

WA writers add to list on literary map

Elaine Fry looks at new works of fiction and non-fiction which stand out from the crowd on the bookshelves

Local authors have continued to contribute to the wealth of new books published. Among the latest are three non-fiction and four fiction offerings deserving of mention.

Nonja Peters' **A Touch of Dutch** (\$55) is an important demonstration of the shared heritage between Australia and the Netherlands. Set over 400 years (17th century to the present), it records the history of Dutch migration and its contribution to the factors that made Australia the country it is today. While academic and factual, it is also informative and interesting, a true labour of love by Peters and other contributing authors that will give pleasure to many, especially those of Dutch ancestry.

By contrast in **The Lottery of Life** (Folker Krueger, \$50) Krueger recounts his career and travels "with the kind of humour credited to the people from Berlin", where he was born during World War II. With understated wit, Krueger describes his memoir as "the travels and adventures of a simple

freight forwarder" while detailing the exotic locations to which his work took him, spanning periods of worldwide progress and change. Krueger's sense of humour and resourceful life make this beautifully presented hardback an enjoyable read.

Let's Face It (Serenity Press, \$15) is a touching collection of eight stories told by people living with mental illness. Painfully honest, the brave contributors lay bare their personal experiences and ways of surviving. Mental illness statistically afflicts a considerable percentage of society, yet is not sufficiently out in the open or understood. This valuable resource can help to alleviate the loneliness and isolation felt by sufferers tormented by this invisible destroyer.

Ian Andrew's **Fall Guys** (Ian Andrew, \$20) is the third in his Wright & Tran series. The redoubtable female investigators with their military intelligence background have skills from that life which equip them with acuity and expertise in their present



Ian Andrew. Picture: South Western Times

work. In this latest adventure, a fast-paced plot involving Britain's national security, arms deals and political intrigue immerse the duo.

Robin Bower's **My River Sanctuary** (Robin Bower, \$10) is a beautifully crafted novel with a Perth setting. The story flows with the Swan River, a symbol of strength bonding the lives of its characters. Kim, a university professor and fourth-generation Chinese and her son Ayden, live close to it. Ayden's absent father, Jack, is deployed in Afghanistan. Ara, an Afghan refugee who had been brought up as a boy by her parents, is enlisted

by Kim to help transform her neglected family farm. Relationships, diverse cultures, refugees and xenophobia are sensitively intertwined to make an insightful book of gentle beauty capturing Perth's unique isolation.

The Burnt Islands and other stories by Nick Bruechle, author of science fiction novel *The Reprint*, is a collection of short stories reflecting his love of surfing and philosophy of life. Entertaining and full of sun, sea, surf and salutary tales, some with WA settings, *The Burnt Islands* itself is a thoughtful tale of escapism to a society founded on drug use and ironically noble and idealistic principles. Available on Amazon (\$4 Kindle, \$10 paperback).

Frame (AK Alliss, \$20) is Alliss's latest novel. The plot unfolds within a structure of frames of photographs, one of which Hannah suspects holds the key to the fate of her husband, Connor, believed killed in action. Alliss deals with big ideas in parallel and possible futures. His visionary interest in social behaviour and the far-reaching impact of technology imprint his idiosyncratic style of fiction with complex layers to navigate.



BIOGRAPHY

Beyond Home: a daughter's journey

Robin Bower

Self-published, \$18, ebook

Eve comes into possession of a diary that renders unstable everything she knows of her family, and she is compelled to travel from Australia to Burma to make sense of her father's lies and omissions. Robin Bower's debut novel moves at a fast pace, unfolding a compelling tale of kidnapping and murder set in the cloying humidity of the tropics, against a backdrop of political resistance, corrupt power and the opium trade. Woven through Eve's story are the life threads of minor characters, such as the opportunistic drug-addicted housemaid Mya, which speak of oppression and exploitation. **t**

SENSES OF PARIS

**Robin Bower & Christine
Vandenbergh**

RB Publishing, \$15

Of course, travel can be extended and enhanced in all sorts of ways, not just by prose. There are photographs. There are paintings. There are poems . . . all of which are art. Which brings us to this elegant, slender publication of words and photographs by Robin Bower and illustrations by Christine Vandenbergh, a collaboration between "two old friends inspired by Paris" who travelled both apart and together before reuniting in recollection. Each chapter focuses on a single sense, hence the title; the result is a true feast for the senses, in which we encounter the great art and artists of Paris along the way.

