
Anthony Arrowroot and Nutty Nutella:

Advertising in Children's Literature

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Merchandising, product placement and advertising in children's literature can be seen as distasteful, due to the obvious manipulation of the audience, who are likely to be too young to be able to critically assess their reading material. I suggest that marketing of products for adults and children through narratives for children addresses a dual readership with varying degrees of success. This article examines a selection of advertising material found in the Children's Literature Collection at the State Library of Victoria, including works by well known artists such as Ida Rentoul Outhwaite, companies such as Arnott's, and instructive or educational works such as safety booklets and encyclopedias.

The theme of advertising in Australian children's literature has long been overlooked as an area of historical and analytical value. While modern marketing campaigns for children are debated and critiqued regularly in popular media, advertising embedded in fictional narratives is often ignored. This is not to say that advertising in children's literature is a relatively modern phenomenon. As Juliet O'Connor states, 'Advertising aimed directly at a child readership was much more common during the early decades of the 20th century than is broadly recognised' (2009, p.82). This article explores 19th and 20th century narratives aimed at a child readership specifically designed to advertise products, in order to give an overview of developments in advertising techniques. I suggest that further research should reveal the significance of the relationships between companies, advertisers and children's publishers. Research into children's advertising also sheds light on the lives of the various authors, illustrators and artists who worked on children's books and magazines. Many well known contributors to children's literature have forayed into the world of advertising. Their skill in evoking meaningful characters and situations were paid for and put to use, particularly in the 20th century as children's literature increasingly became a tool of consumerism and promotion.

It is relatively rare for special collections in libraries and archives to collect advertising for children. When they do, items remain difficult to locate using traditional methods like authorised library subject headings. Children's literature bibliographies often give brief entries making it difficult to

detect the vast range of advertising material available to researchers. A large selection of advertising material can be found in the Children's Literature Collection at the State Library of Victoria. The Ken Pound Collection, acquired by the Library in 1994, is particularly rich in non-traditional forms of children's literature. This is perhaps due to the fact that as a private collector, Ken Pound was able to amass a body of work that included reprints and ephemeral material. More importantly for researchers, the inclusive collecting of Ken Pound ensured that items dismissed as insignificant or promotional by institutions were preserved for future research. The material found in the Library's Children's Literature Collection includes company publications, material affiliated with institutions such as Police Victoria, and items which contain less obvious advertising messages or company sponsorship. Such items are reasonably rare as they have often not been considered worth preserving. Muir and Holden discuss the advertising work undertaken by Ida Rentoul Outhwaite, stating:

Very gradually some of this work is coming to light, but there must be a great deal more as yet undiscovered... As everyone knows, advertising material is the most ephemeral of printed matter, much of it too slight even to have been recovered, let alone preserved, by libraries, and certainly not kept by individuals, especially when intended for children in the first place.

(Muir & Holden 1985, pp.56-57)

Institutional reluctance to collect and retain advertising material has unfortunately hampered research in this area. One reason behind this reluctance is the perceived lack of literary or cultural value - items that have the sole purpose of advertising a product are often seen as inconsequential and disposable. The exceptions to this are a range of company sponsored publications designed to promote a product or brand within what is undeniably a work of children's literature. Even then, the items that were produced were likely to be short booklets, such as the ones produced for the Shell Oil Company, rather than lengthy texts or stories for older children. This assumed lack of value resulted in advertising material rarely being critiqued. Therefore, items with unexplored value remain poorly catalogued or undigitised in order to make way for bigger names in children's literature, or items that have already been digitally captured for exhibition.

Another factor which has hindered institutional collecting of advertising material is that illustrators and authors are not often credited for their work. This lack of creator identification makes claims of merit difficult to declare on authorship or illustration alone. This general lack of attribution highlights the practical applications for researching advertising in children's literature, including the use of advertisements to date works, and on the occasions where a contributor can be identified, periods of creative activity for authors and illustrators.

