

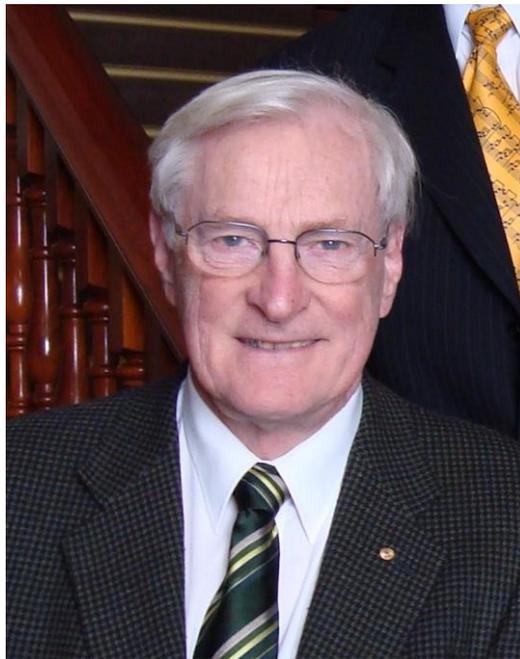


Friends

STATE LIBRARY
South Australia

SPECIAL EDITION

Dedicated to Alan Brissenden



Dear Friends

This edition of our newsletter is dedicated to the memory of Alan Brissenden AM, 1932 -2020.

Alan was a very active Friend over many years and Committee members especially will miss his wise counsel on all things literary.

What follows will give readers a review of Alan's considerable contribution, both before and after his retirement from the University of Adelaide.

09-Sep-2020

A Tribute from the Friends of the State Library of SA

It is with great sadness that we mourn the peaceful passing of Dr Alan Brissenden, AM. He was a true scholar and gentleman, a most compassionate and erudite friend to us all. Alan was a loyal, indefatigable committee member of the Friends for decades, especially in Australiana Publications and was a tireless President from 1994-2000. His knowledge, charm and good humour will be genuinely missed.

Alan Brissenden

By Elizabeth Hambly

Alan Brissenden was born in 1932 in Griffith. He first went to school in Neila Creek, near Cowra, to a one-teacher school, the one teacher being his father! His secondary schooling was at Cowra High School. Both his parents and his brother encouraged his interest in music and dance and at the University of Sydney, where he studied Honours English, he published his first dance review in the student newspaper. In 1952 he began to review dance for the *The Sydney Morning Herald*. After working at the Head Office of the New South Wales Department of Education from 1956 to 1960, he did his doctorate on Jacobean drama at the University of London. While there, he married Elizabeth King, who he had met when they were both students at The University of Sydney; at the time of his proposal she was working as secretary in the University's French Department. He returned to Australia in 1963 to lecture in English at the University of Adelaide. From 1968 to 1976 he was Chairman and Vice-President of the SA division of the Arts Council of Australia. From 1970-1992 he served on the University's Committee for the Performing Arts which led to the establishment of a Drama Department and a Dance Department, both extremely important initiatives. He was on the board of the Governors of the Adelaide Festival of Arts 1981-1994. He reviewed dance for *The Advertiser* in the 1970s and 1980s and from 1990 he contributed dance reviews to *The Australian*. He was made a Member of the Order of Australia for his services to the Arts in 1996.

In a different area of his activity, Alan published the important study, *Shakespeare and the Dance*, in 1981 and, much later, a valuable historical survey, *Australia Dances: creating Australian dance 1945-1965*. He was President of the Bibliographical Society of Australia and New Zealand 1983-5. He retired from the University of Adelaide as Associate Professor in 1994, retaining his link with the university as an Honorary Visiting Research Fellow. He is survived by his three children who have all done noteworthy work in different areas.

After graduating in Honours English at the University of Adelaide, Celia qualified as a librarian and spent three years working in the Barr Smith Library. Her next move was to Arts publicity (Adelaide Festival, SA Museum, Adelaide Symphony Orchestra, Australian String Quartet), then media and communications work in the social services sector. Now employed in the public service, she is currently Principal Media & Communications Adviser, Disaster Recovery and Resilience.

Piers works in the Department for Environment and Water and manages the state-wide Crown lands

program. This involves overseeing the administration and management of all the Crown land that is set aside for various public and government purposes. His role enables him to work with other government agencies, local councils, indigenous groups and communities to help support the best use of Crown land. This also includes working closely with the National Parks and Wildlife Service. Piers is based in the Head Office in Adelaide; however, he is often out and about in the State working with regional teams and with many of the various custodians of Crown land.



Roger graduated in physics at Adelaide University, then completed his doctorate in astronomy at the Australian National University before heading to the United States where he has had a most interesting career. He is currently the Acting Under Secretary for Science and Research for the Smithsonian Institution and also Manager of the Chandra X-ray Center, one of NASA's great observatories that enables scientists from around the world to obtain X-ray images to reveal the structure and evolution of the universe. For the last 30 years he has led and advised major space missions which have resulted in significant astronomical discoveries.

