

UNIMA OZ

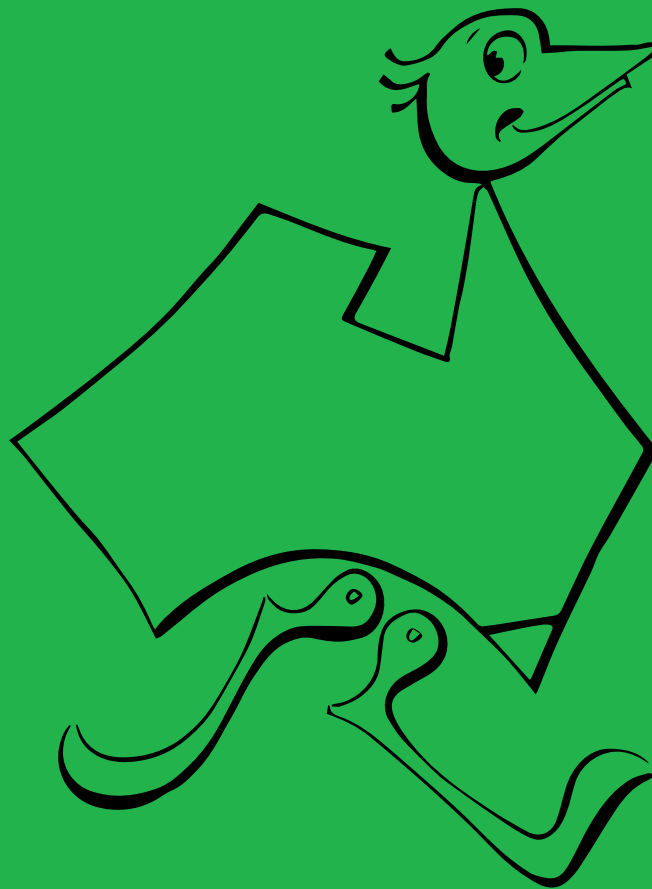
50th Anniversary Edition

ISSUE 4 / 2021

1970

2020

Past / Present / Future
Volume One



UNIMA AUSTRALIA Inc. No A0045823
A CENTRE FOR L'UNION INTERNATIONALE DE LA MARIONNETTE



UNIMA
AUSTRALIA

FRIENDSHIP THROUGH PUPPETRY

Volume One

Past / Present / Future



UNIMA OZ

ISSUE 4 / 2021

50th Anniversary Edition

This issue of UNIMA OZ has been collated, designed and published on Aboriginal land. The editorial team would like to acknowledge and pay our respects to the traditional custodians and original storytellers of these lands. We pay our respect to elders past, present and emerging and we extend that respect to all Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people. We acknowledge that sovereignty was never ceded and that this always was and always will be Aboriginal land.

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John McDonald · Peter McGill · Philip Millar · Philip Mitchell · Murray Raine · Helen Rickards

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1970

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PRESIDENT'S FOREWORD

Philip Millar

*We are celebrating
fifty years of
UNIMA Australia.*

Half a century!

Half a century sounds longer somehow.

If it was a cricket score, we would get polite applause for an innings well started. If it was a marriage, we would be showered with accolades and told we were golden.

To my mind, fifty years of UNIMA Australia represents the extraordinary resilience of puppetry and puppeteers. Fifty years ago, we'd only just discovered Sesame Street and the Muppets.

Our family bought our first TV in 1969 for the two important events, the moon landing and the start of Sesame Street. Half a century later, Jim Henson's style of glove puppetry created for TV is perhaps puppetry's dominant and most imitated form. Interestingly, his style was designed not for a live theatre audience, but for a screen. And now, thanks to Covid, we consume almost everything on a screen.

For many puppeteers, theatre has always been our lifeblood...live performances in front of a live audience... and then in the space of a few months, the very notion of a live audience became either outrageously risky or even illegal due to Covid. Over the course of 2020, many of us who have avoided screens have discovered that they are the new windows to the soul... everyone's eyes are trained on a screen, whether it's a computer monitor, a phone or a wide screen telly.

We have gone from a time when we were warned about the dangers of too much TV to a time when time onscreen is the norm for education, for workplaces and for recreation.

An acceptance of the ubiquitous nature of the screen and learning to work within its borders is a new skill-set for many to confront today.

The pandemic has been an unmitigated disaster for millions of people around the world and we don't know how long the chaos and devastation will last. As I write in early 2021, many countries are returning to

strict lockdown and the US and the UK in particular are setting heart-breaking records for Covid related deaths.

I don't think there is any clear, straightforward answer to how we deal with this crisis and continue...but we are challenged to find a way forward. At the risk of sounding glib, in every crisis there is an opportunity. I'm looking back at my experiences in live performance for clues on how to deal with disasters. In those moments, we are forced to draw on our flexibility, our resourcefulness and the diversity of our skill base.

Most of us have had the experience of dealing with a problem onstage, improvising frenetically, making do with the situation, and discovering that most times, the audience comes with you. There is a 'we're all in this together' attitude, an 'in the moment' nature to these situations. Most audiences want you to succeed and are delighted when you overcome adversity right before their eyes. There is an extra frisson for an audience being present when something different and unusual and

*To my mind, fifty years of
UNIMA Australia represents
the extraordinary resilience of
puppetry and puppeteers.*



unique has happened...
It's a reminder, a
confirmation that each
performance is new, a re-
invention, a one of a kind
experience.

A few times on the 'Walking
With Dinosaurs' tours, one
of the creatures would stop
working for any number of
tedious technical reasons.
When the tech team coaxed
the dinosaur back to life
and the show continued,
it seemed the audience
liked the show even
more, cheering the newly
resurrected dinosaur, now
more acutely aware of the
fragility of the illusion they
were experiencing.

We're in the midst of a
doozy of an example of
things going wrong now.
It is a profound challenge
to our creativity, our
eclectic skill-set and active
imaginings to find a way to
keep going, to maintain our
audiences and keep them
wanting more.

The skills and motivations that
drive us to pursue puppetry I
think are key skills in dealing
with this crisis.

We are inventive, we are
resourceful, we are keen
to share with others in our
community, to offer practical
and technical support and
to cheer on each other's
successes. And we are
diverse. Our approaches
to puppetry are quirky,
individual, defined by a
wide range of styles and
techniques. We are not a
monoculture which is likely
to be swiftly wiped out by
a virus. Our diversity is our
strength.

There's no one size fits all
answer. Many of us are
still dealing with a measure
of despair as we see work
evaporate and governments
fail to notice or acknowledge
that in times of stress, people
en masse turn to the arts.

Some people are discovering
new ways to meet audiences
online. Many are finding
there is an audience that
wants to learn about
puppetry and will pay to do
so. For now, I'm going to run
with the idea that the show
must go on. All things must
pass and I remind myself that
audiences all over the world
still love puppetry.

One of Australia's leading
puppet artists, Philip has
over three decades of
experience as a performer,
designer, maker and
director of puppetry for
theatre, film and television.

As Artistic Director of
Puppetvision, Philip has
created a range of shows
for Melbourne's Fringe and
Comedy Festivals including
'Peta & the Whale',
'Tyrannosaurus sex',
'Pure Puppet Palaver' and
'Tadpole'.

Most recently,
Puppetvision's work has
included an animatronic
toucan for MS Sweepstakes
and a dragon for the
upcoming feature 'Blaze'
directed by Del Kathryn
Barton.

Philip was formerly
Associate Creative Director
at Creature Technology
Company, working
on enormous puppet
spectaculars including
'Walking With Dinosaurs'
and 'How to Train Your
Dragon'.

Philip was elected UNIMA
Oz president in July 2020.

www.puppetvision.com

EDITOR'S NOTE

Pete Davidson



The vision for a project such as this one required a certain structure.

In amongst my rather short personal journey in puppetry, I've spent much of the past year asking questions surrounding puppetry's origin in Australia and how this informs where we are now. But when a milestone such as fifty years comes along, you also bring into question of where that must mean we are going...

These three questions had to be explored separately. The concept, Past / Present / Future. Three volumes, delivered over the course of 2021 to allow us to reflect, react and look ahead. And to do each volume of time justice.

Puppetry in Australia is supported and upheld by a number of different custodians within the industry. There's the puppeteers themselves, but there are also the makers, the designers, the writers, the innovators and perhaps most importantly those that keep everyone together, the glue-people, the ones that make puppetry a community.

With this in mind, it became necessary for me to create four editorial pillars that also strive to do right by these very different members of our readership.

History, Design and Making, Performance and Innovation, Community. Three volumes of time, four pillars of excellence in puppetry arts. Simple, right? Not exactly.

While it is my great pleasure to finally introduce the first volume of this special

50th anniversary issue of UNIMA Oz, I would like to acknowledge that it was compiled during a very difficult year. Despite the many challenges brought on by the Covid-19 pandemic, we were very committed to producing this magazine to mark such a significant milestone for our organisation. 2020 saw the whole world enter a digital frontier by force. It's no surprise that as puppeteers, innovators and makers we know how to adapt and we embrace change. Our editorial committee met and collaborated in a completely digital and remote format. Our authors submitted their articles online.

We've tried our best to create a print-on-demand memento for our members whilst also embracing this digital landscape in which we find ourselves.

*These pages will ultimately serve
as an introduction to the artform of
puppetry in Australia over the last
50 years and state the part that
UNIMA has played within it.*

Over the course of these three volumes you will find articles, images and videos and yes, those all too familiar QR codes that will link your smartphone to digital material.

These pages will ultimately serve as an introduction to the artform of puppetry in Australia over the last 50 years and state the part that UNIMA has played within it. But these volumes are by no means definitive. Rather, I hope you will find them as an invitation to explore our past, present and future further, and we here at UNIMA Oz can only provide you a starting point – a gateway – to the richness and diversity of our artform.

There are many people who have been instrumental to developing and supporting puppetry in Australia through UNIMA over the last half century, and we are very

grateful to them. Personally, I'd like to acknowledge the sub-editing team - Philip Millar, Kay Yasugi, Katherine Hannaford and Christopher Ragg as well as all contributing authors and creatives.

Thanks for having me on board. Happy Fifty UNIMA! Now, enjoy the read.

Pete is an experienced performing artist, designer and educator who discovered puppetry again as an adult in 2015. He is a graduate of UNSW Art & Design (2014) with a double Bachelor of Design and Art Education (Hons).

In 2019, Pete was selected as the Australian candidate for the UNIMA Youth In Progress fellowship to Russia. He performed in the Ryazansky Smotriny

International Puppet Festival.

Pete has been chosen as a full scholarship recipient for the Erasmus Mundus Joint Masters Program 'PuppeTry' to study his Masters of Puppetry across four Eastern European universities.

In 2020 Pete started One Orange Sock as a conduit for his interdisciplinary art and design practice.

The studio produces a comprehensive podcast on puppetry arts in Australia, 'Talking Sock', interviewing the best puppetry artists in Australia and abroad.

Pete is currently an Artist In Residence with Regional Arts Victoria as part of the Creative Workers in Schools program.

www.oneorangesock.com
[@oneorangesockproductions](https://www.instagram.com/oneorangesockproductions)

History

Katherine Hannaford

1970

2020



This volume, volume one, is devoted to articles about the history of Australian puppetry.

Since 2019, I have been digitising and uploading to the UNIMA Australia website various ephemera about Australian Puppetry including the various incarnations of the journal of UNIMA Australia, and Manipulation Magazine.

The goal of the digitising project is to provide access to these invaluable artefacts for researchers, puppeteers and puppet makers, as well as the general public who have an interest in Puppetry.

My thanks to Richard Hart and Julia Davis from Dream Puppets, and to Richard Bradshaw who shared their precious archives with me. The UNIMA Australia digital archive is constantly expanding as more physical objects are scanned and uploaded to the website.

Katherine Hannaford is a high school Teacher Librarian and Engineering teacher by day, and a puppet maker the rest of the time.

Beginning her puppet making journey in 2003, Katherine studied for 10 years with Australian puppeteer and puppet maker Marie Martine Ferrari. As a maker, Katherine specialises in foam puppet building, 3D printed puppet parts, and teaching workshops in puppet building to all those who want to learn how to make puppets.

