



NEWSLETTER

JESSIE STREET NATIONAL WOMEN'S LIBRARY

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July 2004

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PARLIAMENTARY LUNCHEON

GUEST SPEAKER: HER EXCELLENCY, MARIE BASHIR, AC, GOVERNOR OF NEW SOUTH WALES

We are delighted to announce that Her Excellency Professor Marie Bashir AC, Governor of New South Wales, will be guest speaker at our tenth Annual Fundraising Luncheon at Parliament House on 20 September.

We, as women, take pride in the fact that Professor Bashir is the first woman to be appointed to the post of Governor of New South Wales. She took up office in March 2001.

Born in Narrandera to Lebanese-born parents, Marie Bashir was educated at Sydney Girls High School, where many of her classmates were refugees from Nazi Europe. Their stories left her with a sense of outrage, an abiding interest in human rights, and a desire to see fairness and decency the cornerstones of our society. An interest in human rights runs in the family; her cousin, Dr Charles Melick helped draw up the United Nations Declaration of Human Rights.

Professor Bashir attended the University of Sydney as a medical student and after graduating in 1956, practised in Sydney's outer western suburbs before qualifying as a psychiatrist. She married Nicholas Shehadie, who later became Lord Mayor of Sydney and was knighted. They have three children and six grandchildren. Professor Bashir was named Mother of the Year in 1971.

Professor Bashir has taught at the Universities of Sydney and New South Wales, and has had a long and distinguished career in clinical psychiatry, suicide prevention and indigenous health.

Her concerns about mental health issues affecting refugee and immigrant children led her to establish outreach groups to assist young refugees cope with resettlement in Australia. Because of her interest in health issues in developing countries, she undertook the Chairmanship of the Australian Health and Development (Third World Health) Group from 1995 – 1999, and developed collaborative teaching programs between Australian medical and nursing staff and staff in Vietnam and Thailand. Professor Bashir has recently returned from an official visit to Vietnam, promoting friendship and cooperation between the two countries.

As well as the interests associated with her career, she has a deep love of music, studying violin at the New South Wales Conservatorium, and playing in the student orchestra and in chamber music classes.

Professor Bashir is patron of the Sydney Symphony and Opera Australia. In 1988 she was appointed an Officer of the Order of Australia, and in 2001 she became a Companion in the Order of Australia.



JSNWL FUNCTIONS

Lunch-Hour Talks

Venue The Lady Mayoress' Rooms, Town Hall, George Street, Sydney
Date and Time Third Thursday in the month from 12 noon to 1.30 pm
Entry \$20 (non-members)
\$15 (members). Light lunch included
For catering purposes, please let us know you are coming. Contact the Library on (02) 9265 9486 or email info@nationalwomenslibrary.org.au

July—Thursday 15th

Patricia Macdonald—*The VISE Squad*

After a lifetime of teaching in High Schools—State, private, country and city—Patricia, now semi-retired, has been tutoring in the outback of Australia with VISE - Volunteers for Isolated Students' Education. She outlines the history of VISE and recounts her very varied personal experiences over a period of nine years. Her talk illustrates the value of the organisation to families living in isolation.

NOTE: The August and October 7th functions will be held in the Marconi Room, Level 4, Town Hall House, 456 Kent Street, Sydney

August—Thursday 19th

Alison Broinowski—*Is Australia Still a Colony?*

Alison has lived in Japan for six years, and for shorter periods in Burma, Iran, the Philippines, Jordan, South Korea and the US and Mexico, working alternately as author and Australian diplomat. She has written books, both fact and fiction, about the Australian/Asia interface. Alison talks about what sovereignty means for Australia and other countries.

NOTE: There is no lunch-hour talk in September. There are, however, two events in October.

See page 2, column 3 for further details.

**ANNUAL FUNDRAISING LUNCHEON
MONDAY 20 SEPTEMBER 2004 at PARLIAMENT HOUSE**

BOOK EARLY BOOKING FORM ENCLOSED

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 sole focus on collecting and preserving the literary and cultural heritage of women.

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 of JSNWL.

Location: Level 1, Town Hall House
456 Kent Street, Sydney

Public Transport Services

Trains Town Hall Station

Buses QVB, George, York & Druiitt Sts

MERCHANDISE FOR SALE

Library Bags: sturdy and very popular these are screen-printed with the logo

Library Teatowels: printed with the logo

Lapel Pins: approx 12 x 20 mm, the pins elegantly enamelled in maroon and gold

Jessie Street Biography: a short biography by Heather Radi

Jessie Street: A Revised Autobiography by Lenore Coltheart (Federation Press, 2004)

Prices at the Library

Library bags	\$5	Teatowels	\$7
Lapel pins	\$5/\$7.50 (non-members)		
Jessie Street Biography	\$5		
Jessie Street Revised Autobiography	\$25 (members) \$30 (non-members)		

Add \$1 for packaging and posting for first four items. For the Autobiography, add \$9, independent of the number of copies ordered.



OUR ANNUAL RAFFLE

Tickets are enclosed for the Annual Raffle, which will be drawn at the Parliamentary Luncheon on 20 September.

Buy generously and support the Library.

