



Millinery Matters

There is something rather pleasing about an issue of *Millinery Matters* that manages to look backwards, forwards and sideways all at once.

Ballarat, naturally, looms large. After a decade without a Hats Off convention, there was clearly an appetite not merely to learn, but to gather — to compare notes, exchange ideas, reconnect with old friends and discover that there are now quite a few new faces in the room. Rose Hudson's account captures the scale and bustle of the weekend, while other reflections remind us that what happens between the formal sessions can be every bit as valuable as what happens in them.

Rachael Henson's Past and Present goes a little further, asking what has changed in millinery over the years — and the answer, unsurprisingly, is almost everything. Online learning, social media, AI, shifting markets and the decline of traditional training opportunities have altered the landscape considerably. And yet, for all our new digital convenience, there remains something stubbornly irreplaceable about being in a room with other makers, seeing how they think, work and solve problems.

The Awards and Gala provided the more glamorous end of proceedings. This year's work ranged from elegant and refined to sculptural, theatrical and frankly impossible to ignore — exactly as a good millinery award should. Rose Hudson's Grimhilde took the Design Award, while Uri Bouman won the Student Award with *Before the Search Bar*. Catherine Kelly's induction into the Millinery Australia Hall of Fame added a fitting note of recognition to the evening.

It is especially encouraging to see the Student Award continuing to place learning at its centre. Entrants received individual written feedback, and mentoring opportunities gave students access to experienced members of the profession — a practical reminder that encouragement is most useful when accompanied by expertise.

Elsewhere in this issue, Cynthia Jones-Bryson proves that a hat need not remain on a head to have a life of its own. Her book, *Hats A Fine Art*, brings together six years of work into a substantial visual record — part coffee-table object, part personal archive, and, perhaps most importantly, something lasting to hand on.

Sue Younis, meanwhile, reminds us that millinery does not exist only in workrooms, racecourses and galleries. Her community work in South West Victoria has raised funds, introduced people to the craft, encouraged sustainability and given old felt hats a rather better future than some of them may have expected.

And then there is Margaret Watson.

It would be impossible to produce an issue about community without acknowledging those who helped sustain it over many years. Margaret was constant, committed, formidable and — as the tribute in these pages records with suitable affection. Communities are rarely built entirely by agreeable people. Sometimes what keeps them going is persistence, conviction and somebody willing to ask where the money went.

A sincere thank you to everyone who contributed to this issue. The best newsletter is never the voice of one person; it is a collection of experiences, opinions, triumphs, experiments, recollections and the occasional strongly held view.

So please keep them coming. If you have made something, learned something, taught something, rescued something, visited somewhere interesting, changed your mind, formed an opinion or simply have a good hat story, *Millinery Matters* would like to hear it.

After all, a newsletter about milliners should have more than one hat to wear.

Phillip Rhodes, Editor

From the President . . .



This is the eighth year of the Student Award and, despite receiving fewer entries this year, the standard of work was exceptionally high. The judges commented on the creativity, craftsmanship and commitment demonstrated by all entrants, making the final decision an extremely difficult one — particularly when separating first and second place.

Congratulations to Uri Bouman, who was awarded First Prize.

In a remarkable achievement, Pam Kelly was named Runner-up for the second consecutive year, once again impressing the judges with her skill and attention to detail. Congratulations also to Rachael Fenselau, who was awarded both Third Place and the Mary Lock Encouragement Award.

This year's prize pool combined valuable educational opportunities with generous cash and product prizes. Winners received educational experiences generously donated by Louise Macdonald Millinery, Hat Atelier, Hat Academy and Michelle Cameron. Cash prizes were generously provided by Michelle Cameron, Georgia

Skelton Millinery and Millinery Australia, while additional prizes were donated by Hatters Millinery Supplies and House of Adorn.

We extend our sincere thanks to all our sponsors for their continued support and commitment to encouraging emerging millinery talent.

Our thanks also go to our judges, Lynette Lim, Michelle Cameron and Fiona Cooper, for the time, care and expertise they dedicated to assessing each entry. To assist students in their ongoing development, individual written feedback was provided for every entrant and placed in their hat boxes.

As an additional benefit of Millinery Australia student membership, every student entrant was offered a complimentary one-hour online mentoring session with one of our experienced members. This generous initiative provided students with personalised guidance during the development of their competition entries, as well as encouragement as they continue to develop their millinery skills.

