Welcome to Issue 10 of Biography Footnotes

The retirement of Pam Crichton and Barbara Dawson this month serves to remind us that ADB employment is not as stable as it once was; their retiring means that only a quarter of the current NCB/ADB staff were employed before 2008.

This turnover seems exceptional but it is not, of course, unique to a university workplace. Since I joined the ANU in 2008, the ADB has dealt with four managers and editors at Melbourne University Publishing. Despite this movement within the staffs of both the NCB and MUP, volume 18 of the ADB—which will complete the period of subjects who died between 1981 and 1990—will be published, according to the schedule envisaged five years ago, in 2012.

This is a cause for both celebration and some relief. It is also a tribute to the system developed over the past fifty years that is more than any particular individual. It relies on the combined contribution of authors, working party members, ADB staff, ADB Fellows and Editorial Board members.

Our Research Editors are working on the last five articles which will be completed before the Christmas break. Consultation with authors and copy editing will then occupy us until the completed manuscript is delivered to MUP by 23 March next year to be designed, typeset, proofed and printed.

Before embarking on the next period of articles—those who died in the 1990s—staff will also spend some time in the New Year fielding volume 18 articles, preparatory to their being published online.

It is the Queensland Working Party’s turn to host the launch of an ADB volume. The launch of volume 18 will be held in Brisbane in the first week of December 2012. In keeping with tradition, that State’s working party will also nominate the image for the volume’s cover.

I thank Pam and Barbara for ‘holding off’ their respective retirements until volume 18 was largely completed and wish them well for the future.

Melanie Nolan
Director, National Centre of Biography
General Editor, Australian Dictionary of Biography
**ADB Stalwarts Win Prime Minister’s Prize**

The 2010–11 Prime Minister’s Prize for Australian History has been shared between two books, *A Three-Cornered Life: The Historian W. K. Hancock* by Jim Davidson and *Bad Characters: Sex, Crime, Mutiny and Murder and the Australian Imperial Force* by Peter Stanley.

Jim Davidson, a former member of the ADB’s Victorian Working Party, has written three ADB entries including the one on Sir Keith Hancock. Jim’s entry on Dame Nellie Melba was described by Sir Keith, at the launch of volume 10 in 1986, as the ‘best “brief life” of a prima donna that anybody has ever written’. Jim is currently working on a study of the first two editors of the literary journals *Meanjin* and *Overland*—Clem Christesen and Stephen Murray-Smith respectively.

**ADB Files Take on a New Life**

240 ADB files were consulted at the ANU Archives by researchers this year. The files were moved from the ADB’s offices to the Archives in 2009 to make them more accessible to researchers and to ensure their long-term preservation.

As well as birth, death and marriage certificates, the files contain the edited versions of entries, correspondence with authors, research material gathered by editors and details of corrigenda.

**Oxford Centre for Life-Writing**

Oxford University has established a Centre for Life-Writing at Wolfson College. The college is a natural home for life-writing. Its president, Hermione Lee, is an eminent biographer, while several other members of the governing body—including Jon Stallworthy—work in life-writing and related disciplines.

The Centre hosts an annual series of Life-Writing Lectures, and an annual Life-Stories Day, involving auto/biographical presentations from many of the college’s students and Fellows. Its Life-Stories Society meets weekly during term time.

For further information about the Centre, visit [www.wolfson.ox.ac.uk/clusters/life-writing](http://www.wolfson.ox.ac.uk/clusters/life-writing).

**Obituaries Australia on Trove**

The National Library’s Trove search facility will soon include links to items in Obituaries Australia. Trove has been linking to ADB entries since the service started in 2009.

GeneaNet, an international genealogy database, which holds information on over 400 million people, has also expressed an interest in linking to the obituaries.

**Visiting Fellows — 2012**

Dr Lawrence Goldman, Editor of the Oxford Dictionary of National Biography, and Fellow and Tutor in Modern History at St Peter’s College, Oxford, is the first of five eminent biographers and academics specializing in textual scholarship and electronic editing who will be visiting the NCB in 2012.

During his stay, from 23 January until 12 April, Dr Goldman will be conducting

**Study at NCB**

A number of people have already enrolled in the Master of Biographical Research and Writing, offered for the first time next year.

The Masters aims to equip students with a thorough theoretical and critical grounding in biography, and with the skills and opportunity to undertake their own biographical projects.

Subjects offered include Writing Biography, Reading and Writing History, Biographical Practices and an ADB Internship.


Peter Stanley, head of the Centre for Historical Research at the National Museum of Australia, is a member of the ADB’s Commonwealth Working Party. His most recent book, *Digger Smith and Australia’s Great War* (2011), tells the stories of some of the many people with the surname Smith who fought and died, nursed the wounded, spoke out against conscription, penned patriotic doggerel and served as war artists (Grace Cossington Smith) during World War I.
NEWS (cont'd)

research and discussing future collaborative work between the ODNB and the ADB. He is keen to discuss the issue of ‘national identity’ in the ODNB and the many problems and issues involved in national dictionaries.

