

A Western Plains boy's diary

Aspects of outback life in the 1930s, through a teenager's eyes

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Introduction and background

Has learning about text types lost some of its lustre for your students; particularly boys? Does Studies of Society, HSIE, or History need a fillip to energise students' learning in your classroom? Could your Bible/Scripture/Studies of Religion program do with more vibrancy and relevance? And what about a little detective work, some historical research, a mapping assignment or a variation on some of these? Perhaps the reading of a boy's diary may become a *spring-board* for any one of a number of interesting learning activities.

It was a fortuitous find. "Might today's middle school students benefit from, or be interested in it?" I mused. I came across the unexpected 'treasure'—a boy's diary—in the dusty, derelict library of an old homestead in outback north-west New South Wales. Its yellowed pages were buried under miscellaneous cash receipt books, mildewed copies of *National Geographic* and *Reader's Digest* of pre-WWII vintage and some Victorian classics by Dickens and Thomas Hardy.

The diary had no front cover. It had been torn off, apparently by its diarist-owner, but the top of each page was carefully hand-dated, 1937, with the respective printed names for months and weekdays appearing next to entries. I was both puzzled and

curious about the February 29 entry, given that 1937 was not a leap year. Furthermore, the diarist mentioned local people voting in an election on the first weekend in March. Yet, according to available records that I consulted later, no local, state or federal elections were scheduled for or held on that date—two puzzles, whose pieces were put together only much later.¹

Before taking a closer look at the diary's contents and considering its historical and educational value specifically, it may be instructive, first, to make some observations and comments about diaries, in general, and then focus on children's diaries.

Diaries and journals

Diaries are very personal narratives—texts that are windows into the souls of their authors. The genre provides the writer with 'private space', vis-à-vis the Facebook-type flaunting of *Brand Me*, deplored by Hugh Mackay.² One can record anything at all in a diary, including: The mundane; the commonplace; comments on events and happenings; subjects on one's mind and issues in one's life, or personal thoughts, feelings and self-indulgent 'dreaming'. The latter group tends to be the product of left-brain activity that is deeper and more reflective and meditative³ than just a record of everyday events.

Diary and *journal* are regarded mostly as equivalent terms. Although some purists would make a semantic distinction in respect to form and content, reserving the second term for texts that show daily, sequential entries, often associated with records of travels, journeys, voyages, the weather and daily business, whereas diaries are more personal and may be written on a more intermittent basis.⁴ Perhaps it is neither 'here nor there'. A distinction of another kind, however, should be given more weight.

Adults' published accounts of their childhood, whether of early or later years, abound. Written in narrative or diary form, they range from those grounded in personal experience and fact—reminiscent of Roald Dahl's candid *Boy*⁵ or

“Diaries are very personal narratives—texts that are windows into the souls of their authors”

[Photography:
Wilf Rieger]



hilariously blunt fiction⁶ such as *The secret diary of Adrian Mole aged 13¾*—to others differentiated by style, class and culture. The diary of Samuel Pepys⁷

⁷, Leo Tolstoy's autobiographical portrayal of his childhood and the description by Joseph Lijembe⁸ of his East African childhood.

Children's diaries

Diaries of child authors, in contrast, have rarely seen 'the light of publishing day'. Among exceptions are the diaries of Anne Frank⁹ and Zlata Filipovic¹⁰. Both are very personal accounts of the youngsters' lives in extremely distressing circumstances¹¹; the first set during the holocaust years of WWII in Holland, the second in Sarajevo during the 1990s Balkan war. In another recently published diary¹², schoolgirl Ma Yan from the village of Zhangjiashu, in China's remote north-west region, tells of her hopes and struggles to overcome poverty and access education.

