The body in the library
An exhibition of detective fiction from the Rare Books Collection
Introduction

An unpleasant thing in real life, crime takes on another life in our imagination. A skilled storyteller preys on our hopes and fears, providing all manner of excitement in a compelling narrative seemingly made for the sleepless small hours of the morning. Television and film take it as their stock in trade, with producers constantly looking for new angles, new locations and, above all, new villains. It is the same with books. This is what makes this Rare Books exhibition so interesting, particularly as crime in its myriad cultural forms feeds off itself.

Gangsters and standover men follow the Borsalino screen heroes of a previous generation. We see the tilt of homage to the supreme lady novelist of the genre, Agatha Christie, in the television murder mystery set in the totally unreal English village of Midsomer. Philip Marlowe, Raymond Chandler’s hard-boiled private detective, reappears in every imaginable post-modern twist of gender, location and identity. Without crime our contemporary fiction – and our writers – would be the poorer.

Australia was founded by transported criminals. Following hard on their manacled heels were importers of books. The Victorian period writers Charles Dickens, Edgar Allen Poe, Wilkie Collins and Arthur Conan Doyle all dealt in crime. Soon after he emerged from London’s Baker Street fog, Sherlock Holmes was in Australian bookstores and lending libraries.

Byways explored in this exhibition include local evocations and parodies of crime literature. The Mystery of a Hansom Cab by a New Zealander, Fergus Hume, set in Melbourne in the boom decade of the 1880s became a best seller. Then as now, crime paid. Publishers became adept at sending coded visual messages. ‘Yellowbacks’, so-called because of their yellow boards, were cheap sensational novels, mass-produced and beloved by collectors today. They preceded ‘pulp fiction’ usually associated with the United States but also published in Australia. Young men in the 1950s were struck by the lurid images of scantily clad women in compromising situations on the covers of novels by the Australian writer, Alan Yates, better known to the world as Carter Brown.

Dip into this exhibition and you will discover not only the delights enjoyed by readers of popular fiction in former times but also some of the key templates of the literature of crime. You will discover anew that crime is an almost irresistible prospect in a book.

Dr David Dunstan

Dr Dunstan, Senior Lecturer with the National Centre for Australian Studies at Monash University and co-ordinator of its Graduate Publishing program, taught a course in crime fiction and has edited a criminal autobiography, Owen Suffolk’s Days of Crime and Years of Suffering (2000).
Dickens’ Bleak House and Edwin Drood

*Bleak House* / by Charles Dickens ; with illustrations by H.K. Browne. (London : Bradbury and Evans, 1853)

*Bleak House* includes one of the first detectives in English fiction, Inspector Bucket. He is called upon to investigate the murder of a lawyer.

5. Dickens, Charles, 1812-1870.
*The mystery of Edwin Drood* / by Charles Dickens ; with illustrations. (London : Chapman & Hall, 1870) 6 parts issued from April to September, 1870.

Dickens’ last novel. He died, having completed only six parts of a planned twelve. Edwin Drood is murdered but his killer’s identity is not revealed. The illustrations on the covers of the parts are thought to be significant as they show incidents which were to be described in the novel’s later chapters. According to his friend and biographer, John Forster, the murderer was to be John Jasper, Edwin Drood’s uncle. Both Drood and Jasper were in love with the same woman.

*John Jasper’s secret : being a narrative of certain events following and explaining “The mystery of Edwin Drood”*. (London : Wyman & Sons, 1872)

This is the best-known of the contemporary continuations. It appeared anonymously and was thought at the time to have been written by Dickens’s son, Charles Dickens Jr., and Wilkie Collins.


Sir Arthur Conan Doyle’s fictional detective, Sherlock Holmes, first appeared in, “A Study in Scarlet,” *Beeton’s Christmas Annual* 1887. The character’s popularity was sustained with Doyle producing another novel in 1890 and a series of short stories in *The Strand Magazine* in 1891. However, the author believed that detective fiction was impeding his development as a serious novelist and he tried to kill the character in “The Final Problem.” He sends him plummeting to his death over the Reichenbach Falls in Switzerland, with his nemesis, Professor Moriarty.


The public demand for Sherlock Holmes was such that Doyle had to resurrect him and wrote “The Hound of the Baskervilles,” setting it prior to “Final Problem.”
9. **Doyle, Arthur Conan, Sir, 1859-1930.**

*His last bow : some reminiscences of Sherlock Holmes / by Arthur Conan Doyle.* (London : G. Bell, 1917)

A collection of short stories from *The Strand Magazine.* “His Last Bow” is set just before the First World War and has Holmes and Watson called back from retirement, capturing a German spy.

10. **Poe, Edgar Allan, 1809-1849.**


Edgar Allen Poe’s short story, “The Murders in the Rue Morgue,” is often referred to as the first detective fiction written in English. It appeared in Graham’s Magazine in 1841. The crime involves the murder of two women in a fourth-floor room, locked from the inside. The main character, Dupin uses his powers of deduction, setting the tone for later amateur investigators. He also has a friend who acts as narrator. The crime was committed by an orang-utan, owned by a sailor, who had brought the animal back from Borneo. He had escaped from his master, taking with him the sailor’s razor. This he used to slit the throat of one of the women while trying to shave her.

