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# ASAA NEWSLETTER

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ASSOCIATION FOR THE STUDY OF AUSTRALASIA IN ASIA

Website ahttp://www.mla.iitkgp.ernet.in/~aasa/-

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**ASSOCIATION ESTABLISHED IN SRI LANKA - 18 AUGUST 1995**

**FORTHCOMING ASAA CONFERENCE – COLOMBO - SRI LANKA  
December 2008**

This special issue of the ASAA Newsletter celebrates over 10 years of the Association's existence. The selection of extracts from the series of Newsletters published over the years which follow, reflect some of the highlights of the past ten years. This issue also announces the forthcoming conference to be organised in Sri Lanka in the first week of December 2008.

## **OVERVIEW – HISTORY OF ASAA**

At the inaugural meeting of the Association in Colombo in August 1995, Professor Radha of the University of Kerala undertook to organise the inaugural conference. In the next few months she set up what was the first Australian Studies Institute in India at the University of Kerala. Cynthia vanden Driesen was invited to attend and together they were able to take the first steps in planning a conference which, for so new an Association, turned out to be a signal triumph. It was generously supported by the Australia India Council (AIC) of Australia. This generous support of the AIC must be gratefully acknowledged here. It has been consistent through the years and the Association owes a great deal to the AIC; in particular to the kindly assistance of Ian Black and John Powys at the start and later to Carol Robertson (Australia) and to Asha Das (India) whose long-term, personal interest is particularly valued.

The first international conference of the Asian Association for the Study of Australia (this was the name first adopted by the Association) was organized in Thiruvananthapuram, Kerala from 16 -18 January 1997 on the theme of "Creative Configurations: The Expanding Australian Experience". The Association had acquired both an Asian patron, Professor C. D Narasimhaiah, as well as an Australian patron, author and ex-diplomat Ms. Alison Broinowski HE Mr. Darren Gribble the Australian High Commissioner in India, inaugurated the Conference and delivered the inaugural address. Professor M. Salihu, Pro-Vice-Chancellor, University of Kerala, delivered the presidential address. The Asian Patron of the Association Professor C.D. Narasimhaiah and the Australian patron Alison Broinowski also addressed the gathering at different stages of the proceedings. The highlight of the Conference was the 'Writers' Meet,' on 16 January, which provided a forum for the exchange of ideas between two groups of distinguished writers from Australia and Kerala'. (See the extended report on the conference in the pages from the Newsletter that follow).

The conference was adjudged an unqualified success. More than forty eminent delegates from abroad, a large number of participants from Universities and Colleges from all over Kerala and from other parts of India, including teachers, research scholars and students attended. Professor Ashley Halpe and Writer/Academic Rajiva Wijesinghe were eminent representatives from Sri Lanka; while A/Professor Kirpal Singh represented Singapore.

**SPECIAL EDITION**

The publication of an excellent set of Papers entitled *New Directions in Australian Studies* edited by Cynthia vanden Driesen & Adrian Mitchell, followed. The publication of the conference papers has become an established tradition with ASAA conferences and represents an important mode whereby the Association has contributed to a steady building up of resources for the study of Australia in India. Papers were drawn from a range of disciplines—literature, cultural theory, education, women's studies, children's studies. Focusing on the innovative and the creative, these papers articulate perceptive insights from several eminent Australian academics and also record the burgeoning interest of Asian scholars in Australian culture.

The next highlight was the expansion of the membership of the Association to include New Zealand. This was an outcome of a meeting at a conference organized by Professor Narasimhaiah at Dhvanyaloka in Mysore, between AASA Committee members, Cynthia vanden Driesen and Satendra Nandan with Jane Stafford and Mark Williams of New Zealand in 1998. The name of the Association was changed to reflect the expanded membership, to The Asian/Australasian Association for the Study of Australia. (AAASA)—admittedly a complicated title—but it fitted the bill for the moment and changes were not too far away).

Mysore, the home of two well-known advocates of Commonwealth and therefore also of Australian literature, Professor C. D. Narasimhaiah and of Professor Anniah Gowda, was to be the venue of the next AAASA conference in the year 2000. The Second International Conference of the Asian - Australasian Association for the Study of Australasia was held at the University of Mysore from 13-17 September 2000 and was organised by Professor K. T. Sunita of the University of Mysore. Originally intended as a conference to be organised by the Indian membership and on a much smaller scale than the Kerala Conference of 1995, it escalated beyond the original project into a conference with a considerable number of participants from interstate (India) and overseas. The Chief Guest was Dr. Parameshwar, the State Minister for Higher Education who fondly recalled his memories of his own undergraduate studies in Australia in his opening address. The event was presided over by Professor Hegde, Vice Chancellor of the University of Mysore. Ms. Susan Grace from the Australian High Commission and Professor Ken McPherson of the Australia India Council also attended and delivered plenary addresses on the second day of the conference.

This conference was memorable for many reasons. The shining light of this conference was Anna Rutherford. Anna was so well-known in India that she was interviewed by the national newspaper *The Hindu*, had another interview recorded on film, visited by a large number of Indian academics and teachers, and renewed acquaintance with old friends, Professors CDN and Gowda in Mysore. (It was sadly, also to be the last international conference Anna attended. She passed away in the following year and the book of the papers from this conference was affectionately dedicated to her).

The conference events included a special tribute to the two Australian poets best-known in India (both recently deceased) Judith Wright and A. D. Hope; this was held at Dhvanyaloka and presided over by Professor C.D. Narasimhaiah. The Science presentation - a single session - was one of the highlights of the conference. Prof. Appaji Rao from the Indian Institute of Science presented the findings of a joint project worked on with Prof. Alan Bittles of ECU on 'A Genetic Perspective on the S. Indian Tradition of Consanguinous Marriage.' The largely uninitiated, mostly literature-oriented audience was captivated by the sheer lucidity and liveliness of the presentation.

The other highlight of the conference was Bill Ashcroft's plenary presentation which, it seemed, fulfilled all the expectations which had been built up over the previous days. The Writer's Meet featured the writers sponsored by the Literature Fund of the Australian Council. Adib Khan, Jennifer Strauss and Chandani Lokuge besides other Australian writers at the Conference like Satendra Nandan and Carmel Kelly. For both Jennifer and Chandani this was a first visit to India and they have subsequently both continued to develop those ties. The rising young novelist Sunny Singh, the author of *Nani's Book of Suicides*, was undoubtedly one of the most valuable invitees to the conference; others like A. Raghu (poet) from Kerala and Rajinder Singh also presented readings of their work along with the Australian writers throughout the conference. The culture show featured an innovative presentation of Indian costumes, modelled with considerable aplomb by the students, which captivated the audience. Viewing of the opening of the Olympic Games in Sydney on a giant screen specially organised for participants, formed part of the conference events.

There were notable additions to the Association's membership. The contingent of academics from Madras University, Eugenie Pinto and N. Bindu made a new addition to the expanding group of Indian academics interested in the Association. Anjali Roy, currently Asia President of AAASA, first attended the Mysore conference and has gone on to become one of the Association's shining lights, continuing and expanding the academic and personal ties between Australia and India.

The book of the conference: *Australasian Encounters: From Literature and Women's Studies to Politics and Tourism* (edited by Cynthia vanden Driesen & Satendra Nandan) brought together the best academic papers from the conference. The New Zealand contribution at this conference was a distinctive new element and their academic contribution, is evident in the conference publication.

The next important AAASA project was the bringing of five hand-picked academics to Australia in order to further develop the ties to Australia/India in the year 2001. All of these individuals, R. K. Dhawan, Suman Bala, Anjali Roy, K. Radha and Eugenie Pinto have rendered sterling service to the cause of Australian studies in Asia as the recurring names in AAASA publications show.

Two important events to note here were the setting up of an AAASA website and another name-change. The new name of the Association provided a more manageable title: Association for the Study of Australasia in Asia (ASAA) a suggestion offered by Mr. Richard Woolcott when he met with some members of the Association and the Indian members at the ACLALS Conference in Canberra at the time of their visit.

The Third International Conference of the Association on the theme of displacement, dispossession, seachange, commenced with great fanfare in the plush, ornately decorated Mar Ivanios College Conference Hall, Trivandrum 8 July 2004. About 100 delegates from across the country and more than thirty delegates from Australia, New Zealand and Singapore participated in the three-day deliberations. The conference was inaugurated by Mr. John Fisher; Deputy High Commissioner of Australia. Mr. Fisher addressed several aspects of the Conference theme of Diaspora and "sea change" focusing particularly on the numbers of Indian migrants in Australia and the strengthening of educational and other links between India and Australia. His Grace, the Bishop of Kerala also addressed the gathering. Prof. K. Radha, Asian President of ASAA and Director of the Australian Studies Centre, University of Kerala organized the Association's conference for second time. Principal of the College Fr. Daniel Kuzhithadathil commented on the significance of the event as marking the importance of the College's distinctive contribution to education in the region. Professor Edwin Thumboo, renowned Singaporean poet and academic, Director of the Centre for the Arts, Singapore made his first appearance as the new Asian Patron of ASAA. The attendees were a good mix of old and new members: amongst the writers attending for example, Nicholas Hasluck, Glen Phillips have been long-time friends of ASAA; they had new companions in Simone Lazaroo, Serge Lieberman, Syd Harrex, Tony Casella, Jan Kapetas and Serge Liberman. The highlight of this conference was the presence of Australian Aboriginal writers Noel Morrison and Kay Walley. Amongst the Kerala writers who received warm acclamation from the audience were Ayyappa Paniker and Chandrika.

As has become traditional now with ASAA conferences an excellent publication was issued. Both the conference and the publication were again generously assisted by the Australia-India Council. For the first time an official launch of the conference publication was organised by the Australian High Commission in India. While the noting of this event brings the account of highlights over the past ten years to an end, smaller events, visits and communications - like the regular Newsletter have continued. The formation of an Indian Association for the Study of Australia (IASA) can be regarded as evidence of the success of our own programmes. Professor Sareen, the hardworking President of this Association was ASAA'S first secretary, succeeding Debjani Ganguly who took up a postgraduate placement at the Australian National University a very short time after her appointment to the position of secretary of the Association. Professor Sareen's involvement with the founding of this Association in Colombo several years ago first attracted him to the field of Australian studies.

Some of the pioneer figures like Professor Radha have now retired - but others of the "old stagers" carry on with remarkable loyalty.

The return to Sri Lanka has a certain appropriateness. It was the setting for the inauguration of the Association. The conference will be held in Kandy and will be organised by Professor Walter Perera

of the Department of English, University of Sri Lanka in the first week of December, 2008. Despite the continuing ethnic tensions, life goes on as normal in most parts of the island except perhaps still in the troubled north. Kandy is possibly the safest and one of the most beautiful and historic settings possible. (Overseas participants should seriously consider spending more time in Sri Lanka after the conference is over – there is so much to see and enjoy: historic ruins, gameparks, beaches, entrancing scenery, luxurious hotels at amazingly affordable prices - possibly an ideal venue for your Christmas vacation!). One of the events planned will be a Writers 'Meet to be held at the wonderful writers' Centre, Pemberley, established by Yasmine and Brendon Gooneratne, in the salubrious hill-country of Sri Lanka.

A number of Sri Lankan/Canadian and Canadian academics have already been invited to the forthcoming ASAA conference in Sri Lanka: Ranjini Mendis (organiser of the recent ACLALS conference in Vancouver, Canada) and Professor Chelva Kankanayagam (University of Toronto) will be amongst the distinguished invitees to the conference. There are plans afoot to extend the Association to include Canadian scholars – this is certainly being considered as a possible new development.

