

O'CONNOR, Charles Yelverton (1843–1902), engineer, migrated to New Zealand from Ireland in 1865 and was appointed assistant engineer to the Canterbury provincial government. In 1891 he was appointed engineer-in-chief of WA and given the task of establishing a harbour for Perth. By 1900 Fremantle harbour was operating successfully. O'Connor was responsible for both extending the state railways and, more importantly, constructing a pipeline to carry water to the Coolgardie goldfields. Criticism of this project led O'Connor to shoot himself shortly before the pipeline was completed.

'OCTOPUS ACT' The Victorian Railway Construction Act of 1884, dubbed the 'Octopus Act' because the proposed railway extensions resembled tentacles of an octopus, was initiated by Duncan Gillies, the minister for transport, on the recommendation of Richard Speight, the new chairman of the Railways Board. This ambitious program authorised the construction of 65 lines, doubling the size of the railway network. During the parliamentary debates little attempt was made to justify the choice of lines or the magnitude of the scheme. A consequence of the boom in land sales, railway expansion contributed further to it with speculators investing heavily in land along the routes. The scheme was too extravagant for the depressed 1890s, and the railway system was thrown into deficit.

O'DOWD, Bernard Patrick (1866–1953), poet, spent his working life in Melbourne as supreme court librarian and, later, as parliamentary draftsman. He published many volumes of verse, including *Dominions of boundary* (1907) and *The bush* (1912). He also wrote essays; in *Poetry militant* (1909) he expounded his theory that poets should work for the progress of humanity and that the true subjects of poetry were politics, religion, sex, science and social reform.

O'GRADY, John (1907–81), writer, came to prominence in 1957 when *They're a weird mob*, ostensibly written by an Italian migrant, Nino Culotta, became

a bestseller. He wrote many other novels and stories, most of them humorous.

O'HARRIS, Pixie (Rhona Olive Pratt, nee Harris) (1903–), artist and writer, is best known for her illustrated children's stories, which have been translated into many languages. She has also contributed to magazines and newspapers, and exhibited her work.

OIL INDUSTRY Until 1964, Australia relied entirely on imported petroleum for domestic consumption, with refineries located close to the capital cities. The distribution network for motor spirit and lubricating oils has been largely in the hands of the international oil industry throughout this century, the largest company being Shell, which by the early 1980s held almost one-quarter of the market. Other international companies included British Petroleum (BP), Caltex, Esso, Amoco and Total. Companies with substantially Australian ownership which have operated in recent years include Ampol and H.C. Sleight Ltd. In 1920 Commonwealth Oil Refineries (COR) was formed as a joint venture of the commonwealth government and the company which is now BP. In 1952 the Menzies government sold its share to BP.

In February 1964 the Moonie oil field in Queensland came into production to the relief of those concerned with managing Australia's balance of payments, for by that stage imports of crude oil and petroleum products were averaging 335 000 barrels per day at an annual cost of \$240 million. Concern with the balance of payments aspects of oil consumption had led to an ever-changing range of incentive schemes to encourage both onshore and offshore exploration for petroleum.

By mid-1964 Wapet had discovered oil at Barrow Island, off the coast of Western Australia, in its 95th well. When commercial production commenced in 1965 it was at five times the rate of production at Moonie, but that was soon overtaken by the Bass Strait fields off the coast of Victoria, a joint venture of the American giant Esso and the Australian company Broken Hill Proprietary (BHP). BHP is also a major



An artist's impression of a Neptune service station in the 1950s. From *Looking back on the early days, Neptune Oil Pty Ltd, undated, c1955.*

CORNSTALK BOOKSHOP

partner with Shell and others in the development of the gasfield on the Northwest Shelf (which is to supply Western Australia and Japan), and has been involved in major exploration in the Exmouth plateau area. Its Jabiru discoveries led to the suggestion that Australia would need to become a consistent oil exporter if that field were to be developed—a significant change for a country that only two decades earlier had had to import all its requirements, and that for much of the previous decade had been only two-thirds self-sufficient. However, even while Australia continued to import oil, it was also exporting some from Bass Strait, although government approval was initially required on a tanker-by-tanker basis. Bass Strait crude oil is light, and there is still a need to import to acquire the heavier fractions.

