

New England WRITERS CENTRE

For people who love writing and reading

December 2012 – February 2013

PLANS FOR 2013

We are planning an exciting program for next year. We have already received funding for two projects – Youth Online (including a visiting writer) has been funded by Young People through Arts NSW, and a series of online workshops through Skype has been funded by CAL.

We will be announcing the first half of year program in the February newsletter, and second half of year in the July newsletter. The program will be on the website shortly after those announcements.



Val Sherwell ... another member gets published. See page 4.

HOLIDAY CLOSING TIMES

NEWC will be closed from Thursday, December 20, 4pm, and will reopen Tuesday, January 15, at 1pm. There will be no **Drop-In** or **WriteNow** workshops in January, they will resume in February.

ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

Our AGM will be held Friday, March 1, at 5.15pm at NEWC, followed by an Ordinary Meeting, at 5.30pm. All welcome. If you wish to stand for the Board or nominate someone else, please contact us.

CONGRATULATIONS!

- LOCAL WRITERS IN PRINT

Many local writers have had great success this year – with some winning prizes, others being published, as well as new members and emerging writers developing their work through our workshops.

Congratulations to:

Janene Carey: entry for the ABC's Open Project, *Wreaking Havoc*, featured on their web page for October.

Liz Horne: "Look!" will be included in *Stories for Five Year Olds*, to be released by Random House this December, a collection which also includes a story by NEWC Chair, Sophie Masson.

Wendy James: Novel - *The Mistake*, domestic thriller.

Yve Louis: *A Door in the Forest*, book of poems.

Fiona McDonald: *Gentlemen Rogues and Wicked Ladies*, about highwaymen and women; *The Jazz Age*, a social and cultural overview of 1920s' Britain, *Mistresses*, and *Ghost Doll & Jasper* a graphic novel about friendship and acceptance for children 9-12 years.

Martin Levins (member) and Mal Lee: *Bring Your Own Technology*, a book for parents and teachers about BYOT.

Susan McMichael: major open poetry prize at the Tenterfield Brush with Verse Competition, with her poem *Tracks*. Susan's poem was matched to art work created by her husband, Rex Kearns, on display at Forest to Furniture Gallery, Tenterfield.

Sophie Masson: *The Boggle Hunters*, children's book, *Moonlight and Ashes* is a book for

teenagers/children and an adults novel *My Brother Will*, a Kindle-only edition, join the Shakespeare family in Stratford and spend Will's 16th year with them as told by Gilbert, William's younger brother. Sophie also has a story in *Stories for Five Year Olds*, to be released by Random House this December.

Michael Sharkey: *Apollo in George Street, The Life of David Mckee Wright.*

Val Sherwell: *The Guinea Fowl Girl*, to be published by Fastnetbooks. An account of Val's childhood in colonial Rhodesia.

Heather Attrill: *A Web of Words: Pattern and Meaning in Robert Jordan's The Wheel of Time*, an exploration of the role and purpose of the high fantasy author as story teller and pattern maker.

Mark Bourne: *Through the Chair*, an eight-minute monologue which ran for a week at the Newtown Theatre, Sydney in January, subsequently chosen as one of 10 plays for the Peoples Choice Showcase, held in March.

Nick Duhigg: *Pendulum*, published as an e-book.

Maria Hitchcock: With foreword by Peter Garrett, *A Celebration of Wattle* is an updated version of a book published in 1991.

Peter Langston: Second book of poems, *A Head Full of Whispers*.

John Ryan et al: a partnership between UNE and the Armidale Historical Society: *New England Lives IV*, biographies of previously prominent Armidale people.

Bronnie Ware: *The Top Five Regrets of the Dying: A life transformed by the dearly departing*, published by Hay House.

Harry White: Indigenous author: *Bush Tucker, Boomerangs and Bandages*.

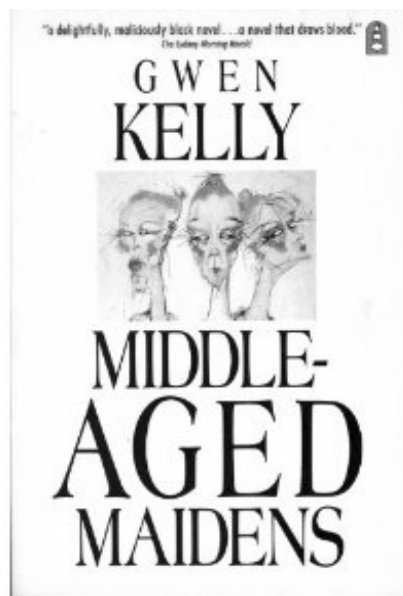
GOODBYE GWEN

Sadly, New England lost one of its great writers this year.

