

CHAPTER TWELVE

ESU Victoria Branch Leaders & Prominent Members

This chapter provides brief accounts of the achievements of some of the leaders and prominent members of the English-Speaking Union Victoria Branch over its hundred-year history.

Individual accounts appear in historical order.

Henry Noyes, Founding Member ESU London 1918

Through Henry Noyes, the ESU Victoria Branch can legitimately lay claim to have been represented at the founding of the ESU in London in 1918.

A Melbourne industrialist, Henry Noyes was part of a group of 15 English-speaking patriots who formed the provisional Committee of the English-Speaking Union on 28 June 1918 in London.

A governing director of the Melbourne engineering firm Noyes Brothers, Henry Noyes was a recognised authority on steel and a member of the Iron and Steel Institute of Great Britain. He was also a member of the American Institute of Mining and Metallurgical Engineers, and the American Institute of Mechanical Engineers.

During his long business career, he was associated with some of the leading engineering firms in England and America and was the Australian representative of Westinghouse, the US industrial powerhouse.

This association between an Australian industrialist of English birth with American industrial interests perfectly positioned Noyes to comprehend and support the aim of the incipient English-Speaking Union – to promote cooperation and understanding between the English-speaking peoples.

He advanced plans to electrify the Adelaide, Unley, Mitcham, Hindmarsh and Henley Beach tram lines in South Australia.¹ As part of his company's approach to attracting skilled employees to undertake these works, Henry Noyes donated a laboratory to the School of Mines in Adelaide, comprising generators, motors and instruments, to enable students to study electrical engineering.² On the opening of this laboratory, the State Education Minister Louis von Doussa noted that the School of Mines was now well equipped as the most valuable and best educational institution in South Australia. He conveyed the gratitude of the people of South Australia for Noyes's "admirable manifestation of public spirit".³

Under Noyes's direction, the firm also carried out construction and electrification of the tramlines for the Prahran and Malvern Tramways Trust in Victoria.

During the war, Noyes's company supplied steel for the war effort. Henry Noyes also made significant personal donations to the Red Cross, donating £500 in 1915.⁴ At that time, the average weekly wage for an Australian male worker in the manufacturing industry was less than £3.⁵ At his own cost, he also provided a complete X-ray outfit for use in hospital fieldwork at the frontlines in France.



Figure 12.1: Prahran Tramways launch in Glenferrie Rd, Malvern, Victoria in 1911.⁶

Noyes took an active part in recruiting in Australia. As Vice-Chairman of the Victorian Recruiting Committee, a body responsible for recruiting volunteers from Victoria to serve in the Australian forces in the First World War, Henry Noyes consulted closely with Sir John Monash, the Victorian-born Australian general who was himself an accomplished engineer.

Noyes's presence in England in 1918 was directly related to his role in supporting Australia's war effort, both in terms of steel production and the provision of replacement Australian troops.

In both his war work and his philanthropic donations to the Red Cross, Henry Noyes was in contact with Sir Norman Brookes, the Australian Wimbledon tennis champion, and his wife, Dame Mabel Brookes.

Sir Norman Brookes, a fellow Victorian, served as commissioner of the Australian Branch of the British Red Cross in Egypt in 1915 in the First World War. Dame Mabel Brookes travelled to Egypt with Sir Norman and volunteered in Red Cross work, organising nurses' canteens, rest homes and concert parties.

Dame Mabel subsequently became a member of the Australian Red Cross Society's federal executive.

The inaugural meeting to establish the Victorian Branch of ESU in 1919 was held at Kurneh in Domain Road, South Yarra, the residence of Sir Norman and Dame Mabel Brookes.

In 1935, a special gathering of ESU members in South Yarra hosted as special guests Mrs. Noyes and Winifred Noyes – the wife and eldest daughter of Henry Noyes, who had died in 1922. Mr. D. G. Lumsden, the branch's Vice-President, formally acknowledged the important role Henry Noyes had played in establishing the English-Speaking Union in Victoria and lauded him as Melbourne's representative at the inaugural meeting of the English-Speaking Union in London.⁷

Sir Edmund Herring, Branch Honorary Secretary 1919–1923

Edmund Herring was a Rhodes Scholar at New College, Oxford, when the First World War broke out. He volunteered for service with the Royal Field Artillery and was awarded the Military Cross and Distinguished Service Order. After the war, he practised as a barrister and King's Counsel in Melbourne.

During the Second World War, Herring commanded the 6th Division Artillery in the Western Desert Campaign in 1940–41 and in the Battle of Greece.

At the Battle of Bardia, in January 1941, Herring controlled all 120 guns used in the 6th Division's attack, in which the infantry were supported by artillery barrages. The victory at Bardia resulted in the capture of 36,000 prisoners. Herring's artillery troops then supported the successful attack on Tobruk later that month.

In the campaign in Greece, Herring was part of the rear-guard force under New Zealand General Freyberg who made a defensive stand against the advancing German forces in April 1941 at the historic Thermopylae pass, the gateway to Athens. Once the German forces had breached the defensive barrier at Thermopylae, Herring was among the 5,100 Allied troops that managed to reach Crete on the Royal Navy transport *HMS Glenearn*.

Herring was promoted to the temporary rank of major general on 14 August 1941 when he took over command of the 6th Division. He returned to Australia with the division in March 1942.

In April 1942, Herring was given command of Northern Territory Force. At this time Darwin was being subjected to Japanese air raids. In late 1942, he commanded the land forces in the Kokoda Track campaign, working closely with General Douglas MacArthur and other senior US commanders.



Figure 12.2: General Sir Edmund Herring, 1945, Archibald Prize-winning portrait by William Dargie.⁸

The following year, Herring led hard-fought Australian operations against the Japanese at Gona and Buna, and later at Lae.



Figure 12.3: Australian troops during the Kokoda track campaign, 1942.⁹

In 1944, Herring resigned his military commission to become chief justice of the Supreme Court of Victoria, serving on that court with Sir Charles Lowe, then ESU Victoria Branch President. Herring served as Chief Justice for 20 years and later became the longest serving lieutenant governor of Victoria.

In a speech given on the occasion of his retirement as Chief Justice of Victoria, Herring said:

*“Under the Australian constitution the great common law courts of Australia are the Supreme Courts of the States. Federal Parliament has no power to set up common law courts and so it is to the Supreme Courts of the States the citizen must look for protection from illegal arrest and other encroachments on his liberty. It is to these Courts that he must come for a writ of habeas corpus. The principle of the independence of the judiciary from the executive is fundamental to our freedom. We must see to it that our citizens all understand that an independent judiciary is the greatest bulwark of their liberties and their best protection from totalitarian rule.”*¹⁰



Figure 12.4: Herring (second from left) in Papua with General Douglas MacArthur (centre) in 1943.¹¹

Herring became the subject of controversy in May 1978 when Barry Jones revealed in Federal Parliament that during the Second World War Herring had confirmed death sentences on 22 Papuans convicted of handing over seven Anglican missionaries to the Japanese, which Jones called “the darkest secret in modern Australian history”. The Papuans had been convicted of offences including murder and treason.

Herring maintained that the accused had been treated fairly. “I have a clear conscience about it,” he said. The seven missionaries had all been murdered by the Japanese. Four of them were women who had been raped before being murdered.¹²

Herring was president of the Boy Scouts’ Association of Victoria for 23 years, and was later the first president of the Australian Boy Scouts’ Association from 1959 to 1977. He was chairman of the trustees of the Shrine of Remembrance from 1945 to 1978, and chairman of the trustees

of the Australian War Memorial from 1959 to 1974.¹³

Sir Edmund Herring was the first Honorary Secretary of the ESU Victoria Branch in 1921. It is likely he was present at the inaugural meeting held to establish the ESU Branch at the mansion of Norman and Mabel Brookes in South Yarra in 1919. As branch secretary, Herring drew up the original branch rules and constitution.¹⁴

Sir Edmund was the longest serving member of the Victoria Branch, his membership spanning the period 1919 to his death in 1982. He was also the longest serving vice-president of the Victoria Branch.

In 1966, Herring was the ESU Victoria Branch's nominee for the position of chairman of the Council of British Commonwealth Societies.

Dr. Alexander Leeper

Dr. Leeper was appointed principal of Trinity College, founded by the Church of England in 1872. Trinity College was the first residential student college affiliated with the University of Melbourne.

Dr. Leeper was also involved in Victoria's cultural life as a trustee of the Public Library, Museums and National Gallery from 1887–1928, becoming president in 1920. He was also the trustees' nominee on the Felton Bequests Committee (1920–1928), which provided funds to purchase the National Gallery's early acquisitions of art.

Harry Emmerton

One of Melbourne's earliest and longest practising solicitors, Harry Emmerton was a member of the Supreme Court Board of Examiners and of the Council of the Law Institute, and was also honorary legal adviser to the Children's Hospital for more than 30 years. He lived in South Yarra for 50 years.

He and his wife were inaugural members of the ESU Victoria Branch, as was Dame Mabel Brookes, their only child who went on to host the first meeting to establish the ESU Victoria Branch in 1919 at her mansion in Domain Rd, South Yarra.

The Emmertons also generously allowed their South Yarra mansion, Raveloe,

to be used for ESU Branch meetings and special functions in its formative years.

Lady Mabel Balcombe Brookes



Figure 12.5: Lady Mabel Balcombe Brookes.¹⁵

Mabel Balcombe Brookes's family, the Emmertons, were part of Melbourne society at a time when community service was seen as an important duty.

