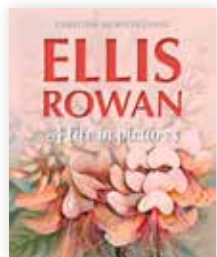


## NLA BOOKSHOP BOOK REVIEW

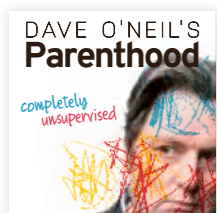
Are you looking for extra books to read during these times of solitude, as the winter hearth beckons? These special offer selections, just for Friends, are sure to delight!



### *Ellis Rowan: A Life in Pictures* by Christine Morton-Evans

The extraordinary Ellis Rowan was no mere 'lady flower painter'. This is her story, told through the wonderful paintings that form part of her collection held by the National Library of Australia.

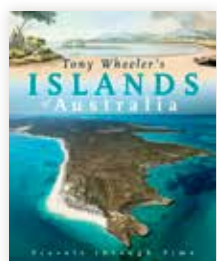
RRP \$34.99, Friends price \$27.99



### *Dave O'Neil's Parenthood: Completely Unsupervised* by Dave O'Neil

Comedian and father of three Dave O'Neil gives us a laugh-out-loud look at parenting through the ages.

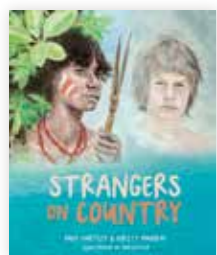
RRP \$19.99, Friends price \$15.99



### *Tony Wheeler's Islands of Australia: Travels through Time* by Tony Wheeler

Join travel guru Tony Wheeler as he discovers the natural beauty and dark histories of Australia's many islands.

RRP \$39.99, Friends price \$31.99



### *Strangers on Country* by Dave Hartley and Kirsty Murray, illustrated by Dub Leffler

Working together to write from both Indigenous Australian and European perspectives, the authors of *Strangers on Country* have brought to life, for young readers, remarkable true stories about Europeans who were taken in by Indigenous communities.

RRP \$29.99, Friends price \$23.99



### *Will the Wonderkid: Treasure Hunter of the Australian Outback* by Stephanie Owen Reeder

*Will the Wonderkid* tells the remarkable true story of how a teenage boy discovered Australia's most famous opal field.

RRP \$24.99, Friends price \$19.99

## FRIENDS ONLINE EVENTS

This winter, all Friends activities will take place using Zoom, which is a video conferencing and webinar application. Bookings will take place online, as usual, through the National Library website ([nla.gov.au/whats-on](http://nla.gov.au/whats-on)) or by emailing [friends@nla.gov.au](mailto:friends@nla.gov.au). Shortly before the event begins, you will receive a Zoom meeting link, which you can click on to join the event at the event time. If you have any questions, please email [friends@nla.gov.au](mailto:friends@nla.gov.au).

### Curious Collections

Curios, conundrums, mysteries and marvels: the National Library has over 10 million items in its collection, with treasures in abundance.

In this series of talks and conversations, you'll hear from curators, volunteers and specialists who will talk about a collection item that has piqued their interest. You'll learn about the fascinating stories behind objects, their provenance, who made them and what they can tell the world.

You'll have the opportunity to talk and ask questions throughout the session in a friendly and informal setting.

Settle in for a Friends-only chat, to learn and converse in the comfort of home with a good group of Friends.

9 June; 14 July; 11 August | 11am

Online via Zoom

Be sure to book early as places may be limited.

### Friends Book Club

Join us for a companionable book club, where the book choice is eclectic, the guests are captivating and the company is Friend-ly.

Once a month we'll choose a book and an author with an Australian flavour and an absorbing story. You'll be able to talk directly with the guest speaker and other members, while we deconstruct the stories together.

24 June; 29 July; 26 August | 4pm

Online via Zoom

Be sure to book early as places may be limited.

