

NEWSLETTER

To keep women's words, women's works, alive and powerful — Ursula LeGuin



ELSIE WALKS INTO HISTORY

On 28 May 2012, Clover Moore MP, Lord Mayor of Sydney, named a short path along the western boundary of Glebe Public School Sydney between Derwent Street and Glebe Point Road, Elsie Walk. It honours the establishment of Australia's first women's refuge. The events leading up to the founding of Elsie Women's Refuge are documented in Anne Summers' autobiography, *ducks on the pond* (1999), but another rich source of information is our Library. *Sydney Women's Liberation Newsletter*



Elsie Women's Refuge, established by squatting in an empty house owned by the Church of England, opened its doors on 16 March 1974. Photograph by Daniela Torsh

issues found in our serials collection contain much material of historical interest and significance: they chart the 1970s women's movement action and activities in minute, prosaic detail. These newsletters, read in conjunction with the feminist newspapers *Mejane* and *Mabel*, provide the raw material and fill out the memories for those who were present at so many critical events which shaped women's services, legislation and extensive women's programs leading to major social reforms.

Elsie Women's Refuge opened as emergency accommodation on 16 March 1974 at 73 Westmoreland Street, Glebe. A group of Sydney Women's Liberation members, led by Anne Summers and including Bessie Guthrie, broke into a vacant house in the Glebe Estate and the adjoining house, and declared them open as a refuge for women subjected to domestic violence. The impetus for this dramatic and courageous action was the many testimonies of women at a forum, Women against a Violent

Society, held on Sunday 10 March 1974 at the NSW Teachers' Federation auditorium then in Sussex Street, Sydney. There was very little crisis accommodation for women in Sydney and women often remained in violent homes and relationships, there being few or no alternatives. Police rarely intervened in what they called 'domestics' and there were no laws against domestic violence.

The Refuge struggled to survive and manage for a few months with a staff of volunteers, donations and local community and commercial support. The illegal occupation was addressed when the federal government bought the Westmoreland Street houses as part of the Glebe Housing Scheme. By November 1974, five full-time positions were being advertised for Elsie. Subsequently, refuges were opened across the Sydney metropolitan area and across the country in every state and territory. Elsie moved to more spacious premises in Derwent Street, Glebe in 1975.

However, its future and that of other refuges was uncertain following the dismissal of the Whitlam Labor government in 1975. Today, we do not consider these services and their work



Annie Bickford, Clover Moore, Dr Anne Summers, Margaret Power, Jozefa Sobski, Dr Sue Wills

for women and children as remarkable or unusual. They are part of the network of women's services funded and supported by government. In 1974, they did not exist. Feminists made the difference through selfless determined action responding to a need. A small walk in Glebe honours this action in perpetuity!

Jozefa Sobski

SYDNEY LUNCH HOUR TALKS — third Thursday of the month

16 August: Jude Conway
Brave women of East Timor

Not much is known about Timor-Leste women. Jude, who worked there before, during the 1999 independence referendum and after, helped in establishing the new nation. She published 13 women's oral histories in *Step by Step* (2010), the focus of her talk.

18 October: Lucy Perry

Ordinary miracle: Catherine Hamlin's work
Dr Catherine Hamlin AC, obstetrician/gynaecologist/surgeon, went to Ethiopia in 1959, and now, aged 88, has worked there 52 years. Lucy Perry, her spokesperson, tells of Catherine's work treating obstetric fistula patients at Addis Ababa Fistula Hospital and about her training of midwives.

15 November: Judy Turner

Grandparents and grandchildren

Judy Turner and her husband Geoff, mid-60s and married for 42 years, suddenly found they needed to take over care of their five year old granddaughter whom they'd met only once before. Drawing on her book, *Grand Love* (2011), Judy will discuss the challenges and rewards of bringing up the next generation.

Date/Venue/Time: 3rd Thursday of the month 12.00 - 1.30pm. Southern Function Room, 4th Floor, Town Hall House, 456 Kent Street Sydney. Cost: \$16 (members) \$22 (non-members) including light lunch. Pay at the door. Book by noon Monday before the talk. Ph (02) 9571 5359

Thursday 13 September 2012: Beverley Kingston — Feminism and fashion, Ultimo Community Centre. See page 3 for details.