Born in 1922, **Gwen Kelly** began writing as a Sydney primary school student, and as a teenager she regularly published poems in her school journal and in the children's pages of magazines and newspapers.

In the 1940s some of her early verse was published, under the pen name Nita Heath, in an anthology entitled *Green Valleys*. This early verse was especially concerned with the themes of natural beauty and religious faith.

Gwen studied English and Philosophy at the University of Sydney, graduating with First Class Hons. In a prolific writing career she published 119 works by the time of her death at age 90.



Gwen Kelly, 1922-2012

Gwen Kelly, who died on August 19 this year in Armidale, was born Gwen Nita Smith, at Thornleigh in Sydney in 1922, and began writing while at primary school. During her secondary school years, she published poems in her school magazine and the children's pages of newspapers and magazines. In the 1940s some of her juvenile verse on the themes of natural beauty and religious belief, written under the pen name Nita Heath, appeared in Alfred A. Richard's *Green Valley* anthology.

Gwen studied English and Philosophy at the University of Sydney, graduating with First Class Honours and a University Medal. Her teachers notably included the Challis Professor of Philosophy (1927-58) John Anderson, the controversial and combative promoter of free thought in morality and politics and advocate of academic freedom. At the university Gwen moved away from her evangelical Baptist upbringing, eventually becoming an atheist. Drawing on this experience, her first novel, *There Is No Refuge* (1961) concerns a young evangelical woman student's responses to ethical challenges at Sydney

University in the 1930s, as she encounters free thought and free love.

In 1944 and 1945 Gwen worked in the Universities Commission, part of the War Organisation of Industry. She married Maurice Nugent Kelly, a graduate in Classics from Sydney University, in 1945. In 1947 she became a Fellow in Philosophy at the University of Sydney. Gwen also briefly taught philosophy at the University of New England, at that time a College of the University of Sydney, before moving to Armidale when Maurice was appointed at UNE in 1954 with particular responsibility for Greek. (Maurice also established, in 1959, the Classics Department Museum – now the Museum of Antiquities.) During these years, she began to publish short stories in Australian literary journals.

In 1960 and 1961 Gwen and her family lived in Quebec, where Maurice completed his PhD at Laval University, and Canada provided the landscape for *The Red Boat* (Sydney, Alpha Books, 1968). This, her second novel, explores the destructive effects of a breakdown in childhood filial relationships. When Gwen and Maurice returned to Armidale, she taught in secondary schools before being appointed Lecturer in English and Philosophy at the Armidale Teachers' College in 1964. She continued to publish short stories in literary journals, and in 1968 she won her first Henry Lawson Prose Award. Gwen published booklets on Henry Lawson for school children and, with her colleague Margaret Mackie, a book called *What is Right? Case Studies in the Ethics of Education* (Angus & Robertson, 1970). Following her tenure of a Senior Fellowship from the Australian Council Literature Board (1974-76), Gwen published her third novel, *The Middle-Aged Maidens* (Melbourne: Nelson, 1976). In 1981 *Fossils and Stray Cats*, a selection of her poetry (together with poems by Anthony J. Bennett) was published by Kardoorair Press in Armidale. In the same year, her fourth novel, *Always Afternoon*, was published by Collins. The story portrayed the impact on the local community of an internment camp for Germans at Trial Bay during World War I, and the love affair of a young Australian woman and a German prisoner. *Always Afternoon* was produced as a miniseries for Australian television in 1988 and subsequently in Germany, where it appeared under the title *Prisoners in Paradise*.

Arrows of Rain, Gwen's fifth novel (North Ryde, Angus & Robertson) and *The Happy People and Others* (Armidale: Kardoorair Press), a selection of her short stories, were published in 1988. Her autobiography, *Lifted from Life*, was published by Kardoorair Press in 2001. *Arrows of*

Rain, recounting the story of the Drayton family through 40 years, elements of the sage form with cultural and political history from the early 1930s up to the Whitlam years. Gwen's short stories found a welcome home in literary journals: in later years, *Southerly* published several of her stories; earlier, her work appeared in *Meanjin*, *Hemispheres*, *Overland*, *Quadrant* and many others. In 2004, her story 'Signorina Nina' appeared in the *New England Writers Centre Anthology* edited by Susan McMichael.

