



RETREAT GUIDEBOOK



The Katharine Susannah Prichard Foundation Inc

11 Old York Road, Greenmount WA 6056

Website: kspwriterscentre.com

Telephone: (08) 9294 1872

E-mail: office@kspwriterscentre.com

ABN: 20-561-349-123

This folder is a compilation of information which may be of assistance during your stay. It contains information about the local area, our retreats, and happenings at the Centre.

Please leave the folder in the retreat for the benefit of future guests.

**The Katharine Susannah Prichard Writers' Centre
acknowledges its sponsors, without whom it would not exist.**

We would like to thank



Department of
Local Government, Sport
and Cultural Industries

for valuing creative arts in Australia.

Welcome to the Katharine Susannah Prichard Writers' Centre

Breathe in, breathe out; slowly. Look outside your window to the wild and rolling grounds around you... you are now on the hallowed ground of one of Australia's most prolific authors, Katharine Susannah Prichard.

From 1919 - 1969, Katharine walked on this grass, thinking up plays and poetry and feeding the birds. Here, she watered the roses, reluctantly pulled weeds, made love to her husband and contemplated the plot of her next novel. Her garden was her pride and joy and she relished in the beautiful surrounds, *'Here I am reclining on the verandah with the garden looking at its beautifullest – lavender, cerise pelargonium and Christmas lilies, pink honeysuckle and nasturtiums all mixed and growing wild together.'*

KSP, in a letter to her son Ric Throssell, 1960s

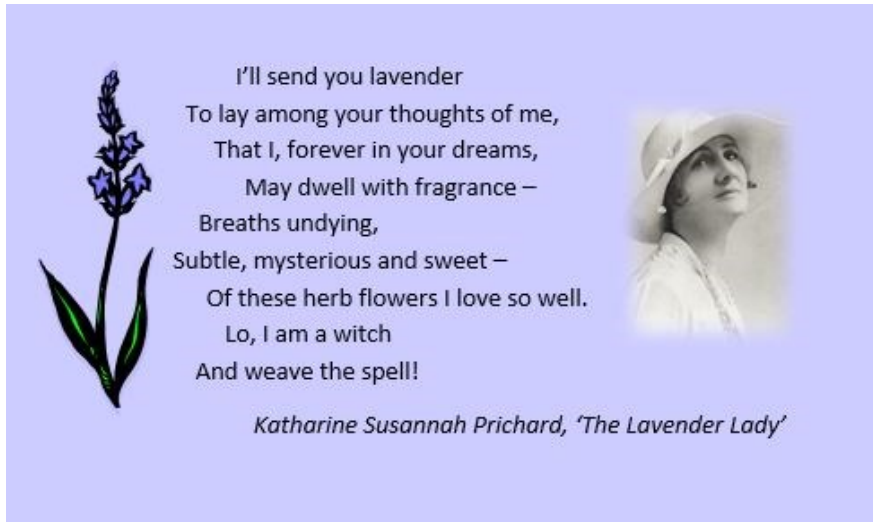
In Katharine's final year, spring in Greenmount was still a joy to her, although she could no longer walk over the paddocks to the place where the wildflowers grew. Her son described how she continued to walk each evening along the overgrown paths of her own wild garden.

This place was where Katharine, in her own words, produced her 'best literary works'. In 1928 she was the first Australian to win an international literary prize, for the controversial novel *Coonardoo*. The money she won financed a trip to Broome and Singapore, and the building of her own private writing retreat, lovingly constructed for her by her famous WWI Victoria Cross recipient husband, Hugo Throssell.

The cabin you are now residing in was modelled after this original retreat. Ask the Coordinator, and you can visit the original to admire the almost one-hundred-year-old architecture and magnificent stone fireplace. Imagine it before the days of air-conditioning, and be inspired by Katharine's dedication to her art:

Katharine worked on through the Christmas and New Year holidays in century heat, concerned only to make the last book of the trilogy all that she dreamed of. It was stifling in the workroom. The casement windows gaped, but there was no movement in the air shimmering over the corrugated iron room. The pulsing heat beat against the oil-darkened weatherboards ... Katharine retreated to her bedroom ... and worked on.

We hope your time here is as productive for you as it was for her and all who have come before you. 20-60,000 words are frequently achieved by our Writers-in-Residence in a four week stay, in between enjoying interaction with local writers – another pastime favoured by Katharine.