Contents

- 1 Elsie walks into history
- 1 Lunch Hour Talks 2012 Sydney
- 2 Join us for our 2012 Luncheon
- 2 Film promotion of the Library
- 3 Women's Statement launch
- 3 Barbara Jefferis Award
- 3 History Week - Feminism and fashion
- 4 Lunch Hour Talk - Suzanne Baker
- 5 Lunch Hour Talk - Rosemary Arnold
- 6 Book Review: *What Remains*
- 7 Capital Investment Fund; Donations

Jessie Street National Women's Library

Australia's National Women's Library is a specialist library, its focus being the collection and preservation of the literary and cultural heritage of women from all ethnic, religious and socio-economic backgrounds.

Aims

- To heighten awareness of women's issues
- To preserve records of women's lives and activities
- To support the field of women's history
- To highlight women's contribution to this country's development

Patrons

Elizabeth Evatt AC; Sir Laurence Street AC KCMG;
Dr Evelyn Scott AO; Clover Moore MP Lord Mayor of Sydney

Board of Management

Jozefa Sobski	Chair
Michele Ginswick	Vice Chair
Jan Burnswoods	Secretary/Public Officer
Jean Burns	Treasurer

Board Members

Diane Hague, Robyn Harriott, Beverley Kingston, Christine Lees, Marie Muir, Katharine Stevenson, Beverley Sodbinow

Editorial Team

Kris Clarke and Margot Simington, Co-editors
Katharine Stevenson, graphic design advice

Film promotion of the Library

The promotional film made on behalf of the Library by filmmaker, Bronwyn Thorncraft, is now complete. Her Excellency Governor-General Quentin Bryce AC CVO generously donated time from a busy schedule to make a contribution, which now opens the film as the GG's message. The film's eight sections focus on the book collection, archives, posters and banners, guest speakers and Lunch Hour Talks, with a segment on the importance of volunteers and members. A rousing rendition of Judy Small's song, 'A Heroine of Mine', closes the film.

Footage was shot exclusively in and around the Library. It also includes photographs of Jessie Street herself, and of posters and banners, and clips from work by Jan Wood who so often in the past has filmed Annual Luncheons and televised selections. Bronwyn Thorncraft has aimed to emphasise Jessie Street as a woman whose work had considerable historical impact. This is important because many visitors to JSNWL are unaware of her or of her contribution to women's rights and raising the status of women internationally. In many shots of the Library interior, there is footage of young women

Join us for our 2012 Luncheon

The Annual Fundraising Luncheon has always been a not-to-be missed event.

A long list of renowned speakers, such as Her Excellency NSW Governor Marie Bashir AC CVO, writers, academics, ex-parliamentarians, entertainers, doctors, businesswomen and lawyers, have entertained and informed us in a spectacular way over 18 years of Annual Luncheons, in the beautiful setting of the Strangers' Dining Room at Parliament House Sydney. The attendance of high school students at the Luncheon has introduced many young women and men to the feminist ideals for the rights of all women.

This year we are delighted to have as our speaker Professor Larissa Behrendt, of the University of Technology Sydney Jumbunna House of Learning – lawyer, academic, author and tireless activist in her campaigning for the rights of Indigenous people. Professor Behrendt's topic is *Strong Women; Strong Communities: Empowering Indigenous Women to Overcome Disadvantage*.

In a departure from previous years, our MC for this year's function is Julia Readett, ex-school captain of Riverside Girls' High School Huntleys Point, Sydney. She is an undergraduate at the University of Sydney, and recently took part together with other students in the film shoot for JSNWL's promotional DVD (see news item below).

The Annual Raffle again has a list of impressive prizes donated by generous sponsors: Teachers Mutual Bank, The Observatory Hotel Sydney, The Mantra Resort Hotel Ettalong Beach NSW, Marie Muir, Sofitel Wentworth Hotel Sydney, Gail Hewison, Captain Cook Cruises, and the New South Wales Teachers' Federation.

Purchasing tickets using the enclosed form will expand our fundraising efforts upon which the Library relies so strongly.

Make a booking to attend on 17 September, and invite friends to join you at your table.

Lyn Egging, Co-convenor,
2012 Annual Luncheon Committee

integrated with footage of our older volunteers. The narration covers many key historical moments in Australian women's struggle for equality and for women's services.

The DVD, about eight minutes long, is now available for viewing in the Library. The Board intends the film be uploaded to YouTube and linked to our website. There will also be copies to use as part of our promotional package.