FIRST PRIZE

\$1200 to spend on Australian Argyle diamonds. This prize is donated by Mondial Neuman at the QVB in Sydney. The lucky winner may choose a piece of jewellery to this value or a selection of loose diamonds for setting. Mondial Neuman specialises in diamonds from the Argyle mine in Western Australia, from which come the famous pink diamonds found nowhere else in the world.

SECOND PRIZE

A framed original painting in acrylic by Max Mannix, valued at \$1000 and donated by the artist.

Max Mannix, a self-taught artist, spent 20 years in the Australian outback working in mustering camps, shearing sheds, and doing droving and fencing. He has also managed a large cattle station. From his colourful experiences, which have provided him with endless inspiration, he depicts life in the outback with insight and humour.

THIRD PRIZE

Book tokens to the value of \$200, redeemable from any Angus & Robertson bookstore in Australia.

CONGRATULATIONS

Congratulations to member **Joan Bielski AM**, who was awarded an AO in the Queen's Birthday Honours 'for services to the community, particularly through programs to encourage women's participation in political life and through continued contributions to the principles of equal opportunity, access to education and social reform.'

Congratulations also to Library supporter **Mrs Rowena Danziger**, who was awarded an AM 'for services to education as headmistress of Ascham School, and through professional organisations, and to the community, particularly through Opera Australia.'

A REMINDER TO RENEW YOUR MEMBERSHIP

If the label on your newsletter is in red, it is a reminder that you have not yet paid your subscription for 2004, and a renewal notice is enclosed.

Membership details are up-to-date as at 30 June. We apologise to any members who paid after this date, but who have nevertheless received a renewal notice in this newsletter.

LUNCH-HOUR TALKS

Special October Event — Thursday 7th
Lenore Coltheart in conversation with Shirley Jones

Lenore (historian with the National Archives of Australia) and Shirley (Public Relations Officer with JSNWL) talk about the trials and delights of Lenore's work in preparing the celebrated new edition of Jessie Street's 1966 autobiography *Truth or Repose*. How do you go about 'revising' an autobiography, especially the autobiography of an important person like Jessie Street? What is in the ASIO files on Jessie? Why has she been 'erased' from Australian political history?

October — Thursday 21st

Pam Liell — Pictures and Messages from the Past

Pam is writing a book about events and fashions 1860-1960, working from information gleaned from old family photographs. She talks about the research she has undertaken for this, and for her two self-published books on the social and military messages contained on the backs of old postcards.

November — Thursday 18th

Goldie Alexander — Intimacy and Intrigue

Goldie has written 25 books, which include murder/mysteries, science fiction, magic realism and social reality. A recent book, *Body and Soul*, explores the Melbourne of 1938. Goldie talks about some of the techniques she uses to create fiction for both children and adults.

LIBRARY MATTERS

THE SPACE SITUATION

It's back to the drawing board! The City of Sydney Council took us to view alternative accommodation in the Ultimo Community Centre, which has recently become available. The new space is a much more suitable and pleasant area than the one we were offered earlier. Although it is a smaller, we will be provided with secure storage space, which will accommodate a lot of material that we do not need daily access to, and this will allow us to make full use of the library space. The architect is drawing up plans. If these are approved by Council, renovation work on the space could start fairly soon and our move into new premises could take place towards the end of the year.

LIBRARY NEWS

What Users are Looking for in the Library

Readers who came into the Library over the last few months were looking for material on the following topics

- Women and work
- Protest and revolution—colonial voices
- Julia of Norwich
- Women's efforts in World War II
- Ada Cambridge
- Ruby Rich and Portia Geach

Several people were seeking material on Jessie Street. Members may be interested to know that the following books on Jessie are in the Loan Collection and available for borrowing.

Truth or Repose (Jessie's original autobiography)

Jessie Street (a biography by Peter Sekules)

Jessie Street: Documents and Essays (edited by Heather Radi)

and the newly published *Jessie Street: A Revised Autobiography*.

The last two can also be bought at the Library, or on request (see page 2, col 1)

Visitors to the Library

Jenni Jeremy came into the Library on 30 June with her cousin from England. Jenni is Development Librarian with The Bob Hawke Prime Ministerial Library in Adelaide. The four Prime Ministerial Libraries in Australia will be holding a conference next year. Jenni is organising this and, since she proposes

making the theme 'Australian Women', she came to look at our Library. We presented her with some background information about JSNWL and a copy of the revised autobiography of Jessie Street, which will be put in her library.

Six degrees of separation

On Wednesday 2 June, Margaret Thirlwell from Newcastle phoned the Library; she was interested in Ada Cambridge and we had the book she wanted. We made instant contact over the phone when I knew where Yackandandah was and had been there on holidays as a child. I happened to be at JSNWL on the following Monday when Margaret came to read Ada's book. While we were having a cup of tea, she asked me if I knew anything about Marie Byles. Talk about a coincidence! A Fact File I had done on Marie had just gone on the JSNWL website.

I had discovered Marie Byles via an interest in Buddhism in Australia (Marie is a foundational person in the history of Buddhism in Australia) and then discovered that Marie was one of the first women to graduate in Law from the University of Sydney and the first to set up her own practice. It turns out that Margaret Thirlwell is the niece of Marie Byles, the daughter of her brother.