Our sincere thanks go to the experienced members who so willingly volunteered their time and expertise to support the next generation of milliners.

At the Gala, we were also delighted to announce the 2027 Student Award theme: FUTURE. We look forward to seeing how our student milliners interpret this thought-provoking theme, and we can't wait to see the creativity it inspires.

Congratulations to all our student entrants. Your enthusiasm, creativity and willingness to challenge yourselves are what make these awards such an exciting and rewarding part of Millinery Australia. We hope to see even more students embrace the challenge and enter the 2027 Student Awards.

Georgia Skelton

ASK LOUISE

Q **Phillip:** As a long-time contributor and tutor at Meet-Ups and Hats Off conferences over the years, what would you say are the greatest differences and standout changes you have noticed between the early years and now?

A **Louise:** There are many more opportunities available now for people to learn to make hats, particularly online. Many experienced milliners, spurred on by the need to pivot during the COVID lockdowns, now offer classes via Zoom, video courses and subscription programs. If there are no in-person classes available in your town, you can still learn online.

This may also mean that some people are less inclined to pay the transport, accommodation and tuition costs involved in attending an in-person course or convention. Perhaps people are not quite as hungry for the convention experience as they once were.

However, what is often absent from online learning is the opportunity to socialise, connect and share millinery



stories and learning experiences with others. Millinery conventions did, and still do, provide this opportunity. Some students simply do not enjoy learning online and prefer face-to-face contact with a tutor. And for those who live in remote areas, conventions are a wonderful way to meet others and feel part of a wider millinery community.

Make Millinery Matters Your Own

A heartfelt thank you to everyone who contributed to this issue of Millinery Matters. Your articles, photographs, ideas and observations are what give the newsletter its character and, more importantly, make it a reflection of the people who make up our millinery community.

For future issues, we would love to hear from even more of you. Think of Millinery Matters as your newsletter — a place to share what you are making, learning, discovering and doing.

Perhaps you have attended an exhibition or workshop, experimented with a new technique, rescued an old hat, discovered an intriguing material, taught a class, visited somewhere with a millinery connection, or simply have a good hat story to tell. It might be a substantial article or just a few paragraphs accompanied by a photograph. All submissions will be considered.

You certainly don't need to think of yourself as a writer. Send us the story and we can help with the rest. What

matters is that the newsletter represents the breadth of interests, experiences and personalities within Millinery Australia.

So, if something has made you think, "Other members might enjoy this," send it in. The more voices we include, the more Millinery Matters belongs to all of us.

Submissions should preferably be supplied as a Word document, with accompanying images sent separately as high-quality JPG or PDF files. Please label images clearly and include captions where appropriate.

We look forward to hearing from you — and to seeing what makes the next issue yours.

Submissions to:
The Editor, Millinery Matters
phillip@philliprhodes.com.au

Old milliners never die, they simply fade away...

If milliners can make over an old hat, it seems not too great a stretch to refashion an old adage to better fit the occasion.

Long-time MAA member and former Treasurer Margaret Watson slipped away this year.

Many will remember Margaret well, while newer members may not have had the pleasure — or, perhaps more accurately, the full Margaret experience. In the spirit of our millinery community, it seems only right to pause and remember someone who was, for many years, very much part of the Association.

And what better way than with Five Good Things About Margaret.

Constant:

Margaret was there. Year after year, meeting after meeting, event after event, she remained a familiar presence. Fashions changed, committees changed, members came and went, but Margaret stayed involved. There is something to be said for simply turning up and remaining committed over the long haul.

Creative:

At the heart of it all, Margaret was a milliner. She understood the pleasure of making and the satisfaction of solving a difficult construction problem. Her hats revealed a distinctly feminine delight in prettiness. There was colour, decoration and a willingness to embrace the decorative without apology — a reminder that millinery can be technically accomplished and still take pleasure in being beautiful.

Community:

Margaret belonged to the millinery community and took that belonging seriously. For many years she contributed her time and experience to the Association and was a staunch supporter of the MAA Pop-Up Shop. Communities are sustained by people who care enough to remain involved and support the collective effort. Margaret certainly did that.

Committee:

Margaret served the Association as Treasurer and in

other committee capacities, taking on the sort of work that is essential but seldom glamorous. Accounts must balance, subscriptions must be chased and someone, somewhere, must know where the money went.

Margaret brought determination and vigilance to those responsibilities.