Advertising products

In 1871, William Calvert published *The Young Australian's Alphabet* in Melbourne, Victoria. The book has a range of advertisements, including slightly unusual ones for artificial teeth, monumental sculptures and tonic wine. Littered among these advertisements are the more mundane - real estate agents, drapery and tailors. This early advertising truly exemplifies the reasons why advertising flourished in the world of children's print during the late 19th and early 20th century. While children

in this period did not have the disposable income to engage with the commercial world, their parents did. Such 19th century advertisements were heavily geared toward an adult audience, and targeted them in the same way newspaper advertisements did. However, it appears that in this case, Calvert placed the onus upon the parents to read through his publication rather than using the child as a conduit.

As Australian children's literature developed, the advertising became more sophisticated and specific. Rather than advertising to a range of target markets, general advertising became focused on the demographic. The 20th century saw an influx of booklets and literature advertising particular products. Companies, whether trying to increase brand awareness or emphasise a family friendly persona, began to produce children's literature of their own. Moving away from the short and sharp advertisements of the previous century, the pamphlets and books were often literature in their own right, as companies and institutions inserted themselves and their products into fanciful narratives. Companies would often focus on particular brands, by either mentioning the name of the brand in text, or by including illustrations of the actual product packaging. Both advertising modes were often poorly disguised as part of the narrative.

Companies sought to lend credence to these publications by engaging well known and respected authors and illustrators to work on the books and pamphlets. Ida Rentoul Outhwaite was one of many Australian illustrators who worked for companies attempting to advertise their brand. The Melbourne born Outhwaite had an impressive career producing 'delicate illustrations of fairies and fairyland' (Lees & MacIntyre 1993, p.328), including international exhibitions, various books and a comic strip in the Melbourne *Weekly Times*. *The Sentry and the Shell Fairy* (Martin 1923?), published in the early 20th century, was one of two items Outhwaite worked on for the British Imperial Oil Company. The story of *The Sentry and the Shell Fairy* takes place in Egypt, where a sentry is told the story of oil by a fairy. The fairy describes how the ruler of Egypt is unhappy with the progress that is being made on the construction of a pyramid. The text states that the issue here is 'Friction-that unseen enemy that hindered the building of the Pyramid' (Martin 1923?, p.12). The fairies wait until the men leave their equipment, before they clean the parts and lubricate them with oil. The pyramid is rapidly finished, however 'trouble fell on the land' (Martin 1928?, p.13), and the secret of oil was lost until it was bestowed upon Australians and New Zealanders. The product name is then advertised in capital letters, as the text states:

Your Daddy may not know that he can to-day buy that same precious oil used by the Shell Fairies. So, next time you are motoring with Daddy, tell him about the Sentry and the Shell Fairy and remind him to be sure and ask for: SHELL MOTOR LUBRICATING OIL

(Martin 1923, p.15)

Outhwaite also illustrated *The Fairy Story that Came True* (British Imperial Oil Company 192-?) for the British Imperial Oil Company. The plot involves the Queen of the Shell Fairies, who wants to assist the distressed messenger fairies, who simply cannot keep up with their workload. She discovers the Spirit of Speed in a cave and becomes the Queen of Speed, thus enabling the messenger fairies to move faster and go about their work with ease. The modern reader, both child

and adult, will most likely find the description of the Queen's discovery confusing. A mysterious voice guides the Queen of the Shell Fairies to 'a big reservoir full of a liquid the Queen had never seen before. It was white like water, pure, and had a sweet, pleasant odor' (p.10). The author worked hard to make petroleum sound pleasant, gentle and harmless. The fairy world meets the real world when a cave-in traps the 'Spirit of Speed' deep underground. The voice announces that the spirit will wait for the 'greatest Empire the world will know' (p.14), in order to fulfill the needs of the new world. After being hidden for years, that same voice alerts a man to the presence of the 'Spirit of Speed', thereby inspiring him to get himself a drill. While the entire work is an obvious attempt to soften petroleum's image for a young generation, it is the final page which pushes home the advertising message. Parents are forced into the equation, as children are told to 'tell daddy that he can use these same pure drops of the Spirit of Speed in his Motor Car' (p.16). The final page also states that the liquid found by the Queen of the Shell Fairies is called Shell Motor Spirit in her honour.