Alan was a member of the Friends of the State Library for many years and President from 1994 to 2000. His contribution to the Friends is worthy of the highest praise. When Mark Gilbert and George Lieschke decided to launch a publication programme, they asked Alan to join the committee because of his experience in academic publishing. His editorial work was rarely acknowledged but of fundamental importance for the success of the scheme. When he became President he introduced two innovations which enhanced the activity of the Friends: the publication of an annual journal, *Bibliofile*, which he edited from 1997 to 2008, and a series of monthly talks by prominent South Australians about the significance of books in their life, *Wednesdays at One*. It was hoped that the lunch hour timeslot would enable many people to attend. Both innovations proved to be very successful. It seems fitting that Alan himself gave the last talk in the series earlier this year. Alan's warm personality played no small part in the effective role he played in his long and valued association with the Friends.

The Committee Remembers...

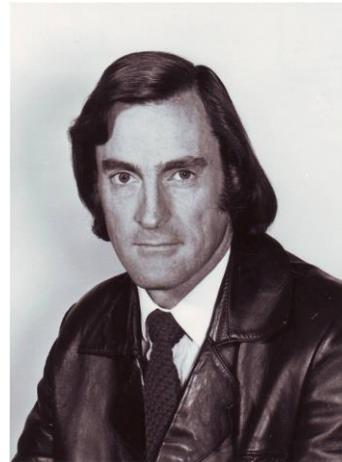
"I was among the English I and II students in 1965-66 who attended Alan's lively lectures on drama at the University of Adelaide. I have him to thank for a life-long interest in the theatre." - Jane Walkley

"I can only add my heartfelt comments to the others. Alan was a friend and mentor to me for over 50 years, initially as Lecturer and Tutor. He was always generous and modest, with a huge talent. It marked a massive change in direction for the Friends when he took over the Presidency. He was a key member of Australiana Publications since the start, and much more." – Mark Gilbert

"Alan was one of the most delightful individuals I have had the pleasure of knowing over many years and I will miss him and his wise counsel enormously." – Vini Ciccarello

"One of the great pleasures of my life has been to share Alan's company each week in a Saturday morning coffee group for the last seven years. He was a wonderful man." - Bernard Whimpress

Dr Alan Brissenden AM, a member of the English Department from 1963 till 1994 has passed away



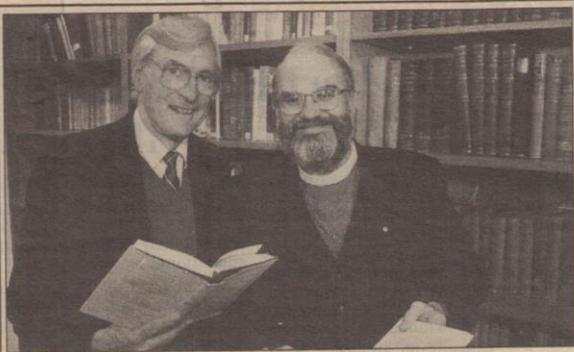
Many staff and alumni will be greatly saddened to hear of the death on 9 September of Dr Alan Brissenden AM, a member of the English Department from 1963 till 1994, and former Reader.

After graduating from the University of Sydney and completing his PhD at University College, London, Alan spent his entire career at the University of Adelaide. He was a noted scholar of Shakespeare and Early Modern drama, as well as having a strong research interest in Australian fiction: his lively tutorials and play readings in these areas are fondly remembered by generations of Adelaide students. Indeed, he taught and inspired a number who would go onto play a significant role in the arts themselves, including Chris Westwood, Keith Gallasch, Libby Raupach and Rob Brookman. Alan was also a major player in the broader cultural life of the university, directing for the Theatre Guild, being instrumental in the establishment of, first the drama, then the dance programs, and finally, in the setting up of the short-lived Faculty of Performing Arts, which at that time encompassed the Elder Conservatorium. Beyond the university, he was a strong advocate for the arts, sitting on the Board of the Adelaide Festival, the Arts Councils of Australia and South Australia respectively, as well as the Australian Dance Council. In 1996 Alan was made a Member of the Order of Australia (AM) for his services to the arts.

Alan's second career was as a dance critic, advocate and writer. He began reviewing dance for *Honi Soit* in the 1950s, and has since written on and reviewed dance for *The Sydney Morning Herald*, *The Advertiser*, *The Australian*, *Dance Australia*, *The Adelaide Review* and *Radio Adelaide*. A founding member of the Adelaide Critics Circle, Alan's contributions to dance were such that in 2013 he was the first non-dancer to be inducted into the Australian Dance Awards Hall of Fame. The esteem with which he is held in the dance community can be measured by the fact that a number of companies, including the Australian Ballet, are planning to dedicate performances to his memory. Alan is survived by his three children, Roger, Celia and Piers, and their families.

