



# E-Newsletter

## President's Message

Dr Susan Steggall

Spending time in someone else's country is a rewarding experience that not only brings insights into another culture but also enhances appreciation of one's own. For more than forty years I have lived between Australia and each time I climb the steps to our old 'Chalet du bois de l'église' is a like a homecoming. Returning to Sydney is a different kind of homecoming but appreciated nevertheless.

For our April meeting, we again have the same presenter for the workshop and the keynote speech. Dr Beth Yahp is well known to many of you through her books and her academic teaching in the English Department at Sydney University. She spent her childhood in another country – Malaysia – and in her keynote speech, 'The trouble with telling tales: memoir and truth' she will discuss her 'fictional memoir' *Eat First, Talk Later* that traces her parents' love story during turbulent times. Beth's workshop, 'Bringing the world to life' is a 'must' for all who are contemplating writing a memoir. As former President and Treasurer of the Society and as an author of an impressive line-up of books, April's guest speaker, Pam Bayfield needs no introduction

I am repeating here information about the Australian Women Writers' Challenge for all those who buy our speakers' books. By writing reviews of works by authors who have spoken at Society functions you will be promoting the excellence of Australian women's writing. The 2017 AWW Challenge runs from 1 January-31 December

2017: <http://australianwomenwriters.com/sign-up/>

The booking form and program for the SWW Writers' Retreat is now available on the SWW website: [www.womenwritersnsw.org](http://www.womenwritersnsw.org). Retreat Director Gwen Bitti and Jan Conway have organised a fascinating range of speakers and activities that will cater for all genres of writing in a peaceful setting that is conducive to creativity. On the subject of finding the time and place to write, a recent twitter/blog post is more than appropriate: 'If Not Now, Then When? If Not You, Then Who?' ([booksbywomen.org/if-not-now-the...#wwwblogs](http://booksbywomen.org/if-not-now-the...#wwwblogs) 22 March 2017):

No matter which stage of life we're at, there never seems a good time to do that one thing that we know we want to do: the right time to have children, change jobs, go back to school, or...write that novel we've been wanting to write for the last twenty-three years...If we don't do it now, then when will the time ever come? If it's not us that sit down to put these words to paper, then who will transcribe our greatest ideas? Who will take those ideas and portray them the way only we can? 'So as long as you write what you wish to write, that is all that matters; and whether it matters for ages or only for hours, nobody can say.' (Virginia Woolf)

Don't go to sleep tonight until you've pulled out your idea, blown off the dust bunnies and spent thirty minutes thinking about how to develop it. That thirty minutes is nothing in the grand scheme of your life, but it will bring you one step closer to achieving your dream. If not now, then when? If not you, then who? (Anne Clermont)

### SWW COMPETITIONS 2017 Entry Deadlines

Poetry – 12 June; Short Story – 10 July; Non Fiction – 7 August

Announcement of ALL Prizewinners: 8 NOVEMBER

Entry forms are on SWW website: [www.womenwritersnsw.org](http://www.womenwritersnsw.org)

Di Yerbury Residency, Entry Deadline: 30 November

Details and entry form will be in the JULY 2017 *Women's Ink!*



Dr Susan Steggall

## DATES FOR YOUR DIARY 2017

### 12 April:

Workshop-Dr Beth Yahp

Guest Talk-Pam Bayfield

Keynote-Dr Beth Yahp

### 10 May:

Workshop-Cathie Tasker

Guest Talk-Jan Conway

Keynote-Alana Valentine

### 14 June:

Workshop-Virginia Gordon

AGM-Election of 2017-2018

Committee

Keynote-Maggie Joel

### 15-17 September:

**SWW Writers' Retreat**

'Spinning Straw to Story Gold'

at **The Brahma Kumaris**

**Centre for Spiritual Learning**

**BOOKINGS ARE NOW OPEN**

Join us for a special experience in a natural bush setting as you listen to motivational keynote speakers, enjoy interactive workshops and share your writing experiences.

See p.6 for information about booking and contact details.

