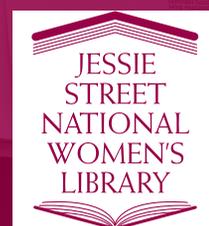


Vol 31, No.1 — February 2020

NEWSLETTER

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



Discovering our serials collection

‘As a PhD candidate researching the women’s movement in Newcastle in the 1970s and 1980s, I find Jessie Street National Women’s Library an essential repository. I have spent many hours in the serials collection alone, to dig out the feminist material I require both for the women’s movement generally and for examples of Novocastrian activism. To unexpectedly come across a gem like the Hunter Valley Home-birth newsletters made me particularly pleased that the collection is not just capital city-focused.’

-Jude Conway, University of Newcastle

Jude is well-qualified to write about the Library, as it holds the archive of her mother, Josephine Conway. She is a long-term member and has spent many days researching material in the serials and archives collections. Jude has also benefitted from the Library’s policy of providing up to four hours of research assistance. Her email request for a scanned page of an early issue of the *Sydney Women’s Liberation Newsletter* was ably fulfilled by a work placement student.

The diverse holdings from many donors outside Sydney, including the Working Women’s Centre in Newcastle, the Canberra Women’s Archive and the Women’s Studies Resource Centre in South Australia, as well as the more singular interests of individual donors, have shaped the serials collection. It encompasses complete holdings of many well-known newsletters and journals from women’s collectives, mainly situated in capital cities, as well as a vast array of newsletters of lesser known women’s organisations across Australia that span all spheres of women’s work and interest.

The Hunter Working Women’s Centre, which was established in 1975, collected, collated and bound serials of interest to its patrons. *Broadsheet*, a feminist magazine published in Auckland ten times per year from 1972 to 1991 and quarterly from 1992 to 1997, is one of its notable donations because it comprised several hundred issues. Similarly, the Women’s Studies Resource Centre in Adelaide amassed a very large serials collection. As the

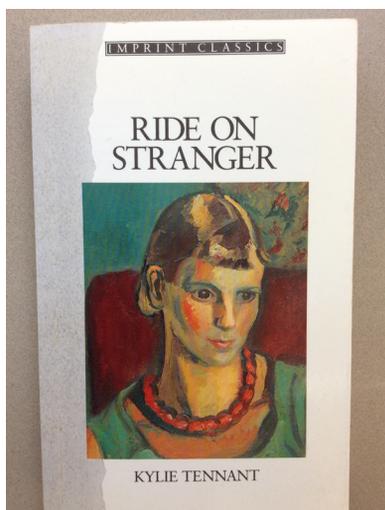
Centre was dismantled, we were able to fill gaps in the Library’s holdings. *Grapevine*, published by the Perth Wimmins Collective from 1980 to 1998, is especially valued as it is only held by three libraries in Australia, the other two being in Western Australia. From the outset, the collective incorporated ‘interstate snippets’ and sought to engage with women’s organisations around Australia. As was so often the case, its enthusiasm was often hampered by publishing problems and disappointment at the lack of feedback from interstate collectives.

Researchers at the Library frequently comment on the usefulness of their searches of newsletters around the date on which an event occurred or even to establish that an event did occur. Women’s organisations’ desire to share information with their readership has resulted in a wealth of articles about women’s activities that constitute valuable primary evidence for researchers.

Lynne Morton

Membership Renewal

Renewal is by calendar year – see page 7. Thank you to those who have already resubscribed for 2020.



Book Club report

In November 2019 we discussed Kylie Tennant's classic novel *Ride On Stranger* (1943), enjoyable reading with marvellous descriptions of Sydney in the 1930s and 40s. The book explores, through women's eyes, the political whirlpool of ideas that backgrounded women's limited employment opportunities. It also shines a light on the exploitation and undervaluing of women in both the paid and unpaid workforce.

