



NUMBER 2 - NOVEMBER 2012

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### Member Profile – Dr Neville Buch



Dr Neville Buch, editor of PHA (Qld) e-Bulletin, is the subject of our second historian profile. You'll be hearing more about Neville soon as he is the brains behind the formation of a National Committee of Editors and a National Book

### Historia - editors' message

The Australian Council of Professional Historians Associations Inc (ACPHA) is the peak body for Professional Historians Associations (PHAs) in Australia.

Welcome to the second edition of ACPHA's e-bulletin *Historia*. *Historia* is distributed to all PHA members so they can find out what Australian historians are doing and share national history issues and events. This e-bulletin has a broader audience as it is also sent to our many friends and colleagues who interact with us in our professional work. Librarians, academics, archivists and publishers are just some of the recipients of *Historia*. The newsletter will give the wider history community a better insight into our work as professional historians.

We look forward to contributions to our next edition early in 2013. Please include your name and email address, and an image if appropriate. All copy is to be sent to [newsletter@historians.org.au](mailto:newsletter@historians.org.au). We are especially interested in items of national significance.

*Pauline Curby, Virginia Macleod (PHA NSW) & Geoff Speirs (PHA SA)*  
ACPHA Public Relations sub-committee

### President's message

Firstly, Merry Christmas. Secondly, don't panic, I just wanted to get in early as *Historia* won't be hitting your inbox again until next year.

Since our last e-bulletin many PHAs have had their Annual General Meetings and voted in new committees. Congratulations to all new committee members and well done to those who are continuing – your commitment to your fellow members and the history profession in Australia is what keeps us all going. Every committee member, no matter what their position, plays an important role in furthering the aims and activities of our organisation.

Many of you may have heard recently that the ABC was making some changes at Radio National, including cut-backs in the area of Arts programming. Through our professional networks ACPHA established that this may have implications for the *Hindsight* program, one of the few radio programs which presents history (from both Australian and international perspectives) to a broad audience. Many of our members work directly or indirectly for



Review Panel. At the ACPHA AGM in Perth Dr Buch's offer to be the first coordinator of the committee was accepted and he was authorised to contact the various ACPHA and PHA editors to discuss the communication mechanisms necessary to establish the committee and the National Book Review Panel.

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### Historian appointed to the NSW Heritage Council

Former President of the History Council of NSW, Mark Dunn has been appointed as historian on the NSW Heritage Council. This appointment returns a historian to the Heritage Council, a position much needed to provide a historical perspective on NSW heritage sites and issues. There had been some concern about whether an appointment would be made after the position had been left vacant in December 2011. Mark has worked in the heritage industry as a historian for over 16 years and is vitally committed to the promotion and preservation of history in NSW.

### Back to the silent set

Recently Nic Haygarth has been investigating the osmiridium mining fields of western Tasmania for a publication on osmiridium mining and the fountain pen industry it served in the first half of the 20th century. Deep in forests of the west coast he found a surprising link with the early Australian film industry.

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### Privileged access to the English country house

Dr Katie McConnel, Historian and Curator, Old Government House, located in the grounds of Queensland University of Technology, was awarded the 2012 Copland Foundation, Alex Copland Scholarship to study historic houses and collections in Britain at the Attingham Summer School which has an international reputation for academic excellence. Each year one Australian is selected to attend.

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*Hindsight* too, either undertaking research or in presenting or producing roles. Accordingly we have written to Mark Scott, Managing Director of the ABC, expressing our concern and urging the continued resourcing and funding of *Hindsight*. We have also put out a press release to this effect which you can access at <http://www.historians.org.au/acpha/bm~doc/rn-media-release-acpha.pdf>

Just a reminder too, that following the ACPHA meeting in September, our scale of fees was updated (in accordance with CPI figures), so when you're quoting for your next job be sure to check the ACPHA website for the current rates – only a small increase this year, but still not to be sneezed at.

*Sonia Jennings*  
President

## ACPHA AGM in Perth

ACPHA delegates from around Australia, together with alternates from Victoria and New South Wales, met in Perth on 31 August and 1 September 2012, for ACPHA's annual face-to-face meeting and AGM. As the first ACPHA meeting to be held in WA, it was a historic occasion and began with a reception at the State Library Western Australia, at which those of us from 't'other side' of the continent were able to meet PHA WA members and the representatives of many of WA's cultural organisations.

As well as offering ACPHA delegates a warm welcome to Western Australia, the reception provided an opportunity for ACPHA President, Sonia Jennings, to present retiring WA delegate Cathie Clement with a Certificate of Merit, recognising her significant contribution to our national body. Cathie has retired after seventeen years as WA's ACPHA delegate. At the AGM held on Friday 31 August, Jenny Weir was welcomed as WA's new representative.



Cathie Clement receives her Certificate of Merit

The following positions for 2012 -2013 were filled by election during the AGM:

President	Sonia Jennings (Vic)
Vice-President	Judy Nissen (Qld)
Secretary	Geoff Speirs (SA)
Treasurer	Jenny Weir (WA)
Special Projects	Kathryn Evans (Tas)
Public Relations	Pauline Curby (NSW)
Web Manager	Alan Davis (NT)
Accreditation Secretary	Judy Nissen (Qld)

Alternate delegates for all but one state were confirmed as:

SA: Carolyn Adams  
NSW: Virginia Macleod  
Vic: Jill Barnard  
Tas: Dianne Snowden  
NT: Steven Farram  
WA: Susan Graham-Taylor

It was later confirmed that Queensland's new alternate delegate would be Sophie Church.