Jozefa Sobski



Women's Statement launch

On 15 May 2012, the Library hosted a major event: the launch by the federal Minister for the Status of Women, the Hon Julie Collins MP, of the *Women's Statement 2012 – Achievements and Budget Measures*. Attending were some 60 representatives of key national women's organisations and of many Sydney groups, including the Australian Federation of Graduate Women, Amnesty International, National Rural Women's Coalition, Business and Professional Women, UN Women, Equal Opportunity for Women in the Workplace Agency (federal government), and Soroptimist International. The occasion was an opportunity to discuss, network and view the Library, this venue having been sought because of its iconic status for women.

Cate McKenzie, Executive Director of the Office for Women (Department of Families, Housing, Community Services and Indigenous Affairs) introduced Minister Collins. JSNWL Board Chair, Jozefa Sobski, spoke about the foundation of the Library in 1989 and about Jessie Street. For some people present, it was the first they had heard about this radical feminist, internationalist and peace activist who, though from a wealthy and privileged background, conducted a lifelong struggle for women's equality and social justice. For example, National Indigenous TV news reporter, Nancia Guivarra, became aware of Jessie's pioneering activism for Indigenous rights.

The Minister explained government priorities for significant reforms to support 'working Australians' by driving gender equality and introducing targeted measures for particular groups of women including Indigenous women, women with disability, and linguistically diverse women. 'We recognise that women participate in the workforce less than men and experience poorer economic outcomes; they remain under-represented in public life and high level decision-making, and women's experience of domestic and family violence and sexual assault is alarmingly high,' said Minister Collins. The *Women's Statement 2012* (see www.fhcsia.gov.au) contains information on policy, programs and budget allocations under three broad themes: Supporting Working Australians and their Families, Building a New Australian Economy, and Strengthening our Communities. The range of initiatives signals government commitment to equality, with a strong focus on increasing women's workforce participation and their economic security.



Senator Julie Collins, Chair Jozefa Sobski

Barbara Jefferis Award

Conferred annually by the Australian Society of Authors, the Barbara Jefferis Award recognises 'the best novel written by an Australian author that depicts women and girls in a positive way or otherwise empowers the status of women and girls in society.' This year's award ceremony took place in Sydney at the NSW State Library. Michele Ginswick and Jozefa Sobski attended on behalf of the Library.

Shortlisted books included Georgia Blain *Too Close to Home*, Claire Corbett *When We Have Wings*, Gail Jones *Five Bells*, Gillian Mears *Fool's Bread* (all 2011) and Frank Moorhouse *Cold Light* (2012). Rosalinde Hinde announced the winner: Anna Funder's much awarded *All That I Am* (2011). Anne Summers, guest speaker, praised John Hinde, broadcaster and film critic, who established the award to honour his wife Barbara and stressed the continuing need for positive portrayals of women. The presence of strong, powerful women seems still to be a provocation in some areas when the blogosphere is examined. Vicious commentary on some sites about Prime Minister Julia Gillard illustrates misogyny in Australian culture which needs challenging.

Anna Funder's book depicts courageous women of conscience prior to World War II and is based on real people and events: Dora Fabian and Mathilde Wurm in England and the life of Ernst Toller. Our congratulations to Anna Funder.

Jozefa Sobski



Rosalinde Hinde, daughter of John Hinde, and author Nadia Wheatley

History Week: Feminism and fashion

History Week is celebrated annually across Australia at various times of the year, and in various ways. The designated theme for History Week NSW 8-16 September 2012 is 'Threads'. The Library is contributing on Thursday 13 September with a stimulating Lunch Hour Talk and complementary display. Historian and Board member Dr Beverley Kingston will speak about 'Feminism and fashion', surveying ways changing fashions have intersected with feminism, encouraging and/or competing with feminist ideals over the past century on Thursday 13 September. On display will be Library books, badges and historic clothing contributed by members. The exhibition will be enhanced by clothes (on hangers), shoes, hats, bags, or other pieces from the 1970s or earlier that you may like to bring along on the day. Contact JSNWL Reception if you wish to leave items at the Library before the talk. **Please note the Talk venue: Ultimo Community Centre, 523-525 Harris Street (cnr William Henry St) Ultimo.**

BEETHOVEN AND THE ZIPPER

Suzanne Baker, *Look! Editor* (Sydney Morning Herald 1971-3), founding member of the Media Women's Action Group 1972, as a Film Australia movie producer won the Academy Award for Best Short Animated Film 1976, 'Leisure'. She produced a world-first documentary series and book, *The Human Face of China* (1980). In her talk she discussed the journey of her latest book and the birth of *Musica Viva*.