Katharine would cut fresh sprigs of lavender from the garden and send bags of them to her friends, and included the little poem above. She became known as the 'Lavender Lady'.



KSP member library and reading room
Open during office hours and events

Katharine's Place – the main house



House

As a guest in a KSP Centre retreat, you also have access to the main house and its facilities. All rooms in the main house are wired for broadband access and also have wireless access to the Internet. Most rooms are air conditioned with reverse cycle units, and all rooms whisper stories of a hundred-year-old history. During office hours, you can visit the KSP library, attend an event or one of our many writing groups.

Printing

Pay & Stay retreat guests: Email your documents to office@kspwriterscentre.com then collect from the office during office hours at a cost of .20c per black-white page.

Writers-in-Residence and Fellows: Complimentary printing is available during office hours, up to 25 pages per stay. Please email your documents to office@kspwriterscentre.com then collect your printouts from the office. Out of office printing is also available in the main house spare room 'Katharine's Bedroom' (opposite the library) via the Brother printer; you'll need to bring a USB for this purpose. Refer to the instructions on desk. Please notify staff if ink or paper is low.

Kitchen

You have 24-hour access to the kitchen via your retreat keys. The main house kitchen is equipped with everything you might need to cook up a storm during your stay. The fridge, freezer, oven, stove and microwave are all available for you to use. Help yourself to crockery, glassware and cutlery if needed BUT PLEASE clean and return them to the house before vacating your cabin. Please also be aware that the kitchen is a shared space used by the Centre's writing and workshop groups, and other visitors. We therefore request your patience during busy times and anticipate that you, like they, will also keep the kitchen clean and tidy. There are plenty of foodstuffs in the fridge shelves (sauces etc) and kitchen shelves (cereals etc) that you may help yourself to.

Pod Coffee Machine: Nescafe Dolce Gusto. Help yourself to a pod coffee at the main house.

Stovetop & Oven: DeLonghi 90cm Dual Fuel Upright Cooker Anthracite. Please refer to the User Manual hanging in main house kitchen on the wall near the oven for instructions. Kindly wipe down the stovetop after use.

Microwave: Set the power (High - Medium - Low) then set the time and press start. Please use the splash cover provided to minimise mess; also, kindly clean after using.

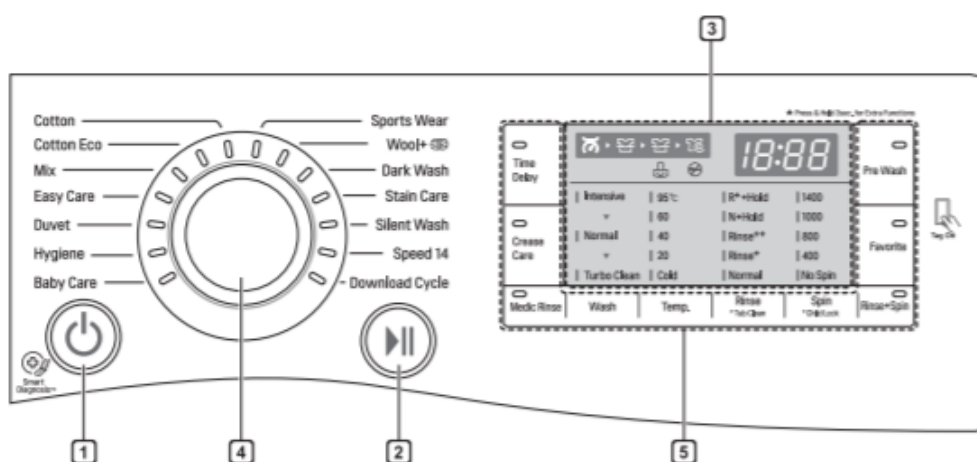
Fridge & Freezer: Feel free to place items in the fridge and freezer if there is room. Ensure to throw away any unused items before you leave, or place a sticky label on top that says 'please take'.

Kitchen Care: As mentioned earlier, the KSP kitchen is a shared space so for the courtesy of other users please **clean, dry and put away dishes** before you leave the kitchen area.

Laundry Facilities

You have 24-hour access to the laundry via your retreat keys. The laundry is located to the right of the main house kitchen and includes a washing machine, dryer and laundry detergent. Basic instructions are below and a full user manual can be found hanging on a hook behind the laundry door.

If you prefer not to use the dryer, your cabin contains a clothes rack to air dry small loads (check under the bed or near the desk).



