

**THE COOK SOCIETY**  
**IN THE UNITED KINGDOM**  
**A JUBILEE HISTORY**  
**1969 - 2019**



Carl Bridge and Bart Zielinski



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**Frontispiece- Robert Menzies and HRH The Duke of Edinburgh  
at Lord's Cricket Ground in 1962**

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### **A JUBILEE HISTORY**

Carl Bridge and Bart Zielinski

Menzies Australia Institute, King's College London

The Cook Society  
2019

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*Cover image: Captain James Cook by Sir Nathaniel Dance Holland c 1775.  
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## A note from His Royal Highness, The Prince Philip, Duke of Edinburgh:



SANDRINGHAM, NORFOLK

I am delighted to know that the Cook Society is celebrating the fiftieth anniversary of its founding. It has a lot to celebrate. Britons and Australians have much in common, but their two countries are a very long way apart. The Cook Society has done a wonderful job in providing an active link between all those who wish to maintain a continuing association.

A handwritten signature in black ink, which appears to be 'Philip', written in a cursive style.

## Preface

This year we celebrate the 50th Anniversary of the UK Cook Society, the origins of which this booklet admirably chronicles, a birthday that falls neatly between the anniversaries of two other significant events which connect Britain and Australia. Next year it will be 250 years since our society's namesake, Captain James Cook, sailed into Botany Bay on board HMS Endeavour. Whilst 2018 marked 230



years since another great British mariner, Admiral Arthur Phillip, taking inspiration from the intrepid voyages of Cook, steered his First Fleet into what he christened Port Jackson, but which the world now knows as Sydney Harbour. This was a feat which earned Phillip a place alongside other pioneering founders of modern Australia.

These two events sowed the seeds of a unique relationship and a special bond, which have underpinned the ethos, and united members, of the Cook Society for the past 50 years.

As a nation Australia, now more conscious than ever that its modern history owes so much to earlier indigenous generations, has never looked back. And the United Kingdom continues to shape and influence world affairs, perhaps not in the way that it might have done in past centuries, but by learning from them and providing leadership and example in so many fields of endeavour.

So, it is perhaps natural that the Cook Society exists to celebrate, enjoy and promote the relationship between Britain and Australia that binds and unites us. The community of our members joins us together in friendship and a



desire to put something back into that relationship, to strengthen our shared values, heritage, experiences and above all trust.

We are indebted to Professor Carl Bridge, an honorary member of the Cook Society, for his insightful perspective of how the Cook Society was founded and developed. We are also grateful for the research contribution of Bart Zielinski and the impact and input of past and present Cook members, who have shared their knowledge with the authors.

The publication of this history coincides with the 2019 Gathering, when we welcome visitors from our counterpart Cook Societies in Australia to London.

We are all privileged to be members of the Cook Society and want to ensure that its future remains in the good hands in decades to come. And we hope to continue the good work and uphold the values and intentions which prompted the Cook Society's establishment 50 years ago.

We hope you enjoy reading our story.

Warmest wishes

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Neil Redcliffe'. The signature is fluid and cursive, with a long, sweeping tail on the final letter.

Neil Redcliffe, Chairman

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The Cook Society<sup>1</sup> was founded in Britain and Australia in 1969, on the cusp of major structural changes in the historical relationship between the two countries. Sir Robert Menzies had recently retired as Australia's prime minister and wanted to counter at the highest level the 'perceptible drift', as he called it, in the relationship.<sup>2</sup> Britain was seeking its future in Europe, withdrawing militarily from East of Suez, and would join the European Economic Community in 1973; whereas Australia now had its strategic alliances in the Pacific, its major trading partners in Asia, and was increasingly drawing its immigrants from countries other than Britain.<sup>3</sup> The Cooks would seek to understand these major changes rather than to arrest or avert them and to encourage the relationship between the two countries. Fifty years later, celebrating its jubilee, The Cook Society is in rude health, and Britain is about to leave the European Community with its eyes set on rekindling a more global role, at least in trade terms. The Anglo-Australian relationship, while not as economically vital as it once was, is commercially valuable, and has evolved through equality in the Commonwealth and participation in 'coalitions of the willing', into a shared sense of good international citizenship that reflects all that was best in the old British Australia as well as in the wider-ranging cultures of the two countries as they are today.<sup>4</sup>

## Origins

Menzies retired as Australia's prime minister in 1966. His legendary Anglophilia had recently been underlined when the Queen made him a Knight of the Thistle (1963) and appointed him to the prestigious ceremonial position of Lord Warden of the Cinque Ports (1965), originally a medieval post designed to provide a navy sailing from the Channel Ports to secure Britain against French invasion, and a post earlier held by the first Duke of Wellington, Sir Winston Churchill and HM Queen Elizabeth the Queen Mother. These appointments were recognition of Menzies' staunch service to Australia and the Commonwealth in the Second World War and the Cold

War. The Anglo-Australian alliance, in a sense personified by Menzies and many of his era and previous ones, rested on four pillars – people, trade, finance, and defence – and all four had bound Australia willingly to Britain for over 150 years. However, by the 1950s and '60s, these erstwhile certainties could no longer be relied upon without question – migration was increasingly coming from countries other than Britain, notably at that time, Italy and Greece; Japan surpassed Britain as Australia's main trading partner in 1966; United States and Japanese investment in Australia now rivalled British; when the pound was devalued in 1967 the new Australian dollar did not follow suit; the ANZUS defence treaty of 1951 excluded Britain; Australia and New Zealand fought in the Vietnam War alongside US not British forces; Britain abandoned nuclear weapons testing in Australia in 1963; Britain was preparing to withdraw its forces from East of Suez; and Britain had finally applied successfully to join the European Common Market.<sup>5</sup>

