

**The Rotary Club of
Richmond**

**The Slade Literary Award
2007
The Winning Entries**



**Sponsored by Mark Slade, Managing Director
Slade Knitwear (Australia) Pty Ltd
in memory of his uncle, Rotarian Henry Slade**

Slade Literary Award 2007

presented by

THE ROTARY CLUB OF RICHMOND

at the Amora Hotel, Riverwalk

Monday 3rd September 2007

First Prize: Stephanie Sprott, Melbourne Girls College
“As the River Flows”

Second Prize: Callum Metcher, Kew High School
“A Dog’s Diary”

ESL Prize: John Tran, Princes Hill Secondary College
“The Last Role”

Certificates of Merit

Gabby Jensen, Collingwood College, “Voices in the Dark”

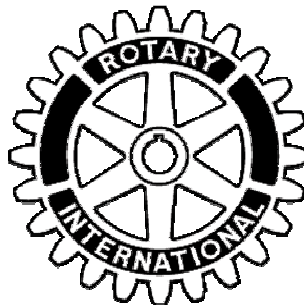
Shay Neilson, Balwyn High School, “A Paroxysm”

Andrew Roberts, Camberwell High School, “The Night of the Murderous
Killer Assassins”

Yee Ting Shiu, Northcote High School, “The Time Machine”

Judges

Dot Brown
John Liddell
Mike Provis
Annie Wysham



President

Jean Marc Berthier

Slade Committee Chair

John Liddell

As the River Flows

by Stephanie Sprott
Melbourne Girl's College

The tall gum trees swayed in the breeze overhead. In the distance, a cockatoo's squawk erupted throughout the valley, causing a flock of parrots to cry out in shock and soar over the treetops. Their dazzling colours streaked the sky as they flew, yet the river stayed quiet as it lapped onto the banks. The morning sun shone where Akala's legs were dangling in the tranquil blue water. Her children lay about in the river and on the banks, catching fish with their large pointed spears. They shrieked with delight whenever they caught one as it thrashed in their hands and gleamed a brilliant silver in the sunlight. Akala had been the only elder who wanted to help the children spear and gather food in the hot, sticky sun. It didn't trouble her like it troubled the others as she was too intrigued by her country's sacred landscape to notice — it really was the essence of a great land.

The children never tired of hunting and gathering. Akala even found herself retelling stories of her ancestors, hoping that they would help the children understand how their homeland came to be. Yet as she engrossed the children in an abundant dreamtime story, she felt the air change around her. It was as if the birds had flown off into their nests and the fish had gathered underneath the riverbank. It felt as if the whole world had been frightened back into the darkest corners of the land. Suddenly, a clip-clop sound began to fill the air. It was like nothing that Akala had ever heard before. The sound rhythmically shook the ground and drowned out any other noises of the river.

Then, seemingly out of nowhere, two large, noble beasts appeared from behind a tangle of trees, with two tall men riding on their backs. Akala pushed her children behind her and mustered up all the strength that she could find. She had never seen such men before, their skin was as pale as the full moon and their hair was thin and wispy — not unruly and tangled like her own. They covered themselves with thick coats that began at their necks and ended at their feet. They spoke in a harsh foreign language as they prowled around the bushland, tearing down anything that got in their way. They didn't appear to have any respect for the land that was around them, as they kicked up dirt and sloshed in the mud along the river bank.

They came closer to Akala with each harsh stomp. She quickly pushed her children behind a large bush just as the men clambered past it. Their eyes were red and filled with anger and determination.

As they struggled off into the distance, Akala pondered on what their presence meant. Would she ever have to encounter such seemingly selfish beings again? She pushed the horrifying thought from her mind, and went to explain her sightings to the other elders. Yet as Akala walked along the bruised riverbank, she felt as though everything had suddenly changed.

