



Rananim

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So...Lawrence Doesn't Matter?

For some years now there has been a concerted effort to expel DH Lawrence from the canon of Australian literature.

Recent compilations of the major works of Australian literature have bypassed *Kangaroo* altogether, presumably because it is no longer regarded as an Australian book - for it can hardly be excluded for other reasons.

Perhaps the nadir of this trend came recently in a reply to our DH Lawrence Society of Australia from the NSW Ministry for the Arts.

We had asked if the NSW Government would help support our website by giving us a small grant sufficient to have the site hosted on a fast server – a matter of a few thousand dollars. As the site is complex and comprehensive, and contains such megabyte-consuming content as colour illustrations, it is slow to download (be accessed) from our current server, which already costs the society a considerable sum - an outlay that we find difficult to support (on top of what we need to keep *Rananim* alive) and so allow people from all round around the world to visit it, and thus promote Australian literature, history and the arts generally.

The reply from Irene Stevens,

Program Manager, Literature and History, was dismissive, not to say insulting. She said: "While the New South Wales Ministry for the Arts does have a Literature and History program which makes grants to literary and history organisations...I regret to inform you that the Literature and History Committee is not likely to consider recommending assistance for a society dedicated to the memory and work of DH Lawrence."

To add injury to insult, she suggested we contact the British Council "to see if they could help the DH Lawrence Society in any way".

The sheer, breath-taking gormlessness of the response puts one in mind of the reply George Orwell received when he sent the manuscript of *Animal Farm* to his American publisher, who wrote back declining to publish it, saying "they did not print children's books".

For it is clear that Ms Stevens hasn't the foggiest idea of the role Lawrence and *Kangaroo* have played – and still play - in Australian literature, history, architecture, painting, music and (as we shall see in this

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Visit our website at www.cybersydney.com.au/dhl to see the art works and photographs in this issue in full colour.

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issue) sculpture, not to mention much else besides.

She probably does not know the significance of Wyewurk (or the fact that her political supremo, Premier Bob Carr, is an Honorary Member of our society, apologises for not attending our functions, and was responsible for slapping a conservation order on Australia's oldest Californian bungalow, where Lawrence wrote *Kangaroo*).

The fact that *Kangaroo* is our best report and description of secret army activity in Australia in the early 1920s has also probably escaped her notice. Ditto no doubt the influence of Lawrence and Wyewurk on Peter Sculthorpe, Patrick White, Garry Shead, Brett Whiteley, PR (Inky) Stephensen – not to mention Katherine Sussanah Prichard and Mollie Skinner, among many illustrious others. (*The Boy in the Bush* has also escaped her eye, for it is partly Australian, and thus might have had a chance of attracting at least half a grant.)

How far have we come from the days of Professor IM Stewart, whose inaugural Commonwealth Literary Fund lecture on Australian Literature was devoted to *Kangaroo*, which he described as

the single major work in Australian literature, not to mention the judgement of people like John Douglas Pringle, who in 1958 described *Kangaroo* as “the only profound book written about Australia”.

British Council indeed! Hurrmmph!

But our anger and annoyance should now be put to a positive and productive use.

For we are, in some way, partly to blame for her ignorance and lack of appreciation of the importance and significance of Lawrence, Wyewurk and *Kangaroo* (and *The Boy in the Bush*). For it is a reflection on our failure as a Society to get the word out (difficult though that is in our world of the new Australian nationalism...to paraphrase Kipling: “What do they of Australian culture know, who only Australian culture know?”).

So we thought we could start by devoting an issue of *Rananim* to that subject – the importance and significance of Lawrence to Australian culture and history.

Hence this issue, which we will try to use as a platform to further promulgate our interest and our cause.

EDITORIAL

If this “Spirit of Lawrence” edition of *Rananim* demonstrates one thing it is that Lawrence has probably inspired and nurtured as many - or more - great Australian writers, artists and musicians than Australian taxpayer-funded support has in its entire history.

The works created by the leading Australians featured in this issue of our journal bears testimony not only to Lawrence and his vision, but also to the fact that art, like most other forms of human endeavour, builds upon what has gone before.

Just as we cannot look at European art, for example, and restrict it to geographical areas, we cannot cut off Australian art, literature and music from the outside world.

OK, Lawrence was an Englishman, but he did visit and write about Australia, and it is his Australian experience which has inspired so many of our creative minds. We Australians have built on what Lawrence did, taking our culture forward.

It's time the Australian government bodies shrugged their anti-Brit chip off their shoulders.

So could we suggest that the NSW Ministry for the Arts reconsiders its insular position and helps our Society maintain its website which advertises and promotes Australian creativity internationally.

- Sandra Jobson, Publisher and Acting Editor

(See details of this issue page 5)



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APOLOGY

We owe an apology to Society member and Archivist Marylyn Valentine whose article on Lawrence and Nietzsche appeared in the previous issue of *Rananim* without its footnote numbers in the text. This was an editorial error caused in transposing the text from the word-processing program to the page lay-out program. A corrected version, with footnote numbers included, can be seen on our DHLA website: www.cybersydney.com.au/dhl

SEND NOT TO KNOW FOR WHOM THE BOAT TOOTED

by Robert Darroch



Darling Harbour in the evening from the Lady Hopetoun (we recommend you view John Lacey's evocative photo in colour on our website)

It is odd how often great occasions emerge out of unexpected circumstances and unpromising beginnings.

When our President John Lacey proposed that we switch our annual DHLA cruise on the *Lady Hopetoun* – the climax of our social year – from a daytime event to a twilight one, no one could have anticipated what would happen.

Day, night, what does it matter? If anything, we'd see less of the Harbour. But it was worth a try, by way of variation, if nothing else.

The prospect certainly didn't galvanise the membership. The time – a Friday evening in mid-March – was not propitious, apparently. Many members had other entanglements, or thought that committing to three or four hours on the water at the end of a workday week was something they could not contemplate with any real expectation of pleasure or enjoyment.

So it was a less-than-full complement that boarded the 101-year-old heritage steam yacht, and

choofed off past the moored gin-palaces on Millionaires' Row along Blackwattle Bay, for what was to prove the experience of a lifetime, all the more so because of our utter unpreparedness for it.

I have long held the view that the enjoyment of occasions, and particularly occasions such as dining, are due not so much to the quality or nature of the food and drink, but the circumstances in which they occur.

Ambience, to my mind, is all.

And let me tell you now that there are few ambiances superior to that produced in cruising slowly round Sydney Harbour on a balmy late-summer evening, seeing the city lights beginning to come on, sipping ice-cold champagne, with the soft chug and evocative coal-whiff of an old steam engine, and the swish of passing water, playing a subtle minuet on your senses.

Well, actually there is one. And that is steaming further on past Rose Bay and Nielsen Park, turning

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left at the Heads, and, as dusk closes in, gliding up to the remote reaches of Middle Harbour, then stopping the engine and sitting down to an *al fresco* supper, with the yacht's lights reflecting back from the still water, and all about you...nothing, other than the loom of the silent gums, and the lapping of water on the foreshore rocks, only just discernible through the darkness.

I don't much remember what we ate and drank. Indeed, the food did not quite match the occasion, palatable and plentiful though it was.

However, it was picnic fare, prepared as if we had been having lunch on the Harbour – as we had for so many years previously – and was patently too sandwichy and finger-foody for what the occasion turned out to be.

Later I remarked that we felt rather like the Russian Royal family aboard the Imperial Yacht, and therefore the event called for caviar, silver, lace tablecloths, and candelabra, even evening-dress, to live up to the almost sublime ambience.

And next time – for we all agreed that this was so exquisite an experience that it would set the precedent for future DHLA cruises – we might essay some of that, at least.

With the night now pitch-black, we built up steam again and chugged back down Middle Harbour, the crew accepting our invitation to a post-prandial drink, and also helping reduce the left-overs.

We tooted cheekily as we passed the wide-windowed houses set into the hillside of the aptly-named Beauty Point, now glowing brightly from out of the darkness, and the inhabitants waved enviously at us as we slid by.

Back on the main Harbour, the city and Circular Quay were now a fairy wonderland, with the Opera House floodlit, and a large liner fully illuminated at berth under the southern approaches to the Bridge.

Sydney can be a magical place if you know how and when to approach her. (Imagine what



Little did we know, as the Lady Hopetoun set out, what pleasure was in store

Lawrence could have done with this!)

Next time, of course, for those who were on this, our first *Lady Hopetoun* Twilight Cruise, the element of surprise and wonderment will be largely dissipated. And, as we know, expectation often leads to disappointment.

Nevertheless, I suspect that all those who went on this inaugural cruise will want to repeat the occasion next year, with bells on.

But I suspect we will not have as much elbow-room on the Grand Old Lady next March as we did in 2003.

(How to book for this year's cruise - page 6)



Anchored near Roseville Bridge, and it's time for supper

**By Publisher and Acting Editor Sandra Jobson
(standing in for John Lacey, who has been away on
a study tour in India)**

Getting out this “Spirit of Lawrence” issue of *Rananim* has been a distinct pleasure, as well as a cultural challenge.

The original objective was to identify, and if possible contact, Australians who had been inspired by Lawrence (and *Kangaroo*) in creating their own works of art, whether it be literature, painting, music, or sculpture.

In fact, as the lead story on page 1 explains, the larger aim was to show what a major role Lawrence has played, and still plays, in Australian culture and intellectual activity generally.

In the case of those who, alas, are no longer with us - such as the artist Brett Whiteley and writers Patrick White, Geoffrey Dutton and John Douglas Pringle - we needed to find people who knew them and who could express how Lawrence/*Kangaroo* had inspired or contributed to their work.

The success of this endeavour surprised even our bright-eyed and bushy-tailed editorial team (enhanced this issue by the welcome additional assistance of Robin Archer and Angela Barker).

In addition to these, and our regular contributors - John Lacey, Margaret Jones, Rob Darroch, Paul Delprat, Arch Dailey, John Ruffels, and Andrew Moore - we had an impressive batch new names: Garry Shead, Tom Bass, Margaret Barbalet, Meg Matthews, Jak Kelly, Kerie Hooke, Michael Organ, and Ian Stapleton.

Being able to attract such expert and talented contributors is an indication of why the DH Lawrence Society of Australia remains a vibrant, relevant and important part of Australian literary and artistic life.

But it is also, I would be remiss in not explaining, a product of an intertwined network of friends and acquaintances - an Australian, mainly but not exclusively Sydney, “network” that is in some ways analogous to that which Lawrence himself almost literally stepped into when he arrived in Sydney in May, 1922.

So now let me outline in greater detail the people who have contributed to this special “Spirit of Lawrence” issue of *Rananim*. I’ll list them in the order they and their contributions appear:

Garry Shead is one of Australia’s leading contemporary artists. His two series on Lawrence at Thirroul and the Royal Family are just part of a growing *oeuvre* of highly-acclaimed and original paintings that have been exhibited here and overseas with enormous

critical and financial success. On pages 8&9 he tells how **Brett Whiteley** and he went down to Thirroul in 1973 to paint the vibrant diptych on Lawrence. Garry, who has been a member of our Society almost since its inception, also talks (page 7) about how Lawrence’s *Kangaroo* has inspired his work.

Jak Kelly is a distinguished scientist and was Professor of Physics at the University of NSW. We got talking at a lunch recently and I mentioned we were doing a special issue on Australia’s artistic debt to Lawrence. He said that if it hadn’t been for him we’d have missed out on Brett Whiteley, for he saved his life down at the snow when Brett was a mere teenager (see page 10).

Next, we come to Australia’s most-acclaimed sculptor, **Tom Bass**, now an enthusiastic member of our Society and who owes much of his artistic inspiration to his long-abiding admiration - even worship is not too strong a word - of Lawrence. You will also see some photos of Tom at our latest Balls Head picnic on pages 19-21.

Then we have **Peter Sculthorpe**, who explained to me how two of his major works, “Sun Music”, and “Fifth Continent” (which included “Small Town”, based on Thirroul), were both inspired by DH Lawrence. As well, **Meg Matthews**, another member of our Society, and a much-respected FM radio music broadcaster and musicologist, has written a background piece on Sculthorpe and his interest in Lawrence.

Next, we have an article by the Secretary of our Society, the eminent foreign correspondent and former *Sydney Morning Herald* literary editor, **Margaret Jones** (whose novel, *The Smiling Buddha*, has just been selected for inclusion in a new Australian Classics online edition by the Sydney University Press). Margaret writes about three writers she has known, each of whom greatly admired Lawrence: **Patrick White**, **Geoffrey Dutton** and **John Douglas Pringle** (the great *SMH* editor for whom I was also privileged to work).

Then we have my long-time friend, the artist **Paul Delprat**, whom I have known since I was 17, when we were both students at the Julian Ashton Art School in Sydney (Paul, now Principal of the School, is the great-grandson of Julian Ashton, whose nephew, Gerald Hum, was Lawrence’s original entre into the Sydney social - and secret army - scene).

Only those who have met and know Paul would appreciate how only he, when so many others have failed, could have charmed the recalcitrant owner of Wyewurk, and penetrated into the forbidden inner

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Spirit of Lawrence

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sanctum of the famous cottage. Paul's paintings of Wyewurk and the beach below are featured on pages 16,17 and 22, but you should go to our website (www.cybersydney.com.au/dhl) to see them in colour.

We next come to **Margaret Barbalet**, author of *Steel Beach*, a novel about Lawrence's "son" and "grandson" at Thirroul. She cleverly took up the fact that a number of pages of an exercise book in which he wrote *Kangaroo* were cut out by Lawrence. What did those pages contain? A good idea for a novel, clearly inspired by her close reading and love of Lawrence's work. (I recall Margaret Barbalet attending our Save Wyewurk meetings back in the 1980s).

Then we feature three articles on the architectural, local and heritage relevance of Wyewurk. The authors of each article - John Ruffels, Ian Stapleton and Michael Organ - have an interesting connection with Wyewurk.

John Ruffels is a founding member of the DH Lawrence Society of Australia, having worked with Robert Darroch in researching material for Darroch's book *DH Lawrence in Australia*. Ruffels is an intrepid researcher on many subjects, contributes historical items to several publications, works on behalf of Barnardos, and is proud to be a postman.

Ian Stapleton is one of Australia's leading heritage architects. After the present owner of Wyewurk, estate agent Michael Morath, acquired Lawrence's "cottage by the sea" from the descendants of its former owner (and Lawrence's landlady) Mrs Beatrice Southwell, Morath applied to put an extra storey on the historic building (now the oldest surviving Californian bungalow in Australia). Such a gross change to a heritage-listed building was rejected by a Commission of Inquiry, but he was given permission to extend the cottage so long as he did so without materially altering it. Ian Stapleton was given the task of coming up with plans for such a "sympathetic" renovation. In the event, however, Morath did not go ahead, and Ian outlines the background to this on page 25.

Michael Organ, MP, is the only Greens Party Member of the House of Representatives in Federal Parliament. He represents Cunningham, which is the South Coast electorate in which Wyewurk is situated, having won this previously safe Labor seat in a recent by-election (to orthodox politics' shock and horror). Michael, as he explains in his contribution, was born and bred in Bulli, the next suburb south of Thirroul, and is a strong supporter of the preservation of Wyewurk, and of the promotion of Lawrence's connection with Thirroul and the area generally. As his photo shows, he is proud to have several works by Garry Shead on the wall of his parliamentary office in Canberra.

Not all of this issue is devoted to "The Spirit of Lawrence" in the polemical sense. So I take this opportunity to mention some other features, and their contributors:

Our Victorian correspondent, **Arch Dailey**, who belongs to the University of the Third Age, has provided yet another interesting summary of his group's year, including something I didn't know before: that Virginia Woolf finally conceded that Lawrence was "a genius".