Janet Morrissey, Fact File Volunteer

JSNWL Catalogue on-Line

Good news! The JSNWL catalogue can now be accessed on-line through the City of Sydney Library website.

Follow these steps.

- 1 On the JSNWL home page, click on JSNWL catalogue
- 2 Click on catalogue for City of Sydney Library
- 3 Click on POWER SEARCH
- 4 Scroll down to Jessie Street National Women's Library
- 5 Enter keywords for your search
- 6 To restrict your search to JSNWL collection only, go to REFINE YOUR SEARCH
- 7 Scroll through and select Jessie Street National Women's Library and click on this.
- 8 Return to top of page and select GO



ARCHIVES NEWS

Martha Jones' Certificate

A delightful piece of ephemera in the collection is a beautiful certificate presented to a Martha Jones by the Women's Social and Political Union. It is signed by Emmeline Pankhurst!! Although undated, it was given to Martha Jones after 'a long period of privation and solitary confinement in prison for the votes for Women Cause'. As I have no idea who Martha Jones was, other than a suffragist in England pre-WWI, I will need to do some careful research on this significant document.

WE NEED ARCHIVES BENEFACTORS

Paying for professional preservation work on the Martha Jones' certificate will cost \$500.

Would any members, interested in contributing towards the archives, be willing to make a donation?

After preservation, the certificate will be framed and the names of contributors attached.

Joyce Clarke Collection

Two volunteers are working on the initial processing of the Joyce Clarke collection. The preparatory work consists of removing papers from their files and putting them in manila folders, then, to preserve the material, replacing all metal clips and staples with special archival paper clips. The work is protracted and tedious, but essential, and we are lucky to have volunteers who are committed to this work.

Beverly Sodbinow, Archivist

Corrections. We would like to correct statements made in the May newsletter. Joyce Clarke's title was Principal of Kogarah High School, not Head Mistress as stated, and although she was actively involved in the Teachers Federation throughout her career, she did not hold the position of Secretary.

In the Loan Collection article in the May newsletter we stated that the book *Karobran: The Story of an Aboriginal Girl*, was the 'only' novel ever written by an Aboriginal woman. This should now read the 'first' novel. Larissa Behrendt's novel *Home* won an award for Indigenous Writers in 2003. The book was launched at the Sydney Writers Festival this year.

We thank an alert member for drawing our attention to these errors—Ed

JUNE LUNCH-HOUR TALK
SPEAKER: HAZEL EDWARDS
Antarctic Writer on Ice

On June 17th Hazel Edwards in her talk gave us a fascinating and humorous insight into life in the Antarctic.

People ask me why somebody of my age of 54 and level of non-fitness would consider going to Antarctica on an Australian National Antarctic Research Expedition. Each year, there's an ANARE humanities' berth available for one non-scientist, someone who will portray Antarctica internationally afterwards.

There are at least 200 applicants for the position, so I didn't think I had a hope. Then I got an acceptance, providing I passed the medical. When I looked at the medical check list I knew I had no hope, because I don't have a prostate! When I got the correct female list, I realised I would have to get really fit to pass the stringent six-hour medical. You have to be pretty fit to deal with the experience of climbing in and out of the Antarctic vessels and vehicles. If you fall into the water without the proper Antarctic gear, you die in four minutes.

Let me share an anecdote with you. When I came home after the expedition I went to my local bank, and the teller said 'Your VISA card is damp! Where have you been?' and when I told her Antarctica, she said 'Did your card work in the ATMs there?' When told there were no ATMs there, she said 'Did you use Antarctic dollars then?' When I said 'No,' she paused for a moment then asked—and this made me realise the depths of ignorance about Antarctica—'Did you see any polar bears?' 'No,' I said. 'They're up the other end. You know—in the North Pole.' And that's why I usually talk about Antarctica when asked—to correct this ignorance.

Today I'll use the letters of the word 'AUTHOR' as a shape for this talk. 'A' stands for both Antarctica and Ambition, for indeed Antarctica is the ultimate ambition for many people. I don't like the cold, but I was really interested in motives and how people confined in a small area got along together. And I fell in love with the icebergs. There's even one named after me, the Hazelberg. Nine-tenths of it is underneath the surface and it's extremely large, so I guess you take that as a compliment.

'A' also refers to an author's 'aim'—why write? If you take the image of the iceberg,

I think that symbolises the writing of a book. Nine-tenths is underneath the surface, but people only see the little bit that's visible. Antarctica has been my most profound researching experience as a writer. I never expected words to be valued as highly as they were in Antarctica and that is because words are a way of coming to terms with the extreme environment.

The second letter is 'U' for understanding. I'm a great believer in being a participant observer-writer so that you can write realistically and Antarctica certainly fits into that category. The ice bases are completely isolated from March through till November. The expeditioners who go down there fit into three categories: the winterers who go for 14-month terms, the summerers, who go down between November and March to do particular scientific projects and return; and the round trippers, including people like me, eco-lawyers and the polities, who go down to have a look. What I was concerned about was how as a writer I would cope. The expeditioners are chosen as the best in their field, but they have to be able to do other things as well. The expeditioners include: the boffins or scientists, who cover areas like astrophysics, wildlife such as seals and penguins, marine research, the weather etc; and the support staff, known as the 'tradies' who include the Chef, Chippy the carpenter who builds, paints and is also the librarian; the plumber who's also the anaesthetist because he's good with valves; and the medical doc, who's also the surgeon and dentist because your fillings fall out.

