



Informed, Intelligent,
Independent
(and sometimes) Irreverent



You are here: [White Hat](#) >> [Australia](#) >> [Australian People](#) >> [200 Significant Australians](#) >> E. W. Cole

PAGE PROTECTED BY **COPYSCAPE** DO NOT COPY

Listen to our
[Monthly Podcast](#)

Subscribe to
our [FREE Newsletter](#)
'Great Things to
do in Melbourne
- the White Hat
guide'

E. W. Cole
Businessman, Publisher, Freethinker
aka 'Cole of the Book Arcade'

E.W.COLE OF THE BOOK ARCADE

Last week we mentioned E.W.Cole of the Book Arcade. Just a little more background on this remarkable Melbournian. Some articles refer to him as a remarkable salesman. This is not true – Cole was a shy man not suited to face-to-face sales. However, he was a remarkable marketer. He could be called the father of marketing in Melbourne. We mentioned the full-page advertisement he took out to promote his new book arcade. He also used the same tactic to find a wife – a full-page ad in the Herald complete with detailed position description and his reasons for choosing this approach to finding a wife. Cole knew the value of brand marketing long before the term had been invented and created a striking rainbow motif (a century before the Nike swoosh) with which he branded his products. He would purchase large print over-runs from England and elsewhere, print his own cover (complete with rainbow) and sell them at cheap prices in his bookstore. In fact he really invented the concept of the remaindered bookstore in Melbourne. His book arcade was always full of colour, motion, entertainment and activity. You could watch the costumed jugglers, buy food and drink, or find a quiet corner to curl up with a book. But all the time he was a man with a message. His Coles Funny Picture Books contains ideas that were quite subversive. His attitudes on religion, racism, social organisation and many other things were all politically incorrect at the time, but he managed to give it all a humorous sugar coating that enabled them to creep under the defences of otherwise closed-minded people. If you get a chance to pick up a copy of Coles Funny Picture Book at a fair or market, check to see when the particular edition was published. His family took over the business and the publishing, and over the years Coles ideas were bowdlerised and watered down. It is interesting to watch how by the later 20th century the descendants are finding Cole's attitudes too radical and start to water them down with unfunny politically correct views from the present. I sometimes wander through Melbourne having conversations with E.W.Cole. "Tell me Mr Cole, what do you think about traders wanting buskers removed from the Bourke Street Mall during peak trading season?" "Great idea my boy. They should do what I did – invite them into their store. I had all sorts of performers in my Indian Bazaar in Howey Place. The crowds came in and usually went out with a few books." "But things are different now Mr Cole. Book stores are facing competition from large overseas chains like Borders." "Nonsense son. Bring them on. If local bookstores have had all that time to establish themselves and can't compete with a few foreigners they shouldn't be in the business. I could beat them on price, I could beat them on atmosphere, I could beat them on profitability and I could beat them on customer loyalty. If it has the rainbow on it, they will buy it. Some of your current day bookstores have made themselves a refuge for po-faced women from the middle suburbs who don't want to deal with real life but want to live in an imaginary world pretending to be real life but expressing only a limited range of views. That's not what a bookstore should be. Books are fun – books are for everyone –and books should expose people to new ways of thinking, not just reinforce their current attitudes. Darwinism my boy. Let me tell you I was pilloried for mentioning Darwin's ideas in my day, but I got away with it and changed some thinking along the way. And I believe in retail Darwinism – the best adapted will survive." "What about the protesters in the Mall, Mr Cole. Many of them are expressing unfashionable views. You must have some empathy with them." "Not all of them my boy. You see, it is one thing to make yourself feel good by confronting people and repeating pre-prepared opinions. But that usually only hardens people in their current thinking. I am interested in changing people's thinking rather than feeling self-righteous. That's why I created the Funny Picture Book. Now tell me more about this Internet thing son, I think it may have some real possibilities."

If you see someone wandering past Howey Place in intense discussion with an invisible stranger, it's probably E.W.Cole and me.

