

JESSIE STREET
NATIONAL WOMEN'S LIBRARY
NEWSLETTER

VOL 22 NO 1
FEBRUARY 2011

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

CHANGING WITH THE TIMES: IT @ JSNWL

It has been said that the Information Technology revolution is having as big an impact on society today as Johannes Gutenberg's invention of the printing press in 1450. Jane Pollard's address at the Annual Luncheon in 2010 highlighted the distinct divide between schoolgirls – digital natives, and the rest of us – digital aliens who have not grown up with digital technology. In 1450, the privilege of being able to read and learn was enhanced by the proliferation of printed material available to those who could afford to purchase or were able to obtain it for themselves. Today, not being able to read seems incomprehensible.

In this third millennium, Jessie Street National Women's Library has many volunteers recognising the need to acquire new skills. Since the Library began, technology has advanced exponentially – hardware, software, shareware. At times this seems bewildering. At least books remain the same solid, visible reminders of the written word.

Those working in the Library, however, know that 'to keep women's words, women's works alive and powerful' we must move with the times. The days of fusty, dusty silent reading rooms are over. For the past year, a Sydney company, Calyx, has trained JSNWL volunteers to manage KOHA, an open source (ie free) integrated library system. This has 'a rich set of customisable features including cataloguing, circulation, patron management, acquisition, serials reporting and more' (Calyx). It supersedes our former out-of-date Athena library system. Switching to KOHA will facilitate management of acquisitions and membership, provide much easier access to the catalogue across Australia and across the globe, and make savings long-term from the use of free technology.

With digitisation of our poster collection and conversion of video tapes to DVD, we have already been approached for the use of digitised posters, particularly for the International Women's Day centenary. Linked computers recently installed by Nik Trevallyn-Jones operate independently or with shared files and are internet-accessible. The aim is to be independent of the City of Sydney's generously provided internet access. Volunteers will eventually be able to update in the Library the new Library website created by Fiona Lam. Our email and internet addresses are also changing slightly with transfer to another service provider. The updated version of Scribus, our open source desktop publishing program, is challenging our *Newsletter* editors with the new capabilities it provides. We plan to offer the *Newsletter* to members electronically, but will continue to make hard copy available.

Notwithstanding all this change, everyone is very welcome to come into the Library and browse its thousands of treasures. Come in and touch the books, breathe in the nostalgia of aged paper. You are especially welcome to arrange a visit for access to our Archives.

Christine Lees, Chair



JSNWL website, www.nationalwomenslibrary.org, looks the same. But look closer – it has changed!

LUNCH HOUR TALKS – SYDNEY

Venue: Southern Funtion Room, 4th Floor, Town Hall House, 456 Kent Street

Date/Time: 3rd Thurs of month 12-1.30pm

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

Please book by noon Tues before talk: Ph (02) 9571 5359

FEBRUARY 2011 - Thursday 17

Caroline Graham

Juanita Nielson: *The Enigma*

Caroline, WEL NSW founding member and activist (peace movement, Green Bans, Palestinian human rights), discusses Juanita's life and death in NSW's heady era of Green Bans, rapacious developers and the Askin Government.

MARCH 2011 - Thursday 17 WOMEN'S HISTORY MONTH

Dr Beverley Kingston

The Cook, the Chef, and the Hotelier

Men seem increasingly to be dominating the cooking business – chefs, restaurants, cookery books. Beverley focusses on three early Australian cooks/entrepreneurs – Mina Rawson, Australia's Isabella Beeton; Harriet Wicken, cookery teacher extraordinaire; and Hannah Maclurcan, founder of the Wentworth Hotel – with illustrations from JSNWL's collection of cookery books.

This talk is the Library's contribution to Women's History Month and will be held at the **Ultimo Community Centre** as the Town Hall is unavailable.

APRIL 2011 - Thursday 21

Meryllyn Sleigh

Riding the Wave – Opportunities from the Biology Revolution

Meryllyn, former research scientist and manager (CSIRO, industry, academia), now biotechnology industry consultant and company director, reviews the radical impact of biotechnology on society's prospects in the latter half of the 20th century and highlights her personal ride on this wave of scientific revolution.