In Professor Goldman’s wake will come: Associate Professor Lawrence Peskin, and Professors Peter Robinson, Jeremy Popkin and Margaretta Jolly.

Australian National Dictionary Centre

Dr Bruce Moore has retired as the head of the Australian National Dictionary Centre, based at the ANU. The Director of the NCB, Professor Melanie Nolan, will meet with the Centre’s new head, Associate Professor Sarah Ogilvie, in January to discuss future collaboration and issues of mutual interest. Sarah is presently the Alice Tong Sze Research Fellow at the University of Cambridge.

More to Scanning Than Meets the Eye

The NCB’s Scanning Facility has been operating for almost a year and is attracting a number of jobs. Our latest project involves scanning children’s books written in Indigenous languages, so that they can be preserved and made more widely available.

Most of us are used to simply pressing a button on a photocopier to produce passable scanned material. The production of archival quality searchable pdfs, however, requires far greater skills.

Max Korolev, our digitisation officer, is a skilled photographer and is adept at manipulating photographs to produce images that are sharp, have good colour balance and are free of blemishes. He has also spent weeks training ABBYY Finereader, the Optical Character Recognition package used by the NCB, to accurately read different qualities of text in an effort to reduce the error rate.

Anyone contemplating a digitising project is welcome to discuss it with us. We can be contacted at (02) 6125 4146 or ncb@anu.edu.au

Biography Reading Group

Dr Elizabeth Morrison discussed writing the biography of David Syme at the Biography Reading Group meeting in November.

This year’s sessions have seen Adjunct Professor Stephen Foster explore the difficulties of researching several generations of the Macpherson family across several continents; Dr Martin Thomas talking about R. H. Mathews, a surveyor and self-taught anthropologist, who left little in the way of diaries or papers upon which to construct a life story; Associate Professor Philip Dwyer grappling with the issue of character development over time of his subject, Napoleon; Professor Jenny Hocking talking about the perils of writing about a subject who is still alive, Gough Whitlam; Peter Rose musing about family memoir; Gideon Haigh on sports biography and Dr Sheridan Palmer discussing writing the biography of the recently deceased art historian, Bernard Smith.

The BRG will not be meeting next year. Instead we will be holding a series of seminars and events throughout the year. We hope that those of you in Canberra will be able to join us in at least some of these activities and will keep the rest of you informed about them via our newsletter and website.

ANU.Lives

Two titles are appearing in this years’ ANU.Lives biography series published by the ANU EPress:

Geoff Gray, Doug Munro, and Christine Winter (eds), Scholars at War: Australasian Social Scientists, 1939-1945

Karen Fox, Maori and Aboriginal Women in the Public Eye: Representing Difference, 1950-2000

The Editorial Board of ANU.Lives, convened by NCB Director, Professor Melanie Nolan, welcomes lively, engaging and provocative manuscripts intended to appeal to the current popular and scholarly interest in biography, memoir and autobiography.

Deaths of ADB Authors

It is with sadness that we note the deaths, that were reported to us this year, of the following ADB authors:

Margriet Roe
Neville Petersen
M. J. Norst
Averi Fink
Charles Campbell
Warren Perry
John Leckey
Anthia Kerr
F. J. Kendall
T. P. Boland
Gordon Keys Smith
Bill Kent
Marianne Eastgate
Nancy Flannery (Whittle)
Zelman Cowen
Ruth Frappell (Teale)
John Eddy
Greg McMinn
Betty Crouchley

Obituaries for Zelman Cowen, Ruth Frappell, John Eddy and Greg McMinn have been included in Obituaries Australia. We welcome obituaries for our other authors.

NLA Biography Files

The NCB is having discussions with the National Library about digitising the 60,000 biography files held by the library and making them available to researchers via the NCB’s websites.

From 1960 to 2000 the NLA clipped biographical items from the major State newspapers as well as significant articles in other papers and magazines.
NCB PhD candidate, Jacqui Donegan, is happy to be enjoying a quiet Australian summer after an adventurous time at Harvard University. Jacqui, who is examining technology transfer between Australian and American confectionery manufacturers, recently completed the Alfred D. Chandler Jnr Travel Fellowship at Harvard Business School.

“Harvard was a very rich and rewarding, intense experience,” she said. “I’ve come away with new ways of looking at my topic and, of course, an enormous research haul that I’m looking forward to writing up over the Christmas break.”

During her fellowship, Jacqui was based at the Baker Library, where she attended history seminars and accessed rare archival sources, such as the papers of Alfred D. Chandler Jnr. She also visited research locations throughout the US, including Chicago and Baltimore, and met with academics at the Australian Studies Center at Harvard.

She reports that everyone was very welcoming and eager to contribute to her work. “As a result, I was able to answer my research questions very quickly and corroborate the American end of my thesis.