1 Power button

- Press the **Power** button to turn the washing machine on.
- To cancel the Time Delay function, the **Power** button should be pressed.

2 Start/Pause button

- This **Start/Pause** button is used to start the wash cycle or pause the wash cycle.
- If a temporary stop of the wash cycle is needed, press the **Start/Pause** button. If the wash is not resumed within 5min the machine will automatically turn off.

3 Display

- The display shows the settings, estimated time remaining, options, and status messages. When the product is turned on, the default settings in the display will illuminate.
- The display will show the estimated time remaining after it has calculated the load size. While the size of the load is being calculated automatically, blinking [] or 'Detecting' appears.

4 Programme Dial

- Programmes should be appropriately selected to suit the laundry type.
- Lamp will light up to indicate the selected programme.

5 Options

- This allows you to select an additional option and will light when selected.
- Use these buttons to select the desired cycle options for the selected cycle. Not all Options may be available with all cycles (refer to pg.23)

Security

House security. You have two keys to grant you 24-hour access to the main house kitchen and laundry. Please be sure to lock up whenever you leave the house.

Writers-in-Residence: You have an extra key to grant you 24-hour access to the main house kitchen, laundry, and dining room, library, and conference room. You will have received a separate sheet on arrival containing special notes on security and access.

Personal security: in your retreat.

- An alarm pad system is mounted on the wall to the right and behind the front door of your retreat. This is monitored by Protect West. The lights on the top screen indicate that it is connected.
- Pull the front pad cover down to reveal three square buttons with coloured icons (to the left of the numbers, as per image on right).
- Press the red one in case of a fire, the green one for medical/auxiliary and the blue for the police/duress/panic. Press the relevant button for two seconds to activate alarm.
- Afterwards please call Protect West on 08 9248 0222 and inform them of the emergency.



Please note that we have neighbours who sometimes walk their dogs on the KSP grounds; these ladies do us a favour with this regular 'patrol'.

After Hours

For retreat queries, please contact the office on (08) 9294 1872 during office hours (please refer to the KSP website for current days/times).

If you have security concerns or experience any low-level incidents outside of office hours, please contact:

1. *Fern Pendragon on 0409 409 070 or
2. Bernie or Sheree Lewis on 0432 434 104

** If needed, Fern is also available to pick up residents and provide emergency accommodation.*

For an immediate security call-out please phone Protect West on 08 9248 0222, then wait in the main house or phone Fern (above) to come over and wait with you.

For local police assistance call 131 444

For emergencies only call 000

Garden Notes

Warning: bees. We have an established colony of native bees in a tree opposite Clarke retreat. The bees are 'friendly' but please take note of them and do not disturb their nest.

There is also the occasional snake in summer and swooping magpies in spring. Wear covered shoes when walking in the garden and stick to the paths or low grass areas. There are many magpies on the property all-year-round who are generally comfortable with people.

Please also be careful not to sit or step on an ants' nest.

Internet Access

You have unlimited complimentary WIFI at KSP. You can connect in your cabin and when you are visiting the main house, using the same login and password. KSP's internet account is: Telstra06F4 or Telstra06F4-5G, and the security key is: 9200207453.

WIFI Connection

- Login to: KSP_Guest | Password: Katharine

If you have trouble connecting to the WIFI in your cabin, try turning off your laptop's WIFI connection, and use the wired internet method instead:

Wired Internet Connection

- Look for the Ethernet cable near your desk which has a USB adapter on the end, and plug this into your laptop.

Troubleshooting a bad connection: Unfortunately KSP staff and out-of-hours officers do not have the capability to fix this for you. If your issue is persisting during office hours, please notify staff and they can try switching the portal off and on; if that doesn't fix the issue, they will contact a technician. If it is outside of office hours

Office Contact

Ph: 08 9294 1872 | E: office@kspwriterscentre.com | W: www.kspwriterscentre.com
The office is generally open from Monday to Friday: 10am–2pm (unless staff are on leave)
Saturdays, Sundays and Public Holidays: Closed
The Centre will also usually close from mid-December to late January every year.

If there is anything you need, don't hesitate to visit our friendly staff during these hours.

KSP Writers' Groups

You are very welcome to visit one or more of our Writing Groups during your stay. For more details on the groups please visit <http://www.kspwriterscentre.com/groups>

Please Note: This list is correct at time of printing but is subject to change.
Consult the KSP website for most current information.

