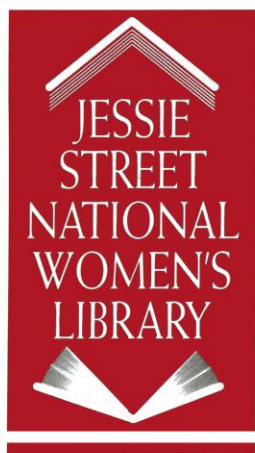


# NEWSLETTER

JESSIE STREET NATIONAL WOMEN'S LIBRARY



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## OUR ANNUAL FUNDRAISING LUNCHEON

An atmosphere of expectancy rippled through the Strangers' Dining Room at Parliament House – guests mingling and exchanging greetings, renewing old friendships and forming new ones. They gathered to share a meal, listen to a stimulating talk, and to celebrate and support the Library.

On Monday 17 September, 308 guests attended the Library's 13th Annual Fundraising Luncheon. Marie Muir, Vice-Chair of the Board, commenced the event by acknowledging the traditional owners, welcoming guests and acknowledging our co-hosts, the Hon. Penny Sharpe MLC and Hon. Robyn Parker MLC.



Jozefa Sobski, Chair of the Board, introduced our guest speaker, Professor Elizabeth Webby, recently retired as Professor of Australian Literature at Sydney University. The theme she chose was 'What were women reading in the 1890s?', a subject she researched extensively for her PhD on the literary culture of Australia and of particular interest to the audience of readers.

Professor Webby focused in particular on two women's reading groups, one in Sydney and one in Hobart. In a brief overview of the literary culture of the early years in Australia's settlement, Professor Webby said that books were scarce and valuable. Simeon Lord, in an advertisement in the *Sydney Gazette*, requested the return of his copy of Clara's Reeve's popular romance, *The Old English Baron*. The following week came the whimsical reply, 'The Old English Baron ... returned to his quarters on Monday; and we understand his presence was admitted as an apology for his absconding without leave of absence.' However, there was little evidence from the newspapers about women's reading.

Novels were considered lowbrow, with the exception of those of Sir Walter Scott, and the works of Shakespeare and Byron were also not considered suitable reading for women.

Rural dwellers were not so fortunate. Professor Webby spoke of a lack of books when she moved to the country as a child in 1948. She enjoyed the stories of Enid Blyton, but in a copy she found of *Treasure Island* the final pages were missing! In Miles Franklin's novel *My Brilliant Career* (1901), the heroine discovers delight in English novelists such as Marie Corelli and George Du Maurier, and Australian male poets Adam Lindsay Gordon, Henry Kendall, Banjo Patterson and Henry Lawson. Professor Webby's research indicates that most of the authors mentioned in the book were read and discussed by Australian women in the 1890s.

By the 1880s and 1890s reading groups became gender segregated. Professor Webby spoke of the personalities in the two reading groups. Lady Teresa Hamilton established the Nil Desperandum Literary Society in Hobart, which met regularly at Government House, the members taking turns at presenting papers. In 1892, when the Hamiltons returned to England, it was renamed the Hamilton Literary Society, and still meets to this day. The minute books show that women did not shy from difficult material, as for example, Robert Buchanan's novel *The Shadow of the Sword*. The minutes record that there was much discussion and that the debate on this 'protest against war' concluded that 'war was a necessary evil'.

Although most papers read were on English authors, in 1889 the group discussed Ibsen's *A Doll's House* and the 1890s strike involving transport workers,

## JSNWL FUNCTIONS

### Lunch-Hour Talks

**Venue:** The Lady Mayoress' Rooms, Sydney Town Hall, George St.

**Date and Time:** Third Thursday in the month from 12 noon to 1:30 pm.

**Entry:** \$15 (members) \$20 (non-members), sandwich lunch included.

For catering purposes, please let us know you are coming.

**To Book:** Phone (02) 9265 9486 or email [info@nationalwomenslibrary.org.au](mailto:info@nationalwomenslibrary.org.au)

## CHRISTMAS CLOSURE

The Library will be closed from Friday 14 December 2007  
to Friday 8 January 2008.

It will reopen on Monday 11 January.

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miners and shearers prompted a lively debate on strikes and unionism. Mrs Morton's paper on Kathleen Mannington Caffyn's *The Yellow Aster* (1894) was received with little enthusiasm, the minute taker protesting about having to 'wade through so much muck'.

In contrast, The Women's Literary Society in Sydney, established in 1890 with Lady Carrington as its patron, was a more radical group. Meetings were held in the evenings in rented rooms in the city. There was limited interest in Australian writing. Papers given were mainly on classic English authors such as George Eliot, Thackeray and Elizabeth Barrett Browning. Topics debated included 'The Probable Influence of Women's Suffrage on Politics' and 'Is Cheap Literature a Bane or a Blessing?'

From Professor Webby's research, it appears that the reading material of the two groups stimulated women's awareness of social issues and engaged them in some animated discussions.

Lyn Eggins thanked Professor Webby for her entertaining and illuminating talk on women's literary discussions in the drawing rooms of the 1890s, and presented her with a memento from the Library.

Beverley Sodbinow, delivered the Librarian's report. She emphasised that every one of the 10,000 books in our collection is there because of generous donations. Many of the books in the research collection are now out of print and unavailable in other libraries, and some are irreplaceable. Beverley also referred to the growing amount of archival material held by the Library – over 200 archive collections, mainly documenting second wave feminism and the influence of the women's movement in Australian women's lives. In conclusion, she acknowledged the support of those present and the hard work of volunteers, enabling the Library 'to keep women's words, women's works alive and powerful'.

