
Editorial

Kay Ferres and Belinda McKay

k.ferres@griffith.edu.au, b.mckay@griffith.edu.au

In 2013, Professor Patrick Buckridge retired after a long career at Griffith University. Patrick was one of a dedicated group of teachers whose enjoyment of disputation became legendary in the School of Humanities. Together, they created a rich and innovative curriculum; individually, they made distinctive contributions to scholarship in their disciplines. In Australian studies, Pat Buckridge worked with Gillian Whitlock, David Carter, Mark Finnane, Stephen Garton and Chilla Bulbeck; and later, as he developed courses in ‘Great Books’, with Belinda McKay. Pat was to become a head of the School of Humanities, and he was the last Dean of that faculty before a restructure saw it disappear.

In June 2013, Kay Ferres convened a symposium to honour Patrick and to recognise his work in literary studies, in the university and in the wider community. His commitment to literature and literary studies has not been confined to the academy. Pat has served his discipline and a broader public through his involvement with *Queensland Review*, the *Australian Dictionary of Biography*, professional associations including the Association for the Study of Australian Literature, the Bibliographical Society of Australia and New Zealand, the Society of the History of Authorship Reading and Publishing, the English Teachers Association of Queensland and U3A.

From his beginnings in Renaissance literature, Patrick broadened his scholarship to embrace Australian literature, Queensland studies, studies in biography and, more recently, the history of reading. That initial grounding continues to make itself felt in his long-standing interest in the question of Shakespeare authorship and his insistence on the continuing importance of close reading, however unfashionable that may have become. His work has always been informed by a deep sense of the value of the encounter with the text — an encounter that is at once enriching and available to anyone prepared to give attention to the words on the page. His work on the history of reading focuses on the institutions that made that experience widely accessible to newly literate populations — on publishers who prepared texts for such readers, reading groups and circles, and the professional readers and critics who enabled and encouraged the appreciation of literature.

The quality of Patrick Buckridge’s scholarship has been recognised through Australian Research Council grants that have supported projects on the history of reading and the history of literature in Queensland. *By the book: A literary history of Queensland*, co-edited by Belinda McKay, brought together the work of scholars from a range of disciplines and institutions who examined the way ‘Queensland’ figured in writing and public imagination from colonial times to 2001. Patrick’s deep knowledge of Queensland culture and people found other expressions through

his role as chair of the *Australian Dictionary of Biography's* Queensland Working Party, his directorship of the Queensland Studies Centre at Griffith University and his editorial role at *Queensland Review*.

Though advocates for the appreciation of literature are often misrepresented by contemporary cultural studies as 'elitist', Patrick's focus is on the democratic effects of literary education. His research has uncovered the value of reading in the lives of ordinary people, and has emphasised the work of 'minor' writers, journalists and other literary professionals such as editors and librarians. His biography of the journalist and novelist Brian Penton, *The scandalous Penton* (1994) — a study of the making and loss of reputation — won the New South Wales Premier's Non-Fiction Award. Thus his work engages with many of the preoccupations of current researchers who find writers less interesting than theorists, and focus their attention on creative industries and the cultural field rather than on ideas and their affects.

This issue of *Queensland Review* opens with the public lecture that Patrick delivered on his retirement. In 'Going forward to the past', he reflects with some sadness on the diminishing role of literary studies in Australian universities, but suggests that responsibility for curating our literary heritage may well lie — as it did in the not-so-distant past — outside the academy, in community book clubs and reading circles.

The articles that follow were presented at the symposium by colleagues of Pat's who have had a long and fruitful intellectual engagement — including plenty of stimulating disagreements — with Patrick. The issue opens with personal tributes. Susan Lever, the editor of *JASAL*, identifies Patrick's qualities both as a scholar with eclectic interests and as an intellectually generous colleague. In 'The Brickworks of Ipswich, Queensland: A note of gratitude to Patrick Buckridge', historian Jonathan Richards recalls that his career as a professional archival researcher began with an undergraduate research project supervised by Patrick.

Two articles focus on how cultural economies shape literary careers. David Carter's research on American editions of Australian books is represented here by "A peacock's plume among a pile of geese feathers": Rosa Praed in the United States'. Carter shows that, even though she built a significant reputation, Queensland-born novelist Rosa Praed left little trace in American book culture once she ceased publishing new titles. He argues that this pattern is typical of the reception of Australian fiction in the United States throughout the twentieth century. Christopher Lee also examines the literary marketplace in his case study of the first two novels of Roger McDonald. 'Literary adaptation and market value: Encounters with the public in the early career of Roger McDonald' focuses on the tensions that arise from the different demands of culture as responsibility to the postcolonial nation, and culture as entertainment in an era of global exchange.

Queensland Review's long-standing interest in gender and modernity is extended here with three articles on the ways in which women engaged with the specificity of life in Queensland to effect cultural transformations. Belinda McKay unravels the mystery of the biographical identity of novelist 'Ellerton Gay' in "What's in a name?": The mystery of Ellerton Gay', arguing that the colonial experience of her creator, Emma Watts Grimes, contributed to the novelist's sense of herself as cultured, modern and cosmopolitan. In 'The Lyceum Club and the making of the modern woman', Kay Ferres investigates the role of Brisbane's Lyceum Club as a space where women negotiated new roles and relationships in the inter-war period.

She focuses in particular on how the ‘club habit’ contributed to the success of Irene Longman, the first woman to be elected to the Queensland Parliament. Sue Lovell reflects on biographical method in ‘Shadowing Vida Lahey: Bats, books and biographical method’. Lahey has not left a trove of personal papers for biographers, but Lovell’s method of ‘mind and body *shadowing*’ shows how the biographer can imaginatively engage with objects — paintings and books — and spaces to bring her subject to life. Lovell seeks to understand how Brisbane visual artist and social activist Vida Lahey engaged with debates about modern art during World War II.

Arthur Upfield’s mixed race detective, Napoleon Bonaparte, made his first appearance in 1929. Philip Neilsen explores Upfield’s representation of place in the three Queensland-focused ‘Bony’ novels. In ‘Place, ecology and environmental writing in the Queensland novels of Arthur Upfield’, Neilsen argues that by rendering the environment tangible and as a dynamic process rather than as passive, aesthetic settings, these works invite an eco-critical approach.

Finally, Peter Roennfeldt concludes his survey of 100 years of Brisbane chamber music in ‘Keeping a good idea alive: Chamber music in Brisbane in the 1950s and 1960s’. Although the state government disbanded the Queensland State String Quartet in 1953, Roennfeldt’s careful research shows that chamber music offerings expanded during this period: new ensembles such as Musica da Camera and Pro Musica emerged, and a Queensland outpost of Musica Viva was established.

Taken together, these articles remind us of the wide range of topics and issues with which Patrick’s work has engaged, and that the idea of ‘Queensland’ can accommodate.