Related links:

[Coles Funny Picture Book](#)



Page last updated:

URL: <https://web.archive.org/web/20080310231058/http://www.whitehat.com.au/Australia/People/ColeEW.asp>



Search

Web White Hat

TOURISM NEWS

**Qantas In Flight Magazine chooses
[White Hat Cemetery Tour](#) as its
featured Australian tour for May**



There are many fine historical tours throughout Australia including cemetery tours. From these, the prestigious Qantas In Flight Magazine has chosen the White Hat Tour of Melbourne Cemetery as its featured Australian tour for the May 2007 edition. This tour was also featured by ABC radio on 24 May and will feature in a documentary series on Burks and Willis to be shown on European television in 2008. The tour has been operating for many years and has won praise from a wide range of sources. This is not a dry and stuffy tour but in keeping with all White Hat offerings it is Informed, Intelligent, Independent (and occasionally) Irreverent. You can find details of the tour at [White Hat Tour of Melbourne Cemetery](#) and view the article at [Qantas In Flight Magazine](#).

E. W. Cole

Businessman, Publisher, Freethinker

aka 'Cole of the Book Arcade'

<http://www.whitehat.com.au/Australia/People/ColeEW.asp>

E.W. COLE OF THE BOOK ARCADE

Last week we mentioned E.W. Cole of the Book Arcade. Just a little more background on this remarkable Melbournian. Some articles refer to him as a remarkable salesman. This is not true - Cole was a shy man not suited to face-to-face sales. However, he was a remarkable marketer. He could be called the father of marketing in Melbourne. We mentioned the full-page advertisement he took out to promote his new book arcade. He also used the same tactic to find a wife - a full-page ad in the Herald complete with detailed position description and his reasons for choosing this approach to finding a wife. Cole knew the value of brand marketing long before the term had been invented and created a striking rainbow motif (a century before the Nike swoosh) with which he branded his products. He would purchase large print over-runs from England and elsewhere, print his own cover (complete with rainbow) and sell them at cheap prices in his bookstore. In fact he really invented the concept of the remaindered bookstore in Melbourne. His book arcade was always full of colour, motion, entertainment and activity. You could watch the costumed jugglers, buy food and drink, or find a quiet corner to curl up with a book. But all the time he was a man with a message. His Coles Funny Picture Books contains ideas that were quite subversive. His attitudes on religion, racism, social organisation and many other things were all politically incorrect at the time, but he managed to give it all a humorous sugar coating that enabled them to creep under the defences of otherwise closed-minded people. If you get a chance to pick up a copy of Coles Funny Picture Book at a fair or market, check to see when the particular edition was published. His family took over the business and the publishing, and over the years Coles ideas were bowdlerised and watered down. It is interesting to watch how by the later 20th century the descendents are finding Cole's attitudes too radical and start to water them down with unfunny politically correct views from the present. I sometimes wander through Melbourne having conversations with E.W. Cole. "Tell me Mr Cole, what do you think about traders wanting buskers removed from the Bourke Street Mall during peak trading season?" "Great idea my boy. They should do what I did - invite them into their store. I had all sorts of performers in my Indian Bazaar in Howey Place. The crowds came in and usually went out with a few books." "But things are different now Mr Cole. Book stores are facing competition from large overseas chains like Borders." "Nonsense son. Bring them on. If local bookstores have had all that time to establish themselves and can't compete with a few foreigners they shouldn't be in the business. I could beat them on price, I could beat them on atmosphere, I could beat them on profitability and I could beat them on customer loyalty. If it has the rainbow on it, they will buy it. Some of your current day bookstores have made themselves a refuge for po-faced women from the middle suburbs who don't want to deal with real life but want to live in an imaginary world pretending to be real life but expressing only a limited range of views. That's not what a bookstore should be. Books are fun - books are for everyone - and books should expose people to new ways of

thinking, not just reinforce their current attitudes. Darwinism my boy. Let me tell you I was pilloried for mentioning Darwin's ideas in my day, but I got away with it and changed some thinking along the way. And I believe in retail Darwinism - the best adapted will survive." "What about the protesters in the Mall, Mr Cole. Many of them are expressing unfashionable views. You must have some empathy with them." "Not all of them my boy. You see, it is one thing to make yourself feel good by confronting people and repeating pre-prepared opinions. But that usually only hardens people in their current thinking. I am interested in changing people's thinking rather than feeling self-righteous. That's why I created the Funny Picture Book. Now tell me more about this Internet thing son, I think it may have some real possibilities."

