

OUT OF AFRICA

Q@A with local author John Livermore

Tell me a bit about yourself and your background.

I was born in Hornchurch Essex, in 1937, and educated at Colchester Royal Grammar School. I obtained a Law degree from Bristol University in 1959. After a brief time as a personnel management trainee at Mullard Phillips, in Blackburn, I returned to Colchester to teach at local secondary modern schools. In 1965 I was sent with my then wife Christine to Zambia by the Department of Overseas Development. On return I taught commercial law at two colleges of further education, one near Oxford and another south of Birmingham.

In 1974 I was recruited by the University of Tasmania to be the inaugural Lecturer in Commercial Law in the Faculty of Commerce and Economics. I retired as Senior Lecturer in 2002.

I qualified in that year as an graded arbitrator with the Institute of Arbitrators and Mediators. I have been Editor of Laws of Australia: Transport, since 1990 to date, and act as an arbitrator ranging from commercial and boundary fence disputes.

How many previous books have you written?

About 10 – all legal. They include four editions of Legal Aspects of Marketing Law (UK) and Transport Law in Australia (Wolters Kluwer) and contributions to six other books including Palmer Bailment (Law Book Co 1989).

What is your new book *South of the Lake, North of the River*, about?

It chronicles my time as a teacher in Zambia 1965-1968 and my experiences there. These included the aftermath of the Lumpa uprising by a self-styled prophetess and the impact of Rhodesia's Unilateral Declaration of Independence, in November 1965, on life in Zambia.

Why did you write this book?

After taking large envelopes around from 1968 back in the UK via my various residences my daughter Crystal said why not write it all down and get it published. So I have.

Your book is set in Zambia, in Africa.

Why did you choose this particular spot?

I had chosen to teach in Zambia and was sent there by the UK Department of Overseas Development.

In which era is the book set?

In the last half of the 1960s.

What kind of research did you do for this book?

A check of the UK Guardian and Times of Zambia news stories of the time and some of the archaeological background of Zambia and Rhodesia and East Africa.

What did you edit out of the book?

Nothing I can think of.

What was the hardest part about this book to write and why?

Dealing with my marriage breakup to ensure that it was a balanced account and did not harm my then wife's position.



Former University of Tasmania Commercial Law lecturer John Livermore recently released his 11th book, this one based on his teaching experiences in Zambia in the 1960s. Picture: EDDIE SAFARIK

Where do you do your best thinking?

In the garden talking to the birds – the responses are enlightening.

Where do you do your best writing?

In my office in a sunny front of the house.

How many hours a day do you write?

Depends – the Mercury articles (for the Talking Point pages) may take an hour- the legal work can take 4-5 hours daily depending on the publisher's deadline.

How do you manage to persevere when the going gets tough during the writing process?

I leave what I have done maybe days before I get back to it (see garden option).

What are you working on next?

A novel that gives a twist to the Japanese submarine visit to Hobart and Oyster Bay in 1942, a clandestine infiltration of an SS backed sleeper cell which I've provisionally titled Thule.

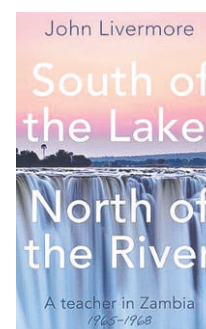
What do you hope readers will get out of your book?

I hope they follow my experiences and journeys and be entertained.

What are you reading at the moment?

Truganini: Journey through the apocalypse, by Cassandra Pybus. A magnificently researched account of an aboriginal woman who survived the overwhelming of her people and culture by another race that believed itself superior and civilised.

South of the Lake, North of the River: A teacher in Zambia 1965-1968, by John Livermore, is published by Troubador, and is retailing in the UK through Kindle for £3.99 (just under \$A8) or £4.99 on the UK Troubador site.

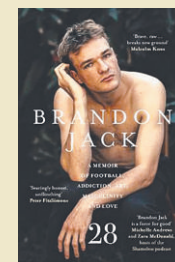


Fiction
Bila Yarrudhanggalangdhury
Anita Heiss
Simon & Schuster, \$33

If I were in charge of such things, I would place Anita Heiss's *Bila Yarrudhanggalangdhury* in the

hands of Australia's secondary history and/or English students as part of the curriculum. Far more relevant than a library bulging with Greenes and Hemingways, Heiss's book is as pulsing as the river that runs through it. At its core is the true story of the 1852 Gundagai flood, where 89 lives were lost and more would have been if not for two Wiradyuri men, Jacky Jacky and Yarri who rescued a third of a town in their bark canoe. Heiss tells the tale of Wagadhanny, daughter of Yarri and proud Wiradyuri woman forced to travel with the white settler family who has claimed her. Separated from her kin and silenced from using her mother tongue, Wagadhanny's mind is alive with her Wiradjuri language, as is Heiss's book which is a romance, a history lesson, a language study and a rollicking read all in one.

FRANCES WHITING



Non-fiction
28
Brandon Jack
Allen & Unwin, \$33

To live with the mountain peak in the rearview mirror at a relatively young age frames life in a backwards way that few

people experience, writes Brandon Jack of his years as an AFL player. His memoir, 28, named for the number of senior games he played with the Sydney Swans, is a rugged dive into the world of professional sport, after being swept towards a life as a footballer without ever really deciding it was what he wanted to do. But it's not so much a career summary, although there's plenty of detail of the struggle to make it to the top, but rather a raw exploration of his life away from the spotlight. About what it feels like to be brought up where life was football, he is the son of rugby league legend Garry Jack and brother of former Sydney Swans captain Kieren Jack, and knowing you didn't quite fit the mould. Thinking maybe you should be doing something else but having no idea what, until making music and writing start to seep into his consciousness.

On his search for meaning and feeling, Jack, 27, is open and intense as he scratches at his psyche for answers, talks of numbing himself with binge drinking, and reveals he drove away from his childhood home on Christmas Day 2014 and has never been back. Much more than a sports book, it's an intense search for an understanding of how to live outside the boundary lines.

ALISON WALSH