

# The Australian Women's Register

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**Entry type:** Person

**Entry ID:** AWE0151

## Turner, Ethel

(1870 - 1958)

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**Born** 24 January, 1870, Balby Yorkshire England

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**Died** 8 April, 1958, Mosman New South Wales Australia

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**Occupation** Author

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### Summary

Ethel Turner's first book, *Seven Little Australians*, was published in 1894. Translated into ten languages, it was made into a stage play in 1915 and a film in 1939. In 1953 it was televised in Britain, and in 1973 and 1975 by the Australian Broadcasting Commission.

### Details

Ethel Turner migrated to Australia with her family at the age of eight. While attending Sydney Girl's High School, she published *Parthenon* with her sister Lillian. She began writing in 1890. Ethel met Herbert Curlewis in 1891, and the pair were married in 1896 when he was an established barrister and she was already a successful writer of children's stories. According to Heather Radi in her anthology *200 Australian Women*, Turner contributed a 'Sydney letter' to the *Tasmanian Mail* and wrote for the children's column of the *Illustrated news*. The *Bulletin* accepted her first story in 1892 and she published her first book, *Seven Little Australians*, in 1894. Radi notes that the book was criticised by some for not conforming to nineteenth century conventions in children's literature, whereby good behaviour is always rewarded, but the book was enormously successful and remains so, with over 40 editions published.

## Published resources

### Resource

Ethel Turner, Lilian Turner and Jean Curlewis ; A Family of Australian Authors,  
<http://www.penrithcity.nsw.gov.au/usrpages/collect/ethel.htm>

Dark, Eleanor 1901-1985, National Library of Australia,  
<http://www.nla.gov.au/ms/findaids/4998.html>

'My Oath!' 102 Years of Seven Little Australians, State Library of Victoria,  
<http://www.statelibrary.vic.gov.au/slv/children/seven/>

Trove, National Library of Australia, 2009

### Book

Johns Notable Australians, Johns, Fred, 1905

The Diaries of Ethel Turner, Poole, Philippa (compiled by), 1979

Seven Little Australians, Turner, Ethel S. and Johnson, A J (illustrated by), 1894

The Apple of Happiness, Turner, Ethel, [1911]

Betty & Co, Turner, Ethel, 1903

Ethel Turner Birthday Book: A Selection of Passages from the Books of Ethel Turner, Turner, Ethel, L.T.T. (arranged by);  
with Kernahan, Coulson (foreward by), 1910

Brigid and the Cub, Turner, Ethel; [Copping, Harold (illustrated by)], 1919

Captain Cub, Turner, Ethel, [1917?]

The Cub: Six Months in his Life: A Story in War-Time, Turner, Ethel. And Copping, Harold. (illustrated by), 1915

The Family at Misrule, Turner, Ethel. with Johnson, A J (illustrations by), 1895

The Sunshine Family: A Book of Nonsense for girls and Boys, Turner, Ethel and Curlewis, Jean, 1923

Authors & Illustrators of Australian Children's Books, McVitty, Walter, 1989

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

### Edited Book

200 Australian Women: A Redress Anthology, Radi, Heather, 1988

### Resource Section

Turner, Ethel Mary (1871-1958), Niall, Brenda, 2006,  
<http://www.adb.online.anu.edu.au/biogs/A120326b.htm>

## Archival resources

### **Mitchell and Dixson Libraries Manuscripts Collection**

[Ethel Turner - literary papers and related papers, 1894-1951](#)

[Dowell O'Reilly - Papers, 1884-1923, with additional family papers, 1877-1944](#)

### **National Library of Australia, Manuscript Collection**

[Papers of Ethel Turner, \[1887-1935\] \[manuscript\]](#)

[Literary manuscripts and correspondence, 1901-1926 \[manuscript\]](#)

[Papers of Violet Braddon, 1916-1980 \[manuscript\]](#)

[Papers of Sir William Cullen, 1880-1935 \[manuscript\]](#)

[Papers of Eleanor Dark, 1910-1974 \[manuscript\]](#)

[Photographs, 19-- \[manuscript\]](#)

### **State Library of Victoria**

[Correspondence, 1928-1954. \[manuscript\].](#)

### **Special Collections, Academy Library, UNSW@ADFA**

[Ada Cambridge manuscript collection](#)

### **State Library of New South Wales**

[Curlewis family papers, 1881-1966](#)

### **Author Details**

Anne Heywood

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