

**Birds and Orchids...** In Australia we have a particular affinity with our birdlife — we notoriously befriend and feed our neighbourhood birds even though we are told this is not necessary for their wellbeing. Recently in many areas residents have been encouraged to note numbers and species as part of the Aussie Backyard Bird Count, one of Australia's biggest citizen science events. The count took place during National Bird Week which originated in the early 1900s when the Royal Australasian Ornithologists Union designated the first Bird Day as 28 October. Two of the artists featured in this issue have special relationships with the birdlife in their neighbourhoods: **Lotje Meijer** in her lush Blue Mountains garden and **Ambrose Reisch** at his home on the wild and beautiful Hawkesbury River. Lotje came to Australia from Holland and Ambrose from Germany, both many years ago and they have inveigled themselves into our unusual and what must have initially seemed strange and foreign environment. Another of our contributors consumed by her passion for our frequently odd and yet magnificent land is **Freedom Wilson** who has made it her mission to discover and safeguard a rare Australian native orchid, the *Buttercup Doubletail*. She describes how she first learned about this endangered species and is now promoting to all of us the dire situation and the preciousness of this tiny plant.

**Fashion on the Rocks...** Visitors to Sydney as well as residents will very probably know of and have visited many times the retail outlet of the Crafts Council of NSW in The Rocks, tucked between George Street and Circular Quay, its home for decades. But times change and so did their lease and **CraftNSW** at 113 years of age has moved to new premises at nearby 12 Argyle Place. Dame Marie Bashir officiated at the opening with fashion icon Claudia Chan Shaw, honorary member and CraftNSW ambassador. How glamorous and stylish is the jewellery and wearable art of these accomplished makers and how important it is for all of us to support their work. It would be wonderful if every one of us were to commit to buying at least one special item a year from such a craftsperson, instead of filling up our wardrobes with a few more cheap and cheerful mass-produced clothes. A work of art will last you a lifetime and as Claudia Chan Shaw says, 'trends fade, style remains'.

A remarkable couple who acquired over the years many beautiful handmade works by Australian jewellers in particular, have recently given their collection to the Art Gallery of South Australia—a generous gift for all to enjoy. **Joost and Truus Daalder** are Dutch Australians who our writer Dorothy Erickson first met in the 1960s when they were at university in Europe. Such patronage is still rare in

Australia. But special gifts can take different forms: when the Wayzgoose Press decided to retire from publishing their remarkable handmade books, all of their records, proofs and prints—the ephemera and behind the scenes workings of a world renowned small press—went to the State Library of Victoria. We are delighted to have in this issue an article by **Mike Hudson** of the Wayzgoose Press setting us all straight on the differences between the woodcut and the wood engraving. You didn't know there is a difference? Then you must read and enjoy a fascinating, didactic journey with this age-old craft. There will be more of Mike Hudson's informative pieces in future issues.

This is our Christmas issue and we hope that when considering a different gift for a special person you will include a subscription to OZ ARTS. Although all of our issues and their wonderful articles are available to read free on the internet, there is nothing to compare with the pleasure of holding a *real* magazine. Enjoy!

**Carolynne Skinner**

