



Newsletter December 2023

A Quarterly Newsletter Publication of The Friends of
the State Library of South Australia
Edited by Jane Walkley.



A Note from the President Professor Rick Sarre

Greetings!

What a wonderful dinner we enjoyed at St Marks on 24 November. The AGM was short and sharp (my report on the year's activities is available in the AGM minutes) and that gave us extra time to enjoy the superb food, the lovely Marble Hill wines, the good company, and the (profitable) silent auction. Well done to Angela and her team for their excellent 'Girt by Sea' themed decorations too. We heard a very good after dinner speech from the Lord Mayor, Jane Lomax-Smith, who *inter alia* spoke about the North Terrace precinct (and the legacy of Morgan Thomas), and the virtues of volunteerism.

A Note from the President continued...

Let me add some of my own notes on volunteering, because the Friends are all volunteers (and generous donors of their time, talents and treasures). Volunteering Australia reports that our country could simply not survive economically without volunteers. The Australian Bureau of Statistics reported in 2021 that about a third of the Australian population aged 15 and over volunteered in some capacity in the four weeks prior to a 2019 survey. This equates to about 600 million hours per year. I am told that that tradition is declining as the energy of our older citizens declines. We cannot let that happen. We must bring the younger generations along with us.



On November 22, four members of the FSL (Marianne, Patricia, Hettie and Rick) attended a garden party at Government House with our patron, Her Excellency the Governor Frances Adamson. Here she is with two of us, along with Julie Quimby, formerly of the SLSA Foundation

My reading since September has been enjoyable. When I reviewed my reading list of recent times, I noticed that most of my treasured authors are men. Hence, I have been focusing on books by women and have been rewarded in spades.

Helen Garner's *This House of Grief* (Text, 2014) follows the trials and (ultimately) the murder conviction of a man who drove his car into a dam in rural Victoria resulting in the deaths of his three children. It makes for gripping reading. Ann Patchett's *The Dutch House* (Bloomsbury, 2019) is an astonishing and beautifully told family tale, set in Philadelphia. It is narrated through the eyes of a young boy abandoned by his mother. Their reunion decades on pulls strongly at the heartstrings. Louise Milligan's *Witness* (Hachette, 2021) examines the legal system's treatment of sexual abuse victims during the criminal trials of their alleged abusers. As a person who interviewed one of these victims, Louise is cross-examined mercilessly. The staggering courtroom exchanges are recited verbatim from the transcripts.

Anna Funder's *Wifedom* (Hamish Hamilton, 2023) explores the truth behind George Orwell's relationship with his wife Eileen and her (ignored and forgotten) influence on his writing. It was inspired by the finding, in 2005, of a cache of her personal correspondence, written during the Second World War, and sent to her best friend. It is fantastic. Adelaide-born Paula Nagel's *Brutal* (Wakefield Press, 2023) is a personal tale of love, fame and loss, with dramatic writing about her health tribulations. It includes touching words that describe her love for her late brother Trevor (whom I knew at law school and at the Adelaide University Football Club). It is terrific. Another Adelaide author is Fay Lee. Her novel, *Empathy* (Hawkeye, 2022), takes us to a dystopian future where the ultra-rich employ medically altered sexual nymphs for their hedonistic purposes. It's an interesting mix of soft porn and science fiction. This was her first book of many (she tells me). I await the sequel.

I end with a mention of Peter Goers' new book *In the Air of an Afternoon Almost Past* (Wakefield Press, 2023), the story of the loss of his parents in a plane crash in New Orleans in 1982. It is a superb mixture of pathos and personal redemption from melancholia. It contains some of the best writing on grief that I have ever read. I will be interviewing him about this book at Writers Week on the 5th March at 3.45 pm.



**Dr Jane Lomax-Smith (Guest Speaker)
with Prof Rick Sarre**



Guests enjoying the Annual Dinner

From our Bibliofile editor, Hettie Tinsley



Our 2023 publication - coast

It is a pleasure to be the incoming editor of *Bibliofile*, the annual publication of the Friends of the State Library. A long-standing tradition, the publication is produced by volunteers and edited by a committee member of the Friends. The Friends of the State Library pay for publication, and each member receives a free copy. Further copies can be purchased from the Friends' office. Its focus is on South Australia, its literature, history and culture. This takes many forms, and over the years an annual theme has evolved to add cohesion to the journal. Reviews of South Australian publications, photography and graphics enhance its appeal. The most long-standing contributor to *Bibliofile* (and, I would argue, its most important) is John Kingsmill, designer, whose skilled and innovative presentation makes the journal so attractive and accessible.

