



# THE IDES OF LAWRENCE

By Sandra Darroch

Photos: John Lacey and Sandra Darroch



WHEN we chose March 2 for the cocktail-party launch of our recent DHLA-sponsored Lawrence event in Sydney, we did not realise the significance of the date.

It was only after the start of Lawrence Month – the highlight of which was an art exhibition at the Union, University and Schools Club in Sydney - that it dawned on us that March 2 was also the 80th anniversary of Lawrence’s death.

We hope that he smiled down at the exhibition of paintings and etchings by Garry Shead, Paul Delprat and Frank Nowlan depicting Lawrence and Frieda at Thirroul, where Lawrence stayed and wrote *Kangaroo* in 1922.

As our DHLA vice-president Robert Darroch explained, when launching Lawrence Month, all three artists portrayed different aspects of the novel in their works.



Robert Darroch

There were 13 water-colours by UUSC member (and chairman of the club’s Art sub-committee) Paul Delprat depicting Lawrence’s time in and around Thirroul, where he met the local barber, watched a football match, walked on the beach, bathed, chased his hat into the waves, and took

trips into the local bushland. Paul also depicted the lighter side of Lawrence’s influence with one of his typical “fantasy” etchings.

tragically in a local Thirroul motel in 1992. A reproduction of the diptych was also on display with the show, along with part of Rob Darroch’s collection of *Kangaroo* first-editions.)

More than 50 guests attended the opening of the exhibition, which continued through the month and concluded with a special lunch on March 30 where our English visitor, Dudley Nichols, gave an illustrated talk about the various places where Lawrence went during his all-too-short life.



Dudley Nichols and Sandra Darroch with a first edition of *Kangaroo*

Dudley’s aunt was Louie Burrows, who met Lawrence as a fellow trainee teacher, and was engaged to him for 15 months before he fell seriously ill and was advised by his doctor not to contemplate marriage. That was in early 1912.



*Paul Delprat with UJSC President Paul O'Sullivan at the exhibition*

(Two months later, Lawrence, restored to health, eloped with Frieda Weekley, nee Richthofen, the wife of his French professor...and the rest is history.)

During his talk Dudley showed us a photo of the family home where Louie Burrows continued to live after her broken engagement (until she finally married at the age of 52). Dudley said Louie always carried Lawrence's letters to her in her "stays", and kept them under her bed at night.

Dudley and his wife Jane, who also collects first editions of Lawrence's works, have travelled the world visiting places Lawrence went, carefully researching beforehand, and the photographs that Dudley showed us were complemented by passages from Lawrence's letters and writing.

Garry Shead's four etchings focussed on Lawrence and Frieda at Wyewurk, the cottage they rented overlooking the Pacific Ocean. His dark images hinted at the menacing, sinister secret army which Lawrence encountered during his stay, and fictionalised as "the Maggies" in his novel.

His talk illustrated Lawrence's knack of always "falling on his feet", and, no matter how impoverished he might have been, always managing to find lovely places to stay - most especially Wyewurk, in Thirroul.

Frank Nowlan, a local Thirroul amateur artist, showed Lawrence and Frieda inspecting the backyard of Wyewurk and attending a football match. One painting also depicted a fantasy scene of Lawrence and the artist Brett Whiteley together on Thirroul Beach. (Brett painted a diptych with Gary Shead of Lawrence at Thirroul. Brett, one of Australia's greatest painters, died



*D.H. Lawrence Society of Australia President John Lacey*



*Frank Nowlan in front of one of his paintings*



*Diptych by Brett Whiteley (left) and Garry Shead (right) of Lawrence, Wyewurk and Thirroul*