Joseph La Trobe*, Melbourne, 1980, p. 84
- <sup>9</sup> Ernest Scott, 'Resistance to Convict Transportation, 1844-1853,' *Victorian Historical Magazine*, vol. 1, no. 4, 1911, p. 133
- <sup>10</sup> *Ibid*
- <sup>11</sup> Ernest Scott, *A Short History of Australia*, 2nd edn. London, 1918, p. 161
- <sup>12</sup> For example Edward Sweetman, *The Constitutional development of Victoria 1851-6*, Melbourne, 1920, p. 148;

- Brian Charles Fitzpatrick, *The British Empire in Australia: an economic history 1834-1939*, Melbourne, 1949, p. 91; Ken Inglis, *The Australian Colonists: an exploration of social history*. Melbourne, 1974, p. 11
- <sup>13</sup> A. G. L. Shaw, 'Victoria's First Governor', *La Trobe Journal*, no. 71, August 2003, p. 89
  - <sup>14</sup> T.A. Coghlan, *Labour and Industry in Australia: From the First Settlement in 1788 to the establishment of the Commonwealth in 1901*. Melbourne, 1918, pp. 348, 444
  - <sup>15</sup> Margaret Kiddle, *Men of Yesterday*, Melbourne, 1962, p. 161
  - <sup>16</sup> *Argus*, 9 August 1849, p. 2; 22 August 1849, pp. 2, 4
  - <sup>17</sup> Robert Thomson *A National History of Australia, New Zealand and the adjacent islands*. 1917, p. 244; Henry Gyles Turner, *A History of The Colony of Victoria From Its Discovery To Its Absorption Into The Commonwealth of Australia in Two Volumes*, Vol. II. A.D. 1854-1900, London, 1904, p. 274; Arthur W. Jose, *History of Australasia*, Sydney, 1913, p. 105
  - <sup>18</sup> George William Rusden, *History of Australia*, 2 vols. Melbourne, 1883, vol 2, pp. 563-65
  - <sup>19</sup> *Ibid*, p. 474
  - <sup>20</sup> Philip Gibbs, *Romance of Empire*, London, 1906, p. 314
  - <sup>21</sup> Shaw, 1966, p. 324
  - <sup>22</sup> *Hobart Courier*, 24 February 1849, p. 2; 4 April 1849, p. 2; 24 February 1849, p. 2; 4 April 1849; *Sydney Morning Herald* (SMH), 12 April, 3, p. 2
  - <sup>23</sup> *SMH* 18 April 1849, p. 2; Allan William Martin, Henry Parkes: a biography, Melbourne, 1980, p. 56
  - <sup>24</sup> *SMH*, 20 April 1849, p. 2
  - <sup>25</sup> *SMH*, 25 April 1849, p. 2
  - <sup>26</sup> *SMH*, 23 May 1849, p. 2
  - <sup>27</sup> *SMH*, 21 May 1849, p. 2; 2 June 1849, p. 2; 21 May 1849, p. 2
  - <sup>28</sup> *SMH*, 9 June 1849, p. 2; 12 June 1849, p. 2
  - <sup>29</sup> *Argus*, 15 June 1849, p. 2
  - <sup>30</sup> Turner, 1904, p. 74-75
  - <sup>31</sup> *SMH*, 12 June 1849, p. 2
  - <sup>32</sup> Fitz Roy to Earl Grey, 30 June 1849, *House of Commons Parliamentary Papers* [1153]
  - <sup>33</sup> *Bathurst Free Press*, 17 August 1850, p. 4
  - <sup>34</sup> *SMH*, 1 October 1850, 2; p. 7 October 1850, p. 3
  - <sup>35</sup> *Argus*, 24 October 1854, p. 5
  - <sup>36</sup> *Argus*, 24 October 1854, p. 5; 23 October 1854, p. 5
  - <sup>37</sup> Thomas McCombie, *The History of the Colony of Victoria*. Melbourne, 1858, p. 176
  - <sup>38</sup> *Melbourne Punch*, 15 May 1856, p. 116
  - <sup>39</sup> *Argus*, 16 May 1856, p. 8
  - <sup>40</sup> *Argus*, 14 September 1863, p. 5; 13 October 1863, p. 6
  - <sup>41</sup> *Argus*, 20 August 1864, p. 4
  - <sup>42</sup> S. T. Leigh, *The Handbook to Sydney and Suburbs*. Sydney, 1866, p. 12
  - <sup>43</sup> *Clarence and Richmond River Examiner*, 15 October 1881, p. 2
  - <sup>44</sup> James Sheen Dowling, *Reminiscences of a Colonial Judge*, Anthony Dowling (ed.), Sydney, 1995, pp. 73-74
  - <sup>45</sup> *Hobart Mercury*, 6 March 1893, p. 3; *Colac Herald*, 14 March 1893, p. 4; *SMH*, 1 April 1893, p. 10

- <sup>46</sup> Arthur Patchett Martin, *Life and Letters of the Right Honourable, Robert Lowe, Viscount Sherbrooke*, London, 1893, vol 1, pp. 381-85
- <sup>47</sup> Suzanne G. Mellor, 'Martin, Arthur Patchett (1851-1902)', *Australian Dictionary of Biography*
- <sup>48</sup> Martin, p. 327
- <sup>49</sup> Martin, pp. 381-82; Rusden, 1883, vol 2, pp. 563-64
- <sup>50</sup> Archibald Michie, 'A Lecture on the Westminster Reviewer's Version of Victorian History' as cited by Martin, p. 382
- <sup>51</sup> *Argus*, 19 September 1868, p. 4
- <sup>52</sup> *Hobart Mercury*, 9 October 1868, p. 2
- <sup>53</sup> *SMH*, 15 May 1849, p. 2; 19 May 1849, p. 2; 6 June 1849, p. 3; 12 June 1849, p. 2
- <sup>54</sup> Edward Jenks, *A History of the Australasian Colonies from their foundation to the year 1893*. Cambridge, 1895, p. 110
- <sup>55</sup> Turner, pp. 274-75
- <sup>56</sup> Foxhall, 2011, p. 2; 'Convicts to Australia', at <http://members.iinet.net.au/~perthdps/convicts/ships.html>
- <sup>57</sup> Charles Bateson, *The Convict Ships 1787-1868, 1959*, 2nd edn., pp. 297, 372
- <sup>58</sup> Charles Cripps, 'Reminiscences', handwritten manuscript, 1906, Mitchell Library MSS 1524
- <sup>59</sup> *Ibid*
- <sup>60</sup> *Argus*, 27 March 1917, p. 8
- <sup>61</sup> James Francis Hogan as cited in *Hobart Mercury*, 6 March 1893, p. 3
- <sup>62</sup> Audrey Oldfield, *The great republic of the southern seas: republicans in nineteenth-century Australia*, Sydney, 1999, p. 106
- <sup>63</sup> Captain John Ross, 'A journal of a voyage from England to New South Wales in the ship Hashemy John Ross commander. Commencing on Tuesday November 7th 1848-25 June 1849, by Captain John Ross'. Mitchell Library. DLMSQ 19
- <sup>64</sup> Colin Arrott Browning, *The Convict Ship*. London, 1856, pp. 264-269; Medical Journal of the *Hashemy*, *Medical Journals, ADM 101/32/5*, The National Archives, online at Ancestry.com. *UK Royal Navy Medical Journals, 1817-1857*
- <sup>65</sup> Health Officer's Report, *Hashemy*, State Records Authority of New South Wales: Shipping Master's Office; Passengers Arriving 1855 – 1922
- <sup>66</sup> John Henderson, 'Diary kept by an unidentified person, believed to be Mr Henderson, during the voyage of the convict ship Hashemy from England to Australia, 20 Nov. 1848 - 8 June 1849', National Library of Australia, manuscript MS 7902
- <sup>67</sup> Shaw, 1966, pp. 317, 318, 324
- <sup>68</sup> Keith M. Clarke, *Convicts of the Port Phillip District*. Canberra, 1999, p. 98
- <sup>69</sup> Foxhall, 2011, p. 2; 'Convicts to Australia', at <http://members.iinet.net.au/~perthdps/convicts/park14.html>.
- <sup>70</sup> Ian Hawkins Nicholson, *Log of logs: a catalogue of logs, journals, shipboard diaries, letters, and all forms of voyage narratives, 1788 to 1988, for Australia and New Zealand and surrounding oceans*. Brisbane, 1990; Paul Buddee, *Fate of the Artful Dodger: Parkhurst boys transported to Australia and New Zealand 1842-1852*, Perth, 1984.
- <sup>71</sup> Guide to convict records in the Archives Office of New South Wales, Archives Authority of New South Wales, 1981, p. 303; Bateson, *Convict Ships*, pp. 332, 328
- <sup>72</sup> Shaw, 2003, pp. 238, 195; *Hobart Courier*, 15 January 1841, p. 2; *Argus*, 1 August 1848, p. 2; Petition to Earl Grey – *Argus*, 8 August 1848, p. 2
- <sup>73</sup> Gipps to Stanley 31 January 1841, cited by *Argus* 17 July 1846, p. 2

Part four

# Practices

Practical advice and guidance  
for professional historians





# COMMUNITY HISTORY AND FREE SOFTWARE:

## The perfect match?

Lucy Bracey

This article that was drawn from a paper presented at the Professional Historians Association's conference 'Working History' in August 2016. It examines two case studies as examples of how professional historians have used free software to engage different community groups in history projects. It questions what might need to change in our approach as historians, what skills we can bring to the table and what advantages and disadvantages free software can present to community history.

It is a wonderful thing that the Professional Historians Association exists. Not just because of the great history community it brings together and the fantastic events it organises – like the Working History Conference 2016 where this paper was first presented – but also for the professionalism it brings to being an historian. Negotiating business insurance, providing model contracts and developing a scale of fees, gives us as professionals the support needed to negotiate a wage that accurately reflects our level of skill and expertise.

The reality, as many of us know, is that history is not always valued as highly as we believe it should be, and we are often faced with the challenge of delivering big on a small budget. In many cases it's not that the client is deliberately being cheap – although we've all had clients that undervalue history too. For a lot of community groups, their activities are limited by local government funding, grants or individual fundraising efforts. They might think that the \$5000 they raised will be plenty to research, write and print a history book. But as we know, that doesn't go very far. What they thought would be a 100-page book might end up closer to a 10-page *booklet*.

But instead of working for peanuts – which not only short-changes ourselves but also each other and our profession generally – we need to try to think more creatively about ways we can undertake community history projects and deliver an outcome that satisfies both the client's needs and our own, because community history projects are just as important. As consultants working on a commissioned basis, we are already limited in the histories we can and can't do. If we further restrict ourselves in the ways that we do history, then we are limiting the historical narrative even more. History needs to be seen as, and actually be, accessible. If communities don't feel an ownership

over the past, then how can we ask them to care about the future?

In this paper I want to reflect on some of the trials and tribulations of using free digital platforms to communicate history, to consider how this has impacted on us as historians, and ask the question: do we have to relearn how we communicate?

In his paper for *The Public Historian*, published in February 2016, historian Andrew Hurley discusses public history and the digital divide. He argues that:

Most critically, digital history practitioners operating in public settings must relearn how to communicate with their audiences.<sup>1</sup>

I would add to this and say that not only do we need to relearn how to communicate with our audiences across digital platforms, but we need to relearn how to communicate this to our clients.

The two examples explored here are projects undertaken by Way Back When Consulting Historians. The first was a collaboration with the Sephardi Association of Victoria and the second example is our experience with the History in Place Project, which brings together local historical sites and schools.

### Case Study One: Our Stories

The Sephardi Association is a small but active Jewish community in Melbourne. Melbourne's Sephardi community is made up of men and women from Egypt, Iraq, India, Morocco, Turkey, Algeria and Singapore; people with shared cultural and religious beliefs, as well as similar experiences of migration.

For a number of years this community had been in contact with the Jewish Museum of Australia agitating for the documentation and collection of their stories.

For various reasons, the Jewish Museum had not been able to begin this process, but through a connection with RMIT University and a one-off funding grant, the museum contacted Way Back When to see if we could do something to at least start this process.