MAY 2011 - Thursday 19

Catherine DeVrye

Who Says I Can't?

Best selling author of eight non-fiction books, businesswoman, motivational speaker and 2010 Australian Keynote Speaker of the Year, Catherine started life in an orphanage. She will share her life's journey drawing on her memoir, *Who Says I Can't?* – a story of hope and perseverance.

MEMBERSHIP RENEWAL Membership is by calendar year – see page 7 to renew.

Thank you to those who have already resubscribed for 2011, some with late 2010 subscriptions.

JESSIE STREET NATIONAL WOMEN'S LIBRARY

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

Aims

- to heighten awareness of women's issues
- to preserve records of women's lives and activities
- to support the field of women's history
- to highlight women's contribution to Australia's heritage

BOARD OF MANAGEMENT: OFFICE BEARERS

Christine Lees	Chair
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Liz Fitzgerald	Treasurer
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Jane Pollard	Honorary Librarian

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Shirley Jones

Margot Simington

Readers — Share your Views

We are very interested to have feedback on Library matters, including on the *Newsletter*. Please email any comments to: info@nationalwomenslibrary.org or send by post to the Library. Some letters may be published in future issues of the *Newsletter*.

The Editors

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ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING 2011

JSNWL Annual General Meeting will be held on Saturday 9 April at 10.30am at the Ultimo Community Centre, Sydney (corner of Harris St and William Henry St, Ultimo) in Littlebridge Hall (ground floor opposite the courtyard).

This is your opportunity to visit the Library, meet the Board and other members, and join us for morning tea.

Nominations are called for the following positions: Chair, Vice-Chair, Secretary, Treasurer, and no fewer than five and no more than nine ordinary members of the Board. **Nominations close Friday 11 March.** Please consider nominating for the Board yourself or suggesting it to a friend. Nomination forms available from the Library.

Board meetings are held at Ultimo Community Centre on the 2nd Tuesday of the month at 12.30pm.

Constitution Amendments & Membership Fees

Notice is hereby given of the following items to be considered at the Annual General Meeting.

1. At its meeting in October, the Board agreed that we need to increase membership fees from 2012. In accordance with the Constitution Part 3 Membership Section 11, this requires the approval of the Annual General Meeting. Proposed fees are:

\$30	Concessional membership
\$60	Standard membership
\$1000	Life membership
\$120	Organisational membership
\$20	Student membership

2. The Board also agreed to recommend that the references in Part 3 Membership Section 5c to supporting junior and honorary life membership be deleted, so that five categories of membership (see 1. above) would remain.

3. The Board agreed to recommend that Part 3 Membership Section 5d be amended to read:

As soon as practicable after receiving a nomination for membership the Secretary shall report the nomination to the Board.

JSNWL Joins ERA

Equality Rights Alliance (ERA), funded by the Federal Government, has responsibility for addressing gender equity and leadership issues. It engages with women and women's organisations, shares information, identifies issues and proposes solutions for government consideration.

ERA, a loose unincorporated coalition, has over 40 member organisations, aims to be inclusive, and does not bind members to any policy or action. Benefits of joining ERA are: regular updates on issues affecting women nationally and internationally; access to ERA website resources; support in representation on issues; networking and linking with a broad range of women's organisations; and participation in advocacy to support members.

The Library, an incorporated body, had been part of a previous alliance, Womenspeak, formerly one of six national women's alliances. After much discussion, the Board endorsed joining ERA and nominated Chris Burvill, Board member, to liaise with ERA on the Library's behalf and report quarterly. We hope the Library and ERA will both benefit from our membership. For more information, go to: www.equalityrightsalliance.org.au.

Jozefa Sobski

LIBRARY NEWS

Implementing our Business Plan

At the end of 2009, the Board of our not-for-profit organisation identified seven priorities for this specialist library to operate, develop and expand, maximising its value to the community. These priorities are:

1. securing funds for ongoing operating costs
2. upgrading the library management system
3. upgrading the general administration and other in-house systems, including desktop publishing
4. updating the website
5. progressive digitisation of the poster collection
6. expansion of the membership base
7. formation of partnerships and cooperative associations.