Katherine has also been studying puppeteering for film and television through attending Beyond the Sock in Texas USA in 2015, 2016, 2017, & 2019. She is being mentored by Sesame Street and Muppet performers Peter Linz and Noel MacNeal.

[@misskhannaford](#)

How Unima Australia Began

Richard Bradshaw

UNIMA, l'Union Internationale de la Marionnette, was founded in Europe in 1929 in three cities, Prague, Paris and Liège, to unite puppeteers around the world.

One of its aims was to encourage international peace, but only ten years later the Second World War began in Europe. Between 1933 and 1957 there were no Congresses, and the first post-war UNIMA international festival was held in Bucharest in 1958.

The next UNIMA festival was held in 1963 at Colwyn Bay, Wales, the home of Eric Bramall and Chris Somerville's Harlequin Puppet Theatre, which also hosted the members of UNIMA's Praesidium [the executive body]. Edith Murray (1897-1988), who had been secretary of the Puppetry Guild of New South Wales, decided to attend, with a fellow Australian puppeteer, Heather Giffin.

The 1963 Colwyn Bay festival was followed by a meeting of the Praesidium in London, and that is when the British Centre of UNIMA was started, thanks largely to Gerald Morice (1907-1986). In the following year, 1964, there was a UNIMA international festival of amateur puppetry in Karlovy Vary (Czech Republic) in May, and a festival of Russian puppetry in Leningrad [St Petersburg] in June. The latter festival coincided with a meeting of UNIMA's Praesidium. I had decided to travel to Britain and Europe that year, and Edith arranged for us to attend those festivals, so we both became members of British UNIMA. It was in Leningrad that I first met Jan Bussell (1909-1984) (who was a member of UNIMA's Praesidium) and his wife, Ann Hogarth. I had seen their Hogarth Puppets performing in Sydney in 1952, and on the train back from Moscow, they invited me to help them perform shows in London parks that summer. It was for me the beginning of a long and valued friendship.

Meeting international puppeteers had been a great experience for Edith and me, and we had known some of their names for

years. Edith Murray returned to Australia in early 1965, determined to help form an Australian centre of UNIMA. An opportunity came when the Adelaide Festival of March 1968 included the Salzburg Marionettes. A small puppetry festival was organised in a hall in Hilton booked by Heather Giffin, who was then in Adelaide. [She married a local puppeteer, John Grant.] The Aichers of the Salzburg Marionettes were our guests one evening. During the festival, plans were made for a UNIMA centre and an Australian Puppetry Guild, with state-based sections.

Four of us were chosen as an interim committee: Edith Murray, Nancy Johnston (of Perth), Norman Hetherington and myself. We met up at Edith's house in Springwood, in the lower Blue Mountains and drew up provisional rules of procedure. These were sent out for comments and suggestions and the Australian Puppetry Guild was inaugurated on 14 February 1969.

In March 1969, a Western Australian Section of the Australian Puppetry Guild was formed, in April the New South Wales Guild was founded, and in June a Victorian State Section was

formed. Each year, one of the state sections was to act as a "federal coordinator," and issue an annual report.

With the first annual report, that of 1969, a separate note from Edith informed us that "the General Secretary, Dr Jan Malik, on behalf of the Praesidium of UNIMA, has entrusted me with 'the special task of establishing the Australian Centre of UNIMA.'" and that began operating in 1970, with Norman Hetherington as President, Edith Murray as Secretary and Nancy Johnston as Treasurer. Initially, there were 13 individual members coming from 5 states.

Jan Bussell was elected President of UNIMA, ahead of the 1969 Congress in Prague, a position he held until 1976. In 1971, with the support of the Australian Council for the Arts, the Elizabethan Theatre Trust arranged for Jan to be Artistic Adviser to the Marionette Theatre of Australia, based in Sydney, for the first half of 1972. He and his wife, Ann Hogarth, arrived by sea from England, bringing with them a set of marionettes for *The Water Babies* to use in a production. 1 ▼

The Marionette Theatre of Australia arranged for Jan to visit other Australian cities, and give workshops for puppeteers and, as its President, he did much to promote UNIMA. He was also hoping to persuade

the Praesidium to meet in Australia, but they felt it was too far away. The 2008 Congress in Perth showed how perceptions have changed.

It was not until Perth had been chosen for the 2008 UNIMA Congress that UNIMA Australia was incorporated and got a proper constitution. That necessary, but demanding task, was taken on in Melbourne while Lorrie Gardner was President and Richard Hart was Secretary. They were ably assisted by John McDonald.

Finally, I would like to mention Karen Smith, since 2012 the second Australian-born member of the UNIMA Executive Committee [the first was Jennifer Pfeiffer] and, since 2016, a Vice-President. Beginning in 2010, she has been the editor-in-chief of the World Encyclopedia of Puppetry Arts (WEPA). Updating the earlier printed version (French), and getting the material up online in three languages, has been a stunning achievement, and a lot of hard work. 2 ▼

Sydney-born Karen had studied theatre at Flinders University in South Australia, and became involved with puppetry in India, becoming a member of UNIMA-India in 1986. She has served as President of UNIMA-USA. Karen lives in California, but has a holiday home south of Sydney.

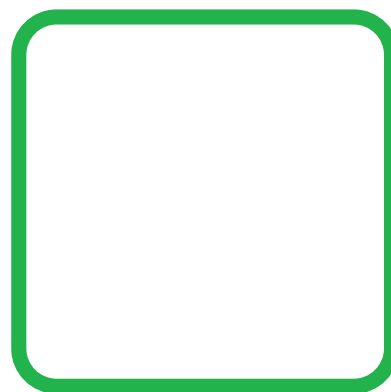
Thanks to UNIMA, puppeteers in Australia are now "well-connected"!

NOTE. Western Australians will know the name of John Garrett Bussell, who founded Busselton. He was the brother of Jan Bussell's grandfather, and Jan's real name was the same as his.

Interactive Content

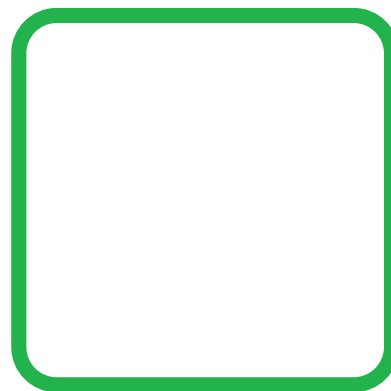
Scan the QR codes to enrich your reading experience

1



Check out the Bussell's *The Water Babies* images here

2



See Karen Smith's profile on the UNIMA International website

*Thanks to UNIMA, puppeteers
in Australia are now “well-
connected”!*

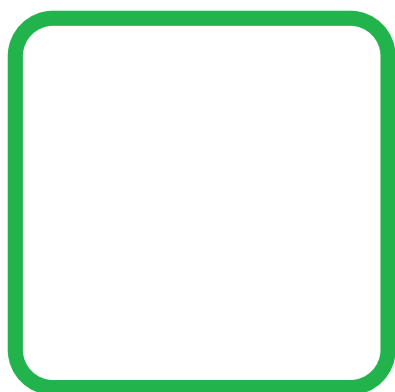


Richard Bradshaw (born Sydney, 1938) has presented his shadow puppets in Europe, the Americas, and Asia on 50 overseas tours. From 1976-83 he was Artistic Director of the Marionette Theatre of Australia.

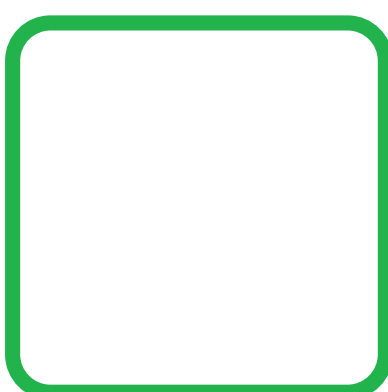
Richard’s Guide to Shadow Puppets was published by Charlemagne Press in 2015, and he has also written articles on Australian puppet history.

Jim Henson recorded a one-hour documentary on Richard’s work in Sydney in 1984.

A foundation member of UNIMA-Australia, he has served as President. In 1986 he was awarded an OAM and in 2016 he was made a Member of Honour of UNIMA.



Find Richard on WEPA,
the UNIMA World
Encyclopedia of Puppetry
Art



Check out Richard’s
interviews on
One Orange Sock’s
podcast
Talking Sock
Episode 4
Out of The Shadows, Into
The Spotlight
Part One of a two-part
double episode

How Unima Australia Became Incorporated

Richard Hart
John McDonald

In May 2003, John McDonald, then Treasurer of UNIMA Australia, received an email from Miguel Arreche, then Secretary General of UNIMA.

Miguel had received an email from the Cairns Convention Centre, QLD - expressing interest in holding "the International Puppeteers Quadrennial Congress". They had clearly done some research. In Miguel's email, he mentions that UNIMA rules state that only a National Centre of UNIMA can apply to host the Congress. There was no proposal for 2008 and he asked if UNIMA Australia was interested and able to get the necessary support.

A UNIMA Australia Committee meeting followed soon after. The President was Lorrie Gardner and Secretary, Mary Sutherland. Later email exchanges with Miguel revealed the massive expense and organisation

involved, so a decision was made to engage the Victorian Arts Centre. The Melbourne bid was led by Lorrie Gardner and Peter J. Wilson, and included Richard Hart, (newly Secretary), Gary Friedman, Sue Wallace, Philip Millar, Jennie Pfeiffer, John McDonald and Sarah Kriegler.

The Victorian Arts Centre was very interested in holding the Festival, but by November 2003, it was clear there would not be enough financial support for such a large project. When all seemed lost, Spare Parts suggested there was an interest from Perth and started preparing a bid led by Philip Mitchell. By May, 2004, the City of Perth was on board.

To host the Congress, a presentation had to be made in June 2004 at the 19th UNIMA Congress and Festival in Croatia. The bid was led by Olly Williams, Philip Mitchell and Nel Simpson of Spare Parts Puppet Theatre, and included a representative of the Western Australian government, a video presentation produced by WA Events Corp...and 121

bottles of Western Australian wine. The bid was a success and Perth became the host of the 20th Congress and Festival.

There are more details about the successful bid in *Australian Puppeteer, Winter 2004* on the UNIMA Australia website.

To be able to make the bid, UNIMA Australia needed to become an incorporated association. With advice from a lawyer with knowledge of Incorporated Associations, John McDonald started to draft rules based on model rules of associations. The rules needed to be adapted to suit the unique nature of our organisation. There were many meetings and discussions with the lawyer, redrafts, emails and debates. John, Lorrie Gardner and Richard Hart were the main members involved with added input from others.

The proposal to incorporate UNIMA Australia was approved at a special General Meeting held on Sunday, May 30th 2004 at Polyglot Puppet Theatre, South Yarra, Victoria.

The UNIMA Festival was held in Perth from 2 to 12 April 2008 and included 17 ticketed productions from Australia and 13 from 9 other countries as well as workshops, street theatre, etc. The UNIMA Congress coincided with the festival.

A special edition of *Australian Puppeteer* was published for the Congress in early 2008, issue no.35. It was the first in colour. Reports on the Congress/festival appear in issue no. 36, August 2008.

The complete collection of *Australian Puppeteer* is on the UNIMA Australia website. Leading up to the 2008 Congress, UNIMA Australia had well over 200 members.

...[The bid] included a representative of the Western Australian government, a video presentation produced by WA Events Corp...and 121 bottles of Western Australian wine. The bid was a success...



Richard Hart is a full time professional puppeteer directing Dream Puppets for the past 25 years, a very successful local, national and international black light puppet theatre based in Melbourne.

He studied Architecture and Art in Sydney during the 1970's and early 80's.

This led to a production of 'The Angler Fish Ballet' that was performed for an

extended season at the Adelaide

International Puppet Festival, 1983. This production was the earliest combination of puppetry and visual projection, (now digital), in Australia.

