

*Women's
Ink!*

Spring / Summer 2020

The Society of Women Writers NSW Inc.
www.womenwritersnsw.org

EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

Jan Conway | President
e: swwpresident@gmail.com

Kylie Day | Vice President
e: kylie.day@12thfloor.com.au

Amanda Mark | Treasurer
e: amanda.mark@mintegrity.com.au

Rita Shaw | Secretary
e: rhinoservices@iinet.net.au

Michele Bomford | Membership Secretary
e: michele.cb@bigpond.com

Julie Thorndyke | Publicity Manager
e: j.thorndyke@bigpond.com

Jacqui Brown | Editor
e: jacqui.brown@panachecat.com

Maria McDougall | Committee Member

Anne Beaumont | Committee Member

TEAM MEMBERS

Valerie Pybus | Mailout

Judith O'Connor | Book Review Editor

Rita Shaw | Photographer

Lindsay Lewis | Website Manager

Susanne Gervay OAM | Facebook Manager

Gwen Wilson | Lunch Booking Officer

Pippa Kay | Workshop Co-ordinator

Julie Thorndyke | Prize Draw

Ace Print & Design | Printer

SPECIAL ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

Dr Hilarie Lindsay MBE OAM
Public Officer

Emerita Professor Di Yerbury AO
Patron



Editor's Message

Starting a new role can be as daunting as it is exciting, and so it was taking on editorship of a magazine with a long literary history. I am grateful for the welcome I've received from Jan Conway and so many members of the society, and to former editor Sharon Rundle for her guidance and support.

When I pursued a move from science to writing, I imagined it as a meandering curve, but in the melee of COVID-19 it transpired as a sharp corner. I soon realised there had been a similar experience within the society: with the doors closing on the State Library and the society's longstanding meeting place the Dixson Room, the society was compelled to adopt digital technology to continue its meetings, something not done in the previous 95 years.

While our members embraced virtual meetings and presenters overcame the challenges of an online platform, a new opportunity emerged - for those outside Sydney to join in our events, and for us to engage with interstate speakers.

The digital world continues to offer new options. Whilst we distribute *Women's Ink!* in traditional hardcopy, for the first time it is also available digitally, to be viewed in vibrant colour on any device, scalable, easily saved and shared, taking the society towards our centenary in a way that is contemporary and accessible.

It is a privilege to be part of a society of women writers of such depth, diversity and generosity. I hope to create a beautiful publication that proudly showcases our members' writing, and to share our voices far and wide.

If you would like to contribute to our next issue of *Women's Ink!* please email me at:

jacqui.brown@panachecat.com

www.panachecat.com
www.facebook.com/panachecat

In This Issue ...

- 4 **PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE**
by Jan Conway
- 6 **FRESH INK IN AUSTRALIAN PUBLISHING**
Talking with Anna Solding, director of MidnightSun
- 8 **DON'T FORGET ANONYMOUS**
by Hazel Edwards
- 10 **Q&A WITH PAMELA RUSHBY**
on the Di Yerbury Residency and her latest release
- 12 **WOMEN WRITERS KICK GOALS**
by Susanne Gervay
- 13 **MEET GRACIE AND HARRISON**
Splash, Slither, Squawk! artists
- 14 **THE RIPPLE EFFECT OF *SPLASH, SLITHER, SQUAWK!***
by Kylie Day
- 15 **AMAZING AUSTRALIANS AT LONGREACH**
by Maria McDougall
- 16 **MEMBERS' BOOK AWARDS 2020 SHORTLIST**
Plus meet the Judges
- 18 **LOCKDOWN HAIKU CLUB**
by Pip Griffin
- 18 **ONLY ONE BOOK, WHICH ONE WOULD YOU CHOOSE?**
by Carmel Bendon
- 20 **BOOK REVIEWS**
Patrick White by Toni Brisland | reviewed by Beatriz Copello
Margaret Caro by Pip Griffin | reviewed by Judith O'Connor
- 22 **FIVE WRITE ANSWERS**
What's the best advice you've received from another author?
- 24 **MEMBER NEWS**
Celebrating our members' success
- 26 **LOOKING BACK**
July to October
- 27 **OUR SPRING/SUMMER PROGRAMME**

President's Message

BY JAN CONWAY

This time last year I closed my November message looking forward to sharing an exciting 2020 with you. One year hence, I'm reminded of words from Helen Garner's 'Monkey Grip' - *It was early summer. And everything, as it always does, began to heave and change.* Little did any of us know what was about to be unleashed on the world and on Australia by way of bushfires, floods and a virus named COVID-19.

Despite the turmoil and the changes forced upon us, the Society of Women Writers NSW survived to celebrate its 95th year in Zooming style and has remained strong. There was a brief hiatus in April as the reality of the pandemic became apparent. Quickly adapting to living in an isolated, virtual world, the Society offered speakers and workshops via Zoom. From isolation, members contributed stories and poems to our eNewsletters and *Women's Ink!* magazine.

Thirty-seven members entered forty-four books in the Members' Book Award 2020 competition. What's thrilling is that, in order to qualify for entry, so many of our members achieved publication in the two-year period between July 2018 and June 2020. Congratulations to everyone who entered and best wishes to those who have been shortlisted. To judges Margaret Bradstock, Carolyn Beaumont, Paul McDonald and Judith O'Connor, your support, professionalism and judgements are sincerely appreciated, thank you.

Congratulations are in order too for members: Libby Hathorn awarded the 2020 Lady Cutler Award, Cathy Perkins for her shortlisting for the NSW Premier's History Awards, and Dr Hilarie Lindsay MBE OAM who is the SWW NSW nominee for The Alice Award 2020.

I'd like to acknowledge and applaud the work of the editors of *Splash, Slither, Squawk!* - Julie Thorndyke and Michele Bomford. In late January, Julie sat on a bus, contemplating the devastation fires were causing along the east coast of Australia. And so from the ashes, something beautiful evolved. An anthology for children about our unique flora and fauna, a collaboration between our SWW members, invited guest writers and children. Julie, and Michele who had been evacuated from her home, took on the challenge of producing this magical book. It was launched by our multi-talented and inspiring Keynote speaker, Jean Kittson at the Society's 95th anniversary celebration. Thank you to all who contributed to *Splash, Slither, Squawk!*, a book that will be as timeless as this land.

I am sharing on the next page the words of Gladys Berejiklian, Premier of New South Wales - one of many messages received on the occasion of our celebration.

I wish everyone the best Christmas possible, a happy, healthy and safe New Year and hope for an early return to the Dixon Room. *Optimism is the faith that leads to achievement - Helen Keller.*



Jan Conway
President

Congratulations and thank you to our longstanding members: 20 years and over

Ms Margaret Ruckert (1952)
Dr Hilary Lindsay MBE OAM (1965)
Ms Deidre Hill (1967)
Ms Libby Hathorn (1975)
Ms Robyn Elliott (1976)
Ms Pat Richardson OAM (1984)
Ms Christianne Bradshaw (1985)
Ms Elissa Buttsworth (1985)
Ms Judith O'Connor (1980s)
Prof Emerita Elizabeth Webby OAM (1990s)
Professor Emerita Di Yerbury AO (1990s)
Ms Susanne Gervay OAM (1990)
Ms Betsy Wearing (1990)
Ms Felicity Pulman (1992)
Ms Joy Mackay (1994)
Ms Pippa Kay (1995)
Dr Dorothy Keyworth (1995)
Ms Cecilia Croaker (1996)
Ms Robyn McWilliam (1996)
Ms Kristin Darell (Prescott) (1997)
Ms Pauline Harvey (1997)
Ms Margaret Everingham (1998)
Ms Diane J Armstrong (1999)
Ms Pamela Rushby (1999)
Ms Lula Saunders (1999)
Ms Beverley George (2000)
Ms Pamela Heard (2000)
Ms Pam Bayfield (2000)
Dr Susan Steggall (2000)

Message from Gladys Berejiklian, Premier of NSW

'Congratulations to the Society of Women Writers NSW on your 95th anniversary.

Your contributions as writers have never been more important. COVID has changed the way we work and even interact - but it hasn't stopped us reading. Quite the opposite. The power of words cannot be underestimated, particularly at a time like this. We need inspiring writers such as you who can help articulate this moment, or craft stories that transport us, however briefly, to another time and place.

Since its first meeting in 1925, the Society of Women Writers has been built on connection - connection with each other as writers and with the wider community. That spirit is captured in the 95th anniversary anthology of nature writing, compiled by members, guests and children to support communities affected by the summer's devastating bushfires.

Congratulations again on this milestone and I wish you all continued success as you look towards the Society's centenary.'



Congratulations

Fresh Ink in Australian Publishing

She's young, talented, and making her mark in Australian publishing. Meet Anna Solding, director of MidnightSun.

Hi Anna, can you tell us how MidnightSun began?

