

1. An occasional newsletter of the History Program, RSSH

ANU Sorry Day Ceremony 2004

The Australian Centre for Indigenous History is involved in the ANU Sorry Day Ceremony for 2004. Frances Peters-Little and Gordon Briscoe will both speak on Wednesday 26 May from 11 am. The ANU is acknowledging Sorry Day as part of its commitment to reconciliation and the promotion of links with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities. The Ceremony will begin at *Ngaraka: Shrine for the Lost Koori* site (Old Canberra House, Liversidge Street, ANU) at 11 am and continue as a guided walk through Indigenous artwork/sculpture areas at ANU. It will include a Welcome to Country, poetry readings, personal accounts, dance, an Acknowledgement of the Land, and addresses by Frances and Gordon. The Ceremony will conclude with a barbecue lunch at the JABAL Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Centre. A Sorry Day book will be available for those who wish to express their recognition of past and present injustices and wrongs. During the guided walk, Frances will speak at Judith Wright Court on the role that Australian poets have played in the process of reconciliation, and Gordon will reflect on the significance of Sorry Day at the Coombs Lecture Theatre.

General Editor of ADB appointed

Dr Di Langmore has been selected as the next general editor of the *Australian Dictionary of Biography*. Di has been acting general editor since 2001. She joined the staff of the ADB in 1982 as a research editor. Promoted to deputy general editor in 1997, she won the ANU Medal for General Staff Excellence in 2002. Di has published four books: *Tamate—a King: James Chalmers in New Guinea* (1974), *Missionary Lives: Papua 1874-1914* (1989), *Prime Ministers' Wives: The Public and Private Lives of Ten Australian Women* (1992) and *Glittering Surfaces: A Life of Maie Casey* (1997). She co-edited Volume 16 of the ADB (2002) and has written numerous journal articles, chapters in books and ADB articles. Her current research interests are the life of Dame Enid Lyons (1897-1981) and the wives of Australian governors-general.

Inga Clendinnen's Words

During the first week of May, the eminent historian Inga Clendinnen visited the History Program as our Inaugural Allan Martin Lecturer. As well as delivering a superb lecture about Allan and the art of biography to over two hundred people on the evening of Tuesday 4 May, Inga gave many other presentations during her stimulating and provocative week with us. She conducted a writing workshop for postgraduate students, delivered a seminar on 'History and Fiction: The melting edge', and presided over a colloquium of History Program members discussing her work. We are very grateful for Inga's energy and intellectual stirring, and for establishing such a fine model

for the Allan Martin Lecturer. Below are some of Inga's spoken words, selected from her various performances:

I was blind lucky – because I was not put on a straightforward career path.

It is transforming to experience altruism in your own society.

You need to see strangeness where you look.

History really requires no special training, other than curiosity, sharp wits and scrupulous attention to detail – plus a determination to honour the mysteriousness of the people you are studying. Any glib, smug narrative is out of the question.

Ponder the miracle of literacy: complete strangers can be drawn into intimacy.

Take my dear friend's advice: 'I trust you to put the good bits in!'

History and Fiction: people get upset by mistaking the genres. The historical origins of that kind of revulsion should be fascinating to us, because that's where our bread and butter is going to be ... and even a little cream.

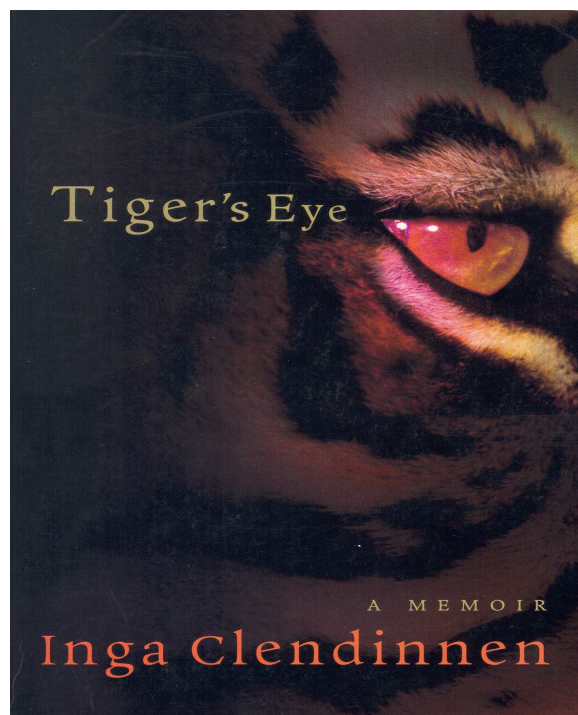
*Have you read Garrett Mattingly's **The Defeat of the Spanish Armada**? It was such breathtaking prose that I thought it couldn't be true! I kept thinking: How did he know that?*

History is superior gossip, gossip that's true.

How much subjectivity should be on the page?

Marry someone who is a good editor!

Our role as scientists of the human is to increase the role of reason in human affairs: to arrive at 'useable truths' regarding the human condition. Whatever our particular subject, our core narrative ought to be the narrative of the inquiry, of our critical engagement with the sources, and what we make of them.