In the early 1980's, he produced two issues of

Manipulation, following on from Maeve Vella. This was the only regular puppetry magazine in Australia until the mid 1990's.

Richard's involvement with UNIMA Australia spans three decades, firstly as Treasurer, then Secretary twice, the second term being for six years. From 2015 to 2020, he was President.

With Julia Davis, he created the first UNIMA Australia email newsletter in the mid 2000's titled UNIMA OZ. They later produced O.P.E.N. for 5 years, the only online puppetry magazine on Australian puppetry for that period.

www.dreampuppets.com.au



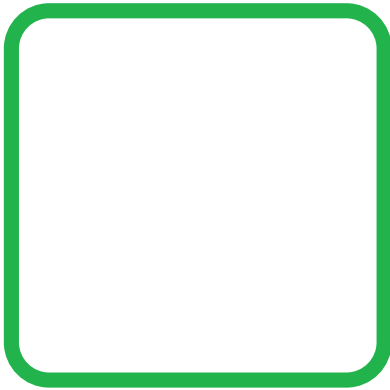
John McDonald is a computer programmer, cyclist and occasional puppeteer. He was Treasurer of UNIMA Australia from 2000 to 2004. His three large turtle puppets are a familiar sight at Climate Rallies in Melbourne.

THE FATHER OF AUSTRALIAN PUPPETRY

W.D.NICOL (1907-1978)

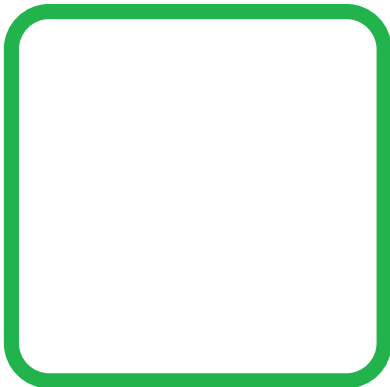
Richard Bradshaw

1

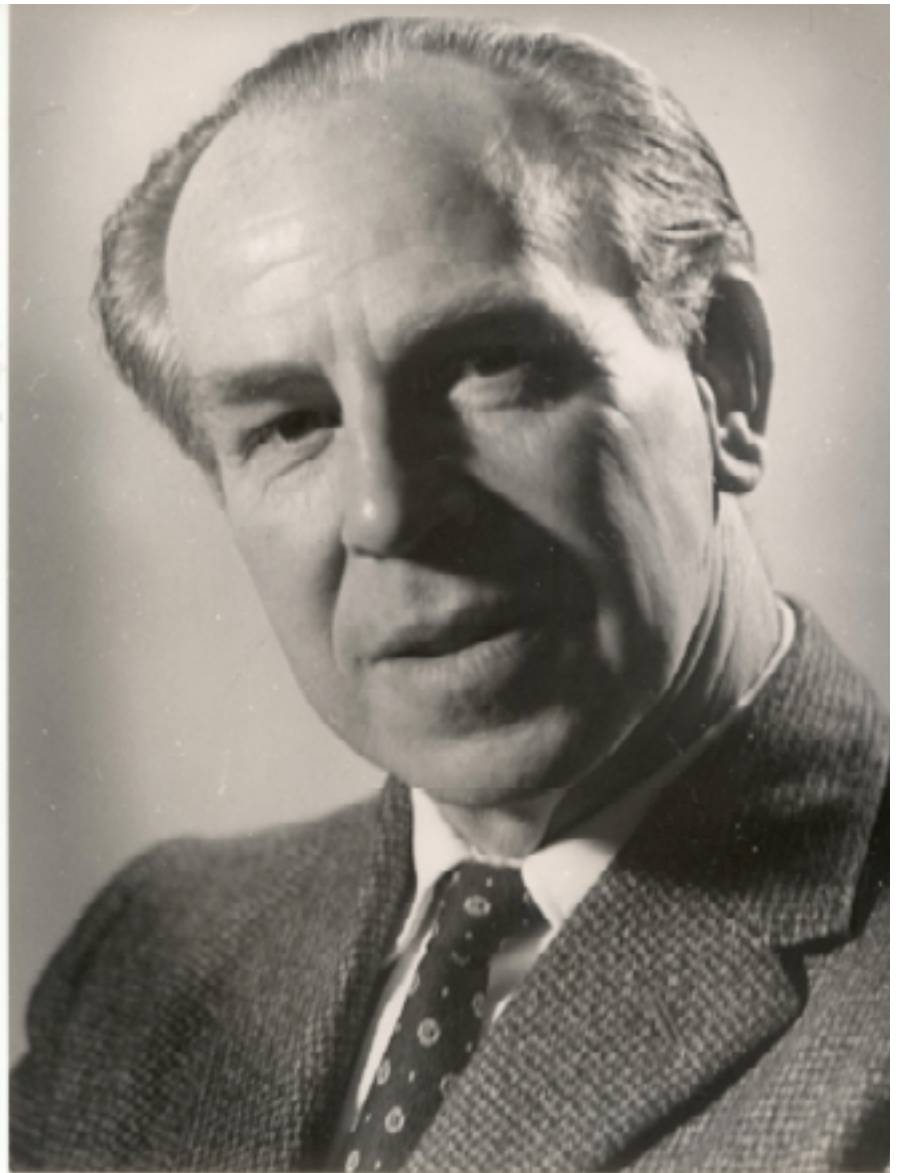


Photos taken at Clovelly
Puppet Theatre
PIX, 27 August 1949

2



The Australasian
Saturday, 22 September
1945, page 1



When Clovelly Puppet Theatre began operating on Saturday 29 May 1949, in addition to glove-puppets there were marionettes that had been lent by Mr W.D. Nicol who had been running a puppet theatre in

Melbourne for four years. These first marionette plays at Clovelly were directed by a Mrs Champion, who had worked with W.D.Nicol, and called him, even as early as that, "the father of puppetry in Australia." 1 ▼

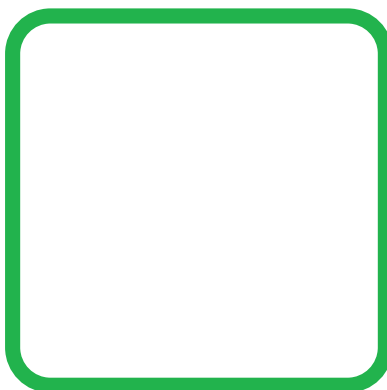
William Dalziel Nicol was born in Dundee, Scotland on 28 April 1907, and arrived in Melbourne with his parents and three sisters in 1922. 15-year-old Bill began work in a toy factory but then became apprenticed to a wood machining firm. In 1929, he became a student at Melbourne Teachers' College. He began primary school teaching in 1931, but in 1936 started teaching Wood and Metal at Hamilton Multi-Purpose High School.

Bill's first experiments with puppets came when he encouraged a group of boys at the high school to make marionettes.

"The puppets were very crude but the enthusiasm they aroused was unmistakable. The first show (an ambitious affair of pirate, underwater scenes and circus acts) was held in a darkened school room to raise money at a school fair. It was a huge success – the show had to be repeated many times to cope with the crowds."

On the recommendation of a school inspector, Bill was invited to return to the Teachers' College in 1940 as an assistant in the Art Department. In 1951, he was promoted to lecturer status. At the college, Bill gathered a group of students who were interested in puppetry and their performances raised money for charities. Initially called "The Nicolini's Collegiate Puppets" this club became the Teachers'

3



The Australasian
Saturday, 22 September
1945, page 12-14

Tip: Use the 'next page'
option in the Trove
directory to cycle through
the images

College Marionette Guild, and raised money for the war effort, as well as entertaining hospitalised soldiers, and interesting Army Education in the possibilities of puppetry in occupational therapy.

In May 1943, after a successful vacation show for children organised by the National Fitness Council, an organiser invited them to form a mobile theatre group, and an Air Raids Precaution van was provided.

It was in that van in 1944 that the inaugural meeting of the Puppet Guild of Australia was held, with 10 people representing four separate groups of puppeteers. Three of these groups, Lillipuppets, Petrouchka Puppets, and Puppet Players gave shows in Kelvin Hall (which later became Playbox Theatre) for a CEMA [Council for the

Encouragement of Music and the Arts] Festival and this led to the establishment of a puppet theatre seating about 100 in the basement of 161 Flinders Lane, under the auspices of the National Fitness Council. Shows were given there on Saturdays from 1945 until 1950, when the lease expired. Puppet shows continued to be created at the Teachers' College. [The Australasian of Saturday, 22 September 1945 had a big article and links to b&w copies of the pages are available here].
2-3 ▼

One person who was introduced to puppetry at the Guild was English-born George Merten, who became a leading figure in Canadian puppetry and a President of the Puppeteers of America in 1956-7.

In mid-1952 Bill was responsible for Saturday morning shows at the National Theatre in St Peter's Hall, East Melbourne. The Marionette plays included *Hansel and Gretel*, *St George and the Dragon*, *Rumpelstiltskin*, *The Sorcerer's Apprentice*, *Bastien and Bastienne* and *Aladdin and His Lamp*. (It is no coincidence that the first program of the Peter Scriven Puppets in 1953 included *St George and the Dragon* and *The Sorcerer's Apprentice*). This led to the Puppet Repertory Theatre which performed at the National Theatre and later (e.g. 1957) at the University's Union Theatre.

Marionettes, gloves puppets and shadows were all used, and the people involved included: Ruth Adams (who had designed and made puppets for Bill from early days and was a puppet-maker for early Peter Scriven shows), Elizabeth Nicol and Jennifer Nicol (daughters of Bill and Emily), Carl Christensen (a director), Gil Brearley, (stage manager and set-builder, who later made his name in cinema), Cicely Fricker (a talented puppet-maker) and Robert Akin (who was responsible for the impressive Pilgrim Puppet Theatre in Hawthorn, Melbourne [1977-1980]).

Bill wrote a report on the beginnings of the Puppet Guild of Australia for the 1944-5 Yearbook of the Puppeteers of America. There he listed pieces performed at the CEMA event in Kelvin Hall on 11-12 August 1944. Marionettes were used for *The Golden Fish* [after Pushkin], *Pinocchio*, *Cinderella* and *Aladdin*. Glove-puppets were used for *The Three Pigs*, and shadow puppets for *How the Elephant Got his Trunk* [Kipling]. He also revealed that at a CEMA event in April 1945 *The Insect Play* by the Capek brothers was performed. This 1920 play is a satire about a tramp who meets a variety of insects displaying different human foibles, and clearly lends itself to puppets.

This first program for adults was on Saturday, 22 July 1950. It included *The Insect*

Play (with the tramp played by a live actor), *St George and the Dragon*, and George Bernard Shaw's only play for marionettes, *Shakes vs Shav*. This was only a year after that play's first performance. The intention was for the program to be restaged on the following 12 to 18 Saturday nights, but a few weeks later Bill revealed to *The Age* that audiences were "below expectations."

An article in the 1947 edition of *Australian Puppeteer*, *Puppets Take to the Vaudeville Stage*, is a well-written account of a performance by an American marionettist, C. Ray Smith, who was performing on the Tivoli circuit in Australia. The writer, Jeremy Scriven, not yet 17, had been allowed backstage to inspect the puppets. In 1948 he began working as a radio announcer at 3HA in Hamilton, using the name Peter Scriven. This is a legendary name in Australian puppetry, and forever associated, since 1956, with the "Tintookies." Peter had been one of the first students to be examined in Puppetry after Bill Nicol had persuaded the Education Department to allow it as a subject in secondary school exams.

In 1953, Bill got special permissions to visit settlements in Central Australia in order to observe the art of Aboriginal people, especially that of children. On sabbatical leave in the U.K. in 1954, assisted by his

Editors Note:

Aboriginal, Torres Strait Islander and other First Nations people are advised that this report by Bill Nicol contains names of deceased people and other content that may be culturally sensitive. Please also be aware that you may see certain words or descriptions in this report which reflect the author's attitude or that of the period in which the item was created.

Nicol's report is linked here for referential purposes only. Views expressed are that of the authors at the time of writing. The report does not reflect the values of respect for First Nations people that are upheld by Richard Bradshaw or by UNIMA Australia and its affiliated contributors.