Both the clients (the Sephardi community) and us as historians wanted to produce something that would begin this collection process and be something the museum could eventually build on. But at the same time, it needed to be its own stand-alone project that the community could share – most importantly with their grandchildren, as many of them were aging and concerned about the preservation of their stories for future generations.

The clients initially wanted a booklet with stories of migration told through objects of significance. Considering the small budget and the desire to engage with a younger generation, we suggested a website instead.



Screen shot of 'Our Stories: The Sephardi Association of Victoria'

By moving this project online, we were able to include beautiful, colour photographs as well as the audio we captured from oral history interviews with each participant. We set up a community day where we invited the participants to come along and share their stories. Doing this all on one day was another way we were able to save money – although it was a very intense day, as you can imagine.



Capturing stories during the community day

Professional historian and photographer Catherine Forge took the photographs, capturing participants sharing their stories with us as well as with each other – an unplanned but lovely additional outcome.

Afterwards, with the photographs, audio and notes taken on the day, we were able to communicate these stories via a WordPress website.<sup>2</sup> We had never built a site using WordPress before, but we had limited experience doing some of the back-end work on our own company website including updating content and writing blog posts. There are also lots of online support forums and tutorials for WordPress where you can find help and guidance for building a site.

We edited our audio into soundbites using Audacity – free audio software for editing and recording.<sup>3</sup> The oral history associations in both Victoria and New South Wales offer workshops on editing audio in Audacity. Like WordPress, there are also lots of tutorials online offering help and guidance for those new to the program.

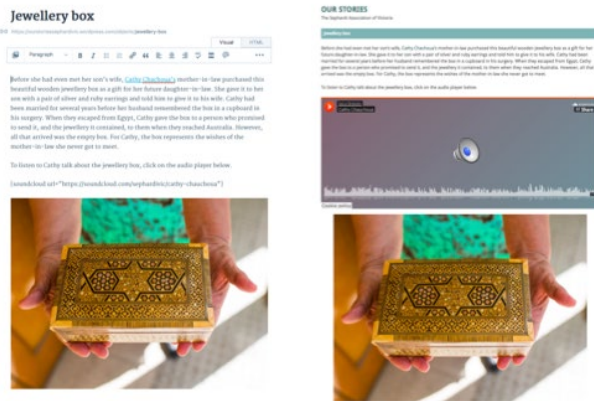
We used SoundCloud – an audio platform that lets you listen to and share audio files – to upload the soundbites and embed them into our WordPress site.<sup>4</sup> WordPress is integrated with SoundCloud so this is a very straightforward process. We taught ourselves how to do this using a free online tutorial.

Overall, this website end product was a much more dynamic and engaging outcome that had the potential to reach a much wider audience than a printed booklet, because it was a digital product that incorporated colour images and sound and could be accessed from anywhere in the world.

Going into this project we knew that a large number of our client group had not grown up with computers and in fact a few of them did not even have a computer at home. We knew that this meant they would have limited access to this project. We felt, however, that a website was still a more flexible option as it would be something the clients could direct their children and grandchildren to and have shared viewing experiences with them. Since one of the primary concerns at the start of the project was preserving these stories for future generations, designing the project in a way that







The working 'back end' of the website where we get to edit and update the site, compared with the visible 'front end' — the view is displayed to the audience.

engages younger generations in a format that they are familiar with was preferable.

At the time of writing, the site has been live for close to two-and-a-half years. While we believe the site has reached a wider audience than a booklet would have, we cannot know that for certain without being able to compare the two outcomes. Thanks to Google analytics – something you can access through WordPress – we do know that the site has had 933 visitors since it was launched in 2014. We also know that the site has been viewed over 5000 times – so many of those visitors viewed the site on multiple occasions. We know the majority of those visitors were from Australia and came to the site directly, or via the Way Back When website. But there were also a number of visitors from the United States, Israel, Spain, Singapore, India, Algeria, France, Canada and the United Kingdom. A number of those countries are places where the project participants lived before coming to Australia. It is pure speculation at this point, but I would guess it is likely that many of those visitors were relatives of the community here in Melbourne, directed to view the site by their friends and family.

Since completing this project, on reflection we underestimated our client's understanding of publishing online compared with traditional publishing (book form). We knew that most of them had not grown up with computers and had limited experience with the internet, but we felt at the time that we had accurately explained what we were doing and how the website would work. In hindsight, there is a chance that we did not do this as well as we could have, or that our clients did not fully grasp the concept of a website, because we were contacted two years after the website going live by two of the participants, who wanted us to remove them from the site. It was unclear exactly why they wanted to withdraw two years after the project was completed, but it was clear that they

were uncomfortable with the fact that they were 'on the internet'.

This digital platform was a great way of communicating the history we produced to our audience. We can surmise with confidence, based on the interactions the site has had, that it has been successful. But our communication with our clients about what this digital platform meant for their history clearly needed improvement.

The benefits and consequences of publishing online through a platform like WordPress are that you can edit and alter pages as requested, unlike a paper publication where, short of reprinting (which is costly), you cannot make changes once the history is published. Ethically, we felt that we had to remove the two people from the site at their request. But what if all the participants wanted to be removed? What would happen to this project then? Would it be lost to the internet archive forever? And if we did something similar again, how could we better explain to our clients the consequences of publishing online, so they would fully understand and be comfortable with it? These are just some of the questions I am still left pondering.

### Case Study Two: History in Place

From a client group that had very limited experience with computers and the internet, our next case study is the complete opposite. In the History in Place project we worked with children in years four to six, who were almost born with an iPhone in their hand. The History in Place project was created as a result of a partnership between the Heritage Council of Victoria, the History Teachers' Association of Victoria and Culture Victoria. The project was designed to establish a framework for students to engage with their local history and heritage, and also help teachers implement the new Australian history curriculum and Victoria's framework of historical themes.<sup>5</sup>

History in Place involves collaboration between historical sites or institutions and local schools. Despite the success of the pilot programs and the development of a comprehensive kit for teachers and managers of local historical sites and museums to use so that they could theoretically implement this program together, the take-up was lower than anticipated. So, in 2014 the National Trust received funding from Arts Victoria to involve a second round of schools in the project and to train some of its site volunteers and managers. It was hoped that by running facilitated programs with heritage property managers and local schools, there would be further interest and take-up of the online History in Place tool kit and resources. It was also hoped that the implementation program would increase the confidence of National Trust site managers to engage with local schools and to encourage and facilitate ongoing participation in the



The History in Place project in action at Gulf Station, an 1850s farm in Yarra Glen, Victoria.

#### History in Place project.

Way Back When was engaged to facilitate this project for the National Trust. We ran a training session for the site managers and coordinated the project with five schools across four National Trust sites in Victoria.

The project involved one full day with each school on location at the National Trust site and two follow-up class sessions with us at the school. On site the students were given a tour of the site and asked to pick up on one aspect of the history that interested them. They collected the resources they needed to make their films, including photographs, notes and at least one 'expert interview' with one of the site volunteers. Back at school they worked with us creating their films, learning how to use the film production software and recording any narration they needed.

It was not hard to sell this to the schools. The only expense they had was transportation and in all but one case the children either walked to the site or had their parents drop them off in the morning and pick them up in the afternoon. The project was designed around the use of iPads and iMovie, which is an app that comes free with iPads. Each school in Victoria is (or at least *was* at the time) eligible for a class set of iPads, through the education department.

Students loved the hands-on nature of the day and they especially enjoyed using the iPads. It was a great learning experience for us as historians. Working with children of that age certainly presented some challenges! But it was so rewarding to be a part of students experiencing history in a tangible way, sometimes for the first time. The students' positive reactions to the sites, the concepts and the overall project were very encouraging and reaffirmed to us our belief that history is inherently interesting, fun and definitely *not* boring – when presented in the right way. For example, the kids loved things like the slaughterhouse at Gulf Station – a 1850s farm in Yarra Glen – for all its gory

details; they were also fascinated by the many shells author Joan Lindsay collected at her home Mulberry Hill in Langwarrin South, more so than the writing desk where she wrote *Picnic at Hanging Rock* (although that might have been because they were too young to have read the book).

The biggest challenge of this project was not explaining the technology to the schools and National Trust staff, nor was it selling the idea – the teachers were delighted with the notion of engaging with history in such a creative fashion. The challenge for us was explaining the concepts of historical research and storytelling to the children. How could we show that the films they were making were different from a film you might see at the cinema? We had to explain copyright regulations and integrity of sources, as well as the differences between primary and secondary evidence. One of the sites, the Portable Iron Houses in South Melbourne, was particularly tricky because the main story at that site was the houses themselves, unlike the farm at Gulf Station or the home of artistic couple, Joan and Daryl Lindsay at Mulberry Hill, where the main stories are about the people that lived there.

On top of this, without careful supervision many of the children would get distracted by the technological possibilities of the movie-making process. They could become so focused on the opening title or music and sound effects that they would run out of time for storyboarding or collecting the resources they needed to make the films.

The technology side of things also proved difficult in a few cases. We needed to familiarise ourselves with movie-making software – iMovie – which we did by experimenting at home, utilising free online tutorials. Four out of five schools we worked with had a class set of iPads, but not all of the iPads had the iMovie app pre-loaded onto them. The fifth school had android tablets, rather than iPads, and looked to us to recommend a movie-making software for them



Students learning about the Portable Iron Houses in Port Melbourne, during the History in Place project.



Students enjoying the History in Place project at Mulberry Hill, home of author Joan Lindsay and artist Daryl Lindsay in Langwarrin South, Victoria.

to download. Again, we needed to research this ourselves and come up with some viable suggestions for them. Because some classes had only one class set of iPads, we had one occasion where the iPads were used by a different class in between our visits and some students' work was accidentally deleted.

Overall however, the History in Place project is a fantastic way of engaging children with local history and heritage (and vice versa) on a very limited budget. It makes the most of free software – iMovie – and finds a way of capturing local knowledge and expertise and showcasing it to a wider audience.

This project was designed with the idea that the historian facilitator would eventually not be needed. However, our experience has shown us that the skills we bring to this – not only as facilitators but also in determining and interpreting the relevant historical themes and sharing with the students our knowledge about oral history interviewing techniques, constructing narratives and sourcing relevant and accurate information – mean that, with the involvement of historians, there is a higher chance of the project being completed, and in a way that hopefully encourages children to begin engaging more with history and with the relevance of the past in their everyday lives.

Without the free software, the project would not have been possible at all. The possibilities generated through technologies like iPads and movie-making software like iMovie, give children access to more resources and the ability to capture knowledge in a totally different way. Yes, they could still go on a site visit and learn about the history of the place without the iPads and they could do a standard paper and pencil presentation. But giving them the ability to film, photograph, record and play back their work asks them to think not only about the content, the message and the presentation, but also about the way in which they

are communicating. They can immediately see the results of their efforts and those of their peers and they can correct what does not work. Using this sort of technology also engages kids in a medium they feel very comfortable with. They get excited about what they can create, and we cannot underestimate the importance of enjoyment as a factor in learning.

## Conclusions

These two examples highlight two different aspects of the importance of communication in our work. In the case of the first project, with the Sephardi Association, we the historians could have benefited from relearning or at least thinking more critically about how best to communicate the technology side of things to our clients. In the case of the History in Place project, we needed to re-shape how we communicated the actual history side of things when working with digital platforms. Communication with our clients and our audience when working as digital history practitioners, as historian Andrew Hurley argued, is absolutely key.

In both of these case studies – the Sephardi website and History in Place project – we used software freely available to anyone; software that can be used by anyone for anything, not just history. What *makes* them work as an avenue for presenting history is us – historians. Without our professional skills – our critical thinking, interpretation and storytelling ability – these projects can become just another website, or iMovie, just as history books written by amateurs do not match up to the history books produced by professionals.

We have the ability to apply these skills across a broad range of platforms. As professional historians, we need to keep abreast of the increasingly diverse ways in which history is being communicated. Even if we don't know how to create a history podcast, for example, it is important to be aware of their existence and of the many ways that history can be shared.

We should be striving to keep ourselves aware of not only the different ways of engaging with history, but also the ways in which people are communicating and sharing information more generally. Facebook, for example, is a great way of crowd sourcing information for large community projects. We have tapped into several school reunion groups when writing education histories. Twitter, likewise, is an easy and effective way of engaging with the online history community.

