



NEWSLETTER

JESSIE STREET NATIONAL WOMEN'S LIBRARY

Vol 21 No 2
May 2010

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ANNUAL FUNDRAISING LUNCHEON CELEBRATING OUR 21ST BIRTHDAY

GUEST SPEAKER: ANN SHERRY AO

*From Country Queensland to the Bridge of a Cruise Shipping Business:
One Woman's Journey*

We are very pleased that Ann Sherry, the well-known business woman, has agreed to be guest speaker at the Annual Fundraising Luncheon, which celebrates the Library's coming-of-age.

Ann spent her childhood in rural Queensland and has always had a desire to help the less fortunate in our communities. She says she always wanted to change the world, but doesn't think that this necessarily requires being extraordinary. Jobs, she thinks, give you the opportunities and the power to change things no matter whether you're dealing with indigenous communities or with women's issues.

With a degree from the University of Queensland, Ann took the job of head of the Office for the Status of Women in the early 1990s advising the Prime Minister, Paul Keating, on policies and programs to improve the status of women. She was Australia's representative to the United Nations forums on human rights and women's rights.

From there she went on to join Westpac and rose to be its chief executive officer in New Zealand, before coming to Sydney to become the first woman CEO in the banking business in Australia and New Zealand. She 'softened' Westpac's banking policies which has greatly helped the bank in the long term. In the

wake of the global financial crisis, Westpac has done well compared with other banks affected.

Ann is now CEO with Carnival Australia, the largest cruise ship operator in Australasia. She took this position, charged with restoring the company's reputation and performance. Australia is now the fastest growing cruise market in the world.



Ann has won numerous awards. In 2001 she was given the Centenary Medal by the Australian Government for her work in providing banking services to disadvantaged communities. In 2004, she was awarded an Order of Australia for promoting corporate management policies and practices that embraced gender equity, social justice and work and family partnerships. And last year's

accolade was being nominated by the Business Women's magazine *Pink*, as one of the Top 15 Women in Business in the world.

Last year we unfortunately were unable to accommodate some people who left making a booking till too late. We suggest you book early to hear Ann Sherry talk, to enjoy the lunch and to make new friends.

ANNUAL FUNDRAISING LUNCHEON Celebrating our Coming-of-Age

**MONDAY, 20 SEPTEMBER 2010
PARLIAMENT HOUSE, SYDNEY**

Members are offered the opportunity to book before invitations are sent to the general public. Booking form enclosed.

JSNWL FUNCTIONS

Lunch-Hour Talks

Venue: Southern Function Room, Town Hall House, 456 Kent Street, Sydney

Date and Time: Third Thursday in the month from 12 noon to 1.30 pm

Entry: \$16 (JSNWL members) \$22 (non-members).

Pay at the door, Sandwich lunch included.

To Book: Phone (02) 9571 5359 or email info@nationalwomenslibrary.org.au

MAY—Thursday 20th

Gaby Kennard—*Achieving an Ambition: My Solo Flight around the World*

Gaby was the first Australian woman to fly solo around the world in a single engine plane. She set off in 1989 from Bankstown Airport in Sydney to commemorate Amelia Earhart's attempted round-the-world flight in 1937. Gaby tells of her experiences: making a forced landing because her fuel was running low battling unforecast winds; her engine cutting out over the Pacific; and the necessity to change course because of severe electrical storms over the Atlantic.

JUNE—Thursday 17th

Anne Ferguson—*Sculpture: An Unlikely Career*

Anne is an internationally renowned sculptor, who is virtually self-taught. There have been no sculptors in her family unless, as she says, you count a great grandfather who was a blacksmith!

Anne talks about some of the numerous exhibitions she has held, solo and joint, in Australia and overseas, and the interesting people this has brought her into contact with. With her sculpture she has constantly been influenced by our relationship with the natural environment, especially in the fragile land of Australia where, she says, we must take care how we place our feet on its thin and delicate crust.

Our New Venue

We are now holding our lunch-hour talks in the Southern Function Room in Town Hall House. The room is light and airy and accommodates 60-70 people. Ask your friends to come to the talks with you. Make up a lunch party and come as a group. Everybody is welcome and Town Hall House is easy to get to by public transport.

We thank all those on Council staff who have worked to make it possible for us to use these rooms after the renovations at Town Hall.

JESSIE STREET NATIONAL WOMEN'S LIBRARY

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

Australia's national women's library is a specialist library with its focus on collecting and preserving 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 documents on women's lives and activities
- to support the field of women's history
- to highlight women's contribution to this country's development

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

Public Transport Services

Trains Central Station or Town Hall Station

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

GETTING TO THE LIBRARY

Location We are situated in the Ultimo Community Centre on the corner of Harris Street and William Henry Street, directly opposite the new Ian Thorpe Aquatic Centre.

Entry Main entrance is at 523-525 Harris Street (just beyond convenience store). Ring the bell for admittance. The Library is up a flight of stairs. The other entrance is in Bulwara Road. We are on the level, directly across the courtyard.

How to Reach Us

By Bus from the city

Catch the No 501 bus in George Street opposite the Cathedral or at Railway Square near Central Station. It runs every 20 minutes and it's a 5 minute trip to the Library. The stop for the Library is opposite the Powerhouse Museum in Harris Street.

By Train

Get off at Central Station. To catch the bus at Railway Square, walk through the Devonshire Tunnel and up the escalator on the left.

By Foot from Central Station

From Railway Square, walk along Broadway, turn right into Harris Street and continue to William Henry (takes about 15-20 minutes). For a slightly shorter route, walk to the end of the Devonshire Tunnel, along the open space with the tram lines, down the lane beside the ABC building, left along Ultimo Road, and right into Harris Street.

ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING 2010

The Annual General Meeting was held in the Seniors' Room at Ultimo Community Centre on Saturday 4 April.

Jozefa Sobski, Chair of the Board, welcomed members, and outlined some of the activities that had taken place during 2009, including the negotiations about the lease with the City of Sydney and the gift of the portrait of Jessie Street to the National Portrait Gallery.

Highlights of the year included the 20th anniversary reception, at which the Capital Investment Fund was launched; the Pine Gap Exhibition held in September at Parliament House, NSW; and the publication of the Women's Map 'Skirting Sydney' a cooperative venture between the City of Sydney and the Library. Jozefa mentioned the installation

of new computers and a new library system as important ongoing work. The City of Sydney's assistance to the Library was particularly acknowledged.

The Chair concluded by noting that this was the end of her five-year term. She thanked the volunteers saying that without their dedication the Library could not have achieved so much.

