

**A Guide to the**

**Walter McVitty Books  
Publisher's Archive**

**The Lu Rees Archives**

**The Library  
University of Canberra**

October 2002

## Scope and Content Note

- Papers
- 1984 – 1997
- 25 boxes
- Series 6 (Publishers) is restricted for 15 years. (2003-2018)
- Series 9, (Finance and Sales) is restricted for 15 years. (2003-2018)

These papers were donated to the Lu Rees Archives in 2000 under the Cultural Gifts Program.

The papers are a complete record of the publishing company 'Walter McVitty Books', from its inception in 1985 until its sale in 1997. They are unique because this company was the only publisher to exclusively publish Australian children's books. The papers include correspondence, reviews, artwork, contracts, awards, financial statements, manuscripts, book dummies and publicity materials.

The major correspondents are the authors and illustrators, especially Colin Thiele and John Marsden; other publishers, and book clubs and associations.

This finding aid was prepared by Management of Archives students Kerri Kemister, Wendy-Anne Quarmby and Lisa Roulstone, under the supervision of Professor Belle Alderman.

### **Walter McVitty Biographical Note**

Prepared by: Cathie Bartley, Karen Ottoway and Amanda Rebbeck.

Teacher, teacher librarian, tertiary lecturer, critic, editor, author and publisher Walter McVitty was born in Melbourne in 1934 and has been involved in the field of children's literature for over four decades.

He taught in schools in Victoria and worked overseas for five years before undertaking a librarianship course at Melbourne Teachers College in 1962. He was a teacher librarian in Victoria for six years, then Senior Lecturer in children's literature at Melbourne Teachers College for fifteen years before establishing his own small publishing company, Walter McVitty Books, with his wife Lois in 1985.

Walter McVitty Books published 57 books between 1985 and 1997 and were a testimony to the highest standard of book production and quality reading. It is to Walter McVitty's credit that he 'discovered' both John Marsden and Margaret Early, creators of international stature. At the same time, he ensured that such

classics as Ethel Turner's *Seven Little Australians* and Colin Thiele's *Sun on the Stubble* were attractive to new generations of readers.

Walter McVitty wrote numerous reviews and articles for the *Age*, *Nation Review* and the *Australian*, gave keynote addresses at numerous conferences, commented on the radio and served as a judge for the Children's Book Council awards.

Walter McVitty has also produced the two-volume *The Blinky Bill Collection* (1988), including the biography of Dorothy Wall and a compilation of her works. But perhaps his most important publication was *Innocence And Experience: Essays on Contemporary Australian Children's Writers* (1981). Here Walter McVitty displayed his astute ability to analyse the strengths of Australia's major writers for young people. It is a book, which remains a standard work.

Other important publication efforts occurred during the years 1984 and 1985 when he was editor of the Primary English Teachers Association books. Two of particular note were *The PETA Guide to Children's Literature* (1985) PETA and *Word Magic : Poetry As a Shared Adventure* (1985, 1989 second ed) PETA. Both provided valuable insights into children's books for a wide audience.

In 1995, Walter McVitty received an AM in the Order of Australia Awards for his service to education and literature for children and won the Nan Chauncy Award in 1998.

#### Sources:

1. Alderman, B 1998, The Nan Chauncy Award 1998, statement written on behalf of the Children's Book Council of Australia, ACT Branch, as a nomination of Walter McVitty for the prestigious Nan Chauncy Award.
2. Alderman, B and Clayton, P (eds) 1994 *Creative Connections, Writing, Illustrating and Publishing Children's Books in Australia: Papers of the Children's Book Council of Australia, ACT Branch Seminars 1987-1993*, Thorpe, Melbourne, p. 169. PN1008.3.C73 1994.
3. Lees, S and McIntyre, P 1993 *The Oxford Companion to Australian Children's Literature*, Oxford Community Press, Melbourne, p. 281. REF9613.9.L44 1993.