This year students and teachers from eight high schools attended--Mosman Girls High School, Mountview High School, Northholm Grammar, Our Lady of Mercy College Parramatta, Queenwood School for Girls, Sydney Girls HS, Wenona and Willoughby Girls HS. Dr Jan Roberts generously donated to each school a hardcover copy of *Maybanke: A Woman's Voice*, which she edited with Beverley Kingston. Marie acknowledged Beryl Daly's generous bequest to the library, a much appreciated boost to stretched funds and then called on students from six of the schools to draw the raffle prizes. One of

## RAFFLE WINNERS

1st Prize Leone Huntsman  
Ticket 1259 (Painting by Sue Meredith, valued at \$900 and donated by the artist)

2nd Prize Marlene Smith  
Ticket 1851 (One dozen bottles of Elysium wine, donated by Jozefa Sobski)

3rd Prize Judy Harrington  
Ticket 1954 (David Jones gift card for \$200, donated by Penelope Street)

4th Prize Sylvia Kinder  
Ticket 1689 (Book voucher valued at \$30 donated by The Feminist Book Shop, Lilyfield)

The 5th to 10th prizes consisted each of two bottles of wine donated by the NSW Teachers Federation)

5th Prize Jan Tamba Ticket 1489

6th Prize Bronwen Morgan Ticket 0788

7th Prize Belinda Jenkins Ticket 2368

8th Prize Joan Graham Ticket 2178

9th Prize Jan Roberts Ticket 1763

10th Prize Helen Westwood Ticket 2168

11th Prize Jill Kitson

Ticket 2052 (Chocolates donated by Deirdre Mason)

the prizes, donated by the New South Wales Teachers' Federation, was a dozen specially labelled bottles of wine produced by the students of Mountview High School in the Hunter Valley.

Heartfelt thanks to everyone who helped to make the day a resounding success – the seamless service of the dining room staff, Marie Muir our MC, the Luncheon Committee, and all the volunteers behind the scenes and on the day – whose diligent efforts raised over \$12,000 to keep the Library running. Our special thanks to Nik Trevallyn-Jones for taking photographs and to Jan Wood who once again captured the event on video.

Numerous guests commented on how much they enjoyed the day, and look forward to enjoying the convivial atmosphere of our annual fundraiser again next year.

## LIBRARY NEWS

### Visit from UTS Informatics Students

On Wednesday 3rd October, six UTS Social Informatics students and their tutor, Nicola Parker, visited the Library. They were looking at issues of representation in museums/archives and how the different sectors of the community are represented in displays, archives and library collections. We supplied them with written information about the Library and its establishment, together with a copy of the collection policy and other publicity material. Marie Muir discussed Jessie Street and her passion for Aboriginal women's and peace issues and Isobel Dewar talked about cataloguing and the Library cataloguing computer system. Beverley Sodbinow showed examples of the archives which demonstrate ways in which women's history is undervalued and often ignored. The students were very interested in the Library and its collections and asked a great number of questions.

### Storage Space

For some time we have been trying to find extra space to accommodate books awaiting accessioning, books for sale, merchandise, stocks of brochures etc. Ray Dehon, the manager at the Ultimo Community Centre has now made a small storeroom adjacent to the Library available for our use. This has been cleaned out and the Library has bought the necessary shelving, which has been installed. Restricted archives, which cannot be accessed for some years, have already been put there.

We are very grateful for use of this room. It means that we are not so pressed for space to accommodate our books, periodicals and archives within the Library itself.

## New Volunteers

### Book Repairs

We have a new volunteer in member Val Skinner who has offered to repair paperback books for us. Over many years Val did book repairs for the Campbelltown.. She has now moved to Coonabarabran, a country town in NSW. Her daughter, Jann, will take books with her mother when she visits her mother and bring back those Val has repaired. Val is making a very valuable contribution to the Library. We can now get back on the shelf books that have been awaiting repairs--in some instances, for years!

### Collecting for the Biographies File

Judith Larter has been a member since 2002. Judith lives in Sadliers Crossing near Ipswich in Queensland and recently

## WISH LIST

### Adding to Our Virginia Woolf Collection

Although our Virginia Woolf collection is very comprehensive, it nevertheless lacks the following books. These, however, are held in stock at the Feminist Bookshop. They would make marvellous Christmas presents for the Library, or for family or friends.

Any members who would like to present the Library with a copy should contact Gail Hewison at The Feminist Bookshop on 9810 2666.

- Briggs, Julia *Virginia Woolf: An Inner Life* (\$28.95)  
Caughie, Pamela *Virginia Woolf and Post Modernism* (\$37.35)  
Light, Alison *Mrs Woolf and the Servants* (\$51.95)  
Snaith, Anna *Virginia Woolf : Public Private Negotiations* (\$47.00)  
Woolf, Virginia *Memoirs of a Novelist* (\$24.95)  
Woolf, Virginia *Carlyle's House and Other Sketches* (\$18.95)

### Response to our May Wish List

The May 2007 newsletter had a wish list of books about women artists. We were very pleased to hear from Jann Skinner, our honorary auditor, who is donating Meg Stewart's *Margaret Olley: Far from a Still Life* and volunteer Margot Simington who is donating Jan Marsh's *Pre-Raphaelite Women Artists*. We thank Jann and Margot for their generosity.

became a volunteer for the Library. She is sending us clippings from the *Courier Mail* for inclusion in our file of biographies of Australian women. This will help make the collection more truly national in character.

Members who live in other states and may like to help in a similar way, should contact the Library for further information.

### Special Donations

Sister P.L. Rhatigan has made a very welcome donation to the Library. This is a copy of a DVD celebrating the 100th birthday of the Sisters of St John of God in Western Australia who cared for Aboriginal women and children. Julie James Bailey, who was involved in producing the DVD, gave the August lunch-hour talk on her work (see page 7).