Mabel Emmerton married Norman Brookes in 1911. A tennis player, Norman was the first Australian to win the Wimbledon Singles Tennis Tournament. In 1915 during the First World War he worked as commissioner for the Australian Branch of the British Red Cross in Cairo. Mabel joined him with her baby to assist in establishing a nurses' home. Here she worked with other officers' wives, ministering to the sick and wounded servicemen.

Returning to Melbourne in 1918, Brookes used her social position to energetically promote her causes, raising funds for hospitals and other charities. In 1919, she hosted the inaugural meeting to establish the Victoria Branch in South Yarra. Her most outstanding contribution was as president of the Queen Victoria Hospital from 1923–1970. She also served as Royal Children's Hospital committee member, executive of the Girl Guides' Association, and a member of the federal executive of the Australian Red Cross Society. Throughout the Second World War she was both commandant of the Australian Women's Air Training Corps and a munitions worker at the Maribyrnong Defence Explosive Factory. During this period, she and her husband provided their mansion in South Yarra for use by the Red Cross as a convalescent home for returned soldiers.

Brookes published her account of her experiences in the First World War in *Broken Idols* (1917), *On the Knees of the Gods* (1918), *Crowded Galleries* (1956) and *Riders of Time* (1967). On her death, Sir Robert Menzies paid tribute to her as “one of the most remarkable women of our time, possessed of a beautiful organising mind”.¹⁶

William Lawrence Baillieu



Figure 12.6: William Lawrence Baillieu.¹⁷

W. L. Baillieu was a prominent Melbourne businessman who was an early supporter of the English-Speaking Union’s Victoria Branch.

In 1909, Baillieu was minister of public health and commissioner of public works and government leader in the council. He was a director of many of Australia’s largest companies, most notably Dunlop, Mount Morgan Gold Mining, Carlton Brewery and North Broken Hill Ltd, of which he was chairman in 1926–1931. In 1915, Baillieu’s company the Collins House Group acquired BHP’s large smelter at Port Pirie, with Baillieu operating as chairman of the Broken Hill Associated Smelters from 1915–1933.

In 1912, under Premier W. A. Watt, Baillieu was an honorary minister and government leader in the council. At that time, Baillieu built Collins House, a massive building in Collins St, to house the offices of 50 companies of his group. Collins House became a seat of financial and economic power, embodied by the building’s graceful archway leading on to Sicilian marble corridors and red marble walls.



Figure 12.7: North Broken Hill mining operation.¹⁸

Baillieu's personal and professional connections with Brookes and Watt, both prominent early ESU members, facilitated use of the Collins House building as the Victoria Branch's first office and clubrooms. Collins House comprised the first office of the branch from 1921 until 1924.

In August 1914, Baillieu attended the Prime Minister's conference on economic policies for war. His work as chairman of the Victorian State Munitions Committee in 1915–18 was highly praised by George Pearce, the Minister for Defence. In this capacity, Baillieu worked closely with Herbert Brookes, another prominent ESU member who was chairman of the Chamber of Manufactures and a member of the State Munitions Committee. In 1918, Baillieu joined Treasurer Watt's Commonwealth Finance Council to plan post-war reconstruction.

In business, parliamentary and patriotic capacities, W. L. Baillieu had a close relationship with Watt and Brookes, two of the prominent early members of the ESU Victoria Branch.

As well as his patriotic activities in the First World War, Baillieu was also a philanthropist, donating £25,000 to the Australian Soldiers' Repatriation Fund in 1918, the largest single gift made by any individual.

After the war, the Baillieu brothers purchased a mansion in Brighton to become, as Anzac House, a repatriation hostel for disabled veterans. The brothers also set up the Baillieu Educational Trust for the benefit of the children of dead or wounded soldiers.

Baillieu publicly espoused his confidence that "the future of the world depended almost entirely upon close co-operation between the English-speaking

peoples. Immigration must be increased and supported in every way for the security of both Australia and the Empire.”²⁰



*Figure 12.8: Anzac House, Brighton, Victoria.*¹⁹

The Baillieu family continued its association with the English-Speaking Union in succeeding decades.

W. L. Baillieu’s son, Clive Baillieu, spent most of his adult life in London, serving in the First World War as a major in the Australian Imperial Forces and then as a lieutenant-colonel in the Royal Air Force. During the Second World War, he was director-general of the British Purchasing Commission in Washington from 1941 to 1942 and became president of the Federation of British Industries, the peak British employer association, in 1945–47. In 1953 he was made a peer, becoming Baron Baillieu of Sefton in the Commonwealth of Australia.

Clive Baillieu became chairman of the English-Speaking Union of the Commonwealth in 1951, occupying the position until 1965.²¹

He became active in the Australian Natives’ Association, a lobby group of Australian-born Liberals who supported Australian Federation and protectionist policies.

William Watt, Branch President 1921–1925

William Watt acted as Prime Minister of Australia from April 1918 until August 1919, during Billy Hughes’s service in the Imperial War Cabinet and attendance at the Versailles peace conference.

From 1894 he was an executive member of the Australasian Federation League of Victoria and campaigned vigorously for Federation, becoming known as part of the 'Young Australia' group. In 1897 Watt was elected to the Victorian Legislative Assembly. In 1899 he became postmaster-general, attaining Cabinet rank when he was only 28 years old, and had "the distinction of being the youngest Cabinet Minister in the British Empire."²²



*Figure 12.9: William Alexander Watt.*²³

In 1909 he served as treasurer, a post he held until 1912. By that time he was leader of the Liberal Party, and became Premier on 12 May.

Watt was the dominant force in Victorian politics, a great orator and debater.

Frustrated by his inability to overcome the factionalism of the Victorian Liberals, Watt resigned as Premier in June 1914.

Just before the outbreak of the First World War, as an obvious potential prime minister, Watt resigned the premiership in order to contest the Commonwealth seat of Balaclava. He comfortably defeated John Curtin, the Australian Labor Party candidate and in his victory speech, thanked Herbert Brookes for the "part you played in dragging me across".

From July 1915 Watt was a member of the parliamentary war committee and advocated for conscription.

He became a leading member of the Nationalist Party when it was formed in 1916 under the leadership of Billy Hughes, and in 1917 he was

appointed Minister for Works and Railways in the Hughes Government, implementing the new transcontinental railway through its final stages.

In March 1918 Watt was appointed treasurer, and became Hughes's deputy. When Hughes left Australia for London in April 1918, Watt became acting Prime Minister, a position he held until Hughes returned from the Versailles Peace Conference in August 1919. During this period Watt also held the portfolio of trade and customs. For his service as acting Prime Minister, Watt was appointed to the Imperial Privy Council in the 1920 New Year Honours, entitling him to the title 'The Right Honourable'.

In April 1920, Watt was Australia's representative at the Spa Conference on War Reparations and travelled to London to participate in reparation talks. He and Hughes had a falling out, and Watt resigned as treasurer and returned to Australia.

In 1923, Watt was elected speaker, a position he held until 1926.

Watt was also chairman of several companies which operated out of his base in Collins House, Melbourne, including the Silvertown Tramway Company and Qantas. He was also chairman of the Melbourne Cricket Ground trustees.²⁴

In 1921, William Watt became the first elected Victorian President of the English-Speaking Union, a role he undertook until 1925.

Lady Ethel Lilian Bridges

Lady Ethel Bridges was the widow of the late Major-General Sir William Bridges.

Major-General William Bridges, a Canadian by birth, was a professional soldier who founded the Duntroon Military College after a world tour studying military teaching methods, modelling Duntroon on America's West Point Military Academy.

Major-General Bridges commanded the First Division Australian Imperial Forces at Gallipoli, where he died of wounds. His grave lies in the grounds of Duntroon Military College.

Lady Bridges was the first president of the Friendly Union of Soldiers' Wives and Mothers, and a member of the South Yarra Auxiliary for the Children's

Hospital. She was active in Victoria Branch activities from 1921 until just prior to her death in 1926.

Sir Henry (Harry) Chauvel, Branch Vice-President 1923–1924

Sir Harry Chauvel was the first Australian to attain the rank of lieutenant general and later general, and the first Australian to lead an army corps. As commander of the Desert Mounted Corps, he was responsible for one of the most decisive victories of the First World War at Beersheba.

Commissioned as a second lieutenant in the Queensland Mounted Infantry in 1890, he also served in the Boer War.

During the First World War, Chauvel commanded the 1st Light Horse Brigade at Gallipoli and later took charge of the 1st Division. Following the withdrawal from Gallipoli, Chauvel became commander of the Anzac Mounted Division, gaining victories in the Battle of Romani in August 1916 and the Battle of Magdhaba in December of that year, and nearly winning the First Battle of Gaza in March 1917. The following month, he took over the Desert Column, later known as the Desert Mounted Corps, thereby becoming the first Australian to command a corps, and the first to reach the rank of lieutenant general. At Beersheba in October 1917, his light horse brigade captured the town and its vital water supply in one of history's last great cavalry charges.

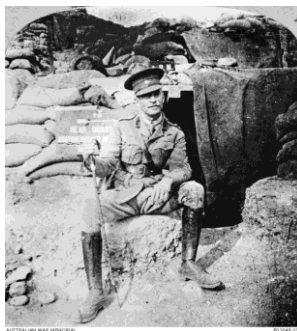


Figure 12.10: Brigadier General Chauvel outside his headquarters at Gallipoli, 1915.²⁵

In 1919, Chauvel was appointed inspector general, the army's most senior post, and later chief of the general staff from 1923 until his retirement in 1930. General Chauvel was also Vice-President of the Victoria Branch in

1923–24.²⁶

During the Second World War, he was recalled to duty as inspector in chief of the Volunteer Defence Corps.²⁷



Figure 12.11: General Chauvel at Maribyrnong camp in March 1923.²⁸

Chauvel has been commemorated at various locations. He was a key figure at the dedication of the Shrine of Remembrance in 1934. His sword is in Christ Church, South Yarra and his uniform is in the Australian War Memorial. He is also honoured by a memorial window in the chapel of the Royal Military College, Duntroon.

