WILLIAM HATHERELL DISCUSSES OODGEROO NOONUCCAL’S LIFE AND WORK AT MOONGALBA.

In 1970, Australia’s bestselling poet and prominent Indigenous activist Kath Walker returned permanently to her childhood home at Minjerribah (North Stradbroke Island), escaping from what she called the ‘concrete jungle’ of Brisbane. The move signalled a new direction in her career, following the unprecedented popular success of her poetry books We are going (1964), The dawn is at hand (1966) and My people (1970), and years of intense political engagement culminating in Walker’s leading role in the triumphant passage of the 1967 referendum to grant full civil rights to Indigenous Australians. She soon leased five acres from the Redlands Shire Council just off the main road between Dunwich and Amity Point at Moongalba (‘sitting down place’). Here Walker shared the natural and cultural riches of the island with about 30,000 schoolchildren who visited the site over two decades, even though she never realised her dream of creating a comprehensive Indigenous cultural centre. She lived in a caravan at Moongalba until her death in 1993, changing her name in 1968 to Oodgeroo (paperback tree) of the Noonuccal tribe (the original inhabitants of North Stradbroke) as a further gesture of identity with her ancestral country.

The Oodgeroo Noonuccal papers at the Fryer (UQFL84) include a large amount of material related to the Moongalba/Stradbroke period: the ‘Moongalba diaries’ (a kind of visitor’s book) that also records cash and in-kind donations to the project by supporters, including cultural luminaries such as Judith Wright, Nancy Cato and Ian Fairweather; manuscripts of poems and stories (generally written in school exercise books), and articles, speeches and correspondence from this period; architectural plans and funding submissions that document Oodgeroo’s (sadly unrealised) vision for Moongalba; curiosities such as a ‘Hymns’ book (Box 3) apparently used as a kind of rhyming thesaurus; and voluminous material relating to Oodgeroo’s extensive political and community activities on Stradbroke and beyond, including campaigns against new mining leases and the building of a bridge from the mainland.

By the 1970s mainstream Australian culture had readily embraced Oodgeroo as Australia’s semi-official ‘Aboriginal poet’ and spokeswoman for her people. Her life at Moongalba was regularly profiled in adonune ‘lifestyle’ pieces in newspapers and magazines, including a ‘My day’ piece in Woman’s Day in July 1976. More rigorous analysis of Oodgeroo’s unique achievements and her relationship with Stradbroke came through Frank Heiman’s film Shadow sister (1977), and a scholarly article by visiting American academic Margaret Read Lauer (published in 1978), based on an extended visit to Moongalba. All these projects are extensively documented in the Fryer papers.

At times, Oodgeroo implies that her Stradbroke period involved a withdrawal from the heady.

\[Image 637x494 to 1163x816\]

\[Above: ‘Camp theatre with moon, emu, 1973’. UQFL84, album 3, image 42\]

\[Below: ‘Kath digging bungwall, 1975’. UQFL84, box 14, image 158\]
literary and political engagement of the 60s. As she puts it in the Woman's Day piece:

So far about 6000 children have visited me here. They seem to be my whole life now. Of course, the future is with them. When I do get time for writing it's rarely lengthy stuff. Mostly I've been doing short stories for children. (Box 28(i))

Certainly Oodgeroo took her responsibilities as an educator remarkably seriously (as discussed below), and her major publication of the Moongalba period was Stradbroke dreamingtime (1972; new editions with different illustrations 1982 and 1993; publisher's proof is in Box 1(i)), a collection of stories about her own island childhood as well as dreamtime stories, clearly written with quite a different purpose and audience in mind than the highly politicised poems and speeches of the 60s. As she puts it in one manuscript notes: "I'm out of the civil rights movement. I'm back to nature" (Box 3(i)).

Yet the Fryer papers also reveal the extent and intensity of Oodgeroo's commitments, not just to her island home and the continuing struggle of her people, but also to many of the causes that defined the period, including the emerging conservation movement, opposition to uranium mining and resistance to various actions of the Bjelke-Petersen government. They also show Oodgeroo starting to explore new creative outlets. Catalogues for her exhibitions of paintings in Brisbane in 1977 and 1981 (Box 52) show the beginnings of an interest that would culminate in Quandamooka: the art of Kath Walker (1985). Numerous manuscripts, poems and stories show that Oodgeroo's poetry has also continued to explore new directions in creative writing.

Oodgeroo spent much of her time during her Stradbroke period on the lecture circuit. She spoke at most Australian universities and colleges of advanced education on topics including Australian literature, Aboriginal culture and conservation. A 1978 itinerary shows her travelling to Western Australia, Sydney, New Guines, Wollongong, Melbourne and Tasmania between April and July (Box 38). Yet the island, and Moongalba in particular, remained at the centre of her activities.

Detaied architectural drawings (Box 29/11) and various statements and submissions show the ambitious vision of the Moongalba project. "The Nuncle Nughie Cultural Centre" (named after the two main island groups on the island, the latter displaced from neighbouring Moreton Island during the nineteenth century) was to have included a park, art gallery, museum, open-air theatre, and library (Box 26(i)). The centre was also envisaged as a repository of "all documents and writing about the Island … Any students, anthropologists, linguists who have visited the island to study the people or the culture would be obliged to place copies of their works in the Cultural Centre" (Box 52).

In fact, none of these plans, apart from the open-air theatre, were ever realised as sufficient state and federal funding was never forthcoming (the long history of Oodgeroo's frustrations in her plans for Moongalba is documented by Kathie Cochrane in her biography,1 Oodgeroo lived simply in a caravan and visited her children and other visitors camped nearby. But Oodgeroo and her collaborators did succeed in developing a sophisticated program for thousands of visiting schoolchildren. A detailed schedule for a "Year 11 Guidance Camp" in 1980, apparently aimed at indigenous students, features sessions on college, career search, black literature, study skills, pottery/macramé, and assertiveness training (Box 55). Visitors to Moongalba also included students from elite private schools such as "Churchie" and Ipswich Girls' Grammar. Apparently Oodgeroo herself at one stage contemplated writing a history of the Island.

A submission to Redland Shire Council in October 1971 refers to an intention to apply for a Commonwealth Literary Fund grant to write the proposed book on the history of Stradbroke Island, mentioning research already done by Nancy Cato that would contribute to the project (Box 23/4). The history of the island, and its interaction with Oodgeroo's personal and family history, loom large in the Fryer material, as they do in Stradbroke dreamingtime. Several manuscript notes refer to the traumatic post-colonial history of the island—Dunwich as Brisbane's first port, sailors bringing venereal disease to Indigenous women, the Dunwich Benevolent Asylum for the indigent aged (which moved to its current location at 'Evertide', Sandgate in 1946 after eighty years) (Box 28/11). In the unpublished story "Old Mick" (Box 27), a Benevolent Asylum resident thinks he is being Oodgeroo's family by bringing them leftover food from the home, but the family, dismissive of western food even at its best, discreetly throws it to the chooks.

Oodgeroo also refers disparagingly to the Christian missionaries who visited the island as early as the 1840s. In a sometimes amusing transcript of a hearing at the Mining Warden's Court in 1884, Oodgeroo, who was opposing an application for a mining lease, told her counsel (the future Queensland Attorney-General Matt Foley) that the Noonuccal had gravitated to Moongalba "when the missionary came in and told them they had to become Christians and they told them to select a place but they must sit down in one place and stop their pagan … ways" (Box 60). In an article titled "Dunwich: Stradbroke Island: assimilation of Aborigines", Oodgeroo uses the biography of her father to make a point about the complex history of race relations on the island. Her father's grandfather was a Manin man of Spanish descent who married an Aboriginal woman on the island, and his mother, the outcome of this union, had married a German (Box 27).

The island also imposed its presence on Oodgeroo's poetry. In her interview with Margaret Reid Lauer included in the 1970s article, Oodgeroo articulates this influence as a new concern with nature:

'I think my poetry, since I came here, has changed, is now more subtle. I now fight for butcher birds, for university students, for the rights of possums, for everything that is alive, not just the human race, but everything—be they plants, snakes or golden-orbed spiders—because man is lost without any of these. Man has the power to communicate and has fallen down on his job. (Box 38)

Manuscript poems from the Stradbroke period show Oodgeroo's poetry has also continued to explore new directions in creative writing. The full moon rose in one place, then a discrete wind took it; the moon went down and I was left in the empty sky. (Box 27) is a particularly arresting example of this mode:

The full moon  
Bent over the tree-trunks.  
Bathing the island  
With silver light.

The black pines  
Shriined in the easterly breeze.  
Possums played on tilted branch  
As I stared in lonely awe.

At the magic of the night,  
Listening for your voice  
No longer there.

Curlew cries  
No musical tune.

Black wattle groan

As easterly breeze brushes past  
To caress my tear-stained cheeks.

That my lonely aching body  
Cannot bear to endure.

REFERENCE

1. K Cochrane, Oodgeroo, University of Queensland Press, St Lucia, 1994, pp. 87-103.

WILLIAM HATHERELL is the author of The Third metropolis: imagining Brisbane through art and literature 1940-1970 (UQP, 2007), which was based largely on research conducted in the Fryer Library between 2000 and 2003. His other publications include journal articles on Australian literature and cultural history and the Australian dictionary of biography entries for Laurence Collinson and John Manifold. He is currently a Senior Development Officer in QUT's Alumni and Development Office.
Mila’s solo exhibition ‘Shadows and reflections’ featured images of Italy, Holland and Australia. Her free time with her camera on Stradbroke Island. Mila’s solo exhibition ‘Shadows and reflections’ featured images of Italy, Holland and Australia. Her free time with her camera on Stradbroke Island.

