

FRIENDS OF THE NOEL BUTLIN ARCHIVES CENTRE INC.

NEWSLETTER

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Michael Saclier in the manner of a big game hunter, packing archives of the Builders Labourers' Federation, Federal Office, Melbourne, 1990.

Dear Friends,

Sadly, Michael Saclier, the longest serving NBAC Archives Officer, passed away on 3 April, aged 82, a casualty of the corona virus (COVID19).

Michael was the fourth NBAC Archives Officer, 1972-1997, following Bruce Shields, John Joseph Jones

and Bob Sharman. Michael directed the relocation of the Archives from the Coombs Building to Acton Underhill, updated its administrative arrangements, including the introduction of digital tools, and initiated the renaming of the Archives in honour of Noel Butlin. Over his time as Archives Officer, Michael oversaw the expansion of the Archives' holdings from 1,200 to 13,000 shelf metres to accommodate records of the Australian trade union movement and companies such as Dalgety, CSR and Tooth & Co.

Amidst these activities, Michael would routinely preside over genial and sometimes earnest discussions at morning and afternoon teas, enjoyed and appreciated by staff, readers and visitors to the Archives. Occasionally, when a member of staff brewed a particularly fine pot of coffee, Michael would pronounce, 'Free her!' (or him, as the case may be). Associate Professor Bobbie Oliver (UWA) wrote to the Friends:

I remember Michael well and the wonderful atmosphere at the archives at Acton Underhill. As a doctoral student in the latter 1980s, I felt very much at home and enjoyed times in the tearoom with staff and other scholars. It was a warm, welcoming and nicely informal place compared with other archives around the country (where there were locked doors, glass partitions etc).

Professor John Weaver has also written a tribute to Michael, recalling the atmosphere Michael created at the Archives, which is printed below.

Michael was instrumental in the establishment of the Australian Society of Archivists and was its first President from 1975 to 1977. He was respected by his staff, readers, depositors and his archival colleagues, who awarded him life membership of the ASA in recognition of his unique contribution to the profession.

Michael's passing will be mourned by his colleagues, former staff and the users, friends and supporters of the NBAC. We wish to convey our deepest sympathy and condolences to his wife, Wendy, and family.

A commemoration and celebration of Michael's life will be held at a future date.

Ewan Maidment,
FNBAC Secretary

On Michael Saclier and Acton Underhill

*John Weaver, Professor of History,
McMaster University, Ontario, Canada*

In 1991, Michael and the cordial staff at Acton Underhill not only changed the course of my academic career but formed the happiest of memories. My initial goal in coming as a visiting scholar to ANU had been to study housing history, more precisely home ownership and mortgage finance, subjects that I had covered for Canada. Pat Troy hosted my visit of June-August, setting me up in the Research School of Social Sciences. One morning over the obligatory RSSS tea break, Pat suggested that I investigate the holdings of Noel Butlin Archives. My notes from that period remark that on 8 July 'I shifted my research from the law library to the ANU Archives of Business and Labour. I was met by a Helen C. [Creagh] who introduced me to a Michael S. who described the extensive collection of urban and pastoral (very large) mortgage lending firms. The archives are in a spacious and weird location, underground in a bunker-like former garage.'

'9 July: Good material on land speculation in the ABL bunker.'

'10 July: Joan and I went for lunch in Queanbeyan with former McMaster Professor Hans Mol. Got back to the ABL at 4:30 and took a ribbing from MS about the long lunch.' I thought that I was merely following local custom.

