



A BIG DAY FOR ... OFF THE WALL POETRY

IN THE age of the Kindle, the e-Book and the iPad one expects to read poems on a cool screen in digital print rather than, say, on the yellowing pages of a much loved slender volume. What you don't expect is to be reading couplets etched in tiny letters on bright red padlocks littered throughout Kings Cross, or to take in lines of verse growing in soft, grassy (cursive) moss on a garden wall in Paddington. Today, you can. The poet responsible for the former 13-part Dylan-esque poetic work is as yet anonymous, and it came to our notice through the keen eyes of a Diary reader, **Tim Purcell**, who discovered one padlock as he walked through the Cross, and then sought out the others.

The latter work, on the other hand, is a City of Sydney project - "Modern Day Mossages" - carefully cultivated at Paddington Reservoir Gardens to honour poet and journalist **John Thompson**, who, with his wife Pat founded the Paddington Society in 1964, which is reckoned to be Australia's first resident action group. (Thompson, who also worked as a writer at the ABC, edited with **Kenneth Slessor** and **R.G. Howarth**, *The Penguin Book of Australian Verse*.) **Haline Ly** and **Sonya Gee**, who wrote the Thompson poem, said: "Just as moss lives a quiet and slightly fragile life, the poems are present yet subtle, offering a message of gentle encouragement."



Wise words ... a moss message in Paddington, top; and poetic padlocks in Kings Cross. Photos: Symple Creative, Tim Purcell