



WriteAway

Newsletter of the Society of Women Writers Victoria Inc.

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Society of Women Writers Victoria Inc. 73 Church Road Carrum VIC 3197

FORTHCOMING EVENT

Perfect Your Poetry and Prose

Workshop 1

KRISTIN HENRY

Writer and Poet

Kristin Henry describes her childhood as exotic.

Her parents were like gypsies, constantly on the move, travelling and living across the deep south of America. They were conservative in an unusual way; her mother worked wherever they set up house and her father was a handsome, charming jack-of-all-trades. They ended up in Australia accidentally, she thinks, not realising how far away it was.

Memory, film, music and people are sources for creativity and inspiration; the lies and truths people tell to get along with each other. Human beings are paradoxical and the little wars and contradictions going on inside them fascinate Kristin.

Themes about emotions are the trigger. Lately it's gratitude for being alive feeling as she's at an age when mortality is an issue.

She has always written and only took her work seriously when an old boyfriend looked at her journal saying—*Do you know you're a poet?* She didn't, thinking words had to rhyme and the only legitimate poets were called Shelley, Keats or Yeats.

Joining the Melbourne Poet's Union was a good move; poetry flowed from her pen and she was invited to read to a live audience. She valued feedback and was soon published.

Kristin says she loves it when an idea grabs her by the throat and won't let go; hours, days, pass and she's still fiddling.

Kristin has held several writer-in-community positions, and was co-Director of the Victorian Writers' Centre during its first two years.

She's published two non-fiction works, five poetry collections, was shortlisted for the NSW Premier's Award and released a CD featuring poems (some sung) from her collection *Quick Packer*. In 2012 UWAP published her verse novel *All The Way Home*.



Joint Event with the Fellowship of Australian Writers (Vic.)

Saturday 21 March, 10.30 am–4 pm, Perfect Your Poetry and Prose with Kristin Henry,

Where: Masonic Lodge, 6–8 Davies Street, Brunswick (enter via carpark)

When: 10.30 am registration, 11 am–4 pm workshop (includes one hour lunch break)

Cost: \$25 members of SWWV and FAW Vic., \$50 non-members

Morning tea, tea and coffee provided. BYO lunch or eat locally

Bookings essential: 03 9350 1781 (Lynn) or lynnemurphy1068@gmail.com

PRESIDENT'S LETTER



At the beginning of this new year we were saddened by the death of Lady April Hamer, much loved former Patron of our Society. Tributes have been flowing through cards to her family and emails between members. It is fitting that the obituary honouring the passing of Lady April should be written by our present patron Errol Broome, who worked so productively in the early days of SWWVictoria. Following a suggestion by Marguerite Kisvardai, who worked alongside Errol, a card will be presented at the February 27th meeting for members to sign and express their sympathy. It will then be sent to the Hamer family.

I hope you all had a good Christmas and a productive holiday break with some interesting writing to present at the February 27th meeting. I had a busy time in the first week of December, with the help of Lisa Kondor, setting up the display of SWWV Members' work in the big street front window in Ross House which was on view through December to 5th January. Many thanks to the writers who contributed their work to this fine showing which helped to publicise our Society and, hopefully, bring in new members. Photographs were taken of the display and will be on view on the new section of our Website early in March.

Andrew Marminc has retired from being webmaster of swwvic.net.au. We are lucky to have new member, Lynn Smailes, step in to take over this task. Lynn and I (Yes! It's 'The Lynne and Lynn Show'. No! We don't get confused but other people do) intend to set up a new simpler website which is easy to upload with fresh information each month, while retaining the old website as an archive. We will redirect traffic from the old site to our new one at swwvic.org.au.

This year, in partnership with the Fellowship of Australian Writers, our Society will present a series of four workshops under the banner of 'Perfect your Poetry and Prose'. Kristin Henry will be the first presenter on Saturday 21st March on poetry and how it can influence your prose and Ray Mooney will be second up on Saturday 23rd May on prose and how to expand your horizons. Each session will run 11 am to 4 pm with a 1 hour BYO lunch break. Tea and coffee will be provided. The venue is the Masonic Hall, Davies Street (just off Sydney Road) Brunswick. Details of how to get there are on Page 19.

On a splendid sunny Saturday 17th January, an extra number of SWWV members attended the Postal Workshops Picnic to meet Gwynneth Ashby of the UK Society of Women Writers & Journalists. Gwynneth, a sprightly and intrepid traveller, enjoyed herself thoroughly in our company in the beautiful surroundings of Fitzroy Gardens, and spoke of the advantages of maintaining and strengthening the link between our Societies. Thanks to Meryl Tobin for her organisation.

Good writing, dear members

Lynne

EDITOR'S LETTER



Dear Members,

I trust you will enjoy this issue of the newsletter and delighted to see your poetry and short stories from the Christmas Competition 2014 in print.

I look forward to receiving your poetry, short stories, letters and articles for the next issue. Your active participation is needed to keep the Society and newsletter vibrant and relevant otherwise both will wither on the vine.

Next month's interview will be with Gwynneth Ashby from the Society of Women Writers & Journalists UK.

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Please send (email) documents as Text Files. All photographs to be sent (emailed) separately in JPEG format and remember—*Prefer et obdura; dolor hic tibi proderit olim.*

Jennifer Leslie

Email: jenniferleslie360@gmail.com

In Memoriam

Lady April Hamer OAM 7 April 1921–6 January, 2015

Patron, supporter and friend of SWWV for thirty years



In 1985, the SWWV published *Equal to the Occasion*, a book of vignettes describing the lives of women in Victoria between 1835–1885, with an introduction by April Hamer.

Lady Hamer opens with a question:

'What is the common thread that links such a diverse collection of writings by women and girls of the past hundred years or more, writings which are in part letters or diaries, inspired by immediacy, and in part recollections of past events?'

—and ends with her answer:

'The common thread binding such disparate elements is that each author records a time of exceptional importance in her own life in a truly unselfconscious manner.'

Lady Hamer could have been speaking of herself, for she was unselfconscious and unselfish in the energy she poured into diverse sections of the community. The SWWV was honoured to have her as patron from September 1983. She attended meetings, chaired the elections and distributed prizes to Christmas competition winners. At a meeting, she spoke with passion about the plight of asylum seekers, and she was outspoken in her determination to save the green wedge parklands of Melbourne.

When Lady Hamer was among us, we knew we were in the presence of a writer. Her daughter Sarah Brenan said her mother 'wrote all the time'. Even a humble thank-you note took on a special flavour when she wrote it.

The last letter about which Sarah knew—handwritten and unsent—was a poignant note last year to Margaret and David when *At the Movies* was coming to an end last year.

When Lady Hamer could no longer attend SWWV meetings, she offered to resign as patron, but remained in the role because the Society would not let her go. She will be much missed, but always remembered.

At the funeral on January 13, Sarah Brenan read a short blessing that Lady Hamer wrote for her great-grandson last year:

Almighty God, you have already given this tiny boy the inheritance of a good body and mind; we pray that when he grows up he may devote some of his inheritance to the good of his fellow men and women, as well as those he loves...

