

Newsletter 3 ♦ July 2020

Member of the Association of Australian Decorative and Fine Arts Society

ABN: 40 338 920 815



From the Chair

with John Griffiths

Welcome to another stunning edition of our Newsletter. Marion Pescud does a wonderful job for us – the newsletter has been admired by many other societies.

As we know we live in very unsettled and unsettling times. It is not easy to keep continuity in any organisation let alone ours. No matter – ADFAS is alive and well and trying as hard as it can to continue to provide high quality and innovative cultural 'brain food' for us all.

The National ADFAS body consists of the Executive Committee and its Council includes the Chair of every Australian Society. As with all ADFAS positions, office bearers are volunteers and unpaid.

Because of the Covid-19 pandemic, conferences of the national body have been disrupted, however the use of the internet has allowed meetings to

continue. The next will be held on July 30, where discussions on the success of our virtual lectures will be discussed, and plans made on how to best serve the membership should isolation be reimposed or travel cancelled.

The National Executive consists of the Chair (Sue Drummond from Brisbane), Vice Chair (Jane Smith from Newcastle), Secretary (Les Davis from Armidale) and Treasurer (John Griffiths from Bangalow). Other members of the National Council are Nan Robertson, Susie Craig, Helen Milne, Libby Davis, Margaret Wilson and Elizabeth Campbell.

Nan Robertson, our national Lecturer Committee Co-ordinator, has been toiling very hard to provide the 'ADFAS@HOME' lectures. So far, I have been very impressed with the range and quality of offerings provided.

For 2021, Nan is working on various avenues to secure lecturers (hopefully including those from overseas) for the ADFAS circuits. There may well be more Australian lecturers, however there is much research required before ADFAS can extend an invitation to present.

As you know, last year we awarded our inaugural Young Musician of the Year to Jemima Drews. Jemima was chosen because she has strong connections with the Northern Rivers and was highly regarded by Southern Cross Soloists (SXS), the musical group who are the talent and innovators behind the Bangalow Music Festival.

This year, in conjunction with SXS, we have identified pianist Francis Atkins, to receive the Young Musician of the Year award. We plan to present him with the award at a special event planned for later in the year.

Finally, while we've all struggled in different ways with the catastrophic events that have engulfed us this year, I'd like to you view the wonderful picture taken by Byron Bay photographer Luke Taylor, and know that our world is still beautiful.

❖ John Griffiths



*Full moon over Byron Bay Lighthouse
By Luke Taylor@slap_byronbay*



Jemima Drews

Last year's recipient of our Young Musician of the Year Award was flautist Jemima Drews. She is currently in her fourth year of at the University of Queensland, is principal flute with the Queensland Youth Symphony, and a 'Next Gen' member of the Southern Cross Soloists. Touted as one of Australia's brightest shining lights in both instrumental excellence and entrepreneurial promise, she has also won Australia's prestigious James Carson Memorial Flute Prize.

Left: Jemima Drews

Vale Sandra and Roger

It was with deep sadness that we heard of the passing in May of ADFAS members Sandra Mankowsky and Roger Downs.

Sandra grew up in Tamworth, and taught at Lane Cove primary school before retiring to Lennox Head with her husband Zsolt six years ago. She embraced life wholeheartedly and was an active community member with many interests. She served as a Committee member of ADFAS, was Co-Vice President of Bangalow Garden Club and a volunteer Lifeline Counsellor.



Sandra Mankowsky

Sandra is remembered by her friend Diana Harden, as a very special person who exuded effortless warmth, good humour, positive attitude and kindness at all times.

Roger and his wife Nerida moved to Lennox Head two and a half years ago from the tiny village of Kurmond, near Kurrajong, in the Hawksbury area. He was a pharmacist with scientific interests, and according to Nerida, ADFAS proved to be quite a surprising and hidden gem of enjoyment for him. They were both appreciative of the cultural learning experiences, and of the friendliness of the membership. To that I can add that it was Roger and Nerida who introduced themselves to me and my husband at our first lecture last October, making us feel very welcome.

