

AustLit News December 2007/January 2008



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Welcome to the latest AustLit newsletter, bringing you up to date with news on the Australian literary scene and on new developments and services at AustLit.

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Quick Search Now Enabled

AustLit's new [Quick Search](#) enables keyword searching across all fields in AustLit records. Results are relevance-ranked according to the number of times a search term appears in the record and may be further refined by limiting results to selected forms, work types, subject fields and time periods and research subsets. As with most keyword search functions, searching may be also be controlled by truncating (using the * symbol) and by using "quote marks" (double inverted commas) to search exact phrases. For updated information on how to get the most out of this search function, check the [Search Tips and Techniques](#) page.

AustLit Farewells Foundation Team Member

[Anne Chittleborough](#), one of AustLit's original team members, is retiring at the end of 2007. Adelaide-born and bred, Anne has spent most of her life in South Australia. She graduated from the University of Adelaide in 1966 with a Bachelor of Arts and then lived in Papua New Guinea for ten years working as a teacher with the Anglican Mission. On her return to Australia she completed a Graduate Diploma in Library Science at Kuring-gai College of Advanced Education, Sydney.

Back in Adelaide by 1983, Anne started work at [Flinders University](#). From 1995 to 2000 she worked on two projects that formed the basis of current AustLit subsets, [South Australian Women Writers](#) (SAWW) and [Australian Literary Responses to 'Asia'](#). While Anne has continued to shape these two subsets over the past seven years, she has also contributed to the full scope of AustLit, particularly working towards the completion of *The Bibliography of Australian Literature*



(BAL).

Professor Gus Worby recalls Anne's early work on the *SAWW* project – steered by Graham Tulloch and Rick Hosking – as being 'meticulous and dedicated'. Likewise, Associate Professor Lyn Jacobs, acknowledges Anne as 'a fine researcher whose expertise commands respect'. Because colleagues in Flinders University's English Department had commended Anne's 'expertise and tact' in compiling *SAWW*, Associate Professor Jacobs 'was delighted' when Anne agreed to assist with the transition and enhancement of the 1995 print and electronic publication *A Bibliography of Australian Literary Responses to 'Asia'* in readiness for the planned AustLit database.

From the very beginning, says Professor Worby, 'Anne sized up the breadth and scope of AustLit's ambitions and wholeheartedly embraced them. She brought a wealth of experience to bear on the translation of resources from database to database, system to system. She "road tested" procedures and conceptualisations in a way that became crucial to the success of the overall approach to AustLit.'

When Professor Worby proposed an AustLit subset honouring Indigenous writing (now a reality in the form of the *Black Words* subset), Anne 'gave her wholehearted support'. Professor Worby continues: 'For this I'm especially grateful. Her patient and fruitful work with Yaritji Green has helped current AustLit Board members Tracey Bunda and Robert Phiddian to secure support for Indigenous literature and the employment of an Indigenous Librarian, a literature specialist, at Flinders University. And she has passed on her skills to an excellent, next generation researcher and scholar, Tully Barnett.'

AustLit's Executive Manager, Kerry Kilner, began working with Anne in the mid-1990s when the World Wide Web was new and *SAWW* was one of the elements of The Australia's Literary Heritage project. (That project brought together five of AustLit's current partners with a view to building a web-based bio-bibliographical resource and collectively contributing to *The Bibliography of Australian Literature*.)

In the early years of Anne and Kerry's association Kerry was based at Monash University, one of the team working collaboratively with researchers at Flinders. That was 'one of the earliest partnerships that now form an essential part of AustLit's raison d'être', says Kerry, 'and Anne has been there from the start. Her scholarship and excellent research, along with her terrific biographical summaries and bibliographical contributions will be especially missed. Anne's contributions to *BAL* have been extremely important and the editors of *BAL* warmly thank her for them.'

Associate Professor Jacobs sends these good wishes to Anne: 'It seems insufficient to say that in her retirement Anne Chittleborough will be greatly missed – this truism is real here. Anne will

continue her intellectual, geographic and spiritual explorations for years to come – and woe betide anyone who gets the facts wrong on the database on her retirement watch. I wish her the very best of post AustLit/Flinders academic time. I suspect that retirement, as some of us conceive it, will remain remote given Anne's vigorous on-going community involvements.'

Professor Worby recognises that 'AustLit is losing a meticulous, dedicated, collegial and collaborative, multi-skilled researcher, worker ... and friend'. On a personal note he says: 'I'll miss the crisp and concise emails, the ever-ready cup of coffee, the generous engagement with whatever it was that needed discussing and the "by the way" communication of enthusiasm for Anne's work from colleagues around the country. Thank you Anne, the privilege has definitely been ours.' AustLit's Advisory Board and the management and content teams heartily agree.

Parting Reflections on the 'Asian' Subset

As a parting gift (and providing further evidence of her dedication and knowledge) [Anne Chittleborough](#) highlights the following selection from the publications added to the *Australian Literary Responses to 'Asia'* subset during 2007:

Titles featuring South Asia:

- [Lucky Baby Yak](#), a picture book by [Max Maxfield](#) and [Helen Manos](#) about Tibetan nomads
 - Irish-born singer-songwriter [Damien Leith](#)'s [One More Time](#), set in the mountains of Nepal
 - [Adib Khan](#)'s novel [Spiral Road](#) in which the character Masud Alam, having lived in Australia for 30 of his past 53 years, returns to Bangladesh to say goodbye to his dying father and to reconnect with his family
- and
- Two autobiographical works for adults, [Lincoln Hall](#)'s remarkable account of his experiences in [Dead Lucky: Life after Death on Mount Everest](#) and [Garry Weare](#)'s [A Long Walk in the Himalaya. A Trek from the Ganges to Kashmir](#)

Australian literary reflections of 'Asia' include writings by the 'Asian' diaspora in Australia as they view their heritage and homelands, and as they perceive themselves to be viewed by Australians. This year has seen the publication of:

- The bi-lingual [Seri Lao: An Anthology of Lao-Australian Refugee Writings](#), a forum for Lao-Australian voices to be read aloud, with personal stories of migration, history and affirmation of the importance of Lao culture
- [Pauline Nguyen](#)'s [Secrets of the Red Lantern](#), the story of her family's refugee flight to Australia and a source of recipes for classic Vietnamese dishes
- [Ouyang Yu](#), in [Bias: Offensively Chinese/Australian](#), includes a chapter on recent

mainland Chinese writing on Australia

- [Jose Wendell Capili's 'Southeast Asian Diaspora Writers in Australia and the Consequence of Community-Based Initiatives'](#) in his *From the Editors: Migrant Communities and Emerging Australian Literature* in which he notes the difficulty of finding an audience for community-based Southeast Asian writers in Australia
- [Ngoc-Tuan Hoang's 'My Long Journey with New and Emerging Vietnamese-Australian Writers'](#) telling of his setting up of the journal *Tap Hop* and its later development into *Viet* – the first professional Vietnamese-language literary journal in Australia – and *Tien Ve*, the Vietnamese on-line journal

and

- Another internet venture *Peril: Asian Australian Journal*, a journal that aims to 'build a critical mass of Asian-Australian art and cultural concerns'

And finally, Anne notes, '2007 publications are remarkable for the number of works published for children and young adults. Books for young people for 2005-2007 are double those of the preceding three years (2002-2004). One might hope that the barriers between east and west are in fact being broken down in younger generations'.

New AustLit Records

During October and November 2007, the Content Development Team added:

- 6,617 new works
- and
- 1,695 new agents (individuals and organisations)

In addition to these new records, over 12,700 existing work and agent records have been upgraded and enhanced.

In the News

New Australian Government Announces New Writing Prizes

The newly-elected Labor Government will recognise the cultural contribution of Australia's writers in the form of two new awards. The Prime Minister's Literary Prizes for Fiction and for Non-Fiction will both carry prize money of \$100,000; a further \$100,000 will be spent on administration and promotion. The value of the awards makes them Australia's richest writing prizes (more than doubling the amount offered by the Miles Franklin Literary Award) and among the richest in the world.

The [Australian Society of Authors](#) welcomed the announcement of the prizes and is particularly pleased that they will be offered tax-free, a policy the organisation has been encouraging the

government to adopt for all awards and grants to creators. (Media release, 5 December 2007)

It is expected that the new awards will be open to Australian writers working anywhere in the world, and writing on any topic, and that they will be administered by the Arts section of the newly created [Department of the Environment, Water, Heritage and the Arts](#). Arts Minister, [the Hon. Peter Garrett](#), will appoint judges for the two categories. Those judges will then make recommendations to the Prime Minister, the Hon. Kevin Rudd.