As editor, I develop a working relationship with writers who are experts in their field, often taking on voluntary roles beyond retirement to bring local knowledge to South Australians. I want to cite one example of the many volunteers it is a privilege to meet. Mark Staniforth has a passion for exploring the *Star of Greece* tragic shipwreck and contributed to *Coast*. As a marine archaeologist, diver, and historian he has settled in Willunga and actively engaged in sharing his knowledge as a member of National Trust of South Australia, Willunga Branch. I was lucky enough to visit him at the Willunga National Trust Courthouse Museum and Waverley House- where he gives talks, produces publications and organises exhibitions on local history within a dedicated team. His photographs are shown here, and I recommend a visit to see more when you are in the Willunga area.

Multiply this rich experience many times over, and you can see how *Bibliofile* reaches the unsung heroes who keep our history and wider knowledge alive. Enjoy reading it as part of your holiday relaxation.



***Star of Greece* by George Frederick (G.F.) Gregory junior (1857-1913). Oil on board. 39 x 63 cm. (Private collection)**



Captain Harrower's telescope being held by Willunga National Trust Chairperson Dr. Paddy O'Toole (photo by Ian Tuohy courtesy of the Willunga Branch of the National Trust of South Australia)

Friends Tours & Events

A Treasure Trove

Our visit to the Mary MacKillop Centre, Phillips Street, Kensington on October 25th was extremely worthwhile. The Museum was re-opened only 4 years ago, having undergone complete renovation and refurbishment; it was a brilliant and thoughtful example of compactness, to be digested at your own pace. The spaces were filled with most informative displays, often interactive, on the life of the extraordinary Mary MacKillop. Her assistant nuns of the Order of St Joseph helped develop and maintain the very extensive school network throughout South Australia. This was beautifully and powerfully documented by newspaper articles and photographs of the era, as well as numerous artefacts. What was made starkly clear was the magnificent work of Mary and the nuns among poor and underprivileged children, especially in this state, though by no means confined to SA.

It was a splendid, informative visit, enthusiastically introduced by Amanda, who always remained on hand to answer questions. There was so much to absorb that a return visit seems almost mandatory - at our own leisure.



A POPULAR TOUR

The Friends undertook two tours of the **Adelaide City Archives** on 21 September and 5 October when a little-known treasure was brought to life by city archivist Robert Thornton.

Robert explained that the Adelaide City Council is the oldest municipality in Australia (dating from 1840) and is responsible for the square mile of the central business district, North Adelaide, and the surrounding parklands. Archival records were housed for well over 100 years in the basement cellars of the Town Hall but had become severely dilapidated before the specially custom-designed space was created and situated at Topham Mall from 1984. The Archives now holds more than 6000 shelf metres of records that include paper documents, photographs, the Civic Collection and Oral History Collection.

Speaking about the paper records Robert drew our attention to the assessment books, Council annual reports and minutes, citizens' rolls, Town Clerk's records, City Engineer's records and building plans. The photographs date from the turn of the 20th century and incorporate views of city streets, buildings, parks, people, and major events.

Discussing the Oral History project Robert added that it employed four part-time historians continuously from 1984 to 2001 and has operated sporadically since then. Interviews provide a window into city life and have been recorded with a range of people from Lord Mayors, Councillors and Corporation staff to businesspeople and long-time residents. The Civic Collection consists of around 5000 items including Queen Adelaide and Colonel Light relics, several hundred paintings and portraits, most of the City's statuary and memorials, protocol gifts and other pieces of historical interest.

On the tour Robert showed us the general reading and work rooms, the downstairs storage areas containing multiple compactus units and the conservation room where paper conservator Helen Szuster explained the repair work she was doing on frail architectural plans. In winding to a close, an enthralling 90 minutes had passed in a flash.

Researchers wishing to use the Archives should note that it is open 8.45am to 5.00pm Mondays to Fridays.

