

AustLit News February/March 2008



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Apology to Australia's Indigenous Peoples

The AustLit Team welcomes the apology to Australia's Indigenous peoples offered by the Prime Minister, the Hon. Kevin Rudd. The apology, delivered on the second sitting day of the newly-convened 42nd Parliament of Australia, honoured 'the Indigenous peoples of this land, the oldest continuing cultures in human history' and reflected 'in particular on the mistreatment of those who were Stolen Generations'. Mr Rudd said 'sorry' for the pain, suffering and hurt experienced by the Stolen Generations and their descendants, and declared himself and the Parliament ready to open a new chapter in Australia's history 'in a true spirit of reconciliation'.

AustLit *Black Words* co-ordinator [Dr Anita Heiss](#), who was in Canberra for the delivery of the apology, wrote in her 1998 poem 'Reconciliation #2:

Reconciliation means understanding
 Reconciliation means awareness
 Reconciliation means compassion
 You say you want reconciliation
 But do you understand what it will take?

...

You must start to
 listen
 understand
 and
 cooperate...

I'm Not Racist, But... (2007)

Mr Rudd and the Leader of the Opposition, the Hon. Dr Brendan Nelson, committed themselves to that task.

The [full text of the Prime Minister's apology](#) is available on the website of the Parliament of Australia together with [Dr Nelson's motion in support](#).

AustLit's *Black Words* subset lists over 400 works with the subject 'Stolen Generations'. The subset also provides a Calendar of Events recording significant dates for Aboriginal and Torres Strait

Islander peoples. The Calendar currently ends at 13 February 2008. AustLit looks forward to adding new dates that will reflect the 'true spirit of reconciliation'.

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.

Please note: Links to AustLit records in the newsletter are fully available to AustLit subscribers. Links to external sites are available to all readers. (AustLit is widely available through the university and public library sectors. Ask at your local library about access or [contact us](#) for access details.)

AustLit News

On the Road with Roger Osborne – American Publishers of Australian Literature Project

AustLit provides support and infrastructure for a number of ongoing research projects. One of these, 'America Publishes Australia: Australian Books and American Publishers 1890-2005', is an [Australian Research Council](#)-funded project directed by [David Carter](#), Professor in Australian Literature and Cultural History at [The University of Queensland](#). A contributor to the project, AustLit team member [Dr Roger Osborne](#), travelled to the United States of America in December 2007. Here he gives an account of research undertaken at the [Library of Congress](#), Washington, D.C., and the [Harry Ransom Center](#), Austin, Texas.

The primary purpose of the research trip was to examine the records of the Book-of-the-Month Club, an institution that has had a significant impact on the formation of America's middlebrow culture since its founding in 1926. The surviving records combine with the Club's monthly *Book-of-the-Month Club News* to reveal the impact Australian books had on American readers between September 1929 when [Henry Handel Richardson's](#) *Ultima Thule* was a main selection and August 1957 when [Patrick White's](#) *Voss* was the main selection. Between these dates, more than fifty Australian books received the wide exposure and increased sales that selection by the Club guaranteed. Analysis of readers' reports and the *Book-of-the-Month Club News* will soon support discussion of the various ways that Australian novels were presented to this large audience of middlebrow readers.

At the Harry Ransom Center I searched through the papers of the American critic and historian [C. Hartley Grattan](#) for evidence of his support of Australian literature in the USA. His correspondence with writers, publishers and government agencies confirms his position as an important friend to Australian literature, revealing cultural networks that can be used to inform analyses of the movement of Australian books within the United States of America. His correspondence with

[The University of Chicago Press](#) is particularly interesting because of the role he played in the publication of the first American edition of [Joseph Furphy's *Such is Life*](#). Combined with records obtained from [The University of Chicago](#), a case-study of *Such is Life* will provide one of the most detailed accounts so far of any Australian novel published in an American edition.

As evidence such as this accumulates, a better understanding of Australia's position in North American print culture emerges, emphasising the importance of collaborations between AustLit and the wider research community.

Roger Osborne is currently working, with other AustLit team members, towards the completion of *The Bibliography of Australian Literature*. He has previously worked with AustLit on the [Australian Magazines of the Twentieth Century](#) subset; many of the fine historical notes included on the AustLit records for individual magazines are the result of Roger's research.

New AustLit Records

During December 2007 and January 2008, the Content Development Team added:

- 6,175 new works
- and
- 1,182 new agents (individuals and organisations)

In addition to these new records, over 7,800 existing work and agent records have been upgraded and enhanced.

In the News

Writers Largely Missing from Australia Day Honours

Australia's writers were notable by their very limited representation in the Australia Day honours list announced on 26 January 2008. Writing in the *Sydney Morning Herald* (26-27 January 2008), [David Marr](#) noted: 'There isn't a novelist on the 2008 list. This year the nation could have tackled the backlog of great writers unhonoured by Yarralumla. But [Helen Garner](#), [Peter Carey](#), [Shirley Hazzard](#), [Alex Miller](#), [Kate Grenville](#) and [Tim Winton](#) – among many others – have still to be recognised by the nation for their services to literature. Republicans among them may feel now is not the time to accept such honours, but clearly the business of writing isn't high on the list of achievements officially blessed in today's Australia'.

