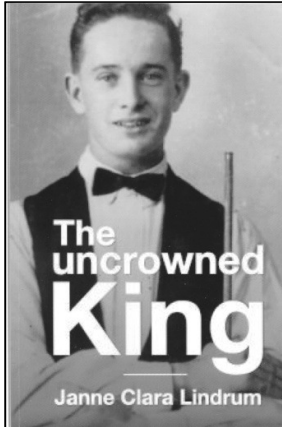


BOOK REVIEW – *The Uncrowned King*, by Janne Clara Lindrum

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Dr Janne (Jan) Lindrum was invited to be guest speaker for the SSHS at the Sutherland School of Arts during the National Trust Heritage Festival. The theme this year was 'Having a voice', and Jan spoke movingly – and entertainingly - about her father, world champion snooker and billiards player, Horace Lindrum. The venue for the talk was made poignant because this famous Australian had played an exhibition match in the School of Arts billiards room in 1944. That room is now the Society's museum.



Jan has recently published a history of the Lindrum family, four generations of which achieved world fame for their prowess in the cue arts. *The Uncrowned King* is a very personal story written to correct the misrepresentations of her family's history, particularly of her father's achievements. Known for his 'almost magical wizardry with the cue in snooker'¹ together with a charming personality, he was dubbed the Showman. Horace became world champion snooker player in 1952 after a two-week marathon against New Zealander, Clark McConachy in England. The British had no entrants because of a dispute between two bodies governing snooker and attempted to claim the contest was a non-event.

Jan's story starts in 1849 when her great great grandfather, Friedrich von Lindrum, wine merchant and billiards player, arrived in Adelaide from Prussia. He was the first Lindrum to make his mark by beating the British billiard champion in 1865, triggering a trade boom in the export of billiard tables of Australian timber. It was also the start of the Lindrum legend, as the succeeding generations of Lindrums took billiards around the country – Perth, Melbourne and Sydney - promoting the sport and excelling at it here and internationally. The last Lindrum to make his name synonymous with billiards and snooker greatness was Horace who died in 1974.

Jan's detailed research includes delving into newspaper archives, family stories, correspondence, diaries, court records, letters and interviews, especially with people who knew her father. Readers have a vivid sense of place and time as Jan writes in colourful detail, often in present tense, about the characters in her family - many had tragic or controversial lives - and how they related to the world around them. The women in the family were just as passionate about preserving the Lindrum legend as the men, especially Horace's mother, Clara and wife, Joy. Woven through the story of their ambition, their struggles and their achievements, is the history of Australia's development as it unfolded. This is very much a social history.

The Uncrowned King was based on Jan's thesis for her Ph.D, conferred by the University of Wollongong in 2015, and titled *Family, Nation & Sport: Writing the Uncrowned King*. This background provides an inkling of the depth of her research. Jan credits much of the material to her mother Joy, who was a meticulous record keeper of family history, a diarist and a writer in her own right.

Reflecting Jan's interest in the performing arts, the writing style is reminiscent of a script for a play, complete with theatrics and details that give the changing scenes colour and immediacy. Use of a larger font in the 2016 edition would have made the book easier to read, and there is no index. However, it is generously footnoted. The black and white photos liberally dispersed through the 244-page book are often indistinct, like old family snaps, but they add to the nostalgia and intimacy of this publication.

The Uncrowned King, by Janne Clara Lindrum, Primrose Publishing, Sydney 2016 is available for \$40.00 from SSHS. Shortly an e-book will be available for \$15.00 (www.lindrum.com).

¹ 'Indian Express', December 1952, cited in *The Uncrowned King*, p.214