

LIBRARY NEWS AND BOOK REVIEWS

FEBRUARY 2017

FROM THE LIBRARIAN

Happy New Year!

As I was reading "The Weekend Australian" the following headline caught my eye! "SHARED WORLDS: In the age of connectivity, books are more important than ever".

I read on "We all ask each other a lot of questions. But we should all ask one question a lot more often: "What are you reading?" It's a simple question but a powerful one, and it can change lives, creating a shared universe for people who are otherwise separated by culture and age and by time and space".

The article was an interesting one, written by Will Schwalbe and talked about various books which had made a difference to his life. The article was an edited extract from "**Books for Living**" by Will Schwalbe. I thought it was a good way to get 2017 running bookwise.

So...What book are you reading or going to read?

Hopefully "**Books for Living**" by Will Schwalbe, now available in the **NEW READS** section of the library.

The "Weekend Australian Magazine" article is also available in the library for you to read.

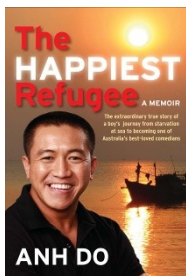
Exploring Faith and Spirituality

Easter/Lent is a time when we look to grow in our faith, but how? Our Library has a variety of resources to help us explore our faith. An array of Lenten resources is on display in our library now for you to browse and borrow.

Looking Forward Towards May

May is History Month in Adelaide and on display in our library will be the local histories of churches in our area, local histories pertaining to our area and autobiographies produced by people within our congregation. Do come and have a look.

BOOK REVIEWS



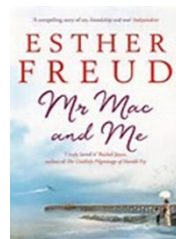
The Happiest Refugee by Anh Do

Anh Do is a rare individual who truly understands how lucky he is to be living the life that he does, and able to look back at the place from where he came with a realistic eye. Once upon a time he might have been a poor boy living on the streets of Vietnam and eking out a living with menial tasks, instead he is one of Australia's successful personalities living a life that most can only dream about.

Life for Anh didn't begin too well. His parents risked everything to get to Australia with their children and then spent every waking moment working hard to provide for them in their new land. That work ethos was passed on to their offspring and Anh has never forgotten the sacrifices they made.

This book is an easy, seductive read as Anh tells his tale with simple direct language and an endearing frankness. His lack of guile is just part of this story which is all about survival, forgiveness, triumph, sadness and joy. If you have never heard of him until you read this book, you will certainly want to know more after you have read it - and if you thought you knew all about Anh already, this story will show you that there is so much more to know.

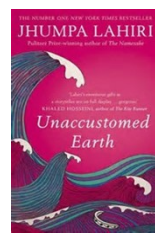
Reviewed by Jan Thornton



Mr Mac & Me by Esther Freud

Life changed forever in the small village on the Suffolk Coast of England at the onset of WW1. Thomas Maggs the local publicans son, crippled from birth, longs to go to sea like the other local boys, but is destined to lead a different life. Fascinated by a Scottish artist, Charles Rennie Macintosh, accused of spying for Germany, Thomas follows his eccentric friend to a more interesting end.

Reviewed by Margaret Boundy



Unaccustomed Earth by Jhumpa Lahiri

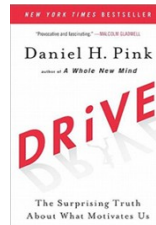
Lahiri is a Pulitzer-Prize winning author whose Bengali parents brought her at an early age from London to grow up in the US.

She is thus well-equipped to write on the sometimes intimate interactions of Bengali Indians within their families, and with surrounding foreign cultures.

The larger Part One of the book comprises five different short stories, beginning with the one with the book's title "Unaccustomed Earth", which derives from a quote from Nathaniel Hawthorne, to the effect that people will flourish better in foreign soil.

The Bengalis seem to have done well, since they are mostly comfortably off, well-educated and much-travelled. Part Two, entitled "Hema and Kaushik", comprises three chapters describing the trials of the girl Hema who loved Kaushik, a travelling photographer, but eventually agreed to marry Navin by family arrangement.

Reviewed by Bryan Forbes



Drive - The Surprising Truth About What Motivates Us by Daniel H Pink

I was quite excited to get this book, described by others as provocative, inspiring, fascinating and energetic and as I'd love to

know what exactly motivates me, I began this paperback with gusto.

