

Origins

Newsletter of the UNSW Archives

Students, Sandhills and Sex

Alumni recall the 1960s

A recent survey of student experience at UNSW in the 1960s illustrates the shifting patterns of student life and culture. More than eighty alumni have responded to a specially

devised twenty page questionnaire recording their memories of study and campus life at UNSW.

A noticeable feature of these responses is that a quarter of them are from women. By the mid 1960s female numbers had risen sharply, from the handful in the 1950s to

2,247 by 1966, comprising seven-teen per cent of total enrolments. Women respondents remembered being part of a minority. You 'couldn't walk into a lecture theatre without having whistles', according to one. Another spoke of a feeling of gender solidarity:

'There were so few of us, we stuck together ... The Women's Room at the Roundhouse was the place we congregated – put on our make up, changed our stockings (they used to get full of sand and get holes in them) and discussed the guys'.

In part, this growth in women students was the result of the establishment of the Faculty of Arts in 1960. But there were female students in other subjects — even engineering. And 'doing Arts' was never the sole preserve of the Arts student. Engineers and scientists were required to take some humanities subjects as part of their degrees. Some alumni fondly

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Tharunka's first cover for 1968. (V92)

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remembered Professor Thornton's inspiring, if somewhat eccentric, fascination for the cosmos in the subject, Scientific Thought, others felt having to study humanities was a 'great idea'. For one engineering student, English and History 'came alive', while another admitted that he preferred humanities to engineering subjects.

What were their impressions of the Kensington campus?

The geography and landscape of the new university campus obviously left an indelible impression on respondents. Various descriptions as 'sandy', 'windswept', 'ugly and treeless', 'bare', 'bleak' and 'barren', the distances students had to travel to get from one class to another was cause for comment:

'The distances we had to travel: Bio/Med to Psych on West Anzac Pde in 10 mins!! AND vice versa was a bit of a stretch! Pretty barren — all those sandhills and couch grass'.

Others concentrated on the possibilities of the new site, seeing it as 'big, modern, go-ahead [and] vital' with 'loads of potential'.

So, where did they hang out?

For Catholic students, the Catholic Hut, 'just behind the Science Theatre, on a slight terrace, just across the road from Goldstein', was a haven — social and spiritual. Some had fond memories of Father John King who provided solace to many Catholic 'freshers' and even presided over many a student wedding.

Others remembered the library as a place of refuge and the library lawn as a central meeting place. But perhaps the most significant landmark for students was the Roundhouse, home of the University Union, opened in 1961. Described by one respondent as a 'breath of spring after a long cold winter', it became the hub of student activity and socialising, the 'lifeline of the University', 'home away from home'.

It was also the venue for concerts and student balls, 'Recovery' and 'Bacchus' balls figuring promi-

nently in alumni recollections. They were the social highlight of the year, an occasion for dressing up, mixing with the opposite sex and drinking:

'From memory, they were at the end of the year. You got very formally dressed, gloves and pearls and long shimmering type gowns. Then everyone drank jugs of beer and this terrible food appeared and people threw it and threw up and there was a good band and everyone would dance. There was occasionally a speaker'.

What did students think of one another?

For some of the part-time students, the Roundhouse was the place where many of the 'arty' students, with 'unlimited leisure hours' and 'little commitment' spent their time.

With numbers of full-time students steadily catching up to part-timers in the 1960s, some respondents commented on the divide between the two types of students. For some part-timers, student politics and active student life was for the 'those who did not have to live in the real world'. According to a part-time engineering student, part-timers didn't have time for juvenile pranks, they considered themselves 'de facto engineers at work' who took a 'more professional attitude to work and study'.

While some part-timers sneered at full-timers and most full-timers were oblivious to part-timers, some science students were sceptical about arts students. At the same time, arts students viewed NIDA (National Institute of Dramatic Arts) students as 'very exotic and interesting', while male students were dreaming up ways of getting more women on campus.

What about student politics?

Student politics was/is the past-time of the few. For them it could be fun, time-consuming, eye-opening and in the context of the Vietnam protests, scary. But for the conscientious part-time engineer and others like him, student politics didn't exist, except when it was discussed in the pages of *Tharunka*.

