The Dwyer collection in the State Library of New South Wales

On 10 July 1916, John Dwyer deposited an extensive collection of papers with the State Library of New South Wales, documenting his working life, political activism and his interest in the occult (thesosophy and spiritualism). On 14 August 1917 he made another deposit, this time of mainly personal papers. The 1916 deposit was identified as ML MSS 2184; the 1917 deposit ML MSS 290. These collections are kept in the Library's Dixson manuscript collection. At some unspecified point after these deposits were made, an extensive range of material deposited by Dwyer was separated from them and scattered under various subject headings in the Mitchell Collection. These papers must be accessed through the old card index reference system maintained in the Mitchell Library. There is no way of knowing that these items are Dwyer deposits until the reader accesses them. The link to Dwyer is usually clarified by a small pencil notation made by a librarian in the margin of the document, indicating that the deposit was sourced from the Dwyer Collection. Many of the items have also been stamped 'John Dwyer'. He has done this, presumably because residents of the Active Service Brigade barracks or the other doss houses he maintained between 1893-1916 had access to the materials. Other items have some personal significance, despite their removal from the manuscript collections - Dwyer's membership records for the Federated Stewards and Cooks’ Union, or correspondence between Dwyer and the Secretary of the NSW Labor Electoral Leagues, which is now in the 'Political Labour League' volume (see details below) - a
volume of material entirely consisting of deposits by Dwyer. The PLL volume represents the only detailed evidence we are likely to find of a NSW Labor League grass roots activist in the pre-1900 period. To my knowledge, the PLL volume, and other records of Dwyer's Mittagong LEL activities, including his 1892 'diary of a Labour League Organiser', represent the only substantial extant collection of NSW LEL papers (The 'diary of a Labour League Organiser' is held at MSS 2184/4). Of course, this also means that these records of the PLL and LEL have been filtered through Dwyer's selection and interests. Similarly, Dwyer has made crucial deposits of papers related to the anarchists Arthur Desmond and John Arthur Andrews, predominantly held together in a volume called 'Anarchy' in the Mitchell collection. Dwyer has also preserved an important collection of Andrew's unpublished fiction (at MSS 2184/16-17). Finally, perhaps the most extraordinary collection amongst Dwyer's papers concern the manuscripts and tracts related to his interest in theosophy and the occult. Most of these are held at MSS 2184/3, although some theosophical tracts deposited by Dwyer can now be found in the Mitchell card index. I cannot claim to have entirely put the jigsaw puzzle back together, but what follows is a guide to as much of the material deposited by Dwyer that I can find in either the Dixson or Mitchell collections of the State Library of New South Wales. The guides to the collections MSS 2184 and MSS 290 outlined below follow the format of the guides prepared by the SLNSW. Please note that I have also provided below a discrete list of papers related to John Arthur Andrews.
Dwyer papers, ML MSS 2184

BOX ML MSS. 2184/1-4

I. Personal papers, 1890-c.1913

Includes correspondence, 1890-1912, with volume mainly concerning the Active Service Brigade, 1890-1910; and writings mainly on occult subjects and philosophy c.1897-c.1913

BOX ML MSS. 2184/5

II. Records of various groups with which Dwyer was associated, 1893-1916

A. Active Service Brigade, 1893-1902; includes constitution, 1893-1895, and constitution and other material relating to Section No. 9, the Wentworth Falls Social Cooperative Coal Mining Association, 1895

BOX ML MSS. 2184/6

B. State Labourers Union of New South Wales, 1900-1905; includes minutes, 3 Aug. 1900- June 1904

BOX ML MSS. 2184/7

C. Various organizations dealing with unemployment, 1902-1908

i Letters mainly to Dwyer and other material mainly re unemployment, 1902 - 1908

ii Citizens Committee on Unemployment, 1904-1905; includes minutes, June 1904 - May 1906, and executive minutes, May-July 1906

iii Citizens National Movement to deal with the Unemployment Question, 1905; Minutes, Aug. 1905- Dec, 1905