As Jann Skinner, the honorary auditor was unable to be present, the Treasurer, Liz Fitzgerald, presented the Auditor's report, and then gave the Treasurer's report.

All Board positions were then declared vacant and Audrey Wacks, the Returning Officer, read out the names of the nominees. All were elected unopposed.

The Incoming Board

Executive

Christine Lees, Chair
Michele Ginswick, Vice-Chair

Jan Burnswoods, Secretary
Liz Fitzgerald, Treasurer

Board Members

Chris Burvill
Robyn Harriott
Sybil Jack
Shirley Jones
Beverley Kingston

Marie Muir
Michelle Rozicky
Jozefa Sobski
Beverley Sodbinow

Special Appointments

Honorary Auditor, Jann Skinner

Public Officer, Sybil Jack

Christine Lees then took over as Chair. Jane Pollard moved a motion to thank Jozefa Sobski for her outstanding performance as Chair and noted that the fact that she had worked regularly in the Library contributed greatly to the quality of her efforts.

Christine Lees also thanked Jozefa for her outstanding work. She said that we

looked forward to a challenging year for us all in meeting the objectives of the Business Plan and coping with the upheaval resulting from the installation of the new computers and the new library system.

After the meeting was declared closed, everyone repaired to the Library for a get-together lunch.

OUR NEW CATALOGUING SYSTEM

Great news! On 7 April we signed a contract with Calyx Ltd for the installation of Koha—an open-source software system for library cataloguing and administration. We have been working towards this for over two years and it is exciting that this change is finally under way.

Preparations so far have included new computers and printer. The work of installing these into a local area network has been done by Nik Trevallyn-Jones, who has generously donated his time and expertise. Meanwhile, library staff have been tidying up data records before the old system is turned off in May. Nik has supplied Calyx with a test sample of our cataloguing records and we are pleased to report that they were found to be very good and require only small adjustments

to transfer to the new system.

On 15 April Sue Baker (cataloguer) and I met with the Calyx principals, Irma and Bob Birchall. While the discussion focused on technicalities of cataloguing records, we also discussed such important symbolic matters as the colours and layout of the web-based online catalogue, soon to be available to all our users.

Library staff will be trained in using the new system and the training will begin in early May. The Honorary Archivist, Beverley Sodbinow, is consulting with Calyx on a template for the archives to use for cataloguing. Beverley will be trained separately once the archives requirements are designed.

Jane Pollard, Honorary Librarian

LIBRARY NEWS

The Poster Collection

Valuation of the Collection

Baiba Berzins spent several hours in the Library recently evaluating our poster collection. Her report makes interesting reading.

The collection consists of 1444 individual poster titles, relating to women's issues, campaigns and activism and dating from the 1970s to the 2000s. They are principally Australian, but there are also international items.

Baiba obtained catalogue descriptions of 196 titles and wrote that 16 of these were items which could fetch between \$500 and \$1650 if offered for sale. Such prices apply to items which were regarded as artworks and were carried out by well-known artists or collectives. She says that political posters, of which we have many, have little sale value despite their importance and their value for historical research.

Her valuations are:

High value items \$ 24,000

Items valued at \$100 each \$85,560

Items valued at \$50 each \$28,520

Total value of collection \$151,188

Baiba concludes her report with the words: 'Jessie Street National Women's Library Poster Collection is a very significant collection because of its comprehensive, important and often rare documentary evidence about a movement that has had a major impact on Australia. The collection is, indeed, a national treasure.'

Baiba has been a member of the Library since 1995. We are very grateful to her for donating her expertise as a gift-in-kind, the time she willingly gives us and her belief in the importance of Australia's National Women's Library.

Indexing the Collection

Anna Coleman was recently at the Library for six weeks, accessioning and indexing the posters that have been donated since the original collection was indexed many years ago. She took on the task as part of her course requirement as a 3rd year extra-mural student in Library and Information Management at Charles Sturt University in Bathurst, NSW.

Anna did a magnificent job with great efficiency and initiative and thoroughly enjoyed her contact with the Library volunteers.

Finalising the Digitisation

Digitising of the poster collection continues with the photography being done by volunteer Anita Pollard. The task is now about two-thirds complete. Anita comes in one day per week, except

during the school holidays. Her work is building on the initial digitising of 450 posters we paid to have done at UTS Digital Imaging Services last year. Those posters were in excellent condition and therefore able to be put through the UTS machines. Anita is having to deal with the more fragile bulk of the collection so the work takes considerably more time, but is expected to be completed in the next couple of months.

A library student, Mallory Salter, is accessioning and indexing the Pine Gap posters that were part of the Pine Gap collection exhibited at Parliament House last September. They too will be digitally photographed for our records.

Requests for Research Information

A student in her third year at the University of Cardiff in Wales, emailed JSNWL asking for information. She is writing on women's liberation in the 1970s, focusing on articles from the English journal, *Spare Rib*. She asked whether we could send her copies of any articles in this serial that related to women's liberation in Australia in that period. Apparently she was having difficulty obtaining the issues she needed in the UK.

We have a substantial collection of *Spare Rib* serials. The volunteer who received the email read through the serials from the relevant time, photocopied seven articles that could be helpful and posted them to the student, who was immensely grateful to receive them. She sent payment for postage and photocopying and a profuse letter of thanks.

Requests coming in by email are increasing and we are delighted to be able to help. As well as researching and sending information to the student in Cardiff, we were able to help someone from Southampton in the UK. In response to their request, we emailed them a photocopy of a page from *The Orphan Gunner*, by Sara Knox.

Visitors from France

Magali and Jeremie from France visited the Library on 16 March to gain information about people who work with books. They are travelling throughout the world for this purpose and discovered the Library from the Women's Map, 'Skirting Sydney'. Magali has worked for the Frankfurt Book Fair and the account of their visit will be posted on the website www.book-fair.com/magali

Our Wish List Request Answered

We are very grateful to Denise Thomas AM, who has bought volumes three and four of Mary Daly's series of volumes, *From Eve to Dawn: Women, Men and Morals* and donated them to the Library, with good wishes for our future.



Book Donations

Although the book donations from publishers has been slowing down these past months, donations from individuals and from the Australian Society of Authors has provided plenty of work for the librarians. Each year the submissions for the Barbara Jefferis Award, administered by the ASA, are donated to JSNWL after judging is completed. We are very pleased to be the beneficiary of so many fine novels, many by new writers.

