

THE UNIVERSITY OF MELBOURNE ARCHIVES

**NAME OF
COLLECTION:** SISTERS PUBLISHING LTD

ACCESSION NO: 99/16

CATEGORY: Business, organisations
ACTIVITY: Publishers

DATE RANGE: 1978 - 1987

**SIZE OF
COLLECTION:** 13 archive boxes (2.1 m)

**DATE OF
TRANSFER:** 1990

**ACCESS
CONDITIONS:** Open

**HISTORICAL
NOTE:** Sisters Publishing Ltd was established in 1979 by five women publishers: Diana Gribble, Hilary McPhee, Sally Milner, Anne O'Donovan and Joyce Nicholson. It was a feminist company whose purpose was to publish fiction, non-fiction and poetry by and for women. To limit the problems of distribution, they also ran a mail-order organisation, Sisters Bookclub, which provided its members with a quarterly newsletter and books by female authors as well as its own publications at discount prices. The company had considerable success; they published eleven titles, including first works by Beverley Farmer and Jean Bedford, and bookclub membership reached 3000 subscribers from all parts of Australia. However its policy of offering discounted books meant that the company had little long-term viability and in 1984 it ceased operation. The company handed over the running of the book club to Murphy Sisters Bookshop in Adelaide.

**NOTE ON
COLLECTION:** Some material in the collection was found to belong to McPhee Gribble and was transferred to that collection. This included page proofs of Helen Garner's *Monkey Grip* and children's stories and artwork for the publication, *Our World*.

**NOTE ON
LISTING:** Italicised words refer to titles of Sisters' publications. Correspondence is between the person named and Sisters' directors and co-ordinator unless stated otherwise.

**NOTE ON
ARRANGEMENT**

This collection was in no discernible original order. While individual files were mostly coherent they usually bore no relationship to the adjoining file. As the company operated with only one salaried member of staff, it would be artificial to impose a series system based on function.

The collection has been weeded. Weeded material includes:

- Duplicates, including multiple copies of galley proofs that have no editor or author revisions on them
- Page proofs and layout (see attached table re authors' records)
- Financial records whose statutory retention period is seven years or less; these include petty cash vouchers, invoices, orders, cheque butts, bank statements
- Subscribers' correspondence relating to subscriptions, book orders and change-of-address. [Samples of this correspondence have been retained].
- Subscribers' orders sent as coupons cut out from *Sisters News* [A sample of these - one in every ten - has been retained]
- Photocopies of published works. These are:
 - Nella Last's war*, Richard Broad and Suzie Fleming, eds. (Bristol, Falling Wall Press, 1981).
 - The hottest night of the century*, Glenda Adams, (North Ryde, Angus & Robertson, 1979).
 - Exiles at home*, Drusilla Modjeska (Sydney, Sirius Books, 1981)
 - Coins for the ferryman*, Leone Sperling (Sydney, Pan Books, 1981)
 - The death of Ruth*, Elizabeth Kata, (Sydney, Pan Books, 1981)
 - The Frangipani Gardens*, Barbara Hanrahan, (St Lucia, University of Queensland Press, 1980)

Draft material where there is a typed copy.

The material has not been arranged, intra file, chronologically.

**CONSERVATION
NOTE**

All metal paper clips and staples have been removed. However some of the records are thermal faxes requiring future copying on to stable paper. These records are marked with an asterisk in the list.