A masterpiece by Beethoven, the dream of an inspired teacher, and close encounters with death, drove the determination and resilience of a wartime refugee and eccentric inventor. With unexpected opportunities in a new country and passion for his musical heritage, Richard Goldner founded what is now Australia's oldest independent non-profit performing arts organisation and the world's largest chamber music entrepreneur, *Musica Viva*.

Goldner knew great loss – his home, his country, his right to work – and despite his seminal contribution to Australian cultural life, *Musica Viva*, he was only vaguely remembered as a Viennese viola player who invented a zipper. It was at my first chamber music festival in Mudgee NSW where I first heard Goldner's story and realised this great Australian immigrant story had to be told. Goldner's story in Australia covered my own lifetime and many early childhood associations. But two publishers I approached would not take on the book because the underlying theme of chamber music would have too limited an appeal. So I decided to self-publish *Beethoven and the Zipper* (2011).

A year ago the first review of the book, by Steve Meacham, appeared in the *Sydney Morning Herald*. Within the first week there were two offers for the movie option rights, focusing on the Richard Goldner biopic. The story begins in Vienna, where Richard was a violist in a famous chamber orchestra. When Hitler invaded Vienna in 1938, Richard and his family fled for safety. Arriving in Sydney, he expected to find a job with the Sydney Symphony Orchestra. To do that, he had



to be a member of the Union. However he was ineligible, as he wasn't a naturalised Australian and that would take five years. So he and his brother Gerard started a women's accessory business, *Natty Novelties* in the Strand Arcade, Sydney.

Soon after the Goldners arrived in Australia, they and other refugee immigrants like them became 'enemy aliens'. There were stringent rules about how they could run their lives and where they could go. By 1942 when Australia was increasingly vulnerable to invasion

by the Japanese, the Department of Defence announced a competition for ideas from a nation of innovative pioneers. Flight Lieutenant Russell Robinson was charged to find locals with technological flair. Richard was a known inventor.

Just as Richard and Gerard were shutting down their accessory production line in the Strand Arcade, there was a knock on the door from Robinson, who explained to Richard that there was an urgent requirement for zippers that would not jam when filled with foreign matter. Having told Robinson he had the wrong man, Goldner then had a dream that revealed how a zipper might work. He went to the factory, found pieces of copper wire and wound them together. It worked. Goldner was then given permission to convert the factory for the production of his zipper. The patent made Goldner a small fortune. He dreamt of bringing to Australia his great mentor, Simon Pullman, conductor of the orchestra in which he had played in Vienna. But Pullman had died in the gas chambers in Treblinka in 1944. Richard's wife Mandy, however, encouraged him to start the group with the zipper money. By December 1945, Richard Goldner's Sydney *Musica Viva* was ready to perform its first concert.

Unfortunately the opening of the first concert coincided with a national steel strike supported by coal miners and seamen, and an official blackout. Goldner appealed to Charles Moses, then General Manager of the ABC, who organised army generators, cars with headlights focused on the exterior of the Sydney Conservatorium of Music, hurricane lamps and pretty girls with torches to guide the audience to their seats. Thus the inaugural concert of *Musica Viva* took place. Beethoven's Great Fugue was the most substantial work on the programme. Pullman was passionate about the Great Fugue as was Goldner.

After the first publicity of my book I received an email from screenwriter, Joan Sauers, who was developing a mini-series for the ABC based on the youthful chamber orchestra. The project had just been shelved, and she was heartbroken. We approached Brian Rosen and his wife Su Armstrong, both with strong records in production and film financing, and Joan pitched her idea for the film. Brian's eyes filled with tears. 'This is the film I want to make before I die.' Brian had deep emotional reasons for wanting to produce the film: his heritage was Jewish and his father had formed a chamber choir in Ireland. In writing the book, I wanted to explain the achievement of Goldner's gift. Apart from Richard's story, I included other historical detail. As ABC broadcaster Margaret Throsby said, '*Beethoven and the Zipper* provides a fascinating insight into the critical role that post-war migration has played in enriching Australia's cultural life.'

