



VJAZZ 57
February 2013
Distribution 650

VJAZZ

Proactively Collecting, Archiving and Disseminating Australian Jazz

Rare Collectable
Jazz
from the Archive

The Unissued
Bill Miller Recordings
Almost Ampersand
1944 - 1951



CAT. 530
VJAZZ 023



QUARTERLY MAGAZINE OF THE VICTORIAN JAZZ ARCHIVE INC. PATRON: WILLIAM H. MILLER M.A., B.C.L. (Oxon.)
15 Mountain Highway, Wantirna Melway Ref. 63 C8

(All correspondence to: PO Box 6007 Wantirna Mall, Vic. 3152) Registered No: A0033964L ABN 53 531 132 426
Ph (03) 9800 5535 email: info@vicjazzarchive.org.au Web page: www.vicjazzarchive.org.au



Contents

02 Letters to the Editor

03 Important CD Release on the VJAZZ Label

04 "Bill" William H. Miller M.A. B.C.I. (Oxon)

By Dr. Ray Marginson

06 Dame Elisabeth Murdoch A.C., D.B.E. A Truly Remarkable Woman

By Dr. Ray Marginson

08 Knockin' A Jug By Jeff Blades

Museums Australia visits the Archive

09 A Tale Of Two Cities By Bill Brown

10 Ian Pearce: A Tasmanian Jazz Musician By Simon Petty

12 Visitors to the Archive

14 Sound Room Upgrade

15 The Unknown Frank Johnson

By Ken Simpson-Bull

Images

Tom Lucas

Terry Norman

Dr Pam Clements

Ray Sutton

Ken Simpson-Bull

Marcie Whetstone

Correction: Photographs of musicians and speakers on pages 10 & 11 in VJAZZ 56 were supplied by Richard Clark.



**Front Cover Image:
The Unissued Bill Miller
Recordings
Almost Ampersand
Available on VJAZZ
label.**

Magazine Editorial Committee

John Thrum	Chairman
Dr Pam Clements	
Dr Mel Forbes	
Terry Norman	
Ken Simpson-Bull	

Board of Management

Terry Norman	President
Jeff Blades	Vice President
Ray Sutton	General Manager
Mel Blachford	Collections Manager
Gretel James	Secretary
David Mc Dowell	Treasurer
Dr. Mel Forbes	
Margaret Harvey	
Dr. Ray Marginson A M	
Barry Mitchell	
Marina Pollard	
Ralph Powell	

Location

VJA Inc. "Koomba Park"
15 Mountain Hwy.
Wantirna
Mel Ref 63 C8
Open Tues & Fri, 10am-3pm

Letters to the Editor

I was very interested in the review by Ken Simpson Bull of Jack Mitchell's book 'COGGY' about Frank Coughlan, one of the 'fathers' of Australian Jazz, if not The Father. Like Ken, I went to the Trocadero to listen to Frank's band in the early fifties.

My trombone teacher Cyril, (Cy) Watts, was always telling me how good 'COGGY' was, and he played like Miff Mole.

When he came to Melbourne in 1951, together with my saxophone and clarinet playing-mate, Bill (Bluey) Thompson, we went to hear the band as often as possible. We were playing in dance bands by then, and when we didn't have a job on Friday nights, we would high tail it to the "Troc", after a few pots at the Musicians Club in Little Collins Street.

We both worked at the Government Aircraft factory at Fishermans Bend, which had a nine piece band made up of employees, two of which played in Frank's band, George Cadman piano, and Alf (Bluey) Barnacle drums, both very good players.

In those days I was into Bill Rank, Miff Mole and Jack Teagarden, the trombone players who influenced me, as well as Tommy Dorsey, for seamless sweet playing.

Frank Coughlan fulfilled all my expectations, and not only on trombone, but he was a very good trumpet player as well. He often played very hot choruses, but one of the main highlights of his playing, was playing chase choruses with himself on his double-belled euphonium. This instrument was a euphonium in the trombone register, plus a smaller one, built-in, in the flugal horn register. Frank would play four bars on the lower instrument, turn a valve and play four bars in the higher register, it sounded like a trombone and trumpet chase chorus.

The workers' canteen at the aircraft factory was huge building with a big stage, and a huge music library. George Cadman ran the band for the staff concerts for charity, and we played for two radio shows called "Workers Playtime" compared by Danny Webb, live on 3DB, (believe it or not)! The Christmas break up day in 1952 saw us playing for the Xmas party "the powers that be" paid for Frank Coughlan to bring about four of his band, plus vocalist Evelyn Wilson, to join us to provide the music.

We played a variety of music, mostly Glenn Miller, Tommy Dorsey, and other big band orchestrations. We played "Song of India" one of Dorsey's big hits. Frank played it perfectly as usual, and it was the first time I had seen the second trombone parts of these charts, because in those days, in most dance bands there was only one trombone. Frank was very encouraging to me, and I was rapt, that he took the time out to offer all his friendly advice.

I am glad that Jack Mitchell has written this book, and I can't wait to read it.

Sincerely

Harry Price

P.S. Good to see the write up of Jim Loughnan (Lougho) by Graeme Pender.

We Welcome these New Members:

Christina Bell, Alan Bradley, Philip Bradley, Nicholas Brown, Daimon Brunton, Anthony (Tony) Buckley, Jenni Campbell, Christopher Chapman, Ian & Fay Chisholm, Neil Clifton, Christopher Constantine, Brenton Coombs, Bill Corbett, Ann Craig, Silvana D'Ambrosio, R.J. (Bob) Dennis, Claudette Elias, Geoff & Margaret Elsworth, Ken Forbes, Derek Freeman, Jose Garcia, Geelong Jazz Club, Lynne Gough & Dave Richard, George Greenberg, Linda Grippi, Steve Haggard, Robert Harmer, John Hoey, Trudie Hollenkamp, Bob James, Keith Johnson, Hendiawan Juandy, David W Jukes, Donna Krauer, Lincoln Family, James MacMillan, Tony May, Edward Meagher, Neil Moseley, Gary Moss, Bruce Mowson, Bala Namasivayam, Colin Richards, Peter Skafte, Allan Smith, Ian Sonderhof, Michael Spencer, Ken Sumsion, Reginald Peter Trevithick, Maurie Vickerman, Ivan Videky, Caleb Webb.

