

openbook

Alexandra Christie
HEAT

Thuy On
poem

Dinuka McKenzie
self-portrait

James Bradley
story



Stacey Lee (11, left) sets the bark of trees alight to produce a natural light source to help hunt for file snakes (*Acrochordus arafuræ*) in Djulkar, Arnhem Land. Photo by Matthew Abbott





Openbook is designed and printed on the traditional and ancestral lands of the Gadigal people of the Eora nation. The State Library of NSW offers our respect to Aboriginal Elders past, present and future, and extends that respect to other First Nations people. We celebrate the strength and diversity of NSW Aboriginal cultures, languages and stories.

Lotus (detail), 2022, Cressida Campbell, unique woodblock print

Artist Cressida Campbell is thriving — two major exhibitions, renewed health and a wedding, page 10





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Self-portrait by Dr John Vallance

We are working hard at the Library to make as many people, from as many different backgrounds as possible, feel welcome here

Welcome to *Openbook*

I'm writing this letter the day after the Premier's Literary Awards ceremony. Last night the Mitchell Reading Room was cleared of tables and chairs and set up beautifully for a crowd of around 400 people.

For the first time, we decided not to charge for tickets to the party.

Regular supporters were joined by new friends from all over the city to hear the Minister for the Arts speak and present the awards. Shortlisted and winning authors, and their publishers, families and friends spent an evening meeting the people who buy and read their books. Proceeds from the sale of books on the night went to the Lismore Library restoration appeal, adding to money raised by a recent collaboration between the State Library and the BAD Sydney Crime Writers Festival.

I counted at least five book club groups who had never been to the Library before; several of them said that in the past they could not afford to come to such a glamorous event. One reader told me that she had 'never met a Minister in real life'.

We maintain grand public buildings and we hold spectacular public events for a purpose: to give everyone who visits a sense that they are taken seriously and can be part of something bigger than

they are. We are working hard at the Library to make as many people, from as many different backgrounds as possible, feel welcome here, and in the most impressive surroundings. My hope is that we can build the Premier's Literary Awards into a free, accessible, annual event for everyone interested in reading, writing, and publishing.

What happened last night at the Library relates closely to the purpose of this magazine: opening our physical doors is just as important as opening our minds and hearts. When a colleague of mine suggested that we call the journal *Openbook* she made it clear that it should be as much an aspirational as a descriptive title. The idea of the open book goes well beyond a simple encouragement to read and write. It suggests an obligation to meet new ideas honestly, running the risk of revealing ourselves to others in the process.

This could well be the best issue so far. You'll find a wide range of pieces here, from the story of a great artist who denied a debt to the land which nurtured him, to the story of a passionfruit tart found in the Library's collection. With quite a lot in between.

Dr John Vallance FAHA
State Librarian

Quiz answers page 90 1. *Richard III* 2. 'Lucy Gray' 3. Yes, one, the deciduous beech or fagus (*Nothofagus gunnii*) in Tasmania 4. The city was blanketed in snow 5. Maggie Tabberer 6. 21 June 7. Ali Smith 8. Pat Cash in 1987 9. *Rebecca* 10. Very Peri (Pantone 19-3938) 11. Rachel Bin Salleh 12. For research — she orchestrated an arrest for loitering 13. Dark Moto, Hobart 14. Blood, phlegm, black bile, yellow bile 15. Nîmes, France — 'serge de Nîmes' 16. *The Torrents* 17. Jane Avril 18. The Country Women's Association 19. True 20. German and Dutch

openbook *obsessions*

Blue dancers

Dancer Megan Schoenmaker told *Openbook* that, ‘Unlike the Degas original where there are fewer dancers — and their tutus are white — there were 14 of us in Handa Opera on Sydney Harbour’s *The Phantom of the Opera* and we got to wear three different shades of green. We managed to huddle together to take a quick photo in our beautiful tutus and pointe shoes before going on stage. Dancing on Sydney Harbour was an incredible, once-in-a-lifetime experience. Seeing the Opera House and Harbour Bridge as we performed was a ‘pinch me’ moment every night. It came with its challenges: performing on a raked stage, especially in pointe shoes, in all weather conditions. If it rained — which it did, a lot — we had wet weather contingency shoes to perform in.

‘Performing this much-loved show with Opera Australia in a very iconic setting will be an experience we will all treasure for the rest of our lives.’ Photo by Trini Farrelly



This train is departing

Kimberley Wallis (@kimboid) is a Melbourne-based photographer. Pushing the limits of mobile phone photography, her photos show commuters on platforms, on escalators or in train carriages. The people in her shots seem to be withdrawing from the world, often into their own mobile phones. Wallis’s photos prove that the everyday immediacy of street photography does not preclude the composition and treatment of light we’re used to seeing in the most considered, choreographed shots.

Of this shot, taken in April 2022, Wallis writes, ‘We all have somewhere where time stops still and you have a moment to breathe and sometimes you just take them wherever you can get them.’

Dinuka McKenzie

I never held any lifelong ambitions to write. As a middle-class Sri Lankan migrant to Australia, being a writer was never on the cards. Despite being a voracious reader, it never occurred to me to wonder who was at the other end of the words that I devoured. It never entered my consciousness to consider the life of an author and how they came to write their stories, let alone the concept of writing as a professional calling. I was only ever interested in the worlds writers created as a means of escape from the growing pains of my own life.

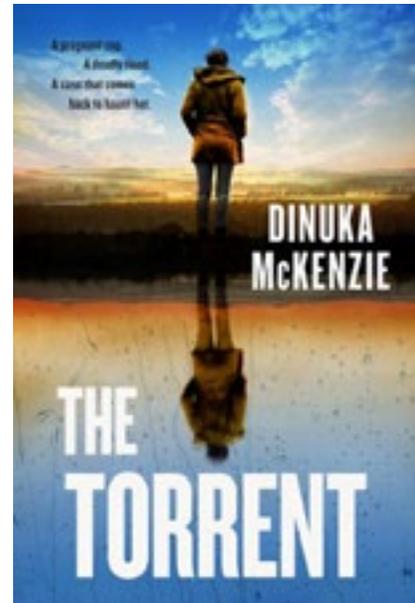
So I began to write. It was both a means of escaping and of processing the world. Once I had started, I couldn't seem to stop.

We were first-generation migrants with the heads-down, bums-up attitude of getting on and making a success of our new life. There was no time for fireside chats or bedtime stories or help with homework. As we moved from house to house across suburban Sydney, it was left to me to navigate three different high schools, with their social hierarchies and bewildering rules underpinning 'being cool', whatever that was.

Looking back, I realise that reading was my primary source of learning about the world. Books showed me how other people and families lived and saw the world. Reading revealed hidden histories, muddled lives, and the many layers of grey that exist in human beings. Over the years, I found myself particularly drawn to crime fiction and writers like PD James, Ian Rankin, Ruth Rendell and Peter Temple who explored moral ambiguity within the framework of a familiar narrative. Good and evil as a matter of circumstance and degree, rather than an absolute; something we are all capable of, depending on the circumstances.

In my real life, I duly followed the path laid out for me: study, career, mortgage and family. Amid the overwhelming intensity of juggling little people and a career, an itch to carve something separate from those parts of my identity that related to other people — mother, wife, daughter, employee — began to swell.

So I began to write. It was both a means of escaping and of processing the world. Once I had started, I couldn't seem to stop. What emerged was a crime narrative grounded in the genre that remains my comfort read to this day, but with a lead character centred on the experience of women and mothers. A woman juggling the demands and compromises of parenthood and career who happens to be a police officer.



That first draft — my first-ever attempt at writing fiction — was as you'd expect: little more than a raw jumble of ideas. It took years of revision, feedback and learning for me to slowly mould something cleaner out of that initial lump of clay. But by then it was too late — I was hooked. Like a heartsick lover, all I could do was follow, despite the uncertainty and rejections that paved the way. Now that I had found *it*, there was no way I was letting go.

Dinuka McKenzie is the author of *The Torrent*, published in 2022 after winning the 2020 HarperCollins Australia Banjo Prize.



Photo by Emma Stergio



Portrait of Cressida Campbell in 2022. Photo by Joy Lai

Art & life

Cressida Campbell

As she finalises work for her landmark exhibition at the National Gallery of Australia, Sydney artist Cressida Campbell invites *Openbook* into her studio.

Cressida Campbell selects a cockatoo feather from a bowl of natural objects in her Bronte studio, and brushes it across the top of my hand. The artist is demonstrating the strange sensation she had on her own hand that day in August 2020, the day her life changed.

Puzzled but not overly concerned, Campbell wasn't to know it was the first sign of something badly amiss. After that, a martini glass slipped through her hand and smashed on the floor. Then her hand began to shake. Campbell ended up in St Vincent's Hospital, Darlinghurst, where doctors ordered the first of an eventual 18 MRI scans. She would be in St Vincent's for five weeks, her life hanging in the balance. 'Quite honestly, I nearly died,' Campbell says.

On the day *Openbook* visits, she is working in her studio on one of the final paintings for her solo exhibition at the National Gallery of Australia. Simply titled *Cressida Campbell*, the exhibition will run from 24 September 2022 until 29 January 2023.

Given her dexterity as she touches tiny strokes of paint onto her work, it's hard to imagine that the artist's entire right side was paralysed less than two years ago. Doctors were uncertain whether she would be able to regain the fine motor skills so crucial for her art. They even thought she might never walk again.

Campbell recalls the day one of her doctors asked her to draw a star so he could see if she was progressing. The best she could manage was a shaky scrawl. 'That was the time I burst into tears and said, "do you think I'll ever recover?" And of course, they didn't know. It was the most traumatic thing,' Campbell says.

Miraculously, after the discovery of a brain abscess and two brain operations, followed by a period of rehabilitation, Campbell is well. She is working as hard as ever at her hulking French easel that she dryly likens to a guillotine. 'I pretty much work seven days a week, which I like,' she says.



The studio is a bit like one of the pictures for which Campbell has legions of admiring fans. Fresh and airy with white walls, dark wooden floorboards and French doors, it looks out on the lush green garden that separates the studio from the house. It's a beautiful place to work, especially now that Campbell has so much to look forward to.

On the professional front there's the National Gallery of Australia exhibition which has been curated by Dr Sarina Noordhuis-Fairfax, the gallery's curator of Australian prints and drawings. Campbell also has a show at Philip Bacon Galleries in Brisbane from 26 July.

On the personal front, Campbell is getting married. When we spoke, she was preparing for a 30 April wedding to fine art and photographic printer Warren Macris. Among the top photographers and artists he works with at his Mascot business are stellar practitioners like Greg Weight, Tamara Dean, Gary Heery, Stephen Dupont and Petrina Hicks. 'Warren is the most enchanting man,' Campbell says. 'Like my father, he's incredibly modest. Everyone adores Warren.'

Campbell's father is not just part of her story, he's part of Sydney's story. Ross Campbell was a Rhodes Scholar but his fame was not earned through erudition. What people loved were his humorous columns about Campbell family life in the lower north shore suburb of Greenwich. The pieces appeared in the *Daily Telegraph*, the *Sunday Telegraph* and the *Australian Women's Weekly*.

The youngest of four siblings, Cressida appeared in her father's columns as Baby Pip. In one of his writings, Baby Pip's sisters give her some marriage advice printed on a lolly wrapper. In another, Ross Campbell carries Baby Pip on his shoulders through Jenolan Caves. Campbell adored her father, who died when she was 21. She suffered another early loss in 2011 when her husband, the film critic Peter Crayford, died of cancer at 61. She still wears Crayford's old shirts to paint in.

Campbell and Macris began dating about five years ago. It was during a trip to the Blue Mountains that Macris popped the question. 'He proposed to me on this precipice. It was a bit like that Caspar David Friedrich painting,' Campbell says. 'He was so nervous. He brought out this little black box and there was a moonstone ring in it. It was incredibly touching and I said yes.'

Just days later, Campbell had that feathery feeling on her hand. Her subsequent illness was nightmarish, spelling the possible end of her slow and patient production of seductively beautiful pictures.

She always uses the same, idiosyncratic process. First, she draws the composition on a block of marine plywood and carves the outlines with a fine dental tool in a high-powered drill. She paints onto the block in watercolour. The block is sprayed with water, and Campbell takes a single print from it using small, hand-held rubber rollers. She often adds more paint to the print, making it a kind of hybrid.

The blocks and prints take months to make. Their crispness and detail must be seen to be believed. While the connection to the Japanese woodblock tradition is obvious, Campbell's works are very much anchored in contemporary Australia. Her stunning compositions often feature interior scenes with bowls of luxuriant flowers juxtaposed with everyday items found around the home. Less well known, but just as beautiful, are her landscapes.

Campbell's process is unique in Australia, as far as Noordhuis-Fairfax knows. It dates back to East Sydney Technical College (now the National Art School) where Campbell studied in the late 1970s. When Campbell arrived at the Tech, she quickly rejected the style of painting it was teaching.

'They wanted you to paint with a giant, thick brush and I only use really small brushes,' Campbell says. 'They wanted you to paint like Cézanne. As wonderful as Cézanne is, it was totally not my thing and it made me very self-conscious because I was hopeless at it.'

The blocks and prints take months to make. Their crispness and detail must be seen to be believed.

Top & opposite: *The Bush*, 1988, silkscreen print by Cressida Campbell





Pymont, 1984,
woodblock print by
Cressida Campbell

I like the idea of putting in an object that most people would think is pretty dreary and making it beautiful.

I think teachers should encourage whatever the person's leaning is. As [her great friend, the artist] Margaret Olley used to say, everyone's got their own handwriting and it will come out.

'So in the second year instead of doing painting, I did printmaking. They just taught you the actual methods of printmaking. They didn't say what to do.'

Lecturer Leonard Matkevich devised the bespoke technique for Campbell. 'Leonard suggested this technique at some point. You know, "why don't you draw on a woodblock and paint on to it and then we'll run it through the press?";' Noordhuis-Fairfax says. The resulting artworks are positioned between painting and printmaking, with characteristics of both.

The lift of the paper from the block during the printing process lends a mottled texture to the woodblock, while the print itself takes on the wood grain, the carved lines and the paint.

In conventional woodblock printing, a separate block is used for each colour in the composition. The last block used is the 'key block', which is covered in black paint to define the main shapes and hold juxtaposed colours in their rightful places without bleeding into each other. Woodblock printing is traditionally done in a press. Campbell, however, always hand-prints her work.

'Watching her print a work was an amazing experience,' Noordhuis-Fairfax says. 'I felt like I was holding my breath for two hours. She didn't stop moving. It's a technique where lots of things can still go wrong. It doesn't matter that she's been doing it for over 40 years. There is a definite element of risk in the process.'

The catalogue for the National Gallery of Australia exhibition will be the first major publication on Campbell's work

since the handsome and much sought-after tome, *The Woodblock Painting of Cressida Campbell*. Published in 2008, it was edited by Crayford with an introduction by the late Edmund Capon, former director of the Art Gallery of New South Wales. The book was published to coincide with Campbell's survey exhibition at the SH Ervin Gallery on Observatory Hill in Sydney.

Capon wrote: 'In a world of contemporary art so conditioned by issues, portentous "statements", egos and the passing foibles of fashion, [Campbell's] work is a joy to behold in reaffirming, as it does, the opportunity for beauty and intimacy in the most familiar and prosaic of subjects. It is this distillation of the commonplace into timeless and life-sustaining compositions that is the character of her work. Her vocabulary may be disarmingly ordinary but the works live with extraordinary and convincing credibility.'

The National Gallery of Australia exhibition will feature about 100 artworks on loan from institutional and private collectors, arranged in themes such as floral still life, food still life, interiors, local Sydney landscapes, coastal views and so on. The earliest works date back to when Campbell was ten, and the latest are fresh off the easel this year. Some of Campbell's paints and implements will be on view, and a video has been made of her working in the studio.

Campbell nominates an eclectic array of artists she admires, from Vermeer and Velázquez to Degas and Vuillard. 'I love Persian and early Indian paintings, Asian ceramics and Chinese ink painting, but generally I like the earlier stuff,' she says. 'I like some modern art. I like some Chinese contemporary art in particular.'

She loves British artist Lucian Freud's early, linear pieces before his canvases began to abound in flesh. Among Australian artists, she likes John Brack and Ian Fairweather.

Of the Japanese ukiyo-e artists such as Hokusai and Hiroshige, Campbell's favourite is Kitagawa Utamaro (1753–1806).

In 1985 Campbell spent several weeks learning woodblock printing at the Yoshida Hanga Academy in Tokyo. It's tempting to imagine what a formative experience this must have been for the young artist, but Noordhuis-Fairfax points out that Campbell's technique was already established by then. What she did learn in Tokyo was composition, and how to lead the eye around the picture plane.

'When you look at Japanese prints you don't notice yourself doing that. But that's what they do. They guide you around. And that's what [Campbell] does in her own work', Noordhuis-Fairfax says. Campbell says she has a similar natural aesthetic to the Japanese woodblock makers 'in the way that I do stylised compositions and the pieces are very linear'.

The woodblock on the 'guillotine' when I visited was round, rather than square or rectangular. It depicted an elegant composition including, of all things, an iron. 'I like the idea of putting in an object that most people would think is pretty dreary and making it beautiful,' the artist says. 'Also it changes the attitude of what would be a slightly conventional subject to putting something a bit industrial that most people would hide.'

Cressida Campbell certainly isn't 'most people', and her life so far has been extraordinary. It looks a lot like it will continue to be so.

Elizabeth Fortescue is a freelance arts writer.



From *Felix and Alexander* by Terry Denton,
which won Children's Picture Book of the Year in 1986

A CHANGING WORLD

Children's picture books reflect the world that makes them, but must try to remake that world too.

When I was a child, I loved Richard Adams's *Watership Down*. It sat high on my bookshelf, satisfyingly thick, like a grown-up book, its illustrated dust jacket worn from use. I can still see it, though I've forgotten nearly every detail of the story contained within. All I remember is the feeling the book gave me: the thrilling sense of a secret world below the down, of peril faced with courage.

I've carried this feeling with me for decades, timeless. So it was a shock, a few years ago, to read an article methodically articulating all the ways that *Watership Down* fails to imagine the female rabbits as anything other than furry baby factories. The version of the book in my head was not timeless after all, but firmly rooted in the fallible past. We grow up but the books we loved as children do not.

Picture books in Australia have changed dramatically in recent decades. Some of these changes have been brought about by advances in technology. Australian picture books had their first great flowering around 50 years ago, when cheap colour printing became available in Asia. 'In the 70s there was a bit of a revolution in printing,' says Margaret Hamilton, the trailblazing publisher at the forefront of this boom. 'That started publishers experimenting with picture books.' New topics were explored and new formats introduced.

But British books still dominated the market when Ted Prior walked into Hamilton's office at Hodder & Stoughton, Australia. He had an idea that he thought could become a television series.

She saw the simplicity of the popular *Mr. Men* stories by the English author Roger Hargreaves and convinced Prior to turn his idea into a book in the same cheap, small, paperback format. There are now more than 30 titles in Ted Prior's *Grug* series, which celebrated its 40th anniversary recently. They have sold more than three million copies. A few years after this, Hamilton launched Margaret Hamilton Books, with the aim of publishing Australian picture books – of the highest quality – for Australian children.

In the early 2000s, with the rise of online publishing, many people worried that picture books would disappear entirely. But nobody talks about the death of the book anymore, says Paul Macdonald of The Children's Bookshop. In fact, the shift to online has pushed picture books to become even bolder versions of themselves. When people can instantly download any story they like, they need a compelling reason to fork out for the paper version, so publishers have turned picture books into beautiful artefacts. Advances in printing technologies have allowed for richer colours, intricate endpapers, embossed covers, even gold foil. 'There are some beautiful, *beautiful* picture books out there that adults are buying for the sake of the aesthetic,' says Macdonald.

Design has long been a key ingredient in any picture book's success but in our image-driven times, it's even more important. People with backgrounds in art or fashion have come into the industry, and book design has reached new heights. 'Our aesthetic, for better or worse, has certainly stepped up,' says Macdonald.

The most significant recent changes in picture book publishing, however, are around content. Sarah Morley is curator of the State Library's exhibition *Imagine ... the wonder of picture books*, which showcases some of the most beautiful and interesting



From *Grandma's Treasured Shoes* (2019) by Coral Vass, illustration by Christina Huynh

picture books and artworks in the Library's collection and beyond. She notes that the most important recent development in picture-book publishing – in all children's publishing – is a move to better represent diversity in all its forms: diversity of races, of abilities, of genders and of family structures.

The last census identified more than 300 different languages spoken in Australia. More than one-fifth of households speak a language other than English at home. Yet, until recently, little of this found a place in picture books. There are efforts to improve this across the board, says Lisa Riley, a publisher of children's books at Penguin Random House. She points to the appointment of Gabrielle Wang as Australian Children's Laureate 2022–23 as indicative of this will for change. Wang's books feature many non-white characters, and she has been vocal in her advocacy for diverse books by diverse authors. There are also picture books about families with two mums or two dads, blended families, and books like *Mummy Days* and *Daddy Days* by Sue deGennaro which feature only one parent. 'I know from friends who are single parents – it means that no one's excluded in that story,' says Ana Vivas, publisher of children's books at Hardie Grant Egmont and Little Hare.