Michael nudged me to spend time with the pastoral companies. I did. Something clicked and, aware of the Mabo decision, I began to think about land, property rights, native title, squatting, and colonization. The next year I pursued the colonization topic in Canadian archives but returned to Acton Underhill in October-November 1993 and plunged into the bank and bankruptcy records of the Melbourne boom and bust, assisted by a fine Canberra research assistant Janine Bush. Thanks to Michael, Maureen Purtell, Ewan Maidment, Pennie Pemberton and other staff members, I had serious but also humorous educational sessions during tea breaks and joined their Melbourne Cup pool where I learned the wisdom of backing the Irish horse. During that period, I was introduced to more Australian history by an energetic, clever, economic geographer, Peter Griggs who was working on a history of the sugar industry in Australia. We struck up a friendship that continues. Peter's magisterial *Global History, Local Innovation: The History of Cane Sugar in Australia, 1820-1995* is a model of business history informed by the riches he discovered 'in the countless boxes of CSR records from *the tunnel*.' Coming to Canberra in the coldest months (where was the heating in Acton Underhill?), we were warmed by a cuppa and cordiality.

In the following years, I would occasionally receive an e-mail from Michael. 'Where are you? How are you?'

That first day at Acton Underhill altered my career and more. A decade later, McGill-Queen's University Press published *The Great Land Rush and the Making of the Modern World*. Michael's nudge, pride in holdings, changed more than he or I could have imagined. A belated thank you.

FNBAC Officers & Committee Members 2020

The following officers and Committee members were elected at the AGM on 3 December 2019:

Patron: Professor Stuart Macintyre

Chair: Professor Bruce Scates

Deputy Chair: Anne Piggott

Secretary: Ewan Maidment

Treasurer: Maggie Shapley

Committee members: John Myrtle, Carol McNally, Colleen McEwen and Debra Leigo

Ex officio: Kathryn Dan (ANU Archivist)

Public Officer: Colleen McEwen

Conservation Fund Committee: – Associate Professor Mark Wilson and Associate Professor Keturah Whitford, both from the ANU College of Business and Economics, Colleen McEwen (Convenor), Maggie Shapley and Carol McNally.

Many thanks are due to Eileen Boydew and Shirley Sullivan who retired from the committee at the AGM after many years of committed support for the Friends.

Chairperson's report to FNBAC AGM, 3 December 2019

Professor Bruce Scates

FNBAC Chairperson

The Chair's report for 2018 noted that the ANU Archives faced a 'difficult period of transition', with 'major change' to the staff (including the retirement of University Archivist Maggie Shapley and long serving archivists, Margaret Avard and Christine Bryan). As 2019 draws to a close, it is apparent that the Archives have dealt with the challenges of transition exceedingly well. Kathryn Dan, Sarah Lethbridge and their colleagues have processed a large number of valuable new acquisitions, the digitisation and conservation program has ensured the preservation and accessibility of key archival holdings and both the Archives' exhibitions and its Reading Rooms have attracted high rates of visitation. Of particular note is the success of the Archives' public outreach program, profiling the University's outstanding holdings both within Canberra and beyond. This includes the showcasing of the Tooth and Company material - Catherine Ziegler featuring on several radio interviews and preparing a special presentation for the ACT Heritage Festival in the former Hotel Ainslie.

The FNBAC faced significant challenges of our own. We were deeply saddened by the loss of long time member and supporter, Elaine Eccleston in February. In

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October, Victor Isaacs, a stalwart member of our committee, long serving Public Officer and a past President of the Canberra Branch of the Australian Society for the Study of Labour History, also passed away. In both cases, the Friends sent messages of consolation to friends and family. There was also considerable change in Committee Membership. On the retirement of Michael Piggott at the AGM in 2017, Ewan Maidment capably took on the role of Chair. He vacated this position when I was appointed Chair in December last year but has continued to serve on the executive, both as an energetic secretary and a mentor to me in a very new role. I record my appreciation to Ewan for all his encouragement and advice. I am equally grateful to Anne Piggott, who took on the post of Deputy Chair in February 2019 and who played a key role during my absence (on University business) overseas. Particular thanks are also due to Colleen McEwen, who replaced Victor Isaacs as our Public Officer in October and has capably overseen an active and ambitious conservation agenda and to Maggie Shapley who has carefully monitored our finances. Thanks are due to the Friends committee members, all of whom have supported the Friends in their respective and often demanding roles.

Membership has remained stable, at about 63 current members. There were five Committee meetings through the course of the year, in February, April, June and August and October, one more meeting than in 2018.