**Watch our website for details! More information will be forthcoming in our July Newsletter. Send in suggestions for themes that could cut across a range of disciplines and regions to the ASAA committee.**

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## GLIMPSES OF THE PAST THROUGH NEWSLETTERS

### DECEMBER 1995 INAUGURAL NEWSLETTER

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<b>Department of English (Osmania University) Nizam College Hyderabad 500 001</b>	<b>Institute of English Kerala University Trivandrum 695 034</b>	<b>Department of English (University of Delhi) S.B.S. College, Triveni New Delhi 11 0017</b>
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### *ASIAN ASSOCIATION FOR THE STUDY OF AUSTRALIA* *AASA*

*The Asian Association for the Study of Australia (AASA) was formally launched in Colombo, Sri Lanka during the Tenth Triennial Conference of the ACLALS (Association for Commonwealth Literature & Language Studies) held from Aug. 14-18, 1995. The print mover was Dr. Cynthia vanden Driesen of Edith Cowan University, Perth, Western Australia the objectives of this Association were broadly identified as:*

- 1. To promote within Asia interest in, and the study of, Australia*
- 2. To facilitate contact between individuals and groups, who have a serious interest in aspects of Australian life such as the arts and sciences, education, industry and commerce and social life.*
- 3. To develop and improve resources available in Asia for the study of Australia.*
- 4. To promote links with and exchanges between educational institutions in Asia and Australia.*

*The Asian Association was thereupon launched with the members present unanimously choosing Prof. Bala Kothandaraman (Osmania Univ., Hyderabad) as the President. Office-bearers and Executive Committee members were also elected as follows:*

*Vice-President Prof. K. Radha (Kerala Univ., Trivandrum)*

*Secretary: Ms. Debjani Ganguly (SNDT Univ., Bombay)*

*Treasurer & Editor (Newsletter): Dr. R.K. Dhawan (Delhi Univ.)*

*Vice-President (Australian): Dr. Cynthia vanden Driesen (Edith Cowan University, Patti)*

*Associate Vice-President (Australian): Dr. Satendra Nandan (Canberra University, Canberra)*

### **Regional Vice-Presidents & Committee Members**

*Sri Lanka Vice-President Prof. Ranjan Goonetilleke, Univ. of Kelaniya*

*Committee Member Prof Ashley Halpe. Univ. of Peradeniya*

*Singapore Vice-President A/Prof. Kirpal Siugh. Nanyang University*

*Committee Member. (to be co-opted from the National University of Singapore)*

*Malaysia Vice-President Dr. Agnes Yeow, Univ. of Malaysia*

*Committee Member Kee Thuan Chye. New Straits Tinns*

*India Vice-President Prof. Ganeswar Mishra (East Zone)*

*Committee Member Dr. Ranjana Harish (West Zone) Dr. Malti Mathur (North Zone)*

*Other major regions are currently represented in the Central Committee.*

### **Australia: Regional Vice-President & Committee Members**

*Canberra: Vice-President, Dr. Sandra Nandan, Canberra University*

*Committee Member Professor Bruce Bennet Australian Defence Force Academy (Co-opted)*

*Sydney: Vice-President, Professor Yasmine Gooneratne. Macquarie University*

*Committee Member A/Professor Adrian Mitchell, Sydney University (Co-opted)*

*Melbourne Vice-President Professor John McLaren, Victoria Univ. of Technology*

*Committee Member. Professor John Barnes, La Trobe University (Co-opted)*

*Perth: Vice-President A/Prof. Glen Phillips, Edith Cowan University*

*Committee Member: A/Prof. Kateryna Longley, Murdoch University*

*S. Queensland: Prof. Ken Goodwin, Deputy Vice-Chancellor, Univ. of S. Queensland*

*Also present at this meeting was Mr. Nicholas Hasluck, QC, who represented the Australian writers invited to the Conference: Beverley Farmer, Robert Drewe, Mudrooroo Nyoongah. It was decided unanimously to request Professor C.D. Narasimhaiah to be the Asian patron of the newly formed AASA; an Australian patron would be approached at a later date. It was decided that a Newsletter be issued twice a year. Professor K. Radha offered to organize the first conference at her University at the end of 1996, an offer which was received with warm applause.*

### **Message from Asian Patron: Professor C.D. Narasimhaiah**

*I see in the new Association coming together of Asia and Australia, symbolising a union of the old and the new, of poised antiquity and dynamic modernity. We had forgotten the Aborigine had conquered, in primordial times, 'the tyranny of distance.' And today he has joined hands with the European and the Asian to explore through the medium of English an Indo-European language, the multiple heritage' of the land which they all look upon as theirs by right of vision. For now this is heralded by the birth of the Asian Association for the Study of Australia. May AASA bring the two giant continents closer in a common endeavour and transform the 'tyranny of distance' into what Patrick White calls the 'omnipotence of distance.'*

**The next newsletter introduced the Australian patron—Dr. Alison Broinowski**

**July 1996**

## **AASA NEWSLETTER**

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**Department of English  
(Osmania University)  
Nizam College  
Hyderabad 500 001**

**Institute of English  
Kerala University  
Trivandrum 695 034**

**Department of English  
(University of Delhi)  
S.B.S. College, Triveni New  
Delhi 11 0017**

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**ASIAN ASSOCIATION FOR THE STUDY OF AUSTRALIA**

**AASA**

*Message from Australian Patron: Ms. Alison Broinowski*

*All the founder-members of the Asian Association for the Study of Australia, from Sri Lanka, India, Malaysia, Singapore, and Australia, are to be congratulated on their initiative in forming the Association. Two clear needs emerged from the 'Outside Images of Australia' conference in Perth in 1992: for more knowledge of Australia in the Asia-Pacific region, and for more help from Australia in generating that knowledge. AASA is a timely response to those needs.*

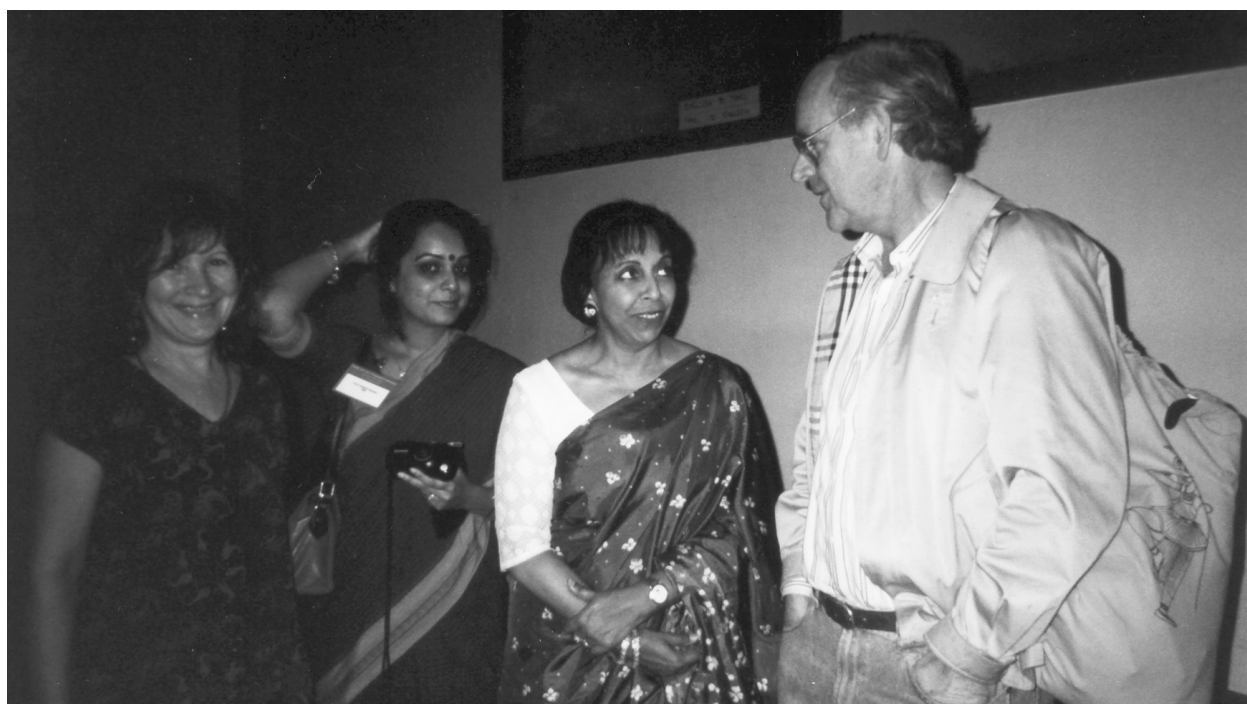
*Ms. Alison Broinowski, writer and diplomat has spent over fifteen years living and working in Asia: Japan, South Korea, the Philippines, Iran Jordan and the U.S.A. Her book *The Yellow Lady* (OUP, 1992) which traces cultural interchange between Australia and Asia has been one of the most talked-about books in the field*

**JULY 1997 RECORDS THE TRIUMPH OF THE FIRST AASA CONFERENCE  
KERALA—JANUARY 1997 - SEE EXCERPTS FROM REPORT – BELOW**

**July 1997**

**AASA NEWSLETTER**

<b>Department of English Osmania University Hyderabad 500 001 91-040-393753</b>	<b>Institute of English Kerala University Trivandrum 695034 91-471-321455</b>	<b>Department of English JNU New Delhi 110067 91-01 1-662238</b>	<b>University of Delhi S.B.S. College, New Delhi 11 0017 91-011-5737849</b>
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**Conference Attendees – L to R - Kateryna Longley, Debjani Ganguly, Yasmine Gooneratne, Nicholas Hasluck.**

*The Asian Association for the Study of Australia (AASA)  
Inaugural Conference  
“Creative Configuration: The Expanding Australian Experience”  
Thiruvananthapuram, Kerala  
16 -18 January 1997*

*A Report*

*The first international conference of the Asian Association for the Study of Australia began with a prayer by Dr. B. Pushpa, Lecturer in Music, Government College for Women. Dr K. Radha, Vice-President, AASA, the Indian convener of the conference, Director, Centre for Australian Studies and Head of the Institute of English, University of Kerala, welcomed the audience. She hoped that the conference would create a new and deeper awareness between Australia and Asia, their peoples and their cultures.*

*Professor M. Salihu, Pro-Vice-Chancellor, University of Kerala, delivered the presidential address. He spoke of the geological and historical contact between Australia and India stretching back to thousands of years.*

*Mr. Darren Gribble, His Excellency the Australian High Commissioner to India, inaugurated the Conference and delivered the inaugural address. He pointed out that 1991 was a kind of turning point in Indo-Australian relations, the end of the cold war and the introduction of the liberal economic policy in India being among the reasons for this. The relations between Australia and India have now reached a much higher and totally different plane. The Conference is sure to take it to still greater heights by adding one more thread to the tapestry of the bilateral relationship. Mr Gribble handed over a gift of books to Dr. Radha for the [recently founded] Centre for Australian Studies.*

*Felicitations were offered by Mr. V.S. Hareendranath, Professor Antony Eapen, and Dr. P.K. Rajan, Members of the Syndicate, University of Kerala. Dr. P.K. Rajan said that the Kerala University was privileged to host the very first conference of the Association in the 60th anniversary year of the University. A right understanding between the continents would modify the very process of creative endeavour.*

*The keynote speakers, the Asian Patron of the Association Professor C.D. Narasimhaiah, the Australian Patron Ms. Alison Broinowski and Professor Chris Wallace-Crabbe.*

*Professor C.D. Narasimhaiah in his lecture, "Note towards an Exploration of Australian Bonds," spoke of the meeting of the two giant continents, Asia and Australia—both parts of the world family. He pointed out that the Pacific was identified as the nerve centre of the world by Jawaharlal Nehru. He traced the ancestry of the aboriginals of both the continents and their common features.*

*The afternoon session began at 2 p.m. In Panel A Dr. Adrian Mitchell chaired the session. The two speakers were Dr. Bill Ashcroft and Dr. Patrick West. Dr. Bill Ashcroft spoke on "Beyond Identity: Australia's Post-Colonial Future." He began by commenting on the importance of the study of Australia and the increasing identification of Australia with Asia. The powerful role that the discipline of English played in Britain's cultural dominance of its Empires was examined in the paper.*