Children's diaries capture the immediacy of ~~the world as it is, not as it should be~~. For Linda Pollock,

¹³ her study of 12 historical ~~children's diaries~~ that

displayed a greater ability to pass on information, to recognise and articulate the emotions possessed by themselves and others, as well as a deeper understanding of what makes people act in the way they do.¹⁴

She comes to the conclusion that diaries are not only

a way of improving the use of language, and not only a source for tracing the development of a child's social sensitivity. They are also an aid to a child's comprehension of the world and life.¹⁵

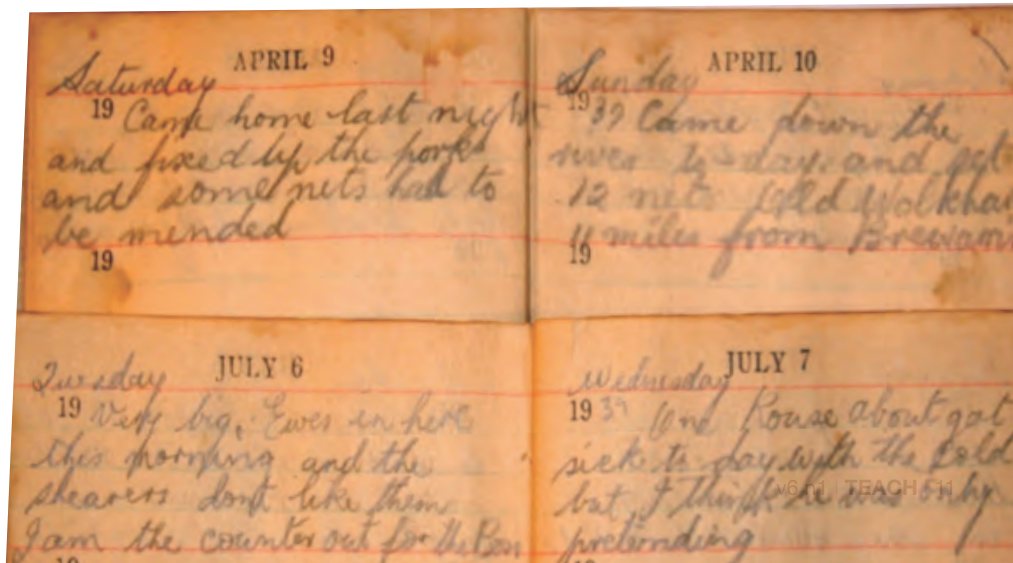
Currawah diary, 1937

The title chosen for the 'retrieved' diary comes from the pastoral property on which it was found and where it was safely left. The original 'document' (see the respective photograph and the complete diary text) was faithfully copied, word for word—including any spelling errors or apparent mistakes.¹⁶ Unfortunately, the diarist's name is not found anywhere in the text. Thus the author remains anonymous as there are no clues to his identity, but it is inferred from the text that the diarist is a male teenager—probably between 13 and 16 years of age—who has left school. Through this article, he has been given a voice and an 'assumed identity': William; Bill for short.

The settings for most of Bill's entries are the banks of the Bogan River, and several pastoral properties with 'sheep runs' near the NSW town of Brewarrina, on the Western Plains. The Western Plains is that vast land area to the west of the Great Dividing Range contained within the rough rectangle that is formed on a map by drawing a line from Forbes north to Moree, then west to Tibooburra, south to Wilcannia and then back to Forbes. Parts of this landscape—towns, villages, farms, fields, bush and grasslands—were inundated by floodwaters after the torrential rain of early 2012. In the diary, there is also reference to a lengthy train journey undertaken by Bill.

A number of things stand out from the diary and catch the reader's attention. The diarist neither feels the need to set himself in any social or geographical context, nor identify himself; or give a reason for embarking on his writing venture. Bill simply starts writing and then, after several months, ends without explanation. His entries seem 'frugal', literal, self-oriented, down-to-earth, concerned with the everydayness of outback life—work, chores, the weather etc.—and not unlike the diary entries of Oliver Meyer, a North American 'counterpart',

“Children's diaries capture the immediacy of their authors' experiences”



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Currawah Diary, 1937

January

Wed. 6 Jack Murphy brought Elwood into hospital about 2 o'clock; very bad from booze. Dad is cook.

Thurs. 7 Murphy & Dad went to Bogan to see dam. I went and cut wood. Murphy carted 2 loads before dinner

Fri. 8 Murphy and I went and cut about 3 loads of wood before dinner; carted 2; A few heavy clouds about to-night. Went for a swim

Sat. 9 Yambacoon; Dad and I carted dirt and fixed the gate and road. Jack went to town to get the boss.