**Walter McVitty Books Publisher  
Finding Aid**

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## Series 1. Authors

### BOX 1

- Ball, Duncan 1985 - 1995  
Includes correspondence, original manuscripts for 'My dog is a scaredy cat' with illustrations by Craig Smith and 'First I built a house', for illustrations see Bishop, Michael.
- Bedson, Jack 1988 - 1996  
Includes correspondence, original manuscript for 'Sheep Dog'. (for illustrations see Gouldthorpe, Peter)
- Braithwaithe, Alicia 1988 - 1993  
Includes correspondence,  
Original manuscript for 'Elephants don't like tuna casserole'.
- Carr, Roger Vaughan 1990 - 1992  
Includes correspondence, original manuscript and illustrations for 'Piano bay' and original manuscript for 'Mr. Glover's tree'.
- Carroll, Jane 1987 - 1998  
Includes correspondence, newspaper clippings for 'Normie'.
- Dwyer, Christina 1990 - 1997  
Includes correspondence, bibliographic notes and photographs.  
Original manuscript for 'Jimmie Jean and the turtles'.  
(for illustrations see Power, Margaret)
- Grey, Michael 1990 - 1997  
Includes correspondence,  
Original manuscript for 'Things.'

### BOX 2

- Green, Cliff 1993 - 1995  
Includes correspondence for 'The incredible stream driven adventures of Riverboat Bill'.  
Includes colour pictures and brochures for the books adaptation to screen.
- Hall, Penny 1986 - 1995

	Includes correspondence and rewrites, also includes an original colour rough for 'The Paperchaser' jacket.
Hilton, Nette	1990 - 1992 Includes correspondence and letters with Cathy Wilcox and Andrew Jessup.
Hogan, Robyn	1994-1997 Includes correspondence, reviews, articles, and publicity materials.
Lisson, Deborah	1989 - 1995 W. McVitty's artwork for maps for 'The Devil's own'. Also includes detailed editorial directions; photographs; bibliographical notes; newspaper clippings; correspondence between author and her publisher. Includes information on 'The Warrigal'.
Niland, Kilmeny	1988 - 1992 Includes correspondence, original manuscripts for 'The window book' and 'Feathers, fur and frills'.
Odgers, Sally	1986 - 1992 Includes correspondence with Bob Graham, Marie Smith (roughs for 'Summer magic') and Julia McRae. Also includes royalty statements and original manuscripts for 'Angie the brave'.
Olsen, Jill	1990 - 1991 Includes correspondence, original manuscripts for 'Emily's Day'
Pinkney, John	1984 - 1992 Includes correspondence and newspaper clippings.
Roye, Maria & Thomas	1987 - 1991 Includes correspondence for 'Man from the dreamtime'
Scott, Bill	1991 - 1997 Includes correspondence and newspaper clippings, original manuscripts for 'The currency hat'

**BOX 3.**

Small, Mary

1987 - 1997

Includes correspondence,  
original manuscript and illustrations for 'Broome dog'  
also includes discarded chapters.

Thiele, Colin

1984 – 1997

3 folders. Correspondence.

Wignell, Edel

1987 - 1997

Includes correspondence,  
original manuscript for 'The secret bay' and original  
artworks for the cover of 'Escape by deluge'.

## Series 2. Illustrators

### BOX 4

- Aldridge, George 1989 - 1994  
Includes correspondence and original self-portrait.
- Bishop, Michael 1990 - 1992  
Includes correspondence,  
illustrations for 'First I built a house' by Ball, Duncan.
- Bridgland, Janet 1989 - 1992  
Includes correspondence and newspaper clippings.
- Cox David 1993 - 1995  
Folder 1: Includes correspondence and an original  
drawing of himself.  
Folder 2: Artwork for Cliff Green's 'Incredible Steam-  
driven Adventures of Riverboat Bill'.
- Early, Margaret 1986 - 1996  
Folder 1: Correspondence, publicity for 'Ali Baba and  
the 40 Thieves' and 'William Tell'  
Folder 2: Correspondence, awards and publicity for  
'William Tell' and 'Sleeping Beauty'  
Folder 3: Correspondence, drafts, sketches and  
publicity for 'Romeo and Juliet'

### BOX 5

- Genovese, Sharon 1989 - 1991  
Includes correspondence regarding cover art for  
various novels.
- Garderen, Ilse van 1993 - 1997  
Includes correspondence and cover art for 'Winter  
bacon'.
- Gouldthorpe, Peter 1991 - 1996  
Includes correspondence works for 'Sheep dog' and  
'Hist' (see author Bedson, Jack).
- Glenn, Helen 1989 - 1992  
Includes correspondence and illustrations for  
'Summer magic'.

