

A Guide to the
WENDY ORR PAPERS



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The Lu Rees Archives

The Library
University of Canberra

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WENDY ORR

BIOGRAPHICAL PROFILE

Wendy Orr was born in Edmonton, Canada in 1953. She spent her childhood in various countries as her father was in the Royal Canadian Air Force. She lived variously in Longuyon, Magny-Metz, Ottawa, Red Deer, Colorado Springs, Toronto and Middleton, Nova Scotia. As a child she read avidly and at eight years of age wrote 'Glossy the Horse', which she said bore a resemblance to *Black Beauty*, a book recently read to her by her mother. Another story, written when she was nine years of age, entitled 'Spring Island' was, she felt, a first draft of *Nim's Island* (1999).

Initially Wendy Orr studied animal husbandry in Kingston, Ontario, but later went to England for the summer but later completed a diploma in occupational therapy at the London School of Occupational Therapy. On a short holiday in Wales, she met an Australian farmer at a Youth Hostel. Six months later they married, and upon her graduation, Orr migrated to Australia with her new husband. They had two children. After nearly 20 years in dairy farming, Wendy and her husband moved to Mornington Peninsula in Victoria where they are restoring the bush to its natural state as a home for wildlife.

Her first book was *Amanda's Dinosaur* (1986), which shared first place in the Ashton Scholastic competition for an unpublished picture book manuscript. It was published in 1988. Rights to this book were subsequently sold to Canada, New Zealand and the United States. In 1993 she left practice as an occupational therapist and became a full-time writer. Shortly thereafter, her book *Leaving It To You* was shortlisted in The Children's Book Council of Australia (CBCA) Awards in 1993. Two years later, *Ark in the Park* won the CBCA Young Readers Award. Her book, *Peeling the Onion*, was chosen as a CBCA Honour Book, selected by the American Library Association as a Best Book for Young Adults, and also by the New York Public Library for its annual bibliography, 'Books for the Teenager'. *Nim's Island* (1999), became a successful Hollywood feature film in 2008 starring Jodie Foster, Abigail Breslin and Gerard Butler. The author describes this five year involvement in the film's creation as 'one of the most amazing and intellectually stimulating times of my life.'

By 2009, Wendy Orr had published over 30 works. She also published under the name Sally George. She writes for various ages and after publishing her adult novel, *The House at Evelyn's Pond* (2001), she plans to alternate writing for adults and children. She writes in many genres and forms including picture books, novellas, novels for teenagers, and in the genres of fantasy and science fiction. Her books have been translated into many languages including Swedish, Portuguese, Taiwanese, Japanese, French, Korean, Lithuanian, Turkish, Slovenian, Greece, Dutch, Thai, Italian, Spanish, Catalan, Basque, Polish, and German as well as appearing in British, America and Canadian editions. Australian critics, Lees and Macintyre describe her work as 'full of humour and intensity, presents the multicultural make-up of the Australian community, its mix of classes, big cities and small country towns. A thematic concern across her work is the development of self and finding one's place in the world.' (Lees & Macintyre in Zipes 2006, p200) Critics in *The Continuum Encyclopedia of Young Adult Literature* describe Orr's work as 'best known for imaginative, adventurous and humorous plots and characters'. (Cullinan, Kunzel & Wooten, 2005, p551).

Sources

Wendy Orr website <<http://www.wendyorr.com>>

Wendy Orr. *Contemporary Authors Online*. Detroit: Gale, 2002.

Zipes, Jack, Editor. *The Oxford Encyclopedia of Children's Literature*. Volume 3. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2006, p200.

Cullinan, Bernice E, Bonnie L Kunzel and Deborah A Wooten, Editors. *The Continuum Encyclopedia of Young Adult Literature*. New York: The Continuum International Publishing Group Ltd, 2005, p551.

WENDY ORR PAPERS

SCOPE AND CONTENT

Wendy Orr donated her second consignment of papers and manuscripts under the Cultural Gifts Program in February 2009. The size of this donation is eight standard archival boxes comprising 14 series. The material relates to *Nim's Island*, a feature film based on her book of the same title, which was screened in 2008, novellas and novels published between 2001 and 2007, picture books and a collection of short pieces. Earlier works by this author were among the papers and manuscripts donated under the Cultural Gifts Program in 2000.