'T' is for 'Title' and it's also for 'Time management'. I was actually in Antarctica about six or seven weeks, and during this time we set out on what was meant to be a three-week return voyage to Casey Station. On the sixth day we broke through the ice edge. You can actually hear the crack as the ship goes through the ice and can see these most beautiful icebergs as large as department stores. It's like sitting in the middle of a pavlova. Day 7 we became stuck or 'beset' in the ice. Two helicopters came from the Casey Station on a recce. Unfortunately one of them crashed on top of us and there was a danger of fire. Emergency training paid off. All went effectively into action. So we had the remains of a helicopter, additional people including the



Casey female Station leader and uncertainty about when and whether we would get out of this block of floating ice. In one way it was a very good experience for a writer, because you see how people work in extreme circumstances.

You are equipped of course with the physical gear. Now I'm fairly tall. That's an advantage. You get to wear the new stuff. One of the other female expeditioners who was quite petite got all the recycled stuff from the young men, who'd never washed woollen gear before and it had shrunk. You have thick woollen jumpers and mittens, you have boots with chains on the bottom. You wear yellow windbreakers, which go over the woollen pants with a sort of belt on them, a hat to keep your head warm and the most beautiful goggles. The Antarctic Division also issues you with a very important piece of female equipment—a FUD—a female urinary device. [Hazel holds it up.] Let me tell you, it's very hard to use, particularly when you've got all those layers on. All frozen waste is shipped back to Australia and we returned in a ship full of it.

'O' is for Originality. I was going to interview expeditioners about their work and family arrangements. I was also researching an eco-thriller, but I had suggested I would do serendipitous projects, that is, I'd find out when I got there, what might be appropriate. I was overcome by the size and the colour coding of the vehicles in Antarctica and I've now done a pre-school TV animation series 'Hot Ice Squad' based on the vehicles, which all have personalities.

Another serendipitous project is what I called the Lachieberg project and it demonstrated the swapping of skills which occurs in Antarctica. A seven-year-old neighbour Lachlan, asked me before I left for Antarctica to write a story with his name in it. The view out my porthole was of this stunning iceberg. So I wrote about an iceberg called the Lachieberg. I asked the glaciologist to check the iceberg facts

in my story and then tried to email it to Lachie but it kept bouncing. Some of the expeditioners came up to me and said 'Hazel how would you feel if we gave you a picture of a jade iceberg to go with your kid's story and we do a find-and-replace on the kid's name and put our own kid's name in it and send it out to our children?' After a discussion about copyright, we emailed the Marcelberg, the Damienberg, and the whateverberg, to America, Malaysia, New Zealand and Australia. I hope the children never meet, because each thought it was written specially for them. Now that's a serendipitous project.

Initially I didn't think writing rated alongside some of the skills of others. It does. I came to an arrangement with the bargemaster. If he could guarantee that I would not fall when we had to climb over the side of the ship and jump down into the barge in all our gear, then I would help him write his email love letters. Now I reckon that was a pretty good trade, because I didn't fall in the ice and when we got back to Hobart, he went off into the blue yonder with this blonde. So this is the power of words in Antarctica.

'R' is for Research, but also things like revising. Surrounded by 'experts' I had much help in plotting my Antarctic thriller but the anthrax plot had to be revised post-11 September. When you're physically confined what actually is courage? Is it pulling people out of helicopters when you've got to make a fast decision about which is the greatest danger? Or is it coping afterwards with the doing nothing and having to use the resources of your mind? This is when creativity kicked in. Most expeditioners are excellent problem-solvers and many activities were word-based. We had trivial pursuit nights, with no more than three PhDs per table, and we had a poetry launch. The ingoing station leader asked whether I had a book about to be launched in Australia. I said 'Yes, it's called Non-Boring Travel Writing, but the book's not here.' He said 'We could have a virtual reality launch. We could just mock up the cover and have a few drinks, bit of cheese. Could you get your publishers to fax it through to you by satellite?' Eventually the faxed cover arrived but only the words in white came out, so what we got was 'Boring Hazel Edwards'. We were all set to launch Boring Hazel Edwards while stuck in the ice when the ship moved. So we delayed the launch and went on to resupply the Casey Station

Then we had to be rescued by the ice-breaker *Aurora Australis*, because our ship got stuck in the ice outside Casey Station. When the *Aurora* arrived we could see this red ship on the horizon zigzagging towards us. Then it did a circle of victory and took off zigzagging through this heavy ice. We had to follow before the ice closed up. Then I began to think I could hear music. They reckon you get a bit strange in this place. My husband is a Wagner fan and I recognised Wagner's *Ride of the Valkyries*. We subsequently learnt that the mate on the *Aurora Australis* is a Wagner fan but my husband is delighted that Wagner has penetrated Antarctica.