The *Australian* newspaper reported immediate delight among the country's literary community. [Alexis Wright](#), winner of this year's Miles Franklin Award for *Carpentaria*, commented that '[t]here's some realisation of how important literature is to the country, and it's marvellous to see this sort of support'. [Louise Adler](#) from [Melbourne University Publishing](#) agreed: 'To have the PM's imprimatur couldn't be more important and of greater significance'. [Alex Miller](#), a dual-Miles Franklin winner, also responded positively to the award, but added a note of realism to the celebrations. 'I don't think many novelists or non-fiction writers do it for the money', he said, 'or are motivated by money'. (*Australian*, 5 December 2007)

Westerly Loses Funding

[Westerly](#), one of Australia's oldest literary magazines, has lost its state government funding for 2008. *Westerly's* application for next year was rejected by [ArtsWA](#), Western Australia's Department of Culture and the Arts, despite the magazine having received regular funding for over thirty years. *Westerly's* co-editors, [Associate Professor Delys Bird](#) and [Professor Denis Haskell](#), had planned to publish two issues next year and to continue that pattern into the foreseeable future. They will now publish a single issue from reserves and re-apply for further funding. (*Westerly* has been a quarterly journal for much of its life, but moved to annual issues in 2000.)

Associate Professor Bird writes that *Westerly* 'has long been seen as the flagship for West Australian writing' and, through its pages, has fostered the careers of writers such as [Elizabeth Jolley](#), [Robert Drewe](#), [Tim Winton](#), [Marion Campbell](#), [Simone Lazaroo](#), [Philip Salom](#), [John Kinsella](#), [Fay Zwicky](#) and [Dorothy Hewett](#). A lack of funding, she says, places 'this very prestigious journal' in 'grave jeopardy'.

PEN Promotes Public Debate

On 14 November [Christos Tsiolkas](#) delivered the third [Sydney PEN](#) lecture for 2007. Tsiolkas probed the notion of tolerance in a lecture titled 'Why Can't We All Get Along'. 'It is true', said Tsiolkas, 'that when we speak of a tolerant person we are intending a compliment. This holds true when we describe a culture as tolerant. Opposed to this, someone who is intolerant, a society that is intolerant, is someone and something we would like to distance ourselves from ... But if being tolerant is a virtue, the act of extending tolerance is more ambiguous, nuanced and complicated. We keep some distance from that which we tolerate. If I was to say to a friend, "I tolerate your

friend", it would most probably be taken as an insult; the implication is that there is something about the friend that we may even dislike. We are putting up with them out of sufferance.

'To reflect on the concept of acceptance seems apposite here, because when we affirm we accept a person or a belief we are affirming an identification with that person, a shared respect for the belief. That is not what occurs when we extend tolerance. The more we begin to explore the spaces between tolerance as a noun, as an adjective and as a verb, the more ambiguous the word becomes.' (Extract published in the *Sydney Morning Herald*, 3 November 2007)

Tsiolkas's lecture is one of a series of three public lectures exploring the 'prickly issues facing contemporary Australia'. Sydney PEN is using the series 'to foster the new generation of exciting free thinkers who can fuel vital public debate' with the aim of demonstrating 'how a writer's talents, ideas and analysis can contribute greatly to the life of a nation'. PEN secured funding from the [Copyright Agency Limited](#) for the project and, in 2008, [Allen and Unwin](#) will publish this year's lectures. Joining Tsiolkas in the collection will be Gideon Haigh and Alexis Wright who addressed themes of 'fear' and 'prejudice'.

Sydney PEN is one of 144 International PEN Centres in 101 countries. International PEN is 'a worldwide association of writers, whose aim is to emphasise the role of literature in the development of mutual understanding and world culture.'

Literature Board Announces Successful Grant Applications

The Literature Board of the [Australia Council](#) has announced the successful applicants in the latest round of literature grants. Board Chair, [Imre Salusinszky](#), reported that '[w]hile the workload at this annual meeting is always daunting for Board Members and advisers, it is also a privilege and a pleasure to witness the extraordinary range of literary endeavour taking place in Australia'.

Among the projects supported by the Board is an application from the People's Literature Publishing House. This Chinese publisher, established in 1951, is a highly regarded publisher of art and literature and has specialised in high quality translations of foreign works. The Board approved an application to provide support for translations of *Theft: A Love Story* by [Peter Carey](#) and *The Red Thread* by [Nicholas Jose](#). Salusinszky said: 'Expanding the overseas market for Australian literature remains a strong priority for the Board and this publisher is building a very good list of Australian titles'. (Chair's Comments, Assessment Meeting Report, 26 October 2007) Australian books published in recent years by the People's Literature Publishing House include [Melina Marchetta's](#) *Looking for Alibrandi*, [Geraldine Brooks's](#) *Year of Wonders: A Novel of the Plague*, [Colleen McCullough's](#) *Morgan's Run* and [Doris Pilkington's](#) *Follow the Rabbit-Proof Fence*.

The Board announced grants to emerging, new and established writers to the value of

\$1,705,000. It also provided \$100,000 each to novelist [Amanda Lohrey](#) and poet [John Tranter](#) in the form of Fellowships. A full list of grant recipients is available in the [Assessment Meeting Report](#) on the Australia Council's website.

Australian Speculative Fiction Showcased in New York

The 2007 [World Fantasy Convention](#) in Saratoga Springs, New York, provided an ideal opportunity for Australian writers of speculative fiction to showcase their wares. On 30 October the Australian Consul-General, John Olsen, launched a catalogue of forthcoming books by more than 160 Australian fantasy and science fiction writers. The catalogue also includes author profiles and the contact details of Australian writers, agents and publishers.

The catalogue is an initiative of [Garth Nix](#), [Deborah Biancotti](#), [Jonathan Strahan](#) and Chair of the [ACT Writers' Centre](#) Trevor Stafford. Speaking on behalf of the co-ordinating team, Garth Nix told *Bookseller + Publisher's Weekly Book Newsletter*: 'We anticipate that the catalogue and the connections it will help forge will assist Australian writers of fantasy and science fiction gain representation and book deals in the USA and elsewhere'. (31 October 2007) The complete catalogue will soon be accessible [online](#).

Nix pre-empted the campaign when his Australian publisher, [Allen and Unwin](#), sold North American rights for three Nix titles to [HarperCollins](#). The new books will include a prequel and a sequel to Nix's *The Old Kingdom* series.

Brendan Cowell's Bollywood Adventure

Playwright, actor and filmmaker [Brendan Cowell](#) visited India during October to research the script for a feature film about cricket. 'It's going to be funny because it's guys, cricket and India. It's chubby men in white pants standing around all fascinated over a hard, red sphere, all day long', Cowell told the Indo-Asian News Service. ('Sledging Aside, Cricket Is "Funny"', 12 October 2007) Cowell's film will be loosely based on the 2005 documentary *Save Your Legs* – the story of the Abbotsford Anglers Cricket Team tour of India in 2001. (The team plays D-grade cricket in Melbourne.)

Cowell's intention is to 'make a film about relationships – about male relationships, about those friendships that go back to when we were boys and now, at 30–35 everything changes because things like marriage and kids and renovations take the front seat and the age old collective known as "the boys" starts to fall away'. ('Sledging Aside') Cowell will cast an Indian in the lead role; filming will be mainly in Melbourne, but with some scenes shot at cricket grounds in India. (Cowell planned to attend the India-Australia one-day game in Mumbai on 17 October as part of his 'research'. If he made it to Wankhede Stadium he would have seen India defeat the tourists.)

Descendant Continues Mitchell Legacy

John Merewether, great-great nephew of [David Scott Mitchell](#), is maintaining his family's

philanthropy to the library world. (Mitchell was an early collector of Australiana who bequeathed his unparalleled collection to the Public Library of New South Wales. The collection is now housed at the [Mitchell Library, State Library of New South Wales](#).) In October 2007 Merewether gifted a reported \$500,000 to the State Library of New South Wales to fund two new annual fellowships. The Mitchell Fellowship will be directed to general Australian research and The Merewether Fellowship will focus on research into New South Wales.

Merewether, a retired architect, is by no means a bibliophile. 'Quite literally I have never read a novel right the way through', he told the *Sydney Morning Herald's* Steve Meacham. (1 October 2007) Merewether does, however, recognise a 'family responsibility' and the fact that 'at 84, I've accumulated a few bob' allows him to indulge what he terms a 'rather vain proprietorship'.

Ongoing Funding for Educational Lending Right Programme

On 8 October the outgoing Minister for the Arts and Sport, Senator George Brandis, announced the Australian Government's continued commitment to the Educational Lending Rights (ELR) scheme. The scheme makes payments to authors and publishers whose books are held in educational libraries. Funding was due to lapse in 2008.

