

## 2018 RICHARDSON READATHON INFORMATION SHEET

### **Venue and Program**

The event will be held at the Trentham Neighbourhood Centre situated at the main crossroads (Market and High Streets), in Trentham, opposite the Post Office. There is street parking close to the venue.

The event takes place on Sunday, August 19, starting at 10 am with a screening of *The Getting of Wisdom* introduced by Ina Bertrand.

The afternoon session, focusing on *The Fortunes of Richard Mahony*, runs from 2pm to 4pm. It includes talks by Richard Trembath and Brigid Magner, with discussion chaired by Delia Bradshaw. Trentham's *Little Choir* will perform songs by HHR at the start of the afternoon session.

### **Lunch, food, coffee**

There will be a lunch break from 1 – 2pm.

You may wish to bring your lunch, get local takeaway or eat at one of Trentham's cafes, all situated close to TNC. TNC has a small kitchen with facilities for heating food.

(We tried to organise a pre-order option from *Polly's Kitchen* but, in true *Fortunes* fashion, 'Polly' has been called up-country to attend to an ailing relative.)

Tea and coffee will be available all day at TNC and superior coffee options are available close by at the cafes.

Afternoon tea will be served at the end of the day.

Trentham coffee houses and cafes:

Market Street: Wild Thyme, Trentham Takeaway

High Street: Trentham Bakery, The General, Chaplins

Wolff Lane (off High): RedBeard Bakery

## **Our Presenters**

Ina Bertrand

Ina Bertrand taught film history at La Trobe University for 25 years. She has written widely on Australian film, with a particular interest in silent film and the role of women both in front and behind the camera.

Richard Trembath

Richard Trembath is a Senior Honorary Research Fellow at Federation University Australia. An historian, he has taught in several Victorian universities. He has written books and articles on various aspects of Australian social history, the first of which was *All Care and Responsibility*, the story of the Victorian nursing profession (with Donna Hellier). His most recent book was *Defending Country: Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Military Service Since 1945* (with Noah Riseman) which appeared in 2015. Currently, he is researching the rise of complementary medicine in Australia, its relationship with orthodox practice and its status within the health system. Richard lives in Ballarat which his Cornish ancestors exploited as much as possible for its alluvial gold.

Brigid Magner

Brigid Magner teaches Literary Studies at RMIT . Over the last few years she has been writing a book which explores locations connected with Australian authors through material forms of commemoration such as writer's houses, graves, statues and trails. She has focused on a selected group of notable authors who have been celebrated through tangible memorials including Adam Lindsay Gordon, Henry Lawson, A.B. 'Banjo' Paterson, Joseph Furphy, Henry Handel Richardson, Nan Chauncy, Katharine Susannah Pritchard, Eleanor Dark and P.L Travers (the creator of *Mary Poppins*). Her research has involved visits to countless literary locations and the interweaving of her own impressions with biographical, literary and academic texts. She has discovered that literary memorials often signal loss rather than success and say more about the commemorators than they do about the writers themselves. Commemorations are produced for a range of reasons, frequently in order to assuage guilty consciences. As Miles Franklin has argued, literary memorials: 'too often are a saving of face by the living in regard to the neglected dead.'

Delia Bradshaw

Delia worked in adult education in Victoria for over thirty years as a teacher, researcher, writer, editor, panel chair and workshop presenter. She worked in a wide range of contexts, including community centres, TAFE institutes and university education faculties. Her work as an adult educator is dedicated to creating a world that is more just, compassionate, harmonious and hopeful. She has published

two books, one exploring her adult relationship with her mother, *Becoming Fine*, and one discovering her Irish grandmother, *With love, Delia*. On reading and writing, she quotes Emily Bronte ... (they always) 'change the colour of my mind'.

Val Goodwin

Val Goodwin has a long history of choral singing and choral direction, encompassing sacred and secular music across a wide repertoire from early music to contemporary styles. In 2007, Val moved to Trentham, and on discovering that there was no choir, promptly started one. *Cool Harmony*, a true non-auditioned community choir, was based at Trentham Neighbourhood Centre for 8 years, and at its peak numbered more than 20 singers. As choirs often do, *Cool Harmony* went into recess in 2016. However, a small ensemble of keen choristers with good sight reading and part singing skills stayed together to continue to explore more complex repertoire. The *Little Choir* is pleased to present some of HHR's songs for Words in Winter.

### **Words in Winter & Bookclub Without Borders**

The Richardson Readathon is part of Trentham's *Words in Winter* festival. Towns in the Hepburn Shire hold various events each August.

This year Trentham is holding two events under the banner of *Bookclub Without Borders* which is meant to suggest open access and multiple points of entry into the discussion.

Participants are not required to have read anything; there is no required reading; all one needs is an interest.

(*Dystopian Fiction* is the other WW Bookclub Without Borders event being held this year – August 4).

BWB also suggests multiple ways of *speaking* in the group, such as written communication (email). Thus we have had some contributions already from a few people lucky enough to be exploring warmer climes, and, in the case of one of our old stalwarts, Laurie McIntyre, a contribution from his sickbed in hospital.

Laurie (first-time reader of *The Fortunes*) says he  
'...ABSOLUTELY ENJOYED (reading the trilogy)...actually finished the whole of Richard Mahony's miserable life!!!!  
An Aussie variant on Hardy's *Jude the Obscure*.'

Charles Sherlock, cruising to England on a ship, also sent his thoughts which I am attaching to the email as a separate document.

Jill, about to take off to Mexico et al wrote the following:

- My abiding memory of *Fortunes* is that 928 pages is a very long read!! Many of the descriptive passages are rather long and I may not have persevered had it not been part of WinW.  
However, what I remember most are the early pictures of Ballarat as a muddy, bustling camp "city" with everyone just doing their best to survive. And the character of Mary, as the lynchpin of the book, remains strong in my memory. As does the food! How did they do it in those conditions? It also has a strong feeling of being written by a woman - the empathy with Mary, many insightful observations on "women's lot", childbirth and other women's "problems".

- Richard is a frustrating character, full of hopes and dreams which are never quite realised to his satisfaction. Mary and the family just get settled somewhere and he wants to be on the move again. Mary, solid and practical but not without charm, does her best to support and accommodate him but without success. There are many minor characters who play their part and who add colour to the story but I can't now remember any in particular.

- I found HHR's portrayal of the Australian landscape very real. The isolation of Ballarat, the hot dry summers, the surrounding bush are all described by someone who knew it.

-As to whether its relevant today, I suppose relationships always are, whatever the century. HHR gives an intimate portrait of their marriage, with the arguments escalating as Mary's frustration with Richard grows. We can all relate to the many irksome instances both have to confront. There are also many examples of more recent wives dutifully following their husbands as they pursue their careers. I don't remember any Indigenous characters although there must have been many still living close to Ballarat.

Just a few responses to kick off our 2018 Bookclub Without Borders.

### **Shop! Bookstall**

The Henry Handel Richardson Society will have books for sale. Other participants, including presenters, have been invited to bring any copies of their books in print which they want to move.

Entry for the day is \$5 – there will be a door prize.

