

World Home Economics Day March 2014

Celebration for the Centenary Edition of the Commonsense Cookery Book and the Margaret Bamford Memorial Lecture.

Contributed by Veronica Cuskelly

The Dixson Room NSW State Library 1827 was the perfect venue to hold a cocktail party to celebrate World Home Economics Day, the Centenary Edition of the Commonsense Cookery Book and to present the Margaret Bamford Memorial Lecture.

The vibe in the room with seventy attendees was amazing! The mix of past presidents, retired and current members, presenters, past and present scholarship awardees, current president, committee, friends and guests set the scene for a memorable, historic evening. The stunning venue, generous flow of delectable food, wine and beverages perfectly completed an evening that will long be remembered.

The Margaret Bamford Memorial Lecture was delivered by Jacqui Newling, Colonial Gastronomer, Food Historian, Curator, Eat Your History, Sydney Living Museums. In her lecture Jacqui took us through Australia's culinary heritage since 1914 acknowledging the significance and value of the Commonsense Cookery Book and its many updated revisions to the culinary historian. Jacqui's lecture stimulated many memories being shared by retired home economic teachers in a vibrant open forum. Younger teachers and attendees found this most enlightening.

Past scholarship awardees of the NSW Cookery Teachers' Scholarships, Tiiu Butler, (1959) and Louise Ciacciarella (2011/2012) shared their stories of receiving the

scholarships thanks to the success of the Commonsense Cookery Book. Tiiu and Louise proposed a toast to the success of the Centenary Edition.

Our Master of Ceremonies, Claudia Chan Shaw, Collector, Australian Fashion Designer, Television Presenter and author of Collectomania was brilliant. Claudia's unique style and memories of her home economics teacher and Commonsense Cookery text book, still amongst her collections, added a very personal touch. The Centenary Edition will now be added to her collectables. This is how Claudia summed up the evening with following:

There was such a lovely feeling in the room on Friday night. Genuine warmth and a sense of belonging. A lovely crowd! It was my pleasure to be a part of it.

As the organising committee co-ordinator, I would like to thank committee members, Jennifer McArthur, Kate Moss, Gail Clarkson and Tammie Jackstas for their dedication and tireless work in making the event such a success.



Committee members: Veronica, Jennifer, Kate, Gail & Tammie

A special thankyou for assisting on the night

Rebecca and Anita front desk duties
Mr Jakstas photographer
Tammie Jaktas
Gail, Tony, Maryann for Ticket Desk duties
Kate for pop up display
Jill Murphy for coordinating Sunbeam prize



Tammie & Anita



Jacqui Newling, Colonial Gastronomer, Food Historian

Sunbeam Earlybird Prize winner:

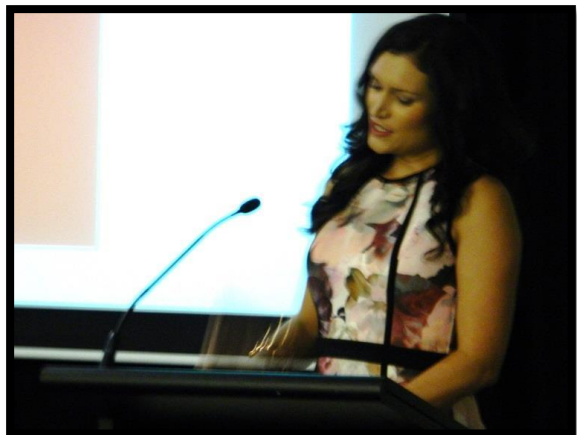
Susannah Williams and her son were very excited to win their sunbeam mixer from the Commonsense Cookbook celebration and have successfully made many cakes together since. There was a small flour mishap when Kirk wanted to see just how fast it could mix! The answer is fast.