If you see someone wandering past Howey Place in intense discussion with an invisible stranger, it's probably E.W. Cole and me.

Pioneers & explorers

- [Matthew Flinders](#) (explorer, navigator) who was the first to circumnavigate the continent as well as naming it 'Australia'.
- [Edward John Eyre](#) (explorer)
- [Robert O'Hara Burke](#) (explorer)
- [Sir Hudson Fysh](#) (pilot, businessman)
- [Bert Hinkler](#) (Aviator)
- [Frank Hurley](#) (photographer, adventurer) whose pioneering images of Mawson's Antarctic expedition are unforgettable.
- [Sir Charles Kingsford Smith](#) ('Smithy') (aviator)
- [Sydney Kirkby](#) (explorer & surveyor) who was one of Australia's most remarkable and prolific explorers but is rarely mentioned in history classes.
- [Sir Keith Smith](#) (aviator)
- [Nancy Bird Walton](#) (aviator)
- [Sir Hubert Wilkins](#) (explorer & adventurer)

Engineers & Inventors

- [John Bradfield](#) (engineer) and designer of one of Australia's most recognisable structures.
- [Sir Edward Hallstrom](#) (inventor., manufacturer, philanthropist) and the bringer of practical refrigeration to the outback.
- [William Hudson](#) (engineer)
- [H. V. McKay](#) (inventor, entrepreneur, businessman) whose invention was the basis for a major manufacturing enterprise.
- [Sir John Monash](#) (soldier, administrator, engineer) regarded during his lifetime as the 'greatest living Australian'.

Education

- [Sir James Darling](#) (educator)

Science, mathematics & medicine

- [Dr Elizabeth Blackburn](#) (scientist) - winner of the Nobel Prize for her work in genetics
- [Sir Lawrence Bragg](#) (mathematician, physicist, Nobel Laureate) - the youngest-ever recipient of the Nobel Prize.
- [Sister Vivian Bullwinkel](#) (nurse, war hero)
- [Sir Frank Macfarlane Burnet](#) (scientist)
- [Adrienne Clarke](#) (scientist)
- [Professor Graeme Clark](#) whose invention has transformed the lives of tens of thousands throughout the world.
- [Sir Ian Clunies-Ross](#) (veterinary scientist)
- [Peter Doherty](#) (scientist) who received the Nobel Prize for his work in immunology
- [Raymond Dart](#) (anthropologist) discoverer of *Australopithecus africanus*
- [Sir Edward \('Weary'\) Dunlop](#) (surgeon, war hero) whose courage and compassion inspired a generation.
- [Sir John Eccles](#) (neurophysicist)
- [Frank Fenner](#) who among his many achievements was awarded the Japan Prize (the applied science equivalent of the Nobel Prize) for his extraordinary contribution to the worldwide eradication of smallpox.
- [Dr Tim Flannery](#) (scientist, author) whose books such as *The Weather Makers* have been recognised worldwide as groundbreaking.
- [Lord Howard Florey](#) (medical researcher) whose work resulted in the saving of millions of lives.
- [Fred Hollows](#) (ophthalmologist)
- [Barry Marshall](#) (medical researcher) whose discovery regarding the treatment of stomach ulcers (tested by infecting himself) to this day is estimated to save over a million lives a year.
- [Sir Douglas Mawson](#) (geologist, explorer)
- [Robert May](#) (scientist)

- [Sir Gustav \('Gus'\) Nossal](#) (immunologist, medical researcher)
- [Sir Marcus Oliphant](#) (nuclear physicist, Governor)
- [Professor Brian Schmidt](#) (astrophysicist)
- [Fiona Stanley](#) (epidemiologist)
- [Struan Sutherland](#) (epidemiologist)
- [Dr Terence Tao](#) (mathematician) who is internationally recognised as a mathematical genius and in 2006 received the Fields Medal (the mathematical equivalent of the Nobel Prize).
- [Alan Truonson](#) (IVF researcher)
- [Baron Ferdinand von Mueller](#) (botanist)
- [Alan Walsh](#) (scientist)
- [Doug Waterhouse](#) (entomologist)

