



ANZAAB Aspects of Book Collecting **Australian Crime Fiction** Cornstalk Bookshop

Crime Fiction is a most interesting field and many people around the world collect various aspects of it. It is such a huge field that unless time and money are limitless collecting themes within the genre is the only answer.

Australia has a long and rich tradition of crime writing which started in the mid nineteenth century. Some of these early books are important in the international crime fiction scene.

The best reference works on the subject are

John Loder : *Australian Crime Fiction A Bibliography 1857 – 1993*. Thorpe 1993

Graham Flanagan: *The Australian Vintage Paperback Guide*. Gryphon Books 1994.

John Arnold and John Hay (Editors) : *The Bibliography of Australian Literature* Australian Scholarly Publishing 2001 -. So far the first three volumes have been published with the fourth due next year.

The National Library Catalogue is also very useful as are the online catalogues of some of the State and academic libraries.

Some suggestions for collections are

- 1 Individual Author Collections
- 2 Regional Collections
- 3 Sporting collections – Horseracing, Baseball, Cricket, Golf
- 4 Women authors
- 5 Period novels
- 6 Medical thrillers
- 7 Spy thrillers
- 8 Clerical collections
- 9 Pulp crime
- 10 Bibliomysteries
- 11 Invent your own

As with modern first editions, the condition of the books in a crime fiction collection is most important. Always purchase the best copy available (budget permitting).

The price range of books in the field will vary from many thousands of dollars for a first edition of Fergus Hume *The Mystery of the Hansom Cab* or the first edition of Arthur Upfield's first book *The House of Cain* (in dust wrapper) to well under \$100 for many important books – such as the works of Carter Brown or Jon Cleary.

There are thousands of books which fall within the genre of Australian Crime Fiction writing and many of them are readily available. However many are rarely seen on the market. The pulp fiction works in this field are numerous and it will take many years (or indeed a lifetime) to collect all the titles in this field in the required condition.