JSNWL has now completed the first year of a Five Year Business Plan working towards these priorities. The front page of this *Newsletter* draws attention to much work that has been done during 2010 for Priorities 2, 3, 4 and 5. This is very heartening and thanks must go to all those involved. Also during 2010, Priorities 1, 6 and 7 were linked to form a Financial Strategy which it is hoped will provide for a viable future.

In any organisation, not only the fiscal arm but also human resources are vital. We are privileged to have a range of members across all professions and interests. However, we are still not fully aware of how members can best contribute to the Library. Not everyone can become a volunteer or perhaps has the means to contribute financially but there are other ways of supporting the Library. **Please read and respond to the survey inserted in this *Newsletter*. An online response will also be available on the website.**

Archives Report

Late in 2010, JSNWL Archives received particularly interesting additions to our collection. The papers of **Marie Byles** (1900-1979), a small but fascinating collection, came through volunteer Barbara Henery. Byles was NSW's first practising female solicitor. She graduated from Sydney University with Bachelors of Arts (1921) and Law (1924). By 1929 Byles had two successful Sydney legal practices. A committed feminist, she was mentor to many women aspiring to practise law. Byles studied non-Christian religions, especially Buddhism. She was a conservationist, an explorer and author of six published works, four about Buddhism.

Jean Gledhill and Marie Tulip donated papers from the Commission on the Status of Women 1973-1988, a great addition to the Archives. They spent many hours working on the collection, so very little work will be required by Archives.

Ingrid Mosser Neuman donated letters and plays of the 1940s & 50s.

Robyn Hanstock, long time Library member, donated her recent exciting PhD thesis focussing on education and learning in NSW women's service and leisure organisations.

We have been promised papers from the Movement for the Ordination of Women (MOW) by the first National President (1983) **Dr Patricia Brennan**. Unfortunately Dr Brennan has been ill, but we look forward to receiving them soon.

It is a great pleasure to receive all this material but we are conscious that processing archival material is time-consuming. Donors can assist with initial processing — removal of paper clips, staples, rubber bands; sorting material into correct order, listing and labelling. This saves time and work for Archives.

Beverley Sodbinow, Archivist

International Women's Day Exhibition

2011 marks the centenary of International Women's Day. There will be events held around Australia, special postage stamps and many community activities. Jessie Street National Women's Library has already made a major contribution of material to a commemorative DVD illustrating the history of IWD in Australia

The Library is also involved in organising an exhibition at NSW Parliament House in

March, titled *Centenary of International Women's Day — 100 years of women's activism in Australia*. Encapsulating the theme of past, present and future, the exhibition will cover highlights of IWD over the last 100 years, what has been achieved by women's activism, and what we would like the future to hold. The Library's posters, photographs, badges, flyers, archival records and other material will be a major part of this exhibition. The exhibition will be officially opened on Tuesday 1 March and will run until 24 March. If you have any material you think we should look at, please contact Jan Burnswoods, JSNWL Secretary.



JSNWL in WA

When in Perth recently, on 1 December 2010 I was privileged to meet some Western Australian members. The venue, a cafe near Perth Concert Hall, was chosen by Helen Tuckey, a long time JSNWL member and a viola player with the Perth Symphony Orchestra, who dashed across the road between rehearsals. Frustrated that she can't attend Sydney functions, Helen thoroughly enjoys reading the edited Lunch Hour Talks in the *Newsletter*. Alison Bartlett, Professor of Women's Studies at the University of Western Australia, travels east to conferences so takes the opportunity to do research in the Library — exactly why we are in existence. Mirina Muir, a lawyer and General Manager Commercial in the Doric company, was given Life membership of JSNWL some years ago by her mother Marie (Board Member). All three would prefer an electronic newsletter to hard copy. 'It's easier to read on my laptop which goes with me everywhere', said Helen. Three other JSNWL members could not attend — Viti Simmons, Vanessa Varis, and Ann Giles.