In another brief poem, ‘Stradbroke’ (1980), Judith Rodriguez uses three images from the island to capture it successfully; the feel of walking on hot sand; the sight of live-reel surf fishers standing in foam; and old Cylinder Beach, with its pandanus on the Point etched against the sky. As she describes it, the headland between Cylinder and Frenchman’s Beaches is overhanging with pandanus and draped with vines, while rocks randomly project among its grasses.

Two poems, ‘Stradbroke ferry’ and ‘Stradbroke dreaming’ of Jan Turner-Jones (b. 1945) in Moonga’s collection (1982), are a response to the ‘Stradbroke experience’. The first poem uses a difficult, nearly disastrous trip across Moreton Bay to reflect on those who pursue life calmly in the face of danger and who refuse our heightened sense of adventure by their prosaic attitudes, e.g. a woman on deck, knitting, indifferent to impending doom.

The second poem reflects on how far the travesties of contemporary life have disturbed us from our natural beginnings. In doing so, they have depopulated our environment and started an inevitable decline—summarised succinctly in Turner-Jones’ ‘The final phase has been set in motion’.

Another, in different vein, tells of a faithful bride who chose death rather than be captured by two of her husband’s brothers. Steele, who discusses aspects of Aboriginal life elsewhere in Queensland, too, has also written on Moreton Bay explorers and on Brisbane in convict days.

Go! to the island, a play by Therese Collie (b. 1953), is set on Stradbroke Island and was performed by Koomba Jidma Theatre in 1999. Some of the action takes place on a barge travelling across Moreton Bay to the island, while other scenes unfold a vigorously vernacular play rich in family communal life. Another play, Story of the muskets at Cookie’s table (2007) by Wesley Enoch, has the ambience of Stradbroke Island and the island’s stories in its narrative core. The play is non-naturalistic but its staging centre is a table made from an ancestral birthplace tree. It won the Patrick White Award for 2006; was played at the Stables, Sydney, in 2007 by Griffin and Hothouse Theatres; and was published by Currency Press in 2007.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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STRADBROKE
If the long beaches burn, there will be a pool.
The pool’s hidden. Burn for it. Grind heels in a sift
of beach—a ridge of sand—and boulders—a beach.
People fish, each on his own stretch hairy with foam.
Turn the point, shoes in hand. It could be the first day
on Frenchman’s, the pallor, its washes hard as eggshell
and trackless at noon.

Far along, forms of life, still we have left no mark.
The sea-dumped jellyfish rings gape pink as footsoles.
They too are dying.

Now look on, look up, shadow fills us. The overhang
bristles with pandanus, vine-lipped, grins rock loosened
from the grassed whaleback headland. We pass in. The pool
lies, body of water poured out in sand, the slow
stone-leached tincture of soils under blowing rain.
You stand to feel it gathering down, it is nearly
stillness. I prop: let’s sight across beach, dazzle and
there! hole-to-hole rushes and dust-ups against sea-wind
of flickering sandcrabs…

You squat, and puddle. You say “Taste”. It has slowed and pooled
bitterer than ocean.

Judith Rodriguez

FOR OODGEROO
Your smile, ripple of light in a Stradbroke lagoon
(Stradbroke, once Minjerriba, your tribal home),
echoed in a portrait in Lecce’s Australian library
lovingly wall-pinned by Bernard Hickey,
cuts through the dark as I write these words
a week after your death, with cold rain falling.

Poet and activist. Impromptu tags in the Press obituaries
as if a dichotomy there as in sugar and salt
but poems should not purr like sedatives
and yours were meant to sting as well as sing.
Words were the wellspring of your deep lagoon
that red vein to the bay, Myora Spring.

Your father’s totem mate, the carpet snake
“Old Carpie” in the tale you loved to tell,
knitted your baby sister, panicked the house
but brushed a rainbow smile from old Biami’s eye.
You gave me charter to perform your tale
and so I did, from Italy to Tully,
twining Australian lore with Shakespeare’s page,
a carpet-weave oblivious to divisions
as was your way, pointing a way to us.

Proud of your race, steely and sharp at times
yet voice as liquid as the lost lagoon
and old eyes rippled by a dream of dawn
that wounds would heal like paperbark’s scarred trunk.

Paul Sherman

DAYS
Small crabs scuttle on the beach, scatter
like marbles spilled from a bag
as we slip down sand hills.
They always run away.

Sometimes, we, the two of us,
chafe against each other, hand in hand,
as we slide down a damp crease
in the wind-folded dunes.
I feel I cannot resist,
I resent this sand.

Graham Rowlands

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Press, St Lucia, 1980.
2. P Sherman, Creeks to be crossed, SweetWater Press,
3. G Rowlands, Replacing mirrors, Saturday Centre, Cammeray,
NSW, 1975.
4. J Turner-Jones, Moongalba cycle, SweetWater Press,
Brisbane, 1982.

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their authors and the publishers.
Writers’ footprints is a reference work reviewing the specific locations that have fired the literary imagination in Queensland since its separation from New South Wales in 1859. The work lists cities, towns and places giving contextual discussion and examples of works relating to these places.

RF: Stan, where did the idea for this book come from?

JSDM: I started work on it in 1978 because I didn’t believe the accepted academic view of the day that Queensland was a barren aesthetic waste from which writers had to flee. Apart from what I knew there was a strong if thin cultural stream, literary and musical, in the state and Maureen Freer’s two essays in Writers’ footprints bear witness to that. There had to have been writers in Queensland. Now, this research started well before the Oxford literary guide to Australia (1987) was mooted in the early 1980s. When that came along, Queensland was the only state which had any research on local writers available and the late Barry Andrews of the Association for the Study of Australian Literature, its originator, asked me to edit that book. For various reasons I declined but wrote its Queensland section with help from country colleagues. If the data I put into the Oxford literary guide to Australia, though, had been included in Writers’ footprints as I intended, Writers’ footprints would have been more comprehensive still. It was while researching the book that I realized how strongly placed and story were linked. Furthermore, there seemed to be a subtle presence of a Queensland of the imagination whether sourced in the appeal of the North, the extensive plains of the Darling Downs or the East.

As it was, I didn’t include any of the author biographical information, where their books were written or many of the photographs I collected from so many authors as I needed to finish and there were still more people to be contacted. That material is lodged in the Fryer Library.

RF: What are some of the common Queensland themes that come through your research?

JSDM: They’ve varied. Some relate to life on the land as in Steele Rudd’s work, writings set on the Atherton Tablelands and the Gulf Country, and plays set on the northern cane fields. Origins and beliefs feature strongly in Aboriginal oral tales recorded by Dick Roughsey, Wilf Reeves (Mooni Jarl), Clem Christensen and Odzgoor Noonuccal. The call of the coast, ranging from Torres Strait to Point Danger can be discerned in poems by David Roxburgh, Mark O’Connor and others; and blatant racism is depicted by Eric Baume and Thea Astley. Always, though, one senses the presence of the land in the writing whether it be of the topical North, Central Queensland or the West.

RF: Songs and oral traditions also have an important link with place in Queensland.

JSDM: Yes, I have mentioned some already. They’re important in covering the land with a mantle of imagination as Eva Mary Kelly (1830-1915), an Irish poet who settled in Brisbane, wanted. Odzgoor Noonuccal’s work regarding Stradbroke Island is important in this respect. She, of course, was much encouraged and guided by poet Judith Wright who had Noonuccal as a guest at her home on Tamborine Mountain. Myths, songs and oral traditions of Queensland Aboriginal people were all but unknown to our early settlers. Otherwise Eva Mary Kelly would not have lamented the absence of story linked to the land in her poem ‘Queensland’ in 1877. The bibliography in Writers’ footprints helps those interested in this aspect to read further.

RF: Your book is dedicated to your later wife, Letty, and also to Cecil Hadgraft who played an important role in the early years of Fryer Library’s collection development. Why them?

JSDM: Cecil Hadgraft, I much admired as teacher, writer and critic and was privileged to call him friend. He was a great supporter of this project who, after I told him about it in 1978, said immediately, ‘If you don’t do it, it will never be done. You have to’. My wife, Letty, was a composer of Australian music and saw the essence of her work as affirming an Australian identity. Her two ballads ‘Never Never’ and ‘A town like Alice’ are widely known in the Australian country music scene. Hughie had admired her as an Australian icon and after her Lost for words (2008) appeared, she wrote him saying, ‘You have reminded every man and his dog that we have our own background’. Cecil’s and Letty’s belief in and support of the work is acknowledged by its dedication.

RF: There is an Italian connection mentioned in the preliminaries of the book - the University of Udine - how did that arise?

JSDM: I was having difficulty getting the book published. Until the University of Queensland Press could not accommodate it and, when in Italy, I mentioned this to Professor Antonella Riem-Natalie who did post-graduate work here. She was adamant that it be published because of the several Italian references in it and made funds available to help. On my return Richard Rotheringham generously augmented these with Faculty of Arts funds as part of the UQ100 Years’ celebrations. Subsequently Michael Wilding and Laurie Herzenger referred me to Australian Scholarly Publications and the rest followed. I owe much to them both. Professor Riem-Natalie’s husband, Luigi, is a leading Italian poet and wrote poems about Stradella after he and Antonella stayed there as guests of Laurie Herzenger. I believe the relevant manuscript of his poem is held by Fryer. Luigi’s photo (with David Malouf, a close friend of Antonella’s and Luigi’s) is in the book on page 34.