Senator Brandis declared the scheme 'an important contributor to the livelihood of many Australian authors and publishers' and acknowledged its role in supporting 'the development of Australian writing'. He also recognised the unique status of ELR: 'no other schemes aimed at educational publishing operate anywhere else in the world'. ([Media statement](#), 8 October 2007)

In 2006-2007 ELR payments of \$10.4 million were made to nearly 10,000 authors and over 350 publishers.

The [Australian Society of Authors](#) (ASA) welcomed Senator Brandis's announcement, but expressed concern at the omission of a funding amount. The ASA would like to see an increase in the capital pool from the current \$10.4 million to \$16 million, and would prefer the funding amount be indexed in line with the Wage Cost Index. (ASA media statement, 11 October 2007)

Huggins's Papers Find a Home at AIATSIS

[Dr Jackie Huggins](#), Deputy Director of the [Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Studies Unit](#) at the University of Queensland, Co-Chair of [Reconciliation Australia](#) and a 2008 Chief Investigator with AustLit, has deposited her papers with the [Australian Institute of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Studies](#) (AIATSIS) becoming one the first Indigenous leaders to do so.

Dr Huggins told the recent AIATSIS Conference in Canberra: 'I understand libraries and the whole process of keeping papers – I'm a historian – so I hoard things'. (AIATSIS media release, 6 November 2007) Her donated papers comprise 30 boxes of materials covering the years 1916 to 2007, with an emphasis on the period 1969 to the present.

AIATSIS anticipates the papers will be used by researchers and students of Indigenous Australian history and politics, and by those interested in Australia's history of reconciliation.

Online Exhibition Highlights the Career of E. Morris Miller

A recent exhibition, curated by the [University of Tasmania](#), highlighted the extraordinary career of [E. Morris Miller](#), well known in the literature world for his 1940 publication *Australian Literature from Its Beginnings to 1935: A Descriptive and Bibliographical Survey of Books by Australian Authors in Poetry, Drama, Fiction, Criticism and Anthology with Subsidiary Entries to 1938*. The exhibition was sourced from materials held in the University's Special and Rare Materials Collection, the Fine Arts collection and the School of Psychology – an indication of the breadth of Miller's talents and interests.



E. Morris Miller, left, at his desk

Photograph, used with permission, from the University of Tasmania Special and Rare Materials Collections

Launching the exhibition, [Dr Philip Mead](#) acknowledged that '[b]ibliographers are hardly the celebrities of the literary and book world' and yet 'they are responsible for some of the most important infrastructure of our national culture'. Miller, together with Sir John Ferguson and Sir John Quick, 'was responsible', says Mead, 'for building the basic infrastructure of Australian literary studies and book history'.

Although the physical version of the exhibition closed in July 2007, virtual visitors can still peruse an online exhibition via the [University of Tasmania's website](#).

Winning Story Withdrawn from Newspaper Publication

The winner of the [State Library of Queensland's](#) Young Writers Award normally expects to receive \$2,000 and publication in Brisbane's *Courier-Mail* newspaper. This year's winner received the cash, but not the publication. [Joel Glazebrook's](#) prize-winning story, '[The Broom Closet](#)', deals with an emotionally and geographically isolated mother who ultimately chooses death for herself and her children. The judges described it as 'immensely powerful, written with a stunning economy ... haunting and unforgettable'.

David Fagan, editor at the *Courier-Mail*, told the *Australian's* [Rosemary Sorensen](#) that he was 'unhappy with the portrayal of the death of the central character. In my opinion, it glamorised suicide in a way I wasn't willing to publish in the *Courier-Mail*'. (*Weekend Australian*, 6-7 October 2007)

Glazebrook's story is available on the State Library of Queensland's website with the warning that it 'contains themes that may cause distress to some people'. Click [here](#) for a link to 'The Broom Closet'.

Australian Books Promoted Over Seas

Sydney writer [Felicia Starr](#) has initiated a scheme to place Australian books on board visiting US Navy and Coast Guard ships 'for the enjoyment of their service men and women'. The scheme, known as Aussie-Books-on-Board, is run under the auspices of the [Australian-American Association](#) (AAA). The organisation aims to foster good relations between Australians and Americans and, according to Starr, providing 'top-quality literature is an excellent place to start'.

Starr sourced new books through publishing houses and from writing colleagues and then presented them to US Vice Admiral Doug Crowder, Commander of the Seventh Fleet, when he visited Australia in July 2007.

(See picture, right, of Starr with US Admiral Crowder on board the USS Blue Ridge.)

Starr also made a presentation to Rear Admiral Rick Wren during his visit to Sydney for the USS *Kitty Hawk's* final tour prior to decommissioning. Admiral Wren promised to read each of the books before forwarding them on to the ship's library; 'a promise', says Starr, 'he is apparently keeping!'



Photograph courtesy of Felicia Starr

Eventually the AAA is keen to expand the Aussie-Books-on-Board project to include Royal Australian Navy vessels. In the meantime donations of books are warmly welcomed. Email austamerican@aol.com for further information.

Influential Writers of the 21st Century

The French literary review *Lire* has compiled a list of 50 international writers it believes will have 'a significant influence on the literature of the 21st century'. The list includes 21 writers from Europe, ten from the Americas, five from Africa, eleven from Asia and three from Australia. The selected Australians are [Nikki Gemmell](#), [Elliot Perlman](#) and [Tim Winton](#).

Most of the chosen writers are aged between 30 and 45 years. The Australians push the upper edge of that age range; Winton was born in 1960, Perlman in 1964 and Gemmell in 1967. The writers (selected by a group of editors) were judged on the impressions created by their novels. The editors looked for 'original choice of subject', an 'individual voice' and an 'unmistakeable style'. According to *Lire*, the 'incredible energy' disseminated through the writers' works 'gives reason to be optimistic regarding the future of literature'. (Quoted in a report by Ralf Klingsieck for the Frankfurt Book Fair)

A list of all 50 writers is available on the 2007 [Frankfurt Book Fair website](#).

Armani on Stage

The new co-directors of the [Sydney Theatre Company](#) (STC), [Cate Blanchett](#) and [Andrew Upton](#), have secured the patronage of Italian fashion designer Giorgio Armani for 2008. Armani's financial contribution will help fund STC productions in Australia and overseas, and will support the development of new talent through the STC's [Wharf 2Loud](#) programme. It is also possible that Armani will dress one of the STC's productions.

STC general manager, Rob Brookman, described the arrangement as 'a terrific convergence'. While grateful for the funding, Brookman is armed against complacency and is seeking further sponsorship: 'Only about 7.5 per cent of core funding comes from government, and even with these terrific gestures from Audi [principal sponsor] and Mr Armani this is still a very, very lean organisation'. (*Sydney Morning Herald*, 11 October 2007)

The Story Continues...

Australian Literature in School Curricula

Following the August 2007 Australian Literature in Education Roundtable (see [AustLit's August/September 2007 newsletter](#)) the New South Wales Minister for Education and Training, the Hon. John Della Bosca, has tasked his [Board of Studies](#) with finding options to 'strengthen the study of Australian literature in the State's English curriculum'. The Minister acknowledges that Australian literature already features strongly across school curricula, but believes 'more needs to be done to ensure all our students benefit from our home-grown authors'. ([Media release](#), 23 October 2007)

One of the options being investigated by the Board of Studies is the development of an in-depth, high level course in Australian literature to be offered as one of the existing Higher School Certificate Distinction Courses. (These courses are currently developed and delivered by various New South Wales universities.) The Board will provide its recommendations to the Minister in 2008.

In a similar move, Western Australia is introducing new Certificate of Education (WACE) courses in Literature in 2009 for students in years 11 and 12. Plans for these courses were well-developed before the August Roundtable, but they do complement that meeting's thinking as they require all students to study Australian writers. A consultation draft for the new courses is available on the [WACE website](#).

Wright Property Refused Heritage Listing

Efforts to have the 'Edge', former home of [Judith Wright](#), included on the National Heritage List have failed. When the 'Edge' was placed on the market by the current owners, the Duke of Edinburgh Award organisation, (see [AustLit's August/September 2007 newsletter](#)) Greens Senator Christine Milne applied to [National Heritage](#) for emergency listing. Her bid was rejected on 12 October. Senator Milne told the *Canberra Times* (5 November 2007) that the rejection was 'a real slap in the face' to Wright's legacy and declared herself 'extremely disappointed'.