11. **Collins, Wilkie, 1824-1889.**


First published in 1868, the plot revolves around the theft of a large diamond looted from India. It is notable in the development of the crime novel for the appearance of a detective, Sergeant Cuff.

12. **Fletcher, Henry, 1856-1932.**

*The North Shore mystery / by Henry Fletcher.* (Melbourne : George Robertson, 1899)

An example of an Australian “yellowback.” This murder mystery is set in Sydney’s Lavender Bay.

13. **Herman, Henry, 1832-1894.**

*The crime of a Christmas toy ; a detective story / by Henry Herman ... with illustrations by Geo. Hutchinson.* Colonial edition. (London, Ward, Lock & Bowden, Ltd. [1900])

First published in *Beeton’s Christmas Annual 1893.* The plot involves the murder of a nobleman by parcel-bomb. A detective is employed to solve the crime.

14. **Finn, Edmund, d. 1922.**


Edmund Finn Jr. was the son of the Melbourne historian, “Garryowen.” He wrote two pantomimes and at least two murder mysteries. *A Priest’s Secret* is set on the Victorian goldfields.

15. **Hume, Fergus, 1859-1932.**

*The mystery of a hansom cab / by Fergus W. Hume.* (London : The Hansom Cab Publishing Co., [1888?])

Originally published in 1886, this was the first detective novel set in Australia. The scene is Melbourne, beginning on St. Kilda Road, with a man found dead in a hansom cab. Much of the action takes place in the city’s slums. Detective Gorby of the Victorian Police solves the crime.

16. **Ferguson, W. Humer.**

*The mystery of a wheel-barrow, or, Gaboriau Gaboroood : an idealistic story of a great and rising colony / W. Humer Ferguson.* (London : Walter Scott, 1888)

*The Mystery of a Hansom Cab* was an immediate success. An adaptation for the stage appeared in 1888 as did this parody. The sub-title refers to Gaboriau (1832-73), a French novelist and pioneer of detective fiction.

2ND SHELF:

17. **Eberhardt, Walter F., 1891?-1935.**

*The jig-saw puzzle murder / by Walter F. Eberhardt.* (Covent Garden : Puzzle Books, [1933])

Accompanied by a box containing a 204 piece jig-saw revealing the solution to the crime. When completed, the puzzle shows the murder scene. We see a gaming table with an “oriental” shooting the victim with a gun disguised as a clarinet. The 1930s saw a revival of interest in jigsaw puzzles; it was also the heyday of the detective novel.
1 game (1 book, handcuffs, 7 booklets, 3 fingerprint cards, 1 notice board, 14 notices, 1 fingerprint powder, 1 stamp pad, 1 crayon, fake moustache material) : ill. ; Box (21 x 36 x 3 cm.)

Herewith the clues / Dennis Wheatley ; planned by J. G. Links. (London : Hutchinson & Co., [1939]
Wheatley and Links produced a set of four, File on Bolitho Blane (US title: Murder Off Miami) (July 1936); Who Killed Robert Prentice? (June 1937); The Malinsay Massacre (April 1938); Herewith the Clues! (July 1939). Copies of each are on display. They are presented as a police dossier with documents, photographs and clues, such as spent cartridges, and strands of hair. Who Killed Robert Prentice? includes a torn-up pornographic postcard, “Produced at inquest: found in dustbin under kitchen sink.” The solutions are in a sealed section at the back of each book.

20. Waddington’s cluedo [game] / Waddington Games Ltd. (Woodlesford, Leeds : John Waddington, c1965) [Donor: Meredith Sherlock]
An Australian version of the popular detective game called Clue in the USA. The original version appeared in England in 1949. The characters include Miss Scarlett, Colonel Mustard, etc., and the clues include, a gun, a knife, a length of lead piping and a piece of rope.

The trial of William Corder, at the Assizes, Bury St. Edmunds, Suffolk, August 7th and 8th,1828, for the murder of Maria Marten, in the Red Barn, at Polstead : including the matrimonial advertisement, and many other curious and important particulars, obtained exclusively by the editor. (London : Printed for Knight & Lacey, 55, Paternoster-Row; and sold by all booksellers, 1828)

Fairburn's edition of the trial of William Corder, for the murder of Maria Marten, in the Red Barn, at Polstead in Suffolk. Including the evidence, speeches of counsel, charge to the jury, prisoner's defence, &c. at full length : tried at Bury St. Edmund, August 7, 1828, and following day, before Chief Baron Alexander. (London: Printed and published by John Fairburn ... sold by Cowie and Strange ..., [1828?])