The ACPHA General meeting that followed the formal AGM canvassed many issues. Amongst these, were future promotion and public relations strategy. The Public Relations sub-committee proposed that

## Obituary: Dr Diane Menghetti



Recently with great sadness PHA Qld farewelled one of their long standing members Dr Diane Menghetti, historian, academic, university teacher and contributor to a number of history organisations. Her valued input will be much missed.

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## State and Territory Professional Historian Associations

- [New South Wales](#)
- [Queensland](#)
- [South Australia](#)
- [Tasmania](#)
- [Victoria](#)
- [Western Australia](#)
- [Northern Territory](#)

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ACPHA's public profile might be further enhanced by tweaking our name and logo to overcome our acronym problem. ACPHA delegates undertook to discuss this proposal with their PHA Committees of Management before any further decisions were made.

Another discussion revolved around the potential to develop a national Voluntary Professional Development Programme, similar to what has been operating in Victoria over the last twelve months. Delegates considered ways of facilitating professional development, such as on-line reading groups, and methods of delivery for podcasts and 'how to' links on our website. Proposals from PHA (NSW) for a closer relationship between ACPHA and state and territory PHAs with more nationally directed initiatives were also discussed.

Acting on a report from Cathie Clement (WA), ACPHA delegates voted to endorse a proposal to form a National Book Review Panel, to be coordinated, in the first instance, by Dr Neville Buch, the editor of the PHA (Qld) e-bulletin. This exciting proposal suggests the formation of a national committee to coordinate members to review publications, exhibitions and websites produced not only by PHA members, but also those of interest to PHA members generally. It is proposed that these reviews would be published in *Historia* and/or PHA newsletters.

All PHAs pay a capitation fee to ACPHA. This fee has remained at \$20.00 per member for the past ten years, despite the introduction of several new costs, such as the production and distribution of *Circa*, our professional journal. The meeting voted to increase the capitation fee to \$30.00 per member, with the new amount being payable at the end of this financial year.

Although ACPHA delegates meet via Skype several times a year, the annual face to face meetings allow for detailed discussions on a number of issues and the schedule for the meetings can be punishing. Despite the hectic timetable at the Perth meeting, ACPHA delegates and alternates were able to spend some time getting to know aspects of historic Perth and enjoy the hospitality of our Western Australian hosts. Visits to Western Australia's Constitutional Centre and the site of Perth's Old Observatory, now the headquarters of the National Trust of Australia (Western Australia), gave us glimpses of the state's past, and, for those of us who braved the climb up into the tower of the former Government Astronomer's residence, a panoramic view of Perth. A short ferry ride across the beautiful Swan River for dinner on Friday evening at a historic Perth hotel provided an opportunity to catch up with more WA PHA members and for us 't'other siders' to experience contemporary Perth nightlife – lively, bustling and very noisy.

Thank you to Cathie Clement, Jenny Weir, Kris Bizzacca and the team from PHA WA for hosting us – see you again in 17 years.

*Sonia Jennings & Jill Barnard PHA (Vic)*



ACPHA delegates

## Member profile - Dr Neville Buch

Dr Neville Buch, editor of PHA (Qld) e-Bulletin, is the subject of our second historian profile. You'll be hearing more about Neville soon as he is the brains behind the formation of a National Committee of Editors and a National Book Review Panel. At the ACPHA AGM in Perth Dr Buch's offer to be the first coordinator of the committee was accepted and he was authorised to contact the various ACPHA and PHA editors to discuss the communication mechanisms necessary to establish the committee and the National Book Review Panel.



Neville Buch

### **Why history? How did you come to history?**

I started down this pathway from my late adolescence and early twenties. At the time I was influenced by others: a history-subject master who fostered the spark of curiosity from a quiet underperforming lad in the classroom, and a Reformation-loving bible college lecturer who, for one of his congregation, set forth a mission to know more about the past of one's beliefs. For myself, there was always the existential passion to form meaning from historical context. In other words, 'what's it all about' seemed to naturally lead to wanting to know 'what's happened'. As I was a very slow learner I didn't have the aptitude for formal philosophy studies (until much later), and so instead, I enrolled to do a double major in history at the University of Queensland. And the rest is history...

### **What was your first history-related job? What path have you taken since then?**

Like most history postgraduates in the 1990s, the first history job I was paid for was as a tutor. For me, that was 'HT135 Problems in Australian History', Semester One 1991, for senior lecturer Dr Marion Diamond in the Department of History at the University of Queensland. The first 'post-doc' job I had was a successfully-completed contract with Fitzroy Dearborn Publishers in 1995, for an essay on Norfolk Island and another on Windsor, near Sydney, in volume five of the *International Dictionary of Historic Places*.