Legal

- [Sir Zelman Cowen](#) (lawyer, Governor General)
- [Sir Owen Dixon](#) (judge)
- [Henry Higgins](#) (politician, judge) who, through a single court case, established one of the pillars of Australian society for the next century.
- [Dame Roma Mitchell](#) (lawyer, Governor)

Business & philanthropy

- [Sir Reginald Ansett](#) ('Reg') (businessman)
- [Sir George Coles](#) (G. J. Coles) (businessman)
- [Louise Hanson-Dyer](#) (publisher, patron) who, as a result of her internationally renowned publishing company, was awarded the Legion of Honour by the French Government.
- [Robert Holmes a Court](#) (businessman)
- [Sir Sidney Kidman](#) (pastoralist)
- [Essington Lewis](#) (businessman)
- [Dame Elisabeth Mudoch](#) (philanthropist)
- [Rupert Murdoch](#) (businessman) - one of the most powerful people in the world
- [Sidney Myer](#) (businessman, philanthropist)
- [Kerry Packer](#) (media proprietor)
- [Dick Smith](#) (businessman, adventurer, philanthropist)
- [W. C. Wentworth](#) (politician, pastoralist)
- [R. M. Williams](#) (bushman, businessman)

Economists

- [H. C. Coombs](#) ('Nugget') (economist)
- [James Wolffensohn](#) (banker, athlete)

Politicians

- [Australian Prime Ministers](#)
- [Sir Edmund Barton](#) (Prime Minister)
- [Neville Bonner](#) (politician)
- [Stanley Bruce](#) (Prime Minister)
- [Arthur Calwell](#) (politician)
- [Sir Richard Casey](#) (politician, diplomat, Governor-General)
- [Ben Chifley](#) (Prime Minister)
- [Don Chipp](#) (politician)
- [John Curtin](#) (Prime Minister)
- [Alfred Deakin](#) (Prime Minister) who many believe should have been Australia's first prime minister.
- [Herbert Vere \('Doc'\) Evatt](#) (statesman, jurist & politician)
- [Malcolm Fraser](#) (Prime Minister, elder statesman)

- [Bob Hawke](#) (Prime Minister)
- [Billy Hughes](#) ('The Little Digger') (Prime Minister) whose negotiations at Versailles are regarded as one of the pivotal moments of Australian history.
- [Sir Isaac Isaacs](#) (lawyer, politician, Governor-General) - Australia's first Australian-born Governor-General.
- [Sir Robert \('Bob'\) Menzies](#) (Prime Minister)
- [Sir Henry Parkes](#) (politician, statesman) - the 'Father of Federation'.
- [Gough Whitlam](#) (Prime Minister, elder statesman)

Other social achievers

- [Daisy Bates](#) (social worker & anthropologist)
- [David Bussau](#) (businessman, social achiever) who has arguably helped more people out of poverty around the world than any other Australian.
- [Caroline Chis olm](#) (social achiever)
- [Pat Dodson](#) (Aboriginal advocate)
- [John Embling](#) (community worker)
- [Dame Phyllis Frost](#) (welfare achiever)
- [Vida Goldstein](#) (feminist activist)
- [Peter Lalor](#) (social achiever)
- [Mary Lee](#) (social achiever)
- [Eddie Mabo](#) (social achiever)
- [Jack Mundey](#) (unionist, environmentalist) whose activities saved many heritage buildings in Sydney.
- [Lowitja \('Lois'\) O'Donoghue](#) (Aboriginal achiever)
- [B. A. Santamaria](#) (social commentator)
- [Arthur Stace](#) (social achiever) whose contribution to Australia is based on a single word.