“Business records in Australia indicate that establishing a glucose industry in Australia in 1914 ‘saved’ our confectionery industry from collapse during the sugar shortages that were intensified by World War I, and American documents unreservedly support this view. After the formal dissolution of US business trusts, American glucose manufacturers were more than happy to offload their surplus plant and personnel to Australia.

“Obtaining the requisite technology was one large aspect of setting up the new industry, but getting Australian consumers to accept a new ‘sugar’ in their jam and sweets was another matter. This required further adoption of American business models, mainly the use of lobbying, public relations and marketing.”

The NCB currently has seven PhD students. Our first students, including Jacqui Donegan, will be submitting their theses in 2012. Niki Francis recently completed her mid-term review

by Niki Francis

My thesis is a roller-coaster ride with a momentum of its own. I recently ticked off the mid-term review requirement—a major milestone—and I expected a sense of relief but instead anti-climax derailed me. The people around me nudged me back on track—unaware their quiet support urges me forward. The thesis continued to metamorphose into something that makes sense and my world regained a rosy hue.

At the higher degree research students’ induction shortly after I enrolled, speakers emphasised the importance of the research community but I was challenged to find such community. I think communities often resemble families in that they do not always function in the way we would like or need. In response we can create our own. I adopted The Wizard of Oz’s Dorothy Gale as a role model. She plans, strategises, and with the help of friends overcomes obstacles; Dorothy eventually reaches her goal but achieves this only with the assistance and friendship of characters she meets on her journey.

The PhD thesis journey can feel like a solitary process but I believe it need not always be the lonely journey it sometimes seems. I keep a running list of people whom I will acknowledge in that far-off day when I have actually written the thesis. After a year-and-a-half the list is as long as both my arms and includes my supervisory panel, administrative staff who help with the bureaucratic processes, interviewees, random people met by chance who point me in new directions with ideas, references or book suggestions, and the people around me—my family, NCB colleagues and some of my fellow PhD candidates in the School of History and across the university who are willing to get together and engage about research, let off steam, reassure/be reassured, or just enjoy some plain old fun.

Dorothy’s Toto, Lion, Tin Woodsman, Glinda and Scarecrow and others accompany her. My fellow travellers include Peacekeeper, Husband, Marxist Historian, Pirate, Barcode and a myriad of others. In the end I am the one who writes the thesis but I recognise I can only do it with the supportive and fun people I meet on my journey.
FAREWELL

The ADB bids farewell to two of its longest serving staff on 24 December.

Dr Barbara Dawson joined the ADB in 1999, working part time as a researcher while completing her PhD. In 2007 she became Commonwealth desk editor.

Pam Crichton joined us in April 2002 as desk editor for New South Wales.

We wish them both a long and happy retirement.

Pam and Barbara with Melanie Nolan at their farewell

Like Pam, Barbara Dawson is a graduate of the ANU—taking a degree a decade: Litt.B. in 1985; MA in 1997; and PhD in 2008.

She trained originally as a physiotherapist but has also been a tutor, a curator at the National Museum of Australia, and worked with Adjunct Professor Stephen Foster at Australian Heritage Projects where she helped to compile Federation: The Guide to Records. She has also served for many years as a board member of St John’s Schoolhouse Museum in Reid and has been a councillor of the Canberra & District Historical Society.

Barbara joined the ADB in 1999 as a research assistant for the small States desk. She was offered the job of a desk editor numerous times but only took up that challenge after completing her PhD thesis in 2007 — working since then as the Commonwealth desk editor.

She has particularly enjoyed unravelling the intrigues and complexities involved in editing the entries of Federal politicians and cites as three favourite articles: William McKell, the boilermaker who became Governor-General, Lionel Murphy and Billy McMahon.

Barbara will continue her association with the ANU’s School of History as a Department Visitor and has plans to rework her thesis into a book and to publish a number of articles arising from her research.

Pam Crichton’s work on volumes 17 and 18 of the ADB has covered many colourful characters—subjects and authors.

Subjects have ranged from Michael Bialoguski of Petrov fame to Frank Theeman, who was suspected of involvement in the disappearance of Juanita Nielsen (who is also in the ADB), to the infamous criminals, George Freeman and Robert Trimbole, recently portrayed in the Underbelly TV series.

Pam rates Clarence the Clocker (race course clocker, Arthur Davies) as one of her favourite entries. One of her most interesting was Charles Hyland, the Duck Feather King, who was held captive for nine months by the Vietcong during the height of the Vietnam War but bore no resentment towards them afterwards.

Pam has had a long association with the ANU, as an undergraduate and, from 1971, a researcher in Political Science and History. The place won’t be the same without her.
The NCB is holding a symposium on 9 February 2012 to celebrate the launch of the books of NCB staff, Drs Rani Kerin and Karen Fox, and to recognise the success of ANU history graduates in publishing their PhD theses.


Since 2000 at least sixteen graduates from the School of History have published their PhDs as monographs. This is an impressive achievement, especially in the current publishing climate where aspiring academic authors receive little encouragement from publishers and are often actively discouraged from attempting the task.