The Helen Leonard Fund has given a further \$4990 to the Library via the National Foundation of Australian Women. This is to enable us to complete the archiving of Helen's papers. Bridget and McKern and I are both working on these.



## ARCHIVES NEWS

### Visitors

Dr Alison Bartlett, Director of the Centre of Women's Studies, English Communication & Cultural Studies at the University of Western Australia, who visited the Library earlier this year paid a second visit to the Library in late October. She came to access our archives on the 1983 Pine Gap Peace Camp for research she is carrying out.

### Australian Feminist Studies Conference

On Friday 26 October I attended a conference at Macquarie University entitled *Making Feminist Histories of the Seventies: An Australian Feminist Studies Symposium*. Speakers included Kathy Drayton in conversation with Maree Delofski, Megan Le Masurier, Ann Vickery, and Johanna Petheentupa talking about unity for Aboriginal women. Michelle Arrow spoke about the song that changed her life Helen Reddy's *I am Woman* in a talk called 'Popular Culture and 70s Feminism'.

After the conference, Helen Reddy launched the Seventies issue of *Australian Feminist Studies*. Everyone then drank Helen's health and celebrated her birthday, slightly late, with a birthday cake. Helen, a member of the JSNWL, autographed a copy of the journal for the Library.

*Beverley Sodbinow, Archivist*

## CHANGED VENUE FOR OUR 2008 LUNCH-HOUR TALKS

The Town Hall, where we have held our lunch-hour talks in the Lady Mayoress' Rooms since February 1999, will be undergoing extensive renovations throughout 2008. We have therefore had to move the Lunch-hour Talks to a new venue. From February 2008, these will be held in the Ultimo Community Centre, where the Library itself is located.

**Venue: Seminar Room 1 on Level 1 of the Community Centre (cnr Harris Street and William Henry Street) Entry via Bulwara Road. Take the lift or the stairs to Level 1.**

We wish to thank all Council staff, both at Town Hall and at the Community Centre, who helped us in our efforts to find the best possible venue for the 2008 talks.

## CANBERRA NEWS

### SEPTEMBER LUNCH-HOUR TALK

On 13 September Geoff McPherson, president of the Canberra Refugee Support provided a valuable insight into the nature of Canberra Refugee Support as an organisation and the situation of refugees in the ACT. The Canberra Refugee Support is a community-based, not-for-profit organisation with no political or other affiliations. All its members work on a part-time basis in a voluntary capacity and are involved with a wide range of refugee stakeholders. Geoff said the focus of the organisation is to provide practical support to refugees seeking to settle in Canberra and also to provide advice on refugee issues to policy-makers. He described its most important work as providing security, stability and friendship to refugees with the clear objective of helping both refugees and asylum seekers to become independent as soon as possible. About 120 refugees and asylum seekers come to Canberra annually. In the past five financial years 215 have come from the Sudan and 62 from Sierra Leone.

An engaged audience was able to get a clear understanding of the important humanitarian work which Geoff's organisation undertakes in assisting often highly traumatised people, including women and children, re-establish their lives in new surroundings.

### NOVEMBER LUNCH-HOUR TALK

On Thursday 1 November Vicki Cullen told of her personal journey as an ordained Anglican priest. Vicki, who is the Rector of Gunning, is an engaging speaker and she spoke passionately about her life in the church and the barriers she confronted along the way before finally being ordained in 1992. Her story was particularly topical given the publicity surrounding the current debate within the Anglican church concerning the prospect of women bishops within that faith. In describing the barriers she encountered to women being ordained as priests, Vicki said there were two strands of opposition. Firstly, from Evangelicals, who do not believe a woman should ever be head over a man and secondly, those who maintain that, as Christ was a man, no woman could represent him at the altar.

Despite confronting many hurdles, Vicki made clear that she loved her chosen vocation--visiting her parishioners, teaching and especially celebrating Eucharist and sharing her faith with others. Although the audience numbers were disappointingly small, those present enjoyed a lively discussion following Vicki's formal presentation.

*September and November write-ups by Janet Tomi. Canberra Talks Convenor*

## VOLUNTEER NEWS

### NEWSLETTER MAILOUT: WORK AND PLEASURE

Sixteen volunteers gathered in the library on Monday 30 July to assist with the July newsletter mailout. By 11 o'clock, a friendly conversational buzz accompanied fingers folding and flattening fat pages to Post Office specifications. By 12.30 the job was complete and we arranged ourselves around the table laden with an assortment of sandwiches, fruit and refreshments. Since we hadn't all met previously, Christine called on each member to introduce themselves and outline their roles. When it was Shirley's turn, a founding member in charge of public relations who works tirelessly for the library, she stated that she was having an easy day, just answering questions. Indeed, we agreed, it should be an easy day since she had already written, compiled and published the newsletter!

An unexpected visitor was the electrician, checking on the air-conditioning with his head mostly out of view in the ceiling. He thanked us for the invitation to join us, but declined.

Everyone enjoyed themselves, and thanks to Christine for organising the event and to the volunteers who produced scrumptious homemade slice and cake.

*Kris Clarke, Assistant Editor*

### CANBERRA TALKS IN 2008

#### DATES FOR YOUR DIARY

**March**, Thursday 27  
**May**, Thursday 29  
**August**, Thursday 28  
**October**, Thursday 30

The March function will be a panel discussion, chaired by Jozefa Sobski, Chair of JSNWL Board.



