

The Australian Adam Smith Club
(Melbourne)



1983-2003
20th Anniversary Dinner

**With an Address by
Foundation President David Sharp
and Award to Frank Penhalluriack**

Tuesday 18th November, 2003

Universal Cafe, 424 Burwood Road, Hawthorn

THE CLUB OBJECTIVES

The Australian Adam Smith Club (Melbourne) was formed in 1983, to promote and explore the further understanding of the principles and works of Adam Smith and like minded thinkers.

Members of the club take an uncompromising stand in the support of:

- * private property
- * freedom of contract
- * freedom from coercion by others
- * freedom of trade and enterprise in the market, both domestically and internationally
- * freedom of the individual within the framework of minimal government activity
- * freedom of movement of capital and labour throughout the world

Further, the Club has been formed to publicise the dangers to our civilisation of the consequences of the failure to promote the principles of freedom in the battle of ideas.

Membership is welcomed and is opened to any person who will support the objects of the Club as outlined above.

ACTIVITIES OF THE CLUB

Dinner meetings are held six times a year, generally between March and November. At each meeting, a guest speaker presents his or her views on some issue of importance. Some formal debates have also been hosted. Past speakers have included:

Prof Lachlan Chipman
John Hyde
Hugh Morgan
Dr Christopher Lingle
Angela Ryan

Prof Geoffrey Blainey
The Hon Bert Kelly
Imre Salusinszky
Martin Lee QC
Bob Santamaria

The Club sells books by Adam Smith and works on related topics at our meetings, the distinctive club tie is also available from our book stall.

The Club produces a newsletter *Laissez Faire* and has a web site at www.economic-justice.org/asmith.htm

The web site has an archive of past *Laissez Faire* articles and links to organisations with similar purposes or intellectual inclinations. Members are welcome to contribute to the newsletter on topics of interest to members.

Contributions may be sent to

‘The Editor’, *Laissez Faire*, P.O. Box 950, Hawthorn 3122 or emailed to “The Editor” <asmith@economic-justice.org>

The evening

Welcome

Club President – Michael Warby



Entree

Vegetable pesto soup
Pumpkin & Fetta Frittata



Presentation of an Award to
Frank Penhalluriack
for services to our community

Main Course

Choice Porterhouse chargrilled sitting on Potato mash drizzled with a Red Wine jus
Fish of the Day with stir fry vegetables & citrus mayonaise
Breast of Chicken stuffed with Pumpkin & Cheeses atop wilted Spinach topped with
Hollandaise
Mushroom, Leek & Parmesan Rissotto

The Address by David Sharp
“In the 21st Century – Why Adam Smith?”

followed by



Dessert

Chocolate Fudge Cake & double cream
Bread & Butter Pudding
and Espresso Coffee or Tea



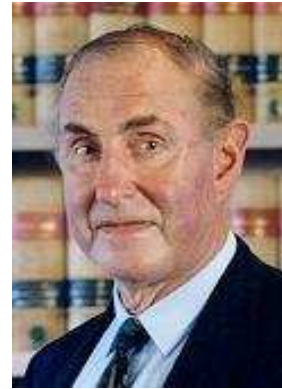
Questions from the floor for the Speaker

A Toast

“The Australian Adam Smith Club”

David Sharp

President, 1983-98



In 1983 I was feeling somewhat frustrated. That there existed a need in Melbourne for an organization furthering freedom and the free market and catering for the broad spectrum of the population rather than academia or the big end of town seemed obvious. I had been waiting years for it to happen so I could make some contribution. David Miller had been doing a tremendous job running, amongst other various activities, the Melbourne Libertarian Club, which met monthly for dinner, an address and discussion. It seemed to me however that something more ambitious and pro-active was required.