Rani and Karen have invited a number of recently published graduates to speak about their experiences and to offer advice to current students.

Speakers at the symposium will include Kirsty Douglas, Tiffany Shellam, Emily O’Gorman, Merridee Bailey, John Thompson and Amanda Laugesen.

In stark contrast to much of the existing literature on turning a thesis into a book, the half-day symposium will offer personal, reflective and positive stories.

Every new author has a different experience; the hope is that in telling their stories of how it was done some common themes will emerge. An anticipated outcome of the symposium will be a collection of reflective essays providing answers to that persistent question, ‘How did you do it—how did you turn your thesis into a book?’

Numbers for the symposium will be limited and priority will be given to currently enrolled postgraduate students in the ANU’s School of History.

Following the symposium participants will be invited to join Rani and Karen and friends for their joint book launch at the Co-op Bookshop, ANU.

**DETAILS**

‘From (History) Thesis to Book: A Symposium and Celebration’

**SYMPOSIUM:** 1.30-4.30pm
McDonald Room, Menzies Library

**BOOK LAUNCH:** Book Co-op, 5.00 for 5.30pm

**INQUIRIES:** rani.kerin@anu.edu.au or karen.fox@anu.edu.au
The database is being constructed on prosopographical principles. Prosopography has been defined as the history of groups as elements in political and social history, achieved by isolating series of persons having certain political or social characteristics in common and then analyzing each series in terms of multiple criteria, in order both to obtain information specific to individuals and to identify the constants and the variables among the data for whole groups.

Some years later I developed an interest in the law, and found no reference provided basic details on all of Australia’s judges (Judge Macoboy of Victoria’s County Court was immortalised in “The Wild Colonial Boy” but is sadly missing from standard reference works; the “Boy” made it into the ADB). Taking the ANU Press series as an exemplar, I sought to plug the gap with a biographical register of Australia’s judiciary (largely complete but never published).

Earlier this year I lighted on the idea of a broad-based register that would include members of all Australian parliaments and the judiciary in a single source that extended to other positions of power and influence in government and the private sector. I am familiar with relational databases from my work in economic research, so it seemed natural to me that such a register would be most useful in the form of a database rather than a printed reference source.

The Western Australian Legislature was the first in a series of biographical registers of parliamentarians published by ANU Press in the 1960s

**Database Coverage**

The positions provisionally identified for coverage are:

- Members of colonial, state and Commonwealth parliaments
- Judges of superior and intermediate courts
- Permanent heads of government departments, holders of statutory offices, heads of Australian diplomatic missions overseas, and other high-level public officials
- Defence Force officers with the rank of brigadier (or equivalent) or higher
- Fellows of the learned academies, and full professors in the universities
- Higher clergy of the major churches
- Directors and chief executives of the largest companies
- Members of selected private clubs (probably one club in each capital city)
- Australian knights, dames, companions and commanders of Imperial orders

The database is limited to inclusion of individuals who attained an elite position prior to the end of 1972. The principal reason for not extending it to the present is the expansion, fragmentation and eclipse of institutions—in government, business and elsewhere—that began to accelerate in the seventies (and still continues), which makes identification of elite positions increasingly difficult for more recent periods. A further reason for choosing a cut-off date a few decades past is that some important sources are unavailable for more recent periods.

**Constructing the Database**

The process of constructing the database involves two distinct phases.

The first phase starts with selecting the positions to be included, then identifying the individuals who have held the positions. Much of this can be done using standard reference works, some of which are online.

In the first phase, the information captured for each individual is minimal: full name, titles, and dates of birth and death. However, the critical function of the database is to link individuals to positions, and to other individuals in the database with whom they have a known familial relationship.

The positions are identified with high specificity: for example, ‘Member of the House of Representatives for Werriwa’ (rather than just ‘member of parliament’), or ‘Professor of Anatomy...
in the University of Sydney’ (rather than just ‘university professor’).

As the source material is rich in exact dates (day, month and year), the database is designed to use this level of detail whenever possible. This enables automatic calculations, such as: lifespan (using birth and death dates); age at attainment and leaving of each position; and duration in each position. The extensive use of dates enables a number of useful searches on this database that are not practicable with existing reference sources.

The database will provide links to websites such as the ADB and Obituaries Australia, and references to printed sources, so that detailed biographical information will be readily found for most entries. However, in its first phase the database itself will have minimal biographical detail.

The second phase is a process of enriching the entries with biographical data. The type and extent of this data are still open, and will depend heavily on data availability. In addition to standard details of family, education and career, they might extend to geographical information (for example, places of residence and work and major property ownership) and financial information (such as salaries and value of estate) expressed both in original values and on a common basis (eg, 2011 dollars) to enable comparison between individuals widely separated by time.

Progress and Prospects

Work is well advanced on identifying holders of the selected positions, and basic identifying information on around 5000 individuals has been entered in spreadsheets.