In March 1985, the federal minister for resources and energy announced that 'in the absence of any new oil discoveries, Australia's level of self-sufficiency in petroleum fuels and production is forecast to decline from 79 per cent in 1983–84 to 42 per cent in 1993–94'. On the advice of the Bureau of Mineral Resources, however, he expected new discoveries to ensure a self-sufficiency level of at least 56 per cent (and possibly up to 86 per cent) in that year.

Major policy issues in the oil industry in the last two decades have included: the form of exploration incentives; whether export permits would be granted for natural gas; the degree to which federal and state governments would be actively involved or would hold equity in exploration and development; the degree of foreign ownership which was to be permitted in the exploration and production phase; the pricing of crude oil at import parity; the pricing of petroleum

products; the extent of government take, as royalties, as excise, and, from 1984, as resources rent tax.

SUSAN BAMBRICK

Further reading P.J. Brain and G.P. Schuyers, *Energy and the Australian economy*, Melbourne 1981; J.McB. Grant, 'The petroleum industry', in Alex Hunter (ed), *The economics of Australian industry*, Melbourne 1962; H. Saddler, *Energy in Australia: politics and economics*, Sydney 1981.

O'KEEFE, John Michael ('Johnny') (1935–78), singer, was born in Waverley, NSW, and began his career in the mid-1950s with impersonations of American singing idols. By 1956 his wild, flamboyant style had established him as Australia's first distinctive rock performer. In 1957 he formed 'Johnny and the Deejeys', Australia's first professional rock group. Later that year they secured a recording contract with Festival Records and became the first Australian rock group to feature on one of Lee Gordon's Big Shows at the Sydney Stadium.

The years 1958 to 1964 mark the peak of O'Keefe's career. In March 1958, his fourth single, 'Wild one', became the first Australian rock record to enter the Top 40 charts. During these years he recorded four No 1 songs: 'She's my baby', 'Don't you know', 'I'm counting on you' and 'Move baby move'. He toured extensively with his 'JO'K Show' in 1960, the first all-Australian show with comparable promotion and budget to those of imported shows. He proved a formidable television performer, compering Australia's first national rock television show, the ABC's 'Six O'Clock Rock' in 1959 and 1960. From 1961 to 1964 he compered the Seven Network's 'The JO'K

Show' (changed to 'Sing, Sing, Sing' in 1963).

After 1965 O'Keefe's involvement in television and recording declined. His energies were directed to his live performances and his company, JO'K Inc Pty Ltd. Always a strong supporter of local artists, O'Keefe made several appearances before the Industries Assistance Commission and the Australian Broadcasting Tribunal in the mid-1970s. He also helped establish the Australian Variety Artists Awards.

O'Keefe was a seminal influence on the Australian rock industry, setting an enormous number of precedents, not least of which was being Australia's first rock idol.

LOUISE DOUGLAS

OLD LEFT, a term used by the New Left school of historians from the late 1960s to distinguish an earlier group of Marxist economic and labour historians, such as Brian Fitzpatrick, Robin Gollan, Russel Ward, Ian Turner, Noel Ebbels and Lloyd Churchward. Although lacking a discrete methodology, the old left concentrated on the development of economic forces and capitalist class relations, particularly the formation of a working-class consciousness, which they argued was egalitarian and anti-authoritarian but not specifically proletarian. They have been criticised as populist, nationalistic, empiricist, determinist and even un-Marxist, though much of their work remains the basis for the history of the labour movement.

OLIPHANT, Sir (Mark) Marcus Laurence Elwin (1901–), scientist, was educated at Unley and Adelaide High Schools and the University of Adelaide. An exhibition took him to Cambridge in 1927 to join the famed team of scientists working under Lord Rutherford in the Cavendish Laboratory. Oliphant helped build the world's first atomic bombs, played a key role in developing radar, was a founder of the Australian National University, first director of its Research School of Physical Sciences and co-founder and first president of the Australian Academy of Science. From 1971 to 1976 he was governor of SA. Oliphant spent much of his life after World War II campaigning against war and preaching the cause of environmental conservation. He was an original member of the Pugwash Movement, which was initiated by scientists to prevent the abuse of scientific technology, including the development and use of nuclear weapons.