At this point Hazel showed slides. You can view some of them at:

www.hazeledwards.com

Hazel's Antarctic publications include: *Antarctic Writer on Ice* (a diary) (www.booksonwriting.com) and *Antarctica's Frozen Chosen* (Lothian)

Transcription and abbreviated version by Shirley Jones



NEW MEMBERS

A warm welcome to our new members

Beverley Beddoes-Mills	NSW
Caroline Bowyer	NSW
Bronwyn Campbell	NSW
Abir El-Lahib	NSW
Clodagh Harrison	NSW
Caroline V. Jones	NSW
H. Chase Livingston	USA
Alison Mackinnon	SA
Lea Maher	NSW
Ea Mulligan	SA
Sharon Sutherland	NSW
Judith Torzillo	NSW
Narelle Wickham	ACT
Margaret Wood	NSW
Australian Nursing Federation	ACT
Children by Choice Association	QLD
Union of Australian Women	VIC
YWCA of Australia	ACT

We extend a special welcome to the four organisations that have joined JSNWL and to Chase Livingston of San Francisco, who is our first member from the United States.

NORA HUPPERT'S TALK

We are very sorry not to be able to print a shortened version of the very moving talk, *Children Rescued from the Holocaust*, that Nora Huppert gave on 20 May. It may be possible to print this at a later date.

NOTES & QUOTES

Bedroom Behaviour in the 60s!!

This is an actual extract from a sex education school textbook for girls, printed in the early '60s in the UK.

"When retiring to the bedroom, prepare yourself for bed as promptly as possible. Whilst feminine hygiene is of the utmost importance, your tired husband does not want to queue for the bathroom, as he would have to do for his train. But remember to look your best when going to bed. Try to achieve a look that is welcoming without being obvious. If you need to apply face cream or hair rollers wait until he is asleep as this can be shocking to a man last thing at night.

When it comes to the possibility of intimate relations with your husband it is important to remember your marriage vows and in particular your commitment to obey him. If he feels that he needs to sleep immediately then so be it – in all things be led by your husband's wishes; do not pressure him in any way to stimulate intimacy. Should your husband suggest congress then agree humbly all the while being mindful that a man's satisfaction is more important than a woman's.

When he reaches his moment of fulfilment, a small moan from yourself is encouraging to him and quite sufficient to indicate any enjoyment that you may have had. Should your husband suggest any of the more unusual practices, be obedient and uncomplaining but register any reluctance by remaining silent. It is likely that your husband will then fall promptly asleep so adjust your clothing, freshen up and apply night-time face and hair care products. You may then set the alarm so that you can arise shortly before him in the morning. This will enable you to have his morning cup of tea ready when he awakes."

Contributed by Janet Morrissey, Volunteer

CANBERRA NEWS

FUNDRAISING DINNER TO CELEBRATE THE LIFE OF JESSIE STREET

The Grand Dinner, held in the Members Dining Room in Old Parliament House on Friday, 14 May, was a massive success and proved to be a great night out. It was wonderful that so many members from Sydney could be present. This was a collaborative event, organised by members of JSNWL in Canberra, Terri-Anne Simmonds (who was MC on the night), Sophie Chessell (our web person), Wendy Sanderson (our Canberra Board member) and Lenore Coltheart, as well as Margy Burn from the Jessie Street Trust

Drinks were served in the Kings Hall to the 150 guests present, to a background of music by the Mozart Wind Trio. Wendy Sanderson in a short talk, outlined the history of the Library, emphasising its significance. She was followed by Jeannette McHugh, who spoke about the Jessie Street Trust and the grants it has awarded since its foundation in 1989. The guests then listened to an address by Commissioner Pru Goward from the Human Rights and Equal Opportunity Commission. The speeches were punctuated periodically by the applauding beat of a drum from a function downstairs.

The guests then moved through into the Members Dining Room to enjoy the Grand Dinner of three delicious courses and wonderful wines. During the dinner Lenore Coltheart gave a short talk, followed by Belinda Mackay, Jessie Street's elder daughter, both speaking very passionately about Jessie's life and the reasons why we should celebrate it.

The dinner owes a lot of its success to a number of donors and we give special thanks to the following: Kate Cowie, General Manager at Old Parliament House; Ginger Catering, who provided wonderful food; Vandy Cullen from the Cullen Vineyard in Margaret River, Western Australia who provided the red and white wines; Rennie, the Florist at Parliament House; the Mozart Wind Trio; Brendan O'Donnell of Art Direction Creative, for the design work; and Diane Young and Federation Press for printing the invitations. The elegant menu, produced by Ginger Catering, is a very fitting souvenir of a highly memorable event.

Contributed by Wendy Sanderson and Shirley Jones

MAY LUNCH-HOUR TALK Guest speaker: Dr Anna Gray

On the 6th of May we were thrilled to have Anna Gray, the National Gallery's Assistant Director with special responsibility for Australian Art, address our Canberra audience. Anna is currently curator of the exhibition *The Edwardians – Secrets and Desires*, which has enjoyed tremendous success within Australia and internationally over the last three years. She shared with us her knowledge about women as artists and objects of the gaze in the Edwardian era, and following her fascinating talk, which included glimpses of the works, everyone was keen to get along to the exhibition!