RF: Stan, for many years you have deposited papers relating to your research in the Fryer Library. What additional information will researchers find in your papers to assist with future research?

JSDM: In general there are three areas.

The earliest deposits are a rich source of material relating to Henry Kingsley and towns in the goldfields areas and other places in Victoria. I collected the local histories of every town I visited as well as other material. It is all in the Fryer Library. The relevant folders are arranged alphabetically. Many papers relating to Henry Kingsley, as well as rare photographs I took of Charles Kingsley’s papers collected by his wife are there. The originals were accidentally destroyed on the country property where they were so the photos in the Fryer Library are the only evidence that they existed. Apart from all this the Library has now what could be a collection of more editions of Kingsley’s work than are held anywhere else. It also has a rare edition by Charles Kingsley that contains at least one direct adverse reference to Henry.

Early, too, is a deposit of glass photographic plates from the turn of the nineteenth century recovered by my brother, pharmacist, SOA Mellick from a garage in South Brisbane. They are a rich source of views of tall ship Katahdin Point and elsewhere and were the property of a Brisbane artist.

The next deposit is related to the Australian Academy of the Humanities edition of The recollections of Geoffry Hamlyn. Not only are the original sheets present showing all the variations in the early editions of the original book but also the correspondence relating to the project.

As well, all the research material developed and arising from involvement with the Oxford literary guide to Australia and Writers’ footprints is deposited with the library and includes data I arranged by towns, photocopies and research sheets containing texts from which authors were made, correspondence with local councils, country papers, information from writers and others as well as their photographs and information about where their books were written and when. It is a collection that will be even more valuable as time goes by. I also deposited with Fryer a complete set of National Australia Bank calendars which are collectors’ items and contain prints of paintings from various Australian galleries illustrating nineteenth-century life in Australia as well as scenes of cities, towns and the country.

RF: Your daughter, Jill, is a poet herself and her poem ‘Moongalba’s Island’ is featured here. What prompted her to write it, especially that change of tone in the last stanza?

JSDM: The poem is a retrospect focusing on the changes and development at Stradbroke since its early days—wanted by some, rejected by others.

In the late 1960s, access from Cylinder Beach to the Point was via a walking track under a canopy of trees and vines—all an-green route later supplanted by a bitumen road. Visitors to the place in those days loved its wilderness which, even then, by word of mouth, brought overseas people there.

Bertie Clayton, mentioned in the poem, was a well-known identity and built the first road in the area.
thus linking Amity and Cylinder Beach. It skirted
the beach flats en route and went around Alder
Rock to Cylinder Beach. This made the area
more accessible to those who went to the island
on Hayles’s ferries. Noteworthy were several
fishing addicts who made the ferry trip on a
Friday night and many were the tales told about
their exploits.

This poetic look at Straddie’s years of change,
as I have written in Writers’ footprints, contains
memories suffused with regret for things past.
The regret (ruefulness?) lies inordinately in the
essential fabric of joy in the memories. The
prosaic ending in the last stanza epitomises the
fate of most human endeavours—an anonymous
immortality embedded in words meaning little to
the uninformed who read them.

MOONGALBA’S ISLAND

“For time is running out
and time is close at hand...”

Oodgeroo Noonuccal

Oodgeroo’s people were mostly gone
when Bertie Clayton set up tent
above beach and scrub.

He squatted by palm trees
on the beach watching turtles, dolphins and whales
move by below
in the opal Pacific swells.

The guest huts he built
had glassless windows,
frames for Southern stars
and wild horses
who blew warm air
into nights so dark
only ears could believe
in the trees and the waves.

The ferries brought fishermen.
They brought wives.

The children chased
frail sky-blue soldier crabs
into crafted holes in clouds of sand.
There was talk of a bridge.

The huts peeped paint.

The miners came
with prize-winning conservation plans
and guides to native animals, plants
and tribal burial grounds,
and severed the arm
of the island’s dunes.

This historian’s children
bought blocks of land
north of the reconstructed dunes,
built holiday houses
of weathered wood.

The sand track was named for Bertie;
a ferry, named for the People.

JILL MELICK

STANTON (LOR) MELICK, a former senior
lecturer in the University’s English Department,
was an early President of the Friends of the
Fryer Library. His work as a research consultant
after retiring appears in the Oxford literary
guide to Australia, the Academy edition of The
Recollections of Geoffrey Harlxy and Writers’
footprints. He has been Chairman of the
Grace College Council and also effected major
restoration of colonial architect FD Stanley’s gym,
St Paul’s Presbyterian Church in the city. As well,
having been a long-time member of the Board
of St Andrew’s War Memorial Hospital, he wrote
his history. He was awarded an OAM in 2005.
His pre-University career included World War II
service, being mentioned in despatches and
serving post-war in senior appointments. While
His pre-University career included World War II
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STRADBROKE: A BRIEF HISTORY

Stradbroke Island is the most southerly of the three
great sand islands—Bribie, Moreton and ‘Stradie’—that guard the entrance to
Moreton Bay. It has been the home of Aboriginal people for thousands of years; the oldest
evidence of Aboriginal occupation dates from
perhaps 20 000 BCE. Europeans first discovered
and occupied the island in the early nineteenth century.

In 1770, sailing the Endeavour north along the
east coast of Australia, James Cook passed to
the east of Moreton Bay. The names he gave to features of the coastal landscape—Mount
Warning, Point Danger, Point Lookout—tell us
something of his state of mind as he struggled
with adverse winds and weather in this area.
Consequently he stayed well out from the shore,
and while he knew from the currents that a large
river must empty into the bay, he didn’t venture
far into Moreton Bay, and did not identify three
separate islands.

It is quite possible that in 1770 there were no
separate islands for Cook to “discover”. These
sand islands are subject to constant erosion,
which has been a feature in the history of
Stradbroke Island since European occupation,
most spectacularly when the sea broke
through between North and South Stradbroke
Islands during a storm in 1896. Durbridge and
Covacevich suggest that in 1770, Moreton and
Stradbroke Islands were possibly still linked to
the Southport Spit. Thomas Wellsby reported
that Toonami, who died in 1888, was told by his
father that he remembered when his Noonuccal
people, and the people of Moreton Island, could
shout to each other across a small gap that later
grew to become the South Passage.

Matthew Finders first recorded the South
Passage during his exploration of the area in
1799. Four years later, coming south from the
wreck of the Purpose in the cutter Hope, he
came ashore on Cylinder Beach, where the
Noonuccal people showed him where to collect
water.

The first Europeans to spend any time on
the island were Thomas Pamphlett and John
Finnegan, two timber-getters from Sydney whose
boat was wrecked nearby, and who were trying
to find their way home to Sydney. John Oxley, the
Government Surveyor, found them on Stradbroke
Island in 1823, and with their help found his way
into the Brisbane River.

The following year, Governor Thomas Brisbane
established the Moreton Bay Settlement. After
several false starts at Redcliffe and Cleveland,
the settlement eventually moved upstream to
the present Brisbane CBD, but throughout
the nineteenth century, Brisbane had a close
association with the islands of Moreton Bay—and
particularly with the most southerly, Stradbroke
Island.
By the 1850s, there were two main settlements on Stradbroke Island. Amity Point, a pilot station, remained as a community of fishermen and dugong hunters. In many ways, it conformed to Caroline Ralston’s definition of a Pacific beach community, with a mixed-race population of beachcombers and fishermen, many with Aboriginal families. During the 1850s, Amity Point was surveyed and town allotments sold. Thomas Welby, the early historian of Moreton Bay, had a home there, but the settlement has been subject to inexorable erosion by the Rainbow Channel, to the point that the pilot station, a racecourse and Welby’s original cottage are all now many metres out to sea. Meanwhile government functions were concentrated in the other main settlement, Dunwich. On 15 July 1850, a government quarantine station was proclaimed there, and only two weeks later, the Emigrant arrived with typhoid on board. Over fifty passengers and crew died, and are buried in the old cemetery at Dunwich. In 1864, the quarantine buildings were taken over by the Benevolent Institution, when it moved from the Brisbane Hospital at Herston, bringing a miscellany of vulnerable people, aged, poor, insane or otherwise troublesome to society. The Benevolent Institution remained at Dunwich for more than eighty years, and over 8000 of its inmates are buried there. Until it moved to Eerwidge at Sandgate after World War II, the Benevolent Institution dominated the economy of Stradbroke Island. As the only government institution in the area, it became an administrative centre dominating the island through the lack of regulations which could limit its power. The institution employed Aboriginal people from the nearby Myora Mission, supplementing their inadequate pay with rations and blankets. In the 1930s, the ‘Aboriginal gang’ was led by a ‘bossman’, Teddy Ruska, whose agitation for improved conditions led to conflict with the administration of the Benevolent Institution. In 1944 he was dismissed. His daughter, Kathleen Ruska, would eventually become famous as Kath Walker, later Oodgeroo Noonuccal.

Other economic activity on Stradbroke Island was limited. In 1895 Bill North took an occupational licence for one year on ten square miles around Point Lookout, and swam cattle over from the Southport Spit. Although he never renewed his licence after the first year, he continued to run cattle there until he retired in 1930, supplying beef to the Benevolent Institution.

