

# Dinkum duo have a dreamtime in Wonderland

Page 3  
W/End Australian  
July 11/12/98

SIAN POWELL

HE'S a Pike, not a pussycat, but he's been to London to visit the Queen.

The celebrated Aboriginal artist Jimmy Pike has been in London for the past week or so, opening a roaringly successful exhibition of his paintings, launching a book written by his British-born wife Pat Lowe, and dropping in on a Buckingham Palace garden party hosted by the Queen.

Quite a week for an Aboriginal man born in the sandhills, a traditional Walmajarri man who didn't see his first Caucasian until he was 14.

"Big mob of people there (at Buckingham Palace), thousands of people in there," Mr Pike said last night from London. "Nice place, that."

He explained that he didn't quite shake the Queen's hand, but they exchanged looks as she moved through the crowd. Ms Lowe said the whole event was hilarious, "like something out of Alice in Wonderland".

The Queen, weirdly, made an appearance both at the garden party and in Lowe's most recent book, titled Jimmy and Pat Meet the Queen. Pike supplied the dazzling illustrations for the story, which has proved very popular in Australia.

In the book, the Pike and Lowe invite the Queen to the Kimberley and then challenge her to prove her ownership of the vacant Crown Land which is Pike's ancestral home. She has a lot of trouble finding waterholes and catching the tucker, although she quite enjoys eating, among other things, roast feral cat and goanna.

Finally she concedes the Walmajarri country in the Great Sandy Desert isn't really her's, packs up her bags and corgis, and flies back to England.



Royal treatment: Pike and Pat Lowe outside Buckingham Palace

Picture: BRENTON EDWARDS

Ms Lowe said last night that she and her husband have determined to send her a suitably inscribed copy of Jimmy and Pat Meet the Queen by way of thanks for the party.

Perhaps the book somehow prompted the garden party

invitation, or perhaps it was one of those odd coincidences. Either way, Pike and Lowe enjoyed the party immensely. Lowe wore a dress, and Pike top and tails — far more formal wear than they're used to at home in Broome.

Not surprisingly, the English press is fascinated with Jimmy Pike. The Daily Telegraph and the Independent have run features, the Times is running stories and CNN is covering the visit. The coverage has prompted a lot of interest in the

exhibition of Pike's work at the Rebecca Hossack Gallery in London. It opened on Thursday evening, shortly after the garden party. Lord Macalpine made a speech, and Mr Pike was most gratified by the reception of his work. "Too many

people coming here," he said. "They must like the paintings."

The Queen's godson, Lord Huntingdon, was there and bought a painting.

Indeed, nearly all the works were sold before the exhibition even opened.