The booklet *Jean and the Shell Fairy* (Shell Company 1930?) was written in a similar vein. The work was illustrated by Sheila Hawkins, an Australian illustrator who produced most of her work in England. The commercial endeavours undertaken by Hawkins were not limited to Shell, and she also worked providing illustrations for Penguin's Puffin Books and providing cat illustrations for the pet food company Tibs (Lees & MacIntyre, p.206). *Jean and the Shell Fairy* describes the adventures of a young girl amongst the fairies. The Shell Fairy is introduced by the King of Fairies, who states 'One of our guests to-day is the Shell Fairy; he is going to tell us all about the light and the other good things he has provided for the comfort of mankind' (p. 7). The Shell Fairy puts on a stage production for the crowd, first telling the audience about the joys of the artificial light that petroleum brings. A motorist then appears on stage and sings the praises of the 'fairy whose name is Shell' (p. 10). The next scene of the production sees a plane arriving in a set made to look like the outback, much to the joy of rural nurses. Finally, a farm scene is played out, and the Shell Fairy uses a tractor to plough the soil. The text and illustration use the lives of fairies as a means of introducing the uses of petroleum in every-day life.

The petroleum industry's marketing in Australia was impressive. While they were using children's literature as their medium, they also managed to advertise the advertising material. An article in *The Brisbane Courier* heralds Shell's promotional efforts in Australia, and is in itself a marketing piece. The image of Shell as a trusted and family friendly company is neatly summed up by the words 'Even the children are not missed by this vast organisation, and a little booklet en-titled "Jean and the Shell Fairy" has been printed for distribution amongst children' (The Brisbane Courier, 5 August 1930, p.45). Interestingly, the article does not mention Hawkins. The Launceston newspaper *The Examiner* gives a very brief mention of the publication of *The Sentry and the Shell Fairy*. Notably, Ida Rentoul Outhwaite is fully credited for the 'welcome impression' she makes in this booklet (*The Examiner*, 15 December 1923, p.15).

The petroleum industry was not alone in its attempts to gain positive brand recognition by using children's literature. The small booklet *Cinderella's Dream, and What it Taught Her* (Kitchen's

[192-]) was a piece of advertising material included in boxes of Kitchen's soap. *Cinderella's Dream* was another item illustrated by Outhwaite, and depicts Cinderella receiving advice from a Fairy Queen. That said, this particular Fairy Queen seems to have been less impressive than the one in the Disney version of the fairy tale, as Cinderella is not provided with a complete escape from her dreary life. Instead, advice relating to Kitchen's products are the miracle which the fairy passes on. All verse in the booklet describes the usefulness of Kitchen's products. Adjacent to the text is a small illustration of the product packaging and a larger illustration which sets the scene. Velvet Shaving Stick is advertised in an illustration that shows the Prince gazing into a mirror, one hand clutching a razor. The accompanying text states:

*'Now husbands want a lot of care,
Quite strangely they behave
If they can't lather well their face
When they require a shave.
To save your Prince from getting cross,
And ever be his treasure,
Provide a **VELVET SHAVING STICK**.
Thus make his shave a pleasure.'*

(Kitchen's [192-], p.15)

The combination of the product packaging, the product name in bold, and the situational illustrations is impressive. The illustrations and verse are creative enough to ensure that the booklet has undeniable appeal to both children and adults. Assuming that, in the 1920s, an adult female would be opening the soap box, Kitchen's ensured that marketing potential successfully targeted a dual audience.