Regular Writing Groups

Members \$5, Non-Members \$12 per session

Tea and coffee provided

Contracted Writers in Residence and Fellows: Complimentary during your stay.

Poetry Writing Group – ‘Poets@KSP’

2nd & 4th Monday of the month except December and January 12.30pm – 3.00pm

Novel Writers Collective

Mondays except from mid-December to mid-January 6.00pm – 9.00pm

Words and Writers

Tuesdays except December and January 10.00am – 12.00pm

Online via Zoom – bookings essential via Eventbrite

<https://www.kspwriterscentre.com/wordsandwriters>

Writefree Women's Writing Group

Wednesdays except December and January 9.45am - 11.45am

Thursday Night Group (TNG)

Thursdays except from mid-December to mid-January 7.30pm - 9.30pm

Non-Fiction Writers

4th Saturday of the month except January 9.30am - 11.30am

Past Tense (Social History) Group

2nd Saturday of the month except January 10.00am - 12.00pm

Fantasy Sci-Fi and Horror Group

2nd & 4th Sunday of the month except January 10.00am - 12.00pm

Transport

Parking is available out front of the Centre, and also down the driveway near the retreats. There is a bus stop on Old York Road heading towards Mundaring, and another one on Great Eastern Highway heading towards Midland train station, Perth city and Fremantle. Please find a current bus and train timetable enclosed in this booklet, or visit the Transperth website for up-to-date information. The Centre is also a ten-minute drive from Perth Domestic Airport.

Local taxi numbers: Swan Taxis 13 13 30; Black and White Taxis 133 222

UBER: <https://www.uber.com/en-AU/cities/perth/>

Shopping

A short walk up Old York Road (out the driveway and to the left) is a payphone and Australia Post letterbox.

Midland town centre is the closest shopping area to the Centre with two main shopping malls: Centre Point and Midland Gate. Alternatively, you may like to venture up the hill to Mundaring for a shopping spree, and visit cafes such as Glen Forest Gourmet.

Centre Point is located directly across from Midland train station, about a three-minute car drive from KSP down Great Eastern Highway. This shopping complex has a Supa IGA, Dan Murphy's, pharmacy, bakery, Red Dot, newsagent, and post office.

Midland Gate is a little further down from Centre Point, and is a bigger complex with a movie theatre (Ace Cinemas), main grocery and department stores such as Coles and Target, Dome Café plus other restaurants and cafes (such as Hog's Breath and Chatters), hairdressers, fast-food places, electronics stores such as Dick Smith, a number of speciality shops as well as branches for most major banks, and a post office. Gilbert's Fresh Food Market is a highlight and includes a café, bakery, butcher, and gift wares.

Or you can order groceries online from Coles or Woolworths and have them delivered direct to your cabin. Ensure to provide the following instructions:

Please note this delivery is to the rear of the property. Drive slowly down the gravel driveway to the immediate left of the main house at 11 Old York Road (look for the 'No Thoroughfare' sign) which will take you to a wide gravel clearing surrounded by hedge. You will see four cabins along a path. Please deliver to the 2nd one from the top, labelled 'Aldridge'. (Or '2nd one from the bottom, labelled 'Clarke' or 'the last one down the hill, labelled 'Phillips').

Restaurants and Take-Away Food

There are some take-away outlets not too far from the Centre. Please find a variety of menus enclosed in this booklet, and a list of recommended places below. *NB: Details correct at time of printing but we advise you to consult their website or phone ahead to ensure they are still in business, to check opening times and to make a booking if required.*

BELLEVUE & PARKERVILLE (approximately 6 minutes' drive from KSP)

- [All Aboard Seafoods](#) (fish and chips), (08) 9255 3099, 15 Great Eastern Hwy, Open Mon-Thurs 4-9pm & Fri-Sun 11am-9:30pm.
- [Parkerville Tavern](#) (family style pub), (08) 9295 4500, 6 Owen Road, Parkerville, Mon-Fri 11am-late; Saturday 11am-late; Sun 8am-10pm.