Anna outlined the social mores of the period in order to elucidate the subtle ways in which female sexuality was foregrounded in many of the works. The Edwardian period was one in which social change and the arts were encouraged, in contrast to the more restrictive Victorian era. One impact that this had on the way in which women were painted is apparent in the nudes of Philip Wilson Steer and

William Orpen, in which female nakedness is grounded in reality, and not elevated by placing the nude figure within a mythological or classical setting.

Anna highlighted a gradual progression towards painting women near windows and out-of-doors – a more liberated setting in a time when afternoon tea in the garden became a fashionable alternative to traditionally structured Edwardian dining. She also provided an insight into the works of female artists of the period, many of whom often sold their work amongst friends and did not exhibit publicly. Interspersed with quotes from Virginia Woolf, Anna's talk was simply delightful and we thank her for her contribution.

Thank you also to those people who helped on the day, and to 2XX for recording the talk and airing it on their show 'Women with Attitude'.

Norelle Woolley, JSNWL Canberra member

JULY LUNCH-HOUR TALK Guest Speaker: Jean Bourke

Recording Stories of Asia-Pacific Women in Australia was the subject of last week's fascinating talk by Jean Bourke. Jean has been a teacher for many years and currently works in the field of Special Education. After 13 years in Papua New Guinea she came to Canberra, where her strong interest in minority groups and issues of social justice led her to join forces with Susanne Holzknicht and Annie Bartlett to compile the anthology *Weaving a Double Cloth: Stories of Asia-Pacific Women in Australia*, published by Pandanus Press. Their goal was to give a voice to women whose stories might otherwise remain unheard, and to provide an insight into the rich and varied lives of a range of Australia's more recent migrant women.

The anthology is an incredibly engaging read; it details the extraordinary herstories of seemingly ordinary women, plunging readers into different countries, historical periods and indeed emotional states in the process! Interviewing the women and transcribing/editing their fascinating stories was an enormous challenge, and Jean's talk provided a delightful blend of inside information on the nature of that challenge and insights into the women's diverse stories.

We thank Jean for her wonderful contribution, and those people who helped on the day. Thanks also to Wendy Sanderson who purchased a copy of the anthology to donate to the Library.

Norelle Woolley, JSNWL Canberra member

FORTHCOMING TALKS

September—Thursday 2nd Speaker: Jenny Coombs

Jenny is from the 'Personal Lives' collection at the Australian War Memorial.

November—Thursday 4th Speaker: Katy Gallagher MLA

Katy, who is Minister for Women in the ACT, talks on being a single mother in politics.

Canberra Museum and Gallery,
London Circuit, Civic, 12.30 - 2. pm
Contact Wendy on 6249 8782 or
email wendysanderson@hotmail.com

NEWS OF MEMBERS

Our newest member is **Chase Livingston** from San Francisco. She and Lenore Colheart recently met up there, when Lenore was on her way to Europe on a 'following in Jessie's footsteps' trip. Chase tells us that they talked for about six hours and had a wonderful time sharing suffrage information. Chase had taken along the book she intends to give to the Library, thinking Lenore could take it back with her. Chase said 'She looked at it, held it, photographed it and then returned it to me to personally deliver.'

Phoenix de Carteret, who was a volunteer in the Library before she took up a scholarship to do a PhD at the University of New England, tells us that she takes every opportunity to promote the Library, and to encourage those doing women's studies to donate a copy of their thesis to JSNWL. She writes: 'A collection of theses comprising overtly feminist scholarship would be a unique resource and absolutely invaluable to feminist researchers. It would also be a wonderful historical record of research by and about women. In these times when...women's studies are disappearing, I think it is as important as ever to keep feminist scholarship and research together.'

Shirley Randell AM has just published her sixth book in Vanuatu, a secondary school text recording the biographies of 43 ni-Vanuatu women in non-traditional professions.

Elizabeth Mooney is back from a trip on the Siberian train to Moscow. She went with three friends, all aged from 50s to late 70s, and thoroughly enjoyed the experience. She writes: 'Our carriage was a dream of pale blue velveteen bed covers, plastic flowers and lace head rests.' Leaving from Beijing on a 19-carriage train, they had stopovers in Ulaan Bataa, Irkutsk, and Lake Baikal. The group enjoyed Mongolia the most, where they stayed with 'a non-complaining, non-English speaking Mongolian family'. They all found Moscow and St Petersburg 'tantalisingly stunning.' The only obvious capitalists, said Elizabeth, were the taxi drivers, one of whom asked them for (but didn't get) \$US120 for a 10-minute ride from the railway station to their hotel overlooking the Kremlin.

VOLUNTEER NEWS

I don't know whether it is the looming Australian Winter or the beckoning European Spring, but many of our volunteers have been travelling to foreign shores—Wendi Balbi (which is why I am doing this report), Ros Leal, Marie Muir and Elizabeth Mooney.

As we farewell TAFE Library student Phoebe Hodgson, we welcome another, Abir El-Lahib. Abir was so excited when she came back to the Library after lunch on 9 June—she had found 'a freed' book, courtesy of BookCrossing (see story below).

