

JANE LENNON

Honorary Membership Australia ICOMOS

CITATION



Jane Lennon AM is an historical geographer and has a PhD on cultural landscape conservation from Deakin University, where she is currently an adjunct professor. She is also an honorary professor at the University of Melbourne in the Faculty of Architecture, Building and Planning specialising in heritage landscapes and an adjunct professor in the Cultural Heritage Centre for Asia and the Pacific at Deakin University, Burwood, Victoria . These positions reflect her long history of work in heritage conservation in Australia, and the respect in which she is held.

Jane certainly needs no introduction. Her claim to honorary membership of Australia ICOMOS is self-evident. All we can do in the time allowed today is briefly outline some of her achievements.

Before Australia ICOMOS was founded Jane's early life equipped her very well to be an outstanding contributor to it. She was a good Catholic girl. The nuns gave her an abiding desire to change the world for the better, good models of female leadership, and of course a certain degree of toughness and persistence in adversity. She grew up on a farm in Victoria, and acquired the ability to work well with others, and to lead them, when she was responsible for taking all of her younger siblings to school on the biggest horse in the parish. (I have seen a photo). Her life in the country gave her an abiding understanding of heritage in its broadest sense. Jane, at University unusually studied both cultural and natural heritage, – history and geography – and has pursued these twin interests ever since – and has led the way integrating the natural and cultural heritage as part as cultural landscape and of the mission of Australia ICOMOS. Also as a university student and young professional, she was well known in Melbourne as a stropky activist, in the pioneering and successful attempts to save at least parts of the “Marvellous Melbourne” she already knew and loved.

It was because of people like Jane, so active so early, in our conservation history that we have both Australia ICOMOS, and the intact heritage we still possess.

Jane attended the inaugural meeting of the Australian branch of ICOMOS in October 1976 at *Illawarra*, a National Trust house in Melbourne. She delivered in person the first annual report of Australia ICOMOS in September 1977 to the ICOMOS secretary in Paris – Ann Webster Smith, thus beginning a lifelong friendship, and continuing relationship with US ICOMOS.

She helped organise the first ICOMOS conference in April 1978 in the historic gold mining township of Beechworth with the timely theme: *The Tide of Australian Settlement – conservation of the physical evidence*. Dr Ernest A. Connally, Secretary General of ICOMOS, attended this first

conference and annual general meeting in April 1978 where Jane presented the first of her many papers to Australia ICOMOS.

She of course was present at the seminal Burra meeting in August 1979 where guidelines for the conservation – not preservation – of places of cultural significance were adopted by Australia ICOMOS for use by the practitioners. She was a crucial contributor to this adoption, since she was playing pool in the Burra pub well after midnight when Miles Lewis and Jim Kerr finally agreed on this wording for the Burra Charter.

At this time Jane was involved in many small meetings and seminars examining aspects of practice. She was involved in the Working Groups which produced Guidelines to the Burra Charter for conservation policy, cultural significance, procedures for undertaking studies and reports. Jane was a member of 'COPWOG' – the coordination of working papers group! These and the amended definition of place which now included "landscapes modified by human activity" were adopted by the membership in 1988. (Jane Lennon, 'Joining the dots in the landscape: context and coordination for the Burra Charter', *Historic Environment*, 18, no. 1, September 2004).

Jane was membership secretary for some years from 1978 and then ran the editorial committee for *Historic Environment* out of her office in Victoria Pde East Melbourne after work – with cheese and wine as the 'bribe' to her attendees. Her family sorted and mailed out the newsletter for 3 years in the 1980s on pain of no trips to the bush! Yes, forced labour a theme she was to pursue in her long-term involvement with Port Arthur.

From 1987-1990 she was Chairperson of Australia ICOMOS and wrote a regular Chair's Column for the newsletter. In 1988 with her colleagues, she organized the traveling conference across the Victorian Central gold fields which was a great success in lobbying local government and in having a fun time. (Jane specialises in fun times – another outstanding contribution to OZ ICOMOS). This conference also resulted in a special edition of *Historic Environment*, vol. 7, no. 1, 1989. At the end of her 'reign' she also met with Minister Ros Kelly and successfully obtained an administrative grant for ICOMOS due in part to her dress on the day – the Minister admired her brown coat and long black boots, so that it became a joke that all Ministerial delegations needed a dress allowance. This grant continued until last year and enabled subsequent AI members on the international executive to have support with their travel.

Jane has confronted many ministers and senior bureaucrats on behalf of ICOMOS over the years – usually with stunning success either through charm or if necessary assertiveness. Jane, in relating difficult encounters with these high-fliers, often says, 'I looked at him!!!' (or her). If you have been the recipient of that particular look of Jane's you will understand her success rate. She was appointed to a range of boards, where she used her position consistently to strengthen the voice of Australia ICOMOS at national and state level. She has been: Commissioner, Australian Heritage Commission; Member, Australian Heritage Council; Member, Kingston – Arthur Vale Historic Area Management Board, Norfolk Island; Councilor, ICCROM (International Centre for the Study of the Preservation and Restoration of Cultural Property), Rome; Member, Queensland Heritage Council, as the ICOMOS representative; Council member of the Museum of Victoria & Queensland Museum; Newstead House Chair and Old Parliament House.