MIDLAND (approximately 8 minutes' drive from KSP)

- [Grill'd](#) (burger bar), (08) 9274 0911, Midland Gate Shopping Centre, 274 Great Eastern Hwy, Open Mon-Wed & Sun 11.00am-9.00pm Thurs 11.00am-9.30pm Fri-Sat 11.00am-10.00pm.
- [The Junction](#) (ice-creamery), (08) 9274 1013, 380 Great Eastern Hwy, Open every day 9.00am-6.00pm.
- [Crooked Spire](#) (coffee and art house), Coffee text line: 0401 011 117, office: 0488 444 344, 71 Victoria St, Midland Junction, Open Mon-Fri 6.00am-5.00pm; Sat-Sun 7.00am-2.00pm.
- [Robot Bun Factory Café](#), (robot themed café), Shop 6/306 Great Eastern Hwy, Midland WA 6056; Open Mon-Sat 6.30am-3pm; Closed Sundays.
- [Corleone Pizza Bar](#), (08) 9250 3090, 63 Great Northern Hwy, Monday, Wednesday, Thurs 5pm-9.30pm; Fri-Sat 5pm-10.30pm; Sun 5pm-9pm.
- [The Principal Brewing Company](#) (modern Australian), (08) 9250 2995, 23 Cale Street, Open every day 10.00am 'till late (bookings for dinner are recommended).

MIDDLE SWAN (approximately 10 minutes' drive from KSP)

- [The Tap](#) at Chapel Farm (tapas and wood-fired pizza), (08) 9250 4755, 231 Toodyay Road, Open Thurs 5pm until late & Fri-Sun 12pm until late.

DARLINGTON (approximately 10 minutes' drive from KSP)

- [Darlington Estate Winery](#) (combination of Australian and European influences), (08) 9299 6268, 1495 Nelson Rd, Open for lunch Thurs-Sun; open for dinner Fri-Sat (times subject to availability. BOOKINGS ARE ESSENTIAL).

MUNDARING (approximately 11 minutes' drive from KSP)

- [Two Sisters and a Chef](#) (modern concept, Australia's international influences inspired by European flavours), (08) 9295 1787, 6825 Great Eastern Hwy, Open Wed-Sat 5:30pm-10:30pm.
- [Mundaring Hotel](#) (pub food, character location), (08) 9295 1006, Corner Nichol & Jacoby St, Open Mon-Thurs 11:30pm-2:30pm & 5:30pm-8:30pm; Fri-Sat 11:30am-2:30pm & 5:30pm-9:00pm; Sun 11:30am-8:00pm (kitchen open).

GUILDFORD (approximately 12 minutes' drive from KSP)

- [Alfred's Kitchen](#) (roadside burger bar with vintage train carriage seating), (08) 9377 1378, Corner of Meadow & James St, Open Mon-Thurs 5:00pm-12:00am Fri 5:00pm-2:00am; Sat 12pm-2:00am; Sun 12pm-12:00am.
- [Guildford Hotel](#) ("menu is not limited by country or style" perfect for sharing, slow cooked meats and bao buns a specialty), (08) 9460 9966, 159 James St, Open every day from 11:00am-late (walk-in venue).
- [Hoang Kim Vietnamese](#), (08) 9379 0388, 207 James St, Open for lunch Wed-Sun 10:30am-2:30am open for dinner Tues-Sun 4:30pm-late.

CAVERSHAM (approximately 12 minutes' drive from KSP)

- [Maison Saint-Honoré](#) (French patisserie), (08) 9377 4674, 100 Benara Rd, Open Mon 8:30am-3:00pm Tues-Fri 6:30am-5:00pm Sat-Sun 8:00am-5:00pm.

SWAN VALLEY & surrounds (approximately 14 minutes' drive from KSP)

- [Margaret River Chocolate Factory](#) (chocolate tasting centre and café), (08) 9250 1588, 5123 West Swan Road, West Swan, Open every day from 9:00am-5:00pm.
- [Providore](#) (gourmet food tasting centre, same location as above), (08) 6274 4040, 5123 West Swan Road, West Swan, Open every day from 9:00am-5:00pm.
- [Cottage Tea Rooms](#) (hands-down the BEST scones in Perth), 8560 West Swan Road, Corner Forest Road in Henley Brook, Open every day 10:00am-4:00pm.
- [Lavender Bistro](#) and Boutique (French cuisine and tea room), (08) 9250 7711, 6 Cranleigh St, West Swan, Open every day from 9:00am-5:00pm.
- [The Mallard Duck](#) (rural sophisticated restaurant, beautiful location), 9386 0080, 10 John Street, Henley Brook, Open Thurs-Sun, see website for times.
- [Swan Valley Gourmet](#) (sustainable café with gluten free specialities), (08) 9296 6789, 34 Haddrill Road, Baskerville, Open Wed-Sun 9am to 4pm (5pm-8pm Fridays).
- [The House of Honey](#) (café, shop and honey farm), (08) 9296 3635, 867 Great Northern Highway, Herne Hill, Open Tues-Sun 10:00am-5:00pm.
- [Any winery in the Swan Valley](#)