We would like to thank the following for their generous donations:

Janet Arndt, The Association of Independent Retirees, Lindsay Bistrup, Blue Tango, Blue-Tone Jazz Band, Cecily Close, Peter Dann, Kate Dunbar (OAM), Doreen Fabrikant, Howard Foster, Geelong Jazz Club, David Hanson, Leo Hodgson, Norma Hogan, John Kennedy (OAM), Paul Lock, David McDowall, James MacMillan, Geoffrey Neilson, Lyn Rogers, Mervyn Spencer, John Thrum, Lee & Bev Treanor, John Tucker, Heidi & Charlotte Victoria.

DISCLAIMER

Opinions and views expressed in editorial and contributed articles are those of the authors and are not necessarily those of the Archive. The editor reserves the right to publish abridged articles/special features due to space restraints. The Archive, editor and the authors expressly disclaim all and any liability to any person, whether an Archive member or not, who acts or fails to act as a consequence of reliance upon the whole or part of this publication. The editor reserves the right to not publish any articles, correspondence or illustrations that may be offensive or contrary to VJA practices and policies. Publication of an advertisement does not necessarily constitute endorsement by the Archive of any product nor warrant its suitability. Advertisements are published as submitted by the advertiser. E&OE.

VJA BOARD OF MANAGEMENT

Sound

Important CD Release on the Vjazz Label

Almost Ampersand –The Unissued Bill Miller Recordings

THE Victorian Jazz Archive has just released an important collection of early Australian jazz originally recorded by the legendary Bill Miller. William H Miller, known to most as Bill, was responsible for providing a focus for jazz activity and discussion from as early as the late 1930s. Concerned that the works of Australian jazz musicians were not being made available to the public on record, he began an ambitious recording enterprise in 1943 for release on his own "Ampersand" label.

However, many of these recordings, for one reason or another, were never released even to this day. The reasons varied from objectionable background noise to musical mistakes within a performance. Fortunately, modern restoration techniques have now enabled many of these problems to be eliminated. Thanks to the endeavours of the Victorian Jazz Archive, forty exciting jazz performances from the period 1944 to 1951 can now be heard on CD for the very first time. Jazz historian and discographer, Jack Mitchell, has written the insert notes for this double-CD release. Here is a little of what Jack had to say:

A wave of excitement swept the Australian hot jazz fraternity in 1943 when it was revealed that amongst the shortly-to-arrive Artie Shaw Navy Band were two famous jazzmen Max Kaminsky and Dave Tough. The schedule of the band, with its performances restricted to servicemen, meant that only a few ever got to speak to Maxie, let alone Tough.

In Melbourne a couple of young fans, Ray Marginson and Ray Bradley, tracked Kaminsky to his hotel and introduced him to Roger Bell, Bill Miller and

others. Bill Miller was quite a force in the Melbourne jazz scene. His excellent record collection was available to fans and musicians alike, and in 1940 he had started, in a modest way, the magazine Jazz Notes.

This group asked Kaminsky to take part in a recording session with members of Roger Bell's Jazz Gang which had begun a weekly gig at Heidelberg Town Hall. Graeme Bell, who was in Queensland playing for the American Red Cross, missed the recording session. Many musicians in Melbourne and Sydney had been recording on acetate instant playback discs for their own use, but the Kaminsky session was recorded onto wax masters, so that regular pressings could be produced in the fullness of time. Bill Miller paid for the session, but it seems that he had little idea of going into the record business at that stage.

By the middle of 1944, with Graeme back on piano, the Bell Band had had some twelve months regular playing Saturday nights at Heidelberg Town Hall and nine months at another gig at the Palais Royal. These jobs resulted in a great improvement in the band's playing and morale, and this might well have been the catalyst for Bill to arrange to record them over four or five sessions. Early in 1946, with wartime restrictions easing, Bill was finally able to have two sides from the Kaminsky session pressed and released on "Ampersand" 1.

This disc was greeted with acclaim and two more discs by the Bell band soon followed. After that, Miller's recording activities became a steady stream, although, as he said himself, they were

all on acetate discs and would be released only if of an acceptable standard. That doesn't mean that the tracks on these CDs were not of an acceptable standard.

In the event, thirty-six 10" and six 12" discs were released, presenting a cross section of Melbourne and Adelaide musicians to the public. Ampersand was the first Australian specialist jazz label. From the unissued material, the VJA has now selected 40 tracks on two CDs to add to our knowledge of the so called "revival". They are an important documentation of Melbourne (and some Adelaide and Sydney) jazz musicians of the late forties and early fifties.

More than fifty musicians are to be heard on these CDs, including some almost forgotten today, and at least one, Ken Owen, appearing for the first time on a commercially available record. However these recordings are not only of historical importance—musically they need no apologies, and we all owe thanks to Bill Miller and his Ampersand label.

Just some of the bands featured on this release include Tony Newstead, Laurie Howells, Keith Hounslow, Ken Owen, Tom Pickering, the University Jazz band, the Barrelhouse Five, and Bruce Gray. The tunes range from Smokey Mokes, See See Rider, and Sunday, to The Girls all Like the Way I Drive. This double CD Vjazz 023, Catalogue 530, is available at just \$25 from the Archive shop or on-line at www.vicjazzarchive.org.au

The Unissued Bill Miller Recordings Almost Ampersand 1944 - 1951

DISC 1

1. Smokey Mokes (Tony Newstead)	3.07
2. Come Back Sweet Papa (Tony Newstead)	2.58
3. Eternal Triangle Blues (Laurie Howells)	3.01
4. Blues (Laurie Howells)	2.50
5. Jazz Me Blues (Tony Newstead)	2.45
6. Save It Pretty Mama (Tony Newstead)	2.29
7. Weary Blues (Keith Hounslow)	2.52
8. Revolutionary Blues (Keith Hounslow)	2.40
9. Slow Blues (Keith Hounslow)	2.45
10. See See Rider (Tony Newstead)	2.47
11. I'm A Ding Dong Daddy From Dumas (Newstead)	2.56
12. West End Blues (Tony Newstead)	3.08
13. Doin' The Low-Down (Tony Newstead)	2.50
14. Raggedy But Right (Tony Newstead)	2.37
15. Sister Margaret Blues (Ken Owen)	3.02
16. Some Of These Days (Ken Owen)	3.12
17. Strictly Improvised (Ken Owen)	2.14
18. The Girls All Love The Way I Drive (Hounslow)	3.08
19. Blues In A Flat (Keith Hounslow)	3.05
20. Fast Blues In C (Keith Hounslow)	2.45
21. St James Infirmary (Keith Hounslow)	3.42