An authentic and faithful history of the mysterious murder of Maria Marten : with a full development of all the extraordinary circumstances which led to the discovery of her body in the Red Barn.../ the whole compiled and arranged, with upwards of three hundred explanatory notes, by J. Curtis, and embellished with many highly interesting engravings. (London : T. Kelly, 1834)
The Murder in the Red Barn was a notorious case which took place in Polstead, Suffolk in May 1827. William Corder and Maria Marten had arranged to meet in the red barn and then to elope. Instead Corder killed his lover and buried her. He then left the town and pretended they had married and were living on the Isle of Wight, even writing letters to her mother supposedly from Maria. The mother dreamt her daughter’s body was buried in the barn and when she asked her husband to dig there, Maria’s remains were discovered, with Corder’s handkerchief tied around her throat. The local constable was able to trace Corder and arrest him. He was running a boarding house with his new wife who had responded to a matrimonial advertisement he had placed in The Times. He was tried and found guilty. The execution took place on 11 August 1828 in front of 7000 people.
Arthur Upfield,
_The Sands of Windee and The Murchison Murders_

_The sands of Windee / by Arthur W. Upfield._
(London : Hutchinson, [1931]) [with facsimile dustwrapper]

_The sands of Windee / by Arthur W. Upfield._
(Sydney : Angus & Robertson, 1958)

_The Murchison murders / by Arthur Upfield ; edited by Bernard Cronin._
(Sydney : Midget Masterpiece Publishing, [1934])

Arthur Upfield is best known for his series of novels featuring Bony, the part-Aboriginal detective. Bony made his first appearance in Upfield's second novel, _The Barrakee Mystery_ in 1929. For his new novel, _The Sands of Windee_, he had to solve the problem of how to dispose of a body without leaving a trace. Upfield was working as a boundary rider on the rabbit-proof fence in Western Australia in 1929 when he discussed this problem with one of his mates, who suggested that the body be burnt, the bone fragments be pounded to dust and then dispersed by the wind. He offered £1 if any of his work-mates could offer a solution. Snowy Rowles was working with Upfield at the time and was part of these discussions. He later killed three of the men he worked with and used the method to cover his crime. However, he kept a ring from one of the victims and was arrested, tried, convicted and executed, on 13 June 1931. Upfield gave evidence in court that the discussions about the “perfect murder” had taken place with Rowles present.

_The Sands of Windee_, published in 1931, was the novel which included the details about disposal of the body and _The Murchison Murders_ (1934) was the account Upfield produced of the events which surrounded it. Also on display is the first Australian edition (1958).

**BOTTOM SHELF:**

27. Penguins
Among the first ten Penguins published in July 1935 were Dorothy L. Sayers’ _The Unpleasantness at the Bellona Club_, (no. 5) and Agatha Christie’s _The Mysterious Affair at Styles_ (no. 6). Because of copyright difficulties the Agatha Christie title was withdrawn, to be re-issued later as no. 61, and her _Murder on the Links_ substituted as no. 6a. The “Green Penguins” have always been popular with crime buffs. The variety of titles on display shows the development in cover design from the early typographical style with horizontal bands, to the more recent illustrated covers. The authors include English and American authors as well as continental crime writers such as Simenon.

Examples are also included of the Penguins published by Lothian in Melbourne during World War II. Monash has a large collection of these, as well as some examples of wartime Penguins published in Egypt and New Zealand. The Sydney firm Horwitz published Penguins in 1961 with their own pulp covers. These are also on display.

**WALL CASES: NO. 1**

Each issue has a distinctive title. “Four new volumes ... are issued on the first Friday of every month.”

The Sexton Blake Library ran from 1915 to 1968 through five series. Sexton Blake was a private detective, a character based on Sherlock Holmes. The stories were written by a syndicate of authors.

On display is a copy of _The Man Who Wouldn’t Quit_, by Gilbert Chester, new series, no. 74. (1944), with the original art work by Eric Parker.
NO. 2
Film posters and the original stories

Number six / by Edgar Wallace.1st ed. (London : G. Newnes, [1927])

Edgar Wallace was one of the most prolific thriller writers of his time. He wrote the original screenplay for *King Kong* but died on the set before the movie was completed.

*Number Six* was an English movie directed by Robert Tronson who later made episodes of *The Bill*.

Meet Mr. Callaghan / Peter Cheyney. (London : Collins, 1953)

Peter Cheyney was a police reporter who turned to writing crime novels in 1936. His first Slim Callaghan novel appeared in 1938, and he featured as the hard-boiled detective in many of Cheyney’s later works.

*Meet Mr. Callaghan* was an English movie directed by Charles Joel Saunders in 1954.

NO. 3
The Detection Club


The rules of the crime fiction were codified in 1929 by Ronald Knox in his introduction to the *Best Detective Stories of the Year 1928*.

Knox’s “Ten Commandments” are as follows:
1. The criminal must be mentioned in the early part of the story, but must not be anyone whose thoughts the reader has been allowed to know.
2. All supernatural or preternatural agencies are ruled out as a matter of course.
3. Any secret room or passage is forbidden.
4. No hitherto undiscovered poisons may be used, nor any appliance which will need a long scientific explanation at the end.
5. No Chinaman must figure in the story.
6. No accident must ever help the detective, nor must he ever have an unaccountable intuition which proves to be right.
7. The detective himself must not commit the crime.
8. The detective is bound to declare any clues which he may discover.
9. The stupid friend of the detective, the Watson, must not conceal from the reader any thoughts which pass through his mind: his intelligence must be slightly, but very slightly, below that of the average reader.
10. Twin brothers, and doubles generally, must not appear unless we have been duly prepared for them.