Crusty:

Anyone who ever tangoed with Margaret would tell you that she had some pretty feisty moves. In fact, if she ever stepped on your toes, it wasn't because she didn't know the steps. Margaret could be forthright, formidable and entirely unmoved by the prospect that someone might disagree with her. She had opinions and was rarely reluctant to share them. Diplomacy may not always have been the first tool she reached for, but there was never much doubt about where you stood.

And perhaps that, too, deserves a place in the remembering.

A community is made up of all sorts of characters: the gentle, the glamorous, the eccentric, the generous, the difficult and the downright indomitable. Margaret was unquestionably a character, and her absence leaves a space.

So we tip our hats to Margaret Watson — constant, creative, community-minded, committed to committee life and, yes, gloriously crusty.

She was one of a kind. And in millinery, surely there can be no higher compliment.



Hats Off to Ballarat

by Rose Hudson

Our Ballarat convention is done and dusted. Over the course of the weekend, beginning on Saturday, July 4th, at lunchtime and ending on Monday the 6th, we had 9 tutors present ten different sessions of millinery to delegates. There were some familiar faces and some new faces. The Convention was designed with our newest members in mind, since it's been ten years since our last event, Hats Off to Adelaide, held in July of 2016.

This year's crop of tutors, Sue Younis, Wendy Scully, Jill Humphries, Rose Hudson, Rachael Hart, Louise McDonald, Lauren Ritchie and Tracey Tau, presented a range of classes to suit all capabilities. There was felt and silk flower making, felt blocking and felt embellishing techniques, vintage-style felt trimming, wedding veils, flat caps, sinamay and wirework.

The feel across the Barkly Square Community Hub was one of positivity and happiness at the return of large-scale face-to-face learning from Millinery Australia.

Our convention was supported by our wonderful traders and associates, Hatters Millinery Supplies, Hat Blocks Australia, the Essential Hat and the Hat Magazine, with Lauren kindly supplying a subscription to the magazine, all trading in the beautiful Victorian-era Community Hall. Elaine Mergard of The Hat Academy generously supplied an online course. Warm, comfortable accommodation was available for those who stayed in town at nearby Federation Uni, Mt Helen campus. Delicious catered morning tea, lunch and afternoon teas for all attending were supplied by John Hudson.

Activities were arranged for both evenings. On Saturday night, we had Hat Chat, with three tutors, Jill, Lauren and Tracey, speaking about their respective careers, their beginnings, their challenges and where they are today with their millinery. Georgia opened the Q&A session, with each tutor answering any and all

questions. A raffle of millinery bits and bobs was won by lucky Perth delegate Sue.

On Sunday night, we had a master blockers challenge. Four milliners demonstrated blocking, using straw or felt, utilising hat blocks from the Millinery Australia Block Library. Members enjoyed more food with a glass of wine as they watched the milliners toil away at the task before them. Darryll Osborne gave a fascinating talk on the art of creating hat blocks. When each of the four milliners had completed the blocking, Louise, Rose, Rachael and Cath each explained to the assembled guests their reasons for choosing the block and their blocking methods. A silent auction commenced shortly afterwards for the four hats. The sum of \$1,380.00 was raised after some spirited silent bidding.

By Monday, the final day of the convention, we were all feeling a bit tired but so pleased with the evident success of it all. Wendy Scully held her silk flower painting class, Sue Younis had her class snipping and slicing remnant felt into clever little pieces as hat trims and brooches, and Rachael Hart's class learnt felt embellishing and burning techniques. A final lunch was served, a closing speech was made and eventually everyone left, bundled up in coats and scarves and carrying sewing boxes and millinery pieces, having learnt some new skills.

Consensus among the committee is that a convention is a wonderful way to bring hat-loving people together to learn, make new friends and immerse ourselves in the age-old trade of making something. Let's do it again, shall we?

Past and Present Tip of the Hat to Ballarat

by Rachael Henson

I recently found myself at Hats Off to Ballarat. I found it an unexpected combination of what I expected and what I didn't.

I should explain why I enrolled. Apart from being around like-minded hat enthusiasts, I was looking forward to seeing familiar faces for the first time in quite a few years (circa Hats Off to Wagga Wagga). The milliner's life can be deeply solitary, and it is hard to truly thrive in isolation. For me, learning isn't just about the classes themselves. Hearing about everyone's recent experiences gives us a real-time view of the arenas we operate in and, as we all know, modern times move fast. In short, Ballarat was the perfect opportunity to reconnect with both old friends and the current story of Australian millinery.