*In Panel B, the session was chaired by Kateryna Longley. David Carter read a paper on "Australian Popular Culture: Models of Culture Influence and Originality." The second speaker Sharyn Pearce's paper was on "Portrait of a Nation? Children's Literature and National Identity." This was followed by Farmer's reading from one of her novels.*

*The afternoon session of Panel C was chaired by Dr. Laurie Clancy. Professor Lucy Frost presented a very interesting paper, "Passing in Australia: Questions of Cultural Appropriation." She "Towards Decolonising Australia" was read by Professor John McLaren, Adib Khan read from his first novel, *Seasonal Adjustments*.*

*The second session of the afternoon at Panel A was chaired by Dennis Haskell. Three papers were presented Glen Phillips—"Katherine Susannah Prichard: A Woman for her Time or A Woman for our Time?" Professor Subhas Chandra Saha presented a paper on "The Feminist Poetry of Australia: A New Creative Configuration." The last paper of the session "Australian Studies in India" was presented by Professor R.K. Dhawan.*

*The parallel session in the afternoon at Panel B was chaired by Professor John McLaren from Victoria University. Professor K.C. Belliappa's paper on "Thomas Keneally's *The Chant of Jimmy Blacksmith: A Critique of White Racism*". Adrian Mitchell's paper on "Heroic Inventions: C.J. Koch's *Highways to a War and Australian Fiction*." Dr. D. Maya presented a paper, "Narrative with a Post-Modern Vision: A Reading of Peter Carey's *Oscar and Lucinda*."*

*The last session of afternoon at Panel C was chaired by Professor Brian Shoesmith. Dr. K.T. Sunitha's paper was a study of Patrick White's "A Cheery Soul" and George Lamming's *A Wedding**

in Spring.” Professor Anniah Gowda’s paper was on “Patrick White as a Playwright.” Dr. A. Raghu presented a paper on “Kangaroo and Camel: James Wieland as a Critic of Nissim Ezekiel.”

One of the highlights of the conference was the ‘Writers’ Meet. The Meet was inaugurated by Her Highness Princess Aswathy Thirunal Gouri Lakshmi Bayi who herself is an eminent writer. Fotinil Epanomitis, Beverley Fanner, Yasmine Gooneratne, Dennis Haskell, Nicholas Hasluck, Beate Josephi, Adib Khan, Annalisa Orselli Dickson, Andrew Taylor, Chris Wallace-Crabbe and Beth Yahp from Australia, and Ms. Kamala Das, Professor O.N.V. Kurup, Professor S. Guptan Nair and Professor V.S. Sharma from Kerala participated. This stimulating session was followed by a wonderful Cultural Show also a performance of Kalaripayattu, the martial arts of Kerala.

The second day began at 9.30 a.m. with the Keynote Address by Ms. Alison Broinowski, the Australian Patron of AASA “Looking West and Looking East.”

The next session began at 11 a.m. Panel A was chaired by Professor Subhas Chandra Saha. Dennis Haskell, a distinguished writer, presented his paper *Representations of Asia in the Poetry of Bruce Dawe*. This paper examined Bruce Dawe’s representations of Asia in his poems. “A’ is for Asia is a poem published by Dawe in 1965 in which he castigates Australian inattention to Asia. Valsa Elizabeth Koshy’s “Reconciliation of Contraries: Douglas Stewart’s *The Golden Lover*. Andrew Taylor read his poems.

Panel B was chaired by Dr. Livio Dobrez. Dr. Basil Jayatilalca presented a paper on “Multicultural Impact on Music Learning in Australia.” The second paper of the session was read by Dr. C.N. Srinath on “The Poetry of Les Murray.”

Dr. David Carter chaired the session of Panel C. Ms. Kateryna Longley’s paper was on “Worlds Apart: Diasporan Family History in Australia. In the afternoon session (2-3.30 p.m.), Panel A was chaired by Dr. Bill Ashcroft. Dr. Laurie Clancy’s paper “A Passage to Australia” examined the recent work by authors like Brian Castro, Yasmine Gooneratne, Dewi Aggraeni and Beth Yahp and analysed especially the attitudes taken towards Australia. The reading in this session was by Professor Yasmine Gooneratne Panel B was chaired by Dr. C.N. Srinath. Dr. S.K. Sareen’s paper “Race, Culture and Perception: Aspects of Aboriginal and White Fiction” was a study of Mudrooroo’s *Wild Cat Falling* (1965) and Thomas Keneally’s *The Chant of Jimmy Blacksmith*. Dr. Suman Bala made a comparison of the fiction of Yasmine Gooneratne and Bapsi Sidhwa in her paper “Beyond National Territories: The Fiction of Yasmine Gooneratne and Bapsi Sidhwa.” Glen Phillips read some of his poems.

The afternoon session of Panel C was chaired by Professor Lucy Frost. The first paper “The Subaltern in Shadow: Reading Aboriginal Women’s Life Stories” was read by Debjani Ganguly. Carmel Kelly’s paper “Negotiated Space: Women and Identity in Asian-Australian Women’s Fiction” examined the writing of three Asian women writers now living in Australia. The session concluded with a reading of her story “Sister” by the writer Beth Yahp.

After the book launch there was an excursion to Kovalam beach, mainly for delegates from abroad and from outside Kerala.

18 January 1997, the plenary session, Professor Chris Wallace-Crabbe’s lecture on “Poetry, Prophecy and Vestige: The Survival of a Sublime Genre in Modern Australia.”

The next session began at 11 a.m. after Tea. Dr. R.K. Dhawan chaired the Panel A. Ms. R. Kamala presented a paper on “Elizabeth Jolley’s *Miss Peabody’s Inheritance* and John Wain’s *Pardoner’s Tale: A Comparison in Theme and Technique*.” She analysed in detail the common features of the two novels, whose chief protagonists finally come to Australia. Dr. Gita Krishnankutty’s paper was on “Patrick White and Raja Rao: A Comparison.” The session ended with the novelist Fotini Epanomitis’ reading. The session Panel B was chaired by Professor Lucy Frost. Dr. Livio Dobrez presented an in-depth study of “*The Phenomenon of Contact: Mythical, Real and Discursive Antipodes*.” The paper focused on the phenomenon of cross-cultural contact and its importance for those involved. Dr. Dobrez made a survey of the notion of Antipodes from the time of Pythagoras to the present day. The second paper was by Dr. Isabel Santoallala (Spain) on “Figuring it out: The Australian Spanish Mis-connection.” The session concluded with Dennis Haskell’s reading of his poems.

Panel C was chaired by Professor K.C. Belliappa. In his paper "Salabhanjika: A Cultural Option," Dr. C.P. Ravichandra took up A.D. Hope's poem "Salabhanjika" and showed how the poet who is aware of the entire western tradition turns to India. Professor K. Radha in her paper, "The Hindu Doctrine of Transmigration of Souls in Rodney Hall's *The Law of Karma: A Progression of Poems*" mentioned that Rodney Halwas influenced by the Hindu law of Karma and the transmigration of souls.

Panel A of the afternoon session was chaired by Professor K. Radha. Dr. Sue-Ellen Murray's paper was on "All in a Good Cause: Australian Women's Experiences and Understandings of Menstruation 1900-1960." Dr. Lebbie Hopkins presented a paper on "On being Powerful" Dr. M.K.C. Nair (Director, Child Development Centre, Thiruvananthapuram) spoke on "Prevention of Childhood Disability: Newcastle/Kerala Model," showing slides. The next paper "The Mosaic Culture of Australia as seen in Patrick White's *Voss*" was by Fr. Sebastian Anand S.J. Dr. Evangeline Shanti Roy's paper, "Singing the World the Barramatijara Way in Thomas Keneally's *Flying Hero Class*" was about the treatment of the Australian aborigines in the white world. The last paper of the session was by G.S. Jayasree on "Multiculturalism and the New World (Dis)Order."

The session - Panel B was chaired by Dr. Patrick West. Three interesting papers were read. Dr. Susan Kenworthy's paper "Racist Acts and Human Rights" examined the effect of the Act on the lives of the colonisers and the colonised. Dr. Cohn Kenworthy's paper "Representing Colonization" threw light on the similarities in the constructions of colonized peoples by the British in Asia, Africa, the Americas and Australasia. The last paper of the session by Dr. Rajiva Wijesinghe (Sri Lanka) was on "Australia's First Major International Role: Human Rights and Child Abuse in Cambodia."

The three-day Conference at Hotel Fort Manor came to a close at 4.30 p.m. on 18 January 1997. More than forty eminent delegates from abroad, a large number of participants from Universities and Colleges from all over Kerala and from other parts of India, including teachers, research scholars and students had attended.

K Radha (University of Kerala)

#### **THE CONFERENCE PUBLICATION:**

*New Directions in Australian Studies*  
ed. Cynthia vanden Driesen & Adrian Mitchell  
New Delhi: Prestige Books

#### *The Book*

*This anthology comprising papers from the inaugural conference of the Asian Association for the Study of Australia (AASA) refracts new trends in Australian studies over a range of disciplines— literature, cultural theory, education, women's studies, children's studies. Focusing on the innovative and the creative, these papers articulate perceptive insights from several eminent Australian academics and also record the burgeoning interest of Asian scholars in Australian culture. The consciousness of Australia's multicultural heritage and awareness of the ties with Asia which permeate these texts make the collection an important landmark in the emerging dialogue between Australian and Indian writers who attended the conference.*

**ISBN: 81-7551-084-6**

**485pp.**

**Rs. 700 US \$30**

**December 1997**

**AASA NEWSLETTER**

***Interactions: The Eighth Biennial Symposium on Literatures and Cultures of the Asia Pacific Region Perth, W. Australia, 8-12 December 1997***  
***A Brief Report by Professor Subhas Chandra Saha (Assam University, India)***

*The symposium was organized by the Centre for Studies in Australian Literature, Department of English, University of Western Australia, Perth. It was a unique symposium as it focussed on the literatures and cultures of the Asia Pacific Region. It was attended by academics and creative writers from Australia, Indonesia, Singapore, Malaysia, Samoa, Japan, India and Thailand, and also from European countries like Austria and Italy. One full day of the programme consisted of readings of poems, stories and plays by creative writers. It was held along with wine-tasting in the famous Houston vineyard. Delegates from India included Dr. G. Jayashree, Dr. M. Dasan and Dr. Valsa Koshi from Kerala and Dr. K. Sunitha from Mysore. The symposium provided the participants not only with the unique opportunity of interacting with specialists on the literatures and cultures of the Asia Pacific region but also the-rare privilege of basking in the warm mateship of the Australian academics and creative writers in bracing climate of neat, clean, green Perth.*

*A two-day national seminar on **Twentieth Century World Drama** was organized by Shaw's Corner, in collaboration with Indian Society for Commonwealth Studies, at Academy of Fine Arts and Literature, New Delhi, on 24-25 October 1997. One of the special features of the Seminar was a full session devoted to Australian drama. It was chaired by Dr. R.K. Dhawan (University of Delhi). Mr. Roger Virtue, an Australian scholar of drama, at present working at New Delhi, discussed the background to the development of drama in Australia.*

**IN RESPONSE TO PROFESSOR NARASIMHAIAH'S SUGGESTION AT A CONFERENCE  
ON INDIAN LITERATURE IN ENGLISH ORGANISED AT DHVANYALOKA ( 1998)  
NEW ZEALAND WAS INVITED TO JOIN THE ASSOCIATION.  
A CHANGE IN TITLE—AND STRUCTURE OF ASSOCIATION RESULTED.**

**February 1999**

**A-AASA NEWSLETTER**

**ASIA-AUSTRALASIA ASSOCIATION FOR THE STUDY OF AUSTRALASIA**

Patrons  
Prof. CD. Narasimhaiah  
(Mysore)  
Ms. Alison Bronowski  
(Canberra)

President (Asia)  
Dr. Suman Bala  
University of Delhi  
Ph. 91-011-5584304

Co-President (Australia)  
Dr. Cynthia vanden  
Driesen  
Edith Cowan University,  
Perth  
Ph. 61-09-3867654