The most exciting development in this push towards diversity is the boom in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander stories. Magabala Books,

based in Broome, is the trailblazer, putting out gorgeously illustrated titles by Sally Morgan, Ambelin Kwaymullina, Bruce Pascoe and Vincent Namatjira, among others. The press has been publishing First Nations stories for over 30 years, but Rachel Bin Salleh, publisher at Magabala, says the books' reception has changed significantly. 'The only thing for us that has changed is that Australia is now much more willing to listen to First Nations stories,' she says. 'It's reckoning with its past.' The big publishers have also brought out books by prominent Indigenous authors and illustrators including Adam Goodes, Bronwyn Bancroft and Thomas Mayor. And these books sell. 'That's something that's new, that people will buy Indigenous books as special gifts,' says Vivas. 'They're more mass market now, which is so fantastic.'

In her Stella-prize winning book, *Dropbear*, the poet Evelyn Araluen reflects on her complicated relationship with the picture books she read as a child. Born on Dharug country, of Bundjalung descent, she grew up reading May Gibbs's books about the gumnut babies who ran from the menacing Banksia Men. She read *Dot and the Kangaroo*, where the main characters ran from the bunyip and Aboriginal hunters were described as violent and savage. As a child, she was mesmerised by these stories. 'I enjoyed the lands they peered into, the adventures they described,' she writes. It was not until years later, when Araluen

went to university and discovered post-colonial theory, that she looked back on these books and saw their othering of the scary, black figures in the bush. She saw the way they linked white children to the landscape, conveniently eliding real Aboriginal bodies, slaughtered and dispossessed. Now, it seemed her parents had been hoodwinked by these books. And yet, she writes, to think this is to ignore how hard her mother and father worked to make sure their children had access to the books that would put them on the path to literacy. ‘It was an easy sort of antagonism, where I could see my parents as the victims of a colonial condition, and not agential selves who had sacrificed everything to give us something. A tidy narrative that forgot the decades of work they did writing curricula for Aboriginal education across New South Wales, creating programs to bring Elders into schools, developing resources for communities to address drug abuse through cultural learning and safety, going to meetings and bushcare, picking up the pieces, being there to remind and remember.’

Just as her parents intended, these books opened up the world of words to Araluen. Without them, would she have gone on to read theory at university? Would she have become a poet?

Macdonald identifies two other main trends in picture book publishing: an increased interest in sustainability and the natural world, as our fears for its destruction grow; and a rise in books on what might be termed wellbeing. Under this umbrella he includes books on everything from mindfulness to positivity and consent. Riley agrees that mental health and wellbeing is a growing focus, pointing to books such as Anna Walker’s *Mister Huff*, which is about dealing with complex emotions including anxiety, and a series of picture books she co-published with Smiling Mind, makers of the popular meditation app.

Each of these three areas — diversity, climate change and mental health — raises big issues with kids, from the destruction of the planet to the treatment of refugees and racism. Picture books once shied away from these topics but now they are diving in. A book like Armin Greder’s *The Inheritance*, for instance, recently shortlisted for the Children’s Picture Book of the Year in the Children’s Book Council of Australia awards, is pitched at readers up to 15 years and through its haunting illustrations and minimal text tackles corporate greed and environmental devastation. ‘Just in the last five years, so much

has changed in the world,’ says the Library’s Sarah Morley. ‘And helping little people to understand those issues — and many of them are really confronting — is important. I think picture books are so powerful because they can do that in a really gentle way.’

A decade ago, Maxine Beneba Clarke’s *When We Say Black Lives Matter*, in which a Black child’s parents share what the Black Lives Matter movement means to them, could barely have been imagined. Now it’s the only picture book of Clarke’s to be picked up in both the US and the UK. ‘I think parents converse with their kids in a very different way to when I was a kid,’ says Clarke, who remembers when politics and ‘serious’ issues were off limits. ‘With social media and the rise of the online world, and especially Covid, kids are exposed to these things anyway. So when you pick up *When We Say Black Lives*

Matter, it would be very rare that a child had not heard that phrase before. Kids know about these things, so it’s more a question of, well, what do you want them to know about it, and how do you engage with them about it?’

When Clarke was growing up in Kellyville, in Western Sydney, she loved a book called *Liza Lou and the Yeller Belly Swamp* by Mercer Mayer. She could find few books with Black faces in them like her own,

and this one resonated.

It was about a little African-American girl who lived on the edge of a swamp with her mother, and had to run errands like delivering the washing her mother had cleaned. She ran through the swamp each time, outwitting the swamp monsters.

In Clarke’s imagination, Mercer Mayer was an older African-American woman.

It was only later when Clarke was older, trying to track the book down for her kids, that she discovered Mayer was a white man. This didn’t make the book offensive to her. ‘I think there is some critique in the fact that he was able to get this book published, at a time when probably what he should have been doing is helping an African-American woman to get her book published,’ she says. ‘But the book is just written so beautifully. It’s really just a story where the protagonist happens to be a little Black girl.’

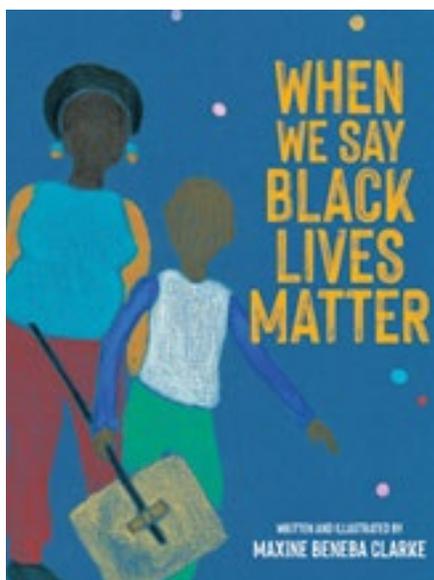
So she bought the book and read it to her kids, and then they had a discussion about the ethics of a white author telling this story.



We grow up but the books we loved as children do not.



Grug by Ted Prior



Cover of *When We Say Black Lives Matter* (2020) by Maxine Beneba Clarke

One of the reasons that picture books matter is that they set children up to become strong readers and writers. Children who are read to from a young age go on to have better literacy, and do better at school, than those who aren't read to, even when we control for factors such as socio-economic status and maternal education. And the earlier that reading starts, the better. Recent research showed that infants who were read aloud to for at least 11 minutes a day had stronger reading, spelling and grammar skills when tested in Years 3 and 5.

Picture books also matter because they are a child's window onto the world. Seeing people who look like them, and people who don't, helps develop identity and a sense of belonging. For all the efforts towards diversity, many Australian children are still not sufficiently represented in our picture books. A recent analysis of the books shortlisted for the Children's Book Council of Australia Early Childhood Book of the Year award between 2001 and 2020 found that while there was a roughly equal gender split in their protagonists, 89 per cent of the human characters were white. None of the main characters were Asian, Black or Middle Eastern. Seven per cent of all characters were Indigenous, but appeared in only 5 out of 118 books.

As Clarke discovered when she went to the library to get a book for her young daughter, she was more likely to find a main character who was a talking penguin than one with skin colour like her own.

One irony of the internet age is that while the choice of books is almost unlimited, what people actually buy has narrowed, particularly since the arrival of Covid. Options online are so overwhelming that people resort to Top 10 lists to find a way through. Similarly, many picture books are now sold in stores such as Kmart and Big W, where the range is inevitably smaller than in a shop dedicated to books. This means that juggernauts like the *Bluey* series dominate: more than three million *Bluey* books have sold since they were first published at the end of 2019.

This might be a welcome development. Perhaps they widen readership, because the familiarity of the characters makes

people who might not otherwise buy books pick them up. But it means that even when publishers put out more diverse books, it can be harder to get them into the hands of readers in large quantities. 'Certainly the market is dominated by fewer books at the moment,' says Macdonald. Last year, Magabala Books sold nearly 300,000 books, its best year ever. But it's still a fraction of what *Bluey* did.

As a child, Clarke had only one *Snugglypot and Cuddlepie* book in the house and she didn't like it much. 'I don't think that was to do with any kind of racial awakening as a kid, it was just that they were so boring,' she says. She only thought about it again when she was in Kmart recently and saw a series of board books featuring May Gibbs's characters. Clarke thought maybe they were simplified versions of the original, amended to take out any offensive content. 'Then I opened the first book and went, "Oh! The Banksia Men are still in the book." I think that has been actually my most surprising moment of the last few years in children's books, of thinking, "Wow. As much as we're diversifying, and as much as we have Magabala Books, for example, filling this void in a really extraordinary way with excellent First Nations kids' literature, this other stuff, because it makes money, it will still never go away.'"

Bin Salleh is clear on how to fix this: an industry that remains overwhelmingly white needs to embrace publishers from diverse backgrounds. At Magabala, they don't look for publishers via the usual routes. Instead, she's proud to employ three First Nations cadets with a wide range of life experience, family experience and deep cultural and community values. 'I can teach them publishing but I can't teach White people Black things,' she says. Her challenge is for the industry to similarly value the insights and knowledge brought by people whose lives are lived outside traditional white structures.

That way, perhaps, we'll see the next great flowering of Australian children's books.

Catherine Keenan is a freelance writer and co-founder and executive director of Story Factory. The Library's *Imagine* exhibition opens on 9 July.



From *A Boy and a Ball* (2020) by Phil Cummings, illustration by Phil Lesnie



From *Amelia Ellicott's Garden* (2000) by Liliana Stafford, illustration by Stephen Michael King



City

This quintessential Australian scene shows the interior of a pub on Sydney's Oxford Street. Painted by modernist artist Herbert Badham in 1942, it is a window on mid-century urban working-class life. There were over 600 public houses in Sydney at this time. The pubs around Darlinghurst and Paddington were popular with local workers, as well as soldiers on leave and sailors walking up from the dockyards. Rich colours enhance Badham's depiction of the pub's cosy atmosphere and the painting captures the easy camaraderie of its clientele. *Oxford Street Interior* reflects his interest in the scenes of everyday life.

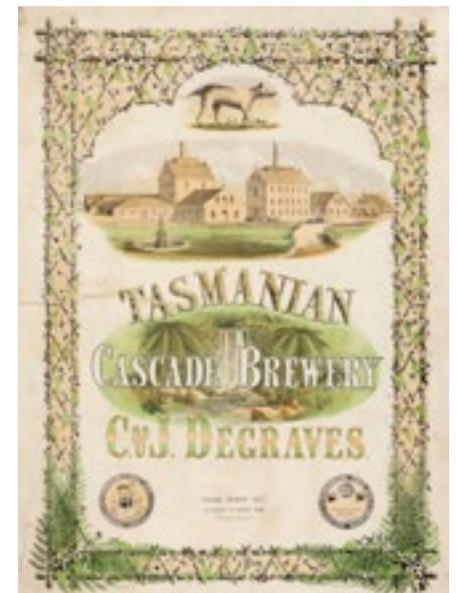
Oxford Street Interior, 1942, oil on board by Herbert Badham



Colonial

The 'Dove and Olive Branch' alehouse operated at 203 Kent St, Sydney in the 1840s. George Roberts' 1845 watercolour shows female licensee Ann Bushby standing in the doorway of the premises where she presided as publican following the death of her husband, Jabez, in 1842. Publican brewers were among the earliest producers of beer in the colony. Although Mrs Bushby was licensed to sell 'Fermented and Spiritous liquors', she did not brew her own beer. As we see here, Mrs Bushby advertised a local beer made by Wright's Australian Brewery in George Street, along with imported beverages such as Taylor's London Porter.

On Church Hill, 1845, 'Dove & Olive Branch, Ann Bushby'. Watercolour by G Roberts, 1850



Hipster brews

Australia has one of the highest per-capita rates of beer consumption in the world. Beer production began with small private breweries supplying local pubs but by the late 19th century brewers began to adopt mass-production techniques. Beer was the largest-selling alcoholic drink in Australia until the 1950s, when its popularity began to decline.

The modern era of craft beer breweries emerged in the 1980s, evolving from home brewers tinkering in their backyards and dabbling with different styles and flavours. Young Henry's brewed their first beers in a backstreet warehouse in Newtown in March 2012. Driven by passionate craft beer makers, and more sophisticated drinkers, there are over 250 microbreweries operating in Australia today.

Young Henry's Newtown Brewery,
76 Wilford Street, 19 February 2013.
Photo by Nic Bezzina



Oldest

The Cascade Brewing Co. is Australia's oldest continually operating brewery. Set in the foothills of South Hobart, the site was originally home to a sawmill which began operating there in 1825. Development of hop growing, especially in Tasmania, saw the expansion and consolidation of the Australian brewing industry. Because the sawmill site had access to the pure waters flowing from Mount Wellington, Hugh Macintosh built his Cascade Brewery there, beside the Hobart Rivulet. It sold its first beer in December 1832. Later owned and operated by the Degraives brothers, this 1870s poster shows a lithographic view of the Cascade Brewery, based on a drawing by William Piguénit, below the iconic figure of a Tasmanian tiger, *Thylacinus cynocephalus*.

Tasmanian Cascade Brewery, C & J Degraives, poster with inset view of the Cascade Brewery, drawn by WC Piguénit. Lithograph by ML Henn



Beer strike

Bulli's 1940–41 beer boycott wasn't the town's first — or its last — but remains the most famous. South Coast coal miners had a tradition of demonstrating their opposition to beer price hikes by boycotting hotels. When excise duties pushed up beer prices in December 1940, the dispute spread statewide, with 30,000 workers joining 12,000 Illawarra beer strikers. Forty minutes before closing time on Christmas Eve, the ban was lifted. Thousands of miners, who had faced the grim prospect of a dry festive season, descended on the Bulli Family Hotel to quench their thirst. Among the drinkers were miners Jack Watchirs and Frank Reeves, pictured here. This strike led to regulated standards for glass sizes — the pint, the schooner, the middy and the pony, a five-ounce glass.

Beer strike Bulli, 5 January 1941, *The Sun*



Palestinian children gather with candles in Beit Lahia, Gaza, Palestine, after a protest by children in the neighbourhood against attacks on Gaza, during a fragile ceasefire following an 11-day conflict between Hamas and Israel. Photo by Fatima Shbair, Getty Images



World Press Photo 2022

For the first time, this annual celebration and travelling exhibition of the world's best documentary photographs and photojournalism has been judged by region. What hasn't changed is the competition's commitment to revealing stories that are overlooked and people whose names are not known, often children.

Photography is an intimate and vivid way to take people to a place and say, 'this is what it's all about'.

Matthew Abbott



Moussa Algebaly (25) lies under a tea flower plant (*Rosa gallica*) after performing daily maintenance in his garden in Al-Tarfa village, South Sinai, Egypt. Photo by Rehab Eldalil



Seliman holds a Khodary (*Nicotiana rustica*) leaf in his garden in the Gharba Valley, South Sinai, Egypt. This photo, part of a series called 'The Longing of the Stranger Whose Path has been Broken', was taken as part of a project reflecting what it means to be Bedouin. Photo by Rehab Eldalil



World Press Photo Story of the Year — *Saving Forests with Fire*

Sydney-based Matthew Abbott worked with the Nawarddeken people of Mamadawerre, West Arnhem Land, to portray their process of fire management, known as cool burning. Here a group of children spear fish early one morning near Djulkar Waterfall, Arnhem Land. Smoke from a fire that was lit the previous day still hangs in the air. Photo by Matthew Abbott, National Geographic/Panos Pictures



World Press Photo of the Year — *Kamloops Residential School*

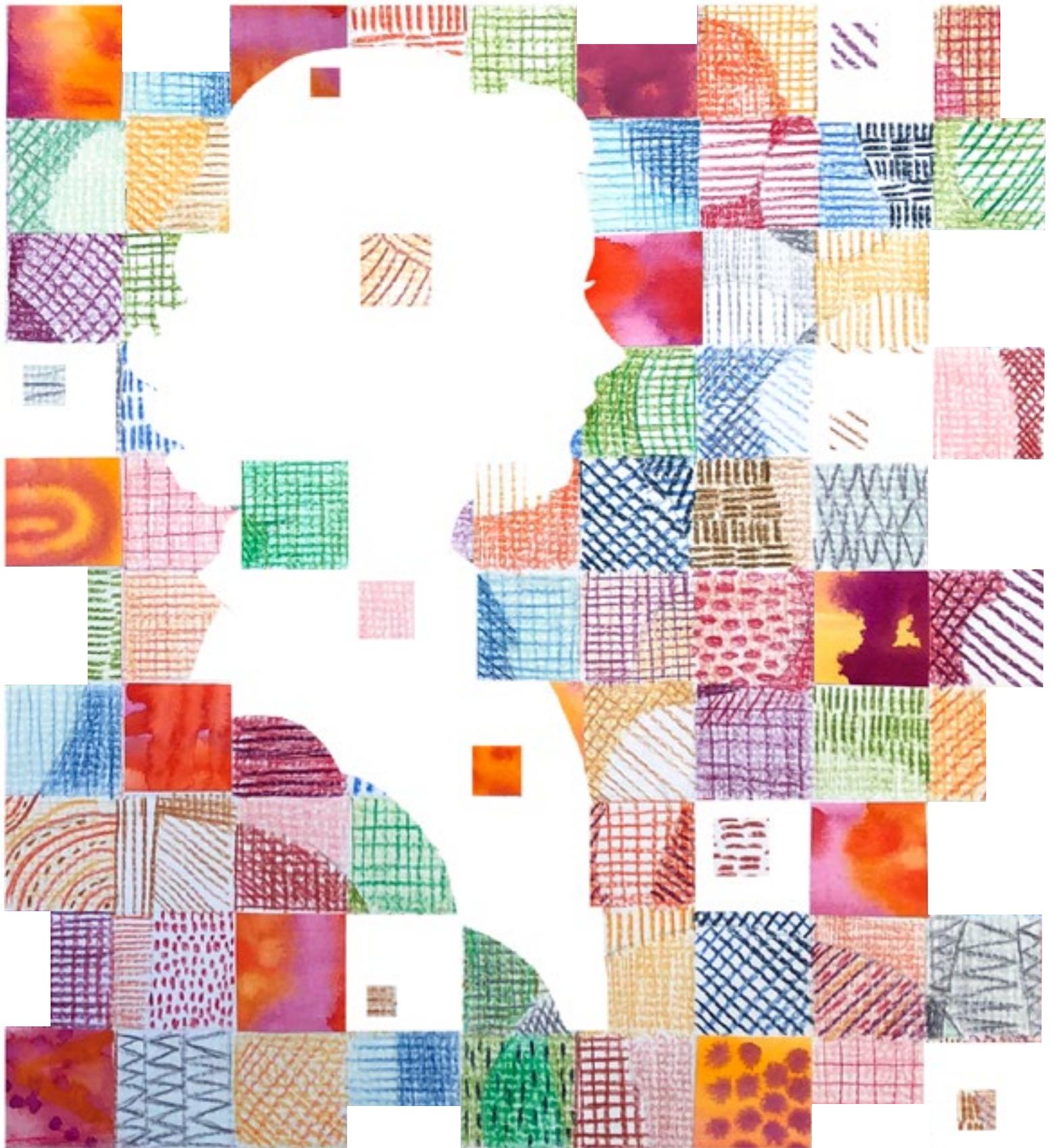
The first winner of Photo of the Year with no visible people in it, this reminds us that the past is always present. Orange dresses hanging along the roadside commemorate children who died — and were placed in as many as 215 unmarked graves — in the Kamloops Indian Residential School, British Columbia, Canada. Photo by Amber Bracken, *New York Times*



A male adult tiger crossing the road in the Tadoba Andhari Tiger Reserve, Chandrapur, Maharashtra, India. A single tiger occupies from 15 to 30 square kilometres of territory. From the series 'Boundaries: Human-Tiger Conflict'. Photo by Senthil Kumaran



A Mixtec elder on the Cerro de la Garza in Guerrero, Mexico. Every year on 31 December, Mixtecs climb the hill to perform rituals commemorating the end and beginning of a life cycle. From the series of textured photographs 'The Flower of Time. Guerrero's Red Mountain'. Photo by Yael Martínez



illustrations by Rosie Handley

The Ministry of Forgetting

Emma was in a meeting when the school called. Osman was explaining the new case review process, his eyes on the display on the whiteboard as he spoke. She lifted a finger to show she had to take the call and stepped out, closing the glass door behind herself.

'Ms Nicholl?' said a woman's voice. 'This is Rachel White. I'm the principal at Forest Hill.'

'Of course,' Emma said. 'Is everything ...?'

'Yes, Harriet is fine. But I wondered if you could possibly come to the school. There's been an incident involving your mother.'

Emma closed her eyes and exhaled. 'An incident?'