Sun. 10 Went down the soap works & got 6 ducks; ate 2; sent 4 home; Dad and boss went to town; found turtles nest

Mon. 11 Arose 5:30 am. Went and got 2 duck for dinner and got the rams and crutched a few. Dad is shooting out of the 303 now.

Tues. 12 Went and took rams out to the paddock. Very warm here this morning. Jack and I shot 10 ducks this evening. I shot 8 and Jack 2.

Wed. 13 Carted 5 loads of wood today, some very heavy wood. Saw large goanna and he was savage. Went fishing to-night.

Thurs. 14 Went shooting yesterday; saw two snakes black and brown. Shot a fox but only shot 9 ducks; a bad days shooting

Fri. 15 Murphy brought dad & I and Daph in from Yambacoon this morning. Today is very hot and sultry. Like rain

Sat. 16 Went up the town [Brewarrina] to the pictures; only fair. Saw Mr. Oliver about a job at crutching. Allan came in from Tarcoon.

Sun. 17 I went over to the garden and got a big water-melon

Mon. 18 Wallace had row with Arthur Townsend and came in home. Would not work. Went up the town; got a pass for Dad & myself to Corowa.

Tues. 19 Left Brewarrina 11:30 am; got to Nyngan; had tea with Jim Anderson; had good trip; very hot travelling.

Wed. 20 Had a good trip to Corowa; only one died, arrived Corowa 11:30 in the night; unloaded the sheep; every drover on the booze; came back to Culcain [Culcairn]. Met Leala at the Post Office.

Thurs. 21 Slept in Culcain last night; came on to June Junction today. Saw Ray Morgan; had a good yarn; caught train to Cootamundra.

Fri. 22 Slept in Waiting room last night; caught train and came to Orange. Stayed in Orange till 4 o'clock; caught train to Bre[warrina].

Sat. 23 On the way to Bre saw Overseer from Q[uantam- bone] Stn. & saw Jimmy Neale; he had 14 trucks of sheep from Gerlarcombone; 1,600 ewes.

Sun. 24 Went with Jack Cunningham and got a bee's nest (nearly two buckets of comb.

Mon. 25 Got another bee's nest; the bottom one very good nest

Tues. 26 Went out to Quantambone. I shot a few ducks; we got a sheep and some grapes. Pearson in good twist.

Wed. 27 We all went out to the bend near the shed; got bee's nests; one big one and two little ones

Thurs. 28 Drove out to the Tarrion Creek I found a big nest; We got one of Bill Clemson's nest; a beauty) got 5 ducks

Fri. 29 Drove out to Quantambone Stn; took out the blue bill Duck; got some grapes, 2 melons 1 squash and tomatoes) came home

Mon. 31 Missed the date for 3 [2] days.

February

Mon. 1 Dad went away with 5 trucks of sheep to Flemington & Allan went away to school; very sorry to see him go.

Tues. 2 Nothing doing here today; very hot; like rain. A very bad cyclone here to-night; trees down everywhere

Wed. 3 Cool here after the rain; this morning tin and lavatories laying on the ground everywhere. Caught two fish today

Thurs. 4 Went up the town and drew out £2-0-0 and then went and bought a lot of groceries. Got 2 gallons of petrol to go to QStn.

Fri. 5 Started to cut down the tree near Granges (the old dry one for wood.

Sat. 6 Fell the tree by 7 o'clock; pulled the tree down with a rope; some very good wood. (carted 4 loads) Killed a turkey

Sun. 7 Doug Tiller came in last night from Tarcoon. Went to Quantambone Stn. got grapes; brought Harry in (had big party

Mon. 8 Felt sick after the party last night (I fixed the mill; Dad and Wallace pulled the car to pieces; started cutting up the tree

Tues. 9 Daphne went to school today for the first time in 7 weeks) Christmas vacation (Mr Hogan) Teacher.

Wed. 10 Helped to clean car parts today; very much like rain here today.

Thurs. 11 Rained here last night; soaking rain; water holes full

Fri. 12 Still raining here to-day; water everywhere; nothing on the lagoon

Sat. 13 Jimbo got poisoned today. Daphne took him up the town.