We often get books that we already hold or that do not fit our collection development policy. These are sorted and, where suitable, are passed on to Milawa Women's Prison. Occasionally such books are sold to a dealer and the money used to buy titles we want for the collection, particularly expensive reference works. Thanks to Virginia Blain's recent large donation of books, we now have copies of a valuable reference work: *The Feminist Companion to Literature in English – women writers from the Middle Ages to the Present*. All these copies are signed by the editors: Virginia Blain, Patricia Clements and Isobel Grundy. We have Virginia's permission to sell a few of these copies, and will be asking a very modest \$25.

Phone the Library if you are interested.

Our New Website Manager

We are delighted, and very relieved, to be able to announce the appointment of our new website manager: Fiona Lam.

We had been searching for someone to take on this role since our previous manager left last year. Temporary help was given for a partial update mid-year to get out the information about the Pine Gap Exhibition and the Annual Fundraising Luncheon at Parliament House. No further updates had been done since early August 2009 and we were feeling embarrassed about the presentation of the site.

We decided to advertise through Volunteering Australia. Fiona was the first of three applicants to apply and be interviewed. We were so impressed we took her on immediately. She is a 3rd year Arts/Law student at UTS. She has her own website and has managed websites before. Fiona got a list of the required updates on Wednesday 17 March and by Friday they were all on the website!

Congratulations, Fiona, and many thanks.

Jane Pollard, Honorary Librarian

COMMUNITY EVENTS

THE BARBARA JEFFERIS AWARD

The Barbara Jefferis Award was held at the Royal Oak Hotel in Balmain on Sunday, 14 March, with about 80 people attending. Angelo Loukakis, executive director of the Australian Society of Authors, gave a brief introduction to the event and introduced Professor Elizabeth Webby, one of the panel of three judges. Of the 58 entries, five were shortlisted and two were highly recommended.

The award is made every year for 'the best novel written by an Australian author that depicts women and girls in a positive way or otherwise empowers the status of women and girls in society.'

Barbara Jefferis was a feminist, a founding member of the Australian Society of Authors, its first woman President and, in the words of Thomas Keneally, 'a rare being amongst authors, being both a fine writer but also organisationally gifted. She was a professional and internationally published writer long before most of us dreamed of such things'.

The winner this year was Kristina Olsson for her book *The China Garden*. Barbara Jefferis' daughter, Rosalind Hinde, presented her with a cheque for \$35,000.

Shirley Jones, editor of JSNWL newsletter and Kris Clarke, assistant editor, attended the ceremony. Each year the Society donates to the Library, a copy of all books entered for the award.

The event was much enjoyed by all; there was much intermingling, renewing of old friendships, and making of new ones.



l to r: Shirley Jones, Kris Clarke, and ASA member, illustrator Sadami

THE ULTIMO PYRMONT FESTIVAL

The local community has been made aware of our presence during March. At the Ultimo Pyrmont Festival, held on 27 March, the Library had a good corner spot near the crossroads at Quarry Place where Jennifer Furness, Michele Ginswick and Christine Lees were able to chat to passers-by. It was pleasing to hear that quite a few people knew of the library, so we hope more locals will call in to what we have to offer.

LUNCH AT THE WOMEN'S CLUB

The President of the Women's Club, Ann Eyland, was delighted that the club had been included as a place of interest in the 'Skirting Sydney' map which the Library and City of Sydney published jointly last year. The club was founded in 1901 'to promote culture ... and appreciation of music, art, science and literature' and to be 'a place where women may spend their leisure moments and associate on equal terms.' It has been a convenient centre for local and country members to meet ever since.

The members of JSNWL Board were invited to the Club for lunch and a tour on 22 April, one of the Club's rare Open Days. Michele Ginswick, Sybil Jack, Bev Kingston, Christine Lees, Marie Muir, Jane Pollard and Jozefa Sobski attended. This provided an opportunity



l to r: Christine Lees, Michele Ginswick, Marie Muir, Ann Eyland, Jozefa Sobski, Bev Kingston, a member of Inner Wheel, Jane Pollard (Photo by Sybil Jack)

for the two organisations to discover more about each other with the hope of a continuing relationship.

One of the members of the Women's Club handed over to the Library a small booklet which she felt would be of archival interest. It is a guide to the Household Management Exhibition held in Sydney Town Hall in 1921.

For further information about the Women's Club and its membership process, please contact one of the Board members listed above.

Christine Lees, Chair of the Board



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

REPORT TO COUNCIL

Professional Approach to Service Delivery

The Library is supported by the City of Sydney with a generous subsidy under its Accommodation Grants Program. We are asked every year to report against a set of agreed performance criteria. There are **general criteria**, and **specific criteria** that relate to the Library.

The **general criteria** apply to all services or organisations subsidised by the City of Sydney. They require these to work cooperatively and in partnership with the City and other community organisations. As part of the program, we are also required to maintain professional and ongoing communication and constructive relationships with the City and deliver services that meet the City community's needs. We must promote positive interaction and understanding between people living, working or visiting the City. Our services have to be delivered inclusively and free of discrimination.

The **specific criteria** relate to public access to our collection; promotion of the Library through the media; the hosting of community events to promote the Library; and working cooperatively and respectfully with the staff of the Ultimo Community Centre.

On all criteria, JSNWL earned a top rating. The Council is very satisfied with the Library and its interaction with other community groups, the services it provides to the general public, and the functions it holds that are open to all. The new lease will give the Library a three-year tenure.

A new specific criterion has been added for 2009/2010 in addition to those already agreed. It requires the Library to plan and create a contingency fund to cover moving costs should the need arise in the future.

Jozefa Sobski, Board Member

THE LIBRARY AS A STUDENT RESOURCE

Students at Ultimo TAFE have been using Jessie Street National Women's Library in a project for their Library Management course. Four students came into the Library on 31 March, armed with information and asking some probing questions about our many and varied Library operations.

Other students have been coming independently for information for their course assignments. The Library is a very valuable resource and the educational institutions in the community are making increasing use of us.

WHY HAVE A LIBRARY?

SOME HISTORICAL INSIGHTS

I am a slave girl in the city of Ninevah, a scribe whose name is long lost although the clay tablets I inscribed with the *Epic of Creation* survive in the library of Ashurbanipal so that our beliefs and identity are known down the centuries.

I am **Ban Shao** historian and scholar. I work in the imperial Chinese library writing the Book of Han. The last Qin emperor burned all the books that differed from his own school of thought, except for the copies in the imperial library, so that all his subjects would be forced to think the same way, but now my teaching at the imperial library of Dongguan has revived forever knowledge of China's past and Confucian philosophy.

I am **Hypatia of Alexandria**, scholar and mathematician. I weep for the scientific knowledge lost in the destruction of the library.