The papers comprise material about the author and her career; correspondence; preliminary ideas and research; manuscripts in various drafts with comments from editors and illustrators; draft text and preliminary copies of illustrations for novellas; galleys and proofs with editing; correspondence with US and UK publishers and a French translator; fan mail; and reviews and publicity, particularly surrounding the film, *Nim's Island*. The collection has particular strengths in demonstrating the process of author revision and the author's working relationships with editors and publishers.

The donation also included four overseas editions of the author's works, and an uncorrected proof copy of one novel.

The papers were arranged and described by Dr Belle Alderman AM. The author's initial arrangement of her papers was usually by title, and this arrangement has been followed. Additional information featured in this finding aid, as a result of the arrangement and description, includes dates and extent of manuscripts, the date range of material, and key individuals involved with a title where these were evident. This enables researchers to trace the communication process and various influences on the author's work. Terminology is that used within the papers.

Related material held in the Lu Rees Archives about Wendy Orr includes her earlier donation of papers and manuscripts in 2000, which cover the period from 1987 – 2000. The Archives also holds an extensive collection of Wendy Orr's published works in Australian and overseas editions, and a comprehensive research file on the author's work featuring reviews, articles and wide-ranging material which aid in an understanding of her work.

A GUIDE TO THE WENDY ORR PAPERS

SERIES DESCRIPTION

Note: Nim at Sea is variously titled Nim II, Nim's New York, and Nicole.

Series	Folder	Description & Date Range	Key Contacts	Box
1	1	Bio-bibliographic material Author produced autobiographical profile, bibliography and awards, dated 2008		1
	2	Published articles by author		1
	3	Talks by author		1
2	1	Nim at Sea (‘Nim II’, 2005-2007) Preliminary thoughts and working papers		1
	2	Nim at Sea [Nim’s New York] Ms, first draft, dated Aug-Oct 2005, 88 pp		1
	3	Nim at Sea [Nim’s New York] Ms, second draft, dated Nov 2005, 94 pp		1
	4	Nim at Sea [Nim’s New York] Ms, third draft, dated Jan 2006, 94 pp		1
	5	Nim at Sea [Nim’s New York] Ms with R Price comments, 94 pp, dated 10.01.06	Rosalind Price, Publisher, Allen & Unwin	1
	6	Nim at Sea [Nim’s New York] Ms with unidentified 2 pp comments, 97 pp, dated 30.01.06		1
	7	Nim at Sea [Nim’s New York (Nim II)] Ms, edited 101 pp, dated 6.09.06 2 copies		1
	8	Nim at Sea [Nim’s Island, dated Jul-Aug 2006] Ms edited by author, 101 pp		1
	9	Nim at Sea [Nim’s New York (Nim II)] Ms, dated 15.12.06 With two separate pages, 90 & 97)		1
	10	Nim at Sea Ms entitled ‘Nicole’, 96 pp Includes comments from child reader		1
	11	Nim at Sea Proof ‘1st Pass Reader’s Set’, edited, 185 pp		2
	12	Nim at Sea Ms copy edit, 112 pp American edition	Cecile Boyette, Editor, Random House (US)	2
	13	Nim at Sea Ms edited by author, 112 pp, dated Feb 2007 American edition		2
	14	Nim at Sea [Nim’s New York] Ms, edited, 112 pp		2
	15	Nim at Sea Research & Nim plans, New York cruise ship		2