'I'm sorry. I'd rather discuss it in person.'

'Of course.' She glanced through the glass panels towards her office, trying not to think about her afternoon, its intricate arrangement of meetings and deadlines. 'Now?'

'I think that would be best.'

Her mother was sitting on the red vinyl seats outside the principal's office when Emma arrived, her back straight and her hands clasped in her lap in the attitude of silent obduracy Emma knew so well.

She stopped in front of her. 'Mum? What's going on?'

Her mother looked at her, chin high and lips pursed. 'It's nothing,' she said. 'Just a stupid misunderstanding.'

Emma was about to demand a better explanation when the principal's door opened. Ms White was a lean woman, with short, greying hair cut in an austere version of a teddy boy's quiff, who Emma had always thought would look more at home working in an art gallery than a primary school.

'Emma,' she said, with a wan smile. 'Thanks for coming. Perhaps we should talk in my office.'

Inside, Ms White gestured to Emma and her mother to sit, then seated herself behind the table.

'What's going on?' Emma demanded again.

'Perhaps your mother should explain,' said Ms White.

Emma glanced across at her mother, who was staring out the window and away from the two of them.

'Mum?'

'As I said before, it's nothing.'

Just a misunderstanding.'

'That's not true, though, is it, Dr Nicholl?'

said Ms White.

Emma's mother didn't reply. Ms White sighed and shook her head.

'I'm sorry,' she said. 'I'd hoped it wouldn't come to this.'

'I don't understand. What's going on?'

'You're aware your mother has been volunteering here for the past few weeks?'

'Yes, of course.'

'As part of that she's been in the classroom, reading to the kids and helping them with activities. This morning she was in Ms Liu's year two class. They were doing a project where they had to make a list of the things that matter most to them.'

'Yes, I remember Harriet doing the same exercise last year.'

'Your mother was assisting several of the children when Ms Liu became concerned something wasn't right. It seems your mother was encouraging the children to write a different kind of list.'

Emma glanced at her mother. 'I'm sorry?'

Ms White took a deep breath. 'She was encouraging them to make a list of things in the past on a piece of paper. Things they'd forgotten.'

Emma sat motionless. All the air seemed to have drained out of the room.

Ms White glanced at Emma's mother and then looked at Emma. When she spoke her voice was firm and clear, so there could be no misunderstanding. 'She was encouraging them to try to remember.'

As they left the office, Ms White touched Emma's arm to hold her back.

'I'm sorry about this, but you know we can't allow this behaviour. It's too unsettling for the children. One of them described a grandparent who died, another talked about their father's drinking.'

Emma nodded. 'Of course,' she said, trying to keep her voice level. 'I completely understand.'

'I'm glad,' said Ms White. 'I don't think we need to take this any further, do you?'

'Thank you,' said Emma. 'I appreciate that.'

Turning, she saw her mother waiting in the corridor. Ignoring her gaze, she walked past her, keeping her eyes forward as she passed the office, her blood pounding in her ears. Back at the car she yanked the door open and, sitting down, gripped the steering wheel with both hands and stared ahead until her mother sat down beside her.

'What on Earth did you think you were doing?' she said once the door was closed.

Her mother arranged her handbag on her lap.

'They deserve to know how to remember.'

'That's not up to you.'

'It's not up to you, either.'

Emma tightened her hands on the wheel and took a breath. She knew her mother well enough to know arguing with her when she was in this mood was futile. Taking a breath she tried a different tack.

'Have you considered how your behaviour affects Harriet? We're lucky they didn't ask her to leave.

Or that you weren't reported and arrested.'

She closed her eyes and tried to steady herself.

'You do understand how much trouble you could be in, don't you?'

Her mother didn't answer, just folded her arms and stared mulishly ahead. Finally Emma sighed in frustration. 'I have to get back to the office. I'll drop you home on the way.'

Neither of them spoke on the drive back to her mother's apartment. As her mother opened the door to get out, Emma looked across at her. 'You know you can't go back to the school, don't you?' she said.

'Not ever.'

Her mother made a derisive sound. 'I'm serious.'

'And you think I wasn't?' said her mother, and slammed the door.

As Emma watched her walk towards the entrance to the building, she remembered her friend Louise saying she thought you could graph parent/child relationships in the shape of an X, and that once you passed the intersection the roles reversed, so you became the parent and they became the irresponsible 20-something, the sullen teen, and eventually — if you were unlucky — the uncontrollable toddler.

Her relationship with her mother had always been complicated, but since Emma's father died she had been different; needier, but also prone to fits of regret, or a desire to linger in the past that Emma found difficult to respond to without becoming irritated.

'Perhaps you could have tried that when I was a kid?' she had snapped only a few weeks before, when her mother had told her she should try to enjoy Harriet now, because she wouldn't be this way forever.

It had all begun when Emma's father got sick. Not long after he retired he and her mother went on a holiday to India, where he began to have fits of temper and confusion. At first he insisted it was nothing, that he was just tired, but after their return he was diagnosed with Alzheimer's. Emma remembered her mother's face when she told her, the look of disbelief, as if her mother could not imagine a world in which this kind of interruption to her plans might occur.

When she read up about it later, Emma found it was not unusual for people with dementia to come unstuck when they went on holiday: apparently the loss of familiar routine unhinged them. But after his diagnosis her father grew rapidly worse, his memory simply slipping away, until he was little more than a shell, a confused shadow of his former self. One day she went to visit him and discovered he did not know who she was; instead he just stared at her blankly. Emma kissed his head and let herself out, leaving him sitting in front of the television in the nursing home. A week later her mother called her and said that he had forgotten her as well, her voice tight with strain.

He lingered for another year after that, so little of him left that in the end it was a relief when he finally died. Those last weeks were difficult, but also oddly transformative: the vanity and desire for control that Emma had always found so difficult about her mother seemed to melt away, and for the first time Emma felt she was seeing her mother undefended, or perhaps as she had been, long ago, when she and Emma's father had first met. And although Emma had always understood, somewhere in herself, that it was not her but her father who had been her mother's great love, now, seeing her lose him, she found that knowledge no longer wounded her.





On the day he died her mother seemed bereft, although also somehow lighter, as if she had reached the end of something. But the next day she called Emma to talk about the funeral arrangements, and at the end of the conversation, paused.

‘He wasn’t perfect, you know.’

Emma nodded, ‘None of us are.’

‘But I’ve been thinking about that, about the fact there must have been times when we weren’t happy. Times we fought, or hurt each other. Even these past weeks, which were so hard in so many ways, but also important.’

Emma tensed, aware her mother was straying into dangerous territory. ‘What are you saying, Mum?’

‘What if I forget all that? What if I forget *him*? Who am I then?’

‘You know it doesn’t work like that.’

‘Are you so sure?’

Emma looked across at the painting Harriet had brought home from school a few days earlier. A stick figure cat sat beside a woman and a child beside a square house. ‘It’s us,’ Harriet had said when she presented it to Emma. ‘Our family.’ Emma reached up and touched the blank space where the father should have stood.

‘We need to let the bad things go,’ she said.

‘Hang on to the good stuff, the positive stuff. It’s better for us, better for all of us.’

Her mother didn’t reply. At the time Emma thought that meant she’d understood, but after the scene at the school this morning, it was clear she had been mistaken about that.

Outside the school gates the next morning, Emma kissed Harriet goodbye and watched while she ran inside. Around her the parents were breaking off into small groups to talk and laugh. Emma smiled and waved to a couple of people and then turned to walk back towards her car. But as she reached it somebody called her name behind her. She turned to find the mother of Harriet’s best friend, Ava, standing there.

‘Becca,’ said Emma, smiling.

Becca smiled back, a little nervously. ‘Ava told me there was some kind of incident yesterday.’

With your mother?’

Emma stared at her friend. ‘She made a mistake, is all.’

Becca gazed at her for a long moment. Not for the first time Emma wondered whether her wide-eyed defencelessness was genuine or a girlish act that had somehow hardened into habit. ‘So nothing serious?’

Emma shook her head. ‘Not at all. And best forgotten.’

Becca nodded, a little too quickly. ‘Yes, of course.’

As she drove away Emma wondered about the edge of nervousness in Becca’s manner. Was it just that Becca was unsettled by the idea something unpleasant or disturbing had occurred? Or was it more than that? Even people who understood why it mattered were often uneasy about her work at the Ministry.

Perhaps that wasn’t entirely surprising when some still insisted the forgetting was maintained by pharmaceuticals, exchanging memes and messages about drugs in the water supply, or chemtrails and vaccines. But although there were times when medical treatments were necessary, for the most part it was much easier than that. After all, history made it obvious that people don’t like troubling

thoughts or difficult ideas; instead they want to forget, all they need is a little encouragement, to be told it is alright to let go of the past, to live in the present. Technology helped, of course: the social media platforms were required to purge themselves every seven days, but that wasn't really necessary, as most people cared more about the new than the old. Once begun, the process usually looked after itself, as people learned to avoid discussing or remembering difficult things. Glancing out her window, she looked at the people hurrying by, their constant movement and industry, the bustling nowness of it, and smiled.

She didn't speak to her mother that week or the next. Emma felt guilty about avoiding her, but was also aware what a relief it was not to have to deal with her. Indeed she had almost forgotten the unpleasantness at the school when she arrived back at her office after lunch a fortnight later, and found a former colleague waiting for her.

'Ben,' she said, ushering him into her office. 'It's been ages. What brings you to these parts?'

Ben waited until she had closed the door and sat down. 'I'm sorry to come here unannounced, but something happened this morning, and I thought you ought to know.'

Emma fell still. Ben had transferred to the Ministry's Enforcement Unit a year before. 'Yes?'

'We broke up a protest down near Parliament House earlier. Nothing big, just the usual misfits and troublemakers.'

'But?'

'We made some arrests, and we issued warnings to the rest. Your name came up when I ran the details of one of them.'

Emma tensed, but didn't move.

'My mother?'

Ben nodded.

'But she wasn't arrested?'

'No. But I thought you should know.'

'Thank you,' Emma said. 'I'll deal with it.'

'Of course.' Ben paused. 'And Emma? You have to deal with this. It was just luck it was me this time.'

Emma sat in silence for several minutes after Ben left. Then she stood up, and grabbing her bag, told her assistant she wasn't feeling well and hurried down to the car. She parked outside her mother's apartment block, but when her mother didn't answer the buzzer she turned and walked across the road into the park. When her parents first moved here Emma had always found the park unsettling, the heavy sandstone and metal arch at its entrance somehow penal, even despite the palm trees towering overhead. But her mother loved it. Walking briskly she crossed the grass, stiff and dry after weeks without rain, until she saw her mother sitting on her favourite seat under one of the trees. Her mother didn't acknowledge her as she approached, instead remaining still, staring ahead, until Emma stopped right in front of her.



‘What the hell, mum?’

Her mother looked at her, her face composed. ‘I gather somebody has been speaking to you.’

‘A colleague. And I’m glad he did. Do you have any idea how much trouble you could have been in? How much trouble I could have been in?’

‘Is that really all you care about? Your job?’ her mother said.

‘What I care about is making sure you don’t get yourself into more trouble.’ She hesitated. ‘Who are these people? How did you meet them?’

Her mother shook her head. ‘They’re just ordinary people, like you and me. All sorts. But they know something is wrong, that it shouldn’t be like this. That we should be able to remember whatever we want.’

‘Listen to yourself! You should be able to remember.’ Emma snorted dismissively and looked around. In the sculpture park by the playground a man and woman were helping a smiling toddler stand on top of the metal sphere. ‘Look at them. See how happy they are? What good would it do them to remember the past? To have to carry the trauma of their history around with them? Why wouldn’t they want to be free of it?’

She glanced across to a pair of teenage girls seated under one of the trees. ‘And those two? Why should they carry around the weight of things that happened in the past? What good would it do them to feel guilty about things they didn’t do? And what about Harriet? Why would she want to remember her father? How would that possibly make her happier?’

‘Is that your choice to make for her? What if Harriet wants to remember?’

Emma took a breath. ‘She’s a child.’

‘But I’m not. And I want to hold on to my past. To who I am.’

Emma stared at her mother for a moment more, and then turned and walked away.

What good would it do them to remember the past? To have to carry the trauma of their history around with them? Why wouldn’t they want to be free of it?

Another week passed, and then another. Once or twice Harriet asked about her grandmother, when she might be able to see her again, but Emma fobbed her off, telling her she was busy, but they’d see her soon. Meanwhile she was working hard not to think too much about the conversation at the park, or the incident at the school. She wanted to remember her mother as she had been in the months before her father died, as somebody she felt fondly about for the first time in her life. But it wasn’t easy. She knew her mother was wrong, that forgetting was the best for her, the best for everybody: you only had to look around to see that, to take in the relief people felt living in the moment, unburdened by the pain and cruelty of the past. Once, not long ago, there had been people who believed trauma was written into the body, that painful memories were laid down in ways that meant we had to experience them over and over again, or even passed from generation to generation, flowing down the line in our genes. Yet forgetting showed that didn’t have to be the case: we could live free of pain and unburdened by the past; remembering only brought pain that nobody should have to suffer. She had seen the difference it made, the way it had made it possible to leave behind the toxic struggles of the past, the unbearable weight of history and its crimes, the cycles of grief and despair that never seemed to end.

It wasn’t costless: happiness never came without sacrifice, and there were always going to be those who mistook their obsession with the sins of the past for the fantasy of justice. But one only had to see the confusion and distress of people who encountered a past they did not, or could not, understand to see why it

was better this way. She had been working at the Ministry long enough to know the system wasn’t perfect, but she was proud to have been a part of that process, proud that she had been able to help a better world.

And so she was almost surprised when she received a phone call from her mother late one evening.

‘Emma?’ her mother said. Her voice sounded hollow, like she was somewhere far away.

‘Mum? Where are you?’

‘That doesn’t matter. I need your help. I’ve been arrested.’

Emma was silent for a moment or two. ‘What do you mean? Why?’

‘I was at a meeting. With the people from before, the rememberers.’

Emma didn’t reply.

‘Emma? I don’t know what’s going to happen to me.’

Emma nodded. She knew if she closed her eyes she would not be able to picture her mother’s face, that if she tried to imagine her here, all she would be able to summon up would be a vague feeling of emptiness.

‘Emma? Are you there? Emma, please, I’m afraid.’

There was a long silence, and then Emma smiled. ‘Thank you,’ she said, and hung up, cutting off her mother’s pleading voice. Turning around she noticed Harriet standing in the doorway, half-asleep in her unicorn nightie.

‘Who was that?’ she asked.

Emma looked at her and smiled. ‘Nobody,’ she said. ‘Nobody at all.’

James Bradley is an author and critic. His most recent novel is *Ghost Species* and his book of essays about the ocean, to be called *Deep Water*, will be published in 2023.



Helmut Newton and his wife, June, at Castlecrag (23 The Scarp), January 1955. Photo by Max Dupain

WORDS Margot Riley

Helmut & Max, June & Maggie

Fashion photographer Helmut Newton's career began in Australia, where he met fellow photographer Max Dupain and two women who would shape his life.

They say things happen in threes, and that's how this investigation began for me. First, browsing the Library's digital collections, I rediscovered an intriguing set of casual portraits of Helmut Newton — one of the world's most influential fashion photographers — and his actor wife June, taken in Sydney in the summer of 1955 by legendary Australian photographer Max Dupain at his Castlecrag home.

Few other photographers have been more published than Helmut Newton. His iconic images sold millions of upmarket fashion magazines and have become part of our collective visual memory. Bold, transgressive pictures creating erotically charged tableaux of feminine power, they meld haute couture with high-voltage glamour. Yet few people know that his career began in Australia, not least because Newton's fashion photography from the 1940s to the early 1960s is rarely found in published surveys or exhibitions.

The second moment was when I read of the death of June Newton in Monte Carlo, at the age of 97. Lifelong muse, collaborator, protector, promoter and curator of her husband's work, Australian-born June Browne was better known in the 1950s and 1960s by her stage name June Brunell. She became a well-regarded photographer in her own right from 1970, working under the wry pseudonym 'Alice Springs'.

The third thing happened just as we descended into the mid-2021 lockdown. An enquiry popped into my inbox from the Jewish Museum of Australia in Melbourne, asking about borrowing works by Helmut Newton for a forthcoming exhibition. (*HELMUT: In Focus* opened in April and will run until early next year.) The JMA show aims to offer the most complete picture of Newton's life ever exhibited in Australia, so its curator was keen to delve into the photographer's early career. The Library's collections include rare copies of Newton's first magazine spreads, as well as a series of remarkable photoprints shot for a local fashion advertising campaign in 1959. These feature future Model of the Year Maggie Tabberer.

I found myself wondering about the circumstances that brought these four people — Helmut and June and Max and Maggie — together, and about the impact these mid-twentieth century encounters may have had on their lives.



June Newton is a born prankster; Helmut is inclined to be serious. Sometimes, however, he will clown with her.

High Fashion Photographer

HELMUT NEWTON FOREVER HUNTS NEW FACES



HELMUT NEWTON, ace fashion photographer of Melbourne, and his lovely actress wife June Brunell have a habit of staring with a narrow-eyed, summing-up look into the faces of passers-by as they stroll through the city streets. Often the earnest stares are followed by what Helmut calls "the dirty work", which he usually leaves to June. This "dirty work" is an invitation to an interesting face to come and be photographed in Helmut's studio with a view to fashion modelling.

The Newtons mentally docket scenery into backgrounds of various kinds, and doorways are listed as part of the set-up of an elegant fashion shot. More often than not the owner is flattered that his door or portico is required for a magazine picture. The Newtons are also opportunists about using the home of their friends for fashion settings. *Continued next page*

Detail is a passion with him. Gesticulating, he pleads with wife June to get mannequin Kin Linehan's collar just right.

The Newtons left Australia permanently in 1961 and lived a glamorous and cosmopolitan lifestyle. Dupain and Tabberer remained here, each achieving iconic status in their separate spheres but not always so lucky in love; both married twice, and Maggie divorced twice.

During the enforced isolation of lockdown, I browsed widely, searching the many online resources about these high-profile personalities. Helmut, June and Maggie all published autobiographies which I read, looking for evidence of ongoing connections. Max left no biography, though he made notes on his life, about which much has been written.

Most sources make passing reference to the arrival in Australia of Berlin-born Helmut Neustaedter, a Jewish refugee. Leaving Nazi Germany on 5 December 1938, his parents fled to Chile but the self-assured Helmut went his own way. Intending to journey to China, he ended up in Singapore instead. Two years later, with the growing threat from Japan, the 20-year-old left for Australia, travelling on the luxury cruiser *Queen Mary*, commandeered to transfer enemy aliens to safety. He sailed into Sydney Harbour in September 1940 and later recalled having thoroughly enjoyed the voyage. Transported to the Tatura Internment Camp in rural Victoria, Helmut was released after 16 months. Designated a 'refugee alien', he took up civilian war work, including picking fruit, before joining the 6th Employment Company (AMF), driving trucks at Tocumwal. Never without his camera, military service enabled Helmut to mix with ordinary Australians and improve his English. By mid-1946 he was working at a Footscray canning factory and renting a flat in South Yarra.

Discharged on 6 August 1946, Helmut received £100 in deferred pay which enabled him to secure a small, dilapidated top-floor studio space in Flinders Lane, the hub of the Melbourne rag trade. By 4 December 1946, when he changed his name by deed poll to Helmut Newton, he'd already achieved a photo

credit to this new name with his first magazine cover — a colour picture of a smiling young woman holding a bucket of grapes for the 2 June 1945 issue of *The Australasian*. He later recalled his 'total euphoria' when he imagined the thousands of people who would buy it.

Newton's search for commissions that would launch his career as a fashion photographer now began in earnest. 'From my earliest start as a photographer the printed page was always my goal,' he said. 'I realised very early on that the most important factor would be to be published, with a by-line, and that to me was much more important than the money people would pay me for my pictures.' He also noted that 'the right girl at the right moment has always been my inspiration'.

That was certainly the case when, in 1946, an aspiring actor named June Browne from the tiny Victorian town of Kangaroo Ground came to his studio looking for modelling work. As their romance blossomed, Helmut would meet June at the theatre after her evening performance and a new avenue of work opened up for him: theatre photography. The couple, known to their friends as 'Helmie and Junie', married in May 1948, forming a life partnership which strengthened and endured through the next 57 years, despite Helmut's warning that she would always be his second love, after photography. June would later say, 'Photography was always his mistress ... [but] I was his wife ...' She recalled their Melbourne years as marvellous: 'We had no money, but we all had such fun'.