The next task will be building a pilot database, to contain all the first-phase content for positions in the Commonwealth Parliament, and for the 1000 individuals who held those positions. This will establish the viability of the approach, help to identify pitfalls and limitations, and serve as a template for a full-scale database. I hope to have this pilot project completed early in 2012. Completion of the whole of the first phase is likely to take one to two years, and at that point I plan to publish the database and its underlying data online.

The timing of the second phase will depend on the availability of my time, access to source material, and coping with the technological challenges of a larger and more complex database. Most likely it will be published over a number of years, in multiple versions, with each update incorporating improvements in database and communications technology as well as additional data.

I am conscious that the usefulness of the database will increase as the number and variety of searches which can be made on it increase.

The Database of Australian Elites will include all parliamentarians, judges, public service departmental heads, senior defence officers, professors and fellows of the learned academies, senior executives, and Australians who have received high honours

Comparison with ADB and Obituaries Australia

I noted above the plan to use a high level of specificity in relation to positions and dates. This in itself provides more detail on positions than is usually captured in ADB and Obituaries Australia.

A complete view of an institution based on its population of officeholders requires (ideally) taking into account all holders, however obscure to history they might be. But as ADB is necessarily selective in its coverage (and uses different criteria for inclusion), it does not capture all the individuals in scope of the proposed database. Here are my estimates of ADB’s coverage of a few positions (the percentages calculated here are of holders of the positions who died no later than 1990, and thus fell within the temporal scope of ADB up to volume 18):

- Members of the Commonwealth Parliament: 58 per cent
- Members of the Victorian Parliament: 42 per cent
- Members of the Western Australian Parliament: 29 per cent
- Judges of superior and intermediate courts: 55 per cent
- Professors in the University of Melbourne: 83 per cent
- Brigadiers (and equivalent) and higher ranks in the Defence Force: around 55 per cent

A sampling of entries in Obituaries Australia indicates that around 17 per cent of them relate to holders of positions intended for my database – around 500 people in entries currently online. With many thousands of database entries outside the scope of ADB, that leaves a large gap to bridge, at least in the near term.

But those numbers may obscure the difference in focus and purpose of my database, compared with the existing sources. The elites database is not focused on the lives of individuals but on the links between individuals and the positions they held. Despite the similarity in subject-matter, it will complement rather than seek to replicate the invaluable ADB and its related projects.

Richard Harrison is a private researcher based in Melbourne. He edited The Australian Investors’ Dictionary (2003) while working in the stockbroking industry and is currently studying law. He can be contacted at: rh@rhharrison.com
The Oxford Dictionary of National Biography has invited the NCB to help celebrate next year’s Olympic Games in London by naming nine great Australian Olympians in the ADB to be put alongside lists from the ODNB and the American National Biography

by Christine Fernon

There are 31 Olympians in the ADB. Swimming – a sport in which we have always excelled – is our single largest category of Olympians, and 29 of the 31 are men.

First place in my list of nine great Olympians goes to athlete, Edwin Flack, the first Australian to win a gold medal at an Olympic Games. Competing in the 1896 Games, he won both the 800 and 1500 metres and then put his name down for the marathon even though he had never run that distance. After taking the lead at the 32 kilometre mark of the race, he began to sway and stagger and was eventually brought into the Olympic stadium by ambulance. He was afterwards hailed as the symbol of the Olympic spirit.

Places two and third are reserved for the ADB’s only women Olympians, Franny Durack and Clara Dennis, who were also the first and second Australian women to win gold medals. Fanny Durack won her medal in 1912 for the 100 metres freestyle, the only individual event that was open to women. A week before the 1920 Olympics she had an appendectomy, followed by typhoid fever and pneumonia, and was forced to withdraw. She retired from competitive swimming the following year after having broken 12 world records. In 1932 fellow swimmer, Clara Dennis, won a gold medal in the 200 metres breaststroke and caused a minor sensation by almost being disqualified in her heats for showing ‘too much shoulder blade’.

Frank Beaurepaire and Andrew (Boy) Charlton, who are both still household names, are fourth and fifth on my list. Though he never won an Olympic gold medal, Beaurepaire held 15 world swimming records over his long career and competed in Olympic Games from 1908 to 1924. He went on to build a successful business, Beaurepaire Tyre Service, was Lord Mayor of Melbourne (1940-42) and a Member of the Victorian Legislative Council (1942-52).

My final four nominations are: Frederick Kelly, a member of the rowing team that won a gold medal at the 1908 Olympics. His rowing was described as having a natural sense of poise and rhythm. He later used those same attributes to become an accomplished musician.

Hurdler, Gary Knoke, represented Australia in the 1964, 1968 and 1972 Olympics. In his semi-final in Munich, West Germany, in 1972, he mistook an echo of the starter’s gun for a recall and slowed to a walk before realising his error. Not surprisingly he didn’t make the final. Thereafter, any Australian athlete doing likewise, or missing the start, was said to have ‘done a Knoke’.