Series	Folder	Description & Date Range	Key Contacts	Box
2	16	Nim at Sea Proofs, edited, 174 pp		2
	17	Nim at Sea Layout & scanned illustrations by K Millard	Kerry Millard, illustrator	2
	18	Nim at Sea [Nim's New York] Ms, clean copy, 108 pp, dated 21.03.07		2
	19	Nim at Sea Ms copyedited, 118 pp, dated 30.04.07 American edition	Jack Lienke, Editorial Assistant, Alfred A Knopf	2
	20	Nim at Sea Author page proofs, British Puffin edition, 174 pp, dated 21.11.07		2
	21	Nim at Sea [Nim's Island / Nim at Sea] Correspondence with publisher and editors, 2005- 2007	Cecile Boyette, Random House (US), Editor Rosalind Price, Publisher, Allen & Unwin Sue Flockhart, Editor, Allen & Unwin	2
	22	Nim at Sea Reviews up to June 2008 Jacket covers, proofs of Nim at Sea and Nim's Island		2
3	1	Jessica Joan Correspondence Proof, black & white with preliminary sketches by A James	Ann James, illustrator Cathie Tasker, Editor, Koala Books	3
	2	Jessica Joan Letter from publisher & illustrator Layout with A James illustrations, 2 nd version, dated 31.01.2000	Ann James, illustrator Cathie Tasker, Editor, Koala Books	3
4	1	Midnight ['The Midnight Stallion'] Short story ms for <i>Kids' Night In!</i> collection, dated 2002	Michelle Madden, Editor, Penguin Australia	3
5	1	Poppy's Path [Elsie] Ms, 48 pp, dated Dec 96-Jan 97		3
	2	Poppy's Path ['Elsie 3'] Ms, 58 pp, dated Jan 97		3
	3	Poppy's Path ['Elsie 4'] Ms, 58 pp, dated Feb-Mar 97		3
	4	Poppy's Path ['Elsie 5'] Ms, 58 pp, dated June-Jul 97 Includes comments from P Freeman	Pamela Freeman, author	3
	5	Poppy's Path [Elsie] Ms, dated Aug 97		3
	6	Poppy's Path [Elsie] 'Clean draft to Cathie and Annica', 58 pp, dated Aug 97		3

Series	Folder	Description & Date Range	Key Contacts	Box
5	7	Poppy's Path [Elsie] 'Clean draft to Cathie and Annica', dated Dec 97- Jan 98		3
	8	Poppy's Path [Elsie] Page proofs for C Tasker, 69 pp, dated 8.01.98		3
	9	Poppy's Path [Elsie] Ms emailed, 36 pp, dated 6.12.2000-Jan 2001 Correspondence with publisher Author's notes Photocopy of sample illustrations	Cathie Tasker, Publisher, Koala Books	3
	10	Poppy's Path [Elsie] Ms emailed to publisher, 36 pp, dated 6.12.00	Cathie Tasker, Publisher, Koala Books	
	11	Poppy's Path [Elsie] Page proofs, 97 pp, edited, dated 21.01.2001	Rita Voutila, illustrator	3
	12	Poppy's Path [Elsie] Correspondence with publishers, dated 1996-2001	Cathie Tasker, Publisher, Koala Books Annick Press (Ontario, Canada) Pamela Freeman, author	3
6	1	Spook's Shack Notes & correspondence, dated May 01-Nov 92		4
	2	Spook's Shack Ms edited, 97 pp, dated 6.04.01-9.10.01		4
	3	Spook's Shack Ms edited, 103 pp, dated 18.10.01-14-12.01		4
	4	Spook's Shack Ms to R Price, 100 pp, dated Dec 01-Jan 02	Rosalind Price, Publisher, Allen & Unwin	4
	5	Spook's Shack Ms with R Price comments Labelled 1 st draft, 66 pp, dated 11.01.02	Rosalind Price, Publisher, Allen & Unwin	4
	6	Spook's Shack Ms edited, labelled draft 5, dated Mar 02		4
	7	Spook's Shack Ms with S Flockhart's comments, 64 pp, dated 11.04.02	Sue Flockhart, Editor, Allen & Unwin	4
	8	Spook's Shack Ms with author's corrections sent to S Flockhart, 64 pp, dated Apr 02	Sue Flockhart, Editor, Allen & Unwin	4
	9	Spook's Shack Ms edited, 55pp, dated June 02		4
	10	Spook's Shack Ms with S Flockhart & R Price comments, 60 pp, dated June 02	Rosalind Price, Publisher, Allen & Unwin Sue Flockhart, Editor, Allen & Unwin	4
	11	Spook's Shack Ms edited, dated Aug 02		4
	12	Spook's Shack Proofs after proof-reader, 98 pp, dated 16.09.02		4
	13	Spook's Shack Proofs, edited, 112 pp, dated Nov 02		4