Sandra and Roger will be missed by our society, and by their community in general. We extend our condolences to their families.

❖ Marion Pescud

Southern Cross Soloists Performance

Established in 1995, the Southern Cross Soloists are recognised as one of Australia's pre-eminent chamber music ensembles.

To celebrate their 25th anniversary season, a series of recitals has been planned, including a performance at the A&I Hall in Bangalow on the 19th October.

More details will be provided later.



The Southern Cross Soloists

Angela Parr

Bingara Studio and Gallery

Angela Parr is an artist, adventurer and philanthropist with a passion for wildlife. She works from her studio 'Bingara', at Knockrow, which in itself is a source of inspiration. Set among lush bushland and macadamia orchards with a fern-lined creek at its doorstep, the property is home to kangaroos, platypi and echidnas, plus an abundance of native birds.



Artist Angela Parr with two of her paintings

Angela was born and grew up in Geelong, but relocated to Ballina almost three decades ago and has lived at her five-acre property in Knockrow for the past two and a half years. Her love of wildlife has been with her since childhood, and she recalls always carrying home injured birds to care for.

After graduating from Melbourne University, she taught English at the Geelong Grammar School, but feeling the urge to spread her wings, she travelled to the Gold Coast, where she met her husband. She worked at several secondary schools, while finding time to travel, raise a family and support various charitable organisations. However, animals have always been a major part of her life and as such, she completed Certificate IV in Veterinary Nursing to assist with her volunteer work. So it is no surprise that Angela's art is centred on wildlife, with her focus on Australian and African animals and birds.



Angela is a self-taught artist, but continually improves her skills by taking short courses with other established painters. She uses a variety of media including pastels, acrylic, watercolour, inks and graphite. She has, periodically accepted students herself.

Beside a natural talent, Angela credits part of her success to her ability to see. She stresses the importance of 'looking' – the play of light, the angle of a limb or wing, and the patina of fur and feathers. It is her detailed observations that make her paintings so exquisite. Her studio also contains wonderful specimens of feathers, plant life and other natural forms (including a dingo skull) to ensure that her works are not only anatomically correct, but botanically accurate.

While wildlife feature in the majority of Angela's work, she is an extremely competent portrait artist and will accept commissions.

Left: Some of Angela's specimens

Angela also believes that 'journalising' is a good tool for artists. Her journal features personal and inspirational words woven around drawings, paintings and pasted-in graphics. It is a clearing-house for ideas, a treasure of memories, a release of emotion and can be a psychological venting platform. In whatever form it takes, artistic innovation is what it creates.

In 2017, she had a major solo exhibition at the Northern Rivers Community Gallery in Ballina, and has displayed her work in several joint exhibitions, throughout the Northern Rivers area. She is also a participant in the 'Open Studios – Ballina, Byron & Beyond' arts adventure trail which, because of Covid-19 restrictions has been rescheduled for the end of November.

One impressive indicator of the quality of Angela's work is her acceptance in the prestigious 'Holmes Prize for Realistic Australian Birds Art Prize', for two of the last four years. This acquisitive award attracts hundreds of entries annually, but only about 35 are chosen to compete.



Angela at work on a commission

Angela combines her philanthropy with adventure. She supports organisations in Australia and in Zimbabwe, where she and her husband have provided both physical and financial assistance. She raised money to purchase swags for homeless people by walking with camels for three months from Alice Springs to Oodnadatta. She recalls nervous nights with her dog tied to her swag as dingoes circled.

She has volunteered and raised funds for the wildlife rescue services 'Friends of the Koala', 'Northern Rivers Seabirds' and 'Northern Rivers WIRES'. A percentage of the sales of her paintings continue to support these agencies.