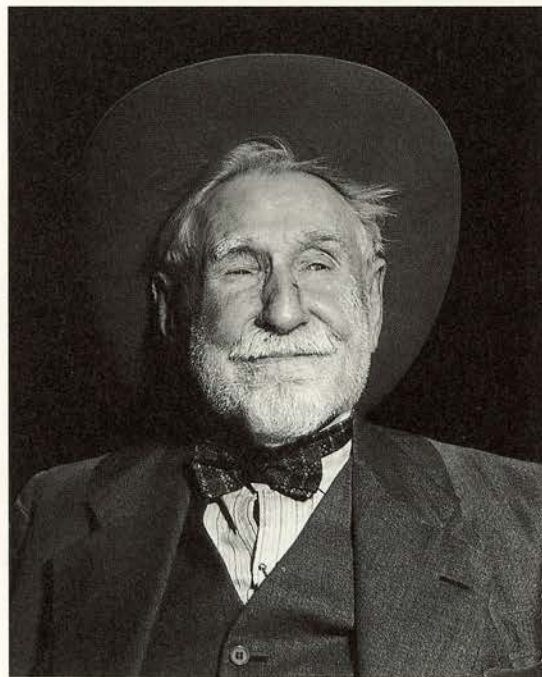
STEWART COCKBURN

Further reading S. Cockburn and D. Ellyard, *Oliphant*, Adelaide 1981.

OLSEN, John (1928–), artist, moved with his family from Newcastle to Sydney as a child and studied at the Julian Ashton School from 1947 to 1953 under John Passmore. He had his first exhibition in 1955 and the following year was involved in the 'Direction 1' exhibition which launched abstract expressionism in Sydney. Olsen travelled extensively in Europe and north America during the 1960s, returning to Australia to paint the 'You Beaut Country' landscape series. His best-known work is the mural in the northern foyer of the Sydney Opera House.

OLYMPIC GAMES Only three nations, Australia, the United Kingdom and Greece, have been represented at every modern Olympic Games and only once, at St Louis in 1904, has Australia not won a medal. Edwin Flack, running in the 800 and 1500-metre events at Athens in 1896, won Australia's first gold medals, but on that occasion individuals rather than nations competed. Australia's most successful performance at the Olympics was at Melbourne in 1956, when as host nation 13 gold medals were won, five better than the next best effort, at Rome in 1960. Probably Australia's most unusual wins were for rugby union at London in 1908 and by Freddy Lane in the 200-metre swimming obstacle race at Paris in 1920. The most successful Australian competitors have been swimmers Dawn Fraser and Murray Rose and athlete Betty Cuthbert, each with four gold medals. Australia's failure to win a gold medal at the 1976 Montreal games resulted in the establishment of the Australian Institute of Sport in 1980.

O'MALLEY, King (1858?–1953), politician, believed to have been born in Canada, migrated from America to Australia in the late 1880s for health reasons. In 1896 he was elected to the SA assembly as member for Encounter Bay and five years later entered the first federal parliament representing Tas. He proposed a national banking system, later to be known as the Commonwealth Bank of Australia, and was an early advocate of a federal capital. He broke with Prime Minister Hughes in 1916, opposing conscription, and was defeated at the 1917 and 1919 elections.



King O'Malley, an Australian populist politician, emphasised and profited from his American origins. Undated photograph.