Vice-President (Asia,)  
Prof K Radha  
Kerala University

AASA: New Developments

*The ACLALS Conference in Koala Lumpur was attended by several members of AASA. Since AASA was launched at the time of the last ACLALS Conference, Colombo 1995, the opportunity was taken to renew/reappoint and extend the membership of the Committee and make some adjustments. Since the membership of the Association has now expanded to include New Zealand.*

*A change in nomenclature was necessary. It was also felt that the importance of the Australian participation needed to be reflected. The acronym of the Association will not change substantially; the new title will now be "Asia-Australasia Association for the Study of Australasia." Unless a committee member had indicated he/she did not wish to continue serving in their current positions, office-bearers were reappointed to their positions till the next meeting. It was accepted that the committee should include an European, American and a British representative.*

*The volume of papers presented at the inaugural conference at Trivandrum is under active preparation. It will be ready for launching in April 1999.*

*The 2nd A-AASA Conference will be held at Mysore in the year 2000. A/Prof. Kirpal Singh has offered to host the 3rd in Singapore.*

## ANNOUNCEMENT OF SECOND INTERNATIONAL ASAA CONFERENCE—MYSORE

February 2000

A-AASA NEWSLETTER

ASIA-AUSTRALASIA ASSOCIATION FOR THE STUDY OF AUSTRALASIA

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*Co-Vice-President  
(Australia)  
Dr. Satendra Nandan.  
Canberra University,  
ANC'  
Ph. 61-02-62012007*

*Secretary  
Prof. SK. Sareen  
J.N.U. New Delhi  
Ph. 91-011-6652238*

*Treasurer & Editor  
Newsletter  
Dr. R K: Dhawan  
University of Delhi  
Ph. 91011.5737849*

*Announcement  
AAASA (INDIA) CONFERENCE  
Mysore - July 2000*

*The next A-AASA Conference will be organized by the Indian membership of A-AASA at Mysore (South India) 12-15 July 2000. The theme of the Conference will be "India-Australia Connections"*

*This could be explored over a range of disciplines—literature, culture, women's studies, social sciences, business, economics etc. The conference should highlight areas of burgeoning strength as well potential developments for the future. Scholars are invited to submit papers on India/New Zealand connections as well as comparative studies of India, Australia and New Zealand. Abstracts should be sent by 15 April 2000 to either of the conveners: Dr. Suman BaLa, Department of English, S. Bhagat Singh College, University of Delhi, New Delhi 110 017. e-mail: [balasuman@yahoo.com](mailto:balasuman@yahoo.com) or Dr. Cynthia vanden Driesen, School of Languages and Literature, Edith Cowan University, Bradford St., Mt. Lawley, Perth, WA 6050. Fax 61-09-3867654. e-mail: [c.vandendriesen@ecu.edu.au](mailto:c.vandendriesen@ecu.edu.au)*

## MYSORE CONFERENCE JULY 2000: HIGHLIGHTS RECORDED IN OVERVIEW

### PICTURES FROM THE CONFERENCE



**Photo Inaugural ceremony: Anna Rutherford – second from left**



**Photo Book Launch - Green Hotel.**



**Group photo : Ralph Crane, Anna Rutherford, Bill Ashcroft with students from Mysore University.**



**Satendra and CDN at Tribute to A.D. Hope and Judith Wright.**

**CONFERENCE PUBLICATION:** *Australasian Encounters - From Literature and Women's Studies to Politics and Tourism* ed Cynthia vanden Driesen & Satendra Nandan  
*The Book-*

*This collection of papers signals the emergence of innovative developments in Australian Studies. In the area of cultural theory some of the brightest talents from Australia, New Zealand and India theorize the fresh insights emerging through exploration of the commonalties of the shared colonial and postcolonial experience of these regions. The addition of perspectives from New Zealand to this Second-World/Third-World dialogue is another of the highlights of this volume. While on the literary scene new figures move into focus, fresh developments in other disciplines are highlighted: politics, diplomacy, tourism and even science show interactions across a whole range of areas. In the widening of its scope and deepening of its focus, this book adds a unique dimension to Australian studies.*

*THE CONTRIBUTORS include: Bill Ashcroft (University of New South Wales), Suman Bala (University of Delhi), N. Bindu (Alpha Arts and Sc. College, Chennai), Alan A.H. Bittles (Edith Cowan University, Perth), Alison Broinowski (Australian National University, Canberra), Ralph Crane (University of Waikato, New Zealand), R.K. Dhawan (University of Delhi), Cynthia vanden Driesen (Edith Cowan University, Perth), Charles Ferrall (Victoria University of Wellington), John Gates (Edith Cowan University, Perth), Abhaya Gowda (University of Mysore), Chris Griffin (Edith Cowan University, Perth), Babli Gupta (University of Delhi), Lekkies Hopkins (Edith Cowan University, Perth), C.T. Indra (University of Madras), R. Kamala (S.D. College, Alappuzha), Carmel Kelly (Canberra, A.C.T.), Erica Lewin (Edith Cowan University, Perth), Chandani Lokuge (Flinders University, Adelaide) Kenneth McPherson (Indian Ocean Centre, Edith Cowan University Perth) Ministry of External Affairs, India, Adrian Mitchell (University of Sydney), Jyoti Nandan (Australian National University, Canberra), Satendra Nandan (Australian National University, Canberra), Glen Phillips (Edith Cowan*

*University, Perth), Eugenie Pinto (University of Madras), K. Radha (University of Kerala, Trivandrum), R. Ramachandra (University of Mysore), Appaji Rao (Indian Institute of Science, Bangalore), Judith Rochecoste (Edith Cowan University, Perth), Anjali Gera Roy (Indian Institute of Technology, Kharagpur), I-ES. Savithri (Indian Institute of Science, Bangalore), Maria Srinivasan (University of Madras), Jane Stafford (Victoria University of Wellington), Jennifer Strauss (Monash University, Melbourne), K. Suneetha Rani (University of Hyderabad), K.T. Sunitha (University of Mysore), Rashmi Talwar (Ethiraj College, Chennai), Auriol Weigold (University of Canberra, A.C.T.), Mark Williams (University of Canterbury), Samina Yasmeen (Univ. of Western Australia)*

**ISBN: 81-7551-131-I 480pp. Rs. 700**

**PRESTIGE BOOKS :3/28, East Patel Nagar, New Delhi 110008**

**A-AASA NEWSLETTER**

**August 2001**

**ASIAN AUSTRALASIAN ASSOCIATION FOR THE STUDY OF AUSTRALASIA**

**A-AASA PROJECT**

**“Consolidating Australian Studies in India through A-AASA”**



***Eugenie Pinto, Anjali Roy and Cynthia vanden Driesen at lunch with John Powys, Director, Australia-India Council (ACLALS Conference, Canberra, July 2001)***

*The Australia India Council sponsored a project entitled “Consolidating Australian Studies in India through AASA”. Five Indian academics, working in the field of Australian literature, were sponsored to visit Australia, to develop a range of joint initiatives to promote cooperation between institutions and individuals engaged in developing Australian studies in the region. The five academics were: Dr. Suman Bala and Dr. R.K. Dhawan (University of Delhi), Professor K. Radha (University of Kerala), Dr. Anjali Roy (I.I.T, Kharagpur) and Prof. Eugenie Pinto (University of Madras). All five participated in the ASAL conference “Thinking Beyond Australia! Beyond Australian Literature”, organized by the University of Melbourne and La Trobe University, at Trades Hall, Melbourne, from 5 to 8 July 2001 and the ACLALS conference held at Canberra. Dr. Suman Bala and Dr. R.K. Dhawan also attended a three-day conference “Nation and Narration” at the Australian Studies Centre, University of Queensland, Brisbane. Dr. Anjali Roy attended a conference in Melbourne from 16-19 July 2001. Ms. Eugenie Pinto travelled to the Australian Studies Centre, University of Queensland, Brisbane to research the Australian studies collection at the Centre.”*

*Members of the group and the coordinator of the project Cynthia vanden Driesen were delighted that Mr. John Powys, Director of Australia-India Council was able to meet them at a convivial lunch, organized by the indefatigable ACLALS Secretary Jacqueline Lo. They were able to express their personal appreciation of the assistance of the Australia-India Council in all A-AASA projects. Mr. Ian Black’s kind assistance and co-operation was warmly acknowledged. Later, some members of the group also met Mr. Richard Woolcott (Founding Director, Asia Society, AustralAsia Centre) and thanked him for his assistance with the project.*

*Some of the important outcomes of the project were:*

- the establishment of a website for the organisation. It is intended that a database be developed to collate information on Australasian studies in the region. Discussions took place and some decisions taken on the possibility of publishing Australian literary texts in India and a Committee was set up to follow through with these decisions.*
- Detailed discussions on the current constitution of A-AASA have resulted in amendments (to be formally ratified by the membership) which it is hoped will help to further the objectives of the Association and facilitate its growth.*

#### **NAME CHANGE**

*A name-change for the Association was considered appropriate. After sponsors and all interested parties are informed it was suggested that the new name of the Association will be: “The Association for Australasian Studies in Asia” (AASA).*

#### **EXCERPTS – REPORTS**

*“Coming to Australia and being able to attend the conferences at Brisbane, Melbourne and Canberra was a fruitful and enriching experience. It provided me an opportunity to come in direct contact with Australian life, literature and culture. ... I interacted with many academics, research scholars and creative writers at the three conferences.*



**R.K. Dhawan and other delegates with Satendra Nandan, Chair, ACLALS conference and Vice-President (Aus) A-AASA Cynthia vanden Driesen**

*“Attending the Melbourne Conference gave me an opportunity to meet many Australian scholars and learn about current issues in Australian Studies. It created in me an interest in reading some authors I had not read so far like Lionel Fogarty and Frank Hardy. The ACLALS Conference venue was the meeting place of a large number of professors and writers from all over the world and I could meet and speak to many of these.” K. Radha*

*“My visit to Australia has indeed been a rewarding and enriching experience. The ASAL conference at Melbourne covered a wide range of subjects. Participation in the ACLALS Conference at Canberra offered me an opportunity to share discussion with hundreds of scholars from the wider Commonwealth. It was great to listen to J.M. Coetzee, the only writer to have won the Booker Prize twice (and) interact with scholars and creative writers of various nations.” R.K. Dhawan*

*“It was an invigorating and stimulating experience interacting with people (academics/writers/professionals) from 60 different countries. Critical theorists such as Stephen Slemon, Bill Ashcroft, Harish Trivedi and a score of others gave us new frameworks for literary and other texts.” Eugenie Pinto*

*“The ASAL conference gave me an insider perspective on Australia underlining the need to frame post-colonial literatures in a multiple framework—ethnic, national and post-colonial.”*

*Anjali Roy*

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**July, 2002**

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**AASA NEWSLETTER**  
**ASSOCIATION FOR THE STUDY OF AUSTRALASIA IN ASIA**  
*AASA is on the Web*

*AASA has recently put up its website [www.thinkahead.net/anjali](http://www.thinkahead.net/anjali). The website has been designed by a professional Bangalore-based artist Savitha and is maintained and edited by Anjali Gera Roy at the Department of Humanities and Social Sciences, IIT, Kharagpur. This was one of the initiatives discussed in July 2001 when AASA—with the generous assistance of the Australia-India Council—*

brought five Indian scholars to Australia as part of the project entitled "Developing Australian Studies in India through AASA." Anjali was entrusted with the responsibility of setting up the web-site and she has done a good job of it.