Kerie Hooke, a member of our DHLA Society, is an English teacher in the Refugee Program at the University of Sydney and happened to live in the English Midlands in the 1980s where her husband, Roger, had an unusual experience at a wedding, en route to Lawrence's birthplace, Eastwood.

Dr Andrew Moore is no stranger to the pages of *Rananim*, and he is one of the people (together with John Ruffels, and Joe Davis in Thirroul) who have been instrumental in helping to uncover the truth about *Kangaroo*, and Lawrence's time in Sydney and Thirroul in 1922. Now Associate Professor of History at the University of Western Sydney, he is the author of the definitive book on Australian secret armies, *The Secret Army and the Premier*.

John Lacey, our President and Editor of our journal, has been away on a prolonged Odyssey in India, having won a NSW Government grant to study how Indian schools teach their history. He has provided a highlight of his truly amazing time in India for this edition (together with some of his travel snapshots).

Angela Barker is a former senior science teacher at Abbotsleigh and now works as a volunteer at Taronga Park Zoo. On page 35 of this issue she writes about Lawrence's poem "Snakes".

Finally, I want to make a personal explanation/apology to my very old and good friend, and my former London (Fairfax) editor, **Evan Williams**. Because of our long-standing connection, we approached him for help in applying for a grant from the NSW Ministry for the Arts. (Evan having previously been Secretary of the NSW Ministry of the Arts). We asked the Ministry (see story page 1) for a small grant to cover the cost of hosting our DHL website on a "fast" server. Evan did all in his power to help, forwarding our application to the Ministry, and it is no reflection on him that, unfortunately, our application fell on, if not deaf, then unsympathetic ears.

- **Sandra Jobson**

How to Book for the Next *Lady Hopetoun* Cruise

Our next twilight cruise on the VIP steam yacht *Lady Hopetoun* is on Saturday, March 20, from 5pm to 9pm. Cost, including dinner is \$65. BYO. This year we will stage a proper sit-down dinner. All you need bring is wine or beer, etc.

You need to book early, c/o the DH Lawrence Society, PO Box 100, Millers Point 2000, enclosing a cheque for \$65 per head, made out to the DH Lawrence Society of Australia. As there are only about 25 berths available, bookings will be taken on a first-come, first-served basis.

We will start embarking at 4.30pm at the wharf at Blackwattle Bay. Parking is available in James Craig Road, beside the wharf.

How *Kangaroo* and DHL Informed my Work

*Here the tree weeps gum tears
Which are also real:
I tell you these things are real.*

- Ern Malley
(From "Petit Testament")

How can one book have such power that over 80 years later it still informs and intrigues us?

It is a book of observations, meditations and prophecies.

How strange it is that the political-social world he noticed and recorded are precisely the same ones that dominate the present day.

Its eternal contemporariness rests on the truths that it speaks.

If it were just a novel written by DH Lawrence, and not based on his experiences, we wouldn't still be reading and talking about it.

But because it is so incredibly prophetic on so many levels, it just continues to polarise us, even those who haven't read it, or only read the first page.

It polarises opinion because it is frighteningly true about us and this country.

Just look at Australian politics of the last 15 years.

When I first began painting my *Kangaroo* Series in 1992 I was struck by the realisation that Australia hasn't changed at all since Lawrence's time in 1922.

Let me say also that Robert Darroch's book *DH Lawrence in Australia*, which showed that the events portrayed were actually based on fact, was crucial in drawing attention back to *Kangaroo*.

His book was certainly a crucial impetus in my paintings.

Be it the relations between the sexes, the place of sport in our society, conflict, the mob mentality, or the treatment of the land, it seemed that Lawrence took everything in and put it into this great book.

Kangaroo is a key book of Australian literature.

- Garry Shead



THE PRESENCE 1. Oil on board. No date



THE PRESENCE. Oil on board. 1995



THE SECRET. Oil on canvas. 1995



THE WAVE. Oil on canvas. 1992

DEATH IN THIRROUL

When the maid came to clean the room at the Oral Eagle Motel in Lawrence Hargrave Drive, Thirroul, on the morning of June 16, 1992, a distressing sight met her eyes.

Slumped on the bed, a half-eaten meal of fish-and-chips beside his lifeless body, was perhaps Australia's greatest – certainly most famous – artist, Brett Whiteley.

He was 53, and he had died the previous evening from a heroin overdose, augmented by alcohol, aggravated by the damage wreaked on his frail constitution by years of substance abuse.

Why did Brett choose to spend, what turned out to be his last night alive, in a somewhat seedy - it has since been renovated, and is now the Thirroul Beach Motel - motel room, alone and unknown, in a less-than-glamorous, indeed rather commonplace, South Coast commuter village?

The answer touches on some of the major themes in Australian culture, and the true significance, perhaps, to both our past and our present, of Thirroul's other, and even-more-famous visitor: DH Lawrence.

Few would question the statement that the ghost of Lawrence hangs over Thirroul, even to this day. And it was that ghost that Brett detected and courted in Thirroul.

If you doubt that assertion, look at the photograph that accompanies this article. Brett is holding up a snapshot of Lawrence, as if he is trying to summon up, or connect with, the spirit of his fellow artist.

Lawrence believed in something he called "the spirit of place". He was profoundly affected by this spirit. It was his constant inspirational companion. And he encountered it in Australia, during a walk at night in the bush, when he felt a "presence" around him: "He schemed as to what it could be. It must be the spirit of the place," he decided.

It was that spirit that Brett sought and maybe found in Thirroul, as fellow artist and collaborator Garry Shead remembers: "Brett suggested one day that we go down to Thirroul, and try to soak up the Lawrence ambience there."

In fact, Brett knew Thirroul quite well. His family used to holiday there. So he was well

aware of the Lawrence connection with the place.

But it wasn't until he returned from his grand overseas experience in 1969, and after he had met Garry, that he suggested they go down and spend some time in Thirroul, and try to "connect" with Lawrence.

"Brett dropped into my studio a few days before we went down and it was then, even before we started painting, that he suggested a diptych," Garry said.

They had wanted to gain access to Wyewurk, the actual place Lawrence had lived in Thirroul in



Brett Whiteley holding up a photograph of DH Lawrence in Thirroul in 1973. (Photograph Garry Shead)

1922, but the then owner, as is the case with the new owner today, turned them away at the gate. So they got permission to set up their easels on the verandah next door, courtesy of two ladies who lived adjacent, at 1 Craig Street.

There they could see directly into Wyewurk's forbidden front garden, and they began to sketch and paint. Garry takes up the story:

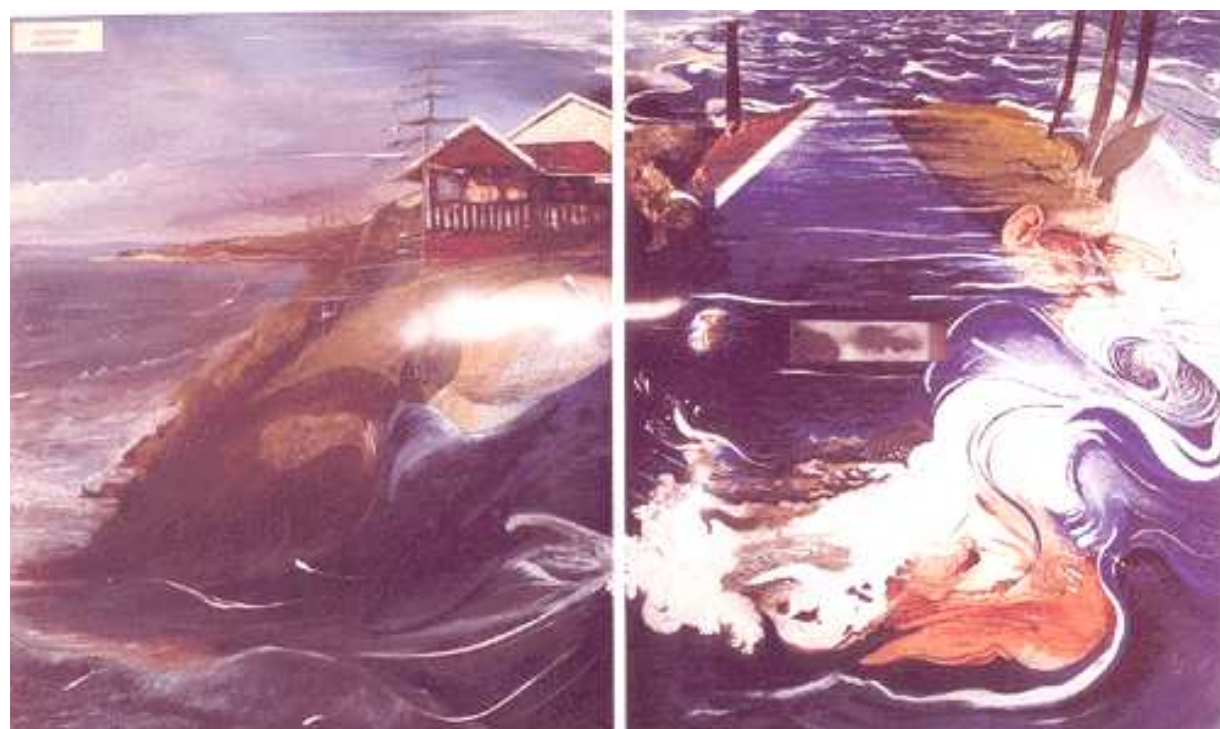
"The concept of a diptych, me painting the left panel, and Brett the right, worked."

Indeed, the two pictures caught evocatively the dark, brooding, storm-tossed winter atmosphere of Wyewurk and Lawrence’s descriptions of it. In fact, so pleased was Brett with the picture that he decided to include it in his next show, at the Bonython Gallery, then in Paddington.

“Brett at that time was going through a personal crisis in his life – indeed, when was he

closed diptych, Brett unlocked it and swung open its leaves, to reveal the full work in all its magnificence.

“I think Brett was a trifle disappointed with White’s reaction to this ceremony. It may have been White’s aversion to public displays of emotion, but he did not go overboard about the work, though in fact it was dedicated to him.”



The famous Shead-Whiteley diptych (48”x96”), sub-titled “What DH Lawrence saw that afternoon on the beach at Thirroul when he walked on the beach and thought about the book he was writing, Kangaroo”, painted as a joint effort in Thirroul in 1973 (see accompanying story). Garry Shead’s half of the joint picture is on the left, and Brett Whiteley’s more expressionistic painting is on the right. Both depict Wyewurk and Lawrence. Although in this reproduction the detail is difficult to fully discern, in fact both pictures are part-collage. In Garry’s picture you might just detect the addition of a photo of the face of Frieda, set on the verandah of Wyewurk. In Brett’s picture, the eyes of Lawrence can be seen in the centre of the canvas. (A better view can be obtained by accessing this issue of Rananim via our website.) The evocation of place and person is unmistakable, and rendered both powerfully and, I think, successfully. Garry, of course, went on to expand this work into his highly-regarded Lawrence/Kangaroo series (see story page 7), while Brett himself painted several more Thirroul pictures, and remained to the tragic end of his life haunted by the spirit of that place, as the accompanying article explains. - RD

not? He particularly empathised with Lawrence and his stormy relationship in Wyewurk with Frieda. There was more than a hint of this in the picture,” Garry said.

Brett was well-acquainted with Patrick White, and White’s own obsession with Lawrence. So he invited White along to the opening of the exhibition. Garry goes on: “Brett was a person given to the dramatic, so he made something of an event of the unveiling – or rather the unlocking – of the diptych.

“The work consisted of a book-like construction, in imitation of the traditional religious diptyches of medieval times. As White and the rest of the opening-night audience gathered before the

Nevertheless, the work did find favour with the rest of those present, and was widely praised.

Later it was acquired by the University of Western Australia - which is something of an irony, as it is now many thousands of miles from where it should be, in either Sydney or the South Coast – reminiscent of the equally inappropriate fact that the film of *Kangaroo* depicts not Wyewurk and the coast south of Sydney, but an alien environment south of Melbourne, for no better reason other than the film was financed by the Victorian Film Commission.

So much for “spirit of place”.

– Robert Darroch

(See “Saving Young Brett” next page)

Saving Young Brett

In the early fifties there were no ski tows or lifts at Perisher Valley, but after nearly a year of haggling with the appropriate State Government Department, the Commonwealth Scientific Industrial Research Organisation (CSIRO) Ski Club had at last been allowed to build one of the first ski lodges, more a hut really, at the south end of the valley, near Back Perisher.

Things were pretty rugged, and in winter the only transport was an old Bren Gun Carrier, which carried some packs and a few people, while the rest of us grabbed one of several long trailing ropes and were towed behind on our skis. There were no ski instructors, so nobody could ski properly, and when you fell over you risked being run over by the towee behind you. The carrier stopped, the fallen one was sent to the back end of the rope, and the slow uphill procession resumed. If only we had been traversing the top of a ridge, and backlit, it would have looked from a distance like one of those Ingmar Bergman scenes of sinners, roped together and being dragged off to hell by a diabolical machine. Our ski hut was a bit basic, but it wasn't as bad as that.

What's a Bren Gun carrier? Good question, only the geriatric amongst you would know. It's a sort of lightweight topless tank. It was used because it had tracks rather than wheels and they were available cheap at the end of the war. Ours was not actually fitted with a Bren machine gun.

So much for the background. The essential point is that you had to be fairly keen on skiing to come to our lodge in winter. Clem Whiteley was one of a number of non-CSIRO people who was keen enough to come, and he brought along Beryl, his wife, and his son, young Brett. In any case, it was generally believed at the time that adolescents (I don't think teenagers had yet been invented) should be regularly subjected to a certain amount of discomfort and stress to prevent them growing up soft. Skiing at the time certainly fulfilled this need.

East of our hut was a flattish area, what would now be called the nursery slopes, where the beginners would slide about learning to snowplow, turn and stop. This was done with the aid of a book and some haphazard advice from those of us who had been up to the snow at least once before. At the edge of this area there was a fairly steep slope down to a creek.

After imparting to the beginners what little knowledge we had, a few of us left Brett and

several others to slide about on the nursery slope. We skied down to the steeper bits, trying to learn to do Parallel Christies without falling over so often.

About half an hour later young Brett came over the edge of the nursery area and straight down the steepest slope, gathering speed but not control, and yelling as he came. I never found out if it was a mistake or if he became bored with sliding about slowly on the gentle nursery slope. I strongly suspect boredom. He was headed straight for the creek, waving his arms about in a desperate effort to stay upright. Clearly, we had all omitted to tell him that the best thing to do in these circumstances was to sit down sideways, an undignified but reliable way to stop. Unfortunately he kept his balance and shot across the narrow waterway, which was nearly completely snowed over.

The snow on the other side of the creek had been sculpted by the wind into an almost vertical bank over two metres higher than the side from which he came. His skis, which were much longer than is fashionable now, drilled into the snow bank until stopped by Brett hitting the snow, still upright, his arms outspread, like those characters who run into cliffs at speed in kids' cartoons.

It really was a funny picture, Brett espaliered on this snow wall, desperately trying to get a grip on the crumbling snow. The picture shifted from funny to hilarious as, still flailing helplessly at the snow, he began to slowly rotate about the axis of his embedded skis, which he couldn't pull out of the snow. We fell about in helpless laughter as he slowly rotated through 180 degrees.

In a pause in the laughter I thought I heard a glugging noise - sound carries well over snow - and skied over to find Brett was trapped, still firmly attached to his skis, upside down in the creek with his head under water, drowning. We got his skis free of the snow bank and dragged him out and after a certain amount of spluttering, coughing up water and being thumped on the back, he seemed to be none the worse for the experience, and went back up to the nursery slopes. I don't recall him trying that steep slope again.