The challenge for us, as I see it, is two-fold. The first challenge is having the confidence to apply our skills as historians to these new forms of presentation. The second challenge is knowing how to communicate what we are doing to our clients. Some, as we have seen, will have very little digital knowledge and they will need us to explain how this outcome differs from a more traditional presentation format, and the potential benefits and consequences of that. Others

will have excellent knowledge of digital technologies and need us to explain how our application of these technologies, and our outcome, will be different from something a non-historian could produce.

To conclude, community history and free software are well matched. There are obstacles, as we have seen, and they are not just technological. But with the right *application* of historical know-how, communication and patience, free software for community history can produce some beautiful, budget-friendly outcomes that effectively engage communities with the past.

## Websites

'History in Place' <http://cv.vic.gov.au/stories/a-diverse-state/history-in-place/>

'History in (many) Places', *Way Back When* blog <http://www.waybackwhen.com.au/blog/2015/7/9/history-in-many-places>

'Our Stories: the Sephardi Association of Victoria' <https://ourstoriessephardivic.wordpress.com/>

Audacity: [www.audacityteam.org/](http://www.audacityteam.org/)

Soundcloud: <https://soundcloud.com/>

WordPress: <https://wordpress.com/>

*Gulf Station*: <https://www.nationaltrust.org.au/places/gulf-station-3/>

*Portable Iron Houses*: <https://www.nationaltrust.org.au/places/portable-iron-houses/>

*Mulberry Hill*: <https://www.nationaltrust.org.au/places/mulberry-hill/>

## Notes

<sup>1</sup> Andrew Hurley: 'Chasing the Frontiers of Digital Technology: Public History Meets the Digital Divide', *The Public Historian*, vol. 38, no. 1, February 2016, p 70

<sup>2</sup> <https://wordpress.com/>

<sup>3</sup> [www.audacityteam.org/](http://www.audacityteam.org/)

<sup>4</sup> <https://soundcloud.com/>

<sup>5</sup> <https://cv.vic.gov.au/stories/a-diverse-state/history-in-place/>

# PARTICIPANTS WANTED:

## Benefits and challenges of developing exhibitions with community involvement

### Birgit Heilmann

Cultural institutions interact with their audience in many ways and involving the community in exhibitions has become an increasingly important practice in the museum sector. It is an excellent way of giving the public a voice to tell their stories. Both the Migration Museum in Adelaide and the Immigration Museum in Melbourne provide gallery spaces for the community to curate their own exhibitions to share their stories and cultures. Other museums involve the public in professional curated shows, for example the Museum of Brisbane brings together the voices of 100 residents in its new exhibition, '100% Brisbane', to reveal Brisbane's identity. In this paper, I will discuss how the local community contributes to exhibitions at Hurstville Museum & Gallery, and I will reflect on what the benefits and challenges are of working with the community.

Hurstville Museum & Gallery, located in southern Sydney, is run by Georges River Council and has approximately 12,000 visitors annually. The Museum & Gallery tells the stories of individuals, groups and communities in the St George area from its earliest peoples to the present day, and how life has changed over the years. One of the institution's aims is to engage the diverse community through innovative exhibitions, programs and services.<sup>1</sup> Community members are involved as object donors, oral history interviewees, advisors, speakers and special guests. This enables the community to have a voice in a public space, increasing access and participation.<sup>2</sup>

I will use two exhibitions with a strong community focus as examples of community involvement: *Remembering them: People of St George & the First World War* (2015) and *Tying the knot: wedding stories & beyond* (2016). Both exhibition concepts received national recognition, being Highly Commended in the 2016 Magna Awards and winning a Magna Award in 2017.

#### How do we involve the community in exhibition development?

We usually initiate community involvement through public callouts, using our networks, the local newspaper and social media, to gain access to unique local content for our exhibitions. Community members who are interested in participating fill out an expression of interest form that helps us to

obtain initial information about the person's story and potential items for the display. Participants share written and oral stories, photographs, objects and other memorabilia, which we then integrate into our in-house produced exhibitions. With many of the participants we conduct oral histories to delve deeper into their stories and record their memories. Selected parts of the stories will then be used for display in written and/or audio format, accompanied by potential objects and photographs. The full interview and transcript becomes publicly available as part of Georges River Council's Local Studies collection. We generally receive the right amount of interest to be able to work with most participants and include them in the exhibition. In cases where interest is greater than what we could include in our physical exhibition, we have the option to add further content digitally using one of our social media platforms such as Facebook, Pinterest and our blog.

#### What are the benefits of involving the community?

1) The Museum & Gallery connects with the community through local content and personal stories.

Strong community involvement was important for the local focus of the exhibition, *Remembering them: People of St George & the First World War*, on display in 2015 to coincide with the Anzac centenary. The aim

of this exhibition was to present personal stories of local soldiers and their experiences during World War One. Individuals from the public responded to a callout and donated photographs and lent objects for the exhibition. This enriched the display with unique objects and personal stories.



Eva and Ellis reading from a war diary of Ellis' father, September 2014; Hurstville Museum & Gallery

Three participants agreed to be filmed reading from postcards, diaries and letters, thus retelling the stories of their relatives as an audio-visual experience in the exhibition. For example, Barry read from postcards that were sent to his grandfather, George Herbert Baker, while he was serving in the war. The young accountant was mainly stationed in England and Egypt.<sup>4</sup> The postcards were all written by George's father, David Baker, describing the latest news from home, as well as news of how friends and relatives at war were doing. The postcard images often depicted scenery of Hurstville and might have brought home a little closer for George. The local angle and personal narrative of the exhibition enabled the general public to immerse themselves in individual soldiers' stories.

Our museum predominately serves the local community and the audience likes to feel connected to the exhibition content. As Anna Clarke's recent research showed, people more easily 'reflect on the past when it relates to their own lives and

communities'.<sup>5</sup> Visitor comments on the exhibition confirm that this notion applies to our museum visitors: 'lovely exhibition, great to celebrate local stories'; 'was lovely seeing Uncle Tom's dining room photo as part of your exhibition. He would have been proud'. (Tom Keating served on the Western Front and the image in the exhibition depicted a dining table decorated for his welcome home celebration on 11 August 1919. We received a copy of the photograph from a community member.)

2) The Museum & Gallery receives a variety of great objects for loan at no cost.

Despite having some World War One related objects in our own collection, such as 'Forget me not' cards sent from France by a young soldier to his future wife, and an engraved pocket watch presented as a farewell present, we needed more objects for the *Remembering them* exhibition. We were able to receive a pocket testament with a shrapnel hole as a loan from the Australian War Memorial.<sup>6</sup> This object told the story of Charles Henry Lester, an electroplater from the local area. He almost died when a shell exploded in front of him, while serving on the Western Front in September 1917. Thanks to his mum's present, Lester was only bruised on the breastbone as the piece of shell passed through the pocket testament and got wedged in the writing tablet, which he carried in his left breast pocket. Unfortunately, Lester did not survive the war and was killed in action in September 1918 at the age of 24.<sup>7</sup>

Due to our budget limitations, we only could afford this one item on loan from a larger institution. With the help of the community callout we were able to include a few more significant objects in the exhibition without additional cost. For instance, we displayed an embroidered cushion cover from Egypt, a copy of the soldiers' magazine *The Aussie*, and some war souvenirs from Alfred Laurence 'Laurie' Muggleston. He was a 29-year-old station master of Hurstville when he enlisted in December 1916. Laurie departed Sydney with the No. 1 section, Railway Unit on board the HMAT *Wiltshire* in February 1917, and served at the railway station in Proven and at Poperinge, near Ypres, Belgium.<sup>8</sup> Laurie found a knife in the mud in the trenches; the engraved number reveals that it belonged to a British soldier. Other souvenirs he brought back home were shell art made of bullets and shrapnel, and big locks which belonged to the gates of Poperinge Railway Station.



Laurie's souvenirs from the trenches: knife, trench art and railway lock; Hurstville Museum & Gallery

3) The Museum & Gallery potentially receives new object donations for the collection

A community callout to participate in specific exhibition projects opens up the opportunity to receive new object donations for the museum's collection. For the 2016 exhibition *Tying the knot: wedding stories & beyond* we called for memories and objects of personal wedding stories. One of the early replies was an email from Liz, with an image of a beautiful wedding dress and the following text:

This is the wedding dress which belongs to Catherine who was 96 years of age and was married in June 1942. The dress is made of cream satin, trimmed with beads. It was handmade by Catherine's mother. There are several satin covered buttons front and back of dress. I would appreciate your thoughts on it.<sup>9</sup>

I thought it would be terrific to include this dress and Catherine's story in the exhibition. We made contact with Liz, Catherine's niece, and interviewed Catherine at a local nursing home. Catherine told us that she met her husband John on the tennis court and they had a very simple wedding due to the war years. Her beautiful wedding dress was handmade by her mother, a milliner, and her grandmother, a dressmaker. The dress was stored away until Liz discovered it while cleaning out the house. The family lent us the dress for the exhibition and ultimately also donated the dress to the Museum & Gallery.

### What are the challenges when working with the community?

1) Does no response to a community callout mean no exhibition?

You will need to be prepared if there are no or only a few community members responding to a callout. We start early to reach out to the community in order to have enough time for an alternative plan if there are not enough responses. Community groups and individuals from our networks can assist us in finding suitable participants for our exhibition. We are also able to use objects from our own collection to have at least some items on display, regardless of the outcome of the community involvement.

2) You are working with individual people not institutions

Working with individual people instead of with professional institutions requires some flexibility with the layout of the exhibition to add or remove items, because people can change their minds or have very specific ideas about how things have to be displayed. Family memorabilia is often kept for generations and giving these keepsakes into other hands can be seen as a big step for some people. I, as the curator and temporary custodian for these objects, need to be aware of this strong connection between the lender and the object.

For example, Ken was a very generous lender for the *Remembering them* exhibition and shared stories and objects from his father, Laurie, who was introduced earlier.

I was particularly happy that Ken agreed to lend us the original field diaries of his father. From the day Laurie left for war in February 1917 to the day he returned to Sydney in 1919, he wrote in his diary daily. For instance, on 6 November 1917, he wrote: 'Huge explosion of last night was a huge shell falling about three quarters of a mile away. Too close for my liking. Had a long conversation with a Sister from Nth. Sydney. Oh how it's great to have a yarn with someone from my own land.'<sup>10</sup>

On the day we visited Ken to collect the objects for the exhibition, he changed his mind and said that the diaries were too precious and he couldn't give them to me. This was only a few days before the exhibition opening and I had already a spot allocated in one of the cabinets. Of course, I understood Ken's feelings. Luckily, visitors could still learn about the diaries because they were featured in a short film screened at the exhibition.

3) Community co-curation influences exhibition content

Responses to a community callout for the exhibition, *Tying the knot: Wedding stories & beyond* influenced the selection of the themes for an exhibition about weddings. I conducted some preliminary research on

potential themes that might be relevant for a wedding exhibition but waited to conceptualise the exhibition until after the community came forward with their stories. Most themes included in the exhibition were chosen because of the personal stories stemming from the community, which were recorded through oral history interviews. For instance, Liz's wedding in 1942 led to a wartime wedding theme, Tania and Claire's wedding in the UK presented a same-sex marriage topic, and Stella and her three different wedding ceremonies, in Korea, China and Australia, explored an intercultural wedding theme. The most unusual story was received from Rob, a local wedding celebrant, who conducted a ceremony in a naturalist's club. He wrote to us:

Some years ago, a couple approached me to enquire whether I could conduct their wedding ceremony. The venue was a naturalists' club, and all participants, including the guests, were going to be completely nude. A trifle reluctant, but extremely curious, I agreed to their request.<sup>11</sup>

I decided this story needed to be part of the exhibition. It was also good to have a male's contribution to the exhibition; all other participants were female.

The personal approach of the exhibition narrative made it possible to be very selective in the exhibition themes but still be able to create a cohesive exhibition for the audience. However, the exhibition could have been quite different if other people with other stories had responded to the public callout.