Promotional rhymes were also used in another advertising booklet called *The O.K. Fairy Book: New Rhymes and Pictures for Kiddies Only* (Weston Company 1923). Illustrated by Pixie O'Harris, the prolific children's fairy illustrator, the work advertises O.K. canned fruit, jams and sauces by combining an illustration of the product and a rhyme extolling the various virtues of the product. The booklet includes illustrations of the product packaging, complete with small fairies climbing on and around the items. The verse encourages the reader to 'Ask mother to order O.K. next week' (p.11). The lack of a story to go along with the rhymes, which are largely touting the wholesome nature of the product, makes this booklet less enticing than *Cinderella's Dream*. One of the more interesting verses reads:

*'A sad little frog
in the river bed
Was croaking and shaking
his funny head
Repining that gnats
were but paltry fare
Compared with O.K.
Canned fruits so rare'*

(Weston Company 1923, [p.6])

The verses do not develop a narrative, and are therefore unlikely to engage the imagination as effectively as promotional items that tell a story.

Two other well-known companies used the lure of illustration and talent of children's illustrators to promote their products, however, unlike petroleum or cleaning products, their products were more in line with the Weston Company, and targeted the children themselves. In an act that extends on Shell's use of Outhwaite, Minties used a range of artists to create cartoons for their wrappers, including James Bancks, Syd Nicholls, Dorothy Wall and more recently, Jeremy Andrew. The Minties Magic Drawing Book, published in the 1920s, is a curious and engaging item (James Steadman-Henderson's Sweets LTD 192-?). The brand colours of red, white and green are used on the cover, as is an illustration of four Minties. The hook lay in the interactive nature of the book. By rubbing a lead pencil over the blank pages of the book, a Minties-themed picture would then appear. The book tries to evoke a sense of freedom and youthfulness as it depicts female surfers, cricket players and young couples. Each picture has an accompanying text. One of the most standout scenes is the tennis 'moment', which states:

It's pretty rough to be beaten by a girl in a straight love set - even if you have been burning the candle at both ends and coming home with the milk. Still, Life's full of worries and it's some consolation after a good licking to find a girl sporty enough to come forward with "Minties" which, by the way, make another good licking.

(James Steadman-Henderson's Sweets LTD 192-?, [p.9])

The back inside cover of the Minties booklet advertises other confectionery made by Steadman-Henderson's Sweets, while the back cover shows an illustration of a Minties tin. The back cover also warns buyers to avoid imitation products and to ensure that 'Minties' is printed on the individual wrappers. The booklet combines single page illustrations with repeated use of the brand name and emphasises the message with the final illustration.

Short piecemeal illustrations were also used by the company Blyth & Platt, who initially advertised through cartoons created by Lionel Lindsay and published in the *Sydney Bulletin*. These cartoons were compiled and used to create *The Adventures of 'Chunder Loo'* (Lindsay [1916]). The product, Cobra Boot Polish, is used liberally throughout the series as the protagonist, Sydney shoe-shiner Chunder Loo, goes on adventures with his two companions, a dog and a koala. Not only is the product the focus of the cartoon, but on a trip to England, Chunder Loo even visits the Cobra Works

in Watford [p.20]. The work and its illustrations are overwhelmingly racist and sexist, however, it is clear that the purpose of advertising Cobra Boot Polish was achieved. Each page has a large illustration of Chunder Loo on his adventures. Directly under each illustration is the slogan “‘Cobra,’ *the* Boot Polish’. The verse beneath the slogan mentions the brand in capital letters, and discusses the use of the product and the joy it brings to people around the world. It appears that Cobra is even the solution to poverty in Colombo, Sri Lanka. One verse reads:

*“Chunder Loo”
of Akim Foo,
In an ox cart
Travels through
All the humbler
Districts where
Cries for money
Rend the air.
“Here.” says ‘Chunder,’
As he drives,
“‘COBRA’ brightens
Many lives.
“Take a sample
Tin away,
Guard against
A rainy day.”*

(Lindsay [1916], p.9)

The accompanying picture shows Chunder Loo sitting on an ox driven cart in a loincloth and turban, throwing sample tins to the public. The series also depicts an appallingly sexist image of a severe looking suffragette [p.30], a Spanish wife being wooed by Chunder [p.16], and a young Melbourne woman being engaged in conversation by the koala. While the simple rhymes and busy images would have appealed to a young audience, it is difficult to claim that this series was entirely designed for children. However, the inclusion of the dog and koala as Chunder’s companions indicate that the cartoons were not just intended for adults. Even though the product is an ostensibly adult item, the Chunder Loo cartoons can be compared to the petroleum booklets - adult products that are marketed through children. The political themes indicate that unlike the petroleum marketing, the Chunder Loo series was supposed to also appeal to adults, the real target market.