One of her achievements on the Australian Heritage Council was convincing her reluctant fellow councillors in Dec 2004 to endorse the Burra Charter in order to encourage best practice in accordance with section 5(e) and (h) of the AHC Act. At this time ICOMOS was very critical of the AHC and Jane was often referred to disparagingly as 'the ICOMOS girl' or the 'ICOMOS mole', which indeed she was!

Australia ICOMOS through the years has been very influential in contributing to and developing heritage theory and practice in ICOMOS international. Jane has been a major contributor to this endeavour, through meetings such as the General Assemblies in Rome (1981), Washington DC (1987), Lausanne (1989), ICOMOS International 10th General Assembly, Sri Lanka (1993) (Hon Vice-President). Sofia (1986), US/ ICOMOS Conference, *Learning from World Heritage*, Natchitoches, Louisiana, March 2004; Xi'an (2005), Paris (2011), Florence (2014) and US ICOMOS 2014 conference on the Venice Charter ('The Venice Charter Down Under - Its legacy in landscape conservation', *Change Over Time: An International Journal of Conservation and the Built Environment* (2014): 316-330).

After moving to Brisbane in 1993, she had a diverse consultancy career: museum involvement, mining places surveys, Commonwealth owned heritage properties, regional forest studies, State of the Environment reports, conservation studies, heritage place management plans and museum feasibility studies.

As a geographer, Jane has always been interested in cultural landscapes and organised the Australia ICOMOS conference at Robertson NSW which resulted again in a special issue of *Historic Environment*, vol 13, nos 3 & 4, 1997. With Brian Egloff, Adrian Davey, Ken Taylor, she coordinated and wrote the July 1999, *Conservation of the Cultural Values of Natural Areas*, discussion paper for Australia ICOMOS [available at <http://www.icomos.org/australia/articles.htm>.] which had a wide audience here and overseas. She has continued her research and interest in cultural landscapes – the subject of her PhD from Deakin University in 2005, a book jointly edited with Ken Taylor in 2012 on *Managing Cultural Landscapes* [Routledge] and again in 2015 some Australian case studies in *Conserving Cultural landscapes: Challenges and New Directions* [Routledge]. She has been a member of the ICOMOS International Scientific Committee on Cultural Landscapes since 2010 and is the current expert voting member.

She has also been interested and involved in remote areas heritage through a range of surveys and in 2010 with Michael Pearson as joint author, their study, *Pastoral Australia: Fortunes, Failure and Hard Yakka*, was published by CSIRO Publishing and launched at the Broken Hill Australia ICOMOS conference. She has also had articles in *Historic Environment* on the plight of remote area heritage, 2011, vol.23 (2) and 'The Long Paddock', Australia's Travelling Stock Route network – A distinctive cultural heritage, 2014, vol. 26, no.1: 46-60

Jane's professional and consultancy work has always been pointed at contributing to the goals and principles of Australia ICOMOS, and in interpreting the Burra Charter in a sympathetic and usable way, which has always shown sensitivity and astuteness in dealing with stakeholders. As an example, Jane was the consultant employed by Port Arthur Historic Site to work through with victims and families a sympathetic and appropriate way to commemorate the 1996 massacre. This was a delicate and difficult assignment and led to outstanding achievement, both in terms of heritage conservation and of giving the stakeholders comfort, sympathy and active involvement. It is a textbook case of good practice in terms of the Burra Charter.

Jane has also been extensively involved in Aboriginal heritage conservation issues, and her influence has contributed to the integration of the richness and complexity of Indigenous concepts of place into the Australia ICOMOS psyche. Since 1999 she has been involved in conservation work at Lake Victoria, south western NSW and is currently the chair of the Lake Victoria Advisory Committee to the Murray Darling Basin Authority.

In 2003 Jane was awarded a Centenary of Federation Medal – "For distinguished service to the community and public sector" and made a Member of the Order of Australia – "For service to conservation, the environment and heritage issues".

But as an ICOMOS old girl she is particularly thrilled to receive this award from you, her colleagues, with whom she has worked argued , partied and achieved throughout her life. Indeed, Jane in one sense does not need to be proclaimed a Honorary Member of Australia ICOMOS – ICOMOS has been a major part of her life for many years and continues to be so.

I know it gives us all great pleasure to formally confer Australia ICOMOS Honorary Membership on Jane Lennon.

Written by Sharon Sullivan

Photos from Jeju ISCCL meeting Nov 2015