Many students, full and part-time, male and female, eagerly awaited each issue of *Tharunka*. Indeed, many of the respondents revealed a kind of vicarious participation in student politics through the paper: 'reading it made you look a bit of a revolutionary'. And for the graduate who'd received a Catholic girls' secondary education, *Tharunka* in the late 1960s was 'absolutely shocking'. Nevertheless, she and her friends couldn't wait for the next issue, fascinated as they were by the 'open discussion of sexual matters, lewd poems and the like'.

Students in the Union (Roundhouse), Orientation Week 1962. Photography by Max

ise like [Australians]' it helped. Another Asian student remembered how the 'Aussies' were superior in their drinking habits compared with Asian students, and how he admired the 'fair go' and 'she will be all right, mate' attitude of Australians. He spoke of sharing his industrial training at Port Kembla with approximately twelve other international students, learning a few words in Greek, Yugoslav, Hungarian and Polish

Are You Departing the University?

Please tell the University Archives!

The Archives is always desirous of being advised of staff leaving UNSW who have personal papers or other records relating to their time here OR who could be of help in documenting some particular aspect of the story of the university and its people.

We are also interested to learn of the death of those who have been associated with the university. We value being put in touch with family members in certain instances.

Through this advice, historically valuable personal records, photographs and memorabilia can often be identified and the holdings of the Archives enhanced.

Ever wondered what a vice-chancellor really thinks of universities, academics or students? Is life at the top all that it's said to be? Here's a chance to find out. *Not an Ivory Tower: The making of an Australian vice-chancellor* is a personal story of a former vice-chancellor of the University of New South Wales and is based on interviews with Michael and Jenny Birt. It examines the career path to becoming a vice-chancellor, as well as the difficult decisions university chiefs face from time-to-time.

Michael Birt talks candidly about the changing role of universities in post-war Australia, and mounts a well-argued case for the importance of a strong university system in Australian society. Industrial action, student protests, his relationship with the Staff Association, university fees, his championing of the humanities, his relationship with education ministers and prime-ministers, EEO — these are among the many issues that Birt comments on.

But this is not the stuff of official reports. Set to the background of Australian society over the last sixty years there is much here also to

Philip Baxter on Stage

Philip Baxter retired as vice-chancellor of UNSW in 1969. He chaired the Australian Atomic Energy Commission (1957-72) and the Sydney Opera House Trust (1969-75). The following piece is based on extracts from Philip Gissing, Sir Philip Baxter, Engineer: The Fabric of a Conservative Style of Thought (submitted for the degree of PhD: currently under examination).

Towards the end of his active public life Philip Baxter wrote a play. *The Day the Sun Rose in the West* is set in the future, and is about an imagined invasion of Australia by a united South East Asian People's Republic. There is a nuclear attack on Canberra which heralds the invasion. The sky lights up making it appear to observers on the east coast that the sun is rising in the west. The invading armies introduce draconian measures to force the country out of its apathy and carry through the large-scale engineering developments that Baxter saw as the key to Australia's future. They also successfully steer Australia through the new world order imposed by the major powers.

In this play Baxter specifically rejected the notion that a nuclear war would mean the end of the world, a belief he had long held in his work on nuclear energy. Speaking on the ABC television programme *Monday Conference*, Baxter argued that Australia would 'have a better chance than most other places' of surviving a nuclear war given its distance from the northern hemisphere, the most likely location for repeated nuclear conflict. But of interest here is why he chose to give these speculations a dramatic form. When one is no longer

writing government policy, does one then turn to writing plays?

Philip Baxter's devotion to the stage took various forms. As a young man recently appointed by ICI as a research engineer in the English village of Stockton-on-Tees, he joined the dramatic society,



(Above) Philip Baxter directs Shaw's *Devil's Disciple* at Kensington in 1956.