After I finished my degree and had been shopping my PhD (*in creative writing*) novel around for a while, getting lovely comments but no offers, a good friend of mine who is an entrepreneur suggested that we start a publishing company. So we did. He helped getting the structure right to begin with, but the company is mine and I am the sole director.

Why the name MidnightSun?

We had a fun brain storming session to come up with a name. MidnightSun isn't just a beautiful name but also reflects my Swedish background. I still love the design of our logo, with a sliver of the moon inside the sun.

I read that you started MidnightSun after disenchantment with established publishing houses in Australia. Could you tell me more?

Because my manuscript had been shortlisted for, but not won, three unpublished manuscript awards I had begun feeling like publication might never happen. The book was too different, had too many main characters, was set in Sweden and constructed as a 'novel constellation' (a novel of connected short stories). It was all about women, motherhood and the connections between strangers. In a way, *The Hum of Concrete*, as it was eventually called, is also a love song to the city of Malmö in Sweden, where I grew up.

So MidnightSun grew from my own desire to get my work published to something much larger: a publisher concentrating on stories that other publishers might find hard to market, books that straddle more than one genre, short story collections, picture books that take children seriously and often first projects by unknown authors and illustrators. Now we welcome the disenchanting.

What does your typical workday look like?

Reading is still one of my favourite parts of the job but there is a lot less of that than you might expect. Most days I spend in front of the computer

replying to emails about design, distribution, editing and sales. And I have come to love this aspect of my publishing job too. Coming up with ideas for covers and seeing how my designer Kim has interpreted them is a huge thrill. Sometimes she designs thirty covers for a book and so many of them are amazing.

Have you always wanted to be a writer and publisher?

From a very young age I loved reading and writing. There was no better way to spend the day than being immersed in a wonderful book. Fairly soon I was expanding on the stories I read (sequel to *The Narnia* series, anyone?) as well as making up my own. One of my teachers was especially encouraging, making writing as a profession seem possible and I'll be eternally grateful to her.

Aspiring writers (and the general public) often think that contracts with a big publishing house means success. Could you comment on that?

Well, I think success is different for everyone. Bigger publishing houses often have the means to pay bigger advances, so in a monetary sense it could be seen as a success. However, many writers find that they themselves and their books get lost in a bigger house and therefore prefer the individually tailored experience that being published by a smaller house provides.

Big publishing houses often say they only have room for a certain number of books. Why is that?

I suspect that bigger publishers have to publish a certain number of books each year to meet their targets, but we don't have that stress. I think the bigger publishers are often inclined to publish work they aren't passionate about but that fits into their schedule.

So if you have two books that are equally good, but only room for one, which one do you choose?

The beauty of running my own publishing house and only publishing books that I love is that I have

complete artistic freedom. I don't have to choose just one if I have two books that are equally good. In fact, I have just chosen to accept two picture books on a fairly unusual Australian theme. The trick is to make sure the illustrations still look very different and that they aren't published around the same time.

What's the most exciting part of discovering a new author?

I love finding new voices, especially diverse voices that tell stories we have never heard before. It gives me great satisfaction to give new authors their first chance of publication, which is why we have also published a couple of short story anthologies. For many writers having a story in a themed collection or winning a short story competition can be the beginning of their career. One of the most exciting things is ringing a new writer to offer them publication. It's a moment of genuine joy and excitement for both of us.

“Identify as a writer. It's more powerful than you think. Do the work, grab the badge. It doesn't matter if you haven't yet been published. **If you write, you're a writer.**”

Where do you see MidnightSun's role in the Australian market in the future?

MidnightSun is highly regarded in the industry for the quality of our books: from the stories to the design and the printing quality. I hope we can keep producing beautiful, highly acclaimed, award-winning books for many years to come. I would be lying if I said that sales don't matter. Of course it would also be wonderful to find a bestseller or two in the slush pile. Over the next few years, we are also planning to expand our overseas reach and I would love for more of our books to reach readers around the world.

What is your personal best advice for new writers?

Read, read, read. And then read some more. I know that this is common advice but it's essential to be familiar with the kinds of books you love and get to understand why you love them. Is it because of the writer's special turn of phrase or the way they leave you with a cliff hanger at the end of every chapter?

Write, write, write. And then write some more. My PhD supervisor had a sign on her door saying: *Thinking about writing or talking about writing or worrying about writing is not writing*'. As a procrastinator, that really hit home for me. You actually have to put words on the page to be able to edit them. This and other excellent advice can be found in Roland Fishman's cute little book *Creative Wisdom For Writers*.

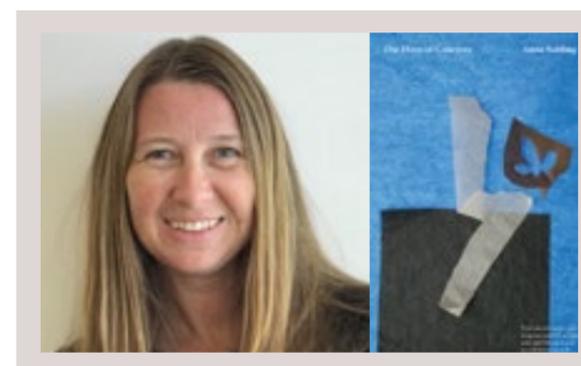
Sharing your writing with your peers is also invaluable. Join a writers' group, take courses at writers' centres. Be open to criticism and reciprocate the feedback if possible. Send your work off to magazines, anthologies, competitions. Join online writing groups. Be supportive of other's successes so that they can one day be supportive of yours. Do a spreadsheet so you know where all your work is being considered. Send many stories out at the same time so that good news could always come your way. Develop a thick skin

so rejections hurt less. As soon as you've had a rejection, send your work out again.

Identify as a writer. It's more powerful than you think. Do the work, grab the badge. It doesn't matter if you haven't yet been published. If you write, you're a writer.

Anything else you would like to add!

Thank you so much for your interest in MidnightSun. It's thanks to readers like you that small publishers like MidnightSun can thrive in the competitive Australian publishing landscape. You can follow us on social media to see what we are up to.



Don't Forget Anonymous

BY HAZEL EDWARDS OAM

“The support of peers matters. Mentoring matters. Authentic literature matters for readers and for writers.”

Not many of us reach 95.

But the Society of Women Writers has always been supported by the generously shared skills of writers, to reach 95 productive years of Herstory.

It's the oldest women writers' group in Australia.

Virginia Woolf's 500 (pounds) a year and a room of your own is often quoted as money and space prerequisites for a female writer. Woolf was married to her publisher, came from an affluent family and could socialise with skilled peers who had time to read. Not typical.

Today's 'Ginia might be a single parent with dependants, renting, working on contract or freelance gigs, who writes into the night and has bills to pay, today. English may not be her first language. She may be part of a minority culture which gives her rich writing material, but... 'getting by' is her participant observation research. She's probably coped with being different and the ability to write has kept her sane or at least enabled her to adjust. As long as her internet works.

Or 'Ginia2, qualified as a lawyer, which is always useful when intellectual property issues arise. She can pay bills while writing outside the legally 'chargeable minutes'. Still faces conflicted values and feels guilty about taking time to write from other obligations.

'Ginia 3 is a retired poet. Retired age-wise, but continues to love crafting words and tackling social issues.

Self-employed, small business of one, 'Ginia 4 makes a living as a longterm, genre author.

Their aim is the same. To capture in words significant stories.

Early female writers had even greater challenges than today's pandemic lockdowns. Multi-tasking wasn't the label then, but they still coped with domestic trivia, earning a living and writing. So the technical and occasional financial support of other literary women helped during rejection times when all writers doubt their worth. The support of peers matters. Mentoring matters. Authentic literature matters for readers and for writers. Memoirs. Biographies, But also inspirational stories of idea pioneers.

In earlier times, the SWW was one of the few ways that women interested in literary ideas could meet. Some travelled a long way to the meetings. They treasured the newsletters and journals. Even now, online information about how others manage comparable writerly lives, is vital. Geographic isolation can be overcome.

Often the best writing comes from extreme experience, and that's hard if you have a family, health or money problems.

Some early women writers married or partnered male authors. Often they wrote the commercially viable, did the childcare and the domestics, while their partner 'mused' on literary matters or was the public face. Occasionally it was an equal partnership. But when the writing became the obsessive lover, some divorced.

Another reliable income was vital. Wealthy fathers were a genetic gamble, supportive husbands required emotional exchange, female literary partners might be more understanding. But the self confidence which came from writing work of value which was acknowledged was not always accompanied by sufficient money to live.

Important to recognise are the 'committee' women who kept an organisation such as SWW functioning. Often the 'admin' time was taken from their own writing.

Let's celebrate the work of the significant women writers while not forgetting ANONYMOUS. She wrote a lot.

But the other variation of ANONYMOUS is the partner, early adopter or hidden worker who enabled the 'famous' one to be acknowledged. Or the women who published or performed the work of others.