32. The floating admiral / by certain members of The Detection Club. (London : Hodder and Stoughton, [1931])

The Detection Club was formed by a group of British crime writers in 1930. The names included, Agatha Christie, Dorothy L. Sayers, Freeman Wills Croft, Baroness Orczy, Arthur Morrison, John Rhode, Anthony Berkeley and Ronald Knox. G. K. Chesterton was the first President. They agreed to write a series of novels using Knox’s rules, with each member writing a chapter in turn. Seven volumes appeared from 1931 to 1939.


Helen Simpson, an Australian novelist living in London, was an Associate member of the Detection Club and contributed to two of the novels, *Ask a Policeman*, and *The Anatomy of Murder* (1936).

34. Six against Scotland Yard : in which Margery Allingham, Anthony Berkeley, Freeman Wills Crofts, Father Ronald Knox, Dorothy L. Sayers, Russell Thorndike commit the crime of murder which ex-Superintendent Cornish, C.I.D., is called upon to solve. (Garden City, N.Y. : The Sun Dial Press, Inc., [1937])

Originally published in London as *Six Against the Yard*. (1936)
35. Murder pie / by J.L. Ranken ... [et al] ; edited by J.L. Ranken, Jane Clunies Ross. 3rd ed. (Sydney : Angus & Robertson, 1936)

By the mid-thirties a group of Sydney writers attempted their own joint detective novel. The result was Murder Pie which appeared in 1936.

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The quest of the sacred slipper / by Sax Rohmer. (New York : A.L. Burt, 1914)


The mask of Fu Manchu / by Sax Rohmer. (New York : A.L. Burt, [1932])


Despite Fr. Knox’s fifth commandment, many crime writers specialised in creating figures of Asian menace, none more so than “Sax Rohmer,” the pen-name of English author, Arthur Ward. His character, Doctor Fu Manchu, first appeared as the evil mastermind in The Mystery of Dr. Fu Manchu (1913) and continued to feature in Sax Rohmer’s novels, many of which were made into movies. In the 1940s he created Sumuru, the female counter-part of the evil Doctor. She began her adventures in a BBC radio serial in 1945 and appeared in five novels from 1950 to 1956.

On the wall are reproductions of covers from two of our large-format pulp magazines, Amazing Detective Tales (Dec. 1930) and Mystery, the Illustrated Detective Magazine (Oct. 1933), which exploit the oriental theme.

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NO. 4.

The Threat from the Orient


The quest of the sacred slipper / by Sax Rohmer. (New York : A.L. Burt, 1914)


The mask of Fu Manchu / by Sax Rohmer. (New York : A.L. Burt, [1932])

FLAT CASE 1

Agatha Christie and Dorothy L. Sayers

According to The Guinness Book of Records, Agatha Christie is the world’s best-selling novelist, and is certainly the most famous crime writer. Her first novel, The Mysterious Affair at Styles was published in 1920. She wrote 80 detective books, many featuring Hercule Poirot or Miss Marple.


Cards on the table / by Agatha Christie. (London : Collins, for the Crime Club, 1936) [with facsimile dustwrapper]

A Hercule Poirot story but notable for the inclusion of another recurrent character, Ariadne Oliver, a semi-humourous, self-effacing projection of Agatha Christie herself. Ariadne is a successful crime writer, who has written 32 novels, many featuring a Finnish detective, whom she does not like, but her readers expect to find in all of her works. The parallel with the Belgian, Poirot, is made obvious.


One of Agatha Christies’s most famous titles. It was first published in 1937. Her second husband, Max Mallowan, was an archaeologist and took her with him to digs in Egypt. She used her experiences there and in the middle-east for settings in various of her novels.


The body in the library / by Agatha Christie. (London : Published for the Crime Club by Collins, 1942)

A Miss Marple story, this is a conscious working over of the detective novel cliché – a body found in a library. Agatha Christie stated in the “Foreword” for a later edition that the library should be a completely conventional one while the body would be a highly improbable and sensational one. The library was in the house of a retired Colonel in a quiet country village. The body appears to be that of an 18 year old girl, a professional dancer. In fact it turns out to be that of a 16 year old Girl Guide and the Colonel was not the killer.
FLAT CASE 2

Dashiel Hammett and Raymond Chandler

The Maltese falcon / by Dashiel Hammett. (London : Pan, 1951)


*A man called Spade : and other stories / by Dashiell Hammett*. (New York : Dell, [1949?] c1944)

Sam Spade appeared in only one novel, and three short stories. The stories were first published in magazines in 1932 and are here collected in book-form, in a “Dell Mapback.” This was a series of American paperback novels published from 1943 to 1951. They featured, on the back covers, a map of the area in which the action takes place or a plan of the crime scene. *A Man Called Spade* shows the plan of “Max Bliss’ Apartment, Scene of Murder.”

The thin man / by Dashiell Hammett. (New York : A.A. Knopf,1934)

This copy of the first American edition includes extensive manuscript amendments to spelling and phrasing. This was used by Penguin in 1935 in preparing the English edition.

The big sleep / Raymond Chandler. (London : Hamish Hamilton, 1949)

Raymond Chandler is the best-known of the American detective fiction writers. He began to publish short stories in *The Black Mask* magazine in 1933 and his first novel, *The Big Sleep* appeared in 1939. The classic film noir version, starring Humphrey Bogart as Philip Marlowe, was released in 1946.