Chauvel's nephew Charles Chauvel was later Australia's best-known film director whose films included *Forty Thousand Horsemen* (1940), featuring the Australian Light Horse in Palestine and the famous Battle of Beersheba.

Sir Harold Clapp

Sir Harold Clapp was Australia's most prominent railway administrator.

He served his apprenticeship at the Austral Otis Co.'s engineering works at South Melbourne, of which Herbert Brookes, another ESU founding member, was a director.

In 1900 Clapp went to the United States of America and spent six years with the General Electric Company in New York. Clapp later joined the Southern Pacific Railroad Co and was responsible for the electrification of the suburban railways of Oakland and Berkeley, California.

In 1920 he was appointed to the position of Chairman of the Victorian Railway Commissioners. He completed the electrification of Melbourne's suburban railway lines.

He also fostered passenger amenities at Flinders Street Station, opening the first kiosk in 1924, setting up stalls at other stations, improving dining car facilities and introducing buffet cars.

Clapp's measures promoted the use of railway passenger and freight services, and helped primary producers and tourism. In 1922 he established the Victorian National Resources Development Train, known as Reso, which took people on tours of regional centres. Many ESU Victoria Branch regional tours involved booking the Reso for journeys to Victorian and interstate destinations.

In 1939 Clapp became general manager of the Aircraft Construction Branch and managed the assembly of Bristol Beaufort Bombers in Australia. In 1942 he became director-general of land transport, coordinating Commonwealth and state road and rail transport, and promoting the standardisation of Australia's railway gauges on defence and national prosperity grounds.²⁹

Harold Clapp was a member of the ESU Council in the 1920s.

Sir Wilfrid Kent Hughes, Branch Honorary Secretary 1923–1926

Sir Wilfrid Selwyn Kent Hughes was an Australian soldier, Rhodes Scholar, Olympian and Olympic Games organiser, author, and Federal and State Government minister.

Becoming the ESU Victoria Branch's second honorary secretary in 1923, Sir Wilfrid Kent Hughes was the first Melbourne Grammar School student to enlist in the First World War. In doing so, his leadership has been acknowledged as "embodying the spirit of self-sacrifice and service".³⁰ Wounded at Gallipoli, he was awarded the Military Cross while serving with the Australian Light Horse under General Chauvel in Palestine. Upon his return to Australia in 1918 he published a volume of memoirs, *Modern Crusaders*, about the exploits of the Light Horse Brigade.



Figure 12.12: Major Wilfrid Selwyn Kent Hughes.³¹

He represented Australia in the 400m hurdles in the 1920 Antwerp Olympics. In 1921, Kent Hughes was part of the Oxford Ski Team visit to Europe, during which he became the first Australian to ski competitively overseas.

Kent Hughes was elected to the Victorian State Parliament in 1927, rising to the position of Deputy Premier of Victoria. He assisted a young Robert Menzies to secure a seat in the Victorian Legislative Council in 1928, a stepping stone to Menzies's eventual election to the Federal House of Representatives as the member for Kooyong. With Robert Menzies, he founded the Young Nationalists Organisation in 1929, which became an influential force in Victoria.

Kent Hughes was a controversial figure in politics, and publicly espoused his admiration for fascism as the “spirit of the age”. He expressed his views prominently in four articles in the *Melbourne Herald* in 1933, describing himself as “a Fascist without a shirt”, rejecting dictators, uniforms and Roman salutes.

He re-enlisted in the Australian Army at the outbreak of the Second World War and, as a colonel in the 8th Division, was captured by the Japanese at Singapore. He spent four years as a prisoner of war in Changi and Manchuria. He was awarded the order of the British Empire (OBE) in 1947 for his inspiration to all ranks during his incarceration and for publishing a depiction of the horrors of Changi called *Slaves of the Samurai*, possibly the only poetic composition about combat and prisoner of war experiences in the Second World War.

He led the Anzac Day march to the Shrine of Remembrance in Melbourne in April each year on horseback in his First World War Light Horse uniform and campaigned for improved benefits for ex-servicemen, particularly ex-prisoners of war.

Kent Hughes returned to Victorian state politics in 1947 and served as transport and education minister and deputy premier before transitioning to Federal Parliament in 1949.

In 1949, he was appointed Minister for the Interior and Minister for Works and Housing in the Commonwealth Government of Sir Robert Menzies.

He chaired the 1956 Summer Olympics Organising Committee, where he modernised the Games. He charged media companies for television and newsreel footage of the Games (previously newsreel footage had been allowed without charge). The payments for TV and newsreel rights to Olympic events helped defray the significant costs of holding the Olympics in Australia and over time became a source of funding that allowed the Olympics to flourish financially.³²

In a lasting legacy, he also initiated the closing ceremony tradition of the athletes of different nations parading together instead of with their national teams, as a symbol of the unity of athletes throughout the world.

An award presented by the Victorian Olympic Council to the athlete it considers to have given the most outstanding performance at an Olympic Games is named in his honour.

Having been dropped from the ministry after 1955, Kent Hughes spoke out against the communist threat in Asia and Africa, and attacked Britain's Labour Government for imposing economic sanctions against Rhodesia while the British Government continued to trade with communist countries.³³

In addition to serving as honorary secretary in the period 1923–25, Kent Hughes was a Victoria Branch executive member in 1925–27.

Sir Thomas Ranken Lyle

Sir Thomas Ranken Lyle was born in Londonderry, Ireland and studied mathematics at Trinity College, Dublin, graduating with the highest honours the college could bestow – the university studentship in mathematics and gold medals in both mathematics and experimental

science. His teachers included G. F. FitzGerald, one of the great figures of 19th century mathematical physics.

Lyle accepted appointment to the chair of natural philosophy at the University of Melbourne, and later took Australia's first X-ray photographs. His medical support services were highly sought after by members of Melbourne's medical community.

Lyle's own research interests lay, however, in the field of electrical power technology. Lyle was an active member of the Royal Society of Victoria to which he presented many of his papers. Sir Walter Spencer, President of the Royal Society of Victoria writing to Sir John Monash described Lyle as "the greatest man, scientifically speaking, that we have ever had in the University".³⁴

Lyle investigated technical education facilities in Britain and the United States for the Victorian Government. In 1904–1914 he represented the University of Melbourne on the Victorian Rhodes Scholarship selection committee.

Lyle became a member of the Federal Munitions Committee, where he worked with Herbert Brookes, a prominent early member of the ESU Victoria Branch. Lyle, with fellow ESU Victoria Branch member Professor William Osborne, also pushed for the establishment of a national laboratory for scientific research, which was eventually established as the Council for Scientific and Industrial Research. Lyle later became a member of the Victorian committee of the CSIRO body.

Lyle was also a founding member of the Australian National Research Council in 1919 and that body's president in 1929–1932. He served on the Council of the University of Melbourne from 1916–1933, together with fellow Victoria Branch members Professor Osborne, Sir Charles Lowe and Herbert Brookes.

His outstanding contribution to the nation's scientific life was recognised by the Australian National Research Council in 1931 with the establishment of the Thomas Ranken Lyle medal for distinguished Australian research in mathematics and physics.

In 1919–1920, Lyle was one of the three newly appointed part-time Victorian state electricity commissioners, with Sir John Monash – another ESU Victoria Branch member – appointed subsequently as full-time

chairman. Lyle's fellow commissioners at his retirement in 1937 paid tribute to "his profound knowledge, sound judgement and breadth of vision", affirming that "neither time nor changing circumstances have made it necessary to alter the policy decisions in major matters registered during the period of his Chairmanship".³⁵

Lyle's eldest daughter, Dame Mary, one of Australia's first female medical graduates, married Sir Edmund Herring, another prominent ESU Victoria Branch founding member and the branch's first honorary secretary.

Sir John Monash, Branch Vice-President 1923–1924

General Sir John Monash was a civil engineer and an Australian military commander of the First World War. He commanded the 4th Brigade in Egypt and took part in the Gallipoli campaign.

In July 1916 he took charge of the newly raised 3rd Division in north-western France and in May 1918 became commander of the Australian Corps, at the time the largest corps on the Western Front.

He led the attack on Hamel in July 1918, which demonstrated the success of coordinated use of infantry, aircraft, artillery and tanks, and was the first battle jointly fought by a combined Australian and American force, illustrating the unity of the English-speaking peoples. The subsequent successful advance at the Battle of Amiens on 8 August 1918 was planned by Monash and spearheaded by British, Australian and Canadian corps under Monash and Canada's General Arthur Currie.

Monash is considered one of the best Allied generals of the First World War and with General Chauvel is one of the most famous military commanders in Australian history.³⁷



Figure 12.13: John Monash, by John Longstaff, c.1919.³⁶

After the First World War, Monash worked as head of the State Electricity Commission of Victoria (SECV) from October 1920. In this capacity, Monash worked closely with Sir Thomas Lyle, a notable ESU Branch member and Sir Arthur Robinson, a later Victoria Branch President.³⁸

Monash was also the second President of the Rotary Club of Melbourne in 1922–23, a club founded by charter members Professor Osborne and Harold Clapp, both also prominent members of the English-Speaking Union Victoria Branch.