Sydney had had an Adam Smith Club for some years and its objects and activities appeared to be what Melbourne lacked.. Its committee at that stage included Nadia Weiner and Elaine Palmer. Having grown tired of waiting for someone else to do it I contacted them to suggest opening a Melbourne branch of the Adam Smith Club. Several visits back and forth then ensued and it was agreed that a Melbourne Adam Smith Club would be set up in conjunction with Sydney. A meeting was called for which David Miller generously supplied his various mailing lists without which it probably would not have been possible. The rest as they say is history.

It only remains to mention that, somewhat ironically perhaps, within a few short years the Sydney Club along with various other branches set up throughout the country had folded leaving the Melbourne Club to continue alone unto the present and beyond.

Dr Michael James

President, 1998-99



When I was appointed president of the Club in late 1998, the meetings were attracting fewer people than in the 1980s, and had settled down to around 30 more or less regular guests and members. And, after 15 years of existence, the Club had been through the obvious standard-bearing speakers in the country. I thought we should have some speakers who were not so favourable to the ideas of Adam Smith (one was David Walker, then a journalist at *The Age*, who criticised the way economists communicated), and also cover some topics on which devotees of Adam Smith might reasonably differ (such as population policy, on which we had a debate led by Phil Ruthven and Bob Birrell). Yet perhaps the most successful meetings during my time as president were those whose speakers were clearly 'on-side' with Adam Smith, and could apply their ideas to standard topics like taxation (Angela Ryan) or the chicanery of intellectuals (Imre Salusinsky), or who were critical of the conventional wisdom (John Daly on greenhouse).

With free market ideas less popular than they seemed (probably falsely) to be in the 1980s, the Club should remain a forum where those ideas are notoriously celebrated, explored and applied, not deliberately exposed to criticism, friendly or otherwise. Our opponents should be welcome to attend our meetings, but they do have plenty of forums of their own! And preaching to the converted helps keep them converted.

Smith famously referred to the natural human tendency to 'truck, barter and exchange', which under the 'system of natural liberty' leads unintentionally to the best outcomes for all. That tendency remains as strong as ever: even critics of markets go for the best deals in their private lives, as reliably as do supporters of the Adam Smith Club. But under democratic politics and the welfare state, an additional natural human tendency comes to the fore: to use the political system to rip other people off, usually nowadays in the name of 'social justice' or 'human rights'. Here self-interest works all right, but it doesn't promote the common good. Smith was well aware of the fraudulence of politics, but how much less that mattered in his day than now! Cutting through the cant and humbug of conventional wisdom and political correctness, which are no more than a defence of the privileges of the political class and its clients, remains our first duty.

Michael is now based in the UK working as a freelance editor and writer

Michael Warby

President, 1999-



When I first achieved the honour of being President of the Adam Smith Club, I saw it as something I could contribute to through being in a position to know of forthcoming speakers. As my circumstances changed, I came to see it much more as a way of staying in touch with dissenting ideas while official organs of public debate fall ever more strongly under the spell of a rancorous, intolerant orthodoxy.

In an age where the errors of the 1930s seem to be being played out again, where government continues to expand so that people in business are not only faced with ever-changing government demands, they face a continuous battle to find out what those demands *actually are*, where the tax-share of national income has never been so high, the need to keep alive the a genuine conversation of humanity falls on all of us, both the big and the little battalions of society. Which is what the Adam Smith Club seeks to do and I hope will continue to do so for many years.

Australian Adam Smith Club, Committee – 1983

President	David Sharp	Vice President	Mannie Gross
Gen. Committee	Richard Alsop	Gen. Committee	Regina Gross
Gen. Committee	Isaac Lahav	Gen. Committee	Iris Lahav

David Revelman & Jeff Babb subsequently joined the committee but have since retired.

Australian Adam Smith Club, Committee – 2003

President	Michael Warby	Vice President	Mannie Gross
Immed. Past Pres.	Dr Michael James	Editor	Regina Bron
Treasurer	Tim Warner	Gen. Committee	David Sharp
Gen. Committee	Tom Bostock	Gen. Committee	Dr Tom Jellinek
Gen. Committee	Bill Stacey		