The Amazing Adventures of Anthony Arrowroot, published around the 1930s by William Arnott Pty Ltd, also uses the product and branding in an ingenious way. The book begins at the Arnott’s factory, when the Arnott’s fairy plays her magic violin. The parrots, or ‘Pollys’, on the tins then come to life. The parrots open the tins, from which emerge the biscuits, ready to play. Not only does this happen in the factory - the magic music allows any Arnott’s biscuit to wake, as long as there is a Polly to open the tin.

The hero, Anthony Arrowroot, runs away from the factory, meets Pussypurr the cat, and after investigating a mysterious island, gets involved with a war between the Buttons and the Invisibles. Just as Anthony, Pussypurr and the Invisibles are about to be overrun by Buttons, Polly arrives with reinforcements in the shape of other biscuits from Anthony's tin. Anthony and the Invisibles win the war by shooting the Buttons with a substance that makes them peaceful. Anthony then returns to the factory.

By anthropomorphising the biscuits, the work raises the problematic question of the reader eating what could be described as comatose biscuits. Fortunately, upon being eaten, Arnott's biscuits go to the 'Land of Fun'. The work transforms product into edible protagonist, effectively allowing for maximum branding. Each image of Anthony depicts him as an Arnott's biscuit, complete with the word 'Arnott' embossed into the biscuit figure. The product name 'Arrowroot' is mentioned frequently in the text, as are the products Jatz, Orange, Cocoanut, Sao, Ginger Nut and 'Monty Carlo'. The work is impressive in that it builds a genuine interest in the brand and the products. The inclusion of main characters that are not related to the brand is cleverly done, so that they do not appear out of place in this bizarre Arnott's world.

The Sanitarium Health Food Company advertised their wares in a completely different manner to Arnott's. In their book, *Australia Yesterday and Today* (Sanitarium Health Food Company [1948?]), the main advertising push takes place in the forward, which states that the book is actually an album for mounting picture cards found in packs of Sanitarium food. The brands are advertised in capital letters, as the forward shrieks 'now being included in WEETBIX and GRANOSE', along with a stable of other products. The child friendly nature of the publication is emphasised by the 'swaps' statement in the back of the book. Sanitarium suggests that children swap their cards with friends, or if they are finding a card difficult to obtain, send two cards to any Sanitarium office and receive the sought after card in return. The company even suggests that if children wish to complete a previously issued album, they can send in a card from *Australia Yesterday and Today*. However, none of the cards from other albums could be used to obtain the new cards, thus ensuring the sale of new packets of food. Throughout the book, Sanitarium consistently encourages the children to make certain that adults buy their products, lest their collection remain incomplete.

Australia Yesterday and Today is clearly designed to be an educational work, supported by a commercial company, no doubt eager to be seen as giving back to the community. Other companies also promoted their product by including them in educational books. Marjorie Hann's safety booklets from the 1950s and 1960s, starring Charlie Cheesecake, were used to encourage safety and promote both Hall's Lemonade and the 3KZ Charlie Cheesecake radio program. *The Adventures of Charlie Cheesecake* (Hann [195-?]) includes an advertisement for the radio show on the inside cover, which has promotional photographs of the show's two hosts. *The Return of Charlie Cheesecake* (Hann [196-?]) pushes the marketing further and attempts to use Charlie to sell a product along with his show. Lemonade is the chosen product, and Charlie is pictured lying against a tree while fishing and enjoying Hall's Lemonade. The text states 'Hall's provide the best thirst-aid!' (p.34). The back cover of the booklet shows Charlie peeking out from behind a bottle of

Hall's that is almost twice his size, providing the reader with both the brand name and the visual cue of what to look for when shopping.