The Senator also wrote to the Duke of Edinburgh but, in a reply from his private secretary, was told that Wright had agreed to the 'specific provision permitting [the property's] potential sale'. (Quoted in the *Canberra Times*, 5 November 2007) In a strongly-worded letter Wright's daughter, [Meredith McKinney](#), responded to that claim by maintaining that Wright had only 'grudgingly agreed' that the property be handed over the Duke of Edinburgh Award organisation when the Australian National University was unable to continue its custodianship of the 'Edge'. (*Canberra Times*, 7 November)

There is still hope that a potential benefactor will purchase the property and preserve it with sensitivity to Wright's national status. In the meantime, Senator Milne plans to approach the [New South Wales Heritage Office](#) to seek protection at state level.

Say It Again

- **Tony Birch**, author of the short story collection *Shadowboxing*, on the trials of being an author:
If you ask people what they most want to do in life, they often put 'write a book' high on the list ... The other one that is often on the list is running a marathon. I've done that too, and I'd rather run the marathon.
(*It's Different the First Time*, *Weekend Australian*, 3-4 November 2007)
- **Inga Clendinnen**, wrestling with the challenges of biographical and autobiographical writing:
I've come to think we are 'homo sapiens' only because we are 'homo narrator': able to organise individual and group experiences into stories, that most supple, elegant, economical and eminently portable form of communication, and so learn useful things from each other.

('Biography: The Impossible Art?', National Biography Award Lecture 2007. Full transcript and audio file available via the [State Library of Victoria website](#).)

- **Fergus Linehan**, artistic director of the [Sydney Festival](#), on the current pre-occupation with attracting younger theatre audiences:
"The most pressing reality that we need to embrace is not how to speak to late teens; it is how we plan to address the fastest-growing population in the country – those older than 60. It is my belief that while acknowledging the need to keep our work relevant to many age groups, it is time to show a bit more respect to the large, loyal and open-minded army of boomers that will be arriving soon at a theatre near you.
(An extract, published in the *Sydney Morning Herald*, 20 October 2007, from the 2007 Philip Parsons Memorial Lecture)

Recent Literary Awards & Shortlists

Gratifying Win for David Rowbotham

[David Rowbotham](#), a self-confessed loner who has long stood apart from literary circles, is a delighted winner of the 2007 Patrick White Award. Rowbotham told the *Australian's* Rosemary Sorensen that he had encountered snobbery and elitism in the literary world. 'People were not kind, and rebellion builds up in you. I did have some anger, and I have thought, "what is the point of writing poetry?" but this [award] puts everything right'. (*Australian*, 10 November 2007).

The Patrick White Award was instituted by [Patrick White](#) after he won the 1973 Nobel Prize for Literature. White used his prize money to establish a trust that now provides grants to Australian writers who have been 'creative over a long period', but have 'not received adequate recognition for their work'.

Rowbotham, aged 83, says the award is 'a fine way to mark the end of a life' and believes he won it not only for his own poetry, but for his encouragement of young poets. He agrees with publishers and editors who say that 'poetry doesn't sell', but believes that is because 'poetry has lost its way ... It's all lower case, no punctuation, no rhymes and it's difficult to know what it's all about. There are some good young poets', says Rowbotham, 'they just need the right guidance'. (*Courier-Mail*, 10 November 2007)

International Honours for Zusak

[Markus Zusak](#) has won two international prizes in 2007. In October, during the Frankfurt Book Fair, the winners of the German children's book prize, the Deutscher Jugendliteraturpreis, were announced. Zusak's *The Messenger*, in a German translation by Alexandra Ernst, was declared the winner of the Youth Jury Prize. He shares 8,000 euros in prize money with Ernst.

The previous month Zusak was awarded the Boeke Prize in South Africa for *The Book Thief*. The

Boeke Prize is sponsored by Exclusive Books, South Africa's leading book retailer, and is chosen by a panel of 38 book critics representing South Africa's media. The judging panel is tasked with selecting an 'unputdownable novel'. Their shortlist for 2007 included books by Cormac McCarthy, Richard North Patterson and Claire Messud.

Commenting on his win, Zusak said he was 'absolutely thrilled and honoured to receive the Boeke Prize. The idea behind the award is the very reason I started writing ... When I was sixteen, I was suddenly reading books that had me turning pages without noticing. I was inside the world of those books. I was living them, believing them completely ... Winning an award that celebrates books in that spirit is something I'm still finding hard to believe. It's even harder to fathom given the competition for the award. The authors on that list are people I would find myself stuttering in front of while I ask for their signature in one of their books, so I am honoured more than you can imagine.' (Biz Community media report, 26 September 2007)

Women in Crime Pass the Connex Test

Judges of this year's [Sisters in Crime](#)-sponsored Davitt Awards applied an innovative form of assessment to the nominated books – the Connex Text. According to one of the judges, crime reviewer [Dr Sue Turnbull](#), the test 'establishes whether or not the book was engaging enough to distract the reader from the tedium of travel on Melbourne's public transport system'. (Sisters in Crime media release, 2 November 2007)

The books that passed the test with flying colours and went on to become 2007 award winners are:

- [Undertow](#) by [Sydney Bauer](#) (Adult Crime Novel)
- [The Betrayal of Bindy Mackenzie](#) by [Jaclyn Moriarty](#) (Young Adult Novel)
- The true crime work, [Silent Death: The Killing of Julie Ramage](#) by [Karen Kissane](#) (True Crime and joint winner in the Readers' Choice category)

and

- [Devil's Food](#) by [Kerry Greenwood](#) (Readers' Choice joint winner)

It is the second joint win for Greenwood in the Readers' Choice category. In 2006 she was joint winner for another book in the [Corinna Chapman](#) series, [Heavenly Pleasures](#). Humorously channelling Chapman, a grateful Greenwood told the audience at the awards' presentation: 'The lady in question would wish me to say that of all presents, your attention is the most precious, and though fashions come and go, and though black trakkie daks may vanish from this earth, your affection will remain as one of our most cherished possessions'. (Media release) [Trick or Treat](#), the fourth book in Greenwood's [Corinna Chapman](#) series, has recently been released by [Allen and Unwin](#).

The Davitt Awards were set up in 2001 by Sisters in Crime to 'celebrate the achievements of Australian women crime writers'. In 2001, seven crime novels competed for the award; in 2007 16 adult crime novels and 11 young adult crime novels competed for the fiction prizes. The awards are named after [Ellen Davitt](#), author of *Force and Fraud* (1865), Australia's first mystery novel. Davitt's novel was re-published in 1993 by Mulini Press and is still available through the Press's *Australian Books on Demand* series. (Contact Victor Crittenden, P O Box 82, Jamison Centre, Cook, ACT, 2614, for further information.)

Milroy Collects Kate Challis RAKA Award

[David Milroy](#) is the 2007 winner of the Kate Challis RAKA Award for his play *Windmill Baby*. The award is one of Australia's richest for Indigenous creative artists. (This year the award's value rose to \$25,000.) The award recognises different five media – creative prose, drama, the visual arts, script writing and poetry – in an annual rotating cycle.

Milroy's *Windmill Baby* premiered in Western Australia in 2005 and has since toured arts festivals in England, Northern Ireland, Canada, India and France. It is produced by [Yirra Yaakin Aboriginal Corporation](#), of which Milroy is founding artistic director. Yirra Yaakin's executive producer, Sam Cook, believes Milroy's award not only confirms Yirra Yaakin as 'Australia's leading indigenous theatre company, it confirms David's place as one of the most successful and prolific playwrights of his generation'. (*West Australian*, 5 September 2007)

The Kate Challis RAKA Award is the fourth prize for Milroy's play. *Windmill Baby* has already won the Patrick White Playwright's Award (2003), the Perth Theatre Trust/Actors Equity Guild, Best New Play Award (2005) and a DEADLY Award (2006). Yirra Yaakin is planning to take *Windmill Baby* to Western Australia's Kimberley region in 2008 and possibly back to the United Kingdom. Cook believes the play has 'not come close to realising its international potential'. (*Melville Times*, 2 October 2007)

Inaugural Inky for Teenage Fiction

Three thousand young people from Australia and around the world have voted in the first Inky Awards. The voters chose [Simmons Howell](#)'s *Notes from the Teenage Underground* for the Golden Inky and American writer [John Green](#)'s *Looking for Alaska* for the Silver Inky. (The Golden Inky is awarded to an Australian book; the Silver Inky to an international work.)

Awards co-ordinator, Lili Wilkinson said: 'These awards reflect what teenagers want to read rather than what they are told to read'. (*Bookseller + Publisher Online*, 14 November 2007) The awards are sponsored by the [Centre for Youth Literature](#) at the State Library of Victoria. Each winner will receive a trophy and Howell will also receive \$2,000 in prize money.

The youth-oriented [Inside a Dog](#) website provides more details of the award. The site also has

news of competitions, audio and screen saver downloads, and an ongoing conversation with Inside a Dog's current writer-in-residence, YA fantasy author [Penni Russon](#).