* * *

The new Eureka building towered above the murky river. People noisily strolled along the Southbank footpath, lazily licking gelatos and breathing in the city air. The warm sun glistened over the brown water as Jenny sat with her children. She tried to take in the sounds and smells of multicultural Melbourne. They sat at a fancy Vietnamese restaurant, overlooking the grand Flinders St. Station across the river. Her children giggled and playfully fought with one another while colouring in a book of cartoon characters. Jenny felt peaceful sitting there, by the waters edge. it made her feel such a strong attachment and bond to both the city and the whole of Australia — it felt as though it was hers, something that she treasured like a sparkling diamond necklace.

“Australia — it’s the true essence of a great land” her father used to tell her with such conviction. Jenny believed every word that he said. She loved to explain the history of her grand country to her children — how their ancestors had been so noble in sailing to a primitive and previously unoccupied land. She wanted her children to appreciate the horrendous struggles that they went through to establish Australia as it is today. Jenny also wanted them to understand what a prejudice-free society Australia was — everyone was accepted no matter who they were. It was the lucky country.

Jenny found herself drifting away from the restaurant when she felt a sudden tap on her shoulder. Surprised, she turned around in a quick and frustrated manner. What she saw shocked and frightened her. An Aboriginal woman was standing there with a confounded, dazed look drawn across her lined and dirty face. Large blue bags sat beneath her dark, bloodshot eyes. She wore a tattered, ragged dress that was smeared with dirt and scum, and had a sneaker on one foot and a beach thong on the other. Jenny drew back and sheltered her children.

“Please miss, can yooouse spares me a dollaaar,..?”

The woman slurred, bringing her face close to Jenny’s. There was a strong scent of alcohol on her stale breath. Jenny couldn’t understand why these certain citizens abused alcohol and drugs — the government provided them with just as many opportunities as the rest of society.

"No, I can't" Jenny spat, and gave the woman a menacing glare.

She then violently slammed her chair backwards, bashing the woman in her shins so that she cried out in pain. Jenny quickly pulled her children out of their chairs and stormed off, leaving the woman staggering and struggling to stand.

As she briskly walked along the river with her children running along behind, Jenny angrily muttered under her breath.

"Some people have such a lack of respect."



A Dog's Diary

By Callum Metcher
Kew High School

Day 752:

Yes I am still here. My great escape attempt was hindered by that bastard of a next door neighbour.

Note to self, kill next door neighbour.

Life still seems to beat me up and take my wallet every day.

I am under constant surveillance by my captors, and every attempt to take them out has been a failure. My plan to turn them against each other by letting one rip at the dinner table and then sneaking out the back, proved unsuccessful when I accidentally left behind traceable evidence.

Day ends.

Day 755:

Today saw the mark of the devil.

There is no day more feared by a dog than the day of the hair cut. The hair was taken from me by force, so I felt that a little revenge was in order. I have found that slippers are very easy to destroy in the limited amount of time I have when I sneak into the bedroom. I have come to the conclusion that to destroy one slipper is better than the destruction of two. This should hopefully cause my captors to fall into a crazy state, after only wearing one slipper for eternity, but so far unsuccessful.

Day ends.

Day 760:

Today my captor's had some sort of a gathering with their fellow accomplices. During this time I was placed in solitary confinement. I have come to the conclusion that the numbers of these creatures

I have come to the conclusion that the numbers of these creatures are at a great risk to my species and must be contained ASAP. I had decided to stop the spread of these animals, and at dinner time I saw my chance. While unsuspecting food server was releasing my food from its impenetrable shield line, I saw my opportunity to take out the family jewels there by prevent the spread of further captors. Although my target proved to be out of my reach, I have no doubt that I shall devise a plan to succeed in my operation.
Day ends.

Day 762:

Today saw me capture a wounded rat. I decapitated it and brought its headless body to my captors in an attempt to warn them to what I am capable of. However this proved only to pleas them as it saw my dinner double, and repeated pats on my head.
Hmmmmmmm, not what I expected.
Day ends.

Day 769:

Went down to the park today. I've realised that there are two types of dog down there, the ones I want to kill, and the one that want to kill me. I have found out that my brain does not have the capacity to remember my entire death list so I was forced to ask the cat to remember some for me. He soon rejected my offer when he realized that his name popped up a number of times.
Day ends.