Those with literary connections who were 'officially blessed' include:

- [Melbourne University Publishing's Louise Adler](#) (for service to literature as a publisher,

through support for and the promotion of emerging authors, to tertiary education, and to the community)

- Biographer [Ann Galbally](#) (for service to the arts as an academic, historian and researcher, particularly through the preservation, development and promotion of Australian art history, as a mentor and author)
- [Allen and Unwin](#) publishing director [Patrick Gallagher](#) (for service to the publishing industry through the promotion of Australia's literary culture, as a mentor to emerging writers, and as a contributor to professional organisations)
- Editor, reviewer and founder of her own publishing house [Margaret Hamilton](#) (for service to the arts through the promotion of children's literature and literacy and through support for authors and illustrators)
- *Australian Dictionary of Biography* editor [Diane Langmore](#) (for service in recording the history of social sciences and humanities as General Editor of the *Australian Dictionary of Biography*)
- Children's writer [Carol Odell](#) (for service to children's literature as an author, scriptwriter and presenter)

and

- Editor and short story writer [Rosemary Creswell](#) (for service to literature, particularly through the promotion and support of Australian writers)

Adler, Galbally, Gallagher, Hamilton, Langmore and Odell each become Members of the Order of Australia; Creswell receives the Medal of the Order of Australia.

Guidelines and instructions for Order of Australia nominations are available on the [It's an Honour website](#). Nominations can be made by individuals or by groups such as a community organisations or professional bodies.

National Indigenous Theatre Company Proposal Meets Opposition

[Wesley Enoch](#)'s proposal to create a national Indigenous theatre company has stirred opposition from existing Indigenous companies. Enoch flagged his idea with Indigenous artists, theatre supporters and community members in early December 2007 via the [Nguin Warup weblog](#). He expressed the view that 'we are in danger of losing some of our most talented Theatre artists if we don't gather resources to create a company that can create works of scale; develop career paths for artists; and develop and expand the audiences for Indigenous Theatre across the country and across the world'.

Enoch garnered \$10,000 from the [Harold Mitchell Foundation](#) towards funding a consultative meeting in Melbourne in mid-December 2007 where interested stakeholders could provide input on questions such as 'Do you think it's a good idea?', 'What kind of work should a National Company create?', and 'What models of relationships with existing companies could there be?'.

The reaction from some of the existing companies was not enthusiastic. Blakstage Alliance, a network representing companies such as [Yirra Yaakin](#) in Perth, [Ilbjerri](#) in Melbourne and [Kooemba Jdarra](#) in Brisbane, told the *Australian's* Rosemary Sorensen: 'with over 800 Indigenous nations within Australia, one company is not adequate or appropriate' and such a company would be likely to 'desecrate Indigenous protocol and respect'. (13 December 2007)

Blakstage member companies will meet in Adelaide in late February at the [Australian Performing Arts Market](#) to continue a dialogue on their collective needs.

New Theatre Needs New Money

[New Theatre](#), the oldest continuously producing theatre company in New South Wales, needs to find \$70,000 by March 2008 to undertake compulsory building upgrades. New Theatre does not receive ongoing funding from government or corporate sources, but is supported by a dedicated contingent of volunteers.

Theatre administrator Luke Rogers told a local newspaper that 'people would notice a void to be filled in the independent theatre scene' if New Theatre is forced to close. (*Glebe*, 17 January 2008) A former administrator, Paul Brennan, believes the community nature of the theatre is at the root of its problems and suggests that the current difficulties are 'self-inflicted'. 'It's a really good theatre, but it's run in the most unbusinesslike manner.' Brennan says the Theatre will not be a proper training ground for theatre professionals unless it stops operating as 'a collective of enthusiastic amateurs'. (*Sydney Morning Herald*, 15 January 2008)

New Theatre, honoured by the [National Institute of Dramatic Art](#) (NIDA) in 2007 for its contribution to the performing arts in Australia, has its origins in the Great Depression. A movement began in the USA to bring the arts to the working classes; it spread to Australia and New Theatre was formed in 1932. New Theatre groups sprang up in all Australian state-capital cities with the groups in Sydney and Melbourne being particularly strong. Sydney's New Theatre has just released a second revision of its history in *The 'New' Years, 1932- : The Plays, People and Events of 75 Years of Sydney's New Theatre*.

Judith Wright Remembered in Naming of New Suburb

A new Canberra housing development is to have a suburb named after poet and activist [Judith Wright](#). The suburb will be part of the Molonglo development to the west of central Canberra and, in a move that would almost certainly have met with Wright's approval, the development will boast 'greater energy efficiency, higher water efficiency and quality' and houses will need to meet minimum five-star energy ratings. ([ACT Chief Minister's media release](#), 2 January 2008)

Canberra already boasts suburbs named after [Henry Handel Richardson](#), [Mary Gilmore](#), [Henry Lawson](#) and [Miles Franklin](#), but even this list doesn't match the concentration of honoured

writers in the Sydney suburb of Casula where all street names recognise Australian writers and artists. Casula residents may find themselves on, for instance, [Kendall Drive](#), [Boldrewood Ave](#), [Keneally Way](#), [Stead Place](#) or [Tennant St](#) in the course of their daily peregrinations.

Dame Edna Takes the Credit for Barry Humphries' 'Crumb'

In October 2007 [Barry Humphries](#) was made a Companion of the British Empire during an investiture at Buckingham Palace, London. When the announcement of the honour was made earlier in 2007, Humphries spoke with BBC Radio 4 in the person of his alter-ego, [Dame Edna Everage](#). Dame Edna commented that 'Barry has been chafing in a pretty undignified way. Look, don't tell anyone, I had a little word with The Queen. I said, "Please throw him a crumb".' (Hear the audio clip of Dame Edna's interview on the [BBC Radio 4 website](#). Enter 'Barry Humphries' in the search box and then select the clip titled 'Barry Humphries Honoured'.)

