

## IN MEMORY OF VALERIE JEAN CAMERON SMITH (1934-2022)



Scholars are born, not made, and in different circumstances an obituary for Val would be recording the contribution she made to 18th century Scottish history. As it is, the little research she was able to undertake shows her comprehension of the period was most extensive and equal to that of any scholar.

Val Smith was a towering figure in the Sydney Society for Scottish History (SSSH), and one of its longest-serving committee members. For those young scholars, Matthew Glozier, Kath Thompson, and Lorna Barrow, among others, who attended the lectures at Malcolm Broun's chambers (Edmund Barton Chambers) in the early 1990s, Val was a warm and welcoming presence. She was at that time Secretary of the SSSH (in addition to heavy commitments with the Scottish Australian Heritage Council) and she remained so for many years thereafter, retaining the position after Matthew took over as President following Malcolm's passing in 2015.

Val presented a few papers over the years to the SSSH, mainly on aspects of the Jacobites that she had been researching for a book, co-written with Alasdair Roberts, *Jacobite Traitor? Coll MacDonell and the Prince*.<sup>1</sup> Val spent many years searching

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I would like to thank the following people for their contributions to this obituary: Dr Matthew Glozier, Associate Professor Sybil Jack (Emerita) and Dr Frank Davidson. Thank you to Barbara Gurney for this photograph of Valerie Cameron Smith.

<sup>1</sup>Alasdair Roberts and Valerie Cameron Smith, *Jacobite Traitor? Coll MacDonell and the Prince* (Edinburgh: Prestoungrange & Cuthill Press, 2013).

through private Scottish family archives, the National Archives of Scotland, the National Library of Scotland, and conversing with scholars in Scotland to complete this work. She was tireless in her efforts to see this book come together. On her many trips to Scotland she met scholars and dignitaries to whom she promoted the society. Many of these esteemed individuals became guest lecturers during Scottish Week in Sydney.

Val was an administrative expert; she was the “doer” who was often the driving force in making things happen (events, hospitality, logistics, especially during Scottish Week with its lectures, balls, dinners, and sundry assorted activities). One small example was her act of kindness in driving another member to the meetings, regularly each month. She did things behind the scenes, often unsung, that were much to the benefit and honour of the SSSH and its members. Val was famous for her homemade marmalade, often whiskey based, which she produced every year for fundraising for the society, raising hundreds of dollars over the years. She also generously provided various raffle prizes as well, all of which helped us to fund our journal and our guest speakers from abroad.

Many also benefitted from her generous hospitality, ranging from drinks over discussion of some arcane point of Scottish history through to full-blown evenings at her home in Annangrove in company with Scottish Week guests. She was a generous host. Val had a passionate interest in Scottish heritage, even supporting and facilitating research by distant kinsfolk and clansmen in the Americas. While her personal genealogical research was frustrated by circumstances beyond her control, she avidly indulged in DNA based investigation, which linked her to broad trends in the history of Scotland and the wider Celtic diaspora. Sadly, while unable to participate actively in recent years, Val remained a much honoured and cherished supporter of the SSSH. Valerie Cameron Smith will be greatly missed by the many friends, and international scholars she was so well acquainted with, through the SSSH.

Dr Lorna G. Barrow (FSAScot)  
Vice-President SSSH

Dr Matthew Glozier  
President SSS

Dr Frank Davidson

Sybil Jack  
Associate Professor (Emerita)