On 6 October 1954, an article in *People* magazine profiled the Newtons as rising stars in their respective fields. Working together and apart, the couple were said to be constantly on the lookout for interesting locations and fresh faces for Helmut's fashion modelling business. His ability to infuse his pictures with the utmost chic — 'using a good honest Australian background and transforming it into something right out of the Champs d'Élysées' — was

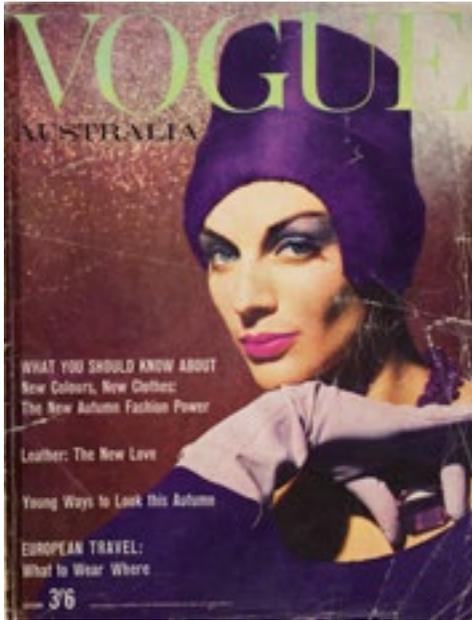


The Australasian, 2 June 1945, Helmut Newton's first magazine cover

credited to his Continental upbringing. Intriguingly, foreshadowing June's later pseudonymous photographic career, the article also mentions that she had already begun 'turning out pictures which Helmut says are excellent, though he doesn't believe that a husband and wife should be in the same line of business'.

His ability to infuse his pictures with the utmost chic

Helmut Newton's grand ambition was to work for *Vogue*. His growing reputation as an adventurous fashion photographer was rewarded when he secured a commission for a series of Australian supplements to British *Vogue* showcasing fashions 'created by Australian designers, worn by Australian models and photographed by ... Australian photographer[s] on Australian soil'. Initiated by UK-based fashion editor Rosemary Cooper, who claimed to have discovered Newton 'working in an attic', she subsequently commissioned him to shoot



Maggie Tabberer was the first Australian model to appear on the cover of *Vogue Australia*. Photo by Helmut Newton

fashion spreads and advertisements for the 1954 supplements.

Around this time, Newton received a letter from Max Dupain inviting him and other Melbourne photographers to participate in a group show at Sydney department store David Jones in May 1955. Newton had occasionally exhibited his work in Melbourne to promote photography for advertising and industry, and fashion in particular. Dupain's Sydney group had been meeting since mid-1954 to discuss and criticise each other's work and were keen to widen their circle.

As devotees of the New Photography movement that originated in Europe in the 1920s, Newton and Dupain should have had much in common. But, in the telling of his own story, Dupain identified the war years as a turning point for his life and work. He'd begun his career working as an apprentice in the studio of Cecil Bostock, one of Sydney's top photographers, during an era when the expanding field of magazine illustration meant increased demand for images. Going out on his own in the 1930s, he took on the variety of assignments essential for survival in a commercial studio: advertising, fashion illustration and social portraiture, which supplied

a never-ending flow of work. Dupain, a pacifist, served as a camouflage officer between 1941 and 1945, but was devastated by the death of his friend, documentary film maker Damien Parer, and the breakdown of his marriage to teenage sweetheart and studio partner Olive Cotton after only 18 months.

Returning to commercial work in 1947, Dupain was determined to reject the triviality and 'cosmetic lie' of fashion photography. He preferred to work outdoors instead of in the studio, which he associated with 'fakery'. Championing a documentary approach, what he called 'factual photography', Dupain began to focus on architectural and industrial photography — both requiring less interaction with people than fashion or portraiture. He said, 'People are almost out right now — it's what they make or build that interests me.'

Dupain had remarried in November 1946. From 1953, he lived with his wife, Diana, and their young family at 23 The Scarp, Castlecrag, designed for them by modernist Australian architect Arthur Baldwinson. Built on a steep block

It's interesting to imagine how Newton and Dupain, two single-minded and determined photographers, might have spent a day together.

sloping down to Middle Harbour, it was surrounded by a native garden cultivated by Dupain. Described by Diana Dupain as a 'complex character', Max was not a social person and could be difficult to talk to.

In late 1954, Helmut and June decided to make the 750-mile drive to Sydney for their summer holidays. In her autobiography, June recalls their road trip starting with a traumatic incident: Helmut ran over Cecil, their spotted

tabby cat. Named for renowned English fashion and society photographer Cecil Beaton, the cat was something of a Melbourne celebrity in his own right. Posing with June for the *Argus* photographer in April 1952, he was billed as 'Cecil, the photogenic cat, who takes pictures'. He had supposedly learned so much about cameras that he was able to 'release the shutter by tapping it with his paw'.

It's interesting to imagine how Newton and Dupain, two single-minded and determined photographers, might have spent a day together. While the Castlecrag photoshoot proves that the two photographers did indeed meet, presumably to examine each other's work and discuss the forthcoming exhibition, nothing came of their proposed collaboration. The eponymously named *6 Photographers* show proceeded, displaying over 200 works by the Sydney photographers only — Dupain, Gordon Andrews, Kerry Dundas, Hal Missingham, Axel Poignant and David Potts — after which the group disbanded. There is no evidence that Newton and Dupain ever met again.

Returning to Melbourne to find Cecil thankfully recovered from his trauma, the Newtons were riding the crest of a wave that would soon take them away from Australia. The first issue of the *Vogue Supplement for Australia* hit local newsstands in March 1955 and Helmut was kept busy working on advertising and editorial commissions for follow-up issues, landing his first full page editorial credit in the Autumn–Winter 1956 Supplement, and his first cover for the Autumn–Winter 1957 issue.

The Newtons left Henry Talbot, a fellow German refugee photographer and former Tatura internee who had joined the Flinders Lane Studio, in charge when they travelled to England to take up a contract with British *Vogue* in February 1957. But Helmut was unhappy working with the *Vogue* editors there and broke his contract within a year. The couple moved to Paris in search of more fulfilling assignments before being lured back to Melbourne



Newton turned Margaret, the housewife, into Maggie, the model.



Photographic portraits of Maggie Tabberer, by Helmut Newton



Maggie Tabberer, by Helmut Newton

in late 1958 by a new contract from Condé Nast for *Vogue Australia*, which launched as a stand-alone title in 1959.

Not surprisingly, this launch increased the volume of Australian fashion photography. Regarded by now as the doyen of Melbourne's fashion photographers, Newton not only photographed most of Australia's top models, he discovered quite a few of them. One was Margaret Tabberer, a young wife and mother just beginning her modelling career in her hometown of Adelaide. Working for David Jones there, she met top model Diane Masters who told her, 'You've got to get out of Adelaide

... the fashion centre in Australia is in Melbourne and that's where you belong'. Masters orchestrated her introduction to Newton, who relished working with taller, bigger 'Amazonian' models. Newton was immediately drawn to Tabberer's dark, European-style looks (and great legs), telling fashion buyer Sheila Scotter, who would later become *Vogue Australia* editor, 'I've found this woman with the most fantastic face, in Adelaide ... [she's size 14 ... but] you should use her'.

Newton turned Margaret, the housewife, into Maggie, the model. Her face dominated the editorial and

fashion advertising pages of *Vogue Australia* between 1959 and 1961. Newton helped Maggie develop her knowledge of photography and encouraged her involvement, as he had with June, in the styling of his pictures, which ignited a creativity Maggie never knew she had.

Around this time, Melbourne manufacturers Lucas & Co. decided to promote their exclusive fashion range, adapted from designs by Parisian couturier Pierre Cardin, in a series of lavish advertising campaigns featured in *Vogue*. These would be shot by Australia's ace fashion photographer, and feature one of Australia's most recognisable faces.



Maggie remembers Newton saying, 'I've got a concept for Lucas ... I want to do it with guys with guns and I want it to look like a big heist has taken place.' She would hold a handgun and have pearls hanging out of her handbag, 'like I had just stolen the jewels ...'.

Another photo in the series was shot at night in one of Melbourne's dark, rain-slicked alleyways. Gritty yet elegant, this image has an erotic subtext. Tabberer, swathed in fur, was cast as a gangster's moll, accompanied by two criminal types in trench coats, her gloved hand stroking the barrel of her henchman's machine gun. Taking fashion photography out of the studio and onto the street, Newton depicts a modern woman in action. Moreover, his risqué, sophisticated snap gives the Cardin-Lucas cocktail dress a hefty dose of cutting-edge glamour. The photo's sinister tone is enhanced by Newton's penchant for film noir and predicts the irreverent style that would become his signature.

In 1961 Tabberer became *Vogue Australia's* first local cover girl, appearing on the autumn issue. She was named 1960 Model of the Year but the demands of her modelling career saw the end of her marriage. Among Tabberer's papers at the Library are black and white contact sheets taken by Newton showing beautiful shots of Maggie nude, wrapped in sheets with her hair down. As Maggie recalls, their affair 'seemed very natural ... We spent so much time

together in all sorts of situations.' Much later, Helmut told Maggie that when he'd confessed to June, she'd said she didn't blame him. But the romance came to an end when the Newtons left the country for good in May 1961, heading to Paris to shoot a 12-page colour advertising spread for *Vogue Australia*, promoting Melbourne's House of Prestige.

Sponsored by French airline TAI, and resembling a ravishing travelogue, Newton snapped the garments on French models 'in the *Vogue* manner', using key Parisian sites as backdrops, including the Eiffel Tower, Montmartre and L'Opéra. In her autobiography Maggie recalls that Newton said to her, "'You should come" ... But I had two little girls who were totally dependent on me ... I knew that it wouldn't work.' Tabberer ended her modelling career not long after, at the age of 25. She maintained her friendship with the Newtons and became a household name in Australia through her fashion and television work.

Coming to the end of my investigation, I find I can't agree with claims by Australian photo historian Gael Newton (no relative) that Helmut Newton 'left nothing to represent his early work in Melbourne in the 1950s'. Nor with Newton's close friend Karl Lagerfeld's description of the decade as Newton's 'unknown, mysterious Australian period'. Newton himself declared that he learned nothing in Australia: 'Absolutely nothing! They were formative

Newton's Australian years gave him the confidence to pursue his creativity internationally.

years but they didn't form me.' Again, I can't agree with the man himself.

Newton's Australian years gave him the confidence to pursue his creativity internationally. What he took with him was the earthiness of the girl from Kangaroo Ground who stayed a constant in his life. In June, Newton found a collaborator who truly understood his work. She was crucial to his success, extending the reach of his considerable oeuvre through her encouragement and unwavering support. After Helmut's death in 2006, June wasn't drawn back to Australia. She said, 'the only thing I was ever drawn to was Helmut ... I loved my life in Australia, but ... home was always where Helmut was.'

Margot Riley, curator

Above: Maggie, Helmut and June at the Newtons' holiday home in the south of France, around 1980. Photo by Amanda Tabberer. Reproduced with permission



Richie Benaud, Australian cricket captain, with Sir Donald Bradman at a Gabba test in Brisbane, 1 January, 1960.
Photo by Jim Fenwick / Newspix

Benaud & Bradman try to change the rules



Two cricket legends, rarely seen to be on the back foot, corresponded about the no-ball rule.

‘You are still my great white hope,’ Sir Donald Bradman told Richie Benaud, in relation to his campaign to change one of the laws of cricket. Without Benaud’s help, Sir Donald wrote, it was liable to be seen as ‘another stupid bloody Bradman exercise’.

This letter was written in October 1992, when Bradman was 84 years old and Benaud 62. Considering the veneration with which both cricketers are now held, it is eye-opening to see how frustrated and ignored Bradman felt as he grew older. Letters between the two Australian greats, newly obtained by the State Library of NSW, reveal the growth of this frustration across almost two decades, from 1975 to 1993.

The focus of the Bradman–Benaud correspondence in this period was, increasingly, the law governing the no-ball in cricket. In 1963, some 15 years after Bradman’s retirement and just as Benaud was finishing his playing career, a 200-year-old law was changed so that an illegal delivery was measured by where a bowler’s front foot landed (it had to be

behind the ‘popping crease’, a few feet past the stumps) rather than the back foot (behind the line of the stumps). The rule had been changed after many bowlers exploited the back-foot rule by ‘dragging’, or landing legally with their back foot but allowing their momentum to carry them well past the popping crease as they released the ball, effectively shortening the length of the pitch.

The no-ball rule might seem an arcane detail of cricket, but Bradman and Benaud opposed it resolutely. Down the years, it was probably the only issue upon which the three iconic Australian captains of the twentieth century – Bradman, Benaud and Ian Chappell, more often than not a staunch opponent of Bradman – all found themselves on the same side.

Benaud passed away in 2015, and his widow, Daphne, has generously donated 14 letters he exchanged with Bradman to the Library. This correspondence shows how dramatically the balance of power in Australian cricket shifted between the 1970s and 1990s.

In their first letters, Benaud was working in England as a professional broadcaster and journalist, while Bradman was operating his stockbroking firm in Adelaide and sitting as a director of the Australian Cricket Board, of which he had been chairman for two terms from 1960 to 1963 and 1969 to 1972.



Top: Sir Donald Bradman gives a press conference on his return from a cricket conference, Mascot, 9 August 1960. Photo by Jack Hickson

Bottom: Richie Benaud at the Sydney Cricket Ground in 1964. From the Australian Photographic Agency Collection, Photo by David J Hickson

In an aerogramme in May 1975, Bradman gave Benaud some advice on work–life balance: ‘Don’t you think you have reached the age when you can take life just a little bit more leisurely and just have a little bit more time to spend with your friends who enjoy your company?’ He politely declined Benaud’s request to appear at a cricket seminar he planned in Adelaide. ‘[F]rantically busy’, Bradman had decided to wind down his public appearances, apologising: ‘I’ve only done 2 functions and have turned down 2 hundred.’ Benaud persisted, replying, ‘I believe it is something you would enjoy doing’, and ‘Let us leave it with you’, before concluding with a suggestion that they have a game of golf next time Benaud visited Adelaide.

By July, Bradman was firmer, declining the golf game for health reasons and asserting, ‘Sorry I think it better for me not to do that seminar but you will get a better man.’ Benaud accepted this response in his next letter, which he filled with observations about cricket politics, broadcast-rights sales and the Australian team currently touring England.

The staples of small talk across the span of their correspondence were gossip about administrators, opinions about current players, golf chat and the future of broadcast rights which, then as now, formed the main stream of cricket’s income.

It was a dispute over those rights that caused a 14-year gap in the Benaud–Bradman correspondence. In 1976–77 in Australia, Kerry Packer’s Nine Network challenged the long-term incumbent, the ABC, for the right to televise cricket. Bradman persistently defended the governing body’s relationship with the public broadcaster and also opposed Ian Chappell’s efforts to lift the players’ pay rates. In 1977, Packer funded World Series Cricket (WSC), a breakaway tournament comprising Australia (led by Ian Chappell), the West Indies and a World XI. This divided global cricket for two years until peace was brokered in 1979 and Nine won the broadcast and marketing rights in Australia. During cricket’s ‘civil war’, Bradman, still a powerful establishment presence, was on the opposite side from Benaud, who offered advice to Packer, mentored WSC players, commentated and wrote on the WSC matches, and was the most influential senior cricketing voice on the WSC side.

The number of no-balls registered by the fast bowlers reduced and slowed down the amount of play, and it was very difficult for umpires to properly observe the bowler’s front foot while also adjudicating on what happened when the ball arrived at the batsman’s end.

It was not until 1989, a full decade after the compromise, by which time Bradman had retired from the board, that the available correspondence resumed. By then, however, the balance of influence between Benaud and Bradman had reversed. Benaud remained a commentator and ever-present guiding hand over Australian cricket, whereas Bradman felt increasingly marginalised. The flow of dinner and golf invitations went the other way: it was Bradman making the suggestions and Benaud, when in Adelaide, apologising for being too busy to eat or play golf with The Don.

On one point, however, they made common ground and felt equally thwarted. Bradman wrote to Benaud of the ‘absolute farce’ of the front-foot no-ball law slowing down play during the recent West Indies tour of Australia, what Bradman called a ‘disastrous experience’. ‘The viewing public are without doubt fed up to the back teeth with the front foot law.’

The number of no-balls registered by the fast bowlers reduced and slowed down the amount of play, and it was very difficult for umpires to properly observe the bowler’s front foot while also adjudicating on what happened when the ball arrived at the batsman’s end. No-ball calls, when made, arrived so late that the batsman had no chance to benefit from it with a free hit. Bradman had been lobbying Australian Cricket Board members without success; he urged Benaud to help him, and promised change ‘PROVIDING WE HAVE THE WILL TO TRY’.

SIR DONALD BRADMAN, A.C.

1000000000
1000000000
1000000000

31-8-93.

Dear Richie,

My very sincere thanks for the letter you sent me re the Umpire's Convention and the copy of your paper.

The only feed back I have had so far was from Alec Bedser, who felt it went as could be expected under the circumstances. And the Chairman of the Sponsoring Company sent me a tie, struck for the Convention.

As you know I had my 85th birthday on Friday and Denis Compton paid me the great compliment of flying out to have dinner with me.

It was a happy occasion, but I did not miss the opportunity of raising with him the back foot issue and he has promised to lend his weight in the right quarters. I still think it is only a handful of hide bound English administrators who are blocking action.

You must have been highly delighted to watch this season's Tests, and in particular to see Shane Warne drive hom the point that leg spin is not yet dead. It was so exciting to get away from incessant pace.

Let me know when you have more news.

Warmest regards to you and Daph.

Sincerely,

Don

In the last of these letters, written in 1993, Bradman sounded exhausted by the fruitless campaign to change the no-ball law and was resigned to being marginalised.

Cricket's laws were made by the Marylebone Cricket Club in London, which felt a long way away. If Bradman, then 80 years old, was feeling the sting of irrelevance, Benaud, at 58, was beginning to sense its onset. Calling the front-foot law 'a wretched thing ... [that] has done harm to [cricket] over the past thirty years', he assured Bradman he was busily writing letters to newspapers, lobbying journalists, and trying to convince Clive Lloyd, the powerful recently retired West Indian captain and now manager, that his team would not have been fined \$22,000 on their 1988–89 Australian tour for slow over rates if the back-foot no-ball law was in operation.

The only material headway the pair made, however, was an undertaking from the then board chairman, Col Egar, that the 1990–91 Sheffield Shield would be played under the back-foot law. Benaud anticipated England saying, 'Why should we be interested in that change when you, in Australia, don't even have the will to do it yourselves.' As it turned out, Australia did not have that will. Bradman said he had heard nothing about it and feared Benaud had been 'misled by some newspaper report'.

By late 1992, Bradman was roundly frustrated. South Africa's cricket chief Ali Bacher had consented to try changing the law in domestic cricket there, but England continued to dismiss his representations.

His later correspondence is alternately apologetic — 'I am not going to bombard you with correspondence' — and also humble, thanking Benaud for reading a piece Bradman wrote for a book Tony Greig was producing on contemporary cricket. At the passing of his old sparring partner Bill 'Tiger' O'Reilly in 1992, Bradman was 'sad' but also relieved that 'at least we have seen the end of his bigoted crusade against what he called the "pyjama" game' plus his continuance of a feud between the two men that had persisted ever since the 1930s when they played together for Australia.

In the last of these letters, written in 1993, Bradman sounded exhausted by the fruitless campaign to change the no-ball law and was resigned to being marginalised. He commented that he had 'my own private thoughts as to where Australia went wrong' in the recent series loss to the West Indies, 'but guess they should remain private. Otherwise I would get into trouble with our selectors and our captain.' On the no-ball law, he had won the support of contemporaries in England such as Alec Bedser and Denis Compton, both also long retired, but had grown weary of 'only a handful of hide bound English administrators who are blocking action'.

The letters offer a new insight into how even two giants of cricket such as Bradman and Benaud felt powerless to influence the course of the game as their playing careers receded into the past. Today, the front-foot no-ball rule persists, but it is governed increasingly by side-on cameras. Batters now have almost zero opportunity to benefit from having the time to hear a no-ball call before they play their shot. Bradman and Benaud would have hated that. But one new development they got to enjoy was mentioned in the last of Bradman's letters to Benaud: he was 'highly delighted' to see a new young bowler. 'Shane Warne drive[s] home the point that leg spin is not yet dead. It was so exciting to get away from incessant pace.' Both Benaud and Bradman lived long enough to see this positive change come to full fruition.

Malcolm Knox is a journalist, author and columnist for the *Sydney Morning Herald*.

ON FIRE



Alexandra Christie is the new editor of HEAT, an illustrious literary publication in its third incarnation

HEAT magazine was a trailblazer from the day it was launched.

It was edgy and confronting, and its closure in 2012, though flagged as temporary, was met with dismay. It was started in 1996 by Ivor Indyk, professor of literature and soon-to-be publisher of Giramondo Books, when he was in a white-heat of anger following the publication of Helen Demidenko's book *The Hand That Signed the Paper*. In Holocaust writing, deception is distasteful to the point of moral disgust; the fake Ukrainian background of that book's author drove Indyk to launch an all-embracing venue for writing, respectful of Indigenous and migrant writers, as well as those from outside Australia. He wanted it to be intellectually exciting in a sea of stolidly worthy literary journals. It became all those things.