Humphries created Dame Edna (initially known as Norma Everage) in 1955. He later invented the characters of [Sir Les Paterson](#), Sandy Stone and [Barry \(Bazza\) McKenzie](#), among others. Humphries has told the story of his life in the autobiographies *More Please* (1992), *Less Is More Please* (1996) and *My Life As Me: A Memoir* (2002).

I'm Not from Here

Brazilian writer Daniela Abade is running a project during 2008 for which selected writers imaginatively encounter a foreign city. Each writer is keeping a fictional journal about their chosen city. The only rules are that the author can't be familiar with the city, is not allowed to visit it while writing about it and must create a character of the same nationality as themselves.

Seven writers, journaling in five languages, are participating in the project including Australia's [Matt Rubinstein](#). The cities in which the fictional characters will spend 2008 are Udine, Italy; Hamilton, Canada; Mexico City, Mexico; Buenos Aires, Argentina; Graz, Austria; and Sydney, Australia. Rubinstein is writing about Graz and the Mexican author Gonzalo Soltero is 'creating' Sydney.

Follow the daily journal entries on [Daniela Abade's Foreigners website](#).

Also in the News

- The [Australian Society of Authors](#) (ASA) has expressed concerns regarding the reported Dymocks Digital project and the ABC's plan to move from audio books to a download delivery of digital audio files. Read the ASA's response in the news section of their [website](#).
- [Big hART](#), a company working to re-engage marginalised communities and individuals

through arts-based projects, has rejected an [Australia Council](#) grant of \$750,000 spanning a six-year period. Big hART says: 'considering the amount of paperwork involved, it is not worth keeping the money'. A spokeswoman for the Arts Minister, the Hon. Peter Garrett, acknowledges that the 'red tape' for theatre funding is too cumbersome and says the Federal Government will work with the Australia Council to simplify it. ([ABC News website](#), 14 January 2008)

- [Books Alive](#) has appointed Cheryl Arkle as its new project director. Arkle has worked in the book industry for over 20 years. She has been marketing manager for [Random House Australia](#) and national buyer for Dymocks and Myer. The annual Books Alive promotion will next take place in August 2008.

and

- The [State Library of Victoria](#) has again run its 'Summer Read' program. The Library selected 20 recently published Victorian books including [Gregory Day's](#) *Ron McCoy's Sea of Diamonds*, [Garry Disher's](#) *Chain of Evidence*, [Cate Kennedy's](#) short story collection, *Dark Roots* and [Dorothy Porter's](#) verse novel *El Dorado*. For a full list of the selected titles, news and readers' reviews go the [Summer Read](#) section of the Library's website.

The Story Continues...

***Meanjin* to Become MUP Imprint**

The Melbourne University panel reviewing the operations of [Meanjin](#) has recommended the winding up of *Meanjin* Company. The review also recommended that a charter of editorial independence be drawn up by the *Meanjin* Board, an editorial advisory committee be established and a new editor appointed. Melbourne University's Subsidiaries Committee has signed off on the review and the University's Council has noted the decision.

[Melbourne University Publishing's](#) (MUP) chief executive, [Louise Adler](#), believes that *Meanjin's* new status as an MUP imprint 'is a terrific partnership with a lot of opportunities for *Meanjin* for a safe berth as it moves into the 21st century'. While confirming the continuation of a print edition of *Meanjin*, Ms Adler said 'the first priority' is to make the journal's archives available online. (*Age*, 12 December 2007)

In early 2008 the new board appointed [Sophie Cunningham](#) as editor of *Meanjin*, effective from 18 February 2008. Cunningham replaces [Ian Britain](#), editor from 2001 to 2007, who did not support the changes recommended by the review panel.

(See '[Meanjin Update](#)' in the August/September 2007 issue of AustLit News for further background.)

Say It Again

- [Kate Veitch](#) discussing requests from her US editor to eliminate Australian-isms and non-American references from her novel, *Listen*:
'I asked my US literary agent for her opinion. [She said]: "do you want to risk losing even a single book sale just to keep the scenes in?" A perfectly valid question, to which my unhesitating answer was "yes"'. Veitch's solution was to include a glossary of the Australian words and expressions 'that just could not be replaced, or which I couldn't bear to lose ... my American readers will now have the opportunity to find out what an arvo is, and a wowser, a bunny-rug, and a shag on a rock'. (*Weekend Australian*, 12-13 January 2008)
- [Tim Flannery](#) reflecting on his foray into fiction via a novella dealing with a catastrophic change in the biosphere:
'Pursuing that in a work of fiction helped me frame some questions that I couldn't really address through science'. (*Sydney Morning Herald*, 12-13 January 2008)
Flannery's 50,000-word manuscript is 'with his publisher'.
- [Timoshenko Aslanides](#) arguing the case for an Australian poet laureate:
'As a literate and sophisticated modern nation, we need a poet laureate to document the evolution of the national psyche and record the strength of regional feeling ... We need to signal that any field of artistic endeavour, poetry included, is a legitimate career option for Australians. And we need to confirm that the articulation of national feeling can help to better focus national thought, with the trade and diplomatic strategies that implies for confidently claiming, and politely occupying, our place in the world. (*Weekend Australian*, 26-27 January 2008)

Recent Literary Awards & Shortlists

'Toy Symphony' Stars in Sydney Theatre Awards

[Michael Gow](#)'s *'Toy Symphony'* won seven categories at the 2007 Sydney Theatre Awards. On 21 January 2008 *'Toy Symphony'* was declared Best Mainstage Production and Best New Australian Work. The [Company B](#) production also won the Best Director category ([Neil Armfield](#)) as well as Best Actor, Best Supporting Actor, Best Supporting Actress and Best Lighting Design. Another Company B production, of [Kate Mulvany](#)'s *'The Seed'*, won Best Independent Production.

