A Guide to the papers of
MEM FOX

The Library
University of Canberra

Created by Dianne Smith

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MEM FOX (1946 - )

BIOGRAPHICAL NOTE

Mem Fox was born Merrion Partridge, daughter of Nancy and Wilfred Gordon McDonald Partridge on 5 March, 1946 in Melbourne. She moved to Zimbabwe the same year where her parents became missionaries. She grew up on Hope Fountain Mission just outside Bulawayo attending the local mission school and then the all white primary and secondary schools in Bulawayo.

The years 1965-1968 were spent in London studying drama at the Rose Bruford College where she met Malcolm Fox who she married in 1969. The couple migrated to Australia in 1970. Their only child Chloe was born in 1971.

Her first book Possum magic (1983) is considered a classic of recent Australian children’s literature and has sold more than any other Australian children’s book. Possum magic won the New South Wales State Literary Award.

Often considered Australia’s most popular contemporary writer for children, Fox has published over 20 children’s books, several textbooks and an autobiography. Her books have been translated into many languages including Indonesian, Japanese, Chinese, German and Hebrew as well as braille.

For 24 years, until the end of 1996, Fox lectured at Flinders University in Adelaide, South Australia, where she taught language arts to teacher education students. She is now a highly regarded international consultant in literacy education and a full time writer.

Mem Fox has received numerous awards including the 1990 Dromkeen Medal, and was made a member of the order of Australia in 1993.

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1 Formerly the South Australian College of Advanced Education.
SCOPE AND CONTENT NOTE

The collection of papers generously donated to the Lu Rees Archives in 1995 consists of a job application for a senior lectureship at South Australian College of Advanced Education (SACAE) in 1986 and supporting documentation, various drafts and rewrites of *Mem’s the word*, and associated correspondence with staff at Penguin.

Papers cover the period 1986 - 1990. Other material held includes 4 video cassettes, 4 audio cassettes, poster and computer disc.

Mem Fox kept her papers in very good order and the original order has been preserved by the archive.

The collection has been divided into three series and is housed in two archival boxes.\(^2\)

These papers are complemented by the extensive collection of the author’s works held in the Lu Rees Archives. The archives also maintains a comprehensive file on Mem Fox which includes:

- Articles by the author
- Articles relating to publications
- Autobiographical notes
- Awards information
- Book reviews
- Correspondence
- Photographs
- Promotional material.

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\(^2\) Linear area 65 cm.
AWARDS

* 1996 Doctorate of Letters (Honoris Causa) from the University of Wollongong.

* 1994 The Alice Award: presented to a woman writer, for long-term contribution to the profession and in recognition of an outstanding body of work.

* 1994 The Flinders University Chancellor's Medal in commemoration of the Centenary of Women’s Suffrage.

* 1993 Australia Day Honours: Member of the General Division of The Order of Australia: AM. For Services to Children's Literature.


* 1991 Advance Australia Award for an outstanding contribution to the advancement and enrichment of Australia, its people and its way of life.

* 1990 Dromkeen Medal for outstanding services to Children's Literature.

* 1989 Parent Magazine, USA, cited *Koala Lou* as one of the ten best books of the Year.

* 1989 The Red Book, USA, cited *Night Noises* as one of the ten best picture books of the year as well as a Notable Children’s Book in *Language Arts* and a 1990 *Horn Book* Fanfare selection.


BIBLIOGRAPHY

An endeavour has been made to prepare a comprehensive listing of all Mem Fox’s works including children’s books, textbooks autobiography and professional articles. Her books have been translated into many languages including Indonesian, Japanese, Chinese, German and Hebrew. Not all editions of each title have been included in this bibliography. Works held by the Lu Rees Archives are marked with a star (★).

Picture Books


A bedtime story; illustrated by Elivia Savadier.

A bedtime story; illustrated by Sisca Verwoert.

Boo to a goose; illustrated by David Miller.

★ A cat called Kite; illustrated by K. Hawley.