4

PRG 1267/3
W.D. Nicol
Aboriginal Children's Art
Research,
Fourth Report,
September 1966,
Government of South
Australia State Library

wife Emily, he performed the shadow-play, *How the Moon Was Made*, a glove-puppet version of *Waltzing Matilda*, and a marionette play, *Yalurit and the Rainbow Snake*, all to recorded soundtracks. In 1966 Bill made a second, 3-month expedition to Central Australia, this time with Emily. His report is available online. 4 ▼

How the Moon was Made was the first play by marionettes that I saw at Clovelly Puppet Theatre in 1952, and one of the puppeteers was Norman Hetherington, getting some early experience in using marionettes.

In 1962 Oxford University Press published *Puppetry*, by W.D.Nicol. It's a very good introduction to puppetry, and is illustrated with elegant line-drawings by his daughter, Jennifer Nicol. Included are instructions for the Melbourne Method, a simple way for children to make puppet-heads. The cover uses an image of striking shadow puppets for *How the Moon Was Made*, designed by Jenny and cut from sheet aluminium. This shadow-play was included in 1964 when a group from the Melbourne Teachers' College, under the direction of Bill Nicol, gave a two-week season at the Adelaide Festival. Although the presentation was called *Shadow Plays*, it seems from a program that glove puppets and marionettes were also used.

Bill retired from the Teachers' College in 1968, but on long service leave in the previous year he and Emily had visited Arnhem Land to pursue their interest in the artistic capabilities of Aboriginal children. In that year, 1967, Kormilda College, a residential secondary college for Indigenous students from isolated areas, was being planned to occupy buildings of a war-time hospital in Darwin. Bill was invited to return to teach, and he and Emily decided to spend three "winter" months there each year. Puppetry was one of the art forms that Bill taught, and one project was the making of marionettes decorated with students' own totems. In 1969 the Nicols published a small book, *Aboriginal Children's Stories*, illustrated by their daughter, Jenny.

In early 1975 there was a festival of puppetry at International House in Melbourne. Bill lent shadow puppets made at Kormilda which I was able to use to the taped voice of the students telling their stories. One of his former Kormilda students was staying with the Nicols at the time and spoke at the festival on the content of puppet shows for Indigenous communities. This was Miriam-Rose Ungunmerr who became the Northern Territory's first fully-qualified Aboriginal teacher later that same year. In 2021 she was named Senior Australian of the Year. 5 ▼

On 13 June 1978, on a holiday to Phillip Island, Bill went fishing in a small boat, and was lost when the weather turned bad; he was presumed drowned. It was a tragic loss of a much-loved husband, father and grandfather...and of the man who can justly be remembered as the "father of Australian puppetry."

[Find Richard Bradshaw's biography on page 4](#)

5

Who is Miriam Rose Ungunmerr
[Miriam Rose Foundation Website](#)

The 20th World Congress and Puppetry Festival

Philip Mitchell

In 2003 Spare Parts Puppet Theatre won the right to host the 20th UNIMA World Congress and Puppet festival on behalf of UNIMA Australia. The Congress and Festival was held from the 2nd April to the 12th April 2008. It was the first Congress and Festival to be held in the Southern Hemisphere and only the third time outside Europe in its then 80-year history.

UNIMA 2008 was huge and Spare Parts Puppet Theatre was fortunate to attract the generous support of many people, organisations and partners to assist in what was a fast and challenging journey.

The Million Puppet Project, funded by Lotterywest, was a Guinness World record attempt that aimed to display one million puppets from around the world in the Perth Concert Hall. Thousands of puppets arrived from all over the world creating a splendid and diverse exhibition of puppets, culture and creative endeavour.

Carnival Day was a free community celebration on Sunday the 6th April with a programme of free puppet shows, puppet making,

giant parading puppets, aerial puppets and most importantly the official count of the million puppet exhibition.

Puppetry performances were presented in venues around Perth and Fremantle from over 30 companies from around the world with particular focus on Australian puppetry.

Exhibitions including the exquisite *Mechanics Alive* presented in collaboration with our long-term partner The Western Australia Museum that opened in the second week of March, and the icon of Australian puppetry *Mr Squiggle*, who appeared along with his maker, Norman Hetherington, at the State Library. Mr Squiggle's friends Blackboard, Bill Steam Shovel, and Gus the Snail were also in attendance at the opening.

An extensive Professional Development Program of astounding quality was delivered with over 35 single events including master classes, workshops, speakers, forums, conversations and debates. It was an unprecedented smorgasbord of opportunities for all types

of artists, educators, health workers, dancers, film and television specialists ... everybody!

The Congress of UNIMA itself was held over 5 days in the City of Perth Town Hall where the 65 member countries met to promote the art form of puppetry.

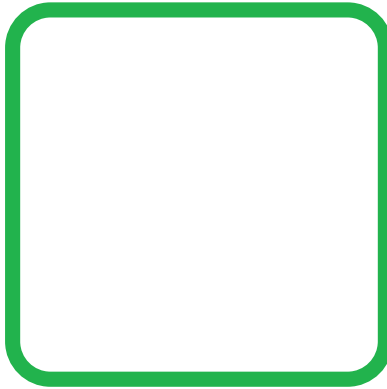
Spare Parts Puppet Theatre had created an event that significantly elevated the profile of puppetry and UNIMA in Australia. Several Australian companies secured international touring from the event and many artists reported how the event has enriched their professional development in puppetry.

Spare Parts Puppet Theatre secured two international invitations from the event to perform Shaun Tan's *The Arrival* at IPAY in Cleveland and the prestigious World Festival of Puppets in Charleville-Mézières.

The hosting of the 20th UNIMA World Congress and Puppetry Festival made 2008 a monumental year for puppetry in Australia and for UNIMA Australia. It was the most comprehensive event in art form and artist

development we could have undertaken and we have stimulated a growing interest in the art form particularly in Western Australia.

From the performance program to the professional development opportunities to the heart of the event, the Million Puppet Project we managed to touch many people from around the world. Spare Parts Puppet Theatre is very proud of our achievement and the quality of the event we hosted. In our untethered desire to present this memorable event, many uninformed judgements were made, and our inexperience could have cost us an extremely viable company - but it didn't and Spare Parts Puppet Theatre forges on as a leader in the artform in Australia.



Truly Madly Puppetry
A documentary about the
World Puppetry Festival in
Perth, 2008
Images and trailer can be
found [here](#).
The documentary is
available to stream /
download for a small fee.



Spare Parts Puppet Theatre is renowned as a driving force in the puppetry landscape in Australia.

We have been creating puppetry works of a world-class standard for 40 years, cultivating a strong and loyal audience base in our local community and touring extensively and consistently around Australia, and internationally through Asia, Europe and North America.

Most recently our international presence has been expanded into South east Asia and several invitations to China with our large-scale work String Symphony.

Our focus is on the creation of new puppetry works and offering ongoing artist training and development in puppetry feeding new and emergent artists into the sector.

[@sparepartspuppets](#)
www.sppt.asn.au

SPARE
PARTS
puppet
theatre 40 YEARS

From Handwritten Newsletter to Digital Magazine

An Overview of Australian Puppetry Communications

Richard Hart

This article attempts to give a context or environment in which the Australian Centre of UNIMA began and grew up, focusing on Australian printed puppetry publications.

Well before *Australian Puppeteer*, *Manipulation* and *The Australian UNIMA Centre*, there existed state based Puppetry Guilds that produced their own newsletters. and continued to do so until around the 1990's.

During the late 1940's, a magazine called *The Australian Puppeteer* was produced which ran for several issues.

1980/81 saw the creation of what became a very important puppetry magazine that endured into the mid 1990's;

Manipulation, a Magazine for Puppeteers, produced by Maeve Vella. She edited all issues except for two in 1984, which were by Richard Hart. *Manipulation* became a nationwide puppetry magazine, allowing puppeteers all around Australia to share news, information and ideas.

[See the Editorial in Manipulation by Maeve Vella pictured on page 14]

"I have never ceased to regret the first moment of rashness which caused me to become editor of this magazine. Those of you who are intrigued - or even amazed - at the apparently irresponsible and sporadic manner in which the "Australian Puppeteer" appears have some justification. It was intended (tell it not in Gath) to issue a quarterly journal - so far, two issues have appeared in two years, and this, the third, may appear in 1949 - we hope so at least.

Such delay would be inexcusable in any other than a voluntary organisation,

where the tendency is to put off until 1949 what can't be done in 1948.

But seriously, I do feel that there is within the Guild a spirit of interest unfortunately not linked with the physical mechanism - we know what we want and don't do it. Many members - I hasten to join their company - can plead pressure of work or domestic chores as an excuse for reduced effort. But the tragedy of all organisations such as ours is that so great possibilities are lost through the inability of volunteers to contribute to the advancement of the cause - be it in shows, meetings or publications.

As one of the principal sinners, may I take this opportunity of appealing to all members to come to the aid of the Guild in a practical way - bombard the Secretary with letters, requests, notes of your doings. Evidence of live interest among members will inevitably assist in the rapid revitalisation of a body which, I feel strongly,

EDITORIAL:

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Yours imploringly,

Editor.

Pictured: Maeve Vella's Editors Note. The origins of Manipulation newsletter

has a definite value in the community. Yours imploringly, Editor”.

From the 1970's onwards a number of Australian Arts/ education bodies produced regular, nationwide magazines that included puppet theatre, such as *Lowdown*, published by Carclew in Adelaide.

Puppet theatres like The Marionette Theatre of Australia NSW, Handspan VIC, Spare Parts WA, and QTOP QLD, all produced printed newsletters.

The names of the newsletters include *Sparticles* by Spare Parts, around the 1990's and *Fingerprint* by Handspan, around the same era.

There have also been many Australian puppetry books and books that include puppetry to a large extent.

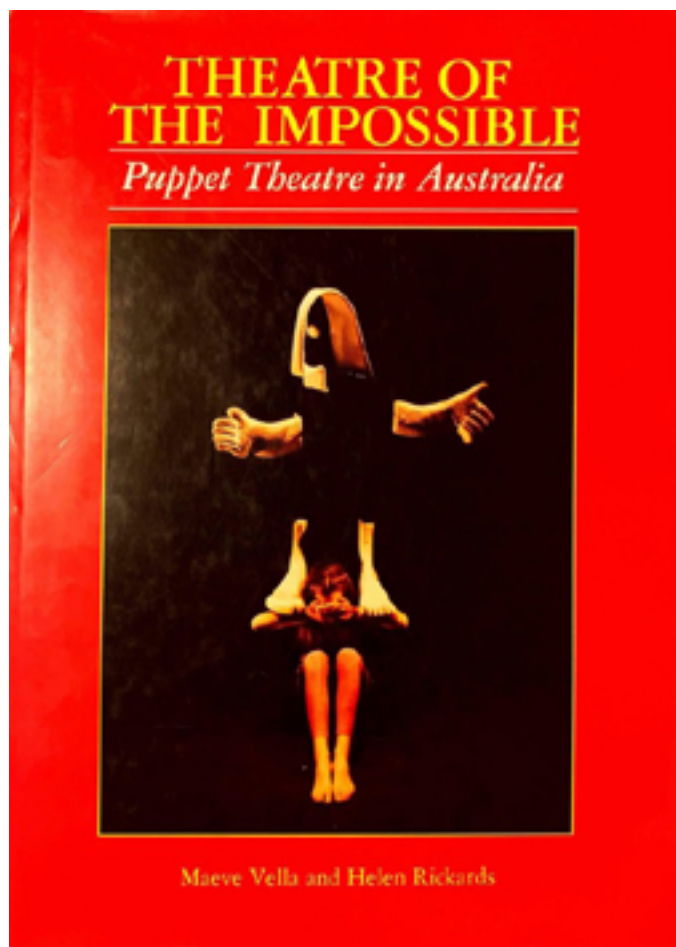
Richard Bradshaw and I worked on a list of books we know of and there are certainly more.