The 2007 Lifetime Achievement award was presented to [Currency Press](#) co-founder [Katharine Brisbane](#). Brisbane founded the Press in 1971 with her late husband, [Dr Philip Parsons](#), and remained its managing editor and publisher until her retirement in 2001. She was national theatre critic at the *Australian* from 1967 to 1974 and has published widely on the history and nature of Australian theatre. A collection of her criticisms and commentaries is published in Currency Press's *Not Wrong, Just Different: Observations on the Rise of the Contemporary Theatre* (2005).

Essayists Share Calibre Prize

The \$10,000 prizemoney for the 2008 Calibre Prize for an Outstanding Essay is to be shared by [Rachel Robertson](#) and [Mark Tredinnick](#). The judges, [Kerryn Goldsworthy](#), [Paul Hetherington](#) and *Australian Book Review* (ABR) editor [Peter Rose](#), culled 127 entries to produce a longlist of eighteen essays and a shortlist of six. They then awarded the prize jointly. The judges described Robertson's essay, '[Reaching One Thousand](#)' as 'an impressively subtle study of autism and of its consequences for the child and for the parents alike'. Robertson was 'delighted and honoured' to be a joint winner. She is writing a series of autobiographical essays and hopes to use her prizemoney to revisit her childhood home in the United Kingdom and undertake further research.

Tredinnick wrote '[A Storm and a Teacup](#)', an essay canvassing 'the need for a profound reassessment of how many resources we all need individually to live equably and sustainably'. The judges commented that '[T]ea and its harmonising ceremonies and literature provide the key in this elegant, succinct essay, which also deals with the literary life in the twenty-first century'.

Both winning essays are published in the February issue of *ABR*. In a further essay, to be published in the March *ABR*, Tredinnick writes: 'Everyone who reads and writes ... ought to be grateful to *ABR* for setting up this prize, which is already resuscitating the essay in Australia; and we should praise [the [Copyright Agency Limited](#)] for joining *ABR* and putting up the kind of money that makes a prize count and attracts writers' very best work'. ('Advances', *ABR*, February 2008)

Sydney PEN Award to Nicholas Jose

[Professor Nicholas Jose](#), author and current Chair of [Creative Writing](#) at the University of Adelaide, was awarded the 2007 Sydney PEN Award for his outstanding work in support PEN's aims. PEN is an international network of centres through which writers promote the role of literature in developing mutual understanding and in opposing restraints on freedom of expression. It acts as 'a powerful voice on behalf of writers harassed, imprisoned and sometimes killed for their views'. PEN members 'pledge themselves to do their utmost to dispel race, class, and national hatreds and to champion the ideal of one humanity living in peace in the world'. ([PEN Charter](#))

Speaking at the Pen Award presentation, [Mara Moustafine](#) highlighted Jose's work in response to Australia's treatment of asylum seekers following the 2001 Tampa crisis and also noted his role

in strengthening Sydney PEN's links with International PEN. Moustafine recalled Jose's words on the impact of his time as Cultural Counselor at the Australian embassy in Beijing (1987-1990): 'I came to understand as never before how intellectual and creative freedom are inseparable from truth and justice in a society. They breathe the same air.'

The full text of Moustafine's address is available on the [Sydney PEN website](#).

The Dead Prove Good Company in Aurealis Awards

[David Kowalski](#) and [Cat Sparks](#) have each been awarded a Golden Aurealis for 2007. Kowalski's novel, *The Company of the Dead*, won Best Novel in the science fiction category and won the overall Golden Aurealis for a novel. Sparks won Best Short Story, also in the science fiction category, and took home the short story Golden Aurealis for 'Hollywood Roadkill'.

The [Aurealis Awards](#) honour speculative fiction in the science fiction, fantasy and horror genres. They recognise writing in short and long fiction forms and also award prizes for writing for children and young adults.

The judges of the 2007 Awards honoured [Terry Dowling](#), conferring on him the Peter McNamara Convenors' Award for Excellence for his novel *Rynemonn: Leopard Dreaming*. *Rynemonn* brings to a close Dowling's long-running *Adventures of Tom Rynosseros* series. The judges stated that Dowling's writing 'fits comfortably next to genre fiction writers such as Ray Bradbury or Ursula K. LeGuin. His literary skill and richness of storytelling equally bring to mind comparisons with writers such as Isak Dinesen and Thornton Wilder.'

A complete list of winners and nominated works can be viewed on the [Aurealis Awards website](#).

ACT Honours Vietnamese Translator

In December 2007 ACT Chief Minister Jon Stanhope announced the ACT Arts Awards, presenting the Book of the Year Award to Vietnamese translator [Ton That Quynh Du](#). Quynh translated (from Vietnamese into English) Pham Thi Hoài's *Sunday Menu*. In 2000 he won a Victorian Premier's Literary Award for translating another of Pham's books, *The Crystal Messenger*.