All of these momentous shifts prompted Menzies – at a private luncheon in London on 26 June 1968 organised by and with his old friend and former British Conservative Prime Minister, Sir Alec Douglas-Home – to raise the idea of founding a select dining society in each country of leading businessmen to promote Anglo-Australian relations and encourage understanding into the future.<sup>6</sup> This proposal brought together several strands from both countries in the previous couple of years. As a result of conversations with HRH Prince Philip in 1966, Sir Peter Runge, Chairman of Tate and Lyle and President of the Confederation of British Industries (CBI), had tried and failed to revive an initiative to form Australian-British Action Councils and was now looking to further the cause by other means.<sup>7</sup> At about the same time, Sir William Kilpatrick, Chairman of Repco and President of the English Speaking Union in Victoria, who knew Menzies through the recently formed Winston Churchill Memorial Trust, discussed with Menzies the idea of forming 'a top level group of business leaders' for the same purpose.<sup>8</sup>

As a result, Menzies, Kilpatrick, Sir Colin Syme, head of Broken Hill Proprietary, and the British High Commissioner to Australia, Sir Charles Johnson, had convened a select dinner in Melbourne in January 1968, to form what Menzies termed a 'very powerful committee', which became the Australian branch of The Cook Society. Interestingly, Menzies commented privately that the time was not ripe for the formation of a more widely based and publicly accessible Britain-Australia Society, or Australia-Britain Society, in either country, because of the amount of 'dust in the atmosphere caused by the East of Suez withdrawals'.<sup>9</sup> When Menzies came on his annual extended Cinque Ports visit to Britain in the summer of 1968, Douglas-Home and Australia's High Commissioner to the United Kingdom, Sir Alexander 'Alec' Downer, arranged a dinner for some 40 prominent businessmen in his honour on 26 June out of which the British Cook Society was born.<sup>10</sup>

The two British businessmen who agreed to be the first co-conveners were Sir Peter Runge and Val Duncan, Chairman of Rio Tinto Zinc (RTZ). John Whitehorn, Deputy Director-General of the CBI, agreed to become Honorary Secretary. Despite some Australian doubts that calling the group The Cook Society was 'delving too much into the past', the name stuck as better than the alternatives – 'the Group' or the Home or Menzies Group.<sup>11</sup>

A paper by Runge and Duncan written before the dinner set out The Cook Society's proposed nature, objectives and plans. It was to be limited to 50 members (having begun with 24), virtually all of whom were businessmen or industrialists. These were to be British (with the sole exception of Downer, as the Australian High Commissioner to the United Kingdom<sup>12</sup>). The 'Objectives' were:

To provide a means for leading businessmen and industrialists and others prominent in Australia, but also including a few representatives of the younger generation ... to meet on social occasions ... in order to further a better understanding of each

other's problems, not excluding those which are controversial or of a sensitive nature, such as defence, trade alliances, et cetera.

To provide ... a circle of senior industrialists and others who would be willing to ... offer hospitality to [visiting] ... Australians.

... [T]o form an appropriate central point of reference whenever they [members] plan to go to Australia [to meet Australian Cooks and] ... in suitable cases to undertake public appearances [including on radio and television].<sup>13</sup>

Furthermore a weekend conference was planned for 1969 in Australia 'to discuss what ought usefully to be done to fortify the economic relationship between Britain and Australia'.<sup>14</sup> The principal means for achieving these aims were two – a series of luncheons to be held from 1969 in the 'trooping season'<sup>15</sup>; and roughly annual conferences would be organised with these alternating between each country. British Cooks would pay an annual subscription, 'mess bill', of £25.<sup>16</sup>

## Pre-history

Australian clubs and societies had existed in Britain in various forms for about a century. There was an Australasian Club in Edinburgh in 1877, and one in London from 1898. Indeed by around 1900 there were some five different ones in London – the Australasian Club, the Australian Club, the London branch of the Australian Chamber of Commerce, the Colonial Club and the Austral Club.<sup>17</sup> These catered variously for an Australian expatriate community of about 21,000, made up not only of business and professional elements, but of young Australian artists, writers, journalists, and sportsmen and sportswomen, and a slew of others returning to the 'Mother Country' to meet family commitments. These numbers grew to some 30,000 by 1951 and 62,000 by 1966.<sup>18</sup>

These clubs were mostly rather ephemeral, almost all disappearing by the 1920s, but something always persisted. In 1937 a group of leading Australians and British with Australian connections, mostly businessmen, politicians and senior civil servants, formed the Australia Club with the express purpose of organising an annual Australia Day dinner and occasionally coming to life to arrange a dinner or luncheon to provide a venue and platform for visiting Australian prime ministers or other significant public figures to engage with a significant British audience.<sup>19</sup> By the 1960s Menzies, Douglas-Home, the former British High Commissioner to Australia and Tory grandee Lord Carrington, and many others in the Anglo-Australian world felt that these old arrangements were becoming increasingly inadequate as the relationship between the two countries evolved ever more rapidly.

## The First Years

In the summer of 1969 the Cooks organised their first full programme of luncheons. The chosen venue was the Royal Thames Yacht Club<sup>20</sup>, conveniently located in Knightsbridge almost opposite Harrods, where the co-conveners paid half the cost of double-glazing the windows (£125) the better to hear what guests and members were saying. There were eight luncheons, at which members entertained 66 Australian and 28 British guests. The Australians' backgrounds broke down as follows: 43 businessmen, 13 politicians, 5 academics/journalists, 3 Agents-General, and 2 CBI scholars.<sup>21</sup> The first speaker was Dr T.B. Millar from the Australian National University who spoke on defence matters in the light of a recent Australian government White Paper.<sup>22</sup> Others over the next few years included Governor-General Sir Paul Hasluck, Prime Ministers William McMahon, Gough Whitlam and Malcolm Fraser, Victorian Premier Sir Henry Bolte, Federal Treasurer elect Leslie Bury, prominent MPs Phillip Lynch, Andrew Peacock, Fred Daly, and John Howard, and Sir James Darling, retired Headmaster, Geelong Grammar School.