(Left) Pictured second from right on an overseas visit to the Dounreay Experimental Reactor Establishment, about 1970. (Baxter Papers: CN1053/88,30)

where he met his future wife, Lilian Thatcher. They moved to Widnes in 1931, where Baxter not only helped rebuild the local chemical industry but also became deputy chairman of the Works Dramatic Club. Following their move to Australia in 1949 upon his appointment as professor of chemical engineering, he continued to take an interest in drama, specifically at the NSW University of Technology, where he took an active role in its Drama Club. In 1956, soon after his appointment as vice-chancellor, he directed George Bernard Shaw's *The Devil's Disciple*, which was performed in the University's Physics Theatre at Kensington, and in August 1959, Edward Percy's 1941 play *The Shop at Sly Corner*.

Baxter was also instrumental in having the National Institute of

Dramatic Art (NIDA) located at the University of New South Wales, at a time when the training of actors, directors and set designers was considered in some quarters to be an inappropriate role for a univer-

sity. In 1958 he convinced the University Council to approve discussions with the Elizabethan Theatre Trust and the ABC about the establishment of NIDA, which was to be governed by a board of directors provided by the three participating institutions. Baxter and Morven Brown, the dean of the Faculty of Arts, were appointed as the University's representatives on the board.

So far, then, we have a picture of Baxter as a keen devotee and amateur practitioner of theatre. But his concept of theatre went deeper than this, evident from his remarks linking drama to the desirable development of what he called a 'western type civilization' in Australia. In a 1961 letter request-

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ing funding for NIDA from the Rockefeller Foundation, he argued that:

'Australia is the largest under-populated and under-developed area still available for the expansion of western peoples with western culture, and the task of developing it imposes a tremendous strain upon the ten million people who live in it at present. It may well be that if the developments necessary do not proceed sufficiently rapidly, in the long term our idea of developing it as a western type civilisation may fail. As a community we must devote all our available capital resources to those immediately necessary and practical things, within which the activities of the humanities and drama do not find a place. There is perhaps, therefore, a case for Foundations like Rockefeller to continue to regard Australia as a type of under-

Recent Accessions

Below is a selection of records received by the Archives from July 1997 to June 1998.

Access enquiries are invited. Conditional or restricted access may apply in some instances.

The Archives extends its special thanks to all depositors.

Alumni donations

The Archives is especially grateful to the following for their contributions of photographs, publications and memorabilia relating mainly to their student days.

Bennett, Jean. Early stationery from the School of Biological Sciences. 1950s. (98A31)

Campbell, W. Photographs of civil engineering students' World Record Bed Push, 1961. (97A149)

Chand, F. (Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia) Photographs of students in 1960 Maths I class, at Basser

College and on a Jenolan Caves field trip, early 1960s. (97A148)

Conyngnam, P. Correspondence relating to the Students' Union and University Press 1996; press cuttings 1960s, including reference to the 'Gas Lash' affair, *Tharunka* 1964; photographs early 1960s; and press obituary for Francis James, early 1990s. (97A236, 98A6)

Harant, H. / Allison, Myee. Records relating to the Students' Union Council 1964, and the Overseas Students Association and Festival of Asia 1957-68; publications and printed items including student alternative handbooks, *Tharunka* and revue posters 1950s-1980s. (Ms M. Allison 97A72, 97A82, 97A85, 97A229)

Haynes, Michael and Marg. Copies of addresses delivered at the President's Reception, UNSW Alumni Association on 21 April

1998, as father and daughter alumni of the early 1960s and early 1990s respectively, and containing reflections upon their university experience. (98A29)

Hyland, H. Photographs taken while an engineering and naval architecture student: scenes include main and western campuses, building development, student activities on 'Lake Bourke', internal photographs of the Roundhouse and of the Library - at both old (Dalton) and new (1966) upper campus locations; all with descriptions. 1963-70. 222 prints. (97A246, 98A49)

Jones, T. Photographs of procession forming for first Foundation Day 1961, and of fellow students at Basser College, early 1960s; collected items from the College noticeboard, various topics, early 1960s. (98A24, 98A48)

Langtry (Moore), Lynette. Candid photographs of university social



Foundation Day out in the City, 1968. (98A49)

life, especially Roundhouse balls.
1969-71. (97A178)