Tying the knot exhibition room shot, September 2016; Hurstville Museum & Gallery

## Summary

Including members of the public in the development of exhibitions facilitates telling local stories that directly engage with the community. It is a great way to gain access to interesting objects for exhibitions that may even be permanently donated to the museum's collection. Working with individual people may require a little bit more planning and flexibility but is also a rewarding and fun experience for museum staff.

## Notes

- <sup>1</sup> Hurstville Library Museum & Gallery Collection Development Policy, released 5 February 2014, p. 5. [www.hurstville.nsw.gov.au/IgnitionSuite/uploads/docs/Collection-Development-Policy.pdf](http://www.hurstville.nsw.gov.au/IgnitionSuite/uploads/docs/Collection-Development-Policy.pdf)
- <sup>2</sup> Chiara O'Reilly and Nina Parish, 'Telling migrant stories in museums in Australia: Does the community gallery still have a role to play?', *Museum Management and Curatorship*, vol. 30, issue 4, July 2015, pp. 296-313
- <sup>3</sup> The video is publicly available on YouTube, <http://bit.ly/29vCAB9>.
- <sup>4</sup> NAA: B2455, BAKER G H
- <sup>5</sup> Anna Clark, *Private Lives, Public History*, Melbourne University Press, Melbourne 2016, p. 40
- <sup>6</sup> Australian War Memorial, PR00129
- <sup>7</sup> *Close shaves*, Australian War Memorial blog article, 3 March 2011, [www.awm.gov.au/blog/2011/03/03/close-shaves](http://www.awm.gov.au/blog/2011/03/03/close-shaves) (retrieved on 10/09/2016)
- <sup>8</sup> NAA: B2455, MUGGLESTON ALFRED LAURENCE
- <sup>9</sup> Liz Armstrong, email to author, 16 July 2015. Sadly, Catherine passed away in May 2017.
- <sup>10</sup> Kenneth Muggleston, *Laurie and Pearl. Letters and diaries 1917-1918*, Sydney 2000, p. 16
- <sup>11</sup> Rob Hughes, Expression of Interest form, 22 July 2015



# CONSULTING 1.01:

## An introduction to business practice for historians

### Abigail Belfrage

Undergraduate and postgraduate history and cultural heritage management degrees teach vital skills in historical enquiry and its application in the history and cultural sectors. However, there is little attention paid to the business skills needed by consulting historians who work outside institutions. This paper provides a case study of a consulting historian who reflects on her journey, the skills needed to be effective as a consultant and how universities might encourage or incorporate business skills and entrepreneurship for historians.

After three years working in my own business as a consulting historian I have reflected on my journey to this point. I am going to outline my ideal course for a consulting historian and then touch on how 'History School' might teach it, or how historians might access such knowledge. But first, here is what I did learn at History School and how I applied it, by way of a case study.

I studied Arts at La Trobe University graduating in 1993 with a BA Honours degree in history and women's studies. This gave me a rich foundation in the humanities and historical method and enquiry. I then studied two vocational courses, a Graduate Diploma in Cultural Heritage Management at Canberra University and a Master of Public History at Monash University. The Canberra course gave me a strong technical grounding in the heritage and cultural sector, while the Monash course was more focused on the historian's role in that sector.

Excited to finish my studies – and armed with my qualifications – I set out to work for myself in my field, but for the next few years without access to family or friends with a business background for guidance, I struggled to stitch it all together. I worked on oral history projects, as a part-time heritage consultant in a heritage consultancy (as an employee), and in various research and project gigs. It was exciting but haphazard and hard to make a living. I did not know what I needed to know to run myself as a business; I did not even know what an ABN was. I traded in the uncertainty for a salary and worked in the Victorian public service for a couple of years.

Fast forward to 2013: after nine years working in different roles with archives at Public Record Office Victoria, and a love affair with the collection and the

digital and online realm, I decided to have another crack at my own business. This time I enrolled in the NEIS (New Enterprise Incentive Scheme), studied a Certificate IV in small business administration at RMIT and, as part of the course, wrote a business plan. The business plan contained the details of what the business would do based on my research, thinking and planning, and what I had learned in my Certificate IV. I have been working in my business, The History Dept., in earnest since 2014. While this is just a blip compared to many of my consulting colleagues, it is long enough for me to have considered what would be most helpful to a historian starting out in business. If it were a course I would call it *Consulting Historian 1.01: an introduction to business practice for historians*, and it would start with the basics:

#### **What are you going to do in your business?**

I would encourage students to use their research superpowers and imaginations here, as this first step into business is about identifying what you can make or do as an historian, and the demand for your products and services. They would probably base this assessment on their work experience, skills, interests and, critically, an understanding of what the market for these products and services is like: who wants to pay for what you have to offer, and how much. It is also good to get out and explore, talk to colleagues, go to conferences and seminars and learn from and adapt to what is happening. There is always something to learn.

#### **What do you need to get going in your business?**

Every business needs to register a business name, decide on a business structure (as a sole trader,

partnership or company) and register an ABN (Australian Business Number) or an ACN (Australian Company Number). Next steps are setting up a business bank account and obtaining professional indemnity and public liability insurance. Your Professional Historians Association should be able to recommend a good insurance provider, and there are some great resources about setting up your business on the ASIC and ATO websites.

Consulting historians also need some basic equipment and a place to work. For many of us this can be a home office, which is convenient and is not an additional expense. I decided however to rent an office. Located at an artists' studio, it allows me to 'go to work' and I enjoy the contact with other small business people and artists. I am gradually acquiring the equipment that makes my work more enjoyable or efficient, and I recommend setting up your space ergonomically. I really love my standing desk.

### **Branding, promotion and intellectual property**

These areas are typically covered in a subject called 'Marketing' and are so much more interesting than what many historians might expect. For example, a brand is about the external persona or personality of your business – how you present yourself to your clients. A brand can be friendly, austere, intelligent, hardworking, refined, cheerful, etc., depending on the visual and textual language used. Your brand can be expressed through your logo, business card, and the look and feel of your website through its fonts, images, and layout, not just what you've written. And of course, the culture of the business through its people is part of its brand.

Promotion relates to the actions and methods to use to make your business known and interesting to your market – how you find your clients and how they find you. Use the promotion that works best for you. For some businesses, very little promotional activity is needed and they are not even online, as most of their clients find them through word of mouth. Other businesses might connect with clients through a simple action such as listing themselves on relevant consultants' registers. Whatever establishes that connection between your business and the people that are interested in it is worth investigating, and this may include engaging on social media, advertising, flyers, giving talks, or sponsoring community events or conferences.

If you are investing in branding and promotion you also need to protect your intellectual property. You will need to register your website domain name and it is advisable to register your business name and any other branding text and logos as trademarks. My course for historians would also cover other intellectual property issues for historians, such as your copyright and moral

rights as an author in a publication.

### **Financial and tax requirements**

I especially liked the part in my Certificate IV where we were given spreadsheet templates with formulas for budgeting, bookkeeping, maintaining a cash flow and calculating tax. Why reinvent the wheel? Your income might not be consistent or substantial particularly while it's getting established as you will be working *on* the business a lot, rather than just working *in* the business, so a part-time job can be a good idea. A part-time job can also act as a break from the intensity that accompanies setting up your business and provide some social interaction. Another financial consideration in the course would include what to charge for your different products and services. The PHA scale of fees is a useful guide here, particularly for the traditional work of professional historians, such as research and writing.

**The next three items are inter-linked and relate to how you and your business will grow:**

### **Where do I want my business to go?**

Key questions here include: what are my business and professional goals? What sort of work do I want to be doing? What are the skills and equipment I need to make this happen? For example, I have learned to make books in response to requests from clients. The first book took a long time, the next one was much quicker. Since then, thanks to an online course, I have learnt my way around a more efficient book layout platform and have refined my workflows, especially when working with graphic designers and editors. I cannot wait to buy a new high-resolution A3 scanner and printer which will save even more time on future book projects.

Setting and working towards goals is potentially a lifelong prospect as your business grows and you develop your craft and sense of what is possible, and of course, as the market for your work changes.

### **Professional development**

Professional development is critical to meeting your business goals and achieving industry standards in your work. Your professional community is key here, through organisations like Professional Historians Australia, Australia ICOMOS, Museums Galleries Australia, Interpretation Australia, Oral History Australia, which offer seminars, conferences, reading groups and all sorts of opportunities to learn from peers and benchmark your practice.

Training in specific skills can be obtained through short courses offered by TAFE and through online platforms like Lynda.com. This platform offers courses on writing, editing, marketing, bookkeeping, graphic

design, coding and project management, and a number of software packages.

Professional development is also part of your growth as a person, allowing you to attain skills and techniques that satisfy your curiosity or enable you to take on new types of projects.

### Support to sustain you and your business

One of the most challenging aspects of running a small business, particularly for a sole trader, can be the cumulative effect of working on your own. After the novelty and exhilaration of making your own decisions – about everything – wears off, you can be left with the tedium of making your own decisions – about everything.

Co-mentoring with other small business people has been an effective way for me to get support for my practice through mutual feedback on ideas and issues. For the first year of my business I met monthly with two friends who were starting their businesses. It was no chat session though; we three observed a strict half-hour time slot for each of us to present in turn to the other two, who gave their full attention, feedback and support to the presenter's topic.

In addition to this peer support, I met with a business mentor every three months and had access to ongoing bookkeeping advice through the NEIS course. I gained confidence knowing I was able to seek advice from experienced practitioners. Other ways to access social and professional support as a small-business owner are to get involved in your professional community, such as your Professional Historians Association, engage a business mentor and seek out groups or individuals for co-mentoring through Meet-up groups or local business networks.

### Project management

Finally, I would want the course to introduce or teach principles of project management, which I learned and used in the public service and find invaluable in my business. Project management methodologies, such as PRINCE2, are taught as formal qualifications, and project management software and planning tools like Gantt charts can be useful for a wide range of projects. As well as underpinning the planning, tracking and execution of projects, project management skills can also inform the preparation of quotes, tenders, briefs, and budgets.

### Over to you, History School

So, how might History School in all its different forms teach some or any of these vital skills for consulting historians? Should universities do this? I think it is worth exploring. Depending on the course, there could be a subject or a stream for developing business skills and entrepreneurship in history or the cultural heritage

sector, possibly in partnership with the business school at a university. This could include how to establish and function as a business, how to develop an idea into a product or service, and how to communicate it.

Another approach would be a component of a subject to assist students to map out career pathways into the sector. For instance, those that envisage a career as a consulting historian might, after their history/cultural heritage degree, want to acquire skills and frameworks for setting up a business through a Certificate IV, or even components of it such as financial or marketing subjects.

A 'pathway mapping' approach might also introduce students to the concepts of project management, templates such as a project brief and a project plan, and project management software. It could point students to the existence of formal training and qualifications in a project management methodology, should they wish to pursue that after their degree. I could see project management working effectively as a subject in a cultural heritage management or vocational history course, where a student could undertake a project as a subject and learn and apply project management methodology.



No longer lady historians: 'At the Public Library', The Australasian Sketcher, 23 Feb 1888, wood engraving, State Library Victoria.

Why point to, or teach these skills at History School? Because we need to encourage entrepreneurship in our profession. We need to 'grow the pie' and encourage qualified historians to come up with new ways to tell stories, explain our society and look after our cultural heritage. A vibrant small business sector of historians – practicing outside of institutions – also has a vital role to play in our history and heritage eco-system, and of course in the wider community.

### Notes

<sup>1</sup> This paper was given as a shorter talk at the panel session of the Working History Conference: 'The Things They Didn't Teach Me at History School'.