Australian Author Vol 43 No 4, Dec 2011 has a cover showing a do-it-yourself bestseller produced using a screwdriver, and contains an article beginning: 'There's been a long held assumption that those who self-publish are the losers of the industry – the guys that didn't make the cut and had more money than talent ... However, self-published books are starting to make their mark and occasionally outperform their mainstream rivals.' I decided to use the print-on-demand (POD) option. After the set-up of the book, I could run off

Continued on page 6

FIRST FEMALES ABOVE AUSTRALIA

Ebullient Rosemary Arnold, Australia's first female helicopter pilot introduced her book about Australian women flyers with a host of lively stories, many showing male hostility to women entering the profession.

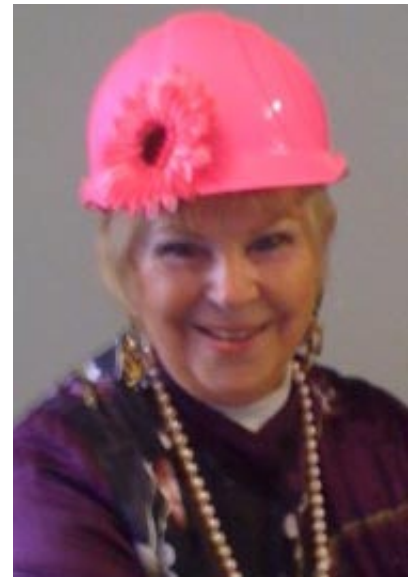
I've always admired Jessie Street National Women's Library. Jessie Street, an amazing woman, did more to help women than most – such an activist, visiting Germany and Russia to study what was happening with their women. On my 28th birthday I soloed an aeroplane for the first time, and felt honoured that Jessie born 1889 had the same birthday – 18 April. I too have a passion to salute women, educate the young ones and inspire them with knowledge of women's struggle.

Did we have to be owned by a man? While my dad fought in WWII, education was hard to get. I went to 11 different schools, at ten I wanted to be a veterinary surgeon. Later, having begun a five year scholarship to Presbyterian Ladies College Armidale NSW, I was pulled out after one year, my parents saying, 'Girls don't get educated, they just marry.' I wore that chip on my shoulder. I'm now Rosemary Arnold, not Mrs. Keith Arnold: marriages don't always last. With four children, I've kept my first married name – 'Arnold' was easy to spell. According to my children, I've reached my silver anniversary breaking in a new husband!

The day I first soloed, I heard about Nancy Bird-Walton founding the Australian Women Pilot's Association in 1950. The following week at their AGM I met Nancy and many other women on a first name basis, then attended their great monthly meetings. In 1965, guest speaker Hawker de Havilland test pilot Randy Green urged us 'girls' to fly helicopters, 'the most fascinating thing I've ever done', he said. There were no helicopter flying schools but a man with a helicopter five minutes drive from my home in Sydney offered to train me. Three weeks and 40 hours shockingly hard training, and I had a cable from Washington welcoming me as 'WhirlyGirl 99', first in the Southern Hemisphere, 99th world-wide. Nobody would employ me (married, four kids) so I sold my car and boat, saved up and bought an old four-seater Bell 47J2A helicopter. The only area of flying open to me, boys didn't like – air show and charity joy rides. My record day was 297 passengers: eight hours dusty, dirty work doing my own refuelling, one daughter pushing three passengers in one side, the other dragging three out the other side. Male pilots wore navy blue, my daughters and I – hot pink. In 2004 I found I could go to university. Amidst 19 year olds, my shoulder chip lifted. A most wonderful experience – with years of industry credits, I finished the three year Bachelor of Aviation in 18 months: at 70, a University of Western Sydney graduate. Asked to lecture, I did two years teaching. On my first day, as 'Rosemary, your aviation history tutor', one boy asked, 'Is it true you're the first Australian woman helicopter pilot?' I couldn't have planted him better! In 2004 I also became a marriage celebrant doing helicopter weddings over Sydney Harbour. Now an LOL (little old lady), I love inspiring children to set goals. I use Andy Thomas as role model: this first Australian-born astronaut aged ten said, 'I want to be an astronaut'.