**RELATED
COLLECTIONS:**

McPhee Gribble Pty Ltd

**LISTED BY:
DATE:**

Jane Ellen
17 September 2002

Collection: -Sisters Publishing Ltd Accession: 99/16

Box No	Series Number	Description	Date
1	1	Directors	
	1/1	Directors' minutes	1978
	1/2	Directors' minutes	1979
	1/3	Directors' minutes	1980
	1/4	Directors' minutes	1981-1983
1	2	Editorial Board	
		[Note The Editorial Board only met twice]	
	2/1	Editorial Board minutes	1979 - 1980
1	3	Co-ordinator	
		[Note The coordinator was the only salaried employee of the company. They were variously Margaret Barca, Clare O'Brien, Vicki O'Meara and Jeanette Spittle].	
	3/1		1979-1980
	3/2	Personnel file re Margaret Barca	1980
	3/3	Applications for coordinator position	1980 - 1983
		Co-ordinator's reports from Clare O'Brien	
1	4	Mailing list	
		[Note The initial mailing list was compiled from names and addresses supplied by the directors, editorial board members and others. This file documents that process].	
	4/1 & 4/2	[2 files]	1979
1	5	Brochure distribution	
	5/1	Outwards correspondence re distribution of first Sisters brochure	1979
1	6	Legal documents re start up	
	6/1	Documents from solicitors re incorporation	1979
1	7	Annual financial statements	
	7/1	Statements from H. & H. Guest and Associates	1979, 1980, 1981
1	8	Profit and loss statements [incomplete]	
	8/1	Profit and loss statements resulting from sales from each issue of <i>Sisters News</i> .	1979 – 1983
1	9	Stock reports	
	9/1	Lists of print runs, sales figures, stock control	
1	10/1	Profit and loss estimates	1979 - c1981

Collection: -Sisters Publishing Ltd Accession: 99/16

Box No	Series Number	Description	Date
	11	Literature Board funding	
1	11/1	Correspondence and copy of grant application to publish <i>Sisters Poets 1</i> and <i>Country girl again</i>	1979-1980
1	11/2	Correspondence and copies of grant application	1980 - 1983
1	12/1	Correspondence between directors and coordinator	1979, 1981
	13	Correspondence with Editorial Board members	
1	13/1	Initial correspondence, inwards and outwards	1979
1	13/2	Initial correspondence, inwards and outwards	1979
2	13/3	Correspondence	1980
2	13/4	Correspondence	1983
2	14	General Correspondence ('Pinks') [Note This correspondence includes copies of all mail sent out from the Sisters office, usually by the co-ordinator but occasionally by the directors. It includes royalty statements, minutes of meetings].	
2	14/1	Correspondence, outwards only	Nov 1979 – Aug1980
2	14/2	Correspondence, outwards only	Sep – Dec 1980
2	14/3	Correspondence, outwards only	Feb – May 1981
2	14/4	Correspondence, outwards only	June – Nov 1981
2	14/5	Correspondence, outwards only	Jan – June 1982
2	14/6	Correspondence, outwards only	July – Dec 1982
3	14/7	Correspondence, outwards only	Feb 1983 – July 1984
3	15	Correspondence re rejected manuscripts [Note Correspondence between co-ordinator or directors and would-be authors who have submitted manuscripts to Sisters. N.B. Copies of outwards correspondence also interfiled with 'pinks']	
3	15/1	Correspondence, inwards and outwards [re manuscripts that have been read by readers].	1979 – early 1980
3	15/2	Correspondence, outwards only	1979 – early 1980
3	15/3	Correspondence, inwards and outwards A-L,	1980 – 1984
3	15/4	Correspondence, inwards and outwards, M-Z,	1980 – 1984.
	16	Correspondence with subscribers	
3	16/1	Correspondence inwards	1979
4	16/2	Correspondence inwards	1979
4	16/3	Correspondence inwards	1979 - 1980
4	16/4	Correspondence inwards and outwards re orders,	1979 – 1980
4	16/5	Correspondence inwards	1980 - 1981

Box No	Series Number	Description	Date
	17	Correspondence with writers re short story anthology [Note The anthology was never published. Correspondents include:Elizabeth Jolley, Colleen Burke, Glenda Adams, P.E. Reeves, Vicki O'Meara, Pat Healey and Vashti Farrer].	
4	17/1	Correspondence inwards and outwards, Incl photocopy of manuscript short story by Rosa Safransky, <i>Chips Rafferty in Paris</i> .	1982
	18	Corrrespondence - Anne O'Donovan [Note Correspondence between Anne O'Donovan and other directors, editorial board members and others; includes copies of directors' minutes]	
			1979 - 1980.
4	18/1	Correspondence inwards and outwards	
	19	Correspondence re offers of assistance	
4	19/1	Correspondence from Sisters' supporters offering to work voluntarily for the company.	1979
	20	Permissions	
4	20/1	Correspondence and forms re permissions to reprint material from Sisters publications. Incl correspondence from Kate Llewellyn.	1980 - 1984
	21	Miscellaneous correspondence	
4	21/1	Incl correspondence from Kate Jennings, Kerry Dwyer, Jane Bradhurst	
	22	Correspondence re cancelled book orders	
4	22/1	Correspondence inwards and outwards	1979
	23	Correspondence with editors of 'little magazines'	
4	23/1	Correspondence re placing advertisements for Sisters Book Club	1979
	24	Form letters	
4	24/1	Templates of form letters	