The Theatre of the Impossible by Maeve Vella and Helen Rickards, published in 1989, is one of the most visually spectacular.

For more in-depth information, I recommend you check State and Federal archives, Carclew Adelaide publications, Sydney Opera House and the Victorian Arts Centre.

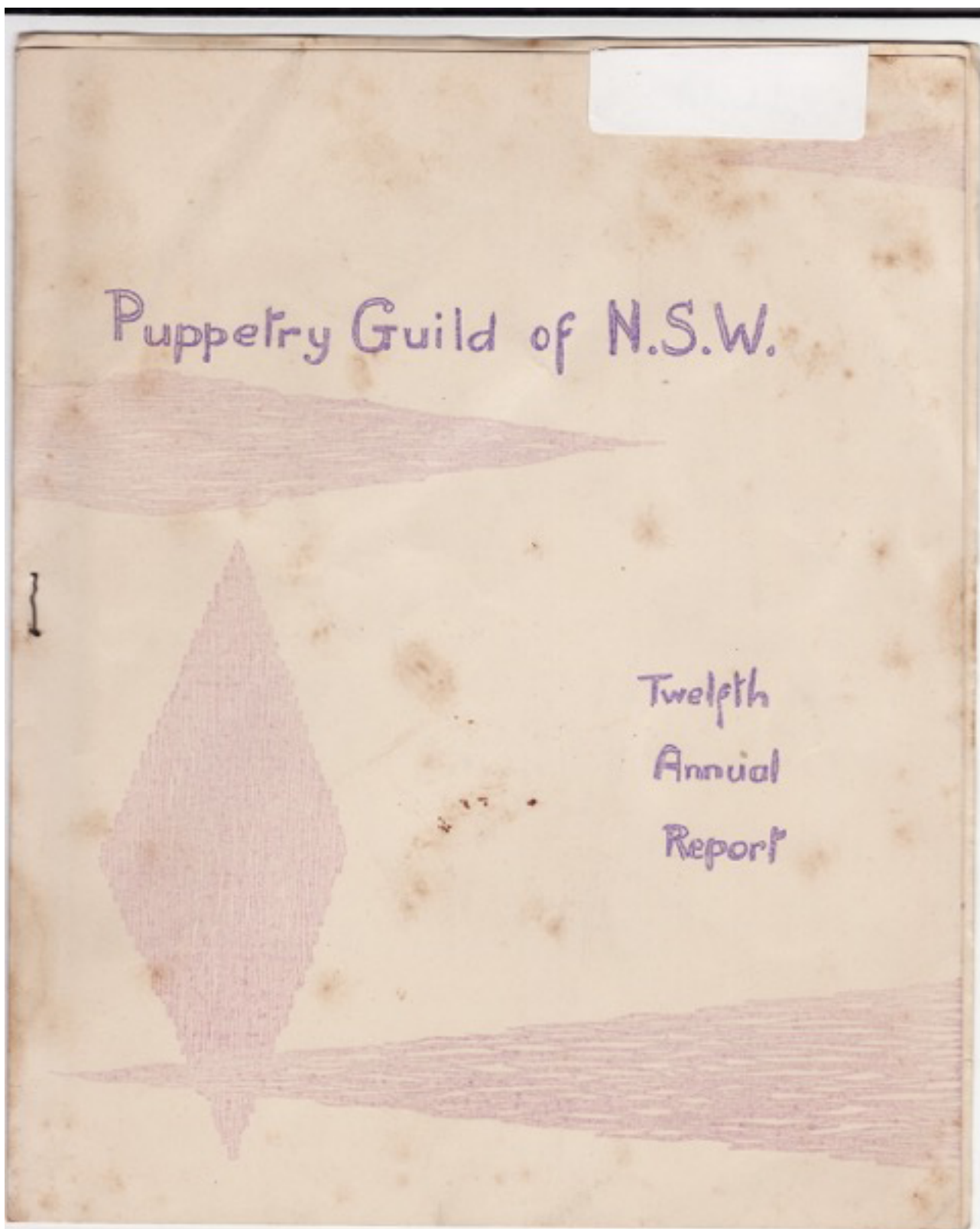
Thank you to all the following for their assistance and contributions: Richard Bradshaw, Maeve Vella, Helen Rickards, Michael Barlow, Rita Monteith, John Lewis and David Hamilton.

[Find Richard Hart's biography on page 6](#)



The Theatre of the Impossible. Puppet Theatre in Australia

Maeve Vella and Helen Rickards (Melbourne, VIC: Craftsman House, 1989)



Copy of the 12th Annual Report Cover, which was handwritten



The Marionette Theatre of Australia Ltd
at the Sydney Sailors' Home
106-108 George Street,
The Rocks, Sydney, 2000.
Phone: 241 1391



JUNE, 1981, No. 5

JUNE, 1981, No. 5

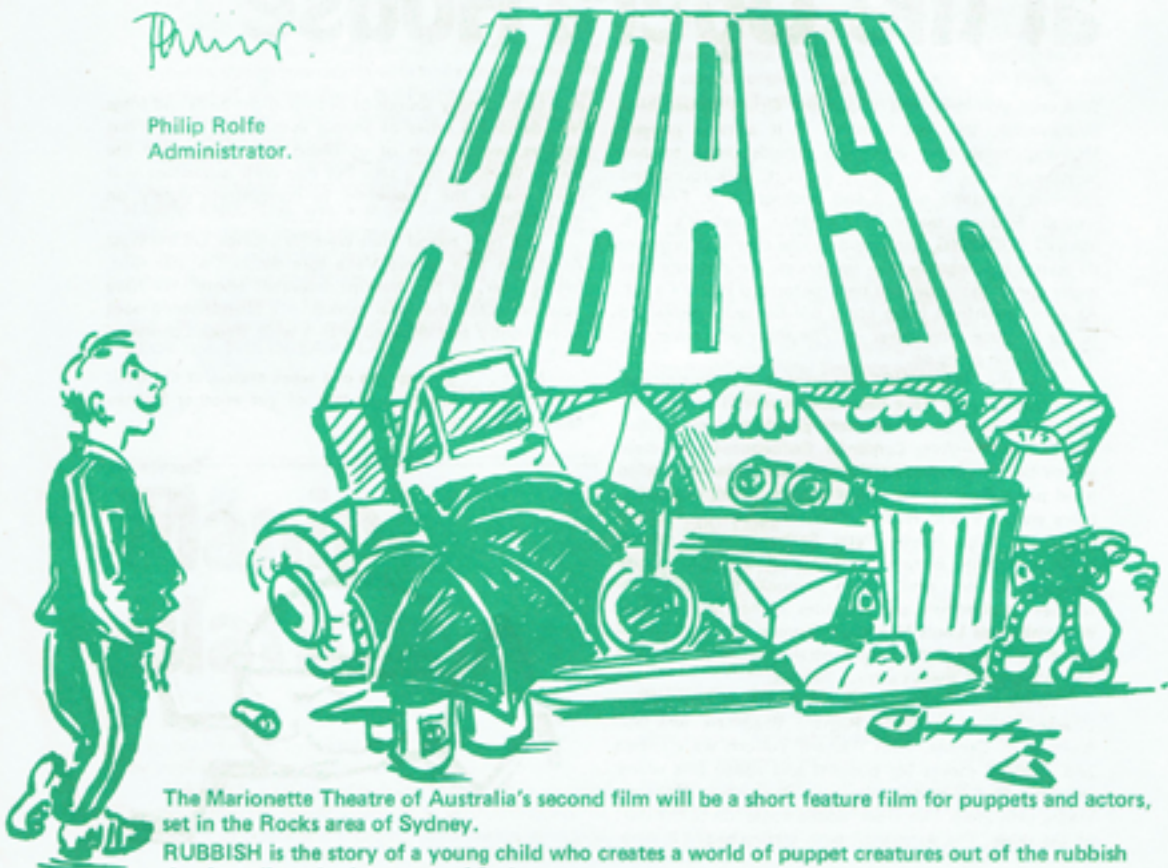
NEWSLETTER

Dear Friends,

In our last newsletter you will recall we announced the MTA's move to its new permanent home. The last few months have been particularly busy ones for us — the acquisition of a building as large as the Sydney Sailors' Home and one in such a derelict state, has presented all involved with ample opportunities for using their spare time. With the initial repairs and reconnections done, we have managed to install our offices and workshop. To start raising the money needed to convert the building, we have appointed a professional fund-raiser who is approaching companies and individuals on our behalf for either financial or material support. Donations from \$10.00 upwards will be greeted with enthusiasm. Please don't hesitate to contact us if you feel you may be able to contribute in any way. The Sailors' Home building is open on weekdays with several parts open for inspection, if you are interested.

Best wishes,

Philip Rolfe
Administrator.



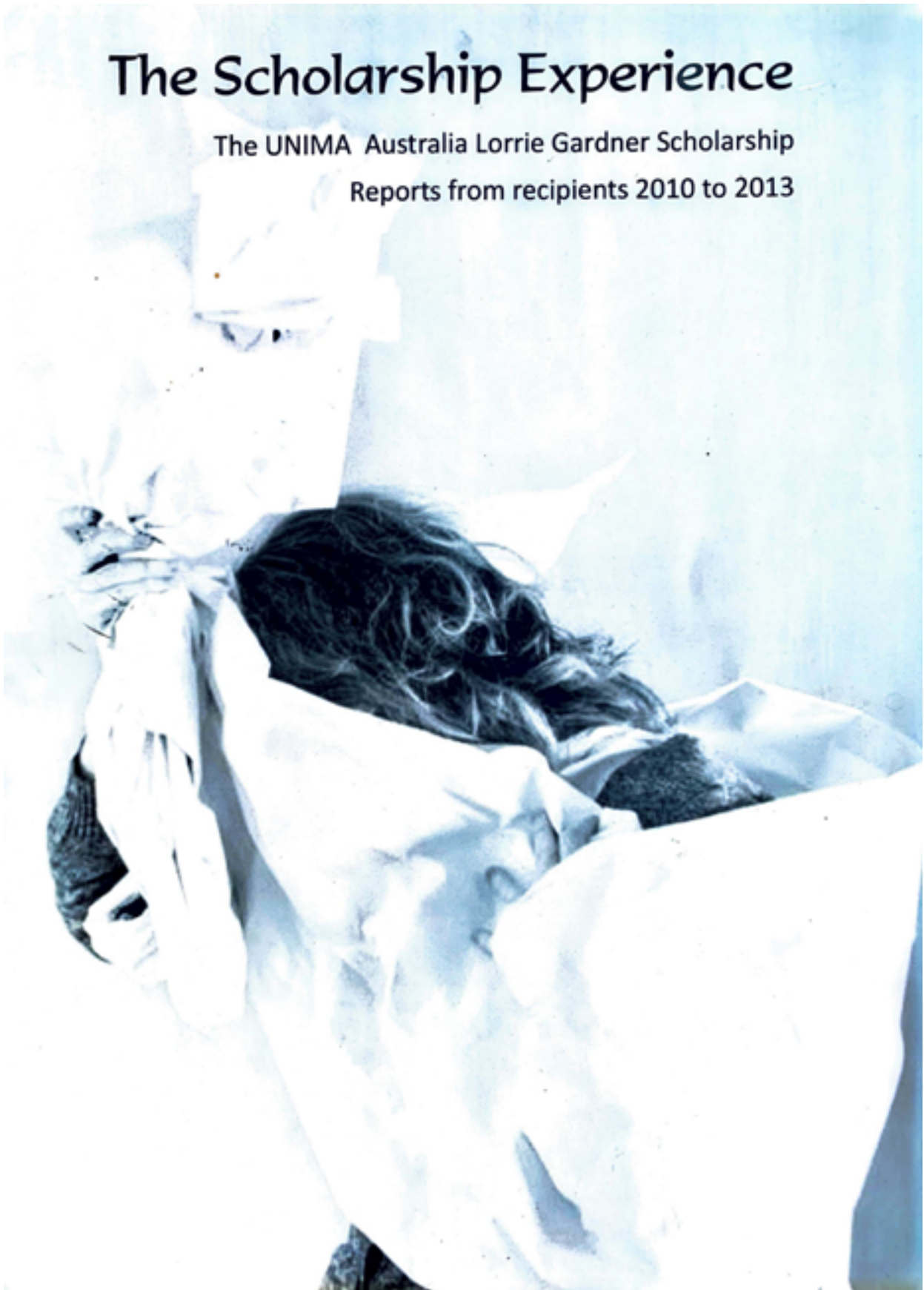
The Marionette Theatre of Australia's second film will be a short feature film for puppets and actors, set in the Rocks area of Sydney.