I am **Newandukt**, princess and granddaughter of Turandot. My language is not written, but I promoted my son Khosrau I 'Immortal soul' to the Sassanid throne and supported his work to make Gondeshapur the centre of learning in Persia, so that texts from the East, from India, and China on medicine and astronomy, mathematics and philosophy could be translated into Pahlavi and research conducted by scholars of all religious backgrounds.

I am **Hrotsvita of Gandersheim** through whose library I am familiar with poetry from Roman times, which influences my plays

I am **Aalimah**. I study the Koran in the libraries of Chinguetti at the crossroads in the Sahara where the caravans meet. Here we can learn and debate the knowledge of our Sunni ancestors and the desert will preserve our wisdom for the generations to come.

I am **Gertrud of Hackeborn**, abbess of Helfta near Eiseleben in Thuringia. I collect books and my nuns transcribe them so that our library can let all our nuns pursue their understanding of the liberal arts, without which they would no longer be able to understand holy writ, without which religion, together with devotion, would disappear.

I am **Lydia Phillips** of Philadelphia. My circulating library promotes library commitment by enabling middle-class women to read new novels like *Sense and Sensibility*.

I am **Mary Ann Ewart**. My father, William, fought to get public libraries established in Britain so that ordinary people could read and learn. As I believe that women as well as men should study, my money is going to Newnham College, Cambridge, for scholarships for women.

NEWS OF MEMBERS

Congratulations to **Dr Robyn Hanstock**, who was awarded a PhD from New England University in April this year. Her thesis was entitled *Learning Journeys in Women's Organisations: Adult Education outside Conventional Settings*. Robyn was examining the ways women learn from each other as members of organisations. She found that women often experience life-changing personal growth through their participation in organisational groups.

Robyn is donating a copy of her thesis to the Library.

Helen Ruby, who transcribes our lunch-hour talks recordings, has entered her latest non-fiction publication in the Queensland Premier's Literary Awards for 2010. Her story, called *How It Was for Me* tells of her life—her childhood, leaving her marriage to live in a lesbian relationship, and continues up to the present, with Helen now aged 66.

Member **Cathy Phillips**, an ex-Australian now teaching at Rutgers University in New Jersey, was in Sydney recently and donated to the Library two copies of the first issue of 'Cauldron'. This calls itself a feminist journal and contains poetry, stories, drawings and photographs from 23 Australian women.

Cathy had brought to Sydney with her, 49 of her photographs which were exhibited at the Washhouse Gallery in Rozelle, from 23 February till 4 March. She called the exhibition 'A Sunburnt Country.'

Elizabeth Mooney has set in motion the carving of some local indigenous history on a dead Forest Red Gum tree in the Sydney Botanical Gardens. She was anxious that the heritage of local Aboriginal people should be acknowledged and is paying for Aboriginal sculptor, Glen Timbery, to depict his ancestral forebears on the Forest Red Gum.

TALK TO NARRABEEN BOOKLOVERS CLUB

On 13 March, I gave a talk to the Narrabeen Booklovers Club at their lovely premises on the edge of Narrabeen Lakes. The premises consist of a library room, the meeting room which accommodates about 100 people, a kitchen, and toilets. These are their own premises, which Council built for them with the help of money they raised from their members. The Club itself has been in existence for 50 years and one or two of the original members still attend meetings!

My talk was entitled, *Jessie Street National Women's Library and its Role in Preserving Women's History*. About 90 members were present and they were a very sympathetic and responsive audience. One of the questions after the talk was how we raised money and why we received no sponsorship money from the City of Sydney Council and/or the government. I had explained in my talk that the Council provides us with virtually rent-free premises, which they have outfitted for us. Some members were interested in the Annual Fundraising Luncheon at Parliament House and are arranging to book as a group.

I very much enjoyed the event and have suggested a group of Booklovers might like to pay a visit to the Library.

CANBERRA LUNCH-HOUR TALKS

CAN YOU HELP?

Janet Tomi, who has been convenor of the talks in Canberra for the last three years, is now stepping down, as is her helper Christine Lancaster.

We are looking for a convenor to take her place and for helpers to assist on the day and with some of the organisational matters.

If you and your friends are interested, why not form a group of helpers? For information about what is involved please ring Janet on 0448 348 559 or on 6286 7277.

The lunch-hour talks are held in the Reception Room in the ACT Legislative Assembly Building, Civic Square and are enjoyed by all who attend. They make people aware of Jessie Street National Women's Library and are a source of new members. We thank Janet and Christine for all their hard work and their dedication.

FEBRUARY LUNCH-HOUR TALK

SPEAKER: MAHBOBA RAWI

Mahboba's Promise: A Journey of Hope

Mahboba Rawi was guest speaker at our lunch-hour talk on Thursday, 18 April. As founder President of the charity, Mahboba's Promise supporting widows and children in Afghanistan, she spoke most movingly about her life and work.

Asalaamu alaikum—peace be with you all. I was born in Kabul, one of nine brothers and sisters. About 40 cousins lived next door. Afghanistan was very peaceful; people were poor but happy. Then everything changed overnight when Russia invaded in 1979.

Like all girls at my school, I was against the invasion. We kept going to school but instead of studying we rallied against the government and against Russia. Our leader, Year 12 girl, Shakila, (I was Year 9) would ring a bell, everyone would come out, she would shout 'Russia, out!' with everyone shouting back, and then walk through the streets joining thousands of other school and university students, until soldiers stopped us. Many students disappeared following these demonstrations. After a couple of years, she disappeared too. Our school then quietened down. I thought to myself, 'What Shakila did was not too difficult. I'm going to try.' As soon as I rang the bell, everyone came out, I shouted, 'Russia, out!', everyone shouted back, and I walked. I continued doing this, leading students everywhere. And we burned our school library's communist books supplied by Russia. Soldiers used electric shock treatment to frighten us. Eventually soldiers searched my house. But luckily my uncle hid me underground for 20 horrible days, while planning an escape from Afghanistan.

I walked into Pakistan with about 45 others, including my uncle, his family and my grandmother. It took ten days. We had to cross mountains because the Khyber Pass route (eight hours to Pakistan) was full of soldiers. No stop, no food, no water—nothing. Many didn't make it; people died but we had to keep going. I thought I would never see my family again.

Pakistan is very different from Afghanistan where women wear the colourful blue burqa. In Pakistan we saw only black—scary! We had no passports. I stayed in a refugee camp for two years, luckily in a house—formerly used for animals and very dark. We cleaned it out. Four or five Afghan families lived upstairs. My grandmother and I slept in the ground floor hallway in everyone's way. I became very close with her. She ended up in hospital and eventually died.

In the camp, I couldn't see what was happening to Afghan people. It was hard.