(Posted online 16 September, 2020 by The University of Adelaide, Faculty of Arts)

City Messenger 9/10/95 p.9



Friends of the State Library president Alan Brissenden with Adelaide Anglican archbishop Ian George, the first speaker in the *Books In My Life* series of lunchtime talks at the State Library. 4133

Four to reveal their book-lined souls during lunch talks at State Library

IAN George knows a lot about a certain book. Gillian Rubenstein has written a book or two. Barbara Hardy likes to plant trees which could become future books. Barrie Kosky would probably like to deconstruct the reading of books as a post-modern art form. The four will be sharing their experiences with books in a series of lunchtime talks for the Friends of the State Library, starting next month and called *Books In My Life*. First to bare his book-lined soul will be Adelaide's Anglican archbishop Ian George, who is an avid reader of a cross-section of books, especially poetry. "I think certainly in the first 25 years of my life I learnt more about human beings and the human experience and life in general from books than anything else," the Archbishop said. "It's been said about modern art that people's reaction says as much about the person as the painting," he said. "That's as true about books. We learn all kinds of things about ourselves."

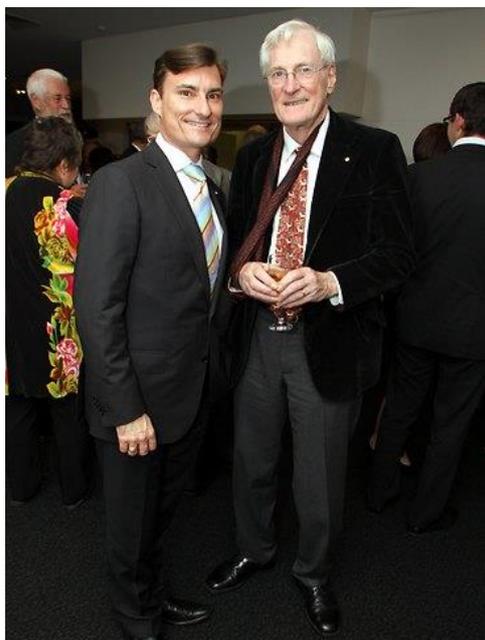
Friends of the State Library president Alan Brissenden said he had no trouble securing his four speakers. "People love talking about books," Mr Brissenden said. "People also are interested in what books other people have read and which may have influenced them."

The Friends of the State Library is the oldest "friends" group in Australia and possibly the world. The Wednesdays At One series is held in the first week of each month from 1.10pm to 1.55pm. Mr Brissenden said city shoppers and workers were encouraged to bring their lunch to the function room in The Institute building, on the corner of North Tee and Kintore Ave. Admission is \$5 or \$3 concession.

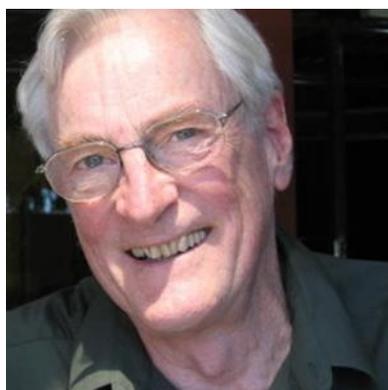
Hear Archbishop Ian George on September 6, author Gillian Rubenstein on October 4, Australian Landcare chairwoman Barbara Hardy on November 1 and Adelaide Festival 96 director Barrie Kosky on December 6.



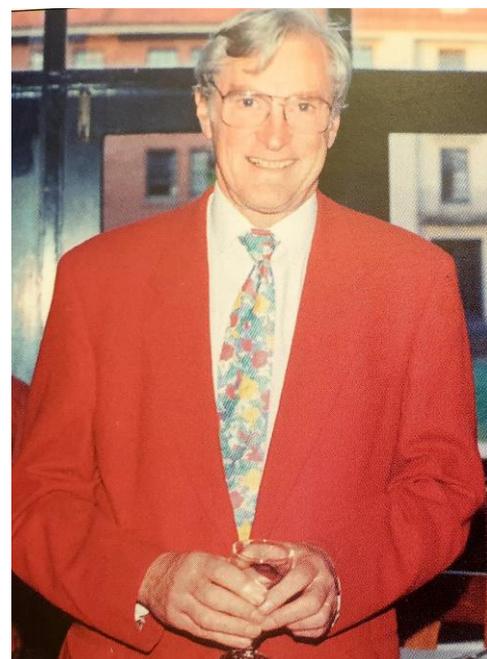
The Facsimile Subcommittee (now Australiana Publications), 1995:
Valmai Hankel, Mark Gilbert (convenor), Alan Brissenden, George Lieschke and Helen Williams



Alan with David McAllister
Hall of Fame 2013



Alan 2011



President-elect, Alan Brissenden, attending the
Friends' Annual General Meeting at St Mark's
College, North Adelaide, in November 1994



Back (L-R): Emma McEwin, Jane Walkley, Anthony Milton, Vini Ciccarello, Alan, Roger Andre,
Pauline McCarthy, Elizabeth Hambly – Front (L-R): Trevor Grant, Rick Sarre, Patricia Michell,
Mark Gilbert, Angela Bannon, Bernard Whimpress