I naively expected all the familiar faces from previous conferences to be there, but was surprised by the number of people I didn't know. This is likely the result of the length of time since any kind of gathering has been held, as well as the fact that I live in Canberra, limiting face-to-face opportunities. In the years I have been coming to these kinds of events, either selling or learning, I just got used to seeing all the same people. It is natural and inevitable that there is turnover; I just hadn't really been confronted by it before. Some milliners simply don't make hats anymore, reflecting the fact that it is a hard gig, both to sell and to sustain in the current market.

Perhaps one of the most sobering thoughts is that it is, in fact, 30 years since I started making hats and, to my illogical surprise, this means that my colleagues of that time and I are also 30 years older. The landscape has changed enormously — the rise of social influencers and online shopping, and what feels like a stronger divergence between those who can afford bespoke hats and buyers who prefer to buy less expensive options, choose on the day and possibly never wear the rest.

The current market was also discussed at the Ballarat Saturday night discussion. The participants were thoughtfully curated, with three milliners distinct in their fields: Tracey Tau, milliner and retailer; Jill Humphries, milliner with a shopfront and online business; and Lauren Ritchie, milliner with a workroom and editor of The Hat Magazine.

All three business owners described how they approach their businesses in the current environment. One of the hot topics was the use of AI — specifically, how do you deal with clients who create an AI hat and ask you to make it? It is similar to a client presenting you with a picture of a hat snipped from a website. However, everyone agreed that AI doesn't take into account how materials behave, and it is a brave milliner who would promise an exact replica of an AI model, even if it randomly happened to align with the aesthetic of the maker. The short answer everyone had was, "We don't do that."

As I was writing this, out of interest, I ran "how people buy hats today" through AI to see what it had to say. Copilot told me that, while there is a shift towards micro-brands and artisans for unique pieces using sustainable materials and demonstrating craftsmanship, there is also a strong shift towards online buying — a surprise to no one reading this — driven by influencer trends. Second-hand marketplaces are also popular.

I found the juxtaposition between craftsmanship and uniqueness and the depersonalised online buying experience interesting and perhaps slightly incongruous. Perhaps the modern definition of bespoke is evolving? I also went to Ballarat for the learning opportunity. I choose the classes I attend using a fairly simple approach: what can I learn? This seems an obvious question, but by this I don't necessarily mean learning a new technique, using a new material or meeting a new teacher. All these things are part of the mix, but now

I look for classes that will help me think about how I make and problem-solve in new ways.

So, this time I happily landed on Louise MacDonald, someone with a worldwide reputation as a milliner known for elegant and meticulous work, as well as second-to-none teaching experience. Louise always provides a precisely mapped-out and constructed class, allowing participants the best chance of completing a successful project. More importantly, underneath the new technique is evidence of how Louise thinks about making. Her approach is born of years of experience that can be demonstrated but cannot be purchased. Nonetheless, the opportunity to be shown a new way of making a toque or pillbox was valuable beyond the object that was created.

This brings me to a few words on the future of millinery learning. This is genuinely an issue for many people. TAFE classes are dwindling, and the opportunities for milliners or aspiring milliners to be exposed to experienced practitioners are almost non-existent. This includes long-term positions in experienced workrooms that allow the nuts and bolts of making to be consolidated without the additional burden of needing to design a hat.

So it was with pleasure that I heard President Georgia Skelton announce how the MAA committee would like to address the learning issue, with its intention to formally endorse MAA members to teach certain skills. While not intending to become a formal teaching body, the MAA endorsement would provide a standard of validation for those wanting to learn. The current committee is to be commended for its foresight and action.

In closing, a few comments about Hats Off to Ballarat. It is no small feat to organise this kind of event. The committee and subcommittee, headed by Rosemary Hudson, did a splendid job. Thank you for a wonderful weekend — and, as an added bonus, delicious food! There have already been some positive knock-on effects. I have since remedied the poor social catch-up situation with fellow Canberra milliner Cynthia Jones-Bryson and, as someone who had never stopped in Ballarat before, I definitely have it on my list of places to return to and explore more thoroughly.

A Reflection on Ballarat

After a wonderful few days at the Millinery Australia Gala and Hats Off to Ballarat 2026 Convention, I came away feeling inspired, supported and very much part of the wider millinery community.