### **NAME CHANGE FOR THE ASSOCIATION—ASAA**

*At the meeting of the membership in Canberra in July 2001, it was agreed that the name of the association be amended to: The Association for the Study of Australasia in Asia (ASAA). This was in response to a suggestion from a well-wisher of the Association, Mr. Richard Woolcott, President of the Asia Society, Austral-Asia Centre, Melbourne, who was invited to make some suggestions for the way forward for the Association at a meeting at Canberra University with some members of the Executive some months earlier. His suggestions, subsequently concentrated in a draft document, have been circulated to various members of AASA and responses are still being collated. The change in the name of the Association has however been carried through as being immediately acceptable and necessary.*

*Henceforth the Association will be known from the date of this announcement by the name printed above and as it has appeared in the title of this Newsletter. The changes to the Constitution discussed at the meetings in Canberra will be finally ratified at the next ASAA Conference to be held in 2003.*

**February 2003**

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### **ASAA NEWSLETTER**

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### **ASSOCIATION FOR THE STUDY OF AUSTRALASIA IN ASIA**

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*Canberra Seminar: ASAA Publication Launched*

*The third Australia India Update Seminar was held at the University of Canberra on 7-8 November 2002. The Seminar theme was "Bi-lateral Relations Post September 11: Regional Security and Multi-Cultural Democracies."*

*As an important forum which regularly highlights the Australia-India connection, the Canberra Seminar was the appropriate forum to launch the book of the ASAA Conference, Mysore 2000: Austral-Asian Encounters, ed. Cynthia vanden Driesen and Satendra Nandan (Prestige: New Delhi, 2002). A limited number of copies of this very handsome volume were made available, courtesy of Prestige Press, for the occasion. (An order form for the volume is attached to this Newsletter*

**November 2003**

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### **ASAA NEWSLETTER**

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### **ASSOCIATION FOR THE STUDY OF AUSTRALASIA IN ASIA**

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*Portraying India: Image, Identity and Myth*

*A one-day symposium "Portraying India: Image, Identity and Myth" was held at India Habitat Centre on 3 September 2003. Organized by Australia-India Council and Australian High Commission, New Delhi, it offered stimulating discussions on some of the ways India has been portrayed in recent Australian writing and media. Ms. Penny Wensley, Australian High Commissioner at New Delhi,*

welcomed the guests and highlighted the importance of the symposium being held. The inaugural address was delivered by Professor Jim Masselos of the University of Sydney. He spoke on the "Multiple Reality" discussing the historical scene in the 19th century India. This was followed by a talk by Professor Narayani Gupta of Jamia Millia Islamia University on "What is the Use of a Book without Picture." Mr. Rory Medcalf, First Secretary, Australian High Commission gave a lively paper on the early Australian author John Lana. Who lived in India in 1800 and who wrote in detail about his extraordinary experiences here? Inez Baranay, noted author of six novels, gave a stimulating talk on "Reading India, Writing-India." The academic lectures were followed by a presentation by expatriate young film-maker Safina Uberoi. She talked of her experiences as a multi-cultural producer of documentary films. The symposium evoked a lively response. Dr. R.K. Dhawan and Dr. Suman Bala of the University of Delhi were participants in the program

**THIRD ASAA CONFERENCE—RETURN TO KERALA—JULY 2004  
VENUE: MAR IVANIOS COLLEGE.**

**December 2004**

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**ASAA NEWSLETTER**

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**ASSOCIATION FOR THE STUDY OF AUSTRALASIA IN ASIA**

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**Third International ASAA Conference Mar Ivanios College, Thiruvananthapuram  
Kerala, South India  
8-10 July 2004**



**Opening Ceremony: Lighting of the lamp by John Fisher. Others in the picture: Principal, Mar Ivanios College, the Bishop of Kerala, and Vice-Chancellor of Kerala University**

## Third International ASAA Conference

### The Inaugural Session

*The Third International Conference of the Association for the Study of Australasia in Asia on the theme of displacement, dispossession, seachange, commenced with great fanfare in the plush, ornately decorated Mar Ivanios College Conference Hall, Trivandrum on 8 July 2004. Supported by the Australia-India Council, the University of Kerala, Edith Cowan University, the University of Canberra, and the WA Govt. Dept. of Industry and Resources, the conference was a great success. About 100 delegates from across the country and more than thirty delegates from Australia, New Zealand and Singapore participated in the three-day deliberations.*



**Asha Das, K.T. Sunitha, Malati Mathur, Anjali Roy, Cynthia, K. Radha, M. Dasan and another participant**

*The conference was inaugurated by Mr. John Fisher; Deputy High Commissioner of Australia. Mr. Fisher addressed several areas of the Conference theme of Diaspora and “sea change” focussing particularly on the numbers of Indian migrants in Australia and the strengthening of educational and other links between India and Australia. His Grace, the Bishop of Kerala also addressed the gathering. Prof. K. Radha, Asian President of ASAA and Director of the Australian Studies Centre, University of Kerala the local Convenor of the conference, welcomed all the eminent guests, delegates, students and other participants. Principal of the College Fr. Daniel Kuzhithadathil commented on the significance of the event as marking the importance of the Colleges’ distinctive contribution to education in the region. Other dignitaries of the University of Kerala offered felicitations. Ms Asha Das, representative of the AIC in India, was also present. Dr. S. Kevin, Vice-Chancellor of Kerala University, presided over the function.*

*The first plenary address was presented by Professor Edwin Thumboo, renowned Singaporean poet and academic, Director of the Centre for the Arts, Singapore and the new Asian Patron of ASAA. The academic sessions of the presentation of Papers started simultaneously in three rooms. Academic debate was leavened and lightened by readings by creative writers from their works on allied motifs of diaspora, Simone Lazaroo, Glen Phillips, Serge Lieberman were the writers featured on the first day*

*The first evening’s entertainment - a cultural show of music, dance and martial arts, embodying the culture of the South, presented by the highly talented students of Mar Ivanios College - held the audience enthralled. The gala evening ended with a lavish dinner hosted by the College. One of the*

highlights of the Conference was the Creative Writers' Session held on the second morning. The Australian writers attending the conference and prominent writers from Kerala shared the stage, reading from their works on the theme of diaspora and discussing its significance under the skilled chairmanship of Nicholas Hasluck. Australian writers present besides Nicholas Hasluck were Syd Harrex, Glen Phillips, Simone Lazaroo, Tony Casella, Jan Kapetas and Serge Liberman, besides the Australian Aboriginal writers Noel Morrison and Kay Whalley. Amongst the Kerala writers who received warm acclamation from the audience were Ayyappa Paniker and Chandrika.



**Writers meet**

**L. to R.: Simone Lazaroo, Ayyappa Panikker, Syd Harrex, Serge Liberman, Tony Casella, Glen Phillips and Nick Hasluck**

Nicholas Hasluck, former Chair of the Literature Fund of the Australia Council, presented a plenary Address before the Writers' Meet which provided some provocative new ideas on the diaspora theme. Bringing together his legal expertise (he is also Justice Hasluck in his native state of West Australia) and writerly imagination, he presented a fascinating talk entitled "Diaspora as Alibi." in the second plenary session for the day, Adrian Mitchell presented an insight into his own distinguished research into the interface between history and culture. A Paper on the Italian diaspora was presented by Anthony Casella, while distinguished Australian demographer Reg Appleyard focused on Greek Communities in Australia. The Islamic Communities and their problems were sketched by Ameer Ali his Paper provided an insider's perspective that was particularly enlightening. (Ameer is Chairperson of the Islamic Councils of Australia.) Abu Siddique's Paper addressed the exigencies of illegal immigration and the continuing dilemma it presents in contemporary Australia, the Centre for Migration and Development Studies at UWA.

A further highlight of the day was the book launch. Edwin Thumboo launched Syd Harrex's latest book of poems entitled "Under a Cedar Tree". The packed schedule concluded with a dinner hosted by the Vice-Chancellor of the University of Kerala for the overseas visitors at the South Park Hotel.

On the third morning, one of Australia's best-known cultural theorists, Bill Ashcroft pre—sented a plenary address entitled. "Diaspora and Boundaries" an insightful study into the problematics of Boundaries eager to reach Horizons. Syd Harrex, Nicholas Hasluck, and Anthony Casella. Read from their creative work after each of the academic sessions. These were truly remarkable for their range and diversity ranging from philosophical and theoretical speculations as to the nature of home and displacement and concepts of heterotopia and vagrant space to some highly imaginative reinterpretations of the theme of diaspora in relation to knowledges and displacement in terms of

intellectual disability. The New Zealanders made their contribution with Jane Stafford, Mark Williams and James Meffan giving the conference theme a distinctive New Zealand perspective. On the last evening, a truly memorable presentation was made by Australian indigenous artists Kay Whalley and Noel Morrison. The session was chaired by Jan Kapetas and each item drew appreciative applause from the audience. Satendra Nandan's scheduled Plenary Paper was presented only in an abbreviated form since he was unable to attend.

The topics on which Indian participants presented Papers show the extent to which Australian literature particularly seems to have developed in India. Dr. Suman Bala (University of Delhi) explored South Asian Women's Writing in Australia. Dr. R.K. Dhawan (University of Delhi) compared Mena Abdullah's *This Time of Peacock* with Suneeta D Costa's *Homework*; Professor K.T. Sunitha (University of Mysore) spoke on the theme of dispossession in Simone Lazaroo's *An Australian Fiancé*; Dr Usha Dhawan (Delhi) presented a paper on South Asian Women in Australia, Dr Malti Mathur (Alwar) and Dr D. K. Pabby (University of Delhi) spoke on the diasporic writings of Satendra Nandan; Professor K. Radha presented a paper on Thomas Keneally; Mariamma Panjikkaran spoke on Elizabeth Jolley; John Cherian on David Malouf; Dr D Maya on Judith Wright; and Raghunatha Pillai on Hasluck's *The Country Without Music*.

A word about Mar Ivanios College, the host institution. It is highly regarded as a premier centre of learning in Kerala. Its beautiful buildings and gardens are spread over 220 acres. It was meant to be a residential university, based on the model of Shantiniketan and one of its distinctive features is its building in of song, dance and cultural pursuits into the student curriculum.

The Conference received wide coverage from the media including television and daily newspapers both local and national.



**Indigenous Writers (Australian) Noel Morrison and Kay Walley**

#### ***ASAA Conference; Special Session on Aborigines***

*The angst of the Australian Aborigine was very much in the air as Noel Morrison and Kay Whalley—aborigine writers—came on stage to read poems and narrate experiences from their lives in the aborigine reservations and missions in Australia.*

*Kay, by reading poems and a short story, painted a poignant picture of how the aborigine of today is struggling to return to his roots and rediscover his lost culture and languages. She spoke of the importance of the home and the family to the Nyungar people and told the audience that “the spirit is still there, the culture is very much alive, hidden, but still alive.” With the help of graphs and charts, Kay also sought to highlight that aborigines suffer the highest incarceration rate in Australia.*

*Noel welcomed the gathering by singing an aboriginal song, in a language he had rediscovered after extensive research. As Noel kept up a commentary on his life in the aborigine reservations, he also showed pictures of how tin shanties and flimsy tents were the ‘homes’ of the aborigines for the better part of the twentieth century. As Noel bid farewell to the seminar with another song in an aborigine language, the audience comprising Australian and Indian writers and students broke out into a robust applause, causing Noel to breakout into a broad smile.*

*The above item appeared in the Indian national newspaper The Hindu, II July 2004.r*

**Reports from the Indigenous Writers—Kay Walley and Noel Morrison  
Kadadjiny Mia Walyalup Aboriginal Writers’ Group**

*Note: The conference organizers Wish to note their appreciation of the assistance given them by the West Australian Government of industry and Technology—particularly Ms. Marilyn Morgan Mgr. Indigenous Art and Marketing, Mr. John Loney (WA Govt), to enable Kay and Noel to participate in the conference.*

*In early July, two emerging Nyoongar writers, Noel Morrison and Kay Walley of the Perth- based Kadadjiny Mia Walyalup Aboriginal Writers’ Group, presented the Valedictory session at the 3rd International Conference of the Association for the Study of Australasia in Asia. Their presentation of stories, poetry, song and Nyoongar history not only received robust applause; it was covered in detail in The Hindu (Sunday II July, 2004). Indigenous Indian and Australian writers. Permission has been given for some of Kay and Noel’s writing to be taught in postcolonial literature courses, and a video discussion between Kay, Noel, and Jan will appear on an Indian web site.*

