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Book Review: All Rise Please

by Anne Weinert

'All Rise Please', a novel by Mollie Shelley, is based on the life of her father, a country magistrate in NSW in the early 1900s.

Will Montgomery, the book's main character, joins the workforce at sixteen, but aspires to be a magistrate. Will marries Catherine, and together they move from town to town as Will completes his studies and gains roles of increasing responsibility in the New South Wales Justice Department (local courts) system.

One of the most interesting parts of the book is its chronicling of the towns of Western New South Wales during the early 1900s – from the social mores, which see Catherine having to negotiate the social structure of each new town they move to, to the historical details of the early days of towns like Leeton, Burley Griffin-planned as part of the new Murrumbidgee Irrigation Area, with its streets laid out in circles

like Canberra, but numbered like Manhattan – making it rather difficult to find your new house at the end of a long dusty drive along unmade roads in 1930!

The story of Will's life unfolds through the eyes of Catherine, or 'Nan' as her family now call her, as she recounts it to Ghita, a social worker married to their fictional grandson Kingsley, a Sydney city magistrate. Ghita is keen to record Nan's story, and so we see her family's city experiences being compared with Nan's reminiscences of lives lived during flood, drought, depression and war.

Those who know Mollie Shelley will be able to see behind the

characters of the book and recognise events or traits which have clearly influenced Mollie's life – such as her love of music and of gardening.

The structure of the book, while based on fact, allows Mollie to take licence and add historical and personal details to keep the reader's interest.

I thoroughly enjoyed it, and congratulate Mollie on persevering to bring the story to a wider audience.

'All Rise Please' is currently available from Lindfield Bookshop, Angus and Robertson Chatswood Chase and Westfield; Dymocks Lane Cove; and Cammeray Square Books.



Quiz No 17 Answers

Questions on page 5

1. In 1871, although it really began as a Bush Mission station and Sabbath school in 1862.
2. In summary, in 1878, Hugh Bryson, age 19, was riding to Willoughby to visit his fiancée. He was thrown from his horse and died. He wore a camellia bloom in his buttonhole. His fiancée planted the camellia in the soil above his coffin and it still survives today. This plaque in the cemetery relates the story.
3. The foundation stone was laid in June 1912 and services commenced in December 1912. Between June and December 1912 services were held under a very large gum tree in the grounds.
4. The name was changed during WW1. I am presuming it was because of anti-German sentiment in the community.

Vale, Pieter Cordia OAM

by Barry Thompson

Pieter passed away recently after a short illness. He had celebrated his 90th birthday in January. He and wife Maylean were 48-year residents of Artarmon. They celebrated their diamond wedding anniversary in 2004, prior to Maylean's death in 2006. Cordia Way, the shared path that runs between Artarmon Reserve and Weedon Rd and passes their property, was named to commemorate their contribution to our city through the establishment of COWPA (City of Willoughby Pedestrians' Association) and of the Artarmon network of Neighbourhood Watch.

Pieter, born in Borneo of Dutch parents, joined the Dutch Navy and ended his maritime career as a pilot on Sydney Harbour. He was heavily involved in community issues from that time. Among his interests outside Artarmon was the heritage of the Prince Henry hospital at Little Bay. He, again with Maylean, was instrumental in setting up a Nurses and Medical Museum there. That work led to them being awarded the OAM in 2005. It was fitting that Pieter's funeral service was held in the chapel on the former hospital site at Little Bay.