One of the highlights was the opportunity to meet so many new people and form friendships that I know I will value for years to come. The generosity and encouragement of fellow milliners made the experience particularly special.

The convention also provided the chance to learn a wide range of new and innovative techniques. I returned home with my head buzzing with ideas and plenty of inspiration for future work.

One of my favourite workshops was Lauren Ritchie's Baker Boy cap class, and I was delighted to leave wearing the cap I had made during the session.

It was a memorable few days of learning, creativity and connection — and a wonderful reminder of just how supportive the millinery community can be.

This is probably as far as I'd elevate it. Any more polish and it starts pretending to be something it isn't.

Julia Watson



Millinery Australia Awards and Gala 2026

by Jo Peterson

Millinery Australia's recent Awards and Gala brought together an extraordinary range of work, from emerging student milliners to established practitioners, with this year's awards celebrating imagination, craftsmanship and individuality across several categories.

The 2026 Design Award theme, Enchanted, inspired a wonderfully diverse group of entries. Rose Hudson was named winner with Grimhilde, a striking sculptural design with a distinctly regal and fantastical quality. Catherine Storm received Second Place for Spellbound, while Tracey Tau was awarded Third Place for Where the Ocean Dreams.

The additional awards reflected the variety and originality of the entries. Lynette Lim received the Patron's Pick for Bloomspell, while Jo Peterson was awarded the Photographer's Pic for Kaleidoscope. The People's Choice Award resulted in a tie, with Sue Younis recognised for Enchanté par la Mer and Kelly Maskell for The Octopus's Garden.

The Student Award, with the theme Curiosity, once again highlighted the work of emerging milliners. Uri Bouman received First Place for Before the Search Bar, with Pam Kelly awarded Second Place for Ah, Gotcha. Rachael Fenselau received both Third Place and the Mary Lock Encouragement Award for Ersatz.

Another important moment of the evening was the induction of Catherine Kelly into the Millinery Australia Hall of Fame, recognising her contribution to the millinery community.

Together, the awards demonstrated the remarkable breadth of contemporary millinery — from traditional techniques and refined craftsmanship to sculptural, conceptual and highly theatrical work. The Gala provided an opportunity not only to recognise individual

achievement, but also to celebrate the creativity and imagination that continue to shape Australian millinery. The event was hosted by Millinery Australia, with photography by Richard Shaw, modelling by Lorena Viancaa and hair and makeup by P. Stasinos Makeup. Millinery Australia also extends its thanks to the many sponsors whose support helped make the Awards and Gala possible: Richard Shaw, Hatters Millinery Supplies, Hatblocks Australia, House of Adorn, Louise Macdonald, Hat Academy, Rebecca Share, Georgia Skelton, Michele Cameron, Guy Morse-Brown, The Hat Magazine, HATalk, The Essential Hat, Millinery Info, Haute Dogs Calendar, Robin Rivett and Mrs Mc Pearl.





2026 Design Award
WINNER: Rose Hudson



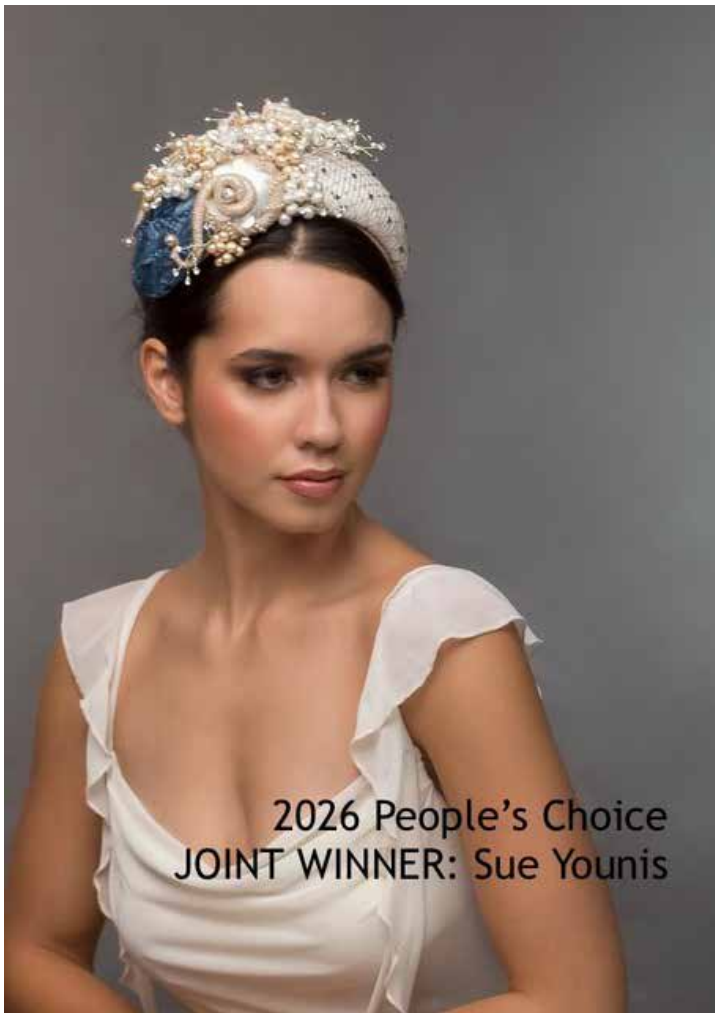
2026 Design Award
SECOND: Catherine Storm