Lady Hamer was a role model for young and old.

Funeral Service for Lady Hamer, 13 January 2015, St. Paul's Anglican Church, Canterbury

A thanksgiving service was held in celebration for the life of Lady Hamer at St. Paul's Canterbury, where her husband, Sir Rupert Hamer, had laid the foundation stone for the hall on 10 May 1964. There was a selection of photographs in the main porch—a moving tribute showing April in a family setting.

A choir led the large number of people attending the service in the singing of the first hymn: 'Be Still, My Soul'.

Lady Hamer's children participated in the eulogy. They recalled events from their youth showing how present she was to them as a mother despite her active community life. Later memories included extracts from Lady Hamer's letters describing her personality and interests painting a portrait of her as humble, incisive, spiritual, and witty. The service closed with the hymn—'Guide Me, O Thou Great Redeemer'—that in part described her attitude to living. After the service, I signed the memorial book on behalf of the Society.

Agnes Chatfield

*SWWV Editor Jennifer Leslie's
interview with prominent economist*
Saul Eslake
about things that matter



Have changes in language influenced the way you communicate?

I try to communicate my thoughts about economic issues in a way people who aren't economists can readily understand because after all, I don't spend much time talking to economists.

Time working in Treasury was good for teaching people with an economics degree how to write for people without one. In the context of economics clear writing and speaking is important as it can be an obscure discipline and many people are cynical about what an economist says and the purposes for which it is used.

I strive to write and speak according to the rules of grammar, spelling and punctuation and accept I may seem old-fashioned. I'm offended by poor punctuation, spelling and grammar and some aspects of the way the language has evolved horrify me. For example, the inability of many people under the age of 35 to string 10 words together without four of them being 'like', that people don't know where to put an apostrophe and are so unsure about using reflexive pronouns they say: 'please return this to myself'.

I find that a terrible indictment on how our language is taught but I am not offended by most of the language of text messages, mind the way word usage changes over time or new words entering our lexis. That's probably one of the reasons for the pervasiveness of English as an international language—it's adaptable and flexible.

I'd like to talk with you about John Maynard Keynes because he mixed in literary and bohemian circles not usually associated with economists. Do you think the life he led influenced his theories?

I think the way he lived after graduating and before he married accounts for much. He was gay for most of that period and many of his friends were members of the Bloomsbury Group. His time with people such as Lytton Strachey, Virginia Woolf probably influenced the way he thought about the world and how he wrote about it.

I think Keynes' assertion that 'the world is ruled by little else than the ideas of economists, both when they are right and when they are wrong' was an exaggeration.

I believe there is truth in another assertion that Keynes made on the same page, namely that 'the power of vested interests is vastly exaggerated compared with the gradual encroachment of ideas' and that 'soon[er] or late[r], it is ideas, not vested interests, which are dangerous for good or evil'.

His ideas were a product of the time; the Great War, Britain's return to the gold standard that he described and analysed correctly as a mistake, and the misery of the inter-war period. He first came to attention through his excoriating critique of the Treaty of Versailles and accurately foretold the consequences of that in dealing with the Great Depression and that is how people today remember his contribution to economic theory.

Do you agree he gave economics a more compassionate profile?

I didn't read *The General Theory of Employment, Interest and Money* until 1982, more than three years after graduation.

I've read much of his writing since then and disagree with many of his statements which is neither difficult nor a particular criticism of Keynes. Frequently, he said or wrote things at variance with those he made at other stages of his life.

Some people have criticised Keynes for his so-called childless vision. He said: 'in the long run we are all dead, economists set themselves too easy, too useless a task if, in tempestuous times, they can only tell us when the storm is past the ocean will be flat again.' I think Keynes has been misinterpreted. Many of his critics believe he was focused on the short term, that he was a hedonist and because he and Lydia Lopokova never had children, he didn't care about the long term.

This criticism was unfair and unfounded. Keynes subsequently wrote an essay called *Economic Possibilities for our Grandchildren* in which he said: 'if economists could manage to get themselves thought of as humble, competent people on a level with dentists that would be splendid'. I always liked that quote because my father was a dentist for some of his career.

How much do you think life experience influences an economist's policies?

Some economists' policies or theories are influenced by the circumstances in which they grew up. Contemporary economic thinking is influenced by the difficulty most western countries had dealing with simultaneous inflation and unemployment from the mid-1970s until the early 90s.

I remember Ken Henry, Secretary of the Australian Treasury for a decade, saying his childhood experiences influenced the way he thought about economics. He grew up in Taree on the Northern coast of NSW and his father worked in Forestry. Bernie Fraser grew up in relatively impoverished circumstances. They weren't my experiences, I grew up typically middle class and haven't any personal experience of poverty or hardship. I've been lucky through my career to see a lot of the world that's given me an international perspective.

During my career I've derived satisfaction from being able to interpret my brief as a macro-economist fairly broadly. I have been able to think, write and speak about a broader range of issues than predict next week's unemployment figures, whether the Reserve Bank will raise or lower interest rates at its next Board meeting, or the value of the A\$ at the end of the year.

Is that the reason you come across as less remote? You seem interested in the effect economic policy has on the individual.

I derive a lot of my notions about what's fair, what's right and wrong from my parents. My father's upbringing was less privileged than mine as he grew up in Balmain before it was fashionable. Also, a lot of my ideas come from reading and the beginning of my career as an economist in the Treasury that despite some perceptions deals with questions of equity and fairness.

Some of my ideas come from my university study and an interest in history and politics. These have influenced my thinking rather than simple academic training as an economist.

You have made comments that set you apart from other economists and the Treasurer of the day, such as the unfairness of unaffordable housing. Are you one of the few economists interested in issues of social equity?

But we are—or at least, I try to—help improve people's lives by assisting them better understand the environment in which they make important decisions for themselves, their businesses, and (occasionally) advocating better economic policies, that will in turn make for a more prosperous and fairer society. I think they are worthy things to be doing with one's life.

It is regrettable that—as I have discovered myself—it is becoming more difficult to express divergent opinions from those in positions of power or authority, or suggest an alternative perspective or policy might be worth considering, without that being taken as tantamount to treason, and cause for retribution of some kind against oneself or one's employer. However, that is an issue which, for now at least, I will leave to others to pursue.

I have been interested in housing for about 30 years. My long held views about negative gearing and the uselessness of cash grants to first home buyers were formed in my early years in Treasury. I developed these ideas over three decades and they stem from fundamental economic principles that are also informed by the difficulty young people have becoming homeowners. Also, there are people who will never become homeowners because of their circumstances of having to rent in the private market.

How much has Keynes and thinkers of similar perception influenced your social policy ideas?

