

Years 3-4 Teacher's Guide to visiting Nutcote

Thank you for booking to participate in the Nutcote Education program. To make the most of your visit, introduce students to May Gibbs and Nutcote by engaging with the information included in this pack. We have provided suggested worksheets to accompany the house and gardens, however teachers are welcome to use their own activities or worksheets to cater more specifically to their class.

In this teacher's guide you will find:

1. History curriculum links
2. Information and itinerary for your excursion
3. Instructions for teachers and suggested tour
4. Suggested activities for back at school

History curriculum links:

These links in conjunction with the inquiry questions relate directly to the syllabus and central to the aim of the excursion

- describes and explains how significant individuals, groups and events contributed to changes in the local community over time **HT2-2**
- applies skills of historical inquiry and communication **HT2-5**

Excursion key themes:

- May Gibbs and her impact on Australia
- Aspects of the past that are still visible today
- How life has changed since the 1920's
- Story writing and storytelling

Students will:

- Be guided through the historical house of May Gibbs and experience history first hand
- Understand and compare their own lives with Sydney in the 1920's.
- Create their own stories
- Explore the impact May Gibbs had on Australian identity

Key inquiry questions:

- How has our community changed? What features have been lost and what features have been retained?
- What is the nature of the contribution made by different groups and individuals in the community?
- How and why do people choose to remember significant events of the past?

Prior to visit to Nutcote

Engage with book written by May Gibbs and also with material about May Gibbs. These include:

- Snugglepot and Cuddlepie,
- The Gumnut Babies,
- A Day with May (we will read this on the day)
- Mamie
- Creating Snugglepot and Cuddlepie



Information and itinerary for Nutcote education program

The following information outlines how the excursion will be run. Student must be split up into groups of 15 approx. for a tour of the house.

Part of the day, as outlined in the schedules below, will be led and supervised by teachers, while the tour of the house will be with one of our tour guides. Much of the day is outdoors so ensure students have weather protection for the day.

| Teacher schedule for groups of 30 or less students | | |
|--|---|--|
| | Group 1 | Group 2 |
| 11:00-11:30 | <p>School arrives. Greeted by Education Guide Morning tea in garden and toilet break</p> | |
| 11:30-11:35 | <p>Shared introduction and discussion – all students/teachers/parent helpers and education guides Explaining house rules and highlighting any previous knowledge of May Gibbs No photos or touching in the house No food or drinks are allowed inside the house Distribute worksheets for the day</p> | |
| 11:35-12:15 | <p>Students will need to be supervised in the house by a teacher but led by one of our tour guides.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Read <i>A Day with May Gibbs</i> 2. Complete the house worksheet or own equivalent | <p>This section to be led and supervised by teachers</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Complete the garden trail worksheet or own equivalent |
| 12:15-12:45 | <p>Picnic lunch (weather permitting) and toilet break</p> | |
| 12:45-1:20 | <p>This section to be led and supervised by teachers</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Complete the garden trail worksheet or own equivalent | <p>Students will need to be supervised in the house by a teacher but led by one of our tour guides.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Read <i>A Day with May Gibbs</i> 2. Complete the house worksheet or own equivalent |
| 1:20-1:30 | <p>Collect bags and head count Students lead on to bus</p> | |

Checklist

Please remember:

- Ensure all students have a copy of the worksheets or own equivalent
- Ensure all students have sun protection
- Weather appropriate clothing
- You bring this guide with you and for any other parent/teacher helpers
- Please ensure you are on time
- There are toilets located on site
- Ensure all students/teachers and parent helpers have a packed lunch, the tearoom will not be open.