2026 Design Award
THIRD: Tracey Tau



2026 Patron's Pick
WINNER: Lynette Lim



2026 People's Choice
JOINT WINNER: Sue Younis



2026 People's Choice
JOINT WINNER: Kelly Maskell



2026 Photographer's Pic
WINNER: Jo Peterson



2026 Student Award
WINNER: Uri Bouman



2026 Student Award
THIRD & MARY LOCK
ENCOURAGEMENT AWARD:
Rachael Feneslau



2026 Student Award
SECOND: Pam Kelly



from Netflix My Brilliant Career

A Milliner on Set

by Jo Honan

Last year I was recruited to work on the Netflix series *My Brilliant Career* as part of the costume department. Mariot Kerr was the Costumer. I had worked with her previously, years ago on *Deadline Gallipoli*, as a student volunteer working on extras' hats and a couple of pieces for the main cast.

This job was much more intense — and paid work too! It involved four to six weeks of eight- to ten-hour days on site at the Adelaide Film Studios. Fairly intense for a retired nurse!

I was located in a room with Mariott and her team, along with some cutters and sewers. I wasn't sure what to expect, but, as I said, I was a nurse, and we go to work every day expecting the unexpected!

There was no millinery equipment and only a few supplies, so I provided a lot from my own stash. This worked well, as I reduced my stash and was reimbursed for it too! Some of my vintage bits and pieces were also used on the costumes. The pearl collar on Sybilla's white dress, when she accepts the marriage proposal, was one of my daughter's op-shop finds.

I was given some guidance about requirements, but Mariot mainly let me do my own thing, with plenty of checking along the way.

Most of the work involved updating, mending, resizing, reshaping and trimming hire hats. I lost count of how many crown ribbons I changed or replaced, along with petersham bands, bows and feathers on the men's hats. Some needed to look old and beaten up, so I used a lot of saved, upcycled petersham from vintage hats.

The main actors' hats were often completely transformed from something I might once have thrown out into things of beauty — perhaps sometimes slightly overdone beauty! The lace appliqué with feathers worn

by Augusta in the Federation scene was one of them. All of Mrs Bossier's hats were upstyled hire hats. I also incorporated vintage hat pins and brooches from the costume department.

I made a few hats from scratch as well. The green bowler hat worn by Sybilla in the final scene is a Bonnetry original, as is the large black hat worn by Blanche in her introductory scene.

The costumes were incredible, as was the huge team of cutters and sewers. I got to see the costumes being made and was in awe. I also collected scraps, such as pieces of lace, to use on the hats.

The costume fittings took place in the room where I was working, and I carried out the actors' hat fittings there too. The actors were a very warm group of people. I didn't really expect that.

Sadly, after filming was completed, I had to return all of the hire hats to their previous, less beautiful state! Not my favourite job, but I loved seeing everyone again.

Waiting for the series to be released seemed interminable, and I couldn't talk about it because I had signed an NDA. This also meant I couldn't take photographs. I did have a few pictures I had sent to Mariot, so I was able to use those with permission, along with some others I was given. I also copied a few pictures from the actors' Instagram accounts, mainly for my own use.

Watching the series when it was finally released was quite emotional. I saw all my hard work, often in close-up, and could see how the hats fitted into the scenes and the story.

The whole experience was amazing, and I am so grateful for the opportunity. Hopefully I will get the chance to do something like this again.