General Sir John Monash was Vice-President of the English-Speaking Union Victoria Branch in 1923–24.³⁹

Dr. Ethel Osborne

Dr. Ethel Osborne was a medical practitioner and industrial health researcher, and the wife of Professor William Osborne.

Ethel Osborne was a founding member of the Lyceum Club in Melbourne, an exclusive women's club of equivalent standing to the Melbourne Club. At its inaugural meeting on 21 March 1912, Osborne was elected the club's first Vice-President.

During the First World War, Ethel Osborne served for two years with the British Ministry of Munitions of War in night welfare work and as head supervisor in ordnance factories. She later published a work environmental report, *Industrial Hygiene as Applied to Munition Workers* (1921) based on this wartime experience.

After the war Ethel Osborne studied medicine at the University of Melbourne, sharing the University's Fulton Prize for obstetrics and gynaecology in 1923. She was a Commonwealth delegate to the fourth and fifth international congresses on industrial accidents and diseases at Amsterdam (1925) and Budapest (1928).

Her lifelong interest in the education of women led to a lifetime involvement with the Emily McPherson College of Domestic Economy. A founding member of its council in 1912, she served as treasurer, vice-president and president (1915–1917 and 1919–1929). When the college's new premises were opened in 1927, its main hall was named after her.

In 1928 Ethel Osborne represented Australia at the Pan-Pacific Women's Conference in Honolulu, chairing the conference's health section. At the second Pan-Pacific Women's Conference (Honolulu, 1930), she was program secretary and liaison officer for the League of Nations.⁴⁰

General Cyril Brudenell White, Branch Vice-President 1923–1924

General White had a profound influence on the organisation of the First Australian Imperial Force (AIF), expanding and restructuring the forces from two divisions to four divisions.

When Bridges was appointed in August 1914 to command the Australian Imperial Force, Lieutenant-Colonel White was his chief of staff. White planned and supervised the Anzac evacuation in Gallipoli, the most successful operation of the campaign. White embarked for France on 29 March 1916 and served there in planning Australian operations.



*Figure 12.14: General Sir C. B. White, Champion of Anzac & ESU Victoria Branch Vice-President 1923–24.*⁴¹

The Battle of Hamel is often seen as the ultimate example of Australian expertise in the art of war. General White developed operational principles that guided the successful Australian campaigns from 1917 in France. These principles included avoiding piecemeal operations; ensuring that advances were limited and focused on attainable objectives; and ensuring proper use of artillery barrages in support of troop advances. These tactics were successfully applied in the Battle of Menin Road on 20 September 1917. Although Monash gained the credit at Hamel, White had prepared the original plans for the operation.

The beliefs, values and principles which White established during this period became the foundations upon which Australian military culture later developed. In this regard, White established himself as the champion of Anzac and Australia's foremost soldier.⁴²

Returning to Australia in June 1919, Sir Brudenell served on a committee which considered the future organisation of the Australian Military Forces. Their report recommended a modified system of compulsory military training and a citizen force structure of six infantry and two mounted divisions – some 180,000 men. These recommendations were rejected by the government and, rather than building a citizen army, as he had hoped, White became responsible for a nucleus military body which would be capable of expansion in an emergency.

General White served as vice-president of the ESU Victoria Branch in 1923–24.⁴³

Claims have been made that White was involved in right-wing 'secret armies' in the 1920s and 1930s. The evidence for such assertions is circumstantial at best, consisting mainly of hearsay in police intelligence files, which alleges that he was a prominent figure in the 'White Army'.

On 13 August 1940, White flew from Melbourne in the company of three Federal ministers, James Fairbairn, Sir Henry Gullett and Geoffrey Street. Their aircraft crashed near Canberra aerodrome, killing all on board.⁴⁴

Herbert Brookes, Branch Vice-President 1925–1926



Figure 12.15: Herbert Brookes.⁴⁵

The Brookes family connection with the English-Speaking Union Victorian Branch was reinforced with the involvement of Sir Norman Brookes's older brother, Herbert Brookes, an active member and later Branch Vice-President.

The relationship between Herbert Brookes and Henry Noyes, who attended the inaugural ESU meeting in London in 1918, was established through their mutual backgrounds as directors of large engineering firms in Melbourne. Noyes was the director of Noyes Brothers, while Herbert Brookes became a director of Austral Otis Engineering Company in 1912 and of Australian Paper Mills, a manufacturing company co-founded in 1895 by Herbert and Norman's father, William Brookes.⁴⁶ Herbert handed over chairmanship of the Australian Paper Mills to his brother Norman Brookes in 1920.

Coincidentally, William Brookes and Henry Noyes also shared a common English county of birth. William Brookes was born in Northampton, Northamptonshire in 1834, while Henry Noyes was born in 1861 in Creaton, a small village about 8 miles north of Northampton.

In another coincidence, given the focus of the ESU on developing ties between British and American kin, Creaton's main claim to fame was as the birthplace of Amphyllis Twigderm, the great-great grandmother of George Washington, first president of the United States of America.

Herbert Brookes had been chairman of the Victorian Chamber of

Manufacturers from 1913 to 1917 and, after the outbreak of war in 1914, was also involved in several key wartime committees, of which the Munitions Committee was the most important. Henry Noyes was a prominent member of both the Victorian Chamber of Manufacturers and the Victorian Munitions Committee, which reaffirmed their ongoing relationship.

Herbert Brookes later put into practical effect ESU's objectives of improved relationships with and better understanding among the English-speaking peoples, serving as Australia's commissioner-general to the United States in 1929. In that capacity, he worked within the British Embassy in Washington, DC as Australia did not have separate diplomatic representation in America at that time.

Writing in 1925 about Anglo-American relations as Vice-President of the English-Speaking Union Victoria Branch, Brookes observed in an article published in the influential US magazine *The Forum* that Anglo-American nations shared a common tongue and common ideals:

*"The Washington Peace Conference, the unveiling of a tablet in Westminster Abbey to the memory of Walter Hines Page, the majestic scene at the welcome to the American Bar Association in Westminster Hall, a gathering unique in world history, are, I think, significant expressions of the ever-increasing spirit of understanding and amity between us....Treaties, Alliances, Ententes are after all mere scraps of paper. Ours are those invincible and ineffable bonds of the spirit. We know your respect and love for the Anzacs, we know the visit of your Fleet was a majestic gesture of your nation-wide appreciation."*⁴⁷

The Brookes family collectively and individually played a significant role in Australian history. Herbert's brother Sir Norman Brookes was an Australian tennis champion, the first non-English-born winner of the Wimbledon tennis male singles championship. Norman was also Australia's Red Cross representative in Egypt and the Middle East from 1916 to 1918. Sir Norman's wife, Dame Mabel Brookes, was a prominent charity worker and president of the Royal Victoria Hospital in Melbourne from 1923 to 1970. Herbert Brookes's wife Ivy, the daughter of Alfred Deakin, a three-time Prime Minister of Australia, was a community worker; a member of the Royal Women's Hospital for over 50 years; the only female Australian representative at the League of Nations General Assembly in Geneva in 1937; and the President of the National Council of Women in Australia.

Herbert, Ivy, Norman and Mabel Brookes were all prominent lifetime members of the ESU Victoria Branch.

Herbert Brookes was probably Alfred Deakin's closest friend and regarded him as a confidante, spiritual advisor and mentor. He travelled with Deakin to London in 1900 for the passing of the Commonwealth Act and after his marriage to Alfred Deakin's eldest daughter, Ivy, moved next door to Deakin's Walsh St home, Llanarth. Brookes's home, named Winwick, became a centre for cultural events in Melbourne.

In 1909 both Herbert and Ivy Brookes were associated with the formation of the original Commonwealth Liberal Party, a merger of liberal protectionists, anti-socialist protectionists and free traders. As Deakin's right-hand man, Herbert was treasurer and fundraiser for the Commonwealth Liberal Party. Brookes later founded the People's Liberal Party in 1911 to support Deakin's political legacy, and financed and edited its monthly journal, *The Liberal*, from 1911 until it ceased publication in 1914. In his will, Alfred Deakin appointed Ivy and Herbert Brookes his literary executors⁴⁸ and Brookes sponsored the 1923 publication of a biography of Deakin by Walter Murdoch, a prominent Australian academic and founding professor of English and later chancellor of the University of Western Australia in Perth.⁴⁹

In a long career dedicated to promoting the interests of Australia and its people, Herbert was a founding member of the Commonwealth Board of Trade (1918–1928) and the Commonwealth Tariff Board (1922–1928); he served as Australian Commissioner-General in the United States of America (1929–1930) and later as the inaugural Vice-Chairman of the Australian Broadcasting Commission (1932–1940). From 1933 until 1947 he was also an active and influential member of the Council of the University of Melbourne.

Herbert and Ivy Brookes were also prominent supporters of cultural endeavours. In 1934, they hosted an intimate piano performance by Australia's foremost pianist Percy Grainger at their home, Winwick, in South Yarra. Brookes, applauding Grainger's efforts to make music an active, rather than a passive, interest in the lives of many thousands of music lovers, expressed his view that "art should not remain a passive thing; it should help to keep alight a spirit of liberation, enlightenment and self-conquest."⁵⁰

Australian Citizen, a biography of Herbert Brookes's life, provides a more comprehensive account of Brookes's impact on Australian society.⁵¹

Donald MacKinnon, Branch President 1925–1926

Donald MacKinnon graduated in law from the University of Melbourne and also studied at New College, Oxford, where he befriended W. A. Spooner, famous for his 'spoonerisms'. MacKinnon became a radical liberal politician in the mould of Alfred Deakin. He was President of the Australian Natives' Association Prahran Branch and he led the Progressive Liberal Association in the Victorian Parliament in 1904, linked with Deakin in the Commonwealth Parliament.