Angela's paintings can be viewed at Bingara Gallery, 431 Hinterland Way, Knockrow (next door to Macadamia Castle). Phone: 0409 314 144, or e-mail: info@bingaragallery.com.au

❖ Marion Pescud



Paintings by Angela Parr – Bingara Gallery

Let's Celebrate!

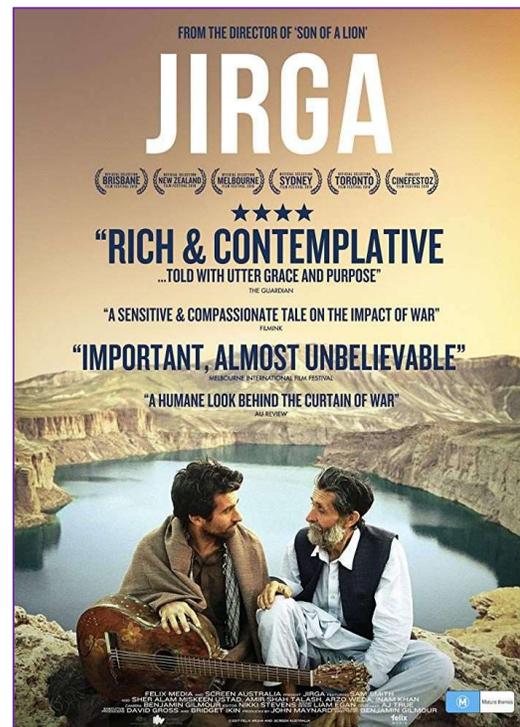
To celebrate the resumption of social gatherings, the ADFAS committee has decided to present special events in October and November.

Helen Stahnam, a long-time supporter of ADFAS in Toowoomba, has very kindly offered her holiday home in Broken Head as the venue for a recital by the Southern Cross Soloists in October, although the date has yet to be set.

Chair of ADFAS Byron Bay & Districts, John Griffiths, will present pianist and Young Musician of the Year recipient, Francis Atkins with his award. This \$500 encouragement prize is given for the recognition of talent and dedication. Francis will be performing for us during the recital.

Following the ADFAS Byron AGM scheduled 16th November at the recently air-conditioned A & I Hall in Bangalow, paramedic, author, blog publisher, and film maker Benjamin Gilmore will speak prior to the showing of his film 'Jirga', the story about a former soldier returning to Afghanistan seeking forgiveness from the family of a civilian he had killed in battle. In 2018, the film premiered at the Sydney Film Festival, and in 2019, received the NSW Premier's Literary Award for Screenwriting.

Benjamin Gilmore was a paramedic for 24 years based in Sydney, but now resides with his family on the North Coast. His books include *The Gap*; *Cameras & Kalashnikovs*; *Warrior Poets*; *Paramedico*; and a children's book, *The Travel Bug*.



Resignation

Due to the social upheaval of this year, Sasha Worthington is no longer able to contribute to our Committee. We thank Sasha for her input and gracious willingness to give us her time.

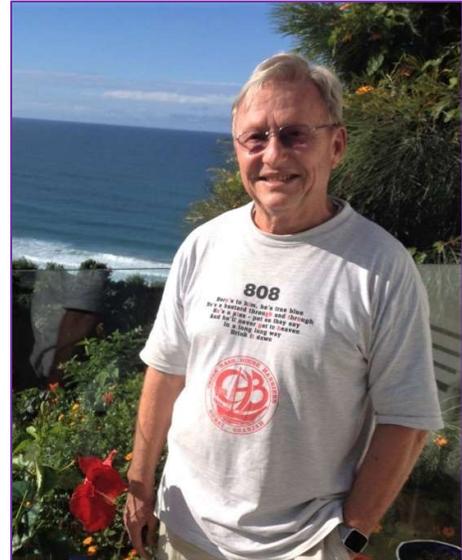


Artist Paul Button

Sunrise Arts, Lennox Head

Paul Button is an artist in all respects; an ever-whirring creative mind with the skill to adapt his talent to several media. He produces unique works using clay, wood, and metal, he occasionally attempts to paint with acrylics and watercolour and enjoys the challenge of life drawing.