The pathway since took a very twisted turn. I ended up working as a researcher and speechwriter for the Griffith University Vice-Chancellor (Professor Webb) and three Vice-Chancellors at the University of Melbourne (Professors Gilbert, Lee Dow, and Davis). A few years after returning to Brisbane, my wife suffered with a brain tumour. It put me in a strange place of juggling roles as a carer, a

full-time parent of two school-aged daughters, and deciding that life was too short to abandon one's passions; I set-up my own history consultancy business.

**What kind of work have you done? What are you working on now?**

I have mostly found work in family history from clients who live a long way from the State Archive or have little or no computer skills. Currently I am working on two school histories: a 125-year old state primary school, and the other, a 40-year old Catholic secondary college. I am also the team manager for a project to digitally map the spatial history of Brisbane's Southside. The project involves two other PHA members and a spatial scientist – what we used to call a 'geographer'. This is all paid work. Research and production in the digital mapping work is funded by the Brisbane City Council's 2012 Community History Grant.

**Research or Writing? (What do you enjoy more and why?)**

I enjoy both equally as two parts of the one job. If there is a difference, it is that family life makes it harder to get the optimal head-space to write. I find it more challenging to stop in the middle of a creative writing task, to attend to a momentary domestic situation, than it is to stop in the middle of an online search or finding a reference in a book.

**What are the best and hardest things about the kind of work you do?**

The best thing is that I am working as an historian. It is unfortunate that this fact is not a commonplace for many who have worked to gain their qualification and accreditation in the profession. The hardest thing is to build a financially sustainable business in a niche market at a time when both government and the marketplace have very little understanding of the value in professional history.

**What advice do you give to those starting out? What do you wish someone had told you?**

If you are still at university, contract with your supervisor specific arrangements to put you into a job-ready position. Very little is being done to formalise the transition from academic history into the profession for graduates. Once in the marketplace, each graduate historian has to decide their own career strategy. Few have their career handed to them. The choice is often to bide your time in unpaid/lowly-paid history work or compromise your time in the profession with an alternative occupation to generate sufficient income. The difficulty is that alternative occupations can cause one to stray from the pathway, and poverty has its limits before it starts to erode career prospects.

**Given the potential unlimited boundaries of writing and research – what tricks do you have for balancing work/family life?**

The trick is to know that there are no tricks. It can never be a matter of a 'balancing trick'. The simple truth is that, for 99 per cent of human beings, life is never the nice orderly affair that we are falsely sold by innumerable ideologies. And it's not just flux either. Perhaps there are strategies for living life, but they are embraced by living through the stress, conflict, understanding, and compassion, in so many countless contexts that all I can suggest is the broad scope of ethical behaviour, sensible communication, and healthy relationships. These things aren't methods. It's about enduring the pressure and discomfort of living with the demands of others because we care. It's also about awareness of our environment when we are tired and exhausted. Sometimes, it is just taking the risk to let it all go, and to attend to the immediate concerns.

**How do you deal with uncertainty – the 'what job next' factor?**

I'm philosophical. Life is uncertain; still you plan, seek help, be out there.

### **Who and what do you like to read?**

I enjoy reading history and philosophy, and particularly the crossover of these disciplines, such as historiography, the history of philosophy and intellectual history. Recently I have been reading Niall Ferguson's *The Ascent of Money: A Financial History of the World* (2008) and Michael Frayn's *The Human Touch: Our Part in the Creation of the Universe* (2006). As you can see from the year of publication, it takes me a while to catch up with the general reading.

### **What's next?**

Further down the pathway, success in history with book publications, and the joys of family life.

## **Circa - December 2012**

The third edition of *Circa: The Journal of Professional Historians* will be launched in December 2012. Thanks to financial support provided by ACPHA, copies will be sent to all PHA members in Australia. The journal will also be distributed to state and territory libraries and a range of archives for public access.

The upcoming edition highlights the wide variety of areas in which professional historians are engaged. Readers can learn about the role of historians in native title, discover the life and work of a forgotten scientist, explore the memoirs of Melbourne's 'trammies', compare two cases of capital punishment in the early twentieth century and ask how a museum can collect dead things and yet remain alive.

This edition also features reviews of work by five professional historians.

It is particularly pleasing that contributions come from members in New South Wales, Queensland, South Australia, Victoria and Western Australia. The best article published in *Circa* in 2012 will be awarded the ACPHA prize.

Plans for the next edition of the journal will be announced shortly. Stay tuned!

For enquiries please contact [circa@phavic.org.au](mailto:circa@phavic.org.au).

*Katherine Sheedy, Circa Editor*

## **Historians win awards**

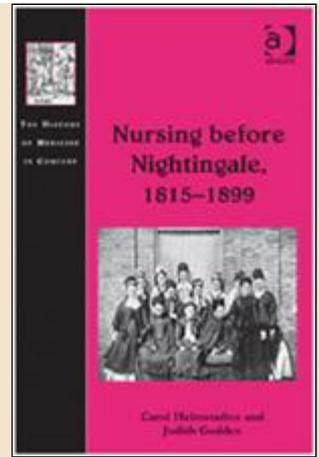
### **American research & writing award**

Dr Judith Godden, a member of PHA NSW, and her co-author Carol Helmstadter recently received a prestigious award for their work on early nursing history.