As 1969-70 marked the bicentenary of Cook's momentous first voyage of discovery to the Pacific, the timing of The Cook Society's foundation was auspicious. The Queen, Prince Philip, Prince Charles and Princess Anne, in HMY *Britannia*, visited Australia extensively in the southern autumn to mark the occasion, and in the months leading up to the Royal Tour, Edward Heath, Leader of the Tory Opposition, soon to be British Prime Minister, and soon to sail in and win the Sydney-to-Hobart Yacht Race, the Leader and Deputy Leader of the Conservatives in the Lords, Douglas-Home, and Carrington, all travelled to Australia and met Menzies and the Australian Cooks in Melbourne. There was a reception attended by the Cooks on *Britannia* in Port Phillip Bay.<sup>23</sup>



**Figure 1 - Lord (Harold) Wilson of Rievaulx & Lord (Sir Alec Douglas-) Home of the Hirsell with Menzies alumni Stephen Graves & Bill Rawlinson holding a painting by Sir Winston Churchill donated for auction by Dame Pattie Menzies**

Carrington and five other British Cooks, including Duncan and Runge, attended the inaugural biennial seminar (now known as the Gathering) between the British and Australian Cooks in Melbourne held over the weekend of 3-4 March. Fourteen Australian Cooks attended, led by Syme and Pagan. On the agenda were issues related to doing business in each country, the movement of peoples, and defence questions. Something of the flavour



can be gleaned from the fact that a memorandum on Australian official impediments to joint ventures was produced and sent to the Gorton Government and a letter was generated to the British Home Office asking for a review of visa restrictions for Australians wishing to work in the United Kingdom. Predictably, each of these was politely brushed aside by the respective ministers. If Runge and Whitehorn at the CBI had envisaged the Cooks as an informal pressure group for British business interests in Australia (or Syme, Pagan and Brian Massy-Greene did so in the other direction), these official responses swiftly disabused them of the idea.<sup>24</sup>

There were other straws in the wind. One was the Australian Cooks' anathema to public engagement between British and Australian Cooks in press, radio and television debates – following Menzies' suggestion, Whitehorn wished to encourage these and have them co-ordinated by the official British Information Service, but the notion was quietly shelved.<sup>25</sup> Another was the funding of commemorative activities: the committee found £65 to contribute to the restoration of the Cook Family Memorial at Great Ayton, Yorkshire, but balked at Pagan's call for helping raise £5000 to fund a memorial chapel over Governor Arthur Phillip's grave at St Nicholas' Church, Bathampton, though in the event several individual Cooks helped him find the money.<sup>26</sup> Someone also raised the idea of renting a box for the five days of the Lord's cricket test match in 1971 to entertain the visiting Australian Cooks, but the £500 charge was thought to be prohibitive.<sup>27</sup> And then there was the question of funding study visits, fellowships and scholarships.

Carrington in Britain and Kilpatrick in Australia were keen to use the Cooks in part as a kernel or ginger group for establishing broader-based, more public and popular friendship societies in each country – what were to become the Britain-Australia Society and the Australia-Britain Society respectively – to organise popular lectures, outings to historic and other sites, and to fund scholarships for young Britons and Australians to visit and work in each other's countries.<sup>28</sup> The question of scholarships, study visits and the

‘exchange of young people’ generally was taken up most energetically by Peter A. Spanoghe. A former Eton master, Spanoghe worked for the charitable side of Rio Tinto, was Honorary Secretary of the Australia Club, and was a Governor of the English Speaking Union, which had an extensive scholarship exchange scheme with the United States.<sup>29</sup> With Whitehorn he organised meetings with Jack Straw (then Secretary of the National Union of Students, and decades later Labour Home Secretary and Foreign Secretary) and his Australian equivalents, Gregor Macaulay and John Bannon (later Labor Premier of South Australia), and even for a time interested Rupert Murdoch in the idea over lunch in the Reform Club.<sup>30</sup> But such schemes required hundreds of thousands of pounds funding and a considerable public profile and were soon judged by Whitehorn, Duncan and Runge to be beyond the remit and ready means of The Cook Society, though perhaps not of Cook members wearing other charitable hats.<sup>31</sup>

Sir Peter Runge died in 1970 and his place as co-convenor with Sir Val Duncan was taken by Sir Reay Geddes, CEO of Dunlop Industries, a participant in the first joint seminar in Melbourne, and a founder Cook. Two years earlier, Geddes had written a very perceptive letter to Runge about the Cooks’ direction of travel and it is worth quoting at length. At the time of writing he was in Australia and had just visited Syme in Melbourne to discuss the then very embryonic Cook Society.

You only need two lung-fulls of pure Australian air, and one morning’s newspapers, to realize that the Menzies era and its Holt postscript has passed, and a new one has begun ...

We will not achieve and maintain a meeting of minds if we appear backward looking or attempt something dramatic or ambitious ...

We must not pretend, or even seem to pretend, that we can change things like the impact of devaluation, the retreat from East of Suez, the agricultural effects of joining the Common Market, and so on ...

The Press, much more than businessmen, are responsible for the apparent drift in relations between the countries and can be relied upon to distort and create an air of mystery, or drama, or anticipation [if we tell them about The Cook Society].

He also correctly anticipated that any suggestions made to government about policy would only be noted by ministers.<sup>32</sup> Though he would later characterise himself as a 'Cassandra' on Cook matters, future years would show the wisdom of his views.<sup>33</sup>

At the time the British High Commission in Canberra had high hopes that Australia might be persuaded to buy nuclear technology from the UK, invest in the next generation of UK-produced fighter aircraft, and form a minerals consortium, around RTZ, to combat Japanese dominance in the Australian market. None of these things came to pass, as the Cooks would find in their 'off-the-record' briefings, each country and each company would (and should) operate in its own best interests.<sup>34</sup> Geddes noted after the 1971 Cook joint seminar at Goldfields House in Sydney:

By the end of the European discussion it seemed fairly clear that Australia would not really be very much affected by our entry [into the Common Market] and might just as well relax about the economic aspects. It also seemed to me that our discussion had uncovered no new subjects for Cook Society work. I said this and no-one challenged it.<sup>35</sup>

By 1972 the Cooks had decided that they were not to be a pressure group for British industry, they would not engage in public debate, and they would not run scholarship or other youth exchange schemes. Whitehorn, in an Aide

Memoire as early as 21 January 1970, wrote that they would 'preserve' their 'informal, private, top-level' character, and that they 'Do not seek to engage in public or executive activity, but rather to promote it from behind the scenes amongst others'.<sup>36</sup> Where, then, would these influences be exercised or felt?