Feathers and fools; illustrated by Lorraine Ellis.

Feathers and fools; illustrated by Nick Wilton.

Goodnight sleep tight; illustrated by Helen Semmler.

★ Guess what? illustrated by Vivienne Goodman.

★ Guess what? illustrated by Vivienne Goodman.

★ Guilherme Augusto Araujo Fernandes; ilustrado por Julie Vivas ; [traducao de Gilda de Aquino].
[Sao Paulo, Brazil] : Brinque Book, 1995]
Guillermo Jorge Manuel Jose; ilustrado por Julie Vivas ; traduccion Gabriela Uribe.

Harriet, you'll drive me wild; illustrated by Marla Frazee.

Hattie and the fox; illustrated by Patricia Mullins.

Hattie and the fox, illustrated by Patricia Mullins.

Hattie and the fox, illustrated by Patricia Mullins.
Sydney : Ashton Scholastic, 1986.

Just like that; illustrated by Kilmeny Niland.

Just like that; illustrated by Kilmeny Niland.

Koala Lou; illustrated by Pamela Lofts.

Koala Lou; illustrated by Pamela Lofts.

Morten Storbjorn Alexander Hansen; illustrated by Julie Vivas.

Night noises; illustrated by Terry Denton.

Night noises; illustrated by Terry Denton.

Oma possums zauber-schau; bilder Julie Vivas ; aus dem Englishman ubersetzt von Doris und Michael Mailander.

Possum magic; illustrated by Julie Vivas.

Possum magic; illustrated by Julie Vivas.

Possum magic frieze with illustrated by Julie Vivas.
Sparky Fox Papers 8

Sail away : the ballad of Skip and Nell; illustrated by Pamela Lofts.  
Sydney : Ashton Scholastic, 1986.

Shoes from Grandpa; illustrated by Patricia Mullins.  

Shoes from Grandpa; illustrated by Patricia Mullins.  

Sleepy bears; illustrated by Kerry Argent.  

Sophie; illustrated by Aminah Brenda Lynn Robinson.  

Sophie; illustrated by Craig Smith.  

The straight line wonder; pictures by Marc Rosenthal.  
Greenvale, N.Y. : Mondo, 1996.

The straight line wonder; illustrated by Meredith Thomas.  

Time for bed; illustrated by Jane Dyer.  

Time for bed; illustrated by Jane Dyer.[Board book ed.]  

Tough Boris; illustrated by Kathryn Brown.  

Was meinst du? Vivienne Goodman ; ubersetzung Susanne Parlmeyer.  

Whoever you are; illustrated by Leslie Staub.  

Wilfrid Alexander Graham Johnson; illustrated by Julie Vivas.  

Wilfrid Gordon McDonald Partridge; illustrated by Julie Vivas.  

Wilfrid Gordon McDonald Partridge; illustrated by Julie Vivas.  


With love at Christmas; illustrated by Fay Plamka. Adelaide : The Lutheran Press, 1992


Zoo looking; illustrated by Rodney McRae. Cammeray, NSW ; Martin Educational ; Gosford, NSW. : Ashton Scholastic, 1986.

Sound recordings


Mem Fox reads [sound recording]. 2 [Sydney?: Australian Broadcasting Corporation, 1991?].
Professional papers & non-fiction works


‘A fox in possum’s clothing: the teacher disguised as a writer in hot pursuit of literacy’ Language arts. 64:1, January 1987, p. 18-32.

‘Growing up in public school [How a state education can provide the means for a private learning experience]’. Bulletin(Sydney), 24 May, 1999, p. 56-57.

How to teach drama to infants without really crying : drama classes for fives to eights; illustrated by Bob Graeme. Sydney : Ashton Scholastic, 1984.

‘In the teeth of creation’. The National Times, July 19-25 1985, p. 34.


‘Journal writing: the bridge between panic and action in the improvement of teaching’. In Empowering Teachers edited by B. Comber, and J. Hancock, Brisbane: Methuen, 1987, p. 58-65.