A relatively recent book which advertises a product to children is Ferrero's *Bad-boy Bunyip Goes Nuts: a Nutty Nutella Team Outback Adventure* (Hood 1995?). The product is the star of the book, as the Nutty Nutella Team are made up of ingredients such as hazelnuts, a cow and a sugar cane, who, much like Outhwaite's Queen of the Shell fairies, are spoken to by a disembodied voice. The voice is so pleased by the make-up of the team that it presents them with a magical giant flying hazelnut to use as a vehicle (p.3-4).

The plot revolves around a bunyip and his wayward friends, who steal hazelnuts. The Nutty Nutella Team are drawn into the situation as one of their members accidentally gets stolen along with some nuts. The team successfully recover their lost member and the stolen hazelnuts by encouraging the bunyip to see the error of his thieving ways. The bunyip has sustained himself on a diet of grubs (the reason for his misery), and after eating a Nutella sandwich, requests more. The Nutty Nutella Team inform the bunyip that without hazelnuts, there can be no more Nutella. The bunyip develops a sense of guilt, so the hazelnuts are returned. Ferrero not only made components of the product into the main characters, an illustrated jar of Nutella manages to find its way into the foreground on two occasions (p.7, 9). The work reinforces the name of the brand through text and forges visual brand recognition.

In contrast to Ferrero's direct use of the product, Kraft's book *Rocketing me to Planet Inanimatom* (Thompson [198-]) largely avoids mentioning both the company and the product. The work follows the adventures of Walter, Jane and Hebrides the dog, who hail from South Melbourne (p.22). The children are charged with the rescue of Smoothy and Crunchy, the peanut butter bears, by the president of the galaxy. The bears are stuck in suspended animation on a far off planet and are therefore unable to make peanut butter. As the protagonists undertake the rescue, they encounter 'small jelly like creatures with tentacles like an octopus' (p.13), which may be a reference to peanut butter and jelly - largely an American culinary experience. The rescue is successful, and the children are returned home.

The final page of the book shows an illustration of two jars of Kraft peanut butter, one smooth and one crunchy. The Kraft logo is shown clearly, as are the two bears. Overall, the poor editing and unintentionally comical text and illustration make the work seem startlingly unfinished. The plot moves along at a cracking pace, explaining what should be crucial points in one sentence, or ignoring them altogether. As the children are on board the president's ship, they are told 'Children, I realise the danger of this mission. If you do not wish to undergo it, I can turn the ship around now' (p.6). The children are then neither seen nor heard, as the next paragraph states 'The atmosphere was filled with blue and pink steaming clouds' (p.9), as the ship approaches the planet. Interestingly, there is no mention of Kraft until the final illustration. The bears are simply called Smoothy and Crunchy, the peanut butter bears.

Companies and institutions

Products are clearly not the only source of inspiration for companies and institutions advertising through children's literature. Organisations found that advertising the parent body through illustration and text could be done with ease. Many companies, such as petroleum companies and food producers like Arnott's, inserted themselves into narratives, but maintained a product as the main focus. Others chose not to promote a particular product or range, and instead promoted the parent company.

The Sanitarium Health Food Company took a different approach from Arnott's, choosing to release a range of non-fiction books aimed at children, such as the previously mentioned *Australia Yesterday and Today*. Their works covered all manner of topics, from the book *Australian Bird Life* [196-?] to *The Story of the Pacific* [195-]. In 1946, Sanitarium published *The Sanitarium Children's Abbreviated Australian Encyclopaedia*. Sanitarium minimised the size of their name on the cover, so that it was crowded by the rest of the title. The educational aspects of the work are emphasised, while the commercial interests are slightly hidden. The marketing payoff for Sanitarium came as the publications encouraged the purchase of their products, some of which included colour images which were intended for pasting in designated areas in the encyclopaedia. There were sixty pictures for children to collect and paste into their encyclopedias, which were 'included in various Sanitarium health food products' (preface). The sixty main picture sections of the encyclopedia are plain white boxes with the title of the image and a number - acting as a clear sign post for the collector.