And many of them have been part of the SWW 95th history. The hidden as well as the visible writers who have contributed intellectual property to our culture and enabled others to solve problems or see from another viewpoint or be entertained. And let's encourage those stories to cross over into new mediums via entrepreneurial visionaries.

Autobiographies or biographies of atypical, adventurous women are important inspiration for youth. Male and female. Let's have fewer 'misery memoirs' and more inspirational writing in fiction or fact about our 'heroes', the role model females in engineering, medicine, invention, design, countrylife and small business, who have inspired others.

And let's acknowledge ANONYMOUS writers whose work has inspired and sustained us.

Hazel Edwards OAM is the Patron of the Society of Women Writers (Victoria). She's also known for her classic picture book *'There's a Hippopotamus on our Roof Eating Cake'* (Puffin) celebrating its 40th anniversary in 2020. *'Complete Your Book in a Year'* (BookPod) is just out as a result of pandemic closure of face-to-face workshops, and features strategies plus mentored Hazelnuts. Currently, Hazel's adult mystery with an asexual celebrant sleuth *'Wed then Dead on the Ghan'* is being adapted with co-writer Geoffrey Wright as a screenplay for ABC.

www.hazeledwards.com



Photo: (left) Errol Broome, former Patron of the SWW (Victoria), and (right) Hazel Edwards OAM, current Patron of SWW (Victoria).

Did you know...
you should always, always
say the name of an ancient
Egyptian out loud...

But why?



Q&A with Pamela Rushby: the Di Yerbury residency, visiting mummies and writing her latest release!

Why did you apply for the Di Yerbury residency?

I read about the Di Yerbury Residency in an e-newsletter. The Residency generously offered accommodation for writers for up to three months in Barnstaple, Devon, for time for research and writing. Applicants had to be female, over 50, and writing a book set in Great Britain which would benefit from research and writing time. I was writing a book for children set in Britain, and really wanted to do extra research, so I applied – and I was fortunate enough to be offered the Residency.

What did you do during your residency?

Apart from the time in Barnstaple (which is an absolutely delightful town), I re-visited the West Park Museum in Macclesfield (which is where I saw the mummy case that the original ideas came from), Highclere Castle (where Lord Carnarvon of Tutankhamun fame lived and where a cupboard full of Tutankhamun antiquities were re-discovered not too long ago), the British Museum (where I haunted the mummy rooms) and the Petrie Museum University College London, which has a wonderfully Victorian-style teaching museum of literally thousands upon thousands of Egyptian antiquities.

When and how did you come up with the idea for your book *The Mummy Smugglers of Crumblin Castle*?

Some years ago I was travelling in England's Peak

District and saw a brochure for the local West Park Museum. It mentioned that their collection included an ancient Egyptian mummy case. I've always been interested in ancient Egypt, so I was there! The Museum was specially built in Victorian times to house interesting things that local residents brought back from their travels – a stuffed tiger, ostrich eggs, a collection of tropical beetles, paintings, and the Egyptian collection. I had to view the mummy case with a small torch, as the light is kept low for preservation purposes – it was certainly atmospheric!

The cartonnage mummy case was that of a 15-year-old girl named Shebmut who had lived and died in the 22nd Dynasty Late Period. It had been donated by a local resident, Miss Marianne Brocklehurst, who had brought it back from her travels in Egypt in the winter of 1873 where she had hired a dahabiya (a houseboat) and travelled a thousand miles up the Nile. She was accompanied on a second dahabiya by a friend, Amelia Edwards, and the ladies visited temples and tombs and collected antiquities on their way. Now, that got my attention. What was a Victorian lady doing travelling in Egypt at that time? And surely a mummy case was an odd sort of a souvenir? So I picked up what information I could find on Miss Brocklehurst from the Museum shop (two smallish brochures), and took it away with me. Idle curiosity, really. Except idle curiosity, for a writer, often leads to other things ...

When I read the brochures, I was extremely intrigued to find that the mummy case had been purchased from an Arab family in Thebes, and that it had been exported illegally from Egypt. Illegally! Really?! So Miss Brocklehurst was a mummy smuggler! There was a story!

I really, really wanted to write about respectable Victorian ladies smuggling artifacts out of Egypt. I just had to think about it a bit ...

Tell me more about Shebmut.

We know her name and her age because it's on her mummy case, and that she was clearly from a well-off family as she was a temple singer of Amun, a prestigious position. The cartonnage (a type of papier mache) mummy case was of high quality. We don't, however, have her mummy. That was discarded by Miss Brocklehurst as she was afraid that the 'odour' of the mummy would alert the crew of her dahabiya to its presence.

The mummy case, along with other antiquities, was successfully smuggled back to England. Amelia Edwards, on this occasion, wasn't so fortunate. Her collection was discovered and confiscated.

How did you find out about the bizarre tea parties where Victorian era unwrapped mummies?

Mummy unwrapping parties were mentioned by my daughter, writer Allison Rushby who was researching odd Victorian customs (like stuffing small animals and dressing them up and placing them in 'scenes' such as tea parties or school rooms – funny lot, the Victorians). I had been wondering how, because I write for children, I was going to introduce a child character into a mummy smuggling situation, and immediately the mummy unwrapping parties were mentioned I could see it. I claimed the mummy unwrapping parties (they're mine!) and the whole idea was pretty much there.

Have you always been interested in mummies and castles?

Always. It goes back to when I was about 8 and I was taken to the old Queensland Museum in Brisbane. There was the mummified hand of a child from ancient Egypt, still with a little gold ring on the finger. And a mummified hawk. I was hooked. I studied ancient history at school and later at university. And castles? Who doesn't like a good castle?

How long did it take you to write *The Mummy Smugglers of Crumblin Castle*?

Ages. The idea was bubbling away for a couple of years. I had a friend who said a writer's brain is like a lava lamp – a whole mess of molten ideas at the bottom, and every so often one idea pops up and floats to the top and you'll think about it for a while, and then it goes down again, but one day it floats up and stays there – and you've got a story.

So, once I had the story it took about a year to write, in between doing other, commissioned work. No deadline, you see. A deadline is a wonderful incentive.

How did the Di Yerbury residency contribute?

It was invaluable. I could have researched online, but it is truly amazing to visit the places and absorb the atmosphere and collect information along the way. For example, I discovered that both Miss Brocklehurst and Amelia Edwards had kept diaries of their travels (bless them) and I was able to get copies of these.

Where can we find out more about your books?

My website is www.pamelarushby.com

Oh, and why should we always, always say the name of an ancient Egyptian out loud?

If you're in a museum and see an Egyptian mummy case, check to see if the person's name is on the information card. It usually is. Then just say 'Hi.' G'day, Shebmut. Hello, Nefer. How's it going, Horemheb. Or whatever. The Egyptians wanted to be remembered. On their mummy cases are usually the words, 'Say my name. Remember me.' I like the idea of doing something for them that they wanted – sort of reaching out to touch someone from the past.



Women Writers Kick Goals - Creating an Anthology for Young People

BY SUSANNE GERVAY OAM

At a time when young people face the reality of climate change in a confronting world, the Society of Women Writers has risen to the challenge. The Society has created an anthology inspiring young people to explore Australian flora and fauna and increase awareness of the threats that face so many of our unique species. In the tradition of the Society, the anthology seeks to engage and empower young people to take action for the future of our planet.

This anthology, *Splash, Slither, Squawk!* edited by authors Julie Thorndyke and Michele Bomford, is a fitting work to celebrate the longest continuing literary association of women writers in Australia for its 95th year. Distinguished poet Dame Mary Gilmore, a founding member of the Society, was a passionate advocate of women and children. This anthology continues this core value, giving voice to women and children through literature.

Children's books have always held a pivotal role in literature. Enid Blyton has sold more than 600 million books. JK Rowlings' *Harry Potter* has sold more than 500 million books. Dr Seuss 500 million, Roald Dahl 250 million. J.D. Salinger's single title *The Catcher in the Rye* has sold more than 65 million, C.S. Lewis and the *Narnia* series has sold more 150 million, and the list goes on. The works of children's authors such as Beatrix Potter, Lewis Carroll, Charles Dickens' *A Christmas Carol*, Astrid Lindgren and many more classic children's stories have become folklore that impact on the values of generation after generation.

Australian women writers of the past and present have joined the million-book sales outreach. Children's and young adult books such as Miles Franklin's *My Brilliant Career*, May



Gibbs' *Cuddlepot and Snugglepip*, Ruth Park's *The Muddleheaded Wombat*, Dorothy Wall's *The Adventures of Blinky Bill*, and Ethel Turner's *Seven Little Australians* continue to have an invaluable place in every children's library.

Australian women children's writers today

continue the tradition with million-plus sales in Australia and internationally. Included in this list is Jessica Townsend's fantasy *Nevermore*, Jackie French's *Diary of a Wombat* picture book series, Patron of the Society of Women Writers Victoria Hazel Edwards' *There's a Hippopotamus on our Roof Eating Cake* series, the historical novels of Kate Forsyth, and many more.