## JUNE LUNCH-HOUR TALK

**SPEAKER: DIANE YOUNG**

***Publishing: A Business and a Passion***

*Diane Young, a Director at Federation Press, presented an insider's view of niche publishing for the specialised segment of the legal market. Having started the business in 1988, Diane has built up the list of titles and now employs a team of 11 staff. Her presentation was informal, based around questions from the audience, drawing on insights gathered from her years of experience in deciding what will and what won't sell in legal publishing. Federation Press is the publisher of the revised autobiography of Jessie Street by Lenore Coltheart.*

First, let me give you a quick history about Federation Press. In 1988 myself and two colleagues were working for the Law Book Company, a large multinational, now International Thomsons. When we were taken over, one of my now business partners said, 'I think we should start our own publishing business.' I said, 'Sure!' But I had no idea how we were going to do this.

The business started from humble beginnings. We had an office in Annandale, and there were three of us. Our expertise was in legal publishing, books primarily for legal practitioners, judge and courts. We knew the authors and we'd been in the game for a while. Many of the academics we already knew were prepared to give us a go. It was risky for them because they weren't sure whether we were going to last.

We have about 300 books in our list now. When people come to us with an unsolicited manuscript, we can assess it quite quickly looking at its merit in terms of publishing, its scholarship and the market. A young person starting their law degree or business degree is likely to be prescribed one of our books. Often the books end up in reference lists and that means libraries or well-meaning parents will buy them. In years gone by, it was not uncommon for every student in the class to buy a copy, but now three or four students will pool their resources to buy a copy of the required texts.

We have always tried to keep prices as low as possible, working on the premise that we'd rather sell more. Our print runs are short as in the case of publishing, for example, a series on the lives of Australia's Chief Justices. We have funding to do these books. They're beautifully done, well researched and good reading because some of these guys were quite interesting characters. [Diane holds up a book.] This is Sir James Dowling, the second Chief Justice of NSW. This hardcover with dust jacket

and pictures is priced at \$49.50. The direct price, if you come to Federation Press, would be \$45.00. The run on this would only be 1500 copies.

Printing economically on a digital press cuts off at about 500 copies. Joanna Penglase came to us recently. Her publisher didn't want to reprint a book she'd written called Orphans of the Living which tells the story of a woman in care as a child in foster homes. We don't publish something unless everyone agrees to it. Then we decide how many copies we really need and how many people are going to buy it. I suggested we get a quote for digital printing of 300. We'll put some of the money in and hopefully Joanna will put in some money and we'll pay her back as the book sells. When you're a small publisher, you have the flexibility to do all that.

**Question:** I've self-published four books and done all the marketing, mail orders and everything. They're historical books – but I my husband is now saying, 'No more!' So I have to decide whether to get a publisher or just pull out of the business altogether.

**Diane:** In 2006 Bob Carr put together a fund for people to be able to publish histories. For example, you would apply for funding, receive it, and whatever money you had left after writing would be used to publish the book. We do a lot of that sort of publishing. History is one of the undervalued areas and the market seems to be very small. Generally speaking, people go to a library for the book and won't often buy it. But digital publishing could assist that.

**Question:** Did you publish the Chief Justices Series in hardcover because you had a grant?

**Diane:** I think we considered that the Chief Justices Series would, in time, become classics. The grant enabled us to publish those books in hardcover with dust jackets. Generally speaking we would go to paperback, but we do hard covers of legal works that judges and practitioners use, because that's what they prefer.

We do a lot of direct marketing. We don't just rely on booksellers who'd much rather promote the latest Bryce Courtney or Harry Potter. Some years ago I did a secondary school mailing and put in a lot of what I'd call the softer law books. I found to my amazement that books on refugees and immigration, for example, sold very well in secondary schools.

**Question:** What was the first book you published and how many did you sell – and do you still have the original copy?

**Diane:** The first book we published was a business law book for students. And yes, we still have the original copy. We sold a truckload of them because there wasn't much competition. My recollection was that we photocopied the cheque we received and still have a copy of it!

**Question:** As a student in editing and publishing, I'm delighted to hear your story because I was getting the impression from the lectures that publishers won't even look at manuscripts and just give them out to agents. There didn't seem to be any sort of personal approach. I wonder if you edit in-house or do you outsource?

**Diane:** In the general publishing world, outsourcing well might be the case. I imagine there'd be a huge number of unsolicited manuscripts going to the trade houses. From our perspective, however, we're rigorous in our editorial process. One of my business partners is the best legal editor in the country. She will not let anything go out that she's not happy with. If the editor gets halfway through and says that this is not how it's supposed to be, we reshape the whole thing, move the chapters around and do the whole catastrophe. We do this in-house, a lot of it online.

**Question:** Do you intend to stay with law books or are you going to branch into other things?

**Diane:** We probably will stay with the professional books. I don't know how the big publishers of novels make any money. When you go into a bookshop and see a vast array of books, you don't notice who's published it. You often find that there's not an older title on the shelf and you have to ask the bookseller to order it. It will still be in print somewhere, but they don't stock it – books have a very short shelf life.

**Diane:** (in answer to a comment about the practice of books being sold off at reduced prices and the author receiving only 10-15%) I quite understand the predicament. As a publisher what we do is fund the book, then sell it to a bookshop and wait for 60 to 120 days until the bookshop decides, after selling it, to pay us. If they don't sell it and don't want to keep it on the shelf, they can send it back to the publisher for credit, so they don't have to part with any money, and the cycle goes on. The window to sell new titles is quite tight in terms of time and most people don't realise that. It's one of the reasons we at Federation Press have a direct price. If people buy direct from us we give a little

*continued on page 10*

## JULY LUNCH-HOUR TALK

**SPEAKER: ELINOR WROBEL**

*Curator to Saints and Sinners*



*On Thursday 19 July, Elinor spoke about the exhibitions she had curated for composer Percy Grainger, the John Passmore Art Museum she and her husband have set up to house that artist's paintings and the Sydney Hospital Museum, which she established. Elinor applied the question 'who are saints and who are sinners?' to the lives and reputations of Percy Grainger, Rose, his mother, Ella his wife and to John Passmore. Elinor's talk was both interesting and unusual.*

I'm going to talk today about my life as a curator of saints and sinners. Who are the saints and sinners that I have acted as a conservator and curator for since 1970?