'The paths of story lead but to the graves’. Primary education, May/June 1984 p. 9-11.


‘So who are we writing for?’ Australian Journal of Language and Literacy. 22:3, October 1999, p. 192-199.


Autobiographical works


- Memories: an autobiography

- Mem's the word
BOX, SERIES AND FOLDERS LIST

Box 1                      Series 1, Folders 1-4
                           Series 2, Folders 1-8

Box 2                      Series 2, Folders 9-14.
                           Series 3, Audio and Audio visual material.

SERIES AND FOLDERS LIST

SERIES 1 : 1980-1986

Series 1 consists of four folders which form part of Fox’s application for a Senior Lectureship at the South Australian College of Advanced Education(SACAE) in June 1986. The material is in the order provided by Fox for the application and includes letters, student handbooks, conference papers, monographs, journal articles and professional activities undertaken between 1984 and 1986. Some of the journal articles were published prior to this date.

FOLDER 1 & 2
◊ Application, references and evaluations. 1982-1986.
◊ Student handbooks, monographs and letters to students 1980-1986.

FOLDER 3 & 4
◊ Copies of conference papers presented at national and international conferences 1984-1986.

SERIES 2 : 1986-1989

FOLDERS 1-6
◊ Consists of the first handwritten drafts of Mem’s the word with corrections and rewrites, correspondence, typed and corrected versions of the manuscript and first full copy of the manuscript all completed by the end of 1988.

FOLDERS 7-12
◊ Various drafts and rewrites.

FOLDER 13
◊ Correspondence relating to publication of Mem’s the word including editorial comments by Julie Watts (Penguin Australia)
 SERIES 3 : 1986-1990

Series 3 consists of audio visual material, namely 4 videos, and 4 sound cassettes, 1 computer disk and 1 poster.

 SERIES 1 : FOLDER 1 : 1982-1986

Application for Senior Lectureship at SACAE Sturt site (10 pages covering teaching content, style, evaluation, attitude to teaching and professional development). 26 June 1986.


• Letter of appreciation from Keith Grundy, Principal, Pulteney Grammar School. 26 March 1986.

• Letter of thanks from Sandra Gapper, Education Department of South Australia, Children’s literature summer school conference planning committee. 20 February 1986.

• Letter of congratulations from J.R. Giles Assistant Director General of Education (Curriculum) South Australia about Children’s Literature Summer School. 10 February 1986.


• 1985 List of women nominated for Awards to women for meritorious contribution in tertiary education.

• Letter from Rosanne DeBats re nomination in the above award.11 November 1985.

• Letter of thanks from Pamela [ ? ], Blackwood Primary School, Seymour Street, Eden Hills. 2 October 1985.

• Letter of appreciation Tony Fawcus (ex student) 4 July 1985.

• Letter of thanks, appreciation, praise from Rachel Ruthven, English Mistress, Seymour College. 24 June 1985.

• 2 copies Student evaluation sheet for subject PR141 Self as learner.

• Note from Bronte Bunney. 18 May 1982.

• Graduate Diploma in Teaching (Language Arts), Performance statement, year of graduation 1981 signed by Dr Mike Dilena, Assistant director : Course development, formerly head : Centre for Language Reading and Communication Studies. [undated]

• Letter of support re application for Senior Lectureship from Barbara Comber, Lecturer in Reading and Language, School of Advanced Studies in Education, SACE, Underdale site. Describes Fox as “committed teacher, scholar and writer…energetic and exciting…selfless dedication… never ending energy”. [undated]

• Letter from Trish Gibbon (student) describing Fox as “talented, dedicated imaginative, empathetic and enthusiastic teacher”. 21 June 1986.

• Systematic and formal evaluation forms for subjects taught by Mem Fox.

**SERIES 1 : FOLDER 2 : 1980-1986**


• *Write now : a handbook for student writers.* 1985 Student handbook.