The idealistic protagonist, Shannon Hicks, a girl from a farm on the south coast of NSW, is a restless teenager and feels unloved by her father. She sets off to live with her Aunt Edith who manages a boarding house in Headtown. There she meets people from all walks of life as she seeks work and friendship. The drudgery of

providing unpaid labour precipitates a move to Sydney in the company of a fellow lodger. During the stressful build-up to World War II, the story explores Shannon's thirst for books and ideas — a coming of age through accumulated wisdom and experiences. Disillusioned by the rigidity of the Marxist movements of the day which many of her new-found friends were espousing, she struggles to find a comfortable fit for herself in the chaos created by war.

In 1986, Helen Garner wrote a foreword to a new edition of *Lantana Lane* by Eleanor Dark about the women writers of that period.

'The women novelists of Australia between the 1920s and the end of the Second World War ... dominated the country's fiction output ... It is the mark of the ability of Australians to distort our own cultural history that a novelist like Eleanor Dark, a critical and popular success for twenty years and twice a winner of the Australian Literary Society's Gold Medal, should now be someone whose name produces blank looks, whose books have almost all been out of print for years, and who is omitted from the Oxford Anthology of Australian Literature (published in 1985 and by any standards a conservative selection).'

The book chosen for 26 February is *Jessie Street: A Revised Autobiography*, Lenore Coltheart (ed.)

Barbara Henery

Annual General Meeting 2020

The Library's Annual General Meeting will be held on Tuesday 14 April at 11 am, followed by lunch at 12 noon. The venue is the upstairs Seminar Room of the Ultimo Community Centre, corner of Harris and William Henry Streets, Ultimo, Sydney.

All members are welcome to the AGM. This is your opportunity to visit the Library, meet members nominating for the Board and other members and join us for a light lunch.

Nominations are called for the following positions: Chair, Vice-Chair, Secretary, Treasurer and no fewer than five and no more than nine ordinary members of the Board. Nominations close on Friday 6 April 2018. Please consider nominating for the Board yourself or suggesting it to a friend. Nomination forms can be sent in an email attachment or are available from the Library.

Board meetings are held on the second Tuesday of each month at the Ultimo Community Centre. There is no Board meeting in January and April. Please RSVP by Friday 10 April 2020 for catering purposes.

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

Quentin Bryce AD CVO; Elizabeth Evatt AC; Clover

Moore Lord Mayor of Sydney; Professor Emerita Elizabeth Anne Webby AM

Board of Management

Jozefa Sobski, Chair; Suzanne Marks, Vice Chair; Jean Burns, Treasurer; Sherri Hilario, Secretary; Michele Ginswick, Diane Hague, Robyn Harriott, Barbara Henery, Beverley Kingston, Susan Price, Valda Rigg, Marion Shaw, Beverley Sodbinow

Editorial Team

Kris Clarke, Jessica Stewart Editors; tindspark, Graphic Design

Lesley Squires v Qantas

Last year the Archives team was delighted to receive papers dealing with an important sex discrimination case against Qantas in the 1980s. They belonged to Lesley Squires, who died in 2016, and were donated by her husband Rick. They include a fascinating collection of transcripts from the NSW Equal Opportunity Tribunal, exhibits, letters of support and newspaper clippings.

Qantas employed its first international hostesses on the Sydney–London route, in 1948. Within a year male flight stewards went on strike, claiming the hostesses were ‘stealing all their glory’ because they had the ‘glamour’ role taking care of the passengers. But for decades the stewards were much better paid, were employed at a ratio of four men to one woman, were the only ones eligible for promotion, and did not have to retire at 35 as the women did. The Air Hostesses Association was formed around 1956, but it was not until the late 1970s that the issues about the differential treatment of hostesses and stewards began to smoulder.

Lesley Squires had joined Qantas in 1973. She lodged a complaint of unlawful discrimination by her employer on the ground of sex in April 1982. It was brought under the NSW Anti-Discrimination Act 1977 and heard by the Equal Opportunity Tribunal after an unsuccessful attempt at conciliation. Lesley alleged that Qantas had discriminated against women in the recruitment, promotion and placement of cabin crew. The hearings commenced in August 1983 but were delayed by a Qantas appeal and dragged on until August 1985.