Box No	Series Number	Description	Date
5		Authors [Note Files are of authors published by Sisters and include correspondence between author and publishers; manuscripts and one set of galley proofs, where they exist, as well as material relating to the book's production and launch. In the case of Beverley Farmer's <i>Alone</i> , all versions of the manuscript have been retained to illustrate the production stages].	
5	25	Patricia Crawford, ed. <i>Exploring Women's Past</i>	
5	25/1	Manuscript 1 st draft	
5	25/2	Manuscript Final draft, photocopy	
5	25/3	Galley proofs, photocopy *	
5	25/4	Correspondence with Patricia Crawford	1982 – 1984
5	25/5	Correspondence between publishers and printers incl quotations and specifications re its production	1983
5	26	Rosemary Dobson, ed. <i>Sisters Poets 1</i>	
5	26/1	Correspondence between Rosemary Dobson, Anne O'Donovan and authors, Kate Llewellyn, Anne Lloyd, Sue Hampton and Joyce Lee.	1979
	27	Beverley Farmer, <i>Alone</i>	
5	27/1	Manuscript	
5	27/2	Galley proofs	
5	27/3	Page paste-ups	
6	27/4	Artwork	
	28	Jill Hellyer, <i>Song of the humpback whale</i>	
6	28/1	Manuscript	
6	28/2	Correspondence with Jill Hellyer	1984 - 1985
	29	Emily Hope, <i>The Legend of Pope Joan</i>	
6	29/1	Manuscript (1st copy)	
6	29/2	Manuscript (2 nd copy)	
	29/3	Galley proofs	
	29/4	Correspondence re its publication and launch with Penelope Hope, Rosemary Dobson, Judith Rodriguez and others	1982 – 1984
6	29/5	Correspondence between publishers and printers, incl quotations and specifications re its production, incl reviews.	

Collection: -Sisters Publishing Ltd Accession: 99/16

Box No	Series Number	Description	Date
	30	Barbara Jefferis, <i>Three of a Kind</i>	
7	30/1	Manuscript	
7	30/2	Galley proofs	
7	30/3	Photographs	
7	30/4	Production, editorial and publicity, incl correspondence with B. Jefferis.	
7	30/5	Reviews	
7	30/6	Correspondence with Barbara Jefferis (one item)	1983
	31	Judith Rodriguez, ed. <i>Mrs Noah and the Minoan Queen</i>	
7			
7	31/1	Manuscript	
7	31/2	Galley proofs	
7	31/3	Contract and correspondence with Judith Rodriguez and others	1983 – 1987
7	31/4	Correspondence from authors and other publishers re permission to reprint material	1983
7	31/5	Guest list to launch and presscuttings of reviews	1984
	32	Judith Rodriguez, <i>Witch Heart</i>	
7	32/1	Manuscript	
7	32/2	Galley proofs	
7	32/3	Correspondence with Judith Rodriguez; publishing contract; printers' quotations and specifications re its production and launch; presscuttings of reviews	1982 - 1984
	33	Jennifer Strauss, <i>Winter Driving</i>	
7	33/1	Manuscript (photocopy only)	
7	33/2	Galley proofs and printer's specifications	
7	33/3	Correspondence to Jennifer Strauss	1983 - 1984
	34	Fay Zwicky, ed. <i>Journeys</i>	
8	34/1	Manuscript (photocopy)	
8	34/2	Reviews	
8	34/3	Correspondence with editor, Fay Zwicky, and authors, Rosemary Dobson, Judith Wright, Gwen Harwood; Memoranda of Agreement with authors; letters giving permission to reproduce from original publishers; book launch address by Judith Rodriguez	1980 – 1982
8	34/4	Correspondence with Fay Zwicky (one item)	1984
8	35	Royalty statements	
	35/1	Statements to Sisters' authors [Also copies in 'pinks']	1979 – 1984