1933 was a fateful year. Percy Grainger and his wife sailed to Australia for a concert tour, and also in order to found the Grainger Museum at his own expense at the University of Melbourne. 1933 was also the year John Passmore, that eccentric genius, sailed out of Sydney Harbour, abandoning his wife, his young son and all emotional and domestic responsibility forever. He returned to Australia in 1951 to become the seminal force in Australian abstract painting. Grainger and Passmore never met.

I was born in 1933, and I became a link between Grainger, Australia's most controversial pianist, composer, generous, multi-talented and innovative genius, and Passmore, the eccentric, egocentric, mystical, controversial and reclusive genius. The one similarity between them was that either they're venerated as saints or they're damned as sinners.

1982 was the centenary of Grainger's birth and in late 1981 I was asked by the Grainger Museum to do an exhibition to celebrate this. From January 1982 until 1999, I researched thematic exhibition catalogues relating to every area of the diverse collections of the Grainger Museum. [Elinor read a list of the 16 Grainger exhibitions she had curated.] As a consultant curator of the Museum, I covered every area of this unique and diverse collection, to demonstrate not only the breadth of the Grainger Museum's collections, and the impeccable provenances, but also the multi-faceted genius and personality of the man, his mother and his wife.

In some exhibitions I focused on particular aspects and periods of his development. In the *Three Faces of Percy Grainger* at the Performing Arts Museum in 1985 in Melbourne, I was allowed to

examine the intimate sexuality of Grainger. I've always endeavoured to portray Grainger with empathy and my perception that a creative genius is endowed with very acute powers of observation, perception and imagination. However, after re-reading extracts of the press critiques of the exhibition, I wondered if my guidelines of empathy and personal perception had succeeded in visually portraying Grainger. Some journalists, art critics and even some Grainger authorities have portrayed Grainger as 'mad' or a 'sinner' to engage the public's attention. Humphrey McQueen criticised a portrait of the 20-year-old Percy Grainger by Rupert Bunny, saying 'who, on looking at that image alone would pick him for a flagellant?' McQueen, by insinuation, was really saying, 'who, by looking at that picture alone, would pick him as a sinner?'

Grainger did engage in flagellation, either self-inflicted or in consent with women he passionately loved--first his sweetheart, the Danish pianist Karen Holtén, and then his wife Ella Viola Stroem-Grainger. This is well documented in restricted access material in the Grainger Museum. In a letter dated July 1956 Grainger says 'One of my greatest ... worries is that I may die without the full evilness of my sex-feelings being known to the world.' In 1985, 29 years after that letter was written, at the Performing Arts Museum in Melbourne, I made his sex life public. Percy married Ella in 1928. Although myth has it she was a sexual innocent or saint, my research showed that she was an extremely beautiful, sophisticated woman who simultaneously charmed and manipulated, sexually and otherwise, three diverse lovers. But should Ella be damned as a sinner? Judged by today's standards, she exemplified the contemporary late-20th century woman.

Perhaps the most maligned member of Grainger's family was his mother, Rose. The bond between Rose and Percy was stronger than ordinary mother love. She was his first music teacher, his friend, mentor, provider, adviser, confidant and secretary, publicist and manager. It was the complexity of this love that drove Rose to suicide in an effort to quell the insidious and unfounded rumours of an incestuous relationship between them. But Rose Grainger had created a genius.

My husband, Fred and I had been seriously collecting Australian art from 1960. During the early 1970s, we had both observed a person unknown to us, John Passmore, at art auctions, who was

oblivious to everything except the paintings. I had a premonition that if I spoke to this stranger, my life would change forever. When he did finally come to our home, unannounced, to view a painting, my life did change forever.

Passmore spent long hours viewing my Sydney exhibitions and was impressed by my portrayal of the complex Grainger. Our friendship deepened. Early in the 1980s, with his health failing, he told me he intended to destroy all his paintings. I persuaded him to consent to a retrospective at the Art Gallery of NSW and to allow me to record his memoirs on tape. His response was, 'I didn't realise how passionate you were about my art. From now on they're going to be your responsibility!' Before he died in 1984, he made a will giving me copyright of his intellectual property; formed the Passmore trust with me as the sole trustee; and allowed me to record his memoirs. In 2003 my husband and I established the John Passmore Museum in an 1874 heritage building in Woolloomooloo.

I want now to talk about the founding of the Sydney Hospital Museum. In 2000 I attended a meeting of the Graduate Nurses' Association, at which I learned that an application had been made for a 2001 Federation Grant to establish a museum at Sydney Hospital. I desperately wanted to be the one chosen to do this for the Hospital, my alma-mater. A museum was first mooted in the 1890s, again after WWI and again in the 1960s when it was shelved. However, I fought for the idea and finally the area Health Service provided six month's salary and I commenced work in January 2001.

The museum has become an obsession with me. I want to preserve the record of our first hospital, established here in 1788 under appalling conditions. During the late 20th century it was continuously downgraded and threatened with closure and demolition. I have now established a museum which recounts the history not only of the nursing staff, but also of the medical staff, related professions, lay staff, and patients. It is a vast repository of archives and objects--a resource and study centre for scholars and historians. For over 100 years, many held a dream for a Sydney Hospital museum. I have made it a reality.

*Transcription by Helen Ruby  
Abbreviated version by Shirley Jones*

## AUGUST LUNCH-HOUR TALK

**SPEAKER: JULIE JAMES BAILEY**

### ***Making Videos in Aboriginal Communities***

On 16 August 2007, Julie James Bailey gave a presentation of a selection of videos she had made or helped to make. These gave great insights into the work she has been doing with Aboriginal communities since she retired, borne out by some of the conclusions she has come to about supplying the needs of these peoples. Here are some extracts from her videos and notes from her talk.

