

## Background Sheet 1

### **Brief Profiles of Significant People** (referred to in the K-6 HSIE syllabus)

#### **Maybanke Anderson** (or Wolstenholme) (1845-1927).

Maybanke Anderson was born in England. She was the only daughter of Henry (a plumber) and Bessie Selfe. In 1854, the family migrated to Sydney. Maybanke trained as a teacher while her brothers Norman and Henry were apprenticed as engineers. In 1867, she married Edward Wolstenholme, a timber merchant, having seven children, four who died in infancy. In 1884, her unemployed alcoholic husband deserted her. She started Maybanke College for girls but still found time for voluntary work, amongst other activities. She was the foundation vice-president of the Womanhood Suffrage League of NSW 1891 (later president), and foundation president of the Kindergarten Union, which opened its first free kindergarten in 1896. When the divorce law was extended in 1892, she divorced Wolstenholme for desertion. After selling Maybanke College, she married Professor (Sir) Francis Anderson in 1899. She continued voluntary work, campaigning to allow women the right to be elected to local government.

#### Sources:

Nairn, B & Serle, G (eds), Australian Dictionary of Biography, Vol 7, Melbourne University Press, 1979.

Radi, H (ed), 200 Australian Women, Women's Redress Press, 1988.

#### **Arabanoo** (d 1789).

Arabanoo was a member of a northern harbour clan. He was captured at Manly on 31 December 1788 by order of Governor Phillip. Phillip wanted to use Arabanoo as an intermediary to improve relations between the Aboriginal people and the colonists, and as a source of information. Arabanoo was taken across the harbour to Sydney Cove to the Cadigal clan lands of the Eora. Here he was kept in Phillip's house. Phillip recorded that he learnt much about Aboriginal customs and language from Arabanoo. When a severe smallpox epidemic swept the Aboriginal community, Arabanoo helped to care for those brought into Sydney. After catching the disease himself, Arabanoo died on or about 18 May 1789.

Sources:

Pike, D (ed), Australian Dictionary of Biography, Vol 1, Melbourne University Press, 1968.

Kohen J, The Darug and Their Neighbours, Blacktown and District Historical Society, 1993.

**Edmund Barton (Sir) (1849-1920).**

Edmund Barton, a Federationist, was the first Prime Minister of Australia. He was born in Sydney, the son of a financial agent and stockbroker. Barton was educated at Fort Street Model School, Sydney Grammar, and then Sydney University, obtaining an MA before reading for the Bar. He was the leading advocate for Federation in NSW following the death of Henry Parkes. As Prime Minister, he was responsible for the establishment of the machinery of government and the White Australia Policy. A married man with a family, he resigned from politics in 1903 to take up the new more financially secure position of senior High Court judge, a position he held until his death.

Sources:

Nairn, B & Serle, G (eds), Australian Dictionary of Biography, Vol. 7, Melbourne University Press, 1979.

**James Cook (1729-1779).**

James Cook was a navigator. The son of a labourer, he was apprenticed to a coal shipper of Whitby, later transferring to the navy. Through his work surveying the coast of Newfoundland and the observation of a solar eclipse, he was sent to the South Seas to observe the transit of Venus. He also had secret instructions to determine the existence of the imagined large southern continent. Cook determined that New Zealand was not part of a southern continent and was two islands. He then sailed west to find the east coast of New Holland (Australia) and chart it. He took formal possession of both New Zealand and the eastern half of New Holland, naming it New South Wales. Without a chronometer, he charted 8000 kilometres of coast with unusual accuracy. He also enforced a diet for the sailors on his ship, The Endeavour, which prevented scurvy.

Sources:

Pike, D (ed), Australian Dictionary of Biography, Vol 1, Melbourne University Press, 1968.

**Francis Greenway (1777-1837).**

Francis Greenway was a professional architect who was convicted of forgery. He was transported to Australia for 14 years, arriving in 1814. His wife and children followed him. He began private practice immediately and was soon advising the government and given a ticket of leave. He was appointed Civil Architect and Assistant Engineer in 1816, designing the buildings for Governor Macquarie's building program. Hyde Park Barracks and St Matthews at Windsor were both designed by Greenway. Said to have been temperamental and not politically astute, he was dismissed in 1822 and gained little work thereafter.

Sources:

Pike, D (ed), Australian Dictionary of Biography, Vol. 1, Melbourne University Press, 1968.

**Mary Lee (1821-1909).**

Mary Lee was a suffragist. At age 58, Mary Lee migrated to Adelaide with her daughter to nurse her ill son. After his death, she worked single-mindedly for political and social reform. She played a major part in the political history of South Australia, achieving the formation of women's trade unions and the vote for women (1894). This made South Australia the first colony in Australia and one of the first communities in the world to extend the vote to women. Because the women in South Australia and Western Australia could vote, all women were included on the Commonwealth electoral roll.

Sources:

Radi, H (ed), 200 Australian Women, Women's Redress Press, 1988.  
Nairn, B & Serle, G (eds), Australian Dictionary of Biography, Vol 10, Melbourne University Press, 1986.

**Elizabeth Macarthur (1767-1850).**

Elizabeth Macarthur was married to John Macarthur, an officer in the NSW Corps. The daughter of minor farming gentry, she arrived with John and the eldest of their nine children in 1790, the first female of her 'class' in the colony. John Macarthur invested money (made trading rum) in Merino sheep. After the Rum Rebellion, when John was recalled to Britain and detained, Elizabeth managed the flocks and breeding programs for eight critical years. She established the reputation of NSW as a centre for wool growing.