The long good-bye / by Raymond Chandler. (London : [Hamish Hamilton for] The Thriller Book Club, [1954])

First published in 1953, this is another of the Philip Marlowe stories. It includes the character, Roger Wade – a drunken author Marlowe is hired to track down, then to keep sober.

Playback / by Raymond Chandler. (London :Hamish Hamilton,1958)

This was the last novel Chandler completed. It is based on a screenplay he wrote during his time in Hollywood. A photograph of the author, lacking his ubiquitous pipe, is featured on the back cover.
FLAT CASE 3

1880s-1890s

This was the era of gaslight crime, set against the background of the London fog.

51. Lynch, Lawrence L.

*Madeline Payne, the expert’s daughter / by Lawrence L. Lynch.* (Chicago : Alex. T. Loyd, 1884, c1883)

“Lawrence L. Lynch,” was the pen-name of a female novelist, Emma Murdoch van Deventer, who wrote many detective novels in the 1880s and 1890s.

52. Pinkerton, A. Frank.

*Dyke Darrel the railroad detective : or the crime of the midnight express / by A. F. Pinkerton.* (Chicago : Laird & Lee, 1887, c1886)

Although the era is characterised in the public mind by Sherlock Holmes and the streets of London, detective fiction was also popular in the United States. This novel, set in Illinois, is part of “The Pinkerton Detective Series.” The Pinkerton Detective Agency, with their motto, “we never sleep,” was established in the US in 1850. By 1900 it was the largest private detective agency in the world.

53. Rockwood, Harry, 1832-1873

*Donald Dyke : the down-east detective / by Harry Rockwood* (New York : American Publishers Corporation, [189-?])

Harry Rockwood was the pseudonym of Ernest A. Young. This work also includes the stories, “Clarice Dyke, the Female Detective,” and “Nat Foster, the Boston Detective.” Clarice Dyke was Donald’s wife and was one of the first female detectives in fiction.

54. Danvers, Milton.

*The doctor’s crime : or, Simply horrible! A detective story told by the coroner / by Milton Danvers.* (London : Disprose & Bateman, [1891])

The forensic aspects of murder and the importance of “medico-jurisprudence” form the background to this novel.

55. Donovan, Dick, 1843-1934.

*From clue to capture : a series of thrilling detective stories / by Dick Donovan ; with numerous illustrations by Paul Hardy and others.* (London : Hutchinson & Co., [1893])

Joyce Emmerson Muddock, wrote under the pseudonym “Dick Donovan.” The novels are in the first person, with Dick Donovan relating his own exploits as a detective of police.

56. Underhill, George F. (George Frederick)

*An inheritance of crime : or, the children of Satan / by G. F. Underhill.* (London : Diprose and Bateman, [1899])

“Bad blood” was often used to explain the villain’s behaviour in early detective stories.

FLAT CASE 4

1900s-1910s

Edwardian detective fiction


*The green diamond / by Arthur Morrison ; illustrated by F.H. Townsend.* (Boston : L.C. Page & Co., 1904)

Arthur Morrison was an English journalist brought up in the East End of London. He published several books of crime stories featuring his detective, Martin Hewitt, a more self-effacing version of Sherlock Holmes. *The Green Diamond* centres on the theft of a large Indian diamond, reminiscent of Wilkie Collins’ *Moonstone*.

58. Kernahan, Coulson, 1858-1943.

*The dumpling : a detective love story of a great labour rising / by Coulson Kernahan ; illustrated by Stanley L. Wood.* (London ; New York : Cassell, 1906)

Kernahan’s arch-villain, “The Dumpling,” is shown on the cover in a pose recalling Conan Doyle’s Moriarty, “the Napoleon of crime.” He leads an anarchist uprising of the workers in London, storms Buckingham Palace, captures the King, but finally receives summary justice from the hero. Kernahan claimed in conducting research for the novel to have, “at great personal risk … contrived to gain entrance to anarchist meetings, so as not to be ignorant of their methods.”
The red skull / by Fergus Hume ... with illustrations by Louise Rogers. (New York : Dodge, [1908])
Fergus Hume is famous for his first novel, The Mystery of a Hansom Cab (1886), set in Melbourne where he was living at the time. In 1888 he returned to England and continued to write, 140 novels in all, most of which were detective stories.

60. Pidgin, Charles Felton, 1844-1923.
Charles Felton Pidgin created a small town, Mason's Corner, near Boston, where he set a series of novels. Sawyer is a young lawyer who solves local crimes.

The innocence of Father Brown / G. K. Chesterton. (London : Cassell, [1915])
This was the first of Chesterton’s “Father Brown” books, first published in 1911. Father Brown is a Catholic priest, perhaps the earliest of the “clerical sleuths.” The character has an air of unworldliness which enables him to solve crimes while both the criminal and the Police ignore him.

62. Jenkins, Herbert, 1876-1923.
Malcolm Sage, detective / by Herbert Jenkins. (London : Herbert Jenkins, [1921])
Herbert Jenkins was a successful publisher, most notably of P. G. Wodehouse’s books. He was also a popular novelist. His detective, Malcolm Sage, is modelled on Sherlock Holmes.