Sun. 14 Car is nearly fixed today; tire is also all right; got net out of the river for Darkey Jones across river.

Mon. 15 Nearly got the car fixed today; only a few things to fix. Dad got a job today with Emery; had nearly 4 ins. rain.

Tues. 16 Have cut more wood today off the old dead tree but there is still a lot of wood to chop

Wed. 17 Washing day today. Dad is gone to work again to-day. Very Hot today.

Thurs. 18 Have been chopping more wood today; very hard; broke 1 axe to-day.

Fri. 19 Jack Cunningham and Murphy came down to-day to see about a party on Sunday night.

Sat. 20 Finished cutting the wood today; a great relief to have it cut

[Historical images:
Wendy Cox]



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Sun. 21 Dud and Dug [Dad and Doug] came in to Bre[warrina] to-day from Tarcoon; brought in the camp things. Going to Milroy tomorrow

Mon. 22 Came out to Culgoa bridge today with Jim Grange; going to stop the night here; shot six ducks

Tues. 23 Came up to Milroy to-day; had dinner with shearers; good cook

Wed. 24 Started work to-day; very hot; never done too many.

Thurs. 25 Started 7:30 this morning; worked till 5:30; done a few more than yesterday.

Fri. 26 Feeling very sore to-day; done a fair tally to-day; helped press some wool.

Sat. 27 Worked up till 2 o'clock today then went and had dinner and came and washed down board

Sun. 28 Went out and shot 5 ducks, two quail and 4 pigeons today

Mon. 29 * Went to work as usual this morning; had a big day. Got a 4lb. cod out of the net today

March

Tues. 1 Done more sheep than yesterday. The shed rats Langbein & Morris got an 8 lb. cod tonight.

Wed. 2 Never done many to-day; very hot; like rain; dry storms about tonight; heard fight [boxing?] on wireless tonight.

Thurs. 3 Had a few sprinkles of rain to-night; might rain tomorrow. The Rats got another fish tonight

Fri. 4 Darkey Jones went to town with the boss today; very bad; he hurt his back on the shute

Sat. 5 Voting Day to-day; over 70 cars went to the garden to vote. Shot 3 ducks today.

Sun. 6 Shot a few more pigeons and ducks today but caught no fish. Had yarn to Herbie Blake.

Mon. 7 Very bad sheep we are on now; very daggy and dirty

Tues. 8 Have done over 26,000 now and the shearers are getting very tired and sick of it.

Wed. 9 Matty More left today; he was full of it; also Murv Blake. the sheep are too dirty and daggy

Thurs. 10 Had a pretty solid day to-day; have over 33,000 done now. Old Jordan was over here to-day to see about the lambs.

Fri. 11 Not so hard today; only picked up for 2 [shearers] and tared for two. The sheep are getting a bit better. But not burry

Sat. 12 Worked a bit over time to-day to cut out of a few sheep.

Sun. 13 Rained here a little to-day and still looks like more rain; Brought the sheep in from the paddock

Mon. 14 Crutched about 2,500 to-day; it is still raining hard here. Started to pick the Dags today

Tues. 15 Still raining here to-day and no crutching; still picking the Dags

Wed. 16 Worked half day Day packing and other half on board. Went to town with Murvin Blake. Saw them all at home.

Thurs. 17 Arrived [from] home here at 3:30 am. this morning from town; worked all day.

Fri. 18 Had big day today; done 3,094 today; it is the biggest day so far. nice and cool here to-day.

Sat. 19 Went down and put the traps in and got 4 perch out of one of them which was in the water

Sun. 20 Got nothing out of the traps to-day. Came back and went to town with overseer of Milroy Stn.

Mon. 21 Have nearly finished all the lambs to-day only about 3 runs to do tomorrow.

Tues. 22 Finished the lambs to-day and started the rams. some very big ones to do; six hundred

Wed. 23 Done about 300 rams today and have only about 250 to-do tomorrow. I am still on the wool table.

Thurs. 24 Finished the rams to-day at 4 o'clock and very glad to have them finished; got the money and came home.