I visited Paul at his lovely high-perched home and studio overlooking Lennox Head and the ocean. Paul designed the house and has filled it with his work. Every shelf, nook, wall and floor space serves to display his pieces. Even in the kitchen, life-sized busts of his wife Esther and his brother and sister sit atop the cupboards, and the drawers are filled with his handmade and wheel-thrown pottery.



Paul Button at home in Lennox Head

Paul frequently mixes his media, sometimes blending a beautiful hand-carved wood piece with metal, or a ceramic pot incorporating a wooden element. While he gains pleasure in all his work, clay is his favourite medium. He throws it, sculpts it and experiments with different techniques and glazing. His large studio has both gas and electric kilns, and is crammed with supplies and works in various stages of completion. He loves to jump from one thing to another as inspiration strikes. He always carries a pad and pen to jot down his tumbling ideas for new designs. It's for this reason that he doesn't accept a lot of commissions. It's important to him to make his own choices.



Paul with his ceramic bust of Nelson Mandela

Paul's background is in architecture. He obtained his degree in Cardiff, and has managed huge architectural works in Britain, the Middle East, and even New Guinea. When he came to Australia he established his own property development company on the Gold Coast, and retired to Lennox Head about 10 years ago.

He developed an interest in the arts at an early age, partly because his mother was a potter, and because his parents took him to all the major galleries and museums across Europe where he marvelled at the exhibits. Even during his busy career as an architect, he made time to pursue his own artistic interests and development. In Oman he was president of the Arts and Crafts Society.

"I don't rest on my laurels" he says, and admits that sometimes he 'stretches himself a bit thin' as he endeavours to support several art workshops and galleries. Through these establishments, Paul exhibits his creations about 10 times a year, and has his own major 'Sunrise Arts' exhibition at his home studio in November to which he invites around 26 local artists to exhibit with him. He gets a buzz from every sale. "Not just because people like my work" he explains, "but because they love it enough to acquire it."



Paul in his Sunrise Arts studio

Paul is instrumental in organising the 'Open Studios – Ballina, Byron and Beyond' event where 32 local artists participate in the special 'arts trail' opening their workshops to the public for two consecutive weekends a year. Originally planned for May, it was postponed because of the Covid-19 pandemic, but the good news is that has now been rescheduled for 28/29 November, and 5/6 December (Covid-19 restrictions permitting).

❖ Marion Pescud

Open Studios
Ballina, Byron & Beyond

An arts adventure trail
featuring 32 artists

10am to 4pm
Saturdays and Sundays
28/29 November,
and 5/6 December

A free event

For more details see:
www.os-bbb.com or
www.facebook.com/OpenStudiosBBB

Virtual lectures

The ADFAS Committee would like to commend you for rising to the challenge of keeping ADFAS awake during this very confronting period of stress and uncertainty during the Covid-19 pandemic. And we appreciate your efforts of adapting to technology in order to view our virtual lectures, which to date, have been very well received.

While we have missed the camaraderie of our meetings due to the social distancing restrictions, we want to thank you for embracing the measures we have taken to keep ADFAS Byron Bay & Districts an ongoing and enriching cultural society.

Museums: a Different Perspective

Having published an extensive list in our last Newsletter of museums and galleries offering virtual tours of their wonderful exhibits, I thought it might be interesting to look closer into the practices of acquisition and display.

London-based, Australia-raised art historian Alice Procter is making waves in the UK with her different perspective on how museums display their artefacts, particularly those items acquired by European colonisers during their first encounters with Indigenous peoples.



Alice Procter

Procter claims that the history of British art is also the history of empire and genocide, written by collectors who traded in landscapes and lives, and she believes that museums were invented to be exclusionary and exclusive spaces. "That means that they've been very racist and very sexist right from the beginning," she says.