The following winners, for poetry writing, were also announced by the Chief Minister:

- The \$10,000 Judith Wright Prize for a published collection by an Australian poet was shared by [Diane Fahey](#) for *Sea Wall and River Light* and [S. K. Kelen](#) for *Earthly Delights*
- The \$5,000 Alec Bolton Prize for an unpublished manuscript by an Australian poet was won by [Karen Knight](#) for 'From a Glass Kennel'
- The \$3,000 Rosemary Dobson Prize for an unpublished poem by an Australian poet was awarded to [Ann Shenfield](#) for 'You Can Only Get So Close on Google Earth'

and

- The \$2,000 David Campbell Prize for an unpublished poem by an ACT poet was presented to [Lesley Lebkowicz](#) for 'The Good Air'

Winning and shortlisted poems for the Rosemary Dobson and David Campbell prizes can be viewed on the [ACT Government website](#).

'British' Intellectual Clive James on *New York Times* Notable Book List

Australian expatriate [Clive James](#) is included on the 2007 *New York Times* Notable Books list for his essay collection *Cultural Amnesia: Necessary Memories from History and the Arts*. The *New York Times* describes James as 'one of Britain's leading public intellectuals'.

Also on the list for 2007 is [Shaun Tan](#) for *The Arrival* and [Scott Westerfeld](#) for *Extras*. Texan-born Westerfeld divides his time between New York City and Sydney. On his website, he describes *Extras* as the fourth book in the *Uglies* 'trilogy' and states that all four books in the series have been *New York Times* bestsellers. *Uglies* is 'set in a future where cosmetic surgery is compulsory when you turn 16, making everyone beautiful. Of course, there are some people who want to keep their own faces ... but they're not allowed.' (scottwesterfeld.com)

Other Recent Award Winners

- Northern Territorian [Alec Kruger](#), with Gerard Waterford, won the 2007 Human Rights and Equal Opportunity Commission's Human Rights Award in the non-fiction category for *Alone on the Soaks: The Life and Times of Alec Kruger*. The book gives an account of Kruger's search for place and people after being 'stolen as a child from his family and his country'. ([IAD Press](#)) For further details see the [IAD Press website](#)
- In the ACT Writing and Publishing Awards [Rory Steele](#) took out the Fiction prize for his novel *Ghosts in the Helmet Trees*. The Poetry award went to the anthology *Verbal Medicine* and the Children's award was presented to another anthology, the short story collection *Secrets*. Each of the three books was published by Canberra's [Ginninderra Press](#)

and

- [Aoife Clifford](#) won the [Sisters in Crime](#) Scarlet Stiletto Award for her 'first ever short story', 'Kill-Dead-Garten'. The story of 'murder and mayhem at a kindergarten' is Clifford's first attempt at writing, 'outside of the odd email', and she declares herself 'absolutely gobsmacked to win a national competition'. ([Sisters in Crime media release](#) , 30 November 2007)

And Watch Out For

The shortlist for the 2008 [International IMPAC Dublin Literary Award](#) will be announced on 2 April and the winner declared on 12 June. Nine Australians are represented on the longlist. They include [Yasmine Gooneratne](#) for *The Sweet and Simple Kind*, [Simone Lazaroo](#) for *The Travel Writer* and [Alexis Wright](#) for *Carpentaria*. Also longlisted is American writer [Claire Messud](#) for *The Emperor's Children*, a novel about three 'thirty-something' friends, set in Manhattan and Sydney.

The full longlist is available on the [Award website](#).

This Month's Spotlight

Demise of the *Bulletin*

On 24 January 2008 the private equity company CVC Asia Pacific announced that the *Bulletin* would cease publication. The 29 January issue, released on 23 January, is the final copy of Australia's oldest, continuously-published periodical. In recent decades the *Bulletin* has been owned by the Packer family's Australian Consolidated Press, an arm of PBL Media. In late 2007, James Packer sold a majority share of PBL to CVC Asia Pacific. A shrinking readership and changing patterns of accessing news stories are said to account for the decision to close the *Bulletin*.

The *Bulletin* was founded in 1880 by [J. F. Archibald](#) and [John Haynes](#); its first issue was published 128 years ago on 31 January. After some early editorial turmoil, the *Bulletin* established itself as the 'Bushman's Bible' in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. Many of Australia's best-known authors of the era honed their writing skills in the *Bulletin*'s pages. It carried the work of '[Breaker](#)' [Morant](#), [Louis Becke](#), [Barbara Baynton](#) and '[Steele Rudd](#)', and arguably fostered a rivalry between [A. B. 'Banjo' Paterson](#) and [Henry Lawson](#).

[S. H. Prior](#), *Bulletin* editor from 1915-1933, inaugurated a novel-writing contest for the magazine. Winning entries included [Marjorie Barnard](#) and [Flora Eldershaw](#)'s *A House Is Built* and [Katharine Susannah Prichard](#)'s *Coonardoo: The Well in the Shadow*. After Prior's death the *Bulletin* established the S. H. Prior Memorial Prize. Again, the winners represented influential authors. *Tibouron* and *The Battlers* by [Kylie Tennant](#), *All That Swagger* by [Miles Franklin](#) and *The Pea Pickers* by [Eve Langley](#) were among the winners.

The 1940s and 1950s maintained the high literary standard; poets in particular flourished during the period. [Douglas Stewart](#), [Judith Wright](#), [David Campbell](#), [Geoffrey Dutton](#), [Rosemary Dobson](#), [R. D. FitzGerald](#), [James McAuley](#), [Ray Mathew](#), [David Rowbotham](#), [Roland Robinson](#) and [Vivian Smith](#) were all included in the *Bulletin*'s pages.