In the 1980s I realised I must put on record the history that surrounded me. Very little had been written about women

pilots apart from the odd autobiography (no dates, records, surnames); and I knew personally 69 of the 100 women flyers I decided to write about. Research for the task involved much cross-referencing to trace later lives for all those first names. I developed tremendous respect for these women and a sense of enormous responsibility to get facts right, particularly given the many errors already in the public domain. Poor Nancy Bird, my good friend for 47 years, was forever cringing when described as Australia's first woman pilot: she was Australia's youngest commercial woman pilot and youngest in the British Empire at the time, and founded the aerial ambulance service for the NSW Far West Children's Health Scheme. I remember once visiting a JSNWL function with Nancy. A walking history book, she knew Jessie Street, and was in great demand as a speaker.* Later, as her driver and note-taker, I asked did she ever decline: 'No, my dear, never.' I dedicated *First Females Above Australia* (2010) to Nancy. The book spans 100 years from 1909 when Florence Taylor went up in her husband George's glider, through to 2009. It was very economic to produce and self-publish. Aiming it especially at school libraries and having done typesetting, graphic design and desktop publishing courses, I did the layout and artwork myself.



Australian women were not allowed to fly until 1927, 17 years after many other countries had women charter pilots and flying instructors. Saddest is my story about a young nursing sister in London, Hilda Hope McMaugh, the only woman among 400 getting their wings there in 1919. On return to Australia Hilda was forbidden to fly and never got an Australian licence. At least I've given her the salute she deserves. Another was Gladys Stafford, an Australian ambulance driver with New Zealand forces in WWI, honoured by NZ with the wherewithal to get a pilot's licence which she achieved in 1926; but back in Australia she could not operate. Brilliant pilot Freda Thompson won 47 silver cups but, barred from presentation dinners, had to wait outside the kitchen to be given her awards.

My early women flyers used those little red Collins school atlases to fly by. Tiny Nancy Bird, at 17 flying England to Australia with co-pilot Peggy Kelman (nee McKillop) in Peggy's words, 'followed the pink bits'. Lores Bonney's husband, Harry, a wealthy Brisbane leather merchant, forbade her to drive the car, pretended not to know Lores was taking flying lessons, but when she got her licence in 1931, bought her a plane. During the 1930s Lores did Christmas dinner for Harry's family, then

Suzanne Baker *continued from page 4*

ten preview copies at \$9 each, which were read for typos and factual errors missed on initial proofing; then print the book in lots of 50 at \$6 a copy, thus eliminating the problem of guessing the number of books I might sell. Distribution was another issue. We called a meeting with Musica Viva, recognising that many Musica Viva subscribers would be interested in the book. So now it is sold at festivals and concerts. The publication proved worth its while in publicity alone – indeed, thousands of dollars worth.

From the outset I only ever wanted to cover my production costs. In terms of the financial aspect of professional versus self-publishing, publishers told me it was not worth their taking on any book that would sell less than 3,000 copies. If *Beethoven and the Zipper* had been professionally published, with RRP of \$24.95, for 3,000 copies the total is \$74,850. If all 3,000 books were sold, that's \$7,485 (10% for the author). My financial calculations using POD were based on sales of 1000. This would cover my costs, including a small investment in marketing.

It's hard to make books pay. Overheads eat away at the RRP and more money can easily be spent on promotion. As I get the audio, radio and have publishing rights to the book when the movie is made, I stand to make a windfall. I have set up a website for mail order sales: www.beethovenandthezipper.com. Gleebooks (in Glebe, Sydney) has copies too.

For music lovers all over the world, the book shows the enormous debt we owe to Goldner's determination and financial generosity, together with the shared sense of purpose of other driving personalities to make Musica Viva the successful not-for-profit phenomenon it is today.

Transcription by Helen Ruby, edited by Kris Clarke

Rosemary Arnold *continued from page 5*

'ducked down' for Boxing Day dinner with her own family, leaving at 4.30am and finishing in the record time of 14½ hours Brisbane to Wangaratta VIC including refuelling: over 1,500kms. (Harry's cousin, famous Australian pilot Bert Hinkler, had recently flown a round-Australia trip; Lores presumably used some leftover fuel planted along his route). The first woman pilot to fly around Australia, Lores flew Brisbane to England, and later to South Africa (1936). Amazing: that basic Collins school atlas and they followed the pink bits!