Part five

# Reviews





ANISA PURI AND  
ALISTAIR THOMSON

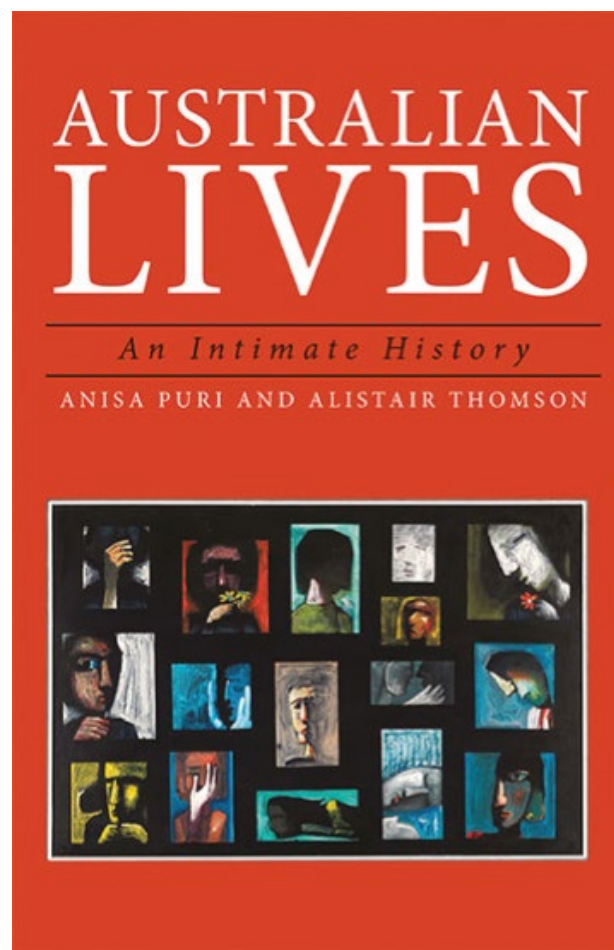
*Australian Lives:  
An Intimate History*

Monash University Publishing, Clayton, 2017

The Australian Generations Oral History Project is a collaboration between Monash and La Trobe universities, the National Library of Australia and ABC Radio National (p. xi). *Australian Lives* is a selection of 50 of the 300 interviews recorded and transcribed for the project. This text-based snapshot of the project enables a wider audience to access the results of the study. Although still a hefty volume, its purpose is to enlighten and reveal the personal and intimate struggles, triumphs and reflections of Australians from a wide range of socio-economic backgrounds without the distraction of jingoist rhetoric about Australian values and identity. The interviews selected for the publication provide an overall narrative of life from early childhood to old age. It is possible to follow the course of one or two people by selecting their entries from successive chapters to see their life story unfold from childhood to old age.

Significantly the authors use the term 'narrator' for the people they interviewed, effectively foregrounding the importance of their agency as authoritative narrators of their life stories. The publication is set out using a Western understanding of a linear life trajectory. It starts with ancestry – where the person came from. The interviews are organised into thematically arranged chapters, and chronologically arranged within the chapter headings. The path of the interviews takes readers through stages of childhood with glimpses of the effects of war, the economy, family life and early schooling. The narrative about the challenges of bringing up a disabled child and the differing services available over the decades to families to help them care for such a child was thought provoking. The following chapter about the experiences of youth included stories about high school, teen life, pleasure and risk, first love, and the transition from school to work with some interviewees talking about their experiences in the military. The nodal chapter about faith covers most of the life stages relating how influential or otherwise religion was in their lives. These stories relate the power of religion for some narrators and for others, the decision to turn away from familial beliefs and forge other pathways.

The chapter on migrants presents stories of people who have come to Australia either as children or as



adults. It explores their impressions of being a migrant in Australia, their reasons for making such a significant change, and how they made Australia their home. The interviews continue into midlife experiences, giving insights into how people entered into more permanent relationships, started their own families and established their households. The role of work played an important part in many peoples' lives, both men and women. The interviews also revealed how these families spent their leisure time and the types of memories these evoked. The chapter on activism uncovers their politicisation, including going to protests in the 1970s and membership in groups that fought for causes and political agendum. The chapter about experiences in later life focused on how they negotiated the loss of loved ones, their retirement and what it meant to them, and how they coped with an ageing body and impending death.

Each chapter scopes across decades in the twentieth and twenty-first centuries, and the narrators describe how time, gender, cultural background and socio-economic circumstances shaped them. Interviews with a number of Indigenous Australians reveal the complexity of living with divergent cultural expectations and the fine line many tread to maintain dignity, both at a personal level and a cultural one. The exploration of changing attitudes towards

homosexuality and other sexual preferences was a feature in a number of the interviews in each chapter. The final chapter, *Telling My Story*, is a collection of reflective moments relating how the experience of being involved in such a project had affected the narrators interviewed for the project. This was a fitting bookend to the stories previously related. Some people found the process of verbalising their experiences and their reactions a cathartic experience. Others felt privileged to tell their stories in the hope the audience would be enabled to understand people in similar situations, or maybe their stories might help their readers and listeners to realise they were not alone in how they felt. Others were excited about the prospect of strangers reading their stories in 50 or 100 years from now, speculating about how closely, or otherwise, their stories might resonate with those future audiences.

The expertise of the authors in this key area of research is evident in what they have encouraged the narrators to reveal. The authors head a team of oral historians aptly trained in the techniques of oral history collecting. Each interviewer has managed to create the all-important safe and friendly environment for the narrators, spaces where they feel safe enough to disclose not just intimate details about their lives but also their intimate feelings and their reactions to their diverse life experiences. Both Thomson and Puri have impressive track records in this area of research and bring a wealth of experience to the project in creating oral histories that evince raw and intimate thoughts so fascinating to readers of this book. This publication will add to the growing publications of oral histories, such as Anna Clark's *Private Lives: Public Histories* (MUP, Melbourne 2016) and *History's Children: History wars in the classroom* (NSW Press, Sydney, 2008), and Thomson's earlier seminal work, *Anzac Memories: Living with the Legend* (Monash University Publishing, Clayton 1994).

As a growing area of research, oral histories provide a distinctive source of knowledge about Australian identity and values. These microscopic insights into peoples' lives have the ability to underline the diversity of regrets, triumphs and aspirations framed within prevailing macro social structures. For anyone reading this book the honesty of the interviews gives insights to why people do or say things and how they react to challenges as well as the good things that happen in life. Each interview demonstrates how the narrators negotiate their situations within the frameworks created by both external and internal forces. After reading this book, you cannot help but develop a high degree of compassion for these fellow life travellers.

The striking feature of this book is the provision of websites at the conclusion of each chapter via the

National Library's database where readers can access the aural versions of the interviews. So often in text versions of oral histories, unique characteristics of the voice are lost. Much of the character of a person can be picked up in the way they speak; the tone of their voice, how it sounds, the pauses, the intonations all contribute to a more nuanced picture of the narrator. This feature adds another level of intimacy between the narrators and the audience. Included is a list for further reading, providing streamlined access to its readership to explore further many of the issues for academic inquiry. However, these do not impinge on a readership happy to simply read and hear 'average' Australians talk about their experiences. The introduction ably sets out the scope and intent of the publication, giving a brief outline of the larger project from which the interviews were selected. The table of contents gives a clear indication about the focus of each chapter. Included at the end is an acknowledgement page giving credit to the narrators who allowed the recording and publishing of their stories. The list also includes the interviewers and the institutions that provided funding and facilities to enable such an undertaking. This demonstrates the importance of cross institutional support and co-operation. Included is a narrator index that gives a brief outline of each of the interviewees and is useful in placing people in the time stream, followed by a general index.

Overall, this publication makes a wonderful and poignant addition to the growing wealth of Australian *vox populi* histories. I would recommend it to anyone interested in Australian history in general terms, but also to those making deeper enquiries by using the details of the interviews to enrich a more academic study about life in Australia in the 20th and 21st centuries.

Jennifer Debenham



CRAIG WILCOX

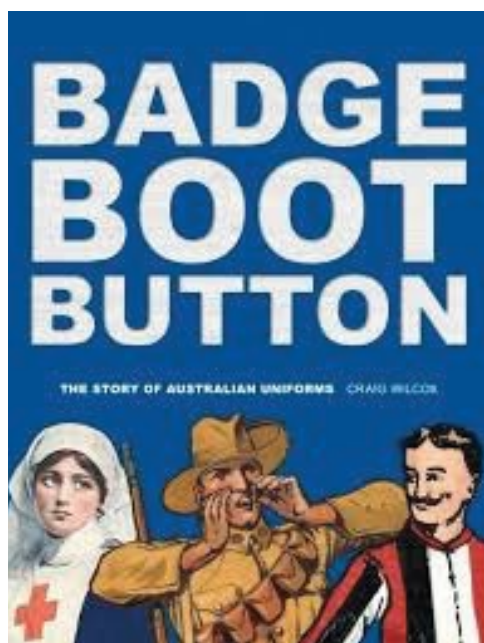
*Badge, Boot, Button:  
The Story of Australian Uniforms*

National Library of Australia, Canberra, 2017

'Uniforms conceal, and uniforms reveal', Craig Wilcox explains in the introduction to *Badge, Boot, Button: The Story of Australian Uniforms*. 'They wrap the bodies of millions of Australians every day, deflecting the sun and rain, insulating against heat and cold, making feet more mobile, camouflaging thighs and chests that would be distracting to display openly, and correcting our all-to-human anatomy by lengthening legs, broadening shoulders and masking disappointing hairlines' (p. 1). However, it is in what they reveal that Wilcox demonstrates the important place of uniforms in Australian history. In exploring the 'language' of uniforms – taking his cue from the work of dress historians before him who demonstrate that identities can be constructed and expressed through what we wear – Wilcox traces sartorial statements of status, authority, discipline and group membership.

Wilcox plots more than 200 years of Australian history through the uniforms that were present: the blue and white naval dress trimmed in gold favoured by Captain James Cook; the soldiers in red, white and blue who fought the diggers' uprising at Eureka (with the diggers themselves wearing a distinctive 'uniform' that marked their identity: hardwearing shirts and trousers suited to the work and conditions on the diggings); the khaki uniforms and slouch hats tested in the Boer War and later on the frontline in the First World War; to the many uniforms visible in Sydney in 1901 to mark Federation, from the gold-braided Windsor uniform of the Governor-General to the brass helmets of firefighters.

In more recent decades he turns to the transition in women's uniforms to consider greater social equality. Indeed women, with the exception of domestic servants and nurses, are noticeably absent from much of the book's first of four chapters. As Wilcox records, however, 'The mass wearing of uniforms from the 1860s passed most women by, just as it passed by any man indifferent or hostile to civic activity and team games' (p. 49). The second half of the book redresses this earlier gap, and the uniforms of women leading up to and during the Second World War, Wilcox notes, was part of 'a claim to efficiency, to discipline, to usefulness, to a partial and temporary equality – but equality nonetheless – with men' (p. 89). With the later move from skirts to slacks in postal, transport and



police uniforms and in the armed forces, women were dressed the same as their male colleagues for the first time, enabling freer movement for active duties.

Australians' passion for sport does not go unnoticed and sporting uniforms feature strongly. Wilcox begins with the red shirts worn by Aboriginal cricketers and painted by John Michael Crossland in *Portrait of Nannultera, a Young Poonindie Cricketer in 1854*. The following decade, these red jerseys were worn on a Victorian Aboriginal cricket team's tour of England. As Wilcox observes, they were both intended to attract attention but also to protect the cricketers from the cold and damp environment to which they were unaccustomed. Wilcox also uses sporting uniforms to consider changing social attitudes. The decreasing coverage of uniforms revealed the powerful bodies of, for example, Australian rules football players and surf lifesavers, and although this new display of flesh initially caused some anxiety it also allowed increased movement. For female athletes, this was especially pronounced: less-restrictive attire enabled them greater freedom to play, and excel at, sports.

Wilcox also provides a fascinating discussion of school uniforms. While these, he outlines, were intended to reduce class distinctions, they could nevertheless be a symbol of privilege when worn by the students of elite private schools. Both loved and loathed for what they represented, school uniforms were mocked perhaps most visibly by Australia's most recognisable 'schoolboy' Angus Young, lead guitarist for rock band AC/DC, whose on-stage persona wore a blazer, shorts, cap and satchel.