Behind Cynthia Jones-Bryson *Hats - A Fine Art*

By Rachael Henson

Sitting down over coffee at the local café, Cynthia Jones-Bryson shared the story behind her book, *Hats A Fine Art*. Intended to be an enticing addition to one's coffee table, the book is a compilation of Cynthia's millinery work.

I asked Cynthia why she had decided to do it. What was her driving motivation? As is so often the case, family was the answer. Cynthia wanted to leave something of herself in the world — to show what she had achieved and tell something of her story.

While intended for everyone, the primary audience is Cynthia's son, Tom Bryson, who is currently studying acting at The Lir Academy of Dramatic Art in Dublin, a highly respected school that is notoriously difficult to gain entry to. When Cynthia mentioned the idea she had for a book, Tom encouraged her to do it, as did Catherine Kelly and Elly Stemerding, editor-in-chief of *The Hat Magazine*. And so began a four-year self-publishing journey.

I asked how she approached the project, and her answer was, "I asked a lot of questions." Cynthia encountered a few wrong turns along the way, including extraordinary quotes and people who simply did not understand her vision. She was, however, determined to use Canberra-based services as far as possible, believing that, while Canberra may have a smaller pool of creative professionals, the quality of work holds its own with the rest of Australia.

Her models are either her niece, Bell, or talent from local agencies, Devojka Models or Victoria's Models. Everyone does their own makeup and hair. The photographers included Canberra's Steven Lloyd, Wendal Live Teodoro for the Australian Turf Club and, well known to the MAA, Richard Shaw.

To produce the book, Cynthia sourced a Canberra-based graphic artist and had the book printed in Melbourne. Unsurprisingly, in this world of scalability, a run of

1,000 copies was more cost-effective than a smaller print run, allowing her to keep the price moderate.

It is a substantial and instantly visually appealing book, with both the front-cover background and hat in Cynthia's signature pinks. Knowing there was no central photo shoot pulling the works together into a cohesive look makes the result all the more impressive. The images are a collection of photographs from the past six years, interspersed with a few words to tie her story together in colour-coded sections.

This speaks to the strong core aesthetic that runs throughout Cynthia's work, as well as her unwavering long-term vision of how she sees that work presented. Cynthia has something of a predilection for coffee-table books, and her own has been created with the intention of joining their ranks, providing interesting, inspirational, conversation-starting and uplifting images. It is a testament to her skill and a record of her work for both the wider world and her son.

Some of you who attended the recent MAA event, *Hats Off to Ballarat*, may have seen a display of Cynthia's work at Hatters Millinery Supplies. As well as being available through Hatters, the book can be purchased at the National Portrait Gallery or directly from Cynthia via cynthiahats.com.

For more of Cynthia's story, see the piece published by HerCanberra.



Millinery in the Community

by Sue Younis

Over many years, I have been delighted to showcase my millinery creations in various fashion parades, assisting many community groups to fundraise in South West Victoria.

Good Friday this year was the first time I had worked with the local CFA, raising money for the Melbourne Royal Children's Hospital Appeal. Our spacious Surf Club building, overlooking beautiful Port Campbell Bay, was the perfect setting for this popular, sold-out event — *Hats and High Tea by the Sea*.

The total funds raised for the RCH far exceeded any previous amount raised by the Port Campbell CFA, much to everyone's delight. Plans for next year's event were immediately put in place.

More recently, I have assisted the local Historical Society, of which I am a member, in its efforts to raise much-needed funds by offering two workshops on how to revamp an old felt hat.

Using selected hat blocks from my collection, along with clear instructions and millinery equipment, participants were delighted with their creations. Final stitching of the trimming was to be completed at home, and an exhibition of these transformed hats in our Arts Space is planned for later in the year, when tourist numbers are higher.

Promoting sustainable millinery and educating people about the stages involved in making hats is really rewarding. I found the enthusiasm and excitement I witnessed throughout the workshops inspiring.

Most of all, I love the opportunity to give back to my community by donating my time and millinery expertise, allowing people to achieve something they can be proud of.

Happy Hatting, everyone!







Departures

London ↑

Good hats
travel further

BRITISH
AIRWAYS

First

Priority Check-in
Club World
Executive Club
Gold Members

SOME
DESTINATIONS
ARE SIMPLY
MORE
FABULOUS



HATS
FROCKS
AND A
BRIGHTER
TOMORROW

Beverley
Carsteers
LONDON
NEXT!

The Carsteers Correspondence

BEVERLEY HEADS TO LONDON!!