DISC 2

1. Hotter Than That (Keith Hounslow)	2.34
2. Oh Didn't He Ramble (Keith Hounslow)	2.23
3. Struttin' With Some Barbeque (Keith Hounslow)	2.28
4. Darktown Strutters' Ball (Keith Hounslow)	2.25
5. Rag In E Flat (Pixie Roberts)	2.36
6. Dancin' Fool (Ampersand Convention Selection)	2.44
7. All Of Me (Ampersand Convention Selection)	3.06
8. Coquette (Ampersand Convention Selection)	2.56
9. Blues (Ampersand Convention Selection)	3.04
10. Sister Kate (Tom Pickering)	3.07
11. Sent Away Blues (Ade Monsborough)	2.32
12. Sunday (Ade Monsborough)	3.22
13. Stomp It Around (Jack Varney)	2.26
14. Some Of These Days (Bruce Gray)	3.11
15. Long Time Blues (Bruce Gray)	3.02
16. The Harry Lime Theme (Bruce Gray)	2.45
17. Gatemouth Stomp (University Jazz Band)	2.40
18. Working Man's Blues (University Jazz Band)	2.50
19. Treat Me Like That (Barrelhouse Five)	2.41

Total Time: 115min 56sec

“Bill” William H. Miller M.A., B.C.I. (Oxon)

It is difficult to sum up Bill Miller's life in jazz and do him justice in a short article. It more or less started when he left Melbourne Grammar for New College, Oxford, fresh from rowing in the successful Head of the River in 1932.

England and jazz was in a golden age with visits by the USA greats like Armstrong and Ellington. Records, both American and English, were freely available and Bill commenced the building of his great collection with quite amazing skill and understanding.

On his return to Australia in 1936, an invitation to a record evening at Bill's place was a great experience for those starved of the music by import and currency controls and the policies of E.M.I. concerning the local catalogue. It widened horizons for the Bell Brothers and, for Adrian Monsborough, gave him his first introduction to the negro washboard bands that so influenced his own style.

Bill in the 1940s and 50s was a key factor in the jazz explosion, although then not a player. He was a wide-ranging proselytizer and innovator with his 3UZ “Jazz Night” radio programs, his record nights, his creating specialist magazines like “Jazz Notes”. But above all his brave but fortunately successful record label “Ampersand”. Despite the pressure by many such as the Deputy Director of the ABC, the jazz lover Clem Semmler, E.M.I. in its Sydney bunker refused to record jazz despite the explosion in Melbourne of jazz for dancing. At the time amateur recordings were made on surface-cut acetate blanks. Bill took the leap to pressing records for sale. But it meant a substantial production (in the hundreds) and the recording had to be done on a wax blank. It was a significant risk financially. The first Ampersand was fortuitously the Roger Bell pick-up group in 1943 with Max Kaminsky visiting with the Artie Shaw band. Bill used wax blanks and after many difficulties Ampersand No. 1 was finally issued in 1946. It was a success, and the Ampersand saga was launched. To this single initiative we owe the preservation of the Australian jazz sound of the 1940s, 50s and 60s. Even later Bill assisted, as a solicitor, in the transfer, and hence the survival of the Swaggie label from Graeme Bell to Nevill Sherburn, who developed it to be one of the world's most enduring classic jazz labels. Bill's energy and foresight was crucial to the maturity of Melbourne's classic jazz development.

To everyone's pleasure he took up playing washboard with great vigour and enthusiasm. Instead of being one of the people listening to the music he became a significant element in the Portsea groups around Tony Newstead, George Tack, Willie McIntyre and David Eggleton, and clearly he enjoyed playing immensely.

So far as the Victorian Jazz Archive is concerned, Bill capped all this off by accepting the role of our Patron. Further, he oversaw the systematic and orderly transfer to the Archive of his collection, both overseas and Australian jazz, together with his own carefully detailed records of the Ampersands, and much more. We at the Archive have honoured his generosity and practical support in many ways. For instance, first class data access and information is available on his gift and the recording aspect of his life's work. We have also produced publications out of his material like the “Bill Miller Recording Log”. To make the music he recorded but did not issue available there is a substantial number of CDs in our catalogue based on his acetate collection the preservation of which was part of the John Kennedy project “Operation Acetate”. The most recent CD issued is a double one of the unissued Ampersands skilfully restored by our resident genius Ken Simpson-Bull. All this has brought to life and availability a major part of the Melbourne and Australian jazz of the 1940s, 50s and 60s.

Jazz was only part of Bill's life of course. So what about the whole person who was our friend?

He had a very particular sense of humour. He loved word play. The titles he used to disguise his pirating of early American negro recordings on his Double Cross label were a joy of obscure reference, sly jokes and puns. His producing of one Ma Rainey blues piece accompanied by Louis Armstrong was styled “Mama can can and orphan will”.

He had a set of firm and individual principles. Always knew his own mind and was contrary on many issues that many people just accepted or took for granted. He was very generous in a practical way. As a solicitor his fee structure was always tailored for those who were young, making their way or just simply hard up; and among his jazz friends there were many in those categories ... and many divorces to pilot through the legal process in the days before the Whitlam reform.

He loved the English countryside and the counties and had over 30 Batsford Books and many other works and periodicals about them. He admired the work of novelist Angela Thirkell, even being a paid up member of the Angela Thirkell Society.

As one got to know him, examples of the way he viewed the world bore out his individuality.

One incident he told me about impressed me greatly. In 1949 when approached by a senior acquaintance with a military background to play an active part in the revival of the 1930s a “new guard”, a vigilante-type army intended to “keep the peace” in the circumstances of the then coal strike, he rejected the approach absolutely out of hand. At heart he was a democrat.

Until his retirement he was Betty and my solicitor – a generous and helpful friend for close on 70 years. We enjoyed over that time many talks about books about life and drank some good wine with him.

We shall miss him as will many others, not the least his immediate family. Vale Bill.

Dr Ray Marginson



**Above: Bill Miller
Relaxing at Eltham.**

**Left: Portsea Trio,
Christmas 1962 Sydney.
Bill Miller washboard,
Willie Mc Intyre piano.**

Dame Elisabeth Murdoch A.C., D.B.E.

A Truly Remarkable Woman

EVERYONE at the Archive, in common with a vast number of volunteer organisations throughout Victoria and Australia, mourn the passing of our country's most remarkable philanthropist.

