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Those adventures in Fairyland

BOOKS

■ **Our story**

IT'S RARE that you come across a history book as accessible and engaging as *The Story of Australia*, written by Robert Lewis in association with the National Museum of Australia.

As museum director Mathew Trinca writes in the foreword, the book is written with a keen eye on the school curriculum.

But, as he notes, it is an "excellent resource for helping all of us – young or old, children, parents or grandparents – to understand more fully the big themes in Australia's past, while also providing fascinating insights into important, defining moments".

From the enduring cultures of Indigenous Australians, to European exploration and colonisation, and the tragic impacts of two world wars, the book runs the gamut of our history, ending with the fast-paced development of the last decades of the 20th century.

But it is by no means a dry argument. Great moments in popular culture and sport are also detailed with a light touch. Technology, commerce and social change are covered, too.

The book is also a delight to the eye, filled with fascinating images drawn from the museum's rich collection.

■ *The Story of Australia* (Random House Australia), RRP \$34.99.

MAGIC happened in an otherwise unassuming cottage in the Melbourne suburb of Kew in the 1940s, '50s and '60s.

There Grace Tabulo – described by broadcaster Philip Brady as "Australia's Walt Disney" – and her Gallipoli veteran husband Jim made their home a wonderland that drew in children from far and wide.

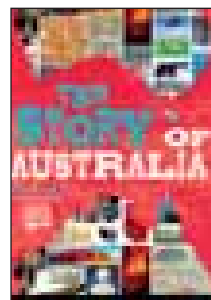
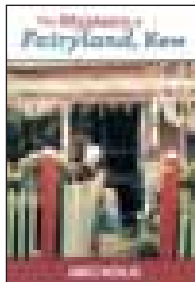
With exhibits, stories, concerts and celebrations for events like Empire Day, Fairyland was featured in newspapers and magazines in Melbourne and abroad.

The Argus newspaper described 57 Malmsbury Street well: "In [Grace's] pocket-handkerchief front garden there are few flowers; there is no room, for it has been turned into a children's dream. Cements, tiles, old broken pieces of priceless china, miniature bottles, lead-lights and strange and beautiful statues have been welded into a grotto which Mrs Tabulo says is only appreciated and understandable to children."

As James Nicolas writes in the preface to his lovely book, *The Mystery of Fairyland, Kew*, children were welcome inside the house, where "fans, plaques and china, some of it more than 300 years old" were handled daily by "tiny but careful hands".

In exploring why the Tabulos created this magical world for children, and what became of it, Nicolas tells a delightful story – and one with surprises, some deeply personal – that will touch even the hardest heart.

■ *The Mystery of Fairyland, Kew* (Vivid Publishing), RRP \$29.



■ **Good carbs**

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■ *The Good Carbs Cookbook* by Alan Barclay, Philippa Sandall and Kate McGhie (Murdoch Books) RRP \$39.99.

Go to www.thesenior.com.au and click on Food under the Lifestyle tab for a lamb shanks with barley, garden peas and mint recipe from the book.

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