Zuggurats of Poems and Stories

In 1961 Sir Frank Packer's Consolidated Press bought the *Bulletin*. The literary emphasis of the magazine was scaled back, but it did not disappear. [Desmond O'Grady](#), whose latest book, *Dinny Going Down* (2007), is a novel about a Sydney journalist, joined the *Bulletin's* staff and served for a time as editor of its famed Red Page. In an article written specially for the AustLit newsletter, O'Grady recalls his experiences of this time:

While at Melbourne University I sometimes looked at the *Bulletin's* Red Pages and asked if there was any chance that they would be rejuvenated. I suspected that they were really the Unread Pages. I did not foresee that about a decade later I was to become the Red Pages editor.

After graduation, a couple of years in Italy, a Roman wife, a son and some unsuccessful attempts to enter journalism, [Donald Horne](#) accepted me on the girly magazine *Weekend* so that I could write for the other magazine he edited, the *Observer*. Shortly afterwards the *Observer* took over the *Bulletin* and I became its foreign editor and reviews (all arts but books) editor.

[Douglas Stewart](#) was the *Bulletin's* prestigious literary editor and I expected him to remain although I did say at an editorial meeting that the Red Pages should pay more attention to other literatures as well as Australian works.

Donald Horne asked [Ronald McCuaig](#) to write a review over the weekend then sacked him on Monday morning. Stewart resigned in sympathy with McCuaig. Stewart was probably negotiating beforehand with [Angus and Robertson](#) for the job he took there subsequently and Donald had probably been instructed by Frank Packer to cut further *Bulletin* staff.

Donald told me 'I can offer you a job with great prestige'. I said I had more prestige than I knew what to with but needed something more than my paltry salary. He did not help there but I did receive two zuggurats of poems and stories waiting to be read. I suggested that [Vincent Buckley](#), with whom I had co-edited a Melbourne literary magazine *Direction*, look after the poetry which he did later. My most notorious moment as poetry editor was when I had to fill a blank space as the *Bulletin* was going to press and grabbed two [Gwen Harwood-Walter Lehmann sonnets](#) which read acrostically 'So long *Bulletin* and fuck all editors'. As a result the issue, which was briefly a best seller, was cancelled and police questioned me in the office.

The Little Boy from Manly had been given the keys of the candy store. They were heady days with [John Quinlem](#), a Torres Strait Islander-Chinese friend, advising me to keep an eye on young unknowns such as [Les Murray](#) and [Geoff Lehmann](#) and another person delivering a message, allegedly from [Patrick White](#), that if he

did not receive a good review of *Riders in the Chariot* he would leave Australia. [Chris Wallace-Crabbe](#) reviewed it and Patrick White stayed on.

The roll call of reviewers, some from the *Observer* days, some new, included a few still writing and many who have faded out: [Ray Mathew](#), [Henry Mayer](#), [Eugene Kamenka](#), [James Griffin](#), [Vivian Smith](#), [Peter Shrubbs](#), [Catherine Mackerras](#), [Thelma Forshaw](#), [Richard Hall](#), [Olaf Ruhen](#), [A. G. L. Shaw](#), [R. A. Simpson](#), [G. K. W. Johnston](#), [R. F. Brissenden](#), [Francis Webb](#), [Peter Hastings](#), [Bill Hannan](#), [Max Harris](#), [John Thompson](#), [Evan Jones](#), [Robert Raymond](#), [Peter Coleman](#), [Nancy Keesing](#) and [John Olsen](#).

Donald wanted to encourage short stories and we showcased work by writers such as [Amy Witting](#), [Hal Porter](#), [Patricia Rolfe](#), [Alan Davies](#), [Hugh Atkinson](#) and a tyro with his first story, [Thomas Keneally](#).

Another task which went with the territory for some months was Answers to Contributors, referred to only by initials, which were supposed to help poets and story writers but also to be readable in their own right. I liked 'The suburbs are dull but not that dull' about one story. Sometimes initials were invented as an excuse for cruelly-cutting comments which could amuse readers.

It was exhilarating and exhausting. Selecting the most suitable books and matching them with reviewers and choosing stories left little time to think about the place of the Red Pages in literary history but we were confident we could ensure the *Bulletin's* survival for another 80 years. But I would not be there to see it because family reasons arose which meant I needed to return to Rome. I wanted [Christopher Koch](#) to take over the Red Pages but he had other fish to fry and [Charles Higham](#) took the position. *Après moi le deluge* – or was it Douglas Stewart who said that when he left?

(Desmond O'Grady lives in Rome as an author and journalist. AustLit appreciates his generosity in writing down these memories on very short notice.)

The *Bulletin* on AustLit

Over a period of several decades, AustLit and its predecessors indexed the entire literary content of the *Bulletin* amounting to almost 65,000 individual items. AustLit records show the peak year for literary content as 1915 when nearly 1,300 items were indexed. In terms of quantity at least, Australian writers and writing were most strongly supported in the years 1903 to 1929; each of those years generated an average of 1,000 items falling within AustLit's selection criteria. (In coming years, AustLit will re-visit its *Bulletin* coverage with a view to upgrading the current records and providing an improved resource for researchers.)

Following that period, literary content gradually shrinks. Apart from a slight surge at the time of the *Bulletin's* 100th anniversary, the number of items relating to Australian literature drops to 698 in 1947, 122 in 1967, 64 in 1987 and 76 in 2007.