- Heinrich, Sally 1988 - 1996  
Includes correspondence; manuscripts; family photographs; slides postcards and illustrations.
- Hunnam, Lucinda 1988 - 1993  
Includes first letter to Walter McVitty, spine art, newspaper clippings and correspondence.
- Jones, Carol 1990 - 1994  
Includes correspondence with Walter McVitty, his suggestions and directions. Also includes biographical notes (Drummond)
- Lennox, John 1997 - 1987  
Illustrator of 'Sun on the stubble'  
See 'Sun on the stubble' Box 8, Folder 10
- Liebelt, Lyn 1988 - 1993  
Includes correspondence and first contact with Walter McVitty. Also includes family photographs and original sketches for 'Brahminy'.

**BOX 6.**

- Mietteninen, Anne 1990 - 1991  
Includes correspondence for 'Emily's day' (also see author Olsen, Jill). Also includes resume and applications for Walter McVitty.
- Milton, Mary 1990 - 1992  
Includes correspondence, publishing details, royalty statements and instructions. Also includes photographs from her trip to China.
- Power, Margaret 1990 - 1992  
Includes correspondence,  
Includes storyboard rough layout and transparencies for 'Jimmie Jean and the Turtles' (see author Dwyer, Christina).
- Smith, Craig 1988 - 1995  
Includes correspondence and illustrations for 'My dog is a scaredy cat' (see author Ball, Duncan).

Tamlyn, Wendy

1989 - 1992

Includes correspondence and possible book covers  
and original illustrations for 'Morris and Minka'.

### Series 3. Book Titles

#### **BOX 7.**

Folders 1 - 3

Breath in May

1991 - 1997

Includes correspondence between author Robyn Hogan and Walter Mcvitty. Also includes research material, cover roughs and photographs.

Includes original manuscript

Folder 1: pages 1 - 108

Folder 2: pages 109 - 193

Folder 3: pages 194 - 211

Folder 4.

Hist

Misbound copy.

Folder 5.

Seven little Australians

1982 - 1995

Philippa Poole (granddaughter of Ethel Turner). Includes drafts, illustrations, correspondence and photographs.

Folders 6 - 8

So much to tell you

1986 - 1996

Folder 6 contains correspondence

Folder 7 contains correspondence, photographs and reviews.

Folder 8 contains resources for students and documents relating to the performance version as well as a script by Perry Hanson.

#### **BOX 8.**

Folders 9 -12

The man from the dreamtime

1987 - 1997

Contains original manuscript

Folder 9: chapters 1 to 5

Folder 10; chapters 6 to 9

Folder 11: chapters 10 to the end

Folder 12; edited versions and reprints

Folder 10

Jodie's Journey

So much to tell you

Persian translations of these MS.

Folder 11. Sun on the stubble	1995 - 1996 Includes correspondence between author Colin Thiele and illustrator John Lennox. Also includes publishing details and information on 'Seven little Australians'.
Folder 12. William Tell	1990 – 1992 Includes correspondence with Margaret Early (author and illustrator) as well as printing quotations.
Folder 13 Farmer Schulz's Ducks	1984 Includes correspondence with author Colin Thiele and illustrator Mary Milton, manuscripts and dummy books.
Folder 14 The Key and the Fountain	ca. 1984 Artwork by Sandra Laroche.
Folder 15 The Sugar Gum Tree	1986 Correspondence with author Patricia Wrightson, manuscript. Book not published.

## **Series 4. Awards, reviews and publicity**

### **BOX 9.**

Folder 1.

Awards

1992 - 1994

Includes entry forms and details for book awards.

Folders 2 and 3

Australian Print Group

2 folders containing awards for excellence; including a wooden plaque.

