

Henry Handel Richardson Society of Australia Inc.

Newsletter November 2015



The Henry Handel Richardson Society's proposed goal is:

"To stimulate enjoyment and study of, and general interest in, the work of Henry Handel Richardson"

General Meeting of HHR Society of Australia, 3rd January 2015

The HHRSA Committee agreed to recommend the following changes to our existing rules:

- The purposes of the Society are to stimulate enjoyment and study of, and general interest in, the works of Henry Handel Richardson.
- The financial year is from 1 January to December 31.
- Funds will be deposited in our accounts no later than 21 working days after they are received.

A general meeting of HHR Society members will be held at 'Lake View' at 5.30pm on 3rd January 2016 to vote on these changes. Members may appoint a proxy in writing for the meeting.

Birthday Celebration, 3rd January at Lake View in Chiltern

What better way to achieve our goal than the annual celebration of Richardson's birthday with a picnic tea at Lake View, her home in Chiltern.



3rd January 2015 at 'Lake View'

The BYO picnic tea will be held for the 46th consecutive year on Sunday 3rd January 2016, commencing at 6pm. All very welcome.

For those who haven't been before, 'Lake View' is a National Trust property where Richardson lived for one and a half very significant years of her childhood from 1876-7. She wrote about the house in her memoir, *Myself When Young*. Details of the house and town of Chiltern can also be readily identified with those of the house the Mahony family occupy in *Ultima Thule*, the third volume of *The Fortunes of Richard Mahony*. Chiltern is still recognisable as the town of Barambong in the same book.



Gloria and Graeme Banks at 'Lake View'

Have you seen a ghost at 'Lake View'?

Most of us who've sat in the gardens and walked through the house have probably had a sense of the presence of both the Richardson and the Mahony families. Even ghosts?

This year the speaker at our picnic tea is Dr Brigid Magner and her topic is *Looking through time itself: HHR and the haunting of 'Lake View'*.

Brigid Magner

Brigid is a lecturer in Literary Studies in the School of Media & Communication at RMIT University. She has done work and published articles on a range of topics, including literary tourism. At present she has an honorary fellowship with the State Library of Victoria to develop a book manuscript and interactive map: *On the trail: Reading literary places in Australia*.

Her project is envisioned as a two-stage work, beginning with a book publication followed by the creation of an interactive map designed to make sites of literary significance more easily accessible to a wider public.

The book is centrally concerned with investigating the desire to connect literary texts with specific places in the Australian landscape. The central focus is on the memorialisation of notable authors such as Henry Lawson, Adam Lindsay Gordon, Henry Handel Richardson, Nan Chauncy, PL Travers, Joseph Furphy, Katharine Susannah Pritchard and Eleanor Dark.



Brigid Magner

Two Studies: Henry Handel Richardson and the Great Extractor - a journal article by Rachel Solomon in *Script and Print*, the *Bulletin of the Bibliographical Society of Australia and New Zealand*, Vol 38 number 4 (2014), 229-248

'Two Studies: Henry Handel Richardson and The Great Extractor' is Rachel Solomon's first journal article and concerns one of HHR's correspondents/publishers in London, Jacob Schwartz, sometime dentist turned publisher and called 'the great extractor' by Samuel Beckett, no less. Schwartz seems to have taken a shine to her work, and published two of her short stories as 'Two Studies' (1931) in fine, limited edition booklets. He seems to have enjoyed a somewhat shady reputation. Rachel's work is an examination of the history of this fine print publication, and the relationship between the author and the publisher, within the context of the literary and publishing market of the late 1920s and early 1930s.

Of this work Rachel says:

I was intrigued by the interaction between HHR and Jacob Schwartz from the time I was writing my thesis. There was very little information about Schwartz at that time. More recently, a few curious Joyce and Beckett scholars have added snippets of information which confirm Schwartz's profile as a wily and elusive character. I wondered whether HHR was carried away by Schwartz's charm, gifts, and literary connections, or whether she was the one controlling the play between them.

Either way, they each seemed to achieve what they wanted. HHR received a beautiful limited edition of her stories; and Jacob Schwartz became a publisher of the world famous author of 'The Fortunes of Richard Mahony'. Furthermore, he managed to extract a post

publication manuscript of 'Mary Christina' and a number of extra copies of 'Two Studies', presumably to sell to wealthy American collectors.

To read Rachel's article go to our website www.henryhandelrichardsonociety.org.au



Rachel Solomon and Clive Probyn at the 2014 prize giving event

About Rachel:

Rachel was a PhD student in the English department at Monash, supervised by Bruce Steele. Her topic was a critical edition of Richardson's short stories known as 'The End of a Childhood'. She was also the Research Assistant on The Monash Henry Handel Richardson Project, which saw the publication of *Henry Handel Richardson: the Letters*, 3 volumes, Miegunyah Press, Melbourne University Press (Melbourne, 2000), which bears her name on the title pages.

Our Essay Prize winner's book on Aileen Palmer to be published



Sylvia Martin

Sylvia Martin, who won the HHR Essay award for her essay about Aileen Palmer, including material about HHR, will have her biography of Palmer published by UWAP in March 2016.

The book is titled *Ink in Her Veins: The Troubled Life of Aileen Palmer*. Congratulations to Sylvia from all in

the HHR Society. Good news is that Sylvia has agreed to deliver our HHR oration in Chiltern in April next year.