## **The Britain-Australia Society**

From the very start, Menzies and Douglas-Home had envisaged a two-tier structure for their Anglo-Australian initiative. Below, or alongside, the select senior grouping of the Cooks, there would be a much more accessible and visible friendship society in each country along the lines of the English Speaking Union or the Royal Commonwealth Society, open to all who were interested. It was no coincidence that men like Kilpatrick, Carrington and Spanoghe were also involved with the ESU.<sup>37</sup> The old Australia Club, of which Spanoghe was honorary secretary, and which had Carrington on its committee, only came to life once or twice a year, organising an Australia Day Dinner, and occasionally a dinner for a visiting Prime Minister. The Deputy High Commissioner for Australia, Sir John Knott, 1966-68, had suggested the Club needed to be rejuvenated and once the Cooks were up and running, Carrington and Spanoghe, abetted by the visiting Kilpatrick, planned as phase two the launching in 1970 of what was initially named the Australian Society (re-named the Britain-Australia Society in 1971 to parallel its sister organisation founded in Sydney in that same year, the Australia-Britain Society). From the Australian point of view, Kilpatrick outlined the urgency of attracting new blood to the society. The younger generation did not properly understand Australia's British basis – migration flows, investment and trade – or how important Britain had been in the world wars and was still for 'the stability of Europe'. While Spanoghe wrote of the 'urgent need to strengthen the weak "white" Commonwealth link ... and to confound the cynics'.<sup>38</sup>

The rejuvenated Australian Society was re-launched in 1970 with the Duke of Gloucester as President (Gloucester, the Queen's uncle, had been Governor-General of Australia during the second world war), and on the committee of 12, Sir Val Duncan for the Cooks, and Spanoghe as secretary. The Society boasted 480 members (with subscriptions at £4 p.a. for ordinary members and £2 p.a. for under 25s) and it had its offices in the Rio Tinto building at 6 St James's Square. Its objective was defined as encouraging 'good relations' between the two countries by seven defined means – the Australia Day Dinner; quarterly 'discussion' luncheons; quarterly 'gatherings' (buffet lunches or cocktails) for young Australians studying or training in the UK; site visits; the 'movement of people' through scholarships and study visits for school leavers, tertiary students and young professionals; individual contacts and visits to members' homes; and publication of a quarterly 'broadsheet'.<sup>39</sup> Membership would now include ordinary Britons as well as Australians. The founders' intention, as a later Cooks' co-convenor Sir Anthony Burney put it, was for the Britain-Australia Society to be the 'executive body' and The Cook Society to be the influential 'talking shop'.<sup>40</sup> This connection was recognised by the Cooks who in due course in 1977 agreed to fund at £1000 p.a. the secretariat of the new Britain-Australia Society on the understanding that it would also help administer The Cook Society.<sup>41</sup> This is still the case.<sup>42</sup>

## Reformation

Sir Val Duncan died in 1977, Sir Robert Menzies died in 1978, and Douglas-Home, now Lord Home of the Hirsel, soon retired to Scotland – thus removing the founding generation of Cooks from the helm of the society. Into the breach stepped a new generation whose moving spirit was Sir Anthony Burney. A partner in the accountancy firm Binders, Burney was on the board of Debenhams and was also involved in a number of the Duke of Edinburgh's Commonwealth business and leadership initiatives. In December 1976, Spanoghe wrote to the incoming Burney suggesting that Whitehorn, as a

‘very busy senior official of the CBI’ had only got involved at the insistence of Runge, and had restricted the scope of the Cooks to suit the limited time he had to devote to them. Reform was overdue. Whitehorn, Spanoghe wrote, only wants to restrict membership to

industrialists and bankers who can afford the cost, maybe, a senior civil servant, but not to include a politician or two and men in the professions or in the academic world. Surely the founders ... intend[ed] to include influential men in all fields to promote and strengthen Anglo-Australian relations.

This would make the luncheon discussions ‘more meaningful’ and breathe new life into The Cook Society generally.<sup>43</sup>

Burney needed little prompting. Whitehorn was induced to step down and Vice Admiral John Scotland RN (retired) was appointed joint part-time administrator of the two societies on £750 p.a., with Jean Pratt as his full-time secretarial assistant. The old informal steering group became an elected committee (of 12 then 9 members), presided over by a Chairman (initially Home, then Burney). The membership was expanded to 65 and ‘non-business’ people from the arts, the sporting world and the professions would be invited to join, while the question of ‘lady membership’ was ‘left open’. The CBI would no longer be banker to the Society, and the subscription was set at £50 p.a. payable each



**Figure 2 - Baroness ‘Trixie’ Gardner of Parkes**

June 1st. Among the first wave of new members were Colin Cowdrey, the former England Test cricketer and Chairman of the Britain-Australia Society; Viscount Slim, the distinguished soldier and son of the former Governor-General; Admiral Lewin, an expert on Captain Cook; and Kevan Gosper, the Australian Olympic athlete and Shell executive.<sup>44</sup> The Cook Society in its current guise was born, though it took until 1992 for the first woman to be made a British Cook in the person of the Conservative local politician, Baroness 'Trixie' Gardner of Parkes.<sup>45</sup> She became chairman in 1996 since when there have been two further women in the chair.<sup>46</sup> Today women constitute a fifth of active Cooks.