**Notes from Noel Morrison  
Kadadjiny Mia Walyalup Aboriginal Writers’ Group**

*We arrived in Trivandrum in a huge monsoon storm. Four o’clock in the morning Australian time. It was unbelievable, racing through the dark down narrow empty streets, thinking what is this place? We couldn’t see anything but darkness and rain in the headlights. Next morning, I looked out the window. In the light, it was still raining. Green tree tops in the rain. We went for a walk and found a market, the Connemara Market, and bought umbrellas. I had to pinch myself to see I wasn’t dreaming. It was India just like you see it on television but with all the smells and sounds—horns beeping, fish gutters cleaning the fish, fresh fruit and vegetables, women in saris, mud, traffic.*

*At the Conference we met wonderful people. An Indigenous Indian professor I learned a lot about Indian ways of doing things. What was really important to me was the many chances I had to share our Indigenous history and culture with many different audiences and the conversations we had with young university students during the breaks. I was surprised by how interested they are in Aboriginal things, and how much the Indigenous Indian professors already knew (and loved) about Aboriginal writers and writing.*

*Going to India has made me even stronger about the need for people to understand one another. It has made me realize that sharing our stories and writing really matters.*

**Notes from Kay Walley**  
**Nyoongar Writer**

*The chance to travel to India and present our stories and our cultural history was extremely important. I found my heart going out to the people I met, and I know that what I saw and learned in India will stay with me in every thing I do through the years of my life. As a writer, I will be stronger, and I will never lack the courage to say what needs saying. At the Conference, I stood before a huge audience of academics and writers and read my poetry and the poems of other Nyoongar writers, and I saw how those poems touched the audience. This was a very important experience for someone like me—an ordinary Nyoongar woman who writes, but who hasn't really understood how powerful words can be. It was important to share the stories and poetry of my people, and it was important to see how warmly people responded.*

*Going to this conference, and going to India was a very important experience. As Aboriginal writers we were able to share our experiences as people and writers with many people. Our presentation was really heard by the audience. Yarning with lecturers, professors, writers and 'students, we were able, to share something of our Nyoongar ways, our culture and our friendship. The Hindu printed the story of our presentation so that knowledge of Aboriginal Australian history will be more widely known. More than fifty of our books were sold and after they were read, we were told that people loved the work and that some of our poems will be taught in university literature courses. Lastly, we were invited, and made a video about our work as writers which will appear on the World Wide Web.*

*For myself, I believe my own writing will be richer and stronger because of this trip ...*

**ANOTHER WRITER'S PERSPECTIVE**

**A Backward Look at the Third International ASAA Conference**  
**University of Kerala, Thiruvananthapuram**  
**8-10 July 2004**  
**SERGE LIBERMAN**

*To myself as a Jew living in an Australian environment from childhood on, these have all been perennial part-and-parcel issues of the Jewish community in which I have lived. At the conference, it was salutary to learn of these similar concerns writ more broadly, albeit with assorted variations, challenging other communities as well, among them the Indian, Anglo—Indian, Italian, Greek, South East Asian, Chinese, Muslim and Aboriginal, and to be brought to reflect upon the larger political, economic, historical, moral, social and anthropological dimensions of borders, migrations, loyalties, multicultural ideals, and inclusion, marginality and personal identity. All of this may be “ivory tower” kind of stuff—but nevertheless it was part of the experience of this conference.*

*Far more grounded in experienced actuality was the exhilaration of being part of a Conference, admirably brought together by hard-working organisers, of so many scholars and writers with illuminating things to say. This was enhanced by the unimpeachable service of the staff of the South Park Hotel (the chosen accommodation for overseas guests). The grace of the affable student volunteers and helpful staff of Mar Ivanios College helped the consistent maintenance of an easy camaraderie which has made the conference, for me at least, a distinct highlight of my literary career.*

## THE BOOK

**DIASPORA: The Australasian Experience**  
edited by  
**Cynthia vanden Driesen & Ralph Crane**

*The perennially engaging theme of diaspora has acquired an increasing, even an alarming resonance in the contemporary world. This collection of writings from Australia, New Zealand, India and Singapore straddles disciplines ranging from Literature, Media, and the Social Sciences to Computing and Library Studies. The medley of voices combines to illuminate a topic which must surely be one of the most challenging in current intellectual debates the world over. It is aerated also with insightful contributions from creative artists. The varied issues are probed with unusual depth and perspicacity, partly because while some of the contributors are recognized experts in the field, others are exciting new talents testing their strengths in the field of international scholarship.*

*Contributors include: Ameer Ali; Stephen Alomes; Reginald Appleyard; Bill Ashcroft; Greg Battye; N. Bindu; Sunitha Byrappa; Antonio Casella; Joanne Church; Michael Collins; Ralph Crane; R.K. Dhawan; Cynthia vanden Driesen; Ian vanden Driesen; R.N. Ghosh; Julia Gross; Syd Harrex; Nicholas Hasluck; Trudy Hoad; Leng Hui; Robert Imre; Jan Kapetas; Simone Lazaroo; Serge Liberman; Kateryna Longley; Keya Majumdar; Malati Mathur; James Meffan; Adrian Mitchell; Jane Mummary; Satendra Nandan; D.K. Pabby; Glen Phillips; K. Reghunadhan Pillai; Srilata Ravi; Anjali Gera Roy; M.A.B. Siddique; Sachiko Sone; Jane Stafford; Edwin Thumboo; Mark Williams; Serge Walberg; Dennis Wood.*

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**Prestige Books**

**3/28, East Patel Nagar, New Delhi 110 008, India. [prestigebooks@gmail.com](mailto:prestigebooks@gmail.com)**

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### **An Intellectual Potpourri**

*Professor Anjali Gera Roy, Vice-President (Asia) ASAA, was in Canberra from August to November 2004 as a Visiting Fellow at the Australian National University to work on a project on the globalization of a North Indian folk performance tradition[. She visited Canberra first in July 2001 as part of an ASAA project entitled 'Inducting Indian Scholars into Australian Studies ]*

*I have had an intellectual surfeit during my Australian sojourn—reading, writing, talking, at meetings with writers and artists, conversations and discussions. I have been talking a lot the last couple of months to all who would care to listen about the global flows of Bhangra, British Punjabi film, Bollywood, the Partition of Punjab and Punjabi Migration from the North West Frontier Province. To my utter delight, I have had many in the audience pitching in on the finer nuances of Asian culture and music, Bhangra, Partition and the North West Frontier.*

*It has been an AASA reunion, a carry-over of the conversations at the AASA Conference in Trivandrum in July 2004. I shared a couple of classes with Ralph Crane on his course on Raj fiction at the University of Tasmania at Hobart in the third week of September and spoke on the problems of Translating Difference in Bend it Like Beckham. A brief stopover in Melbourne had me comparing notes with Serge Liberman on 1947 Indian Partition and the holocaust, a dialogue that continues on the electronic media. In Sydney, I catch up with Bill Ashcroft and lecture at the University of Technology Sydney on Bollywood Bhangra and After Partition to three different groups.*

*While I write this, I am looking forward to another view of Australia at the Dialogues across Cultures Conference next week at Melbourne organized by the Centre for Indigenous Studies, Monash and to speaking about the construction of punjabiyyat in the Sikh Diaspora at the Monash Asia Institute. Before then, I wish I will have had enough time to have my fill of the lake outside my window.*

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ASSOCIATION FOR THE STUDY OF AUSTRALASIA IN ASIA

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*Professor C.D. Narasimhaiah: First Asian Patron of ASAA  
An Era Passes Away*

*Professor CD. Narasimhaiah, the Grand Old Man of English Studies in India, is no more. The larger-than-life figure who was part of the generation of international scholars who helped set up the field of Commonwealth Literature was not unduly perturbed when the discipline took a postcolonial turn. Firmly in place at Dhvanyaloka, the Centre for English Studies and indigenous Arts, that he established in Mysore, he continued to smile graciously and extended his fabulous hospitality to followers of all literary fashions. The history of English studies in India parallels CDN's personal journey from a young Leavisite, to the admirer of the work of Indian writers in English like Raja Rao, Mulk Raj Anand and R.K. Narayan and the discovery of the Indian traditions. Having personally monitored the phase, the shift from English Literature to literatures in English, his greatest contribution to the discipline, by whatever name it be called, was to help earn for writings from India and other parts of the Commonwealth, international recognition and respect.*

*There were so many CDNS: the Leavisite and the Nehruvian, the British gentleman and the Indian guru, the demanding supervisor and the affectionate guide, the perfect conversationalist and the solitary walker, the ruthless critic and the charming host. Which CDN one knew depended on the time of his life one came to know him. I, with so many other scholars from all over India and indeed the world, from England, the United States, Australia, New Zealand and Europe, will remember him as the spirit of the Dhvanyaloka, leading generations of scholars and writers to follow him in the consuming love of literature and cultural studies. Dhvanyaloka will never be quite the same without his physical presence but his achievements remain and his memory will be a continued source of inspiration*

ANJALI ROY

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*NOTE As the fist Asian Patron of ASAA his suggestion that the Association first established for the "Study of Australia" extend its focus to include Australasia at a conference he had organized at Dhvanyaloka in 1998 brought in the valued partnership of New Zealand. The ASAA Committee is glad also that their invitation to Anna Rutherford brought her to visit Mysore for the last time (for the ASAA conference of 2000) and enabled her renew her old friendship with Professor Narasimhaiah.*

***EACLALS Conference: Malta  
Report: Cynthia vanden Driesen***

*The European Assn. for Commonwealth Literature and Language Studies (EACLALS) held its triennial conference in idyllic Mediterranean weather in Malta, an island rich in ancient historic traditions. It was also a venue with historic connections to the Commonwealth literary tradition and many of the speeches at the opening ceremony recalled the earlier conference held in Malta - thirty years before. It was truly a splendid conference assembling over two hundred scholars - academics, writers, and theorists from all over Europe and beyond - Singapore, India as well as Australia, Canada, South Africa and the United States.*



***Sightseeing: Good Friday Procession, Malta***

***L to R: I-lena Maes-Jelinek (Univ. of Liege), Jitka Vlkova (Univ. of Brno), Shirley Chew (Univ. of Leeds) Cynthia. Elenore Wildburger (Univ. of Klaenfurt) (Photo: thanks to Amin Malak Canida) Jitka and Elenore will be our new European reps.***

*Amongst Australians attending the conference were Ann Collet, Tanya Dalziell, Bill Ashcroft, Helen Tiffin, Helen Gilbert, Cynthia vanden Driesen and Carole Ferrier. Participants from India were Meenakshi Mukherjee, Jayashree and Vijay—all from Hyderabad. As with all conferences of this nature, wonderful opportunities were presented for new friendships to be formed and for older friendships to be renewed.*

*While many of us missed the presence of Doireann McDermott - unable to be present due to family responsibilities—and also, of the late Anna Rutherford, it was wonderful to see Hena Maes-Jelinek continuing to take an active part in all of the proceedings - from the academic sessions to the sight-seeing) and the dining and wining all along the marvellous sea-front! In the true style of those pioneers - Hena made time to catch up with as many old acquaintances as she could while keeping tabs on all that was going on with the serious work of the conference*



*Conference Dinner*

*L. to R.: Isabel Carrera (Univ. of Oviedo), Vijaysree Chaganti (Hyderabad), Carla Commelini (Univ. of Trieste), Shirley Chew (Leeds), T. Vijay Kumar (Hyderabad), Hena, Benedicte Ledent (Liege), Meenakshi Mukherjee (Hyderabad).*

*Seated: Cynthia and Nuria Casado*

*(Photo: Thanks to Katie Gramich, Bath, UK)*

New European representatives have been recruited to act as associate members of ASAA and to publicize ASAA activities in Europe. These are: Eleonore Wildburger, Univ. of Klagenfurt, Austria; Jitka Vlkov, Univ. of Brno, Czech Republic; Carla Commelini, Univ. of Trieste, Italy.