Some of it has. Keynes is often dismissed as a socialist but he was, in his words, an unabashed capitalist. The things he proposed, including a larger role for government in running the economy, were prompted by a desire to support the capitalist system rather destroy it. In the British context he was a Liberal and supported Lloyd George. He wasn't a conservative and never described himself as a Socialist in the sense the Labour Party unavowedly was at the time.

Do you think these ideas have a role today?

There's a famous passage in the last paragraph of Keynes's *General Theory* where he said—and I'm paraphrasing—bad men in authority who hear voices in the air are usually distilling the scribbling of some defunct economist. That follows another celebrated passage where he said that ideas are much more powerful for better or worse than any kind of vested interest.

I think ideas, whether about economics or from another context can be powerful for better or worse and in that sense I think Keynes was right. Many of his ideas have fallen out of favour and his thinking shifted on many issues over the course of his life.

I think he held almost every position on the desirability or otherwise of free trade that it was possible to hold; like Tony Abbott on climate change. Keynes defended that by saying that '...when the facts change, I change my mind, what do you do, sir?' I'd like to think I am sufficiently open-minded to change my mind when previous views have turned out to be wrong.

What do you look for when you are reading a book?

I admit a little shamefacedly, I haven't read a lot of fiction including great works from the English canon or acclaimed foreign literature in translation. Most of my reading is non-fiction, history, travel, biography and from general interest in the subject. In terms of fiction, I have intentionally read some contemporary Tasmanian writers or stories that have been set in Tasmania.

I enjoy Wayne Johnson's writing whose stories are set in Newfoundland. I have been to Newfoundland and think there's no place in the world more like Tasmania. His books, *The Colony of Unrequited Dreams* and *The Danger Tree*, touch on things of personal interest.

You mention themes of personal interest, what are they?

Episodes in the life and history of Tasmania are of special interest and themes about the individual's struggle to overcome difficulty, stories set in wartime, descriptions of the painful choices people sometimes must make and the reason they do some of the things they do,

Who are your favourite writers?

Maynard Keynes, whom I read during my 30s and 40s. I've particularly enjoyed Doris Kearns Goodwin's *Team of Rivals* about Abraham Lincoln's cabinet and *The Bully Pulpit* describing the relationship between Theodore Roosevelt, William Howard Taft and the muckraking journalists with whom they worked. I admire Amity Shlaes book about the Great Depression and her biography of Calvin Coolidge, Richard Flanagan's books and James Boyce's *Van Diemen's Land* and, *1835 The Founding of Melbourne*.

Who have been the most influential people in your life?

My parents were my early mentors and as a young adult, Don Wing, the Mayor of Launceston. Russell Barnes, my first boss in the private sector, John Stone in Treasury and others such as my wife Linda.

Writers such as Keynes, Milton Friedman, James Tobin and James Buchanan have shaped the way I've thought about the world. Paul Kelly's writings on contemporary Australian history have been thought provoking and newspaper writers have also influenced me.

Is there a common quality linking the people who have influenced you?

I think most of the people who have influenced me have been conscious of history, have had or have a global perspective, and are motivated by a desire to change things for the better.

In interpreting my role, I've been motivated by the thoughts of some of the giants of the economics profession.

I've taken to heart something James Tobin wrote after being awarded the Nobel Prize in Economics in 1981, that 'the study of economics offered the hope, as it still does, that improved understanding could better the lot of mankind'.

That's a perspective these days too few economists seek to defend and frequently economics is derided as 'the dismal science' in the words of the nineteenth century Scottish writer Thomas Carlyle. Few economists seem to be aware that Carlyle directed this criticism at economists like John Stuart Mill in response to their opposition to slavery, the abolition of which he (Carlyle) deeply regretted.

Armatya Sen, another Nobel Prize winning economist, eloquently described the notion of the economist as upholder of freedom.

In his book *Development as Freedom*, Sen writes: 'it is important to dispute the common description of Adam Smith—the father of modern economics—as the single-minded prophet of self-interest'. Sen goes on to argue that the focus of economists 'should not be on GNP or technical progress or industrialization, but rather with our capability to lead the kind of lives we have reason to value'. I agree and Sen's thinking has had a major influence on the well-being framework the Australian Treasury developed to guide its work.

Paul Krugman, winner of the Nobel Prize for Economics in 2008 has also inspired me. In 2000, he wrote: 'economists may make lots of bad predictions, but they do have a method—a systematic way of thinking about the world that is more true than not, that gives them genuine if imperfect expertise. That is also why lay commentators and other social scientists tend to hate them'.

You travel a lot for work and recreation and you've been to some unusual places. What are your favourites?

My favourite places have something about their history that makes them unusual. I like some of the world's big cities but I also like islands and remote places that few people I know have experienced.

You've sold up in Melbourne and moved to Tasmania. Why?

I have always wanted to return to Tasmania to live. I see parallels between Tasmania and other countries I am drawn to, particularly Ireland. I've always thought the combination of education and the Celtic Tiger is part of the Irish story. Ireland made an enormous investment in education during the 1960s that paid dividends from the 80s and 90s and I think that's what Tasmania needs to do.

There are many parallels between Tasmania and Ireland. Ireland is a country of immigrants and although that's probably not the best way to put it, there are Irish people everywhere.

Tasmanians migrate a lot as well because historically it's been difficult to achieve everything people want in the confines of the small place. Indeed, it's part of the island experience that the people want to go somewhere else to see what's on the other side.

Do you think many Tasmanians leave because it's cold, remote, small and has a brutal past that cannot be ignored?

No, I don't I think so and hope many leave to get experience and like me, return. I think there's too much wailing and gnashing of teeth in Tasmania about young people who leave. Imagining there's something more interesting somewhere else is a strong strand in Tasmanian literature. Christopher Koch's *The Boys in the Island* is full of that theme and I think it's true some islands are population magnets—Manhattan, Honshu and Java— but most island societies are on the periphery of something bigger.

In my view Tasmania shouldn't bemoan the fact many young people leave for bigger metropolitan centres but instead, maintain contact with them. Through that process people from different places might wish to live here giving expats a reason to return. I don't think Tasmanians have done any of those things particularly well in the last five decades,

Have you read Peter Conrad's books about Tasmania?

I have read *Down Home* that is a depressing tale about life in Tasmania. Peter Conrad is a Tasmanian version of other Australians of a similar age such as Clive James, Robert Hughes and Germaine Greer. In the 1960s they thought Australia an insular place and went to London for fame and fortune but have recently, spent a lot of time *back home*.

Maybe if Peter Conrad spent more time in contemporary Tasmania—while he'd still find lots to criticise—he might find a few things to like as well.

Why do you love this place?

It's an important part of my identity. I wasn't born there, I came there as an eight year old with my parents. I adopted it and for whatever reason it has continued to call me back. Even though I left Tasmania in 1983 and have lived in Melbourne for 32 years it has been a part of my life plan to spend the last third of it there. I hope it will be part of my children's experience although I don't expect them to want to spend all their lives there. It's a good place to grow up although trade offs are necessary as there aren't the opportunities of large cities.

Have you considered writing? If so, what would you write about?