KALAMUNDA (approximately 14 minutes' drive from KSP)

- [Mason and Bird](#) ("local eats & drinks" all day breakfast and brunch), (08) 9293 1581, 7 Williams St, Open every day from 8:00am-3:00pm.
- [Kalamunda Hotel](#) (traditional pub food), (08) 9257 1084, 43 Railway Rd, open for breakfast Sat-Sun 9:00am-10:30am open for lunch and dinner every day from 11:00am-9:00pm (kitchen open).

GLEN FORREST (approximately 15 minutes' drive from KSP)

- [Jolly Belly](#) (Nepalese and Indian restaurant), (08) 9298 8144, 1320 Great Eastern Highway, Open Mon-Thurs 5:30pm-9:30pm Fri-Sun 5:30pm-10:00pm.

Further afield, but worth a visit ...

BENNETT SPRINGS (approximately 20 minutes' drive from KSP)

- [Slate Café](#) (dog-friendly, Asian-fusion, excellent brunch spot), 0481 788 336, 12 Dulwich Street, Mon-Fri 8:00am-3:00pm; Sat-Sun 8:00am-4:00pm.

HIGHGATE & MOUNT LAWLEY (approximately 25 minutes' drive from KSP)

- [Mia Flora café and garden centre](#) (Café with wonderful cakes and pasta, and plants galore), (08) 9271 1599, 905 Beaufort St, Open every day from 8:00am-4:00pm.

PERTH CBD

- [C Restaurant in the Sky](#) (fine dining revolving restaurant, vegan/vegetarian options, excellent high tea and the best espresso martinis in Perth) (08) 9220 8333, Level 33, 44 St Georges Terrace, Open every day 12pm till late.

FREMANTLE

- [Bread In Common](#) (warehouse kitchen and bakery with GF & vegan options), (08) 9336 1032, 43 Pakenham Street, Open Mon-Fri 11:30am-10pm; Sat-Sun 8am-late.

CITY BEACH

- [Odyssea City Beach](#) (modern Australian, superb dining and beachfront view), (08) 9385 7979, 187 Challenger Parade, Open every day from 7am till late, bookings essential on weekends.

You can also use online services [Menu Log](#) or [UBER Eats](#) for more delivery options.

Surrounds

Local Area

The Perth Hills is a large, geographically diverse wine region lying on Perth's doorstep. It runs along the Darling scarp from the northern town of Bindoon, south to the Serpentine Reservoir. The region has five major valleys, Bindoon and Chittering in the north, Mundaring in the centre and Bickley and Carmel to the south. The rivers Swan, Avon and Helena flow through the region.

The Shire of Mundaring covers an area of 644 square kilometres and one third of its total area is State Forest. Our villages are steeped in a rich history, closely linked by the old railway line that is now the fabulous Railway Reserves Heritage Trail stretching some 70kms through the shire.

If you feel like going for a walk, visit a historic site or are looking for some leisure activities, you are in the right place! There are lots of possibilities. To start with, google 'John Forrest National Park' for beautiful nearby walking trails.



For more information, please visit the Mundaring Visitor Centre:
7225 Great Eastern Highway, Mundaring
08 9295 0202 | www.mundaringtourism.com.au

History of the Centre

First of all, how did it get this name?

The Steering Committee was born in 1985 to formulate a concept for Western Australia's first Writers' Centre, and at that time received a plethora of information from friends and former associates of Katharine Susannah Prichard. Those who had been part of the inner circle of Katharine's fellow writers and political supporters always spoke of the house as 'Katharine's Place', so it was decided then and there to perpetuate this title.

How original is the actual house?



Katharine's Place, circa 1920s

Katharine's Place retained its 1919 original form with minor additions to the grounds, such as a large summerhouse, until it became Megalong Gallery in the 1970s. Then the two central rooms and passage were made into one large room, and the northern veranda was replaced by a large living room (now the meeting room) and extra bedroom. The property as it is now is only half of what it used to be, as Katharine sold off the extra lot before she died.

After the house became a Writers' Centre in 1985, it was listed as a state-heritage building and extensive renovations restored the sagging floors, replaced the roof and repainted the property in the appropriate original colours. The verandah and wash-house (now the office) have been repaired. The retreats were built in 2008.