Edward Scarf, a butcher, won Australia’s first Olympic medal (a bronze) in wrestling at the 1932 Olympics. Turning professional in 1938, he was nicknamed ‘The Butch’ and was said to have created a new hold which looked as if he was ‘trussing a side of beef in his butcher’s shop’.

Cyclist, Edward Russell Mockridge, entered his first bicycle race in 1946 on an old roadster. He won and two years later represented Australia at the Olympics where his bike suffered two punctures and he was unplaced. In 1952 he won gold medals in the 1000-metre time trial and, with Lionel Cox, the 2000-metre tandem. While on a training ride in Melbourne in 1958 he was struck by a bus and killed.

This then is my list—in true ADB tradition a balance of excellence, representativeness and human interest. If you disagree with my picks you are welcome to send in your own for consideration before we make our final nominations early next year.

Christine Fernon is the NCB’s Online Manager
We haven’t quite reached our target of loading 3000 obituaries this year but the year is not over yet!

While at the beginning of the year we mostly had to source and correct obituaries ourselves from the National Library’s digitised newspapers, we are now in the happy position of having a steady supply of corrected obituaries sent to us. We have also received a number of obituaries that were published this year and hope to improve on this coverage next year.

Often the obituaries are sent to us by descendants, who also assist with the indexing. There are also a number of people who are offering continued assistance for which we are very grateful. Judith Ballard, a former school principal and skilled family historian, is helping us find birth years/places for the many obituaries that are missing that information.

Attila Ürményházi recently sent us 18 profiles he has written of deceased Hungarian migrants, many of whom arrived in Australia as displaced persons after World War II. It is fascinating to read the often ‘rags to riches’ stories of these men and the many contributions they have made to the ‘Australian way of life’. Stephen Ferencz, for example, established the first yoghurt factory in Tasmania.

Attila is, himself, one of the successful migrant stories that he writes about along with many others. Colin has no preferences when looking for obituaries. After finding obituaries for as many family members as he can, he says he “reels in his line and casts it once more into the deep of the Trove [digitised newspapers] ocean, perhaps to land an artist or a judge or a polo player or a scoundrel or a soldier who died in the Great War. They all have a story to tell.”

### Labour Australia

The NCB has begun transferring the 2200 records of the Biographical Register of the Australian Labour Movement to its newest website, Labour Australia. The records will be indexed using the same fields as Obituaries Australia and the ADB to enable researchers to conduct searches across all three websites.

Associate Professor Andrew Moore and Professor John Shields, who developed the Register, will continue to act as consultants in the development of the site.

Labour Australia will be launched on 1 May (May Day) next year.
FINDING SUTTIE

PAM CRICHTON describes the highs and lows of researching an ADB entry

Some ADB authors do such good research that they end up writing a book after aiming originally for 500 or 1000 words. Some of our subjects, however, are more elusive and the work of one person is insufficient to trace them. When I suggested earlier this year that I could write the entry on Gladys Sutcliffe (1900-1990), lawn bowler, for volume 18—due to the illness of the original author—I naively thought that, with the abundance of material already on file, I could write the article in half a day. Weeks turned into months... and I was still desperately searching for information.

Twenty years ago Chris Cunneen, and his cohort at the ADB, did a lot of work on Gladys. Thanks to the chairman of historians at the NSW Women’s Bowling Association, Sutcliffe’s sporting achievements were clear. With more difficulty birth and marriage certificates were obtained. After tracing her movements in Australia Chris found her place of death to be New Zealand but we had no date.

With those details settled I wanted to know where she was educated and started by contacting the Catholic school in Tatura, where she was born. Why? A colleague asked. Because I can, was my answer (thanks to the web I was able to find the school’s email address). I drew a blank so approached the state school. A kind person there, when she could not find Gladys’s enrolment, emailed the surrounding tiny rural schools. Two days later someone from Harston rang me – voila! We had the years and place of Gladys’s education.

Fay, the ADB’s Melbourne researcher, was able to produce newspaper accounts of Sutcliffe’s wedding. Ask me anything about her dress, the flowers, the caterer... But, sadly, there was nothing in the paper about her job at the time. Rachel, our Sydney researcher, trawled through the Manly Daily during significant periods of Sutcliffe’s life such as when she was awarded the British Empire Medal. Rachel found a tantalising mention of church and charities Sutcliffe was involved with so contacted the Presbyterian Church archives in NSW to find what information they had about her.

I also requested her ‘honours file’ from the National Archives of Australia; it was retrieved from the relevant department but contributed nothing further. Brian, our Canberra researcher, searched a Christchurch newspaper until he found her death notice—so that was finally settled also.

Gladys’s sporting fame had spread to Canberra, where a street in Nicholls is named after her. Perhaps the Canberra Place Names unit had more information? Unfortunately their extensive research only provided information we already had. This led to the surprising conclusion that I may be the world expert on Gladys Sutcliffe.