Phone 8203 7439 or

www.adelaidecitycouncil.com/archives

Bernard Whimpress



Tuesday Talks



Prof Joanne Cys - Books in My Life November 2023

We welcomed Professor Joanne Cys (Provost, University of South Australia) as our Books in My Life speaker on 7 November 2023. Jo subtitled her talk “Memory, place, design”, as her professional calling is interior design. She began by recalling the joy of being read as a child:

Akiho Tsutsumi, *Animal Toys*, 1968
Eric Carle, *The very hungry caterpillar*, 1969
Richard Scarry, *Busy, Busy World*, 1965

As an older youth, and then into adulthood, her eclectic tastes took her to read for pleasure the following titles:

Joseph Heller, *Catch 22*, 1961
John Osborne, *Look Back in Anger*, 1956
Barry Miles, *David Bowie Black Book*, 1980
Henrik Ibsen, *The Master Builder and Other Plays*, 1892
Virginia Woolf, *To The Lighthouse*, 1927
TS Elliot, *Selected Poems*, 1973
Jack Kerouac, *On the Road*, 1957
Lee Child, *Gone Tomorrow*, 2009

And in her professional studies and life she listed and spoke of her love for the following works:

Anatol Carmin, *Yves Klein*, 2002
Julia Williams Robinson, *The Discipline of Architecture*, 2001
Match Creative Disciplines Collaboration Tournament, 2004
Design South Australia, 2012

Prof Anthony Elliott AM - Books in My Life December 2023



On December 5 our speaker was Professor Anthony Elliott, Research Professor of Sociology and Dean of External Engagement at the University of South Australia. Anthony’s love of the challenges posed by modern social theory was manifested by his choice of four books. Their authors had drawn him into the world of sociology, a world that has now offered us his scholarly focus on the digital revolution and artificial intelligence. Indeed, Lord Anthony Giddens was his PhD supervisor at Cambridge.

His chosen four works were:

Cornelius Castoriadis, *The Imaginary Institution of Society*, 1975
Anthony Giddens, *Modernity and Self-Identity*, 1991
Julia Kristeva, *Tales of Love*, 1987
Zygmunt Bauman, *Life in Fragments: Essays in Postmodern Morality*, 1994

Anthony's books:

- *Concepts of the Self*, by Anthony Elliott
- *Algorithmic Intimacy: The Digital Revolution in Personal Relationships* by Anthony Elliott
- *Making sense of AI: Our Algorithmic World*, by Anthony Elliott
- *The Culture of AI: Everyday Life and the Digital Revolution* by Anthony Elliott
- *On Society* by Anthony Elliott & Bryan Turner

[Purchase
Anthony's
books here](#)



Margaret Calder - Books in My Life

October 2023

In an excellent address, Margaret told us that she had been a keen reader (of perhaps 2,000 books) in her eight decades. It is difficult to do justice to Margaret's talk given the many books that she included. I have selected a few here that captured my attention.

As a younger woman she loved Lawrence Durrell's *Alexandria Quartet - Justine, Balthazar, Montolive and Clea* (1957-1960).

Recently she received as a gift a wonderful book by a Japanese author, Haruki Murakami, *1Q84 - The complete trilogy*. She told us how she had had to overcome her prejudice against the Japanese, but not before she was well into her 40s. This was because her father, Clive, a Presbyterian minister, went as a chaplain to New Guinea. He was killed in 1942, by a Japanese sniper as he was conducting a funeral.

Soon after that she began to read novels about the experiences of soldiers during the war, such as Laurens Van der Post's *The Seed and the Sower*. In 1963, she quoted in her journal from the book: "If we could all re-learn to speak of our common suffering and need, we too would be surprised to find how close we are to one another."

