

Wed. Sept 11/1985

Dear John McLaren,

Your visit to this State was much appreciated because busy Editors of prestigious journals like A. B. R. do not find time to stop over long enough to gain an impression of what it is like to work in the literary field here.

Therefore I thank you sincerely for giving us that most precious commodity 'Time'. (I have a saying that I spend two currencies and am short on both, i.e. time and money.)

The assignment granted to me by Ray Coffey of Fremantle Press, has proved difficult. I now send you the completed review of Shadow of the Hill. Difficult for several reasons... 1. Do your readers know the circumstances of the foundation of the FREMANTLE ARTS CENTRE PRESS ?

Have you done articles on the history of the old building, its architecture, its purpose within the history of the Port of Fremantle, and the planning of the Port, additional to its present use as a Publication and Printing Centre, Exhibition place for the Arts of Pottery, Pictures, Painting, Exhibits of furniture and general all purposes for the promotion of the Arts ?

I presume that such treatment has been given so that your readership might realise that the set-up is totally different from that of others.

2. As the big event of the Cup approaches you may even have decided to do a complete coverage on the Centre, we didn't have time to talk about it, having so much else to discuss.

I have found this assignment, which I talked myself into, a difficult one.

It was because Pat Giles, who was doing the launching, dropped a copy in on me to read, and I did some notes for her as a guide, because she has been caught up talking on the End of Decade Conferences of Women in Nairobi, from one State to another and as far afield as Darwin and our North West - not until people have to travel our vast distances do they become aware of the extent of our one-third of Australia. They have even queried me when I've called it so, thinking that like South Australia, it was divided into territories such as N.T., The Centre, and South Australia. Geography is one of the "Dropped subjects" taught in our curriculum..(ums)

Then I realised that a book with double credits on front cover of authorship, with supplementary statements to Chris' story, such as Another View by Stuart Clements, (which is sometimes contradictory) and the difficulties of clear presentation so involved a collection of opinions and the need to point out that Fremantle Pre-ss has produced yet another Oral History - any reviewer faces problems of presentation.

As action ceases at the year 1981, and there has been a change of Government, with entirely new set-up so far as legislation governing both Union matters, and attitudes towards women as a result of new Equal Opportunitys laws, the further problem in my mind has been whether to present the story of one wife, Chileen Heath, as is done in the book, or to add new circumstances of changed conditions in Company Mining Towns as a postscript of my own.

To which is a further complication mentioned in my original letter to you, Colleen Heath is now the wife of Stewart Clements, who was present at the launching and they live in the South and not on the Pilbara any more!

For all these reasons I send the original review, plus the additional material gained afterwards, for which I held it back and notified you. The review still stands as a picture of the times when the policy of Sir Charles Court towards Mining Companies, which totally ignored the role of wives of miners, and caused the trauma of the death by his own hand of Colleen Heath's husband, Chris Heath to occur.

But, as I hope to have demonstrated, this was not an easy review for me. My feminist interpretation, however, of one woman's story (even though incidental to that of her husband and other Union men on the mines, still stands as a precise interpretation of one woman's agony under conditions prior to the new Burke Labor Government's amendments in law.

This letter is already too long. With my regrets that it seemed necessary,

I changed this approach & revised accordingly after speaking with my friend Jan Campbell who speaks well of your article pub in latest ABR by Brian Gribble on 10th Anniversary Fremantle Arts Centre Press

Greetings & Good wishes,
Irene Greenwood