Oystering was important. The Moreton Bay Oyster Company was formed in 1876, with shareholders including the politicians Thomas Molten and Arthur Palmer. The Aboriginal families who worked for the company ‘appear to have been more efficient at managing the specific leases for which they had responsibility than the parent company’, and continued to work the beaches after the company was finally wound up in 1963.

And then there is sand mining, which remains a contentious issue to the present day. The first mining company, Zinc Corp, set up operations in 1949, followed by Titanium and Zirconium Industries in the 1950s, and Consolidated Rutile in 1963. The sand is mined for heavy metals, particularly zirconium and titanium, which have become ever more valuable as raw materials in the electronics industry, but while mining remains a major employer of labour on the island, it has increasingly been seen as incompatible with the other major driver of economic development, tourism. Stradbroke first became a destination for recreational fishing, camping, bushwalking and sailing in the late nineteenth century. As Amity Point gradually disappeared into the ocean as a result of erosion, a third settlement, Point Lookout (Mooloomba), grew, during the twentieth century as a holiday and retirement settlement. In the 1930s, Bert Clayton built the first guesthouse, beginning with tents that he gradually replaced with one-room cabins. He also started the first bus service to Point Lookout. The Point Lookout Lighthouse was built in 1932, and during World War II, Point Lookout was the site of an American radar station, which later passed to the RAAF. The sinking of the Centaur in 1943 was first reported from here.

With the removal of the Benevolent Institution at the end of the war, the focus of Stradbroke Island shifted to sand mining on the one hand, and recreation and leisure activities on the other. A vehicular ferry service began in 1947, the same year that Resevers began to patrol Point Lookout.4 Mining and tourism remain in constant tension to the present day.

The sand islands of Moreton Bay are in constant flux, with only a few rocky outcrops, like Point Lookout, that are permanent fixtures within the shifting sand dunes. In geological terms, the most significant event since the European occupation of Stradbroke Island occurred between 1894 and 1896, when South Stradbroke Island separated from the larger, northern part of Stradbroke Island. In early September 1894, the Cambus Wallace was wrecked off Stradbroke Island. The local residents turned out to help rescue most of those on board. The Brisbane Courier reported: ‘The scene of the wreck is only about two hundred yards off the shore, but the surf which is constantly breaking over her would render it a rather risky task to swim ashore. Portions of the cargo, such as cases of spirits, salt, dynamite, and large pieces of wreckage, are to be seen strewn along the beach of the Island for about two miles, and the Customs authorities are doing their best to prevent … thefts …’

Above: Detail of A reduction of Captain Cook’s original chart of the East Australian Coast Line 1770 to originals in the British Museum, south sheet, from James Cook, Captain Cook’s journal during his first voyage around the world, made in H.M. Bark ‘Endeavour’, 1768-71; a literal transcription of the original ms. with notes and introduction, Stock, London, 1893 Right: The Brisbane Courier, 24 Jul 1896, p. 5

In 1877, the Commandant of the Moreton Bay Settlement, Patrick Logan, established a convict and military settlement at Dunwich, on the landward side. With the end of the convict era, this settlement was abandoned until 1843, when a group of Passionist priests set up a Catholic mission to the Aborigines in the abandoned buildings. The mission failed, and they left in 1847. Brisbane looked to the sea for communication with Sydney and the rest of the world, but the long, shallow channel up the Brisbane River was slow and unsuitable for ocean-going ships until a deeper current was cut, much later in the century. Until the 1840s, ships entered Moreton Bay via the South Passage, guided by a pilot based at Amity Point (Pulan) on Stradbroke Island. A small settlement grew up around this pilot station.

The South Passage was dangerous, and in 1847 the passenger steamer Swansea was wrecked coming through into Moreton Bay, with forty-four people drowned. After that tragedy, ships used the safer northern shipping route between Moreton and Brisbane Islands, and the pilot station moved to Cape Moreton.

SWIMMING PORT

14 - UQ LIBRARY

FRYER FOLIOS | JULY 2012  15

In 1415, G&W Nicol, UQ LIBRARY

Above: Detail of ‘East Coast, sheet 2’ from Matthew Pinders, Charts of Terra Australis or Australia: showing the parts explored between 1798-1803, G&W Nicol, London, 1814
Men in boots marched up and down the beach, guarding the remaining cargo. Their activity damaged the fragile grasses that stabilise the dunes, and more damage occurred when the authorities blew up the cargo of dynamite, fearing it might become unstable. Two years later, during another winter storm, the sea broke through at what is now Jumpinpin.

The shipwreck and its aftermath undoubtedly hastened this event. Men in boots were new to the island. Yet the creation of South Stradbroke Island was inevitable nevertheless, part of the constant pattern of erosion that has affected the area for millennia, and will continue to do so.

THE PASSIONIST MISSION ON STRADBROKE ISLAND (1843-1847)

Stefano Girola examines an early, ill-fated Catholic mission on Stradbroke Island.

Stradbroke Island or Minjerribah occupies an important place in the history of Roman Catholicism in Australia. It was here, in 1843, that the first Catholic mission among Australia’s Indigenous peoples was founded. At that time, the Catholic Church was beginning to establish its own hierarchy in the Australian colonies. The Church had been dependent until then on the far-away bishop of Majorca, but on 5 April 1842, Pope Gregory XV appointed English Benedicite John Bede Polding (1794-1877) as the head of the new metropolitan and archepiscopal See of Sydney. The new prelate believed that his Church had overlooked for too long the evangelisation of Aborigines.

In 1842 Polding travelled to Rome to discuss his plans with the Pope, who was a strong supporter of missionary work. Polding was able to recruit for his mission four priests of the Congregation of the Passion of Our Lord Jesus Christ (Passionists) from the Italian dioceses of Rome, Luigi Pesciaroli of Canepina (Viterbo), Maurizio Lencioni of Lucca and the Swiss Joseph Snell. The four missionaries arrived in Sydney on 9 March 1843, and then travelled north to Stradbroke Island, opposite the small town of Brisbane, still part of the colony of New South Wales. The wooden pier at Durwach where they landed in May 1843 had been built by convicts, who had recently left the island.

The mission was undertaken with exaggerated expectations of easy success, but these did not last long. Pesciaroli, Lencioni and Snell abandoned the island in 1845, when the failure of their efforts ‘to convert and civilise the Aborigines’ became evident. Vaccari stayed on alone for another year, spending more time in obtaining police protection against the growing hostility of the Aborigines than in spreading the Word. From the missionaries’ point of view, their experience ended with a bitter sense of failure. What were the reasons for this outcome? First and foremost was their lack of preparation. Only Fr Snell could understand English and all had great difficulty trying to communicate with the three different groups of Aborigines (Noonuccal, Goenpuls and Nughie).

Then there was the problem of getting accustomed to living in a recently colonised area, in a sub-tropical climate that was very different from the climate of southern Europe. These priests had always lived in the sheltered life of European seminaries or convents and had contemplative or intellectual habits; they lacked practical skills that were necessary for their enterprise.

Moreover, Moreton Bay was not the ‘uncontaminated’ place, far from European influence, which they thought would have offered the best conditions for the announcement of the Gospel and the teaching of the Catechism. The missionaries quickly realised that contact between Indigenous peoples and the Europeans living in the Bay had begun to produce the same negative effects as in the south of the colony.

There was conflict about the status of the mission, its dependence on Rome, and the extent of the Sydney archbishop’s authority. The Passionists, for instance, would only baptise children on the verge of death, whereas Polding argued for a more flexible interpretation of the moral theology taught in the seminaries.

Besides these factors, which were recognised at the time, today we focus on other causes of the failure of this Catholic mission: in particular an underlying incapacity to overcome the great intercultural barriers.

By the time the Passionists arrived on Stradbroke, Aborigines were wary of the Europeans. Even though they felt that the motivations of the missionaries were different from those of the other colonists, Indigenous Australians regarded the missions mainly as an opportunity to obtain resources for their survival, which was more often threatened by the advancement of the colonial frontier. When the missionaries were able to satisfy their demands, the Aborigines appeared to be friendlier and willing to listen to religious instructions; otherwise they showed indifference if not downright hostility. The fact that the missionaries accused the Aborigines of ingratitude and opportunism reveals that they did not understand that for Indigenous peoples in that context it was hard to distinguish between...

Above: ‘Naturalists and scientists at Point Lookout at cottage, the home of Billy North’. UQFL 122, box 9, image 28

REFERENCES
2. T Whately, Earl Moreton Bay, Outright Printing Company, Brisbane, 1907, p. 274.
6. Goodall, p. 41.
7. Goodall, p. 240.
8. Goodall, p. 257.
10. ‘Island History’.
The missionaries and other colonisers. Also the Aborigines’ reluctance to give up the semi-nomadic life of hunter-gatherers in the bush they had practised for thousands of years to adopt a sedentary, tending life as small farmers was viewed by the missionaries as inborn laziness and lack of a ‘work ethic’. Moreover, according to the Passionists, Aboriginal cultural expressions such as body painting or propitiatory ceremonies before hunting and fishing expeditions revealed a barbarian nature which was impossible to eradicate. It should be noted that it would take more than a century before strategies such as the ‘enlightenment of the Gospel’, based on a more positive view of Indigenous cultures, were accepted as a viable missionary methodology.