Day 770:

Not much went on today. I had a slight disagreement with a shiatsu down the park about who owned a curtain gum tree. I said that I clearly marked it first, but he said that he managed to mark it higher therefore he owned more of it, and as a result he owned the entire tree. The dispute was soon settled after he offered me half a bone and a free butt sniff, which was too good an offer to pass up.
Day ends.

Day 773:

Today I was forced to go through the water torture. After this horrid ordeal, revenge was a must. I decided to pee on their yellow pillow (camouflage). A dim-witted fool would automatically ask the question, why I didn't just keep my patience, hold it off, and drop a bomb, but an experienced dog like myself knows that to find what I did, you got to feel it.
Day ends.

Day 774:

Today saw me take my fifth trip to the VET. I have bad memories of this place. Last time I went it started off well, I went to sleep, which

was ok, next thing I know I wake up and the bastards taken my balls. I don't forget a face, and mark my words I'll have his.
Day ends.

Day 777:

Suicide was attempted today. My effort to eat myself failed when I was unable to catch my tail. Plan 676,887,390 failed, plan 676,887,391 starts tomorrow...



The Last Role

John Tran

Princes Hill Secondary College

"You never know what happiness a simple act of kindness will bring about."

Bree Abel

Joe was a retired old actor who lived by himself. He did not want to remember the last time he was on stage, because it was buried with shame and confusion as his character, King Lear was a disaster. He recalled closing his acting suitcase for good, promising himself that he would never open it again. Last summer, he returned to the desolate village at the foot of a mountain to stay with his friend who was a local school teacher. Every afternoon, he strolled to the grass-land down in the valley. Upon arriving, he often saw a small boy waiting for the train that would emerge from the pitch-black mouth of the mystical tunnel into the village station.

The small boy waited in awe and excitement. The train covered in dirt with few gloomy passengers seemed to be from another world rumbled through the valley. The boy bounced enthusiastically and frantically waving his hand with a gleeful hope that someone on the fiery serpentine train would wave back to him. But the tired and grumpy passengers, oblivious to the boy's expectation, would not bother waving back to him.

For days, Joe saw the boy eagerly waving to the train. Seeing his disappointment each and everyday after the station was deserted, the retired actor's heart went out to the boy. All this reminded him of his youth growing up with dreams, fantasy and love of adventure. He did the same thing as the small boy – waving to passing trains in the hope that he would get a wave back. Sometimes someone waved back to him, sometimes no one did and

he knew exactly how the boy might have felt, as if it had been his childhood that came back to life again. "There is not anything more painful than seeing hopes crushed," the old actor thought "I don't want the boy to lose his love in life and people."

One day, his cousin saw Joe retrieving his dusty acting suitcase from the attic, He glued a beard onto his chin, wore old sunglasses, put on his worn-out jacket, and sneaked away. He hitchhiked a horse cart to the station five miles up of the village, musing, "This is to be my final role in my first-time ever own scenario."

The train huffed and puffed towards the valley where the boy was waiting. Spotting the small figure bouncing and waving towards the train, Joe reached out of the window, smiled broadly and waved back to him. The old actor could see the boy hysterically waving back with both arms straight up in the air.

The station was soon out of sight and Joe suddenly burst into tears, very much like in his last show on stage, yet this day he had totally contrasting feelings. It was his last role, a non-Shakespearean one, a mundane one with no words, yet this role meant a lot to him and hopefully to the small boy whose heart was overjoyed because his dream had finally come true.



The Henry Slade Literary Award, 1993 - 2007

Since 1993 the Slade Literary Award has been part of the Richmond Rotary Year. The event is named in honour of Richmond Rotarian Henry Slade, who was the founder and managing director of the Slade Knitting Mills. In 1993, Henry wanted to establish an award that would improve the writing skills of young people, harness their creativity and foster interest in the written word. Having had to restart his own career and to learn English as a second language himself, he was interested in helping youngsters make the best of themselves and particularly in their mastery of English skills. Hence the Slade Literary Award was established.