What a damp squid it turned out to be! This dry little epistle is slanted towards the American way of life, using examples of practices, stories and teachings that are more pertinent to the US.

Pink tells us that we are irrational and predictably so. Well, that's not really new, but I could understand what he was getting at - at that point. He lost me when he talked about things being heuristic (an experimental process where you have to come up with something new) and asymptote (a line that draws ever closer to a curve without ever meeting it).

This is hardly the kind of book that you'd casually dip into before falling asleep and you would be bound to kill the conversation at any social gathering if you brought up what Pink thinks are the twenty best conversation starters.

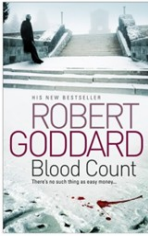
Just before the book ends we are presented with a dictionary of some strange jargon that is supposed to help us make sense of everything that has gone before, but is quite interesting if you would like to learn some gobbledegook guaranteed to kill the aforementioned social gathering in its entirety!

As a study of behaviour, motivation, purpose and mastery this book was frustrating and condescending. Others far more intelligent than I might make sense of it all but for the average reader; I believe this tome offers nothing new.

Reviewed by Jan Thornton



For more book reviews go to www.morialtauca.org.au/resources/library



Book Review

Blood Count - There is no such thing as easy money by Robert Goddard

Reviewed by the Vision Editor

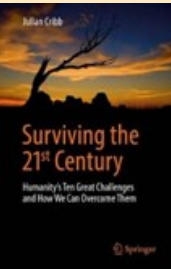
As the book cover says "there is no such thing as easy money", something that our hero surgeon Edward Hammond discovers as the story unfolds. This is one of those books that will make

you miss your bus stop because it is hard to put down, as the naïve and trusting surgeon solves one crisis only to be confronted with a new threat. It is a book where the ending is like a mirage in the desert and just when you think he is safe, and all will end with him back in his hospital in London, another twist sees him facing an even bigger threat to his safety.

However, the book is not only "a brilliant race against time thriller", it also examines cause and effect and the outcomes of actions that seem ethical on the surface,

but which have a dark side as well. If our surgeon hero had not accepted a huge fee for going to the Balkans to give a Serbian gangster a new liver, which enabled said gangster to live and slaughter many innocent people, he would never have ended up being hounded by several equally nasty groups across Europe. The central theme is that only you can lay the past to rest.

Available in Morialta UC Library!



Book Review

Surviving the 21st Century - Humanity's Ten Great Challenges and How We Can Overcome Them by Julian Cribb

Reviewed by the Vision Editor

In the December 2016 Vison we reviewed Julian Cribb's earlier book "The Coming Famine", published in 2010, in which Cribb paints a vivid picture of the likely world food shortage that will face our children and their peers in many countries in mid-21st century. This new book is about the prospects of our survival as a species in

the 21st century. The book cover carries 15 reviews by eminent scientists and social historians including Paul Erlich, Peter Doherty, Bob Douglas and Robyn Williams. The one that hit home to me was by veterinarian and Nobel Laureate Peter Doherty who states: "We've come a long way from our hunter/gatherer past, but how assured is our future?"

In this book, Julian Cribb argues that the continuation of the human story depends on **what we do now and in the immediate future.** According to Cribb the time to act is now or it will be too late.

The book is divided into 10 easily readable chapters of less than 24 pages each. The chapters cover the most important issues facing *homo sapiens* and the chapter titles give us an insight into what the author sees as not only our most pressing issues, but

our greatest mistakes. He starts with "The Self-Worshipper", and follows with "The Terminator", "The Degraded", "The Butcher", "The Baker", "The Poisoner", "The Devourer", "The Urbanite", "The Self-Deceiver" and finally (and hopefully) "The Getter of Wisdom".

Chapters 2 to 9 end with summary dot points of "What we **can** do" followed by a briefer list of "What we **must** do". The book ends with the final and most important question Cribb poses:

"Foresight is humanity's ultimate skill. Our quintessential wisdom is the wisdom of the survivor. The question the twenty first century will answer is: Do humans have it still?" Only time will tell.

NOTE: A Lenten study based on this book is being offered at Morialta during Lent.