Every day we heard of deaths, floods. I began to feel this was our way of life and I would be next sometime soon. Millions of dollars coming into Pakistan for refugees went to the government for giving us a place, but they didn't allow Afghan children into Pakistani schools without paying fees, and we had no money. Even young as I was, I always said, 'It doesn't look like any of the money people give Afghanistan is coming to my people.'

I spent two years in Pakistan, and did not want to die there. My brother came over from Iran (after selling his shop) and we walked into India. Not so bad a walk as leaving Afghanistan, but corrupt soldiers took virtually everything—my brother's money and some books. As we crossed the border, they let me through but stopped my brother, demanding his jumper. He screamed, 'I'm not giving you my jumper and I haven't any money!' I begged, 'Please give your jumper and come!' He did and came into India. We had no money whatsoever.

It got dark. An Afghan man passing us said, 'Get out of here, it's dangerous.' We said we had no money to get to New Delhi. He said, 'Don't worry. Come with me.' He seemed so generous, taking us to his hotel. He and my brother went into one room, I to another. Later my brother returned, saying, 'We're with dangerous smugglers. We must escape or be killed.'

Early in the morning we escaped. Finally another Afghan gave us money to get to New Delhi where we stayed with a relative for about five days. But they had no room and we had to leave. We took a garage owned by an Indian, promising we'd pay when our money arrived and would respect his requirement: 'no eating egg or meat.' We slept all night and then, very hungry, got the cheapest food possible—an egg. We closed the doors and cooked it. Next morning he came in and said, 'You cooked an egg!' For Indian people it's against their religion. We left. We didn't eat for seven days. Eventually an Afghan from Australia who knew one of my brothers, proposed marriage to me: he had epilepsy, needed three hours massage a day and said I could look after him. I said, 'OK. I give you massage every day, whatever.' I got married and came to Australia in 1984.

So many people in Australia think Muslims are dangerous. But when I came here at 18, it was a sunny day, I saw blue sky, I put my feet on Australian soil and thanked God. There's no way I could harm Australia. It's given me hope, freedom and life. Many, many Muslim



people feel the same way.

It was very exciting, but I couldn't speak a word. I had never experienced a beach: I saw a woman naked and my first reaction was OOPSIE! Then I said, 'Oh, my God, look at these women, they are so free! They're jumping in the water, they can swim and they can drive.' I knew I couldn't even undress in front of my husband. But from the beginning I said, 'That's their way of life and it's good for them.' I soon had three children, and was busy working, earning money and settling down. First I used body language, then began learning English. For a while, I didn't want to think about Afghanistan.

In July 1992 my son, Arash, was six, my daughter three. It was school holidays and my husband was very sick. My extended family asked me to go to Kiama Blow Hole with them. I said, 'No, my husband wants me at home to massage him. Take Arash.' He and his cousin were best friends. That was the last I saw of Arash. Next morning the radio said seven had died at Kiama. People from my community came. One of my brothers said, 'They couldn't swim and he's gone.' A beautiful boy. We were very, very close.

Losing him I felt, 'I've had enough of this life.' My daughter had nightmares. Relations with my husband became worse. I wasn't the same person for him anymore. I went to the cemetery every day for three years. During that time I also did a Social Work course at Granville TAFE College. My husband fell apart. He had lost more family than I, and one of his brothers was never found. Tragedy destroyed many of our family members, him especially. He left. I had nothing but my two kids.

My brother said, 'Okay, you have two choices—to throw yourself away, or be a fighter. I know you are a fighter but I can't decide for you.' Then I became very strong spiritually. I'd wake up at night and pray. I thought of my mother, uneducated, who raised nine children, all university graduates, and of my family whom I'd brought here since I had arrived. I said, 'I am a fighter.'

Soon after this, my charity, Mahboba's Promise, began to develop. A young Afghan doctor in Pakistan wrote, 'Children are dying on the footpath in

continued on page 10

MARCH LUNCH-HOUR TALK

SPEAKER: ALEIT WOODWARD

From Poznan to Pymble: A Forced and a Voluntary Migration

Aleit gave a most interesting talk on Thursday 18 March. Her story, at times tearful, at times heartwarming, showed her mother as a person of great strength and courage.

Poland, a country often divided between Austria, Russia and Prussia, has always had a minority population of Germans. My family, which is German, had lived in Poland from about 1770. They could speak their own language and had their own schools. My father, an artist, studied at the Warsaw Academy and after marrying my mother they moved to Poznan, where I was born in 1943.

My elder brother was born in 1940, my younger one on 2 January 1945—really bad timing by my parents! Poland was occupied by Nazi Germany in 1939 and that started the Second World War. By 1945, the Russian front had come so close to Poznan that we had to leave the city. My father, who was staying behind to fight, put us all, including our Polish maid, into a train bound for Dresden where refugees could meet up. This was January and the temperature was minus 23°C. The train trip, which would normally have taken 1½ days, took about three weeks.

The earliest experience I remember was standing on a railway station. My mother, with the maid and my baby brother, had got on the train, leaving my older brother and me on the platform. Then the train started moving out. I was screaming but the train kept on moving—and then suddenly it stopped and we were picked up. My mother had rushed to the carriage behind the locomotive and **all** the women were shouting 'Stop!' at the engine driver.

We were supposed to meet family members from Poland in Dresden on 15 February, but my mother got her dates wrong and we arrived a day later. This probably saved our lives. On the 14th, the city centre was fire-bombed and thousands of people died. My cousins and two aunts luckily survived. Somehow my mother found them and they all decided to walk back to Poland. They put together a 'treck', which is a horse-drawn carriage where all your belongings go and the people walk behind.

Most of the refugees were fleeing from the Eastern front and walking west. We were walking in the opposite direction and it meant we could not get supplies any more. My mother had lost her milk and could not nurse my younger brother but she had got milk powder at railway stations. Now that our group was walking eastward, we were on our own. My parents had prepared for the flight very well. My mother had put her father's gold

coin collection in the base of the baby's pram. We children carried small bags round our necks, with our names, my parents' names, and money in it in case we got separated from our mother. She now bought a goat for the milk to feed my brother. It travelled in its own little cart and my mother fed it dandelion or grasses.

We stayed in deserted homesteads as most people had fled. We were never hungry but our diet was monotonous. The women dug up potatoes, or found food on the farm. One day, we were in a village and the women could hear a thunderstorm brewing. When German soldiers came into the village, they looked quite aghast and told us that it was not thunder, but the noise of fighting and that in half an hour we would be in the middle of it. So we packed up hurriedly and left. When the war finished, we were in the Soviet zone and my mother always said that the soldiers were very, very nice to the children. With the women, it was different, and my mother had nightmares all her life.