Those who have not been enjoying foreign travel have been working hard—representing the Library, Jozefa Sobski launched the revised edition of the history of the Pan Pacific and South East Asia Women's Association (PPSEAWA) on 26 May and Janet Morrissey spoke at Wenona School Year 10 History Day about the social activism of Australian women post-World War II.

Jill Harris has been networking with TAFE, Royal Agricultural Society, Police Museum, the Police archivist and the CWA in her 'fact filing' hunt. The committee for the Parliamentary Luncheon in September meets monthly and is on track with the preparations and Wendy Fothergill provides a guiding hand. Thank you also to Alison Storey who stood in for Elizabeth Mooney while she was away.

Our volunteers are multi-skilled and while some have been singled out, we value each and every one of their contributions to the day-to-day running of the Library—the Library would not exist without them.

Janet Morrissey
pro tem *Volunteer Coordinator*

Abir's BookCrossing Find

Abir El-Lahib, who is doing the Ultimo TAFE Library and Information Services course, is a new student volunteer at the Library. She shares this delightful story with us.

'On Wednesday 9 June 2004 at my lunch break I found Agatha Christie's *Peril at End House* sitting helplessly at the end of the stairs near the one-stop shop in Town Hall House and begging to be picked up. I was not sure to take it or leave it. However, I decided to show it to the dedicated volunteers at Jessie Street National Women's Library where I also volunteer. They got very excited as they

had recently read about the BookCrossing but had never 'found' a book.

On Wednesday 16 June I 'found' another book in the exact same place. The Wednesday volunteers really teased me and said the Town Hall House BookCrossing person was waiting for me! Maybe JSNWL could release the books that it no longer needs into the world in BookCrossing style?

Editor's note: JSNWL will be looking into this suggestion.

THE WEL 2004 EDNA RYAN AWARDS

These awards have been presented each year since 1998 by NSW Women's Electoral Lobby as a memorial to Edna Ryan, and a way of publicising women's achievements.

At this year's event on Saturday 12 June, the following EDNAs were presented:

Government	Susan Ryan
Battling	Lucy Porter
Mentoring	Julie Griffiths Joan Lemaire
Community Activism	Muriel Hortin Margo Moore
Workforce	Phillipa Hall Dominique Hogan-Doran
Grand Stirrer	Anne Summers

Full details of this and previous years' Award winners are held by JSNWL, as well as a history of the first five years of 'The EDNAs'.

DYNASTY COMES TO THE LIBRARY

Geraldine McKenna, ABC 'TV Dynasty Series' researcher, visited the Library on Monday, 5th July. As part of the Series program on the Street family Jessie's archives form a vital component. We were able to direct Geraldine to appropriate archival sources and to make available the Library's own material, both print and audiovisual. She is now even more intrigued by the phenomenal persona of Jessie and of her contribution to women's rights.

Audrey Green, Volunteer Librarian

The new series of *Dynasty* will be screening later this year.

NEW MEMBERS ON THE BOARD

We welcome on board two new members, Marie Muir and Jozefa Sobski, who were appointed to fill positions left vacant after the AGM in March.

Marie Muir

Marie was educated at Sydney Girls High School and Sydney Teachers College in Infant Training. Almost 30 years' teaching saw her in country areas, Sydney schools, disadvantaged schools, rising to positions of Infant Mistress and Primary Principal. During this time she contributed as a delegate to and representative of the NSW Teachers Federation, working for equal pay and equal opportunity, and finally holding the position of Vice President. She even found time to co-author a text book *Mathematics Evaluation Procedures K-12* and represent Australian schools in Oregon, USA, and the Cook Islands.

Since she retired in 1985, Marie has been busy, again representing women, as a

delegate to conferences in Moscow (1987) and Sheffield (1991) and at Women's Constitutional Conventions in Canberra in 1998 and 2002.

She was fortunate to witness the elections in El Salvador in 1991, where she also met with women's groups, and to visit Vietnam in 1992 with the Australian People for Health, Education and Development Abroad (APHEDA) to assess programs.

Marie has been active in Jessie Street National Women's Library since 1994. She was on the Management Committee from 1995-1999, holding the position of Vice-Chair from 1997-1999.

Jozefa Sobski

Jozefa Sobski has been active in women's organisations for many years. She was an inaugural member of the NSW Women in Education group and the Australian Women's Education Coalition. She qualified as an English and History teacher and received a Master in Adult Education from UTS during her period of working in Technical and Further Education.

Her career in the paid public service spans 31 years. Most recently, she was the Chief Information Officer in the NSW Department of Health, responsible for information technology and systems reform. She has been a member of the NSW Public Service Association and previously, the NSW Teachers Federation, where she served on its Council, and as an office bearer for the Officers, Consultants and Advisers Association in the 1980s.

As Deputy Director-General in the NSW Department of Education and Training from 1998 to 2001, she was appointed to the NSW Board of Studies and the Board of the Australian Children's Television Foundation, where she was the state representative. She has also been a member of the former Commonwealth Tertiary Education Commission and was for some years, Chairperson of the Ministerial Council's National Vocational Education, Employment and Training Women's Advisory Committee.

