

Entry type: Person
Entry ID: IMP0189

O'Harris, Pixie

(1903 - 1991)

Born	15 October, 1903, Cardiff Wales United Kingdom
Died	17 November, 1991, Sydney New South Wales Australia
Occupation	Author, Illustrator

Summary

Pixie O'Harris was an artist and author particularly of children's books. On 1 January 1976 she was appointed a Member of the Order of the British Empire (Civil) for services to the Arts. In 1953 she was awarded the Queen's Coronation Medal and in 1977 she received the Queen's Silver Jubilee Medal. In 1977 she became patron to the Royal Alexandra Hospital for Children in Sydney.

Details

Pixie O'Harris was the daughter of George Frederick and Rosetta Elizabeth (née Lucas). Her father was an artist who was chairman of the Royal Art Society Cardiff. The fifth of nine children she was educated at Sully village school and Allensbank Girl's School Wales. At age 14 she was a member of the South West Art Society.

The Harris family migrated to Australia in 1920 and settled in Perth before moving to Sydney the following year. It was while on the ship to Australia that she adopted the name 'Pixie.' Being referred to as 'the Welsh pixie' and not liking the name Rona, she decided to use Pixie. A change in her surname followed after a printer at the *Sydney Morning Herald* added an apostrophe to her second initial.

During her career she contributed poems, stories and illustrations to many publications as well as illustrating the work of other authors. These included Frank Dalby Davison, Lydia Pender and Kenneth. On 16 July 1928, Pixie O'Harris married Bruce Pratt, editor of the *Australian Encyclopaedia*. At the time of the births of her three daughters, she found the hospitals cold and clinical and decided to paint fairy-style murals for children. Over 50 children's hospital wards, schools, day nurseries and baby clinics throughout New South Wales have been decorated with her work.

Events

1920 - 1920

Fashion artist, Perth Western Australia

1924 - 1924

Caricaturist for the *Triad* magazine

1925 - 1928

Artist

1936 - 1939

Editress of *Humour*

1977 - 1977

Patron of the Royal Alexandra Hospital for Children (Sydney)

1977 - 1977

Recipient of the Queen's Silver Jubilee Medal

1953 - 1953

Awarded Queen's Coronation Medal

2028 - 2028

Married: Bruce Pratt and had three children

1976 - 1976

Appointed to the Order of the British Empire – Member (Civil)

Published resources

Resource

Trove, National Library of Australia, 2009

Book

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

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

Edited Book

Who's Who of Australian Women, Lofthouse, Andrea, 1982

Site Exhibition

Faith, Hope and Charity Australian Women and Imperial Honours: 1901-1989, Australian Women's Archives Project, 2003,

<http://www.womenaustralia.info/exhib/honours/honours.html>

Archival resources

State Library of New South Wales

[Pixie O'Harris papers, 1913-1987](#)

[Pixie O'Harris - further & associated papers, 1910-1994](#)

Author Details

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