The missionaries saw the children as their best hope. The priests were convinced that if they managed to separate them from their parents in order to educate them, slowly but surely they would be able to create a stable, Christian, ‘civilised’ community. In 1844 they built a little school, and during some periods, probably for the first time in the history of the missions, they ventured into the bush to try to convert the children. However, when the scarcity of resources made it difficult to support the children, the adults would leave them at the mission, but they would return to reclaim the children when conditions improved. This situation was frustrating for the four priests, and also for Polding, who even reached the point of taking some children of mixed descent with him to Sydney, provoking the anger of family members who threatened to kill the missionaries if they did not bring them back.2 The idea of separating children from their parents to ‘convert and civilise’ them had grave consequences on Australian society, as is evident from the tragedy of the ‘stolen generation’.

Eventually, a climate of mutual mistrust between the Passionists and the Aborigines developed on the mission, which certainly contributed to its early demise. Nothing remains today of the little wooden church and the school that the priests built at Dunwich, but the Passionist fathers have not been completely forgotten by the local Aborigines. One hundred and fifty years after their arrival on the island, in 1950, a group of Aborigines celebrated this anniversary with a Mass and a public ceremony, dedicating a plaque to the four priests, which can still be seen near the small port of Dunwich.

John Mackenzie-Smith has stressed a positive aspect of the legacy of the missionaries: ‘the honest and earnest Passionist priests encouraged the Aborigines to regain their confidence in Europeans who had hitherto betrayed, deceived and maltreated them’.3 Also for this reason, the story of the first Catholic mission in Australia should be part of the historical memory of Stradbroke Island or Minjerribah.

REFERENCES
2. J. Harris, One blood, 200 years of Aboriginal encounter with Christianity: a story of hope, 2nd ed. Albatross Books, Sutherland, NSW, 1994, p. 76.
3. Raimondo Vaxzi was born in Rome in 1801 and became a Passionist in 1823. When he met Bishop Polding in Rome in the early 1840s, Vaxzi was the Rector of the Retreat of St. Angels at Vertolde, near Viterbo, in the region of Lazio. Luigi Pesciaroli was born in Casoria, in Naples, in 1804. A former diocesan priest, when he was thirty-four when he became a Passionist. In 1839, he responded positively to Polding’s appeal for missionaries to Australia. Maurizio Lencioni was born in piano, Tuscany, in 1814. He joined the Passionists when he was eighteen and made his religious profession in 1833. He was ordained as a priest in 1847, and died in Rome when he met Polding. The oldest of the four was Father Joseph Snell. He was born in Lyrmi in 1806 to non-Catholic parents but converted to Catholicism when he was twenty-three. After this, he joined the Passionists at Monte Argentario in Tuscany. After his ordination in 1830 he went to Sydney where he stayed in the diocese of Nipoc for the next eight years (Thorpe, pp. 23-26).
4. When Pesciaroli, Lencioni and Snell left Stradbroke, they intended to go to Western Australia. However, they had to change their plans and finally they all remained in the diocese of Adelaide. In 1849 Pesciaroli went to Mount Baw Baw as assistant priest. Lencioni went to reside at Bishop Murphy’s House in Adelaide and Snell went to Mount Gambier as assistant priest. Lencioni returned to Adelaide in 1854 and then became rector of the mission in 1859. In 1861, Snell returned to Adelaide as a parish priest and died in 1861, while Pesciaroli died in Adelaide in 1864, when he was about to return to Europe. In 1847 Vaxzi also left the Stradbroke mission forever, disillusioned and mentally exhausted. Nothing was heard of him for 13 years, until he was found working as a gardener under an assumed English name in a Franciscan convent in Rome. He eventually joined the Franciscans (Thorpe, pp. 147-71).
5. ‘Of the failures, the largest in scale and the most pernicious was that of the Passionists at Moreton Bay. It also had most repercussions for the general morale and organization of the Church in Australia’ (T. Sutton, ‘Heavenly and democracy in Australia 1788-1870: the formation of Australian Catholics’, Melbourne University Press, Melbourne, 1965, p. 96). The failure of the Passionist mission on Stradbroke is also discussed in RM Wiltgen, The founding of the Roman Catholic Church in Oceania 1820 to 1870, Australian National University Press, Canberra, 1979, pp. 380-7.
6. According to the missionaries, Aborigines were ‘by nature inconsistent and prone to falsehood’ (P. Main, History of the Catholic Church in Australia from authentic sources containing many original and official documents in connection with the Church in Australia, besides others from the archives of Rome, Westminster, and Dublin, which are here presented to the public for the first time, Frank-Coffey, Sydney, 1858, p. 412).

Above: Father Maurizio Lencioni, one of the Passionists sent to Stradbroke.

Image: © O. Adelaide Catholic Archdiocese Archives, kindly supplied by Co.As., It. Historical Society, Melbourne.

DR STEFANO GIROLA obtained his BA at the University of Milan in 1994. In 2007 he received his PhD in Studies in Religion from UQ. His thesis was on ‘The policies and attitudes of the Catholic Church with regard to Australia’s Indigenous peoples, 1885-1967’. He lectures in Church History at Australian Catholic University and teaches Italian at the Institute of Modern Languages. He has recently been awarded the ‘Robert Placid Speechetti Memorial Scholarship’ by the Benevolent Community of New Norcia.

DEEP-LEAVING AUSTRALIAN NEWSPAPERS WITH TROVE AND SUBJECT INDEXES

The National Library’s service Trove (trove.nla.gov.au) has been described as ‘the search engine for all things Aussie’. It offers the ability to search and sort millions of records from libraries and cultural institutions across the country.

Included in Trove is the National Library’s groundbreaking digitised newspapers service. Since 2006 the Library has been making digital images of Australian newspapers, dating from 1803, available online. But what is most remarkable about this service is that special computer software was used to convert the letters on the newspaper pages to searchable text. Of course this automated process is prone to errors, so anyone who uses the service is encouraged to submit corrections. This has proven to be popular, with tens of thousands of corrections submitted daily.

No longer faced with the difficulties of dusty volumes or microfilm readers, readers have delved into the newspaper content for a wide variety of reasons. Stories range from rail enthusiasts uncovering details of little-known railway lines to knitters all over the world trying out patterns first published decades ago.

Historians have long appreciated the historical worth of newspapers and have worked hard to make them more accessible. For example, the subject index Moreton Bay in the news 1841–1860, compiled by Rod Fisher and John Schiavo and published by the Brisbane History Group, was a helpful reference used in conjunction with Trove to identify and locate information for the accompanying Passionist Mission article. Such resources may prove to have new and expanded uses in conjunction with the newspaper service in Trove.

AMANDA WINTERS is a librarian in the Fryer Library. She holds a BA from Valparaiso University in Indiana, USA, and a Master of Information Management from QUT.

Above: Extract from Moreton Bay in the news, dealing with Stradbroke Island.

FRYER FOLIOS | JULY 2012
FRANK THOMPSON, AO

The Queen's Birthday honours list included Frank Walden Thompson, AO.

Frank Thompson had worked in Michigan State University Press, migrated to Australia, and became manager of The University of Queensland Press, and the associated bookshop, from 1961 to 1983. The press had published mostly extended scientific papers, and administrative publications such as handbooks. Australian literature had Angus and Robertson as the dominant publisher of senior writers.

By the end of the 1960s UQP and to a fair extent contemporary Australian literature, was being transformed. A plays series, poetry (even anthologies in paperback), fiction, with authors and editors such as Rodney Hall, Tom Shapcott, Roger McDonald, Michael Wilding, came from a quickly widening circle. David Malouf is repeatedly an important influence, as in Fryer history generally. And not just an influence: Johnno (1979) was a pretty good title for a university publisher in Brisbane to add to its list.

Let's not summarise: go instead to UQP: the writer's press, 1948-1996, edited by Craig Munro, a lively but thorough history written by the key people, including Frank Thompson himself. It's the reverse of dry: Frank Thompson's own chapter is titled 'Creating a press of national value,' but by two chapters onwards, we are 'Imbibing culture at the Royal Exchange' (by Roger McDonald).

SPENCER ROUTH retired from The UQ Library in 1997 after a career spanning 38 years of service as Reference Librarian and later as Collection Development Librarian. He continues to serve as a member of the Queensland Working Party of the Australian dictionary of biography, as well as contributing biographical articles to this work. Spencer was awarded an honorary doctorate from UQ in 2006 in recognition of his distinguished career and contribution to the University Library. He was awarded an OAM in 2011.

2012 FRYER LIBRARY AWARDS

The recipient of the Fryer Library Award for 2012 is Ms D'Arcy Randall. Ms Randall received her BA in Art History from Newcomb College, New Orleans, in 1976. From 1980 to 1989, she was Fiction Editor and Senior Editor at The University of Queensland Press. This was a period that saw UQP rise to prominence as a leading Australian literary publisher specialising in original works by new writers. In the 1970s, UQP's willingness to invest in unknown writers initiated the careers of David Malouf, Rodney Hall and Peter Carey. As Fiction Editor in the 1980s, D'Arcy Randall aimed to balance this brilliant but male-dominated list with works by women writers. By the mid-1980s, UQP had published first books by Kate Grenville, Marion Halligan, and Olga Masters, among many others. D'Arcy Randall also worked with Thea Astley, Rosa Cappiello, Beverley Farmer, Elizabeth Jolley, Barbara Hannrahan, and Janette Turner Hospital. These writers quickly attracted major literary prizes, strong reviews, and dedicated readers. Ms Randall is conducting research in Fryer for a memoir of her career at UQP. This memoir will assist scholars to interpret and contextualise the archival records of UQP held by Fryer Library and will also examine the ways in which UQP was "transnational" before we knew the word. In 1989, D'Arcy Randall returned to the US, obtained her MA and PhD in English from the University of Texas at Austin, and currently teaches there as a Senior Lecturer. We are delighted to welcome her back to Brisbane and The University of Queensland as the 2012 Fryer Library Award winner.