The *Bulletin's* final issue, carrying the unwittingly pertinent cover heading 'Souvenir Issue', brings the magazine full circle. In its early years the *Bulletin* both echoed and generated nationalistic fervour. It was shaped by issues surrounding race relations, Australia's involvement in wars, republicanism and the national character. These themes are taken up by [Richard Flanagan](#), [Thomas Keneally](#) and [Frank Moorhouse](#) in the 29 January issue in a series of 'Australia Day' essays revealing each writer's vision for Australia.

Flanagan yearns for a revival of the larrikin character and hopes that, as a society, Australia will 'rediscover and reassert the necessity of witnessing and questioning as the greatest guarantee' of democracy. Keneally reflects on Australia's settlement history. He notes that European settlement did not begin with hope and religious conviction, as it did in America, but with a 'pre-fallen' Adam and Eve. 'The Book of Genesis reads backwards in our early story. First we're damned. Slowly we become the redeemed.' Moorhouse tackles issues of privacy, civil liberties, egalitarianism and spirituality.

From last words to some of the first: in August 1880 the *Bulletin* published this acrostic from [Philip Holdsworth](#), writing under the pseudonym 'Quiz'. Its tone is in similar vein to many early *Bulletin* contributions.

T-hese lines you read below
H-elp my name to show;
E-ach one of you must know.

B-orn in eighteen seventy-nine,
U-nique in name as in design;
L-aughing in his swaddling clothes
L-ike a strapping two-year-old,
E-very week he larger grows
T-hen with gossip over-flows,
I-n leaders good, in endless fun—
N-o living paper has so great a run.

New Publications

Tales of Two Cities' Libraries

Two recent publications delve into the respective collections of the [Mitchell Library](#), at the State Library of New South Wales, and the [State Library of Victoria](#).

In *Magnificent Obsession: The Story of the Mitchell Library, Sydney*, [Brian Fletcher](#) traces the story of the library that emerged from the benefaction of David Scott Mitchell. Fletcher, who was Bicentennial Professor of Australian History at The University of Sydney, pays particular attention to those who matched Mitchell's passion (although not his monetary resources) for Australiana such as librarians H. C. L. Anderson and [Ida Leeson](#).

The [State Library of New South Wales](#) is currently preparing for the Mitchell's centenary in 2010. Leading up to this milestone, the Library is highlighting various collection strengths through specially-curated exhibitions. The focus for 2008 is the Mitchell Library's extensive collection of children's literature, including original illustrations, literary manuscripts and first editions.

In Melbourne, the State Library of Victoria has teamed with [Melbourne University Publishing's Miegunyah Press](#) imprint to produce *The World of the Book*. Taking a different approach from its New South Wales counterpart, the Victorian book uses the State Library's Rare Books Collection to focus on the book as object and the history of the book. Employing a largely pictorial approach, *The World of the Book* reproduces illustrations from early scientific and cartographic works through to pulp fiction and graphic novels.

The book's authors, [Des Cowley](#) and Clare Williamson, jointly curate the State Library of Victoria's permanent exhibition *Mirror of the World: Books and Ideas*.

Submissions & Applications

Critical Studies Sought for New *Australian Literature Collection*

Dr Paul Richardson, editor with the New York-based [Cambria Press](#), sends news of a new series of critical writing on Australian authors:

Cambria Press is proud to announce a new, pioneering *Australian Literature Collection* with [Susan Lever](#), Associate Professor at the University of New South Wales, Australian Defence Force Academy, and author of many books, including *David Foster: The Satirist of Australia*, as Series Editor.

The *Collection* will showcase groundbreaking studies in Australian literature that consider the careers of individual Australian writers or offer new interpretations of their work. The Press is interested in critical studies of the works of writers such as [Murray Bail](#), [Brian Castro](#), [Robert Drewe](#), [Helen Garner](#), [Kate Grenville](#), [Janette Turner Hospital](#), [Elizabeth Jolley](#), [David Malouf](#), and other Australian writers.

Cambria Press publishes scholarly research for the academic community. The author of or lead contributor to a Cambria Press book must have a doctoral level degree or be nearing completion

of an advanced doctoral degree. Contact Dr Paul Richardson for further information:

Email: prichardson@cambriapress.com

Mail: Cambria Press, PO Box 350, Youngstown, NY 14174-0350, USA

Australian Representation Sought for *The Literary Encyclopedia*

Editors of the *The Literary Encyclopedia* are seeking to increase coverage of Australian authors and works in their online publication. The *Encyclopedia* is 'a collaborative historical and scholarly project of global ambition'. It intends eventually to provide 'a description of all literary and cultural texts of scholarly interest in the English-speaking world'.

Founded in 1998, the *Encyclopedia* has published over 4,100 articles and has commissioned another 870 for publication during 2008. Suggestions for additional entries, or offers to write particular entries, can be sent to:

Dr Alison Searle, Assistant Editor, *The Literary Encyclopedia*

Email: alisonsearle@litencyc.com

To gain an overview of the project visit the [Encyclopedia website](#).

For more submission opportunities, and news of upcoming conferences and festivals, 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.

Time and Tide

Nancy Phelan (1913-2008)

[Nancy Phelan](#) embodied the expression 'well-travelled'. She grew up in Mosman, Sydney, and would later portray her childhood there with detail and delight in the memoir *A Kingdom by the Sea* (1969). But in 1938 Phelan bought a one-way ticket to England and began her episodic travels to countries unseen by many Australians of her generation. Following marriage, the birth of her daughter and World War II, Phelan returned to Sydney and began work with the South Pacific Commission – a job that required travel to various Pacific Islands. Her first book, *Atoll Holiday* (1958) describes her time in Kiribati (then known as the Gilbert Islands).