• *Becoming a writer.* 1984 Student handbook.

• Introductory letter to students, signed copy. 16 February 1986.

• Letter providing information, expectations, assessment for course PR141 (Self as learner), signed copy. 19 February 1986.

• Copy of student handout regarding subject PR142 (Self as teacher) in Term 2, 1986. [Week 10 Term 1 1986].


• *Possums’ questions answered.* Individually signed booklet given to children attending creative writing sessions at Sturt in June 1986.

• Memo to David Wyatt, from Ken Elford. 8 April, 1986. Copy Mem Fox re school visits and creative writing classes.

- *Literacy: text and context.* 12\textsuperscript{th} Australian Reading Association Conference, 2-5 July 1986, Sheraton Perth.

- *The fox in possums’ clothing: the teacher disguised as a writer in hot pursuit of literacy.* Plenary paper : length one hour. [undated]

- Letter from Alwyn Reilly Program Committee Convenor requesting Mem Fox to speak at 12\textsuperscript{th} Australian Reading Association Conference. 25 August, 1985

- Letter from Barbara Bosich acknowledging receipt of registration and draft copy of conference program. [undated]

- *Journal writing: the bridge between panic and action in the improvement of teaching.* Keynote paper : length one hour. 13 February 1986.


- Letter from Joan Zahnleiter (lecturer Dept. of Librarianship and Teaching Studies) confirming details of paper to be presented. 19 April, 1985.

- *The paths of story lead but to the graves.* A paper for the International Writing Convention at the University of East Anglia, Norwich, UK, April 1985. This is an updated version of a paper published in *Primary Education.* 15:3, May/June, 1984, p. 9-11. Length 30 minutes.


- *Learning to love one another: the social benefits of the ‘process approach’ to teaching writing, particularly at tertiary level.* Paper for the Melbourne Reading Association Conference Melbourne : length one hour : 30 August 1984.

- Letter from David Dillon (Dept of Elementary Education, University of Alberta, Edmonton.) inviting submission of paper to journal *Language Arts: official journal of the elementary section of the National Council of Teachers of Education.* 24 February, 1986.

• Copy of the article *A fox in possum’s clothing: the teacher disguised as a writer, in hot pursuit of literacy*. [undated]


• ‘The rewarding agony: writing picture books’. *Primary education*, July/August, 1985, p. 18-20. (photocopy)

• ‘In the teeth of creation’. *The National Times*, July 19-25 1985, p. 34. (photocopy)

• ‘The paths of story lead but to the graves’. *Primary education*, May/June 1984 p. 9-11. (photocopy)


**SERIES 1 : FOLDER 4 : 1984-1986.**

• International writing convention 31 March - 4 April, 1985 programme.

• Conference report to faculty board. 17 February, 1986.

• Letter from Agneta Rawlinson (Head of English Centre) Folkuniversitetet, Kursverksamheter vid Goteborgs universitet inviting Mem Fox to talk on “Art of story telling” on 27 October 1985. 22 May 1985.


• Programme from *Reaching for new horizons*. Florida Council of Teachers of English Fall Conference, 17-19 October, 1985.
• Letter from Nana E. Hilsenbeck (Florida Council of Teachers of English) confirming conference and presentation details. 15 July 1985

• ‘Fox phenomena sells 130,000 copies’. Centralian Advocate, 22 May 1985. Press clipping.


• Promotional flyer for Come and listen to the story telling magic of Mem Fox at the Singing Tree, Victoria Park, Perth. 5 July 1986.

• Letter from Freeda Davis, Shailer Park Primary School inviting Mem to visit August/September 1986. 5 November 1985.

• Registration form for a Mem Fox Seminar on 24 May 1986, Mt Gravatt College of Advanced Education.

• Seminar program - 24 May 1986, Mt Gravatt College of Advanced Education.


• Invitation from Robyn Green, Convenor of Australian Reading Association Inc. Melbourne to deliver the plenary lecture. 7 February 1984.