In the meantime, Qantas had concluded an agreement in the Arbitration Commission with the male and female unions which provided for equality for women from June 1983, but did not rectify the consequences of past discrimination. The two unions were invited by the Tribunal to participate in Lesley’s case but elected not to intervene—dismissing the Qantas procedural appeal in 1984, the Judge described Lesley as ‘a gallant warrior’ who had been deserted by her allies. Although pursued as an individual complaint, the Tribunal noted that Lesley’s case challenged the whole Qantas system as discriminatory against female cabin crew. Qantas conceded there was no relevant distinction in the work carried out by hostesses and stewards, and also conceded

that up to June 1983 hostesses were not afforded the same promotional opportunities as stewards. But it denied discrimination or claimed that if it had occurred it arose from the separate industrial awards for the two unions.

The Tribunal found the complaint of discrimination was substantiated and awarded damages for monetary loss by exclusion from promotion, totaling \$20,500. Lesley was promoted to Senior Flight Attendant in 1983 but lost further promotion because of male seniority issues. She later became Assistant to the CEO of Qantas.

When Lesley died in 2016, Tricia Gubbins paid tribute to her as the first Qantas hostess to ‘take on the big boys’, paving the way ‘for many of us to also bring a case against Qantas in the years that followed.’ Tricia was in a position to know, since she and four other hostesses also went to the Equal Opportunity Tribunal in the 1980s and were awarded the maximum \$40,000 damages each for the discrimination they faced. Qantas fought the case all the way to the High Court, partly because it also faced making payments to many other former hostesses, plus legal costs, and it did not conclude until 1994.

Bev Sodbinow and Jan Burnswoods





Out of the Old and into the New

We celebrated the end of our first 30 years at our annual Christmas gathering amidst a smoky haze blanketing the city and unbearable heat. We honoured the efforts of Board member Michele Ginswick with Life Membership and reflected on the sorry state of the planet and our political leaders. Fires were raging in the north of New South Wales and they were to devastate the South Coast during the holiday season.

Michele's honour was so well-deserved. She joined as a volunteer in 2007 and the Board in 2010. She became Convenor of the Lunch Hour Talks in 2011. She replaced Marie Muir as Convenor of the Annual Luncheon Committee and has been indefatigable. She is a calm and caring contributor in all her roles, gently steering discussion and resolving numerous

issues. Her work is always professional and considered. Patience and a spirit of compromise with mutual respect underpin her approach. She attracts others to participation and gives every volunteer space to share their views and make their mark. The Board was unanimous in wishing her efforts to be acknowledged.

Her efforts are typical of so many of our volunteers: altruistic, committed and enthusiastic about the Library's role as an institution run by women for women and the preservation of women's works and words. We pay tribute to all volunteer efforts at our Annual General Meeting and less formally at our end of year party. Those who attend enjoy an opportunity to meet other volunteers working in different capacities to sustain the Library and keep its



work relevant and linked to contemporary library practice. This year was no different and we were pleased to welcome Rosa Campbell, a PhD researcher and Janet Ramsay to the festivities. Howard Houliston was present and again thanked for keeping our network functioning smoothly.

Some volunteers were not able to attend this year due to illness or other commitments. Vallie Rigg, Board member and member of the archives team, was an apology as were Diane Hague for whom the distance to travel is at times prohibitive and Bev Kingston for whom the weather and the air quality was an inhibitor.

We share as a community of women some common social objectives, objectives which Jessie Street spent her life fighting to achieve; causes which she espoused through numerous organisations and extensive national and international networks. The Library, consistent with Jessie's political practice, supports actions and campaigns for achieving equality for women and social justice for our Indigenous people and world peace. Our collection will continue to reflect these objectives and concerns, but perhaps we need to add more?