Series	Folder	Description & Date Range	Key Contacts	Box
7	1	Mokie and Bik Ms with editor's comments, 46 pp, dated Nov 04-Nov 05	Robin Tordini, Assistant Editor, Henry Holt & Co (US)	5
	2	Mokie and Bik Character sketches Ms, 21 pp, dated 8.03.06 Correspondence, dated Jul 03-May 05	Henry Holt (US edition)	5
	3	Mokie and Bik Proofs, black & white, copy-edited, 76 pp Comments from author, dated 16.03.06 Letter from Henry Holt publisher, dated 24.03.06	Henry Holt (US edition)	5
	4	Mokie and Bik Proofs, black & white & colour, edited, 71 pp, dated 11.06.06	Henry Holt (US edition)	5
	5	Mokie and Bik Draft mss 1-4, dated Jul 03-May 05	Allen & Unwin (Australian edition)	6
	6	Mokie and Bik Draft mss 5-8, dated Aug 04-Sept 04	Allen & Unwin (Australian edition)	6
	7	Mokie and Bik Draft mss 9-10, dated Oct 04	Allen & Unwin (Australian edition) Sue Flockhart, Editor, Allen & Unwin	6
	8	Mokie and Bik Draft mss 11-13, dated Jan 05-Mar 05	Allen & Unwin (Australian edition)	6
	9	Mokie and Bik Ms with editor's comments; photocopies of illustrator's roughs (2 copies), dated Sept 04-Aug 05	Sue Flockhart, Editor, Allen & Unwin Beth Norling, illustrator	6
	10	Mokie and Bik Proofs, colour, 83 pp, dated 3.07.06	Allen & Unwin (Australian edition)	6
	11	Mokie and Bik Correspondence & notes, dated 2004-2005	Allen & Unwin (Australian edition) Sue Flockhart, Editor, Allen & Unwin Beth Norling, illustrator	6
	12	Mokie and Bik Reviews (US & Australian), dated 2006-2007		6
8	1	Nim's Island (book) Correspondence with Random House, US Recommended changes to proofs, dated May 2000-Feb 2001	Rebecca Stevens, Random House (US)	7
	2	Nim's Island (book) Proofs, with US editor's suggestions, 121 pp, dated May 2000	Rebecca Stevens, Random House (US)	7
	3	Nim's Island (book) Correspondence with US & Australian publishers, dated Jul 2002-Jul 2003	Rebecca Stevens, Associate Editor, Alfred A Knopf	7
	4	Nim's Island (book) Translation submitted to French publisher, dated 2006 Correspondence between author & translator	Veronique Froelich, translator	7
	5	Nim's Island (book) Proofs 114 pp, dated 20.11.07, for UK Puffin edition		7
9	1	Nim's Island (film) Outline, script 1 st draft + revisions, dated Feb-Aug 2004		7

Series	Folder	Description & Date Range	Key Contacts	Box
9	2	Nim's Island (film) Final draft 2, 105 pp, dated Aug 2004		7
	3	Nim's Island (film) Movie script development Correspondence dated 2003-2008	Paula Mazur, Film Producer & joint author of film adaptation of novel Joe Kwong, joint author of film adaptation of novel	7
	4	Nim's Island (film) Production script, 102 pp, dated 21.08.07		7
	5	Nim's Island (film) Fan letters & pictures Various letters, dated 2000-2008		7
	6	Nim's Island (film) Articles, publicity, memorabilia & reviews, dated 2008		7
	7	Nim's Island (film) Promotional material (book & film), dated April 2008		7
10	1	Too Much Stuff Ms, author's edit to publisher, correspondence, dated 2004-2005	Lisa Riley, Associate Publisher, Penguin Group Australia	8
	2	Too Much Stuff Galleys, 64 pp, dated 29.11.05		8
	3	Too Much Stuff Galleys, 66 pp, dated 6.02.06 Draft illustrations Letters to author	Penny Matthews, Editor	8
	4	Too Much Stuff Galleys, final, 66 pp, dated 3.04.06 Letter		8
	5	Too Much Stuff Ms, final Letters from children, review		8
11	1	Across the Dark Sea Ms, including copy Nov 04-May 05		8
	2	Across the Dark Sea Proofs, 64 pp, edited		8
	3	Across the Dark Sea Correspondence Interview notes Reviews (Aug 2004-March 2008)		8
12	1	Arabella Original draft, dated 31.07.94, 5 pp		8
13	1	Short writings Includes 'The Monster in the Bedroom', 'Contest of Skill', 'Waiting for Janet', & 'Sarah's Tree'		8
14	1	Reviews Various		8
	2	Photocopies of jackets & 1 st page of author's overseas editions		8
	3	Publicity & bookmarks		8