What's new, Pussycats?

By the time you read this, Beverley Carsteers will be London-bound on a mission of considerable cultural importance.

"I am off to London to visit the Queen," she announced, before conceding that the Queen herself may prove difficult to secure. "Well, her coats, hats and frocks."

For Beverley, this is no mere holiday. It is a pilgrimage. With spring racing looming and the BIG BIG BIG race days approaching, serious decisions must be made. London's milliners have been placed discreetly on notice as Beverley prepares to tempt the rain gods by commissioning something glorious to crown her dome.

Naturally, there will be reconnaissance. Bond Street will be inspected. Department stores will be assessed. Tea will be taken where necessary. Beverley has also indicated that she may conduct a brief audit of London standards generally, particularly in relation to hats, hems, handbags and people who wear trainers with tailored trousers. Britain has not requested this assistance, but that has never stopped her before.

And what a year it has already been. Beverley casts an approving, if exacting, eye over Hats Off to Ballarat, where the nimble-fingered exercised their creative prerogative through a series of edifying tutorials designed to broaden the creative spectrum and refresh the design palate.

One senses, however, a certain restlessness in our Fashion Editrix. After a lifetime spent beneath other people's handiwork, perhaps the urge to create is finally stirring.

As Beverley herself puts it:

"I was born to adorn!"

London has been warned.

ASK BEVERLEY??

In response to overwhelming demand from persons of uncertain judgement, Beverley's Help Line is now open.

Readers are invited to submit their most pressing questions on matters including, but by no means limited to, client conflict, millinery misdemeanours, wardrobe emergencies, social indiscretions, unsuitable trimming, inadequate entrances, over-familiar brides, under-accessorised racegoers and the general commissariat of good taste.

No problem is too trivial. No dilemma is too delicate. No opinion is too strongly held for Beverley to make stronger.

Have you been asked to copy another milliner's hat?

Has a client requested 'something simple'?

Do you suspect beige is entering your life without permission?

Has someone worn a fascinator before 4.00pm?

Are you surrounded by people who simply do not understand standards?

Beverley is here to help.

Advice will be dispensed with confidence, authority and absolutely no responsibility for the consequences.

Discretion cannot be guaranteed.

Send your questions to The Carsteers Correspondence and await judgement.

Beverley knows best.

Thank you to our 2026 ASSOCIATES



Hatters Millinery Supplies offers a 10% discount to Fellow & Life Members, and a 5% discount to Students off a wide range of products. Simply sign up for an account online, and then contact Hatters to confirm your MAA membership to receive the discount. Discounts are not automatic, and only apply to current members.

Sydney, NSW www.hattersmillinerysupplies.com.au - info@hattersmillinerysupplies.com.au - 1300 428 837



BUnique Millinery offers a 10% discount to all Members, across the full range of Australian warehouse items. Just enter the discount Code at checkout and the discount will be applied. There is no restriction on order value or the number of times for use.

Peachester, Queensland www.buniquemillinery.com - brenda@buniquemillinery.com.au 61 7 5494 9299



Hat Blocks Australia have been hand-making blocks and hat-maker's accessories for milliners and hat-makers around the world for 25 years. Located just outside of Adelaide, HBA is a premier hat block producer, with an extensive range of catalogued blocks, as well as vintage reproductions. HBA can also make you your very own custom block, just contact Darryll and Renee to discuss.

Adelaide, SA www.hatblocksaustralia.com.au - hatblocksaustralia@gmail.com - 0413 319 765



The Essential Hat recently become an associate member of the Millinery Association. They are the proud custodians of the MAA's block library which comprises the hat block collection generously donated to the Association by Kangan TAFE. It is an absolute delight to have this beautiful collection of millinery history available for use by the Association's members and student members.

Malvern, VIC www.essentialhat.com - info@essentialhat.com 0487 312 831



Hat Atelier offers a diverse range of courses tailored to suit all skill levels, from beginners to seasoned milliners. Founded by the renowned master milliner Rebecca Share, the platform provides comprehensive online video courses that encompass all the essential techniques and tips needed for creating beautiful headpieces.

hatatelier.com



Hat Academy offer millinery design at your convenience with detailed video lessons. With an easy-to-follow approach, study at your own pace and schedule around your family and lifestyle. Millinery courses that beginners and experienced milliners alike can enjoy.

hatacademy.com

**Some of our associates provide discounts to our members which can be found in the members area of the website.*