Mirka Mora
LOVE AND CLUTTER
Viking, $45.95hb, 140pp, 0 670 04064 9

Lipsticks, teddy bears, kitchen dressers, marriage proposals, waves, books and handbags are all part of the love and clutter that Mirka Mora describes in this delightful book. She takes us on a journey through her clutter and the memories that these objects conjure. Most of us groan when we think of the clutter in our own homes, but Mora shows that clutter is an important part of our lives and often opens up forgotten doors into our pasts. For each piece she describes, we are told a story about her life, and her descriptions inspire all kinds of amazing imagery. Love and Clutter is beautifully illustrated, with drawings and photographs. Opening the covers of this book is like taking a walk through Mora’s studio itself. It will make an ideal gift for Christmas. (AMT)

Guy Noble
THE MUSIC EXPLORER
ABC Books, $24.95pb, 269pp, 0 7333 1061 3

A world without music would be pretty dull, as Guy Noble makes clear in this fun book about the world of music and the people who make it. Noble writes about conductors, accompanists, singers and violinists. He even includes a series of posthumous interviews with composers such as Mozart, Vivaldi, Handel, Rossini and Haydn. He discusses the invention of musak, which has been part of our lives since the 1920s; the generosity of Giuseppe Verdi, whose idea it was to create a retirement home for artists; the short, tragic lives of artists such as Edith Piaf, Maria Callas and Judy Garland; and the limitations that Australia’s small population places on live music. Noble even shares the excitement he felt when conducting the West Australian Symphony Orchestra’s rendition of Star Wars on New Year’s Eve 1999 at Cottesloe beach in Perth. (AMT)

Frank van Straten
TIVOLI
Lothian, $60hb, 253pp, 0 7344 0553 7

Stories of the Tivoli have always fascinated me because it was frowned upon in my grandmother’s house, and so too, it seems, in Barry Humphries’s childhood home a few doors down the road. Frank van Straten has brought the Tivoli back to life in this history of the famous theatre that entertained Australians for more than seventy years. The book contains a myriad of information about the Tivoli from its birth in 1892 to its closure in 1966. It launched many famous careers, including those of Roy Rene, Val Jellay and Toni Lamond. Containing short biographies of the people associated with the theatre and numerous photographs of performers, costumes, posters, tickets, programmes and other ephemera, this book is not only a history of a theatre but also an important piece of Australian social history. At the back of the book is a CD containing a variety of Tivoli hits. (AMT)

Jan Fook, Susan Hawthorne and Renate Klein (eds)
CAT TALES:
THE MEANING OF CATS IN WOMEN’S LIVES
Spinifex, $32.95pb, 219pp, 1 876756 37 3

Schoolgirls, poets, award-winning writers, activists, a sailor, a stilt-walker and other cat-loving women from several continents contribute their recollections, reflections and poems to this beautifully designed companion volume to A Girl’s Best Friend. Going beyond the stereotype of haughtiness, the writers introduce us to the personalities of over seventy moggies and ‘aristocats’, mousers, felines, with a penchant for sitting in the tumble dryer, and one even worth leaving a husband for. Black-and-white photographs of the subjects and their owners capture each unique relationship. Cat-loving readers will identify with the sentiments they convey. (LS)

Michael Leunig
POEMS
Viking, $19.95hb, 112pp, 0 670 04091 6

The weight of a National Trust declaration of ‘Living Treasure’ status does not bear heavily upon the verses in this collection. From the invocation of ‘Magpie’ to the whimsy of ‘The Empty Jeff’ and the fist-shaking of ‘Ode to a Jet-ski Person’, these sometimes poignant, sometimes hilarious, often reverent lines form a pocketful of Leunig’s unique observations, and are a rallying call to the power of love. A handful of muted illustrations, quality paper, sumptuous binding and its ‘huggable’ size make this volume a treasure. A list of contents or, at the least, a cord bookmark, would have made finding one’s special poem easier. (LS)

Mungo MacCallum
POLITICAL ANECDOTES
Duffy & Snellgrove, $30pb, 285pp, 1 876631 74 0

Updating this volume (first published ten years ago, by OUP), political commentator Mungo MacCallum says that in today’s political jungle, ‘Nice guys finish last’. From the records of First Fleet Captain Watkin Tench to David Solomon’s Howard’s Race, MacCallum has sourced hundreds of incidents, quotations and behind-the-scenes stories to piece together a unique picture of Australia’s political milieu. Colonial scoundrels and lechers, Victorian masters of the ad-lib, twentieth-century leaders and wannabes, and our current incumbents show that there has never been a place for the faint-hearted in this particular arena. MacCallum’s extensive reference list enables further research into this cutthroat world. (LS)

Murray Mottram and Bev Buckingham
BEATING THE ODDS:
THE FALL AND RISE OF BEV BUCKINGHAM
Allen & Unwin, $29.95pb, 275pp, 1 74114 251 2