We are still astounded by the way in which she immediately responded to our approach in July 1995 for assistance in those difficult days when we were seeking support in cash or kind to meet the costs of getting off the ground.

We had just negotiated the lease of what had been a motor vehicle repair workshop building, from Parks Victoria, and an initial grant from the State Government, through Arts Victoria, from the Community Support Fund. We had also managed to get approval for gifts being tax deductible but we needed additional funds to fit out and computer equipment; further we had in mind the establishment of a fund to give us some interest income to help in operational costs.

We had a warm and almost immediate response from Dame Elisabeth promising \$25,000. All we had to do was to contact her accountant and the cheque arrived.

Not only was this a wonderful immediate help, but it also gave us a sense of security as well as giving everyone's morale a tremendous boost. Dame Elisabeth has always been personally a jazz supporter and has on many occasions had small groups play at social and fundraising events in her beautiful garden at her home "Cruden Farm" at Langwarrin. She just loved jazz. It was a great occasion when she arrived at the Collins Street Assembly Hall to attend Graeme Bell's 80th Birthday Concert.

In June 2006 Dame Elisabeth, despite her age, responded to our invitation to pay a visit to Wantirna to see the progress we had made over the intervening 8 years.

Over a pleasant informal lunch she not only expressed her delight with what had been achieved but offered us a second \$25,000. This was received with our great appreciation. Dame Elisabeth has been a most significant supporter of our work. This fact is an endorsement of the nature of the whole Archive enterprise – its professional quality, its devoted and hardworking volunteers and the creation of an important national museum collection of a special aspect of Australia's musical heritage.

Australia has lost an important figure in its history and someone who has been in many ways a role model to her peers. She has also exercised her own personal judgement in deciding the work she has been willing to support. To be a recipient of that support is in itself an accolade of quality and endeavour.

We, with thousands of others, have lost a great friend. We extend our sympathy and condolences to her family and register our thanks for her enormous help.

Dr Ray Marginson



Dame Elisabeth Murdoch A.C. D.B.E.

KNOCKIN' A JUG

An occasional column

By Jeff Blades

IN THE tune "Is it true what they say about Dixie," Al Jolson delivers the line – "Folks keep eating possum, till they can't eat no more".

While the following has nothing to do with this story, it begs the old chestnut – if we were meant to be vegans, how come all the animals are made out of meat?

I'm back on track, and a search of the Archive Library reveals a book titled "They all Played Ragtime" written by Rudi Blesh and Harriet Janis. Most of the tunes in it were composed one hundred or more years ago, and from some of them listed here you can see Americans of that period had an obsession with possums and other furry (and not so furry) little critters. Here we go.

Possumala 1894. Possum Hunt 1896. Possum Barbecue 1899. Possum Hall Rag 1899. De' Possum Hunt 1899. Possum and Taters 1901. Kangaroo Hop 1903. Possum Rag 1907. Porcupine Rag 1909. Monkey Rag 1911. Ragtime Turkey Trot 1913. Squirrel Rag 1913. Good Gravy 1925. Silver Fox – piano roll, date not shown.

The late Fred Parkes assured me American possums are different to ours, but this did not deter the fox which ripped the head and tail from a big "Bushy" in my Wantirna backyard recently, eating the innards and coming back the following night for afters.

History and photos show that indigenous Australians made clothing from possum pelts and I imagine they ate the flesh as well.

My question is, "does anyone out there have one of Grandma's old recipes?" For the possum – not the fox.

DONATION

Unload those nuisance five cent coins and donate them to the Archive.

We will count 'em, bank 'em and put them to good use, and you won't get another hole in your pocket.

OBSERVATION

Before attempting to climb the ladder of jazz without a lifeline –

Look out for the missing rungs!
Anon

Museums Australia visits the Archive



Peter Friend, Warren Doubleday MAP Committee member, Bill Brown, Terry Norman VJA President, Liz Marsden MAP Manager, Ray Sutton General Manager, Cassie May MAP Manager, Mel Blachford Collections Manager.

IT MAY be assumed that anyone can set up a building, fill it with various artefacts, cultural items and the like, and call it a museum. But to be accredited by the federal body *Museums Australia* is a different matter altogether. The Victorian Jazz Archive has, for many years, been officially recognised as an accredited museum. But such accreditation does not come easily, nor is it necessarily permanent. Official accreditation must be renewed every three years, so on Tuesday 4th September the Jazz Archive was visited by a team from *Museums Australia* with the task of renewing the existing status.

As we all know, the Jazz Archive has the culturally important task of safely storing, maintaining and displaying many items of great social value. These may be items of paper such as photographs, posters, programs, books, magazines, press clippings, club journals, sheet music and charts. There is also the all-important sound and vision collection which is received on all manner of media such as shellac, vinyl and acetate discs, on reel-to-reel or cassette tapes, on CD and DVD, and several other formats. Then there are musical instruments, badges, clothing—the list goes on.

So what does accreditation mean? It is something not granted lightly, and requires attainment and maintenance of high standards of record-keeping and information systems, appropriate physi-

cal treatment and conservation of materials, and open sharing of the collection. The aim of the Jazz Archive is not only to satisfy the requirements for accreditation but to continually strive for improvement, especially in methods used to preserve the materials given to us in trust by our donors.

The team from *Museums Australia* were impressed by the professional attitude of the staff, who although volunteers, are all skilled in the tasks they perform. Also impressive were the many and various methods of preservation employed to prevent deterioration of the valuable artefacts, some examples being the digitisation of sound and vision recordings and photographs, the use of acid-free protective wrapping and sealed containers.

Display of collected items in exhibitions and the dissemination of rare recordings of outstanding or historic jazz in the form of the Archive's own locally produced CDs are also part of the examination undertaken by the accreditation team, as is the existence of a comprehensive asset listing made available to the public via the Eastern Regional Library database.

Of course the Victorian Jazz Archive is much more than has been described here and we are proud to have just received news that continuation of accreditation has been approved up until 2017.

A TALE OF TWO CITIES

By Bill Brown.



Edinburgh: The Sandy Brown Band. Johnny Twiss (bj), Stan Greig (p), Sandy Brown(cl), Al Fairweather (t), Willie Burns (d).



Melbourne: Ken Ingram (tb), John Sangster (tp), Nick Polites (cl), Russ Fusedale (cl).