The question of remote Aboriginal communities is in the media every day. Working over the last ten years in these communities I have encountered many of the issues we are all grappling with. As a retired film-maker, I was keen to see how I can help, and today I want to share with you some thoughts drawing on my personal journey.

Here is my six-minute promotional film explaining to communities what I do.

*Video extract (Julie narrating) Aboriginal people today are still suffering from discrimination, paternalism, and inequality. 'What can I do about it?' was the question I asked myself when I retired. I thought that maybe I could help Aboriginal people make videos to tell their own stories. So I bought a 4-wheel drive truck which is outfitted to serve as a post-production studio to teach film-making to Aboriginal communities[so] they can shoot their own videos, edit them and choose what they want to say.*

[Julie then indicated on a map of Australia areas where she has worked – including Arnhemland, the Central Desert, the Kimberley, and Ravenshoe on the Atherton Tableland in Queensland.]

The next extract is from a video made by students at the University of Notre Dame's Broome campus promoting the campus's Pathways Education course. Aboriginal Teaching Aids in remote communities can continue to work in their schools while progressing through certificate qualifications to a diploma and finally a BA in education. This extract shows Yakanarra Independent Community Aboriginal School, southwest of Fitzroy Crossing in WA.

*Video (Co-ordinator speaking) These films are all run by an independent council of Aboriginal people representing school communities and employing qualified Aboriginal teachers, several from Yakanarra currently studying through Notre Dame. Kids see their own family doing a great job as role models.*

*(Principal speaking) The Notre Dame course is successful in Yakanarra because it's primarily studied on site. We provide tutors for at least two hours*

*every day. The school has a two-way learning policy to prepare young Yakanarra people for running their own community, and to help promote Aboriginal language and culture.*

The two-way learning policy means learning both their own language and English. The local language in Yakanarra is Walmajarri. However, there no newspapers or library books to support this or any other Aboriginal language. Apparently it is easier to become literate in your own language than in a second, so maintaining a local language and learning English are both important. Most teachers working in the communities do not have ESL (English as a second language) training. Noel Pearson and members of the Catholic education system now support sending children away for high school education so that they can learn to survive in a non-Aboriginal culture and have English-language support.

In 2005 I made a video with the rangers in the Mulan community, 40 km from Balgo on the WA/NT border. Called Mapping Mulan, it shows the community identifying places of significance to them on a large canvas map of Lake Gregory. Kim Mahood led the project. Her father was manager on Tanami Downs, but she left there when she was 18 and returned about 20 years later to reinvestigate her association with the land. She wrote a fascinating book, *Craft for a Dry Lake*. In this extract Jim Bowler, who discovered Mungo Man, explains the archeological significance of the Lake Gregory which, unlike Mungo, has water, and which is probably just as important archeologically. The video emphasises the great divide between white fellas and black fellas.

*Video extract (Jim speaking to an Aboriginal group) We can read the stories of the lake from the shells. These are very young shells and are the last sign of the water that came up in the 1982 floods. Under the 1982 mud there are older shells from the older lake. You have your important stories – we white fellas come to this land – we learn from you and dare we try to tell you what is the story of the lake?*

I returned to Mulan in 2006 and once again experienced this great divide. CALM (WA Conservation and Land Management) was running a seminar on Lake Gregory for the local Aborigines. The CALM white fellas from Perth occupied almost three whole days with power-point presentations, only one member of the team making concession



to English not being the first language. They were trying to persuade the local people to get the horses and cattle off the land in order to bring back the original animals and insects. A comment by an Elder woman summed it up 'What do you mean? Bring back pussy cat--that's good tucker!'

This year for the centenary celebrations for the Sisters of St John of God in the Kimberley I interviewed 11 women who had been in the Holy Child Orphanage run by the Sisters in Broome from 1938 to 1962.

*Video extract (Yvonne Cox speaking) I'm glad I learned from the nuns. I now know how to look after my children. I reared my children up myself and now my children know how to look after their children through me. Life in the orphanage was good.*

I also interviewed various Catholic Sisters who came from Ireland, Tasmania, Melbourne and so on for the centenary--remarkable women. They all said 'It's the Aboriginal people we remember. We always felt so warmly welcomed and accepted when we worked in their communities. It was not us personally but all the Sisters who had been before us.' I went back to three communities with the Sisters and saw grandmothers kissing and hugging them, some of whom were tiny children when the Sisters were working there. I decided that the important elements here were respect, trust, love and continuity.

I've tried to describe to you my journey over ten years. I want to conclude by sharing with you some answers I have tentatively come up with to my question 'What can be done?' Every community has a different history and different languages, so there is no one answer.

There has been a lot of political and media comment on the Aboriginal way of life in remote communities. However, I want to concentrate on the white people there. No-one talks about the amount of money that goes into white fellas pockets. There are some excellent people there, but there's a lot of corruption and mismanagement. We all know about problems in the past with religious missionaries, but the centenary project gave me a totally different perspective on the role of the Sisters of St John of God. Today they are the first to admit their past faults and now they listen to the

*continued on page 10*

## INTERACTION WITH THE COMMUNITY

### WOMEN IN SCIENCE PANEL DISCUSSION

#### Ultimo Branch Library and JSNWL Joint Event

On Saturday 25 August, the Library proudly co-hosted its first Ultimo Science week event with the City of Sydney's Ultimo Library – a panel discussion on 'Women in Science' held in the Ultimo Branch Library.