Through the course of the year the Committee considered quotations for the repair and restoration of several 19th Century trade union minute books, and recommended continuing to use the services of the firm, 'Art and Archival'. The Conservation Fund, managed by the Friends, was bolstered by generous donations from Anne and Michael Piggott, Dr Thomas Mautner, the Australian Manufacturing Workers' Union and an anonymous pair of donors. These and other donations assisted work on the Fremantle Lumpers' Union minute book, 1891-1893 (N28/1) and the United Furniture Trades Association of Victoria minute book, 1881-1888 (T58/1/4). Conservation work is also underway on other significant pre-Federation records, including the Tinsmiths and Sheet Iron Workers of NSW minute books, 1888-1892 and 1896-1901 (T23/1/3 & T23/1/1).

The Friends' flagship event, the ANU Archives Annual Lecture, was held on 10 September 2019. The eighteenth Annual Lecture to date (the series began in 2003) was delivered by historian and political biographer, Emeritus Professor Jenny Hocking, her topic being 'Archival Secrets and Hidden Histories: Reasserting the Right to Public Access'. The Lecture was well delivered and well received. There were 137 acceptances, and at least 100 people turned up on the night. The lecture attracted a diverse audience - historians, lawyers and archivists, including several staff from the National Archives of Australia. The presence

of the latter was especially appreciated, given that NAA is keeper of 'The Palace Papers', the subject of Jenny Hocking's spirited address. An account of the lecture is included in the last newsletter (No 45, December 2019). Of particular note is the Archives and Friends success in attracting enough of an audience to match the venue, the capacious lecture theatre of the Australian Centre for China in the World and that audience has been further extended by featuring the lecture on line. The publicity campaign and informal communications worked well, aided by the Australian Society of Archivists, the Canberra Labour History Society, the Department of History (CASS, ANU), the National Library of Australia, the Australian War Memorial and the NAA. Having said that, the Theatre offered a far less 'intimate' space than previous venues and several attendees reported problems with the sound system. Particular thanks are due to Sarah Lethbridge, who initially suggested Jenny Hocking as a speaker; Kathryn Dan, who took on the time-consuming task of organising an appropriate time and venue; and Deputy Chair of the FNBAC, Anne Piggott, who represented the Friends during the proceedings.

The FNBAC Newsletter edited by Ewan Maidment, was issued in June and November respectively. Issue 44 included thoughtful reflections on the impact the floods of February 2018 had on the University Library (by University Librarian Roxanne Missingham); a fascinating inquiry into the light early trade union records throw on now largely 'Forgotten Trades' (by Rachel Armstrong and Beth Lonergan); and Colleen McEwen's engaging summary of the 2018 NBAC Lecture by Professor Simon Ville. The December 2019 issue featured Kathryn Dan's account of the digitisation of Burns Philp and Company records, including some 11,000 staff records. As Kathryn ably illustrates, this has proved 'a rich source for those studying biography, family history, business history and social change'. The Burns Philp papers were profiled in one of several well-attended exhibitions fielded by the ANU Archives throughout the year. From March through to May the Archives hosted an exhibition of the University's extensive holdings on the Spanish Civil War: Catherine Ziegler's richly-illustrated and painstakingly-researched article in issue 45 of the newsletter outlines the same. As in the past, the newsletter carries a summary of the Annual Lecture, a recording of which (as earlier noted) is now available on line.

One of the most heartening developments this year has been the increased use of Archives by researchers. On a number of occasions, Kathryn reported that the reading room was 'completely occupied' and the number of items requested has 'increased significantly' (as much as doubling in June/August this year). This is due in no small part to the patronage of a dedicated coterie of young labour historians, and it seems appropriate that this year's AGM will conclude with an address by one

of them, Josh Black. Josh is researching his PhD in the School of History at the ANU – a prompt to acknowledge the generous support the School (and its Head, Frank Bongiorno AM) have extended to the Friends. On that note the FNABC was pleased to note Frank's Australia Day Award for his 'significant service to tertiary education' at our very first meeting of the year.