BOX ML MSS. 2184/8

D Social Democratic Federation, 1907-1909; includes Minutes, 3 May 1907- 29 Mar. 1909

E Industrial Workers of the World - N.S.W. Branch, 1911; Minutes, 26 Oct. 1911 -23 Nov. 1911, and correspondence, 20 Sep. 1911 - 18 Dec. 1911

ML MSS. 2184/9-10

F Popular Rights Defence League 1909; includes minutes, 30 Aug. 1909- 13 Dec. 1909
VOL. MSS. 2184/11

G   North Australian League, c.19-; Notebook, c.19-

BOX ML MSS. 2184/12

H   Northern Territory & North West Settlements Corporation Limited, 1904-1916; includes memorandum and articles of association, 1908-1912, share register, 1912-1913, minutes of directors' meetings, 5 Feb. 1912-Apr. 1914, correspondence, 1912-1916

VOLS. ML MSS. 2184/13-14

I   Right to Work Movement of New South Wales, 1913-1914; includes minutes, 23 July 1913-9 May 1914 and correspondence, 27 June 1913-23 Mar. 1914

FOLDER ML MSS. 2184/15

J   The Workmen's Residence Company, 1899-1900; Account book, 1899-1900

ML MSS. 2184/16-17

III  Material relating to John Arthur Andrews, c. 1888-c. 1902; includes correspondence and various writings

FOLDER ML MSS. 2184/18

IV   Miscellaneous material, c. 189- c.19-; Includes 'Letter to a Lodge.', Nos 3-5, 8, by Jasper Niemand

Dwyer papers, ML MSS 290
Personal papers 1888-1914

1888-1914 Papers re John Dwyer's service as a seaman.
1889 Papers re passage of wife and children to NSW expenditure notes.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1892-93</td>
<td>Notebook used by John Dwyer; Rentbook, Mrs Dwyer, Mittagong.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>c.1893</td>
<td>Ticket of membership of Active Service Brigade of John Dwyer, initialled by Arthur Desmond.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1894</td>
<td>Papers re change of criminal libel on Hon. T.M. Slattery by John Dwyer and others: re assault on Henry Tregarthan Douglas.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1895, 1899</td>
<td>Drafts of letters by John Dwyer to Premier Reid.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1895-1899</td>
<td>Papers re mining lease near Wentworth Falls 1895-96 and at Nerriga 1899.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1896</td>
<td>Copy of statements by John Dwyer re attempts to defraud him.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1896</td>
<td>Special commissions issued to John Dwyer by Independent Order of Templars, Grand Lodge of NSW.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1897</td>
<td>Certificate of membership, Isis Lodge Theosophical Society of Australasia, with a copy of the Society’s constitution.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1898, 1901</td>
<td>Elector’s rights issued to John Dwyer.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1899-1900</td>
<td>Record of expenditure</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1900</td>
<td>Victorian Labour Federation membership book.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1902</td>
<td>Notes by H.M. Boucher, natal biologist on characteristics of two subjects (ie. John Dwyer and son Ted.)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1902</td>
<td>International Socialist Club, Sydney, membership card.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1903</td>
<td>Expenditure notes.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1903-04</td>
<td>Diary</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1914</td>
<td>Notes re family birthdays and anniversaries</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1912</td>
<td>Notes re. helpers</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
1913-14 Right to Work Movement. NSW section, membership book.

c.1914 'List of documents and papers, personal and private compiled by John Dwyer (numerical guide to collection).

**Correspondence 1883-1913**

1888- Family papers and correspondence including c.1914 letters from his wife Annie, daughter Lizzie and son Daniel and Tim.