In 2014 she wrote to Richard Flanagan to tell him how much she had enjoyed *The Narrow Road to the Deep North*. He wrote back:

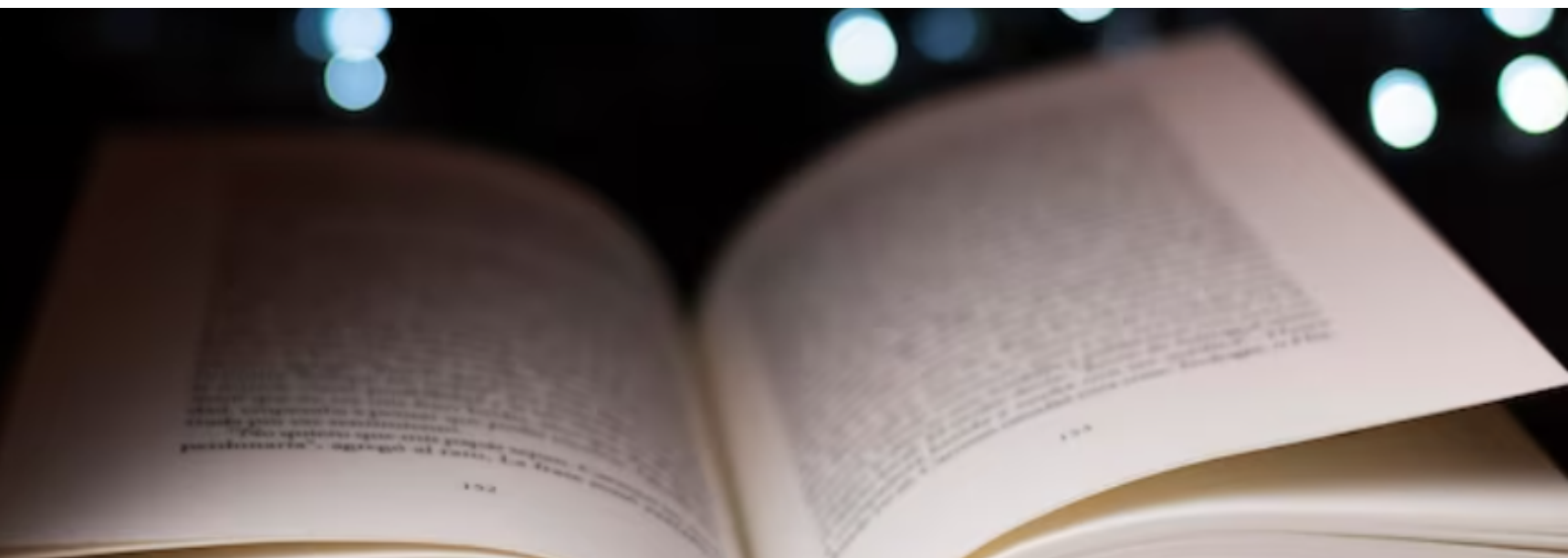
Dear Margaret, Many thanks for your kind and thoughtful letter, card and prayer. Well, I do agree - hope is all. Despair is rational, but to hope is the very essence of what it is to be human. Warm Wishes, Richard.

Since first reading *One Hundred Years of Solitude* in 1970, Gabriel Garcia Marquez has become another one of her favourites. Others of his include *No One Writes to the Colonel* (1961) and *Love in the Time of Cholera* (1985).

She highly recommended *Talking to My Country* (2016) and *Australia Day* (2019) by Stan Grant, telling of his life growing up as an Aboriginal Australian. His latest *With the Falling of the Dusk - a chronicle of the world in crisis* (2021) is, she said, a powerful, poetic and compelling book.

She recommended Kate Atkinson's *Shrines of Gaiety* (2022), a novel set in Soho in London in the 1920s. She mentioned how, recently, she read Colum McCann's *Apeirogon*. This novel gives two perspectives on the Palestine-Israel imbroglio. It follows the meeting of a Palestinian man, Bassam, and a Jewish man, Rami. The two men unite in their sorrow to press for a peaceful resolution to the conflict. They started an organisation 'Combatants for Peace' and travelled the world together, talking about their experiences.

This is just a smattering of the many wonderful books recommended by Margaret. A full list is available from the FSL desk.

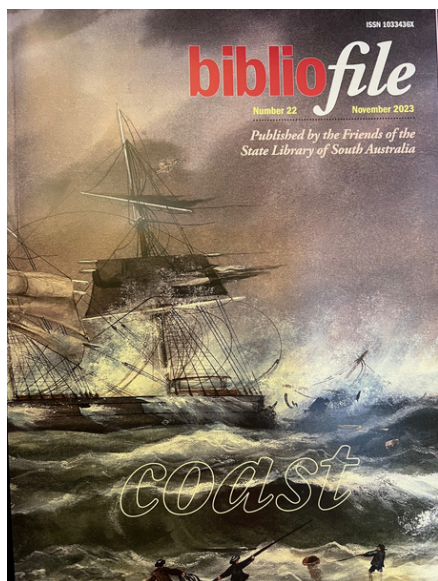


AGM & ANNUAL DINNER 24 November 2023



Christmas is coming!