All those present decided to meet again some time in 2011, hopefully with other WA members, possibly on Mirina's farm on the Swan River. I'm sure other members would be welcome too.

Christine Lees, Chair

Farewell Stella Cornelius

We are saddened to hear that Stella Cornelius, a very supportive member of JSNWL for many years, has died, aged 91. Stella invited us to establish our administrative headquarters in 147A King Street, Sydney, at minimal rental. This provided a large room, the Jessie Street Auditorium, where we held occasional exhibitions and established our lunch hour talks series. The first talk there was in April 1996, and the last in July 1998. We are very grateful to Stella whose generosity enabled us to develop a presence in Sydney's CBD. An obituary appeared in the *Sydney Morning Herald* 8-9 January 2011.

Out of Sight: The Civic Legacy of the Convict Era

SPEAKER: BABETTE SMITH

Author of Australia's Birthstain the startling legacy of the convict era (2008), mediator and historian Babette Smith presented her stimulating thesis that Australia owes much of its cultural distinctiveness to convict origins.

Australia's Birthstain examines why evidence of convicts has been lost or hidden. The legacy of distortion revealed underpins the reconceptualisation of Australia's history I present in the book.

138,000 men and 25,000 women were transported to New South Wales, Van Diemen's Land, or Western Australia where the last convicts landed (1868). Most were young men — teenagers, not Robert Hughes's 'old crawlers' in *The Fatal Shore* (1987). I sampled c.1100 convicts: four boatloads of males (Sir William Bunsby 1817, John 1832, St Vincent to Van Diemen's Land 1853, Lord Dalhousie to Western Australia 1868), plus Princess Royal women (see my *A Cargo Of Women* rev ed 2008) and the last women to reach Van Diemen's Land (1853).

Departure of most longstanding colonial leaders in the mid-19th century changed the colonial 'guard', leaving newcomers like Henry Parkes in control of self-governing colonies. The influx of migrants 1839-43 included many clergy anxious about the community's moral health. They found flourishing communities created by former convicts proud of opportunities for their children. But they had been influenced by publicity from a House of Commons Select Committee whose Chair, Sir William Molesworth, wanted to end 'white slavery'. Amid sensational press coverage the 1837 Committee, like its predecessors, deplored women convicts as useless whores, adding the new charge: that 'unnatural crime' (homosexuality) was rife.

Subsequently, anti-transportation campaigning in Australia used fear of homosexuality and moral pressure to trash convict reputation. The movement's leader, Reverend John West, claimed that convict society of 'revolting severity' left 'a class embittered by ignorance and revenge'. Very quickly the image of convicts changed from one of proud rehabilitation into the most obscene people Victorian society could imagine. By c.1850, it was untenable to identify as a convict or having convict connections. To obliterate traces of convictism, Van Diemen's Land became Tasmania and Blue Mountains' road names changed. A whole new mythology had convicts dying childless through their 'vice',



with the few descendants 'swamped' by gold rushes. Increasingly, our distinctive qualities (such as egalitarianism) and significant events were cast as occurring post-1850s on the assumption that nothing worthwhile occurred before that decade. Gothic 1880s and 1890s accounts of the convict era (eg Marcus Clarke's

For the Term of His Natural Life 1874) and *Bulletin* attitudes embellished West's ugly template.

'Out of sight' for 150 years, convict society was careless, rough, exuberant, optimistic, energetic, humorous, blasphemous, egalitarian, tolerant, equalised by criminal conviction. Convicts bore tattoos: 'Speak of me as you find'. Historian John Hirst argues that convict society, not being slave, must have been British working class and so Australian humour is ordinary working class British/Irish humour (*The Monthly* July 2008). My research (in Australia and Britain) proves him wrong. Firstly, convict humour contains little good-humoured British deference. Secondly convicts, unlike their compatriots, used humour to subvert authority, prick pomposity and 'level' class barriers. Thirdly, convict humour hid fear and misery. Sardonic, gallows humour became typically Australian.