HEAT lived through two incarnations, two separate series, before going into hibernation. Fifteen issues were published in the first series, which lasted from 1996 to 2000. The second, containing 24 issues, ran from 2001 to 2011. Indyk admits that when he closed HEAT, he was physically and financially exhausted. He had just come through a bruising legal wrangle with the international corporation Bauer Media, which published a gossip magazine named *Heat* overseas and wanted to clear the local market of the

brand before bringing their tabloid to Australia. Indyk won his case but, working almost alone on HEAT, needed a rest. 'It was a Pyrrhic victory because I was totally wiped out,' he says now.

The editorials Indyk wrote for the first and last issues of HEAT reflect a developmental arc. He has said he was 'slightly embarrassed' by the intensity of the first one: it was a 'manifesto' rather than a polite introduction. In it, he described 'the destruction of universities as sites of intellectual and artistic controversy [and] the devaluation of literary ideals in the marketplace'. In his valedictory remarks, he said that he expected that if HEAT were resurrected in the future it would be edited by a younger generation and would be published online. Half of that prediction has come true.

A neat decade after the second series finished, a new series has been launched — pushed, Indyk says, by the younger generation at Giramondo, including associate publisher Nick Tapper and editor Aleesha Paz. Equipped with a four-year grant from the Australia Council, the team set out to begin HEAT again. That task included finding a new editor as Indyk stepped back. Thirty-one-year-old, Sydney-born Alexandra Christie, appointed by Indyk, was their choice.

The new incarnation is both like and unlike the originals. It is still dedicated to publishing non-Anglophone views of

the world, alternatives to the mainstream and points of view that are both thought-provoking and expressed in high literary style. But this series is published six times a year instead of twice a year and the editions are smaller. And instead of having striking covers displaying bright images and bold pointers to the writing inside, the new design is minimal, almost to the point of disappearing on the shelf. Yet it stands out for its size, texture and simplicity. Physically smaller, and lighter, HEAT Series 3, Number 1 contains only six pieces of writing. The brief contents page seems to offer more space for reading and contemplation, doing away as it does with that sense of having to prioritise and find time to read it all in a busy schedule. The designer, award-winning Jenny Grigg, has ingeniously consolidated that sense of calm by tapping into the quiet elegance of her own aesthetic, which she also brings to Giramondo's standalone poetry books.

The first edition of whatever one would now call HEAT — is it a magazine? a book? — is exquisite. It contains short works by the novelists/short story writers/essayists Mireille Juchau, Brian Castro and Cristina Rivera Garza in translation as well as poetry by Sarah Holland-Batt. Its cover is a borderless orange, with the names of the writers contained within written in white capital letters. It comes in an organic-looking pale grey-brown envelope marked 'POSTAGE PAID'.

Christie herself is surprisingly shy and was reticent about talking to *Openbook*. She only agreed to it when reassured that the conversation would be about HEAT primarily, as though understanding who the editor is and what she intends isn't all about the magazine itself. Small and dark-haired, she speaks straight to the point and avoids chit-chat. Over a coffee near Giramondo's current premises in a renovated warehouse, which they are soon to move from, she sketches out her position.

She has been given a free hand. Asked what her brief was from Indyk, she says, 'He wasn't dictatorial in any way, in terms of curation. I definitely value his feedback as a reader and he's been very generous in terms of reading things for me. In the beginning, I wanted to get a sense of his taste and what he was interested in, but I had the whole history of the magazine, all the back issues, to read. And some of the contributors in this first issue — Mireille Juchau, Brian Castro and Sarah Holland-Batt — have contributed to HEAT before.

'But that's one of the most amazing things about HEAT. Even reading back over the issues, it's incredible how relevant it all feels. Just picking up a random piece and feeling like it could

Keeping things intellectual and invigorating is a double demand that not many other literary magazines can answer.

have been written this year.' As a result, they are now in the process of digitising some of the back issues and putting them online. So many of the specific subjects explored in the first issues, she points out, are still important in today's political and social discourse: 'The conversations just come round again and again, in cycles almost.'

That timeliness has kept many preoccupations of the writers that HEAT has promoted over the years — Alexis Wright and Gerald Murnane, Antigone Kefala, Michael Mohammed Ahmad and many more — hovering in the ether.

Christie wants the roll call at HEAT to be multi-generational, keeping the established writers on board while giving space to emerging writers. If it's difficult to break into the literary world, even with spade-loads of talent, there aren't many venues for experienced high-brow writers these days either. Keeping things intellectual *and* invigorating is a double demand that not many other literary magazines can answer.

'It takes a long time to become a good writer, to really hone your craft,' Christie says. 'I want to bring [emerging writers] into the mix and elevate them next to established voices. That's really important to me.' She has placed a young writer in the second issue, she says, one who has only published one short story so far. But the calibre of the writing is high. 'And I want publishers to pay attention to that. The big mainstream publishers seem to operate in a separate orbit, in a way, to literary journals. I've had experience with multinational publishers and I've never seen literary journals in that space. I wish there was a little more overlap. I'm keen to create more crossover in the literary community.'

Worthiness never trumped literary taste at HEAT, which has always been known for the quality of its writing as well as its multicultural outlook. In fact, one might say that ensuring the two went hand in hand was its very purpose: exposing the cultural multiplicity of very good writing. 'HEAT has always been outward facing,' Christie adds. 'It has published a lot of international voices alongside Australian voices; it used to be known as Australia's international quarterly.'

Indyk published some amazing writers, she points out — writers from the Middle East, the UK, Eastern Europe, Indonesia, China, and translations from all over the world. The process of bringing translations to life can be complicated, and fascinating.

'Usually what happens is you communicate with the translator. I did that for one of the people in the first issue, Cristina Rivera Garza, who is Mexican so writes in Spanish. The translation already existed but we edited it. It depends on the

situation and how fluent the author is in English. If there's someone who communicates exclusively in Bulgarian, for example, you would deal with the translator.' Translators, she explains, like to place short excerpts from books they're translating, or short stories, to raise their profile as well as the authors. She uses the example of a Giramondo book by Norman Erikson Pasaribu, an emerging Indonesian writer, whom Christie will also publish. 'His translator, Tiffany Tsao, is brilliant. She works at the *Sydney Review of Books* as well, where she edits *The Circular*, and has been instrumental in bringing his work to an English-language audience. Her role in the creation of the English version of that book was unparalleled.'

Poetry, often undervalued in Australia, has always been promoted by HEAT. 'We have a poem by Samuel Wagan Watson in the next issue,' Christie continues, 'another person who is underappreciated. He is absolutely brilliant.' Watson has a typically mixed Australian background: he's a mixture of Munanjali, Birri Gubba, German and Irish descent. He has won many literary prizes and, in 2018, was the recipient of the Patrick White Literary Award for significant contribution to Australian literature. Yet, he is hardly a household name. Christie will continue to provide a space for poets to flourish.

'It's nice to be at Giramondo where we've had such a great history of publishing Indigenous writers — Alexis Wright, Ali Cobby Eckermann — it's an amazing list. And it has really stood the test of time. I suppose something I share with Ivor and Nick Tapper on the books side is a desire to publish writing that is timeless and doesn't feel reactionary, doesn't feel as though it's speaking to a specific time.' Someone like Antigone Kefala, for example, is overdue for a revival, she says. Kefala started publishing poetry in the 1970s, but her whole body of work reads as though it was written yesterday.

Christie's last job was as a literary agent with the prestigious Wylie Agency in New York. Covid brought her home. 'I think after living overseas for four years I was ready and Covid



was a good push,' she says. 'I've always wanted to be more hands-on in the editing side of things and I was ready for a change, ready for something at home, supporting Australian writers.'

She had arrived in the US without a job, after having won the Green Card Lottery, and successfully applied for the Wylie job. Before that, armed with a media and communications degree, she had worked in publicity for publishing companies in Sydney. She came home without a job too, and when she saw the advertisement for a new editor for HEAT, she applied. Christie impressed Indyk. 'She was amenable but very sharp in finding and commissioning writers. She curates with huge concentration,' he says. 'And then there was her international dimension.'

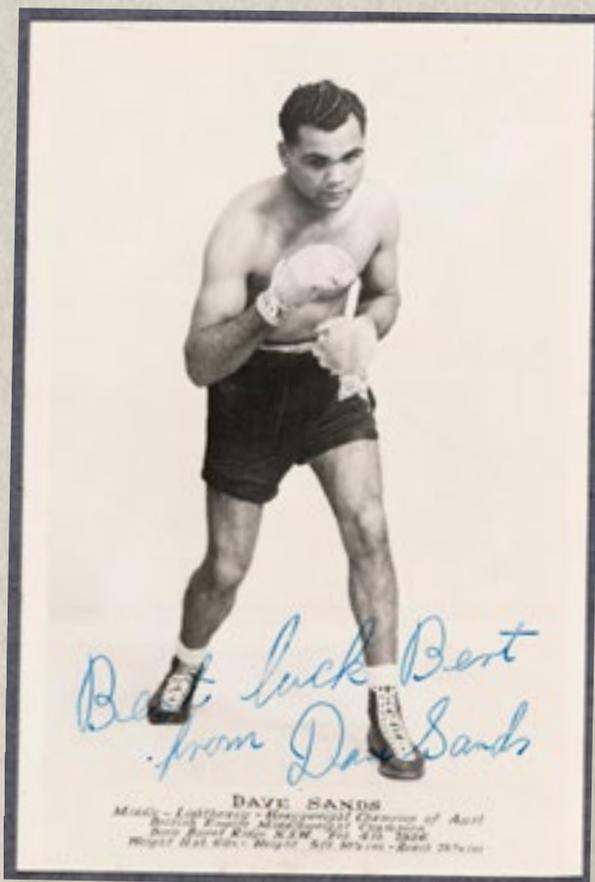
She enjoyed the collegial atmosphere at The Wylie Agency, though she demurs when asked which writers she handled there. 'It's very much like a family at the Agency and you're involved with everyone', she says. 'So, I could say Martin Amis, or that I worked with Sally Rooney, and there were certain people I brought on ...' She says something similar about her short time working at HEAT so far. The two experiences might say as much about Christie as it does about the workplaces.

'We work very much as a team, though I've curated all the pieces myself,' she says of the new HEAT, '[It] obviously has a long history and it's such a privilege to build on something, rather than having to build something entirely new from scratch.'

And she sidetracks into discussing her colleagues again: the brilliance of Grigg, the collegiality of Indyk and Tapper. Indyk himself prolongs our conversation about Christie to underline that his only involvement in HEAT now is with practical matters of printing or distribution, which occupy him as the co-publisher of Giramondo (with his wife, Evelyn Juers), and not at all with editorial decisions, which are now entirely Christie's. He seems proud to say it.

Miriam Cosic is a Sydney-based arts journalist, essayist and critic.

Photo by Joy Lai



Collection of photographs, newspaper cuttings and some manuscript material on boxing, collected by Bert L Cox. Photographs show Dave, Alfie, George and Clem.

WORDS Melissa Jackson & Kerry-Ann Tape

The Fighting Sands Brothers

Sport — including boxing — has long been one arena where First Nations talent has been celebrated.

To succeed in sport requires large measures of grit, determination, belief, and talent. Socioeconomic status and ethnicity are often less of a barrier to reaching the highest echelons in the sporting sphere, and sports have consistently recognised First Nations people's talents in ways that other spaces have not. First Nations athletes have been conquering the world sporting stage since early colonisation.

Many Aboriginal families have a story of a male family member fighting as a part of a travelling boxing troupe. These troupes gained popularity as early as 1910 and flourished up to the 1970s, a popular form of mass entertainment in an era without television. Boxing was one of the few ways that Aboriginal men could earn a living wage outside of hard labour and many families are proud of their grandfathers, fathers, brothers and uncles who became boxing legends. Boxing historian Bert Cox helps us to remember this era through his avid collecting of articles, programs, statistics and photographs — much of which are now kept in the Library.

One of the best-known boxing families was the Sands Brothers. Dughutti

brothers Clement, Percival, George, David, Alfred and Russell, known as the Fighting Sands, were from Burnt Bridge outside of Kempsey. Between the six of them they won state, national and Empire/Commonwealth titles.

By far the most successful brother — and the most famous — was Dave. Fast on his feet, with a renowned left hook and the ability to land blows and defend himself from heavy assaults, during the 1940s he won middleweight, light heavyweight and heavyweight titles — often all three in the same year. Soon after World War II he was fighting in front of enthusiastic crowds of up to 10,000 people in Sydney and Brisbane. Overseas, he was victorious in heavily promoted fights in Britain and the United States.

Sadly, Dave Sands died in 1952 when he was only 26 in a truck accident near Dungog. At the time he was ranked number 3 in the world. He won an extraordinary 97 of his 110 professional fights during his boxing career. Because it was widely accepted that he would have won the world championship had he lived, he was inducted into the World Boxing Hall of Fame in 1998.

In May 2022 at NSW Parliament House, Sands's family were presented with a replica belt in recognition of the achievements of this boxing champion.

The promotional photo from Bert's collection illustrates Dave's generous nature as he signed 'Best luck Bert from Dave Sands'.



These are just some of the First Nations sporting heroes and memorabilia in our collection, which covers many sports, not just boxing. To view these materials or learn more about how to access the Library collections you can contact info.koori@sl.nsw.gov.au and ask to yarn with our Koori collection specialists.

Finally, the Library has an upcoming First Nations exhibition to celebrate 50 years of Koori Knockout, opening in September 2022. We're looking for stories, objects, images and memorabilia to borrow for the display. Have you got a jersey in the back of the cupboard? A box of photos? T-shirts? Posters? Club documents? A trophy under your bed? We'd love to hear from you! Please get in touch with us at: kooriknockout@sl.nsw.gov.au

Melissa Jackson (Bundjalung) and Kerry-Ann Tape (Ngiyampaa), Indigenous Engagement.

Thanks to Chad Ritchie for his insights into Dave Sands, his grandfather.



Woman drinking a green detox smoothie at the gym, iStock photo by Hispanolistic

All well & good

Twenty-first-century notions of wellness have a long lineage.

Our twenty-first century idea of ‘wellness’ may be hard to define, but many of us aspire to it, or are told we should. Along with a focus on physical health — maintaining a healthy diet, exercising regularly, participating in the occasional dry July, consuming less red meat or doing a sugar or caffeine detox — wellness encompasses our mental and spiritual health. Google the term ‘wellness’ and you will find multitudes of studies and graphs and much guidance about how to attain personal wellness. In short, how to strike a balance between physical health and emotional, intellectual, financial, social and spiritual fulfilment.

These measures don’t come cheap, but all seek the same outcome: finding ways to live a balanced life. A healthy life. Achieving a work–life balance is living the dream, isn’t it? A yoga class in the morning before work, a conference call before a delicious vegetarian lunch, team meetings in the afternoon before school pickup, joyful family time and somehow, in the midst of all this, learning an Instagrammable new hobby. Living your best life.

But a balanced life is not a modern invention.

For centuries, the idea of a healthy body meant a balanced body. Ancient Greco-Roman ideas about the four humours and the balanced body prevailed over many centuries. They arrived in Europe during the Middle Ages and, thanks to the printing press, this knowledge flourished. Herbals and medical books were among the first books published and were widely circulated. Medical knowledge at the time was a complicated mix that blended lingering paganism with local knowledge, ancient folk charms and remedies, superstitions,

and a powerful belief in God and all things divine. Humoural theory was upheld in medical writing and practice until well into the nineteenth century.

When visitors to the Library’s *Kill or Cure* exhibition step into a number of ‘treatment rooms’, they will glimpse the powerful and enduring ideas of the four humours and the balanced body.

The ‘humours’ were four liquids understood to flow within the body in equal measure: blood, phlegm, yellow bile and black bile. Each of the four humors was linked with two of four fundamental qualities: hot, cold, wet and dry, and one of four elements: air, fire, earth or water. These, in turn, were linked to a season, an organ in the body and an astrological sign, which influenced not only the physical body, but an individual’s temperament as well.

When the body became sick or diseased, it meant there was an excess of one humour, or a deterioration or imbalance of any of the humours. The solution lay in ridding the body of the excess bad humour, and thus restoring it to balance. This was achieved through various treatments, either an enema, vomiting or bloodletting.

These imbalances could also be caused, it was thought, by various alignments of the planets and stars, or by bad air, or miasmas, that prompted epidemics such as smallpox, plague, malarial fevers and intestinal infections, spread from person to person. Early modern ideas around infection control were not entirely misguided:

‘You shall have a care that your houses be kept clean and sweet, not suffering any foule and filthy clothes or stinking things to remain ...’

Preservatives Against the Plague, 1652

Western medicine’s main emphasis at this time was on prevention, particularly through building a strong body and following a daily health regimen. Moderation in food and drink, a restful night’s sleep, and exercise were all recommended to keep the body in balance and, therefore, in health.



Zodiac man, The Shepherds kalender, London, 1656

A helpful seventeenth-century guide, *Everyman His Own Doctor*, reminds us to do ‘everything in moderation’, good advice that still stands today:

considering the great damage that comes upon most people daily by not knowing, or not regarding their own constitutions of body; whereby they neglect the precious Jewel of Health, and so by ignorance do live negligently, and do eat and drink they care not what ... thinking it cannot be bad for them, so it please the palate – but thereby many dig their graves with their teeth.

This warning not to ‘dig your grave with your teeth’ might not be found on a modern public health leaflet, yet its meaning rings true for us: don’t overindulge. More vegetables, less ale.

The same guide highly recommends:

Exercise doth increase health and strength, also it moves and agitates the spirits, from whence the heart is made strong and can resist external injuries ... those bodies that live idly, are soft and tender, and unfit to perform labours of every kind as dancing, running, playing at ball, gesture of body, riding, swimming, walking and all others.

The seventeenth-century person was encouraged to generate a ‘naturall sweat’, to open the pores, clean the blood and comfort the spirits. We know today that a good way to deal with stress and anxiety is to exercise, because it releases endorphins and enhances our mood.

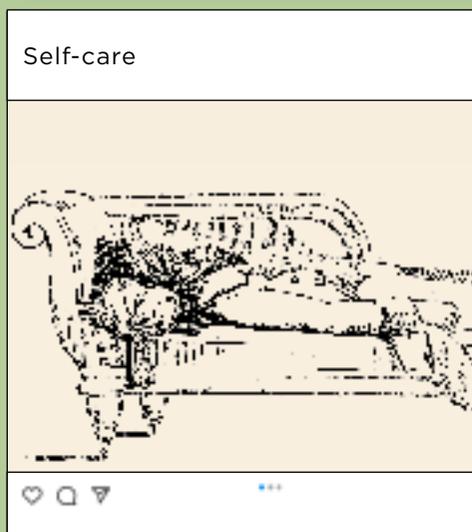
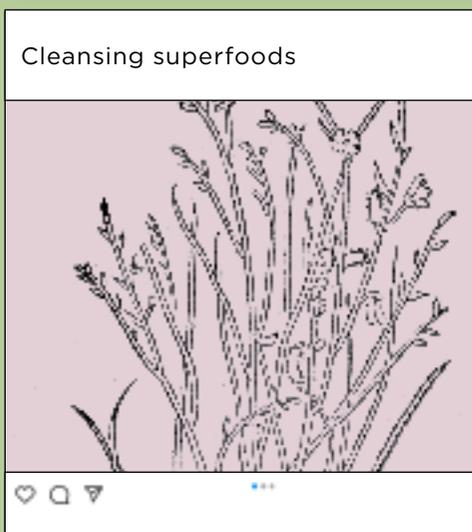
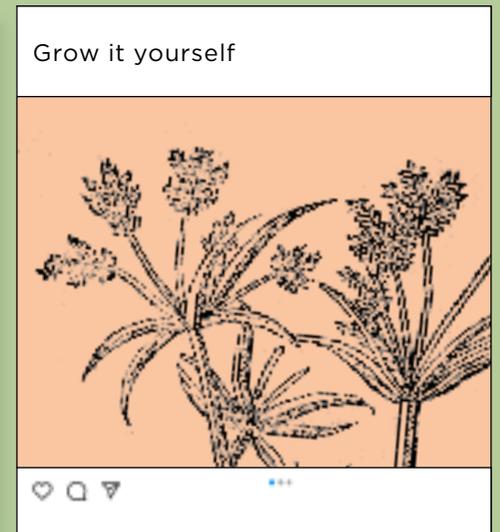
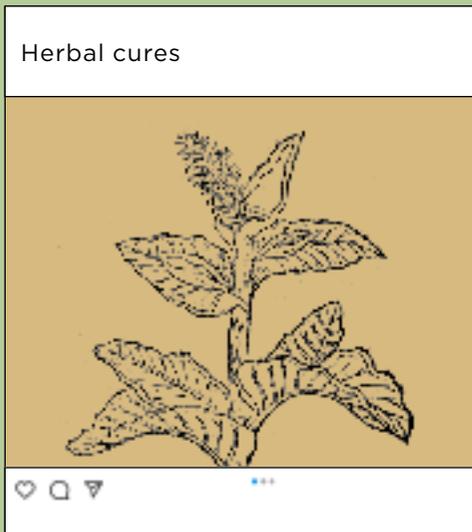
A further benefit of bathing or ‘sweating’ was that the practice removed superfluous humours from the body. Inducing sweat in what we would call saunas or steam rooms, or therapeutic bathing, immersing the patient in water, or washing various body parts in water, was seen to be beneficial. The word ‘spa’, a common site for ‘wellness’ treatments and therapies today, comes from this idea of ‘taking the waters’.