1883-1913 General correspondence: correspondents include Henry Newman 1891; David Storey 1894; J.A. Andrews 1894-95; E.W. O'Sullivan 1900-1904; J.H. Carruthers 1904; G.H. Reid 1904; W.M. Hughes 1904; Cardinal Moran 1904; Lord Jersey 1905; Mr Justice Backhouse 1907; J.P. Cochran 1911; J.J. Morrish 1911-1912; James McGowen 1913. Correspondence includes letters of recommendation/appreciation 1889-1912; re leases and rent on various properties including boarding-houses; re organization of meetings of unemployed men 1901-1905.

1912-1913 Documents re Northern Territory and N.W. Settlement Corporation Ltd., including receipts and unissued share certificates.

c.1893-1911 Miscellaneous papers including statement c. 1893 by 3.A. Andrews re Primrose mining field; papers re William Clark 1904-1911; share transfer Bertha May Field Milne Bay Gold Mining Company 1900; letter by J. Blake Sep. 1905.

1908-1911 Papers re Louis Nistrie

C.1896 1914 Miscellaneous items including photograph (by Stockwell?) c1896 of Active Service Brigade Headquarters, Elizabeth Street, possibly showing John Dwyer and child; photographs (2) of Mrs Gavan and child, deceased; lock of Teddy Dwyer's hair; wallets (2).

**Other Dwyer deposits in the Mitchell Collection, SLNSW**

'Anarchy', bound volume of papers annotated, '10.7.17 Dwyer Collection'.

*Australian Theosophist* (Theosophical Society in Australasia)

Federated Stewards and Cooks Union of Australasia, Rule Book, 1889.

H. Rider Haggard, *She*
Independent Order of Good Templars, Metropolitan District Lodge No.2, 
*Official Register and Directory with Combined Lodge Syllabus, May to July, 1896*

Independent Order of Good Templars, *Proceedings of the 24th Annual Session of the Grand Lodge of the NSW Independent Order of Good Templars, 19-22 April 1897*

*International Socialist Review for Australasia*

*Magic (Theosophical Society in Australasia)*


Redbeard, Ragnar (Arthur Desmond), *The Survival of the Fittest or the Philosophy of Power*, also known as *Might is Right*, Chicago 1896.


Rosa, Sam, *The Coming Terror*

Socialism Handbills (this collection has been lost, and I was unable to read these papers. However it is almost certainly a collection deposited by Dwyer)

Theosophical Society in Australasia, Tracts.

**Papers relating to John Arthur Andrews**


John Arthur Andrews papers, Merrifield Collection, State Library of Victoria.


John Arthur Andrews, 'Poems of Freedom', 1894, ML


*Note:* See also Dwyer papers ML MSS. 2184/16-17 and *Anarchy* volume, ML.
Museum of London

Information provided in correspondence from R.R. Aspinall, Librarian, Museum in Docklands Project, concerning the London and St. Katherine Docks Company. Also provided were copies of maps and extracts from the staff ledger concerning John Dwyer's employment with the company.

Noel Butlin Archives Centre, Australian National University

J. Normington Rawling papers

Other primary sources from the Mitchell Collection, State Library of New South Wales

*A Century of Banking, the Commercial Banking Co of Sydney Ltd., 1834-1934,* WC Penfold Sydney 1934.

*Australian Men of Mark,* Vol.1 Charles F. Maxwell Melbourne 1888.

Benevolent Society of NSW *Help for the Poor and Afflicted,* , 1891.


Cockshott, H.M., et. al. (eds.), *Digest of Reported Cases decided in the Supreme Court of New South Wales, 1825-1904,* Law Book Company Sydney 1905.


*Commonwealth Department of Trade and Customs, Report on Tuberculosis,* 1916.

Desmond, Arthur, ‘Christ as a Social Reformer’, Auckland 1890.


*Our Coming of Age*, Sydney Central Methodist Mission 1904 souvenir booklet.

*Our Weekly Greeting*, journal of the Sydney Central Methodist Mission, 15 September 1906

Parkes correspondence

Louis Phillips Papers, Vol.66 "Newscuttings and circulars, 1883-1912".


Schey, W.F., Historical Notes concerning the United Service Lodge, 1912.