Tiu Butler NSWCT scholarship recipient with guests Lillian and Heather



Kirk and Sunbeam in action



Below Louise Ciacciarell – NSWCT scholarship recipient

The Commonsense Cookery Book celebrating a century of publication

**Contributed by Gail Clarkson (project
manager centenary edition)**

The Cookery Teachers' Association (CTA) of New South Wales established in 1910 was one of many such professional associations of the time formed to stimulate initiatives and the sharing of educational ideas. One of the first aims of the CTA was to produce a recipe book for use in schools. This was to be a highly practical, step-by-step textbook that would help give students a good basic knowledge of healthy food of the day and how to prepare it. The task of selecting and preparing the recipes was undertaken by a group of metropolitan cookery teachers. A committee of eight senior teachers revised and checked the final selection: Jean Blackstock, Ellie Buckland, Millie Cain, Florence Clayton, Lilly Lavender, Margaret Law, Elsie Devenish-Memear and Jessie Rowohl.

It was Jessie Rowohl, then secretary to the CTA, who wrote to the Minister for Public Instruction on 8 May 1913 to say:

I have the honour to apply on behalf of the Cookery Teachers' Association of NSW for permission to publish a book of recipes for use in Public School classes and continuation schools. These recipes are those in daily use in schools and by having them in printed form an immense amount of time and work would be saved by both teacher and pupil.¹

Of course it took much further correspondence, but the outcome for which many thousands of students and other Australians will be forever grateful was the highly practical recipe book first published as *The Commonsense Cookery Book* in 1914 now celebrating its centenary.

The cookbook, originally conceived as a textbook for students, quickly became popular beyond schools. Publisher Angus &

Robertson Ltd reprinted before the end of the year, then again in 1915 and 1919. By 1939 there were more than 216,000 copies in print. At the time, a copy cost 1 shilling 9 pence. Today, some of those early editions of *The Commonsense Cookery Book* are held by the State Library of New South Wales and the NSW division of the Home Economics Institute of Australia (HEIA) – and no doubt also live in the bottom kitchen drawer of many households throughout the country.

With the increasing sales of *The Commonsense Cookery Book*, the CTA arranged for the royalties of all sales to be placed in a scholarship fund to benefit student teachers in New South Wales. For many years, management of the fund and allocation of the scholarships were handled by various committee members of the CTA. However, in the late 1990s, as those members

1 The History of Home Economics – NSW by Jean Peacock (add publisher and date)

approached retirement age, these duties were transferred to The Trust Company (VIC) ensuring that scholarship funds would continue to grow and CTA scholarships continue to be awarded annually.

In November 2008 a meeting was arranged with the only surviving committee member of the CTA trustees, Hazel June Smith, aged 84 years, a woman of some standing within the education department for many years. Veronica Cuskelly and I had the privilege of meeting June, sharing a meal and hearing about the work she and her colleagues carried out when the original trust fund was set up. June told us that although the women she worked with as committee members had now passed on it was extremely rewarding to hear that the work of maintaining the currency of the book continues and royalties funnelled into the trust fund ensure that the scholarship program will continue well into the future.

From time to time, *The Commonsense Cookery Book* has been revised and new editions published to keep it up to date for succeeding generations of Australian cooks. In 1948 it was joined by a companion volume,

The Advanced Commonsense Cookery Book, which became known as Book Two after the late Molly Breden, with other trustees, conducted an extensive revision in 1978. A major new edition of the original book was issued then in 1988.

At the demise of the CTA, custodianship of updating the books was handed on to the Home Economics Association of NSW (later known as the NSW division of Home Economics Institute of Australia). The most recent review completed in 2010, when the updated paperback Kitchen Classic edition introduced web references and step-by-step illustrations of essential techniques.

One hundred years after first publication, *The Commonsense Cookery Book* remains a perennial favourite of Australian cooks, with more than one million copies sold.

As manager of the small project team from the NSW division of HEIA charged with periodic reviews and updating of the *Commonsense Cookery Book* series, it was with enormous pride that I, along with the rest of the HEIA team and the support of The Trust Company and publisher HarperCollins, presented the centenary edition in March 2014 to our members and guests at a gala evening held in the NSW State Library.

During the course of the evening, we were delighted to meet with two very special guests, former recipients of the NSW Cookery Teachers Scholarship – Tiiu Butler who was awarded the scholarship in 1959, and also Louise Ciacciarelli who received her award during 2011/12. Both scholars shared with us the value and impact the scholarship had upon their lives whilst studying in the field of Home Economics and education.