There is a legion of Australian women children's writers reaching young people on the great issues of our time, from family to war, wildlife to inclusion, environment to peace, inviting critical thinking. Renowned women writers with classic works have contributed to the Society's anthology. These include Libby Hathorn, whose *Thunderwith*, which was revisioned into a movie, brings hope to the human spirit; Susanne Gervay, whose *I Am Jack* anti-bullying series, adapted into a play by Monkey Baa Theatre, has become a rite-of-passage bullying read and studied across Australia; Pamela Rushby, whose *The Horses Didn't Come Home* powerfully reveals the great courage and sacrifice of horses at Beersheba, 1917; and the outstanding author Sophie Masson who has spearheaded remarkable books on history, fantasy and folktales.

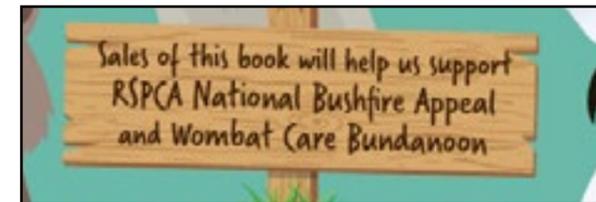
Passionate emerging, established, and award-winning women writers have contributed to this anthology. They include Michele Bomford, Jacqui Brown, Kylie Day, Carolyn Eldridge-Alfonzetti, Beverley George, Samantha Goyen, Pippa Kay,

Colleen Keating, Dorothy Keyworth, Hester Leung, Sema Musson, Liz Newton, Vanessa Proctor, Susan Ramage, Joanne Ruppin, Margaret Ruckert, Rita Shaw, Pat Simmons, Carmel Summers, Christine Sykes, Julie Thorndyke and Decima Wraxall.

It was additionally special when children added their own creativity to this anthology by illustrating the writers' stories, poetry and articles.

The State Library of NSW has enabled the Society to establish a 'home' within its magnificent Mitchell Wing. Under the direction of Dr John Vallance, the NSW State Librarian, a unique Children's Library within the State Library was opened in October 2019. This anthology is a timely addition to the collection in the Children's Library with its commitment to reading for young people.

It was with great joy to receive Dr John Vallance's delightful endorsement of the anthology: 'Do we have heads so cockatoos have something to rest on? Are lyrebirds really trying to fool us? Why do we have Easter bilbies not bunnies? How are our coral reefs changing? What do birds pray for? Do you like poems and stories about the bush? I'd be surprised if you didn't. Get yourself a copy of this book - if necessary find an adult to do it for you - and find somewhere cosy to sit. You won't regret it.'



Sales of *'Splash, Slither, Squawk!'* support the RSPCA National Bushfire Appeal and Wombat Care Bundanoon. Celebrate and purchase this beautiful anthology for readers and young people to recognise the 95th anniversary of the Society of Women Writers, the State Library of NSW, and support those who faced the devastation of the bush fires and of course, our beloved wombats.

www.sgervay.com



Splash, Slither, Squawk!
 Edited by Michele Bomford and Julie Thorndyke
 Published by The Society of Women Writers NSW Inc., 2020
 Paperback, 140 pp; black and white illus.
 ISBN 978-0-9808407-5-9 RRP \$20
<https://womenwritersnsw.org/>
 Contact: Michele Bomford michele.cb@bigpond.com

Our Future Artists

Talking with Gracie (aged 11)

Hi Gracie, how did you get involved with the anthology? Me and my cousin Millie were at Westfield the shopping mall and Great Aunt Susie (*that's Susanne Gervay to the rest of us*) asked if we'd like to be a part of the anthology and we were both excited so we're like yeah sure!

Have you had anything published before? I haven't had anything published before this was a really cool and awesome opportunity that I really wanted to do because I love drawing.

Did you get a copy of the anthology? Yes. I thought it was really cool and I loved all the different poems and everything and the stories and I thought it was really great to see other kids drawings.

Do you have any other creative interests? I love to draw and paint and to be creative. I do art things at school. I might be entering a competition at school to do some art. I just really enjoy it.

How did you feel when you saw the actual book with your picture and name in it? It's a really great book which kids can look at and their parents can read to them and learn about all different wildlife, because people think in Australia we see wombats and kangaroos every single day, but we don't unless you live in the country, so it's really great.

Talking with Harrison (aged 8)

Hi Harrison, how did you get asked to draw for the anthology? Mum asked if we had any drawings that I'd done for the past few years in school and I said yes because we had lots of these animal pictures that I'd made. I did all of those when I was in year 1, and now I'm in year 2.

What did you think when you saw your drawing published in the book? I felt proud of myself and excited that my pictures were in the book.

What did your friends think? I took it to school and at school they didn't believe me but then when I showed they were like whaaaaaaa?!

Do you like art? Yeah, I love it a lot. A lot.

Thanks Gracie and Harrison

The Ripple Effect of *Splash, Slither, Squawk!*

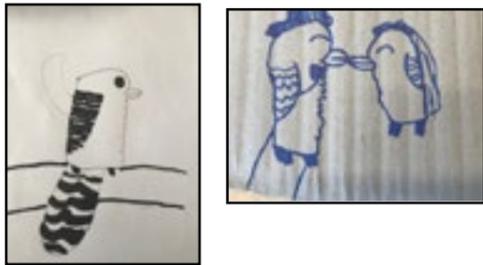
BY KYLIE DAY

It is always exciting to receive a parcel in the post, particularly when it contains copies of the Society's new anthology *Splash, Slither, Squawk!* in its colourful, characterful cover design (thank you, Matthew George).

My parcel arrived on the first day of spring, shortly before I went to pick up my children from school. The children were as excited to see the book as me.

Toby (5) quickly found his cicada drawing. Together with his sister, Darcey (8), they marvelled at the pictures drawn by other children and enjoyed matching them with the bios in the back of the book – they loved hearing about other children, their interests and activities.

Darcey, who draws very well, was inspired by Willow's kookaburra (p.40) to try drawing kookaburras of her own. A collective noun for kookaburras is, appropriately, a "riot". They are turning up all over our house. Here are two of them.



I particularly love Darcey's drawing of Mr and Mrs Kookaburra kissing at their wedding. Now there's a writing prompt!

Before long, it was bedtime and we began to dip into the poems and stories, enjoying their variety. The next morning, Darcey and Toby took copies of the book to give to their schools. Toby talked about it to his class, and his teacher read from it at storytime.

Toby's preschool newsletter reported:

Toby had some very exciting news to share today. His artwork – a cicada – is published in a book.

Toby: 'It's a poem book and my mum has a poem here.'

Toby expressed great pride in sharing this with the group!

Later in the week we saw his classmate, Gracie, walking to school. Gracie's mum said that they had read the cicada poem at bedtime.

How lovely it is to see the ripples being made by *Splash, Slither, Squawk!* as it casts off.

Kylie Day is a Barrister and mother of two young children. She loves language, libraries, reading and writing.



Amazing Australians at Longreach

BY MARIA MCDUGALL

The Australian Stockman's Hall of Fame and Outback Heritage Centre at Longreach, Queensland, profiles early settlers and their struggles to tame the unforgiving terrain and make something of their lives. From Aboriginal settlements and practices to present-day technologies, the centre pays tribute to the foundation members of the Australian outback.

Imagine my delight when, during a visit in July 2020, I walked into the centre's bookshop and there on the top shelf were three books by Australian women writers!

On the left is *Rebel Women Who Changed Australia*, which features the work of women through a broad spectrum of pioneering life, including medicine, law, politics, arts, and sport.

The author, Susanna de Vries OAM, is an Alice Award Recipient and the Society of Women Writers NSW Workshop presenter and keynote speaker for April 2021. Her workshop will address how to write a lively autobiography that people want to read, while her Keynote will introduce her latest work, *Nell: The Australian Heiress who Saved her Husband from the Nazis*.

Jill Bowen's *Kidman The Forgotten King* in the centre details the achievements of the Kidman dynasty in outback Australia.

The book on the right-hand side, *The Washerwoman's Dream* by Hilarie Lindsay, tells the story of Winifred Steger who finds solace in writing to escape her hardship. Winifred's early letters, memoirs, novel and short stories are pieced together to tell the story of her life. Winifred eventually found love with an Indian trader, whose wagon, laden with paraphernalia, is featured in the exhibition at Longreach.

Dr Hilarie Lindsay MBE OAM is a lifetime member of the Society of Women Writers NSW. Her vast body of writing and community involvement is outstanding. Her lively presence is welcomed each month at the Dixon Room Literary Meetings in the NSW State Library.

To see Hilarie's book, first published in 2002, the second edition in 2007, and reprinted in 2018, still being sold and enjoyed, is an inspiration to all women writers.