More honours for History Program members!

Dr Gordon Briscoe was made an Officer of the Order of Australia in the Australia Day honours this year, and Rebe Taylor won the Adelaide Festival Literature Award for Non-Fiction for *Unearthed: The Aboriginal Tasmanians of Kangaroo Island* (Wakefield Press).

New Graduate Scholars

Welcome to Georgina Fitzpatrick, Ani Fox, Tiffany Shellam and Susan Mary Withycombe who have all joined the History Program as doctoral scholars this year. Look out for profiles and details of their research projects in future issues of *Footnotes*.

Lois Banner and John Laslett

The History Program is delighted to welcome as Visiting Fellows from late May 2004 Professor Lois Banner and Professor John Laslett.

Lois Banner is Professor in the Department of History and Gender Studies Program at the University of Southern California, and the author of many books, including *American Beauty* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1983), *Finding Fran: History and Memory in the Lives of Two Women* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1998), and *In Full Flower: Aging Women, Power, and Sexuality: A History* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1992). Her most recent books are *Intertwined Lives: Passion and Intellect in the Lives of Ruth Benedict and Margaret Mead* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 2003), and *Reading Benedict/Reading Mead: Feminism, Race, and Imperial Visions* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2003), which she edited with Dolores Janiewski of Victorian University, New Zealand.

Professor's Banner's current research is a study of the international free love movement from 1900 to World War II. This movement has been largely unknown heretofore; she discovered its existence through her work on Benedict and Mead, who were part of it. This project will involve research on the early sexologists, especially Havelock Ellis, on the pre-World War One radical community in Greenwich Village, on Bertrand Russell and the Bloomsbury Group, and on the birth control movement in England. Professor Banner has discovered an Australian free-love circle among friends of Margaret Mead in Australia.

In another project, Professor Banner is returning to her early work on physical appearance, published in her book, *American Beauty*, which focused on the nineteenth century and largely ended in 1920. In the new work she wants to investigate the interrelations between class, race, and gender as they apply to major female icons of the twentieth century: Mae West, Marilyn Monroe, and Madonna. In doing this book, she intends to look at their portrayals in fashion and film magazines and to utilize the extensive film archives in Los Angeles. But she is also interested in the international appeal of these women and will be examining magazines and other sources about them in Australia.

John Laslett has for many years been a Professor of History at UCLA, teaching U.S. working class history, comparative immigration, and comparative social

movements. He taught previously at Oxford and the University of Chicago, and has published seven books, which include *Labor and the Left: A Study of Socialist and Radical Influences in the American Labor Movement, 1881-1924* (Basic Books, 1970), *Colliers Across the Sea: Class Formation in Scotland and the American Midwest, 1830-1924* (University of Illinois Press, 2000), and *Ambiguous Legacy: Race, Ethnicity, and the Search for Unity in American Working Class History* (Princeton University Press, forthcoming).

Professor Laslett is currently working on a general history of the Los Angeles working class and a research project on *Overlapping Diasporas* that offers an empirical, descriptive framework for U.S. working class history seen in international and comparative terms. It is a framework within which U.S. working class movements are seen as (in part) a product of four overlapping migratory flows from Africa, Asia, Mexico, and Europe. He is also engaged in a model-building project extending, or anchoring, this U.S.-based framework in the emerging discipline of Atlantic and Pacific diasporic studies, a project in which Australia would also figure.

History Program One Day Conference

On Thursday 27 May, the History Program is holding its first One Day Conference. Held at Manning Clark House, the day will be devoted to informal presentations by all members of the Program about their current research interests and concerns.

Christy Collis reflects on her Fellowship

Dr Christy Collis is currently a Sabbatical Fellow in the History Program, and gave a wonderful seminar on her research here on 15 April. Now more than half-way through her time in R.S.S.S., Christy writes of her experience so far:

The air is sharp and cold, the National Library and its wealth of polar manuscripts is just a quick bike ride across the bridge, and Antarctic scholars regularly drop by my office for a chat: this definitely isn't Brisbane! I'm a postdoctoral research fellow at the University of Queensland's Australian Studies Centre, and I'm now six weeks into my Sabbatical Fellowship here in the History Program. After two years of research, I'm using this Fellowship to begin writing the manuscript of my book, *The Spirit of Possession: A Spatial History of the Australian Antarctic Territory*. My subtropical friends agreed that this would be the perfect opportunity for this work, informing me that Canberra is so cold and dull that I would have little else to do but write. While the writing is indeed going well, however, it's the stimulating environment in which I find myself that is spurring productivity. It's fantastic to be working in a Program with such a vigorous sense of internal coherence: weekly seminars are consistently engaging and well-attended, and people are welcoming and keen to discuss projects and ideas. And as for the cold, I'm a Canadian Antarctic scholar: I love it!

It's an honour and a delight to be working among the exciting scholars in this Program; my particular thanks to Tom Griffiths for sharing his time and his enthusiasm for Australian polar history with me.