

3. At this meeting Phyllis Mander-Jones was elected as the Archives Section Representative Councillor on the L.A.A. Council.
4. An informal publication begun in 1954 by Gibbney and Horton. (See *Archives and Manuscripts* vol. 6, no. 5, Nov. 1975, pp. 193-194, and vol. 13, no. 2, Nov. 1985, pp. 113-115.) Gibbney, nevertheless, became one of the first editors of *Archives and Manuscripts*.
5. At the suggestion of Miss Mander-Jones. See *Archives and Manuscripts* vol. 6, no. 5, p.194.

An Intense Interest in the World About Her

Mary Miles*

When I joined the staff of the Mitchell Library in 1954 Phyllis Mander-Jones was in her last few years as Mitchell Librarian. It was her knowledge and enthusiasm and her devotion to the vast collection of Australiana under her care that brought Australian history to life for me.

In November 1956 she left for London and became, in 1957, the Library Liaison Officer for the Public Library of New South Wales and later the Australian Joint Copying Project Officer. Apart from a brief meeting in 1958 when I visited London, I did not see her again until towards the end of 1964 when she came back to London to begin work on the guide to *Manuscripts in the British Isles relating to Australia, New Zealand and the Pacific*. She had returned to Australia in 1963 to do some preliminary work for the guide just as I was on my way to London to take up the post of Library Liaison Officer.

The Institute of Commonwealth Studies in Russell Square made a room available to her for her work, and later she moved to an office near Australia House. She lived in a room in London during the week, and at weekends she returned home to the cottage at Dorchester-on-Thames which she shared with her sister Mildred. It was just over an hour's coach ride from London.

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I saw her frequently during the years that I spent in London. Often during the cold winter months I would run into her in the Australia House restaurant where we had both arrived for a hot lunch. She was unfailingly interested in the work that I was doing for the Library and was always ready to share her knowledge. I once spent a morning with her at the Natural History Museum inspecting the original drawings of Sydney Parkinson, who sailed as botanical draughtsman on Cook's first voyage, and it was from her that I learned of a Tasmanian painting by John Glover, formerly in the collection of King Louis Philippe of France to whom it had been given by Glover in 1845, and now in the Louvre. Her detailed notes often proved invaluable in checking items which came up for sale at auction, and I remember particularly the list and description she made in 1960 of the drawings held in the Musée d'Histoire Naturelle at Le Havre which were done by Petit and Lesueur during Baudin's voyage of 1800-1804. She had spent several days at Le Havre examining all the drawings and supervising their photography by Axel Poignant.¹

During the Cook Bicentenary celebrations in 1968 various institutions such as the British Museum, the Natural History Museum and the National Maritime Museum held exhibitions, and Dr J.C. Beaglehole gave several talks. I often saw Phyllis Mander-Jones at these functions, and she kindly invited me to attend with her a Royal Society reception given on 3 June 1969 to celebrate the bicentenary of Cook's observations of the transit of Venus. On another occasion we both stood beside William Bligh's tomb in the churchyard of St Mary's, Lambeth, at a ceremony commemorating Bligh.

But her interests extended also to the wider fields of the arts. She used to come to the talks and film shows arranged by the Society of Australian Writers, and to art exhibitions at the Tate Gallery and other London galleries. She had an intense interest in the world about her and was a stimulating companion. When I spent a week-end with her and her sister in their cottage at Dorchester-on-Thames she took me walking to show me the local places of interest, discoursing on them with knowledge and evident enjoyment. The Mander-Jones sisters were very hospitable, and neighbours were often entertained at the cottage or in its pleasant garden.

By February 1970 research for the guide was completed, and a party was given in the library at Australia House in honour of Phyllis Mander-Jones and her great work. A large crowd of her friends and colleagues, including writers, booksellers, historians, librarians, museum curators and record keepers, gathered to congratulate her. It was a happy occasion, and one which demonstrated the high esteem and warm personal regard in which she was held by all those who knew her.

FOOTNOTE:

1. For some details of this project, see 'The artists who sailed with Baudin and Flinders' by Phyllis Mander-Jones, in the *Proceedings* of the Royal Geographical Society of Australasia, S.A. Branch Inc., vol. 66, Dec. 1965, pp. 17-31.