During her period as Director of the South Western Sydney Institute of TAFE, she

was presented in 1997 with the inaugural Premier's Public Sector Award for her institute in the category of improving Delivery Towards Social Justice for improving access and equity for students. She is also a recipient of the national AUSTAFE leadership award in recognition of her contribution to vocational education and training.

Jozefa is passionately committed to quality public services, improving the status, standing and participation of women in community life, equality of access to education and training for all, and adequate government investment in our public institutions.

She has broad-ranging public service, community and political experience and interest. She grew up in migrant hostels, spending seven years at Villawood, now the detention centre! She is deeply distressed by the current national public policy on refugees and asylum seekers.

Jozefa is very pleased to be joining the Board and hopes to make contribution to the governance of the Library through her participation. As a feminist, she has been involved with women's causes from the early 70s when she joined the MeJane Collective, the first women's liberation newspaper. She is currently a member of WEL, Women into Politics, UNIFEM and has been periodically, a member of EMILY's list, IWDA and other groups. She also serves on the Board of the Casula Powerhouse Arts Centre.

LAUNCH OF REVISED HISTORY BOOKLET

On 26 May, **Jozefa Sobski**, as her first task as a member of the Board, launched the revised history booklet of the Pan-Pacific and South East Asia Women's Association of Australia (PPSEAWA) at The Women's Club in Elizabeth Street, Sydney. Some 50 members were present including some from the ACT branch.

In launching the booklet, Jozefa stressed that, if we consider world economic and social conditions, and the conflicts that are daily reported, the objectives of the Association—strengthening peace through friendship and building understanding; and promoting cooperation among women for the study and improvement of social, economic and cultural conditions—remain extremely pertinent and their pursuit more urgent.

A copy of the booklet is in the Library or may be obtained from the Association.

TALK TO STUDENTS AT WENONA SCHOOL

On 7 June, **Janet Morrissey**, one of our volunteers, gave a talk about 'women in Australia since World War II, feminism and activism', to about 52 students in Year 10 History at Wenona School in North Sydney.

Janet told the girls her own story, saying 'I didn't set out to "live history" but at various times in my life, I have been involved in what is now in the history books!' Through her parents and her schooling, Janet developed a strong sense of social justice. This led to her involvement over the years with, among other issues, Aboriginal Land Rights, protests against the Vietnamese war, the campaign against apartheid in South Africa, setting up the South Coast Australia-East Timor Association after the Indonesian invasion and women's rights. Janet still maintains her involvement in fights against injustice.

To conclude, Janet said that history is not something that happens to dead people. Each one of us lives history. Jessie Street National Women's Library is trying to preserve that history, particularly of those women who have not been seen as part of it. Janet said 'I am volunteering two days a week there and one of my tasks is to make our collection more accessible to young women like yourselves.'

OBITUARY

Dr Patricia Mary Lahy OM (1928-2004)

Pat's recent unexpected death marks the passing of one of Australia's quiet pioneers. The first woman Dean of Arts at Sydney University, indeed, it would appear in the whole of NSW if not Australia, she was a remarkable woman who, without any evident self-assertion, treated men and women, high and low, as equals and took great pains to help those who had been unfairly dealt with. After three terms as Dean she became the Vice-Chancellor's executive assistant and then in 1987 Pro-Vice-Chancellor in charge of the plans for the proposed Chifley College in Western Sydney. When, instead, the University of Western Sydney was established by amalgamating three existing CAEs, Pat was deeply involved in smoothing the path of the changeover. She was on the Board of Governors there from 1989-1997. Although she formally retired from Sydney University in 1991, until 1999 she still held various part-time jobs there which required her special administrative knowledge and people skills.

Sybil Jack, JSNWL Board member



BEQUESTS & ENDOWMENTS

Membership subscriptions and donations are not adequate to fully support our Library and its activities.

We need endowments and bequests to supplement our income.

JSNWL is a young and vigorous specialist Library with a collection unique in Australia. It is totally reliant on volunteers for its functioning and on membership subscriptions and donations for its running expenses. It receives no support from taxes or government contributions, except for an occasional grant or small amounts for special projects.

Would you like to make a contribution to the Library but are unable to do so at the moment? Then

Please remember us in your will.

MEMBERSHIP/VOLUNTEER FORM

Name(Ms/Mrs/Miss)

Address

..... Postcode

Tel (h) (w) Fax

Email (please print) Date/...../.....

Member \$ 45 Concessional \$20 (unwaged/pensioner)

Supporting member \$100 Life member \$500

Organisation \$100 Student (conditions apply) \$5

I wish to make a donation of \$ (Donations over \$2 are tax deductible)

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OR Please charge \$ to my Bankcard Mastercard Visa

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Volunteers Required

I would like to help with (tick where appropriate)

Fact Files Oral history Tapestry project JSNWL functions Book reviews

Newsletter mailout Transcribing tapes Processing archival material

Reception work Staffing Library (Are you library skilled unskilled)

WOMEN'S RECORDS

Jessie Street National Women's Library wishes to contact women with archival material of interest to other women.

Name(Ms/Mrs/Miss)

Address

..... Postcode

Tel (h) (w) Fax

Email (please print)

Do you hold records of an organisation or association (if so please name)

personal papers other (please specify)

Please return forms to

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

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