Folders 4

Reviews

1985 - 1991

Reviews and awards for the following titles: Things, Hist, Elephants don't like tuna casserole, Farmer Polz's pumpkins, Sheep dogs, Piano Bay, Drummond, The stew that grew, One Saturday, Escape by deluge, Normie, The Devil's own, Broome dog, Ali Baba and the forty thieves, Jodie's' journey, So much to tell you, Angie the brave, My dog is a scaredy cat, Sea shores and shadows, Shatterbelt, The paper chaser, Farmer Schulz's ducks, The key and the fountain.

Folder 5

Reviews

1991 - 1994

Romeo and Juliet, With dew on my boots, No goodbye, Dangerous secret, What sort of day?, Cherokee, Sun on the stubble, High valley, Robin Hood, Breath in May, River boat Bill, Brahminy, So much to tell you (play), Seven little Australians, The man from the dreamtime, Reckless rhymes, Winter bacon, Edgar's eggs and The march of mother duck.

Folders 6 and 7

Flyers, publicity and leaflets

1994 - 1997

Includes handmade flyers and address listings.

## **Series 5. Post - Publishing**

### **BOX 10**

Folders 1 to 4

Royalty Statements

Folder 1.

1990 - 1992

Distributors' monthly sales reports and figures. Includes circulars from Walter McVitty Books to distributors.

Folder 2.

1985 - 1993

Distributors' monthly sales reports and figures. Includes circulars from Walter McVitty Books to distributors.

Folder 3.

1992 - 1997

Distributors' monthly sales reports for every title published by Walter McVitty Books, month by month. Arrangement is alphabetical by book title.

Folder 4.

1986 - 1997

Financial statements

Includes complete set of cash books (20 volumes) showing details of all company receipts and expenditure.

Folder 5.

1986 - 1997

Monthly sales figures

Folder 6.

1985 - 1998

Company receipts and expenditure.

Includes details of all company receipts and expenditure

### **BOX 11**

Folders 7 to 11

PG (Permissions granted)

Folder 1. 1978- -1991

Folder 2. 1991 - 1993

Folder 3. 1993 - 1995

Folder 4. 1995 - 1996

Folder 5. 1996 - 1997

All folders include invoices and permission for reproduction from books to libraries and the Department of Education.

Folder 12  
PLR (Public Lending Right)

1991 - 1997  
Includes statements, receipts, invoices and correspondence.

## **Series 6 Publishers**

### **Box 12**

Abrams, Harry N (US)	1988 - 1997 Includes invoices, orders and correspondence with Margaret Early's Ali Baba and the forty thieves.
Book Bounty	1987 - 1997 Includes claims and receipts (incomplete)
Cambridge University Press	1988 - 1992 Includes correspondence regarding Ali Baba and the forty thieves.
Dent (UK)	1987 - 1990 Includes correspondence and book covers.
Gyldenal (Denmark)	1990 - 1997 Includes correspondence and royalty statements.
Harper Collins (Aust)	1987 - 1994 Includes correspondence, invoices and royalty statements.
<b>BOX 13</b>	
Harper Collins (US)	1986 - 1997 Includes correspondence, invoices and royalty statements.
Holiday House (US)	1989 - 1993 Includes correspondence, invoices and royalty statements.
Houghton Mifflin (US)	1992 - 1997 Includes correspondence, invoices and royalty statements.
DeJonge, Jenny	1991 - 1997 Includes correspondence, invoices and royalty statements.

Lansdowne Publishers	1993 - 1997 Includes correspondence for 'Sun on the stubble' and 'Seven little Australians'.
Little Brown (US)	1988 - 1995 Includes correspondence and royalty statements. Also correspondence with John Marsden regarding changes to the US edition of 'So much to tell you'.
O'Brien Press (Ireland) Brian	1995 - 1996 Includes correspondence and contacts with O'Brien.
<b>BOX 14</b> Penguin Publishers	1985 - 1997 Includes correspondence, invoices and royalty statements.
Ploegsma (Netherlands)	1986 - 1997 Includes correspondence, invoices and royalty statements.
Ravensburg (Germany)	1989 - 1997 Includes correspondence, invoices and royalty statements.
Random House (UK)	1989 - 1999 Includes correspondence, invoices and royalty statements.
Reed books/Jacaranda	1993 - 1997 Includes correspondence regarding 'Broome Dog' royalty statements and invoices.
Sjostrands Forlag AB (Sweden)	1986 - 1998 Includes correspondence for 'Seashores and shadows', 'Shatterbelt', 'The paper chaser', 'Broome Dog' and 'Ali Baba and the 40 thieves'. Also includes translations.
Thorup (Denmark)	1986 - 1990