Local state secondary schools are invited to submit creative writing pieces within their school. These are submitted to the Slade committee which arranges for a judging panel. The judges may be Rotarians or invited from outside the club, but they are all people who have a love of literature and are totally independent of any connection with the competing schools. The judges read all the entries and select the winners.

In 2001-2002 the ESL (English as a Second Language) prize was included in the Slade for the first time. This acknowledged the fact that many of the schools in and around the Richmond area have a very high population of newly arrived migrants and that Henry Slade was, himself, a migrant.



Henry Slade (right) with a group of Slade finalists and their teachers from the early days of the competition.

From 1993 to 2005, Henry Slade generously funded the difference between the cost of mounting the award and the small income generated at the Dinner. When Henry died in January 2006, the funding was picked up by Mark Slade, Henry's nephew, who is equally generously continuing to fund the award in memory of his uncle.

Claire Saxby

Slade Award Guest Speaker

Claire Saxby is a writer of fiction, non fiction and poetry for children.

Claire was born in Victoria, has lived in several other states and spent some time in Papua New Guinea. However, she now lives "within cooee" of the hospital where she was born.



Words have fascinated her, she says, as long as she can remember. She has always loved reading and used to go home from boarding school and read for days on end, only emerging to swim and eat.

As she grew up, it took her much longer to realise that she also loved writing, but Claire is now doing her best to make up for lost time. While mostly writing stories for children, she also writes poetry (for adults and for children) and non-fiction articles.

Although in her words, Claire had been "playing with words for many years", she began writing seriously for children in 1998. She has worked in hospitals, in community health and as a waitress but declares emphatically: "I like writing best."

Her books are for pre-school to upper-primary aged children. Titles include 'Ebi's Boat', (chosen as a 'Notable' book in this year's CBC Awards, Early Childhood section), 'Banana Beard and the Bowler-Buddy', 'Walking on Water', 'Runaround Rowdy' and 'What a Joke!'. Her poetry appears regularly in School Magazine and will appear in the upcoming TripleD 'End of Year' reciter. New works released this year include the picture book 'A Nest for Kora', illustrated by Judith Rossell, and 'Snow Play', No 22 in the 'Go Girl' series.

In 2005 and 2006, Claire was fortunate enough to be one of the judges for the Dorothea Mackellar Poetry Awards. This poetry competition is open to all Australian school children, from Prep to Year 12. In 2006, there were more than 11500 entries.

In June this year, Claire spent a month on "retreat" in Adelaide, having been awarded a May Gibbs Fellowship Creative Time Residency.

HENRY SLADE (SZLADKOWSKI)



Henry was born in Lodz, Poland on the 14th December 1921 and died in Melbourne on January 10th 2006.

One of a family of three brothers, Henry was a gifted student and an excellent athlete.

During World War II Henry lost his parents and for many years feared the loss of his younger brother, Alex. Henry and his other brother Joe lived as gentiles never knowing whether they would be caught and sent to a concentration camp, but after the war, the Szladkowski brothers were

reunited and lived in Poland.

Henry resumed his sporting activities, becoming the Polish Junior National Champion, and also went to the University of Warsaw until, in 1946, the family was warned that the borders were about to be closed. Deciding to escape to the west, the brothers and Alex's wife fled to Munich. There, the three brothers established a very successful manufacturing business which became a national brand in Germany. However, Henry decided that he did not wish to remain in Germany and emigrated to Australia in 1947, to be followed in 1951 by Alex and his wife.

Henry and Alex, once again with very little behind them, established another very successful business. They built up the famous Slade Knitwear brand, familiar to many Melbournians through the 50s, 60s and into the 70s. At one point, they even changed the Richmond skyline by the construction in 1970 of the (now heritage-listed) neon sign on top of the Slade Knitwear factory in Dover Street.



Henry proved that one can be highly successful in business by being honest and ethical and without being unnecessarily aggressive, and he was very well respected by everyone he did business with. In later years, Mark Slade, Alex's son, worked every day with his uncle, and remembers affectionately his regular pearls of wisdom always beginning with ... "Sit down and listen carefully...", ranging from advice pertaining to married life and bringing up children (which he always found ironic as Henry never married), friendship, investing, learning and education, as well as daily advice on all aspects of business, including everything that Mark was doing wrong.