MAGAZINE PROMOTIONS

ONE BIG UNION (OBU) was a socialist ideal, akin to syndicalism, advocating the unification of the working class by a single militant industrial union undifferentiated by craft distinctions. The idea was popularised by the Industrial Workers of the World after its formation in Australia in 1907, and also came to stand for direct action by workers rather than participation in industrial arbitration. Congresses of NSW and Victorian trade unions in 1918 adopted proposals to form One Big Union, called the Workers' Industrial Union of Australia (WIUA), to pursue political and industrial action for workers' control of industry. These proposals were endorsed by an all-Australia conference in January 1919. Opposition from the parliamentary wing of the Labor party and the Australian Workers' Union (which presented itself as the appropriate nucleus for the OBU) created a temporary split within the labour movement. The refusal of established unions to merge with the WIUA, combined with the difficulties of implementing industrial unionism, led to the demise of the WIUA in 1921, when it was absorbed by the AWU.

OPERA Performed irregularly from the 1840s, opera came into its own twenty years later with the touring companies formed by W.S. Lyster. The repertoire was wide, performances spirited, and audiences enthusiastic: many people went again and again. New standards were set by the Melba-Williamson season in 1911, which brought to Australia a group of international artists of high calibre; touring companies remained important until World War II. It was not until the creation in 1954 of the Australian Elizabethan Theatre Trust that a national organisation was founded, which in turn gave rise in 1969 to the Australian Opera. Nowadays there are, in addition, at least three state opera companies. After a long period of indifference, at the tail end of which the Sydney Opera House was first commissioned and then scaled down in function, Australian audiences have taken to opera once again: the country has always produced a prodigious number of singers, and the hyperbole of the form seems to suit the Australian performing temperament. Although many see opera as outmoded, and vocal music generally as being disadvantaged in the age of atonalism, Australian composers have turned to it successfully in recent years: most notable has been Richard Meale's *Voss* (1986). JIM DAVIDSON

OPINION POLLS Public opinion polls were introduced into Australia in 1941 when Sir Keith Murdoch commissioned the Roy Morgan Research Centre to conduct the first sample surveys by the Gallup Method. Using a small number of interviews, roughly 2000, these surveys have since been conducted for the Herald and Weekly Times Ltd and other media groups to measure public opinion, mostly on national issues. Polls are regularly conducted in the lead-up to elections in relation to voting intentions and approval ratings of party leaders. Their success rate in predicting the outcome of elections has been good. In the 1970s the number of polling agencies proliferated, as have the issues canvassed.



The Australian Opera's production in 1986 of Madam Butterfly at the Sydney Opera House. In the same year the company performed Richard Meale's new opera Voss, based on the novel by Patrick White. Photograph by Kevin Diletti.

OPPERMAN, Sir Hubert Ferdinand (1904–86), cyclist, was Australian road cycling champion in 1924, 1927 and 1929. He held world records for unpaced track, motor paced over 24 hours and best time for 1000 miles (1800 kilometres). Opperman won the Bol d'Or (1928), the Paris–Brest–Paris (1931) and the Bidlake Memorial Prize in England (1934). In 1949 he entered federal politics as a Liberal and held two ministerial posts. From 1967 to 1972 he was the Australian high commissioner to Malta.

ORD RIVER IRRIGATION SCHEME is located in the East Kimberley area of WA. It was completed in 1972 with the opening of the main Ord River dam, which forms Lake Argyle, the scheme's major reservoir. Lake Argyle stores sufficient water to irrigate 40 000 hectares in WA and 20 000 hectares in the NT. The potential also exists for a small power station. Agricultural and economic problems, however, have affected the success of the scheme. Cotton growing on the irrigated areas became uneconomical by 1974. In the late 1970s a range of other crops had been planted over 4400 hectares, though hopes for sugar growing have since been disappointed.

ORDER OF AUSTRALIA was established in 1975 to 'reward achievement and merit to Australia and humanity at large'. It has both civil and military divisions, consisting of knights and dames, companions, officers, members and medallists. Awards are made by the governor-general on the recommendation of

the Council of the Order from nominations which may be submitted by any person or organisation in Australia. The order is thus less open to political influence than the old 'imperial honours', and is entirely managed in Australia. A.G.L. SHAW

ORMOND, Francis (1829–89), grazier and philanthropist, arrived in Vic in 1842 and in 1854 took over the management of his father's 12 000-hectare station and acquired additional property and bred livestock. His success in these activities gave him the basis for the wealth which he was able to pour into philanthropic ventures. The main recipients of his lavish donations were the Presbyterian college in the University of Melbourne, which received over £40 000 in his lifetime, and the Working Man's College, founded 1887, which received £20 500. He also gave £20 000 to found the Ormond chair of music at the university.