• Letter from Margaret White (Chairman) of International Toastmistress Clubs Australia, Flinders Region requesting travel arrangements for appearing as the lunch time speaker for ITC 7th Annual Conference. 10 March 1985.

• Brochure with background information on International Toast Mistress.

• Invitation from Jennifer Fink (Children’s Librarian for the Alice Springs Library Promotion Committee) to speak at Northern Territory Library Week. 13 March 1985.

• Itinerary details for Alice Springs visit 13-16 May 1985.
• Letter of confirmation from Brian Carter (Convention Chairman) City of Adelaide Lions. 18 March 1986.

• Subscription brochure *The Adelaide Symphony Orchestra plays possum.*

• Programme for *Adelaide Symphony Orchestra Family Concert, Adelaide Festival Theatre 6 June 1986.*


• Invitation from Dr Beate Josephi (Chairperson) Writers’ Week to speak in Children’s Literature session of Adelaide Festival 1986. 12 July 1985.

• Writer’s Week 2-8 March 1986 program.

• Letter of confirmation from Anne Hazell (Library Resource Development Unit) to speak at the Children’s Literature Summer School. 3 December 1985.

• Letter of thanks from John Crawford (President) Amnesty International South Australia. 16 January 1986.

• Programme for *Self-defence for the drama teacher* Annual Conference South Australia Association for Drama in Education 16-18 August, 1985.

• Letter from Merilyn Webb of Australian Association of Early Childhood Educators, South Australian Chapter of thanks and commiserations. 31 July 1985.


• Letter from Helen Campagna (Reading /Language Education) SCAE confirming presentation to students. 8 March 1985.

• Letter from Merrilyn Smith (Come Out Coordinator) Hackham East Junior Primary School confirming school visits. 6 March 1985.

• Letter of confirmation from Kashka Lantis (All Write Coordinator) 24 April 1985.

• Invitation to visit from Angela Cormack (Teacher Librarian) Alberton Primary School. 18 February 1985.
SERIES 2 : 1986-1988


- The first handwritten drafts of *Mem’s the word* and other extraneous material and correspondence.
- Note to Kerry Tyler about drafts. 21 January 1988.
- Letter to Kerry [Tyler] with instructions on changes to manuscript. 28 March 1988.
- Letter from Kim Black, Permissions Secretary for the National Council of Teachers of English (NCTE) granting permission to reprint the article ‘Notes from the battlefield : towards a theory of why people write’ which appeared in the February 1988 issue of *Language Arts*. 9 May 1988.
- 2 pages of rough calculations of typing cost.
- Short story *Growing up : life in Africa* for writing group. 18 October 1981.
- Copy of the paper *Writers as human beings*. 19 September 1985.
- Copy of letter to [newspaper editor] about lack of women in page 2 feature on successful people. [undated]
- Copy of piece [Why wasn’t I wombat] written for last week for subject PR142 (Self as teacher), term II 1986.

FOLDER 2, 3 & 4

- Various typed drafts and corrections and comments.
FOLDER 5 & 6 : 1988

- First full copies of the manuscript. December 1988.

FOLDERS 7-12.

- Various drafts handwritten and typed for each chapter. Includes comments and suggestions to and from Rick Hoskins, Lyn Wilkinson and Sue [R?]

FOLDER : 13 1988-1992

Correspondence relating to Mem’s the word, mainly with staff at Penguin Australia. Correspondence includes editorial comment by Julie Watts and marketing/launch discussions with Suzanne Wilson

- Letter from Julie Watts acknowledging receipt of first manuscript. 11 May 1988.
- Letter from Julie Watts plus detailed analysis of original manuscript and suggestions for change. 28 June 1988.
- Letter from Julie Watts with comments and suggestions on the first draft. 19 January 1989.
- ‘Palace of wisdom’ Mem Fox workshop notes. 1 September 1989.
- Letter from Julie Watts re meeting. 10 November 1989.
- Letter from Moira [Robinson] with editing corrections. 6 February [1990?]
- Letter from Suzanne Wilson with last few pages for interest/correction. 27 April 1990

• Letter from Suzanne Wilson re blurb. 28 May 1990.