WHAT the Dickens indeed! No not him. But it was the best of times, not the worst by any means. The above title alludes to the burgeoning movement that prevailed world-wide in the late forties/early fifties. The searching back to the source of the hot jazz of the twenties/thirties period, known as the Classic Age of the music.

The two cities I refer to were at far ends of the globe, Melbourne Town and the 'Athens' of the north, Edinburgh, known to many as Auld Reekie.

The quest for the golden sounds was of course carried on in other environs but for this essay we'll concern ourselves with those two localities.

Recently a book has emerged detailing the birth of the good noise of the Revival (as it was known) in Edinburgh. This tome is called 'Edinburgh Jazz Enlightenment' the Story of Traditional Jazz in Edinburgh. This covers the early days of the scene there especially the emergence of five musicians who in later years gravitated south to London and made a great impression on the scene there – clarinetists, Sandy Brown and Archie Semple; trumpet men, Al Fairweather and Alex Welsh; and pianist/drummer Stan Greig. Of those five only Stan is still with us although I doubt if he plays as he has Parkinsons and had at least one stroke. The book is compiled by Graham Blamire, a bass player around the Edinburgh scene since the early sixties, and deals also with the players who never left Edinburgh and covers at length the development of the annual Jazz festival from the seventies onward, which also has included overseas musicians including our own players such as the Barnard brothers.

Whilst I arrived in Melbourne town (1966) long after those formative revival years, from what I have gleaned a similar

situation unfolded here. Of course the main focus was on the Bells' group and their extraordinary achievements, but other players obviously contributed to the tapestry that emerged in those halcyon days. I'm sure a similar book could be put together on our patch. After all this upsurge of swinging mayhem carried on until the sixties. The advent of the Red Onions, Yarra Yarra band plus the other bands that appear on the marvelous CDs covering the sixties EPs (put out by the archive—where else) illustrate this. I'm sure those worthies Geoff Tobin and Roger Beilby could get this project going.

Just last week in the archive shop I saw a marvelous book of photos depicting Bob Barnard's jazz life over the years, a terrific coverage of a jazz journey. In my opinion Bob was Melbourne's Louis. In the same way I reckon Tony Newstead was our Bix and Jim Loughnan was our Sidney Bechét. Jim who passed away in recent times often visited the archive and we had great chats in the sound room about the jazz scene both here and elsewhere. I presented him with some Bechét material, recorded in Europe in the fifties with a slightly more 'modern' rhythm section and he was really chuffed.

Back in Auld Reekie the guys who made the trip south as I said were all stars but the fates cut most of them down early. The early fifties Alex Welsh band with Archie Semple on clarinet not only played like the Eddie Condon crew, they followed their lifestyle. I think the only survivor is trombonist Roy Crimmins who now resides in Tel Aviv of all places. Perhaps dodging the odd Hammas rocket is preferable to being in the Welsh bandwagon when the whisky flask was doing the rounds. As for the Edinburgh festival other Australians have been there. I have a CD of George

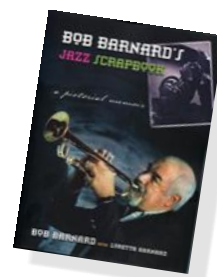
Washingmachine with English guitarist Diz Disley and some local musicians. On a trip back to Scotland in 1985 I attended this festival and enjoyed seeing some old faces still blowing with their enthusiasm not dimmed. So two cities with a fine jazz pedigree.

In an email I received from Graham Blamire he agreed with me about the greying of the jazz audiences but said that like our scene, younger lads [and lassies] were appearing who played the older sounds. Certainly he maintained that the original players were dwindling as the years passed. He said when he first came to the music in around 1960 he was often the youngster in the band. Now in his seventieth year he sometimes still is.

I have kept in touch with the people who recently started a jazz archive in Edinburgh and sent them a copy of our magazine and a few of our issued CDs. They appeared suitably impressed.

At any rate I'm sure that Charles D. wouldn't have minded me borrowing his title for this latest scribble.

As a postscript to the above article I have since learned that Edinburgh born pianist/drummer/band leader, **Stan Greig**, one of the group who took London by storm in the mid fifties died in London on November 18th aged eighty-two. Stan visited Australia on a few occasions as a member of Acker Bilk's Band and attended the **Fiftieth Jazz Convention** in Melbourne in 1995.



Ian Pearce: A Tasmanian Jazz Musician

By Simon Petty



Ian Pearce (tb), Frank Johnson (t), George Tack (cl).

PEARCE was a pioneer of Australian jazz, his career spanned seventy-five years as a professional musician. Beginning as a trumpet player Pearce, along with his elder brother Cedric, and friends Tom Pickering and Rex Green were the founders of Tasmania's first jazz band: **The Barrelhouse Four**, one of Australia's first traditional jazz bands. In 1946 the band attended the first Australian Jazz Convention, and were the first representation of a Tasmanian jazz band on a national stage.

Following his army enlistment, Pearce was posted to Darwin for three years, then returned to Melbourne where he studied composition at the Melbourne Conservatorium of Music for the next three years. During this time Pearce began attending the Uptown Club to hear Graeme Bell's band. Dental problems led him to give up the trumpet and take up the trombone with its larger mouthpiece in replacement. When the Bell band returned from its first European tour, Pearce joined the band on trombone for a series of tours and recording sessions. As Pearce was in his final year of study he declined the invitation to go with the Bell's on the second tour in 1949. But continued to perform in Melbourne with Tony Newstead's band.

After completing his diploma, in 1950 he went to England with Don Banks and Ivan Sutherland. Pearce's early orientation in London was spent meeting musicians, listening to music, both recordings and frequenting any live performances he could. Regularly attending concerts of the Society of Contemporary Music. Excluding his time in the Bell band, during the course of his music studies, Pearce had invariably changed his ob-

jectives from performing to composing, and although still extremely influenced by jazz it was classical music that entertained his interests during this time. While working mundane jobs and pursuing his musical interests wherever possible, it was fourteen months after his arrival that the British Australian Embassy thought it a good idea to showcase a concert of Australian chamber music to the people of London. Successively the three boys: Pearce, Banks and Sutherland, were all invited to provide compositions for the event, along with other Australian composers: Coverage of the concert was so vast even numerous newspaper write-ups were featured in Australia, including the Mercury newspaper back in Hobart, casting the recital as the first ever London concert showcasing all -Australian chamber music. With the recent success of the concerts, this evoked a keen interest back into Pearce's music. Shortly after this he switched to piano and joined **Mick Mulligan's Magnolia Jazz Band**. Pearce toured extensively with them throughout Europe, and remained with Mulligan until the band broke up following a serious road accident involving its touring bus. Pearce went on to play casual work, inter alia, Sandy Brown, and Bob Mickelborough.