Fri. 25 Went out to Cato this morning and got a few fish out of the nets for Friday.

Sat. 26 Went back to Cato again this morning and got a good few fish.

Sun. 27 Never went to the pictures last night as they were not any good. Naughty Marietta was playing.

Mon. 28 Caught some fish and smoked them today; very nice eating. Had a yarn to Sarce about going down the river.

Tues. 29 Went up the town and saw Sarce and he is going down the river tomorrow.

Wed. 30 Came down the river this evening with Bobby Lyell and saw Mr. Staggs about stopping down the river.

Thurs. 31 Caught 3 big fish this morning and had them for breakfast. Shot some ducks today.



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April

Fri. 1 Went up to Yambacoona this morning and got a few parcels of the mail. Caught a 8 lb. cod this morning.
Sat. 2 Caught 2 fish this morning and shot 3 ducks. 1 shoveller, 1 black and one wood duck
Sun. 3 Bobbie Lyell came down the river today and went pig hunting but got none; only 12 ducks, 2 roos and fox. He got lost.
Mon. 4 Went up to Yambacoona today; saw boss about job on dam and collected a box of cartridges and shot some ducks.



[Historical images:
Wendy Cox]

Tues. 5 Stopped at home half of the day today. Shot a big snake over 6ft long and skinned it; got a fox in a log.
Wed. 6 Went away out pig hunting on the other side and got 3 and six ducks.
Thurs. 7 Went up round Yambacoona Stn. to see if we could get any ducks; had dinner there.
Fri. 8 Sarce gave me a note to ring Bobbie Lyell to come and get us. Got lost for half the night .
Sat. 9 Came home last night and fixed up the pork and some nets had to be mended
Sun. 10 Came down the river today and set 12 nets [at] Old Wolkhara 11 miles from Brewarrina
Mon. 11 Caught 3 cod today and 17 perch so far.
Tues. 12 Wallace came down to collect the fish; 7 cod and a good many perch and Bream, 11/2 cwt.
Wed. 13 There was 9 cod in the nets today but I only [got] 7 as two got through the nets
Thurs. 14 Wallace came back down the river today; found Black Ducks nest; 10 eggs.
Fri. 15 Sent 11/2 cwt. away again today; running fairly well. looks a lot like rain.
Sat. 16 Dad and Wallace came down the river today and we all went to Yambacoona; to Dam
Sun. 17 Dad and Wallace fixed Dam; I came back from the Dam yesterday to see to all the nets.
Mon. 18 Dad took the fish in yesterday; the same weight as before 11/2 [cwt.] Rained here yesterday evening
Tues. 19 The fish are not running here now; Wallace came down but there was no fish for him.
Wed. 20 Still no fish and don't look like getting any

Thurs. 21 Only got about 30 lbs. today to take in; Cods are coming down the river dead everywhere
Fri. 22 Caught 3 pigs yesterday; only suckers. Shot a couple of ducks. Caught a 10lb. cod to-day and 9 perch.

[No entries between April 22 and June 30; no reason or explanation given]

June

Wed. 30 Afternoon; Started shearing [at] Milroy today; 25 shearers. 1 am shed hand; 93,000 to be done

July

Thurs. 1 Had a fairly good day today; Shearers all a bit stiff tonight
Fri. 2 Same as usual to-day only a few more sheep than yesterday.
Sat. 3 I finished up at 12 o'clock today; washed the board down and went and mended a tyre.
Sun. 4 A big game of poker on here to Day. Only a few winning and a lot losing
Mon. 5 Very cold here to-day; a big dew here this morning. It is dark when we have breakfast & tea of a day.
Tues. 6 Very big Ewes in here this morning and the shearers don't like them; I am the counter out for the Boss
Wed. 7 One Rouse about got sick today with the cold but I think he was only pretending.
Thurs. 8 Had a meeting with the U.A. P. and discussions of the work in the shed for shearers & rouses.
Fri. 9 Francis Blake and the shed Rat Morris had a fight today. The rat won on points.