Free settlers did not overwhelm convict numbers. Convicts, healthier than their forbears, had large families (often up to 12). Much intermarriage occurred between convicts and their children, and immigrants. Thousands moved around Australia following gold and escaping convict stigma. We owe pervasive secularism to penal society. Most former prisoners and families had little reason to thank the clergy. In Britain magistrates, often clerical (and younger sons of aristocrats), decided between committal for trial or let-off with a warning; in Australia, evangelical clergy judged convicts by middle-class standards and led shaming campaigns. And 'blasphemy flourished: 'bloody' became 'the great Australian adjective'. America's religious underpinnings could never take root here.

Australian tolerance began with convicts. Mainly English, Scottish and Irish, convict society also drew people 'of colour' from across the Empire — New Zealand Maoris, negroes (America, West Indies), people from India and Mauritius — but racism towards those not white-skinned (albeit Aboriginals suffered) was notably absent, on condition (as today) that newcomers adopt local custom. Ex-convicts were determined that British class structure and economic privilege should not be replicated. This distinctive ethos accorded the convict lawyer, doctor or merchant no more status than highwayman or pickpocket. Governor Phillip's 1788 decision to share the colony's food equally had confuted class expectations and there is evidence that this approach, cherished from Phillip's day, was deeply entrenched by the 1830s. During transportation, with too few free settlers for a middle class, each new boatload of prisoners found a society without 'Us' and 'Them' — and this was reflected among our POWs in Japanese camps, and today in consensus that government provide a 'safety net'. Australians today affirming the mantra, 'preserve the Australian way of life', don't understand why they feel so strongly. No-one teaches this history.

John Hirst and I do agree convict society functioned as a working class. Most males (c.75-80%) did not experience the traditional image of chain gangs, flogging, cruel soldiers, guards, lick-spittle ex-convict overseers; 90% of women were not drunken, useless whores. But in our working class, convicts and descendants recognised the power to withdraw labour; prisoners weren't afraid to contradict magistrates or tick-off employers. Our early industrial relations history, when written, will reveal an *Australian* working culture.

Family history researchers had by the late 1970s discovered that convicts believed in Australia's future. Their children served on local councils; some became community leaders, squatters, professionals; others went into small business. Grandchildren fought at Gallipoli and convict

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Love and Marriage

SPEAKER: ZENY GILES

*Born in Sydney in 1937 of Greek immigrant parents, writer Zeny Giles introduced her novel, *Wedding Dance* (2009), about attitudes and emotional upheaval in Greek families adapting to Australian culture.*

My novel, which is partly family memoir, walks a very fine line between fact and fiction. I am interested in the clash of cultures between Greek newcomers and the predominant Australian culture, and especially in wedding customs and the phenomenon of the arranged marriage, the way my parents and most family members were married.

I begin *Wedding Dance* with fact. The novel is organised around a fascinating photo of my parents' huge 1936 wedding in the Aghia Sophia Orthodox Church, Sydney. Almost 200 people attended, and the wedding party, despite the Depression, was arrayed in luxurious clothes at what was obviously a big community occasion. Working from this photo of my extended Greek family, I hone in on various characters.

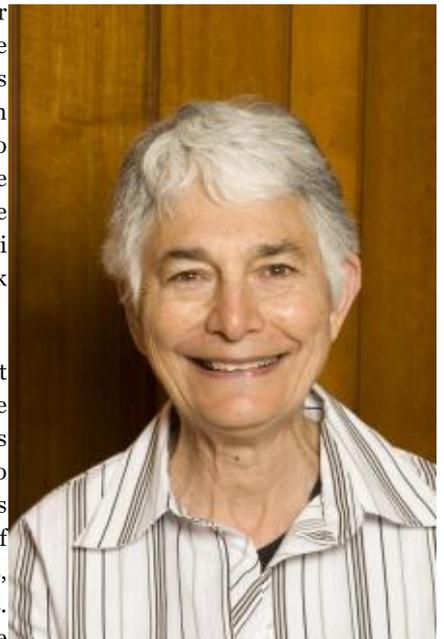
Firstly the older generation — my grandfather, Manoli, at that marriage of his second daughter Katina (my mother) in 1936: 'During the wedding dance, when ... guests ... give offerings of money to the bride and groom, my grandfather seized the moment. He took ... coins from his pocket and with a flourish flung them at the feet of the married couple. "Take every last penny of it," he declaimed ... "What need have I of money now? I've married off my last daughter." And to celebrate this new phase of his life, my grandfather executed a brilliant turn of solo dancing'.