MacKinnon became Victorian attorney-general, solicitor-general and minister of railways in the Victorian government of William Watt, later the Commonwealth treasurer and in 1921, the first ESU Victoria Branch President.

In November 1915, MacKinnon took on the unpaid chairmanship of the Victorian recruiting committee. In that role, he worked closely with Henry Noyes, Australia's representative at the inaugural meeting to establish the English-Speaking Union in London in 1918.

After the failure of the conscription referendums, MacKinnon was appointed the unpaid Commonwealth director-general of recruiting. He set up a structure of central recruiting committees in every federal electorate and local government area and recruiting officers in towns. He travelled constantly on speaking tours and wrote many recruitment pamphlets and articles. His policy was that recruiting must be persuasive and conciliatory, and he appreciated the extraordinary numbers of volunteers Australia had attracted to its armed services.

Like Herbert Brookes, a fellow leading figure in the establishment of the ESU Victoria Branch in Melbourne, MacKinnon was a member of the Board of Trade and Tariff Board. Following in the footsteps of Henry Braddon, the first Branch President of the ESU NSW, MacKinnon became the Australian commissioner in the United States of America in 1923–24, promoting trade and closer relations. He raised Australia's profile in America by establishing relationships with influential American political figures such as Franklin Roosevelt.⁵² Speaking of his role in America, MacKinnon stated: "The Atlantic and the Pacific might materially divide, but if the bond of brotherhood was fostered it would provide a link which neither time nor space could break."⁵³

MacKinnon was also chairman of the Geelong Grammar School Council

from 1917 until 1932 and was a significant benefactor to the school.⁵⁴

He was President of the Victorian Scottish Union, maintaining his Caledonian heritage and in that capacity pursuing a vigorous immigration policy. He served as chairman of trustees of Scots Church, Melbourne for over two decades.

In 1931 Herbert Brookes described him as “one of the finest democrats this country has thrown up from the native soil” and recalled that both of them had imagined when young that Australia could be made a paradise.

D. G. Lumsden, Branch Vice-President 1925–1937

Mr. D. G. Lumsden was the British-born secretary of the Mount Lyell Co. for 25 years.⁵⁵ Mt Lyell near Queenstown, Tasmania was the largest copper mine in Australia and dominated mining in Tasmania for seven decades.

Lumsden was a member of the Australian Club, the Melbourne Scots and the English-Speaking Union, serving as Vice-President from 1925 until his sudden death while overseas in 1937.

Sir James Elder

James Elder was from 1916 a director of Goldsbrough Mort & Co. Ltd; a director of the Union Trustee Co. of Australia Ltd until 1942; and served as director and in 1932–1943 as chairman of the National Bank of Australasia. Elder was also a trade adviser to the Federal Government.

In 1914 he became the representative of the Associated Chambers of Commerce on the Commonwealth Board of Trade, holding that position for the next decade. In that capacity, he worked closely with Herbert Brookes, a founding member of the ESU Victoria Branch.

In 1919 Elder accepted an invitation to investigate trade and investment problems between Australia and Britain. On this unpaid mission, he visited nearly 100 British firms and subsequently several new enterprises were established by British firms in Australia. Elder was also a commissioner of the British Empire Exhibition held in London in 1924 and 1925.

In September 1924, following in the footsteps of Henry Braddon, the President of the ESU NSW Branch, he took up a two-year appointment as Commissioner for Australia in the United States of America, promoting

Australian trade interests, travelling widely, delivering lectures and making extensive use of the new wireless medium.

He was knighted in June 1925 in recognition of his services to Australian trade.⁵⁶ Sir James served on the Victoria Branch Council during the 1920s.

Robert Elliott

Robert Dunlop Elliott was a businessman, newspaper proprietor and Country Party senator. He owned the *Sunraysia Daily* and acquired other country newspapers, including the *Castlemaine Mail* (1932), *Shepparton Advertiser* (1935), *Swan Hill Guardian* and *Wentworth Western Evening News* (1938), *Albury Banner* (1940), *Yarrawonga Chronicle* (1943), *Cobram Courier* (1944), *Maryborough Advertiser* (1945), *Cohuna Farmers' Weekly* (1947) and *Wangaratta Chronicle* (1949). He also controlled radio 3MA (Mildura) from 1932. He was director of Western Newspapers Group and of Australian United Press, and a founding director of the Australian Provincial Daily Press Association (Regional Dailies of Australia Ltd).



Figure 12.16: Senator Robert Elliott.⁵⁷

Elliott was a delegate at Imperial Press Conferences in London in 1930 and South Africa in 1935.

He promoted Dominion food supplies for Britain and supported the primacy of British capital and manufactures for Dominions and colonies with concessions to Dominion manufacturers. Elliott's pamphlet, *The Empire Crusade: Plain Facts for Australians* (1930), appealed to economic advantage and Empire patriotism:

"We have a creed which calls on us to strive for healthy development for the good of our towns, for the good of our districts, for the good of our States, for

the good of our country, and for the good of our Empire. If something meets those requirements, we fight for it."⁵⁸

In 1940 he travelled to England to take up the role of personal adviser to Lord Beaverbrook, assisting him in the Ministry for Aircraft Production.⁵⁹

Elliott was a colleague of Herbert Brookes, an early Victoria Branch member and was later himself an executive member of the ESU Victoria Branch in 1933–34.⁶⁰

Professor William Osborne, Branch President 1926–1929; 1933–1935

William Alexander Osborne was born at Holywood, Down in Ireland and was educated at Queen's College, Belfast, later undertaking post-graduate studies in biochemistry and physics at the University of Tübingen, Germany.

He was a renaissance intellect, able to read and converse in German, French, Italian, Spanish and Norwegian, as well as being familiar with Latin and Greek.

Barry Jones's article in the *Australian Dictionary of Biography* describes him as "tall, athletic, strikingly handsome, blue-eyed and blonde".⁶¹

In 1903, he was appointed professor of physiology at the University of Melbourne, later becoming Dean of the Faculty of Medicine and President of the professorial board (1919–1921).



Figure 12.17: Melbourne University respirator, c. 1917.⁶²

During the First World War he designed an anti-gas respirator (gas mask) in conjunction with Professor Laby, a colleague at the University of Melbourne.

About 1,000 of these respirators were sent to Britain, but none were used in the First World War as they had been superseded by British versions that provided protection from additional poison gases that had been introduced on the battlefield while the Australian version was under production.

In September 1915 Professor Osborne lectured on the need to develop scientific research in Australia. Following a discussion in December between Osborne and Prime Minister Billy Hughes, Hughes promised government support for scientific research. This discussion led to the formation of the Advisory Council of Science and Industry in March 1916, which resulted in the foundation of the Council for Scientific and Industrial Research – the forerunner of the Commonwealth Scientific and Industrial Research Organisation (CSIRO) in Australia.

Osborne was a member of the Victorian Branch of the Round Table from 1910 to 1921, co-founded Melbourne Rotary in 1921, and served as president of the Melbourne Shakespeare Society, chairman of the Free Library Movement, president of the prestigious Royal Society of Victoria 1915–16 and committee member of the Royal Historical Society of Victoria from 1930 to 1937.

He served two separate periods as ESU Victoria Branch President: 1927–29 and 1933–35.

After his period as ESU Branch President, Professor Osborne gave a talk to ESU members in March 1938 about his overseas visit to France, England, Ireland and Germany, revealing that the three most beautiful sights in all his travels were the French countryside, the English cathedrals and the Irish coast. “The only way in which to see England properly is on foot,” he declared. Professor Osborne also observed that, contrary to many opinions, he did not feel that the youth of Germany was groaning under tyranny. “The Hitler youth glows with pride and health,” he said. “The physique of the young people is far better than it was in the days when I was a university student in Germany, when most of the young men were flabby and weedy.”⁶³

Sir Arthur Robinson, Branch President 1929–1933

Arthur Robinson studied law at the University of Melbourne and became a partner in the legal firm that later became Arthur Robinson & Co and subsequently Allens Arthur Robinson. Robinson's firm owed much of its success to the legal business it handled for the powerful Collins House group of companies directed by William Baillieu, another ESU Victoria Branch member.

Robinson's uncle was Australia's first Prime Minister, the protectionist Sir Edmund Barton.

Like ESU's first President, William Watt, Robinson was a member of the Australian Natives' Association and was its president in 1903–1904. Again like Watt, Robinson was an ardent supporter of Federation, having been influenced by discussions with his uncle Edmund Barton, and by Alfred Deakin at his family home.

He was a Victorian Government minister from 1915 and solicitor-general 1918–1924.

Robinson had a prominent role in the creation of the State Electricity Commission, drafting its charter, and as the responsible minister of works, supporting Sir John Monash, chief of the commission and an old acquaintance. Monash was also a vice-president of the ESU Victoria Branch.

Robinson's community activities included supporting Scotch College, where one of the boarding houses bears his name. He was a Scotch College council member from 1922, chairman from 1934–1945 and president of the Old Scotch Collegians' Association for 22 years. Sir Arthur was also a key figure in fundraising for Scotch College's Memorial Hall and Chapel, for which he laid the foundation stone.⁶⁴

In his professional capacity, Robinson was honorary secretary of the Law Institute of Victoria in 1903–1918 and of the Council of Legal Education in 1904–1921. In 1915 he founded the Soldiers' Advice Bureau to supply free legal advice to returning soldiers.