Milner Davis, Jessica. Publications
and reports relating to student
matters in the 1960s; Drama I
course handouts for students and
listeners to Radio University,
prepared by Professor R. Quentin
and T. Brown, 1961; notes taken
as an arts student at lectures
given by Quentin, Dr Leonie
Kramer and others, 1961-64.
(97A169, 98A2, 98A3)

Niland, J.R. Issues of Basser College
magazine. 1959-63. (97A6)

Nilsson, Marianne R. Photographs
taken on UNSW Geology excursions,
and of the Kensington
campus, with descriptions. 1962-
67. 40 items (97A77)

O'Brien (Thomas), Terry. Photograph
of UNSW students, who
were members of the Australian
Organising Co-ordinating Committee,
Overseas Students
(AOCCOS), at the welcome desk,
Sydney airport, January 1969.
(97A248)

Institute of Languages. Correspondence relating to the evaluation of language laboratory methods of teaching English to Aboriginal children in certain schools in the Northern Territory, with personal note books about visits, 1969-73; minutes and correspondence of the State Accreditation Panel for Translators and Interpreters (NT), 1981. (Mrs Margot Garrick 97A87)

Millis, D. Former Head, UNSW Publications Section, and artist/designer. Photographs of Section staff, and campus views; posters and programs relating to UNSW events. Mainly 1960s, 1970s. (97A106, 97A192)

Milner, C.J. / Willis, A.H. Respectively, former professor of Applied Physics, Dean of Science and Emeritus; former professor and Dean of Engineering, Pro-Vice-Chancellor and Emeritus. Funeral oration written and delivered by Emeritus Professor Willis at the funeral service for Emeritus Professor Milner, St Luke's Church, Mosman, 28 February, 1998. (98A40)

Milner Davis, Jessica. President, UNSW Alumni Association and Member, University Council; UNSW's Deputy Chancellor 1981-1990. Photographs and correspondence relating to the Kay Friedrich Garden (AGSM forecourt); correspondence about the retention of the historic name *The Old Tote Theatre*, 1989; and samples of greeting cards produced in 1983 by the U Committee featuring campus sketches by Professor J.C. Haskell, Faculty of Architecture. (97A169, 97A177, 97A181).

Correspondence, early 1990s, about the creation of the position of Dean of Emeriti, originally raised by Emeritus Professor C.J. Milner; and congratulatory correspondence about the Deputy Chancellorship from Mrs Ruth Moss in 1981, the daughter of Mr Ralph Symons, whose timber company constructed the Solar Furnace for Physics under the direction of Professor Milner, Dr Milner Davis' father. (98A39).

Biographical audiotapes telling of the Czechoslovak refugee experi-

ence stemming from the 1968 Soviet invasion, and including reference to the trail-blazing intensive English language course, specially prepared for a group of these refugees by the donor, then a student leader, and staff of UNSW's Institute of Languages in 1969; 1991 audiotape feature on Mr Va'clav Havel, then Czechoslovak President, and later recipient of an Hon. DLitt, UNSW 1995. Recordings mainly 1991, 1995. (98A4)

Niland, John and Carmel. Vice-Chancellor; former Commerce (industrial relations) student and President, Students' Union early 1960s; Carmel Hume (Niland) was an Arts student and member of the Students' Union Council around the same time. Items from student days at UNSW and from their time in the USA, late 1960s, where J. Niland undertook doctoral studies (Illinois) then taught at Cornell University, Ithaca. Includes films, photographs, a 1962 dinner program autographed by many key figures at UNSW, and a *Pix* magazine photo-spread on 'Free Love' featuring UNSW students. 1960-70. (98A34)

Orlovich, P. Senior Lecturer, Information, Library and Archive Studies. Collected newsletters, circulars and other information relating to the activities of the Staff Association, University Club and other campus entities. Various years. (98A17)

Reuter, F.H. Foundation Associate Professor of Food Technology. Papers relating to the establishment of the Food Technology course at UNSW; publications and reports relating to aspects of education in this discipline, and to government regulation of food and drugs. 1949-97 (97A238).