In 1955, he returned to Australia with his family, to work with his brother Cedric in Fuller's Bookshop in Hobart. Pearce formed a sextet in a more mainstream style, to play ABC broadcasts, produced by Ellis Blain, this led to a series of recordings produced by Jack Smith of the ABC for the record label Swaggie. Over a seventy-five-year period, he has been leader or co-leader of

various other groups, all of which have become cornerstones of Tasmanian jazz, including the **Pearce-Pickering Jazz Band** and the **Pearce-Pickering Ragtime Five**.

After twenty-three years, 1981 saw Pearce's retirement from Fuller's Bookshop, in favour of slowing down. Following illness Pickering also retired around the same time. With the retirement of Pickering, and other band members moving out of Hobart, and the Pearce-Pickering Jazz Band evolved into the **Ian Pearce Quartet**, with Paul Martin replacing Pickering, Ken Martin joining on bass, and Michael Colrain remaining on drums. In 1973 the Wrest Point Hotel was refurbished which included the construction of the seventeen-storey hotel tower. The landmark became nationally identified with Hobart. This development was a result of John Haddad, one of the company's executives being assigned the role of getting a casino license for the hotel. A State referendum was passed and the hotel now incorporated a casino, and was renamed the Wrest Point Hotel and Casino. Pearce had always had a long running association with the Wrest Point Hotel since his performances there in the early '40s as piano player with his trio and trumpet player in Ron Richards Orchestra. With the anticipated opening of the casino, executives' thought it would be a good idea to have a live jazz band every Sunday afternoon in the new Boardwalk Bar. The decision was then made to approach the only probable candidate for job, and with that in 1984 the Ian Pearce Quartet took up residency for the next seventeen years.

When you start to consider that the inexplicable process which enabled a select few musicians to improvise and compose in the jazz idiom start fading-away before the artist turns forty, Pearce almost astonishingly in his late sixties was in the peak of his career. As a pianist Ian Pearce can boast a style genuinely unique in Australia. The early combinations of American swing era piano players Teddy Wilson and Jess Stacy who both rose to fame in Benny Goodman's band are very apparent in Pearce's style. Further to this the resonance of Earl Hines, Fats Waller and James P. Johnson who were all masters of the Harlem stride piano style can be observed in Pearce's piano style. While extremely capable of interpreting melodies in many other styles, it is the stride piano styles that underpinned most of Pearce's finest work.

The succeeding years saw the Ian Pearce Quartet appear annually at the Clarence and Mildura Jazz Festivals, along with many other prominent festivals throughout Australia, including performances alongside international musicians: Kenny Davern, Buddy Tate, Chris Barber, Kenny Ball, The Dutch Swing College Band, Tom Pletcher, Jim Cullum and Warren Vache, among others, Australian musicians: Don Burrows, Bob Barnard, Tom Baker, Dan Barnett and Steven Grant and the list goes on.

In 1995, Pearce's talents were rightfully recognised beyond the shores of Tasmania. His creditable place as a composer of national stature, and interpreter par excellence of the considera-

finalists pieces in a competition run by the ABC. Kaywana together with the other seven finalist compositions were recorded by the Sydney Light Orchestra and released on a 33 1/3 LP by Columbia records entitled "Holiday Bound". This continuing success led to Pearce being commissioned to write a film score for wind quintet for a local documentary film on Tasmania's Southwest coast wilderness. Furthermore the Tasmanian Symphony Orchestra performed his composition "Pastorale", which was subsequently broadcast on ABC national radio.

With the very sad passing of Ian Pearce you can hear his music on a considerable anthology of CD recordings, radiobroadcasts, and read of his accomplishments in national magazines and newspapers.

Approaching his 91st year, whilst still performing with undiminished vitality, Pearce was one of the unsurpassed pianists of traditional jazz in Australia. Having the same humble, genuine approach

Australian music compositions performed to European audiences in London. The partnership of Pearce-Pickering saw them to help augur the ragtime revival in the late 60s with the **Pearce-Pickering Ragtime Five**, in a succession of recording and performance dates. These along with many other achievements and milestones in a seventy-five year career have rightfully etched Pearce's place in Australian jazz history. A man who undoubtedly is a national treasure and has contributed so much to Australian jazz together with being the leading force in keeping jazz alive in Tasmania for so many years, was interviewed by Robert Cox in 2001, about his career achievements, Cox asked of Pearce, "Do you have any regrets?" Pearce in his soft, well modulated voice, quite manifestly replied, "No, no regrets".

Ian was not only one of my mentors, but also true friend and always a gentleman. I feel very privileged to have performed with him on many occasions and also to have written an honours thesis about his life and achievements in 2011. Ian was known for his humility and was admired by so many musician's Australia wide; will be deeply missed by the fraternity of Tasmanian and Australian jazz musicians.

- **Simon Petty**

Acknowledgement to:

Johnson, B. (1987). *The Oxford companion to Australian Jazz*. Melbourne: Oxford University Press.

Petty, Simon (2011). *Tasmanian Jazzman a study of Ian Pearce's contribution to Australian jazz*. Unpublished thesis. Griffith University.



Alan Brinkman (cl), Ian Pearce (p), Ballarat, 1988.

ble library that form the lexicon of classic jazz standards, saw him made a Member of the Order of Australia. "The citation mentioning not only the musical summits he has attained, but also his many years of non-playing support for the cause through his leadership in Tasmania's Jazz Action Society and his university lectures on jazz history". Within the jazz sorority the honours kept coming with lifetime achievement awards from the Mildura jazz festival and placement on the Honour Roll at the Montsalvat jazz festival in Victoria. In '96 Pearce was further made patron of the St Helens; Suncoast jazz festival, receiving the Satchmo Award for his services to Tasmanian jazz, throughout his fifty-five year career. In 1997, Pearce at the age of 76, was to embark on his first US tour, as a pianist in **Steve Waddell's Creole Jazz Band**. The band did a series of dates including appearances at festivals in Los Angeles and San Francisco. Pearce yet again achieved feat being the only Tasmanian musician at the festivals performing in the only Australian band on the program

It is appropriate to mention here Pearce's non-jazz compositions, apart from his student works in the Conservatorium period, 1961 saw him compose a piece of music entitled "Kaywana". Pearce composed this for light orchestra and it was accepted as one of the eight

to his performances is what has exemplified him as being at the forefront of the success of jazz developments in Australia and overseas. His numerous contributions as co-leader of one of Australia's first jazz bands, the **Barrelhouse Four**, to assisting pioneer the trad jazz revival as part of **Mick Mulligan's bands** in the UK in the late 1950s. Together with Don Banks and Ivan Sutherland were the first to have their



Bell Band in Adelaide: Ian Pearce (tb), Ade Monsbrough (t), Roger Bell (t), Pixie Roberts (cl), Charlie Blott (d), Bud Baker (bj).