Young Playwright's Award to Murphy

[Tommy Murphy](#), winner of the 2007 Philip Parsons Young Playwright's Award, wonders whether he can still technically be called 'young'. 'I think my hair's starting to fall out, so maybe I'm emerging now. But you can call me what you like as long as you come to my plays', Murphy told journalist Louise Schwartzkoff. (*Sydney Morning Herald*, 22 October 2007) Murphy probably does not need to worry on that score. His award-winning adaptation, *Holding the Man*, has just completed a third Sydney season at the [Belvoir Street Theatre](#). This season and the two earlier ones at the [SBW Stables Theatre](#) and the [Sydney Opera House](#) have all been sell-out productions.

The Philip Parsons Award is presented annually to a playwright under the age of 35 whose work demonstrates 'an original and compelling theatrical voice'. It offers the recipient a \$10,000 writer's commission with Sydney's Company B at the Belvoir Street Theatre. Murphy is especially pleased with the writing opportunity offered by the Philip Parsons Award: 'I want to use it to stretch myself and apply the lessons I learnt when I wrote *Holding the Man*.' (*Sydney Morning Herald*, 22 October 2007)

Australians Nominated for Astrid Lindgren Award

Two Australians are among the candidates for the 2008 Astrid Lindgren Memorial Award. [Sonya Hartnett](#) and [John Marsden](#), both of whom have been previously nominated during the award's short history, join 153 others in contention for the international prize for children's literature.

The award honours Astrid Lindgren (1907-2002) one of Sweden's, and the world's, most popular writers for young people, especially through her *Pippi Longstocking* series. Founded by the Swedish government, the award is publicly funded and offers prize money of five million Swedish krona (nearly AUD\$900,000). Authors, illustrators, storytellers and organisations are all eligible. This inclusiveness is designed as 'a signal ... that good children's and youth literature is worth millions. And our children are worth more than millions'. ([The Astrid Lindgren Memorial Award website](#)) Next year's winner will be announced in March 2008.

Other Recent Award Winners

A plethora of recent award announcements include the following:

- [Dr Anita Heiss](#) is the winner of the 2007 Scanlon Prize for Poetry. Formerly known as the Brencorp Prize, the Scanlon Prize recognises the best published collection of poems in English by an Indigenous Australian writer. Heiss receives the prize for her 2007

publication *I'm Not Racist, But...: A Collection of Social Observations*.

- The 2007 Asher Award goes to [Brenda Walker](#) for *The Wing of Night*. The Asher Award, funded from a bequest by Mrs Helen Waltraud Rosalie Asher, recognises a literary work by a female writer that carries an anti-war message or theme.
- [Terry Dowling](#) grabbed the spotlight in the recently announced 2006 International Horror Guild Awards. Dowling was joint winner in the Collection category for *Basic Black: Tales of Appropriate Fear*. He was also shortlisted in the Short Fiction category for 'Cheat Light', one of the stories from *Basic Black*.
- Judges of the Westfield Waverley Library Award for Literature selected [John Bailey's](#) *Mr Stuart's Track: The Forgotten Life of Australia's Greatest Explorer* as the 2007 award winner. Bailey's biography of John McDouall Stuart beat off competition from three autobiographical works – [Alice Pung's](#) *Unpolished Gem*, [Barry Jones's](#) *A Thinking Reed* and [David Hills's](#) *The Forgotten Children*.
- [Susanne Gervay](#) is this year's winner of the Lady Cutler Award for distinguished service to children's literature. Gervay was recognised for her 'generosity in supporting ... the ideals of the [Children's Book Council of Australia](#), her 'tireless work in encouraging authors and illustrators' and her 'contribution to the development of new authors'.
- On 4 October 2007 [Deborah Robertson](#) received the 2006 Colin Roderick Award (for 'the best book published in Australia which deals with any aspect of Australian life') for her novel *Careless*. Nominations are now open for the 2007 award and can be lodged until 28 February 2008. See the [application form](#) on the James Cook University website for more details.
- In the 2007 Inside Film Awards, Best Script and Best Feature Film went to [Dee McLachlan's](#) *The Jammed*. [Tony Ayres](#) (also nominated for Best Script) won Best Director for his semi-autobiographical film *The Home Song Stories*.
- Film critic Paul Byrnes is the latest winner of the Geraldine Pascall Prize for Critical Writing. Judges described Byrnes as one of the few Australian critics who 'pays serious attention to film as a vehicle for ideas'. (*Sydney Morning Herald*, 26 September 2007)
- *Jonestown : The Power and the Myth of Alan Jones* by [Chris Masters](#) is the winner of the 2007 Walkley Award for Best Non-Fiction Book; [Frank Moorhouse](#) takes the Social Equity Journalism Award for his essay 'The Writer in a Time of Terror'.

This Month's Spotlight

Excursions on the Research Track

During the course of 2007, AustLit researchers have continued work on the final volumes of *The Bibliography of Australian Literature (BAL)*. As work progressed (seemingly incrementally and always painstakingly), the researchers have sometimes found themselves captivated by particular authors. Often it was a 'minor' author who would spark a researcher's interest. Sometimes the interest uncovered a mistaken identity or a previously unknown connection. On one occasion it

even gave rise to a fresh creative outpouring.

Rebecca Carter was a Senior Library Assistant in the [Social Sciences and Humanities Library](#) at the University of Queensland prior to joining the AustLit team in 2006. This year Rebecca has had cause to delve into the lives of two authors who spent time in gaol and whose cases attracted much attention at the time because of legal complexities. One author was the English-born Thomas Suffield, the other an itinerant and fiercely patriotic Irishman named Gerald Supple. Rebecca writes:

[Thomas Suffield](#) was employed at a Lambton colliery driving a pumping engine when he was charged in December 1890 with assault. He was found guilty the following year and sentenced to 10 years imprisonment. Suffield continually protested his innocence and declined to be released from prison until his innocence was declared. On several occasions he refused to be freed on remission as this would not remove the stigma of conviction.

Suffield was to become a *cause célèbre*. The *Bulletin*, which later published some of his poetry, also published [A. G. Stephens's *The Suffield Case: The Evidence at the Police Court and at the Trial with a Plan of the Scene of the Alleged Outrage, and a Commentary on the Methods and Manoeuvres of Botany Bay Justice*](#) (1890). Not long after his release Suffield published his one book of poetry, pointedly titled [Thro' Prison Bars: Songs of Servitude by Thomas Suffield, for Seven Years and Ten Months a Prisoner in Her Majesty's Prisons of N.S.W.](#)

Gerald Supple, another immigrant, began his writing career in London producing, among other pieces, some patriotic Irish ballads. (He is reputed to have been involved at one time in an insurrection planned for the Irish town of Meath.) After arriving in Australia Supple studied for the bar and continued writing. His articles appeared in the Melbourne newspapers, the *Herald*, the *Age* and the *Argus*. Apparently not beholden to his sometime-employer, Supple was roused by anti-Irish sentiments expressed by the editor of the *Age* and attempted to shoot him. Due to Supple's near-sightedness, he only wounded the editor but accidentally killed a bystander. In 1870 Supple was sentenced to hang for murder. A second trial, precipitated by a point of law on intention to kill, reduced the sentence to 20 years in gaol.

Supple continued to write while he was in gaol (to support his sisters in New Zealand) and his work appeared in the *Australasian*. After serving eight years of his sentence, he was released from gaol (shortly after the death of his original murder target) and promptly left Australia to join his two sisters. Supple supported himself and his sisters by working for the *New Zealand Herald*. His poems subsequently appeared in Irish and Australian anthologies (Hayes's *Ballads of Ireland* and Sladen's *Australian Poets: 1788-1888*) and in *Bentley's Miscellany*.

Supple also wrote *The History of the Invasion of Ireland by the Anglo-Normans*, published in Dublin in 1856.

Rebecca concludes: 'what was also interesting about Suffield and Supple was that A.G. Stephens got involved in both cases. I wondered about that but didn't have time to go into detail.' Such is the lot of a time-pressed *BAL* worker!

Jim Cleary is a former senior librarian at the University of Newcastle and has worked in the educational policy field. This year Jim's *BAL* research – displaying his usual curiosity and reading around an author's life while scouring for additional bibliographical information – uncovered the little-known woman writer [Gertrude Scarlett](#). Scarlett had not previously appeared in AustLit nor was she included in [Deborah Adelaide's *Bibliography of Australian Women's Literature 1795-1990*](#) (1991).