A member of the select Melbourne Round Table group in 1935–1940, he contributed as an Australian and imperial patriot to its deliberations on

the worsening state of international affairs.

Reginald Wilmot, Branch Vice-President 1933–1937

Reginald Wilmot was a leading sports journalist in Melbourne, best known for his coverage of cricket and AFL. He is considered to have coined the term ‘bodyline’ to describe the English intimidatory bowling tactics against Australia’s Test batsmen during the 1932–33 Ashes Test cricket series. Wilmot’s account of this Ashes Test, *Defending the Ashes 1932–1933*, gave an Australian perspective of this historic and controversial series. He was secretary of the Melbourne Athenaeum Club from 1909 until his death in 1949.

The Athenaeum began in Melbourne in 1839 as the Melbourne Mechanics’ Institute and School of Arts, and is the oldest public institution in Victoria. In 1939, Wilmot authored a centenary history of the club.⁶⁵



Figure 12.18: Exterior of Melbourne Athenaeum in Collins St, opposite the Regent Theatre, location of the ESU’s clubrooms in 1930–1932.⁶⁶

Wilmot’s son, Reginald William Winchester (‘Chester’) Wilmot (1911–1954), was a famous Second World War newspaper and radio correspondent and historian.

Wilmot’s daughter Jean married an American and lived in Boston where, as Mrs. Jean Bemis, she became a prominent member of the English-Speaking Union’s Boston Branch and was awarded the King’s Medal in 1946 for her radio broadcasts to Australia and for Red Cross services to Britain.⁶⁷

Reginald Wilmot was inducted to the Australian Football Hall of Fame in 1996 and into the MCG’s ‘Rogues Gallery’ in 1998.

Ivy Brookes, Branch Vice-President 1935–1936

Ivy Brookes was the eldest daughter of Alfred Deakin, Australia's second Prime Minister and one of the leading figures of Australian Federation. As Ivy Deakin, she had been a pupil at George Marshall-Hall's Conservatorium in East Melbourne in 1901, which later became the Melba Conservatorium. Marshall-Hall had been the foundation chairman of music at the University of Melbourne from 1891 to 1900 and was a personal friend of the Heidelberg School painters and of Norman and Lionel Lindsay.



Figure 12.19: Ivy Deakin Brookes held leadership positions across a wide range of organisations in Victoria.⁶⁸

In 1905, Ivy married Herbert Brookes, one of her father's most steadfast supporters. Ivy became the honorary secretary of the Commonwealth Liberal Party (CLP), an organisation which her father, Alfred Deakin, had founded to support the 'Fusion' Liberal Party he created in Federal Parliament. This political party was absorbed into the People's Liberal Party in 1911, in which she also held the position of honorary secretary.

In 1937, Ivy represented Australia at the League of Nations Assembly in Geneva, as the only woman in the Australian delegation.⁶⁹

She was one of the Australian delegates at the International Council of Women's 50th Anniversary Conference, held in Scotland in 1938. As a delegate to the National Council of Women of Australia (NCWA), Brookes chaired its press, arts and letters, and peace and international relations committees for a number of years. She was elected national President in 1948, serving until 1953.

She was the inaugural Vice-President of the Anti-Cancer Council of

Victoria, from 1936 to 1966. A later ESU Victoria Branch President, Sir William Kilpatrick, was also an active executive member of this body.

Ivy and her husband were dedicated philanthropists who supported many educational and cultural initiatives.

In 1920, Ivy Brookes supported an appeal by the Church of England Girls' Grammar School in South Yarra to extend the school. The appeal sought £10,000 to purchase a property adjoining the school grounds. The Brookes family donated £1,000 to this appeal.⁷⁰ The Brookes family subsequently endowed a new wing for the University of Melbourne music faculty, providing 17 extra teaching rooms, a lecture room, a new library, cafeteria and staff rooms.⁷¹

Ivy Brookes remained a member of the Faculty of Music from 1926 until 1969, and with Herbert Brookes supported the establishment of the Melbourne Symphony Orchestra through the Lady Northcote Trust Fund.

Ivy was also a founding member of the University of Melbourne's boards of physical education (1938–1970) and social studies (1941–1967).

As a key member of the ESU Victoria Branch Council, Ivy Brookes was responsible for organising hospitality for the US Naval Fleet visit to Melbourne in 1925. Her organising ability resulted in an attendance of 2,000 members and guests at a gala ball held in St Kilda to welcome the US Fleet officers and sailors. This high-profile success contributed to the strong growth in branch membership in succeeding years.

Sir Walter Leitch, Branch President 1935–1937

Sir Walter Leitch managed the Australian operations of the London-based Quaker firm of Joseph Baker & Sons, manufacturers and exporters of baking and confectionery machinery. His firm was involved in war production in Australia from 1915, at first manufacturing field kitchens and later undertaking munitions engineering. In June 1915 he was appointed to the Commonwealth Munitions Committee, which supplied Britain with Australian steel. He worked closely on this committee with Herbert Brookes, a leading ESU branch member.

In 1917, Leitch became director of the newly established Commonwealth Bureau of Commerce and Industry. In the course of his official duties, Leitch had contact with nearly all of Australia's leading politicians, civil servants and businessmen.

In 1929, Leitch was appointed Victorian agent-general in London, the first non-political occupant of the post, serving in the position for four years. He was a leading figure in the Scots community in Melbourne.⁷²

Sir Walter Leitch served as Branch President from 1935 to 1937.

Sir Charles Lowe, Branch President 1937–1939; 1942–1946

Sir Charles John Lowe was a judge of the Supreme Court of Victoria and chancellor of the University of Melbourne. He was knighted in 1948 and was appointed Knight Commander of the Order of St. Michael and St. George (KCMG) in 1956. Between 1927 and 1935 he also served on the council of Trinity College with Dr. Alexander Leeper.

During a record 37 years on the Supreme Court bench, Lowe won a reputation as one of the notable judges of the 20th century by meticulous application of the law. “No one could be as wise as Sir Charles Lowe looks,” Sir Robert Menzies observed. He was the acting chief justice in 1944 when Sir Edmund Herring was formally appointed to the role.

His sense of humour also distinguished him from other judges. A counsel in a divorce case sought to prove a husband a ‘perjurer’ for claiming to be teetotal while drinking up to six beers a night. “I suppose that makes the condition of being teetotal a little more tolerable,” Justice Lowe commented.

Lowe served as chancellor of the University of Melbourne from 1941 to 1954. At the university’s centenary celebrations, Sir John Medley, an eminent former university vice-chancellor, described Lowe as “one of the greatest men who have served this University”.⁷³

Sir Charles also undertook many government inquiries in his judicial capacity. In 1942, he was appointed to inquire into the Japanese air raids on Darwin on 19 February. The day after his arrival in Darwin, he telegraphed the minister for defence coordination: “Absolutely imperative Darwin be strengthened; vulnerable to any major attack”.

Lowe’s last royal commission was undertaken for the state of Victoria to report on the “origins, aims, objects and funds of the Communist Party in Victoria and its activities and operations”. He sat from June 1949 to March 1950, examining 159 witnesses and compiling 10,000 pages of record.

Scrupulous as always, Lowe never allowed his investigation to become a witch hunt.⁷⁴

Reporting with “painstaking fair-mindedness”, Lowe found that “the Communist Party is prepared to use any means to achieve what it thinks to be a desirable object”, and that it “does not hold itself bound to obey laws which it regards as oppressive”. His meticulous examination of allegations of rigging of union elections found some proved but not all; and, on the issue of the party’s purported allegiance to a foreign power, he found the evidence insufficient to support allegations of espionage. Party members praised Lowe, but others have criticised him for failing to uncover acts of espionage that have since been revealed.⁷⁵ The report was overtaken before it was formally released when Sir Robert Menzies introduced the Communist Party Dissolution Bill the day before Lowe’s report was issued on 28 April 1950.

In 1959, Lowe broke the former record of 32 years as a judge of the Victorian Supreme Court. He did not formally retire until 1964, but presided over his last case on 17 December 1962, at the age of 82. Every one of the 43 judges gathered in the court for his official farewell had appeared before him as a barrister.⁷⁶

Professor Ernest Willington Skeats, Branch President 1940–1942

Skeats was born in Southampton, England, and studied at Royal College of Science, London. Skeats moved to Australia in 1904, becoming a professor of geology and mineralogy at the University of Melbourne. He specialised in petrology and stratigraphy. Skeats served as Dean of the University of Melbourne’s Faculty of Science in 1910–1915 and was President of the Professorial Board in 1922–24. He retired in 1941 as professor emeritus.

Skeats was also President of the Royal Society of Victoria 1910–11. The Royal Society had been founded in 1854 and is Victoria’s oldest learned society, playing an important role in the formation of government policy on science, surveying the natural resources of Victoria, establishing the Museum of Victoria and national parks, convening the first Australian Antarctic Exploration Committee in 1885, and organising the Burke and Wills expedition.

He was awarded the Clarke Medal, the most prestigious award of the Royal Society of New South Wales, in 1929.

Skeats was elected President of the ESU Victoria Branch in 1940 and stood down as President in 1942, following his retirement from the University of Melbourne in 1941.⁷⁷

Sir Owen Dixon, Branch President 1946–1960

Sir Owen Dixon studied law at the University of Melbourne and after graduation was commissioned to work on the consolidation of Victorian statutes, a task he shared with Sir Arthur Robinson. Both Robinson and Dixon were later to become presidents of the ESU Victoria Branch. Appointed a King's Counsel in 1922, Dixon came to exercise absolute dominance over the Bar, becoming the acknowledged leader and the greatest advocate among Australia's premier barristers.