Collection: -Sisters Publishing Ltd Accession: 99/16

Box No	Series Number	Description	Date
8	36	Buy-Ins [Note Records relating to Sisters' purchase of other publishers' titles to sell through the Book Club. These include correspondence with publishers, book catalogues and planning documents. N.B. Arrangement of files reflects their original order.]	
8	36/1	Re Buy-ins for Sisters News 1	1979
8	36/2	Re Buy-ins, Sisters News 2	1979
8	36/3	Re Buy-Ins	1979
8	36/4	Re Buy-Ins	1979-1980
8	36/5	Re Buy-Ins	1980
8	36/6	Re Buy-Ins	1982
8	36/7	Re Buy-Ins from the Women's Press Incl correspondence with Stephanie Dowrick	1979 - 1981
8	36/8	Re Buy-Ins from Virago Incl correspondence with Carmen Callil	1979 - 1981
8	37	Sisters News	
	37/1	Brochure production for <i>Sisters News 1</i>	
	37/2	<i>Sisters News</i> 1-4, 6, 8, 10-17 [NB nos 5, 7 & 9 are missing]	
9	38	Orders from Sisters News [Note Book orders are on coupons cut out from Sisters News. N.B. <u>Samples only</u> have been retained, at the rate of one order in every ten. The collection holds no orders after <i>Sisters News 12</i>]	
9	38/1	Orders from <i>Sisters News 1</i>	
9	38/2	Orders from <i>Sisters News 2</i>	
9	38/3	Orders from <i>Sisters News 3</i>	
9	38/4	Orders from <i>Sisters News 4</i>	
9	38/5	Orders from <i>Sisters News 5</i>	
9	38/6	Orders from <i>Sisters News 6</i>	
9	38/7	Orders from <i>Sisters News 7</i>	
9	38/8	Orders from <i>Sisters News 8</i>	
9	38/9	Orders from <i>Sisters News 9</i>	
9	38/10	Orders from <i>Sisters News 10</i>	
9	38/11	Orders from <i>Sisters News 11</i>	
9	38/12	Orders from <i>Sisters News 12</i>	
	39	Invoices – Outwards	
9	39/1	A sample set of outwards invoices,	1983
	40	Orders – Inwards	
9	40/1	A sample set of bookshop orders	1979-1980

Collection: -Sisters Publishing Ltd Accession: 99/16

Box No	Series Number	Description	Date
9	41 41/1	Australian Pensioner and Golden Pass Book Club Correspondence and memoranda re selling Sisters' publications through the Golden Pass Book Club	1982 – 1983
10	42 42/1	Distributors' sales reports Reports from Allbooks Distribution and Kingfisher Books Pty Ltd	1984 - 1987
10	43 43/1	Winding up Correspondence, mainly inwards, some outwards, from solicitors, accountants, Australian Taxation Office, Corporate Affairs office and ANZ Bank re winding up Sisters' business.	1984 - 1987
10	44 44/1	Transfer to Murphy Sisters Inwards and outwards correspondence re the transfer of Sisters Book Club to Murphy Sisters Book Shop	1983 - 1984
10	45 45/1	Post-1984 correspondence [Note Correspondence, mainly from other publishers wanting to reprint material from Sisters publications, that was received after the company had ceased operating. The matters were dealt with by McPhee Gribble Pty Ltd staff] Correspondence	1985 - 1987
10	46 46/1	Post-1984 distributors' sales reports [Received after Sisters had closed down] Sales reports	
10	47 47/1	Presscuttings Miscellaneous reviews [Other reviews also held in Author files]	
10	48 48/1	Press releases Miscellaneous press releases issued by Sisters [Other press releases also held in Author files]	
10	49 49/1	Legal deposit Correspondence [incl form letters] re legal deposit of Sisters publications to State Library of Victoria and National Library	1979-1981
10	50 50/1	Book awards Correspondence, forms and guidelines re various book awards	