The Fryer Library Award Committee has also chosen to award an Honorary Fryer Library Award this year to Mrs Barbara Williams. Mrs Williams was a member of the staff of The University of Queensland Library from 1968 to 1995 in various positions. She has been a member of Graduate Women Queensland since 1960, was President of the Australian Federation of University Women Queensland from 1983-1986, and a committee member of that organisation almost continuously from 1965 to 2003. She served on the management committee of Fellowships Fund Inc. (FFF) from its inception until 2011 and now proposes to write a history of that organisation. She believes it is important that the story of the Fellowship Fund, and its establishment, success and growth to its current status as a multi-million dollar educational fund making regular awards is properly documented. The Fryer Library Award Committee agrees and has granted her an Honorary Fryer Library Award to assist her in this task.

Fryer Library staff look forward to working closely with both Fryer Library Award winners for 2012 and assisting them in their research.

BRIT ANDRESEN DESCRIBES A BEACH HOUSE DESIGNED TO TAKE ADVANTAGE OF STRADBROKE ISLAND'S UNIQUE LANDSCAPE AND CLIMATE.

Above: Mooloomba House. Photograph for Andresen O’Gorman Architects by Anthony Browell

The house itself comprises three different but connected elements, the long north-south gallery wing, the south ‘cave’ room and the north ‘bower’ room.

The two storey, gable-roofed, gallery-wing is formed by a 2.4 metre wide, timber-frame structure twenty four metres long.

In some sections of the gallery-wing the frame is enclosed to accommodate, at the upper level, the sleeping alcoves, bathroom and the belvedere overlooking the Pacific Ocean and at the lower level, the store, kitchen bench and decks.

The frame structure of the gallery-wing is visible both on the inside and outside of the walls and has a regular ordering geometry and dressed timber members of relatively small sections.

Elements of this timber frame structure are repeated in the arbor on the east of the central banksia courtyard.

The north room and south room are located to the west of the long gallery wing and share views into the sand court and the small garden court.
The timber structure of this western zone comprises thirteen cypress poles and rough-sawn timber roof members, mostly arranged off-grid with an irregular geometry—approximating the Fibonacci series. The more ‘chaotic’ character of this timber-frame structure contrasts with the opposing ‘ordered’ character of the gallery-wing.

The high walls and ceiling of the north ‘bower’ room are largely transparent or translucent and remain free of bracing members which have been transposed to the upper level of the ‘aedicule’ that further defines the interiority of this ‘bower’ space.

The tall folding doors allow the room to open onto the small courts on either side and provide cooling ventilation.

The north room has access to the garden and serves as a kitchen and studio space.

The floor level of the south room is raised one half level above the ground to gain a view across the sand court and through the north room to the horizon and also connects to the deck of the central courtyard.

This ‘cave’ room, set against the hillside with its fireplace, is the only room where the wall and ceiling have been lined to create continuity of surface to form a closed and sheltered space.

Project Intentions

The design of Mooloomba House has two primary intentions: to intensify the presence of the landscape and to continue the exploration of the expressive capacity of hardwood in terms of its material properties, geometry and metaphor.

Hardwood has conventionally been incorporated within stud-framed systems to conceal the defective behavior of the frame (those well-known characteristics of hardwoods to shrink, harden, warp, twist, cup and crack as they dry after milling). Sheathing over hardwood has always seemed to us an unfortunate loss of architectural opportunity in a material where high strength and durability does permit an external use and potential to contribute to building expression.

In Mooloomba House the simple strategy adopted in order to tame excessive lateral movements has been to vertically laminate thin, hardwood members of opposing grain formation and integrate a 1200mm by 2000mm wall panel of 18mm waterproof plywood sheathing sandwiched in-between. The frame simultaneously forms enlarged ‘cover batters’ over the joints in sheets. The technique also facilitates a prefabrication process. Having drawn the hardwood frame into playing an expressive role in the building three important ideas inform the underlying architectural intent for the house.

Firstly, in her essay ‘Proportioning systems and the timber frame’, Rachel Fletcher explains that before Homeric times the ancient Greek word for harmony, ‘harmonia’, was a term meaning the harmonious pattern of sounds, visuals, colours etc. as well as a term used in joinery or carpentry meaning ‘a timber frame such that to take away one piece would collapse it’—informing the idea that the components must fit together harmonically to make a whole.

In Mooloomba House the generative 1200 x 2000 (1:1.618) proportion of the expressed wall panel and primary frame is intended to link the ancient meaning of harmony with the poetic interpretation of a mathematical proportioning system that offers visual integrity.

In these days of environmental crisis the ancients’ belief that nature and the entire ‘spherical’ universe form a living, harmonic whole does not seem an inappropriate reference. To recognise the humble timber frame as the origin of such a profound sequence of thought is to expose its architectural potential.

The second idea is that space may be characterised by constructional form. For example the open assemblage of relatively thin members can characterise a bower space such as the woven balustrade of the belvedere (‘tectonic space’). Or the creation of a continuous surface, as if carved out of a mass, can characterise a cave space such as the lined corner of the room with the fireplace (‘stereotomic space’). The thought in this small house was to explore the inclusion of these different constructional forms, all of hardwood, in three different segments of the building, to be held together in forms of what Aldo van Eyck called ‘technocracy’.

The third idea, made possible by the benign climate of North Stradbroke Island, is the opportunity of creating space with ‘transparencies’ inherent in tectonic form. Such opportunities begin to bridge technology (material and technique), territoriality (the plan), light, and relationship with the landscape, and also offer an opportunity for what Colin Rowe termed ‘phenomenological transparency’ where several conditions may be ‘layered’ together.

The design of Mooloomba House also explores the proposition that to defer to the existing landscape, to allude to a mythical landscape and to create a constructed landscape can collectively contribute to intensify the place of the house in its wider setting.

The first landscape is the existing island setting. To fix the location of the house in this landscape the relatively small site has been constructed as an open terrain of interconnected outdoor rooms. Continuity of the hillside landscape is maintained by revealing the folding topography of the slopes through the centre of the site where a grove of old banksia trees is framed on three sides creating the largest of the courtyards. While the central courtyard is loosely bounded by a cloistered walkway the site enclosure has been ‘eroded’ in places to allow traces of the larger landform to be seen from within the site across neighbouring properties.

Secondly, the design explores the inclusion of mythical and metaphorical landscapes together with their small shelters such as the child’s tree house or the small bower in Paradise. The perched sleeping alcoves and the ‘lookout–nest’ of the belvedere invite reverie and are designed with recollected experiences in mind.

The third landscape is the ‘imaginary forest’ constructed, as one continuous landscape adjacent to the western boundary, through the two principal rooms and small courts. In this constructed landscape thirteen cypress columns have been set off-grid, among growing trees and overhead interlaced in places with irregularly spaced rafters.

REFERENCES AND ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

This article draws upon a special issue of international architecture magazine UME devoted to the works of Andresen O’Gorman Architects. UME 22—Andresen O’Gorman Works 1985–2007, edited by Hag Biek and Jackie Cooper, available online at www.umermagazine.com. Frye also holds one of 50 hard copy portfolios of this publication, published to accompany the launch of the web document, and kindly donated by Professor Michael Hargreaves.


BRIT ANDRESEN is an Emeritus Professor at UQ’s School of Architecture. In 2002, after a successful architectural and academic career spanning more than three decades, she was the first woman to receive the prestigious Royal Australian Institute of Architects Gold Medal.

Above: Mooloomba House. Axonometric drawing for Andresen O’Gorman Architects by Michael Barnett
At the end of the nineteenth century, Brisbane celebrated its half century as a free settlement as well as the centenary of white settlement in New South Wales. As the colony moved towards Federation, politicians and planners looked forward with some confidence. Novelist, too, gave their prognostications of what a Brisbane of the future might look like, using the fantasy trope of time travel, but evoking the real city in great detail—the river, the heat, the lush vegetation—detail that has become integral to the way we imagine and experience the city today.

William Lane's White or yellow?: a story of the race-war of 1908 was serialised in the radical newspaper, The Boomerang, in 1888. Before leading 500 disciples to Paraguay in 1893 to establish a short-lived Utopian settlement, the British-born Lane spent more than a decade in Queensland. During this period he established himself as the most widely read and influential radical journalist in the colony. His racism was fanatical even by the standards of the time; he only thought of it as a land of mighty forests and of boundless pastures and of mines from which yellow gold was dug by the tons, as a land in which the creepers grew over the homesteaders' verandas and in which the market-gardens of the yellow aliens blossomed in every waterway like chains of emeralds upon the bosom of Nature. He gave no glance at the crowded towns in which the destitution of the Old World had commenced in all its loathsomeness.2

This passage turns on an opposition almost as important to the novel as the clash of races: the clash of rural and urban values. The omniscient narrator slides in and out of Lord Stibbins' consciousness, revealing both what he is able to see—Queensland's natural wealth ('yellow gold' and 'boundless pastures')—and what he cannot: the suffering of the urban poor, who are denied their share of the bounty. Over the course of the novel, Brisbane's physical layout comes to represent the city/bush divide: the inner city, home to the British-controlled parliament and old China Town, is the domain of corrupting foreign influences; the bushland and pastoral areas in the city's west, where the resistance is based, are associated with Australian patriotism.