Alas, Brett is no longer with us, and neither is the original CSIRO Ski Lodge. It suffered the fate of many successful pioneering ventures. It led to the development of Perisher with so many lodges and facilities that our lodge was eventually demolished to make way for yet another ski lift.

- **Jak Kelly**

My Inspiration, My Mentor and My Guide

My first encounter with DH Lawrence was in reading his novel *Kangaroo* when I was in my early twenties. I borrowed it from the City of Sydney Municipal Library, then at the Market Street end of the old Queen Victoria Building.

As I read it I was struck by three things. First was his prophecy of the New Guard, which I had lived through. Second was his vivid account of the Australian bush, and the third thing was his tedious account of his domestic life with Frieda as they crossed the world on the way to Australia, which seemed to go on and on. At the end of the book, as they sailed down the coast past Thirroul, he was saying in effect “so we say farewell to sunny Australia”. After the final sentence somebody had written neatly in pencil “and good riddance to you!”

Then, some years later - I think it was during the Second World War - Catherine Carswell’s book, *The Savage Pilgrimage*, came into my hands. In that book she told me who Lawrence really was. She gave me such a vivid experience of the man that I doubt that if I had met him in the flesh he could have exposed so much of himself to me as Catherine Carswell had done. I was so moved by the book that I felt impelled to make a tooled leather jacket for it, and Lawrence has been a vital part of my life ever since then.

Some time later his collected poetry came into my hands, and Lawrence spoke to me directly. I can’t think of any other man who has been on my life’s journey with me as intimately and constantly as Lawrence. I have literary friends who don’t think highly of him as a writer. I am glad that that kind of knowledge didn’t stand in the way of knowing the man and hearing him speak to me.

I was especially affected by his poem “The Song of a Man who has Come Through”. It became particularly important to me at a time when it seemed that almost every aspect of my life and my values were crumbling. I had thought of myself as a social communicator and I came to feel that my role had been taken over by television – that unless a thing had been seen on TV, people could walk past it every day and not see it. I felt that my whole sense of myself and my career had been invalidated. I felt like a medieval man stranded in the middle of the twentieth century. Then, when I read Lawrence’s lines that said that there is “*the fine, fine wind that finds its way through the chaos of the world....*” and that he would be “*like a fine, an exquisite chisel, a wedge-*



Tom Bass with his tooled leather copy of Carswell’s book

blade inserted driven by invisible blows, the rock will split, and we shall come at the wonder....” I felt he was speaking to me as the sculptor. I had been converted to the Catholic Church for 10 years and I had never heard such a vivid image of the Holy Spirit. “The Song of a Man who has come Through” became like a prayer to me. I had come back to be the man who had come through.

During that time I was in a process of profound change. I read his poem “Phoenix” in which he told me the deepest meaning of real change. At that time, when all the habitual securities of my old life were taken away from me, I found the poem “Trust”. Even if I had met him as a person, I doubt that he would have been as close to me as he was then.

As I come nearer to the end of my life, and read again his “Ship of Death” poems, which no doubt have their origin in his visits to the Etruscan Tombs, I also come face to face with the question “*have you built your ship of death?*”, knowing that I am sharing in his extraordinary intuitive meditation on his own imminent death, or what it would mean to be “*stranded on the grey muddy margins of existence, waiting for the common bargeman to take me on the longest journey*”.

So I can truly say that Lawrence has been my constant companion, my guide and mentor, and an inspiration in my life.

- Tom Bass

(See page 18 for more about Tom Bass)

Music Inspired by *Sun & Thirroul*

In his autobiography *Sun Music*, Peter Sculthorpe makes a number of references to Lawrence. Initially, this attraction to the writings of Lawrence seems to have come from his friendship with the English music scholar, composer and pianist Wilfred Mellers, whom he met while studying at Oxford in the late 1950s. Sculthorpe writes: “Wilfred was something of an authority on the writings of DH Lawrence. It wasn’t difficult for him to link my pantheistic love of landscape and my love of the sun with Lawrence’s doctrines. Wilfred nurtured these ideas in me; for this reason alone, I regard him as my best composition teacher.”

While enjoying the friendship of Mellers and wife Peggy - a soprano - Sculthorpe wrote a song cycle for them he called *Sun*. Based on three poems by Lawrence, it was first performed by the Mellers duo in the Birmingham Art Gallery in the spring of 1960. And although the work was well-received, Sculthorpe felt strongly he could improve on his setting of the last poem, “Sun in Me”, which begins: *A sun will rise in me./I shall slowly resurrect,/Already the whiteness of false dawn is on my inner ocean.* This was to become his *Irkanda IV*.

Begun in England, *Irkanda IV* was completed in Launceston in 1961, just after the death of his father, and it is really a lament, scored for solo violin, strings and percussion. *Irkanda* is an aboriginal word of uncertain origin meaning a remote and lonely place. Sculthorpe describes the ending of the work as “an extended song-like coda, an affirmation of life and living. It was in this section that I finally managed to recompose my...setting of the DH Lawrence poem ‘Sun in Me’. The melisma of the solo violin is a reflection of the poem. Thus, in the final bars, there is a high white C. Lawrence in his poem relates sun and atom to God and atom. The high white C, which must be the whitest note of all, represents the word ‘God’.”

The following year, Sculthorpe started planning a larger instrumental piece inspired by Lawrence’s Australian novel, *Kangaroo*. He cites this passage as his inspiration:

But the bush, the grey, charred bush...It was so phantom-like, so ghostly, with its tall pale trees and many dead trees, like corpses, partly charred by bushfires....And then it was so

deathly still. Even the few birds seemed to be swamped in silence. Waiting, waiting - the bush seemed to be hoarily waiting...It was biding its time with a terrible ageless watchfulness, waiting for a far-off end, watching the myriad intruding white men...

The large-scale work inspired by *Kangaroo* became a radiophonic piece in five movements, *The Fifth Continent*, composed in 1963. The third movement was revised in 1976 to become the smaller work *Small Town*. This has become one of Sculthorpe’s most enduring and endearing works, and once again, although it was dedicated to his friend the artist Russell Drysdale, the link with Lawrence and *Kangaroo* remains. Of the piece, Sculthorpe writes: “*Small Town* takes its point of departure from a description of the NSW coastal township of Thirroul, given by DH Lawrence in his novel *Kangaroo*:

It was a wonderful main street, and...out of the wind. There were several large but rather scaring brown hotels, with balconies all around: there was a yellow stucco church with a red-painted steeple, like a weird toy: there were high roofs, all corrugated iron: and you came to an opening and there, behold, were two forlorn bungalows inside their wooden palings, and then the void...the memorial to the fallen soldiers...had ‘Lest we forget’ for a motto. Carved at the bottom step it said ‘Unveiled by Grannie Rhys’ A real township monument, bearing the names of everyone possible: the fallen, all those who donned khaki, the people who presented it, and Grannie Rhys...

“I knew that Thirroul was no longer this lonely country place...but I wanted the music to sing of all small Australian towns,” he said.

Perhaps the continuing popularity of this six-minute orchestral piece is due to the fact that it captures the nostalgic charm of all small Australian towns, with its lonely but lyrical oboe solo and its integration of the *Last Post* played by a bugle and depicting the central importance of a town’s war memorial.

In 1964, now settled in Sydney and working in the Music Department of the University of Sydney, Sculthorpe began his String Quartet No.6. Again, he cites Lawrence: “In the same way that the conclusion of *Irkanda IV* is a reflection on Lawrence’s ‘Sun in Me’, the opening of the last

What Lawrence Means to Me

“I first came across Lawrence’s work when I was still in short pants, in Launceston. I loved his poems especially.

I was also interested in Lawrence’s affinity with nature. I was particularly fascinated by Lawrence’s feelings about the sun. I think he had a dual attitude about the sun – there is no light without darkness.

When I was living in England, and missing the sunshine of Australia, I re-read Lawrence’s three poems about the sun. I set some songs to music – a song cycle – based on those poems.

Then I returned home to Tasmania to visit my dying father. While I was there I received a letter from my friend Wilfred Mellers telling me that his wife Peggy’s baby had died. To console myself I played ‘Sun in Me’, which I had based on the last poem.

Then I became interested in *Kangaroo* and decided to visit Thirroul. What I found there augured well for my move to Sydney. It also inspired me to write ‘Fifth Continent’ (1963) which is based on the sub-plot of *Kangaroo*.

The first movement, the prologue, is about Lawrence deciding to come to Australia. The second movement concentrates on Lawrence’s initial hatred and fear of the Australian bush. The third movement is “Small Town”, about Thirroul. In the fourth, “Pacific”, Lawrence comes to grips



Peter Sculthorpe

with Australia, and in the fifth movement he comes to love the country.

In 1988 I visited Taos in New Mexico and found the shrine containing Lawrence’s ashes. I thought it a monument to bad taste.

My later compositions continued, indirectly, to reflect my abiding love of Lawrence’s work. I think that Lawrence’s influence on me is maybe more enduring than any other. ”

As told to Sandra Jobson

movement of the quartet could also be sung. In the words of a poem by Lawrence:

*Desire goes down into the sea
I have no desire any more
Towards woman or man, bird, beast or
creature or thing.
All day long I feel the tide
rocking, rocking
Though it strikes no shore
In me.
Only mid-ocean.”*

Peter Sculthorpe’s next piece, *Sun Music I*, composed in 1965, has no literary links, but he says of it: “The sun of DH Lawrence however, and also the Mexican sun, the Australian sun and my own sun are ever present.” With the involvement of Robert Helpmann this was later expanded to become a successful ballet. The sun of DH Law-

rence is a recurring theme and in his autobiography he refers to it again when explaining the “light eternal” in the last movement of his *Requiem* for solo cello written in 1979.

On Peter Sculthorpe’s 60th birthday in 1989 he received a present from his friend, the composer David Matthews. It was a setting of a poem by Lawrence, “Green”

*The dawn was apple-green,
The sky was green wine held up in the sun,
The moon was a golden petal in between.
She opened her eyes, and green
They shone, clear like flowers undone
For the first time, now for the first time seen*

Given his acknowledgement of his debt to Lawrence, I suggest that Peter Sculthorpe be invited to become a member of the DH Lawrence Society in Australia!
- **Meg Matthews**

(All quotations from Sun Music, 1999, ABC Books.)

‘There is only one profound Australian book’

So said John Douglas Pringle, distinguished editor and essayist, adding: “I can think of no more convincing proof of the superiority of the creative writer over the journalist or historian.” He was writing about *Kangaroo*, the novel DH Lawrence wrote in Thirroul in 1922.

Pringle, a Scot who came to Australia in the 1950s to edit the *Sydney Morning Herald*, was in no doubt about Lawrence’s relevance to Australian life and literature. In his ground-breaking book, *Australian Accent*, published in 1958, he devotes his entire second chapter to *Kangaroo*.

He remarked that *Kangaroo*, like all Lawrence’s work, had many obvious faults, and the “political-philosophical maundering” was Lawrence at his worst,

...Yet as a description of the feel of Australia as it seems to a European perceptive analysis of the Australian character, it is a masterpiece. To read it again after spending five years in the country is to be overwhelmed by its essential truth. Most of it is as true today as when it was written thirty-five years ago.

Pringle, as others have done, highly praised Lawrence’s observations in *Kangaroo* of the landscape and the bush: what he called “the spirit of place”.

These were faultless, though, he said, hardly surprising to anyone who knew Lawrence’s superb descriptive powers, as demonstrated in *The Plumed Serpent* or *The White Peacock* or *Sea and Sardinia*.

Lawrence, Pringle said, was repelled at the beginning by “the vast uninhabited land...the grey, scarred bush...so phantom like, so ghostly, with its tall, pale trees and many dead trees, like corpses”. But after Lawrence moved with Frieda to Thirroul, he began to see “the strange, as it were, *invisible* beauty of Australia which is undeniably there, but which seems to lurk just beyond the range of our white vision.”

Few would question the strength and beauty of the descriptive passages in *Kangaroo*, but Pringle thought Lawrence’s observations on the Australian



Cartoon by George Molnar

character and the “feel” of Australia formed the most remarkable part of the book. (He didn’t think much of the political side, and gave Robert Darroch’s work on that subject a bit of a serve in one of his reviews.)

Pringle notes that when Lawrence first arrived he was repelled by the people as well as the landscape, thinking Australians barbarians and surveying them with “a kind of horror.” “The most loutish Neapolitan loafer was nearer to him in pulse than these British Australians with their aggressive familiarity,” he said - a typical example of Lawrence hyperbole.

Nevertheless, as time went on, Pringle believed Lawrence penetrated in many ways to the heart of the Australian character, diagnosing, as Manning Clark later did, a “vast emptiness or indifference in the core of each man.” (It is a view which Pringle, an uneasily transplanted European, seems to share. He lived in Australia to the end of his long life, but was never quite reconciled to it, in the same way that Lawrence could never have been.)

It is Patrick White, however, Australia’s only Nobel laureate for literature, who perhaps offers the strongest evidence of Lawrence’s influence on Australian writing.

White is on record as saying that when he began writing, his two strongest influences were Lawrence and Joyce, though he might not have been altogether pleased when critics said of *Happy Valley* that it was a brilliant novel, and White was a major new talent, but that there was too much Lawrence and Joyce. White himself seems to have come to share this view, saying he needed to find his own voice. Not everybody, however, thought that the Lawrence influence was a bad thing. When White

met Manoly Lascaris, who was to become his life partner, he gave him a copy of *Happy Valley*, and Lascaris was transported. He felt he had found a new Lawrence, he said.

In his magisterial biography, David Marr reports White as saying that when he read *Kangaroo*, he "...found the slabs of politics dreadful, but he thought Lawrence's description of the wild coast and the bush around Sydney were wonderful."

White being White, he could not, however, resist an ambiguous gibe when writing to Joseph Losey, who was coming to Australia to discuss filming *Voss*. (It came to nothing). "I'm only worried," White wrote to Losey, "that you and Mercer (David Mercer, the scriptwriter) should know so little about the look of Australia, unless, like DH Lawrence, you can get it all from the drive between the station (airport) and hotel."

In 1939 White also made a pilgrimage to Taos, to pay homage at another place where Lawrence had tried to find some sort of Utopia. Dorothy Brett took him to meet Frieda, whom he found witty and amusing, and he climbed up to the phoenix-crowned chapel where Lawrence's ashes were enshrined, mixed in a block of concrete.

He was enchanted by New Mexico and believed he could settle there happily, though he may have been influenced by his brief but intense affair with Spud Johnson, the poet and literary hanger-on.

Geoffrey Dutton, poet, author, publisher, and possibly the most eminent all-round man of letters Australia has produced, also was enamoured of Lawrence from an early age, and made a pilgrimage to the Villa Mirinda near Florence where Lawrence lived when he was writing *Lady Chatterley's Lover*, and where the locals still remembered him. He sent copies of photographs of the villa to Frieda, and later met her, a meeting of which he wrote movingly in a previous issue of *Rananim*.

Dutton, in his autobiography *Out in the Open*, claimed to be the only person who had read the collected fiction of DH Lawrence while flying an aircraft. As a very young pilot in WWII, flying a Wackett Trainer, Dutton discovered that a book could be balanced on the cowl above the instruments, and propped against the windscreen.

The only snag, he said, was that "...it is a little difficult to read and see where you are going at the same time," recalling one occasion when, absorbed in Lawrence, he flew more than 20 minutes past the prescribed time, to the agitation of the trainee who was with him. "Sarge, cannot hear base any longer," said a note which Dutton found in a copy of *Sons and Lovers* years later.

Lawrence's stay in Australia was brief, but even 81 years on, its traces still linger.