[Other undated entries in the diary: Wages earned and shopping list]

1 week of work £2 – 10 [2 pounds, 10 shillings]

Groceries	10/8	[10 shillings, 8 pence]
Freight	7/2	
Petrol	8/4	
	26/2	[= £1, 6shillings, 2 pence]

[No further entries; end of all entries]

in late 19th Century rural Iowa.¹⁷ It appears that Bill has little time to spare, hence his relatively short entries, compared with Oliver Meyer's or the recorded journal entries of Harry Turton, a 15-year-old, travelling on the barque *Fatima* on a four-month voyage from London to Port Adelaide in 1850.¹⁸

Judging from the diary account, Bill's father was probably a Jack-of-all-trades: A hired hand; day labourer; seasonal worker; who did fencing, repairing sheds, droving and shearing sheep or *any* work that 'came his way'. And Bill followed in his father's footsteps. Australia, at the time, was still suffering the effects of The Great Depression. A few years earlier (1932), national unemployment stood at 30% and the basic wage was under £4-0-0.¹⁹ This meant that boys, leaving school after six or seven years of primary education, had to 'earn their keep'. Only the sons (or some daughters) of well-to-do farmers and pastoralists could attend secondary boarding schools or colleges in large country towns or capital cities.

The reader sees Bill move almost in an entirely male adult world, except for the expressed regret of Allen going away to school (Feb.1). One presumes that the brief mention of Daphne (Jan.15 and Feb. 13) is a reference to his younger sister. With no other female figures appearing in the diary—meeting Leala at the Culcairn Post Office is an exception—one wonders regarding the whereabouts of Bill's mother. A combination of the harshness and isolation of the physical environment and the economic necessity to live off the land by fishing and shooting, not to mention the 'sparse' social environment, appears to bring out a determined self-sufficiency in young Bill that leaves little room for the expression of emotions and feelings in writing his diary. Bill neither 'pours out his heart' like Ma Yan, nor complains about his lot in life.

At this point it seems fitting to return to the question that was put at the beginning of this article. As part of their education, might students in today's world benefit from and be interested in examining the contents of this document? I believe there are some possibilities.

Springboards to learning

Depending on the level and interests of students and also teacher planning and syllabi, the diary might serve as a 'springboard' for any one or several 'stand alone' or 'associated' learning activities. (The article's 'picture bank' could act as a possible 'motivator'.) The activities could be incorporated in subjects like *Human Society and its Environment*, *English*, and *Studies of Religion*, but need not be limited to them.

Suggested learning activities on an individual or group basis could include:

- Under *Time, change and continuity*, research/examine/discuss changes in the community and in family life. Evaluate the effects of these on groups and/or individuals. Specifically: How might the diary of Bill's sister (Daphne) be different? Write an imaginary page of her diary. What part have advances in technology played in making rural life easier? In what ways may schooling have been similar/different to what students experience today?
- Under *Cultural change*: Read about life in 'Early Brewarrina' or other inland river communities, on historical websites. (There is often also much information on these websites about the history and culture of aboriginal tribes who lived on coastal or inland rivers; this may comprise a study of its own.) Undertake an *in-depth case study of cultural change* in relation to the community of which the students' school is a part.
- Mapping activity: Specifically—follow Bill's train journey and discuss what it might have entailed. Then trace the route of significant journeys, explorations or voyages that students might currently be studying. Discuss the importance of *primary sources* in relation to these historical events.
- Environments: Consider the effects of human and natural effects on environments. Specifically: The effects of introduced species, e.g.
 1. Carp—on native fish species and inland river systems.
 2. Foxes, rabbits, goats, pigs and cane toads—on landscapes.

“A combination of the harshness and isolation of the physical environment and the economic necessity to live off the land appears to bring out a determined self-sufficiency”

[Photography: Wilf Rieger]



- Values education: Specifically, what character traits, 'come through' in Bill's diary? And what about Bill's spiritual side? Does he think about the 'big questions' in life? Church, worship, or scripture don't even rate a mention. Why might that be?
- Writing activities: Exploring text types and how they work; to which category of text type do diaries and journals belong? Why? Students consider commencing writing a diary/journal of their own. (There should be valuable 'spin-offs' in this activity). *Writing* and *reading* are regarded as transactional processes and the transactive relation between the two "leads to critical insights across texts as students generate and express new meanings."²⁰
- Studies of Religion/Scripture: Discuss the part journaling might play in one's spiritual growth and journey; how prayer 'works' and the benefits of keeping a prayer diary/journal (including answers to prayer).