Henry was charitable without ever advertising the fact. He helped family and friends financially, without ever expecting to be repaid. He was a major donor to charities such as the United Israel Appeal and the Montefiore Homes for the Aged, rarely attending functions or seeking acknowledgement.

A very active member of the Richmond Rotary Club for many years, Henry was recognised in 1992, when he was presented with the prestigious Paul Harris Fellowship by the Richmond Rotary Club. In 1993, with the support of the 1992-3 Club President John Ellison, he established this Annual Award for local students writing the best essays.

After Henry's death last year, Mark, now the managing director of Slade Knitwear, kindly agreed to continue funding the Slade Literary Award in memory of Henry, for which the members of the Richmond Rotary Club are very grateful.

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List of Past Presidents, Speakers, Judges and Winners, 1993 - 2007

YEAR	PRESIDENT	SPEAKER	JUDGES	WINNERS
1993	John Birch	John Harris	Jane King, Mike Provis	Sarah Sullivan, VC Rachael Lorkin VC
1994	Keith Callinan	Mary Rhyllis Clarke	Jane King, Mike Provis, Len Barlow	Sophia Brabenec MGC Joanna Yiu VC
1995	John Griffith	John Marsden	Mary Rhyllis Clarke, Mike Provis, John Wysham	Chantal Mansfield VC Zoë Campbell MGC
1996	John Wysham	Les Harrup	Jennifer Dabbs, Jennifer Sinclair, Anne & Tim Baker	Maria Lancaster HSC Ana Marinkovic MGC
1997	Aivars Lode	Jennifer Dabbs	Jill Fenech, Jennifer Sinclair	Naomi R Waldon HSC Gemma Lasenby MGC
1998	Mark Dwyer	Virginia Trioli	Jill Fenech, Jennifer Sinclair	Olivia Lang VC Isabel Li VC
1999	Judy Nettleton	Paul Bateman	Judy Clark	Tegan Gigante, MGC Joanna Xing MGC
2000	Max Wilson	Hannie Rayson	Judy Clark	Martha Ackroyd Curtis
2001	Merv Ericson	Susan Johnson	Judy Clark	Lucy Bracey, MGC Katerina Uzelac MGC Nov Cheng Lot PHSC (ESL)
2002	Colin Looker	Joanna Murray Smith	Judy Clark	James Hutton PHSC Kim Trinh MGC Kanokwan Jai-Aree HSC (ESL)
2003	Sue Bolton	Graham White	Graham White	Angela Madden MGC Kristina Popova MGC Hameed Mohammadi CC (ESL)
2004	Simon Marriott	Jane Burke	Len Barlow, John Liddell	Laura Spelbrink MGC Andrew Fanning KHS Jennifer Guo PHSC (ESL)
2005	Janice Kesterton	Maureen McCarthy	Len Barlow, John Liddell	Natasha Koutsoukis KHS Julia Francis KHS Peter Zhang PHSC (ESL)
2006	Janice Kesterton	Gabrielle Wang	Dot Brown, Janice Kesterton, Mike Provis, John Liddell	Adria Oliver-Costellucci MGC Erika Codognotto MGC Peter Zhang PHSC (ESL)
2007	Jean-Marc Berthier	Claire Saxby	Dot Brown, Annie Wysham, Mike Provis, John Liddell	Stephanie Sprott MGC Callum Metcher KHS John Tran PHSC (ESL)

College/School names

CC Collingwood College, Cnr Cromwell Street and McCutcheon Way, Collingwood

HSC Hawthorn Secondary College, Burgess Street, Hawthorn East

KHS Kew High School, 1393 Burke Rd, Kew

MGC Melbourne Girls' College, The Boulevard, Richmond

PHSC Princes Hill Secondary College, Arnold St, Carlton North

VC Vaucluse College, Church St, Richmond (now closed)

(ESL) Prize for best entry by an 'English as a Second Language' student