

As all of these tributes show, Phyllis Mander-Jones played an outstanding part in this noble task.

G.L. Fischer

FOOTNOTES

1. Phyllis Mander-Jones, MBE, BA, FLAA, Honorary Member of the Australian Society of Archivists. A citation in reference to Miss Mander-Jones' Honorary Membership appeared in the *Bulletin* of The Australian Society of Archivists for July 1976.
2. Several others whom I invited greatly regretted their inability to participate.
3. Marguerite Yourcenar, *Memoirs of Hadrian*, translated from the French by Grace Frick in collaboration with the author. Lond., Penguin Books, 1959.
4. *Ibid* p.176.

A World To Be Spanned And Enjoyed

By Lois Mander-Jones*

In 1895 one of the 'Belles of Newcastle' — as Margaret and Florence Arnott were known — married George Burnett Mander-Jones from Goomeri, Queensland. The young doctor with an M.D. from London who took Margaret Fleming Arnott for his wife, was the grandson of David Jones¹ whose son David Mander had chosen to take up land on the Burnett River rather than to go into the family store. Two vigorous and successful Sydney families were so united, Margaret's father being William Arnott of biscuit fame. David was named for his father and mother, Jane Mander, and christened his children with the name Mander which was then used as a double name to differentiate from the Hall Jones whose father George (a brother) was a partner in Queensland with David, and from other multifarious Jones cousins. In the 1930's Evan Mander-Jones took the hyphen by deed poll, mainly for consistent indexing, and in latter years Phyllis used this also.

* Mrs Evan Mander-Jones, sister-in-law of Phyllis Mander-Jones.

Phyllis Mander-Jones was born at Homebush on 2 January 1896, and remembered sitting on a hot green lawn watching a smart gig and horse come up the driveway, her father leaping out to greet his two-year-old daughter. He was back from his rounds. His mother, Annie Emily, came from Queensland to live in Sydney about this time with her two daughters, Annie and Elsie. Granny taught Phyllis to read before she was five. Phyllis remembered frequent visits to their house and often staying overnight. George took his family to England in 1899 and his sister Elsie went too to help care for the new baby, Mildred. The voyage was very rough, George was extremely ill with sea-sickness, and Elsie was flung around the deck with the new baby in her arms. Phyllis' picture of Elsie is a clear vignette of a slender girl with soft puffs of brown hair, dressed in a sprigged voile and dabbing perfume on while Phyllis looked on from beneath a mosquito-netted cot. In England, Elsie met Dr Peter Laird and later returned to marry him. The Laird family visited Australia with their children in 1909 and the close connection between the cousins has never broken.

George again took his family to England in 1904, apparently for refresher courses at London. Perhaps he just liked travelling. The journey was rough. Phyllis never forgot the beauty of King George Sound as they put in to Albany, sitting with her mother using coils of rope as chairs on the deck. They stayed in England until after Geoffrey, the youngest child, was born in 1906.² The effect on the young Phyllis, and indeed upon the family, was to give a concept of the world as accessible, interesting, and above all, secure. Father seems to have been a close and competent parent, able to go with his two little daughters to London to meet his sister Annie when she came for a visit, while Margaret stayed in Torquay with the two little boys. They stayed several days in a hotel, but Phyllis writes 'One thing Father was no good at was doing our hair — Aunt Annie re-did it as soon as she arrived'. He took the girls on trips walking through peanut warehouses in Marseilles, in rickshaws eating sugar bananas, and rowing them around the coast of Torquay. There was a visit to Kilmalcom in Scotland to see Peter Laird and Elsie. Playing in the long northern twilight was a novelty, but bedtime while the sun was still up was less agreeable. Arnott cousins came from Australia. The world was there to be spanned and enjoyed. Phyllis loved toy sailing boats and balls, but could not be persuaded to have a doll or a tea-set. Mother, with five small children (albeit help from a nanny), was 'always singing' — she and George had met over a piano, singing hymns and Victorian ballads.

Back in Australia they settled in *Boonara* at Wahroonga, beside Abbotsleigh School which the girls were to attend. There was much open scrub around and the house had a large wild garden at the end of the block. They all loved this, and each could always be refreshed by a picnic or a walk in the bush.

George bought a Humber car, employed a chauffeur, and settled down to suburban practice. The girls slipped through the hedge to school. Photographs of the drawing class at Abbotsleigh School show Phyllis a grave child in an enormous white hat and white dress, sketching on a hillside. Later the class rolled up their skirts and waded in the sea, complete with puff sleeves and large hats. In 1983 she again sat by the sea sketching seagulls and the Aldinga hills south of Adelaide, and waded in the clear gulf waters. I recall her in 1971 in bathers and a lifejacket, nimbly hopping on to my son's small catamaran and whipping across the same gulf. She showed slides of this to amazed friends in England, with no comment but a deep twinkle in her eyes. She was then seventy-five.