- Margaret Jones

A toast to Jane Austen - despite what DHL said about her

It was a gathering of the clans, literary style, and very Sydney.

On Saturday, December 13, 2003, over 200 members of Australian literary societies gathered at the Kirribilli Club in North Sydney for an elegant lunch, embellished by beautiful weather and dazzling harbour views.

The occasion was staged by the Jane Austen Society to celebrate the 238th birthday of the Blessed Jane. It is held every year, but this year members of other literary societies, including the DH Lawrence Society of Australia, were invited.

The invitations were accepted with pleasure, for as well as enjoying a convivial lunch with like-minded people, speakers for the other societies were given a platform to spruik their own wares. Each, of course, claimed their own society was superior to all others, but competition was good natured, and there was some entertaining literary joking.

The President of the Jane Austen Society, Susannah Fullerton, led off the proceedings, and she was followed by speakers from the DH Lawrence Society, the Dylan Thomas Society, The Sherlock Holmes Society (also known as The Passengers), the Dickens Society, and the Bronte Society - which has a perhaps unfair advantage of having three authors to exploit.

Robert Darroch spoke for the DH Lawrence Society, and got off to a provocative start by recalling that Lawrence was not a great fan of Jane Austen. In fact, he said, Lawrence called her "a silly old maid". However, he went on to say that Lawrence was more of a kitchen-sink writer than a country-house one, and that no sensible person would deny Jane's genius as a writer and social observer. He then gave a presentation about the DHLA Society and extolled its attractions to potential new members.

What really brought down the house, however, was a reading of Dylan Thomas's *A Welsh Christmas* by a speaker with a Welsh accent. There was hardly a dry eye at any table. Mention was also made of the fact that a tape exists of Dylan Thomas reading Lawrence's *Kangaroo*. More will be heard later of this treasure.

The function was so agreeable that it is hoped to repeat it next year and beyond.

- Margaret Jones

A Foot in the Door

Being about 19, skinny, awkward, and unread, I was sure it was a serious judgement on a perceived personality flaw when the girl with whom I was in deep conversation looked earnestly at me and said: “You, Paul, are a Lawrentian man.”

She was studying Arts at University and was currently reading the novels of DH Lawrence. Naturally, in the spirit of self-discovery, I began reading him at once!

Later, among the Ashton family papers, I found a letter from Dame Mary Gilmore, addressed to my grandfather, Howard Ashton, in which she wrote very disapprovingly of DHL, whom she noted, regretfully, was about to sully Australian shores.

Obviously *not* a Lawrentian woman.

Much later I visited Thirroul, the seaside village situated to the south of Sydney, and painted

a few small studies of the house where DHL had stayed in 1922.

I positioned myself on the opposite side of the road, and made other sketches from the ocean side, looking up at the cliff, the front garden, and the pines.

Did the house have a lingering atmosphere of its famous association?

Curiosity drew me down to Thirroul on a subsequent occasion to complete one of the paintings.

An occupant from the house noticed me painting and took time to examine my work.

I explained that I was an artist from Sydney, and that I was intrested in DHL.

He very kindly offered to let me view the interior of the house and the garden. Considering the many unsolicited visits from the curious, he



Street facade of Wyewurk

Oil painting by Paul Delprat



McCauley's Beach, and, above, the Norfolk pines in the garden of Wyewurk Oil painting by Paul Delprat

must have experienced, I was very grateful for the opportunity.

I was invited to walk through to the front of the bungalow, down the steps, and across the lawn facing the sea, to the cliff edge.

That experience was very affecting – it was just as Lawrence described it.

I also did an etching of Lawrence and the Sirens in the Australian landscape, which I had earlier completed after first discovering *Kangaroo*, his great novel of Australia, which I re-open from time-to-time and read with great pleasure.

Like all of Lawrence, *Kangaroo* has many layers, but his description of the bush is so true.

On reflection, perhaps that young lady Arts student all those years ago had been swept away, transported by *Sons and Lovers*, and I was, in her mind, a character in the novel, the young artist called Paul.

In any case, I was grateful to her for introducing me to Lawrence.

Having read much of his work, I guess I am able to say that I am “Lawrentian” in the sense that I have been affected, as have so many others, by his poetic vision.

- Paul Delprat



Somers chasing his hat into the sea

Watercolour by Paul Delprat

Lawrence and his Disciple - the Boy from Gundagai

At 88, and still active, sculptor Tom Bass, AM, must be one of Australia's most revered artists. At the moment he's working on several projects, the largest being a statue of Elizabeth Macquarie for the outer Sydney suburb – it's actually a satellite city – of Campbelltown (Elizabeth, wife of our fifth Governor, was a Campbell, and Campbelltown is named after her).

I first came across Tom in 1958, on my first day at Sydney University. I got off the tram at the Parramatta Road gates, and walked up the path behind the tennis courts (then grass) towards the Great Hall. There, just inside the gates, was a sculpture bearing Tom's distinctive cartouche.

Anyone who walks around Sydney, Melbourne or Canberra will also be familiar with Tom's work, and his cartouche.

On the corner of Hunter and Castlereagh streets in the CBD, set into the wall of what was the P&O Building, is Tom's bronze fountain (alas, no longer gushing). His statue of Ethos in Civic Square in Canberra is one of the nation's capital's most distinctive landmarks. He also did the Lintel Sculpture at the National Library in Canberra, and The Trial of Socrates at Melbourne University.

Tom has just finished working on a "piece" for the NSW country town of Narromine which will be unveiled



Tom Bass's 1975 piece, "Introspection"

in the town's main street in March this year. It's called "The Baker of Narromine" and it is inspired by Tom's grandfather, who was the first baker of Narromine.

Tom has no memory of his grandfather (whom he depicts holding up a large loaf of bread), but he was inspired by his own father, who was also a baker, and the memories of the bakery he grew up in Gundagai (five miles from where the Dog sits on the Tucker Box, no doubt containing sandwiches made with Bass bread).

"I used to help my father on Fridays, when he made a double batch for the weekend," recalls Tom. "I remember seeing him mixing the dough with both arms, the sweat dripping off his forehead into the dough. I remember seeing him lift 100lb bags of flour. He would look critically at a loaf he had made and say, 'That's a beautiful loaf.' I am sure he did that because he had seen his father do it. Grandfather taught so many apprentices how to bake bread. He was an artist in his way."

Bakery's loss was Australian sculpture's gain, however - though no doubt the way Tom tackles his clay, "kneading and pummelling" it, owes something to those Fridays back in Gundagai.

I came across Tom again last year, in a most unexpected way. A friend, Derry Simonds, rang to say that she had just been talking to Tom Bass, whose sculpture school she attends in Erskineville, and he had mentioned the debt he owed to DH Lawrence.

He did not know there was a DH Lawrence Society of Australia, but when he learned of its existence, he wanted to join it, for Lawrence had been his life-long inspiration. So Derry put me in touch with him.

Elsewhere in this issue are photos of Tom attending our functions. And he has written specially for this Spirit of Lawrence issue of *Rananim* his own appreciation of Lawrence and what his work, particularly his poetry, has meant to him.

So much so that, some years ago, he acquired a copy of Catherine Carswell's early biography of Lawrence, *The Savage Pilgrimage* (1932), and tooled a special cover for it in leather, depicting Lawrence's great symbol, the Phoenix (on p. 11 we reproduce a photo of Tom showing the book and the cover he made for it – as potent a testimony to the influence of Lawrence on a major Australian artist as Brett Whiteley on p.8 holding a picture of Lawrence in front of his face in Thirroul).

We also reproduce (left) a bronze head that Tom finished in 1975. It is called "Introspection", and it was crafted at a time when he was much influenced by Lawrence's poem, "The Song of a Man Who Has Come Through" (see Tom's article also on p. 11 explaining the significance of this poem to him).

But Tom's mind is also directed to the present, and he is keen to finish his large sculpture of Elizabeth Macquarie, nee Campbell, who, legend has it, planted irises along what was then Sydney Road, that led from Sydney Cove to the new settlement at Campbelltown. Tom's piece will show Elizabeth leaning over with a watering-can, to tend her irises. Tom plans to plant a garden of irises around the stature.

As he showed me out of his studio-home in Annandale (in Albion Street, Ms Stevens!), he proudly showed off a lovely canna he had just planted. "Look at the leaves," he said. "Aren't they beautiful? Lawrence would have liked that."

- Robert Darroch

Picnic Poetry

Our annual winter picnic at Ball's Head Reserve in September saw the largest turnout of any social event in our Society's now 10-year history.

Almost 40 members and guests came along, on what was in truth an early spring day, though the weather was distinctly of a typical Sydney winter variety.

Bush picnics are an Australian tradition – indeed, Lawrence attended one shortly after his arrival in Perth in May 1922, and evidently relished this Aussie winter ritual.

We did not have the open fire (banned in tinder-dry Sydney), nor the boiling billy, but the bright late-winter sun shone, the gums impregnated the clear crisp air with their gummy scent, the Harbour sparkled in the brisk westerly, and some of our number put down rugs on the ground, doing what generations of Sydneysiders and their families have done for, literally, centuries.

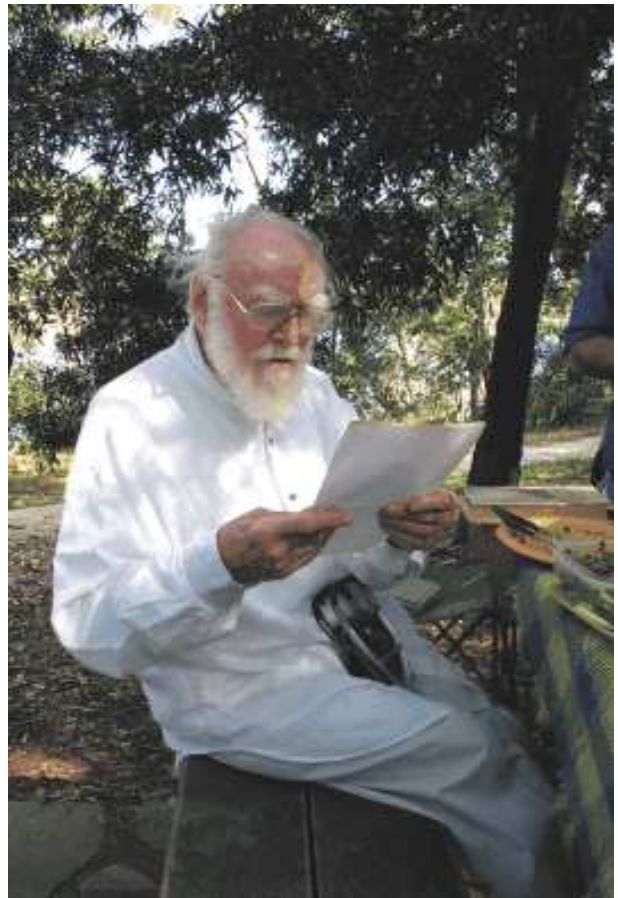
Not everybody could come along (Susannah Fullerton, from our sister Jane Austen Society, sent an apology – she had just returned from a literary tour in England, where she went to Eastwood and visited Lawrence's birthplace). But most of our other loyal supporters were there.

The quality of the food and wine we can now take for granted. Even though we arrived early, we could not secure our prized spot outside the cave overlooking the Harbour (it was such a sparkling day that the reserve was quite crowded - it being almost the last chance to have a Sydney winter bush picnic). But we had plenty of space around the electric barbecue, and the sausages sizzled contentedly, while the iced chardonnay happily fulfilled its appointed destiny.

The main purpose of the day was to farewell our jolly President John Lacey, who was about to depart for India, having won a Premier's History Scholarship, to pursue his interest in the Indian education system first-hand. Robert Darroch, on behalf of the Society, bade him an enjoyable and fruitful trip, and hoped he would have sufficient idle time to also enjoy his other interest – Indian trains.

But, sybaritic though it was, the picnic had its more Lawrentian moments, particularly when our new member, the Australian sculptor Tom Bass, read the Lawrence poem – “The Song of a Man Who Has Come Through” - that had helped inspire his continuing interest in DHL.

Robert Darroch augmented this moving recital with the background to the poem's composition - Lawrence and Frieda's “elopement” to Germany in 1912 and the significance of its opening words:



Sculptor Tom Bass reading Lawrence's poem, “The Song of a Man Who Has Come Through”, at the picnic

Not I, but the wind...”, which Frieda subsequently borrowed for the title of her first autobiography, describing her turbulent, peripatetic life with Lawrence.

That “savage pilgrimage” was also mentioned by Tom Bass, and he brought along to the picnic his special copy of Catherine Carswell's biography of Lawrence, with its tooled cover, first mentioned in the report of our AGM at Marrickville earlier in the year.

The picnic wound up a trifle early, as several of its number expressed a desire to repair to the Darroch's apartment at Bondi to view the annual Festival of the Winds, another Sydney early-spring tradition. There the kites stood stiffly out to sea in the strong westerly, and the theme of wind wound up what was close to being a perfect Sydney Sunday.

- Robert Darroch

See more photos of the picnic over page - and go to our website www.cybersydney.com.au/dhl (click on “Photos”) to see the pictures in colour.

Our Latest Balls



(l to r) John Lacey, Rob Darroch, Mary Jones, Robin Archer, Kerie Hooke, Margaret Jones (in white hat, back to camera)



Doug Knowland (left) and Rob Darroch man the barbecue



(l to r) Robin Archer, William Hooke, Evie Harrison, Peter Jones, Tom Bass (centre)



John Lacey's farewell cake



Nathan Williams and Zoe Garbutt

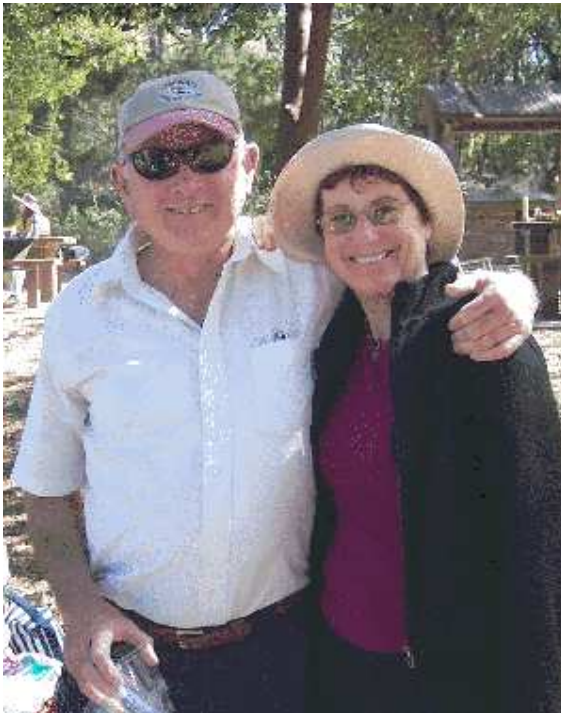
Head Picnic Snaps



*Rob Darroch (left) wishes
John Lacey bon voyage*



Tom Bass enjoying a drop



Peter and Mary Jones



*Rob Darroch extolling the virtues of his picnic hamper,
bought at the Vinnies in Bondi*

One Writer Inspires Another

It's not what happened, but who they were, we were saying as we slowly drove through Wollongong on Christmas Day 1982.

Rainy days are the most memorable, and it was raining that day.

My four-year-old son was asleep in the back seat of the Datsun 120Y.

He always had a healthy appetite, and the food and the excitement had worn him out.

I can't remember where we were going – probably to friends for more Christmas cheer – but I can remember what we were discussing: Jean Bedford had just released a novel, *Sister Kate* (Penguin), which was about Ned Kelly's sister.