Collection: -Sisters Publishing Ltd Accession: 99/16

Box No	Series Number	Description	Date
10	51 51/1	Public Lending Right Documents and forms issued by the Public Lending Rights Scheme	1983 -1984
10	52 52/1	Photographs Photographs of Jennifer Rankin Fay Zwicky Antigone Kefala Judith Rodriguez and Tom Shapcott Jennifer Strauss	
10	53 53/1	Re <i>Who's Who of Australian Women 1982</i> Correspondence with compiler, Andrea Lofthouse.	
10	54 54/1	Article by Joyce Nicholson, Sisters Publishing : <i>Problems of a feminist publishing house.</i>	
10	55 55/1	'Poems for presents' Notes by Clare O'Brien and paper and envelope samples re an idea to market poetry.	
10	56 56/1	Women and Arts Festival, Correspondence and programs	1982
10	57 57/1	Women and Labour Conference Correspondence, newsletters	1980
10	58 58/1	Register of manuscript submissions Two exercises recording each manuscript submitted	30 Oct 1979 - 21 May 1981
10	59	Unpublished Manuscripts [Note Manuscripts submitted to Sisters but not returned to the author. They usually include a covering letter from the author and sometimes a reader's report].	
10	59/1	Unidentified manuscript [A note by Hilary McPhee says 'Received long ago (82?) with no name, address or title page']	
11	59/2	Cherrie Ancone, photographs of women's theatre in Adelaide	c1977-1980
11	59/3	Ryl Currey, untitled poems	
11	59/4	Alison Ferrier, untitled poems	
	59/5	Joyce Lee, untitled poems	

Collection: -Sisters Publishing Ltd Accession: 99/16

Box No	Series Number	Description	Date
11	59/6	Elly McDonald, untitled poems	
11	59/7	Sue Mackie, thesis, <i>Qin Jin: representative or unique?</i>	
11	59/8	Bronwen Nicholls, two short stories, <i>Concrete and mud</i> , and <i>A soft-edge man</i>	
11	59/9	Marie Pond, short story, <i>A visit to the aunts</i>	
11	59/10	P.E. Reeves, untitled short stories	
11	59/11	Sandra Shotlander, short stories and a playscript, <i>Companions</i>	
11	59/12	Anne Walton, untitled poems	
11	59/13	Penelope White, short stories, <i>One Sunday afternoon</i> , <i>A very interesting person</i> , <i>There was an incident</i> and <i>The miscarriage</i> .	
11	59/14	Judith Womersley, poems, short stories and novella, <i>Have an apple, teacher</i>	
11	59/15	Glenda Adams Manuscript short stories: <i>Warren and Wendy and the simple life</i> ; <i>Study for a woman leaning on broken stone</i> ; <i>The only jig-saw gallery in Australia</i> ; <i>Says Tina</i> ; <i>The mothers have curly hair</i> . Photocopy of published story: <i>Young woman with kangaroo</i> .	
12	40	Subscribers' cards Alphabetically-arranged file cards listing name and address of subscribers.	
13	41	Sisters publications [Note This is the complete body of works published by Sisters] Copies of:	
13		<i>Alone</i>	
13		<i>Country girl again</i>	
13		<i>Exploring Women's Past</i>	
13		<i>Journeys</i>	
13		<i>Legend of Pope Joan</i>	
13		<i>Mrs Noah & the Minoan Queen</i>	
13		<i>Sisters Poets 1</i>	
13		<i>Song of the humpback whale</i>	
13		<i>Three of a kind</i>	
13		<i>Winter driving</i>	
13		<i>Witch heart</i>	
13		<i>Working women</i>	

Box No	Series Number	Description	Date
Editorial Board			
members			
		Joan Grant	Julie Rigg
		Dorothy Hewett	Edna Ryan
		Kate Jennings	Shirley Sampson
		Michele Kosky	Carmel Shute
		Gay Mason	Margaret Smith
		Winsome McCaughey	Anne Summers
		Deborah McCulloch	Dany Torsh
		Judy McLean	Biff Ward
		Drusilla Modjeska	Paula Weideger
		Mary Murnane	Rosemary Wighton
		Carmel Niland	Judith Wright
		Suzie Owen	Fay Zwicky
		Gail Radford	
		Elizabeth Riddell	

E:\UMArchives\lists\Lists-Final\Business\Business Organisations\Sisters Publishing Ltd.doc

Box	Series	Description	Date
No	Number		

Title	Book	Ms	Galley proofs	Page-proofs	Artwork	Author or editorial work?
Alone	y	y	y	y	y	n
Country girl again	y	n	n	n	n	n/a
Exploring women's past	y	2	3	n	y	
Journeys	y	P/copy	6	y	n	
Legend of Pope Joan	y	2	y	n	n	n
Mrs Noah & the Minoan Q	y	y	2			n
Sisters Poets 1	y	n	n	n	n	
Song of the humpback w	y	n	n	n	n	
Three of a kind	y	y	y	y	n	
Winter driving	y	y	3	n	n	
Witch heart	y	y	2	n	2	
Working women	y	n	n	n	n	

E N D