63. Brandon, John G. (John Gordon), 1879-1942.
The big heart : a present-day adventure – without a moral / by John G. Brandon. (New York : Brentano’s, 1923)
Though born in Australia, John G. Brandon achieved success as an author in England. He wrote many of the Sexton Blake stories. The Big Heart was his first novel. It tells of a soldier, demobilized after the First World War, who finds work as a detective unravelling a blackmail plot.

FLAT CASE 5

The Golden Age
1920s-1930s

This was the period when Agatha Christie and Dorothy Sayers were the dominant names in detective fiction and the time when many of the conventions of the genre were set. The action typically took place in rural, idyllic settings or, if urban, in locations such as Oxford. The characters often lived in vicarages or were staying at country houses.

64. Horton, Mileson, 1899-
Photocrimes / by Mileson Horton and Thomas Pembroke. (London : Arthur Barker, [1936])
This book was an attempt to attract those engrossed in the 1930s crossword craze. “Solving these problems will, we believe, provide you with an enjoyable occupation, and at least a temporary relief from counting up letters and filling in squares.” Readers are presented with 26 crimes, with the facts and clues given in pictures. Solutions are provided at the back of the book.

Murder in Chelsea / E. C. R. Lorac. (London : Sampson Low, Marston & Co., Ltd., [1934])
“E. C. R. Lorac” was the pseudonym of Edith Caroline Rivett.
Edith Rivett wrote around 70 detective novels under two pen-names, “E. C. R. Lorac,” and “Carol Carnac.” Murder in Chelsea features one of her main protagonists, Chief Inspector Macdonald. He operates with a partner in a style similar to modern TV detectives such as Morse and Lewis.

The ha-ha case / J.J. Connington. (London : Hodder & Stoughton, 1936)
A “ha-ha” is a feature in landscape gardening where a ditch is concealed from view, yet forms a barrier, to stop livestock from entering the garden. The plan on the cover is in a style later taken up by the Dell “Mapbacks.”
The Ha-Ha case was first published in 1934. The author's real name was Alfred Walter Stewart and he was Professor of Chemistry at Queens University, Belfast. His plots involve poisons, blood tests and other forensic details.

The “Big Little Book” series began in 1932, with The Adventures of Dick Tracy. The format was extremely popular in the 1930s. It featured illustrations on each right-hand page facing text on left.

FLAT CASE 6

Yellow jackets
Produced by Hodder & Stoughton, “Yellow jackets” were a feature of the 1920s and continued to be published into the 1950s. As well as detective fiction and thrillers, the titles included romances and westerns.

68. Wallace, Edgar, 1875-1932.
The strange countess / Edgar Wallace. (London : Hodder & Stoughton, 1950)
Edgar Wallace was one of the major authors in “Yellow jackets.” The Strange Countess was first published in 1925.

The great impersonation / E. Phillips Oppenheim. (London : Hodder and Stoughton, [192-?])
Another of the major names in the series, E. Phillips Oppenheim, wrote 150 novels, mostly crime and spy thrillers, from 1887 to 1944. He made a fortune and lived on the Riviera. All of his Yellow jackets had on the cover, “The prince of storytellers,” and many had the slogan, “Switch off the wireless – it’s an Oppenheim.”

The prisoner in the opal / by A. E. W. Mason. [8th ed.]. (London] : Hodder and Stroughton, [1933])
A. E. W. Mason was unusual among English writers in that he set his novels in France, and featured the detective M. Hanaud of the French Sûreté.

71. Sapper, 1888-1937.
Bulldog Drummond / by Sapper [pseudonym of Herman Cyril McNeil]. (London : Hodder and Stoughton, 1953)
Originally published in 1920, this was the first Bulldog Drummond novel. In the opening chapter he places an advertisement in the newspaper, “Demobilised Officer finding peace incredibly tedious would welcome diversion. Legitimate if possible; but crime of a humorous description, no objection. Excitement essential.” A keen golfer, “Sapper” likened a good short story to “the perfect iron shot.”

Follow the Saint / Leslie Charteris. (London : Hodder & Stoughton, 1950)
Leslie Charteris began publishing the Simon Templar, “Saint” stories in 1930. In 1935 Charteris moved from England to America and many of the later novels are set in the U.S. Follow the Saint, a collection of three novellas, was first published in 1938. His novels appeared in the Yellow jacket format from 1928, and he became Hodder’s biggest name.

73. Witting, Clifford.
Midsummer murder / by Clifford Witting. (London : Hodder & Stoughton, 1953)
First published in 1937, and set in the English country-side. The novel opens with a man murdered in broad daylight, shot through the head while cleaning the statue in the town square.
FLAT CASE 7

The 1940s

The 1940s saw an increase in reading in general, especially during the war. People sought mainly escapist fare and detective fiction figured strongly.

74. Walsh, J. M. (James Morgan), 1897-1952

*Something on the stairs* / by Stephen Maddock. (London : Collins, 1944)

“Stephen Maddock” was a pseudonym of J. M. Walsh. Walsh was born in Geelong but moved permanently to London in 1925 and became a writer of detective fiction under his own name and various pseudonyms.


*Died in the wool* / Ngaio Marsh. (London : Published for the Crime Club by Collins, 1946)

Ngaio Marsh was a New Zealand author, one of the “Queens of Crime” from the Golden Age of Detective Fiction. Her first novel appeared in 1934. Her strength was in characterisation, “I invariably start with people … I must involve one of them in a crime of violence … I have to ask myself which of these persons is capable of such a crime … and under what circumstances would he or she commit it.” *Died in the Wool* is set on a New Zealand sheep property and involves a body found in a bale of wool.