Astrology was an integral part of early medicine, used to calculate the best time for a range of medical therapies including bloodletting, imbibing medicines, carrying out surgery and the practice of bathing. Physicians were trained in the intricate study of astrology and astronomy, and both were understood by the average person to be central to diagnosing and treating sickness.

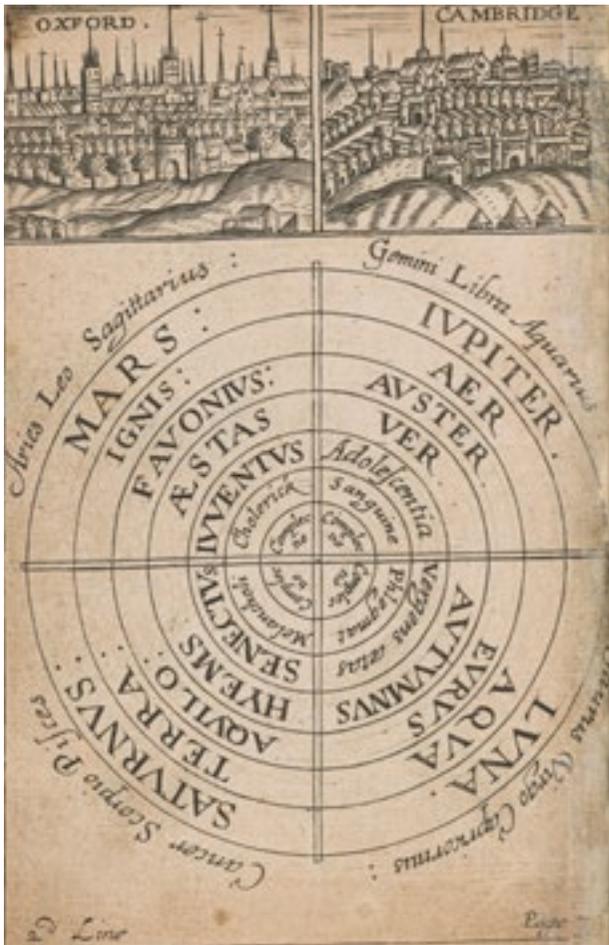
The lunar cycle was believed to govern the course of acute illnesses, while the solar cycle governed the course of chronic illnesses. In late-medieval European society, the planets were understood to influence almost every aspect of life, from the wars, famines and epidemics that affected masses of people to individual or familial relationships, health and success. Almanacs from the year 1684, for example, gave dire warnings that ‘The effects of these eclipses will presage sickness and such diseases as will prove contagious, and for the most part, mortal.’

To understand the course of an illness, the physician had to study the position of the moon and sun in relation to the zodiac at the onset of illness. Interpreting the astrological influences at that moment, and knowing the future movements

A balanced life as imagined on Insta ...



Illustrations and quotes taken from the Library's rare book collections, on display in the *Kill or Cure?* exhibition.



The optick glasse of humors or The philosophers stone to make a golden temper, 1639

of the stars, meant he (it was always a he) could predict how the illness would progress.

The heavens were seen to hold answers not available on Earth:

now a cruel condition (about which I have a dread of speaking), also a horrible and spotting ... and a death-bringing disease has been sent by France ... the damage grows everywhere; even on our bodies one sees much disease ... Many wish to die as soon as possible, so badly does the inner pus or the rotting blood hurt them. It burns, punches, and pricks them, inflames, tortures and itches with all kinds of pains and torments them. SINCE I want to get to the bottom of this terrible and cruel sickness and since no doctor of medicine can discover the causes of this illness, I turn to the astronomers and to the teachers of the art of the stars. *Ein hübscher Tractat von dem Ursprung des Bösen Franzos*, 1496

Much medical astrology was concerned with lunar prognostication. For physicians, phases of the moon and the precise position of the moon in the zodiac could determine the right time for

bloodletting. However, the actual bloodletting was carried out by master surgeons or barber surgeons.

The image of the bloodletting man was a common illustration in early modern medical books. A common image depicts a naked man, with labels indicating which veins are to be opened for the relief of a variety of medical conditions:

when the body is filled with naughty and superfluous humours, it is convenient to draw blood (if the heavens consent) ... As for the pestilence ... the pleurisy, a continual headache, a hot burning fever or any extrem pain ... a vein is speedily to be opened. *Almanac*, 1640

The astrological diagram known as the Zodiac Man had been in use in Europe since the eleventh century. It illustrated the relationship between the universe and the human body, indicating the influence of each zodiac sign over a part of the body, or a specific organ. This image generally included the twelve astrological signs arranged around the figure if the sign governing a particular part of the body was affected by a malevolent planet or bad aspect, that arm or leg, heart or spleen would become ill.

Take notice that the womb of a woman is under Scorpio; for under Virgo it cannot be, because Virgo is a barren sign; Scorpio is a fruitful sign because it rules the womb and Cancer and Pisces are fruitful because they are of the same triplicity. *A Directory for Midwives*, Nicholas Culpeper, 1762

Medicines were not capsules in foil blister packs, but tinctures, unguents, poultices, potions and tonic. From ancient times, across human societies, botanicals of all kinds were recognised for their healing qualities, so the raw materials were herbs, plants, roots and trees. Many remain active ingredients in various medications today.

Learn the high and marvellous virtue of herbs know how inestimable a preservative to the health of n God hath provided growing every day at our hand Use the effects with reverence and give thanks to thy maker celestial. *The vertuose boke of distyllacyon*, by Hieronymus Brunschwig, 1527

Elise Edmonds is a senior curator.

The exhibition *Kill or Cure: A Taste of Medicine* opens on 23 July.



Key botanical treatments and what they were said to cure:

Mandrake
hath a predominate colde facultie ... The juice drawn forth of the rootes, dried, and taken in small quantitie, purgeth the belly exceedingly from flegm and melancholick humours.

Wormwood
maketh one pisse well ... It is good for the winde and payne of the stomake and the belly.

Aloe
dried, is sprinkled into woundes to make them grow together agayne.
Wine or rose water, or the juice of fenell, wherein Aloe mixed with dragons blood and myrr healeth stinking and old sores. The same, mixed with mirr, kepeth dead bodyes from corruption.

Betony
For them that be fearful – give two dragmes of powdre hereof with warme water and as much wine at the time that the fear cometh.

Vervain
To make folke mery at ye table. To make all them in a house to be mery take foure leaves and foure rotes of vervayn in wyne, than spryncke the wine all about the house where the eatynge is and they shall be all merry.



Illustration by Rosie Handley

Ceci n'est pas une poème!

No mad scatter of berets
flung around like frisbees
No beatnik finger clicking
in quasi groove time
No pretence of a saxophone slide
with your smooth diphthongs
No midnight spoken word howling
to a nonchalant fat moon
No singing a love letter
to trees sentinel like a field of crosses
We don't want to hear words
as unhitched as train carriages
falling from your wine-bruised lips
and a heart as transparent as rice paper.

Thuy On

Thuy On is an arts journalist, editor, critic and poet.
Currently Reviews Editor of *ArtsHub*, her debut poetry collection,
Turbulence, was published in 2020 by UWAP who will publish
her second collection, *Decadence*, in July.

WORDS Suzanne Falkiner
and Meredith Lawn

The writer & the archivist

Rose de Freycinet, a nineteenth-century French woman, stowaway and diarist, unites a writer and an archivist 200 years later.

THE WRITER: SUZANNE FALKINER ON THE JOURNAL OF ROSE DE FREYCINET

Inscribed in even, economical lines with a quill pen in black ink of variously fading intensities, Rose de Freycinet's journal, in three flimsy blue-paper-covered notebooks, comprises some 120 pages of dated entries: some neat, others scarred with crossings-out and annotations, others marked with blots and irregularities that might have resulted from writing in a ship's cramped and heaving cabin. To the unhabituated eye, many of these closely written leaves seem almost unintelligible, with the stylised letters — m's and n's and u's and w's — merging indistinguishably into each other. The first page contains a dedication. The entire work had been written due to a promise to a childhood friend, in part as a gift in case Rose did not survive the next three dangerous years at sea.

When I first came across Rose's story on one of those helpful noticeboards that the Parks and Wildlife people put up in picturesque spots in Western Australia, I was intrigued. The thought of a young French girl, plucked from the cobbled alleys of the St Germain district of early-nineteenth-century Paris, walking on a remote beach at Shark Bay in her sunbonnet and empire-line gown, and meeting a hunting party of Indigenous Malgana men — dark-skinned, entirely naked and carrying spears — seemed almost surreal. Who had been the most surprised?

Rose, unable to bear being parted from her new husband, French naval officer Louis de Freycinet, when he embarked on an expedition of scientific discovery to the South Seas, had hidden herself in his cabin on the night before he sailed, emerging only when the ship was beyond French waters. It was a plot that Jane Austen herself might have contrived: a lonely young naval officer of good family returns from the Napoleonic Wars to find himself a bride in Rose, the 19-year-old daughter of a widowed and impoverished schoolteacher.



... the corvette *Uranie* has discovered, east of the Navigators' Archipelago, a small island which is not on any of the most recent maps of these seas, and that the commander of the aforesaid corvette has named this island, 'Rose'. It is done, my name is attached to a small point of the globe ...

Louis, a skilled cartographer who had sailed with explorer Nicolas Baudin, had made his mark in history by becoming the first to publish a full map of the Australian coastline. Rose would make hers by being the first woman to circumnavigate the world and leave a written account of her journey.

Louis, however, in his exhaustive record of his second expedition, would make no mention of Rose's presence, beyond an enigmatic notation that he had named a remote atoll in Western Samoa 'for someone extremely dear to me'. Neither would any of his officers: according to French officialdom and naval regulations, she did not exist. So who was Rose? This woman about whom little was known except the date and place of her birth, and that her mother's first name was probably Jeanne?

Rose's private journal, given to her childhood friend Caroline de Nanteuil in 1820, was returned to the Freycinet family by a descendant in 1913 and kept in the library of the Château de l'Âge, near the town of Chabanais in Charente, for several generations. An abridged transcription appeared in Paris in around 1927. An English translation by Mauritian scholar Marc Serge Rivière, taken from the published French version, appeared in Australia in 1996.

I had found this translated edition curiously bland at first. Later I would realise that the text had passed through the hands of several male editors who, in small but significant ways, had bowdlerised it.

Meanwhile, I learned, from the 1960s the Freycinet family archives had been dispersed by international auction into private collections all over the world. From among this wealth of historical documents, hand-drawn maps, drawings and painted illustrations, Rose's manuscript, 'Journal particulier de Rose pour Caroline', September 1817–October 1820, was acquired by the State Library of NSW in 2013, and a letter book — Louis's transcription of Rose's shipboard letters to her mother — in 2014.

Now, for the first time these documents became available to the general public. Other family papers and letters followed in 2021.

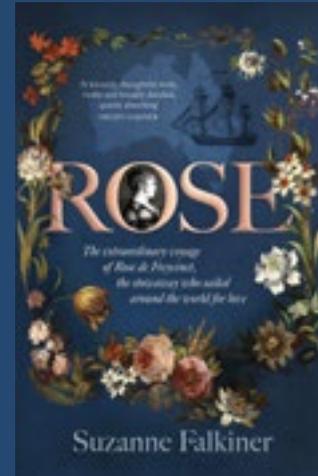
Serendipitously, I discovered, Meredith Lawn, the archivist in charge of cataloguing the Freycinet collection was as entranced by Rose's story as I was, and facilitated my access to the collection and kept me informed of tantalising new acquisitions.

When I was a very small child, I was bewitched by a book called *The Magic Faraway Tree*. In it, the English writer Enid Blyton describes a stalwart

Rose de Freycinet at 17, engraved from a portrait made in 1812



A reception aboard the corvette *Uranie*, from Louis de Freycinet's *Voyage autour du monde* — his trip around the world, 1817-1820



band of British children who discover an enchanted forest with a tree so tall that it touches the clouds. From its highest branches the children can climb into a series of magical worlds, sometimes pleasant, sometimes perilous, and different on every visit. Each time, the children must return from their explorations and reach the cloud-hole before the clouds move on, or else find themselves trapped in that particular domain until it revolves around again.

Sometimes it seems to me that for Rose de Freycinet, the magic tree was a wooden ship with three tall masts and white wings spread like a bird's, bringing her to a succession of strange and unknown lands as the Earth rotated under its hull: a journey waiting to be rediscovered and relived in the dry paper archives of the State Library of NSW.

Suzanne Falkiner's most recent book is *Rose*, an account of Rose de Freycinet's voyage, published by HarperCollins Australia in 2022.

THE ARCHIVIST: MEREDITH LAWN ON THE FREYCINET FAMILY

In mid-2019, I had the privilege of cataloguing a large collection of documents from the Freycinet family archive purchased by the Library from Hordern House Rare Books. The collection consisted of some 300 manuscripts in French from the early nineteenth century, some in elegant, legible handwriting and others in an almost indecipherable scrawl. Cataloguing it over many weeks, the collection transported me to a different time and place. I was able to touch the very paper that both the writer and recipient had held in their hands 200 years before me. The story of the Freycinet family was revealed to me like a gripping novel, set in the same period as Victor Hugo's *Les Misérables*.

It captivated me more than any other collection I have catalogued. Covering four generations, I researched the family tree to understand all the connections. I was drawn into the heart of the family and felt that I almost knew the family members personally. Élisabeth de Freycinet would write letters to her son Henri and then hand the pen over to her husband to finish off the page (*Je laisse la plume à ton père*).

As parents, they were concerned for the careers and promotion of their adult sons and were clearly fond of their daughters-in-law.

I saw Henri de Freycinet's handwriting change from his elegant right-handed script to shaky attempts to sign documents with his left hand a day after losing his right arm in a sea battle with a British warship. I read about Rose's life in Paris after the *Uranie* voyage, her joy in being entrusted with the care of her young nephew Lodoïx, son of Henri and Clémentine, and then her sadness at having to hand him back to his parents three years later, which perhaps exacerbated the melancholy and poor health of her final years.

Louis de Freycinet's personality was revealed through the papers as someone who was extremely conscientious and hard-working, who often felt misunderstood and unappreciated. The document that gave me the greatest insight into Louis's thoughts and feelings was a six-page manuscript that he intended to be published as an epilogue to his *Uranie* voyage account. In these heartfelt pages, Louis recorded the hardships he endured in completing the work and the lack of support from the French authorities.



Meredith at the gates of Château de Freycinet



Château de Freycinet

In January 1839, nearly two decades after the expedition's return, Louis sent his draft epilogue to Henri. His wise older brother recognised that Louis's open attacks on the Ministry would be counterproductive and urgently advised his brother not to publish it. The collection includes Louis's reply accepting his brother's advice – the epilogue was never published. I can only hope that the process of writing it was therapeutic for Louis. Had the epilogue been published, it would have contained Louis's tribute to Rose as the inseparable companion of his life (*l'inséparable compagne de ma vie*), providing the only hint of her presence on the voyage in the official narrative.

The Library purchased a further 47 documents from the Freycinet family archive when they came onto the market through Maggs Bros in London in late 2020. I also catalogued these. This collection added many significant documents to our holdings: Louis's 1816 proposal for the *Uranie* voyage and letters from his parents to Henri, in which they transcribed precious letters received from Rose and Louis on their voyage, including their account of the shipwreck.

Now reunited at the State Library with the journal and transcribed letters of Rose, which also came from the

Freycinet family archive, these two additional collections are a source of much fresh information about the two Freycinet brothers and Rose, and the way their lives intersected with the early years of European settlement in Australia. Knowing that Suzanne Falkiner was able to use the material in her book only increased my enjoyment. We exchanged information to our mutual benefit, and Suzanne even shared some draft chapters with me.

Well before I was assigned to catalogue the first Freycinet collection, my husband and I had booked a holiday to Provence and the Ardèche region in the south of France in September 2019. While working on the Freycinet collection, I saw letters sent from the family château at Freycinet. Searching online to find the location of the Château de Freycinet at Saulces-sur-Rhône, I discovered that it was not far from where we were intending to go. Using Street View, I could see the closed gates to the property, but it was impossible to see down the driveway and a thick row of trees along the street blocked any view of the château.

An idea took hold: we would make a detour in our itinerary to go in search of the Freycinet château and also Louis's grave. Our efforts were amply rewarded. On the day of our visit, the

It captivated me more than any other collection I have catalogued . . . I was drawn into the heart of the family.

gates to the château were open and in the nearby cemetery we found the headstone of Louis and Rose's shared grave. It struck me as a very humble monument to two extraordinary people.

Meredith Lawn is a specialist librarian.

WORDS **John Vallance**



John Vallance. Photo by David Field

The library that made me

Before I get to the good bits, I need to tell you that I was very nearly un-made by libraries.

Imagine Lindfield Public School in the late sixties. At the age of eight I was caught with my friend Rebecca (not her real name) running *outside* the sacred literary precinct. Mrs Book (not her real name) collared me and sent me to the principal where I was ‘given the cane’ and had my name inscribed in the ‘punishment book’. ‘Giving’ someone the cane is an unusual form of generosity, even if it does lead to a place on the literary record.

Much later, I found myself facing a similar prospect at North Sydney Boys’ High School. This time I was in trouble for ‘fidgiting at a desk in the library’ and sent to Mr Warning (his real name). By then I’d learned a little, so sat under a tree for a decent time and returned to say that Mr Warning wasn’t there.

If you hit a child at school today there’s a good chance you’d end up in Silverwater.

Libraries have struck me in more positive ways throughout a very fortunate life — to the point where I’ve ended up running one. As a student at Sydney University, the Fisher Library Stacks were a treat. My own academic work at the time was a low priority and I spent days distractedly wandering about, exploring a world on paper every bit as real as the one outside.

A scholarship took me to Cambridge and a constellation of college libraries with treasures I’d only read about (in other books). Manuscripts of Winnie the

Pooh, the *Fitzwilliam Virginal Book*, the paintings of Edward Lear, papyrus texts, eighth-century classical manuscripts and personal archives of people who helped to build (and take down) the modern world. Then there was the University Library itself, or ‘UL’ — a phallic puritan leviathan of a building with stacks named like London postcodes.

My work took me to many of the great libraries of Europe. In the old Bibliothèque Nationale of France (in the days when it was in the Rue de Richelieu) I inadvertently crossed a velvet rope, triggering a frightening reaction from the librarians and memories of Lindfield Public School. In the University Library at Leiden, in the Netherlands, I fell asleep in the manuscripts room and knocked over a large codex of Lucretius. The British Library was too complicated and cumbersome to use at all in those days, but was still a destination for a library tourist like me.

In spite of their glamour, none of these libraries made me. The library that made me was at home. My mother and father met each other over books. They celebrated their engagement by buying a rare early edition of Cook’s journal. Between them they put together a vast collection at home of nearly 20,000 books, papers, pictures, recordings, films — covering every imaginable subject. Natural science, exploration, music and art, children’s and adult fiction, chemistry and geology, poetry, biography, architecture, erotica and pornography, history ... it goes on. After my father died, my mother could not

manage it all and much of the collection went to the University of Melbourne.

One of the best things about personal libraries is the way they record the existence of their owners. I’m not just talking about acts of choice and selection made by all collectors. Most of my parents’ books contain traces of their own lives — tickets, family photos, postcards, menus and invitations used as bookmarks. There are wine and food stains, faded covers on books that used to be kept in a sunny room at the end of the house.

Slipped between the covers of my father’s copy of Ferguson’s *Bibliography of Australia* are letters he exchanged with its author, tucked in with cards and invitations to Christmas drinks. My own copy of *The Magic Pudding* contains a children’s menu from the P&O Orcades which took us to Europe for my father’s sabbatical in 1970. Bank statements and receipts scattered through the collection present a history of Australian commerce over the past 50 years. It was my father who always read me my bedtime story and I still have the books he read me, complete with birthday cards I picked up along the way.

Some people keep diaries. Others stick their lives into scrapbooks. My life is in my library — quite literally so. Libraries had a go at breaking me at first, but they’ve since done a pretty good job of putting me back together. And keeping me that way. I suspect that many of you will feel the same way when you look at what’s on your own shelves.

John Vallance is the State Librarian.

WORDS Jane Gibian

Untapped

A new project brings out-of-print books back to life.

Have you ever searched for a particular book, perhaps one published in the twentieth century by a well-known Australian author, only to find that it's out of print?