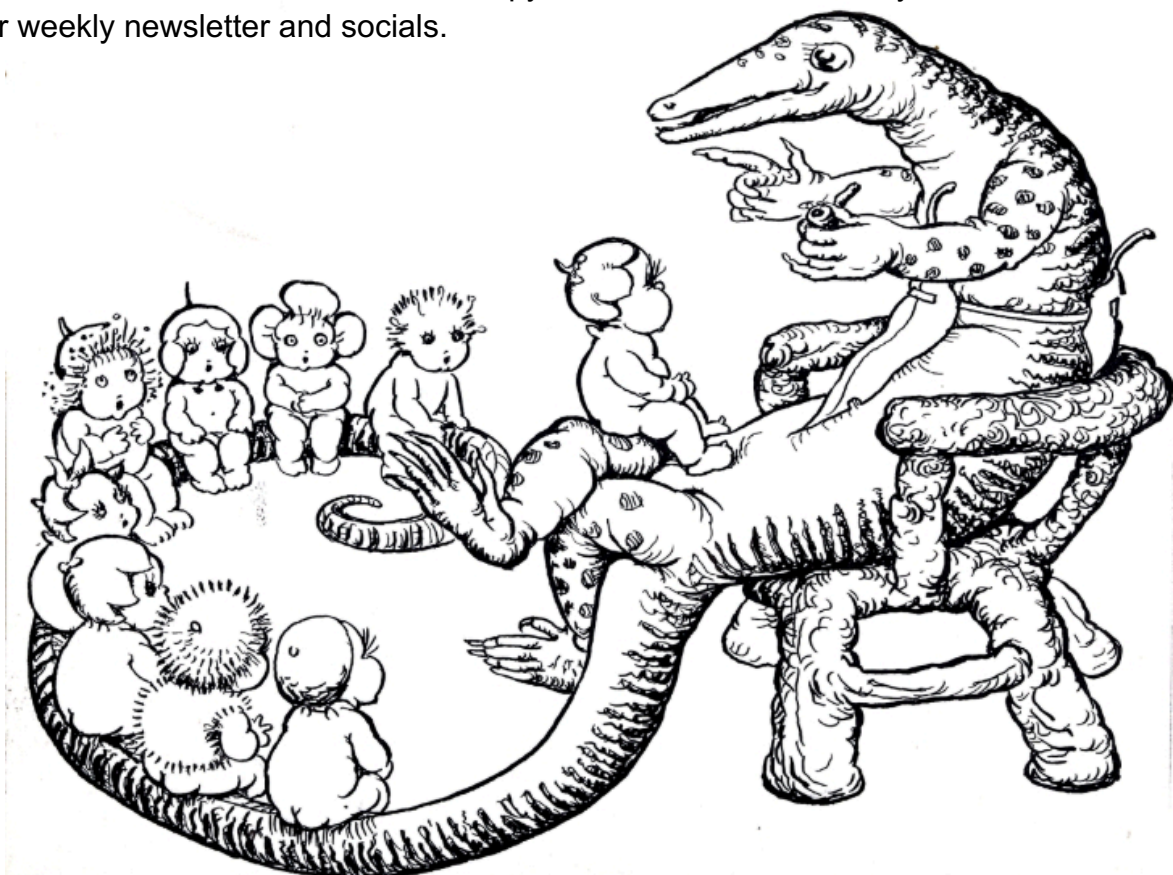
Back at School

After leaving Nutcote, the experience can continue. Below are some ideas for stage 2 students to incorporate May Gibbs into their learning.

Students can:

- do a report on their visit to Nutcote
- compare May's life at Nutcote to theirs in their own homes
- write a letter to May Gibbs', describing what Nutcote is like today and how you feel about it
- make a class mural or collage of the visit to Nutcote using anything you collected on the excursion
- case studies on Australian flora and fauna
- write their own Bib and Bub comic strips with their own characters
- write a poem about their visit or about May and her stories
- create their own bush characters to write stories about
- create their own bookmark

If possible, we would love to have a copy of the students work, fully credited, to share for our weekly newsletter and socials.



Background information for teachers about Nutcote:

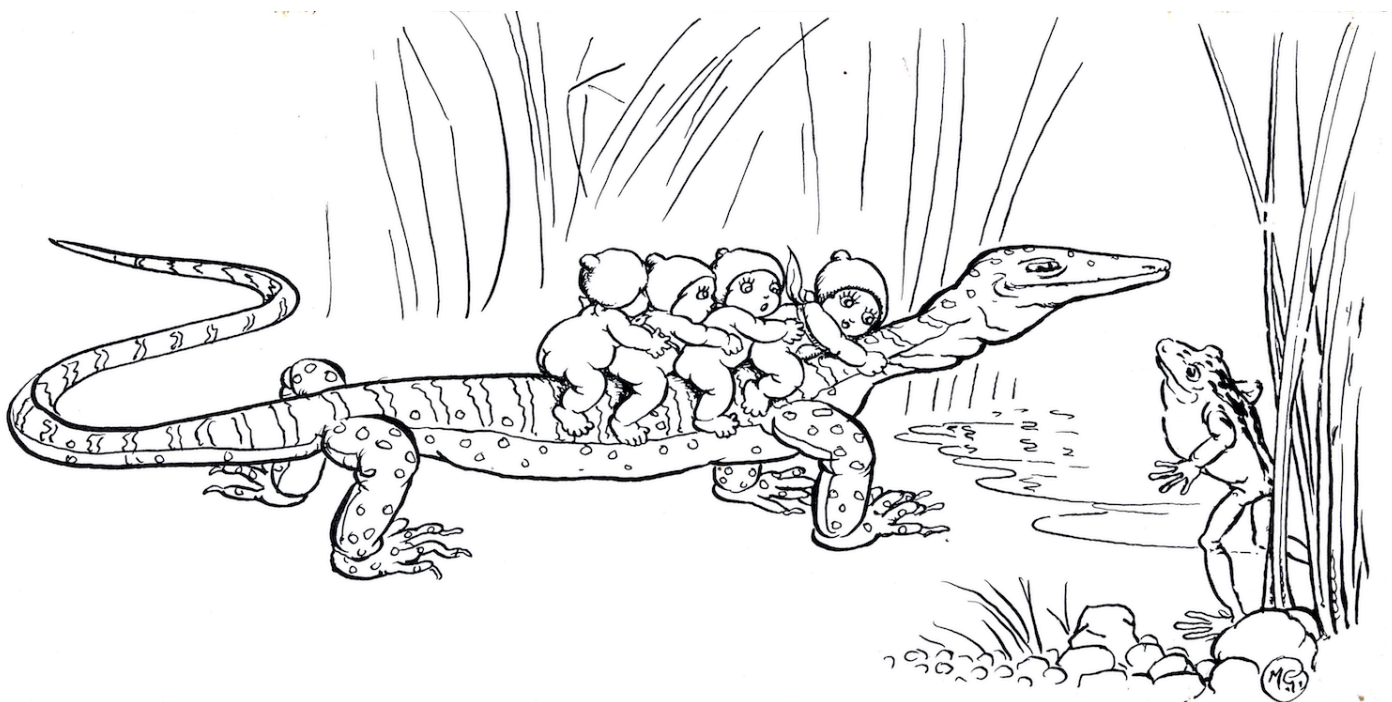
The House

Nutcote was designed for May Gibbs in 1925 by the architect Bertrand Waterhouse. In her will, May Gibbs left Nutcote to UNICEF which, at the time, could not own property, so the house and contents were auctioned in 1970. Later owners planned to demolish the house and develop the site for townhouses. In 1987, concerned relatives and friends formed the May Gibbs Foundation and succeeded in having Nutcote protected by a Permanent Conservation Order. It was also placed on the Register of the National Estate. North Sydney Municipal Council purchased the property in 1990.

Nutcote was the birthplace of the comic strips *Bib and Bub* and *Tiggy Touchwood*. Three other publications were produced at Nutcote: *Scotty in Gumnut Land*, *Mr and Mrs Bear and Friends* and *Prince Dande Lion*.

The house features stuccoed yellow walls, arched windows and blue-green shutters. The interior of the house has been recreated in the 1930s style. It has an early English Baronial character favoured by Waterhouse with the generous use of dark stained timber and built-ins of either Californian redwood or cedar. The flooring is the original jarrah from Western Australia. Some background sources include May's husband's diaries and letters, photographs of the house taken by the occupants, or photographs taken by Harold Cazneau for an article on Nutcote in *Australian Home Beautiful* in 1926, and oral histories from family and friends.

The house is now developed as a museum and displays include some original pieces of furniture and original artwork. Visitors can enter the unique studio where May worked for forty-four years. Special features included an angled window so May Gibbs could look from her easel down the harbour, and an adjustable light for working at night.