ORR CASE Sydney Orr (1914–66) was professor of philosophy in the University of Tas. Following disension in the university on various subjects, in which Orr had been deeply involved, he was dismissed without notice in 1956 on the ground of misconduct with a female student. Bitter controversy followed throughout the Australian academic community over the question of his guilt and whether, if he was guilty, the university had acted properly.

A university committee of inquiry reported against Orr, and Orr's legal suit against the university was dismissed by the Supreme Court of Tas, but later a committee of the University Staff Associations of Australia concluded that these two opinions were incorrect and censured the university for not according Orr natural justice. Meanwhile the staffs of Australian philosophy departments had declared the vacant chair 'black' and no one either from Australia or overseas was willing to apply to fill it. Eventually the university paid Professor Orr his back salary, and this settlement, quickly followed by his sudden and relatively early death, allowed his chair to be filled in 1969, and the controversy to die down. A.G.L. SHAW

O'SHANE, Patricia (1941–), lawyer and activist for Aboriginal rights, attended Cairns State High School, University of Queensland and University of New South Wales before becoming a schoolteacher. In 1976 she became the first Aboriginal barrister and in 1981 was appointed permanent head of the Aboriginal affairs department, NSW. In 1982 she won the NSW University Alumni Association Award and the following year was appointed to the Commonwealth Tertiary Education Commission. In 1986 she became the first Aboriginal magistrate. O'Shane's goal is 'to bring about real and lasting changes in such aspects as housing, health and education of Aborigines'.

OVERLAND TELEGRAPH The first trans-Australian telegraph line, the Overland Telegraph, linked Australia with overseas telegraphic networks, greatly shortening communication times with the rest of the world. It involved building a 3175-kilometre land line between Port Augusta (SA) and Palmerston (Darwin, NT), where the line joined a submarine cable to Java,



Bushmen watering horses in the desert of Australia, ink and watercolour by George Hamilton, c1840. Overlanders were frequently involved in long treks through semiarid inland areas droving sheep and cattle to new pastures or to coastal markets. Other illustrations of Hamilton's journey from the Port Phillip district to South Australia in 1839 are reproduced in *Australians 1838*, chapter 2.

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and from there the cable system linking Asia and Europe. Work on the line started in 1870. The SA government, which, being responsible for the NT, administered the land the line crossed, bore the £480 000 cost alone. Its postmaster-general, Charles Todd, was overall supervisor. The line traversed territory only recently explored during John McDouall Stuart's expeditions (1859–62). The first message along the line was transmitted on 23 June 1872, with a pony express spanning an unfinished section between Daly Waters and Tennant Creek.

OVERLANDERS were the drovers who herded cattle and sheep over long distances to reach new pastures in undeveloped parts of Australia. Often they followed close on the tracks of the explorers, and they were themselves sometimes the explorers. Their feats became a part of Australian folklore, as seen in the folksong 'The overlander'.

The first overlanding was from north of the Murray River into the newly settled Port Phillip district in 1837–40, mostly south from present-day Albury. During the same period overlanders moved stock into SA from Portland Bay in the Port Phillip district and from the Murray–Darling basin. Prominent among those on the tracks into both Port Phillip and SA was Edward John Eyre, who gained exploring experience as an overlander, and who was also the first (1840) to overland stock in WA, from King George Sound to Perth. Overlanding into the Moreton Bay district began in 1840, to the Darling Downs from the New England district. Routes into Qld's gulf country were opened up from 1864. A route into the NT from SA was opened in 1870–72, and from southwestern Qld to the Daly River area in 1881. Among the greatest overlanding treks were those of the Durack family, who moved cattle from southwestern Qld into the Kimberley region of WA in 1883–85.