The first museums were established from the private collections of wealthy individuals and according to Procter, were based on those individual's tastes, values and politics, and reflected kind of status and worldview from their privileged perspective.

Frustrated by what she perceived as a lack of transparency, she organised 'Uncomfortable Art Tours' where she guided visitors through six of London's public museums and galleries. While focusing on the histories of imperialism, nationalism and racism, she spoke about the some of the dubious origin of the institutions and of the objects within them.

Beginning in June, 2017, she was able to do this undetected for almost a year because the museum staff thought that she was an official guide. When it was discovered what she was doing, Procter received some initial flack. She was disparaged by the *Daily Mail* newspaper, and a British MP labelled her tours as 'sensationalist', however the tours which were originally attended by fine art and art history students now draw whole university classes and museum staff.



One of the objects Procter uses to prove her argument is the 'Gweagal Shield', which dates to 1770 when Captain Cook and Sir Joseph Banks arrived in Botany Bay. The oval-shaped shield made from red mangrove wood, and now housed in the British Museum, was the first relic of south-eastern Australian Indigenous culture returned to the UK. It was taken during the first contact with the Gweagal clan when Captain James Cook shot one of the men, who then dropped his shield before fleeing.

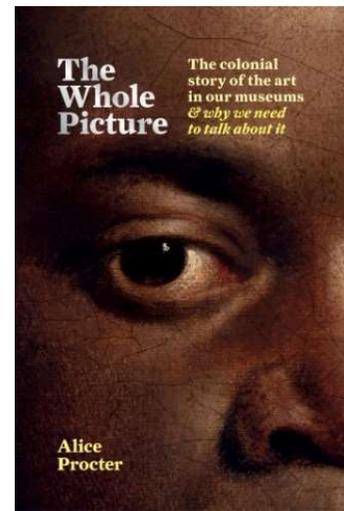
Procter claims that objects such as this represent the creation of colonial power. "The history has always been about the myth of the perfect continent waiting to be conquered and discovered," she says, while pointing out that the British Museum's explanatory label on the shield reduces a contentious and complicated history to merely 'First contacts in

the Pacific were often tense and violent.' She is advocating for museums and galleries to 'display it like you stole it', thus making the acquisition history of objects transparent.

On the bright side, Procter believes that there has been 'an amazing shift' amongst smaller museums and university collections towards the repatriation and restitution of ancestral remains and sacred objects. The University of Manchester's Museum has recently agreed to return 43 items belonging to four language groups across Australia.

Alice Procter has written a book on the subject titled *The Whole Picture: the colonial story of the art in our museums and why we need to talk about it*, and publishes a podcast under the name *The Exhibitionist*.

❖ Marion Pescud



Lismore Regional Gallery Hannah Cabinet Acquisition

After years of fundraising, the exquisite Hannah Cabinet has been acquired by the Lismore Regional Gallery. While government grants helped secure the cabinet, local donations of \$570,000 contributed to the million dollars required for the purchase.



The Hannah Cabinet, Lismore Regional Gallery

Designed and crafted by Geoff Hannah, the cabinet was named in honour of his parents and brother. A year to plan and six and a half years to make, the Hannah masterpiece features more than 40 drawers and several secret compartments. It comprises 34 different types of wood, four kinds of rare shells and 17 varieties of precious and semi-precious stones.

Christies of London have stated that in their belief, Geoff Hannah is the only craftsman in the world that could make a cabinet of such intricacy. We are so fortunate to have the cabinet and its creator reside in our community.

❖ Marion Pescud

The Ruthless Pursuit for Osprey Plumage

The article below was extracted from the UK's Arts Society lecturer Tessa Boase's book, *Mrs Pankhurst's Purple Feather: Fashion, Fury and Feminism – Women's Fight for Change*, which details the war against 'murderous millinery' in the early 1900s and the founding of one of the Britain's best-known charities, The Royal Society of the Protection of Birds.