*Minute for murder* / by Nicholas Blake. (London : Published for the Crime Club by Collins, 1947)

“Nicholas Blake” was the pseudonym used by the poet Cecil Day-Lewis when writing detective fiction. *Minute for Murder* is set in the “Ministry for Morale” during the war, and involves Blake’s usual detective, Nigel Strangeways. The novel is partly based on the author’s experiences working in the Ministry of Information.

78. Rowland, John, 1907-

*The orange-tree mystery* / by John Rowland. (London : Herbert Jenkins, [1949])

The plot centres on the deaths of people on the staff of “that brilliant new magazine, the London Circus.”


*Death draws the line* / by Jack Iams. (New York : William Morrow, 1949)

Iams mainly wrote comedies of manners and was referred to as the “American Wodehouse.” *Death Draws the Line*, however, is a serious crime novel although it involves a comic strip artist. It is set in the world of magazine publishing.

FLAT CASE 8

The 1950s

80. Box, Edgar, 1925-

*Death likes it hot* / by Edgar Box. (London : Heinemann, 1955)

“Edgar Box” was the pseudonym of Gore Vidal. He wrote three detective novels published from 1952 to 1954, all featuring a young upper-class American, Peter Cutler Sargeant II. They are most notable for their high society settings. In *Death Likes it Hot* the action takes place at a Long island house party.
The attraction of detective fiction for academics is well-known. The genre presents a puzzle, somewhat similar to the crossword, which requires ingenuity to solve. Although he wrote several books on literary and historical subjects, Vulliamy is best remembered for his crime novels.

82. Lacy, Ed.  
End to violence / by Ed Lacy. (Melbourne : Atlas, [1954?])  
Ed Lacy was an American writer of hard-boiled fiction. Although *End to Violence* appeared in Melbourne as “an original novel – not a reprint,” it was in fact first published in the United States in 1953 as *Strip for Violence.*

A novel with an honest cop whose investigations into a murder frame-up are hindered by political corruption.

84. Easton, Nat.  
One good turn / by Nat Easton. (London : T. V. Boardman, 1957)  
Nat Easton was an English novelist who published with the Boardman stable of writers. The Boardman crime books were noted for their striking graphic design, as seen here with the woman lit by torch-light.

85. Rice, Craig, 1908-1957.  
The double frame / Craig Rice. (London : Hammond Hammond, 1958)  
“Craig Rice” was the pseudonym of American writer, Georgiana Ann Randolph. She worked as a script writer for radio in the 1930s and had a prodigious output of detective fiction. She is thought to have been the ghost-writer for Gypsy Rose Lee. This novel first appeared in the U.S. in 1957 as *Knocked For a Loop.*

The refuge : a confession / Seaforth Mackenzie. (London : Cape ; Sydney : Angus and Robertson 1954)  
This was Mackenzie’s last and most ambitious novel. It begins with the protagonist, a crime reporter, calling from the night desk at his newspaper office to confess to the murder of his wife. The author presents a psychological study, recalling Dostoyevsky’s *Crime and Punishment,* set against a background of European refugees and left-wing bohemian circles in Sydney.

87. Corrigan, Mark.  
Sydney for sin / Mark Corrigan. (Sydney : Angus & Robertson, [1955])  
“Mark Corrigan” was one of the pseudonyms used by Norman Lee. He was an English writer, but lived in Australia during the 1950s, and set many of his thrillers and crime novels here.
*A chip on my shoulder / by Eric North.* (London : Dennis Dobson, 1955) [with ms. inscription by author]

“Eric North” was the pen-name of the Australian novelist Bernard Cronin under which he wrote five detective novels. *A Chip On My Shoulder* is set in Melbourne where a murder is committed by members of a narcotics ring. The novel is set in the underworld of night clubs and back alleys.

89. Murray, Max, 1901-1956.
*Breakfast with a corpse / Max Murray.* (London : Michael Joseph, 1956)

Max Murray was born in Australia and worked in Sydney as a reporter, before leaving to travel around the world on tramp steamers. He spent the war in London as a screenwriter and began his career as a crime writer with *The Voice of the Corpse* in 1947. He wrote 12 detective novels, all with “corpse” in the title; and died in Sydney in 1956 while back in Australia on a visit.

90. Wright, June, 1919-
*Faculty of murder / June Wright.* (London : John Long, [1961]) [with ms. inscription by author]

June Wright wrote six detective novels from 1948 to 1966, all set in Melbourne. *Faculty of Murder* involves the death of a Professor’s wife and the disappearance of a female student from one of the colleges at the University of Melbourne.

91. Corris, Peter, 1942-
*The dying trade / Peter Corris.* (Sydney : McGraw-Hill, 1980)

The two outstanding writers of detective fiction now in Australia are Shane Maloney and Peter Corris. Peter Corris was a Teaching Fellow in History at Monash University between 1964 and 1966, and completed his MA on “Aborigines and Europeans in Western Victoria, from first contact to 1860”. *The Dying Trade* was the first of his crime novels. It is set in Sydney and introduces his hard-boiled P.I., Cliff Hardy, as the main character.