## Later Initiatives

Since the founding of The Cook Society its members have been extremely active in carrying out the Cooks' mission to widen and deepen Anglo-Australian relations through the founding and nurturing of a considerable cluster of charitable trusts, business and professional organisations and educational institutions. After starting the Britain-Australia Society (1971), Cooks were active in initiating and energising the networking organisation Australian Business in Europe (1975, Bruce Matthews);<sup>47</sup> the re-purposed Northcote Trust to send British research students to Australian universities (1975, Sir Anthony Burney, Tom Millar, Carl Bridge, Pauline Lyle-Smith); the Menzies Memorial Trust, to bring Australian research students to British universities (1979, Sir Anthony Burney, Michael Rendle, Michael Whalley, Richard Link); the Australian Studies Centre in the University of London, to lead teaching and research on Australia in Britain and across Europe at a tertiary level (1982, Sir Anthony Burney, Thomas Borges, Sir Zelman Cowen, Tom Millar, Carl Bridge, Sir Roger Carrick, Pauline Lyle-Smith, and Lady Beverley McKay among others);<sup>48</sup> the Australian Bicentennial Scholarships and Fellowships Scheme (1988, Tom Millar, Carl Bridge, Lady Beverley McKay and Sir Peter Gadsden); and the Britain-Australia Society Education Trust, to

send British school-leavers, apprentices and young tradespeople to Australia for a term (founded 1990, repurposed 2011, Sir Christopher Benson, John May, Sally Martin, Carl Bridge, and Pauline Lyle-Smith). Cooks were also the moving spirits behind, among other projects, the Admiral Arthur Phillip chapel in St Nicholas' Church, Bathampton (1972, Sir John Pagan and Sir Alexander Downer); the James Cook Memorial in St Andrew the Great Church, Cambridge (1985, Sir Anthony Burney); the Britain-Australia



**Figure 3 - Phillip memorial armillary sphere in Bath**

Bicentennial Committee and the STS *Young Endeavour* (1988, Sir Peter Gadsden); the London Australian War Memorial, Hyde Park Corner (2003, Philip Flood and Michael L'Estrange); the Admiral Arthur Phillip stone in Westminster Abbey (2014, Sir Christopher Benson, the Hon. Sarah Joiner, Sally Martin, Pauline Lyle-Smith and Carl Bridge); the Phillip memorial armillary sphere in Bath (2014, Sir Christopher Benson, Sir Roger Carrick and Richard Pavitt); and the Matthew Flinders memorial at Euston Station, London (2014, John Allen, Pauline Lyle-Smith and

Bill Muirhead). Since The Cook Society's inception many thousands of Britons and Australians have had their professional and personal horizons broadened and their understanding of each other's countries immeasurably enhanced.



The annual round of Cook luncheons and dinners and the biennial gatherings have continued unabated. High quality speakers have included: Sir John Major, the former British Prime Minister; Sir Anthony Mason, Chief Justice of Australia; Sir Rod Eddington, CEO of British Airways; Sir Eddie George, Governor of the Bank of England; Dame Bridget Ogilvie, head of the Wellcome Foundation; John Thompson, editor of *The Times*; Field Marshal Lord Guthrie; Michael Lynch, CEO of the London South Bank Centre; Sir Tim Rice, the lyricist and President of the MCC; Professor Stephen Hopper in charge of the Royal Botanic Gardens at Kew; virtually all of the High Commissioners to both countries; and many other British and Australian politicians and leading figures from the business, academic, media, arts and sporting worlds. Outings at Gatherings, apart from the usual historical and cultural site visits, have included a tour of the Channel Tunnel, then under construction, and a trip to the Limericks' country seat in Kent to plant a Wollemi Pine.

Down the decades, the Cooks have been their own sternest critics. Periodically, there have been minor crises of confidence. In May 1997, Peter Costain wrote a paper as chairman suggesting that in the light of the formation since The Cook Society's inception of 'other Anglo-Australian groups ... established to support a common theme we all share, which is improving Australian/British relations' the Cooks might take time to reconsider their purpose. The 'current status of the membership ... is, I believe, a concern we all share ... We are all compatible, nice people who enjoy the lunches and share a common interest but the concern is that The Cook Society runs the risk of its being superseded by other initiatives, and thus runs the risk of being side-lined'. Should the Cooks 'become a social club' or 'consider updating the objectives and criteria by which people become members and reinvigorate The Cook Society'. His view was that they should go back to the 'original view' of convening a select group of 'active

members', who were company chairmen and chief executives and members of parliament and government and to relegate retirees to a 'supplementary membership role'. The aim would be to 're-establish ourselves with business as a meaningful society capable of acting as convenors or interactors with others to facilitate a meaningful forum with our Australian counterparts to review business in its entirety between our two countries'. He added, however, that he was 'not ... seeking to create a revolution'.<sup>49</sup> He didn't.



**Figure 4- Australian and British Cooks with the United Kingdom High Commissioner to Australia, HE Menna Rawlings CMG (centre, 2nd row) at her residence in Canberra, Westminster House. Gathering 2017**

Instead, the committee agreed after discussion that 'There is a role for The Cook Society and we must show it is worth joining and not lose confidence and coherence'. It should 'not just become a social club but have influence in the business world'. It 'should not be in competition but should support the

other organisations with Australian connections ... who had assumed in their own ways the position envisaged by the founders of The Cook Society'. And that it should 'retain its exclusivity with members being invited to join'.<sup>50</sup> This was an eminently wise course of action: to let a hundred flowers bloom. After all, Cooks were instrumental in planting the seeds and tending the growth of all of them.

At the next meeting Maurice de Rohan, Brian Harris and Lord 'Pat' Limerick elaborated on the theme, saying that the Cooks' 'future role' should be to enhance its function as an exclusive speaking venue, to be 'like the Pilgrims Society which entertained important American visitors to the UK' and that it should 'remain a club with active as well as retired members'.<sup>51</sup> Indeed, one might add, as no doubt was realised, it was often the 'retired' members who were most active in the Society's philanthropic and other public endeavours.<sup>52</sup> This position was further buttressed in 2001 when Brian Harris pronounced from the chair that 'fundamentally The Cook Society had not changed since inception and he did not see the need for a lobbying role, or to change the original formula created by the founders'.<sup>53</sup> And this remains policy.<sup>54</sup>

## Still Cook-ing

Today The Cook Society in Britain is in fine fettle. It has some 121 members, 23 of whom are women, with 77 from the business world, 10 civil servants and diplomats, 9 lawyers, 7 scientists, 6 politicians, 4 from the arts, and 8 unclassified. Regular lunches are now held in the Royal Air Force Club in Piccadilly; there is an annual joint summer reception with the Britain-Australia Society at Norton Rose Fulbright, and later in the year a Captain Cook Dinner, and the biennial Gatherings still take place alternately in each country.<sup>55</sup>



**Figure 5 - Deputy Agent-General for South Australia Matt Johnson introduces Agent-General for South Australia Bill Muirhead, HRH Prince William, Australian High Commissioner HE Alexander Downer, and John Allen at the dedication of the Matthew Flinders Memorial in Australia House**

Many good works ensue. One might say that the people-to-people relationship between the United Kingdom and Australia is as strong as ever. Both countries still join 'coalitions of the willing' and have close defence co-operation. Trade, investment and other financial links, though very significant, are not quite what they were, but while there is an open global marketplace the opportunities for mutual benefit will be there. One would expect Sir Robert Menzies and Lord Home to be well-satisfied with the manifold and splendid results of their initial Cook-ery.

