WHAT I'M READING

Matthew Stuckings | Manuscripts Librarian

My triple life as a manuscripts librarian, musician and law student leaves little time to read anything other than law reports, and as much as I adore Lord Denning, he’s not quite the thing for curling up.

I love biography. Peeking into other people’s lives can almost never be boring. One that caught my eye recently was Owen Dixon by Philip Ayres. Sir Owen sat on the High Court from 1929 to 1964, becoming Chief Justice in 1952. His personal papers remained with his family until 2009, when they were at last transferred to the Library’s Manuscripts Collection. Ayres’ meticulous research brings the man and his work alive for lovers of Australian history.

Before that, I enjoyed Banwick by David Marr, on Sir Owen’s successor, Sir Garfield Banwick. The book reads as freshly now as I’m sure it did when it was first published in 1980. Sir Garfield was responsible for the construction of the permanent High Court building in Canberra, known for a time as ‘Gar’s Mahal’. He played a controversial role in advising Sir John Kerr in the 1975 Constitutional Crisis. On that note, I’m looking forward to Jenny Hocking’s new book, The Dissimul Dossier, which draws on newly available material from the Library’s Oral History collection.

As for fiction, Canadian author Robertson Davies’ The Salterton Trilogy is a perennial favourite with its Trollope-like caricatures, as are Gonsalves’ endearing Rose novels.

LECTURE AND BOOK LAUNCH

Taking Flight: Lores Bonney’s Extraordinary Flying Career by Kristen Alexander

Aviation writer Kristen Alexander tells the story of aviator pilot Lores Bonney. The book will be officially launched by Gabby Kennard OAM, the first Australian woman to fly solo around the world. Tuesday 6 March, 6 pm

Foyer, free (includes refreshments and book signing)
Bookings: nla.gov.au/bookings or 02 6262 1271

BOOK LAUNCH

All My Januaries: Pleasures of Life and Other Essays by Barbara Blackman

Join Barbara Blackman AO for the launch of her new collection of essays.
Sunday 24 April, 12 pm
Theatre, $15 (includes refreshments and book signing)
Bookings: nla.gov.au/bookings or 02 6262 1271

BOOK LAUNCH

Eric Rolls Memorial Lecture
Gifts from China

Professor Nicholas Jose reflects on Eric Rolls’ research for Sojourners: The Epic Story of China’s Centuries-old Relationship with Australia and his own experiences as a researcher, writer and former cultural attache in Beijing.
Sunday 20 March, 2 pm
Theatre, $15 (includes refreshments)
Bookings: nla.gov.au/bookings or 02 6262 1271
Supported by Elaine van Hampton

BOOK LAUNCH

The Gatekeepers of Australian Foreign Policy 1950–1966 by Adam Hughes Hennessy

Join author Dr Adam Hughes Henry and Dr Nicholas Brown of the School of History, Australian National University, for the launch of this detailed study of Australian foreign policy.
Monday 21 March, 6 pm
Bookshop, free (includes refreshments)
Bookings: nla.gov.au/bookings or 02 6262 1271

CHILDREN’S BOOK READING AND ACTIVITIES
Socks, Sandbags and Leeches: Letters to my Anzac Dad by Pauline Deives

Join author Pauline Deives as she reads from her latest book by NLA Publishing. The book reading will be followed by an interactive activity session. Suitable for children 4 years and over.
Sunday 10 April, 11 am
Foyer, free
Bookings: nla.gov.au/bookings or 02 6262 1271

SPECIAL OFFER

Capturing Time: Panoramas of Old Australia by Edwin Barnard

RRP $49.99 Special Price $9.99

This book looks back on our nation through the medium of panorama, looking in detail at the life and art of this extraordinary artist, from the mid-1890s to the 1930s. It’s also a celebration of the region’s richness of image and memory.

THE LATEST IN AUSTRALIAN BOOKS AND WRITING

The Midnight Watch by David Dyer, Hamish Hamilton, RRP $32.99

Sometimes the smallest of human failings can lead to the greatest of disasters. On a wretchedly cold night in the North Atlantic, a steamer stopped in an icefield sees the glow of another ship on the horizon. Just after midnight, the first of eight distress rockets is fired. Why did the Californian look on while the Titanic sank? Based on true events, this heart-stopping novel explores the frailty of men, the strength of women, the capriciousness of fate and the price of loyalty.

Margaret Preston by Art Gallery of New South Wales, Thames & Hudson, RRP $80

Bearing ‘the conspicuous mark of talent’ from an early age, the fiercely independent and opinionated Margaret Preston is one of Australia’s most innovative early modernists. In this revised edition of the Preston monograph, curator Deborah Edwards looks in detail at the life and art of this extraordinary artist, from the mid-1890s in Adelaide to her life in Sydney in 1963. Also featuring a CD-ROM catalogue raisonné of paintings, monotypes and ceramics, this richly-illustrated monograph is unrivalled in its scope.

Outback Penguin: Richard Lane’s Wbarrell Diaries by Elizabeth Lane and Fiona Kells, Black Inc., RRP $49.99

Richard Lane was one of the three brothers who founded Penguin Books in 1935. For close to three decades, he led the business with Allen Lane and championed the imprint’s editorial character. But before Penguin, Richard was a key expert in rural New South Wales and South Australia. He worked on the land enduring many hardships. In Australia, he deepened his appreciation for literature and the importance of making good writing widely accessible.

Wildlight by Robyn Mundy, Picador Australia, RRP $32.99

Sixteen-year-old Stephanie West has been dragged from Sydney to remote Maatsuyker Island off the coast of Tasmania by her parents, hoping to recasture a childhood idyll and come to terms with their grief over the death of Stephanie’s twin brother. With no television, no heating and no-one else on the island, the months ahead look to be filled with ghosts of the past. Wildlight is an exploration of the journey of adolescence, and how the experience of place can change the course of lives.