Speaking for all the members of the FNABC, we acknowledge the enormous, consistent efforts of all our supporters, and the important work of on-going committee members. Lastly, I wish to record our appreciation of archivists past and present. Their wonderful physical and online exhibitions, their engaging lectures and articles and (most important of all) their efforts to preserve a rich but fragile heritage are a great service to the university, the labour movement, Australian businesses and our community as a whole.

**Noel Butlin Archives Centre,
2019 Annual Report, 3 December 2019**

Kathryn Dan, University Archivist

Highlights

- Increasing accessibility via a range of digitisation projects
- Public outreach through exhibitions, Annual Lecture and social media presence
- Continued engagement with teaching programs

Staff

Staffing numbers were stable in 2019 with University Archivist, Senior Archivist, three Archivists, Assistant Archivist and Repository Assistant roles filled. Debra Leigo returned for 8 weeks as a casual archivist to process records of Commonwealth Shipowners Association/Maritime Industry Australia Limited records. Brenton Clifford, who had been working with the Archives as a casual Archives Assistant, joined the Digital Scholarship team on a contract to undertake digitisation projects for much of the year. Alex Burchmore also continued to digitise photographic slides from the academic Arthur Basham. The Library digitisation program funded this work. Between October and December Indigenous cadets Cherie Walker and Finnan Robb are undertaking a rotation with the Archives as part of their internship with the Scholarly Information Services Division. Two student volunteers contributed to enhancing description of the Stephen Wurm, Helen Groger-Wurm, and Marie Reay archives.

Research use

Although the number of reference enquiries appears to be lower than last year by as much as 20%, there has been a significant increase in use of records in the reading room – as much as 60% more than this time last year. These variations are attributed to a number of researchers working on projects requiring intensive use

of individual collections, and increasing 'self-service' use of digitised material for simple enquiries. The majority of reference enquiries related to ANU, trade unions and companies; with Tooth and Co., CSR, Australian Agricultural Co. and Burns Philp attracting the most use. As well as strong usage by ANU academics and students, the Archives attracted usage from 18 other Australian universities and researchers from universities in the UK, the USA, Canada, New Zealand, Japan, and Northern Ireland.

Family and local history continue to be popular areas of research. The Archives now has over 57,000 items digitised and available via the Open Research repository. During the 2019 year to date there were 402,000 views and over 120,000 downloads of digitised archival material.

Senior Archivist, Sarah Lethbridge, has led involvement in teaching programs by presenting to undergraduate and graduate students in the courses 'Who do we think we are? Using Archives and Special Collections' (Centre for Heritage and Museum Studies), 'Making History' (School of History), 'The Australian Economy: Past and Present' (Research School of Economics) and Sociology Honours Methods (CASS). Students from sociology, economic history and the 'Making History' course have subsequently undertaken research in the Archives.

University Archivist, Kathryn Dan participated in ANU Higher Degree Research student induction sessions during the year. She gave an overview on how to access Archives' research resources as part of the Scholarly Information Services Division's engagement with the Interactive Learning Project (iLeap), designed to enhance student learning.

In the past year the Archives has used Facebook, Instagram and Twitter more assiduously to raise awareness of collection material, events and activities. The reach of these stories, particularly via Facebook, has increased markedly as audiences become familiar with regular postings. Hotels have been the most popular subject with one story reaching 60,000 views. Department stores, agriculture and properties, trade unions and places have also been featured.

Public events and exhibitions

Professor Jenny Hocking presented the Archives Annual Lecture, organised in conjunction with the Friends of the Noel Butlin Archives Centre, on 10 September. Her topic was 'Archival secrets and hidden histories: reasserting the right to public access'. A recording of the lecture is available online at ANU TV YouTube channel.

The Archives participated in the Canberra Heritage Festival on 2 May with Catherine Ziegler, Archivist, presenting on 'Exploring Historic Hotel Records with the ANU Archives' at the heritage-listed Mercure, formerly Ainslie Hotel.

