

## Miss Isobel Bennett

The honorary degree of Master of Science was conferred upon Miss Isobel Bennett by the Chancellor, Sir Charles Bickerton Blackburn KCMG OBE, at a graduation ceremony held on Tuesday, 10 April 1962.

### Report

Miss Bennett's first appointment was as Secretary to the Professor of Zoology, then Professor W J Dakin. She was also Zoology Department Librarian and was enlisted as a member of the crew of the vessel used by the Professor for his researches in marine biology.

She attended courses in zoology and within a short time her duties included acting as a demonstrator in zoology classes. Professor Dakin has written, "Miss Bennett soon showed that she was brilliant at her work as well as extremely industrious. She became one of our best demonstrators".

From the beginning of her university career Miss Bennett helped Professor Dakin with the collating of data for his books and the collection of marine specimens for his research. In 1945, when he became ill, she took over full responsibility for all field work in connection with his various research projects.

She helped with the research for Professor Dakin's book "The Great Barrier Reef" and supervised its publication after he died in 1950. She is one of the co-authors of the book "Australian Seashores", which embodies a survey of the plants and animals of the intertidal zones of the New South Wales coastline made by Professor Dakin, Miss Elizabeth Pope of the Australian Museum and herself. Following its publication she and Miss Pope completed similar detailed surveys of the coastlines of Victoria and Tasmania.

Professor L C Birch, the present Professor of Zoology, says: "As joint author of 'Australian Seashores', Miss Bennett has been responsible for compiling a great amount of the data and also adding new data to the literature on the intertidal animals. This work is of uniformly high standard and is regarded by world authorities as the definitive study on the Australian intertidal fauna".

In 1952 Miss Bennett spent three weeks in the *Galathea*, the Danish Deep Sea Expedition's naval vessel, while it was engaged on the Australian section of its two-year world survey.

In 1959 she became one of the first four women to go to the Antarctic when she visited Macquarie Island in the *Thala Dan*, the relief ship of the Australian National Antarctic Research Expedition. On Macquarie Island she carried out further intertidal investigations and was invited to continue this work with the 1960 relief ship.

*From The Gazette, May 1962*