Shirley Jones gave an overview of women scientists and introduced panelists Dr Naomi McClure-Griffiths, astrophysicist, Dr Margot Kearns, science and nursing educator, and Arhontoula Arendsen, pharmaceutical drugs marketer. The panel outlined how they climbed the career ladder in their respective fields. Naomi won the distinguished prize for Physical Scientist of the Year in 2006, and, at CSIRO, is researching the distribution of hydrogen gas and the galaxy. Margot studied medical biochemistry, worked for the Children's Medical Research Institute and is now Dean of the School of Nursing at the University of Notre Dame. Arhontoula started out in a hospital pharmacy and pursued her interest in medical services. She progressed to a more challenging and financially rewarding role in pharmaceutical marketing.

Questioned about their inspiration, the panelists revealed their shared early interest in, curiosity about, and passion

#### MONETARY DONATIONS

Patricia Cooper  
Bonney Djuric  
Kathy McClellan  
Eve Stenning  
Elizabeth Tanner

#### Special Donations

The **Helen Leonard Fund** has given a further \$4990 to the Library via the National Foundation of Australian Women. This is to enable us to complete the archiving of Helen's papers.

**Bridget McKern**, who was guest speaker at the October lunch-hour talk, sold 10 copies of her book *Living the Journey: Everyday Heroes Tell their Story* at the function. We thank Bridget for donating the Library \$100 from the proceeds.



*L to r: Naomi McClure-Griffiths,  
Margot Kearns and Arhontoula Arendsen*

for science, nurtured by dedicated teachers in their school years. Naomi commented that 50% of PhD students are now women. The issue of women's lower salaries was raised. The discrepancy was attributed to women being less skilful negotiators and also partly to secrecy surrounding professional salaries in the commercial areas.

In response to the issue of discrimination, members of the audience related instances and the panel added theirs. Margot spoke of a discouraging academic adviser, and a position refused due to pregnancy. With her family responsibilities, she relinquished her pursuit of molecular genetics and changed career direction. She believes that the full-time vs part-time dilemma can be resolved with a focus on results and outcomes.

Overall it seems that, despite women still taking the major responsibility for child rearing, women working in traditionally male-dominated fields are now finding it easier to build careers in science, and are limited only by their ambitions.

*Kris Clarke, Assistant Editor*

### BOOK LAUNCH

#### A JOINT JSNWL and UTS EVENT

Jessie Street National Women's Library is hosting a book launch in conjunction with the University of Technology Sydney (UTS) Library. *A World-Proof Life: Eleanor Dark, a Writer in her Times, 1901-1985* is a biography by Dr Marivic Wyndham, a lecturer in Latin American studies at UTS. The book will be launched by Professor Peter Read.

**Venue:** JSNWL, 523-525 Harris Street, Ultimo (directly opposite the Ian Thorpe Aquatic Centre)

**Date:** Thursday, 22 November

**Time:** 5 pm to 6.30 pm

**RSVP by Monday 19 November:**

**Email** Gabrielle.Gardiner@uts.edu.au  
**or ring 9514 3064**

Nicholas Brown of the *Australian Dictionary of Biography* writes: 'This eloquent and passionate biography resists familiar categories for Eleanor Dark, presenting her instead as a figure that questions the ways we understand the place of the writer, the feminist and the politically-engaged intellectual in a vital period of Australian history.'

Copies of the book are available for sale at the launch. It would make an excellent Christmas present.

## DONATIONS OF MATERIAL

We thank the following people and organisations who have generously donated material to the Library.

Margaret Bettison  
Julie Bishop  
Agnes Godfrey  
Harold Hunt  
Marris Holly  
Heidi Key  
Noelene Kyle  
Vicky Marquis  
Joan Patrick  
Alan Pert  
Sr Pat Rhatigan  
Marian Sawyer  
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### Special Donations

We thank the following for their special donations

**Belinda Mackay** for two photographs of Ann Outlaw, a very great friend of Jessie Street

**Waverley Council** for three photographs of Jessie Street

**Jane Pollard** for donating the shelving for the store room

**Jan Wood** for the video of the Parliamentary Luncheon

## NEWS OF MEMBERS

**Baiba Berzins**, who makes an in-kind donation to the Library by doing a professional evaluation of our collection every two years, has just published her new book, *Australia's Northern Secret: Tourism in the Northern Territory, 1920s to 1980s*. It looks at the history of tourism in the Northern Territory from the early years of the colony to the present day, focusing on the 1920s to the 1980s when tourism, once the province of adventurers, emerged to become one of the Territory's most significant industries.

Thinking of Christmas? This book would make an excellent present. You can get copies from Baiba herself or from specialist bookshops. For information contact Baiba on [baibapl@netspace.net.au](mailto:baibapl@netspace.net.au)

Volunteer **Barbara Henery** took part in the Macquarie University Singers choir at their concert on Saturday 27 October. The choir was celebrating its 40th anniversary, as was the university itself. Barbara has just finished writing the history of the choir, which is about to go to the publisher.

Board members, **Christine Lees and Kris Clarke**, on behalf of the Library, attended an art exhibition on 19 October at the Castle Hill Community Centre. 'The exhibition showed 130 paintings, the result of 10 years' work by local artist, Ivanka. The exhibition was also the venue for the launch of a book of the paintings.

The Library is hoping to be donated a copy of the book to add to its somewhat small collection of works on Australian women artists.

Congratulations to member **Juno Gemes**. Her exhibition *Proof*, portraits of Aboriginal people that she has spent over 30 years taking, is showing at the Museum of Sydney. The exhibition, commissioned by the National Portrait Gallery in 2003, was opened on November 5th by Linda Burney. The director of the National Portrait Gallery said that the much-acclaimed collection was 'a rare insight into key players in modern Aboriginal history'.

A warm welcome to our new members.