Her work has also been published in more than a dozen anthologies of Australian writing and has been translated in Switzerland, Germany and Indonesia. Her numerous literary awards include four Henry Lawson prose Awards for short stories (1968, 1976, 1980, 1981), and the Melbourne Sun-Pictorial Award in 1980. In 1981, the Society of Women Writers presented her with the first Hilarie Lindsay Award for achievement by a woman writer (an award which she again won in 1989). In 1974 she received a three-year Senior Fellowship from the Australian Council Literature Board. The New England Writers Centre honoured Gwen with its inaugural award for achievement.

Gwen's husband Maurice died in October 2011, and Gwen felt his loss enormously. They were an intellectually brilliant couple, passionately committed to education and academic freedom, lovers of literature and the fine arts, and sharing a delight in conversation on the philosophical good life with visitors they entertained in their home. Gwen and Maurice are survived by their daughters and sons-in-law (Bronwyn and James Sloan, and Jillian and Rod James) and their children. Like Maurice, Gwen contributed greatly to the New England Writers Centre through generous support of the Centre's programmes involving writers from the region. She assisted many aspiring or mid-career writers, and enthusiastically attended readings and literary gatherings that brought many of her well-known contemporaries to the region. It was a revelation to many people how many such renowned authors sought out Gwen and expressed to her their admiration for her writing.

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For the record, Maurice's achievements in his field were as remarkable as Gwen's in hers. His major publications include *View from the Forum: a history of Rome to A.D. 410* [Cheshire, 1969, 1985, 1989] and *View from Olympus: A History of Ancient Greece* [Cheshire, 1964; Cheshire, 1975; Longman, 1987]. Maurice was also a gifted writer of verse satires. In 1982, I published in *The Third Kangaroo*,

an annual literary supplement sponsored by UNE's Students Association, a selection of Maurice's acerbic epigrams on academic life. In an interview in the same issue with Tony Bennett, publisher of two collections of Gwen's short stories, and her autobiography, Gwen spoke of the importance of landscape to her writing, of short story writing in Australia, and of poetry. Concerning the latter remarked, 'I do think ideas relate to poetry as well as emotion: I couldn't agree with Judith Wright on that one, because I think all thinking is emotional, and emotion is rooted in certain beliefs and understanding'. To the end of her life, Gwen maintained her acute radar in the matter of aesthetic as well as moral claims. The New England Writers Centre, and readers in general have lost a great friend in Gwen Kelly, whose career, however, will continue to inspire us, and her work to find new readers.

- **Michael Sharkey**

Gwen's funeral was held at Piddington's Crematorium Chapel on August 23.

A DEDICATION TO GWEN

Australian poet and painter, Edwin Wilson, has paid tribute to Gwen Kelly by dedicating his new work to her.

Edwin Wilson went to Armidale Teachers' College as a student straight out of school (1960-61) and lectured at the same college (1968- 1972).

He says: "Armidale made me a poet". He has just brought out his *New Collected Poems* (Kardoorair Press, Armidale), coming in at over 700 pages (including prelims), with pencil illustrations by the late Elizabeth McAlpine. He wrote his first poem at the age of 10, so this is the culmination of some 60 years of application to the craft of verse. This hardcover volume, with a tinted lino-cut of flannel flowers on its cover, has an introduction and epilogue by Professor John Ryan, University of New England, plus an index and updated notes. A PDF of this volume has now been posted on his website (edwinwilson.com.au) with some of his other publications, which may be viewed/shared/or downloaded free for personal or educational purposes (as long as it is not sold). Details of his paintings and his other books are listed on this same website. For any more information he may be contacted at woodbinepress@hotmail.com.

WORKSPACE

The Guinea Fowl Girl

By Val Sherwell

Val shares her experience of writing her book and finally seeing it published:

In 1999, my daughter and partner took me to Zimbabwe for a visit. We had a most interesting time, none more so than calling in at two of my old childhood homes. What a shock that was! I took various pictures of the Que Que (Kwe Kwe) and Fort Victoria (Mazsvingo) houses which had been virtually trashed over the years. It would take too long to tell you how and why. Zimbabwe itself was degraded and this really caused me a deal of worry. It was horrible to see the country of my birth in such a state. Anyway, I decided when we got back to South Africa (and then Australia), I would write about my childhood in what was then Rhodesia. With this in mind, I attended several workshops at NEWC and was chosen one year to go to Varuna. This was all well and good, but in no way helped me get published. However, one of the members of the NEWC spent a lot of time over several months time reading my drafts and commenting on the memoir in general and the writing in particular. This was most helpful and I am grateful to her.