# NEXT LITERARY LUNCHEON

Wednesday 12 April 2017

**Gallery Room, State Library of NSW**

Macquarie Street, Sydney

## Program

**10.00 – 11.45am Workshop:**

‘Bringing the world to life’

Beth Yahp

*Workshop Coordinator*

*Robyn McWilliam 0418 225 051*

**12.00 – 12.20pm: Arrival & Registration**

**12.20 – 12.40pm: Luncheon**

**12.40 pm: 2016 Di Yerbury Residency**

**Winner:** Pam Rushby

**12.50 pm: Guest Speaker**

‘Why I loved writing historical fiction’

Pam Bayfield.

**1.05-1.35pm: Keynote Speaker**

‘The trouble with telling tales: memoir and truth’

Beth Yahp

### REMINDER

Bookseller Janet Grundy will be coming to the SWW luncheon events to sell books by our Guest and Keynote Speakers. It's a wonderful way to support your fellow writers!

## LUNCHEON AND/OR WORKSHOP

Pay by direct deposit into the SWW bank account by the FRIDAY before the meeting OR you can still pay on the day of the meeting.

### Members:

Luncheon \$45 (ML)

Workshop \$30 (MWS)

Luncheon & Workshop \$68 (MLW)

### Non Members:

Luncheon \$50 (NML)

Workshop \$40 (NMWS)

Luncheon & Workshop \$83 (NMLW)

*For Direct Deposit please use the codes listed above  
The Society of Women Writers' NSW Inc  
BSB: 062 018 A/C: 00950433*

**Everyone must book with Lynda Calder BEFORE 10.00am on the MONDAY before the meeting.**

**NB: There is a permanent list for bookings if you wish to be on it**

Please book by email if you have access to a computer.

Contact Name: SWW Lunch Booking

Email address: [swwlunchbooking@gmail.com](mailto:swwlunchbooking@gmail.com)

Mobile phone: Text message to 0403 177 208

Your text message should be addressed to swwlunchbooking or swwlunch and should contain: date, your name and phone number.



## Workshop

### Bringing the world to life

Beth Yahp

What brings a place to life in a reader's mind? How do we translate our experiences of real or remembered places into memorable sites a reader may step into? In this interactive writing workshop participants take an imaginary tour, do writing exercises to make things new, and share tips and tricks to bring the world to life on the page.

Beth Yahp was born in Malaysia. Her award-winning novel *The Crocodile Fury* was published in several languages, and she wrote the libretto for Liza Lim's contemporary opera *Moon Spirit Feasting*, which won an APRA award in 2002.

Beth has edited or co-edited collections of stories and essays. Her memoir *Eat First, Talk Later* was published by Penguin Random House in 2015. The *Red Pearl and Other Stories* and a new edition of *The Crocodile Fury* are due out with Vagabond Press in 2017. Beth runs writing workshops and lectures in the Creative Writing program at the University of Sydney.



## Guest Speaker

### Why I loved writing historical fiction

Pam Bayfield

Pam Bayfield is a self-published author who has written twelve books over fifteen years. Her first one was a faction (fiction based on fact), followed by her autobiography, and four biographies have been fitted in and around her other writing.

Her first fiction, *Silver Dreams*, was the story of Broken Hill. One book was about her bilateral knee operation, followed by *A Leading Lady* about her actress aunt.

Pam's first historical novel was *For the Love of Grace*, set in the 1850s and beyond in old Sydney Town and Manly. The sequel came out in 2016 and the last one in the trilogy, *For the Love of Grace-the Next Generation*, is to be launched at the War Vets in April. It covers the First World War, the 20s, 30s and up to the Second World War.

Writing has played a big part in Pam's life and she has sold most of her books through book launches and talks. Pam has been President of the Society of Women Writers and then Treasurer.



## STAY CONNECTED!

Keep up with what's happening at the SWW NSW on Facebook, Twitter and LinkedIn.  
Just search for "The Society of Women Writers NSW Inc."