As I have been writing all of my working life, the thought sometimes crosses my mind.

What would you write about?

It wouldn't be a work of fiction because I don't think I have the imagination or creativity. Two possibilities are an edited compilation of articles and papers I've written over the course of my career helping people who aren't economists understand economic issues and problems. The other is the story of my own life if anybody were interested in the twists and turns it has taken over the last 56 years.

Thank you.

Quote of the Month



'In all matters of opinion, our adversaries are insane.'
Oscar Wilde, (1854-1900) Irish writer and poet.

WINNER

Visitation



Elizabeth closed the living-room door on the sounds of the TV, and headed into the kitchen. Feeling resentment tightening the muscles at the back of her neck, she reached for the potato-peeler.

Every year she told herself she wouldn't get uptight about Christmas. Every year she failed. Every year she worked and worried and planned and made lists and ran round in circles, until enjoyment was swallowed up in exhaustion. Her husband Jim had summed it up last year in gentle exasperation.

'Look, just because you've got the right pastry cutters for it, you don't always have to make shortcake biscuits in the shape of stars and angels, you know. If you gave it a miss one year and just bought a packet of chocolate digestives instead, nobody would notice.'

She knew he was right, but she stayed up late and made the biscuits anyway.

And now here she was alone in the kitchen again on Christmas Eve, with so much left to do, and nobody cared how she felt because they were too busy enjoying themselves.

She lifted her head from the sink, and brushed away a tear of self-pity with one dripping-wet hand. Blinking, she looked out into the back garden, and suddenly the potatoes were forgotten.

In the fading afternoon light, there was a warm golden glow around the hazy figure of a girl in a long blue dress, sitting on the swing in the apple tree.

Her hair fell forward over her face as she bent towards the baby she cradled in her lap, and the glow seemed to gather around their heads. Elizabeth watched one tiny fist reaching upwards, and saw the mother's secret smile as chubby fingers explored her face. Then the baby wriggled, and the girl shifted her position slightly, raised her head, and looked straight through the kitchen window into Elizabeth's eyes.

She watched, entranced, as the girl reached out one finger and the baby's fist curled tightly round it.

The finger that the child gripped was rough and callused, speaking of long hours of scrubbing and sweeping. Young as she was, this mother was no stranger to hardship, but it was all forgotten in her delight in her son. Elizabeth looked down at her own hands, the skin wrinkled and the nail varnish chipped from the day's washing up. When she looked up again, the swing was empty, moving gently backwards and forwards in the still air. She heard the kitchen door open behind her, and Jim's voice broke the spell.

'Come on, Liz, you're missing the carols—what are you doing lurking out here by yourself?'

He crossed to the sink and gently took the potato-peeler out of her hand.

'Leave that,' he said. 'It can wait. I'll come out and give you a hand later. You know you love the carols on Christmas Eve, so come and enjoy them with the rest of us. It's silly to make a martyr of yourself over a few spuds—you're missing out on the spirit of Christmas, out here on your own.'

She turned away from the window and smiled at him.

'Oh no,' she said, untying her apron and reaching for his hand, 'I'm not missing out on the spirit of anything at all!'

© **Mary Jones**

SECOND PLACE

For Long Love Lyric



For My Companion

My loving strength is for a round red rose,
refreshing as the morning air.
in fulsom foliage she is lushly clothed,
nor thorns nor prickles doth my sweet rose bear.

her joyous aspect draws gay butterflies,
her pollen tempts the hungry bee to sip,
her gentle fragrance courts the sun to bow
and bless with warmth bird, butterfly, bee and flower.

may I companion thee, gentle rose,
with my stringent garlic nature strong?
planting myself close by your feet I'll toil
to halt all insects who would do you harm.

oh rose, fade not twixt golden day and sombre night!
let not our union suffer time's authority,

nor let age succumb to time's cruel bite,
and sated flesh weaken love's intensity.

Oh Happy Christmas
to thee, dear Rose!
from your protective
Garlic

© **Rebecca Maxwell**

Epiphany



The Christmas tree is drooping
the reindeer's antler crumples.
A swan's head dangles by a cord.

Silver seeds dislodge
from white foam balls.
Fallen stars blink idly.

Only six months apart
the two year-old initiates
the order of their play.

THIRD PLACE

A Question of Luck



A 50 word novel

*Christmas Night at a pool-side bar in Darwin
Drifters meet and pass through...*

Fans whirr softly
Bar girls smile welcome to
The old codger, a toothless relic.

'Well, hello Santa, fancy seeing you,
Could I be so lucky?' she jokes.

He grins, bemused; accepts her drink
and melts into the darkness.

She, drunk, replete, sways, hesitates
then slides under the bar.

No luck there.

© **Del Nightingale**

The younger cousin speaks
an arcane tongue—
apart from 'no' and 'two'.

As I remove the ornament
from the apex of the tree,
I hear her third word—'Star'.

© **Judith Keighran**

Christmas Home Coming 1945



We were children of war. Andrea my sister born in 1938 and I fourteen months later in 1939. We were as different as chalk and cheese.

Andrea was outgoing, full of confidence and I was in total awe of her. She had lovely reddish blonde hair worn mostly in plaits but sometimes Mum curled them. My hair was thin and wispy no curls for me! Home was in the Melbourne suburb of Footscray. A typical neighbourhood then of Aussie working class families. Our house was in a quiet cul de sac, and there were ten homes. All very similar in design, yet each different in some way. Weatherboard differed in colours, timber fences with assorted styles and gates, and mostly well maintained front gardens. There was a strong sense of care between the families. There were very few tree lined streets, and little traffic. The street was our playground, as safe as the houses we lived in. Cars were a rarity even after the war ended in 1945. Mum was Dorothy and Daddy was Ron.

Daddy was a soldier, fighting the war, in the jungles of New Guinea and Borneo, and I only knew him as the nice man in the silver frame on the piano. He had a nice smiley face and very nice black hair combed back in the fashion of the day, like some of the movie stars we saw when we went to pictures with Mum on Saturdays. I loved that man on our piano dearly.

I remember sometimes crying at bed time wanting him to be home, even though I had no actual memory of him as a person in my life at all. I was just three years old in December 1942 when he enlisted in the Army in January 1943.

The wireless and news reels and newspapers were the only way to hear news of the war. Our wireless was rarely turned off, and we went to the picture theatre each week to see newsreels in case we saw Daddy, or some news about where he was. Mum talked about Daddy, nearly every day telling us about him and how brave he was, being a soldier driving a 'Matilda' tank in the jungle. This always made me happy, as the word Matilda from the happy sounding *Waltzing Matilda* song, made me think Daddy was happy in his tank.

We said our prayers each night saying 'Keep Daddy safe at the war.'