## Notes

<sup>1</sup> The authors are most grateful to Sir Roger Carrick and Mrs Pauline Lyle-Smith for their comments on earlier drafts.

<sup>2</sup> Versions of the term are common in the Cook correspondence: Menzies used the exact phrase in an interview written up in *Time and Tide*, 31 July 1968, Cook Society Papers [hereinafter, CSP], Box 1, folder 2, Australia Centre, Australia House, London.

<sup>3</sup> There is an extensive scholarly literature on all of this. See, for example, Carl Bridge, 'Introduction' to *Australia and the United Kingdom, 1960-1975*, S.R. Ashton, Carl Bridge, and Stuart Ward, eds, Canberra, Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade, 2010, and Stuart Ward, *Australia and the British Embrace*, Melbourne, Melbourne U.P., 2001.

<sup>4</sup> See Carl Bridge and Bart Zielinski, 'The Anglosphere and the American Embrace: the End of Empire and After' in Andrew Mycock and Ben Wellings, eds, *The Anglosphere: Continuity, Dissonance and Location*, Proceedings of the British Academy, Oxford, Oxford U.P., In press. Michael L'Estrange, *The Australia-Britain Relationship Today: Patterns of History, Dynamics of Change. The Menzies Lecture, 2004*, London, Menzies Centre for Australian Studies, 2004) is still a good guide.

<sup>5</sup> See Bridge, 'Introduction' for chapter and verse.

<sup>6</sup> John Whitehorn to Morrice James (Colonial Office), letter, 19 May 1968, CSP, Box 1, Folder 2.

<sup>7</sup> Ibid. Runge to Major James Orr (Buckingham Palace), letter, 3 May 1968, CSP, Box 1, Folder 2.

<sup>8</sup> Kilpatrick to Sir Colin Syme (BHP), letter, 17 April 1969, CSP, Box 1, Folder 2.

<sup>9</sup> Others at the dinner were: Charles McGrath (RepcO), Ian Potter (financier), E.M. Christensen (Peters Ice Cream), T.M. Ramsay (Kiwii), Baillieu Myer (Myers), Charles Lloyd Jones (David Jones), M. Mawby (CRA), Archibald Glenn (Imperial Chemical Industries), Sir John 'Jock' Pagan (President, Liberal Party of Australia), and H.J. McIver (Australian Council of Trade Unions). Menzies to Douglas-Home, letter, 24 January 1968, CSP, Box, 1, Folder 2. Later in the year a Sydney Group was formed convened by Sir James Kirby, a prominent manufacturing engineer, and J.B. Massy-Greene, managing director of Consolidated Goldfields.

<sup>10</sup> Whitehorn to Morris James, letter, 19 May 1968, CSP, Box 1, Folder 2.

<sup>11</sup> Jack B. Johnston (FCO) to Lord Carrington, letter, 24 May 1968, CSP, Box 1, Folder 1. Syme to Runge, 20 May 1968, CSP, Box 1, Folder 2.

<sup>12</sup> Pagan, when he became Agent-General for NSW, was later admitted, but as a visiting Australian Cook, but the other states' Agents-General were excluded from membership.

<sup>13</sup> Sir Alec Douglas-Home's Proposed Anglo-Australian Group, Note by Sir Peter Runge and Mr (later Sir) Val Duncan, no date, circa June 1968, CSP, Box 1, Folder 2.

<sup>14</sup> Ibid.

<sup>15</sup> The Autumn months when traditionally troops departed for postings in the Empire, stretched in the Cooks' case to include the Summer.

<sup>16</sup> Whitehorn's phrases in Whitehorn to Duncan, letter, 7 November 1972, CSP, Box 1, Folder 1; CBI Press Release, October 1971, CSP, Box, 1, Folder 1.

<sup>17</sup> See Simon Sleight, 'Reading the British Australasian community in London', ch.7 in Carl Bridge, Robert Crawford and David Dunstan, eds, *Australians in Britain: The Twentieth Century Experience*, Melbourne, Monash University ePress, 2009. For the Austral Club, see Angela Woollacott, *To Try Her Fortune in London*, New York, Oxford U.P., 2001, 70, 101-3.

<sup>18</sup> See Carl Bridge, 'Australians in the England and Wales Census of 1901: A demographic survey', ch. 4, and 'Introduction' in Bridge, et al., eds, *Australians in Britain*.

<sup>19</sup> The Australia Club's records are held by the Britain-Australia Society in its Australia Centre offices, Australia House, London.

<sup>20</sup> Until October 2015 when it moved to its current venue, the RAF Club in Piccadilly.

