

The Friends of the Baillieu Library

Juliet Flesch

Executive Secretary

1994 ended on a high note for the Friends of the Baillieu Library, with Dr Pierre Gorman's illustrated talk "From the Granta to the Yarra" attracting an audience of 100. The talk was based on the extraordinary collection of books on Cambridge purchased by the Library from Dr Gorman and believed to be the most extensive collection outside the United Kingdom. At the end of his talk, the University Librarian was surprised and delighted to receive the gift of Dr Gorman's copy, in the original boards, of Ackermann's *A History of the University of Cambridge*. This copy forms an interesting point of comparison with the bound copy held in the Poynton Collection. The catalogue of the Library's collection of books on Cambridge is still available*.

Our first function for 1995 was the Annual General Meeting, held in the Leigh Scott Room on 27 March. After the formal proceedings were concluded, a group of about 20 heard a most interesting presentation by Pamela Macintyre and Bernadette Welch, entitled "Sex, crime and videotape in the Library". Accompanying their presentation with readings from many examples, they introduced the audience to some of the more surprising types of material held in an academic library, including romance novels, crime and detective fiction, books of all kinds for young adults and joke books for children and adults alike. Their talk concluded with a brief account of the video collection held in the Education Resources Centre.

On 13 July the Friends were delighted to welcome the Hon. Barry Jones, MP, to their Annual Dinner in University House. Forty members and guests enjoyed the informal pre-dinner drinks, providing a chance to meet the speaker, old friends and new acquaintances before sitting down to their three-course meal.

Barry Jones's talk, entitled "Challenges of the Information Society", sounded a general alert as he pointed out that "information issues" are too important to all Australians to be left to

the "information professionals" and the owners of the information media. He stressed that issues of ownership, access and cost are not clearly understood by the community at large, while those who stand to profit are poised to control and direct the course of events. He warned against knee-jerk reactions to issues of foreign control or concentration of ownership, pointing out that dispersed foreign control is not necessarily better or worse than a local monopoly.

Mr Jones has a long history of concern with Australia's information policy. *His Sleepers, Wake! : technology and the future of work* (first published in 1982, revised in 1983, with a third edition due at the end of this year) was the first Australian publication to concern itself with the issues of access and equity posed by the advent of the "information society". As Chair of the House of Representatives Standing Committee for Long Term Strategies, he was responsible for two reports published in 1991: *Australia as an Information Society: grasping new paradigms* and *Australia as an Information Society: the role of libraries/information networks*.

Both in these reports and in his talk to the Friends, Mr Jones acknowledged the efforts of librarians to keep issues of access and equity in the forefront of the debate. He also acknowledged a long history of government inaction, starting with the fate of the 1976 report of the Committee of Inquiry into Public Libraries (the Horton Report) as described by the Hon. E.G. Whitlam: "The Fraser Government put the Horton Report on the shelf; the Hawke Government has yet to take it down".

He issued a challenge to librarians and others concerned with the future of libraries and information networks, describing their representations to government as feeble. He is not convinced that librarians have made the case of their stakeholders in a compelling manner to government, and invited the audience to improve their efforts to ensure that in the third millennium Australia is numbered among the information rich nations, not the information poor.

In September Michael Adcock from the Department of History gave a fascinating illustrated talk on "Baron

Hausman and the Transformation of Paris". Michael outlined the 4 principal imperatives behind Napoléon III's Préfet: the military one of providing wide straight boulevards which could not be barricaded by rebellious citizens, who were shifted to the outer suburbs; the monumental imperative, with Paris as a tribute to the régime; the capitalist one of providing a great commercial capital, and the hygienist imperative of pure water and efficient sewerage. The Library is fortunate to have the great work of one of Haussmann's colleagues, Alphand's *Les promenades de Paris*. Presented by the Friends, it provides an illustration of the vast changes wrought by a man whose work in turn had such a visible influence on the planning of Melbourne.

On 29th November Dr Pierre Gorman will speak on "Pictorial Representations of Cambridge". Bookings and further information may be obtained by phoning 9344 4256.

**To obtain a catalogue, contact Library Administrative Services, 9344 4689; purchase price \$7.50 plus \$2.50 postage and packing.*



Juliet Flesch retires as Executive Secretary

At the August meeting of the Friends of the Baillieu Library, Juliet Flesch gave notice of her retirement as Executive Secretary, effective from the end of 1995. Many thanks to Juliet, who for the past nine years has made an outstanding contribution in this position. She has ensured that the Friends' business affairs were handled meticulously and has played a vital role in helping the Friends to achieve their objectives. Juliet entered into all aspects of the group's activities with enthusiasm and energy, and was often the creative and sustaining force behind the Friends' interesting and varied programs of events.

The new Executive Secretary is Merete Smith, Curator of Rare Books.