RUBBISH is the story of a young child who creates a world of puppet creatures out of the rubbish that he collects in the streets of Sydney.

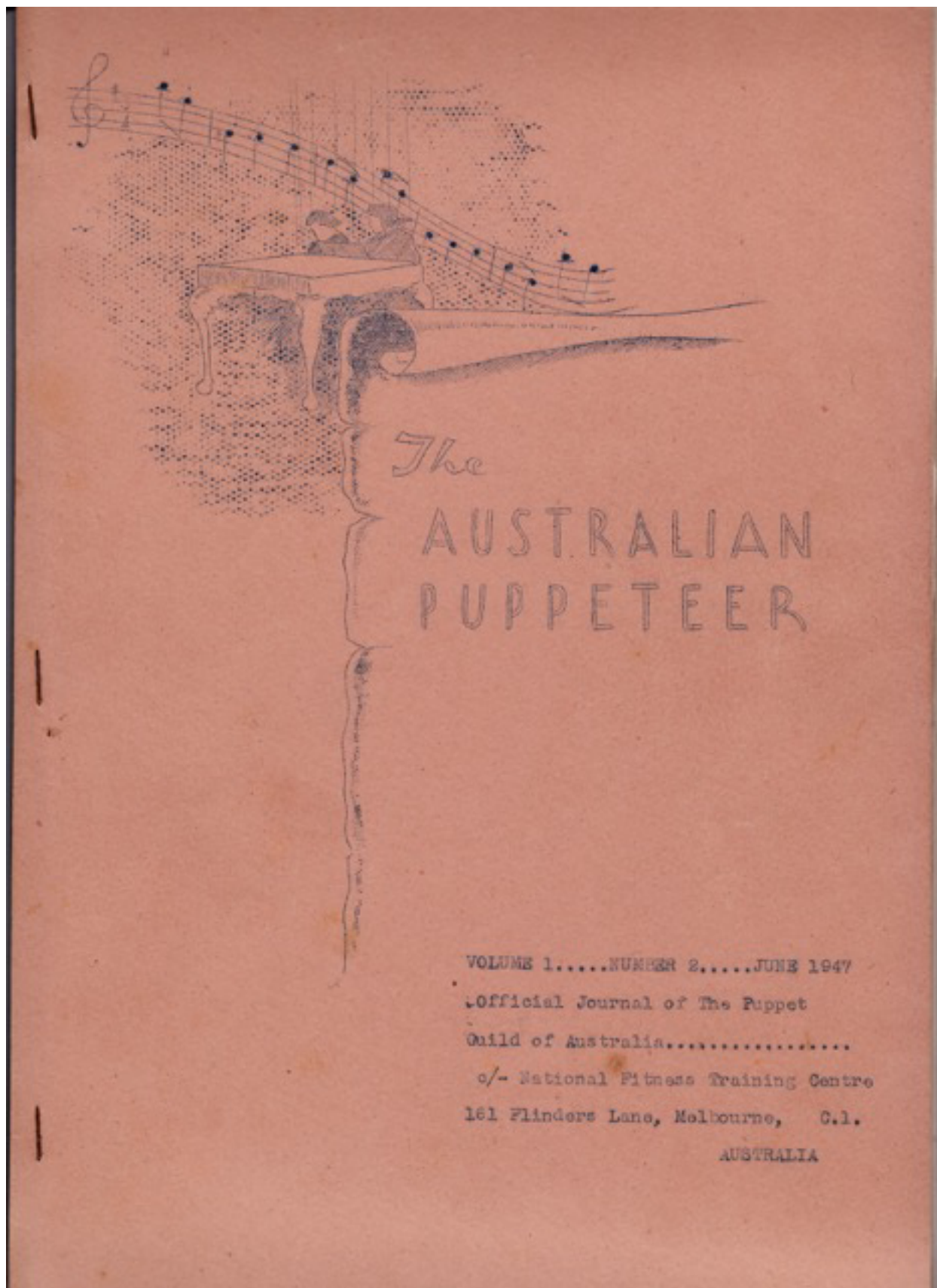
The Scholarship Experience

The UNIMA Australia Lorrie Gardner Scholarship

Reports from recipients 2010 to 2013



UNIMA Australia - Lorrie Gardner Scholarship Reports cover



Pictured: Australian Puppeteer No 2 1947 cover

Australian Puppeteer From Bulletin to Magazine

Richard Hart

In June, 1972, Bulletin No.1 of the Australian Centre of UNIMA was produced by Edith Murray, our first honorary Secretary.

She remained in this role until 1979, providing 26 issues. These were all printed on a roneo device, (pre-photocopy technology) that required a stencil made on special sheets that could be used on a typewriter. The typed stencil would then be attached to the roneo machine and a methylated spirit based ink was used to print up to a hundred or more copies. Paper format was foolscap and the print a distinctive mauve colour, on only one side of the sheet.

From 1979, Beverley Campbell Jackson succeeded Edith as Secretary, producing photocopied issues on A4 sheets and later followed on by William Pitt in 1981.

A new look and name was created, *UNIMA Australia Newsletter*, and it appears

to have been created on an early word processor and printed on both sides. In 1982, Pitt's second issue included 'tone drop-out' photo images on the back page. Around this time, new developments were available for printing short runs cheaply and *Manipulation*, an Australian puppetry magazine, had been recently created.

I will look at this magazine and its relationship with UNIMA Australia later on in the next section of my article.

Up till late 1982, all issues were produced by the Secretary of UNIMA Australia. Between then and March, 1983, a couple of newsletters were team edited by Norman Hetherington, Richard Bradshaw and Axel Axelrad.

In the aftermath of Adelaide's International Puppet Festival, 1983, Annie Heitman took over as Secretary and editor of the newsletter until late 1997. During the Adelaide Puppet Festival, Maeve Vella, the editor of *Manipulation*, made daily printed issues of updates, news, etc about and during the Festival. The

relationship between UNIMA Australia and *Manipulation* from then on was to share some important information and avoid repeating that which was the same.

Annie was originally from Adelaide and knew Lloyd Noble, who worked with her for a number of issues until his tragic death in 1997. Lloyd did most of the typing on what appears to be a word processor.

Axel Axelrad took the baton from Annie, who still remained Secretary, in late 1987. The cover design was changed, remaining the same until 1995. Over that period, the editors were:

Axel Axelrad
1987 - 1989

Dennis Murphy
1989 - 1990

Axel Axelrad
1990 - 1991

Peter Grasshopper
1991 - 1993

During Peter's editorship the newsletter was in folded A3 form, stapled in the fold. It had also become more regular than *Manipulation*

We owe a debt of gratitude to all those mentioned in this article for providing a wonderful printed heritage, full of enormous amounts of information, for current and future puppeteers and puppetry enthusiasts.

and included photos that could be readable given the limited resources. Only screened or dot printed photos worked well. It had also grown to be around 16 pages.

Following Peter Grasshopper was Jennie Pfeiffer, 1993 to 1995, with more use of computer layout. By mid June, 1995, the newsletter had expanded to 20 pages, with a new editor, Jenny Andersen. *Manipulation* was no longer being produced, so in September the same year, the newsletter officially became a magazine with a new title; *UNIMA Australia*, growing to 28 pages.

The birth of *Australian Puppeteer* magazine was Spring 1997, when Anita Sinclair became the new editor. Her plan was to have the cover theme as the "Faces of Australian Puppetry" and a name change to *Australian Puppeteer*.

It remained as our UNIMA Centre's magazine for another 16 years, the final being 'issue 42', a glossy colour cover, with articles focusing on the Tarrengower Puppet Fest in Autumn, 2012.

Over the 16 year period, the format was A4, except for four issues which were A5 "zines". Between 2000 to 2002, any main Australian puppetry event was celebrated in a special issue, including three covering before, during and after the 2008 UNIMA Congress and Festival in Perth. All the editors were volunteers at this time, and all with their own ideas and visions. They spent many hours cutting and pasting as with earlier issues to eventually manage a computer layout as the 2000s progressed.

Following Anita Sinclair here is a list of all the other editors:

1999 to 2002 - Philip Millar.
From 2002 to 2007 - the

editorship alternated between Sarah Kriegler and Julia Davis with Samantha Ferris and Vicki Jaeger filling in on some issues.

Special issue 35, 2008 - the editorial team comprised Ken Evans, Julia Davis, Vicki Jaeger and Penelope Bartlau.

From 2008, the editors were Julia Davis, Vicki Jaeger, Leon Hendroff and Robert Reid, the final editor.

We owe a debt of gratitude to all those mentioned in this article for providing a wonderful printed heritage, full of enormous amounts of information, for current and future puppeteers and puppetry enthusiasts.

For further descriptions on what it was like to be one of the editors, look up *Australian Puppeteer* 'issue 29', 2005 on the UNIMA Australia website.

[Find Richard Hart's Biography on page 6](#)

Opening Doors and Staying Connected

O.P.E.N. Magazine

2002 - 2017

Julia Davis

In 2002 Lorrie Gardner, who was president of UNIMA Australia then, asked me if I would step in and edit the Spring edition of *Australian Puppeteer*, as Sarah Kriegler, the current editor, was performing in Singapore with *Polyglot*. Lorrie knew I had some previous editing experience and as a budding 'puppet tragic', my commitment to the subject matter was assured.

This edition was a significant one, because it covered the First National Puppetry and Animatronics Summit which had just been held at the Melbourne Arts Centre and had been attended by all the puppet 'heavies', including Penny Francis (UK) and Ronnie Burkett (CAN). Axel Axelrad, Norman Hetherington and Richard Bradshaw were honoured as lifetime members of UNIMA for their outstanding achievements, and plans for a proposed Puppetry course at the VCA and Australia's 2008 UNIMA

Congress had been mooted during the event. It looked as if the noughties would be momentous for Australian Puppetry.

At the time *Australian Puppeteer* was published three-monthly as a 32 - 36 page black and white printed magazine, an onerous task for one editor, usually a practising puppeteer. After my 2002 foray into the editorship, the UNIMA committee decided that the editor's workload could be shared. Sarah and I would produce two issues a year each. This arrangement of multiple editors continued until at least 2009.

Assembling the magazine in the early 2000's felt like a physical workout - crouching over giant A1 sheets of paper layouts, gritting my teeth using guillotines, weights and shears, my tongue working the corners of my mouth, scissoring around puppet images in photos to create

'arty' collages, and finally rolling away the snotty balls of rubber cement excess with my fingers, before hefting the hard copy to the printers for preliminary scanning. Then, in 2004, Sarah Kriegler taught me how to use 'Pages' on our spanking new Apple Mac, so I stepped into the 21st century. I enjoyed the facility of the design options, the selection of material and proof-reading, and I learned so much about all aspects of puppetry, puppeteers, trends, performance and construction tips. I made contact with many puppeteers who I otherwise would never have met or corresponded with. Each published edition was like a birth, but despite some dismaying printing errors and disappointing photo reproductions (of course, there were no editorial missteps!), each issue felt like a wonderful achievement when I held the first pristine copy in my hands.



These 3 sculpted heads of Axel Axelrad, Norman Hetherington and Richard Bradshaw by Julia Davis were attached to trophies and presented to each of them as UNIMA lifetime achievement awards at the 2002 Puppetry Summit. Image from Australian Puppeteer Spring 2002. Photo: Julia Davis

The last magazine I edited was issued in August 2008 after the UNIMA 2008 congress. In the preceding years there had been so much to report: new festivals, another Summit, the launch of the VCA puppetry course, the lead-up to the Congress, which generated a lot of excitement and new UNIMA members.