For me, it was the beginning of a change, a break-out from the straight-jackets of history and fiction, a wave that has unrolled and curved and kept on travelling ever since. Before this, fiction had been fiction, and history...well, history had been a dull academic discipline.

We were talking and joking about what one could do with *Kangaroo*. "Son of *Kangaroo*," someone said. I laughed, and was away, in my head.

I had recently finished writing not only my first novel, *Blood in the Rain*, but also, in tandem, a long orthodox history of wards-of-the-state, called *Far from a Low Gutter Girl*, which had just been accepted by Oxford University Press.

I was weary of history-writing after I finished that book, and fled towards fiction and poetry with great relief.

I knew that Lawrence's house, Wyewurk, was still there, at 3 Craig Street, Thirroul, and that from May to August 1922 Lawrence had written most of *Kangaroo* there.

The house, then as now, was privately-owned, and therefore not open for inspection.

A Wollongong friend, Mike Donaldson, showed me the way there and said that along the beach was the best way to view the house. The house was rather hidden from the other aspect, from the street, and the owner wasn't keen on letting anyone inside.



The light plane which landed on Sandon Point

Watercolour by Paul Delprat

Some time later a huge row developed over his plans to redevelop the site, but all that was in the future when I walked along the beach that summer and dreamt up a literary mystery, a true descendant of *Kangaroo*, both in flesh and in text.

Steel Beach, which for most of its drafting was called "Joey", for obvious reasons, grew out of my huge enjoyment of *Kangaroo*, which I had not read since university days.

In the summer of 1982, when I spent a month house-sitting in Austinmer, just north of where Lawrence's house still sits, I read paragraphs of *Kangaroo* and looked up and stared for minutes on end at the coast, at what Lawrence called the Tor, and that southern view along the coastline from my perch in Austinmer. He wrote: "The sea's edge was smoking with the fume of the waves like a mist and the high shore ahead, with the few painted red-roofed bungalows, was all dim, like a Japanese print."

It hadn't changed since Lawrence's day.

But of course it had altered. Wollongong was home to BHP and the steelworks. I was living in the bland, middle-class milieu of Canberra. These contrasts inspired the novel.

I also played with the idea of gender and time in the opening pages, and a lot of readers have commented to me that they were confused by the first-person voice and the narrator's gender.

I also played with the contrasts between the world of Canberra academics, and the working-class of Wollongong. I delighted in my male-voice first-person narrator.

The book grew quickly and, compared to my

New Tricks for an Old Dog

Gerald Pollinger, the son of Lawrence's agent Laurence Pollinger, lives in Surrey in England, still immersed in DHL matters, although his daughter Lesley now runs the day-to-day business of the literary agency Laurence Pollinger Ltd.

While I was in London late last year I rang him. He's now 78 and is excited about learning to use a computer.

"I go to computer classes twice a week and have a completely-equipped office here at home," he said.

At the time I rang him he was immersed in the forthcoming launch of the new book of Lawrence's paintings. "And then there's the CUP edition of his poems (edited by Australian Christopher Pollnitz) coming out next year," he said.

Gerald Pollinger recently gave his last two copies of the first book of Lawrence's paintings (published by PR "Inky" Stephensen) to the University of Nottingham. "The Aga Khan got the original paintings," he explained.

Although he doesn't remember Lawrence - "I was too young" - he does remember Frieda, clearly. "A big blousy hausfrau. She would hug me to her bosom and I would



Gerald Pollinger with his computer teachers

disappear between her breasts," he said with a chuckle.

Gerald Pollinger is an Honorary Member of the DH Lawrence Society of Australia and has, over the years, kindly permitted us to publish excerpts from Lawrence's works in *Rananim*.

-Sandra Jobson

cont'd from facing page

first novel, which took 12 years to write – a real "oak tree of a book" – this one I felt was a simple gum tree, shooting metres high in its first year.

Then I came to the part in chapter 7 where my hero discovered the missing pages of *Kangaroo*. (To elucidate: in the original manuscripts of the [first] draft of *Kangaroo*, after the chapter called "Harriett and Lovatt at Sea in Marriage", there are half-a-dozen pages that had been cut out with a sharp implement. These are the missing pages that my fictional hero unearths in Wollongong.)

At this point, however, my writing came to a standstill. Writing the missing pages took months. Lawrence's style, so easy to parody, was very hard to imitate. I read and re-read *Kangaroo* over and over until I thought I could hear the cadences in my head and hold on to an immediate sense of the lovely, sensual descriptions.

I took as my starting point the opening words of the chapter:

They had another ferocious battle Somers and Harriett; they stood opposite to one another in such fury one against the other that they nearly annihilated one another.

Although *Steel Beach* is out of print, Margaret Barbalet has a stock of extra copies which she is happy to mail to anyone at \$15 a copy. Contact her at: margaret.barbalet@defat.gov.au

Here is what I wrote to continue the mood of the chapter:

He walked away angrily up the road. He burned with a sort of anger that was so bright and hot that it would not let him stay near the woman and the house where the sea echoed their quarrels. He didn't care whether she cried when he had gone. She had stood at the door and shouted at him as he walked to the gate. So he had shut the gate and walked off down the little track as if he didn't care. But all the time he was burning with a kind of anger that hurt him as much as it had hurt her.

It had rained the night before and all the little houses seemed to shine in the high Australian sunlight. Somers felt his spirits lighten as he walked on and up the road. It was little more than a track now, a winding gravel track with grasses and flowers bordering the edge. In the distance was the steep wall of the Tor and all its primitive strangeness. The little houses that lined the road seemed not to notice the giant wall of the scarp slope but set themselves out happily like a row of children dressed up for a picnic out in the bush. A picnic in the bush! How absurd that one could do that, Somers thought, looking at the little houses with their faces gaily set above their verandas and their backs to the great hill.

The book sold well. I'd like to think I got it almost right.

- Margaret Barbalet

Wyewurk's Architectural Heritage



I am no architect, and would leave professional assessment of the architectural importance of Wyewurk, the house Lawrence and Frieda lived in at Thirroul, to the experts.

However, elsewhere ⁽¹⁾, I have gathered together historical details and family records to permit a more informed judgement to be made.

Quite separately, in 1989, the late Professor Richard Apperly presented his verdict on Wyewurk's place as an early adaptation of Californian architecture in a treatise annexed to the Heritage Council's evidence to the inquiry into the case for the preservation of Lawrence's "bungalow by the sea":

Wyewurk has a simplicity and a ground-hugging quality which characterises the California Bungalow in Australia, although it has few of the stylistic details and 'features' of the fully developed style. The very informal plan of the house, complete with an absence of corridors, demonstrates a typical aspect of the California Bungalow in America.

Last year Sandra Jobson wrote an article (*Rananim* Vol 11, No 1) on Lawrence and his houses ⁽²⁾ in which she said that Lawrence and Frieda had lived in 300 houses from 1912 to the time he died in 1930 - villas in Italy, cottages in the English countryside, a guesthouse and a bungalow in Australia, a ranch in New Mexico...

In the year of the Lawrences' Australian landfall alone, 1922, their total for the year was 20 different locations! ⁽³⁾.

Most of these residences were designed by their owners as places of relaxation; delightful houses, conducive of sloth and lethargy.

Yet, far from winding-down, as Frieda always wanted to do, Lawrence was invigorated: frenetically exploring the landscape of his new surroundings. Antennae out, he was forever seeking his "spirit of place".

These were experienced house-dwellers.

I think it fair to say that Wyewurk, the brick cottage Frieda and Lawrence rented in Thirroul on the New South Wales South Coast in winter 1922, forms an integral part - almost a character itself - of Lawrence's Australian novel, *Kangaroo*. They expressed great fondness for the house in their letters, as Lawrence himself did in the novel.

Wyewurk was solid and well-built, a bit like the rugged Australian character - informal, with no servants' quarters, a back-door facing the street, and verandah sleep-out accommodation for visitors wanting a healthy holiday.

The laconic Australian humour, signposted on the gate for all to see, asked "Why Work?" Why indeed?

It was atmospheric, capable of reflecting the attitude of its owners, reflecting the moods of the sea-shore and the weather.

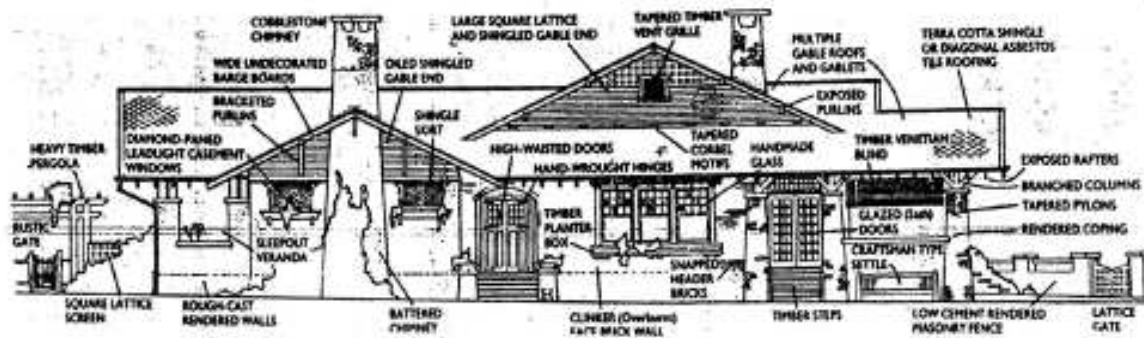
In the past, *Rananim* has recorded the attempts by early Australian Lawrence pilgrims, like John Byrnes, and poet Les Robinson, and others, to navigate their way to Lawrence's Australian nest by using the details set down in *Kangaroo*. Once they knew the town was Thirroul, and not Mullumbimby on the North Coast, all of them were successful in reaching the house.

Bert Lawrence and Frieda had much to argue about in their time in Australia - money, human company, staying or going...but it is safe to say, one thing they agreed about was how lovely their Thirroul cottage was.

Years later, long after Lawrence's death, Frieda still spoke fondly of their pleasant sojourn in New South Wales.

But although they were going to the American West coast, little did they realise that the house they loved so much, and which featured so prominently in Lawrence's Australian novel, was an important link in the earliest adaptation of a distinctive style of American architecture, which was to go on, after World War 1, to solidify into an established form as one of Australia's most

cont'd page 26



Typical features of the Californian Bungalow style (courtesy of Maisy and John Stapleton)

“ALL COMPACT AND NICE”

Wewurk was clearly conceived as a holiday cottage; everything subjugated to the creation of the one good central room with access to two of the other five small rooms only from the verandahs.

When I visited the house with Hector Abrahams in mid-1988, the kitchen, pantry and bathroom had been knocked into one to make a tolerable-size bedroom, and the kitchen had been relocated to the north-eastern verandah.

But the exterior was largely intact and it was not hard to recognise the “all compact and nice” bungalow described in *Kangaroo*.

By that time the “cubbyhole” bathroom also had been replaced by a larger bathroom installed in the bedroom off the southern verandah.

The Heritage Office of NSW had employed us to turn the cottage into a four-bedroom house without spoiling its significance. At that time this translated into making additions and alterations, but keeping the house form, finishes and interiors as unchanged as possible.

Our first attempt was to design a new bedroom and bathroom on the southern side set back against the existing (and apparently original) garage and accessed through a partly-restored kitchen. Along the street-side we proposed two bedrooms, a small bathroom, and a laundry linked to the cottage by a covered way.

This design kept all sides, except a small section of the south elevation, free from change, and allowed partial reconstruction of the kitchen, pantry and bathroom. The laundry with its chimney remained in the old garage.

The Heritage Council liked this scheme, but the owner did not, and we were asked to try again.

Our second scheme consisted of an addition right along the southern boundary of the property with a verandah along its northern side. This included an easterly extension of the garage to accommodate two cars. The scheme also allowed the partial reconstruction of the kitchen, pantry and bathroom area, provided a beautiful main bedroom overlooking the sea, and other bedrooms, with a good northerly aspect. The drawback was that, whilst the original structure is quite evident, the view of the front (sea-side) elevation of Lawrence’s cottage would be permanently changed by the presence of the new wing.

There was also a problem of building on the boundary and possible overshadowing of the neighbour to the south.

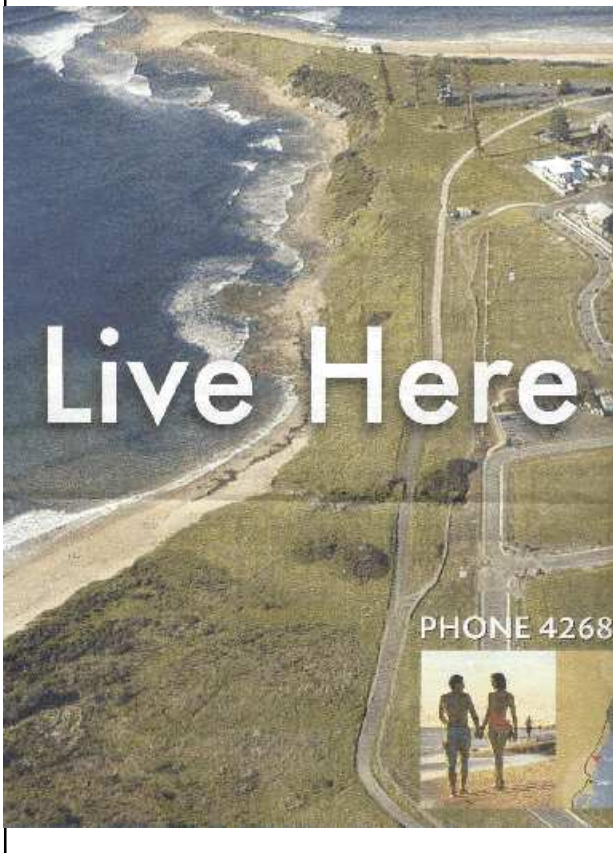
On this scheme the parties swapped views. Whilst the owner approved, the Heritage Office disagreed.

Both schemes were to be carried out in a simplified Californian Bungalow style, and in 1988 this was thought to be the correct approach. I cannot recall how the owner obtained the second scheme, but the last thing we heard was that he had submitted it as a formal Section 60 application.

At this point Hector and I bowed out and it is for others to take up and continue the saga of the house. *[In the event, neither scheme was implemented. - RD]*

-Ian Stapleton

And he did!



In January this year an advertisement in the *Sydney Morning Herald's Good Weekend* magazine, featuring a trendy young couple walking hand-in-hand beside the surf, trumpeted the sale of "The Point", an exciting new land development overlooking McCauley's Beach, Thirroul. This means the local community has lost its fight to preserve the wetland wilderness behind McCauley's Beach, between Wyewurk and Sandon Point. No mention in the ad of Lawrence and *Kangaroo*, our Ms Stevens will be pleased to learn, only the "Direct frontage to McCauley's Beach", "An hour from Sydney CBD", "Unequalled beachside lifestyle", and (Mr Morath will be pleased to hear) "Land prices from \$525,000 to \$12.54 million". LIVE HERE the ad urges. Many no doubt will. And so another vestige of Lawrence's Thirroul ("...down a steep bank...was smooth yellow sand, and the long sea swishing up its incline, and the rocks to the left, the incredible long rollers furling over and crushing down on the shore. At her feet! At her very feet, the huge rhythmic Pacific.") is carved up by progress.

Wyewurk's Architectural Heritage

cont'd from page 24

affordable and practical designs. So much so that today almost every Australian town and city is blessed with this ideal - for our climate - creation.

From the original owners' family account, and utilising the excellent knowledge of local historian Joe Davis, it has been possible to deduce the date of Wyewurk's construction to late 1910.

When wealthy Thirroul holiday-home builders sought to erect their own cottages, several were given guided tours of Wyewurk by its proud owner, Thomas Irons. At least two houses nearby were consciously copied from the Wyewurk design, (4).