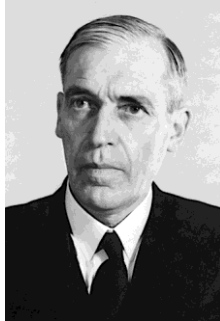


Figure 12.20: Dixon was appointed to the High Court in 1929; at 42, he was the youngest member of the High Court bench.⁷⁸

At the start of the Second World War, Dixon drafted the government charter for the second Australian Imperial Force (AIF). The charter stated that the force was to be Australian with an Australian commander responsible to the Australian Government. As with the first AIF, the expeditionary force was not to be divided among British forces as reinforcements.

In April 1942, Prime Minister John Curtin chose Sir Owen to succeed Baron Casey as Australian minister in Washington. One of Dixon's most important tasks was to ensure that the United States of America did not lose sight of the war in the Pacific and that Australia's interests were not neglected. He also represented Australia on the Pacific War Council, advancing the need for a concerted Pacific war strategy.⁷⁹ In this work, Dixon had insisted that he report directly to Curtin, as he distrusted the Australian Foreign Affairs Minister Dr. Evatt.

President Roosevelt affirmed the effectiveness of Dixon's diplomatic overtures, stating publicly that:

*"The close bonds of blood and sentiment which unite Australia and America are now drawn ever firmer by our common struggle against the forces of conquest and tyranny. We now stand comrades in arms, defending our common liberty, and our existence as a free people. We have walked through dark days together; we share the awful sacrifices of war. The American fighting forces now stand guard in Australia side by side with the gallant Anzacs. The creation of the Pacific War Council in Washington now provides machinery for continued consultation through personal contact and for pooling all views on the conduct of the war."*⁸⁰

Dixon's view was that "Australia one day will be a great nation, forming a stronghold in the South Pacific of English-speaking peoples."⁸¹

Dixon resumed his High Court role in 1944. Appointed Chief Justice of the High Court of Australia on 18 April 1952, Dixon held this office for 12 years.

As a judge, Dixon employed the common law method in his judgements with rare skill. He took the view that there was "no other safe guide to judicial decisions in great conflicts than a strict and complete legalism". It is legalism, in the sense of the "strict logic and high technique" of the common law, which permeates his judgements. In particular, he considered it essential that the common law method should be applied to the construction of the Commonwealth Constitution in order to maintain public confidence in the court's judgements as apolitical. Dixon was faithful to the best traditions of the common law. He regarded it as his duty to apply the law accurately and to give effect to Parliament's intentions as revealed in the statutes that he was required to construe.⁸²

Consistent with his endorsement of the common law method, Dixon believed that the doctrine of precedent was of paramount importance.

He staunchly opposed proposals to move the High Court from Melbourne to Canberra and in fact opposed the court having a permanent seat anywhere because he thought the court should not be removed from the people. He considered that the High Court should be an Australian Court, going to the people rather than requiring the people to come to it.

While having a stern countenance, Dixon enjoyed a dry sense of humour. When Robert Menzies, a junior to Dixon when he was King's Counsel, entered politics, Dixon observed: "Well, Menzies, it is quite easy, I am told, to

convert a good lawyer into a good politician. But reconversion is impossible.”⁸³

He was considered by most legal practitioners as the greatest judicial lawyer in the English-speaking world and the most distinguished living exponent of the common law. His judgements carried persuasive effect wherever the common law was applied. Both the Owen Dixon Chambers in Melbourne and the Sir Owen Dixon Chambers in Sydney, offices of Australia’s leading barristers, are named in his honour. In recognition of his decades of outstanding judicial service, Sir Owen Dixon was one of a rare number of Australians elected an honorary member of the prestigious American Academy of Arts and Sciences, whose original members include Benjamin Franklin and George Washington.⁸⁴

A man of grace, decorum and soundness, Sir Owen Dixon’s contribution to the activities of the Felton Bequests Committee remains an example of the important voluntary work a jurist possessing a classically equipped mind can perform on behalf of both the public and the arts. The Felton Bequest had been established under the terms of the will of Alfred Felton to benefit and make purchases of public art collections on behalf of the National Gallery of Victoria. Sir Owen Dixon joined the committee in 1945 and in 1956 was appointed chairman, a post he retained until August 1965.⁸⁵

Sir Reginald Sholl, Branch President 1961–1965

Sir Reginald Richard Sholl was a barrister, judge and Australian diplomat. He won a Rhodes scholarship in 1924, based on his university results and sporting achievements in AFL, cricket and lacrosse. After completing his studies at Oxford University, he practised law in Melbourne.

He served in the Australian Imperial Force from 1942 as a staff captain at Allied Forces Land Headquarters, Melbourne and later as part of New Guinea Force, Port Moresby (1943–44).

In the post-war period, he advised the Returned Sailors’ Soldiers’ and Airmen’s Imperial League of Australia on how to rid its ranks of suspected communists, and was the leading counsel assisting the Royal Commission into the Communist Party in Victoria (1949), chaired by Sir Charles Lowe, another former ESU Victoria Branch President. He was appointed to the Supreme Court of Victoria in 1950. His criticism of Victoria Police interrogation techniques in 1965 led to the introduction of formal records of interview in police procedures.

Sir Reginald Sholl was elected to the Victoria Branch Council in 1950, and became vice-president in 1953 and deputy president in 1958. During his period on the council, Sir Reginald was part of the selection panel for the King George VI Memorial scholarships, worked to establish the Winston Churchill Memorial Trust and was chairman of the ESU Scholarship committee. Sir Reginald was also a trustee of the National Gallery of Victoria, and a foundation member and chairman of the national selection committee awarding fellowships in the Winston Churchill Memorial Trust.⁸⁶

He was elected ESU Victoria Branch President in 1961 and resigned in 1965, prior to being appointed Australia's consul-general to the United States, following in the footsteps of Herbert Brookes. He was also elected ESU Federal President in 1961–63 and again for the period 1969–1973. In 1970, he became commissioner of the Overseas Bureau, responsible for the Australian Volunteers Abroad scheme.

He was a forthright commentator, courting controversy by speaking at Australian League of Rights events. He warned about the consequences of non-white immigration, publicly stating that his years as consul-general in the United States “had shown him quite clearly what disorders and problems a racial minority produced”.⁸⁷

Edna Wark, Branch President 1966–1967

Edna Wark, the daughter of Sir Charles Lowe, a leading Branch member and president in 1937–39 and 1942–46, was first elected to the Victoria Branch Council in 1934.

She was the principal organiser of ESU hospitality for visitors to the Melbourne Olympic Games in 1956 as well as undertaking the roles of chairman of the Branch's Hospitality Committee and honorary secretary of the Education Committee.

In the early 1960s, she organised country trips and accommodation for Fulbright scholars and exchange teachers.

In 1964, she was appointed national ESU coordinator for British work experience students in Australia.

Mrs. Wark served as Branch President in 1966–67, during which time the branch's hospitality and liaison role with British student visits achieved prominence.

Sir William Kilpatrick, Branch President 1968–1972

Sir William Kilpatrick was a Branch Vice-President in 1965 and was elected Deputy President in 1966. He was elected ESU Victoria Branch President in 1968 and continued to serve the branch in this role until 1972.

He served in the Royal Australian Air Force from 1942 as an identification officer in a number of fighter sectors in the South West Pacific Area, and was promoted to acting squadron leader in 1945.

In 1946 Kilpatrick established an import company, Business Equipment Holdings Pty Ltd, which in 1965 employed 1,000 people in 30 offices across Australia.

He also raised funds for war veterans' and war nurses' homes, and was a Melbourne City councillor from 1958 to 1964.

His most significant role was as a fundraiser for medical research with the Anti-Cancer Council of Victoria (1957–1976), having been founding president of the Australian Cancer Society in 1961–64. In 1960–64 he was the first vice-president of the National Heart Foundation of Australia and in 1970–72 chairman of the National Drug Education Committee.

To support these charities, Kilpatrick introduced door knocking for public donations, a concept copied from the United States of America. He directed the three largest charity appeals of their time in Australia: the 1958 Anti-Cancer Campaign, which raised £1,350,000; the 1961 National Heart Appeal (raising £2,562,745); and the Winston Churchill Memorial Appeal of 1965, which doubled its original target of £1 million to support the Churchill Memorial Trust, of which Kilpatrick was founding national president (1965–1980) and patron (1980–85).⁸⁸

Sir William Kilpatrick was national chairman of the Churchill Trust from 1965 until 1975 and then served as national president from 1975 until 1980. Upon his death in 1985, the Board named a perpetual fellowship in his honour due to his dedicated work on behalf of the Churchill Trust.

During his presidency, ESU Victoria Branch continued to sponsor the working visits of British and European students. The program attained a peak of 300 visiting undergraduate students in 1974. In 1971, the Victoria Branch inaugurated a scheme to allow Australian university undergraduates

to undertake working visits to Britain.⁸⁹

Highlights of his period as Victoria Branch President included hosting the branch's 50th anniversary jubilee banquet in 1969 and the gala dinner in the Great Hall of the National Gallery of Victoria on 26 February 1970 in honour of Sir Alec Douglas-Home, former British Prime Minister. This event featured Sir Robert Menzies, former Australian Prime Minister, as guest speaker and was attended by 470 branch members and friends.