Today, osprey has just one meaning: the magnificent sea eagle, however between 1870 and 1920, when the fashion for feathers swelled to obscene proportions, the 'osprey' meant an upright, tufty millinery ornament made from the fine, breeding plumage of the great and snowy egret. It was the cruellest plume of all to harvest, depriving chicks of their parents, and became the most potent emblem for the campaign against feathered hats.

David 'Egret' Bennett was an American who boasted of his part in the near annihilation of egrets in his 20-year career. He had already 'cleared out' Central America with his team of shooters, moving on to the Gulf of California and then to the Pacific Ocean side of Mexico.

In 1903, a conscientious group of women launched a hard-hitting attack on consumers by way of a guerrilla marketing campaign, the first of its kind. Spearheading the campaign was Etta Lemon, who was fierce in her contempt for female followers of fashion of every class. 'The only thing that can be urged on behalf of osprey wearing is that it is nowadays so thoroughly democratic,' she wrote witheringly, pointing out its popularity with charlady and duchess alike. The campaign strategy was to infiltrate stores, surprise shoppers, question shop girls, cross-examine head milliners and lecture shop managers.



So desperate was the fashion industry to continue its inhumane, but profitable business, it peddled the feathers as 'fake ethical substitutes', but expert ornithologists examined the plumes forensically, and in each case determined them to be the real thing.

It was difficult to prick the conscience of the Edwardian woman of fashion. In 1911 Queen Alexandra publicly renounced the 'osprey' and lady mayoresses purged their wardrobes, but still the fashion persisted. It was not until 1920 when Virginia Woolf, piqued by an article condemning women as the heartless wearers of the snowy egret plumes, lent her voice to the campaign and garnered positive action.

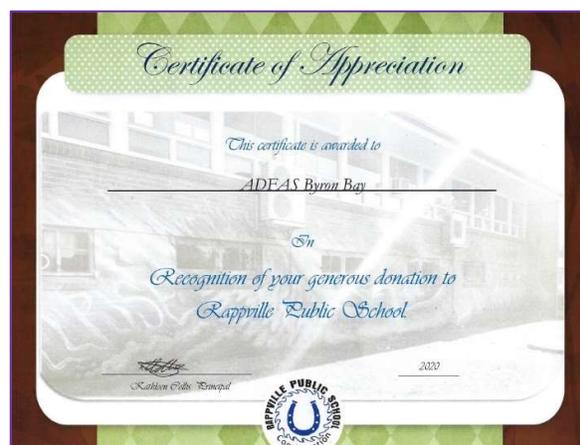
Woolf was outraged that women wore the shame, while it was men that starved, tortured and killed the birds, and it that men were responsible for squashing the Plumage Bill, put before the House of Commons in 1920 for the fourth time. Triumphantly, one year later it was finally

pushed through by Nancy, Lady Astor: the first woman to take a seat in the House of Commons.

- ❖ From Mrs Pankhurst's *Purple Feather: Fashion, Fury and Feminism – Women's Fight for Change*, by Tessa Boase

ADFAS Donation

ADFAS Byron Bay and Districts has donated \$185 to the Rappville Public School to assist with the bushfire recovery. Several homes and many outbuilding were destroyed in the fire last October and residents were forced to shelter in the school, which was saved.



The money raised from the raffle at the Paul Atterbury lecture in March was originally intended for the CWA, however because of technicalities with the donation process, it was decided instead to support the Rappville community.

ADFAS on Instagram

ADFAS now has a presence on *Instagram* featuring photographs from individual societies, as well as a collective. It's a fun way to look back on our functions, and to keep track of the activities organised by our sister groups. We will be posting photographs periodically to share our news and showcase the vibrancy of our Byron Bay & Districts' membership.

To engage ADFAS on this platform, download the 'Instagram' app then 'search' and 'follow' *adfasbyronbay* for local content, and *adfasnational* for the Society's group as a whole.