If Jessie Street were with us today, she would be standing shoulder to shoulder with the thousands of young women and men pleading with world leaders for protecting the global climate from further plunder and pillage and for climate justice. At the recent COP25 Madrid Conference women's rights and climate activists were advocating a feminist Green New Deal! The calls for global climate action mirror concerns for world peace which so punctuated the lives of women activists between the wars in the twentieth century. This is the issue for this century and our next 30 years!

Jozefa Sobski AM, Board Chair



A warm welcome to our new members

Galavizh Farhadzadeh	Suzanne Noske
Trixie Tagg	Gowland Legal

General donations since November 2019

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

Mavis Clements	Daphne Degotardi
Deirdre Freyberg	Jean Gledhill
Nola Harris	Anne-Marie Kestle
Elizabeth Lonergan	Monique Reiher
Lucile Seale	Jane Singleton
Dori Wiesnieski	

Donations of material expand our collection:

Wendy Murray	Ginninderra Press
Little Red Apple Publishing	
NSW Teachers Federation	



Book Review

Ninu Grandmothers' Law: the autobiography of Nura Nungalka Ward

This beautifully illustrated account of Nura's life reveals a childhood lived in peace and harmony on country. Nura Nungalka Ward was a Yankunytjatjara woman from the Central Desert, at a time when Central Desert people were leaving their homelands and entering a society they did not know. She spent her early years living at Ernabella, continually running away to join her parents, who were station workers, as she preferred living in the bush.

She tells stories of healing methods and medicinal uses for plant and animal parts of the many species she had grown up with, revealing the very different world in which she grew up, and acknowledging those who taught her. She regrets that her happy childhood is not the experience of current generations of indigenous young people, especially young mothers and girls. Her working life has been spent trying to build resilience and strength within communities, and dancing! This is known in Pitjantjatjara as inma and was the way to teach law and history – Tjukurpa – to young women and the whole community. This was Grandmothers' Law - Kamiku Tjukurpa, and to her it was the way to build the future.

Nura's close friends became interpreters and researchers to help her create this book which includes an exceptional selection of archival photographs. Nura wants future generations to know her story: how well she was cared for and nurtured as a child, learning etiquette from traditional living and relying on the land to supply all her needs and wants. Nura felt these customs would bring happiness into the lives of all those who would listen and learn.

Nura, who has passed away, was a great storyteller, a matriarch, a strong Law woman and a consummate teacher of dance. She remained true to 'Grandmother's Law'.

This book is a rare testament to one woman's advocacy for her family, people and culture: part biography, part customs manual and food guide, part traditional social history and women's customs and governance. It reveals a culture in harmony with the environment in ways that educational curricula have failed to explain to most Australians. Our ignorance is our shame as well as our loss. I highly commend this book.

The book was donated by Library member Merry Cooper, who recognised it as a 'must have' for our collection. Well spotted, and thank you Merry!

Barbara Henery

Lunch Hour Talks

27 February: Dr Tjanara Goreng Goreng
A Long Way from No Go

Indigenous writer Dr Tjanara Goreng Goreng has written a moving and disturbing book about how she was dismissed from her role as a senior public servant during the Howard Government. She had blown the whistle on a false claim which had led to the Government's controversial policy, The Intervention, which sent the army into Aboriginal communities.

26 March: Natalie Conyer
Present Tense

When South Africa moved from Apartheid to majority rule, locally produced crime fiction became extremely popular. Why was this? What does crime fiction have to say about the new South Africa, and how does it deal with real-life crime there? Natalie will talk about why she chose to write about South Africa and the challenges she faced in doing so. *Present Tense* is her first novel.

21 May: Michelle Balogh
Her Kind of Luck

Born in China, Shan-Yi Balogh lived in America from the age of four, and after travelling extensively, settled in Sydney with her German husband at the start of World War II. When he was interned, Shan-Yi found out who he really was - a Guinness world-record holder and suspected spy. Shan-Yi's little-known story was unearthed by great-granddaughter Michelle.

Venue/Time: 12.00-1.30pm. Customs House Library, 31 Alfred St, Sydney — on Circular Quay, enter via front of Customs House

Cost: \$16 (members) \$22 (non-members) including light lunch. Pay at the door.