Phelan's travels often resulted in a book publication. An account of her solitary trip through Turkey is given in *Welcome the Wayfarer: A Traveller in Modern Turkey* (1965); her sojourn in Japan is told in *Pillow of Grass* (1969) and a trip to Chile is explored in *The Chilean Way* (1973). Travel in Morocco and the USSR also found its way onto the page.

Phelan's output extended well beyond travel writing and memoir. She wrote biographies of two relatives: *Charles Mackerras: A Musicians' Musician* (Phelan's cousin) and *The Romantic Lives*

of *Louise Mack* (Phelan's aunt). She also wrote novels and novellas including the Miles Franklin Literary Award-shortlisted *Home Is the Sailor, and, The Best of Intentions* (1987). In 2004 Phelan was awarded the Patrick White Award for a writer who has been highly creative over a long period, but who has not received adequate recognition for their work. Phelan was 91 years of age when she received the Award.

Speaking to Meg Stewart in 1995, Phelan explained that she had 'never thought of "writing" as a career'. Writing was simply 'something you did like eating and reading. When I wanted to say something, I wrote it'. Her ideal was to write prose that came near to poetry, 'in the sense that poetry dispenses with unnecessary words. It gets to the crux of the thing and puts it in a beautiful or an arresting way. That is the sort of writing I would like to be able to do. I don't know that I'll ever get there. And yet that isn't the only thing. There's got to be feeling and there's got to be content. It's a very difficult job, isn't it?' (*Sydney Morning Herald*, 11 October 1995)

Paddy McGuinness (1938-2008)

On taking up the role of editor at *Quadrant* in 1997, *Paddy McGuinness* declared: 'little magazines should be hotbeds of unorthodoxy and uncomfortable debate. If they merely reflect the prevailing orthodoxy they decline into vehicles of vanity publishing and mutual assistance, as many have done in the past ... There will be no sacred cows in my *Quadrant*, and no contribution of sufficient quality – no matter how much I might disagree with it – will be scorned or rejected out of hand'. (*Sydney Morning Herald*, 20 December 1997)

McGuinness's era at *Quadrant* came to an end late last year, reportedly due to ill-health. (The final issue produced under his editorship is the current January-February 2008 magazine.) Newspaper columnists and obituarists have been chary of stating a cause of death. As his friend and colleague, journalist *Jane Fraser*, told the *Australian*: 'He refused to discuss his illness with those close to him and would tell us: "Mind your own bloody business—and don't send any bloody priests"'. (28 January 2008)

McGuinness was educated for a time by the Jesuits in Sydney, but when fee-support from his uncles failed he moved to Sydney Boys High School and from there to The University of Sydney. While studying for a degree in economics, McGuinness became involved with the radical and libertarian Sydney Push. From Sydney he went to London where he worked in banking and continued his studies. (It was during this time that he travelled to Paris to witness the student uprising, an event recalled in his final piece for *Quadrant*, '*Paris, May 1968*', in the current issue.)

Returning to Australia, McGuinness established his journalism career with the *Australian Financial Review* and subsequently worked for a range of other newspapers including the *National Times*, the *Australian*, the *Age* and the *Sydney Morning Herald*.

McGuinness's style, in person and in writing, drew strong reactions. In the days following his

death, commentators, friends and adversaries went into print offering their opinions and memories. Their impressions ranged variously across affection, hostility, regard, disdain, and respect. Perhaps the reason behind their responses is best illustrated via McGuinness's own words. In 2003 McGuinness, a self-confessed 'long-standing critic of the honours system' accepted the award of Officer in the Order of Australia. McGuinness told his readers that he accepted 'partly out of contrarianism, since I knew that many of the chattering classes who object to my refusal to accept their smelly little orthodoxies would be infuriated by it'. But his rationale did not stop there. His acceptance was also '[p]artly to please those many people who have generously accepted that it is worthwhile to have a dissident voice continually raised against the mindless mob of political correctness. Partly to bring attention to the defects of the honours system there have been plenty of crooks, political fixers and intellectual frauds already included, and to attack my appointment is to bring attention to the imperfections and past abuses of the system'. ('When No Means Yes, Principle's the Same', *Sydney Morning Herald*, 28 January 2003)

Paddy McGuinness died on Australia Day.

Jan McKemmish (1950-2007)

On the cover of [Jan McKemmish](#)'s third and final novel, *Common Knowledge* (1996), there is a reproduction of John Kelly's painting *Black and White Cow Depot*. It is an apt picture for both the book – a story of farms and families – and for McKemmish's own early years. Jan McKemmish grew up on a dairy farm near Strathmerton in northern Victoria before moving to an orchard in the rural town of Tongala. She was the first member of her family to attend university and she carried a conviction that 'access to language' and 'the piece of paper' would make a difference in her life. ('[Altering the Landscape](#)', *Inner Cities* (1989): 184-185)

In 1985 the feminist co-operative [Sybylla Press](#) published McKemmish's first novel, the spy thriller *A Gap in the Records*. This was followed by the urban crime novel *Only Lawyers Dancing* (1992). In each book, McKemmish shows an awareness of the interplay between human language and the landscape that shapes it. As she wrote in 'Altering the Landscape': 'We cannot talk about the places we live without being crucially aware of language'. (181)

McKemmish established Fab Press while living in Sydney in the 1980s and later helped establish the creative writing course at The University of Queensland. She died from cancer after a short illness.

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