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- <sup>21</sup> Cook Society Committee Agenda, 18 August 1969, CSP, Box 1, Folder 3. Whitehorn to Duncan, letter, 20 February 1969, CSP, Box 1, Folder 2.
- <sup>22</sup> He later became Head of the Australian Studies Centre in London and a British Cook.
- <sup>23</sup> Aide Memoire: Cook Society, by Whitehorn, 23 September 1969, CSP, Box 1, Folder 2; Duncan to Prince Philip, letter, no date [1970], CSP, Box 1, Folder 4. After the Cooks' dinner for Heath, Syme expressed himself 'most impressed' by him' and 'unable to understand his alleged unpopularity in the UK', Syme to Runge, 19 August 1968, letter, CSP, Box 1, Folder 2.
- <sup>24</sup> See CBI Staff Notes on Scope and Pattern for Joint Operations between UK and Australian Industry, no date [1969], Sir Charles Johnson (FCO) to Whitehorn, letter, 4 January 1969, Whitehorn to Lord Caldecote, letter, 10 December 1973, CSP, Box 1, Folder 1, and Whitehorn to Sir Morrice James (FCO), letter, 11 March 1971, CSP, Box 2. Whitehorn was at pains to describe his Cook work as 'informal and extramural', Whitehorn to Dr F. Llewellyn (Director General, British Council), letter, 13 February 1973, CSP, Box 1, Folder 1. Duncan to Reginald Maudling (Home Secretary), letter, 19 August 1970, and Maudling's reply, 27 August 1970, CSP, Box 1, Folder 1. *Financial Times*, 11 January 1973.
- <sup>25</sup> Cook Society Committee Minutes, 7 August 1968, and Jack B. Johnston (FCO) to Carrington, letter, 24 October 1968, CSP, Box 1, Folder 2.
- <sup>26</sup> *Darlington & Stockton Times*, 9 October 1971; Whitehorn to Duncan, letter, 27 November 1972, CSP, Box 1, Folder 1; *Sun* (Sydney), 12 October 1972.
- <sup>27</sup> Whitehorn to Malcolmson, letter, 7 February 1972, CSP, Box 1, Folder 1.
- <sup>28</sup> Whitehorn to P.A. Spanoghe (RTZ), 20 March 1969, Kilpatrick to Syme, letter, 17 April 1969, Spanoghe to Kilpatrick, letter, 22 April 1969, Spanoghe, 'The Cook Society', memorandum, 23 April 1970, CSP, Box 1, Folder
- <sup>29</sup> Michael Holroyd, *Basil Street Blues: A Family Story*, London, Head of Zeus, 2015, ch.14, has a lively pen portrait.
- <sup>30</sup> Murdoch was wooed but never became a Cook; neither did Straw.
- <sup>31</sup> See references cited in footnote 24 above, and also Whitehorn to Spanoghe, letter, 8 May 1970, CSP, Box 1, Folder 2.
- <sup>32</sup> Geddes to Runge, letter, 6 June 1968, CSP, Box 1, Folder 2.
- <sup>33</sup> Geddes to Whitehorn, letter, 23 February 1971, CSP, Box 1, Folder 6.
- <sup>34</sup> Charles Johnston to Whitehorn, letter, 4 January 1969, CSP, Box 1, Folder 2.
- <sup>35</sup> Geddes to Whitehorn, letter, 23 February 1971, CSP, Box 1, Folder 6.
- <sup>36</sup> CSP, Box, 1, Folder 4.
- <sup>37</sup> Kilpatrick was President of the ESU in Victoria and Spanoghe a Governor of the ESU in London. Sir Basil Smallpeice, of Cunard, was chairman of the ESU and a Cook. For early plans and the linkage between the Cooks and what became the Britain-Australia Society, see Menzies to Douglas-Home, letter, 24 January 1968, and Kilpatrick to Syme, letter, 17 April 1969, CSP, Box 1, Folder 2.
- <sup>38</sup> Kilpatrick to Syme, letter, 17 April 1969, CSP, Box 1, Folder 2, Spanoghe to Whitehorn, letter, 10 September 1968, CSP, Box 1, Folder 2, and Whitehorn to Cooks, letter, 24 August 1971, CSP, Box 1, Folder 8.
- <sup>39</sup> Other members included an Australian member of the House of Commons, A.B.C. Harrison; former British High Commissioner to Australia, Lt Gen. Sir William Oliver; and former Governor of Queensland, Col. Sir Henry Abel Smith. 'Australia Club 1970-71', November 1970, CSP, Box 2; Malcolmson to Whitehorn, letter, 18 June 1973, CSP, Box 1, Folder 1.
- <sup>40</sup> Burney to Cook Society, letter, 30 March 1978, CSP, Box 1, Folder 4.
- <sup>41</sup> A.C. Everett (Hon. Treasurer, Britain-Australia Society) to Lord McFadzean (co-convener, Cook Society), letter, 12 March 1979, CSP, Box 1, Folder 4.
- <sup>42</sup> The current subvention is £10,500.
- <sup>43</sup> Spanoghe to Burney, 'The Cook Society', memorandum, 2 December 1976, CSP, Box 1, Folder 1.

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<sup>44</sup> Cook Society Committee Minutes, 7 December 1977, Burney to Cook Society, letter, 30 March 1978, Brigadier John Simpson to McFadzean, letter, 15 December 1978, CSP, Box 1, Folder 4.

<sup>45</sup> Cook Society Committee Minutes, 14 April 1992, CSP, Red ring-binder. An Australian 'Lady Cook', Senator Dame Margaret Guilfoyle had visited for the 1984 British Gathering, Cook Minutes, 8 February 1984, CSP, Red ring-binder. The next two women British Cooks were Rosaleen McGovern, Deputy High Commissioner for Australia (1996) and Lady Beverley McKay, Britain-Australia Bicentennial Trust (1997).

<sup>46</sup> Her daughter, the Hon. Sarah Joiner (2009) and Pauline Lyle-Smith (2011)

<sup>47</sup> Now Australian Business.

<sup>48</sup> The Australian Studies Centre was established as part of the Institute of Commonwealth Studies, University of London, in 1982, and moved to King's College London in 1998. It became the Sir Robert Menzies Centre for Australian Studies in 1987, the Menzies Centre for Australian Studies in 1998, and the Menzies Australia Institute in 2018.

<sup>49</sup> Cook Society Committee Minutes, 14 May 1997, CSP, Red ring-binder.

<sup>50</sup> Cook Society Committee Minutes, 9 July 1997, CSP, Red ring-binder.

<sup>51</sup> Cook Society Committee Minutes, 17 September 1997, CSP, Red ring-binder.

<sup>52</sup> In a meeting on 28 June 2006 it was observed acutely that 'given the frenetic pace of international business today' it was inevitable that most Cooks would be retired, especially those at the Gatherings, CSP, Red ring-binder.

<sup>53</sup> Cook Society Committee Minutes, 19 September 2001, CSP, Red ring-binder.