The years passed with only an occasional letter to Mum. Andrea said Mum always cried when she read them. I can't remember that. I started school in 1945 and it was after the mid-year school holiday in August we heard Mr Chifley the Prime Minister on the radio announcing the war was over. There was great excitement. Mum was so excited and happy she danced around the kitchen with Andrea and me laughing and crying all at once saying 'Daddy's coming home! Daddy's coming home! Daddy will be home for Christmas! We'll have a big party for him with all of our family and friends. It will be wonderful.'

Christmas seemed a long way away then, however the weeks passed quickly. One Saturday morning Mum got a telegram, bought to our house by a boy on a bike. Mum opened it carefully, read the message then turned to us both smiling and said, 'It's from Daddy Girls, it says, "arriving Spencer Street Station Christmas Day." Isn't that wonderful. Daddy's on his way home at last. He will come on the train with all the other soldiers. Only two more sleeps girls,' and Mum laughed happily. My sixth birthday was on Christmas Eve.

It was a hot, windy Christmas Day and I remember a lot of what happened that day. Struggling to remember my Daddy, looked longingly at the man with the nicely combed shiny black hair in the photo on the piano, hardly daring to believe he was coming home.

The focus was definitely on Daddy's arrival. Mum was polishing the brown linoleum floors she had only done the day before. She wanted everything to be shiny and clean when he arrived. As children, we could not possibly comprehend her feelings of anxiety, mixed with excitement and relief. She wanted everything to be perfect.

continued next page

I sat atop the front fence holding on to the gate post, in the searing hot sun and dirty north wind, typical for an Aussie Christmas, waiting to see him walk around the corner.

I have no idea how long I was there, but eventually went back inside. Soon afterwards Mum shouted, 'He's here! He's here!' and ran out the back door, with Andrea and I hot on her heels.

At our gate there was a shiny black car with a light on top, which I knew was special, and called a taxi. A man jumped out, and Mum threw herself into his arms.

They were hugging and kissing each other, and Mum was crying. I remember feeling very strange about this, and realised years later I was embarrassed. I had never seen Mum kiss or hug a man this way before. Our neighbours came out into the street and were watching this ecstatic reunion from their gates, eventually rushing over, the women hugging Ron, the men slapping him on the back. Andrea and I stood back watching this carnival of emotions, then Daddy turned and scooped us both into his arms, and danced around with us. I was terrified, this was not my Daddy, this was not the man in the photo, he looked very different. His hair wasn't black, it was ginger, like 'Ginger Meggs' in the comics in the newspaper. He had a ginger moustache and whiskers too, which scratched my face when he kissed me. I was very confused, all the dreams and images that had been instilled in me for as long as I could remember were wrong.

I wanted the man in the photo on the piano, not this man who didn't live up to my expectations at all.

Eventually we went back into the house, into the lounge room which was only used on special occasions. Daddy had a dirty old bag, called a 'Kit Bag', and he tipped it up and emptied everything onto Mum's polished floor.

Andrea and I were horrified, but Mum just sat there laughing. Daddy scrounged around, looking for something, then suddenly triumphant, he stood up holding a small, dirty white ball. He said, "Here you are girls, take this to school and show your teachers. I was playing golf in the jungle, and my golf ball hit the last Jap on the head and killed him. So I ended the war." And he proudly showed us the blood on the ball.

That golf ball went to every class room at our school, Andrea triumphantly recounting how our Daddy ended the war.

How many other dirty golf balls with that story, appeared at schools all around Australia, we'll never know, but in our eyes then, Daddy was our hero and the war was finally over.

© Sandra Topp

Christmas Eve



The Christmas table is finally set with the best cutlery the plates gleaming in the red candlelight heralds joy the crackers gold the feeling of expectations as the family arrives gifts under the tree pile up the younger set gathers laughter fills the house

carols singing around the piano the bell is ringing for angels song some tears shed remembering folks no present

opening the parcels wrapped with love wishing Merry Christmas thanking heavens above for being together this time a time of love...

© Francisca Bartosy

Christmas



What a host of connotations arise in the mind at the mention of Christmas—mass for Christ being the least likely unless one is a truly committed Christian. ‘

‘Tis the season to be jolly! Tra, la, la, la, la! Tra, la, la, la! rings out in the shopping malls. We all know what that means, ‘Come along and spend your money! That is all we want from you!’ The season now extends from the end of September. Days are counted off in dollars to be saved in “special offers”. The first glimpse of tinsel in the supermarkets sends shudders through shoppers anxiously reaching for generic brands to balance the budget for the Christmas presents list.

It was easier once—before television displayed goods so enticingly, before there were so many things to want. Now there are dazzling arrays of expensive electronic equipment that did not exist before, that every child, teenager and adult seems to expect or want for Christmas. Disappointment and sometimes resentment can set in if wishes are not granted. It is a difficult balancing act for parents, for partners, for relatives.

What a relief to go to the local school and see the Nativity Play enacted by young children so wholeheartedly and sincerely; to observe the church next door, vibrant with light in the dark night, worshippers arriving quietly to celebrate the midnight mass.

Christmas presents should be for little children full of belief, waking early on that magic morning, blowing little toy trumpets and whistles pulled out of Christmas stockings, and scrabbling among wrapped parcels under the Christmas tree to discover treasures.

For grown up children and their parents, the extended family Christmas dinner can be a disaster with the prodigal son and his father almost coming to blows against a background of screaming little cousins, gloomy teenagers loud in their boredom, and a marriage falling apart.

Yet after all, the Christmas spirit can bring everyone together wonderfully with reconciliations and a walk along the beach in the warm evening, breathing in fresh, salt air, sand between the toes, from little ones to grandparents alike, walking hand in hand, with peace in their hearts.

© Lynne Murphy

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Christmas Fear



After a hard day sweeping paths, raking lawns and weeding the garden I felt so exhausted I slumped onto my bed and fell asleep. It was the day before Christmas.

Suddenly, I woke up in fright and paralysed with fear. What’s happening to me? Shock and horror took over when the pain that seized my whole body became unbearable. All I wanted was sleep, but it was impossible. One minute I felt as if my body’s was on fire, and then I broke into a cold sweat. My pyjamas were damp with perspiration.

Was I dreaming? Was this really happening? Was my heart on the way out? All alone in my bed, I told myself it would pass. As I writhed with the disease, I wondered what was hurting me.

I pretended it was a nightmare, and I would wake up soon.

I felt pinned to the bed, dizzy and sick. I wet myself. Weak and helpless, I struggled to the bedside phone and rang my husband. He said he would come, but he worked a half hour drive away. I really thought I’d be dead by then. Time waited. It seemed like hours. A further surge of torture wracked my body. It felt like someone was pricking me with a needle all over. I beat on my stomach with my fist, but then I must have passed out. When I opened my eyes from a groggy sleep, I saw my husband bathing my face from a basin of warm water. He helped me wash myself and change. He drove me to Casualty. Doctors surrounded the bed, and stripped me bare. I was certain this was the end because I saw a bright white light shining at me through a very long tunnel. Then a young doctor told me that he was going to inject me with an anti-histamine, which he did. Not long after when the pain dwindled, he unravelled my singlet and showed me a dead European wasp.