Jim was working on the author [Charles Shaw](#) when he noticed the following reference in [Nancy Keesing's](#) autobiography, *Riding the Elephant* (1988): 'Nor can one know how many good books were "lost" during the Depression, either because their authors could not afford time or energy for writing, or dissipated their talent writing hack work for quick cash, as did my friends Gertrude Scarlett, Charles Shaw and [Eric Schlunke](#) – though Shaw and Schlunke wrote substantial works after World War II.' (209) Jim continues the story:

Consulting Keesing and checking AustLit, I realised that Gertrude Scarlett was a significant writer who had been totally overlooked due to her use of pseudonyms and the destruction of her regular correspondence. She was most likely born in the 1890s. She married the prominent Australian musician Robert Dalley-Scarlett in 1909 and had two sons by him in 1910 and 1914. Dalley-Scarlett left her for another woman, according to Nancy Keesing (45), and moved to Brisbane as an organist. The devastated wife was left to raise their two sons without support in Sydney and turned to writing throughout the inter-war years.

'Using a galaxy of pseudonyms', (45) Scarlett wrote everything from recipes, household hints and childcare tips to natural history, gardening and humorous incidents. She received a penny or two per line in a variety of journals including the Sydney *Bulletin* and the *Australian Woman's Mirror*. She apparently sent fifty paragraphs per week to magazines. Keesing (45) remembers that Scarlett also wrote 'short stories varying from "true love" to adventure. She wrote a good deal for early radio; lyrics for one of the community singing groups popular in the depression; and a few book reviews'. The only published work listed in a library catalogue under Scarlett's own name is the short story '[Three Memories and a Garden Party](#)'. That title appears in the *Mitchell Library Dictionary Catalog of Printed Books* (1968) and has now been added to AustLit.

Keesing met Scarlett at the Sydney Short Story Club in 1941 where Keesing was a resident 'expert' appraising literary contributions. Keesing (43-44) says: 'After a year or so the only opinion I really valued was Gertrude Scarlett's ... It was Scarlett who lent me [Christina Stead's *Seven Poor Men of Sydney*](#) long before she was well-known in her own country'.

Scarlett and Keesing maintained a voluminous correspondence, spanning three decades. Unfortunately, concludes Jim, Scarlett requested that Keesing burn the papers and Keesing obeyed.

Contemporary scholars are now presented with the challenge of assisting AustLit to uncover the hundreds of short stories and other articles written by Gertrude Scarlett under a variety of pseudonyms no longer known.

Cathy Leutenegger is on secondment to AustLit from the University of Queensland's [Fryer Library](#) where she has been the Manuscript Librarian. Naturally intrigued by early authors, she became fascinated by the case of the two Herr Müllers. Cathy writes:

Sometimes the similarities between two authors are so many that it is understandable that a historian, writing about them almost a century later, would decide that the two are actually one, and treat them as such. This was the case with the two Theodor Müllers, who were described as one person by Augustin Lodewyckx in his 1932 book, *Die Deutschen in Australien*. Lodewyckx's book has long been considered an authoritative work on the history of Germans in Australia. Library cataloguers perpetuated his error, treating the two Müllers as one. It was only relatively recently that two researchers, John Fletcher and Thomas A. Darragh, separately recognised and sorted out the confusion. (They have written independently about their discoveries, but have also talked together about them.)

The similarities between the two Müllers are striking. Both were in Australia for a period of twenty years in the mid-nineteenth century, many of those years overlapping. Both returned to their homelands and wrote in German about their experiences, in books published within a year of each other. One Herr Müller was German, however, and the other Swiss. The German [Müller](#) was an active member of Victoria's German community, achieving some fame for his poems in German-language newspapers. The Swiss [Müller](#), who worked in various occupations such as gardener and farm-hand in New South Wales and Queensland, appears to have saved his literary energies for his return home, when he wrote a memoir of his experiences. This has recently been published in English as [The Swiss Swagman: Nineteen Years in Australia](#) (2007)

Although these two writers documented well their experiences in Australia, I am

still left wondering what on earth possessed them to leave their comfortable lives in Europe for twenty years of working in often lowly occupations in the harsh conditions of Australia. And what was it in the end that made them return to their homelands? These are the kind of ultimately unanswerable questions that capture the imagination of the AustLit researcher!

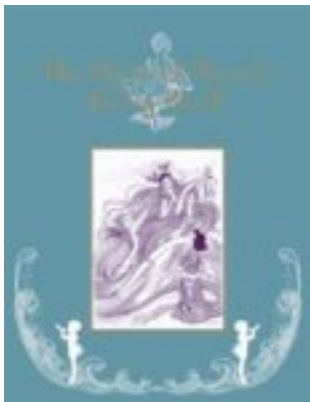
Peter Knox came to the AustLit team from the University of Wollongong (where he's halfway through a PhD on **Melinda Kendall**, mother of the better-known **Henry Kendall**). Peter is also a weekend musician.

During my BAL research, I came upon a book of poems (a loose description of the book's contents) titled *Rhymes of a Reveller* (1945) by **Thomas Wilfred Nathan**. I've set two of these poems to music – 'The Lane below the Flats' and 'Denunciation' – and now perform them regularly, with my band *Paspalum*, at venues around the Tweed area in northern New South Wales.

New Publications

Children's Classics Revived

The stories of **May Gibbs** and **Pixie O'Harris** are treasured by generations of Australian children (and their parents). Now some of their best-known stories have been re-published in new compilation editions.



Pan Macmillan has just released *The Pixie O'Harris Fairy Book* featuring the tales of *Pearl Pinkie and Sea Greenie*, the poems and stories from both *The Pixie O'Harris Story Book* and *The Pixie O'Harris Gift Book* and the contents of the original 1925 *Pixie O'Harris Fairy Book*.

Cover, left, of *Pixie O'Harris Fairy Book* (2007)
Used with permission of Pan Macmillan

O'Harris wrote and illustrated dozens of children's books and newspaper stories in a career that spanned more than 60 years. She grew up in Wales and studied art there before migrating to Australia with her family in 1920. The story of O'Harris's youth is told in *Our Small Safe World: Recollections of a Welsh Childhood*; a broader view of her life is found in her 1983 autobiography *Was It Yesterday?*

O'Harris continues to be honoured through the Pixie O'Harris Award presented annually as part of the **Australian Book Industry Awards**. The award in O'Harris's name recognises those who

have 'worked consistently in children's literature, demonstrated a commitment beyond the call of duty and developed a reputation for their contribution to the industry'.

Like O'Harris, May Gibbs created a fantasy world for child-readers.

[HarperCollins](#) has breathed new life into Gibbs's world with the release of a deluxe edition of *The Complete Adventures of Snugglepoot and Cuddleprie*.

This publication combines the three original Snugglepoot and Cuddleprie titles – *Snugglepoot and Cuddleprie: Their Adventures Wonderful*, *Little Ragged Blossom* and *Little Obelia*.



Cover, right, of *Snugglepoot and Cuddleprie* (2007)

Used with permission of HarperCollins

2007 marks the 130th anniversary of Gibbs's birth in England in 1877. She came to Australia in 1881 and returned to the United Kingdom twice in the early years of the 20th century to further her art studies. Back in Australia, Gibbs, like O'Harris, derived some of her income as an illustrator for newspapers.

While O'Harris's name lives on through the Pixie O'Harris Award, Gibbs's legacy is maintained by the [May Gibbs Children's Literature Trust](#). The Trust values the creators of Australian children's literature 'for their role in the preservation and shaping of our culture'. It supports those creators through its [Residential Fellowships](#) and through access to its [studio apartments](#).

HHR Project Reaches Completion

The publication of a three-volume, unabridged edition of [Henry Handel Richardson's](#) *The Fortunes of Richard Mahony* brings to a close the more than decade-long [Monash Henry Handel Richardson Project](#). The Project, led by [Professor Clive Probyn](#) and [Associate Professor Bruce Steele](#), aimed to produce critical editions of Richardson's 'six novels, two volumes of music, three volumes of letters, one of short stories, and associated material'. The Project's first assignment was *Maurice Guest*, published in 1998 by the [University of Queensland Press](#) and the [Australian Academy of the Humanities](#); its final edition has now reached the bookstores.

Filmmaker [Bruce Beresford](#) launched *The Fortunes of Richard Mahony*, published by [Australian Scholarly Publishing](#), at the [State Library of Victoria](#) on 12 October 2007. Beresford, who directed the 1978 film-adaptation of Richardson's *The Getting of Wisdom*, emphasised the historical value of the *Mahony* trilogy: '[then Prime Minister] Howard's on at the moment about teaching Australian history in schools. What a great historical saga this is! ... It would give kids an amazing and colourful insight into that whole period, a half-century or more, from the gold rushes onwards.' (*Age*, 13 October 2007)

The first omnibus edition of Richardson's mammoth trilogy became available to Australian readers in late 1930, but it was a severely abridged edition. Richardson cut 12,000 words from *The Fortunes of Richard Mahony: Australia Felix I* alone. 'Consequently', says Probyn, 'the first volume, the most "Australian" as well as the most drastically cut of the three volumes, remained largely unavailable and unread, particularly in [Richardson's] home country'. (Clive Probyn, "'Another Colosse on Hand": Henry Handel Richardson's *The Fortunes of Richard Mahony*', *Australian Book Review* 295 (2007): 31) Nevertheless, he continues, '[F]ifteen thousand copies sold on the day of publication (18 November 1930), and an immediate reprinting of 20,000 copies was begun'.