Her ability to capture a scene or delineate wildflowers stayed ever fresh and a considerable folio of paintings is evidence. In her last year of life she was studying strelitzias and was fascinated by their angles and the pure intensity of colour. The headmistress of Abbotsleigh, Marian Clarke, was a painter and had been interested in Phyllis' work. Miss Clarke always took a sketch book on holidays — Phyllis noted this and did likewise. She was fond of Miss Clarke and unawed by her. In 1913 she took the Senior Public Examination and was awarded the Fairfax Prize for German.

Phyllis made only one significant entry in a diary given to her in 1909 by her Aunt Annie. She writes —

It was just as I was finishing practising [the piano] this evening that it took hold of me it was a pity I hadn't written more in this book. The fact is I have a violent prejudice against diaries, some of course are interesting but I was sure mine would be one of the milk and water kind in which the author solemnly writes down that on such and such a date she went to party and on such and such a date went away for a holiday — facts not at all interesting for future reference. I cannot very well write a record of my schooldays [the title of the diary] now for I have only a little over a year more, but I have at least the consolation that 'It is better late than never' so I am going to make a reminiscence of those left behind, for it has occurred to me that I have spent of late some very happy years and I would not like them to slip away altogether. Ever since I can remember I have loved telling stories so now I am going to write as though I was telling myself — that is, the old lady who will be myself, — it will give me a sense of fun when I think I am talking to myself, yet, an old myself, about whom I know absolutely nothing at all, whether she will be an old spinster or a married lady and if she will have a lot of little grandchildren, or where she will be living. I always like a feeling of amusement when I am reading a book though I am very fond of sad books too if they are not tainted by melodrama when the hero and heroine go through a hundred complexities and agonising circumstances and everything comes right in the end. There is a false ring about such books.

The sense of fun and dislike of melodrama and false rings were to remain part of her. She goes on in the diary to describe the holidays spent with Aunt Annie on the south coast of New South Wales, first in rented houses

then in *Dunoon*, built especially for the purpose by Annie at Austinmer. Here the cousins gathered in the holiday venue each term break, together with Eric Saville, the son of a missionary in New Guinea, who went to Shore Grammar School with Phyllis' brothers Evan, Burnett and Geoffrey. The children of Llewellyn Mander-Jones came from *Boonara* in Queensland, seven in all, and the twelve children all shared the chores, although Phyllis notes dryly 'the boys did not care much for this'. They tended to monopolise the task of polishing the steel knives (not stainless) with a little felt wheel and pink paste — 'a most satisfactory procedure both in operation and for the knives'.

Freedom combined with the necessary discipline to maintain themselves and the house, the impact of nature upon the senses, and the firm family identity developed by parents and the aunt who formed a bridge between the families and a bulwark for the parents, gave each child an enviable heritage. The memory of long days on the beach, the 'Devil's Own wind' rushing down from the mountains, thick cream clotted on the pans of fresh milk on the stove, the frugal use of fresh water, come clearly through in Phyllis' last reminiscences as the earlier descriptions of the child in her diary. She wrote 'The surf pounded through our dreams'.

One cannot resist the comment that here the bases of personality listed by Erik Erikson,³ identity, competence, autonomy and inter-relatedness, were validated not only by parents but by a significant other person — Aunt Annie — naturally and unselfconsciously. As each child reached a milestone it was recognised by Aunt Annie, with a letter, a silver pencil or a watch, or perhaps a well stacked hamper from *Nangur*, her city home. When Phyllis had been in the Public Library of New South Wales about ten years, it was Aunt Annie who helped her to have a holiday at Mailu in New Guinea with the Savilles. Her sensitive lino-cuts of that village are preserved in the Mitchell Library and in the family.



Mailu, Papua in 1932. Lino cut by Phyllis Mander-Jones, 1933.
(Courtesy Lois Mander-Jones).

Phyllis tried teaching but did not care for it. I asked her about this and she said with some hesitation that she had not liked the repetition, and although the girls were very pleasant they were not all really serious about learning! She had been a serious student at the Women's College at the University of Sydney⁴, and had in fact been twitted by the freshers for not smiling or being friendly enough. She was amazed and somewhat amused by this, not perhaps looking for such rewards from university life. About this time, too, her dearest school friend, a brilliant and charming girl, had died from tuberculosis. Dr Mander-Jones would not let his daughter visit in the last days; it is more than likely that grief and the loss of a particularly understanding friend detached her more from the students than one would have thought likely. She never spoke of this friend, Helen Denny, to me.