I remember that, at one stage, we stayed in a refugee camp. I thought it was wonderful, because I could run around and be noisy and there were lots of other children. My mother felt very embarrassed that refugees were put into private people's homes and she kept us totally silent, my younger brother and I only talking in whispers. My mother decided to leave the camp mainly because at night the horses to feed the refugees were killed behind our cabin and she could not bear listening to the slaughter.

We eventually ended up near Dresden again, but mother wanted to settle in the country, where there was always food—or so she thought. Unfortunately we ended up in a 3-storey flat in the very poorest area of Germany, where we were constantly searching for extra food. My mother cut nettles and made purees. We picked blueberries and raspberries in season and mushrooms in the meadows, but the farmer set his dogs on us pretending he needed these himself. A cousin in America had found us and sent a CARE parcel in which, amongst other things, were sewing needles. Once my mother exchanged a sewing needle for a large sack of potatoes, but when she went to fetch some from the cellar for the evening meal, they had all been stolen. She became quite bitter. It was very hard for her to try and feed her children. She had to work and my older brother was already at school. This was now 1947 and my younger brother and I were left alone until my mother came home. Sometimes we went upstairs to visit Rudy. He had



found a food source nobody competed for. He would pull a tray out of the oven and there they sat, in neat rows—big garden slugs, bubbling in fat! We didn't know what they were, so we wouldn't eat them.

In 1948, my mother received a letter. I remember this day very clearly, because she screamed, 'Oh children, your father is alive!' My father had been in a Russian prisoner-of-war camp, but had tricked his way out of it. When he arrived he had a stubbly face and kissed me and I thought, 'Oh yuk!' I had no memory of my father.

He left soon afterwards to find work in the British zone and soon after that again, we were on a train to Magdeburg. Here it was relatively easy to cross the border into West Germany illegally at night. Unfortunately our contact person was not in the forest as expected and then my little brother started screaming. My mother saw a man and asked him for advice. In total disbelief he said 'You're asking **me**?' He was a border guard! However he told her when to come at night and when the guards would change shifts. We went back later and I clearly remember taking my shoes off, slipping into the river and wading across. My mother went back a couple of weeks later to collect belongings from the flat, but this time the guards shot at her and her sister-in-law. They were lying hidden in the meadow. A farmer making hay told them to stay down until the guards finally gave up.

We arrived in a small place called Dannenberg in West Germany where my father's elder brother and his wife were living. We moved in, along with my aunt and my father's other brother, so there were six adults and nine children in a tiny little flat. It was very, very cramped. My parents started looking for a place of their own and enquired at a village farm. My mother mentioned apologetically that they had three children. The farmer's wife replied, 'That is wonderful.' Not expecting such kindness, my mother started crying. We had two rooms at the farm and when the farmers killed a beast, they came up at night with a big sausage for my elder brother, a medium one for me and the smallest for my little brother.

This was 1949 and I was six, the age for starting school. Our village didn't have one, but we walked with all the farmers' kids to a school in the next village. My

continued on page 10

DONATIONS OF MATERIAL

We thank the following people and organisations who have so generously donated material to the Library.

Heather Bird
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Australian Scholarly Publishing
Country Woman
Federation Press

MONETARY DONATIONS

We thank all those who have generously made monetary gifts to the Library, usually when renewing memberships. These donations help pay for the day-to-day running costs of the Library.

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Verna Morgan
Rosa Needham
Diane Openshaw
Helen Tuckey
Rosalind Wallis

PROPOSED BOOK

Calling for Expressions of Interest

Alison Bartlett from the University of Western Australia has visited JSNWL several times to get material for her proposed book on *Feminist Objects, Feminist Memories: The Australian Women's Movement Re-Collects*.

How is the women's movement now remembered? What happened to the overalls, posters, banners, calendars etc? Alison, with co-editor Margaret Henderson, is calling for expressions of interest in contributing to the book.

Please state in 100-200 words: the 'object' central to your contribution; what areas of feminist ideas or experience your writing will include; the length and form of the writing.

Email alison.bartlett@uwa.edu.au titling it 'Feminist Objects' or write to her at Women's Studies M202, University of Western Australia, Crawley 6009 WA.

Deadline for actual contributions is November 2010.



NEW MEMBERS

A warm welcome to our new members

Anna Coleman
Lizzie Landers
Cathy Machin
Vanessa McNeil

Women's Action and Information Group
(Lane Cove)

A PERSONAL FEMINIST LIBRARY

Cathy Clarke in Brisbane is collecting her own personal feminist library. She came down from Brisbane to attend the Feminist Conference held in Sydney on Saturday and Sunday, 10 and 11 April. Cathy came into the Library on the Monday after the Conference and was very happy to be given several books that she did not have in her collection.

We not only receive books, we also donate!



FUNCTIONS HELD by MEMBER WOMEN'S ORGANISATIONS

WAIG (Women's Action & Information Group)

Book Reviews

17 May Jane Partridge reviews *Message from an Unknown Mother* by Xinran, a Chinese journalist and broadcaster. These are stories of Chinese mothers who've lost or had to abandon their daughters.

31 May Some WAIG members report on sessions they've enjoyed at the Sydney Writers' Festival.

21 June Kathie Forster talks about Steig Larrsons' women, as detailed in his trilogy, *The Girl with the Dragon Tattoo*, *The Girl who Played with Fire* and *The Girl who Kicked the Hornet's Nest*.

Discussion Group

7 June JSNWL volunteer Elizabeth Mooney, business woman and seasoned traveller, tells why women are number 1 in real estate and shares stories of her travels to Cuba.

28 June Bronwyn Clarke, Project Manager for 'Lane Cove Alive', talks about this program, which is designed to maintain Lane Cove's 'village' character.

Venue: The Meeting House, 25 Stokes Street, Lane Cove

Time: 10 am to 12 noon

Cost: \$6 members/\$8 non-members
For information phone (02) 9428 3317 or email: waig@waig.org.au
Website address is: www.waig.org.au

DID YOU KNOW?

Snippets of information from books on the Library shelves

Suffrage

In 1912 Millicent Fawcett, the English suffragist, published a little booklet called *Women's Suffrage: A Short History of a Great Movement*. The ostensible reason women in England were given the vote after WWI was that they were rewarded for helping in the war effort. Millicent gives us an alternative reason. Far from being a reward, it was an act of expediency. Eligibility to vote rested on being able to prove 'occupation' of a residence for 12 months prior to the election. Since this ruled out all men who had been fighting overseas for lengthy periods, the government had to introduce new legislation dealing with the whole franchise question. Women raised once more the issue of women's suffrage and Parliament didn't dare go against it.