Project Manager
Gail Clarkson

POP UP COLLECTION

...journey through the pages of the decades of publishing this "little text"

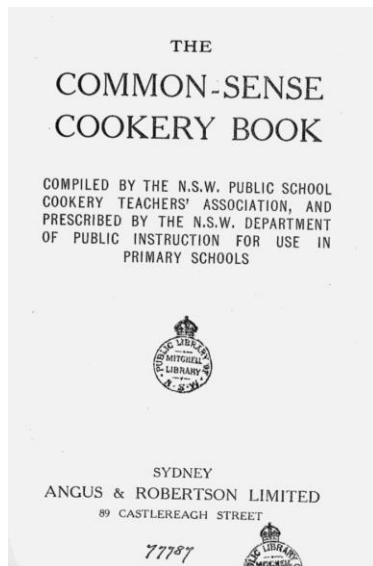


Sample of books displayed on the evening

For those members who were unable to attend the celebrations for the Common Sense Cook book event on 21 March 2014 Mitchell Library State Library of NSW.

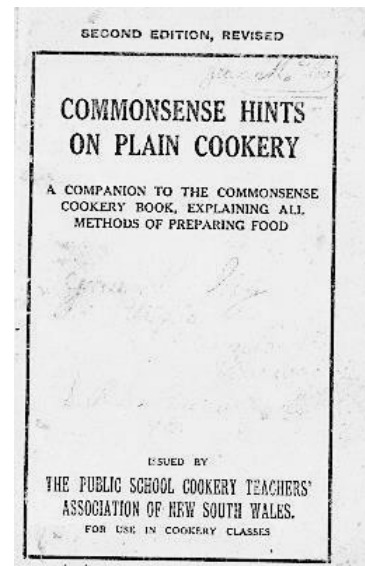
I have included the introduction to the display.

Our **collection of books** was sourced and heartfelt thanks to Gail Clarkson, past and present HEIA NSW members and family & friends.



1914 1st EDITION Location AMAZE Gallery. Compiled by the NSW Public School Cookery Teachers Association, as a text -book with the intention of supplying a complete set of suitable recipes for the use of pupils in cookery classes in Public Schools and the students of the Domestic Science Continuation Schools; prescribed by the NSW Department of Public Instruction for use In Primary schools. **NSW Public School Cookery Teachers Association:** President Miss M Low, V P Mrs F Clayton, Sec Mrs J Rowohl. Committee: Misses J Blackstock, E Buckland, M Cain, L Lavender, E Meares. Source Mitchell Library Archive Purchase 10/3/1914

1919 COMMON-SENSE HINTS ON PLAIN COOKERY Second Edition Revised and Enlarged. Original owner **Jean McCoy** a school student at SPS Burwood "the popularity of The Common-Sense Cookery Book encouraged the Cookery Teachers Association to compile a companion text book on the Theory of Plain Cookery...intended as a guide to students in Domestic Science Schools and for young home makers" Office Bearers of the association cited in the book were Cookery School teachers at Forest Lodge, Newtown, Manly, North Sydney, Redfern, Roselle, Petersham. **Copy source** with thanks to Dawn Churchill



1927 New and Revised Edition

Total Issue **163,000** Copies Pub. by Cornstalk Publishing Company Sydney Price 1/6

* *Copy 1:* original owner **May Wall** dated this book on 25/3/30. **Advertisements** include: Foster Clark's Custard, Excelsor Coffee Essence, Soyers Baking Powder, Cornwalls Pure malt Vinegar, Bussells White Wings SR Flour, Silver Rice Starch, Pearson's Carbolic Soap. **Cakes section** first recipe is Apple cake and the Biscuit recipes included in this section are Lemon biscuits, Vanilla Biscuits, Ginger Nuts. Miscellaneous section has a recipe for Apricot Jam. **Supplement section** includes new recipes for Dry Curry (a great recipe for the time!), Spaghetti (plain with grated cheese and tomatoes) and Aberdeen Sausage.

* *Copy 2:* original owner **Joyce Foxford:** favourite pages include Christmas cake, Scones Rockcake, Gems, Pumpkin Scones, Velvet cake (for lamingtons) and additional recipe for Cinnamon Drops.

CURATOR *Kathleen Moss*
Master in Museum Studies,
Treasurer HEIANSW