What about Katina's attitudes, brought up very strictly, never allowed out unaccompanied, withdrawn from school aged eleven to help in the family fish shop, yet fed a diet of Hollywood film — a strange juxtaposition against Greek marriage customs with marriage arrangers wielding power: 'Amongst the varied themes from the present and the past, [Katina] would not have been surprised to see a film set on a Greek island. Nor would she have questioned the authenticity of a story ... showing ... love ...[triumphing] over the stultifying conventions of a small community. She would ... have been moved by the pathos of a young man, a foreigner, who came to the island and fell in love with the youngest daughter of a well-established family.'

What of Manoli's son, Andreas' attitude? In writing this novel, early on I decided to free myself from all that had actually happened and renamed all the characters. And I wanted a spoilt only son for Manoli so I changed the family by eliminating two of my mother's brothers, leaving only Andreas, a good-looking young man who traditionally would enter an arranged marriage with a well-endowed, young Greek beauty. Manoli is thrilled at the prospect of Andreas' marriage to the rich, beautiful Filia. But Andreas, in love with an Australian girl Joyce, tells Katina, "I really can't go on with it. ...I don't love Filia." Katina gives him back his own words to her when she first tried to end her engagement — "And what does love have to do with an arranged marriage?" Notwithstanding this, Andreas marries Joyce. No family members attend; moreover Manoli rejects him outright. Andreas,

determined to recover the Greek family life that he needs, realises that his baby son would, according to Greek tradition, take Manoli's name. He thereby entices Manoli to welcome him back into the flock.

But Andreas is still not very happy. Some things Joyce does annoy him. She has no feeling for food. He gets into the habit of cooking evening meals, relishing tender steaks. '[One night] as he



stepped into the foyer of their building, ... there was. ..the all-pervading farty smell of overcooked cabbage mixed with acrid burning. He ran to the door of their flat. ..Her face was flushed. "I've done it all Andy. You only have to sit down." ... He said, ... "You've at least left the steak for me to cook haven't you?" ... From the oven she took the two plates. ...that prime piece of scotch fillet ... lay charred and shrunken ... and ... she poured a thick orange-brown sauce over the meat, explaining, "Gravox, so the meat will be juicy, the way you like it." ... he gasped, "Christe mou...". Then he began slowly to beat his head against the wall.'

As for Joyce, how could she know that in marrying Andreas she was marrying the family as well. She feels that at every turn there is a 'has to', that 'whether it's a wedding or an engagement or a baby's christening these Greeks have to make a song and dance of it'. Joyce calls her baby son 'Edward' — not his baptised name, 'Manoli'. This is a continuing battle too.

So Andreas who marries for love has moments of happiness mixed with much unhappiness. And, once Andreas had done what he did, his sibling Katina is not able to go through with her second attempt to avoid her arranged marriage. She proceeds with it in 1936 for the sake of family and because Manoli would not tolerate rebellion. This arranged marriage has its problems too.

Manoli finds he has to contend with generational change. His two daughters go on strike — rebel — refuse to cook for him because he ignores all his grandchildren, except little Manoli of whom he is unspeakably proud. You need to read my book to see what happens.

In conclusion, I have tried to write a story that captures the reader's interest with characters that ring true — a seamless novel/memoir. Satisfyingly, relatives did not ask for changes to my manuscript before publication, and my family cannot tell where truth ends and fiction begins, a great compliment.

