



FOURTH ANNUAL LECTURE PRESENTED BY  
THE ANU ARCHIVES PROGRAM  
& FRIENDS OF THE NOEL BUTLIN ARCHIVES CENTRE

PUBLIC LECTURE SERIES 2005

# TRADESMEN'S ENTRANCE:

## The contribution of trade journals to understanding capitalism in Australia

### Humphrey McQueen

Author and Commentator

Wednesday 25 May, 6.30pm  
Manning Clark Centre, Lecture Theatre 3, ANU

This lecture is free and open to the public.  
Enquiries: 6125 2219



#### THE LECTURE

The lecture draws attention to a neglected body of Australian journalism, namely, trade periodicals. Between the 1880s and 1960s Australian employer organisations produced over 1000 trade journals – each significant for tracing changes in technology and marketing. Mr McQueen argues that these publications provide rich material not only for media studies, but also offer insights into how capitalism works. This lecture will draw on trade journals from the first half of the 20th century as sources for an alternative analysis of expansion of capital in terms of tariffs and arbitration. He points to a different kind of 'settlement', one between price fixing, standardisation, cost accounting, piece rates and the limitation on customer choice.

#### THE LECTURER

Australia's leading Marxist author and commentator Humphrey McQueen is an independent historian based in Canberra. He is a member of the editorial board of *Seeing Red*, the quarterly magazine of the Socialist Alliance. His publications have dealt with art, the media, Japan and several aspects of Australian history. His most recent book is *The Essence of Capitalism*, a Marxist history of Coca-Cola. Mr McQueen is currently working on a history of the Builders Labourers' Federation using the BLF records held at the Noel Butlin Archives Centre.

NOEL BUTLIN ARCHIVES CENTRE – DOCUMENTING AUSTRALIANS AT WORK