The Gardens

May Gibbs and her husband, James Ossoli Kelly first established their garden in the 1920s. Plant species in the garden are typical of the period: roses, annuals, hydrangeas, citrus and perennials. Survivors of the time when May was there include a large banksia tree, which grows on the waterfront and a she-oak on the waterfront.

The gardens provide an opportunity for visitors to examine some of the native plants that inspired May's stories and illustrations.

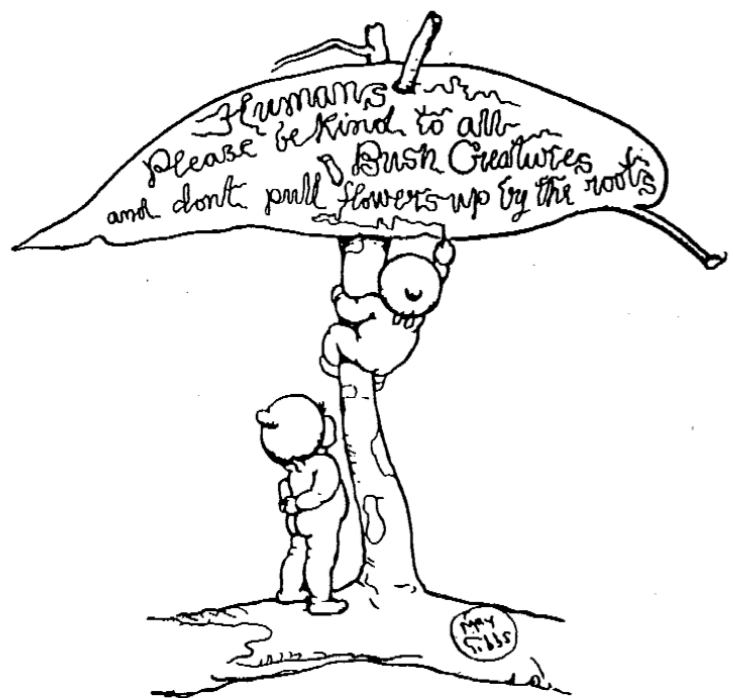
May Gibbs

May Gibbs was born on 17 January 1877 in Surrey, England. Her parents emigrated to Australia in 1881, farming at Franklin Harbour, South Australia and Harvey River, Western Australia, before settling in Perth in 1887. May grew up in an artistic environment and was encouraged to draw and paint from an early age.

At the age of twelve, May's talent was recognised with the publication of a full page of illustrations in the *West Australian Bulletin*. Her natural ability was further developed by two visits to London for formal study. On a third visit she obtained experience as a regular contributor to newspapers, magazines and books. On her return to Australia in 1913 May settled in Sydney and her career as an illustrator flourished.

During the First World War May received recognition for her cheerful postcards produced to boost the morale of troops. She also created bookmarks, calendars, school magazine illustrations, gum babies and flower children. She was an excellent caricaturist with a great sense of fun. Her first major children's book *Snugglepot and Cuddlepie: Their Adventures Wonderful*, appeared in 1918 with the message: 'Humans. Please be kind to all bush creatures and don't pull flowers up by the roots'.

Snugglepot and Cuddlepie has never been out of print. With these gumnut baby characters, May Gibbs created a much-loved Australian folklore. Her inspiration came from the Australian bush and detailed observation of its unique flowers and animals. By the 1920s May Gibbs' work received worldwide acclaim. Her characters became



popular subjects for a wide variety of merchandise. 1924 also saw the beginning of her comic strip *Bib and Bub*, which continued until 1967.

As a female artist in a working world dominated by men, May's achievements are all the more remarkable. She married late at the age of forty-two, and her husband supported her business affairs, in a role-reversal uncommon for the time. May earned a living for both of them through her work but was not always fairly paid for her efforts. Her contemporary, the male cartoonist for *Ginger Meggs*, reportedly received eight times the pay May received for her comic strip *Bib and Bub*.

In 1925, after twelve years in Sydney, May Gibbs and her husband moved into Nutcote. It was here that May lived and worked until her death at the age of ninety-two in 1969.