THE SHORTLIST

POETRY JUDGED BY MARGARET BRADSTOCK

- P.S. Cottier** | Monstrous
Tricia Dearborn | Autobiocchemistry
Pip Griffin | Margaret Caro
Colleen Keating | Desert Patterns
Colleen Keating | Hildegard of Bingen

FICTION JUDGED BY CAROLYN BEAUMONT

- Nicole Alexander** | Stone Country
Diane Armstrong | The Collaborator
Carmel Bendon | Grasping at Water
Cindy Broadbent | The Revolutionary's Cousin
Christine Sykes | The Changing Room
Julie Thorndyke | Mrs Rickaby's Lullaby

NON FICTION JUDGED BY JUDITH O'CONNOR

- Colleen Keating** | Hildegard of Bingen
Liz Newton | The Firing Line
Jessica North | Esther
Jo Oliver | Jessie Traill – a Biography
Annabet Ousback | Red Herrings for Breakfast
Gill Shaddick | The Hong Kong Letters

CHILDREN JUDGED BY PAUL McDONALD

- Georgina Donaghey** | In the Shadow of an Elephant
Susanne Gervay | The Boy in the Blue Glasses
Libby Hathorn | Miss Franklin

YOUNG ADULT JUDGED BY PAUL McDONALD

Judge's decision that no prizes will be awarded in this category

Members Book Awards 2020

We're delighted to announce the shortlist for the Members' Book Awards 2020. Congratulations to all the shortlisted authors (listed alphabetically in each category). And thank you to our judges, you can read more about them below.

JUDITH O'CONNOR



Judith lives in Sydney. She has a BA from the University of Sydney and worked as a newspaper, magazine and radio journalist and editor for twelve years both in Australia and overseas before turning to creative fiction. For many years she ran media skills workshops at most adult evening colleges in Sydney and worked for some time teaching English as a Second Language. She has published and contributed to several books. Her short stories have won prizes and awards and have been published in various anthologies. She has completed her first novel and is currently working on a collection of memoir pieces. Judith is currently the Book Review Editor for SWW.

MARGARET BRADSTOCK



Margaret is a Sydney poet, critic and editor. She lectured at UNSW for 25 years and has been Asialink Writer-in-Residence at Peking University, co-editor of Five Bells for Poets Union, and on the Board of Directors for Australian Poetry. She has eight published collections of poetry, including *The Pomelo Tree* (winner of the Wesley Michel Wright Prize) and *Barnacle Rock* (winner of the Woollahra Festival Award, 2014). Editor of *Antipodes*, the first Australian anthology of Aboriginal and white responses to "settlement" (2011) and *Caring for Country* (2017), Margaret won the Banjo Paterson Poetry Award in 2014, 2015 and 2017. Her most recent book is *Brief Garden* (Puncher & Wattmann, 2019).

CAROLYN BEAUMONT



Carolyn is an editor of fiction, autobiographical and non-fiction manuscripts, who has worked with publishers John Wiley & Sons, Pan Macmillan, Harper Collins, Random House and more. She holds a Bachelor of Arts from The University of Sydney, majoring in English literature. Her special interest in research is the influence of Dante Alighieri on the English writer, Geoffrey Chaucer, in his epic poem, *The House of Fame*. Carolyn is a former book reviewer for *The Australian*. She conducts workshops in Sydney for prospective and published writers and teaches editing and proofreading skills (digital and traditional). She holds a Certificate IV in Training and Assessment with the Commonwealth Government of Australia.

PAUL MACDONALD



Paul owns the award-winning The Children's Bookshop which has been a Sydney literary institution since 1971. Paul has a Master of Education, working almost 20 years as a teacher of Upper Primary and Secondary. He has won numerous teaching awards. Paul won the inaugural Maurice Saxby Award in 2012 for his contributions to raising the profile of teen fiction. He also was the winner of the 2016 Lady Cutler award for services to children's literature and literacy in Australia. Paul manages The Children's Bookshop Speakers' Agency and is a consultant working with schools focusing on building reading cultures. He is currently completing his PhD in Australian Young Adult literature. Paul is the author of the picture book *The Hole Idea*.

In April, **Pip Griffin** and three friends started a daily 'haiku club' to document their lockdown experience.

This selection of Pip's haikus perfectly capture the essence of the experience for us all.



Bay Run like Pitt Street
Bones Cafe over-crowded
Covid-19 Easter

will this May weather
last through our winter months?
Covid's begrudging gift

delivery men
ubiquitous saviours
feed the needy

Haberfield homes mute
save for the screeching machines
of renovators

beside the canal
family members play hockey
all on roller skates

a red wattlebird
breakfasts on sasanqua sap
welcome back my friend

who would have thought it
elastic is hard to get
today I found some! (in Woolies)

Saturday sun paints
a rainbow on kitchen tiles –
short-lived glow of hope.

Pip Griffin

Only One Book – Which One Would You Choose?

BY CARMEL BENDON

If there's any consolation to be found in the distress and isolation that COVID-19 has brought to our world, it might be that, confined to our homes, we have had more time to devote to working through the tall stacks of 'to-be-read' books that have been gathering dust on shelves, desks, and bedside tables over many months (years?) of accumulation. The sorting process got me thinking of the books that I couldn't live without, the books that have inspired my life, fired my imagination, and opened my mind. The list is long and when I engage in the 'game' of choosing five books I'd take to a desert island, I usually find myself extending the list by a book, or two ... or twenty. Chaucer's *Canterbury Tales* would be first in the survival pack - definitely, no question. Then, of course, Julian of Norwich's *Revelations*, for its truth and beauty. And Shakespeare, the complete works (yes, I realise a 'complete works' is probably cheating); maybe a Dickens' compendium (yes, another 'cheat' no doubt); and then my favourite Australian novel, Tim Winton's *Cloudstreet* - I never tire of that. Same goes for Umberto Eco's *The Name of the Rose*. But what about ... and...?

This is a game I always lose and, in my defeat, I'm sometimes drawn to think of those hardy medieval souls who might have possessed only one book for their whole lifetime. Then most people were illiterate and the production of manuscripts was such a costly and labour-intensive task that it was only the wealthy or religiously-professed who, firstly, knew how to read and, secondly, could hope to own any books.

I remember, many years ago, in the magnificence of the old British Library (at that time part of the British Museum), putting in my request for an original, 13th century manuscript of *Ancrene Wisse*, a work that I was researching as part of my doctoral thesis on medieval religious and mystical writings. I recall it being a small book, about fifteen centimeters wide and maybe eighteen centimeters in length and bound by two pieces of very fragile wood that were connected by a leather spine. Inside were about sixty pages of grey and yellowing thick, rough-cut parchment. And on both sides of these pages, written in the cursive of the time, in (now) faded brown ink and with no (or few spaces) between each word (because parchment was too rare

and valuable to be wasted on blank areas), was the 'guide' to how an anchoress should conduct herself in the anchorhold where she was immured, for life.

Anchoresses (and the male equivalent, anchorites) were a particular feature of religious dedication and practice in medieval England. The term refers to individuals who willingly sought to be enclosed for life in a small cell ('anchorhold') usually attached to a church, in order to pursue a solitary life of prayer and contemplation. Those seeking enclosure usually required funds of their own and/or sponsorship to embark on the life but subsequently were maintained, at least in part, by people of the town or parish. At all times anchoresses were under the supervision of the local bishop, and subject to Church rules and a nominated spiritual director. It was a solemn vocation, anchoritic enclosure being preceded by a Mass for the Dead.

I realised that this little book had been held and read, probably every day, by a woman who had been locked in a little cell attached to a church; and in this little cell she had lived out her whole adult life. And there she would die, and even be buried in the 'in-house' pre-dug grave (the existence of which recent archaeological

investigations into anchorholds have revealed). How precious that book must have been to her because it was, most likely, her only book. No doubt, in its preciousness, the book was passed on to another (and another, and another) anchoress after the original owner's death. How fascinating to me were the signs of fingermarks where each woman had held the book over many readings. How intoxicating was the smell of the dusty parchment which I, like a Pavlovian dog, responded to by conjuring up the whole scene of the woman sitting and reading in a very dank, very dark, and very cold purpose-built cell.

For me, at that time, having a researcher's Reader's Ticket to the British Library was like being a child with a gift voucher for a candy shop. I made the most of it, requesting (and being granted) permission to view some of the library's rare and priceless illuminated manuscripts. They were breathtaking in the richness of their colours, the perfection of their script, and the lustre of the thick gold embossing that embellished many pages.