“Carter Brown” was the pseudonym of Alan Yates. He wrote hundreds of pulp detective novels from the 1950s to the 1980s. They were mostly set in America and featured lurid covers. Unlike the Larry Kents, the Carter Brown novels were published locally and also in the U.S.

94. Terry, Joe
*Underworld lady / by Joe Terry.* (Sydney : Action Comics, [1955?])

Another Australian pulp set in the U.S. “Joe Terry” is probably a pen-name. The story centres on “cub reporter Dale Morgan,” who goes under-cover as Della Jordan, “wicked-eyed cabaret performer with an ear sensitive to any gossip which might give her a lead”.

95. McCall, K. T.
*The lady’s a decoy / by K.T. McCall.* (Sydney : Horwitz, 1957)

“K. T. McCall” was a joint pen-name for two Australian women writers, Audrey Armitage and Muriel Watkins. In his bibliography of *Australian Crime Fiction*, John Loder lists 22 titles by them, published in 1957 and 1958. The hero, Johnny Buchanan, is cast in the hard-boiled, wise-cracking mould and the stories are set in New York. *The Lady’s a Decoy* involves a model who has her legs insured for $100,000, “Now she was missing. I knew she was dead – I had a leg to prove it.” The severed leg had been dumped on Johnny’s doorstep wrapped in newspaper.
96. North, Gerry.

Gerry North collects / Gerry North. (Sydney : Horwitz, 1959)

“Gerry North” was another pseudonym for the “K. T. McCall” writers. This was the first novel written by women to feature a female private investigator.


Lady in black / by E. Hamilton Clay. (Sydney : Cleveland Publishing, [195-?])

Possibly another pen-name. Clay begins his description of the woman seen on the cover, “The fingernail on the trigger was enamelled deep red. The face behind the gun was oval, smooth, beautiful, framed in gleaming black hair.”

98. Dudgeon, Robert, 1913-1975.

Nude in nylon / Robert Dudgeon. (Sydney : Cleveland Publishing, [196-?])

“Robert Dudgeon” was the pen-name of Frank S. Greenop, an Australian journalist who wrote a vast number of novels under a variety of pseudonyms. He is best known as the editor of Man magazine.


Rub out the redhead / Marc Brody. (Sydney : Horwitz Publications, 1960)

“Marc Brody” was the pseudonym of Australian journalist W. H. Williams, editor of Truth. Brody, a reporter on an American newspaper, narrates the novels in the first person.


Male was published by Horwitz in Sydney, the most successful of the Australian crime fiction imprints. This is a light-hearted piece which begins, “Essentials of the plot are: a corpse – preferably blonde....”

FLAT CASE 11

Australian crime pulp magazines

102. Action detective magazine.

(Sydney : Action Comics, 1950-1956)

Each issue had a distinctive title and the covers featured photographs of actors rather than line art.


(Sydney : Blue Diamond Publishing Company, [1952?-1953?])

On display is no. 6, (October 1953). The first story, Mayhem for Micky, by Richard Deming, has the moral spelled out in the opening paragraph, “You should never toy with a loaded Irishman”.

104. Detective stories : tales of murder, romance, suspense, detection.

(Sydney : Blue Diamond Publishing, [1952-1954])

On display is no. 7, (October 1953). Despite the lurid cover details, none of the stories seem to feature pearls hidden inside an artificial leg taken from a corpse.
105. Stranks, Alan
*P.C. 49* / by Alan Stranks; with a forward by Brian Reece; illustrated by F. G. Moorsom. (London: Juvenile Productions, [1949])

106. Stranks, Alan
*P.C. 49 annual* / by Alan Stranks; illustrations and introduction by John Worsley. (London: Andrew Dakers Limited, [1955])

PC 49 was a policeman who appeared in the weekly boys’ paper, *Eagle,* and in a wireless serial.


This book includes factual information on the work of the C.I.D., as well as chapters on “How science helps detectives,” and “Facts about fingerprints.”

*John Mystery’s detectives.* (Sydney: Publicity Press, [1945])

“John Mystery,” whose real name was Lester Sinclair, was an Australian phenomenon. He wrote or compiled hundreds of children’s books from his home, Adventure Castle, in Sydney during the 1940s and 1950s. One of the stories in this book is Mark Twain’s “Tom Sawyer, detective.”
CORRIDOR CASES

Children’s detective stories

Enid Blyton


Annette Funicello

The American firm, Whitman Publishing, produced three mystery novels featuring Annette from “The Mouseketeers.” They were written by Doris Schroeder and appeared from 1961 to 1963.

GROUND FLOOR CASE


SCREENS

Colour scans of the cover art from the Dell “Mapback” series. (1943-1951)

*Death in Five boxes* is a typical mystery from the Dell mapback series, with a crime map on the back cover (top). By John Dickson Carr, this edition was published New York in 1944.
Francis Sill Ware’s novel, Dangerous Ground, was published in 1947 by Invincible Press, Sydney. The original U.S. edition had been published in 1945.
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Cover: Walter F. Eberhardt’s 1933 mystery, The jig-saw puzzle murder, was accompanied by this jig-saw revealing the solution to the crime.