Sir John Knott, Branch President 1973–1986

Sir John Knott was secretary of Commonwealth Departments of Defence Production and Supply and a member of the Australian Defence Mission to the United States in 1957. He served as Australia's deputy high commissioner in London 1966–68 and was Australia's Postmaster General 1968–1972.

During his period as Victoria Branch President, the branch hosted the ESU World Members' Conference in Melbourne in 1983 and held a series of lectures in 1979 featuring Sir Zelman Cowen, Sir John Young and Sir Billy Snedden as guest speakers to celebrate the Victoria Branch's Diamond Jubilee, culminating in a Diamond Jubilee ball at Melbourne's Old Customs House in June 1979.

Sir Billy Snedden, Branch Vice-President 1979–1987

Sir Billy Snedden had an extensive parliamentary career, commencing in 1955. He was Commonwealth attorney-general in 1963–66; minister for immigration and treasurer in 1971–72 and leader of the Parliamentary Liberal Party in 1972–75. Like William Watt, the ESU Victoria Branch's inaugural president, Snedden was also speaker of the Commonwealth House of Representatives from 1976–78.

Sir Billy's first association with the ESU Victoria Branch was as a guest lecturer in the branch's Diamond Jubilee lectures in October 1979. He spoke on the Constitution, Parliament and the Westminster Heritage.

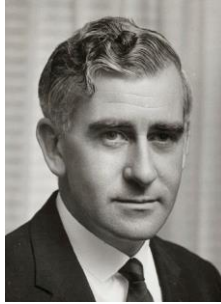


Figure 12.21: Sir Billy Snedden.⁹⁰

In that year, he formally unveiled the ESU Victoria Branch presidents' board.

As branch vice-president, Sir Billy chaired the ESU Stuart Devlin Craftsman's Award Committee from 1980 to 1987.

Sir John Minogue, Branch Vice-President 1982–1989

John Minogue was a barrister and a judge who also served as Vice-President of the ESU Victoria Branch from 1982 until his death in 1989.

Minogue served in the Australian Army from 1941 to 1946. In October 1942, when Australian troops were fighting in the mud of the Kokoda Trail, Lieutenant Colonel Minogue was the first senior staff officer to slog to the front line where the bullets were thickest. In 1945–46 he was a member of the Australian Military Mission in Washington.

He was appointed Queen's Counsel in 1957 and later appointed a judge of the Supreme Court of the Territory of Papua and New Guinea in 1962. He had been hand-picked by the Minister for Territories Paul Hasluck, who was determined that the emerging nation should have a strong and independent judiciary. Minogue served as chief justice of the Supreme Court of Papua and New Guinea from 1970 to 1974. During his period on the court, he took the court on circuit to all parts of the territory and presided over more than 500 murder trials.

He was pro-chancellor of the fledgling University of Papua and New Guinea.

He was later appointed Victorian Law Reform Commissioner from 1977 to

1982, making recommendations on the law of provocation and diminished responsibility in murder.⁹¹

Alan Barker, Branch President 1986–1991

Alan Barker's mother had been an early member of the ESU Victoria Branch and Alan joined the Victoria Branch in 1959. He was elected to ESU Council in 1960 and was appointed Deputy President in 1974, working with Sir John Knott. For his dedication to the aims and ideals of the English-Speaking Union, Alan Barker was awarded an MBE in the 1980 Queen's Birthday Honours List.⁹²

Barker became President of the Victoria Branch in 1986 and retired in 1991. During his period as President, the branch promoted cultural events such as the Stuart Devlin Craftsman Award, and art and sculpture exhibitions, as well as educational programs, including the ESU Travelling Scholarship.

Sir Bernard Callinan, Branch Vice-President 1986–1995



Figure 12.22: Bernard Callinan in command of the 26th Battalion, Bougainville, 1945.⁹³

Bernard Callinan was an Australian soldier, civil engineer, businessman and administrator.

In March 1941, he volunteered for overseas service and joined the Second Australian Imperial Force, taking up a posting as an instructor at the Demolitions Wing, at the 7th Infantry Training Centre. He was promoted captain in July 1941, and subsequently posted as the second-in-command to the 2/2nd Independent Company, deploying to Timor as part of Sparrow

Force in December 1941. He subsequently led these commandos during their campaign on the island and in July 1942 was temporarily promoted to major.

In early 1945, he was promoted to lieutenant colonel and assumed command of the 26th Battalion, leading these troops throughout the Bougainville Campaign.

For his wartime service he was awarded the Distinguished Service Order and Military Cross for outstanding leadership and gallantry.

Callinan was a civil engineer by training and practised in this field for 40 years, specialising in urban planning. He held many positions in the commercial field, including director of CSR Ltd, director of British Petroleum Company of Australia, chairman of the new Federal Parliament House Construction Authority, commissioner of the Australian Broadcasting Corporation (ABC) and the State Electricity Commission of Victoria (SEC), and deputy chancellor of La Trobe University.⁹⁴

Dame Joan Hammond, Branch Vice-President 1990–1996

Joan Hammond was born in Christchurch, New Zealand and moved to Sydney, Australia as a child.

She studied opera singing in Vienna in 1936 and later studied in London. She toured widely, and became noted particularly for her Puccini roles. She returned to Australia for concert tours in 1946, 1949 and 1953, and starred in the second Elizabethan Theatre Trust opera season in 1957. She undertook world concert tours between 1946 and 1961. Her autobiography, *A Voice, a Life*, was published in 1970.

Dame Joan Hammond appeared in the major opera houses of the world – the Royal Opera House, La Scala, the Vienna State Opera and the Bolshoi. Her fame in Britain came not just from her stage appearances but also from her recordings. She made famous the aria ‘O mio Bambino Caro’ from Puccini’s opera *Gianni Schicchi*. Recorded in English under the title ‘O My Beloved Father’, it earned Hammond a Gold Record Award for one million sold copies on 27 August 1969. Hammond’s repertoire also encompassed Verdi, Handel, Tchaikovsky, Massenet, Beethoven, as well as folk song, art song and lieder.

She became patron and a life member of the Melbourne-based Victorian Opera Company – known as the Victorian State Opera (VSO) since 1976. She was its artistic director from 1971 until 1976 and remained on the board until 1985. She became an Honorary Life Member of Opera Australia. She was important to the success of both the VSO and Opera Australia.

Hammond embarked on a career as a voice teacher after her performance career ended. In 1975, she was appointed the head of the voice faculty at the Victorian College of the Arts, where she remained until her retirement 17 years later in 1992. In that time she trained an extraordinary number of Australian singers who had successful careers in Australia and on the international stage.

Dame Joan was an active supporter of the ESU and arranged concerts at ESU House with her Victorian College of the Arts students. In 1997, following Dame Joan's death, the ESU supported the establishment of the Dame Joan Hammond Foundation for aspiring opera performers.⁹⁵

David White, Branch President 1991–2005

David White, an accountant, joined the Victoria Branch in 1958 and was first elected to ESU Council in 1967. He was appointed Vice-President in 1972 in recognition of his many years of active participation in branch activities, including his role in fundraising and as chairman of the House and Premises Committee, responsible for the extensive alterations to the ballroom in ESU House. David's wife, Sheila White, was ESU secretary from 1976 to 1997 and helped organise the successful 1983 ESU World Members' Conference in Melbourne.

During his period as Victoria Branch President, David had to deal with a fracturing of relationships between the long-standing branches of Victoria, New South Wales and South Australia, and the Queensland Branch. This internal dispute between ESU branches in Australia led to the establishment of two conflicting national ESU bodies, which saw the Victoria Branch joining with the SA and NSW branches to form the Australian National Federation of the English-Speaking Union in 1998. The escalating dispute with the Queensland Branch led to legal proceedings in 1998–99, which absorbed considerable branch funds and resources.⁹⁶

James Meeny, Branch President 2005–2010

James Meeny joined the Victoria Branch in the 1990s and was elected President in 2005. He was closely involved in extended consultation over several years to broker a resolution to the impasse that had led to two separate national bodies purporting to represent the English-Speaking Union in Australia. The first body – the Australian National Federation of ESUs (ANFESU) – comprised the NSW, SA & Victoria state branches; the other body – the ESU of Australia (ESUA) – centred on the ESU Queensland Branch.

His efforts eventually came to formal fruition in 2014 with the establishment of a single national body – the Australian ESU.

During his period as President, the Victoria Branch confronted an array of financial and membership challenges, which he successfully navigated while focusing efforts on the branch's educational programs.

Robert Furlan, Branch President 2010–Current



Figure 12.23: Robert Furlan at Dartmouth House, London during the ESU London's centenary celebrations in 2018.

Robert Furlan is a University of Melbourne law and arts graduate, with post-graduate qualifications in business. He joined the ESU Victoria Branch in 1996 and was elected branch treasurer in 2006. He was elected President in 2010, following the retirement of James Meeny.

Under his presidency, the ESU Victoria Branch became a registered Australian charity in 2014, expanded its educational sponsorships, and sponsored and organised a competition in 2015 for secondary students in Australia to celebrate the 800th anniversary of the Magna Carta. He also re-

established the Sir Owen Dixon Library.

In 2014, Robert was elected the first chairman of a re-established national body, the Australian English-Speaking Union which incorporates all Australian ESU branches and re-established the previously fractured relationship between key state ESU branches. Robert also chaired the Council of British and Commonwealth Societies in 2019.

In 2016, he guided the Victoria Branch through the difficult decision to sell ESU's South Yarra property and the move in 2017 to new branch clubrooms in a heritage building in Ascot Vale.

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