At its 29th annual conference in Savannah, Georgia, the American Association for the History of Nursing made awards to members for their outstanding scholarship. One of these, the Lavinia L. Dock Award for Exemplary Historical Research and Writing in a book was awarded to Carol Helmstadter and Judith Godden for *Nursing Before Nightingale: 1850 -1899* (Ashgate Publishing Limited).

The press release announcing this major award commented:

*In this work Helmstadter and Godden explore the practice of nurses in the early 19th century prior to Nightingale's founding of the famous St. Thomas Hospital's School of Nursing. Focusing on the activities of English Anglican sisters beginning in 1815, the authors document the many contributions the sisters made in transforming nurses/nursing from ignorant and indifferent women to intelligent and competent nurses. In doing this, the researchers have dispelled many of the myths that have cast Nightingale as the sole creator of modern professional nursing.*



Carol Helmstadter, formerly Adjunct Assistant Professor at the Faculty of Nursing, University of Toronto publishes on nursing in the 19th century, while PHA NSW member Judith Godden, who specialises in the history of medicine, was formerly Senior Lecturer in the School of Public Health at the University of Sydney.

[View Nursing Before Nightingale: 1850 -1899 online >>](#)

### **National Library of Australia Harold White Fellowship**

Dr Christine Cheater (PHA NSW & PHA Tas) has been awarded a National Library of Australia (NLA) Harold White Fellowship to undertake research on a project called 'Stealing boyhood: the experiences of institutionalised Aboriginal boys pre-1940'.

These fellowships are one of the few sources of research funding open to independent scholars. A full fellowship covers airfares to and from Canberra and a living allowance. These can be used to fund special projects historians would like to pursue but never have the time to undertake.

Dr Cheater comments that one of the hardest aspects of researching children's history is finding material that tells the history from the child's point of view. She believes oral histories are the best resources for this type of study. Previously she used oral histories from the 'Bringing them home' collection, which includes interviews with Aboriginal children forcibly removed from their families by state governments, for a paper on the plight of Aboriginal girls who had been institutionalised between the two world wars. She wanted to do similar research on what happened to institutionalised boys.

Her proposed research project will look at how these boys were treated and how they coped with life in an institution; the sort of training they were given and type of work they were expected to do after they left the institutions; and whether their experiences differed according to which state took the boys and the type of institution responsible for their welfare. Very little has been published on what happened to Aboriginal boys after they were removed from their families and it was with this in mind that Dr Cheater applied for the fellowship.

Acceptance of the fellowship entails spending 10-12 weeks at the NLA and acknowledging the Library's role in any publications that result from the study. Fellows are also expected to give a public presentation on their research and an informal seminar for the Library staff.

**Melbourne multi-media walking tour PHA (VIC)**

## Historic Melbourne: A Discovery Tour for the Whole Family

To celebrate History Week 2012 the PHA (Vic) self-guided walking tour, Historic Melbourne: A Discovery Tour for the Whole Family has gone live on the PHA (Vic) website.

The tour of some of Melbourne's hidden history is the fruit of the talents and hard work of a number of PHA (Vic) members. Sophie Couchman, Carla Pascoe, Barbara Lemon, Lucy Bracey, Michele Summerton, Snjez Cosic and Jill Barnard contributed text for the tour, while Peg Fraser, Lucy Bracey, Fiona Poulton, Vicky Ryan, Katherine Sheedy, Carmel Cedro and Jill Barnard worked on maps, illustrations, editing, planning, design and technical issues. Graphic designer Justin Di Naccio has provided a professional finish.

Aimed at families, the tour includes some of Melbourne's iconic landmarks and tells stories that will capture the imaginations of children and adults alike. See the Burke and Wills statue and learn about these intrepid explorers, discover lions in Melbourne's Chinatown and get lost in 'Little Lon', then ride a W Class tram before finishing with fairies in the Fitzroy Gardens.

Download the self-guided tour to your iPad, tablet or smartphone: it's print-friendly too. Additional information, videos and websites can be accessed along the way, if you have an internet-capable device. The walk takes around 1.5 - 2 hours, with plenty of time to pause and enjoy glimpses of Melbourne's past along the way!



## Northern Territory Annual History Colloquium

The Northern Territory Annual History Colloquium will be held on Saturday 10 November at the Theatrette, Museum and Art Gallery of the Northern Territory (MAGNT), Bullocky Point, Darwin. An annual event since the early 1990s, the Colloquium was inaugurated by Dr Lyn Riddett, history lecturer at Northern Territory University, now Charles Darwin University. MAGNT soon joined in helping to run the event and since 2003, the Australian National University has been a partner and has funded many postgraduate students to attend. More recently, PHA (NT) has also played a major organisational role.

Staff, members and postgraduate students of the partner organisations are invited to present papers at the Colloquium. There are occasional guest presenters as well. Four of the ten papers offered this year will be presented by PHA (NT) members. The event is free and everybody is welcome. View the program online.

*Dr Steven Farram  
Lecturer in History, Charles Darwin University; and President, PHA  
(NT)*

### Melbourne Cricket Club opens archives

The Melbourne Cricket Club has announced that many documents relating to its history are now available to researchers. The Melbourne Cricket Club's collection offers absorbing and valuable insights into the history of the Club, the Melbourne Cricket Ground (MCG), the Club's contribution to the development of sport and its socio-cultural interaction with Melbourne from the 1840s. See [website for details](#).