Selected printed material relating to the history of the School of Chemistry, Food Technology and Colombo Plan students at UNSW. Prepared for the UNSW History Project in 1998. (Ms Karen Hutchings 98A42)

Reuter, Mrs Irene. Foundation member, Wives Group from 1950.

Memoirs of a Childhood and Youth in Berlin 1911-1933. Typed manuscript 1996. 38p. (98A36)

Thompson, Adrienne. Convenor, Alumni Associates. Former University Council member and Honorary Visiting Fellow, Biochemistry. Photographs of members of Alumni Associates at a revival of 'Elevenses' at Pindari, 22 April 1993. (97A189)

Governance and Administration

Secretariat. Council, Council committees, Faculties. Meeting agenda papers and minutes, 1993-98; Council Resolution Book 1949-83 and Index; Visiting Committee reports 1988-93; Aboriginal Education Committee records 1988-94. 3.75m (Multiple accessions)

Vice-Chancellor (J.R. Niland).

Business records 1995-96, videotape of address to National Press Club 25 February 1997, and duplicate Certificate of Appreciation presented to Mr Ted Spence upon his retirement as driver to the last three vice-chancellors of



The Subiaco Columns. Photographic study by Martin Dudman, 1989. (98A26)

Student Services. Office files of the Deputy Registrar (S. Croker) relating to student organisations, student equity and services, and to the Campus Planning Steering Committee. Mainly 1989-93. 2.2m. (97A35)

Facilities Department. Certificate of Title relating to part of UNSW's *Cliffbrook* Campus site, Coogee, 1953. (Director's Office 97A231). Fitting out reference manual used by UNSW: *Details of CSIRO Standard Laboratory Fittings*, 1959; site and landscaping plans for Kensington Campus 1949-78, 12 items; sketches and plans for Stage I, Grandstand, David Phillips Field, by Kevin J. Curtin & Partners, 4 items; colour photographs of site for Samuels Building, c.1987. (N. Siminsky 97A63, 97A120, 97A121, 97A160)

Faculties, Schools and academic organisations

Applied Science. Selected office files of the last Dean of the Faculty (G.J.S. Govett), including corre-

spondence relating to *UNSW 2000* which recommended abolition of the Faculty. (97A4, 97A5)

Biological Science. Photo display boards showing field work at Smith's Lake, Herron Island and elsewhere 1960s, 1970s; photographic portraits of early staff; and biographical information about Dr Mary Hindmarsh compiled 1954-90. (R. King 97A250)

Chemistry. School minutes and newsletters; videotapes. Mainly 1987-93 (K. McGuffin 97A69)

Engineering. Letter of appreciation written to Professor Mark Wainwright by Emeritus Professor Harold Brown, aged 86, UNSW's first professor of Electrical Engineering and first Dean of the Faculty of Engineering, following his visit to UNSW in early 1997. (M. Wainwright 97A180)

Industry Linked Education. Files relating to the establishment of the Master of Business Technology program, including the initial consultancy and steering committee. 1989-92 (M. Brennan 7A239)

Law. Photographs taken of participants in the Future Directions Seminar, July 1994. (K. Daley 97A191)

Mechanical Engineering. Sample of examination papers 1964-69; crafted descriptive geometry teaching aid showing two intersecting cones enveloping a sphere and their tangent plane. n.d. poss. 1940s or 1950s. (A. Bauman 97A53, 97A54)

Postgraduate Extension Studies / Institute of Professional Education. Videotapes of lectures, most produced for teaching by closed circuit television. 1968-77. 14 tapes. (97A227)

Spanish and Latin American Studies. Audiotapes of noted speakers at three conferences, including a major international conference held at UNSW in 1986 entitled *When Strangers Meet: Australia and Latin America*; the poster for this conference, and other audio recordings. 1978-92. 23 tapes. (J. Levy 98A10)

Other University organisations

The Asia-Australia Institute.