Stephen, Reverend P.J., "Among the Evangelists", in *Evangelism and Social Regeneration*, 24th anniversary souvenir booklet, Sydney Central Methodist Mission, 1908.


Sydney District Council of the Australasian Labour Federation, General Meeting minutes, Labor Council of New South Wales records.
II. Official Published Sources

NSW Government & Parliamentary papers

*Consolidated circulars issued by the Under-Secretary, Department of the Attorney-General and Justice, 1874-1915. ML*

*NSW Legislative Assembly, Votes & Proceedings*

*Journal of the NSW Legislative Council*

*NSW Parliamentary Debates*

*NSW Industrial Gazette*

*Statistical Register of New South Wales for 1894*

Consolidated Circulars issued by the Under Secretary, NSW Department of the Attorney-General and Justice 1874-1915, ML.


Archives Authority of NSW

Darlinghurst Gaol - Condemned Prisoners Daily Record, 1892-1903, (City 5/1739), AANSW.

Register of Police appointments 1861-1892, NSW Commissioner of Police reel 3043 AANSW.

Register of promotions, transfers and dismissals, 1891-1907, NSW Commissioner of Police reel 2658 AANSW.

Judge's Notebook (Justice J.G. Long-Innes, Regina v. Douglas & Ors., Darlinghurst Central Criminal Court, 12 June 1894), Vol.22 2/4559 AANSW.


NSW Registrar of Births, Deaths and Marriages

Death certificates for Elizabeth Matilda Balhatchet, John, Annie, Daniel and Timm Stephen Dwyer.
III. Newspapers and Periodicals

Anarchy
Australian Star
Australian Temperance World and Good Templar Record
Australian Town and Country Journal
Australian Workman
Bowral Free Press
Bulletin
Daily Telegraph
Evening News
Hard Cash [July 1893; Vol.2 No.3 (undated); September 1893]
Hummer
Illustrated Sydney News
Justice [London SDF]
Justice [Active Service Brigade]
Mittagong Express
New Order
Revolt
Socialist
Southern Mail
Stratford Express
Sydney Morning Herald
Theosophy in Australia
Tocsin
Truth
Under Lock and Key
Worker [Sydney]
IV. Secondary Sources

Articles & papers


Cochrane, Peter, 'Britishness in Australia', Voices, Spring 1996 Vol VI No.3.


Dening, Greg, "Let my curiosity have its little day": a reflection', Australian Book Review, No.180 May 1996.


Joyce, Patrick, 'The Imaginary Discontents of Social History', *Social History*, XVIII, 1, January 1993.

Knowles, Harry, 'Biography and the writing of history: a methodological problem?' Postgraduate research paper, Department of Industrial Relations, University of Sydney, 1999.

Lake, Marilyn, "Women, Gender and History" Australian Feminist Studies, Nos. 7&8 Summer 1988.


Meaney, Neville, "'The Yellow Peril", Invasion Scare Novels and Australian Political Culture', in Ken Stewart (ed.), The 1890s, Australian Literature and Literary Culture, University of Queensland Press St. Lucia 1996.


Scalmer, Sean, 'Experience and Discourse: a map of recent theoretical approaches to Labour and Social History', Labour History, No.70 May 1996


Books and Theses


Hamsun, Knut *Hunger*, Rebel Inc Edinburgh 1996.


Kelly, Max (ed.), *Sydney, City of Suburbs*, University of NSW Press Sydney 1987.


Meade, Marion, Madame Blavatsky, the Woman behind the Myth, GP Putnam's Sons, NY 1999.


Nairn, Bede, Civilising Capitalism, the Labour Movement in New South Wales, 1870-1900, Melbourne University Press 1989.


Salvatore, Nick, *We All Got History, the Memory Books of Amos Webber*, Times Books NY 1996.


Stewart, Ken (ed.), *The 1890s, Australian Literature and Literary Culture*, University of Queensland Press, 1996.


Wilson, Edmund, *To the Finland Station*, Macmillan London 1983.