There is much to enjoy in this book. Wilcox's writing is charming and highly readable, and he draws in excellent quotes from contemporary newspapers

that express attitudes from admiration to outrage. His four themed chapters, which are also largely chronological, range from the livery of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, to the promotion, protection and equality offered by contemporary uniforms. They are interspersed with single-page pieces that Wilcox uses to highlight particular examples. The book is also lavishly illustrated giving it strong visual appeal. Photographs, artworks, posters, postcards and advertising material are incorporated, and images of uniforms from museum collections add further depth to Wilcox's analysis. Here we find, for example, a rare surviving convict magpie suit from Van Diemen's Land (dating c.1830–49), the RAAF uniform of Sir Charles Kingford-Smith, a boldly coloured Qantas crew uniform designed by Pucci in the 1970s, and the practical,

recognisable (and as detractors commented, a little garish) Sydney Olympics 'Games Force' uniform of 2000. While the large majority of primary sources are from the National Library of Australia's rich collection, Wilcox has also drawn in material from other cultural institutions and newspaper archives to tell the story of Australian uniforms, and he does so admirably.

As Wilcox recognises in his conclusion, few articles or books have explored Australian uniforms, and the examples preserved in museum collections remain an under-utilised resource. *Badge, Boot, Button: The Story of Australian Uniforms* goes a considerable way towards remedying this, and Wilcox's entertaining exploration should inspire more research into this area.

Lorinda Cramer

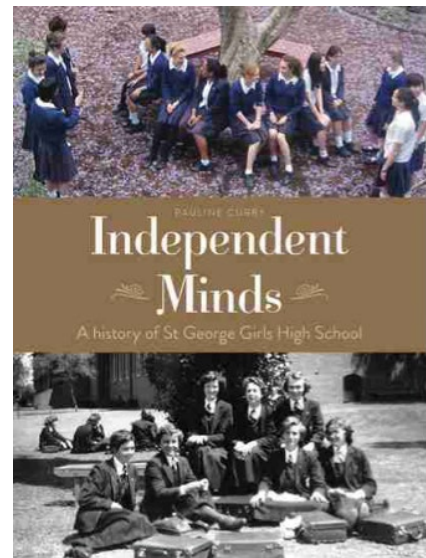
## PAULINE CURBY

### *Independent Minds: A History of St George Girls High School*

New South Publishing, Sydney, 2016

Nearly everyone assumes the term 'culture' is one that is clearly understood when it is frequently discussed. Generally, it is a catch-term for most human activities: ideas, customs, social behaviour, and intellectual achievements. Reading Pauline Curby's superb history of St George Girls High School provides one clear fact about culture: schooling is society's first and most sustaining point of enculturation. For many members of generations past, and well before mass higher education, schooling is the last and final act of enculturation. That claim may seem controversial, for surely, one may say that the family or a religious institution has that primary role. However, as Curby demonstrates, family traditions often evolve around *the* school or *the* kind of schools attended across generations. A student of the mid-1920s, speaking of St George in much later years, said, 'Everything that mattered I learnt there'.(p. 44) Religious institutions too are very dependent on their own educational communities and (surprisingly for some) religion has deep-rooted connections into secular state schools, such as St George Girls High School St George's motto is 'God and Right' (Dieu et Droit).(p. 31)

St George Girls High School is a secular institution; it is also an elite kind of school in the New South Wales state education system. It is single-sex, and it is a selective secondary-level 'ladies college'. The term



'college' has only recently been used for Australian state secondary schools, but the point is that schools like St George are the 'public' school equivalent to corporatised grammar schools and other private colleges.(p. 97) Looking at educationalist history in this way, ideas of culture are very overt. Curby has done an excellent job to alert fellow historians to the rich cultural fabric of tradition and social change, while at the same time providing the general reader with a freely flowing and comprehensive view of school activities and educational themes.

There is a wonderful subtlety and nuance in Curby's historical writing that may escape the general reader but is a delight for other educationalist historians. One of the most powerful lines in the book was phrased very innocently, and its potency would have escaped most readers. Curby writes, 'By the late 1930s, St George Girls High School was making its mark in educational circles, even though many girls were unable to realise their educational ambitions'.(p. 42)

A moment's pause for thought and the inference is striking. It was unnecessary that students reach success in their education (according to a student's own standards: 'ambitions') for a school to make a favourable impression in the education system and the society that it serves. It would be a big mistake to think that Curby was paying a backhanded compliment to St George. In fact, the criticism is reverse, taking the internal radicalism of St George, often well-dressed in the respectable cloth of social conservatism, to demonstrate inertia of the larger, encompassing society where the economic question of 'how much will it cost?' keeps trumping the ethical question of 'what kind of society do we want to produce?'

The school has been a major vehicle for young women to achieve educationally and was resisted by the *educated* enculturation of past generations who taught that women's education was only suitable for learning particular subjects and only to a certain level. St George's principals and teachers were as much influenced by such socially conservative attitudes, even as they were advocates for social change, encouraging the girls to take the Leaving Certificate and look beyond their domestic destiny. It took almost a century to reach a point where a student at St George could say that her teachers, 'created a sense of "anything is possible"...' and had 'instilled a belief in the girls that "being female was no limitation, but rather an advantage"'. (p. 176)

Nevertheless, throughout the whole history, the teachers were themselves testimony of educational ambition, the achievements by women who attained college and university training. Inspired, the girls at St George not only provided future generations of school teachers, but also gave Australia highly successful careers in the arts and sciences. Yet it did not come easily. Like the common narratives of elite grammar schools, tradition and progressivist politics fought bitterly on both sides of the school's gates. The reason why educational reform is so slow, and tradition is so resistant, is that many cultural roles of the school are performed to satisfy different parts of the Australian society – religion or worldview or 'tradition', morality or ethics, nationality or ethnicity, arts, sciences, and sport. In Curby's comprehensive view of school activities and educational themes, we get an understanding of the cultural conflicts in New South Wales educational circles, and more broadly in Australian history. It is one where St George principals, and all other educational managers, had to individually decide how much to attend to reforms, and how much attention was given to keep 'the large ship of state' afloat, ensuring all parts are well-maintained. When the metaphorical iceberg appeared suddenly, for a society lacking historical foresight, the societal and personal pain is in the slowness to turn the ship around.

Curby's work introduces us to the educationalist progressivists of New South Wales – Peter Board, Clive Evatt and Harold Wyndham, the men with historical foresight in a male-dominated and conservative education system. Peter Board, NSW Director of Education (1905–22), made it possible for there to be a St George Girls High School by progressing secondary education in the state, even though he emphasised domestic science as the main component of women's education. (pp. 29-30) Clive Evatt, NSW Minister for Education (1941–44), had a much more positive view of women's education, but his attempt to bring about co-educational reforms (the mixing of the sexes in the school environment) died in the fears of the imagined threats it would have to 'feminist' communities like St George. (pp. 78-79, 83, 101) The fears would return in the early 1960s in a more successful battle for co-educational reforms in the state system under Sir Harold Wyndham, NSW Director-General of Education (1952–68). (pp. 115, 120-121) The solution, and the avoidance of the imagined iceberg for both progressivists and conservatives, was only achieved painfully, under Wyndham's reforms, when it was understood that selective and single-sex schools, such as St George, would actually thrive within a new comprehensive and co-educational system. Democratic reforms meant appeasing both the needs of the masses and the elite. Unfortunately reaching such principled compromise is painful, perhaps too unnecessarily so, and the recent federal debate on school funding demonstrates the continuance of this fact.

Curby's story of educational and social reforms at St George is fascinating on a number of levels. The gender-orientation and elite traditions is only one part of the cultural story that Curby provides. There is also the great struggle over 'class' and the 'classroom' streaming debates, over infrastructure development and the environment, and over ideas of loyalty to *the* nation and *the* school and multiculturalism. Each theme draws worthy and lengthy essays out of Curby's detailed analysis. The oddly radical-conservative feminist tradition, though, is central.

The school culture went from the terrifying prohibition on a St George girl talking to a boy, even a relative, on the street or on the train during the trip to and from school (and girls were punished for such 'crimes'), to frequent employment of male head teachers (and to say nothing of one unfortunate episode of a 'leg competition'). In recent decades there has been an almost uninterrupted series of appointments of male deputy principals. (p. 176) St George remains a safe-haven for the girls, but the extreme feminism in the school's history, ironically framed in the conservative Christian morality and sociology, has disappeared. St George girls are formally

mixed with boys in educational and social settings, but beyond the school gates. In the story of St George, the feminine school uniform is perhaps a better metaphor and it is subtly the one that Curby uses throughout the book.

For many of the early decades, black stockings were the bane of the girls' lives, working against what we now understand as a healthy self-esteem and social development. Black is the absence of colour and an extreme position on the spectrum. The stockings were worn with white dresses and black bloomers. (p. 75) White absorbs all colours and is, again, an extreme position on the spectrum. Frequently the school uniform became the focal point of tradition. Prefects

were sentries at the school gate to ensure each girl was strictly uniformed. However, such militant and inflexible traditional practice would eventually kill itself. First, relaxations came in the austerity of the Depression and material shortages of World War Two. And finally, uniforms were modernised in the 1960s, and, aghast, girls' knees were exposed! (pp 134-6) While they were worn the interesting fact emerged that the black stockings changed colour through excessive washes. It is reported that they became a 'sickly green colour'. (p. 75) Although Curby does not make the link directly, one imagines that the stockings were really symbolic of the 'blue-socking' culture. (p. 80)

Neville Buch

## JENNIFER GALL

### *Looking for Rose Paterson: How Family Bush Life Nurtured Banjo the Poet*

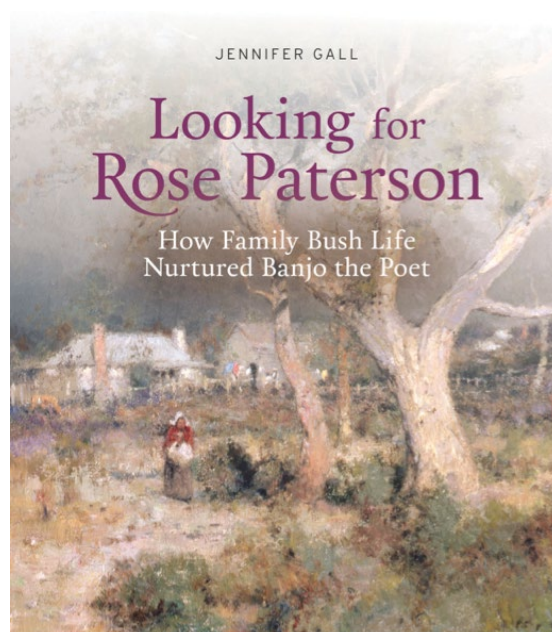
NLA Publishing, Canberra, 2017

I volunteered to write this book review because I was intrigued to learn about the family influences on one of Australia's most beloved poets – Banjo Paterson, known as Barty by his family – and because I enjoy delving into a well-researched biography.

Rose Isabella Paterson née Barton (1844–1893) was an intelligent, educated, hardworking mother of seven, and a loyal wife. We learn much about the minutiae of the Paterson family's daily life at 'Illalong', from the surviving letters written by Rose to her younger sister Nora Murray-Prior (1846–1931).

Presenting the key themes discussed in Rose's letters in seven chapters produced a logical, flowing structure in this book: 1. Home life, 2. Farming, isolation and money, 3. Childbirth and health, 4. Barty, 5. Childcare, child rearing and education, 6. Women's education and rights, 7. Social life.

My criticism of this book is the frustrating lack of detailed explanation about the wonderful collection of letters from Rose to her sister. They are the key primary source used by Gale, yet we are only told the letters spanned 1873–88 and they relate to other Banjo Paterson and Murray-Prior collections held by the NLA. Nor do we learn how the NLA acquired them (p. 7). No information is given about why they only span those years, how many letters have survived, or how frequently they were penned. The only evidence given of destroyed or missing letters is when Rose noted in 1873 'burn this' (p. 50), and one reference in the text to 'extant' letters (p. 66). In chapter 3, there is a passing



comment that there was only one letter dated 1876 (p. 69). We were, however, told a number of times that Nora's replies to her sister did not survive.