In 1979, Deborah Lawrie changed the whole face of Australia's airline pilot profession, winning a landmark equal opportunity case to get pilot training with, and employment as a pilot by, Ansett Airlines. Chauvinism persisted: during the 1980s, Deborah, in the cockpit doing pre-flight checks together with a very macho captain, sought the call button for a glass of water; the captain barked, 'Don't touch that button, it's mine'; later, a flight engineer with authority to set the throttle at various parts of the flight, said to the captain, 'I'm about to change the throttle setting. Are throttles yours or mine?'

Nevertheless I think Jessie Street would be proud now. Judy Lording (in the audience today) and I flew races together all over Australia. Seven children between us, we called ourselves 'The Flying Mums' and wore silver lame flying suits. And even in the construction industry you can wear one of these [Rosemary dons a hot pink hard hat] rather than horrid orange ones.

Transcription by Helen Ruby, edited by Margot Simington.

*Nancy Bird-Walton: JSNWL's first Annual Luncheon speaker in 1995.

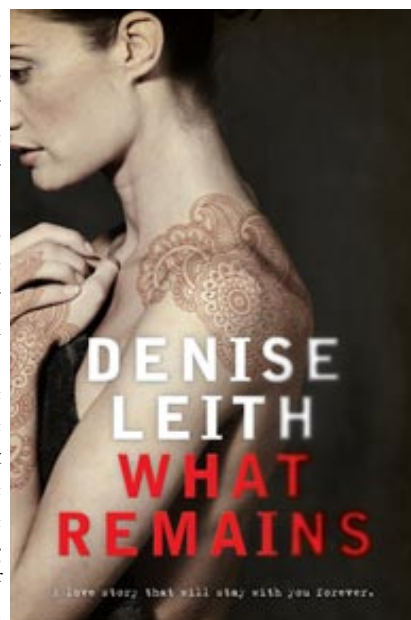
BOOK REVIEW

Denise Leith *What Remains*
Allen and Unwin, 2012
ISBN: 9781742376929

This is not a feminist book – it is post-feminist, set in a world where women have a place but not necessarily a comfortable one, where asserting their independence is less necessary than understanding its implications. It may be quasi-fictional but it reads as reality. It is a compelling book that reawakens in those over forty all the suppressed memories of uncomfortable international disasters, thankfully happening beyond our shores. It describes not the sanitised accounts that filtered into our media but how it appeared to outsiders on the ground with the smells of death and corruption constantly in their nostrils. It is not accidental that it is to Australia that the heroine retreats when her sanity is threatened and it raises the question of what that protection costs us.

The narrative weaves together three main themes: the mind-shattering impact of genocidal massacres, the painful learning process that instils the realisation of the powerlessness of individual goodwill and the mindless reality of evil and the growth of vulnerable love. Kate Price is a young woman prepared to sacrifice any other thing to her ambition to be tough enough to be the greatest war reporter of her day, to write copy that would change the world. She journeys from Riyadh and the atrocities of Desert Storm, the flare-up of the Palestinian-Israeli conflict, the killing that underlay the South African struggle and in Sarajevo, the Serbian war in the Balkans.

In Rwanda, she finally meets the unendurable, the nightmare of destruction of the innocent that imprints horror on her mind. Yet, what she is learning is that there is, ultimately, no innocence, no unquestionable good side, no communal moral rightness. Throughout her subsequent reporting, the need to assist threatened individuals, those who were friends and those who were simply helpless makes clear the futility of resistance, the frustrations of bureaucratic process. Chechnya was yet another genocidal war but as the 21st century starts she faces destruction that is not war (although as deadly) but disease, in particular AIDS. Increasingly, she is torn between her wish to be with the war photographer Pete McDermott, who understands her better than she does herself and her need to persist with her chosen path. She returns, a decade later, to Baghdad, the setting for her first experiences where the aftermath of one war was running into the start of another. Journalists



cannot retain their impartial stance and survive, as one group or another threatens destruction of hostages to fortune if the reports are not slanted for their interests. And, if they do not comply, the security officers of the West suppress them in case they become inconvenient hostages, requiring government action.

Eventually, one way or another all the journalists must get out either to less fraught assignments or like Pete, to death by a grenade while doing his job. The story builds up through the relentless piling up of detail, skilfully relieved by moments of light-heartedness and comedy. It leaves the reader with a sense of personal involvement.