BakeClass by Annika Manning, Murdoch Books, RRP $45

An essential baking book that builds the home cook’s skills and confidence through technique-based lessons and delicious recipes. Take a personalised master class with baking expert Annika Manning. Whether you’re a beginner or already baking with confidence, Annika will guide you through a unique step-by-step lesson to help you master the ten fundamental mixing methods that provide the foundation for all baking recipes. Features over 90 sweet and savoury fail-safe recipes that will build your confidence and help you become the baker you want to be.

THE NATIONAL LIBRARY BOOKSHOP

National Library Bookshop, open daily, 10 am–5 pm
National Library of Australia, Parkes Place, Canberra, ACT 2600
Tel: 02 6262 1424 Email: nlibshop@nla.gov.au

Would you like to join our mailing list and receive this newsletter electronically? Email your details to us at nlibshop@nla.gov.au and we will add you to our mailing list.

BECOME A FRIEND

Become a Friend of the National Library of Australia and enjoy exclusive behind-the-scenes visits, discover collections that reveal our unique heritage and experience one of the world’s great libraries. Friends receive a 15% discount on all purchases at the National Library Bookshop instore and online. For information, visit nla.gov.au/friends or phone 02 6262 1271.
Talking to My Country by Stan Grant, HarperCollins Australia, RRP $29.99

This is rare and special book that talks to every Australian about their country—what it is, and what it could be. It is not just about race, or about Indigenous people, but all of us, our shared identity. Direct, honest and forthright, Stan is talking to us all. He might not have all the answers but he wants us to keep on asking the question: how can we be better?

Changing Minds by Dr Mark Cross and Dr Catherine Hannah, ABC Books, RRP $29.99

Leading psychiatrist Dr Mark Cross, from the acclaimed ABC TV series Changing Minds, feels strongly that everyone should have easy access to information they can trust about common mental health problems. This compassionate and insightful guide will demystify mental health issues and help anyone concerned about themselves or loved ones. Since almost half of all Australians will experience a mental health issue at some point in their lifetime, this book is for everyone.


Sexual harassment, domestic violence and date rape had not been named, although they certainly existed, when Damned Whores and God’s Police was first published in 1975. It’s hard to imagine an Australia where these abuses were not yet fully understood. Who are today’s damned whores? And why do women themselves still want to be God’s Police?

In Love with Betty the Crow: The First 40 Years of ABC RN’s The Science Show by Robyn Williams, ABC Books, RRP $32.99

The Science Show with Robyn Williams on Radio National is one of the longest running programs on Australian radio. Scientific issues, debates, events, personalities, exposing scientific fraud, discoveries and broadcasting pranks have been its hallmarks, and the show has given Australians fascinating insights into all manner of things.


An exquisite story of courage, destiny and the search for home. In 1913, Jacob Frank leaves his Lithuanian village bound for New York. Twenty-five years later, his daughter Bertha sets sail for South Africa to marry a man she has never met. Her granddaughter, Shelley, feels the violence of apartheid to live in America, before at last finding home in Australia.

The Forgotten People by Damien Freeman

The Forgotten People is a deeply researched, expertly written and accessible history of Indigenous Australians that is essential reading for all Australians.

The Pearl-Shell Diver by Kay Crabbe, Allen & Unwin, RRP $16.99

Sario Ives lives with his family on a remote Torres Strait island, which he never wants to leave—but the winds of change are stirring. The year is 1898 and the pearl-shell trade is at its height. When his father is coerced to join a white trader on his pearling lugger, 13-year-old Sario must go to work as a diver to support the family.

Where the Shoreline Used to Be edited by Susan La Marca and Pam Macintyre, Penguin Books, RRP $24.99

A diverse collection of poetry, short stories, song lyrics, novel extracts and illustrations from some of the most important creators today. Susan La Marca and Pam Macintyre have gathered an exciting mix of original and pre-published works that cover Indigenous issues, friendship, migrants in Australia, the environment, dystopia, science-adventure and death.

Magrit by Lee Batterton

Magrit lives in an abandoned cemetery with her friend and advisor, Master Puppet, whom she built from bones and bits of graveyard junk. One night as Magrit and Master Puppet sit atop their crumbling chapel, a passing stork drops a baby into the graveyard. A haunting tale about accepting the truth about yourself, presented in a gothic gift package.

NEW FICTION

Hold by Kirsten Tranter, 4th Estate, RRP $27.99

Three years ago, Shelley’s lover Conrad died. Still in a state of subdued grief, Shelley has just moved into an old Victorian terrace in Paddington with her new partner. At home one morning, Shelley discovers a door to a small room that is not on the plans. There is a window, a fireplace and a beautiful chandelier—but nothing else.

Our Magic Hour by Jennifer Down, Text Publishing, RRP $29.99

Audrey, Katy and Adam have been friends since they were children going through their teenage years. But now Katy has gone. Without her, Audrey and Adam’s relationship is tested. As香菇沈阳市沈阳市沈阳市 they come to terms with the loss of their friend, they are faced with new challenges and an unexpected return.

The Soldier’s Curse by Mog and Tom Keneally, Vintage Australia, RRP $32.99

In the Port Macquarie penal settlement for second offenders, gentleman-convict Hugh Monsarrat hungers for freedom. Transferred for fragging documents, he is now the clerk of the commandant. When the commandant is away, his beautiful wife falls ill with an unidentified sickness and dies. She has been slowly poisoned, but by whom? Monsarrat must find the killer.

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