Niki, an ADB colleague who has New Zealand links, joined in on the search enthusiastically, using her contacts in Dunedin to enlarge our band of searchers. We obtained Gladys’s will, and we know a lot about the religion of her son and grandchildren, but not much more of Gladys herself. In desperation I wrote 15 blind letters to New Zealand in search of the living granddaughter, only to discover that it was more likely that she lives in the United States. Information on the Philadelphia Church of God and its history has helped to find her address—another letter was despatched.

Taking up a suggestion from Chris Cunneen, I put a plea for help in the RSVP column of the Sydney Morning Herald. When the paper published it a couple of weeks later, the search for Sutcliffe improved dramatically. Within 48 hours I had responses from the granddaughter, only to discover that it was more likely that she lives in the United States. Information on the Philadelphia Church of God and its history has helped to find her address—another letter was despatched.

For a time I wondered whether I would have enough material for ‘my’ Glad to make the ADB grade. Now, after all this help from so many people (most of whom are total strangers), she has come alive to me so much that I can dream about designing the invitations for the book launch.
Colin Choat, one of our regular contributors of obituaries, spotted this charming obituary for James Western (1865–1929), a journalist who wrote his own obituary notice 'to save trouble'. Though dealing with a tragic event, it is written with great affection and humour that is still apparent 80 years later.

There is more than one sort of hero. The quiet heroism of James Graves Western, a veteran Adelaide journalist, who died yesterday, was so unostentatious as to amount to secrecy.

Knocked down by a motor lorry and mortally injured, this extraordinarily courageous little man, whose frail figure and white hair made him seem older than his 64 years, recovered consciousness in bed at the Adelaide Hospital, insisted on getting up to take his copy to the office, and then went home to die, his only care being to keep his wife in ignorance of the fact that he had met with an accident.

Jimmy Western, as he was known to every other Adelaide journalist, was a district correspondent in the eastern suburbs. On Monday he had "covered his assignments," as the phrase goes, and at 6 p.m. was in the Parade, Norwood, about to board a tram for the city, when a motor lorry knocked him down.

He was removed to the Adelaide Hospital in the police ambulance, and was put to bed. At 8 o'clock, when he regained consciousness, his first thought was of the copy he had intended to deliver at the office, and, in spite of all remonstrances, he insisted on dressing himself and leaving the Hospital at once.

He was quite ready to sign the usual document to the effect that he left of his own volition.

News of a serious accident to James Graves Western reached the office shortly before he, himself, put in an appearance. Going up quietly to lodge his copy with the sub-editor, he created something of a sensation. No, he said, he had not been injured. He looked at the engagement book, noted what was expected of him on the following day, and departed in time to avoid further enquiry.

Returning to his home at Clark street, Norwood, he exchanged a few commonplaces with his wife, and went to bed. A few minutes afterwards there was a knock at the front door. A policeman had arrived to inform Mrs. Western that her husband had been seriously injured, and had been taken to the hospital. "Nonsense," said she. "He has just gone to bed." The constable insisted on seeing the victim of the reported accident, who airily asserted that he was all right, except for a headache. He refused to be fussed over. Perhaps he would have a cup of tea at supper time.

At midnight his condition was obviously worse, and a doctor was sent for. Early yesterday morning, the patient lapsed into a state, bordering on coma. He was hurried to the hospital, where an operation was to have been performed; but death preceded the surgeon. Jimmy Western’s last words were, ‘This will be afternoon’s news’—meaning that the afternoon paper would get it first.

He was above all things a journalist. When search was made in this office for a record of his life, a neatly labelled envelope was found in its place among hundreds of others, and, within the envelope, in the dead man’s characteristic handwriting, was this memorandum:

James Graves Western
Born September 4, 1865, at Childers street, North Adelaide.
Eldest son of the late Thomas Henry Western and Harriet Western (maiden name Graves).
Received main education at Whinham College and the old Norwood Grammar School.
Joined Advertiser staff as messenger boy at age of 16 years; served on many newspapers, among them the defunct Silver Age (Broken Hill); Daily News, Perth; West Australian, Perth; defunct Faulding’s Medical Journal; and The Register. In the days when such men as Sir William Morgan, Mr. G. W. Cotton, and C. C. Kingston were political powers, J. G. W. was a gallery reporter. He married Miss Sophia Lane, second daughter of the late Mrs. Sarah Lane. Might save trouble some night. (signed)
J. W.

The last line is too typical of the man not to be quoted, and too pathetic, in all the circumstances, to admit of comment. Beside the widow, there survive one son, Mr. James Western, of Woodville, and one daughter, Miss Sophia Western, of Clark street, Norwood.

The headline for Western’s obituary in the Register (Adelaide), 22 August 1929, p 3

**POSTSCRIPT:** The inquest into James Western’s death found that it was likely he would have died even if he had remained in hospital.
SEASON’S GREETINGS

Staff and students of the National Centre of Biography wish our readers a happy and safe Christmas and New Year

ADB CREST

We found this drawing of a crest when going through the ADB’s archival files from the late 1950s/early 1960s.