Beth Abraham  
Alexandra Cato  
Pamela Dingle  
Ann Holbrook  
Rosalind Hurrell  
Bernadette Kerrigan  
Barbara McGarity  
Noel Mills  
Ellen Myer  
Penelope Nelson  
Judy Newton  
Valda Rigg  
Hilary Vallance  
Kerry Vernon  
Professor Elizabeth Webby

## OBITUARY

### MARIE CAVANAGH (1925 - 2007)



Marie Cavanagh (nee Jacobs) was born in Sydney and went to school at South Hurstville Primary then Burwood Girls High where she did the Leaving Certificate. Marie won a scholarship to go to Sydney Teacher's College where she studied Home Economics and Needlework, graduating in 1945. She met Tom, her future husband, at a youth camp while still a student teacher and they married New Years Eve 1946.

Marie's first teaching position was at Randwick Girl's High and she went on to teach at Penshurst Girl's High, Heathcote High, Port Hacking, Beverley Hills and many others. While busy teaching she found the time to co-author a book on Food and Nutrition with two fellow teachers and friends, which was used as a textbook in schools. From an early age Marie was a great supporter of Public School education and supported DOGS- (Defence of Government Schools).

Marie had many interests. Always a great reader, she belonged to a Friday reading group. It was through this group that she joined Jessie Street National Women's Library in 1995 and became a very active volunteer. She loved embroidery and spent many happy years as a member of the Embroiderer's Guild NSW, becoming the Curator for the Guild Collection, a position she loved. She travelled to many parts of NSW giving talks on the collection.

She was a member with Tom of the Australian Field Geology Club and they went on many trips together and made many friends. They both loved bushwalking and one of their greatest adventures was going on the Inaugural Sydney to Newcastle Great Northern Walk in 1988. From this another walking group was formed, The Wombats, which Marie and Tom spent many relaxing hours with. They also walked 650 kms Sydney to Melbourne on the Federation Track Walk. She and Tom were also great music lovers and both belonged to music groups and clubs.

Marie led an extremely busy, active and productive life but still found time to travel around Australia and to many countries overseas with Tom. Photos Tom took on these trips often became the theme for an embroidery piece.

Marie is survived by Tom and her two children, Jill and Allan.

*Obituary supplied by Marie's daughter, Jill Burton*

All those at the Library who knew Marie were distressed and saddened to hear of her sudden death. She was a very active volunteer, reliable in all she did, liked and respected by those who worked with her. She was a great team member. Those of you who attended lunch-hour talks will remember her, often selling the raffle

tickets, sometimes taking on the vote of thanks to speakers, or filling in with other tasks when someone was away. Each year she made a delicious and hugely popular Christmas cake for our Christmas raffle, something everyone wanted to win! She is sadly missed by all of us. Ed

*From page 5*  
discount.

**Question:** Are there any guidelines in how you assess a manuscript?

**Diane:** It depends on the subject of the book. For example, in contract law, I could tell you immediately the three other competitors and their market share. I would also be able to ask the opinion of any number of academics or other professionals. My two partners are lawyers and they would read it, so each manuscript we receive is read thoroughly

*Transcription by Helen Ruby  
Abbreviated version by Kris Clarke*

*From page 7*

people, support them and respect their culture. Today's missionaries are young people who come in with no knowledge, no experience, no skills and want to do good. They have very little support and burn out and leave.

I believe there should be much more thought about training white people to work in these communities; how their professional organisations and bureaucracies can support them; the qualifications and resources they need; and a requirement to understand community development and the transfer of skills. Maybe we should be working with the Aboriginal community to set up courses and qualifications for white people who want to work with them, and have some sort of vetting system. Doctors going to work in foreign countries get introductory training in language and culture; white doctors and health workers can just come into a remote community understanding neither. How can we create the mutual respect, love and trust between white and black I witnessed when the Sisters returned to their communities? These are the issues I wanted to raise with you

*Transcription by Helen Ruby  
Abbreviated version by Margot Simington  
and Shirley Jones*

# OBITUARY

## LADY (VINCENT) FAIRFAX (1916-2007)

Nancy (later Lady (Vincent) Fairfax) was born in Surrey, England and educated at Beneden, a girls school chosen by the Queen for Princess Anne. Nancy was a good scholar, who loved English and read voraciously. On leaving school she worked as a volunteer for charities in London, and in 1935 spent six months in Freiburg, Germany, where she learned to speak the language fluently. In 1936 she worked voluntarily for Fairbridge Farm School which settled needy British children in overseas dominions. Nancy sailed with 28 Fairbridge children on the *Oronsay* to Western Australia. She travelled within Australia and New Zealand and it was here she met Vincent Fairfax, her future husband. They were married in London in 1939, arriving back in Australia on the day war was declared. Their four children were born in the 1940s.

The family settled in Double Bay. Vincent's presence on various prominent organisations such as the Commonwealth Press Union, the Royal Agricultural Society and the Bank of NSW, gave Nancy a public face and she gradually took on a busy public life. She was honorary editor of *Countrywomen Journal* and an energetic advocate for the needs and rights of young children and the value of early childhood education. She was a volunteer with the Red Cross and on the board of Rachel Forster Hospital. She worked with the Vincent Fairfax Family Foundation, a large philanthropic organisation and, as a lover of the arts, supported the Art Gallery of NSW, the Australian Ballet, the National Institute of Dramatic Art and joined Jessie Street National Women's Library in 1992 as a Life Member.

In 1974 she was made an Officer of the British Empire for her service to early childhood education, and in 2004 was made an honorary doctor of letters by the University of NSW for her distinguished service to the community. She is survived by her four children, 12 grandchildren and 13 great grandchildren.

*Abbreviated from an obituary in the Sydney Morning Herald, 13 July 2007*

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