‘It didn’t hurt when I broke my neck’, is the opening statement in this remarkable story. Five years ago, Bev Buckingham was Australia’s top woman jockey, having rid-
den 900 winners and been awarded the Tasmanian jockey’s premiership. Then a fall at Elwick racecourse rendered her a quadriplegic, dependent upon a ventilator. To add insult to shocking injury, her marriage was also breaking up. Details of the racing life, family heartbreak and triumph, and the thousand indignities and challenges along the rehabilitation road, make this an inspiring read. Despite irreparable muscle damage, Buckingham is once again rising before dawn to tend the animals she loves. (LS)

John Elliott
BIG JACK: MY SPORTING LIFE
Schwartz, $34.95hb, 317pp, 1 86395 117 2

It seems as though everybody who has ever been in the public eye is writing their autobiography, and John Elliott has joined the club. One of Australia’s most colourful businessmen, Elliott spent twenty years as the Carlton Football Club’s longest-serving president. Elliott writes as he speaks, and relates the story of his love of football, his presidency and his deposition at the end of 2002. The book is peppered with amusing and forthright anecdotes. Some include his love of smoking, entertaining the Archbishop of Canterbury and the anatomy of pigs. Also included is a ‘greatest of’ section, in which Elliott lists his favourite characters and players from the AFL. (AMT)

Michael Meanwell
THE ENTERPRISING WRITER: HOW TO MAKE A SUCCESSFUL LIVING AS A FREELANCE WRITER
Hardie Grant Books, $34.95pb, 233pp, 1 74066 093 5

Packed with valuable information, this manual offers sound advice on all aspects of freelance writing. Meanwell covers everything a writer needs to know, from writing a business plan to self-promotion. He includes sections on finding new writing opportunities, writing press releases and how to make money from writing. He talks about writing for the Web, how to write brilliant speeches and breaking into the corporate communications market. Also included are sections on how to market your writing business, managing the business and dealing with bad debts. Information is easy to find, and Meanwell includes strategies for dealing with writer’s block and for finding the time to write. (AMT)

Anne Chittleborough et al. (eds)
ALAS, FOR THE PELICANS! FLINDERS, BAUDIN & BEYOND: ESSAYS AND POEMS
Wakefield Press, $29.95pb, 237pp, 1 86254 603 7

This collection of essays and poems was compiled to celebrate the two-hundredth anniversary of the encounter between Matthew Flinders and Nicolas Baudin off the coast of South Australia. It is a book about encounters and about the impact that they had on the people involved with the two expeditions, as well as on those less directly connected. Flinders dominates the book, which is unsurprising given that he mapped a much larger portion of the Australian coastline than Baudin. The essays cover numerous subjects, including Flinders’ marriage to Ann Chappelle, the mysteries of Kangaroo Island, slavery and the passion for collecting objects. With a foreword by Lester-Irabinna Rigney, this is a valuable addition to studies in Australian colonial history. (AMT)

Kieran Kelly
TANAMI: ON FOOT ACROSS AUSTRALIA’S HEART
Macmillan, $30pb, 319pp, 0 7329 1188 5

The Tanami Desert defeated nineteenth-century explorers John McDouall Stuart and Augustus Gregory. Last year, Sydney banker Kieran Kelly, with cameleer Andrew Harper, proved that a foot crossing could be done. This account, complete with photographs, maps and an in-depth engagement with the journals of both explorers, reveals the logistics, teamwork and endurance needed to walk into the record books. They found no inland sea, but readers will discover a new appreciation for camels, the compass and the imaginative grip of water upon thirsty minds. (LS)

William C. Clarke
REMEMBERING PAPUA NEW GUINEA: AN ECCENTRIC ETHNOGRAPHY
Pandanus, $49.50pb, 178pp, 1 74076 032 8

In 1964 geographer and poet William C. Clarke arrived in Papua New Guinea to spend a year with the Maring people, whose first contact with Europeans had been six years earlier. Clarke took many photographs during his time with these people, and they are reproduced in this fascinating look at a culture whose way of life no longer exists. For each photograph, there is a brief essay explaining what the images are about. In one of them, Clarke talks about representations of ‘The Other’, the resemblances he saw between the people he lived with and his friends back in California, and how their differences from his own culture ‘however dramatic, do not finally count for much’. These people, like any group of people anywhere in the world, have ‘their own way of doing things’. (AMT)

Harry Seidler
THE GRAND TOUR: TRAVELLING THE WORLD WITH AN ARCHITECT’S EYE
Taschen, $65pb, 704pp, 3 8228 2555 7

Harry Seidler has been credited with ‘changing the architectural views of a continent’. Recipient of the RIBA Gold Medal and Australia’s highest honour, he is best known for Shell House, Australia Square and this country’s first modernist house. Fifty years of travel with the appreciative eye of a master and notable camera skills have produced this armchair guide. Brief architectural histories of over thirty-five countries, and thousands of annotated colour photographs, bring Egyptian temples, Angkor Wat, the Blue Mosque of Istanbul, the Guggenheim and a world of other buildings into focus. Finland’s Tapiola Centre earns some of his highest praise. (LS)

(Lolla Stewart and Anne-Marie Thomas)