Too much of Australia's literary heritage has been lost. *Untapped*, the Australian Literary Heritage Project, is working to make books available to readers once more by selecting and digitising over 150 culturally important titles — fiction and non-fiction, poetry, plays, children's fiction and speculative fiction. These can be borrowed through Australian public libraries and are for sale through ebook retailers. Authors — or their estates — earn royalties on library loans and sales, creating new income streams from books that were languishing out of print. While some devoted readers are used to scouring second-hand bookshops and websites, and some publishers have launched programs that make out-of-print titles available once more, most notably Text Classics, *Untapped* does so systematically and at scale.

You may be surprised to hear that some of the selected books were out of print at all. The collection includes titles published as recently as 2011, such as *There Should Be More Dancing*, by

Rosalie Ham, author of the popular novel *The Dressmaker*, and titles as significant as Thea Astley's Miles Franklin Award-winning novels *The Well-dressed Explorer* (1962) and *The Acolyte* (1972). Others are by important authors from across the twentieth century, such as Kylie Tennant, Katharine Susannah Prichard and Martin Boyd.

Untapped is a unique collaborative project between academics, libraries and authors. Arising from research at the University of Melbourne, it now includes representatives (the author of this article among them) from state, territory and public libraries. A panel works to select a diverse and inclusive list from titles nominated by librarians, authors, academics and the general public.

What makes a book culturally important? The criteria vary; a title might have won a significant award, such as the Miles Franklin, or be critically acclaimed. It might be a seminal work on a particular place or time, a debut by a now well-known author or a favourite children's series.

The wide distribution of these ebooks through public libraries nationally is made possible through the advantages of ebook technology, sponsorship by industry and government partners, and the waiving of commissions by ebook platform providers. Copies are lodged with the National Library of Australia under the National edeposit Scheme, so they will be available indefinitely.

You can explore the *Untapped* collection through several categories: by

author, genre, prize, publication date or state. You will find six Miles Franklin winners that, until now, were unavailable, including *The Cupboard Under the Stairs* (1963) by George Turner. More specialist prizes include the Aurealis Award for Excellence in Australian Speculative Fiction, won by Sean Williams for *Metal Fatigue* (1996), and the Grace Leven Poetry Prize, won by Rosemary Dobson for *The Three Fates and Other Poems* (1984).

Many contemporary authors are represented: Carmel Bird's Miles Franklin-shortlisted titles *Red Shoes* (1998) and *The Bluebird Café* (1990), Sue Woolfe's *Leaning Towards Infinity* (1996) and *Painted Woman* (1989), and several books by crime writer Gary Disher. Writers who are well known for one famous work like Jessica Anderson's 1978 novel *Tirra Lirra by the River* now have other titles available — try her *Stories from the Warm Zone/Sydney Stories*.

Author Danielle Clode, whose book *A Future in Flames* is in *Untapped*, says, 'One of the things that's really frustrating about writing books is that you spend such an awfully long time creating the works and sometimes they can go out of print really quickly.' Clode says, 'republishing my backlist ... means my books have a longer lifespan ... and that's especially important for books that have small enthusiastic audiences or particular local relevance.'

Some books may return to prominence after many years. When Bernadette Brennan was researching the Gillian



Mears papers held in the Mitchell Library, I asked her if she'd recommend any out-of-print books by Mears for *Untapped*. Mears's *Collected Stories* turned out to be still in print but not *The Grass Sister* (1995), which Brennan considers Mears's best novel. It was duly selected by the panel and loans data shows it has already been borrowed in several states, no doubt enhanced by the publication of Brennan's literary biography *Leaping into Waterfalls: The enigmatic Gillian Mears*.

Non-fiction titles cover history, sport, biography and autobiography. Historian Henry Reynolds contributed a new introduction to his book *Fate of a Free People* (1995). My Library colleague Warwick Hirst's 1999 book *Great Escapes by Convicts in Colonial Australia* is available again. There are

some curiosities such as *Ready When You Are, C.B.! the autobiography of Alan Yates alias Carter Brown*, one of the world's most prolific and acclaimed 'pulp' authors, selling millions of copies of his Carter Brown mystery series.

Plays by Alex Buzo (*Rooted*, 1973) and Louis Nowra (*The Temple*, 1993) are in the collection, which also includes poetry. Recently deceased poet Jordie Albiston's 1998 verse novel *The Hanging of Jean Lee* is now part of *Untapped*. Several books by another much-missed poet, Dorothy Porter, were chosen including *Driving Too Fast* (1989) and *What a Piece of Work* (1995), as well as Michael Dransfield's selected poetry collection *A Retrospective*, and Anita Heiss's 2007 book *I'm Not Racist But ...*

Children's and young adult fiction (though not picture books, which were outside the project's scope) by Isobelle Carmody, Sophie Masson and Ivan Southall is once again available, including the modern classic *Space Demons* (1986) by Gillian Rubinstein.

Libraries are an essential part of our literary ecosystem. They have been one of the few places for readers to find out-of-print books, and now they come to the fore in facilitating access to the *Untapped* collection.

Jane Gibian, Specialist Librarian

The Australian literature database AustLit has an online exhibition about *Untapped* at www.austlit.edu.au/untapped

WORDS Robert Phiddian



Front page of the final edition 28 October 1950, signed by artists, journalists, and production staff.

THE **LIFE** & death of *Smith's Weekly*

The death of a newspaper plays out in a box of cartoons.

You don't often stumble on a death in a library, but that is exactly what happened to me in the Mitchell Reading Room while studying *Smith's Weekly* when I innocently called up a box of pictures, PXD 840.

Smith's was a weekly newspaper produced in Sydney and distributed nationally. It started as a broadsheet on 1 March 1919 and thrived and survived through three very different decades: the Roaring 1920s, the Depression of the 1930s, and the 1940s, dominated by war.

The newspaper's obvious competitor, *The Bulletin*, was slipping into its mid-century dotage, attached to the bush myth it created in the lead-up to Federation. By contrast, *Smith's* saw that Australia was more urban than rural and, in particular, became the Digger's champion after World War I. It fitted into the journalistic firmament at the populist end of the market, more respectable than Ezra Norton's scurrilous *Truth*, but closer to it than to the stuffily conservative *Sydney Morning Herald*.

Smith's was famed for its larrikin humour, which emanated particularly from its highly paid stable of cartoonists, of whom there were sometimes as many as a dozen on staff. It regularly published more than 80 cartoons in its 24 pages, and most cartoonists of the era — Cecil Hartt, Virgil Reilly, George Finey and, most notably, Stan Cross — contributed. It also attracted major writers, including the poet Kenneth Slessor, a long-time journalist and, briefly, the newspaper's editor. *Smith's Weekly* sat at the centre of blokey, beer-soaked, journalistic bohemia in mid-century Sydney.



Unpublished cartoons from top:

Cartoon by Charles Hallett, 'Maisie, I insist you take this! Remember what happened last time you went for a car ride!'

Cartoon by John Endean.

Strip cartoon by Bruce Begg.

Unfinished strip cartoon by Joan Morrison.

Cartoon by Les Dixon, 'And the judges have called for a photo.'

Cartoon by John Endean, 'Tell them to repeat the last couple of words'. (Mystifyingly, this was too early for the Maralinga nuclear tests, which started in 1952.)



Final published page of *Smith's*, with cartoons by various artists.



Drawing of Mo (Roy Rene), artist unknown

Reduced to tabloid format by newsprint restrictions during World War II, it limped through the post-war reconstruction years until 1950, never fully regaining its vigour. Box PXD 840 was clearly from this later era of the newspaper. It was full of cartoon originals, in both black and white and full colour, but I couldn't work out publication dates, though these images were clearly marked up for the press.

If you have a printed – rather than hand-written – caption, an online search in Trove Newspapers nearly always comes up with a publication date and context for a cartoon. This time, however, pictures by Jean Cullen and Unk White failed to provide a match. Then two cartoons by Norm Rice, while not the best of the batch, appeared in the 28 October, 1950 edition. Trove reminded me that this was the very last edition of the paper.

Because I had worked systematically through the items in the box, it was not until I got to the bottom that I realised what I was a witness to. There were two copies of the front page for 28 October, covered in signatures. This box held the last remains of the paper. The 22 left-over cartoons – ghosts of cartoons, really, because they remain unpublished – had no subsequent editions in which they might appear.

One of the signatories was George Blaikie, long-time *Smith's* journalist and a chronicler of the paper. He writes of an attempt at last-minute salvation by the all-powerful Sir Keith Murdoch who it was hoped might take over the paper for his stable. But the main shareholders sold to a new owner who, as media historian Sally Young puts it, was 'more interested in the real estate owned by the business than the journalism'.

The death of this newspaper was a very Sydney cold case.

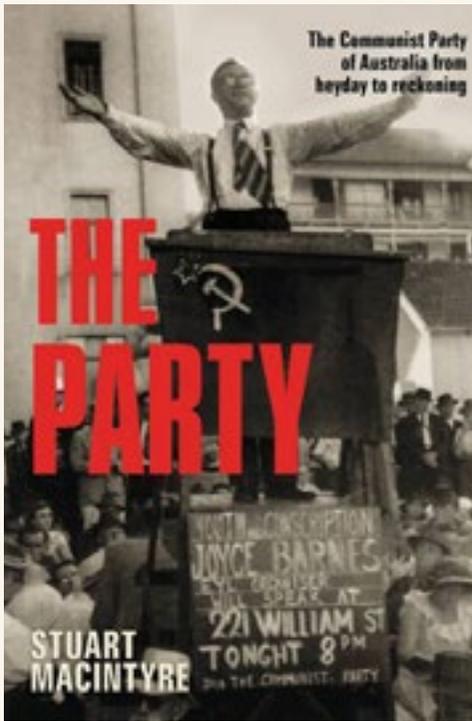
Robert Phiddian is professor of English at Flinders University, where he specialises in parody, satire and political humour. He was the Library's Ross Steele Fellow in 1921.



Unpublished cartoon by Unk White, 'Jus' put yerself in my shoes, lady, an' yer won't 'ave a care in the world'.



Unpublished cartoon by Unk White, 'Hey! who th'ell yer shovin'".



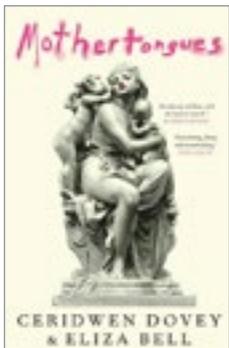
The Party: The Communist Party of Australia from heyday to reckoning

by Stuart Macintyre

Allen & Unwin

Australia lost one of its most important historians when Professor Stuart Macintyre died of cancer last November. Macintyre's political and labour history, written over five decades, showed a singular dedication to a style of historical interpretation that pieces the evidence into as impartial but empathetic a narrative as possible. In the heady world of Australian history-writing — at times under siege from politicians and journalists — he stood out for not only the gravitas and style he brought to the subject but also for his generous encouragement of his peers and students.

Macintyre's posthumously published *The Party*, the last volume of his two-part history of the Communist Party of Australia, is an elegant memorial as well as an important book. The cover of the red-spined hardback suggests a heroic story of true believers welcomed into a revolutionary movement. It shows a CPA speaker at a street meeting in Sydney more than 70 years ago, arms outstretched in shirt sleeves and suspenders, standing above a chalked hammer and sickle, surrounded by masses of attentive men and a few women. That shared idealism and activity is indeed part of the book's



Mothertongues

by Ceridwen Dovey and Eliza Bell

Hamish Hamilton

There's an internet joke that gets around: 'I'm tagged in this and I don't like it', which expresses the feeling when you recognise yourself in something but feel a little embarrassed when confronted with your own image. That is how I feel about *Mothertongues* — deeply understood and

yet somehow sheepish that as a millennial mother of a small child I am so easily known, my anxieties and deranged internal monologue all on show.

Dovey and Bell grapple with this in their hybrid work — the feeling of having a truly extraordinary experience that is also quotidian. *Mothertongues* is hilarious, wide ranging and never judgmental. If your mothers' group was a dud, this book will replace the experience perfectly.

Melissa Brooks



Bedtime Story

by Chloe Hooper
Illustrated by Anna Walker

Simon & Schuster

Chloe Hooper invites us into her home as her family navigates the terrifying journey of serious illness. Using children's literature as a guide, Hooper searches for meaning, finding solace and strength in the words of Tolkien, Dahl,

the Brothers Grimm and others. 'Embedded in their work is a philosophical framework to deal with the dark,' she writes.

Her portrayal of a life-threatening diagnosis and her search for the right words to explain it to her two young sons is tender and deeply moving. I found myself holding my breath at every medical appointment and sitting beside Hooper as she read to her sons at bedtime. It felt like a privilege to share this experience. The messages in this book, made more beautiful by its evocative illustrations, linger long after the final page is read.

Pauline Fitzgerald

story, as it introduces working men and women who expanded their education and influence through membership of the party.

Yet this was at the beginning of the decline of a party whose popularity peaked during the Second World War when Australia's alliance with the Soviet Union saw the government's and the party's objectives align. As the evidence of the problematic practice of socialism mounted, and was amplified by a Cold War agenda, the party inevitably shed members. As Macintyre shows for the period this volume covers — the early 1940s to the early 1970s — the party leadership's hard-line doctrine and stifling of dissent made it easy to leave. The approach of these leaders, and the members who stayed, is partly explained by the willingness of those

who witnessed the ravages of capitalism during the Great Depression to gloss over the deficiencies of an alternative system and adhere to its shifting orthodoxies.

Of those who left, most maintained their socialist ideals and retained positive memories of a radical, and at times illegal, movement that had broad influence on Australian politics, working conditions and culture. About 100,000 people are said to have been members of the Communist Party of Australia from its inception in 1920 to its dissolution in 1991. They produced, says Macintyre, 'an extraordinary body of books and journals, newspapers and pamphlets; they used posters, cartoons, radio and cinema, organised rallies, marches and demonstrations, and fostered culture and enlightenment through theatre, art, literature and

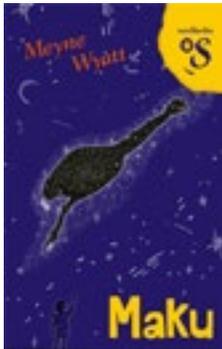
music'. Then there are the hundreds of boxes of archival records and dozens of memoirs and shorter reflections.

Stuart Macintyre has selected and crafted this material into an intricate history of a party whose members sometimes sacrificed their jobs and risked imprisonment in their commitment to its revolutionary, rather than revisionist, aims. 'Apart from five countries that are grotesque parodies of the cause they continue to profess,' writes Macintyre, himself a member in the 1970s, 'communism is now a distant memory.' Without romanticising this tumultuous period, he has brought it closer in his final book.

Cathy Perkins

NEW

Our Stories is a new early-chapter book series edited by Randa Abdel-Fattah that celebrates Australia's multicultural society with authors and illustrators from a diverse range of backgrounds.



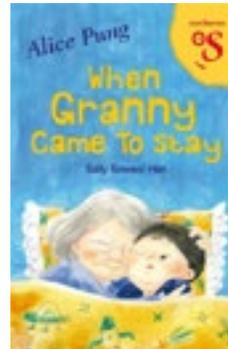
Maku
by Meyne Wyatt
Pan Macmillan

Maku is a young Koori boy, who has a hard time fitting in at school and moves a lot. He's waiting to be able to live with his Nan and Pop permanently. His Pop shares stories of growing up in the Stolen Generation and understands Maku's need to go home.

Maku learns about bush culture and dreaming stories from his Nan and Pop, who are Indigenous rangers, on a camping trip. He learns about the Rainbow Serpent, the Great Emu and his totem, Maku (meaning witchetty grub). The witchetty grub is a beautiful metaphor for Koori men's ceremony, and Pop explains that once he is home with them, Maku will go through the ceremony too. Maku dreams of creating a movie about the transformation of witchetty grubs to butterflies. He decides that he wants to become a moth, heal the land with Wanambi (the Rainbow Serpent) and appease the Great Emu. Maku makes his first friend and finds out he can finally go home with Nan and Pop.

Written by performer, actor and writer Meyne Wyatt Wongutha-Yamatji, *Maku* is a wholesome read about the challenges First Nations children face when being separated from their family.

Kerry-Ann Tape (Ngiyampaa)



When Granny Came to Stay
by Alice Pung
Illustrated by Sally Soweal Han
Pan Macmillan

Alice Pung is an established voice in Australian literature, but here she turns her attention to a much younger audience. Her story follows a young boy nicknamed Pangzi, whose obsession with Destroyer

Dises (the most popular toy in school) infiltrates his family life when his grandmother visits from China.

Pangzi's experiences — being embarrassed by family members or 'exposed' at school for not having the trendiest toy — will feel familiar to many children. Cultural norms of Chinese-Australian families are integrated seamlessly, from eating congee for breakfast to taking shoes off in the house.

Finding early chapter books with a compelling storyline can be difficult when an author is restricted to words children can sound out. There are some challenging words like 'tsunami', but the interest of the plot will motivate children to ask for help. It may even advance their vocabulary.

Alicia De Audney

DYE HARD



The Tintex Girl
brightened
a world dulled
by rationing

Rationing was an essential part of life in Australia and around the world during the two world wars. While clothing and textiles were still being manufactured for the local market, by World War II most of these factories had moved to uniform production, restricting the availability of civilian clothing and material.

Households were forced to get creative with their clothes, reusing and repurposing what they already had, and figuring out ways to brighten up fabrics.

German firms had been the leading dye manufacturers in the early twentieth century, but the 1915 British navy blockades of German ports caused serious worldwide shortages of synthetic dyes. French, English and American fashion manufacturers responded by creating fads for black-and-white clothing and accessories, making the most of the (literal) lack of colour in the world.

Tintex, an Australian chemical business founded in the early 1900s, was savvy in its response to shortages: the company quickly expanded its tinctures and ointments to create a rainbow of colours. A breakthrough in 1920 made it the first company to successfully formulate a cold-water dye. The *Sydney Morning Herald* reported with relish, after visiting the Tintex stall at the Royal Hall of Industries in April 1920, that ‘the Germans with all their ingenuity and knowledge of the dye business, have never given the world a cold water dye’. With dye stocked by every pharmacist, general merchant and haberdasher, the world became a little brighter once more.

The Library recently acquired an original painting of *The Tintex Girl* by Edward Francis Cole, from around 1920.

Holding a packet of canary-yellow dye in one hand while wearing her vivid multicoloured Art Deco-style dress, the elegant Tintex Girl is rendered in brightly opaque gouache, with coloured stripes that perfectly reflect the company’s new range of cold-water dyes.

Few details are known about the artist. Cole was a private in the British army during World War I and later became a commercial artist producing work in Australia and New Zealand. The Tintex Girl would go on to enjoy a long and colourful career. Her fashion and styling changed many times in advertising campaigns over the years to reflect the latest trends.

The brand, which appealed to a variety of customers and homemakers, expanded its kaleidoscope of colours but always promised ‘not to soil the hands or injure the most delicate fabrics’.

Tintex is still in operation today. Way back in 1924 it celebrated its cold-water dye achievement by reminding customers, with a touch of nationalism, that its product was ‘made in Australia, for Australians, by Australians. Avoid all foreign substitutes.’ The company even released a one-step song imploring people in the chorus to ‘Never say Dye, say Tintex’.

Maria Savvidis, Specialist Librarian



The Tintex Girl by Edward Francis Cole, c 1920

Journal of the Apophthegm Society



The journal of an obscure society devoted to pithy sayings takes a roundabout route to the Library.

A recent acquisition by the Library had many of us scrambling to look up the obscure term ‘apophthegm’. It means ‘A terse, pointed saying, embodying an important truth in few words; a pithy or sententious maxim’. According to the Oxford English Dictionary, the word had its peak around 1781.