Visitors To The Archive



Left : Pippa Wilson (vls), Kevin Grigsbey (tb), Richard Desmond (t), Neil Davidson (d), Tony Feehan (p), Ann Craig (f).

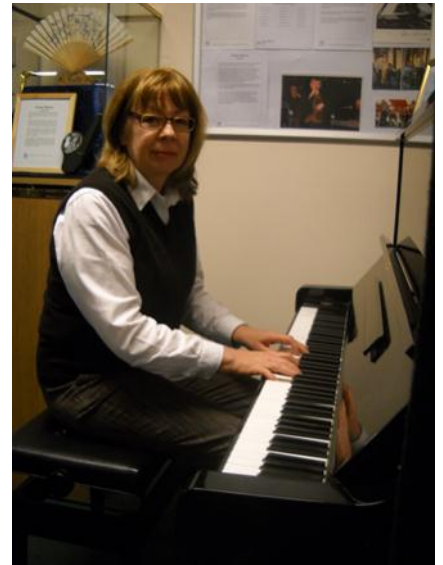
Below: Ashley Thomas (bar), Jennifer Mc Cluskey (as), Yang Chen (as), Andre Lew (ts), Liam Robertson (vn), Aaron Robertson (p).



Left: Terry Norman (ts), Richard Desmond (t), Ann Craig (f), John Thrum (p), Kevin Grigsbey (tb).



Janet Seidel and Mel Blachford



Janet Seidel testing out the Archive's piano.



Bob and Rae Sedergreen

Sound Room Upgrade

THE SOUND ROOM at the Archive has, for several years, been in need of refurbishment, so when General Manager Ray Sutton suggested that some funds were available to perform renovations, the Sound Room staff jumped at the chance.

First of all was a plan for the new fittings and furniture drawn up by Audio Consultant Ken Simpson-Bull. After approval by the Management team a visit was made to "Allboard Distributors" who were contracted to provide the new cupboards, bench-top and shelving. New power-points and electric wiring were installed by a qualified electrician before the arrival of the ordered furniture.

Overseeing the installation of the furniture was Henry Matser, ably assisted

by John Thrum and Brian Abrahams. Henry expertly filled-in two existing windows which were to be eliminated in the new set-up and attractively painted the whole room. Of course, the sound and vision technical equipment had to be removed before the work began and Ken was careful to properly label the many leads and connections which would have to be re-assembled on completion of the renovations.

Bill Brown, Peter Friend and Ken had to be relocated during the installation and were found space in the back room (where the international record collection is housed). In fact the back-room boys were advised by the sound guys that there may be a take-over of their much-coveted territory. (The back room is where much fun, laughter and good hot jazz emanates during the day.)

Finally the renovations were complete and the technical equipment re-installed without (too much) drama. Everyone thinks it now looks great and the crew responsible for the work were pleasantly surprised to each receive a gift for their efforts from the Board of Management.



Contemplating success— Bill Brown, Ken Simpson-Bull and Henry Matser.

A Lucky Find

WHILE checking through some 78rpm records donated to the Archive from the estate of the late Ron Schober, we came across an interesting item. It's an individually autographed 10 inch disc of **Larry Adler's** recording of *St. Louis Blues*, signed by the performer himself with a "chinagraph" (wax) pencil just below the record label.

Discographer, Brian Rust, lists **Larry Adler** (born 1914) in his "Jazz Records" which implies that Rust saw him as a jazz musician. In fact Adler made recordings with the "Quintette of the Hot Club of France" as well as with Duke Ellington. Known as the world's best-known harmonica player, Adler first recorded in London in 1934, and since then made hundreds of sides all over the world. He died in 2001.



ALL HANDS ON DECK —Brian Abrahams, Henry Matser, and John Thrum.

'Moments in Time'

'Moments in Time'
is a Jazz Australia CD dedicated to five of the musicians who feature largely on it, **Len Barnard, Tom Baker, Fred Parkes, Gary Costello & Bill Howard.**

Many contrasts of the classic jazz style are represented on this comprehensive recording which features highlights of Jazz Australia performances during the '80s and '90s in Melbourne. As Sydney jazz journalist Peter Newton states in his review 'This CD features the cream of mainstream jazz in Melbourne and Sydney in the late 20th Century, the one exception being Jim Cullum, who has visited Australia many times to perform duets with Bob Barnard.

This CD not only feature those to whom it is dedicated, but also Paul Furniss, Allan Browne, Peter Gaudion, Stephen Grant, Ian Smith, Doug de Vries,

John Scurry, Graeme Bell, Graham Coyle and many more.

The tracks include:
Mahogany Hall Stomp – *Allan Browne Band with Peter Gaudion & Fred Parkes.*
Cherokee – *Doug de Vries Quintet with Fred Parkes.*
Whip Me with Plenty of Love – *Tom Baker Band with Len Barnard at Melba Hall.*
China Boy – *Tom Baker Band with Tom on trombone.*
Dancing in the Dark – *Jim Cullum & Bob Barnard Quintet*
Stardust – *Stephen Grant Trio*
Temptation Rag – *Graeme Bell Trio*
Brother Can you Spare a Dime – *Graham Coyle Trio*
Blues My Naughty Sweetie Gives to Me – *Paul Furniss & Fred Parkes Quintet* plus many more.



This recording would make a wonderful gift for the jazz enthusiast who has everything! It is only available from Jazz Australia 5258 3936 and the Victorian Jazz Archive 9800 5535 \$25 includes postage.