Brisbane was a privileged vantage point for a writer of Lane's political persuasion in the 1880s and 1890s. An essentially urban creature, he nonetheless insisted on the superiority of the bush. Brisbane allowed him access to the outback Queensland landscape that he and many other writers of the period saw as the real Australia, but also offered him the opportunity to observe and document the effects of the 1890s recession on city life.

Austin South's Utopian novel, White or yellow?: in those days or life in the 20th century, is as optimistic about Brisbane's future as White or yellow? is pessimistic. Unlike the charismatic editor of The Boomerang, who has remained a figure of fascination for generations of Australian scholars, South's identity is now lost to us. We know from the foreword of his only novel, that Austin South was the pen name of a well-off businessman who lived in Brisbane around 1890. The novel's narrator Maurice Penton is of a similarly privileged background. A gentleman scientist of late nineteenth-century Brisbane, he gradually becomes conscious of the fate of the city's poor:

And now and again, when perhaps a bad season or a commercial depression caused hundreds of willing and able workmen to tramp through the country in vain search for employment, and grinding poverty lifted its gaunt head, I had wondered ... if there were no remedy, no means by which all men could be secured the possession of at least the necessities of life.3

Written and published at a time of severe recession, climate extremes, and massive strikes in Queensland, in those days imagines twentieth-century Brisbane as a classless, high-tech Utopia. Edward Bellamy's popular 1887 Utopian novel, Looking Backwards, is the literary model, while South's philosophical framework is derived from the ideas of another American, social theorist Henry George. In 1890, shortly before South began work on the first draft of the book, George had undertaken a worldwide
years to launch a flying machine. He finally succeeds only to be knocked unconscious by an electric shock during his maiden flight. His hero awakes, still flying, in the year 1995 to find his home city greatly altered. Although he recognises Moreton Island (‘this was Brisbane surely’), he is astonished by the sight of futuristic sailing vessels on the bay and masses of electric flying machines similar to his own. Fenton is nursed back to health by a man named Dr Hope, who acts as his guide to the ‘great and busy city’ of twentieth-century Brisbane.

Like his creator, Fenton is a bourgeois observer of social change, rather than an agent of it. From a fashionable North Quay restaurant, he observes the skyscrapers and bridges of futuristic Brisbane, while Dr Hope explains how a movement for global reform began in Brisbane in the early 1900s. In 1903, we learn, 2000 delegates from around the English-speaking world gathered at City Hall in Brisbane to plan world revolution. Society was remade swiftly and without violence by implementing reforms similar to those proposed by Henry George. In those days juxtaposes images of sunlight dancing on the Brisbane River with Dr Hope’s revelation that poverty has been defeated. In 1985, the Queensland capital is ‘a dream city of some eastern fairy-tale where citizens live in magnificent riverside palaces.

South’s image of the Brisbane dream—a big house on the riverbank—clearly survives today, though it is far from accessible to most of us. It would fail to his near-contemporary, Thomas Pennington Lucas, who was working on his own Brisbane novel during the great flood of 1893, to ponder the wisdom of building Utopia on a flood plain.

Pennington Lucas is a moralist first and a cure for social inequality. Like his creator, Fenton is a bourgeois observer of social change, rather than an agent of it. From a fashionable North Quay restaurant, he observes the skyscrapers and bridges of futuristic Brisbane, while Dr Hope explains how a movement for global reform began in Brisbane in the early 1900s. In 1903, we learn, 2000 delegates from around the English-speaking world gathered at City Hall in Brisbane to plan world revolution. Society was remade swiftly and without violence by implementing reforms similar to those proposed by Henry George. In those days juxtaposes images of sunlight dancing on the Brisbane River with Dr Hope’s revelation that poverty has been defeated. In 1985, the Queensland capital is ‘a dream city of some eastern fairy-tale where citizens live in magnificent riverside palaces.

Pennington Lucas’s The curse and its cure is the longest, strongest, and least coherent of the three novels considered here. Its author, a British-born physician who came to Queensland in 1886 for the sake of his health, is now best remembered as the inventor of Lucas’s Pawpaw ointment, a skin treatment that is still sold in distinctive red tubes by Australian chemists today.

His 1894 novel, The curse and its cure is structured as a story cycle, a series of loosely related anecdotes connected by a narrative frame. In the year 2000, an unnamed nineteenth-century line traveller visits the ruins of Brisbane where a handful of pioneers are re-establishing the city. The secondary characters take turns to tell stories of Brisbane’s decline and destruction in the late 1800s. Although the causes are far from clear, it appears the city was destroyed by a combination of civil war with the southern colonies over the issue of black labour in Queensland, and catastrophic flooding of the Brisbane River.

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WHAT’S NEW IN FRYER LIBRARY

All of the Fryer staff, whether full-time or part-time, play an important role in providing service to our clients and in caring for our collection. The Fryer staff are, from left to right: Andrew Yeo, Francisco Roelas, Cathy Leutenegger, Holly McGuire, Elizabeth Aley, Penny Whiteway, Laurie McNeice, Rose Wade, Amanda Winters, Robin Clare, Darren Williams, Marg Powell, Rebecca Carter, Lachlan Wong, and Keri Williams.

Left: Our new University Librarian Robert Gerrity

OUR NEW UNIVERSITY LIBRARIAN ROBERT GERRITY

On Monday, 30 July, our new University Librarian, Robert Gerrity, will arrive at UQ. Bob comes to The University of Queensland Library from Boston College Libraries, where he was the Associate University Librarian for Library Systems and Information Technology. Responsible for all technology-based systems and services, Bob joined Boston College in 1999, and oversaw the selection and implementation of a variety of technologies to improve management of and access to Boston College Libraries’ burgeoning electronic and digital collections. Most recently, he led the Libraries’ development partnership with Ex Libris on Alma, a cloud-based, next-generation integrated library system. He also spearheaded the Boston College Libraries’ memberships in the HathiTrust and OCLC Research partnerships.

Bob was previously the Coordinator of the Metro-Boston Library Network (MBNL) at the Boston Public Library. MBLN is a resource-sharing network providing technology services to public and school libraries. Bob started his library career working for CLSI, a leading automation vendor at the time. Prior to becoming a librarian, Bob held several editorial positions, for an indexing and abstracting service and an educational testing company.

Bob is the editor of Information Technology and Libraries, the official publication of the Library and Information Technology Association (LITA) division of the American Library Association. He presents regularly at library conferences, on technology and scholarly-communication topics. In his spare time, Bob is an avid runner and cyclist.

NEW STAFF IN FRYER LIBRARY

Fryer Library has acquired three new staff in recent months. Following Laurie McNeil’s promotion to Fryer Library Manager, Penny Whiteway was the successful applicant for the Senior Librarian’s position in Fryer. Penny’s vacant librarian position was filled by Elizabeth Aley. Elizabeth Aley obtained a BA degree with first class honours in Classical Language from UQ in 2007 and a Master of Information Technology degree from QUT in 2009. She comes to UQ from QUT, where she was a liaison librarian and an academic skills advisor, winning an individual Vice-Chancellor’s Performance Award for her work in 2011.

Jeff Rickertt left Fryer in January 2012 for a new job as Senior Archivist with the Queensland State Archives. His vacant librarian’s position was filled by Amanda Winters, who comes to Fryer from the Queensland State Archives. Amanda earned a BA with majors in Philosophy and German from Vassar College in Indiana, US, before earning her Master of Information Management degree from QUT in 2010. She has also worked at Griffith University and the Supreme Court of Queensland Library.

Andrew Yeo is Fryer’s new photographer, working 18 hours per week on Fryer’s current digitisation projects and its copying service for clients. Andrew has a BA degree with a major in Photography from Griffith University and a Graduate Certificate of Business Administration from QUT. He spent many years working in the New York film production industry, and has his own photography business, Andrew Yeo Pictures.

Fryer welcomes these new staff to the team, and looks forward to the contribution their skills and abilities will make to our work.

COLLECTIONS

DONATION FROM VICTORIAN FICTION RESEARCH GROUP

Members of the Victorian Fiction Research Group have recently donated a sum of money to Fryer to enable it to purchase first editions of George Eliot’s Middlemarch (1872) and Anthony Trollope’s John Caldigate (1879). George Eliot was the pen name of Mary Ann Evans (1819-1880), an English novelist, journalist and translator, who said that she used a male pen name to ensure her works would be taken seriously. She wrote seven novels, most of them set in provincial England and noted for their realism and psychological insight. Middlemarch is her sixth novel and it is almost unanimously acclaimed as one of the greatest novels in the English language. Set in the fictitious Midlands town of Middelmarch during the period 1830-32, it has multiple plots with a large cast of characters and pursues a number of underlying themes, including the status of women, the nature of marriage, idealism and self-interest, religion and hypocrisy, political reform, and education. Anthony Trollope’s John Caldigate is the tale of an Englishman who, after relocating to Australia to make his fortune, does so and returns home, marries and has a son, and is then surprised by the arrival in England of a former fiancée who claims to have become his wife in Australia. Trollope (1815-1882) was one of the most prolific and successful English novelists of the Victorian era, and John Caldigate was very popular with contemporary critics and the reading public.