December 2005

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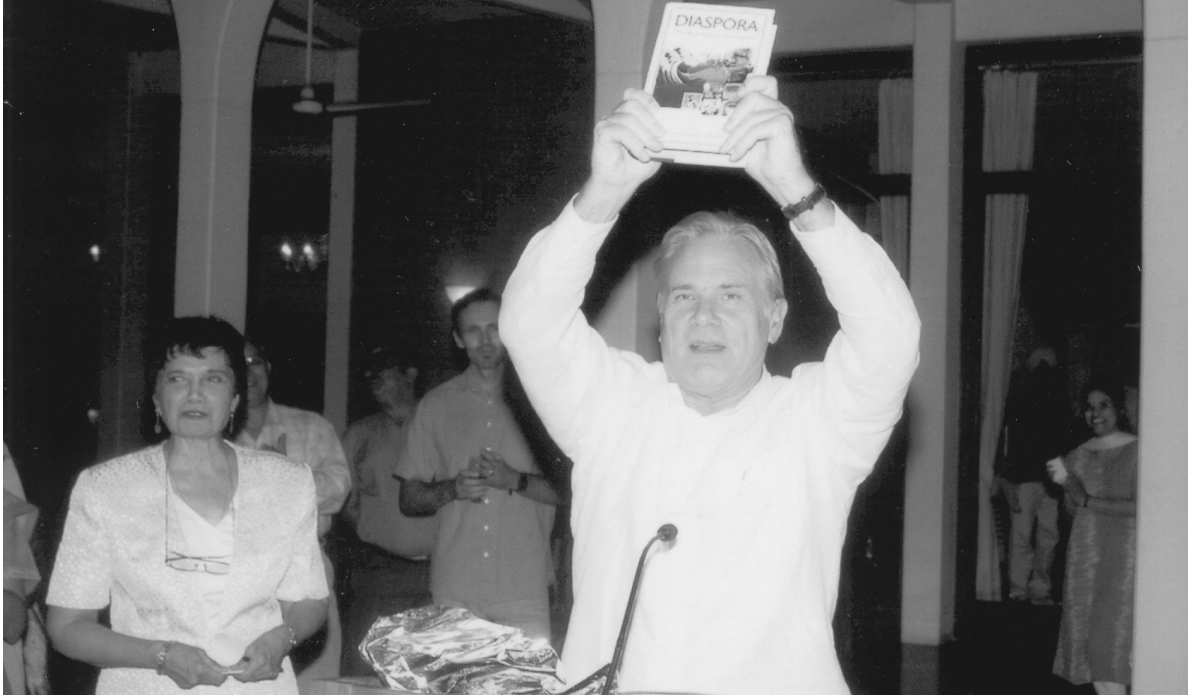
## ASAA NEWSLETTER

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### ASSOCIATION FOR THE STUDY OF AUSTRALASIA IN ASIA

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#### *Diaspora: The Australasian Experience* The Book Launch



***H E Mr. John Mc Carthy, Australian High Commissioner, India launches the book***

*Diaspora: The Australasian Experience, the book of the papers of the third ASAA (Association of Study of Australasia in Asia) Conference held at University of Kerala, Thiruvananthapuram, in July 2004, co-ed. Cynthia vanden Driesen & Ralph Crane, was launched at a function organized by Australian High Commission, New Delhi, on 23 October 2005. About eighty Australianists from different universities and walks of life participated. Also present was the Deputy High Commissioner of New Zealand Ms. Heather Ward. The event was presided over by H E Mr. John McCarthy who opened the relaxed and informal evening with some prefatory comments on his own experiences and ideas on the theme of diaspora. Dr Cynthia vanden Driesen of Edith Cowan University, one of the co-editors of the book, next addressed the audience. She chose to speak about the history of ASAA and its formation in Colombo, Sri Lanka, on the occasion of the ACLALS Conference in 1995. The success of the Association's work is attested by the fact that an Indian Association for the study of Australian studies was formed subsequently and the interest in the region continues to grow.*



***Jyotsna Thakur, Keya Majumdar, K.T. Sunitha, Cynthia vanden Driesen,  
HE John McCarthy, R.K. Dhawan, Serge Liberman, Asha Das and Suman Bala***

*Her presentation was followed by a short speech by Professor K.T. Sunitha of Mysore University, the Asian Vice-President of the Association. Serge Liberman, a creative writer from Melbourne and also a contributor to the volume who also spoke on the theme of Diaspora. Dr. R.K. Dhawan thanked the hosts as well as those contributors like Dr. Keya Majumdar and Dr. Sunitha for travelling all the way to New Delhi for the event.*

*The book Diaspora: The Australasian Experience was then formally released by Mr. John McCarthy, the Australian High Commissioner. Refreshments were served and the guests mingled informally in the delightful ambience of the gardens of the High Commission.*

*The evening was a tribute to the organizing talents of Ms. Asha Das - of the Australian High Commission and her staff especially Ms. Jyotsna Thakur. ASAA's appreciative thanks are due to the AIC for travel assistance to Dr. Sunitha and also—most important—for the assistance with the publication, of the book and the conference before it. The Book Launch was a fitting finale to several months of collaborative work.*

### ***XII International Commonwealth Conference 13-15 October 2005***

*The 12th International Conference of the Indian Society for Commonwealth Studies was held at the Department of Humanities, I.I.T., Roorkee, on 13-15 October 2005. More than two hundred scholars from across the country and fourteen scholars from abroad participated in the Conference literary event.*

#### ***Impressions of the International Conference on Commonwealth Studies David Myers, University of Queensland***

*I was most impressed by the extraordinary enthusiasm and commitment shown by some 250 delegates from universities all over the subcontinent, some of whom had travelled for two days and two nights to participate.*

*The organisers, led by the President of Indian Society for Commonwealth Studies Dr. R.K. Dhawan, and the hosts at Roorkee University showed considerable flexibility when numbers increased*

unexpectedly from 170 to 250. The hosting of daily meals by the staff of Roorkee University was truly outstanding and the vegetarian curries were delicious. The conference excursion to Haridwar and the banks of the holy Ganges was spectacular and truly memorable.

**A Feast of Literature at a Three-Week Indian Banquet**  
**Serge Liberman**

*ROORKEE.* If asked to name the three profoundest impressions that I brought home with me from my recent second-time appearance at a literary conference in India [my first being at the Association for the Study of Australasia in Asia (ASAA) Conference in Thiruvananthapuram in July 2004, and this being the International Conference on Commonwealth Literature, held at the Department of Humanities and Sciences, Indian Institute of Technology, at Roorkee, on October 13-15, 2005], I would answer, the sheer enthusiasm for literature of the participants and the living issues raised by the authors they dealt with; the easy camaraderie, harmony and hospitality of everyone present. Some 250 participants presented 200 papers. I had to snip off some of its contents, for, three days later, on the 24th October, came ASAA's big moment of 2005 - the launch of the papers presented at its 2004 Thiruvananthapuram Conference assembled into one very impressive—and dare I say it without seeming to be overly partisan?—important and seminal volume titled *Diaspora. The Australasian Experience* (Prestige Publications, New Delhi, 544 pp.)

*KHARAGPUR:* I mentioned at the outset three of the profoundest impressions that I brought home with me from India this time around. This proved as true of Kharagpur, two hours by train outside Kolkata, to which I travelled on after Delhi, as it had been in Roorkeew here my contact with students in Delhi was very brief, in Kharagpur, I delivered a talk accompanied by a reading from my work, conducted a writers' workshop which lengthened from the scheduled sixty minutes to twice that time..

July 2006

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**ASAA NEWSLETTER**

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**ASSOCIATION FOR THE STUDY OF AUSTRALASIA IN ASIA**

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*Patron (Asia): Professor Edwin Thumboo, National University of Singapore*

*President (Australia): Dr. Cynthia vanden Driesen, Edith Cowan University, Perth. Ph.: 61-89 370 6357. e-mail: c.vandendriesen@ecu.edu.au*

*Vice-President (Australia): TBA*

*Vice-President (New Zealand): Dr. Mark Williams, University of Canterbury*

*Secretary: Dr. Suman Bala, University of Delhi. Ph.: 91-11-42316562. Mobile: 9891097657. e-mail: balasuman@yahoo.com*

*President (Asia): Professor Anjali Roy, IIT, Kharagpur. e-mail: anjalihss.iitkgp.ernet.in.*

*Vice-President (Asia): Professor K.T. Sunitha. University of Mysore.*

*Treasurer & Editor Newsletter: Dr. R.K. Dhawan. University of Delhi. Ph.: 91-11-28745849/28743567. Mobile: 9818755529. e-mail: rkdhawan@gmail.com*

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*Malaysia: Leonard Jeyam, University of Malaysia; S. Korea: Prof. Kim Hyung Shik, Chung-Ang*

University; Japan: Prof. Yasue Amritsu, Doshisa University, Kyoto. Indonesia: Dr. Reni Winata, Univ. of Indonesia; Philippines: Professor Marjorie Evasco-Pernia, De La Salle University;

**Associate Committee Members (Europe):**

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**Committee Members: India**

Professor Jameela Begum and Dr. Meena Pillai (Thiruvananthapuram); Ms. Eugenie Pinto (Chennai); Dr. Suneetha Rani (Hyderabad); Dr. Keya Majumdar (Jamshedpur); Dr. V.B. Sharma (Gurgaon); Dr. D.K. Pabby (Delhi); Dr. D.N. Banerjee (Calcutta).

**Committee Members: Australia**

A/Prof. Ralph Crane, Univ. of Tasmania; A/Prof. Adrian Mitchell, Univ. of Sydney; A/Prof. Bill Ashcroft, Univ. of New South Wales; Dr. Auriol Weigold, Univ. of Canberra; Dr. Greg Batty, Univ. of Canberra. Dr. Rick Hosking, Flinders University, SA; Serge Walberg, Edith Cowan University; Michael Collins, Edith Cowan University; Ms. Julia Gross, Edith Cowan University. Dr. Abu Siddique, University of Western Australia.

**THANKS TO THE AIC**

ASAA wishes to express its appreciation to the Australia-India Council for purchasing a number of copies of its latest publication *Diaspora: The Australasian Experience* for distribution to Indian Universities interested in the promotion of Australian Studies in India. The volume is a substantial collection of articles on the theme of diaspora in the Australasian context. It should contribute to enhancing the resources being built up by Indian Universities in the area of Australian studies. Thanks to Ms Carol Robertson, Director of the Australia-India Council and Ms Asha Das of the Australian High Commission in India for their continuing interest and support.

**Singapore Conference:**

***Literatures in Englishes and Their Centres: Perceiving from the Inside***

National University of Singapore, 7-10 Dec. 2005

Convened by Professor Edwin Thumboo, this conference brought together a distinguished group of creative writers and scholars from the Asia-Pacific region over a three-day period. The Papers explored the widespread uses of English over the last thirty years in various parts of Asia and its function as a medium of literary composition and bridge between a variety of different cultures. The particular challenge the conference addressed (to quote from Professor Thumboo's introductory message) was the need to develop a specific theory and mode of criticism that would permit "seeing these literatures steadily and seeing them whole."

Participants addressed the set themes with enthusiasm, energy and occasional brilliance. Contributors actually wore the two hats. The Australian contingent included Dennis Haskell (UWA), Bruce Bennett (ADEA), Harry Aveling (La Trobe), Robert [mre] (Notre Dame), Cynthia vanden Driesen (ECU), Peter KUch (UNSW) and creative writers, Sunil Govinnage and Ernest MacIntyre.

...The conference was in itself a tribute to Professor Thumboo and the fact that it concluded with a magnificent banquet at which official tributes were paid to him by the University as well as government dignitaries made it an altogether memorable occasion.