• Letter to Joelle, Lyn & Carmen with ideas and thoughts on teaching EES101 Self as leaner.

• Copy of final version of back cover blurb from Suzanne Wilson. 12 June 1990.

• B&W copy of cover from Suzanne Wilson. 25 June 1990.


• Letter from Sue Caton with complimentary copies. 27 July 1990.

• Letter to Sandi [Thorogood] re catering and launch arrangements. 9 August 1990.

• Letter from Sandy Thorogood re book launch. 4 September 1990.

• Best wishes letter from Julie Watts. 5 September 1990.


• Letter from Suzanne Wilson re corrections and launch. 5 October 1990.

• Copy of publicity interview program following launch.

• Various drafts of launch speech. 3-4 October 1990.

• Copy of letter to Chloe re launch of Mem’s the word. 6 October 1990.

• Copy of letter to parents re launch of Mem’s the word. 6 October 1990.

• Photocopy and original of book review by Derek Whitelock The Advertiser [Adelaide]. 6 October 1990.

• Copy of speech by Rick [Hoskin] at launch of Mem’s the word. 10 October 1990.

• Copy of speech notes to Red Cross 15 October 1990.


• Letter from Patricia Adam re publicity. 16 October 1990.

• Letter from Julie Watts re reprint. 24 October 1990.

• Letter from Peg McColl book adapted for print handicapped. 7 December 1990.
• Royalty statement 1 July-31 December 1990.

• Letter to Caroline Lurie from Julie Watts with promotional details, copies of reviews, sales and return figures. 15 February 1991

• Fax to Julie Watts from Caroline Lurie. 20 February 1991.


• Fax from Caroline Lurie. 13 August 1991.


• Faxes and letter to Allyn Johnston re changes. 20 October 1991.

• Letter from Rod [?] Martin International. 31 January 1992.

• Addresses from launch invitations.

• Launch invitation and mock-up.

• Photocopy of rough pencil sketch for cover drawn by Vivienne Goodman 1990.

• Cover of dust jacket

• Dear Mem Fox, I have read all your books even the pathetic ones and other incidents in the life of a children’s book author. New York : Harcourt Brace Jovanovich , 1992. (A Harvest/HBJ original), Uncorrected proof

• Copy of review by Beatrice Fincher in Reading Time 35:1, 1991, p. 40.

FOLDER 14 : 1989

Original manuscript prior condensing of final chapters edited by Moira Robinson. 12 December 1989.

SERIES 3 : 1986-1990

• Cassette 1: Mem Fox reads Feather and fools on Radio National’s Science Show for the International Day of Peace in 1986.

• Cassette 3: A Celebration of Reading. Mem Fox talks to children at [?] library and reads Hattie and the fox, Feathers and fools and Night noises.

• Cassette 4: Mem Fox stories
  Side A: Possum Magic  
  Sail away  
  Shoes from Grandpa  
  Hattie and the fox  
  Goodnight sleep tight
  Side B: Wilfred Gordon McDonald Partridge  
  Just like that  
  Harriett you drive me wild  
  Koala Lou  
  Night noises.


• Video cassette 2: Mem Fox welcomes EES 101 classes 1990. (11:42 minutes) Sturt Media Production, February 1990.

• Video cassette 3: Mem Fox visits Parramatta North Primary School on 8 November, 1991. (95 minutes) She reads her books and answers questions.

• Video cassette 4: Student presentations for N251 on Tuesday 13 [?].

• Macintosh 3 ½ inch computer disk with manuscript saved in Word 5.1A. Labelled new work from February 1989.

• Promotional poster for Wilfrid Gordon McDonald Partridge adapted by Sheryn Dee. 27 July-15 August 1987. (42.5 x 59 cm)
References