© Shirley Whiteway

Christmas in Room 18



Corralled in its box since last festive season, and now suffering a pronounced list to the left, the star topped tree is cornered

Coloured lights flash cheerfully randomly, glitter adorns mock fir branches

These together with the Nativity scene convey his anticipation of the coming celebrations

offer peace and Christmas cheer to his visitors

© Maree Silver

Three Calico Balloons



Three calico balloons hanging on the line in the laundry. Always three.

It wasn’t until mother passed away that we knew why it was always three.

Like the three bears. Big pudding for Christmas dinner. Middle size pudding for the elderly couple down the road. Small pudding for Dad to have later as he loved the outside crust on the cold pudding.

These three puddings hailed the beginning of the Christmas season for our family.

I know Christmas is always about Church, and I cherish the Christmas Eve service lit only by candle flames shivering and twinkling in the darkened sanctuary.

I love singing the carols, and delight in the children either dressed in their party clothes or rugged up in their nightwear.

What I enjoy about the holiday season is the way the world is singing. Yes, there are the bad carols you hear in the elevators, but I endure them gladly because of the glorious concerts taking place inside our theatres and outside in our beautiful parks.

And I know Christmas is all about giving. I love the hurly-burly of the shops decorated with ornamental Christmas trees covered in masses of sparkling lights as I try to fathom what everyone really, really wants. Gifts to be wrapped in silver and gold.

But I know some of the real meaning of Christmas time also lies in the kitchen. The rest of the year I am devoted to olive oil and brown rice. But when the puddings appear in the laundry I start to buy almond meal, castor sugar, copho and chocolate, and rainbow sprinkles.

Indeed, my girls are well aware that from the moment they are old enough to be propped on a chair next to the kitchen table, a dishtowel tied around the neck, pudgy pink or chocolate fingers ready to roll a dough ball in cinnamon or coloured sprinkles, they are apprenticed into a long tradition. I remind them that this tradition commenced for me in my grandmother’s kitchen.

It’s in the kitchen where, each year, we feel again the power of time spent together, laughing as we cook - recalling stories of our shared lives, and catching the moment as it passes, gilded in sugar, spices and love.

© Margaret White

Writing is a Health Hazard



Bourke Street is chaos, with frenzied Christmas shoppers on the rampage. The Myer window queue is longer than that awful Irish version of The Twelve Days of Christmas. Parents scold, 'Stop whinging. And if you do that to your little sister again, I'll tell Santa!' And I am in the middle of it, planning deathless prose.

My Right Brain often panics, 'You've forgotten how to write; you've lost your creativity!' But this is not one of those times. I have been to the Society of Women's Writers Christmas meeting, and new ideas for Postal Workshop are downloading—fast! How will I remember? If I sat beside that Japanese busker playing the string instrument like a tortured cat, and thumped on a laptop, nobody would blink. But I need lots of scrap paper for inspiration. You can't sit outside Myer's scribbling on bank statements!

The GPO lights turn red. The rat race skids to a halt. Get set. Everyone in position? The lights change. The rats stream across Elizabeth Street sweeping me with them. Not that I am in a hurry. But crowd surge is contagious. Ahh! My foot slips. Left Brain logic reports, 'Hmm, yes. Metal strip worn smooth by friction. Tram line!' The Right Brain Centre for Creative Panic shrieks, 'Crisis. Major disaster. Run like mad. You may regain balance. Whoops! Too late. You are on the ground, surrounded by strangers. How embarrassing. Hope no one saw your knickers.'

Sensory Nervous System takes over: 'Patient face down, prone position. Pain in assorted joints, priority right elbow. Let the team through, people.' Pedestrians gather around. 'Are you alright?' (Not particularly.) 'It shakes you up, doesn't it?' (I'll go along with that.) 'Where are you going?' (The opposite kerb would be nice.)

I think the lights have changed. But it doesn't matter. My rescuers form a tight circle of People Power.

I manage to stand. A Competent Lady takes my arm. A Good Samaritan carries my bag. Not my handbag, of course. It would take unconsciousness to part with that! Though that may be an option, from the muffled roar in my ears. I shuffle to the kerb. I must not faint. I would be whipped off to hospital, and by the time I escaped from Casualty I would have missed my train.

Competent Lady—crises always bring one to the fore—says, 'You need to sit down.' The only available seat looks to be the Down escalator into a bargain bookshop. 'There's a seat,' says Competent Lady. She takes my arm, with Good Samaritan going ahead carrying my bag. This would be humiliating, except that I am too busy trying not to faint. They leave me to recover, wishing me well.

Breathe deeply. And again. The roaring subsides, and the city noises return. I can take stock. A hole in my tights—that's okay, they weren't new. And a huge graze on my elbow. Why I am not adding to the drama by shedding tears is one of life's little mysteries. I take the risk of standing. My knees are trembling. I prescribe myself fluids and carbohydrates, and wander into a nearby McDonald's.

'A cappuccino and a blueberry muffin, please.'

The Asian boy behind the counter hands over my docket, and I see that the coffee is free. He hasn't even asked if I have a Seniors card, though no doubt proof is unnecessary. I look as if caffeine is a humanitarian need that Médecins Sans Frontières would prescribe. I sit for a long time before starting my walk to Southern Cross. I could of course take a tram, but in my confusion it doesn't occur to me.

The city air is refreshing (!?) I reach Southern Cross as good as new, apart from my elbow, a suspicious pain in a rib, and tights like a schoolgirl's. Amid jostling commuters hung with Christmas shopping I find one of those weird seats that constantly slide you forward. It is uncomfortable. But I need to be here. It's urgent!

I must get all this down before I forget. I'll need it next year for Postal Workshop.

© Janice Williams

Mrs Beeton's Christmas Pudding



Long before I was interested in Christmas pudding I knew of Mrs Beeton and her famous book of household management.

I was still in primary school when I discovered the heavy volume of beautifully illustrated recipe book. When I was bored with my readers I would carefully turn the pages to look in awe at pictures of food that looked too pretty to eat. My mother decided that the chicken in aspic looked tasteless. I did not know what aspic was then and my mother's knowledge of English was nonexistent but the pictures told her that spices were not used in the making of the beautiful food so they had to be tasteless and inedible.

Many years later when I was buying books for my English Literature course at university I came across a smaller version of Mrs Beeton's recipe book. I decided, on a whim, to purchase the book. The book accompanied me to Melbourne a few years later, by which time I had already tested out some of the recipes, with strawberry shortcake being my favourite. A few years later I turned to Mrs Beeton to impress my Australian in-laws. I offered to bring the Christmas pudding to the family yuletide gathering. If the in-laws were sceptical about my ability they gave not the slightest hint.

I was very familiar with Mrs Beeton's rich Christmas pudding recipe. I had read it often, always with the intention of making one, but never going beyond the stage of translating the avoirdupois to everyday

terminology. The recipe called for half a gill of stout.