Join the Friends on Facebook (@NLAFriends), as well as the National Library on Twitter (@nlagovau, @TroveAustralia and @NLABookshop) and Facebook, to get the latest news and stories.

FRIENDS OF THE  
NATIONAL LIBRARY  
OF AUSTRALIA INC.

WINTER 2020

Friends

### MESSAGE FROM THE CHAIR

Dear Friends

Reflecting on the words I wrote in January this year is a reminder of the rapidity of change to our lives brought about by the COVID-19 pandemic. Our ways of conducting our lives have been overturned in many ways, from keeping contact with our family and friends to the manner we do our shopping and coping with the restrictions on our day-to-day travel. On the other hand, many of us will have taken the chance to reduce that pile of unread books.

The previous message was focused on then-upcoming events, none of which eventually occurred, due to the need to scale back the Library's activities and for the majority of staff to work from home. While the public cannot access the building, it is unclear when Library activities such as exhibitions, tours and talks will resume. In the meantime, the Friends Committee has been developing a range of online activities to expose some of the collection items that have particular appeal to the Library staff who care for them. The Committee has also organised an online book club, which will start in June. The focus will be on Australian authors, and participants will be able to discuss aspects of the book with each other and the guest speaker.

The dates and times for these activities are included in this newsletter under 'Friends Online Events'. Keep an eye on the Library's website for other activities and events.

Thank you for maintaining or renewing your Friends membership. As a gesture of thanks, and as a reflection of the reduction in the services offered by the Friends, the Committee has decided to extend your membership by three months at no cost.

Your Committee trusts that you are keeping well in these unusual times and we look forward to catching up with you again at Library activities once normal arrangements are restored.

Howard Murray | Chair

### Fanny Durack: Trailblazing Olympian



Olympic Gold Medal Won by Australian Swimmer Sarah 'Fanny' Durack at Stockholm, 1912, nla.cat-vn2104701.

Although Tokyo2020 will not take place, we can still see an Olympic Games 'treasure' in the Library's collection online—the gold medal won by swimmer Sarah 'Fanny' Durack at the 1912 Stockholm Olympics.

Fanny overcame officialdom and the world's best women swimmers to win the very first Olympic gold medal for women's swimming.

Fanny was born in Sydney in 1889 and learnt to swim breaststroke (the only style for which there was a championship for women) at Coogee Baths, owned by the father of her friend and rival Wilhemina 'Mina' Wylie. In 1911, she changed strokes to the 'Australian crawl' (now freestyle).

Her Olympic dream was initially thwarted; women were forbidden by the New South Wales Ladies' Amateur Swimming Association to take part in competitions where men were present, as competitors or spectators. Its president believed that mixed bathing or audiences would 'lead to a loss of respect for the girls and the increasing boldness of the men'. Fanny had been described by one writer as a 'toothsome piece of femininity'.

Fanny was determined and so were her supporters. Community and media demands and fundraising led to the ban being reversed and Fanny set sail for Sweden, where she trained half a mile a day! Mina followed later. There was only one individual event for the 27 women swimmers competing, the 100 metres freestyle. Swimming in a murky pool and wearing a 'scandalous' close-fitting suit, Fanny broke the world record in her heat. She won the final, with Mina second, and became Australia's first female Olympic medallist.

Fanny added to her legendary status. She campaigned against sexism and in 1913, in Sydney, won a women's 100-yard race in world-record time; male spectators were allowed entry for the

## NATIONAL LIBRARY BOOKSHOP SPECIAL OFFER FOR FRIENDS

The winter special offers listed above show the special 20% discount for Friends when Friends purchase any of these online between 1 June 2020 and 31 August 2020.

\* Discount does not apply to limited-edition prints, discounted and remaindered stock, newspapers, stamps, copy cards, magazines or vouchers.

To claim your 20% discount on these winter special offers in the online shop, use the promotional code **FRWINT20** at the checkout. You can also use this code to apply the usual Friends 15% discount to other eligible online purchases\*.