I contacted two South African publishers to no avail, because I felt my memoir was probably too specific to have acceptance in Australia. I wrote several more drafts and tried Transit Lounge and a few other publishers, but they were not interested either.

So, my MS lay forgotten in a drawer in my computer room for several more years.

When finally I got someone to show interest in my memoir, it was through a stroke of luck, no more or less. A friend told me she was getting her book published. I mentioned to her that I wished I had someone to publish mine. She kindly rang her publisher, he suggested I submit my MS. And, to use an old cliché, the rest is history.

I felt a great urge to write down what is now the past, because unless this is done, although the life we led has vanished, at least it won't be forgotten.

*Val's book was launched by Ian Johnstone, retired Armidale solicitor, at the Armidale Dumaresq Library on November 12. A large, enthusiastic group soon bought all available copies and the publishers had to take names to supply the unmet demand. *The Guinea Fowl Girl* is available through Amazon.

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*Apollo in George Street: The Life of
David Mckee Wright*

By Michael Sharkey

Michael's book was launched by Julian Croft, Emeritus Professor of English, University of New England, at the Armidale Dumaresq Council War Memorial Library on October 10. *Apollo in George Street* is available on line from SPUNC, priced at \$34.95

A Door in the Forest

By Yve Louis

A Door in the Forest is the sixth book of poems to be published by Yve and it was launched in September by Michael Sharkey at Trax Restaurant in The Railway Hotel. Look for *A Door in the Forest* in Armidale bookshops.

*A Web of Words: Pattern and Meaning
in Robert Jordan's The Wheel of Time*

By Heather Attrill

Theatre director, Dr Martin Mantle, launched the new book by local author Heather Attrill: *A Web of Words: Pattern and Meaning in Robert Jordan's The Wheel of Time*. It is published by Fastnet Books and was launched at the Armidale Art Gallery on October 5.

**Congratulations Ruby Straker
Starting Young**

Year 2 TAS student Ruby Straker won the inaugural Storybook Challenge for the Armidale region. Her story about what she loves most about her community won her a \$250 book package and \$1000 worth of books and a reading mat for her class at The Armidale School. Could be the start of a brilliant career.

What We Did This Year

This year I went full-time at the Armidale Express, moving into the senior journalist's role occupied for many decades by veteran journo Peter Barrett, who retired in April. I was acting editor for two months in July and August after Matt Taylor left and before our current editor, Lydia Roberts, transferred from *The Canberra Times* to take up the position.

- **Janene Carey**

Wreaking Havoc

Member Janene Carey's entry *Wreaking Havoc* for the ABC's Open Project, October theme *Caught Out* was posted on <https://open.abc.net.au/projects/500-words-caught-out28dn4-ay/contributions/places/armidale+region+nsw>

Janene Carey Portrait of a Vandal



I wrote a story with a crime theme, a speech on depression, read over drafts of novels, and planned a novel.

Early in the year I found John Carroll's *Ego and Soul* interesting reading. A Digital Hub visit helped me set up a blog. Importantly, I reorganised and stored all my fiction on an external hard drive.

- **Richard McLennan**

The NEWC market stall went really well and all authors had sales. Huge thanks to Teresa for helping to set up the stall and being there all day, and to Yve, Sophie and Gaynor who came along to sell books and help promote the Writers' Centre. Other published members, the stall might be on again in February so come along and be part of the push for NE writers.

Thanks again everyone, and cheers!

- **Liz Horne**

WORKSHOP FEEDBACK

Youth Online

Blackville Public School found the Youth Online program very useful:

“All our seven primary students participated. The students gained some great stimuli for future writing.

“From a teacher perspective, it is always fantastic to have high professional writers reinforce concepts we are covering with students.

“The students particularly enjoyed the performance poet- Miles Merrill.

In the past we really enjoyed emailing pieces of writing to authors for feedback. This old system had a much greater impact on students writing than the current system. Perhaps some of this can be included in next year's program.

“Sharing of children's work over VC just does not work. I believe there must be better ways to use the authors' time.

- **Amanda Maxwell**
Principal

Blackville Public School

Top sessions! The kids wrote the best stories I've had this year when they got back to the room. They wouldn't go out at recess!!!

- **Steve Hawkins**
Principal,

Tintinhull Public School

The workshops with Felicity Plunkett were excellent. My students gained a great deal - both for ext 1 and ext 2.

- **Anne Scott**
Quirindi High School

Thirteen Yarrowitch students participated in the

Youth Online program. We felt the workshops were great and it is fabulous for the student to listen to authors and an illustrator and not have to travel. It was also great for the students to listen to other students' responses. We would really like Youth Online to continue in 2013.