Feature

The Unknown Frank Johnson

By Ken Simpson-Bull



The young Frankie Johnson

IN 1949 Graeme Bell's Band was the most popular Jazz band in Melbourne, nay, in Australia not to mention the UK and parts of Europe. Then, in early 1949 at the "Battle of the Bands" at Wirth's Olympia (a venue situated in St Kilda Road near where the Art Centre now stands) a new kid on the block, 22-year-old cornettist **Frank Johnson and his "Fabulous Dixielanders"**, was voted the winner, suddenly making his the most popular jazz band in Melbourne.

There were two more "Battle of the Bands" re-matches in the following months and Frank Johnson won both contests. Although the results were only transitory and Graeme Bell remained Australia's best known and most popular jazz band, the Frank Johnson group consisting of Wocka Dyer on trombone, Geoff Kitchen on clarinet, Geoff Bland on piano, Jack Connelly on bass and Wes Brown on drums, had suddenly reached the big times.

Their first major payoff was a nine-year stint at the Collingwood Town Hall where dancers and jazz lovers from all over Melbourne and beyond would come to hear the band play. There were also recording contracts and more. The band's history until Frank's death in October 2000 is well documented in publications like Andrew Bisset's *Black Roots and White Flowers*, Bruce Johnson's *Oxford Companion to Australian Jazz* and in *Vjazz No 42* to name a few sources.

What is not documented however are Frank's very early years. Victorian Jazz Archive member Jack Bartlett, a childhood friend of Frank's, has come out of the woodwork, so to speak, to discuss this period.

"In early 1939 at the Rathdowne Street [Carlton] State School I elected to sit next to Frank", said Jack Bartlett. "At that time there were two to a desk. We both would have been twelve years of age and became very close friends".

Still at school and with the onset of war, Frank used to draw battleships while Jack drew aero-planes. Frank had blond wavy hair and a "pretty" face which apparently made him the target of bullies. Jack, who later became a boxing champion in the Air Training Corps, taught Frank how to "look after himself, which he did from then on".

Frank lived at the back of a shop, which still exists today, on the east side of Rathdowne Street just north of Elgin Street in Carlton. At the time, the shop was vacant but there were banners and signs in the window with the hammer and sickle. It appears that Frank's father was an official with the local branch of the Communist Party. Frank's surname at that time was Ewer, his father being of Russian origin (Jack claims). In the early years of the war the Russians were on the side of Germany, so in order to avoid harassment Frank's father changed the family's name to Johnson.

"Frank always had to be home straight after school", Jack remembered, "because even at 12 years of age Frank was getting lessons on how to play the trumpet." At the end of 1939, after the final exams, those students who performed well went to Melbourne High School, which is where Frank went. Those with lower marks went to Collingwood Tech, which is where Jack went.

Later on, Jack went to live in Portland and lost touch with Frank until

Jack caught up with him again at a dance in Portland around 1951. "Frank and his band must have been doing a tour of country areas" Jack said. "He immediately recognised me from the bandstand and called me up. By this time Frank was doing very well."

In Graeme Bell's autobiography, Graeme refers to the fact that when he first met Frank Johnson, which was at the First Australian Jazz Convention in 1946, Frank was known as Frankie; in fact "Frankie Johnson's Hot Five". (Remember that at that time, Frank Sinatra, idol of the bobby-soxers, was called Frankie.) As interviewer I once asked Wes Brown (Frank's long-time drummer) whether Frank preferred Frank or Frankie. "Only the girls called him Frankie", was Wes's reply.

Frank Johnson's recording career theoretically began on the 21st January, 1947 when he was waxed by Bill Miller for the *Ampersand* label. But this disc was never released. However there are two earlier double-sided home-cut acetates, one in the possession of the Jazz Archive. Both feature Frank on trumpet, Geoff Kitchen on clarinet, Eric Washington on trombone, Geoff Bland on piano, H. Morrison on guitar, and Ken Thwaites on drums made on 22nd September, 1945. The embryo band on this recording, with Frank just 18 years of age, sounds very immature!

Frank's first commercial record release was on the *Ampersand* label, recorded on the 19th June, 1948 with *Bienville Blues* and *Leonard's Shuffle*. He began his better known *Jazzart* recordings in March 1949 and his first recordings by a major company, on *Parlophone*, in December, 1949 which was soon after he had won the "Battle of the Bands". Frank Johnson truly deserves his place in Australia's legends of Jazz..



Frank Johnson's Fabulous Dixielanders riverboat trip.



KEYBOARD CORNER

are proud to be sponsors of
The Victorian Jazz Archive
 We carry a huge range of all instruments,
 and offer special pricing to
 Victorian Jazz Archive members
 Contact Craig Johnston
KEYBOARD CORNER
137 Boronia Road, Boronia 3155
9761 0003

**PLEASE NOTE THE DEADLINE FOR THE
 NEXT MAGAZINE IS THE END OF
 MARCH 2013**

Melbourne

BRASS & WOODWIND

The best in instruments
The best after sales service

Everything to do with brass and woodwind instruments
 578 North Road, Ormond, Victoria. 3204
 T. 03 9578 3677 www.ozwinds.com.au



HOTEL BRUCE COUNTY



03 8805 8400
 445 Blackburn Rd, Mt Waverley
www.brucecounty.com.au



Overflow Cafe Wine Bar

BREAKFAST: Mon to Fri
 LUNCH: Mon to Fri & Sun
 DINNER: 7 days

\$19 Combo Lunch (Mon-Fri)
 choice of 1 course plus a glass of wine or beer

**Friday Drinks - drink specials
 & free finger food 4.30-6pm**

Kids \$12 menu with Activity Pack
 50% OFF before 7pm Fri, Sat, Sun

Clancy's Restaurant



LUNCH: Wed to Fri
 DINNER: Wed to Sat

\$38 Two Course Lunch
 includes a glass of wine or beer

**Dinner Dance - last Friday
 of the month from 25 May**

Regular Winemaker's Dinners
 6 courses matched with wines from \$99

CELEBRATING 30 YEARS!

The Victorian Jazz Archive acknowledges the past support of the following organisations: The State of Victoria through the Department of Premier and Cabinet and Arts Victoria, Parks Victoria, The Ian Potter Foundation, The Myer Foundation, The Pratt Foundation, The Trust Company of Australia, The Helen McPherson Smith Trust, Diana Allen of Jazz Australia, The Australian Jazz Convention Trustees, The Estates of the late Don Boardman, Ron Halstead, David Ward and Ward McKenzie Pty Ltd. and Sam Meerkin. The Archive gratefully acknowledges the financial support given to the VJA Capital Fund by Dame Elisabeth Murdoch, A.C., D.B.E.