At the bottom of the drawing there is a message ‘Proposal Title Page, Decoration for the Dictionary’. The motto, not included on the drawing, says ‘Semper Superfacio’ which we’ve been told means ‘I always overachieve’.

We have no idea who drew the crest or whether there was ever a serious proposal to include it in the Dictionary.

The drawing shows a convict and a gentleman settler on either side of the shield and what looks like a hanged man, and jugs of alcohol (the Rum Rebellion?) on the top half of the shield with an outstretched hand (the creation of the welfare state?) and a sheep (the nation’s prosperity) on the lower half.

Missing are women, children and the original inhabitants!

If any readers would like to suggest a more up-to-date crest we will publish the best in the next newsletter.

A NOVEL USE OF THE ADB

The NCB was pleasantly surprised to receive an advance copy of D. Manning Richard’s book, Destiny in Sydney. On the inside cover the author had written a personal note to the ADB’s General Editor, Professor Melanie Nolan, thanking her for producing the ADB and acknowledging the extensive use he makes of the Dictionary when writing his novels about Sydney.
ADB Research Editor BARBARA DAWSON explores a life-history that can be found in our hip pockets

Have you looked at the portrait on a $50 note lately? There you will see the face of the Indigenous high-flyer, David Unaipon (1872-1967).

David Unaipon was a man of innate intelligence who, with the aid of education, was able to become an inventor and an author. Born in 1872 at the Point McLeay Mission, South Australia, the son of a congregational evangelist, David attended the mission school for six years from the age of seven. Afterwards, he learned boot making, but education led him to other fields. He loved music and he played the organ; he read widely, becoming interested in philosophy and science.

By 1909 Unaipon had developed and patented a modified handpiece for shearing. During the following 35 years he made patent applications for nine other inventions, including a centrifugal motor, a multi-radial wheel and a mechanical propulsion device. He was obsessed with discovering the secret of perpetual motion.

Influenced by the classics and by his research into Egyptology at the South Australian Museum, Unaipon studied Aboriginal mythology. In the 1920s he compiled his versions of legends, published in the Sydney Daily Telegraph beginning on 2 August 1924. William Ramsay Smith published them, without acknowledgment, as Myths and Legends of the Australian Aboriginals (London, 1930). Unaipon published poetry in the 1930s and more legends in the 1960s.

During his long life, Unaipon travelled throughout southeastern Australia, urging the need for better conditions for Indigenous people. The best-known Indigenous Australian in the 1920s, he became his people’s spokesman and appeared before two Royal Commissions into the treatment of the First Australians. Unaipon was a preacher, and he gave lectures and sermons in churches and cathedrals of different denominations. He also spoke at schools and to learned societies on Aboriginal legends and customs. He was still preaching at 87.

In his 90s Unaipon worked on his inventions at Point McLeay, convinced that he was close to discovering the secret of perpetual motion. He died aged 94 on 7 February 1967.

Visit the Australian Dictionary of Biography at adb.anu.edu.au to read David Unaipon’s biography as well as those of 163 other Indigenous Australians.

The editor of the ANU Reporter invited the National Centre of Biography to contribute a series of columns on subjects in the Australian Dictionary of Biography which would be of interest to its readers.

This is the most recent of the columns appearing in the series ‘Life Sentences’.

ARTHUR PHILLIP BICENTENARY

The Britain-Australia Society (UK) is raising funds to erect a memorial in honour of Admiral Arthur Phillip, Captain General of the First Fleet and first governor of New South Wales.

The memorial will be unveiled in 2014, to mark the bicentenary of Phillip’s death, and will be located in the grounds of the Bath Assembly Rooms, almost directly opposite the house which Phillip owned, and lived in with his wife Isabella, at the time of his death.

The Dean of Westminster has also agreed to lay a large stone in the Abbey floor in Phillip’s memory while the parish church at Bathampton, where Phillip and his wife are buried, will display the story of his command of the First Fleet.

For further information about the planned celebrations visit http://www.britozwest.org.uk/
The NCB’s computer programmer, Scott Yeadon, has developed a family tree chart, which can be accessed from ADB and OA entries, that shows the relationships between immediate family members.

Mapping the relationships between family groups is more complex. Scott has been experimenting with various visualisation tools available on the web. This chart is one result. It shows the familial relationships of all the entries in OA.

The bottom rungs show people who have one other family member in OA. The graph gets progressively more complex in relation to the number of family members and connections with other families. The top row shows the most complex family relationships and includes (from left) the NSW Dangar and Fairfax families with a link showing the connection by marriage between the two. The next two connected graphs are the Stephens and Suttor families. The fourth (middle), rather messy graph, shows the complex interconnectedness between prominent West Australian families whose obituaries we have so far collected.

While this graph is an interesting take on OA we are still looking for tools which can clearly and dynamically display complex family relationships at both the micro and macro level.