One of Sydney's leading real estate agents, Cecil Gorman of the firm Hardie and Gorman, said, after such a conducted tour, that his ambition was to have a holiday cottage an exact copy of Wyewurk (5). One can only imagine how many builders an important Sydney real estate agent and developer like Gorman was able to influence to erect cottages all over New South Wales, copying the Wyewurk design.

Thomas Irons' son, and the architect of Wyewurk, Roy Irons, is said to have collaborated

informally with his father in modifying an American bungalow book-design to create their house. (6)

In fact, Roy Irons enjoyed the experience so much that, after building Wyewurk, he travelled to America to study architecture at the University of Pennsylvania from 1912 to 1914.

Unfortunately, World War 1 intervened, and (more happily) he married the daughter of an English millionaire. He never returned to his Wyewurk – even after his father left it to him in his Will. (7)

But I am sure he would have day-dreamed about his happy holidays at the idyllically-designed Australian cottage, which went on to help inspire hundreds of home-builders.

- John Ruffels

FOOTNOTES

- (1) See *Rananim*, June 1994, "A Touch Of Pasadena At Thirroul" by John Ruffels.
- (2) See *Rananim*, March, 2003, "How DHL Fell On His Feet" by Sandra Jobson.
- (3) Sandra computed these facts using Harry T Moore's *Poste Restante*.
- (4) See footnote #20 in "A Touch Of Pasadena At Thirroul", (ibid).
- (5) See Hardie & Gorman's *Real Estate Movements: A monthly Record*, January, 1919.
- (6) & (7) Refer to details in footnote (1) above.

The Country of My Heart

Wyewurk...a house up the road, with a bit of history to it, I was told, and a book all about it, or should I say, starring it...those are my memories as a child, growing up in the Housing Commission estate at Sandon Point, Bulli, located about half a mile due south of Thirrour, the town where Lawrence stayed all those years ago. As a kid I remember walking to Thirrour along the beach, just feet away from Wyewurk perched high on the cliff above me. But I never saw it.

I was born in Bulli in 1956, the year of rock'n roll. My family had lived in the area since the 1850s, on the southern side of the swamp and the Bulli Pass road. To the north was Thirrour, and the spidery coast road, running next to the railway line which wound its way through tunnels and along cliff edges to the coastal plain and on towards Wollongong, our city. Dad worked in the local Thirrour brickworks, built on the wetlands that lay to the south of the cliff Wyewurk was perched upon. Sun, surf, sand, hard work in the local factory or the nearby coal mine, and getting drunk in the pub or stoned by the beach were the orders of the day.

I encountered *Kangaroo* in high school but, like Shakespeare and the English poets, it had no real impact. I found it hard going, but then I was more interested in maths and science, the local rocks, the land, the mountains and the sea about me. I loved the place.

Lawrence did not figure for me, my family and friends during those sunny days of the '60s when we spent every weekend on the beach, tanned to the hilt and unaware of something called skin cancer. It was only upon venturing to university, to do electrical engineering, that I turned my mind to local history.

There was no reason for this interest in history and the local area. I was just driven to it, and remain so. The fact that some five-to-six generations of Organs have lived in the Gong since 1839 was perhaps part of the reason, but I was a victim here, and the local area just drew me to find more out about it. Aborigines, convicts, settlers, painters and writers. I wanted to know when, where, how and why. Dates, and what they left behind. Paintings, drawings, letters, maps, manuscripts and books of travel. So long as it was about my part of the world, and prior to 1850 if possible. Fiction did not much interest me, and *Kangaroo*, as a "fictional" work, was always a bit



Michael Organ, Greens MP for Cunningham (note the Shearwater pictures on his Canberra office wall)

of a worry for this reason.

I was not alone in my passion for things "local", and during the '70s and '80s the story of Lawrence and his visit to Thirrour was revealed in detail. By "revealed" I primarily mean revealed to the local community. It was made public.

Of course this rediscovery was amidst threats to the house, ie, demolition or redevelopment, and amidst an increasing interest in all things Australian, around the time of the Bicentennial in 1988.

And, of course, the local council throughout this period thought nothing of the significance of the place and allowed it to remain in private hands, when the opportunity was there for the community – for all of Australia – to own it.

Whatever their reasons, we as a local community failed, as we often do when up against government and money. The local heritage and historical community – of which I was a member – in large part failed to save the building for us all, for all time, as we wished. The research was done, letters written, submissions made, declarations declared. But Wyewurk, and the significance of *Kangaroo* and Lawrence, were just not significant enough, not powerful enough, to convince the authorities to put their hands in their pockets, and make the place a public memorial.

So we come to 2004, and Wyewurk remains much as it was when I grew up in the early '60s – known throughout the world, but a mystery to locals, its national/international significance neither applauded nor promoted. An opportunity lost.

Who is to blame? Well, I blame the building itself! For it has hidden itself away on that little back road in Thirrour, overlooking the ocean, away behind a fence and bush. But perhaps one day, in the not too distant future, when people speak of Wollongong and the Illawarra, Wyewurk and Lawrence will spring to mind.

- Michael Organ, MP

VICTORIAN JOTTINGS

We stopped discussing DHL at the U3A (University of the Third Age) almost a year ago and began a study of Leslie Stephen: his forebears, growing up, and dependence on his brother James Fitzjames (who became an Apostle, as Leslie did not, at Cambridge). We discussed his marriages and the two families. We have now reached the time when the young children (Vanessa, Thoby and Virginia) of his second marriage are beginning to look about them at 22 Hyde Park Gate. Such a different world from Lawrence's beginnings. An aristocratic social life. Servants at one's beck and call. Carriage transport and dressing for dinner. Yet Stephen, like Lawrence, enjoyed walking, and became a noted Alps mountaineer, giving rise to Thomas Hardy's poem of remembrance to his old friend when Leslie's climbing days were passed and Hardy himself visited The Schreckhorn. When young, Leslie considered it no hardship to get up and walk from Cambridge to London before breakfast, and then walk back to Cambridge for dinner.

Lawrence, and even his brothers and sisters, had the opportunity, and took it, to gain the education newly-available to them. Lawrence won scholarships and eventually attended Nottingham College, whereas, according to the practice of Victorian upper-middle-class families, Virginia and her elder sister Vanessa were not given the benefit of an education, other than what they were able to obtain elsewhere - Vanessa at the Slade Art School, and Virginia from her access to her father's library, where she educated herself. Their half-brother George Duckworth tried hard to introduce them into Victorian aristocratic society as eligible ladies for marriage, but he failed. Virginia brought one society dinner to a halt when she asked her neighbour why she had never read Plato! They were not "free spirits" as the Lawrences were, able to roam about the countryside, but instead endured repetitive walks around Kensington Gardens in London. They remained in the same family home for over 20 years, only leaving it on the death of Leslie and moving to Bloomsbury, where their lives changed dramatically under the influence of Thoby's Cambridge friends, such as Lytton Strachey.

But there was the Talland House that Leslie found and leased at St Ives in 1881, which became one of the first memories that Virginia wrote of when she remembered as a babe in arms being carried to or from St Ives on the annual summer

vacation of the whole household. Unlike Lawrence's journeys, they did not travel light. The holidays at Talland House were to remain forever part of Virginia's life and memory, and which she put into her novel, *To the Lighthouse*.

Virginia had never spoken to Lawrence, but once espied him in a St Ives shop, and recognised him again through a train window at the railway station in Rome. In 1920 she reviewed his novel *The Lost Girl* for the *Times Literary Supplement*, in which she said it was either a postscript or a prelude in a writer's progress.

The following year, when *Women in Love* was published, she was lured to read it because of the ugly portrait of Ottoline Morrell, a friend of hers, as the character Hermione Roddice. "It was all a little boring, the writing superficial, the imagery too transparent. There must be something wrong with the man to account for his preoccupation with sex." Still, he was "honest", and therefore "100 times better than most of us".

Virginia's publisher husband, Leonard Woolf, protested vigorously when the Customs authorities intercepted Lawrence's typescript of his book of poems *Pansies*, and forwarded it to the Home Secretary, who then described them in Parliament as "grossly obscene".

After Lawrence's death, Virginia began to reassess the work of this intense and often-misunderstood writer. She then read *Sons and Lovers*, and realised, with regret, that, as she put it, "a man of genius wrote in my time and I never read him. Yes, genius and distorted I think."

It was with a sense of relief for me to immerse myself again in Lawrence, after Sandra (Jobson's) recommendation that I be asked by the Melbourne Eastern Regional Libraries to take part in their series of talks on "Classic Books are Magic", exploring the life and work of the famous author of *Sons and Lovers* and *Women in Love*. I managed to deliver a comprehensive 50-minute outline, moving from the *Trial of Lady Chatterley's Lover* and its treatment in Australia, to the Lawrence's visit to Australia, to a brief sketch of his childhood background and career as a teacher, and to first books, and to his meeting Frieda, and so on...

But you all know all about it, and my audience did not, so I had an enjoyable time answering questions and advising joining the DHLA Society to further their interest. - Arch Dailey

(Arch Dailey is our Victorian Correspondent - see also p.37)

Culture Shock

When DH Lawrence came to Australia in 1922, he suffered from what is known in modern-day terms as “culture shock”.

Culture shock is a feeling of dislocation, and even anxiety, caused by the fact that not only physical differences, but value and behavioural differences exist between the place you are familiar with, and the new country you are visiting.

In Lawrence’s case, his culture shock may have been exacerbated by the belief that Australia, as a former colony of England, with more or less the same language, might not be so foreign.

Among the differences Lawrence particularly noticed was the dark, straggling, disorganised bush in Sydney, in contrast to the green, fresh, peaceful countryside around Eastwood, in the Nottinghamshire Midlands, where he grew up.

However, the most unsettling thing for him was the absence of English class distinctions. As he remarked in *Kangaroo*, Australians did not feel better than their neighbours, only better-off.

As an Englishman through-and-through, he was more familiar with a system where everyone recognises that there is a hierarchy based on social position and education. It would not be suitable for the son of a miner – as his father was – to go to the same school as the son of a member of the aristocracy.

The shocking familiarity of the Australians repulsed him; “to him they were barbarians”, he said in *Kangaroo*.

It would have come as a surprise to him, if he had ever thought about it, to find that Australians in England, some four decades after his Australian visit, encountered some rather barbarian behaviour there, and which could be attributed to modern-day class differences.

To Australians visiting England, the concept of a lower-class status in itself was a little shocking. Yet the consequences of this were often just plain funny.

A wedding that my husband Roger Hooke attended in the Midlands was an example of this, especially as the honeymoon in question was spent in, of all places, Eastwood! (The significance of this small Midlands town as the formative influence on a famous writer escaped Roger at the time.)

Working in Sheffield during the 1960s, Roger received a phone call from a former fellow Sydney Rugby club member who was now also in England. He told Roger that he was going to be married in

Wigan (an industrial centre some distance away in Lancashire) to a local Wigan girl the following Saturday.

He told Roger that he did not have many friends in the north of England, so he asked Roger if he could travel up to Wigan and attend the wedding.

Roger was actually due to play Rugby in Sheffield (in Yorkshire) on that particular afternoon. However, due to the early darkness, his match would end around 4.15pm. The wedding was at 6pm – but Wigan was 100km distant, and the roads between tortuous.

Given the bad weather, and the snow, Roger arrived just as the bride and groom were leaving the church.

This didn’t prove a problem, and so Roger joined the wedding party, which set off to a local working-man’s club for the reception.

Tables had been set up in the Bingo room, and the guests ate the same food as the club members did on a Saturday night. Then they, too, played Bingo.

Having a congratulatory drink with his friend, the groom, Roger learned that the newly-married couple intended to spend the first day of their honeymoon at a little place somewhere near Nottingham.

They were having trouble finding transport, and, as Nottingham was only 50km from Sheffield, they asked Roger if he would remain in Wigan overnight and drive them there the next morning.

After several hours of Bingo and drinking, this seemed to Roger a sensible idea.

Roger’s car, unfortunately, was a Triumph Spitfire, and had two front seats, and virtually no back seat or boot. In true English fashion, the groom sat in the front, and his bride lay on top of the suitcases crammed in between them and the fabric roof while they drove to the place called Eastwood.

In the interest of truth and accuracy, it should be emphasised that the bridegroom was an Australian, and also did not know the significance of the name of the place where the happy couple intended to spend their honeymoon.

Perhaps the fact that the bride was English, from a working-class background, and willingly put up with these travel arrangements, says something about relations between the sexes in the land of Lawrence’s birth.

- Kerie Hooke

The Charge Against the Light Brigade

The Darroch thesis - the argument that *Kangaroo* was based on DH Lawrence's actual experiences in Australia during 1922 - has never enjoyed unanimous support among this country's academic literary community. Australian historians - including myself - have been more supportive. Yet even among historians there remain many doubters.

In particular, mainstream military historians based at the Australian Defence Force Academy and authors of the recent *Australian Centenary History of Defence* have been unwilling to accept that Australia has a distinctive "secret army" tradition closely related to its formal military apparatus. In *The Australian Army* (OUP, 2001) Jeffrey Grey, for instance, relates that Major General Sir Charles Rosenthal "has been suggested as a model for Benjamin Cooley, leader of a secret army organisation in DH Lawrence's *Kangaroo*". Grey, however, argues that the efforts of some historians (Keith Amos, Michael Cathcart and the present writer) have been misdirected in "implying a counter-revolutionary and reactionary outlook within the army".

Groups like the Australian Protective League of 1918, or the Old Guard of 1930-32, were certainly both counter-revolutionary and reactionary. More than that, however, these groups were essentially formally constituted auxiliaries of the state. Raised as much by administrative fiat as ideological animosity, they were not "private armies". The Peace Officers Act of 1925, for instance, essentially allowed the Commonwealth Government to swear in civilian auxiliaries ("peace officers") at time of perceived social or industrial crisis. This replicated the State Governments' right to use "special constables".

With only a small standing army, it was not especially reactionary for people like Rosenthal to involve themselves in specific contingency planning. It was their job to do so. They would have argued that it was their duty to ensure that British civilisation in the Antipodes was not upset by agents of the Comintern. So therefore it was inevitable that generals like Rosenthal, or Tom Blamey, or Brudenell White, commanded such groups. As individuals, the likes of White and



Dr Andrew Moore brandishing the sword that Captain De Groot used to cut the ribbon at the opening of the Sydney Harbour Bridge in 1932 (see box facing page)

Blamey were, of course, politically reactionary, but that is beside the point.

As various writers have noted, Lawrence's description of the uniform of the New South Wales "Maggies" imparts many similarities to that worn by the Australian Light Horse. *Kangaroo* recounts that the "Maggies...had a distinctive badge of their own; a white broad brimmed felt hat, like the ordinary khaki military hat, but white, and with a tuft of white feathers".

The principal luminary of the Light Horse in New South Wales, from the time of the Great War to the Depression, was George Macarthur Onslow of Camden Park, descendant of the famous pioneering grazing family. In *The Rallying Point* Eric Campbell refers to "General George" being invited to join the executive of the New Guard, but having "already pledged his help in another direction". This was an oblique reference to Macarthur Onslow's prominence within the best people's secret army, the Old Guard. Nor was there any contradiction, real or perceived, in the fact that, prior to his untimely death in 1931, the patrician general was also commanding officer of the 1st Cavalry Division. Professor Grey is conspicuously silent on the subject, but both the Army and sundry militia troops were also involved

in maintaining “internal security”.

Much effort has gone into tracing the ancestry and origins of paramilitary groups like the Old Guard. One argument has been that the anxieties of Australian domestic politics during the Great War, a general strike, two bitterly contested conscription referenda, and a short-lived campaign conducted by the militant Industrial Workers of the World, gave birth to a continuing paramilitary apparatus. And, so the argument continues, it was this structure that DH Lawrence stumbled across in 1922.