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In October, Kathryn Dan, University Archivist, and Catherine Ziegler, Archivist, participated in *Designing the Archive*, an international archives conference presented by the International Council on Archives and relevant archives professional associations from Australia, New Zealand and the Pacific region. Kathryn Dan presented a paper 'Accessibility for data analysis: using digital tools to unlock archives potential' about a project to digitise and use digital humanities tools to extract data from Sydney Stock Exchange registers, 1901-1950. She also convened workshop on archival management software AtoM with panel members Kari James of the Pacific Manuscripts Bureau and Piers Higgs of Gaia Consulting. Catherine Ziegler participated in a PARBICA disaster preparedness workshop, the PARBICA General Assembly and conference sessions.

The Archives mounted several exhibitions in the Menzies Library, as well as contributing material to exhibition projects coordinated by others.

Archivists Rachel Armstrong and Beth Lonergan curated *Forgotten Trades: Selected Records of Early Australian Trade Unions* featuring 12 diverse occupations represented in the trade union records of the NBAC. This exhibition was on display in the Menzies Library from October 2018 to February 2019.

From March to May *Australia & the Spanish Civil War: Activism & Reaction*, curated by Catherine Ziegler, highlighted the sometimes forgotten participation and reaction of Australians to the conflict in Spain using photographs, documents and posters. This exhibition drew on the Amirah Inglis Collection, Spanish Relief Committee records and trade union records.

Art in Archives curated by Rachel Armstrong has been the main exhibition in the Noel Butlin Archives Centre this year. The exhibition shows the variety and depth of artworks held within the Noel Butlin Archives, ANU Archives and Pacific Research Archives. Including trade union banners, department store catalogues, advertising material, architectural and design drawings, paintings, posters and photographs, the exhibition highlights items of artistic value within a variety of records collections. It will continue until 2020.

Following Bob Hawke's death in May, Archivist Beth Lonergan prepared a small display about his life and association with ANU. It appeared in the Menzies Library foyer for 2 weeks of June. Sarah Lethbridge is curating an exhibition focussing on ANU's academic interaction with Southeast Asia which will run from the end of 2019 through early 2020.

The Archives lent or provided items for reproduction in exhibitions coordinated by others. *Total Design: Derek Wrigley and the ANU Design Unit 1954-1977* at the Canberra Museum and Gallery featured photographs and plans from the Archives. A CAP exhibition celebrating 50 years of prehistory at ANU drew significantly on the Jack Golson papers held at the

Archives and was on display at the Centre for China in the World for 2 weeks in May.

All Archives coordinated exhibitions continue to be available online.

Collection management

Archives staff continue to add descriptions of items to the publicly accessible database. Processing is often a necessary first step in preparing material for digitisation. Collections processed in the last year include:

- Collection from ANU political scientist, Don Rawson
- Paddy Troy collection, trade unionist and father of ANU Urban Researcher Pat Troy
- National Centre for Biography administrative records
- Ron Arnold, Amalgamated Metal Workers
- Ian Maddocks' records about Pari village, Papua New Guinea
- Joy London, ANU benefactor and joint donor of the Kioloa site
- Mt Stromlo, insurance and general files, photographs, technical drawings and plans transferred after the 2003 fire
- Val Plumwood, eminent environmental philosopher and former Visiting Fellow of the Fenner School
- Australian Natives Association
- Tooth and Company records of regional hotels and hotel interiors – for planned digitisation
- Photographs from business and trade union records – for planned digitisation

New accessions

In 2019 the Archives received records of the NSW Electrical Trades Union, the Union of Australian Workers, and Superannuated Commonwealth Officers' Association. We received photographs and slides of regional Australia from Barry McGowan, photographs from the AMWU South Australian Branch, and oral history recordings with members of the Seamen's Union from Diane Kirkby. The papers of Mavis Robertson, feminist and political activist, Alec Robertson, journalist and editor of the Tribune, and Alec Robertson senior, were donated by the family.