Election at 'Eye' from *The Weaker Vessel: Woman's Lot in Seventeenth-Century England* by Antonia Fraser

In October 1640, the Parliamentary elections for the borough of Eye in

Suffolk, were held in public, according to contemporary custom. Some widows arrived to be 'sworn' on behalf of two knights, who were Presbyterian candidates. Initially the women had their votes taken, but when the Sheriff of Suffolk heard this, the women's votes were removed from the register. He later admitted, with some disgust, that the Suffolk women's 'voices' might, 'in law', have been allowed. One outcome of this was that it was finally laid down that 'Multitudes are bound by the Acts of Parliament which are not parties to the election'. In this silent subject group were 'males under 21', 'all they that have no freehold' and 'all women having freehold or no freehold.'

Women Writers

Joanna Russ in her book *How to Suppress Women's Writing*, states that the ways in which this is done, are along the lines of: 'She didn't write it. She wrote it, but she shouldn't have. She wrote it but look what she wrote about. She

INVEST IN AUSTRALIA'S NATIONAL WOMEN'S LIBRARY

CONTRIBUTE TO OUR CAPITAL INVESTMENT FUND

When we did a survey of members some years back now, 95% of the respondents ticked the box 'believe in the concept' to explain why they had joined the Library. This is heartwarming.

The Library has reached maturity. It is 21 years old this year and has grown strongly over the years. Its collection of books, archives, posters, serials is an invaluable resource, encapsulating women's experiences, thoughts, writings, ideas, attainments and philosophies. The primary aim of the Library is to preserve this rich deposit of women's history.

The Library is self-supporting. To secure our future we have established the CAPITAL INVESTMENT FUND. The Fund is being allowed to grow through compound interest. When it reaches the target amount of \$500,000, the Library will draw on the interest from it to meet its various needs.

All contributions are welcome but we are actively seeking deposits of \$1000, \$5000, \$10,000 and more, from individuals, from organisations, from families and groups.

Contributions over \$2 are tax deductible. The Fund now stands at \$45,000. It needs to grow more quickly.

The end of the financial year is only two months away.
PLEASE CONSIDER GIVING A SUBSTANTIAL DONATION.

The more you donate, the greater your tax deduction,
and the greater the benefit to the Library.
The Library is here for future generations. It is in your interest to preserve it.

Use the Membership/Renewal/Donation form on page 11 to make your donation.

Did You Know? continued from page 8

wrote it, but she wrote only one of it. She wrote it, but she isn't really an artist, and it isn't really art. She wrote it but she had help. She wrote it, but she's an anomaly. She wrote it BUT ... This is also brought out strongly in Dale Spender's book *The Writing or the Sex?* or *Why you don't have to read women's writing to know it's no good!*

Anne Finch, Countess of Winshilsea, published poetry in the 17th century, a period in which it was considered highly reprehensible for a woman to publish, let alone put her name to the work. Often quoted from one of her poems is the couplet:

Alas, a woman that attempts the pen
Intruders on the rights of men

Joanna Russ writes of the space women poets are accorded in anthologies. *Poets of the English Language* (used as a college text in America) omitted Elizabeth Barrett Browning and Aphra Behn. Out of the one hundred poets included, however, there **were five** women, Anne Bradstreet, the Countess of Winshilsea, Emily Brontë, Christina Rossetti and Emily Dickinson.

Sexist Language

From *Coming Out: Women's Voices, Women's Lives*, edited by Julie Rigg and Julie Copeland is a discussion on 'He-Man Language: How sexism is reflected

and perpetuated by words.' In this, Dale Spender argues that until about the 15th century the use of 'he' and 'man' to stand for 'she' and 'woman' was unknown. Then along came the grammarians saying that 'he' and 'man' should be used inclusively. An 1850 Act of Parliament in England made the use of 'he' and 'man' to include women mandatory. As women were not educated at this time, there were no women to protest. Women were left out of the language debates. In the same discussion Gale Shelston says language often gives women secondary status or renders them invisible. She quotes as an example: 'Ten hostages, including seven women'. Even though the women happen to be in the majority, they're still described as 'being included in'.

Midwifery

We have in our Research Collection a copy of the *Medieval Women's Guide to Health*, a treatise on women's health and childbirth, attributed to Trotula di Ruggiero, and written in Latin. Trotula is thought to have practised in the 11th century in Salerno, which was the centre of medical knowledge in medieval Europe. The manuscripts, which no longer exist, dealt with treatments for menstruation, conception, pregnancy and childbirth, in addition to medical advice of a more general kind, such as how to lighten freckles. She claimed that some

NOTES & QUOTES

From Feminists

If the men in the room would only think how they would feel graduating with a 'spinster of arts' degree, they would see how important [language reform] is.
Gloria Steinem

I have yet to hear a man ask for advice on how to combine marriage and a career.
Gloria Steinem

You can see exactly what your next step should be, but you realise there are all sorts of obstacles ... a brick wall, a solid united front of male clubbability.
Letter to the UK Times

The idea that only a male can represent Christ at the altar is a most serious heresy.
George Carey, Archbishop of Canterbury

In politics, if you want anything said, ask a man; if you want anything done, ask a woman
Margaret Thatcher

failures to conceive were caused by physical problems in men, and also advocated the use of drugs to make labour less painful. This contravened religious teaching which maintained that women were ordained to suffer through childbirth.

It has been argued over the years that these manuscripts were not the work of Trotula, that Trotula may never have existed, and that the treatises may have been written by a man. None of this can now be proved.

The Midwives Book, which Jane Sharpe based on her 40 years of work in this field, is the first book of its sort written in English by an Englishwoman. It was in constant print until 1725. This was the period of the rise of 'men-midwives'. Men were arguing that only those with a university education and who could read texts on the subject in foreign languages, should be allowed to attend women in childbirth. Jane argued with her detractors that:

'the Holy Scriptures hath recorded Midwives to the perpetual honour of the female Sex, there being not so much one word concerning Men-midwives mentioned there.'

Compiled by Shirley Jones, Newsletter Editor

front of my house. Can somebody help?’ I cried. I had begun classes in swimming, exercise and English to empower Afghan women and I read them her letter. They contributed \$120 which she gave to 35 orphans, saying, ‘Mahboba sent this.’ In return she sent 35 fingerprints with another plea: ‘Mother Mahboba, you are our last hope. Please help again.’ I said, ‘Oh, my God, for \$120 I am a mother of 35 children! That’s cool!’ I gave up social work and worked full time for Afghan children. Ever since—for 11 years—my garage has been the office for Mahboba’s Promise. It is staffed entirely by volunteers except that, as of 2009, my committee pay me something to survive. I don’t feel good about taking that money.