*Patricia Downs, Archivist, Melbourne Cricket Club*

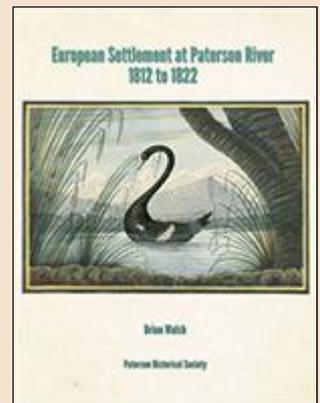


### Recent publication

In October 2012 *European Settlement at Paterson River 1812 to 1822* (Paterson Historical Society), was launched to mark 200 years of European settlement in the Paterson area of NSW's Hunter Valley.

Five sawyers at the Newcastle penal settlement filled a special order by Governor Macquarie for 500 cedar logs to be cut from the banks of the Hunter River and its tributaries, and as a reward the Governor allowed them to take up small parcels of land along the Paterson River. Four were convicts and the other was a colonial-born teenager. Together with their partners they became the first Europeans to settle on NSW land beyond the Sydney basin.

Dr Brian Walsh reveals the working and living conditions of these early settlers, along with the disruption, and in some cases dislocation, they suffered as a result of the survey of the Hunter Valley in the 1820s and the allocation of land to the Clergy and School Lands Corporation. Biographical notes on the settlers, their partners and families are also included. For further details see [www.patersonriver.com.au](http://www.patersonriver.com.au)



### Privileged access to the English country house

In this Olympic year I represented Australia not in sport but as the Copland Foundation, Alex Copland Attingham Scholar, when in July I attended the 61st Attingham Summer School for the study of historic houses and collections in Britain. For me it has been a remarkable

journey from my first almost accidental internet discovery last year of the Attingham Trust and its specialist educational programs, and the generous scholarship program of the Copland Foundation which assists Australians to attend the Trust's courses.

Visiting 27 historic houses in 18 days would in itself be a wonderful experience, but the truly extraordinary feature of the Attingham Summer School Trust – and testament to the respect accorded to the Trust's work – was the privileged access we were granted into privately owned houses, and restricted areas and collections of the larger country houses. This was further enhanced by the warm welcome and generous hospitality of many of the owners; and the privileged access to numerous specialists from a diverse range of areas, but all vitally linked to the interpretation and conservation of the country house.

To select one house to feature is a difficult task but immediately Calke Abbey comes to mind as it was one of the most unexpected highlights of the Summer school. This haunting house certainly differed from the majority of the houses visited: it challenged or shifted the expectations of any visitor to a country house. Its rambling aged and weathered rooms, many of which were filled with chaotically stacked artwork and furniture from generations of former residents, was a unique time capsule. Presented in its 'Preserved as Found' state the house did not speak of its original architectural statement of power and authority but presented as a fragile yet intriguing social history artefact/document. At certain points the curatorial voice endeavoured to subtly interpret a number of rooms using recreations and print and digital mediums. It seemed to me that the house had so many more layers to be peeled away and stories to be told. The Curator largely agreed but more overt interpretation was at odds with the National Trust's 'Preserved as Found' objective. Calke Abbey certainly has a lingering and thought provoking effect and arguably that is a reflection of its success as a unique visitor experience.

As an historian foremost and as a curator of a historic house I found the Summer School an extraordinary experience and enormously beneficial both professionally and personally and anticipate that these benefits will continue in the ensuing months and years. My sincere thanks to the Trustees of the Copland Foundation for their support in providing me with the means and opportunity to attend the 61st Attingham Summer School.

#### **Key Links**

- [Attingham Trust](#)
- [The Copland Foundation](#)

*Katie McConnel (PHA Qld)*



Scholars at Calke Abbey

## Museums Australia Conference Adelaide 2012

This year's Museums Australia Conference took as its theme 'Research and Collections in a Connected World', with the emphasis on collaboration between museums and other institutions, such as universities and libraries, within and between museums, and with their audiences.

The format for the conference, held in the beautiful – and now beautifully restored – Elder Hall at the University of Adelaide, was for morning plenary sessions followed by parallel sessions in the nearby Napier building. Visitors spilled out onto the lawns for lunch and coffee served from Bonython Hall, which was also the site of trade displays and conference administration.

As you would expect, there was a variety of approaches to the theme. Among the keynote speakers Jill Austin, Curator at the Chicago History Museum, spoke about collaborations in two projects between the Museum and two very different communities in Chicago: Roman Catholics and the Lesbian and Gay community. Roy Clare, Director of the Auckland War Memorial Museum, discussed some of the bridges his museum is building with various Maori communities. Robin Hirst, Director of Collections, Research and Exhibitions at Museum Victoria, argued that research, normally regarded as the province of the curator, is essential in all areas of museum operation, particularly for designers, conservators and teachers, working beyond their own specialisations. Nigel Sutton, Creative Director of NDS Productions and Catherine Hughes, Project Director of the Atlanta History Centre, spoke to the value of theatre in engaging the audience for museum exhibitions – Nigel using some live theatre, a bit embarrassing for the audience really but all good clean fun.