As a result of the Monash Henry Handel Richardson Project, all of Richardson's works are now in print in Australia in complete versions. While lauding this achievement, the *Australian Book Review* (ABR) has recently called for an Australian project similar in scope to the USA's *Library of America*. The Library of America is a non-profit publisher 'dedicated to publishing, and keeping in print, authoritative editions of America's best and most significant writing'. As ABR says: 'Now there is an ambitious project for a visionary Australian philanthropist of philanthropic trust'. (October 2007)

Submissions & Applications

Conference Paper Submissions Invited

A range of literature-related conferences is currently seeking submissions. These include:

- **The American Association of Australian Literary Studies (AAALS)**
The annual [The American Association of Australian Literary Studies](#) (AAALS) conference will be held in Austin, Texas from 28 February to 1 March 2008. 'AAALS welcomes papers on any aspect of Australian or Antipodean literature or culture.'

The deadline for submission of paper proposals is 5 January 2008. For further details, see the [Annual Conference section](#) of the AAALS website.

- **The Art of the Real: Creative Non-Fiction**
The Literature, Cinema, Culture Research Group, [School of Humanities and Social Sciences](#) at the University of Newcastle seeks abstracts for 20-minute papers, panels, writing workshops and roundtable discussions. Topics may include genres and forms; tensions between the 'real' and the 'fictional'; the profusion of genres and sub-genres in contemporary life writing; true crime; travel writing; nature writing; poetry/poetics of the self; reportage; biography, memoir and autobiography; ficto-criticism; DIY media; and the pedagogy of creative non-fiction.

Abstracts and expressions of interest should be forwarded to the conference co-convenor Dr Ros Smith (Ros.Smith@newcastle.edu.au) no later than 18 January, 2008.

- **Poetry and the Trace: An International Conference**

Monash University's [School of English, Communications and Performance Studies](#) and its [Centre for Women's Studies and Gender Research](#) are joint sponsors of a conference focussing on the relationship between the language of poetry and the language of memory and desire.

Proposals are invited for papers that consider the theme of the trace in relation to poetry of any kind. Forward abstracts of 200-300 words together with a brief biographical note to one of the conference convenors:

Ann Vickery: Ann.Vickery@arts.monash.edu.au

John Hawke: John.Hawke@arts.monash.edu.au

or

Rose Lucas: Rose.Lucas@arts.monash.edu.au

The deadline for submissions is 1 February 2008.

- **Other Worlds in Children's Literature: Fantasy, Reality and Imagination**

The 8th International Conference of the [Australasian Children's Literature Association for Research](#) (ACLAR) will be held at Victoria University of Wellington, New Zealand, from 27 to 29 June 2008. The conference will consider such themes as the role of reality and fantasy play in children's literature, the stimulation of children's imaginations through fantastic and realistic worlds, and crossovers and overlappings between reality and fantasy (or whether a clear separation even exists).

Abstracts (no longer than 300 words) for proposed 20-minute papers should be sent to Anna Jackson (anna.jackson@vuw.ac.nz) by 31 January 2008.

Contributions Sought for Bernard Hickey Tribute

[Professoressa Maria Renata Dolce](#) and [Professoressa Antonella Riem Natale](#), both old friends and former students of [Professor Bernard Hickey](#), are planning to publish a collection in memory of Professor Hickey who died earlier this year. The book, provisionally titled 'The Wizard of Oz. In Memory of Bernard Hickey, Literature's Roving Ambassador', will include tributes on the subjects Professor Hickey cared about most deeply. Possible themes include: the relationship between Australia and Europe; Indigenous culture; migration, diaspora and multiculturalism; and travel writing.

Articles, between 15,000 and 30,000 characters in length (including spaces), should be underpinned by original research or present an original framework built on previous research.

Articles, together with an abstract (maximum 150 words) and a biography (maximum 100 words) must be submitted by the 31 January 2008 to:
mariarenata.dolce@ateneo.unile.it

For further information on submission guidelines, including formatting, contact:
Antonella Riem Natale (antonella.riem@uniud.it)
or
Maria Renata Dolce (mariarenata.dolce@ateneo.unile.it)

ASA Seeks Feedback from Educational Writers

The [Australian Society of Authors](#) (ASA) is seeking feedback from educational writers 'in order to obtain concrete evidence of current publishing practices and issues facing writers today' and to develop a network of support.

Educational publishing in Australia is worth over \$500 million and accounts for approximately one third of the Australian publishing industry. Each year around 4,600 new Australian educational titles are released.

To take part in the ASA's survey follow the link from the Association's [website](#) or link directly to the survey [here](#).

'Boot Camp' for Speculative Fiction Writers

Applications will soon open for the 2009 Clarion Science Fiction & Fantasy Writers' Workshop. The intensive six-week workshop, sometimes described as 'boot camp' for speculative fiction writers, is aimed at those preparing for a professional career in the science fiction and fantasy genres.

The workshop is residential and is open to emerging writers (not beginners) 'who lack opportunities to meet with their peers and polish their craft'. It will be held in Brisbane from 4 January to 14 February 2009 with tutoring provided by [Sean Williams](#), [Marianne de Pierres](#), [Margo Lanagan](#), [Jack Dann](#) and American writers Kelly Link and Gavin J. Grant.

Further details about the workshop, including the application form, are available on [Clarion's website](#). Applications open on 1 February 2008 and close on 30 June 2008.

Want More?

For more conferences, festivals and other literary opportunities see the [AustLit Events Directory](#). If you have new events of interest to the Australian literature, teaching and research communities and the general public please complete the form provided on the [Events Submission page](#) on our website.

News of conferences in the literary world and in wider spheres is also available on the [Australian Public Intellectual Network](#) (API) website. Select the link to the API Annual Calendar.

Time and Tide

Guy Morrison (1917-2007)

[Guy Morrison](#) made a 'sea change' long before the idea reached its current popularity. In the 1940s he and his family left Brisbane to live on a small island in the Great Barrier Reef. His book *We Shared an Island* (1951) provides an account of their experiences and their attempts to establish a colony for writers and artists. (The experiment came to an end when a cyclone demolished their dwelling.)

Morrison is described by Sandra Symons (*Sydney Morning Herald*, 23 October 2007) as 'a gifted journalist and editor, poet and playwright. His life was devoted to literature, theatre, music and art, and driven by a commitment to social justice'. Symons says that in the late 1960s Morrison was one of the instigators of Arts Vietnam, an organisation that voiced the protest sentiments of the Australian arts community. He was also a driving force behind Apmira Artists for Aboriginal Land Rights in the late 1970s. Apmira organised concerts and art exhibitions in the early 1980s attracting the support of prominent writers, artists and musicians including [Faith Bandler](#), [Les Murray](#), [Lloyd Rees](#) and [Peter Sculthorpe](#).

Morrison worked for newspapers in London, Sydney and Canberra, including a period as the Features editor for the *Sydney Morning Herald*.

Marcie Muir (1919-2007)

Biographer and bibliographer [Marcie Muir](#) is best known for her substantial two-volume compilation *A Bibliography of Australian Children's Books* and for the first volume of *Australian Children's Books: A Bibliography*, covering the period 1774 to 1972. (The second and third volumes of *Australian Children's Books* were prepared by [Kerry White](#).)

Muir's pioneering work was inspired by her husband, bookseller and founder of [Wakefield Press](#), [Harry Muir](#), who urged Muir to delve into the publishing of children's books with an eye to both the text and the illustrations. In 1978, two years after the publication of *A Bibliography of Australian Children's Books*'s second volume, husband and wife were jointly recognised as winners of the NBC Bookman of the Year Award. More honours were to follow for Marcie Muir. She was the inaugural winner of the Nan Chauncy Award in 1983 and the winner of the Australian Library and Information Association's Redmond Barry Award in 1988. The Chauncy Award recognised Muir's outstanding contribution to the field of Australian children's literature while the Barry Award was for her outstanding commitment to the library world.

In addition to her bibliographic work, Muir composed articles for reference works, compiled an

anthology of South Australian poetry and prose for children, prepared a history of Wakefield Press and wrote a range of biographies. Her biographical subjects included [Charlotte Barton](#), [Ida Rentoul Outhwaite](#) (written with [Robert Holden](#)) and illustrator [Sheila Hawkins](#).

