

CORRESPONDENCE WITH AGNSW

Contact the Gallery

Thank you, your message has been sent.
You submitted the following data:

Email address chris@wavehand.one

Name Christopher Tillam

I have a boomerang (aka 'throwing stick') which Sid Nolan gave me in 1952 or '53 at his Wahroongah studio. It was acquired by Cynthia's daughter Jinx during the family's trip in 1946 across the 'top end'. The trip, and the throwing stick are documented in Cynthia Nolan's "Outback"; the studio and the dates in Paula Dredge's "The Artist's Materials - Sidney Nolan".

I've been in touch with Jinx Nolan in Boston. (We last met when she had an exhibition in Sydney back in the 1970s). She is not in good health. I have no-one appropriate to whom I could pass on the throwing stick, and am wondering if the Gallery might be interested in having it. I'm not interested in remuneration. An image and more detail to this story are available on request.

Looking forward to hearing from you in due course.

Yours sincerely,

Christopher Tillam

Bundanoon 2578.

Re: Submission from Contact Us

July 20, 2022 4:26pm 21KB

From: ArtMail <ArtMail@ag.nsw.gov.au>

To: chris@wavehand.one

Dear Christopher,

Thank you for your email.

Can you please send through an image of the boomerang.

Kind regards,

The Art Gallery Team

From: chris@wavehand.one
Sent: Friday, 22 July 2022 11:05 AM
To: ArtMail <ArtMail@ag.nsw.gov.au>
Subject: Re: Submission from Contact Us

Dear AGNSW Team,

The throwing stick was given to Jinx ("Polly" in *Outback*, the book is dedicated to her) at the Ord River Station in W.A. (p.141). It's the only stick in the book.

The station is a heritage site:

<http://inherit.stateheritage.wa.gov.au/Public/Inventory/Details/883ccb4b-ff06-409f-90f4-404fa9552185>

Paula Dredge's later work on Nolan, *The Artist's Materials - Sidney Nolan* (pp.76ff) verified my memories of the studio at the back of the lawn, and of the smell of canvasses stacked in the hallway, off-gassing.

The throwing stick: dimensions 650mm x 90mm.

Yours sincerely,
Christopher Tillam
33 Nerrim Street
Bundanoon NSW 2578



Boomerang and books

July 27, 2022 7:42 am 24 KB

From: Steven Miller <Steven.Miller@ag.nsw.gov.au>

To: chris@wavehand.one

Dear Christopher,

Your email to the general Gallery number was forwarded on to both the senior curator of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander art and myself.

I'm sad to hear the Jinx is not in good health. She is a lovely person. Many years ago I represented the Gallery in the case about the paintings that belonged to her mother. I took the Gallery files on the Nolan exhibition to the court, as they clearly showed that the works were in the collection of her mum. However, lawyers can always twist things around and the one for Mary Nolan got the evidence disallowed on the grounds that I could not show without a doubt that no-one had ever had access to the files and could have tampered with them!

Anyway, we would love to have the throwing-stick and books you mentioned for the archive, if you are agreeable.

On 1 November we open our fantastic new premises, the main research library, but also facilities for our National Art Archive.

Kind regards, Steven

Steven Miller

Head of Research Library and Archives

T + 61 2 9225 1762

Steven.Miller@ag.nsw.gov.au

you can almost touch the cattle as they walk away from you. Old Woop-woop and me were playing ping pong with 'em. I'd get 'em over to him, back they'd come to me. We lost a lot, couldn't help it."

He had left the yard and come over to squat on his heels and have a smoke with us.

"The boongs 'ull keep going," he said laconically, "they're quite capable."

For smoko we went down to his camp under the trees by the river bank. Roughly hand-made hide camel bags were standing around, a box served as table, hide water bags were alternative seats to the dusty ground, and one of the everlasting little fires fed by blanched trunks and branches burned untidily. Nearby three hobbled pack camels stood in the shade. A young man carrying a load of cut spinifex for the cook's bed walked slowly along the opposite bank. The cook, a wizened old Irishman and Billy's only white companion during the mustering, was not to be seen.

"He's cranky today," said Bill, "a state to which he's peculiarly subject. Never met a man more difficult to live with; *Love on the Dole*, that's what this life is."

The following day Charlie Harris had to present his monthly book-keeping record to the accountant at the much larger senior property of Ord River.

Early in the morning we set off on the three-hour drive across country, up and down steep dry river beds, through poor land scantily spotted with short useless turpentine grass whose roots quickly dry, leaving dead tufts to blow aimlessly about. This was threadbare country, lovely in colour but poor for cattle.

One found good mitchell (*astrebla*) and flinders (*iselema*) grasses on Ord, which was the better property, although Turner carried about 2,500 cattle. Ord River Station was built on powdery ground along a low cliff at the bottom of which trickled the summer stream of a river sufficiently forceful to be used, farther away, for an extensive irrigation scheme; the collection of buildings forming the homestead could easily

TURNER STATION

be taken for a small township. Beside the manager's house were quarters for engineers, their workshop, a smithy, the stockmen's building, a windmill, a well stocked store, and other outhouses. For midday dinner fifteen men joined us at the long white covered table in the cement-floored dining room.

As we were sitting down Polly came running in, waving a throwing stick she had been given. While inwardly groaning, for she already had a collection of womeras and coolamons, we admired this new treasure and sat her down between us, hoping we would act as buffers between her and the men at the table. For a few moments she was spellbound as she gazed enraptured into all these wonderful faces, new sources of stories and experience, then, between enormous mouthfuls and expertly dodging our red herrings, she was off, concentrating briefly on one after the other; nobody missed his turn. We gave up, left the men to their fate and listened to the drover opposite who was talking about the Wyndham hotel. He asked us had we been discomforted by the open doors and lack of keys. We replied that quite frankly we had not even noticed either.

"Some do," he said, "when they come into this part of the country where there isn't a lock or bar about and doors are usually left wide open. One elderly spinster lady - English she was - happened to be visiting a station I was passing through and I heard her say to the manager, 'But I must have a lock for my door. It's unheard of . . . no woman would be safe with all these rough stockmen and drovers around.' 'Lady', the manager told her, 'you've never been so bloody (excuse me Missus) so bloody safe in your life.' And he was right. If she'd a bin a bottle of beer now," he added with a wink, "I don't know as you could have said the same."

About three o'clock in the afternoon Charlie finished his business and we said goodbye.

"I hope you don't see any donkeys on the way home," said the manager's wife. "I know they're a nuisance, but how I hate being present when they're killed. A little while ago they rounded up over 500 of them on Ord and shot them all."

http://www.jinxnolan.com/jinx_web_site_12-30-15_002.htm

OUTBACK



Landscape
36" x 36" Paint and Collage
on Masonite
2015