There was a bewildering array of parallel sessions, and also a series of tours to museums and heritage sites around Adelaide, including the South Australian Museum, the Art Gallery, Unley Museum, National Railway Museum, University of Adelaide Collections, University of SA Architecture Museum, Artlab Australia and the SA Embroiderers Guild Museum. The SA Museum hosted a reception, complete with smoking ceremony, songs and dance from local Kurna people, and there were dinners, award presentations and general socialising.

I was particularly taken with the presentation by Jill Austin from the Chicago History Museum. The museum made a deliberate policy

decision to create exhibitions which would emphasise difference and diversity within the Chicago community and in doing so engaged with two very different groups: Catholics and gays. In its exhibition, *Catholic Chicago*, it chose Catholics because Chicago, with its range of steeples and parish schools, is often considered a Catholic city. It used film and video interviews with worshippers, priests and cardinals to get a sense of what Catholicism meant to them as individuals, and didn't shy away from the issue of the sexual abuse of children by priests, including a discreetly located monitor with ten-minute interviews of victims talking about the effects of the abuse on their lives. This had to be negotiated with the cardinal, no easy task!

Perhaps its exhibition about the gay subculture in Chicago, *Out in Chicago*, was even more ground-breaking. The aim of the exhibition was to gain understanding and some empathy from their mainstream audience of community groups in Chicago about whom they knew little, and who in their lifestyles and sexual practices are very different. To do this they consulted widely with gay men and women, transsexuals, establishing two focus groups – one known as 'straight allies' and the other from the lesbian and gay community, code-named LGPT. This latter group was insistent that the exhibition must talk about sexuality and include some of the 'glitz and glam' associated with gay sexuality; the introductory gallery featured gay costumes including full leather ensembles. Each of the five galleries in the exhibition was introduced by a video featuring a different gay presenter. The displays also took visitors back to the 1850s, when legislation forbade women to wear dungaree pants, or indeed any clothing which could make them appear masculine. This legislation wasn't repealed until the 1970s, and the exhibition features stories about women who were imprisoned during World War II for wearing dungarees for their work in a munitions factory. The exhibition also covered other aspects of gay community life including disco, tabletop dancing and 'queer' political activism.

Jill Austin reported that the exhibition caused a sensation when it opened; my sense as a member of her audience was that this was a case where a museum can break down stereotypes and barriers, if it's willing to take the risk and handle the issue sensitively.

Among presentations in the parallel sessions Jan Packer, from the UQ School of Tourism, gave an interesting talk about the potential of the Anzac story as presented by museums such as the Australian War Memorial to influence people to explore their own identity. She cited as an example a survey of visitors based on pre and post-visit questionnaires to the Memorial. It showed, *inter alia*, that visitors were prompted to reflect on what their own responses to adversity might be, and increased their sense of pride in being Australian. Regan Forrest, a PhD student at UQ, produced an interesting analysis of visitor movements in the Aboriginal Cultures Gallery and other sites at the South Australian Museum. The study confounded the expectations of Museum curators and designers and led the Museum to respond by making changes to the design layouts.

I also enjoyed a talk by Alice Gorman, an archaeologist at Flinders University, in which she pointed out that Australia was the third country in the world to launch its own space satellite (at Woomera) and puzzled over why Australia had not continued to be actively involved in space programs. After spending several years trying to locate scraps or debris from the British Blue Streak rocket program, she had all but given up when by chance she found a display in an old showcase of parts of its propulsion system. This was on a visit to a small museum at Meningie in South Australia, known as the Meningie Cheese Factory Museum.

The conference prompted me to ponder the close links between museums and the history profession. It's worth keeping an eye open for museum conferences at whatever level. The next national conference, incidentally, will be in Canberra in May next year, as part of the celebrations of the centenary of the National Capital.



Geoff Speirs with Dieuwke Jessop, Curator of the Brighton Historical Society.  
Photo courtesy of Museums Australia (SA)

## Historian on the road

PHA NSW member Dr Rosemary Kerr recently presented a paper at the 'Preserving the Historic Road Conference' in Indianapolis. Her paper, entitled 'Roads and Remembrance: Meaning, Memory and Forgetting along Australia's Great Ocean Road', explored the history of the road's construction as a memorial to World War 1 servicemen, the subsequent interpretation and promotion of the road, and its development as one of the nation's most iconic scenic touring routes.

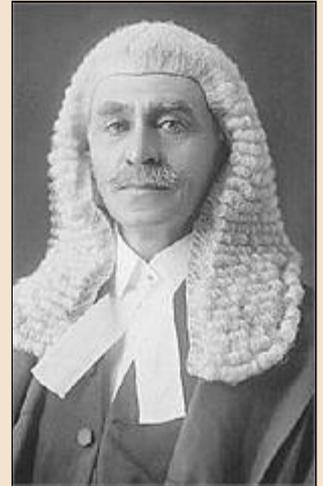
Held biennially in different parts of America, these conferences attract heritage professionals and academics working in a range of fields, including history, architecture, archaeology, cultural geography and tourism. They provide an opportunity to feature current developments and best practice in the management, preservation and interpretation of historic roads, bridges and cultural routes and include field workshops. While the majority of attendees were from the United States, participants from Spain, France, Italy and Australia provided international perspectives.