In September 2006, my partner, Richard Hart, who was secretary of UNIMA at the time, and I set up *UNIMA OZ*, the first email UNIMA newsletter. *Australian Puppeteer* was still being published as a hardcopy three times a year, but we felt there were some more urgent and time-sensitive notifications which needed to

be aired in the lead-up to the 2008 Congress.

'Kassius Kamel' was recruited to pass on e-goss. Kassius is an almost life-sized Camel puppet I constructed in 2004 and he ended up having a far more illustrious career as a columnist than as a performer. When the e-goss ran dry, Kassius' commentary extended to politics, philosophy, the state of the art of puppetry and other silliness.

UNIMA OZ ran for approximately three years, but, unfortunately, none of our online issues survive (that we know of) due to a computer hardware meltdown - the downside of the ephemerality of online

media! For those, who did not have email (and there were very few) we mailed out streaky black and white copies from our home printer, and some of these survived.

Richard resigned from his position as Secretary of UNIMA in 2009, and I let go of the UNIMA media editorship. Post Congress there was a slump in UNIMA membership but the stories were still out there to be shared.

In February 2010 *O.P.E.N.* was born! Richard came up with the acronym, *O.P.E.N.* for Oz Puppetry Email Newsletter - open and free to all who wanted to contribute or partake in puppetry fare.



JUST DESSERTS

Yes, it's me! I'm still here - but not for long, for I must flee the impending "Great Australian Camel Cull". I now consider myself to be A Refugee From Australia.

However, thanks to the generosity of Saudi Arabia, I and my extended family will be able to take asylum there to escape this accursed camelocide. There, instead of being proscribed as pests and pariahs of the pastures, we will be preserved as the Pampered Pets of Princes. Our just desserts, indeed!

But do stay connected via my facebook page - a preview below - and add yourselves to my extensive list of friends.

Kassius Kamel is now on facebook



Kassius Kamel
dromedary



Kassius Kamel -
distant
relative



Cassio Kamel -
relative distance
advised!



curious...



...and curiouser



?

Here are some of Kassius' friends:

Kassius is a fan of: Opera, Listerine, Pilates, Cosmetic Dentistry and a variety of Dates.....

Kassius Kamel's 'Just Desserts' from the first O.P.E.N. February 2010.

Our first O.P.E.N. featured an image of many doors hanging from a hills hoist. Richard had constructed the doors, especially for this significant opening event. The front cover of every subsequent issue showed a door with a topical puppetry image presented in the top panel.

We felt there was a need to 'open' up communication about puppetry to everyone, and to celebrate and share what's happening in the Australian expression of the art form - from multi-million dollar productions involving giant animatronic

beasts to Sunday morning sock-puppet-making with the neighbourhood children. Kassius Kamel was once again employed as our 'Outback Correspondent' and we had great fun establishing his style as commentator. Bossy, pompous, iconoclastic and controversial, he was O.P.E.N.'s puppet mascot, his regular column, 'Just Desserts', referencing his history as political activist, opera singer, space traveller, social media influencer, attendee at royal weddings and puppet festivals.

I mention Kassius at length because often a 'Kassius inspiration' jump started an issue of O.P.E.N. and sparked the playfulness in the presentation of material. Kassius even received fan mail as our readership widened.

O.P.E.N. ran for five years from February 2010 to September, 2015, and we produced fifty issues of up to sixteen pages each. At times, we needed to divide the issues into Parts A and B to include all the 'What's On's, features and photos and keep the megabytes low for email transmission.

For the first two years O.P.E.N. was disseminated monthly, but this was reduced to once every two months with the addition of 'OP-Dates', an interim 'update' bulletin which we sent out 'half' way ('OP' being half the title) between full O.P.E.N. issues. We published thirty-two OP-Dates. The OP-Date cover included images of dates, Kassius's favourite food. Pure silliness.

Nonetheless, our mailing list grew substantially over the five years and our circulation included a long list of overseas recipients whom we had met during our years of touring. We believe a lot of O.P.E.N. issues were forwarded on to many more puppetry enthusiasts. For five years O.P.E.N. provided up-to-date coverage of festivals, performances, workshops, slams and

other puppetry events and get-togethers around Australia. Reviews, profiles of puppeteers and news and interviews about artists' projects were included along with lots and lots of glorious puppet pictures in full colour. We didn't offer to publish papers or academic discussions; our focus was to report "suspected puppet activity" in Australia. However, World Puppetry Day participation around the globe was featured each year and some international employment opportunities, festival applications and grant notifications were announced.

One highlight was Australian, Simon Rann's regular journal submissions about his life on the road with Compagnie Philippe Genty, an insight into the everyday routines of a puppeteer performing in one of the most renowned companies in the world. Richard and Simon had worked together as puppeteers on an Australian TV puppetry series, *Li'l Horrors*, in 2000 and had kept in contact over the years.

It was also important for us to acknowledge and commemorate the passing of puppeteers. An entire issue was devoted to Norman Hetherington's contribution to Australian Puppetry.

The last printed issue of *Australian Puppeteer* was distributed in 2012, following the first Maldon Puppetry Festival. *O.P.E.N.*

was now Australia's main collected source of puppetry information at this time.

In 2013 Kay Yasugi came on board *O.P.E.N.* and reported significantly on puppetry in NSW with PSS (Puppetry Scene Sydney). She included brief reviews of productions she had attended and some fine sketches chronicling her travels and observations. Her input was invaluable and we began to include a number of links to YouTube performances and other intriguing examples of puppetry she had chanced upon, producing an evolving plexus of puppetry connections.

Richard became President of UNIMA Australia in 2014. There hadn't been any puppetry publications since 2012 so *UNIMA Australia Newsletter* was launched online which Richard and I assembled as needed. The first issue was sent out in September 2014. It was a modest publication, mainly news items and What's On's and was about 3-5 pages in length, although some issues were more substantial when there was significant activity. Due to this UNIMA's commitment to *O.P.E.N.* was disseminated less regularly during its final year in 2015, although each issue was still impressingly comprehensive - and there were more Op-dates. By then, puppetry was developing a thriving presence on social media and I could no longer keep my ageing fingers on the pulse.

Richard and I published the final regular *O.P.E.N.* in September 2015 and we devoted our resources to the *UNIMA Newsletter*. I continued with the online *UNIMA Newsletter* until February, 2017, when Kay Yasugi took over the mantle and developed the newsletter into the elaborate online publications UNIMA has today.

The embers of *O.P.E.N.* were still glimmering, however. When Axel Axelrad passed in November 2018 at the age of ninety-nine, Richard and I produced a special issue of *O.P.E.N.* in January 2019. This 2 part online commemorative edition, featured Axel's life, work and puppets and celebrated his remarkable gift to 20th century Australian puppetry and children's television.

As editor of the new online *UNIMA OZ* and *UNIMA E-Updates* Kay Yasugi has continued the *O.P.E.N.* tradition of providing a main course newsletter with appetisers in between. And an infinite tracery of links! We are all staying connected.



Final copy of O.P.E.N. September 2015, showing front covers of all issues from 2010.



Julia is a full-time artist, puppet-maker, designer and performer. Her creative involvement with Dream Puppets began over 20 years ago and she has performed with them in Europe, the Middle East, South America and Asia.

Julia has a background working in secondary and TAFE teaching, opera, sculpting and writing, and still performs as a classical singer. Julia was editor of Australian Puppeteer from 2002 to 2009. She founded 'O.P.E.N.' with Richard Hart in 2010 and produced over 50 issues until 2015.

www.dreampuppets.com.au

An Australian Puppet Book List

Richard Hart &
Richard Bradshaw



Rod and Hand Puppets from Cardboard

Axel Axelrad (Olinda: Victoria, self published, 1995)

A.S.E.A. Bulletin

Suzanne King and Edward Broomhall (Launceston: Tasmania, 1979)

The Puppetry Handbook

Written and illustrated by Anita Sinclair (Melbourne: Victoria: Richard Lee Publishing, 1995)

Puppetry and Visual Theatre in Australia and New Zealand

Edited by Geoffrey Milne and Peter J. Wilson (Melbourne: Australasian Drama Studies, 2007)

The Space Between. The Art of Puppetry and Visual Theatre in Australia

Peter J. Wilson and Geoffrey Milne (Melbourne: Currency Press, 2004)

Richard Bradshaws Guide to Shadow Puppets

Richard Bradshaw (Garden Bay, B.C.: Charlemagne Press, 2015)

Puppet's Progress

By Jan Bussell [London: Faber and Faber, 1953] has two chapters on their 1952 tour of Australia.



Puppets of Australia

Compiled by Norman Hetherington [Brookvale, NSW: Prior Press, 1974]

Strolling Players' Spirit Lives On; The life of Joan & Betty Rayner

Text by David Weil
[Melbourne: Australian Children's Theatre Foundation, 2011]

or the earlier edition

Strolling Players (Joan & Betty Rayner)

Mavis Thorpe Clark,
[Melbourne: Lansdowne Press, 1972]

Puppets for Juniors

Kay and Allan Lewis
[Melbourne?: Australian Red Cross, 1950]

Hand Shadows

Norman and Margaret Hetherington [North Ryde, N.S.W.: Angus & Robertson, 1988]

Life Among the Little People

Peter Hartland [Bicton, W.A.: Pembroke, 1991]

How I Make Marionettes

Peter Hartland [Bicton, W.A.: Pembroke, undated]

The Puppet Theatre That Walked (a play)

Joan and Betty Rayner
[London: English Theatre Guild, 1970]

The Girl Who Became A Bird (a play for puppets or actors in Two Plays

Joan and Betty Rayner
[London: English Theatre Guild, 1970]

Puppetry and Allied Crafts

W.D.Nicol [Melbourne: National Fitness Council, (no later than 1955)]

Puppetry

W.D.Nicol [Melbourne: Oxford University Press, 1962]

Ten Plays for Puppets

Musette Morell [Sydney: Currawong, 1950]

Proved Popular Puppet Plays

Millicent Harry [Melbourne: Temperance Committee, Presbyterian Church, 1971]

Tinkerbell's Puppet Scrap Book

Compiled by Mildred Clarke
[Perth: self-published, 1988]

Bill Nicol

Margaret Wallace
[Melbourne: self-published, 2012]

(This book by a daughter of Bill includes Bill's work with puppets and some good coloured photos.)

River Boy

A puppetry book by Wugularr children and community [Abbotsford, VIC: Kids' Own Publishing, 2013]

Puppets

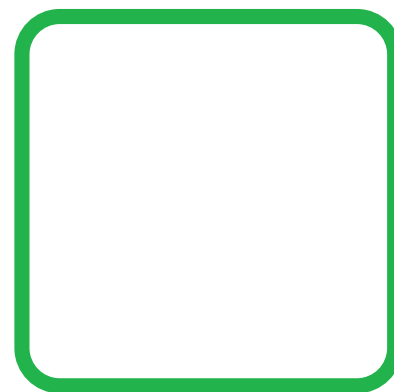
Carole Hooper [Glebe, NSW: Pascal Press, 1990]

Australian Musicals from the beginning

Peter Pinne and Peter Wyllie Johnston [London: Austin Macauley Publishers, 2019.

[Find Richard Bradshaw's Biography on Page 4](#)

[Find Richard Hart's Biography on Page 6](#)



[To find out more about Helen Rickards or Handspan Theatre, check out the archival website here](#)

FINGERPRINT

Published by Handspan Theatre (1984-1993)

Helen Rickards

FINGERPRINT
*was the quarterly
newsletter of
Melbourne-based
Handspan Theatre.*

Its first edition announced that the publication was “to let people know what the company, and members of the company are doing and planning”.

It aimed to promote Handspan to industry colleagues and organisations on a regular basis to attract small financial donations to the company through a “Friends” campaign, rewarded by a subscription to the publication.