## Keynote Speaker

### The trouble with telling tales: memoir and truth

Beth Yahp

One starts a memoir either in foolhardy ignorance or a kind of dogged determination, but some questions keep cropping up. Is your life yours to tell, or does it also belong to everyone in it? Who has the right to tell, to force into words something as ephemeral and brimful as a life lived? Does one anticipate and deal with the fallout of telling 'true' tales – as memoirs should – not only in the family but also on a national level? Is it a free-for-all in a time of fake news and alternative facts?

Beth Yahp shares her experience of writing her 'fictional memoir' *Eat First, Talk Later*, which traces the love story of her parents in Malaysia from childhood during the Japanese Occupation to the Communist Emergency, Independence and Anwar Ibrahim's sodomy trials and Reformasi movement. In it, official 'facts' contend with counterfactual histories and what-really-happened with what it felt like. Which is 'true'? Is memoir, Beth wonders, open to invention: filled with stories we tell ourselves and others in order to survive?



## Coming Events

*The Historical Novels Society of Australasia (HNSA) conference is to be held in Melbourne in September 2017 (<http://hnsa.org.au>).*

The conference is about bringing writers and readers of historical fiction together, with a high profile panel of speakers giving insights into researching and writing their books, plus numerous workshop sessions for beginner writers. For information about the star-studded line up of authors, plus information on booking (Early Bird Booking has now opened) go to the conference website: <http://hnsa.org.au>.

### Satellite events in Sydney:

**Monday 29 May:** 'Follow that Horse! All you ever wanted to know about researching, writing and publishing historical fiction', with Elisabeth Storrs, Isolde Martyn, Julianne Miles-Brown and Debbie Robson. Sutherland Library, 6.30-8.30 pm. Booking: tel: 9710 0351 or book on line: [www.sutherlandshire.nsw.gov.au/Community/LibraryServices](http://www.sutherlandshire.nsw.gov.au/Community/LibraryServices). Free event.

**Wednesday 26 July:** 'Wings into History: how the past inspires historical fiction' with Justin Sheedy, Winton Higgins, Michelle Morgan and Kim Kelly. Gordon Library 6 – 8 pm. Bookings: [kmc.nsw.gov.au](http://kmc.nsw.gov.au). Enquiries 9424 0120. Cost \$5.

**Felicity Pulman, Conference Committee**



### A reminder about SWW Membership Terms and Conditions

The membership renewal fee for new members who join after 1 March will be due on 1 July of the following year. Similarly, members who renew from 1 March, will have their fees due on 1 July the following year.

There is also the option to become a Life Member for the one off payment of \$450.00

- Regular member: \$55.00
- Concessional member: \$45.00 (Pension/Student)
- New member (regular): \$70
- New member (concession): \$60.00



If you wish to contribute any member notice, please email your text and image as a JPEG file to: [swall@bigpond.net.au](mailto:swall@bigpond.net.au) With 'ATTN: SWW E-Newsletter editor' in subject heading.

**The deadline for e-Newsletter submission is the 20<sup>th</sup> of each month.**

Any late submissions will be held for the following month.

## The Society of Women Writers NSW

### Committee and Team for 2016-2017

**Committee:** Dr Susan Steggall – President, Yvonne Jarman – Vice-President, Amanda Mark – Treasurer, Charo Devery – Secretary, Maria McDougall – Membership Secretary, Gwen Bitti, Vivienne Foster, Libby Hathorn, Lindsay Lewis, Mary Ann Napper, Wendy Searle  
**E-Newsletter team** – Dr Susan Steggall (Editor) & Lindsay Lewis |

**Website Manager** – Lindsay Lewis

**LinkedIn Group Manager** – Dr Maria Hill

**SWW Face Book Manager** – Susanne Gervay

**SWW Front Desk** – Lynda Calder

**Workshop Convenor** – Robyn McWilliam.

**Women's INK! Team** – Margaret Zanardo (Editor), Dr Susan Steggall (Sub-Editor), Sandra Davis, Judith O'Connor (Book Editor), Joy Williams.