Fryer is very pleased to be able to add these two valuable first editions to its rare book collection.

TWO SIGNIFICANT ART-RELATED ACQUISITIONS

Thanks to two generous donations from Drs Catherine and Margaret Mittelhauser, Fryer has recently been able to acquire a first edition of The etchings of Norman Lindsay (London: Constable & Co., 1927) and Peter Lysicott’s latest artist’s book Men of flowers: Charles Darwin, Joseph Hooker and Gregor Mendel. Norman Lindsay’s first book of etchings was published by Constable in an edition of 129 copies, of which only 120 were for sale. Lindsay’s popularity in the 1920s meant that the edition sold out almost at once, and only a handful of copies reached Australia. Many copies were subsequently broken to sell the plates, making intact first edition copies even greater rarities. A deluxe edition of thirty-one copies, of which twenty-five were for sale, included an original etching and was even more highly sought after by collectors. Eleven Australian libraries are fortunate enough to hold copies of the deluxe edition. The State Library of New South Wales held the only Australian copy of the standard first edition—Fryer now holds the second copy in Australia. Peter Lysicott’s Men of flowers has an edition size of ten—Fryer’s copy is No. 7. The book was commissioned by the University of Melbourne in 2009 to celebrate the 50th anniversary of the Bailleu Library, the 200th anniversary of the birth of Charles Darwin, and the 150th anniversary of the publication of his famous book The origin of species. Men of flowers includes
an introductory scholarly essay by Humphrey McQueen on Darwin, Hooker and Mendel. Peter Lyssiotis is nationally recognised as creating artist’s books which compel and confront those who explore them and Fryer can now add this book to the other examples it holds of his work.

DIGITISATION WORK IN FRYER

Mention is made earlier in this issue of Fryer’s work in digitising a collection of glass slides donated by SOA Mellick. We thought we might share a couple of these images with the readers of Fryer Folios. They appear to show a regatta on the Brisbane River at the turn of the century.

Readers might also be interested in a photo recently donated to Fryer and digitised showing members of the Suburban Bicycle Club in Sydney in October 1900. Fryer aims to digitise more of its photographic holdings and make them widely available to researchers through UQ eSpace and Trove.

WEBSITE

TREASURE OF THE MONTH

Fryer Library continues to profile a “treasure” from its holdings each month on its website, accompanying it with a small physical display in the Reading Room. Treasures profiled recently include: an album from the Hayes collection with late nineteenth-century South Pacific images; the famous Romantic artist John Martin’s mezzotints for Fryer’s rare 1827 edition of Milton’s Paradise Lost; Fryer’s material on the first Australasian Antarctic Expedition of 1911 led by Douglas Mawson; a look at Fryer’s political ephemera collection; a sketch of Tatura internment camp with a unique folk-art frame from Fryer’s Baldwin Goener collection; a profile of the life and work of sculptor Harold Parker based on his manuscript collection in Fryer; and rare images from the time of the 1882 Transit of Venus from Fryer’s Hume Family collection.


DISPLAYS

DISPLAY FOR THE AUSTRALIAN EARLY MEDIEVAL ASSOCIATION CONFERENCE

In April of 2012, the Australian Early Medieval Association held its annual conference at the University of Queensland and Fryer Library mounted a display of its holdings in this area for conference delegates. In Australia, access to original sources in this field can be difficult, so the scholars in attendance appreciated Fryer’s display, even though some of the items included properly belonged to the later medieval period and even to the Renaissance. Fryer is hoping to renovate and refurbish its display space shortly, to allow it to mount more extensive physical displays of its holdings, and to allow displays organised for a specific occasion to be exhibited for longer and enjoyed by more viewers.
FRIENDS OF FRAYER EVENTS

12 SEPTEMBER: BETTY CHURCHER AO ‘NOTEBOOKS’

In conjunction with the 2011 Brisbane Writers Festival, the University of Queensland Library was pleased to host former National Gallery of Australia Director and author Betty Churcher on 12 September. Over a delightful hour in conversation with Keith Webster, Betty shared with the audience many experiences, particularly as they related to her most recent publication, Notebooks, which details her experiences as she travelled to some of the world’s great galleries, memorising her favourite artworks by drawing them herself.

12 OCTOBER: KAY SAUNDERS AM ‘NOTORIOUS AUSTRALIAN WOMEN: THE SENSATIONAL LIVES AND EXPLOITS OF SOME OF AUSTRALIA’S MOST AUDACIOUS WOMEN’

On 12 October 2011, author and UQ academic Emeritus Professor Kay Saunders regaled the Friends of Fryer and other audience members with tales from her book, Notorious Australian women. Kay’s exhaustive research into her subjects, much of it conducted with the help of Fryer and UQL staff, was evident as she shared stories about women as diverse as bushrangers, courtesans, cross-dressers, writers, designers and radicals, determined to live their lives their way.

30 NOVEMBER: RHYL HINWOOD AM

Characters and events from the history of UQ came to life at the Friends of Fryer Christmas Party when sculptor Rhyl Hinwood took guests on a walking tour of the Great Court grotesques. Rhyl was commissioned as UQ Sculptor in 1976, and has created a variety of works for the University in the years since. Rhyl’s informative history of both the grotesques and other sculptural work was followed by drinks and canapés in The Hive.

8 MARCH: 40TH ANNIVERSARY OF WOMEN’S & GENDER STUDIES

On International Women’s Day, 8 March, Fryer Library, in conjunction with the UQ Gender Studies Teaching Committee and the UQ NTEU Women’s Committee, hosted an afternoon of panel discussions commemorating the 40th anniversary of the establishment of the first women’s studies course at The University of Queensland. The discussions explored the history and future of women’s studies at UQ. Special guest and panelist, former UQ academic Merle Thornton, presented Fryer with some rare ephemera relating to the infamous occasion at the Regatta Hotel, when she, Rosalie Bogner and Elaine Dignan chained themselves to the bar in protest against laws banning women from public bars. Other panel members included Senator Claire Moore, Professor Carole Ferrier, Professor Cindy Shannon and Associate Professor Liz Mackinlay.

13 JUNE: SIMON CLEARY ‘CLOSER TO STONE’

Author and UQ Alumnus Simon Cleary spoke about his most recent book, Closer to Stone, in conversation with Professor Peter Holbrook at a Friends of Fryer event on 13 June. Starting with a reading from the novel, Peter and Simon explored the main themes of the book, and spoke about the research undertaken by Simon, which included a class in sandstone sculpting. This event followed on from Simon’s earlier appearance at the Writers’ Hub during UQ’s centenary year.

UPCOMING EVENTS

7 & 8 SEPTEMBER: BRISBANE WRITERS’ FESTIVAL

On Friday, 7 September at 2 p.m. in the Library Conference Room, the University of Queensland Library will host a session, chaired by Joanne Tompkins, with writers Drusilla Modjeska and Jon Doust discussing their recent novels To the Highlands and To the Highlands. Both novels draw on their writers’ experience of Papua New Guinea and explore aspects of its post-colonial history.

On Saturday, 8 September at 10 a.m. in the Studio at the State Library of Queensland, The University of Queensland Library will sponsor a session with Robert Dessaix in conversation with fellow writer and friend Drusilla Modjeska about The Mountain. Robert Dessaix is a writer, translator, and broadcaster who has written an autobiography, novels, short stories, essays and travel memoirs.

26 SEPTEMBER: BOOK LAUNCH

On the evening of Wednesday 26 September in the Fryer Library, Carol Hetherington and Kees de Hoog will launch Investigating Uplifted: a centenary collection of critical essays, a book they have co-edited. A panel discussion on detective fiction in general, and Australian detective fiction in particular, will accompany the book launch.

28 NOVEMBER: CHRISTMAS PARTY

On the evening of Wednesday, 28 November in the Hive, Level 1, Social Sciences and Humanities Library, the Friends of Fryer will hold their annual Christmas party, which will feature Professor Peter Roennfeldt from the Queensland Conservatorium, Griffith University, speaking about his book on the history of the Queensland Conservatorium and the history of music in Brisbane.
Seeking the educational opportunities

Already a voracious reader, she was

Australian settlers, both convict and free. 1

Before her marriage to Jim Crouchley, as

concerts.

2011, aged 89, the day after she had been

22 September 1922–9 December 2011

Betty Crouchley

was told that her first duty would be to

read all the books in the Fryer collection

was appointed as a member of the Queensland Working Party of the

Australian dictionary of biography, as well as the Dictionary of Literary Biography to which she contributed. In 2010, her first book of poetry, 

Betty was a part-time state research officer

for the Queensland government, mainly in the Macquarie University Libraries.

Betty was born in 1922 at Ulmarra (NSW),

with family links including early

Australian settlers, both convict and free. 1

After Brisbane Girls Grammar School and

working in a bank, she became a secretary to

‘Doc-Robbie’, Associate Professor FW Robinson, founding professor with Professor PJ Stobie at the Fryer Memorial Library.2

At a very young age, Betty was told that her first duty would be to

read all the books in the Fryer collection

and to be curator of that library. (Talk about ordering a fish to swim...) Fryer was the ‘home’ for students interested in Australian literature. At the celebration of Fryer’s 80th anniversary in 2009, David Malinow’s tribute to those times

Bett’s love of books was evident from a young age, and her interest in literature continued throughout her life.

EDITORIAL

NARRATIVE