The Pacific Research Archives was added to with correspondence from Professor Anthony Forge, Susan Sands papers from work in West Papua, further records from patrol officer and author Jim Sinclair, archaeologist Andree Rosenfeld's records of excavations in New Ireland, and census data from Papua New Guinea.

Records added to the ANU archives included reports from the Australia-Netherlands Research Collaboration, recordings from the Canberra School of Music, and a gift of Dr Dorothy Tunbridge's 1981 University Medal.

Projects

The Archives continues to participate in Library digitisation projects. This year's projects included photographs of early CSR Australian sugar mills, meteorological records from CSR mills and plantations in Australia and Fiji, ANU photographs, maps and plans, and Pacific slides including the large collection of Helen Groger-Wurm.

N380: Maritime Industry Australia Limited deposit

Debra Leigo, Archivist, ANU Archives

NBAC holds numerous shipping and maritime deposits from companies, industry associations (representing employers) and unions (representing employees).

Searching on the database for deposits in the NBAC, limiting results to titles of deposits which include the term maritime or *ship* (includes terms such as steamship and shipping) gave 22 results, of which 14 relate to unions. The remaining 8 deposits fall into the companies and industry associations' category, including a single item of press releases received from the Australian Chamber of Shipping, covering the period 1964 to 1966.

Adelaide Steamship Company deposits 1, 2 and 3 span the years 1875 to 1996 and total approximately 34 linear metres. This company was a founding member of the Australasian Steamship Owners' Federation (ASOF), established in 1899 after the Victorian Steamship Owners' Association was formally wound up on 28 February 1899.

On 11 July 1905 the Commonwealth Steamship Owners' Association (CSOA) was formed and registered under the Conciliation and Arbitration Act to assume the industrial responsibilities of ASOF. The two bodies were identical in composition but differed in function; ASOF dealing with matters pertaining to the Navigation Act and the CSOA handling industrial disputes, awards and representing shipping companies in matters before the Arbitration Court.

In 1986 the Australian National Maritime Association (ANMA) was formed out of the ASOF, then ANMA and CSOA merged in 1994 to become the Australian Shipowners Industrial Association (ASIA). ASIA underwent a name change in 1996 to become the Australian Shipowners Association (ASA). In early 2015 ASA became Maritime Industry Australia Limited (MIAL).

NBAC holds records of ASOF, CSOA and their successors, across 4 deposits covering the period 1893-2013 and totalling approximately 129 linear metres. The deposits include minute books, constitutions, membership, communications and subject files which include advice to companies on a wide range of employment and maritime topics, and industrial disputes. Some of the larger or more common case files relate to the Basic Wage, the National Wage, and waterfront industry reform.

The most recent deposit (N380) was received from Maritime Industries Australia Limited in 2016. The deposit arrived as 328 cartons stacked across 7 pallets which has now been appraised and processed into 3504 items housed in 422 boxes covering 85 linear metres. The records cover the period 1902 to 2013.

Having previously processed industrial association collections, including the Queensland Coal Mining Industry Industrial Relations deposit (Z742), I was familiar with the conciliation and arbitration process and large cases such as the National Wage Case. I was not however, familiar with some of the maritime terminology or issues causing dispute between crew and companies.



N380 MIAL deposit before processing

Hard-lying is a term that refers to the level of 'hardship' suffered by crew due to a ship being classed as 'sub-standard' (N380-883), or the location of cabin accommodation in proximity to the engine-room. The hard-lying allowance compensates for excessive noise, vibration, heat or poor ventilation. Deposit N380 includes 66 items that relate directly to hard-lying.