Sources:

Pike, D (ed), Australian Dictionary of Biography, Vol 2, Melbourne University Press, 1967.

**Henry Parkes** (Sir) (1815-1896).

Henry Parkes was five times Premier of NSW. The self-educated son of a tenant farmer and an ivory turner by trade, Parkes was considered a radical. As bounty immigrants, he and his first wife migrated to Sydney in 1839. He entered politics in 1854, when only ministers were paid. He served, with only short breaks between, until 1894. Always financially precarious, he married three times and had 17 children. He is remembered for fostering the Federation movement and for public education.

Sources:

Martin, A W, Henry Parkes: A Biography, Melbourne University Press, 1980.

**Pemulwuy** (Pemulwhy) (d 1802).

Pemulwuy was of Eora descent. In December 1790, in retaliation for the shooting of many Aboriginal people, Pemulwuy speared John McIntyre, a stockkeeper. This was justified under Aboriginal law. In response, Arthur Phillip ordered the troops to find Pemulwuy and bring back a number of Aboriginal heads. Pemulwuy was not captured. From 1790 until he was shot in 1802, he led a campaign of active and successful resistance against the invasion and occupation of western Sydney.

Sources:

Kohen, J, The Darug and Their Neighbours, Blacktown and District Historical Society, 1993.

Elder, B, Blood on the Wattle, New Holland Publishers, 1992.

Macdougall, A (ed), The Australian Encyclopedia, Vol 6. Australian Geographic, 1997.

**Arthur Phillip**(1738-1814).

Arthur Phillip was the founding Governor of NSW (1787-1792). Phillip was a relatively unimportant navy captain who had served with the Portuguese navy, transporting convicts to Brazil, prior to his appointment. Given an almost impossible task without proper equipment or support, he left the colony in better shape than could have been expected. He was described as a conscientious and sensible leader. He eventually left Australia in ill health.

Sources:

Gillen, M, The Founders of Australia: Biographical Dictionary of the First Fleet, Library of Australian History, 1989.

Pike, D (ed), Australian Dictionary of Biography ,Vol 5, Melbourne University Press, 1974.

**Mary Reiby (1777-1855).**

Mary Reiby was originally convicted as a man, 'James Borrow' (and transported as 'Molly Haydock') for stealing a horse at the age of 13. Well educated, orphan Mary arrived in Sydney in 1792. In 1794, she married a free settler, Thomas Reiby. Widowed with seven children in 1811, she pursued Thomas's business interests with vigour and skill to become Australia's first female entrepreneur, owner of much of lower George St, Sydney, and a founding member of the Bank of NSW (now Westpac).

**Sources:**

Irvine, N, Mary Reiby: Molly Incognito, Library of Australian History, 1982.

Irvine, N (ed), Dear Cousin: The Reiby Letters, Hale & Irenmonger, 1995.

Pike, D (ed), Australian Dictionary of Biography, Vol. 2, Melbourne University Press, 1968.

Radi, H (ed), 200 Australian Women, Women's Redress Press, 1988.

**George Houstoun Reid (1845-1918).**

George Reid served as Premier, Prime Minister and British High Commissioner. The youngest of five sons of a minister, he migrated from England to Melbourne as a young child. He worked initially as a clerk, then a public servant, before reading Law and entering politics. Married with children, he kept his family life private. His contribution to Federation was significant.

**Sources:**

Serle, G (ed), Australian Dictionary of Biography, Vol 11, Melbourne University Press, 1988.

**James Ruse (1759-1837).**

James Ruse was convicted in 1782 of breaking and entering, and sentenced to seven years' transportation. He arrived on the First Fleet with 18 months of his sentence to go. Ruse applied to Governor Phillip for a land grant, stating that he had been bred to farming. Governor Phillip, desperate to make the colony self-sufficient, allocated Ruse an allotment at Rose Hill (Parramatta), where he proved himself industrious and showed that it was possible for a family to survive through farming. Having done this, Ruse received a grant of 30 acres (Grant No 1) and by 1793 was able to sell 600 bushels of maize. He later exchanged this grant for more fertile land on the Hawkesbury. Ruse never built on his initial success.

**Sources:**

Gillen, M, Founders of Australia: Biographical Dictionary of the First Fleet, Library of Australian History, 1989.

**Rose Scott (1847-1925).**

Rose Scott was a feminist and suffragist. The daughter of a pastoralist and of independent means, she devoted her life to improving women's lives. She was foundation secretary of the Women's Suffrage League of NSW and she campaigned vigorously for separate prisons for women. She strongly opposed Federation.

Sources:

Serle, G (ed), Australian Dictionary of Biography, Vol 11, Melbourne University Press, 1988.

Radi, H (ed), 200 Australian Women, Women's Redress Press, 1988.

**Catherine Helen Spence (1825-1910).**

Catherine Helen Spence was born in Scotland. She migrated to South Australia in 1839. She was first a governess, then a novelist from 1854 to 1889. From 1872, she also worked for orphaned and destitute children. In 1880, she wrote the first social studies textbook used in Australian schools. In 1878, after many years of writing anonymously, she was appointed a paid contributor to the South Australian Register. Her articles promoted her chosen causes -- chiefly, electoral reform through the introduction of proportional representation. Promoting this, she unsuccessfully stood for election in the 1897 Federal Convention, becoming Australia's first female political candidate. She was vice-president of the Women's Suffrage League of South Australia. After 1894, she supported campaigns in New South Wales and Victoria.

Sources:

Radi, H (ed), 200 Australian Women, Women's Redress Press, 1988.

Nairn, B (ed), Australian Dictionary of Biography, Vol 6, Melbourne University Press, 1976.