Philosophy

- [Peter Singer](#) (philosopher, ethicist, activist) whose work has created both world renown and controversy.
- [Jack Smart](#) (philosopher)

Historians

- [Geoffrey Blainey](#) (historian)
- [Manning Clark](#) (historian)

Art

- [Arthur Boyd](#) (painter)
- [John Brack](#) (painter)
- [Harold Cazneaux](#) (photographer)
- [Sir William Dobell](#) (painter)
- [Sir Russell Drysdale](#) (painter)
- [Max Dupain](#) (photographer)
- [Pro Hart](#) (painter, inventor)
- [Emily Kngwarreye](#) (painter)
- [Norman Lindsay](#) (artist, cartoonist, writer)
- [Albert Namatjira](#) (painter)
- [Sir Sidney Nolan](#) (artist)
- [Clifton Pugh](#) (artist)
- [Tom Roberts](#) (painter)
- [Sir Arthur Streeton](#) (painter)
- [Albert Tucker](#) (painter)
- [Sydney Ure Smith](#) (artist, publisher)
- [Brett Whiteley](#) (painter)
- [Fred Williams](#) (painter)

Literary

- [Peter Carey](#) (author)
- [Marcus Clarke](#) (writer)
- [Joseph Furphy](#) (writer)
- [Dame Mary Gilmore](#) (poet, author)
- [Adam Lindsay Gordon](#) (poet, horseman) who became Australia's first poet to be acknowledged as world class.
- [Germaine Greer](#) (feminist, writer) whose writings and lectures have a world audience.
- [A. D. Hope](#) (poet)
- [Robert Hughes](#) (writer, art critic)
- [Tom Keneally](#) (writer)
- [Henry Lawson](#) (writer)
- [Ern Malley](#) (poet, artistic inspiration) whose works holds a special place in Australian artistic endeavour.
- [David Malouf](#) (writer)
- [Les Murray](#) (poet) regarded as one of the finest living poets writing in English.
- [Oodgeroo Noonucle](#) (Kath Walker) (writer & activist)
- [Banjo Paterson](#) (Andrew Baton Paterson or A. B. Paterson) (poet) whose verses are well known but whose managerial achievements are often overlooked.
- [Peter Porter](#) (poet)
- [Henry Handel Richardson](#) (writer)
- [Catherine Helen Spence](#) (writer, social activist)
- [Morris West](#) (novelist)
- [Patrick White](#) (writer) - Australia's only Nobel Prize winner in literature.
- [David Williamson](#) (playwright)
- [Judith Wright](#) (poet)

Theatre & film

- [Dame Judith Anderson](#) (actress) - a true dame of the stage and film.
- [Bruce Beresford](#) (film director)
- [Cate Blanchett](#) (actress)
- [Ruth Cracknell](#) (actress)
- [Peter Finch](#) (actor)
- [Errol Flynn](#) (actor)
- [Mel Gibson](#) (actor)
- [Sir Robert Helpmann](#) (dancer, choreographer, actor) - whose achievements as a dancer, stage actor, screen actor, choreographer and director were all world class
- [Paul Hogan](#) (comedian, actor)
- [Barry Humphries](#) (satirist)
- [Baz Luhrmann](#) (director)
- [Geoffrey Rush](#) (actor)
- [Fred Schepisi](#) (film director)
- [Nellie Stewart](#) (actress, singer) - the darling of the stage for many decades and acknowledged as Australia's greatest singing actress
- [Bud Tingwell](#) (actor)
- [Peter Weir](#) (film director)

Music & Opera

- [John Antill](#) (composer)
- [Florence Austral](#) (singer)
- [John Brownlee](#) (singer)
- [Peter Dawson](#) (singer)
- [Lauris Elms](#) (singer)
- [Peggy Glanville-Hicks](#) (composer)
- [Percy Grainger](#) (composer, pianist) - a ratbag genius.

- [Dame Joan Hammond](#) (singer)
- [Marjorie Lawrence](#) (singer)
- [Sir Charles Mackerras](#) (conductor)
- [Dame Nellie Melba](#) (singer) who claimed to have "put Australia on the map".
- [Gladys Moncrieff](#) (singer) - affectionately known as "Our Glad"
- [Peter Sculthorpe](#) (composer) whose music speaks with a distinctly Australian voice.
- [Dame Joan Sutherland](#) (singer) who for several decades dominated the world of *bel canto* opera
- [Margaret Sutherland](#) (composer)
- [Barry Tuckwell](#) (horn player, conductor) - an outstanding instrumentalist.
- [John Williams](#) (guitarist) - another outstanding instrumentalist
- [Roger Woodward](#) (pianist)