In a contribution to a eulogy delivered at Muir's funeral, Kerry White offered these thoughts on Muir: 'Marcie was a great companion to her family and friends, generous, interested in everything, fun, open to new ideas, a woman who loved good food and drink but who was also a professional, dedicated to her work'. White had previously acknowledged her debt to Muir in the acknowledgements for volume two of *Australian Children's Books*. White's words provide a fitting tribute: 'This project began with one letter sent and a reply – I am not too sure whether I ought to thank Marcie Muir for that reply which started me on a journey that apparently never ends! But I can thank Marcie for her friendship and encouragement. Bibliography is lonely work and the value of having someone who understands the joy, torment and hard slog cannot be underestimated.' (xvii)

Eric Rolls (1923-2007)

[Eric Rolls](#) was a busy man – farmer and fisherman, husband and father, writer and environmental agitator. When Rolls was in his seventies he told [Laurie Muller](#), his former publisher at [University of Queensland Press](#): 'I don't have enough time left to write all the things I want to write about'. (*Australian*, 3 November 2007) But that didn't stop him trying. Rolls's first book of poetry, *Sheaf Tosser and Other Poems*, was published in 1967. It was followed by his early environmental writing and then, in 1981, his multi-award-winning *A Million Wild Acres: 200 Years of Man and an Australian Forest*.

[Tom Griffiths](#), Professor of History in the Research School of Social Sciences at the Australian National University, describes *A Million Wild Acres* as 'still the best-written' environmental history 'in this country'. It is 'a regional history like no other, where birds, animals and plants share the stage with humans ... Through his democratic recognition of all life, Rolls enchants the forest, presenting a country raucous with sound and nervous with creative energy. Reviewers compared it to a campfire yarn, the Book of Genesis and Icelandic sagas. [Les Murray](#) read it "with all the delight of one who knows he has at last got hold of a book that is in no way alien to him.'" ('He Worked with Words and the Land', *Sydney Morning Herald* 7 November 2007)

Rolls's other work includes the essay collection *Celebration of the Senses*, two non-fiction titles on China's relationship with Australia, and the first of a two-book project on Australia, *Australia: A Biography, the Beginnings from the Cosmos to the Genesis of Gondwana, and Its Rivers, Forests, Flora, Fauna, and Fecundity*.

Rolls's earliest published poem was '[Death Song of the Mad Bush Shepherd](#)'. It appeared in the *Bulletin* on 30 September 1942. Explaining the poem's significance, Rolls says: 'Written when I was fifteen years old, it was published by [Douglas Stewart](#) on the Red Page of the *Bulletin* after I

plucked up the courage to send it to him as an eighteen-year-old signaller in Papua New Guinea. Its reception had a profound effect on me: it confirmed that writing was worthwhile.' (*Selected Poems* (1990): [iii])

Rolls wrote for children and adults. According to Griffiths, Rolls 'found a way of telling stories that made listeners feel they were sitting on his knee. He carried a rare combination of authority and intimacy. With short sentences, vivid verbs, sensual imagery and a necessary swagger, this poet-turned-prose writer wove a kind of magic'. In recent years Rolls, with his second wife Elaine van Kempen, established the [Watermark Literary Society](#). (Rolls was patron of Watermark and van Kempen its president.) Watermark aims 'to celebrate literature of nature and place and create opportunities for writers and readers to meet, share and enjoy that literature'. One of those opportunities is the bi-annual [Watermark Literary Muster](#) held on the mid-north coast of New South Wales.

Following the death of his first wife, Joan, in 1985, Rolls received a letter from [Nancy Keesing](#) in which she offered him the hope and wisdom of a Jewish expression for mourners: 'I wish you a long life'. Keesing continued with these thoughts: 'it is believed that how people live; what they contribute to their families and friends and their community is all-important and what they should be celebrated and remembered for. Mourners should mourn – but also live.' ('Free Choice', *Celebration of the Senses* (1985): 161) The evidence of the last 22 years is that Rolls fulfilled Keesing's hopes and continued to live.

Steve J. Spears (1951-2007)

'I am currently reprising two roles from my early career', wrote [Steve J. Spears](#) six months before his death. 'Funnily enough', he remarked, he had twice played a cripple – once as the mechanic in *Mad Max 2: The Road Warrior* and again as a member of the Australian cast of *The Rocky Horror Show*. By April of this year his acting experience in a wheelchair was proving gratifyingly helpful as he found himself 'suddenly permanently in one with a floppy right arm and a leg that no longer works'. (*Age*, 'Metro', 27 April 2007) Spears was incapacitated with inoperable brain cancer, but his final months were typically spiked with humour and irreverence – as witnessed by his friends.

[Graeme Blundell](#) spoke with his old friend on the phone just prior to Spears's death, recalling their days together in theatre revues. 'Spears laughed and burst into one of the songs he had composed ... about the transgressions of [Sydney] north shore accountants and their wives. He was very loud and I could hear nurses laughing in the background. That was the way with Spears. Nothing was more important than a laugh.' (*Australian*, 18 October 2007)

Spears's career in the entertainment industry began with revues at Adelaide University where he was studying Law. One subject short of his degree, he abandoned tertiary education in favour of playwriting. His major stage success came with the 1976 play *The Elocution of Benjamin*

Franklin. The show premiered at the Nimrod Theatre Downstairs starring Gordon Chater under the direction of [Richard Wherrett](#). The production won the 1977 Major AWGIE Award and toured nationally prior to seasons in London, San Francisco and New York. In New York it won the off-Broadway OBIE Award for Best Play.

Although Spears wrote more plays, his major output was in writing for television. He wrote scripts for comedies such as *The Norman Gunston Show* and *Hey Dad* and delivered episodes for dramas, soap operas and cartoons. 'But', says Penelope DeBelle, 'it was in children's film and television that his creativity and originality had full rein and his long association with the [Australian Children's Television Foundation](#) resulted in a swag of awards for series and tele-features'. (Age, 22 October 2007)

Towards the end of his writing career, Spears turned to crime fiction. He published three detective novels in the *Pentangeli Papers* series between 2003 and 2005. At the time of his death he was working on a book tentatively titled 'God's Diary'.

[Louis Nowra](#), Spears's friend and fellow playwright, says that Spears died 'surrounded by friends who rallied round him ... He suffered from a kind of self-loathing really, and he gained great happiness at the end. He discovered at last that people really loved him for himself'. (Quoted in the *Australian*, 17 October 2007)

Andrea Stretton (1952-2007)

'Whoever you talk to, the message is the same: literary and arts journalist [Andrea Stretton](#) was a warm and generous woman who poured hard work, intellectual rigour, a passion for life and integrity into the arts, particularly in the world of books and Australian literature.' These are the words of Stretton's obituarist, [Sandy George](#), writing in the *Australian* on 20 November 2007, four days after Stretton's death. George's sentiments have been echoed by writers, members of the arts community, television executives and co-workers.

Novelist [Gerard Windsor](#) said: 'I don't believe there has been an arts journalist that was such a pervasive reader of literature as well as being a journalist. In her utterly matter-of-fact way Andrea was a guardian angel of Australian literary culture. Above all, she was a dream reader. She read voraciously and with the most acute intelligence.' [Robert Dessaix](#) would concur. 'She had the intellectual and literary mind that could make an interview thought-provoking and not just entertainment.' (Both quoted in the *Sydney Morning Herald*, 19 November 2007)

Stretton spent over a decade with SBS, Australia's multicultural and multilingual public broadcaster, beginning in radio and then moving to television. She hosted *The Book Show* with [Dinny O'Hearn](#) and was also a presenter on *Masterpiece*. In 1998 she moved to the ABC and presented the arts programme *Sunday Afternoon*. [David Malouf](#), one of Stretton's interviewees and subsequently a friend, said: 'Writers loved her. She made them feel good. Not by telling them

how good they were but by making them believe that so long as there were readers out there who cared as much as she did, and responded with so much sympathy, then the best sort of writing was possible.' (Quoted in the *Sydney Morning Herald*, 24 November 2007)

Stretton was honoured by the government of France for her services in the field of the arts and literature, receiving the prestigious Chevalier dans l'Ordre des Arts et des Lettres (Order of Arts and Letters). She was Artistic Director of the Olympic Arts Festivals in the late 1990s and, in 1998, commissioned the first of the now-popular Sculptures by the Sea exhibitions.

Stretton died shortly after being diagnosed with lung cancer in early November 2007. The suddenness of her death shocked friends and left them with a sense of disbelief. Among those to mourn her loss are members of the Sydney PEN community. Their comments and expressions of grief can be read on [PEN's website](#).

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