The key issue of the family's finances wove its way through every chapter; it is referred to specifically in the publisher's flyer claiming that Rose lived with 'no domestic help and a tight budget'. Gall actually used the term 'penury' on page 1. I took these references to financial difficulties as fact, until this assertion was flatly contradicted numerous times throughout the book. Rose employed up to three domestic servants (p. 48) and one governess (replaced over the years) in the years 1871–89, while the family resided at 'Illalong'. Rose noted that one governess cost her £30 per annum, while her replacement only received £25 (p. 134). 'Books and journals aplenty' were purchased for the children and Rose to enjoy (p. 191). The long trek to Sydney, by train, to visit Rose's mother would have dented the family budget on numerous occasions

depending on how many of her children Rose took with her. While an uncle's inheritance paid for Barty to attend Sydney Grammar School from 1875–80, and he lived with his grandmother, books and uniform and other expenses must have been covered by the Paterson family budget (p. 104).

The family's 14-year-old eldest daughter, known as Flo, spent two months in 1880 living in Yass to attend the Misses Allman school there as a day student; she studied dancing, music, painting and calisthenics according to Rose's October 1880 letter. This school's 1866 fees were advertised as £2.2.0 per school term for girls older than eight (p. 137). That same year, Flo and her younger sisters, Jessie and Edie, travelled twice a week into Binnalong, the nearest township, for 'arithmetic lessons' from the local school teacher (p. 138). Presumably he charged Rose for his services.

Editing was needed to rectify factual errors within the text. The timeline of key events in Barty's life, before his mother's death in 1893, were central to the story, so why was Barty described as being a 'clerk' in 1889, when he was actually a fully qualified solicitor by then? (pp. 90, 140). The reference to Andrew Paterson's business partner/brother's untimely death in 1871 contributing to the family's straitened finances (p. 17) is contradicted by the fact that the brothers had already been forced to sell 'Illalong' and their other property in 1869 (pp. 60–61). This led to Andrew being appointed the overseer of his former property, 'Illalong', from 1871 until his death in 1889. (His salary from 1882–87 was to be £500 per annum according to Rose (pp. 58–59); not a salary that warrants the regular use of the term 'poverty' throughout this book.)

Why does the publisher's flyer declare that this book contains 'the first known ... photographs of Rose and Andrew Paterson', which duly appear on pages 8 and 27 respectively, yet Gall concludes that 'no photograph of Rose exists' (p. 191)? Also, grammatical errors such as 'delapidated' (p. 54), and one governess' title changing from Miss to Frau (German for Mrs) Persicker (pp. 133–34) should not have been overlooked by keen editorial eyes.

Banjo's maternal grandmother, Emily Mary Barton (1817–1909), was an accomplished published verse writer later in her own life. The writing gene ran so strongly from her to Rose then down to Banjo, but Gale chose to only mention this important family trait in passing. This oversight demonstrates the problems of focusing too closely on a particular source. These two women, and the 11 years he lived full-time at the family property, definitely inspired Banjo the writer.

This is a lavishly illustrated book boasting double-page reproductions of works by Roberts, McCubbin and Streeton from the famed Heidelberg school, which are used to feature an extract from a Banjo verse or story. Valuable primary sources were used to tell Rose Paterson's story, an account that is of historical worth regardless of who her oldest child happened to be. A light has been shone on the day-to-day life of a woman who spent long periods alone, raising her seven children and running the domestic side of a rural property in nineteenth century New South Wales. Rose herself termed her life as 'grass widowhood' (p. 163).

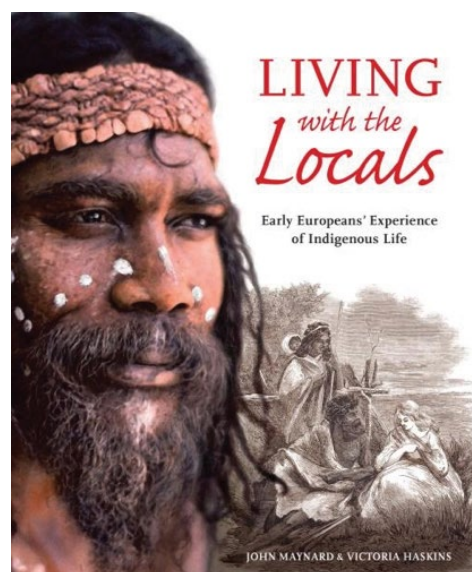
Michele Matthews

## JOHN MAYNARD AND VICTORIA HASKINS

### *Living with the Locals: Early Europeans' Experience of Indigenous Life*

National Library of Australia, Canberra, 2016

Maynard and Haskins tell the stories of 13 English, Irish, Scottish and French men and women who were adopted into Aboriginal families and clan groups after surviving shipwreck or escaping the colonies. The stories span the late eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, and traverse the east coast of Australia from Melbourne's Port Phillip Bay up into the islands of the Torres Strait.



This is not the first time stories such as these have been gathered together for reinterpretation. Archibald

Meston, for instance, compared several of the same stories in an article for the *World News Magazine* under the title 'Wild White Men: Australian instances' (27 October 1923). Haskins and Maynard have a very different purpose. As well as tracing the stories of the individuals involved, they hope to 'provide a glimpse into Indigenous lifestyles and views of the world at the very point of first contact ... and some insight into their perspective on the world of the colonists' (p. 1). Their emphasis is on the kindness and generosity of the Aboriginal people who adopted these Europeans who had strayed from their own people, and on the richness and equality of their lifeways and cultures, which they argue could continue to provide inspiration in the present, if we let them (pp. 216–17). They acknowledge, though, that the sensationalism and social Darwinism palpable in Meston's account, and so many of the nineteenth century accounts of these stories, continues to shadow them today. For instance, the constant sniffing about for traces of cannibalism, a doggedly consistent attempt to dehumanise Aboriginal people, had to be worked 'against the grain' and at times even this was hardly possible (pp. 2-3).

Bringing together a wide array of sources, Maynard and Haskins illustrate an intriguing range of interactions, governed by survival, circumstances and personal choice. Barbara Thompson, it would seem, rescued by the Kaurareg people of the Torres Strait four or five years earlier, was given the opportunity to think about whether or not she wanted to return to Sydney with the surveying party of the *Rattlesnake*, and perhaps come to her own decision (pp. 158-62). Narcisse Pelletier, on the other hand, marooned on Cape York in 1858, appears to have felt constrained to leave his adoptive people (or was perhaps outright kidnapped) after 17 years when picked up by an English pearl lugger (p. 201). William Buckley, having set up his camp apart from the Wathaurong people of Port Phillip Bay for a while, was perhaps happier than at any other time of his life when a young Aboriginal woman chose to join him as his partner for several seasons before returning to her own group (p. 36).

Maynard and Haskins find evidence in the story of Pamphlett, Finnegan and Parsons – two convicts and a ticket-of-leave man on an ill-fated cedar-getting expedition – that the several groups of Aboriginal people who helped them survive around Moreton Bay, at times wished them to move on promptly, and at other times wished them to stay on and become part of local society (pp. 63-68). Their sensitive analysis of these historically and culturally formed personal

relationships makes a valuable contribution to understanding these stories as a group.

James Morrill is described as having been 'well integrated into Aboriginal society, if not fully accepted' (p. 191). The level or degree of 'integration', 'acceptance' and 'incorporation' of other adoptees is also evaluated according to their apparent levels of initiation, linguistic achievements and marriage, for example (Buckley p. 48, Ireland and D'Oyley p. 117, Thompson p. 165, Pelletier p. 209). I would have liked Maynard and Haskins to unpack these concepts for their readers, as I puzzled over the concepts but wasn't able to appreciate the distinctions they made – and may have missed a layer of insight into the relationships that the book brings to life as a result.

Maynard and Haskins have made a decision to divide each of the chapters into two parts. The first section of each chapter traces the personal story of escape or shipwreck, adoption, movements around the country and the building of relationships – the individuals' 'life' stories. The second section presents a summary of the information that can be gleaned about 'Aboriginal life' from the accounts of these life stories, thematically arranged. This decision has been made before – for example by Constant Merland, who set down the most extensive account of Narcisse Pelletier's story. Stephanie Anderson, who recently translated this account, muses that Merland was not able to combine his biography of Pelletier with his ethnography of his adoptive people – Pelletier himself disappears into the account of the patterns of Aboriginal life, even as he supplies insight into them via his own experience. It would have been interesting to hear Maynard and Haskins reflect on their own decision to render the accounts in this way. Their decision does affect the connections that can be made between the knowledge of 'Aboriginal life' they draw out, and the source of this knowledge, namely the thirteen featured individuals. Each spoke of aspects of their adoptive Aboriginal lives or refused (as the authors note was often the case p.217) and did so according to the particular historic prejudices of their times. Even so, their analysis in both parts is generally well-contextualised and illuminating.

The book is beautifully illustrated. As a historian, I would have liked all of the plates to be captioned with creator, place and date as well as an interpretation of the scene. Nevertheless, the drawings and engravings, paintings and photographs thoughtfully enhance the storytelling and analysis, and make this book a suitable gift as well as a good fireside read.

Emma Dortins

PETER STANLEY

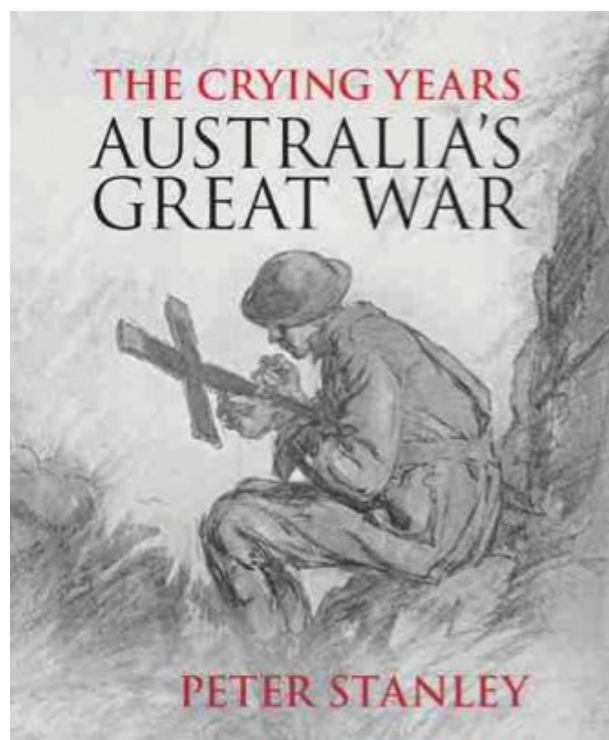
*The Crying Years:  
Australia's Great War*

NLA Publishing, Canberra, 2017

This publication draws together a visual narrative about the Great War of 1914 to 1918. In collaboration with the National Library of Australia (NLA), Stanley showcases a small selection of the vast array of artefacts held by the library demonstrating it is not only the Australian War Memorial and the National Museum of Australia that hold priceless illustrations and memorabilia of Australia's wartime history. Indeed, it is the eclectic nature of the library's collection that provided Stanley with such a vast array of photographs, ephemera, artefacts and images to choose from; 'it is the library's contribution to marking the centenary of the Great War' (p. vi).

Divided into six chapters, each one focuses on a year of Australia's involvement in the war. The final chapter, 1919 'The Last Anzac', is devoted to reflecting on the immediate aftermath of the war as well as how its legacy has shaped present day understandings of Anzac and memories of World War One. The large format book, using thick, quality paper, ably accommodates the lavish images selected. Attention to this aspect of the book's production pays dividends for its audience without resulting in a prohibitive price tag for a work of this type. Throughout the text numbered icons prompt the reader to pay particular attention to images related in the story line. This accommodation assists readers to make valuable cognitive links between the text and the images, effectively using the images to provide greater depth and texture to the narrative.

The purpose of the book is to present in visual form a history of Australia's involvement in World War One and to emphasise the war was not confined to the battlefronts but included an array of experiences for those on the home front, including women, men, children and Indigenous peoples. Stanley attempts to outline their diverse involvements, highlighting the many social and political divisions existing amongst Australians on the home front during these years. Some of these include the running of the two conscription campaigns, one in 1916 and another in 1917, exposing the simmering tensions played out along sectarian and ideological lines. Stanley has selected a number of images to portray what at times devolved into vitriolic battles between imperial loyalists who were primarily Protestant, white and middle class, and working-class



Australians who were for the most part Catholic and unionists. In 1917, these divisions also manifested a heightened fear of Socialism within Protestant factions. The Hughes government imposed harsh laws after the Easter Uprising in Ireland, resulting in the incarceration of many Irish-Australian sympathisers to the Fenian cause. Tensions were further complicated, and intensified the divide between Imperialists and Unionists, by the Great Strike that began in Sydney's Eveleigh railway yards and spread nationwide over the proposed introduction of a time and motion clock-in system.