A rare antiquarian history of the New South Wales Mounted Rifles, recently brought to my attention by Humphrey McQueen, provides another possibility. This relates to the 1890s strikes, a time of considerable alarm among the propertied class about the belligerent industrial activities of great sections of the country’s proletariat. Nor was this concern misplaced. The country’s shearers and maritime workers, in particular, seemed intent upon making Australia the world’s first socialist state.

Out in George Macarthur Onslow territory, in Campbelltown and Camden, then isolated rural villages, rather than part of Sydney’s suburban sprawl, the latter an elite enclave, there was specific contingency planning for this alarming possibility. While the permanent company of the New South Wales Mounted Rifles had been disbanded in July 1890, owing to financial cost-cutting predicated by the 1890s Depression, the onset of the maritime strike caused a reveille to be sounded. The official regimental history recounts:

Owing to the excited state of the strikers during the great maritime disturbance in 1890 the Campbelltown and Picton companies were invited to take up the duties of special mounted constables. The instructions were telegraphed on Sunday, September 21st, 1890, and a few hours after the message had been received, officers commanding these two companies, assisted by the prompt action of the railway department, reached Dawes Battery, Sydney, with 95 out of a total of 100 men.

The following day work commenced in earnest, and the troops, who in the meanwhile had been sworn in as ‘Specials’ and fitted with mounted constables uniform and equipment, were told in as reliefs for patrol duty in the city and suburbs. The duty extended from 6am until midnight and the men, by their good judgement, prevented a good deal of trouble. For this duty they were paid their usual rates of pay as well as receiving rations and forage.

The work of patrolling continued until October 30th 1890, when the strike was practically settled. On this date the Premier, Sir Henry Parkes, held a review of the troops in Moore Park and on behalf of the government and people of New South Wales, thanked all ranks for the work they had performed.

“General George” did not take up a commission in the local troop until 1895, so any lesson he might have drawn from this episode was second-hand. The same applies to his brother James who did not return from Cambridge until 1891, and was commissioned captain in the Picton troop in 1892. But the involvement of the Campbelltown and Picton troops of the New South Wales Mounted Rifles in the 1890 Maritime Strike shows how endemic was the blurring between the military and paramilitary traditions in Australia. Organising something ostensibly “irregular”, a civilian apparatus for counter-revolutionary purposes, was the mirror image of a directing an “official” military regiment, conducting bivouacs, drilling, preparing for national defence or foreign war. Only the enemy, a militant working-class rather than a foreign army, was different. For his part, DH Lawrence understood that what he had observed was not merely amateur zealots practising war games. After submitting the manuscript of *Kangaroo*, he wrote to his publisher, Thomas Seltzer, “Do you think the Australian Government or the Diggers might resent anything?”

- Andrew Moore

A Slice of History

The gaudiest event in Australian secret army history – *Kangaroo* apart – was Captain De Groot’s impromptu cutting of the ribbon at the opening of the Sydney Harbour Bridge in March 1932, so beating Labor Premier Jack Lang – bete rouge of the 1920-30s secret armies – to the honour.

Dr Andrew Moore has become an expert on De Groot and his times, and recently, when on study leave in Ireland, he visited the surviving nephew of the quixotic captain. And there he discovered one of Australian history’s lost icons: the famous sword itself!

The picture opposite, taken in Ireland late last year, features the peace-loving Dr Moore with the legendary sword, now in the possession of Dr Groot’s relative.

Last August Dr Moore delivered a talk on De Groot to Robert Darroch’s History conversazione at the Union Club in Sydney (itself a hotbed of secret-army plotting in the 20s and 30s) at which he appealed for information about the missing sword. Although no less than four pieces of the cut ribbon turned up at the function, the sword itself was conspicuous by its absence. Now Dr Moore has solved one of our enduring mysteries. - RD

(LATE NEWS: Dr Moore has received a grant to write a book about De Groot.)

The Row in Parliament

Thanks to the support of the NSW Premier's Westfield Scholarship for Modern History, I was able to spend an extended time in India, from October 2003 to early January 2004.

As Lawrence did not actually visit India, although he had intended to, there was no direct Lawrence connection in my travels. However, Lawrence novels were on sale in a number of bookshops I visited, and a number of people told me that they had read Lawrence either at school or university. The most frequently mentioned novels were *Lady Chatterley's Lover*, *Sons and Lovers* with *Women in Love* a more distant third. No one mentioned *Kangaroo*.

One of the most unusual days of the 97 that I spent in India was the day I visited the Indian Parliament. Since the terrorist attack in December 2001, when 12 people were killed, it is with considerable difficulty that overseas visitors are able to spend time in that institution. The Assistant Director of the Parliamentary Studies told me frankly that most such requests are ignored; in a few cases access is granted on non-sitting days. So how was an ordinary NSW school teacher able to gain "Distinguished Visitor" status, complete with lunch and tea? The President of the NSW Legislative Council, Meredith Burgmann - sister of the first secretary of our DHLA Society (Beverley Firth) - wrote such a glowing reference to the Speaker of the Lower House (with copies to the Australian High Commissioner) that the Parliamentary Secretary smoothed the way!

The actual way was not quite smooth,



Our "Distinguished Visitor", John Lacey, with his cicerone, somewhere in India

however. There had been elections held in five States, and these had been seen as a litmus test for the national elections due later this year. The governing coalition had secured much better results than expected. The day selected for my visit was the first visit of the Prime Minister to the House since the declaration of the results; and it was expected that the Question Time would be quite dramatic as a result.

I arrived early, and was vetted and security checked, and taken to the office of the Director of the Parliamentary Studies Bureau; alas, the very urbane Director had been caught in the traffic and security chaos caused by the Prime Minister's visit.

But we eventually met, and I was escorted to the Distinguished Visitors Gallery of the Lok Sabha, the Lower House, which has 543 members. My escort, Mr Rana, endeared himself with the comment that I was too young to be an historian. The galleries (alas! there were Galleries for even more esteemed Visitors than the merely Distinguished such as myself) and the public galleries were positioned like the galleries in a theatre, and there certainly was theatre down on the stage below this day!

My first impressions were that there was great variety in the membership, and this was reflected in the dress of the members: from Western suits (both male and female) to silken saris to Gandhian cottons (but, as it was a winter's day, no loincloths!). Similarly, there was a huge variety of head dress; from Congress caps, Muslim caps, to Sikh and other turbans. Members may speak in any of the main languages (such as English, Hindi, and Tamil) and by giving 24 hours notice can deliver a speech in any language, and have it instantly translated through the head-set service.

Also notable was a larger proportion of women members than in any of Australia's parliaments. And some were Party Leaders, while others were Ministers or Shadow Ministers.

A microphone lights up on the member's table when the Speaker gives a call to a member. And how does a member attract the Speaker's attention? By raising a hand, gesticulating and shouting, "Sir! Sir!" like enthusiastic Australian schoolboys did in the 1950s.

And as this was an important day, as already mentioned, there was indeed quite a lot of "Sir! Sir!" attention-seeking!



John Lacey and friend

The reason for this was not only that the Prime Minister was due to attend Parliament for the first time since the State election results, but also that he was expected to make a statement regarding a controversial matter., and this was to be the first opportunity to question him on it.

In the event, the Prime Minister did not turn up (he was in the building, but did not appear in Parliament - and, as it had been some time since his last appearance at Question Time, this also created an uproar when the Speaker answered a question on his absence). Opposition speakers commented that the Prime Minister was treating the parliament with contempt (does this sound familiar?).

Now, what do I mean by an uproar? I mean members standing in their seats, standing in the aisles and shouting: shouting denunciations and abuse. The more restrained banged on their tables or hit their microphones with their hands and threw papers. (Shades of the “Row in Town” chapter in *Kangaroo!*) The uproar was in a variety of languages, and individual members would switch from English to Hindi to various other languages, either trying to attract the Speaker’s attention, or in their denunciation/interjections/protests. It was perhaps fortunate for the Speaker that only the main languages are automatically translated: even so a Distinguished Visitor needs to be very multi-lingual to understand all that is said.

Calm or comparative calm descended, and then there was a period of quiet deliberation, similar to that prevailing in the NSW Lower House on an eventful day, but followed by an even greater

uproar.

It took me some time, with the help of the next day’s newspapers, to understand the reasons for this. However, as mentioned, the BJP party had done well in the State Elections, and three of its lower house members were to go the States and take over as Chief Ministers (equivalent to Australian State Premiers). The uproar had come when these ordinary MPs arrived, and were escorted to the front bench, and feted by the BJP front benchers. (The BJP is at the center of the governing coalition, and the PM is from the BJP. However, it is not an Australian-style coalition, as it currently consists of 24 parties.)

So the opposition MPs, who range from far left-wing to far right-wing (the government coalition is itself basically right-wing), with the Congress having the largest number of members, objected and protested to the Speaker. The Speaker had to stand, and he himself was shouting, “Please sit down...Please occupy your seats...”. During all this, government members congratulated the new Chief Ministers, or themselves.

Uniformed attendants, wearing formal dress and the most elaborate turbans, are constantly delivering messages and papers. On the floor level of the House is another large gallery, and this contains advisers and bureaucrats from the ministries. Members seem to come and go at irregular intervals. Some are assisted by attendants; many chat while a Member is speaking, even though this is against the guidelines for Parliamentary behaviour. (The Director of the

cont’d over page



One of John Lacey's photographs from his Indian visit - the Red Fort in Delhi

cont'd from previous page

Bureau kindly gave me copious documents during lunch, including a listing of an MP's entitlements - and a briefcase in which to carry them all. I posted 4.5 kgs of these documents home: the briefcase with its embossed picture of the Parliament Building unfortunately expired after two months of exemplary service.

Eventually, a number of government members left (apparently the Prime Minister was hosting a victory celebration) and Question Time became quieter with the reading and the tabling of questions on notice for future sessions.

I then repaired to the Upper House, the Raja Saya, which was very much more sedate. I listened to a speech for 30 minutes on the importance of education, and there was barely a murmur. And the reason for the difference in the two houses? The Lower House is popularly elected, while the members of the Upper House are elected by the State governments (with the President appointing 15 Distinguished Citizens). The Upper House cannot be dissolved, and one-third of the members retire each two years.

So where is this going? And what is the connection with Lawrence (the Row apart)?

Well, I could not help reflecting on what Lawrence wrote about democracy.

Of all the people who live in democracies in the world, roughly three-quarters of them are Indian. India is the world's largest democracy.

What is the most lucrative profession in India? Politics. What is the subject that attracts the greatest amount of space in newspapers and magazines? Politics (followed by cricket and film star news!).

The Lower House MPs are often very uncertain about their futures (since 1988 only one government has completed its full term; sometimes elections have been called after only 10 or 11 months), and so the MPs are under great pressure to perform. So this is why the Central Government so often has its time taken up by State issues. The MPs, especially those from the Delhi area, are also under pressure to perform for the media, as Parliament is broadcast on local TV.

So some of the bad behaviour is created by the need to attract attention. Media attention means local interest and publicity. The small parties in the Lok Sabha (its 543 members belong to 42 parties - but only 11 of the parties have more than 10 members) are often the ruling parties in the States, so again time in the Lok Sabha is given over to discussing State rather than national issues.

Now, what does Lawrence say about democracy in *Kangaroo* **- John Lacey**

Snakes and Adders

This is one of a series of articles by Angela Barker on Lawrence's "animal poems". Angela, who is a volunteer at Taronga Park Zoo, has previously written about Lawrence's poem, "Kangaroo". This time she writes about the subject of his poem "Snake".

Lawrence's reaction to his snake at the water-trough is one that many of us would share. Fear, fascination, admiration, and guilt at an instinct to kill.

Most people are incredibly frightened of snakes and find them physically repellant - evil, slimy, dangerous creatures. We are educated to fear them and to assume they are dangerous. In fact of the 2800 (or so) species of snakes less than 50 are dangerous to humans. They are typically shy creatures and avoid human contact as much as possible, only biting if provoked.

(Provocation of some species would seem to be particularly ill advised - the Fierce Snake of Central Australia is perhaps the world's most venomous, and the King Cobra of Asia can inject enough venom to kill an elephant.) They are certainly not slippery and slimy. Snakes have no sweat glands and their skin is quite dry, most often described by those who handle them as "feeling like silk".

In different times and in different cultures snakes have come to symbolise many things - sin and evil, good health, protection, immortality, masculinity and femininity... to name a few. The snake as the villain in the Garden of Eden is well recognised as a symbol of sin and evil. But for some, the snake's close association with Eve, the original matriarch, has meant that it can be seen as a symbol of femininity! The presence of snakes beside wells and springs has been taken in some cultures to symbolise life and fertility. The snake as a symbol of masculinity is, of course, more obvious. When a snake sheds its skin it has been seen by some to renew itself and be reborn. And when a cold, lethargic and apparently dead snake appears to come to life in the sun, we again have "rebirth". So the snake for some is a symbol of immortality. In ancient Egypt the snake was a symbol of royalty. For us today the snake and Egypt are forever associated with Cleopatra and her death by an asp's bite. And in this scenario the symbolism of the snake has been questioned, discussed and agonised over at length.

The well-known symbol for medicine, recognised and used worldwide, is a snake coiled around the wooden staff of Aesculapius, the

Roman god of medicine and healing. (Or Asclepius, the Greek god, whose daughters, Hygieia and Panacea were also medically connected.)

It has been said that the snake evokes stronger human reactions than almost any other animal - whether loathed, feared, admired or worshipped. Lawrence's poem captures beautifully the strong and conflicting emotions he experienced when he encountered a snake at his water-trough in the heat of summer in Sicily.

-Angela Barker

SNAKE (an excerpt)

*A snake came to my water-trough
On a hot, hot day, and I in pyjamas for the heat,
To drink there.*

*In the deep, strange-scented shade of the great dark carob-tree
I came down the steps with my pitcher
And must wait, must stand and wait, for there he was at
the trough before me.*

*He reached down from a fissure in the earth-wall in the
gloom
And trailed his yellow-brown slackness soft-bellied down,
over the edge of the stone trough
And where the water had dripped from the tap, in a small
clearness,
He sipped with his straight mouth,
Softly drank through his straight gums, into his slack
long body,
Silently.*

[Lawrence throws a log at the snake...]

*And immediately I regretted it.
I thought how paltry, how vulgar, what a mean act!
I despised myself and the voices of my accursed human
education.*

*And I thought of the albatross,
And I wished he would come back, my snake.*

*For he seemed to me again like a king,
Like a king in exile, uncrowned in the underworld,
Now due to be crowned again.*

*And so, I missed my chance with one of the lords
Of life,
And I have something to expiate;
A pettiness.*

PRESIDENT'S REPORT AT AGM

W elcome ladies and gentlemen to the 10th AGM of the DHL Society. Each year we try to hold our AGM in an interesting venue. For example, our first was at the Glebe Rowing Club, which has become transformed into the expensive Boatshed Restaurant. Another year our host was the KMT Association in Chinatown, and last year we had a private room in the excellent Spotted Cod of Balmain.

So welcome to Minhs, a restaurant I first visited close on 20 years ago, brought here by a friend who taught Mr Minh's son. As this restaurant has prospered and grown, I hope so too will the DHL Society.

I am pleased to welcome today some new faces - Tom Bass and Susannah Fullerton - along with our stalwarts, and I hope you all will enjoy and benefit from your membership.

Now I am going to begin, and end, my report on the last year's activities with a personal note, for which I hope you will forgive me, but the two personal references, poles apart, do provide a context for my report on the year's activities.