In a quiet but unforgiving way, this story poses a series of moral dilemmas to its readers, questions that come from what we have and have not done in the last quarter century, questions of responsibility that are not easily answered. It is a 'must read'.

Sybil Jack

Capital Investment Fund

Since its launch in September 2009, the Capital Investment Fund has now reached almost \$94,000. Our target is \$500,000, the interest from which will provide essential support for Library operations. If you would like to contribute, please indicate on the membership/renewal/donation form on this page.

CIF donations since May 2012:

Jill Roe Selena Williams

General Donations since July 2012

Donations of money help meet day-to-day running costs:

- Karen Banfield
- Linda Burney
- Elizabeth Clarke
- Elaine Cohen
- Joyce Goode
- Diane Hague
- V Koutsounadis
- Joan Patrick
- Caroline Phillips
- Jan Roberts
- Linda Shaw
- Susan Steggall
- Kay Vernon
- Maureen Ward

Donations of material expand our collection:

- Nancy Aldersen
- Elsie Bell
- Lyn Eggins
- Gillian Neale
- Evgueni Singatouline
- Allen & Unwin
- Fremantle Press
- Text Publishing
- Wakefield Press

A warm welcome to our new members:

- Joyce Goode
- Robyn Parker MP
- Linda Scott

MEMBERSHIP RENEWAL/DONATION FORM

I wish to: join the library renew my membership
 make a donation

Date: / / Title: Mr/Mrs/Ms/Miss/Dr/other

Name:

Address:

Telephone: (h).....(w).....(m).....

Email: (PLEASE PRINT BLOCKLETTERS)

Please send newsletters by email instead of hardcopy.

Full Member \$60 Life member \$1,000

Organisation \$120 Student \$20 (conditions apply)

Concession \$30 (Pensioner/Centrelink Concession Cardholders)

The membership year runs from 1 January to 31 December. Members joining after 1 October are financial until 31 December of the following year.

I wish to donate: \$.....(donations over \$2 are tax deductible)

I enclose a cheque/cash/money order for \$

OR

Please charge my MasterCard/Visa with \$.....

Name of cardholder:

Card no.

Expiry date.....

Signature:.....

I was introduced to the Library by

Auto Debit Authorisation

I authorise JSNWL to charge this, and all future member ship renewals as they fall due, to the credit card number above on this form.

I authorise JSNWL to charge \$ annually to the above credit card as a donation to the Library.

Signature:.....

Donation to the Capital Investment Fund

I wish to make a donation to the Capital Investment Fund. Please charge the amount of \$ to the above credit card.

I am willing to have my name published.

I wish to remain anonymous.

Signature:.....

Become a volunteer

I would like to help the Library by becoming a volunteer. (You will be contacted for an interview.)

Please forward the completed form to:

**Jessie Street National Women's Library
GPO Box 2656, Sydney NSW 2001**

Jessie Street National Women's Library
GPO Box 2656 Sydney NSW 2001

ISSN 1838-0662

ABN 42 276162 418

SURFACE
MAIL

POSTAGE
PAID
AUSTRALIA



Proudly
sponsored
by the



Visit Us:

523-525 Harris Street (cnr William Henry Street), Ultimo

Please use the intercom for admittance

For level access, enter via the Community Centre in Bulwarra Rd

Opening times:

The Library is open to the public Monday to Friday 10 am to 3 pm

Borrowing Policy:

The public can access items using the interlibrary loan system. The public cannot borrow items, but may use them in their library of choice. A loan collection is available to financial members

How to reach the Library:

There are several ways to travel to the Library:

- ▶ The Library is a 20 minute walk from Town Hall Station (through Darling Harbour) or from Central Station (via Harris Street)
- ▶ Bus 501 (Ian Thorpe Pool stop) from Sydney Town Hall or Railway Square
- ▶ Bus 443 (Harris and Allan Streets stop) from Circular Quay or Wynyard Station
- ▶ By light rail from Central Station to Exhibition stop
- ▶ If you drive, there is limited two hour street meter parking available

Contact us:

Postal Address:

GPO Box 2656
Sydney, NSW 2001

Telephone:

(02) 9571 5359

Facsimile:

(02) 9571 5714

Email:

info@nationalwomenslibrary.org.au

Visit our website:

www.nationalwomenslibrary.org.au