

The Australian Women's Register

Entry type: Person
Entry ID: PR00136

Praed, Rosa

(1851 - 1935)

Born 27 March, 1851, Bromelton Queensland Australia

Died 10 April, 1935, Torquay England

Occupation Writer

Summary

Writing in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, Rosa Praed covered many genres in her extensive bibliography, including books for children as well as adults. Rosa Murray-Prior began writing in her teens, contributing résumés and stories to the family's handwritten *Marroon Magazine*. She married Englishman Arthur Campbell Bulkley Praed, and four years later Rosa and her husband returned to England, where she continued to write. Praed revisited Australia only once, however she continued to rework her memories, and published her autobiography *My Australian Girlhood* in 1902. Other biographical work included *Australian Life; Black and White* (1885). She maintained contacts with relations and friends in Australia until her death. Writing as Mrs Campbell Praed, she produced more than forty-five books over the next four decades, approximately half of which deal with Australian material.

Details

Praed was the third child of Thomas Lodge Murray-Prior and Matilda Harpur, niece of poet Charles Harpur. Murray-Prior established a pastoral station in Queensland where he became a member of the Legislative Council and served as Post-Master General to three Prime Ministers during the latter half of the 19th century. Her father's political career in Queensland exposed Rosa to political discourses and the social world of the colony. These experiences were often reflected in her later books. She was educated at home by her mother and private tutors. She married on 29 October 1872 at St John's Church of England, Brisbane. Within a few weeks of their marriage, Arthur Praed took Rosa to his cattle station, Monte Christo, situated on Curtis Island, off the Queensland coast between Gladstone and Rockhampton. Rosa was glad to leave behind the lonely existence on Curtis Island to travel to England with her husband.

In 1882 Praed published *Nadine*, an intense psychological study drawing on the life of Olga Novikoff. She collaborated on four books with the Irish politician Justin McCarthy, who wrote voluminously to her on the progress of the Home Rule debate of the 1880s. She edited these letters as *Our Book of Memories* (1912). Her talents also extended to writing a dramatic play, *Ariane*, based on her novel, *The Bond of Wedlock* (1887). This ran for 100 performances in London's West End in 1888.

Rosa separated from her husband in 1897 and began living with a psychic medium, Nancy Harward. Much of her later fiction, some of which was written with Harward, reflects her devout belief in the supernatural. Her work includes acute analyses of the colonial mentality, especially of society women, whilst historical events and personages often supply background and characters for her novels. Rosa moved to Devon with Harward in the early 1920s and lived there until her death.

Published resources

Book

Rosa Praed (Mrs. Campbell Praed), 1851-1935 : a bibliography, Tiffin, Chris, 1989

Ada Cambridge, Tasma and Rosa Praed, Beilby, R and Hadgraft, C., 1979

In mortal bondage : the strange life of Rosa Praed, Roderick, C., 1948

Rosa! Rosa!: a life of Rosa Praed, novelist and spiritualist, Clarke, Patricia, 1999

Resource Section

Praed, Rosa Caroline (1851 - 1935), Tiffin, Chris, 2006,
<http://www.adb.online.anu.edu.au/biogs/A110282b.htm>

Resource

Trove, National Library of Australia, 2009

Archival resources

John Oxley Library, Manuscripts and Business Records Collection

[OM78-58/15 Rosa Caroline Praed Letter ca. 1886](#)

[OM64-01 Rosa Caroline Praed Papers ca. 1885 - ca. 1930](#)

[TR 1921 Rosa Campbell Praed Correspondence 1909](#)

National Library of Australia, Manuscript Collection

[Letters 1901 \[manuscript\]](#)

[Papers of Patricia Clarke. 1887-2010 \[manuscript\]](#)

National Library of Australia, Pictures Collection

[Mrs. Campbell Praed \[picture\] / photo. Elliot and Fry](#)

Author Details

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