- **Sarah Carter**
Principal
Yarrowitch Public School

One hundred and twenty children took part at our school. It brought children in contact with 'real' writers and illustrators and gave them insight into their working process. It also brought them into contact with other students from around the region. Congratulations on a good program - I thought it was good.

- **Lyndy Scott**
Librarian
Quirindi Public School

Youth Online 2012 funded by **ConnectEd Arts** (a NSW Government arts and education program funded by Arts NSW and managed in partnership with the Department of Education and Training).

MANUSCRIPT ASSESSMENT

Pippa Masson

Fascinating! There were participants with works covering many different genres so we all benefited greatly from the wide range of advice Pippa gave.

- **Frances Letters**

Pippa was very helpful, and the whole experience not as intimidating as I feared it would be, especially since I submitted a first draft and felt quite nervous about it.

- **Birender Joynt**

WRITING THE FANTASTICAL

Kate Forsyth

I have learned more in this workshop than in any other writing course I have attended – ever! Brilliant.

- **Anna Thomson**

This workshop has changed my life – the turning point in my writing journey! I have learned so much and enjoyed it immensely!

- **Emily Thomas-Moore**

Excellent, absorbing workshop. Well organised and paced. Should be a standard workshop given annually. One of the best workshops I've attended.

- **Fiona McDonald**

BLOGGS AND BLOGWRITING **Tim Leah**

I was oblivious to the world of blogging, but Tim opened up a new tangent for me, which I have explored with open eyes. As a result I have now uploaded a story to the ABC site, which has received some favourable reviews. What a way to open us to new aspects of the internet.

- **Lyn Grace**

Overall, I thought *Blogs & Blogwriting* was a great workshop, really interactive, not much technical jargon, etc. I think everybody came away with some really good information and inspiration at the end of the day.

- **Teresa Van Der Kraan**

NEWS AND INFORMATION

The Australian Society of Authors (ASA) recently informed us of the ABC'S plans to drop a number of programs including: *Airplay*, *The Book Reading*, *Night Air* and *Sunday Story*. This is a disastrous decision for Australian authors, representing as it does one of the only outlets for Australian radio drama. The ASA suggests emails expressing dismay to ABC managing director, Mark Scott, scott.mark@abc.net.au or the chairman of the ABC Board, James Spigelman, spigelman.james@abc.net.au

The Australian Law Reform Commission (ALRC) is conducting an inquiry into how copyright affects the growth of Australia's digital economy. There is information about the inquiry at www.alrc.gov.au.

PUBLISHING/FELLOWSHIPS/ OPPORTUNITIES

The ABC Open 500 words writing project invites regional communities to produce and publish photos, stories, videos, and sound through the ABC, based around a monthly theme. Go to: <http://open.abc.net.au/> or <http://open.abc.net.au/projects/500-words-caught-out-28dn4y#/discover> or contact Kelly Ann Brent KellyAnn@abc.net.au

Pan MacMillan Australia publishes books for the general market in a wide range of genres. Manuscript Monday, an initiative wherein they will accept submissions between 10am and 4pm on a Monday that are sent electronically and comply with the guidelines as listed on the Manuscript

Monday page. Go to: http://www.panmacmillan.com.au/submission_guidelines.asp

black&write! Indigenous Writing Fellowships, Library of Queensland's national black&write! writing competition for novels, short stories, poetry or children's book. Two winners will each receive \$10,000 prize money; Manuscript development with *black&write!*'s indigenous editors at SLQ; publication by prestigious indigenous publisher Magabala Book, Published and unpublished Indigenous writers – this is a chance to be a part of a growing community of deadly writers, illustrators and editors. Contact: indigenous.writing@slq.qld.gov.au or 07 3842 9985

Closes: January 2013

Fastnet Books offers three publishing packages for anybody wanting to self-publish. As they are a local company, it is possible that organising things might be just that bit easier. Contact: Paul Adams, on 6772 6366 or p_r_adams@bigpond.com or Fastnet Books, 227 Donnelly Street, Armidale, 2350 or go to <http://www.fastnetbooks.net/Publish.html>

CONFERENCES/WORKSHOPS FESTIVALS

South Coast Writers' Centre workshops: AFTRS Short Film Screenwriting Workshop, January 14-18, a complete short film script in just five days, working with industry experts. Cost: \$800. Go to: <http://www.aftrs.edu.au/>

AFTRS Writing for TV workshop, January 21-25, the fundamentals of creating viable and original TV drama or comedy series. Cost: \$800. Go to <http://www.aftrs.edu.au/>

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