I figured out that a gill is equal to a quarter of a pint and so I had that written down on the blank space above the recipe. It was a foolproof recipe so there was no drama at the Christmas lunch when the hot pudding was brought to the table engulfed in the blue flame of burning alcohol.

The success of the pudding gave me the confidence to make some changes to the recipe. On the occasion of having some Muslim guests to a Christmas lunch I omitted use of alcohol, opting for apple juice instead. These days I make my pudding alcohol free as it is not only Muslims who are teetotaler. A very devout Christian friend does not touch the stuff. Mrs Beeton might turn in her grave but I would invoke her name when Christmas pudding is mentioned, mainly to give me credibility. My close friends are not afraid to joke about a Muslim spending seven hours boiling a Christmas pudding. My rejoinder is that a rich delicious pudding knows no religious boundary.

I still make Mrs Beeton's rich pudding each Christmas, albeit with minor changes to the original recipe.

© Razmi Wahab

So This Is Christmas



Our first grandchild, Patrick Ross Howie McGrath was born on December 1 on the first day of Advent, that time of waiting in hope, peace, joy and love, for the birth of Jesus on Christmas Day.

I was present at Patrick's birth. My older daughter wanted me to be there with her partner, so both of us could support her, one on either side. That was a great privilege. The sheer effort of cheering her on through the labour pains was desperately hard work (my arms were bruised where she had hung on to them) but I didn't feel that until afterwards.

When the baby finally slipped out into the waiting hands of the Doctor, we all felt a great rush of relief, excitement and enormous love. Life would never be the same, again. Holding that baby boy, then passing him around the adoring family members present, I understood in a new and physical way, something more of the wisdom of the Incarnation. What could be more human, close and real than the birth of a child, the pain, the joy, the bonding, the connection to family past and future.

Imagine, too, my surprise and emotion, when my daughter told me to look in her bag, for a gift. It was a CD of *The Messiah*. Of course I played this glorious music as soon as I got home, and have played it every Christmas since, remembering that special time when Patrick was born.

So we had our own baby on Christmas Day. Afterwards, my younger daughter made a framed collage of photos of the day, entitled 'Patrick's First Christmas.' The tiny child appears with his parents, grandparents and paternal great grandparents and maternal great grandmother—all of us joined across the generations by this child in strong bonds of love and commitment.

Every year, the family gathers for Christmas Day, nearly always at our home. There are seventeen people now, nine of them our grandchildren. Whatever the weather, we have a traditional roast dinner with a break for the giving of gifts under the Christmas tree, before eating the delicious Christmas pudding made according to an ancient family recipe. Afterwards there is the excursion to the nearby park for cricket, the playground or a swim.

At his 10th Christmas, Patrick decided to make a speech. He went away, wrote it, then stood up, with great aplomb, to read it to the assembled relations. I still have the original copy that makes me laugh and cry. Here is his speech verbatim:

My ten years here has been wonderfully fun. You are all extremely nice and beautiful people... The people who aren't here physically from this family's spirits flow through our viens. Dave and Joan are two of the nicest people in our family. There kids Ruby, Sam and Lucas are cute, happy and extremely nice cousins to us.

Grandma and Bapa are nice, but can be strict. But 'always' (crossed out and replaced with) 'most' of the tim, are nice.

Katie who introduced Elize is a nice and energetic aunty. My mother and Father work extremely hard to feed and cloth us and give us water. Now Liz the Wiz, Bek the Bunny and Tom the troublemaker are always good to be around.

I love you all as much as earth itself. Even though most of you go for the Western Bulldogs.

Lots of love, Patrick Ross Howie McGrath

Last Christmas Patrick, then 18 and 187cm tall, appeared with shaven head and eyebrows. He looked dreadful, a skeletal convict. Surely this hadn't been his idea, although teenagers do that sort of thing. No, it wasn't, but he had fallen asleep after drinking beer with a couple of mates. They took the opportunity to do him over. He was rather bashful about this and had to live with his folly for quite a few weeks. What was hidden on the day, but shown by request, was a tattoo on his stomach of a bear's head – the bear having particular meaning for him. Who knows what he will look like this Christmas, or at any other. We will be delighted to see him, all of them, whatever.

© Janet Howie

Jingle Bells Again



HO! HO! HO! A word of advice! Gather around, dear friends, while I impart a little wisdom. Never at any time, no matter how tempting, allow anyone to raise you to the level of sainthood. It's too damned hard to live up to. Take my case as a dire warning. My wife, sweet soul that she is, thinks I can work miracles. But she's not the one making millions of personal appearances—always smiling, always jovial with sticky-fingered brats crawling all over her.

Tonight's the big one. I'll have to leave in a minute, though I've not yet finished loading the vehicle. Oh dear, she keeps on bringing out fresh bundles—all nicely wrapped, I grant you, but I can't keep piling everything on board without so much as a thought for the traffic police AND they're everywhere! Too much weight over the rear axle – they warned me last time—but all she says is, 'Spread it more evenly over the front!'

Women! Why is it they cannot understand? Well, this is positively the last I can cram in.

Goodness gracious me! It's already snowing. The reindeer are getting impatient AND trouble has broken out in the ranks. Cupid is fighting with Comet; Dancer and Prancer are straining at the bit AND blast it all, Donner has cast a shoe. Now, for heaven's sake, please don't mention Rudolf. I haven't even met the beast.

If I'm as clever as you all believe, I'll solve the problem by knocking the first pair's heads together AND I'll lay down the law with Donner. Careless Hussy! She'll just have to go with one bare foot all night long.

Honest to goodness, I'm so glad it comes around only once a year.

© E E Caldwell

Sleigh Bells

'Ho, ho, ho!' calls the red-costumed Santa driving around in his sleigh at a canter. Children cheer him like mad—for him they cannot be bad—as they offer him biscuits and Fanta.

© Meryl Brown Tobin



Making a Date

It's only October and they're talking Christmas. Gee, I can't fit my life in as it is What's Christmas doing sneaking up like a fox in a fowl-yard?

They reckon Christmas '99 will be the last for the millennium—that's if you see the end of 1999 as the end of the millennium instead of the end of the Year 2000

And is it two thousand years since Christ was born? Somewhere I read He was born in BC—before AD—something to do with the reform of the calendar. Funny that.

© Meryl Brown Tobin

SWWV NEWS AND NOTICES

The Nance Donkin Award 2015

Advance notice from Rebecca Maxwell:

The Nance Donkin Award, a biennial award for a woman author in Australia who writes for children, is due to be presented again in 2015. Nance’s intention in offering this award was to encourage and make known a good writer for children who is deserving more recognition. So please read some women authors currently writing in Australia whose talent you would wish to celebrate. The nominations close in June 2015.

More details in the next issue and on the new website www.vic.org.au.

Postal Workshops Annual Picnic

It was a perfect summer’s day for our annual gathering in the Fitzroy Gardens. The thirteen who were able to attend chose to sit outside on the verandah around The Pavilion, where our happy chatter and laughter would intrude less on our fellow diners indoors!