In Afghanistan we now have three orphanages including Hope House, five girls schools and two clinics; and we have an orphanage in Pakistan. We support about 500 widows and orphans, and some widows have 8-10 children. I travel to Kabul each year to bring orphans into Hope House. Our work is now less directly welfare-oriented than at first, with 19 development projects for long-term benefit, like vocational training for widows. Education is the key with the focus on girls and women: without education, men keep them down forever. Our Sister School Program, which began five years ago partnered Asquith Girls High School in Sydney with Panjshir Valley Girls’ School in Afghanistan. Village girls write and exchange photographs. Last year I saw Asquith girls’ photos in Afghan homes. Thirteen more Australian schools have joined the program, making friends and promoting peace.

Many call me a feminist and say, ‘You don’t look after men.’ I say, ‘Just women, and children under 18! I don’t want men.’ That’s how I keep our sites safe. Before the war, Tajik, Pashtun, and Hazarah people lived together peacefully, but war divides. Sometimes in Afghanistan they say, ‘Oh, your husband/brother is behind you.’ I say, ‘Nobody is behind me. It’s my honesty, my hard work and my passion.’ My present husband (we married in 2003) and my brother understand, but they cannot do my work. I have huge respect from my community in Afghanistan.

Please help me help my people. Sponsor a child. Buy a tree or a sewing machine for a widow. Volunteer. Buy *Mahboba’s Promise* (Bantam Books, 2005); proceeds go to the charity. Visit our website: www.mahbobaspromise.org

Peace be with you.

*Transcription by Helen Ruby
Prepared for publication by Margot Simington*

father went away looking for work in a high school and we eventually ended up, in 1952, in East Friesland on the North Sea. We moved into a two-bedroom flat, with running cold water—wonderful! East Friesland is just next to the Dutch border, in beautiful countryside. We lived so close to the sea that, when the spring tides came, we had our suitcases packed in case the dykes broke and we were flooded out.

I started high school in 1953 at a co-educational school, with far more emphasis on maths and the sciences than on languages. In Germany you learn English from age ten. My father was the Fine Arts Master at the school but he felt that his work was not appreciated, so he looked for another place. He got a position at Hamelin, the city of Pied Piper fame. In the meantime my mother had received compensation from the German government for a block of flats with 36 units she had owned in Poland. We then built a house in Hamelin and moved there in 1958. It is a beautiful city. In the city centre, 15th century half-timbered houses are still standing, their gables highly decorated, and all bearing inscriptions relating to the people who had built them.

At the school, I was bottom of the class in English and that’s where I stayed all my school life in Hamelin. Our teacher was excellent and taught the language, the culture and the history of England. I had a huge vocabulary when I arrived in Australia, but I couldn’t quite string it together. After completing my schooling in 1962, I went to Hanover for 1½ years for my practical library training, followed by 1½ years in Hamburg at a library school. There I became friends with a girl with whom I would later migrate to Australia. After we finished library school in 1965, I went to work in the wonderful library in Göttingen which possesses one of the eight complete Gutenberg Bibles in the world. It also contains wonderful illuminated manuscripts, many of them unfinished. It takes years to create them—establishing the design, writing the text, and applying the gold leaf. Some manuscripts still bore instructions like, ‘Here thou shalt paint the cow red.’

After working for a year, my girlfriend and I applied to migrate to Australia. We had the most wonderful five weeks on board an Italian ship. Although initially scheduled to arrive in Sydney on 25 April 1966, we actually docked the day before. My girlfriend knew a young Australian man, whose friend would become my future husband, and they were to pick us up from the ship. Because they didn’t know it had docked a day early they weren’t on the wharf. Fortunately I had struck up a friendship with a guy who

FAREWELL TONY CASEY

Jessie Street National Women’s Library was saddened to receive a message from the Lord Mayor on 2 March to say that Tony Casey had passed away.

This was extremely upsetting news for those of us involved with the lunch-hour talks who knew him well. We held our first talk in the Lady Mayoress’ Rooms at the beginning of 1999. Tony, as Venue Manager, arranged each month for the rooms to be set up for us and saw that we had all we needed. He and his staff were wonderfully supportive and willingly gave us all the help we needed over the years we used the rooms.

We extend our sympathy to his family. Tony was a very special person and he is greatly missed.

was keen on teaching me English. When he heard we were stranded, the person who had met him agreed to take us with them to their place in Balmain. They sat us down in the kitchen to eat their roast with peas and what my girlfriend called ‘smashed’ potato. What hospitality! Then my girlfriend rang the young man she knew and we were picked up.

We found a flat of our own and were offered jobs at the University of NSW library. There were two library clerk vacancies, one for a male and one for a female. ‘Which of you wants to be the male?’ they asked. We tossed a coin and my girlfriend became the male, which meant she got more money, although we were doing the same work.

We knew English well, but it didn’t mean we understood the people here. Funny things happened. Whenever someone says something like, ‘Pull your socks up,’ you will stoop and do it. One day the assistant in a shop greeted me by saying, ‘Hello, darling.’ As I left he said, ‘See you later.’ ‘When?’ I asked. ‘Well—just later.’ ‘But,’ I replied ‘I can’t see you later, if I don’t know what time.’

I think my migrant experience was the very best one could have had. We didn’t look different and we wanted to be here. There was no prejudice. And finding love as well! It was a great experience. I think most migrants repay the country here with loyalty and gratitude. After living here for over 40 years and travelling very extensively I would like to tell you that I sang at the opening of the Olympic Games in a mass choir and when the German team arrived we all cheered. But I must admit that when the Australians marched in, I started crying! It is a good home.

*Transcription by Helen Ruby
Abbreviated version by Shirley Jones*

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There have been eight anonymous donations

AIM - \$500,000

At July 2009 = \$24,500

At October 2009 = \$38,000

At January 2010 = \$43,000

At April 2010 = \$45,000

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Title: Ms / Miss / Mrs / Dr / Other

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 I am willing to have my name published I wish to remain anonymous

Signature

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- I would like to help the Library by becoming a volunteer
(You will be contacted so that an interview can be arranged.)

The membership year runs from January to December.

Members joining after 1st October are financial until December of the following year.

Please forward the completed form to:

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

We invite organisations and individuals to donate generously to the Capital Investment Fund and help us reach our target of \$500,000 quickly.

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GPO Box 2656 Sydney NSW 2001**

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