Sylvia holds a doctorate in Women's Studies from Griffith University and is the author of two other biographies: *Passionate Friends: Mary Fullerton, Mabel Singleton and Miles Franklin* (2001) and *Ida Leeson: A Life: Not a Blue-Stocking Lady* (2006).

Aileen Palmer – activist, writer and much else

The following is a brief statement from Sylvia about Palmer to whet your appetites.

Aileen (1915-1988) was the elder daughter of Nettie and Vance Palmer, a brilliant child who was awarded a 1st Class Honours degree in French from Melbourne University. She joined the CPA at university and was torn between her desire to write and her political activism. She volunteered as interpreter and secretary to the British Medical Aid unit in 1936 and spent two years on the frontlines of the Spanish Civil War, drove ambulances during the Blitz in London in WWII and returned to Australia in 1945. Her later years were blighted by 'breakdowns' but she continued to write and had poems published in journals such as *Meanjin* and *Overland* and Stephen Murray Smith, editor of *Overland* published a volume of her poetry in 1964.

HHR Oration, April 16/17 weekend, Chiltern

In April 2016 the Society will be treated to an oration by Sylvia Martin – 'Aileen Palmer's Getting of Wisdom' – and Sylvia's new book will be available for sale at this event.

More details of the oration and other possible HHR events will be in the next newsletter at the end of January, but keep this weekend free!

Richardson's Observation of Children

by Christine Brett Vickers

Christine is a psychoanalytic psychotherapist and historian, living in Lockwood, near Bendigo. Her current research interest is the history of psychoanalysis and Freud's influence in the Oceania region.

In a recent entry, September 2015, 'Child Study in Australia, 1898 onwards' on her blog, 'Freud in Oceania', she made the following reference to Richardson:

"I will begin with an excerpt taken from Henry Handel Richardson's novel: 'Ultima Thule', first published in 1929. It is the third volume of her trilogy: 'The Fortunes of Richard Mahony', a fictionalised biography of her father, Walter Lindesay Richardson, a medical practitioner.



Christine Brett Vickers

In this scene we hear his response to a crying child:

...she had cocked an attentive ear and now she said: 'Tilly there's something about that child's cry... there's a tone in it a...'

'Ungry...!' said Tilly fiercely. 'E's starving -that's what it is'.

'Of course, hungry, too. But I must say it sounds to me more angry. And then look at how he beats the air with his little fists. He's not trying to suck them or get them near his mouth...'

Who's to say where consciousness begins?...or ends. For all we know, the child in the womb may have its own dim sentience. Now I don't need to give you my opinion of the wet-nurse system. Nonetheless if the case were mine, I should urge the mother to leave no stone unturned to find the person who first had it at her breast'.

I am intrigued by this excerpt by Richardson. She was the sister-in-law of the radical pedagogue, A.S. Neill. She was well versed in Freud and psychoanalytic theory and, presumably would have been aware of 'Child Study'—the scientific study of infants and children which originated in the United States during the 1880s. Here, she infers the 'folk knowledge' of mothers who, from experience, have learned the language of their babies. Through her protagonist, Richard Mahony, a doctor and the central figure in her trilogy, 'Richardson reaches towards understanding the babe's experience: *Who's to say where consciousness begins?...or ends. For all we know, the child in the womb may have its own dim sentience.*'

To read more of Christine's blog go to www.freudinoceania.com

Heritage Gold Award to our first President, Rex Fuge



The Award was reported in the *Border Mail* (27 May 2015).

“A CHILTERN resident who spent half his life advocating for the town’s heritage has been given a special posthumous award.

Rex Fuge has been granted a heritage gold award as part of the 2015 Indigo Heritage Awards.

The award was presented at the discretion of the council’s heritage advisory committee and the National Trust of Australia (Victoria) North East branch.

Its aim was to celebrate and acknowledge Mr Fuge’s enormous contribution “as heritage warrior and advocate, kind and thoughtful friend and mentor to many”.

Mr Fuge died suddenly at his Chiltern home last September, aged 79.

He was most closely linked with the Chiltern Athenaeum Museum, where he was chairman and chief historian for close to 34 years.

Mr Fuge was a long-time heritage advisory committee member and, in 2005, received a Medal of the Order of Australia for his service to Chiltern, through heritage, tourism groups and local government.

“Heritage and history is something I’ve loved all my life, starting from my own family history to that of Cornishtown and later Chiltern,” he said in 2005.

This was one of several categories announced under the heritage awards.”

Our new President, Graeme Charles continues the work in Inverloch

As many will know Graeme and his wife, Dot, were both founding members of the HHR Society

Committee, and have occupied various positions over the life of the Society. This year Graeme was elected President.

In this same year Graeme and Dot moved from Chiltern in the north east to Wonthaggi in Victoria’s south east, but their work has continued. In September Graeme addressed the Friends of the Inverloch Library on the life and times of Richardson and this was reported in ‘The South Gippsland Sentinel Times’ on October 6.



Can you help?

We need help for our website and Facebook page.

If you have some skills you’d like to share in this area contact Graeme Charles at graemejcharles@gmail.com

HHRSA Committee

President: Graeme Charles

Vice-President: Bill Steele

Treasurer: Helen Macrae

Secretary: Janey Runci

Committee Members:

Clive Probyn, Bronwyn Minifie

Website: www.henryhandelrichardsonsociety.org.au