But if I had to choose only one of those manuscripts to take with me to a desert island it would be the little, unadorned *Ancrene Wisse*.¹

¹ A modern translation of *Ancrene Wisse* can be found at: *Ancrene Wisse: Guide for Anchoresses*, Penguin Classics, 1994

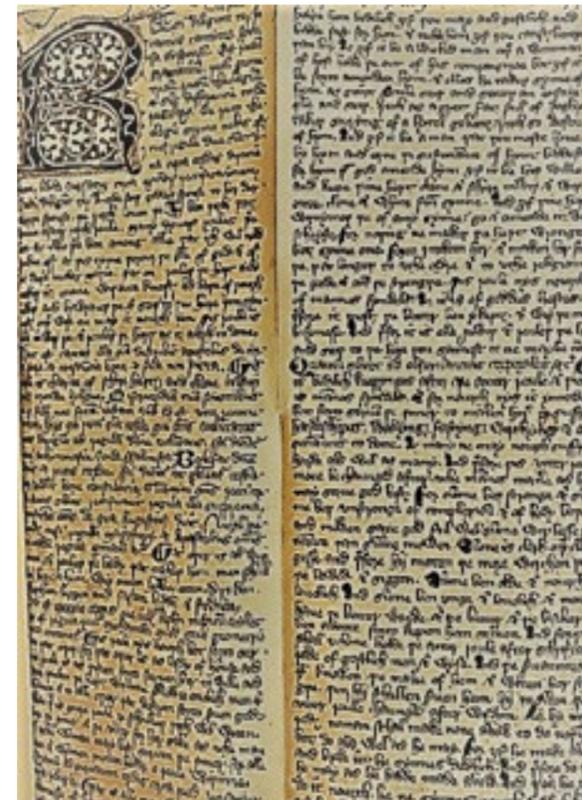


Photo by C. Bendon of reproduced page of *Ancrene Wisse* from Magdalene College, Cambridge, MS Pepys 2498, p.371 in *Ancrene Wisse: Magdalene College, Cambridge, MS Pepys 2498*. Ed. A Zettersten. *Early English Text Society*. London: Oxford University Press, 1976.



Dr Carmel Bendon is an author, academic and presenter. With a PhD in Medieval Literature, and Medieval Mystics as her specialist field, her publications include the book *Mysticism and Space*, and articles on Julian of Norwich, Hildegard of Bingen, anchoresses, and Geoffrey Chaucer. She is a popular presenter on "all things medieval". Her first novel, *Grasping at Water* (Odyssey Books, 2018) wonders how a medieval mystic would fare in modern-day Sydney.

Patrick White by Toni Brisland

Illustrated by Anastasia Popp | Published by Little Steps Publishing

REVIEWED BY BEATRIZ COPELLO

Toni Brisland, an award-winning author, teacher and corporate lawyer, has written about the fascinating life of Patrick White, the only Australian to have been awarded the Nobel Prize in Literature (1973). This beautifully crafted book, in content and presentation, chronologically tells the life story of Patrick White. It has been written in a language accessible to children in middle grades. This informative and well written book contains ten chapters, a synopsis, prologue, Patrick White Timeline, a selected bibliography and references.

The author has researched Patrick White's life broadly and thoroughly and she presents the readers with an amenable and interesting narrative which will appeal to young readers. In a written interview on what it is about Patrick White's life that middle readers can relate to, she clearly explains:

'Middle readers in Australia are learning to find their place in the mini-society that is school and the broader community, learning to face their own fears and insecurities and sometimes illnesses (they may be) confronted by bullies and domineering peers and have to grasp with their idea of self and what they want to be in life which sometimes conflicts with how their parents see them and the expectations their parents have for them.' In his life, White had to contend with many issues like illness (he suffered from asthma), he was bullied at school, he was a loner, his parents expected different things from those he wanted and he had periods of poverty.

Brisland, within the narrative, provides explanations for the terminology used, for example, 'A jackaroo does the work of a stockman. Patrick learned how to dig out rabbits, build fences, work the tractor and harvest the oats.' Not only does the writer give the meaning of words, she also teaches about what White learnt from other people, for example how the Australian modernist

painter Roy De Maistre influenced the writer. 'De Maistre introduced Patrick to what is called modernist culture, that is, looking at everything in ways to try to see it differently. De Maistre did this with the way he painted. As an example, one of the things De Maistre is remembered for is his interest in colour-music. He chose colours to harmonise in much the same way as notes in music harmonise.'

Brisland has included in this appealing children's book some of the characters in White's novels. For example, a passage about the character Voss from the novel of the same title. 'Patrick set Voss in the Australian colonial era. It tells the story of John Ulrich Voss and his attempt to cross the Australian continent from the east to the west. Like Leichhardt, Voss died in the attempt. Voss is an heroic tale about a larger than life hero who has an outstanding extroverted personality. It is told in a way to inspire and motivate. It showed how cleverly Patrick could use language.'

I was pleased that Brisland did not hide the fact that Patrick White was homosexual; in a very delicate way the author explains the relationship between Patrick and Manoly. 'During the war service, Patrick met a Greek army officer in Alexandria, who become his best, lifelong friend and partner. His name was Manoly Lascaris.'

Although Patrick White is a book for children, I must admit that I not only absolutely enjoyed reading it but that I learnt a few new facts. I highly recommend Patrick White for children. And why not adults as well? It is well written, entertaining and contains many facts about this most admired Australian writer.

Dr Beatriz Copello writes poetry, reviews, fiction and plays. Her poetry has been published in literary journals and many feminist publications.

Margaret Caro by Pip Griffin

Published by Pohutukawa Press

REVIEWED BY JUDITH O'CONNOR

The author has chosen the narrative verse form to recount the extraordinary life of her great aunt Margaret Caro who, among a host of other accomplishments, was a pioneering dentist in New Zealand and instrumental in founding the New Zealand Dentist Association (1889). Margaret, who lived between 1848 and 1938, was of Jewish descent and a towering 6 feet (1.8m) tall. She went on to embrace the Seventh Day Adventist Church, and the sections in the book which record and recreate the early formation of the Church both at Sydney's Summer Hill and Wahroonga, I found particularly interesting and well researched.

The author draws on historical and archival records to tell Margaret's story but, through the passing of time, there are necessarily gaps and unknowns. The author makes it clear from the start 'I have changed some dates and circumstances to flesh out her adventurous life' and adds that she 'has included a timeline that gives actual dates and events as far as I can ascertain.' While this is a very professional and helpful note, I found it a little unsettling at times as to have to flip backwards and forwards to clarify what was a real event and what was a recreation by the author. For example, there are many pages devoted to the Napier earthquake in 1931 and, although Margaret and her family were affected, I found the account of the impact and damage a little lengthy in the context of Margaret's personal experience. On the other hand, the author's inclusion of one-line side notes at times throughout the text is extremely easy and quick to access.

The book opens with Margaret as an old woman writing for her descendants. We learn that she married Jacob ('shorter than I would have liked, but a decent dancer who held me firmly') at the age of 16 years at Richmond near Nelson in the South Island of New Zealand. Jacob, immediately carried Margaret off to the New Zealand goldfields

and other remote South Island locations where he worked as a physician. She quickly stepped up as his assistant and when one particularly nasty case presented itself – a huge Maori with teeth like tombstones - Margaret gives him a swig of laudanum, takes the pliers and wrenches the tooth from the man's mouth. 'My dearest, you did so well,' Jacob exclaims. 'From now on you can treat all the bad teeth.' And so, her career is launched...

The couple decide to take the long journey from Christchurch to Hokitika by foot along the Hurunui trail. In her notes, the author tells us there is no record of Jacob and Margaret every actually going to Hokitika but her description and account of the roughness and difficulties of this part of the goldmining country make up for any slight deviation from the real story. I loved the description of their preparations. 'Jacob spent three pounds at the diggers' store ... swags, tent, billies...shovel, tomahawk, pistol, doctor's bag with laudanum, mercury, syrup of ipecac, knife and saw, catgut for stitching wounds...' This simple list speaks volumes for the life that awaits them.

Hokitika is described as hell on earth with '82 pubs disgorging staggering, glazed-eyed men, their fetid breath sickens us, we dodge the flailing arms, slip on the vomit...'. And so the reader is taken into all the colour and a despair of the gold digger's life and the 'young women, some hideous with running sores (who) drape doorways (and) stare with defiant eyes' who live amongst them. The book ends with Margaret recounting the travails of her children which are stories in themselves, and finishes with a satisfying arc as six of her friends visit her each week to hear her relive the memories of her ninety years. 'Now I have finished, dear descendants. I am very tired and lay down my pen satisfied that I have always written honestly.'

Judith O'Connor is a published writer. Her short stories have appeared in anthologies and won prizes.

5

WRITE

What's the best advice

One Question.

Five Answers.

Every Issue.

If you'd like to submit a question suggestion, or want to be the one answering, let me know at: jacqui.brown@panachecat.com

Melissa Bruce:

It was delivered in a workshop at the SWW by the wonderful Australian author, Sue Woolfe.

In discussing the early stages of a writing project, Sue spoke of 'The tragedy of knowing what you're doing'. She explained that it is actually important, in terms of the way our brains work creatively, not to know. That 'our unconscious mind is much smarter than we are,' and that in a sense, we need to trust that our story knows what it's doing, even if we are initially uncertain.

