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 it’s 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:


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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’
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Years</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Small, Mary</td>
<td>1987 - 1997</td>
<td>Includes correspondence, original manuscript and illustrations for ‘Broome dog’ also includes discarded chapters.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wignell, Edel</td>
<td>1987 - 1997</td>
<td>Includes correspondence, original manuscript for ‘The secret bay’ and original artworks for the cover of ‘Escape by deluge’.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
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’

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

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

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Publisher</th>
<th>Years</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Abrams, Harry N (US)</td>
<td>1988 - 1997</td>
<td>Includes invoices, orders and correspondence with Margaret Early's Ali Baba and the forty thieves.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Book Bounty</td>
<td>1987 - 1997</td>
<td>Includes claims and receipts (incomplete)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gyldenal (Denmark)</td>
<td>1990 - 1997</td>
<td>Includes correspondence and royalty statements.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### BOX 13

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Publisher</th>
<th>Years</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Harper Collins (US)</td>
<td>1986 - 1997</td>
<td>Includes correspondence, invoices and royalty statements.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Holiday House (US)</td>
<td>1989 - 1993</td>
<td>Includes correspondence, invoices and royalty statements.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DeJonge, Jenny</td>
<td>1991 - 1997</td>
<td>Includes correspondence, invoices and royalty statements.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Publisher</td>
<td>Dates</td>
<td>Details</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-----------------------------------------------------</td>
<td>-------------</td>
<td>-------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lansdowne Publishers</td>
<td>1993 - 1997</td>
<td>Includes correspondence for ‘Sun on the stubble’ and ‘Seven little Australians’.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Little Brown (US)</td>
<td>1988 - 1995</td>
<td>Includes correspondence and royalty statements. Also correspondence with John Marsden regarding changes to the US edition of ‘So much to tell you’.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>BOX 14</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ploegsma (Netherlands)</td>
<td>1986 - 1997</td>
<td>Includes correspondence, invoices and royalty statements.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ravensburg (Germany)</td>
<td>1989 - 1997</td>
<td>Includes correspondence, invoices and royalty statements.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Random House (UK)</td>
<td>1989 - 1999</td>
<td>Includes correspondence, invoices and royalty statements.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reed books/Jacaranda</td>
<td>1993 - 1997</td>
<td>Includes correspondence regarding ‘Broome Dog’ royalty statements and invoices.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Thorup (Denmark)</td>
<td>1986 - 1990</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Company</td>
<td>Period</td>
<td>Description</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>------------------------------</td>
<td>-----------------</td>
<td>-----------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ueberreuter (Germany)</td>
<td>1989 - 1999</td>
<td>Includes correspondence, invoices, royalty statements and translations.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Western Producer (Canada)</td>
<td>1988 - 1991</td>
<td>Prairie Books, includes correspondence, invoices and royalty statements.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Walker Books (UK)</td>
<td>1988 - 1997</td>
<td>Includes correspondence, invoices and Royalty statements.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
**Series 7 Printers**  
**BOX 15**  

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Folder</th>
<th>Company</th>
<th>Years</th>
<th>Notes</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Folder 1</td>
<td>Australian Print Group</td>
<td>1987 - 1997</td>
<td>Includes quotations and invoices.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Folder 2</td>
<td>Globe Press</td>
<td>1985 - 1993</td>
<td>Includes quotations and invoices. Also includes first printing contracts with Walter McVitty.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Folder 3</td>
<td>Mandarin Offset (HK)</td>
<td>1991 - 1993</td>
<td>Includes quotations and invoices.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Folder 5</td>
<td>South China Printing Co.</td>
<td>1990 - 1997</td>
<td>Includes correspondence, quotations and invoices.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
**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
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
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 1987 - 1994
Leesan Town
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.