Edited by Margot Simington

AUSTRALIAN WOMEN POETS AND THEIR WORKS - PART 2

Lesley Walter (b. 1950) has a Masters in Australian Literature from the University of Sydney and is past president of the Society of Women Writers NSW. She was once a secondary school teacher, then a tertiary administrator. In the year 2000, Five Islands Press published Walter's first collection of poetry, *Watermelon Baby*, poems about parenting and family life. The title comes from the poem *Fruitfulness* where the poet's pregnant belly 'wore the stretched taut sheen/of the full-term fruit, smooth, round and green.' This collection demonstrates a mind that sees worlds in minutiae, a sensibility which can be witty and profound, lyrical, sad or tender.

Many of the poems refer to the joy of motherhood but with a sombre undertone: 'and yet, your celebration/means somehow strangely mourning/the myriad you I never knew/who failed to find creation'. In *Blood Stains*, the mother feels she has 'stumbled blind — without instrument or map of any kind/upon that vast, primeval continent, Motherhood.' As a stepmother she is unsure of the relationship:

Daughters sit at their fathers' tables,
stare at them with their mothers' cool blue eyes...
and mock their mid-life stepmothers
with the breasts of once loved wives.

Marital discord is captured in eight deceptively simple lines:

And so,
the wall grows higher still —
each argument a line of bricks
cemented in with stubbornness.
I'm sorry would dislodge a brick,
create a simple sun-filled chink
through which we'd reach,
hold hands and speak.

Walter can be political too, as in the poem *Home Invasion*. Here she contrasts a comfortable suburban family, shaken by balaclava-clad invaders, with the invaders of Australia who:

killed thousands
dispossessed the rest
and snatched away children.
They received for these deeds
tracts of stolen land,
and their children's children
went on to be lawyers.

Poet/solicitor **Anna Kerdijk Nicholson** was a guest at the Sydney Writers' Festival in 2010 where she spoke about her second poetry collection, *Possession*. This volume's sub-title is *Poems about the voyage of Lt James Cook in the Endeavour 1768-1771* (2010). Nicholson emigrated from Yorkshire, birthplace of Cook, so is familiar with the forces that shaped this famous navigator and explorer. There are three strands interwoven in her collection: the author's own voyage of reorientation, Cook's literal voyage, and a philosophical response found in poems 'Extracted from notes on a lost manuscript' (p20). Cook's birthplace in Great Ayton is seen to be source of his ability to know and use the wind that would fill the Endeavour's sails: 'Changeable as it is, it is the truth. Measure it as you will, it cannot be over-/thrown, only managed, never mastered....it is the one thing which,/having so many names, cannot be named or called....you have let it into/your bones so it flutes you.'

Now the poet speaks — in Kangaroo Valley early 21st century — in tones reminiscent of a storm at sea with towering mast and creaking timbers:

Gales have left snapped and toppled
the wattles near the fence, the largest
split in two, its full height cracked and hanging.

Still caught in the wind, its fronding
branches creak it to and fro.

In the poem, *What was lost*, she imagines that between the 18th and 21st centuries, what was lost [ie from the 'lost manuscript'] was:

How to use the one drop of juice
from a fig stalk
to make a scarlet dye
The one thousand and seven weaves for cocconut palm
In what manner coral rock is carried to the marai
On which day to cut the plantain
the hour it can be laid to dry for beating...

All three strands of this collection cohere with repetition of motifs, metaphors, language: stars, maps, wind, navigation, words — in particular, names: 'I am sitting at the edge of Terra Australis, the Great Southern Land,/reconnoitred by Dutch, French, Malay, Chinese and named New Holland.../The mailbox names down the Dam Road are recent tributes/to us coming here to find...what in our hearts we sought: Eccles, Johnston, McWhirter, Naidu.' These poems are sophisticated explorations of language, and anachronistic juxtapositions that reveal fresh insights into people's assumptions and how time can alter one's views and understanding.

According to William Wordsmith, 'poetry is emotion recollected in tranquillity'. It is hard to imagine **Anita Heiss** (b. 1968) ever being tranquil; she is a force of nature and in her poetry the words explode off the page. The emotion is certainly present, and the passion. Heiss is a Wiradjuri woman from central New South Wales who today is Associate Professor at the University of Western Sydney attached to the Badanami Centre for Indigenous Education. As well as poetry, she writes novels, non-fiction, short stories, book reviews and, as a social commentator, is much in demand as a speaker.