COMPANY	O/SEAS/COASTAL TRADING	CONSUMPTION EGGS Av. Jan/Feb/Mar. 1985 NO. PER MAN DAY.	COMMENT
Adelaide Brighton Cement	C	2.2	
Ampol Ltd.	C O/S	2.5 2.3	
A.S.P.	C O/S		
John Burke	C	2.3	
Howard Smiths	C O/S	1.9 2.0	
Q.B.C.	C O/S	2.3 2.4	

N380-3310 sample of victualling survey responses

Victualling means to supply a seagoing vessel with food, beverages and other provisions. This topic is the focus of 17 items covering the period 1947 to 1985. N380-3310 includes survey results from six companies comparing the consumption of various provisions on coastal and overseas trading vessels. For example, the consumption of butter per man per month for the period Jan-Mar 1985 on the Adelaide Brighton Cement (ABC) coastal trading vessels was 3909 grams while the consumption on Howard Smith's overseas trading vessels was only 696 grams for the same period. The consumption of tinned fruit, using the same measurement, for the same period and vessels of ABC was 4289 grams while the lowest consumption at 938 grams per man per month was reported by Ampol Ltd on their overseas trading vessels. Egg consumption ranged from 1.9 to 2.5 per day per man over the same period.

Menus or menu cards are found in 7 items with N380-3310 containing common menus and a list of provisions needed for a crew of forty for thirty-five days.

Working conditions, health and safety are frequent topics in disputes and much time has been spent developing policies, procedures and award conditions. ASOF had representatives on Standards Association of Australia (SAA) committees from 1962 to 1986 (N380-3470 – N380-3473). These committees were responsible for establishing standards for equipment and practices ranging from ‘safe use of ropes and for braided fibre ropes’ to ‘ventilation of engine rooms in diesel engine driven ships’, ‘lifting tackle and lifting fittings’ (hooks, eyebolts and shackles) and the specifications for ‘ships pilots and embarkation ladders’.



MIAL delegation and ANU Archives staff role playing ‘The Soap Saga’.

MIAL presentation – the Soap Saga

A delegation of 23 Maritime Industry Australia Ltd (MIAL) members and staff visited the NBAC on Thursday 27 February, where they were welcomed by Kathryn Dan and provided with a personalised tour of the repositories by Sarah Lethbridge. The delegation was impressed by a wide range of exhibits from the MIAL and predecessor deposits and selected, related items from the Stock Exchange of Melbourne (Z777) and Adelaide Steamship Co. (N46) deposits. An interactive role play skit, based on the transcript of a dispute over dessert, fruit and the brand of soap, between McIlwraith McEacharn and the Seamen’s Union of Australia, 1951, (N380-1248), was well received. Role play participants included 10 MIAL delegates and 3 Archives staff. All were thoroughly engaged in their roles, with the audience joining in to protest over one brand of soap and lobby for another. Archives staff were delighted to provide this unique experience to the depositors.

Raymond O’Dea and the Journalists’ Work-Value Case

John Myrtle, FNBAC Committee member

In the latter part of 2019, housebound with a knee injury, I spent time re-writing a paper that I had originally researched as a student at the University of Sydney in 1976, on two related aspects of journalism in Australia: the 1966-67 work-value case and the 1967 Sydney newspaper strike. The newspaper strike had been one of the most bitter in the history of Australian journalism and back in 1976 researching that part of the paper was a straightforward exercise. I had access to published reports on the dispute and was able to interview participants. However when I revisited the paper, I realised that as an undergraduate student I had written about the journalists’ work-value case at the Commonwealth Conciliation and Arbitration Commission without accessing critical archival sources of information on the case. It transpired that Raymond O’Dea’s papers held by the Noel Butlin Archives Centre at the Australian National University (ANU) would provide important information on all aspects of the journalists’ case.

Who was O’Dea, and what was his connection with the ANU? Raymond John O’Dea was an innovative advocate who had a significant impact on industrial relations in Australia in the 1960s and the early 1970s. An article by the Canberra journalist Bruce Juddery provides useful details on O’Dea’s background and career (*Canberra Times*, 7 Feb 1968: 8). His education and the early part of his career had been spent in Melbourne and in 1965 he moved to Canberra to enrol in a PhD in the Law program at ANU, with the aim of researching various aspects of Australia’s arbitration system. Prior to this he graduated in law from the University of Melbourne, was employed by the Commonwealth’s Department of Labour and National Service, and in 1957 he joined the Association of Professional Engineers, Australia (APEA) as their executive officer. The APEA had been established in 1946 with the aim of achieving salaries appropriate for professional performance and contribution. Driven by O’Dea’s advocacy, success came in 1961, when the Professional Engineers Award established decent salary levels and professional recognition for engineers with degrees and diplomas. O’Dea had set out to persuade the Commission that:

- Engineering is a profession;
- They as engineers were professionals;
- Professionals were entitled to significantly more money; and
- This long-term unjust situation should be corrected.