Architecture

- [Robin Boyd](#) (architect)
- [Walter Burley Griffin & Marion Mahony Griffin](#) (architects) - whose vision for Canberra was thwarted by beurocracy
- [Glenn Murcutt](#) (architect) - often known as 'The Tin Man'.
- [Harry Seidler](#) (architect)

Sport

- [Richie Benaud](#) (cricketer, sports commentator) - whose unique style of commentary has entertained and educated millions
- [Allan Border](#) (cricketer)
- [Sir Jack Brabham](#) (racing driver)
- [Sir Donald Bradman](#) (cricketer, sportsman, businessman)
- [Jimmy Carruthers](#) (boxer)
- [Roy Cazaly](#) (footballer) whose exploits gave rise to the phrase 'up there Cazaly'.
- [Percy Cerutti](#) (athletics coach) whose unorthodox methods produced remarkable results.
- [Margaret Court](#) (Margaret Smith) (tennis player)
- [Jack Dyer](#) ('Captain Blood') (footballer, commentator)
- [Herb Elliott](#) (athlete)
- [Dawn Fraser](#) (swimmer)
- [Cathy Freeman](#) (athlete)
- [Harry Hopman](#) (tennis player)
- [Geoff Hunt](#) (squash player)
- [Marjorie Jackson](#) (athlete, governor)
- [John Landy](#) (athlete, sportsman)
- [Rod Laver](#) (tennis player)
- [Walter Lindrum](#) (billiards player) who dominated the world in his chosen sport.
- [Heather McKay](#) (squash player)
- [Keith Miller](#) (sportsman)
- [Sir Hubert Opperman](#) ('Oppy') (cyclist, politician) who remains the the only Australian to have been voted European Sportsman of the Year, and who as a politician helped bring to an end the White Australia Policy.
- [Pharlap](#) (racehorse) who inspired a nation during the Depression.
- [Lionel Rose](#) (boxer)
- [Murray Rose](#) (swimmer)
- [Bill Roycroft](#) (horseman)
- [Frank Sedgman](#) (tennis player)
- [Shirley Strickland Delahunty](#) (athlete, scientist) - a nuclear physicist and one of Australia's most successful track and field athletes.
- [Peter Thomson](#) (golfer)
- [Shane Warne](#) (cricketer) who had a major impact on the way in which the game of cricket was played
- [Ted Whitten](#) (footballer)

Military

- [Sir Thomas Blamey](#) (Field Marshall)
- [Harry Chauvel](#) (cavalry commander)
- [Albert Jacka](#) (soldier, Victoria Cross winner) - Australia's first Victoria Cross winner of World War I.
- [Leslie Morshead](#) (military commander)
- [Nancy Wake](#) "The White Mouse" (resistance fighter)
- [Simpson and his donkey](#)

Media

- [Ita Buttrose](#) (journalist, publisher)
- [E. W. Cole](#) (businessman, publisher)
- [John Fairfax](#) (newspaper proprietor)
- [Sir Keith Murdoch](#) (journalist, editor)
- [Bruce Petty](#) (cartoonist)

Religious

- [Rev. John Flynn](#) ('Flynn of the Inland') (minister) who used his profession of photography to finance his work with the flying doctor service.
- [Archbishop Daniel Mannix](#) (Archbishop)
- [Saint Mary McKillop](#) (Nun)

Popular entertainment

- [Peter Allen](#) (entertainer, songwriter)
- [Robyn Archer](#) (performer)
- [Slim Dusty](#) (singer)
- [John Farnham](#) (singer)
- [Florrie Forde](#) (popular entertainer and singer) probably Australia's most successful popular singer ever who became one of the best loved music hall entertainers in the world.
- [Clive James](#) (writer, broadcaster)
- [Graham Kennedy](#) (entertainer)
- [Kylie Minogue](#) (singer, actress, marketer) - although her talents as a singer and actress may not be of the highest class she has recognised how to skilfully market her image as a total package and as such has proved herself a consummate business woman
- [Roy Rene](#) ('Mo') (comedian)

Infamous Australians

- [Ben Hall](#) (bushranger)
- [Ned Kelly](#) (bushranger)