The many men who did not volunteer to go to the battlefront felt the wrath of women on the home front. Stanley shows how these men were subject to a relentless campaign that labelled them lazy, cowards and shirkers. Generally regarded with disgust and held in low esteem, the images selected by Stanley illustrate the unrelenting campaign against them. Many were the target of the dreaded three white feathers letter, although in numerous instances they held war related jobs.

Stanley includes propaganda posters showing how images of children were used indiscriminately to further numerous and diverse causes during the war. Images of children as victims of poverty and rapine made effective guilt-ridden messages; with pithy slogans they acted as moral compasses to bully adults into action and to contribute to the war effort through raising money, knitting socks and balaclavas and other assorted projects, providing a new level of emotive blackmail. In many instances, women were at the forefront of these campaigns.

Women also worked tirelessly as volunteers but within the framework set by the social expectations placed on them at this time. The book illustrates how Australia's very conservative attitude toward women – even though by this time they had the vote – restricted what they could achieve in the public sphere, apart from a few including Vida Goldstein and Millicent Preston-Stanley, two of the earliest female contenders for parliamentary positions in Australia. The war gave some women more freedom and simultaneously gave others much less. Many women faced the threat of an unwanted pregnancy, and combined with the maintenance of families in the face of – in some instances – extreme poverty and depredation, they were often the sole provider of the household if their husbands volunteered for service. Stanley selected some rarely seen images to illustrate how euphemisms were used to spread information about birth control. The examination of women's and men's sexuality took on new understandings. Although not a new challenge, soldiers stationed overseas in places like Cairo often contracted sexually transmitted diseases in greater numbers. The use of images depicting infected men highlights the widespread problems it caused in the population after their return from the battlefield.

The book also addresses the issue relating to the German internment camps and provides some glimpses of what their lives were like at this time. Many Australians of German descent were treated with great suspicion and spent time in the camps for the duration of the war. Some were more restrictive than others. Apart from this, there is scant evidence of the presence of other minority groups, particularly Indigenous Australians and other ethnic groups. Stanley does give Indigenous Australians a cursory acknowledgement about their service in World War One, but their treatment on their return is absent in the chapter about the war's aftermath. There is room here for further research.

A number of the selected images give an indication of the political turmoil of the time. Here the divisions amongst Australians were seen at their most vehement. Illustrations by political cartoonists such as Lionel and Norma Lindsay, and Cecil Hartt, are included in the book. Their caricatures of politicians, making much of their weaknesses, strengths and idiosyncrasies in relation to current events, provide an insight into the style of political and social commentary of the time. The commentary illustrates how these debates were conducted, highlighting the differences between trade union groups, volunteers and families with each condemning the other for their agenda.

Stanley also includes the role played by war correspondents, including CEW Bean, Ellis Ashmead-Bartlett and Keith Murdoch, in the formation of the Anzac mythology on the home front. The initial

tales of the glorious bravery of the soldiers became increasingly engulfed with grief and loss as the war dragged on. Letters written by soldiers on the front lines to loved ones at home tell stories of the indescribable conditions to which Australian troops were subjected. On the home front these narratives became engulfed and were collapsed with other issues that set the scene, in some quarters, for some reconsideration of the relationship between Australia and Britain. Illustrations of the correspondence between soldiers and their loved ones, together with the inclusion of photographs from the trenches and war zones taken by war photographers, provide graphic evidence of the hardships. What is important is Stanley's use of the material to show evidence that hardships were experienced by those on the home front and those on the front lines making a valuable cognitive connection between the two theatres of war. Each image tells a poignant personal story and Stanley has used the NLA's collection well to complement the narrative.

Stanley is eminently suited to produce such a publication. As an academic in this field for almost seven decades, he worked for many years at the Australian War Memorial researching and writing articles and books that have greatly expanded our understanding and our relationship to World War One. In the section on further reading he provides evidence of his knowledge and familiarity with the raft of literature available in this field of study, including references to his own work. This publication adds to that canon by providing a cognitive link to the narrative. It complements these publications, particularly Joan Beaumont's *Broken Nation* (2013). Beaumont was one of the first authors to address the importance of the home front in constructing memories of World War One and the Anzac legend. Overall, Stanley's latest addition to the literature in this field will attract a wide audience and provide another avenue to view and gain a greater insight to the 'Great War', which holds a unique place in Australian history. It is a good read but also a good browse.

Jennifer Debenham



# Contributors

**Abigale Belfrage** is a consulting historian who established her business The History Dept., in 2013. She specialises in archival research for heritage and interpretation projects, collection management, and house and place history publications. She is a member of PHA Vic, and co-coordinates communications for the Australia ICOMOS National Scientific Committee on Intangible Cultural Heritage. Prior to working in her business Abi worked as a heritage consultant, a project manager in the Victorian public service, and in various digital roles at Public Record Office Victoria in access and online engagement.

**Michael Bennett** is the Senior Historian at Native Title Services Corporation (formerly NSW Native Title Services) in Redfern where he has worked since 2002. NTSCORP is the federally funded native title service provider for NSW and ACT and is staffed by community facilitators, solicitors and researchers who assist claimants in lodging applications and progressing them to an outcome. He conducts historical research and writes connection reports for native title claims throughout New South Wales. His interest in trackers came from hearing stories about Alec Riley when growing up in Dubbo in the 1980s.

**Libby Blamey** is a professional historian with ten years experience in the heritage industry. She is a senior associate and historian at Lovell Chen, heritage consultants, having joined in 2011, and previously worked at Heritage Victoria, assessing places for the Victorian Heritage Register. Her current work includes contributing to conservation and heritage management plans, heritage assessments and oral histories. Her background is in social history, and her interests include the study of places connected with popular culture and politics, and twentieth century history.

**Lucy Bracey** is a professional historian with *Way Back When consulting historians*. She has been working in the field for the last seven years and has completed a number of different commissioned projects from exhibitions to radio programs, oral histories, books and websites. She loves telling stories and engaging with community groups to help them tell their own stories in a meaningful and lasting way.

**Neville Buch** is an independent researcher in intellectual history, exploring influential social thinkers in Queensland's past. He has been a Q ANZAC Fellow at the State Library of Queensland (2014-2015), a speechwriter and higher education researcher, working with four Vice-Chancellors. Dr Buch is Director of the Brisbane Southside History Network and manages the Mapping Brisbane History Project. He is well-published and recognised for his contribution in the histories of both Catholic secondary and state primary education in Queensland, as well as histories in the cultural and religious shaping of Protestant and Catholic organisations.

**Lorinda Cramer** is a historian, museum curator and collection manager. She currently works as Art and Heritage Curator at the Victoria Racing Club, and in this position works with the rich history of Flemington Racecourse, a site registered on the National Heritage List.

**Margaret Cook**, a member of PHA (Queensland) since 1992, has worked as a consultant historian and heritage practitioner for 25 years. She has published many commissioned histories and worked in the museum, tourism, heritage and tertiary university sectors. Margaret has a BA (Hons.) in history and is currently a PhD candidate at the University of Queensland, researching the history of Brisbane River floods. This work has produced five published articles with another two in press.

**Jennifer Debenham** is currently a Senior Research Assistant with the Centre for the History of Violence at the University of Newcastle, Callaghan Campus, and a sessional tutor in Australian history and sociology. Her special interests include mythology in history, representation, memory, gender, race and class in Australian and international history over a range of time periods. An anthropological understanding of historical issues steers the perspectives in her inquiry. Her doctorate examined representations of Aboriginal Australians in documentary films and her publications include *The Australia Day Regatta*, with Dr Christine Cheater, (2014) and the online publication, *Colonial Frontier Massacres in Eastern Australia, 1788-1872* with L. Ryan, W. Pascoe and M. Brown, (2017). <<https://c21ch.newcastle.edu.au/colonialmassacres/map>>

**Emma Dortins** was awarded a PhD in history at the University of Sydney for her thesis "The Lives of Stories: Making histories of Aboriginal-settler friendship" in 2012. She is soon to publish a book based on her doctoral research, which explores contemporary history-making around the stories of Birri-gubba adoptee James Morrill, Bennelong and his association with the Sydney colony, and Wiradjuri warrior Wyndradyne and his friendship with the Suttor family. She works for the Heritage Division of the NSW Office of Environment and Heritage.

**Steven Farram** is Senior Lecturer in North Australian and Regional Studies (History) at Charles Darwin University. His research interests include the politics and history of northern Australia and Southeast Asia, particularly Indonesia and Timor-Leste. He is well-published in these areas with many journal articles and book chapters and is also the author and editor of several books. He is a founding member of PHA (NT) where he currently holds the position of secretary

**Juliet Ella Flesch** was a librarian for 30 years, working from 1965 to 1978 at the National Library of Australia and from 1978 to 1997 as foundation Principal Librarian (Collections) of the University of Melbourne Library. In 1998 she moved to the Department of History as a research assistant and librarian. Her PhD thesis was published as *From Australia with Love: A history of modern Australian popular romance novels* and she has published several other histories, including *Minding the Shop*, a history of the Department of Property and Campus Services at the University of Melbourne, *Life's Logic*, a history of the Department of Physiology and most recently *Transforming Biology*, a history of the Department of Biochemistry and Molecular Biology and *40 Years/ 40 Women: biographies of University of Melbourne Women*, published to commemorate the 40th anniversary of the International Year of Women. *A Commitment to Learning: a history of Education at the University of Melbourne* was published by the Miegunyah Press in December 2017. She is a member of PHA (Vic).

**Sandra Gorter** (MA Hons, English) is a freelance writer and historian, trained at the London School of Journalism and the University of Auckland. Her work in a wide range of topics is distinctive for its use of oral histories and has been published in national and international periodicals, newspapers and books. A large part of her work has been maritime history and the boats that sailed in and around Auckland. She was elected Auckland representative to the PHANZA committee in 2014. Her most recent project, a four-year study of New Zealand's civil construction industry draws from

over 250 oral interviews focussing on the company HEB Construction, was published in March 2018.

**Birgit Heilmann** is curator at Hurstville Museum & Gallery, Georges River Council, Sydney. In her role, she particularly develops social history exhibitions with a focus on the St George area. She has great interest in bringing history alive through community engagement. Dr Heilmann is a member of PHA NSW & ACT.

**Annabel Lloyd** is the City Archivist for Brisbane City Council and was responsible for the establishment of the City Archives in 1994. She has been actively working in archives and the professional archives community since 1984. Responsibility includes managing the City Archives in accordance with the *Public Records Act* and enhancing the accessibility and relevance of the history of Brisbane to the broader community. She provides guidance and support for Council's libraries in managing their local studies collections and local history groups in managing their information. Annabel has a BA (Hons) in history and a Diploma in Management Archives Admin.

**Michele Matthews** has been a local, social and oral historian for over three decades and is an ardent advocate for using local history sources. In the 1980s and 1990s, she worked on numerous contracts for the former City of Bendigo Council, including being the consultant historian for their 'Making a Nation' exhibition - a history of the Federation movement. She has also worked as the historian for Bendigo Bank (1995-1997) cataloguing their own extensive Archives and interviewing former staff and Board members. She completed her PhD "Survivors, Schemes, Samaritans and Shareholders: the impact of the Great Depression on Bendigo and District 1925-1935" in 2007 and has been the Archives Officer at the Bendigo Regional Archives Centre (BRAC) since its creation in 2008.

**Douglas Wilkie** is an independent historian from Melbourne and an Honorary Fellow with the School of Historical and Philosophical Studies at the University of Melbourne. He has written numerous articles and books on aspects of colonial life in Australia and Victoria, in particular investigating the extraordinary lives of a number of non-British, non-stereotypical men and women who were convicted of crimes in England and transported to Van Diemen's Land during the 1830s and 1840s. He has also written extensively on aspects of the Victorian gold rushes of 1851. His PhD thesis investigated the forgotten and ignored origins of the 1851 gold rush.