I've since heard this idea mirrored in various ways by other authors such as George Saunders and Elizabeth Gilbert and I love and believe in the magical element of the concept, though it's easier said than done!



Melissa Bruce an award-winning writer of fiction, non-fiction, poetry and drama. Her debut novel, *'Picnic at Mount Disappointment'* won the inaugural Woollahra Digital Literary Award for Fiction and was Highly Commended by the Society of Women Writers, NSW.

Sharon Rundle:

From Elizabeth Jolley, the importance of observing and jotting down the 'quick note'.

From Stephanie Dowrick, allowing the creative mind to bring ideas to the surface, while your hands are engaged in doing routine chores.

From Patti Miller, the value of narrative withholding, where a writer withholds certain information from the reader in order to create mystery, suspense, tension, interest and dramatic irony.

From David Malouf, that 'writing is about an enthusiastic rush; it is also about patience'. He is right. For a writer, patience is essential – patience when writing and patience when publishing.



Dr Sharon Rundle is an Editor of books and online Story Mosaics, who has taught writing for over 25 years at universities and institutions in Australia, India, and the UK. For the past 15 years, she has edited books by authors in Australia and the Indian Subcontinent.

www.sharonrundle.com

ANSWERS

you've received from another author?

Pippa Kay:

It's hard to pin down a best advice because I've had lots of good advice. But perhaps the earliest and most fundamental is good old Show Don't Tell.

I can't remember who or when I first came across that piece of advice, but it was certainly reinforced by Patricia Gaut when I was one of her Willoughby Writers. Since those early days, I have modified it a bit so that it's: mostly show, and tell when you really need to.



Pippa Kay is a Sydney-based author whose most recent work *Keeping it in the Family* won the Society of Women Writers Fiction Book award in 2018. Pippa's work has also appeared in multiple anthologies including *On Murder 2*, *No Thanks or Regrets*, and various *Stringybark* anthologies.

Colleen Keating:

To read my poetry out loud and listen carefully for meaning and rhythm.

When I am stuck, I record it and play it back to myself. I know there are modern methods to do this on our iPhones these days, but I still have an old portable tape recorder on the shelf above my desk which I read into and listen back, checking out the lyrical bent.

I get so much insight from this process.



Colleen Keating is an award winning Sydney-based poet. She has four books of poetry including her latest poetry book *Hildegard of Bingen: A poetic journey*, awarded the Silver Nautilus Award 2019 Better Books for a Better World USA.

www.colleenkeatingpoet.com.au

Libby Sommer:

It was years ago when I was submitting poems to the late Les Murray, Literary Editor of *Quadrant* magazine and all my poems were getting rejected.

I said to Les, 'I am not a poet, am I?'

He said, 'You could be a poet, but you need a surprise at the end of each stanza.'

So that's what I do now and it's working.

My own advice to new writers is a quote from Ernest Hemingway: 'The only kind of writing is rewriting.'



Libby Sommer is an award-winning Australian author of *'My Year With Sammy'* 2015, *'The Crystal Ballroom'* 2017, *'The Usual Story'* 2018 and *'Stories from Bondi'* 2019. *'Lost In Cooper Park'* will be published by Ginninderra Press in late 2020. She is a regular contributor of stories and poems to *Quadrant* magazine.

www/libby.sommer.net.au/

Libby Hathorn receives The Lady Cutler Award for 2020

Congratulations to author, poet and librettist Libby Hathorn, recipient of the 2020 Lady Cutler Award.

Commemorating the contribution to the Children's Book Council of Australia NSW Branch by its former patron, Lady Helen Cutler, this bi-ennial award is presented for Distinguished Service to Children's Literature.

Along with the title, Libby receives a framed certificate, a cameo brooch, her name engraved on the perpetual trophy, a Wedgewood vase, and the distinguished honour of retaining the vase until the succeeding award presentation.

The announcement said: 'Over the decades Libby has generously shared her love of literature with children, teachers, and the community, promoting the importance of story, the valuing of books and libraries all with Australian stories at heart. She continually seeks to raise the standard of literature through both her own work and teaching and mentoring others. Libby has carried the message of the diversity and vibrance of children's literature far beyond Australia.'

Libby says, 'It was an honour after so many decades in the marvellous world of children's literature to be thus recognised, added to the fact many moons ago I met Lady Helen Cutler a few times at our CBCA luncheons at the Rocks and remember her warm support of all of us then. And I like cameos very much!'

Libby has been a member of the Society of Women Writers NSW for over twenty years, sharing her knowledge and experience and love of story, most recently as the keynote speaker on her new picture book with her daughter, Lisa Jarman-Hathorn, titled *No! Never!*. www.libbyhathorn.com



Cathy Perkins shortlisted in the NSW Premier's History Awards

On being shortlisted for her novel **The Shelf Life of Zora Cross**, Cathy told us 'It was wonderful to be shortlisted for the award. It's great to have the biography of a woman writer recognised as history that goes beyond her personal experience. The book is a biography of Zora Cross but it also addresses the question of why we remember some figures from the past and forget others.'

The Judges Report said: 'With ingenuity and flair, in *The Shelf Life of Zora Cross*, Cathy Perkins tells the story of a woman who was a World War One-era literary sensation, but who has now largely been forgotten. Actor, poet, children's author, journalist and sometime literary critic, Cross lived an unconventional life whose passions were reflected in her most successful writing, and notably in the romantic and erotic themes of her acclaimed *Songs of Love and Life* (1917).

This superbly crafted book tells of Cross's successes, tragedies and failures, her recognition as one of the most exciting authors of her day, and the price she paid for choosing the public career of a writer while eschewing many of society's expectations of women in that era. As an accomplished literary biography, Perkins' *The Shelf Life of Zora Cross* offers fresh and stimulating insights into twentieth-century social and cultural history, and especially the barriers faced by creative women in a male-dominated society.'

Congratulations Cathy!

Member News

Dr Vanessa Witton

Congratulations on the following publications: Biographical entry on Dr Iza Frances Josephine Coghlan published by the Dictionary of Sydney in 2020; Museum exhibition review of 'Rise, Serve, Lead!' America's Women Physicians at National Library of Medicine, published in Australian journal *Health and History* Vol. 22, No.1 (2020): 154-59; Museum review of 'Women's Museum of Australia and Old Gaol Alice Springs' published in *Medical History*, newsletter of Australian and New Zealand Society of the History of Medicine Inc, No. 69 (May 2020): 6.

Pip Griffin

Well done to Pip Griffin whose poetry collection, *The Climb Back*, has been accepted by Ginninderra Press to be published in 2021. Pip was delighted to have her poem *Dervishes* selected for publication in *Verge* (Monash University's annual anthology of creative writing, featuring some of Australia's most creative authors) she was honoured to be asked to read it at the Zoom launch on 3 September along with three of the short story writers. The theme for the 2020 journal was 'Ritual'. Her book *Margaret Caro, the extraordinary life of a pioneering dentist, New Zealand 1848-1938* (recently shortlisted in the poetry section of the SWW Members' Book Awards) and the *Caro Family Timeline*, cited in the *Seventh-day Adventist Encyclopaedia Online*, for articles about Margaret Caro and Dr Edgar Caro.

Cynthia Rowe

Cynthia has been extensively published in the following: 'Homecoming' haiga published by Lavana Kray in *Black & White Haiga/Haisha* <https://ourbesthaiga.blogspot.com/>; tanka and 3 haiku in *Presence* #66; senryu in *Failed Haiku* Issue 50; 2 senryu in *Prune Juice* March issue #30; 2 haiku in *Creatrix* #48; haiku and 2 tanka in *cattails* April 2020; 3 haiku and a haiku sequence "Hastings Street" in *Kokako* #32; 2 haiku and "behind closed doors" haiga in *Chrysanthemum* 27; haibun "Advancing—Retreating" in *drifting sands* haibun; senryu and haiga "Pausing" in *Failed Haiku* Issue 53 "Back From The Dead"; 2 senryu in *Failed Haiku* Issue 54, republished on www.tempslibres.org and translated into French by Serge Tomé; 2 haiku in *Creatrix* #49; senryu in *Failed Haiku* Issue 55 and *Failed Haiku* Issue 56; 'Rainy Day Stretch' haibun in *Failed Haiku* Issue 57; 2 haiku in *Creatrix* #50, translated into French by Serge Tomé and republished on www.tempslibres.org

Kelly Van Nelson

Kelly's debut contemporary poetry book, *Graffiti Lane*, went to #1 bestsellers on Amazon Australia and Amazon UK, won Roar Success Best Book Award, and was gifted to Hollywood Oscars winners and nominees, featuring on *The Today Show*, CBS Los Angeles Television, BBC Radio, ABC Radio, Metro Radio, Radio Northern Beaches, and in 60 media newspapers worldwide during Feb 2020, including *National Enquirer*, USA, *The South African Times*, front page of *The Journal*, UK, *Daily Telegraph*, and *Daily Mail*. Her second poetry book, *Punch and Judy*, released August 2020, book launch with MMHPress. *Rolling in the Mud*, A Short Story Collection, accepted for publication by Ginninderra Press late 2020. Fiction novel, *The Pinstripe Prisoner*, accepted for publication by Serenity Press in 2021. Poetry performed at Spoken Word events in USA, UK, Australia, NZ, including *Slamalamadingdong*, *Bankstown Poetry Slam*, *Poetica*, *Voicebox*. Sold Out poetry performance at *Storyroom* event, Manly, March 2020. Finalist *Telstra Business Women's Award*, NSW, May 2020.