This urge to produce useful or educational marketing publications continued past the 1950s and 1960s. *Silly Billy learns a lesson* is a 1983 publication that first appears to be a straight forward book about safety. After being introduced to the main characters, the reader soon hits a full page photo of a helicopter, which breaks this illusion (p.8). The ubiquitous 'enjoy Coca-Cola' logo is clearly visible on the helicopter, which is entirely red and white. The image is out of place, and too obvious to escape attention, despite the fact that the book includes plenty of photographs alongside the illustrations. It is not until the inside back cover that one sees the heading 'Sponsors', and realises that the helicopter has more than just the Coke logo. Channel 7, *The Advertiser* and 5AD Music all have small logos on the helicopter, however it is clear from the helicopter that Coke provided the majority of the sponsorship. Interestingly, while *The Return of Charlie Cheesecake* managed to fit in the final image of Charlie and the bottle of lemonade, the publishers of *Silly Billy* included the logos of many sponsors - a testament to the difficulties of juggling multiple business interests.

Visual branding was impressively used by Victoria Police, as they collaborated with a children's author in an attempt to use children's books as educational and promotional tools. The 'Police Series' written by Lorraine Wilson and illustrated by Marina McAllan, explore various aspects of police work, including cadet training, the use of dogs and horses, air patrols and work done by traffic police. The works include an acknowledgement on the inside covers which states 'The author and publishers would like to thank members of the Victoria Police Force for their co-operation and

assistance in the preparation of these books'. While the works do not advertise products, they do advertise Victoria Police as an institution. The texts which focus on cadets advertise police work as a potential career, while other works portray the police in a positive light - creating brand awareness. The work *Sally Jenkins at the police academy* (Wilson 1989) appears to be encouraging women to enter the police force. Cadet training is portrayed as structured, interesting and unfortunately, due to some conventional gender stereotyping, sexist. The promotion of institutions is clearly not limited to those that view themselves as a business.

Marketing strategy: Building relationships with children

Companies and institutions clearly had a range of marketing strategies at their disposal but relatively few seem to have harnessed direct communication. The John Mystery publications were a notable exception, ushering in an interesting period in the history of children's advertising.

John Mystery was the alter ego of Lester Sinclair, a businessman who produced over three hundred titles from the 1930s to the 1950s (O'Connor 2009, p.106). Some of Sinclair's advertising was standard - a list of titles at the end of the books allowed children to view the items that were not in their collection. *Famous Robbers* (John Mystery, [1945-50?]) contains three pages of titles, divided by series, with a short description of each group. While encouraging collecting was not a particularly innovative step, other advertising strategies were both curious and clever.

Sinclair personalised the experience a child had when reading one of his publications through a variety of means, including his 'Dear Cobber' letters, which encouraged readers to communicate and build a relationship with John Mystery. Children were urged to ask retailers for titles that they were after (John Mystery *Famous Romance*, [1944]). Part of the 'Dear Cobber' letter on the inside cover of *Famous Romance* states:

Thank you for asking again and again for my books. If the book you want is not at your shop to-day, it may be there to-morrow. Soon, when the final Victory has been gained, and the dream of peace is a dream no longer, I will then be able to write all the books for which you have asked. Until then, please keep enquiring at your books shop for the John Mystery book you want.

(John Mystery, [1944])

Sinclair's efforts to promote the John Mystery titles did not stop with the books themselves. Some of his 'Dear Cobber' letters suggested that children write to him in order to receive 'lucky beans' that he had found in an old chest. The beans were from Jack's beanstalk and purportedly brought luck to the bearer (John Mystery, *Famous Romance*). To add to the element of magic and wonder, John Mystery was said to live in a castle. Advising children to address their letters to 'John Mystery, Adventure Castle, Sydney' was another quirky marketing ploy. Sinclair's creative and endearing letters to his readers, while charming, are quite clearly advertising. The 'Dear Cobber' letters were perhaps the biggest hook for readers, as they directly engaged children and referred to real time events, such as war and rationing.