<sup>54</sup> In 2004 in-coming chairman Michael Whalley discussed the issue with outgoing High Commissioner Michael L'Estrange and it was mooted that perhaps the chairman should write an annual letter to the Australian Prime Minister and other relevant ministers outlining key ideas discussed by the Cooks and that the Cooks might fly in a high-profile speaker annually from Australia 'to reach a wider audience' but the suggestions were not followed up, presumably because it was concluded that these functions were served already in other quarters. Cook Society Committee Minutes, 6 December 2004, CSP, Red ring-binder.

<sup>55</sup> The current annual subscription is £345.



## Appendix 1

### List of Co-Conveners (1969-78) and Chairmen (1978 to the Present)

1969/70	Sir Peter Runge (Tate and Lyle; CBI) and Sir Val Duncan (RTZ)
1971/74	Sir Val Duncan (RTZ) and Sir Reay Geddes (Dunlop) Sir Val Duncan (RTZ), the Hon. Andrew Turner (Dalgety), and Sir Anthony Burney (Binders)
1976/77	Sir Anthony Burney (Binders), the Hon. Andrew Turner, and F.G. Hawkings (Stone-Platt Industries)
1978/79	Lord Home (former British Prime Minister), Lord McFadzean (Rolls Royce)
1980/81	Sir Mark Turner (Kleinwort Benson), Sir Ronald Swayne (Overseas Containers Limited)
1982	Lord Shackleton (Rio Tinto)
1983	Lord Hayter (Chubb & Sons Lock & Safe Co)
1984	Sir John Swire (John Swire and Sons)
1985	Sir Donald Tebbit (former British High Commissioner to Australia)
1986	Lord Cowdrey (England Test cricketer)
1987	Sir John Rampton (Sheerness Steel)
1988	Sir Peter Baxendell (Royal Dutch Shell)

1989	Sir Kerry St Johnston (P&O)
1990	Viscount Caldecote (Delta Group)
1991	The Earl of Limerick (Kleinwort Benson)
1992	Sir Richard Lumley (Edward Lumley Holdings)
1993	Michael Rendle (Willis Group)
1994	Sir John Leahy (former British High Commissioner to Australia)
1995	Sir Brian Shaw (Port of London Authority)
1996	Baroness Gardner of Parkes (Conservative politician)
1997	Peter Costain (AMP and Wessex Water)
1998	Sir William Barlow (British Insulated Callender's Cables)
1999	Sir Peter Gadsden (Britain-Australia Bicentenary Trust, former Lord Mayor of the City of London)
2000	Rohan Courtney (Union Media Group, former Sheriff of the City of London)
2001	Brian Harris (Insignia Richard Ellis and former Sheriff of the City of London)
2002	Edward Scott (John Swire and Sons) to 29 January, deceased Sir Roger Carrick (former British High Commissioner to Australia) from 30 January

2003	Maurice de Rohan (Agent-General for South Australia)
2004	Sir Christopher Benson (Sun Alliance)
2005	Michael Whalley (lawyer, Minter Ellison)
2006	Richard Turner (Rolls Royce)
2007	The Earl of Buckinghamshire (Watson Wyatt Partners)
2008	Peter J. Box (Price Waterhouse Coopers)
2009	The Hon. Sarah Joiner (Saatchi & Saatchi)
2010	John Allen (Anglo-Pacific Minerals)
2011	Pauline Lyle-Smith (lawyer, founder DX Group in UK)
2012	Alderman Neil Redcliffe (Currencies Direct)
2013-14	Sir Stephen Brown (Ambassador Partnership)
2015-16	Jeffery Barratt (lawyer, Norton Rose Fulbright)
2017-18	John May (Hambros and Caledonia Investments)
2018-	Neil Redcliffe (Four Red Hens and former Sheriff of the City of London)

## Appendix 2

### List of Principal Administrative Staff, 1969 to the Present

#### Honorary Secretaries

1969/77	John Whitehorn (CBI)
1977/78	Vice-Admiral John Scotland RN (ret'd)
1978	Peter Spanoghe (RTZ) Acting

#### Directors-General

1978-81	Brigadier John Simpson
1981-89	Air Vice-Marshal Anthony Caillard, RAF (ret'd)
1995-98	Peter Brind
1998-2008	Sir Geoffrey Errington Bt

### Secretarial Assistants, Administrators and Executive Secretaries

#### Secretarial Assistants

1978	Jean Pratt
1985-87	Gay Blacksell

#### Administrators

1987-2000	Heather Hurle
2000-02	Sue Whitby
2002-04	Christine Shanahan

#### Executive Secretaries

2004-11	Kim Hemmingway
2011-14	Kate Kirby
2014-17	Alison Rhall
2017-	Dale Eaton

## The Authors

Carl Bridge has been a Cook since 1997. A graduate of the University of Sydney and Flinders University, and a Fellow of the Royal Historical Society, he has taught history at the Flinders University of South Australia, the University of New England, the Institute of Commonwealth Studies and King's College London, as

Professor and Head of the Menzies Centre for Australian Studies (1997-2014). He is now Professor of Australian History at King's College London. He has held visiting fellowships at the National Library of Australia, the Australian Prime Ministers Centre, and Clare Hall and Churchill College, Cambridge. He is a long-serving chairman of the Australian Bicentennial Scholarships and Fellowships Committee and the Northcote Scholarships Selection Committee and a Trustee of the Britain-Australia Society Education Trust and the Lincoln Australian Bicentennial Trust. Among his many books are *Munich to Vietnam* (1991), *Between Empire and Nation* (2000), *The British World* (2003), *Australians in Britain* (2009), *Australia's Britain* (2004), *A Delicate Mission* (2008), *Australia and the United Kingdom 1960-1975* (2010), *The High Commissioners* (2010), *William Hughes* (2011), and *Australia Goes to Washington* (2016).

Bart Zielinski is a graduate of the University of Munich, Royal Holloway and King's College London, where he recently completed his PhD in History. He has lectured in history at King's and was Professor Bridge's Graduate Research Assistant and is a section author for a major documentary book edited by Carl Bridge, David Lee and Jatinder Mann on *Australia and Britain in War and Peace, 1914-1918* to be published by the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade, Canberra.



**Figure 6 - Dr Bart Zielinski (left) and Prof. Carl Bridge (right)**