Dr Mander-Jones died suddenly in 1924 and the young family on the threshold of their careers received a severe setback. A smaller home was found, and several dreams laid quietly to rest. Phyllis tackled the acre of



Mailu House, Papua. Lino cut by Phyllis Mander-Jones, January 1933.
(Courtesy Lois Mander-Jones).

garden around the new cottage, and my early memories of her are with spade and secateurs, growing not only orchids, pansies, persimmons and apples, but a little crop of peanuts — for fun! She was by now a skilled photographer. Albums of walks in the Blue Mountains are written and illustrated with sketches and photographs. Like all the Austinmer brood she was a great walker. At the age of sixty-two she led me a cracking ten miles on Mull⁵, Scotland, until a merciful milkman rescued us.

In the 1930's she learned some form of expressive dance. A photograph shows her, a tall brown-eyed beautiful woman, in a Greek dance in Hyde Park, together with Heather Sherrie. In latter years she loved the Australian Dance Theatre as much as classical ballet, and enjoyed the musical *Evita* as well as chamber music. Also in the 1930's she loved flying in a small 'plane with a friend of her brother, Evan, from Oxford, and even contemplated flying to England with him. This pilot friend, Derek, was killed early in the Battle of Britain. Phyllis and her mother went by sea and returned from England and Europe just before the Second World War began.

During the Second World War she worked not only at the Mitchell Library, but also for Censorship authorities, at the same time gardening continuously and sharing the tasks of the household with an ageing mother. Her three brothers and sister were all in the forces and a steady stream of letters and parcels went to each one. To me, arriving as a shy and rather gauche twenty-two year old into this warm, talented and united family, there was immediate warmth and reception from her.

Her world was never bounded by continents, passing easily from one hemisphere to another she had family and friends in both. The child who sat in the tarry coils of rope, was to look with passion on both Americas, Europe and Africa, to record with care the gentle people of Mailu, and to trace the sources of the Pacific, paint the raw intensity of the Australian inland. She quotes at the beginning of her all too short memoirs from *Memoirs of Hadrian*⁶, a work of historical fiction by Marguerite Yourcenar —

I felt more and more the need to gather together and conserve our ancient books, and to entrust the making of new copies to conscientious scribes

and also -

...how ephemeral a shadow man throws on this abiding earth.

Phyllis Mander-Jones died in Adelaide after a very short illness, on 19 February, 1984.

FOOTNOTES

1. David Jones (1793-1873) the Sydney merchant, married Jane Hall Mander of East Smithfield, London, in 1828. She was his second wife, and the couple arrived in Australia in 1834. *Australian Dictionary of Biography* vol. 2, pp. 23-24.
2. The surviving children of George and Margaret Mander Jones were Phyllis (born 1896), Mildred (1898), Evan (1902), Burnett (1904), and Geoffrey (1906).
3. Erik Erikson 'Identity and the life cycle' in *Journal of the American Psychoanalytical Association* for 1956.
4. Phyllis Mander-Jones graduated as Bachelor of Arts (with Class I Honours in German and Class II Honours in French) in 1917. Her course also included Latin, History and Botany.
5. The island home off Scotland of Governor Lachlan Macquarie which had special interest for Phyllis Mander-Jones. In 1956 she edited *Lachlan Macquarie ... Journals of his tours*.
6. Marguerite Yourcenar *Memoirs of Hadrian*, translated from the French by Grace Frick in collaboration with the author. Lond., Penguin Books, 1959, pp. 176, 177.

A Good Friend, A Fine Librarian

Jean F. Arnot*

Phyllis Mander-Jones, a graduate of the University of Sydney, was appointed to the staff of the Public Library of New South Wales in 1925, as a clerical officer. As was the custom then, she began duties in the Reading Room and later was transferred to the Cataloguing Department. Learning the craft of librarianship was in the experience gained in the various departments. Three series of Public Service examinations had to be passed for promotion. A few lectures were given by senior members of the staff to candidates for the Higher Grade (Reg.329a) examination, a very searching and difficult one. On passing this, officers were appointed to the Professional Division of the Public Service. Through these stages Phyllis Mander-Jones passed successfully.

Phyllis was very artistic and a fine photographer. These skills were used by the Library in various projects assigned to her, as for instance the *Classification and cataloguing of the Print Collection of the National Art Gallery of New South Wales*, 1940, and a booklet on *The Tasman map of 1644*, 1948.

*Jean Arnot, MBE, FLAA, former Head Cataloguer, Public Library of New South Wales 1950-68, and Acting Mitchell Librarian 1956-58.