Director's Office files, general correspondence, booklets and other printed items. 1990-95. 1.1m. (97A83)

Kensington Colleges / Milner

Davis, Jessica. Files relating to the governance of Kensington Colleges 1992-96, including a set of meeting papers 1994-96, maintained by Dr J. Milner Davis, a director and member of the College Board. 1m. (J. Milner Davis 98A3)

External organisations

Eastern Sydney Area Health

Service. Media release pack, with photographs, conveying the announcement of a \$160 million plan to relocate or enlarge certain hospitals, including the Royal Hospital for Women and the Prince of Wales and Prince Henry hospitals, which are principal teaching hospitals of the university. 1993. (97A168)

The Winston Churchill Memorial

Trust. Records relating to the New South Wales administration of the Trust, and in particular to Churchill Fellowship Awards, 1965-1990. 1.7m. (Mr Bill Farley 98A7). (The NSW Regional Office was established in the 1960s with the assistance of the Vice-Chancellor, Sir Philip Baxter. Since that time UNSW people have played a major role in the running of the Office)

Student or alumni related

Commerce and Economics. Base-

ball-style cap, available on Careers Day 1997, with text *UNSW-Commerce and Economics*. (P. Orlovich 97A88)

Medicine. Photographs of the class

of 1995. (J. Horder 97A79)

Can You Help?

Documenting university sport

Some not so good news is that the Archives holds only moderate amounts of material relating to the university's sports clubs. We wish to improve this situation.

In the years 2000-2003 alone, many of the following clubs may seek to celebrate their fiftieth anniversary, aided by any records held by the Archives:

Clubs established by 1950: Athlet-

ics, Basketball (Men's), Golf, Rugby Union, Swimming, Soccer (also 1956), Tennis.

1951: Boxing, Cricket, Fencing, Rifle, Rowing, Swimming and Water Polo, Table Tennis, Weightlifting.

1952: Squash, Volleyball.

1953: Hockey, Judo.

Anyone having written records, annual reports, photographs, film or video, parts of older club uni-

New State Records Legislation

New legislation will require the University — including faculties and schools — to account for all material generated in the course of university business.

course outlines, school corre-

The State Records Act 1998 became law on 2 June 1998 and replaces the Archives Act 1960. The Archives Authority of New South Wales will become the State Records Authority and its jurisdiction broadened to include universities, which will become subject to the Act in late 1999.

The purpose of the legislation is to facilitate business through improved recordkeeping practices, make Government and other public institutions more accountable, implement standards, codes of best practice and guidelines for managing official records in all formats, and to ensure the orderly disposal of official records and the preservation of records deemed to be of continuing value.

How will this affect UNSW?

The Act has the effect of placing responsibility on those who generate records in the course of university business to safeguard and dispose of them according to the 'standards and codes of best practice for records management'. The types of records likely to be subject to the Act include minutes of school meetings and those of faculties and other units within the University, as well as

Notes from a Researcher's Desk

The manuscript for the UNSW fiftieth anniversary history has gone to press. Patrick O'Farrell's *UNSW: A Portrait 1949-1999* will be launched in March 1999, a centre-piece of the anniversary celebrations.

Professor Patrick O'Farrell and researchers Damien McCoy and myself have been most fortunate in the generous responses to our call

access restrictions. The following is a sample of the kinds of facts and anecdotes that you may or may not find in the pages of the official history.

Resourcefulness in the days of shortages

In the early days of the university, teaching and laboratory space at Ultimo was often at a premium, along with chronic shortages of equipment and furniture. Lateral

was solved by 'borrowing' furniture from another department of the technical college, forcing the then registrar to purchase some more to replace it.

Similarly enterprising were some Asian students staying in the Anzac Parade Student Hostel in the 1960s, who, wishing to cater for a large student party, cooked genuine lamb curry in the community laundry boiler. The result? Plenty of curry for the partygoers and bright orange linen smelling strongly of Madras curry for many wash days to come!

Crashing through glass

Crashing through glass seems to have been something that happened quite a lot in the early days, given that building and construction was constantly underway. In Building M on the Western side of

Biographical Profile

THE UNIVER