	Includes correspondence, invoices and royalty statements.
Ueberreuter (Germany)	1989 - 1999 Includes correspondence, invoices, royalty statements and translations.
Western Producer (Canada)	1988 - 1991 Prairie Books, includes correspondence, invoices and royalty statements.
Walker Books (UK)	1988 - 1997 Includes correspondence, invoices and Royalty statements.

**Series 7 Printers**

**BOX 15**

Folder 1

Australian Print Group

1987 - 1997

Includes quotations and invoices.

Folder 2

Globe Press

1985 - 1993

Includes quotations and invoices. Also includes first printing contracts with Walter McVitty.

Folder 3

Mandarin Offset (HK)

1991 - 1993

Includes quotations and invoices.

Folder 4

Southwood Press

1991 - 1997

Includes quotations and invoices.

Folder 5

South China Printing Co.

1990 - 1997

Includes correspondence, quotations and invoices.

**Series 8 Literary Agents  
BOX 16**

Cherokee (South Africa)

1990 - 1992

Includes correspondence and contacts regarding 'My dog is a scaredy cat'.

Curtis Brown Pty Ltd

1991 - 1992

Includes correspondence and details of royalty statements.

Elle (Edizioni) Italy

1994 - 1998

Includes correspondence and details of royalty statements.

Tuttle Mori (Japan)

1990 - 1997

Correspondence with Chinese and Japanese publishers for Walter McVitty Books.

Tiden (Sweden)

1989 - 1995

Includes publishing details and correspondence for 'So much to tell you'. Also includes translations.

**Series 9 Finance and Sales**

**Box 17**

Folders 1 to 5

Contain distributors monthly sales reports, financial statements and monthly sales figures.

**Box 18**

Folders 7 and 8

Contains list of distributors, receipts, expenditures and cash books (not kept in this folder)

Folder 9

Bankruptcies and bad debts

Folder 10

Selling the Company  
Includes correspondence with Peter Lothian, contracts and photographs.

## **Series 10 Book clubs and Associations**

### **Box 19**

#### Folder 1

Ashton Scholastic (Aust)

1985 - 1997

Includes book club orders, invoices, correspondence and statements.

#### Folder 2

Ashton Scholastic (NZ)

1988 - 1996

Includes book club orders, invoices, correspondence and statements.

#### Folder 3

Blind Association

1992 - 1997

Includes contacts and royalty statements for Louis Braille and talking books.

#### Folder 4

Book clubs

1994 - 1997

Includes book club orders, invoices, correspondence and statements.

#### Folder 5

Doubleday book club

1990 - 1994

Includes book club orders, invoices, correspondence and statements.

#### Folder 6

Flammerion (France)

1988 - 1999

Includes correspondence, royalty statements and invoices.

#### Folder 7

Recorded Book Corp

Leesan Town

1987 - 1994

Includes correspondence, contacts and royalty statements.

## **Series 11 Customs documents**

### **BOX 20**

Folders 1 to 6

Contains books printed in Hong Kong and shipped to Australia

## **Series 12 Unsolicited Manuscripts**

### **BOX 21**

Unsolicited Manuscripts

A- I

Arranged by author's surname.

### **BOX 22**

Unsolicited Manuscripts

K - TA

Arranged by author's surname.

### **BOX 23**

Unsolicited Manuscripts

V - Z

Arranged by author's surname.

All boxes include letters to Walter McVitty requesting comments or progress reports by a selection of authors.

## **Series 13 Walter McVitty**

### **BOX 24**

Folders 1 to 6

Bologna Book Fair

1986 - 1991

Includes correspondence, schedules, rosters, letters, appointments and rejection letters.

6 folders

Folder 7

Round World Trip

1992

Includes Walter McVitty's inventory and appointments from trip.