Friends  
OF THE  
NATIONAL LIBRARY  
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first time. In 1914, Fanny swam a mile in open water in 26 minutes and 8 seconds, beating the New South Wales men's record by 52 seconds. She set 12 world records up until 1918, in distances from 100 yards (91 metres) to one mile (1.6 kilometres).

Fanny toured the United States of America with Mina, not without controversy. In 1918, they arrived to find themselves banned by the Amateur Swimming Union of Australia. In 1919, the US body threatened to suspend their amateur status when they refused to swim until their manager's expenses were paid. Ordered by officials to swim in Chicago, she jumped the starter's gun, swam half a length and got out, telling officials: 'I ... swam didn't I?' The tour was curtailed.

A week before the Australian team left for the 1920 Antwerp Olympics, Fanny, who had increased her training to a mile a day, had an emergency appendectomy, followed by typhoid fever and pneumonia, and was forced to withdraw.

She retired from competitive swimming in 1921, married Bernard Gately, a horse trainer, and devoted herself to coaching young children.

After Fanny died in 1956, aged 66, her brother Frank presented her gold medal to the Commonwealth Government. The medal, just 3.3 centimetres in diameter, is pure gold; 1912 was the last year Olympic medals were made thus. You can see the medal online at [nla.gov.au/nla.cat-vn2104701](http://nla.gov.au/nla.cat-vn2104701) and, when the Library reopens, on display at the entrance to the Treasures Gallery.

**Kerry Blackburn** | Friends Deputy Chair, Library volunteer



Exchange Studios, *Portrait of Fanny Durack*, 1912, nla.cat-vn89140.



Fragile pages from *My Ballet Diary*, compiled by S. Gans, between 1952 and 1956, nla.cat-vn1834543.

## Volunteering in the Time of COVID-19

We're all learning to adapt in the time of COVID-19, and that includes the National Library volunteers in the small team known as 'AusStagers'. We have spent four years entering data—such as the names and functions of people named in the many thousands of theatre programs held in the Library's PROMPT Collection—into a database called AusStage, an online resource for collecting and sharing information about Australian live performances. It is searchable through Trove.

Our work has relied on access to paper theatre programs, but the Library's current closure ended that access. The resourceful AusStagers have found another source of data to add to the project while we enjoy social isolation at home—the magnificent Trove. Our team has used Trove's digitised newspapers to help date many theatre programs and learn which newspapers regularly covered performances.

The AusStagers are now using Trove to find theatre reviews and advertisements in *The Sydney Mail and New South Wales Advertiser* and *Sydney Morning Herald* starting in 1884, the year of the earliest theatre program handled so far in the PROMPT Collection. We cross-check each performance referenced against the AusStage database, enter newly discovered data and correct Trove text.

We are finding some entertaining things about theatre reporting in 1884:

- Many column inches were dedicated to loquacious and detailed explanations of the plot, with just a few lines at the end of an article about the performers.
- *The Sydney Mail and NSW Advertiser* delivered some frank assessments:
  - 'Mr. Gordon's Mephistopheles is still crude dramatically and very defective vocally. The orchestra played unusually well.' (23 February 1884)
  - 'The bills at the Theatre Royal have not lately caught the public taste. "Turn of the Tide", in spite of the beautiful scenery, has been a failure; and that dreary drama, "The Wages of Sin" has been revived.' (13 December 1884). For good reason, perhaps, the reviewer's name is not provided.

The AusStagers have replaced their coffee break at Bookplate with a Zoom session to stay in touch, sharing the gems we are finding and swapping notes on ways of making social isolation not so isolating. We say they are all staying sane, laughing together and enjoying virtual volunteering.

**Margaret Goode** | Friends Committee Member, Library volunteer

## Introducing New Friends Committee Members

### Vivien Arnold

Vivien has lived in Canberra for over 50 years and has loved the Library building since it was built. With a background in education, training and psychology, Vivien has a strong interest in, and commitment to, the National Library and the role it plays in Australian culture. As a composer and choral music director, she has published work and staged over 90 productions.

### Margaret Goode

Margaret is a National Library volunteer and has a background in librarianship, working at the State Library of Victoria and then with a publisher and bookseller in Oxford. Margaret has been in management consulting for much of her working life and would like to apply her knowledge and skills to help to ensure that all the Friends' activities and efforts are benefitting the National Library.

### Larissa Karpish

Larissa has always loved the National Library for its beautiful exterior, which speaks of the rich heritage and learning to be found within its walls. While on the Committee, she would like to foster greater awareness of the Library and its fine heritage, embedding a better understanding of it within the Australian community.

### Jo Schumann

Jo's career includes extensive experience in the public sector in both state and Commonwealth agencies. Jo has a passion for national institutions, like the Library, and the role they play in the Australian community, psyche and history. She would like to use her solid understanding of governance, her varied skill sets and her enthusiasm to help benefit the Committee.

**Melanie Olde** | Friends Executive Officer

## Memories of Using the National Library

One of the pleasures of living in Canberra is easy access to the National Library.

I started my family history research in 1968 while studying at the Australian National University. This was before microfiche indexes of births, deaths and marriages, or access to newspapers on Trove. I remember searching day by day through *The Sydney Morning Herald* looking for family connections. Eventually, I found the 1922 deaths of my great-grandparents, Robert and Jeanie Thom. On their way home from church, waiting for a tram in Leichhardt, they died after a car being chased by police lost control and crashed into the group waiting at the tram stop. I had no knowledge of this accident. By 1968, my grandparents Thom were deceased and my father was not interested in family history. He was born in 1916; surely he knew about the deaths of his grandparents—or maybe not, as religious differences had split the family.

I became such a regular user at the Library that staff, seemingly fed up with my frequent requests for the large printed volumes of the Australian Electoral Rolls, allowed me (back then) to do research in the stacks—of course, I always returned the volumes to their correct location. I became a heavy user of the Australian Joint Copying Project microfilms; this great resource is now being digitised for inclusion in Trove.

My biggest surprise resulted from a suggestion by a contact in England that I look at *The History and Antiquities of the County of Leicester* by John Nichols, published between 1795 and 1815, in relation to my connection to the Ashby family of Quenby Hall. I doubted the Library would hold the four volumes but it did—and they're available online using a National Library card! Information about this well-known Leicestershire family included a family tree taking my Ashby line back to the thirteenth century.

A couple of years ago, searching variations of my great-grandfather's name, John Edmund Miller Russell, the Library website led me to an 1885 edition of a booklet by J.E.M. Russell, *The Pictorial Guide to the Blue Mountains of New South Wales*. It's now available online.

After leaving Canberra in 1991, I became a regular user of the Library website, especially Trove, and joined the newly established Friends of the National Library. Whenever I'm back in Canberra, I continue to enjoy the benefits of this beautiful building and its wonderful collections.

**Grahame Thom** | Treasurer, Friends Committee



Erika Mordek, *Card File at the National Library of Australia*, 2020.



## Bushranger Ben Hall

Among the Library's collections are some fascinating links with Australia's colourful past.

As a young lad in the 1860s, Australia's best-known bushranger Ned Kelly is reported to have idolised Ben Hall, who roamed the central west of New South Wales.

The two share a unique infamy, albeit 20-odd years apart. Each was the subject of an Act of parliament sanctioning the killing of an individual by the general public. In 1865, New South Wales' *Felons Apprehension Act* authorised citizens to kill Hall and his gang on sight; in 1878, a similar Act was passed in Victoria, aimed at stopping the Kelly gang.

The 1850s gold rushes saw the emergence of Australian-born bushrangers, renowned for their exceptional riding skills and bushcraft.

Ben Hall was the most prolific and efficient of bushrangers. In just two years until his death in 1865, he led a gang that committed more than 100 robberies and several murders. They were well armed and superbly mounted, often riding stolen racehorses able to easily outpace police nags.

Why did Hall, a respected lease-holder, turn to bushranging? In 1861, police inspector Sir Frederick Pottinger issued a warrant for Hall's arrest on suspicion of harbouring bushranger Frank Gardiner, whose mistress was a sister of Hall's wife Bridget. The warrant also authorised the police to destroy all the property on Hall's land.



Top: Colt's Patent Firearms Manufacturing Company, *Ben Hall's Revolver*, 1850s, nla.cat-vn2652485.

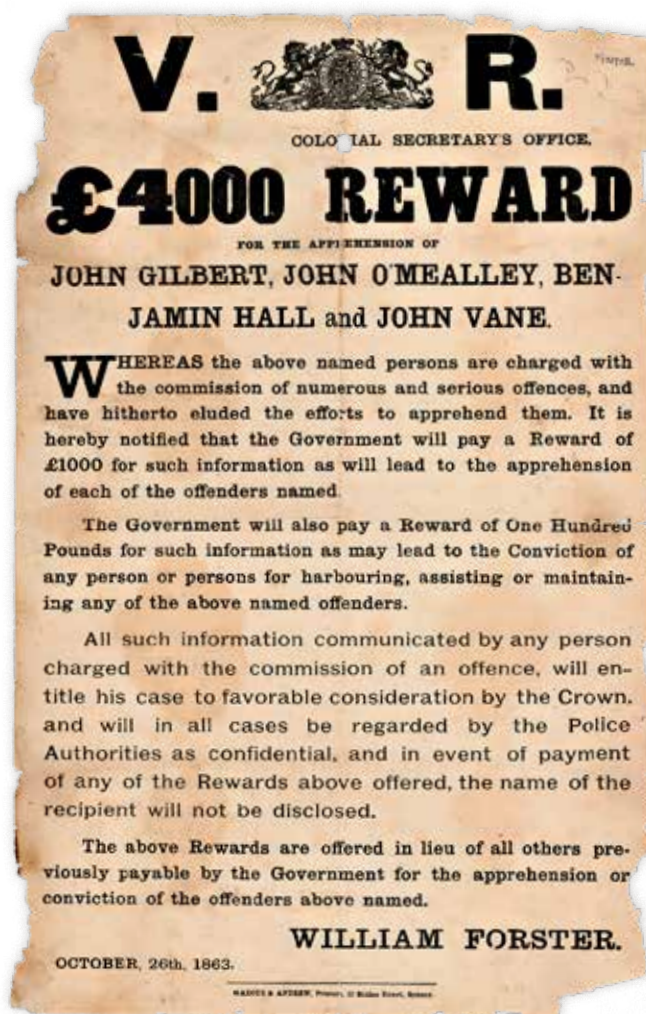
Bottom: *Portrait of Ben Hall*, 1865, nla.cat-vn1165537.

Pottinger arrested Hall for highway robbery using arms. Acquitted for want of evidence—but embittered by his arrest and discovery that Bridget, with their infant son, had run off with his friend James Taylor—Hall joined Gardiner's gang. Soon after, Hall was arrested for his share in Australia's biggest gold heist, the Eugowra gold-escort robbery. He was released only to find his house burnt down and stock dead. Hall took to bushranging with a vengeance, determined to outdo all others.

Hall took over the gang in 1862, joining forces with Canadian-born bushranger John Gilbert. Hall led them in daring robberies, stealing horses from police and magistrates, capturing (then releasing) police, bailing up the residents of Canowindra and staging a three-day party with them, imbibing port wine and dancing with other captives. He was assisted by a good 'bush telegraph' system and sympathisers who were often rewarded with a share of the loot.

With the press berating the 'useless police', a reward of £4,000 for the apprehension of Hall and his gang was posted by the New South Wales Government in October 1863.

Their robberies turned more deadly in 1864 and 1865. Gilbert shot dead a police constable during the hold up of a mail coach near Jugiong and John Dunn killed another constable at Collector. Hoping to lure Hall and Dunn into the open, Sir Frederick Pottinger



*£4000 Reward for the Apprehension of John Gilbert, John O'Mealley, Benjamin Hall and John Vane* (Sydney: Colonial Secretary's Office, 1863) nla.cat-vn1607223.

rode in the Wowingragong races but failed to notice Hall's gang at the course. He was recalled to Sydney and dismissed. The cause of his dismissal has been attributed by some as the origin of 'even blind Freddy could see that'.

Drastic measures were needed. In April 1865, the *Felons Apprehension Act* (NSW) was passed, directed at Hall, Gilbert, Dunn and another bushranger, 'Mad Dog' Morgan. If they failed to surrender by a specified date, they could be declared 'outlaws'. Any person was then authorised to take them 'alive or dead'. A subsequent Act was not repealed until 1976, more than 100 years after the original Act!

Hall decided to quit his life of crime but was betrayed by an informer. At daybreak on 5 May 1865, police ambushed and shot 27-year-old Hall at a billabong near Forbes. Thirty bullets were found in his body. Ironically, Hall and Morgan were both killed before the provisions of the Act directed at them came into force.

Hall's funeral was 'numerously attended', particularly by women. His legend continues through music, poetry, films and six Ben Hall sites listed by the Heritage Council of New South Wales.

Hall's Colt revolver, with the initials 'B.H.' carved on the butt, was acquired by the Library from writer Frank Clune, who had acquired it from Henry Taylor, grandson of the James Taylor who had caused Hall such grief.

What became of the other gang members on the 1863 reward poster? John O'Meally was shot dead in November 1863 during a raid near Forbes. One week after Hall's death, John Gilbert was fatally shot by police near Binalong. John Vane left the gang in 1863, turned himself in and served five years of a 15-year jail sentence. He died in 1906. The supposedly inept Sir Frederick Pottinger died a month before Hall, in April 1865, after accidentally shooting himself in the abdomen while boarding a moving coach.

More resources about Ben Hall and other bushrangers can be found through the Library Catalogue and in the National Library Bookshop. Hall's pistol and reward poster will be on display soon after the Treasures Gallery reopens.

Kerry Blackburn | Friends Deputy Chair, Library volunteer

## Help Us to Preserve and Share the Papers of Banjo Paterson

Most of us know at least a few lines from A.B. 'Banjo' Paterson's most famous poems, *The Man from Snowy River* and *Waltzing Matilda*. But what do we really know about Banjo Paterson the man, or the time that he lived in?

This year, the Library's appeal is raising funds to preserve and digitise the papers of legendary Australian bush poet Banjo Paterson so it can share this rich material online with everyone.

Held by four generations of the Paterson family before its acquisition by the Library in 2019, this collection represents the last remaining Paterson material not already held in a public institution.

Your donation will enable the Library to share this remarkable collection with all Australians, offering a new and rich insight into the life and times of Banjo Paterson.

Friends will receive the appeal letter and brochure by mail or can find out more and donate online at [nla.gov.au/support-us/BanjoPaterson](http://nla.gov.au/support-us/BanjoPaterson). We encourage you to make your gift online, where a receipt may be downloaded immediately. The Library will continue to process other gifts, but while the building remains closed, there may be delays processing gifts sent by mail. Donations over \$2 are tax-deductible. This appeal will remain open until 31 December 2020.

Top: Photograph of A.B. Paterson in *The Man from Snowy River and Other Verses* by A.B. Paterson (Sydney: Angus & Robertson, 1895), limited-edition copy 17 of 25, signed by Paterson, Papers of Andrew Barton 'Banjo' Paterson, nla.cat-vn8047102.

Bottom: A.B. Paterson (1864–1941), *An Early Version of Waltzing Matilda*, Papers of Andrew Barton 'Banjo' Paterson, nla.cat-vn8047102.