Rosemary Kerr presenting her paper at the Indianapolis conference, September 2012. The University of Sydney recently awarded Dr Kerr a PhD for her thesis, 'On

## Kerfred Oration at Beechworth

Recently PHA Vic member Dr Bill Wilson shared the stage with former deputy prime minister Tim Fischer at the annual Kerfred Oration at Beechworth. This paid tribute to the first Australia-born governor general, Sir Isaac Isaacs, who was educated in the Beechworth district. Dr Wilson commented that Sir Isaac, the child of Jewish migrants, 'rose above his poor background to become one of Australia's more famous sons.' Although he could be 'acerbic, dogmatic and unforgiving of those he considered fools, he mixed freely with many people.' Dr Wilson notes that during Isaac's time as governor general in the 1930s he relinquished a quarter of his salary, abandoned official residences and declined his retired judge's pension.



Isaac Isaacs (Courtesy of the National Library of Australia)

## NSW History Week

Once again the History Council of NSW's History Week was a great success, with a number of PHA members hosting events and participating in others. History Week's theme this year was 'Threads', looking at the history of fashion and dress, and how fashion shapes who we are and how we present ourselves to others. Dress is an important element of human expression, used to signify class, status, conformity, defiance, culture, celebration, profession and much more.

With over 100 events in Sydney and regional NSW, History Week covered all aspects of the fashion industry and dress history from catwalk parades to country debutees, migrant textile workers to colonial hat makers. With an expanded and updated website, the History Council was also able to work in partnership with the Oral History Association of Australia (NSW) to link to ten different recordings from their collection to feature a variety of personal stories from going to the beach in the 1920s to escaping post-war Europe in disguise. This approach allows those who may not be able to attend an event still connect to the state wide festival.

In addition, the History Council NSW trialled a new program called Speaker Connect, whereby regional libraries and historical societies were invited to apply for a speaker to be sent to them during History Week. Four speakers involved in the program headed to Wollongong, West Wyalong, Tweed Heads and Leichhardt. This trial program was particularly successful and will be returning in 2013.

With a view to new and innovative approaches to telling our history, and as a strategy to attract new and diverse audiences, the History Council, in partnership with Vogue Australia, also invited six fashion designers to create a new piece based on six historic muses selected by the Council. Choosing Bennelong, Margaret Tart, Annette Kellerman, John Curtin, Jean Garling and Merivale Hemmes as the muses, the designers P. Johnson Tailors, Jenny Kee, Zimmerman, Herringbome, Camilla and Marc and Sass and Bide respectively, reinterpreted each in a modern style. The result was a fascinating insight into the enduring legacy of these well known Australians and

the impact they had and continue to have across history.

Planning for History Week 2013 is underway with the theme being 'Picture This', looking at image and the role of image makers in shaping our history.

*Mark Dunn PHA (NSW)*



Two women in Australian fashion outside Minerva French Perfumery, Kings Cross, NSW, July 1941, photograph by Russell Roberts for Walkabout Magazine. Mitchell Library, State Library of NSW

## Back to the silent set

Millions of words flowed from Caudrys Hill. The serpentine hill in western Tasmania produced 'point metal' osmiridium, used to make the nibs of gold fountain pens. From 1918 into the 1930s Tasmania had a virtual world monopoly on point metal—which was then much more valuable than gold. Until the Adamsfield rush in south-western Tasmania in 1925, the best osmiridium—an alloy of osmium and iridium—was panned in or dug out of streams which drained Caudrys Hill, especially 19-Mile Creek and its parent river, the Savage.



Tasmanian osmiridium went to New York and England to make Watermans, Swan, Sheaffer, Parker and other brands of fountain pen, whereupon those nibs travelled the world. Sir Ernest Shackleton

took Swan fountain pens on his early Antarctic expeditions, swearing that they stood up well to two years of constant use in the freezing conditions. Tasmanian osmiridium may have signed the Treaty of Versailles which ended World War I and the death warrant of Tsar Nicholas II of Russia.

Osmiridium also inspired a challenge to Hollywood dominance of Australian cinemas. Marie Bjelke Petersen's gender-bending romance story *Jewelled Nights*, about a runaway bride hiding out on the wild west osmiridium fields, appealed to Louise Lovely (Louise Alberti), an Australian starlet returned from Hollywood. Lovely was determined to take local movies to the world. In 1925, she and her director husband, Wilton Welch, assembled a Hollywood scale £8000 budget and set out to shoot *Jewelled Nights*.

Australia's first Hollywood glamour queen, a challenger to Mary Pickford's crown, did it the hard way. Not even working with Lon Chaney on *Stronger than Death* (1915), *The Gilded Spider* and *Tangled Hearts* (1916) could have steeled Louise Lovely for the rainforested gorges of western Tasmania.

The search for the location of *Jewelled Nights* propels us downhill through the scrub. Suddenly a benched track is at our feet and we are following in the footsteps of the movie crew from 87 years ago. A fallen deep red myrtle tree lies smashed on the path carved out of the rainforest. Then the flat—Flea Flat, no less, the main diggings on the 19-Mile Creek osmiridium mining field—emerges from the forest. Water gushes in every direction through dry-stone-walled channels, where the diggers once sluiced, picked and blasted out the precious metal. Deep in the west coast forest, the leeches are voracious, the mud accommodating, the horizontal scrub dripping wet. Thence came Lovely.