AP
AUSTRALIANA PUBLICATIONS
Adelaide



Bibliofile is the annual journal of the Friends of the State Library.

Bibliofile is a long standing tradition of the Friends. Its focus is on South Australia; its literature, history and culture. It's produced by volunteers and edited by a committee member - this year Hettie Tinsley. Each member receives a free copy via post, and further copies, or even past editions, can be purchased from the Friends Bookshop or on our website.

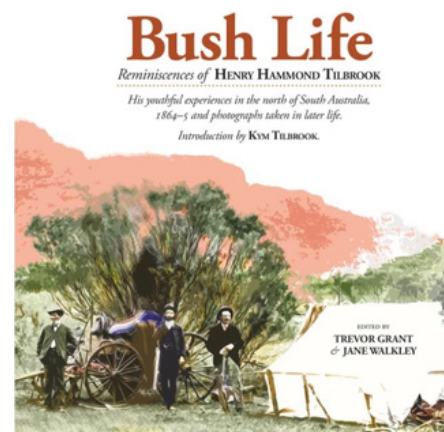
This year's edition is called *coast*.

[Buy
Bibliofile
here](#)

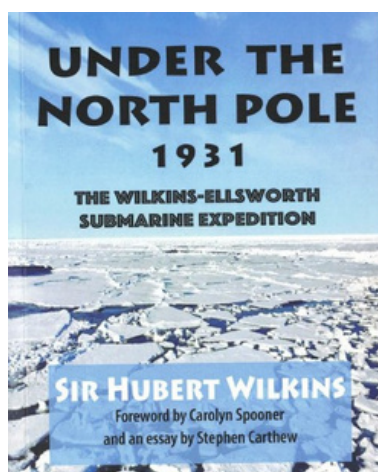
Henry Hammond Tilbrook's youthful experiences in the north of South Australia 1864-5, with photographs taken in later life.

He lived from 1848 to 1937 and was a well-known Adelaide photographer from the 1890s onward. His widely-circulated photographs of SA's Mid North are some of his best. Less well-known is the fact that he first saw this country when a naïve youth working on Thomas Elder's properties. The frank, honest diaries of his adventures in the 1860s and written up by him in the 1930s, as held by the State Library, have been painstakingly transcribed, giving fascinating insights into an itinerant worker's life.

Tilbrook's closely edited *Reminiscences* are now to be published, complemented with many striking photographs.



[Buy *Bush Life* here](#)



The Friends of the State Library SA have re-published Wilkins' 1931 *Under the North Pole* with additional material.

This exciting account of his plans to take a submarine under the north polar ice cap contains his reminiscences of growing up in SA's mid-north - learning the skills which served him so well in his amazing life: horsemanship, survival and resourcefulness, even a spiritual aspect from his close association with the local Indigenous people.

[Buy
*Under the
North Pole*
here](#)

Tuesday Talks - 'Books in My Life' are very popular!

Speakers we have booked for 2024:

SAMELA HARRIS (writer)
MIKE RANN (former Premier)
ROD BUNTEN (spouse to Governor)
JANE TURNER GOLDSMITH (psychologist and writer)
DAVID FABER (historian)
ROD WELLS (palaeontologist)
JESSICA ALICE (young writer)
PETER GOERS (broadcaster and writer)
JULIE REDMAN (family lawyer)
PETER MAYER (politics and economics)


Tuesday Talks are 11am
in the Hetzel Lecture
Theatre. Dates are
advertised by email

Book Donations are always welcome

Drop them off during
our opening hours or
ring the office on
7424 6310
to arrange a pick up

Especially
kids' books!





Christmas Hours :
The Friends Office and Bookshop
will be closed from Friday 22 December
and re-open Monday 15 January

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Not open public holidays

Friends of the State Library of SA - GPO Box 419 Adelaide SA 5001

Level 1, Institute Building, corner North Terrace and Kintore Ave, Adelaide
Ph: 08 7424 6310 – slsafriends@libraries.sa.gov.au