Book by noon Monday before the talk.

Ph (02) 9571 5359

Researchers' Cornucopia

I am a PhD student at the University of Cambridge currently completing my PhD on Australian Women's Liberation in the years 1968-1990.



Placing this important social movement in the global context, I consider the connections between women's liberation in the US, the UK, New Zealand, Canada and Australia; I also explore the way that political events across the Asia-Pacific informed women's liberation in Australia (for example, Chinese communism and the Vietnam War). I also research networks of women, including Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander women, agitating for gender justice across the Pacific and around the world. I enquire into the impact of waves of migration including, for example, Italian, Greek and Vietnamese migration, on Australian women's liberation.

I have been digging into the wonderful archives of the Library and have felt warmly welcomed and supported by the Library staff. I am really thankful for this space to write and read feminist history and plan for the future. I am also undertaking oral history interviews with women who were involved in the women's liberation movement (some of whom volunteer at the Library). If you were involved and would like to get your story on the record, or have any questions about the project, I would love to hear from you. I have been active in social justice movements in both the UK and Australia and have the utmost respect for those who blazed the trail.

I can be contacted on Twitter [@rrrosavalerie](#) or email at rvc25@cam.ac.uk

Rosa Campbell

Capital Investment Fund

Since it was launched in September 2009, the Capital Investment Fund has reached \$434,234. 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/donation form on this page.

CIF donations since November 2019:

Julie James Bailey	Carolyn Bloch
Cathy Bloch	Anne Giles
Sue Comrie-Thompson	Caroline Phillips

Membership/donation form

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

Date: ___/___/___

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

Name: _____

Address: _____

Tel: (h) _____ (w) _____ (m) _____

Email: _____

Please send newsletters by email instead of hardcopy.

Membership Category

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

Organisation \$120 Student \$20

(conditions apply)

Concession \$30

(Pensioner/Centrelink Concession Cardholders)

A membership year runs from 1 January to 31 December. Members joining after 1

October are financial until 31 December of the following year.

Donations (donations over \$2 are tax deductible)

I wish to make a donation of \$.....

to the Library for general purposes

to the Library's Capital Investment Fund

I am willing to have my name published

in the Newsletter

I wish to remain anonymous

Payment Details

CREDIT CARD PAYMENTS: Westpac Bank is no longer accepting manual vouchers for credit card payments. Therefore, payments will no longer be issued the yellow credit card receipt. Credit card payments can still be made in the usual way and will be processed electronically. Please contact Jean Burns at the library if you have any questions.

Enclosed is my cheque/money order for \$

(payable to Jessie Street National Women's Library)

Please charge my MasterCard/Visa with \$ _____

Name of cardholder: _____

Card no. _____

Expiry date ___/___ CCV ____

Signature: _____

Auto Debit Authorisation

I authorise JSNWL to charge this, and all future membership 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 for general purposes or to

the Library's Capital Investment Fund.

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
Registered Charity No. CFN10255

Note: Please advise the Library if your contact details have changed.

Visit us:

523–525 Harris Street (cnr William Henry Street), Ultimo
Enter through the Ultimo Community Centre, Bulwara Rd
Please use the intercom for admittance

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:

- * The Library is a 20 minute walk from Town Hall Station through Darling Harbour or from Central Station via the Goods Line walk or via Harris Street
- * Bus 501 (Railway Square to Ryde/ West Ryde) at Ian Thorpe Aquatic Centre stop
- * Bus 389 (Maritime Museum to North Bondi) at Harris and Allan Streets stop
- * Light rail from Central Station or Dulwich Hill to Exhibition stop
- * There is limited two hour street meter parking available

Postal Address:

GPO Box 2656
Sydney, NSW 2001
Telephone:
(02) 9571 5359
Email:
info@nationalwomenslibrary.org.au
Visit our website:
www.nationalwomenslibrary.org.au

Find us on social media:

