

Australian Studies at the Lodz University: Co-operation Between the British and Commonwealth Studies Department, University of Lodz, and the Australian Embassy in Poland

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Abstract

The article discusses the history of academic co-operation between the British and Commonwealth Studies Department at the University of Lodz and the Australian Embassy in Poland. Over the years the co-operation took the shape of a regular academic exchange and led to substantial academic, educational and cultural projects on Australia which resulted in a number of book-length studies.

Keywords: Australian studies, Australian Embassy in Poland, British and Commonwealth Studies Department, University of Lodz

Co-operation Between the British and Commonwealth Studies Department, University of Lodz, and the Australian Embassy in Poland started in 1998 when Margaret Adamson was the Ambassador of Australia in Poland. It included academic, educational and cultural fields of interest.

Academic projects

1999–2000

“Culture At the Local and Global Levels: British and Commonwealth Contributions to World Civilisation” and “Australia’s Cultural Diversity as a Foundation for National Identity and Unity”.

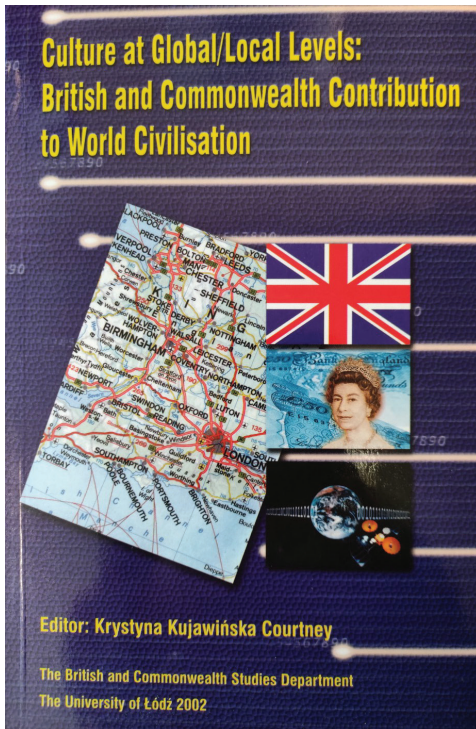


Illustration 1. Book cover.

Photo: Beata Gradowska

The results of these projects were published in the monograph *Culture at Global/Local Levels: British and Commonwealth Contribution to World Civilisation*, ed. Krystyna Kujawińska Courtney, Łódź: Wydawnictwo Biblioteka, 2002, pp. 303.

2000-2002

“Australian Multiculturalism to Poland and Beyond in the Perspective of European Integration.”

The British and Commonwealth Studies Department (University of Lodz) co-operated with three Australian universities: the Australian National University; the University of Southern Queensland; Adelaide University as well as the Australian Embassy in Poland. The project included the organisation of a cycle of symposia devoted to Australian multiculturalism in selected Polish cities and towns: e.g. Łódź, Warsaw, Gdańsk, Kraków, Wrocław and Natolin. Her Excellency Margaret Adamson, Dr Krzysztof Batorowicz (The University of Southern Queensland), Marek Edelman and Krzysztof Zanussi participated in the seminar organized in Lodz. “Australian Days” accompanied the symposia, which included showings of Australian cinematography (6 movies) preceded by lectures, exhibitions of Australian culture and Australian cuisine in major restaurants.

2003

The *International Studies. Interdisciplinary Political and Cultural Journal* published a special thematic volume presenting the outcomes of the project: *Australian Multiculturalism to Poland and Beyond in the Perspective of European Integration*, ed. Krystyna Kujawińska Courtney, 2003, vol. 5, no 1.



Illustration 2. /S volume cover

Educational projects

2002–2003

The eminent Australian professors: Jerzy Zubrzycki, Jerzy Smolicz and Krzysztof Batorowicz gave a two-week course in Australian studies to the students of the British and Commonwealth Studies, University of Lodz.



Illustration 3. Jerzy Benedykt Zubrzycki

Source: public domain

Jerzy Benedykt Zubrzycki (1920–2009) the father of Australian multicultural policy. Prof Zubrzycki lectured at the Australian National University in Canberra, where in 1970 he founded the faculty of sociology. He was the chairman of Australian Ethnic Council and a member of Australian Institute of Multicultural Affairs. Professor Zubrzycki initiated the publication of an international periodical *The Australian and New Zealand Journal of Sociology*.



Illustration 4. Jerzy Jarosław Smolicz

Source: public domain

Jerzy Jarosław Smolicz (1935–2006) was the director of the Centre for Intercultural Studies and Multicultural Education at the Adelaide University and one of the developers and champions of the Australian multicultural policy. His academic research centered on cultural multiculturalism in multiethnic societies. He lectured in e.g. Great Britain, USA, New Zealand, India, Canada, and Germany. Professor Smolicz was awarded the Order of Australia for his work in multicultural and linguistic education, and the Order of Merit of the Republic of Poland. In 2002 the UNESCO granted him the Linguapax Prize.