In essence, the Engineers' case became a model work-value case for other professions, focussing on what a professional person could offer with respect to education, training, responsibility and care, and O'Dea sought to interest the Australian Journalists' Association (AJA) in a similar approach for journalists. In October 1965 O'Dea wrote to the General Secretary of the AJA offering to undertake research, negotiation, and advocacy of a journalists' work-value case at the Commission. The cost to the union would be any out-of-pocket expenses not covered by the university's field work payments. Given the likely complexity of such a case, this was a very generous offer and the proposal was approved by the AJA's Federal Council in November 1965.

O'Dea's papers provide valuable information on his preparation for the work-value case, including correspondence with federal and district (i.e. branch) officers of the union and also details of meetings with journalist members in different states. In his presentation of the AJA's case O'Dea adopted a different course from previous hearings before the Industrial Commission. Apart from having working journalists as witnesses to describe their duties and activities, he used highly placed and publicly known professional witnesses discussing the place and value of journalists' work in the community. These included Gough Whitlam and academics such as Geoffrey Sawer (his PhD supervisor at ANU), Sol Encel, Henry Mayer, and W. Macmahon Ball. O'Dea's papers include the draft statements of these witnesses and the complete transcript of the case which extended over 29 hearing days ranging from 16 August 1966 to 17 June 1967, with hearings held in Canberra, Sydney and Melbourne.

The Commission's decision was handed down on 7 July 1967. In the short term journalists were offered significant pay rises and added professional status which

vindicated Raymond O'Dea's work-value approach, but the way was left open for the newspaper proprietors to downgrade their journalist employees and start cost cutting. The strike which followed involved journalists, printers and other newspaper workers and extended from 1 to 17 August 1967. O'Dea's papers cover all aspects of his involvement with the journalists' work-value case, and although his involvement with the union ended with the Commission's decision, his papers also have information on the strike, including strike photographs from *Tribune* newspaper.

After the 1966-67 work-value case, Raymond O'Dea continued to live in Canberra where he built an industrial advocacy practice. On 9 October 1973, aged 46, he was killed in a head-on collision while driving from Melbourne to Canberra. He was survived by his wife Marjory and four children and was widely regarded as one of Australia's most respected industrial advocates.

Note: My paper, 'Rethinking Australian Journalism in the 1960s: The 1966-67 Work-Value Case and the Sydney Newspaper Strike', is available on the Honest History website at <<http://www.honesthistory.net.au>>.

Details of the O'Dea collection at Noel Butlin Archives Centre:

- Raymond O'Dea Collection deposit 1, AU NBAC P53 (16.5m)
Records of the Metropolitan Daily Newspapers Award case, 1966. Includes correspondence, questionnaires, personal notebooks of R O'Dea concerning the case, Australian Journalists' Association material, newspaper cuttings, transcripts of the case, tapes, printed and roneoed material.
- Raymond O'Dea Collection deposit 2, AU NBAC P113 (1.2m)
Includes arbitration case files and legal opinions on industrial matters, personal memorabilia, Law School notes, published papers, photographs of the 1967 Journalists' Strike and printed material.

**Friends of the Noel Butlin Archives
Centre Inc.
Contact Details**

Postal address: c/o ANU Archives,
R.G. Menzies Building, 2 Fellows
Road, Australian National University,
Canberra ACT 2600, Australia.

Phone: c/o NBAC (02) 6125 2219

Email: c/o.butlin.archives@anu.edu.au