

Elizabeth Hale, "Entry on: Mr Archimedes' Bath by Pamela Allen", peer-reviewed by Miriam Riverlea and Daniel A. Nkemleke. Our Mythical Childhood Survey (Warsaw: University of Warsaw, 2018). Link: <http://omc.obta.al.uw.edu.pl/myth-survey/item/37>. Entry version as of February 06, 2025.

Pamela Allen

Mr Archimedes' Bath

Australia (1980)

TAGS: [Archimedes](#) [Greek Science](#)



We are still trying to obtain permission for posting the original cover.

General information	
<i>Title of the work</i>	Mr Archimedes' Bath
<i>Country of the First Edition</i>	Australia
<i>Country/countries of popularity</i>	Australia
<i>Original Language</i>	English
<i>First Edition Date</i>	1980
<i>First Edition Details</i>	Pamela Allen, <i>Mr Archimedes' Bath</i> . Sydney: Allen & Unwin, 1980, 32 pp.
<i>ISBN</i>	9780207172854
<i>Awards</i>	1980 - NSW Premier's Literary Awards - Ethel Turner Prize
<i>Genre</i>	Humor, Illustrated works, Instructional and educational works, Picture books
<i>Target Audience</i>	Crossover
<i>Author of the Entry</i>	Elizabeth Hale, University of New England, ehale@une.edu.au
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Creators



Pamela Allen , b. 1934 (Author)

Pamela Allen was born in Devonport, in Auckland, New Zealand in 1934. She moved to Australia with her painter husband in 1980, and returned to Auckland over thirty years later. She trained as a fine artist at the Elam School of Arts, in New Zealand. Her first picture book was *Mr Archimedes' Bath*, the first of a series of picture books about aspects of water displacement theory (*Who Sank The Boat?* and *Alexander's Outing* followed soon after). Allen has built a distinguished career as a writer and illustrator of picture books. She has received numerous awards, for individual books, including several Book of the Year Awards from the Children's Book Council of Australia, two New South Wales Premier's Literary Awards, and the Margaret Mahy Medal, New Zealand's most prestigious award for children's literature.

Sources:

[Profile](#) at the bookcouncil.org.nz (accessed: June 3, 2018).

[Profile](#) at the thelittlebigbookclub.com.au (accessed: June 3, 2018).

[Profile](#) at the storylines.org.nz (accessed: June 3, 2018).

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Additional information

Summary

A humorous picture book about the principle of water displacement discovered by the Greek mathematician, Archimedes. In this book, 'Mr Archimedes' shares his bath with three animals: a goat, a wombat, and a kangaroo. Trial and error in the bath (in which each animal is 'blamed' in turn for taking up too much room) show the principles of displacement in action. Finally, Mr Archimedes shouts 'Eureka!' and explains to the animals that they are all making the water go up and down. Illustrations are pen-and-ink line drawings, with cross-hatching and watercolour shading.

Analysis

Mr Archimedes' Bath is a lightly handled picture book about the scientific principle of water displacement, as discovered by Archimedes. The setting is quasi-modern (the bath appears to have plumbing; Mr Archimedes wears trousers and a shirt), and the inclusion of two Australian animals (kangaroo and wombat) show the interaction of ancient Greek ideas with a modern setting. The playful retelling of Archimedes' discovery using Australian animal friends, mimics a child's bathtime with toy animals, and a certain amount of spilled water. Mr Archimedes' cry of 'Eureka!' precipitates the discovery that the principle is the same regardless of who is in the bath.

Classical, Mythological,
Traditional Motifs,
Characters, and
Concepts

[Archimedes Greek Science](#)

Other Motifs, Figures,
and Concepts Relevant
for Children and Youth
Culture

[Animals Friendship Water](#)

