

# Emperors in Lilliput: Clem Christesen of *Meanjin* & Stephen Murray-Smith of *Overland*



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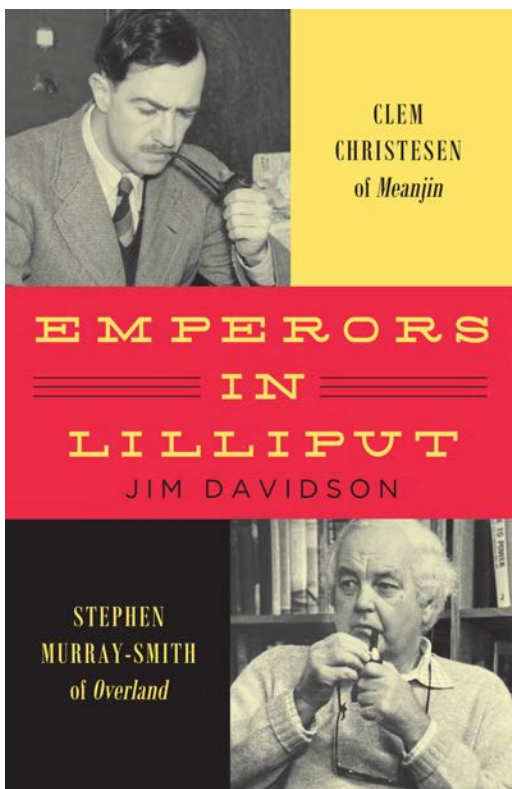
BIOGRAPHY WORKSHOP  
SERIES 2022

Literary magazine editors used to be rather imperial in style, exercising considerable influence beyond the literary culture. Clem Christesen and Stephen Murray-Smith projected real authority as they fought the cultural and political battles of the day.

The style of their magazines was quite different. *Meanjin*, formally associated with the University of Melbourne, inclined as much to academic analysis as it did to creative writing, interleaved with speculative pieces on Australian society and culture. It was also highly conscious of the international dimension, and regularly published work from major overseas writers.

*Overland*, on the other hand, while also emanating from the University of Melbourne – informally – had an entirely different project. It arose from a Communist front, and while steadily broadening its approach and appeal, always retained a sense of being a collective enterprise. Essentially inclusive, Murray-Smith sought to unite elements across the social spectrum to help create a distinctive Australian culture, expanding its infrastructure with some writings of his own.

Biography Workshop National  
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**Jim Davidson** has held academic appointments at the ANU, the University of Melbourne, Victoria University, and overseas. He edited *Meanjin* from 1974 to 1982. His books include a scholarly edition of Anthony Trollope's *South Africa* and histories of tourism and postcards. But he is best known for his prize-winning biographies, *Lyrebird Rising: Louise Hanson-Dyer of Oiseau-Lyre* (1994) and *A Three-Cornered Life: The Historian WK Hancock* (2010). His double biography of Clem Christesen and Stephen Murray-Smith, *Emperors in Lilliput*, has just been published by Melbourne University Press.

## Time:

27 October 2022  
11:00am-12:30 pm

## In Person:

Seminar Room 5.72  
Level 5 RSSS Building  
146 Ellery Crescent

## Zoom option:

### Meeting ID:

849 0058 9945

Password: 630803

### Join Zoom Meeting:

[bit.ly/BioWorkshop2022](https://bit.ly/BioWorkshop2022)