Entry type: Person
Entry ID: IMP0155

Meredith, Gwen

(1907 - 2006)

Born	19071118, Orange New South Wales Australia
Died	20061003, Bowral New South Wales Australia
Occupation	Author, Playwright

Summary

Gwen Meredith was the writer of the Australian Broadcasting Corporation (ABC) radio serial *Blue Hills.* On 10 June 1967 she was appointed a Member of the Order of the British Empire (MBE) for her services to radio entertainment and on the 11 June 1977 an Officer of the Order of the British Empire (OBE) for her services to the Arts.

Details

Daughter of George and Florence Meredith, Gwen completed her secondary education at Sydney Girls High School and her tertiary education at the University of Sydney, graduating with a Bachelor of Arts. From 1932 – 1939 she was the owner of the Chelsea Bookshop (which led to the development of the Chelsea Drama Club) before working as a freelance writer for four years.

In 1943 Gwen Meredith commenced a 33-year relationship with the Australian Broadcasting Corporation, contracted to write radio plays, serials and documentaries. For five years she wrote for radio serial *The Lawsons*, highlighting the problems of rural Australia in wartime. Her next serial, *Blue Hills*, depicted rural life in the wheat belt, the high country and the red centre, and ran for 5795 episodes over 27 years: ‘During the high noon of radio’s golden era’, claims Richard Begbie in the *Canberra Times*, ‘it was estimated that nearly half the Australian radio sets operating on 1pm weekdays were tuned to *Blue Hills*.’

Gwen Meredith married engineer Ainsworth Harrison on 24 December 1938. She enjoyed gardening and painting, as well as bush-walking and fly-fishing with her husband. Her publications include: *Wives Have Their Uses* (1944); *Great Inheritance* (1946); *The Lawsons* (1948); *Blue Hills* (1950); *Beyond Blue Hills* (1953), *Inns and Outs* (with husband Ainsworth Harrison) (1955) and *Into the Sun*.

Published resources

Edited Book
Who's Who in Australia 2002, Herd, Margaret, 2002

Monash Biographical Dictionary of 20th Century Australia, Arnold, John and Morris, Deirdre, 1994

Sound recording
[Conversation with Gwen Meredith] / [interviewer : Hazel de Berg], Meredith, Gwen, 1907-, 1975

Book
The golden age of Australian radio drama 1923-1960 : a history through biography, Lane, Richard, 1994

Australian women writers : a bibliographic guide, Adelaide, Debra, 1988

Wives have their uses : a comedy in three acts, Meredith, Gwen, 1907-, 1944

Great inheritance, Meredith, Gwen, 1907-, 1945

The Lawsons, Meredith, Gwen, 1907-, 1948

Blue Hills, Meredith, Gwen, 1907-, 1950

Beyond blue hills : the Ternna-Boolla story, Meredith, Gwen, 1907-, 1953

Inns and outs, Meredith, Gwen, 1907- and Harrison, Ainsworth, 1955

Into the sun : a Blue Hills novel, Meredith, Gwen, 1907-, 1961

Upstaged : Australian women dramatists in the limelight at last, Arrow, Michelle, 2002

Site Exhibition
Faith, Hope and Charity Australian Women and Imperial Honours: 1901-1989, Australian Women's Archives Project, 2003,
http://www.womenaustralia.info/exhib/honours/honours.html

Resource
Trove, National Library of Australia, 2009

Archival resources

National Library of Australia, Manuscript Collection
Papers of Gwen Meredith, 1938-1987 [manuscript]

National Library of Australia
[Biographical cuttings on Gwen Meredith, author, containing one or more cuttings from newspapers or journals]

Author Details
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