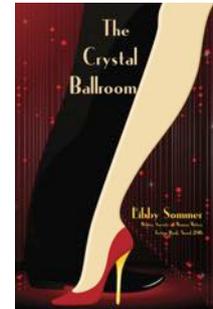
**Correspondence: Secretary – Society of Women Writers NSW Inc,**  
**GPO Box 1388 Sydney NSW 2001**  
**[www.womenwritersnsw.org](http://www.womenwritersnsw.org)**

## Member News

• **Kristin Prescott & Susan Steggall**, collaborating authors, *The Time of the Jade Spider* (NBWG) was launched at Manly Library, 25 March. This book was developed from NBWG's prize-winning manuscript in the 2016 Write-A-Book-In-A-Day (open section) competition. The event not only raises money for the Kids' Cancer Project but also creates an invaluable opportunity for some creative collaborative writing.



• **Libby Sommer**, *The Crystal Ballroom*, Ginninderra Press (May). Sommers lays bare the foibles of human nature in her finely observed stories of love and loss in the singles dance scene.



### "Spinning Straw to Story Gold"



**15-17 SEPTEMBER, 2017**  
BRAHMA KUMARIS CENTRE FOR SPIRITUAL LEARNING  
150 Macarthur Drive, WILTON NSW 2571



SWW offers you the opportunity to leave your writing cave and join us for a day of retreat to the tranquility of a natural bush setting and relax as you listen to motivational keynote speakers share your writing projects, experiences, triumphs, ideas & "spin straw to story gold", network, med

**SPEAKERS and PRESENTERS:** Beverley George Hathorn, Kathryn Heyman, Emily Maguire, Cather



The Society of Women Writers, founded in 1925, is the oldest literary assoc

## Society of Women Writers Retreat

‘Spinning Straw to Story Gold’

[Thank you Libby Hathorn for the title]

**15 – 17 September 2017**

Brahma Kumaris Centre for Spiritual Learning  
150 Macarthur Drive  
Wilton NSW

### What you will enjoy in a tranquil bush setting:

- 2 x nights twin-share accommodation, meals – 2 x breakfasts, 2 x dinners, 2 x lunches, 2 x morning teas and 1 x afternoon tea
- Guided meditative bushwalks
- Attendance at all program sessions

### Opportunity:

1. Have your first ten (10) pages critiqued by publisher, **Catherine Milne** (*bookings essential. \* Ring or email Gwen or Jan for cost – limited places*)
2. Your first page critiqued by **Susanne Gervay**
3. Open Mic - Read 300 words in any genre.

### Friday 15 September

- 4.00 – 6.00pm Registration  
6.30 – 7.50pm Dinner  
8.00 – 8.15pm Welcome and Housekeeping  
8.15 – 9.15pm **KEYNOTE – 13 Lessons from 13 years as a published writer with Emily Maguire**

### Saturday 16 September

- 09.30 – 10.30am **KEYNOTE – In the Flow with Libby Hathorn**  
10.45 – 12.15pm **WORKSHOP** (choose one)  
(a) Haiku, with Beverley George  
(b) Writing from within, with Libby Sommer  
(c) The essential pitch, with Susanne Gervay  
1.45 – 2.15pm **OPEN MIC** (*booking essential*)  
2.15 – 3.15pm **WORKSHOP – Your first page with Susanne Gervay**  
3.45 – 5.00pm Personal writing time/reflection  
5.00 – 6.30pm **PRESENTATION – What publishers want.** with publisher **Catherine Milne, Harper Collins** followed by Q & A panel  
8.00 – 9.00pm Shared writing/networking (*form own groups*)  
9.00 – 9.30pm **Guided Deep Relaxation with Gwen Bitti**

### Sunday 17 September

- 09.30 – 10.30am **WORKSHOP – Spinning Straw to Story Gold – Ideas to Stories** with **Libby Hathorn**  
10.45 – 11.45am **IN CONVERSATION** with **Kathryn Heyman**  
12.15 – 1.30pm Lunch  
1.30 – 2.00pm Official Farewell from Brahma Kumaris Co-ordinator  
2.00pm Departure

**Retreat Director:** Gwen Bitti, email: [gwen.swwretreat@bigpond.com](mailto:gwen.swwretreat@bigpond.com) or mobile: 0403 165 925

**Retreat Secretary:** Jan Conway email: (as for Gwen) or mobile: 0402 755 768