“Only the creativity and resourcefulness of teachers and students place a limit on learning.”

Review

In the above suggested learning activities, only the creativity and resourcefulness of teachers and students place a limit on learning. The number of possibilities that might be considered and explored and which might generate a rich and meaningful learning environment are exciting; the spring-board for which may have been a yellowed-with-age Western Plains boy's diary, found in outback NSW. **TEACH**

Endnotes and references

¹ A calendar search revealed that 1932 was the nearest preceding leap year when February 29* fell on a Monday. It is conjectured that the original owner of the diary—probably an adult—made some initial entries and then discarded it. Several years later, the discarded diary was 'passed on' to, or acquired by the teenager, who tore off the cover (most likely with the original owner's name on it) and the first few pages; starting his entries on Wednesday, January 6, 1937.

An answer to the puzzle regarding the date of the recorded voting day also came to light. In 1937, a federal election did not occur until October 23. However, on the day in question—the first Saturday in March—Australians voted in a referendum concerning the Commonwealth Government's proposals for the amendment of the Constitution (See *Australia through time* (1999). Sydney, NSW: Random House Australia, p. 291.), thus confirming the veracity of the diary entry.

² Mackay, H. (2012). The marketing of Brand Me. *The Sydney Morning Herald*, weekend edition, news review, March 3–4, p. 22.

³ Shields, M. (2012). Journaling. A presentation given at the SALT Conference, Avondale College of Higher Education, Cooranbong, NSW, March 15–17.

⁴ Cf. www.ehow.com/how_8169607_historical-diaries-journals.html, accessed February 22, 2012.

⁵ Dahl, R. (1992). *Boy*. London: Penguin.

⁶ Townsend, S. (1982). *The secret diary of Adrian Mole aged 13¾*. London: Methuen.

⁷ The diary chronicles personal affairs and historical events set in the second half of 17th century London.

⁸ Lijembe, J. (1967). The valley between: A Muluyia's story. In Fox, L. (Ed.). *East African childhood*. Nairobi: Oxford University Press.

⁹ Frank, A. (1960). *The diary of Anne Frank*. Translated from the Dutch. London: Hutchinson.

¹⁰ Filipovic, Z. (2006). *Zlata's diary: A child's life in Sarajevo*. New York: Penguin.

¹¹ References to and extracts from children's diaries in WWII can also be found in Wallis, S. and Palmer, S. (2009). Children's diaries from WWII. *Bedeutung*. 1(3).

¹² Ma, Y. (2004). *The diary of Ma Yan: The struggles and hopes of a Chinese schoolgirl*. Edited by Pierre Haski and translated from the Mandarin by He Yanping. New York: Harper Collins.

¹³ Pollock, L. (1984). An exploratory analysis of children's diaries. In H.Cowie (Ed.). *The development of children's imaginative writing*. London: Croom Helm.

¹⁴ Ibid., p. 106.

¹⁵ Op. cit., p. 105.

¹⁶ The few *supplied* words—not in the original—are placed in square brackets, i.e. [] and semi-colons have been inserted to separate some expressions and to facilitate easier reading. The relatively few spelling errors in the diary may reflect not only the ability of the diarist, but also perhaps indicate the emphasis placed on Spelling in the NSW Primary English Curriculum of the 1930s.

¹⁷ Oliver Meyer's diary, in beautiful copperplate, has been preserved together with other historic Iowa children's diaries by the State Historical Society of Iowa and can be accessed on: <http://digital.lib.uiowa.edu/cdm4/document.php?CISORROOT>

¹⁸ Harry Turton's journal may be accessed on <http://www.theshipslist.com/accounts/turton.htm>

¹⁹ *Australia through time*. (1999). Sydney, NSW: Random House, pp. 272, 273.

²⁰ Dahl, K. and Farnan, N. (1998). *Children's writing: Perspectives from research*. Newark, DE: International Reading Association.