We stand where the cameras once rolled, where the crew flexed their tinsel reflectors at the dappled light, where spectators gawked at the Hollywood starlet. Even the big stump which formed the first upright of osmiridium digger Jos Hancock's hut is gone. Here, as Hancock once explained it, the "sappey-biss" (sappy business, that is, the love scenes), was filmed. No sign remains of Hancock's bed or slab walls amongst the bracken ferns—just Tasma beer bottles, a rusted out basin and shards of china. Only an impressive watering can still standing on duty reminds us of the fruit trees and vegetable gardens that once sustained the diggers. Although the pademelons (small wallabies) appear to have made short work of the abandoned gardens, a stunted blackberry vine struggles towards the light over the entrance of a 20-metre-long tunnel driven into a bank.

Osmiridium diggers could easily work in backyard landscaping today. Kilometre upon kilometre of 19-Mile Creek and its flood plain have been deepened, channelled, walled, dug and diverted. Piles of earth the size of glacial moraines often divide two or three parallel watercourses. A man-made 1.5-metre-high waterfall—the legacy of where a sluiceway was placed over the creek—would make a great garden feature. Dry stone walls up to two metres high were created by removing obstructive rocks from streams and to create diversion channels in order to work dry creek beds for deposits of the precious alloy. Boots, bottles, pick heads, more boots. It seems that the only thing you won't find on the osmiridium fields is a fountain pen.

*Nic Haygarth PHA (Tas)*

### **Obituary: Dr Diane Menghetti (1940-2012)**

In the 1970s, in her thirties, Diane Menghetti decided to complete her education after a career as a nurse working in places such as Papua New Guinea and northern Australia. One of the first mature age students to be accepted at James Cook University, she

graduated in 1980 with First Class Honours in History, a University Medal and the Jean Farnfield Prize in Australian History.

In 1984 Menghetti was awarded her doctorate in history at James Cook University for work on the social history of Charters Towers. Her thesis, integrating oral history with historical photographs of the town, was published by James Cook University History Department in 1989 under the title, *I Remember: Memories of Charters Towers*.

From 1988 Dr Menghetti worked as a history lecturer at James Cook University, becoming the Head of the Discipline of History (formerly head of the School of History and Politics) from 1997-1999. In the school she researched and taught Australian History (especially mining history) and Queensland Cultural Heritage. Among her other academic responsibilities was the James Cook University's North Queensland Photographic Collection and the North Queensland Oral History Project from the 1980s.

During her academic career she taught at Eotvos Lorand University in Budapest, where she introduced the discipline of history to the Australian Studies Unit (1988-1996); and in the Australian Studies Unit at the University of Papua New Guinea in Port Moresby (1988).

Reaching the academic level of Associate Professor of History (1997-2003), she was appointed to the position of Associate Dean of the Faculty of Arts, Education and Social Science at James Cook University in 2001 and 2002. On retirement in 2003 she continued in an adjunct position at James Cook University, and worked as a Consultant Historian and Heritage Assessor. She was made a Life Member of the National Tertiary Education Union in recognition of her service to the Union.

Diane Menghetti was a significant link between many history and heritage organisations in Queensland. She had been a member of the Royal Historical Society of Queensland since July 1988, and was well-known as a member of the management committee of Queensland's Professional Historians Association (2000-2006).

She served on the Queensland Heritage Council (Deputy Chair, 2002), the Executive Committee of the National Trust of Queensland (Chair, 2006-2007), and the Executive Committee of the Australian Mining History Association (1994-2008). She was Honorary Fellow of the Queensland Museum (2000-2003) and Vice-President (2000-2007) and President (2007-2008) of the Townsville Museum & Historical Society. She was also the Director, Australian Council of National Trusts (2006-2007) and the Expert Assessor (Heritage) to Queensland Government (2003-2008).

A number of organisations, including on the Board of Institute of International Affairs, North Queensland Branch (1989 and 1997-2003), the Editorial Board of Clionet (1993-2003, later Electronic Journal of Australian and New Zealand History), and the Professional Historians Association (Qld) Newsletter from 2003 to 2006, benefitted from her editorial input.

Her history work included nine books, more than 70 journal and review articles and papers presented at conferences in Australia, Italy, Mexico and the United States; as well as some heritage journalism. Among her major history publications are: *The Red North*, a history of radical politics in north Queensland during the depression of the 1930s; *Blair Athol: the Life and Death of a Town*, developed from a four years project to locate, collect and store all available materials pertaining to the now-defunct mining town of Blair Athol and including the collection of a significant amount of oral testimony; *Ravenswood: Five Heritage Trails*, a guide book based on extensive research of the mining history of Ravenswood and the compiling of a set of heritage trails for tourists visiting that town.

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*Judy Nissen PHA (Qld)*



Image courtesy of Brewer Funeral Tributes, at <http://brewerfuneral.tributes.com/show/Diane-Menghetti-93993459>, retrieved on 27 June 2012

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