Decima Wraxall

Have a look at this extensive list of publications for Decima, what an amazing achievement! *Rowing On The Avon*, Tamba, Autumn/Winter, 2019. *The MOZZIE* Vol 27 Issue 7 Sept OCT 2019 Poem You called SILVER Positive Words, December, 2019. *STAMPED* Poem Positive Words Nov 2019. *CHANCE* Poem Positive Words Jan 2020. *SHADOWED* Poem Positive Words MARCH 2020. Longlisted with 'Rendezvous' in *Fish Flash Fiction Prize* April, 2020. *Choking*, my poem, has been accepted for the *Ginninderra I Protest Anthology*. Her comment on *A Week at the Pandemic Centre*, Txt Jonathan Mayler, Photos Phillip Montgomery, Was published in the *NYT*, *Positive Words* May 2020 Poems, *TAMBA* Issue 66, *Poem Mock Orange*, *You'll Be Safe*, *Positive Words* July 2020: *Poems*, *Stamped*, *Silver*, *Canal Walk*.

Where we've been...

Thank you to our outstanding speakers and presenters in the past four months - not only for sharing their knowledge, experience and insights, but for graciously accommodating the necessary change to Zoom.

Here's a quick rundown of where we've been ...

In July, **Cindy Davies** took us on an illustrated talk from Iran to NSW's Illawarra as part of her research into a novel set in three different continents. **Patti Miller** talked about the longing for wild beauty and exploring the way she found her reserved and distant brother through their shared joy in high places. **Anne Howard** shared how we can tame our data to bring us a feeling of Kon-Mari-like satisfaction and peace.

In August, **Libby Hathorn** and her daughter **Lisa Hathorn-Jarman** revealed the ins and outs of teaming up to create their new book together, *No! Never!*. **Narrelle Harris** helped us devise our tricky crime plots and successfully seed our clues in her *Thinning the Plot* workshop.

In September, we celebrated our **95th Birthday with Jean Kittson** whose presentation was inspirational, delightfully honest, and of course, funny! It seems Jean is right there with those of us who only knuckle down to write when there's a deadline about to strangle us! **Gwen Wilson** gave a raw, personal and fascinating talk about her family history as she weaves it together into her new book, *Louisa's Legacy*. **Jacqui Winn** helped us examine the essential story elements of character and conflict, revealing how to build characters of depth, and having us all a little more tuned into neighbouring conversations in coffee shops!



Finally, in October **Louise Allan** spoke genuinely and openly about second novel syndrome about the voices in our heads that get in our way, and leaving us with the message: *Write for joy. There's no point in writing otherwise*. **Dorothy Keyworth** brought to life Australian poet Grace Perry's remarkable work. **Ella Jeffery** led an exquisite workshop on bringing the world around us into the space of our poems and have place come alive in our poetry.

Now it's time for our Spring to Summer Programme...

Our Spring to Summer Programme

Wednesday 11 November 2020 (on Zoom)

KEYNOTE SPEAKER **Susanne Gervay, OAM** | *Story Matters*

SWW SPEAKER **Margaret Zanardo** | *What happens when you accidentally fall in love with poetry?*



Wednesday 18 November 2020 (on Zoom)

WORKSHOP **Susanne Gervay** | *Writing Story that Matters*

Wednesday 9 December 2020 (on Zoom)

KEYNOTE SPEAKER **Di Solomon** | *Eeking out a Living in Show Business*

SWW SPEAKER **Liz Newton** | *Author of The Firing Line*

** This pre-Christmas event will be free to all members! **



January 2021 - Summer Break!

Wednesday 10 February 2021 (Dixson Room at the State Library)

WORKSHOP **Cathleen Ross & Kandy Shepherd** | *Stripping Down the Love Scene*

PLUS

Di Yerbury Residency Winner Announcement

Members Book Award Prize Ceremony



SOCIETY OF WOMEN WRITERS.

At the invitation of Mrs. Lawrence Ennis, between forty and fifty members of the Society of Women Writers spent an enjoyable afternoon yesterday, inspecting the workshops at Milson's Point, being carried to the deck level of the Harbour Bridge, and later being entertained at tea at the company's offices at Miller's Point.

Under the guidance of Messrs. A. and H. Martin, and Haslitt, members of the party were able to gain considerable insight into the various departments of this great feat of engineering, commencing with the sawing of the sheets of metal, and following each process in the construction to the point where the giant girders were placed in position. In parties of fifteen, the visitors were borne aloft in the wire-enclosed "cage" to the landing-stage, 190 feet above sea level, and 40 feet higher than the tallest of the city's buildings. The less nervous members of the party walked along the decking as far as it had been built, and gazed through the "portals"—as that part is termed—down into the grey waters of the harbour.

When the return journey had been safely made, and the last visitor had been lowered in the cage, the party boarded a launch and were carried to Miller's Point. Mr. and Mrs. Ennis entertained at afternoon tea in a small hall in the office building, the long tables being attractively decorated with bowls of sweet peas and maidenhair fern. A vote of thanks to the host and hostess was proposed by Mrs. Liddell, on behalf of the society, and responded to by Mr. Ennis.

At the usual weekly luncheon of the society, held at the Duncowan, Martin-place, members entertained as their guest of honour, Dr. R. Cilento, director of tropical hygiene, who is visiting Sydney.

Women Writers' Paper

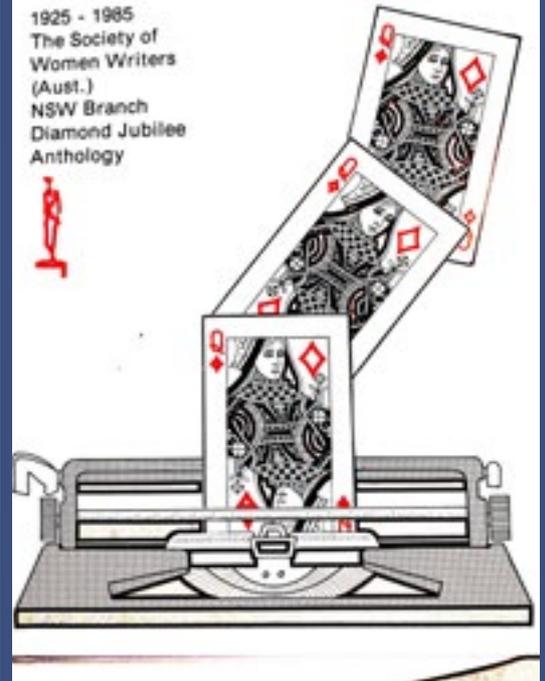
INCLUDING stories of well-known Australian writers and artists, the first issue of "Ink," an annual sponsored by the Society of Women Writers of N.S.W., and edited by Constance Robertson, will make its appearance on November 30. The proceeds of "Ink," which will be sold for 1s, comprising 128 pages of illustrations and interesting reading matter, will be devoted to the Women Writers' Friendly Society.

The two-color cover is original, and the 32 artists who are represented include J. C. Bancks, Tom Glover, Ted Scorfield, Unk White, Jack Quayle, May Gibbs, Margaret Preston, Thea Proctor, Betty and Esther Patterson, R. W. Coulter, Vic. Cowdroy, Mahdi McCrae, Will Mahony, Cyril Samuels, Sid Nicholls, Harry Julius, Aria and Frith. The 50 writers include M. Barnard Eldershaw, Vella Ereole, L. W. Lower, Harold Mercer, A. G. Stephens, Mary Gilmore, Dulcie Deamer, Fixie O'Harris, Gladys Owen, Ethel Turner, Ruth Bedford, Amy Mack, Myra Morris, Elliott Napier, W. J. Rock, Mary Marlowe, and Jessie Urquhart.

TO-MORROW'S DIARY

SIXTY YEARS ON

1925 - 1985
The Society of
Women Writers
(Aust.)
NSW Branch
Diamond Jubilee
Anthology



The Society of Women Writers NSW Inc.

Connect with us on
Facebook
and
LinkedIn

Correspondence:
Secretary
Society of Women Writers NSW Inc.
GPO Box 1388
Sydney NSW 2001

Email: womenwritersnsw@gmail.com
Website: www.womenwritersnsw.org