When and how was the KSP Writers' Centre established?

The idea of preserving Katharine's Place dates back to 1983 when the then President of the Fellowship of Australian Writers, Professor Brian Dibble, realised that having a commemorative plaque placed on the cottage would be an appropriate record of the centenary of the birth of one of the nation's greatest early authors. Several years later, the owners of the house were transferred to the North West and approached the Fellowship to see if they were interested in seeing the house preserved for posterity. Dr Glen Phillips agreed to set up a Steering Committee to draft a proposal to the Minister for the Arts, Mr Ron Davies, and the Shire of Mundaring, for purchase of the property, vesting it in the Shire and leasing it to the Katharine Susannah Prichard Foundation which was in the process of being established. The Foundation finally obtained the lease for the Centre in December 1985.

Katharine Susannah Prichard 1883-1969



Katharine Susannah Prichard was the first Australian novelist to gain international recognition. In 1915, her novel, *The Pioneers*, won the Hodder and Stoughton All Empire Literature Prize for Australasia.

Fifty years later, with thirteen novels to her credit, five collections of short stories, ten plays, two films, two volumes of verse, translations into thirteen foreign languages and prizes for a novel, a short story and a play, Katharine confessed that she had been born 'with ink in her veins'. A love for writing was her inheritance.

Her father had been Editor of *The Fiji Times* when she was born at the height of a hurricane. 'The Child of the Hurricane' the Fijians called her. It was to be the title of her autobiography, written in 1964 after she had lived through a lifetime of conflict, triumph, tragedy and unremitting struggle for the things she believed in.

The editor's blue pencil was her first literary lesson as a staff journalist on *The Melbourne Herald*. 'You must make every word count,' he taught her. When the opportunity arrived in 1908, she eagerly accepted an assignment in London and Paris.

The misery of starving men and women, the homeless, and the desperation of the hunger marchers spurred her search for the way to a fairer world. 'I wouldn't have the poor of London on my conscience,' she wrote. She found her answer in the promises of socialism - hopeless dreams, until she saw in the improbable victory of the Bolsheviks in Russia, the hope that their dreams might become reality.

London too brought changes to her own life. With the laurels of her own literary victory still fresh, she met an Australian Light Horseman at a convalescent hospital for Australian soldiers. Lieut. Hugo Throssell from Perth had recently been awarded the Victoria Cross for outstanding gallantry at Gallipoli.

Katharine Prichard had returned to Melbourne to a triumphal welcome when the war ended and Captain Hugo Throssell V.C. could also come home to Australia and claim her. Katharine and her 'Jim' were married in 1919, with bushfire smoke blue in the air around their honeymoon cottage at Greenmount.

Her greatest work was done in the first ten joyous years of their life together at their home at Greenmount. She had determined that her work would celebrate Australia and Australian working people. Her novels fulfilled that pledge. In *The Black Opal* she wrote of the opal miners of Lightning Ridge; *Working Bullocks* told of the timber workers of the karri forests; *Coonardoo* spoke with warmth and understanding of the Aborigines on the north-west cattle stations, as none had written of the native people before; *Haxby's Circus* told the story of a crippled bareback rider with a travelling circus.

With her own career promising a new future, she became a foundation member of the Communist Party of Australia. Her only child, Ric Throssell, was born in 1922.

Those years of creative achievement were destroyed by the agonies of the Great Depression. Unable to find work, obsessed by overwhelming debt and a sense of failure, Hugo Throssell V.C. shot himself while she was overseas.

When she could face her private pain, Katharine Prichard returned to her tragic novel of the Depression, *Intimate Strangers*, which some have wrongly identified with Hugo Throssell's suicide. After the Second World War, with her political duties in support of the common war effort done, she completed the goldfields trilogy, *The Roaring Nineties*, *Golden Miles* and *Winged Seeds*, as much a social history of the discovery and exploitation of gold in Western Australia, as the story of three generations of men and women of the goldfields.

A stroke that left her unable to move her hand interrupted her last novel, *Subtle Flame*, dedicated to the peace movement, but showing incredible determination, she taught herself to write again using her left hand and dictated the last of the novel to the comrade to whom the book was dedicated.

Katharine Susannah Prichard died at her home in Greenmount on 2 October 1969. Her ashes were scattered on the slopes of Greenmount as she wished. 'Good to think of becoming part of the earth, and perhaps nourishing a wild flower,' she had written.