Firstly the nadir for me occurred shortly after last year's AGM when I had a minor accident which caused some trauma, and I was out of action for some months recovering.

During this period, however, we continued with a number of activities.

The Society fielded a table at the NSW Branch of the Association of Archivists Trivia Night, and the Society's table performed well. More importantly, we were able to renew our friendship with Alan Ventress, the former Mitchell Librarian who now holds an important post in the NSW Archives - and we know how important archives are for Lawrence scholars.

Members of the Society also attended the opening of an exhibition of member Garry Shead's paintings at the Saville Gallery. Many rued the lost opportunities by not having purchased one of Garry's DHL series when they were first offered about six or seven years ago. We had a pleasant dinner afterwards on this winter's night at a Paddington pub.

Next in the seasonal changes was our Spring Bush picnic in the prime position under the overhanging rock at the top of Balls Head. This was an ideal day with Sydney's deep blue sky, the passing traffic on the Harbour below, and behind and around us the bush described by Lawrence. About 30 members and friends attended this event, and in our discussion following my report I said we should consider another

one this year. (We did! see page 19 - SJ.)

As the weather became hotter, it was time for another of our Annual Events: a Christmas Picnic in the Rose Garden of the Royal Botanic Gardens, opposite the site of Mrs Scott's guest house in Macquarie Street. Numbers were down, probably due to an excess of Christmas cheer, but it was another enjoyable day.

The Society's next major activity involves the work of a number of people who spend January and February putting our journal *Rananim* together. This takes a lot of time! I would like to pay tribute to those people who contribute, write, or in some cases, cajole, other people into writing, edit, proof read and publish *Rananim*. In particular, Evie Harrison, Marylyn Valentine, Margaret Jones, John Ruffels, Angela Barker, Robin Archer and Rob Douglass. And of course Rob and Sandra Darroch. It is with great pleasure that I can, as president, report that each issue seems to be the best yet. Thanks also to our Treasurer Doug Knowland who so capably manages our finances which help to pay for *Rananim*.

The work on *Rananim* is followed by the editorial team's reward: the relaxing *Lady Hopetoun* cruise. This year we tried something different - an evening cruise, especially to see the Harbour lights from a quite different perspective. Financially, it was not a success, but as an experience I suggest you read Rob's report on page 3.

The seasons changed. Now it was time for mists and mellow fruitfulness and the Thirroul Festival of the Arts. It was a day of mixed fortunes: the Darrochs suffered a major car breakdown, and our location in the park next to Wyewurk, rather than in the main street, brought us few takers for our BBQ.

One thing we should discuss is our location in future festivals.

However, there was a Lawrence-like protean moment when a tall man with sun-bleached hair rose out of the sea carrying his surfboard. This was Michael Organ, a long-time local resident and now MHR for the area. Incidentally, he has several Garry Sheads hanging on his office wall, and he has promised to support the Society and our activities.

Again, enormous thanks go to Rob and Sandra, and to our wandering poet, John Ruffels, for their efforts to increase our participation and recognition in the Thirroul community.

While *Rananim* continues to be the focus of most of the Society's activities, there are others such as this participation in the Thirroul community and

the maintenance of our website. The website does produce inquiries and leads, but further development of the website has been put on hold while some hosting issues are resolved. Unfortunately I have not had the time to learn new programs to enable this to happen, but perhaps next year?

The final activity was an ad hoc lunch with Brenda Maddox who was visiting Sydney for the Writers' Week festival. Thanks to the kindness of Rob and Sandra, a lunch with Brenda was organised at short notice, and a few members could meet and talk with the author of the recent Lawrence biography,

The Married Man.

I began this rather long report with a personal reference, and so this report ends with another - the zenith of my fortunes in the past year. During Summer I saw an advertisement, spent some time preparing a response, and then in Autumn it was announced that I had been awarded the Premier's Scholarship for NSW history teachers. This means that I will be in India for three months starting in October.

Thank you Committee members, members and friends for your patience and your support.

- John Lacey

MINUTES OF AGM 2003

MINUTES OF THE ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING OF THE DH LAWRENCE SOCIETY OF AUSTRALIA HELD AT MINHS VIETNAMESE RESTAURANT, DULWICH HILL, ON AUGUST 2, 2003

PRESENT: John Lacey, Robert Darroch, Sandra Jobson, Doug Knowland, Margaret Jones, Marylyn Valentine, Eve Harrison, John Ruffels, Robin Archer, Angela Barker, Clif Barker, Sally Rothwell, John Rothwell, Susannah Fullerton, Tom Bass, Rob Douglass.

APOLOGIES: Apologies were received from Bob Carr, Andrew Moore, Beverley Firth, Arch Dailey, Peter Jones, Gerald Pollinger, Michael Organ and Katherine Douglass.

PRESIDENT'S REPORT: (See full version page 36). John Lacey welcomed members to the AGM at Minhs restaurant, a favourite of his over the past 20 years. He reported on the Society's activities during the year beginning with fielding a table at the NSW branch of the Association of Archivists trivia night. This had the double benefit of allowing members to renew acquaintance with Alan Ventress, the former Mitchell Librarian.

Members attended the opening of an exhibition of member Garry Shead's paintings at the Saville Gallery and had a sociable dinner afterwards at a Paddington pub.

The spring picnic at Balls Head was an outstanding success, as was the twilight cruise on the *Lady Hopetoun*. The traditional Christmas picnic was held in the Rose Garden of the Botanic Gardens opposite the site of Mrs Scott's guesthouse in Macquarie Street where Lawrence and Frieda had spent their first night in Sydney in 1922.

In the autumn the Society took part in the Thirroul

Festival, though the barbecue in the park drew few visitors. The final activity of the year was an ad hoc lunch with Brenda Maddox, Lawrence biographer, who was visiting for the Sydney Writers Festival.

MEMBERSHIP: Sandra Jobson reported that the DHL Society was the second largest literary society in Australia. It now has 30 full members and 19 honorary members, with another 10 members unfinancial.

TREASURER'S REPORT: Doug Knowland reported that the Society's funds stood at \$1618.73 at June 30, 2003.

ELECTION OF OFFICERS: The committee remains as before: John Lacey President and Editor of *Rananim*, Robert Darroch Vice President, Doug Knowland Treasurer, Margaret Jones Secretary, Sandra Jobson Membership Secretary and Publisher of *Rananim*. Marylyn Valentine Archivist, while Robin Archer, Rob Douglas and Angela Barker have been added to the editorial committee.

FUTURE EVENTS: The President suggested we might hire a 1957 clipper bus owned by the NRMA and on show at the Australia Day display.

- Margaret Jones, Secretary

A MEETING PROPOSAL

Darren Harrison, a Melbourne member of the DHLA and collector of Lawrence works, is keen to organise an informal meeting of Victorian DHLA members. If you are interested, his contact phone number is 03 9460 4392, or he can be contacted at 50 Chauvel St. Reservoir, Victoria 3073.



Andrew Spiers plays Lovatt/Lawrence in the Illawarra Performing Arts Centre production of *Kangaroo*

Making a Lawrence Swansong

Last year brought a most unexpected contribution to Australia's cultural interpretation of Lawrence's stay and his Thirroul novel.

Back in the Sydney of the 1970s, it was impossible to gather round a water-cooler or dinner party table, the washing up even, without discussion about the latest television program phenomenon - Sydney's first home-grown "soap-opera", *Number 96*.

Set around the occupants of a block of flats in a mythical Sydney suburb, the program's content wrestled with a number of hot topics: multiculturalism, homosexuality, murder, arson - the whole gammut of dramatic themes. It caused a sensation.

Large numbers of young people arranged their social calendars around the time these programmes were aired. Phones were taken off the hook, doors went unanswered, and thread-bare excuses were offered for inabilities to attend evening functions.

The long-term characters were spoken of in the Press as if they were real people. Bus tours of the real-life block of flats in Moncur Street, Woollahra, resulted in the vandalism and even theft of fittings from the foyer of the flats.

One of the prominent principal characters was "Arnold Feather", a nerdish know-all: a young man in glasses who took himself and the world very seriously, and used cliched phrases like: "In point of actual fact..."

Needless to say, these elements set "Feather" up as a convenient vehicle for storylines involving reluctant sexual intimacy, ambiguous sexuality and nymphomaniac matrons.

When the show finally closed after about 10 years, the actual actors drifted off into other work: films, commercials, live theatre, politics, business, and teaching.

The actor who played "Arnold Feather" was in reality Jeff Kevin. For the last 15 years Jeff Kevin has been Head of

Acting in the Faculty of Creative Arts at Wollongong University. His career has been more or less concentrated on teaching, with an occasional role as director and actor with the regional company, Theatre South. His many roles have included Malvolio (*Twelfth Night*), Ron Blair's *Christian Brother*, Esson's Sir Joseph Quiverton in *The Time is Not Yet Ripe*, and the villain Ridley Harvester in John Senczuk's musical *Time, Gentlemen!*

Last year he announced he was to retire. He advertised his hobby farm in the orchard-belt at Lakesland in the hills behind Wollongong in preparation for a move to retire in Tasmania.

But, most surprisingly, he announced, as his last "hurrah", that his colleague in the Faculty, John Senczuk, had commissioned playwright Justin Fleming to adapt a play for him for a week-long season at the Illawarra Performing Arts Centre as part of their fringe season.

His subject? DH Lawrence and his stay in Thirroul!

Not a lot of publicity was generated, despite the bizarre prospect of an older "Arnold Feather" morphing into the barrister Benjamin Cooley, Lawrence's character *Kangaroo*.

I did not see the performance, which comprised Kevin and six other local actors (members of the Graduate Company *Square Brackets*), performing a play based upon *Kangaroo*, and written by Justin Fleming, but the local grape-vine suggests that the play is a significant piece, and that the production was very well received.

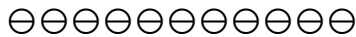
Despite this being a grand cultural event, its season was very brief, and received very little, if any, coverage in the Sydney papers. Companies in Melbourne and Sydney, however, are considering the script for production in 2005.

But, hey! congratulations to Jeff Kevin for tackling the subject. Imagine if *Number 96* had taken up some of Lawrence's other favourite hobby-horses? It is expected an analysis of the script itself, and more photos, will appear in our next issue.

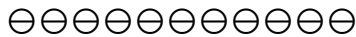
- John Ruffels

Bits...

It's not only Australian writers who have been inspired by Lawrence. The celebrated South American writer, Gabriel Garcia Marquez, reminisced in a recent issue of *The New Yorker* about the pleasure he had in Bogota in 1947 when the first post-war translations of modern writers came hot off the presses from Buenos Aires "like bread warm from the oven". Two writers he particularly mentions are DH Lawrence and Katherine Mansfield.



Lawrence would no doubt have found awe-inspiring the Weather installation currently on display in the cavernous entrance to the Tate Modern Gallery in London. The installation is an enormous, glowing sun disc reflected in a vast mirrored ceiling. Rob Darroch and Sandra Jobson, who visited the Gallery last November, felt the installation was reminiscent of Lawrence's poem "Sun in Me."



Fortuitously, or perhaps ironically (even appropriately), the relevance of Lawrence to Australia, and Sydney in particular, was emphasised by a front-page lead article in the Mosman Daily in November. Headed "Author's Paradise Chopped", the story told of the desecration of a stand of coral trees planted around Cremorne Point (where Lawrence strolled in 1922). North Sydney Council had decided to extirpate the lovely trees – mentioned by Lawrence in Kangaroo ("...a fine Australian tree...with big tufts of red, spikey flowers") – because they were in fact not Australian (horror!), but "foreign". How Ms Stevens of the NSW Ministry of the Arts would have warmed to the council's position on what trees are now politically correct in our fair State. (However, ignorance also rears its head again, for the council wants to replace the coral trees with jacarandas, an exotic from beyond our sacred shores.)

Letters...

The Editor,

The importance and continuing relevance of DHL to all humanity who can understand him is his extraordinary ability to associate himself with the human spirit - in *Kangaroo* with "the spirit of the place."

Surely that is why he is important in Australia today for so many artists and just ordinary people. All that secret army

stuff, fascinating as it is, is merely a manifestation of the spirit of the place which Lawrence so clearly plugged into. How many other visitors to Australia (to say nothing of its inhabitants) have come and gone and never done more than scratch the surface. DHL immediately deeply dug his roots into the sandy soil and spotted even this emptiness of our soul.

I would accept that the NSW Ministry of the Arts would not particularly want to subsidise another publication of Shakespeare's works - but I bet they would subsidise Bell Shakespeare Company performing them - similarly, surely the DHL Society's website.

In *Lady Chatterley's Lover*, DHL wrote about the consequences of spiritual dissociation:

Oh what a catastrophe for man when he cut himself off...from his union with the sun and the earth. This is what is the matter with us. We are bleeding at the roots, because we are cut off from the earth and sun and stars, and love a grinning mockery, because, poor blossom, we plucked it from the stem of the tree of Life, and expected it to keep on blooming in our civilised vase on the table.

Naive insistence on gumnut-flavoured literature certainly deserves a trenchant de-construction.

**Rob Douglass
Mosman, Sydney**



Dear Robert [Darroch],

Thank you for your email and for the DHL Society material you sent me some months ago. Sorry I did not get back to you but busy busy busy is my way of life.

I am sitting here in my office in Parliament House wading through emails, preparing speeches and Press releases, and thinking about all the many issues currently facing us.

On the wall to my right, above my computer, are three Garry Shead lithographs from the *Kangaroo* series - "The Wave", "The Monument", and "Thirroul". They are the only thing in this strange building which are a constant reminder to me of where I come from - Bulli - and where I will end up when this whole crazy parliamentary experience is over.

Is Wyewurk on the Australian National Heritage listing? If not, perhaps I can ask the Minister to list it. (*Yes, please Michael! - RD*)

**Michael Organ, MP
Parliament House, Canberra**



Hi Rob,

This is just to let you know that today I'm so happy to have located a copy of your book. How are things? I heard that the DHL Centre in Nottingham is to be integrated into a local writing centre. I was so sad to hear that DHL research in England is declining, and wrote to Peter Preston to tell him my feelings. DHL is still applauded here in China, and I am translating his essays. There is even an edition of his paintings in production. Whatever people in the West think, DHL is alive and well here in China.

**Bi Bingbin
Beijing**

Rananim Editorial Team at Work and Play



Acting Editor Sandra Jobson (top left) with her editorial team (clockwise from left) Rob Douglass, Robin Archer, Marylyn Valentine, Angela Barker and Evie Harrison, joined at lunch at the Darrochs' Bondi apartment, by Rob Darroch (centre bottom left) and recently returned Editor John Lacey (bottom right)



About the D.H. Lawrence Society of Australia

The aims of the D.H. Lawrence Society of Australia are to foster interest in Lawrence generally, and his time in Australia, and also to promote the preservation of Wyewurk, the Californian-style bungalow where he stayed in Thirroul south of Sydney and which he portrayed in his novel, *Kangaroo*.

The Society holds regular meetings and outings and publishes its journal, *Rananim*.

If you are not already a member of the Society, or know somebody who would like to join, please fill in the our Membership form and send it with a cheque for \$30 (A\$50 for overseas members) to the Secretary, D.H. Lawrence Society of Australia, PO Box 100, Millers Point, Sydney, NSW 2000, Australia.
www.cybersydney.com.au/dhl

MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION FORM THE D.H. LAWRENCE SOCIETY OF AUSTRALIA

PO BOX 100 MILLERS POINT, NSW 2000,
AUSTRALIA

NAME:

ADDRESS:

..... POSTCODE:

TEL: FAX:

E-MAIL:

I enclose a cheque for \$30 (A\$50 for overseas members) for membership for one year.