Her 2007 poetry collection — *I'm not Racist, But...* is subtitled *A COLLECTION OF SOCIAL OBSERVATIONS*. The title poem uses this quote as a refrain with three verses of comments most would have heard at one time or another:

Why don't they just get over it — the past is the past?
Why do I have to say sorry for something I didn't do?
I wouldn't pick one up in my cab...

The fourth verse changes the refrain: *I'm not Racist Because...*

I played football with one once
I worked with one once
I use the word Koori
I let them sit next to me on the bus...

The fifth verse refrain: *I'm not Racist...*

I'm simply privileged by being white
I'm just speaking from a position of power
I'm just observing the obvious.

In the poem, *Reconciliation #2*, Heiss writes: 'Don't forget —/ It is you that is making peace with me./And I am happy to do so./But not at the cost of losing my dignity.' Every poem here bears witness to the Aboriginal struggle for cultural and political identity; each is a cry for justice. The final line of the poem, *Why I Write*, says: 'I write because it is the only way I have a voice in your world.'

Thank you to all these poets and the many more on our shelves. We are grateful to the self-published poets, and to publishers, who donate these books to the Library, thus immeasurably enriching our collection.

Jane Pollard, Honorary Librarian

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culture moulded World War 1 diggers. Compare C. P Hodgson's 1840s comment that his ex-convict workforce 'must be led, not driven...knowing their own worth' and General Monash's experience of Australian soldiers as 'easy to lead but difficult to drive ... [needing appeal to] intelligence and ... instinct for a square deal'.

Anniversary Day 1789 (Australia Day) rated a Sydney Harbour regatta with convict children competing for honours, and a boisterous dinner including emancipists and convict sons. The proud toast, 'The land, boys, we live in', became tradition. By 1842, the dinner included free settlers' sons; Governor Bligh's grandson toasted 'Australia, the land we live in'. Anti-transportation then supervened. By 1888 *The Bulletin* was bemoaning Australia's 'natal-day' which 'commemorates ... shame ... slavery ... loathsomeness and moral leprosy'. Ambivalence marked our 1988 Bicentenary: historian Peter Spearritt perceived 'European Australians ... slow to develop their own rituals'.

We must introduce children to the characters, escapades and bravery of convict Australia. For all its heartbreak, including the tragic Myall Creek Aboriginal massacre (NSW), convictism originated distinctively Australian qualities. Whether of convict, free settler, refugee or Aboriginal descent, we all gain by better understanding the multiple layers of Australian society.

Edited by Margot Simington

CAPITAL INVESTMENT FUND

The JSNWL Board is delighted with the response to the recent Capital Investment Fund initiative. Since it was launched in September 2009 it has now reached \$67,316. Our target is \$500,000, the interest from which will provide essential support for Library operations. If you would like to contribute please indicate on the membership renewal/donation form on this page.

CIF donations since November 2010:

Jan Burnswoods Clodagh Harrison University of Sydney

Donations

Thanks to those who have generously donated to the Library.

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

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A warm welcome to our new members:

Elizabeth Clarke	Gillian Fisher	Zeny Giles
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The Feminist Bookshop For Sale

After 36 years, the Feminist Bookshop is about to close. If you are looking for an opportunity to continue this important work and would like to buy this iconic bookshop, please contact Gail Hewison or Libby Silva on (02) 9810 2666 for further information.

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

Please forward the completed form to:

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JNSWL Opening Times

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

Borrowing Policy

The public may borrow items on interlibrary loan. A loan collection is available to financial members.

Location

Ultimo Community Centre
523-525 Harris Street
Ultimo (cnr William Henry St)

How to Reach the Library

Trains To Central Station or Town Hall Station

Buses No 501 from Railway Square (Central Station) or from George Street (opp Town Hall Station)

On Foot from Sydney city through Darling Harbour to Harris St opp Ian Thorpe Aquatic Centre; from Railway Sq north along Harris St.

*NB For level access enter via Bulwara Rd (parallel to Harris St)
Use intercom for admittance.*

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