**Australian Studies Conference—Inner Mongolia July 1-7, 2006**



GLEN WITH THE ASIAN ACADEMICS

*Inner Mongolia might be as far away from reality in some people's minds as that 1950s legendary American comic strip country of Lower Slobbovia, but I can assure you that it is a living vibrant part of modern China. Inner Mongolia is abundant in coal deposits and generates a large portion of China's electric power supplies. When it was chosen as the location for the Tenth International Conference of Australian Studies in China, I was determined to visit this autonomous region.*

**Excerpts from the The Asian Studies Assn of Australia's ebulletin: June 2006**

**PROFILE – Dr. Cynthia vanden Driesen, Edith Cowan University, President (Australian) Association for the Study of Australasia**



*Q: When did you become interested in Asia and why?*

*A: I was born in Sri Lanka so I am naturally connected to Asia though I have lived and worked in Australia for decades*

*Q: What are your current preoccupations?*

*A: Our [Association] concentrates on improving understanding of Australian culture in Asian countries.*

*Most Asians do not perceive anything distinctive about Australian culture. It is too often melded with an image of British or American culture. Prime Minister Howard has offered AUD25 million to an Australian university which will promote American studies. This is a tragic and very public*

*example of how little the Asian connection really matters. One fraction of that sum invested in promoting the Australian image in Asia would pay huge dividends in terms of intercultural understanding within our region but not one word of protest has been raised publicly about this neglect.*

*For that[the Australian engagement with Asia} to be fruitful we must ensure our values and ways of seeing the world are understood by our neighbours. Indeed just the realisation that an Australian is not an Englishman or an American could help promote understanding of Australian motives in interventions such as the campaign in East Timor or the protection extended to the West Papuan refugees. This could take the edge off the tensions that periodically surface between Australia and her Asian neighbours and actually enlarge the possibilities for Australia to play a crucial role in the region.*

*We should be setting up Australian Studies centres wherever an opportunity emerges. There needs to be substantial funding invested in developing a program for Australia similar to the British Council, the United States Information Service or the Canada Council. Without such a body, Australia will remain a hazy undefined image in the perception of most Asians. Unhappily, to this day the only salient fact in most Asians' knowledge of Australia is the 'White Australia' policy. This is surely the saddest reflection on how our Asian neighbours still see us.*

*<http://iceaps.anu.edu.au/ac/asian-currents-06-10.html><http://iceaps.anu.edu.au/ac/asian-currents-06-10.html>*

**PROFILE —OCTOBER 2006** - Professor Bill Ashcroft took up the Chair of English in the Faculty of Arts of the University of Hong Kong in January 2006. His book, *The Empire Writes Back* (London: Routledge 1989) co-authored with Gareth Griffiths and Helen Tiffin, was the first to examine systematically a field that is now universally referred to as 'post-colonial studies'. It is now a standard text in the field and has been translated into Spanish, Korean, Chinese, Japanese and Arabic.



*Q: When did you become interested in studying Asia and why?*

*A: I have been interested for some time in studying Asia as part of a broader interest in post-colonial literatures. Asia, including Asian politics and Asian cultural production, has become a more prominent feature of my interests. The region presents the post-colonial analyst with a particularly diverse range of cultural engagements..*

*Hong Kong is possibly the most strategic place in the world today, because it is the meeting point of two, very different, empires, the US and Chinese empires. And this century will be characterised by the relationship between them, and between the United States and India.*

*Q: What are your current preoccupations?*

*A: These include a study of the ways in which English has been transformed in post-colonial literatures, including those from Asia, and an analysis of the cultural bases and cultural distinctiveness of the relationship between the United States, China and India.*

*Q: How do these fit into the contemporary scene?*

*A: The two major phenomena in this century will be the adoption and transformation of English and the relationship between Asia and the West.*

*Q: What are your hopes for Asian studies in Australia?*

*A: Australia is at an interesting point in its history. Asian studies in Australia will move from a study of the cultures to Australia's north that have some relationship with it, to a study of the ways in which Asia's place in the world is changing the shape of the world itself. How Australia relates to this change will affect its future in this century.*

## RETURN TO CURRENT EVENTS/ISSUES :

### FORTHCOMING CONFERENCES

**ASIA PACIFIC WEEK 2008: Building Australia's Asia Pacific Expertise, 29 January-1 February 2008 Canberra.** Asia Pacific Week is a forum of discussion for seven "Graduate Summer Schools" focusing on different areas of the Asia Pacific Region (Japan, China, Vietnam, Indonesia, East Timor, Pacific Islands and South Asia). During one week of activities graduate students present their research interests and participate in a series of events. Apply before 2 October 2007 See <http://rspas.anu.edu.au/asiapacificweek>

**HAN STUDIES SYMPOSIUM & WORKSHOP, 24-27 April 2008, Stanford University.** Call for Papers. Han encompasses ninety-four percent of the population of mainland China. The first-ever Critical Han Studies Symposium & Workshop seeks to bring this area of research to the attention to an international, and interdisciplinary community of scholars. The deadline for paper and panel proposals is 3 December 2007 Contact: Professor Thomas S. Mullaney at [tsmullaney@stanford.edu](mailto:tsmullaney@stanford.edu) or James Leibold at Latrobe University: <http://www.latrobe.edu.au/socsci/staff/leibold/leibold.html>

**IS THIS THE ASIAN CENTURY? 17th Asian Studies Association of Australia Conference, 1-3 July 2008, Melbourne.** The biennial Asian Studies Association of Australia conference is the largest gathering of experts on Asia in the southern hemisphere. The theme for 2008 invites re-assessment of a series of regions and issues. The ASAA conference is multi-disciplinary and covers Central, South, South-East and North East Asia and the relationship of all of these with the rest of the world. See <http://www.conferenceworks.net.au/asaa>

**TRANSITION AND INTERCHANGE Ninth Women in Asia Conference, 29 September-1 October 2008, Brisbane.** The University of Queensland is hosting the ninth Women in Asia (WIA) Conference: 29 September-1 October, 2008. Call for Papers: Enquiries can be addressed to [wia@uq.edu.au](mailto:wia@uq.edu.au)

#### ***EACLALS 2008 -***

The 2008 **EACLALS** triennial conference is jointly organized by the University of Padua, Ca' Foscari University, Venice, and Venice International University.

[www.maldura.unipd.it/eaclals2008/organizer.html](http://www.maldura.unipd.it/eaclals2008/organizer.html) - 3k - Cached - Similar pages

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III Biennial International Conference, Dayanand College, Ajmer, in collaboration with Australia-India Council, Canberra (27-29 January 2008). Theme: *Identity, Ethos and Ethnicity: Australia & India..* Send abstracts to the following address: Department of English & Centre for Indo-Australian Studies, Dayanand College, Ajmer 305 001, Rajasthan (India) or to [emailsharma\\_anuraag@yahoo.com](mailto:emailsharma_anuraag@yahoo.com) , [pradeeptrikha@gmail.com](mailto:pradeeptrikha@gmail.com)

IV International Conference of The Indian Association for the Study of Australia (IASA) will be held at Kolkata on 22 -24 January 2008. It is jointly organized with Burdwan University, West Bengal and the Australia-India Council. Main Theme: Culture and Identity: Re-Imagining Australia and India.

V.A two-day conference on "Women Writing 1550-1750 (Revisited)" will be held in Melbourne, Australia, 26 to 27 January 2008. Proposals are invited for a 20 minute paper. Organized by: La Trobe University Contact: Paul Salzman; E-mail: [P.Salzman@latrobe.edu.au](mailto:P.Salzman@latrobe.edu.au)

#### **ASAA –TRAVELLERS**

Dr. Suman Bala attended the "Rerouting the Postcolonial" conference at University of Northampton, U.K., on 3-5 July 2007. It was a well-organised conference with about 125 participants, about half of which presented papers. She presented a paper on Manju Kapur and Anita Rau Badami" which aroused considerable interest.

ACLALS Conference., "Literature For Our Times, " 17 -22 August, 2008.

A number of long-time members of ASAA attended the conference: Satendra Nandan, Cynthia vanden Driesen, Suman Bala . Nicholas Hasluck played a prominent part at the conference as current Chair of the Association. of Commonwealth Writers.

## PUBLICATIONS

***Intersections: Gender, Race and Ethnicity in Australasian Studies( 2007) ed.s*** Margaret Allen  
(Adelaand R.K. Dhawan (New Delhi).

This collection explores a wide range of issues from Indigenous women's activism, Australian Muslim women's experiences of discrimination, the Miss Australia quest and hegemonic whiteness in relation to masculinities and to gay and lesbian claims for citizenship.

A number of scholarly disciplines come together to form the bases upon which the papers in this collection stand. Since the resurgence of the women's movement in Australia in the 1970s, there has been a flowering of rich scholarship in the field of feminist studies. Scholars have researched women lives and works which had been ignored by earlier androcentric scholars. In Australian literary studies, this work of recovery has seen a number of writers of nineteenth and twentieth centuries become the subject of critical and historical work.

The papers in this collection can be understood in relation to these developments and to the intersections of gender, 'race,' sexualities, ethnicity, class and the concept of whiteness. Particularly apt in a volume published in India, is the study of Mena Abdullah, the first Indian-Australian writer, by Christiane Charon. Here Charon has focussed upon Abdullah's poetry, which has been largely overlooked, as other studies focus almost exclusively on her short stories - the collection, *The Time of the Peacock* written with Ray Mathew. As Charon notes, a study of Abdullah's verse 'offers an additional facet of the Indian-Australian experience, covering a broader range of themes than the stories and thus allowing us to see Mena Abdullah's writing in a new light.'

The article by Patricia Grimshaw and Barbara Brooks takes us back to the 1950s and has a trans-Tasman concern as it examines and contrasts the activism of Maori and Victorian Aboriginal women in the 1950s, a decade of assimilation policies. Alia Imtoul examines the representations of Muslim women in the Australian press and discusses these with a number of young Australian Muslim women. She finds that the press often depicts Muslim women as oppressed and backward. She argues that discourses about Islam and Muslims, particularly Muslim women, need to undergo a fundamental shift. This volume makes a significant contribution to the fast-growing corpus of feminist studies, with a focus on contemporary Australasian literary scenario.

***Australian Studies Now: An Introductory Reader in Australian Studies, (2007),***ed Andrew Hassam and Amit Sarwal. Indialog Publications, New Delhi. Rs. 450. The book will be of interest to those studying and teaching about Australia, as well as those with the intellectual curiosity to know more about India's cricketing rival and trading partner "Down Under."

***Australian Aboriginal Women's Autobiographies.***(2007) - K. Suneetha Rani, New Delhi: Prestige, Australian Aboriginal women's autobiographies convey the writers' protest against colonisation and oppression. They deconstruct the history and Aboriginal identity created by the colonisers and come up with alternative histories in the form of autobiographies.

## Association for the Study of Australasia in Asia (ASAA)

ASAA is an international organization that aims at promoting Australasian Studies in Asia. It holds lectures, seminars, and triennial conference, and brings out Newsletters and other academic publications. Three conferences have been held since the inception of the Association at the University of Kerala, Kerala (1997), University of Mysore, Mysore (2000) and Mar Ivanios College, Thiruvananthapuram (2004). Scholars and researchers from all disciplines as well as creative writers are welcome to join the Association.

### MEMBERSHIP FORM

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Mailing Address \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Professional status and Institutional address \_\_\_\_\_

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Mobile No. \_\_\_\_\_

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\_\_\_\_\_

I wish to enrol as a member. As my membership for one/three years, I am enclosing Rs.200/ Rs. 500; Aus\$20/ Aus\$50; US\$17/ US\$45 (cash/ money order/ cheque/ bank draft made out in favour of "AASA"). In case of cheque, please add Rs. 30/ \$2 towards bank charges. Members will receive a copy of the inaugural issue of *Journal of Australasian Studies*.

Date: \_\_\_\_\_ Signature \_\_\_\_\_

Please send membership fee to: Dr. R.K. Dhawan, J 391, New Rajinder Nagar, New Delhi 110060, India. e-mail: rkdhawan@gmail.com

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