Illustration 5. Krzysztof Batorowicz

Source: public domain

Prof. Krzysztof Batorowicz was the founder and director of the Multicultural Centre at the University of Southern Queensland, Toowoomba. He authored many monographs and scholarly articles devoted to the multicultural problematics.

Australian academics employed in the Department of British and Commonwealth Studies:

- Professor Garvin Perram, PhD – 2000–2002 and 2007–2008
- Professor Michael Goddard, PhD – 2004–2006
- Professor Justine Lloyd, PhD – 2003–2004
- Professor Jerzy Zubrzycki, PhD -2000/2001
- dr Gaye Pool, PhD – 2001/2002
- dr Krzysztof Batorowicz, PhD – 2000/2001
- Evan Williams MA – 2006/2007

In the years 2004–2010 Professor Maria Łukowska, PhD, served as the director of the Australian Studies specialisation and conducted MA seminars for the students of the Faculty of International and Political Studies at the University of Lodz.

Cultural projects

2003

The Department organised the *In Deserts, Forests, and Orchards: Meetings with Papua and Aboriginal Culture* conference together with the Łódź Archeological Museum. A rich collection of material culture exhibits and film presentations of various documentaries accompanied the conference. The outcome took the form of a collection of essays *Wśród pustyń, buszu, lasów i ogrodów: spotkania z kulturą Papuasów i Aborygenów*, eds. Krystyna Kujawińska Courtney, Bronisława Kopczyńska-Jaworska, and Anna Nadolska-Styczyńska, Łódź: Wydawnictwo Biblioteka, 2003, pp. 137.



Illustration 6. Book cover

Photo: Beata Gradowska

2004

In 2004 the Department published *Shakespeare's Local Habitation*, a collection of essays authored by international scholars, mainly researchers affiliated with Australian universities.

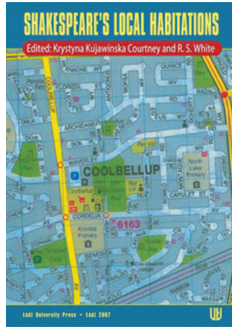


Illustration 7. Book cover

Photo: Beata Gradowska

Shakespeare's Local Habitations. Eds. Krystyna Kujawińska Courtney and Robert S. White. Łódź: Łódź University Press, 2007.

2005

In 2005 the Department organised an international conference *Multiculturalism At the Start of 21st Century. The British-Polish Experience. Australian Theory and Practice* attended by representatives of many countries e.g. Australia, Sweden, Great Britain, Russia. The event was sponsored by the Embassy of Australia in Poland.

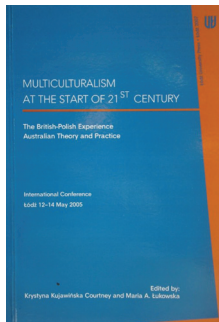


Illustration 8. Book cover

Photo: Beata Gradowska

The publication *Multiculturalism At the Start of 21st Century. The British-Polish Experience. Australian Theory and Practice*. Eds. Krystyna Kujawinska Courtney and Maria Lukowska. Łódź: Łódź University Press, 2007.

Other selected forms of co-operation with Australia

In 2001 the Department hosted a delegation of members of Australian parliament: Senator Chris Schacht, Senator for South Australia, Shadow Minister for Veterans' Affairs, and others who delivered lectures. A number of lectures by Australian novelists and poets were organised in co-operation with the Lodz City Council and together with Teatr Małych Form [Small Forms Theatre] in Lodz two shows of the Australian Kropka theatre. It was at that time that four visits by Professor Sev Ozdowski, Ph.D. were held. Professor Ozdowski gave lectures for students and staff members. In 2003 Professor Ozdowski was the Minister of multiculturalism and Immigration in the Australian government. He works currently at the Western Sydney University. He often supports our academic activities with books and periodicals.



Illustration 9. Sev Ozdowski

Source: public domain

Activities of the Australian Studies Academic Work Group

In 2003 the Faculty established an Academic Work Group devoted to Australian Studies. Its aim was to propagate our research in various periodicals, conferences, projects, symposia and lectures.

Over the years the Department received over 1000 books, encyclopedias and periodicals from the Embassy. In 2004 the Embassy donated to us Australian DVDs and a TV set.



Illustration 10. The departmental Australian Studies Centre

Photo: Beata Gradowska

In 2013 the University of Lodz awarded the Australian Embassy in Poland the *Medal Universitatis Lodziensis Amico* upon the request from the British and Commonwealth Department.



Illustration 11. University of Lodz medal *Medal Universitatis Lodziensis Amico*

Photo: Beata Gradowska

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