Company shows were announced, tour dates published and news of members’ independent projects in the arts industry. The second issue announced three imminent weddings of member couples and an impressive repertoire of current shows: *Secrets*, *The Haunted*, *Tutta Casa Letto e Chiesa*, and *Smalls* on the mainstage for adult audiences and were touring nationally and



internationally; *Guts on the road* in Victoria and South Australia; the filming of a video rock clip for *Mondo Rock*; and *I-con*, a “theatrical environment” exhibition exhibited nationally to galleries in five states.

Ken Evans designed all the shows and was one of the three collaborating artists in *I-Con*. He was also one of the wedding protagonists and Handspan’s Board Chairperson. Looking back, it was a rollicking creative time for not only Ken, but for everyone – and clearly relentlessly engaging.

Later editions included news of puppets and theatre companies across Australia in snippets about members, profiles of company artists and announcements about international puppetry artists and sometimes, UNIMA events: Eric Bass at the Alexander Theatre, Jacques Templerud Masterclasses and the UNIMA 1988 Congress in Japan.

FINGERPRINT’s format was simple; a black and white A3 fold. Its distribution was equally simple – 100-150 copies folded, addressed and mailed out by members, volunteering for the task in late night sessions around Handspan’s glass-topped Board table.

The publication kept its fingerprint logo until 1992 when 3 glossy editions appeared including the last, promoting *Viva La Vida Frida Kahlo* in Volume 9, No. 1, April 1993.

*For more on Helen Rickards,
use the QR code on page 28*

From The Archives

Curated Articles by Katherine Hannaford

With a note from the editor...

The following articles are extracts taken from the wide library of Australian puppetry publications from over the years.

We've done the sifting through countless magazines to choose these articles for you. They are living evidence of some of the key moments in UNIMA and puppetry's historic place in Australian arts and culture. The articles here are not a definitive list in their significance but act as an entry point for investigation, reflection and further discussion of the artform's past.

I'd like to acknowledge the tireless work of Katherine Hannaford in digitising every available magazine, from *UNIMA Oz*, to *Manipulation* and *Australian Puppeteer* that is now available on our website. It is through the efforts of custodians like Katherine that the art form and its practices are given space to live on and inspire new generations of puppeteers, designers, makers and theatre practitioners.

Australian Puppetry Guild 9th Annual Report 1977

Edith Murray an Appreciation

Australian Puppetry Guild 6th Annual Report

1974 - Clovelly Puppet Theatre 25th Anniversary

Manipulation #4

Anita Sinclair Interview

Manipulation June 1981

Word from the Workshop
Glues

Manipulation February 1982

More on glue

Manipulation Winter 1990

Tintookies come to town (pg 14)

Manipulation Summer 1991

Obituary - Ross Hill

Manipulation Spring 89

Obituary - Beverley Campbell Jackson

Australian Puppeteer 1 2011

Norman Hetherington
Obituary

Australian Puppeteer 35

Brief History of Puppetry in Australia (pg. 3)

Australian Puppeteer 37

Puppet History - a quiz
(answers are on pg. 32)

Australian Puppeteer Autumn 2002

What is UNIMA? An Organisational Flowchart

Australian Puppeteer

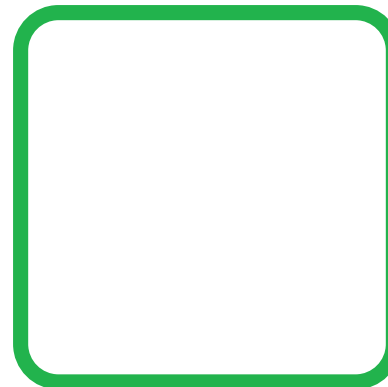
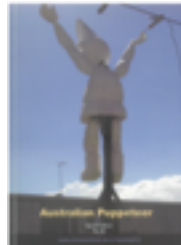
Summer 04/05 Possibilities of Puppetry by Dr Margaret Williams

Australian Puppeteer 35

Being a Puppet (pg. 20)

Find the QR Code on the next page. It will take you to UNIMA Australia's dedicated webpage where you'll find all of these publications and more!

Happy exploring!



THE LORRIE GARDNER SCHOLARSHIP FUND

•
Gayle Gardner

The Lorrie Gardner Scholarship Fund was set up to support puppeteers in advancing their craft. The fund has supported puppeteers in research, study and both national and international professional development tours.

Lorrie ran the Gardner Puppet Theatre for almost 40 years, entertaining thousands of children at primary schools, kindergartens and preschools. She wrote all her own material, designed and built puppets, scenery, theatres and recorded music and sound effects. At its height the theatre was delivering 800 shows a year. Lorrie's puppet shows were frequently topical, exploring issues associated with growing up and fitting in, school-yard bullying and environmental problems such as climate change and endangered species.

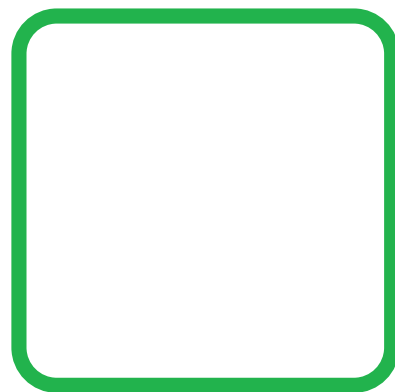
The Gardner Puppet Theatre travelled all over Melbourne and Victoria in a brightly painted van. The feature paintwork was modelled on one of Lorrie's giant puppets, a caterpillar, which in performance was manipulated by a parade of children, each walking beneath and helping hold it high in the air.

Lorrie passed away after a short illness in 2005 and the family found it difficult to let go of the van, so it became the family's travelling camper van, used for many trips. The van often created a stir when people recognised it and remembered Lorrie's shows.

Recently, the Gardner family decided to sell the van and tried unsuccessfully to find someone who would appreciate its history. It was finally sold to a business that purchased vintage vans for parts - shipping them as a whole to a third world country where every part of it would be used to keep other vans running. Lorrie's van was destined for Pakistan where the bright artwork might appear again - a notion that we know would have amused her. If you

travel to this country, look for a giant caterpillar or smiling sun set against a yellow background!

Lorrie was very active in UNIMA, and was honoured with a LifeTime Achievement Award. She retired as the Australian UNIMA president only after becoming ill. To continue her unwavering commitment to the world of puppetry, the Gardner family donated the proceeds from the sale of the van to supplement the Lorrie Gardner Scholarship Fund.



To find out more about the fund and its previous recipients, go [here](#).



The Gardner Puppet Theatre Van



Lorrie Gardner with her young audience

Remembering Norman Hetherington (1921-2010)

Peter McGill
Murray Raine

*Taken with permission from the Puppets and Puppeteers
Facebook Page*

Company:

Norman Hetherington
Puppets

**Puppeteer, Designer,
Director, Cartoonist:**

Norman Hetherington
(1921 - 2010)

Productions:

Mr Squiggle (ABC TV)

Mr Squiggle and Friends
(ABC TV)

Scriptwriter:

Margaret (Peggy)
Hetherington

Actor Presenters:

Miss Pat (Patricia Lovell)
Jane Fennell
Rebecca Hetherington

Characters:

Mr Squiggle
Bill Steamshovel
Blackboard
Gus the Snail, Rocket

Catch phrase:

Hurry up Hurry up
(Blackboard)

Norman started as a cartoonist with *The Bulletin* prior to moving into puppetry. He and his wife Margaret (Peggy) developed live shows, but Norman's destiny was on TV. Norman appeared on Channel 9 on the first day of television in Australia. He then moved over to the fledgling national broadcaster ABC.

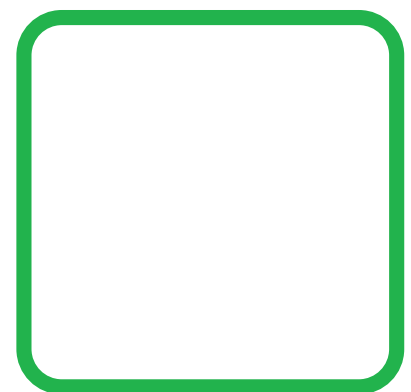
Mr Squiggle ran on ABC TV from 1 July 1959 to 9 July 1999. It was a family affair, with Norman's wife Peggy writing the scripts and later on his daughter Rebecca as presenter.

The later show, *Mr Squiggle and Friends*, was a longer format and included guest appearances by other performers, including Jean Paul Bell, Australia's leading mime, who did a series of short comic silent films for the show.

So how did *Mr Squiggle* do the drawings? Not telling, but remember Miss Pat would always turn the Squiggles upside down when Mr Squiggle had finished squiggling.

Norman also designed for other puppet companies, including The Marionette Theatre of Australia. Productions included *The Mysterious Potamus* (1978), *The Wind In The Willows* (1986) and *Pinocchio* (1987).

In 2019 the Australian Mint issued a series of coins featuring *Mr Squiggle & Friends*, possibly the only time world wide that a puppeteer has been so honoured.



[See more from the Puppets and Puppeteers Facebook Page here](#)



Norman Hetherington with Mr Squiggle and his friends Bill the Steam Shovel and Gus the Snail.
Photo: Courtesy Rebecca Hetherington



To read more about Norman's life and work, see Richard Bradshaw's extensive article in the Australian Puppeteer Magazine (Issue 1, 2011)

2019 Australian Mint Mr Squiggle & Friends Coin Collection
1/3



2019 Australian Mint Mr Squiggle & Friends Coin Collection 2/3 (top) and 3/3 (bottom)



Murray Raine is a Melbourne-based puppeteer & puppet maker who specialises in marionettes.

In the early 1970's while training with "The Marti McClelland Puppets" he created a solo marionette cabaret act which proved to be a hit! Mentored by Marti McClelland, Peter Oldham and Norman Hetherington, his skills as a cabaret marionettist has seen him in high demand across Australia & internationally. He has twice been awarded "Australian Speciality Act Of The Year".

With a vast career spanning theatre, television and cabaret he has performed both as a solo artiste and company member. For the past 14 years Murray has performed exclusively on cruise ships.

www.murrayrainepuppets.com

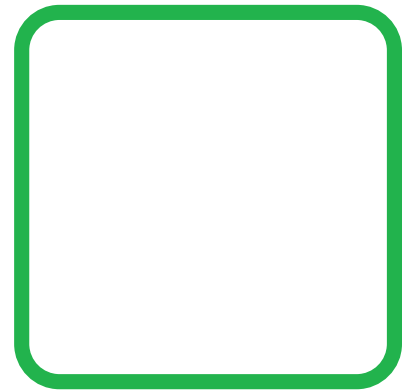


Peter McGill was company manager for The Tintookies, then administrator for The Marionette Theatre of Australia. He is now director of Pyro Oz Productions. He set up the Puppets and Puppeteers Facebook Page, with contributions also from Murray Raine and Michael Salmon. It is a very useful resource for those interested in puppetry history.

The UNIMA Australia Logo was designed by the renowned Norman Hetherington, creator of Mr Squiggle and the first President of UNIMA Australia when it began in 1970.

We have had special permission from his daughter, Rebecca Hetherington, to use Norman's beautiful Aussie emu graphics for our limited edition 50th Anniversary merchandise.

The images were used in the 1974 publication 'Puppets of Australia' and we are thrilled to share his art with the wider puppetry community.



Find UNIMA Merchandise including Norman Hetherington's limited edition collection on our Redbubble store.

CHECK OUT OUR
**SPECIAL LIMITED
EDITION MERCH!**
CELEBRATING 50 YEARS OF UNIMA OZ!



U N I M A A U S T R A L I A 5 0 Y E A R S
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Have your voice heard

If you have puppetry news, reviews, images, videos and articles that you would like to share with the puppetry community, please send them to General Secretary Kay Yasugi at secretary@unima.org.au

Not yet a member of UNIMA Australia?

UNIMA Oz is an online publication only available to members of UNIMA Australia. If you would like to join us, please go to www.unima.org.au/membership
If you have a question about your membership please email our Membership Secretary Katherine Hannaford at membership@unima.org.au

Our non-profit organisation is all about fostering the Art of Puppetry, furthering puppetry knowledge and connecting puppeteers in Australia and abroad.



www.unima.org.au

 [@unimaoz](https://www.instagram.com/unimaoz)