The use of letters to the reader was more likely to engage children, as they were actively involved and could exercise their own imaginations, rather than being limited by externally imposed structures like card collections. At least one other company chose to use the letter as an effective way of getting their message across. Arthur Yates & Co. published the work *The Garden Year with Mr. Bear* in the 1940s, which is almost entirely based on letters to the reader.

The front cover gives no indication that the work is essentially a Yates promotional book, as the title does not even include the company's name, nor is there any sign of a Yates product. However, the inside cover contains the words 'published for Australian kiddies by Arthur Yates & Co. Pty. Ltd. Australia's greatest seed house', followed by the address of their Sydney location.

The guiding character in this work, Uncle Koala, writes a letter to the reader for each month of the year, beginning on January 1st. The letters are accompanied by images of Uncle Koala going about his gardening, with different rhymes to emphasise the tasks that are to be done. After addressing the introductory January letter 'Dear Boys and Girls', Uncle Koala uses it to discuss the benefits of gardening, and suggest that 'mother will be pleased' when the young gardener is able to show her the resulting fresh produce [p.2]. In the same letter Uncle Koala also states 'I am sure daddy will give you a corner of his garden and if you ask him nicely, he will buy you a hoe, rake and spade in just the right sizes for you to use'. There is no mention here of a parent buying Yates' seeds, but March's letter has Uncle Koala spruiking Yates' sweet pea seeds as the best, and suggesting that the reader give them a try [p.6]. The April verse in *The Garden Year with Mr. Bear* mentions the young sweet peas growing [p.9]. This particular verse has been digitised by the State Library of Victoria, and is freely available to the public. However, while one can view Uncle Koala clutching a bag of Yates seeds along with some text, there is no accompanying letter. Although it is useful to get an idea of the layout and the way the gardening advice is dispensed, in my view it is impossible for a researcher to use the digital



Figure 1. Cover: *The Garden Year with Mr Bear* [194-], Arthur Yates & Co., photo credit: State Library of Victoria.

material to assess the work as a whole, as context is lost. A reader quite clearly needs to read the monthly letters to understand the way Yates was nudging children toward their product.

December's letter begins with 'Hurrah for Yates'! - for with the help of the firm who only sell the very best of seeds, I have won First Prize for the Best Garden in Bushland' [p.24]. This blatant promotion is to be expected, and the marketing is mirrored in the verse and images which lie opposite the letters, however the lack of visual branding is interesting, indicating that the book truly is for children - ready to request items from their parents verbally according to the month, and therefore in no real need of visual cues. While Uncle Koala is occasionally shown with a bag of seeds that says 'Yates', it is by no means the same sort of visual branding that was undertaken by Arnott's.

The difficulties that researchers may have when attempting to locate material relating to advertising, or any other relatively un-explored area, is the lack of identification present in library catalogues and other finding tools. *The Garden Year with Mr. Bear* can be located in the State Library of Victoria catalogue by searching for the parent company, as is the case with most children's advertising material. Items like *Silly Billy Learns a Lesson* perhaps pose the greatest problem for researchers. For the purposes of this paper, *Silly Billy* was located in an entirely serendipitous manner. However, as an outdated and non-descript book about safety, it has certainly not been digitised, and the authorised subject headings do not suggest that advertising is a component of the work.

Since advertising is not an intended subject of a significant proportion of the works discussed in this paper, research into advertising is fraught with difficulty, as there are limited ways in which to find material. Children's literature collections such as the one at the State Library of Victoria have the potential to provide in-depth insight into the world of print advertising as it relates to children and their parents. The ephemeral nature of advertising material, and the dismissal of works that have a clear commercial agenda, means that the SLV collection is both unique and valuable.

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