Late last year, we received in the mail from Perth a fragile but well-maintained, hand-written volume, curiously titled the ‘Journal of the Apophthegm Society’. It was created in 1893. How this mysterious item made its way to the Library is almost as curious as its title. A small note inserted into the frontispiece gives some sense of its circuitous voyage:

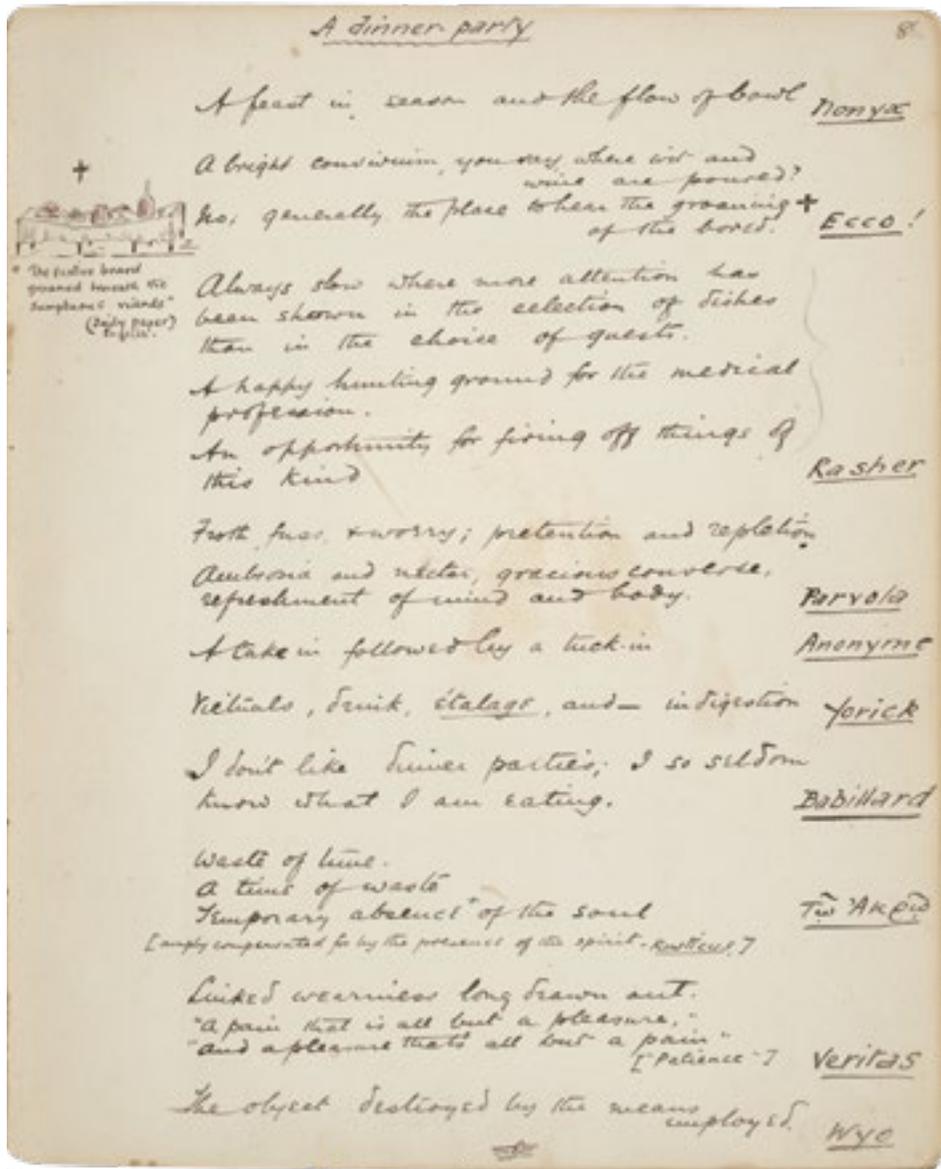
This book was found in a Red Cross waste products shop during the second World War. Inside the cover it bore the following inscription:

Fred. R. Barlee
Wentworth Court, Sydney, N.S.W.
July 1893.

This wasn’t the first we’d heard about it. In 1974, a CE Cowan of Hollywood (now Nedlands), Western Australia, contacted the Library about the item, offering us the opportunity to take photocopies, and then return it – then-Mitchell Librarian Suzanne Mourot saw promptly to the task. Some 47 years later, the Cowan family

decided it was time to give the item a permanent home in the Library.

The early pages of the beautifully illustrated journal give us the details of the establishment and rules of the ‘Society’ which met monthly to brainstorm pithy ‘apophthegms’ on a series of six set topics. Each apophthegm was submitted anonymously, under a nom de guerre, to ensure fair judging. Based on the entries in the journal, which run from 15 August 1893 to 1 September 1894, there appear to be an average of 12 regular attendees, contributing under pseudonyms such as Veritas, Troglodyte and Yorick. Monthly themes included familiar terms like ‘politics’,



Rules (compiled by Jenkins)

1. The name of the society shall be the 'Apophthegm Society'.
2. The object shall be the record and invention of good sayings.
3. Six subjects shall be set each month for definition, illustration, or short comment.
4. Members shall send in their contributions written on one side of the paper only, to the secretary before the 15th of each month.
5. All answers received by the secretary shall be transcribed by him in a book to be circulated during the month among the members.
6. It shall be the duty of each member to supply six subjects on application by the secretary, for [unclear] by the members.
7. Each member shall enclose with this contributions a nom-de-plume-guerre under which he wishes them to appear in The Journal.
8. Quotations may be contributed in lieu of original matter, but the sources of the quotation must in each case be given.

'advice', 'fashion', 'charity', 'fame' and, interestingly, 'epidemics'. More esoteric topics included 'noblesse oblige', 'infinity' and 'mammon', not to mention various notes in ancient Greek. The idea for the society came from apparently someone called Jenkins, who thought it up during a reverie one afternoon. He set forth the rules — with the ultimate aim being the production of a book.

A small note gives a clue that the owner of this lavishly illustrated journal — Frederick Barlee — had a taste for drawing. 'N.B. [The Secretary's copy is not illustrated — this is a private copy — illustrated by one of the members in his idle moments].' But who was Barlee?

Frederick Rudolph Barlee (c 1859–1941), was born and educated in Sydney. After studying a Master of Arts degree at the University of Sydney, Barlee was admitted to the Bar of New South Wales in 1887. He moved to Perth in 1896, and was subsequently admitted to the WA Bar in 1897. He was Associate to Mr Justice Stone before being appointed Magistrate at Northam, and became Supreme Court Librarian in 1905. Back in 1884, aged approximately 35, Barlee was living at 'Arthursleigh', Frazer Road, Petersham, and was a member of the 'Apophthegm Society' which produced this journal as a record of its monthly meetings.

As for the apophthegms themselves, there is much entertainment and wisdom to be found in the members' contributions. On 'Charity', for example, Anonyme writes, 'A tax imposed by the faults and failings of humanity'.

An anonymous contribution on the theme 'A bore' states 'a person who will insist on talking about himself when all the time you want to talk about yourself'. And what was said about epidemics? Nonyx wisely notes, 'Mightily unpleasant subjects on which to write apophthegms'.

Anna Corkhill, Librarian



Photo by Joy Lai

Passionfruit Tarts

LEMON CHEESE TARTS (Sep 12)

¼ lb. S.R. flour
1 egg
¼ lb. butter
1 oz. sugar

Rub butter into flour. Add eggs and sugar. Roll out very thin and fill patty pans, adding lemon cheese or black currant jam before cooking. Bake for 10 minutes in moderate oven.

(Mrs RK Wood, Adelaide, SA)

2022 marks the centenary of the Country Women's Association, which was established to improve conditions for women and children in rural Australia. It was founded by Grace Emily Munro, wife of a Keera grazier, in an attempt to improve medical services and reduce rural women's isolation. It is one of the biggest women's organisations in the country, but many people associate the CWA primarily with delicious baked goods.

Our home cook Genevieve Freeman, a former restaurant pastry chef herself, chose two tart recipes from a 1933 CWA publication by Dorothy C Hammond: *The Calendar of Cake and Afternoon Tea Delicacies: A recipe for each day of the year*. With contributions from women across Australia, it was produced so it could easily hang on a kitchen hook for everyday baking.

PASSION FRUIT TARTS (Dec 6)

Make pastry as per recipe 12th Sept.

Filling:

1 doz. passion fruit
2 eggs
1 lge. tablesp. butter
1 cup sugar

Beat yolks of eggs well into butter and sugar, then add passion fruit; put into saucepan and stir constantly till it thickens like lemon cheese.

Have tarts already cooked and put mixture in.

Whip the whites till stiff, add small cup of sugar, and whip till quite stiff. Spread over top of tarts and put in oven till it sets like meringue.

(Mrs. WB Studdy, North Sydney Branch)

Cook's notes: At first glance, the modern cook will notice the distinct lack of instruction in the CWA recipes. Their assumed knowledge is vast. Most home cooks in 1933, the year of publication, would have known their stuff – CWA members' baking skills are legendary. In their recipes, essential information like oven temperatures and cooking times are left to the experienced CWA cook to work out. Modern cooks are used to cookbooks with step-by-step pictures, conversion guides and so on. They need more reassurance and have more questions: What variety of passionfruit do I use? How big should the eggs be? What type of sugar? What is the cooking duration? What does baking tart shells blind mean? How many portions does this recipe make?

All pastry baking is chemistry. Get the balance wrong and it can be a catastrophe. But it is always fun and the results of this three-step recipe were definitely worth the effort. I'd love to try more recipes from this calendar of baking classics.

I doubled the pastry recipe (12 September), and it was far too wet to be able to roll with its equal ratio of flour to butter and an egg as well. I may have made the fatal mistake of using too-warm butter but, again, ice-cold butter is a baker's trick that the CWA assumes its readers know about. I compensated by leaving out an egg in my doubled recipe, adding more flour to bring it to the right consistency and chilling the pastry before rolling it out.

I tweaked the passionfruit filling recipe (6 December) as well. Perhaps modern passionfruits are larger and juicier? I ended up adding a slurry of 1 teaspoon of cornflour because the egg yolk was not enough to thicken the mix. A foolproof test is to put a teaspoon of the filling on a plate and put in the freezer to see if it sets.

The best meringue is made from old egg whites because the albumen is broken down. Add the caster sugar very gradually after peaks have formed so you can build on the volume.

CONVERSIONS:

1 pound (lb) = 500 grams
1 ounce (oz) = 30 grams

Matthew Abbott

Openbook managed to ask Matthew Abbott a few questions as he sat on a train travelling to Amsterdam to attend the grand opening of the World Press Photo Exhibition.



Matthew Abbott. Photo by Saskia Wilson

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CONGRATULATIONS ON WINNING WORLD PRESS PHOTO STORY OF THE YEAR. WHAT DOES WINNING THAT PRIZE MEAN TO YOU AS A PHOTOGRAPHER?

It's very exciting. Especially as I was shortlisted two years ago, for work I did on bushfires but because of Covid I couldn't travel. This is the top prize in my field. Being able to have my work seen by so many people — the exhibition goes to 120 cities around the world — is great. As is the recognition among your peers as well.

All I want to do is keep making great stories and this helps me do that. It shows editors around the world, and the international publications which I mainly work for, the stories I'm interested in and the work I'm making.

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CAN YOU SHARE SOME BACKGROUND TO YOUR WINNING SERIES *SAVING FORESTS WITH FIRE*?

I lived and worked in Arnhem Land back in 2008. I was working part-time at an art centre in Gunbalanya and photographing at the same time. I was there for a long time, so I met people and built trust as I photographed life there.

Living there was life-changing. I ended up spending two years there full-time and another two years on and off after that. I made a lot of friends and had incredible experiences. It was a really good grounding in how to work in communities — that patience and slow approach is critical in making relationships possible so that you can tell really great stories. Actually, I met some of the people I ended up photographing for this story.

So fast-forwarding to now, I'd just finished photographing the catastrophic bushfires two years ago — months of chaos and destruction. I was wondering what to do next. I was approached by *National Geographic* who asked about long-term stories about fire and the environment, and forests. How do we approach fire in Australia after such a terrible tragedy? I immediately thought of the work that the Warddeken rangers are doing in Arnhem Land. It is such an incredible insight into how Indigenous people have been managing the land for such a long period of time and how they work fire into a landscape.

'Photojournalism is really good at digging deeper. Photography is an intimate and vivid way to take people to a place and say, 'This is what it's all about.'

DO YOU THINK PHOTOJOURNALISM IS INHERENTLY POLITICAL?

Yes, definitely. And I would argue that photography is generally political as well. Art is political. I don't see myself as an activist, but I see myself as wanting to highlight stories around the country with insight into unexplored ideas. I like finding interesting specific stories where I can dig deeper into complex issues and scenarios. Photojournalism is really good at that. Photography is an intimate and vivid way to take people to a place and say, 'This is what it's all about.'

OUR WORLD IS SATURATED WITH IMAGES. DOES PHOTOJOURNALISM GET LOST IN THE GLOSSY STAGED PICTURES WE SEE ON SOCIAL MEDIA?

What I'd say about social media is that people are becoming more visually literate without realising. They'll see a photograph and make judgments about what they've seen without even thinking about it. Visual communication is becoming more important in today's society. Photography has this amazing ability to hit people quickly and hard. It's rare, but a powerful picture can knock someone for six. It's exciting that there's more exposure to it.

I think, perversely, the perception of photojournalism by some academics and maybe even some journalists is not what

it should be. Maybe it's not as respected. It's not given enough investment by local media organisations, especially when it comes to longform photojournalism projects. You can't get to the heart of a story in a day or two. You need time to build connections and approach the subject in a considered way. I'd like to see more of that kind of work.

Single images can get lost in the chaos of what's happening. I'm interested in longer bodies of work that speak to a story.

WHAT TRAINING HAVE YOU HAD OR DID YOU LEARN BY EXPERIENCE?

I started university in visual arts but dropped out. I did a short photo course at TAFE. But it's an obsession. My life is dedicated to documentary photography. I'm so passionate about it. I've always had that curiosity to have these incredible experiences. It's the challenge of storytelling. Figuring out what's a creative way to tell stories. That drives me to keep exploring. To keep finding new stories.

WHAT WAS YOUR FIRST CAMERA?

My first camera — once I started taking it seriously — was a Voigtlander with a 35mm lens. I shot that for many many years. Having just one lens and a simple camera — shooting film —

was really good grounding. It made me the photographer I am today.

These days I'm shooting digital. The work I'm doing is much more fast-paced, but I still try to keep things as simple as possible. I only use one lens — a zoom lens, 24–70mm

IF TIME AND MONEY WERE NO OBJECT, WHAT WOULD YOUR DREAM PHOTOGRAPHIC PROJECT BE?

Honestly, this last project is my dream project. When I was first living and working up in Arnhem Land in 2008, I was invited on this 10-day bushwalk. To this day, it was the most incredible experience of my life. That was where the idea was first seeded, through that experience, seeing what was happening in this part of the country. So this project means a lot to me.

But ok, since you're asking, I would really like to do a story in Antarctica. About isolation. I don't know what the story would be because I don't know what goes on there. I know there are are logistical challenges. I'm fascinated not necessarily by the environment, but by how people live there.

WORDS Howard Tanner



Enhancing the Reading Room

Generations of students and scholars have entered this grand hushed interior – now known as the Mitchell Library Reading Room – with a sense of awe. Thanks to its sheer scale, encircling galleries, mysterious stained-glass windows and luminous top-lit ceiling, it never fails to impress.

Completed in 1942, and informed by a number of imposing classically-inspired library interiors in North America, its neutral background of travertine stone, cream walls and vaulting, and pale floor coverings was designed to emphasise the book-lined walls.

By 2020 the interior was in need of significant refurbishment, and the Library's management, headed by Dr John Vallance, seized on the Covid closures of the Reading Room as an opportunity to implement major works. A key aim was to regain, as much as possible, the original character, a fusion of classical elements with some 1930s Deco accents. Important initiatives included: removing the intrusive stair to the basement; introducing high-performance ceiling lighting; illuminating the handsome coffered coved ceilings; restoring the symmetrical table layout; and rationalising the heavy card catalogues to the sides so as not to despoil the main space. The single most important change was the introduction of a fine broadloom carpet to provide a rich unifying element for the whole space.

Interior designer Rosemary Lucas, who has significant expertise in carpet design explains: 'The decision to replace existing carpet tiles with broadloom carpet was ambitious, given the enormity of the space. It needed a large scale and confident design, one suitable to be seen from all perspectives.

'There was no precedent to follow, so I looked to architectural and interior details that could offer direction to start the search. Decorative friezes and railings and the ceiling coffers all provided ideas evocative of the 1930s when the room was designed. The carpet needed to be a robust design with relevance and serviceability for years to come.

'The vast area of the room (over 1000 square metres) provided me with freedom to develop a unique carpet design by reconfiguring and recolouring patterns from the huge design library of Brinton's Carpets, one of the few Australian companies manufacturing woven carpet in their own overseas production facilities. Firstly, they provided computer printouts, then loom trials (a square of actual carpet) of a geometric motif which neither imitated nor copied a specific 1930s style. The Library reviewed the choices, and agreed to further development of the initial colours from Brinton's tuft boxes.

'A final loom trial with these adjustments was approved in August 2021, and the carpet is now installed.'

In parallel, the upper walls, the friezes, the coved coffered ceilings and the main ceiling were repainted using giant scissor lifts, the result a subtle scheme which emphasises the architectural modelling. The revised lighting is yet to come, improving night time reading conditions, and revealing the wonderful coffered ceilings, the latter capable of being washed with a subtle golden glow for special occasions.

Reading Room carpet consultants:
Howard Tanner, consultant architect
Rosemary Lucas, interior designer
Mary Dewar Dutailis, architect, Studio Dewar
Derrick Edwards and Hector Alvarez,
LCI Lighting Consultants.



The Mitchell Library Reading Room, before (top) and after (below)

20 questions

- 1 Which of Shakespeare's plays has this famous line: 'Now is the winter of our discontent'?
- 2 What is the name of Romantic poet William Wordsworth's poem named for a little girl who disappears in the snow? (Hint: it's also known as 'Solitude'.)
- 3 Does Australia have any deciduous trees?
- 4 What happened in Sydney on 28 June in the winter of 1836?
- 5 Who was the first Australian model to appear on the cover of Australian *Vogue*?
- 6 What is the date of this year's winter solstice or equinox?
- 7 Name the Scottish author whose seasonal quartet (including *Winter*) was shortlisted for the Man Booker Prize.
- 8 Last year Ash Barty won the Wimbledon Women's final. Who was the last Australian to win a Wimbledon singles title and when?
- 9 Which eponymous novel features a main character called de Winter?
- 10 What is Pantone's 2022 colour of the year?
- 11 Who is the publisher at Magabala Books and the author of *Alfred's War*?
- 12 Why did author Kylie Tennant spend a brief time in Parramatta Gaol in 1953?
- 13 Which mid-winter festival features a nude solstice swim?
- 14 Name the four 'humours' that informed medical practice for centuries.
- 15 From which place does the fabric denim originate and get its name?
- 16 What is the name of author Dinuka McKenzie's book?
- 17 What is the name of the French can-can dancer made famous by artist Toulouse-Lautrec, and also the inspiration for Baz Luhrmann's *Moulin Rouge* character, Satine?
- 18 Which organisation celebrates its centenary in 2022?
- 19 Richie Benaud and Donald Bradman were against the no-ball rule in cricket. True or False?
- 20 Which two languages share the same word for winter as English?

Find the answers to this quiz at the bottom of page 6.





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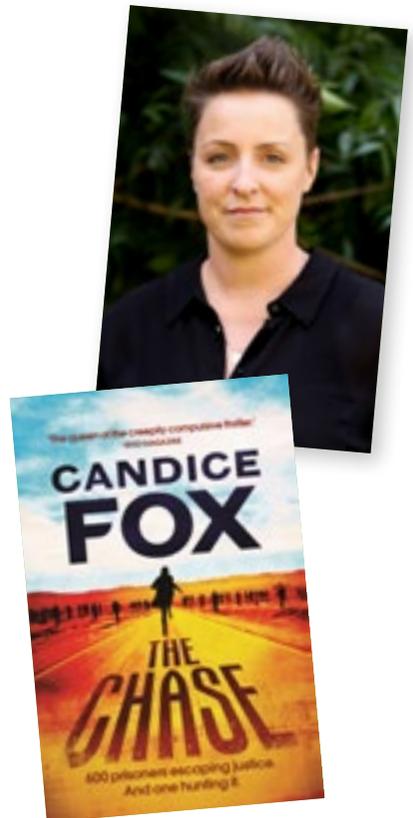
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KILL OR CURE?

A TASTE OF MEDICINE

OPENS 23 JULY



AMAZE GALLERY
CHANGING DISPLAYS



IMAGINE...

THE WONDER OF PICTURE BOOKS

OPENS 9 JULY



SENTIENT PAPER

OPENS 11 JUNE

CHAU CHAK WING
MUSEUM, SYDNEY UNI

Landscipt: A stroll back to this place I enjoy,
Xu Bing, 2002, ink on Nepalese paper



HELMUT NEWTON: IN FOCUS

UNTIL 29 JAN

JEWISH MUSEUM
OF AUSTRALIA: GANDEL
CENTRE OF JUDAICA

Helmut Newton, *Shoe*, Monte Carlo, 1983
© Helmut Newton Estate
courtesy Helmut Newton Foundation

CRESSIDA CAMPBELL

PHILIP BACON GALLERIES
BRISBANE 26 JUL-20 AUG

NGA CANBERRA
24 SEP-29 JAN



Lotus (detail), 2022, Cressida Campbell, unique woodblock print



Winner: Archibald Prize 2022, *Moby Dickens* (detail),
by Blak Douglas, synthetic polymer paint on linen

ARCHIBALD, WYNNE & SULMAN PRIZES

UNTIL 28 AUGUST

ART GALLERY OF NSW



Japanese Hydrangeas, 2005, Cressida Campbell
Private collection © Cressida Campbell



“The response from the Australian community to the devastating floods has been overwhelming. That photo of ruined books piled high outside the Lismore Library reached so many people. So proud to be part of this wonderful library world.”

Lucy Kinsley, Richmond Tweed Regional Library