The Quest for Wandu

'Your KS #27: The Quest for Wandu', published in KSP's newsletter, November 2017 by Nathan Hobby, KSP Writer in Residence Alumni

Last month I wrote about my quest to learn more about Wandu, the home Katharine Susannah Prichard and Hugo Throssell rented in 1919 and 1920. It's been an exciting month of discoveries. It turns out the Greenmount Liquor Store (**Update: sadly this store closed down in 2022**), a block along Old York Road from the writers' centre, is a remnant of the Wandu Estate. It was once the tea-rooms I'd found advertised up until World War Two; the guesthouse that Hugo and Katharine lived in was a separate, much bigger house set further back from the road.

I made these discoveries thanks to Ross Burgess who contacted me through Facebook after he saw my post. In 1958, his parents bought the shop, and ran it as Burgess Save-Way. By that time, the original Wandu guest-house had been dismantled, its building materials used to construct new cottages on the original block. Ross remembers using the tennis court and the remains of the golf course Blanche Hunter had built in the 1920s.

Ross also remembers Katharine Susannah Prichard – Mrs Throssell as he knew her:

When we had the shop we delivered her groceries, she never seemed to leave the house, always sitting either writing or reading... When I got my licence, I did most of the deliveries and I can still picture Mrs Throssell, very pale, white longish hair, sitting at her writing table near the kitchen, always spoke to me and asked after my parents, the house was always very dark and dingy and had an old black wood stove, she used to regularly order an old-fashioned product called 'Zebo' stove black; I only remember this because she was the only one who still bought it.

Katharine got on well with Ross's dad, Alick Burgess, perhaps because they'd both visited Russia – in his case, not in appreciation of communism like her, but as a horse-dealer after serving in the Great War. While Katharine was known around Australia as a communist, her politics wasn't an issue for Country Party-voting Alick. In Ross's



memory, it was just like the way some people support the wrong footy team: 'no great aggro – you just change the subject'. In 1964 she presented Alick and his wife with a copy of her autobiography, *Child of the Hurricane*, inscribed to 'my good friends Mr and Mrs Burgess'.

Ross put me in touch with Dale Kessell, the granddaughter of Blanche Hunter. Dale lived in Wandu as a young girl up to the time it was dismantled in the early 1950s. In her wooden box of family photos are pictures of the lost Wandu house in its prime, a sprawling bungalow, framed and obscured by the trees and the garden around it. There are smiling tennis players on the courts at the back of the house, their names now lost, and a program from a play put on at Wandu to welcome back Dale's aunts in 1927, Hugo Throssell one of the actors.

Dale also knew Katharine, a familiar presence in her childhood and early adulthood. On the way to Greenmount Primary School, Dale would take a short-cut through Katharine's property; Katharine would often wave at her from her writing cabin. As a schoolgirl in 1954, Dale presented Katharine with a bouquet at the opening of the Hugo Throssell memorial.

In talking to Ross and Dale, Katharine Susannah Prichard and the Greenmount she lived in for some many decades seemed closer, a precious experience for a biographer.

- More on Katharine at Nathan's blog at <https://nathanhobby.com>



Pictures: Top: Burgess Save-Way as it was in 1959. Used with permission of Ross Burgess and Remember Midland; Bottom: from *Western Mail*, 8 October 1931, 47. <http://nla.gov.au/nla.news-article38528565>

KSP Bird Spotting

Please feel free to take a copy.

This list was started in 2017 fellow recipient Ashley Kalagian Blunt (@AKalagian Blunt)

Bird	Spotted	Notes
Rainbow lorikeet		
Corella		
Carnaby's cockatoo		
Magpie		
28 parrot / Ring neck		
Galah		
Kookaburra		
Wattlebird		
Common Bronzewing Pigeon		
Crow		
Silver eyes		
Wee bills		
Rosella		
Raven		

From Ric Throssell's biography of his mother Katharine Susannah Prichard, *Wild Weeds and Windflowers* (pp 83, 1975):

'Katharine knew all the bird songs in the garden at Greenmount: the chestnut-breasted warbler, the yellow-rump tit-warbler, the melancholy heart-cry of the pallid cuckoo in spring. She delighted in the brief, flirting visits of the blue wrens, and the redbreast's tiny, crimson flag flaunted from a fence post in defiance of the winter rain; the daredevil willy-wagtail chasing a marauding magpie from his nest with a machine-gun volley of scolding profanity.'