Normally the annual Postal Workshop gathering is for postal workshop members only, giving us an opportunity to meet face to face rather than via the monthly magazines or email. This year, to give all Society of Women Writers an opportunity to meet Gwynneth Ashby, a visiting English writer, our gathering was open to all members. Some members had met Gwynneth on one of her previous visits and enjoyed renewing her acquaintance. The rest of us were delighted to get to know Gwynneth for the first time.

With thirteen people present there was always several conversations going on at once. While our common interest was obviously writing and the Society of Women Writers, we nevertheless shared many different aspects of our lives. There was much laughter over delicious food, tea and coffee, and some indulged in a decadent-looking chocolate-coated ice cream. ‘Life’s too short to eat healthily all the time,’ one indulgee laughed, and we all agreed.

Our annual gathering is a social time. The shared chatter and laughter may not always focus on writing, and when it does is rarely in-depth, but the friendships and time of face-to-face interaction free of meeting constraints creates a basis of caring and understanding. In the months ahead we look forward to seeing fellow those members who are able to attend meetings. For those who cannot attend, the Postal Workshops create a sense of belonging.

Judith Green (Postal Workshops Co-ordinator)

The April Issue Of WriteAway

The theme of this issue is **Creativity and Inspiration**. Members are invited to contribute original work on this theme. The interview for the April issue is with two internationally acclaimed Russian iconographers—Philip Davidov and Olga Shalamova—from the **Sacred Murals Studio**, St Petersburg. They discuss the universality of the creative process and the challenges all artists face today.

Please send your work to the Editor—jenniferleslie360@gmail.com by the 10th of April.

Thank you

<p>Literary Patron Errol Broome</p> <p>Life Members Dorothy Richards, Barbara Warren Errol Broome, Judy Bartosy Dorothea Lavery</p> <p>Newsletter Editor Jennifer Leslie jenniferleslie360@gmail.com</p>	<p>President Lynne Murphy lynnemurphy1068@gmail.com</p> <p>Vice President Agnes Chatfield</p> <p>Treasurer ShirleyWhiteway</p> <p>Membership Secretary Judy Bartosy fjbartosy@gmail.com</p> <p>Newsletter Design Lynn Smailes</p>	<p>Committee Members Lisa Kondor Mary Jones Rebecca Maxwell Blaise Van Hecke Yvonne Sweeney Jennifer Leslie</p> <p>Postal Workshops Coordinator Judith Green</p> <p>Postal Workshops Editors <i>Spring:</i> Judith Green <i>Carpe Diem:</i> Judith Green <i>Arianthe's Thread:</i> Patricia O'Keefe</p>
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Closing 1 March

The **Ada Cambridge Poetry** (up to 30 lines) and **Biographical Short Story Prizes** (between 1000 and 3000 words), and the **Young Adas** (graphic and conventional story) are open to people living, working or studying in the western suburbs of Melbourne. Entry is online and free. Prizes are \$1000 (short story), \$500 (Poetry) and \$250 (Young Adas). For details and entry visit www.willylitfest.org.au

Closing 6 March

The theme for the **2015 Tabor Adelaide Creative Writing Awards** for short stories of 1500 words and poems of up to 42 lines is ‘Hope against Hope’. Entry is online only and free. The first prize is \$250 and second is \$150 in both categories. For details see www.taboradelaide.edu.au

Closing 13 March

The **Castaways Poetry Prize** sets poets the challenge of writing a 24 line poem ‘inspired by, drawn upon, or use[ing] the theme of images from the Castaways Web Gallery’. Entry is free. The prize is \$200 and publication in the gallery catalogue. To view the collection and enter visit www.rockingham.gov.au

Closing 31 March

The W B Yeats Poetry Prize offers a first prize of \$500 and a second prize of \$150 for poems up to 50 lines. Entry costs \$8.50 (and \$5 thereafter). Online and postal entry. Please see www.wbyeatspoetryprize.com or write to 6 Samuel Close, Berwick, Vic. 3806

Closing 31 March

The **Henry Lawson Memorial and Literary Society** offers \$1000 for an Australian themed short story of 1000 words and prizes of \$1000 (1st) / \$500 (2nd) and \$250 for Australian themed rhyming poetry of no more than 60 lines. Entry: \$5. There is a separate category for writers under 19, with a prize of \$250 for each category. Details and entry form: PO Box 429, Brighton or phone Marie 03 9592 0780

Closing 1 May

The Australian Book Review’s **2015 Jolley Short Story Prize** offers \$8000 in prize money for short stories of 2000–5000 words. Entry (online or print) costs \$20 or \$15 for subscribers. For details see www.australianbookreview.com.au

Closing 3 April

The **Pan Macmillan Bad Romeo Challenge** invites writers to submit a 1000 word story using the characters from Shakespeare’s Romeo and Juliet. Entry is free and the prize is a one-on-one meeting with a Pan Macmillan commissioning editor. You need to submit a 100 word bio with the piece. Read the requirements before submitting at Pan Macmillan’s [Facebook page](#) and submit to badromeo@macmillan.com

Casual Work, Writers and Editors

Uniscribe is a new business offering ‘editing and coaching services’ to university students. If you are interested in investigating casual contracting work with the company, visit www.uniscribe.com



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MEETINGS and EVENTS

Ross House Meetings, 247 Flinders Lane, Melbourne

Friday 27 February, 11 am–3 pm, Members' Readings and Writings, Jenny Florence Room, 3rd Floor, Ross House *** Please note change of venue ***

Friday 27 March, 12 pm–4 pm, Speaker: Alan Attwood on being Editor of *The Big Issue*, Hayden Raysmith Room, 4th Floor, Ross House. *** Please note change of time ***

Saturday 21 March, 10.30 am–4 pm, Perfect Your Poetry and Prose with Kristin Henry

Masonic Lodge, 6–8 Davies Street, Brunswick (enter via carpark)

10.30 am registration, 11 am–4 pm workshop (includes one hour lunch break)

Cost: \$25 members of SWWV and FAW Vic., \$50 non-members

Morning tea, tea and coffee provided. BYO lunch or eat locally.

Bookings essential: 03 9350 1781 (Lynn) or lynnemurphy1068@gmail.com

By car

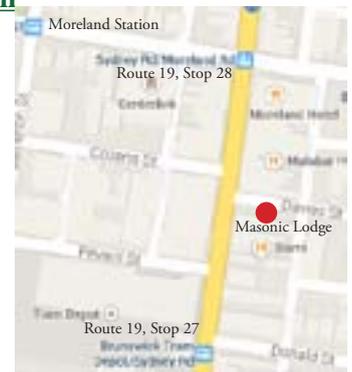
Melways Map Reference: 29 H4

Parking available in Masonic Carpark. Street parking unrestricted from 1 pm

Public Transport

Upfield Line Train from Flinders Street to Moreland Station

Number 19 tram from Flinders and Elizabeth Streets,
alight at Brunswick Terminus or Moreland Road



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